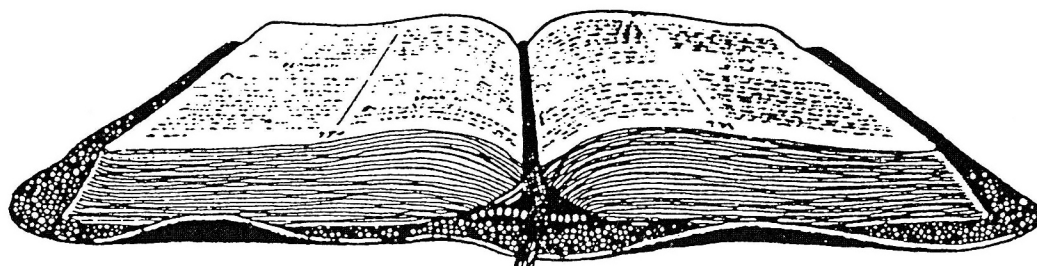


DISPENSATIONALISM

Key

to the

Scriptures



Manfred E. Kober, Th. D.

Join us, Sept. 25 & 26, for our 2015

Montana

Regular

Baptist

Fellowship

State Bible Conference



hosted by the:

First Baptist Church
of Columbia Falls

with Dr. Manfred Kober

Conference Theme:

Dispensations: Key to the Scriptures

Friday - - - - - **Sept. 25**

4:00 pm - Session 1 - - - - - *"Why Do They Love to Hate Dispensationalists"*

5:30 pm - Evening Meal at the Church (please sign up or call First Baptist at 406-892-3729)

7:00 pm - Session 2 - - - - - *"God's Glorious Plan for the Ages"*

8:30 pm - - - - - MRBF Business Meeting

Saturday - - - - - **Sept. 26**

8:30 am - - - - - Continental Breakfast at the Church

9:00 am - - - - - LBBB Camp Business Meeting

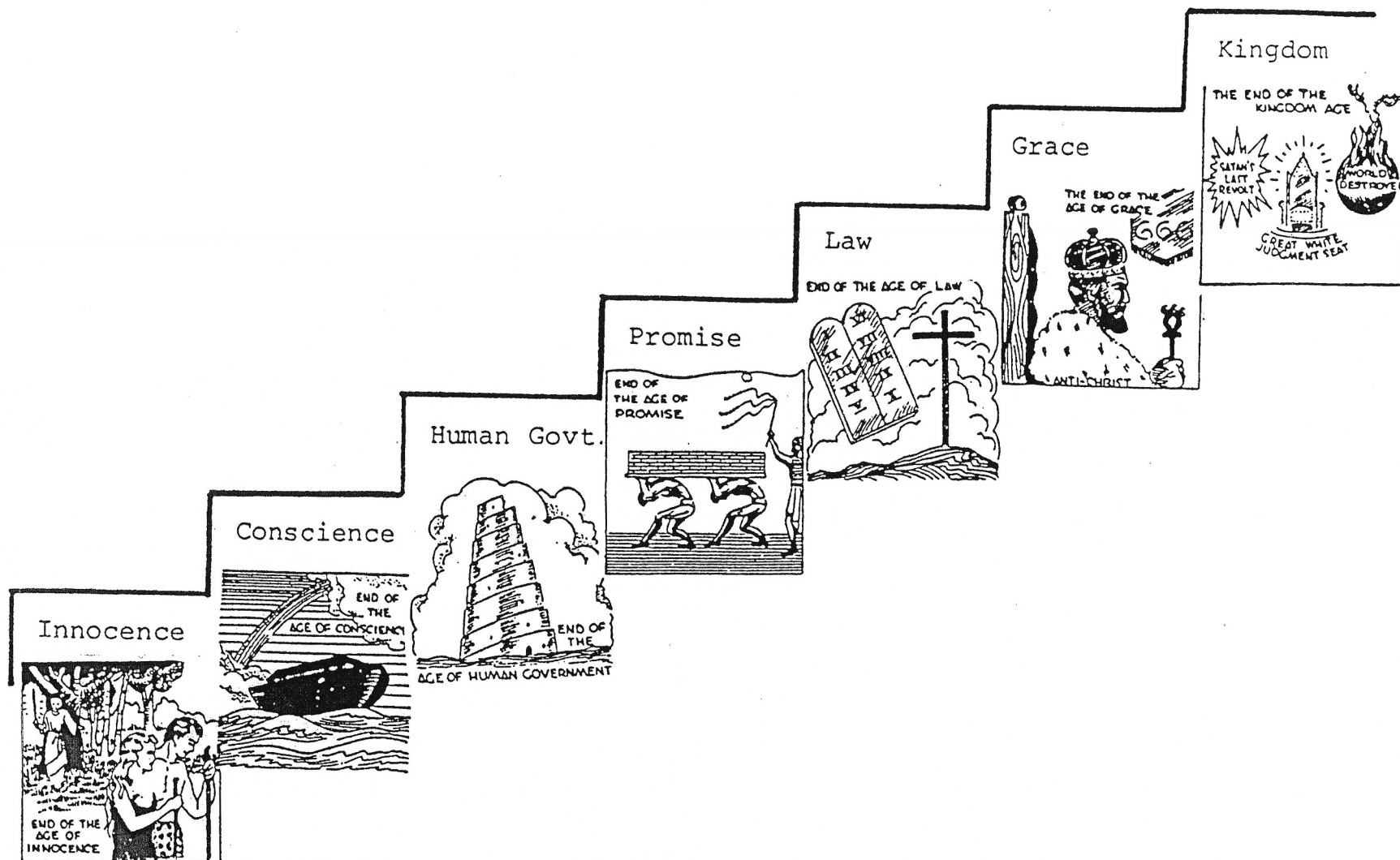
10:30 am - Session 3 - - *"The Most Misunderstood Aspects of Dispensationalism"*

