

**CHRISTIAN ZIONISM: ITS HISTORY,
THEOLOGY AND POLITICS**

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WHY WE REPUBLISH THIS TEXT

The rev. Stephen Sizer has done an immense service to mankind, and to the peoples of the Middle East in particular, in analyzing what is called, in the US, "Christian Zionism", a purely American phenomenon, with a direct impact on the genocide practised in Palestine by the Israeli authorities

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These are resource chapters used in my doctoral research.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Christian Zionism Defined

At its simplest, Christian Zionism has been defined as 'Christian support for Zionism.'¹ In *Der Judenstaat*, published in 1896, Theodor Herzl forcefully articulated the aspirations of Jewish Zionists for their own homeland, although the Zionist dream was largely nurtured and shaped by Christian Zionists long before it was able to inspire widespread Jewish support in the 1940's.²

At the First Zionist Congress which Herzl convened a year later in Basle, the Zionist aspiration was formulated in a call for a, 'publicly secured and legally assured homeland for the Jews in Palestine.'³ At the 27th Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem in 1968, Zionism was defined in terms of five principles:

1) the unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life; 2) the in-gathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland, Eretz Israel; 3) the strengthening of the State of Israel; 4) the preservation of the identity of the Jewish people; and 5) the protection of Jewish rights.⁴

Sharif understands political Zionism to be '...the ideological instrument for mobilizing international support for an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine.' She observes how in 1975, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 3379 (XXX) defining Zionism as, 'a form of racism and racial discrimination.'⁵ It was no longer politically correct to view Zionism as merely another national liberation movement, in this case for Jews. Uri Davis has written probably the most critical book on the realisation of the Zionist goal, entitled, *Israel, an Apartheid State*.⁶ Contemporary Christian Zionism is in part a reaction to this world-wide criticism.

So, for example, in 1967, following the passing of U.N. Resolution 242 in protest at Israel's occupation of the West Bank, and Palestinian Jerusalem, when the entire international community closed their embassy's in Jerusalem, the International Christian Embassy moved to Jerusalem expressly to show solidarity with Israel. They and other Christian Zionists believe that the modern State of Israel, and Zionism in general, are divinely mandated, the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. 'I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.' (Genesis 12:3)⁷ So, Hal Lindsey could assert, 'The center of the entire prophetic forecast is the State of Israel.'⁸

Christian Zionists see themselves as defenders of, and apologists for, the Jewish people, and in particular, the State of Israel. This support involves opposing those deemed to be critical of, or hostile toward Israel.⁹ It is rare therefore to find Christian Zionists who feel a similar solidarity with the Palestinians.

The most well known and influential Christian Zionist organisations include the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ); the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People, also known as The Israel Trust of the Anglican Church within Israel (CMJ or ITAC); Christian Friends of Israel (CFI); Intercrossers For Britain (IFB); Prayer Friends of Israel (PFI); Bridges for Peace (BFP); The American Messianic Fellowship (AMF); The Messianic Jewish Alliance America (MJAA); Jews for Jesus (JFJ); the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary; and the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). These organisations, in varying degrees, and for a variety of reasons, some contradictory, are part of a broad coalition, which is shaping the content of the Christian Zionist agenda today.

Contemporary British Christian leaders such as Derek Prince¹⁰, David Pawson¹¹, Lance Lambert¹², Walter Riggans¹³, along with Americans like Jerry Falwell¹⁴, Pat Robertson¹⁵, Hal Lindsey¹⁶, Mike Evans¹⁷, Charles Dyer¹⁸, John Walvoord¹⁹, Dave Hunt²⁰, and the German, Basilea Schlink²¹, have had considerable influence in popularising an apocalyptic premillennial dispensational eschatology and Zionist vision among Western Christians.

That their teachings warrant the description 'Armageddon Theology'²² is evident from the

provocative titles of many of their most recent publications.²³ The beliefs and practices of the most influential of these organisations and individuals will be examined in depth in later chapters. This introduction attempts to map out the main historical and theological facts that have given shape and definition to the term.

Louis Hamada traces what he sees as the correlation between Jewish and Christian Zionism.

The term Zionism refers to a political Jewish movement for the establishment of a national homeland in Palestine for the Jews that have been dispersed. On the other hand, a Christian Zionist is a person who is more interested in helping God fulfil His prophetic plan through the physical and political Israel, rather than helping Him fulfil His evangelistic plan through the Body of Christ.²⁴

While this definition may be true of agencies such as Bridges for Peace (BFP) and the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem (ICEJ); other organisations such as Jews for Jesus and the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) are committed to both evangelistic witness as well as political restoration. CMJ, founded in 1809 under the name 'The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews' was the first Christian Zionist organisation in Britain. The less accurate description of 'London Jews' Society' (LJS) eventually proved more popular.²⁵ At its inception LJS had a fourfold mission agenda.

1) declaring the Messiahship of Jesus to the Jew first and also to the non-Jew; 2) endeavouring to teach the Church its Jewish roots; 3) encouraging the physical restoration of the Jewish people to Eretz Israel - the Land of Israel; 4) encouraging the Hebrew Christian/Messianic Jewish movement.²⁶

The Rev. Louis Way, who directed the London Jews Society (LJS) from 1809, forcefully articulated Christian Zionist views some ninety years before the World Zionist Congress.²⁷ During the last Century, in response to changing attitudes toward the Jews, LJS modified its name several times, first to 'Church Missions to Jews'²⁸, to 'The Church's Mission to the Jews', then, 'The Church's Ministry Among the Jews'²⁹, and finally in 1995 to 'The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People.'³⁰ Their promotional literature now indicates a more subtle and less explicit three-fold strategy,

The aims of CMJ are:

Evangelism: To be workers with God in his continuing purpose for the Jewish people, both in Israel and world-wide, especially in seeking to lead them to faith in Jesus the Messiah as their only Saviour.

Encouragement: Supporting Jewish believers in Jesus in all possible ways.

Education: To help Christians to appreciate the biblical, Jewish roots of the Christian faith.³¹

This third aspect of their ministry was further modified in 1995 to emphasise not merely the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, but its living abiding relevance now, together with their concern, like that of the Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ), to confront anti-Semitism. The third 'aim' therefore now reads, To help Christians to appreciate the biblical, Jewish roots of the Christian faith and life. The concern to combat anti-Semitism.³²

Whether this justifies defending the State of Israel from criticism for its continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is a controversial and sensitive point within CMJ. Material obtained in 1990 from Emmanuel House in Jaffa indicates that the commitment of some members of CMJ leadership to 'restorationism', that is, the active encouraging of Jewish people to move to Eretz Israel, including the Occupied Territories, appears to remain an important, if not explicit or well publicised aspect of their ministry. Their leaflet explaining the ministry of Emmanuel House states,

ITAC, as the London Jews Society is known today, has always believed, proclaimed and worked towards the return of the Jewish people to Zion. This policy is rooted in a firm belief in the message of biblical prophecy which has accurately foretold these things.³³

In the 1996 Annual Report of CMJ, its General Director, Walter Riggans, explicitly and unequivocally identifies CMJ with restorationism and with support for the State of Israel. ³⁴

Not to be out done by Christian Zionist organisations preoccupied with the fulfilment of biblical prophecy in Israel during what are regarded as the 'End Times', Riggans, under the section of the Report, outlining 'CMJ Issues', and in the context of the primary tasks of evangelism and encouragement, writes,

Within this focus we need to be aware that God's concern is with the Jewish people the world over. In our day there seems to be in some Christian circles a restriction of interest to the State of Israel and to the significance of various events for the unfolding of Biblical prophecies relating to the end times. CMJ has always been at the forefront of teaching about God's restoration of the Jewish people to and in Israel, and we are continually excited by, and watchful of all that is happening. We are humbled by what the Lord is doing among Israeli believers. In other words, our prayerful interest in the State of Israel is as constant and committed as ever.³⁵

Perhaps this is why Walter Riggans defines the term 'Christian Zionist' in an overtly political sense as '...any Christian who supports the Zionist aim of the sovereign State of Israel, its army, government, education etc.; but it can describe a Christian who claims to support the State of Israel for any reason.'³⁶

In a 'Resource Pack' produced in 1996 for group study as well as to answer objections to the work of CMJ, material is included under the bold heading, 'The State of Israel: Why should we support it?'³⁷

Christian Friends of Israel (CFI) likewise insists on the unconditional necessity of 'Standing with Israel' and bringing blessing to her as a nation, though in their case, primarily through prayer and humanitarian projects rather than by evangelism.

We believe the Lord Jesus is both Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world; however, our stand alongside Israel is not conditional upon her acceptance of our belief. The Bible teaches that Israel (people, land, nation) has a Divinely ordained and glorious future, and that God has neither rejected nor replaced His Jewish people.³⁸

Bridges For Peace (BFP), founded in 1976 by Clarence H. Wagner similarly affirm, 'Through programs both in Israel and world-wide, we are giving Christians the opportunity to actively express our biblical responsibility before God to be faithful to Israel and the Jewish community.'³⁹

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) may also be regarded as a Zionist organisation. While prohibiting proselytism of Jews by Christians associated with CCJ, its members, nevertheless, show more concern to defend the actions of the Israeli Government than with the claims of Christ. For example, when Said Aburish's *The Forgotten Faithful* was published in 1993, Beryl Norman wrote an intemperate rebuttal in the *Church Times*, criticising him for being,

'...part of a major campaign now being waged to win over Christians in the West to the Palestinian cause, and ensure that Israel loses Western Christian support.'⁴⁰

When invited to elaborate in correspondence, she did not substantiate these claims, but made further allegations. In response to a request for evidence she claimed that,

'Militant Palestinian groups - PLO, Hamas - are using the churches. It is very easy to identify this - same vocabulary, same phrases, same stories. Our friends in Israel see this at first hand.'⁴¹

AMF International, formerly the American Messianic Fellowship (AMFI), was founded as the Chicago Hebrew Mission in 1887 by William E. Blackstone (1841-1935). Blackstone was a colleague of D. L. Moody and was also deeply influenced by J. N. Darby's brand of premillennial dispensationalism.⁴² He subsequently wrote 'Jesus is Coming' in 1908, which by 1916 had already been translated into 25 languages and is apparently still in print.⁴³

AMFI is, according to its own literature, a 'conservative evangelical ministry committed to seeing

the Lord's purposes fulfilled by building bridges of understanding between Christian and Jewish Communities'.⁴⁴ Their Articles of Belief defines those 'purposes' to include a scenario of the future which is pre-tribulational, premillennial dispensationalism.

We believe that the blessed hope is the Lord Jesus' personal, imminent return to rapture the Church and then introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land and the earth will then be full of the knowledge of the Lord.⁴⁵

The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) claims to be the largest association of Messianic Jewish believers in the world, founded in 1915, with affiliations in 15 countries, 250 Messianic Synagogues, and 350,000 Messianic Jews world-wide. They insist they are 'the leading representative organisation for American Jews who believe in Messiah Yeshua' ⁴⁶ Their simple statement of belief is made up of four short paragraphs. The fourth states,

We believe in G-d's eternal covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We, therefore, stand with and support the Jewish people and the State of Israel and hold fast to the Biblical heritage of our forefathers.⁴⁷

MJAA provides a wide range of ministries designed to 'service the needs of the Jewish revival.' These include the MESSIAH Conference, 'The world's largest annual international conference on Messianic Judaism' held each summer with over 2,000 participants, the Young Messianic Jewish Alliance (YMJA); the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (IAMCS); the Russia Committee; the International Relations Committee (IRC) which publishes the 'prestigious' quarterly, the Messianic World Report; and the Messianic Jewish Israel Fund (MJIF) which helps meet the financial needs of Messianic Jews in Israel and with lobbying for 'the right for Messianic Jews to emigrate to Israel as Jews.'⁴⁸ In 1992 a MJAA position paper was published in the Israeli newspaper HaAretz entitled, 'Messianic Jews Say: "The Land Belongs to Israel"'⁴⁹ In it, MJAA expressed their conviction that Eretz Israel has been given to the Jews by God and that they will 'repossess the regions of Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan Heights.'⁵⁰

Jews for Jesus (JFJ) was founded in 1973 by Moishe Rosen⁵¹ to 'proclaim the message of Messiah to all people.' They claim to be,

'...the largest and best-known of the non-denominational Jewish evangelistic agencies with missionaries in ten countries'.

In addition to their 15 branches and 60 chapters, JFJ sends out evangelistic teams such as the emotively named 'Liberated Wailing Wall.'⁵² Their Doctrinal Statement asserts belief in the continuing existence of two parallel but separate covenants for Israel and the church.

We believe Israel exists as a covenant people through whom God continues to accomplish His purposes and that the Church is an elect people in accordance with the New Covenant, comprising both Jews and Gentiles who acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and Redeemer.⁵³

Their statement regarding the Second Advent is somewhat more enigmatic. 'We believe that Jesus the Messiah will return personally in order to consummate the prophesied purposes concerning his Kingdom.'⁵⁴ JFJ does not spell out what those 'prophesied purposes' are. It is true that JFJ have generally been critical of the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, for taking a political position and for refusing to engage in Jewish proselytism. However in a JFJ Publications Page review of a book by David Larsen,⁵⁵ Leslie Flynn summarizes and affirms the author's treaties that,

"The Jews are God's timepiece," the author says. They are the key to history and prophecy...God's unconditional covenant with Abraham, which includes the promise of the land, a seed to rule over the land and the blessing his offspring will be to all humankind...the regathering of Israel and her central place among the nations, seem to go far beyond anything that Israel has yet experienced historically...that are to be literally fulfilled in the personal reign of Christ on earth.⁵⁶

Of all the Christian Zionist organisations, the International Christian Embassy (ICEJ) is probably the most influential and controversial. ICEJ was founded in 1980, specifically in Jerusalem, as an attempt by Zionist Christians to reverse the effect of the decision by the international community to vacate their embassies in Jerusalem protesting Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank. Ironically ICEJ is housed in the confiscated home once belonging to the family of Dr Edward Said. Their promotional literature states,

When the vision of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was first given it was expressed in the following concerns; to care for the Jewish people, especially for the new-born State of Israel which includes standing up for the Jews when they are attacked or discriminated against, and for Israel to live in peace and security....to care that the world wide body of Christ will be rightly related to Israel in comfort, love and prayer for her well-being, to care for the nations whose destinies will be increasingly linked to the way in which they relate to Israel, the care and preparation for the coming of the Lord.⁵⁷

At the Third International Christian Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem 25-29 February, 1996 under the auspices of ICEJ, some 1,500 delegates from over 40 countries unanimously affirmed a proclamation and affirmation of Christian Zionism including the following beliefs,

2. God the Father, Almighty, chose the ancient nation and people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to reveal His plan of redemption for the world. They remain elect of God, and without the Jewish nation His redemptive purposes for the world will not be completed.

6. The modern Ingathering of the Jewish People to Eretz Israel and the rebirth of the nation of Israel are in fulfilment of biblical prophecies, as written in both Old and New Testaments.

7. Christian believers are instructed by Scripture to acknowledge the Hebraic roots of their faith and to actively assist and participate in the plan of God for the ingathering of the Jewish People and the restoration of the nation of Israel in our day.

8. The Lord in His zealous love for Israel and the Jewish People blesses and curses peoples and judges nations based upon their treatment of the Chosen People of Israel.

10. According to God's distribution of nations, the Land of Israel has been given to the Jewish People by God as an everlasting possession by an eternal covenant. The Jewish People have the absolute right to possess and dwell in the Land, including Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan.⁵⁸

In an amplification of those resolutions, the religio-political agenda of ICEJ is made quite explicit.

Further, we are persuaded by the clear unction of our God to express the sense of this Congress on the following concerns before us this day,

1. Because of the sovereign purposes of God for the City, Jerusalem must remain undivided, under Israeli sovereignty, open to all peoples, the capital of Israel only, and all nations should so concur and place their embassies here.

2. As a faith bound to love and forgiveness we are appreciative of the attempts by the Government of Israel to work tirelessly for peace. However, the truths of God are sovereign and it is written that the Land which He promised to His People is not to be partitioned... It would be further error for the nations to recognise a Palestinian state in any part of Eretz Israel.

3. To the extent the Palestinian Covenant or any successor instrument calls for the elimination of Israel or denies the right of Israel to exist within secure borders in Eretz Israel, it should be abolished.

4. The Golan is part of biblical Israel and is a vital strategic asset necessary for the security and defence of the entire country.

C. The Islamic claim to Jerusalem, including its exclusive claim to the Temple Mount, is in direct contradiction to the clear biblical and historical significance of the city and its holiest site, and this claim is of later religio-political origin rather than arising from any Qur'anic text or early Muslim tradition.

7. While Gentile believers have been grafted into that household of faith which is of Abraham (the

commonwealth of Israel), replacement theology within the Christian faith, which does not recognise the ongoing biblical purposes for Israel and the Jewish People, is doctrinal error.

8. Regarding Aliyah, we remain concerned for the fate of imperilled Jewish People in diverse places, and seek to encourage and assist in the continuing process of Return of the Exiles to Eretz Israel. To this end we commit to work with Israel and to encourage the Diaspora to fulfil the vision and goal of gathering to Israel the greater majority of all Jewish People from throughout the world.⁵⁹

It is significant that many of the staff working for the International Christian Embassy apparently worship at the Anglican, Christ Church, near the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem, which, coincidentally, is the headquarters of the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) in Israel. Ray Lockhart, the vicar of Christ Church, when invited to comment on the work of ICEJ, refused to express any criticism of it.⁶⁰

In what is a useful summary, Walter Riggans, General Director of CMJ, claims Christian Zionists generally agree on three cardinal beliefs, allowing for a wide diversity of views as to their theological significance eschatologically, as well as their implications for Christian practice.

The return of Jews to the land in the last 100 years and the establishment of the State of Israel should be (or can be) interpreted as a fulfilment of Old Testament promises and prophecies concerning the land, or at the very least as signs of God's continuing mercy and faithfulness to the Jewish people. 'For many Christians today the greatest visible sign of God's faithfulness is the survival of the Jewish people. God has preserved them, cared for them, directed them, against all the odds. And so, in a sense, the greatest sign of all is the State of Israel, and Jewish sovereignty over Eretz Israel; such is a classic Christian Zionist position....'

The establishment of the State of Israel has special theological significance because of what it means for the Jews, or because of what it means in the sequence of events leading up to the turning of the Jewish people to their Messiah and the second coming of Christ.

Christians should not only support the idea of a Jewish state, but (at least in general terms) support its policies. '...in the most modest of ways I would suggest that Christians as Christians must give support in principle to the State of Israel as a sign of God's mercy and faithfulness, and as a biblical mark that God is very much at work in the world...' ⁶¹

In qualifying this definition, Colin Chapman argues that an important distinction needs to be made between 'Christian Zionism' and 'Biblical Zionism'. He recognises that Biblical Zionism could accept the existence of the State of Israel, and be willing to work and pray for its security on political or humanitarian grounds without needing to do so on theological grounds.

Christian Zionism, is however, rooted, in varying degrees, in the theological conviction that the Bible mandates a restoration of the Davidic kingdom as the focus of God's rule on earth. In broad terms therefore they see in contemporary events, the hand of God protecting his chosen people, the Jews. The founding of the State of Israel in 1948 is regarded as the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. Eretz Israel, not always well defined geographically, is nevertheless seen as theirs by unconditional divine right given under the Abrahamic covenant. Jerusalem is inevitably seen as the eternal and undivided capital of the Jewish State.⁶²

Christian Zionism has, in general terms, arisen from within Evangelicalism, and Fundamentalism in particular. Within that narrower circle, Christian Zionism is invariably associated with, although not exclusively, a dispensational reading of Biblical history and a premillennial eschatology. It would be useful therefore to amplify the meaning of these four theological terms.

1.1 Evangelicalism

The term 'Evangelicalism' denotes a broad spectrum of theological opinion arising out of the Reformation, Puritanism and Revivalism. Tertullian was one of the first to use the term around 200

AD. in his defence of biblical truth against Marcion. Martin Luther used the term to describe John Hus, but it was Thomas More who introduced the word to the English language. In a 'vitriolic attack' on William Tyndale in 1532, More referred to those 'evangelicalles'.⁶³ The distinctive doctrines of Evangelicalism include a belief in the supreme authority of scripture over tradition (*sola Scriptura*); in the literal interpretation of scripture; adherence to the historic creeds; the need for a personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and holiness; and a belief in the imminent, visible and personal return of Jesus Christ. Differences exist between 'open' and 'conservative' evangelicals as to the relative importance of such doctrines as infallibility and inerrancy. Evangelicalism is represented, and generally accepted, within all the main Protestant denominations and in Britain an increasing number of senior ecclesiastical posts are now held by evangelicals including Archbishop George Carey.⁶⁴

Evangelicalism has become a popular subject for analysis, not least among proponents. 'The overwhelming majority of them present the picture of a Christian movement which is sweeping all before it, triumphing over both liberalism and ritualism.'⁶⁵

1.2 Fundamentalism

Within Western evangelicalism there are many strands defined by adherents as much as by opponents. These include those of fundamentalist, conservative, open and liberal. This spectrum has sometimes been simplified into the three categories of right, centre and left.⁶⁶ The fastest growing and most influential of these is fundamentalism, also known in the United States as the 'Evangelical Right'. Fundamentalism draws its support primarily from the Baptist, Pentecostal and Independent Bible churches associated with individuals such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Hal Lindsey and Mike Evans.⁶⁷

The term 'fundamentalist' derives from a series of tracts entitled 'The Fundamentals' published from 1910 onwards in an attempt by American conservative evangelicals to defend the basis of historic Christianity and repudiate what they saw as 'modernism' and theological liberalism. The term 'fundamentalism' was first used by Curtis Lee Laws, the editor of the Baptist Watchman Examiner, in 1918 to describe the movement within Baptist circles dedicated to such a position.⁶⁸

Much valuable research has already been undertaken into the nature of Christian fundamentalism,⁶⁹ including the correlation between evangelical fundamentalism and anti-Semitism.⁷⁰

Christian fundamentalism is the most active, exclusive, intolerant, and conservative wing of evangelicalism, both theologically and politically.⁷¹ The popularity of what is also known as the New Christian Right (NCR) is, in part, due to its near monopoly of Christian satellite, television and radio stations and programmes; the espousal, within its charismatic wing, of a success oriented 'health and wealth' gospel; and its propensity to provide simplistic, infallible, biblical panaceas for the world's problems.⁷²

The sympathies of the NCR for Israel and Zionism are compounded by an implacable antagonism toward communism and Islam. Donald Bridge, for instance, in describing the significance of Jerusalem to Jews, Christians and Moslems, claims,

Jews world-wide mark their calendars with events that took place here. Muslims world-wide are eager to engage in holy wars here... Arab feeling soon runs high here, and is expressed in anti-Christian and anti-Jewish frenzy. Mullahs shouting over the minarets' loudspeakers can turn a congregation into a rampaging mob within minutes.⁷³

In the words of Gerald Butt, fundamentalism essentially, 'offers an outlet for frustrated ambitions.'⁷⁴ Similarly, Michael Sward has compared some aspects of fundamentalism in its style to the culture of facism.⁷⁵ Martin Marty succinctly describes fundamentalists as 'angry evangelicals.'⁷⁶

Fundamentalist Christian Zionists are often outspoken and tend to advocate the annexation of the entire West Bank by Israel; support the lobby for other nations to return their embassies to Jerusalem as the undivided and eternal capital of the Jews; are committed to the building of the Third Jewish Temple and the re-institution of the priesthood and temple sacrifices as a precursor to the return of the Messiah.⁷⁷ They have also helped facilitate the return or 'restoration' of Jews from around

the world to Israel, especially those living in Russia and Eastern Europe, and deliberately encouraged their re-settlement in the Occupied Territories.⁷⁸

There is a large and growing number of books written by evangelical and fundamentalist Christian Zionists presenting a largely pro-Israel yet apocalyptic scenario.⁷⁹ Within contemporary Christian fundamentalism the most influential theological interpretation of history is known as premillennial dispensationalism.

1.3 Premillennialism

Traditionally there have been three mutually exclusive interpretations of the references to a millennial reign of Christ in Revelation 20 depending on whether it is understood literally or figuratively. These are amillennial, postmillennial, and premillennial.⁸⁰ Premillennialists hold to the belief that Christ will return prior to the millennium. Premillennialists are themselves divided on the question as to when the so called 'rapture' will occur.⁸¹ Four distinct, mutually exclusive, positions have and continue to be held, the cause of some rather acrimonious disagreement within premillennialist circles.

1.3.1 Pre-Tribulationists

J. N. Darby⁸² influenced by Edward Irving⁸³ and followed by C. I. Scofield⁸⁴ and the early dispensationalists such as Lewis S. Chafer⁸⁵ and Charles Ryrie⁸⁶ held to this position. Ryrie describes pre-tribulationism as 'normative dispensational eschatology' and 'a regular feature of classic dispensational premillennialism'.⁸⁷ Gerstner acknowledges that virtually all Dispensationalists are also Pre-tribulationists.⁸⁸

Pre-tribulationist premillennialists believe that Jesus Christ will return at any moment to secretly 'rapture' the church before the Tribulation begins on earth. After seven years of tribulation, Christ will return with His saints to overcome the Antichrist and his forces and establish God's millennial Jewish kingdom on earth. One popular exponent of this position is Tim LaHaye.

Are you ready for Christ's return? Do you believe that at any instant you could find yourself hurtling through the skies to meet your Lord face to face? Are you confident that God will spare you and your loved ones the horrifying judgment of the Tribulation... Are you living your life as if each moment could be your last on earth?⁸⁹

Lindsey is even more colourful in his depiction of what events on earth will be like,

There I was driving down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went crazy... cars going in all directions... and not one of them had a driver. I mean it was wild. I think we've got an invasion from outer space.⁹⁰

At the late 19th Century Niagara Prophetic Conferences attended by men like D. L. Moody and C. I. Scofield, alternative views of the chronology of the rapture, already present in the increasingly sectarian Brethren circles, emerged there also and caused considerable internal division within dispensational circles. This came to be known as the 'Rapture-Rupture' ⁹¹

1.3.2 Mid-Tribulationists

Mid-tribulationists assert instead that Christians will experience the first half of the Tribulation, that is three and a half years of persecution, and then at the midpoint of the Tribulation they will be raptured. Those who argue for such a position do so on the basis of Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 12:4 which include the phrase "time, times and half a time." This is taken to mean a period of three and a half years of tribulation, before the rapture.⁹²

1.3.3 Post-Tribulationists

Authors such as J. Barton Payne, George Ladd and R. H. Gundry are classical premillennialists and not dispensationalists. They believe the church will experience seven years of tribulation before Christ returns.⁹³ Unlike Pretribulationists, they regard the references to the suffering of the 'saints' in Revelation as referring to Christians and not Jews who have come to believe in Messiah after the church has been raptured.⁹⁴

1.3.4 Pre-Wrath Tribulational

Marvin J. Rosenthal has literally incurred the 'wrath' of some pre-tribulationists⁹⁵ because of his controversial book, 'The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church'⁹⁶. In this Rosenthal insists, based on his ultra-literalist hermeneutic, that the seven year period during which the Antichrist will supposedly arise, also known as the seventieth week of Daniel 9:24-27, must be separated into three not two.

The Bible teaches that there are three major sections to the seventieth week: the beginning of sorrows (Matt. 24:8), the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21), and the Day of the Lord (Matt. 24:30-31)⁹⁷

Rosenthal therefore argues the church will endure the Tribulation, but escape the wrath of the Day of the Lord immediately prior to Christ's return. Like most other premillennial dispensationalists however, he insists,

The Bible teaches that at Christ's return, a surviving remnant of Jews will be regathered to Israel and saved. God's covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be literally fulfilled (Matt. 24:31; Rom. 11:25-26).⁹⁸

Rosenthal's views are influential in so far as he has been the executive director of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, and editor of the journal, Israel, My Glory, for sixteen years. He is now the executive director of Zion's Hope, an international mission agency and editor of Zion's Fire, an evangelical magazine.⁹⁹

1.4 Dispensationalism

John Nelson Darby is regarded as the father of dispensationalism¹⁰⁰, although William Kelly Edward Irving played no small part in the restoration of premillennial speculations out of which Darby's dispensationalism arose.¹⁰¹ It was C. I. Scofield, however, that brought Darby's eccentric theology into mainstream evangelicalism.

The publication of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909 by the Oxford University Press was something of a innovative literary coup for the movement, since for the first time, overtly dispensationalist notes were added to the pages of the biblical text. Others before Darby and Scofield had used the term 'dispensation' to describe the progressive revelation of God's purposes in biblical history. What distinguished Darby's innovative scheme was the conviction that these dispensations were irreversible and progressive.¹⁰² While such a dispensational chronology of events was largely unknown prior to the teaching of Darby and Scofield¹⁰³, the Scofield Reference Bible became the leading bible used by American Evangelicals and Fundamentalists for the next sixty years.¹⁰⁴

The 'proof text' of dispensationalism is the Authorised translation of 2 Timothy 2:15, in which the Apostle Paul calls upon Timothy to, '... rightly divide the word of truth.' Scofield took this as the title for his first book which is a defence of this novel way of 'dividing' Scripture into discrete dispensations.¹⁰⁵

Following Darby and Scofield, dispensationalists claim to find in Scripture evidence of seven distinct dispensations¹⁰⁶ during which mankind has been tested in respect of specific revelation as to the will of God. In each, mankind, including in the sixth dispensation, the church, has failed. These dispensations began with Creation and will end, it is claimed, in an exclusive Jewish kingdom on earth. Ryrie offers the clearest outline of dispensationalism.¹⁰⁷

The Dispensations

Name

Scripture

Responsibilities

Judgment(s)

Innocency

Genesis 1:3-3:6

Keep Garden...

Curses...

Conscience

Genesis 3:7-8:14

Do Good

Flood

Civil Government

Genesis 8:15-11:9

Fill earth...

Forced scattering..

Patriarchal Rule

Genesis 11:10-Exodus 18:27

Stay in Promised Land

Egyptian bondage..

Mosaic Law

Exodus 19:1 - John 14:30

Keep the Law...

Captivities

Grace

Acts 2:1- Revelation 19:21

Believe in Christ...

Death...

Millennium

Revelation 20:1-15

Believe & Obey...

Death...

These dispensations are seen by proponents as 'providing us with a chronological map to guide us'¹⁰⁸, leading the more fundamentalist to insist that the world is about to end.¹⁰⁹ Gerstner concedes that the church has always understood biblical revelation to be progressive. However,

Unlike traditional interpreters, dispensationalists "divide" these sections sharply such that they virtually conflict with one another rather than enfold from one another... sharply divided from one another rather than integrated with one another. They conflict rather than harmonize. Even the word divide is a sharper term than Paul's original requires but the dispensationalists have made it sharper still.¹¹⁰

Dispensationalism the source of the most virulent and pervasive form of Christian Zionism today because it is based on an arbitrary division of the Bible into dispensations. Darby and Scofield taught, as a consequence, that God has two separate but parallel means of working, one through the church, the other through Israel, the former being a parenthesis to the later.¹¹¹ Thus there is, and always will remain, a distinction, 'between Israel, the Gentiles and the Church.'¹¹² It was Darby who first insisted that, 'The Jewish nation is never to enter the Church.'¹¹³ Likewise Scofield elaborated,

Comparing then, what is said in Scripture concerning Israel and the Church, we find that in origin, calling, promise, worship, principles of conduct and future destiny all is contrast.¹¹⁴

In its classical form, Charles Ryrie insists the sine qua non of Dispensationalism to be:

1. A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the Church distinct...
2. This distinction between Israel and the church is born out of a system of hermeneutics that is usually called literal interpretation...

3. A third aspect... concerns the underlying purpose of God in the world... namely, the glory of God... To the normative dispensationalist, the soteriological, or saving, program of God is not the only program but one of the means God is using in the total program of glorifying Himself.¹¹⁵

Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, elaborates further on this dichotomy between Israel and the church,

The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved which is Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved, which is Christianity.¹¹⁶

For Chafer, 'Israel is an eternal nation, heir to an eternal land, with an eternal kingdom, on which David rules from an eternal throne'¹¹⁷ so that in eternity, '...never the twain, Israel and church, shall meet.'¹¹⁸ Ryrie even concedes the conclusion of his critic Daniel Fuller in stating that the,

...basic promise of Dispensationalism is two purposes of God expressed in the formation of two peoples who maintain their distinction throughout eternity.¹¹⁹

Certain implications follow the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant. For dispensationalists, logically, Israel can do no wrong.

Even though Israel should fall into sin, and should seem no longer to be a recipient of God's blessing, it would still be true that God has promised that those who bring blessing to His earthly people will themselves be blessed, while those who curse His earthly people will themselves suffer the results of God's displeasure. All history is full of examples of this fact... The fate of the nations that have injured Israel is a terrible warning that God never goes back on His promises. From Haman to Hitler, history shows how dangerous it is to hate His chosen people.¹²⁰

Hal Lindsey goes as far as to accuse those who refuse to accept dispensationalism of encouraging anti-Semitism for denying a role for the State of Israel in God's future purposes, '...the same error that founded the legacy of contempt for the Jews and ultimately led to the Holocaust of Nazi Germany.'¹²¹

Not surprisingly, dispensationalists refute the supposition inherent in all other non-dispensational theologies, and especially reformed covenantalism, that the ethical law of the Pentateuch applies as much now as then, and that God has one purpose for all people, namely their salvation through Jesus Christ, bringing both Jews and Gentiles into one people, the church, and that in and through Him the earthly will be transformed into the heavenly. Chafer, in particular, criticises non-dispensational theology for giving a spiritual interpretation to what he sees as earthly realities.¹²²

This is probably the most basic theological test of whether or not a person is a dispensationalist, and it is undoubtedly the most practical and conclusive. The one who fails to distinguish Israel and the church consistently will inevitably not hold to dispensational distinctions; and one who does will.¹²³

Dispensationalism is based on a hermeneutic in which all Scripture, and especially the prophetic, must always be interpreted literally. Darby's hermeneutic might be summed up in this sentence in which he admitted, 'I prefer quoting many passages than enlarging upon them.'¹²⁴ Scofield, who popularised and synthesised Darby's theology, taught,

Not one instance exists of a 'spiritual' or figurative fulfilment of prophecy... Jerusalem is always Jerusalem, Israel is always Israel, Zion is always Zion... Prophecies may never be spiritualised, but are always literal.¹²⁵

Ryrie similarly asserts,

To be sure, literal/historical/grammatical interpretation is not the sole possession or practice of dispensationalists, but the consistent use of it in all areas of biblical interpretation is.¹²⁶

Dwight Pentecost goes as far as to insist that,

Scripture is unintelligible until one can distinguish clearly between God's program for his earthly people Israel and that for the Church.¹²⁷

One is left in no doubt that a literalist interpretation is the only consistent one for evangelicals. Perhaps wondering how the universal church coped before 1830, Gerstner observes,

...that without pretribulational, premillennial Dispensationalism, the Scripture is "unintelligible"... Even if a person were a traditional premillennialist, without this other element by means of which Israel is distinguished from the church, Scripture would remain a mystery and confusion would reign.¹²⁸

James Bear makes this assessment of dispensational hermeneutics.

[They] ...are content to reiterate the catch-phrases which set forth their distinctive principles, supporting them by reference to Bible passages of which they do not stop to show the validity. They usually do not attempt in their books to follow out their principles to their logical conclusions, and one often wonders if many who call themselves 'Dispensationalist' have ever actually faced the conclusion which must flow from the principles which they so confidently teach.¹²⁹

Nevertheless based on such an interpretative principle, dispensationalists hold that the promises made to Abraham and through him to Israel, although postponed during the church age, were nevertheless eternal and unconditional and therefore await future fulfilment since they have never yet been literally fulfilled in their entirety. So, for example, it is an article of normative dispensational belief that all Israel will be literally saved; that the boundaries of the land promised to Abraham and his descendants will be literally instituted; and that Jesus Christ will return to a literal and theocratic Jewish kingdom centred on Jerusalem. In such a scheme the church on earth is relegated to the status of a parenthesis¹³⁰, '...a sort of footnote or sidetrack in contrast to God's main mission to save ethnic, national Israel.'¹³¹

It is for this reason many Christian Zionists are happy to disavow evangelism among Jews believing 'all Israel will be saved' when or after Christ returns,¹³² and why the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, proudly welcomes the Israeli Prime Minister to speak at their annual gatherings. It also explains why dispensationalists such as John Walvoord, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson have in the past been happy to attend joint worship services with Jewish Rabbi's since both Jews and Christians are seen as 'descendants of Abraham' and 'chosen under the terms of [God's] covenants.'¹³³

Sandeen observes that dispensationalism has, 'a frozen biblical text in which every word was supported by the same weight of divine authority.'¹³⁴ Bass goes further insisting that,

No part of historic Christian doctrine supports this radical distinction between church and kingdom. To be sure they are not identical; but dispensationalism has added the idea that the kingdom was to be a restoration of Israel, not a consummation of the church.¹³⁵

In the light of this principle, it is legitimate to ask whether dispensationalism is not orientated more from the Abrahamic Covenant than from the Cross. Is not its focus centred more on the Jewish kingdom than on the Body of Christ? Does it not interpret the New Testament in the light of Old Testament prophecies, instead of interpreting those prophecies in the light of the more complete revelation of the New Testament?¹³⁶

Notwithstanding such serious criticisms, dispensationalism increasingly came to replace the simpler form of historic premillennialism.¹³⁷ Writing in 1958, Norman Kraus could observe how,

...the dispensationalists had won the day so completely that for the next fifty years friend and foe alike largely identified dispensationalism with premillennialism.¹³⁸

Today, premillennial dispensationalism still dominates American evangelicalism and fundamentalism. R. C. Sproul concedes that dispensationalism is now '...a theological system that in all probability is the majority report among current American evangelicals.'¹³⁹ Gerstner adds,

Most leading evangelists have been teachers or followers of Dispensationalism. Earlier in this century, the radio broadcasts of dispensationalists such as D. G. Barnhouse, Charles E. Fuller, and M. R. DeHaan attracted a wide audience. Today, most of the noted 'electronic' evangelists, including Rex

Humbard, Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, James Robison, and Billy Graham are dispensational.¹⁴⁰

Leading dispensationalists who are also overtly Zionist include Charles Ryrie¹⁴¹, Dwight Pentecost¹⁴², John Walvoord¹⁴³, Eric Sauer¹⁴⁴, Charles Dyer¹⁴⁵ and Hal Lindsey.¹⁴⁶ Christian Zionism, although latent within 19th Century dispensationalism, has grown in popularity within evangelical circles, particularly in America and especially since 1967, coinciding with the Arab-Israel Six Day War and a few years later in 1970 with the publication of Hal Lindsey's 'The Late Great Planet Earth.'¹⁴⁷

Tracing the development of Christian Zionism from the mid-19th and early 20th Century, the premillennial dispensationalist preoccupation with a distinctly Jewish millennium preceded by a pre-tribulation rapture of the church and an end-time gathering of the remnant of Israel, came to replace the simpler form of historic premillennialism.¹⁴⁸

...the dispensationalists had won the day so completely that for the next fifty years friend and foe alike largely identified dispensationalism with premillennialism.¹⁴⁹

There has also been some constructive dialogue between contemporary dispensationalists and reformed covenantal theologians on the relationship of the church to Israel, although primarily still as a theoretical and academic, theological question.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, a new generation of younger dispensationalists among the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary have attempted to redefine their movement as 'progressive dispensationalism'.¹⁵¹ They distance themselves from what they regard as the 'naïveté' of the founder's vision, ¹⁵²distinguishing the traditional dispensationalism of Lewis Sperry Chafer and Charles Ryrie¹⁵³ from 'Scofieldism',¹⁵⁴ as well as from 'the popular 'apocalypticism' of Lindseyism'.¹⁵⁵ They regard themselves as 'less land centred' and less 'future centred'.¹⁵⁶

Ryrie is sceptical, unwilling to concede to such revisionism. He prefers to describe the position of theologians such as Blaising and Bock as 'neo-dispensationalist' or 'covenant dispensationalist', for holding, for instance, to a 'slippery' hermeneutic.¹⁵⁷ Ryrie similarly insists on distinguishing normative dispensationalism from 'Ultradispensationalism'. This is rooted in the teaching of Ethelbert W. Bullinger (1837-1913) and his successor Charles H. Welch, who, according to Ryrie, have merely carried dispensationalism to its 'logical extremes'. Ultradispensationalists hold for instance, that the church did not begin at Pentecost but in Acts 28 when Israel was set aside; the Great Commission of Matthew and Mark is Jewish and therefore not for the church; the Gospels and Acts describe the dispensation of the Law; only the Pauline prison epistles, that is Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, relate to the church Age; water baptism is not for the church Age; and Israel, not the church, is the Bride of Christ.¹⁵⁸ Their teachings are perpetuated today by the Berean Bible Society, Berean Expositor, Berean Publishing Trust¹⁵⁹ and Grace Mission.

Despite these attempts to redefine and reshape the dispensationalism of Darby and Scofield, many remain unconvinced.¹⁶⁰ As an outsider, James Barr insists in all its variations, 'Dispensationalism is a totally fundamentalist scheme.'¹⁶¹

Following Darby and Scofield's literalistic hermeneutic and rigid distinction between Israel and the church, most contemporary dispensationalists regard the founding of the State of Israel as evidence of divine intervention, that the Jews remain God's 'chosen people'; having a divine right to the Middle East in perpetuity. Crucial to the dispensationalist reading of biblical prophecy is the conviction that the period of tribulation is imminent along with the secret rapture of the church and the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount. This will signal the return of the Lord to restore the Kingdom to Israel centred on Jerusalem. This pivotal event is also seen as the trigger for the start of the war of Armageddon in which large numbers of Jews will suffer and die.¹⁶²

Clearly such views, whether promulgated by academics from respectable Christian theological institutions like Dallas Theological Seminary and the Moody Bible Institute, or by Jewish fanatics such as Baruch Ben-Yosef and the Temple Mount Yeshiva,¹⁶³ the consequences could be devastating as these fundamentalists have considerable political influence seeking the endorsement of their divinely ordained and predetermined apocalyptic visions of the future. Karen Armstrong traces the pervading legacy of the Crusades on the contemporary Middle East, claiming Christian Zionists, 'have returned to a classical and extreme religious crusading.'¹⁶⁴

Ominously, Charles Colson, the former senior aide to president Richard Nixon, claimed in 1988 that the United States Government had contingency plans for a scenario in which Jewish fanatics would capture the Temple Mount, destroy the Dome of the Rock and rebuild the Jewish Temple,

caught live by American Christian television channels based in Jerusalem. Based on State records, Colson speculated that if Israeli military forces refused to intervene to maintain the existing status quo, the United States would be forced to do so.¹⁶⁵

1.5 Reasons for this research

Kenneth Leech offers this critical assessment of Christian fundamentalism and also some grounds for its evaluation.

Biblical fundamentalism has normally been accompanied by manifestations of bigotry, intolerance and violence... Fundamentalism of this kind is a serious danger to Christian spirituality as well as to the health of any community in which it is present. It is a pathological growth upon the Christian movement and calls for very serious and thoughtful responses.¹⁶⁶

The Palestinian Christian community has, especially since 1948, suffered isolation, discrimination and persecution in a way that some describe as a form of apartheid or 'ethnic cleansing'. They are presently caught between three forms of religious fundamentalism, a Moslem fundamentalism which regards them as traitors to the Arab cause; a Jewish fundamentalism which perceives them as a 'fifth column' and impediment to the realisation of a 'Greater Israel'; and a Christian fundamentalism which is infatuated with Zionism and is, in the words of Don Wagner, 'Anxious for Armageddon,'¹⁶⁷ unable to comprehend why Christian Palestinians do not support the State of Israel against the perceived threat of Islam.

They have experienced as a people, how,

"Fundamentalism represents a narrowing of vision, a closing of doors, a diminishing of human beings, and a backward force in human history..."¹⁶⁸

The plight of the Palestinian church is made worse by the fact that they are ignored by the majority of Christian pilgrims and tourists, of all traditions, who visit the Holy Land primarily to see the sites associated with the Bible. The author's previous research has shown that their itineraries tend to follow a predictable pattern determined more by the strategies of the Israeli Government Ministry of Tourism than the needs of the indigenous Christian communities for contact and fellowship.¹⁶⁹

As a consequence, a significant number of Palestinians continue to leave their homeland out of desperation, fear and intimidation. The very real danger is the creation of what Archbishop George Carey once described as 'an empty Christian Disney World.' At this critical time there is a newly emerging and distinctive Palestinian theology, distinct from other forms of Liberation Theology, which is offering an alternative, indeed a contrary reading of the Scriptures to that of Christian Zionism. It is reflected in the writings of Naim Ateek, Audeh Rantisi, Riah Abu El-Assal, Elias Chacour and others.¹⁷⁰

While evangelicalism and Christian fundamentalism, in particular, have attracted a considerable amount of attention in academic circles,¹⁷¹ their influence upon the rise of Christian Zionism appears to have escaped serious consideration apart from a few notable exceptions.¹⁷² Indeed Marsden concedes that,

Even most of those neo-evangelicals who abandoned the details of dispensationalism still retained a firm belief in Israel's God-ordained role. This belief is immensely popular in America, though rarely mentioned in proportion to its influence.¹⁷³

In the light of an extensive survey of published literature there appears to have been little research so far into the historical origins, theological basis and political ramifications of contemporary Christian Zionism nor an assessment of its impact on the indigenous Christian community of Israel/Palestine. Regina Sharif, for example, explores the influence of the Reformation, Puritanism and Millennialism on the rise of Zionism, although she concentrates more on political Zionism and the developments prior to 1945.¹⁷⁴

The traditional terms 'Gentile' or 'Christian' Zionism are misleading since they now suggest a Christian enthusiasm for Zionism motivated essentially by Biblical or theological reasoning. But it is the

political motivations of non-Jewish protagonists of Zionism which have above all today come to make up an integral part of the non-Jewish Zionist matrix... It is precisely this unique phenomenon on non-Jewish Zionism that we propose to analyse here.¹⁷⁵

It is the conviction of this author that the influence of Christians upon Zionism has been consistently underestimated and is much more pervasive and influential than has previously been thought. It is for this reason that this research was initiated. The aims are threefold:

1. To assess the main historical, theological and political factors in the rise of contemporary Christian Zionism.
2. To examine and classify discrete types of contemporary Christian Zionism distinguished on the basis of their historical roots, theological perspective, ecclesiastical loyalties and political ramifications, in particular, with regard to the indigenous church of Israel/Palestine.
3. Specifically to discover how Christian Zionist organisations justify biblically and theologically their support for the State of Israel, as demonstrated in their views as to Israel's legitimate international borders; justification of Israel's continued illegal occupation of the West Bank; claim to Jerusalem as their eternal undivided city (the status and extent of Jerusalem); aspirations regarding the Temple Mount (hopes for the rebuilding of the Third Temple); and their attitude toward the continued denial of Palestinian aspirations to autonomy, self determination and statehood.

The theological presuppositions upon which this research is based are reflected in the following sentiment,

I hold to the representative view of Israel's future, neither anti-semitic nor zionist. First, according to this position, Israel maintains a special place in the plan of God. It is greatly loved by God. Because of its unique role in the conversion of the Gentiles, it is to be evangelised, not exterminated. It is to be called back to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, not excluded from a place in the world. It is to be cherished by the Church, the New Israel, not excoriated as a "Christ-killer": remember, the whole world crucified Christ, for above His head were written in all the major languages of Jew and Gentile: "King of the Jews." But second, the representative or covenantal view is not nationalistic. It does not believe there is magic in being a political unit, a nation. Just because Israel has become nationalized has little or nothing to do with its becoming "covenantalized"; in fact, being politicized has always stood in its way of accepting Christ as Savior and more importantly, Lord.¹⁷⁶

The second chapter will appraise the main historical influences upon the rise of contemporary Christian Zionism.

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Chapter 2

The Historical Origins of Christian Zionism

An analysis of the history of Western Christian attitudes toward the Jews and the Holy Land lies beyond the scope of this study. Others however have done so comprehensively.¹ Furthermore the development of non-Jewish Zionism, and especially its early origins in Puritanism and Millenarianism has also already been ably researched.² This chapter will focus on those specific historical events and theological developments that appear to have been determinative in the rise of contemporary Western Christian Zionism.

Critics as well as proponents of Christian Zionism have traced the movement as far back to the Montanist controversy in the 2nd Century, to the Protestant Reformation, to the Jewish mystical Kabbalist movement and, in particular, the Revivalist, Millennialist and Apocalyptic writings which were popular between the 17th and 19th centuries in Europe and America. Proponents insist, however, that Christian Zionism is mandated in both Old and New Testaments which, they claim, is the source of their motivation.³

It must be acknowledged at the outset that the theological interpretation of historical events, especially those since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, is made exceedingly complex and controversial since two peoples, Jews and Palestinians, each claim the same land, endowing the same locations with different place names and religious significance, while at the same time promoting rival and contradictory histories of the same events. It is consequently hard to remain neutral and not take sides, especially when visiting the Holy Land as tourists or pilgrims. As Glen Bowman points out,

Most tourists, in accord with the Israel Ministry of Tourism, call the land 'Israel', but in United Nations terminology the land is 'Israel and the Occupied Territories'. This variance in nomenclature reflects a deeper issue of identity; Israel and the area it occupied in the 1967 'Six Day War' constitute a deeply, and violently, divided country.⁴

Zionists clearly see the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 as highly significant, signalling the end of 2000 years of exile. Christian Zionists and some Jewish religious groups also equate this as another 'Exodus', a return to the 'Promised Land' in fulfilment of biblical prophecy and Divine blessing. Hal Lindsey is regarded as the 'Father of the Modern-Day Bible Prophecy movement'⁵ and representative of Christian Zionists generally.

Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it... With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2600 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of Jesus Christ's soon coming is before us... It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found... For all those who trust in Jesus Christ, it is a time of electrifying excitement.⁶

Palestinians, however, regard this traumatic experience rather differently. They see it as the violation of their fundamental human rights to exist autonomously in the land of their birth and forefathers. Since 1948 therefore, each community has disputed the grounds under which the other may remain. Examples of these contested and contradictory histories include those of Palumbo,⁷ Antonius⁸ and Said⁹ who give a Palestinian view point, and Zionist's such as Tuchman¹⁰ and Peters¹¹ who offer an alternative perspective. The tension is particularly focused on the mutually exclusive claims over Jerusalem. Little has changed since Kenneth Cragg wrote,

Jerusalem... is still bitterly the symbol of confronting defiance and dismay, its centrality to both parties ensuring that the obdurate loyalties it commands continue to forbid the peace to which its name is dedicated. All visions of a federal constitution, a mutual destiny, a bi-communal possession, have thus far been fruitless. The

city remains the indivisible, inalienable Jewish symbol Zionism cannot allow itself to share, except in the free access of tourism and the tolerance of religious devotion. It is, therefore, a painful sign of irreconcilability - and steadily more so as the years pass.¹²

2.1 Early Christian Attitudes toward the Jews

The post-Apostolic Church Fathers believed that the Jews ceased to be God's 'chosen people' when they rejected Jesus Christ. Instead they understood the church to be the new Israel.

Until the close of the New Testament period, the church claimed to be Israel and wrote to the synagogues of the Dispersion accordingly... After circa A. D. 100 there was less of a tendency for Christians to claim to be Israel and more of a tendency to contrast Christianity and Judaism as separate religions.¹³

...the Church is regarded as the new, authentic Israel which has inherited the promises which God made to the old.¹⁴

This commonplace in Christian literature, aimed at demonstrating that the church had now become the new and the true Israel, may well have antedated the Gospels themselves.¹⁵

This view finds its basis within the New Testament. Speaking to the Jews shortly before his crucifixion, Jesus pronounced,

"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." (Matthew 21:43).

The Apostle Paul, writing what is probably the earliest extant epistle in the New Testament, applies this same promise to a predominantly Gentile church. Confronting the teaching of Jewish legalists Paul offers a radical reinterpretation of the story of Sarah and Hagar.

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother... Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. (Galatians 4:21-31)

This typological hermeneutic of taking Old Testament promises previously made to Israel and applying them to the Church can be traced systematically through the writings of the post-Apostolic Fathers.¹⁶

Clement (c. 90)

Clement taught that the church was the New Israel.¹⁷ In his First Epistle, Clement quotes from Deuteronomy 32:8-9 which deals with Israel's election as God's chosen people. This he applies to the church, calling his hearers to draw near to God, 'who has made us partakers in the blessings of his elect.'¹⁸ Kelly makes this assessment,

Clement of Rome sees in its [the church's] election the fulfilment of the prophecies that Jacob should become the Lord's portion and Israel the lot of His inheritance.¹⁹

Epistle of Barnabas (c. 100)

Barnabas is more explicit. Speaking of the covenant, he insists it is not, 'both theirs [ethnic Israel's] and ours [the church's]," since, 'they [the Jews] finally lost it, after Moses had already received it.'²⁰ DeMar notes how the author asks rhetorically whether,

'This people [the church] is the heir, or the former, and if the covenant belongs to us or to them.' In answer to this question, "Barnabas" mentioned several Old Testament episodes in which the younger son replaced the oldest son as heir, the obvious implication being that the church (the younger son) has become heir.²¹

Justin Martyr (c. 160)

In his Dialogue with Trypho, Justin makes the same point, stressing how the prophets warned that Israel would be removed and replaced by another.

For the true spiritual Israel, the descendants of Judah, Jacob, and Abraham (who in uncircumcision was approved of and blessed by God on account of his faith, and called the father of many nations), are we who have been led to God through this crucified Christ... Christ is the Israel and the Jacob, even so we, who have been quarried out from the bowels of Christ, are the true Israelitic race... Along with Abraham we shall inherit the holy land, when we shall receive the inheritance for an endless eternity, being children of Abraham through like faith.²²

Irenaeus (c. 180)

Irenaeus also explored the biblical analogy of Sarah and Hagar, seeing the rivalry between Jacob and Esau as a type which explained the tensions between the church and the Jews.

...[Jacob] received the rights of the first-born, when his brother looked on them with contempt; even as also the younger nation received Him. Christ, the first-begotten, when the elder nation rejected Him, saying, "We have no king but Caesar." But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father, just as Jacob took away the blessings of this Esau. For which cause his brother suffered the ploys and persecutions of a brother, just as the Church suffers this self-same thing from the Jews.²³

Gradually, over the first few centuries, the church which had initially been largely Jewish became predominantly Gentile. At the same time Judaism came to recognise that Christianity was not a Jewish sect. The immediacy therefore of answering the apologetic question as to the relationship of Christianity to Judaism and to the Old Testament became less and less significant.²⁴ Jaroslav Pelikan puts it succinctly,

No title for the church in early Christianity is more comprehensive than the term 'the people of God,' which originally meant 'the new Israel' but gradually lost this connotation as the Christian claim to be the only true people of God no longer had to be substantiated.²⁵

Augustine (c. 413)

In his magnum opus, *The City of God*, Augustine portrayed the church as embodying the millennial kingdom of God, a view which became universally accepted within the Catholic church until the time of the Reformation. 'As a result the medieval period tended to dissociate contemporary Jews from the ancient Hebrews.'²⁶

2.2 Early Christian Attitudes Toward the Holy Land

Western Christian interest in the land of Israel is closely associated with the birth, demise and subsequent resurgence of the pilgrimage movement. The word 'pilgrimage' comes from the Latin *peregrinus* which means a foreigner or traveller, and describes a journey to some place regarded as holy, undertaken for a religious purpose

and in the hope of receiving spiritual or material blessing.²⁷

In both Islamic and Hebrew traditions, pilgrimage is regarded as a religious obligation imposed on the entire faith community and taught in their sacred scriptures, hence the importance of the land of Israel, and in particular the shrines associated with Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, to both Jews and Moslems. For Christians however there is no such emphasis or requirement. Jesus taught instead that the sacred is located not in a place but in the body of the believer, and worship is something to be offered to God anywhere and everywhere (John 4:21-23).

In the earliest days of the Christian Church therefore, there does not appear to have been any perceived benefit from undertaking a pilgrimage. But the desire to visit the scenes associated with the birth, life and death of Jesus grew partly from natural interest and partly through the influence of superstitious beliefs the Church inherited from the surrounding pagan religions. Initially the idea of pilgrimage was seen as something voluntary and optional.²⁸

Jerome (345-413), in common with most Protestant pilgrims today, regarded pilgrimages to Palestine as an essential way of gaining a greater understanding of the Bible, '...so we also understand the Scriptures better when we have seen Judea with our own eyes...'²⁹

However, Augustine (354-430), John Chrysostom (344-407) and especially Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) recognised the dangers of associating sacredness with particular shrines. Consequently they actively discouraged Christians from undertaking pilgrimages to Palestine. Augustine and Chrysostom insisted,

'God is indeed everywhere, and he who created all things is not contained or shut in by any one place.'³⁰

'The task is not to cross the sea, nor to undertake a lengthy pilgrimage... both when we come to church and when we stay at home, let us earnestly call on God.'³¹

Nevertheless, Empress Helena's visit to Palestine toward the end of the fourth century ensured that a pilgrimage to the Holy Land became a fashionable as well as a religious duty.³² Despite the costs, hazards and arduous nature of such a journey, pilgrims increasingly travelled to the Holy Land to do penance, to obtain redemption from serious crimes, and to secure relics for their churches.³³ In a desire to create greater unity within his empire, Constantine did much to encourage pilgrimages by building large churches in Jerusalem and Bethlehem which became foci for devotion and worship. Eusebius for example, claimed divine inspiration was behind Constantine's desire to make the Church of the Resurrection 'a centre of attraction and venerable to all.'³⁴ Under Byzantine rule, despite the periodic liberalisation of the ban on Jews visiting or residing in Palestine, the Holy Land was essentially perceived as the land made holy by Jesus and now the inheritance of the church.

Prior to the Reformation, traditional Catholic thought had no place for the possibility of a Jewish return to Palestine nor any such concept as the existence of a Jewish nation.³⁵

2.3 The Middle Ages and the Impact of the Crusades

Historians have examined in detail the lasting impact of the Crusades and have traced the devastating consequences of the sacralising of Mediaeval European military designs to retake the Holy Land from the 'infidels', whether Moslem or Jewish.³⁶

The attempt to liberate the Holy Land from Moslem control was seen by many as a sacred endeavour and even as a form of pilgrimage. When Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade in 1095 he gave several reasons for this 'holy pilgrimage',

....each of high moral value, first to defend Constantinople and by doing so heal the schism between East and West; second, to be a repentant act of faith that would culminate in the moral reformation and total renewal of Christendom; third, it was to be a mass pilgrimage of believers united in the expectation of the imminent return of Christ.³⁷

How far this aspiration was shared by the Crusaders themselves is debatable. Zander seriously questions

whether the Crusades ever really had anything to do with 'defending' the Church.³⁸ Robert the Monk, commenting on Pope Urban's mobilisation speech, gave much more provocative reasons.

Let the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord our Saviour which is possessed by unclean nations, especially incite you, and the Holy Places which are now treated with ignominy and irreverently polluted with their filthiness... Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves... This royal city, therefore, situated at the centre of the world, is now held captive by his enemies, and is in subjection to those who do not know God, to the worship of the heathens.³⁹

For over a century, Bishops, clerics and Kings repeated the call 'to avenge the injury which had been inflicted upon Christ.'⁴⁰ This explains why Christians had come to regard the land as their exclusive inheritance as the 'true' Israel.

The theological justification for the Crusades went through significant and progressive stages. Initially the motivation was simply to liberate the Holy Land as a means of achieving personal salvation and of hastening the apocalypse. Having conquered and settled the land and created Christian kingdoms, when Jerusalem was once again threatened by infidels, it became an opportunity for martyrdom and sacrifice. After Jerusalem was lost, the Muslim presence was seen as an insult to God, and the later Crusades were justified to avenge the injury to God. Toward the end of the Crusading era the Crusaders saw themselves as the successors of Israel; their duty to claim Christ's patrimony and inheritance.⁴¹

Such religious arrogance and the consequent extermination of the Jewish and Moslem inhabitants of Palestine by the European Crusaders unleashed a spiral of barbaric savagery which has fermented for a thousand years, each side locked in what Armstrong calls 'a murderous triangle of hatred and intolerance.'⁴² Cragg draws some important conclusions about the effect of the Crusades and their religious imprimatur on the Arab psyche.

The Western, Latin Rome saw the Christian East in terms of judicial dominance and ecclesiastical power... The Crusades became an enduring symbol of malignancy as well as heroism, of open imperialism and private piety... They left noble piles of architecture on the eastern landscape but seared the eastern soul. They gave Arab Muslims through every succeeding century a warrant of memory to hold against Christian Arabs as, by association, liable to pseudo-Arabness or worse. What the crusaders did to the eastern psyche, long outlived their tenure.... The image of them is one no century since has been able to exorcise.⁴³

2.4 The Reformation and Puritan Attitudes toward the Jews

The Reformation was in part precipitated by the rediscovery of the Bible as the inspired Word of God and the final authority in matters of faith and doctrine. The translation, publication and free access to the Bible among the laity created a major paradigm shift in popular thinking. Within the Church of England, for example, a large Bible written in English was placed in every parish church, the priest and people required to share the cost. Interpretation was no longer the exclusive prerogative of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. The study of the Biblical texts in their original languages, Hebrew and Greek, was also encouraged. From pulpits right across Europe the Bible was increasingly taught in its historical context and in its plain literal sense.

Every Sunday called to his mind the ancient history and lost property of the 'glory of all lands', while the existing ruin and desolation of the country gave testimony to the truth of the Bible and the certainty of the promised blessings... The biblical descriptions of the Holy Land contribute no less to the propagation of which which (sic) we may call the Zionist idea.⁴⁴

A new postmillennial assessment of the place of the Jew within the future purposes of God emerged, especially through the writings of Theodore Beza, John Calvin's successor in Geneva, and Martin Bucer in Strasbourg.⁴⁵ In his Institutes, Calvin stressed that divine blessing was associated with their covenant obedience.

(Salvation depends on God's mercy, which He extends to whom He pleases [Romans 9:15-16]; ...there is no reason for the Jews to preen themselves and boast in the name of the covenant unless they keep the law of the covenant, that is, obey the Word.

Nevertheless, when Paul cast them down from vain confidence in their kindred, he still saw, on the other

hand, that the covenant which God had made once for all with the descendants of Abraham could in no way be made void. Consequently, in the eleventh chapter (of Romans) he argues that Abraham's physical progeny must not be deprived of their dignity. By virtue of this, he teaches, the Jews are the first and natural heirs of the gospel, except that by their ungratefulness they were forsaken as unworthy - yet forsaken in such a way that the heavenly blessing has not departed utterly from their nation. For this reason, despite their stubbornness and covenant-breaking, Paul still calls them holy [Rom. 11:16]. Despite the great obstinacy with which they continue to wage war against the gospel, we must not despise them, while we consider that, for the sake of the promise, God's blessing still rests among them.⁴⁶

Peter Toon traces the development of these ideas from the Continent to Britain and America.

...the word 'Israel' in Romans 11:25ff., which had been understood by Calvin and Luther as referring to the Church of Jews and Gentiles, could be taken to mean 'Jews', that is non-Christian Jews whose religion was Judaism. Beza himself favoured this interpretation of Romans 11 and he was followed by the various editors of the influential Geneva Bible, which was translated in Geneva by the Marian exiles during the life time of Beza. In the 1557 and 1560 editions short notes explained that 'Israel' meant 'the nation of the Jews' but in later editions (e.g. 1599) the note on Romans 11 stated that the prophets of the Old Testament had predicted a conversion of the nation of the Jews to Christ. Through this Bible and the writings of the Puritans (e.g. William Perkins, Commentary on Galatians, and various books by Hugh Broughton) the doctrine of the conversion of the Jewish people was widely diffused in England, Scotland and New England.⁴⁷

Ian Murray describes the place of the Jews within the emerging Puritan postmillennial eschatology.

The future of the Jews had decisive significance for them because they believed that, though little is clearly revealed of the future purposes of God in history, enough has been given us in Scripture to warrant the expectation that with the calling of the Jews there will come far-reaching blessing for the world. Puritan England and Covenanting Scotland knew much of spiritual blessing and it was the prayerful longing for wider blessing, not a mere interest in unfulfilled prophecy, which led them to give such place to Israel.⁴⁸

Samuel Rutherford, the Scottish theologian, for example, longed for the conversion of the Jews. In a letter written in 1635 he eulogised,

O to see the sight, next to Christ's Coming in the clouds, the most joyful! Our elder brethren the Jews and Christ fall upon one another's necks and kiss each other! They have been long asunder: they will be kind to one another when they meet. O day! O longed-for and lovely day-dawn! O sweet Jesus, let me see that sight which will be life from the dead, thee and the ancient people in mutual embraces.⁴⁹

In 1615 Thomas Brightman produced what Peter Toon has described as, 'the first important and influential revision of the Reformed, Augustinian concept of the Millennium' predicting the conversion of the Jews.⁵⁰ Sharif describes Brightman as 'the father of the British doctrine of the Restoration of the Jews.'⁵¹

In His Apocalypsis Apocalypseos, meaning, 'A Revelation of the Revelation', Brightman taught that the Turkish empire would be brought to an end followed by 'the calling of the Jews to be a Christian nation,' leading to 'a most happy tranquility from thence to the end of the world'. In 1635 he completed a commentary on Daniel 11-12 which he sub-titled, 'The restoring of the Jewes and their callinge to the faith of Christ after the utter overthrow of their three enemies is set forth in livelie colours.' Brightman not only believed the Jewish people would come to faith in Jesus Christ, he was also convinced of 'the rebirth of a Christian Israelite nation' which would become 'the centre of a Christian world.'⁵²

Brightman's preaching and writings attracted considerable attention and his views became influential even in British government circles. In 1621, Sir Henry Finch, an eminent lawyer and M.P. developed Brightman's views further and published a book entitled, *The World's Great Restoration or the Calling of the Jews, and of all the Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth, to the Faith of Christ*. In it he argued,

Where Israel, Judah, Zion and Jerusalem are named [in the Bible] the Holy Ghost meant not the spiritual Israel, or the Church of God collected of the Gentiles or of the Jews and Gentiles both... But Israel properly descended out of Jacob's loynes. The same judgement is to be made of their returning to their land and ancient seats, the conquest of their foes... The glorious church they shall erect in the land itself of Judah... These and

such like are not allegories, set forth in terrene similitudes or deliverance through Christ (whereof those were types and figures), but meant really and literally the Jews.⁵³

Other reformers such as William Perkins, Richard Sibbes and John Owen were equally convinced that one day the Jews would be brought to faith in Jesus Christ and for this they prayed earnestly.⁵⁴ This conviction of the conversion of the Jews was so universally embraced that it was written into the Westminster Larger Confession and Congregationalist Savoy Declaration of 1658. The latter affirmed,

We expect that in the latter days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the kingdom of his dear son broken, the churches of Christ being enlarged and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceful and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.⁵⁵

Similarly, the Westminster Directory of Public Worship called upon clergy to pray,

for the Propagation of the Gospell and Kingdome of Christ to all nations, for the conversion of the Jewes, the fitnessse of the Gentiles, the fall of Antichrist, and the hastening of the second coming of the Lord.⁵⁶

In 1649 Ebenezer and Joanna Cartwright, English Puritans living in Amsterdam sent a petition to the British Government calling for the lifting of the ban on Jews settling in England and also assistance to enable them to move to Palestine.

That this Nation of England, with the inhabitants of the Netherlands, shall be the first and the readiest to transport Israel's sons and daughters on their ships to the land promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for an everlasting inheritance.⁵⁷

Sharif observes that this was the first time human intervention was sought to realise a Jewish Restoration rather than the reliance on God to accomplish it.⁵⁸

Jonathan Edwards was probably the most influential American writer of the 18th Century. In his history of the Church written in 1774, As a convinced postmillennialist, Edwards spoke of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom epitomised in the Pope, Islam and 'Jewish infidelity',

However obstinate [the Jews] have been now for above seventeen hundred years in their rejection of Christ, and however rare have been the instances on individual conversions, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem... Yet, when this day comes, the thick veil that blinds their eyes shall be removed. 2 Cor iii.16. And divine grace shall melt and renew their hard hearts... And then shall the house of Israel be saved: the Jews in all their dispersions shall cast away their old infidelity, and shall have their hearts wonderfully changed, and abhor themselves for their past unbelief and obstinacy... Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews in Romans 11.2.⁵⁹

Sharif offers this summary of the importance of the Reformation and Puritanism for the emergence of more explicit Christian Zionist aspirations in subsequent generations.

To the Christian mind in Protestant Europe, Palestine became the Jewish land. The Jews became the Palestinian people who were foreign to Europe, absent from their Homeland, but in due time were to be returned to Palestine... Manifestations of early non-Jewish Zionism were thus neither isolated incidents nor espoused only by religious eccentrics and outsiders... A voluminous religious literature on the role and the destiny of the Jews spread rapidly during the 17th Century and, by its millenarian nature, never fell out of vogue. Many millenarians were rebuked, persecuted and sometimes even executed for their heretical beliefs. Nevertheless, their writings helped to entrench the notion of a Jewish Restoration to Palestine. It was not long until the more practical questions, as to when and how Restoration was to take place, began to gain importance.⁶⁰

2.5 Prophetic and Revivalist Premillennial Adventism

It is not coincidental that Christian Zionist and millennialist speculation have converged toward the end of each century, especially since the 1590's when the first printed literature dealing with millenarian speculations

and the restoration of the Jews first appeared.⁶¹ The predominance of military and apocalyptic terminology in the titles of popular books written by Christian Zionists since the 1980's would suggest a similar connection in this century also.⁶² Andrew Walker has described this as 'PMT' or 'Premillennial Tension'. 'We're counting up to the year 2000 and there's a strong apocalyptical anxiety.'⁶³

The revival during the 1790-1800 period was a direct result of the turmoil Europeans felt in the wake of the French and American revolutions coupled with the approach of a new century. The British, like Europeans on the continent, began to feel that their world was falling apart. People turned away from new secular philosophy and political answers and embraced a more fundamentalist form of Christian teachings that included a revived form of prophetic interpretations of the Bible. In this troubled and uncertain climate, Christian Zionism began to take root.⁶⁴

Edward Irving (1792-1834)

The rise in popularity of premillennialism in the nineteenth century, and the revolution in prophetic and apocalyptic thought can be largely attributed to Edward Irving.⁶⁵ In 1825 he preached at the annual gathering of the Continental Society. His address was entitled, 'Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed',

...in it Irving advanced the assertion that the Church, far from being on the threshold of a new era of blessing, was about to enter a 'series of thick-coming judgments and fearful perplexities' preparatory to Christ's advent and reign.⁶⁶

A year later in 1826 Irving was introduced to the views of Manuel Lacunza a Spanish Jesuit who wrote a book under the pseudonym of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, allegedly a converted Jew, entitled, 'The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty'. Lacunza interpreted all but the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation as describing apocalyptic events about to happen. Irving was so excited by Lacunza's speculations, he mastered Spanish in order to translate and publish the work in English.⁶⁷ Irving added a 203 page preface to the translation in which he presented with great conviction his own prophetic speculations about the end of the world, predicting, the apostasy of Christendom, then subsequently the restoration of the Jews and finally the imminent return of Christ.

When the Lord shall have finished the taking of witness against the Gentiles... he will begin to prepare another ark of testimony... and to that end will turn his Holy Spirit unto his ancient people, the Jews, and bring them unto those days of refreshing... This outpouring of the Spirit is known in Scripture by 'the latter rain'.⁶⁸

Irving came to have a profound influence over Henry Drummond, a politician, banker and writer who opened his home at Albury Park, Surrey, to Irving, McNeile, Way, and those of like mind, keen to study prophecy.

The first decades of the nineteenth century saw an increasing dissatisfaction with the oversimplified Gospel of the earlier evangelical movement. The quest for a more experimental faith and a fuller biblical exegesis led to greater emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, ecclesiology, and prophecy. These subjects were of major interest to such orthodox churchmen as Haldane Stewart, Hugh MacNeil, and William Marsh, who together with Edward Irving and many others attended at Henry Drummond's invitation the Conferences for Biblical Study at Albury Park, Surrey, in 1826.⁶⁹

With a growing interest in millennial speculations other writers published similar treatises. McNeile, looking back in 1866, in the preface to his new edition, acknowledged how, a generation earlier, such views were something of a novelty by what he terms 'anti-restorationists'.⁷⁰

When these lectures were first published in 1830, the subject was comparatively new to the Church in this country. It had no place in the battle-field of the Reformation. It had not been discussed by any of the theological lights of the last century. It was just beginning to be ventilated in consequence of the labours of Mr. Louis Way and Mr. Hawtrej; and more especially in consequence of the writings of Mr. Faber, and the zealous advocacy of Mr. Simeon.⁷¹

Benjamin Willis Newton (1807-1899)

Another prolific writer was Benjamin Willis Newton, a Brethren colleague of John Nelson Darby, whose books were reprinted several times between the 1850's and 1900's.⁷² Newton appears to have been something of a nineteenth century ancestor of Hal Lindsey, interpreting the contemporary European political scene in the light of prophecy.⁷³ He saw, for example, great significance in the fact that one of the Rothschild's was allegedly negotiating with the Sultan for the construction of a railway from Constantinople to Baghdad. He believed this to be one of many signs of the impending merger of the revived Eastern and Western halves of the Roman Empire, a 'Roman world, from England to the Euphrates' centred on Rome.⁷⁴ Writing in 1859, Newton comments at length on the theological significance of geo-political developments in Europe,

The interests of France, Great Britain and Austria are more and more felt to be identical as respects the aggression of Russia; and this feeling Spain, Italy and Greece, will soon thoroughly share...⁷⁵

His colourful predictive map of the ten kingdoms making up this revived Roman Empire, published in 1863, comprised the then most influential countries surrounding the Mediterranean, namely, France, Spain, Northern Italy, the Neopolitan States, Austria, Turkey, Greece, Syria and Egypt, together with the British Isles.⁷⁶ Allowing himself a degree of latitude with regard to the timing of these events, Newton asserted in 1879,

Whether it may be long and deadly; or whether the way of the Western Roman nations may be smoothed so as for the resuscitation of the East under their guardianship to be quietly and speedily effected, it is impossible for us to say.⁷⁷

In the forward to 'Babylon: Its Future History and Doom with remarks on the Future of Egypt and Other Eastern Countries', (3rd Edition) published in 1890, Newton could still insist, 'On Israel, and on Western Europe chiefly will rest the responsibility of causing the revived Eastern Branch of the Roman World to be what it is to be.'⁷⁸ Just as contemporary apocalyptic writers see the rise of New Age inter-faith religious unity as a sign of the coming Antichrist⁷⁹, so Newton was predicting the same at the end of the 19th Century.

The result of the late war with Russia has been to bring the Turkish dominions into recognised political connection with Western Europe... The ancient outline of the Roman Empire will again appear... At bottom, Mohommedanism, what is it but a sect of Christianity? When the Papists, and the Greek church and Judaism, and Mohommedanism, and Anglicanism, shall re-echo this sentiment, and when it shall become governmentally adopted by the nations of the Roman world, we shall soon see the 'Ephah' and 'wickedness', its inmate, established in the land of Shinar.⁸⁰

In America, following the frequent visits of John Nelson Darby from 1862 onwards, his dispensational views about the Church and Israel had a profound influence upon leading evangelicals like James Brookes, D. L. Moody, William E. Blackstone and C. I. Scofield, to the point where these millennial speculations came to be accepted as normative by the great majority of American evangelicals within the 20th Century.⁸¹

James H. Brookes (1830)

Rev. James H. Brookes, the minister of Walnut Street Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, is known as 'The Father of American Dispensationalism'⁸². Brookes was instrumental in bringing D. L. Moody to St Louis for the 1879-1880 campaign, and introduced Scofield, and probably also Darby to Moody.

Brookes not only sympathised with J. N. Darby's dispensational views of a failing Church, corrupt and beyond hope, but it is known they met during five visits Darby made to St Louis between 1864-1865⁸³ and again between 1872-1877 when Darby preached from Brookes' pulpit.⁸⁴

Brookes became the most influential exponent of Dispensationalism by three chief means. The first of these was his own Bible study and his habit of gathering young protégés around him for such study. By far the best known of these students was C. I. Scofield. The second means was his literary work. He published many books and pamphlets and he edited *The Truth*, a Christian magazine, from 1874 until his death. The third means was his leadership in the Niagara Bible Conference and the various prophetic conferences of his day.⁸⁵

In the summer of 1872, Darby wrote a letter describing the fruitfulness of his initial visit to St. Louis which had included, '...good opportunities and I am in pretty full intercourse with those exercised, among whom are more than one official minister.'⁸⁶ Mindful perhaps of the disapprobation held within traditional denominational circles for the Brethren and in particular for Darby's controversial views, with which he now identified, Brookes,

...gave no credit for them to Darby or any of the Brethren. This may be due to the fact that there were associations with the name Darby which Brookes wished to avoid. ⁸⁷

This nevertheless explains how the premillennial dispensational views associated with the Albury and Powerscourt Conferences in England and Ireland had taken root in Middle America.

