

Understanding The Distinction Between Israel And The Church



www.letusreason.com

Contents:

- Introduction – p. 3.
- The Bible – A Book Of Covenants – p. 19.
- Israel And The Church – Distinct Origins, Purposes, And Destinies – p. 86.
- Israel – A Type Of the Church – p. 96.
- An Evaluation Of Replacement Theology – p. 121.
- God's Eschatological Time-Clock – The Mutual Exclusivity Of Israel And The Church – p. 167.
- Conclusion – p. 232.
- Sources – p. 234.

Introduction

It is our conviction that one of the most ignored, and yet most important cornerstones for accurately interpreting the Bible is the understanding of the distinction between Israel and the church. When this distinction is not understood, the downstream implications are disastrous, and inevitably lead to mistaken doctrine in key areas of Bible interpretation.

On the other hand, when this distinction is observed, the rest of the Bible will fall right into place (so long as proper interpretive methods are used elsewhere also!). So, our assertion is that the proper understanding of this topic – the distinction between Israel and the church – is a key, but often missing puzzle piece that is foundational to proper Biblical understanding.

Without this understanding, it will be impossible for any student of the Bible to have an accurate perception of God's purpose and plans for the future, much less for the believer in the present Church Age. This issue of the distinction between Israel and the church is in many ways closely tied in with the proper understanding of Biblical eschatology, or the prophetic Biblical study of the end-times. All of these necessary understandings are ultimately derived from having a sound hermeneutic (or method of Bible interpretation).

Unfortunately, many different interpretive lenses have been embraced by Christians down through the centuries, that when looked through, will dramatically affect and change how one understands the Bible. But we advocate something radical – the idea that the Bible actually means what it says. Simple as that! We

accurately understand what the Bible is saying through the simple and plain reading of its words – in context, of course. In other words, we utilize what may be called the consistent use of a literal-grammatical-historical approach to Bible interpretation. By doing this, we are allowing the Scriptures to tell us what God means by what He actually says. We are not allegorizing away the meaning as some do, and making ourselves the ultimate determiners of its meaning. We are simply allowing the Bible to speak, and are recognizing what it says. When we do this, we have a solid foundation for properly understanding the inspired words of Scripture.

Keeping these principles in mind, we will be able to clearly uncover what the Bible communicates regarding this topic of the distinction between Israel and the church as separate entities in God's program. Understanding this distinction will act as a necessary key that helps us rightly divide the word, as Paul instructs us to do in 2 Timothy...

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
-2 Timothy 2:15

So, let's begin...

As we open our exploration of the distinction between Israel and the church, let's clearly establish our premises and define our terms.

-Our Premises:

We have two overarching premises that will guide our perceptions. As we go through this study, we will show that both of these points are established by Scripture and leave us no room to form alternative ideas. In fact, as we will see, properly understanding these concepts allows the whole of Scripture to fall neatly into place. But on the other hand, without an accurate perception of these issues, there will arise perpetual confusion. So, let's discuss these two premises...

- First, we assert from Scripture that the nation of Israel and the church each have a distinct origin, purpose, and destiny. Israel is not the church and the church is not Israel. The church has not “replaced” Israel; and Israel as a nation, still has a purpose and destiny in God's plan.
- Second, it appears clear from Scripture that in God's timeline and plan for humanity, Israel and the church are mutually exclusive – and God deals with them mutually exclusively. Each has its own prophetic timeclock in God's plan and timeline. A chess clock is a good example of this. In formal chess matches, there is a clock for each of the two players. When one player's clock is running, the other's is automatically stopped – and vice versa.

These are the two main premises we will use as our foundation. This concept of the distinction between the church and Israel is a theme that is interwoven through the Bible. As we will point out, the church is a hidden mystery in the Old Testament, and her origin and destiny are revealed in the New. Israel is described in detail in the Old Testament – her origin and history are recorded, but also her

prophetic destiny. In the New Testament, Israel's destiny and future in God's plan is made even clearer to us, as we will see throughout this study.

We will begin our exploration of the distinctions between these two entities by recognizing the covenants and promises God has made throughout Scripture. Additionally, when you understand the greater scope of God's timeline and purposes for the structure and scheme of eschatology (the study of the end-times), the distinctions clearly emerge. This is where Daniel's Seventy Week Prophecy becomes foundational to our recognition of God's prophetic timeline, especially in regards to the topic of this study.

As we will see, this incredible prophecy given to Daniel in Daniel Chapter 9 turns out to provide us with the prophetic "scaffolding" that elucidates the concept of God's timeclock for Israel, as well as for the church. When one is active, the other is dormant, and vice versa, as we just mentioned. At a later point in this study, we will later indulge in a deep-dive exploration of this. You will see for yourself how understanding the distinction between Israel and the church is necessary for having an accurate perception of the Biblical portrayal of God's timeline for human history – both past and future.

But let's now begin by defining several key terms and concepts as sharply as possible in order to avoid any confusion.

-Terms:

The following terms will be discussed throughout this study. Let's define how they will be used for the purposes of this study...

- Israel: Israel is a national identity that began with Abraham, Isaac, and then Jacob, who was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel is a specific nation chosen by God and sustained by covenant promises (Deut. 7:6-9). Not all individuals in this chosen nation are saved (Rom. 9:6; 11:28). Unbelieving Jews were physical children of Abraham but spiritual children of the devil (John 8:37-44), as Jesus told us. Believing Jews were Old Testament saints such as the prophets, and those who obeyed the Law and covenants of God.
- Jew: Some mistakenly try to create a distinction between Israel and the term Jew, claiming that Jew only means a descendant of the tribe of Judah. There are those who wish to create entire doctrines based on this false idea.

Easton's Bible Dictionary is helpful, outlining for us the following lengthy but thorough definition for the term "Jew":

"the name derived from the patriarch Judah, at first given to one belonging to the tribe of Judah or to the separate kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 16:6; 25:25; Jeremiah 32:12; 38:19; 40:11 and 41:3), in contradistinction from those belonging to the kingdom of the ten tribes, who were called Israelites.

During the Captivity, and after the Restoration, the name, however, was extended to all the Hebrew nation without

distinction (Esther 3:6; 3:10; Daniel 3:8; 3:12; Ezra 4:12; 5:1 and 5:5).

Originally this people were called Hebrews (Genesis 39:14; 40:15; Exodus 2:7; 3:18; 5:3; 1 Samuel 4:6 4:9, et al.), but after the Exile this name fell into disuse...

There are three names used in the New Testament to designate this people,

-Jews, as regards their nationality, to distinguish them from Gentiles.

-Hebrews, with regard to their language and education, to distinguish them from Hellenists, i.e., Jews who spoke the Greek language.

-Israelites, as respects their sacred privileges as the chosen people of God.”

-<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/jew/> (Retrieved 2/05/19)

So, in this study we will at times refer to members of the distinct group called Israel as “Jews.” Understand that we are using this term as the Bible does – in other words, as a synonym of the terms “Israel,” “Israelites,” and “Hebrews.”

- Gentiles: The word Gentile is an English translation of the Hebrew word *goyim* (“people, nations”) and the Greek word *ethne* (“nations, people groups, people”). The Latin

Vulgate translated these words as gentilis, and this word was then carried over into English as “Gentile.” The term refers to a person who is not a Jew.

-<https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-a-Gentile.html> (Retrieved 2/01/19)

From the Jewish perspective, Gentiles were often seen as pagans who did not know the true God. During Jesus’ time, many Jews took such pride in their cultural and religious heritage that they considered Gentiles “unclean,” calling them “dogs” and “the uncircumcision.” Gentiles and the half-Gentile Samaritans were viewed as enemies to be shunned (John 4:9; 18:28; and Acts 10:28).

- The Church: The church is a called-out assembly of believers out of every nation, who have been initiated into the body of Christ by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). The identity of the church is the beloved bride of Christ. To better understand this idiom of marriage in the context of the church, feel free to consult the companion study entitled, *The Romance Of Redemption – The Marriage Of Jesus Christ And The Church*.

Members of the church include those saved through the gospel plan – beginning at the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit was first poured out on the believers (Acts 2), and ending with those who will be removed from earth in the supernatural catching away of the church (known as the rapture – 1 Thessalonians 4:17, et al.).

Believing Jews/Gentiles prior to Pentecost, believing Jews/Gentiles during the Tribulation, and believing Jews/Gentiles during the earthly Kingdom reign of Christ (the Millennium) are not members of the church. There are saved Old Testament saints as well as saved Tribulation saints. They are not part of the church. The Church Age on earth began at Pentecost and will end at the rapture.

- The Rapture: The rapture is an important term to define, as it serves as the terminal event of the Church Age. The rapture is the next prophetic event to take place on the horizon for the church – it is called our “blessed hope,” and what we yearn for (Titus 2:12-13). As mentioned, the rapture is the instantaneous, supernatural “catching away” of the church from earth to heaven, and includes the transition from a physical body to a supernatural “glorified” body (1 Thessalonians 4:17, et al.). At this time, the dead in Christ (or deceased Christians) will be resurrected first, and receive their glorified bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- Replacement Theology: Replacement Theology (also known as supersessionism) essentially teaches that the church has replaced Israel in God’s plan. Adherents of Replacement Theology believe the Jews are no longer God’s chosen people, and God does not have specific future plans for the nation of Israel. Replacement Theology teaches that the church is the replacement for Israel and that the many promises made to Israel in the Bible are fulfilled allegorically in the Christian church. The prophecies in Scripture concerning for instance,

the blessing and restoration of Israel to the Promised Land are spiritualized or allegorized into promises of God's blessing for the church.

-<https://www.gotquestions.org/replacement-theology.html> (Retrieved 2/01/19)

The overall problem with this view is that God made a number of unconditional promises and covenants with Israel in the Old Testament. Replacement Theology neglects these promises that God made to Israel, and therefore challenges the integrity of God. It makes God a liar.

It also results from an incorrect hermeneutic, in which adherents of this belief allegorize or spiritualize the promises God made to Israel instead of interpreting the plain and literal meaning. In the Bible, Israel always means Israel. But in their view, Israel becomes spiritual code language to mean the church. And instead of understanding the plain meanings of these promises, they instead come up with spiritual meanings of their own choosing, which they then apply to the church. Therefore, they are able to completely avoid acknowledging Israel's present and future relevance in God's program.

- Premillennial Dispensationalism: Although we will not be using this term much throughout this study, it is the lens through which we rightly interpret eschatology, or the study of the end-times, and therefore is useful to define. Everything that follows in this study will follow this system of interpretation, which we believe to clearly be the Scriptural one. Premillennial

Dispensationalism is the natural end-result of a literal-grammatical-historical interpretation of the Bible.

In other words, when you see the Bible through a literal-grammatical-historical viewpoint, the end-result is the recognition that there is a literal future Millennium of time in which Christ will rule earth from David's Throne in Jerusalem, as the Scriptures plainly prophesy. This is what we mean by "Premillennial." We are living in the time prior to this future Millennium.

In addition, we recognize that God has dealt with mankind in a number of different ways throughout history. We call these different periods "dispensations," meaning different ages characterized by, among other things, the different covenants God has made with man throughout history. So, Dispensationalism is the understanding that God administers His plan for mankind in various stages, or dispensations. It recognizes how these different ages involve different covenants God has made with mankind in His ultimate plan for the redemption of mankind and of earth.

Two of the essential pillars of Dispensationalism are especially relevant to this study:

1. Consistent Literal Interpretation

In other words, this refers to consistently interpreting the Bible using the normal or plain meanings that the text is

communicating, instead of spiritualizing or allegorizing the meanings.

2. Israel and the Church are Distinct

The second essential pillar of Dispensationalism is the topic of this study. Dispensationalists believe the Bible teaches that God's single program for human history includes a distinct plan for Israel and a distinct plan for the church.

-Charles Ryrie, "Dispensationalism," rev. and exp. ed., Chicago: Moody, 2007, pp. 46-48.

So, we believe that Dispensationalism is a system of theology that is essential to correctly understand the Bible, especially Bible prophecy. Without utilizing these principles of Biblical interpretation, we will arrive at the wrong conclusion concerning the topic of this study.

The term Dispensationalism is just a man-made term or label for the correct approach to understanding Scripture. Since the topic of this study is one of the foundational essentials of this method of interpretation, we thought it important to draw your attention to. Many people are Dispensationalists without even knowing it. If you interpret the Bible literally, and believe Israel has a future, you view the Bible dispensationally.

Before moving on, let's do a quick run through the Premillennial/Dispensational understanding of eschatology. We

will focus on this in detail later on in our study, but it's important to enter in with a basic understanding. Correctly understanding the timeline for eschatology goes hand-in-hand with understanding the distinction between Israel and the church, and how God has operated within the theater of humanity for the past 4,000 years – and how he will operate in the future.

Our outline for this understanding is given in Daniel 9. This chapter records how in the mid-500's B.C., the prophet Daniel was given the 70-Weeks Prophecy, which declared seventy weeks of years that would take place for Israel and Jerusalem. In other words, this refers to a total of 490 years (70×7). A beginning point and ending point are given for the 1st through the 69th Weeks of years.

The 69th Week of years ended with the Triumphant Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in 33 A.D., just days prior to His crucifixion. According to the prophecy, it is clear that the timeclock stopped with the completion of the 69th Week, leaving one future week – the 70th Week to still be completed. But after the 69th Week, something unexpected happened – after Israel killed her Messiah, rejecting His offer of the Messianic Kingdom (which had been promised and prophesied of throughout the Old Testament), this 70-Week program of God for Israel was postponed, and God introduced an interim program called the church, as the Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost of that same year (33 A.D.).

Subsequently, the gospel was spread to all nations, as God's focus shifted from that of national Israel to His new work called the church, which focused on all nations. And so, at the Triumphal Entry, the timeclock for Israel's 70-Week countdown was paused and a gap called the Church Age was inserted. In 70 A.D., the final harbinger of this shift took place as Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were eventually scattered to the uttermost parts of the earth in what is termed the Diaspora. The Church Age has been in effect since 33 A.D., and will last until the closing event of this age – the rapture, or supernatural catching away of the church to heaven described in Scripture (I Thessalonians 4:14-18 et al.).

Dispensationalists understand that God's timeclock for the church will stop with the rapture, and either immediately or soon after, God's timeclock for Israel will again begin, as there remains one final week of years – the 70th Week – to be completed for Israel. During this time, Israel will once again become the primary focus of God's plan during this final 7-year "week" of time often called the Tribulation, or Daniel's 70th Week.

The Tribulation (detailed in Revelation Chapters 6-19, among other passages) will be a time of trouble for the world, but will be especially focused upon Israel. Scripture says that the Tribulation begins with the Antichrist enforcing a covenant, which he afterwards apparently breaks midway through the seven years – an event known as the abomination of desolation (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15).

After this midpoint abomination, the latter 3 ½ years of the Tribulation will be a time of unparalleled distress in human history, especially for the Jews. In fact, Jesus calls it the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22). We will find out in this study that one major purpose of the Tribulation is to drive Israel to repentance, through great affliction. Sometimes God has to knock us down in order to get us to look up at Him – and that's what's happening to Israel during the Tribulation. Through this experience of great distress, Israel will finally be brought to faith. We will find out that Israel turning toward her true Messiah – Jesus Christ – acknowledging Him as such, and petitioning His return is actually a precondition for the next event – the Second Coming of Christ, which will end the Tribulation, or Daniel's 70th Week.

When Christ does return to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, Israel will be ready to receive Him as their Messiah. This now-righteous remnant of Israel will be rescued, and Christ will set up His Millennial or Messianic Kingdom on earth. The church will have returned with Christ at the Second Coming (Revelation 19:14), and will then rule and reign with Him as His bride for a literal thousand years, along with the other First Resurrection believers (Revelation 20:6).

Strong support for a literal future Millennium is found in the clear teaching of Revelation 20:1–7, where it says six times that Christ's Kingdom will last 1,000 years. Scripture tells us that during this 1,000-year period, the Lord will establish His

physical Kingdom on this earth with Jerusalem as its capital. With Christ reigning as King, Israel will be the prominent nation on earth after being restored spiritually and physically. Representatives from all nations will come to Jerusalem to honor and worship the King – Jesus Christ – who will reign on the throne of David, fulfilling a multitude of Old Testament Kingdom prophecies. Then, following the Millennium, will come the Eternal State, as God's full plan for the redemption of mankind will have been realized.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament support a Premillennial/Dispensational understanding of God's plan for Israel, and this was always the traditional understanding of the ancient Jews, and early Christians as well. Although they would not have been familiar with these modern labels of "Premillennialism" or "Dispensationalism," this was the lens of literalism through which they generally viewed Bible prophecy.

It is essential to understand that the church has not replaced Israel in God's plan. While God's timeclock has shifted to focus on the church for the past 2,000 years (or what we might call the Church Age), He has not forgotten Israel, and will one day restore her to His intended role as the nation He has chosen (Romans 11).

This was just a brief outline of the Bible's eschatological timetable. If what we just discussed was new to you, or difficult for you to follow, or you simply don't understand how we came to those conclusions, we will be exploring much of it in detail

later on in this study. We just felt it important to introduce this basic overview of how these concepts of literal interpretation, as well as the distinction between Israel and the church yield a proper understanding of eschatology and the future plans of God for mankind.

Now that we have defined some of our important foundational terms and concepts, let's begin our study by investigating one of the most basic foundations for understanding the distinction between Israel and the church – the Biblical concept of “covenant.”

The Bible – A Book Of Covenants

You cannot understand the Bible without understanding the concept of covenant. In the larger picture, all of the Bible is covenant. The two Testaments (Old and New) are stories of God's covenants – or relationships – with mankind at different times and in different ways. In fact, the word “testament” actually means covenant (Greek, *diatheke* – Strong's #G1242).

-<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=kjv&strongs=g1242> (Retrieved 2/01/19)

A covenant is an agreement or legal contract between two individuals or parties. There are generally terms and conditions on both sides, and if one breaks the contract, the other side is freed from their obligations.

-<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/covenant> (Retrieved 2/01/19)

It is instructive to recognize that in the Apostle Paul's letters, he always presents a trichotomy; he divides people into three categories – the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church (we will look into this in more detail later). However, prior to the birth of the church on Pentecost, Scripture divides people into only two groups – Jews and Gentiles. Those were the only two categories that existed prior to the church, and they are the only two categories that will exist after the rapture, during the Tribulation.

The Old and New Testaments both make very clear what caused this distinction between Israel and the nations. It was the covenants God

had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then with their descendants through Moses.

The Old Testament contains a number of covenants, but what's interesting is how many of them are unconditional. In other words, in many of these cases, God promised He would perform His covenant promises without requiring any specific terms or actions from the other party.

The important distinction between Jews and Gentiles is maintained consistently throughout the Bible, as God separated Israel from the other nations by way of these covenants. The following are several passages that clearly describe Israel's separation as God's chosen...

"For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

-Exodus 33:16

"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

-Leviticus 20:26

"And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?

For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, Lord, becamest their God.”

-1 Chronicles 17:21-22

“That at that time ye (Gentiles) were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:”

-Ephesians 2:12

So, we can clearly see from just this small sampling of passages, that throughout Scripture, Israel is always viewed as being a separate group from the Gentiles. This not to say that Gentiles couldn't know God in any way, but rather that it was specifically Israel who was made the “covenant nation” that God would work through in order to communicate His truth to mankind. Let's familiarize ourselves with some of the covenants God made with Israel.

-The Covenants Made with Israel:

- The Abrahamic Covenant:

In Genesis 12, God unilaterally (or unconditionally) offers Abraham several important promises. God says He will...

- Make Abraham a great nation

- Make Abraham's name great

- Bless those who bless him and curse those that curse him

-Bless all the nations through him (this in large part, being a reference to the Messiah who would be one of Abraham's descendants – one who would bring salvation to all mankind).

It is important to note that this was an unconditional covenant in every way. In the ancient world, a covenant would be made official by cutting open a dove or a ram, or some other animal or animals, and placing them on the ground so that both parties involved in the covenant could walk between the pieces. In the case of this covenant God made with Abraham, God took on the form of a “smoking furnace and a flaming torch” and passed between the pieces alone. God had caused Abraham to fall asleep while this took place, further communicating that the full weight of responsibility in this covenant was to fall on God, and not Abraham (Genesis 15).

So, this covenant was unconditional, or unilateral in every way. It did not in any way depend upon Abraham or his descendants doing anything. And furthermore, this covenant was an everlasting covenant. There is nothing that can or will prevent God from keeping this covenant with Abraham.

- The Land Covenant:

In Genesis 15 and 17, God adds another promise to the list that He's already offered Abraham, promising his descendants the land of Canaan, from the Nile River all the way to the Euphrates River (Genesis 15:18 and 17:7-8). God promised to give the land

to Abraham's descendants as an everlasting possession. This was an unconditional covenant promise, and is one that has yet to be fulfilled in its entirety. Israel has never controlled the entirety of the land designated in this land promise.

It's important to note that this promise was not directed at all of his descendants, but was directed specifically to the offspring of Isaac, whom the Bible calls the "son of promise" (Genesis 17:15-27). In Genesis 48:4, God then renewed the promise to Isaac's son Jacob. God would unconditionally give that land to Jacob's descendants as an everlasting possession.

- The Davidic Covenant:

We later find that in Genesis 49:10, God promised that a king would come from the tribe of Judah (one of the sons of Jacob). From Judah, God chose a shepherd boy named David to be king. God then expounded upon His original promise, telling King David that he would be the progenitor of an everlasting Kingdom – that his throne would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16).

This was also an unconditional covenant. Yet, there is a catch – if David's children disobeyed God, they would be punished. Yet, God would still have mercy on David's line in the end, and a Son of David would reign on his throne forever. In Luke 1, the angel Gabriel arrives to tell Mary (a descendant of David) that God's promise to David would be fulfilled through a baby she would supernaturally conceive.

“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

-Luke 1:30-33

So, we can see clearly how the words of the angel provide the fulfillment for the promises given to David regarding His Messianic descendant – an everlasting Kingdom and the Throne of David.

This factors into our discussion of the future Millennial reign of Christ. We must ask ourselves, “when did Jesus – during His First Coming – ever reign from the throne of David?” Not only do we know that it didn’t happen at His First Coming, but the throne of David didn’t even exist in that day, as Rome ruled Israel in the 1st century A.D. Yet, Gabriel told Mary that Jesus would rule on the throne of David and His Kingdom would last forever.

We know from understanding Biblical eschatology that when Christ returns at the end of Daniel’s 70th Week, He will then establish the Kingdom Age – the Millennium – when He will

literally rule on David's throne from Jerusalem as an earthly monarch for 1,000 years. It is during this time that He will ultimately fulfill numerous Kingdom-related Old Testament prophecies and promises given to Israel.

So, you should be able to see how when the Bible is taken plainly at its literal or normal meaning, our perceptions of eschatology begin to become clear. If you are to take these words of God to Abraham and David seriously, then you cannot spiritualize or allegorize away these clear promises. These promises must come to pass, and the Biblical prophets give us the clear understanding that they will come to pass in a future Messianic Kingdom on earth. Both the Old and New Testaments make this abundantly clear.

- The Mosaic Covenant:

Although the Mosaic Covenant was given before the Davidic Covenant, there is one major difference between this one and the previous ones we discussed – the Mosaic Covenant was conditional. This was a bilateral covenant, meaning both parties had conditions to uphold. For that reason, we left it to be discussed after the unconditional covenants.

The Book of Exodus contains the story of the Israelites' incredible departure from slavery in Egypt. Now being a large group of people out in the desert facing the task of self-governance as a new nation, God called Israel into a covenant relationship. At Mt. Sinai, God called their leader, Moses, up

into the mountain where he would receive this covenant, which would be characterized by the Ten Commandments.

The Covenant would ultimately include 613 commands or laws, instructing the people on every aspect of their lives. It served the ultimate purpose of dispensing to them the unique task of preserving the oracles of God and being a light of godliness unto the nations. Most ultimately, this was to lead Israel (and by extension, all nations) as a schoolmaster to the recognition of Christ as being the Messianic fulfillment of this Law (Galatians 3:24).

At Sinai, both parties (God and Israel) agreed to the obligations of this bilateral and conditional covenant...

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:
And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” –Exodus 19:5-6

After hearing all of the conditions of the Covenant, Israel, responds in agreement by saying...

“All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.”
–Exodus 19:8

So, this was a conditional covenant agreed to by both parties. The signatories of the covenant were Israel and God, and for

any generation to experience the blessings God promised under this covenant, there had to be a level of faithfulness demonstrated by Israel to God. As mentioned, this covenant or Law contained 613 commands. These commands were given specifically and only to the nation Israel to govern and guide their moral, religious, and secular life at this time while in the Promised Land. The Mosaic Law – much less its punishments – are obviously not generalizable to Gentiles or other nations, although any nation could benefit by embracing the transcendent moral elements it contained.

Keep in mind that these moral elements were not new to humanity in the Mosaic Law. Rather, God's Eternal Law always has and always will confer moral requirements upon humanity – and morality is unchanging. In other words, murder did not first become wrong when the Ten Commandments were issued. Murder always was and always will be morally wrong, completely independent of this Covenant. The morality codified in the Mosaic Law is simply a reflection of God's already existent unchanging nature and Eternal Law evident to all men through, at minimum, the conscience (Romans 2:14-15).

So, again, the Mosaic Law was conditional. It was through obedience to the Mosaic Covenant (the Law) that Israel would be able to experience blessings in the Promised Land. For obedience, there would be blessings; for disobedience, there would be cursings, as we see in the following passage...

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

...

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee...”

-Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15

Reading through the entire chapter of Deuteronomy 28 will make clear the blessings and cursings relative to Israel's compliance with the conditions of the Mosaic Law. So, we see very clearly that the Mosaic Law required each signatory to uphold certain commitments.

So then, does Scripture say this Covenant is still operative today? And if not, when did it terminate?

One of the profound emphases of the New Testament, especially the epistles of Paul, is that Christians are not under the rule of the Mosaic Law – as this covenant was never made with the church or any Gentiles – and furthermore, was completely fulfilled in Christ. This truth is stated in no uncertain

terms, and in various ways throughout the New Testament, which we will go over.

But many who believe Christians are still subject to the Mosaic Law habitually quote Jesus's statement in Matthew 5:17-18 to support their contention that the church is under the Law. This statement reads as follows...

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law..."

-Matthew 5:17-18a

"One jot or tittle" is essentially a Hebrew equivalent of saying "not the dotting of an 'I' or the crossing of a 'T' will pass from the law." In other words, not even the tiniest, most insignificant pen-stroke in the letters of the Law would be discarded. Yet, those who interpret this to mean that the Law is still in effect routinely seem to leave out the rest of the sentence, which continues in Verse 18...

"...till all be fulfilled." -Matthew 5:18b

The word "till" – or, "until" is important to grasp here. In fact, you should learn to notice the "untils" found in Scripture. They often are essential markers or bookends that help us distinguish certain concepts in the Bible – and that certainly is the case here. Far from teaching that the Law would always be

in force, Christ declared that it would only be in operation “till” – or “until” – it was fulfilled, and that He had come to fulfill it:
“...I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil...”

Jesus says something similar in Luke 16...

“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” -Luke 16:16-17

The Law and the Prophets is obviously a clear reference to the Old Covenant, as revealed to Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures (or the Christian Old Testament). Jesus said this Old Covenant ended with John the Baptist. We will later examine a complimentary passage where Jesus describes John the Baptist as the greatest of the Old Covenant prophets (Mt. 11:11 and Luke 7:28).

So, Jesus is clear that the times under the Mosaic Law ended with John, and that He (Jesus) had come to introduce something new. However, in the very next verse, Jesus makes clear that not one tittle of the Law would fail – a statement almost identical to the earlier passage we read that has confused so many people who believe the Law is still active and that Christians are subject to it. So, Jesus is clear that the Law is over in Luke 16:16, and yet many get the opposite idea by the following verse (Verse 17). What does He mean?

These verses clearly indicate that the Mosaic Law was about to conclude the purpose which God had intended it to serve (to lead Israel to the recognition of Christ – Galatians 3:24-25) and it would soon no longer be in effect. After the events of Calvary, the message of the Law and the Prophets (the Old or Mosaic Covenant) would be replaced by a greater revelation, that of the New Covenant (to be discussed next). But then Jesus immediately (in Verse 17) stresses that the Old Testament would always remain inspired, and moreover, fulfilled Scripture, instead of being something which afterward should be tossed aside as rubbish.

The Law served several purposes: to more profoundly reveal sin, and to reveal mankind's inability (on his own merit) to do anything about it. It served to point us to Christ, who fulfills the Law. The Messiah's death on the cross completely satisfied God's justice through His sinless perfection, accomplishing and fulfilling the redemption and atonement that the Old Covenant pointed towards. We see this in John 19, as the dying Christ took His last breath on the cross...