12:00 pm - - - - - Lunch break (on your own)

1:30 pm - Session 4 - - - - - *"The Dangerous Delusions of Covenant Theology"*

A nursery and children's ministry (through grade 3) will be provided for sessions 2, 3 & 4.

THE DISPENSATIONS



DISPENSATIONALISM: Why They Love to Hate Us

1A. Opposition to dispensationalism:

It would be possible to estimate the number of objections that have been launched against a system which actually has opened the eyes of lay people to the meaning of the Scriptures, especially to the prophetic Word, more than a dispensational understanding of the Bible. Below are listed a few of the major objections.

1b. Dispensationalism is recent:

Since the study of dispensationalism was popularized only within the last 100 years, it cannot possibly be true. In fact, Covenant Theology is more recent than dispensationalism because it is a Post-Reformation development and in its present form emerged later than a dispensational understanding of the Scriptures.

If dispensationalism can be attacked simply because it is new, then Covenant Theology is equally flawed. As Ryrie points out:



After all, nearly every antidispenational writer attempts to make something of the relative recency of systematized dispensationalism. Those who are of the Reformed tradition always attempt to imply that dispensationalism is a mere infant compared to the ancient and wise man of covenant theology. . . If lack of antiquity is detrimental and refinement is disallowed for dispensationalism, then by the same two criteria covenant theology is discredited. And if these matters are basically nonessential for covenant theology, then they are likewise irrelevant in the critique of dispensationalism.

(Dispensationalism Today [1965], 179, 183)

2b. Dispensationalism is heretical:

Many times dispensationalism is discussed in books on cults and isms and is couched between sects such as Seventh Day Adventism and Mormonism. Daniel B. Fuller, the son of Charles E. Fuller, reached the conclusion that dispensationalism is “internally inconsistent and unable to harmonize itself with the Biblical data. . .” (*The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism*, unpublished Doctor’s dissertation, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, 1957, 386.)

