PAULINE DISPENSATIONALISM

Forward

A quarter-century ago a California brother in Christ wrote, "You ought to put your mimeo'd *Green Letters* into book form." Something that had never entered our mind—a book from the Lord! You probably know "the rest of the story." Recently another California brother in Christ wrote :

November 1992

Dear brother Miles

Your recent careful analysis of the Bock-Blaising book, *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, is right on target. I have observed a growing interest in the Neo-Dispensational trend. It appears obvious that the departure from the traditional dispensational position is leading younger students of God's Word into the Covenant Theology camp.

For years I have been reading and studying the Apostle Paul and his Church Epistles. They are completely adequate for the life and labors of every member of the Body of Christ.

I would like to see the Dispensational Papers you have sent out over the past years published in a book. By selecting and editing these Papers, you could make a vital contribution to thousands of younger men called of God into the ministry, as well as others.

Your friend and brother in Christ,

Lehman Strauss

December 1992

Dear brother Miles

Our friend Lehman still knows the truth when he sees it! I am delighted that you are following his suggestion. Your Dispensational Papers are greatly needed in this hour. In fact, I carry a sheaf of them in my briefcase to share with pastors about the country. I praise the Lord for your insight and clarity in sounding the true Pauline dispensational note.

In my morning devotions I am going through your *Green Letters*. This I do periodically with much benefit.

Your recent letter and enclosures came as a real encouragement. Utter confusion reigns among evangelicals because of the failure to rightly divide the Word, especially the clear distinction between Israel and the Church.

Again, I am grateful for your remembering me with these choice writings. More and more I am distressed with the teaching which confuses Israel and the Church, Law and Grace, Salvation and Discipleship.

Sad, sad that many of God's dear children seem to know nothing more than Jesus of Nazareth in His humiliation—while the risen, ascended, glorified Man is ignored, or unknown.

Yours in His grace,

Paul R. Van Gorder

Preface

Herein is offered the Pauline answer to present-day Dispensationalism in her dire illness, as well as our counteraction against what we have termed "Neo-Dispensationalism." This movement, recently emerging from Dallas Theological Seminary and elsewhere, is "contemporary," and "progressive," having left Dallas' founder, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, and his Pauline Dispensationalism far, far behind.

The aim of Neo-Dispensationalism is to equate Israel and the Church as much as possible, while at the same time keeping them separate. It has the Lord Jesus Christ now reigning over the Church from David's heavenly throne. And it emphasizes an "already/not yet" millennial kingdom in which the Church is participating—while still fully preserving, of course, the Jewish elements of the Messianic Kingdom.

In other words, Neo-Dispensationalism is "progressing" on the horizontal, kingdom level, and is already halfway to Covenant Theology, which has always been on that earthly plane.

Pauline Dispensationalism is heavenly. The Christian whom Paul presents is heavenly; the Church that Paul presents is heavenly—her Source is in heaven, although her birth took place on earth on the Day of Pentecost. She will return to her Source in heaven on the Day of the Rapture.

Traditional Dispensationalism has been brought to confusion by Covenant Theology mainly because they have root similarity. Hence, unless she moves onto Paul's vertical plane, there is little or no hope for her survival.

Coming onto Paul's heavenly ground results in a full escape from all earthly, horizontal, New Covenant, Synoptic, Sermon on the Mount, and Millennial Kingdom influences. The heavenly *position* and *identification* factors of the Church via Paul are missing in Neo-Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology. Their horizontal doctrine and law-orientation prevent them from rising above the earthly, kingdom level.

Hence we make no apology for including extensive teaching concerning the heavenly Church and the Christian life, not limited to, but centered in Paul's Church Epistles. Since both Dr. Chafer and Dr. Wm. R. Newell were staunch and faithful Pauline Dispensationalists, we give their rightly-divided writings ample exposure in helping solve the present-day Dispensational dilemma.

1 January, 1993

Miles J. Stanford
Colorado Springs,
Colorado, U.S.A.

Chapter 1 — Pauline Dispensationalism

Breached Bulwarks

There are three great fissures in the Dispensational dike, through which doctrinally contaminated Covenant theology is pouring. These inundating law-streams arise from three sources: (1) Israel's New Covenant, (2) Israel's Sermon on the Mount, and (3) Israel's Millennial Kingdom.

These rifts are not only caused by Covenant-engineers from the outside, but also Dispensational-sappers from the inside. Unless these torrents are terminated, the Church will suffer greater devastation in the grip of Covenant Theology than she has from the turmoil and personal wreckage caused by the Arminian Charismatic chaos.

Pauline Dispensationalism

Our theme is as follows: The Church is to be kept separate from all else, including Israel and her Law, via clear-cut *Pauline Dispensationalism*.

The Lord Jesus Christ loves His Church, for whom He gave Himself on the Cross. He did so that He might cleanse and sanctify her with the washing of water by the (rightly divided) Word of truth. He would present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having Charismatic spot, nor Covenant wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that she should be holy and without earthly Jewish blemish (Eph. 5:25–27).

The glorified Lord delivered His sanctifying and glorifying message exclusively to His Bride through Paul—a life-giving Word infinitely higher than His earthly message to the nation of Israel. The *Pauline Gospel*, governed by *Pauline Dispensationalism*, belongs to the Church.

Dual Gospels

Most dispensationalists and all Covenant theologians fail to realize that there are *two* Gospels, each dependent upon the Blood of the Cross. The one Gospel is *earthly* (Kingdom), the other is *heavenly* (Grace). Both Gospels are "according to Jesus," and present only one *way*: by faith.

One Gospel was ministered by Christ on earth, during His pre-Cross humiliation, and was exclusively addressed to *Israel* regarding her Millennial Kingdom. The other—altogether "new creation" other—was ministered to Paul by the glorified Lord Jesus Christ; after Calvary, from heaven, exclusively to and for His chosen heavenly *Body*.

John the Baptist's, Jesus', and the Apostles' Gospel concerned the Messiah and His Kingdom-specifically and repeatedly referred to as "the Gospel of the Kingdom" (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14; Luke 9:2, 6). The other, "the Gospel of the Grace of God, "was neither preached nor mentioned until Paul went forth to declare it (Acts 20:24; Rom. 3:21–28; Eph. 3:1–3).

Heaven-based Church

The Church's Source is in heaven; as a unique body she was brought into being on earth at Pentecost. She will return to her eternal Source and abode in heaven at the Rapture—not partially, but each and every member of His completed Body. The glorious heavenly Church

has no relationship, no continuity, with anything prior to the Cross, nor after the Rapture. His Body will be completed; His spotless Bride presented to Himself in heaven.

Paul's heavenly Gospel is exclusively for the Church. One need not go down to earthly Israel for *anything*! Why should a heavenly citizen, "blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, stoop to purloin some "spiritual" blessing from comparatively poor Israel? Like the wealthy shoplifter, in the 5 & 10! The Bride shares the throne with her Bridegroom, whether in heaven, or on earth.

Anti-"Ultra"

Before going further, be assured that the dispensational aspects of the Word presented here are simply normal, clear-cut, *Pauline* teaching. We have always been opposed to all so-called "ultra," or "extreme" Dispensationalism. We insist that the Church was born on the day of Pentecost; we insist upon the privilege and responsibility of the Lord's Supper; we insist upon believers' baptism by immersion. We have been associated with the Bible Church movement for over half a century; we are just seeking to give God's revelation to Paul its proper place and nothing more—there is no more!

Heavenly Gospel

The Gospel for the Church, the Gospel of the Grace of God, Paul's Gospel, is not mentioned in the Scriptures until 1 Corinthians 15:3–5. "For I delivered unto you *first of all* that which I also received [from Christ in glory], that Christ *died* for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was *buried*, and that He *rose* again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen…"

"But I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither *received* it of man, neither was I *taught* it, but by the *revelation* of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11, 12). "For I [the glorified Lord] have appeared unto thee [Saul] for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16).

"All the Apostles (except Paul) accompanied the Lord and followed Him to the cloud (Acts 1:9). Paul sees Him the other side of the cloud, and it is this which characterizes his entire ministry."

The glorified Lord directly communicated to Paul not only the great fundamentals of the heavenly Church Gospel, but totally *new* revelation concerning His Body—truths that He never shared with the nation Israel. These truths concerned our identification with Christ crucified, buried, resurrected and ascended; our heavenly position; our co-heirship and co-reign with our Beloved Bridegroom, and much more.

Dr. Chafer wrote, "The current neglect of the extensive doctrine of the Church is not only blameworthy, but has led to a considerable array of baneful errors. The Church is the purpose of the Father in the present dispensation, and His supreme purpose in the universe" (*Systematic Theology* IV: 54).

Infinitely Above

All the while the Lord Jesus' heavenly Gospel in content and position is infinitely above the Kingdom Gospel that He shared with earthly Israel—which they rejected.

Those who do not *center* in the truths which the ascended Lord communicated directly to Paul will not know who and *where* they are in Christ, nor *what* their portion is in the purpose of the Father. Neither will they know their privileges and responsibilities. Those who are ignorant of, and hence not centered in, the Pauline Gospel as set forth exclusively in his Church Epistles, are constantly astray in their interpretation of the Gospel, to say nothing of all-important Church truth.

"Few are restful and enlightened enough to *ascend* from earth to heaven, and therefore there are so few who can *descend* from heaven to earth to manifest the Lord Jesus and to share His mind and thoughts as regards things here. The great secret of all blessing is to come *from* the Lord. Every Christian goes *to* Him." —J.B. Stoney

If Paul's Gospel were not *other* than that of Jesus' earthly Kingdom Gospel, he would naturally have been instructed by the Apostles who had been with and taught by Jesus all during His earthly ministry. On the contrary, the Apostles had to be indoctrinated by Paul concerning most of the new-creation truth.

"…even as our beloved brother, Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:15, 16). Be warned, all ye who would wrest, rather than rest and rightly divide! There is a heavy penalty involved in forsaking Pauline Dispensationalism for Covenant Theology, or even Neo-Dispensationalism.

"The sublimest truths are still needed to enforce the simplest responsibilities. As the laws which mould the stars and move the gigantic orbs of Saturn and Uranus in their tremendous circuits shape the dew-drop that glistens at the end of a blade of grass, so should everything in the Christian's life be regulated by the principles which lie in the Person and Cross of the glorified Lord Jesus Christ. To isolate Christian morality from Christian theology is to rend asunder the teachings of the Pauline Epistles, as to their deepest and most vital elements." —W.G. Scroggie

"The laws of the Kingdom are not required to be combined with the teachings of Grace, since every item within those laws which could have any present application, is exactly and amply stated in the Pauline teachings of Grace." —Chafer (*Grace*, p. 233)

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, unto which thou hast attained" (1 Tim. 4:6).