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

~John 19:28-30

Christ completely fulfilled the prophecies, types, and shadows contained within the Mosaic Law that pointed forward to His work as the Messiah and Savior of the world. Therefore, we understand why the Law must have continued until He had accomplished everything, as this verse alluded to. This happened at the death of Jesus, and harmonizes perfectly with the later teachings of Paul in Romans and Galatians. For instance, in Galatians, Paul says...

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” -Galatians 3:19

So, again we see this word “till,” or “until.” Paul says the Law served a temporary purpose that would continue only until the “seed,” or the promised Messiah would come.

Let’s take a look at just a few of the ways Christ fulfilled different aspects of the Mosaic Law...

Element of the Mosaic Law	Fulfillment in Christ
Burnt offerings	Continual forgiveness (1 Jn. 2:1, 2)
Blood of the sacrifices	Blood of Christ (Heb. 10:19)
Most Holy Place	Presence of God (Heb. 10:19-23)
Tabernacle	Incarnation (Jn. 1:1-3, 14)
Shekinah glory	Glory of God's Son (Jn. 1:14)
Uplifted serpent	The cross of Christ (Jn. 3:14)
High Priest	Redemption of Christ (Heb. 9:11, 12)
Circumcision	Removal of the "flesh" (Col. 2:11)
Sabbath	The rest of God (Heb. 4:8-11)
Jubilee	Liberation from the bondage of sin (Lk. 4:18, 19)
Passover	The Lamb of God (Jn. 1:36)

Jesus Himself explained that the Old Testament Law was all about Him...

"And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

Search the scriptures (which at that time was only the Old Testament); for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

-John 5:38-39

Several verses later, he then said...

"For had ye believed Moses (the writings of Moses, or the Law), ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me."

-John 5:46

On the day of Christ's resurrection, Jesus joined two disciples as they traveled on the road to Emmaus. Luke, who records

this, summarizes the seven-mile Bible study that Jesus gave to these disciples, by saying...

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

-Luke 24:27

The New Testament is clear that the Mosaic Law was brought to its intended completion in Christ, as we can see in the following sampling of additional passages...

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

-Romans 10:4

In other words, the Mosaic Law reached fulfillment, or reached its intended end in Christ.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

-Romans 6:14

Very plainly, Paul says Christians are not under the Mosaic Law.

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ...”

-Romans 7:4a

Paul tells us we are dead to the Law by the body of Christ, or the church. In other words, when Christ introduced the church, the Mosaic Law was superseded by the New Covenant.

“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?” -Galatians 4:21

The only way these Christians to whom Paul was writing could “desire to be under the law” would be if they were not already under it. You can’t desire to be under something that you’re already under. So, grammatically and logically, Paul’s wording confirms to us again that we are not under the Law.

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” -Galatians 3:24-25

In other words, once the fulfillment arrives, the types and shadows that anticipated or pointed toward the fulfillment become obsolete. This is even more clearly said in the next passage...

“In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” -Hebrews 8:13

The writer of this passage in Hebrews plainly tells us that the Old Covenant is outdated, decaying, and is fading away. The

ESV phrases this passage as follows, actually using the word “obsolete” ...

“In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” -Hebrews 8:13 (ESV)

So then, if the Mosaic Covenant (or Old Covenant) – which was specifically given to Israel – has been fulfilled by Christ and is now obsolete and has vanished away, then what covenant is relevant today, and to whom was it given? As alluded to earlier, the answer is the New Covenant, which we will explore next.

Before moving on to discuss the New Covenant, you should understand the purpose for our investigation of the covenants made with Israel. All of those covenants we discussed highlighted Israel’s distinction among the nations. Because of those covenants, Israel was always a group distinct from the Gentile nations. We have seen that God has always dealt with them as a group distinct from the Gentiles. To learn even more about the purpose and background for God’s calling of Israel, feel free to refer to the companion study entitled, *Should Christians Support Israel?*

As we move into exploring the New Covenant, we will find that although it was also originally a promise given to Israel, its near-term fulfillment established a new, third group (other than Jew and Gentile), called the church, that came into existence on the Day of Pentecost in 33 A.D.

-An Introduction to the New Covenant:

Although the New Covenant was also a covenant originally made with Israel, we have separated it from the previous covenants as its own sub-section because it's the only covenant extended to all humanity. In other words, all of the other covenants made with Israel were made exclusively with Israel (or their progenitors). The Gentile nations may in many ways be blessed by those covenants, and every blessing the church has in some way derives from those covenants – but the New Covenant is unique in that it was intended to be extended to all nations.

It was always God's ultimate plan to use Israel as an instrument to deliver His truth to all of humanity – to be a blessing of light unto the nations. The ultimate Light would be the Messiah, who would bring salvation to the entire world through a New Covenant. When Israel rejected her Messiah and His offer of the Messianic Kingdom, God placed Israel on pause and introduced His interim program called the church, through which He would make this New Covenant available for all nations. This New Covenant would be the ultimate and everlasting basis of relationship that would bridge the gap between God and man, re-instituting the intimate relationship that was lost in the Garden of Eden when original sin took place.

The Old Covenant was established to point towards this New Covenant, physically symbolizing the greater spiritual and heavenly fulfillments that the New Covenant would confer. The church was the first to receive this New Covenant on the Day of Pentecost, and

would become a third distinct group, apart from the previous two (Jews and Gentiles). This new group could only be established following the death and resurrection of Christ – the work He completed on Calvary in 33 A.D. So, we can say that the New Covenant and the Church Age share the same beginning point.

Throughout this section in particular, we will be “walking Word,” (meaning going through a lot of Scriptures), so it may be a good idea to have your Bible on hand to pause at your own pace and explore each passage on your own in order to fully understand each. If this is new to you, we encourage you to take it at your own pace. Let’s begin...

The concept of a New Covenant was not a new idea concocted in the New Testament, or some novel concept introduced by Christians. Many of the Old Testament prophets – such as Isaiah, Joel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah – prophesied of the time when God would make a New Covenant with His people – a new basis of relationship. The following are several examples...

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts,

and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” ~Jeremiah 31:31-33

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

~Ezekiel 36:25-26

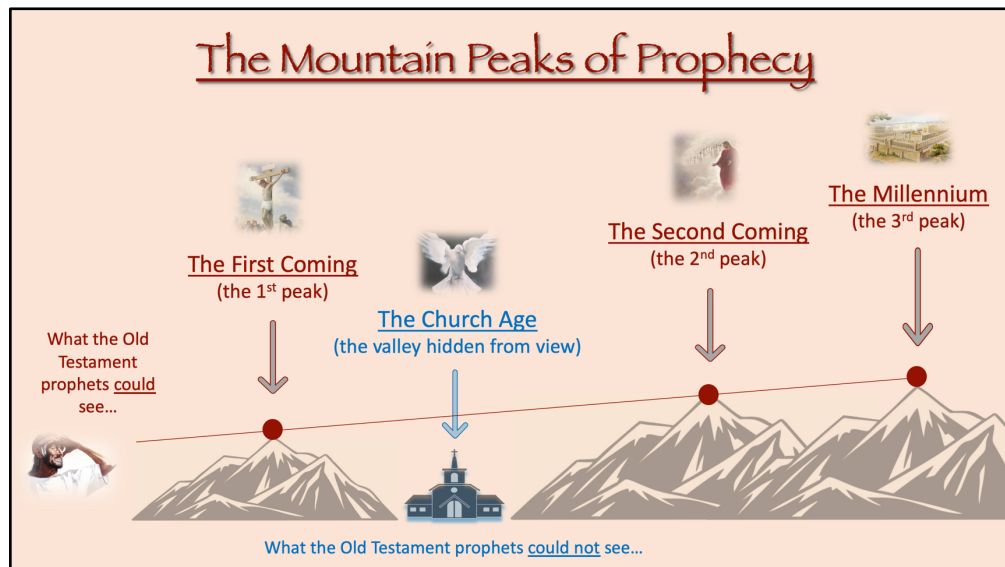
“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:”

~Joel 2:28

Let’s recognize that all of these Old Testament prophecies regarding the New Covenant were, in original context, made to Israel – an important but often overlooked point that we will revisit throughout this study. The Jeremiah 31 passage actually says that this New Covenant would be made with the “house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” We need to recognize that the church was a mystery entity hidden throughout the Old Testament.

Some have illustrated this concept as a series of mountain peaks, separated by a valley. The first mountain peak represents the events of the First Coming of the Messiah, and the next taller mountain peaks represent the events of the Second Coming and the Millennial Kingdom that immediately follows. In between these first two peaks sits a valley encompassing the Church Age, which was below the line

of vision for the prophets. They could see the first peak, and the second and third peaks, and even after that, even being able to in some cases see glimpses of the Eternal State. But they couldn't tell if and how much the events of these prophetic peaks were separated. In other words, they couldn't know that there was a 2,000-or-more-year Church Age that separated the events they saw. And the events of the Church Age were not visible to them, as they lay beneath their line of sight in the valley below.



The point being, the Old Testament prophets who spoke of this coming New Covenant had no idea about it being poured out upon an entity comprised of both Jews and Gentiles called the church, as we see fulfilled in the New Testament Book of Acts. The context they expected and foresaw was its outpouring upon national Israel, and they saw it within the context of their national restoration (spiritually and physically) in the Millennial or Messianic Kingdom.

But when Israel as a nation rejected her Messiah at His First Coming, the Kingdom Age was postponed, and God introduced His mystery

plan for a new entity called the church! Although the church began with the Jewish followers of Jesus as they received this New Covenant Spirit outpouring on Pentecost, this outpouring was soon extended to the Gentiles (Acts 10 and following), as this mystery hidden Church Age was inaugurated.

But here is a key point. Unfortunately, many Christians see these Old Testament prophecies that we just read, which speak of the New Covenant, as being completely fulfilled in the context of the church (as presented in Acts and following). They completely miss the fact that the original Millennial context of these Old Testament prophecies reveals to us that these promises of the New Covenant outpouring on Israel will find ultimate fulfillment in the Millennium, as all of Israel will be saved. Although we won't engage deeply on this right now, you should recognize that when carefully examining these Old Testament prophecies, it is impossible to claim total fulfillment in the events of the Spirit outpouring on the church on Pentecost in Acts 2 and following. According to these prophecies, one of the criteria points is that all of Israel will be saved when this takes place (Jer. 31:34, Isa. 59:20-21, Rom. 11:24-29), and the context of when this takes place is unmistakably Millennial. A reading of the chapters surrounding these New Covenant prophecies clearly conveys this context. Obviously, a national salvation of this scale has never yet taken place for Israel, but will in the future Millennial Kingdom Age.

But in the New Testament, we find that the New Testament authors quoted all of these prophecies and clearly applied at least partial fulfillment to the church after the Spirit outpouring on Pentecost. The church has become the first beneficiary of this New Covenant, as

it was always God's plan to extend it to the Gentiles, which we will see shortly. So, it is important to understand that the partial fulfillment does not negate the certainty of the ultimate fulfillment in the Millennium for national Israel, as originally prophesied.

But let's discuss another important point to be aware of regarding this subject of the church and the New Covenant. As we continue our exploration of the New Covenant, we need to be sensitive to the fact that the New Covenant is not a synonym for the church. The New Covenant will extend past the Church Age, as it's an everlasting covenant. The church is a select entity within New Covenant believers. The church was the first recipient of the New Covenant and is the only current recipient at this time. If you are not sure exactly what we mean by this, be assured that all will be explained as we continue. So, for the purposes of this study, we will often closely associate the church and the New Covenant, but just be aware that they are not perfectly synonymous in the greater scope. With that said, let's continue...

The New Covenant was to be the completion of which the Old Covenant made at Sinai would culminate. Put another way, the Old Covenant was meant to lead Israel to the New Covenant, which would then be extended to all nations. Along the way, Israel was meant to be a light of God to the nations, preparing the Gentiles to also receive it. Isaiah makes clear Israel's assignment to be a light to the nations in the following passages...

"...I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

-Isaiah 49:6b

"I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;"

-Isaiah 42:6

Galatians tells us that the New Covenant is the fulfillment of what the Old Covenant Law acted as a "schoolmaster" pointing towards (Galatians 3:24-25). As we continue, we will see that the basis of the New Covenant, as it exists today in the Church Age, involves the Spirit endowment in the heart of the believer.

The following passage from Romans tells us that what was impossible to accomplish through the Law (because it depended upon our own humanity, or flesh to live up to), will be fulfilled and accomplished through the Holy Spirit living inside of us, enabling us to walk after the Spirit...

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

-Romans 8:3-4

So, Paul actually contrasts the Law (or the Old Covenant) with the Spirit (or the New Covenant). He tells us that what the nation of Israel was not able to do through the Old Covenant, would now become

possible for believers who take part in the New Covenant established through the blood shed by Jesus Christ on the cross. This New Covenant was announced by Jesus at the Last Supper prior to His crucifixion...

“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament (or covenant) in my blood, which is shed for you.”

–Luke 22:20

So, Jesus introduced the New Covenant at the Last Supper, although as we will see further ahead, it would not actually be inaugurated until the Spirit outpouring on Pentecost, 50 days after His crucifixion.

The author of Hebrews goes to great lengths to expound upon the details of the New Covenant, contrasting it with the Old. He makes clear that this is a better covenant founded upon better promises, replacing an old, faulty, temporary, and inferior covenant. He includes a quote of the passage we read earlier in Jeremiah 31 that spoke of God’s Law being written on the hearts of His people, instead of on tablets of stone (as in the Old Covenant):

“But now hath he (Jesus) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

For finding fault with them, he saith (now quoting Jeremiah 31), Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:” –Hebrews 8:6-12

How does Jesus Christ work with His people in writing God’s Law on our hearts? We know that Christ accomplishes this through His Spirit, the Holy Spirit indwelling, or living in the believer. So, we will see that the indwelling Holy Spirit is the foundational distinction between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

–Galatians 2:20

The importance of God’s Spirit alive inside of us cannot be overstated. It gives us the ability to keep God’s Law through Christ working in our lives, and is the basis of this New Covenant.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, stating how the Old Covenant letter of the Law was unable to bring life. However, through the New Covenant, the Spirit will give life. In this passage, he quotes the prophecy we read earlier in Ezekiel 36...

“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament (covenant); not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

-2 Corinthians 3:3-6

The letter of God’s Law was written on tablets of stone at Mount Sinai as the Old Covenant was given to Israel. Sadly, that Law, which reflected the very character of God, remained on the tablets of stone and largely did not become a part of the lives of God’s people Israel. But through God’s Spirit, the overall intention of the Law of God is accomplished, as it’s written upon the hearts of New Covenant believers – Christians – enabling them to live according to the Spirit.

So, it is also clear that the New Covenant, made possible through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, would be empowered through the Spirit, also reflecting the other key prophetic New Covenant passage we examined in Joel 2 – “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.” So, it is obvious that the major difference is that the New Covenant would involve the Spirit in a way completely different from the Old. And it was only made possible through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

There should be no confusion as to the identification of the New

Covenant. It was clearly anticipated by the Old Testament prophets, and the New Testament writers clearly apply those prophecies to the Christian experience – the church. As we go on, we will continue to see more examples of the New Testament writers applying these Old Testament prophecies of the New Covenant to the church.

-The New Covenant and the Church:

In this subsection, we will begin to further connect what we have already examined with the concept of the distinction between Israel and the church.

Throughout the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, He offered the promised Kingdom Age, or Messianic Kingdom to Israel as a nation. This was the promise of God discussed in tremendous detail throughout the prophetic writings of the Old Testament prophets. And this promise of the earthly Messianic Kingdom was the ultimate anticipation of every Jew. In their understanding, the arrival of the Messiah brings the arrival of the Kingdom.

The gospel of Matthew very carefully traces this subject of Christ's offer of the Kingdom to Israel. Mathew Chapters 1 through 10 detail John the Baptist and Christ's preaching regarding this offer of the Kingdom – "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then, beginning in Chapter 11 – and primarily in Chapter 12, he explains that the leadership of the nation rejected that offer. When they rejected this offer, the offer was withdrawn and God's program for Israel was postponed.

The day will come when a future generation will accept the offer and turn to their true Messiah – and the Kingdom will come. But that day was not in the 1st century A.D. Skipping ahead for a moment in Matthew, we see this future generation prophetically detailed in Matthew 24 and 25, in which Jesus explains how this promise will one day be accepted and how God will fulfill every promise He ever made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the nation of Israel. Chapter 24 tells us that a future generation of national Israel will turn to Christ at the end of the Tribulation, prior to Christ's Second Coming. But let's focus back on the 1st century and Israel's rejection of her Messiah...

Since God never leaves the earth without a witness of Himself, He then introduced a new interim program – the church – a program that was unknown to Old Testament prophecy, yet was foreknown to Him. The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3 tells us that the church was not “Plan B” – but was part of the foreknown, eternal purpose of God, which we will discuss more further ahead in this section. But it is important to understand that Israel's rejection did not “catch God off-guard.” He knew exactly how they would react, and His plan was always to separate out for Himself the church, which the Bible calls the pure, virgin bride of Christ. But let's continue to understand how this is laid out in Matthew...

In Chapter 12, Matthew records the nation's rejection of Christ's offer of the Kingdom – with the main turning point being their attribution of His miracles to Satan. Once their rejection of Jesus' ministry was final with their leadership doing that, the offer was retracted. We then get an explanation of what God is going to be doing while the Kingdom is in postponement awaiting the future generation that will receive the

offer. This begins to be explained in what is known as the Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13, in which Jesus gives a number of parables discussing this postponement of the Kingdom. In the following chapters, Jesus begins to signal His introduction of this new interim plan called the church. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus begins to introduce this new concept by name...

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
-Matthew 16:18

The word church in this passage is from the Greek word ekklesia (Strong's #H1577), meaning a called-out assembly or congregation of believers.

-<https://biblehub.com/greek/1577.htm> (Retrieved 2/03/19)

In this passage we just read (Matthew 16:18), Jesus was responding to Peter's answer to His question in Verse 15. Jesus had initially asked...

“...But whom say ye that I am?”
-Matthew 16:15b

Peter responded by affirming the revelation that Jesus was the Son of God.

“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” -Matthew 16:16

In other words, what the nation had rejected, Peter (among others)

had accepted. Jesus responded to this by saying...

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” -Matthew 16:17

Jesus then speaks what we already read in Verse 18, calling Peter by name, and saying that it is this rock of revelation of who He is, that would be the “bedrock” of the church. Jesus appears to be using a play on words in the Greek. “You are Peter (petros) and on this rock (petra) I will build my church.” Since Peter’s name means rock, and Jesus is going to build His church on a rock – it appears that He was using a play on words to convey that Peter would be instrumental in delivering this “rock” of revelation to the world – which he would do on the Day of Pentecost and following. Jesus Christ is also called the “rock,” and the Chief Cornerstone.

-<https://www.gotquestions.org/upon-this-rock.html> (Retrieved 2/03/19)

So, the point here is that we can see Jesus anticipating the formation of a new entity called the church. God would use this new entity as His interim mechanism to bless the world. As we will see, the promises of the New Covenant originally given to Israel, will become available to all nations through the church during this interim period. As a result, there would now be three divisions of mankind: Jews, Gentiles and the church.

We see this trichotomy clearly reflected later in the New Testament writings. Paul, in his epistles, always separated people into a trichotomy – Jews (or Israel), Gentiles (or non-Jews), and the church

(made up of both, yet now as a distinct third group). For instance, in 1 Corinthians, Paul tells us that we are to...

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.” -1 Corinthians 10:32

So, we clearly see three groups – Jews, Gentiles, and now, the church. Like we said earlier, all of the benefits we enjoy as members of this third group are ultimately derived from the former covenants made with Israel, which we will see in the following passage. The idea of the church being “grafted into” the spiritual promises of the household of God is neatly summarized in this following excerpt from Ephesians 2, and demonstrates the relationship of the New Covenant Gentile believer to the former covenants...

“Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands — remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him

we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

-Ephesians 2:11-22 (ESV)

So, Paul explains how we were grafted into the promises of God, which He instituted through Israel. Again, we can see how Israel was the instrument God used to introduce His plan to mankind as a whole. Some have mistakenly interpreted this to mean that the church becomes part of Israel. But in the writings of the Scriptures, and especially of Paul, we continue to see that Israel, as a distinct national entity, has a future separate destiny from that of the church in God's plan – helping us to recognize that it is not Israel that the New Covenant believer becomes part of. Instead, we simply are grafted into being recipients of the promises of God that Israel was first given.

But this same theme of the three groups – Jews, Gentiles, and the church, is maintained throughout Paul's writing. Although the church is made up of both Jews and Gentiles, it is clear from Scripture that once in the church, one is neither Jew nor Gentile – one instead becomes a part of a different group entirely. For example, we see this in Romans 10 in the obvious context of initiation into the church...

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

-Romans 10:9-13

So, we see here that Paul categorizes members of the church as a third group, in which there is no “difference between the Jew and the Greek” (or Gentiles). In the rest of his writings however, we can see that outside of the church, he still treats the rest of humanity as being part of either the Jews or the Gentiles. We then see in the last verse of that passage – after stating that within the context of the church, there is no Jew/Gentile distinction – Paul then quotes the prophetic New Covenant passage from Joel 2 – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” As you may recall, we examined a prophetic New Covenant passage from Joel 2 a short while ago – “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh...”

The verse Paul quoted from is found only several verses after this passage, clearly anchoring its context as a New Covenant prophecy, and strengthening our understanding that Paul was speaking about the New Covenant (Peter also applies this prophecy to the church in Acts 2). The passage in Joel that Paul was quoting reads as follows...

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered:”

-Joel 2:32

So, Paul applies this prophecy to his point that ethnicity is irrelevant in the context of New Covenant salvation and the church. Paul was

highlighting this by the word “whosoever” from Joel’s New Covenant prophecy.

The full inclusion of the Gentile nations as equal citizens in God’s New Covenant was not explicit in the Old Covenant revelation, which is why we will see Paul describing this concept as a mystery that he has the privilege of fully revealing. We should understand that in the New Testament, a mystery typically refers to something that may have only been faintly hinted at in the Old Testament, such that it was not fully grasped until the coming of the Spirit in the New Covenant. Paul declares this in the following passage in Ephesians...

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is
given me to you-ward:

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I
wrote afore in few words,

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the
mystery of Christ)

Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is
now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and
partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:”

-Ephesians 3:1-6

So, Paul reveals to us this mystery that was hidden to the view of the Old Testament prophets – this mystery of a new group called the church, which would be comprised of both Jews and Gentiles through the Spirit. But again, it is important to note that the church is not

“Plan B” in the mind of God. In fact, as Paul continues in this passage, He makes it clear that the church – although unknown and unrevealed to the Old Testament audience – was the predetermined plan of God (it was just an unrevealed plan, or a mystery). For added clarity, let’s read this in the ESV...

“and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,” -Ephesians 3:9-11 (ESV)

So, the church was a predetermined – yet unrevealed – mystery plan of God. This is also a point of distinction between Israel and the church. The church’s future was unrevealed, but Israel’s future was revealed (very clearly and thoroughly throughout the Old Testament prophetic corpus).

And like we mentioned, the idea that Gentiles of all nations would be included in the future New Covenant was only faintly hinted at in the Old Testament. For instance, we see the following in the prophetic book of Hosea...

“and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.”
-Hosea 2:23b

Paul actually quotes this passage from Hosea as he argues this exact point. In fact, this is only one of several Old Testament prophetic passages Paul uses in Romans 9 in order to show that the extending of a covenant to the Gentiles was hinted at. For brevity, we will only focus on his quote of this passage from Hosea. Paul's quotation of Hosea's prophecy is found in Romans 9, and reads as follows...

"Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

As he saith also in Osee (Hosea), I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." -Romans 9:24-26

So, we need to recognize this mystery revelation of a third group of people in God's plan – the church.

As we also see elsewhere in Romans 9, Paul may at times refer to the Jews as his brethren (since he was ethnically a Jew), but he is clear that he only means ethnically (he clarifies by saying "according to the flesh"). In God's eyes – or in other words, according to God's classification, Paul is a member of the church, making him neither Jew nor Gentile.

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God,

and the promises;” -Romans 9:3-4

So, it is absolutely essential to understand that these three groups exist side by side in today’s age. It is also essential to understand that the church was established by God, offering a New Covenant (or a new basis of relationship with God) that was prophesied of to Israel in the Old Testament, but was always intended in God’s plan to extend to all nations. Since Israel rejected their Messiah, they could not be the instrument for this to take place at that time – and God instead introduced the church as His interim program.

-The Beginning of the New Covenant and the Church:

You may ask, “When did the Old Covenant cease and the New Covenant begin?” This question is important in helping us sharply divide Israel from the church, and the New Covenant Age from the Old Covenant Age. As we will see, the New Covenant and the church share the same beginning point, but the New Covenant will extend beyond the current Church Age, in a sense skip over the Tribulation, and then be active during the Millennium. It will then stay eternally in effect. We will explore this more, further ahead in our study, but for now, let’s just be sensitive to that as we continue. So, let’s begin to explore this question of when the Old Covenant ended and the New Covenant (and the church) began. We will find that Jesus Christ Himself makes this distinction clear for us, and answers this question.

As we mentioned earlier, Jesus declared that the Old Covenant for Israel under the Law and the Prophets ended with John the Baptist, who declared the coming of Jesus Christ, preached repentance, and

paved the way for Christ's earthly ministry. Jesus made this clear, as He is quoted in the following passage in Luke. Earlier, we read this passage in the KJV. Now, let's see how it's rendered in the NIV...

"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it."

–Luke 16:16 (NIV)

So, the NIV conveys the same message as the KJV. Note the key word "until" in this passage, which tells us that the Old Covenant message was proclaimed until John the Baptist. Jesus says that after John, the good news (or gospel) will be preached – an obvious allusion to the coming New Covenant Church Age which Jesus was setting the foundation for (cf. Luke 17:20-21 and Romans 14:17).

Of course, until Pentecost, the full gospel message could not be preached, so we should recognize John and even Christ as transitional figures. John set the stage for the ministry of Christ, calling the people to repentance in preparation to receive their Messiah and His Kingdom (which they rejected). Because they rejected it, the fullness of the earthly Kingdom could not come, but the heavenly aspects – or, the New Covenant – would come. Jesus came to activate the gospel – through His death, burial, and resurrection, in order to provide this New Covenant salvation plan that would then be able to go forth on Pentecost as the church began. So, we see from this passage that the Old Covenant ended with John the Baptist, and Jesus indicated that something new would shortly be inaugurated.

In the following passage in Matthew, we will see that Jesus actually acknowledged John the Baptist as being the greatest of all the Old Covenant prophets. In doing so, Jesus created an interesting distinction between the Old Covenant and the New with the following statement...

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding (yet), he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

–Matthew 11:11

How can this be, that the least in the kingdom of heaven (or the New Covenant) is greater than John the Baptist, who Jesus declared was greater than Elijah, Enoch, Moses, Abraham, David, and all of the Old Testament prophets? If John is greater than all of them, how is the most insignificant person in the New Covenant greater than he?

The answer is simple, and illustrates the uniqueness of the New Covenant, and its first recipients, the church. Although the Spirit of the Lord greatly empowered those men to perform great feats, they did not possess the indwelling endowment (or baptism) of the Holy Spirit in the way that we now can after it was poured out on the Day of Pentecost! This astonishing fact makes clear the distinction and uniqueness of the church! The New Testament calls Christians heirs of the Kingdom. Although the earthly Kingdom has not yet come, we are heirs of it – and have received the spiritual or heavenly aspects of it through the New Covenant (Jn. 3:3-5, Lk. 17:21, Rom. 14:17).

The writer of Hebrews echoes the superiority of the New Covenant promises (the promised Holy Spirit) in comparison to the various Old Testament figures, in the following passage...

“And these all (meaning prominent OT figures, like the ones we mentioned), having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” –Hebrews 11:39-40

And in Hebrews 8...

“...by how much also he (Jesus) is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”

–Hebrews 8:6b

We will see later that these “better promises,” pertain to the promise of the Spirit, or as Jesus later phrases it, “the promise of my Father” (Luke 24:49).

Everyone who participates in God’s New Covenant today – which we’ve read is accomplished through His indwelling Spirit – has greater spiritual privileges, blessings, and power than John or any of the other Old Covenant figures had.

John preached that the kingdom of heaven (or the New Covenant) was at hand, and called for the people to repent. However, he did not participate in the fullness of that New Covenant (the outpouring of the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, as the KJV words it). John was

murdered prior to this (Matthew 14). Instead, we find that the fullness of grace came only through Christ (His death, burial and resurrection).

“Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law (or the Old Covenant) was given through Moses; grace and truth (or the New Covenant) came through Jesus Christ.” –John 1:16-17

John the Baptist did not experience the Spirit baptism himself, but he preached that Jesus, who would come after him, would baptize with the Holy Ghost...