3b. Dispensationalism is man-made:

Men like John Nelson Darby, the “pope of the Plymouth Brethren” movement is said to have invented dispensationalism. Since the system is a human innovation, it must be wrong. It is easy to discern the falsehood of such an observation because if something is scriptural, no matter when believers discovered it in the written Word, it is true whether the position was held by the early church or not until after the Reformation.

4b. Dispensationalism is dangerous:

Dispensationalism sees the future establishment of a literal kingdom, a suggestion that is branded as a devilish doctrine. One California group is very outspoken in its hatred for those who subscribe to the dispensation of the kingdom:

Those human devils who are teaching that Christ will set up an earthly utopia or Communistic heaven on earth are promoting Communism under the masquerade of the Christian faith. When they are confronted with this issue they only maintain a surly silence and keep right on with their subversion and subterfuge. They desecrate the faith and the American flag with their premillennial Communism. They who hold the faith in unrighteousness are gravediggers (*Christians Awake*, Summer 1972, 2).

According to the folks in California who sent me the above letter, trying to dissuade me from teaching premillennialism, suggest that we are human devils. In a conservative Lutheran publication, *Christian News*, pastor Vernon Harley wrote a column on the millennium and the danger which a belief in Christ’s reign on earth poses:

Among many fantasies with which some Christians delude themselves and even endanger their salvation is the idea of a millennium, that is, a literal 1000 years in which Christ is to reign here on earth. There are many ways in which this idea varies, some thinking of the millennium as occurring before the Second Coming of Christ; others have it after the Second Advent. Some think of this as being a period of general peace and good will here on earth preceding the Day of Judgment; others seem to expect a visible appearance of Christ here on earth at which time He is to bring about a general conversion of the Jews and rule with His church over the nations. As a result, the eyes of many are directed toward Israeli in our time, now that the Israelites again have returned to Palestine as rulers of the promised land.

Our Lutheran Confessions reject every type of Millennialism, or Chiliasm, as it is also called. So does our **Brief Statement**, and primarily because such ideas, contrary to Scripture, direct men’s faith and hopes to a future glory here on earth, and often even to a second chance for repentance and

salvation, rather than to point them to the return of Christ for Judgment and the end of the world (June 14, 1971 -- see the entire column at the end of this outline).

5b. Dispensationalists are antinomian:



R. C. Sproul, the president of Ligonier Ministries, seems to be the spokesman for Covenant Theology. In the forward of a book by John Gerstner (*Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, 1991), he writes the following, "The dispensational system of theology is inherently and inescapably antinomian. . .Dispensationalism should be discarded as being a serious deviation from Biblical Christianity."

In a taped sermon delivered by R. C. Sproul at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Orlando, Florida, in June 1994 entitled "Only One Gospel," he likewise accuses dispensationalists of antinomianism: "I believe that [Charles] Ryrie teaches unvarnished antinomianism and another gospel, and is under the anathema of God."

It would be difficult to think of a single theologian in the dispensational camp who is that harsh in his critique of Covenant Theology. Can anybody cite a statement from Lewis Sperry Chafer, John F. Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, Alva J. McClain or John Whitcomb that labels Covenant Theology as a heretical system under the curse of God, endangering men's salvation?

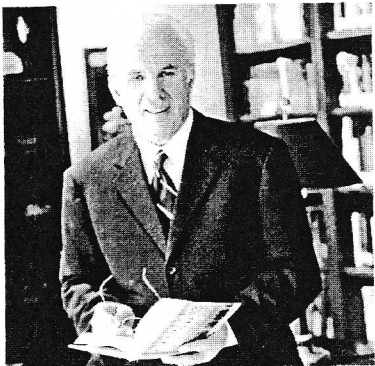
6b. Dispensationalism is erroneous:

1c. Dispensationalism is accused of teaching two ways of salvation. The Old Testament saints are said to be saved by offering sacrifices; New Testament saints are saved by trusting in Christ. In fact Dr. Charles C. Ryrie in his classic book *Dispensationalism* refutes this false charge, though it is constantly repeated.