Chapter 2 — Pauline Gospel

Newell Knew!

Dr. Wm. R. Newell well knew the scriptural difference between Jesus' Kingdom Gospel to Israel, and His heavenly Grace Gospel to the Church.

"Saul already stood in clearer light regarding the ascended Lord Jesus than did the other Apostles; for they had known Him primarily in His humiliation, and they were messengers to Israel, of whom is Christ "as concerning the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (2 Cor. 5:16).

"But Saul's first vision of Christ was as the glorified One, the Eternal Son of God, in blinding ascension glory. Paul, we may say, never saw aught after his conversion "but the glory of that light" that burst into his life from the glorified Lord. See Acts 22:11; Phil. 3:7–10).

"We do not mean that the other Apostles did not recognize Jesus as Son of God. They had, long since (Matt. 16:16; John 1:14; 2:11; 20:28, etc.). But their first testimony at Jerusalem and to Israel had been of the Messiahship and Lordship of Jesus as Israel's *King*.

"But Paul received his teaching from *heaven*, from the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than from Jesus on earth in His Jewish connections. Paul had been so completely taken out of Judaism [it may have taken awhile to get the Judaism out of him] and all connections with "old things" that the Jews would never acknowledge him again.

"And the Jewish Christians constantly misunderstood Paul [even as they do now]. Today the "Messianic Jews" naturally gravitate to Jesus' Kingdom Gospel in the Synoptics—as do many others! Such liberty as Paul had come into was totally unknown before [and has been all too little known since!]." (*Paul vs. Peter*, pp. 11, 12).

Paul had no connection whatever with the Apostles before him, whether in his conversion or in the revelation of the *heavenly* Gospel to him. "I went up [to Jerusalem] by revelation, and communicated unto them *that Gospel* which I preach among the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:2). The Lord Jesus, according to His [Kingdom] Gospel, said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24).

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat (whatever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man's person)—for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added *nothing* to me. But, on the contrary, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter… they gave to me…the right hands of fellowship" (Gal. 2:6, 7, 9).

The heart of the Pauline Gospel is that the old Adam life is condemned in death (not forgiven), and another Adam—even the glorified Lord Jesus--is given to us as our Christian life, by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Father identified us with Christ on the Cross, making us positionally dead *unto* sin, and alive unto God in Christ. "I have been crucified *with* Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

"But God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation" (Gal. 6:14, 15; 2 Cor. 5:17).

"All is to us a new *creation*. It is not a new *creature*. A butterfly is a new creature; it is not a new creation. But the new man is not the old man changed or renovated [reformed]; he is a new creation of the Father (2 Cor. 5:17)."

Dr. Newell continues:

> "In His earthly ministry to Israel the Lord Jesus gave *none* of the great heavenly truths for the present Church dispensation. He but mentioned the Church, giving no explanation. Nor were these vital truths related to the Twelve Apostles.
>
> "Just as God chose Moses to be the revelator to Israel of the Ten Commandments, and all connected with the Law dispensation, so He chose Saul of Tarsus to be the revelator of the exclusive truths connected with our Lord's death, burial, resurrection, and His ascended, glorified Person.
>
> "The word "cross" does not appear in the epistles of James, Peter, or John. These men are not at *variance* with Paul —not in the least! Their words are included in the statement that "all Scripture is profitable…" (2 Tim. 3:16).
>
> "Nevertheless, Paul is the declarer of the heavenly Gospel to us. Take *Romans* to *Philemon* out of the Bible and you are bereft of Christian Church doctrine. For instance, if you were to take Paul's Epistles out of the Bible, you could not find anything about the Church, for no other Apostle even mentions that Body.
>
> "You could not find the exact meaning of any of the great doctrines such as Propitiation, Reconciliation, Justification, Identification, Redemption, or Sanctification. Nor could you find what is perhaps the most tremendous fact of every Christian life, that of *personal union* with the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father in glory! Paul is the divinely appointed opener to us of truth for this dispensation of Grace.
>
> "You can evaluate a man's ministry by this rule--is he Pauline? [Note well, all ye Pulpit Committees!] Does his doctrine *start* and *finish* according to those statements of Church truth proclaimed by the Apostle Paul?" (pp. 6, 7).

Chapter 3 — The Tragedy Of Romans 5:12

The Tragedy Of Romans 5:12

Between *Romans 5:11 and 12* there is a "great gulf fixed," a veritable doctrinal Grand Canyon. Into this abyss the Church has fallen, seemingly unable to advance into the realm of the Word specifically and exclusively written for her. Ever since Paul wrote Galatians the Church has occupied much of Israel's ground, thereby falling short of her Pauline heavenly privileges.

Substitution

Up to and including 5:11 in Romans, Paul is setting forth the Saviour's *substitutionary* death for our *sins*. He alone could die for our sins, past, present, and future--thereby paying the penalty for, and redeeming, all who believe. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus… to declare His righteousness for the remission of *sins*." "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose *sins* are covered" (Rom. 3:24, 25; 4:7).

It is in this new birth portion of the Word that the Church languishes—rightly seeking the salvation of the lost, but inadequately ministering for the growth of the saved.

Over The Top

If it should be felt that this evaluation is overstated, or even in error, let us cross the doctrinal canyon in which the Church lies trapped, and briefly consider Romans 5:12 through chapter eight. Abruptly, from verse 12, Paul is no longer dealing with our *sins*, but rather with their source, the *principle of indwelling sin* personified in the indwelling fallen Adam.

Identification

"As by one man [Adam] *sin* entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all sinned [in Adam]" (Rom. 5:15). Unlike its product sins, *sin* could not be forgiven, for it would be sin still. A forgiven thief is still a thief. Hence *sin* had to be *condemned* to death. "God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, *condemned* sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3.)

Our sins were forgiven via the principle of substitution, i. e., "Christ died for our sins according to the [Pauline] Gospel" (1 Cor. 15:3). But our sin was condemned via the principle of identification, i.e., "For He hath made Him, who knew no sin, *to be sin* for us" (2 Cor. 5:21).

The Savor did not die for sin, but for *sins*. Being made sin, our sin, He was judged, condemned, and crucified. He, in Himself being the sinless One, died *unto sin*—out of the realm of sin—having paid the price in full. Hence He was free to rise from among the dead into "newness of life"—heavenly, glorified, "new creation life."

Positional History

In order to set forth how the Church relates to *sin*, we might consider the individual member of that heavenly Body.

Talk about pre-historic! Before anything was brought into being in eternity past, before the universe, the world, or Adam, I — a chosen, elect, and called person—was conceived in my Father's heart and mind. "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." "Called us with a holy calling…which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9).

Adamic

My Father called the world into being, and then created Adam to be the federal head of the human race in that world. I was positionally *identified* with Adam, the same humanity. Hence, when Adam sinned and thereby died to God, I died in him. When he was condemned, I was condemned in him.

Romans 5:12 states, "As by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all sinned [in Adam]." Verses 13 to 17 are in parentheses; verse 18, following verse 12, states: "Therefore, as by the offense of one [Adam] *judgment* came upon all men to *condemnation*." "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18).

I, the natural man condemned in Adam, was not forgiven at the Cross. My then-future *sins* were forgiven, but I, as the Adamic old man, the source of those sins, was not forgiven. Sin must be condemned. While the Lamb of God was on the Cross [not before] my Father laid all my as-yet-uncommitted *sins* upon Him, and His death for those sins freed me from their penalty. While the Lord Jesus was on that same Cross the Father identified me, in my Adamic life of sin, with His Son who was made to be that sin (2 Cor. 5:21). In Him, I died *unto sin*. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed *unto sin*" (Rom. 6:11).

In my death unto sin in Christ's death I was judicially freed from all that I was in the first Adam, and I was re-created in the Last Adam as He rose from among the dead. "For if [since] we have been planted together [identified, united] in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old [Adamic] things are [*positionally*] passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). I am "His [God's] workmanship, [newly] created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:10).

My Essential Identity

My Father, in eternity past, formed me in His heart and mind, *positionally*, as a unique person. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unformed; and in Thy Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them" (Ps. 139:6).

In His time He formed me actually [condition], in my mother's womb. My identification with the Fallen Adam did not unmake me as a particular elect and called person; nor did my new-birth identification with the ascended Last Adam unmake me as that person. What is intrinsic to my personhood I never lose; my essential identity is unalterable, eternal.

Whatever change I passed through in my new birth as to soul and spirit, whatever change awaits my body at the Rapture, I shall *never* lose my essential identity — that which my Father conceived me to be before the foundation of the world.

Chapter 4 — "One Naturism" (Part I)

"One Naturism"

Before proceeding further, we will briefly consider the "one-nature" error.

1) Wesleyan One-naturism

This is the typical old Pentecostal aberration: "'Total Depravity' does not mean that human nature is essentially and completely evil, but that *every part* of it is damaged and infected by inherited Adamic sin. "It is insisted that there is no new nature involved at conversion, but rather the impartation of spiritual life that regenerates the old Adamic nature.

Eradication: This is the teaching that all *sin* is eradicated from the sinful Adamic nature. The Wesleyan "pure heart," is attained when the "second blessing" *experience* of the "Pentecostal flame" consumes the sinful propensities of the old Adamic nature. Presto, new divine nature!

2) Arminian One-naturism

Another type of "one naturism" is set forth by Sidlow Baxter in his book, *A New Call to Holiness*. This holiness theory is that of *amelioration* of the sinful Adamic nature. Dr. Baxter writes:

"Sin is a diffused infection of thought, desire, motive, impulse, inclination, and even of instinct, right through the moral nature. From the moment the Holy Ghost fully possesses us, He begins to correct, purify, refine, inbreathe and renovate all the qualities, tempers, urges, propensities, and functions of the mind, the sensations, and the will. This is how holiness begins and continues to be inwrought" (p. 116).