“And (John the Baptist) preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me (speaking of Jesus Christ), the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” –Mark 1:7-8

So, John spoke of Jesus Christ as the figure who would initiate this New Covenant through the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit. We should recognize that John the Baptist acted as the forerunner to call the people to repentance in preparation of this New Covenant. However, Jesus did not initiate the New Testament church or baptize believers with the Holy Ghost while alive on earth. He instead spoke of the church in the future tense...

“upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” –Matthew 16:18b

In introducing this New Covenant church, Jesus, at the Last Supper, gave His disciples a new commandment...

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

-John 13:34-35

A few verses later in John 14:11, Jesus also instructed them to believe in Him. It is well understood by the writers of the New Testament, including John, Paul, and James, that these commandments were the New Covenant commandments, and they referred to them as the “Law of Christ,” or the “royal law.” This is then confirmed later in 1 John 3:22-24, where these commands are reiterated – to believe on the name of Jesus and to love one another – and in fact, are referred to as one single commandment.

“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” -1 John 3:22-24

But let's look back to Jesus as He prepared His followers for the institution of this New Covenant. Shortly before His ascension, He told His disciples the following...

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,
And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
–Luke 24:45-47

He then told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the New Covenant promise – the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which John also had spoken of. Jesus also said...

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”
–Luke 24:49

We see this also in Acts...

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.
For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

–Acts 1:4-8

This passage describes Jesus’ instruction to His disciples to return to Jerusalem and await the promised Holy Spirit baptism. He also refers to the ministry of John the Baptist, connecting the passages we previously read in which John prophetically points ahead to this Spirit baptism.

Interestingly, we also see the contrast between the earthly and spiritual components of the Kingdom of God/heaven in this passage. Being typical Jews raised under the anticipation of the coming earthly Messianic Kingdom, the disciples mistakenly thought Jesus, at His First Coming, was here to usher in the Millennial Reign.

They had asked “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” They were completely unaware that Jesus had come to establish something completely new – the church. They had apparently only attributed the New Covenant to being fulfilled during the Millennial/Messianic Reign – and from the Old Testament prophecies, that’s what any reader would think. The church was hidden from view.

But notice Jesus’ reply – “And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own

power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

So, Jesus didn't deny that the earthly fulfillment of the Kingdom through Israel would one day come, but He instead redirected their attention toward what was relevant at the moment – His interim program: the spiritual component of the Kingdom, the New Covenant Spirit outpouring, through which they would become witnesses of the gospel to all nations. In other words, Jesus emphasized the inauguration of the mystery New Covenant entity He had previously referred to as the church in Matthew 16:18!

Again, this New Covenant has at its foundation, the promise of the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:31-33; 2 Corinthians 3:3-6). We will see that the New Testament church dates from the Day of Pentecost rather than from John's preaching or the Lord's earthly ministry. God had designed a New Covenant with man, and this covenant required Christ's death, burial and resurrection before it would come into effect. Let's explore this...

Before the New Covenant, Jesus had to die, as we see clearly stated in the following passage in Hebrews:

“And for this cause he (meaning Christ) is the mediator of the new testament (covenant), that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.” –Hebrews 9:15-16

In other words, when a man writes a will, the ones labeled as the beneficiaries of the will do not receive anything until after the man dies. Therefore, Jesus had to die in order that we might receive His promise. Jesus became the mediator of the New Covenant by His death, and His resurrection made His death effective for us...

“but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” –Romans 4:24-25 (NIV)

Therefore, the promised Holy Spirit could only be given after Christ’s death and resurrection. The following passage is an extremely strategic verse in recognizing the distinction between Israel and the church by way of the Old and New Covenants...

“(But this spake he (Jesus) of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”
–John 7:39

This passage is clear that the Spirit outpouring on the believers – the key distinction between the Old and New Covenants – could only happen after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. People who don’t recognize this distinction have said, “the thief on the cross didn’t receive the Spirit, yet Jesus declared he would be in Paradise.

How can this be?” This verse is the answer. There was no outpouring of the Spirit yet, and it helps us sharply divide things. Jesus confirms this in His speech to His disciples regarding the coming Comforter, or the Holy Ghost.

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” –John 16:7

John 14 makes it clear that the Comforter is simply Jesus in Spirit form instead of in bodily form...

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” –John 14:16-18

The fact that the Spirit was simply Jesus in another form was made clear in this passage by the phrases “ye know him,” “I will come to you,” and “I in you.” This is made clear to us throughout the New Testament. For instance, Paul tells us in Galatians 4:6...

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

-Galatians 4:6

So then, when was this Comforter – or the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Jesus – given? The Book of Acts records that the New Testament church began on the Hebrew feast day called Pentecost, which was about fifty days after Christ’s death on the Passover.

As we mentioned earlier, Jesus had instructed the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise – the baptism of the Holy Ghost – the basis of this New Covenant. In obedience to Christ’s command, approximately one hundred twenty of His followers returned to Jerusalem after His ascension to await the baptism of the Spirit. Included in this number were the twelve Apostles (with Matthias replacing Judas Iscariot), Mary the mother of Jesus, the brothers of Jesus, and a number of women (Acts 1).

Acts records that they were gathered together in an “upper room,” on the Jewish feast day of Pentecost. Acts 2 then states that while these one hundred twenty believers were together in this upper room awaiting the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the following then took place...

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

-Acts 2:2-4

When the Holy Ghost entered into all of the one hundred twenty believers, they all began to praise God in languages (tongues) that were unknown to the speakers. The noise of this event caused Jews, who had traveled to Jerusalem from numerous foreign countries and were staying in the city during the feast days, to become astounded at what they were seeing and hearing! Many of the tongues being spoken by the one hundred twenty turned out to be foreign languages that were recognized by these foreign Jewish onlookers as being their own native tongues! They marveled at this and were astonished, and inquired what this was all about!

“And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:
And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

–Acts 2:12-18, 21

In response to the astonishment of the Jews, Peter stood up and declared this to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy of the New Covenant Spirit outpouring from Joel 2:28-32 (“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...”). Peter then went on to preach to the crowd of Jews that were gathered about Jesus, and how He had been crucified for them in order to usher in this New Covenant opportunity. So, the answer to the question of when the New Covenant (and the church) began is the Day of Pentecost, as described here in Acts 2. Prior to this initial outpouring of the Spirit, the New Covenant was not available.

Later, Paul in his epistles, hammered away at this distinction of the church as having the Spirit infilling. He describes the unique sealing of the church by the Holy Spirit – calling it the down payment of our eternal redemption.

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Which is the earnest of our inheritance (meaning the down payment) until the redemption of the purchased possession (meaning until Christ comes back to get us), unto the praise of his glory.”

–Ephesians 4:13-14

So, what is unique about the New Covenant in its current embodiment – or the church? At the heart of it, it's the Spirit! The church enjoys the sealing and indwelling role of the Holy Ghost. Although the Spirit was very active throughout the Old Testament, and the Spirit will also be very active after the rapture in the Tribulation, the church is unique in receiving this sealing/indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost in our hearts. And this New Covenant experience of the Spirit will also be poured out on those alive during the Millennial Kingdom.

-When Will the Church Age End?:

We recognize that the church shares the same beginning point as the New Covenant – when the Spirit was poured out on Pentecost. Since we now understand when the Bible says the Church Age began, let's now examine when the Bible says it will end. As mentioned several times throughout this study, the terminal event of the Church Age on earth is the rapture.

First, let's begin by defining the actual English word "rapture." The word rapture in English means a state or experience of being carried away. In other words, it means to be carried away in spirit or in body.

-<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rapture> (Retrieved 1/10/18)

The Biblical application of this word refers to the rapture of the church – meaning the literal carrying away of the church from earth to heaven by God. The rapture of the church is the event in which God "snatches away" all believers from the earth in order to make way

for His righteous judgment to be poured out on the earth during the Tribulation period – or Daniel’s 70th Week.

Rapture is a term not found in the English Bible, but is a term that we use to refer to this supernatural, instantaneous “catching away” of the church described in Scripture. You may ask, “if the word rapture is not found in the English Bible, then where do we get this term?”

The English word “rapture” comes from the Latin “rapiemur,” which is the word Jerome used to translate the Greek word “harpazo” (Strong’s #G726 – meaning, “to pluck up, to seize, to catch away”) in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and other passages.

-<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/kjv/harpazo.html> (Retrieved 1/10/18)

(Jerome translated the Greek Bible into Latin – called the Latin Vulgate. The original New Testament manuscripts were written in Greek, but later translated into Latin, English, and other languages).

-<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vulgate> (Retrieved 1/21/19)

So, in other words, the English word “rapture” simply comes from the Latin translation “rapiemur” of the Koine Greek word “harpazo” found in 1 Thessalonians 4 and other places. Almost all modern Bibles translate this word as “caught up”. Let’s take a look at this passage, as it’s one of the foundational passages for understanding this concept of the rapture of the church.

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (Greek, harpazo) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

-1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Elsewhere, this term harpazo is used to describe how the Spirit caught up Philip near Gaza and brought him to Caesarea (Acts 8:39), and to describe Paul's experience of being caught up into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2-4). Thus, there can be no doubt that the word is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 to indicate the actual physical departure of people from earth to heaven.

It is also at this rapture event that we will be instantly changed into a “glorified” (likely inter-dimensional) body and caught up to the Lord. We see this in 1 Corinthians, as Paul expounds upon this mystery...

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

-1 Corinthians 15:50-54

We can see how these two passages (1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15) mesh together, giving us the clear understanding that God will resurrect all believers who have died, give them glorified bodies, and take them from the earth along with all living believers, who will also be given glorified bodies at that time.

Many Christians believe the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ are the same event. We believe that this is a grave error that is in many ways linked to the failure to recognize the distinction between Israel and the church – and that it will ultimately lead to a failure to understand the Bible. These two revelations – the distinction between Israel and the church, as well as the pretribulational rapture – are two beliefs that when combined, allow one to properly understand the larger story of the Bible and God’s timeline for eschatology.

While we can't get too sidetracked with this topic right now, we should recognize that the rapture is to be distinguished from the Second Coming. We will discuss this topic in more detail toward the end of this study. But let's continue...

The rapture of the church is a glorious event we should all be longing for. We will finally be free from sin. We will be in God's presence forever. The rapture is the next event to take place on the horizon for the church – it is our “blessed hope,” and what we yearn for (Titus 2:12-13).

A proper understanding of the rapture is important to this study because it helps to reveal the distinction between Israel and the church. As mentioned earlier, you cannot understand Daniel's 70 Weeks as a whole, or God's purposes for Daniel's 70th Week (the Tribulation), if you believe the church will be on earth during this time period. As we will demonstrate later on, a proper understanding of Daniel's 70 Weeks will make clear that all 70 Weeks pertain to Israel specifically – and not the church. In fact, we will actually find that they are mutually exclusive. By putting the church on Earth during the final 70th Week, you're committing the error of intermingling God's program for the church with God's program for Israel – which leads to confusion and error in Bible interpretation.

This is made even more clear when understanding God's purpose for the Tribulation, which we will see is to drive Israel, through trials, toward the recognition of her true Messiah, Christ. We will find that a precondition for His Second Coming involves Israel's repentance, her

recognition of Christ as Messiah, and her petitioning His return. The purpose of the Tribulation has nothing at all to do with the church. In fact, as we learn from Scripture, the Tribulation and the church are adversative or antithetical – they cannot mix. For example, the Tribulation is the wrath of God, and the church is described as being exempt from the wrath of God (1 Thess. 5:9). We will discuss this more in a later section.

So, understanding the timing of the rapture as taking place prior to the 70th Week is a vital part of understanding the distinction and mutual exclusivity of Israel and the church. When God's attention turns back on Israel during the 70th Week, the church must already have been removed from the picture. This will all be discussed in greater detail later in this study. Our purpose here was simply to understand the subject of the rapture, as it serves as the terminal bookend, or the ending point of the Church Age on earth.

-The New Covenant After the Church Age:

In the previous subsections, we've indulged in an in-depth exploration of the New Covenant instituted via the church. We've examined the beginning of the New Covenant and the church (which share a beginning point), and we've examined the removal of the church from the world scene at the rapture (the end of the Church Age). But what comes after this, in relation to the New Covenant? How will the New Covenant factor into the times that follow the rapture?

As we begin to explore these questions, let's start with a review of an aspect of the New Covenant that we've already mentioned a number

of times. That is, we should keep in mind that the New Covenant is not synonymous with the church. Although we are currently in the Church Age right now – a time characterized by the giving of the New Covenant – we cannot say that the New Covenant will end when the church is raptured from Earth. The Bible describes it as an eternal and everlasting covenant. So then how does this relate to future time periods that follow the rapture, such as the Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom?

We will give our answer first, and then give the explanation. In short, the answer is the Spirit outpouring will likely not be available during the Tribulation. Although the Spirit will absolutely be at work drawing people's hearts, we cannot say it will be filling individuals in the way that it does currently in the Church Age. However, the Spirit outpouring will absolutely be available following the Tribulation, during the Millennium, as this is one of the most consistent prophetic themes in the Old Testament prophets. Let's look into this deeper...

In the Old Testament prophetic passages that spoke of the New Covenant, we have seen clearly that these promises were made to Israel (the northern and southern kingdoms). For instance, in the Jeremiah 31 passage, this is clear...

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.”
-Jeremiah 31:31

So, as we've already mentioned, these promises of the Spirit outpouring were made to Israel, and their ultimate fulfillments will take

place in the Millennium, as that is the clear context. For instance, consider Jeremiah 31:34, only several verses following the passage we just read...

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

-Jeremiah 31:34

This prophecy was part of what Paul was referring to as he taught the church at Rome about the future plans of God for Israel, in Romans 11...

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

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

-Romans 11:25-27

So, Paul emphasizes that after the “fulness of the Gentiles be come in,” God will again turn His attention back on Israel, and all Israel will eventually be saved. Let’s think about this. When was this prophecy ever fulfilled? When did all of Israel know the Lord, from the least to the greatest? This obviously has never happened, but will happen at the end of the Great Tribulation, when the remnant of Jews repent and turn to Jesus as Messiah. The New Covenant Spirit will be poured

out on them soon after, in the Millennium, as Jesus sets up His earthly reign in Jerusalem following His Second Coming to rescue this remnant. During this Millennial context, all of Israel will know God – from the least to the greatest. Although there are numerous prophetic passages that describe this in the Old Testament, let's just look at the following passage from Zechariah (we will examine more in a later section).

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;

All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

-Zechariah 12:10-13:1

This is a clear prophecy discussing the future spiritual return of Israel to their true Messiah, Christ, at the end of the Tribulation, and their subsequent restoration during the Millennial Kingdom. So, we need to recognize that Israel will receive the blessings of the New Covenant in

the Millennium. The reference to a “fountain” in this passage is a consistent theme in both the Old and New Testaments, always referring to the New Covenant Spirit outpouring. For instance, the Lord is called the “fountain of living waters” in Jeremiah...

“O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.”
-Jeremiah 17:13

In other places, this is called “living water” and also the “wells of salvation.” For instance, we see this in Isaiah, describing Israel receiving this “living water” of the Spirit in the Millennial context...

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

-Isaiah 12:3-6

In this passage, we see the reference to “with joy, drawing water out of the wells of salvation” – pointing to the New Covenant Spirit outpouring to be administered upon the Jewish remnant and the believers in the Millennium. We can see in this excerpt, the many

references to “salvation.” In fact, the Hebrew word for “salvation” here is yeshuah (Strong’s #H3444), which is Jesus’ name in Hebrew. One of the more obvious clues that this chapter is referring to the Millennium though, is in the last verse, which states that God is dwelling in the midst of them at that future time – which can mean only one time – the future Millennial Kingdom.

Yet another prophetic reference to living water being poured out during the Millennium is found in Zechariah 14...

“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.” -Zechariah 14:8-9

These idioms referring to fountains, wells, and living water were very well-recognized by the Jews of Jesus’ day. They would have been extremely familiar with these common figures of speech as referring to the future outpouring of the Spirit by the Messiah. Jesus, during His earthly ministry, spoke of this coming outpouring, linking it to the events at Pentecost that would soon take place following His death, resurrection, and ascension. For instance, Jesus once encountered a woman who had come to draw water from a well. He told her about this coming outpouring of the Spirit, continuing the theme of fountains of living water as representing the Spirit...

“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

-John 4:13-14

Then during the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood up and proclaimed the following...

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

-John 7:37-39

John plainly identifies this promise of coming living water as a reference to the impending Spirit outpouring that would take place in Acts 2 on Pentecost. So, we can see the consistent use of this idiom throughout the Bible, helping us recognize its Old Testament prophetic usages as clearly referring to the Millennial outpouring to come for Israel. But it also clearly refers (in our more immediate context) to the Spirit outpouring on Pentecost, as clearly introduced by Jesus. Much more can be said about this, including an incredible mystery of an ancient Jewish ritual on the Feast of Tabernacles (which represents the Millennium), called the “Pouring of Water,” which is a picture of the Holy Spirit approaching Jerusalem during the Kingdom and being poured out upon the people. To learn more

about this, please consult the companion study, entitled, “*Typology Of The Moedim – The Levitical Feasts As Prophetic Macrocodes*”.

So, Jesus pointed to Himself (and His Spirit, which He would pour out) as the source of the “living water” that would sustain their spiritual lives. This outpouring of living water referred to the refreshing power of the Holy Spirit – the basis of the New Covenant – that would become an indwelling source of life for those who would receive Him. And as we can clearly see, this is a consistent theme spoken of throughout the Old Testament prophets, looking forward to the outpouring of the Spirit on Israel (and then all nations) in the Millennium.

But then what about during the Tribulation? Will the Spirit outpouring be available then? As mentioned earlier, we conclude that it will not. Certainly, the Spirit will be at work during the Tribulation, just as it always has, yet the Spirit baptism or infilling in the individual appears to be absent during this time. Let’s unpack this a bit...

Regarding the Tribulation, we see some indication from 2 Thessalonians 2:7, that the one restraining the world from sin, i.e., the Holy Spirit, will be “taken out of the way” prior to the Tribulation and revealing of the Antichrist. Although we can’t fully delve into it here, it seems obvious that this “Restrainer” refers to the Holy Spirit in His indwelling ministry within the hearts of Christians in a way unique to the Church Age.

In other words, the idea is that when the rapture takes place and the church is removed, this “restraining presence” will be removed,

allowing the onset of the Tribulation and the man of sin – the Antichrist. So, this would be one very probable piece of Scriptural evidence that the Spirit will not have an indwelling presence during the Tribulation, following the rapture.

Like we said, this doesn't mean that the Holy Spirit will not be at work during the Tribulation. We know that it will. For example, the Book of Revelation mentions a large Jewish revival that will take place during the Tribulation as a result of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. It would also seem clear that many other non-Jews will come to faith as well. In addition, in Revelation 11, Two Witnesses will perform acts that will require the involvement of God's Spirit. So, we understand the Holy Spirit will still be active during this time, and yet in a way fundamentally different than at present during the Church Age.

Furthermore, the Tribulation period seems to revert back to Old Testament conditions in several ways. One obvious way is that in the Old Testament period, saints were never permanently indwelt with the Spirit baptism, although a number of instances exist where select individuals were Spirit-empowered for specific tasks. It would seem that people are saved in the Tribulation in very much the same way they were saved prior to the church. Saved Tribulation saints and saved Old Testament saints would seem to be in a similar grouping, as the Tribulation is more accurately termed "Daniel's 70th Week" and is a continuation of the 70 Weeks Prophecy, which Daniel 9:24 tells us is a time period specifically designated for the Jews and Jerusalem. We will discuss this in great detail later in this study, and it is a foundational concept in recognizing the distinction between Israel and the church.

But our point here is that if the Tribulation is a continuation of Israel's 70 Weeks, it must be mutually exclusive in reference to the church and the New Covenant, or the Spirit outpouring. People during this time can be "saved" just like in previous ages, but they will not be part of the church, and they will not be "obeying the Gospel" as we do in the context of the church. They will not be indwelt by the Spirit as individuals in the church are now.

So, the overarching point here is, let's be sensitive to the fact that the church is not perfectly synonymous with the New Covenant in the overall panorama of God's plan. The church is a unique entity within the New Covenant, and is the current recipient of the New Covenant. But the promise was originally made to Israel, and part of God's agenda (based on the Old Testament prophecies) is clearly to bless Israel on the basis of the New Covenant in the Millennium. And furthermore, the New Covenant will be the eternally enduring and final covenant even past the Millennium into the Eternal State. All who will be saved will be saved on the basis of this ultimate and final covenant.

Israel And The Church – Distinct Origins, Purposes, And Destinies

As we have been asserting throughout this study, Israel is not the church, and the church is not Israel. Some have come to the mistaken conclusion that in the New Testament, the church is referred to as Israel. This is not the case at all. In the 73 mentions of Israel in the New Testament, the term is always used to refer to either the nation of Israel as a whole, or (rarely) to the believing remnant within the nation – in other words, Hebrew believers in Jesus. It is never used of the church in general or of Gentile believers. It is never used of a mixed Jew/Gentile audience, whether believers or unbelievers.

As we have already seen earlier in this study, the Apostle Paul, in 1st Corinthians 10:32, offers a vital axiom that anchors our understanding of the distinction the Bible draws between Israel, the Gentiles, and the church.

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:” –1 Corinthians 10:32

We clearly see three groups differentiated here by Paul – in perfect alignment with the greater backdrop of the covenants communicated in Scripture, which we have reviewed. This entire 10th Chapter of 1 Corinthians reinforces this explicit distinction that many Christians, unfortunately, choose to ignore.

In this section, we will first draw attention to the Biblical portrayal that Israel and the church each have distinct origins, purposes, and

destinies. In this study, we wish to not only emphasize the differences between the two, but also emphasize the unique and special way that Christ views His bride, the church.

We will do this in two parts – first, we will contrast Israel and the church. Secondly, we will contrast the Old and New Covenants. We have already seen that the Old Covenant is the earthly, physical covenant given to Israel, while the New Covenant is the spiritual, heavenly covenant first received by the church. We will further examine the distinctions between these two covenants in order to further sharpen our understanding of the distinction between Israel and the church.

So, first let's examine the Biblical points of contrast between Israel and the church. You will notice that the characteristics and expectations of Israel are always physical and earthly, while the characteristics and expectations of the church are spiritual and heavenly. As we will explore further in the section that follows this one, be sensitive to the idea that Israel is a physical symbol – or a type – of the institution founded upon better promises – the church. In many of our comparisons, you will be able to detect this. Let's begin...

- Israel: Israel is a specific nation chosen by God and sustained by covenant promises (Deut. 7:6-9). Not all individuals in this chosen nation are saved (Rom. 9:6; 11:28).

The Church: The church is a called-out assembly of believers out of every nation, who have been baptized into the body of

Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Every true member of the body of Christ is saved (we don't mean every member of a particular local church). There are multitudes of professing believers who will not be saved.

- Israel: Israel traces its origin as a people to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Jacob, later renamed Israel, being the father of the twelve tribes), and its origin as a nation to the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Mosaic Law at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19).

The Church: The church traces its origin to the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when believers were first placed into the body of Christ by obedience to the gospel plan of salvation.

- Israel: God's program for Israel centered in Jerusalem (Mt. 23:37) and will again center in Jerusalem during the Tribulation (Mt. 24:15-20) and during the Millennium (Isa. 2:1-5).

The Church: God's program for His church began in Jerusalem, but extended to the uttermost parts of the earth (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). The church is identified with the risen Christ, not with any earthly city. However, in the ultimate eternal sense, the New Jerusalem – a spiritual Jerusalem not made with human hands – is the church's ultimate dwelling place (Rev. 21).

- Israel: The hope and expectancy of Israel was earthly, centering on the establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah foretold by the prophets (Jer. 23:5-8; Isa. 2:1-5; 11:1-16).

The Church: The hope and expectancy of the church is heavenly, centering on the glorious appearing of Christ at the rapture to take His people to heaven (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:1-4; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

- Israel: God's purpose and program for Israel was revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Church: God's purpose and program for the church was hidden in the Old Testament, and was revealed through the New Testament apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:5). Paul considered it his high privilege to reveal the mystery of the church.

- Israel: Israel's history involved animal sacrifices, which acted as a shadow of what was to come in the death of Jesus Christ, the ultimate spotless Lamb.

The Church: The church's history does not involve animal sacrifices. Rather, the OT practice of animal sacrifices to atone for sins is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Messiah's sacrifice is commemorated by means of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-29).

- Israel: Israel's history involves a physical Temple for worship.

The Church: In the church, God manifests His glory in His believers, both individually and collectively, designating them (their bodies) as His temple (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; Eph. 2:21-

22). This is accomplished by the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost.

- Israel: Israel's history involves a Levitical (of the Tribe of Levi) priesthood limited to the sons of Aaron, and excluded most Israelites (Ex. 29; Deut. 10:8).

The Church: Whereas Israel had a priesthood, the church is a priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5).

- Israel: Male Jews were circumcised as a symbol of the Abrahamic Covenant. Believing Jews were also figuratively circumcised in the heart (Jer. 4:4).

The Church: In the church, true believers enjoy an internal circumcision of the heart, not made with hands (Col. 2:11; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 6:15-16). Physical circumcision is not required.

- Israel: Israel was under the Law of Moses as a rule of life.

The Church: The church is under a "better" covenant (Heb. 8).

- Israel: Unbelieving Jews were physical children of Abraham and spiritual children of the devil (John 8:37-44).

The Church: Every believer in Christ (every true member of the church, whether Jew or Gentile) is a figurative "child of Abraham" and a child of God (Rom. 4:11-12; Gal. 3:26-29). This statement does not mean that Church Age believers are literal

Jews or Israelites, but rather that they spiritually embody what it truly means to be a “child of Abraham” (Rom. 9:6-8).

- Israel: Israel was to observe the Sabbath Day in accordance with OT law (Exodus 20:8). Sabbath observance will also apparently take place in the Tribulation (Mt. 24:20) and in the Millennium (Ezek. 46:1,3).

The Church: Though the Sabbath Day was the “rest” Israel was instructed to observe, the fulfillment of what that rest was intended to be is manifested in the experience of the believer being filled with the Holy Ghost (Isa. 28:11-12). Rather than setting aside a certain day and observing Mosaic Law, the church “rests” in God on a daily basis (Col. 2:16).

- Israel: Believing Jews prior to Pentecost, believing Jews during the Tribulation, and believing Jews during the Kingdom reign of Christ are not members of the body of Christ (the church).

The Church: Believing Jews and Gentiles from Pentecost to the rapture who have obeyed the gospel are members of the body of Christ (the church).

- Israel: Israel’s place of worship centered in Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10; John 4:20) and this will also be true in the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27) and in the Millennium (Isa. 2:1-5).

The Church: The church's place of worship is "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name" (Mt. 18:20; John 4:21-24). Christ is in the midst of His churches (Rev. 1:13, 20).

- Israel: Israel is likened to the wife of Jehovah/Yahweh, often an unfaithful wife or a whore (Hosea).

The Church: The church is the beloved bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-8) to be one day presented as a blameless and spotless virgin (Eph. 5:27).

Although there are probably many more comparative points that can be made, these that we have examined provide the foundational distinctives that make Israel and the church unique.

Let's now point out a list of contrasts between the Old Covenant (of which Israel was the recipient) and the New Covenant (of which the church was the first recipient). This will further sharpen our perception of the distinction between Israel and the church – and help us understand why Scripture describes the New Covenant as a better covenant built upon better promises...

- The Old Covenant came by Moses, while the New Covenant came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).
- The Old Covenant is a covenant of Letter, while the New Covenant is a covenant of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6).

- The Old Covenant leads to death, while the New Covenant gives life (2 Cor. 3:6).
- The Old Covenant was ended by Jesus Christ (Romans 10:4), while the New Covenant was established by Jesus Christ (Heb. 8:6).
- The Old Covenant enslaves (Gal. 5:1), while the New Covenant makes free (John 8:32, 36).
- The Old Covenant leaves man imperfect, while the New Covenant leaves man perfect (Heb. 7:19).
- The Old Covenant exposes sin (Gal. 3:19), while the New Covenant covers sin (Rom. 4:1-8).
- The Old Covenant cannot give life (2 Cor. 3:7), while the New Covenant gives life (Gal. 6:8, 2 Cor. 3:6).
- The Old Covenant was abolished, while the New Covenant is in effect and everlasting (Eph. 2:15).
- The Old Covenant brings a curse (Gal. 3:10), while the New Covenant redeems from the curse (Gal. 3:13).
- The Old Covenant is a shadow (Col. 2:14-17), while the New Covenant is the reality (Heb. 10:1-18).

