Chapter 2

ISRAEL — AND REPRESENTATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY REFORMED ESCHATOLOGY

There is a segment of evangelical Christianity in this twenty-first century that, in varying degrees, looks with subtle disdain upon Jews and the present state of Israel, especially where discussion concerns the modern secular aspirations of Zionism. Not surprisingly, this perception is derived from a grid of doctrinal presuppositions, rooted in specific historic and systematic currents, that inevitably lead to a platform of aloofness and disparagement that, to be perfectly candid, can only be defined as a form of theological anti-Semitism. This writer, in associating with Calvinistic and Reformed Christians, has experienced this condescending attitude, this cool, qualified tolerance at best, on numerous occasions in both conversation and published form. Of course this opposition to matters associated with national Judaism does not come with an open face, so to speak, at least in most instances. Rather it is clothed in terms that on the one hand forthrightly deny the unbelieving Jew of any present divine covenantal rights while on the other hand there is token acknowledgment that nevertheless, the Christian ought to love these rejecters of Christ and continue in witnessing to them. Minimal recognition of the individual Jew is allowed in that he is identified by the term “Jew” in a nominal sense, even though there is strenuous assertion, though commonly not in his presence, that he is forever disinherited from the land and any covenant relationship with God, and in fact in no sense is he to be regarded as a distinctive Jew in the flesh, in the sight of the God of Abraham. But let some present day examples of this attitude be presented at this stage. They are not identical; there are varying nuances, and some are more blatant while others are more subtle. Nevertheless a heritage is followed that has flowed through many centuries. At this point we will consider nine more recent examples, namely Patrick Fairbairn, Geerhardus Vos, Anthony Hoekema, Loraine Boettner, William Hendriksen, O Palmer Robertson, Hans K. LaRondelle, Samuel E. Waldron, and Kim Riddlebarger. Then in the next chapter will follow a survey of the preceding centuries of church history in which a consistent, essential doctrinal thrust represented by these authors has resulted in the sublimation of Judaism in any real sense within biblical Christianity. The ethical consequences of this thrust are such that this doctrine of supercessionism, in giving birth to such an intentional disregard for the Jews and Israel over the centuries, ought to be seriously questioned.

A. Patrick Fairbairn

Born in Hallyburton, Scotland, in 1805, after graduating from the University of Edinburgh in 1826 he tutored at the Orkney Islands and advanced in his study of Hebrew and German. Following his first pastorate in Glasgow, evangelical convictions led to his alignment with the Free Church of Scotland, hence a leading part in organizing the Free Church Presbytery of Haddington. In 1853 he was appointed by the General Assembly to the Chair of Theology in Aberdeen. However when the Free Church College was founded in Glasgow in 1856 Professor Fairbairn became Principal and Professor of Church History and Exegesis there, and presided over the institution till his death in 1874.
1. **Fairbairn (1838-39) versus Fairbairn (1864).**

In 1838-39 Fairbairn delivered twelve lectures on, “Future Prospects of the Jews—Restoration to Their Own Land—Universal Conversion to the Faith of Christ.” Here the younger Presbyterian minister of Glasgow presents arguments for a millennial eschatology that envisages a distinct national future and conversion of the Jewish people. In 1864 the older Fairbairn, as Principal of the Presbyterian Free Church College in Glasgow, authored *Fairbairn on Prophecy* in which was included, from an amillennial perspective, “The Prophetic Future of the Jewish People.” Fairbairn’s *The Typology of Scripture* (1852), *Hermeneutical Manual* (1858), and *Commentary on Ezekiel* (1863) are similarly amillennial. In 1950, Albertus Pieters\(^1\) edited a book in which both articles were included under the title, *The Prophetic Prospects of the Jews, or Fairbairn vs. Fairbairn*. The later writing of Fairbairn proposes three views, the Jewish, semi-Jewish, and spiritualistic, the last mentioned being his amillennial perspective, namely “that the proper meaning of the prophecies, in so far as they bear on the future of Israel, is to be made good simply by the conversion of the people [Jews] to the Christian faith, and their participation in the privileges and hopes of the church of Christ.”\(^2\) Hence we now briefly consider the older Fairbairn’s regard for Israel and the Jews which is simply a recapitulation of essential Augustinianism, though filtered through a prism of German scholarship.

We pass by this author’s unwillingness to face the Jewish realities of Matthew 19:28; Luke 21:24; Acts 1:6-7,\(^3\) and simply consider his wrestling with the vital question:

> [M]ay not the natural Israel in some other respect have the prospect of a separate and peculiar standing in the church? . . . Even when the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, shall the Jewish nation stand out and apart from the rest? . . . Were it to do so, it would not be a continuation or a renewal of the past, but the introduction of an entirely new principle into the Church of God.\(^4\)

Here is no concession such as by Holwerda who, as we saw earlier, in commencing a study of Romans 9-11, asked the question, “Is there a future for Jewish Israel?” To this he offered the frank confession that, “there is nothing in the Gospels and Acts that either biblically or logically entails an absolute or definitive rejection of Jewish Israel.”\(^5\) Rather Fairbairn is quite unyielding at this juncture. He further explains concerning Israel that they were the nation that held the truth, and, as such, stood apart from the idolatrous nations of heathendom. But when that distinction virtually ceased to exist by the mass of the people abandoning the truth, and espousing the corruptions of heathenism, the Lord

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1. Refer to this author’s theological anti-Semitism in Chapter 1.
2. Albertus Pieters, *The Prophetic Prospects of the Jews or Fairbairn vs. Fairbairn*, p. 91. Of course this incorporation of Israel into the Church of Christ means that all Jewish identity, whether individual, national, or territorial, has become null and void.
4. Ibid., pp. 131, 133-134.
5. David E. Holwerda, *Jesus & Israel, One Covenant or Two?* p. 150.
held the ground of separation to be abolished, and addressed and treated them as heathen
(Isa. 1:1-10; Amos 9:7-8; Ezek. 16-23).

Yet Fairbairn makes no reference to the fact that ensuing revelation of all three of these
prophets gives encouragement concerning the vital truth of Paul that “where sin
increased, grace abounded all the more” (Rom. 5:20; cf. Isa. 2:1-4; Amos 9:11-15;
Ezek. 28:25-26; 34, 36-37), namely the triumph of sovereign grace that so many of the
likes of Fairbairn acknowledge with regard to the New Covenant dispensation, yet
deny for Israel. Though more of this when we subsequently consider Bonar’s objection
to this matter with regard to Fairbairn’s faulty view of conditionality.

Why then cannot the future one people of God yet incorporate a diversity of Jew and
Gentile or the nations, as certainly Edwards, Bonar, Ryle, and Spurgeon affirm?

Fairbairn explains:

[I]f converted Israelites were still to stand apart from and above them [the remainder of
the kingdom], it would not be the same thing that existed under the law, but something
essentially different—something foreign even to Judaism; how much more, then, to
Christianity?

Here we simply assert that the essence of Judaism is rooted in the Abrahamic covenant,
as signified by circumcision, and not the temporal Mosaic legal covenant. Hence, a
future distinctive Hebraic/Judaic distinction would not be essentially different. Granted
that there would be new features in this perfected Messianic Judaism, but it is simply
not correct to suggest that there could not be variety amongst the people of God. After
all, we might ask if angelic beings will also be participants in the new glorious order?

Concerning Fairbairn’s regard of the land of promise, we encounter a similar problem.
He declares,

that the typical character which attached to the people and the religion of the old
covenant, attached also to the inheritance—the land of Canaan; and that the transition to
gospel times is represented as effecting the same relative change in respect to this as to the
others . . . . The land was, in a manner, the common basis of the people and the worship—
the platform on which both stood, and in connection with which the whole of their
religious observances, and their national history, might be said to move. To except this,
therefore, from the typical territory, and withdraw it from the temporary things which
were to pass to something higher and better in Christ, were to suppose an incongruity in
the circumstances of ancient Israel, which we cannot conceive to have existed, and could
only have led to inextricable confusion. . . . [T]he former relation of the Israelites to the
land of Canaan affords no ground for re-occupation by them after their conversion to the
faith of Christ, no more than for expecting that the handwriting of ordinances shall then
be restored.

Yet for all of the twisting and turning here, the fact remains that God’s promise of the
land was made unilaterally to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12:1; 15:1-21; 26:2-4;
28:13), and it seems intimated here that Fairbairn is uncomfortably aware of this fact.
The reality here is that the multilateral Mosaic covenant was a temporary
administration imposed upon Israel (Ps. 147:19-20), which could not nullify that which

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6 Pieters, Prophetic Prospects of the Jews, p. 132.
7 Ibid., p. 134.
8 Ibid., p. 140, 142.
had been promised to Abraham (Gal. 3:17); it “was added because of transgressions” (Gal. 3:19; cf. Rom. 5:20), and thus could not invalidate the promise of the land. Yes, we agree that Abraham would become “heir of the world” (Rom. 4:13), that the seed of Abraham, being Christ and His seed (Gal. 3:16, 29), would inherit the world. But we reject Fairbairn’s suggestion that this necessarily brings about the nullification of Israel’s future possession of the land, as if it were part of “the handwriting of ordinances” (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14) that were specifically Mosaic. So again we see here the rigid unwillingness of amillennial doctrine to incorporate diversity within unity. However it is the prophets who repeatedly incorporate the diversity of the land, the prominence of Jerusalem, and the surrounding nations within the unity of the whole redeemed, inhabited earth (Isa. 60:1-4; 62:1-12; Mic. 4:1-5; Hag. 2:1-7; Zech. 14:16-21).

2. Ezekiel 34, 36-38.

The overall approach of Fairbairn in consideration of the future of national Israel in these classic references is summed up according to a question he raises and subsequent conclusions.

Could the promise of Messiah, and of the affairs connected with his work and kingdom, have been unfolded to the Church [of ancient Israel] beforehand, and with any degree of detail, excepting under the form and shadow of Old Testament relations? We unhesitatingly answer, No; not unless the Spirit had violently controlled the minds of the prophets, and superceded the free exercise of their faculties. . . . [This] prophecy . . . bears the natural impress of the time to which it belonged. But if any, determined to hear of nothing but the letter, will still hold by the watchword of literality,—will maintain that as it is a literal Israel that is the subject of promise, a literal Canaan, a literal dispersion, and a literal return from it, such too must be all that is to come,—then, we say, let them carry it out, and the shepherd by whom the good is to be accomplished must be the literal David, for David alone is expressly named in the promise; and so the Messiah altogether vanishes from the word of which he is the very heart and center. And there must be no advance in the Divine dispensations, nothing but the formal reproduction of the past. Such is a slavish adherence to the letter; it ends in shutting up the new wine of Messiah’s kingdom in the old bottles of a transitory and provisional economy. . . . Thus, as the David of the promise is Christ, so the covenant-people are no longer the Jews distinctively, but the faithful in Christ; and the territory of blessing no longer Canaan, but the region of which Christ is king and lord.

Hence these passages, and thus the human author, although directed by the Holy Spirit, were culturally landlocked, constrained by “the time to which [they] . . . belonged.” To be sure, the tone of the exilic period is to be expected in Ezekiel’s style of communication (Ezek. 1:1-3). But to suggest that God could only present the future of His kingdom strictly within these exilic parameters is to rashly constrain Him and be in conflict with Daniel who was not so restricted, for he “heard but could not understand,” and was further told, “Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time” (Dan. 12:8-9). Here Fairbairn begs the question since the necessity of “violent control of the minds of the prophets” in predicting the future is quite unproven, and indeed an unnecessary restriction of the Divine Will. After all, the vital terms concerning the meaning of “Judah” and “Israel” and “land” and “Jerusalem” and Zion” and “nations” are certainly not restricted by a

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9 Patrick Fairbairn, Ezekiel, p. 385, 388, 421.
particular culture. Hence we would suggest that Fairbairn’s attempt to generalize with regard to the promised rapprochement concerning “Judah” and “Israel” (Ezek. 37:15-23) so that it merely represents the result of the resurrection of God’s people whereby “the direct result of this was to unite them to God” borders on the fanciful. We would maintain that “Judah” means “Judah” and “Israel” means “Israel,” so that God “will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them” (Ezek. 37:22).

Concerning David following his future resurrection, we would first enquire of the amillennialist as to what his distinctive role will be in the future kingdom of God. As with Moses and Elijah, surely he will have great prominence, in which case it is quite likely that he will indeed be a regent/prince over Israel under the King of kings, Jesus Christ, the “righteous Branch” of David (Jer. 23:5). Hence to suggest that such an understanding results in “Messiah altogether vanishing from the word” is simply absurd. Thus, “My servant David will be prince among them,” that is “My flock” (Ezek. 34:22-24). However, that this prince is not identical with Christ is indicated by the fact that he offers a sin offering for himself (45:22), and has distinctive sons (46:16-17).

Thus the conclusion of Fairbairn is that at the consummation of the church, peculiar and historic Jewishness will have been done away with, superceded, absorbed into the one people of God, and particularly with regard to any distinction concerning the territory of Israel. In essence, Augustinianism and Catholic eschatology and Fairbairn are in agreement at this point. Thus the good news for the Jew today is that his distinctive Jewishness is divinely passé, a biblical anachronism. Those Christians who believe this will nevertheless declare their desire is that the Jews be saved. But they dare not explain to these same Jews their whole agenda which includes salvation from Jewishness. Yet how this approach flies in the face of Paul’s whole attitude toward the Jews (Rom. 11:28), especially in his evangelistic endeavors, in that he freely confesses that he remains one of them (Acts 21:39; 22:3; Rom. 9:3; 11:1). And surely he does not confess this with a forked tongue!


Interpretations of this concluding and climactic section of Ezekiel are divided into four categories, the last of which is that of Fairbairn and to which we offer a brief critical analysis. A. The historico-literal interpretation. B. The historico-ideal interpretation. C. The Jewish-carnal interpretation. D. The Christian-spiritual interpretation. Thus, the whole representation was not intended to find either in Jewish or Christian times an express and formal realization, but was a grand, complicated symbol of the good God had in reserve for his church, especially under the coming dispensation of the gospel. From the Fathers downwards this has been the prevailing view in the Christian church.

Now we would thoroughly agree with this historic representation, except that “from the Fathers downwards” in reality it describes the eschatology of Augustine and the Roman Catholic Church, namely supercessionism which Fairbairn consistently represents. Would he just as readily accept the gospel declared from “the Fathers

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10 Ibid., p. 416.
11 Ibid., pp. 443-444.
downwards” that has been “the prevailing view of the Christian church”? However when Ezekiel is instructed concerning his final vision, “Declare to the house of Israel all that you see” (Ezek. 40:4), he was confirming the earlier promise: “And the nations [Gentiles] will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever” (Ezek. 37:28). Thus “Israel” and “the nations” are to become distinct yet complementary, worshipping entities.

In rejecting Fairbairn’s interpretation here, we admit to his consistency with regard to his method of interpreting prophetic Scripture. However, it is at this juncture concerning Ezekiel 40-48, that we see it most clearly in terms of its generalization that so blithely rides over the astonishing particulars in terms of future fulfillment. This is not to suggest that such a grand and glorious vision is easily comprehended. Though it does test our willingness to accept the transcendent glory of God’s future, holy, spiritual materiality. However, it is the “spiritual interpretation” here that is so evidently unspiritual in that it implies an unnecessary verbosity that ends up in justifying any number of vague interpretations, provided one deals with the particulars. Allow Horatius Bonar to explain better the problem here.

Every word of prophecy is big with meaning. Hence it must be most carefully and exactly interpreted. To attach a general meaning to a whole chapter, as is frequently done, shows not only grievous irreverence for the Divine Word, but much misconception of the real nature of that language in which it is written. Yet such is often the practice of many expositors of prophecy. They will take up a chapter of Isaiah, and tell you that it refers to the future glory of the Christian Church; and that is the one idea which they gather from a whole chapter, or sometimes from a series of chapters. Their system does not admit of interpreting verse by verse and clause by clause, and affixing an exact and definite sense to each. Bring them to this test, and their system gives way. It looks fair and plausible enough, so long as they can persuade you that the whole chapter is one scene, out of which it is merely designed that one grand idea should be extracted; but bring it to the best of minute and precise interpretation, and its nakedness is at once discovered. Many prophecies become in this way a mere waste of words. What might be expressed in one sentence, is beaten out over a whole chapter; nay, sometimes over a whole book.

These expositors think that there is nothing in prophecy, except that Jew and Gentile are all to be gathered in, and made one in Christ. Prophet after prophet is raised up, vision after vision is given, and yet nothing is declared but this one idea! Every chapter almost of Isaiah foretells something about the future glory of the world; and every chapter presents it to us in some new aspect, opening up new scenes, and pointing out new objects; but, according to the scheme of some, every chapter sets forth the same idea, reiterates the same objects, and depicts the same scenes. Is not this handling the Word of God deceitfully?

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12 In An Exposition of Ezekiel by William Greenhill, 40:4 is considered as referencing the Christian church in the extreme. Any distinctive regard for national Israel is wholly absorbed into a Gentile world view.

13 “The latter chapters of Ezekiel, describing the erection of a certain temple, are involved in so much obscurity, that it seems difficult to arrive at any determinate conclusion respecting the import of this mysterious prophecy. It is certain that the attempt to spiritualize it produces little besides perplexity and confusion; nor have we any example in Scripture of an allegory so perfectly dark and enigmatic, as it must be confessed to be, on that supposition.”—Robert Hall, Works, IV, p. 405.

14 Horatius Bonar, Prophetical Landmarks, pp. 234-235.
4. The response of Horatius Bonar.

In Bonar’s *Prophetical Landmarks*, and *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* which he edited from 1849 to 1873, there are detailed refutations of Fairbairn’s eschatology, though for the sake of brevity, we give a summary of two significant areas of criticism.

a. All prophecy is, to some degree, conditional.

Classic Reformed theology has commonly distinguished between prophecy that is predestined or certain, and prophecy that is contingent or conditional, usually in harmony with the distinction between God’s decretive will and His preceptive will. Fairbairn addressed this matter in his *Prophecy, viewed in respect to its Distinctive Nature, its Special Function, and Proper Interpretation* (1856), and included a qualifying appendix in the Second Edition (1865). This was doubtless due to the controversial nature of his opinion, that is his alleged departure from the accepted Calvinist stance to that which was more Arminian. In this regard, Bonar responded in *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* (1858) with evident disagreement concerning this particular item in *Prophecy*, to which Fairbairn replied with some displeasure in the preface to his *Hermeneutical Manual* (1858).