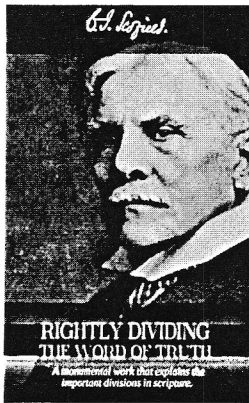
2c. Dispensationalism is accused of totally disregarding the Sermon on the Mount, relegating it to the Kingdom Age. John MacArthur thinks that "traditionally, dispensationalism says, 'The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) has nothing to do with us, so we don't need to worry about it'" (teaching tape GC 70-16, "Bible Questions and Answers").

Has he not read the section in Ryrie's book on "Dispensationalism and the Sermon on the Mount"? or J. Dwight Pentecost? or John F. Walvoord's treatment of it in their studies in Matthew?

What is especially disconcerting to dispensationalists is that John MacArthur claims to be a dispensationalist, saying "dispensationalism is a fundamentally correct system of understanding God's program through the



ages.” And yet he has some very critical things to say about dispensationalism:



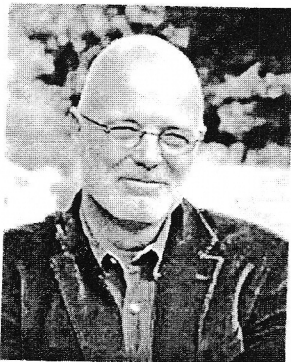
There is a tendency, however, for dispensationalists to get carried away with compartmentalizing truth to the point that they can make unbiblical distinctions. An almost obsessive desire to categorize everything neatly has led various dispensationalist interpreters to draw hard lines not only between the church and Israel, but also between salvation and discipleship, the church and the kingdom, Christ's preaching and the apostolic messages, faith and repentance and the age of law and grace (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, 25).

Has MacArthur not read C. I. Scofield's *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*?

7b. Dispensationalism is deadly:

In an April 2009 article in *Sojourner's* magazine by emerging church leader, Brian McLaren, McLaren targets fundamentalists in a most vicious manner. The title of his article is, "Four Points Toward Peace in the Middle East." Below are listed the first two points. And it should be noticed that there might be peace in the Middle East if it were not for the dispensationalists:

1. The equal rights of both Jewish and Palestinian people to security, equity, and prosperity, and the equal responsibilities of both groups to seek, not just good for "their own," but the common good of all.
2. The need to confront the terrible, deadly, distorted, yet popular theologies associated with Christian Zionism and deterministic dispensationalism. These systems of belief—so common among my fellow evangelical Christians—too often lead people to act as if Jewish people have God-given rights but Palestinians do not. They use a discredited hermeneutic (way of interpreting the Bible) to imply that God shows favoritism—that God is concerned for justice for one group of people and not for others. They create bigotry and prejudice against Muslims in general ... and in particular against Palestinians, many of whom are Muslim but many of whom are Christian too. These doctrinal formulations often use a bogus end-of-the-world scenario to create a kind of death-wish for World War III, which—unless it is confronted more robustly by the rest of us—could too easily create a self-fulfilling prophecy.



If you hold to a deterministic-dispensationalist or Zionist theology, I sincerely hope you will rethink your view. I grew up with these views as well, and have become thoroughly convinced that they are not only

biblically unfaithful but also, in too many cases, morally and ethically harmful. I know that rethinking these things can make your life more difficult—friends, church members, and even family members may reject you, for example. But think back to the 1950s and 1960s: Wasn't it necessary for many Christians to have the courage to differ when racism was acceptable and even justified in most American churches? Wouldn't you want to have the same moral courage today you would have wanted to have back then? -- (Note part of the original article appended to this outline).

2A. THE ORIGIN OF DISPENSATIONALISM:

- 1b. Pierre Poiret (1647-1719)
The roots of dispensationalism can be found in *The Divine Economy*, a 6-volume work originally written in 1687 and then published again in 1713.
- 2b. Isaac Watts (167-1748), Famed son writer and theologian, subscribed to seven dispensations very similar to those held by C. I. Scofield.
- 3b. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), who did much to recover the New Testament truth of the church and God's program for the church and Israel.
- 4b. C. I. Scofield and the *Scofield Bible*.