This is the humanistic theory of *change* in contradiction to the spiritual principle of *exchange*; "Not I, but Christ. "

3) Covenant One-naturism

The most prevalent and insidious type of "one-naturism" today is that of Covenant Theology. Through the error of considering Romans 6:6 to be actual (condition), rather than *positional*, it is claimed that the old Adamic man is actually crucified, dead, and gone--eradicated. Those holding this view are forced, however, to admit to indwelling sin in the Christian. Some teach that it is simply a residual influence left over from pre-salvation days.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Dr. Jay Adams refer to indwelling sin as "old habits." Dr. John MacArthur terms it the "old coat of humanness." Dr. Charles Solomon says it is the "energy of residual sin. Another erroneous term for the indwelling old man is condition of flesh." The one-nature proponents separate the alleged eradication of the old man from the indwelling "flesh."

However, the Word teaches that "flesh is a person, as well as a condition. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh" (Gen. 6:3). "Fathers of our flesh" (Heb. 12:9) sire progeny of flesh. Belief in the eradication of the old man tends to relieve the Christian of much of his *responsibility* concerning the activity of his indwelling Adamic life and nature. He is wont to place the blame for his sinning upon Satan, and upon "residual tendencies" and "habits" developed prior to salvation.

But here is the crux of the matter: it is not possible for the *source* of indwelling sin to be eradicated, while retaining sin, the product of that sinful source. *Effect must have a cause*! If you sin, you have its source, i.e., Adam.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones taught that "The old man is non-existent. Your old self is gone" (*Romans Six*, p. 65). Dr. MacArthur: "The old man is dead, destroyed, removed…it isn't around" (*Tape GC 2147*). Dr. Solomon: "The old man and sin nature no longer exist in the Christian" (*Rejection Syndrome*, p. 106). Dr. Bob George: "That old man is dead and gone; he will never exist again" (*Classic Christianity*, p. 90). Dr. Bill Gillham: "I claim by faith that the old man is extinct" (*Lifetime Guarantee*, p. 187).

What the one-nature eradicationist fails to understand is that death ever means separation! Separation from God is *living* death. I, as a new creation in the Last Adam, was *positionally separated* from the first Adam at the Cross (Gal. 2:20). Hence I reckon myself dead (separated) from sin and its source, the sinful indwelling old Adamic man. This is the meaning of Romans Six.

Chapter 5 — "One Naturism" (Part II)

I Know You're In There!

Every honest believer who knows anything at all about the extensive and all-important Romans Seven experience, realizes that the sins in his Christian life are identical in character to those he experienced prior to salvation. They are "the works of the flesh," the same all-too-familiar traits of the person of the first Adam.

They are not the manifestation of some residual sinful habits, left behind by a long-gone, eradicated, Adamic source. And they certainly aren't countered and replaced by the development of "good" new habits. Imagine the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our indwelling Christian life, having to develop *habits*!

Every believer who knows the liberating Romans Eight life, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (v. 2), realizes that the righteousness manifested in his Christian life has its source in the indwelling life of the Last Adam, "the fruit of the Spirit." "That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11).

The *nature* is the essential character of a *person*, a life, the quality or qualities that characterize a person. The traits, the attributes, comprise the nature of a man—whether it be the first Adam man, or the Last Adam Man. We have the *life* of Adam, hence his sinful nature; we have the *Life* of the Last Adam, hence His new and divine nature. The Christian has two life sources within, and the manifestation of their natures is the undeniable evidence thereof—"the works of the flesh," and "the fruit of the Spirit."

To mention but a few of the more prominent present-day eradicationists—the late Martyn Lloyd-Jones (via his voluminous writings), John MacArthur, David Needham, Charles Solomon, John Stott, Charles Stanley, Bill Gillham, and Bob George.

Further Personal History

Positionally free from the Adamic life through my death unto sin in the Lord Jesus, the Father was at liberty to identify the essential me with His Son; and in His resurrection I was recreated "alive unto God" in Him. When He arose, as the beginning of the (new) creation of God (Rev. 3:14), I arose with Him in "newness of life"—a totally new *creation* (2 Cor. 5:17).

When the Lord Jesus, now Head of the new heavenly creation (the Church), ascended to the right hand of His Father, He took me with Him. The Father, having re-created me in His Son, raised me up and made me to sit together in heavenly places in Him. "And *hath* raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). Abide Above!

I was positionally separated by death via the Cross from the first Adam, to be recreated in union with the Last Adam in His resurrection and ascension. Old Adamic things *positionally* passed away in the death of Calvary. In my *condition*, they are (slowly) passing away as I *grow* spiritually. *Actually*, finally, they will totally and eternally pass away at my death or at the Rapture--whichever comes first. "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

There I am in my glorious position, "hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). In the Lord Jesus I am a new creation, I am accepted in the Beloved, complete in Him, sanctified in Him, perfect in Him. With that position, who can question his unconditional eternal security?!

All of that, and *much* more, has been held in spiritual escrow for me ever since the One who is my life ascended to the right hand of the Father. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

All had to be completed positionally before a single Christian and the Church could be brought into being, because Christianity is founded upon and springs from the *finished* work of Christ. “And ye are *complete* in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10).

The Condition Factor

Born into the world in the life and image of the first Adam, I grew up a condemned sinner, “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). In His foreordained time and purpose the Father called me, and by His grace and the Spirit-caused conviction of sin, I responded in unconditional faith—responsibly accepting the Lord Jesus as my own Saviour.

At that moment the Holy Spirit, by His indwelling, brought me the life of the ascended Lord to be my Christian life. Then and there I was placed in my position as a new creation in the Last Adam. Nevertheless, the old Adam life continues to indwell my body of mortal flesh.

In the Spirit’s time I came to know of the positional truths of the Word concerning me—from Romans 5:12 on throughout Paul’s Church Epistles. I saw that I had judicially died to sin on the Cross, crucified with the Lord Jesus (Gal. 2:20).

In time, and years of that, I learned via Romans Seven not to struggle against the fleshly life of Adam within, but to count by faith upon the *positional truth* of the finished work of the Cross. “For in that He died, He died *unto sin* once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin, but to be alive unto God in Jesus Christ, our Lord” (Rom. 6:11).

Likewise reckoning upon my position — “alive unto God in Christ Jesus” — the Holy Spirit centers my heart and mind upon the One who is my Christian life. As I behold Him by means of the Word, in personal fellowship and worship, the Spirit of Christ causes that completed life to manifest the “fruit of the Spirit.” With ever increasing growth I am conformed to the image of the Son. “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18).

At the Rapture I will receive my renewed body, like unto His glorious body. Then — and not until then — my body of mortal flesh will be instantly transformed into my spiritual, glorified body. The old Adamic man will finally be eradicated, and I will be in eternal condition what has been my *position* ever since my death and resurrection in Him at Calvary — yes, ever since my Father formed me in His heart in eternity past.

Doctrinal Dearth

The question remains: What of these great liberating, positional truths have you learned at church — whether it be through your local Bible church, or elsewhere?

From fifty years of close observation, I would say that your chances are just about one in a thousand. If the leadership in the doctrinally sound church realized *who* and *where* they are

in the glorified Lord Jesus, would they stop at Romans 5:11, and not enter into Romans 5:12 and beyond? Would they be OT and Synoptic-oriented, holding the Church to the earthly level of Israel and her Law?

Would they substitute the synoptic "Gospel of the Kingdom" for Paul's exclusive "glorious heavenly Gospel"? Would they subject members of the heavenly Body of the glorified Lord to Israel's earthly New Covenant, her legal Sermon on the Mount, and her Mosaic and Kingdom law systems--that to which the Christian has died? "For I, through the law, died to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. 2:19).

Chapter 6 — Israel's New Covenant

Israel's New Covenant

We must stop here and stanch the flow of Covenant theology that is flooding onto Dispensational ground — beginning with the primary effusion, *Israel's* New Covenant.

All traditional Dispensationalists believe and teach that Israel alone will be under the New Covenant of Jeremiah and Ezekiel in the future Messianic Kingdom. Yet they all, almost without exception, forsake this exclusiveness of the rightly-divided Word by maintaining that the *Church* shares in the "spiritual" blessings of Israel's New Covenant! Down goes the scriptural separation between Israel and its Law, and the Church and her Grace.

Those who pander to Israel's New Covenant, and seek to participate in its "spiritual" blessings, are simply playing into the hands of Amillennial Covenant Theology, its stepchild, Theonomy, as well as Judaistic Messianic Christianity. They are evidently in need of Israel's New Covenant to help them legalize their legality.

Mr. F. W. Grant long ago warned against such a teaching: "To take from Israel what is hers is only to diminish her and not enrich ourselves; nay, what has been called in this way the spiritualizing of the promises has led most surely and emphatically to the carnalizing, and the legalizing, of the Church."

There is neither word nor inference in the Covenant concerning the Church, nor is it to be established during the Church's dispensation. Paul, in his time, stated that Israel's New Covenant was yet future: "And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:26, 27).

The Eternal Covenant

The Church, on the contrary, presently has the benefits of the Eternal Covenant of Hebrews 13:20, 21 --

> "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the Blood of the *everlasting covenant*, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

NT New Covenant

There are a number of NT references which have to do with Israel's New Covenant, and others which have to do with the Church—some of which we will briefly touch upon.

"For this is My blood of the new testament (covenant), which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

"And He said unto them, This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:24).

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20).

In these Synoptic references the Lord Jesus is *introducing* the New Covenant of His coming Church. He is not explaining it, but is instituting it eschatalogically, on the basis of the soon coming Cross.

He introduced the subject of the Church in Matthew 16:18: "I will build My Church," but He did not explain it. That He would do through Paul to the members of His Body. The explanation of the Church's Eternal Covenant is the responsibility of Paul, the primary source of Church truth.

"For I received of the [ascended] Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed… took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. 11:23, 25, 26).

Here Paul establishes the Church's New Covenant, identical to that previously introduced in the Synoptics by the Lord Jesus.

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6).

Paul's ministry to the heavenly Church is not made up of, nor does it contain, aspects of Israel's New Covenant. The Church's New Covenant consists of the life of the Son, not the law of the Kingdom.

"And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament [Greek: recent in its beginning as well as new in quality], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15).

"And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and the Blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (12:24).

His Blood having been poured out in fulfillment of the eternal pact between the God of peace and Himself, the Lord Jesus thereby becomes the Mediator of the New Covenant for His Body, the Church—of which the Lord's Supper is the blessed reminder.

The blood of Abel spoke of judgment—"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground. And now art thou [Cain] cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand" (Gen. 4:10, 11). But the Blood of sprinkling—the application *by faith* in the shed Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—testified of the judgment of the Cross and of everlasting peace with the God of peace Himself!

"And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:26, 27).

