

## Chapter 7

### ISRAEL – THE CHALLENGE OF CARNALITY

ALL eschatological opinions are open to perversion, even with regard to the three major schools of interpretation. They have each attracted devotees who have strayed from the mainstream of the historic norm. Amillennialism has at times strayed in a Gnostic and Neo-Platonist direction with the result being a prospective amorphous, ethereal future kingdom, that which is spiritually nonsubstantial, that which presents difficulty for human comprehension. Postmillennialism has at times strayed into a political agenda, and more currently extreme preterism, that, in alignment with the Christian church, has anticipated a legislative establishment of the future kingdom. Premillennialism, in proclaiming a future earthly reign of Jesus Christ upon a renewed earth, has known associations with a carnal materialism that, in conveying worldliness, lacks spirituality. It is this charge against premillennialism that we are here concerned about for it certainly does have a degree of validity with regard to *some* deviant opinions. There are those who have given prominence to Israel's prospective glorious dominion in Israel in predominantly political and sensationalist terms, yet this remains quite invalid in the light of a classic historic premillennial understanding, again with regard to incorporation of Israel's future prospects.

It was Augustine who, in opposing chiliasm while commenting on Revelation 20, characterized its outworking as, “the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, [so that] such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them are called by the spiritual Chiliasts, which we may literally reproduce by the name Millenarians.”<sup>1</sup>

#### A. The fall of spirituality and materiality.

When we read in Genesis 1:31, “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good [טוֹב, *tōb*],” the totality here includes the “light,” “the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters,” the “vegetation . . . plants . . . seeds . . . trees,” “the two great lights,” “the great sea monsters and every living creature . . . and every winged bird,” “the beasts of the earth . . . and the cattle . . . and everything that creeps on the ground” (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 16-18, 21, 25). Hence we believe that this whole creation was “very good” in its substance in conjunction with a hovering and inherent spirituality. Perhaps we could go so far as to say that God's original creation was comprised of “spiritual substance,” and thus wholly unpolluted, undefiled. There was nothing “carnal” or second-rate about this holy materiality. If “the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters” (Gen. 1:2) at the commencement of creation, how much more did this same Spirit inhabit the whole of that same creation at its completion, and especially the Garden of Eden. Further, the fact that Adam and Eve, in their innocence, had intimate fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8) indicates that there was blessed spiritual kinship and union. From God's perspective, that which He had created was good, spiritually and materially, especially in the sense of it being admirable both ethically and esthetically. Psalm 104:1-6, 24, 30-31 well reflects the overall glory of God's creation, not its material earthly inferiority that pales before spiritual heavenly superiority.

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<sup>1</sup> Aurelius Augustine, *The City of God*, XX, 7.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
 O Lord my God, You are very great;  
 You are clothed with splendor and majesty,  
 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak,  
 Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain,  
 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters,  
 He makes the clouds His chariot;  
 He walks upon the wings of the wind;  
 He makes the winds His messengers,  
 Flaming fire His ministers.  
  
 He established the earth upon its foundations,  
 So that it will not totter forever and ever.  
 You covered it with the deep as with a garment;  
 The waters were standing above the mountains.  
  
 O LORD, how many are Your works!  
 In wisdom You have made them all;  
 The earth is full of Your possessions.  
  
 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;  
 And you renew the face of the ground.  
 Let the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
 Let the LORD be glad in His works.

In resting, immediately following the creation, God reflected and mused upon the excellence of His labor, surely in greater terms of veneration than any Psalmist could express. If it could be said that God sings (cf. Christ singing, Matt. 26:30; Heb. 2:12), it would have been at such a time that He sang an exultant doxology of worthy Self-praise concerning the perfection resulting from His six days of labor.

However the fall of Adam and Eve in sin contracted the curse of God upon the whole created order over which they had been commissioned to have righteous dominion. The holy materiality of the creation became an unholy materiality. The consequences of this sin, being judgment upon Adam and his posterity, also included judgment upon the world as a whole, not just humanity. In particular, decay and degradation in the human species also resulted in decay and degradation within the remaining material order. Such is the world that today we inhabit. It is difficult for redeemed man, let alone unredeemed man, to conceive of a world in which materiality and spirituality perfectly coalesce. Nevertheless, the promise that the child of God eagerly looks forward to is that future time when, “the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God, [that time of] the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:21, 23).

#### B. The spirituality of materiality in the Old Testament.

Not only is the Old Testament revelation a transcript of the truth of God communicated through a Hebrew prism, but also it reveals visceral earthiness and admiration of the imminent creation that is in confluence with transcendent spirituality reaching to God’s glorious throne in heaven. Thus as George Eldon Ladd explains:

Hebrew thought saw an essential unity between man and nature. The prophets do not think of the earth as merely the indifferent theater on which man carries out his normal task but as the expression of the divine glory. The Old Testament nowhere holds forth the hope of a bodiless,

nonmaterial, purely “spiritual” redemption as did Greek thought. The earth is the divinely ordained scene of human existence. Furthermore, the earth has been involved in the evils which sin has incurred. There is an interrelation of nature with the moral life of man; therefore the earth must also share in God’s final redemption. . . . The fact that man is a physical creature is not the measure of his sinfulness and therefore a state from which he must be delivered. Rather, the acceptance of his creaturehood and the confession of complete and utter dependence upon the Creator God are essential to man’s true existence. . . . Salvation for man does not mean deliverance from creaturehood, for it is not an evil thing but an essential and permanent element of man’s true being. Salvation does not mean escape from bodily, creaturely existence. On the contrary, ultimate redemption will mean the redemption of the whole man. For this reason, the resurrection of the body in an integral part of the biblical hope.