It is very interesting to note a number of the main opponents of dispensationalism give testimony to the fact that they came to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ through a dispensationalist. John Gerstner pays tribute to the spiritual help given to him by dispensationalists and so does Brian McLaren.



Christian News



June 14, 1971

The Millennium

By Vernon Harley



Among the many fantasies with which some Christians delude themselves and even endanger their salvation is the idea of a millennium, that is, a literal 1000 years in which Christ is to reign here on earth. There are many ways in which this idea varies, some thinking of the millennium as occurring before the Second Coming of Christ; others have it after the Second Advent. Some think of this as being a period of general peace and good will here on earth preceding the Day of Judgment; others seem to expect a visible appearance of Christ here on earth at which time He is to bring about a general conversion of the Jews and rule with His church over the nations. As a result, the eyes of many are directed toward Israel in our time, now that the Israelites again have returned to Palestine as rulers of the promised land.

Our Lutheran Confessions reject every type of Millenialism, or Chillasm, as it is also called. So does our **Brief Statement**, and primarily because such ideas, contrary to Scripture, direct men's faith and hopes to a future glory here on earth, and often even to a second chance for repentance and salvation, rather than to point them to the return of Christ for Judgment and the end of the world.

Four Points Toward Peace in the Middle East

by [Brian McLaren](#) [1] 04-16-2009 | 2:30pm



photo by Ryan Rodrick Beiler

[6]I've written [a lot on Palestine and Gaza](#) [7] in recent years. Any of us who travel (or read) know that peace in the world can't be separated from peace in Israel -- peace for Jews, and peace for Muslim and Christian Palestinians. There is probably no single issue more important to helping Muslims and Christians and Jews live in peace world-wide than resolving the crisis of peace in Israel.

In the coming months, I hope that more and more of us -- especially those of us from evangelical backgrounds -- will start speaking out on this subject, addressing four key issues with courage, passion, and persistence:

1. The equal rights of both Jewish and Palestinian people to security, equity, and prosperity, and the equal responsibilities of both groups to seek, not just good for "their own," but the common good of all.
2. The need to confront the terrible, deadly, distorted, yet popular theologies associated with Christian Zionism and deterministic dispensationalism. These systems of belief -- so common among my fellow evangelical Christians -- too often lead people to act as if Jewish people have God-given rights but Palestinians do not. They use a discredited hermeneutic (way of interpreting the Bible) to imply that God shows favoritism -- that God is concerned for justice for one group of people and not for others. They create bigotry and prejudice against Muslims in general ... and in particular against Palestinians, many of whom are Muslim but many of whom are Christian too. These doctrinal formulations often use a bogus end-of-the-world scenario to create a kind of death-wish for World War III, which -- unless it is confronted more robustly by the rest of us -- could too easily create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If you hold to a deterministic-dispensationalist or Zionist theology, I sincerely hope you will rethink your view. I grew up with these views as well, and have become thoroughly convinced that they are not only biblically unfaithful but also, in too many cases, morally and ethically harmful. I know that rethinking these things can make your life more difficult -- friends, church members, and even family members may reject you, for example. But think back to the 1950s and 1960s: Wasn't it necessary for many Christians to have the courage to differ when racism was acceptable and even justified in most American churches? Wouldn't you want to have the same moral courage today you would have wanted to have back then?