Paul here is speaking of some of the gracious *I wills* of Israel's New Covenant. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." "I will also save you from all your uncleannesses…in the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities" (Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 36:29, 33).

The primary purpose of the Book of Hebrews was to keep the Jews, both saved and unsaved, from turning back to Judaism and the law, the old decaying Mosaic Covenant. They were exhorted to focus, not on the Covenant, but the *Mediator* of a better covenant.

Those Jews who were saved had come to Jesus, the Mediator of Israel's New Covenant, *not to the Covenant itself*, which was yet future. They were in living union with Him who is the Mediator of the Church's New Covenant, and that is a higher thing than if they had merely come to Israel's earthly kingdom Covenant. The Mediator will actualize this New Covenant with Israel on earth in the Millennial Kingdom.

"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 ['I will']. 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 [Millennial], saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:6–8).

In these verses (Hebrews 8:10–13) the writer gives more details concerning Israel's New Covenant, and then in verse 13 he states: "In that He saith, a new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and groweth old is ready to vanish away."

They were not to turn back to Moses, but to the greater than Moses, greater than all: "That Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant" (Heb. 13:20).

"Covenant theology at the utmost, is forgiveness of sins and divine favor enjoyed; and all that concerns their new position in the Lord Jesus Christ is ignored, or alas! guarded against as dangerous.

"Men are placed under Israel's New Covenant which does not go beyond remission of sins and the law written on the heart. But being new creations in Christ Jesus, and knowing it by the Holy Spirit, and what that involves now—that is not a part of their creed." —J. N. Darby

"We are come 'to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant' (Heb. 12:24). We are not come to the New Covenant, but to Jesus the Mediator of it. We are associated with Him who is the Mediator; that is a far higher thing than if merely come to the Covenant. He will make this New Covenant with Israel on earth." —H.H. Snell

Chapter 7 — The Blood And The Spirit

There are a number of scriptural reasons why Israel's New Covenant "blessings" do not apply to the heavenly Body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Blood

First, it is claimed by nearly all that the Church benefits from the Blood of Israel's New Covenant in the forgiveness of sins. But it is just the other way around. Israel will benefit in her iniquities forgiven and her sins remembered no more (Jer. 31:34) from "the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant": (Heb. 13:20)—the *Church's* New Covenant.

The heavenly Bride, hidden in the heart of the glorified Bridegroom, requires *nothing* from earthly Israel and her coming kingdom. The Church's citizenship and position are heavenly—all the way into the Holiest! "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19). Israel, in all her coming earthly glory, will never be the recipient of anything like that!

The Church was chosen in Him (not *under* the King's reign) *before* the foundation of the world in eternity past. "With the precious Blood of Christ… who verily was foreordained *before* the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:19, 20). "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus *before* the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

Granted that Israel's sins are to be forgiven by the same Blood that was shed for the Church on the Cross, but that is where any semblance between the two ceases. The Church is already made "nigh" at the right hand of the Father. "But *now* in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off are made near by the Blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13).

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come [including the millennial kingdom age] He might show [to the angels, redeemed Israel, and the redeemed Gentile nations] the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward *us* through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6, 7).

Israel, standing before the King and His beloved Bride in all the glory of David's earthly millennial throne, will never attain unto the unique blessing of the Church.[1]

The Holy Spirit

In general, Dispensationalists also claim that Israel's New Covenant indwelling of the Spirit is a "spiritual" blessing of which the Church partakes. But Israel's indwelling will be for the purpose of writing the theocratic law upon their hearts and enabling them to walk in His kingdom ordinances. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep Mine ordinances, and do them" (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27).

The primary ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the *Christian* is to manifest the life of the Lord Jesus, never the works of the law. The believer has died to the law, and is alive

---

1Stanford, *Miles Stanford*, (Garland, Texas: Electronic edition by Galaxie Software) 1999.

unto God in Christ Jesus. “For the law of the Spirit of *life* in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” “We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:18).

When we, as His Bride, are co-reigning with Him over Israel and her glorious Millennial Kingdom, we will be like Him, including our redeemed and glorified bodies made like unto His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). To look to Israel’s future, earthly, law-governed New Covenant for “blessings” for the Bride who has *everything* in Him—how could that be?

Dr. Newell knew without question that the Church has no need of any part of Israel’s New Covenant:

> “This Eternal Covenant of Hebrews 13:20 was not between creatures, but between ‘the God of peace’ and ‘the Lord Jesus,’ and the condition was obedience unto death of Christ to the Father; its ground, the shed Blood of the Son, and its issue, an ‘eternal covenant.’
>
> “This is the great fundamental transaction between the Father and the Son; no creatures are seen; but oh! believers become—apart from works—blessed *beneficiaries*! So that God can go on and establish [in the millennial future] the second, or ‘new’ covenant with Israel, who ‘continued not’ in the Mosaic or ‘first,’ now ‘old’ covenant.
>
> “The ‘new covenant’ yet to be made with Israel and Judah at our Lord’s return to earth and that nation, is all of grace—*God’s* operation instead of their response (Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 37:12–14, 21, 23, 25–28). Therefore, the ‘new covenant’ which the Hebrew believers to whom Paul was writing had had explained to them, was not yet in effect, nor will be until Christ’s return to earth. At that time it will apply to ‘the house of Israel and the house of Judah,’ as God says, in the land of Palestine, with the peculiar earthly blessings described in Scripture.
>
> “But there is yet an *eternal covenant*, detailed in Hebrews 13:20, 21, in which and according to which Paul knows that all Christians may be made ‘perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ’ [not through the law written in the heart, as with future Israel].
>
> “This is the Eternal Covenant of which the Lord Jesus is said to be the Mediator, and which is celebrated in the Lord’s Supper, in view of His death on our behalf, by those benefited forever thereby” (*Hebrews, Verse by Verse*, pp. 258, 460-463).

Chapter 8 — Israel's Sermon On The Mount

The Sermon

Christ's Sermon on the Mount, addressed to Israel, is the next great leak in the Dispensational wall.

Why should the heavenly grace-Church be subjected to Jesus' pre-Cross law-message of the kingdom to Israel? There is nothing in the Sermon on the Mount that is not superseded by Paul's Church Epistles. Nothing!

Dr. Chafer places the Sermon in its proper scriptural perspective:

> "The Sermon on the Mount is characterized--among other things—by the absence of those elements which are distinctly Christian, i.e., redemption by the Blood of Christ, faith, regeneration, deliverance from judgment, the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. The absence of these vital elements cannot but arrest the attention of those who are awake to, and jealous for, the faith once delivered to the saints."

The Nine Beatitudes

This kingdom message opens with the record of the ninefold blessing which is promised and provided for the faithful child of the kingdom (Matt. 5:1–12). These blessings are won through personal merit.

1. "Blessed are the poor [humble] in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (v. 3). To the *Christian* it is said, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind" (Col. 3:12). In the teachings of *grace*, "put on" does not mean to pretend, or assume; it is the manifestation of the regenerate life through the power of the Spirit (Eph. 4:24; 6:11).

2. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (v. 4). Mourning does not belong to the *Bride* of Christ. To her a different message is given: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).

3. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (v. 5). Under *grace*, meekness is wrought in the *Christian* by the Spirit (Gal. 5:23), and is never rewarded. While the meek in the kingdom will inherit the *earth*, the believer has an "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in *heaven* for you" (1 Pet. 1:4).

4. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (v. 6). The *Christian* may crave a closer walk with the Father; but he is already "made the righteousness of God in Him [Christ]" (2 Cor. 5:21).

5. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (vs. 7). In the kingdom mercy from God will be made to depend wholly on the exercise of mercy toward others. This is pure law. Under *grace*, the *Christian* is besought to be merciful, as one who has already obtained mercy (Eph. 2:4, 5; Titus 3:5).

6. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (v. 8). Opposed to this, and under *grace* it is written: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

7. “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (v. 9). In the kingdom there will be special distinction given to those who promote peace. “They shall be called the children of God. “Under *grace*, no one is constituted a child of God by any works whatever, “for ye are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3:26).

8. “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the [millennial] kingdom of heaven” (v. 10). The issue here again is *righteousness*. The *Christian* under *grace*, on the contrary, suffers with Christ and for His sake, and is rewarded in heaven.

9. “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you… for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (v. 11, 12). Under *grace* the *believer* is called upon to suffer for Christ’s sake” (Phil. 1:29).

Ninefold Fruit

A careful comparison should be made of the ninefold blessing which is promised under the kingdom, with the ninefold blessing which is prepared under *grace* (“the fruit of the Spirit”). It will be seen that all that is *demanded* under the law of the kingdom as a condition of blessing is, under grace, divinely *provided*.

The two aspects of life which are represented by these two groups of characterizing words are most significant. The total of all the blessings in the kingdom is not comparable with the superabundant “fruit of the Spirit”—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

The very tense of the verb used is important. Under *grace*, the fruit of the Spirit *is*, which indicates the present possession of the blessing through pure grace; whereas under the kingdom, the blessing *shall be* to such as merit it by their works” (*Systematic Theology* IV: 216–219).

Warning

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:15–20). The warning here is against false prophets who are to be discerned by the quality of their lives.

But the warning to the children of God under *grace* is against false teachers who are to be discerned by their *doctrine* concerning Christ (2 Pet. 2:1; 2 John 1:7–11)” (*Systematic Theology* IV: 223).

Chapter 9 — Israel's Messianic Kingdom

The third major leakage of Covenant Theology into Dispensationalism concerns Israel's *Millennial Kingdom*.

Kingdomization

After Dr. Chafer's Homegoing in 1952, Dallas, and similar dispensational schools and organizations, began to soften and blur the sharp Pauline distinctions of the rightly divided Word. The inevitable result has been that the Church is deprived of her heavenly identity. She begins to take on the earthly characteristics of Israel, its New Covenant, its Sermon, its Law, and its Kingdom.

As far back as 1875, Mr. J.B. Stoney said:

> "I fear there is a tendency abroad to exaggerate the standing and state of the OT saints in order to make little difference between the Church and Israel, and thus the heavenly distinctiveness is weakened and lost. The aim of the enemy from a very early date was to draw the saints from their heavenly calling (see Hebrews). Once heaven as a present position and portion is surrendered, the great privilege and position of the Church, the Body of Christ, is drained away."

For some time the catchword from seminary to church has been "kingdom." Dispensational distinctions have been broken down to the point where: 1) The Church is a *phase* of Israel's future millennial kingdom; 2) There is a recognition of a *present form* of the theocratic kingdom: "now/not yet."