The corollary of this is that creation in its entirety must share in the blessings of redemption. There is no Greek dualism or Gnosticism in the Old Testament hope. The world is not evil *per se* and therefore a realm from which man must escape to find his true life. When God created the world, he saw that it was good (Gen. 1:31). The goodness of nature has indeed been marred by sin. The earth is cursed for man’s sake, bearing thorns and thistles, and condemning man to a life of sweat and toil. This does not, however, suggest any intrinsic moral evil in nature. It does not mean that creation has fallen from goodness to evil, so that it has become offensive to its Creator. The world was created for God’s glory (Ps. 19:1); and the ultimate goal and destiny of creation, along with man, is to glorify and praise the Creator (Ps. 98:7-9). The world is not a temporary stage upon which man acts out the drama of his mortal existence; neither is it the reality of sin and evil from which man must be rescued. The world was and remains God’s world and therefore is destined to play a role in the consummation of God’s redemptive purpose.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, from a Hebrew perspective, Baruch Maoz comments:

It is true that redemption from sin is not to be conceived of in terms that are primarily material. On this point the New Testament is as clear as the Old, though much more emphatic. But salvation is not to be thought of as exclusively spiritual and moral, as if Israel’s living in the land had no spiritual and moral implications! The gospel message is replete with appreciation for the material realm. The New Testament makes it quite clear that the material is the arena in which ultimate salvation is to take place (Rom. 8:18-25), thus reconfirming Old Testament expectation. Even our bodies are to be redeemed.<sup>3</sup>

With this in mind, we reject that imposition of the shadowy character of the Mosaic covenant upon the general ethos of the Old Testament as a whole. This is in no way meant to depreciate the significance of progressive revelation whereby promise in the Old Testament proceeds toward fulfillment in the New Testament. However we believe that in Palmer Robertson’s *The Israel Of God*, frequent use of term “shadow,” in going beyond the obvious intimations of the Mosaic Covenant, subtracts from the abiding material spirituality the revelation of God intends. This we believe to be a fundamental error. For instance, Robertson writes: “In speaking of Israel’s land under the old covenant, it is necessary to think in categories of shadow, type, and prophecy, in contrast to reality, substance, and fulfillment under the new covenant.”<sup>4</sup> However, as we have maintained elsewhere, the Land is rooted in the abiding Abrahamic covenant, not the transient old covenant. Being aware of this, Robertson responds:

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<sup>2</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence Of The Future*, pp. 59-60, 63-64.

<sup>3</sup> Baruch Maoz, “People, land and Torah: a Jewish Christian perspective,” *The Land of Promise*, eds. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker, p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, *The Israel of God*, p. 4.

Just as the tabernacle was never intended to be a settled item in the plan of redemption, but was to point to Christ's tabernacling among his people (cf. John 1:14), and just as the sacrificial system could never atone for sins but could only foreshadow the offering of the Son of God (Heb. 9:23-26), so in a similar manner Abraham received the promise of the land but never experienced the blessing of its full possession. In this way the patriarch learned to look forward to "the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Heb. 11:10).<sup>5</sup>

It is significant that Robertson cannot prove his point here apart from the further use of inappropriate Mosaic covenant categories. Here is recourse to an incorrect Gentile understanding of Hebrews 9:23-26, the concept of a superior, other-worldly heaven above and inferior earth below, where we in fact have a learned Hebrew Christian author instructing Hebrew Christians. When Abraham entered and surveyed the promised land, it was manifestly unholy. His looking was for the consummation of the promise when heaven would come down and transform the unholy land into the land that was to become truly holy. Refer to Chapter 7.

### C. The spirituality of materiality in the New Testament.

At the transfiguration of Jesus, it seems that for a fleeting period, the veil of perfect humanity is penetrated to reveal essential glory so that "His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light" (Matt.17:2). The account of Luke adds that "Moses and Elijah [were] . . . appearing in glory [δόξα, doxa]" (Luke 9:31). Moses remained evidently Moses while Elijah remained evidently Elijah. Here was the embodiment of spiritual materiality, on planet earth. So with the resurrection appearances of the Lord Jesus, He was transformed (Luke 24:13-16, 30-31; John 20:15-16). In Galilee, He suddenly "stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be to you.' But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit" (Luke 24:36-37). Then He invited them to, "touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (24:39). Subsequently He ate fish, after which "He parted from them and was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51). Again, here is the spirituality of materiality. So Paul similarly instructs us in I Corinthians 15:35-57. Concerning the resurrection of the dead: "it is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. . . . Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly [as a both/and result]. Now I say this brethren, that [sinful] flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God [except resurrection change be accomplished when] . . . this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality," vs. 42-44, 49-50, 53. So the premillennial hope anticipates that time when spiritual materiality in the redeemed, comprising Israel and the Gentile nations, will enjoy the consummation of their salvation on an earth of spiritual materiality where the glorious, spiritually tangible and spiritually substantial Jesus Christ will reign from Jerusalem.

To those who charge that premillennialism is carnal at its roots, Horatius Bonar has a compelling response that is worth pondering.

I am told that the literal sense is often so carnal that it must be departed from. Perhaps in some cases it may be so; but every passage must first be brought separately to the test. A literal fulfillment is often just as spiritual as any other; and it is a strange misapprehension of the true scope of Scripture to suppose that because some interpret literally, therefore they do not

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

interpret spiritually. . . . Take the prophecies regarding the incarnation of Christ. Before that event took place, there might be a controversy as to whether they were to be literally fulfilled or not. A Jew might have argued with much apparent force against a literal meaning, What! Is God to take upon Himself the form of a man? Is Jehovah to become an infant of days, nay, to be born of a creature, to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, to die and be buried, as men die and are buried? Impossible! the very idea is carnal beyond endurance. These prophecies cannot be interpreted in their literal sense; they must have some figurative, some spiritual meaning. So might a Jew have argued before Messiah came; and truly, when we think what it was that he had to believe regarding his Messiah, we could not have wondered had he found much difficulty in receiving such prophecies as literal; our wonder is at the strength of that faith which, in spite of difficulties so vast, could take in the idea, and believe in the reality of that stupendous fact which the literal interpretation of prophecy involved. The fact, the glorious but stupendous fact, made known in the fullness of time, proved not only that the literal was the true sense of these prophecies regarding Messiah's first coming, but also established this truth, that the literal interpretation and fulfillment may be the more truly spiritual of the two. Take, as another illustration of the point in hand, the doctrine of the resurrection. That doctrine appeared to some, in the first ages, such a carnal doctrine, that they denied the literal accomplishment of those Scriptures which speak of it. Of these were Hymenæus and Philetis, mentioned in the Second Epistle to Timothy. They maintained that a literal resurrection was such a carnal thing, that those passages which refer to it must mean something spiritual,—the resurrection of the soul from sin. They “erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection was past already.” Here, also, the literal was the more spiritual of the two interpretations.