The heart of Bonar’s concern, as a Calvinist, was Fairbairn’s belief “that there is in all prophecy an element of contingency,” which consequently yields to a more Arminian perspective. Thus Fairbairn believed that the Second Coming was certainly decreed in a general sense, although circumstances could change in terms of the time of its eventual occurrence. By way of example Bonar makes reference to the following:

> The prophecies, for example, relating to the second coming of the Lord, . . . may be regarded . . . as protracted beyond what the natural import of the language might have seemed to indicate, on account of the forbearance of God waiting for the conversion of men. . . . Yet when [this Advent is] spoken of, as it often is, of being “near,” of “drawing nigh,” or being “at hand,” while now so many centuries have elapsed without its taking place, we can scarcely help admitting (however we may choose to express it) that some after-respect has been had to moral considerations as influencing the time of the predicted event; in other words, that there has been the operation of a conditional element to the effect of delaying longer than the original predictions might have led us to expect the actual occurrence of the event predicted.

Consequently Bonar responds:

> [W]e are at a loss to conceive how it [this quotation] can be reconciled with any theory of predestination whatever. To say that God did not from all eternity decree the time when the Savior should come the second time, is to admit at once the Arminian notion of conditional decrees. . . . Nothing can well be more dishonoring to the Divine Being than to suppose, as Dr. Fairbairn’s words imply, that there was enough in the earlier predictions to warrant an expectation of the advent at a period

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16 Fairbairn, *Prophecy*, 63-64.
which has passed by without it; and that “the course of things in the world” has led to the postponement of the Church’s hope.17

To criticism such as this by Bonar, Fairbairn responded, with seeming irritation:

To divide, as he [Bonar] and his authorities do, between prophecy, considered as equivalent to Divine decrees, and prophecy, as involving matter of commination or promise—the former absolute, the latter conditional—does not satisfy my “exegetical conscience,” and I am afraid never can.18

However a further illustration of Fairbairn’s understanding of conditionality concerns the institution of the Davidic Covenant in II Samuel 7:1-17. Thus we are told: “David himself knew perfectly well, that there was an implied condition, and that the prophecy must be read in connection with the whole plan and purposes of God in the administration of the affairs of His church.”19 Though we wonder what conditionality, in any sense, could be understood in the Noachic covenant of Genesis 8:20-9:17. Could in fact an unprecedented surge in human moral decline bring about an unexpected Divine interference in which the seasons fail and a similar universal flood reoccurs? We are not told. However, what interests us most is where this distinctive hermeneutic leads, and we now discover that it very much concerns the destiny of Israel. Fairbairn further explains.

[I]f the threatened judgments of the prophetic word, then also its promised blessings, are to be regarded, not as primarily and absolutely predictions of coming events, but rather as exhibitions of the Lord’s goodness, prospective indications of his desire and purpose to bless the persons or communities addressed, yet capable of being checked, or even altogether cancelled, in the event of a perverse and rebellious disposition being manifested by men. . . . [T]he Apostle Paul re-announces the principle with special emphasis on this particular branch of its application, when he says, at the close of his reasoning on the case of the Jewish people, “Behold, therefore, the goodness and the severity of God: on them which fell severity, but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise, thou shalt also be cut off” (Rom. 11:22),—that is, the prophetic intimations of future blessing are to be understood as valid only so long as the spiritual relation contemplated in them abides. When that ceases, a new and different state of things has entered which the promise did not contemplate, and to which it cannot in justice be applied.20

In the face of such a disturbing course of reasoning, we would simply respond to Fairbairn with the enquiry as to whether this same conditionality applies to the application of the New Covenant gospel to believing sinners? If it does, then surely the sovereignty of grace has been done away and in its place has been substituted a subtle form of Galatianism.

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19 Fairbairn, Prophecy, pp. 64-65.
b. The unhelpful influence of German scholarship.

It is refreshing to discover a conservative scholar such as Bonar who is not wholly enamored with, even hypnotized by German scholarship, so that both its strengths and weaknesses are clearly distinguished.

The German style of thought is now widely leavening both Britain and America; and the issue of this is matter for suspicion and fear, in so far as pure Bible exposition is concerned. It is a style entirely self-revolving, in which, as one of their poets has described it, the soul is,

"Chasing its own dream for ever,
On through many a distant star;"

turning in upon its own actings, instead of out upon God’s; making man’s interior self the great region of research, not God’s manifested self; dealing with spiritual truths as with abstractions or ideas, not as connected with Divine personality and life.

In spite of all the admiration in which it is fashionable to hold German critics, and with the full admission that their researches have not been unrewarded, their system of criticism, as a whole, cannot but be regarded as a failure, if not something worse. Its results have been inconsiderable for good, but vast for evil. Dwelling in the region of their own thoughts, they have lost the power to grasp, and the taste to appreciate the thoughts of God. They may be interpreters of words, but they are not expounders of thought, in so far as Scripture is concerned. In the former they excel, in the latter they fail. They have not brought forth the fullness, the richness, the vastness of Scripture language; they have rather diluted and emptied it. They have taken their own thoughts as their standard in measuring, their law in interpreting the thoughts of God. Hence, in prophecy, where the language is doubly pregnant with the thoughts and purposes of God, they have totally broken down. Few of their works on prophecy are possessed of much value beyond that of verbal criticism. And it is sad to see their American imitators rapidly coming up to them, if not outstripping them, in the race of irreverence and error.  

Fairbairn has obviously spent much time in studying German theologians and exegetes, and that with considerable reliance. Thus in reviewing Ezekiel, An Exposition, Bonar comments: “We must profess our great dislike to the many abstract and German forms of expression employed throughout Mr. Fairbairn’s volume.”  

He further includes in The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy the following correspondence, presumably with some agreement.

You [Bonar] have carefully abstained from saying many things regarding Dr. Fairbairn’s works in general which you might have said, and which are freely ventilated in private among German scholars, viz., that Dr. F. has taken most of his good things, as well as some of his bad things, from German critics. A great part of his Commentary on Ezekiel is from Hävernick, as every German scholar knows. His other works are said to be in like manner large debtors to foreign sources. . . . [Signed] A CALVINIST.

23 Ibid., X, 1858, p. 410.
While much of German scholarship has been amillennial in its leaning, and especially with regard to Lutheran writings even to this day, it remains to be seen if a direct connection can be made between this and the eschatology of Fairbairn’s later writings.

B. Geerhardus Vos

Since the close of the nineteenth century, probably the most influential and esteemed Reformed scholar in the realm of eschatology, not unrelated to his pioneering studies in biblical theology, would be Geerhardus Vos. That such stature is not overstated will be indicated by the fact that in subsequent considerations of a variety of Reformed writers, a number will be found to place considerable reliance upon Vos, especially with regard to Hoekema, Robertson, Waldron, and Riddlebarger. Born at Friesland, the Netherlands, in 1862, he was raised in a Christian Reformed Church manse in Michigan. Later he studied at the Theological School of that denomination in Grand Rapids, then Princeton Seminary, Berlin and Strasburg. As a result came personal exposure to Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck in the Netherlands. Returning to a faculty position in Grand Rapids, he eventually settled back at Princeton Seminary as professor of biblical theology in 1893 until his retirement in 1932. At the outset, it is to be noted that the theological environment of Vos was decidedly intolerant of premillennialism, such as with regard to Bavinck, and to a lesser extent overall, Princeton Theological Seminary. In that the Christian Reformed Church was rooted in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, along with confessional allegiance to the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of the Synod of Dort, there was the conviction that this creedal heritage was incompatible with chiliasm beliefs. That Vos himself was vehemently opposed to premillennialism is plainly indicated in his Pauline Eschatology, specifically the chapter “The Question of Chiliasm In Paul,” which includes the following:

Chiliasm has to its credit the astounding readiness it evinces of taking the O.T. Scriptures in a realistic manner, with simple faith, not asking whether the fulfillment of these things is logically conceivable, offering as its sole basis the conviction that to God all things are possible. This attitude is, of course, not attained except through a reckless abuse of the fundamental principles of O.T. exegesis, a perversion invading inevitably the precincts of N.T. exegesis likewise, heedless of the fact that already the O.T. itself points to the spiritualizing of most of the things in question. Apart from accidental features, and broadly speaking, Chiliasm is a daring literalizing and concretizing of the substance of ancient revelation. Due credit should be given for the naïve type of faith such a mentality involves. It is a great pity that from this very point of view premillennialism has not been psychologically studied, so as to ascertain whence in its

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24 Refer to his, The Last Things: Hope for this World and the Next.

25 The Christian Reformed Church, in being traditionally amillennial, has critically responded to the emergence of any premillennialism within its ranks. Consider the instances of both Rev. H. Bultema and Prof. D. H. Kromminga being under synodical investigation. John Kromminga, The Christian Reformed Church, pp. 72-75; Harry R. Boer, “The Premillennial Eschatology of Diedrich, Honrich Kromminga,” Peter De Klerk and Richard R. De Ridder, eds., Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church, pp. 153-169. Boer’s fair-minded conclusion is significant. “The virtue of Kromminga’s contribution is that he has alerted us to eschatological possibilities in a manner and on a scale that the Reformed tradition up to now has not taken into account. Most especially an appreciation of Kromminga’s eschatological vision should raise the question by what legitimate rationale can public discussion of it be ecclesiastically prohibited.”

26 David B. Calhoun’s Princeton Seminary refers to a “tolerant dissatisfaction” concerning premillennialism, II, p. 183.
For this writer, it is difficult to recall a more graceless, indeed intellectually arrogant denunciation of an opposing Christian perspective than this. While Richard Gaffin commends the gentle, retiring, pious manner of Vos, such virtue is quite absent here. Furthermore, within this whole chapter by Vos, although numerous European sources are employed in support of his critical analysis, there does not appear to be so much as one reference to a premillennialist of standing. Hence, it is not so surprising that, as we have already noted in Chapter 1 according to VanGemeren, Vos was fearful of any considerations of a future, eschatological conversion of the Jews since then, for chiliasm, a door might ever so slightly be opened for the entrance of this system into Reformed eschatology. Nevertheless, commitment to the exposition of Romans 11 led Vos to yield to what he felt the Apostle Paul incontrovertibly taught, namely a future conversion of Israel *en masse*. So we repeat what VanGemeren has explained:

> In his *Dogmatiek* Vos answers the question why it is so difficult to enter into detail on the future conversion of Israel by saying: “Because it has been connected on the one hand with the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land and on the other hand with the millennial kingdom. . . . The fear existed to encourage chiliasm” (p. 26). . . . Vos affirms, nevertheless, the exegetical ground for the hope in Israel’s conversion. . . . He expects the conversion to be a true spiritual revival, when the Jews have sufficiently been provoked to jealousy . . . by the Gentiles who have found salvation in Jesus Christ. When the fullness of Jewish and Gentile Christians has been achieved, the *parousia* will follow. Vos admits that the chronological connection is implied in the text, but not explicitly stated (p. 88). Though Vos vehemently opposes a premillennial reading of the NT. The exegesis of the text itself forces him to expect a future conversion of the Jews.

However, like John Murray who confessed to a similar “mass conversion,” Vos is careful not to express belief in any related present covenantal land inheritance rights for Israel in unbelief (Rom. 8:28), or future, distinctive, covenantal national identity. Should he do so, he is well aware that he would be crossing over the divide, so to speak, into millennial territory. However, in not following this path, his understanding of what constitutes “Jews” by his designation with regard to their mass conversion, in their having individuality but no national or territorial inheritance, is a common weakness of this approach. It is as if

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31 To use Old Testament Scripture for justification of such land and nation legitimacy would involve passages that, using the same hermeneutic, would lead to acknowledgment of a millennial economy in which a distinction is maintained between Jew and Gentile within the one people of God (cf. Ezek. 36-37; Zech. 8, etc.).
Paul, in claiming to be an “Israelite” (Rom. 11:1) nevertheless repudiated national identity according to divine recognition. Such a bifurcated perspective is quite untenable from a biblical and Hebrew understanding of Jewishness. In this regard, concerning the reticence of Vos at this point to clarify exactly what he means by the term “Jew” who is in need of conversion, consider his article, “Eschatology of the New Testament” which lists two events that will precede the *parousia*. They are first, the conversion of Israel, and second the coming of the Antichrist. The former event is succinctly referenced in approximately 115 words; the latter event is comprehensively referenced in approximately 2900 words!\(^{32}\)

Further indication of the reluctance of Vos to give explanation beyond his declaration that “in the future there will be a comprehensive conversion of Israel (Rom. 11:5, 25-32)”\(^{33}\) is found in an article, “The Second Coming of Our Lord and the Millennium.” It is his contention that Old Testament Jewishness is ultimately superceded by the New Testament kingdom of God. This being so, then distinctive, eschatological, covenantal significance for the nation of Israel and the land has been done away with, whatever conversion of the Jews toward the end of this present age might entail. Vos declares: “The theory [of premillennialism] has its preformation in a certain scheme of Jewish eschatology dating back as far as the New Testament period or even earlier.”\(^{34}\) One is inclined to enquire how, at that period, any other than a “Jewish eschatology” would be referenced by the early church. However Vos continues:

In Judaism there existed two types of eschatological outlook. There was the ancient national hope which revolved around the destiny of Israel. Alongside of this existed a higher form which had in view the destiny of the creation as a whole. The former has its scene on earth, the latter in a new world, radically different from the present one. Now, in certain of the apocalyptic writings a compromise is effected between these two schemes after this manner, that the carrying out of the one is to follow that of the other, the national earthly hope receiving its fulfillment in a provisional messianic kingdom of limited duration (400 or 1,000 years), to be superceded at the end by the eternal state. It was felt that the eschatology of this world and that of the world to come would not mix, therefore the two were held together on the purely mechanical principle of chronological succession. This Jewish compromise was distinctly due to a lack of spirituality in the circles where it appears. . . .

As stated, the Old Testament avails itself of earthly and eternal forms to convey heavenly and spiritual things. Sincere attachment to the Old Testament Scriptures and a profound conviction of their absolute veracity could and can still underlie a desire to see them in their whole extent literally fulfilled, and since the eternal world offers no scope for this, to create a sphere for such fulfillment in the millennial kingdom. Instead of casting upon such a state of mind the stigma of unspiritualness and narrow-mindedness, we should rather admire the faith-robustness which it unquestionably reveals. None the less, we believe such faith to be a misguided faith.\(^{35}\)

Hence, since a millennium would unsatisfactorily result in a mere upgraded universe, “the consummation of this world and the bringing in of the world to come, this and nothing else can at this point effect the necessary change.”\(^{36}\) Thus “the world to come” is radically different from “this present world,” especially its transcendence of any earthly Jewish

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\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 983.

\(^{34}\) Geerhardus Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Revelation*, p. 416.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., pp. 416-417.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 419.
heritage. However, we would suggest that the Bible does indeed describe an upgraded, thoroughly refurbished rather than a supplanted universe, that is a victoriously recovered rather than a new world supplanting that which was defeated by Satan; this is the point of the “restoration/rebirth [παλιγγενεσία, palingenesia] of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets” (Acts 3:21), in which purified Judaism will retain a distinctive role as the prophets make very clear. The same point is true with regard to the nature of the future bodily regeneration of the believer. He will receive a changed, glorified body, not that which is wholly new (I Cor. 15:51). As this “perishable [body] must put on the imperishable” (I Cor. 15:53), so this perishing world will be renewed, yet retain essential connection with its original form. Certainly purified Judaism will be a distinctive part of that retained essence. However for Vos, this “world to come” has left behind any Jewish essence. Concerning this present world, he describes how Paul “outlines for us in Romans a program of the uninterrupted progress of the kingdom of God and points as its goal the Christianization of all the nations and the salvation of all Israel.”

Indiscriminate insistence upon the literal import of prophecy were not merely a weak, but an impossible basis to build chiliasm upon. In point of fact, even the most radical chiliasts discriminate between what they expect and do not expect to see materialized in the millennium. On the ground of the Old Testament alone there is no warrant for such distinction. The prophets proclaim as emphatically the restoration of the temple, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system as they predict the return of the people to Palestine and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Besides, the serious difficulty arises that the Old Testament ascribes to the fulfillment of these things eternal validity and duration.

The heart of the complaint here is not that of “the return of the people to Palestine and the rebuilding of Jerusalem,” which events are not rooted in the old Mosaic covenant, as clear as these events are prophesied in the Old Testament. Rather, in mentioning “the restoration of the temple, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system,” the inference chiefly concerns Ezekiel 40-48 and supposed conflict here with the abolishment of the Mosaic sacrificial order according to Hebrews. How Vos interprets this passage is not indicated, though perhaps we can assume he takes a path here similar to Patrick Fairbairn. Be that as it may, spurning a premillennial perspective hardly enlightens us with a positive interpretation of a passage that presents considerable mystery whatever one’s understanding may be. We would simply quote A. B. Davidson at this juncture concerning Ezekiel 40-48.

We should go very far astray if on the one hand fastening our attention on the natural elements of the picture . . . [these] were [regarded as] mere figures or symbols, meaning nothing but a higher spiritual condition after the restoration [from Babylon], and that the restoration described by Ezekiel is no more than one which might be called natural, and which took place under Zerubbabel and later. Ezekiel of course expects a restoration in the true sense, but it is a restoration which is complete, embracing all the scattered members of Israel, and final, being the entrance of Israel upon its eternal felicity and perfection, and the enjoyment of the full presence of Jehovah in the midst of it. . . .