No wonder the Church is being flattened out and bound to the horizontal plane of Israel's kingdom! Little wonder believers are being deprived of the knowledge and benefits of their vertical heavenly position in the Son at the Father's right hand. This is not *grace* teaching, and hence not Church teaching. It is simply a fall from the cutting edge of Pauline Dispensationalism to the earthly law-oriented realm of Covenant and Theonomic theology.

One of the contributing factors to the kingdomization of the Church is the breakdown of the distinction between the "kingdom of God," and the '"kingdom of heaven." During the last 20 years or so dispensational leaders have been forsaking the distinctiveness of the kingdom of heaven as set forth in Matthew, more and more making it synonymous with the kingdom of God. But when the kingdom of heaven is no longer considered to be strictly Israel's coming Messianic Kingdom, there emerges a loss of the scriptural separation between earthly Israel and the heavenly Church. Grace is made to partake of law.

Contemporary Confusion

Nearly 50 years ago Dr. Chafer warned:

> "It has been a constant disposition on the part of certain writers to invest OT saints with the same position, qualities, and standing as those which belong to the believers who comprise the Church.
>
> And there is more recently a disposition to carry the same realities that belong to the saved of this dispensation over into the kingdom dispensation and to Jews and Gentiles alike. Such assumptions are avoided when it is recognized

> that to the *Church alone* is accorded the heavenly position and glory. Of her alone it is declared that each of her members who make up Christ's Body is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light" (*Systematic Theology* III: 327).

Nearly 75 years ago Dr. Newell predicted:

> "Failure to rightly divide between Kingdom and Church will lead to a wrong conception of the Bible, and a false interpretation of its truth and application of its promises.
>
> "One of the first things that will happen will be to *spiritualize* the kingdom promises of the OT and attempt to make them apply to the Church of this dispensation. This only results in confusion and conflict."

Conditions today in the seminaries and churches could not have been more accurately predicted!

Dr. Donald K. Campbell, president of Dallas, wrote in the book, *Essays in Honor of J. D. Pentecost*, 1985 (p. 155):

> "The two opposite viewpoints of premillennialism and amillennialism are still with us, though some modifications are taking place. Some premillennialists now view the present Church dispensation as the *first phase* of the fulfillment of the promised messianic kingdom, in that believers now experience the spiritual blessings of the kingdom, such as the blessings of Israel's New Covenant."

This is indicative of the dispensational impoverishment of the Church. Take Israel's New Covenant away from these Neo-Dispensational "modifiers," and "progressives," and their entire house of cards will collapse!

Dr. C.A. Blaising wrote in *Bib Sac* of July/Sept., 1988, p. 276:

> It is amazing that in the writings of Walvoord, Pentecost, and Ryrie published in the '50s and '60s, the heavenly/earthly dualistic language is gone. A distinction between Israel and the Church is vigorously asserted and all the theological structures of distinction are present, *except* [that's all it takes!] that the eternal destinies of the two peoples now share the same sphere. [*In Christ*?]

Consequently, the heavenly/earthly distinctions are dropped. Thus is begun a slow movement [30 years] *away* from the scholastic, classic, *absolute distinction* [between Israel and the Church] found from Darby to Chafer."

Since there is this development (among dispensational seminarians) of relating the Church to Israel's Millennial Kingdom, we will share some material by Dr. Chafer to the contrary:

> "The teachings of the Kingdom have not been applied to men in all ages; nay, they have not been applied to any man. Since they anticipate the binding of Satan, a purified earth, the restoration of Israel, and the personal reign of the King, they cannot be applied until God's appointed time when these accompanying conditions on the earth have been brought to pass.

> "The kingdom laws will be addressed to Israel and beyond them to all the nations which will enter the Kingdom. It will be the first and only universal reign of righteousness and peace in the history of the world. One *nation* was in view when the law of Moses was in force in the earth; the *individual* is in view during the dispensation of grace; and the whole *social order* of mankind will be in view when the Kingdom is established on the earth.
>
> "The Church is not once mentioned in relation to the teachings of the Kingdom, nor are those teachings applied to her; for her part in the Kingdom is not to be reigned over, but to reign with Christ, her Head. She, being the Bride of the King, is His Consort. She will be under the heavenly teachings of *grace*, and her home will be in the bosom of the Bridegroom in the ivory palace of the King.
>
> "The King will rule with a rod of iron. Sin and iniquity will be rebuked instantly and judged in perfect righteousness. Clear conception of the glory of the Kingdom is lost if it is confused with the dispensation of *grace*.
>
> "There is a dangerous and entirely baseless sentiment abroad which assumes that every teaching of Jesus must be binding during this dispensation simply because He said it. The fact is forgotten that the Lord Jesus, while living under, keeping, and applying the *Law of Moses*, also taught the principles of His future *Kingdom*, and at the end of His ministry and in relation to His Cross, He also anticipated the teachings of *Grace*. If this threefold division of His teachings is not recognized, there can be nothing but confusion of mind and consequent contradiction of truth.
>
> "The teachings of *Grace* are perfect and sufficient in themselves. They provide for the instruction of the child of God in every situation that may arise. There is no need that they be supplemented, or augmented, by the addition of precepts from either the Law of Moses or the teachings of the Kingdom" (IV: 224).

Millennial Saint

Mr. J. Butler Stoney, Darby contemporary, gives us another slant on the same distinction between the Church and Israel's Kingdom:

> The difference between this present dispensation and that of the millennium is very distinct. The Christian is now joined to Christ and is one spirit with Him. Since I am united to Him, He is my Life; "*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).
>
> "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" (Gal. 2:20). Here I have died, and my life is hid with Christ in God. The future earthly kingdom saint will live here on earth, but he will not be united to the Lord Jesus, he will not be dead to the flesh and the world, and he will be a man living in all the commandments and ordinances of the law blameless.

> "This then is the great difference—the heavenly saint has a standing of complete deliverance from the man in the flesh; while the millennial saint will be through grace empowered by the Spirit to do what God requires from man in the flesh. "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" (Heb. 8:10).
>
> "Again, the way into the Holiest of All is now made manifest. We—the heavenly believers--have "boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus... through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10:19, 20). The earthly millennial saint, though cleansed of his sins by the Blood, cannot speak of being inside the veil, because his dispensation is connected with this earth. If we admit that our position as worshippers is inside the veil, we must admit another great difference between a heavenly and an earthly saint.
>
> "One more difference is to be noticed: the saint united to the Lord Jesus in heaven, knowing deliverance in Him and worshiping in the Holiest of All, has a place in heaven prepared for him by the Lord Jesus Christ, which an earthly kingdom saint never could have.
>
> "True, he can speak of knowing the Lord of heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, when all things are made new; but he cannot speak of having a place prepared for him in the Father's house, and still less speak of being raised up together with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).
>
> "Thus we see the difference in status between the heavenly and the earthly saint. First, the connection with Christ is different, the saints during His rejection being united to Him in heaven, a privilege not known by, nor granted to, any other class of saints—neither to the OT saints, nor the millennial saints" (*Ministry X*:36, 37).

"In the one case, that of the earthly or millennial family, the law will be written in their hearts (Jer. 31:33), the inclination to do evil will be superseded. In the other family, the heavenly, that is, Christian, the *Lord Jesus Christ* is written in their hearts by the Holy Spirit; a great and important distinction, and indicating that the Christian's blessings are in association with the Lord Jesus who has gone within the veil." —W.J. Hocking.

Chapter 10 — Messianic Judaism

Messianic Judaism

Many Jews are being saved today, but few are established dispensationally; as a result, they are strongly Galatianized. As Christians they are both Judaistic, and Judaizers, constituting a definite contribution to the delinquency of Dispensationalism.

Due to its lack of dispensational, rightly-divided protection, the Messianic Jew movement here in the States has fallen prey to the two main detrimental factors—tongues, and the law. The entire group is based upon the latter—the legal aspects of the undivided Word. The charismatic integration is primarily due to the 'Jews for Jesus' influence.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

Dr. Fruchtenbaum (Dallas '71) has written a 142-page book titled *Hebrew Christianity*. His thesis is typical of American Messianism. This will be brought out from the book, along with our brief comments.

> "What then is a Hebrew Christian? He is a Jew who believes that Jesus Christ is his Messiah. He must acknowledge that he is both a Jew and a Christian" (p. 12).

Need one go further? This is an attempt to create a dichotomy in Christ that does not exist. "There is neither Jew nor Greek… for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

> "If a Jew accepts baptism solely to lose his identity as a Jew, he is by no means to be considered a Hebrew Christian; he is a renegade, a traitor, and an apostate. A Hebrew Christian is proud of his Jewishness" (p. 13).

Judaizers

Here is the sad key to the Messianists, their true attitude and aim. They are actually Judaizers. They are backing into Christianity—they do not want to know where they are going in Christ, but only where they have been in Judaism.

> "The Bible does not teach that there is a Hebrew Christian distinctive in the Body of Christ. It is the continuity of the Abrahamic Covenant that provides the first basis of the Hebrew Christian distinction. Since that Covenant is still very much in effect, these four features also involve the Hebrew Christian both in position and function"(p. 17).

The Hebrew Christian seeks to include himself in a covenant belonging to Israel, which will be in effect and find its fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom and throughout eternity.

> "*First* of all, Hebrew Christians are still Jews, for they, like other Jews, are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *Secondly*, the homeland for the Hebrew Christian is the land of Israel, and this is where his primary loyalty should be despite his place of residence" (p. 28).

Israel is an earthly nation, and forever shall be. The Lord Jesus' Bride is not of this world. Many Hebrew Christians are confirmed Zionists.

> "*Thirdly*, the Gentile relationship to the Jews in the blessing and cursing aspects is as true for Hebrew Christians as for other Jews. Hebrew Christians who are blessed or cursed because of their Jewishness will find the blessers blessed and the cursers cursed" (p. 28).

Their entire bent is Judaistic. They fail to realize their scriptural relationship to the Father, the Son, the Spirit, the Jews, the Gentiles, and the world.

Circumcision

> "*Finally*, there is the matter of circumcision. Since Hebrew Christians still fall under the other provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant, they fall under this one as well. It is my conviction that Hebrew Christians should have their sons circumcised on the eighth day" (p. 29).

Paul would guide them away from fleshly ritualism of any kind to spiritual reality. "Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the *flesh*" (Phil. 3:2, 3).