It is said, “All are one in Christ Jesus, therefore there can be no national distinction of the Jews, no national restoration, no national pre-eminence.” I am unable to comprehend the ground or force of this reasoning. I cannot discern the very shadow of inconsistency between the two things; nor can I understand how the national distinctiveness, or even national pre-eminence of the Jews, should prevent their being one in Christ Jesus with their Gentile brethren.

Some have surely a strange notion of what is meant by being “one in Christ,” when they make their spiritual oneness depend upon the uniformity of external circumstances. What a low idea of Christian oneness! They charge us with carnal views because we insist upon the future distinctiveness of the Jewish nation; but it appears that the charge of carnality belongs to them, not to us! We believe in the literal accomplishment of the prophecies regarding the Jews, in which there appear to be many promises of temporal blessings as well as spiritual; but we lay no further stress upon these than the Word of God lays; we admit spiritual blessings to be the highest and noblest. Our opponents, however, lay such stress upon external circumstances, as to insist, that if these exist the oneness in Christ is gone. We had always understood Scripture as telling us, not that there were no national distinctions, but that, *in spite of these*, there was a oneness which bound together all believers; a oneness so spiritual, so divine, so unearthly, to unapproachable, as not to be in the very least affected by temporal distinctions of time, or place, or rank.<sup>6</sup>

We might take this argument further by referring to the Apostle John's insistence, not only that “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), but also that, “every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus [has come in the flesh] is not from God” (I John 4:2-3). Indeed, added to this impeccable carnality of the Son of God was the vital sensual attestation that John esteemed to be of fundamental significance concerning, “what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life” (I John 1:1). Surely there is allusion here to Christ's post-resurrection

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<sup>6</sup> Horatius Bonar, *Prophetical Landmarks*, pp. 231-233, 240-241.

appearances that manifest a glorified, nevertheless spiritual materiality that has been promised as the form of His personal second coming (Acts 1:9-11). In Jesus Christ has come about the union of eternal deity and holy materiality, while at the same time He has received from His Father “the Spirit without measure” (John 3:34).<sup>7</sup>

Thus the original creation before the fall, especially within the boundaries of the Garden of Eden, was not of such a lowly and inferior status that it will be superseded by a heavenly existence. On the other hand, this is not to say that the vindication of God by means of the future millennial reign of Jesus Christ upon earth will be by means of an economy identical with that of Eden.

#### D. The influence of Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism upon the early church.

The early Christian Fathers were Gentile Greeks and Romans. Having embraced Christian truth, they nevertheless were influenced by the dominant world view of their time, namely Greek philosophy, particularly Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism, often in blended forms. Gager indicates that “the appropriation of Middle- and Neo-Platonic philosophy by such theologians as Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, and Augustine, eventually came to play an important role in the formulation of Christian doctrine.”<sup>8</sup> Platonism also had ongoing relevance for Christian mysticism as represented by Dionysius the Areopagite and Bernard of Clairvaux. Later in the Medieval Church, John Scotus, then in the Renaissance, John Colet, Thomas More, and Richard Hooker, imbibed this ongoing stream of Platonic thought. The prevailing philosophic understanding of Hellenistic deity was that of a transcendent, spiritual, unchanging being in contrast with the changing character of this material world. Thus Greek thought was predominantly negative about this earthly existence. It considered material life in this world to be temporal, transient, the creation of an inferior deity. The philosophical approach to this world was usually ascetic in which the philosopher sought to rise above the things of the world. The Greek or Hellenist despised the material world because it was substance and changing, deteriorating as an inferior creation. Man was comprised of body, the mere clothing of the soul which was regarded as the real essential person. Future hope was release from the imprisonment of the earthly body. Of course it is not difficult to recognize some agreement in certain areas here with biblical Christianity, especially in the realm of the transcendence of God. However the thought that God would participate in human flesh, and indeed resurrect the body, was abhorrent to Greek thought (Acts 17:32; I John 1:1-3; 4:1-3; II John 1:7). Hence, we can easily see how other-worldly Hellenistic thought was in conflict with a more earthy Hebrew world view, except that some mode of reconciliation could be employed. Alfred Edersheim explains how rapprochement could be obtained, even amongst Jews influenced by Hellenism during the time of Jesus Christ.

To those who sought to weld Grecian thought with Hebrew revelation, two objects would naturally present themselves. They must try to connect their Greek philosophers with the Bible, and they must find beneath the letter of Scripture a deeper meaning, which would accord with philosophic truth. So far as the truth of Scripture was concerned, they had a method ready at hand. The Stoic philosophers had busied themselves in finding a deeper *allegorical* meaning, especially in the writings of Homer. By applying it to mythical stories, or to the popular beliefs, and by tracing the supposed symbolical meaning of names, numbers, &c., it became easy to prove almost anything, or to extract from these philosophical truths ethical principles, and even

<sup>7</sup> Concerning this interpretation of John 3:34, refer to Barrett, Carson, Morris.