Consequently we should go equally far astray on the other hand if fastening our attention only on the supernatural parts of Ezekiel’s picture . . . that all this to the prophet’s mind was nothing but a lofty symbolism representing a spiritual perfection to be eventually reach in the
Church of God of the Christian age. To put such a meaning on the Temple and its measurement and all the details enumerated by the prophet is to contradict all reason. The Temple is real, for it is the place of Jehovah's presence upon the earth; the ministers and the ministrations are equally real, for His servants serve him in his Temple. The service of Jehovah by sacrifice and offering is considered to continue when Israel is perfect and the kingdom of the Lord's even by the greatest prophets (Isa. 19:19, 21; 60:7; 66:20; Jer. 33:18).39

C. Anthony Hoekema.

Anthony A. Hoekema was born in the Netherlands and immigrated to the United States in 1923. He attended Calvin College, the University of Michigan, Calvin Theological seminary and Princeton Theological seminary. After serving as minister of several Christian Reformed Churches (1944-56) he became Associate Professor of Bible at Calvin College (1956-58). From 1958 to 1979, when he retired, he was Professor of Systematic Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Professor Hoekema spent two sabbatical years in Cambridge, England (1965-66, 1973-74). Of the books he has written, one is of major significance, The Bible and the Future (1979); he was also a contributor to The Meaning of the Millennium (1977) in which he is the selected spokesman for amillennial eschatology. From the latter two publications we see quite obviously the perpetuation of the eschatology of Bavinck and Vos in particular, as well as that of the Christian Reformed Church. There is further acknowledgment of other amillennialist authors who oppose a premillennial and dispensational understanding of Israel and the Jews, including Oswalt T. Allis, Louis Berkhof, W. E. Cox, Louis DeCaro, W. Grier, Floyd E. Hamilton, W. Hendriksen, Philip Mauto, George Murray, Albertus Pieters, and Martin Wyngaarden.40

1. The Christian Church is the true Israel.

Here Augustinian, supercessionist theology with regard to national Israel is quite explicit. For instance, “because the nation of Israel as a whole rejected the kingdom, Jesus said that the kingdom of God would be taken away from them and given to a nation producing the fruits of it (Matt. 21:43).”41 Hence, “the New Testament church is now the true Israel, in whom and through whom the promises made to Old Testament Israel are being fulfilled.”42

2. Romans 11.

The author readily confesses that his understanding of this most important passage of Scripture is based upon the exegesis of William Hendriksen.43 For our purposes we simply note certain conclusion which can be compared with Appendix A where a more comprehensive understanding of Romans 9-11 is provided.

41 Ibid., p. 46.
42 Ibid., p. 198.
43 Ibid. He specifically references Romans 9-11 according to Hendriksen’s Israel in Prophecy, p. 142n.
a. The salvation of the fullness of Israel, v. 12, 15.

Whereas the saved “remnant” of Israel, v. 5, is in parallel with “riches for the Gentiles,” v. 12, yet the salvation of the fullness of Israel, likened to “life from the dead,” v. 15, will bring about undreamed-of riches for the entire world, v. 12. But when will this resurrection of Israel take place? The analogy of the olive tree, vs. 17-24, indicates that “God is able to graft them [the natural branches of Israel] in again,” v. 23. But when? Hoekema, along with Dutch commentators of a Reformed background in particular, believes the “resurrection” and “regrafting” to be coterminous with the gradual gathering of the elect and the gradual completion of the “fullness of the Gentiles,” v. 25. Thus:

Israel will continue to turn to the Lord until the Parousia, while at the same time the fullness of the Gentiles is being gathered in. And in this way all Israel will be saved: not just the last generation of Israelites, but all true Israelites, . . . the sum total of all the remnants throughout history.  

Of course a prima facie reading of Romans 11 does not easily lead to Hoekema’s conclusion here. Rather it naturally presents a sequential/temporal order, which vs. 25-25 quite obviously construe. Hence a temporal understanding here, with the mass saving of Israel subsequent to the times of the Gentiles, also presents a most climactic conclusion to this age which is immediately followed by the return of Jesus Christ. But Hoekema’s understanding, with a trickle of Jews being saved up to the end, is hardly climactic, even if a cumulative remnant over the centuries is considered. Rather Paul’s concluding excitement in Romans 11, as a Jew, surely anticipates a time of riches for the world through Israel’s national, spiritual regeneration/ resurrection (Ezek. 36-37) that defies the limitations of our present imaginations.


This will involve “the bringing to salvation throughout history of the total number of the elect from among the Jews. . . . [Thus] ‘all Israel’ . . . [is] not designating the nation of Israel as a totality to be saved in the end-time, but as referring to the number of the elect to be saved throughout history.”\(^45\) Of course such a view commonly believes that this elect remnant has no national or territorial identity in the sight of God. The “Jewish” Christian, in being incorporated into the Church of Jesus Christ, in reality loses all Jewish identity.


The honesty that the following quotation expresses is quite revealing since one could rightly expect that the alleged identification of Israel with the church would have numerous explicit indications in Scripture. However we read:

There is at least one New Testament passage where the term Israel is used as inclusive of Gentiles, and therefore as standing for the entire New Testament church. I refer to Galatians 6:15-16. . . . The word \(\kappa\alpha\iota\) [Greek], therefore, should be rendered even, as the

\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 145.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 140.
New International Version has done. When the passage is so understood, “the Israel of God” is a further description of “all who follow this rule”—that is, of all true believers, including both Jews and Gentiles, who constitute the New Testament church. Here, in other words, Paul clearly identifies the church as the true Israel.  

Let the reader simply refer to Appendix C concerning Galatians 6:16 and he will appreciate just how much Hoekema leaves unsaid with regard to what is undoubtedly his minority opinion, the NIV notwithstanding.

4. The conversion of the Jews.

The following quotation describes the continual adding of Jewish Christians to the remnant (Rom. 11:5), so that when the remnant, that is “the sum total of all the remnant throughout history is complete,” then “all Israel will be saved,” but not in any national and climactic sense.

Jews will continue to be converted to Christianity throughout the entire era between the first and second comings of Christ, as the full number of the Gentiles is being gathered in. In such Jewish conversions, therefore, we are to see a sign of the certainty of Christ’s return. In the meantime, this sign should bind on our hearts the urgency of the church’s mission to the Jews. In a world in which there is still a great deal of anti-Semitism, let us never forget that God has not rejected his ancient covenant people, and that he still has his purpose with Israel.

However, as well-intentioned as the last two sentences may seem to be, there appears some ambiguity, even obfuscation, with the declaration that “God has not rejected his ancient covenant people.” Does this mean that Hoekema believes, concerning this present church age, that national Israel and the land it inhabits has divine sanction according to the explicit covenantal promises that God made to Abraham? The following comment would suggest otherwise.

From the fourth chapter of the book of Hebrews we learn that Canaan was a type of Sabbath-rest of the people of God in the life to come. From Paul’s letter to the Galatians we learn that all those who are in Christ are included in the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). When we read Genesis 17:8 (“And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God” [ASV]) with this understanding of the New Testament broadening these concepts, we see in it a promise of the new earth as the everlasting possession of all the people of God, not just of the physical descendants of Abraham. And when in the light of this New Testament teaching, we now read Amos 9:15 (“And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God” [ASV]), we do not feel compelled to restrict the meaning of these words to national Israel and the land of Palestine. We understand them to be a prediction of the eternal dwelling of all of God’s people, Gentiles as well as Jews, on the new earth of which Canaan was a type.

46 Ibid., pp. 196-197.
47 Ibid., p. 145. The author footnotes that his interpretation “is competently set forth in Hendriksen, Israel in Prophecy, chapters 3 and 4.”
48 Ibid., p. 147.
Here is a classic example of how plasticity in exegesis, especially with regard to Amos 9:15, results in the square peg of an Old Testament text being forced into the round hole of a theological system. The Jew to whom we are called upon to witness would rightly scoff at such a misuse of the sacred text. Furthermore, he would also be repulsed by the knowledge, should it be revealed to him, that our evangelistic endeavor intends for him to come to realize that his Jewishness is really passé in the sight of God. Of course Paul never had such an intention, but those who follow Hoekema’s eschatology certainly do. Hence this reference to God’s “ancient covenant people” involves dubious meaning.

D. Loraine Boettner.

To begin with, we consider the late Loraine Boettner, a twentieth century scholar of classic Reformed convictions whose volume *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* has had considerable influence, and rightly so, for it is an excellent presentation of the doctrines of sovereign grace. However it is in this same author’s book *The Millennium* that we find, not only the most emphatic and categorical expressions of replacement theology, but also declarations with regard to Judaism that are so obviously slanted as to reflect explicit theological anti-Semitism. Let the reader judge for himself with regard to the following quotations.

> [W]hile the Jews no longer occupy a place of special favor in the divine plan, this does not mean that God has cast them off. *Nothing has been taken from the Jews as individuals.* Only the external forms have been abolished. The blessings and privileges of salvation which they enjoyed during the Old Testament dispensation have been magnified and heightened and extended to all nations and races alike. After the Jews had forfeited their rights as a chosen nation, or, to put it more accurately, after God had completed His purpose with the Jews as a separate people, they continued to have the privileges of full and free salvation individually.

> The Old Testament era was the times of the Jews. The New Testament era is the times of the Gentiles. Judaism is a thing of the past. It is a glorious memory, despite its limitations and its failings. But it can never be revived. The assumption there is to be a national conversion of the Jews at the Second coming of Christ, after the close of “the times of the Gentiles,” and that they are to evangelize the world in a seven year period, is entirely unwarranted. . . . [There is] no room for a revival of Judaism, nor for a Jewish era of any kind. But it does leave room for the conversion of Jews as individuals along with individuals from all other national groups. With the establishment of the Christian Church Judaism should have made a smooth and willing transition into Christianity, and should thereby have disappeared as the flower falls away before the developing fruit. Its continued existence as a bitter rival and enemy of the Christian Church after the time of Christ, and particularly its revival after the judgment of God had fallen on it so heavily in the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersal of the people in 70 A.D., was sinful.

> Furthermore, this revived Judaism built again the middle wall of partition [cf. Eph. 2:14] and so made it possible to perpetuate through the centuries the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The continuance of this bitterly anti-Christian racial Group has brought no good to themselves, and there has been strife and antagonism in practically every nation where they have gone. They have not been a happy people. One only need think of the pogroms in Russia, the ghettos of eastern Europe, the many restrictions and persecutions that they have suffered in Italy, Spain, Poland, and other countries, and in our own day the campaign of extermination waged against

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them in Germany by Hitler. At the present time we see this problem in a particularly aggravated form in the Near East, where the recently established nation of Israel has ruthlessly displaced an Arab population and seeks to expand further into surrounding regions, some 900,000 Arabs in refugee camps around the borders of Israel being one of the chief continuing causes of bitterness. . . . Israel is not a self-sustaining nation, and her existence to date has been heavily subsidized by American money and equipment—much of it undoubtedly having been given for the purpose of influencing the Jewish vote in this country. . . . The mere fact that these people are Jews does not in itself give them any more moral or legal right to Palestine than to the United States or any other part of the world. . . . It may seem harsh to say that, “God is through with the Jews.” But the fact of the matter is that He is through with them as a unified national group.

This does not mean, of course, that the Jews will never go back to Palestine—as indeed some of them have already established the nation of Israel, a little less than 2 million out of an estimated world Jewish population of 12 million now being in that country. But it does mean that as any of them go back they do so entirely on their own, apart from any covenanted purpose to that end and entirely outside of Scripture prophecy. No Scripture blessing is promised for a project of that kind.51

Surely there is an overall tone here, so antithetical to that of Paul, which in itself indicates there is something fundamentally wrong with the doctrine that produces such a response. Particularly objectionable is the segment, utterly void of compassion, that suggests that the Jews were responsible for the misery they have endured over the centuries. For a professing Christian, the attitude here is nevertheless objectionable and odious. There is not the slightest mention of widespread anti-Semitism throughout the centuries of the Christian Church and western society that calls for shameful confession. The problem is chiefly that of the Jew; he has become a blot on society. There is even the intimation that Christians in particular were, to a considerable extent, justified in their campaigns of ostracism concerning the perfidious, Christ-killing Jew. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Jewish Christian, rightly expresses his distress here as follows:

According to Boettner, the Jews are totally to blame for their history of persecution. The problem is not with the Gentiles’ attitude toward the Jews, but with the Jews failure to disappear. The solution is that the Jews should cease to be Jews, and by so doing will make a great contribution to the world. It is the Jewish failure to assimilate that has produced tragic results, both for the Jews and “for the world at large.” This is theological anti-Semitism with a vengeance!52

It is interesting to note that, in support of his overall contention here concerning Israel, Boettner approvingly quotes at length from The Seed of Abraham by Albertus Pieters, previously referenced in Chapter 1. Pieters further writes that, following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the subsequent Jewish lineage was comprised of illegitimate usurpers. Thus,

their program [turned out to be] the exact opposite of Christ, and in this unholy endeavor they were only too successful, with the result that untold calamities were brought down upon themselves and upon the whole world. Ignorant that their separateness from the rest of the world was in the divine purpose temporary, they strove to render it permanent. Thus that

51 Ibid., pp. 312, 313, 314, 319, 321.
52 Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Israelology, p. 49. The reference here is to Boettner, Millennium, p. 315.
which had been in itself good and holy became through their error a source of poison in the life of the world; and “The Jew” became the great persistent international problem.\textsuperscript{53}

Here then is a reflection of the same derogatory attitude as that of Boettner, in which Judaism is esteemed as “a source of poison in the life of the world,” a “great persistent international problem.” For a professing Christian, such an attitude is quite outrageous. It is full of Gentile arrogance, namely that the problems of the suffering Jew are essentially those of his own making. Again, one is forced to conclude that if this deplorable attitude is the fruit of a certain doctrinal system, then there must be something fundamentally wrong with the originating body of teaching.

Furthermore, in Franklin Littell’s \textit{The crucifixion of the Jews}, in also expressing dismay concerning this same portion of Boettner’s mean expression of supercessionist theology, he perceptively comments:

> At first blush, this looks like a simple dehydrated statement of the displacement myth. The revealing phrase is, however, this: “Nothing has been taken from the Jews as individuals.” This formula does not derive from ancient teachers and synods of the church; it is precisely the dogma of the Enlightenment. “Everything to the Jew as an individual; nothing to the Jews as a people.”\textsuperscript{54}

Though perhaps we might add to Littell’s assertion a modification. “Everything to the Jew as an individual in persecution; nothing to the Jew as a people in blessing.” Here then is the unveiling of a common form of duplicity amongst a number of Reformed Christian scholars, and indeed Evangelicals more broadly speaking. On the one hand they will declare that there presently abides in this Christian dispensation, “a remnant according to God’s gracious choice” (Rom. 11:5), that is Christians who are to be designated as Jewish, sans national and territorial claims. They will also confess that there are individual non-Christians today who are to be nominated as “Jews” in some worldly racial sense. On the other hand, as with Boettner, and as we shall also see with Hendriksen, LaRondelle, Palmer Robertson, LaRondelle, Waldron, etc., there is yet for these “Jews” no nation, no land, no covenant relationship in any sense that abides according to the original promise made to Abraham. That, they claim, has been permanently done away with. In other words, for authors such as Boettner, the use of the term “Jew” is really a hoax. He is quite frank in this regard, even though he continues to speak of “Jews” in modern society.

We should point out further that those who today popularly are called “Jews” are in reality not Jews at all. Legitimate Judaism as it existed in the Old Testament era was of divine origin and had a very definite content of religious and civil laws, priesthood, ritual, sacrifices, temple, Sabbath, etc. But with the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the people in A.D. 70, that system was effectively destroyed. It has since not been practiced anywhere in the world.\textsuperscript{55}

There is an honesty here that is breathtaking, and unfortunately lacking in the writings of others who obviously hold the same doctrinal convictions that are inherent in replacement theology. Thus some, like Boettner, confess their belief at this point quite bluntly, without shame, while others, in holding an identical belief, yet express it with a more “gentle” touch. Nevertheless, essentially they are all saying the same thing.

\textsuperscript{53} Albertus Pieters, \textit{The Seed of Abraham}, pp. 132-134.

\textsuperscript{54} Franklin H. Littell, \textit{The Crucifixion of the Jews}, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{55} Boettner, \textit{Millennium}, p. 381.
Now our practical, resultant concern here is that if the contemporary Jew has in fact no status in the sight of God of any kind, as the preceding references indicate, nebulous terminology notwithstanding, then will belief from this perspective be productive of a certain ethical behavior toward the Jew who nevertheless claims an historic national identity, especially with regard to Palestine? The answer is obvious, particularly as centuries of Church history have plainly indicated. And the preceding quotations would very much parallel the doctrine and resultant behavior of that shameful past. Do devotees of replacement theology, as representatively set forth thus far, enthusiastically involve themselves in distinctive missionary outreach toward the Jews, according to the Pauline model? In witnessing to the "Jew," would they present to them the declarations of Boettner and Pieters? Further, would they encourage the establishment in Israel of Christian churches that proclaim this teaching concerning the "poisonous" influence of Judaism?

E. William Hendriksen

William Hendriksen is a recognized evangelical scholar of Reformed convictions who quite evidently has Dutch roots and sympathies, as well as pastoral experience with the Christian Reformed Church. His commentaries on a number of New Testament books of the Bible have gained wide acceptance amongst contemporary Calvinistic Christians, especially since he has considerable exegetical abilities, he being a doctoral graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary. Several representatives of Reformed eschatology, especially Anthony Hoekema, also Cornelius P. Venema, place considerable reliance upon Hendriksen's exegetical conclusions. We will consider two of his writings.

1. *The Premillennialist Conception concerning Israel and the Church* (1934).