Jewish "Remnant"

> "The point is that in Israel, past, present, and future, it is a remnant that is faithful to the revelation of God. This is also true in this present Dispensation of Grace; the Hebrew Christians are the remnant of Israel today. The remnant is always in the nation, not outside of it; the Hebrew Christian, the present-day remnant, are [sic] part of Israel and the Jewish people. Their Jewishness is distinct" (p. 31).

They would rather be a remnant of presently rejected Israel than to see themselves as, and grow in the benefit of, being an integral part of the beauteous Bride, the heavenly Body of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:1–4). Israel, in all its glory, will never approximate this!

> "In the early period (A.D 30–68) Christianity was Hebrew, and for all practical purposes it was a sect within Judaism" (p. 35). The Gentile believers were called Christians (Acts 11:29), but the Jewish believers were called Nazarenes (Acts 24:5)" (p. 37).

> "Several waves of persecution against the Hebrew Christians took place between A.D. 32 and A.D. 66; nevertheless, they lived among their own Jewish people, attending the Temple and synagogue services, and observing Jewish religious practices. The policy of Hebrew Christianity was a policy of distinction from Gentile Christianity, but there was still an alliance between them" (p. 38).

The Ultra- and Neo-Dispensationalists should certainly relate to the above! Acts is the *transition* from Judaism and the Law to Christianity and its Life. Christianity was never Hebrew, nor was it ever Gentile. Christianity is Christ glorified, forged on the Cross of Calvary, and instituted by the descent of the Spirit of Christ on its birth-day of Pentecost.

Hebrew Christian Missions

> "In 1866 the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain was founded on the premise: Let us not sacrifice our identity. When we profess Christ, we do not cease to be Jews; Paul, after his conversion, did not cease to be a Jew; not only Saul was, but even Paul remained a Hebrew of the Hebrews.
>
> "We cannot and will not forget the land of our fathers, and it is our desire to cherish feelings of patriotism. As Hebrews, as Christians, we feel tied together; and as Hebrew Christians, we desire to be allied more closely to one another. In 1915, the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America was founded. In 1925, the International Hebrew Christian Alliance was founded in London" (p. 49).

There is no question but that reliable missions to the Jews in this country and elsewhere have been the means of many Jews being born again. But it must be said, and should have been pointed out long ago, that these ministries to the Jews are working on a faulty, if not false, premise.

The nation of Israel, as such, has been set aside by God during this Church/ Grace dispensation.

Therefore, to present Christ as *Messiah* to the Jew is to orient him to Judaism and its Kingdom Gospel, instead of Paul's heavenly Gospel of Grace, which will position the Spirit-convicted Jew upon heavenly ground in the glorified Lord Jesus Christ as *Saviour*.

Paul, who received his new life *and* Gospel from the *glorified* Lord Jesus, immediately "preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received [not from the apostles, but from the glorified Lord], that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3, 4).

> "The believer in Christ is free of the Law of Moses. He is also free to keep parts of the Law of Moses if he so desires" (p. 88).

The fact of the believer's life in Christ, and Christ's life in him, to say nothing of the admonitions of Galatians and Hebrews, precludes any such thought. The Law is a complete *modus operandi*—one cannot pick and choose.

> "Modern Judaism is not the same as biblical Judaism, nor is it the 'father of Christianity.' At best it can be called its brother, and biblical Judaism is the father of both" (p. 106).

Dr. Chafer maintained that "Judaism is not the bud that blossomed into Christianity. [Neo-Dispensationalism is trying to make it a flower in the same pot!] Each sets up its ground of relation-ship between God and man—the Jew by physical birth, the Christian by spiritual birth; each provides its instruction on the life of its adherents—the *Law* for Israel, the teachings of *Grace* for the Church; each has its sphere of existence; Israel on the earth for all ages to come, the Church in heaven (IV: 248).

Jewish Feasts

> "There are certain advantages for a Hebrew Christian in keeping some or all of the Feasts. First, they are good opportunities to share the faith with

> unbelieving Jewish people [rank accommodation], showing them how the particular Feast points to the Messiahship of Christ" (p. 107).

Dr. Chafer pointed in the scriptural direction: "To the Jew and Gentile alike the Gospel is to be shared and, without reference to any former estate or promises, they are to be confronted with the glory of *heavenly* realities. All Jewish advantage and Gentile disadvantage is set aside to the end that the *heavenly* purpose may be accomplished (IV: 320).

> "Secondly, the Feast presents a good way of identifying ourselves with Jewish people. This matter of identification is very important as a testimony to the Jewishness of our faith" (p. 176).

Here is the consummate *compromise* of all mission work to the Jews: "Stooping" to conquer the poor lost Jew—who needs the living witness to Christianity to win him to the glorified Son of God. If the Hebrew Christian knew of his identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, he would not be so eager to identify with earthly Judaism.

"Thirdly, the Feasts provide a basis for teaching Jewish culture and history. This is especially important for instilling Jewishness in the children of Hebrew Christians."

The more Jewishness for the children, the greater the barrier and prejudice for them regarding Christianity.

> "Fourthly, the Feasts serve as an opportunity to worship God and to thank him for what he has done in the course of Jewish history; and for what he has done for us in the Messiah's fulfillment of the Jewish Holy Days" (p. 107).

Although all Scripture is profitable, all Scripture is not directed to, or incumbent upon, members of the Body of Christ. The glorified Bridegroom speaks to His beloved Bride *primarily* through the Pauline Church Epistles.

Dr. Chafer wrote long ago, "All Scripture is not of primary application to a particular person or class of persons which the Bible designates as such. All Scripture is not about angels, nor is it all about the Gentiles. In like manner, all Scripture is not addressed to the Jew, nor is it all addressed to the Christian." (*Dispensationalism*, p. 417).

Mr. Paul Wilson states, "A Christian cannot pick up his Bible and read just anywhere and find direction for his feet. If he does not read discerningly, he may think it his duty to help rebuild a temple in Jerusalem today, or do any of thousands of things that would be totally inconsistent with his position as a Christian, whose life, commonwealth, and hopes are in heaven."

Remove Paul, neglect him, or fail to build a Pauline and hence a Christ-centered life or church on dispensational truth, and there is little left apart from the laws of Moses and of the Millennial Kingdom. There is nothing in the entire Scriptures concerning Christian growth that Paul did not set forth—and that on the *heavenly* plane.

Dr. Newell pointed out that "Paul received all his teaching from heaven, from the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, rather than from Jesus on earth in His pre-Cross Jewish connections. Paul's Gospel of Glory has nothing Jewish about it—whether for birth, or for growth."

When Hebrew Christians refer to Paul, they endeavor to keep him as Jewish as possible. But Paul repudiated *all* that was of the *flesh*. "If any other man thinketh that he hath reasons

for which he might *trust in the flesh*, I more; circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal [without knowledge], persecuting the Church; touching the [self] righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count *all* things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of *all* things, and do count them as refuse, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:4–8).

"That I may know Him" (Phil. 3:10). Here Paul was referring to the glorified Lord Jesus Christ. He, and our heavenly position in Him, will never be found in *anything* Judaistic.

Dr. Chafer wrote: "Much divine blessing is determined for Israel, all of which is anticipated in her covenants and prophecies; but no covenant or prophecy brings that nation into heavenly citizenship, or makes it the Bride of Christ" (IV: 142).

Dr. Newell concurs: "Paul's Gospel is the Gospel of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ, and of God as the One who *raised* Him from among the dead and is now working *on resurrection ground only*. Christ appeared to Paul as the ascended One, outside Jerusalem, independent of the Twelve, and apart from Judaism absolutely. The Church has no connection with Israel whatsoever!" (*Galatians*, p. 24).

This distinction is the hallmark of Pauline Dispensationalism!

Donald Grey Barnhouse stated, "While freeing believers from the bondage of Rome, the Reformation brought them back, in large measure, under the bondage of Sinai. The Church came out of the Middle Ages like Lazarus from the tomb—alive but bound in graveclothes. The Reformers took away one set of bindings, but bound believers in another, the Law—and this has atrophied the spiritual life of multitudes."

Chapter 11 — Distinctive Gospels

Distinctive Gospels

In this chapter Dr. Newell will share with us different aspects of the Gospel—actually, different Gospels:

The thirteen Epistles of Paul (Romans to Philemon) form a distinct body of truth; and this realm of truth is *about us*, the Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, as no other Scriptures are. And Paul is the Father's special messenger to us.

The teaching that the choice of Matthias in Acts 1 was a blunder on Peter's part has arisen from failure to recognize the character of Paul's calling and work. And to fail to realize this is to miss the vital core of Paul's whole teaching. Terrible loss! For when the Church lost this (as she early did) she had left no defense against Judaism and its law on the one hand and worldliness on the other. When we consider Paul's teaching we soon see its special character; but it is plain, even before a study of his doctrine, that his apostleship was wholly distinct from and independent of that of the Twelve.

Israel was, and in God's gracious purpose is yet to be, His *earthly* people. That is, their calling is to represent God on the earth, as the chief nation of the earth, dwelling in a special country, in an earthly order of things, with earthly hopes, rewards, etc. But the Church, the Body of Christ, into which, in the Father's wondrous grace, we have been called, is *heavenly*. The Church has nothing to do with earth, except to witness in the name of the Lord, and then pass on into glory, into heaven, her eternal Home.

We will never be able to understand Scripture till we see sharply and clearly the distinction between *Israel*, the chosen earthly nation, and the *Church*, the Body of Christ. Paul is the Apostle of the latter. And, as such, he is the Apostle of a totally new thing. For Israel is constantly before us in the OT and in the Synoptic Gospels, but the Church is very rarely even referred to before we come to Acts.

At first thought these distinctions will not seem important; but when we remember that the right understanding of our exact relation as the Church, is absolutely necessary. If we are to apprehend and enter into our *full* rights, privileges and responsibilities as Christians, their most careful study will be seen to be imperative.

It is in Acts 9:20 that the Lord Jesus is first *proclaimed*, by Paul, as the Son of God—and this is a distinct *advance* of truth concerning Him. Paul already stood in clearer light regarding the risen and glorified Lord than did the other Apostles, for they had known Him primarily in humiliation, and they were His messengers to Israel, of whom is Christ "as concerning the flesh" (Rom. 9:5). But Paul's first vision of the Lord Jesus was as the Glorified One, the Son of God, in resurrection glory.

We will examine the nature and scope of the Gospel preached during our Lord's walk on the earth; and then the Gospel preached after His resurrection until the revelation given to the Apostle Paul. Actually we will look at *three different Gospels*.