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899)

John Nelson Darby's influence over D. L. Moody came about through one of Darby's disciples, a young evangelist Henry Moorehouse who impressed Moody with his 'extraordinary' preaching. According to his son, Moody's message and style were revolutionised, 'Mr Moorehouse taught Moody to draw his sword full length, to fling the scabbard away, and to enter the battle with the naked blade.'⁸⁸

Albert Newman, a contemporary American historian confirmed the strong influence Darby and his colleagues had over Moody,

The large class of evangelists, of whom Dwight L. Moody was the most eminent, have drawn their inspiration and their Scripture interpretation largely from the writings and the personal influence of the Brethren.⁸⁹

Arno Gaebelin, Scofield's biographer, notes how Scofield kept Moody conformed to a dispensational prophetic framework, 'Moody himself needed at times a better knowledge of prophecy, and Scofield was the man to lead him into it.'⁹⁰

Moody's greatest service to Darby and dispensationalism has come through the Bible institute which still bears his name and which became a model for many others. By 1956 it is known that at least 41 Bible schools were identified as dispensational, training some 10,000 pastors and missionaries annually, six of the largest accounting for half the student numbers.⁹¹

Moody's Institute in Chicago, although not the first of such schools, became the prototype; and since Moody had imbibed a fair dose of dispensationalism in a rather typical unstructured form, and his colleague and successor R. A. Torrey in a more systematic way, it was natural that the burgeoning Bible school movement, with a few exceptions, should follow this line of thought. And as the Bible schools unintentionally became training centres for evangelical ministers as many of the theological seminaries opted for divergent views, Darby's prophetic teaching became more widely accepted than ever.⁹²

Moody's name is also associated with the popular Northfield Conferences which he founded in 1880⁹³ Sandeen makes a further significant observation.

No historian of Moody's amazing career has noted, however, that his Northfield Conferences were virtually dominated by dispensationalists, particularly from 1880 through 1887 and again from 1894-1902.⁹⁴

William E. Blackstone (1841-1935)

Another of John Nelson Darby's disciples was William E. Blackstone, an influential evangelist, financier and benefactor⁹⁵. In 1887 he wrote a book, *Jesus is Coming* which by 1916 had already been translated into 25 languages,⁹⁶ eventually selling over 1 million copies in 48 languages including Hebrew. In 1908 a presentation edition was sent to several hundred thousand ministers and Christian workers⁹⁷ and apparently the book is still in print. According to W. M. Smith, this best-seller was,

Probably the most wide-read book in this century on our Lord's return... More Christian leaders had their interest in the second advent awakened by this book than any other volume that had been published for decades.⁹⁸

Blackstone also helped to found the Chicago Hebrew Mission, which later became the American Messianic Fellowship. In 1890, he headed the first conference between Jews and Christians in Chicago. The following year in March 1891 he lobbied the US President Benjamin Harrison and his Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, with a petition signed by 413 Jewish and Christian leaders including John & William Rockefeller, calling for an international conference on the Jews and Palestine. The petition offered this solution,

Why not give Palestine back to them [the Jews] again? According to God's distribution of nations it is their home, an inalienable possession from which they were expelled by force. Under their cultivation it was a remarkably fruitful land, sustaining millions of Israelites, who industriously tilled its hillsides and valleys. They were agriculturalists and producers as well as a nation of great commercial importance - the centre of civilization and religion. Why shall not the powers which under the treaty of Berlin, in 1878, gave Bulgaria to the Bulgarians and Servia to the Servians now give Palestine back to the Jews?⁹⁹

Although President Harrison did not act upon the petition, the event was commemorated in Israel in 1965 with a memorial and a forest dedicated in Blackstone's name.¹⁰⁰

2.6 The 19th Century Resurgence of Interest in Palestine and Zionism

In the 19th Century there was a considerable thawing in Protestant attitudes toward the Jews,¹⁰¹ of enthusiasm for missionary outreach among them as well as a growing interest in the Holy Land and things Oriental.¹⁰² This was largely due to a succession of archaeological discoveries in the Near East, military adventurism, and the growing number of travelogues which fired the imagination.

Travelogues

One of the most popular was Dean Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* which went through four editions within a year of its publication in 1856.¹⁰³ Other authors included William M. Thackeray,¹⁰⁴ Gertrude Bell,¹⁰⁵ Robert Byron,¹⁰⁶ Robert Graves,¹⁰⁷ Alexander Kinglake,¹⁰⁸ Rudyard Kipling,¹⁰⁹ T.E. Lawrence,¹¹⁰ Freya Stark,¹¹¹ and William M. Thomson.¹¹² However, the most influential English writer among early Arabists was Charles Montague Doughty, an Oxford Don. Like many other European travellers,

Lawrence, throughout his sojourn in the Middle East, was under the spell of 'Travels in Arabia Deserta', a twelve-hundred page account of a two-year odyssey, between 1876 and 1878... This tome, which took Doughty a decade to write is so powerful and all-engrossing in its effect and so completely defines the Arabs and the Middle East desert that the book's influence on Arabists thought cannot be exaggerated. *Travels in Arabia Deserta* makes Doughty, truly, Britain's first and greatest Arabist... Doughty's book started a literary and psychological movement among Westerners drawn to the Arabs...¹¹³

Between 1800 and 1875, around 2,000 authors wrote about the Holy Land, and by the 1830's a visit to the Near East formed part of the grand tour taken by most young European gentlemen.¹¹⁴ Alexander Kinglake, who wrote his travelogue in 1835, noted the tensions Europeans faced when encountering the Eastern denominations.

Many Protestants are wont to treat these traditions contemptuously, and those who distinguish themselves from their brethren by the appellation of 'Bible Christians' are almost fierce in their denunciation of these supposed errors.¹¹⁵

Pliny Fisk & William Thomson, among the earliest 19th century American missionaries to the Middle East were shocked on their arrival in Jerusalem,

...to see the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the other Holy Places guarded by a dirty and superstitious rabble of Greeks and Byzantinized Arabs, all kissing icons and burning incense amid gold-leaf finery, scandalised these well-bred and puritanical New Englanders. In the eyes of the missionaries, it was the Oriental Christians-the Greek Orthodox, the Egyptian Copts, the Lebanese Maronites, and others-who had truly usurped

the Holy Land, by emphasizing the hypnotic mechanics of liturgy over the Word of God. The Protestant missionary animus toward these strange eastern rite churches... was never to dissipate.¹¹⁶

Another Beirut missionary, Margaret McGilvary, made similar derogatory comments in the 1920's,

The Oriental Church is the canker at the heart of Christianity, and inasmuch as it is the chief point of contact with Islam, it behooves the Christian world to renovate the system which so unworthily represents its cause in the Near East.¹¹⁷

Harriet Martineau, another writer, referred to the services at the Holy Sepulchre as '...mummeries done in the name of Christianity... idolatrous nonsense...'¹¹⁸ It was this dissatisfaction with the Eastern Churches' monopoly on the traditional sites and a repugnance for their garish shrines which fuelled interest among Evangelicals in such ventures as the archaeological work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the alleged discovery of the true Calvary in 1883 by General Gordon and the subsequent funding by public subscription of the Garden Tomb Association.¹¹⁹ Since then the Garden Tomb has become probably the most popular religious site for Christian Zionists, after the Temple area, who prefer to worship in this typical English country garden rather than at the historic sites with the unfamiliar yet indigenous Christians.

19th Century Protestant pilgrims, while not wishing to appear superstitious or overly emotional, were nevertheless often moved by their first sight of Jerusalem. Robert Curzon describes the magnetic hold which this place has over pilgrims through what happened in his party.

Everyone was silent for a while, absorbed in the deepest contemplation. It was curious to observe the different effect which our approach to Jerusalem had upon the various persons who composed our party. A Christian pilgrim, who had joined us on the road, fell down upon his knees and kissed the holy ground, two others embraced each other, and congratulated themselves that they had lived to see Jerusalem. As for us Franks, we sat bolt upright on our horses, and stared and said nothing, whilst around us the more natural children of the East wept for joy, and, as in the army of the Crusaders, the word Jerusalem! Jerusalem! was repeated from mouth to mouth; but we, who consider ourselves civilised and superior beings, repressed our emotions; we were above showing that we participated in the feelings of our barbarous companions.¹²⁰

Curzon's account also reveals something of the condescending prejudice commonly felt by Europeans toward Orientals, a related issue which will be developed later. While the theological reservations of the Reformers were quietly forgotten in the growing fascination with things Oriental, the real breakthrough in the rise in personal contact with the Orient came as a result of innovations in transportation.

Pilgrimages

In 1869 the Suez Canal was opened, coincidentally the same year Thomas Cook led his first tour group to Jerusalem, made up of 16 ladies, 33 gentlemen, and two assistants. By the end of the 19th Century, his company had arranged for 12,000 pilgrims to visit the Holy Land. It is not an exaggeration to say that Thomas Cook probably did more than any other person to facilitate and shape evangelical contact with the Holy Land. His reputation as an organiser of pilgrimages grew after he was invited in 1882 to arrange the visit by Prince Edward, later Edward VII, and his son Prince George, later King George V. In 1872 Cook wrote the following analysis of his new enterprise.

The educational and social results of these four years of Eastern travel have been most encouraging. A new incentive to scriptural investigation has been created and fostered; 'The Land and the Book' have been brought into familiar juxtaposition, and their analogies have been better comprehended; and under the general influence of sacred scenes and repeated sites of biblical events, inquiring and believing spirits have held sweet counsel with each other.¹²¹

In 1891 his influence was further enhanced by the publication of Cook's Tourist Handbook for Palestine and Syria. This was designed to be read on horseback or by tent light and contained all the essential scriptural references associated with each location visited. By doing so, Cook reinforced the link in the minds of pilgrims between the Biblical history of the Jews and the contemporary locations visited. Avoiding the traditional pilgrimage itinerary which focussed on religious shrines regarded with distaste by Europeans, Cook also

pioneered what he termed, 'Biblical Educational and General Tours' designed especially for clergy, Sunday school teachers and 'others engaged in promoting scriptural education.'¹²²

Cook's tours proved popular for a number of other significant reasons which have a bearing not only on the development of Christian Zionism in the 20th Century but also, conversely, on the decline in contact between pilgrims and the indigenous Christians. Middle-class Protestant clientele from America and Europe were attracted to Cook's tours because they wanted the type of pilgrimage, and above all, the kind of services he alone offered. For example, payments were made in advance obviating the need for pilgrims to carry large sums of money, and thereby risk robbery. Cook also hand-picked and employed the 'dragomen' or local agents who in effect became his subcontractors. Those who were unwilling to co-operate soon went out of business. Tensions over the provision and competence of local guides, the quality of local hotels, unfamiliar food, the suitability of transportation and general fear of the indigenous population are not new. These frictions and prejudices so common today were clearly evident in the 19th Century. They epitomise the inability or unwillingness of Americans and Europeans generally, then as now, to identify with the indigenous Palestinian Christians.

Literary Romanticism

Another important influence upon Christian attitudes toward Zionism in the 19th Century had to do with the growing literary fascination with the Jews and the Holy Land, what Sharif calls, 'the literalization of the Hebrew World'.¹²³ She describes this genre of literature as 'Romantic racism', that is a Romanticism infatuated with Zion, and offers extensive quotations from the writings of Robert Byron, Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Robert Browning and George Eliot to illustrate it.¹²⁴ Eliot, for example, was a devout evangelical who at the same time was familiar with contemporary Judaism, apparently regularly attending synagogue services and dialoguing with Jewish Rabbis. In 1874 Eliot began working on *Daniel Deronda*, described by Sharif as, 'the first truly Zionist novel in the history of non-Jewish fiction.'

Eliot dispenses with the theories of amalgamation or affinity between Christianity and Judaism. The hero of *Daniel Deronda* is not a Christianized or 'gentilized' Jewish national hero who discovers his Jewish heritage under the influence of non-Jews. Nor are there appeals to Anglican England to follow the example of Cyrus and help to bring a Jewish return to Palestine. Eliot's debt to Shaftesbury and Evangelism (sic) though unacknowledged, must be considered. The gentile author created in *Daniel Deronda* a true Zionist hero who discovers for himself his Jewish nationality and heritage. The novel represents the apex of non-Jewish Zionism in the literary field, the culmination of a long tradition that began with the Protestant idea of Restoration, but had initially demanded the conversion of the Jews as a first step towards the Palestine goal. Then it was allowed that conversion might happen after Restoration and, by the 19th Century, conversion had been completely dropped as a necessary requirement. Restoration had instead become identified with a return to the Hebrew heritage.¹²⁵

Through her fictional character Mordecai, a Jewish mystic, Eliot graphically expresses a concrete manifesto behind the 19th Century Christian Zionist vision.

Looking towards a land and a polity, our dispersed people in all the ends of the earth may share the dignity of a national life which has a voice among the peoples of the East and the West - which will plant the wisdom and skill of our race so that it may be, as of old, a medium of transmission and understanding... There is a store of wisdom among us to found a new Jewish polity, grand, simple, just, like the old - a republic where there is equality of protection, an equality which shone like a star on the forehead of our ancient community, and give it more than the brightness of Western freedom and despotisms of the East. Then our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and a brain to watch and guide and execute... And the world will gain as Israel gains.¹²⁶

Sharif concludes, '*Daniel Deronda* was the 'literary introduction' to the Balfour Declaration, which made the presence of a Jewish polity in Palestine a historic necessity.'¹²⁷

2.7 British Colonialism and the Restoration of Jews to Zion

Bonaparte, Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the French Republic in Africa and Asia, to the Rightful Heirs of Palestine. Israelites, unique nation, whom, in thousands of years, lust of conquest and tyranny were able to deprive of the ancestral lands only, but not of name and national existence... She [France] offers to you at this

very time, and contrary to all expectations, Israel's patrimony... Rightful heirs of Palestine... Hasten! Now is the moment which may not return for thousands of years, to claim the restoration of your rights among the population of the universe which had shamefully withheld from you for thousands of years, your political existence as a nation among the nations, and the unlimited natural right to worship Yehovah in accordance with your faith, publicly and in likelihood for ever (Joel 4:20).¹²⁸

In the Spring of 1799, during the Syrian campaign of his Oriental expedition, Napoleon became the first statesman to propose a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine. Napoleon believed that with sympathetic Jews controlling the territory between Acre, Lower Egypt and the Red Sea, French imperial and commercial interests in India, Arabia and Africa could be secured.¹²⁹ Neither Napoleon nor the Jews were able to deliver. Nevertheless his proclamation, '...is a barometer of the extent to which the European atmosphere was charged with these messianic expectations.'¹³⁰ As Sharif observes,

The idea of a Jewish national Restoration to Palestine had resurfaced in Western European culture at a politically most opportune time. During the course of the 19th Century, a Jewish presence in Palestine, apart from its previous religious-prophetic, benevolent or philo-Semitic connotations, now came to be a political issue for the secular European powers that aspired to overseas expansion and empires. Religious and philanthropic ideas were now skilfully combined with the hard-headed Realpolitik of acquiring or strengthening spheres of influence in the Near East... Secular authorities, as well as religious ones, were now toying with Zionist ideas for their potential usefulness... Palestine suddenly found itself within the orbit of European power politics and under the contending influences of all the major powers: France, Britain and Russia... Britain's interest in the Near East, and of course Palestine, had been stirred by the Napoleonic expedition of 1799. The area's strategic importance to the British Empire had already been fully recognized. The vital necessity of preventing French control over the area had not only resulted in the battles of the Nile and Acre, but also spawned a British military expedition eastwards. Soon Britain's main concern was to hold back Russia by maintaining Turkish sovereignty at all costs.¹³¹

Just as Napoleon's motives behind his call to arms directed at Jews across Europe were complex, so it is difficult to separate 19th Century British foreign policy regarding Palestine from the religious beliefs of her own political leaders, notably Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Palmerston and later Lord Balfour.¹³² Other leading figures in British society who were known to sympathise with Jewish restorationism included the Duke of Kent, Bishop Manning and Gladstone.

Lord Shaftesbury

Lord Shaftesbury was himself 'convinced of Darby's teachings',¹³³ and actively campaigned for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.¹³⁴ Stirred by the Napoleonic expedition, Shaftesbury argued for a greater British presence in Palestine on both religious as well as political grounds, advocating that assistance be given not only to assist Jews to return to Palestine but also for the founding of an Anglican bishopric and cathedral in Jerusalem. This he saw as the means by which God would continue to bless England as he had apparently promised through Abraham, and Lord Palmerston, providentially Shaftesbury's step-father-in-law was Britain's Foreign Secretary. In his diary for 1st August 1838, Shaftesbury wrote,

Dined with Palmerston. After dinner left alone with him. Propounded my schemes which seems to strike his fancy. He asked questions and readily promised to consider it. How singular is the order of Providence. Singular, if estimated by man's ways. Palmerston had already been chosen by God to be an instrument of good to His ancient people, to do homage to their inheritance, and to recognize their rights without believing their destiny. It seems he will yet do more. Though the motive be kind, it is not sound. I am forced to argue politically, financially, commercially. He weeps not, like his Master, over Jerusalem, nor prays that now, at last, she may put on her beautiful garments.¹³⁵

As a first step Shaftesbury persuaded Palmerston to appoint the fellow restorationist William Young as the first British vice-consul in Jerusalem. He subsequently wrote in his diary,

What a wonderful event it is! The ancient City of the people of God is about to resume a place among the nations; and England is the first of the gentile kingdoms that ceases to 'tread her down'.¹³⁶

A year later in 1839, Shaftesbury wrote a 30 page article for the Quarterly Review, entitled 'State and Restauration (sic) of the Jews.' In it Shaftesbury predicted a new era for God's chosen people. He insisted,

...the Jews must be encouraged to return in yet greater numbers and become once more the husbandman of Judea and Galilee... though admittedly a stiff-necked, dark hearted people, and sunk in moral degradation, obduracy, and ignorance of the Gospel were not only worthy of salvation but also vital to Christianity's hope of salvation¹³⁷

Wagner assesses the significance of Shaftesbury's strategy.

Demonstrating keen political insight, Shaftesbury saw three distinct advantages for England in this plan, (1) England would outpace France in the colonial competition to control the Near East; (2) England would be insured a direct land passage to India, the 'jewel' of the British Empire; (3) vast commercial markets would be opened for British economic interests. It was not a mere coincidence that these political goals matched those of the British Foreign office concerning the Near East.¹³⁸

Lord Palmerston

Shaftesbury's gentle lobbying of Palmerston proved successful. Palmerston wrote an astonishing letter to Ponsonby, the British ambassador in Constantinople, dated 11 August 1840. It concerned the mutual benefit to both Turkey and Britain of allowing Jews to return to Palestine. Ironically the restoration of the Jews was seen, at that time, as an important means of maintaining the status quo, and of avoiding the disintegration of the Moslem Ottoman Empire. Palmerston wrote,

There exists at the present time among the Jews dispersed over Europe, a strong notion that the time is approaching when their nation is to return to Palestine... It would be of manifest importance to the Sultan to encourage the Jews to return and to settle in Palestine because the wealth which they would bring with them would increase the resources of the Sultan's dominions; and the Jewish people, if returning under the sanction and protection and at the invitation of the Sultan, would be a check upon any future evil designs of Mohamet Ali or his successor... I have to instruct Your Excellency strongly to recommend [the Turkish government] to hold out every just encouragement to the Jews of Europe to return to Palestine.¹³⁹

Days after Lord Palmerston sent his letter, a lead article in the Times dated 17 August 1840, called for a plan 'to plant the Jewish people in the land of their fathers' claiming such a plan was under 'serious political consideration' and commending the efforts of Shaftesbury, as the author of the plan which it argued was 'practical and statesmanlike.' Tuchman claims the article 'created a sensation.'¹⁴⁰ Lady Palmerston supported her husband's stance. A letter written to Princess Lieven reveals something of her ambivalence toward the involvement of Christian Zionists in the plan to restore Palestine to the Jews,

We have on our side the fanatical and religious elements, and you know what a following they have in this country. They are absolutely determined that Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine shall be reserved for the Jews to return to; this is their only longing to restore the Jews.¹⁴¹

Fuelling speculation about an imminent restoration, on 4 November of 1840, Shaftesbury took out a paid advertisement in the Times to give greater visibility to his vision. The advertisement included the following,

RESTORATION OF THE JEWS, A memorandum has been addressed to the Protestant monarchs of Europe on the subject of the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Palestine. The document in question, dictated by a peculiar conjunction of affairs in the East, and other striking 'signs of the times,' reverts to the original covenant which secures that land to the descendants of Abraham.¹⁴²

Wagner summarises Shaftesbury's influence on the rise of Christian Zionism in these terms,

One cannot overstate the influence of Lord Shaftesbury on the British political elite, church leaders, and the average Christian lay person. His efforts and religious-political thought may have set the tone for England's colonial approach to the Near East and in particular the 'holy' land during the next one hundred years. He single-handedly translated the theological positions of Brightman, Henry Finch, and John Nelson Darby into a political

strategy. His high political connections, matched by his uncanny instincts, combined to advance the Christian Zionist vision.¹⁴³

Like Moses, Shaftesbury did not live to see his promised land realised, however, through his lobbying, writings and public speaking he did more than any other British politician to inspire a generation of Caleb's and Joshua's to translate his religious vision into a political reality.

In addition to influencing British colonial perceptions of the Near East, Shaftesbury also predisposed the next generation of British Conservative politicians favourably toward the World Zionist movement, which led eventually to British support of the Jewish state.¹⁴⁴

What is not generally known is that it was probably Shaftesbury who inspired Israel Zangwell and Theodore Herzl to coin the myth, 'A land of no people for a people with no land.' It is likely that they borrowed the idea from Shaftesbury, who a generation earlier, imagining Palestine an empty country, formulated the slogan, 'A country without a nation for a nation without a country.'¹⁴⁵

In 1865, James Finn, the British Consul in Jerusalem and another leading restorationist, established the Palestine Exploration Fund for the purpose of encouraging scientific exploration, archaeological research and the cartographic mapping of the Holy Land. According to Sharif, this was merely one of many organisations and charities offering advice and financial support to encourage Jews to emigrate to Palestine and form agricultural colonies.¹⁴⁶

Laurence Oliphant

One of those to take up the Zionist mantle of Shaftesbury was another influential M. P., Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888). Unlike many other Zionists, he actually visited Palestine to survey the land and explore prospects for its agricultural colonisation. In 1880 Oliphant published a book entitled *The Land of Gilead*, in which he reiterated the Zionist case, proposing a detailed settlement scheme east of the Jordan under British protection while acknowledging Turkish sovereignty. Conveniently, Oliphant too recognised the convergence of absolute religious dogmatism and pragmatic political expediency.

It remains for England to decide whether she will undertake the task of exploring its ruined cities, of developing its vast agricultural resources, by means of the repatriation of that race which first entered into its possession, 3000 years ago and of securing the great political advantages which must accrue from such a policy.¹⁴⁷

Oliphant also urged the British Parliament to assist the emigration of Jews to Palestine from Russia and Eastern Europe. Controversially he recommended that the 'warlike' Bedouins be driven out, while the more passive Palestinians be moved onto reservations along the lines of the native Indians in North America.¹⁴⁸

By 1897 when the First World Zionist Congress met in Basle, Switzerland, Jewish leaders in favour of a Zionist state had sympathetic support from many more senior British political figures. The founder of the Red Cross, the Swiss Christian philanthropist, Henri Dunant, for example, was the first Gentile to be called a 'Christian Zionist' by Theodor Herzl, and one of only a handful of Gentiles to be invited to the Congress.¹⁴⁹

William Hechler

Another Christian Zionist to influence Herzl was William Hechler (1845-1931), an Anglican priest and chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna.

The very embodiment of British evangelism (sic) entering the realm of politics, he was, by background and by training, ideally suited to act as mediator between Jewish and non-Jewish Zionism, combining religious, humanitarian and political Zionism. Imbued with evangelical millenarianism, he even formulated his own exact date for the re-establishment of the Jewish state. Equally, he was moved by his concern over the vast stream of East European Jewish refugees now fleeing towards the West... His booklet, *The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine* (1894), predating Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* by two years, spoke of the need for 'restoring the Jews to

Palestine according to Old Testament prophecies.¹⁵⁰

Having read Herzl's call for a Jewish state, Hechler arranged to see the author. Herzl records the meeting on 10 March 1896 in his diary.

The Reverend William Hechler, Chaplain of the English Embassy here, came to see me. A sympathetic, gentle fellow, with a long grey beard of a prophet. He is enthusiastic about my solution of the Jewish Question. He also considers my movement a 'prophetic turning-point' - which he had foretold two years before. From a prophecy in the time of Omar (637CE) he had reckoned that at the end of forty-two prophetic months (total 1260 years) the Jews would get Palestine back. This figure he arrived at was 1897-98.¹⁵¹

David Lloyd George

David Lloyd George, who eventually became Prime Minister in 1916, was another self-confessed Zionist, sharing similar views to those of Shaftesbury and Oliphant, although his were, according to Wagner, more 'ardent'. In his own words, he was Chaim Weizmann's 'proselyte... Acetone converted me to Zionism.' In the same speech before the Jewish Historical Society in 1925, he reminisced,

I was brought up in a school where I was taught far more about the history of the Jews than about the history of my own land. I could tell you all the kings of Israel. But I doubt whether I could have named half a dozen of the kings of England, and not more of the kings of Wales... We were thoroughly imbued with the history of your race in the days of its greatest glory, when it founded that great literature which will echo to the very last days of this old world, influencing, moulding, fashioning human character, inspiring and sustaining human motive, for not only Jews, but Gentiles as well. We absorbed it and made it part of the best in the Gentile character.¹⁵²

Christopher Sykes, the son of Sir Mark Sykes who co-authored the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 which dismembered the Ottoman Empire between Britain, France and Russia, was also one of Lloyd-George's biographers. Sykes wrote that prior to the Paris Peace Accords, signed in 1919, various advisors had tried unsuccessfully to brief Lloyd-George on the issues relating to the Palestine settlement but that he was not able to grasp the issues,

...largely because he could not move beyond the Christian Zionist worldview of his youth. When briefed repeatedly on the contemporary geography of Palestine, Lloyd-George insisted on reciting from his memory of childhood Sunday school lessons the biblical cities and lands of bible times, some of which no longer existed.¹⁵³

Lord Arthur Balfour

Finally, and probably most significantly of all, Lord Arthur Balfour who pioneered the Balfour Declaration in 1917, was himself also a premillennial Christian Zionist,¹⁵⁴ who regarded history as, 'an instrument for carrying out a Divine purpose.'¹⁵⁵ From 1905, for example, Chaim Weizmann, then a professor of chemistry at Manchester University, began to have regular meetings with Balfour to discuss the implementation of that goal. Like Lloyd George, Balfour had been brought up in an evangelical home and was,

...predisposed to the Zionist positions solely on the basis of his limited understanding of the Bible. He subscribed to a simple, lay-person's version of the premillennial dispensational theology.¹⁵⁶

Following a meeting with Weizmann on 9 January 1906, Balfour wrote to his wife saying that he could see, 'no political difficulty about obtaining Palestine, only economic ones.'¹⁵⁷ Weizmann convinced Balfour that none of the other Jewish homeland 'solutions' such as Uganda or Argentina were tenable, and according to his niece, shortly before his death, Balfour remarked that,

...the Jewish form of patriotism was unique... Their love of their country refused to be satisfied by the Uganda scheme. It was Weizmann's absolute refusal even to look at it that impressed me.¹⁵⁸

The British Colonialist presence in the Middle East, at the beginning of the 20th Century included both

those sympathetic to Zionism like Balfour and others who for a variety of reasons had become 'Arabists.' The American, Kaplan terms them, 'sand-mad Britons' and identifying Sir Richard Francis Burton, Charles Doughty, T. E. Lawrence ('of Arabia'), Harry 'Abdullah' Philby, Wilfred Theisiger, and Gertrude Bell.¹⁵⁹ Ultimately, both British Zionists and Arabists were committed to the same end - a strong British presence in the Middle East. Kaplan draws an important distinction between British and American Arabists in the late 19th Century and early 20th.

It was the advantages of power and privilege that imperialism offered that allowed these British men and women to work out their personalities and fantasies upon such an exotic stage. Their myriad eccentricities notwithstanding, men such as Lawrence and women such as Gertrude Bell were in Arab lands as British government agents, and thus it was the mechanics of imperial power that primarily concerned them... While British Arabists were imperialists, American Arabists were originally-and therefore, most significantly-missionaries. Mission work defines the American Arabist, much as imperialism defines the British Arabist... The British sought to dominate, to acquire a culture and a terrain as one acquires a rare and beautiful book. But Americans... sought something more tantalising. They sought to change this terrain, to improve upon it, using their own model. They manifested a psychology that grew out of the American Revolution.¹⁶⁰

T. E. Lawrence

In 1916, Thomas Edward Lawrence, at 27 and an Arabic scholar, had been assigned to British military intelligence in Cairo, to sail to Jidda to seek an alliance with Sherif Hussein with the purpose of ending the unpopular pro-German Turkish occupation of the Middle East, while at the same time guarding the sea route to British India. Although Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* became one of the most popular 20th Century works on the Middle East in the English language, his official status was always that of a political intelligence officer, who in the end did deliver the Arabs to Great Britain.

Lawrence thought as an imperialist. He favoured the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist enterprise as a means to keep the French out of Palestine and perhaps out of the rest of Syria. He championed ill-fated negotiations between the Sherif of Mecca's son, the Emir Feisal, and Chaim Weizmann (whom Lawrence genuinely admired). Lawrence's prejudices were imperially motivated. He loathed Turks and Frenchmen, and he respected Jews, 'the sooner the Jews farm it [Palestine] the better,' wrote Lawrence in a letter home. In *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, he notes that 'only in... the everlasting miracle of Jewry, had distant Semites kept some of their identity and force' in the greater world.¹⁶¹

'Clientitis' was a necessary fact of Middle Eastern politics in an era when autonomous Arab states did not officially exist and when there was no formal means by which local tribal chiefs could express their views or aspirations other than through sympathetic British officers whose 'career fortunes rose and fell in direct proportion to those of the particular tribesmen they were attached to.' ¹⁶²

Prior to 1918, it was the belief of the Colonial Office, and practically all the local expatriate Arabists that when the Turks had been defeated, the direct descendants of Mohammed, the Hashemite family of the Sherif of Mecca were the only tribe with sufficient religious and political prestige to rule with any stability in Arabia.

Lawrence, in particular, was a person overly influenced by setting. Among Arabs in the desert, he became pro-Arab; in Whitehall he was pro-Empire; with Chaim Weizmann he felt himself an avid Zionist. Thus to read the wartime missives of Lawrence, Miss Bell, and others-where, for instance, on one occasion Arab nationalism is proscribed, while on another Iraqi and Syrian self-rule is cheered on-is to find oneself in a muddle. And a muddle is what the British, with assistance from the French, made of the post-Ottoman Middle East.¹⁶³

On 2nd November, 1917, Lord Balfour, then British Foreign Secretary made public the 'following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet.'

His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of that object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done, which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish Communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. ¹⁶⁴

What the Balfour Declaration left unclear was the meaning of a 'national home'. Was this synonymous with sovereignty or statehood and if so what were to be the borders? In all of Palestine or just a portion? What was to be the status of Jerusalem? Furthermore, while it stated that 'the civil and religious rights of the existing population' were to be safeguarded and the territory was designated 'Palestine', there was no reference to Palestinians. 'They were an actual, but awkward non-identity'.¹⁶⁵ It was Balfour's opinion that 'the present inhabitants' need not be consulted, either before or after.¹⁶⁶ That 90% of the population of Palestine were Palestinian Arabs of whom around 20% were Christian seemed irrelevant to the politicians and Zionists who had another agenda.¹⁶⁷ So the awkward questions were left unanswered and it is these ambiguities which have plagued Middle East peace negotiations and divided Christians ever since. According to Wagner,

This single declaration gave the Zionist movement its first political legitimacy in history and created a platform for its leaders to accelerate colonization of Palestine.¹⁶⁸

In a speech made at the London Opera House celebration of the Balfour Declaration on 2nd December 1917, Lord Robert Cecil claimed that it marked not the birth of a nation but,

...the rebirth of a nation... I believe it will have far-flung influence on the history of the world and consequences than none can foresee on the future history of the human race.¹⁶⁹

A week later, on the 9th December 1917, British troops occupied Jerusalem, 'and the Holy City passed into Christian hands for the first time since the rule of Frederick II as King of Jerusalem.' Her future, 'now lay with the Western powers and was to all intents and purposes bound up with the question of harmonising their interests in Palestine as a whole.'¹⁷⁰

General Edmund Allenby

General Edmund Allenby however, broke with more than military custom when he walked into Jerusalem through the Jaffa Gate in order to identify with Jesus Christ, two days later on December 11th 1917. In a speech given later that day Allenby indicated something of his own respect, and his administration's intentions regarding the toleration and protection of the religious rights of the indigenous population.

Since your city is regarded with affection by the adherents of three of the great religions of mankind, and its soil has been consecrated by the prayers and pilgrimages of multitudes of devout people of these three religions for many centuries, therefore do I make known to you that every sacred building, monument, holy spot, traditional shrine, endowment, pious request, or customary place of prayer, of whatsoever form of the three religions, will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faith they are sacred.¹⁷¹

It was clearly Allenby's desire to maintain good relations with both Arabs and Jews. Ironically it was actually the Mandate officials who encouraged the early development of indigenous Arab churches, especially among the Anglicans, and fixed the rights and responsibilities of the various denominations with regard to the sacred shrines.¹⁷² However, Anglo-French diplomacy and strategic self interest concerning the possession of territory gained from the Turks led to duplicity over the Balfour Declaration, and partisan support for the Jews.

The League of Nations mandate was a double blow to the Arabs because it not only denied them their promised independence, despite their having assisted in the overthrow of Ottoman rule, but endorsed a Jewish national homeland on what had once been Arab soil. In 1917 when Allied forces overran Damascus, helped by Lawrence's Arab guerrillas, the British and French divided their spoils of what had formerly been the Ottoman territory of Syria into six different zones.

A sliver of northern Syria was amalgamated into a new Turkish state that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was beginning to carve out of the rump of the old Ottoman Sultanate. Southern Syria was split into two new British territories, a mandate in Palestine (which the British promised twice over, to the Jews and to the Arabs) and a kingdom in Transjordan ruled by one of Lawrence's World War I allies, Abdullah, the brother of Feisal and the son of the Sherif of Mecca. Eastern Syria became part of British Iraq. The French got the hole in the map that was left, which they in turn subdivided by proclaiming an enlarged Lebanese state, known as Grand Liban, in

order to strengthen their friends, the Maronite Christians, who would now have a large Sunni Moslem population under their thumb. Meanwhile, Lawrence's World War I comrade-in-arms Feisal the son of the Sherif of Mecca, required a reward for his services; so the British set him up as the king of Syria in 1920. His kingdom lasted a hundred days until the French forced him out. Lawrence and company then proceeded to dump Feisal on Iraq, where his Hashemites from western Arabia enjoyed no local support.¹⁷³

Thus, Lord Balfour and David Lloyd-George, probably two of the most influential British political leaders of the First World War years, were basically committed to Christian Zionism. Their support for the World Zionist Movement was a direct result of their evangelical upbringing. These views,

...facilitated the British colonial predisposition toward Zionist interests and the disenfranchisement of the Palestinian people following World War I.¹⁷⁴

It was inevitable that there would be an Arab backlash and consequently Britain placed severe restrictions on Jewish emigration right up to the declaration of independence in 1948 thereby inciting antipathy and terrorist attacks from both sides.¹⁷⁵ The 1936 Peel Commission which had recommended the partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs stated,

The partition of Palestine is subject to the overriding necessity of keeping the sanctity of Jerusalem and Bethlehem inviolate and of ensuring free and safe access to them for all the world. That is 'a sacred trust of civilisation', a trust on behalf not merely of the peoples of Palestine but of multitudes in other lands to whom these places, one or both, are Holy Places...¹⁷⁶

The professed reason given then for the partition of Palestine was the maintenance of free access for Western pilgrims rather than with settling any territorial rights or providing safeguards for the indigenous communities. Sir Walter Shaw of the British Colonial Office made a more realistic and perceptive appraisal of the situation,

To the Arabs it must appear improbable that such competitors (Jews) will in years to come be content to share the country with them. These fears have been intensified by the more extreme statements of Zionist policy and the Arabs have come to see in the Jewish immigrant not only a menace to their livelihood but a possible overlord of the future.¹⁷⁷

The indigenous Christians are now living with the consequences.

2.8 Anglican Israel and the Influence of Episcopal Church in Palestine

In the 19th Century, coinciding with world-wide Western missionary endeavours, improvements in transportation, and paralleling European Colonial expansion in this strategic staging post to Africa and Asia, there was a renewed interest in Palestine among the major Protestant denominations. At the beginning of the 19th Century the only representatives of Western Christianity to be found in Jerusalem had been the Franciscans and only the Orthodox and Armenian traditions were resident in significant numbers. From the mid 19th Century, Protestant denominations began to found their own churches, not so much from a separatist spirit but because of the animosity and ostracism of the Eastern traditions. Their reformed theology, emphasis on personal conversion and lay leadership were anathema to Eastern Orthodoxy.¹⁷⁸

This ecclesiastical fragmentation coincided with increasing inroads from Western Europe into the politics, economy, and culture of the Ottoman caliphate and of those parts of it which enjoyed varying degrees of independence. After the arousal that accompanied Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, the Western scramble for influence, and competition to wield it, quickened in the apparent, or actual, deterioration of Ottoman imperial competence in the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁹

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was among the earliest to show an interest from 1821, but it was the London Jews Society (LJS) who established the first permanent mission station in 1831. Their aim was the conversion of Jews to Protestant Christianity.

The influence of Christian Zionism within Anglican Evangelical circles was boosted by the support of

Charles Simeon (1759-1836), who in later life was consumed with a passion for the conversion of Jews and the work of the London Jews Society, looking for 'a full and imminent restoration of God's chosen people'¹⁸⁰

Whilst Way and others evangelized on the Continent, Simeon at home acted as a kind of one-man general staff, preaching for the Society, recruiting workers, spreading propaganda, collecting funds, advising on overall strategy. He did so with even more than his usual sense of urgency. He lived to see the work prosper remarkably. An annual income of £7,000 in 1815 was doubled by 1836. Episcopal patronage was bestowed on the Society... In that progress Charles Simeon had no small part.¹⁸¹

The British Consul was also the first to be appointed in Jerusalem in 1838, and the Anglican church, Christ Church, was dedicated in 1845. A Protestant bishopric under joint British and Prussian auspices had been founded in 1841. Solomon Alexander, the first bishop and a former Jewish rabbi did not survive long in the post and was succeeded by Samuel Gobat, a Swiss Lutheran. The arrangement with Germany then lapsed and the bishopric became solely Anglican in 1881.¹⁸² Initially Alexander and Gobat co-operated with the Eastern Churches, concentrating on the circulation of the Scriptures and opening what were termed 'Bible schools'.

As Eastern Christians bought the Bibles and sought help in reading them, teachers were supplied and more schools opened. The first two CMS missionaries arrived for this purpose in 1851 and were based in Jerusalem and Nablus. The local leadership of the Eastern Churches felt threatened and excommunicated those who read the Scriptures offered by the Anglicans.

Consequently Bishop Gobat felt compelled to protect them and from the 1860's small Anglican congregations based on a loose parish structure and led by Palestinian clergy were formed in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Jaffa, Haifa, and Salt. The transition from a colonialist Anglican church dominated by expatriates to a Palestinian Anglican church was a significant but slow process which is still continuing. According to Bishop Rennie MacInnes, writing in 1925,

The work of the CMS in all its missions is to train those who join her in the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, with the ultimate object of aiding in the establishment of a self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending system.¹⁸³

The self-governing Palestine Church Council, also known as the Episcopal Evangelical Church in the Holy Land was officially established in Jaffa in 1905. By then it already included twenty Palestinian clergy serving in Jaffa, Kefr Yasif, Bir Zeit, Ramleh, Shefaamr, Nablus, Acco, Salt, Nazareth and Jerusalem. However, it was not until 1958 that the first Palestinian Bishop was appointed.

For all their will to autonomy, the local recruits to Protestant mission were beholden in various ways to its Western sources, beneficiaries of its educational investments and conditioned by the vicissitudes of external politics.¹⁸⁴

However far this process of assimilation has come and still needs to go, is a matter of healthy debate. Unfortunately this commitment has sadly been misunderstood and maligned by many, especially by Christian and Jewish Zionists.

Crombie's partisan history of the Anglican Church in the Holy Land, in keeping with the provocative title 'For the Love of Zion', is an example of this.¹⁸⁵ While its sub-title Christian Witness and the Restoration of Israel, makes an assumption as to what Christian witness should lead to or support, Crombie never clarifies his geographical definition of Zion and therefore where this 'restoration' is to take place. Throughout the book however, he is patently unsympathetic with the present indigenous Anglican leadership, and the claim of the Palestinians to the Occupied Territories. The final chapter of his book is entitled 'The antithesis of Alexander - a PLO Bishop'. The book, not surprisingly, has aroused a good deal of criticism among leading Palestinian Anglicans.

I found reading it that it was written by a person who really harbours resentment against the Arabs and against Palestinian Christians... it reflects his prejudice, his resentment, his deep dislike of the local Christians as if they really have nothing to say. Anything that Jews do somehow is always put in the right light and anything Arabs would do is somehow always judged as being wrong... why doesn't he see the presence of so many Zionist Bishops and clergy, those are OK but once you have any person who loves the land God has chosen to give him,

an indigenous Palestinian, that's taboo.¹⁸⁶

The same kind of Zionist prejudice from a Jewish perspective can be seen in the views of Teddy Kollek the mayor of Jerusalem. In 1992 he criticised the leadership of the Church of England for allowing the Diocese in Jerusalem 'to fall into the hands of the Arabs.'¹⁸⁷

The termination of the British Mandate in 1948 further accelerated the transition from expatriate to Palestinian control of Anglican mission schools, hospitals and other church assets, although the Zionist agency, the Churches Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) has remained strongly independent of, and resistant to, the indigenous leadership of the Diocese of Jerusalem. The elevation of the Anglican episcopate in Jerusalem to the status of an archbishopric in 1957 and its renaming as the 'Episcopal Church in the Middle East' was another important step in this process of naturalisation.¹⁸⁸

2.9 American Arabists and Changing American Attitudes to Israel

Robert Kaplan in *The Arabists*,¹⁸⁹ traces how a small but powerful elite of families and friends came to dominate America's relations with the Middle East for over a century, and in particular their perceptions of Jews and Arabs. Known as 'Arabists,' they had gone 'ethnic' immersing themselves in Arab life and culture and enjoying privileged access to the ruling Arab families. They served as educators, military attaches and diplomats, perpetuating both the Western romance with Arabia while at the same time playing a seminal role in the growth of Arab nationalism.

They were descended from the first Americans to travel to what became Lebanon and Syria, the missionaries, scholars and explorers, an extension of the ruling WASP of 19th Century America, but without the imperialist and colonialist agenda which drove much of European interest in the area. These men and women dominated American policy and shaped American perception of the Arab world until World War II. From the late 1940's, coinciding with the birth of the State of Israel, a significant change occurred in the US diplomatic corps, which reflected the country's new ethic and social diversity.

Kaplan describes the impact of this change within the State Department, particularly marked since the 1970's, showing how the rise of Irish Catholics, Jews and Harvard experts within the diplomatic service loosened the grip of Arabists on Middle East diplomacy, and upon American attitudes to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the early part of the 20th Century American perceptions were very different. For the grown children of those missionary families, returning to Lebanon as Foreign Service officers and educationalists,

Syria constituted much more than a home. It was almost a transplanted version of New England itself, a glorified tableau of Ivy League Brahmins, each with a foothold in the Lebanese mountains, a magical kingdom of Protestant families brimming with a spirit of adventure, rectitude, and religious idealism, where the twentieth century would not fully arrive until 1948. When it came, it came with a vengeance.¹⁹⁰

In the Middle Ages the term 'Arabist' referred to a physician who studied Arab medicine. In the 19th Century it was also used of a student of Arab culture or language.¹⁹¹ From 1948 and the founding of the state of Israel the term Arabist quickly became a pejorative term for anti-Semitism. In the words of Richard Murphy, a former ambassador to Syria and Saudi Arabia, the term 'Arabist' came to describe,

'he who intellectually sleeps with Arabs,' someone, that is, assumed to be politically naive, elitist, and too deferential to exotic cultures. The word almost presumes guilt. The very syllables resonate with sympathy and possession-of and with the Arabs-in a way that a word like Sinologist does not.¹⁹²

Early American missionaries to Lebanon and Syria included Bill Stoltzfus, Arthur & Ray Close, Talcott Seelye, David Zimmerman, and David & Grace Dodge.

In marked contrast to the conduct of European colonials... imperialism and commercial exploitation were entirely missing from the baggage carried by the missionaries in Lebanon. Nor did the Americans even present a threat to the local religious culture, as the missionary colonies in India, China, Burma and Siam would. For if truth be told, compared with the missionaries in the Far East, who won over significant numbers of Chinese to Protestant Christianity, the American missionaries in the Middle East were complete failures. The intractability

of Islam quickly forced them to give up any hope of converting souls to Christ... It would be only as purveyors of Western education that the Americans in Lebanon were to succeed. And for that the local Arabs would learn to love them.¹⁹³

The American Great Awakening fired enthusiasm for missionary work abroad and in the Middle East. A friendly agreement reached in the 1870's between three American denominations saw the Congregationalists take responsibility for Turkey, the Presbyterians for Egypt, Syria and Iran and the Dutch Reformed Church for the Arabian Gulf.

One could even date the beginning of the American Arabist tradition to 1827, when Eli Smith, the Connecticut Yankee from Yale, struck out from the relative safety of a nascent mission community in Beirut for the surrounding mountains, to live for several months with the Moslem and Druze villagers, studying their language.¹⁹⁴

What made the contribution of American missionaries to the education of Arabs distinctive was their commitment to do so, at least initially, in Arabic. They wanted to convert from within in partnership rather than as Colonialists from the outside. Unlike the Jesuits who ran the French Catholic Schools, and who consequently attracted Arab families who wanted their children to receive a Western education, the American missionaries tried to avoid creating an elite who in the end would be divorced from their own culture. How far they succeeded is questionable. Hourani regards the ethos of such foreign academic institutions as causing 'social and psychological displacement' for Arab children learning a curriculum essentially 'alien' to their own.¹⁹⁵

In The Arab Awakening, the standard treatise on Arab nationalism, George Antonius, himself an Arab Christian, offers a more positive assessment.

The educational activities of the American missionaries in that early period had, among many virtues, one outstanding merit, they gave the pride of place to Arabic... In that, they were the pioneers... the intellectual effervescence which marked the first stirrings of the Arab revival owes most to their labours.¹⁹⁶

Daniel Bliss and David Dodge founded the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut in 1866, and while acknowledging the failure of previous American missionaries to convert Jews and Moslems or even the Eastern Orthodox, was nevertheless committed to teaching Arabs 'the Protestant values of democracy, hard work, and free intellectual enquiry.'¹⁹⁷ The College actively encouraged discussion and free thinking on matters such as politics providing a fertile seed bed to Arab nationalism.

Despite the 'truncation' of Syria by British and French imperialism, Dodge, was still optimistic for the realisation of Arab nationalism, and under his leadership, the teaching staff, unlike the French Jesuit College, became internationalist, including many Arabs, Americans and Europeans.

AUB... became the heart of an Arab nationalist awakening... a world for whom the State of Israel was a provocative remnant of British colonialism, just as Maronite-dominated Lebanon was a remnant of French colonialism... AUB became, in a political-cultural sense, more influential than either the British or French governments in the Middle East; a startling achievement considering that the American government had recently retreated from the region and had no presence to speak of.¹⁹⁸

But the dream of cultivating the inverse of colonialism was shattered by the outbreak of World War I when the traumatic effects of European geopolitical power struggles and colonial rivalries spilled over into the Holy Land. The vision of the American missionaries for a 'borderless Arab nationalism' in which Syria followed the model of the United States becoming a liberal democracy was not shared beyond the majority Sunni Moslems, least of all by the Maronites, Druze, Greek Orthodox, Jews or Armenians living in uneasy coexistence.

During the First World War, besides the relief work of the Syrian Protestant College, the American missionaries in Syria, received the enormous sum of sixteen million dollars from churches in the United States for their work in feeding and clothing poor Arabs.

But while the British and French were drawing lines on the map and switching rulers around like chess pieces, the American Protestants were suffering alongside the victims of famine and massacre, which were the mundane consequences of World War I. While Britons like Lawrence, Philby and Miss Bell were falling in love

with Arabs, the missionaries were learning—more than they ever had before—what it actually felt like to be like an Arab... in the hospices and soup kitchens of World War I Syria, far from the tents of kings and the power centers of London...¹⁹⁹

In 1919, aware that the British and French were undermining his goal of self-determination in Syria, Woodrow Wilson sent Charles Crane, a wealthy American Arabist as head of the King-Crane Commission to investigate the wishes of the indigenous people. Reservations expressed by Arab leaders and expatriate Americans led Cranes Commission to recommend the abandonment of American support for a Jewish homeland, that further Jewish immigration be severely restricted and America or Britain govern Palestine.

While Crane went on to help finance the first explorations for oil in Saudi Arabia and the Yemen, his admiration for Hitler's Germany 'the real political bulwark of Christian culture', and of Stalin's anti-Jewish purges in Soviet Russia, led his biographer to describe his later life as dominated by,

...a most pronounced prejudice... his unbridled dislike of Jews.' Crane 'tried... to persuade ...President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, to shun the counsels of Felix Frankfurter and to avoid appointing other Jews to government posts.' Crane 'envisioned a world-wide attempt on the part of the Jews to stamp out all religious life and felt that only a coalition of Moslems and Roman Catholics would be strong enough to defeat such designs.' In 1933 Crane actually proposed to Haj Amin Hussein, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, that the Mufti open talks with the Vatican to plan an anti-Jewish campaign.²⁰⁰

It is significant that The Arab Awakening by George Antonius was funded by and dedicated 'To Charles R. Crane, aptly nicknamed Harun al-Rashid affectionately.'²⁰¹

The reasoning behind opposition by American missionaries to the founding of the state of Israel is a complex one. In 1948, weeks before the founding of the State of Israel, Bayard Dodge retired from AUB for Princeton in New Jersey. In April he wrote a watershed article in Readers Digest entitled, 'Must There Be War in the Middle East?'

This six-thousand-word article, while forgotten and obscure, is the definitive statement of American Arabists on the birth of Israel. Though he cautioned, 'Not all Jews are Zionist and not all Zionists are extremists,' for Dodge the Zionist movement was a tragedy of which little good could come. Dodge was not anti-Semitic... Dodge's argument against Zionism rests, not on the politics of the movement, but on the Arabs' opposition to it, which in Dodge's view made the Zionist program unrealistic and therefore dangerous. Years and decades of strife would, Dodge knew, follow the birth of the Jewish state. As a result, wrote Dodge, 'All the work done by our philanthropic non-profit American agencies in the Arab world—Our Near East Foundation, our missions, our YMCA and YWCA, our Boston Jesuit college in Baghdad, our colleges in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus—would be threatened with complete frustration and collapse... so would our oil concessions,' a scenario that Dodge said would help Communist Russia. Dodge then quoted a fellow 'American Middle East expert' as saying that 'they [the Russians] intend to get many thousands of Russian Communist Jews into the Palestinian Jewish State.' Though Dodge made passing reference to the Holocaust (barely three years old at the time he wrote the article), he appeared oblivious to its psychological and historical ramifications upon the European Jewish refugees in Palestine. While admitting that the Arabs would never countenance a Jewish state, Dodge nevertheless exhorted Jews to lay down their arms and talk to the Arabs. The article ends with a quote from the Bible, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.' Dodge did not seem aware that the death-camp-haunted Jews of Palestine read the Old Testament with different eyes from those of a Protestant missionary.²⁰²

Kaplan argues that Dodge's views were representative of the wider expatriate and missionary community of Beirut who believed the US, British and Russians morally and politically wrong to railroad the partition of Palestine through the United Nations. Richard Crossman, the MP who was a member of the Anglo-American team investigating the Palestine crisis in 1947, observed that the American Protestant missionaries, 'challenged the Zionist case with all the arguments of the most violently pro-Arab British Middle Eastern officials.'²⁰³ Based on the perceptions of Bill Stoltzfus, who during his diplomatic career had been US Ambassador to six Arab countries, Yemen, Bahrain, the Y.A.E., Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, Kaplan concludes,

..the American community on Lebanon was almost, to a man, psychologically opposed to the State of Israel. But very few went over the line into anti-Semitism.²⁰⁴

Furthermore, President Harry Truman's foreign policy advisers were opposed to the proposal to recognise the state of Israel which they saw as a threat to maintaining good relations with the strategic oil-rich Arab nations, at the very time America was engaged in a race to thwart Soviet hegemony. In his memoirs Truman claims his State Department specialists were opposed to the idea of a Jewish state because they either wanted to appease the Arabs or because they were anti-Semitic, a charge many disputed claiming Truman was playing domestic politics, more concerned for the growing influence of American Jews than the advice of his Foreign Service professionals.

Sympathy for the Arabs and Palestinians in particular, continued among American Foreign Service officials working in the Middle East. Wat Cleverius, an Arabist, was transferred from Saudi Arabia to Tel Aviv in 1969, as economic officer, was responsible for US charities working among Palestinians, including CARE, Catholic Relief and Lutheran World Service, following the annexation of the West Bank by Israel. Looking back over three years work he wrote,

By the time I left Israel in 1972, I had begun to witness enormous corruption on the part of the Israeli civil-military establishment on the West Bank, in the form of humiliations, physical intimidation, and petty bribes that Arabs had to pay Israeli officials. Old Arab men were made to kiss the asses of donkeys in front of their families. Once the Likud came to power in 1977, they really promoted the head crunchers. They put the toughest and poorest Iraqi Jews and other Sephardim [Oriental Jews] in the West Bank, in order to really beat up the Arabs.²⁰⁵

American Foreign policy under Presidents like Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson tended to favour maintaining the status quo in the Middle East combining,

...emotional sympathy toward Israel-albeit in varying degrees-friendship toward the Arabs, and, most important of all, a desire to avoid conflict.²⁰⁶

The Six-Day War was bad news for Arabists. 'Israel was strengthened, Arab states were humiliated, and US embassies in Arab countries were closed, forcing many an Arabist to switch careers.'²⁰⁷ The seismic effect of the Six-Day war changed more than the borders of Israel. Her perceived US strategic value in the Middle East coincided with Richard Nixon's election as President. Critical of the State Department and FSO's, Nixon believed,

...an astonishing number of them have no obvious dedication to America. ...and evinced 'an expatriate attitude.' Even worse in Nixon's eyes, FSO's were the kind of people likely to be Democrats. Nixon was also a cold warrior who saw the Middle East, not in its own terms, but in terms of the world-wide struggle against the Soviets...now irrevocably in bed with the Arabs, making Israel a valuable Cold War asset.²⁰⁸

Nixon chose Henry Kissinger, a Jewish refugee from Germany, to head the National Security Council. According to Kaplan,

While previous administrations sought to avoid conflict in the Middle East, Nixon and Kissinger saw the imminent threat of confrontation as a series of opportunities for rearranging the pieces of the Arab-Israeli puzzle more to America's liking... with American Jews proud and energised as a result of Israel's war victory, Nixon saw Middle East negotiations as a loser in domestic political terms... In other words and put crudely, the relationship between the American president and the American Jewish community now loomed larger than the relationship between Arabists and their personal connections in the Levant.²⁰⁹

Arabists like Andrew Killgore, for example, who gave 25 years to serving in the US Foreign Service in many Arab countries, found himself, in 1974, when he expected to be named ambassador to Bahrain, exiled to the embassy in New Zealand. 'I thought that... I'd never get a good job [in the Arab world], because the Zionists, in my view, had it in for me at that time.'²¹⁰ Regarding Kissinger, Killgore, who in 1977 became US ambassador to Qatar, was even more outspoken,

Henry, of course, was just a fifth columnist, as far as I am concerned. He was working for the Israeli's... Henry's real objective was to get out of the Middle East the Arabists that the Zionists didn't like. Because Henry was not so crypto-he just was Zionist.²¹¹

Following his retirement in 1980, Killgore went on to publish *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, in which in 1987 and 1988 he made the following provocative statements,

It is wrong and perverse for fanatical elements within the two and a half percent of our population who are Jewish to hold Congress hostage... America must regard the Israeli progression from penetration to direction of U.S. foreign policy as the work of a master criminal.²¹²

1970 saw a coup attempt against the pro-Western government in Jordan by the PLFP and Syria, which, in the eyes of the United States, would have only benefited the Soviets.

Nixon and Kissinger faced a stark realization, only Israel could save the king of Jordan and preserve the balance of power in the region. The threat of Israeli military intervention caused the Syrians to retreat, allowing King Hussein to crush the Palestinian guerrillas in what came to be known as the Black September War.

The U.S.-Israeli strategic relationship was born amid the ashes of the failed fedayeen revolt. In the three years leading up to the 1970 Jordan crisis, annual U.S. military aid to Israel averaged under \$47 million. In the three years succeeding the crisis, the annual aid averaged over \$384 million.²¹³

The influence of AUB on the post-war Arab world can be measured by the fact that at the Charter meeting of the United Nations in 1945, AUB graduates outnumbered those of any other university on the world.²¹⁴ By the late 1960s, the faculty were pro-Palestinian, anti-Nixon and antiwar, and drew parallels between American imperialism in Vietnam and Israel.

David Dodge, acting president of AUB and the great-grandson of its founder Daniel Bliss, was ironically the first American to be taken hostage in Lebanon following Israel's invasion in 1981. On being released a year later, Dodge gave the following explanation for his abduction,

We condoned Israel's invasion of Lebanon and my kidnapping was in part due to the actions of Israel and U.S. support of Israel. Yes, I feel more strongly than ever that American policies in the Middle East are not even-handed enough.²¹⁵

Another American missionary taken hostage in 1984, Ben Weir and his wife Carol were highly critical of American policy in the Middle East. Weir was a lecturer at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, an ecumenical Seminary committed to training Protestants for ministry in the Arab world. Without the kind of government backing available to AUB, NESTB was even more dependent on and integrated within the indigenous Moslem Arab culture. Kaplan argues, 'The Weirs represented the extreme evolutionary offshoot of the American missionary adventure in Lebanon...' ²¹⁶ David Long, an American State Department Arabist, was responsible for liaising with the Weir family in the negotiations to get Weir released. He wrote later,

The Weirs treated me and the State Department as the enemies, even though we were their government, trying to help get Ben Weir released... Carol Weir and her church group had this holier-than-thou attitude toward the U.S. government. They didn't even want the CIA to debrief him when he was released, even though the debriefing could have helped other hostages. To them, the CIA and the Israelis-not the kidnappers were the enemy.²¹⁷

In any country, changes in foreign policy will invariably reflect, to some degree, changes in domestic perceptions of the world. Kaplan explains how in the 1970s and 1980s, in regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, a gulf emerged between the experiences of the American expatriate missionary-diplomatic community living in the Middle East and American public opinion back home.

The historic relationship between a group of privileged Americans and the educated stratum of Arabs in Greater Syria was just not something that an increasingly ethnic and middle-class society in the United States was even aware of or to which it could easily relate. Regarding Israel, while those like Dodge, Seelye and Mrs. Weir were in a unique position to witness the very worst aspects of the Israeli national character, Americans at home could identify with positive aspects of Israeli life more easily than they could with anything going on in the Arab world, especially in blood-spattered Lebanon. For all its faults and crude tactics, even AIPAC was psychologically closer to mainstream America than the AUB crowd was.²¹⁸

America's desire to be 'even-handed' is typified by the continued presence of an embassy in Tel Aviv and a consulate in East Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem consulate is the most controversial U.S. diplomatic mission in the Middle East, if not in the world. It represents the Arabist frontline against the pro-Israel section of the State Department, as represented by the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv, forty-five minutes away with no crossing points in between.

The consulate building in Arab East Jerusalem was a rebuke to the State of Israel. It was, to all intents and purposes, an American embassy located on territory controlled by the Israeli government. But the consulate did not recognise the Israeli government in Jerusalem, nor did it primarily deal with Israelis, its main purpose was to deal with Arabs in Jerusalem and the West Bank under Israeli military rule. Because the United States did not recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the consulate tried to insist that when the U.S. ambassador to Israel visited Jerusalem from Tel Aviv he should not fly the American flag on the hood of his limousine. Jerusalem was the consulate's turf, not the embassy's. The consulate in East Jerusalem, a graceful old stone building near the mediaeval Arab souk, was Arab, while the embassy, situated on a noisy and garish street in the heart of Jewish Tel Aviv, clearly was not. A war raged between the two installations.²¹⁹

Ironically, pro-Zionist Senator Bob Dole has recently introduced legislation to the American Senate which requires the US Embassy to be rebuilt in Jerusalem by 31 May 1999, and authorising \$100 million for 'preliminary' spending in the next 3 years. On 24th October 1995 he stated,

Israel's capital is not on the table in the peace process, and moving the United States embassy to Jerusalem does nothing to prejudice the outcome of any future negotiations.²²⁰

Marshall Wiley, was a US diplomat in Iraq, Lebanon and Israel from the early 1950s. In 1981, then the US ambassador to Oman, he resigned from the US Foreign Service because he opposed the aggressive support for the State of Israel given by the incoming Reagan administration. This was his outspoken assessment of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians.

Among the things I remember are the old Arab villages from the pre-1948 era that the Israelis had bulldozed... The previous conquerors didn't displace the population the way the Israelis displaced the Palestinians. There was some resentment on my part toward Israel, because the viewpoint I had gotten in Israel was exposed as false when seen from the Arab side. The Palestinians lived in miserable conditions. Israeli colonialism is, in my view, worse than that of the [Ottoman] Turks.²²¹

In what was becoming an increasingly pro-Israel administration, in 1989 Wiley went further arguing,

Israel is only about 2 percent of the [Middle East] population, and because of their support for that 2 percent, we're willing to alienate the goodwill of the other 98 percent, which have most of the land area and most of the resources, which, I think, in terms of our national interest, is a mistake.²²²

Ironically it was Moshe Dayan, the hero of Israel's Six-Day War, who recognised the value of American Arabists to Israeli security when he said, '...the more friends and influence America has in the Arab world [and elsewhere], the more secure Israel will be.'²²³

2.10 Orientalism and European Cultural Imperialism

Western Christians have, for many generations, appeared to share with the Jews not only a cultural antipathy toward Palestinians in particular but also pejorative political assumptions about Arabs generally.²²⁴ Edward Said claims this prejudice, or 'Orientalism' is representative of a peculiarly European way of dealing with foreigners. In his book, *Orientalism*,²²⁵ he eloquently demystifies romantic European notions of the Orient, exposing the reality and intensity of European hostility and cultural imperialism toward the East in which the strengths of the West are magnified and contrasted with the supposed weaknesses of the Orient.

Such bias and contrived generalisations have had the effect of polarising West from East, limiting the 'human encounter between different cultures, traditions and societies.'²²⁶ At its most mundane it surfaces in views and phrases that highlight the fact that Arabs are different from Europeans, whether in skin colour, dietary

preferences or personal habits. At a more profound level Orientalism has also had a profound and lasting impact upon American and European foreign policy.

Kinglake, in his unorthodox and frank impressions of the Middle East, *Eothen*, first published in 1844, contains an early example of Orientalism.

A man coming freshly from Europe is at first proof against the nonsense with which he is assailed; but often it happens that after a little while the social atmosphere of Asia will begin to infect him, and, if he has been unaccustomed to the cunning of fence by which reason prepares the means of guarding herself against fallacy, he will yield himself at last to the faith of those around him; and this he will do by sympathy, it would seem, rather than from conviction.²²⁷

Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, written nearly a century later, contains 'perhaps the most famous Arabist analysis of the Arab mind, considered brilliant by some and racist by others.'²²⁸

In the very outset, at the first meeting with them, was found a universal clearness or hardness of belief, almost mathematical in its limitation, and repellent in its unsympathetic form... They were a people of primary colours, or rather of black and white, who saw the world always in contour. They were a dogmatic people, despising doubt, our modern crown of thorns. They did not understand our metaphysical difficulties, our introspective questionings... They were at ease only in extremes. They inhabited superlatives by choice... they never compromised, they pursued the logic of several incompatible opinions to absurd ends, without perceiving the incongruity... They steered their course between the idols of the tribe and the cave.²²⁹

The perceptions of the Revd John Holmes is another good example of this. Following a visit to Palestine in 1929 he wrote with admiration for the Jewish pioneer settlers,

As I met and talked with these toilers on the land, I could think of nothing but the early English settlers who came to the bleak shores of Massachusetts, and there amid winter's cold in an untilled soil, among an unfriendly native population, laid firm and sure the foundations of our American Republic. For this reason I was not surprised later, when I read Josiah Wedgewood's 'The Seventh Dominion' to find this distinguished Gentile Zionist of Britain speaking of these Jewish pioneers as 'the Pilgrim Fathers of Palestine'. Here is the same heroism dedicated to the same ends... It is obvious that the native Arabs while no less stubborn and savage than the American Indians, cannot be removed from the scene.²³⁰

Edward Said offers more recent evidence from an essay by Dr Henry Kissinger entitled 'Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy'. In it Kissinger relies on what linguists refer to as 'binary opposition', in which, like Orientalists, he divides the world into two halves, the developed post-Newtonian and the developing pre-Newtonian world.

And like Orientalism's distinction Kissinger's was not value-free, despite the apparent neutrality of his tone. Thus such words as 'prophetic,' 'accurate,' 'internal,' 'empirical reality,' and 'order' are scattered throughout his description, and they characterise either attractive, familiar, desirable virtues or menacing, peculiar, disorderly defects. Both the traditional Orientalist... and Kissinger conceive of the difference between cultures, first, as creating a battle front that separates them, and second, as inviting the West to control, contain, and otherwise govern (through superior knowledge and accommodating power) the Other.²³¹

Said gives further examples of 'respectable' Orientalism in the writings of Harold Glidden, an advisor on American foreign policy to the United States Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, whose views were published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* in February 1972.

...it is a notable fact that while the Arab value system demands absolute solidarity within the group, it at the same time encourages among its members a kind of rivalry that is destructive of that very solidarity; in Arab society only 'success counts' and 'the end justifies the means'; Arabs live 'naturally' in a world 'characterised by anxiety expressed in generalised suspicion and distrust, which has been labelled free-floating hostility'; 'the art of subterfuge is highly developed in Arab life, as well as in Islam itself'; the Arab need for vengeance overrides everything, otherwise the Arab would feel 'ego-destroying' shame. Therefore, if 'Westerners consider peace to be high on the scale of values' and if 'we have a highly developed consciousness of the value of time,' this is not true of Arabs. 'In fact,' we are told, 'in Arab tribal society, strife, not peace, was the normal state of affairs because

raiding was one of the two main supports of the economy.' ²³²

Probably the most disastrous recent example of how Orientalist attitudes have influenced foreign policy decisions would be the failure of the United States and the Western Alliance to take seriously Saddam Hussein's expansionist intentions prior to his annexation of Kuwait. April Glaspie, the US ambassador to Iraq, and significantly the first woman ambassador in the Middle East, made two fundamental errors, prior to Iraq's invasion which are inherent flaws common to Arabists, and yet ironically at the same time are typical of Western Orientalists.

..first, what was required in this situation was not so much tough talk as straight talk. She was not straight with Saddam. Whatever may have been Washington's official position at the time, an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was going to result in some sort of strong U.S. response-common sense would tell you that-and she failed to point this out to him. Second, here was an area specialist who completely misjudged the overall situation, as Gertrude Bell had misjudged it with King Feisal and as the missionaries had repeatedly misjudged it with the Sunni Arab nationalists, all misjudgements that stemmed from the hubris that allowed Westerners to think that they could modify the behaviour of another culture and shape it in their own perfect image. Saddam could be moderated if only he had the right incentives, like nonlethal military equipment...²³³

In April 1991, April Glaspie appeared in public for the first time following the invasion of Kuwait, to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Sydney Blumenthal of the New Republic notes that she appeared 'without makeup or jewellery; her long grey hair was pulled back and her dress absolutely plain. Her puritan austerity suggested virtue.' Indeed, she looked every inch the missionary.'²³⁴

For the Orientalist the West is seen as liberal, peaceful, rational and capable of embracing 'real' values whereas the Oriental is not. Kenneth Cragg who has lived in the Middle East for many years, and has closely identified with the Arab culture, both Moslem and Christian, concurs with Said's criticism of Orientalism, for its 'crude stereotype imaging of the East', and for being,

....a gross form of Western superiority complex, expressed in a literature and a scholarship that imposed its own false portrayal on the East and refused to care sensitively for the East's own evaluation of itself. By distortion it had its own way with its eastern versions and made these the instrument of control and, indeed, of denigration... 19th and 20th century Western Orientalism is thus found uniformly culpable, and a conniver with misrepresentation. ²³⁵

This indictment of the West falls as much upon the Church as it does upon politicians since it has contributed to the divisions among Protestant Christians in places like Jerusalem where Hebrew-Messianic believers and Zionist Christians gravitate toward Christ Church, Palestinians and their supporters to St George's, while pietistic Evangelicals invariably end up at the Garden Tomb. Each community tends to worship in isolation, attracting their own following in varying proportions from among pilgrims. Edward Said, although himself a nominal Anglican, crystallises the issue at a more profound level.

I consider Orientalism's failure to have been a human as much as an intellectual one; for in having to take up a position of irreducible opposition to a region of the world it considered alien to its own, Orientalism failed to identify with human experience, failed also to see it as human experience. ²³⁶

Eber concedes that it is perhaps inevitable that we find it hard to cope with the 'foreign' because of the weight of our emotional 'baggage' carried when travelling abroad, since we cannot avoid 'refining and redefining ourselves, confirming and reconfirming our individual and collective identities' in the light of this encounter. Nevertheless it is, she argues, '...only by examining and becoming aware of our own internal voice-overs and editing processes can we bring into sharper focus the images that we see.'²³⁷ Similarly Cragg calls unambiguously for 'imaginative, uninhibited and uninhibiting sympathy between Arab and Western Christians' ²³⁸

These are however lone voices and there remains a pervasive and arrogant racism implicit in much Christian Zionism in that presence of a Palestinian Church is ignored or denigrated, and their very existence threatened.²³⁹ This is the result not only of the historical processes already considered, but has been compounded

by relatively recent theological controversies concerning biblical prophecy and eschatology. These coincided with the momentous events of 1967.

2.11 The 20th Century Revival of Christian Zionism

In the early 20th Century, following the devastating toll of the 'Great War', and then the 'Great Depression', American fundamentalism became preoccupied with refuting theological liberalism and consequently interest in Zionism appears to have waned.

In a detailed history of the rise of 20th Century American fundamentalism prior to 1970, Erling Jorstad traces the right wing, anti-modernist, anti-communist and xenophobic agenda of the movement. There is significantly, however, no reference to Israel.²⁴⁰ Similarly, in George Marsden's historical overview of the rise of fundamentalism and evangelicalism in America between 1870-1930, he argues that despite some evidence of anti-Semitism, in the early 20th Century there seems to have been little interest in contemporary Israel.²⁴¹

During the 1940's both prior to and after the founding of the state of Israel, liberal Protestant Christians such as Paul Tillich, William Albright and Reinhold Niebuhr were the principle allies of Israel, founding the Christian Council on Palestine in 1942. Niebuhr, as Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary defended his Zionism on pragmatic grounds rather than religious ones in an article for *The Nation* in 1941. Persecution in Europe combined with restrictive immigration laws in America led Niebuhr to recognise the 'moral right' of the Jews to Palestine in order to survive as a nation.²⁴² In 1946 he testified before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in Washington on behalf of the Christian Council on Palestine. While acknowledging the conflicting rights of Arabs and Jews in Palestine, he argued,

The fact however that the Arabs have a vast hinterland in the Middle East, and the fact that the Jews have nowhere to go, establishes the relative justice of their claims and of their cause... Arab sovereignty over a portion of the debated territory must undoubtedly be sacrificed for the sake of establishing a world Jewish homeland.²⁴³

Some notable dispensational leaders did, however, maintain a faithful and vocal commitment to an imminent realisation of the Zionist dream. Dr M. R. DeHaan, for example, founder of the Radio Bible Class World-wide Gospel Broadcast, who was regularly heard via over 600 radio stations world-wide, published his studies in the Book of Daniel in 1947. In a chapter entitled, 'The Jews and Palestine' he interprets the events before and after the Balfour Declaration in the light of Abrahamic Covenant and Belshazzar's "Handwriting on the Wall" from Daniel 5. His racist attitude toward the indigenous Christian and Moslem Palestinians is typical of Christian Zionists yet an inevitable consequence of his dispensational presuppositions.

Now the land of Palestine is the Holy Land because in His eternal purposes and program, God has set it aside for the one purpose of occupation by his peculiar people, the descendants of Jacob, and because it is God's Holy Land, anyone who tampers with it and seeks to separate its people from their possession comes under the judgment of God. This is the record of history...

Belshazzar, the king, stretched forth his hand and touched the holy things of God, the vessels that had been taken from the holy Temple in Jerusalem in the land of Judah. As a result, God brought swift and speedy judgment upon the nation and Babylon fell and came to a dismal end. Today the same thing is still true in principle, and the Holy Land, that little parcel of land... Is still the key to the world's problems. When the nation of that land to whom God has promised it by covenant is given full and free possession of the land, then only will the nations be at rest and the peace for which men strive shall finally be realised.

In recent years, there has been much indication of the fact that this is about to be consummated, and we believe we are sat the very threshold of that glorious time when Israel shall be fully restored top the land again and the millennial rest will be ushered in by the coming of the Messiah. Many Bible students were quite certain some twenty or twenty-five years ago that we had just about reached that period in history when Israel would be restored to the land and it would be a signal for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a well-known fact established in history that when the tide of war was turning against the Allies in World War 1, it was a humble modest Jewish chemist, Dr. Chaim Weitzman, now world famous and very much in the news again, who came forward in the zero hour of the apparent defeat of the Allies with the formula for the most powerful explosive ever discovered up to that time, T.N.T., and donated the discovery to his beloved country, Britain, and that

turned the tide of victory for the Allies... Then it was that Lord Balfour announced that in the event of victory over the enemy, the land of Palestine would be set aside and given to Israel as her national homeland. Well, you remember the war ended, and the Balfour declaration gave Britain the mandate over the entire land of Palestine, the Holy Land. Here we believe was the golden opportunity. She had it in her power and her right to clear the land of its unlawful possessors and make it exclusively the homeland for God's scattered people. However, for reasons of expediency or otherwise, this dream, this promise was never fully realized... If only the nations had been able to see their way clear to keep their promise to set aside the Holy Land as a national refuge and return it again to their rightful possessors to whom God had promised it, God might have raised many, many more of the see of Jacob like Dr. Weitzman to bring blessing and help to the nations of the world... And so the awful crisis continues and the unrest in the land is gaining by leaps and bounds.²⁴⁴

The combination of the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, the capture of Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1967, and the defeat on both occasions of the combined Arab armies, increasingly came to be seen as significant fulfilment's of biblical prophecy by a new generation of American and European dispensational fundamentalists.

Coincidentally, the New Scofield Reference Bible, a revision of the 1917 version, edited by Dr. E. Schuyler English and a team of dispensationalists including John F. Walvoord, was published in 1967 which, given its timing, inevitably fuelled greater interest in Christian Zionism.²⁴⁵ Ironically, Schuyler English had edited a young person's version of the Scofield Bible, entitled the Holy Bible, Pilgrim Edition, some twenty years earlier, in 1948.²⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that the popular edition of the Scofield Reference Bible was published in 1917 coinciding with the Balfour Declaration and in the words of Lord Cecil, 'the rebirth of a nation'²⁴⁷; the youth edition of Scofield with the War of Independence in 1948; and the 'new' edition of Scofield with the occupation of Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1967.

The 1967 'Six Day War' marked a significant watershed for evangelical Christian interest in Israel and Zionism. With the annexation of the West Bank Liberal Protestants and organisations such as the World Council of Churches increasingly distanced themselves from Zionism, whereas the same events fuelled enthusiasm among fundamentalists for Israel.²⁴⁸ For example, Jerry Falwell did not begin to speak about modern-day Israel until after Israel's 1967 military victory.

Falwell changed completely. He entered into politics and became an avid supporter of the Zionist State... the stunning Israeli victory made a big impact not only on Falwell, but on a lot of Americans... Remember that in 1967, the United States was mired in the Vietnam war. Many felt a sense of defeat, helplessness and discouragement. As Americans we were made acutely aware of our own diminished authority, of no longer being able to police the world or perhaps even our own neighbourhoods... Many Americans, including Falwell, turned worshipful glances toward Israel, which they viewed as militarily strong and invincible. They gave their unstinting approval to the Israeli take-over of Arab lands because they perceived this conquest as power and righteousness... Macho or muscular Christians such as Falwell credited Israeli General Moshe Dayan with this victory over Arab forces and termed him the Miracle Man of the Age, and the Pentagon invited him to Vietnam and tell us how to win the war.²⁴⁹

Billy Graham's father-in-law, Nelson Bell, the editor of the prestigious and authoritative mouthpiece of conservative Evangelicalism, Christianity Today, appeared to express the sentiments of many American Evangelicals when, in an editorial in 1967 he wrote,

That for the first time in more than 2,000 years Jerusalem is now completely in the hands of the Jews gives a student of the Bible a thrill and a renewed faith in the accuracy and validity of the Bible. ²⁵⁰

The most influential of all fundamentalist Christian Zionists of the 20th century is undoubtedly Hal Lindsey. He has been described by Time Magazine as 'The Jeremiah for this Generation', and by his own publisher as 'The Father of the Modern-Day Bible Prophecy Movement.'²⁵¹ Lindsey is a prolific writer, with at least eighteen books dealing directly or indirectly with the End Times, his own radio and television programmes, seminars, Holy Land Tours, and by subscription, his monthly Countdown Magazine and International Intelligence Briefing.