   This was a Master of Theology thesis submitted to Calvin Seminary in 1934. While the title leads one to expect that classic premillennialism will be exactly distinguished from the more recent dispensationalism, this does not turn out to be the case. Rather there is considerable confusion at this point, especially with regard to the sources quoted that are more often dispensational. The strong Dutch eschatological influence that Hendriksen upholds, including the same theological aura that Calvin Seminary represents, leads him to reference the premillennial views of Harry Bultema in particular that conflicted with the generally amillennial eschatology of the Christian Reformed Church. Refer to page 41n. Two points of criticism of premillennialism by Hendriksen that relate to our particular concern are as follows.

   a. It is incorrect for premillennialism to maintain that Israel's future restoration will be unconditional. Thus:

   \[\text{We are continually assured that Israel's future restoration will be unconditional. It is not conditional on faith. Now this position which accords God's very special favor to those who continue in willful obedience and arrogant unbelief makes light of the...}\]

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57 William Hendriksen, *The Premillennialist Conception concerning Israel and the Church*. On p. 34 it is noted by Hendriksen that, concerning "one way of salvation for Israel; another for the Church," admittedly, "[m]any Pre's [Premillenarians] would not subscribe to this statement." Nevertheless, the overall presentation makes not the slightest attempt to distinguish between historic and dispensational premillennialism. However both premillennial schools of eschatology make a general, if not identical, distinction between Israel and the Church that is quite unacceptable to Hendriksen and the Reformed eschatology he represents.
character of God as revealed in Scripture. Scripture throughout reveals a God whose holiness is for transgressors a principle of and an object of fear. . . . It is impossible to harmonize the Premillennialistic view in regard to God’s very special favor shown to those who refuse to accept the Gospel with this Scriptural teaching in regard to the character of God and his burning wrath against all willful disobedience and unbelief. I regard this to be a very fundamental objection against the Premillennialistic system. 58

For a Calvinist of Hendriksen’s Reformed stature to make such a claim, although over seventy years ago, and more recently uphold it, 59 is nothing short of astounding. Suppose we were so say that the church’s future completion would be unconditional, then how would Hendriksen respond? Doubtless his Reformed convictions would answer with a resounding affirmation. Of course faith here would not have been denied as superfluous; nevertheless, faith would be acknowledged as the sovereign gift of God whereby the future completion of the church and its elect constituents would be guaranteed. Furthermore, there never was a saved sinner who did not, prior to his conversion, yet rebel in the face of “the character of God and his burning wrath”! Hence the declaration here that God will bless Israel, while continuing in disobedience and arrogance, is a misrepresentation. It plainly ignores the truth of God promising to cleanse and renew the heart of national Israel with the result that obedience and humility will result. Thus Ezekiel 36:22-32; 37:1-14 precisely describes this divine regeneration and salvation procedure, in much the same way that the New Testament describes the regeneration and salvation of a disobedient and arrogant sinner. And as good Calvinist doctrine describes such conversion as being unconditional while incorporating faith, according to the election of grace, so it will be the case with the unconditional election and conversion of national Israel that will likewise incorporate faith. Yet without any exegesis of these classic passages from Ezekiel, Hendriksen nevertheless answers that they had significance for the people who were living at the time these prophecies were uttered. In their literal sense they were intended for them and for their children, grandchildren, and so forth, not for the people living today, though it is true that their underlying moral and spiritual lessons remain valid for every generation. 60

That such a conclusion is difficult to arrive at from the text is evidenced by the fact that Reformed scholars, Robertson 61 and Venema, 62 in seeming to reject such

58 William Henriksen, The Premillennialistic Conception Concerning Israel And The Church, pp. 49-50.
59 William Hendriksen, Israel and the Bible, pp. 24-25. Concerning Jeremiah 18:5-10 he declares that “there is indeed a sense in which we can call the divine impartation of blessing a conditional matter. . . . [H]ere in Jeremiah 18:5-10, the Lord himself declares that whenever he predicts weal or woe, good or evil, for a nation, the condition always applies.” There is minimal acknowledgment “that it is only by God’s grace and power that men are able to fulfil the condition. But the condition is there nevertheless.” However Calvinist Hendriksen makes no mention of the fact that the setting here is of God who declares, “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?” Would this author, in insisting on conditionality with regard to a list of Old Testament promises, pp. 16-31, be equally as insistent for conditionality with regard to the terms of the New Covenant?
60 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
61 O. Palmer Robertson, The Israel of God, pp. 21-25.
a possibility, prefer to simply extract regeneration and resurrection motifs from Ezekiel and declare their fulfillment in the New Covenant order.

b. This premillennialistic position, “is in conflict with the very definite statements of Scripture with reference to the unity of God’s people of both dispensations.”

63 It is necessary to understand Hendriksen’s covenant theology at this juncture in which a derived, overarching Covenant of Grace incorporates all of God’s redemptive dealings with man from the Fall until the Return of Jesus Christ. This is a vital element in the distinctive Dutch Reformed theology which he espouses. Hence the “church/congregation in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38), finds its continuation in the church of the New Testament. Nevertheless, we may still enquire as to whether it is the will of God that He incorporate diversity within the unity of His one people. Hendriksen, in referencing Ephesians 2:11-22, then comments: “[F]aith in Christ unites N.T. believers to those whom the covenant-promise was made during the O.T. Dispensation. Together they constitute ONE PEOPLE.”

64 As it stands, we can agree with this statement, except we believe this “oneness” includes diversity, even that concerning which the prophets wrote about with regard to the consummated Messianic kingdom (Ezek. 36:22-23; 37:24-28; 39:7; Mic. 4:1-5; Hag. 2:6-9; Zech. 8:18-23; 14:16-19; Mal. 3:12). Hendriksen, in rejecting such diversity, of necessity must therefore deny the continuity of distinctive Jewish identity. To this we respond with comments found in Appendix C concerning the people of God as described by Paul in Ephesians 2.

The main point that many amillennialists attempt to derive from this passage is that the “one new man” and the “one body to God” [vs. 15-16] evidence a homogenous unity that does not allow diversity, namely divine recognition of Jewish and Gentile Christians. This we believe to be a fundamental error since the “one Lord” and “one Lord” and “one God and Father” (Eph. 4:4-6) comprise a personal diversity in the essential unity of the Godhead. So here in 2:13-16, and in I Corinthians 12:12-30 where there is one body of Christ that is composed of distinctively gifted members, overall unity comprises a complementary diversity, as in the marriage union. Thus the “one new man” and the “one body to God,” indeed the “the whole building, . . . a holy temple in the Lord,” v. 21, represent a unity that incorporates Jewish and Gentile individuality ordained of God (Gal. 3:28-29; 6:15-16).

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2. Israel and the Bible (1968).

This publication is a classic representation of replacement theology, certainly more friendly in tone than that of Boettner, that yet quite plainly upholds God’s permanent disenfranchisement of national Israel and corporate Judaism. This is the thrust of the substance of this publication while at the same time, in conclusion, it is recommended that the Christian should nevertheless be “understanding,” “appreciative,” “sympathetic and cooperative,” and above all “desirous to win Jewish souls for Christ.”

66 Of course this laudable goal yet means the loss of God-ordained Jewishness, and especially nationality and territory. Hence consider the substance of this writing

63 Hendriksen, Premillennialistic Conception Concerning Israel And The Church, p. 56.

64 Ibid., p. 71.

65 Appendix C, p. 336.

66 Ibid., pp. 58-63.
which relentlessly, in classic amillennial style, considers the promises, so plainly offered to Israel in the Old Testament, as having been expropriated by the Christian church, the new Israel of God. In a significant chapter, “Is God Finished with the Jews?”, there is the following introductory statement.

It has been established that the restoration predictions [in the Old Testament] have no reference to what is happening today on a national scale or will take place in the future. Explained in their own literary and historical contexts these prophecies do not refer to any twentieth century (or later) national return in unbelief, followed by national conversion, and so forth. Does this mean that God is finished with the Jews? Those who, contrary to all New Testament teaching (Matt. 8:11, 12; Rom. 10:12, 13; I Cor. 7:19; Gal. 3:9, 29; Eph. 2:14, 18; Col. 3:11; I Thess. 2:14-16; I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 2:9), maintain that the Jews are still God’s specially favored people, and that the program of their future glory is already beginning to unfold, sometimes speak as if with respect to this subject there are only two alternatives: (a) their view, and (b) the view that “God is finished with the Jews,” as if all Jews were doomed forever. But is it not possible to reject both of these extremes, and to accept a third position? Instead of accepting a future national conversion of the Jews, is it not possible to believe in remnant conversion? And, instead of limiting this conversion to the close of the dispensation, is it not better to connect it with every period of history until the return of the Bridegroom, when at last the door will be shut against those who are not ready to enter (Matt. 25:10)?

Now the supposed presentation of a mediating position here may have an appealing ring about it while in fact it is really literary obfuscation. What becomes abundantly clear in the ensuing argument and exegesis of this author is that the status of this remnant in covenantal Jewish terms is in fact a nonentity. In other words, as Hendriksen designates, those who comprise the remnant of Jewish Christians in fact have no participation in distinctive Abrahamic Judaism in the eyes of God. Their designation as “Jewish” Christians is in reality a cloak for mere tokenism and ambiguity. Consider Hendriksen’s confession that the “blessings formerly promised to the Jewish people are now given to ‘the Israel of God,’ namely, to the church of Jew and Gentile. . . . [T]he privileges which once belonged to the ancient covenant people have been transferred to this new nation.” Yes, but are any of these privileges distinctively Jewish? In the light of this “new nation,” is there any sense in which the Jewish Christian could be legitimately distinguished from the Gentile Christian, that is in the sight of God? Most likely Hendriksen would reply in the negative, in which case his reference to the remnant as being “Jewish” would in fact be the employment of a meaningless expression. Herein we come to the point of difference that Edwards, Bonar, Ryle, and Spurgeon, etc., make in the attached appendices. It is that, within the composition of the one redeemed people of God, it is thoroughly biblical to uphold a racial and territorial distinction in the same way that a believing husband and wife, being one in Christ Jesus, yet maintain a gender distinction (Gal. 3:28).

Again, we commend Hendriksen for the spirit of his concluding chapter, “What Should Be Our Attitude Toward The Jew?” His evangelistic longing is well expressed:

O that all the gifts and talents with which these people have been so richly endowed might be applied also—yes, first and most of all—to the service of him who is indeed the true

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67 Ibid., p. 32.
68 Ibid., p. 55.
Then he makes a further plea, with which we wholeheartedly agree. “More than anything else, we should tell these people the truth.” Yes, we as premillennialists believe that this truth should include the grave warning of Jesus Christ, “Unless you believe that I am He [the Son of God, Messiah], you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). But on the other hand, would Hendriksen really explain to a listening Jew the eschatological truth as he believes it concerning God’s disenfranchisement of covenant individuality, nationality and territory? Further, would Hendriksen explain just how many Christian churches and fellowships have been planted in Israel that espouse his Reformed eschatology?

F. O. Palmer Robertson

A further instance of this bifurcated approach toward the Jew in modern society concerns another Calvinistic and Reformed scholar, O. Palmer Robertson, who, in his *The Israel of God: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, has an approach that is similar to that of Hendriksen. Though to be quite frank, the overall style is far less friendly with regard to national Israel, and even whatever tokenism with regard to the Jews may be discovered, it is sparse indeed. For instance we read: “Clearly the plight of the Jews after the horrors of the Holocaust must be fully appreciated. Yet the tragic circumstances of the residents of the land displaced during the twentieth century must also be appreciated.” Then is attached a near half page footnote that focuses on an instance of alleged Jewish brutality toward Palestinians in Palestine in 1948, according to a proponent of “Palestinian Liberation Theology.” Of course there is no mention of the savage assault of the surrounding Arab states upon Israel the day following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, according to the United Nations charter. The tilt of sympathy, here and elsewhere, cannot be avoided. Refer to Appendix N for necessary correctives in this regard. Further consider from this author:

Evangelical Christianity in particular should take care to apply the implications of Pauline theology to the current situation with regard to the land. . . . How sad it would be if evangelical Christians who profess to love the Jewish people should become a primary tool in misdirecting their faith and expectation.

In response it should be stated how sad it would be if Gentile Christianity, in studying Paul’s *Epistle to the Romans*, should fail to understand that this magisterial epistle was indeed written by a converted Jewish Rabbi, not a Gentile. Further, how sad it would be if Gentile Christians, in esteeming themselves to be the new Israel of God, should, contrary to Paul’s exhortation, look disparagingly upon Jews who they esteem as not really being Jews in the sight of God (Rom. 11:18; 28). Further antipathy by this author toward the modern Jewish state and sympathy for the Palestinians, based upon undefined “inhabitation” and “displacement,” is found in a series of depreciative references to Golda Meir, Theodor

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69 Ibid., p. 59.
70 Ibid., p. 63.
72 Ibid, p. 31.
Herzl, David Ben-Gurion, and Joseph Weitz. The bias here is quite clear. Out of one side of his mouth Robertson plainly disclaims belief in “replacement theology,” that is a bare substitution that has little connectedness, while from the other side of his mouth he so blends Israel into the future people of God that any ethnic or national identity, according to covenantal determination, is eliminated. For instance we read, “it is not that the church takes the place of Israel, but that a renewed Israel of God is being formed by the shaping of the church. This kingdom will reach beyond the limits of the Israel of the old covenant.”

How shall this come about? Concerning national Israel, as a result of its rejection of the Messiah,

[t]he solemn consequences of this rejection find expression in the words of Jesus: “The kingdom shall be taken away from you and given to a people bearing the fruit of it” (Matt. 21:43). Israel as a nation would no more be able to claim that they possessed the kingdom of God in a way that was distinct from other nations. Yet the people of the new covenant would still be designated as Israel, “the Israel of God.” This new covenant people would be formed around the core of twelve Israelites who were chosen to constitute the ongoing Israel of God.

Hence while alternative terms such as “transference,” or “supercessionism” or “expropriationism” or “absorptionism,” could be proposed here, the end result is identical to that which proceeds from replacement theology. That is, there remains inevitable repudiation of the continuance of national Israel, along with ongoing territorial rights, as a result of the dawning of the new covenant era. For all of the subtlety here, Robertson’s use of Matthew 21:43, according to his own expression, means that Israel of old is Israel “no more,” and as this writer repeatedly emphasizes, this especially refers to national and territorial identity. Furthermore, it ought to be noted that this author has made significant qualification here concerning the emerging new covenant “Israel of God.” In this regard, it is vital that Robertson should place great stress upon his exegesis of Galatians 6:16 where the only New Testament reference to such an expression is found; thus his study of this verse occupies considerably more space than most other Scripture passages referenced in his book.

Of course the reason is obvious since this passage is the singular reference for the proof of Robertson’s case, namely that the New Testament people of God comprise believing Jews and Gentiles. However, in spite of the contrary opinion of F. F. Bruce, G. C. Berkouwer, Hans Dieter Betz, Ernest De Witt Burton, and A. T. Hanson, he bravely writes: “The only explanation of Paul’s phrase “the Israel of God” that satisfies the context as well as the grammar of the passage [is that it describes] . . . the new community within humanity brought into existence by the cross of Christ in its uniting of Jews and Gentiles into one new people of God.” Concerning the tenuousness of this opinion, refer to Appendix C.

In a concluding summary of Robertson’s theology of Israel, twelve propositions are set forth that obviously repudiate, with considerable emphasis, the common premillennial belief in a distinctive new covenant, eschatological future for ethnic and national Israel. It will be

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73 Ibid., pp. 47-48. The source of all of these references is Colin Chapman’s Whose Promised Land? which volume is theologically anti-Semitic. For further consideration of Chapman in this regard, refer to the study of Romans 11:28 in Chapter 9.
74 Ibid., p. 118.
75 Ibid., p. 121.
76 Ibid., pp. 39-45.
77 Ibid., p. 43.
78 Ibid., pp. 193-195.
noted that the wording of these propositions needs careful consideration since often there is a lack of clarification, a subtle turn of expression, as well as the avoidance of pertinent issues. We select the most significant of these for more detailed analysis.

Proposition #2: The modern Jewish state is not a part of the messianic kingdom of Jesus Christ. Even though it may be affirmed that this particular civil government came into being under the sovereignty of the God of the Bible, it would be a denial of Jesus’ affirmation that his kingdom is “not of this world order” (John 18:36) to assert that this government is a part of his messianic kingdom. To be honest, this writer knows of few premillennialists who would declare that the modern state of Israel is presently part of the messianic kingdom of Jesus Christ. Though they would certainly believe that such a blessed economy will emerge at the second coming of the Son of God. However, there are two related questions that must be faced here. First, is the Land of Palestine today still a valid part of God’s promise to the national seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, irrespective of present unbelief or whether a number of Jews, large or small, inhabits it? One fundamental reason, among many, why this covenant promise abides is Paul’s declaration, obviously in the present tense, that “the promises” still belong to the Israelites (Rom. 9:4). To suggest that this expression excludes “the Land,” would be quite unthinkable according to the Apostle’s use of accepted Hebrew parlance. Second, does God have any present covenantal regard for unbelieving, carnal, national, ethnic Israel in the present? While a more complete positive answer is given in Chapter 8, it is sufficient here to refer to Romans 11:28 where it is plain that God continues to have a covenantal interest in unbelieving Israel in the present. Robertson, in being aware of the problem here, seemingly attempts to identify those “beloved for the sake of the fathers” as being elect Jews, not unbelieving Israel in a national sense. However, while amillennialist Lenski is of a similar interpretation, the overwhelming opinion of most commentators in that, as Barrett concludes, “[t]hey [Israel] are the race [emphasis added] whom God elected to be his peculiar people, and their election rests in no way upon their merits or achievements.” Thus, the positive answer to both of the questions raised leads to the conclusion that while there cannot be absolute certainty with regard to eschatological fulfillment in the present, yet this new state of Israel, and especially its possession of Jerusalem, suggests a probability that eschatological fulfillment is in process before our very eyes.

However, although Robertson concedes, as a Calvinist, that there is the operation of God’s sovereignty in the establishment of the state of Israel, this is obviously an inclusive understanding with regard to His general dominion over all of creation; hence this would nevertheless exclude any divine, particular, sovereign, covenantal, national interest. Furthermore, he sees no distinctive involvement by God in the seeming secular process by which the European Zionist movement resulted in the rebirth of the state of Israel since such involvement would violate the principle of John 18:36. Nevertheless, in this regard reference should be made to David Larsen’s Jews, Gentiles, & The Church, especially pages 131-221, in which he documents the historic development of Zionism that was substantially secular, nevertheless often directed and permeated by Christian sympathy, investment and biblical presuppositions. Consider that, “[w]hile doubtless there were complex motives of self-interest on the part of Great Britain, [Chaim] Weizmann stoutly maintained in his memoirs

79 Ibid., p. 190.

that the sincere Christian beliefs of Balfour, Lloyd-George, and Jan Christian Smuts were more responsible than anything else for the new opening for the Jews in Palestine.”

Concerning the broad principle of John 18:36, where Jesus declared, “My kingdom is not of this world,” certainly no premillennialist would assert that the present day nation of Israel is in fact a manifestation of the kingdom of God. Having said this, it ought not to be implied then that, because of the present secularity and unbelief of Israel, therefore God has no vested, particular, covenantal, loving interest in His people, as if a father had given up on his prodigal son. Quite to the contrary, in the biblical parable the father lovingly follows the course of his son even when he is defiling himself in the far country. Hence surely in this present age there is abundant evidence of God’s dealing with godless mankind according to His prevenient grace whereby He woos and draws with cords of love the particular objects of His elective grace (John 6:44-45; II Thess. 2:13; I Pet. 1:1-2). They may appear as thoroughly secular and vehement despisers of Christ, nevertheless the divine pursuit of such renegades is unrelenting until such a time as sovereign grace claims them as with Jacob (Gen. 28:10-22; 32:24-32) and Paul (Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:1-9; Gal. 1:15-16). If this be so, then is it not equally evident that God has pursued the nation of Israel through the centuries in its unbelief. But further, how is it possible then to so vehemently deny that God is now, in this twenty-first century, distinctively, covenantally dealing with the nation of Israel, especially since 1948? Indeed it is Romans 11 that so plainly describes this wooing through the centuries, even with the employed strategy of temporary withdrawal.