The Kingdom Gospel

(1) First we have the *Gospel of the Kingdom* that was offered to the Jews in the person of the Heir. "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at

hand; repent, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15). "And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the Twelve were with Him" (Luke 8:1).

The effect of repenting and believing this Gospel is set forth in the prayer that our Lord taught His disciples, who, as the faithful of that day, had accepted this Gospel. It was good tidings that God was offering men, His kingdom and His Son, the Heir of all. The disciples believed this, and hence our Lord teaches them a prayer expressive of the state of soul which they as believing in this Gospel should have.

This Disciple's Prayer

"And it came to pass that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil" (Luke 11:1–4).

If this prayer is suitable for the disciples at that time, before the Saviour's death, and before the gift of the Holy Spirit, it must be evident that it could not be suitable after they had known the blessings of redemption and their union with the risen Lord.

In this prayer there is a knowledge of the Father, because Christ was declaring Him on earth, but His will had not yet been done. Christ came to do His will, and now He has done it; so that we could not now pray for it *to be done*, though it was right for the disciples to pray that it might be done. Besides, there is no knowledge of the forgiveness of sins; it is looking for forgiveness on the ground of work rather than rejoicing in it through *grace*. It is a prayer regarding man in the flesh rather than in the Spirit.

Christ and the Spirit are in no way referred to in this prayer, and this is consistent, for Christ had not yet finished His work, and therefore He does not lead their souls into it; and as the Holy Spirit has not yet come He finds no place in it. The prayer suited the disciples, and shows us where they were. If a soul now goes back to their state, then the prayer will suit them; but the soul using it intelligently must feel that he has neither forgiveness of sins nor the life of Christ, in which through the Spirit he is free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

Instead of growing up in Christ and reaching unto "perfection," this prayer is to get daily bread, to escape from temptation, and for deliverance from evil—all necessary in their place, but not occupying the individual with the higher realities of Christianity. If Christianity had a place in their prayer, it would manifestly have been suited to the disciples; and inasmuch as Christianity is left out, it cannot be a suitable prayer for members of the Body of Christ.

Limited Apprehension

And if I go further and note the manner and way of the apostles at this time, I see in them no moral power, no correct idea of the things of God, though they, to the joy and rest of their hearts, were in a surpassing way sheltered by Jesus in person. Would saints in the present day approve of being, or consent to be, no better in hope or intelligence than the apostles before the resurrection, who slept when asked to watch with Him, and who forsook Him and fled?

And “as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.” Now these were believers in the *Gospel of the Kingdom*, and in the spirit of their minds they were according to this prayer in Luke 11, the so-called Lord’s Prayer. Hence, when saints nowadays limit their standing to that prayer, they cannot practically rise above the apostles at that hour of prayer, hope or intelligence, and, sad as it is to say it, they literally do not!

Progression

Now on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus the Gospel obtains a remarkable breadth and fullness not known before that great event. The Lord not only stands in their midst a risen One, assuring them of peace, but He breathes on them and says, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). Now they are to realize that they not only believe in God, but also in Him.

And they received from Him the Commission, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15, 16).

Here in precise and unmistakable language is declared to us the Gospel they were now to proclaim. The Gospel at that time was that everyone believing in Jesus risen, and taking his place in accordance with this fact on earth through baptism, should be saved. The Gospel now conveyed salvation and the power of the Spirit on *earth*, but nothing beyond this.

It is important to notice the nature and character of the Gospel presented, because according to it must be the consequent blessing; and if I, like Apollos, preach only the baptism of John, as he did at Ephesus, is it any wonder that the believers at Ephesus, as we see from Acts 19, knew nothing more and never heard that the Holy Spirit was now on earth? It is of all importance what Gospel is preached, for though God saves and secures blessing for me according to His love in Christ, still my sense of it, my joy and strength because of the blessing, must be determined by my knowledge and faith in the nature of the blessing.

Now if some have not advanced beyond the Gospel preached during our Lord’s life here, many more think they have gained the heights of grace when they proclaim with much energy and faithfulness the truth that salvation follows, and is assured to the soul, on believing in a risen Christ. It is doubtless a truth of unspeakable magnitude that a lost sinner, at a distance from God and under fear of judgment, finds himself now through faith in Jesus Christ fully and finally saved by Him.

Earthly Gospel

(2) This marks a new and wondrous era in the grace and mercy of God, and on the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost Peter insists on this blessed truth, showing that the manifestation of the power of the Spirit was indicative of the time when it should be fulfilled--“It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be *saved*” (Acts 2:21). And further (v. 36), “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Progressive Revelation

We can see where the Gospel then preached set souls. *Saved* was the great leading characteristic of those who had accepted the Gospel. And on earth they were in the unity of Christ’s Body by the Holy Spirit, though that truth had not as yet been revealed. This

Gospel, as one can see, does not present heaven before the soul, nor does it separate men from the earth.

True, it set men so in the power of the Spirit that selfishness has lost its influence and rule, for they "had all things in common." But a hope apart from and outside earth was not presented, nor were they regarded as no longer connected with men as men on earth. On the contrary, they were a beautiful expression of God's grace to man on earth; individual selfishness set aside in the power of the bond which united them, "they, continuing daily with one accord *in the Temple*, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46).

The Gospel that these had received was that Jesus was risen, and that He was appointed of God both Lord and Christ. And now in the power of the Holy Spirit they were in unity, but still as yet their hope was not apart from earth, nor did they regard themselves as apart from relation thereto, though they held that relation in view of their risen Lord, whose return to it they announced.

Still Kingdom Level

There is a great necessity for thus tracing the history of the Gospel, for it will be found that most souls to the present have not progressed beyond the Gospel of Acts 2, though, alas! without arriving at the blessed results manifested there, which could not really be manifest *now* because the earthly connection has terminated.

Are there not saints now who, being assured of salvation, meet as saved ones to support an earthly order, which the breaking of bread indicates; who are thinking more of their relation to earth than of their hope and position in heaven; and who regard the coming of the Lord in the light of His return to the earth, more than in that of their meeting Him in the air? More earthly kingdom, than the heavenly Rapture?

Stephen Juncture

In Acts 3 the lame man was healed through Peter and John, and it was then that Peter preached to the gathered multitude of Israelites that "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the age began." "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 3:19–21; 1:11).

They knew their Lord had gone to heaven, but they expected His return; and they connected all their ideas of the place He went to prepare for them with His return to earth. His promise to them in John 14 was that He would come again to receive them unto Himself, that where He was they should be also; but however they understood this, it is evident from Peter's sermon, as well as the testimony of the angels, that up to this moment His return to *earth* was their great cardinal hope.

But soon the leaders of Israel began to reject the Gospel and persecute the apostles. And in Acts 6 and 7 we are told how both the people and the elders and the scribes came upon Stephen and caught him and brought him to the Council; and then deliberately, they not only rejected but stoned to death the witness of the Holy Spirit, by whom the Word of God appealed to their consciences not to resist Him.

Thus, as before in the death of John the Baptist, they have proclaimed their opposition to Him whom John presented; so now by the stoning of Stephen they openly unmask and expose the hatred and rebellion of their hearts to a glorified Christ. It is now declared that there is no acceptance of Him on earth by His own people, but on the contrary, there is an open avowal, "We will not have this man to reign over us"!

Hence it is easy to see that the hope of Christ's return to earth to set up the kingdom, which was the hope of the Gospel preached by Peter and the apostles up to this time, can no longer be insisted on. Stephen is taken to glory with the Lord Jesus instead of waiting here for His return to earth as its true and only King.

Disciples To Stephen To Paul

(3) Here we can see the transition, the point of juncture between the Gospel hitherto preached by the Apostles and that which, consequent on the death of Stephen, was committed to Saul of Tarsus. Christ coming from heaven to earth has been deliberately, defiantly and outrageously refused. His witness, being stoned, has been taken to be with Him where He is; *now* comes the call of Saul of Tarsus; and the Gospel which is now revealed and committed to him sets forth how God in His grace and according to Himself will disclose the purpose and fullness of His heart.

The *glorified* Lord Jesus Christ tells Saul, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast *seen*, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee." And what does Saul *see*? Not only Christ risen, but also Christ ascended in glory. Stephen has seen Him there, and had consigned his spirit to Him whom he had seen there; but Saul sees Him and is commissioned to be a minister and a witness of the things that he sees.

Here, then, was the introduction of the *Gospel of God* according to the fullness of His heart and purpose. Can anyone for a moment hesitate to accept the beautiful order of this wondrous Gospel, beginning and consummating in the bright, full circle of the Father's presence and glory?

We have already seen that salvation through a risen Saviour could be and was known, and the saints maintained, through the Holy Spirit here on earth, in one mind, one soul, remembering the death of the Lord in the breaking of bread. This was while they were still linked to earth and to the Temple services, and their hope entirely connected with the earth as waiting their Lord's return to establish His kingdom (Acts 1:6).

Church Gospel

But now that this hope could no longer be presented on account of Christ's rejection from the earth, God unfolds through Christ the deep, full counsel of His heart; and the scene where all this can be displayed is the glory into which Saul in now introduced; and seeing the Lord Jesus in the glory is the pivot and center of that Gospel which is now entrusted to him.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages hath been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:8, 9).

The nature and scope of this Gospel we shall best ascertain by tracing the lines of truth expounded in Paul's writings, which, like rays emanating from Christ, the Center and

Source, lead the heart back to Himself and feed it with His excellency and glory. Saul's first sermon gives us a clear idea of the power and greatness of the Gospel committed to him. "He preached Christ… that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20).

In the Epistle to the Romans, where Paul calls the Gospel "the *Gospel of God* (Rom. 1:1), "*the Gospel of His Son*" (v. 9), and "*my Gospel*" (Rom. 16:25), the first characteristic we find of it is justification through faith, because God's righteousness is revealed in Christ. The righteousness of God is thus characteristic of Paul's Gospel.

Now the righteousness of God is established in the Cross of Christ—He bearing in Himself the judgment on man, so that there is an end of that which offended God. He was made to be sin for us, that we should be made the righteousness of God in Him. There is an end of man as man was (in Adam); the old man was crucified with Christ. Hence, with the righteousness of God there is another characteristic, namely, the end of man in the flesh.

Then comes eternal life: grace reigns "through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). A further characteristic is that "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (8:9). It is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" which has "made me free from the law of sin and death" (8:2), and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (8:9).