Lindsey's most influential book, The Late Great Planet Earth has been described by the New York Times as the '#1 Non-fiction Bestseller of the Decade.' It has gone through more than 100 printings with sales, by 1993,

in excess of 18 million in English, with a further 30 million copies in 31 foreign editions.²⁵² Despite dramatic changes in the world since its publication in 1970, most significantly, it remains in print in its original un-revised form. Lindsey has subsequently become a consultant on Middle Eastern affairs to both the Pentagon and Israeli Government.²⁵³

This particular kind of reading of history, coloured by a literal exegesis of selected biblical scriptures, is dualistic, dogmatic, triumphalist, apocalyptic and confrontational. Lindsey's last but one book, *The Final Battle*, includes the statement on the cover "Never before, in one book, has there been such a complete and detailed look at the events leading up to 'The Battle of Armageddon.'"²⁵⁴

Lindsey confidently asserts that the world is degenerating and that the forces of evil manifest in godless Communism and militant Islam are the real enemies of Israel. He describes in detail the events leading to the great battle at Megiddo between the massive Russian, Chinese and African armies that will attempt but fail to destroy Israel. He and others like Louis Goldberg, a professor of Theology and Jewish Studies at the Moody Bible Institute, offer detailed illustrated plans ostensibly showing future military movements of armies and naval convoys leading up to the battle of Armageddon.²⁵⁵ These will merely hasten the return of Jesus Christ as King of the Jews who will rule over the other nations from the rebuilt Jewish temple on the site of the destroyed Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.²⁵⁶

Jerusalem will be the spiritual centre of the entire world... all people of the earth will come annually to worship Jesus who will rule there.²⁵⁷

One of the reasons fundamentalists appear so enthusiastic about such a terrible scenario may have to do with their hope of the secret rapture. Just before the final conflagration they believe Jesus will,

...'rapture' true Christians into the upper air, while the rest of humankind, was being slaughtered below. 144,000 Jews would bow down before Jesus and be saved, but the rest of Jewry would perish in the mother of all holocausts.²⁵⁸

The Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary have played no small part in promoting a Fundamentalist and Zionist eschatology among thousands of American ministers and missionaries.²⁵⁹ Charles Dyer, a professor of Bible exposition at Dallas even includes photographs allegedly showing Saddam Hussein's reconstruction of Babylon to the same specifications and splendour as Nebuchadnezzar.²⁶⁰ Dyer warns that this is evidence that Hussein plans to attempt to repeat Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Israel, the only Arab ever to have done so. 'The Middle East is the world's time bomb, and Babylon is the fuse that will ignite the events of the end times.'²⁶¹

An indication of how seriously fundamentalists take the military aspect of their apocalyptic scenario can be seen from the content of the itinerary used by Jerry Falwell in his Friendship Tour to Israel in 1983. It included meetings with top Israeli government and military officials and an,

.....On-site tour of modern Israeli battlefields... Official visit to an Israeli defence installation... strategic military positions, plus experience first hand the battle Israel faces as a nation.²⁶²

The demise of the Soviet Union, the rise of militant Islam, the success of the Allies in the Gulf War, and the approaching third millennium have only fuelled more imaginative speculations among fundamentalists, while the same anti-Arab prejudices and Orientalist stereotypes persist.

Long ago the psalmist predicted the final mad attempt of the confederated Arab armies to destroy the nation of Israel... The Palestinians are determined to trouble the world until they repossess what they feel is their land. The Arab nations consider it a matter of racial honour to destroy the State of Israel. Islam considers it a sacred mission of religious honour to recapture Old Jerusalem.²⁶³

Following the Gulf War, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism hired the Fundamentalist musician Pat Boone to promote pilgrimages in North America through a series of costly advertisements in Evangelical journals and on television. According to Wagner there are a number of Evangelical Christian Zionist leaders even more right wing than Falwell and Robertson, who in the 1980's had direct access to Reagan and the White House.²⁶⁴ These include Terry Risenhoover and Doug Kreiger who were very influential in gathering American support for the

Jewish extremist organisation, the Temple Mount Faithful.²⁶⁵ These particular Christian and Jewish Zionists believe that the Moslem Dome of the Rock must be destroyed and the Third Jewish Temple built in order to ensure the return of Jesus.²⁶⁶

To such Fundamentalists the existence of a Palestinian Christian church is either ignored completely, or maligned as theologically Liberal and spiritually dead, an irrelevancy in the inexorable movement of world history leading to the imminent return of the Jewish Messiah. Basilea Schlink, for example, berates the Palestinian Intifada as 'terrorism.... aimed solely at destroying Israel.'²⁶⁷ Her uncompromising views are typical of many other Zionists who elevate the State of Israel to a privileged status far above any human sanction or criticism.

Anyone who disputes Israel's right to the land of Canaan is actually opposing God and his holy covenant with the Patriarchs. He is striving against sacred, inviolable words and promises of God, which He has sworn to keep.²⁶⁸

The founding of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem in 1980 represents in some senses the coming of age of Christian Zionism as a high profile concerted international movement. The ICEJ was opened with the express intention of bringing comfort and support to the Jewish people and the State of Israel. It was built at a time when other governmental embassies were being moved out of Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in protest at Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem. Their promotional material includes the following explanation.

When the vision of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was first given it was expressed in the following concerns; to care for the Jewish people, especially for the newborn State of Israel which includes standing up for the Jews when they are attacked or discriminated against, and for Israel to live in peace and security.... to care that the world wide body of Christ will be rightly related to Israel in comfort, love and prayer for her well-being, to care for the nations whose destinies will be increasingly linked to the way in which they relate to Israel, the care and preparation for the coming of the Lord.²⁶⁹

Among other things the work of the ICEJ specifically includes promoting Zionist pilgrimages, and imposing a Zionist agenda on pilgrimage itineraries. ICEJ are not alone in offering explicit support for Israel. Doug Kreiger, an evangelical fundamentalist listed over 250 pro-Israel evangelical organisations operating in America and founded between 1980-1985.²⁷⁰

2.12 The Coalition of Religious and Political Zionism

There are a number of similarities between 19th Century British and 20th Century American attitudes to Israel. In both, as the international power broker of their day, the blend of religion and politics became inextricably entwined. In the closing decades of the 19th and early 20th Century, there was a convergence of British strategic colonial interests and Christian Zionism within significant segments of the intellectual and political intelligentsia. Likewise current American foreign policy in the Middle East largely coincides with that of the powerful Christian Zionist lobby.²⁷¹ Both parties, now as then, favour a strong and dominant pro-American presence in the Middle East whether for pragmatic reasons of military strategy, or because it conforms to their particular eschatology. Among a consensus of American Christian fundamentalist leaders, these twin motives, religious and political are unashamedly connected and intrinsic to a predicted apocalyptic scenario which one writer has gone so far as to describe as, 'Operation Desert Storm II.'²⁷²

In 1976-77 several events occurred simultaneously which had the effect of accelerating the influence of Christian Zionism as a political phenomenon in America.

A religious and political marriage was consummated between American Zionist organisations, Israeli leadership, and Fundamentalist Christian Zionists.²⁷³

In 1977 the Likud party under Menachem Begin came to power on an expansionist Zionist platform using biblical phraseology to justify the settlement of the West Bank. It was Begin for example who first renamed Israel and the Occupied Territories as Judaea and Samaria.²⁷⁴ In America the Jewish lobby realised the potential significance of wooing the political endorsement of the powerful 50-60 million Evangelical block vote through their fundamentalist leadership. With this in mind, in 1979, the Israeli government honoured Jerry Falwell with

the Jabotinsky Award in appreciation of his support of Israel. They also provided him with a Lear jet to assist in his work on their behalf.²⁷⁵

U.S. President Jimmy Carter was well known for his evangelical beliefs and these he applied to his Middle Eastern policy.²⁷⁶ In a speech made in 1978 he explained how he saw the state of Israel as,

A return at last, to the Biblical land from which the Jews were driven so many hundreds of years ago... The establishment of the nation of Israel is the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy and the very essence of its fulfilment.²⁷⁷

In another speech, this time given before the Israeli Knesset in March 1979 he dwelt on the special relationship between America and Israel, stressing how,

It has been and it is a unique relationship. And it is a relationship that is indestructible, because it is rooted in the consciousness and the morals and the religion and the beliefs of the American people themselves... Israel and the United States were shaped by pioneers - my nation is also a nation of immigrants and refugees - by peoples gathered in both nations from many lands... We share the heritage of the Bible.²⁷⁸

Carter made several trips to the Middle East where he met with both Israeli and Palestinian leaders. His recollection of those meetings demonstrates a sad naivety . When faced with repeated claims of the denial of basic human rights among the Palestinians, Carter innocently confessed,

On one occasion I argued with them about their refusal to take the strongest cases to the Israeli Supreme Court, and I tried to assure the group that they would get a fair hearing and perhaps set a precedent that would be beneficial in many similar cases... I was assured that Israeli lawyers were available to represent the Palestinians... The Israelis told me that in every instance there was a legal basis for the taking of land - or it was needed for security purposes... I asked an Israeli Supreme Court justice if he considered the treatment of the Palestinians fair; he said that he dealt fairly with every case brought before him in the high court... When I inquired about the purposes of the PLO, they seemed somewhat taken aback that I needed to ask such a question...²⁷⁹

Following the failure of the Camp David agreements Carter came to believe the Arab-Israeli conflict could not be solved by international intervention, or even pressure from America, but only by the Israeli electorate.

Unless there is a massive Arab-Israeli war, the key to the future of Israel will not be found outside the country but within. Neither the United States nor any combination of Arab powers can force its preferences on Israel concerning the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinian rights, or the occupied territories of Syria and Lebanon. The judgments concerning what is best for Israel will be made in Jerusalem, through democratic processes involving all Israelis who can express their views or elect their leaders... The outcome of this debate will shape the future of Israel; it may also determine the prospects for peace in the Middle East - and perhaps the world.²⁸⁰

Carter's pessimistic dispensational roots are perhaps evident in the last sentence. His eventual downfall, in part due to the loss of the fundamentalist block vote; the exploitation of the media by Evangelicals Concern for Israel including well known figures as Pat Boone and Vernon Grounds; the rise of Moral Majority as a political campaigning organisation under Jerry Falwell; and the election of Ronald Reagan as a President who publicly subscribed to a Fundamentalist premillennial dispensational theology, all combined to give a considerable boost to the Christian Zionist cause. In the 1980 presidential elections, Wagner claims that 80% of Evangelicals supported the conservative wing of the Republican party, and Ronald Reagan, in particular.

The election of Ronald Reagan ushered in not only the most pro-Israel administration in history but gave several Christian Zionists prominent political posts. In addition to the President, those who subscribed to a futurist premillennial theology and Christian Zionism included Attorney General Ed Meese, Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger, and Secretary of the Interior James Watt.... Once the Reagan Administration opened the door, leading Evangelical Christian Zionist televangelists and writers were given direct access to the President and cabinet members. Rev. Jerry Falwell, Christian Zionist televangelist Mike Evans and author Hal Lindsey among them.²⁸¹

'White House Seminars' became a regular feature of Reagan's administration bringing Christian Zionists

into direct personal contact with national and Congressional leaders.

In Reagan's Address to the Nation on the West Bank and the Palestinians in 1982, marking the ejection of the PLO from Beirut, he gave the official position of the United States government,

Today has been a day that should make all of us proud... Our involvement in the search for Mideast peace is not a matter of preference, it is a moral imperative... We also have an irreversible commitment to the survival and territorial integrity of friendly states... So the United States will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and we will not support annexation or permanent control by Israel... But it is the firm view of the United States that self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best chance for a durable, just and lasting peace.²⁸²

However, in a personal conversation reported in the Washington Post in April of 1984, Reagan told the chief Israeli lobbyist, Tom Dine,

You know, I turn back to the ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if-if we're the generation that is going to see that come about. I don't know if you've noted any of these prophecies lately, but believe me they certainly describe the times we're going through.²⁸³

For Fundamentalists such as Jerry Falwell and Mike Evans, America is seen as the great redeemer, her role in the world providentially and politically preordained.²⁸⁴ The two nations of America and Israel are like Siamese twins, linked not only by common self interest but more significantly by similar religious foundations. Together they are perceived to be pitted against an evil world dominated by Communist and Islamic totalitarian regimes antithetical to the values of America and Israel.²⁸⁵ So for example, Mike Evans, founder and president of Lovers of Israel Inc, in the following quotations from his book, Israel, America's Key to Survival, almost mimics and plays on the apocalyptic scenario of Benjamin Netanyahu, offering 'biblical' grounds for their countries mutual survival.

If America goes down, then the whole world goes down. Nothing will remain of the world. If America was not around, the Soviet Union would take over the world in three days. Their goals are to destroy America... to destroy it... to reduce it to nothing; and they feel they can effectively do it through terrorism.²⁸⁶

Only one nation, Israel, stands between Soviet-sponsored terrorist aggression and the complete decline of the United States as a democratic world power... Surely demonic pressure will endeavor to encourage her to betray Israel. This must not happen. Israel is the key to America's survival. For God has said of the nations who will oppose Israel, "Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted... I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee..."(Isa.60:12; Gen. 12:3)...As we stand with Israel, I believe we shall see God perform a mighty work in our day. God is going to bless America and Israel as well. It is not too late. I believe this is the greatest hour to be alive, and the key is unity, standing tall, proclaiming with a voice of love our commitment to the House of Israel, and to the God of Israel.²⁸⁷

Similarly, Ramon Bennett, author of 'Saga: Israel and the Demise of the Nations' and spokesman for Arm of Salvation, a Christian Zionist organisation based in Jerusalem, emotively dedicates his book, 'To the men of the Israeli Defence Force who display immense courage when facing impossible odds. To the grieving parents, wives, children, sweethearts, sisters and brothers and friends, whose tears have watered the parched earth of Eretz Yisreal.'²⁸⁸

The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem has, since 1980, become the semi-official voice of this coalition of Christian religious and political Zionist organisations, frequently cultivated, exploited and quoted by the Israeli Government when ever a sympathetic Christian view point is needed to enhance their own policies, and rebut Western criticism. For example, in October 1996, Benjamin Netanyahu the Israeli Prime Minister spoke at the Jerusalem 3000 rally organised by the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, to support Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem. Following the provocative opening of an underground tunnel by the Israelis from the Western Wall through the Moslem Quarter, he was cheered when he insisted the tunnel, 'is open. It will stay open. It will always stay open.'²⁸⁹

Not surprisingly the 1993 Peace-Accord signed by the Israeli Government and the PLO has been sharply

criticised by Christian Zionist groups who see it as a threat to the realisation of Eretz Israel. In particular they have opposed the handing back of the West Bank and the threat to the status of the Jewish settlements. For example, Theodore Temple Beckett, Chairman of the Christian Friends of Israel Community Development Foundation, as well as President of the Colorado-based Foundation for Israel, has initiated an 'adopt-a-settlement program among American Evangelical Churches. The Jewish town of Ariel has already been adopted by Faith Bible Chapel in Denver. By the end of 1995 it was Beckett's expectation that around 70 Jewish settlements would have been adopted by churches,

...with larger churches adopting larger settlements and smaller churches adopting smaller settlements and giving all a morale boost to show them they are not alone and are loved by many.²⁹⁰

On the 21st December 1995, just hours before the Israeli's handed over administrative responsibility for Bethlehem to the Palestinian National Authority, the Voice of America radio station carried a news report claiming some Evangelical Christian groups had called for a boycott of Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem in protest.

Nine Christian Organisations have called their faithful not to go to Bethlehem this Christmas, to protest the transfer of the City to Palestinian rule. One of those Groups is called Bridges for Peace. Its Director is Clarence Wagner.

'There are millions of Evangelical Christians and other Middle East Christians who are concerned about the fact that Bethlehem has been unilaterally turned over to the Palestinian Authority, which is under the aegis of the PLO, and therefore has placed Bethlehem under Muslim control. Historically, Islam has not respected Christian holy sites. And here, Manger Square, the birthplace of Jesus, one of the holiest shrines in Christianity, is sort of quietly being turned over to a Muslim authority and no one is saying anything like, 'What will this mean for the future?... We have no idea what the experience under the PA will be, particularly if more fanatical Islamic Fundamentalism does increase in the years to come.'

...But the Latin Patriarch of the Holy Land, Michel Sabbah, who is Palestinian, said he welcomes the transfer of authority in Bethlehem and Mr. Arafat's plan to attend Midnight Mass. He says, religion and politics have always been linked in the Middle East and this is an opportunity to make that linkage in a positive way. Patriarch Sabbah... sharply criticizes those who are calling for a boycott of Bethlehem this Christmas.

'They are our brothers, every human being is our brother, but they are coming from abroad and they are bringing in the country feelings from abroad which do not correspond to the views and to the needs, spiritual and human, of the Land. This Land needs reconciliation. So, this is what we need, and not people coming from outside to tell us to boycott this and boycott that.'²⁹¹

The International Christian Embassy, quoted in the Sunday Times, on Christmas Eve 1995 predicted that the celebrations that night would, '...look more like Arafat's birthday than that of Jesus.'²⁹² Ray Borlaise, writing in the Prayer Bulletin of Intercrossors for Britain in January 1996, made similar criticisms of the transfer of power in Bethlehem, but apparently on sound theological grounds,

It is plain from Zechariah 12 that Jerusalem will become a contentious issue leading to conflict. Many feel that Ezekiel 38 & 39 will take place in the last days and will be a conflict between Islamic countries and Israel. There may be previous skirmishes before that battle takes place on the 'mountains of Israel' - some areas of which have just been handed over to the Palestinians. We sense that the peace may falter causing Samaria and Judea to pass back into Jewish hands. Will God allow Bethlehem, the burial place of Rachel, the town of Ruth and the birth place of David (let alone that of Jesus) to remain in Arab hands when it was promised to Abraham, Issac (sic) and Jacob as an eternal inheritance? (Genesis 17)²⁹³

Borlaise, in one short paragraph, makes a number of typical Christian Zionist assumptions which will be explored in more detail in a later chapter. He assumes, for example, that selectively chosen ancient Hebrew writings relate directly to contemporary events, and will thereby some how determine future events, conveniently ignoring other prophetic passages in which God warns of the expulsion of the Jews from the land as and when they fail to act righteously and with justice. It is also interesting that Borlaise not only refers to the Occupied Territories, as 'Judea and Samaria,' but also assumes that because Bethlehem had an historical significance in Jewish history between 3,500 - 2000 years ago, contemporary Jewish people have some divine

right to occupy and confiscate the land of those living there prior to 1967.

A notorious example of this relates to the confiscation of Palestinian owned land at Abu-Ghoneim mountain, located at the northern edge of Beit Sahour on the traditional site of the Shepherds Fields, which was ratified by the Israeli Supreme Court on December 4th 1994. Local Christians see this particular Jewish settlement project, called Har Homa, as one of the most serious and dangerous, not only because the building work involves the destruction of several ancient Christian shrines, but also because it demonstrates a flagrant State-initiated contradiction and judicially-ratified disregard for both the text and spirit of the Peace Accord signed a year earlier.²⁹⁴

At the Third International Christian Zionist Congress, held in February 1996 under the auspices of ICEJ, the following resolutions were passed unanimously indicating the explicit religio-political agenda of ICEJ.

Further, we are persuaded by the clear unctio[n] of our God to express the sense of this Congress on the following concerns before us this day,

1. Because of the sovereign purposes of God for the City, Jerusalem must remain undivided, under Israeli sovereignty, open to all peoples, the capitol of Israel only, and all nations should so concur and place their embassies here.

2. As a faith bound to love and forgiveness we are appreciative of the attempts by the Government of Israel to work tirelessly for peace. However, the truths of God are sovereign and it is written that the Land which He promised to His People is not to be partitioned... It would be further error for the nations to recognize a Palestinian state in any part of Eretz Israel.

3. To the extent the Palestinian Covenant or any successor instrument calls for the elimination of Israel or denies the right of Israel to exist within secure borders in Eretz Israel, it should be abolished.

4. The Golan is part of biblical Israel and is a vital strategic asset necessary for the security and defense of the entire country.

C. The Islamic claim to Jerusalem, including its exclusive claim to the Temple Mount, is in direct contradiction to the clear biblical and historical significance of the city and its holiest site, and this claim is of later religio-political origin rather than arising from any Qur'anic text or early Muslim tradition.

7. While Gentile believers have been grafted into that household of faith which is of Abraham (the commonwealth of Israel), replacement theology within the Christian faith, which does not recognize the ongoing biblical purposes for Israel and the Jewish People, is doctrinal error.

8. Regarding Aliyah, we remain concerned for the fate of imperiled Jewish People in diverse places, and seek to encourage and assist in the continuing process of Return of the Exiles to Eretz Israel. To this end we commit to work with Israel and to encourage the Diaspora to fulfill the vision and goal of gathering to Israel the greater majority of all Jewish People from throughout the world.²⁹⁵

Under Netanyahu's influence, the Israeli government remains enthusiastic to nurture the support of Christian Zionists. Exploiting the association of Megiddo with the apocalypse, Israeli planners and architects, with Netanyahu's blessing, have begun creating a three dimensional 'virtual Megiddo'. While some critics have described it 'Apocalypso', Israeli officials are keen to capitalise on the millions of additional visitors, 'expected to flock to mark the end of the millennium in gloomy style.'²⁹⁶ Ze'ev Margalit, the official in charge of the development claimed, ...the beauty of this place is that it has a 6,000-year history that can take people back to the dawn of civilisation, a vibrant present and an apocalyptic future.²⁹⁷ Anxious to avoid creating a 'Disneyland of the apocalypse', Margalit added, 'There are a lot of different ideas on how to deal with this. It is easy to get kitsch and we must avoid that. So we will leave a lot to the imagination.'²⁹⁸ Keen to encourage greater numbers of Christians to visit Israel leading up to the Millennium, Netanyahu has recently taken part in programmes broadcast on Evangelical radio stations.

Boosting evangelical tourism dovetails with his plans to deepen Israel's ties with leaders of America's Christian far right, many of whom are sympathetic to Zionism... Netanyahu has a long history of nurturing these

ties. He believes the conservative Christian influence in American public opinion, and particularly within the Republican party controlling congress, can be used to counter liberal Democrats such as President Bill Clinton, who want Israel to cede land to the Palestinians.²⁹⁹

2.13 A Preliminary Critique of Christian Zionism

Armstrong is not alone in tracing in Western Christian Zionism evidence of the legacy of the Crusades. Fundamentalists have, she claims, 'returned to a classical and extreme religious crusading.'³⁰⁰ The Ruether's also see the danger of this kind of Christian Zionism in its, 'dualistic, Manichaeic view of global politics. America and Israel together against an evil world.'³⁰¹

The following quote from Senator Bob Dole is a good example,

American-Israeli friendship is no accident. It is a product of our shared values. We are both democracies. We are both pioneer states. We have both opened our doors to the oppressed. We have both shown a passion for freedom and we have gone to war to protect it. ³⁰²

This 'simple dualism' and 'highly dogmatic thinking' is something a number of sociologists have observed as common to much American fundamentalism.³⁰³ Bishop Kenneth Cragg writes,

It is so; God chose the Jews; the land is theirs by divine gift. These dicta cannot be questioned or resisted. They are final. Such verdicts come infallibly from Christian biblicists for whom Israel can do no wrong—thus fortified. But can such positivism, this unquestioning finality, be compatible with the integrity of the Prophets themselves? It certainly cannot square with the open peoplehood under God which is the crux of New Testament faith. Nor can it well be reconciled with the ethical demands central to law and election alike. ³⁰⁴

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), representing the indigenous and ancient Oriental and Eastern Churches, has been highly critical of the activities of Christian Zionists, and the International Christian Embassy, in particular. They assert, for instance, that the International Christian Embassy has aggressively imposed an aberrant expression of the Christian faith and an erroneous interpretation of the Bible which is subservient to the political agenda of the modern State of Israel. Indeed they represent a tendency to,

...force the Zionist model of theocratic and ethnocentric nationalism on the Middle East... (rejecting)... the movement of Christian unity and inter-religious understanding which is promoted by the (indigenous) churches in the region. The Christian Zionist programme, with its elevation of modern political Zionism, provides the Christian with a world view where the gospel is identified with the ideology of success and militarism. It places its emphasis on events leading up to the end of history rather than living Christ's love and justice today.³⁰⁵

In 1988 the MECC went further insisting that Christian Zionism had no place in the Middle East and should be repudiated by the universal Church because it was 'a dangerous distortion' and significant shift away from orthodox Christocentric expressions of the Christian faith.

(This is) ...a fundamental disservice also to Jews who may be inspired to liberate themselves from discriminatory attitudes and thereby rediscover equality with the Palestinians with whom they are expected to live God's justice and peace in the Holy Land.³⁰⁶

Although ICEJ's support for Israel is primarily political, MECC has been concerned more with its theological basis, and ICEJ's attempt to sacralize a political ideology beyond human criticism or ethical standards and to treat the security of a Jewish State within the entire land presently occupied as a fundamental axiom of their supra-historical eschatology. The declarations following the first, second and third Christian Zionist Congresses, organised by ICEJ in 1985, 1988 and 1996, according to MECC, show a significant shift away from orthodox Christocentric expressions of the Christian faith. Based on the writings of ICEJ's spokesman, rev. Jan Willem van der Hoeven, MECC argue that the 'Christian Zionist',

.....is placed in a reductionist eschatology by engaging in actions designed to bring 'comfort and support' to modern political Israel. Accordingly, Jesus is de-emphasised, as is His death and resurrection, while salvation

and judgment are redefined.... Christians will be judged solely according to their actions on behalf of the state of Israel. True Christians are those who leave their Gentile background and become 'Israelites of God' ³⁰⁷

It is therefore perhaps not surprising that among the Middle East churches generally, Christian Zionism is regarded as a devious heresy and an unwelcome and alien intrusion into their culture, which advocates an ethnocentric and nationalist political agenda running counter to their work of reconciliation, and patient witness among both Jews and Muslims.³⁰⁸ In the course of interviews conducted in 1993, one leading Anglican cleric said, 'Making God into a real estate agent is heart breaking... They are not preaching Jesus any more.'³⁰⁹ They are, in the words of another Palestinian clergyman, 'instruments of destruction'³¹⁰ Another senior churchman was equally forthright,

Their presence here is quite offensive... projecting themselves as really the Christians of the land... with total disregard for the indigenous Christian community.³¹¹

Similarly outspoken criticisms of the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC) were made by another Palestinian Anglican clergyman.

CMJ are propagating Zionism rather than Christianity. It is working against the interests of the Anglican Church in Israel. ³¹²

Essentially, Christian Zionism fails to recognise the deep seated problems that exist between Palestinians and Israelis; it distorts the Bible and marginalises the universal imperative of the Christian Gospel; has grave political ramifications and ultimately ignores the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of indigenous Christians.³¹³ It is a situation that many believe Israel exploits to her advantage, cynically welcoming American Christian Zionists as long as they remain docile and compliant with Israeli government policy. Consequently,

Local Christians are caught in a degree of museumization. They are aware of tourists who come in great volume from the West to savour holy places but who are, for the most part, blithely disinterested in the people who indwell them. The pain of the indifference is not eased insofar as the same tourism is subtly manipulated to make the case for the entire legitimacy of the statehood that regulates it.³¹⁴

Cragg offers this astute critique of Christian Zionism,

The overriding criteria of Christian perception have to be those of equal grace and common justice. From these there can be no proper exemption, however alleged or presumed. Chosenness cannot properly be either an ethnic exclusivism or a political facility.³¹⁵

Christian Zionism appears, at least in the eyes of its critics, to offer an uncritical endorsement of the Israeli political right and at the same time shows an inexcusable lack of compassion for the Palestinian tragedy. In doing so it has apparently legitimised their oppression in the name of the Gospel.

Is such a condemnation of Western Christian Zionism legitimate? The task of this thesis will be to examine in detail the various forms of Western Fundamentalist Christian Zionism, to note their historical development, to appraise their theological interpretation of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures and to assess their political impact on the Middle East and indigenous Palestinian Church, in particular.

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Chapter 3

Edward Irving (1792-1834)

The Rapture and the Rupture Between Israel and the Church

1. Irving and the Revival of 19th Century Premillennialism

The development of premillennialism in the nineteenth century, and the revolution in prophetic and apocalyptic speculation concerning the 'rapture' and the return of Christ can be largely attributed to the Scottish, Edward Irving¹, also the forerunner of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.²

Having accepted a call in 1822 to pastor the Church of Scotland congregation at the Caledonian Chapel, Irving soon became a popular if controversial speaker. So much so that the Chapel proved too small for the large numbers who wanted to hear him, and a larger church was built in Regent Square in 1827.³

Given his growing popularity Irving was invited to preach at the annual service of the London Missionary Society in 1824, and a year later in 1825 to the Continental Society, in which Henry Drummond was already influential. Irving's address on that occasion was provocatively entitled, 'Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed',

...in it Irving advanced the assertion that the Church, far from being on the threshold of a new era of blessing, was about to enter a 'series of thick-coming judgments and fearful perplexities' preparatory to Christ's advent and reign.⁴

Irving published the address acknowledging in the foreword, his indebtedness to Hatley Frere, an influential layman who held premillennialist views.⁵

In 1828 Irving confidently wrote to Thomas Chalmers, who had just been appointed Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh, to ask whether he might be examined for a doctorate in divinity, as well as have further opportunity to preach in Edinburgh on the theme of the Kingdom. In that letter he gave some indication of his theological emphasis at that time,

The second coming of the Lord is the 'point de vue', the vantage ground, as one of my friends is won't to word it, from which, and from which alone, the whole purpose of God can be contemplated and understood.⁶

2. Irving Views on the Gentile Church and the Jewish People

In 1826 Irving was introduced to the views of Manuel Lacunza a Spanish Jesuit who wrote a book under the pseudonym of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, allegedly a converted Jew, entitled, 'The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty'. Lacunza interpreted all but the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation as describing apocalyptic events about to happen.

Irving was so excited by Lacunza's speculations, he mastered Spanish in order to translate and publish the work in English.⁷ Irving added a 203 page preface to the translation in which he presented with great

conviction his own unique prophetic speculations about the end of the world, predicting the apostasy of Christendom, the subsequent restoration of the Jews and finally the imminent return of Christ.

When the Lord shall have finished the taking of witness against the Gentiles... he will begin to prepare another ark of testimony... and to that end will turn his Holy Spirit unto his ancient people, the Jews, and bring them unto those days of refreshing... This outpouring of the Spirit is known in Scripture by 'the latter rain'.⁸

These three points of doctrine concerning the Gentile church, the future Jewish and universal church, and the personal advent of the Lord to destroy the one and to build up the other, I opened and defended out of the scriptures from Sabbath to Sabbath, with all boldness, yet with fear and trembling... at that time I did not know of one brother in the ministry who held with me in these matters, and of those to whom I broke the subject, I could not get the ear, even for preliminaries. So novel and strange a doctrine... such uncivil and implacable language, concerning overwhelming judgments upon the very eve of the millennial blessedness... such low and derogatory of the risen and exalted Saviour, as that he should ever again come to visit earth, and be visibly present in it for any length of time, could not fail, and certainly did not fail, to call down upon my head all possibly forms and degrees of angry and intemperate abuse... But the more I examined, the more I was convinced, and resolved, though alone and single-handed, to maintain these three great heads of doctrine from the holy scriptures, against all who should undertake to uphold the commonly-received notion, that the present Gentile dispensation was about to burst forth with the millennial blessedness, after which, to wind up and consume all, the Lord would come in the latter end.⁹

In 1828 Irving wrote, a work of over 500 pages entitled, *The Last Days: A Discourse on the Evil Character of These Our Times, Proving Them to be The 'Perilous Times' and the 'Last Days.'* The first chapter is entitled, 'Introductory, to prove that the Last Times and Last Days of Holy Scripture are the Conclusion of the Jewish Captivity and the Gentile Dispersion.' Irving was clearly convinced that the Lord would return in his generation,

I conclude, therefore, that the last days... will begin to run from the time of God's appearing for his ancient people, and gathering them together to the work of destroying all Antichristian nations, of evangelising the world, and of governing it during the Millennium...

The times and fulness of the times, so often mentioned in the New Testament, I consider as referring to the great period numbered by times... Now if this reasoning be correct, as there can be little doubt that the one thousand two hundred and sixty days concluded in the year 1792, and the thirty additional days in the year 1823, we are already entered upon the last days, and the ordinary life of a man will carry many of us to the end of them. If this be so, it gives to the subject with which we have introduced this year's ministry a very great importance indeed.¹⁰

Unlike Hal Lindsey and later dispensationalists, Irving believed the reference to 'Gog' in Ezekiel 38 to be,

...a confederacy of all the nations of the East, which are left from the destruction of the Roman apostasy, which procedeth this great congregation of nations against Jerusalem spoken of in all the prophets.¹¹

3. Irving and the Prophetic Conference Movement

Irving's premillennial and prophetic views concerning Israel came to have a profound influence over many Christian leaders and politicians not least John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Brethren and Henry Drummond (1786-1860), a city banker and politician, who later founded the Catholic Apostolic Church.

On the first day of Advent in 1826, the same year Irving was translating Lacunza's work, Drummond opened his home at Albury Park to a select group of some twenty invited guests to discuss matters of prophecy. These included the Revd. Lewis Way who had helped found the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews, or London Jews Society, as it was more commonly named, along with Joseph Frey. Also present was Hugh McNeile, another Anglican who, in 1830, published a book entitled 'The Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation,' from Albury Rectory. In this book McNeile made frequent references to 'dispensations' and the future national pre-eminence of Israel.¹² Some twenty men attended the first conference and in the region of forty attended one or more of those held at Albury. The majority were like Lewis Way and

Hugh McNeile, were Anglicans, although others were Moravian, Church of Scotland and Nonconformist ministers.¹³ Irving was to write of the first such conference,

...the six days we spent under the holy and hospitable roof of Albury House, within the chime of the church bell, and surrounded by the most picturesque and beautiful forms of nature... of which I can say is this, that no council, from that first which we convened at Jerusalem until this time, seemed more governed, and conducted, and inspired by a spirit of holy communion.¹⁴

Similar premillennial prophetic conferences were held at Albury each year until 1830, before proliferating, apparently under the increasing influence of J. N. Darby to other venues including the Powerscourt Conferences in Dublin held in the 1830's, to New York in 1868, London in 1873, Chicago in 1875, and culminating in the Bible Conference Movement and the Niagara Conferences of 1883 to 1897. Regular topics covered included speculations on the Second Coming.

Both the method of 'Bible readings' and the topics of the conferences strongly suggest that the gatherings were a result of J.N. Darby's travels in the United States and the influence of the Plymouth Brethren.¹⁵

Though already dead for fifty years, Irving is also attributed to have been the cause of the split that occurred at the 1884 Niagara Conference over what became known as the 'Rapture-Rupture'.¹⁶

4. The Origin of the 'Secret Pretribulation Rapture' Doctrine

Darby began publishing his prophetic speculations in 1831. Coincidentally both he and Edward Irving began to postulate two stages to Christ's imminent return about the same time. First, there would be an invisible 'appearing' when Christians would meet Christ in the air and be removed from the earth, a process which came to be known as 'the rapture of the saints'. With the restraining presence of the Holy Spirit removed from the world, the Antichrist would arise and the seven year tribulation would begin. His rule would finally be crushed only by the public 'appearing' of Jesus Christ.

There is some speculation that this novel doctrine emerged as a result of the Powerscourt prophetic conference held near Dublin in 1831. 'Darby's prominence at the Powerscourt meetings has led to the supposition that he was responsible for it...'¹⁷ While dispensationalists have been most anxious to perpetuate this belief to ensure a measure of orthodoxy, there is much evidence to the contrary.¹⁸ Several have attributed the notion of a secret, pretribulation Rapture to Edward Irving.¹⁹ Dave MacPherson argues convincingly that the doctrine arose through a prophetic revelation given to Margaret MacDonald, one of Irving's disciples.²⁰

Corroborating evidence can be found in the division the doctrine caused among dispensationalists between pre-tribulationists and post-tribulationists at the Niagara Prophecy Conferences from about 1884.

The 'Rapture-Rupture' essentially had Robert Cameron, Nathaniel West, and later W. R. Erdman, holding for a 'Rapture' at the very end of the age. They were to be supported by W. G. Moorehead of Xenia Theological Seminary. An apparent majority of the Niagarans, including Brookes, Scofield, Gaebelein, Parson, Gordon and George Needham, were holding for what has become the traditional pretribulation view.²¹

Gaebelein, writing some fifty years later about the Scofield Reference Bible, looked back at the Niagara Conferences and linked the controversy to Irving.

Toward the end of the Niagara meetings several of the teachers, influenced by one man, who was considered an outstanding biblical and ecclesiastical scholar (as he undoubtedly was), began to abandon this distinction and branded it as mere invention. One of them went so far as to say that the teaching that the Lord would remove His true Church before the predicted Great Tribulation judgment, and that so far as His coming for His saints is concerned that it might occur at any moment, originated in the days of Edward Irving and his spurious gift of tongues revival. And so the blessed hope of the imminent coming of the Lord was more or less charged to the influence of subtle demons.²²

Gaebelein may have merely been repeating the position known to be held by Darby via Scofield concerning Irving's later eccentricities. Despite the obvious influence Darby and Irving had upon one another in

the early days of the Prophecy Conferences at Albury and Powerscourt, Darby eventually disassociated himself from the fanciful prophecies of the Irvingites and the Catholic Apostolic Church. Scofield himself denied that Irving was the source of this doctrine. Responding to criticisms from a former colleague at the Niagara Conference, and following its demise over infighting over the 'rapture' he wrote an anonymous editorial in *Our Hope* in 1902,

We cannot, however, in the interests of truth, allow the statement to stand that 'until the days of Edward Irving, who was excluded from the Presbyterian Church for heresy, no one ever heard of this 'coming for' and 'coming with his saints.'" As a matter of fact, Irving was excluded, not for heresy in doctrine, but for his view on church order... If the editor of the *Watchword and Truth* will turn to Zechariah 14:4,5, he will learn of a statement concerning the coming with which considerably antedates Edward Irving... And if, further, he will turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, he will find a revelation concerning the 'coming for His saints' later indeed than Zechariah by six hundred years, but still about eighteen hundred years before Edward Irving.²³

As late as 1976 Walvoord was still anxious to distance the origin of the doctrine of the Rapture from Irving.

The often-repeated charge that Darby secured his pretribulationism from Edward Irving has never been actually documented. One can hardly account for the wide acceptance of pretribulationism by Plymouth Brethren, who are devoted students of the bible, to the offering of this view by a person who had no reputation for orthodoxy.²⁴

Canfield notes that Walvoord's position contradicts several British historians who were closer to the issue.

Neatby, writing in 1901, Howard Rowden in 1967, F. Roy Coad in 1968 and Iain Murray in 1971, all find direct and reasonable links between the ideas of Irving and the role of J. N. Darby. The link is so evident that a denial, using semantics on Walvoord's part, does not 'wash'.²⁵

5. Irving's Legacy: the Legitimisation of Christian Zionism within the British Evangelical Establishment

John Nelson Darby had resigned his curacy in the Church of Ireland in 1827 to form a new church, the Brethren. Edward Irving was to do the same, leaving the Church of Scotland to form the Catholic Apostolic Church in 1832. The circumstances of his departure, like Darby's, had as much to do with his eschatology and confidence in direct personal divine guidance as it did with the opposition to their views from others.

By the end of 1829 all the factors were present which were to cast such shadows over the closing years of Irving's ministry. His fascination for the curious and the speculative had led him to accept conjectures on Christ's humanity... To Irving, confident of the guidance of the Spirit and no longer bound by 'received traditions', the opposition he provoked was proof of the decadence he had complained of in the churches since 1825. A further proof of the unspirituality of the religious world was now added. By 1829 he was convinced that the supernatural powers present in the first century should be possessed by the Church 'as surely and richly now as in the days of the Apostles'. The absence of miraculous gifts was the fruit of the Church's long unbelief.²⁶

It is an indication of Irving's influence over Henry Drummond and the Continental Society that in 1830, the year Irving separated from the Church of Scotland because of accusations of heresy, the Society nevertheless passed a resolution written by Henry Drummond to the effect,

That this Meeting, impressed with the thought that the day of labour is far spent, and must soon close... do recognise the great duty and privilege of raising the cry throughout apostate Christendom, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."²⁷

Edward Irving's premature death in 1834 while on a preaching tour of Scotland left the reins of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Henry Drummond's hands, the hope of the restoration of Israel to men like Lewis Way and Hugh McNeile and the cause of premillennialism to be shaped and forged by John Nelson Darby's nascent dispensationalism alone.

Horatius Bonar was happy to write a 31 page preface to a second edition of Irving's *The Last Days*,

published in 1850, 16 years after his death. In it Bonar made this assessment of Irving's life and ministry,

My sympathies are strongly with the author, and, in the main, with his sentiments and expositions; at least those bearing upon prophecy, and relating to the characteristics of the last days... It is a work of power, but not of effort, giving evidence of a gifted mind, and an observant eye... Thus, 'he being dead yet speaketh.' He speaks to the Church. He speaks to the kingdom. He speaks as a minister of the gospel. He speaks as an ambassador of Christ, and as a witness for his speedy coming. He speaks as a watchman, set by his commander on the tower of some beleaguered fortress, and he speaks as a soldier, cheering on his comrades in the day of sore and weary battle. He speaks as a patriot, in the fulness of his yearning heart, - a patriot of the ancient type and time, uncorrupted, undegenerated, single-eyed, and fearless, - a patriot of the truest stock, and noblest blood, that Scotland ever bore, or England reared.²⁸

John Ellerton, an Anglican evangelical and young contemporary of Irving, wrote this assessment of his influence over many clergy and laity of the Established Church after his death,

I thought of him chiefly as an open-air preacher... But the favourite, the inexhaustible subject of talk among serious people was unfulfilled prophecy. The Irvingite movement, (as people would call it) had popularized Millenarian speculations among many who resisted steadily all belief in the new 'Miracles' and 'Tongues'. Names now utterly forgotten of writers on prophecy formed the staple reading, I am afraid, for a good many of the religious folk among whom I lived; and their speculations turned chiefly on the chronology of the future - in what year the Jews were to be restored, Popery to be destroyed, and the Millennium to begin.²⁹

The influence of the premillennial Zionist views of men like Lewis Way and Hugh McNeile upon other Anglican ministers can be seen in the observation made by E. B. Elliott, who wrote his own four volume 2,500 page treatise on the Apocalypse, which was to go through five editions in 18 years,³⁰

In the year 1844, the date of the first publication of my own work on the Apocalypse, so rapid has been the progress of these views in England, that instead of its appearing a thing strange and half-heretical to hold them, as when Irving published his translation of Ben Ezra, the leaven had evidently now deeply penetrated the religious mind; and from the ineffectiveness of the opposition hitherto formally made to them, they seemed gradually advancing toward to triumph.³¹

Charles Simeon (1759-1836), who was to outlive Irving by just two years was probably the most influential Anglican leader to embrace the cause of Christian Zionism in the early 19th Century. In his latter years Simeon was consumed with a passion for the conversion of Jews, and the establishment of the London Jews Society, looking for 'a full and imminent restoration of God's chosen people.'³²

Whilst Way and others evangelized on the Continent, Simeon at home acted as a kind of one-man general staff, preaching for the Society, recruiting workers, spreading propaganda, collecting funds, advising on overall strategy. He did so with even more than his usual sense of urgency. He lived to see the work prosper remarkably. An annual income of £7,000 in 1815 was doubled by 1836. Episcopal patronage was bestowed on the Society... In that progress Charles Simeon had no small part.³³

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- ¹ Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1971), p. 188.
- ² Arnold Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving: The Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1983); Gordon Strachan, *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving* (Peabody, Massachusetts, 1973).
- ³ J.D. Douglas, 'Edward Irving' *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. ed. J. D. Douglas. rev. edn. (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1978) p.517.
- ⁴ Iain H. Murray, *Puritan.*, p. 189.
- ⁵ M. O. W. Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving* 2 vols. (London, 1862), p. 96.
- ⁶ Oliphant, *The Life.*, p. 255.
- ⁷ Arnold Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving, Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1983), p. 62.
- ⁸ Edward Irving, preliminary discourse, 'on Ben Ezra', *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra a converted Jew, Translated from the Spanish, with a Preliminary Discourse (London, L.B. Seeley & Sons, 1827), pp. 5-6.
- ⁹ Edward Irving, *The Rev. Edward Irving's Preliminary Discourse to the Work of Ben Ezra entitled the Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* 1859 reprint, pp. 7-8, quoted in Iain Murray, *Hope.*, p. 190.
- ¹⁰ Edward Irving, *The Last Days A Discourse on the Evil Character of These Our Times, Proving Them to be The 'Perilous Times' and the 'Last Days'* (London, James Nisbit, 1850), pp. 10-22.
- ¹¹ Irving, *Last.*, p. 25.
- ¹² Dean Hugh McNeile, *The Collected Works, Vol. II. The Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation* (London, The Christian Book Society, [1830] 1878)
- ¹³ Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1971), p.191.
- ¹⁴ Edward Irving, *Preliminary Discourse.*, pp. 197-202
- ¹⁵ Bruce L. Shelly, 'Niagara Conferences', *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* ed. J. D. Douglas. rev. edn. (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1978) p. 706.
- ¹⁶ Joseph M. Canfield, *The Incredible Scofield and His Book* (Vallecito, California, Ross House, 1988), pp. 122-130. See also Richard R. Reiter, *The Decline of the Niagara Bible Conference and Breakup of the United Premillennial Movement*. Unpublished Paper, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1976.
- ¹⁷ Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, Tennessee, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), p. 25.
- ¹⁸ John Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and The Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1976), p. 48.
- ¹⁹ Bass, *Backgrounds.*, p. 41; Jon Zens, *Dispensationalism: A Reformed Inquiry Into Its Leading Figures and Features* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, Presbyterian and reformed, 1980), p. 18. Cited in Gerstner, *Wrongly.*, pp. 25-26
- ²⁰ Dave MacPherson, *The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin* (Kansas City, Heart of America Bible Society, 1973) and *The Incredible Cover-Up* (Medford, Oregon, Omega Publications, 1975)
- ²¹ Canfield, *Incredible.*, p. 127.
- ²² Arno C. Gaebelien, *The History of the Scofield Reference Bible* (Spokane, WA, Living Word Foundation, 1991), p. 41.
- ²³ Gaebelien, *History.*, p. 43.
- ²⁴ Walvoord, *Blessed.*, p. 48.
- ²⁵ Canfield, *Incredible.*, pp. 129-130. See also his fn. 27, p. 132.
- ²⁶ Murray, *Puritan.*, p. 193.
- ²⁷ Le Roy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers* (1946), Vol. 3, p. 447. quoted in Murray, *Puritan.*, p. 194.
- ²⁸ Irving, *Last.*, Preface.
- ²⁹ Henry Houseman, *John Ellerton, A Sketch of his Life and Works* (1896), p. 19, quoted in Murray, *Puritan.*, p. 196.
- ³⁰ E.B. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ, A Commentary on the Apocalypse* 4th edn. (1851), quoted in Murray, *Puritan.*, p. 197.
- ³¹ Elliott, *Horae.*, vol. 4, p. 522.
- ³² W. Carus, *Memoirs of the Life of Rev. Charles Simeon* (1847), p. 514.
- ³³ Arthur Pollard, 'The Influence and Significance of Simeon's Work' in *Charles Simeon 1759-1836* eds. Arthur Pollard & Michael Hennell (London, SPCK, 1964), p. 180.

Chapter 4

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)

The Father of Premillennial Dispensationalism

1. Darby's Background and the Origins of the Premillennial Dispensationalism

John Nelson Darby is regarded by many as the father of premillennial dispensationalism and the most influential figure in the development of its prodigy, Christian Zionism¹. Darby was ordained in the church of Ireland in 1825 with a burning desire to evangelise Roman Catholics through the work of the Home Mission. He claimed that Catholics were 'becoming Protestants at a rate of 600 to 800 a week' which amounted to something of a revival.² However, when his Bishop insisted that they also swear an oath of allegiance to the English Crown, Darby protested that this was unthinkable because it was, 'unscriptural, and derogatory to the glory of Christ'.³ His Bishop was unmoved, so Darby, remaining resolutely consistent with his own emerging theological stance, took the logical step of renouncing the visible church, both Anglican and Dissenting, as apostate. 'This manifestation of the glory of Christ by the Church in unity no longer exists.'⁴

His analysis of the contemporary ecclesiastical scene was to become increasingly pessimistic, judgmental and sectarian. His repeated response was to declare 'The Church is in ruins.'⁵ He went on to insist that this was not merely the result of denominational division but that, '...the entire nature and purpose of the church has become so perverted that it is diametrically opposed to the fundamental reason for which it is instituted'.⁶

The prevailing eschatology arising from the 18th Century Great Awakening was essentially postmillennial, inspiring great optimism and the rise of world-wide missionary endeavour⁷. This Darby, and others like Irving, opposed strongly and vigorously. In a lecture given in Geneva in 1840, Darby insisted,

What we are about to consider will tend to show that, instead of permitting ourselves to hope for a continued progress of good, we must expect a progress of evil; and that the hope of the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord before the exercise of His judgement, and the consummation of this judgement on the earth, is delusive. We are to expect evil, until it becomes so flagrant that it will be necessary for the Lord to judge it... I am afraid than many a cherished feeling, dear to the children of God, has been shocked this evening; I mean, their hope that the gospel will spread by itself over the whole earth during the actual dispensation.⁸

During the period 1826-1828 he began meeting with a few influential friends for prayer, study and fellowship and following the publication of his first tract in 1828⁹ they established what in effect became an informal house church.¹⁰ Their meetings drew others disenchanted with the religious establishment and soon developed into a close knit and exclusive connection of fellowships known as the Brethren.

To both proponents and critics, Darby was the undeniable founder and apologist for the Brethren movement, or Darbyites as they were sometimes called. Doctrinally, he was the primary influence in expressing and propagating what came to be the distinctive ultra literalist theology of the Brethren, forging and maintaining

a rigid, almost fanatical creed of doctrinal purity, in what he and others believed were the final days of history.

Darby's distinctive premillennial views were inevitably influenced by those of a similar persuasion whom he met at the prophetic conferences held near Dublin under the sponsorship of Lady Powerscourt in the early 1830's, which came to be shaped by his dominating and charismatic leadership.¹¹ These meetings can be traced originally to the home of Henry Drummond in Albury, Surrey, which, from 1826, became 'the centre for wild speculation',¹² under the charismatic influence of Edward Irving.

These exclusive prophetic gatherings which focused on a pessimistic interpretation of world events and the imminent return of Christ, confirmed both Darby's denunciation of the established churches, and also his own prophetic calling. Coad insists, 'He felt himself an instrument of God, burdened with an urgent call to His people to come out of associations doomed to judgement.'¹³

A number of influential Christian leaders were present beside Edward Irving who undoubtedly influenced Darby. Nevertheless Darby rarely conceded, at least in writing, to the influence of others on his own theological views, let alone quoted from them or admitted to advocating their views. There is however, one lone reference to Irving in Darby's 34 volumes. It is the one implicit acknowledgement of Irving's influence on Darby, though even here Darby is keen to stress how he disassociated himself from the fanciful prophecies of the Irvingites and the Catholic Apostolic Church.

The largest expression of piety and holiness prove nothing. They were found in Mr Irving's writings, and much most blessed and precious truth too; few writings could be named where there is so much.¹⁴

For Darby, 'Separation from evil was the divine principle of unity,'¹⁵ since doctrinal error led, so he claimed, to 'gross moral contamination.'¹⁶ On another occasion Darby admitted, 'I prefer quoting many passages than enlarging upon them.'¹⁷

Not surprisingly perhaps, Charles Spurgeon observed in Darbyism, a growing tendency to isolationism, obscurantism and a party spirit.¹⁸ Spurgeon regarded their hermeneutics as 'warped' and his colourful description might easily apply to some contemporary Christian Zionists, 'Plymouth Brethren delight to fish up some hitherto undiscovered tadpole of interpretation, and cry it round the town as a rare dainty.'¹⁹

Former co-labourers like George Muller, Anthony Groves and Benjamin Newton, for example, experienced first hand Darby's severe and intolerant autocratic leadership which led to painful and repeated doctrinal schism within the Brethren movement.²⁰

Darby was a charismatic figure, a dominant personality, persuasive speaker and zealous missionary for his dispensationalist beliefs. He personally founded Plymouth Brethren churches as far away as Germany, Switzerland, France and the United States, and translated the entire Scriptures in what one ardent supporter claimed was, '...an entirely free and independent rendering of the whole original text, using all known helps.'²¹

The churches Darby planted with the seeds of a separatist premillennial dispensationalism, in turn sent missionaries to Africa, the West Indies, Australia and New Zealand, so that by the time of his death in 1885, around 1500 Plymouth Brethren churches had already been founded world-wide. His views also came to influence the Bible and Prophetic Conferences associated with Niagara and other centres in North America from 1875.²²

During his lifetime, Darby wrote more hymns than the Wesleys, travelled further than the Apostle Paul, and was a Greek and Hebrew scholar. His writings filled forty volumes... If Brightman was the father of Christian Zionism, then Darby was its greatest apostle and missionary...²³

2. Darby's Innovative Dispensational Scheme

Darby was not the first to discover 'dispensations' within Biblical history, nor was his own scheme universally accepted even within Brethren circles.²⁴ It is significant, given the controversy over the extent of Edward Irving's influence upon Darby, that Irving was, already by 1828, using the term 'dispensation' to contrast God's dealings between Israel and the church.

There are, and there can be, only two opinions with respect to this point: the first, that they are the last days of the Jewish; and the second, that they are the last days of the Christian dispensation.²⁵

Hugh McNeile, another of those who attended the Albury Conferences in the 1820's, referred to three dispensations associated with Abraham, Moses and Christ, believing that Israel's national repentance would precede her restoration to the land.²⁶

George Faber, another Anglican, and a contemporary of Darby and McNeile, also wrote a number of speculative treaties on Israel, prophecy and biblical history. In 1822, for example, Faber spoke on the relative dating of the termination of the times of the Gentiles and the restoration of the Jewish people preceding the millennium, at the annual gathering of the London Jews Society.²⁷ In his principle work on the dispensations published in 1823, he distinguished three stages in God's gracious dealing with mankind, Patriarchal, Levitical, and Christian. However, unlike Darby, he did not regard them as necessarily consecutive nor was each a remedy for the failure of the previous.

From the time of the fall down to the termination of the world, man lives under one and the same system of divine grace, a system, which was rendered necessary for him by the very circumstances of the fall, and which therefore at no one period can differ essentially from itself.²⁸

Harry Ironside, who was for years the pastor of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, and a dispensationalist, claimed Darby had rediscovered the apostolic teaching lost to the church,

Until brought to the fore through the writings and preaching and teaching of a distinguished ex-clergyman, Mr J. N. Darby, in the early part of the last century, it is scarcely to be found in a single book or sermon through a period of sixteen hundred years.²⁹

Charles Ryrie also concedes that it was Darby who systematised and popularised the idea of dispensationalism.³⁰ It is significant that the term 'dispensation' was being used contemporaneously to Darby by more orthodox writers simply to distinguish the Old Testament from the New.³¹

The clearest expression of Darby's thinking is to be found in 'The Apostasy of the Successive Dispensations.' The following extended quotation includes every reference to the word 'dispensation'. It shows how vague and embryonic his views actually were, compared with later attempts by Scofield and then Ryrie to systematise seven distinct dispensations.

The detail of the history connected with these **dispensations** brings out many most interesting displays... But the **dispensations** themselves all declare some leading principle or interference of God, some condition in which He has placed man, principles which in themselves are everlastingly sanctioned of God, but in the course of these **dispensations** placed responsibly in the hands of man for the display and discovery of what he was, and the bringing in their infallible establishment in Him to whom the glory of them all rightly belonged... In every instance, there was a total and immediate failure as regarded man, however the patience of God might tolerate and carry on by grace the **dispensation** in which man has thus failed in the outset; and further, that there is no instance of the restoration of a **dispensation** afforded us, though there might be partial revivals of it through faith.

The **paradisaical** state cannot properly perhaps be called a **dispensation** in this sense of the word; but as regards the universal failure of man; it is a most important instance... Corruption, disorder, violence were the consequences of this, until the Lord destroyed the first world created... Here **dispensations**, properly speaking, begin. **On the first, Noah** I shall be very brief... The first account after his call we have of faithful Abraham which as a minuter circumstance I also pass briefly over...

But to take up the point of the **dispensation - obedience under the law** by which life was to be: this obedience they undertook; and Moses returned to receive the various orderings of divine appointment as under it, and the two tables of testimony. But this dispensation which met the failure of the world...

The ordinance or **dispensation of priesthood** failed in like manner. Before Aaron and his sons had gone out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, because the anointing oil of the Lord was upon them,

Nahab and Abihu had already offered stranger fire and been consumed before the Lord...

The **kingly dispensation** failed in the same way as did the nation under the previous ordering which made way for the king (see Judges 2)... till the provocations of Manasseh set aside all hope of recovery or way of mercy in that **dispensation**. The same is true of universal rule transferred to the Gentiles: Nebuchadnezzar, the golden head, sets up the golden image, persecutes the faithful, and is turned into the image of a beast for his pride.

The rejection of our blessed Lord proved that no present mercy or grace, no present interference of God in goodness here would meet the wilful and persevering enmity of the human heart, but only showed it in its true light. But this never being set up as a **dispensation** but only the manifestation of His Person (by faith), I pass by. **The last** we have to notice, in a humbled sense of sin in us, **is the present**, where we are apt to take our ease in the world... the **dispensation of the Spirit**. Much has been said, with strong objection to it, as to the apostasy or failure of this **dispensation**. The results are but too plain...

But the point which is proved is that this is not merely that it is in a bad state now, but that like all others it broke down in the commencement-no sooner fully established than it proved a failure... The remnant have been preserved... but the **dispensation** was gone. We belong to a better glory...

And as he cannot desire, so neither does Scripture present the restoration of a **dispensation**; it never justifies its actual condition; and though grace and faith may, as I have said, effect revivals during the long-suffering of God, the **dispensation**, as such, is actually gone, that the glory of the principle contained in it may shine forth in the hands of Messiah. The attempt to set this **dispensation** on another footing, as to its continuance, than those **dispensations** which have failed already, not only shows ignorance of the principles of God's dealings...

And the close of all **dispensation**, and the end of all question and title of authority shall come, and all be finished, God shall be all in all without question and without failure...

Reference to the second chapter of Galatians will confirm and establish the point historically as to the present **dispensation**... In fact the **Gentile dispensation**, as a distinct thing, took its rise at the death of Stephen, the witness that the Jews resisted the Holy Ghost: as their fathers did, so did they.³²

It is suggested that Darby was not attempting to devise a specific scheme of dispensations here but rather, as his title suggests, merely showing how all attempts by mankind to find acceptance with God had failed. It was only later in the writings of Scofield that seven dispensations became fixed within dispensational thinking. Ryrie's interpretation of Darby's dispensations is actually significantly at variance with Darby's own writings but more consistent with Scofield. It is an understatement when Ryrie claims Darby's scheme is, 'not always easily discerned from his writings'.³³ It is suggested that Ryrie has read back into Darby's mind, a scheme that suited his own purposes. From Darby's own pen we may attempt to reconstruct his dispensational chronology and compare it with Ryrie's interpretation, together with Scofield's later 1909 version, itself at variance with the further revision made by Schuyler English in 1967.

Darby's Dispensations³⁴

Ryrie's Version of Darby³⁵

Scofield's Dispensations³⁶

1. Paraisaical state
 1. Innocency (Genesis 1:28)
 1. Noah (Government)
2. Noah
 2. Conscience (Genesis 3:23)
3. Abraham
 3. Human Government (Genesis 8:20)
2. Moses (Law)
 3. Aaron (Priesthood)
4. Kingly (Manasseh)
4. Israel-under law under priesthood under kings

4. Promise (Genesis 12:1)
5. Law (Exodus 19:8)
5. Spirit (Gentile)
5. Gentiles
6. Grace (John 1:17)
6. Spirit
7. Millennium
7. Kingdom (Ephesians 1:10)

When he wrote, 'The paradisaical state cannot properly perhaps be called a dispensation in this sense of the word... On the first, Noah I shall be very brief', Darby clearly and unambiguously regarded Noah as marking the first dispensation, something no other dispensationalist has held to since. Nor is there any indication that Darby regarded there as being any future dispensation after the present one.

B. W. Newton, a colleague of Darby interpreted the dispensations in yet another pattern, indicating that such a scheme is not as self evident in Scripture as Dispensationalists would wish.

'The Adamic - the Antediluvian - the Noahic - the Hagar dispensation of the Jews - the Nebuchadnezzar dispensation of power - the Sarah dispensation of the church - all have failed.'³⁷

Biblical prophecy and millennial speculation were nevertheless among the distinctive features of the early Brethren. Within this hothouse environment Darby sought to explain the present by reinterpreting the past. His form of dispensationalism was different in so far as he saw them distinguished by a change in the means by which God has apparently dealt with mankind. This enabled Darby to speculate about an imminent change of dispensation in which the church would soon be 'raptured' to heaven and replaced by the Jews who would be the people of God on earth during the final millennium. Despite Ryrie's views to the contrary,³⁸ Darby, himself, recognised that his ideas were novel and urged some caution in disseminating them.

I think we ought to have something more of direct testimony as to the Lord's coming, and its bearing also on the state of the church: ordinarily, it would not be well to have it so clear, as it frightens people. We must pursue it steadily; it works like leaven, and its fruit is by no means seen yet; I do not mean leaven as ill, but the thoughts are new, and people's minds work on them, and all the old habits are against their feelings - all the gain of situation, and every worldly motive; we must not be surprised at its effect being slow on the mass, the ordinary instruments of acting upon others having been trained in most opposite habits.³⁹

Darby defended his dispensational hermeneutic on two grounds. First, because others had not studied the Scriptures correctly.

The covenant is a word common in the language of a large class of Christian professors... but in its development and detail, as to its unfolded principles, much obscurity appears to me to have arisen from a want of simple attention to Scripture.⁴⁰

The second reason Darby insisted that his interpretation was correct was because he believed the Lord had revealed it to him personally and directly.

For my part, if I were bound to receive all that has been said by the Millenarians, I would reject the whole system, but their views and statements weigh with me not one feather. But this does not hinder me from enquiring by the teaching of the same spirit... what God has with infinite graciousness revealed to me concerning His dealing with the Church.⁴¹

But I must, though without comment, direct attention to chapter 32 of the same prophet; which I do the rather, because it was in this the Lord was pleased, without man's teaching, first to open my eyes on this subject, that I might learn His will concerning it throughout.⁴²

In response to public reaction to his doctrine of the dispensations, he wrote,

...I believe it to be the one true Scriptural ground of the church... I am daily more struck with the connection of the great principles on which my mind was exercised... Christ coming to receive us to Himself;

and collaterally with that, the setting up of a new earthly dispensation, from Isaiah XXXII... It was a vague fact that received form in my mind long after, that there must be a wholly new order of things...⁴³

Even Coad, in his otherwise positive history of the Brethren Movement, admits that 'For the traditional view of the Revelation, another was substituted.'⁴⁴ Barr is less sympathetic arguing premillennial dispensationalism was, '...individually invented by J. N. Darby... concocted in complete contradiction to all main Christian tradition...'⁴⁵

Coad claims to trace what came to be known as this 'futurist view' of the end times, so evident in Darby's writings to the works of a Jesuit, Francesco Ribera of the sixteenth century, whose writings were later popularised in the nineteenth century by another Spanish Jesuit, Manuel Lacunza. As has been noted, Lacunza used the pseudonym Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, allegedly a converted Jew, for his book, 'The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty' which Edward Irving translated into English.⁴⁶ Irving's 203 page preface to the translation superimposed his own prophetic speculations about the end of the world, predicting, like Darby, the apostasy of Christendom, then subsequently the restoration of the Jews and finally the imminent return of Christ. It is most likely therefore that Darby was aware of such writings, and particularly Lacunza's via Irving, since they had met with those of like mind to discuss 'the end times' at a prophetic conference under the enthusiastic sponsorship of Henry Drummond at Albury in 1826. It is not surprising, however, that Darby does not credit them with having influenced his own writings since he was consistently dismissive of everyone's views but his own. Referring to Darby's dispensational ideas, Bass concludes,

'Such a concept is singularly missing from historic Christian theology... Darby is pointedly correct in stating that this came to him as a new truth, since it is not to be found in theological literature prior to his proclamation of it. It is not that exegetes prior to his time did not see a covenant between God and Israel, or a future relation of Israel to the millennial reign, but they always viewed the church as the continuation of God's single program of redemption begun in Israel.'⁴⁷

Darby's contribution then, to the development of Christian Zionism and a rigid differentiation between the church and Israel arose out of ecclesiastical expediency, his novel dispensational speculations and an independent and rigid literalist hermeneutic. These led him to formulate two innovative doctrines concerning the church and Israel. Both marked a significant departure from Christian orthodoxy and evangelicalism in particular.

The first might be termed a 'replacement theology', although ironically, his was the opposite of that which is so criticised by Christian Zionists today. Darby taught that Israel would soon replace the church, rather than the church having replaced, superseded or indeed become, Israel. To accomplish this, Darby postulated his second distinctive doctrine involving two stages to the return of Christ instead of one, the first being to secretly gather the church to heaven in a 'rapture' leaving a revived and gathered nation of Israel to rule on earth for the millennium.

3. Darby's Ecclesiology - A Replacement Theology

Darby's strong and repeated condemnation of the visible church as apostate, clearly influenced his innovative belief that the church era was now merely a 'parenthesis'⁴⁸ of the Last Days. 'Satan having beguiled the Church, the church is in the position of earthliness and united in system with the world.'⁴⁹

Darby regarded the church as merely one more dispensation that had failed like the previous five. Each in turn had lost its place in the divine economy and was under God's judgement. Just as Israel had been cut off, so he believed the church would also be. Just as only a small remnant of Israel had been saved, so would only a small remnant of the church be saved. The remnant taken from the ruins of the church would conveniently be, he claimed, his own followers, also known as 'the Assembly'. His answer to the condition of the visible church was not to insist on the need for a new reformation, national repentance or even a revival, since to attempt to restore or repair the ruins would actually be sinful.

We insist on the fact that the house has been ruined, its ordinances perverted, its orders and all its arrangements forsaken or destroyed; that human ordinances, a human order, have been substituted for them; and what merits all the attention of faith, we insist that the Lord... is coming soon in His power and glory to judge all

this state of things.⁵⁰

To those who saw things differently, Darby repeatedly asserted, "The house is in ruin, and you are bad imitators acting from your own leading and wrongly."⁵¹

Because Darby insisted on there being irreversible and progressive dispensations, in which the church was merely one such dispensation, he deduced, a priori, that there could be no future earthly hope for the church. He argued that Scripture does not,

...present the restoration of a dispensation; it never justifies its actual condition; though grace may... effect revivals during the long suffering of God, the dispensation, as such, is actually gone, that the glory of the principle contained in it may shine forth in the hands of the Messiah. The attempt to set this dispensation on another footing, as to its continuance than those dispensations which have failed already shows ignorance of the principles of God's dealing for the calling of God was always by Grace.⁵²

Instead he speculated that the church would soon be replaced in God's purposes on earth by a revived national Israel.

The Church has sought to settle itself here, but it has no place on the earth... [Though] making a most constructive parenthesis, it forms no part of the regular order of God's earthly plans, but is merely an interruption of them to give a fuller character and meaning to them (the Jews).⁵³

Darby, through his rigid literalist interpretation of Scripture, regarded the covenantal relationship between God and Abraham as binding for ever, and that the promises pertaining to the nation of Israel, as yet unfulfilled, would find their consummation in the reign of Jesus Christ on earth during the millennium. He thereby encouraged an essential dichotomy between those promises that applied to Israel and those to the church. In an article in the Christian Witness published in 1838, and attributed to Darby, he went further arguing that,

There are two great subjects which occupy the sphere of millennial prophecy and testimony - The Church and its glory in Christ, and the Jews and their glory as a redeemed nation in Christ - the heavenly people and the earthly people. The habitation and scene of the one being the heavens; of the other, the earth.⁵⁴

In a lecture entitled, 'The Hopes of the Church of God', Darby claimed that Israel was the theatre through which God had displayed His character,

It is in this people, by the ways of God revealed to them, that the character of Jehovah is fully revealed, that the nations will know Jehovah, and that we shall ourselves learn to know him.⁵⁵

Darby made this assertion because of his unusual, if not eccentric view of prophecy.

Prophecy applies itself properly to the earth; its object is not heaven. It is about things that were to happen on the earth; and the not seeing this has misled the church. We had thought that we ourselves had within us the accomplishment of these earthly blessings, whereas we are to enjoy heavenly blessings. The privilege of the church is to have its position in the heavenly places; and later blessings will be shed forth upon the earthly people.⁵⁶

Following his literalist interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, every promise and prediction concerning Israel then that had not been fulfilled completely must, according to his logic, apply to the future.

Revelation 12 presents to us the last great object of prophecy... the combat which takes place between the last Adam and Satan. It is from this centre of truth that all light which is found in Scripture radiates. This great combat may take place either for the earthly things... and then it is in the Jews; or for the Church... and then it is in the heavenly places. It is on this account that the subject of prophecy divides itself into two parts, the hope of the Church, and those of the Jews...⁵⁷

A little later Darby went further, insisting that this distinction between Israel and the church has resulted in two separate "callings", the grounds upon which some today teach that Jews can be saved by the Law and Gentiles by grace.

There are indeed the called from among the nations (namely the church) but it is for the heavens they are called. The calling of God for the earth is never transferred to the nations; it remains with the Jews. If I want an earthly religion, I ought to be a Jew. From the instant that the church loses sight of its heavenly calling, it loses, humanly speaking, all.⁵⁸

Darby's rigid dichotomy between heaven and earth, the Jews and the church even had implications for his doctrine of the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

The Lord, having been rejected by the Jewish people, is become wholly a heavenly person.⁵⁹

In his developing scheme, Darby therefore, laid the foundation for a dispensationalism in which the church was seen as a mere parenthesis⁶⁰ to God's continuing covenantal relationship with Israel. Darby was emphatic, the Jews would remain his primary instrument of rule on earth during the millennium. With the benefit of hindsight, modern dispensationalists differ from Darby in believing the Jews would return to the land before the Messiah comes. Darby argued the reverse.

The first thing, then, which the Lord will do will be to purify His land (the land which belongs to the Jews) of the Tyrians, the Philistines, the Sidonians; of Edom and Moab, and Amon - of all the wicked, in short from the Nile to the Euphrates. It will be done by the power of Christ in favour of His people re-established by His goodness. The people are put into security in the land, and then will those of them who remain till that time among the nations be gathered together.⁶¹

What is not generally conceded by later Dispensationalists, or at least is conveniently ignored, is that Darby took no less a favourable view of the Jews than he did of the Arabs resident in the Middle East and Palestine, in particular. Even though he argued that the Lord would remove the Arabs from the land between the Nile and the Euphrates and give it all to Israel, Darby did not envisage the Jews actually co-operating with Christ or ruling on earth with him during the Millennium.

His prognosis for the Jews was no less pessimistic than his view of the church. Indeed some would regard his teaching as anti-Semitic since Darby taught that the Jews will rule on earth in league with Satan. Following the rapture of the saints, Darby insisted,

The government of the fourth monarchy will be still in existence, but under the influence and direction of the Antichrist; and the Jews will unite themselves to him, in a state of rebellion, to make war with the lamb... Satan will then be displayed, who will unite the Jews with this apostate prince against heaven... a remnant of the Jews is delivered and Antichrist destroyed.⁶²

Perceptive Jews are not surprisingly cynical of Christian Zionist support for the State of Israel when it is realised that they largely share Darby's dispensational views on the fate of the Jews, believing most will not escape Armageddon in the 'rapture' but will be annihilated in the tribulation to follow. Hal Lindsey, for example, on the basis of passages like Revelation 16:13-14, predicts the 200 mile valley from the Sea of Galilee to Eilat flowing with blood several feet deep.⁶³ Similarly, based on the same passage, Timothy Dailey describes Tel Aviv destroyed by nuclear warheads fired from Syria.⁶⁴

Clarence Bass summarises the novel nature of Darby's emerging theological framework.

It is not that exegetes prior to his time did not see a covenant between God and Israel, or a future relation of Israel to the millennial reign, but they always viewed the church as a continuation of God's single program of redemption begun in Israel. It is dispensationalism's rigid insistence on a distinct cleavage between Israel and the church, and its belief in a later unconditional fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, that sets it off from the historic faith of the church.⁶⁵

Similarly, H. C. Leupold, professor of Old Testament exegesis at the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, in his commentary on Genesis 12:3 and with reference to the promise made to Abraham, makes the following critique of Darby's dispensationalism,

Now surely, as commentators of all times have clearly pointed out, especially already Luther and Calvin,

this promise to Israel is conditional, requiring faith... History is the best commentary on how the promise is meant. When the Jews definitely cast off Christ, they were definitely as a nation expelled from the land. All who fall back upon this promise as guaranteeing a restoration of Palestine to the Jews... have laid into it a meaning which the words simply do not carry.⁶⁶

4. Darby's Eschatology - An Imminent Secret Pre-Tribulation Rapture

It was into this dispensational scheme that Darby and his contemporary Edward Irving postulated two stages to Christ's imminent return. First, there would be an invisible 'appearing' when Christians would meet Christ in the air and be removed from the earth, a process which came to be known as 'the rapture of the saints'. With the restraining presence of the Holy Spirit removed from the world, the Antichrist would arise. His rule would finally be crushed by the public 'appearing' of Jesus Christ. Darby argued that, regarding the rapture,

The Church's joining Christ has nothing to do with Christ's appearing or coming to earth. Her place is elsewhere. She sits in Him already in heavenly places. She has to be brought there as to bodily presence..

...We go up to meet Christ in the air. Nothing is clearer, then, than that we are to go up to meet Him, and not await His coming to earth; but that this coming to receive us to Himself is not His appearing is still clearer...

..This is the rapture of the saints, preceding their and Christ's appearing ...so that at their rapture He has not appeared yet... This rapture before the appearing of Christ is a matter of express revelation, as we have seen from Colossians 3:4.⁶⁷

In commenting on 1 Thessalonians 4:15, in his Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, Darby asserts,

Observe, also, that this revelation gives another direction to the hope of the Thessalonians, because it distinguishes with much precision between our departure hence to join the Lord in the air, and our return to the earth with Him.⁶⁸

These passages actually say nothing about any secret rapture in any dispensational sense, still less that the church will be removed and return later to earth with Christ at His public appearing. Bass insists, 'Only by involved exegetical interpretation can the pre-tribulation rapture be supported.'⁶⁹

Darby's interpretation of passages such as 1 Thessalonians 4 is a clear example of the way later Dispensationalists read back from their presuppositional view of the church into the Scriptures. In doing so Darby denies what the passage teaches (the blessed hope of the church does have to do with the coming of Christ) and affirms what it does not teach (the blessed hope is the secret going and later public returning of the church). Darby admitted as much that his doctrine of the rapture was an innovation, the result of 'express revelation', indeed he seemed quite pleased with the reaction to it.

The rapture of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, before His manifestation to the earth, and the existence of a Jewish remnant in whom the Spirit of God is graciously working before the Lord manifests Himself to them for their deliverance, is happily attracting the attention of Christians. It has made sufficient way to be the occasion of renewed opposition... ⁷⁰

Following his literalist hermeneutic, Darby insisted that the tribulation would end seven years after the rapture when Jesus Christ would return to Jerusalem to set up his kingdom from which he would rule the world for a thousand years. Indeed Darby made the 'pre-tribulation rapture' yet one more of his exclusive tests of Brethren orthodoxy.

It is this conviction, that the Church is properly heavenly, in its calling and relationship with Christ, forming no part of the course of events of the earth, which makes the rapture so simple and clear, and on the other hand, it shows how the denial of its rapture brings down the Church to an earthly position, and destroys its whole spiritual character and position.⁷¹

His attitude toward those who disagreed with his doctrine of the secret rapture was scathing,

...Wherever this is enfeebled, Satan is at work.... He who awaits Christ's appearing, as the time in which he is to go to be with Him, has denied the proper hope and proper relationship of the Church with Christ. On this point there can be no compromise. Ignorance of privilege is one thing... the denial of it another⁷²

He regarded disinterest in his teaching of the rapture as a sign that the church was apostate and his own 'Assembly' elect.

The rapture of the saints before the appearing of Christ, strange as it may appear to some, has nothing to say to the church, directly or exclusively; but as we form part of those caught up, it of course, interests us in the highest degree.⁷³

Among Darby's supporters, 'his delineations of millennial glory dazzled the minds of his hearers.'⁷⁴ Despite its novelty, Darby's belief of the 'pre-tribulation rapture' became central to his doctrine of the church as well as his dispensational eschatology, and subsequently came to be 'a foundation for contemporary Christian Zionism'⁷⁵

5. Darby's Dispensationalism Criticised and Refined

Darby's novel ideas were not left unchallenged even within Brethren circles. B. W. Newton, his chief assistant in Plymouth, confronted Darby arguing that these views were heretical and a departure from Biblical orthodoxy. Darby's intransigence led to one of many splits within the Brethren movement, and with former colleagues like Irving from the prophetic conference days in Albury. Despite holding similar views concerning the rapture, there was no love lost for the Irvingites and their charismatic excesses.