Proposition #3: It cannot be established from Scripture that the birth of the modern state of Israel is a prophetic precursor to the mass conversion of Jewish people. Doubtless in absolute terms this is correct even as it cannot be certainly proved that Robertson’s denial of such an apocalyptic return and conversion of the Diaspora is correct. With the Word of God concerning eschatological events, at best we are dealing with guarded probability, so let each Christian be persuaded as he carefully studies Scripture. Theoretically, present day Israel might be so assailed by the Arabs that it finds itself pushed into the Mediterranean Sea. This would in no way invalidate the premillennial hope, such as is portrayed in Ezekiel 37, though some amillennialists might inwardly smile at such an event. Here they would confess God’s hand at work in judgment while denying His hand would ever bring consummate blessing. On the other hand, C. H. Spurgeon, Bishop J. C. Ryle, and Horatius Bonar did have such a premillennial hope concerning national Israel well before there was any aroused prospect in Europe of a possible Jewish state. However, by way of contrast, consider the rather imprudent prognostication of Philip Mauro who wrote that should Jerusalem “come into Jewish hands again” during the “times of the Gentiles,” then “the prophecies would have been falsified and the entire New Testament discredited.” The pity is that he is not now able to provide an explanation of present circumstances, though the temper of his writings suggests that like some, he would simply deny any activity or national purpose of God, whatsoever, in the present state of Israel.

Proposition #4: The land of the Bible served in a typological role as a model of the consummate realization of the purposes of God for his redeemed people that encompasses the whole of the cosmos. Because of the inherently limited scope of the land of the Bible, it is not to be regarded as having continuing significance in the realm of redemption other than

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81 David L. Larsen, Jews, Gentiles & The Church, p. 182.
82 Philip Mauro, The Gospel of the Kingdom, Chapter Twelve, Internet sourced. In Chapter Fourteen, commenting on Zionism up to 1927, Mauro suggests that despite the Balfour Declaration, Zionism is a shabby movement in decline.
its function as a teaching model. In this matter we would simply ask that Appendix F be read in full where C. H. Spurgeon expounds upon Ezekiel 37:1-10. By way of summary, the famous preacher is well aware that

this vision has been used, from the time of Jerome onwards, as a description of the resurrection. . . [However] there is no allusion made by Ezekiel to the resurrection, and such topic would have been quite apart from the design of the prophet’s speech. I believe he was no more thinking of the resurrection of the dead than of the building of St. Peter’s at Rome, or the emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers. That topic is altogether foreign to the subject in hand, and could not by any possibility have crept into the prophet’s mind. He was talking about the people of Israel, and prophesying concerning them. . . The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel.

However, by way of contrast, consider Robertson’s explanation of this same passage in which we now begin to see that there is nothing really new. His eschatological understanding of Ezekiel, quite apart from any immediate return of Israel after the Babylonian exile, is essentially a revamped interpretation that employs the resurrection motif while categorically excluding national Israel’s resurrection to life through regeneration.

This perspective [moving from shadow to reality] provides insight into the return to the land as described by Ezekiel and the other prophets. In the nature of things, these writers could only employ images with which they and their hearers were familiar. So they spoke of a return to the geographical land of Israel. Indeed there was a return to this land, though hardly on the scale prophesied by Ezekiel. But in the context of the realities of the new covenant, this land must be understood in terms of the newly created cosmos about which the apostle Paul speaks in Romans. The whole universe (which is “the land” from a new covenant perspective) groans in travail, waiting for the redemption that will come with the resurrection of the bodies of the redeemed (Rom. 8:22-23). The return to paradise in the framework of the new covenant does not involve merely a return to the shadowy forms of the old covenant. It means the rejuvenation of the entire earth. By this renewal of the entire creation, the old covenant’s promise of land finds its new covenant realization.  

We would agree here with the prophetic vision that Romans 8:22-33 presents and at the same time anticipates the future glorious Messianic kingdom which will manifest Christ’s reign from Jerusalem over Jew and Gentile. However we would vigorously disagree with that mystical, indeed contorted incorporation of the Land into the new cosmos in such a way that all territorial identity is lost. Thus we return to two basic problems here. First there is a seeming unwillingness to accept that in the future blessed state that could possibly be a unity with diversity, regenerate Jews and Gentiles in blissful subjection to the reign of Christ. Second, there is the basic fallacy that the land, as a mere shadow, is rooted in the old or Mosaic covenant. We would strongly assert that the Land is rooted in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1, 5-7; 13:14-15, 17; 15:7-21), and as such is not limited by the temporal character of the Mosaic economy. God’s fundamental dealing with Israel after redemption from Egypt continued to be based upon the Abrahamic covenant that continued to anticipate its inherent promise of the Land (Exod. 3:6-8, 15-17; 6:1-9; 12:25; 13:5; 32:13-14; 33:1-3; Lev. 20:24; 33:1-3; Num. 13:27).

Proposition #5: Rather than understanding predictions about the “return” of “Israel” to the “land” in terms of a geopolitical re-establishment of the state of Israel, these prophecies are more properly interpreted as finding consummate fulfillment at the “restoration of all things” that will accompany the resurrection of believers at the return of Christ (Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:22-23). No premillennialist perceives the present “geopolitical re-establishment of the state of Israel” in a consummate sense. It is a precursor of that “regeneration, πάλινγενεσία, palingenesia” (Acts 3:21) and redemption of the created order (Romans 8:22-23) in which saved national Israel will gloriously participate. However, this does not mean that we walk blindly through this world as if historic events have little significance. Surely not only the continued increasing material and military strength of national Israel, obtained in the face of seeming insuperable opposition, but particularly its possession of Jerusalem after a hiatus of over 2,000 years, has troubled those of Reformed Augustinian convictions. There are many published instances of their wrestling with these events that defy an easy explanation.

Proposition #7: No worship practices that place Jewish believers in a category different from Gentile believers can be a legitimate worship-form among the redeemed people of God. Is this to suggest that the worship of the Gentile church at Antioch had an identical form when compared with that of the mother Jewish church at Jerusalem? If a church that is predominantly Jewish should desire to remember the Lord Jesus by means of a Seder while a predominantly Gentile church should simply employ the Lords’ Table, who is to say that one order is more biblical than the other? If a church that is predominantly Jewish desires to initiate its children of Jewish parents and Jewish converts into Messianic Judaism by means of circumcision, where is the clear teaching in the New Testament that indicates that such a signification has been voided? How is it possible for the council of Jerusalem’s decision (Acts 15:1-35) to be construed as teaching the abolition of circumcision for the Jewish Christian?

Proposition #9: The future manifestation of the messianic kingdom of Christ cannot include a distinctively Jewish aspect that would distinguish the peoples and practices of Jewish believers from their Gentile counterparts. This is a purely arbitrary statement which betrays a Gentile mindset. In effect Robertson is saying that while the Gentile can worship in a pure Gentile manner, and the inference is that this will be the future messianic standard, on the other hand the Jew cannot incorporate distinctive Jewish aspects that are not appropriate for the Gentile. After all, this would be unfair for the Gentile. But how is it fair for the Jew to have to conform to Gentile worship.

G. Hans K. LaRondelle

Hans K. LaRondelle is professor emeritus of theology at the Theological Seminary of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. His most notable book in the area of eschatology is The Israel of God in Prophecy, a volume that is highly esteemed by many Reformed amillennialists, especially because of its explicit replacement theology. Throughout the whole book, while there is that common token expression of responsibility for Christians to witness to Jews as individuals, there is not the slightest expression of Pauline compassion for them, this being difficult since in reality, the claims of legitimacy for contemporary biblical Jewishness are denied. While as a Seventh Day Adventist scholar, LaRondelle’s several quotations of Ellen White might be expected, it is important to recognize that this author is upholding the standard replacement theology of his denomination and its founder. Consider the recent summary statement taken from an article in a special issue of the Adventist Review devoted to Bible prophecy.
Did Bible Prophecy Fail? As we read the Old Testament, we run up against certain prophetic predictions that, especially in recent times, have led to questions. They have the form of eschatological prophecies—prophecies relating to “the last things.” Did they find fulfillment? Or were the prophets mistaken? The common element in these prophecies is that they begin with the prophet’s circumstances (commonly the Babylonian exile), then look beyond immediate events into the future. In that future, the prophets were shown what ancient Israel could have become. They saw God’s people returning to their glorified land. They saw Jerusalem as an exalted city—the world capital, in fact, into which people from all nations would stream, seeking a knowledge of the true God. The exaltation of this land and the entire world was to continue until it would become, in effect, a new earth. These prophecies about ancient Israel were never literally fulfilled, however. Why? The humanistic answer is that the prophets were not really recipients of divine foreknowledge and had simply guessed wrong. A completely opposite answer, characteristic of some evangelical interpreters (known as dispensationalists [more inclusively premillennialists]), is that, since these prophecies were inspired by God, they must take place—in the literal, present country of Israel. Seventh-day Adventists take a third approach—one in the middle of the first two. Like the evangelicals, we believe these “failed” prophecies were given by God and are true. But we agree with the humanists that they will not be literally fulfilled in Israel. How do we reconcile these two points of view? By considering these prophecies conditional. As Ellen G. White put it: “The promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional.” Following her lead, we have placed these prophecies in the category of promises—promises of what could have been if God’s chosen people had cooperated fully with His plan for them. Unfortunately, they did not. We see the final frustration of God’s plan in the New Testament. Here God’s own people reject the Messiah: “He came to his own home, and his own people received him not” (John 1:11, RSV). While these prophecies will yet be fulfilled in reference to spiritual Israel, the Christian church (Gal. 3:15-29), they no longer apply to a literal Israel in the Middle East.44

To begin with, at the core of LaRondelle’s eschatology is his Christological hermeneutic, which subject occupies over one third of his book. This is his hermeneutical motif. His stated overall critical response is to the literal interpretation of dispensationalism, though it should be understood that most of his objections are really with regard to basic premillennialism as represented in Appendices F, G, H. LaRondelle explains his Christocentricity as follows:

Those modern interpretations of the prophetic Word which exclude Christ, His saving grace, and His new-covenant people from the center of Israel’s end-time prophecies basically miss the divine mark and exalt a torch of false prophecy. Christ is “the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the end” (Rev. 22:13) of the whole prophetic Word. Christ is the shining Morning Star, who illuminates each covenant promise and prophecy with His saving presence. Christ is “the Root and Offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16), which means that He is the Lord of David as well as the Son of David. He represents Yahweh, the God of Israel, in all that He says and does (John 12:44-50). Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father are united so intimately that the christocentric focus is the inalienable hallmark of a biblical-theological exposition of Israel’s prophetic Word.85


85 Hans K. LaRondelle, The Israel Of God In Prophecy, pp. 9.
Surely the inference here that dispensationalists and premillennialists “exclude Christ” is simply extreme and unfounded. Such a charge is quite ironic when one considers the weight of emphasis that the Seven Day Adventist denomination gives to evangelistic outreach that employs dramatic and graphic prophetic scenarios. These could easily be understood as obscuring christocentricity. Rather, in general, millennialists would claim to be second to none in agreeing with the thoughts that LaRondelle has expressed concerning the centrality of Christ in their prophetic understanding. Hence the explicit charge of a lack of christocentricity is quite invalid, especially when the millennialist gloriously anticipates that in the future, earthly Messianic economy, “the Lord [by means of His Son] will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one” (Zech. 14:9). Shall that glorified King yet have nail-prints in His hand? We would believe so, and this being the case, it would follow that this King will also remain King of the Jews as a Jew Himself. Even the Gentile nations will be ruled by a Jew. To maintain that while this Messianic economy retains a national and territorial distinction between Jew and Gentile, with resultant blessed harmony between Jew and Gentile, there must necessarily be a lack of christocentric focus, is patently illogical and unbiblical. LaRondelle further states:

Seventh-day Adventists have received special counsel to draw all eyes to Christ as the center of hope in their prophetic interpretations. . . .

We have learned that Christ and the New Testament are the Christian’s final authority and highest norm for the theological understanding of Israel’s history, prophecy, wisdom, and sacred poetry. . . . Our fundamental starting point in this work has been the axiom of faith that the Bible is its own expositor by means of immediate and wider contexts. Because we accept Jesus Christ as the true Interpreter of the Hebrew Bible, we take our stand with the Church of the ages in confessing that the New Testament is God’s authorized interpretation and authoritative application of the Old Testament.86

It should also be acknowledged that this author declares his acceptance of “the validity of the grammatical-historical and theological principles of exegesis for all Scripture interpretation,”87 as the bottom layer, so to speak, of his hermeneutical complex, though he does this with a particular qualification. It is the inclusion in the preceding statement of a “theological principle” that is drawn from amillennialist Louis Bekhof, who in turn gleans from Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck, all having similar eschatological leanings. Even Berkhof admits, what we also believe at this point, namely that “[m]any writers on Hermeneutics are of the opinion that the grammatical and historical interpretation meet all the requirements for the proper interpretation of the Bible. They have no eye for the special theological character of this discipline.”88 And of course such people would not all be premillennialists. So LaRondelle concludes, referencing support from F. F. Bruce, though with doubtful applicability, “grammatico-historical exegesis is not sufficient for the interpretation of Holy Scripture. Theological exegesis is also necessary.”89 However, it is not difficult to sense the necessity of this “theological” element for the formation of a certain

86 Ibid., pp. 9, 60, 207.
87 Ibid., p. 32.
88 Louis Berkhof, Principles of Biblical Interpretation, p. 133.
89 LaRondelle, Israel Of God In Prophecy, p. 25. The footnote references Bruce for support as follows: “But grammatico-historical exegesis is not sufficient for the interpretation of the biblical documents in relation to their place in the canon. Theological exegesis is also necessary, although it cannot override grammatico-historical findings.” Baker’s Dictionary of Theology, p. 293. We would agree with Bruce here re canonicity in general, but our consideration is with reference to the exegesis of the biblical text, which establishes our theology.
understanding of the Old Testament by means of the imposition upon it of New Testament
doctrine. And further we would enquire as to what doctrine is to be incorporated here, and
how is that choice of doctrine to be arrived at? The more one considers answers here, the
more one realizes that we move from objectivity to suitable subjectivity. Thus in so
upholding the necessity of the New Testament being the hermeneutical crux for the
interpretation of the Old Testament, the inevitable question must be raised that LaRondelle
hardly addresses. It is this. “What is the hermeneutic by which we interpret the New
Testament, especially its christology?” The answer must surely be the “grammatical-
historical” methodology. But would LaRondelle add the “theological principle” as well?
And what would this involve? In reviewing LaRondelle’s book, Willem VanGemeren makes
some related criticisms at this point.

[LaRondelle] assumes a uniform interpretation of the NT. The fact is, however, the interpreters
of the NT are not in agreement concerning the meaning of many of the words of Jesus and the
apostles. There is even less agreement as to any “principles of interpretation which may be
derived from the NT and applied to the OT prophets. It is naïve to approach the OT prophets
from the perspective of the NT with the assumption that it lays down a system of interpretation
of the OT prophets.¹⁰

Thus, if we say that we interpret the Old Testament by the New Testament we are in danger
of employing a dual hermeneutic, namely the standard “grammatical-historical” principle
for the New Testament, and then the imposition of the resultant derived theology upon the
“grammatical-historical” interpretation of the Old Testament. Rather, we would suggest
that there is one, and only one “grammatical-historical” heremeneutic for the whole Bible. It
is what William Tyndale described as the “literal sense,” that pertains to “the scripture,” as
quoted by J. I. Packer:

Thou shalt understand, therefore, that the scripture hath but one sense, which is but the literal
sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth,
whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way. Nevertheless, the scripture
uses proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the
proverb, similitude, riddle or allegory signifieth, is ever the literal sense, which thou must seek
out diligently.¹¹

Hence, this leads us to a further justifiable criticism by VanGemeren, who has warned that,
“[T]he ‘new’ Reformed hermeneutic is no longer “the Old is in the New revealed and the
New is in the Old concealed,” but rather “the Old is by the New restricted and the New is
on the Old inflicted.”¹² Consequently,

LaRondelle needs to look not only at the interpretation of the OT in the NT, but also at the
interpretation of the OT within itself. I greatly appreciate his emphasis on unity, harmony, and
progressive understanding of God’s word. However, within the OT itself, the words of promise
are being interpreted and reinterpreted; for that reason, it is necessary to pay attention to the
developments within the OT which also reflect unity, harmony, and progression.¹³

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¹¹ J. I. Packer, ‘Fundamentalism’ and the Word of God, p. 104
¹² Willem A. VanGemeren, “Israel as the Hermeneutical Crux in the Interpretation of Prophecy,” Westminster
But furthermore, LaRondelle also defends the inclusion of a proper allegorical element in his hermeneutic. His argument, being quite standard, is as follows. There are, in certain instances, allegorical and illustrative usage of the Old Testament in the New Testament, as with Sarah and Hagar of Genesis 21 in Galatians 4:24-31, so that this justifies a legitimate allegorical interpretation of other parts of the Old Testament. However, what the Bible determines as being allegorical or illustrative, according to the inspiration of God, is one thing. But for the interpreter to claim for himself the same prerogative of the Spirit of God is quite another, even though LaRondelle distances himself from a history of such abuse in the Church, using this principle. There are indicatives in the Bible that are in no way intended as imperatives for the Christian (Acts 5:1-6). Hence for LaRondelle we have a regulative, Christological top layer that rests upon the grammatical-historical foundation. However, the proposal of this layered hermeneutic is one thing while its outworking, as we shall see, is quite another. After all, what Christian would deny that Christ is redemptively central to the whole Word of God? Nevertheless this significance must be kept in Trinitarian perspective with regard to the headship of the Father. This is not an insignificant point since, as has been well pointed out by Thomas Smail in *The Forgotten Father*, it is common today for an almost blind prominence to be given to the preeminence of Jesus Christ, as though impossible to challenge, while in fact it is a biblical distortion. Hence we believe LaRondelle takes this legitimate Christological principle and gives it a disproportionate, driving emphasis, notwithstanding his passing mention of the triunity of God in a preceding quotation. Thus Bernard Ramm provides a more balanced approach when he recommends, for the interpretation of the prophetic segments of Scripture, five principles, the last of which is, “Keep in mind the centrality of Jesus Christ.”