<sup>8</sup> John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, p. 160.

the later results of natural science. Such a process was peculiarly pleasing to the imagination, and the results alike astounding and satisfactory, since as they could not be proved, so neither could they be disproved. This allegorical method was the welcome key by which the Hellenists might unlock the hidden treasury of Scripture.<sup>9</sup>

It should not surprise us then that the early Christians Fathers, but particularly the influential Augustine, should be similarly influenced by Greek thought in such a way as to subtly include elements of Hellenism within his hermeneutical frame of reference concerning Scripture, but especially with regard to eschatology.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the Augustinian concept of the *City of God* was based upon an either/or, that is inferior/superior eschatological regard for earth and heaven rather than the Hebrew both/and eschatological hope concerning earth and heaven, materiality and spirituality. Herein lies a fundamental point of difference that this writer regards to be at the heart of much amillennial allegiance, often quite unconsciously, to anti-Semitic eschatology. To embrace the Augustinian dichotomy between materiality and spirituality and impose it on the Old Testament canon is to fly in the face of Hebrew spirituality. However, of supreme importance is the consequence of this philosophic/theological amalgam that has led to the depreciation of national and ethnic Israel. Augustine's *City of God* found its earthly expression in the Roman Catholic Church that, as the new Israel of God, would not suffer any legitimacy from a rival old Israel of God. B. B. Warfield writes:

It was particularly in the doctrine of the Church, which he [Augustine] thus took up and transfigured, that he became in a true sense the founder of Roman Catholicism, and thus called into being a new type of Christianity, and thus called into being a new type of Christianity, in which, "the idea of the Church became the central power in the religious feeling" and "in ecclesiastical activity," "in a fashion which has remained unknown to the East." . . . To Augustine the Church was fundamentally the *congregatio sanctorum*, the Body of Christ, and it is this Church which he has in mind when he calls it the *civitas Dei*, or the Kingdom of God on earth.<sup>11</sup>

That a Christian today should, in retrospect, consider the subsequent centuries of denigration of the Jewish people that have transpired through the widespread influence of Augustinian eschatology and ecclesiology, and yet at the same time boast in this eschatology, is difficult to comprehend. Consider Jewish historian Robert S. Wistrich's estimate in this regard.

The Augustinian theology reinforced the notion of the Jews as a wandering, homeless, rejected and accursed people who were incurably carnal, blind to spiritual meaning, perfidious, faithless, and apostate. Their crime, being one of cosmic proportions, merited permanent exile and subordination to Christianity. Israel, the older son, must be made to 'serve' the Church, the younger son, which is the true heir and rightful owner of the Divine promises enunciated in the Old Testament.<sup>12</sup>

Hence, when Reformed writers write with admiration concerning their eschatological linkage with Augustine,<sup>13</sup> they might reconsider exactly what the fruit of this legacy has

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<sup>9</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, II, pp. 33-34.

<sup>10</sup> Otto Heick, *A History of Christian Thought*, I, p. 133, quotes Anders Nygren in *Agape and Eros*, "all his life he [Augustine] remained a Neo-Platonic Christian or, if you will, a Christian Platonist, p. 458.

<sup>11</sup> B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, p. 313. He quotes Hermann Reuter, *Augustinische Studien*, vii, p. 499.

<sup>12</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism, The Longest Hatred*, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> W. J. Grier writes glowingly of Augustine as "one of the greatest men of the Christian Church of all time" since it has been said that he "laid the ghost of premillennialism so effectively that for centuries the subject was

produced, and how their derived understanding of national and ethnic Israel would help or retard their witness to unbelieving Jews.

#### E. The redemption of spirituality and materiality

In rejecting the Platonic/Augustinian eschatological dichotomy between inferior, earthly materiality and superior, heavenly spirituality, the alternative of both earthly materiality and heavenly spirituality in holy union should be carefully understood. Craig Blaising describes this essential distinction in the millennial debate that is well worth consideration at this point. It concerns what he designates as “Two Models of Eternal Life.” There is “The Spiritual Vision Model” which he defines as follows that in fact is the basic presupposition, or as he defines it, the “preunderstanding” of amillennialism.

In the history of the church, many Christian theologians have claimed that the final state of the resurrected will be in heaven. The way in which they have described it draws not only on biblical themes . . . but also on cultural ideas common to the classical philosophical tradition. That tradition has contributed to the spiritual vision model in three basic convictions: (1) a basic contrast between spirit and matter; (2) an identification of spirit with mind or intellect; and (3) a belief that eternal perfection entails the absence of change. Central to all three of these is the classical tradition’s notion of an ontological hierarchy in which spirit is located at the top of a descending order of being. Elemental matter occupies the lowest place. In the spiritual vision model of eternity, heaven is the highest level of ontological reality. It is the realm of spirit as opposed to base matter. This is the destiny of the saved, who will exist in that non earthly, spiritual place as spiritual beings engaged eternally in spiritual activity.

The perfection of heaven in the spiritual vision model means that it is free from all change. This changelessness is contrasted with life on the material earth. While changelessness means freedom from death and decay, it also means the absence of development or growth. It means freedom from temporal and historical change, such that the arrival of eternity (or better one’s arrival in eternity) is characterized as the end of time and history.

Following the classical tradition’s identification of spirit with mind or intellect, the spiritual model views eternal life primarily as cognitive, meditative, or contemplative. With this point of emphasis, the place or realm of eternal life is really a secondary or even inconsequential matter. In its essential reality, eternal life is a state of knowing. Knowing what? Knowing God, of course—and this is a perfect way, which means in a changeless manner. Perfect spiritual knowledge is not a discursive or developmental knowledge but a complete perception of the whole. The Platonic tradition spoke of it as a direct, full, and unbroken *vision* of true being, absolute god, and unsurpassed beauty. Following the biblical promise that the saints will see God, the Christian tradition has spoken of eternal life as the *beatific vision* of God—an unbroken, unchanging contemplation of the infinite reality of God.<sup>14</sup>

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practically ignored.” *The Momentous Event*, p. 27. Cornelius P. Venema writes of the “the great church father, Augustine” with regard to his instrumental role in establishing the predominant place of amillennialism over succeeding centuries and on through the Reformation. *The Promise of the Future*, pp. 236-237.

<sup>14</sup> Craig A. Blaising, “Premillennialism,” *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, eds. Darrell L. Bock, Stanley N. Gundry, pp. 161-162. It is acknowledged that some amillennialists have attempted to retain materiality involving the present planet earth in their understanding of the future new heavens and new earth. Nevertheless, this must surely be seen as a precipitous situation in that it opens the door for a more earthly understanding of Old Testament passages that, according to a prima facie reading, proclaim a glorious, holy earthly existence. In such a case the door would then open even wider to Messiah inhabiting and reigning over a geographic Jerusalem, Israel, and the nations.