The people called Irvingites have been plainly convicted elsewhere of so much false doctrine, false practice, and false prophecy, and that by so many of the Church of God as to make it, when known, a question only of preserving God's children against the deceits and crafts of Satan.⁷⁶

In particular, Darby was scathing of their speculative prophecies concerning the Antichrist and the lost tribes of Israel, allegedly given by the Holy Spirit.

...that spirit pronounced young Napoleon to be the man of sin; It stated an American Indian Chief, then in London, would be converted there, and receive the work and return to America, and lead back his countrymen, who were the ten tribes, to Palestine; but he went back unconverted.⁷⁷

Strong differences also repeatedly emerged within the Brethren movement, particularly between Darby and Newton, as to the implications of his new doctrines concerning the rapture and the relationship of the church to Israel. If the church had already been removed before the Antichrist could persecute them, who then would be the remnant persecuted under his rule? For Darby, a faithful Jewish remnant would reign on earth after the rapture and remain faithful to the Law under persecution, seeing the literal fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies still to be realised. The church however, Darby insisted, would play no part in this earthly reign. 'This remnant has neither the church's heavenly blessings nor the church's hopes.'⁷⁸

Newton and others saw Darby's elevation of Israel above the church as 'full-blown heresy'.⁷⁹ They understood the church in Scripture to be made up of both Jews and Gentiles who have been made one in Christ. Darby's scheme, followed logically, implied two distinct and separate ways to salvation. For Newton,

...the church included all the faithful from Abraham down. he considered Mr Darby's dispensational teaching as the height of speculative nonsense.⁸⁰

If the church were removed and a Jewish remnant were the fruit of God's redemptive work apart from Christ then it must be the result of 'another' gospel condemned by the Apostle Paul in Galatians. C. H. Spurgeon was one of Darby's most vociferous critics. Of Darby's Translation of the Holy Scripture, Spurgeon wrote,

We don't even mention the other renderings in his new Bible, just as serious and erroneous as the above; much less notice the transposition of tenses and prepositions, or the awkward English diction throughout. Suffice it to say, that some renderings are good, and some of the notes are good; but taken as a whole, with a great

display of learning, the ignorance of the results of modern criticism is almost incredible. And the fatal upsetting of vital doctrines condemns the work as more calculated to promote scepticism than true religion-the most sacred subjects being handled with irreverent familiarity. ⁸¹

It is not clear whether Darby's translation influenced his doctrine or vice versa. However, like his fellow millennialist, Charles Russell, who also translated the scriptures and formed his own sect, the Jehovah witnesses, it is true to say that there is a consistency between Darby's translation and teaching.

Newton and others within the Brethren sought to devise alternative, less problematic interpretations of the future to Darby's system which, even to those favourably disposed to the Brethren, like Coad, admitted was built on a 'completely new structure of Biblical interpretation.'⁸²

These included what came to be known as 'the partial rapture.' Newton expounded through the journal, *The Christian Witness*, the belief that a remnant both of faithful Jews as well as Gentiles would survive the Tribulation, while others would be raptured before hand. In 1836, for example, he contradicted Darby's scheme arguing, 'Accordingly, the resurrection glory of the saints is as distinctly connected with Israel and Jerusalem, as with the earth.'⁸³

Newton also argued that the New Testament writers spiritualised the promises in the Old Testament to the inheritance of a literal land.

It is thus that the descriptions which in the Old Testament are confined to the earthly city, are used by the Apostles to express the glories of Jerusalem which is above; for these are the expansion and heavenly antitype of the typical (though real) glories of Jerusalem below. They both belong to the same system - they are different courts of the same glorious temple visibly united yet distinct.⁸⁴

Newton postulated a millennial reign whereby the dispensations were not consecutive and in which Israel would be restored under the same covenant of faith as the church, not one in which, as Darby claimed, national Israel would be restored and the church excluded. Newton did not see the means of blessing as parallel and distinct but converging, both on the basis of grace through faith, and a foretaste of heaven.⁸⁵

In 1838 Newton sought a reconciliation between Darby's dispensationalism and more orthodox Reformed theology. In a paper called 'The Dispensations' he argued that in Abraham,

In order to preserve blessing in the earth, we for the first time find ostensibly and manifestly introduced that method of elective grace, which alone secures the perpetuity of blessing, because it is 'not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.' And hence the call of Abraham... Here was sovereign grace calling, and sovereign grace giving and multiplying, and this is the character of all the branches of the covenant to Abraham. And therefore nothing that could arise from man, no subsequent arrangement even of God Himself could possibly annul it, so as to make the promise of none effect. This covenant therefore must be everlasting, and all that ever will be effectually blessed either in earth or in heaven, hand upon it as a covenant of promise. Upon this covenant the natural seed of Abraham, Israel according to the flesh is secretly sustained now...

...But not only the earthly Jerusalem and the land, the Heavenly Jerusalem likewise does equally rest upon the covenant of promise to Abraham; for the promise was not made simply to Abraham, but equally to his seed, i.e. Christ (Galatians iii). 'And therefore if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise.'⁸⁶

Like Darby, Newton believed that the church would be raptured, and that the Jews would be restored, but instead, he brought together Darby's views of the heavenly church and earthly Israel arguing this would all occur after the tribulation and return of Christ, not before, and that the remnant of Jews in Jerusalem would be brought to faith in Messiah and so too be blessed.

The dispensation, therefore, which commenced with Abraham, is necessarily an eternal one, for (though many earthly and temporary blessings yet to be accomplished were included in it), it had respect to a heavenly and eternal city-Jerusalem which is above... the manifestation of Sarah blessing is altogether future and will not be shown forth in its power until the whole family both in earth and heaven, Jerusalem above and Jerusalem

below, are alike manifestly brought under its bond of blessing.⁸⁷

Restored Israel in Jerusalem, will in many respects resemble the Church now. Not indeed, in suffering, for that is a privilege possessed by the Church of the first-born distinctly. But as it is now said of the Church, that they are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood; so it is written of Israel in that day, that they shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.⁸⁸

It seems inexplicable that Darby should have ignored these attempts by other Brethren leaders like Newton to accommodate themselves to his own idiosyncratic doctrinal position, nor recognise that their views fitted the Scriptures more convincingly than his own speculations.

Only the supposition of a mental block can explain Darby's total failure to acknowledge that what was proposed was a strengthening, not a weakening, of his own system. Not only did it bring his teaching back into accord with the basic Reformed orthodoxies, without denying anything essential in it, but it also cured the dangerous Docetic tendencies that were latent in Darby's own vivid distinction between the exclusively earthly hopes of Israel and the exclusively heavenly hopes of the Church. It is significant that a tendency to Doceticism has always been a serious flaw in Darbyite thinking.⁸⁹

Friction between Darby and Newton came to a head in 1843 when Newton published his Thoughts on the Apocalypse, and Darby felt impelled to attack it.

What Mr Newton teaches subverts the truth of Christ. If he says it does not, it only proves that he does not know the truth which it clearly does subvert.⁹⁰

Of Newton's attempt to show that Jew and Gentile must come to faith by the same means and enjoy the same blessings, Darby replied in a letter dated 14th November 1844,

And it is precisely on this point... that I feel that Plymouth has lost, or for the most part never has attained, the idea which seems to me essential to the Church - that is, which distinguishes it in its privileges. I knew that the system, which prevails there placed the Church on the same ground as Israel in the millennium, and it was one of the things which convinced me that the notion of the Church was entirely wanting... But my answer to your question, Has the church any spiritual things which it has not received through Israel? is -ALL that is properly essential to it as the Church. I admit the truth of what is stated at Plymouth. The evil is this, that all the higher part of the truth is left out, and everything which expresses it reduced to this level... But union with a Saviour hid in God... is of the essence of the Church, and I cannot see that this forms a part of Israel's privileges in the millennium... In a word, all that is distinctive to the Church is lost in this system, for that which is distinctive to it is not the subject of promise...⁹¹

Darby's insistence on two dispensations, one for the church and another for Israel is the basis on which much non-evangelistic but triumphalist Christian Zionism views Israel. It is, as shall be shown later, the stance taken by the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, the Messianic Testimony, and in large measure, Christian Friends of Israel who see their role primarily in terms of supporting and defending Israel. Coad summarises the split between Darby and Newton.

Newton, to Darby, was depriving the Church of its glories in Christ. The simple thought that Newton's system did nothing of the kind, but that it rather added the glories of the redeemed Israel to the glories of the redeemed Church, seems never to have entered Darby's mind.⁹²

Darby's response to opposition was simple. He would charge his critics with sectarianism and excommunicate them. Darby led the 'Exclusive' Brethren and Newton the 'Open' Brethren. George Muller and others tried to remain neutral, refusing, as Darby insisted, on excommunicating those who remained in fellowship with Newton. Those who suffered his wrath in this way included Groves, Muller, Harris and Newton, and by 1865 without them, and those like Bellett and Craik who had died, his hold over the Exclusive Brethren gradually waned.⁹³ Darby's Exclusive Brethren underwent further schism splitting into three parties by 1881, known after the names of their leaders as the Darbyites, Kellyites and Cluffites.⁹⁴

Darby was hardly less sympathetic with those who failed to understand his arguments.

That he could be ungracious and scathing in his criticism is evident in the incident where, when the great evangelist Dwight L. Moody failed to grasp a point, Darby turned to a bystander and remarked, 'I am here to supply exposition not brains.'⁹⁵

Darby's supporters, when forced to take sides, inevitably saw things differently,

He faced heresy in the very society originally formed by himself... and in spite of the obloquy, scorn, and contempt of the brethren once most dear to him, he continued, even as he had begun, to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The world may pour contempt on such a man; sectarians may dip their pens in wormwood and gall for his destruction; and the eulogies of hypocrites and liars may denounce him as a fiend incarnate; but, in our very heart of hearts, we honour and reverence him as a true soldier of the Cross.⁹⁶

6. Darby's Influence on the Rise of Modern Dispensationalism

Darby and his supporters clearly believed the 'secret rapture' would occur in their own life time and certainly before the end of the 19th Century. Looking back, Blair Neatby, writing his history of the Brethren in 1901 reflects,

If anyone had told the first Brethren that three quarters of a century might elapse and the Church be on earth, the answer would probably have been a smile, partly of pity, partly of disapproval, wholly of incredulity. Yet so it has proved. It is impossible not to respect hopes so congenial to an ardent devotion; yet it is clear now that Brethrenism took shape under the influence of a delusion, and that delusion was a decisive element in all of its distinctive features.⁹⁷

But the rapture did not occur. Whereas the leaders of Irving's Catholic Apostolic church refused to appoint successors, convinced that the Lord would return to Albury before the last one died, so that today the church there remains empty, Darby's dispensationalist ideas permeated beyond his narrow Brethrenism to a new generation of evangelicals in the 20th Century.

Professor Francis W. Newman was a contemporary of Darby and offers this assessment of his impact on those who came under his influence.

For the first time I perceived that so vehement a champion of the sufficiency of the Scriptures, so staunch an opposer of creed and churches, was wedded to an extra-scriptural creed of his own, by which he tested the spiritual state of his brethren. ⁹⁸

...this gentleman has every where (sic) displayed a wonderful power of bending other minds to his own, and even stamping upon them the tones of his voice and all sorts of slavish imitation. Over the general results of his action I have long deeply mourned, as blunting his natural tenderness and sacrificing his wisdom to the Letter, dwarfing men's understandings, contracting their hearts, crushing their moral sensibilities, and setting those at variance who ought to love, yet oh! how specious it was in the beginning! he only wanted men 'to submit their understanding to God,' that is to the Bible, that is to his interpretation.⁹⁹

From 1862 onwards, as his influence over Brethrenism in Britain waned, Darby focused his ministry more and more on North America, making seven journeys in the next twenty years. Sandeen has estimated that Darby spent 40% of his time in the United States.¹⁰⁰ During that time he had a considerable and increasing influence on such evangelical leaders as James H. Brookes, Dwight L. Moody, William Blackstone and C. I. Scofield, as well as the emerging evangelical Bible Schools and Prophecy Conferences which,

'...set the tone for the evangelical and fundamentalist movements in North America between 1875 and 1920.'¹⁰¹

Krauss claims that by 1901, following a good deal of controversy at these prophetic conferences,

...the dispensationalists had won the day so completely that for the next fifty years friend and foe alike largely identified dispensationalism with premillennialism.¹⁰²

Bass, in his definitive critique of Dispensationalism concludes,

The line of continuity from Darby to the present can be traced unbroken from the works of his contemporaries, C. H. Mackintosh, William Trotter, William Kelly, and F. W. Grant, through the intermediary works of W. E. Blackstone, James Hall Brooks, A. J. Frost, G. Campbell Morgan, Harry Ironside, A. C. Gaebelein, C. I. Scofield, and his Scofield Bible, to the contemporary adherents of his views... Suffice it to say that he stamped his movement with his own personality. Much of its spiritual atmosphere undoubtedly belongs to his influence; and certainly its interpretative principles, its divisive compartmentalization of the redemptive plan of God, its literalness as to prophetic interpretation, and its separatist spirit may be traced to this personality. Perhaps it is too broad a summary to say that Darby's personality influenced directly the spirit of contemporary dispensationalism, but certainly the pattern which he set into motion is reflected in it. [103](#)

Similarly, George Marsden, in his history of the rise of fundamentalism between 1870 and 1930, traces the considerable influence of Darby's dispensationalism on the American evangelical world of Moody and Scofield.

This new form of premillennial teaching, imported from England, first spread in America through prophecy conferences where the Bible was studied intently. Summer conferences, a newly popular form of vacation in the age of the trains, were particularly effective. Most importantly, Dwight L. Moody had sympathies with the broad outlines of dispensationalism and had as his closest lieutenants dispensationalist leaders such as Reuben A. Torrey (1856-1928), James M. Gray (1851-1925), C. I. Scofield (1843-1921), William J. Erdman (1833-1923), A.C. Dixon (1854-1925), and A. J. Gordon (1836-1895). These men were activist evangelists who promoted a host of Bible conferences and other missionary and evangelistic efforts. They also gave the dispensationalist movement institutional permanence by assuming leadership of the new Bible institutes such as the Moody Bible Institute (1886), the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (1907), and the Philadelphia College of the Bible (1914). The network of related institutes that soon sprang up became the nucleus for much of the important fundamentalist movement of the twentieth century. Dispensationalist leaders, in fact, actively organised this antimodernist effort. Notably, they oversaw the publication between 1910-1915 of the widely distributed twelve-volume paperback series, *The Fundamentals*.[104](#)

It is not inaccurate therefore to conclude, Darby's dispensational views, like those of Edward Irving, would probably have remained the exotic preserve of the dwindling and divided Brethren sects were it not for the energetic efforts of significant individuals like William Blackstone, D. L. Moody and above all, C. I. Scofield who introduced them to a wider audience in America and the English speaking world through his Scofield Reference Bible.

- 1 Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Waterloo, Ontario, Herald Press, 1995), pp. 81, 88. This is disputed by Charles Ryrie who attempts to place the origin of Dispensationalism, unconvincingly, some 150 years earlier allegedly finding evidence in the writings of Pierre Poiret (1646-1719) and John Edwards (1639-1716) as well as Isaac Watts (1674-1748) in *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1995), pp. 65-71.
- 2 J. N. Darby, as cited by W. Blair Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), p. 16.
- 3 W. G. Turner, *John Nelson Darby* (London, Chapter Two, 1901, 1986), p. 17.
- 4 J. N. Darby, 'Reflections on the Ruined Condition of the Church' *The Collected Writings of John Nelson Darby*, Eccl. I, Vol. I. William Kelly, ed. (Kingston on Thames, Stow Hill Bible and Trust Depot, 1962), p. 201.
- 5 J. N. Darby, 'On the Formation of Churches, Further developments' *The Collected Writings*, Eccl. I, Vol. I. William Kelly, ed. (Kingston on Thames, Stow Hill Bible and Trust Depot, 1962), p. 303. See also Eccl. III, Vol. XIV., 'What the Christian has amid the Ruin of the Church'
- 6 J. N. Darby, 'What is the Unity of the Church?' *Collected Writings*, Eccl. IV, Vol. XX. p.456.
- 7 Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1971), pp. 105-185.
- 8 J. N. Darby, 'Progress of Evil on the Earth' *Collected Writings*, Prophetic, Vol. I, pp. 471, 483.
- 9 A. H. Newman, *A Manual of Church History* (Philadelphia, American Baptist Publications Society, 1902)
- 10 'Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ' later called 'the Brethren's first pamphlet.' by Neatby, in, *A History*, p. 18.
- 11 Clarence Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1986), p. 146.
- 12 Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Exeter, Paternoster, 1968), p. 109.
- 13 Coad, *History*, p. 111.
- 14 J. N. Darby, 'Remarks on a tract circulated by the Irvingites,' *Collected Writings*, Doctrinal. IV, Vol. 15, p. 34.
- 15 Turner, *Darby*, p. 22.
- 16 Coad, *History*, p. 122.
- 17 Darby, *Collected Writings*, Vol. 11, p. 363.
- 18 Turner, *Darby*, p. 34.
- 19 C. H. Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries* (London, Banner of Truth Trust, 1876), p. 31.
- 20 Coad, *History*, pp. 139-154.
- 21 Turner, *Darby*, p. 53.
- 22 Joseph M. Canfield, *The Incredible Scofield and his Book* (Vallecito, California, Ross House Books, 1988), pp. 122 ff.
- 23 Wagner, *Anxious*, p. 89.
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Chapter 5:

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921)

The Author of the Scofield Reference Bible

1. Scofield: The Christian Leader with Feet of Clay

While Cyrus Ingerson Scofield may justifiably be regarded as the father of American dispensationalism and its most popular exponent through the various editions and variants of the Scofield Reference Bible¹, his personal life is shrouded in mystery, one of American Fundamentalism's best kept and perhaps most embarrassing secrets.

Ernest Sandeen insists, "...in the calendar of Fundamentalist saints no name is better known or more revered."² Yet while writings abound on the early Brethren such as J. N. Darby and other contemporary American dispensationalists such as D. L. Moody, C. I. Scofield remains an illusive and enigmatic figure. Only two biographies have been published, one by a fellow dispensationalist, eulogises Scofield³, the other, from a Reformed perspective, exposes him as morally unfit for Christian ministry.⁴ Reconciliation of these two perspectives is difficult if not impossible. George Trumbull, Scofield's biographer, writing in 1920, claims,

Dr. Scofield loves all nature-not only men and women and children, but the whole created world, still so beautiful in spite of what Satan and sinners have done to mar God's work.⁵

Similarly, George W. Truett, speaking at a memorial service for Scofield, held in Dallas, Texas on 27 November 1921, included this tribute,

Every one felt that he was a prince of true men. And what a friend he was. A man who would have friends must show himself friendly. Along with these qualities he was kindly, full of good will and cheer which radiated from him as the light from the sun. When with him you knew you were in the presence of one who knew what he believed. Christ was real to him... a wonderful preacher and a world preacher. He would have been at ease in any congregation where he could have preached. There was about him a positiveness, a definitiveness, a certainty...⁶

Canfield's detailed investigation of Scofield's past portrays a very different person. Discrepancies exist between Scofield's own reminiscences, Trumbull's biography, family correspondence and actual public records regarding many aspects of Scofield's life and ministry both before and after his alleged conversion, ordination and association with D. L. Moody. These range from the trivial to the reprehensible.

1. His claim to have fought with General Lee is disputed as is his alleged decoration for service in the Confederate army in 1861.⁷

2. His 'rank perjury' in swearing the oath of office to become District Attorney for Kansas in June 1873, denying he had served in the Confederate Army⁸, a post he then had to resign just six months later following well publicised charges of extortion and blackmail.⁹

3. The desertion of his first wife Leontine, and daughters Abigail and Marie-Helene from 1877 and failure to provide for them.¹⁰

4. The unsubstantiated claim that he was admitted to the Bar of St. Louis and practised law.¹¹

5. The discrepancies surrounding his alleged conversion in 1879 in jail and also while practising law.¹²

6. The criminal charges of fraud and embezzlement brought against him between 1877-1879, some following his alleged conversion¹³ resulting in at least one jail sentence.¹⁴

7. His persistent refusal, even as a Christian minister, to make restitution to those he had defrauded.¹⁵

8. The embarrassment of having divorce proceedings initiated against him by his wife Leontine in 1881 while he was pastor of Hyde Park Congregational Church, St. Louis . Her divorce papers charged Scofield with, '...gross neglect of duty...' having, 'failed to support this plaintiff or her said children, or to contribute thereto, and has made no provision for them for food, clothing or a home...' ¹⁶ The court decided in favour of Leontine after some delay in 1883 and issued a decree of divorce in December of that year, describing Scofield as, '...not a fit person to have custody of the children.'¹⁷

9. His nomination as pastor to the First Congregational Church of Dallas in 1882, by James H. Brookes was apparently without reference to or acknowledgement of any Christian obligation to provide for his family.¹⁸

10. Discrepancies exist in the accounts of his alleged theological training prior to ordination.¹⁹

11. Discrepancies exist in the conflicting length of his courtship and the date of his second marriage to Hettie Van Wark in March 1884, only three months after her arrival in Dallas and his divorce becoming final.²⁰

12. Doubts have been raised as to claims made that Scofield made several visits to London prior to 1903,²¹ and claims that he studied and lectured in Rome, Paris, Geneva and Berlin between 1906-1907.²²

13. Scofield apparently conferred a doctorate on himself in 1892.²³ The 1897 Northfield Bible Conference, for example, lists Scofield's name with a D.D. yet there is no evidence of this award being conferred by a university or college. 'We are not aware of any degree-awarding institution which in the 1890's would recognize dispensational accomplishments.'²⁴

14. In 1904, addressing a gathering of Confederate veterans in Dallas, Scofield made pejorative and racist remarks concerning blacks and whites.²⁵

15. Major discrepancies exist in his Who's Who in America 1912 entry both in terms of misstatements, factual inaccuracies and omissions, including the dates of his marriages, the names of his three children, and subsequent divorce.²⁶

16. In 1909 and 1921, despite significant royalties from the Scofield Reference Bible, he wrote to his daughters Helene and Abbie, explaining his inability to help them financially as he was suffering from chronic 'Scofielditis', his euphemism for 'a purse which has grown dimly empty.'²⁷

Given Scofield's notoriety in Kansas, following his well publicised conversion and association with D.L. Moody, several newspaper articles attempted to piece together something of his already then chequered career. An article originally in the Atchison Patriot was picked up by the Topeka paper, The Daily Capital on 27 August 1881. It included the following,

Cyrus I. Scofield, formerly of Kansas, late lawyer, politician and shyster generally, has come to the surface again, and promises once more to gather around himself that halo of notoriety that has made him so prominent in the past... Within the past year... Cyrus committed a series of St. Louis forgeries that could not be settled so easily, and the erratic young gentleman was compelled to linger in the St. Louis jail for a period of six months.

Among the many malicious acts that characterized his career, was one peculiarly atrocious, that has come under our personal notice. Shortly after he left Kansas, leaving his wife and two children dependent upon the bounty of his wife's mother, he wrote his wife that he could invest some \$1,300 of her mother's money, all she had, in a manner that would return big interest. After some correspondence he forwarded them a mortgage, signed and executed by one Chas. Best, purporting to convey valuable property in St. Louis. Upon this the money was sent to him. Afterwards the mortgages were found to be base forgeries, no such person as Charles Best being in existence, and the property conveyed in the mortgage fictitious... A representative of the Patriot met Mrs Schofield (sic) today... As to supporting herself and the children, he has done nothing, said the little woman... I will gladly give him the matrimonial liberty he desires. I care not who he marries, or when, but I do want him to aid me in giving our little daughters the support and education they should have.²⁸

Following the death of D. L. Moody in 1899, when it became known that Scofield had officiated at the funeral, the interest of the secular press was once again aroused and more stories about Scofield were brought to the surface. The following is taken from the Kansas City Journal of 28 December 1899.

The pastor who delivered the sermon and presided at the funeral of Dwight L. Moody, the famous evangelist, was rev. C. I. Scofield... Scofield landed in Nemaha County in 1872, just in time to be nominated on the Republican ticket for member of the legislature. He was elected, and, though ostensibly a supporter of Senator Pomeroy, he became largely instrumental in causing the election of Ingalls... in reward for his services he was made United States district attorney for the state. But he did not hold this office long. He was ousted in disgrace on account of some shady financial transactions which left him indebted in a number of thousands to a score of prominent Republicans... then followed an explosion which compelled Scofield to resign his federal office and leave the state... While in jail he had been visited by a band of Christian women who prayed with him and worked his conversion, and upon his release he entered the Congregational ministry. His first pastorate was at Dallas, Tex., where he built up one of the wealthiest and most aristocratic church organisations in the state... When approached by his Kansas creditors Parson Scofield declares that he is poor and unable to pay, but has never failed to do the right and easy thing by renewing his notes. So far as those who know him best are able to judge, his conversion is of an enduring nature, and, as once remarked by his old friend and supporter, the sarcastic Mr. Ingalls, 'No man can doubt the efficacy of the scheme of Christian salvation with the record of Scofield in view'.²⁹

Cranfield makes this assessment of these still uncontested contemporary secular reports,

If Scofield had defrauded the leading Republican politicians of Kansas, obviously 'he had to go.' But these same Republican leaders could not afford to have it known publicly that they had been involved. This being so, the only course was to have Scofield 'disappear,' allowing the scandal to blow over... The story of Scofield's rather casual extension of notes, which had ostensibly been made to repay funds embezzled, does not surprise. It is entirely congruent with the antinomian nature of Dispensationalism which Scofield inherited from J. N. Darby. Instead of allowing the legal obligation to expire with the statute of limitations, Scofield tolled the statute with the notes even though he could not have any intention of repayment.³⁰

These unsavoury facts regarding Scofield's life and character have never been adequately answered or explained by his followers. The reason for his sudden acceptance and subsequent integration within a group of wealthy and influential Christian fundamentalists seems inexplicable given their supposed rigid adherence to biblical standards of morality and exacting criteria for Christian leadership. As Canfield rightly insists,

...genuineness in conversion and the accompanying change of heart include restitution. Such was an absolute condition in the Old Dispensation.³¹

Scofield's behaviour both before and after his alleged conversion are nevertheless consistent with, and illustrative of, the antinomianism inherent in Darby's rigid dispensationalism which Scofield popularised.³² In a message published in 1893 entitled, "The Purpose of God in This Age", Scofield seems to come close to

describing his own pessimistic, predetermined experience as much as that of dispensationalism generally. Speaking of his seven dispensations, Scofield concludes of each,

As you are aware, they are marked, as to their beginning, by some new probation for man, as to their ending by some act of judgment—for man always fails at last.³³

2. The Link between Darby and Scofield in the Rise of Dispensationalism

As a young and largely 'illiterate' Christian, Scofield was profoundly influenced and indeed schooled by the Rev. James H. Brookes, the minister of Walnut Street Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, and known as 'The Father of American Dispensationalism'³⁴. Brookes introduced Scofield, and probably also Darby to D. L. Moody. Brookes sympathised with J. N. Darby's dispensational views of a failing Church, corrupt and beyond hope, but it is known they met during five visits Darby made to St Louis between 1864-1865³⁵ and again between 1872-1877.³⁶ Canfield observes,

When convert Scofield in 1879 moved from forgery to Christian work, he found a niche in Christendom off the mainstream of recognized denominations... in the one city in North America which had been singled out by John Nelson Darby for concentrated 'planting' of Darby's special brand of Bible teaching.³⁷

Scofield, serving as Brookes' disciple, probably did more than anyone else to popularise Darby's distinctive theological perspective, basing his reference notes on Darby's own idiosyncratic translation of the Bible. Clarence Bass notes,

The parallel between Scofield's notes and Darby's works only too clearly reveals that Scofield was not only a student of Darby's works, but that he copiously borrowed ideas, words and phrases.³⁸

According to even one of Darby's own biographers, 'His perceptions of Scriptural truths are the source from which Scofield Reference Bibles get their characteristic notes.'³⁹ Gerstner says the resemblance between Scofield and Darby 'is deep and systematic.'⁴⁰ It is significant, however, that neither in the Introduction to his Reference Bible, nor in the accompanying notes does Scofield acknowledge his indebtedness to Darby. In this regard Scofield was merely following the example of his mentor, Brookes. Scofield claimed his ideas to be the fruit of fifty years of Bible study, something which, even by 1917, the date of the second edition of the Scofield Reference Bible published, is hard to explain if he was only converted in 1879 as alleged. One must assume Scofield meant other people's study.⁴¹

Privately at least, Scofield did acknowledge the influence of Arno C. Gaebelein who is probably responsible for the prophetic writings contained in the Scofield Reference Bible. Like Scofield, Gaebelein was disciples by James Brookes who, he admitted, 'took me literally under his wings.'⁴² Scofield wrote the foreword to Gaebelein's, 'The Harmony of the Prophetic Word' which he devoured. In a letter to Gaebelein, written on the 2nd September 1905, Scofield acknowledged,

My beloved brother: By all means follow your own views of prophetic analysis. I sit at your feet when it comes to prophecy, and congratulate in advance the future readers of my Bible on having in their hands a safe, clear, sane guide through what to most is a labyrinth. Yours lovingly in Christ, Scofield⁴³

There is also the likely possibility that another unattributed writer influenced Scofield, one much nearer to home, although somewhat more controversial. J. R. Graves, a Southern Baptist minister from Arcadia near Memphis published a work entitled, 'The Work of Christ Consummated in Seven Dispensations' in 1883.⁴⁴

It features a dispensational scheme quite similar to one which was later used in the Scofield Reference Bible. For some strange reason, Graves is almost never mentioned by Dispensational writers who are not committed Baptists... Since Graves' work had its primary circulation in the area Scofield was using as a base, the possibility of an unacknowledged debt to Graves must be considered. With Scofield's lack of formal training and a need to learn fast, no reasonable source of help would have been overlooked.⁴⁵

It is probable that Graves was not acceptable to dispensationalists since he emphasised the importance of the visible church in the purposes of God, something strongly denied by Brethren with their 'failing church'

doctrine.

3. Scofield's Dispensational Hermeneutic: 'Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth'.

In 1888 Scofield published his first work called *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. In it Scofield presented the hermeneutic principles of dispensationalism he had allegedly been teaching his Bible classes and which would become the theological presuppositions behind which the notes of his Scofield Reference Bible. Not surprisingly, it was the Plymouth Brethren 'house' publishers, Loizeaux Brothers of New York, who printed the first edition,⁴⁶ and continue to do so, a century later.⁴⁷

Scofield began his work quoting from Paul's second letter to Timothy, part of which was used as the book's title,

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)⁴⁸

The Word of Truth, then, has right divisions, and it must be evident that, as one cannot be 'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed' without observing them, so any study of that Word which ignores these divisions must be in large measure profitless and confusing. The purpose of this pamphlet is to indicate the more important divisions of the Word of Truth...⁴⁹

The Table of Contents lists the lessons as:

- The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God
- The Seven Dispensations
- The Two Advents
- The Two Resurrections
- The Five Judgments
- Law and Grace
- The Believer's Two Natures
- The Believer's Standing and State
- Salvation and Rewards⁵⁰

The first lesson sets the tone for all future Dispensational teaching offering a novel interpretation of the verse 'Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.' (1 Corinthians 10:32).

Scofield attempts to justify the division of the world into three classes of people, Jews, Gentiles and the church, an idea that is the 'warp and woof of Dispensational teaching,'⁵¹ yet one that lacks any biblical basis. There are only two classes of people consistently mentioned in the New Testament, those who believe in Jesus Christ and those who do not, irrespective of whether they be Jews or Gentiles.⁵² Paul is simply urging the Corinthians to respect the differing traditions of Jews and Gentiles in their witness for Christ. There is no basis in the New Testament for the idea that the Jews remain special to God outside, or apart from, their membership of the Body of Christ.⁵³

In the second lesson Scofield unfolds the emerging dispensational belief that biblical history should be divided into seven 'dispensations.'

These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind, in respect of two questions, of sin, and of man's responsibility. Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment - marking his utter failure in every dispensation.⁵⁴

His third lesson, another typical Brethren and Dispensational touchstone, makes a person's view of the return of Christ and the 'secret rapture', the test of orthodoxy. No alternative eschatological schemes are acknowledged. The implication is clear. If a person does not accept a dispensational eschatology they do not believe in the Lord's return and are not submitting to the authority of scripture.⁵⁵

By the 'authority of scripture' Scofield meant his own rigid literalist hermeneutical approach to scripture.

So, for example, he insists that,

Not one instance exists of a 'spiritual' or figurative fulfilment of prophecy... Jerusalem is always Jerusalem, Israel is always Israel, Zion is always Zion... Prophecies may never be spiritualised, but are always literal.⁵⁶

Scotfield's 'literalism' extended even to exact verbal phraseology. This led him to claim there to be seven dispensations, eight covenants, and eleven great mysteries.⁵⁷ James Barr, in his critique of fundamentalism, reserves some of his strongest language for Scotfield's literalist hermeneutic which he describes rather sarcastically as, 'Mythopoeic fantasy' comparable with the 'apocalyptic poems of Blake'.⁵⁸

With the favour and respectability bestowed by the Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary, Scotfield's little book has subsequently gone through numerous editions and been reprinted by several publishers. The Bible Publishers of Dallas, for instance, printed 35,000 copies during the nine year period 1945-1954.⁵⁹

4. Scotfield, the Brethren and the Bible Prophecy Conference Movement

In many ways Scotfield was merely representative of, but at the same time became a focus for, a growing prophetic and millennial movement in North America influenced by the Plymouth Brethren. The views later popularised by Scotfield, were 'hammered into presentable form'⁶⁰ by a series of Bible and Prophetic Conferences held across North America beginning in 1868 which followed the pattern established by Darby and Irving at Albury and Powerscourt from the 1830's.

Both the method of 'Bible readings' and the topics of the conferences strongly suggest that the gatherings were a result of J. N. Darby's travels in the United States and the influence of the Plymouth Brethren.⁶¹

For example, one of the resolutions adopted by the 1878 Niagara Conference gives clear evidence of the Darbyite dispensationalism, and Christian Zionism into which Scotfield was becoming an eager proselyte.

We believe that the world will not be converted during the present dispensation, but is fast ripening for judgment, while there will be fearful apostasy in the professing Christian body; and hence that the Lord Jesus will come in person to introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; and that this personal and premillennial advent is the blessed hope set before us in the Gospel for which we should be constantly looking: Luke 12:35-40; 17:26-30; 18:8; Acts 15:14-17; 2 Thess. 2:3-8; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Tit. 2:11-15.⁶²

Scotfield first attended the Niagara Conference in 1887, completing his book *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, during the 1888 conference. Apparently, the manuscript was delivered direct to the Plymouth Brethren 'house' publishers, Loizeaux Brothers in New York from the conference. Trumbull, referring to the book commented,

The work of making the little book was a time-consuming and laborious task for him then and "spoiled" his vacation entirely one summer at Niagara. But what a blessing it has been to multitudes of others.⁶³

5. The Significance of the Scotfield Reference Bible

According to Oswald Allis, by 1945 more than 2 million copies of the Scotfield Reference Bible had been published in the United States alone.⁶⁴ Between 1967 and 1979 a further 1 million copies of the New Scotfield Reference Bible had been published.⁶⁵ In a move to make Scotfield's work more accessible, in 1984 a new edition based on the New International Version was published.⁶⁶

Arno C. Gaebelien tells the story of how the Scotfield Reference Bible came about from a discussion held with Scotfield in 1901.

One night, about the middle of that week, Dr. Scotfield suggested, after the evening service, that we take

a stroll along the shore. It was a beautiful night. Our walk along the shore of the sound lasted until midnight. For the first time he mentioned the plan of producing a reference Bible, and outlined the method he had in mind. He said he had thought of it for many years and had spoken to others about it, but had not received much encouragement. The scheme came to him in the early days of his ministry in Dallas, and later, during the balmy days of the Niagara Conferences he had submitted his desire to a number of brethren, who all approved of it, but nothing came of it. He expressed the hope that the new beginning and this new testimony in Sea Cliff might open the way to bring about the publication of such a Bible with references and copious footnotes.⁶⁷

Those discussions led eventually to the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909. The combination of an attractive format, illustrative notes, and cross references has led both critics and advocates to acknowledge the Scofield's Reference Bible to have been the most influential book among evangelicals during the first half of the twentieth century.

The various millennial currents were most effectively solidified in The Scofield Reference Bible. The significance of the Scofield Reference Bible cannot be overestimated.⁶⁸

James Barr claims that in the 1950's half of all conservative evangelical student groups were using the Scofield Reference Bible, and that it was,

The most important single document of all fundamentalism... which has been the normal religious diet of many millions of readers. Its name itself makes clear what it is, A private interpretation... Both serious biblical scholarship and the established traditions of the major churches were alike ignored.⁶⁹

Craig Blaising, professor of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, and a dispensationalist, similarly acknowledges,

The Scofield Reference Bible became the Bible of fundamentalism, and the theology of the notes approached confessional status in many Bible schools, institutes and seminaries established in the early decades of this century.⁷⁰

Ernest Sandeen explains some of the reasons for its popularity,

The Scofield Reference Bible combined an attractive format of typography, paraphrasing, notes, and cross references with the theology of Darbyite dispensationalism. The book has thus been subtly but powerfully influential in spreading those views among hundreds of thousands who have regularly read that Bible and who often have been unaware of the distinction between the ancient text and the Scofield interpretation.⁷¹

In his Introduction, Scofield claimed that, over the previous fifty years there had been an 'unprecedented' degree of interest in Bible study, '...free from merely controversial motive' and that from this '...new and vast exegetical and expository...' body of literature which was '...inaccessible for bulk, cost, and time to the average reader', Scofield had taken, the '...winnowed and attested results...' of this fifty years of study and that they were now '...embodied in the notes, summaries, and definitions of this edition.' He insisted that 'Expository novelties, and merely personal views and interpretations, have been rejected.'⁷² In distinguishing his own from previous bible reference systems, which he regarded as '...unscientific and often misleading...' Scofield insisted that in his new system,

...all the greater truths of the divine revelation are so traced through the entire Bible, from the place of first mention to the last, that the reader may himself follow the gradual unfolding of these, by many inspired writers through many ages, to their culmination in Jesus Christ and the New Testament Scriptures. This method imparts to Bible study and interest and vital reality which are wholly lacking in fragmented and disconnected study.⁷³

The footnotes which appear in the Scofield Reference Bible are actually very selective, appearing on less than half of the pages of Scripture. 781 pages lack any comment out of a total of 1,353 so it hardly rates as a comprehensive commentary such as provided by Albert Barnes or Matthew Henry.⁷⁴ Trumbull observes that Scofield was convinced people wanted to study the Bible but didn't know how and,

...saw that if his Bible studies were to be of the widest usefulness they would need to be attached to the

Word itself-and in a form not too bulky.⁷⁵

Scotfield goes much further than either Barnes or Henry in providing comprehensive headings embedded in the Scriptural text. These not only include chapter and paragraph titles but in many cases, verse by verse headings in chapters deemed significant to dispensationalists that would otherwise prove obscure were it not for such 'helps'. For example, in Isaiah 11, entitled 'The Davidic kingdom set up' additional headings guide readers carefully through the chapter ensuring a dispensational gloss,

(1) The King's ancestry (11,1); (2) The source of the King's power, the sevenfold Spirit (11,2); (3) The character of his reign (11,3-5); (4) The quality of the kingdom (11,6-8); (5) The extent of the Kingdom (11,9); (6) How the kingdom will be set up (11,10-16) ⁷⁶

Had Scotfield's notes been published as a commentary separately they would have, in time, probably been forgotten or superseded. The difference is, 'neither Henry nor Barnes had the temerity, guile or gall to get their notes accepted as Scripture itself.'⁷⁷

Scotfield's Reference Bible has undergone significant revision since it was first published in 1909. Scotfield completed the first revision in 1917, apparently with the help of seven consulting editors - Henry G. Weston (President, Crozier Theological Seminary); James M. Gray (Dean, Moody Bible Institute); W. G. Moorehead (Professor, Xenia Theological Seminary); Elmore Harris (President, Toronto Bible Institute) William J. Erdman; Arno C. Gaebelien & Arthur T. Pierson, several of whom were D.L. Moody's colleagues.⁷⁸ Canfield argues that the addition of these names together with their academic qualifications was merely cosmetic, to give an air of respectability⁷⁹ Sandeen goes further arguing,

Just what role these consulting editors played in the project has been the subject of some confusion. Apparently Scotfield only meant to gain support for his publication from both sides of the millenarian movement with this device.⁸⁰

In 1945 when a minor revision was published, an eighth consulting editor, William L. Pettingill, was added. However, so wedded to the 1917 edition were some ultra-dispensationalists that strong representations were made to the revision committee to 'hold the line.' Cornelius Stam asked,

Would revision neutralize the dispensational distinctions which Dr. Scotfield had brought to light? Would it represent a retreat rather than an advance for dispensational truth? Would it impair the Reference Bible which had brought so much blessing to so many thousands of people?⁸¹

Despite such reservations, revisions continued to adapt, modify and elaborate Scotfield's dispensational package. The New Scotfield Reference Bible was published in 1967 edited by Dr E. Schuyler English. In 1984 a further revision based on the New International Version of the Bible was undertaken by three of the faculty from Philadelphia College of Bible, Clarence Mason, Sherrill Babb and Paul Karleen, and published by the Oxford University Press as The New Scotfield Study Bible.⁸² Charles Ryrie, perhaps seeking to emulate Scotfield's success, also published in his own name a more refined dispensational guide, the Ryrie Study Bible.⁸³

6. Scotfield's Seven Dispensations

Scotfield defines his dispensations as periods of time, '...during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God...'⁸⁴ In the Introduction to the Scotfield Reference Bible, he explains, following mention of the 'remarkable results of the modern study of the Prophets, in recovering to the church... a clear and coherent harmony of the predictive portions...' how,

The Dispensations are distinguished, exhibiting the majestic, progressive order of the divine dealings of God with humanity, the 'increasing purpose' which runs through and links together the ages, from the beginning of the life of man to the end in eternity. Augustine said: 'Distinguish the ages, and the Scriptures harmonize.'⁸⁵

Whether Augustine understood 'ages' in terms of Scotfield's dispensations is extremely unlikely. Nevertheless, Scotfield claims that seven such dispensations were 'distinguished' in Scripture. He believed that his scheme was natural and self evident in Scripture,

there is a beautiful system in this gradualness of unfolding. The past is seen to fall into periods, marked off by distinct limits, and distinguishable period from period by something peculiar to each. Thus it comes to be understood that there is a doctrine of Ages or Dispensations in the Bible.⁸⁶

It is interesting to compare how these 'distinct limits' were moved as well as renamed in subsequent editions of the Scofield Reference Bible, as others, especially Schuyler English, sought to refine his scheme.

Scofield Reference Bible (1917)⁸⁷

The New Scofield Study Bible (1984)⁸⁸

1. Innocency (Gen. 1:28)
1. Innocence (Gen. 1.28)
2. Conscience (Gen. 3.23)
2. Conscience or Moral Responsibility (Gen. 3.7)
3. Human Government (Gen. 8.20)
3. Human Government (Gen.8.15)
4. Promise (Gen. 12.1)
4. Promise (Gen. 12.1)
5. Law (Ex. 19.8)
5. Law (Ex. 19.1)
6. Grace (John 1.17)
6. Church (Acts 2.1)
7. Kingdom or Fulness of Times (Eph. 1.10)⁸⁹
7. Kingdom (Rev. 20.4)

Scofield's rigid adherence to these dispensations required him to make some novel assertions to ensure consistency. So for example, in describing the transition between his fourth dispensation of promise to his fifth dispensation of law, Scofield argues,

The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing... The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex. 19. 8). Grace had prepared a deliverer (Moses), provided a sacrifice for the guilty, and by divine power brought them out of bondage (Ex. 19. 4); but at Sinai they exchanged grace for law.⁹⁰

Similarly, in his introduction to the Gospels, Scofield artificially imposes stark divisions before and after Calvary which lead him to the amazing assertions that,

The mission of Jesus was, primarily, to the Jews... The Sermon on the Mount is law, not grace... the doctrines of Grace are to be sought in the Epistles not in the Gospels.⁹¹

Strangely, Scofield ignores the one division that is self evident between the Old and New Covenants. Mark 1:1 categorically states, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ', And Matthew 11:13 further informs us, 'For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. Yet Scofield places the life and ministry of Jesus within the dispensation of Law along with John the Baptist and the Old Testament Prophets, arguing that the sixth dispensation of grace only 'begins with the death and resurrection of Christ'.⁹² So, for example, the Lord's Prayer, and in particular the petition, 'Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.' (Matthew 6:12) is not applicable to the church, since it is 'legal ground'.⁹³ He even suggests the possibility of salvation by works,

As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 3. 24-26; 4. 24, 25). The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ... The predicted end of the testing of man under grace is the apostasy of the professing church...⁹⁴

Scofield believed the Gospels were essentially for the Jews and therefore not relevant for the Church. In the note attached to Ephesians 3, he boldly states, 'In his (Paul's) writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the Church.'⁹⁵ Unfortunately, Scofield seems to impose divisions that do not exist in

Scripture and ignores those that do.

This research, however, is not primarily concerned with an evaluation of Scofield's theological framework, nor even with how he has influenced the rise of dispensationalism. Others have already done so as on the relationship between law and grace.⁹⁶ It is with Scofield's more specific prophetic speculations concerning the relationship between Israel and the Church which this research will concentrate on since they have had such a profound effect on much contemporary Christian Zionism.

As has been noted, in 'Rightly Dividing the Word of God', Scofield laid out the dispensational presuppositions which determined his theological framework,

These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind, in respect of two questions, of sin, and of man's responsibility. Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment - marking his utter failure in every dispensation.⁹⁷

Such a pessimistic view of human history is no where more evident than in what Scofield teaches about his sixth dispensation, the church-age.

7. The Denigration of the Church within the Purposes of God

Historic Christianity has traditionally seen some form of continuity between the Old and New Covenants, and in the relationship between Israel and the Church, national Israel being in an anti-type and precursor for the Church. Scofield concedes as much, although through his notes, he systematically attempts to prove such a view erroneous in favour of a 'failing' church syndrome. Indeed he insists that the Church has not replaced or succeeded Israel as the people of God. In his introduction to the Four Gospels, he argues,

...in approaching the study of the Gospels, the mind should be freed, so far as possible, from mere theological concepts and presuppositions. Especially is it necessary to exclude the notion-a legacy in Protestant thought from post-apostolic and Roman Catholic theology-that the Church is the true Israel, and that the Old Testament foreview of the kingdom is fulfilled in the Church.⁹⁸

Apparently blind to the 'theological concepts and presuppositions' of his own dispensational framework, for all his claims to 'literalism', Scofield applied an obscure, arbitrary and indeed excessive form of typology to reinforce the belief, no doubt influenced by Darby, that the Church age will ultimately end in failure and apostasy to be replaced by a revived national Israel who will enjoy the blessings of the final kingdom dispensation.⁹⁹

Given that four of his seven dispensations are based around events recorded in the first twelve chapters of Genesis, (and a fifth in Exodus), it is perhaps not surprising that Scofield finds in these texts the basis for his entire scheme. So for example, in a footnote to Genesis 2:23, Scofield asserts that Eve is a 'type of the Church as bride of Christ.'¹⁰⁰ As with some of his other 'types' this one appears arbitrary and speculative. Scofield offers a list of New Testament cross references, presumably in the belief that they validate his teaching. These are John 3:28-29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32 and Rev. 19:7-8. In none of these, however, is there any justification for such an assertion. Eve is not even mentioned. There are only two references to Eve in the New Testament, and only once by way of comparison. In 2 Cor. 11:3 Paul warns the Corinthians that they are in danger of being deceived like Eve. Even this verse therefore does not teach that they, the Corinthians were deceived, still less that Eve could or should be regarded as a type for the universal Church. From Genesis 3:14, Scofield further claims that the,

'Adamic Covenant conditions the life of fallen man-conditions which must remain till, in the kingdom age, 'the creation also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God' (Rom. 8.21).¹⁰¹

The verse quoted actually refers to creation not people. By such typology, in which Eve and the so-called Adamic Covenant represent the state of the Church, Scofield prepares the ground for his teaching that the dispensation of the Church is destined to end in apostasy and failure. Then from Genesis 11:1, Scofield sees the Tower of Babel as yet another striking type for the professing Church.

The history of Babel (confusion) strikingly parallels that of the professing Church... ending in a man-made unity-the papacy... [and] ...the confusion of tongues-Protestantism with its innumerable sects. ¹⁰²

Linking Isaiah 13 with Revelation 17, Scofield insists the latter reference predicts the destruction of 'apostate Christianity', which he also described as 'ecclesio-Babylon'¹⁰³ In a speculative but rather confusing footnote to Revelation 17 and the identity of Babylon, Scofield insists that there are actually 'two' Babylons.

Two 'Babylons' are to be distinguished in the Revelation, ecclesiastical Babylon, which is apostate Christendom, headed up under the Papacy; and political Babylon, which is the Beast's confederated empire, the last form of Gentile world-dominion. Ecclesiastical Babylon is 'the great whore' (Rev. 17. 1), and is destroyed by political Babylon (Rev. 17. 15-18)...¹⁰⁴

But the language of Rev. 18. (e.g. vs. 10, 16, 18) seem beyond question to identify 'Babylon,' the 'city' of luxury and traffic, with 'Babylon' the ecclesiastical centre, viz. Rome.¹⁰⁵

By such typology, Scofield intends his readers to concur that even the dispensation of the Church will end in 'judgment-marking... utter failure'¹⁰⁶ This is at variance with New Testament teaching which assures of the permanence and ultimate victory of the Church over evil.¹⁰⁷

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matthew 16:18)

In other places Scofield's scheme flatly contradicts the New Testament. So in Matthew 13, for example, in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, the Lord explains that the wicked will be removed first. Scofield however, insists the believers will be taken out first at the rapture.¹⁰⁸ Likewise his footnote to Acts 1:11 ignores the fact that the Angel promises that all will see Jesus when He returns and not the few in some 'secret rapture.'

Clearly therefore, those who have subsequently accepted Scofield's scheme, especially since 1948, such as Hal Lindsey, have been preconditioned to expect the return of Jews to Palestine. They are also generally pessimistic about the role of the Church, and see in the founding of the State of Israel, evidence not only of the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy, but of an impending Jewish revival and the imminent return of Christ.

8. The Elevation of National Israel to a Superior Role over the Church

This process begins for Scofield with his footnote to Genesis 12:1 and the supposed Fourth Dispensation of Promise.

For Abraham and his descendants it is evident that the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15.18, note) made a great change. They became distinctively the heirs of promise. That covenant is wholly gracious and unconditional. The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing.¹⁰⁹

Schuyler English, anxious to expurgate Scofield's unorthodox views that, 'The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex. 19.8)' ¹¹⁰, makes considerable changes to this footnote and goes much further in the dispensational claims made for Israel.

God's promises to Abram and his seed certainly did not terminate at Sinai with the giving of the law (Gal 3:17). Both O.T. and N.T. are full of post-Sinaitic promises concerning Israel and the land which is to be Israel's everlasting possession (e.g. Exo 32:13; 33:1 - 3; Lev 23:10; 25:2; 26:6; Deu 6:1 - 23; 8:1 - 18; Josh 1:2,11; 24:13; Acts 7:17; Rom 9:4). But as a specific test of Israel's stewardship of divine truth, the dispensation of Promise was superseded, though not annulled, by the law that was given at Sinai (Exo 19:3ff.).¹¹¹

Scofield also applied his distinctive typology to the relationship between Israel and the Church. Starting with a cross-reference from Genesis 11:1 and the story of Babel, he guides his readers to Isaiah 13:1 and the 'burden of Babylon' where Scofield claims,

Isa. 3.14 gives the divine view of the welter of warring Gentile powers. The divine order is given in Isa.

11. Israel in her own land, the centre of divine government of the world and channel of divine blessing; and the Gentiles blessed in association with Israel. Anything else is, politically, mere 'Babel'¹¹²

This notion that Gentiles are 'blessed in association with Israel', is the principle motivation for the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) who believe Christians are called to 'comfort Zion' rather than bear witness to Jesus as Messiah.¹¹³ Scofield provided Christian Zionists such as the ICEJ with justification when he took the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 and applied it to Abraham's descendants,

(5) 'I will bless them that bless thee.' In fulfilment closely related to the next clause. (6) 'And curse him that curseth thee.' Wonderfully fulfilled in the history of the dispersion. It has invariably fared ill with the people who have persecuted the Jew-well with those who have protected him. The future will still more remarkably prove this principle. (Deut. 30. 7; Isa. 14. 1, 2; Joel 3. 1-8; Mic. 5. 7-9; Hag. 2. 22; Zech. 14. 1-3; Mt. 25. 40, 45).¹¹⁴

To Scofield's notes on Genesis 12:1 & 3 Schuyler English adds,

There was a promise of blessing upon those individuals and nations who bless Abram's descendants, and a curse laid upon those who persecute the Jews (Gen 12:3; Mat 25:31 - 46)... For a nation to commit the sin of anti-Semitism brings inevitable judgment. The future will still more remarkably prove this principle.¹¹⁵

The promise given to Abraham actually states,

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. (Genesis 12:3)

There is no indication in the text that this warning of cursing was ever intended to extend beyond Abraham. The promise, when referring to Abraham's descendants speaks of God's blessing them, not other nations blessing the Jews. Ironically, Scofield makes no comment on the passage in Galatians 3:16 and 3:28-29, where the Apostle Paul understands Christ to be the "seed" of Abraham, and that the promise of blessing to the Gentiles comes through faith in Jesus Christ and not on the basis of how well they treat the Jews.

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. (Galatians 3:14-16)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:28-29)

Nevertheless Schuyler English boldly insists,

Both O.T. and N.T. are full of post-Sinaitic promises concerning Israel and the land which is to be Israel's everlasting possession (e.g. Exo 32:13; 33:1 - 3; Lev 23:10; 25:2; 26:6; Deu 6:1 - 23; 8:1 - 18; Josh 1:2,11; 24:13; Acts 7:17; Rom 9:4)

Just two New Testament cross references are offered. Neither corroborates what he claims.

As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased. (Acts 7:17)

For Luke, the "fulfilment" of the promise made to Abraham was seen to have already been fulfilled through Moses, "as the time drew near..."

Over against Scofield's distinction between Israel and the Church, the New Testament consistently speaks of there being one true vine or one olive tree, symbols portraying the unity within the one elect people of

God made up of both Jews and Gentiles, who by faith are thereby all declared to be children of Abraham. However, in his introduction to the Gospels, Scofield insists,

Do not, therefore, assume interpretations to be true because familiar. Do not assume that 'the throne of David' (Lk. 1.32) is synonymous with 'My Father's throne' (Rev. 3. 21), or that 'the house of Jacob' (Lk. 1.33) is the Church composed both of Jew and Gentile. [116](#)

Following Darby, Scofield taught that God has two separate plans, one for Israel, another for the Church, each having a separate identity and eternal destiny, Israel's on earth while the Church's in heaven. So in commenting on Matthew 16,18, and Jesus' promise to 'build my church,' Scofield claims,

Israel was the true 'church' but not in any sense the N.T. church-the only point of similarity being that both were 'called out' and by the same God. All else is contrast.[117](#)

In a footnote to Acts 7:38, Scofield explains away the term used by Stephen of Israel as 'the church in the wilderness'.

Israel in the land is never called a church. In the wilderness Israel was a true church (Gr. ecclesia = called-out assembly), but in striking contrast with the N. T. ecclesia (Mt. 16. 18, note).[118](#)

In commenting on Romans 11:1, Scofield insists on maintaining this distinction between the Church and Israel. To do so however, he has to distinguish between the 'earthly' and 'heavenly' fulfilment of Biblical prophecy,

That the Christian now inherits the distinctive Jewish promises is not taught in Scripture. The Christian is of the heavenly seed of Abraham (Gen. 15. 5, 6; Gal. 3. 29), and partakes of the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15. 8, note); but Israel as a nation always has its own place, and is yet to have its greatest exaltation as the earthly people of God.[119](#)

So, with reference to Romans 11:5, in which Paul insists a remnant of believing Jews existed in his day, Scofield extrapolates that,

During the church-age the remnant is composed of believing Jews... During the great tribulation a remnant out of all Israel will turn to Jesus as Messiah and will become His witnesses after the removal of the church (Rev. 7.3-8).

The purpose of God during this so called, 'church age' then is,

not the conversion of the world, but to, 'gather out of the Gentiles a people for his name' After this he 'will return' and then, and not before, will the world be converted.[120](#)

What should the attitude of the Church be to Israel? Scofield uses the description of the final judgement in Matthew 25:31-46 to teach implicitly that Gentiles should bless Israel. Schuyler English in his revision makes this point much more explicitly.

All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. (Matthew 25:32)

In their footnotes to this verse in the 1917 and 1984 editions, it is significant to observe how more overtly Dispensational the latter has become.

Scofield Reference Bible (1917)

The New Scofield Study Bible (1984)

This judgment is to be distinguished from the judgment of the great white throne. Here there is no resurrection; the persons judged are living nations; no books are opened;

three classes are present, sheep, goats, brethren; the time is at the return of Christ (v. 31); and the scene is on earth. All these particulars are in contrast with rev. 20. 11-15.

The test in this judgment is the treatment accorded by the nations to those whom Christ here calls "my brethren." These "brethren" are the Jewish Remnant who will have preached the Gospel of the kingdom to all nations during the tribulation.¹²¹

This judgment of individual Gentiles is to be distinguished from other judgments in Scripture, such as the judgment of the Church (2 Cor 5:10 - 11), the judgment of Israel (Ezek 20:33 - 38), and the judgment of the wicked after the millennium (Rev 20:11 - 15). The time of this judgment is "when the Son of man comes in his glory," i.e. at the second coming of Christ after the tribulation. The subjects of this judgment are "all nations," i.e. all Gentiles... then living on earth. Three classes of individuals are mentioned: (1) sheep, saved Gentiles; (2) goats, unsaved Gentiles; and (3) brothers, the people of Israel. The scene is on earth; no books are opened; it deals with the living rather than with those translated or raised from the dead. The test of this judgment is the treatment by individual Gentiles of those whom Christ calls "brothers of mine" living in the preceding tribulation period when Israel is fearfully persecuted (cp. Gen. 12:3). The sheep are Gentiles saved on earth during the period between the rapture and Christ's second coming to the earth.¹²²

To justify this perpetual distinction between Israel and the Church, even under the New Covenant, Scofield insists that Israel is the earthly wife of God and the Church is actually the heavenly bride of Christ. Commenting on Hosea 2:2, Scofield writes,

That Israel is the wife of Jehovah (see vs. 16-23), now disowned but yet to be restored, is the clear teaching of the passages. This relationship is not to be confounded with that of the Church to Christ (John 3.29, refs.). In the mystery of the Divine tri-unity both are true. The N.T. speaks of the Church as a virgin espoused to one husband (2 Cor. 11.1,2); which could never be said of an adulterous wife, restored in grace. Israel is, then, to be the restored and forgiven wife of Jehovah, the Church the virgin wife of the Lamb (John 3.29; Rev. 19. 6-8); Israel Jehovah's earthly wife (Hos. 2, 23); the Church the Lamb's heavenly bride (Rev. 19.7)¹²³

In a footnote to the last reference, Revelation 19:7, Scofield insists,

The 'Lamb's wife' here is the 'bride' (Rev. 21. 9), the Church, identified with the 'heavenly Jerusalem' (Heb. 12. 22, 23), and to be distinguished from Israel, the adulterous and repudiated 'wife' of Jehovah, yet to be restored (Isa. 54. 1-10; Hos. 2. 1-17), who is identified with the earth (Hos. 2. 23). ¹²⁴

Scofield reaches this conclusion guided by his literalistic hermeneutic and presupposition that Israel and the Church are separate bodies, therefore, 'A forgiven and restored wife could not be called either a virgin (2 Cor. 11: 2,3), or a bride.'¹²⁵ Such novel teaching of an 'earthly wife' and 'heavenly bride' is in plain contradiction to passages such as John 10:16 and Romans 11:24, neither of which, interestingly, warrant any comment by Scofield.

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. (John 10,16)

After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to

nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree! (Romans 11,24)

Paul is here emphasising how Gentiles share the same privileges as the faithful remnant of Jewish believers. This is neither equated with national Israel, nor with a separate olive tree. At some future time Paul predicts believing Jews will also be grafted in once again. Paul is therefore teaching quite explicitly that there is one olive tree into which both Jews and Gentiles have and will be grafted on the same basis - belief in Jesus Christ. In reply to those who, in Paul's own day, regarded Gentile believers as inferior and who wished to keep Jewish and Gentile believers separate, he insisted,

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one

in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3,28-29)

Paul uses similar analogies of 'one new man' (Ephesians 2:13-16), and, 'fellow heirs, and of the same body' (Ephesians 3:4-6), to emphasise that God has taken two peoples and made them one in Christ. By insisting, however, on arbitrary divisions in biblical history marked off, '...by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind...' each ending '...in judgment' and '...utter failure in every dispensation,'¹²⁶ Scofield sets in tension Old Testament Scripture with New Testament Scripture, divorces Israel from the Church, and thereby confuses the future with the past. This is made more apparent still by the way in which Scofield insists that unfulfilled prophecies concerning national Israel will be fulfilled in the future.

9. Prophetic Promises of a New Covenant with a Restored National Israel

Like Darby, Scofield taught that it was God's intention to restore the nation of Israel to Palestine, rebuild the Temple, and re-institute the priesthood and sacrificial system. 'According to the prophets, Israel, regathered from all nations, restored to her own land, and converted, is yet to have her greatest earthly exaltation and glory.'¹²⁷ In a note attached to Hebrews 7:22, Scofield insists the New Covenant contains separate promises for both Israel and the church,

The New Covenant secures the personal revelation of the Lord to every believer (v.11)... And secures the perpetuity, future conversion, and blessing of Israel (Jer. 31.31-40).¹²⁸

Similarly, in the context of the return of Christ, Scofield asserts,

To Israel, the return of the Lord is predicted to accomplish the yet unfulfilled prophecies of her national regathering, conversion and establishment in peace and power under the Davidic Covenant (Acts 15. 14-17 with Zech. 14. 1-9)¹²⁹

So, in his note on Haggai 2:9, Scofield claims, therefore, that there will actually be a fourth and fifth temple built in Jerusalem.

In a sense all the temples (i.e. Solomon's; Ezra's; Herod's; that which will be used by the unbelieving Jews under the covenant with the Beast [Dan. 9.27; Mt. 24. 15; 2 Thes. 2. 3,4]; and Ezekiel's future kingdom temple [Ezk. 40-47.]), are treated as one 'house'-the 'house of the Lord,'¹³⁰

Scofield finds evidence for this view in Leviticus 23:23-25 and an unusual typology related to the feast of Tabernacles.

This feast is a prophetic type and refers to the future re-gathering of long-dispersed Israel. A long interval elapses between Pentecost and Trumpets, answering the long period occupied in the Pentecostal work of the Holy Spirit in the present dispensation. Study carefully Isa. 18. 3; 27. 13 (with contexts); 58. (entire chapter), and Joel 2. 1 to 3. 21 in connection with the 'trumpets,' and it will be seen that these trumpets, always symbols of testimony, are connected with the re-gathering and repentance of Israel after the church, or Pentecostal, period is ended.¹³¹

This highly speculative scheme is simply imposed on a series of texts that teach nothing of the sort. For example, Leviticus 23:23-25 reads,

The LORD said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites, 'On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the LORD by fire.'

It is surprising that Scofield should begin to base his belief in the return of the Jews to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple on the basis of passages such as this. In one of the cross references given, Joel 2, Scofield is forced to reinterpret later verses to avoid reversing the chronological order of the chapter. The earlier portion of the chapter, he claims, refers to the future restoration of Israel. However Peter, on the great Day of

Pentecost, quotes from the latter part, Joel 2:28-32 to explain how the events predicted were occurring that day. To get round this, Scofield insists,

Acts 2.17, which gives a specific interpretation of 'afterward' (Heb. *acherith* = 'latter,' 'last'). 'Afterward' in Joel 2. 28 means 'in the last days' (Gr. *eschatos*), and has a partial and continuous fulfilment during the 'last days' which began with the first advent of Christ (Heb. 1. 2); but the greater fulfilment awaits the 'last days' as applied to Israel.¹³²

So Scofield teaches that a 'greater fulfilment' of this passage refers to a future blessing awaiting Israel rather than that which occurred on the Day of Pentecost at the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on the Church. Once again national Israel is placed in a superior position to that of the Body of Christ, the Church. To perpetuate this artificial division, in the cross-reference to Acts 2:17, Scofield has to distinguish between the 'last days' of the Church and the 'last days' of Israel.

A distinction must be observed between 'the last days' when the prediction relates to Israel, and the 'last days' when the prediction relates to the church (1 Tim. 4. 1-3; 2 Tim. 3. 1-8; Heb. 1.1,2; 1 Pet. 1. 4,5; 2 Pet. 3. 1-9; 1 John 2. 18, 19; Jude 17-19). Also distinguish the expression the 'last days' (plural) from the 'last day' (singular); the latter expression referring to the resurrections and the judgment (John 6. 39, 40, 44, 54; 11. 24; 12. 48). The 'last days' as related to the church began with the advent of Christ (Heb. 1. 2), but have especial reference to the time of declension and apostasy at the end of this age (2 Tim. 3. 1; 4. 4). The 'last days' as related to Israel are the days of Israel's exaltation and blessing, and are synonymous with the kingdom-age (Isa. 2. 2-4; Mic. 4. 1-7). They are 'last' not with reference to this dispensation, but with reference to the whole of Israel's history.¹³³

To justify his dispensational scheme and a glorious future for Israel in the Kingdom age, Scofield concedes that the Scriptures speak of two occasions when national Israel returned to Palestine, but insists a third return is also predicted.

The gift of the land is modified by prophecies of three dispossessions and restorations (Gen. 15. 13, 14, 16; Jer. 25. 11, 12; Deut. 28. 62-65; 30. 1-3). Two dispossessions and restorations have been accomplished. Israel is now in the third dispersion, from which she will be restored at the return of the Lord as King under the Davidic Covenant (Deut. 30. 3; Jer. 23. 5-8; Ezk. 37. 21-25; Lk. 1. 30-33; Acts 15. 14-17).¹³⁴

Scofield's argument for a third return is based on two important deductions that follows from his literalist hermeneutic. First, that Israel had never taken all the land promised to Abraham, and second, that Messianic promises had not been fulfilled during the first advent. In linking these two together, Scofield speculated that the return to the land would follow the return of the Lord,¹³⁵ a chronology that is contradicted in the conflicting notes on Deuteronomy 30:3-5, written with hindsight in the New Scofield Reference Bible published in 1967,¹³⁶ yet reiterated again, without comment in the New Scofield Study Bible of 1984.¹³⁷ In a note on Deuteronomy 30:3, Scofield argues,

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

- (1) Dispersion for disobedience, v. 1 (Deut. 28. 63-68. See Gen. 15. 18. note).
- (2) The future repentance of Israel while in the dispersion, v.2.
- (3) The return of the Lord, v. 3 (Amos 9. 9-14; Acts 15. 14-17).
- (4) Restoration to the land, v. 5 (Isa. 11. 11, 12; Jer. 23. 3-8; Ezk. 37. 21-25).
- (5) National conversion, v. 6 (Rom. 11. 26, 27; Hos. 2. 14-16).
- (6) The judgment of Israel's oppressors, v. 7 (Isa. 14. 1, 2; Joel 3. 1-8; Mt. 25. 31-46).
- (7) National prosperity, v. 9 (Amos 9. 11-14)¹³⁸

Far from the Abrahamic covenant being 'unconditional', Scofield and his later dispensational revisionists, ignore or minimise the seriousness of the injunctions contained in this very passage of Deuteronomy which plainly teaches that occupation of the land would always be conditional on adherence to her covenantal obligations, a principle Moses was concerned to impress upon Israel before she entered the land, a principle

subsequently demonstrated throughout Israel's history, and in particular under the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

Schuyler English, in his 1967 revision of the Scofield Reference Bible, consistently adds to Scofield's original notes to give a more explicit dispensational reading of key texts. In many cases references to contemporary Israel are appended to verses on which Scofield originally made no comment at all. So, to Genesis 12:7, Schuyler English adds,

(12:7) The verb 'give' appears over 1000 times in the Bible, with greatest frequency in relation to God giving the land of Palestine to his people Israel, a truth here announced for the first time but repeated in nearly 150 passages in the O.T...¹³⁹

One may legitimately ask for evidence of the same promise being made in the New Testament. Again, on Deuteronomy 30:5, Schuyler English adds the following innovation,

No passage of Scripture has found fuller confirmation in the events of history than Dt. 28 - 30. In A.D. 70 the Jewish nation was scattered throughout the world because of disobedience and rejection of Christ. In world-wide dispersion they experienced exactly the punishments foretold by Moses. On the other hand, when the nation walked in conformity with the will of God, it enjoyed the blessing and protection of God. In the twentieth century the exiled people were restored to their homeland.¹⁴⁰

No attempt is made to explain the apparent contradiction in Israel's continued 'disobedience and rejection of Christ' and their restoration, 'to their homeland,' other than to insist the promises made to Israel have been 'postponed' during this church age. Ironically, the attempt by Scofield's revisers to make Deuteronomy 30:1-6 speak of a final restoration to the land is actually undermined just a few verses further on in Deuteronomy 30:11-20 where Moses reiterates the same warning.

But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. (Deuteronomy 30,17-19)

Not surprisingly, no notes are included in any version of Scofield for this passage. Scofield's dispensational hermeneutic nevertheless requires a futuristic interpretation of this passage on the grounds that Israel has never yet received all the land allegedly 'unconditionally' and literally promised under the Abrahamic Covenant. Therefore, Scofield insists, logically, she must do so one day. So, in paragraph headings to Isaiah 11, he adds the bold assertion that these verses speak of, 'The vision of the Jewish remnant in the great tribulation' for vv. 20-27 and, 'The approach of the Gentile hosts to the battle of Armageddon.' for vv. 28-34. Then in a footnote to Isaiah 11 Scofield writes,

The order of events in Isa. 10., 11., is noteworthy. Isa. 10. gives the distress of the Remnant in Palestine in the great tribulation (Psa. 2. 5; Rev. 7. 14), and the approach and destruction of the Gentile hosts under the Beast (Dan. 7. 8; Rev. 19. 20). Isa. 11. immediately follows with its glorious picture of the kingdom-age. Precisely the same order is found in Rev. 19., 20...

That nothing of this occurred at the first coming of Christ is evident from the comparison of the history of the times of Christ with this and all the other parallel prophecies. So far from re-gathering dispersed Israel and establishing peace in the earth, His crucifixion was soon followed (A.D. 70) by the destruction of Jerusalem, and the utter scattering of the Palestinian Jews amongst the nations¹⁴¹

Significantly, this dogmatic footnote denying any link with the incarnation of Jesus Christ, is omitted in the New Scofield Study Bible.

The argument concerning God's possible future purposes for a revived national Israel therefore in part stands or falls on whether the promise made under the Abrahamic Covenant has or has not yet been fulfilled. In Genesis 15:18 we are told,

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, 'To your descendants I give this land,

from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates...

Then, in Deuteronomy 6, Moses says,

See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers--to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob--and to their descendants after them. (Deuteronomy 1,8)

But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers. (Deuteronomy 6,23)

In these passages Moses reminds the Israelites that God had rescued them from Egypt in order to fulfil the promise made to Abraham that his seed would inherit the Promised Land. God reaffirms that same promise to Moses' successor, Joshua.

Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. (Joshua 1,6)

The question then arises, did Israel do so? While it is true that the Jews have never exercised political sovereignty over all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates, looking back, the writer of the book of Joshua regarded the covenant promise as having already been fulfilled in that generation.

So Joshua took the **entire land**, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war. (Joshua 11,23)

So the LORD gave Israel **all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers**, and they took possession of it and settled there. The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD handed all their enemies over to them. **Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.** (Joshua 21,43-45)¹⁴²

It is significant that we are told Joshua took 'the entire land' because the Lord had given 'Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers'. To the claim that certain promises have yet to be fulfilled, Joshua is emphatic, 'Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.' Likewise, Nehemiah, writing after the second exile, looked back to the first exile and could testify in praise to God for the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham,

You gave them kingdoms and nations, allotting to them even the remotest frontiers... You made their sons as numerous as the stars in the sky, and you brought them into the land that you told their fathers to enter and possess. (Nehemiah 9,22-23)

These passages record the first re-gathering of the Israelites to the Promised Land and Nehemiah even refers to the metaphorical promise to make Abraham's descendants 'as numerous as the stars in the sky' (cf. Genesis 22:17). It is significant, however, that Scofield gives no footnotes to these passages, nor offers any cross-references to them. Instead he relies on a literalistic interpretation of Genesis 15:18 that leads him to contradict these other passages of Scripture.

This selective approach is not the only occasion on which Scofield mishandles Scripture in order to maintain his dispensational scheme. He does the same with the second exile. The Prophets, while warning of judgement and chastisement also offer, in varying degrees of explicitness, the promise of a second return. After 70 years this was fulfilled under Zerubbabel, and recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah. However, Scofield insists they refer to a third return on the premise that certain Messianic promises have not yet been completely fulfilled literally. An example he gives is Jeremiah 23:5-8,

The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety... 'So then, the days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when people will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land.

In a footnote to this passage, Scofield asserts,

This final restoration is shown to be accomplished after a period of unexampled tribulation (Jer 30. 3-10), and in connection with the manifestation of David's righteous Branch (v. 5), who is also Jehovah-tsidkenu (v. 6). The restoration here foretold is not to be confounded with the return of a feeble remnant of Judah under Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel at the end of the 70 years (Jer. 29. 10). At His first advent Christ, David's righteous Branch (Lk. 1. 31-33), did not 'execute justice and judgment in the earth' but was crowned with thorns and crucified. Neither was Israel the nation restored, nor did the Jewish people say, 'The Lord our righteousness.' Cf. Rom. 10. 3. The prophecy is yet to be fulfilled (Acts 15. 14-17).¹⁴³

Another passage which Scofield insists supports his belief in a 'third' return is Ezekiel 37 and the vision of the valley of dry bones.

Having announced (Ezk. 36. 24-38) the restoration of the nation, Jehovah now gives in vision and symbol the method of its accomplishment. Verse 11 gives the clue. The 'bones' are the whole house of Israel who shall then be living. The 'graves' are the nations where they dwell. The order of the procedure is, (1) the bringing of the people out (v. 12); (2) the bringing of them in (v. 12); (3) their conversion (v. 13); (4) the filling with the Spirit (v.14). The symbol follows. The two sticks are Judah and the ten tribes; united, they are one nation (vs. 19-21). Then follows (vs. 21-27) the plain declaration as to Jehovah's purpose, and verse 28 implies that then Jehovah will become known to the Gentiles in a marked way. This is also the order of Acts 15. 16, 17, and the two passages strongly indicate the time of full Gentile conversion.¹⁴⁴

It is difficult to conceive how such an entirely futuristic interpretation would have brought comfort to the Jewish exiles in Babylon to whom Ezekiel was sent to minister.

In the footnote to Genesis 15, Scofield offers just two New Testament references to vindicate his claim that there would be a third return to the Land. Luke 1:30-33 and Acts 15:13-17. Significantly there is in fact no reference to "land" in either of these passages. Luke 1:33 states, "and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." Without further comment or footnote to the actual text, Scofield takes Luke 1:30-33 to be an implicit prediction of the return of Israel, a third time, to the Land in which Jesus will therefore "reign" as king for ever. He clearly sees this as specific to Israel rather than as a universal reference to earthly or heavenly rule as other commentators have done.

The second New Testament passage which Scofield claims speaks of a third return is Acts 15:13-17. This contains the quote by James taken from Amos 9:11-12.

After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' that have been known for ages. (Acts 15:16-18)

For Scofield, 'Dispensationally, this is the most important passage in the N.T. It gives the divine purpose for this age, and for the beginning of the next.'¹⁴⁵ since it contains James' summary of the decision reached by the Apostles and elders that Gentile believers were not required to undergo circumcision or be commanded to keep the law of Moses as some of the Pharisees had insisted (Acts 15:5-6). James appeals to Amos 9:11 as proof that what they had been witnessing since Pentecost, in seeing Gentiles come to faith, had been predicted long ago and was therefore consistent with God's will.

Scofield reads considerably more into this passage however. So much so that he obscures its most obvious and direct meaning. The reason Scofield believes 'dispensationally', this to be '...the most important passage in the N.T.' is because,

It gives the divine purpose for this age, and for the beginning of the next. (1) The taking out from among the Gentiles of a people for His name, the distinctive work of the present, or church-age... Precisely this has been in progress since Pentecost. The Gospel has never anywhere converted all, but everywhere has called out some. ('After this [viz. the out-calling] I will return.' James quotes from Amos 9. 11, 12. The verses which follow in Amos describe the final re-gathering of Israel... (3) 'And will build again the tabernacle of David,' i.e. re-establish the Davidic rule over Israel (2 Sam. 7. 8-17; Lk. 1. 31-33). (4) 'That the residue of man [Israelites] may

seek after the Lord' (cf. Zech. 12. 7, 8; 13. 1,2). (5) 'And all the Gentiles,' etc. (cf. Mic. 4. 2; Zech. 8. 21, 22). This is also the order of Rom. 11. 24-27.¹⁴⁶

Scotfield has interpreted the 'After this...' as meaning that 'after James' or 'after Pentecost', in fact at least 1,900 years 'after', God would some day 'rebuild the tabernacle of David'. In doing so Scotfield ignores the fact that James is actually quoting Amos and a chronology seen from Amos' perspective, to explain what had happened since the time of Amos and the amazing conversion of Cornelius and other Gentiles which had caused such a stir (Acts 15:2-4) and necessitated this potentially divisive meeting between Paul and Barnabas, the Apostles and Elders.