As an indication of how the imposition of a “theological principle” upon the “grammatical-historical” hermeneutic, can be arbitrary, while at the same time the imposition of the New Testament in the interpretation of the Old Testament does not necessarily lead to exegesis that results in discovery of the truth of God, consider LaRondelle’s section titled, “‘The Israel of God’ in the Context of Galatians.” We will focus on the exegesis of three passages here, though at the outset it should be noted that the author avoids making any reference to three of the most outstanding critical commentaries concerning Galatians, they being by F. F. Bruce, Ernest De Witt Burton and Hans Dieter Betz, and the reason why may not be unrelated to the fact that these authors do not offer sufficient support for LaRondelle’s categorical thesis concerning Israel’s divine ethnic disqualification.

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94 Thomas A. Smail, *The Forgotten Father*. Initially captivated by the Charismatic Movement, this author became troubled by an unbiblical pneumatology that gave little emphasis to God the Father. He explains that in reading a paper before European charismatic leaders, “Professor Francis Sullivan SJ, of the Gregorian University in Rome, commented that I had said a great deal about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the person and work of Christ, but practically nothing about his relationship to the Father, although the latter was as prominent as the former in the text I had been expounding (Acts 2:33) according to which Christ “has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear”. I could only admit the omission and plead that I was not alone in being guilty of it—it was indeed characteristic of the kind of Reformed Christocentric emphasis in which I had been grounded. Indeed when one widens the scope and looks at vital modern Christian movements of any kind, one has to admit that emphasis upon and devotion to the Father has not been a main characteristic of many of them.” Pp. 18-19.


There is such a constricted view here that one wonders if “in protesting too much,” the intention is to convince the reader to believe that the stated point of view is quite beyond question, while in fact the writer probably well knows that some of the most careful and esteemed commentators do not agree with him. LaRondelle states:

The historical background of this epistle indicates that Paul is vehemently rejecting [in 6:16] any different status or claim of the Jewish Christians beside or above that of gentle Christians before God. Baptized Jews and Gentiles are all one in Christ, are “all sons of God through faith on Christ Jesus.” Consequently, “there is neither Jew nor Greek” in Christ (Gal. 3:26-28). “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). How could language state it any more conclusively and unambiguously? . . . [T]o single out Jewish believers within the Church as “the Israel of God” is a concept that is in basic conflict with Paul’s message to the Galatians. He declares categorically that “there is neither Jew not Greek” within the Church, and that the church as a whole—all who belong to Christ—is the seed of Abraham, the heir of Israel’s covenant promise (Gal. 3:26-69).

The argument here is in absolute terms that disallow any diversity within unity. In other words, in spite of the fact that the promise originally given to Abraham distinguished between “a great nation” that would be a blessing to “all the families of the earth” (Gen. 12:1-3), that is the Hebrew nation being a blessing to the Gentile nations, LaRondelle declares the end result to be the homogenous people of God, which Galatians 3:29 does not declare. The obvious proof here is that upon conversion, the Christian male and the Christian female do not lose their gender distinction, notwithstanding that both are “Sons of God” and “one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26, 28). Thus Burton explains:

That he [Paul] is speaking of these distinctions from the point of view of religion is evident from the context in general, but especially from his inclusion of the ineradicable distinction of sex. The passage has nothing to do directly with the merging of nationalities or the abolition of slavery.

The same point is applicable with regard to the parallel passage in Colossians 3:11, concerning which LaRondelle makes a similar categorical statement:

The apostle removes every theological distinction between Jew and Gentile before God, because “Christ is all and is in all” Col. 3:11; cf. Gal. 3:26-29.” However, this verse in full describes, “a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all in all.

Surely the Sythian retains his ethnic identity within the unity that Paul has just described. And it is particularly noteworthy that within this same unity, the Apostle follows on by describing the hierarchical relationships that subsume within this unity between wives and their husbands, children and their parents, and slaves and their masters (Col. 3:18-22).

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98 Ibid., p. 128.
Hence, to further suggest that Paul, in distinguishing between a Jew and Gentile in the Church, would conflict with his essential thesis in Galatians is simply to fly in the face of the Apostle doing that very thing in Romans 11:5 where he acknowledges that “there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice,” comprised of Jewish Christians as distinct from Gentile Christians.


Again LaRondelle is highly selective here in his exposition that makes no reference to Burton, Bruce, Betz, and especially Lightfoot’s consideration of Hagar in 4:25, none of whom consider this allegorical representation to be a denial of Israel ethnicity.

Paul does not want to be misunderstood and therefore has more to say [following on from 3:29] to those who still claim special promises for ethnic Israel. In Galatians 4:21-31 the apostle radically denies any claim of ethnic Israel to any covenant promise. This passage has rightly been called “the sharpest polemic against Jerusalem and Judaism in the New Testament.” Paul goes so far as to equate “the present Jerusalem,” the nation of Israel, with the status before God of Ishmael, who was totally disinherited because he persecuted Isaac.99

Without doubt Paul is sharply denouncing “the present/now Jerusalem,” τὴ νῦν Ἱεροσολύμου, that is the contemporary, political, carnal, Christ rejecting Jerusalem of Judea (I Thess. 2:14-16), but not the nation of Israel as a whole, especially from an eschatological perspective of irrevocable disqualification. Rather he anticipates “the [eschatological] Jerusalem above,” ἡ ἄνω Ἱεροσολύμου, which expression has tended to be misunderstood by some expositors according to a Hellenistic rather than a Hebrew perspective. Refer to Chapter 7. The distinction here between the Jerusalem “now” and “above” is not primarily one of location or geography, that is of earth below and heaven above, of matter below and spirit above, according to a Greco/Platonic mindset, but contrast between the present Jerusalem that now is and the future Messianic kingdom that is to be, coming from heaven to earth (Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 21:10-27). Rabbinic understanding of this terminology appears to be especially incorporated into the Hebrews references.100


Reference should first be made to Appendix C where a more detailed study of this verse is included. However, La Rondelle declares:

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100 Alford, Greek Testament, III, p. 48; Lightfoot, Galatians, pp. 181-182. Also J. C. DeYoung, Jerusalem in the New Testament, just referenced by LaRondelle, provides a wealth of information that confirms the Jewish understanding of “the Jerusalem above” terminology as being anticipatory of the coming Messianic kingdom, pp. 109-116. However we would disagree with his arbitrary comment: “Paul’s thought of the heavenly Jerusalem must be distinguished from that of Judaism, not identified with it,” p. 118. Converted Rabbi Paul and the author of Hebrews remained Hebrew Christians, though it is not as easy for the Gentile Christian to comprehend this point.
Paul’s benediction in Galatians 6:16 becomes, then, the chief witness in the New Testament in declaring that the universal Church of Christ is the Israel of God, the seed of Abraham, the heir to Israel’s covenant promise (cf. Gal. 3:29; 6:16). This is an extraordinary confession since Galatians 6:16 is the only place in the New Testament where the expression “the Israel of God” is employed. We would simply add the following explanations which both acknowledge a distinct Jewish association. Hence following a detailed consideration, Hans Dieter Betz declares: “Thus, Paul extends the blessing beyond the Galatian Paulinists to those Jewish—Christians who approve of his κανέν [kanôn] (“rule”) in v. 15.” F. F. Bruce similarly concludes:

F. Mussner (Galaterbrief, 417 n. 59) probably indicates the true sense when he identifies the Israel of God here with πας Ἰσραήλ [pas Israël], of Romans 11:26. For all of his demoting of the law and the customs, Paul held good hope of the ultimate blessing of Israel. They were not all keeping in line with ‘this rule’ yet, but the fact that some Israelites were doing so was in his eyes a pledge that this remnant would increase until, with the ingathering of the full tale (πλήρωμα [pleroma]) of Gentiles, ‘all Israel will be saved’. The invocation of blessing on the Israel of God has probably an eschatological perspective.

H. Samuel E. Waldron

We now consider a more recent publication, written in a popular style, by Reformed Baptist pastor, Samuel E. Waldron, titled, The End Times Made Simple – How Could Everyone Be So Wrong About Biblical Prophecy? The back cover commendation declares: “Piece by piece, Samuel E. Waldron strips away years of false teaching and faulty exegesis thrust upon the church to reveal what the Bible, in its own simple but profound way, says about what will happen at the end of this present age.” Then there are chapters breathtakingly titled, “But How Could Everyone Be So Wrong?” and “The Bible’s Own System,” which tempt us to express gratitude for the dawning of unparalleled illumination in the midst of such widespread eschatological darkness! It is difficult to refrain from disparaging this obvious immodest posturing. However, it simply needs to be pointed out that what we have here is, quite obviously, warmed over amillennialism that many of a Reformed Baptist persuasion profess. And from the heights of such simple eschatological purity, there rains down endless condemnation of complicated, worldly dispensationalism and premillennialism. The following quotation confirms this point in that it reflects participation in classic Augustinianism that has perpetuated the historic put-down of ethnic, national, and territorial Israel, and that in the name of Christianity.

We have been saying that the church is the New Israel. Now we must emphasize that the church is the New Israel. Though there is basic unity between the church and Israel, there is also the development, advancement, and superiority of the church over Israel. The church may be considered as the true Israel and as such the continuation of the Old Covenant people. It may also be considered to be the New Israel and as such a new beginning by God. . . .

Old Covenant Israel did not possess the spirituality, unity, and oneness of the body of Christ. The corporate spirituality, unity, and commonality of the church did not exist in Old Testament Israel. A Jonathan and a David might hold sweet communion, but a Joab, Abner, and Saul also

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101 LaRondelle, Israel of God in Prophecy, pp. 110-111.
102 Hans Dieter Betz, Galatians, p. 323. He also footnotes support from Peter Richardson and Franz Mussner.
103 F. F. Bruce, The Epistle To The Galatians, A Commentary on the Greek Text, p. 275.
worshiped with them in the same congregation of Israel. There was a unity in the flesh, but not in the Spirit. There were regenerate Israelites, but never a regenerated Israel. Its constitution was fleshly, not spiritual. What a privilege fellowship in a true church is; the saints of the Old Covenant knew only its flashes and shadows.  

Now we would agree with the principle of progression of revelation whereby the promise of the gospel in the Old Testament finds fulfillment in the New Testament. We would further agree that the Mosaic Covenant was clearly comprised, according to God's design, of shadows that made way for the substance that is in Christ (Col. 2:17). However, we would vigorously deny that Israel, regarded as a mere shadow, subsequently finds its fulfillment in the church. The simple reason for this is that Israel's existence in continuum is not conditioned by its participation in the interim Mosaic Covenant, but rather the abiding Abrahamic Covenant. As is so often the case with the kind of amillennial reasoning that Waldron presents, Israel's failure in general before God is attributed to its failure to abide by the conditional nature of the Mosaic Covenant.

The promises to the nation, Israel, contained a conditional element. Of course, they were not completely dependent on human obedience. The condition of human obedience was contained in the context of God's sovereign purpose. Yet while they are to be understood within the framework of divine sovereignty, the conditional element is clear (Exod. 19:5-6). Only faithful Jews could lay claim to the promises. That there would be such the divine purpose would secure, but that all Jews would be faithful was nowhere certified (Rom. 11:3f).  

One senses that Waldron knows he is skating on thin ice here when he refers to Israel's lack of “faithfulness” to the terms of Exodus 19:5-6 with regard to the Sinaitic Covenant concerning which God said, “If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant [the Decalogue], then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” It is granted that Israel broke this covenant. But to suggest this brought about the permanent disenfranchisement of Israel and the appropriation of its blessings by the church, is to make Galatians 3:17 of none effect where, “the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God.” As we have previously pointed out in this chapter, through the leadership of Moses, from the burning bush encounter onward to Israel’s redemption out of Egypt and beyond, God continually declared that His covenantal intent, according to His promise to Abraham, was to bring His people into the promised land (Exod. 3:6-8, 15-17; 6:1-9; 12:25; 13:5; 32:13-14; 33:1-3; Lev. 20:24; 33:1-3; Num. 13:27). Redemption out of Egypt did not primarily look forward to the Sinaitic Covenant, which was added because of transgression (Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19). Thus Israel’s national future was not based upon the bilateral Mosaic Covenant, but the unilateral Abrahamic Covenant, which Romans 11:28-29 emphatically declares. Does Waldron’s conditionality here concerning Israel equally apply to the continuance of a Christian in the faith? It is a wonder to behold when amillennial Calvinists, who so staunchly believe in particular elective grace, whereby even saving faith is a gift, yet speak of elect Israel losing its chosen status because of conditionality!

In two chapters Waldron deals with the crucial issue concerning the relationship between Israel and the church. While there is so much that should be responded to in this regard, only two, though significant matters, will be dealt with. At the outset, the classic premillennial position will be upheld in which the one people of God incorporates the two


105 Ibid., p. 151. There are shades of Fairbairn’s conditionalism here.
distinct categories of Israel and the church. Further dispensational qualifications in this regard are not considered here, and they are not necessary insofar as the essential amillennial fulfillment of Israel in the church is concerned.

1. The church is the New Israel according to church history.

The author writes, “that God has only one people in all ages. The promises made to Israel are fulfilled to the New Israel, the church. I have called this position the historic position of the church. . . . The eschatological viewpoint that dominated the church through the Middle ages after the demise of the early premillennialism in the 4th century was not even premillennial. Now what almost defies understanding here is that Waldron should declare, with apparent admiration, that his eschatological perspective concerning Israel and the church is in fact according to the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, that which found particular formulation through Augustine. We do not hesitate in agreeing that, especially from the Constantinian era on through to the Reformation, and beyond, the Church of Rome gloried in its dominion as the New Israel that could not tolerate ongoing Judaism. The eschatology of Augustine in this regard is one that ought to lead to shame, not boasting. One of the unfortunate attitudes of some believers with Reformed convictions is that because Augustine became such a staunch advocate of the sovereignty of grace, and thus profoundly influenced Luther, the consequent Augustinian, therefore it is assumed that in other areas of doctrine he was equally reliable and laudable. The only remedy for Waldron’s void in his understanding of church history at this point is for him to read of the ethical fruit of Augustine’s eschatology, even as he learned it from Ambrose, and it found such repugnant expression in the theological anti-Semitism of Chrysostom, whose mouth did not always prove to be so golden. The terrible truth is that for centuries after the doctrine of supercessionism became established, the church acted in a manner that directly opposed Paul’s admonition to the Gentiles in Romans 11:17-21. Luther was enthusiastically an Augustinian, though we are not talking here with regard to the inheritance of gospel doctrine but rather an eschatology that has continued to result in despite being inflicted upon the Jews by those who claim to have been saved by a Jew. For a contemporary illustration of this truth, refer to Appendix J. But further, Waldron needs to read much more comprehensively on this matter, and it is for this reason that Appendix O has been included. How could it be that, after the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), in which the mother Jewish church in Jerusalem saw the light concerning gospel grace being freely outpoured toward the Gentiles, and readily acknowledged liberty in this regard, yet within one hundred and fifty years the Gentile children turned on its mother and arrogantly declared that she must conform to their dictates?

One other matter in this area of history that begs for a response is the reference to the eschatology of C. H. Spurgeon. A quotation is given, drawn from Iain Murray’s *The Puritan Hope*, in which the great Calvinist preacher is obviously disavowing an aspect of dispensationalism that is distinct from historic premillennialism. This leads Waldron to accept Murray’s mistaken inference that Spurgeon made no distinction of any sort concerning Israel within the people of God. Hence, in a book proposing simplicity in the matter of the future, all we can say is that here this author is the bearer of great

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106 Ibid., p. 137.
confusion. The truth is that Spurgeon, as a covenantal premillennialist,\textsuperscript{107} in believing that there was only one redeemed people of God since the Fall, nevertheless also believed that there was to be an ongoing distinction between Jewish and Gentile Christians in a future earthly millennium under the reign of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem. Appendix G makes this abundantly clear, even though in no way could Spurgeon be designated as a dispensationalist. As a further example, consider Spurgeon’s comment on Zechariah 2:1-5.

I am not given to prophesying, and I fear that the fixing of dates and periods has been exceedingly injurious to the whole system of premillennial teaching; but I think I clearly see in Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ will come—so far I go, and take my stand—that he will come personally to reign upon this earth. At his coming it appears clear to me that he will gather together the Jewish people, that Jerusalem shall become the metropolis of the new empire which shall then extend from pole to pole, from the river even to the ends of the earth. If this be a correct interpretation of prophecy, you may read the whole of this chapter through and understand it; you have the key to every sentence: without such a belief; I see not how to interpret the prophet’s meaning.\textsuperscript{108}

We should also add that reference to Murray’s representation of premillennialism is obviously slanted in this regard, downward that is; in contrast this author presents a decidedly romantic Scottish partiality toward postmillennialism. Unfortunately the premillennial Bonar’s and M’Cheyne, etc. became tainted through guilt by association with Edward Irving. They participated in the eclipse of the more glorious postmillennial hope of previous centuries that had begun to wane. However for a more balanced representation of Puritan millennialism, refer to Crawford Gribben’s doctoral thesis, The Puritan Millennium: Literature & Theology, 1550-1682, in which he details Scottish “embryonic postmillennialism,”\textsuperscript{109} both moderate and radical, as well as a more balanced representation of the considerable and varied premillennial influence within the seventeenth century.

2. The church is the New Israel according to Scripture.

There are six lines of argument that are presented to prove that the church is the true and new Israel of God. We deal with these briefly or refer to more detailed considerations of these matters in other chapters and appendices.

a. The term “church/congregation” (ekklēsia) is often used in the Greek Septuagint to describe the “congregation” (qahal) of Israel, and thus such an association “argues forcibly for the unity of God’s people.”\textsuperscript{110} However, consider Earl D. Radmachers’ doctoral conclusion in this regard.