- The Old Covenant is a covered glory, while the New Covenant is glory uncovered (2 Cor. 3:7-18).
- The Old Covenant had many high priests (Heb. 7:23), while the New Covenant has only one High Priest (Jesus Christ) (Heb. 7:24-28).
- The Old Covenant had earthly High priests (Heb. 5:1-4), while the New Covenant has a heavenly High Priest (Heb. 9:24, 10:12).
- The Old Covenant had an earthly Tabernacle/Temple (Heb. 9:2), while the New Covenant has a heavenly Tabernacle/Temple (Heb. 8:2).
- In the Old Covenant, the priesthood was of the Order of Aaron, while in the New Covenant, the priesthood is of the Order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:11, 21).
- In the Old Covenant, priest and High Priests were sinners (Heb. 5:1-4), while in the New Covenant, the High Priest Christ has no sin (Heb. 7:26).
- The Old Covenant was fulfilled (Mat. 5:17-18), while the New Covenant is perpetually active (Heb. 8:6, 10:9).
- In the Old Covenant, the Law was written on stone tablets, while in the New Covenant, God's Law is written on people's hearts (Jeremiah 31:33).

- In the Old Covenant, Moses and the prophets were mediators (Ex. 20:18-19, Gal. 3:19), while in the New Covenant, Jesus Christ is the only Mediator (1 Tím. 2:5, Heb. 9:15).
- The Old Covenant needed blood offerings for sin (Lev. 17:11), while in the New Covenant, Jesus's blood alone was the one perfect sin offering (Heb. 9:12).
- In the Old Covenant, the Tabernacle/Temple was made with hands (Heb. 9:1-2), while in the New Covenant the Tabernacle/Temple is one made without hands (Heb. 9:11).
- The Old Covenant remembers sin (Heb. 10:3), while the New Covenant does not remember sin (Heb. 8:12, 10:17).
- The Old Covenant was exclusively for Israel (Deut. 4:7-8), while the New Covenant is for all nations (Mt. 28:19-20).

So, we can see that Israel and the church each have a laundry list of distinctions. We have now also seen that the covenants given to each – the Old to Israel and the New to the church – reflect these distinctions. Everything about the Old Covenant served as an earthly, physical picture, or symbol of its ultimate spiritual fulfillment in the New Covenant. Everything about the Old Covenant was inferior and temporary, while everything about the New Covenant is superior and everlasting. In the next section, we will build upon this foundation, delving into the topic of typology.

Israel – A Type Of The Church

In the Bible, a “type” may be defined as “a figure or ensample (meaning a pattern or model) of something future and more or less prophetic, called the ‘antitype.’”

-E.W. Bullinger, “Figures of Speech Used in the Bible,” Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968, p. 768.

Wick Broomall, in “Baker Dictionary of Theology,” defines it as follows...

“A type is a shadow cast on the pages of Old Testament history by a truth whose full embodiment or antitype is found in the New Testament revelation.”

-Wick Broomall, “Baker Dictionary of Theology,” eds. Everett F. Harrison, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Carl F. H. Henry, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1960, p. 533.

Typology helps us to perceive the unity of the Scriptures, especially the unity and continuity between the Testaments (or Covenants). In other words, the subject of prophetic typology in the Bible turns out to be a strong evidence of the integration of the Bible, which is one factor that demonstrates its authorship from outside of time. Before moving on, let’s quickly define what we mean by “the integration of the Bible.”

The Bible being integrated means that it contains various parts or aspects that are linked or coordinated by a common author. The fact that the Bible is really a series of 66 different books written by over 40 men who mostly didn’t know each other, over the course of around 1,500 years indicates that if it is truly integrated, then the true

origin of this book's inspiration is of necessity, from outside of our time domain.

In other words, if we do conclude that there is evidence of its integration, then that requires a common author – but because it was written over the course of 1,500 years by different people who mainly weren't in contact with each other, then it provably cannot come from man. It must be from a Being outside the constraints of time altogether, who has the ability to inspire man and interact in human history. If we find this proposition regarding integration to prove true, it has profound implications on the way we view this collection of books we call the Bible.

Let's put it one last way to ensure this is understood. Imagine your favorite novel or storybook...imagine you one day found out that the chapters were written by different people who mostly didn't know each other and weren't alive at the same time, over a period of 1,500 years...yet, the storyline was flawless, or, to use our term, integrated. Obviously, this is impossible – especially when the earlier chapters predict how the later chapters would turn out with amazing precision – and its predictions actually align with the record of human history. This points to a common Author outside of time who was guiding and inspiring the human writers to compose this unified story. This is what we mean by integration. Let's continue...

An understanding of prophetic types is essential to an understanding of the Bible. Many of the prominent characters in the Old Testament function in certain ways as types that anticipate the then-future Jesus Christ, who is the antitype. But Jesus is not the only subject of

typological prophecy. There are many other anticipatory types embedded in Scripture, involving individuals, groups, events, institutions, objects, animals, et al., all acting as types of certain concepts or truths that would later become central themes in the Biblical narrative.

One of the most obvious prophetic subjects of typology in Scripture is the contrast between physical and earthly Israel under the Old Covenant (the type) and the spiritual and heavenly church under the New Covenant (the antitype). You might even say the Old Testament vs. the New Testament. In this section, we will examine the Scriptural basis for this, which is extensive. In order to do this, we will examine the handful of Greek words that are used in the New Testament to convey the concept of typology, and see what they have to say about the relationship between the Old and New Covenants.

-Greek Words Conveying the Typology of Israel vs. the Church:

The Greek language – the language in which the New Testament was written – is very useful to us in examining this concept of Israel being a prophetic type of the church. For those not familiar with the concept of typology, the easiest synonym may be a “prototype,” which is really what we mean when we use the word “type” in the Biblical prophetic sense. The Greek language has a number of words that all convey this concept of Israel being a prototype of the church in Scripture. These words – as we will see – all communicate a similar meaning, such as: type, shadow, pattern, example, parable, allegory, figure, model, comparison, likeness, similitude, etc.

- “Tupos”:

This first example we will look at is the word “tupos” (Strong’s #5179b) the Greek word from which we get the English word type – meaning an anticipatory pattern or symbol.

-Joseph H. Thayer, “Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.,” repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015, p. 632.

Although this word is variously used in the New Testament, we see it used in our present context in Romans 5:14, where Paul declares that Adam “is a figure (tupos, or type) of him that was to come”, i.e., Christ.

“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure (tupos) of him that was to come (meaning Christ).”

-Romans 5:14

So, we are clearly told that Adam was a type, or a prototype, of Christ. This is shown also in 1 Corinthians 15:45-47...

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.” -1 Corinthians 15:45-47

As we have already mentioned, the Old Covenant (or Israel) was the physical, earthly symbol or type of the ultimate antitype – the spiritual, heavenly, New Covenant church. It's important to get what Paul is really saying here. Adam, was more than just a direct type of Christ – Adam was a symbol of the “first,” while Christ is a symbol of the “second,” or the last, or the ultimate. Israel was the first, the church was the second, or the last, or the ultimate. Adam was the original figure representing the Old Testament, while Christ is the ultimate figure representing the New Testament. So, this is also contrast between the Old and New Covenants and reflects the contrast between Israel and the church. Let's continue...

There is another passage – also in 1 Corinthians – that continues to reveal this truth that Israel is a type of the church...

“Now all these things happened unto them (meaning Israel) for examples: and they are written for our (meaning the church's) admonition....”

-1 Corinthians 10:11

The word translated “examples” comes from “tupos.” To understand that this passage is clearly contrasting Israel and the church, we need to see the full context by looking reading Verses 1-11...

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
And did all eat the same spiritual meat;
And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.
But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.
Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.
Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.
Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.
Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.
Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.
Now all these things happened unto them for examples (tupos): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” -1 Corinthians 10:1-11

So, Paul clearly presents the Old Testament events of national Israel's failures as having relevance for the New Covenant church, and then summarizes his statements in Verse 11, declaring them to be a “tupos,” or an example, for us (the church). But it gets even clearer as we continue...

- “Skía”:

The second word we will look at is “skía” (Strong’s #4639), rendered “shadow” in Colossians 2:17. This word, according to Thayer’s Lexicon, can mean “an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object.”

-Ibid., p. 578.

In other words, the shadow would be like the type and the object casting the shadow is the antitype. This is exactly how it is used in Colossians 2:17...

“Which are a shadow (skía) of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

-Colossians 2:17

To understand what is the shadow (skía, or the type) and what is the object (the antitype), let’s examine the point Paul is making by looking at Verses 11-17 of this chapter in order to see what he is referring to...

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven

you all trespasses;
Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,
which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to
his cross;
And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew
of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in
respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath
days:
Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of
Christ.” -Colossians 2:11-17

First, Paul contrasts the Old Covenant symbol of circumcision with the New Covenant ritual of baptism. We know that circumcision only has physical benefits and effects, while the New Testament is clear that baptism has spiritual effects.

Next, he discusses how the “ordinances” of the Old Covenant Law were “nailed to the cross” by Christ. Thayer’s Lexicon says the word “ordinances” (Strong’s #G1378) is used in other places in the New Testament to describe the rules and requirements of the Old Covenant Law of Moses.

Paul then focuses on the dietary restrictions and ritual holy days (including new moons and sabbaths) that were required observances under the Old Covenant. But he indicates that members of the New Covenant are not obligated to observe these requirements. He instead describes them as being a shadow (skia) of things to come in New Covenant times.

So, they were earthly and physical, but represented (or were intended to teach about) a spiritual fulfillment in the New Covenant (“but the body is of Christ”).

- “Hupodeigma”:

The third word we will look at is the term “hupodeigma” (Strong’s #G5262), which is translated “example,” and is used in conjunction with “shadow” in Hebrews 8:5 (cf. Hebrews 9:23). This word also means a figure, an example, or a model.

-Ibid., pp. 642-643.

In Hebrews 8:5, we actually see three of the terms we have examined, all in the same verse, and all conveying a similar concept...

“Who serve unto the example (hupodeigma) and shadow (skia) of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern (tupos) shewed to thee in the mount.” -Hebrews 8:5

Again, to fully recognize the context of this passage, and to prove that it’s describing Israel under the Old Covenant as being a type looking towards the church under the New Covenant, we need to read more of this chapter. In fact, because it so clearly argues this point, we will read the entire thing...

“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest (talking about Christ), who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

Who serve unto the example (hupodeigma) and shadow (skia) of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern (tupos) shewed to thee in the mount.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

-Hebrews 8

Ok, so there's a lot here to discuss, but let's just summarize several key points...

First, he begins by talking about the ultimate High Priest – Jesus Christ. We need to recognize that the Old Covenant was based upon an earthly priesthood that had a High Priest. There was a Tabernacle in which they performed the priestly sacrifices and rituals according to the commandments of the Old Covenant Law. So, the message Paul is conveying here, is that clearly, the earthly, natural, Old Covenant ritual was a picture of something spiritual and heavenly. If there was any question that this was the context, he removes all doubt in what follows. After giving us that picture, he then – starting in Verse 6 – launches into the contrast between the Old and New Covenants, declaring that the Old was faulty. He says that this High Priest, Christ, came to establish a New Covenant that is better, being founded upon better promises.

Note: We need to recognize that one of the purposes for the manifestation of the Son of God (God in human form) was to be the arbiter, or mediator, of this New Covenant. Since He was both fully man and fully God, He was unique in being able to perform this mission. Let's continue...

Paul then quotes the passage we have repeatedly mentioned – Jeremiah 31:33 – one of the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of a New Covenant. Finally, in the last verse, he finishes by saying that the coming of a New Covenant is what made the previous one Old. He also goes as far as to say that the Old Covenant is no more – it is decaying and vanishing away, with the introduction of the New and better Covenant.

So, again, we see the Greek words in the New Testament clearly describing the typology of Israel, or the Old Covenant and the antitype, the church, or the New Covenant.

- “Parabole”:

The fourth word we need to look at is “parabole” (Strong's #G3850 – compare to our English word “parable”). This word is found in Hebrews 9:9, where certain elements of the Tabernacle are described as “a figure (parabole) for the time then present” (cf. 11:19). This word means a comparison, likeness, similitude, or a parable.

-Ibid., p. 479.

“Which was a figure (parabole) for the time then present (the Old Covenant), in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;”
-Hebrews 9:9

Hebrews Chapter 9 continues the writer’s dissertation regarding the contrast between the Old and New Covenants that we just read in Hebrews 8. Again, because it is so relevant to our topic here, we really need to look at this whole chapter...

“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the

errors of the people:

The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of

no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

So, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” -Hebrews 9

This was a long passage, but necessary to read in order to understand this concept. So, we see again that in this chapter, the physical, earthly rituals, symbols, and ordinances of the Old Covenant are contrasted with the spiritual, heavenly New Covenant antitypes they represented.

- “Antitupos”:

Finally, we will note the use of the word “antitupos” (Strong’s #G499 – compare to our English word “antitype”), rendered “figures” in Hebrews 9:24, and “like figure” in 1 Peter 3:21. This word, as used in the New Testament, denotes that which corresponds to the type (as we’ve already mentioned). The antitype is the ultimate reality which fulfills the prophetic type.

-ibid., p. 51.

We see (as we just read) in Hebrews 9:24, this word for “figures,” speaking of the way the Tabernacle and related objects in the Old Covenant were apparently created after the pattern of a genuine heavenly version.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures (antitupos) of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”
-Hebrews 9:24

So, just as the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies once a year on Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement – with the blood

of a sacrifice, Christ apparently completed this ritual by bringing His own perfect blood to the heavenly Tabernacle after His death on the cross. This “heavenly” version, which received the perfect blood of Christ, would inaugurate the New Covenant, indicating how everything about this covenant would be spiritual and heavenly. Although the earthly “parable” took place yearly, the ultimate antitype was done once for all time.

We see this term again in 1 Peter 3:21...

“The like figure (antítupos) whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:”

-1 Peter 3:21

To get a good idea of the context here, we only need to read a portion of the previous verse. So, let’s back up and reread this whole excerpt...

“...when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

The like figure (antítupos) whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:”

-1 Peter 3:20b-21

So, in this passage, Peter tells us that the Flood of Noah's day acted as a type of New Covenant baptism (the antitype). Peter is saying that just as the water carried Noah and his family to salvation in the ark, baptism is crucial for our salvation by washing our sins away (cf. Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Mark 16:16, and Galatians 3:27). To take it even further, baptism is one of the key elements that brings you into the safety of the "ark" known as the church!

So, we have looked at a number of the Greek words that all convey the reality that the New Testament writers convey to us – that Israel, under the earthly and physical Old Covenant served as a prophetic type of the church under the heavenly and spiritual New Covenant. In the next subsection, we will drive this point home even more conclusively.

-Further Exploration of the Typology of Israel and the Church:

If you still remain skeptical of what we discussed in the previous subsection, we will drive it home conclusively in this section, as we will delve even deeper into the topic of Israel as a type of the church. We have already unmistakably seen that the New Testament writers portrayed Israel as being the earthly, physical, or "fleshly" recipients of the Old Covenant (a covenant full of earthly, physical symbols that pointed towards greater spiritual fulfillments). We have also seen that they portrayed the church as the spiritual recipients of the New Covenant (which was that greater spiritual fulfillment). This will become abundantly clear, as we investigate some incredible examples of the prophetic integration of Scripture. Let's begin...

You may recall that one of the terms linked to the word “type” is the word “pattern.” To the Jewish mind, prophecy is not just prediction and fulfillment, but also involves typology and prophetic patterning or prefiguring.

-<https://www.khouse.org/articles/2001/341/> (Retrieved 2/08/19)

Well, it turns out that there is a recurring pattern in the Old Testament where the younger son receives the blessing from the father that should, by right, have gone to the firstborn son. In Old Testament society, the firstborn son was the one who normally received a double inheritance, and was the one who would inherit his father’s role as head of the family.

But we continually see God reversing this order in the stories of the patriarchs and following. What mystery is concealed here? Is this all just an accident? We should know by now that nothing in Scripture is accidental. Instead, there is pattern being formed that is meant to convey to us a prophetic message. We will attempt to uncover what this prophetic mystery means – but first, let’s examine some of these examples of the younger son usurping the firstborn in Scripture.

The following are some examples:

- Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-8)

Although Cain was the firstborn, God had regard for his younger brother Abel’s sacrificial offering. This prompted Cain to murder Abel.

- Ishmael and Isaac (Genesis 17:18-21)

After receiving the prophetic word that Abraham's barren wife Sarah would bear a son during old age, Abraham wavered in his faith and decided to take matters into his own hands by impregnating his concubine Hagar. This produced Ishmael, Abraham's first-born son. But God's message was clear that Sarah would bear a son – Isaac – who would be the one to inherit God's covenant promise.

- Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25-27, Romans 9:10-13, Hebrews 12:15-17)

Isaac's barren wife Rebekah became pregnant with twins – Esau (the elder) and Jacob (the younger). God prophesied to Rebekah that the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). Though this was already spoken, in later years Rebekah would decide to take matters into her own hands and help her favored son Jacob conspire to take the birthright away from Esau – which he did.

- Joseph and Reuben (Genesis 49:1-4, 1 Chronicles 5:1-2)

Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob, but lost the blessing for sleeping with his stepmother. Although Joseph's brother Judah prevailed over his brothers, Scripture is clear that Joseph received the birthright.

- Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:8-20)

As an old man, Joseph's father Jacob was ready to impart his blessings onto Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Although Joseph wanted Jacob to bless his eldest son Manasseh with the blessing of the firstborn, Jacob purposely switched hands and blessed the younger son.

- Perez and Zerah (Genesis 38:27-30)

Perez and Zerah were twins, but during their birth, Zerah stuck his hand out of the womb first, prompting the midwife to tie a scarlet thread on his wrist to mark him as the firstborn. But he then pulled his hand back inside the womb and his twin brother Perez came out and got the blessing.

- David and his brothers (1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 89:20-29)

When the prophet Samuel came to Jesse's house to find and anoint the second king of Israel, he passed over all of David's elder brothers and instead anointed David. Psalm 89 says that God made David His firstborn. This has a unique twist as well, in that David was also the second king of Israel, and he – not Saul, who was the first king – received the Davidic Covenant of an everlasting throne through Jesus Christ the Messiah.

So, we continually witness this counter-cultural theme of the younger receiving prominence over the older, or the second having prominence over the first. There are many more examples that also

can be pointed out. It is clear that this is a deliberate theme in Scripture. The question then, is, what are we to make of it? What does it mean?

Fortunately, the Apostle Paul comes to our rescue and helps interpret this for us. He takes one of the above examples, and explains to the church at Galatia that this concept of the younger surpassing the elder is actually a type, or allegory, of Israel and the church. Israel is obviously the elder, or the first, and the church is the younger, or the second. Let's take a look at this passage, found in Galatians 4...

"Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written,

"Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband."

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the

Scripture say? “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.”

-Galatians 4:21-28 (ESV)

Let's break down what Paul is trying to convey in this passage...

First, he addresses those who wish to put Christians back under the Law. His point is to make them realize the Old Covenant is inferior, and that as members of the church, we have the blessings of the superior New Covenant. In other words, why settle for the type when you can have the antitype? Why settle for the shadow when you can have the actual object that's casting the shadow?

Paul then describes the two sons of Abraham – the elder, being Ishmael, who came from Abraham's Egyptian servant Hagar, and the younger, being Isaac, who came from Abraham's wife Sarah (here called a “free woman”). He contrasts the two sons by saying Ishmael was a son born after the “flesh” – a reference to things earthly and physical. Meanwhile, he says Isaac was a son born through promise – referring to God's prophetic word to Sarah that she would miraculously give birth, despite being barren and an old woman. Nothing about this was earthly or physical. This was supernatural, or you might say, heavenly or spiritual. This was the promised son whom God said would inherit the Abrahamic Covenant and become a progenitor of the Messianic lineage.

Next, Paul actually states that these two women (Hagar and Sarah) are allegories (or types) representing the Old and New Covenants!

He ironically says that Hagar (an Egyptian slave) represents the Old Covenant given to Israel at Mt. Sinai after the Israelites escaped Egyptian slavery. He said Hagar corresponds to the earthly city of Jerusalem, which is in bondage under the Law. Meanwhile, he says that Sarah (ironically, the actual mother of Israel), as a free woman, represents the New Covenant, corresponding to the heavenly New Jerusalem (the Jerusalem from above). Later in Revelation, we are told that following the Millennial reign of Christ on earth, this city – the New Jerusalem – will descend from heaven (Revelation 21:2-4). It is described as being the eternal home of the bride of Christ, the church (cf. Hebrews 12:22, and 13:14), making it a perfect idiom for the New Covenant.

Paul also contrasts the children of each woman. The children of Hagar, he ironically equates to the children of the Old Covenant – the nation Israel! Meanwhile, he declares that “we” (the church, in which he included himself) are children of the “free woman” Sarah. In other words, the church are children of the New Covenant. He says this despite the fact that Sarah is actually the mother of Isaac, the progenitor of the physical tribes of Israel!

This aligns perfectly with the multitude of other New Testament writings that we’ve examined which describe the church as being the “true ‘descendants’ of Abraham,” in a spiritual sense – or in other words, they follow Abraham’s pattern in that they operate on the spiritual basis of true faith. So, if Sarah – the mother of physical Israel – is an allegory for being the mother of the New Covenant, then we should understand that Israel (her actual children) acts as a type of the church (the actual children of the New Covenant).

Let's summarize...

- Hagar = the Old Covenant, and her children = Israel
- Sarah = the New Covenant, and her children = the church

...and Paul declares this to be a type, or an allegory – giving us Scriptural confirmation of what we've been asserting – that Israel (Sarah's actual descendants) is a type of the church!

So, we must take notice of the pervasive nature of the episodes in Scripture where the younger son (representing the church, which came about long after Israel) inherits the promise instead of the firstborn (representing Israel, which preceded the church and as a nation, rejected their Messiah). It is incredible to recognize that this plan of God was embedded in Scripture going all the way back to the first brothers in history – a demonstration of the profound integration of Scripture and the foreknowledge of this plan in God's mind.

As we transition to the next subsection, we will switch gears a bit and begin to examine the erroneous doctrine called Replacement Theology, its origins, and its implications.

An Evaluation of Replacement Theology

In one of our previous sections, we covered a number of distinctions that Scripture presents, highlighting the unique origins, purposes, and destinies of both Israel and the church, as well as the contrasts between the Old and New Covenants. We will now discuss the belief that is based upon the neglect of these distinctions – the belief called Replacement Theology. In this section, we will first go in-depth to debunk this erroneous belief from the clear testimony of Scripture. We will then explore some of the devastating historical ramifications that have arisen from embracing this belief.

By not understanding these distinctions, many false doctrines have crept into so-called Christianity, some (like we said) having devastating repercussions. We will find that these false doctrines are often a result of – and/or fueled by – anti-Semitism (the hatred of, or discrimination against the Jews).

Replacement Theology is the belief that God's plans for Israel have ceased and that the church is Israel's replacement. Adherents of this belief typically end up spiritualizing or allegorizing God's promises to Israel and somehow connecting them to the church. We will find that it is impossible to interpret the Bible literally and at the same time be a Replacement theologian. Replacement Theology is always a downstream result of an allegorical interpretation of the Bible, in which prophetic statements are not taken at face value. The allegorist "spiritualizes" them, ignoring the context, and inserts a meaning of his own choosing. This flawed hermeneutical foundation of allegorism

acts as the framework through which beliefs such as Replacement Theology are able to surface and thrive.

So, why does understanding the error of Replacement Theology matter? First and foremost, simply because it's unbiblical, and therefore, wrong. But additionally, we should recognize that a belief in this doctrine will absolutely ensure that one will never understand the Bible as a whole. It is impossible to understand God's purposes and God's future plans as expressed in the prophetic corpus of Scripture while embracing this belief. Belief in Replacement Theology will result in inevitable confusion and false doctrine.

But there is an even darker outcome of embracing Replacement Theology – this being the horrible scourge of anti-Semitism, which history readily demonstrates – and which we will point out in detail in the latter half of this section. But before delving into that, we will first begin by simply looking into Scripture and spend some time refuting this false doctrine of Replacement Theology. As you will see, this is not a difficult task. You simply need to be capable of reading the text and accepting the plain and obvious message. That's all. It really is that easy. With that said, let's begin...

-A Refutation Of Replacement Theology:

Like we have already mentioned thus far, Replacement Theology can easily be debunked solely based on the fact that it's built upon an illegitimate method of Bible interpretation – allegorism. The Bible itself provides us with the guide for sound Bible interpretation. It is simply this: since all Bible prophecy in the past was fulfilled literally,

we should have the expectation that all future prophecies that are still awaiting fulfillment will also be fulfilled literally. And likewise, we should have that expectation regarding Israel's future in God's program – since the great majority of Bible prophecy has Israel as the focus. But let's take some time to understand what the Bible has to say regarding this topic of whether or not Israel has been replaced in God's program...

First, as we have already seen in earlier passages, the Bible repeatedly and overtly denounces this idea of the church "replacing" Israel in God's program. We've already gone over a number of these clear passages in earlier sections, and so we do not need to repeat them here. Further, we have noted that God's promises and covenants regarding Israel are unconditional and everlasting. The entirety of the prophetic corpus of Scripture, all of the direct promises of God throughout the Old Testament, as well as the direct words of the New Testament writers all clearly declare that God's promises to Israel will still be fulfilled. If you take the Bible literally and understand its words in the plain, normal sense, this is an inescapable conclusion. The best place to begin our deeper exploration of this topic is the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Romans, in which he clearly answers this issue.

In the first eight chapters of Romans, Paul begins by laying down a discourse on a number of major doctrines – including the doctrines of justification, sanctification, and glorification. But then he takes a break from the teaching of his doctrine and beginning with Chapter 9, he parenthetically inserts three chapters discussing the condition of the Jews, or national Israel. In these three chapters, Paul helps us

understand where and how the nation of Israel fits into the future plans and purpose of God.

In Chapter 9, he deals primarily with Israel's past (as God's chosen and privileged people). In Chapter 10, he deals primarily with Israel's present (as a nation which has refused to submit to Christ's gospel). And in Chapter 11, he deals primarily with Israel's future (as a nation which he says someday will be saved and will enjoy the fulfillment of the New Covenant promises as a nation). As I'm sure you can already see, if Romans 11 really does say what we just claimed, then just based on that chapter alone, Replacement Theology is completely demolished. So, let's begin by investigating this chapter...

In Romans 11, Paul begins by setting the context of this chapter as being specifically about the Jewish people – the nation of Israel – and what will become of them in the future. The question he was answering was essentially, “if the Gentiles have received the New Covenant promise after the Jews as a nation had rejected it, then what future relevance does Israel still have? Does Israel still have a future in God's program?”

Paul tells us the answer in this chapter, completely obliterating the false doctrine of “Replacement Theology.” He begins the chapter by asking the basic question we just asked. He then promptly answers it...

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.”

-Romans 11:1-2a

Paul makes it clear that God is not finished with the Jewish people – He still has a unique plan for them. Before continuing with Chapter 11, we need to first pause in order to frame our context. In order to understand the relevance of this question for Paul's 1st century audience, we need to try to put ourselves in the shoes of those who lived at that time and to try to understand this question they were having regarding the problem of "what is now the purpose of Israel?"

Let's recognize four key facts that will help us understand this issue they were having...

- Fact #1 – The Israelites are God's chosen people (Deut. 7:6-9; Romans 11:28).
- Fact #2 – God promised His chosen people that they would enjoy a glorious Kingdom under their Messiah (Dan. 7:13-14; Isaiah 2:1-5; 9:6-7; 11:1-9; Jer. 23:5-8; 31:31-37; 33:14-16; Luke 1:32-33).
- Fact #3 – The nation Israel (at least the great majority of the nation, as well as their leadership) rejected their Messiah when He came to earth (John 1:11; Matthew 12:22-24; Matthew 21:33-46; 27:22, 23, 25; John 19:15; Acts 22:22; 1 Th.2:14-15).
- Fact #4 – When the church first began it was made up entirely of Jewish believers, but gradually this changed. As the years

went by, the church was comprised of more and more Gentiles, and less and less Jews.

Are you beginning to see the problem? To a 1st century Christian without access to a full New Testament, Facts #1 and #2 seem to be contradicted by Facts #3 and #4. What has happened to the promise of Israel's glorious earthly Messianic Kingdom? What has happened to all of the promises that God had given to Israel in the Old Testament? God's program for the present (the church) involves primarily the Gentiles and not the Jews. Why is this so? Has God cast away His people? Is God through with the nation of Israel? Does the nation have any future in God's program at all?

To the Jewish mind, based on the Old Testament, they always connected the King (or the Messiah) with the earthly Kingdom (or the Messianic Kingdom). So then, the question to Paul was also, "if Jesus is the King, then where is the Kingdom? And why aren't the Old Testament promises of the Kingdom being fulfilled?" God has given us Romans Chapters 9-11 (and especially Chapter 11) to answer these questions.

Before we continue to examine Chapter 11, let's also recognize that these issues are very relevant to our day as well. As we've discussed, there are a number of Christian denominations and individual believers who deny that the nation of Israel has any hope of a future Kingdom on earth under their Messiah, as is clearly predicted in hundreds of Old Testament prophecies.