Schuyler English in his revision of Scotfield attempts to reinforce this dispensational reading.

With the exception of the first five words, vv. 16 - 18 are quoted from Amos 9:11 - 12. James quoted from the LXX, which here preserved the original text (see Amos 9:12, note). Amos 9:11 begins with the words "in that day." James introduced his quotation in such a way as to show what day Amos was talking about, namely, the time after the present world-wide witness (Acts 1:8), when Christ will return. James showed that there will be Gentile believers at that time as well as Jewish believers; hence he concluded that Gentiles are not required to become Jewish proselytes by circumcision."¹⁴⁷

Here Schuyler English presumably believes the promise to "restore David's fallen tent" refers to the physical return of Israel to the Land rather than the spiritual return of Israel to their Lord. The quotation is taken from Amos 9:11.

In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name, " declares the LORD, who will do these things. "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God. (Amos 9:11-15)

"Amos' single prophecy of future blessing (9:11 - 15) details (1) the restoration of the Davidic dynasty (v. 11); (2) the conversion of the nations (v. 12); (3) the fruitfulness of the land (v. 13); (4) Israel's return from captivity (v. 14); (5) the rebuilding of the waste cities (v. 14); and (6) Israel's permanent settlement in the holy land (v. 15)."¹⁴⁸

Whereas Scotfield and Schuyler English take James' quote of Amos as promising a future literal and permanent return to the Land, James, does not actually quote Amos 9:13-15, stopping at, and paraphrasing, verse 12. Instead James dwells on the purpose - the bringing of people to faith in the Messiah, and specifically the explanation of why Gentiles were turning to the Lord. James is simply appealing to the prophets to vindicate the universality of the Gospel and the Gentile mission in particular. If dispensationalists see this as 'spiritualising' the Old Testament text, then they should acknowledge that it is James under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who does so.¹⁴⁹

By using the passage to teach some predetermined chronological and superior futuristic plan for national Israel, however, Scotfield and Schuyler English take away the heart of the passage which implicitly focuses on the wonder of Christ's work at Calvary as the reason Gentiles were turning to God (Acts 15:26). Furthermore, on the basis of Scotfield's logic, and as others have insisted subsequently, the 'return' of Israel to the Land could precede her return to the Lord, since this Jewish revival will occur on His 'return' thus negating the need for evangelism among the Jews.

It is a simple fact that nowhere is a third re-gathering 'to the land' mentioned anywhere in the Bible. Each passage quoted by Scotfield refers either to the first or second re-gathering to the land, or as in the case of Amos 9, to the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is significant that following the rebuilding of Solomon's temple in 516 B.C. there are no biblical references in either the Old or the New Testament to any return to the Land.

From the perspective of the New Testament, the Land, as much as the nation of Israel, has ceased to have

any significance in the future purposes of God. So for example, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus reinterprets and universalises the promises made to Israel in Psalm 37.

Psalm 37: 11, 22, 29

But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace...

those the Lord blesses will inherit the land, but those he curses will be cut off... the righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever.

Matthew 5:5

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Similarly, when Paul is listing the present benefits that still pertain to Israel in Romans 9, significantly, apart from the indirect reference by way of to 'the covenants' he does not explicitly mention the land or kingdom as one of them.¹⁵⁰

...the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. (Romans 9,4-5)

Probably most conclusive of all, Jesus himself rules out any notion that Israel will enjoy any discrete national identity, as a 'kingdom' in the future.

Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. (Matthew 21:43)

Gerstner interprets this as signalling,

...the end of the nation of Israel as the chosen people of God. They have been tried and found wanting. God's patience has been exhausted. If there were any doubts about that being the obvious meaning of the words, the parable on which they are based would utterly eliminate any lingering procrastination.¹⁵¹

Gerstner points out that the Greek word used in verse 43 for nation (ethnos) is invariably used to describe the Gentile peoples, and in context, the parable of the tenants clearly relates to and contrasts with the disobedience of the Jewish nation.¹⁵² Instead of attempting to explain how Jesus might be describing a 'temporary' rejection of the Jews, Ryrie reverses the plain intention of the text to fit a dispensational framework, asserting,

The kingdom of God shall be taken from you (leaders of Israel), and given to a nation (Israel) bringing forth the fruits thereof.¹⁵³

Gerstner also notes that Chafer, Walvoord and Gaebelien remain 'curiously silent' on this verse.¹⁵⁴ Allis summarises the traditional interpretation that Jesus is here signalling the end of any national identity for Israel within the purposes of God.

Jesus declared to the Jews that the kingdom should 'be taken from' them (Matt. xxi. 41f.). The children of the kingdom (the natural and lawful heirs) are to be 'cast out' (viii. 11f.). None of those 'bidden' are to taste of the marriage supper (Lk. xiv. 24). The vineyard is to be given to 'other husbandmen'; to 'a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof'; men are to come from the 'highways,' from 'the east and west and north and south,' to partake with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob of the marriage supper.¹⁵⁵

Unperturbed by such discrepancies, inconsistencies and omissions Scofield constructs a detailed 'end-times' scenario which forms the basis of much contemporary apocalyptic dispensationalism.

10. Speculations on Armageddon and the Day of the Lord

In 1897 when Scofield spoke at the Niagara Prophetic Conference, his commitment to Darby's doctrine of a 'failing church' and imminent rapture were well formulated. His message was entitled, 'The Return of the Lord.'

The signs and portents of the end-time are now so many and so ominous than men of vision everywhere, and in every walk of life, are taking note of them; and this quite apart from the interpretation of them which prophecy gives. Men like Gladstone and Bismark have said that the catastrophe of present day civilisation is near and cannot be averted; that the destructive agencies are more and mightier than the forces of conservatism, and that no man may predict what form the reconstructed social order will assume after the inevitable cataclysm... We have risen from our study of the Word of God to come up here year by year to utter this warning-that the age ends in disaster, in ruin, in the great, final, world-catastrophe and for this we have been branded pessimists.¹⁵⁶

Scofield followed Darby in describing in detail the events preceding the Great Tribulation and battle of Armageddon. It is interesting to compare the categorical footnotes to Ezekiel 38 found in the 1917 Scofield Reference Bible with the more circumspect notes of the 1984 New Scofield Study Bible.

Scofield Reference Bible (1917)

The New Scofield Study Bible (1984)

That the primary reference is to the northern (European) powers, headed up by Russia, all agree. The whole passage should be read in connection with Zech. 12. 1-4; 14. 1-9; Mat. 24. 14-30; rev. 14. 14-20; 19. 17-21.

'Gog' is the prince, 'Magog,' his land. The reference to Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolsk) is a clear mark of identification.

Russia and the northern powers have been the latest persecutors of dispersed Israel, and it is congruous both with divine justice and with the covenants (e.g. Gen. 15. 18, note; Deut. 30. 3, note) that destruction should fall at the climax of the last mad attempt to exterminate the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem.

The whole prophecy belongs to the yet future 'day of Jehovah' (Isa. 2. 10-22; rev. 19. 11-21), and to the battle of Armageddon (rev. 16. 14; 19. 19, note), but includes also the final revolt of the nations at the close of the kingdom-age (rev. 20. 7-9).¹⁵⁷

The reference is to the powers in the north of Europe, headed by Russia. The whole passage should be read in connection with Zech. 12. 1-4; 14. 1-9; Mat. 24. 14-30; rev. 14. 14-20; 19. 17-21.

Gog is probably the prince; Magog, his land.

Russia and the northern powers have long been the persecutors of dispersed Israel, and it is congruous both with divine justice and the covenants of God that destruction shall fall in connection with the attempt to exterminate the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem.

The entire prophecy belongs to the yet future day of the Lord (see notes at Joel 1:15; Revelation 19:19).¹⁵⁸

A similar comparison of the footnotes to Revelation 19:19 in both editions shows how dispensationalist speculations concerning Armageddon have been modified to take account of recent history.

So for example where Scofield, writing at the height of the colonial era, could speculate about "...the coming of the Lord in glory (Rev. 19. 1, 21), until which time Jerusalem is politically subject to Gentile rule (Luke 21. 24)."¹⁵⁹ E. Schuyler English, writing in 1967 takes account of the events of 1948 and revises the note to read somewhat more enigmatically, "Until then Jerusalem will be, as Christ said, "trampled on by the Gentiles." (Luke 21:24)"¹⁶⁰

Similarly, Scofield sees the purpose of the Lord's visible return to earth, subsequent to the secret rapture and removal of the saints to heaven, specifically in order to 'deliver the Jewish remnant besieged by the Gentile world-powers under the Beast and False Prophet'.¹⁶¹ This scheme is not apparently shared by E. Schuyler English who, with the benefit of 20th Century hindsight, sees more significance in the invading Chinese army than in the deliverance of Israel.

Scofield Reference Bible (1917)

The New Scofield Study Bible (1984)

Armageddon (the ancient hill and valley of Megiddo, west of Jordan in the plain of Jezreel) is the appointed place for the beginning of the great battle in which the Lord, at his coming in glory, will deliver the Jewish remnant besieged by the Gentile world-powers under the Beast and False Prophet (rev. 16.13-16; Zech. 12.1-9). Apparently the besieging hosts, whose approach to Jerusalem is described in Isa. 10.28-32, alarmed by the signs which precede the Lord's coming (Mt. 24.29,30), have fallen back to Megiddo, after the events of Zech. 14.2, where their destruction begins; a destruction consummated in Moab and the plains of Idumea (Isa. 63.1-6). This battle is the first event in "the day of Jehovah" (Isa. 2.12, refs.), and the fulfilment of the smiting-stone prophecy of Dan. 2.35.¹⁶²

Armageddon (the name itself is to be found only in 16:16) is the ancient hill and valley of Megiddo, west of the Jordan in the plain of Jezreel between Samaria and Galilee. It is the appointed place where the armies of the beast and false prophet will be destroyed by Christ's descending to earth in glory (vv. 11,15,19,21), as well as any other forces which will come against the beast in their attack on Palestine (e.g. the remainder of the Far Eastern army of 200 million men), and others (9:13 - 18; 16:12 -14,16; cp. Joel 3:9 - 16; Zech 12:1 - 9; 14:1 - 4; Mat 24:27 - 30).

The battle is a fulfillment of the striking-stone prophecy of Dan 2:35... See also Isa 2:12, refs.¹⁶³

As has been shown Scofield divided the world into three classes of people, Jews, Gentiles and the visible church.¹⁶⁴ Consequently he sees the return of Jesus Christ as having a 'threefold relation: to the church, to Israel, to the nations.'¹⁶⁵ In a most unorthodox manner, Scofield even claims that after the judgment there will be forgiveness and blessing for both Jews and Gentiles long after the church has been raised to heaven.

(a) To the church the descent of the Lord into the air to raise the sleeping and change the living saints is set forth as a constant expectation and hope...

(b) To Israel, the return of the Lord is predicted to accomplish the yet unfulfilled prophecies of her national regathering, conversion and establishment in peace and power under the Davidic Covenant (Acts 15. 14-17 with Zech. 14. 1-9)

(c) To the Gentile nations the return of Christ is predicted to bring the destruction of the present political world-system (Dan. 2.34, 35; Rev. 19. 11, note); the judgment of Mt. 25. 31-46, followed by world-wide Gentile conversion and participation in the blessings of the kingdom (Isa. 2. 2-4; 11. 10; 60. 3; Zech. 8. 3, 20, 23; 14. 16-21).¹⁶⁶

It is interesting to observe how Scofield used passages such as Matthew 24 to make prophetic interpretations fit contemporary events, a pattern developed by subsequent dispensationalists. So, in referring to Allenby's capture of Jerusalem in December 1917, Scofield wrote to Charles Trumbull, his biographer, 'Now for the first time, we have a real prophetic Sign.'¹⁶⁷ A year later, in 1918 Scofield published, *What Do The Prophets Say?*, a series of studies that had previously appeared in the *Sunday School Times* in 1916. This included a chapter entitled, 'Does the Bible Throw Light on This War?' Scofield speculated,

So far as the prophetic Word has spoken there is not the least warrant for the expectation that the nations engaged in the present gigantic struggle will or can make a permanent peace. It is fondly dreamed that out of all the duffering and carnage and destruction of this war will be born such a hatred of war as will bring to pass a federation of the nations-The United States of the World-in which will exist but one army, and that an international peace, rather than an army.

For once there is some correspondence between a popular dream and the prophetic Word. For that Word certainly points to a federated world-empire in the end-time of the age... It is, of course, possible, nay, probable that some temporary truce may end, or suspend for a time, the present world-war, for ten kingdoms will exist at the end-time in the territory once ruled over by Rome.¹⁶⁸

There are remarkable similarities between Scofield's views and those written 60 years later by Hal Lindsey who equally dogmatically asserts,

We are the generation the prophets were talking about. We have witnessed biblical prophecies come true. The birth of Israel. The decline in American power and morality. The rise of Russian and Chinese might. The threat of war in the Middle East. The increase of earthquakes, volcanoes, famine and drought. The Bible foretells the signs that precede Armageddon... We are the generation that will see the end times ...and the return of Jesus.¹⁶⁹

Dwight Wilson observes,

The premillarian's history is strewn with a mass of erroneous speculations which have undermined their credibility... The supposed restoration of Israel has confused the problem of whether the Jews are to be restored before or after the coming of the Messiah. The restoration... Has been pinpointed to have begun in 1897, 1917, and 1948... It is not likely that the situation will change greatly.¹⁷⁰

11. Conclusions: The Legacy of Scofieldism on Christian Zionism

William E. Cox, a former dispensationalist and subsequently a critic of Scofieldism offers this appraisal of his abiding influence.

Scofield's footnotes and his systematized schemes of hermeneutics have been memorized by many as religiously as have verses of the Bible. It is not at all uncommon to hear devout men recite these footnotes prefaced by the words, 'The Bible says...!' Many a pastor has lost all influence with members of his congregation and has been branded a liberal for no other reason than failure to concur with all the footnotes of Dr. Scofield. Even many ministers use the teachings of Scofield as tests of orthodoxy! Charles G. Trumball, late editor of the Sunday School Times, spoke of the Scofield Bible in the following terms, in his book, *The Life Story of C. I. Scofield*: 'God-planned, God-guided, God-energized work.(p. 114).'¹⁷¹

In 1890 Scofield began his Comprehensive Bible Correspondence Course through which tens of thousands of students around the world were introduced to his dispensational teaching about a failing Church and a future Israel. Scofield directed the Course until 1914 when it was taken over by the Moody Press, associated with the Moody Bible Institute.

In the 1890's during Scofield's pastorate in Dallas he was also head of the Southwestern School of the Bible, the forerunner to Dallas Theological Seminary, founded in 1924 by another of his disciples, Lewis Sperry Chafer, who became probably Scofield's most influential exponent.

Chafer has, in the history of American Dispensationalism, a double distinction. First, he established and led Dispensationalism's most scholarly institution through the formative years of its existence. Second, he produced the first full and definitive systematic theology of Dispensationalism. This massive eight-volume work is a full articulation of the standard Scofieldian variety of dispensational thought, constantly related to the Biblical texts and data on which it claims to rest. Its influence appears to have been great on all dispensationalist teachers since its first publication, though it is fading today.

All of Chafer's work and career was openly and obviously in the Scofieldian tradition. A few years before his death, Chafer, faithful to his mentor to the last, was to say of his greatest academic achievement, 'It goes on record that the Dallas Theological Seminary uses, recommends, and defends the Scofield Bible.'

The major line of dispensational orthodoxy is clear and unbroken from Darby to Scofield to Chafer to

Dallas.¹⁷²

For example, Chafer repeatedly defended both Scofield's and Darby's foundational assumption that the Bible reveals God is working through two different channels, Israel and the church.

...with the call of Abraham and the giving of the Law and all that followed, there are two widely different, standardized, divine provisions, whereby man, who is utterly fallen, might come into favour with God... These systems [of law and grace] do set up conflicting and opposing principles. But since these difficulties appear only when an attempt is made to coalesce systems, elements, and principles which God has separated, the conflicts really do not exist at all outside these unwarranted unifying efforts... The true unity of the Scriptures is not discovered when one blindly seeks to fuse these opposing principles into one system... Though dispensationalism does... Departmentalize the message of the Word of God according to its obvious divisions, [it] does also discover the true unity of the Bible. The outstanding characteristic of the dispensationalist is... That he believes every statement of the Bible and gives to it the plain, natural meaning its words imply. [Dispensationalism] has changed the Bible from being a mass of more or less conflicting writings into a classified and easily assimilated revelation of both the earthly and heavenly purposes of God, which purposes reach on into eternity to come.¹⁷³

It is perhaps therefore not surprising that these two institutions, the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and Dallas Theological Seminary have since then continued to be the foremost apologists for Scofield's dispensational views, and Christian Zionism in particular.

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- 1 For example, The New Scofield Reference Bible ed. E. Schuyler English (New York, Oxford University Press, 1967); The Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute, 1994); The New Scofield Study Bible (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984); Scofield Study Notes (Quickverse for Windows, Parsons Technology, 1994)
- 2 Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism, British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 222.
- 3 Charles G. Trumball, *The Life Story of C. I. Scofield* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1920)
- 4 Joseph M. Canfield, *The Incredible Scofield and his Book* (Vallecito, California, Ross House Books, 1988). Canfield refers to a third source by William A. BeVier, *A Biographical Sketch of C.I. Scofield: A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Southern Methodist University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Master of Arts with a Major in History*, May 1960. See also Albertus Pieters, *A Candid Examination of the Scofield Bible* (Grand Rapids, Douma Publications)
- 5 Trumball, *Scofield*., p. 125.
- 6 cited by Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 1. as reported in *The Dallas Morning News*, Monday Nov. 28, 1921, p. 7.
- 7 Canfield, *Incredible*., pp. 15, 108.
- 8 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 48.
- 9 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 52.
- 10 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 54.
- 11 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 55.
- 12 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 66.
- 13 Canfield, *Incredible*., pp. 57, 67.
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- 15 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 80.
- 16 From the papers in case No. 2161, supplied by the Atchison County Court, cited in Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 89.
- 17 From the papers in case No. 2161, supplied by the Atchison County Court, cited in Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 89.
- 18 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 95.
- 19 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 98.
- 20 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 100.
- 21 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 115.
- 22 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 196.
- 23 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 135.
- 24 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 148.
- 25 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 181.
- 26 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 231.
- 27 Canfield, *Incredible*., pp. 222, 277, 291.
- 28 From the files of the Kansas State Historical Society, as cited by Canfield, *Incredible*., pp. 79-80.
- 29 Newspaper from the files of the Kansas City Public Library, as cited by Canfield, *Incredible*., pp. 82-83.
- 30 Canfield, *Incredible*., pp. 83-84.
- 31 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 151
- 32 Canfield, *Incredible*., pp. 76, 84.
- 33 C.I. Scofield, *The Purpose of God in This Age*, a sermon preached at First Congregational, Dallas, October 15, 1893, p. 19. Cited by Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 137.
- 34 John Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, Tennessee, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), p. 38.
- 35 Ernest Reisinger, 'A History of Dispensationalism in America' (<http://wwwFOUNDERS.org/FJ09/article1.html>)
- 36 Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism British & American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago, University Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 74-75.
- 37 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 74.
- 38 Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1960), p. 18. See also Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1958), p. 369f.
- 39 W. G. Turner, *John Nelson Darby* (London, Chapter Two, [1901], 1986), back cover.
- 40 Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 43.
- 41 C. I. Scofield, 'Introduction,' *The Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), 1909.
- 42 Arno C. Gaebelien, *Half A Century* (New York, Publication Office of Our Hope, 1930), p. 20. Cited in Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 44.
- 43 Arno C. Gaebelien, *The History of the Scofield Reference Bible* (Spokane, WA, Living Words Foundation, 1991), p. 33.
- 44 J. R. Graves, *The Work of Christ Consummated in Seven Dispensations* (Texarkana, Baptist Sunday School Board of Texarkana, 1883)
- 45 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 112.
- 46 C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (New York, Loizeaux Brothers, 1888)
- 47 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 122.
- 48 The Authorised Version translates this verses as 'rightly dividing the Word of Truth.' Canfield wrongly attributes this to Paul's first letter to Timothy, Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 166.
- 49 Scofield, *Rightly*., p. 3.
- 50 Scofield, *Rightly*., p. 2.
- 51 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 166.
- 52 (John 3:16, 18)
- 53 (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- 54 Scofield, *Rightly*., p. 18.
- 55 Canfield, *Incredible*., p. 167.
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- 57 Scofield, *Scofield*., Index.
- 58 Barr, *Fundamentalism*., p. 196.
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- 65 Fuller, *Gospel*., p. 1.
- 66 *The New Scofield Study Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984)
- 67 Arno C. Gaebelien, *Moody Monthly* 43 (1943) p. 278.
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- 69 James Barr, *Escaping from Fundamentalism* (London, SCM, 1984), p. 6.
- 70 Craig A. Blaising 'Dispensationalism, The Search for Definition' in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church, The Search for Definition* ed. Craig A. Blaising & Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1992) p. 21.
- 71 Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism British & American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago, University Chicago Press, 1970), p. 222.
- 72 C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1917), Introduction, p. iii.

- 73 Scofield, Scofield., p. iii.
- 74 Canfield, Incredible., p. 209. Canfield calculates that comments appear on only 327 out of a total of 970 pages of the Old Testament, and on only 214 out of 352 pages in the New Testament.
- 75 Trumball, Scofield., p. 76.
- 76 Scofield, Scofield., p. 725.
- 77 Canfield, Incredible., p. 209.
- 78 James M. Gray, President of Moody Bible Institute, and William J. Erdman.
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- 80 Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism British & American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago, University Chicago Press, 1970), p. 224.
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- 82 *The New Scofield Study Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984)
- 83 Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition* (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute, 1994)
- 84 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 4, p. 5.
- 85 Scofield, Scofield., Introduction to the Scofield Reference Bible, p. iii.
- 86 C. I. Scofield, *Addresses on Prophecy* (New York, Chas. C. Cook, 1914), p. 13. Cited in Canfield, Incredible., pp. 216-217.
- 87 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 4, p. 5.
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- 89 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 3, p. 1250.
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- 92 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 2, p. 1115.
- 93 Scofield, Scofield., p. 1002. Many other dispensationalists take the same view. See Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, (Dallas, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975), vol. 4, p. 221.
- 94 Scofield, Scofield., p. 1115. This footnote is substantially modified in the *New Scofield Study Bible*, to stress that salvation is always through faith. p. 1094.
- 95 Scofield, Scofield., p. 1252. Here Scofield contradicts Paul himself in 2 Timothy 3:16.
- 96 Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law, Contrast or Continuum. The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1980); Patrick Fairbairn, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, reprinted 1964); William Cox, *Why I Left Scofieldism* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, n.d.); *An Examination of Dispensationalism* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1963)
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- 98 Scofield, Scofield., p. 989.
- 99 William E. Cox, *Why I Left Scofieldism* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, Presbyterian and Reformed, n.d.) p. 8.
- 100 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 8.
- 101 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 9.
- 102 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 18.
- 103 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 725.
- 104 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1346.
- 105 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1347.
- 106 Scofield, *Rightly.*, p. 13.
- 107 see Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 16:18.
- 108 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1629.
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- 111 *New Scofield Study Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 18.
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- 113 International Christian Zionist Congress Proclamation, International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem. 25-29 February 1996; and Colin Chapman, *Whose Promised Land?* (Oxford, Lion, 1992), p. 280.
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- 115 *New Scofield Study Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 18.
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- 117 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 2, p. 1021.
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- 119 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1204.
- 120 Cited in Canfield, Incredible., p. 169.
- 121 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1036.
- 122 *New Scofield Study Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 1012.
- 123 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 922.
- 124 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1348.
- 125 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1348.
- 126 Scofield, *Rightly.*, p. 18.
- 127 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1206.
- 128 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1297.
- 129 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1148.
- 130 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 2, p. 963.
- 131 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 2, p. 157.
- 132 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 932.
- 133 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 1151.
- 134 Scofield, Scofield., note, p. 25.
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- 136 *The New Scofield Reference Bible* ed. E. Schuyler English (New York, Oxford University Press, 1967)
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- 138 Scofield, Scofield., fn. 1, p. 250.
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pursued in more detail later]

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Chapter 6

Hal Lindsey

The Father of Apocalyptic Christian Zionism

1. The Significance of Hal Lindsey to Christian Zionism

Hal Lindsey is undoubtedly the most influential of all Christian Zionists of the 20th century. Although rarely quoted by others, he has nevertheless been described by Time as 'The Jeremiah for this Generation', and by the New York Times as 'the best selling author of the decade.'¹ His newest publisher describes him as 'The Father of the Modern-Day Bible Prophecy Movement,'² and, 'the best known prophecy teacher in the world.'³ He is apparently one of very few authors to have had three books on the New York Times best seller list at the same time.⁴

This chapter will explore the significance of Hal Lindsey within Christian Zionism, his dispensational hermeneutic, unconventional view of prophecy and eschatology, his distinctive apocalyptic Zionism and his stand against anti-Semitism.

Lindsey acknowledges that 'The future is big business,'⁵ and has proved the axiom true. He is a prolific writer, the author of at least twenty books spanning 27 years, most of which deal explicitly or implicitly with a dispensational interpretation of the future, biblical prophecy and Christian Zionism.⁶ He hosts his own radio⁷ and television programmes, leads regular pro-Israeli Holy Land tours, and by subscription makes available a monthly Christian Intelligence Journal called Countdown as well as the International Intelligence Briefing⁸. Lindsey, along with fellow Zionist, Grant Jeffries, hosts a weekly news programme, International Intelligence Briefing on the fundamentalist Trinity Broadcasting Network television station.⁹

Lindsey's most famous book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* has been described by the New York Times as the '#1 Non-fiction Bestseller of the Decade.' It has gone through more than 108 printings with sales, by 1993, of more than 18 million copies in English, with estimates varying between 18-20 million further copies in 54 foreign languages.¹⁰

Despite dramatic changes in the world since its publication in 1970, Lindsey maintains that the prophetic and apocalyptic scenario depicted in the book is biblically accurate and therefore it remains in print in its original un-revised form. Sales increased 83% during August and September 1990 amidst fears in the United States that Saddam Hussein would drag the world into total world war. Paul Van Duinen, an executive of Lindsey's publishers, admitted, 'Often times we see during a crisis that people more actively turn toward God and things spiritual.'¹¹

Lindsey's popularity may be attributed to a combination of factors including his readable, journalistic style of writing, his imaginative, if apocalyptic, insistence that contemporary geo-political events are the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and, above all, his categorical assertion that the end of the world is imminent.

What makes Lindsey's writings distinctive, however, is that like J. N. Darby¹² and C. I.

Scotfield¹³, he confidently claims his interpretation of the Bible shows what will happen in the future.

Today, almost before I finish explaining a developing trend - it's already an accomplished fact.¹⁴

This book describes in more detail and explicitness than any other just what will happen to humanity and to the Earth, not a thousand years from now, but in our lifetime-indeed in this very generation.¹⁵

In this riveting non-fiction book, the father of modern-day Bible prophecy cracks the "Apocalypse Code" and deciphers long-hidden messages about man's future and the fate of the earth.¹⁶

Hal will be your guide on a chilling tour of the world's future battlefields as the Great Tribulation, foretold more than two thousand years ago by Old and New Testament prophets, begins to unfold. You'll meet the world leaders who will bring man to the very edge of extinction and examine the causes of the current global situation - what it all means, what will shortly come to pass, and how it will all turn out.¹⁷

Like Darby, Lindsey claims his novel interpretations to have been revealed directly and personally by God.

I believe that the Spirit of God gave me a special insight, not only into how John described what he actually experienced, but also into how this whole phenomenon encoded the prophecies so that they could be fully understood only when their fulfillment drew near... I prayerfully sought for a confirmation for my apocalypse code theory...¹⁸

His popularity may also in part, however, have to do with his tendency to revise those predictions in the light of changing world events. So for example *The Final Battle* (1994) is essentially an unacknowledged rewrite of the 'Late Great Planet Earth' (1970); 'Apocalypse Code' (1997) is a rewrite of 'There's a New World Coming' (1973); and 'Planet Earth 2000 A.D.' (1994, & 1996) are both revisions of 'The 1980's Countdown to Armageddon' (1980). *Planet Earth: The Final Chapter* (1998) is, the latest version in the 'Planet Earth' series.

A good example of Lindsey's prophetic revisions concerns the future of the United States. In *Planet Earth 2000 A.D.* Lindsey specifically draws attention to a prophecy made in *The Late Great Planet Earth* as evidence of his prophetic accuracy. A comparison, however, shows that he has edited out the prediction of communist subversion which did not occur.

[The Late Great Planet Earth](#) [Planet Earth 2000 A. D.](#)

The United States will not hold its present position of leadership in the western world; financially, the future leader will be Western Europe. Internal political chaos caused by student rebellion and Communist subversion will begin to erode the economy of our nation. Lack of moral principle by citizens and leaders will so weaken law and order that a state of anarchy will finally result. The military capability of the United States, though it is at present the most powerful in the world, has already been neutralized because no one has the courage to use it decisively. When the economy collapses so will the military.¹⁹

"The United States will not hold its present position of leadership in the western world," I wrote in *The Late Great Planet Earth*.

"Lack of moral principle by citizens and leaders will so weaken law and order that a state of anarchy will finally result. The military capability of the United States, though it is at present the most powerful in the world, has already been neutralized because no one has the courage to use it decisively. When the economy collapses so will the military." Remember folks, these words were written in 1969, not the 1990's!²⁰

Without access to all Lindsey's books one would not necessarily be aware that he has adapted his material to fit the changing world since he rarely acknowledges his sources or uses footnotes. The Introduction to two of his books serves as a good example. Reading *Planet Earth 2000 A.D.* (1994), one is led to believe this, and not *1980's Countdown to Armageddon* (1981), was the long awaited sequel to *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970).

[1980's Countdown to Armageddon](#) [Planet Earth 2000 A. D.](#)

Ever since *The Late Great Planet Earth* I have thought about writing another book on how prophecy relates to current events.

But only recently have I felt compelled to do so. So many of the things which have occurred during the past 10 years are so directly related to prophecy that I now sense an urgent, even desperate compulsion to bring readers up to date.

The goal of this book is not merely to show which prophecies have been fulfilled since *Late Great* came out in 1970, however. Even more important, it is intended to analyze what will occur in the decade we have just entered...

The decade of the 1980's could very well be the last decade of history as we know it.²¹

Meanwhile, for 25 years I resisted the mammoth undertaking of writing a book that would go beyond where *The Late Great Planet Earth* left off, mostly because prophetically meaningful events were occurring so quickly, I wasn't sure how a book could do justice to the subject. Instead of focussing on writing prophecy books that might be out of date by the time they reached the stores, I devoted my attention to radio and television shows, video and audio tapes and a monthly news and prophecy journal.

Only now, as mankind approaches the third millennium, do I feel like the Holy Spirit has provided me with the proper perspective - the Big Picture, so to speak - on the mind blowing experiences of the modern world...

This book doesn't dwell on the past, it looks to the future. Because we are so close to the final, climactic stages of world history, it is considerably easier today for the student of Bible prophecy to see with some accuracy what's coming next...

I am certain... The Second Advent will occur in the next few years - probably in your lifetime.²²

With the decade of the 1980's coming to an end, and the Second Advent still some way off, Lindsey also needed to revise the title if it was to remain in print. Without acknowledging he had rewritten the book, Lindsey changed his publisher and implied that *Planet Earth 2000 A.D.* was actually the sequel to *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Ten years on, and with the new Millennium fast approaching, the date has been removed altogether from the title in the latest edition, *Planet Earth, the Final Chapter*.²³

Lindsey also makes use of previously published material in his later books. Unattributed paragraphs and sentences from earlier works reappear with regularity. So for example, in two unrelated books, published just a year apart, the same sentences are repeated.

[Planet Earth 2000 A.D. \(1994\)](#)
[The Final Battle \(1995\)](#)

The greatest threat to freedom and world peace today - is Islamic fundamentalism... Tragically, the world's sole remaining superpower - the United States -has responded to this monumental threat by embarking on a suicidal, unilateral demilitarization process of unprecedented speed and recklessness. Like the Scriptures warn, the West is blithely saying 'Peace and safety'...²⁴

As the Bible tells us, the dispute over Jerusalem and Israel's borders will never be settled by any peace agreements nor any whiz-bang diplomatic breakthrough.²⁵

Right now, as you read this, preparations are being made to rebuild the Third Temple.²⁶

Folks, the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, can already be heard as He approaches the doors of heaven to return.²⁷

'Land for Peace!' Is the cry heard 'round the world.²⁸

...the Arab world has been successful at framing the debate over the Middle East as a struggle between downtrodden Palestinians and powerful, heavily armed Jews...²⁹

Heading up what will evolve into a 10-nation confederacy will be a man of such magnetism and power that he will become the greatest dictator the world has ever known...[30](#)

There is a potential dictator waiting in the wings somewhere in Europe who will make Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin look like choir boys. Right now he is preparing to take his throne, inflaming his soul with visions of what he will be able to do for mankind with his grand schemes and revolutionary ideas.[31](#)

There will be no peace in the Middle East as long as the world entertains the Arab's fanciful visions of dividing and conquering Jerusalem.

Peace would only be possible, if, by some miracle, the Arabs realized that their ambitions for military and economic hegemony over Israel were delusional. Don't hold your breath... the Arab world has been successful at framing the debate over the Middle East as a struggle between downtrodden Palestinians and powerful, heavily armed Jews...[32](#)

...the greatest threat to freedom and world peace today - is Islamic fundamentalism... Tragically, the world's sole remaining superpower for the moment - the United States - has responded to this monumental threat by embarking on a suicidal demilitarization process of unprecedented proportions. Like the Scriptures warned, the West is blithely saying 'Peace and safety'...[33](#)

As the Bible tells us, the dispute over Jerusalem and Israel's borders will never be settled by any peace agreements nor any whiz-bang diplomatic breakthrough.[34](#)

Right now, as you read this, preparations are being made to rebuild the Third Temple...[35](#)

Truly, the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, can already be heard as He approaches the doors of heaven to return.[36](#)

"Land for peace!" is the cry heard 'round the world.[37](#)

Because the Muslim nations have been successful at framing the debate over the Middle East as a struggle between downtrodden Palestinians and powerful, heavily armed Jews...[38](#)

And heading up this 10-nation confederacy will be a man of such magnetism and power that he will become the greatest dictator the world has ever known.[39](#)

There is a potential dictator waiting in the wings somewhere in Europe who will make Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin look like choir boys. Right now he is preparing to take his throne, inflaming his soul with visions of what he will be able to do for mankind with his grand schemes and revolutionary ideas.[40](#)

There will be no peace in the Middle East as long as the world entertains the Arab's fanciful visions of dividing and conquering Jerusalem and driving all the Jews into the sea. Peace would only be possible, if, by some miracle, the Arabs realize that their ambitions for military and economic hegemony over Israel were delusional. But don't hold your breath... Because the Arab world has been successful at framing the debate over the Middle East as a struggle between downtrodden Palestinians and powerful, heavily armed Jews...[41](#)

On one occasion in *The Final Battle* (1995), Lindsey even makes use of the same material in subsequent chapters.

Israel is facing world pressure like never before. Because the Muslim nations have been successful at framing the debate over the Middle East as a struggle between downtrodden Palestinians and powerful, heavily armed Jews. Israel is precipitously close to compromising its own security needs[42](#)

Israel is facing world pressure like never before. Because the Arab world have been successful at framing the debate over the Middle East as a struggle between downtrodden Palestinians and powerful, heavily armed Jews. Israel is dangerously close to compromising its own security needs.[43](#)

In criticising clergy for getting caught up in 'the save-the-earth gospel,' Lindsey reveals something of his estimation of himself,

Don't get me wrong. No one can deny that the earth is facing grave ecological crises. There is probably no one in the church that has done more than me in calling this fact to the attention of millions.⁴⁴

There is no doubt that Lindsey has had a profound and lasting impact on the American as well as British Christian scene. Indeed, the popular influence Christian Zionists such as Lindsey have had, even in American political circles, is highlighted by Don Wagner who claims that as long ago as 1980,

The election of Ronald Reagan ushered in not only the most pro-Israel administration in history but gave several Christian Zionists prominent political posts... Once the Reagan Administration opened the door, leading Evangelical Christian Zionist televangelists and writers were given direct access to the President and cabinet members. Rev. Jerry Falwell, Christian Zionist televangelist Mike Evans and author Hal Lindsey among them.⁴⁵

'White House Seminars' became a regular feature of Reagan's administration bringing Lindsey into direct personal contact with national and Congressional leaders. Lindsey subsequently became a consultant on Middle Eastern affairs not only to the Pentagon but also to the Israeli Government.⁴⁶

2. Lindsey's Literalistic Dispensational Hermeneutic

Like other dispensationalists, Lindsey holds dogmatically to a literalist approach to biblical hermeneutics. He attributes the development of erroneous views concerning Israel to an allegorical, non-literal hermeneutic supposedly popularised by Origen.

The man most responsible for changing the way the Church interpreted prophecy is Origen... [He] powerfully introduced, taught and spread the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures, particularly in the area of prophecy. From this seemingly harmless fact of Church history evolved a system of prophetic interpretation that created the atmosphere in which 'Christian' anti-Semitism took root and spread. Using this method of prophetic interpretation, Church theologians began to develop the idea that the Israelites had permanently forfeited all their covenants by rejecting Jesus as the Messiah.⁴⁷

As has been shown in an earlier chapter, it was the consistent approach of the Post-Apostolic Fathers to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures typologically as the Apostles had done before them.⁴⁸ In his commitment to literalism, Lindsey does not appear to distinguish between figurative or typological approaches acknowledged by covenantal theologians from the allegorical methods of interpretation seen typically in pre-Reformation Roman Catholicism.⁴⁹ The distinction between these two methods of interpretation are significant since the former places particular emphasis on the historical context of passages as well as the way scripture interprets scripture. An allegorical approach finds eternal truths in the bible without reference to their historical setting. A typological approach highlights the way New Testament writers see Jesus Christ to be the fulfilment of many Old Testament images and types.⁵⁰ There is good evidence that a typological interpretation of the Old Testament was consistently followed by the Church from the 1st Century, and did not arise with Origen as Lindsey alleges.

Origen defended the historical sense of Scripture, tried to reconcile the historical and allegorical senses, attempted to interpret Scripture with Scripture, and was respectful of the church's tradition.⁵¹

Ironically, Lindsey admits to using typology on occasions. In explaining his hermenutical approach to interpreting the Book of Revelation, Lindsey makes the following assumptions,

How could this first-century man describe the scientific wonders of the latter twentieth century? He had to illustrate them with phenomena of the first century; for instance, a thermonuclear war looked to him like a giant volcanic eruption spewing fire and brimstone... Much of the symbolism John used was the result of a first century man being catapulted in God's time machine up to the end of the twentieth century, then returned to his own time and commanded to write what he had seen and heard. The only way that John could obey that instruction was to use phenomena with which he was familiar to illustrate the scientific and technical marvels that he predicts.⁵² Some writers have chosen to interpret each symbol quite literally. For example, a locust with the face of a man, the teeth of a lion, a breastplate of iron, a tail than can sting, and wings that make the sound of many chariots would have to be specially created by God to look just like that description. I personally tend to think that God might utilize in his judgments some modern devices of man which the Apostle John was at a loss for

words to describe nineteen centuries ago! In the case just mentioned, the locusts might symbolize an advanced kind of helicopter. This is just one example of the fast-moving, contemporary, and often deductive manner in which I have chosen to approach the Book of Revelation. I realize I'll be accused by some of making wild speculations...⁵³

In *Apocalypse Code* (1997), essentially an unattributed revision of *There's a New World Coming* (1973), Lindsey's speculations become more dogmatic and categorical, and so phrases such as "might symbolize" become "actually saw."

Just exactly how could a first century prophet describe, much less understand, the incredible advances in science and technology that exist at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries? Yet he testified and God bore witness that he actually saw and heard things like:

- supersonic jet aircraft with missiles...
- advanced attack helicopters
- modern main battle tanks
- intercontinental ballistic missiles with Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicles tipped with thermonuclear warheads (ICBM's that are MIRVed).
- battlefield artillery and missiles with neutron-nuclear warheads
- biological and chemical weapons
- aircraft carriers, missile cruisers, nuclear submarines
- laser weapons
- space stations and satellites
- the new super secret HAARP weapon system (High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program)⁵⁴

So, in Lindsey's inspired bible code, John's 'locusts' become helicopters, 'horses prepared for battle' are heavily armed attack helicopters, 'crowns of gold' are the helmets worn by pilots, and the 'sound of their wings' are the 'thunderous sound of many attack helicopters flying overhead.'⁵⁵ Just as imaginatively, the 'bow' wielded by the Antichrist in Revelation 6:1-2, is apparently, "...a code for long range weapons like ICBM's."⁵⁶ The reference to the "colour of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone" in Revelation 9:17 becomes the "Chinese national flag"..."emblazoned on the military vehicles."⁵⁷ Lindsey applies the same hermeneutical technique to Zechariah 14:12.

This is exactly the way a neutron bomb works. A soldier is hit by a burst of radiation that leaves only a skeleton within a nanosecond. How could Zechariah have known such a thing 2500 years ago? Once again, the Apocalypse code unlocks the meaning of something not understood for centuries, because the technology for such things did not exist until now.⁵⁸

Like Darby and Scofield before him, Lindsey also interprets references to ancient tribes and nations mentioned in Old Testament prophecies as applying to contemporary peoples and countries in the Middle East.⁵⁹

In Psalm 83, some 3,000 years ago, God gave a warning of what would happen in the last days... In these verses the Philistia or Philistines are the modern Palestinians. Tyre is modern Lebanon. Assyria is modern Syria.⁶⁰ Ezekiel 38 also talks about a confederacy of powers - including Russia and Germany - coming against Israel... Ezekiel Chapter 38, verse 8 describes modern-day Israel, after the Jews have returned from many nations and "are living securely."⁶¹ I know from my study of the Bible that the final great war includes Turkey as part of the Islamic grouping allied with Russia.⁶²

The great nations that do get Biblical reference are the Kings of the East, (China, India, Pakistan - all openly nuclear), Russia (Gog and Magog), Libya, Egypt, Iran, Iraq and so on.⁶³

On other occasions, with reference to Exodus 9:9, Lindsey is content to acknowledge, "Egypt is often used as a metaphor in the Bible for the "world" as opposed to the Church."⁶⁴

It is not clear, however, when the term should be taken literally or as a metaphor.

To assist his readers in their understanding of otherwise obscure passages of Scripture, Lindsey also has the tendency to add words to biblical texts which are not there in the original. So, in *The Road to Holocaust*, for example, where Lindsey is anxious to stress how the promises made in Romans 11 apply to the State of Israel and not merely to Jews generally, Lindsey 'interprets' this passage dispensationally adding the word 'national' to the text.

The whole point of this passage revolves around Israel's being restored to a position of preeminence as a believing nation. This could not be true if those who are converted in the future are made part of the Church, since the national distinction would be lost... The exact meaning of the future 'riches of the world' and of the 'fullness for national Israel' is of utmost importance.⁶⁵

In a quotation of Matthew 24:15-18, Lindsey adds a reference to the rebuilding of the temple, necessary for this prophecy to refer to some future date,

Therefore when you see the Abomination which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [of the rebuilt temple] (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...⁶⁶

Lindsey's interpretation of Daniel 11:40-45 is similarly colourful,

This will be the sign that immediately precedes the Russian-led Islamic invasion of Israel... "At the time of the end the King of the South [the Muslim Confederacy] will engage him [the False Prophet of Israel] in battle, and the King of the North [Russia] will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He [the Russian Commander] will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land [Israel]. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon [Jordan] will be delivered from his hand...⁶⁷

Likewise, in quoting Ezekiel 38:15-16, Lindsey adds the word 'Russia' to reinforce his interpretation.

And you (Russia) will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you...⁶⁸

His preoccupation with reading the Soviet Union into Old Testament prophecies leads to some novel definitions of chronology and time. In commenting on Isaiah 10:25, for example, Lindsey insists,

Carefully note also that right after the LORD predicts the restoration of the remnant of Israel and the destruction of the Assyrian enemy (which must be applied to a yet future enemy), He says, 'VERY SOON my anger against you will end and my wrath will be directed to their [Israel's enemies] destruction' (Isaiah 10:25) What the LORD called 'Very soon' has already been some 2700 years.⁶⁹

Lindsey's rather unusual understanding of time also extends to his view of prophecy.

3. Lindsey's Unconventional View of Prophecy

Integral to his literalist hermeneutic, Lindsey has largely been responsible for popularising a rather controversial approach to eschatology. In his first work, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Lindsey surveys the apparent revival in interest in astrology, spiritualism and clairvoyancy. He then asserts,

However, compared to the speculation of most that is called prophetic today, the Bible contains clear and unmistakable prophetic signs. We are able to see right now in this Best Seller predictions made centuries ago being fulfilled before our eyes. The Bible makes fantastic claims; but these claims are no more startling than those of present day astrologers, prophets and seers. Furthermore, the claims of the Bible have a greater basis in historical evidence and fact.⁷⁰

In his third book, *There's A New World Coming: A Prophetic Odyssey*, published three years later in 1973, Lindsey continues to take a comparative approach to prophecy, likening the claims of the Old Testament prophets to those of the druids of Stonehenge.

Through these stones, 4000 years ago, priests could site the sun, moon and stars and predict with exact accuracy the seasons, sun risings and eclipses of the sun and moon... There have been many, throughout the centuries of man's long history, who have sought to predict the course of human events, but none have had the incredible accuracy of the ancient Hebrew prophets.⁷¹

In 1994, looking back at the popularity of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Lindsey challenged his critics,

Not surprisingly, then, I'll confidently hold up my track record against that of any modern-day astrological charlatan or New Age clairvoyant.⁷²

Lindsey appears therefore to believe that predictive accuracy is the hallmark of divinely inspired prophecy. In taking a comparative approach to prophecy he has been criticised for blurring the distinction between biblical and occult sources.⁷³ Ironically, the last chapter of *The Late Great Planet Earth* is entitled, 'Polishing the Crystal Ball,'⁷⁴ while a paragraph heading in *There's a New World Coming*, describing the Book of Revelation, is entitled, 'John's Chain of ESP'.⁷⁵

Lindsey makes a second questionable assumption regarding prophecy. He assumes that biblical prophecy is essentially futuristic and predictive, that is, the foretelling of the future, and the future of the State of Israel, in particular.

The center of the entire prophetic forecast is the State of Israel. Certain events in that nation's recent history prove the accuracy of the prophets. They also force us to accept the fact that the 'countdown' has begun.⁷⁶ The information in the book you're about to read is more up-to-date than tomorrow's newspaper... I think you will be surprised to see what kind of predictions were made almost two thousand years ago!⁷⁷ ...it is intended to analyze what will occur in the decade we have just entered.⁷⁸ The world is spinning out of control - or so it seems. But, as you will discover, everything is in order. God told us these things would happen - in advance...⁷⁹ These weapons are so new, so secret, and so deadly that few people outside of military circles even know such weapons exist. But God knew, and he told Zechariah all about them when he was given details of another, upcoming battle for Jerusalem.⁸⁰

Following Darby, Lindsey believes 'prophecy is prewritten history'.⁸¹ In so doing he detaches predictions concerning the future from the covenantal context within which the prophecies were given. Lindsey's view is at variance with the Hebrew prophets who consistently stress that their intention is to call God's people back to the terms of their covenant relationship. Their role was not primarily to reveal arbitrary and otherwise hidden facts about predestined future events. The prophet speaks the Word of God. He appeals to his people to be true to Yahweh, the God of the covenant... He comes to his people with a threat or with words of comfort. Insofar as his message touches on the future, he does point to events down the road. But the prophet never makes predictions as such. His message is conditional; it is tied in with God's promises, on the one hand, and his threats, on the other.⁸² Authentic biblical prophecy was always conditional rather than fatalistic and given within the context of the covenant between God and his chosen people. It was the false prophets who flattered the people with promises of peace and prosperity without specifying the covenantal preconditions of repentance and faith. The true prophets were not concerned with authenticating their prophecies by presenting predictions that came true. In fact, some of the predictions didn't come true at all. When Micah prophesied that Jerusalem would be plowed as a field and turn into a heap of ruins, his words led to repentance under King Hezekiah. As a result, the Lord held back his judgment He had in mind (Mic. 3:12; Jer. 26:17-19).⁸³ Since Lindsey, like other Dispensationalists, believes God gave the Middle East to Abraham's Jewish descendants as an unconditional and everlasting possession, he does not acknowledge a correlation between the prophetic message and covenant relationship. Instead, he understands the prophets to be predicting predetermined events thousands of years later, giving an 'exciting view'⁸⁴ of human destiny.

Three millenniums of history are strewn with evidence of their prophetic marksmanship and to ignore their incredible predictions of man's destiny and the events which are soon to affect this planet will be perhaps the greatest folly of this generation.⁸⁵ Hal Lindsey claims to have uncovered prophetic puzzles throughout the Bible. Hidden away within these enigmas are specific predictions concerning the present and imminent future. In the wake of the 'Bible Code' debate, Lindsey rewrote *There's a New World Coming*, renaming it *Apocalypse Code* claiming to have deciphered, 'long-hidden messages about man's future and the fate of the earth.'⁸⁶ To do so Lindsey performs 'acrobatic stunts',⁸⁷ twisting biblical texts to fit his future scenario, propounding what some critics regard as a 'new form of Christian Gnosticism',⁸⁸ since only those who read his books will be able to understand them.

Perhaps we could speak of a post-Rapture complex in Lindsey's hermeneutics. As a result of this complex, all sorts of ancient prophecies about nations that have disappeared must be modernized, right down to the weaponry used in warfare... In his books, Hal Lindsey uses Biblical prophecy to open a supermarket in which he sells the curious inside information about the near future, especially World War III.⁸⁹

Responding to criticism that he did not foresee the collapse of Soviet Communism, Lindsey carefully denies that he himself ever claimed to a prophet.⁹⁰ He does, however, confess to making 'a series of predictions'⁹¹ and is happy to quote others who believe he is a prophet. For example, Lindsey allows his publishers to use the accolade of *Time* magazine that he is "The Jeremiah for this generation."⁹² Reviewing the prophecies made in *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 25 years later, Lindsey lists 23 of these predictions and then asks the rhetorical question, 'Did I miss any?'⁹³

The back cover of *The Final Battle* (1995), which is an amplified and significantly more politicised rewriting of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, says,

You couldn't get a better picture of what World War III will be like without being bodily transported into the future. Hal Lindsey has done it again! ⁹⁴

4. The Distinctive Apocalyptic Zionism of Hal Lindsey

The titles of Lindsey's books show an increasingly exaggerated and almost pathological

preoccupation with the apocalyptic.⁹⁵

His books are replete with dogmatic and categorical assertions of the imminent destruction of the world.

We are the generation the prophets were talking about. We have witnessed biblical prophecies come true. The birth of Israel. The decline in American power and morality. The rise of Russian and Chinese might. The threat of war in the Middle East. The increase of earthquakes, volcanoes, famine and drought. The Bible foretells the signs that precede Armageddon... We are the generation that will see the end times... and the return of Jesus.⁹⁶ Lindsey has been described as, 'a long haired reincarnation of Scofield.'⁹⁷

This may be because of the similarities between the pessimistic pronouncements of both authors.

Cyrus Scofield (1918)
Hal Lindsey (1970)

So far as the prophetic Word has spoken there is not the least warrant for the expectation that the nations engaged in the present gigantic struggle will or can make a permanent peace. It is fondly dreamed that out of all the suffering and carnage and destruction of this war will be born such a hatred of war as will bring to pass a federation of the nations-The United States of the World-in which will exist but one army, and that an international peace, rather than an army... For that Word certainly points to a federated world-empire in the end-time of the age... It is, of course, possible, nay, probable that some temporary truce may end, or suspend for a time, the present world-war, for ten kingdoms will exist at the end-time in the territory once ruled over by Rome.⁹⁸

In spite of the vain striving of man, of the bold and infamous conquerors throughout the ages who failed in their human attempts, we are beginning to see the Ancient Roman Empire draw together, just as predicted... We believe that the Common Market and the trend toward unification in Europe may well be the beginning of the ten-nation confederacy predicted by Daniel and the Book of Revelation... In spite of those who propose the alternatives to the United States of Europe, and the temporary setbacks it appears to have, it seems that the trend is ever onward... At about 1980 we may fully expect the great fusion of all economic, military, and political communities into the United States of Europe... Imagine that. A "ten-nation economic entity." Is it any wonder that men who have studied prophecy for many years believe that the basic beginning of the unification of Europe has begun?⁹⁹

Lindsey's book, *The Final Battle*, is a good example of "Armageddon Theology". It includes this statement on the cover,

Never before, in one book, has there been such a complete and detailed look at the events leading up to 'The Battle of Armageddon.'¹⁰⁰

Lindsey asserts that the world is degenerating and that the forces of evil manifest in godless Communism and militant Islam are the real enemies of Israel. An apocalyptic scenario is predicted, centred upon a great battle at Megiddo between massive continental armies that will attempt but fail to destroy Israel.

Based on his interpretation of Ezekiel 38 & 39, and selective quotations from speculative 19th Century commentators, Lindsey insists the references to Gog, Rosh and Tubal reveal that the chief enemy of Israel in the final days will be Russia.

You need only to take a globe to verify this exact geographical fix. There is only one nation to the 'uttermost north' of Israel - the U.S.S.R... General Dyan's statement that 'The next war will not be with the Arabs but with the Russians' has a considerably deeper significance, doesn't it? Just think for a moment how incredible a thing we are considering here. How could Ezekiel 2600 years ago have forecast so accurately the rise of Russia to its current military might and its direct and obvious designs upon the Middle East, not to mention that fact that it is now an implacable enemy of the new state of Israel? How could men like Chamberlain and Cummings, for that matter, one hundred years ago have so clearly seen the rise of Russia to its present world-threatening position? The answer is again, it seems to this writer, obvious, Ezekiel once again passes 'the test of a prophet'.¹⁰¹

Lindsey offers detailed illustrated plans showing future military movements of armies and naval convoys, including the American 6th Fleet, leading up to the battle of Armageddon.¹⁰² He claims these cataclysmic events indicate the imminent return of Jesus Christ as King of the Jews who will rule the world from the rebuilt Jewish temple on the site of the destroyed Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.¹⁰³

Lindsey believes that the great battle of Armageddon is imminent and unavoidable. His motive for writing is to shock people into believing in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Only then can they be raptured to heaven and avoid suffering in the coming global holocaust. Like a sinking ship, Lindsey portrays a world in which there is no hope or purpose, other than trying to get off as quickly as possible. There is therefore no point in trying to care for the world or getting involved in charitable or humanitarian work. Every human tragedy, be it earthquake, hurricane or war merely adds to the mounting evidence and proves his contention that the end of the world is nigh.

You won't find another book quite like this one. We will examine why and how the world is hurtling toward disaster... My background as a student of prophecy allows me to place all this information in perspective in a way that is sure to lead many people to the ultimate truth about the coming global holocaust - and, if they are open, to a wonderful way of escaping it. Read this book. Learn from it. Pass it on to your friends. It may be the last chance some of them will ever have to avoid the horrible fate this book describes.¹⁰⁴

According to Lindsey, the key to deliverance from Armageddon is bound up with God's purposes for, and our attitude toward, the Jews.

4.1 The Jews of the Bible and the Modern State of Israel

Lindsey's empathy for the Jews is highlighted in his emotive description of a visit he made to the Western Wall.

The wall is a symbol of the unity of the Jews as a race and of their ancient ties to God. Even battle-hardened soldiers wept when they first approached the wall. I stood by many a Jew when he first touched the wall, and all have felt that at last they had come home. So did I.¹⁰⁵

He also claims to have been motivated by concern for the Jews in writing his first book,

In writing *The Late Great Planet Earth*, I had the Jews constantly in mind. I prayerfully and deliberately sought to present my prophetic case in such a way that it would especially appeal to them. It has been published in more than fifty foreign editions and has been instrumental all around the world in bringing tens of thousands of Jews to faith in Jesus as their Messiah. I run into them everywhere. They continue to write to me from virtually every part of the world. The first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion, was reading it shortly before he died. Since everything in his room has been kept the way it was before he died, a copy of *The Late Great Planet Earth* remains on his desk. A friend of mine who is one of Israel's top military commanders passed out hundreds of copies of the Hebrew translation to the Israeli Defence forces, even though he personally hasn't as yet believed in Jesus as the Messiah.¹⁰⁶

Lindsey's sympathies clearly lie with the State of Israel rather than with her Arab neighbours, the Palestinians, or even with the ancient indigenous Christian community of Israel and the Occupied Territories. Under a heading 'Why the Bias?' Lindsey insists,

Because Israel is a pro-Western, democratic nation committed to the ideals of free speech and press, there is good access for journalists... And because Israel is a staunch U.S. Ally, it is always under the microscope... This kind of distortion and bias has placed Israel center stage in the court of world opinion and helped to make the Jewish state something of a pariah nation. Funny, how that's just what the Bible predicted for Israel in the last days.¹⁰⁷

Lamenting the isolation the United States experiences in the United Nations when vetoing repeated censure motions against Israel, Lindsey points out,

Up to the time of the 1991 Madrid Conference, the Arabs were 'called upon' to 'comply,' 'desist,' 'refrain' etc. four times. Israel was 'demanded,' 'ordered,' etc. to do General Assembly bidding three hundred and five times. The UN voted six hundred and five resolutions between its inception and the Gulf War. Four hundred and twenty nine of those resolutions, or, sixty-two percent of the total of the UN's resolutions were against Israel or its interests.¹⁰⁸

Israeli society is far from homogeneous politically. While the majority of secular Jews favour a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians, Lindsey identifies with the fundamentalist settlers and political far right.

...it was a pity that Israel chose to recognize, negotiate and compromise with sworn enemy and terrorist Yasser Arafat... It was a risky tactic - one fraught with danger not only for the Jewish state but for the entire world. The stage is now set for the kind of explosive developments students of Bible prophecy have long anticipated. What the Israelis have actually done by establishing autonomous Arab states in Jericho and Gaza is to create the kind of bridgehead in Israel that Arafat has, until now, only dreamed about.¹⁰⁹

Lindsey's preoccupation with Israel is largely due to his dispensational presuppositions which distinguish Israel from the Church in the present and future purposes of God, although the origins of this theological position are never discussed, nor attributed in any of his writings apart from three pages in his latest book.¹¹⁰

Like other dispensationalists, Lindsey insists that the promises of blessing and protection made to Abraham are unconditional and eternal and that it is specifically the State of Israel rather than merely people of Jewish descent who are the beneficiaries today.

There has been much infidelity in Jewish history, and their present worldwide dispersion and persecution have been their divine discipline. However, God made unconditional promises of eternal blessings to the Jewish patriarchs and will someday restore the Jews to a position of special favour with Himself... God has promised never to abandon His chosen people, no matter how despicably they treat Him (Romans 11:1,2). The divine hand of protection of the Jews during their recent Six-Day War was just a token of that protective care.¹¹¹ ...God clearly reveals that the tree into which we Gentiles have been grafted contrary to nature is still the Jew's own olive tree. The simple meaning of this is that the covenants are still valid to the physical race of Israel. Their fulfilment only awaits that predicted time when God will bring them back to faith again.¹¹²

Rather than apply these ancient promises to the Jewish people generally, Lindsey quite specifically, and increasingly more explicitly, applies them to the State of Israel and Israeli citizens.

The God of Israel has sworn in the prophecies that He will not forsake the Israelis, nor let them be destroyed.¹¹³ To Israel as a nation were made unique promises... All other nations received blessings only through Israel. They were the only nation that was promised a specific plot of land, a city, and a kingdom on an earth from which the original curse would be removed.¹¹⁴ Unless one goes off into allegorical la-la land, these prophecies literally demand a National restoration of Israel as a distinct and unique believing Nation in the future kingdom.¹¹⁵

To reinforce the link with the Jews of the Old Testament, in his later books, Lindsey increasingly refers to Israeli citizens as 'Israelites'¹¹⁶ as well, the land as 'Judea and Samaria'¹¹⁷

One of Lindsey's strongest critics is David Chilton. With regard to the promise in Romans 11 that many Jews would recognise Jesus as their Messiah, Chilton insists,

The Bible promises the restoration of Israel as a people, but not necessarily as a State; nothing requires that the two must go together. Even assuming, that there is still a State of Israel when the Jews are converted, Israel would simply be one Christian nation among many, with no special standing. The people of genetic Israel will be part of the covenantal tree of life, but there is no longer any religious significance belonging to Palestine.¹¹⁸

To even classical dispensationalists, such as Schuyler English, who revised the Scofield Reference Bible in 1967, Israel as a State has no prophetic significance during the 'church age' until after the so-called 'rapture'.

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. 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.¹¹⁹

Daniel 9:24-27 states,

"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

²⁵"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Lindsey believes,

...this amazing prediction of the future events of Israel's career sets forth a divinely ordained time period of 'seventy weeks' of years (490 years) in which God would, in specific ways, deal with the sin of the nation, bring in everlasting righteousness, and send the Messiah to the world. This allotted time period was like a great divine 'time-clock'... Countdown began clicking off April, 444 B.C.E... Then Daniel predicted a strange thing. He said that after sixty-nine weeks of years (483 years) had clicked off on this allotment of time, the Messiah of Israel would be revealed to the Jews and then killed, and the city of Jerusalem and their Temple would be destroyed and their 490 year special time allotment would be temporarily cut short by 7 years...

Jesus himself had thoroughly studied this prophecy of Daniel and related its meaning to his disciples... Then he added something which Daniel hadn't predicted, but Moses had: '...Jerusalem would be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled' (Luke 21:23, 24)... For nearly two thousand years now, this prophecy has been a horrible reality in the life of God's chosen people... Even though Israel is now partially back in her ancient homeland, she isn't at peace with the world around her...

We have one thing to give substance to our hope for Israel. We know that God will never break a promise and He still owes Israel seven years of her allotted 490 years in which to bring about righteousness in her land and purge her people of sin. Then God's Messiah will come again to Israel and give to those of His chosen people and the world who receive Him, the Kingdom of God which He promised so long ago.¹²⁰

Lindsey does not explain how he fits the nearly 1878 year gap between 70 A.D. and 1948 into Daniel 9:24-27. The seven years he claims is still 'allotted' to Israel during which they will be 'purged' is actually a euphemism for the 'tribulation' in which Lindsey believes many Israelis will suffer and die in the nuclear war of Armageddon. In order to strengthen his argument that the prophets predicted the restoration of Israel in 1948, Lindsey believes that Moses predicted two separate destructions of Israel in Deuteronomy 28:49-52 and 28:62-66. The passages actually state,

The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, ^{50a}a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young. ⁵¹They will devour the young of your livestock and the crops of your land until you are destroyed. They will leave you no grain, new wine or oil, nor any calves of your herds or lambs of your flocks until you are ruined. ⁵²They will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust fall down. They will besiege all the cities throughout the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Deut. 28:49-52)

You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the Lord your God. ⁶³Just as it pleased the Lord to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.

⁶⁴Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods--gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. ⁶⁵Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. ⁶⁶You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. (Deut. 28:62-66)

Lindsey claims these verses teach that,

Just before the Hebrews conquered the Promised Land, Moses predicted that Israel would twice be destroyed as a nation and twice be driven out of the land because of persistent unbelief. He also predicted that the first destruction and dispersion would come by the hand of one mighty nation. He specifically predicted that in this dispersion the Israelites would be taken captive into this one invading nation (Deuteronomy 28:49-57). This prophecy was fulfilled when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. And took the survivors back to Babylon as slaves (2 Chronicles 36:9-21)...

When Moses predicted the second destruction of the nation, he warned that the second dispersion would be much more extensive and severe than the first... This part of Moses' prophecy was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Titus and the Roman Tenth Legion crushed Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and scattered the surviving Jews throughout the known world... Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Zechariah and many other prophets predicted Israel's second restoration as a nation in the 'latter

days'. They predicted that the Jews would return to their ancient homeland after a long and terrible dispersion among the nations, and that they would miraculously become a nation again (Ezekiel 36, 37). The most important factor in these prophecies is that God promises the Jews that once they have returned in the second restoration, their nation will never be destroyed again.¹²¹

Lindsey neglects to point out that the warnings uttered by Moses in Deuteronomy 28 were not predictions of future events but conditional warnings, dependent on whether the Israelites kept the covenant. In between the two selective passages which Lindsey highlights, Moses also warned that the Israelites would suffer all the plagues witnessed in Egypt if they were disobedient, something Lindsey conveniently ignores.

More significantly, the passages Lindsey quotes do not actually specify that the Israelites will be taken captive 'into this one invading nation', nor that two distinct dispersions would occur. The reference in Deuteronomy 28:63-66 which Lindsey claims predicts a second universal exile actually goes on two verses later to indicate that Egypt, still a feared and great power in Moses day, would be their return destination. Lindsey's insistence on two dispersions is itself a very selective reading of Jewish history ignoring the earlier Assyrian conquest of Tiglath-Pileser in 721 B.C. when the ten tribes of the Northern kingdom were deported and absorbed into other parts of the Assyrian Empire.

Instead of following the position of Schuyler English and other traditional dispensationalists, Lindsey develops his own innovative scheme claiming that there is great significance in the events of 1948 and especially 1967. He insists, 'The center of the entire prophetic forecast is the State of Israel,'¹²² and Israel is the 'center of world destiny.'¹²³

Lindsey's entire reading of the Bible and of contemporary events in the world are shaped by this conviction and perspective.

In 1970, in *The Late Great Planet Earth*, under the sub-title 'Keys to the Prophetic Puzzle', Lindsey explained why his interpretation of contemporary events concerning Israel is more reliable than previous attempts. Then in 1980 Lindsey reiterated this conviction more dogmatically, insisting the 'rebirth' of Israel to be the only 'sign' that the 'countdown' to Armageddon had begun.

Late Great Planet Earth 1980's Countdown to Armageddon

Many Bible students in recent years have tried to fit the events of World War I and II to the prophetic signs which would herald the imminent return of Christ. Their failure discredited prophecy... It is because of these unscriptural attempts at calculating days that some eyebrows rise when we speak of Bible prophecy today. The one event which many Bible students in the past overlooked was this paramount prophetic sign: Israel had to be a nation again in the land of its forefathers.¹²⁴

Many skeptics point out that during World War I and II, some well-meaning students of prophecy claimed that the end of history was at hand and the Messiah would return soon... Naturally, when the world didn't end, all prophecy was discredited. These skeptics have asked me, 'Why do you think that all the various prophecies will come to pass during this generation? The answer is simple. The prophets told us that the rebirth of Israel-no other event-would be the sign that the countdown had begun. Since that rebirth, the rest of the prophecies have begun to be fulfilled quite rapidly. For this reason I am convinced that we are now in the unique time so clearly and precisely forecast by the Hebrew prophets.'¹²⁵

Lindsey bases his interpretation of contemporary events largely on the prophecies of Ezekiel 37-39, and, in particular, the vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37. Most commentators see in these chapters the promise of the return of the remnant from Babylon under Ezra and Nehemiah.¹²⁶

Lindsey, however, chooses instead to apply them to 1948 and 1967 when Israel occupied the West Bank and the Old City of Jerusalem.

Some 2600 years ago Ezekiel showed that the Jewish nation would be reborn after a long world-wide dispersion, but before the coming of the Messiah...¹²⁷ Ezekiel 37:7-8... Is phase one of the prophecy which predicts the PHYSICAL RESTORATION of the Nation without Spiritual life which began May 14, 1948... Ezekiel 37:9-10... Is phase two of the prophecy which predicts the SPIRITUAL REBIRTH of the nation AFTER they are physically restored to the land as a nation... The Lord identifies the bones in the allegory as representing 'the whole house of Israel.' It is crystal clear that this is literally predicting the restoration and rebirth of the whole nation at the time of Messiah's coming [Ezekiel 37:21-27].¹²⁸

In like manner, where first Century Christians understood Jesus to be warning them to flee Jerusalem because of its imminent destruction, Lindsey claims that Jesus was actually predicting the restoration of the Jews to Palestine in the 20th Century.

But the most important sign in Matthew has to be the restoration of the Jews to the land in the rebirth of Israel. Even the figure of speech 'fig tree' has been a historic symbol of national Israel. When the Jewish people, after nearly 2,000 years of exile, under relentless persecution, became a nation again on 14 May 1948 the 'fig tree' put forth its first leaves.¹²⁹

Nothing, however, in Matthew 24:32 indicates that Jesus intended his hearers to understand that he was promising Israel would become a nation once more. The New Testament is silent on the question of whether the Jews would ever become a national state again. Nevertheless, Lindsey has popularised the notion that the return of Jewish people to Palestine since 1948 is the fulfilment of biblical prophecy. Lindsey speaks repeatedly of the 'rebirth'¹³⁰ of Israel, insisting,

The nation of Israel cannot be ignored; we see the Jews as a miracle of history.'¹³¹ ...all the unconditional covenants... Were made only with the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as a unique nation.¹³²

This logic leads Lindsey to suggest that had the Jewish people accepted Jesus as their Messiah, the rest of the world would not have been offered the Gospel.

The Gospel and the age of grace would not have come to us Gentiles unless Israel had fallen into unbelief.¹³³

Aware of criticism of attempts to apply biblical prophecy to contemporary events, Lindsey qualifies his own particular interpretation, but in so doing advocates both a massive secularisation of biblical prophecy as well as a questionable 'second chance' way of salvation for the Jews.

Right here a careful distinction must be made between 'the physical restoration' to the land of Palestine as a nation, which clearly occurs shortly before the Messiah's coming and the 'spiritual restoration' of all Jews who have believed in the Messiah just after His return to this earth. The 'physical restoration' is accomplished by unbelieving Jews through their human effort. As a matter of fact, the great catastrophic events which are to happen to this nation during 'the tribulation' are primarily designed to shock the people into believing in their true Messiah (Ezekiel 38; 39).¹³⁴

In *The Road to Holocaust*, Lindsey draws a distinction between those who are Jews racially and religiously from those who are regenerate Jews, claiming only the latter are God's chosen people.

The Regenerate Israelite has always been the True Israelite. This group combines together both the racial and spiritual factors that the Bible describes as 'the remnant of Israel.'... The Bible reveals the insufficiency of being only a racial and religious Jew... The Bible has always taught that only the racial Jew who is born spiritually is a true Israelite and heir to the eternal promises... And that they continue to be God's special people.¹³⁵

Lindsey does not accept that the privileged status of covenant people was taken away from the Jews at some time between Pentecost and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. Based on his interpretation of Romans 11, Lindsey argues, in line with classical dispensationalism, that the Church will be replaced by Israel as the people of God on earth,

...at some point in history - very soon, I believe - God's special focus and blessing is going to shift back to the Jews. At that moment, the Jews will once again be responsible, as God's representatives, to take His message to the whole world. This mission - incomplete and seemingly impossible for the last 2,000 years - will be accomplished by the 144,000 Jewish Billy Graham's in seven years.¹³⁶

In his latest work, Lindsey continues to insist on a radical distinction between the church and Israel.

He redeemed the Church (both Jew and Gentile who trusted in Him) at the Cross. That is an accomplished fact. Israel's national redemption in accordance with the Abrahamic covenant takes place at the Second Advent.¹³⁷

An alternative reading of the New Testament would suggest that, while the apostles Peter and Paul could appeal to the historical link between the Jews and their privileges (Acts 3:25; Romans 9:4-5, 11:28), time was running out and that there was a limit to that appeal. In the plan of redemptive history, the rejection of the Messiah by the majority of Jewish people led to their rejection under the terms of the covenant. In Acts 3:22-23 Peter applies the Mosaic warning of Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and Leviticus 23:29 to his generation and makes their response to Jesus Christ the critical test.

For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your

own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.' (Acts 3:22-23)

Likewise, Paul explains how only those who believe in Jesus Christ, including both Jews and Gentiles, are now the true children of Abraham.

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring - not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." (Romans 4:13-17)

Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (Galatians 3:6-9)

The New Testament therefore insists on a limited time when the initial offer of salvation would be made to the Jews as the chosen people of God. This was probably confined to the generation that witnessed the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Failure to respond to the claims of Christ led to the removal of the covenant status and privileges from the Jewish people and their application to the Church (1 Peter 2:9-10). Paul goes so far as to describe the consequences as a complete reversal of the status of Jews and Gentiles. 'Jerusalem' symbolic of the Jews who had rejected Jesus Christ were now regarded as the offspring of Hagar not Sarah.

²⁴These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother... ²⁸Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise... ³⁰But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." ³¹Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. (Galatians 4:24-31)

Ignoring the flow of redemptive history, the status of Israel under the terms of the Hebrew covenant, and ultimately the impact of their rejection of Jesus Christ, Lindsey applies conditional and superseded Old Testament promises made to Israel, at times to the contemporary State of Israel and on other occasions to Jews who believe in Jesus as their Messiah. This ambivalence is perpetuated in Lindsey's speculations concerning which, and how many, Israelis will survive the war of Armageddon, explored later.

4.2 The Territorial Extent of Eretz Israel

Christian Zionists clearly see the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 as highly significant, signalling the end of 2000 years of exile. They have therefore actively encouraged Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe to make Aliya, seeing this as another 'Exodus.'¹³⁸

The settlement and integration of the Occupied Territories within Eretz Israel, now imbued with the evocative biblical names of 'Judea and Samaria', is deemed essential to maintain Israeli security as well as to fulfil the land promise made to Abraham and his descendants. In this Lindsey was the first and probably most successful to popularise a Christian Zionist reading of Scripture and contemporary events since 1967.

What the average Israeli understands-in part because their sons and fathers and brothers fought to gallantly to gain this high ground-is this... Giving away the Golan Heights might be enough to cause a political uprising among the Israeli people. But if it isn't, surely concessions that involve Judea and Samaria would be. There are 100,000 Jewish settlers living in these lands now. They are biblically Jewish lands. To evacuate Jews from them would be an enormous psychological blow to the whole concept of Jewish nationhood. Frankly, such an attempt might be enough to trigger a civil war.¹³⁹ And God has promised the land of Israel to the Jews forever. Period.¹⁴⁰

Lindsey is at his most critical when contemplating the implications of a 'land for peace' resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

If Israel would just give the Palestinians a homeland, the Arabs would be satisfied and peace would reign. If you believe that, I have some lakefront property in the Sahara Desert I'd like to sell you.¹⁴¹

Having listed the various military threats Israel faces from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Iran and other Arab nations, Lindsey finds negotiation incomprehensible.

...despite all of these facts, Israel has still agreed to give up more occupied land in the Gaza strip and Jericho and is discussing turning over more strategic territory in Judea, Samaria and the Golan Heights. This series of developments was enough to make the most confident warriors scared.¹⁴² With its all-consuming desire for peace at any price, Israel has now placed itself in an indefensible position.¹⁴³

Speaking of the Wye, Oslo and Hebron Accords, Lindsey offers this pessimistic assessment.

Basically, the agreement calls for Israel to surrender more land in exchange for Arafat's promises to abide by the agreements he has already signed. Something for less than nothing is the best way to term it.¹⁴⁴ 'Land for Peace!' Is the cry heard 'round the world. In 1993 we saw Israel bullied and blackmailed into turning over more land to the Arabs - this time to its sworn enemy, the terrorist Yasser Arafat. Objective military and intelligence say any more land concessions would be strategically foolhardy... Further land concessions would leave Israel with indefensible borders and no effective conventional deterrent against attack. The world should take note that if it stands by and lets Israel be over run, the Samson Option is still very much in readiness... Does the world really want to force Israel to rely exclusively on nuclear weapons for its defence? ¹⁴⁵

Although the rhetorical answer is presumably 'no,' Lindsey predicts, yet again, an apocalyptic scenario.

There is no question, in reviewing Bible prophecy, that a cataclysmic, apocalyptic war will engulf the Mideast prior to the return of Jesus Christ. In this nuclear age, it makes sense to us that the mass annihilation we read about might be the result of a nuclear exchange. Because the Bible talks about mass destruction by fire, this scenario seems to make sense. 'And I will send fire on Magog [Russia],' Ezekiel recorded. If faced with annihilation you can count on Israel to protect its civilian population by any means necessary... Its clear that the Bible can't be talking about any other time in history but today.¹⁴⁶

Quoting a defence expert, Joseph De Courcy, Lindsey insists,

The absolute minimum territory Israel requires to deter war is the territory it is controlling today... If Israel gives back Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, it woill simply no longer be able to defend itself against the Muslim nations with conventional weapons.¹⁴⁷

4.3 The Significance of Jerusalem

Lindsey insists that the occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967 by the Jews was another significant sign of the imminent return of the Messiah, since unfulfilled prophecies concerning the Jewish people must occur within the ancient city.