The ekklēsia is never contemplated as a spiritual fact, independent of spatial and temporal limitations. Finally, as was the case in the classical writings, there is no

\begin{itemize}
\item [\textsuperscript{107}] This is the term of Dennis Michael Swanson in his definitive study, Charles H. Spurgeon and Eschatology: Did He have a Discernable Millennial Position? The Master’s Seminary, California. Internet sourced, The Spurgeon Archive, http://www.spurgeon.org/eschat.htm. Here also the deficiencies of Murray’s study are clearly stated.
\item [\textsuperscript{108}] C. H. Spurgeon, The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, 10:604, Ages Software CD
\item [\textsuperscript{109}] Crawford Gribben, The Puritan Millennium: Literature & Theology, 1550-1682, p. 103, 109.
\item [\textsuperscript{110}] Waldron, End Times Made Simple, p. 140.
\end{itemize}
evidence whatever that the word acquired a specifically religious connotation in the Septuagint. All uses of the word never go beyond the simple meaning of an assembly. Thus, there is no place for reading the church back into the Old Testament on the basis of the prevalent usage of 

\[ \textit{ekklēsia} \].\textsuperscript{111}

Therefore Waldron’s reference to Acts 7:38 in this regard, as though Stephen’s description of “the congregation [of Israel] in the wilderness” has some Christian church association, is without foundation, as George Eldon Ladd confirms,\textsuperscript{112} and the same is equally true with regard to the reference to Hebrews 2:12 (cf. \textit{ekklēsia}, Acts 19:32).

b. The Old Testament people of God became so through God’s electing, redeeming, covenant-making activity. The New Testament church became so through God’s electing, redeeming, covenant-making activity in Christ. Therefore, Waldron concludes:

> How many elections, redemptions are there? Ultimately, there is just one (Rom. 3:25; Acts 4:12). The election and redemption of Israel was typical of the election and redemption in Christ. There can, then, be ultimately only one people of God.\textsuperscript{113}

Here is the logical fallacy of the undistributed middle. However, to understand this improper argument, consider the following syllogism. A man is elected, redeemed through Christ’s new covenant. A woman is elected, redeemed through Christ’s new covenant. Therefore a man is identical to a woman! Now both the man and the woman are saved on the same basis, yet there remains distinction within their unity in Christ (Gal. 3:28). In the same way the Bible repeatedly teaches that both Jew and Gentile are ultimately saved according to an identical election and redemption through Christ’s new covenant. Nevertheless, this in no way eliminates diversity within this unity, as with natural and wild olive branches, belonging to the one tree (Rom. 11:17-23).

c. The New Testament directly asserts that the church is the true Israel of God. Five passages of Scripture are offered as proof, although only one uses the term “the Israel of God.”

1. I Corinthians 10:18. It is interesting that the NASB translates the literal “Israel after the flesh” as simply “the nation of Israel.” Yes, we could also translate “carnal Israel,” which in turn indicates “unbelieving, unregenerate Israel.” All this being true, it is difficult to understand how Waldron equates this reference with proof, in quoting Charles Hodge, that since there is an inferential distinction concerning “Israel after the Spirit,” or “the spiritual Israel” or “the true people of God,” then somehow this spiritual Israel is basically the same as the church. As Chapter 8 explains in greater detail, but especially with reference to Romans 11:28, “Israel after the flesh” still retains a measure of covenantal recognition from God. And the “remnant according to God’s gracious choice” (Rom. 11:5), which could rightly be designated as “Israel after the Spirit,” nevertheless retains the distinction of being

\textsuperscript{111} Earl D. Radmacher, \textit{The Nature of the Church}, pp. 122-123. Support in this regard is also quoted from B. H. Carroll, \textit{Ecclesia–The Church}, p. 44.


\textsuperscript{113} Waldron, \textit{End Times Made Simple}, p. 140.
associated with the natural olive branches that shall ultimately be part of saved national Israel’s fullness (Rom. 11:12, 23, 26).

(2) Romans 2:28-29. Waldron fails to acknowledge the commonly recognized problem that his interpretation presents concerning the immediate context of Paul’s revived esteem for “the Jew” in Romans 3:1-8. In so doing he expresses his premature desire to move on to Romans 9:6-8. Refer to Appendix B.

(3) Romans 9:6-8. The exegesis here is wholly inadequate. Refer to Appendix B.

(4) Philippians 3:3. Refer to Appendix C.

(5) Galatians 6:16. Refer to the preceding analysis of The Israel of God in Prophecy by LaRondelle, also Appendix C.

d. The characteristics and privileges of Israel are assumed by the church. We are told that, “[t]he massive evidence for this is easily summarized by way of the following table,” namely alleged similarities between “Old Israel or Church” and “New Israel or Church.” Some of these comparisons concern typological features of the old Mosaic covenant that certainly do find their antitype in the new covenant in the blood of Christ. For instance the Mosaic kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:5-6) prefigures Christians as a kingdom of priests (I Pet. 2:9). In this regard such shadows do prefigure the substance that is in Christ (Col. 2:16-17). Nevertheless, as we have elsewhere argued, these temporary Mosaic features are in no way to be equated with a similar temporary or shadowy regard for national and ethnic Israel. However with other comparisons, here we again find the logical fallacy of the undistributed middle demonstrated with astonishing rapidity, as already demonstrated in the preceding paragraph b. Consider the following examples. Old Israel is designated as elect, beloved, called, Church, flock, holy, etc. New Israel is designated as elect, beloved, called, Church, flock, holy, etc. Consequently, New Israel assumes the same characteristics, hence identity, as Old Israel. Furthermore, and the inference is obvious, New Israel has taken over from Old Israel. However, such an argument is fundamentally flawed, as has already been indicated concerning the use of “church” in the Septuagint. In simplest terms, when the comparison of two items results in some common features, these do not prove similar identity. For instance, a dog has four legs; a cat has four legs; therefore a dog is a cat! Therefore, to suggest, as Waldron does, Old Israel had twelve patriarchs; New Israel has Twelve Apostles; therefore New Israel is identical to Old Israel is nonsence.

e. Classic passages of Scripture that describe the relation of the church and Israel clearly teach unity and continuity. But why is there such a seeming aversion to the truth that unity could also incorporate diversity?

(1) Galatians 3:29. Refer to the preceding analysis of The Israel of God in Prophecy by LaRondelle.

\[\text{114} \iff pend., p. 143.\]
(2) Romans 11:16-24. Refer to Appendix B.

(3) Ephesians 2:11-24. Refer to Appendix C.

f. The Scriptures teach the eschatological unity of the people of God. The climax of history is, according to the Bible, one people of God. Yet again there is the misguided assumption that in the unity of the eternal state, any accommodation of diversity is somehow less than God’s intended perfection. We repeat that in the nature of the Godhead there is a unity of essence with a personal diversity. Even heaven itself has holy angels who are quite distinct from redeemed sinners. Thus the concept of the family of God is harmonious with the unity with diversity that the human representation portrays.

(1) Matthew 8:11-12. Here the Son of God declared that, “many will come from the east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” Thus Waldron concludes:

Gentiles are saved and drawn into the kingdom of heaven. Jews—the children of the kingdom—are cast out. This implies, of course, that saved Jews remain in. Gentiles and Jews are, thus, one with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the eschatological kingdom. However, as Trench rightly comments concerning these verses, here “because of their unbelief, they, the natural branches of the olive tree, should be broken off, and the wild olive should be grafted in (Rom. 11:17-24; Acts 13:46; 19:9; 38:28; Matt. 3:9).” This being so, we should not divorce this witness concerning the Gentile Centurion’s faith from the more comprehensive picture of Romans 11:23, where “God is able to graft them [the severed wild olive branches] in again.”

(2) John 10:16. Jesus Christ declared that, “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one Shepherd.” Waldron comments: “There shall be one fold of both Gentile and Jewish sheep.” We would happily agree here except that he would undoubtedly believe that in the “consummate kingdom” as he puts it, or the glorious millennium, Gentile and Jewish identity will have been eliminated. However, in parallel with John 11:52, we would believe that this ingathering of the Gentiles into the rich root of the olive tree (Rom. 11:17) in no way eliminates diversity within the unity of God’s people as one flock. Possibly Jesus is alluding to Zechariah 14:9; cf. Ezek. 34:11-31; 37:21-24, in which case the alleged passing identity of national and ethnic Israel as a shadow is quite unthinkable. In other words, this one flock shall be the seed of promise according to Abraham, both “a great nation” and from “all the families of the earth” (Gen. 12:2-3).

115 Ibid., p. 148.
116 R. C. Trench, Notes on the Miracles of our Lord, p. 142.
117 Waldron, End Times Made Simple, p. 148.
(3) Hebrews 11:39-40. “All these [heroes of faith previously described], having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.” Waldron writes: “Here, then, is an explicit statement that all of God’s people in both the Old Testament and New Testament will enjoy the eternal inheritance together.”\footnote{118} Whether we define “us” here with reference to Hebrew Christian addressees or Christians in general, we happily accept Delitzsch’s conclusion: “The saints, then, of the Old Testament march henceforth at equal pace with ourselves in the perfect way of salvation.”\footnote{119} However, this in no way eliminates diversity within this unity, especially with regard to those eschatological passages that anticipate the future millennial reign of Christ who shall reign over regenerate Israel and the surrounding regenerate Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-4; 62:1-12; Mic. 4:1-5; Hag. 2:1-7; Zech. 14:16-21).

(4) Revelation 21:9-14. Concerning the New Jerusalem described here, Waldron expounds:

In the New Heavens and New Earth, there is one city, one bride. Its gates bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Its foundations bear the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Symbolism could not more clearly teach the eschatological unity of the people of God of the church and Israel.\footnote{120}

Yes, as Isaiah 65:17-18 declares, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; . . . For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing.” There will be one city from where Messiah will gloriously reign, that is from the glorified Jerusalem of Zechariah 14:9-11. Then shall the previously humiliated Jew, in relation to the Gentile, discover a reversal of former roles. Then there shall be a glorious diversity in unity. “Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness. . . . It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will also go.’ So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord. ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘In those days ten men from all the nations [Gentiles] will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’”’ (Zech. 8:7-8, 20-23).

I. Kim Riddlebarger.

In his recent volume, A Case For Amillennialism, this pastor of the Christian Reformed Church and visiting professor at Westminster Theological Seminary presents his eschatological scenario with a calm reasonableness, a comprehensiveness, and indeed a frankness, that is less evident in the writings of Boettner, Robertson, LaRondelle, and

\footnote{118} Ibid., p. 148.
\footnote{119} Franz Delitzsch, Hebrews, II, p. 294.
\footnote{120} Waldron, End Times Made Simple, p. 149.
Waldron as reviewed in this chapter. We will confine our analysis to several areas that are either distinctive or particularly relate to the Premillennial regard for the ongoing and future role of national Israel according to God’s covenant faithfulness. By way of introduction is the comment:

Sadly, when it comes to eschatology, a great deal of *ad hominem* argumentation goes on. For example, dispensationalists accuse amillennialists of being anti-Semitic, liberal, or of spiritualizing the Bible by not taking the Bible literally. Amillennialists accuse dispensationalists of being literalists who are prone to sensationalism. While we may have to agree or disagree, we would always strive to conclude this debate with charity and respect.121

This writer, as a premillennialist, does believe that the historic stream of amillennialism has been and continues to be, in varying degrees, theologically anti-Semitic; the historic facts speak for themselves, though he would firmly deny that amillennialism is essentially liberal. He would also believe that the hermeneutic of amillennialism is fundamentally rooted in Hellenistic thought, in Clement, Origen, Jerome and Augustine, representing the school of Alexandria, and as such is inclined to be more allegorical and figurative in its interpretation. By way of contrast he believes that premillennialism is rooted more in Judaic thought, in Lucian, Diodorus, Theodore and Chrysostom representing the school of Antioch, and as such is more inclined to be consistently literal and straightforward. Hence, while premillennialists do insistently lay claim to literality as the fundamental, hermeneutical principle, and of course “literal” is the operative term here that must be carefully defined, this writer would sadly agree that some premillennialists are at times sensationalist, carnal, and even overly simplistic. However, reading the eschatology of Bonnar, Ryle, and Spurgeon, will be a good corrective in this regard. Moreover, when all has been said and done, every school of eschatology has its perverse representations.

1. The distinctive Reformed representation.

From beginning to end, Riddlebarger is not only committed to historic Reformed eschatology in general, but also passionately devoted to a more recent development technically defined as “biblical theology” which has entered this stream that comprises a substantial part of the overall Reformation heritage. Thus:

My purpose is to set forth the historic Protestant understanding of the millennial age. This position is commonly known as *amillennialism* and is centered in the present reign of Jesus Christ. Amillennialism is grounded in *receptive history*, the historical acts of God as they unfold in the Bible to provide for the salvation of his people. . . . I stand in the Dutch Reformed school and redemptive-historical trajectory of Geerhardus Vos, Herman Ridderbos, Anthony Hoekema, Cornelis Venema, and Meredith Kline.122

Hence it is immediately clear that, notwithstanding a much vaunted historic lineage, a more recent development has come to hold considerable sway, almost to the point of intoxication. This is no careless charge since Riddlebarger repeatedly employs terminology that incorporates the ideas of this school of “receptive history,” involving over fifty-five explicit references. Certainly this emphasis, emanating from old Princeton Theological Seminary, could hardly be upheld as rooted in the centuries of Augustinian and Reformed theology. Indeed, the Lutheran stream has never drawn from this heritage, as is the case with regard to earlier systematic covenant theology.

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122 Ibid. pp. 11, 31.
2. The claim of historic lineage.

Numerous Reformed writers have been inclined to boast in the fact that their amillennial eschatology has a long-standing heritage going back to Augustine. They claim, and rightly so, that following the fourth century, subsequent centuries witnessed the overwhelming dominance of their essential prophetic perspective. Thus the illustrious, indeed God-blessed Reformation perpetuated this inherited eschatology, notwithstanding the fact that not only the gospel, but also the doctrine of the church, were subject to considerable, indeed radical change and apostolic recovery. No contemporary conservative Reformed writer seems to make this point more emphatically than Riddlebarger. He writes of amillennialism as “the historic Protestant understanding of the millennial age,” and in such a way that one is led to believe that to be Reformed in the fullest sense of that term is to be amillennial. Thus Augustinian eschatology, channeled through Luther, ought to be regarded as the traditional scheme of prophecy, and implicit is Riddlebarger’s belief that the vagaries of premillennialism, earlier repudiated as carnal chiliasm, along with its dispensational derivatives, should yield to the more historic stream. Thus:

The Protestant orthodox also used the more polemical term chiliasmus crassissimus, “the grossest millennialism,” regarding those who stressed the earthly and Jewish elements of the millennial age, much like contemporary dispensationalists. Most Protestants regard chiliasm as incompatible with Reformation orthodoxy. This may come as a surprise to many American evangelicals, who assume that Bible-believing Christians throughout the centuries have held to premillennialism.

For the believer of Reformed convictions, there is a strong allegiance to historical roots and continuity, especially insofar as connection with the historic Reformation is concerned, distinctively emanating from Wittenberg, Geneva and Westminster. So we further read:

First given systematic expression by Augustine in his famous City of God, amillennialism developed a distinctive Reformed emphasis. . . . Because amillennialism has its roots deep in historic Christianity, when it comes to comparing amillennialism with dispensationalism, clearly the burden of proof lies with dispensationalists to prove their case. Evangelicals often assume the opposite. It should also be noted that all major thinkers in Christian history have held something akin to the amillennial position (e.g. Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin). This does not mean that amillennialism is true simply because it has historical support within Catholic Christianity and historic Protestantism. Nevertheless this is an impressive point, which is often not considered.

However, such claims call for a response that clearly exposes, not grounds for boasting, but rather the shameful legacy of historic amillennialism which is in reality the eschatology of Roman Catholicism. We read today, of writers such as LaRondelle, Chapman, Walker, and Palmer Robertson that the Christian Church has, through inheritance, become the New Israel of God. Such language is nothing new according to Roman Catholicism. Consider the following:

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123 Ibid. p. 11.
124 Ibid., p. 20.
125 Ibid., p. 32.
a. “In fact, from the beginning of his ministry, the Lord Jesus instituted the Twelve as ‘the seeds of the new Israel and the beginning of the sacred hierarchy.’[AG 5.]” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Para. 877. (Second Vatican Council, 1992).

b. “As Israel according to the flesh which wandered in the desert was already called the Church of God (2 Esd. 13:1; cf. Num. 20:4; Deut. 23:1 ff.), so too, the new Israel, which advances in this present era in search of a future and permanent city (cf. Heb. 13:14), is called also the Church of Christ (cf. Mt. 16:18).” Second Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium, Chapter II, “The People of God,” 1964.

c. “His [Jesus Christ’s] intention in employing the term [qahal], hitherto used of the Hebrew people viewed as a church, to denote the society He Himself was establishing cannot be mistaken. It implied the claim that this society now constituted the true people of God, that the Old Covenant was passing away, and that He, the promised Messias, was inaugurating a New Covenant with a New Israel.”

“Hebrew prophecy relates in almost equal proportions to the person and to the work of the Messias. This work was conceived as consisting of the establishment of a kingdom, in which he was to reign over a regenerated Israel. The prophetic writings describe for us with precision many of the characteristics which were to distinguish that kingdom. Christ during His ministry affirmed not only that the prophecies relating to the Messias were fulfilled in His own person, but also that the expected Messianic kingdom was none other than His Church.”

“In the Apostolic teaching the term *Church*, from the very first, takes the place of the expression *Kingdom of God* (Acts, V, 11). Where others than the Jews were concerned, the greater suitability of the former name is evident; for *Kingdom of God* had special reference to Jewish beliefs. But the change of title only emphasizes the social unity of the members. They are the new congregation of Israel -- the theocratic polity: they are the people (*laos*) of God (Acts, xv, 14; Rom., ix, 25; II Cor., vi, 16; I Peter, ii, 9 sq.; Heb., viii, 10; Apoc., xviii, 4; xxi, 3).” *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1908, (Internet sourced).

However, since the time of Augustine, the amillennial doctrine of the supercession of national Israel by the Christian church, a doctrine beyond question, has resulted in the vilification of the Jewish people over the centuries that has not excluded participation by Reformed congregations, notwithstanding some notable exceptions. It is interesting to consider that more recently, while within the Roman Catholic Church there has been some sorrowful confession of this tragic heritage (Refer to Callan, Carroll, Flannery, Hay, and Mussner in Appendix P), those of conservative Reformed convictions have appeared to be reluctant to confront the ethical shame of their eschatological roots. Of course the Roman Catholic Church, notwithstanding Nostra Aetate of Vatican II, in which anti-Semitism was denounced,126 nevertheless continues to maintain that it is the

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126 “True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (John 19:6); still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. . . . [T]he Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's
new Israel. Thus the dynamic of its problem has not been excised. Hence those of a Reformed persuasion are faced with the embarrassment of a sordid eschatological lineage (Refer to Chapter 3) and the alternative of recognition of national Israel in the present, after the manner of Romans 11:28, that of necessity also involves the embrace of ongoing validity for the land, and a distinct glorious national future within the people of God. The dilemma here is that such an eschatological vision inescapably draws close to a premillennial perspective with regard to Israel, especially concerning the interpretation of passages such as Ezekiel 36-37.