Some teach that the church has inherited the promises that were made to Israel. Others teach that the Kingdom promises made to Israel are being fulfilled here and now through Christ “spiritually reigning” in the hearts of His believers. Many completely ignore or allegorize away the hundreds of specific Kingdom promises and predictions that have clearly not yet been fulfilled. Did God really mean what He said about the Kingdom and the coming Messiah, or not? Romans Chapter 11 is thus, a vitally important chapter for rightly understanding the current and future place of national Israel in God’s program.

Note: These same questions also frame the context which Jesus addresses in His Olivet Discourse on the future prophetic end-times destiny of Israel, recorded most famously in Matthew 24. But let’s continue here with Romans 11...

So, we started out by unmistakably seeing that in Verses 1 and 2, Paul makes it clear that God is not finished with the Jewish people – He still has a unique plan for them. Dropping down to Verse 7, he then continues...

“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.
(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;)
unto this day.” -Romans 11:7-8

Here, Paul refers to Jesus' pronouncement of the curse of blindness upon the unbelieving Jewish people, recorded in Luke 19. Jesus said...

"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."
-Luke 19:42

But Paul tells us in the passage we just read that this curse of blindness was not a novel idea – but "according as it is written". In other words, this had already been prophesied long before, in multiple places in the Old Testament. Paul was essentially quoting the following two prophetic Old Testament passages...

"For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." -Isaiah 29:10

"Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." -Deuteronomy 29:4

Continuing in his discourse in Romans 11, Paul then goes on to describe how the Gentiles were grafted into the promise of salvation after Israel had fallen away through unbelief. As we continue on with this chapter, there is an important question we must address, as Paul begins to give us understanding on how the church relates to the spiritual promises God had originally given to Israel. The question is, "is it true that in a sense, the church is the spiritual version or

fulfillment of Israel, in that they have received that which the Old Covenant pointed towards?”

The answer is a clear, “absolutely!” Scripture is clear that the essence of being a true “son of Abraham” is not achieved just by being a literal descendant of Abraham, but rather, is achieved through genuine faith in God. Romans 11 discusses this concept of the church (comprised of mostly Gentiles) being “grafted in” to the spiritual promises of Israel. This is a somewhat lengthy passage, but necessary to read through in order to understand this concept. Let’s pick up with Verse 17...

“And if some of the branches (unbelieving Israel) be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree (the Gentile church), wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree (the spiritual promises of God through Israel); Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? -Romans 11:17-24

Paul starts out by telling us that the natural branches, or “unbelieving Israel” have been broken off the tree, and the Gentile church has been grafted into their spiritual promises of salvation through the New Covenant. This has the effect and purpose of making the Jews “jealous” and so to draw them to faith in Christ, in order that they might again be “grafted back in” to receive their original promised inheritance. The “natural branches” (or Israel) are still distinct from the “wild branches” (or the church), so that God’s covenants with His people will still be literally fulfilled. And to this point, let’s keep in mind that the church does not receive the unconditional promises made specifically to Israel as a nation (the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, etc.) – the church receives the spiritual promises of New Covenant salvation. Let’s not be confused on that point.

But Paul also tells us that our attitude toward Israel should not be hostile. He tells us not to “boast against the branches” – meaning don’t be antagonistic towards the natural branches, or Israel. He says that if God is able to graft in the Gentile believers, or the wild, unnatural branches, how much more is He able to then, at a later point, graft back in the natural branches?

Continuing on starting with Verse 25, Paul then hits us with some incredible passages, describing this whole subject as a mystery –

something previously hidden or not understood, but something God was now using him to reveal. And he then tells us not to be ignorant of this mystery – that this will in fact happen! Israel, the natural branches, will be grafted back in! He even tells us when this will happen – after “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” And he tells us that “all Israel will be saved,” a deliverance that obviously has not yet taken place. Let’s see this as we continue reading in Romans 11:25...

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father’s sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

-Romans 11:25-29

In this passage, Paul quoted yet another Old Testament prophecy – this one found in Isaiah – that also describes Israel being delivered after their transgression. Paul was quoting Isaiah 59:20. This passage (along with Verse 21), also depicts God’s unending covenant promise to Israel...

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.

As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." -Isaiah 59:20-21

So, Paul is quoting an Old Testament passage that records God speaking of His everlasting unconditional promises to Israel. In Verse 29, Paul had said that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. This means that God cannot repent, or change His mind regarding this. It is fixed. In other words, Israel did not and cannot lose her place in God's plan. He is telling us that God does have a future plan for Israel! He is telling us that their national blindness is temporary, and when it is removed, they will be saved as a nation!

Like we said, Paul even tells us when their blindness will end. The answer is found in the unique phrase, "the fulness of the Gentiles" in Verse 25 ("blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"). Remember, Paul declared that this was a mystery that he was revealing. This mystery is a foundational key to being able to recognize the distinction between Israel and the church – since the church was an unknown entity in Old Testament prophecy.

The key word in this passage is "until." It is an interesting study to track down all of the "untils" in Scripture. You will find that many of them are keys or markers of some kind. In other words, they act as boundary conditions that say, "this won't happen until that." These boundary conditions help us sharply isolate and define certain

events, groups, times, and subjects in Scripture. If you look closely here, you see that the term “fulness of the Gentiles” is a strategic label for the end of the Church Age, and it’s juxtaposed with the removal of the blindness from Israel.

But let’s backtrack for a moment and understand why Jesus pronounced corporate blindness upon the Jewish nation. The answer is given to us two verses after Jesus’ declaration of blindness in Luke 19:42, which we read earlier – “because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” In other words, they didn’t receive their Messiah when He came. They rejected Him at His coming. But let’s take a moment to set the stage in order to fully recognize what was happening here...

The setting was Jerusalem in 33 A.D. It was the week that would end with Jesus’ crucifixion. Jesus was approaching the city while being showered with a chorus of “hosannas” from the frenzied Jewish onlookers (a Messianic exclamation meaning, “save now”). They threw palm branches down before Him as He approached riding a donkey. They sang the prophetic Messianic song from Psalm 118, which anticipated the Messianic King entering Jerusalem. This was that time!

What time exactly? The time prophesied of in Daniel 9:25 – the culminating day of Daniel’s 69-Week “countdown to the Messiah,” the prophecy given by the angel Gabriel to Daniel half a millennium earlier. This was “the day” also spoken of in Psalm 118:24-26 and anticipated in detail in Zechariah 9:9.

This culminating day – known to Christians as the Triumphal Entry – was supposed to be a day of great joy, and so far, it had been. But something was about to change. Jesus Christ, as He was being hailed as a Messianic King entering Jerusalem on that day, suddenly began to weep. Let's read Luke's recording of this event...

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,
And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

-Luke 19:41-44

So, we see the answer to our question of why Jesus pronounced corporate blindness upon Israel – because they knew not the time of their Messianic visitation. And Jesus wept over this. He had offered them the promises of the Messianic Kingdom (which had been promised in prophetic detail throughout the Old Testament), but they would not receive Him as their King Messiah. All of their Scriptures and prophets were given to lead them to the acceptance of Him as Messiah, but as a nation, they blew it. He wept because they blew it, despite the fact that He had gone to such lengths ahead of time to prepare them ahead to receive Him. Although many were hailing Him on this day, Jesus knew that just a few days later, these

same onlookers would be part of the mob shouting “crucify Him!” The leadership of the nation had already turned on Jesus, going as far as to attribute His miracles to Satan – and the populace would soon follow.

Because of that, Jesus said, “the things which belong unto thy peace” are hidden from you. He announced corporate blindness upon the Jewish nation specifically because they did not truly recognize this day, and because they rejected their prophesied Messiah! In other words, as a nation, because of this rejection, God’s program for Israel’s Kingdom would go into postponement and He would instead introduce His interim program called the church. But this postponement would be temporary – not permanent. God’s 70-Week prophetic time-clock for Israel was paused on this day in 33 A.D. as the 69th Week was completed, and the church’s time-clock would soon start on the Day of Pentecost.

Going back to Paul’s discourse in Romans 11, we now can fully understand what he meant by “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” The fulness of the Gentiles refers to the Gentiles that are gathered in to make up this interim program called the church, and blindness in part will continue among Israel as a nation until the end of this intervening period called the Church Age that began on Pentecost.

The Church Age ends with the physical removal of the church from the earth at the event called the rapture – the supernatural catching away of the church to heaven. God cannot begin primarily dealing with Israel as a nation again until the church is removed – until the

“fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” Everything taking place right now regarding Israel being in the land, etc., is preparatory for this final week.

Following this, God’s program for Israel will again resume and their time-clock will begin as their 70th Week, or the Tribulation begins. After the Tribulation, although the 70-Weeks will be complete, God’s plans for Israel will still continue into the Millennial Kingdom, in which He will fulfill all of His remaining promises, as Israel will be the centerpiece nation on earth during this period.

So, the Old Testament promises and unconditional covenants will still be fulfilled for Israel, but they’re currently in a state of postponement due to their unbelief and rejection of Him as their Messiah. Like we mentioned, God’s program for Israel will restart in the Tribulation after the church has been removed. Because of their unbelief, they will be thrust into the discipline of the Tribulation, which God will use to draw Israel to repentance, ultimately delivering a righteous remnant from this time of unparalleled distress.

The details of this deliverance for national Israel are prophesied of in passages such as Zechariah Chapters 8-14 and Revelation Chapters 7-19, which speak of end-times Israel at Christ’s return. A key verse describing the coming to faith of the future remnant of Israel is Zechariah 12:10, which we also examined in an earlier section...

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him,

as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

-Zechariah 12:10

This occurs at the end of the 70th Week, or Tribulation period prophesied of in Daniel 9:24-27 (which we will fully detail in a later section). Understanding this is foundational as to why a literal reading of the Bible forces one to the conclusion that the church has not replaced Israel. This is just a small sampling of Scripture that clearly tells us that Israel has a future in God's plan! We have examined numerous passages throughout this study that all indicate this; and we will continue to examine many more in later sections as well.

With this in mind, let's focus back on Romans 11. Before moving on, let's do one final review of this key passage – Romans 11:25-29 – while keeping in mind the prophetic understandings we just touched on...

Verse 25:

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

In other words, Israel rejected her Messiah and her Kingdom-program was placed into a period of postponement until God's interim plan – the Church Age – is ended at the rapture.

Verse 26:

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

In other words, after the Church Age is complete, God will again begin to deal primarily with Israel. God will use the Tribulation to purge the unbelief from Israel and draw them to repentance. He will then return at the end of the Tribulation to save the righteous remnant that turns and cries out to Him.

Verse 27:

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

In other words, God will then bring the righteous remnant of Israel into the Messianic or Millennial Kingdom, in which they'll be spiritually and physically restored and all of God's promises will be fulfilled.

Verse 28:

“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes.”

In other words, while in their current state of spiritual unbelief, the Jews will be hostile towards the idea of Jesus being their Messiah. But this state of unbelief does not revoke God's love, His promises, and His covenants regarding Israel. He will fulfill all that He promised to their forefathers.

Verse 29:

“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

In other words, God cannot and will not go back on His promises to Israel. Israel is still a distinct entity that God will deal with separately. Israel as a nation still has a purpose and a destiny in God’s playbook.

So, you can’t “get rid” of Israel (as Replacement Theologians attempt to do), and at the same time take God’s Word seriously. Furthermore, this passage helps us also understand the attitude the church or individual Christians should have towards Israel – “as touching the election, they are beloved for the father’s sakes... the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Many Christians today espouse the idea that because Israel is in a state of spiritual rebellion, we as Christians should oppose Israel and oppose the Jews. But this is not God’s attitude towards them at all, as we just read. And so, our viewpoint towards Israel as Christians should fall in line with God’s viewpoint towards them.

If Paul tells us that Israel is still beloved in God’s eyes and still has a future in God’s plan, then we should also embrace a love for Israel in spite of her unbelief. The mentality of the Christian towards Israel is similar to that of a parent watching a rebellious child reap the consequences of their bad decisions. The parent loves and pities the child, and roots for the child to get it right the next time, despite their stumbles. That should be our attitude towards Israel. Israel got it wrong at the Messiah’s First Coming, and has been suffering the consequences ever since. But Scripture tells us that she will get it

right the second time, at the Messiah's Second Coming. It should be a joyful idea to us that Israel will finally come to faith. If we know that's the heart of God, then it should give us joy to see His plan come to pass.

Of course, that doesn't mean we have to support everything Israel does, or everything any particular Jewish person might do. And of course, we should do our best to spread the gospel to them. But we need to embrace a mentality that aligns with God's thinking concerning Israel – He yearns to graft them back into His spiritual promises, and He will. And furthermore, we should certainly acknowledge and support Israel's right to exist as a sovereign nation, as we saw how their present-day regathering is unquestionably prophetic.

As we will see further ahead, the anti-Semitic mentality that arises out of a belief in Replacement Theology is completely opposite of what Paul expresses in Romans, and embracing this belief actually puts one at odds with God.

-Believers as Children of Abraham:

Before going on in our examination of the consequences of Replacement Theology, let's continue addressing our earlier point in which we were discussing how clear Scripture is, that the essence of being a true child of Abraham is not achieved just by being a literal descendant of Abraham. Instead, more importantly, it is achieved through genuine faith in God.

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” -Galatians 3:7

Paul tells us here that in the context of the church, those who through faith believe in Christ are the “children of Abraham.”

“Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” -Romans 9:6-8

Here, Paul makes it clear that being a physical descendant of Abraham does not make one a child of God, but rather, the “children of the promise,” or those who have actually received and obeyed the promises of God are considered the seed of Abraham.

“And if ye be Christs, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” -Galatians 3:29

So, Paul tells us that the church is the true fulfillment of what it means to be heirs of the promises of God.

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” -Romans 2:28-29

Again, Paul tells us that the true essence of what it means to be a child of the promises of Abraham is inward, not genetic. This does not mean we as Church-Age believers “become Israel” or that Israel is no longer a national identity with a future in God’s plan. It simply means exactly what we’ve been saying thus far – that those who have come to faith in Christ have fulfilled what Israel was instituted to receive – the spiritual blessings of God.

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”
-Philippians 3:3

Again, Paul tells us that we – the church – are the true fulfillment of what the circumcision was instituted to represent, or point towards. He makes it even clearer in the following passage...

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

...

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

-Ephesians 2:11-13, 19

So, the children of promise are those who put their faith in Jesus, and they are seen by God as the true seed and heirs of Abraham.

Whether they are Jewish or Gentile, God regards only those who have renewed hearts as being citizens in the household of God.

So, New Testament Christians are called the “seed of Abraham” because he was the father of those who believe – the father of faith. Abraham was, in a unique way, both Jew and Gentile. He was a Gentile because there were no Jews at that time. Yet, the Jews are his descendants through Isaac and Jacob. In the same way, Abraham is both the father of physical Israel, known as the Jews, and father of spiritual descendants, that is, everyone who believes in Jesus as Messiah, whether of Jewish or Gentile blood.

This makes perfect sense based upon our exploration of the Old Covenant as being an earthly symbol pointing towards the greater spiritual reality of the New Covenant. If Israel is a type of the church, which we positively demonstrated earlier in our study, then it follows that New Covenant believers are the ultimate spiritual reality of what being an Israelite was intended to point towards. This is clearly and obviously Biblical.

But what is not Biblical is to say that the church is Israel in the sense that national Israel is no longer a unique entity in God’s plan, and no longer has a purpose or future. It’s also not Biblical to say that God

won't fulfill His covenant promises to Israel, and will instead somehow apply their fulfillments to the church. That is the erroneous view of Replacement Theology.

The idea that God is finished with Israel turns out to be a particularly dangerous belief, as in reality, it impugns the character of God. In other words, God has made unconditional eternal promises to Israel, which were never – and can never be – annulled. To assert otherwise is to essentially call God a liar. It also introduces questions and uncertainty regarding every other promise God has made – including His promises to us. But God is not a liar, and His promises are always faithful and true. As we've seen in Romans 11, Paul continually addressed this issue of God fulfilling His promises to national Israel, and argued this exact point in his epistles.

Earlier, in Romans 3, he wrote concerning the similar question many Hebrew Christians had at that time – the question of “if the Gentiles are now grafted into the promises of God, what good are God's promises to Abraham? What good was God's choice of the nation Israel?” We will see that Paul replies (in Verse 2) essentially saying, “Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the Word of God.”

That leads to a second question many had (in Verse 3) which essentially was: “Does Jewish unbelief negate God's promises?” In Verse 4, Paul responds strongly to the thought that God might be unfaithful, essentially saying: “May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar.” In other words, he

agrees with us that Replacement Theology makes God out to be a liar!

Let's read through this passage...

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar;

-Romans 3:1-4

So, Paul explains that Israel's unbelief would not nullify His promises concerning them. This passage makes it clear that the notion that God will not be faithful to His promises made to Israel – despite their unbelief (which Replacement theologians advocate) – is to call God a liar.

-The Historical Consequences Of Replacement Theology:

If the Bible is so clear on the distinction between Israel and the church (as we've witnessed in the previous subsection), then when, how, and why did certain elements within so-called Christianity develop the belief of Replacement Theology? As we mentioned earlier, it is a documented fact of history that beliefs such as Replacement Theology developed as an outgrowth of anti-Semitism in the early so-called church. It also can be said in the reverse – embracing a

belief in Replacement Theology often leads to anti-Semitism. Let's examine this in more depth...

Note: For the remainder of this section, we do not need to continue using the designation "so-called," as you surely can recognize that we don't consider what became the mainstream "church" in the first several centuries (nor its denominational offshoots) to have any similarity to the actual church the Bible depicts in Acts and the Epistles. Let's continue...

In order to recognize the origin of the mainstream church's acceptance of Replacement Theology, we must go all the way back to the early centuries of Christian history. Early on in church history, there developed two centers of Biblical interpretation: the Antiochian school of thought and the Alexandrian school of thought.

The Antiochian school (centered in Antioch near the modern border of Syria and Turkey) interpreted Bible prophecy literally. The Alexandrian school in Egypt developed an allegorical interpretation of Bible prophecy. By the 4th century, the Alexandrian school had gained preeminence as the dominant school of thought in mainstream Christendom – largely due to the writings of the church father Augustine (354-430 A.D.). He penned the book "City of God," giving the allegorical school of thought a formal treatise. Augustine's views were accepted by the Catholic Church, leading to the widespread dominance of allegorism over the next thousand years of church history.

-http://www.danielsecomb.com/augustine-and-the-advent-of-amillennialism/#_ftn4 (Retrieved 10/29/20)

In this book, he portrayed the events of his time within a framework that we refer to as “Amillennialism.” Within Amillennialism, the clear Scriptural prophecies and promises given to Israel regarding a literal and physical future earthly Kingdom reign of the Messiah are “spiritualized” away and interpreted as the present “reign of Christ” within the hearts of the Christians. In other words, through the allegorizing of Scripture, Amillennialism denies a future 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom, which Scripture repeatedly promises.

-ibid.

These views of allegorism, Amillennialism, and Replacement Theology go hand in hand. The scholars who introduced these aberrant views were greatly influenced by Greek philosophy, such as Gnosticism, which taught that the physical world was evil and only the spiritual was capable of good. It was a short slide to then believe that the perfect Son of God could not rule a physical Kingdom (despite the promises of Scripture). In this view, His reign must instead be over the immaterial hearts and souls of mankind. Everything the Bible plainly says about future prophecy was interpreted through this “spiritual” lens. The city of Alexandria at the time was the hotbed of Gnosticism and Greek philosophy, and so it is easy to see how these false beliefs worked their way into the church.

-<https://biblehub.com/topical/g/gnosticism.htm> (Retrieved 10/29/20)

Although on the surface it might seem to be an insignificant change, Amillennialism profoundly changed the church in the centuries after Augustine. It altered the church’s view of Scripture, as well as of

prophecy, and the negative impact of Augustine's doctrine continues to this day. Let's briefly try to backtrack in time in order to understand the evolution of allegorism and how it led to the Catholic Church system that chased after temporal earthly power and set the stage for the rampant anti-Semitism that was active throughout church history...

After centuries of persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire, a monumental turning point within Christian history occurred in 313 A.D. The Roman emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, making Christianity an approved religion in the Roman Empire.

-<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Edict-of-Milan> (Retrieved 10/29/20)

This Edict by Constantine led to Christianity eventually becoming the official state religion, prompting the forced "conversion" of pagans.

-<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/rulers/theodosius-i.html> (Retrieved 10/29/20)

The Roman government's sudden approval of – and involvement in the Christian faith dramatically changed the course of church history. From a theological perspective – and specifically an eschatological perspective – the Edict of Milan signaled a monumental paradigm shift from the well-grounded literal interpretation (Premillennialism) of the ancient church fathers, to the views of Amillennialism and Postmillennialism that would dominate Christian thinking from the 4th century A.D. to at least the middle part of the 19th century.

This shift away from the early Premillennialism of the Apostolic church gained strength with Augustine and his allegorical approach to Biblical prophecy, as popularized in his book "City of God." Dr. Grant Jeffrey describes the transformation of the church after the time of Augustine in this way...

"Consequently, as the Church formed powerful alliances with the kings of Europe, it lost interest in the literal prophecies about Christ's coming Kingdom . . . and leaders of the medieval Church set out to change humanity and to rule the world themselves and in alliance with Christian rulers."

-Grant Jeffrey, "Triumphant Return: The Coming Kingdom of God", p. 129.

So, as the church took upon itself the role of introducing and expanding God's so-called kingdom on earth, it sought to exert its power through human government. It began to rely on military might to conquer and forcibly convert people to Christianity, rather than on the presentation of the Gospel. It was not coincidental that all these factors led to the atrocities of the Medieval Period, and the continual persecution of the Jews as heretics and infidels who must be converted or destroyed. The Edict of Milan, combined with the emergence of Amillennialism, contributed to this distortion of the Gospel, as well as the entire purpose of the church. It was these distortions that characterized the Catholic Church and its dominance over the majority of Christian history. Like we mentioned, these distorted views also provided the perfect breeding ground for anti-Semitism, as it provided a way to delete Israel from the future program of God.

In his book “Israel and the Church: The Prodigal Heirs,” Chuck Missler documents a sampling of the history and writings of some of the early church fathers, even prior to the Edict of Milan and Augustine. The church fathers unfortunately, espoused bizarrely negative views towards Judaism. It’s astonishing to discover the blatant anti-Semitism in the early church.

-Chuck Missler, “Israel and the Church: The Prodigal Heirs,” Coeur d’Alene, ID: Koinonia House, 2016, pp. 34-40.

Missler points out that even very early on, this hatred of the Jews was present. For example, Ignatius (50-117 A.D.) taught that those who partake of the Passover are partakers with those who killed Jesus.

-Ibid., p. 34.

As we go through these examples, you will note this skewed mentality to be a common pattern of thought, in which there exists this continual theme of “the Jews killed Jesus.” This mistaken mentality completely misses the point of everything Jesus did. First, it was always in God’s plan and foreknowledge to die for us. Revelation 13:8 calls Christ the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” – indicating that it was always in His plan to perform the redemptive work of the cross. Secondly, the reality is that it was not “the Jews” that killed Jesus, but rather the sins of humanity – of all of us – that made the cross necessary. Because of His love for us, Jesus voluntarily went to the cross, looking past all of the hurt and pain it included, because He saw into the future. He saw the joy set before Him of having a bride – a people, called the church – holy, set apart,

and filled with His Spirit. A group who would make the free-will choice to follow Him out of love, despite the earthly consequences.

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

-Hebrews 12:2

In this passage, the phrase “despising the shame” means He thought little of it, or disregarded it. He was the God of the universe being put through the most painfully excruciating and embarrassing death possible – but He looked past it to see us as His joyful reward – and He just ignored the pain and shame.

-<https://biblehub.com/greek/2706.htm> (Retrieved 2/04/19)

So, we can see how misplaced it is to “hate the Jews” for “killing Jesus.” This is to completely miss the point of Christianity, the New Covenant, and the Bible. It’s to make Jesus some sort of victim. It’s to imply that Jesus didn’t fulfill His mission, which they evidently must believe to have been His human survival. According to that view, maybe Jesus’ true mission was to reach His golden years and enjoy His grandkids. Obviously not. Jesus’ mission was always to come to Earth and die for the sins of His beloved image creature – mankind.

But getting back to our exploration of church history, let’s point out a number of other recognizable early church figures who promoted similar beliefs...

- Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.) is a well-known name in church history, and he too claimed that God's covenants with Israel were no longer valid. He argued that the Gentiles had replaced the Jews.

-Missler, p. 35.

- Irenaeus (130-202 A.D.) believed that the Jews were disinherited from the grace of God.

-Ibid.

- Tertullian (155-240 A.D.) also blamed the Jews for Jesus' death and argued that they had been rejected by God.

-Ibid.

- Origen (263-339 A.D.) also asserted that the Jews were responsible for killing Jesus.

-Ibid.

- Eusebius (263-339 A.D.) taught that the promises of Scripture were meant for the Gentiles and the curses were meant for the Jews.

-Ibid.

So, we can see that there was a long and unfortunate history of these mistaken beliefs that the church is the true Israel, the Jews were no longer the chosen people of God, and that they

no longer had any place in God's plan. As we mentioned earlier, these beliefs were greatly embraced and mainstreamed by the Catholic Church, as we will see in the next several points...

- Emperor Constantine (who had issued the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D.) created a law on October 18, 329 A.D. making it illegal to convert to Judaism. Half a century later, laws issued by emperors Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius I declared things like...

"Those Christians who have insulted the dignity of their own religion and name and have contaminated themselves with the Jewish disease will be punished for these shameful acts."

-Qtd. in Robert Michael, "A History Of Catholic Anti-Semitism : The Dark Side of the Church," New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 36.

Fueled by his hatred of the Jews, Constantine himself said...

"Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd."

-Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 3.18-19, in "The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers," eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Rpt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976, 2nd ser., I, pp. 524-525.

- The Synod of Elvira in the early 4th century A.D. prohibited Christians from sharing a meal with a Jew, marrying a Jew, or blessing a Jew.

-Missler, p. 35.

- The Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. changed the date of the celebration of the Resurrection in order to purposely distance the church from the Jewish calendar. Christ rose the first Sunday after Passover – which is the Jewish Feast of First Fruits, which would be the accurate time to commemorate His resurrection. But this council made sure the observation of Easter was well removed from this date.

-Ibid.

Concerning this, the theologian and church historian Theodoret records a letter that Constantine wrote to the bishops who couldn't attend the Council of Nicea, saying...

"It was... declared improper to follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this holy festival, because their hands are imbued in crime, and their minds blinded with defilement."

-Theodoret and Evagrius, "History of the Church," London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854, p. 40.

- The church under Constantine excommunicated any Quartodecimans – who were men who wanted to memorialize the crucifixion according to the correct calendar day (in connection to the 14th of Nisan, the date of Passover on the Jewish calendar). Archbishop of Constantinople John Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.) condemned this supposed association with the Jews, saying...

"But you dishonor him so much that you pay honor to those who slew him on the cross, that you observe with them the fellowship of the festivals, that you go to their profane places,

enter their unclean doors, and share in the tables of demons. For I am persuaded to call the fasting of the Jews a table of demons because they slew God.”

–“The Fathers of the Church: St. John Chrysostom, Discourses Against Judaizing Christians,” trans. Paul W. Harkins, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, repr. 1999, Discourse I, VII.5, p. 28.

- Augustine (who we’ve already discussed at length), asserted that the Jews deserved death, but were destined to wander the earth to witness the church’s victory over the synagogue.

–Messler, p. 37.

This mentality of Augustine – and many before him – was completely embraced by the Roman Catholic Church, as it consolidated temporal power as the mainstream church – believing it was their job to physically establish God’s Kingdom on earth through conquest and forcible suppression of opposition. Of course, the greatest of all villains in their mind, were the Jews who had “killed Jesus.”

It was this anti-Semitic mentality that led to the atrocities of the Middle Ages and following, as the church embraced a view of allegorical eschatology rather than literalism. All of the unconditional promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament (most of which will be fulfilled in the Millennium), were denied by the Roman church, which instead advocated the beliefs of Replacement Theology.

But let’s try to understand how the prevalent anti-Semitism melded with the state-run religious system to produce this deviant view of eschatology and the future of Israel. As Rome took over the church, it became no longer acceptable to preach that Jesus would one day

return to rid the world of its evil rulers. The current “evil rulers” of that era controlled the church leaders as part of its state-run religion, presenting an obvious conflict of interest for the church. This is one reason for the rising prominence of Augustine’s allegorical, Amillennial eschatological view that Christ’s rule would be symbolic – in our hearts. And it was compatible with the Roman Church’s quest for earthly power, as they assumed the role of establishing God’s kingdom themselves since under their view, they were not expecting Christ to actually return and do it Himself. It allowed them to remove the Jews (whom they hated) from God’s plans.

-Ibid., p. 42.