Then there is the “New Creation Model” which is the basic presupposition, or “preunderstanding” of premillennialism.

The *new creation model* of eternal life draws on biblical texts that speak of a future everlasting kingdom, of a new earth and the renewal of life on it, of bodily resurrection (especially of the nature of Christ’s resurrection body), of social and even political concourse among the redeemed. The new creation model expects that the ontological order and scope of eternal life is essentially continuous with that of present earthly life except for the absence of sin and death. Eternal life for redeemed human beings will be an embodied life on earth (whether the present earth or a wholly new earth), set within a cosmic structure such as we have presently. It is not a timeless, static existence but rather an unending sequence of life and lived experiences. It does not reject physicality or materiality, but affirms them as essential both to a holistic anthropology and to the biblical idea of a redeemed creation.

While eternal life is essentially continuous with present existence, it is not simply an unending eternal life. Those who share that life will be immortal, having been freed from death through resurrection or translation. Sin will not exist. The saints will be confirmed and glorified in a holy character by the Spirit of God. As such they will enjoy communion with God as well as with one another in the new creation. This is the “Spirituality” of eternal life in the new creation model—not the absence of materiality but the full effect of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling the resurrected physical bodies of the redeemed. (This is also the meaning of “spiritual bodies” in I Corinthians 15—material bodies indwelt by and glorified by the Holy Spirit.

Following the language of Isaiah 25, 65, and 66, of Revelation 21, and of Romans 8, the new creation model expects the earth and cosmic order to be renewed and made everlasting through the same creating power that grants immortal and resurrection life to the saints. The nonhuman aspects of creation, both animate and inanimate, will be greatly blessed beyond the state of things prior to the transgression of Adam and Eve. This is the “new” in the “new creation” view of eternity.<sup>15</sup>

F. The historic tension that spiritual materiality presents to amillennialism.

It is worthwhile considering Robert Strimple’s critique of the preceding scenario of Craig Blasing since it raises a more recent development within amillennial eschatology. In disclaiming a proven connection between amillennialism and the “Spiritual Vision Model,” reference is made to Charles E. Hill’s *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Future Hope in Early Christianity*, which volume considers the streams of millennialism and amillennialism that flowed during the early church up to the mid-third century. Thus Hill concludes:

Nor should it be thought permissible to portray all opposition to early chiliasm as “Greek,” “allegorizing,” or “spiritualizing.” Doubtless chiliastic hopes must have seemed a chimera [a fantastic/gross result of imagination] to any who were favorably disposed to Platonism, but the eschatological scheme that looked for a return of Christ to be followed, without an interregnum, by a last judgment and an eternal state was no less “realistic,” no less “historical,” and no more “allegorical,” “mystical,” or “Greek” than was chiliasm. Nor was the amillennial tendency necessarily or ultimately “antimaterialistic”; it only looked for the next stage of material realization to be final, perfect, and eternal (Rom. 8:19-23), rather than intermediate, gradational, and temporal.<sup>16</sup>

However, aside from this conclusion which spans a period of approximately 150 years, and thus hardly encompasses “the history of the church” as Blasing puts it, it must be asked as to how Augustine, immediately following the period of Hill’s consideration, arrived at his

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 162-163.

<sup>16</sup> Charles E. Hill, *Regnum Caelorum, Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity*, p. 251.

amillennialism. After all his doctrine was, as previously pointed out, influenced by the dominant world view of that time, namely Greek philosophy, particularly Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism, often in blended forms. As Gager indicated, those especially impacted by this teaching were Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose and Augustine.<sup>17</sup> Hill himself admits: “We know that Augustine, in continuity with the non-chiliasmatic tradition, still reserved a large place in his exegesis for the ‘Church triumphant’ in heaven.”<sup>18</sup> Hence, not surprisingly, in Augustine having been a Neo-platonist prior to his conversion, Warfield concludes: “[I]t was as a Neoplatonist thinker that Augustine became a Christian; and he carried his Neoplatonic conceptions over into Christianity with him.”<sup>19</sup> Not that this legacy remained; quite to the contrary, Warfield suggests that it diminished. Thus Augustine is not expounding “the Neoplatonist philosophy in Christian terms: he is developing the philosophy of Christianity in terms of the best philosophic thought of the day.”<sup>20</sup> With this in mind, as well as the subsequent Aristotelian legacy of Thomas Aquinas and centuries of Roman Catholic mysticism, it is not surprising that these many centuries that led to the present have indeed been dominated by Blaising’s “Spiritual Vision Model.”

Nevertheless, in the light of the preceding, it is interesting to consider that more recently a number of Reformed amillennialists have upheld a version of Blaising’s “New Creation Model,” and from a premillennial perspective, we believe this to be a step in the right direction. In considering the representations of Anthony Hoekema, Robert Strimple, Cornelius Venema, and Samuel Waldron, we find interpretations of the “new heavens and a new earth” which do appear to affirm a hope in future spiritual materiality. Thus Hoekema raises the question as to “whether the new earth will be totally other than this present earth or a renewal of the present earth. . . . Lutheran theologians have often favored the former of these two options. . . . We must, however, reject the concept of total annihilation in favor of the concept of renewal.”<sup>21</sup> Now in agreeing with Hoekema concerning this Lutheran perspective, we would nevertheless suggest a far more broad legacy is involved that, as we have already indicated, involved centuries of a mystical heavenly hope rather than anything earthly according to spiritual materiality. So Hoekema appears to quote approvingly Edward Thurneysen who wrote that:

The world into which we shall enter in the Paousia of Jesus Christ is therefore not another world; it is this world, this heaven, this earth; both however, passed away and renewed. It is these forests, these fields, these cities streets, these people, that will be the scene of redemption. At present they are battlefields, full of the strife and sorrow of the not yet accomplished consummation; then they will be fields of victory, fields of harvest, where out of seed that was sown with tears the everlasting sheaves will be reaped and brought home.<sup>22</sup>

Concerning Revelation 21:24 and 26, Hoekema declares:

One could say that, according to these words, the inhabitants of the new earth will include people who attained great prominence and exercised great power on the present earth—

<sup>17</sup> John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, p. 160.