3. Exegetical considerations, particularly Romans 11.

In devoting a whole chapter to the question, “Is There a Future for Israel?” there is right focus on the significance of Romans 11 where heavy reliance is placed upon the exegesis of Anthony Hoekema and Robert Strimple. To begin with, here is honest acknowledgment of a fundamental problem that amillennialism must confront.

There is no escaping the subject. Amillenarians must be prepared to answer the charge that it is so-called “suppressionist” or “replacement” theology which contends that Israel has been cut off, no longer elect and superceded by the church, that opens the door to modern anti-Semitism. The answer to these charges is found in Romans 11. The conclusion of the matter is that there is a future for ethnic Israel, though a subtle use of language appears to be employed here. Nowhere is it expressed that national Israel has a future, and certainly there is no indication that the ethnic Jew has any divine claim upon a national territory. Thus Riddlebarger takes a position similar to that of Hoekema, John Murray, Strimple, and Vos, etc., whereby there will be a climactic saving of a large number of Jews, not simply the totality of the remnant (Rom. 11:5), toward the end of this age. However, there is careful qualification.

From an amillennial perspective, the future role of Israel in Romans 11 has little effect in determining one’s view of the millennium. . . . [T]he future salvation of Israel is not connected to a future millennial kingdom. It is connected to the end of the age. When all Israel is at hand, the resurrection is at hand.

Presumably, then will follow the homogenous kingdom in which past Jewish and Gentiles distinctiveness will have been eliminated. Hence, this future saving of the Jews has individual, ethnic significance, though there is great care not to suggest that there are any present or future national and territorial blessings in store, according to divine, covenantal determination. Thus, “amillenarians believe that the formation of the nation of Israel in 1948 is not related to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant but to God’s mysterious providential purposes for world history.” Herein, once again, is the inherent weakness of this whole approach in which belief is confessed in a present emasculated Judaism. Hence, it ought not to surprise those who believe in this limited

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128 Riddlebarger, Case for Amillennialism, p. 183.
129 Ibid., p. 181, 194.
130 Ibid., p. 243.
recognition if, in honestly witnessing to a Jew according to this perspective, their approach is quickly repudiated.

4. The amillennial response to theological anti-semitism.

Riddlebarger is to be commended for his readiness to deal with the charge of anti-semitism that amillennialism faces as it is raised by dispensationalist Hal Lindsey, and even Reformed scholar David Holwerda in his *Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two?* He writes that, “[my] purpose in this present study is to rectify this lamentable situation.” However, in honestly admitting the reality of the problem, sad to say, there has really been no attempt whatsoever by Riddlebarger to deal with the *reasons why* the charge of anti-semitism is raised. It is not enough to recapitulate Reformed eschatology merely for the sake of clarification. For instance, as a starter, why not consider the writings of Carroll, Cohn-Sherbok, Gruber, Hay, Littell, Williamson, Wistrich, etc., as referenced in Appendix P? Further, why not consider studying Acts and Romans and Galatians and Hebrews, not only according to recognized Reformed theologians, but also through a Hebrew-Christian lens as well? Recall the earlier challenging comment of John McRay, Professor of Old Testament and Archaeology at Wheaton College Graduate School, who, in the introduction to his significant volume, *Paul: His Life and Teaching*, wrote:

I have tried to ‘put on my first-century glasses,’ look at Paul in his Jewish and Hellenistic world of the Mediterranean, and see him not as a fourth-century church father, a sixteenth-century Protestant reformer, or a twenty-first century evangelical missionary, but as what he was, a first-century Jewish rabbi who accepted Jesus as his Messiah and became an ardent, dedicated Messianic Jew. In this volume I have tried to emphasize that Paul was not the founder of Christianity, that he never ceased to be a Jew, and that Christianity is not a Gentile religion. There has never been a greater advocate of the universal composition of the Christian faith than Paul, who emphatically asserted that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). This means that when people place their trust in Jesus, neither Jews nor Gentiles have to abandon their ancestry, neither males nor females have to abandon their gender, and neither slaves nor free people have to abandon their sociological status. Paul’s central focus in his preaching was that Gentiles do not have to become Jews any more than Jews have to become Gentiles, for as he went on to say, “If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29).

So much of Riddlebarger’s perspective, and indeed the other authors reviewed in this chapter, seem captive to Gentile exegesis, especially within the confines of a Reformed “tradition.” Certainly this is the Augustinian, Constantian heritage that the Reformed mind seems locked up to. However, what has been the resultant ethical fruit of this heritage insofar as a kindly, compassionate witness of Gentile Christianity to the Jews is enjoined by Paul (Rom. 11:17-24)?

A concluding comment seems to suggest that this author is by no means convinced that his amillennial explanation has really dealt with the heart of the problem.

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But even if the land promise of the Abrahamic covenant has already been fulfilled, nevertheless it is quite remarkable that the Jews have returned *en masse* to their ancient homeland. This is a fact which cannot be easily dismissed by amillenarians. Israel is a nation again. The Jews as a people are largely gathered together in one place. Amillenarians need to offer a cogent explanation for this amazing historical development, although we must be careful not to allow current events to determine our interpretation of a given biblical text. The answer to this problem was supplied for us by Paul in Romans 11.\(^\text{133}\)

If the land promise has been fulfilled, then how is it possible for there to be bon fide “Jews” in the present? The author seems to sense a dilemma, because of the evidence of history, that in fact his exegesis of Romans 11 has not answered. This is not so surprising when one considers that his study of this critical passage of the Word of God has given no consideration to the vital truth of v. 28, namely that *national* Israel remains God’s beloved enemy.

J. Concluding Summary.

The nature of Reformed eschatology is comprised of several distinguishing characteristics. And it seems unfortunate that these tend to work against the Reformation principle of *semper reformanda*, that is “always reforming,” and especially at the level of Scripture exegesis.

To begin with there is the thread of Augustinianism. From the fourth century onward, Aurelius Augustine has continued to be a hovering influence over Christendom, and particularly with regard to the church in its institutional form. Crawford Gribben provides an excellent summary of this prime historic root.

After the rapid decay of the early church, Puritanism really began with St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo (354-430), as Richard Muller noted in Christ and the Decree (1986): ‘Reformed theology appears not as a monolithic structure – not, in short, as ‘Calvinism’ – but as a form of Augustinian theology and piety capable of considerable variation in its form and presentation.’ Many elements of Augustine’s thought remained paradigmatic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His *City of God* [prepared between 413 and 426 AD], for example, was the first catalyst of puritanism’s eschatological innovations.\(^\text{134}\)

The alleged purpose of this classic was to oppose carnal millennialism and uphold a more spiritual understanding of the kingdom of God.

[H]is antipathy towards millennialism was such that, mainly under his influence, it was declared heretical by the Council of Ephesus in 431. . . . Augustine’s teaching exercised phenomenal influence in succeeding centuries, but the fact that the Reformation confessions needed to reiterate the Ephesian council’s ban – one thousand years after its composition – demonstrates the perennial popularity of millenarian ideas.\(^\text{135}\)

Hence it is not uncommon for Reformed Christians to enthuse and so revere Augustine, as Luther did with the frequent endearing term of “blessed,” that it becomes almost unthinkable that his eschatology and related ecclesiology could be wrong at a point believed

\(^\text{133}\) Riddlebarger, *Case for Amillennialism*, p. 244.


\(^\text{135}\) Ibid., p. 34.
to be so essential to the character of the Christian church. In this regard, as a Baptist, Waldron should carefully weigh the doctrine of Augustine on baptism as well as his militant opposition to the Donatists. However, allow James Carroll, as a Catholic, to sum up Augustine’s eschatological/ecclesiological doctrinal endowment.

The legacy of Augustine’s teaching on the Jews is a double-edged sword. On one side, against Chrysostom and even Ambrose, it requires an end to all violent assaults against synagogues, Jewish property, and Jewish persons. . . . On the other side, Augustine’s relatively benign attitude toward Jews is rooted still in assumptions of supercessionism that would prove to be deadly. The “witness” prescription attributed to him—Let them survive, but not thrive!—would underlie the destructive ambivalence that marked Catholic attitudes toward Jews from then on. . . This is the legacy that haunts the Catholic Church into the twenty-first century, a perverse legacy from which, despite the twentieth-century’s jolts, the Church is not yet free.  

It only needs to be added that much of evangelical Reformed Christianity, with its like admiration for Augustine, similarly needs to face up to its imbibing of an eschatological legacy that, from an ethical perspective, is to be condemned.

It should not be unexpected then that this preceding lineage should lead to confessionalism that became similarly freighted with the Augustinian eschatology. Thus the Augsburg Confession, 1530, and similarly the second Helvetic Confession, 1566, condemned those “who now scatter Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being every where suppressed [the saints alone, the pious, shall have a worldly kingdom, and shall exterminate all the godless].”137

More recently The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has declared:

With the Augsburg Confession (Art. XVII) we reject every type of millennialism, or Chiliasm, the opinions that Christ will return visibly to this earth a thousand years before the end of the world and establish a dominion of the Church over the world; or that before the end of the world the Church is to enjoy a season of special prosperity; or that before a general resurrection on Judgment Day a number of departed Christians or martyrs are to be raised again to reign in glory in this world; or that before the end of the world a universal conversion of the Jewish nation (of Israel according to the flesh) will take place.  

*Amillennialism*, however, is the teaching that there will be no millennium of perfect peace on earth before or after Christ’s second coming. The Lutheran church, on the basis of the Bible, holds to this point of view. The Bible does not teach that there will be a definite 1,000-year period of time during which Christ will reign on earth visibly. Christ Himself said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36); furthermore, the Bible clearly teaches that we Christians are looking for “a new heaven and a new earth” (2 Pet.3:13)—not an era of prosperity on the present earth.138

Hence Iain Murray, being very much a representative of the Reformed emphasis of *The Banner of Truth Trust*, seems to express admiration for the eschatological emphasis of the main sixteenth century confessions when he writes that, “all the Confessional statements of the Reformed churches four hundred years ago refused to identify millenarianism with historic Christianity and spoke rather of the return of Jesus Christ as coincident with the day of judgment.”139 In response, it simply needs to be pointed out that the eschatology of the

138 *Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*. Official Web Site.
Reformed churches, as here nominated, did not represent the recovery of eschatological biblical truth, as was surely the case with regards to the gospel awakening that Luther was used of God to initiate. Murray’s use here of the term “historic Christianity” has a certain comprehensiveness about it since we are in reality talking of the eschatological lineage of the Roman Catholic Church that the Reformer’s inherited and passed on without essential change. To be sure, they revised their understanding of the doctrine of the church. However, insofar as supercessionism is concerned with regard to the place of national and ethnic Israel in the covenant plan of God, there was continuation of a doctrinal emphasis that, not surprisingly, also resulted in the continuation of the general disparagement of the Jews. Of course there were exceptions to this general result, such as in parts of Scotland and Holland, though it mostly involved a desire for Jewish conversion so that they might lose their Jewishness in their incorporation into the Gentile Christian church. Consequently, the thread of Augustinianism has continued on unsevered.

As a result, in the evangelical Reformed movement of the twenty-first century, an almost romantic attitude has developed whereby the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially that which originated from Geneva, the Westminster divines, Dort, the Puritans, Scotland, and to a lesser extent, Germany, has become equivalent to the authoritative role of the Church Fathers in the Roman Catholic Church. However, in the role of eschatology, it is a fact that the Church of Rome has become far more repentant of its past shameful treatment of the Jews, as a result of its doctrinal legacy, than ever has been the case with the evangelical Reformed movement of today. To name but a few in this regard, refer to the annotated bibliography in Appendix P concerning Terrance Callan, James Carroll, Edward H. Flannery, Malcolm Hay, and Franz Mussner. Certainly the inclusion in Chapter 1 of the writings of Willem VanGemeren, and to a lesser extent David Holwerda, indicate a more moderate attempt to wrestle with eschatological matters concerning Israel, especially in the light of Israel’s reclamation of Jerusalem in 1967 that sixteenth and seventeenth century Christians never dreamt about. Nevertheless, there remains an historic culture that is resistant to new paths, and often allied with denominational, associational, and creedal loyalties. And added to this we could perhaps mention the influence of Aristotle, Plato, later Hellenism and scholasticism that have been additional threads that permeated earlier university and ministerial training. The evangelical Reformed movement, for all of its Puritan loyalties, has placed great store upon the learning of its fathers, especially that which emanated from Oxford, Cambridge, and Princeton. This is in no way meant to play down the great Biblicism that earlier came from these influential institutions. But if we think that the threads already mentioned were not woven within all of this, we are deluding ourselves. Hence we are suggesting that those who claim attachment to this broad, historic eschatological lineage need to carefully assess to what extent they continue their allegiance based upon a Reformed heritage rather than the biblical text. Consider two examples in this regard. In Jay Adam’s amillennial apologia The Time Is At Hand, there is the following introductory comment: “That amillennialism is a beautifully systematic eschatology should be recognized instantly by every amillennialist. Since he believes the system is biblical, and all biblical truth is systematically coherent, this must follow.” This comment is so typical of the Calvinist who, with his integrated system, his logical conclusion, perhaps threatened by paradox, may in fact be seeing the beauty of his eschatological framework rather than its conformity to the biblical text. Doubtless he will convince many amillennialists of the unity of his system. But others have exegetical matters to consider that they will not allow to be pressed, as it were, like a square peg into a round hole. For instance, consideration by

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Adams of the vital matter of Israel and Romans 11 is less than brief and nothing short of scrappy, especially when he writes of “the Gentile church, true spiritual Israel, the present seed of Abraham.” In truth, the Gentile church is not the true spiritual Israel, and careful exegesis of Romans 11 would demonstrate this, though it might also destroy the logical system as well. Then consider Samuel Waldron’s reliance upon Matthew 12:32, cf. Mark 12:29, where the Lord Jesus speaks of “this age . . . [and] the age to come.” Consequently,

What could be simpler than this system? . . . There could not be a simpler eschatology. . . . There are only two ages—one temporal and natural, the other eternal and supernatural, separated by the second coming and resurrection. If one grasps this, one knows vastly more than most of the so-called “prophetic teachers” of our day. It is men who have made eschatology difficult, not God.

But as we have repeatedly enquired with regard to the distinctiveness of saved Israel within the unity of the people of God, granted that in a broad sense there is simply “the age to come,” how can it be biblically maintained that this unity in no way incorporates diversity as well as complexity? And further, it is a false simplicity when critical exegetical particulars, such as the relationship between Revelation 19 and 20 are so cavalierly passed over. We are told,

the second advent of Christ in chapter 19, . . . does not demand that the historical fulfillment of the visions in Revelation 20 be chronologically subsequent to the historical fulfillment of the visions in chapter 19. Just as Revelation 12 takes us back to the beginning of the gospel age, so also may Revelation 20 do the same.

But this superficial explanation will not do, as Craig Blaising has pointed out. He refers to a number of non-evangelical scholars who, without carrying evangelical eschatological baggage, are agreed that there is continuity between Revelation 19 and 20, in which case, Waldron’s “simple” scheme begins to become unraveled. Thus Blaising comments, and raises a significant raison d’être behind the amillennial objections to this exegetical continuity.

When we see a basics consensus of people who study the literary structure of the book that John does in fact see an interregnum between the Parousia and the new world freely admitting this point (while disassociating any personal theological commitments from such an idea), then the question is: Why do some evangelicals committed to Scripture have such trouble seeing this? I suggest that the answer lies in traditional theological preunderstandings that are hostile to this interpretation, preunderstandings whose history we have sketched earlier.

Finally, this writer is convinced that much of Reformed eschatology is the result of a Gentile mindset, certainly rooted in Gentile patristic dominance, that has tended to disparage a Jewish perspective of Scripture as Jewish fables or potential Galatianism or carnal chiliasm and dispensationalism. There is a legacy involved here that not only originates from the Constantinian revolution, but also passes through the illustrious Reformation. More recently, a reevaluation of this legacy indicates that these roots have involved raw theological anti-Semitism based upon supercessionism channeled through church authoritarianism. Hence in this regard it is fascinating to consider what factors contributed

141 Ibid., p. 72.
142 Samuel Waldron, The End Times Made Simple, p. 42.
143 Ibid., p. 90.
144 Craig A. Blaising, “Premillennialism,” Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond, eds. Darrell L. Bock and Stanley N. Gundry, p. 214.
toward the sudden eruption of millennialism during the sixteenth century that so rent a long-standing eschatological tradition. In the conclusion of his study on Puritan millennialism, Crawford Gribben offers an enlightening explanation.

If, as [Christopher] Hill claims, English Calvinism was crumbling in the 1590s, then after the 1640s both strict church discipline and Calvinist theology finally “lost their grip”: “Calvinism broke down when the Revolution established freedom of discussion.” . . . The revolution’s literary implications were also enormous. . . . As Thomas Manton noted in 1655, “The press is an excellent means to scatter knowledge, were it not so often abused. All complain there is enough written, and think that now there should be a stop. Indeed, it were well if in this scribbling age there were some restraint. Useless pamphlets are grown almost as great a mischief as the erroneous and profane.” Hill has noted that, “The collapse of censorship saw a fantastic outpouring of books, pamphlets and newspapers. Before 1640, newspapers were illegal; by 1645 there were 722. Twenty-two books were published in 1640; over 2,000 in 1642. As both sides in the Civil War appealed for support from the ordinary people, the issues at stake had to be discussed. But it went farther than that . . . No old shibboleths were left unchallenged in this unprecedented freedom.” Perhaps Owen had been right in hoping “we might have less writing, and more praying.”

In other words, implicit here is the fact that the centuries preceding the Reformation were times of doctrinal repression, especially concerning teaching that would deny that the Church of Rome is the new Israel. Once printing was followed by liberation of personal expression, then truth, displacing centuries of error, resulting from individual biblical enquiry, could not be suppressed.

Hence, at the present, along with the rise of a diverse Messianic Judaism, there has come about a more scholarly reevaluation of the place of national and ethnic Israel in the New Testament, some of which sources have been employed in the exegetical sections of this work. The time may have come, in a manner of speaking, for the church at Antioch to return to Jerusalem and confess its need to ask forgiveness for its disregard of Paul’s warning in Romans 11:18, “do not be arrogant toward the [natural] branches.”

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