If you are unwilling to reconsider your commitment to deterministic-dispensationalist or Zionist theology, I hope you will at least try to avoid extremist tendencies by your colleagues who share these beliefs, so you can be faithful to the scriptures that tell us [God is not a respecter of persons](#) [8], that God shows no partiality (try James 2, for example), that God cares about "the least of these," and that love never rejoices in evil. If you are open and willing to rethink your views, here are three books I'd encourage you to read:

Israel and Dispensationalism

By Greg Loren Durand
(1995)

Many Christians believe that there are three separate bodies in the world today: the Church, Israel, and the Gentiles. The Bible, however, is clear that God has had only one people throughout redemptive history which He has adopted as His Church (as they are called in the New Testament), or as the people of God (as they are called in the Old Testament). The modern distinction that is made between the Christian Church and Israel is, by and large, the product of the Dispensational system which originated in the last century with J.N. Darby and C.I. Scofield. It is perpetuated today in the writings of Hal Lindsey, Dave Hunt, and in such evangelical movements as the Calvary Chapels. Dispensationalists center their interpretation of biblical prophecy around modern Israel and look forward to a time in the near future when the Church will be "raptured" out of the world and God will resume His historical dealings with the physical descendants of Abraham. Supposedly, with the advent of a world leader known as "Antichrist," the Jews will recognize Jesus as their Messiah and will repent of their rebellion and return to the worship of Yahweh. This, however, will not constitute their salvation in the Christian sense of the word, for the Jewish temple will then be rebuilt and the sacrificial system will be reinstated. At the end of a seven-year period commonly referred to as the "Great Tribulation," Jesus will return once again to earth and set up an earthly throne in Jerusalem. This is referred to as the "millennial reign" of Christ, for it is said to last one thousand years.

Many would be shocked to hear that such an elaborate eschatological system has no basis whatsoever in the Scriptures (properly interpreted), and instead rests upon very questionable, and at times even heretical, presuppositions regarding redemptive history. First of all, there is not one verse that can be cited from the Bible that teaches that Jesus will sit upon an earthly throne in Jerusalem. Also, the teaching that this reign will be limited to one thousand years is drawn from a strained interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10 (the only biblical passage that even mentions a millennium). However, the gravest error of the Dispensational system is its underlying premise that God deals with Christians and the nation of Israel in completely different ways, and that Jews may be reconciled to God apart from the Gospel of Christ. Paul specifically addressed this alleged distinction when he wrote that "*both Jews and Greeks [Gentiles]... are all under sin*" (Romans 3:9). He went on to say:

"Therefore by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the Law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:20-24).

Furthermore, in Romans 8:5, Paul separated mankind into two classes of people-- those "*who live according to the flesh*" (the unregenerate) and those who "*live according to the Spirit*" (the regenerate). Members of the former group are said to be "*enmity against God*" (verse 7), and therefore "*cannot please God*" (verse 8). The latter are those whom God had chosen to save "*before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4), and are pleasing to God solely on the basis of the fact that they have been reckoned by Him as being "*in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:3). This same concept is seen in slightly different terms in Paul's distinction between those "*in Adam*" and those "*in Christ*" found in Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:22.

In Galatians 3:26-29 and Romans 9:6-8, Paul denied that physical descent from Abraham and physical circumcision would save anyone, and stated that the true descendants of Abraham were those who "*are Christ's*" via spiritual regeneration. Consequently, we must reject the concept promoted by Dispensationalism that there are two separate people of God-- the Christian Church and the nation of Israel. The covenantal privilege that national Israel enjoyed as the chosen people of God was ended when the Jewish leaders "*fill[ed] up... the measure of [their] fathers' guilt*" (Matthew 23:32) by rejecting and crucifying their own Messiah. Jesus was very explicit in stating that the "house" of Israel was left "desolate" (Matthew 23:37-39), and that the Kingdom would be taken from the Jews as a people and given to another people (Matthew 8:10-12, 21:33-45, etc.).

The Reformed view is that God "divorced" national Israel and "married" spiritual Israel, which is the Church made up of people "*from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*" (Revelation 5:9). Henceforth, the Church, not the nation of Israel, is referred to as the "*Israel of God*" (Galatians 6:16), the "*house of God*" (Hebrews 10:21), "*a holy temple*" (Ephesians 2:21), the "*new Jerusalem*" (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2), and "*a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, [and] His own special people*" (I Peter 2:9).