<sup>18</sup> Hill, *Regnum Caelorum*, p. 267.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, p. 369.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>21</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and The Future*, p. 280. It is significant that Hoekema acknowledges his indebtedness to Patrick Fairbairn’s *Typology of Scripture* with regard to the development of his teaching on “The New Earth,” pp. 276n, 279. Refer to Chapter 7 for a consideration of Fairbairn in this regard.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281. Thurneysen, as a pastor theologian, was a close colleague of Karl Barth in Germany.

kings, princes, leaders, and the like. One could also say that whatever people have done on this earth which glorified God will be remembered in the life to come (cf. Rev. 14:13). But more must be said. Is it too much to say that, according to these verses, the unique contributions of each nation to the life of the present earth will enrich the life of the new earth? Shall we then perhaps inherit the best products of culture and art which this earth has produced?

Then he concludes:

Whereas ecologists often picture the future of this earth in gloomy terms, it is encouraging to know that some day God will prepare a glorious new earth on which the ecological problems which now plague us will no longer exist. . . . As citizens of God's kingdom, we may not just write off the present earth as a total loss, or rejoice in its deterioration. . . . As we live on this earth, we are preparing for life on God's new earth.<sup>23</sup>

All of this is quite astonishing. Without blushing, language is used being very similar to that which premillenarians have employed for generations. Even more startling is the mention of distinctive national contributions, which of necessity would surely have to include the cultural benefactions of Israel! But then, according to amillennialism, such a distinction is passé. Hence, it is also fascinating to note that more recently, several amillennial authors have expressed their agreement with Hoekema's exposition with regard to the nature of the eschatological "New Earth." Three examples are:

1. Robert B. Strimple, "Amillennialism," *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Darrell L. Bock, pp. 256-276. Referencing Bavinck and Vos in support, he also draws upon Hoekema's "even more earth-oriented vision."
2. Cornelius P. Venema, *The Promise of the Future*, pp. 454-488. Also referencing Bavinck and Hoekema, he makes a significant though unexplained comment: "Ironically, the future millennium of dispensational expectations is in some ways a less literal fulfillment of the biblical promise of the new heavens and earth than that of Amillennialism."<sup>24</sup>
3. Samuel E. Waldron, *The End Times Made Simple*, pp. 225-241. In confessing his dependence on Hoekema, this author declares that

[t]his doctrine enables us to answer the best argument of both pre- and postmillennialists. What is this argument? It is the countless Old Testament and New Testament prophecies that clearly prophecy a future, earthly kingdom. In the past, those opposing millenarianism often failed to satisfactorily interpret such passages. They attempted to apply them to the church in the present age or to heaven. Such interpretations did not make sense to many good people. They shouldn't have! They were wrong. Only the doctrine of the new earth provides a proper interpretation of such passages.<sup>25</sup>

In reply, we very much appreciate the hermeneutical advance here that is more genuinely literal. Yet the interpretation of Isaiah 65-66, while not being a passage easily understood, whatever eschatology one holds, nevertheless leaves much to be desired. In

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 286-287.

<sup>24</sup> Cornelius P. Venema, *The Promise of the Future*, p. 469n.

<sup>25</sup> Samuel E. Waldron, *The End Times Made Simple*, p.241.

terms of Judeo-centric premillennialism, it fails to explain the distinction that will exist between “My people/My chosen ones,” 65:19, 22; and “the nations,” 66:12, 18, as well as the identification of “Jerusalem/Zion/-My holy mountain,” 65:18-19, 25; 66:8, 10, 13, 20. Are these terms, in distinctively representing the community and geography of “Heaven on earth,” to be identified as the Jerusalem where Messiah will personally reign with “My people Israel”? Surely the language of Isaiah 41:8-10; 43:1-7; 44:21; 45:17; 46:3-4, 13; 49:5-7; 55:5; 60:9, 14; 63:7-8 provides an eloquent and positive answer. However supercessionist amillennialism plainly conflicts with such an expectation.

#### G. The redemption of Israel’s fallen spiritual materiality

Surely the preeminent passage of Scripture that describes the resurrection of national Israel is Ezekiel 37:1-28. Refer to Appendix F for Spurgeon’s understanding of this passage, in which he proposes that national Israel will experience national conversion as well as glorious residency in the Land, and then Palmer Robertson’s attempt to spiritualize this account in Chapter 2. We would strongly maintain that Spurgeon is essentially and obviously correct, while it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Robertson’s explanation is born of avoidance, at all costs, of what is patently obvious. Two matters should be considered at this point. First, the nation of Israel will enjoy the redemption of its fallen spiritual materiality. The language is full of the material becoming gloriously alive unto God. The national and personal form remains, but the bones come to life and are clothed with redeemed flesh that responds with submissive adoration. Second, v. 28 adds, “And the nations [Gentiles] will know that I am the Lord who sanctified Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.” There is no absorption here of the Jews into the Gentile community or of the Gentile community into the Jewish community. The Jews will inhabit the Land, and the Gentiles will surround them with perfect diversity in unity as the seed of Abraham.