But by embracing these views, they denied basically everything the Bible says about God’s prophetic plans for the future, concerning essentially everything – Israel, the church, the Kingdom, the earth, and even the Eternal State. In this way, they distorted the message of the Word of God, which directly led to the atrocities and murders committed as a result of this flawed method of interpretation. But further yet, they challenged the character and integrity of God Himself by the implication that He will not fulfill His Word by keeping His unconditional promises.

Before moving on to explore some of the consequences of these false doctrines, let’s take a moment to dispel the erroneous belief called Amillennialism – the denial of a future physical Messianic Kingdom on earth.

In order for God to keep His promises to Israel and His covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:8-16, 23:5; Psalm 89:3-4), there must be a literal,

physical Kingdom on this earth. As mentioned throughout this study, to doubt this is to call into question God's desire and/or ability to keep His promises – opening up a host of other theological problems. For example, if God would renege on His unconditional promises to Israel after proclaiming those promises to be “everlasting,” how could we be sure of anything He promises, including His promises of salvation given to believers in Jesus? The only solution is to take Him at His word and understand that His promises will be literally fulfilled – just as all prophecies have been throughout Scripture.

The Bible clearly says that the Kingdom will be a literal, physical, earthly kingdom. The following are just five of the many reasons that we can point to in order to establish this view...

1. Christ's feet will literally, actually, physically touch the Mount of Olives prior to the establishment of His Kingdom (Zechariah 14:4, 9). We are told that the wicked people of earth will physically see Him coming, and will mourn (Revelation 1:7). Christ's return is literal, contrary to the beliefs of the Amillennialists.
2. During the Kingdom, the Messiah Himself will personally dwell on earth and execute justice and judgment on the earth (Jeremiah 23:5-8, Revelation 21:3 et al.). This describes a physical Kingdom on earth ruled by Christ who dwells among man throughout this period.

3. The Kingdom is described as being under heaven (Daniel 7:13-14, 27). In other words, a physical Kingdom on earth – not some sort of allegorized heavenly reign in men’s hearts.
4. The prophets foretold of dramatic earth-changes during the Kingdom Age (Acts 3:21; Isaiah 35:1-2, 11:6-9, 29:18, 65:20-22; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Amos 9:11-15). This describes a physical Kingdom on earth.
5. The chronological order of events in Revelation indicates the existence of an earthly Kingdom prior to the conclusion of world history and the Eternal State (Revelation 20).

The Amillennial view comes from using one method of interpretation for unfulfilled prophecy and another method for non-prophetic Scripture and fulfilled prophecy. Non-prophetic Scripture and fulfilled prophecy are interpreted literally or normally. But, according to the Amillennialist, unfulfilled prophecy is to be interpreted spiritually, or non-literally. Those who hold to Amillennialism believe that a “spiritual” reading of unfulfilled prophecy is the normal reading of the texts. This is called a dual hermeneutic (hermeneutics meaning the study of the principles of Biblical interpretation). In other words, it’s an inconsistent method of interpretation. The Amillennialist assumes that most of, or all unfulfilled prophecy is written in symbolic, figurative, spiritual language. Therefore, the Amillennialist will assign different meanings to those parts of Scripture instead of the normal, contextual meanings of those words.

One of the main problems with interpreting unfulfilled prophecy in this manner is that this allows for a wide range of meanings, and allows you to concoct your own private interpretation. It doesn't hold you accountable to the actual text. But God, the ultimate Author of all Scripture, did have a specific meaning in mind when He inspired the human authors to write. By allegorizing it, you're ignoring and changing what He intended to convey to us. You're putting your own interpretation above the intended meaning of Scripture.

Like we've mentioned already, the fact that fulfilled prophecies were fulfilled literally in the Bible is the best reason of all for assuming that yet-unfulfilled prophecies will also be fulfilled literally in the future. For example, the prophecies concerning Christ's First Coming were all fulfilled literally. Therefore, prophecies concerning Christ's Second Coming should also be expected to be fulfilled literally.

For these reasons, an allegorical interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy should be rejected and a literal/grammatical/historical, or normal and plain interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy should be adopted. Dr. David L. Cooper described this literal method of interpretation in the following way...

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

-<http://www.biblicalresearch.info/page502.html> (Retrieved 11/10/20)

So, we should take the text seriously by allowing it to interpret itself through the plain use of language. Amillennialism fails in that it uses faulty and inconsistent hermeneutics – failing to take the plain meanings, and interpreting unfulfilled prophecy differently from fulfilled prophecy.

We should recognize that the early Christian view (in line with the eschatological views of ancient Jews) was always Premillennialism. These early Christians believed (as the Jews did) in a future literal Millennium, or Messianic Kingdom. The early writings of the early Christian apologist Justin Martyr attest to this...

“I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.”

-Justin Martyr, Dialogue With Trypho, Chapter LXXX

(<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-dialoguetrypho.html> - Retrieved 10/10/20)

Justin, who was born in 100 A.D., records that the orthodox view at his time was that which we today would call Premillennialism. Although Justin himself got caught up in the deception that the church replaces Israel, he does record the fact that at his time, the common view of eschatology had not yet been poisoned by it. But like we said, as time passed, the allegorism/Amillennialism of Augustine was embraced by the mainstream and became a systematic interpretive method that supported the anti-Semitic views of Replacement Theology.

And so, we see in summary that the allegorical view of the Scriptures is a form of anti-Semitism in which church leaders have tried to rip the promises of God away from Israel. We've seen that early Christian leaders have a long history of advocating that the "Jews killed Jesus," and that "the church has replaced Israel," etc. We have already seen the results of this in some of the anti-Semitic edicts of the church councils that we've looked at. Throughout the Medieval era, the Jews were viewed as a cursed race, becoming fodder for robbery, murder, abuse, and every kind of hatred and humiliation.

The Roman Popes were at the center of this anti-Semitism, as a result of the Amillennial worldview. For example...

- On November 1, 1478, Pope Sixtus IV issued that papal bull "Exegit Sincere Devotionis Affectus" at the request of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, granting them the right to establish an organized judicial interrogation system to root out Jews suspected of remaining faithful to Judaism (which was outlawed). Many Jews were burned at the stake by order of the Spanish Inquisition.

-Missler, p. 38.

In 1492, King Ferdinand decided that all Spanish Jews should be banned from Spain. Approximately 150,000 Jews were forced to leave Spain.

-Ibid.

Similar persecutions, pogroms, evictions, and abuses were levelled at the Jewish communities throughout Europe and the Middle East throughout Christian history. This example of the Spanish Inquisition is just one of a seemingly endless list – most of which were committed by so-called Christians and the so-called church, all under the banner of Christ. If you doubt this, do a simple online search of the history of anti-Semitism. You will be amazed at the abuse and persecution the Jews have had to put up with throughout Christian history. In fact, the way so-called Christians have treated Israel throughout history makes the Muslim treatment of Israel look friendly.

-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_antisemitism (Retrieved 10/29/20)

With this in mind, it's easy to understand the Jews' animosity towards Christianity after dealing with this kind of treatment for 2,000 years. But this treatment was not limited to the Roman Catholic Church.

An unfortunate reality is that while much good was done during the Protestant Reformation to attempt to reform the church back to its Biblical roots, the Reformers failed in many key areas. Relevant to our study here, is their failure to re-examine the long-held allegorical method of interpretation and Amillennial eschatology, which went hand-in-hand with Replacement Theology. The main leaders of the Protestant Reformation – men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin – while doing much good, were also, unfortunately, some of the most vehement anti-Semites in history.

In 1543, Luther published “On the Jews and Their Lies,” in which he revealed his deep anti-Semitism...

- He said that the Jews are a “base, whoring people, that is, no people of God, and their boast of lineage, circumcision, and law must be accounted as filth.”

-Robert Michael, “Holy Hatred: Christianity, Anti-Semitism, and the Holocaust,” New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 113.

- He said they are full of the “devil’s feces ... which they wallow in like swine.”

-Ibid., p. 112.

- He said the synagogue was a “defiled bride, yes, an incorrigible whore and an evil slut ...”

-Martin Luther, “On the Jews and Their Lies,” cited in Robert Michael, “Luther, Luther Scholars, and the Jews,” in “Encounter,” 46:4 (Autumn 1985) p. 342.

- He argued that their synagogues and schools be set on fire, their prayer books destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, homes razed, and property and money confiscated.

-Ibid., p. 343.

- He said they should be shown no mercy or kindness, afforded no legal protection, and these “poisonous envenomed worms” should be drafted into forced labor or expelled for all time.

-Martin Luther, “On the Jews and Their Lies,” Luther’s Werke, 47:268-271; trans. Martin H. Bertram, in “Luther’s Works,” Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

- He also seemed to advocate their murder, writing “[w]e are at fault in not slaying them.”

-Martin Luther, “On the Jews and Their Lies,” cited in Robert Michael, “Luther, Luther Scholars, and the Jews,” in “Encounter,” 46:4 (Autumn 1985) pp. 343-344.

According to Heiko Oberman...

“the basis of Luther’s anti-Judaism was the conviction that ever since Christ’s appearance on earth, the Jews have had no more future as Jews.”

-Heiko Oberman, “The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation,” Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, p.46.

In other words, from this quote, we can clearly see how the root of Luther’s anti-Semitism was Replacement Theology – the view that Israel no longer has a future in God’s plan. Unfortunately, this did not end in the centuries surrounding the Middle Ages and the Reformation. Instead, it set the foundation for the anti-Semitism that fueled the Nazi persecutions of the Jews in the 1900’s. In his book “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,” William L. Shirer wrote...

“It is difficult to understand the behavior of most German Protestants in the first Nazi years unless one is aware of two things: their history and the influence of Martin Luther. The great founder of Protestantism was both a passionate anti-Semite and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority. He wanted Germany rid of the Jews. Luther’s advice was literally followed four centuries later by Hitler, Goering and Himmler.”

-William L. Shirer, “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,” New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990, p. 236.

So, it was the failure of the Reformers such as Martin Luther to re-examine the eschatology of the Medieval Church that lead to the silent pulpits in Nazi-era Germany and the atrocities of the Holocaust that followed. Chuck Missler summarizes it well...

“When we replace Israel with the Church and reject Christ’s literal millennial reign, we can trace a path from Augustine to Auschwitz. Replacement Theology specifically denies Israel’s role in God’s program, directly contradicting a long list of Scriptures that God has laid out in both the Old and New Testaments.”

-Ibid., p. 43.

So, we should recognize that there are real-life consequences of the belief in Replacement Theology and the failure to recognize the distinction between Israel and the church.

As we have seen, it is impossible for one to read the Bible literally and plainly, and still come to the conclusion that the church has replaced Israel in God’s plan. If you come to this conclusion, it is only through embracing a flawed system of Bible interpretation in which you allegorize away the plain and obvious meanings of what the Bible says. You end up inserting and exalting your own personal interpretations instead of allowing the text to speak for itself. The outworkings of this kind of skewed system of interpretation are deeply flawed views such as Replacement Theology, which often end in anti-Semitism, which places oneself contrary to the mind of God and makes it impossible to accurately understand the Bible. It is why we can firmly state that Replacement Theology is a dangerous error that’s based on an inaccurate understanding of the Bible.

So, since we have firmly asserted that Israel does have a future in God’s plan, then what is it? Although we have already briefly mentioned it throughout this study, we will now transition our focus into a deeper study of this topic.

In the next section, we will indulge in an exploration of the prophetic future of the nation of Israel, according to God's timeline as laid out in Scripture. We will find that without the foundational axiom of understanding the distinction between Israel and the church, along with the recognition that God deals with them mutually exclusively, one cannot accurately perceive God's timeline of eschatology.

God's Eschatological Time-Clock – The Mutual Exclusivity Of Israel And The Church

Throughout this study, we have examined this concept of the distinction between Israel and the church from a number of different angles. We have seen the distinction through understanding the covenants God made. We have seen the distinction through recognizing the unique origins, purposes, and destinies of each. We have seen the Scriptural evidence that declares their distinction. And we have seen the witness of their distinction through prophetic typology. We have also examined the origin of the major opposing viewpoint (Replacement Theology), and how it arose from a flawed allegorical hermeneutic that eventually was embraced by the Roman Church, unfortunately becoming the dominant view throughout the history of Christianity. And we've seen how this flawed hermeneutic has manifested in church-backed anti-Semitism and all of its consequences, leading from Augustine to Auschwitz.

In this final section, we will now bring our understanding of this topic to completion by indulging in an exploration of the prophetic timeline of eschatology. The content we will discuss now will allow us to zoom out our viewpoint in order to gain a perspective of the panorama of God's plan for human history – both past and future, as it is all already laid out in Scripture. As we explore this topic, you may be astonished to find out that understanding the distinction between Israel and the church actually turns out to be a necessary key that unlocks a new realm of clarity for understanding Biblical prophecy and the plan of God as revealed in the Bible. What we have discussed in past sections should have already unlocked newfound clarity for

understanding much of God's purposes and plans in Scripture. This section will do the same for your perception of eschatology and God's future prophetic timeline.

As we begin, we need to review one necessary concept that we mentioned at the beginning of the study as one of our two main premises. Up until this point, we mainly have discussed the first premise – the idea that Israel and the church are distinct and that the church is not a replacement for Israel. But in this section – much more so than any of the previous sections – we will highlight our second premise. Our second premise was that Scripture appears to communicate that Israel and the church are not only distinct, but are actually mutually exclusive in God's timeline. What we mean is that each has its own prophetic timeclock in God's program, and He always deals with them mutually exclusively.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this study, a perfect analogy to this is a chess clock. If you've never seen or used a chess clock, it's a single device that has two separate clocks side by side. In a formal chess match, each player's turn to move their pieces is limited by time. So, there's a button above each of the two clocks, and when one is pushed to begin counting down the time for one player, the other player's clock automatically stops – and vice versa. In other words, the two clocks are mutually exclusive – when one is running, the other is stopped, and when the running clock stops, the stopped clock begins. This is exactly how it appears God deals with Israel and the church – and it is also a foundational key that is essential to accurately understand Biblical prophecy as well as God's overall timeline and plan.

We also noted in the very beginning of this study that the 70 Weeks prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-27 turns out to be foundational for helping to establish this perspective. In fact, this prophecy acts as the framework, the scaffolding, or the outline for all future prophetic Scripture. In other words, it provides a prophetic template for later eschatological revelations, such as Jesus' Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, Paul's "Day of the Lord" teaching in 2 Thessalonians 2, and the apocalyptic chapters in Revelation, mostly 6-19. We find that all of it can be understood when overlaid onto the eschatological framework provided by this 70 Weeks prophecy found in Daniel 9.

Furthermore, with all of that in mind, we can then look back into the Old Testament corpus of eschatological prophecy and easily understand how they align with the timeline laid out here in Daniel and expounded upon elsewhere. But in order for it to all fall into place and be consistent with the rest of the Bible, this concept of the distinction between Israel and the church – along with their mutual exclusivity in God's timeframe – is necessary to comprehend.

Because a level of understanding concerning the 70 Weeks Prophecy is needed as a prerequisite for understanding the content discussed in this section, an introductory review is in order. Let's begin...

-A Verse-by-Verse Review of Daniel's Seventy Weeks:

The context of this prophecy in Daniel 9 concerns Daniel while he was in Babylon during the Babylonian Exile of the Jews. Daniel understood from Jeremiah's prophecies that the exile would last for

70 years (Daniel 9:2, Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10). He recognized that their restoration depended on national repentance (Jeremiah 29:10-14), so Daniel personally interceded for Israel in prayer.

He prayed specifically for the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple, as they had been destroyed by the Babylonians (Daniel 9:3-19). Daniel apparently expected the immediate and complete fulfillment of Israel's restoration with the conclusion of the 70-year captivity. However, the future of the Jews and Jerusalem was shown to him by the angel Gabriel (who gave him the 70 Weeks Prophecy), revealing that Israel's restoration would be progressive and only ultimately fulfilled at the time of the end (see also Daniel 12). Through this prophecy, God decreed that He would complete His Messianic redemption of the Jews and Jerusalem over the course of a 70-week period (which as we now understand, includes both advents of Christ).

This prophecy in Daniel 9 describes seventy "sevens" (or weeks) of years – in other words, 490 years that would be designated for the Jews and Jerusalem in order to complete six key objectives related to this full Messianic redemption (essentially, to wrap up this age of human history and introduce the Messianic Kingdom).

Let's begin by reading this passage in Daniel 9, beginning with Verse 24 and ending with the last verse of this chapter – Verse 27. We have added some parenthetical inserts in order to help you understand what each part of this prophecy is saying within the context of our topic here. We will then go over each verse in more detail to make sure it's clear. Let's begin...

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city (meaning the Jews and Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (meaning basically, to finish this age).

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks (7 + 62, equaling a total of 69 weeks, or 483 years since each week is 7 years): the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks (in other words, after the 62 weeks that follow the 7 weeks, or put another way, after the entire 69 weeks, or 483 years) shall Messiah be cut off (this happened in 33 A.D. with the crucifixion of Christ), but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined (this happened in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem).

And he (referring back to the prince that shall come) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (speaking of the final 70th Week): and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

-Daniel 9:24-27

So, let's now begin a verse-by-verse examination of this prophecy so we can go into more detail...

-Verse 24:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” -Daniel 9:24

Verse 24 makes it clear to us that 70 weeks of years (70×7 , or 490 years) are designated by God for the future of the Jews and Jerusalem in order to complete a number of key objectives. It is crucial to first recognize that this 70 Week Prophecy is specifically stated to be intended very specifically for the Jews and Jerusalem – not the Gentiles, nor the church. This is one of the foundational points we need to recognize, especially for the purposes of this study, in which our goal is to shed light on how this prophecy acts as the backbone for all future prophecy – and also that it expresses the mutual exclusivity of Israel and the church. Stay sensitive to the idea that while the 70 Week timeclock is ticking, Israel (the Jews and Jerusalem) are in focus. But when the clock stops, the church becomes the focus. You will see this more clearly as we progress, but just understand that the purpose of our examination of this prophecy is to ultimately recognize this simple point.

So, Verse 24 tells us that the 70 Weeks are determined for the Jews and Jerusalem in order to accomplish six key objectives. It is critical to

recognize that all of these objectives have not yet been fully completed. The six objectives are as follows:

- to finish the transgressions
- to make an end of sins
- to make reconciliation for iniquity
- to bring in everlasting righteousness
- to seal up the vision and prophecy
- to anoint the Most Holy Place (the Holy of Holies)

Since these objectives were not explicitly defined for us, it leaves the interpreter to find a plausible explanation of what they point toward. We believe it is clear that they point towards the culmination of the major Biblical themes of this age – judgment of sin, atonement, forgiveness, and spiritual restoration.

When we look at these themes while using the backdrop of Old and New Testament prophecy, it becomes clear that although some may have been fulfilled – or have begun being fulfilled – it is clear that in the ultimate sense, these events will be brought to complete fulfillment when Israel is brought to spiritual restoration and revival at the time of the Second Coming of Christ and the inauguration of the future Millennial Kingdom.

For instance, the fulfillment of at very minimum, the last three objectives, clearly awaits the future time of the end. Let's examine these...

- The phrase “to bring in everlasting righteousness” refers to the Millennial restoration or “age of righteousness” (see Isaiah 1:26, 11:2-5, 32:16-18; Jeremiah 23:5-6, 33:15-18).
- This future restoration will also likely “seal up the prophetic vision,” as it brings to fulfillment all that it speaks of.
- The final objective – “to anoint the most holy” – looks toward a future dedication of the Temple’s Holy of Holies, specifically, the Millennial Temple. The Old Testament tells us all about this in detail. When the Messiah returns in glory, He will build the Millennial Temple (see Ezekiel Chapters 40-48), fill it with the divine presence (Ezekiel 43:1-7), and consecrate it for use throughout the Messianic Age (Isaiah 56:6-7, 60:7; Jeremiah 33:18; Ezekiel 43:11, 18-27, 44:11-28, 45:13-46:15; Zechariah 14:16-21).

As we continue into the following verses of this 70 Weeks Prophecy, we will see that Daniel describes the Messiah’s mission to Israel, beginning with a countdown that led to His Triumphant Entry and soon after crucifixion as Israel’s Savior, and culminating with His reign as Israel’s King – events that take place during Christ’s First and Second Comings.

So, the ultimate restoration of Israel is yet future. We identify the expected time of completion to be the end of the Tribulation, which is what we term the 70th Week – just prior to the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. All of these six objectives will seem to have been achieved by that time.

So then, because they have not yet been fully achieved at this present time, it means that the 70 Week Prophecy has not yet been completed. Instead, we will find that it has been paused. We will discuss this in more detail shortly.

-Verse 25:

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”

-Daniel 9:25

As we pointed out earlier, we have a total of 70 weeks of years, or 490 years. However, Verse 25 focuses on the first 69 weeks of years, separating them from the 70th. It breaks them down into a first 7 weeks of years followed immediately by 62 weeks of years (or threescore and two weeks), totaling 69. It tells us that these 69 weeks of years would be a countdown that begins with a commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and culminates with the appearance of the Messiah to Israel. It's a countdown to the arrival of the Messiah, or what Christians would call the “First Coming.”

In the companion study entitled [The Daniel 9:25 Prophecy – An Exact Timeline For the Arrival Of The Messiah](#), we conclusively proved in great detail that this 69 week countdown began during the Hebrew month of Nisan in 444 B.C. with the decree of Artaxerxes (Neh. 1 and 2), and ended on March 30th of 33 A.D. at the Triumphant Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Several days following His Triumphant

Entry, He was then crucified on April 3rd – a key element which we will see anticipated in the next verse (Verse 26). So, we should recognize that the 69 Weeks have concluded long ago. If you have any doubts about this, or would like to understand the evidence for yourself, feel free to consult the aforementioned study.

-Verse 26:

“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”

-Daniel 9:26

Verse 26 discusses the events that occur after the completion of the 69 Weeks, which we said terminated on March 30th of 33 A.D. – the day of the Triumphal Entry, the day Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem. So, as stated earlier, we should recognize that the 69 Weeks have concluded long ago.

So, this verse discusses the events that would follow the termination of the 69th Week. It says that after the 69 total weeks, the Messiah would then be “cut off,” and that Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed by a prince who would come. These events happened exactly as this prophecy predicts.

First, as we have shown in the companion study we just mentioned, several days following the Triumphal Entry, Jesus (the Messiah) was cut off. The Triumphal Entry took place on Monday, ending the 69

Weeks, and then Jesus was crucified on Friday of that same week – in 33 A.D.

Let's briefly discuss this term "cut off" so there is no confusion. The Hebrew term for "cut off" here, is "karath" (Strong's #H3772). This word literally means to be "cut off, cut down, or cut asunder," and is often used to mean that one would be executed or killed.

Interestingly, this word also is used to imply the "cutting of a covenant," in which two people would literally cut off a piece of animal flesh and pass between the pieces while making vows – as we discussed was done during the making of the Old Covenant with Israel.

-James Strong, "Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible," Updated and Expanded Ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007, p. 1517.

Is there any word that better summarizes the work of Christ on the cross? He was "cut off" and rejected by His people, the Jews, and was then executed. But this act of laying down His life was the cornerstone upon which the New Covenant was based upon! So, there should be no confusion regarding this expression "cut off." It means the Messiah would be executed after the conclusion of the sixty-nine weeks – which, as we have shown in our companion study, Christ was (four days – as we count – following His Triumphal Entry).

Second, Verse 26 then predicts that Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed by a prince who would come. This was fulfilled precisely as spoken in this Verse, as the city and the sanctuary were indeed

destroyed by a prince who would come about thirty-seven years later in 70 A.D. Our knowledge of the history of this time is well-preserved and well-known. History records in detail the actions of the Roman prince and general, Titus Vespasian, who led the assault on Jerusalem and the Temple, destroying them in 70 A.D.

-<https://www.britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Jerusalem-70> (Retrieved 2/18/19)

-Note: For more information on this, feel free to consult our companion study entitled, [The Luke 19:43-44 Prophecy: The Destruction Of Jerusalem Foretold](#).

During the Jewish rebellion against Rome in the late 60's A.D., Titus' father Vespasian, also formerly a general, had now become the emperor of Rome. He put Titus in charge of carrying out the assault on Jerusalem, which he accomplished in 70 A.D. – resulting in the massacre and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

-<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Vespasian> (Retrieved 2/18/19)

So, Titus Vespasian had just become a prince, since his father had just become the emperor – exactly as the prophetic text required. And like the prophecy states, the end came for Jerusalem in its destruction in 70 A.D., and following that, war continued with its desolations, as history has confirmed. The entire countryside was levelled, as recorded in the writings of Josephus, and beginning at that time, the Jewish people would begin to be sent into a worldwide Diaspora.

-Flavius Josephus, "The Wars of the Jews," in "Josephus, The Complete Works," trans. William Whiston, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998.

So, the fulfillments of this prophetic verse are very clear. But before moving on, we need to pause and take note of something crucial. This crucial point will help us recognize how this 70 Week Prophecy reveals the mutual exclusivity of Israel and the church. It is simply this – we can clearly infer that the 70 Week Prophecy was put on pause after the completion of the 69th Week. At that time (like we said, at the Triumphal Entry in 33 A.D.), Israel's timeclock stopped and the church's timeclock would shortly begin. How did we arrive at this conclusion? Let's examine this...

We've seen that Verse 26 describes events that were said to occur after the 69th Week. Should we then believe that the 70th Week immediately followed the 69th, meaning that the 70 Weeks have also long been concluded?

The answer is no, and we will discuss why not. Instead, it's obvious that the 70 Weeks were paused at the completion of the 69th Week and a gap was inserted between the 69th and 70th. We know this for many reasons, but maybe most obviously, like we already mentioned, because the six objectives that the 70 Weeks were said to accomplish (that we went over in Verse 24) have not yet all been completely fulfilled. In other words, since almost 2,000 years have passed since the 69th Week ended in 33 A.D. (and yet, the six events remain unfulfilled) we know the full 490 years could not yet have occurred. This leaves a future final week – the 70th Week.

But we need to recognize how the mutual exclusivity of Israel and the church play into this scenario. If the 70th Week didn't yet occur, but

the 69 Weeks have occurred, then the prophetic timeclock for this prophecy must have stopped when the 69 Weeks were fulfilled in 33 A.D.

We will find that this is indeed the case, as we clearly witness God's "chess-clock" in action. So, Israel's timeclock stopped in 33 A.D. – which we notice is the same year that the church's timeclock started (at the establishment of the church on the Day of Pentecost, 50 days following the death of Christ). Like we mentioned earlier in our study, when Israel rejected the King and the Kingdom, God put His program for Israel into postponement and introduced His program called the church.

So, the picture here is that the first 69 Weeks for Israel have been completed. Almost immediately after Israel's timeclock stopped, the church's timeclock began. And here we are nearly 2,000 years later, still in this "gap" period, or this intercalation in-between the 69th and 70th Weeks. We call this gap the Church Age – the time in which God's interim program called the church (rather than Israel) is God's instrument to reach humanity.

Throughout the majority of this period called the Church Age, which is primarily dominated by a Gentile presence in the church, Israel has been almost completely out of the picture – scattered throughout the nations. For most of this time, Israel has not had a controlling presence in Jerusalem, and Israel has not had a Temple. In fact, one of the reasons we believe that the timeclock may be preparing to switch back toward Israel again soon, is because of the obvious way in which God's focus appears to be shifting back towards Israel in the

past century, with their return to the land, with Israel's reemergence as a sovereign state, and with the Jews' increasing control of Jerusalem. Just as there was a period of roughly 40 years following the pausing of Israel's timeclock and the complete destruction of the city and sanctuary in 70 A.D., there may be a reversal of that taking place currently, as Israel's presence back in the land seems to be in preparation for this prophetic 70th Week to begin.