Jerusalem's importance in history is infinitely beyond its size and economic significance. From ages past, Jerusalem has been the most important city on this planet... More prophecies have been made concerning Jerusalem than any other place on earth.¹⁴⁸

He concedes that the status of Jerusalem is contested, claiming, in the context of the Oslo Peace Accord,

The Arabs still demand Jerusalem as the ransom price for any lasting peace. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu went on record in Washington repeating his promise that Jerusalem will never be divided.¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Lindsey insists, pessimistically, Arab aspirations are futile.

As the Bible tells us, the dispute over Jerusalem and Israel's borders will never be settled by any peace agreements nor any whiz-bang diplomatic breakthrough. Jerusalem, the Bible says, will be a stumbling block for the entire world... In Luke 21:24, the Bible tells us that 'Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' We are literally witnessing the end of the times of the Gentiles.¹⁵⁰

A year later, Lindsey is more specific and emphatic in his dispensational timing,

We are literally witnessing the last hours of the times of the Gentiles. God's focus is shifting back to His people Israel.¹⁵¹

Lindsey interprets the prophecies of Zechariah 12-14 as foretelling events that are about to happen including a fearful siege of Jerusalem by the Soviet army.¹⁵²

It is clear from these chapters that the Jews would have to be dwelling in and have possession of the ancient city of Jerusalem at the time of the Messiah's triumphant advent.¹⁵³ There couldn't be a more perfect modern-day description of what was predicted hundreds of years ago in Zechariah 12-14. There it tells us that the last war of the world will be started by a dispute over Jerusalem. We've got that dispute right now. As a matter of fact, the West helped guaranty the world a dispute over Jerusalem by forcing the Israelis into a pact with the Palestinians.¹⁵⁴

How much of Jerusalem will be left standing when Jesus returns is a matter of speculation, given Lindsey's terrifying description of the war of Armageddon.

The Bible also makes clear that Jerusalem - the focal point of the endtimes fighting - will be vanquished by Israel's enemies in the hours just before the Lord comes. In fact, it seems that the destruction of the holy city is the final straw that angers God and provokes Jesus' return.¹⁵⁵

He nevertheless looks forward to a better day after Armageddon, when, during the Millennium, Jerusalem will be the spiritual centre of the entire world... all people of the earth will come annually to worship Jesus who will rule there.¹⁵⁶

4.4 The Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple

Right now, as you read this, preparations are being made to rebuild the Third Temple.¹⁵⁷

Lindsey not only regards the founding of the State of Israel and capture of Jerusalem as the fulfilment of biblical prophecy but insists, controversially, that the Jewish Temple must also be rebuilt. Initially, in 1970, he insisted this would have to be in place of the Dome of the Rock.

There remains but one more event to completely set the stage for Israel's part in the last great act of her historical drama. This is to rebuild the ancient Temple of worship upon its old site... There is one major problem barring the construction of a third Temple. That obstacle is the second holiest place of the Moslem faith, the Dome of the Rock. This is believed to be built squarely in the middle of the old temple site. Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it.¹⁵⁸ This quote reveals Lindsey's basic ignorance of Islam. The Temple Mount on which the Dome of the Rock and Alaqsa Mosque are built constitutes the third most holy shrine to Moslems after Medina and Mecca not the second as Lindsey erroneously asserts here and repeats later in *There's a New World Coming*.¹⁵⁹

Dispensationalists like Lindsey believe in the imminent rebuilding of the Temple based on the somewhat enigmatic passage of Daniel 9:24-27. The sanctuary already appears to have been destroyed in verse 26 yet sacrifices are brought to an end in verse 27 and then the 'abomination that causes desolation' desecrates the Temple.

After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." (Daniel 9:26-27)

On the basis of a rather tenuous interpretation, Lindsey confidently argues,

This prophecy speaks of sacrifice and offerings which demand that the Jews rebuild the Temple for the third time upon its original site. At that point, Judaism and Islam will be placed on an inevitable course of war over the site, a war that will start Armageddon. Many prophecies demand rebuilding of the ancient Temple, indicating that the event is a significant prophetic sign (see Matthew 24:15 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4). Therefore any move toward that direction is a crucial clue to what hour it is on God's prophetic timetable.¹⁶⁰

Lindsey insists Jesus concurred with this interpretation.

Of course, for Temple rites to be stopped in the last days, we know they must be restarted. The words of Jesus Himself in Matthew 24:15 require that a new holy place be built and a complete sacrificial system re-instituted. And since only a consecrated temple can be defiled, this prophecy

shows that the physical Temple must not only be rebuilt, but a functioning priesthood must begin practising once again.¹⁶¹

He also sees evidence for the rebuilding of the Temple in the instructions given to the Apostle John to measure the Temple in Revelation 11:1-2.

The Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation about the year A.D. 95. This means that the Temple... was non-existent for the twenty-five years preceding John's writing... What Temple, then, was John referring to? There can be only one answer - a yet-to-be-built structure!¹⁶²

Lindsey quotes Israel Eldad, an Israeli historian, who claims that devout Jews, 'some of whom are in powerful positions in the Israeli government' expect the Dome of the Rock to be destroyed, whether by natural or supernatural intervention, and the Jewish Temple to be rebuilt very soon after.¹⁶³

Lindsey quotes Eldad again three years later,
"When the Jewish people took over Jerusalem the first time, under King David, only one generation passed before they built the Temple, and so it shall be with us." When asked about the problem of the Dome of the Rock being on the Jewish Temple site, he replied with a wink, "Who knows, perhaps there will be an earthquake!" What Eldad said in jest may be just the thing that will happen.¹⁶⁴

Clearly, in 1970, Lindsey believed that the Dome of the Rock would need to be destroyed in order for the Jewish Temple to be rebuilt. He even appeared to know the exact location of the former structure.

Archaeologists have uncovered a pillar from Solomon's porch as the first major find from the Herodian Temple. From its location in relation to the Wailing Wall they have now ascertained where the ancient Holy of Holies in the Temple was located. Imagine my emotions as I stood under a sign at the Wall which read in Hebrew: 'Holy of Holies, 10 Metres,' with an arrow pointing towards a spot thirty feet behind the existing Wall in the direction of the Dome of the Rock!¹⁶⁵

By 1983 Lindsey had changed his mind about the location of the Herodian Temple. Based apparently on the findings of a 16 year investigation undertaken by Dr Kaufman of the Hebrew University and published in the Biblical Archaeology Review, Lindsey now claimed,

I also believe that this discovery has accelerated the countdown to the events that will bring the Messiah Jesus back to earth. The reason for this belief is that the predicted Third Temple can now be built without disturbing the Dome of the Rock. ...the Temple and its immediate guard wall could be rebuilt and still be twenty-six meters away from the Dome of the Rock. ¹⁶⁶

Having discovered the true site of the Herodian Temple, in 1980 Lindsey proceeded to find scriptural verification for this new location.

Revelation chapter 11 indicates this very situation: 'I was given a reed like a measuring rod and told, 'Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.' (Revelation 11:1,2 NIV). The outer court, which includes the area where the Dome of the Rock is situated, was given to the Gentiles. So this prophecy accurately reflects the situation that is present today... All of these things are tremendously exciting to those who know Bible prophecy. We are literally in the very last days of the Church Age. The Temple will be rebuilt soon!¹⁶⁷

In 1994, Lindsey heightened speculation still further with the following assertion.

I remember my whole body tingling with excitement when I measured the distances on the Temple platform and realized that God had left out the outer court because it allowed for the Gentile temple to remain alongside the rebuilt Jewish Temple during the Tribulation. Folks, the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, can already be heard as He approaches the doors of heaven to return. The Temple is the last sign that needs to fall into place before events irreversibly speed toward the return of Jesus.¹⁶⁸

Despite being aware of the hypersensitivity felt by Moslems about the Temple Mount area and their justifiable fear that Jewish and Christian fundamentalists might try to destroy it again,¹⁶⁹ Lindsey assumes that, since a Jewish Temple could now be built alongside the Dome of the Rock, the Moslem authorities would tolerate this, so that the Jewish Temple could become 'the greatest tourist attraction in the world'.¹⁷⁰

But lets think even more practically. Not only would the Temple become a unifying force for Israel's diverse and pluralistic society, it would also, without doubt, become the greatest tourist attraction in the world. Its basic economics. Imagine what a new Temple would do for the Israeli economy, which relies so heavily on tourism. The Temple would also serve to attract more Jews from

all over the world-and... The Bible tells us that eventually all of the dispersed will return to their homeland. The Temple would serve as a kind of spiritual magnet. This, too, would fit into the prophetic scenario, which indicates that Israel is destined to play a major role in the world and experience vast wealth, power and prestige in the last days. Why else would the Antichrist choose to set up his throne in Jerusalem unless Israel had moved center stage in the world's political and economic picture.¹⁷¹

Lindsey points to the existence of two talmudic schools training some 200 Levite priests and the accumulation of vessels and clothing necessary to perform sacrifices, as further proof of the imminent plans to rebuild the Temple.

Near the site of the Temple, the seminary of Aterat Kohanim (Glory of the Priests) is reviving an extinct class of Jewish priests and their servants known as Levites so they will be ready when the ancient prophecies are fulfilled and the Temple, twice destroyed, is rebuilt.¹⁷²

Lindsey's belief in the imminent rebuilding of the Temple is reinforced by his understanding of Jesus' words in Matthew 24.

Jesus Christ predicted an event which would trigger a time of unparalleled catastrophe for the Jewish nation shortly before His second coming... With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2600 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of Jesus Christ's soon coming is before us... It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found... For all those who trust in Jesus Christ, it is a time of electrifying excitement.¹⁷³

Although Lindsey's speculations are popular and have an immediacy in terms of interpreting contemporary events, they bear little relation to the events described in Matthew 24. Many commentators note that the predictions of Jesus were fulfilled in the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. when Jewish Zealots desecrated the temple using it as a fortress against the Romans. Eusebius, for example, the 4th Century Bishop and historian refers to the eye witness accounts of Josephus, the Jewish historian of the 1st Century, to show how these predictions of Jesus had already been fulfilled.

It is fitting to add to these accounts the true prediction of our Saviour in which he foretold these very events.¹⁷⁴

Lindsey ignores this historical position preferring to interpret Matthew 24 as prophecy still awaiting fulfilment. So when Jesus promised these events would be witnessed by 'this generation'¹⁷⁵, Lindsey understands 'this' to be his own generation.¹⁷⁶

There is no room for negotiation or debate on this issue, Lindsey is emphatic.

So the rebuilding of the Temple is significant not only because of the potential firestorm it will create between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East. It is also a critical development in the entire prophetic scenario. The Bible makes it clear that in the last days the Antichrist will establish his reign in the Temple of Jerusalem. Therefore, the Temple must and will be rebuilt.¹⁷⁷

4.5 The Implacable Enemies of Israel: Communists and Moslems

Lindsey claims biblical warrant for his hostility toward Communism and Islam.

Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah all said that a nation to the extreme north of Israel would achieve great influence and become a threat to the whole world. They said this power would be Israel's mortal enemy. The prophets predicted that this nation would launch an all-out land and sea attack on Israel, the Arab nations and the continent of Africa. This country, Bible scholars agree, is the Soviet Union. A line drawn due north of Israel crosses only one land mass - Russia. And the three tribes Ezekiel predicted would people the nation to the north are in fact the ancestors of today's Russians. Throughout its history, the single most consistent motive of the Soviet Union's military invasions has been the acquisition of warm water ports for its merchant and naval fleets. ¹⁷⁸ As previously quoted the Russians will make both an amphibious and land invasion of Israel. The current build-up of Russian ships in the Mediterranean serves as another significant sign of the possible nearness of Armageddon.¹⁷⁹

Lindsey's speculations concerning Russia show remarkable similarity to those of earlier Dispensationalists such as Arno Gaebelein.

Arno Gaebelein (1916)

Hal Lindsey (1980)

The time cannot be far off when Russia's millions, augmented by the armies that she will gather from these and other nations, will be thrown by their rulers into Palestine in order to destroy the nation of the Jews.¹⁸⁰

...I predicted that the Soviets would begin their Middle East campaign with a sweep through the Persian Gulf area into Iran. The recent Russian invasion of Afghanistan was a first step in that direction.¹⁸¹...to utterly destroy the Jewish people.¹⁸²

Attempting to keep pace with the dramatic geo-political changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Lindsey insisted in 1981 and 1994 that his shifting views of Russia, were nevertheless both predicted in the Bible.

1980's Countdown to Armageddon Planet Earth 2000 A.D.

Today, the Soviets are without question the strongest power on the face of the earth. Lets look at recent history to see how the Russians rose to the might predicted for them thousands of years ago.¹⁸³

We see Russia as no longer a world threat, but a regional power with a world-class military - exactly what Ezekiel 38 and 39 predicted it would be.¹⁸⁴

While at the time believing Russia had a preordained destiny to dominate the world, attack Israel and precipitate a nuclear holocaust, in 1980 Lindsey nevertheless berated successive American governments for allowing the Russians to gain this military superiority. He does not explain how on the one hand he believed this to be the fulfilment of biblical prophecy yet 'incomprehensible'.

The United States was far ahead in the nuclear arms race until the end of the 1960's. Then the situation began to change rapidly. The change occurred because of the U.S. leadership's almost unbelievable misreading of the Soviet goals and intentions. In light of the clearly-stated communist goal of world domination and their constant efforts to attain that status, it is incomprehensible to me that America allowed the Russians to take the lead in the arms race. To understand how the U.S. slipped into this perilous position we must review some recent history.¹⁸⁵

Lindsey provides five pages of graphs to show how Russia had by the 1980's gained military superiority over the United States in conventional forces, tactical aircraft, military personnel, combat ships, tanks, artillery, anti-ballistic missiles, interceptor aircraft, strategic bombers and nuclear warheads.¹⁸⁶

Lindsey laments,
Beginning with President Kennedy, each U.S. Administration has grossly misjudged the goals of the Soviet Union and communism in general. Each successive administration has hoped that its own example of fairness and good will toward the world would somehow encourage the communists to abandon their drive toward world domination.¹⁸⁷

Lindsey repeats this inexplicable contradiction, one the one hand criticising the U.S. Government for allowing the Russians to gain superiority, while at the same time claiming this to be their divinely determined destiny.

In carefully researching this chapter, one thing came through with sickening clarity: The foreign policies of the western nations, especially the U.S., have done more to aid the tremendous buildup of Soviet power than has any other single factor... The Soviet Union and its satellites have now reached the position of military superiority and strategic world power to fulfill their predicted dreadful role in history. The pages of Ezekiel's and Daniel's prophecies are beginning to look like today's headlines.¹⁸⁸

With the demise of the Soviet empire, Lindsey's predictions appeared more like 'yesterdays' headlines. Nevertheless, in 1994, despite the fall of the Communist government, Lindsey continued to speculate a possible revival of the Russian threat.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, I criticized Ronald Reagan and George Bush for making foreign policy based on the life and health of one man - Mikhail Gorbachev. It is even more true today that the United States is taking a great gamble - because of its rapid savaging of our whole military-industrial complex - that Boris Yeltsin will prevail and turn Russia permanently away from its expansionist, imperialist dreams. That's a gamble, by the way, that the Bible prophecies hint may lead to our destruction.¹⁸⁹

By 1995, just a year later, Lindsey was now extolling Reagan's foreign policy and denying that it was ever predicted in Scripture that the Soviet Union would gain world domination.

In fact, the Soviet Union was on the verge of dominating the world militarily in the period leading up to 1985... Fortunately, a confident and bold leader, Ronald Reagan, was elected president of the United States and set in place policies which resulted in a series of reversals - militarily and economic - for the Soviet Union. I believe God's providential hand was working behind the scenes because it was never on the cards for the Kremlin to rule the world.¹⁹⁰

With the gradual demise of Russia as a world power, and the disintegration of her communist empire, Lindsey began to switch his emphasis to Islam as the real threat to Israel and world peace.¹⁹¹

It is interesting to observe this transition.

Late Great Planet Earth (1970)
Apocalypse Code (1997)

The Russian force will establish command headquarters on Mount Moriah or the Temple area in Jerusalem. ...he seeks to utterly destroy the Jewish people.¹⁹²

In response to these two deadly threats, the Russian-Muslim force retreats back to Israel and sets up command HQs on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. These forces try to annihilate the Jews as they do this.¹⁹³

1980's Countdown to Armageddon
Planet Earth 2000 A.D. (1994)

Today, the Soviets are without a question the strongest power on the face of the earth... As the Biblical prophets predicted long ago, the Russians now possess a 'splendidly equipped' army. In fact, the Russian military is the most destructive war machine ever assembled... The Soviet Union and its satellites have now reached the position of military superiority and strategic world power to fulfill their predicted dreadful role in history... Today, we are in a life-or-death contest with the totalitarian system of communism. If we cannot build a credible deterrent to the growing Soviet military machine, then we will soon be taken over, and we will cease to exist as a free society...¹⁹⁴

The greatest threat to freedom and world peace today - is Islamic fundamentalism... Tragically, the world's sole remaining superpower - the United States -has responded to this monumental threat by embarking on a suicidal, unilateral demilitarization process of unprecedented speed and recklessness. Like the Scriptures warn, the West is blithely saying 'Peace and safety'... Yet the free world today is facing greater danger than anything since World War II.¹⁹⁵

Throughout his books, but increasingly in the latter editions, Lindsey denigrates Arabs generally and Palestinians, in particular. He appears to show little understanding or compassion for their plight. Instead he offers a novel reinterpretation of the events of 1948.

Although the new Israeli government pleaded with them to stay and fight together for a common homeland, all but a handful crossed over into Jordan to wait for total victory against the Jews.¹⁹⁶ The Palestinians are determined to trouble the world until they repossess what they feel is their land.¹⁹⁷ While it is true that "the Palestinian issue" is a mere mirage, an excuse for hating Jews and Israel and turning the world against them, it is also true that the radical Islamic world will never accept the existence of the Jewish state no matter what concessions it makes toward peace.¹⁹⁸ ...there is no such thing as Palestine.¹⁹⁹ ...the Palestinians who have attempted to usurp control over a city that holds no genuine significance for them and a land they never particularly wanted until the Jews occupied it again.²⁰⁰

Lindsey's antipathy toward Islam, expressed in quite inflammatory remarks, is typical of Christian Zionism generally.

'All Moslems see Israel as their enemy'²⁰¹

The Arab nations are united in their fanatical obsession to destroy Israel.²⁰²

The Arab nations consider it a matter of racial honour to destroy the State of Israel.²⁰³ The Middle East is a powder keg, all right. But its not because of Israeli policies. Islam, with its grand and

global ambitions - not Israel - is the culprit.²⁰⁴ There will be no peace in the Middle East as long as the world entertains the Arab's fanciful visions of dividing and conquering Jerusalem. Peace would only be possible, if, by some miracle, the Arabs realized that their ambitions for military and economic hegemony over Israel were delusional. Don't hold your breath... the Arab world has been successful at framing the debate over the Middle East as a struggle between downtrodden Palestinians and powerful, heavily armed Jews...²⁰⁵ Agreements in the Arab nations don't mean the same thing they mean in the Judeo-Christian world. Islam not only has a track record of re-interpreting, denouncing and reversing settlements, such actions are actually encouraged if they further the cause of Allah.²⁰⁶

Is there anyone who doubts that the Syrians are willing to push the button to launch surface-to-surface missiles carrying chemical warheads into Israeli population centers?... Given what you know about the long history of Islamic jealousy and hatred of the Jews, is it difficult to imagine a decision being made in Baghdad or Tehran to fire a nuclear warhead at Tel Aviv?²⁰⁷

The history of the Middle East and Islam is a landscape of tribal warfare, imperial ambitions and oppression for all non-believers.²⁰⁸

This movement seeks not only to destroy the state of Israel but also the overthrow of the Judeo-Christian culture-the very foundation of our western civilisation... They have, like the Communists, at their philosophic core the sworn duty to "bury us."²⁰⁹

Lindsey claims biblical warrant for the contemporary Arab-Israeli conflict. He believes the Psalmist, for example, predicted that the Palestinians along with the Lebanese and Syrians would attempt but fail to destroy Israel.

Long ago the psalmist predicted the final mad attempt by the confederated Arab armies to destroy the nation of Israel... (Psalm 83:1-8)²¹⁰ In Psalm 83, some 3,000 years ago, God gave a warning of what would happen in the last days... In these verses the Philistia or Philistines are the modern Palestinians. Tyre is modern Lebanon. Assyria is modern Syria. I wanted you to read this passage for yourself because it speaks of a time in which there is a concerted effort to wipe out Israel as a nation... Even then, the Psalmist -under Divine Inspiration-looked to the last days before the Messiah would come to deliver Israel from the children of Ishmael. All the peoples named in those verses make up the various tribes that became known as the Arabs. When you read some of these verses it sounds like modern Radio Tehran, doesn't it? Why? Because this passage of scripture is predicting the modern-day Middle East situation.²¹¹ As the Bible tells us, the dispute over Jerusalem and Israel's borders will never be settled by any peace agreements nor any whiz-bang diplomatic breakthrough.²¹²

Lindsey attributes Armageddon and the destruction of most of the world's population to the influence of Islam over the Arab-Israeli conflict.

All this destruction will be caused by the ancient hatred between Ishmael and Isaac - the smouldering flames of hatred that have existed for 4,000 years - the jealousy of Ishmael toward Isaac - the fact that Ishmael and his descendants have never been willing to accept the blessings that God gave them... they have never been satisfied. They wanted Isaac's blessing... it is what is going to touch off the war that will almost destroy the World.²¹³ Ezekiel's long-predicted invasion sweeps into Israel with the pent-up-fury of four thousand years of hatred that started with Ishmael and was later enshrined by his descendants in the Muslim religion.²¹⁴ This will be the sign that immediately precedes the Russian-led Islamic invasion of Israel.²¹⁵

Lindsey claims his assessment of Middle Eastern politics is not only based upon the bible but also privileged access to 'primary intelligence sources' within the Israeli military. In 1994 he quoted one such source as equating Islam with Nazism,

Stopping the Iranian-Syrian axis and their lead over the Islamic world is the most important issue of this decade. It is even more important than it was in 1939 to stop Adolf Hitler.²¹⁶

Lindsey's dogmatic and provocative views are representative of what Edward Said calls Western cultural imperialism or 'Orientalism' typified by its "crude stereotype imaging of the East."²¹⁷

4.6 The Fall and Rise of the United States

A popular view among Christian Zionists is the belief that God will continue to bless America only as long as she remains an ally of Israel. Lindsey is no exception.

Except for the U.S., Israel has no allies... We are still Israel's friend. But there are strong pressures from within to turn away from Israel. I pray that we do not, for our friendship with the Israelis is one of the reasons we've survived as a nation.²¹⁸

Lindsey finds mention of the United States in the Bible. In the reference to '...the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly into the wilderness...' in Revelation 12:13-17, Lindsey speculates that this describes 'some massive airlift' that will transport escaping Jewish believers from the holocaust of Armageddon to the safety of places like Petra.

Since the eagle is the national symbol of the United States, its possible that the airlift will be made available by aircraft from the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.²¹⁹

Lindsey does not explain why the symbolism of the eagle should be applied to the United States instead of to any one of a number of countries like Germany or the Czech Republic who also include an eagle as part of their national emblem. Nor does he explain why this particular reference to an eagle should be understood as describing modern aircraft and not other passages such as Exodus 19:4, Deuteronomy 32:11-12 or Isaiah 40:31 which also refer to eagles. Such speculative interpretations hardly corroborate Lindsey's claim to hold to a consistent literal hermeneutic.

Despite fulfilling this important biblical role of supporting Israel, Lindsey does not, however, see a hopeful future for the United States. In 1970 he predicted,

The United States will not hold its present position of leadership in the western world; financially, the future leader will be Western Europe. Internal political chaos caused by student rebellion and Communist subversion will begin to erode the economy of our nation. Lack of moral principle by citizens and leaders will so weaken law and order that a state of anarchy will finally result. The military capability of the United States, though it is at present the most powerful in the world, has already been neutralized because no one has the courage to use it decisively. When the economy collapses so will the military.²²⁰

In 1994, Lindsey drew attention to the accuracy of his predictions, made some 24 years earlier, of a moral as well as military decline of the United States. "And this is exactly what I have been expecting and predicting for this country since 1956."²²¹ In the 1980's Lindsey saw further evidence that his prediction had come true. He berated the U.S. Administration for allowing Russia to gain military superiority, describing America as 'a second-class military power.'²²²

Lindsey claimed God wanted the American government to win back the lead in the arms race.

...I believe that the Bible supports building a powerful military force. And the Bible is telling the U.S. To become strong again. A weak military will encourage the Soviet Union to start an all-out war... It is time to use our vast and superior technology to create the world's strongest military power. Only this will stop the Soviet's insane rush toward nuclear war.²²³

Since Lindsey believes most of the world will be destroyed in a predestined nuclear holocaust anyway, he does not explain the point of building yet more weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, he claims that American people must face some stark choices.

So from the standpoint of Biblical prophecy, the U.S. must fade from its place of leadership for the West and its former supreme superpower status. There are several possible fates for the U.S. They include:

A takeover by the communists

Destruction by a surprise Soviet nuclear attack (I don't even like to think about this possibility)

Becoming a dependent of the 10-nation European confederacy

- A far more hopeful fate than any of the above...²²⁴

His fourth option is elaborated under the heading 'The More Important Duty.' Lindsey claims that God has preserved the United States as a 'free country' for four reasons. These include the presence of a large community of 'true believers'; their support for missionaries around the world; their commitment to prayer; and,

The third reason is that the U.S. has stood behind the Jews and the nation of Israel in their times of need. Both here and in the Middle East, we have fought persecution of the Jewish people and their nation, many times when no one else would help. God said to Abraham, the father of all Jews: 'I'll bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you.' This promise was extended to protect all the descendants (sic) of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 12:3 and 27:29). I believe that if the U.S. ever turns its back on Israel, we will no longer exist as a nation. Don't take this lightly, for throughout history the rise and fall of empires can be directly related to how they treated the Jews.²²⁵

By 1995 Lindsey was lamenting American ambivalence toward Israel.

I believe America's fate is tied directly to the way it relates to the nation of Israel. Think of the way America prospered from 1948 through 1967 when its support of the Jewish state was virtually unconditional. Today the United States has joined the worldwide chorus urging Israel to make concession after concession to the Arabs for nothing more than promises...[226](#)

This he attributed to a failure on the part of the American establishment, and president, in particular, to maintain a foreign policy that was unequivocally pro-Israel based on a strategic military alliance against the Communists and Islam.

In these days of rogue Islamic nations acquiring nuclear missile capabilities, such short-sightedness is close to national suicide... We now have had a president of the United States who smoked marijuana but "didn't inhale." The American military is completely demoralized. Its mission has been radically altered from fighting force to "humanitarian" force. And as the defense budget is hacked away mercilessly, America's naive political leadership keeps finding more remote parts of the world in which to commit our confused young troops.[227](#) After Jimmy Carter was elected president in 1976, America took a more strongly pro-Cairo line... Under President Bush, things deteriorated even further... George Bush's administration represented the most anti-Israel U.S. presidency ever. But that was then, and this is now. The current administration and, particularly, the new leadership emerging within the State Department, may make the Bush years look good by comparison.[228](#)

Lindsey has been particularly outspoken in criticising the United States decision to help monitor the Peace Accord by offering the services of the CIA both to the Palestine Authority as well as Israel.

Last week's Middle East peace deal puts the US smack in the middle of a war zone. President Clinton committed the Central Intelligence Agency to a role the CIA was not designed to do. The US promised to use the CIA to openly track Palestinian compliance with the Wye agreement... The use of the CIA in the Middle East is filled with dangerous possibilities for America... And it's the CIA's new role to play umpire. Anybody that's ever been to a baseball game knows what that means. The last thing the US needs is to hear the Arabs begin to chant 'kill the umpire.' Because they won't be throwing soda bottles.[229](#)

Appalled at the involvement of the United States in the peace agreement signed at the White House in 1993, Lindsey insists,

Instead of peace, appeasement will lead to war in the Middle East. But not just war. This time it will lead to catastrophe, to nightmare, to unprecedented bloodshed and human suffering. In other words, it will lead to the Final Battle.[230](#)

Despite the fact that the United States remains the most powerful country in the world, and while Lindsey remains convinced that the apocalypse is imminent, in 1995, he reiterated,

But my gut reaction is that America will continue to decline in power and influence in the coming years. Clearly, America does not appear to play an extraordinary role in the endtimes events. If she did, there would be more scriptural evidence for it.[231](#) I have always believed and stated quite plainly that the fate of America is, to a great extent, determined by how it treats Israel. Why? Because God promised to bless those nations that were a blessing to Israel and curse those that were a curse upon the Jewish state. I won't go so far as to suggest that America has been a curse upon Israel of late, but it has been far from a blessing either... The U.S. has been protected by God because it has been a haven for Israelites and an ally for their survival... Now we are turning away, look for the "Late Great United States... Its understandable why America may be all but irrelevant by the time of the Final Battle."[232](#)

4.7 Europe and the Emergence of a Revived Roman Empire

Like many other dispensationalists before him, Lindsey claims the Bible predicts that the European nations are forming a revived Roman Empire out of which the Anti-Christ will emerge. His writings show a rare ability to shape prophecy to fit the changing size of the European Community. In

1970, quoting Walter Hallstein, former president of the European Economic Community, Lindsey predicted,

We believe that the Common Market and the trend toward unification of Europe may well be the beginning of the ten-nation confederacy predicted by Daniel and the Book of Revelation... 'At about 1980 we may fully expect the great fusion of all economic, military, and political communities together into the United States of Europe.'²³³

In 1973, Lindsey returns to the same theme,

You'll notice that nine countries are already members of the Community... The European union has therefore been temporarily halted at nine members instead of ten. My personal belief is that God Himself stopped the rapid unification because the Revised (sic) Roman Empire was coming together too fast. Once the confederacy includes the ten nations of God's choosing, the group will begin to look for a leader powerful enough to make this new nation the nucleus of a one-world government.²³⁴

In 1980, Lindsey was more assured about his timetable.

When I wrote that in Late Great, the only possible successor to the Roman Empire (in my opinion) was the European Common Market. But a decade ago, that organization had just six member nations, not the 10 the Bible forecast. In 1979, Greece became the 10th member of the Common Market. Recently, the Common Market went beyond its original economic and trade functions and elected a parliament. This move will eventually fulfill the Common Market's long range goal - to unify its members into a single political body.²³⁵

Perhaps foreseeing that more countries might conceivably wish to join the European Community, Lindsey wisely covers that eventuality also.

It is possible that more than 10 nations could at one point be admitted. But in the final stages, it will number 10.²³⁶

In 1994, Lindsey acknowledged that there were now 12 member nations and more likely to join, so, in order that Scripture be fulfilled, Lindsey predicted,

In phase 2 of the fourth kingdom, Rome will be in the form of a 10-nation confederacy. Therefore we can expect two nations to withdraw from the CE or we can expect to see mergers of nations.²³⁷

A year later, Lindsey was more specific about what would likely happen next.

I believe, for instance, that a split is very likely that will cause either Britain and/or Germany to leave the EC. Germany could forge a closer relationship with Russia, while Britain may turn toward the United States of America. The Bible is very clear, as we shall see, that this union will be a confederation of ten nations.²³⁸

4.8 The Coming Holocaust: Armageddon Theology in Practice

Most Christian Zionists are dispensationalists and all dispensationalists are premillennialists, holding to a pessimistic view of the future. Lindsey is no exception. Without any hesitation or doubt he insists,

'And look what's happening in the Middle East - ground zero in the endtimes events.... This phoney peace deal in the Middle East thus only ensures that eventually there will be a thermonuclear holocaust in the Middle East... This seems to parallel predictions in Revelation and elsewhere almost to a T. Mark my words. It will happen.'²³⁹ Let's talk about World War III... We can almost see the handwriting on the wall... Does this sound like a scenario that could happen in the very near future? Perhaps at almost any minute? You bet it does.²⁴⁰ Want to know what hell on earth will be like?. Hal Lindsey gives us the best glimpse to date... You couldn't get a better picture of what World War III will be like without being bodily transported into the future... This book focuses on a rapidly approaching climactic war - the most brutal, barbaric and destructive conflict ever waged on this planet.²⁴¹

At times Lindsey's description of suffering inherent in this most terrible scenario of a nuclear holocaust is tasteless if not sick.

Man has pretty much exhausted his arsenal. There are few popguns left, but not very much left to pop them. At least four billion people have perished in the first 14 Judgments alone. Now it's God's turn.²⁴² I always get a comical mental image when I read this next verse. In my mind's eye, I see this

confused, cancer ridden, dull eyed, war-weary soldier. He smokes a giant joint and says, "Let the weak say, I am a mighty man"²⁴³

In two of Lindsey's much early books he includes maps showing the various stages of this war of Armageddon. A comparison shows the evolution in Lindsey's thinking given a changing world.

The Late Great Planet Earth (1970)
Israel and the Last Days (1983)

Phase I: Pan Arabic assault & Russian amphibious assault.
Phase II: Russian Confederacy counterattack Middle East into Egypt (Daniel 11:40-42)
Phase III: Russian Confederacy initiates conquest of Africa, attacking to the West and South.
Phase IV: Russian commander hears tidings out of the 'East' (Orient mobilizing) and out of the 'North' (Roman confederacy mobilizing) and regroups his troops. (Daniel 11:43-45)
Phase V: Russian army returns to Israel from Egypt and is destroyed there.²⁴⁴
Map 1: King of the South. Pan-Arabic Armies Attack Israel (Daniel 11:40).
Map 2: King of the North. The Soviet Union Launches an All-Out Invasion. (Daniel 11:40-45)
Phases 1 & 2: Soviets and their allies launch massive invasion from land, sea and air.
Phase 3: Soviets launch lightning attack on Strait of Hormuz from Afghanistan to close off oil from Persian Gulf.
Phase 4. Soviet navy makes large amphibious invasion. Hits hard and lands at Haifa, gateway to the Valley of Armageddon. Also lands on shores of Egypt.
Soviet commander moves rapidly through Israel on his way to Egypt and prepares to take Africa (See Daniel 11:42-44.)
Map 3: Armies of the East and West. China and Ten Nations of Europe Counterattack (Revelation 16:12, Daniel 11:44)... The Soviets are totally destroyed.
Map 4: The Messiah Comes. Blood Shall Stand to the Horses Bridles (Revelation 14:19-20).²⁴⁵
Despite the peace-process, in 1995, Lindsey maintained a predictably pessimistic stance regarding the future.
...the Middle East is more unstable and more prone to war than any time in modern history. Its literally on the brink of a catastrophic nuclear war. And the next time, its not going to be a regional, self-contained conflict. It will touch every part of the globe.²⁴⁶

4.8.1 The Motivation for the War of Armageddon

At various times Lindsey has speculated as to the causes of the war of Armageddon. To justify the conviction that four great super-powers, a revived Roman Empire, a Russian, an African and the Chinese will all wish to occupy Palestine, Lindsey initially speculated that Israel would become the wealthiest and most desirable territory on earth.

The prophetic indication is that Israel will become one of the most prosperous nations on earth during the reign of the Antichrist... Israel will become a cultural, religious and economic world center, especially at Jerusalem. The value of the mineral deposits in the Dead Sea alone have been estimated at one trillion, two hundred and seventy billion dollars. This is more than the combined wealth of France, England, and the United States.²⁴⁷

Together with her strategic significance as a bridgehead between Africa, Asia and Europe, Lindsey argues, based on his interpretation of Ezekiel, that the Russians will invade Israel to gain control of this great material wealth.²⁴⁸

In 1983, Lindsey began to speculate about an alternative religious reason for the war of Armageddon.

The dispute to trigger the war of Armageddon will arise between the Arabs and Israelis over the Temple Mount and Old Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2-3), the most contested and strategic piece of real estate in the world. Even now we are witnessing the escalation of that conflict.²⁴⁹

In 1994, Lindsey developed this religious theory further, describing the Temple Mount as 'The most disputed 35 acres on the planet.'²⁵⁰

He confidently predicted,

Two religions, Judaism and Islam, thus are on a collision course with global and heavenly repercussions... Islam will never accept Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the Jewish state, and

Israel will never agree to give it up. This is the intractable, insoluble crisis that will soon result in the climax of world history.²⁵¹ The whole prophetic scenario is in place. We see the Islamic nations united in mutual hatred of Israel. The dispute has nothing to do with borders or territory. It has to do with the existence of Israel and its claim on Jerusalem.²⁵²

In 1995, Lindsey lay the blame for the failure of the peace process and the coming holocaust squarely with the Moslems.

The peace process continues... But - and this is a big 'but' - any such settlement is doomed to ultimate failure for two basic reasons. First, because it doesn't deal with the principal causes of war between Arabs and Jews, which are rooted in the Muslim religion. Second, because it at the same time, increases the opportunities for war. The Muslim nations know that Israel must have the territory she has held since 1967 to successfully defend herself with conventional weapons. So when Israel is squeezed down to the presently agreed upon borders, the Muslims will once again figure that an all out attack on Israel would have a high probability of victory.²⁵³

4.8.2 The Strategy for the Soviet Occupation of Israel

In the Late Great Planet Earth, Lindsey claimed that Daniel 11 and Ezekiel 38 describe the way in which Russia will attack Israel.

When the Russians invade the Middle East with amphibious and mechanized land forces, they will make a 'blitzkrieg' type of offensive through the area... The current build-up of Russian ships in the Mediterranean serves as another significant sign of the possible nearness of Armageddon.²⁵⁴

Ten years after making his first predictions concerning the role of Russia in the war of Armageddon, Lindsey saw further corroboration.

In the Late Great Planet Earth I predicted that the Soviets would begin their Middle East campaign with a sweep through the Persian Gulf area into Iran. The recent Russian invasion of Afghanistan was a first step in that direction.²⁵⁵ Russia's attack on Afghanistan was its first step into the pages of Ezekiel, chapter 38. It's clear that the Russian strategy is to cut off the supply of Persian Gulf oil to the west and then close all sea lanes leading to that vital area.²⁵⁶ The Russian invasion of Afghanistan has telegraphed the Soviet intention to take over the entire Middle East... This area has now fit precisely into the pattern predicted for it. All that remains is for the Russians to make their predicted move.²⁵⁷ When we apply this prophecy to modern times, it becomes obvious that the Soviets will use their recent conquest of Afghanistan as a springboard to overthrow Iran and gain control of the Persian Gulf area.²⁵⁸

Although apparently obvious to Lindsey, the Soviet military had another agenda and were forced ignominiously to pull out of Afghanistan. In 1990 when asked whether perhaps the Gulf War instead perhaps signalled the end of history, Lindsey claimed rather more evasively,

I've never named a day or time, but I can tell you this: Prophecy is on fast forward. I do believe we live in the generation that will see Armageddon.²⁵⁹

Then in early 1991 Lindsey again insisted the war against Iraq was 'setting the stage for the last, climactic war.'²⁶⁰

By 1995, however, the Islamic threat to destroy Israel would come, Lindsey now predicted, from Iran.

In Tehran, the new leader of the Islamic confederation is determined to do Allah's will and destroy Israel and thereby prove to the world that its creation was merely a historical anomaly. Here's the plan: Iran's Operation Grand Design includes a a (sic) strategic amphibious invasion in a chemical weapons environment. The first step is clearly the overthrow of the house of Saud. By taking out Saudi Arabia, the Iran-Syria alliance would remove the vital Western military base, control the Islamic holy places and deprive the West of its supply of oil. According to intelligence sources, the plan then calls for an all-out airborne chemical and nuclear assault on the state of Israel. Such draconian plans become all the more achievable as Israel's borders shrink. That's the policy America is promoting today for Israel.²⁶¹

4.8.3 The Samson Option: Israel's Response to the Coming Holocaust

Following the war of 1973, Lindsey described a conversation with one of Israel's 'most brilliant and aggressive generals.'²⁶²

At Masada, all Israel's graduating military officers swear allegiance to the State, promising as part of a solemn oath that 'Masada shall never fall again.' Lindsey claims this 'Masada Complex' has

now been superseded by a more aggressive retaliatory stance known as the 'Samson Complex'.

A hint of Israel's new outlook was revealed just after the 1973 war. Time magazine quoted a conversation between General Moshe Dayan, then chief of Israel's defense, and the late Prime Minister Golda Meir. The conversation reportedly took place when Israel's defences were being overwhelmed both in the Sinai and in the Golan Heights. 'The Third Temple (a term for modern Israel) is falling,' Dayan reportedly told his prime minister. 'Arm the doomsday weapon.'... Anyone who understands the history of the Jewish people knows what the Israelis would do if they found themselves about to fall to their Arab enemies... I'm sure that if Israel saw its own destruction near it would use whatever was needed to bomb key Arab cities right off the map. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if Israel launched an attack on Russia as well, since the Soviets have armed and goaded Israel's Arab enemies. Remember, Israel has the capability of producing nuclear weapons, and its pilots are legends for their skill and daring. If the world were to stand by and allow another holocaust to occur, then, like Samson of old, Israel would surely take its enemies along to mutual destruction.²⁶³

In 1994, Lindsey was even more dogmatic. He anticipated that the consequence of the peace process would require Israel to relinquish more strategic territory in the Occupied Territories and the Golan. The consequences of this for Lindsey were dire.

Soon will come the time when Israel has no alternative but to use all or part of its nuclear arsenal - conservatively estimated at some 200 warheads. This doesn't even count its neutron bombs.²⁶⁴

A year later Lindsey claimed to have had access to Israeli military intelligence reports showing that the "Samson Option" was now operative.

Instead of just Jewish corpses, there would be millions of Arab corpses. The option is to launch an all-out nuclear attack on all the Arab capitals. I have seen and read the "Samson Option" a special paper that outlines a military doctrine now in force. If Israel is being overrun, they will use the nuclear option. Like Samson, they may go down, but so will all their enemies. And that's just a preview of how terrible things will be in the Final Battle.²⁶⁵

4.8.4 The Extent of the Final Holocaust

Lindsey describes in graphic detail what this war will be like. In his earliest writings, he predicted that there would be a Soviet invasion if Israel.

The Russian force will establish command headquarters on Mount Moriah or the Temple area in Jerusalem. Daniel pointed this out when he said: 'And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the seas [Dead Sea and Mediterranean Sea] and the glorious holy mount Zion; yet he shall come to his end with none to help him' (Daniel 11:45 Amplified).²⁶⁶ However, Russia and her confederates will be destroyed completely by an act that Israel will acknowledge as being from their God. This act will bring many in Israel to believe in their true Messiah (Ezekiel 38:15ff.). The attack upon the Russian confederacy and the resulting conflict will escalate into the last war of the world, involving all nations.²⁶⁷ The armies of all nations will be gathered in the area of Israel, especially around Jerusalem. Think of it: at least 200 million soldiers from the Orient, with millions more from the forces of the West... Messiah Jesus will first strike those who have ravaged His city, Jerusalem. Then he will strike the armies amassed in the Valley of Meggido. No wonder blood will stand to the horses' bridles for a distance of two hundred miles from Jerusalem! (Revelation 14:20). Its grizzly to think about such carnage, but just to check all this out I measured from the point where the Valley of Armageddon sloped down to the Jordan Valley. From that point southward down the Valley through the Dead Sea to the port of Elath on the gulf of Aqabah measures approximately two hundred miles. Apparently this whole valley will be filled with war materials, animals, bodies of men, and blood!²⁶⁸ I have traveled the entire length of this valley... It is almost impossible to imagine the valley covered with blood five feet high! Yet that is exactly what God predicts, and He always fulfills His Word. Some have asked, "Wouldn't the blood coagulate and not flow?" Blood exposed to intense radiation doesn't coagulate.²⁶⁹ Because of the intense radiation, blood will not coagulate. It will literally become a sea of blood five feet deep.²⁷⁰

The topography between Megiddo and Eilat would make such a vision difficult. Megiddo is approximately 50 metres above sea level while Jerusalem is over 800 metres above sea level. Most of the Jordan Valley, however, is 300 metres below sea level while the region around Eilat rises to around 70 metres above sea level. Without major geological changes, Lindsey's vision cannot be accomplished. However, based on Revelation 16, he believes, the impending '...full-scale nuclear exchange' will not only radically alter the climate causing a 'global heat wave' but will also change the topography of the world.²⁷¹

While this great battle is raging, every city in the world is going to be levelled. This will take place by what is called an 'earthquake' (Greek seismos), but that's not the only meaning. The word

itself simply means 'a great shaking of the earth.' The earth could be shaken either by a literal earthquake or by a full-scale nuclear exchange of all remaining missiles. I lean towards the nuclear conflict; I believe that when these powers lock forces here, there will be a full-scale exchange of nuclear weapons, and its at this time that 'the cities of the nations fall.' Just think of the great cities of the world - London, Rome, Paris, Berlin, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and Tokyo - all these great cities are going to be judged at that time!²⁷² Apparently the devastation will be so tremendous that not only will all the cities be destroyed, but the land itself will be ripped apart. The coastlines and continents will be changed and all the mountains will be shifted in elevation... This chapter closes with multiplied millions of soldiers slaughtering each other in and around Israel.²⁷³ That means half of the original population of the earth is wiped out within a space of no more than a few years. Perhaps in only a few months (Revelation 6:7, 8 and 9:15)... When all is said and done - after all the battles have been waged and Jesus has conquered Satan... Only a tiny fraction of the world's population will be left. Only a remnant will have survived... Hard to believe, isn't it? ... Think no such thing. This is reality.²⁷⁴

4.8.5 Supernatural Deliverance from the Holocaust

Most dispensationalists are not afraid of the imminent holocaust. Whereas Israel is the 'Fuse of Armageddon'²⁷⁵

Christians accepting a dispensational eschatology will, Lindsey insists, be safely raptured to heaven just before the tribulation of Armageddon begins. He depicts this event seen from the perspective of the non-Christian left behind,

There I was driving down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went crazy... cars going in all directions... and not one of them had a driver. I mean it was wild. I think we've got an invasion from outer space.²⁷⁶

While Lindsey is confident that Christians will escape the holocaust and witness the events from heaven he seems less certain concerning the fate of the Jews. His writings offer a variety of perspectives, some more hopeful than others. In *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), Lindsey taught,

...the great catastrophic events which are to happen to this nation during 'the tribulation' are primarily designed to shock the people into believing in their true Messiah (Ezekiel 38; 39)... According to Zechariah, terrible fighting will center around the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2,3; 14:1,2)... In a battle line which will extend throughout Israel with the vortex centred at the Valley of Megiddo... Zechariah predicts that one-third of the Jews alive during this period will be converted to Christ and miraculously preserved.²⁷⁷

In *There's a New World Coming* (1973), Lindsey claimed God will supernaturally deliver Messianic Jews who come to believe in Jesus during the tribulation. The fate of those who do not believe is left unclear but presumably bleak given the carnage he envisages. Based on his reading of Revelation 7:4-8 Lindsey insists,

The fact that God redeems 144,000 literal Jews and ordains them His evangelists not only makes good sense but fits in with the counsel of God... So I say loud and clear: the 144,000 described here are not Jehovah Witnesses, or Mormon elders, or some symbol of the Church; they are Jews, Jews, Jews!²⁷⁸ This chapter closes with multiplied millions of soldiers slaughtering each other in and around Israel.²⁷⁹

In *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon* (1980), Lindsey is more hopeful for Israelis generally.

The God of Israel has sworn in the prophecies that He will not forsake the Israelis, nor let them be destroyed.²⁸⁰

By 1983, in *Israel and the Last Days*, Lindsey is able to reassure Jews that during the tribulation, despite being at the 'vortex' of a world war involving hundreds of millions of soldiers and despite enduring nuclear as well as conventional attacks from Russia, Europe and China,

In one of the most incredible miracles of all time, Israel will be converted to faith in her true Messiah and then miraculously protected... (Zechariah 12:8,9). As promised, God will strengthen the Israelis to fight with a ferocity never seen before on this earth. He will also supernaturally protect them from being annihilated.²⁸¹

In 1994, Lindsey had returned to a more pessimistic forecast.

...only a tiny fraction of the world's population will be left. Only a remnant will have survived. Many of the Jews would have been killed.²⁸²

In *The Final Battle* published in 1995, Lindsey seems to envisage contradictory scenarios for Israel. Under the heading "It Will Take A Miracle To Save Israel-Intelligence Digest", Lindsey was confident,

A miracle is just what Zechariah Chapters 12 through 14 predict and promise will save Israel. God has promised in several passages that their nation will never, ever again be destroyed. All the weapons of the world won't overturn that promise. But Israel is in for a very rough time. The Jewish state will be brought to the brink of destruction.²⁸³

In a later chapter, however, he predicts in greater detail,

The land of Israel and the surrounding area will certainly be targeted for nuclear attack. Iran and all the Muslim nations around Israel have already been targeted with Israeli nukes. Russia clearly receives a knockout blow, probably in the form of a retaliatory strike. Russia's Eastern European allies would also likely suffer the same fate. All of Europe, the seat of power of the Antichrist, would surely be a nuclear battlefield, as would the United States... Zechariah gives an unusual, detailed account of how hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the Israel battle zone will die. Their flesh will be consumed from their bones, their eyes from their sockets, and their tongues from their mouths while they stand on their feet (Zechariah 14:12). This is exactly the sort of thing that happens from the intense radiation of a neutron type bomb... But God's power is certainly stronger than any nuclear bomb... We do know God will supernaturally strengthen and protect the believing Israelites so that they will survive the worst holocaust the world will ever see. Amen. But believe it or not, there's more to this story. The world is not over. Contrary to popular belief, the Final Battle is not the end of the world.²⁸⁴

Lindsey neglects to explain how this will be biologically or ecologically possible, nor how the 144,000 Jewish evangelists will have any ministry to perform in a post-nuclear holocaust world where the combined populations of America, Russia, China, Europe and the Middle East have been annihilated by destructive forces sufficient to modify the world's climate as well as topography. Since "every city in the world will be leveled"²⁸⁵ it is difficult to imagine anyone alive, let alone anyone sane enough to want to listen to "144,000 Hebrew Billy Grahams running round the world"²⁸⁶

4.9 Dating the Second Coming of Christ

One reason other Dispensational writers have perhaps avoided quoting Lindsey or been reluctant to identify with his views, may be because of his tendency to set the date for Christ's return. Lindsey was not the first to do so. In 1828, one of the founders of what became dispensationalism, Edward Irving, set an example others have eagerly followed.

I conclude, therefore, that the last days... will begin to run from the time of God's appearing for his ancient people, and gathering them together to the work of destroying all Antichristian nations, of evangelising the world, and of governing it during the Millennium... The times and fulness of the times, so often mentioned in the New Testament, I consider as referring to the great period numbered by times... Now if this reasoning be correct, as there can be little doubt that the one thousand two hundred and sixty days concluded in the year 1792, and the thirty additional days in the year 1823, we are already entered upon the last days, and the ordinary life of a man will carry many of us to the end of them. If this be so, it gives to the subject with which we have introduced this year's ministry a very great importance indeed.²⁸⁷

Lindsey has exploited that same escapist fear throughout his writings. On the back cover of the American edition of *The 1980's Countdown to Armageddon*, for instance, is the assertion, 'We are the generation that will see the end times ...and the return of Jesus.'²⁸⁸ The British edition is more circumspect claiming enigmatically, 'We are the generation the prophets were talking about...'²⁸⁹

In 1994, Lindsey was still insisting,

It is clear that the Bible can't be talking about any other time in history but today. No man knows the day or hour this dramatic climax is going to occur. But there can be little doubt that this is the generation. It could start tomorrow.²⁹⁰

Lindsey's dogmatism concerning the imminent return of Christ is largely based on his interpretation of the 'signs' given in Matthew 24 and the meaning of the phrase 'this generation.'

4.9.1 This Generation

In his first book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Lindsey interprets Matthew 24 as referring to the

events that have occurred since the State of Israel was founded in 1948. Lindsey calculates,

Jesus said that this would indicate that He was 'at the door,' ready to return. Then He said, 'Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place' (Matthew 24:34 NASB). What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs-chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that this is so.²⁹¹

Lindsey does not elaborate on who these scholars are but implicitly set 1988 as the date by which Jesus would return. In his later work, 'The 1980's Countdown to Armageddon', published in 1980, Lindsey continued to speculate that the tribulation would occur before 1990. 'The decade of the 1980's could very well be the last decade as we know it.' ²⁹² Many of his contemporary dispensationalists similarly placed great emphasis on 1988.²⁹³

By 1994, while persisting in his belief that Jesus meant this present generation, Lindsey had begun to prevaricate and lengthen a 'biblical generation' since Jesus had not returned by 1988 as he had confidently predicted. Based on his revised calculations Lindsey claimed Jesus would return some time between now and 2067.

Jesus promised us that the generation that witnessed the restoration of the Jewish people to their homeland would not pass until 'all these things' - including his return to Earth - would be done. The Jewish people declared the rebirth of their nation in 1948. They recaptured Jerusalem in 1967. A biblical generation is somewhere between 40 to 100 years, depending on whether you take the example from Abraham's day or from the discipline of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. In either case, you do the arithmetic, folks. No matter how you cut it, there's not much time left.²⁹⁴ I also said that 'if' a generation was 40 years and 'if' the generation of the 'fig tree' (Matthew 24:32-34) started with the foundation of the State of Israel, then Jesus 'might come back by 1988.' But I put a lot of ifs and maybes in because I knew that no one could be absolutely certain.²⁹⁵ Many biblical scholars have pointed out the fact that a generation in the Bible is generally regarded as 40 years. Some people point out that 40 years has already passed since the rebirth of Israel and Jesus has not returned. Well folks, we simply don't know for certain how long a biblical generation is. In addition, we're not certain when that final countdown began. Did it begin in 1948 when Israel was reborn? Or could it have begun in 1967 when Jerusalem, the apple of God's eye, was recaptured and reunified under Jewish control? We simply don't know and that is the way God wants it.²⁹⁶

The failure of Lindsey's published timetable led him to reappraise the critical 'sign' upon which his chronology was based.

My recent study of Daniel 9:24-27 has convinced me that the capture of Jerusalem in 1967 may be a more prophetically significant event than the rebirth of the nation. Think of it. In June of that year, the Jews recaptured Jerusalem and re-established a lasting sovereignty over it for the first time since the Babylonian destruction in the 6th Century B.C.²⁹⁷

In The Final Battle, Lindsey also implied a date before 2024 A.D was now feasible,

But note carefully, Jesus said the generation would not "pass away until all was fulfilled." In other words, many who saw the signs begin to come together would not die before their climactic fulfillment. Life expectancy today in the U.S. is about 76 years²⁹⁸

In Lindsey's latest work, Planet Earth, The Final Chapter, with the benefit of hindsight, he now claims, the period between 1948 and 1967 does not count in calculating the time of the Lord's return.

...the prophetic time-clock stalled in 1948, and did not resume again until the pivotal events on June 6, 1967, when for the first time in 2500 years, Jews once again had sovereign control of Jerusalem and have maintained it.²⁹⁹

While Lindsey places great emphasis on holding to a 'literal' hermeneutic, on passages such as this, he appears to accept an interpretation that is far from literal. When Jesus refers to 'this generation' he uses the same language as in Matthew 16:28, where he predicts, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." In both cases most commentators believe Jesus is referring to those alive at that time, rather than a generation living 2000 years or more later.³⁰⁰

4.9.2 The Anti-Christ is Alive and Well

Integral with the 'end times' scenario Lindsey envisages, is the conviction that the Antichrist is alive and about to be revealed. Beginning in 1970, Lindsey has repeatedly insisted that this individual

is alive today.

We believe that the dramatic elements which are occurring in the world today are setting the stage for this magnetic, diabolical Future Fuehrer to make his entrance.³⁰¹

As I wrote 10 years ago in *The Late Great Planet Earth*, I believe this man is alive today-alive and waiting to come forth... I believe this leader is alive somewhere in Europe; perhaps he is already a member of the EEC parliament.³⁰² He will immediately rise to prominence in the EEC and from that post he will offer the world amazing solutions to all its complex and terrifying problems. Because of his superhuman powers and his solutions to the world's conflicts, the anti-Christ will be chosen to lead the EEC.³⁰³ Heading up what will evolve into a 10-nation confederacy will be a man of such magnetism and power that he will become the greatest dictator the world has ever known... And he is alive today. There is a potential dictator waiting in the wings somewhere in Europe who will make Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin look like choir boys. Right now he is preparing to take his throne, inflaming his soul with visions of what he will be able to do for mankind with his grand schemes and revolutionary ideas... Is alive and well on planet Earth... Lets go meet him.³⁰⁴

Today, the man who will command this budding economic and military colossus - this phony savior of Jerusalem - is alive and well somewhere in Europe. The man who will make a pact with Satan for a few months of glory in this world is planning his ascendancy.

Despite promising in 1995, 'I will show you who will be the key players in this endtimes drama,'³⁰⁵

and for thirty years, making detailed predictions about this 'someone', supposedly alive today, Lindsey is still unable to identify the anti-Christ.

4.9.3 Signs of the Times

Consistently and repeatedly, Lindsey draws attention to 'signs' which he believes indicate that the return of Jesus is very near. In this respect, Lindsey is simply reiterating a conviction held by earlier dispensationalists. John Walvoord, a member of the faculty at Dallas Theological Seminary while Lindsey was a student, held very similar views to Lindsey some twenty years earlier.

John Walvoord (1962)
Hal Lindsey (1980 & 1994)

In the present world scene there are many indications pointing to the conclusion that the end of the age may soon be upon us... In this generation.

Never before in the history of the world has there been a confluence of major evidences of preparation for the end.³⁰⁶

We are the generation he was talking about. I say this because, unmistakably, for the first time in history, all the signs are coming together at an accelerating rate.³⁰⁷ ...never before in the history of the planet have events and conditions so coincided as to set the stage for this history-stopping event.³⁰⁸

In 1983 Lindsey was even more emphatic.

All the predicted signs are before us. No other generation has ever witnessed the simultaneous coming together of these prophetic events. It is because of this that I believe we are the generation that will see the Lord Jesus' return. World events viewed through the grid of Bible prophecy indicate that we are rapidly moving toward the end of history as we know it.³⁰⁹

Lindsey goes to great lengths to show that the 'signs' of his imminent return predicted by Jesus, such as wars, earthquakes, famines, etc. are increasing dramatically.

There have been many great earthquakes throughout history, but, according to surprisingly well-kept records, in the past they did not occur very frequently. The 20th Century, however, has experienced an unprecedented increase in the frequency of these calamities. In fact, the number of earthquakes per decade has roughly doubled in each of the ten year periods since 1950... The 1970's experienced the largest increase in the number of killer quakes known in history.³¹⁰

Whilst Lindsey lists the major earthquakes which occurred in the 1970's, he offers no evidence to substantiate his assertion that such disturbances are increasing exponentially. In 1994 he quoted from a U.S. Geological Survey, which allegedly shows the number of earthquakes increasing.³¹¹ Others remain unconvinced and quote seismologists to that effect.³¹² Lindsey's apocalyptic claim that in 1982, the so-called 'Jupiter Effect' would cause 'history's greatest outbreak of earthquakes' did not materialise.³¹³

While other contemporary dispensationalists like Thomas Ice could insist, '...there are no signs relating to the rapture. The fruit of date setting... has not been gathered from the root called dispensationalism,'³¹⁴

Lindsey and others have proved that date-setting sells books.³¹⁵ So in a foreword to *The Coming Russian Invasion of Israel*, by Thomas McCall and Zola Levitt, Lindsey claims, 'I feel this book is a must for everyone who wants to know where we are on God's time-table.'³¹⁶

In 1994, with an eye on the Middle East, Lindsey was still insisting, 'It is clear that the Bible can't be talking about any other time in history but today. No man knows the day or hour this dramatic climax is going to occur. But there can be little doubt that this is the generation. It could start tomorrow. We are on the brink of some startling prophetic development. Never before has the world stage been set for the climax of history as it is today. Pray for God's intervention. The 'times of the Gentiles' are rapidly drawing to a close.'³¹⁷

In describing the Apostle John's description of Armageddon, Lindsey reminds his readers in 1994, '...of this endtimes battle, which I believe is coming in this decade or the next.'³¹⁸

Lindsey appears able to hold in tension his declared agnosticism over the precise timing of the Lord's return with the ability to predict the decade, always just a few years hence. Since 1970, as each decade has passed, Lindsey has offered with each new book another 'imminent' prediction when the old one has been superceded. For example, he reflects,

I remember saying to myself a little over 13 years ago while writing the book, *The 1980s: Countdown to Armageddon*, that if the Lord doesn't come by the mid 1990s, we'll be able to see the end more clearly from there. And now that we're here, wow, can we see it.³¹⁹

In an 'Afterword' Lindsey looked on toward the celebrations being planned for the 31st December 1999.

Just for the record: I'm not planning to attend. In fact looking at the state of the world today, I wouldn't make any long-term earthly plans. We may be caught up to meet Christ in the clouds, between now and then - just as I described in an earlier chapter. Could I be wrong? Of course. The rapture may not occur between now and the year 2000. But never before in the history of the planet have events and conditions so coincided as to set the stage for this history-stopping event... I want to spend the final pages of this book discussing what I expect to see happen in the hours and minutes we have left.³²⁰

In the same work, Lindsey made his most provocative claim, repeated word for word a year later in 1995, concerning the imminent return of Christ.

Folks, the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, can already be heard as He approaches the doors of heaven to return.³²¹

5. Lindseyism and Charges of Anti-Semitism

Assured of the veracity of his own interpretation of Biblical prophecy and contemporary events, like Darby, Lindsey has sought to inoculate his followers from the criticisms levelled against him.³²²

Peter... even warned that in 'the latter times' men posing as religious leaders would rise from within the Church and deny, even ridicule, the prophetic word (II Peter 2:1-3; 3:1-18). If you pass this book around to many ministers you'll find how true this prediction has become.³²³ No self-respecting

scholar who looks at the world conditions and the accelerating decline in Christian influence today is a 'postmillennialist.'³²⁴ I've said it before and I will no doubt say it again: When the Rapture occurs, many churches will not have to find a new pastor. That's how badly infected the modern church is with deceiving spirits.³²⁵

Given his controversial reading of Scripture, Lindsey has attracted criticism particularly from postmillennialists³²⁶ as well as from fellow dispensationalists who distance themselves from what they term the popular 'apocalypticism' of 'Lindseyism'.³²⁷

It's obvious that Lindsey does not represent 'orthodox' dispensationalism. But Lindsey's brand of date-setting dispensationalism is the prevailing system. If Lindsey had not intimated at dates, and used the regathering of unbelieving ethnic Israel to their land as the basis for his speculations, The Late Great Planet Earth would not have been an eschatological novelty. It was the predictions that sold the books. Therefore, many who call themselves dispensationalists are really 'Lindseyite dispensationalists.'³²⁸

Lindsey's most controversial book is probably Road to Holocaust. In it, like Darby, he makes eschatology a test of orthodoxy.³²⁹

He accuses those who refuse to accept dispensationalism's distinction between the Church and Israel of actually encouraging anti-Semitism since they deny any future role for the State of Israel within the purposes of God.

...the same error that founded the legacy of contempt for the Jews and ultimately led to the Holocaust of Nazi Germany.³³⁰ The purpose of this book is to warn about a rapidly expanding new movement in the Church that is subtly introducing the same errors that eventually and inevitably led to centuries of atrocities against the Jews and culminated in the Holocaust of the Third Reich... They are setting up a philosophical system that will result in anti-Semitism.³³¹ As I wrote in my book. The Road to Holocaust, the allegorizing of prophetic passages and the unconditional covenants made to the believing Jewish remnant, in which future national blessings are guaranteed to them, open the door to Christian anti-Jewish attitudes.³³²

Given that Lindsey's form of pre-tribulational dispensationalism with its rigid distinction between Israel and the Church, was unheard of prior to 1830, he is essentially condemning all Christians before then as well as those since who hold contrary views of the relationship of Israel to the Church. Lindsey is less than charitable toward those affirming a covenantal post-millennial eschatology.

Man, this is one of the things that's dangerous. This is the most anti-Semitic movement I've seen since Adolf Hitler.³³³

Critics argue that it is actually Lindsey who is perpetuating the legacy of racism and anti-Semitism.

The ongoing attempt to identify the real Antichrist is still spawning racism, polarization, and conflict. In a chapter of The Late Great Planet Earth entitled 'The Yellow Peril,' Lindsey describes how 'vast hordes of the Orient' are likely to threaten our future... I am convinced that the relentless and impassioned search for the Antichrist through the years has produced a tragic amount of racism, religious hatred, and violence. It both nourishes and feeds off the illusion that the world can best be understood in simple black-and-white apocalyptic terms - the powers of Antichrist verses the powers of God.³³⁴

Harold Brown traces the link between Marcion's heretical view of a radical discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments and anti-Semitism.

One consequence of Marcion's rejection of the Old Testament was hostility to the Jews. Both Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism which were much more critical of Old Testament Law than the Reformed tradition are also more inclined to anti-Semitism. The rejection of the authenticity and authority of the Old Testament by nineteenth-century liberalism was followed by virulent anti-Semitism, especially in Germany.³³⁵

Following traditional dispensationalism, Lindsey does not believe the moral law enshrined in the Ten Commandments has any abiding relevance for Christians.

The Law of Moses was specifically given only to the Nation of Israel. More than 150,000 of the first believers in Jesus as Messiah were all Israelites. When the early Jewish believers first had to deal with the problem of Gentile converts, many were still confused about the purpose of the Law. They

tried to put the Gentiles under the Mosaic Law... Israel's failure under the Law serves as an historical lesson to all of us today that religion of all kinds blinds us to the truth.³³⁶

Brown's observations concerning the environment which gave rise to anti-Semitism could therefore justifiably apply to dispensationalists such as Darby, Scofield³³⁷ and Lindsey who deny the validity of the Old Testament moral law, such as the prohibition to commit murder, on the Gentiles.

Dispensationalism creates an environment for any despot to do what he wants, even murder, since Jewish law, the Old Testament was never intended for the Gentile nations. Hitler murdered millions of Jews, but what law would Hal Lindsey use to judge him? The Ten Commandments? But that's Jewish law.³³⁸

Donald Grey Barnhouse, another leading dispensationalist insisted, however,

It was a tragic hour when the reformation churches wrote the Ten Commandments into their creeds and catechisms and sought to bring Gentile believers into bondage to Jewish law, which was never intended either for the Gentile nations or for the church.³³⁹

Without the law of God, protection against anti-Semitism and other forms of racism are removed. It is ironic that Lindsey should charge his critics with anti-Semitism while he believes Israel will make a 'Treaty with Hell',³⁴⁰ that two-thirds of all Jews will die in the battle of Armageddon, that the 200 mile valley from the Sea of Galilee to Eilat will flow with blood several feet deep,³⁴¹ and with,

...death on a massive scale... One-fourth of the world's population will be destroyed within a matter of days... Nearly one billion people.³⁴²

Given his apocalyptic dispensational eschatology in which the 'church age' will fail just like the previous five, Lindsey is intensely pessimistic about the Middle East peace process and any possibility of co-existence between Jews and Arabs. He insists,

It is this kind of fierce pride and smoldering hatred against Israel that will keep the Middle East a dangerous trouble spot. No Arab leader could hope to remain in power if he were willing to make concessions in negotiating with Israel.³⁴³

Demar suggests a reason why Lindsey should charge his critics with anti-Semitism.

The futuristic and unwarranted literalistic interpretation of these passages forces the dispensationalist to predict the greatest holocaust the world has ever seen, all in the name of dispensational premillennialism! Is it any wonder that Hal Lindsey wants to paint non-dispensational premillennialist (sic) as holocaust-orientated? He must cover up the inevitable holocaust predicted by dispensationalism.³⁴⁴

Perceptive Jews are not surprisingly cynical of Christian Zionist support for the State of Israel when it is realised that they largely share Lindsey's dispensational views on the fate of the Jews, while Christians are safely 'raptured' to heaven to escape the mother of all holocausts.

6. A Summary and Critique of Hal Lindsey's Christian Zionism

Lindsey's particular kind of reading of history, coloured by a literal exegesis of highly selective biblical scriptures, is essentially polarised, dualistic, racist and confrontational. He justifies the continued demonisation of Russia, China, Islam and the Arab nations; he encourages the continued military and economic funding of Israel by the United States; he urges Israelis to resist negotiating land for peace and instead, maintain their apartheid policies, settling and incorporating the Occupied Territories within the State of Israel; and he incites fundamentalist groups committed to destroying the Dome of the Rock and rebuilding the Jewish Temple. In so doing Lindsey identifies unconditionally with the political as well as religious far right both in the United States as well as in Israel. Ironically, as the 'father' of 'armageddon theology' his attempts to defend Israel and to refute anti-Semitism may actually be leading to the very holocaust he abhors but repeatedly predicts.

Revised 11 April 1999

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- 2 Hal Lindsey, *The Final Battle* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1995), back cover.
- 3 Hal Lindsey, *The Apocalypse Code* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1997), back cover.
- 4 Lindsey, 1980's., p. 179
- 5 Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970), p. 16.
- 6 Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970); *Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1973); *There's A New World Coming, A Prophetic Odyssey* (Santa Ana, California, Vision House, 1973); *The Liberation of Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1974); *The World's Final Hour: Evacuation or Extinction?* (1976); *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon* (New York, Bantam, 1981); *The Promise* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1982); *The Rapture: Truth or Consequences* (New York, Bantam, 1983); *The Terminal Generation* (New York, Bantam, 1983); *A Prophetic Walk Through the Holy Land* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1983); *Israel and the Last Days* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1983); *Combat Faith* (1986); *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, Bantam, 1989); *Planet Earth-2000 A.D.* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1994); *The Final Battle* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1995); *Planet Earth-2000 A.D. Rev. Edn.* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1996); *Amazing Grace* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1996); *Blood Moon* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1996); *The Apocalypse Code* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1997); *Planet Earth: The Final Chapter* (Beverly Hills, California, Western Front, 1998); *International Intelligence Briefing* (Palos Verdes, California, HLM), monthly journal.
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- 8 For more information see <http://www.iib-report.com/>
- 9 <http://www.iib-report.com/>
- 10 Lindsey, *Road.*, p. 195. For other statistics see George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1991) p. 77, and Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, North Carolina Press, 1993), p. 311. See also Gary Friesen, 'A Return Visit,' *Moody Monthly* (May 1988), p. 30; Lindsey's latest publisher, Western Front, is more conservative referring to 'a dozen books with combined world sales of more than 35 million.' Lindsey, *The Final Battle* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1995), p. xiii & back cover.
- 11 National & International Religion Report (22 October 1990), p. 1, cited in Gary Demar, *Last Days Madness, Obsession of the Modern Church* (Atlanta, Georgia, American Vision, 1997), p. 196.
- 12 J. N. Darby, "Evidence from Scripture for the passing away of the present dispensations' *Collected Writings., Prophetic I, Vol II.* p. 108.
- 13 C. I. Scofield, *What do the Prophets Say?* (Philadelphia, The Sunday School Times Co, 1918), pp. 18-19.
- 14 Lindsey, *Planet.*, Rev. Edn. p. 3
- 15 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. xiii
- 16 Lindsey, *Apocalypse.*, back cover.
- 17 Lindsey, *Planet Earth The Final Chapter*, back cover.
- 18 Lindsey, *Apocalypse.*, p. 37. Compare with Darby, *Collected Writings., Prophetic I, Vol. II.* pp. 6-7, 108.
- 19 Lindsey, *Late.*, p. 184.
- 20 Lindsey, *Planet.*, pp. 15-16.
- 21 Lindsey, 1980's., p. 7.
- 22 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 3.
- 23 Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970); *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon* (New York, Bantam, 1981); *Planet Earth-2000 A.D.* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1994); *Earth-2000 A.D. Rev. Edn.* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1996); *Planet Earth: The Final Chapter* (Beverly Hills, California, Western Front, 1998).
- 24 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 171.
- 25 Lindsey, *Planet.*, pp. 162, 164.
- 26 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 156.
- 27 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 160.
- 28 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 149.
- 29 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 310.
- 30 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 232.
- 31 Lindsey, *Planet.*, pp. 232, 235.
- 32 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 310.
- 33 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 5.
- 34 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 93.
- 35 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 103.
- 36 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 108.
- 37 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 118.
- 38 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 116.
- 39 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 163.
- 40 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 165.
- 41 Lindsey, *Final.*, pp. 260-261.
- 42 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 116.
- 43 Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 261. In his last book, *Planet Earth, The Final Chapter*, the page numbers in the index do not correspond to the chapters in the book.
- 44 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 32.
- 45 Wagner, *Beyond.*, p. 5.
- 46 Wagner, *Beyond.*, p. 4.
- 47 Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, Bantam, 1989), pp. 7-8.
- 48 Chapter 2. *Early Christian Attitudes Towards the Jews.*
- 49 J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, rev. ed. (San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 69-75.
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- 52 Lindsey, *Israel.*, pp. 32-33. This chapter is reused heavily in *Apocalypse Code*, pp. 30-44.

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- 57 Lindsey, Planet Earth: The Final Chapter, p. 247.
- 58 Lindsey, Apocalypse., pp. 110-111.
- 59 J. N. Darby, 'The Hopes.,' The Collected Writings, Prophetic I, Vol. II, p. 380; C. I. Scofield, Scofield Reference Bible, fn. 1, p. 883.
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- 61 Lindsey, Final., pp. 140, 142.
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- 63 Lindsey, Planet Earth: The Final Chapter, p. 213.
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- 65 Lindsey, Road., p. 176.
- 66 Lindsey, Apocalypse., p. 78.
- 67 Lindsey, Planet Earth, The Final Chapter, pp. 182-183.
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- 82 Van der Waal, Hal., p. 51.
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- 86 Lindsey, Apocalypse., back cover.
- 87 Van der Waal, Hal., p. 54.
- 88 Van der Waal, Hal., p. 55.
- 89 Van der Waal, Hal., p. 53.
- 90 Lindsey, Planet., p. 191.
- 91 Lindsey, Planet., p. 4.
- 92 Lindsey, Planet., back cover; Final., back cover;
- 93 Lindsey, Planet., p. 5. These predictions included the rise of ecumenism, the persecution of Christians, a one-world religion, plans to rebuild the Jewish Temple, European unification, the decline of US influence in the world, Israeli prosperity, papal influence, global catastrophes, and increases in crime, riots, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, etc. Lindsey does not, however, footnote where these predictions were made in The Late Great Planet Earth.
- 94 Lindsey, Final., back cover.
- 95 Hal Lindsey, The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon (New York, Bantam, 1981); Israel and the Last Days (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1983); The Road to Holocaust (New York, Bantam, 1989); The Final Battle (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1995); Planet Earth-2000, Will Man Survive? Rev. Edn. (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1996); The Apocalypse Code (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1997).
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- 99 Lindsey, Late., pp. 96-97.
- 100 Lindsey, Final., front cover.
- 101 Lindsey, Late., p. 66.
- 102 Lindsey, Late., pp. 155, 159.
- 103 Lindsey, Israel., pp. 31-48.
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- 108 Hal Lindsey, International Intelligence Briefing, 29th October 1998. His underlining <http://www.iib-report.com/pages/transcripts/10.29.98/oct29.htm>
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- 110 Lindsey, Planet Earth, The Final Chapter. pp.32-34.
- 111 Lindsey, There's., p. 115
- 112 Lindsey, Road., p. 197.
- 113 Lindsey, 1980's., p. 45.
- 114 Lindsey, Road., p. 127.
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- 123 Lindsey, *Planet*, p. 133.
- 124 Lindsey, *Late*, p. 43.
- 125 Lindsey, 1980's., p. 12.
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- 128 Lindsey, *Road*, p. 180.
- 129 Lindsey, *Late*, p. 53.
- 130 Lindsey, *Israel*, p. 19; Lindsey, 1980's., p. 11.
- 131 Lindsey, *Late*, p. 45.
- 132 Lindsey, *Road*, p. 186.
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- 134 Lindsey, *Late*, p. 48. The idea of Jewish evangelists replacing the Church during the Tribulation offering people a second opportunity to believe in Jesus is also taught in *There's a New World Coming*, pp. 121ff.
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- 137 Lindsey, *Planet Earth: The Final Chapter*, p. 98.
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- 156 Lindsey, *Israel*, p. 165.
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- 165 Lindsey, *There's*, p. 163.
- 166 Lindsey, *Israel*, p. 29.
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- 201 Lindsey, 1980's., p. 45.
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- 204 Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 175.
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Chapter 7

The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem

The Most influential & Controversial Christian Zionism Agency

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1. The Historical Origins of the ICEJ

Of all the Christian Zionist organisations, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) is probably the most influential and controversial. The founding of the International Christian Embassy in 1980 in West Jerusalem near the home of the Israeli Prime Minister, represented the coming of age of Christian Zionism as a high profile, politically astute, international movement. Ironically, it had originally been the home of the family of Dr Edward Said, the distinguished Palestinian-American Anglican academic, before being confiscated in 1948 when it was given to the Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, then the Chilean embassy before becoming the home of the ICEJ. This itself is a paradigm of the impact Christian Zionists such as the ICEJ have had upon the indigenous Palestinian people and Christian community, in particular.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was formally opened in 1980 by the Jerusalem based committee of the thousand pilgrims who came to the first international Feast of Tabernacles celebration.¹

The timing was actually precipitated by the co-ordinated withdrawal of the last few Latin American embassies based in Jerusalem in protest at Israel's continued occupation of East Jerusalem now 'legitimised' by the passing of the Jerusalem Bill by the Knesset in 1980, in which the Jews declared Jerusalem their undivided, eternal capital.