##### 1. Carnal Zionism.

Zionism is the Jewish national movement of rebirth and renewal in the land of Israel - the historical birthplace of the Jewish people. The yearning to return to Zion, the biblical term for not only the Land of Israel, but Jerusalem in particular, has been the cornerstone of Jewish religious life since the Jewish exile from the land two thousand years ago, and is embedded in Jewish prayer, ritual, literature and culture. Modern Zionism emerged in the late 19th century in response to the violent persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe, anti-Semitism in Western Europe. Modern Zionism fused the ancient Jewish biblical and historical ties to the ancestral homeland with the modern concept of nationalism into a vision of establishing a modern Jewish state in the land of Israel. The “father” of modern Zionism, Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl, consolidated various strands of Zionist thought into an organized political movement, advocating for international recognition of a “Jewish state” and encouraging Jewish immigration to build the land. He was unquestionably a secularist, yet in Appendix J some significant incidents in his life indicate that the shameful attitudes of European Christianity toward Jews, such as he, were a shameful testimony rather than which would endear Jesus as the gracious Son of God. Also of great influence was Dr. Chaim Weitzmann, a distinguished scientist, who became president of the English Zionist Federation. The

core of the Zionist idea appears in Israel's *Declaration of Independence* (14 May 1948), which states, inter alia, that:

The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books. After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Those Christians who are theologically-Antisemitic and thus opponents of modern Zionism will strenuously declare just how carnal and ungodly this astonishing movement has been. This writer has encountered a number of Reformed Christians in this regard who, although evidencing a nominal recognition of “Jews,” yet evidence little sympathy for national Israel and ethnic Judaism. Certainly the present leadership of Israel reflects no love for Jesus of Nazareth as their longed for Messiah, even as was the case when the Apostle Paul never ceased to witness in synagogues wherever he traveled. Though it is interesting to note that whereas in 1967, the year of the Six Day War in which Israel regained Jerusalem, there were no Messianic Jewish congregations in the world, while as of 1998 there were 350.<sup>26</sup> However, as is pointed out in Chapter 8, and especially with reference to Romans 11:28, God still has a covenantal regard for His “beloved enemies” in the flesh. This being so, Christian opponents to modern Zionism, being theologically driven, are usually both ignorant of and even reluctant in considering significant historic features that led to the rise of the modern state of Israel. In other words, there were Christians, both nominal and committed, holding influential government, political, and military offices, that were providentially enabled in the accomplishment of that which seemed for a considerable time an impossible dream. David Larsen writes in this regard:

While doubtless there were complex motives of self-interest on the part of Great Britain, [Chaim] Weizmann stoutly maintained in his memoirs that the sincere beliefs of Balfour, Lloyd-George, and Jan Christian Smuts were more responsible than anything else for the new opening for the Jews in Palestine.<sup>27</sup>

Hence, drawing upon Larsen's research, we simply sketch here the contribution of some of these individuals who were instrumental, humanly speaking, in the birth of modern Israel, and especially on account of both loving sympathy and biblical convictions.

a. David Lloyd-George.

David Lloyd-George, leader of the British War Cabinet during the last half of World War I, played an important part in the Palestinian question. Born of Welsh parentage and raised in a nonconformist home in which he learned all of the biblical imagery, Lloyd-George was a philosemite and a Zionist. Although no devout believer in Christ, Lloyd-George testified: “When Dr. Weizmann was talking of

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<sup>26</sup> Gary Thomas, “The Return of the Jewish Church,” *Christianity Today*, September 7, 1998.

<sup>27</sup> David Larsen, *Jews, Gentiles, and the Church*, p. 182.

Palestine he kept bringing us place-names which were more familiar to me than those on the western front.”<sup>28</sup>

Following the penning of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, and consequent opposition even from within the British government,

Prime Minister Lloyd-George was not about to retreat. When Weizmann visited the prime minister on Armistice Day, “he found him reading the Psalms in tears.” Lloyd-George often used to say afterwards that to him “Palestine was the one interesting part of the war.”<sup>29</sup>

b. Arthur James Balfour.

Balfour was the nephew of the long-time British prime minister, Lord Salisbury, and had been Conservative Prime Minister from 1902-1905. Raised in a devout Christian home, he detested anti-Semitism. Then as Foreign Secretary he wrote a letter of historic significance on November 2, 1917 to Lord Rothschild, the influential Jewish financier, as follows:

His Majesty’s Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political enjoyed by Jews in any other country.<sup>30</sup>

It was Chaim Weizmann who helped him to see how the British could help the Jews. As a consequence Balfour pledged his support, and according to historian Barbara Tuchman, “the motive was biblical not imperial.’ It was his life-long study of the Bible and his Scottish upbringing that commandeered his whole being.”<sup>31</sup>

c. Edmund Allenby.

The capture of Jerusalem from the Turks in 1917 fell to General Sir Edmund Allenby, married to a direct descendant of Cromwell, according to the choice of Lloyd-George. Of him Larson writes:

Steeped in biblical studies, he was raised in a home where prayer was made “for the peace of Jerusalem.” T. E. Lawrence said of him: “Allenby was so morally great that the comprehension of our littleness came slow to him.” . . . Lloyd-George told Allenby that he wanted to give Jerusalem to the weary British people as a Christmas gift. Seizing his inspiration from Isaiah 31:4-5, Allenby sent planes over Jerusalem in hopes of averting bloody hand-to-hand combat in the Holy City, and indeed the Turks panicked and the city was taken without loss of life, Allenby walking walking ahead of his troops with his cap doffed.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 178-179.

## d. Woodrow Wilson.

American support for the Balfour Declaration was secured through President Woodrow Wilson by Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, confidant of Wilson. Brandeis was an early Zionist and the first Jew to sit on the Supreme Court of the United States. His appointment was bitterly fought. One writer on “The Palestine Question in the Wilson Era” observed: “By chance, Louis D. Brandeis, one of the men of ‘light and leading’ on whom Wilson relied, formally became a Zionist in the year of the Princeton scholar’s first election.” With the help of Rabbi Stephen Wise and facing the opposition of presidential advisor Colonel House and Secretary of State Lansing, Brandeis obtained Wilson’s backing for the Balfour declaration as early as September 24, 1917. Already we see the negativity of the U.S. State Department to Zionist aspiration which plays out even to the present. The President publicly announced support for the Balfour Declaration on August 31, 1918. The subsequent strength of the Arab opposition to a Jewish homeland seemed to surprise Wilson, and at Versailles he faced a formidable array against him. Yet he stood firmly and the name of Woodrow Wilson belongs amongst the “fathers” of the new commonwealth of Israel.<sup>33</sup>

## e. Jan Christian Smuts.

This future Prime Minister of South Africa, was the African delegate to the British War Cabinet during World War I, and thus helped to encourage the British government in adopting the Balfour Declaration and thus make a commitment to construct a Zionist colony under British direction. Zionism caught his imagination. He worked for it with enthusiasm. When the leader of the Zionism in England, Chaim Weizmann, sought help from Lloyd George, he was told “Go, and talk with Lord Reading and General Smuts.” Weizmann saw Reading, but Reading, the Jew, met him coldly, and froze him with his icy reserve. He went to Smuts, the Christian, who welcomed him with warmth and enthusiasm. “One of the great objects for which we fight this war,” said Smuts, “is to provide a national home for the Jewish people,” and he worked zealously to help Weizmann and the Zionists. His later participation in the League of Nations included a major role in the drafting of the Covenant of the League of Nations which provided the international legal basis for establishing a British protectorate, or Mandate over Palestine.