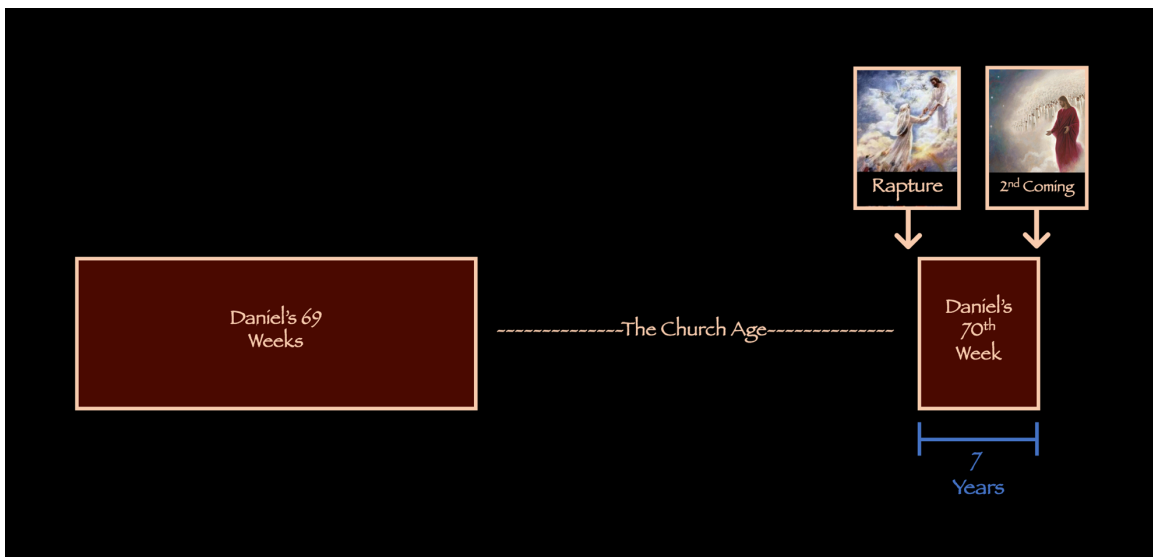
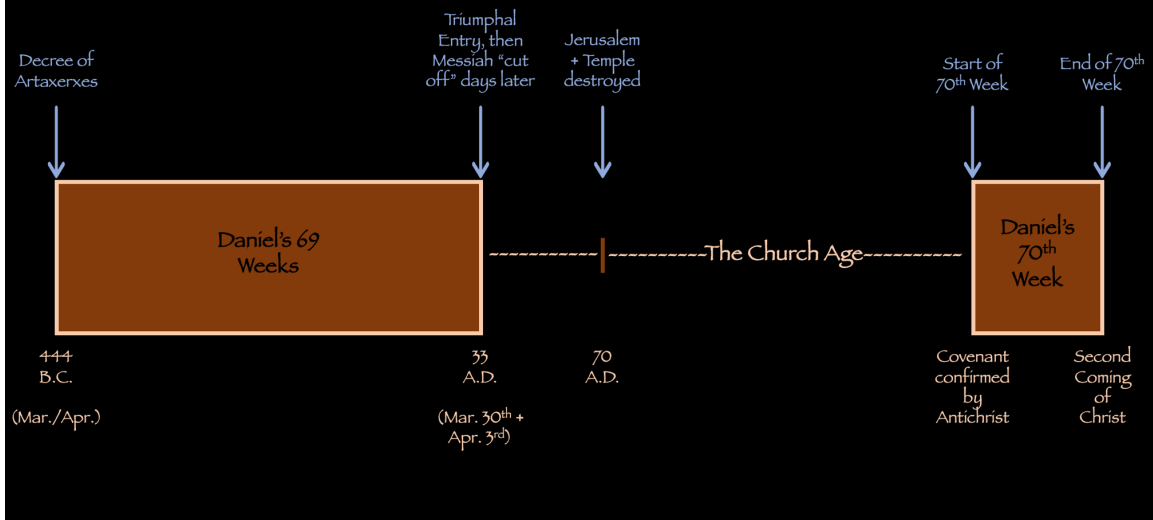
This current Church Age period will continue until the culminating event of the Church Age – the rapture. At the rapture, the timeclock for the church will permanently stop as the Church Age believers are supernaturally removed from the earth. Either immediately or sometime shortly after this, the timeclock for Israel will start up again as their 70th Week (the Tribulation) begins.

You will see that it is impossible to believe that the church goes through the Tribulation if you understand the distinction between Israel and the church, as well as the principle of their mutual exclusivity in God's 70 Week prophetic framework. As we mentioned earlier, the 70 Weeks are designated specifically for the Jews and Jerusalem. The church was not around during the first 69 Weeks, and will not (and cannot) be around during the final 70th Week either. The church is an intercalation – or an interim program – in God's 70 Week calendar for Israel.

What we have just discussed is the overarching understanding we are attempting to get across here in this section. For a visual of what we just discussed, please refer to the following charts:

Daniel's Seventy Weeks Timeline

(Daniel 9:24-27)



So, again, the major point here is that when Israel's clock is running, the church's clock is off – and vice versa. This entire concept anchors our awareness of the two main premises of this study – the distinction between Israel and the church as two separate entities, as well as the idea that God deals with them mutually exclusively. They are two separate plans of God in the earth, like two trains moving on two different tracks. It is impossible to precisely understand Scripture – especially eschatology – without the benefit of these insights. Let's now continue to Verse 27...

-Verse 27:

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

-Daniel 9:27

Verse 27 seems to make an unusual jump to describing the mysterious 70th Week, but gives no description of how the events following the 69 Weeks link into the 70th. Our understanding of the previous verse is clear that the 69 Weeks were completed, and tells us of events that would occur after their completion – forcing us to recognize a gap. The sixty-nine weeks concluded on March 30th, 33 A.D. at the Triumphal Entry. Then after that, Jesus the Messiah was “cut off” four days later. Then still even further after that, the city and sanctuary were destroyed almost forty years later in 70 A.D. So, any

way you cut it, this passage mandates a gap of time following the sixty-nine weeks.

But when we look at Verse 27 and notice its description of the final 70th Week, the question is, when should we understand this final week to occur? Did it occur in 70 A.D.? Or, is it yet future? The only point of continuity or linkage with the previous verse is the use of the pronoun “he,” which would seem to refer back to the antecedent – “prince that shall come” in Verse 26.

We are told that a covenant will be confirmed (or, enforced), which would appear to be the marker for the beginning of the final 70th Week – “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week”. We are then told of a marker that would appear to designate the middle of the 70th Week – “and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...” There is often much confusion as to whether these events have already happened, or if we should understand them to be future events.

Like we mentioned, Part of the confusion here centers on the identification of the pronoun “he,” which has been the topic of much debate. While some believe it refers to the Messiah mentioned in the beginning of the previous verse, others believe it refers to the “prince” mentioned toward the end of the previous verse. In normal laws of reference in language, a pronoun refers back to the last preceding person mentioned. This is one reason we take the position that the “he” refers to the antecedent – “the prince that shall come.”

Those who instead argue that “he” means the Messiah face a number of difficulties. For example, if this is taken to mean Christ confirming the New Covenant (as some have suggested), it immediately runs into major problems, as the New Covenant is obviously longer than seven years in duration. Further, those who apply this to Christ often apply the first half of the final seven years to Jesus’ earthly ministry. However, doing that would overlap the 70th Week with the 69th Week, which we showed in our companion study to have been still in progress until 33 A.D.

Further yet, there are no noteworthy events to designate as markers that would conclude the 70th Week if you applied this to the years following 33 A.D. But the most problematic issue is probably the great number of parallel prophetic passages that clearly identify the 70th Week as a time period that terminates with the Second Coming of Christ – a period often called the Tribulation. Since the Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ are clearly and obviously portrayed in Scripture as future events, then this obviously requires a futurist interpretation of this prophecy. This is the view that we of course embrace.

So, we have seen that the better interpretation of the pronoun “he” is in reference to the “prince that shall come.” The next obvious question becomes, “if it refers to the prince, who we already identified as Titus Vespasian, how can this prophecy be yet future?” Let’s begin to explore the answer to this question.

Many interpreters (especially Preterists) have interpreted Verse 27 to have already been fulfilled in the 1st century A.D. with the destruction

of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Preterism is a Christian eschatological view that interprets the prophecies of the Bible as being events which have already happened.

-<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preterism> (Retrieved 2/25/19)

This view holds that the Biblical prophecies concerning the end-times have already been fulfilled in the past, mainly in the 1st century. The term Preterism comes from the Latin *praeter*, meaning “past.” Preterism is directly opposed to futurism, which sees the end-times prophecies as having a still-future fulfillment. Another typical aspect of Preterism is the belief that Israel finds its continuation or fulfillment in the Christian church following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (*ibid.*). In other words, this view falls into the camp of Replacement Theology. So, most Preterists don’t accept the basic premises of this study – the distinction between Israel and the church, their mutual exclusivity, and the idea that the church has not replaced Israel.

Preterists generally attribute complete fulfillment to Daniel 9:27 in the actions of Titus Vespasian and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Many Preterists have noted the similarities between the actions of Titus and the content of Verse 27 – “he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate.” Titus put an end to sacrifice and offering by destroying Jerusalem and the Temple. The Romans set up their pagan emblems on the eastern wing of the Temple and offered sacrifices to them. The Jewish/Roman historian Josephus, who was there, records all of this in “The Wars of the Jews,” Book 6, Chapter 6.

-Flavius Josephus, "The Wars of the Jews," VI, 6.1, p. 891.

At quick glance, and when isolating this passage from the rest of the Biblical commentary on the 70th Week, this interpretation may appear convincing. Yet, when we utilize a systematic, precise, literal reading of all of the parallel Biblical passages that also discuss the 70th Week, we find that this Preterist view is indefensible.

Earlier, we mentioned that numerous future end-times discourses in the New Testament were given based upon this template of Daniel 9:24-27. Jesus' Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, Paul's teaching on the end-time "Day of the Lord" in 2 Thessalonians 2, and the apocalyptic prophecies of Revelation 6-19 are all prime examples. These passages all act as parallel or clarifying Biblical commentary on the events of the 70th Week, expounding upon this particular verse – Verse 27. And their plain, literal readings necessitate a future context of interpretation – meaning the events that Verse 27 describes cannot have found ultimate fulfillment in 70 A.D., or any other time up until the present. Further ahead, we will allude to some of these parallel prophecies, as well as other passages that clearly depict the 70th Week as being a future end-times period involving the desecrating actions of the figure often called the Antichrist. We will clearly see that the only Biblically coherent way to understand the 70th Week is through the futurist interpretation.

But let's focus our attention on the question we posed earlier. "If the pronoun 'he' in Verse 27 refers to the prince, who we already identified as Titus Vespasian in Verse 26, then how can this prophecy be yet future?" In order to further answer this question, we need to

make note of several key peculiarities that we repeatedly note in prophetic Scripture.

First, we shouldn't be surprised that between Verse 26 and Verse 27 exists a gap of time. The fact that the "he" can jump from referring to Titus Vespasian in 70 A.D. in Verse 26 to the future Antichrist in the Tribulation in Verse 27 should not startle us. It is somewhat common in Scripture for a prophecy to, in the course of a single line, or even in the space of a comma, jump from one fulfillment event to another, being hundreds or even thousands of years apart.

In fact, many of these are directly due to the fact that the Church Age was hidden to Old Testament prophecy. In other words, the prophecies often discuss events fulfilled at Christ's First Coming, but then skip over the several thousands of years we've experienced so far in the Church Age, and then culminate with Tribulation, Second Coming, or Millennial events. If you didn't know there was a mystery Church Age gap inserted there, you'd think they were all continuous and uninterrupted prophecies.

A classic example of this which Jesus Christ Himself interpreted for us can be found in Luke 4:16-19. This passage records that at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus stood up in the synagogue when it was His turn to read, and opened to the book of the prophet Isaiah. He proceeded to read Isaiah 61:1-2, proclaiming His mission at His First Coming. He finishes with His mandate, "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." What you probably wouldn't realize without going back to Isaiah to read the original prophecy, is that

Jesus stopped reading right in the middle of the sentence! The rest reads, “and the day of vengeance of our God...”

Jesus stopped reading at the comma that preceded “and the day of vengeance of our God...” He left that last segment out. Why? Because we now understand that after that comma, the prophecy jumped from the time of the Messiah’s First Coming to some several thousand years or more into the future – past the present time we are living in now – to the time of His Second Coming. The “day of vengeance” was not part of His mission during His First Coming, but it will be fulfilled at His Second Coming.

So, in the original prophecy in Isaiah, we see that one comma separated several thousand years of history (to date), but this gap would have been unknown and undetectable to the original readers. This is exactly what we see happening here in Daniel 9:26-27, as thousands of years separate the two verses – and yet, from a casual reading, they seem to flow together.

Additionally, there are also many examples of multiple reference prophecies in Scripture, in which it’s clear who or what the original subject is, but then at some point in the text, the prophecy clearly begins to transcend that subject and point to a future person or subject that will act as the ultimate fulfillment.

One example of a multiple reference prophecy is found in the Book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 28:12-19), which gives a description of someone called the King of Tyre. Although there was an actual historical person who was the King of Tyre, the description the Bible gives of

this person at some point seems to go far beyond just describing this human leader. Though in context, Ezekiel was first speaking about the historical King of Tyre, at some point in the prophecy, he seemingly moved into the dateless past with a description of the original fall of Satan – the true power behind the earthly King of Tyre.

This also seems to be happening here in Daniel 9:26-27. Verse 26 obviously refers to the actions of Titus Vespasian, and yet we understand from the many other parallel prophetic passages in Scripture that the events of Verse 27 are yet future. And so, even though the pronoun “he” from Verse 26 is carried into Verse 27 without any obvious change in context in Daniel 9, we understand from these other parallel supporting texts that the “he” in Verse 27 clearly transcends Titus – and instead, refers to the coming Antichrist in the eschatological 70th Week.

Furthermore, it is even possible that the events of Verse 27 as a whole do find a typological near-term fulfillment in the events of 70 A.D. In other words, Titus Vespasian and the events of 70 A.D. may be in some ways a type of the Antichrist and his future actions. And as usual with typology, the type is not identical in all ways to the antitype.

That is perfectly compatible with the futurist interpretation, as futurists recognize the routine usage of dual fulfillment prophecies in Scripture, as we just outlined. For instance, we find something similar in Daniel 11:31, another place in which the term abomination of desolation is referenced, which futurist scholars understand to have

both near-term and far-term fulfillments. This is the essence of prophetic typology, and there is no limit to the number of types that can occur. It is often a reoccurring pattern that has the purpose of prefiguring an ultimate future far-term fulfillment event.

In the near-term sense, this passage (Daniel 11:31) refers to the events that took place in 167 B.C. in which a Seleucid-Greek ruler named Antiochus Epiphanes erected an idol of Zeus in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem – and also sacrificed a pig on the altar. This historical abomination of desolation is the event that led to the Maccabean Revolt, in which the Greeks were expelled from Judea, and the Temple was then cleansed and rededicated. This historical event is commemorated by the Jews each year at Hanukkah.

But in the far-term sense, this passage in Daniel 11 also appears to transcend this near-term application and find ultimate fulfillment in the actions of the Antichrist during the future 70th Week. This is made clear for us in many ways, but maybe most obviously in the understanding that the Daniel 11 narrative, which flows into Daniel 12, ends with the Second Coming of Christ.

In other words, this Chapter in Daniel is yet another example of a prophecy that begins to transcend the local near-term application and end with events that are clearly in the future. And like Daniel 9:26-27, you will find that Daniel 11 also skips over several thousand years of the Church Age, culminating in the Second Coming event described early in Chapter 12. This concept alone refutes the Preterist view that “all of this has already happened.” If it already happened, when did the Second Coming take place? Scripture is

obvious that these 70th Week events end with the Second Coming of Christ.

So, this prophecy of an abomination of desolation that we see described in Daniel 11:31 did describe an actual historical event that has occurred in the past, yet we also understand it to be a type or a shadow of an ultimate fulfillment yet to come. Like we said, this may also be the case in Daniel 9:27 with the actions of Titus Vespasian in 70 A.D. But at most, they only act as a shadow of something yet future that will occur in the 70th Week. And as is the case in many of these instances, the near-term fulfillment doesn't perfectly fit the prophecy.

In other words, a shadow is hazy and indistinct. The actual object casting the shadow is detailed and well-defined. Even if we ignore the host of parallel passages necessitating an end-times context, there are a number of other reasons why Daniel 9:27's ultimate fulfillment could not have been found in the events of 70 A.D. The most obvious reason is that the abomination of desolation refers most specifically to the desecrating action of a Gentile outsider erecting a false god in the Holy of Holies – and Titus did not do this. He did not even step foot into the Temple until it was already on fire and about to be destroyed. In fact, history records that Titus had actually ordered his men to preserve the Temple. Yet, due to their anger against the Jews, they disobeyed the order of their general and set fire to the Temple, destroying it and pillaging it of its gold.

-Ray C. Stedman, "What's This World Coming To?" (An expository study of Matthew 24-26, the Olivet Discourse). Palo Alto, CA: Discovery Publications, 1970, Ch. 1.

The Jewish Encyclopedia records this ancient historical account, telling us the following...

“...one of the Roman soldiers, weary of fighting, threw a burning piece of wood into the Temple. In vain did Titus give orders to extinguish the flames; his voice was drowned in the uproar. Titus himself, impelled by curiosity, entered the Sanctuary, but the smoke forced him to withdraw; and thus the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem became associated with his name.”

-<http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14412-titus> (Retrieved 11/3/20)

So, in some ways you can make the argument that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was a type of an abomination of desolation event, and yet it doesn't completely fit the bill regarding everything the Bible tells us about the ultimate and final desolation. Parallel prophetic passages in the Bible tell us that the ultimate future abomination of desolation will involve the Antichrist physically standing in the Holy of Holies claiming to be God. We will see this further ahead in our study. It is therefore impossible to apply the full and ultimate fulfillment of Daniel 9:27 to Titus Vespasian and the events of 70 A.D. At most, it can represent a partial near-term fulfillment or a type that will be ultimately fulfilled by the Antichrist in the future end-times 70th Week – the Tribulation.

And so, although it can be confusing to read Daniel 9:26-27 in isolation and without the benefit of other clarifying parallel passages, we should not allow this to cause us to misinterpret the text as Preterists and others do. We do have other clarifying passages that clearly detail this final week – some of which we mentioned earlier – and we must not view Daniel 9 in isolation. We must take into account

the entire corpus of Biblical commentary on this subject before formulating our conclusion.

In the next subsection, we will look deeper into the events of this 70th Week and the actions of the Antichrist during this period. Overall, our objective will be to further explore God's purposes for Israel during this time period – and to witness how this furthers our awareness of the distinction and mutual exclusivity of Israel and the church.

-A Deeper Look At Israel's 70th Week:

Let's begin with a quick review of the last subsection as we transition into a deeper exploration of it. Previously, we devoted some time to understanding the identification of the pronoun "he" in Daniel 9:26 and 27. We concluded that this figure refers to Titus Vespasian and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. We noted how especially in Verse 27, the identity of this figure clearly transcends Titus Vespasian, and in a more ultimate sense, refers to the character many know as the Antichrist – and his final act of desecration in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem during the final 70th Week (or the Tribulation).

When we look at this while using the benefit of the other clarifying parallel passages in Scripture, we can clearly see that the actions of Titus may, at most, act as a mere shadow of this ultimate and final figure. And this abomination of desolation that this ultimate figure causes, is clearly in the context of a future end-times event that occurs prior to Christ's Second Coming.

We are told that this future Antichrist character will confirm or enforce a covenant with Israel. We don't know exactly what this covenant, or treaty, is, but we know it marks the beginning of the final week. It could be that he enforces the Land Covenant in Deuteronomy that gives Israel the full right to the land. Or, it could have something to do with the Temple, since we're told that in the middle of the week, he will cause the "sacrifice and the oblation to cease." This of course, implies that the Temple will be standing, meaning that the Jews will be back in the land (this part already is being fulfilled, and has been for the last century with the Jews returning to Israel). It implies that the Jews will have rebuilt the Temple and have returned to the Levitical system of sacrifices (these things have not yet been fulfilled). However, this implication regarding the Temple being rebuilt in the final 70th Week aligns the rest of prophetic Scripture, as Jesus, Paul, and John all allude to its existence at that future time.

Verse 27 also tells us that "for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even unto the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." We touched on this in the last subsection, but let's delve into it further here, but connecting it with the words of Jesus, who described a future event that will transpire in similar fashion...

Many Christians are surprised to find out that the New Testament actually refers to the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah. This reference is found in John 10:22 – called the "feast of dedication" in the winter, which refers to Hanukkah. Scripture seems to assume that its readers should be familiar with this event. Why? Because this rededication of

the Temple was a pivotal event in “recent” Jewish history at the time the New Testament was written.

Earlier, we referenced the abomination of desolation committed by Antiochus Epiphanes (the Greek-Seleucid ruler) in 167 B.C. Among many of his other actions of persecution toward the Jews, He most famously erected an idol to Zeus in the Holy of Holies and sacrificed a pig on the altar in the Temple.

As we also mentioned, the near-term fulfillment of this abomination of desolation event was prophesied of by Daniel in Daniel 11:31 several hundred years before it took place. Then, around 200 years after the events of Antiochus’ desolation, Jesus makes reference to the abomination of desolation in a prophetic briefing (which we call the Olivet Discourse) given to His disciples, as recorded in Matthew 25:15...

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)” -Matthew 24:15

Jesus was referring back to the events surrounding Antiochus’s desecration of the Temple – which any Jew, especially in His day – would have been intimately familiar with. Yet, Jesus spoke of it in a future eschatological context, allowing us to understand that the ultimate fulfillment is still to come. Jesus was answering the disciples’ question of, “what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” in Verse 3. Daniel doesn’t only mention the abomination of desolation in Daniel 11:31 and 9:27, but he also mentions it in Daniel

12:11, in which it's used as a marker for the end of the age. The context of Daniel 12 is clearly the eschatological future Tribulation and Second Coming.

So, there should be no confusion about the fact that Jesus' discourse in Matthew 24 was focusing on end-time events that will occur during the 70th Week of Daniel, or the Tribulation. The actions of Antiochus that occurred 200 years before Jesus made this statement, were simply the shadow, or type of the ultimate fulfillment, or antitype. Jesus was telling his listeners that there will be an ultimate abomination of desolation in the future 70th Week, perpetrated by the Antichrist. This interpretation also aligns with the other parallel passages describing this event and time – such as Daniel 7, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 13.

So, we understand from the words of Jesus that this future leader will evidently repeat (ultimately fulfilling) the “abomination of desolation” event performed by Antiochus in 167/168 B.C. and possibly in some ways also foreshadowed by Titus Vespasian in 70 A.D. But as we discussed in the previous subsection, the actions of Titus do not perfectly fulfill what Jesus spoke of, as for one thing, he did not erect an idol inside the Holy of Holies in the Temple, or do anything even remotely similar.

In fact, this has not yet happened since Jesus predicted it – which is another reason we know the 70th Week has not yet occurred. A Roman emperor did once unsuccessfully try – this was Caligula in 40 A.D., who instructed his general Petronius to erect his image in the Holy of Holies. Petronius refused, knowing this would result in a

Jewish revolt. Before Petronius could be executed for his refusal, Caligula died, letting him off the hook. It would seem God would not allow this to happen until the 70th Week, as predicted by Daniel and Jesus.

Let's now look further into the timeline and events of this future week...

There are thirty-three titles for the Antichrist in the Old Testament, and thirteen in the New. For example, he's called the "Beast" in Revelation Chapters 11 and 13. In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul calls him the "Man of Sin" and the "Son of Perdition" in Verse 2; then in Verse 8, he calls him the "Lawless One." John calls him the Antichrist (or pseudo-christ) in 1 John 2.

Daniel 9:27 says that this Antichrist or Beast will confirm a covenant for seven years, but in the middle of this week (or 3 ½ years into this final 70th Week), he will break the covenant, putting a stop to the daily sacrifices and will commit the abomination of desolation. Revelation 13 gives us a clue as to what this abomination entails, as it explains that the Beast will have an image of himself that all are required to worship – and that the image will in some way become animated...

"...saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

-Revelation 13:14-15

Daniel 11:31 seems to imply that this image will be placed in the Temple, similar to how Antiochus Epiphanes erected an idol of Zeus in the Temple...

“And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”

-Daniel 11:31

2 Thessalonians 2 tells us the Antichrist will also himself sit in the Temple, as if he was God, requiring the world to worship him...

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (the Antichrist);

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

-2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

This aligns with the statement by Jesus in Matthew 24:15, saying that the abomination of desolation would “stand in the Holy Place” in the Temple.

Revelation 13:5 says that this will go on for 42 months, which is 3 ½ years. Since Daniel 9:27 says that this will happen in the “middle of the week,” and Revelation 13:5 says that the Beast will do this for a period of 42 months, it is easy to see that the total length of time in

this “week” is 84 months, or seven years. Also see Daniel 7:25, which mentions “time, times, and half a time” (time = 1 year; times = 2 years; half a time = $\frac{1}{2}$ year; giving a total of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years).

What happens during this $3\frac{1}{2}$ year period?

- Daniel 7:25 describes it as the period that Tribulation saints are given into the Antichrist's hands.
- Daniel 9:27 describes it as the period between the breaking of the Antichrist's covenant with Israel and subsequent abomination of desolation, and the establishment of Jesus' Kingdom.
- Daniel 12:7 describes it as the duration of the worst “time of trouble” for Israel.
- Revelation 11:2 describes it as the period that the holy city will be tread underfoot by Gentiles.
- Revelation 11:3 describes it as the period of ministry for the Two Witnesses.
- Revelation 12:6 and 12:14 describes it as the period that Israel (or perhaps only its repentant remnant) is preserved by God in the wilderness.
- Revelation 13:5 describes it as the duration of Antichrist's authority to rule, persecute and blaspheme.

So, taking all these together, we are obviously dealing with the last half of Daniel's 70th Week – a time repeatedly described in Scripture with more detail than any other time in human history.

In Matthew 24, Jesus tells us that this abomination of desolation that occurs at this mid-point of the 70th Week is a marker for the beginning of the “Great Tribulation” – the name He gave to this final 3 ½ year period. He also tells the Jews living in Jerusalem at that time that when they see this event take place, it will be their sign to immediately flee, as it will initiate this time of unparalleled distress for Israel....

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

-Matthew 24:15-21

So, let's review. From the passages we've examined that all describe this abomination of desolation, which the reader is commanded by Jesus to understand, we see that it includes the following elements:

1. It occurs in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 11:31; 2 Thessalonians 2:4).
2. It marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation, or the latter 3 ½ years of the final 70th Week of Daniel – the worst persecution against the Jewish people in history. (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15 and 21)
3. It seems to involve the Antichrist setting up a statue or image of himself so that he may be worshipped in place of God (Daniel 11:31; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:14-15).
4. The image is made to come to life (Revelation 13:14).
5. A worship system of this false god is thus inaugurated (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:14-15).
6. The Antichrist himself sits in the Temple claiming to be God and demanding worship (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).
7. The abomination results in the cessation of the regular sacrifice (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).
8. At the end of this time period, the Antichrist who commits the act will himself be cut off (Daniel 9:27).

We've conducted this introductory review in order to give a basis of understanding for how to understand the prophetic timeline or framework of Daniel 9:24-27 as it relates to eschatology and this subject of the distinction and mutual exclusivity of Israel and the church.

So, now that we have a sufficient baseline of understanding concerning the major events and divisions of this final 70th Week of time for Israel, in the next subsection, we will begin to examine what Biblical prophecy says about this time period within the context of the nation of Israel. Doing this will continue to sharpen our perceptions regarding the mutual exclusivity of Israel and the church in God's program.

-God's Plan for Israel in the Future 70th Week:

Throughout this study, we have alluded to the fact that Scripture shows us that Israel will be brought into this final week following the rapture of the church. We have also mentioned how this final week has as one of its primary purposes, the objective of using trouble and trial to bring national Israel to repentance and faith in her true Messiah. We have also mentioned that a remnant of national Israel will turn to Christ at the end of this seven years of intense trouble, calling out to Him and petitioning His return – resulting in His Second Coming to save them. Let's now take a closer look at this and examine some more of the prophetic details that Scripture provides.

This one period of time is probably the most prophetically anticipated period of time in the Bible – no other period of time is documented more thoroughly and extensively. In Revelation and other parts of Daniel, this final 70th Week – or Tribulation – is described in precise detail. The characteristics of this time period are well-known, and are extensively alluded to throughout the Old Testament prophets and in the sayings of Jesus in the gospels.

We recognize that this Great Tribulation spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 24 – will be a time of trouble unlike anything else. Like we've been saying, this is a prophecy concerning the future of national Israel, not the church. This will be a time of intense trouble for the whole world, but mainly focused on national Israel. These concepts that Jesus is speaking about should be easily understood for any student of the Old Testament. Jesus was in effect, quoting from the Book of Daniel. Daniel 12:1 says...

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

-Daniel 12:1

So, Jesus is clear in Matthew 24 that the time that is coming is a time of trouble that will be unprecedented. Understanding Jewish history, that is a difficult truth to embrace, as the Jews have already endured some of the worst persecution imaginable. One Jew out of every three was said to have been killed during the Nazi Holocaust, but the

“time of trouble” that is coming in the latter half of the 70th Week will be much worse.

The Old Testament prophet Zechariah prophesied extensively about this time period. He prophesied the following regarding the Israel in the context of the Tribulation...

“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”

-Zechariah 13:8-9

In the Holocaust, one out of every three was said to have been killed, but in this coming Great Tribulation, the Jews’ own Scriptures, right here in Zechariah, declare that it will be two out of every three. This is an awful thing to even think about, and we do not as Christians take any pleasure in contemplating this; but it clearly is what the Word of God says. This time period is referred to here by Zechariah as a refiner’s fire, and is also widely referred to in Bible prophecy (especially the Old Testament) as a time period of God’s wrath or indignation. For instance, Zephaniah puts it this way...