Thirteen embassies moved to Tel Aviv, stating that Israel had violated international law by this decision, and they would not grant legitimacy to such an illegal action. When Chile moved to Tel Aviv, Israel turned the building on Brenner Street over to the International Christian Embassy.²

The ICEJ placed a somewhat different emphasis on these events.

In 1980 Israel declared Jerusalem to be her eternal, undivided capital. In reply, bringing the pressure of an oil boycott to bear, the Arab nations caused 13 countries to remove their embassies from Jerusalem and go down to Tel Aviv. The inspiration to establish a Christian Embassy was given at the time when Israel was celebrating the great annual Feast of Succot. Thereafter each year a Christian Celebration has been held at Succot, pledging loyalty to her charter, "Comfort, Comfort My people." (Isaiah 40:1)³

Their later promotional material elaborates further,

When the vision of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was first given it was expressed in the following concerns; to care for the Jewish people, especially for the newborn State of Israel which includes standing up for the Jews when they are attacked or discriminated against, and for Israel to live in peace and security.... to care that the world wide body of Christ will be rightly related to Israel in comfort, love and prayer for her well-being, to care for the nations whose destinies will be increasingly linked to the way in which they relate to Israel, the care and preparation for the coming of the Lord.⁴

In 1985 the ICEJ organised the first International Christian Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in the same hall used by Theodor Herzl to launch the Zionist movement in 1897.⁵ In 1993, the ICEJ had an international staff of 50 representing 12 different nationalities, together with a further 250 volunteers who assisted with annual events such as the Feast of Tabernacles Celebration. ICEJ 'ambassadors' also served in over 100 countries world-wide through a network of branches, national directors and regional boards working under the authority of its Jerusalem Executive.⁶ By 1997 the ICEJ claimed to have representatives in 80 countries. The ICEJ draws its support almost exclusively from charismatic and evangelical fundamentalist Christians since, based on their literal interpretation of the Bible, these Christians are said to "...have very warm feelings toward Israel."⁷ *The ICEJ is strongest in the USA, Canada and South Africa, and also in Sweden, Germany and Singapore as well as other European, Asian and Central American countries, experiencing "a tremendous move of the Holy Spirit."⁸*

1.1 The Objectives of the ICEJ

From its foundation the 'charter' of the ICEJ has been to 'comfort' Israel. This has been defined in terms of encouraging and facilitating the 'restoration' of the Jews to Eretz Israel although the geographical extent of 'greater' Israel is not always made clear.

The embassy believes that God wants us to stimulate, encourage, and inspire Christians amongst the many nations concerning their role and task in the restoration of Israel. The Bible says that the destiny of nations, Christians, and even that of the church is linked to the way in which these groups respond to this restoration.⁹

In 1993, the ICEJ declared itself to have nine objectives, many of which were overtly political as well as Zionist, but based, they claimed, on biblical grounds.

- *To show concern for the Jewish people and the reborn State of Israel, by being a focus of comfort "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" (Isaiah 40:1)*
- *To be a centre where Christians can gain a biblical understanding of Israel, and learn to be rightly related to the nation "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise... But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made us one" (Ephesians 2:12-14)*
- *To present to Christians a true understanding of what is taking place in the Land today so that world events may be interpreted in the light of God's Word "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come. So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory" (Psalm 102:13-16)*
- *To remind and encourage Christians to pray for Jerusalem and the Land of Israel "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:6-7)*
- *To stimulate Christian leaders, churches and organisations to become effective influences in their countries on behalf of the Jewish people "Now the Lord said unto Abram: I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in*

thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3)

- To encourage Jewish people to return to their homeland "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt; But, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers" (Jeremiah 16:14-15)

- To be a channel of fulfilment of God's promise that one day Israel and her Arab neighbours will live in peace under the blessing of God, in the middle of the earth "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isaiah 19:24-25)

- To begin or assist projects in Israel, including economic ventures, for the well being of all who live here "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matthew 25:40)

- To take part through these activities in preparing the way of the Lord and to anticipate His reign from Jerusalem "And it shall come to pass in the last days. That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and all the nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3)¹⁰

1.2 The Priorities and Activities of the ICEJ

The main priorities of the ICEJ since its inception in 1980 have been to 'bring comfort' to Israel through the encouragement of Soviet and Eastern European Jews to emigrate to Israel; a social assistance programme for integrating Jewish immigrants into Israeli life; the sponsoring of an annual Christian Zionist Feast of Tabernacles Celebration in Jerusalem; and Diplomatic Banquets and Receptions through which church leaders and government officials around the world are lobbied on behalf of the State of Israel.

The ICEJ has also developed a sophisticated and professional news service which produces weekly radio and video programmes broadcast on four continents together with newsletters and periodicals such as the *Middle East Intelligence Digest*, a pro-Israeli summary of Israeli and Arab newspapers and journals, published in print and on their web site, as well as daily press releases distributed by email. These are aimed, according to Jan Willem van der Hoeven, at countering "increasingly warped and twisted" coverage which apparently has a "marked bias against Israel."¹¹

A significant part of the ministry of the ICEJ also involves fund-raising from Western donors sympathetic to their mission. The ICEJ claims,

*The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, North America, Europe and other parts of the world is established as a non-profit organisation. As a result, financial accountability is based on current laws of the land and as such records are open to public scrutiny.*¹²

While the Jerusalem Post claimed in 1985 that the ICEJ's monthly budget was in the region of \$80,000, Don Wagner notes, "...the ICEJ sources of income are veiled in secrecy"¹³

*The ICEJ's social assistance programme includes funding the families of needy Israeli policemen; remedial Hebrew courses for Jewish immigrants and educational material for Jewish schools; help with setting up a children's club in a new synagogue, and an ambulance for a Jewish settlement.*¹⁴ Internationally, the ICEJ also admits to working closely with Israeli Embassies, Consulates as well as the Jewish Agency in channelling support and funds to Israel.¹⁵

1.3 Key Individuals Associated with the ICEJ

Two notable individuals associated with the founding of the ICEJ are Jan Willem van der Hoeven, their spokesman and Johann Luckhoff, their Director.

Jan Willem van der Hoeven was very influential in the founding of the ICEJ before he was sacked in 1999 from being their chief spokesman, apparently for being too extreme.¹⁶ He was born in 1940 in Holland and before joining the ICEJ was Warden of the Garden Tomb between 1968-1975.¹⁷

1.4 Relationship with other Christian Zionist Organisations

In North America, the ICEJ works closely with the political lobbying body, Christian Israel Public

Action Campaign (CIPAC) which is affiliated to ICEJ.¹⁸

In the United Kingdom, ICEJ has worked in partnership with the *Good News Travels Bus Company* to transport Jewish people within the former Soviet Union to regional centres with airports for flights to Israel.¹⁹

Although it is not mentioned in their promotional literature, since the mid-1980's, the ICEJ has also closely associated with the politically subversive *Voice of Hope* radio station in Southern Lebanon.

*The Voice of Hope was formerly owned by Christian fundamentalist entrepreneur George Ortis, Sr., a supporter of renegade Lebanese army major Saad Haddad, whom Israel assisted with a militia and financial support in the Israeli-controlled sector of south Lebanon. The Voice of Hope station broadcasts to northern Israel and Lebanon frequent messages from Haddad, American Christian country-and-western music, and fundamentalist Christian radio programs.*²⁰

It is significant that many of the staff working for the ICEJ worship on Sundays at Christ Church, an Anglican church, near the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem, which is also the headquarters of the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) in Israel. Ray Lockhart, the then vicar of Christ Church, when invited to comment on the work of ICEJ, refused to express any criticism of it.²¹

2. The Theology of the ICEJ

ICEJ is a self appointed and self regulated 'embassy'. Throughout their literature the assumption made, however, is that they,

*...represent Christians from all over the world who love Israel and the people of Israel... and ...represent Israel and what the Bible says about its destiny to the Christian world.*²²

At the Third International Christian Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem 25-29 February, 1996, under the auspices of the ICEJ, some 1,500 delegates from over 40 countries unanimously affirmed a proclamation and affirmation of Christian Zionism based on the following tenets,

God the Father, Almighty, chose the ancient nation and people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to reveal His plan of redemption for the world. They remain elect of God, and without the Jewish nation His redemptive purposes for the world will not be completed...

The modern ingathering of the Jewish People to Eretz Israel and the rebirth of the nation of Israel are in fulfilment of biblical prophecies, as written in both Old and New Testaments.

Christian believers are instructed by Scripture to acknowledge the Hebraic roots of their faith and to actively assist and participate in the plan of God for the ingathering of the Jewish People and the restoration of the nation of Israel in our day.

The Lord in His zealous love for Israel and the Jewish People blesses and curses peoples and judges nations based upon their treatment of the Chosen People of Israel...

*According to God's distribution of nations, the Land of Israel has been given to the Jewish People by God as an everlasting possession by an eternal covenant. The Jewish People have the absolute right to possess and dwell in the Land, including Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan.*²³

2.1 Dispensational Roots

Those who founded the ICEJ in 1980 were drawn from Western evangelical, fundamentalist and charismatic circles. According to Don Wagner, virtually the entire ICEJ leadership are also dispensationalists, who, like Darby, Scofield and Lindsey, believe that the restoration of the Jews to Israel and the contemporary State of Israel is the fulfilment of biblical prophecy.²⁴ Johann Luckoff, the director of ICEJ wrote,

*The return to Zion from exile a second time (Isa. 11:11) is a living testimony to God's faithfulness and his enduring covenant with the Jewish people.*²⁵

In applying this passage from Isaiah literally to contemporary events rather than to those of Isaiah's generation, Luckoff is implicitly condoning the steps specified for achieving this 'return' and also the lands which they may occupy, mentioned just a few verses later in Isaiah 11.

In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea... They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the

west; together they will plunder the people to the east. They will lay hands on Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them. (Isaiah 11:11,14)

In 1996, in rebutting criticism of their theological position, the ICEJ repudiated those who refused to acknowledge the central place of Israel within God's continuing purposes,

While Gentile believers have been grafted into that household of faith which is of Abraham (the commonwealth of Israel), replacement theology within the Christian faith, which does not recognize the ongoing biblical purposes for Israel and the Jewish People, is doctrinal error.²⁶

2.2 Literalist Hermeneutic

The ICEJ's theological position is essentially literalist and traditional dispensational, emphasising in contemporary events the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy concerning Israel. There appears little recognition, however, of the way in which the New Testament writers regard these promises as fulfilled, annulled and universalised in and through Jesus Christ. So for example, the promotional booklet of the ICEJ published in 1993 contains 30 biblical references, 25 of which are taken from the Old Testament and only five from the New Testament.²⁷ Repeatedly they insist their position on Israel is synonymous with 'the' biblical position. They appear unwilling to acknowledge that Christians have historically reached a diversity of other conclusions based on the same passages. In response to criticism from Kathy Kern of the Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT) in Hebron, about the way in which the ICEJ 'blesses' Israel, their representative, Patrick Goodenough insisted,

We are not a bunch of lunatics spreading a gospel of hatred against Arabs and we certainly do not justify human rights abuses against them. We simply believe the Bible. And that Bible, which we understand has not been revoked, makes it quite clear that God has given this land as an eternal inheritance to the Jewish people.²⁸

The ICEJ also explicitly distinguishes the Church from Israel, speaking of "the former and latter rains", and, "His beloved people, both Jew and Gentile"²⁹. Whereas the New Testament emphasises that Jesus Christ has made the two one³⁰, so that in Christ there is now neither Jew nor Gentile³¹, the ICEJ insist on maintaining a distinction and superior status for those of Jewish ethnic descent, who remain, even apparently, apart from faith in Jesus Christ, the chosen people, "His Jewish sons and daughters."³²

In no uncertain terms God has made known His intention to regather the scattered Jewish people and to plant them in the land with His "whole heart and soul" (Jeremiah 32:41). We believe that in the present massive wave of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel (almost 400,000 since September 1989), the world is witnessing one of the most startling prophetic fulfillments of our time - one that should deeply touch the heart of every Bible-believing Christian and provoke him to action. Since its inception in 1980 the vision for the release of Soviet Jewry has been a vital aspect of the work of the ICEJ. Along with a growing number of Christians internationally, we have seen the Soviet Jewry issue as pivotal in God's unfolding plan for Israel and the nations... Moreover, it helped organise demonstrations at various Soviet Embassies to declare the Word of the Lord to "Give up!" His people (Isaiah 43:6), and sought to inform and challenge Christians to actively participate in the ongoing struggle... Now that the doors have actually opened, God has given the ICEJ and Christians in general unprecedented opportunities to become directly involved in the outworking of His promises. It is an amazing fact that God, through His prophets, long ago ordained that He would use Gentiles to bring back His Jewish sons and daughters.³³

2.3 Annual Feast of Tabernacles Celebration

The ICEJ has gained significant status within right-wing Jewish political circles for its sponsorship of an annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration at which the Prime Minister of Israel is invited to address Christian Zionists from around the world. Every Prime Minister since 1980 has attended and addressed the celebration. ICEJ claim that this event, attended by up to five thousand pilgrims from over 70 nations, is the largest single annual tourist event in Israel.³⁴ They believe it to be a "prophetic foreshadowing" of the celebration to be held during the Millennium after the Messiah returns. With reference to the Jewish festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, and in fulfilment of Zechariah 14:16, the ICEJ claim,

God commanded the people of Israel to keep three Feasts. Two of these have been fulfilled, and only one still awaits its final fulfilment... The final fulfilment of this Feast will take place when, during His reign, all nations will be commanded to come up to Jerusalem to worship the King each year and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles... The fact that we are already coming to celebrate this

*Feast gives it an international flavour, and a prophetic foreshadowing of that Feast of the Messiah that will be celebrated each year as the summit event of His earthly reign.*³⁵

The ICEJ's preoccupation with a pre-Christian emphasis on Judaism is no where more clearly evident than in the explanation for this Celebration.

*The annual Celebration has become one of the world's finest models of Davidic worship. It has grown to an event of eight evenings of worship using music, dance, drama and the spoken word in Jerusalem's largest hall, a praise march through the streets, and a host of concerts and musical offerings... At the Feast, pilgrims and local people-Jews, Arabs, and the Prime Minister himself-join together in singing and rejoicing over the God of Israel, who is bringing back "His sons from afar, and his daughters from the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 43:6,7)... Israel's needs and her central position in God's plan for these endtimes are presented in musical settings.*³⁶

2.4 Reinterpretation of Christian Mission

The ICEJ consistently reinterprets the Christian faith and New Testament dispensationally, convinced that Old Testament prophecies, the Jewish people and the State of Israel remain central to God's present and future purposes. They define "biblical responsibility toward the Jewish people"³⁷ in terms of supporting Jews and encouraging them to make aliya and settle the land God promised to Abraham, including the Occupied Territories. In relation to support for Ethiopian Jews, for example, this is seen in terms of the hope that "...their long exile will be at an end-their reunion will be complete."³⁸ So, where Christians have traditionally understood Jesus to be referring to his own disciples, the ICEJ narrows and Zionises such promises as in Matthew 25:40.

To begin or assist projects in Israel, including economic ventures, for the well being of all who live here "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matthew 25:40)

The term "International Outreach," though normally used by Christians to describe world-wide evangelisation through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, has also been invested by the ICEJ with new meaning. Based on Old Testament prophecies in Jeremiah and Isaiah, spoken to Jews in exile in Babylon, ICEJ suggest that the promise of salvation still awaits fulfilment in the 'return' of Jews to Zion.

*The biblical mandate concerning the proclamation and the restoration of Israel is clear. It must be worldwide. "Here the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare in the coastlands afar off, and say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock." (Jeremiah 31:10) "Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, "Lo, your salvation comes;" (Isaiah 62:11a) In the same sense that the first apostles were commissioned by the Lord to be his witnesses from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth, we also feel compelled to proclaim the word of Israel's restoration, and the Christian's response to it, to every country and in every place where there are believers.*³⁹

The comparison of the 'restoration' ministry of the ICEJ with that of the apostolic commission to preach the gospel is without precedent.

*There is no evidence in Jesus' teachings that Israel will be reconstituted as a state to serve as God's primary vehicle in the latter days. Jesus in fact rejects this teaching in Acts 1:6-8. Not only does Jesus reject the futurist pro-Zionist state scenario, but he challenges true disciples with the task of taking the gospel into the entire world, including Jerusalem and the most difficult places. That mission has not changed, despite the revision of Christianity by the ICEJ...*⁴⁰

The ICEJ has reinterpreted the purposes of God for the Jewish people in terms of "comforting Israel". In this regard the ICEJ has consistently and repeatedly compromised the biblical mandate to proclaim the gospel to all people, including the Jews, yet continues to insist on designating itself as an evangelical organisation.

2.5 Eschatology: Signs of the Times

Although not stated as explicitly or graphically as by some Christian Zionist authors, the ICEJ essentially holds to a traditional premillennial dispensationalist eschatology. Their eschatology is however more hopeful for the Jewish people than that of most premillennial dispensationalists.

The immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel and the Occupied Territories, for example, is seen as

*evidence that these are indeed the Last Days and a necessary precursor before the 'spiritual restoration' of the Jews occurs, before, during, or after the return of the Messiah. Now is the time to act and speak on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Jeremiah prophesied (Jer. 14:14-15) that the greatest exodus of all will come from the north and other lands; it will be of such magnitude that memories of the deliverance from Egypt will be eclipsed. It is my belief that the spiritual restoration of Israel prophesied by Ezekiel for the latter days cannot happen until this promise is fulfilled.*⁴¹

Before the return of the Messiah, the ICEJ, through their spokesman, Jan Willem van der Hoeven, believe, like other premillennial dispensationalists, that there will be a final Battle of Armageddon, not so much of nations fighting against one another, but rather against Israel.

*Nations will increasingly shut Israel out of their councils until they finally find themselves coming up against her at Armageddon (Zech. 14:2-3). Disaster will surely strike every nation that turns against Zion (Isa. 60:12)... Repeatedly the Bible states that the betrayal of Israel will be a major reason for the wrath of God being heaped upon the nations in the latter days.*⁴²

In keeping with other contemporary dispensationalists, van der Hoeven has also speculated that the power of America and the Western nations are in decline, and that the Antichrist is alive today and will probably appear from within the European Community during the 1990's.⁴³ The ICEJ have, however, disassociated themselves from the apocalyptic dispensational speculations of some Christian Zionism such as Hal Lindsey and Grant Jeffries. Their understanding of the future of Israel,

*...does NOT include the distasteful belief that "once all the Jews in the world emigrate to Israel, two-thirds of them will die in Armageddon (sic) and one-third convert to Christianity." There are some who call themselves Christian who subscribe to that teaching. We do not and have sought to refute it where possible.*⁴⁴

It is not clear therefore how the ICEJ views the impact of Armageddon on the Jewish people or State of Israel. The ICEJ represents, at least on the surface, a more optimistic, though non-evangelistic form of dispensational Christian Zionism. They claim that one day peace will reign on earth and that their objective is,

*To be a channel of fulfilment of God's promise that one day Israel and her Arab neighbours will live in peace under the blessing of God, in the middle of the earth "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isaiah 19:24-25)*⁴⁵

How this peace will be achieved and maintained and on what basis Jews will live on earth during any Millennium is not answered in the ICEJ literature. The implication may be drawn, however, that since they disavow evangelism among Jews before Messiah returns, the ICEJ hold to a two covenant theology, one for the Jews based on unconditional and eternal promises made to Abraham and the Law, and the other primarily for Gentiles based on faith in Jesus Christ. The theology of the ICEJ is therefore consistent with traditional dispensationalism which has elevated a restored Israel to a superior role and position over the Church in the future purposes of God and in which the latter is, as Darby taught, merely a parenthesis to the former. Wagner offers this astute assessment of the theology of the ICEJ.

*If the church is deemphasized and a modern secular/ethnic government assumes total authority, the Christian message is clearly undermined. The gospel of Jesus becomes secondary. The task of doing justice and proclaiming salvation in Jesus Christ is lost. The future survival of all nations, their prosperity and destiny, are made conditional on the degree to which they support the political state of Israel.*⁴⁶

Whereas the traditional understanding of the Christian mandate is based on the conviction that Jesus Christ has reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God and "...made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments..." (Ephesians 2:14-15), the ministry of the ICEJ appears in some senses to have rebuilt that wall, has encouraged the reintroduction of pre-Christian distinctions and offered a favoured status for Jewish people based on race rather than on faith.

3. The Politics of the ICEJ

The ICEJ claim that their support for the State of Israel is not primarily a political but a spiritual

act, and

...part of the warfare to help protect the Lord's people and to help preserve them for that time when the Lord will fulfill his promises (Ezek. 37; Zech. 12; Joel 3)⁴⁷

The ICEJ's ministry is, nevertheless, highly politicised in several significant ways.

3.1 Unconditional Support for the State of Israel

The ICEJ has, from its very inception, carefully courted the favour of the Israeli right-wing Likud political establishment and lobbied foreign governments on behalf of Israel through their Diplomatic Banquets.

The ICEJ sponsors banquets and receptions in different countries through which Israel's ambassador and embassy can be introduced to the local Christian leaders and believers... The Israeli embassy and local Jewish communities have been very encouraged by these events. Another important purpose of these receptions is to speak prophetically to politicians and the leaders of the historical churches regarding the nations' and the Church's stand towards the Jewish people. The invitation cards are written so that they have a message in them concerning the restoration of Israel and recognising the Jewish roots of our faith. Even if the invited leader did not attend, a seed was planted by the invitation itself... The programme usually consists of a few short speeches, a presentation to the Israeli Ambassador and his wife, a response from him and some beautiful classical worship and Israeli music... Some of the countries in which receptions were held recently are: the Philippines, France, Spain, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Switzerland, New Zealand, Honduras, Canada and USA.⁴⁸

They proudly record the following testimonials of Jewish political leaders.

On September 30th, 1980, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was opened in the presence of the world-renowned Mayor of the Holy City, Teddy Kollek. He commented, "This has been one of the most moving ceremonies I have ever attended in my life... The establishment of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was welcomed by Israelis from all walks of life."⁴⁹

Allow me to tell you how much I, and Israel, appreciate your [presence] here in Jerusalem, especially during these difficult days. Israel has experienced through her existence many difficulties. Therefore, whenever we see people that care, that are involved, and who show this by deeds, and by words - we appreciate this. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin⁵⁰

We thank you all for being here, for coming here faithfully every year. Your faith gives us strength. We know that you are many but we know that you are representing many, many more. Mayor Teddy Kollek⁵¹

You have given life and relevance to Zechariah's prophecy that in time to come that nations shall come up from year to year to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. I cannot conclude without adding my appreciation for the Zionist Resolutions of your Basel Congress. Thank you all for coming. President Chaim Herzog.⁵²

Your sympathy, solidarity and belief in the future of Israel - this to us is tremendous. We consider you part of the fulfilment of the prophetic vision expressed by Zechariah in Chapter 14. Your presence here will always remain a golden page in the book of eternity in heaven. May the Lord bless you out of Zion. (Former) Chief Rabbi Shlomo Green.⁵³

Your decision to establish your Embassy in Jerusalem at a time when we were being abandoned because of our faith was an act of courage and a symbol of the closeness between us. Your gestures and acts gave us the feeling that we were not alone. The Late Prime Minister Menachem Begin.⁵⁴

In 1988, the Israeli President, Chaim Herzog addressed the Second International Christian Zionist Congress, held in Jerusalem.

When the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded, I do not think that even its devoted leaders expected a mass movement of such dimensions to emerge in the course of a few years. Your understanding of the spiritual roots of Zionism and of the special nature of Jerusalem, are unfortunately far from universally held in other circles and movements. That you are joining us in

celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Israel's establishment is indeed a logical outcome of your attachment to Scripture and to the people who have lived by Scripture throughout the centuries. Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the symbolic events of your movement: the Congress, born like Zionism in Basel, now reconvened in Jerusalem, and the annual pilgrimage to the Feast of Tabernacles, as foreseen by the Prophet Zechariah...55

Donald Wagner attended the opening session of the Second International Christian Zionist Congress in 1988, at which the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir also spoke.

Shamir's speech was devoid of spiritual content and seemed insensitive to a Christian audience. The Christian Zionists, however, absolutely loved him, even when he chided Christians about their lack of loyalty to Jews. Shamir's remarks concentrated on the Palestinian Intifada, which he characterized as a "force of evil" that was "endeavouring to undermine the stability of the country and safety of its citizens." He added, "What is happening in Judea and Samaria and Gaza is a continuation of the Arab's war against the Jewish people. We have not returned to 'Eretz Israel' to be frightened by rocks and stones and firebombs. He we are and here we will stay forever."56

Immediately, the crowd was on its feet cheering, applauding, and yelling, "Praise the Lord," with hands waving above heads. I was fascinated by the scene: a militant secular Zionist politician, still wanted by the British as a terrorist until his election in 1983, receiving the affirmation a great Christian evangelist might be accorded at a revival. Shamir concluded his speech in fifteen to eighteen minutes, then left the stage, praising the ICEJ as "true friends of Israel."57

In 1991 the ICEJ received the Speaker of the Knesset's Quality of Life Award, donating the prize toward housing for recently arrived Soviet Jews. The citation included,

The Foundation recommends to award the prize to the International Christian Embassy for its continuous and energetic activity in education and information in Israel and abroad to strengthen the ties between Jews and Christians, for its activity to bring understanding between Jews and Arabs in Israel and for its activity to deepen Jewish and Zionist awareness amongst Christians around the world and for encouraging immigration to Israel.58

With such impressive endorsements, especially from the Israeli political Right, ICEJ has increasingly become the semi-official voice of a broad coalition of Christian Zionist organisations, frequently cultivated, exploited and quoted by the Israeli Government whenever a sympathetic Christian view point was needed to enhance their own policies, and rebut Western political or indigenous Christian criticism. When questioned about the tension the government of Israel must face when working with such Christian organisations, Daniel Rossing, the Director of Israeli Religious Affairs admitted,

We need support from wherever we can find it, but we keep these people on a very short leash.59

Wagner observes,

Likud was also smart enough to know that the evangelical and fundamentalist communities represented Israel's largest potential block of political and economic support in the West60

Yitzhak Shamir, for example, acknowledged,

The Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and your pilgrimage to this city carry a message which cannot be overlooked or discounted by governments or statesmen on all five continents. It is a message of truth, a message of conscience, a message of plurality, of decency, and of human brotherhood. (Former) Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.61

In an amplification of the resolutions passed at the ICEJ Third International Christian Zionist Congress, held in February 1996, the following declarations reveal their explicit religio-political agenda.

Further, we are persuaded by the clear unctio[n] of our God to express the sense of this Congress on the following concerns before us this day,

Because of the sovereign purposes of God for the City, Jerusalem must remain undivided, under Israeli sovereignty, open to all peoples, the capitol of Israel only, and all nations should so concur and place their embassies here.

As a faith bound to love and forgiveness we are appreciative of the attempts by the Government of Israel to work tirelessly for peace. However, the truths of God are sovereign and it is

written that the Land which He promised to His People is not to be partitioned... It would be further error for the nations to recognize a Palestinian state in any part of Eretz Israel.

To the extent the Palestinian Covenant or any successor instrument calls for the elimination of Israel or denies the right of Israel to exist within secure borders in Eretz Israel, it should be abolished.

The Golan is part of biblical Israel and is a vital strategic asset necessary for the security and defense of the entire country...

The Islamic claim to Jerusalem, including its exclusive claim to the Temple Mount, is in direct contradiction to the clear biblical and historical significance of the city and its holiest site, and this claim is of later religio-political origin rather than arising from any Qur'anic text or early Muslim tradition...

While Gentile believers have been grafted into that household of faith which is of Abraham (the commonwealth of Israel), replacement theology within the Christian faith, which does not recognize the ongoing biblical purposes for Israel and the Jewish People, is doctrinal error.

Regarding Aliyah, we remain concerned for the fate of imperilled Jewish People in diverse places, and seek to encourage and assist in the continuing process of Return of the Exiles to Eretz Israel. To this end we commit to work with Israel and to encourage the Diaspora to fulfil the vision and goal of gathering to Israel the greater majority of all Jewish People from throughout the world.⁶²

The ICEJ consistently endorses and defends right wing members of Likud and the smaller religious parties who are resolute in their commitment to confiscate, annexe and build further settlements in the Occupied Territories including Gaza and the Golan Heights.

ICEJ provides a contemporary Christian adoption and advocacy of the more militant Likud brand of political Zionism.⁶³ Ironically, when criticised for uncritically supporting the policies of the, then, Likud government, the ICEJ's denial reveals the extent of their refusal to countenance political compromise or the negotiation of land for peace with the Palestinians.

We do not "throw unequivocal support behind Israeli government policy". We disagreed strongly, for example, with the decision by the current government to withdraw its troops from most of Hebron, the first Jewish city in history... Our support for Israel and the Jewish people is based not on Likud policy or Labour policy - but on our understanding of God's Word.⁶⁴

The ICEJ appear to have disapproved of Netanyahu for failing to comply with the 'biblical' stand of his more Zionist right-wing coalition religious parties.

3.2 The Territorial Extent of Eretz Israel

Central to the ICEJ's theological position is the conviction that Eretz Israel belongs exclusively to the Jewish people by divine mandate.

The fourth resolution of the 'Declaration of the First International Christian Zionist Leadership Conference' held under the auspices of the ICEJ in August 1985, was entitled, 'All Nations Should Recognize Judea and Samaria as Belonging to Israel.' Its position on the Occupied Territories is indistinguishable from that of the Likud Party.

The Congress declares that Judea and Samaria (inaccurately termed 'the West Bank') are, and by biblical right as well as international law and practice ought to be, a part of Israel.⁶⁵

This claim is untrue. No other country in the world recognises Israel's claim to the Occupied Territories in international law. On the basis of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the international community through the United Nations has repeatedly condemned Israel's continued occupation of territory gained by war, for example in resolutions 242 and 338. The ICEJ uses biblical terms to invest this illegal occupation with an air of legitimacy, and thereby justify God's apparent favour toward an ethnic group at the expense of all others. The Third International Christian Zionist Congress held in February 1996 reaffirmed a Proclamation which included the following amplification of these Zionist claim,

According to God's distribution of nations, the Land of Israel has been given to the Jewish People by God as an everlasting possession by an eternal covenant. The Jewish People have the absolute right to possess and dwell in the Land, including Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan.⁶⁶

3.3 The Jewish Settlements in the Occupied Territories

In 1985 nine members of staff resigned from the ICEJ because the leadership were increasingly identified with the Likud party. The Rev. Audeh Rantisi, then Principal of the Evangelical Boys Home in Ramallah claimed it was precipitated by a decision on the part of the ICEJ to fund a Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories. He went on to say,

*Christians have no embassy. Our message is that of reconciliation between ourselves and our sisters and brothers and with God. All efforts not geared for these principles will ultimately fail.*⁶⁷

*Describing as madness' the hand-over of much of Hebron to the Palestinian Authority, Jan Willem van der Hoeven, however, insisted, The Jews have the divine right to live wherever they choose in their own land.*⁶⁸

On the threatened negotiations with Syria over the Golan Heights, van der Hoeven supported the claims of Jewish settlers there that,

*The Golan is part of biblical Israel and is a vital strategic asset necessary for the security and defense of the entire country...*⁶⁹ In their support for the confiscation, occupation and settlement of the West Bank, the ICEJ has, in the words of Don Wagner, reduced God, "...to a cosmic real estate agent who will allow one people to suffer and be removed from their cities and farms..." reducing, "...eternal truths to material terms. This truncated gospel of reductionism is inconsistent with the message of Jesus..."⁷⁰

3.4 Jerusalem the Eternal Undivided Capital of Israel

*The ICEJ, like other Zionists, regard Jerusalem as the undivided eternal capital of Israel, and central to God's future purposes for the Jews on earth. So, in 1992, the ICEJ sponsored various receptions marking the 25th anniversary of what they referred to as the "Reunification of Jerusalem."*⁷¹ In 1996 this position was reiterated.

*Because of the sovereign purposes of God for the City, Jerusalem must remain undivided, under Israeli sovereignty, open to all peoples, the capitol of Israel only, and all nations should so concur and place their embassies here.*⁷²

With the final status peace talks with the Palestinians about to resume, in 1999 the ICEJ launched a world-wide petition to demonstrate 'Christian' support for Israel's claim over Jerusalem to be presented to the Israeli government in March 2000 during the next Christian Zionist Congress, when "...tremendous pressure will be exerted to re-divide the city." The petition affirmed,

*We the undersigned, support Israel's exclusive claim to sovereignty over united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. We commend Israel for its exemplary record in guaranteeing access to the biblical sites in Jerusalem and throughout Israel, and support the continuation of Israel in this role.*⁷³

3.5 The Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple

The ICEJ have been careful to avoid inflammatory statements concerning the necessity for the Jewish temple to be rebuilt. However, at the Third International Christian Zionist Congress in 1996 the following affirmation was endorsed.

*The Islamic claim to Jerusalem, including its exclusive claim to the Temple Mount, is in direct contradiction to the clear biblical and historical significance of the city and its holiest site, and this claim is of later religio-political origin rather than arising from any Qur'anic text or early Muslim tradition...*⁷⁴

3.6 Attitude toward the Arabs States and Palestinians

Although the ICEJ claims to have sponsored token humanitarian projects among Arab Palestinians, they are consistently critical of Islam and Arabs generally and have been a divisive influence between Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Christians. A newsletter published in 1987, for example, listed five ways in which the ICEJ supporters could 'come against the spirit of Islam'⁷⁵

*Israel has been in struggle for survival since its beginning. Our job is to stand on God's Word against all opposition and to be vessels of mercy for the Jewish people (Romans 11:31).*⁷⁶

In insisting that Israel has the exclusive right to the Occupied Territories, the ICEJ implicitly denies the right of the Palestinians to political autonomy or statehood.

...the truths of God are sovereign and it is written that the Land which He promised to His

*People is not to be partitioned... It would be further error for the nations to recognize a Palestinian state in any part of Eretz Israel. To the extent the Palestinian Covenant or any successor instrument calls for the elimination of Israel or denies the right of Israel to exist within secure borders in Eretz Israel, it should be abolished.*⁷⁷

Jan Willem van der Hoeven, the then chief-spokesman for the ICEJ was even more outspoken,

*The Palestinians have taken by the sword everything that doesn't belong to them. Palestinians are under Israeli occupation because they asked for it... It was not because Israel was so aggressive, but because they wanted to throw the Israelis into the sea. The Jews are kind enough to let them live here without killing them.*⁷⁸

Based on an interview with van der Hoeven, Felix Corley claims, "*He has little sympathy for Palestinians, except for those like his wife who are prepared to accept Israeli rule.*"⁷⁹

Patrick Goodenough, of the ICEJ's Middle East Digest responded to that critical report published in the Church of England Newspaper, with the following,

*Corley speaks of the local churchmen who are critical of the ICEJ's 'political interpretations of Scripture'. Point: many Palestinian clergy have long used the Scripture to back their pro-PLO positions. They have stood quietly by as Yasser Arafat labelled Jesus 'the first Palestinian revolutionary' and - as recently as March - while his followers erected three crosses at a protest site in Jerusalem. We hear no church voices decrying such blasphemous abuse of the symbols of our faith by the followers of another. I hardly think these churchmen are in a position to accuse anyone of abusing the Bible for political ends.*⁸⁰

Although claiming many Palestinians identify with their perspective on Israel, the ICEJ claim it is not possible to include their perspective in their radio and television programmes due to intimidation.

*Unfortunately it is not possible to include Arab speakers as their participation in a programme favourable to Israel would endanger their lives.*⁸¹

*The result of the ICEJ's uncritical endorsement of Zionism essentially demonises the Palestinians and, 'negates Palestinian claims to their land, livelihood, beliefs and very presence in the land.'*⁸²

3.7 Criticism of Palestinian Autonomy

Critical of the Israeli government's decision to allow limited Palestinian autonomy in Bethlehem, the ICEJ, quoted in the *Sunday Times*, on Christmas Eve 1995 predicted that the celebrations that night would, '*...look more like Arafat's birthday than that of Jesus.*'⁸³

3.8 The Emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel

The ICEJ has been proactive in encouraging, coercing and facilitating the immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel/Palestine. It is based on the theological conviction that it is God's intention to "...bring back His people...⁸⁴ to Palestine. Claiming that an estimated 3 million Jews still in the "*land of the north*" ICEJ believe, "*God has promised an exodus that would exceed in greatness the Exodus from Egypt.*"⁸⁵

During the period 1990-1992 the ICEJ raised several million dollars to fund special flights to Israel of Soviet Jews. The following description gives an impression of the early days of this ministry.

*On May 28, 1990, in the early hours of the morning, the first Christian sponsored flight of Soviet Jews arrived at Israel's Ben Gurion Airport. As the weary new immigrants descended from the El Al plane to the crowd of joyful, singing Christians waiting, many broke into tears. Like electricity the news was spread throughout the Israeli media later that day. It was like a prophetic moment in time that touched people across the nation and spread during weeks and months to Christians worldwide. The branches of the ICEJ have now sponsored more than forty flights on new immigrants. The airlift project, which is still going on, has led the way for more cooperation with the Jewish Agency in this tremendous challenge to bring the Jewish people home.*⁸⁶

Since 1991 the ICEJ have also worked in partnership with the UK based Good News Travel Bus Company and Jewish Agency to bus Soviet Jews to several Eastern European cities such as Warsaw from where they could be flown to Israel. In one year they claim to have assisted 1500 Soviet Jews from the Ukraine to reach Israel in this way.

In order to meet this larger challenge, the ICEJ is now building an internal transportation network in the Ukraine consisting of buses, mini-buses and family cars to transport Jews from different cities and towns to local airports. Apartments are also being leased to serve as local offices and temporary hostels for emigrants in transit.⁸⁷

The ICEJ conceded that by 1992, the number of Soviet immigrants was declining and therefore a new, more intimidating strategy was devised, to persuade Jews to leave Russia for Israel. Jeremiah had promised repentant Jews of his own day they would eventually return to Israel from their Babylonian captivity. Under the banner 'The "Fishers" Task,' the ICEJ applied Jeremiah 16:16 to their own work.

"But now I will send for many fishermen," declares the LORD, "and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks."

Believing that "Many Jews in the former USSR are sitting on the fence concerning Israel." The ICEJ initiated the production of 'educational' material and videos distributed among Jewish communities in the Soviet Union to persuade Jews to leave before it was too late. Using a concert tour and a double-decker bus equipped with a theatre and audio-visual exhibition about Israel, an ICEJ team also toured the Soviet Union between 1990-1992. Reinterpreting Jeremiah 16, the ICEJ claimed,

The task of the fisher is to encourage them with a 'good report' of the land like Joshua and Caleb, before God sends the hunters. The biblical fact is that in Israel, they have a 'future and a hope'...⁸⁸

The implication is clear, as in pre-war Germany, 'leave before it is too late.' To consolidate this ministry, the ICEJ also founded the Raoul Wallenberg Centre in Budapest in Hungary, named after the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Jews from the Nazi holocaust. This became their Eastern European headquarters co-ordinating efforts to encourage Jews in the former USSR and Eastern Europe to make aliya and emigrate to Israel. In 1996, at the Third International Christian Zionist Congress, the following affirmation was endorsed.

Regarding Aliyah, we remain concerned for the fate of imperiled Jewish People in diverse places, and seek to encourage and assist in the continuing process of Return of the Exiles to Eretz Israel. To this end we commit to work with Israel and to encourage the Diaspora to fulfill the vision and goal of gathering to Israel the greater majority of all Jewish People from throughout the world.⁸⁹

Controversially, the ICEJ has been active in encouraging Soviet Jews to move into new settlements in East Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories, largely oblivious of the fact that they were being used to displace the indigenous Palestinians, in violation of international law.

During the October 1991 Feast of Tabernacles festivities, representatives from twelve countries presented checks to Prime Minister Shamir to finance the settlements. Shamir told them that the arrival of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews confirms that we are "living in a period of the fulfillment of prophecy and miracles."⁹⁰

3.9 Economic and Financial Assistance for Israel

Part of the ICEJ's 'outreach' involves promoting ways of helping Israel economically. ICEJ, for example, encourages supporters to invest in Israel through purchasing shares in the International Christian Investment Corporation.

This money, injected into Israel by Christians, wisely invested, will draw a yearly dividend for the investors. Those who wish to be involved in the Embassy's economic outreach, the importing of Israeli products, joint ventures, breaking of the Arab boycott, or opening Israeli shops can write for further information... By helping Israel economically and financially we are seeing the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecy that one day the wealth of the nations will flow to Israel.⁹¹

During the 1980's the ICEJ was also politically active in the destabilisation of Central America, as a channel for the funding of the United States backed Contras.

When the ICEJ proudly established an "embassy" in Honduras and in Guatemala, they worked closely with the government of Israel in bringing funds into the countries. ICEJ was granted diplomatic

status in both countries and allowed to bring goods and funds into the country without inspection by customs agents. In September 1988, the investigative journal Israeli Foreign Affairs noted that the ICEJ "ambassador to Honduras," Marta Rodriguez, told journalist Deborah Preusch that ICEJ had brought in vehicles and other items for the Contras. Other fundamentalist Christian groups that cooperated with ICEJ, include Gospel Crusade of Bradenton, Florida, whose head, Gerald Derstine, is a founding member of ICEJ. This project, in close cooperation with the Israeli government and its embassies in Guatemala and Honduras, operated in total violation of United States law and policy.⁹²

It is interesting to speculate whether the ICEJ was also involved in sanctions busting or brokering the close military and economic co-operation between Israel and South Africa during the apartheid years.

3.10 Lobbying of the United States Government on Behalf of Israel

ICEJ has been particularly active in lobbying the US government and other governments in co-operation with and on behalf of the government of Israel. During the Second Christian Zionist Congress, held in April 1988, a member of the Swiss government and member of Parliament from Bern spoke about the importance of political lobbying.

He urged participants to form a political party in their own countries in cooperation with ICEJ and to campaign vigorously in their home countries for PLO offices to be removed.⁹³

Wagner has traced the impact and extent of the ICEJ's political lobbying activities in the USA, and gives several examples.

On February 23, 1984, the ICEJ sent Richard A. Hellman to Washington D.C., to testify before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign relations, arguing that the U.S. Government should move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In the course of his testimony, Hellman claimed that the ICEJ was a "spiritual rather than political" organization. The Israeli lobby AIPAC organized the pro-Israel testimony and included Rev. Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority... In February 1991, at the National Prayer Network for Israel, right wing political activist Ed McAteer announced the founding of Christian Israel Public Affairs Committee (CIPAC), modelled after the powerful Israeli lobby AIPAC. Its board of directors included AIPAC director Tom Dine and Herbert Zweibon, president of Americans for a Safe Israel, another powerful pro-Israeli lobby organization. Both groups have for fifteen years espoused a Likud political ideology. The goals of CIPAC matched those of QAIPAC but added the Christian dispensational rationale. Its director, Richard Hellman, former aide of U.S. Senator Howard Baker, has been a long term ICEJ supporter. The major emphasis of CIPAC became supporting \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees for Israel toward the settlement of Soviet Jews in Israel and the West Bank. During the fall of 1991 and winter spring of 1992, CIPAC, like AIPAC, found significant opposition to their lobbying for the loan guarantees from the Bush administration. The administration linked the loan guarantees to the illegal construction of settlements in the Occupied Territories, which it decried as an "obstacle to peace in the Middle East." ICEJ spokesman Jan Willem van der Hoeven told the Jerusalem Post that the "religious Christian community finds the Bush administration's policy on the loan guarantees totally unacceptable." He estimated that eighty percent of America's 40 million Bible Belt Christians would support the guarantees.⁹⁴

3.11 Coverage of the Jerusalem Tunnel Incident

In October 1996, Netanyahu the Israeli Prime Minister spoke at the Jerusalem 3000 rally organised by the ICEJ, to support Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem. Following the provocative opening of an underground tunnel by the Israelis from the Western Wall underneath the Moslem Quarter, he was cheered when he insisted the tunnel, '*...is open. It will stay open. It will always stay open.*'⁹⁵

The political activities of the ICEJ on behalf of Israel have been and continue to be both significant and comprehensive.

4. A Critical Summary of the Distinctive Christian Zionism of ICEJ

The ICEJ's distinctive form of Christian Zionism is best summarised in their own words in the following way.

To show concern for the Jewish people and the reborn State of Israel, by being a focus of comfort... To stimulate Christian leaders, churches and organisations to become effective influences in their countries on behalf of the Jewish people.⁹⁶

Biblical Christian Zionism includes the following basic tenets: Belief that the restoration of the

*modern State of Israel is no political accident, but rather a visible fulfillment of God's word and promise (Isa. 11:10-12; Jer. 31:10-20).*⁹⁷

Historically, it is significant that the same convictions which guided the early British Christian Zionists such as Thomas Brightman and Henry Finch, later to become central to the dispensationalism of John Nelson Darby and Cyrus Scofield's Reference Bible, also undergird the work of the ICEJ today.⁹⁸ The ICEJ is a self-appointed and self-regulated organisation unaccountable to the wider Christian community and vehemently opposed by the indigenous Christian community of the Middle East.

Theologically, the ICEJ has, without precedent, reinterpreted the Christian mandate from proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ 'to the Jew first' into a social gospel serving the expansionist political agenda of the modern state of Israel. The ICEJ's justification of Israel's racist and apartheid policies on biblical grounds is contributing to the undermining of Christian witness among both Jews and Moslems, as well as the destruction of the indigenous Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Many regard this as nothing less than apostasy and, "*an anachronistic return to the Judaizing tendency the early church rejected at the first ecumenical council, recorded in Acts 15.*"⁹⁹

Politically, the ICEJ has repeatedly identified itself uncritically and unconditionally with the Israeli political Right, defending from international criticism, Israel's military occupation and settlement expansion programme of Syria's Golan Heights and the Occupied Territories. The ICEJ has from its inception remained implacably opposed to the aspirations of the Palestinians for political autonomy in the pre-1967 borders of the West Bank, a shared Jerusalem, and the right of return for refugees.

Wagner offers seven reasons why the ICEJ should be rejected as a Christian organisation. The following is a summary of his arguments.

1. *The ICEJ allows the gospel and lordship of Jesus Christ to become subservient to the modern political ideology of Zionism.*
2. *The International Christian Embassy is guilty of the sin of idolatry by worshipping state power in Israel and benefiting from its praises.*
3. *The ICEJ obscures the call to reconciliation in the Christian gospel, especially as it applies to Palestinians and Israelis.*
4. *The ICEJ reduces the gospel to material and partisan political dimensions while it ignores the ultimate principles of the Christian message and its immediate kingdom implications.*
5. *The ICEJ has become a heretical cult by reducing the Christian church to a mere "parenthesis" and by rejecting the local Christian community.*
6. *The ICEJ represents anti-mission activity in the Middle East, in relation to both Islam and Judaism.*
7. *The ICEJ does not take Jesus Christ as its alpha and omega but focuses on Zionism in theory and practice.*¹⁰⁰

Wagner's conclusion is unequivocal.

*Thus the ICEJ is a pseudo-Christian movement that attempts to baptize a modern political ideology with some Scripture and revisionist Christian dispensational theology. In fact, the ICEJ goes well beyond classical premillennial dispensationalism in its claims that modern Israel fulfills Scripture and that its actions are beyond reproach.*¹⁰¹

Revised 9 June 1999

This chapter is incomplete. Please return to the web site in the near future for an expanded version. I would be grateful for constructive criticisms and additional leads on the ICEJ.

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- 2 Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, Herald Press, 1995), p. 97.
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- 4 MECC, *What is Western Fundamentalist Christian Zionism?* rev. edn. (Limassol, Cyprus, Middle East Council of Churches, 1988), p. 11.
- 5 Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, Herald Press, 1995), p. 97.
- 6 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem*, (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 4.
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- 10 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 5.
- 11 Felix Corley, 'Is Radical Zionism an Option for Christians?' *Church of England Newspaper*, 7 February 1997, p. 7.
- 12 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 4.
- 13 *Wagner, Anxious.*, p. 100.
- 14 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), pp. 19-20.
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- 16 Based on a conversation with Tom Getman, Director of *World Vision*, Jerusalem, 30 May 1999.
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- 19 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 24.
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- 21 Interview with Ray Lockhart, vicar of Christ Church, Jerusalem, 1994.
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- 23 *International Christian Zionist Congress Proclamation*, International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem. 25-29 February 1996.
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- 25 Johann Lukoff, *A Christian Response to Israel* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1985).
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- 29 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 15.
- 30 Ephesians 2:14.
- 31 Galatians 3:28.
- 32 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 9.
- 33 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 9.
- 34 Patrick Goodenough, 'Jerusalem journalist hits back for Zionists' *Church of England Newspaper*, 4 May 1997, p. 13. Additional material from the unpublished portions of Goodenough's extensive letter to the *CEN*.
- 35 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 15.
- 36 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 14.
- 37 *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, ICEJ, 1993), p. 10.
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Chapter 8

The Hermeneutics of Christian Zionism Critiqued

The Development of a Literalist Christian Zionist Hermeneutic

The literal interpretation of Scripture, as opposed to the allegoricalism found in Roman Catholicism, was generally normative among Protestant denominations from the Reformation until the rise of liberalism in the 19th Century.⁵ From the early 19th century literalism increasingly became associated with evangelicalism and fundamentalism to the point where today they are now virtually synonymous.⁶ Within this broad movement, which was predominantly postmillennial in outlook, the development of a distinctive Christian Zionist hermeneutic can be dated to the early 19th Century and the influence of a group of British and Irish evangelical leaders who began meeting together to study what they perceived to be as yet 'unfulfilled' prophecies concerning the Jews. The Albury conferences brought together Edward Irving's innovative and pessimistic form of premillennialism, Lewis Way's preoccupation with the literal and futurist fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies and Joseph Wolff's quest for the 'lost tribes' of Israel. These meetings and those held subsequently at Powerscourt in Ireland and the journals and books published by the Albury Circle, such as in the *Morning Watch*, provided the catalyst for what became the increasingly popular conviction that God had a continuing and separate purpose for the Jewish people, apart from the Church. The Albury Circle popularised the belief in the imminent rediscovery of the ten lost tribes, their mass conversion and return to Palestine just prior to the return of the Messiah. While the conviction that such events would occur in their own life time proved unfounded, the belief that such events were nevertheless predicted in the Bible became the theological foundation for 20th Century Christian Zionism.

Edward Irving and the Revival of 19th Century Premillennialism

The revival of premillennialism in the nineteenth century as well as the novel doctrine of the rapture, have been attributed to the Scottish preacher, Edward Irving⁷. Set against the prevailing utopianism which saw the founding of many missionary societies following the Great Revivals of the 18th Century and the ministry of the evangelists such as the Wesleys and Whitfield, Irving's critical pessimism provoked a furore.⁸ A popular Scottish preacher working in London, Irving had been invited to preach at the annual service of the London Missionary Society in 1824, and a year later in 1825 to the Continental Society. Irving's address in 1825 was entitled, '*Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed*'. In reaction to the prevailing optimism and postmillennial drive toward missionary expansion, Irving predicted that the world was about to experience a '*series of thick-coming judgments and fearful perplexities*' before the imminent return of Jesus Christ.⁹ Irving insisted that missionary work, especially in Southern Europe where the Continental Society concentrated its ministry, was utterly futile because God's judgement was about to fall on these lands of the former Roman Empire. Some

walked out of the meeting in protest while the leaders of the Society accused Irving of undermining their ministry.¹⁰

The origin of what came to be known as a *'futurist view'* of end time prophecy, upon which Irving based his innovative eschatology, has been attributed to the works of a 16th century Jesuit, Francesco Ribera, whose writings were later popularised in the 19th century by another Spanish Jesuit, Manuel Lacunza. Lacunza used the pseudonym Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, allegedly a converted Jew, for his book, *'The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty'*. Available in Spanish and manuscript form from the 1790's, it was Edward Irving's English translation of 1827 which brought the work to popular attention.¹¹ Irving's 203 page preface to the translation indicated his own emerging prophetic speculations about the end of the world, the apostasy of Christendom, the restoration of the Jews and the imminent return of Christ.

As early as 1828 the critical *Christian Observer* attributed to Irving and his Albury colleague M'Neile responsibility for the controversial teaching that God was about to destroy the world and inaugurate a *'whole new dispensation'* on earth. Those who opposed Irving's views among the established mission agencies saw themselves as *'ministers of mercy, and not of wrath'*.¹² Irving became increasingly preoccupied with speculative interpretations of the apocalyptic writings, especially of *Daniel and Revelation*. He predicted, for example, that the Church had suffered under Papal rule from 533 when Justinian recognised the Bishop of Rome as head of the Church until 1793. He saw the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution as evidence of the "signs of the end". The first six vials referred to in the Book of Revelation had been poured out, while he argued the seventh vial referred to the 1820's. This final era would see the final battle of Armageddon, the Second Advent and the beginning of the Millennium.¹³ Irving's prophetic views came to have a profound influence on many other Christian leaders and politicians not least John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Brethren as well as Henry Drummond who, together with Irving, founded the Catholic Apostolic Church.

The Albury Circle and the "Unfulfilled Prophecy" Conferences

On the first day of Advent in 1826, the same year Irving was translating Lacunza's work on the Second Advent¹⁴, Henry Drummond opened his home at Albury Park to a select group of invited evangelical leaders for a week long retreat to discuss matters of unfulfilled prophecy. This was to become the first of five annual conferences held there until 1830.

Henry Drummond was a banker, Member of Parliament and at one time High Sheriff of Surrey.¹⁵ Significantly, he was the Vice President of the recently formed London Jews Society as well as influential in the Continental Society. Besides Henry Drummond, those who attended included nineteen Anglican, two Dissenting and four Church of Scotland ministers. The Anglicans included Lewis Way and Joseph Wolff of the London Jews Society, Hugh M'Neile the Irish Rector of Albury and eventually Dean of Liverpool, Daniel Wilson who became Bishop of Calcutta, Hatley Frere, Spencer Percival and John Tudor, who became the editor of the *Morning Watch*, the short-lived quarterly journal of the 'Albury Circle'. The Church of Scotland representatives included Edward Irving and his friend Robert Story of Rosneath.¹⁶ Later participants included Lady Powerscourt of Dublin.

According to Roy Coad, the Brethren historian, Albury became, *the centre for wild speculation'*.¹⁷ It lay the seeds not only for 19th Century Millenarianism and Darby's Dispensationalism but also the future direction of the London Jews Society and Christian Zionism. The rise of biblical literalism, so central to Christian Zionism, and a renewed interest in the Jews, can be clearly attributed to Edward Irving, Lewis Way and their associates at the Albury Conference of 1826.¹⁸

In 1821, Way had published a pamphlet called *'The Latter Rain'* in which he called Christians to pray for the Jews in the belief that the prophecies of the Old Testament had a, *'primary and literal reference to the Jews'* rather than the Church.¹⁹ Hugh M'Neile, one of the Albury Circle, published a similar but longer book, *'The Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation.'* in 1830.²⁰ Like Irving and subsequently Darby also, M'Neile advocated a separate status for the Jews from the Church which, he claimed, existed within different dispensations. He believed that the future repentance and then restoration of the Jews, as well as their pre-eminence on earth, were the result of a literal reading of Old Testament prophecies. He was also preoccupied, like Joseph Wolff, with locating the so called ten *'Lost Tribes'* of Israel, so indispensable to any future restoration.²¹ Edward Irving compared the first Albury conference with that of the Apostles in Jerusalem in Acts 15 and acknowledged the influence of Wolff's knowledge of Hebrew.

*No appeal was allowed but to the Scriptures, of which the originals lay before us; in the interpretation of which, if any question arose, we had the most learned Eastern scholar perhaps in the world to appeal to, and a native Hebrew. I mean Joseph Wolff.*²²

Edward Miller's quotations from Irving's notes of the first Albury conference in 1826 confirm that the origin of the dispensational distinction between the Jews and the Church and the restoration of the Jews before the return of Christ may be attributed to Edward Irving.²³

...perfect unanimity on the following points:- (I) That the Christian Dispensation was to be terminated, ending in the destruction of the visible Church, like the Jewish; during which 'judgements' the Jews were to be restored to Palestine. (II) 'The judgements' were to fall principally, if not exclusively, upon Christendom. (III) That 'the 1,260 years' commenced with Justinian and terminated in 1793, and that the vials of the Apocalypse then began to be poured out; that our blessed Lord will then appear, and that therefore it is the duty of all to press these considerations on the attention of all men.²⁴

The conference of 1828 similarly focussed on speculation concerning the imminent restoration of the Jews. Irving, for example, records the momentous news which Drummond shared of the discovery of some 20 million of the 'ten lost Hebrew' tribes allegedly now living in Cashmere.²⁵ It is possible that Joseph Wolff's lifelong search for the 'Ten Tribes' which began in the same year may have been sparked off by this 'discovery'.²⁶ In the later conferences the emphasis shifted to the imminent Last Days 'preparations' or signs of the Second Coming.²⁷

In 1866, Hugh M'Neile, whom Drummond had appointed Rector of Albury, looked back and acknowledged how, a generation earlier in the 1830's, such futurist interpretations of the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation advocated by himself, Way and Irving had been viewed as something of a novelty by sceptics he describes as 'anti-restorationists'.²⁸ He admits that it had, 'no place in the battle-field of the Reformation' or among theologians in the 18th century.

It was just beginning to be ventilated in consequence of the labours of Mr. Lewis Way and Mr. Hawtrey; and more especially in consequence of the writings of Mr. Faber, and the zealous advocacy of Mr. Simeon.²⁹

Irving rejoiced that the 'Albury Circle' had caused a sea change in Millennial speculation and how, 'the truth of his Son's glorious advent maketh winged speed in all the churches.'³⁰ The Albury Circle, principally Irving, Drummond, Way, Wolff, M'Neile and Lady Powerscourt, were probably the most significant influence in the development of a literalist and futurist hermeneutic which in turn gave rise to both Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism. Between 1830 and 1834, following the model established at Albury, Lady Powerscourt hosted a series of similar prophetic conferences at Powerscourt Castle near Dublin, under the growing influence of J. N. Darby, to whom she was engaged to be married.

John Nelson Darby's Contribution to a Literalist Hermeneutic

John Nelson Darby is regarded by many as the father of dispensationalism and the most influential figure in the development of its prodigy, Christian Zionism³¹. Darby defended his own literalist dispensational hermeneutic on two grounds. First, because, he claimed, others had not studied the Scriptures correctly.

*The covenant is a word common in the language of a large class of Christian professors... but in its development and detail, as to its unfolded principles, much obscurity appears to me to have arisen from a want of simple attention to Scripture.*³²

Second, Darby insisted that his own interpretation, over against that of the Millenarians, was correct because the Lord had revealed it to him by special revelation.

*...what God has with infinite graciousness revealed to me concerning His dealing with the Church... it was in this the Lord was pleased, without man's teaching, first to open my eyes on this subject, that I might learn His will concerning it throughout.*³³

Darby's literal hermeneutic, typical of popular Christian Zionist writers today, might be summed up in his own words, 'I prefer quoting many passages than enlarging upon them.'³⁴ In response to the negative reaction his controversial teaching about a future dispensation of Jews on earth after the church had been removed, Darby wrote,

*...I believe it to be the one true Scriptural ground of the church... Christ coming to receive us to Himself; and collaterally with that, the setting up of a new earthly dispensation... It was a vague fact that received form in my mind long after, that there must be a wholly new order of things...*³⁵

Even Coad, in his otherwise positive history of the Brethren Movement, admits that 'For the traditional view of the Revelation, another was substituted.'³⁶ Barr is less sympathetic arguing

premillennial dispensationalism was, '*...individually invented by J. N. Darby... concocted in complete contradiction to all main Christian tradition...*'³⁷ It was Cyrus Scofield, however, and principally his Scofield Reference Bible, who synthesised and popularised a literalist and futurist reading of Scripture based on Irving and Darby's distinctive rupture between the Church and Israel.

Scofield's Hermeneutic - Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

According to one of Darby's biographers, '*His perceptions of Scriptural truths are the source from which Scofield Reference Bibles get their characteristic notes.*'³⁸ Others have noted that the resemblance between Scofield and Darby '*is deep and systematic.*'³⁹ It is significant, however, that neither in the Introduction to his Reference Bible, nor in the accompanying notes does Scofield acknowledge his indebtedness to Darby, any more than Darby credited Irving. In 1888 Scofield published his first work called '*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*'.⁴⁰ In it Scofield presented the hermeneutical principles of dispensationalism he had allegedly been teaching his Bible classes and which would become the theological presuppositions behind the notes of his Scofield Reference Bible. Not surprisingly, it was the Plymouth Brethren 'house' publishers, Loizeaux Brothers of New York, who printed the first edition,⁴¹ and continued to do so, a century later.⁴² The key text upon which Scofield based his scheme is the Authorised translation of 2 Timothy 2:15, in which the Apostle Paul calls upon Timothy to, '*... rightly divide the word of truth.*' Scofield took this as the title for his first book which elaborated on how the Bible should be divided into discrete dispensations.⁴³

*The Word of Truth, then, has right divisions, and it must be evident that, as one cannot be 'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed' without observing them, so any study of that Word which ignores these divisions must be in large measure profitless and confusing. The purpose of this pamphlet is to indicate the more important divisions of the Word of Truth...*⁴⁴

*The first lesson sets the tone for all future Dispensational teaching offering a novel 'literal' interpretation of the verse 'Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.' (1 Corinthians 10:32). On the basis of this verse, Scofield justified the division of the world into three classes of people, Jews, Gentiles and the Church, an idea that is now the 'warp and woof of Dispensational teaching.'*⁴⁵ Others perceive that The New Testament more accurately delineates two classes of people, those who believe in Jesus Christ and those who do not, irrespective of their racial origins.⁴⁶ Scofield, like Darby, insisted that promises made to the Jews in the Old Testament *could not be applied to the Church in the New Testament.*

*Not one instance exists of a 'spiritual' or figurative fulfilment of prophecy... Jerusalem is always Jerusalem, Israel is always Israel, Zion is always Zion... Prophecies may never be spiritualised, but are always literal.*⁴⁷

Scofield's literalism extended even to exact verbal phraseology. This led him to claim, for example, that there are seven dispensations, eight covenants, and eleven great mysteries.⁴⁸ To justify this perpetual and 'eternal' distinction between Israel and the Church, even under the New Covenant, Scofield insisted that Israel is the '*earthly wife*' of God and the Church is actually the '*heavenly bride*' of Christ. Commenting on Hosea 2:2, Scofield writes,

That Israel is the wife of Jehovah (see vs. 16-23), now disowned but yet to be restored, is the clear teaching of the passages. This relationship is not to be confounded with that of the Church to Christ (John 3.29, refs.)... The N.T. speaks of the Church as a virgin espoused to one husband (2 Cor. 11.1,2); which could never be said of an adulterous wife, restored in grace. Israel is, then, to be the restored and forgiven wife of Jehovah, the Church the virgin wife of the Lamb (John 3.29; Rev. 19. 6-8); Israel Jehovah's earthly wife (Hos. 2, 23); the Church the Lamb's heavenly bride (Rev. 19.7)⁴⁹

Scofield therefore concluded that Israel and the Church were separate bodies. '*A forgiven and restored wife could not be called either a virgin (2 Cor. 11: 2,3), or a bride.*'⁵⁰ Such novel teaching about two separate people of God - that of an '*earthly wife*' and a '*heavenly bride*' contradicts other passages such as John 10:16 and Romans 11:24, neither of which warrant any comment in Scofield's Reference Bible. Scofield's footnotes and systematised scheme of hermeneutics, however, were seen as inspired and used as a test of orthodoxy among fundamentalists in the early 20th Century.

*Charles G. Trumbull, late editor of the Sunday School Times, spoke of the Scofield Bible in the following terms, in his book, The Life Story of C. I. Scofield: 'God-planned, God-guided, God-energized work.'*⁵¹

One of Scofield's disciples, Lewis Sperry Chafer who founded Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924, became his most articulate and influential exponent, producing the first and definitive eight volume systematic theology of Dispensationalism based on Scofield's scheme. Before his death in 1952 Chafer described what he perceived to be his greatest academic achievement. 'It goes on record

that the Dallas Theological Seminary uses, recommends, and defends the Scofield Bible.'⁵²

A Dispensational Definition of Biblical Literalism

Lewis Chafer defines the literal hermeneutic upon which dispensationalism and contemporary Christian Zionism is based in the following way.

*The outstanding characteristic of the dispensationalist is... That he believes every statement of the Bible and gives to it the plain, natural meaning its words imply.*⁵³

The biblical text therefore needs little or no human interpretation. Like Chafer, Charles Ryrie insists that it is only dispensationalists who are consistent in applying a literal interpretation.

*To be sure, literal/historical/grammatical interpretation is not the sole possession or practice of dispensationalists, but the consistent use of it in all areas of biblical interpretation is.*⁵⁴

Louis Goldberg claims that it is those who reject a literalist hermeneutic who are imposing their theological framework on the Scriptures.

...two established rules of interpretation are as follows: 1) "When Scripture makes common sense use no other sense;" 2) "Prophecy ... must be interpreted literally ... The reason a non-literal method of interpretation is adopted is, almost without exception, because of a desire to avoid the obvious interpretation of the passage. The desire to bring the teaching of Scripture into harmony with some predetermined system of doctrine instead of bringing doctrine into harmony with the Scriptures has kept this practice alive."

*The point is that we have to let the prophetic Scriptures speak on their own without reading into them!*⁵⁵

However, without the foundational dispensational presupposition that God's purposes for Israel and the Church are and remain eternally separate, Chafer insists the Bible is incomprehensible.

*[Dispensationalism] has changed the Bible from being a mass of more or less conflicting writings into a classified and easily assimilated revelation of both the earthly and heavenly purposes of God, which purposes reach on into eternity to come.*⁵⁶

Chafer taught that without this dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church, a simple literal reading along with other 'non literal' methods of interpretation are confusing and lead to internal inconsistency. Dwight Pentecost, also of Dallas Theological Seminary similarly insists,

*Scripture is unintelligible until one can distinguish clearly between God's program for his earthly people Israel and that for the Church.*⁵⁷

Patrick Goodenough of the International Christian Embassy explains the consequences of this simple 'literal' hermeneutic.

*We simply believe the Bible. And that Bible, which we understand has not been revoked, makes it quite clear that God has given this land as an eternal inheritance to the Jewish people.*⁵⁸

In the 1980's the Churches Ministry Among Jewish People went further, locating the origin of what they term a 'spiritualised' reading of the Bible in the heresy of Marcion who proposed the abandonment of the Old Testament.

*But that was unacceptable to the Church and a better way to de-Judaize the Hebrew Scriptures was "Christianise" the Hebrew Scriptures so as to spiritualise the text and read New Testament concepts into the text. That view is still prevalent today.*⁵⁹

Hal Lindsey also attributed the development of erroneous views concerning Israel to an allegorical, non-literal hermeneutic allegedly advocated by Origen.⁶⁰ Others, however, have argued that it was the consistent approach of the Post-Apostolic Fathers, including Origen, to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures typologically, that is as 'types' of New Testament realities⁶¹, as the Apostles had done before them.⁶² In his commitment to literalism, Lindsey and other dispensationalists do not distinguish between figurative or typological approaches acknowledged by covenantal theologians from the allegorical methods of interpretation seen typically in pre-Reformation Roman Catholicism.⁶³ The distinction between these two methods of interpretation is significant since the former places particular emphasis on the historical context of passages as well as the way scripture interprets scripture.⁶⁴ An allegorical approach finds eternal truths in the Bible without reference to their historical setting. A typological approach highlights the way New Testament writers see Jesus Christ to be the fulfilment of many Old Testament images and types.⁶⁵ There is good evidence that a typological interpretation of the Old Testament was consistently followed by the Church from the 1st Century, and

did not arise with Origen as Lindsey alleges.⁶⁶

The Political Implications of a Zionist Literalist Hermeneutic

It is when such a literalist hermeneutic, combined with the dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church, is applied to the prophetic books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation, that the political ramifications of Christian Zionism are seen to be so controversial. Hal Lindsey, for example, has been largely responsible for popularising a futurist and predictive view of ancient prophecies applying promises made to the ancient Jews to the contemporary State of Israel.

*The center of the entire prophetic forecast is the State of Israel. Certain events in that nation's recent history prove the accuracy of the prophets. They also force us to accept the fact that the 'countdown' has begun... The information in the book you're about to read is more up-to-date than tomorrow's newspaper... I think you will be surprised to see what kind of predictions were made almost two thousand years ago!*⁶⁷

Lindsey's eschatological speculations, while criticised by some dispensationalists⁶⁸, are nevertheless representative of numerous other popular Christian Zionist writers such as Tim LaHaye⁶⁹, Mike Evans⁷⁰, John Hagee⁷¹, Randall Price⁷², Charles Dyer⁷³, Grant Jeffrey⁷⁴ and Dave Hunt⁷⁵. Leslie Flynn of Jews for Jesus, for example, illustrates how Old Testament prophecies can be used to describe future events and thereby reinforce a Zionist agenda.

*"The Jews are God's timepiece," ..They are the key to history and prophecy... God's unconditional covenant with Abraham, which includes the promise of the land, a seed to rule over the land and the blessing his offspring will be to all humankind... the regathering of Israel and her central place among the nations.*⁷⁶

While not a dispensationalist, Basilea Schlink, on the basis of a literalist reading of the Bible, similarly equates the ancient Jews with the contemporary State of Israel, and elevates them to a privileged status far above human sanction or criticism. Indeed she warns that those who reject such a conclusion are opposing God.

*Anyone who disputes Israel's right to the land of Canaan is actually opposing God and his holy covenant with the Patriarchs. He is striving against sacred, inviolable words and promises of God, which He has sworn to keep.*⁷⁷

The outworking of this hermeneutic can also be seen in the conclusions Anne Dexter reaches concerning the territorial extent of Israel.

*Some Arab believers and expatriate Christians in Israel feel so strongly about these matters that they will not read the parts of the Bible that seem to promise the land to the Jews or in any way uphold their election. Examples of this are certain sections of Isaiah and the song of Zechariah in Luke. Large parts of the Scriptures are effectively invalidated by this approach.*⁷⁸

The implication is clear, only those who read the Bible 'literally' are being faithful to the integrity of the Scriptures. It is interesting to observe how far this literalism is sometimes pressed by Christian Zionists. For example, while the promises of blessing made to Abraham in Genesis 12 were made personally to the patriarch, the International Christian Embassy not only applies them to the way other nations treat the State of Israel today but insists the promises also provide divine justification for Israel's continued occupation of parts of Syrian and Palestine.

*The Lord in His zealous love for Israel and the Jewish People blesses and curses peoples and judges nations based upon their treatment of the Chosen People of Israel... According to God's distribution of nations, the Land of Israel has been given to the Jewish People by God as an everlasting possession by an eternal covenant. The Jewish People have the absolute right to possess and dwell in the Land, including Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan.*⁷⁹

*Mike Evans, Founder and President of Lovers of Israel Inc., interprets the same passage in Genesis as meaning that as long as the United States supports Israel, it will survive and prosper. He argues that demonic forces are attempting to force America to betray Israel and that America's very survival will depend on her continued support of Israel.*⁸⁰

An Appraisal of the Christian Zionist Hermeneutic

With sales of over 40 million books in over 50 languages, Hal Lindsey is undoubtedly the most influential Christian Zionist writer today.⁸² This appraisal will therefore use Lindsey's own writings as illustrative of, as well as representative of, other Christian Zionist writers apply a 'literalist' hermeneutic.

Changing Interpretation

*It is noticeable how some authors have altered their interpretations to suit changing events.*⁸³ For example, in *There's a New World Coming* (1973), Lindsey was relatively circumspect in his interpretation of what some of the symbols used in the Book of Revelation.

I personally tend to think that God might utilize in his judgments some modern devices of man

which the Apostle John was at a loss for words to describe nineteen centuries ago! In the case just mentioned, the locusts might symbolize an advanced kind of helicopter...⁸⁴

By the time he wrote *Apocalypse Code* (1997), 24 years later, however, as new and more destructive military hardware became available, Lindsey's speculations became more dogmatic and specific. So, for example, "might symbolize" becomes what the apostle John "actually saw."

Just exactly how could a first century prophet describe, much less understand, the incredible advances in science and technology that exist at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries? Yet he testified and God bore witness that he actually saw and heard things like:

supersonic jet aircraft with missiles... advanced attack helicopters... intercontinental ballistic missiles with Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicles tipped with thermonuclear warheads... biological and chemical weapons, aircraft carriers, missile cruisers, nuclear submarines, laser weapons, space stations and satellites...⁸⁵

Attempting to keep pace with the dramatic geo-political changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Lindsey insisted in 1981 and again in 1994 that his, by then, apparently contradictory assessments of Russia were, nevertheless, both predicted in the Bible.

1980's Countdown to Armageddon Planet Earth 2000 A.D.

Today, the Soviets are without question the strongest power on the face of the earth. Lets look at recent history to see how the Russians rose to the might predicted for them thousands of years ago.⁸⁶

We see Russia as no longer a world threat, but a regional power with a world-class military - exactly what Ezekiel 38 and 39 predicted it would be.⁸⁷

With the gradual demise of Russia as a world power, and the disintegration of the communist empire, Lindsey began to switch his emphasis to Islam as the real threat to Israel and world peace.⁸⁸ The greatest threat to freedom and world peace today - is Islamic fundamentalism...⁸⁹

Late Great Planet Earth (1970) Apocalypse Code (1997)

The Russian force will establish command headquarters on Mount Moriah or the Temple area in Jerusalem. ...he seeks to utterly destroy the Jewish people.⁹⁰

...the Russian-Muslim force retreats back to Israel and sets up command HQs on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. These forces try to annihilate the Jews as they do this.⁹¹

In *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), the threat comes from "The Russian force." By 1997 this had become, "The Russian-Muslim force." By 1999 Lindsey's Bible was predicting that the power of the Anti-Christ had shifted to "A Muslim-Russian alliance"⁹²

Figurative Interpretation

Although Christian Zionists insist on interpreting Scripture literally, they are not always consistent. David Brickner claims that until recently,

...people tended to interpret the Bible's future predictions as symbolic. It was inconceivable to them that the end times events depicted in Scripture could possibly occur in any literal sense. All that has changed...⁹³

However, in his interpretation of Daniel 9 and the term 'weeks', Brickner looks for a symbolic explanation.

When Daniel talks about "weeks" (literally units of seven) in this passage, he is not speaking of literal weeks but of periods of time, each a period of seven years⁹⁴

In order to give a futurist reading to Daniel's prophecy, it is also necessary for Dispensationalists to posit a 'parenthesis' of 2000 years between the 69th and 70th week. Brickner, offers this explanation.

The prophecy of Daniel, chapter nine, has not been completely fulfilled. There is more--one "seven" of the seventy still remains to be played out. But there seems to be a break in Daniel's countdown; he indicates a time lapse between the sixty-ninth seven and the final seven. "The end will come like a flood, war will continue until the end and desolations have been decreed." The past 2000 years have been a parenthesis in Daniel's prophecy and we await that final seven: "He will confirm a covenant with many for one seven..."⁹⁵

This problem with this interpretation is that it has no biblical justification, here or in any other text. The arbitrary decision to stop the prophetic clock and place a 2000 year gap between Daniel's 69th and 70th week is probably the most eccentric example of a non-literal and unnatural interpretation imposed on the text by those who insist on a literal hermeneutic.⁹⁶

Lindsey explains the reasons for his own 'symbolic' approach to the Book of Revelation.

How could this first-century man describe the scientific wonders of the latter twentieth century? He had to illustrate them with phenomena of the first century; for instance, a thermonuclear war looked to him like a giant volcanic eruption spewing fire and brimstone... Much of the symbolism John used was the result of a first century man being catapulted in God's time machine up to the end of the twentieth century, then returned to his own time and commanded to write what he had seen and heard. The only way that John could obey that instruction was to use phenomena with which he was familiar to illustrate the scientific and technical marvels that he predicts.⁹⁷

Using Lindsey's 'Bible Code', the Apostle John's 'locusts' thereby become helicopters, 'horses prepared for battle' are actually heavily armed attack helicopters, 'crowns of gold' are the helmets worn by pilots, and the 'sound of their wings' are the 'thunderous sound of many attack helicopters flying overhead.'⁹⁸ The 'bow' wielded by the Antichrist in Revelation 6:1-2, is actually, "...a code for long range weapons like ICBM's."⁹⁹ The reference to the "colour of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone" in Revelation 9:17 also becomes the "Chinese national flag... emblazoned on the military vehicles."¹⁰⁰ Similarly, while Israel is always Israel, other nations mentioned in prophecy require interpretation. So, following Darby and Scofield, Lindsey equates ancient tribes and nations mentioned in Old Testament prophecies with contemporary enemies of Israel in the Middle East.¹⁰¹

In Psalm 83, some 3,000 years ago, God gave a warning of what would happen in the last days... In these verses the Philistia or Philistines are the modern Palestinians. Tyre is modern Lebanon. Assyria is modern Syria.¹⁰²

What is not always clear is the basis upon which these confident assertions are made.