## f. Captain Orde Charles Wingate.

While a somewhat eccentric person, Wingate was a devout believer and an ardent Zionist. After serving in both the Sudan and Libya, he was posted to Palestine in 1936 where for three years he risked his professional career in the British Army by training the Special Night Squads, and thereby laying the foundations of the IDF (the Israeli Defense Force). Tending to be passive in their response to Arab incursion, the Israelis responded well to Wingate’s challenge. “Today you are seeing the beginning of the Jewish army—You are the sons of the Maccabees.”

Because he was an irritant to developing British policy, Wingate was ultimately transferred to action in Ethiopia and then to commanding British forces in Butma (the Chinditd) where he tragically met his death in 1944. Described by Ben-Gurion’s

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

biographer as “a biblical scholar of ascetic experience” and “a mystical Zionist as militant as any Jew and far more aggressive than most Jews in asserting Zionist rights,” Wingate becomes another in a striking succession of British military and political figures of great Christian persuasion who believed in a future for the Jews in Palestine.<sup>34</sup>

For some, the thought that God could be sovereignly directing his unbelieving people back to the land of Palestine is quite unthinkable; it would make God complicit in carnality. However, consider the glorious temple of that monstrous potentate, King Herod. Surely his motives were self-aggrandizement in the extreme, as well as attempted ingratiation with the Jews he had so frequently abused. Yet, how could it be that the Son of God should esteem this “carnal” edifice as “My Father’s house” (John 2:16) and at the same time so passionately defend and cleanse it?

Bishop J. C. Ryle offered his opinion without explication, significantly in 1867, “that the Jews will probably first be gathered in an unconverted state, though humbled, and will afterwards be taught to look to Him whom they have pierced, through much tribulation.”<sup>35</sup> In accepting such a scenario, the circumstances of such a return could not possibly have the appearance of some overtly spiritual movement. Rather, such a regathering would incorporate secular agencies and world leaders, not unlike the intervention of Cyrus the Persian, when he encouraged the return of exiles to Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1-4). However this sovereign action by a world potentate was nevertheless subject to the sovereign LORD of Israel, Who declared, “It is I who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd! And He will perform all my desire’” (Isa, 44:28-45:1).

## 2. Spiritual Zionism.

“Zion” is quoted 153 times in the Old Testament, particularly with reference to Psalms, Isaiah, Lamentations, Micah, and Zechariah, and 7 times in the New Testament. It is first referenced in II Samuel 5:7 concerning “the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David.” Here it refers to a specific mountain on which was the citadel of the Jebusites, the inhabitants of that region prior to David’s reign, that later was named Jerusalem. The frequent expression “daughter(s) of Zion” refers to the nation of Israel, while Zion as Jerusalem particularly describes where God displays His glory (Ps. 102:16), meets with His people (Ps. 84:5, 7); there they worship Him (Ps. 102:21) and He blesses them (Ps. 128:5; 134:3). Of the New Testament references, three have an eschatological meaning that nevertheless in no way require abstraction that detaches from the fundamental geographic location. Romans 11:26 indicates from where “the Deliverer will come from,” in relation to the salvation of “all Israel.” Hebrews 12:22 indicates the transformation of Zion that is to be the believer’s inheritance, “the heavenly Jerusalem,” that will characterize the Messianic age. Refer to Chapter 6. Revelation 14:1 indicates that the Lamb of God will stand on Mount Zion with the one hundred and forty-four thousand, described in 7:4-8 as a remnant of Israel.

What is of supreme importance is that Zion will also undergo resurrection unto spiritual materiality. Because “the Lord of hosts . . . [is] exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion” (Zech. 1:14), He “will again comfort Zion and again choose

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>35</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Are You Ready For The End Of Time?* p. 115.

Jerusalem” (Zech. 1:17). As a result, “I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain” (Zech. 8:3). Commenting on this last reference and what follows, David Baron admirably describes the character of spiritual Zionism.

Jehovah, in the person of the Messiah, “*will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem,*” which shall become the center of His governmental dealings with the world, and the place whence light and truth shall go forth unto all the nation. “And Jerusalem shall be called *’Ir ha-emeth,* the City of truth”; first, because it shall be the seat of *El-emeth,* “The God of Truth”; and, secondly, because “the remnant of Israel,” which shall then dwell in it, “shall not any longer do iniquity, nor speak lies” (Zeph. 3:13), but be known throughout the earth for their truth and fidelity toward God and man. “*And the mountain of Jehovah of hosts,*” *i.e.,* Mount Zion, shall be called “*The Holy Mountain,*” because there the Holy one of Israel shall once more take up His abode, and by His presence in their midst sanctify His people, so that they, too, shall be holy; and, *Qodesh la-Yehovah*—“Holiness (or ‘holy’) unto Jehovah,” shall be written, not only upon their hearts and foreheads, but upon all their possessions, down to the very “bells of their horses,” and the “pots” which they shall use to prepare their food (14:20-21; Isa. 1:26; 60:14; 62:12).

Now follows a beautiful picture of restored and flourishing Jerusalem. No longer shall the holy city, and the land of which it is the metropolis, be depopulated by war and other grievous calamities, and lie desolate.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> David Baron, *Zechariah*, pp. 233-234.