“That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,”

-Zephaniah 1:15

In Daniel's apocalyptic vision, he was told...

"He said, 'Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end.'

-Daniel 8:19

It is also called a time of great trouble. For instance, Jeremiah refers to it as the "time of Jacob's trouble," referring to the Jews collectively as Jacob – their forefather.

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

-Jeremiah 30:7

This description of the Great Tribulation as "the time of Jacob's trouble" is one of the puzzle pieces helpful in allowing us to realize that although this is a worldwide Tribulation, its primary focus is on the Jews, or Israel – this being in line with the concept of Daniel's 70 Weeks being designated specifically for the Jews and Jerusalem.

Jacob was the patriarch of the twelve tribes of Israel, whose name was later changed to Israel (Gen. 32). So, this passage is clear in telling us that this is a time of trouble that is especially focused upon Israel. This passage also tells us that this ultimate time of trouble will be unlike any other period of time in the long and unfortunate history of Jewish persecution – "none is like it." As we referred to earlier, this

period of time will unfortunately, make the Holocaust look like a minor event.

One of the most important verses for understanding this period is found in Hosea, and helps answer the question of “what is the purpose of the Tribulation, as it concerns Israel?” You will see that the answer to this question helps sharpen our perception of the distinction between Israel and the church and how God deals with them mutually exclusively, allowing us to recognize that the Tribulation – the 70th Week – has absolutely nothing to do with the church.

“I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”

-Hosea 5:15 * (Note that the word “early” in this passage actually means “earnestly.”)

This passage records God speaking in the first person, saying that He will go and return to His place. First of all, this would make no sense if God had never left His place (heaven) – He couldn’t go back if He never left it. But this makes perfect sense in light of the Incarnation, where God came to earth in a body as a genuine human. Through the manifestation of the Son, Christ Jesus, God in flesh did come to earth. And He will one day return. When? This verse tells us! He said He wouldn’t return “till” – or until they acknowledge their offense (which we will see was rejecting their Messiah), and seek God’s face. In other words, He will not return until they repent, acknowledge Him as their true Messiah, and petition His return.

So, this passage shows us that one of the main purposes of the Tribulation (here described as “their affliction”) is to drive the Jews to repentance! It is unfortunate that it will take such extreme affliction in order to accomplish that, yet their own Scriptures plainly say it.

Again, we can clearly see that the Tribulation – the 70th Week – has absolutely nothing to do with the church, but part of its entire purpose directly concerns Israel. In fact, a key point to make note of is that the New Testament makes it very clear that the church is actually antithetical to the Tribulation. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 that God has not appointed the church to wrath. The pouring out of God’s wrath in judgment upon a world that has completely turned against Him is what the Tribulation by definition is (Revelation 6:16-17), and is exactly the context of what this passage written by Paul is referring to.

Jesus Himself declares this same concept in Revelation 3:10, telling us that the church will be kept from the time of God’s wrath altogether. So, this is another way in which we see the mutual exclusivity of Israel and the church – they cannot both be active during the Tribulation. The Tribulation is for Israel, and is incompatible with the church’s existence on earth. The church must be removed prior to Israel’s 70th Week, or the 7-year Tribulation. We will discuss this subject further in the following subsection.

Another key point to note is that the passage we were looking at in Hosea also declares that the Jews’ repentance is actually a pre-condition for the Second Coming of Christ! God said He wouldn’t return “till” – or until they acknowledge their offense and seek His

face. This is one of the key differentiators between the rapture (or supernatural removal) of the church and the Second Coming. The rapture – when the church is removed from earth – has no preconditions. We refer to this concept as the “Doctrine of Imminence.” We find that the New Testament describes the rapture as an imminent event.

In other words, it is a sign-less, sudden event that has no preconditions. Yet, concerning the Second Coming, which is described here in Hosea 5:15, we clearly see that Israel’s repentance acts as a precondition in order for it to take place. If the church was on earth during the 70th Week and the rapture is the same event as the Second Coming, then this would violate the Doctrine of Imminence. This anchors our perception that the church will be removed prior to the 70th Week – which we refer to as a pre-tribulational rapture (which again, we will discuss further in the next subsection). So, we can continue to see the many ways in which, according to Scripture, Israel and the church are mutually exclusive.

But let’s get back to Hosea 5:15 and even more clearly understand what “offense” God was referring to in this passage. Remember, God said He would only return when “they acknowledge their offense,” and seek His face. So, what offense is this? The answer is obvious to even the most casual Bible reader. Jesus told us the answer in Luke 19:43-44, as we discussed earlier in our study.

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,
And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

-Luke 19:41-44

So, their offense was not recognizing the time of their Messianic visitation. And not recognizing Him as their Messiah – even after He had given them the Daniel 9:25 prophecy to try to ensure they’d be ready for His arrival right on time! They were given the exact timeline, and yet still somehow missed it! Because of this, Jesus pronounced corporate blindness upon Israel, and the past two thousand years have illustrated this to be evident. The Jews as a whole, still do not recognize their Messiah – even after all this time. Jesus says something similar in Matthew 23:37-29...

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

-Matthew 23:37-39

Here, Jesus' love for His people, the Jews, becomes tangible. His grief and concern are obvious, as He expresses the tragedy of all history "and ye would not." If they would have accepted Him at His First Coming, He would have "gathered" them like a hen does her chicks under His rule and given them their ultimate anticipation – the Messianic Kingdom. But because of their rejection of Him, the Kingdom went into postponement (not cancellation!), and God instead introduced His interim plan called the church.

But notice that in this passage, Jesus alludes to the Second Coming in a way similar to the Hosea passage, saying "Ye shall not see me...till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in in the name of the Lord." This was a Messianic phrase found in Psalm 118:26, with which the Jews were to welcome the Messiah when He came. This is parallel to what is conveyed in Hosea 5:15 – that Christ's return is predicated on their recognition of Him as Messiah. Also, the reference to Israel's "house being left desolate" seems to be a reference to the departure of God's presence from the Temple, as God's program fully switched from Israel over to the Church Age following their rejection of Him as their Messiah. The New Testament tells us that instead, in the Church Age, our bodies are the "Temple" of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, et al.).

But all of these prophecies referring to the 70th Week that we've read in Daniel, Zechariah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and many more that we haven't read, all declare that through their time of Tribulation, there would come a point where the Jews would repent, acknowledge Him, and be saved! Bringing national Israel to repentance in order to then

come to rescue them from destruction is one of God's main purposes for this final "week" on His calendar for Israel. He will get Israel back!

Let's review these prophecies. (Keep in mind, the following are just a few we have looked at in this section. There are many, many more prophecies in the Bible that also communicate this same message of Israel turning to God and being delivered at the end of the Tribulation.) So, let's review...

- The passage in Daniel (Daniel 12:1) declares that, "at that time (the context being the end of the Tribulation) thy people shall be delivered."
- The passage in Zechariah (Zechariah 13:8-9) declares that God would save the remnant 1/3rd of the Jewish nation out of the coming time of trouble – "they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God."
- The passage in Jeremiah (Jeremiah 30:7 – the "time of Jacob's trouble") declares that "he (referring to "Jacob," or Israel) shall be saved out of it."
- The passage in Hosea (Hosea 5:15) declares, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence..." It says that in their affliction (meaning the Tribulation), they will seek Him. The word "till", or "until" clearly implies that when they do acknowledge their offense, He will return for them and save them.

Exploring this passage further, we can understand how clear this is, as the next chapter – Hosea Chapter 6 – begins by saying the following...

“Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.
After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.”
-Hosea 6:1-2

It is also interesting that the Hosea passage says, “After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.” In other places in Scripture, one day is used as an idiom for a thousand years (Psalm 90:4, 2 Peter 3:8). How long has it been since Jesus proclaimed corporate blindness upon the Jews after they rejected their Messiah? About 2,000 years – or “two days.” Is the “third day” an idiom for the Millennium, when Christ will reign on earth and restore Israel to godliness? This is very likely.

So, we constantly see this same theme in Biblical prophecy – a remnant of rebellious Israel will repent and turn to her true Messiah at the end of the Tribulation, prompting His return to restore them physically and spiritually, and then inaugurate His Millennial Kingdom. This is Israel’s future in God’s plan. Although Israel is currently in a state of rebellion, God will get her back, but it will take the Tribulation period to do it. God is not finished with Israel! This can further be

summarized in the following passage from Isaiah 54, speaking of the end-time restoration of Israel...

“For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.” -Isaiah 54:5-8

We see from this entire panorama of history which was given prophetically, hundreds of years before Christ's First Coming. God prophetically laid out how he would for a time turn His attention away from Israel after the nation's rejection of Him as Messiah (and His attention would move to the church). But He makes clear that at the end of it all, He would regather them in kindness and mercy.

Recall the earlier passage we looked at that records Jesus' lament in Matthew 23:37 – declaring how He wanted to gather them as a nation back then at His First Coming, but they wouldn't have Him. They failed the test at His First Coming. Yet, hundreds of years earlier here in Isaiah (and many other places), He was already declaring His intention to ultimately regather them in the end, as through the Tribulation, they will receive Him at His Second Coming.

A few verses later, God says...

“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

-Isaiah 54:10

So, we see the same everlasting nature of God’s unconditional covenant promises to Israel shown here. God tells Israel that the mountains and hills will be removed from the earth before His covenant with Israel could ever be removed. God then finishes out this chapter by declaring the everlasting principle of His preservation of Israel...

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”

-Isaiah 54:17

This concept is also amazingly summarized prophetically in Deuteronomy 4. In Verses 25-31, Israel’s future history as a nation is detailed before they even entered the Promised Land – foretelling their future apostasy, exile, scattering among the nations, suffering during the Tribulation, and then ultimate spiritual restoration in fulfillment of God’s covenant promises.

“When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the

form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you. And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice. For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.” -Deuteronomy 4:25-31 (ESV)

We are clearly told that they will have to go through the Tribulation due to their apostate condition, and yet God also promises that He will not leave them, nor destroy them, nor would He forget (or go back on) the covenant He made with their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He says that they will return to God in the latter days, and realize the fulfillments of all of God’s covenants, which we know from other passages will take place during the Millennial Kingdom.

This same panorama of history is also clearly prophesied of in Deuteronomy 30 as well, showing how Israel would be scattered among the nations due to their disobedience, would be gathered in

repentance and brought back to possess the land in faith in fulfillment of God's promises.

This entire idea of God keeping his covenant promises to Israel is one of the major reasons for Christ's Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation. John, in his apocalyptic vision in Revelation, describes this event...

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

-Revelation 19:11

Why is Christ called "Faithful and True?" Because this is Him coming back to save the Jewish remnant that had turned to Him, in order to keep His covenants with Israel. He is Faithful and True to His unconditional covenant promises. Jesus in Matthew 24 had told us that if He didn't return, no flesh would be saved. In other words, if this time period of Tribulation was allowed to continue past its allotted time, all people on earth – and certainly the Jewish remnant – would be destroyed (Matthew 24:22). And if there is no Jewish remnant remaining, then God couldn't fulfill His covenant promises to Israel. So, in order to fulfill His promises, His Second Coming is necessary. This Faithful and True covenant-keeping God will return as a Conquering King to save this remnant and then bring them into the Millennial Kingdom, in which all of His promises will be kept.

So, we need to recognize that Daniel's 70th Week has absolutely nothing to do with the church, but everything to do with God's future

plan to save a righteous remnant of national Israel, while also pouring out judgment upon the wicked. This is the entire point we've been trying to illuminate, and everything up to this point in our review has been to elucidate this point.

So, let's summarize...

We must remember that, according to Daniel, the 70 Weeks are specifically designated for the Jews and Jerusalem – not the Gentiles or the church. We see that when the first 69 Weeks for Israel were active, the church was not on the scene. But the same year the 69 Weeks ended – 33 A.D., – the church then began almost immediately after on Pentecost. Israel's clock stopped and the church's clock began. The church was God's interim program that God inaugurated after national Israel rejected her Messiah. This is the time we are living in presently – which we call the Church Age.

The rapture of the church, or supernatural removal of the church from Earth, will be the event that stops the church's clock – permanently. But as we've discussed here, when the 70th Week begins, Israel's clock will resume until its completion at the Second Coming – which will take place at the end of the 70th Week.

Our in-depth exploration of this 70th Week and its purposes for Israel should help sharpen our understanding of these points. In the next subsection, we will shift our focus towards demonstrating that the church's clock will stop prior to the beginning of the 70th Week – at the pretribulational rapture.

-The Church Will End Prior to the 70th Week:

So far, we have discussed Daniel's first 69 Weeks, which began with Artaxerxes' command to rebuild Jerusalem in 444 B.C. and ended with the Triumphant Entry in 33 A.D. When these weeks ended, God's interim program (the church) almost immediately began (about 50 days later on Pentecost). We then discussed Daniel's future 70th Week, which will begin with the Antichrist confirming a covenant. He will then break the covenant at the midpoint. This week will then conclude with the Second Coming of Christ.

We have shown how the first 69 Weeks and the 70th Week are designated for Israel, and have nothing to do with the church. In fact, we have already alluded to several reasons that show the church and the 70th Week to be completely incompatible. The church will be raptured prior to the beginning of this final week – an event we term the pretribulational rapture. Understanding this outline of eschatology helps us recognize how distinct and mutually exclusive Israel and the church really are in God's plan.

In this section, we will explore this idea of the pretribulational rapture of the church, and will offer a number of Biblical evidences that corroborate it. The importance of understanding this goes hand in hand with the recognition that Israel and the church are mutually exclusive. Another way of putting it is, since the 70 Weeks are specifically designated as being for Israel, then the 70 Weeks and the church are mutually exclusive. This itself is one of the reasons that necessitate the pretribulational removal of the church from earth in order for God to begin Israel's final week.

There are many other Scriptural proofs for a pretribulational rapture. Although this subject is extensive enough to be a full series of studies on its own, we will briefly summarize five simple points of evidence. Let's begin...

1. Believers escaping the coming wrath is taught plainly in Scripture. The coming time of wrath refers to the Tribulation. This is shown most plainly in Revelation 6, as the Sixth Seal is opened. The people of earth cry out in fear...

“And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” -Revelation 6:16-17

There it is some debate over where the Sixth Seal takes place chronologically during the Tribulation. Some have suggested it occurs at the beginning, while others suggest it occurs somewhere closer to the midpoint or later. But regardless of where the Sixth Seal falls, for our discussion here, let's just understand that the Tribulation as a whole characterizes the wrath of God. The wrath is most intensely poured out in the latter half of the Tribulation, which Jesus called the “Great Tribulation” in Matthew 24. Yet, it should be understood that the entire 70th Week – not just the latter half – is the wrath of God. Why? Because Jesus is the one in heaven opening the

seals and releasing these judgments (Revelation 6 and following).

But here is what we're really getting at – the Bible clearly teaches that believers escape before the time of God's wrath, or the Tribulation. In other words, the church is caught up in the rapture before the 70th Week. Consider the following points...

- In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, Paul tells the church that Jesus delivered us from the wrath to come...

“And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” -1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

Notice that this says Jesus delivered us – past tense – from the wrath to come – future tense. When we were saved and we entered into the body of Christ or the church, that salvation brought with it an exemption from the coming time of wrath. It doesn't say God will bring us through the wrath in the future – it says He has already saved us from it altogether.

- In 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Paul then says...

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,”
-1 Thessalonians 5:9

So, we again find it clearly taught that we are not appointed to wrath. The Tribulation is God's time of wrath for those that dwell on the earth (as we will see even more clearly in the following passage). If we are not appointed to wrath, then our being on earth during the coming time of wrath is irreconcilable.

- In Revelation 3:10, the Lord Himself promised to keep us from the time of the Tribulation altogether. Jesus, speaking to the church at Philadelphia says...

"Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth." -Revelation 3:10

Notice that there's no way to interpret this to mean God will preserve us through the Tribulation. It specifically says God will keep us from even the time of the Tribulation. We won't be here for it. Of course, the church – like anyone else – will endure normal tribulations of life (lowercase "t"), but the church is exempt from the Tribulation (uppercase "T") – the future specific period of time that is Daniel's 70th Week.

- In 1 Thessalonians 4:18, after giving us the promise of the rapture in the previous several verses, Paul then follows this up by saying...

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

-1 Thessalonians 4:18

We find that the rapture is to be a comfort to us. If the rapture doesn't take place until the end of the Tribulation, how could this present us with any comfort? It would be like saying, "those of you who endure through the worst seven years of earth's history, who do not get decapitated by the Antichrist, will get raptured at the end of it. Be comforted by that." Obviously, that is not even close to being a comforting promise.

And so, this promise of the rapture being a comfort supports the earlier passages that describe our exemption from this coming time of wrath – and that is definitely a comfort. When we study the Tribulation, we can be comforted by the teaching that we will be rescued prior to it.

2. The church is conspicuously absent from the part of the Book of Revelation that discusses the Tribulation (Chapters 5 through 19). However, before the subject matter of the book begins to focus on the Tribulation, the word "church" is prominently mentioned 22 times (in Chapters 1-3). It's not mentioned again (in the context of being on earth during the Tribulation) for the remainder of the book.

Furthermore, Revelation 4:1 seems to be a type or shadow of the rapture, where the Apostle John is "caught up" to heaven at the sound of a trumpet. The 24 elders, which many Biblical

scholars consider to be a picture of the glorified church in heaven, are already present in heaven in Chapter 4 before the Tribulation begins on earth.

John is told he'll be shown things that will take place after this. In other words, he's shown what takes place after the rapture. What happens after this in the book is the Tribulation, and that's what John records. From heaven, John and the elders are able to witness the Tribulation events occurring "below" on earth. So, we continue to find that the concept of the church on earth is incompatible with the Tribulation.

Some have mistakenly concluded that the various mentions of "Tribulation saints" in these chapters of Revelation are equivalent to the church. This is not the case. There will be saints present during the Tribulation in the same way that there were Old Testament saints present before the church existed. This does not refer in any way to the church.

One point that helps clarify this distinction is that Jesus told us the gates of hell would not prevail over the church (Matthew 16:16-17). Yet, in the Tribulation, Satan's man of the hour – the Antichrist – is said to prevail over the saints and conquer them (Daniel 7:21, Revelation 13:7).

There will be many who come to faith in Jesus during the Tribulation, but they should not be confused with the church, and Revelation never refers to them as the church. The references to the church abruptly stop at Chapter 3.

3. The Bible presents the timing of the coming of the Lord at the rapture as being unknown and unpredictable. Yet, the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation is one of the most predictable events in the Bible. In fact, the Bible gives us the exact markers for the beginning of the Tribulation, the midpoint, and how to calculate the time in just about every unit of measure except nanoseconds.

Revelation 12:6 says the Jews will have to wait 1,260 days for the Lord to return. The 1,260 days begin when the Antichrist stands in the Temple and declares himself to be God (Matthew 24:15-21, 2 Thessalonians 2:4). This event will take place at the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation (Daniel 9:27). The Antichrist has authority to rule for 42 months, which is 1,260 days (Revelation 13:4), or 3 ½ years (Daniel 7:25), and will be destroyed by Jesus at His Second Coming (Revelation 19:20, 2 Thessalonians 2:8). If you start counting at the beginning or at the midpoint, you should be able to calculate when to expect the Second Coming.

So, we find the descriptions of these two events as being completely contradictory, which helps us understand them as being two separate events, occurring at different times.

4. The Bible teaches us that one characteristic of the rapture is its imminency. The rapture is an imminent event – meaning it can occur at any moment with no preconditions. There are no signs or warnings – it takes place suddenly. This logically requires

that nothing has to happen before the rapture can take place. If there were necessary preconditions or events, it couldn't be truly imminent. This is why Scripture constantly tells us to wait and watch for the rapture, and gives us the impression that it can happen at any moment.

This characteristic of imminency demands that the rapture take place prior to the Tribulation. If on the other hand, the rapture couldn't occur until the middle or end of the Tribulation, then that would contradict this characteristic of imminency.

The pretribulational rapture is the only view that allows for the rapture to be imminent in its timing. All the other views require a number of prophetic occurrences to take place first, before the rapture can occur. To be looking for the imminent return of Christ, you have to believe in a pretribulational rapture.

Some "imminency passages" include the following...

The Bible says that Jesus' return is at hand, and we are to wait eagerly for it (Romans 8:19-25; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 4:5; Jude 21). James encourages us to "be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near" (James 5:8). Revelation 1:3 and 22:10 also say that "the time is near."

5. Many unreconcilable distinctions exist between the Bible's description of the rapture and its description of the Second Coming. These distinctions indicate that the two are different events happening at different times. The central passages

dealing with the Rapture are John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The central passages dealing with the Second Coming to earth are Zechariah 14:1-21; Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-27 and Revelation 19.

A careful examination of these texts will show that there is enough reason to conclude that the Rapture and the Second Coming to earth are not the same event. Let's examine a brief list of some of the major points of disagreement...

- Meeting Christ in the air vs. returning with Christ:

The rapture verses say that when Jesus comes, He comes in the air. Believers are caught up from the ground into the air to be with Christ, and are taken to the Father's house in heaven. But in the Second Coming verses, the opposite order occurs – with Jesus coming down to the earth while bringing His saints with Him – and His feet touch down on the Mount of Olives.

Furthermore, let's look at the location of believers during these events. In the rapture verses, the believers are brought up from the earth to heaven to be with Jesus. But in the Second Coming verses, when Jesus comes back to earth from heaven with the believers with him, there are believers (Tribulation saints) still on the earth.

If the rapture and the Second Coming are the same event, then if Jesus brought all the believers up at the rapture,

how could there be believers still on the Earth at the Second Coming? A significant time lapse would've had to occur between the Rapture and Second Coming for so many people to come to belief in Jesus as Savior. So, again, these contradictory descriptions force us to understand these to be two separate and distinct events.

- Taken for blessing/left for judgment vs. taken for judgment/left for blessing:

In the rapture verses, those that are “taken” are taken for blessing and those that are “left,” are left for judgment (in the Tribulation). Meanwhile, in the Second Coming verses, those that are “taken” are taken in judgment, and those that are “left,” are left for blessing (and will enter the Millennial Kingdom).

- Instantaneous vs. “all eyes will see”:

In the rapture verses, we are told that the church will be caught up in an instant, in the “twinkling of an eye.” In other words, this event will be so instantaneous that those left behind will not know what happened. People are taken faster than you can blink your eye. It's isn't portrayed as an event that can be visibly witnessed. Meanwhile, the Second Coming verses describe an event that “all eyes will see,” and that “all nations shall mourn” when they see Christ coming. This seems to describe two separate events.

- A mystery vs. known and expected throughout Old Testament Prophecy:

In the rapture verses, the catching away or gathering of the saints to Christ is described as a mystery that Paul was revealing. Earlier, in John 14, Jesus had introduced the basic concept of the rapture in the sense that He would return for the righteous. But it was Paul who later expounded upon this promise, detailing it as a doctrine that we can now understand. Paul described the unveiling of this rapture doctrine as a mystery. A mystery in the Greek Biblical sense means a concept that was previously unknown, but now revealed.

But even earlier than both John 14 and the writings of Paul, Jesus had described a future “gathering of His elect” at His Second Coming (in Matthew 24). Many people confuse this gathering of the elect with the rapture, as the language sounds similar. But if Paul much later on was the first to reveal this mystery doctrine of the gathering of the church at the rapture, than the gathering described by Jesus at the Second Coming would seem to be referring to something else. Otherwise, Paul couldn’t have revealed it as a mystery if it was already described in detail by Jesus long before.

It turns out that this gathering of the elect described by Christ in Matthew 24 is a familiar prophetic event to

anyone who knows their Old Testament well – it refers to the re-gathering of Israel in faith in preparation for blessing after the Tribulation as the Millennial Kingdom is about to be established (Isaiah 27:12-13, 43:5-7, et al.).

And so, the mystery nature of the rapture of the church contradicts the well-known nature of the prophetic gathering of Israel at the Second Coming, helping us recognize their distinction as separate events.

These are just a few of the many Biblical differentiators between the rapture and the Second Coming, helping us recognize that they are two different events happening at two different times.

And so, these five points of evidence we just examined serve to anchor and sharpen our perceptions of the distinction between Israel and the church in God's plan. They clearly demonstrate the way God deals with both entities mutually exclusively within the framework of the 70-Week prophetic outline of God's plan.

While Israel's first 69 Weeks were actively ticking away on God's prophetic clock, the church was nowhere to be found. But as soon as Israel's clock stopped after the completion of the 69th Week, the church's clock started. The church's clock though, has a mystery nature – there is no set number of weeks. Instead, the church's terminal point is this specific event we call the rapture. When the pretribulational rapture takes place and the church is removed from

the picture, either immediately or soon after, Israel's clock will again begin as her final week activates.

And so, through a precise and literal reading of all that the Bible has to tell us on this subject, it is not difficult to see the main premises of this study in operation.

Conclusion

As we begin to close out this study, let's review our initial premises – that Israel and the church are distinct entities in God's plan, and that God deals with Israel and the church mutually exclusively. As we've demonstrated throughout our study, Israel and the church are two separate programs within God's overarching plan for mankind. They are like two trains on separate tracks. It's like a chess-clock. As God's program for Israel is active, the church is inactive. But when God switches the timeclock over to the church, Israel becomes inactive.

We demonstrated how clear the Bible is that God made a number of unconditional promises and covenants with Israel that He still intends to keep. God's plan for Israel's future was outlined throughout the Old Testament, especially in the prophets. And in Daniel, we were given a prophetic template that would bring us to the end of this age and would establish the necessary conditions for the inauguration of the age to come – the Millennial Kingdom on earth. This template was then further detailed for us in the New Testament after the interim program called the church was introduced.

It is incredible how the Bible all falls into place like a puzzle when you put it together correctly. As we've shown, one of the most important keys for assembling this puzzle accurately is to keep God's program for Israel distinct from God's program for the church. If you do not keep them distinct – if you intermingle God's programs for Israel and the church – it is a certainty that you will not be able to comprehend and rightly divide Scripture as a whole. But if you do keep this

principle in mind and apply it to your understanding of the Scriptures, Bible prophecy will make perfect sense to you, and the puzzle will reveal the amazing picture showing how God's plan will be brought to completion!

Sources:

- Broomall, Wick, "Baker Dictionary of Theology," eds. Everett F. Harrison, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Carl F. H. Henry, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1960.
- Bullinger, E.W., "Figures of Speech Used in the Bible," Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968.
- "Fathers of the Church, The: St. John Chrysostom, Discourses Against Judaizing Christians,"* trans. Paul W. Harkins, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, repr. 1999.
- <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14412-titus>
- <http://www.biblicalresearch.info/page502.html>
- http://www.danielsecomb.com/augustine-and-the-advent-of-amillennialism/#_ftn4
- <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-dialoguetrypho.html>
- <https://biblehub.com/greek/1577.htm>
- <https://biblehub.com/greek/2706.htm>
- <https://biblehub.com/topical/g/gnosticism.htm>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preterism>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_antisemitism
- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/jew/>
- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/kingdom-of-god/>
- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/kjv/harpazo.html>
- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=kjv&strongs=g1242>
- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Vespasian>
- <https://www.britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Jerusalem-70>

- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Edict-of-Milan>
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vulgate>
- <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/rulers/theodosius-i.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/amillennialism.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/replacement-theology.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/upon-this-rock.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-a-Gentile.html>
- <https://www.khouse.org/articles/2001/341/>
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/covenant>
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rapture>
- Jeffrey, Grant, "Triumphant Return: The Coming Kingdom of God."
- Josephus, Flavius, "The Wars of the Jews," in "Josephus, The Complete Works," trans. William Whiston, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998.
- Luther, Martin, "On the Jews and Their Lies," cited in Robert Michael, "Luther, Luther Scholars, and the Jews," in "Encounter."
- Luther, Martin, "On the Jews and Their Lies," Luther's Werke, trans. Martin H. Bertram, in "Luther's Works," Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.
- Michael, Robert, "A History Of Catholic Anti-Semitism : The Dark Side of the Church," New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Michael, Robert, "Holy Hatred: Christianity, Anti-Semitism , and the Holocaust," New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Missler, Chuck, "Israel and the Church: The Prodigal Heirs," Coeur d'Alene, ID: Koinonia House, 2016.

-“Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, The,” eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Rpt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976, 2nd ser.

- Eusebius, “Life of Constantine,” in “The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers”

-Oberman, Heiko, “The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation,” Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

-Ryrie, Charles, “Dispensationalism,” rev. and exp. ed., Chicago: Moody, 2007.

-Shirer, William L., “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,” New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990.

-Stedman, Ray C., “What’s This World Coming To?” (An expository study of Matthew 24-26, the Olivet Discourse). Palo Alto, CA: Discovery Publications, 1970.

-Strong, James, “Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible,” Updated and Expanded Ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007.

-Thayer, Joseph H., “Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.,” repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015.

-Theodoret and Evagrius, “History of the Church,” London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854.