Contradictory Interpretation

While dispensationalists claim to use a consistent, plain and literal interpretation of Scripture, at times, even though they share the same theology and eschatology they nevertheless reach very different, and sometimes contradictory, conclusions. For example, in their interpretation of Revelation 9:13-19, Hal Lindsey and M.R. DeHann contradict one another:

M.R. DeHann (1946)

Hal Lindsey (1973)

In Revelation 9:13-21 we have a description of an army of two hundred million horsemen... seems to be a supernatural army of horrible beings, probably demons, who are permitted to plague the unrepentant sinners on the earth...¹⁰³

The four angels of Revelation 9:14-15 will mobilize an army of 200 million soldiers from east of the Euphrates... I believe these 200 million troops are Red Chinese soldiers accompanied by other Eastern allies...¹⁰⁴

For DeHann the 200 million are supernatural beasts while for Lindsey they are literally Chinese soldiers, although the horses are mobilized ballistic missile launchers.¹⁰⁵ Both claim theirs is a literal interpretation of the text. It seems rather that their form of hermeneutic is instead 'licensed for full-scale exegetical exploitation.'¹⁰⁶

Enhanced Interpretation

To assist readers in their understanding of otherwise obscure passages of Scripture, Lindsey, like other authors, has the tendency to add words to the biblical text, absent in the original but which reinforce his interpretation. So, in *The Road to Holocaust*, for example, where Lindsey is anxious to stress how the promises made in Romans 11 apply to the State of Israel and not merely to Jews generally, he 'adds the word 'national' to the reference to Israel in the text.¹⁰⁷

Similarly, in a quotation of Matthew 24:15-18, Lindsey adds a reference to the rebuilding of the temple, necessary for this prophecy to refer to some future date rather than prior to 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

Therefore when you see the Abomination which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [of the rebuilt temple] (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...¹⁰⁸

Moishe Rosen of Jews for Jesus similarly argues that Zechariah's prophecy promising an end to the Babylonian captivity and the return of the Israelites refers to the 20th Century.

First, the regathering of the Jewish people will take place from the west (represented by Egypt) and from the east (represented by Assyria).¹⁰⁹

One of the most popular but erroneous assumptions Christian Zionists continue to make is that 'Gog' and 'Magog' mentioned in Ezekiel 38:15-16 refer to Russia. Lindsey even adds the word 'Russia' to reinforce his interpretation. 'And you (Russia) will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you...' ¹¹⁰

Lindsey's insistence that Gog and Magog refer to Russia, while repeated by many other Christian Zionist writers ¹¹¹, has been discredited by biblical scholars and etymologists. ¹¹²

Unsubstantiated Interpretation

Lindsey is particularly prone to making unsubstantiated claims. For example,

I know from my study of the Bible that the final great war includes Turkey as part of the Islamic grouping allied with Russia... The great nations that do get Biblical reference are the Kings of the East, (China, India, Pakistan - all openly nuclear), Russia (Gog and Magog), Libya, Egypt, Iran, Iraq and so on. ¹¹³

Without offering any corroborating evidence, Lindsey claims that the Bible foretold many other recent events including the rise of Muslim fundamentalism, the collapse of the Israeli peace process and the development of the European community, all at the same time in history. ¹¹⁴

Such categorical but unsubstantiated claims are not exclusive to Lindsey but found in the writings of other Christian Zionists. ¹¹⁵ For example, David Brickner, without explanation, insists that, 'we know that Persia is Iran,' ¹¹⁶ and that the destruction of Babylon mentioned in Revelation 18 is 'modern day Iraq.' ¹¹⁷

Using Hal Lindsey's writings as an example, it has been demonstrated that the apparently plain 'literal' interpretation of Scripture is flexible enough to change to suit historical events, may contradict the findings of other literalists, can involve eisegesis rather than exegesis, and lead to dogmatic and fanciful but unsubstantiated claims about contemporary history.

Conclusions

It has been shown that historically, it was the development of a literalist-futurist interpretation of biblical prophecy amongst the Albury Circle and then Powerscourt conferences, which eventually gave rise to the dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church so foundational to Christian Zionism. This movement may be traced from the influence and writings of individuals such as Irving, Darby, Scofield through to Chafer, Moody, Ryrie and the wider dispensationalist movement associated with, amongst others, the Brethren, Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary.

Following Darby, Lindsey and his contemporaries believe 'prophecy is prewritten history.' ¹¹⁸ They understand the prophets to be pronouncing with 'prophetic marksmanship' ¹¹⁹ predetermined events thousands of years later, giving an 'exciting view' ¹²⁰ of human destiny. In so doing they detach predictions concerning the future from the covenantal context within which the prophecies were originally given. Such a view is at variance with the Hebrew prophets who consistently stress that their intention is to call God's people back to the terms of their covenant relationship. Their role was not primarily to reveal arbitrary and otherwise hidden facts about predestined future events thousands of years later. The truly prophetic element of the Hebrew scriptures yearns for fidelity. God's message to his people is always two edged, promising blessing but also warning of judgement. The future is always conditional upon faith and obedience to God's revealed will. Set within the context of the wider fundamentalist movement, Christian Zionists treat the Hebrew and Christian scriptures as a 'frozen biblical text' ¹²¹ in which every word is given equal and continuing divine authority. The focus, however, based on highly selective texts, is placed upon a restored Jewish kingdom rather than the Body of Christ, upon the contemporary State of Israel rather than the cross of Christ. ¹²² Their selective hermeneutic leads them to ignore how Jesus and the Apostles reinterpreted the Old Testament ¹²³

It is instead made to speak dogmatically, with no recognition of other perspectives, about present and future events, almost as if the New Testament had never been written. ¹²⁴ Under the Old Covenant, revelation from God came often in shadow, image, form and prophecy. In the New Covenant that revelation finds its consummation in reality, substance and fulfilment in Jesus Christ. ¹²⁵ The question is therefore not whether the promises of the covenant are to be understood literally or spiritually as Christian Zionists like to suggest. ¹²⁶

It is instead a question of whether they should be understood in terms of Old Covenant shadow or New Covenant reality. This is the most basic hermeneutical error which Christian Zionists consistently repeat. Biblical prophecy is invariably conditional rather than fatalistic and given within the context of the covenant relationship between God and his chosen people. It was the false prophets who flattered the people with promises of peace and prosperity without specifying the covenantal

preconditions of repentance and faith.

The Christian Zionist's particular reading of both history and contemporary events, determined by the dubious exegesis of highly selective biblical texts, as well as their theological presuppositions, is therefore essentially fatalistic, polarised and dualistic. It sets Israel and the Jewish people apart from and above other peoples in the Middle East. In so doing, however unintentionally, it perpetuates, exacerbates and justifies the endemic racism and mistrust plaguing the Middle East because '*The Bible tells them so.*'¹²⁷

It leads authors such as Lindsey, Hunt and Jeffrey to demonise Russia, China, Islam and the Arab nations. It encourages the continued military and economic funding of Israel by the United States. It identifies with right-wing Israelis who resist negotiating land for peace and instead, it reinforces Israel's apartheid policies, and the settlement and absorption of the Occupied Territories into the State of Israel. It also incites fundamentalist groups committed to destroying the Dome of the Rock and rebuilding the Jewish Temple. Ironically, attempts by Christian Zionists to defend Israel and to refute anti-Semitism, may actually be leading to the very holocaust so abhorred but repeatedly predicted.

- ¹ For example, David Pawson, *When Jesus Returns* (London, Hodder, 1998); John MacArthur, *The Future of Israel* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1991); R.T. Kendall, 'How literally do you read your Bible?' *Israel & Christians Today*, Summer 2001, p. 9.
- ² Jews for Jesus and the Churches Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ).
- ³ The Ebenezer Trust and Operation Exodus
- ⁴ The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, Christian Friends of Israel and Bridges for Peace.
- ⁵ J.I. Packer, 'Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics' in *Scripture and Truth*, eds. D.A. Carson & John D. Woodbridge (Leicester, IVP, 1983), p.345ff.
- ⁶ James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London, SCM, 1977); J.I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (London, IVF, 1958)
- ⁷ Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1971), p. 188. Dave MacPherson, *The Rapture Plot* (Simpsonville, South Carolina, Millennium III Publishers, 1995)
- ⁸ Dallimore, *Life.*, p. 61.
- ⁹ Edward Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God* (Glasgow, Chalmers and Collins, 1826)
- ¹⁰ Dallimore, *Life.*, p. 62.
- ¹¹ Edward Irving, preliminary discourse, 'on Ben Ezra', *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra a converted Jew, *Translated from the Spanish, with a Preliminary Discourse* (London, L.B. Seeley & Sons, 1827); Arnold Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving, Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1983), p. 62.
- ¹² *The Christian Observer*, June 1828, pp. 398-399. Cited in Michael Hennell, *Sons of the Prophets* (London, SPCK, 1979), p. 11.
- ¹³ P. E. Shaw, *The Catholic Apostolic Church* (New York, King's Crown Press, 1946), p. 18, cited in Michael Hennell, *Sons of the Prophets, Evangelical Leaders of the Victorian Church* (London, SPCK, 1979), p. 11.
- ¹⁴ Irving, *Ben Ezra.*
- ¹⁵ Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh, Banner of Trust, 1971), p. 191.
- ¹⁶ Andrew L. Drummond, Edward Irving and his Circle (London, James Clarke), p. 133.
- ¹⁷ Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Exeter, Paternoster, 1968), p. 109.
- ¹⁸ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, A History from the 1730's to the 1980's.* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 88.
- ¹⁹ Lewis Way, *The Latter Rain*, 2nd edn (London, 1821), in Bebbington, *Evangelicalism.*, p. 88.
- ²⁰ Dean Hugh M'Neile, *The Collected Works, Vol. II. The Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation* (London, The Christian Book Society, [1830] 1878)
- ²¹ M'Neile, *Collected Works, Vol. II.*, pp. 431 ff.
- ²² Margaret Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving*, Vol. 1. 2nd Edition (1862) pp. 197-202 393.
- ²³ Shaw, *Catholic.*, p. 18.
- ²⁴ Edward Miller, *The History and Doctrines of Irvingism* (London, 1878), cited in Drummond, *Edward.*, p. 134.
- ²⁵ *Oliphant, Life.*, p. 243.
- ²⁶ Drummond, *Edward.*, p. 133.
- ²⁷ *Morning Watch*, no. 7. p. 621. cited in Drummond, *Edward*, p. 135.
- ²⁸ Hugh M'Neile, *The Collected Works, Vol. II. The Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation* (London, The Christian Book Society, 1878), p. 213.
- ²⁹ M'Neile, *Prophecies.*, preface to new edition 1866, first published 1830; see also George Stanley Faber, *A Treatise on the Genius and Object of the Patriarchal, the Levitical and the Christian Dispensations.* (London, F.C & J. Rivington, 1823). 2 vols.
- ³⁰ Murray, *Puritan.* p.191.
- ³¹ Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Waterloo, Ontario, Herald Press, 1995), pp. 81, 88. See also Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1995), pp. 65-71.
- ³² J. N. Darby, 'The Covenants.' *Collected Writings.*, Doctrine I. Vol. III. William Kelly, ed. (Kingston on Thames, Stow Hill Bible and Trust Depot, 1962). p. 68.
- ³³ J. N. Darby, 'Reflections Upon the Prophetic Inquiry, and the Views Advanced in It', *Collected Writings.*, Prophetic I, Vol. II. pp. 6-7; 'Evidence from Scripture for the passing away of the present dispensations' *Collected Writings.*, Prophetic I, Vol. II. p. 108.
- ³⁴ Darby, *Collected Writings.*, Vol. 11, p. 363
- ³⁵ J. N. Darby, *Letters of John Nelson Darby.*, Vol. 1. (London, Stow Hill Bible and Trust Depot, n.d.), pp. 343-345.
- ³⁶ Coad, *History.*, p. 129.
- ³⁷ James Barr, *Escaping from Fundamentalism* (London, SCM, 1984), p. 6.
- ³⁸ W. G. Turner, *John Nelson Darby* (London, Chapter Two, [1901], 1986), back cover.
- ³⁹ Gerstner, *Wrongly.*, p. 43.
- ⁴⁰ C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Philadelphia, Philadelphia School of the Bible, 1928)
- ⁴¹ C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (New York, Loizeaux Brothers, 1888)
- ⁴² Canfield, *Incredible.*, p. 122.
- ⁴³ C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Philadelphia, Philadelphia School of the Bible, 1928)
- ⁴⁴ Scofield, *Rightly.*, p. 3.
- ⁴⁵ *Canfield, Incredible.*, p. 166.
- ⁴⁶ (John 3:16, 18; 1 Corinthians 12:13)
- ⁴⁷ C.I. Scofield, *Scofield Bible Correspondence Course* (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute), pp. 45-46.
- ⁴⁸ Scofield, *Scofield.*, Index.
- ⁴⁹ Scofield, *Scofield.*, fn. 1, p. 922.
- ⁵⁰ Scofield, *Scofield.*, fn. 1, p. 1348.
- ⁵¹ William E. Cox, *An Examination of Dispensationalism* (Philadelphia, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974), p. 55-56.
- ⁵² Cited in Gerstner, *Wrongly.*, p. 46
- ⁵³ L. S. Chafer, 'Dispensationalism,' *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 93 (October 1936), 410, 417.
- ⁵⁴ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism.*, p. 40.
- ⁵⁵ Louis Goldberg, 'Whose Land Is It?' *Issues*, 4.2. Goldberg quotes from Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1964), p. 60.
- ⁵⁶ L. S. Chafer, 'Dispensationalism,' *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 93 (October 1936) pp. 446-447. Quoted in Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law, Contrast or Continuum? The Hermeneutic of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 24-25.
- ⁵⁷ Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Findlay, Ohio, Dunham, 1958), p. 529.
- ⁵⁸ Kathy Kern, 'Blessing Israel? Christian Embassy Responds' Christian Peacemakers Team, Internet:menno.org.cpt.news@MennoLink.org 2 November 1997.

- ⁵⁹ 'Replacement Theology: Is the Church the 'Israel of God'?' CMJ Leaflet. n.d.
- ⁶⁰ Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, Bantam, 1989), pp. 7-8.
- ⁶¹ For example the Temple and its sacrifices are seen as types or illustrations of Jesus. See Hebrews 9 and Matthew 26:61 "Destroy this Temple and I will rebuild it again in three days."
- ⁶² Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1971-1989), vol. 1: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, p. 16. Cited in Gary DeMar & Peter Leithart, *The Legacy of Hatred Continues* (Tyler, Texas, Institute of Christian Economics, 1989), p. 38; Clement, 'First Epistle.' In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1. pp. 12-13; Epistle of Barnabas IV. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1. p. 138; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, XI. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1. pp. 200-267; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*. IV. XXI. 3. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1. p. 493;
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- ⁶⁴ John Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Leicester, IVP, 1981), pp. 97-114; Richard Longnecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1975); John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Guildford, Eagle, 1993)
- ⁶⁵ E. A. Martens, *Plot and Purpose in the Old Testament*. (Leicester, IVP, 1981); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom, A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament*, (Exeter, Paternoster, 1981); *According to Plan, The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*, (Leicester, IVP, 1991).
- ⁶⁶ DeMar and Leithart, *Legacy*., p. 37.
- ⁶⁷ *Lindsey, 1980's.*, p. 11; *There's.*, p. 7.
- ⁶⁸ Craig A. Blaising & Darrell L. Bock, ed. *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1992, pp. 14-15.
- ⁶⁹ Tim LaHaye, *No Fear of the Storm, Why Christians Will Escape All the Tribulation* (Sisters, Oregon, Multnomah, 1992)
- ⁷⁰ Mike Evans, *Israel, America's Key to Survival* (Plainfield, Logos, n.d.);
- ⁷¹ John Hagee, *Final Dawn Over Jerusalem* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998)
- ⁷² Randall Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1999)
- ⁷³ Charles Dyer, *The Rise of Babylon, Signs of the End Times* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1991); *World News and Biblical Prophecy* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1993)
- ⁷⁴ Grant R. Jeffrey, *War in the Middle East & The Road to Armageddon* (Toronto, Ontario, Frontier Research Publications, 1991)
- ⁷⁵ Dave Hunt, *The Cup of Trembling: Jerusalem and Bible Prophecy* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1995)
- ⁷⁶ *JFJ, Publications Page*. obtained, 29 October 1996.
- ⁷⁷ *Schlink, Israel.*, p. 22.
- ⁷⁸ *Dexter, View.*, pp. 214-215.
- ⁷⁹ *International Christian Zionist Congress Proclamation*, International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem. 25-29 February 1996. Note how place names are 'judaized' by the reintroduction of ancient biblical names. This is particularly apparent in the naming of the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories.
- ⁸⁰ *Evans, Israel.*, p. 221.
- ⁸¹ For example Ezekiel 33:21-29.
- ⁸² *Lindsey, Road.*, p. 195. For other statistics see George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1991) p. 77, and Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, North Carolina Press, 1993), p. 311. See also Gary Friesen, 'A Return Visit,' *Moody Monthly* (May 1988), p. 30; Lindsey's latest publisher, Western Front, is more conservative referring to 'a dozen books with combined world sales of more than 35 million.' *Lindsey, The Final Battle* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1995), p. xiii & back cover.
- ⁸³ Compare Grant Jeffrey, *Armageddon, Appointment with Destiny* (Toronto, Frontier research Publications, 1988), pp. 182-187; with *Messiah, War in the Middle East & Road to Armageddon* (Toronto, Frontier research Publications, 1991), p.268. In the former Jeffrey dates Daniel's 70th seek to the 7 years 1993-2000 and the Lord's return and cleansing of a rebuilt Temple to the 24th of the 9th month in 2000 A.D. In the latter book Jeffrey appears to contradict himself claiming, "We cannot and must not set dates" p. 276.
- ⁸⁴ *Lindsey, There's.*, p. 8. See also page 141 for Cobra helicopters.
- ⁸⁵ *Lindsey, Apocalypse.*, p. 36.
- ⁸⁶ *Lindsey, 1980's.*, p. 68.
- ⁸⁷ *Lindsey, Planet.*, p. 216.
- ⁸⁸ *Lindsey*, Chapter 1 of *The Final Battle*, (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1995), is entitled "The New Islamic Global Threat". p. 1.
- ⁸⁹ *Lindsey, Planet.*, p. 171.
- ⁹⁰ *Lindsey, Late.*, p. 160.
- ⁹¹ *Lindsey, Apocalypse.*, p. 153.
- ⁹² *Lindsey, Briefing.*, 7th January 1999.
- ⁹³ *Brickner, Future.*, p. 7.
- ⁹⁴ *Brickner, Future.*, p. 17.
- ⁹⁵ *Brickner, Future.*, p. 18. See also his 'prophetic parenthesis' timetable, p. 130.
- ⁹⁶ Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness* (Atlanta, American Vision, 1997), p. 81.
- ⁹⁷ *Lindsey, Israel.*, pp. 32-33. This chapter is reused heavily in *Apocalypse Code*, pp. 30-44.
- ⁹⁸ *Lindsey, Apocalypse.*, p. 42.
- ⁹⁹ *Lindsey, Apocalypse.*, p. 72.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Lindsey, Planet Earth: The Final Chapter*, p. 247.
- ¹⁰¹ J. N. Darby, 'The Hopes,' *The Collected Writings*, Prophetic I, Vol. II, p. 380; C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Reference Bible*, fn. 1, p. 883.
- ¹⁰² *Lindsey, Final.*, p. 2.
- ¹⁰³ *M. R. DeHann, Revelation, 35 Simple Studies in the Major Themes of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1946), p. 148;
- ¹⁰⁴ Hal Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming* (London, Coverdale, 1973), pp. 142-143.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Lindsey, There's.*, p. 143.
- ¹⁰⁶ Frank Kermode, "Can we say absolutely anything we like?" *Art, Politics, and Will: Essays in Honour of Lionel Trilling*. ed. Quentin Anderson, et. Al. (New York, Basic, 1977), pp. 159-72, Cited in Kathleen Boone, *The Bible Tells Them So* (London, SCM 1989) p. 44.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Lindsey, Road.*, p. 176.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Lindsey, Apocalypse.*, p. 78.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Rosen, Overture.*, p. 152.
- ¹¹⁰ *Lindsey, 1980's.*, p. 65.

- ¹¹¹ Jeffrey, *Armageddon.*, pp. 98ff.
- ¹¹² Edwin Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontier* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1982), pp. 19-27.
- ¹¹³ Lindsey, *Final.*, p. 183; *Planet Earth: The Final Chapter*, p. 213.
- ¹¹⁴ Lindsey, International Intelligence Briefing, 7th January 1999. Lindsey also claims a 'gigantic fault' runs through the Mount of Olives. *Late.*, p. 174.
- ¹¹⁵ Charles Dyer, *The Rise of Babylon* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1991), p. 198; Grant Jeffrey, *Armageddon, Appointment with Destiny* (Toronto, Frontier Research, 1988), pp. 185-187.
- ¹¹⁶ Brickner, *Future.*, p. 70.
- ¹¹⁷ Brickner, *Future.*, p. 73.
- ¹¹⁸ C. Van der Waal, *Hal Lindsey and Biblical Prophecy* (Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada, Inheritance Publications, 1991), p. 51.
- ¹¹⁹ Lindsey, *Late.*, back cover.
- ¹²⁰ Lindsey, *Late.*, p. 18.
- ¹²¹ Ernest R. Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," *Church History* 36 (1967), 70. Cited in Gerstner, *Wrongly.*, p. 100.
- ¹²² Bass, *Backgrounds.*, p. 151.
- ¹²³ See Galatians 4 where the Gentiles are now regarded as the children of Sarah and the Jews who have rejected Jesus are the children of Hagar.
- ¹²⁴ Kyle regards this form of hermenutics as 'Peshet' which is Aramaic for 'interpretation' Richard Kyle, *The Last Days are Here Again*, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1998), p. 199.
- ¹²⁵ see Hebrews 1:1-4, 8:13, 10:1.
- ¹²⁶ R.T. Kendall, "How literally do you read your Bible?" *Israel and Christians Today*, Summer 2001, p.9.
- ¹²⁷ Kathleen C. Boone, *The Bible tells Them So: The Discourse of Protestant Fundamentalism* (London, SCM, 1990).

Chapter 9

The Jewish Temple in Contemporary Christian Zionism

Heaven on Earth : The Temple in Biblical Theology,
ed. Desmond Alexander & Simon Gathercole (Paternoster 2004)

On January 8, 2001, former Shin Bet secret service chief Carmi Gillon and former police commissioner Assaf Hefetz together with leading Israeli academics delivered a report to the then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak detailing their concerns regarding plots by Jewish extremist groups to blow up the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque.¹ Keshev, the Centre for the Protection of Democracy based in Tel Aviv, founded by Gillon and Hefetz following the assassination of Rabin, published a 12 page report entitled, "Target Temple Mount" which examined current threats to the Temple Mount from extreme militant and Messianic groups. The report claimed, 'The Temple Mount is like a smouldering volcano that is bubbling and threatening to erupt - a threat that is liable to endanger Israel's existence.'² In 1999, the US Anti-Defamation League (ADL) included Gershon Salomon, leader of the Temple Mount Faithful, on a list of "threats to (US) national security."³

On the 8th January 2001, 500,000 secular, religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews gathered near the Temple Mount at the Western Wall, 'and swore faithfulness to the Temple Mount and Jerusalem.'⁴ In July 2001 the Rabbinical Council of Judea, Samaria and Gaza called on all rabbis to bring their communities to visit the Temple Mount. This was the first time a group of rabbis representing a significant proportion of the religious Jewish community had ruled it permissible for Jews to ascend the Temple Mount. Previously this had been forbidden. The rabbis also called upon the Yesha Council of Jewish settlements to organise mass visits to the Temple Mount from the settlements. Settlement residents tend to be the more politically right wing religious Jews.⁵ During the same month, the Israeli Supreme Court made a significant decision, once again, for the first time, allowing the Temple Mount Faithful to hold a symbolic cornerstone laying ceremony for the Third Temple near the Dung Gate adjacent to the Western Wall. Each year attempts are made by the Temple Mount Faithful to place a three ton stone on the Temple Mount on Tisha b'Av (29th July) when the Jews mourn the destruction of the first and second Temples and also during the Feast of Sukkoth (usually early October).⁶ Muslims see this as further indication that Zionists are attempting to take the Temple Mount area by force, destroy the Dome of the Rock and rebuild the Jewish Temple on the site.⁷

This paper will examine the reasons why Christian Zionists believe so passionately that the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is imminent and actively support those committed to achieving it.⁸ Belief in a rebuilt Jewish temple lies at the heart of the controversy concerning the claim to exclusive Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem as well as the expansion of the borders of Israel to include not only the Palestinian Territories but, based on the literal fulfilment of Genesis 15:18, most of the Middle East from Egypt to the Euphrates.⁹

We should not forget... that the supreme purpose of the ingathering of exiles and the establishment of our state is the building of the temple. The temple is at the very top of the pyramid.¹⁰

It is all a matter of sovereignty. He who controls the Temple Mount, controls Jerusalem. And he who controls Jerusalem, controls the land of Israel.¹¹

Using an analogy of three concentric rings, the Land represents the outer ring, Jerusalem the middle and the Temple the centre. The three rings comprise the Zionist expansionist agenda of which the outer was claimed in 1948, the middle in 1967 and the inner now under heightened threat.

1. Introduction : The Temple of Prayer The Importance of the Temple to Jews and Zionist Christians

For the past 19 centuries, religious Jews have prayed three times a day, "May it be Thy will that the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our days."¹² Randall Price claims that the Torah, 'obligates the Jewish nation to rebuild the Temple whenever it becomes possible to do so (Ex 25:8).'¹³ However, when IDF Chaplain Rabbi Shlomo Goren blew the shofar and performed a religious ceremony near the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in August 1967 just days after its capture, he was criticised by both the secular Israeli press and orthodox Jews.¹⁴ By 1989 Time Magazine reported the findings of a survey showing that some 20 years later, 18% of Israelis thought it was time to rebuild the Temple.¹⁵ A similar Gallup poll was conducted in Israel in 1996 to assess opinions on the question of sovereignty over the Temple Mount and the rebuilding the Jewish Temple. It found that 58% of Israelis now supported the Temple Mount Faithful and therebuilding the Jewish Temple. This was allegedly the largest show of support any organisation had ever received in Israel on any subject. Significantly, the highest percentage of support came from young Israelis.¹⁶ A simple Internet search of the words 'Temple Mount' reveals 351,000 pages. Add the word 'Christian' and there are still 54,300 web pages of data.¹⁷

Contemporary Christian Zionists who have written on the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple include Thomas Ice and Randall Price¹⁸, Grant Jeffrey¹⁹, Hal Lindsey²⁰, Tim LaHaye²¹ and Dave Hunt.²² Their combined published book sales exceed 70 million in more than 50 languages. Their views are therefore influential and cannot be dismissed as marginal or esoteric. They are endorsed by some of the largest theological colleges and missionary institutions²³ as well as a significant proportion of evangelical, Charismatic, Pentecostal and fundamentalist Christians world-wide. Grace Halsell speculates that 10% of Americans support this movement.²⁴

Other Christian Zionist leaders including James DeLoach, Terry Risenhoover and Doug Kreiger have also been influential in gathering significant American financial and political support for extreme Jewish organisations such as Gush Emunim and the Temple Mount Faithful.²⁵ Christian and Jewish Zionists are united in the conviction that the Muslim Dome of the Rock must be destroyed, the third Jewish Temple built, priests consecrated and sacrifices reinstated in fulfilment of biblical prophecy and to ensure the coming of Messiah.²⁶

Christian Zionists see the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and the capture of Jerusalem in 1967 as highly significant, signalling the end of 2000 years exile, and the end of the 'Times of the Gentiles'. Hal Lindsey is regarded as the 'Father of the Modern-Day Bible Prophecy movement'²⁷ and a leading representative of Christian Zionists. He insists the Temple Mount is 'the most disputed 35 acres on the Planet,'²⁸ and the fate of the earth will be determined by its contested ownership.²⁹

Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it... With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2600 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of Jesus Christ's soon coming is before us... It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found... For all those who trust in Jesus Christ, it is a time of electrifying excitement.³⁰

Since the 1960's, I have been writing and saying that the single most important key to prophecies yet to be fulfilled involve rebuilding the Temple. Twenty-five years ago, the whole idea of Jews actually rebuilding their holy Temple seemed quaint-even far fetched. Today, nobody's laughing about the notion.³¹

Jews for Jesus also endorse and sell 'Ready to Rebuild: The Imminent Plan to Rebuild the Last Days Temple', by Thomas Ice and Randall Price. These dispensational writers advocate the rebuilding of the Jewish temple next to, if not in place of, the Dome of the Rock.³² The book review, quoting John Walvoord, chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary, also implies the State of Israel supports moves to rebuild the Temple.

Something is happening in Israel! For many years there has been speculation as to whether the Second Temple, destroyed in 70 AD, will ever be rebuilt - even though Scripture predicts it. Now you can read the startling evidence. The move is already underway. This fascinating, fast-moving overview of contemporary events shows why the Temple is significant in Bible prophecy and how, more than

ever, Israel is ready to rebuild. "A masterpiece presenting all the various views with substantiating evidence... A mine of information for those concerned about prophecy... A solid basis for faith and what can actually be expected in regard to the rebuilding of the Temple... (it) is highly recommended." - John F. Walvoord³³

2. The Temple of Dispensationalism The Historical Origins of the Christian Zionist Temple Movement

2.1 The Premillennial Presuppositions of a Rebuilt Temple

Of the three eschatological positions, amillennial, postmillennial and premillennial, it is the latter, with its belief in a literal and physical thousand year Messianic reign on earth, centred on Jerusalem, which has sustained belief in a future Jewish Temple. While this view was held prior to 1948³⁴, it was the founding of the State of Israel, and more especially, the Israeli capture of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967, which became the catalyst for speculation on the imminent rebuilding of the Temple.³⁵ In the early 19th Century the dominant eschatological position among evangelicals was postmillennial, believing the Church would triumph over evil, progressively converting the world before the return of Jesus. Gradually the influence of Edward Irving's apocalypticism³⁶ and J. N. Darby's pessimistic dispensationalism³⁷, brought about a revival in premillennial thinking to the point when by the mid 20th Century it had come to dominate evangelical and fundamentalist circles, virtually synonymous with dispensationalism.³⁸

2.2 A Futurist Literal Hermeneutic

Speculation about the rebuilding of the Temple is largely the consequence of a futurist literal hermeneutic popularised in the early 19th Century by Edward Irving³⁹ and the Albury Circle meeting in Surrey,⁴⁰ later by John Nelson Darby and the Powerscourt Conferences in Ireland⁴¹ and then most effectively by Cyrus Scofield in the United States through his Scofield Reference Bible.⁴² It is based on the premise that prophecies made in the Old Testament which have not yet been fulfilled literally, word for word, must await future fulfilment. Similarly the futurizing of passages such as the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 require a rebuilt Temple for their fulfilment.⁴³ So, Scofield insisted,

Not one instance exists of a 'spiritual' or figurative fulfilment of prophecy... Jerusalem is always Jerusalem, Israel is always Israel, Zion is always Zion... Prophecies may never be spiritualised, but are always literal.⁴⁴

One of Scofield's disciples, Lewis Sperry Chafer, who founded Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924, became his most articulate and influential exponent producing the first and definitive eight volume systematic theology of Dispensationalism based on Scofield's scheme.⁴⁵ Chafer defines the literal hermeneutic upon which dispensationalism and the Christian Zionist belief in a rebuilt Temple is based.

The outstanding characteristic of the dispensationalist is... That he believes every statement of the Bible and gives to it the plain, natural meaning its words imply.⁴⁶

John Walvoord, Chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary, summarises the position of premillennial dispensationalists who take the authors of the Bible "to mean what they say".

Orthodox Jews for many years have been praying daily for the rebuilding of the temple. In this expectation, they have had the support of premillennarians who interpret Scriptural prophecies as meaning what they say when they refer to a future temple in Jerusalem. The world as a whole, as well as the majority of the church, have tended to ignore this expectation as being too literal an interpretation of prophecy.⁴⁷

Walvoord claims history has proved the premillennialist correct.

The fact that Israel is now in their ancient land organized as a nation, and the impressive recent events which have put the city of Jerusalem itself into the hands of Israel, have to a large extent revealed the premises and conclusions of both the amillennarians and postmillennarians to be in error.⁴⁸

Walvoord's dogmatic presuppositions are readily questioned by those who hold differing eschatological views.⁴⁹

2.3 The Dispensational Distinction between the Church and Israel

The literalist hermeneutic of dispensationalism leads them to distinguish between God's continuing purposes for the Jewish people from those of the Church.⁵⁰ The idea that the Jews are God's earthly people and the Church God's heavenly people was first argued by John Nelson Darby.⁵¹

Charles Ryrie insists the sine qua non of Dispensationalism to be:

1. A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the Church distinct...
2. This distinction between Israel and the church is born out of a system of hermeneutics that is usually called literal interpretation...⁵²

Scofield taught as a consequence that it was God's intention to restore the nation of Israel to Palestine, to rebuild the Temple, and re-institute the priesthood and sacrificial system.

According to the prophets, Israel, regathered from all nations, restored to her own land, and converted, is yet to have her greatest earthly exaltation and glory.⁵³

Scofield even claimed that there will be a fourth millennium temple in Jerusalem.

In a sense all the temples (i.e. Solomon's; Ezra's; Herod's; that which will be used by the unbelieving Jews under the covenant with the Beast [Dan. 9.27; Mt. 24. 15; 2 Thes. 2. 3,4]; and Ezekiel's future kingdom temple [Ezk. 40-47.]), are treated as one 'house'-the 'house of the Lord,' ⁵⁴

The conviction held by Christian Zionists that the Jewish Temple must be rebuilt is therefore based upon a premillennial eschatology, a futurist literal hermeneutic and the dispensationalist distinction between Israel and the Church. These foundational presuppositions stand or fall together.⁵⁵

3. The Temple of Prophecy

The Biblical Basis for the Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple

The conviction that the Temple must be rebuilt is based on the assumption that certain Old Testament prophecies referring to the Temple have not yet been fulfilled and upon a few New Testament references which, when read using a futurist literal hermeneutic, imply the existence of a Jewish Temple immediately prior to the return of Christ.

3.1 Unfulfilled Old Testament Prophecies

One of the most frequently quoted Old Testament passages by Christian Zionists is Daniel 9:24-27. The sanctuary appears to have already been destroyed in verse 26 yet sacrifices are brought to an end in verse 27 and then the 'abomination that causes desolation' desecrates the Temple. On the basis of a literal chronology in which it is necessary to place a gap of nearly 2000 years between the verses, Lindsey confidently argues,

This prophecy speaks of sacrifice and offerings which demand that the Jews rebuild the Temple for the third time upon its original site. At that point, Judaism and Islam will be placed on an inevitable course of war over the site, a war that will start Armageddon... any move toward that direction is a crucial clue to what hour it is on God's prophetic timetable.⁵⁶

David Brickner, International Director of Jews for Jesus, reaches the same conclusion.

Obviously the Temple has been rebuilt because Daniel tells us this ruler puts an end to sacrifice and sets up some kind of abomination (a loathsome horror that would be anathema to Jewish worship) right inside the Temple in Jerusalem. Ultimately this ruler is destroyed in a final conflagration of enormous proportion.⁵⁷

Kenneth Barker posits five rather questionable reasons for the gap between the 69th and 70th week. His two strongest arguments are based on literalist dispensational presuppositions which evaporate if they are themselves questioned.

The seventieth seven could not have been fulfilled because the results of the Messiah's work outlined in v. 24 have not yet been realized... All the remaining unfulfilled prophecies become unintelligible unless the present church age is regarded as a distinct period of time of unknown duration in God's prophetic program.⁵⁸

There is nothing, however, in the text of Daniel 9 that requires a futurist scenario, suggests a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks, or predicts the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple. Gary DeMar points out,

The idea of separation and the placement of an indeterminable gap between the two sets of weeks is one of the most unnatural and nonliteral interpretations of Scripture found in any eschatological system.⁵⁹

Other commentators regard attempts to date Daniel's 'weeks' are essentially flawed because they fail to read this prophecy as symbolic 'chronography' rather than literal chronology. So, for

example, Goldingay claims Daniel is using,

...a stylized scheme of history used to interpret historical data rather than arising from them, comparable to cosmology, arithmology, and genealogy...⁶⁰

Others also see these verses as having been fulfilled theologically in Jesus who by his death put an end to sacrifices as well as the Temple.⁶¹

Moishe Rosen, however, following a futurist literal reading, claims Ezekiel 43 also refers to contemporary events leading to the imminent rebuilding of the Temple.

...at some point in these stressful days, the ancient Jewish Temple will be rebuilt on the holy Temple Mount in Jerusalem... Prophecy foretells the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple and the reinstatement of the sacrifices prescribed in the law of Moses. In a vision of the future Temple, Ezekiel received this word... Some way, somehow, the Temple will be rebuilt, in spite of the fact that two Arab shrines now stand on the only site on earth where this Temple may stand.⁶

Such a conviction is based on the imposition of dispensational presuppositions and a futurist hermeneutic rather than by exegeting what the text actually says. The same futurist assumptions are used to interpret references to the destruction of the Temple found in the New Testament.

3.2 The New Testament Fulfilment

The most important New Testament passage used to support the belief in the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is Matthew 24:1-2 and 15. While Dispensationalists agree that in the first two verses Jesus is warning of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem,⁶³

they claim that by verse 15 Jesus is describing the desecration of another future Temple which has yet to be built. This futurist interpretation of Matthew 24, like that of Daniel 9:24-27 requires a gap of some 2000 years between these verses. So, for example, John Walvoord argues,

This prediction obviously could not refer to A.D. 70 as it is an event immediately preceding the second advent of Christ described, in Matthew 24:27-31. The prediction, however, gives us the clue concerning the future Temple. The abomination of desolation has reference to a future event paralleling to some extent "the abomination that maketh desolate" of Daniel 11:31 fulfilled in the desolation of the Temple in the second century B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes which sparked the Maccabean revolt.

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Hal Lindsey takes a similar but rather more dogmatic view.

Of course, for Temple rites to be stopped in the last days, we know they must be restarted. The words of Jesus Himself in Matthew 24:15 require that a new holy place be built and a complete sacrificial system re-instituted. And since only a consecrated temple can be defiled, this prophecy shows that the physical Temple must not only be rebuilt, but a functioning priesthood must begin practising once again.⁶⁵

Lindsey is not averse to adding words to the text of scripture where they help to reinforce his interpretation.

Therefore when you see the Abomination which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [of the rebuilt temple] (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...⁶⁶

While Lindsey and Walvoord believe Jesus was predicting a future desecration of a rebuilt temple, non-dispensationalist commentators suggest his words were fulfilled in the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. when Jewish Zealots desecrated the temple using it as a fortress against the Romans.⁶⁷

Eusebius, the 4th Century church historian, for example, refers to the eyewitness accounts of

Josephus to show how these predictions were understood as having already been fulfilled by then.⁶⁸

...what terrible, and worse than terrible, sights were seen by those who had fled to Jerusalem itself as to a most sure metropolis; the character of the whole war, and each of its happenings in detail; how at the end the abomination of desolation announced by the prophets took its stand in the once far-famed temple of God when it endured its utter ruin and final destruction by fire [all these things] he who wishes may gather with exactitude from the history written by Josephus.⁶⁹

Writing in the Jewish Wars, Josephus links Daniel's prophecy to the desecration of the Temple and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 66-70.

And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision. And what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them.⁷⁰

Josephus also specifically associates the desecration of the Temple with the activities of Jewish Zealots who, between November 67 and the Spring of 68 AD., used the Temple as a military fortress, murdered Jewish opponents within it and even entered the Holiest of Holies. They also appointed their own high priests who were 'undeserving, ignoble and vile persons' including an 'ignoramus' called Phannias.⁷¹

For there was a certain ancient oracle of those men, that the city should then be taken and the sanctuary burned, by right of war, when a rebellion should invade the Jews, and their own hand should pollute the temple of God. Now while these zealots did not [quite] disbelieve these predictions, they made themselves the instruments of their own accomplishments.⁷²

These men made the Temple of God a stronghold for them, and a place where they might resort, in order to avoid the troubles they feared from the people; the sanctuary was now become a refuge, and a shop of tyranny.⁷³

Two of the boldest of them fell upon Zacharias in the middle of the temple and killed him; and as he fell down dead, they bantered him... They also threw him down from the temple immediately into the valley beneath it.⁷⁴

The best esteemed also of the high priests... Ananus stood in the midst of them, and casting his eyes frequently at the temple, and having a flood of tears in his eyes, he said, "Certainly it had been good for me to die before I had seen the house of God full of so many abominations, or these sacred places, that ought not to be trodden upon at random, filled with the feet of these blood-shedding villains"; ...called Jews, do walk about in the midst of the holy places, at the very time when their hands are still warm with the slaughter of their own countrymen.⁷⁵

Believing God would intervene and deliver them by force, the Zealots invited the Idumean army of some 20,000 troops to come and help defend Jerusalem from the Romans. Josephus tells us that instead, the Idumeans took advantage of the city and plundered it, filling the Temple with the blood of those slaughtered including the family of the High Priest Ananus.

...nor did the Idumeans spare anybody... And now the outer temple was all of it overflowed with blood; and that day, as it came on, they saw eight thousand five hundred dead bodies there.⁷⁶

Josephus regarded the death of Ananus as the beginning of the destruction of Jerusalem.⁷⁷

It is probable therefore that Jewish Christians also recognised in the murder of Ananus and the appointment of apostate high priests like Phannias, the sacrilege Jesus had warned of in Matthew 24, and so fled Jerusalem for the mountains of Pella on the other side of the Jordan.⁷⁸

The Temple was subsequently defiled yet again by the invading Roman army. The Roman soldiers worshipped the eagle on their ensigns and placed them in the Temple where they offered sacrifices to their pagan gods. Josephus describes the scene.

And now the Romans, upon the flight of the rebellious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings around it, brought their ensigns to the temple and set them near to its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there they did make Titus imperator with the greatest acclamations of joy.⁷⁹

As a 1st Century eyewitness and historian, Josephus shows how the Temple was desecrated

on numerous occasions first by Jewish Zealots, then by the marauding Idumeans and finally by Titus and his Roman army. The irony is that Josephus also records that Titus lamented how the Jews themselves destroyed their own temple by setting it on fire.⁸⁰

When I came near to your temple, I again departed from the laws of war, and exhorted you to spare your own sanctuary, and to preserve your holy house to yourselves. I allowed you a quiet exit out of it, and security for your preservation... Yet have you still despised every one of my proposals, and have set fire to your holy house with your own hands.⁸¹

While the Idumeans and Romans did subsequently desecrate the Temple, it was first and foremost the Jews who, having rejected Jesus and declared Caesar to be their only king, appointed apostate high priests and used the Temple as a fortress against Rome, who ultimately fulfilled the words of Jesus and made Temple worship idolatrous.⁸²

John Calvin reached this conclusion believing God,

...deserted his Temple, because it was only founded for a time, and was but a shadow, until the Jews so completely violated the whole covenant that no sanctity remained in either the Temple, the nation, or the land itself.⁸³

Whether at the hands of Jews or pagans, with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 the abomination had indeed brought desolation. Dispensationalists, however, reject the contemporary historical evidence, substantiating a 1st Century fulfilment, preferring instead to interpret Matthew 24 as prophecy awaiting future fulfilment. So when Jesus promised these events would be witnessed by 'this generation'⁸⁴

Lindsey understands the word 'this' to refer to his own generation who had witnessed the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and capture of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967.⁸⁵

So the rebuilding of the Temple is significant not only because of the potential firestorm it will create between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East. It is also a critical development in the entire prophetic scenario. The Bible makes it clear that in the last days the Antichrist will establish his reign in the Temple of Jerusalem. Therefore, the Temple must and will be rebuilt.⁸⁶

A plain reading of the text, however, indicates that Jesus spoke with urgency intending his hearers to recognise the signs of the times and escape the imminent death and destruction about to befall Jerusalem. Walvoord, nevertheless, claims that his reading of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 confirms a futurist dispensational reading.

In this passage prediction is made that the future man of sin "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" assumes the role of deity, "so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess 2:4). Using this passage as an interpretation of the prediction of Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15, it may be concluded that following the desecration of the Jewish temple and its sacrifices the future man of sin identified by many as "the prince that shall come" (Dan 9:26) will become an object of worship.⁸⁷

Further evidence for the rebuilding of the Temple is allegedly found in the instructions given to the Apostle John to measure the Temple in Revelation 11:1-2.

The Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation about the year A.D. 95. This means that the Temple... was non-existent for the twenty-five years preceding John's writing... What Temple, then, was John referring to? There can be only one answer - a yet-to-be-built structure!⁸⁸

It is on the basis of these passages and a literalist logic that dispensationalists believe the Bible promises a future Temple will be built in order to be desecrated and destroyed once again.

With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2600 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of Jesus Christ's soon coming is before us... It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found... For all those who trust in Jesus Christ, it is a time of electrifying excitement.⁸⁹

A study of the usage of the word Temple in the New Testament reveals 112 references. Of 66 verses where the word occurs in the Gospels, 58 refer to Herod's Temple. In the other eight Jesus compares himself to the Temple, its destruction and his own resurrection.⁹⁰

The word is also used 25 times in Acts and always of Herod's Temple or a pagan shrine. In the Epistles the word occurs in nine verses. In three it refers to the existing Jewish Temple and once to a pagan shrine.⁹¹

In the Book of Revelation the word occurs a further 12 times and in each case refers specifically to the heavenly Temple or to the Lord God Himself⁹²

. On the six remaining occasions when the word is used in the Epistles it describes the individual Christian and corporately the Church as the Body of Christ.⁹³

Jesus anticipated this in his conversation with the Samaritan women in John 4. Worship, Jesus predicted, would soon no longer be confined to the Temple in Jerusalem but become universal 'in spirit and truth'.⁹⁴

While Jesus warned of the destruction of the Temple, and was known to have said so by his critics, he never promised that it would ever be rebuilt.⁹⁵

In Hebrews, the author describes the offering of sacrifices between the death of Christ and the destruction of the Temple as an 'illustration' of, and 'copies' of, heavenly realities, a 'reminder of sins' but unable, unlike the finished work of Christ, to take sin away.⁹⁶

Peter uses the same terminology to describe the way Christians are being made into the new house of God,⁹⁷ in which Jesus is the 'precious cornerstone'.⁹⁸

There is therefore not a single verse in the New Testament which promises the Jewish Temple would be rebuilt or that a 2000 year 'parenthesis' should be placed between references to its desecration and destruction. Christian Zionists consistently ignore the way in which the Temple is invested with new meaning in the New Testament as a 'type' for Jesus Christ and his Church⁹⁹

Instead they advocate a return to the very practices made redundant by the work of Jesus Christ.

4. The Temple of Sacrifice

The Theological Purpose for the Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple

The rebuilding of the Temple is meaningless without at the same time the reintroduction of the Mosaic sacrificial system. Based on his reading of Daniel, Walvoord, for example, claims,

Judging by Scriptures, this is precisely what they will do as it would be impossible to cause sacrifices to cease if they were not already in operation. The usual method of dismissing this as something which occurred in A.D. 70 does not provide a reasonable explanation of the text nor account for the fact that the second coming of Christ occurs immediately thereafter.¹⁰⁰

Scofield in his Reference Bible claimed, however, that the sacrifices mentioned in Ezekiel 43:19, would only be a 'memorial' offering.

Doubtless these offerings will be memorial, looking back to the cross, as the offerings under the old covenant were anticipatory, looking forward to the cross. In neither case have animal sacrifices power to put away sin (Heb. 10.4; Rom. 3.25).¹⁰¹

For one so committed to 'literalism' such an interpretation is unconvincing for the verse explicitly refers to the sacrifice of a 'young bullock as a sin offering.' If Scofield appears to fudge the issue, the note on the same verse in the New Scofield Reference Bible goes even further, undermining the entire hermeneutical premise of Dispensationalism.

The reference to sacrifices is not to be taken literally, in view of the putting away of such offerings, but is rather to be regarded as a presentation of the worship of redeemed Israel, in her own land and in the millennial Temple, using the terms with which the Jews were familiar in Ezekiel's day.¹⁰²

If this particular reference to sacrifice need not be taken literally then the whole dispensationalist

edifice collapses, flawed by its internal inconsistency.¹⁰³

It is impossible to confuse or equate the sacrifice of a young bullock with a memorial offering which consisted of grain and oil.¹⁰⁴

The immediate context for Ezekiel's vision of a rebuilt Temple is the promised return of the Jews from Babylonian exile, not some long distant eschatological event. This would have been utterly meaningless to the exiles longing to return to Israel. Furthermore, if Ezekiel was referring to some future millennial age, Jesus Christ could not serve in such a Temple because he was not of the tribe of Levi.¹⁰⁵

However, even if he could do so it would still be incongruous for Jesus to offer animal sacrifices when he had replaced them by the shedding his own blood.¹⁰⁶

Such an interpretation undermines the New Testament emphasis on the finished and sufficient work of Christ.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, Zahava Glaser, of Jews for Jesus, describes how over the past 1900 years the liturgy used in the synagogue has kept the memory of the Temple alive in Jewish hearts and prayers. He therefore insists, 'when God instituted the sacrificial system, it was instituted for all time.'

What flour is to bread, the sacrificial system is to the religion revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. It is not a garnish. It is not a flavoring. It is the very substance out of which the Jewish religion was constructed. We can forever design our own substitutes, but they cannot satisfy our yearnings the way God's own provision can. Though some rabbis might minimize the revealed system of worship and its requirements, can the individual Jew neglect what God says? Can there be a "proper" Judaism without a priesthood, an altar, a sacrifice and a place on earth where God meets the individual?¹⁰⁸

Glaser seems to be representative of those who hold that the Temple will be rebuilt because the Jews have a separate covenant relationship with God, apart from the Church. He therefore does not appear to see the high priesthood of Jesus as in any sense necessarily replacing or superseding the Jewish religious system.

By insisting on such an arbitrary and dualistic separation between God's purposes for the Jews and those of the Church, Christian Zionists are promoting Old Testament 'shadows' alongside their New Testament 'substance'.¹⁰⁹

In doing so they are seeking to revive what is now obsolete. Turning the clock back in redemptive history¹¹⁰ they are Judaizing the Christian faith.¹¹¹

If religious Jews do indeed rebuild their Temple and re-institute sacrifices it will only confirm their rejection of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. For Christians to support them in the belief that future sacrifices may atone for sin is apostasy.¹¹²

This is because the movement in the progressive revelation of Scripture is always from the lesser to the greater. It is never reversed. The New Testament repeatedly sees such Old Testament concepts as the Temple, High Priest and sacrifice as 'types' pointing to and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.¹¹³

Typology in Scripture never typifies itself, nor is it ever greater than that which it typifies.¹¹⁴

Christians who therefore advocate the rebuilding of the Temple are regressing into a pre-Christian sacrificial system, superseded and annulled by the finished work of Jesus Christ. DeMar writes,

With the true lamb slain, the earthly temple could no longer operate as a place of sacrifice. The action of the high priest, "standing in the holy place" (24:15), continuing to offer sacrifices in the temple, was an abomination, a rejection of the work of Christ.¹¹⁵

The Temple was but a temporary edifice, 'a copy and a shadow of what is in heaven,'¹¹⁶ anticipating the day when God would dwell with people of all nations throughout the world because of the atoning work of the true Temple, Jesus Christ.¹¹⁷

J.C. Ryle, writing in 1856, challenged those of his day who anticipated the rebuilding of the Temple based on Matthew 24 in like manner.

It surprises some to find so much importance attached to the taking of Jerusalem: they would rather regard the whole chapter as unfulfilled. Such persons forget that Jerusalem and the temple were the heart of the old Jewish dispensation: when they were destroyed, the old Mosaic system came to an end. The daily sacrifice, the yearly feasts, the altar, the holiest of holies, the priesthood, were all essential parts of revealed religion, till Christ came, - but no longer. When he died upon the

cross, their work was done: they were dead, and it only remained that they should be buried. But it was not fitting that this thing should be done quietly. The ending of a dispensation given with so much solemnity at mount Sinai, might well be expected to be marked with peculiar solemnity; the destruction of the holy temple, where so many old saints had seen "shadows of good things to come," might well be expected to form a subject of prophecy: and so it was. The Lord Jesus specially predicts the desolation of "the holy place." The great High Priest describes the end of the dispensation which had been a schoolmaster to bring men to Himself.¹¹⁸

Charles Spurgeon put it rather more succinctly.

Judaism had become a "carcase", dead and corrupt; fair prey for the vultures or carrion-kites of Rome.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, the weight of argument in favour of a historical or preterist interpretation has not hindered Christian Zionists from supporting and funding the work to rebuild the Jewish Temple.

5. The Temple of Destiny The Practical Issues of Rebuilding the Jewish Temple

5.1 When - the timing for the rebuilding

Brickner asserts that the preparations for rebuilding the Temple began in 1967 with the capture of the Old City of Jerusalem.¹²⁰

Lindsey is equally confident. 'Right now, as you read this, preparations are being made to rebuild the Third Temple.'¹²¹

5.2 Where - the location of the First and Second Temples

One of the unresolved difficulties faced by those who favour the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is deciding where to put it. It is critical that any future Temple be built on the same site as the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod. There appears to have been some continuity with each being built with its Holy of Holies enclosing the same protrusion of Mount Moriah, also known as Even ha-Shetiyah (The Foundation Stone). There are three main theories advocated by historians and archaeologists.

One theory **C** suggested by Father Bellarmino Bagatti, a Franciscan scholar and supported by Tel Aviv architect Tuvia Sagiv, is based on early archaeological findings, Josephus and topographical elevations. They argue that the Temple was situated at the southwest corner of the platform near to where the Al Aqsa mosque is today.¹²²

Based on infrared thermographic scans of the Temple Mount they claim that underground structures may prove the presence of vaults and Hadrian's temple to Jupiter in this area to the south of the Dome of the Rock. If the Roman's built their pagan temple over the destroyed Jewish Temple, as was often their custom, this may indicate that the Temple was originally at this location.

A more popular theory **A** is offered by Asher Kaufmann, a physicist at the Hebrew University.¹²³

His research relies on details given in the Mishna Tractate known as Middot (Measurements) and computations based on the angles of line-of-sight between the Mount of Olives where the red heifer was allegedly sacrificed and the eastern court of the Temple where the Great Altar stood. Kaufman claims that based on these calculations the Temple was built on the north-western corner of the Temple platform about 330 feet away from the Dome of the Rock. He believes that a small cupola at this site, known in Arabic as the Dome of the Tablets, was the Foundation Stone within the Holy of Holies.¹²⁴

The most commonly held theory **B**, with both traditional support and the consensus among Israeli archaeologists today, is that the Temple stood on the site of the Dome of the Rock. Research by Benjamin Mazar, Leen Ritmeyer, who served as chief architect for the Western wall excavations, as well as Dan Bahat, professor of archaeology at Bar Ilan University, conclude that based on physical evidence remaining on the site, both the First and Second Temples were situated under the Dome of

the Rock.¹²⁵

Ritmeyer claims to have found within the Muslim Dome of the Rock, the foundation trenches and the walls of the Holy of Holies, and place where the Ark of the Covenant rested.¹²⁶

Kaufmann's northern site theory is increasingly favoured by Christian Zionists as it does not require the destruction of the Dome of the Rock.

It is fascinating observing how people like Lindsey have altered their views over time. In the 1970's, for example, Lindsey insisted the Jewish Temple would have to be built in place of the Dome of the Rock.

There remains but one more event to completely set the stage for Israel's part in the last great act of her historical drama. This is to rebuild the ancient Temple of worship upon its old site... There is one major problem barring the construction of a third Temple. That obstacle is the second holiest place of the Muslim faith, the Dome of the Rock. This is believed to be built squarely in the middle of the old temple site. Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it.¹²⁷

Lindsey even appeared to know the exact location of the former structure.

Archaeologists have uncovered a pillar from Solomon's porch as the first major find from the Herodian Temple. From its location in relation to the Wailing Wall they have now ascertained where the ancient Holy of Holies in the Temple was located. Imagine my emotions as I stood under a sign at the Wall which read in Hebrew: 'Holy of Holies, 10 Metres,' with an arrow pointing towards a spot thirty feet behind the existing Wall in the direction of the Dome of the Rock!¹²⁸

By 1983 Lindsey had changed his mind. Favouring Kaufman's position Lindsey now claimed,

I also believe that this discovery has accelerated the countdown to the events that will bring the Messiah Jesus back to earth. The reason for this belief is that the predicted Third Temple can now be built without disturbing the Dome of the Rock. ...the Temple and its immediate guard wall could be rebuilt and still be twenty-six meters away from the Dome of the Rock. ¹²⁹

Having discovered the true site of the Herodian Temple, Lindsey proceeded to find scriptural verification for this new location.

Revelation chapter 11 indicates this very situation: 'I was given a reed like a measuring rod and told, 'Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.' (Revelation 11:1,2 NIV). The outer court, which includes the area where the Dome of the Rock is situated, was given to the Gentiles. So this prophecy accurately reflects the situation that is present today... All of these things are tremendously exciting to those who know Bible prophecy. We are literally in the very last days of the Church Age. The Temple will be rebuilt soon!¹³⁰

In 1994, Lindsey heightened speculation still further by insisting,

I remember my whole body tingling with excitement when I measured the distances on the Temple platform and realized that God had left out the outer court because it allowed for the Gentile temple to remain alongside the rebuilt Jewish Temple during the Tribulation. Folks, the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, can already be heard as He approaches the doors of heaven to return. The Temple is the last sign that needs to fall into place before events irreversibly speed toward the return of Jesus.¹³¹

Brickner also supports the claims made by Randall Price that the Jewish Temple could actually be rebuilt alongside the Dome of the Rock.

...there may be a solution for that barrier to rebuilding. You see, recently some archaeologists have concluded that the actual location of the foundation stone upon which the ark rested is north of the Dome of the Rock. If true, it is theoretically possible to rebuild the Temple without having to tear down the Muslim holy sites.

Nevertheless, because of the proximity to the mosques, it remains a sensitive issue to say the least.¹³²

Most orthodox Jews, however, remain convinced that the Dome of the Rock must be removed before the Temple can be rebuilt,¹³³

although Gershon Salomon claims the Dome of the Rock was built by Caliph Abd el-Malik in 691 AD as a Jewish house of prayer, as he was allegedly a Jewish proselyte.¹³⁴

5.3 How - the Means for Rebuilding

Chaim Richman, a spokesman for the Temple Institute, claims detailed blueprints for the Third Temple have existed for several years. Other buildings associated with the a future Temple are planned or have already been built. Rabbi Shlomo Goren, for example, has supervised the construction of a replica of the 70-seat Supreme Court building for the new Sanhedrin, adjacent to the Temple Mount in the Jewish Quarter. The legal stipulations which the Sanhedrin will use to supervise Temple practices are also being published. The first volume was printed in 1986 by the Research Center for Jewish Thought under the direction of Yoel Lerner.¹³⁵

A member of Meir Kahane Kach movement, Lerner was arrested and convicted in 1982 for attempting to sabotage the Dome of the Rock for which he was sentenced to two and a half years in prison.¹³⁶

Previously he had served a three year sentence for plotting to overthrow the Israeli government and establish a state based upon religious law.

5.3.1 Training the Priests - The Temple Mount Yeshivas

According to rabbinic tradition, although the genealogical records of the Temple were lost in 70 AD when the Jews were dispersed, Levites were forbidden to change their family names when other Jews assimilated into the Roman Empire. The use of modern DNA tests has also been used to confirm the authenticity of men suitable to train as Temple priests. Rabbi Nachman Kahane, head of the Young Israel Synagogue together with the Institute for Talmudic Commentaries maintains a computer database of all known priestly candidates in Israel. Other Orthodox organizations in Israel are helping to educate them. The Yeshiva founded by Motti Dan Hacoheh, known as Ateret Cohanim, for example, is preparing students to perform priestly service. Its sister organization Atara Leyoshna, has aggressively acquired or illegally occupied many Arab properties in the Muslim Quarter near the Temple Mount in order to establish and consolidate a Jewish presence in preparation for rebuilding the Temple.¹³⁷

Brickner cites the following advert placed in Ha'aretz in March 1998.

Children wanted for future Temple service. Ultra-orthodox Jewish sect is searching for parents willing to hand over newborn sons to be raised in isolation and purity in preparation for the rebuilding of the biblical temple in Jerusalem. Only members of the Jewish priestly caste, the Kohanim need apply.¹³⁸

Brickner appears representative of those Christian Zionists who are convinced that ultra-orthodox groups will fulfill the vision of a fully functioning Jewish Temple.

5.3.2 Consecrating the Priests - Breeding the Red Heifers

The dilemma facing prospective Temple priests is how to gain ritual purity in order to begin serving in a future Temple. According to the Book of Numbers, the ashes of a pure unblemished red heifer, itself previously offered by a ritually pure priest, must be mixed with water and sprinkled on both them and the Temple furniture. With the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD the ashes used in the ceremony were lost and the Jews of the Diaspora have since therefore been perpetually unclean. The search for the ashes of the last red heifer have so far proved unsuccessful. In 1998, however, Clyde Lott, a Mississippi rancher, formed Canaan Land Restoration of Israel, Inc. for the purpose of raising livestock suitable for Temple sacrifice.¹³⁹

Shortly after this Rev. Lott (who is also a cattleman by trade) came to possess a red heifer that met all the biblical qualifications of Numbers chapter 19. Since that historic time in, November 11, 1994 God has miraculously unveiled His divine plan for the restoration of Israel, to the Church. The

Holy Ghost has worked during this time to reveal to Apostolic ministers and laymen the need to unify their efforts in order to see this project move forward, both in the Spirit and in the natural. August 11, 1998 Israel is expecting to receive from Canaan Land Restoration, 500 head of bred, registered Red Angus Heifers.¹⁴⁰

According to Newsweek, in 1997, the first red heifer for 2000 years was born at the kibbutz Kfar Hassidim near Haifa.

Her name is Melody, and she whiles away her oblivious to controversy that surrounds her. Some would like to put a bullet in her head. Others want to burn her to cinders. But the greatest troubles Melody knows are the flies that swarm about her pen. Melody, a red heifer, born on an ordinary farm in northern Israel last year. But to observant Jews, there is nothing ordinary about her. A couple of millenniums ago, in the era of the first and second Jewish Kingdoms, the ashes of a red heifer, butchered in her third year, were mixed with water and used to purify Jews before they could approach the Holy Temple on Jerusalem's Temple Mount.¹⁴¹

There was, however, some debate concerning Melody's purity due to the appearance of several white hairs. Nevertheless, Randall Price claims, other qualified red heifers have been secured from Clyde Lott. These have already been approved by Israeli authorities for import and are now awaiting transport to Israel.

Because the Jewish sage Maimonides taught that there had been nine red heifers between the beginning of the Tabernacle and the end of the Second Temple, and that when the tenth arrived it would be prepared by the Messianic King, a special urgency is attached to this recovery by leaders of the Temple Institute, such as Rabbi Chaim Richman.¹⁴²

The cost of the work of rebuilding the Temple, the training of its future priests and furnishings is being funded, in large measure, by Christian Zionists as well as Jewish supporters.

5.3.3 Funding the Work - The Temple Treasury

The International Christian Embassy as well as mega-churches such as Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa in California have been associated with the funding of the Jerusalem Temple Foundation (JTF) founded by a Jewish terrorist, Stanley Goldfoot and several leading American evangelicals.¹⁴³

Terry Reisenhoover is the chairman and Goldfoot its international secretary. According to the Israeli newspaper Davar, as a member of the Stern Gang and also Irgun, Goldfoot was responsible for planting the bomb at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 22nd July 1946 which killed 100 British soldiers and officials.¹⁴⁴ In 1948 he was also convicted and jailed by an Israeli court for the murder of UN envoy Count Bernadotte.¹⁴⁵ Goldfoot has subsequently been influential in raising large sums of money, allegedly up to \$100 million a year¹⁴⁶, for the JTF through American Christian TV and Radio stations and evangelical churches. Although van der Hoeven has denied direct involvement in efforts to see the Jewish Temple rebuilt, he has admitted that, "...when supporters volunteer to give money for building a temple, he directs them to Goldfoot." Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network has also assisted in fund raising for Gershon Salomon's Temple Mount Faithful.¹⁴⁷

6. The Temple of Armageddon

The Political Consequences of Rebuilding the Jewish Temple

The religious aspirations of Jewish and Christian Zionists working toward the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple clearly have political ramifications which threaten to destabilise the entire Middle East.¹⁴⁸

However, apparently unaware of Muslim sensitivities, Lindsey naively suggests that a Jewish Temple could be built alongside the Muslim shrine and become 'the greatest tourist attraction in the world'.¹⁴⁹

But lets think even more practically. Not only would the Temple become a unifying force for Israel's diverse and pluralistic society, it would also, without doubt, become the greatest tourist

attraction in the world. Its basic economics. Imagine what a new Temple would do for the Israeli economy, which relies so heavily on tourism. The Temple would also serve to attract more Jews from all over the world-and... The Bible tells us that eventually all of the dispersed will return to their homeland. The Temple would serve as a kind of spiritual magnet. This, too, would fit into the prophetic scenario, which indicates that Israel is destined to play a major role in the world and experience vast wealth, power and prestige in the last days.¹⁵⁰

In his earlier writings Lindsey was rather less optimistic but probably more accurate.

The dispute to trigger the war of Armageddon will arise between the Arabs and Israelis over the Temple Mount and Old Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2-3), the most contested and strategic piece of real estate in the world. Even now we are witnessing the escalation of that conflict.¹⁵¹

6.1 Support for the Jewish State

Christian Zionists tend to find their solidarity with the religious right-wing of Israeli society. For example, the Israeli Prime Minister has spoken at every one of the International Christian Zionist Congresses held annually in Jerusalem since 1980. Brickner is typical in lamenting the fact that ten days after Moshe Dyan captured the Old City in 1967, he returned the Temple Mount area to the Islamic authorities.

Israel's secular military leaders had no commitment to rebuilding the Temple. To them it was a relic of the past. To them, the Temple Mount represented potential conflict with Islam, more a political liability than anything else. Many Jews today feel quite different about that "little" piece of real estate.¹⁵²

In an open letter to Benjamin Netanyahu, then Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, the International Christian Embassy affirmed its commitment that Jews be able to worship again on the Temple Mount.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem fervently hopes and prays that the day will soon come that the Temple Mount-or as the Bible calls it, the Mountain of the Lord-will no longer be a reason for religious divisiveness, but a place where all mankind will unite in worship to God according to His declared purposes. The Bible foresees the day when all nations will flow to the Mountain of the Lord irrespective of race or colour, and says that: 'His house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.'¹⁵³

Van der Hoeven, former director of the ICEJ, quotes from the speech made by Teddy Kollek, then mayor of Jerusalem, at the 1985 Christian Zionist Feast of Tabernacles celebration. Behind him was a futuristic painting of Jerusalem showing a rebuilt Jewish Temple.

Thank you for being here, for coming here faithfully, every year. Your faith gives us strength... I am glad I am speaking here against the background of this beautiful painting of Jerusalem. It is not yet the Jerusalem of today. If you look properly, you will see that the Temple, the Holy of Holies, has been restored!.. Our return is the first sign that the city will be existing again as it is in this painting!¹⁵⁴

Christian Zionists are consistent in supporting and defending Israel from criticism whether political or religious equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism.¹⁵⁵

6.2 Support for the Temple Mount Movement

There is a clear and unambiguous symbiotic relationship between Christian and Jewish Zionist organisations committed to rebuilding the Jewish Temple. For example, Jews for Jesus provides information on, and offers direct Internet links to, eight extreme and militant Jewish organisations involved in attempts to destroy the Dome of the Rock, rebuild the Jewish Temple and re-institute Jewish Temple worship and sacrifices. These include the Temple Institute and Temple Mount Faithful.¹⁵⁶

Now, however, despite the fact that two Muslim mosques sit upon the Temple Mount, there are Jewish groups concerned with training priests for the day that the Temple is restored. Aterah Kohanim is one such group. They have purchased many of the Arab homes in the Old City of Jerusalem, very near the Temple Mount. They have also set up yeshivas to educate and train Temple priests; two hundred men are in active training for the priesthood there now.¹⁵⁷

Randall Price similarly provides information on how to contact and show solidarity with 18 different Temple organisations.¹⁵⁸

One of the most extreme is the Temple Mount Faithful. Brickner points out, approvingly, that

they are ready to commence building 'at any moment.'

They've cut a massive piece of limestone, a 4.5-ton cornerstone to begin their work. Their first attempt to bring it up to the Temple Mount was in 1989. Each year during Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, they enact the elaborate water-drawing ceremony at the pool of Siloam, and then attempt to set the cornerstone for the rebuilding of the Temple. Each year the Israeli government authorities prevent them. The site remains a holy place for Muslims and it is under Islamic control. Israeli government officials have little stomach for actions that might well lead to riots or perhaps even World War III.¹⁵⁹

Zhava Glaser, also of Jews for Jesus, affirms the motives of Gershon Salomon, founder of The Temple Mount Faithful who has over 9,000 supporters. He describes Salomon as a 'man of courage', whose credentials as an Israeli patriot, soldier, politician and Zionist are 'impeccable'.¹⁶⁰

Salomon has, however, become increasingly provocative in his assertions that the Dome of the Rock must be destroyed. Speaking at the Jerusalem Christian Zionist Congress in 1998, Salomon insisted,

The mission of the present generation is to liberate the Temple Mount and to remove - I repeat, to remove - the defiling abomination there ... The Jewish people will not be stopped at the gates leading to the Temple Mount ... We will fly our Israeli flag over the Temple Mount, which will be minus its Dome of the Rock and its mosques and will have only our Israeli flag and our Temple. This is what our generation must accomplish.¹⁶¹

According to Sam Kiley, Salomon is the '...almost acceptable face of millennial cults.' In a Times interview Salomon insisted that the Islamic shrine must be destroyed.

The Israeli Government must do it. We must have a war. There will be many nations against us but God will be our general. I am sure this is a test, that God is expecting us to move the Dome with no fear from other nations. The Messiah will not come by himself, we should bring Him by fighting.¹⁶²

Salomon believes Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount, days before Barak and Arafat were to sign a deal on joint sovereignty of Jerusalem with Clinton, and his subsequent election as Israeli Prime Minister were acts of God.

Sharon's visit itself was not an accident. G-d put it in his heart to go up to the Temple Mount to display the eternal sovereignty of G-d over this most holy site and to give a very clear NO! To the terrible plans to give it away. These enemies of Israel understood the meaning of Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. They started the war against Israel with the encouragement of all the Arab countries and their many allies all over the world. When these events stated, Barak became weaker and weaker as all the other parties in his coalition left him. This was the judgment of G-d, leading to the election by such a majority of the man who visited, fought, and demonstrated for Him and His holy mountain. It was also a clear message that G-d is determined to continue to save Israel and not allow any enemy to put his hand on His holy mountain and His holy city Jerusalem. He showed everyone that - whether they want it or not - the Temple Mount will very soon be the site of His holy temple.¹⁶³

Gordon Welty, a sociologist and anthropologist, explains the apparent contradiction of evangelical Christians choosing to support Jewish terrorists.

Their power is to keep inconsistencies in airtight compartments, so that they themselves never recognize these inconsistencies... If the money a muscular Christian donates to the Jewish terrorists buys the dynamite that destroys the mosque, the muscular Christian will say simply, "It was an act of God."¹⁶⁴

Such provocative convictions clearly have ramifications for the way Christian Zionists view Arabs generally and Palestinians, in particular.

6.3 Antipathy Toward Muslims

Support for extreme Jewish organisations among Christian Zionists is also associated with an antipathy for Islam. At the Third International Christian Zionist Congress, for example, held in 1996 under the auspices of the ICEJ, the following affirmation was endorsed.

The Islamic claim to Jerusalem, including its exclusive claim to the Temple Mount, is in direct contradiction to the clear biblical and historical significance of the city and its holiest site, and this claim is of later religio-political origin rather than arising from any Qur'anic text or early Muslim tradition...¹⁶⁵

Similarly, in 1994, Lindsey predicted,

Two religions, Judaism and Islam, thus are on a collision course with global and heavenly repercussions... Islam will never accept Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the Jewish state, and Israel will never agree to give it up. This is the intractable, insoluble crisis that will soon result in the climax of world history.¹⁶⁶

The whole prophetic scenario is in place. We see the Islamic nations united in mutual hatred of Israel. The dispute has nothing to do with borders or territory. It has to do with the existence of Israel and its claim on Jerusalem.¹⁶⁷ Such prejudice not only reinforces stereotypes but ignites racial hatred and becomes a self fulfilling prophecy for dispensationalists.

6.4 The Battle of Armageddon

Brickner is typical in his conviction that, based on his literalist reading of the Bible, that the rebuilding of the Temple will be associated with the deaths of most Israelis.

A full two-thirds of the population of Israel will perish in the ensuing conflict, according to Zechariah 13:8. The hope of the Jewish people in seeing the glorious Temple rebuilt will, in fact, lead to their greatest calamity and suffering.¹⁶⁸

Rosen also speculates on such a future scenario, suggesting the Dome will be destroyed by scuds fired by Israel in an attempt to implicate Iraq, turning Muslim rage away from Israel and toward Saddam Hussein.

In truth, the fusillade of missiles had not all come from Iraq - only the ones which hit Jewish neighbourhoods. The rest were Scud-class missiles launched by Israelis from mobile launchers deployed deep in the Judean wilderness, near the Israeli/Jordanian border. Yitshak Shamir had his revenge.¹⁶⁹

Lindsey describes in graphic detail what this apocalyptic future will be like.

The Russian force will establish command headquarters on Mount Moriah or the Temple area in Jerusalem. Daniel pointed this out when he said: 'And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the seas [Dead Sea and Mediterranean Sea] and the glorious holy mount Zion; yet he shall come to his end with none to help him' (Daniel 11:45 Amplified).¹⁷⁰

Christian enthusiasm for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is therefore only part of a wider apocalyptic scenario of mass destruction in which the writings of prophets like Daniel, Ezekiel and the Book of Revelation are interpreted literally, allegedly describing pre-written history.¹⁷¹

7. Conclusions

It has been shown that the Christian belief in, and support for, the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple arises generally from a premillennial eschatology and specifically from the novel dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church combined with, and arising from, an ultra-literalist and futurist hermeneutic. On the basis of allegedly unfulfilled Old and New Testament predictions, Christian Zionists are convinced that a third Temple will be built in place of, or near, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. They are also convinced that a Jewish priesthood will once again offer sacrifices and offerings. They also believe this yet to be built Temple will be desecrated by the Antichrist and replaced by a fourth Millennial Temple.

It has been shown that this conviction and the hermeneutic upon which it is based is flawed because it fails to recognise how Jesus Christ interprets, completes, and fulfils the role of the Temple with its sacrificial system. The Temple, and the Tabernacle before it, were indeed the places where God dwelt with his people and where their sin could be atoned for by sacrifice. The New Testament reveals how the Temple was, however, an illustration¹⁷² a copy¹⁷³ and shadow¹⁷⁴

for the atoning work of Jesus Christ who now dwells on earth by the Holy Spirit. The Temple therefore finds its ultimate significance and fulfilment not in another man-made sanctuary but in Jesus Christ who is in heaven and in his Church on earth.¹⁷⁵

The Book of Revelation expressly says that one day the two will be united and the Lord will dwell with his people and have no need of a Temple.¹⁷⁶

The Christian Zionist preoccupation, therefore, with locating the site of the Temple, with training priests, breeding red heifers and funding the Temple Treasury is at best a distraction from the gospel imperative and at worst promoting apostasy¹⁷⁷

Christian support for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is also invariably linked to the political claims of exclusive Jewish sovereignty over not only the Temple Mount and Jerusalem but much of the Middle East as well. Whether intentionally or otherwise, therefore, Christian Zionists are complicit in perpetuating a form of apartheid as well as the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. Many regard this reading of history as questionable, coloured by a literal exegesis of highly selective biblical passages, profoundly misguided and essentially racist. Far from demonstrating a ministry of reconciliation to all nations, which is at the heart of the Christian faith, Zionism perpetuates religious intolerance and incites ethnic violence. Fuelled by a fatalistic conviction of an imminent apocalyptic war, Christian Zionists are indeed, 'anxious for Armageddon.'¹⁷⁸

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The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem
The Churches Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ)
Christian Friends of Israel
Bridges for Peace
Jews For Jesus
International Christian Zionist Congress
American Messianic Fellowship (AMF)
Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA)
Messianic Friends Network
The King of Kings Bible College
The Jerusalem Sentinel
Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry
Zion Web
Tehilah BaAretz
Middle East Digest (ICEJ)
YASHAnet
Watch Jerusalem
Exodus Organisation
The Nehemiah Trust
Thomas Brimmer Ministries
Jack Van Impe International Ministries

2. Jewish Zionist Sites

Aliyah Home Page
Arutz 7
Temple Mount Yeshiva
Freeman Centre for Strategic Studies

3. Palestinian & Pro-Palestinian Sites

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem
Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, North Park University
Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding
Palestine Alternative Tourism Group
The Society of St Yves
Palestine Information Centre
Palestine Academic Network
Birzeit University
Birzeit Human Rights Action Project
Amnesty International on Israel
American Muslims for Jerusalem
ClariNet
Loyola University - Strategic Defence
Arab-American Roman Catholic Community (Al Bushra)
Jerusalem 2000
Bethlehem
Alternative Information Centre
Centre for Palestine Research and Studies
Index of Palestine Web Sites

Applied Research Institute
Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW)
Al-Haq
Deir Yassin Remembered
50 Years of Nakba in Palestine
LAW
B'Tselem

4. News Sites Associated with Palestine

Jerusalem Media and Communication Center
The Washington Report
The Palestine Times
The Jerusalem Times
The Jerusalem Post
Amin - Arabic Media
Middle East Reality (MER)
Alternative Information Center

Please advise of corrections and of other useful web sites. I would be grateful if you could add a link to this site on yours.

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