Let the soul endeavor to embrace all that is conferred on it in this epistle by Paul's Gospel: righteousness—the righteousness of God established by Christ; the judicial ending of the old man; the gift of eternal life; the Spirit of Christ; so that Christ in me is the summing up, as well as the fullness, of blessing.[2]

Paul's Gospel

Paul's Gospel produces, for those that believe, a new order of existence after another order of man. *Christ lives in me*. It is not that the old man has received additions and advantages as in a legal religion—a former Gospel--but that I am made anew of Him who is the Son of God, and that the old man has been superseded and judicially put an end to in His Cross. Being crucified with Christ, it has no longer any recognized existence before God; while I, in my new creation, am in Christ before the Father, and He lives in me. This is the very kernel of Paul's Gospel.

Thus we see how the "Gospel of His Son" positions the believer before God in relation to Him, and also in relation to the old Adamic man. This is very partially presented in the Gospel preached by Peter. He preached salvation, perfect and final, through a risen Savor, and the present indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Great elements, it must be admitted, in the truth revealed to Paul; but they did not set aside man as entirely and judicially ended in the Cross of Christ, nor connect the individual with Christ as his Life and Head, though the saints possessed it through the Holy Spirit. They did not know *who* they were, and *where* they were, "hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).

William Kelly stated, "The evangelical 'revival,' whether of Wesley or Whitfield, was a pious reaction which insisted on the new birth and earnestness on behalf of lost souls, from the cold ethics and formality, if not deism, of the century before.

2Stanford, *Miles Stanford*, (Garland, Texas: Electronic edition by Galaxie Software) 1999.

"But the *heavenly* calling and the inheritance of the saints, the purpose of God for His glory in Christ, never really dawned upon evangelical hearts, any more than of the Puritans, or even the Reformers who preceded."

Chapter 12 — Dr. Chafer Vs. Covenant Theology

Dr. Chafer's Presbyterian background enabled him to understand *Covenant Theology*, and he faithfully sought to alert the Church as to its doctrinal dangers.

All too many dispensational leaders are seeking dialogue and fellowship with Covenant theologians, seemingly unaware of the risk they are taking, and the adverse example they are setting.

We share here what Dr. Chafer wrote in his *Systematic Theology* concerning the errors of Covenant Theology. To let him loose on the subject is an awesome thing to behold. Be warned!

Reformation Restraint

A clear recognition of that which, through divine grace, the Church is, of the supreme position she occupies as the Body of Christ, and of the glory and exaltation which awaits the Bride of the Lamb, is indispensable if a worthy perspective of God's plan and purpose is to be gained. The all but universal disregard on the part of [Covenant] theologians for the Pauline revelation respecting the Church has wrought confusion and damage to an immeasurable degree.

Two factors serve as paramount causes of this deplorable neglect of Paul, namely: (a) the *Reformation* did not recover this truth as formerly it was held by the early Church; (b) that attitude of the theologians, being bound and confined within the limitations of *Reformation* truth, has been one of avoidance of what to them seems new.

J. N. Darby & Company

While there were occasional references to the Church universal in post-*Reformation* literature, it was not until the middle of the last century that this extensive and important body of teaching was formed into a doctrinal declaration. It was given to J.N. Darby of England to achieve this distinctive ministry.

From the teachings of John Darby and his associates what is known as the Plymouth Brethren movement sprang. These highly trained men produced an expository literature covering the entire Sacred Text which is not only orthodox and free from misconceptions, but assays to interpret faithfully the entire field of Biblical doctrine-that which theology confined to the *Reformation* failed to do.

There is, then, a division in the ranks of orthodox men. On the one hand, there are those who, being trained to recognize no more than that which entered into *Reformation* theology, are restricted in their doctrinal viewpoint and who look upon added truth as a departure from standard ideas and therefore dangerous. On the other hand, there are those who, though as jealous to preserve the purity of the divine revelation, are constructing an unabridged system of theology, and finding the way into full-orbed harmony of truth and into limitless fields of Biblical doctrine (*Systematic Theology* IV: 36, 37).

Apocryphal Covenants

The essential error of *Covenant Theology* is mentioned at this point only as it bears on human responsibility before God. The theological terms, *Covenant of Works* and *Covenant of*

Grace, do not occur in Scripture. If they are to be sustained it must be wholly apart from Biblical authority.

What is known as *Covenant Theology* builds its structure on these two covenants and is at least a recognition—though inadequate—of the truth that the creature has responsibility toward his Creator. *Covenant Theology* has Cocceius (1603–1669) as its chief exponent. He taught that before the Fall, as much as after it, the relation between God and man was a covenant. The first was a *Covenant of Works*. For this was substituted, after the Fall, the *Covenant of Grace*.

Undiscernment

Upon this human invention of two covenants *Reformed Theology* has largely been constructed. It sees the empirical truth that God can forgive sinners only by that freedom which is secured by the sacrifice of His Son-anticipated in the old order and realized in the new. However, that theology utterly fails to discern God's purposes for the ages—the varying relationships to God of the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church, with the distinctive, consistent human obligations which arise directly and unavoidably from the nature of each specific relationship to God.

A theology which penetrates no further into Scripture than to discover that in all ages God is immutable in His grace toward penitent sinners, and constructs the idea of a universal Church (continuing through the ages), and the one truth of immutable grace, is not only disregarding vast spheres of revelation but is reaping the unavoidable confusion and misdirection which part-truth engenders.

The outworking of divine grace is not standardized, though the *Covenant* idea of theology would make it so; and as certainly as God's dealings with man are not standardized, in the same manner the entire field of the corresponding human obligation in daily life is not run into a mold of human idealism (IV: 156,157).

One-track Limitation

Judaism has its field of theology with its soteriology and its eschatology. That these factors of a system which occupies three-fourths of the Bible are unrecognized and ignored by theologians does not demonstrate their nonexistence, nor does it prove their unimportance. A *Covenant Theology* engenders the notion that there is but one soteriology and one eschatology, and that ecclesiology, such as it is conceived to be, extends from the Garden of Eden to the Great White Throne. The insuperable problems in exegesis which such fanciful suppositions create are easily disposed of by ignoring them.

On the other hand, Scripture is harmonized and its message clarified when two divinely appointed systems—Judaism and Christianity—are recognized, and their complete and distinctive characters are observed. No matter how orthodox they may be in matters of inspiration, the Deity of Christ, His virgin birth, and the efficacy of His death, *Covenant Theologians* have not been forward in Bible exposition (IV: 248).

Roman Residuary

It is a common practice with some theologians to brand millennialism as a modern theory, forgetting that, in its restored form, even justification by faith and millennialism were

taught in the NT and were therefore the belief of the early Church. These doctrines, like all other essential truths, went into obscurity during the Dark Ages.

The *Reformers* did not restore all features of doctrine, and along with justification by faith retained the Romish notion that the Church is the Kingdom, fulfilling the Davidic covenant, and appointed to conquer the world by bringing it under the authority of the Church. This idea has prevailed in spite of the clear, uncomplicated testimony of the NT that this dispensation must end in unprecedented wickedness (IV: 257).

Covenant Amalgamation

Israel has never been the Church, is not the Church, nor will it ever be the Church. A form of *Covenant Theology* which would thread all of Jehovah's purposes and undertakings upon His one attribute of grace could hardly avoid confusion of mind in matters related to His varied objectives.

Covenant Theology, in consistency with its manmade premise, asserts its inventions respecting an OT Church, which, it is claimed, is an integral part of the NT Church and on the ground that, since God's grace is one unchanging attribute, its accomplishments must be the realization of one standard ideal.

The *Covenant* theory does retain Israel as such to the time of Christ's death. The Church is thought to be a spiritual remnant within Israel to whom all OT blessings are granted, and the nation as such is allowed to inherit the cursings.

The fact that the Bible recognizes an Israel within the nation itself—sometimes termed "the remnant"-- has been seized upon by *Covenant theologians* as a ground for their contention that the Church is the true Israel of the OT (IV: 311,312).

Rescinded Resurrection

As traced by *Covenant theologians*, the death of Christ is given a place of large significance but His resurrection is accounted as little more than something for His personal convenience, His necessary return from the sphere of death back to the place which He occupied before. In other words, as viewed by *Covenant theologians*, there is practically no doctrinal significance of Christ's resurrection [and we identified with Him!]

That Christ by resurrection became what in Himself He had not been before—the federal Head of a wholly new order [creation] of beings and these the primary divine objective, as this is set forth in the Pauline Epistles—cannot be incorporated into a system of which the cherished and distinctive feature is one unchangeable divine purpose from Adam to the end of time.

If it has been said *Covenant Theology* ignores the doctrinal aspects of the resurrection of Christ, it is due to the fact that according to that idealism the Church is not a new creation with its headship in the ascended Christ, but has existed under a supposed uniform convenant from the beginning of human history. Thus for that system the great reality of a heavenly purpose peculiar to this dispensation is ruled out completely.

The doctrinal aspects of Christ's ascension and present ministry in heaven mean but little to those who are committed to the theory of an unchanging covenant. According to this assumption, the Church existed without a headship in heaven as something sprung out of His resurrection could not be of any great moment.

The *Covenant* theory cannot be broadened to allow for Christ's new priesthood in heaven, nor for His immeasurable ministry as Advocate, and for the same reason. Therefore, all this incalculable truth is not included in their system by *Covenant theologians*.

Slighted Spirit

Whenever the *Covenant* theory is stressed, there must go along with it a neglect of the most vital truths respecting the present age-characterizing ministries of the Holy Spirit. The same reason may be assigned for this neglect, namely, that if the Church existed and progressed in OT times apart from these ministries of the Spirit they cannot be of vital import in the present dispensation.

The disannulling of all Jewish purposes and distinctive features for a dispensation renders a continuous-covenant conception objectionable. The OT history leads on to its consummation in a glorious earthly kingdom in which the elect nation, Israel, will realize her covenants as promises fulfilled. It is, therefore, disruptive to a one-covenant theory to the last degree that a situation should be set up as it has been in this dispensation in which it is said respecting Jew and Gentile that "there is no difference" (Rom. 3:9; 10:12).

The introduction of a dispensation as an intercalation into the midst of the predicted ongoing Jewish and Gentile programs, and the new heavenly purpose which characterizes this dispensation, cannot be made to conform to a supposed single covenant. Thus it is seen how, to maintain the basic idea of a *Covenant theology*, much that is vital in the whole divine purpose must be renounced and excluded in the interest of that which at best is only a theory; and among the neglected truths is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Incalculable Loss

However, in spite of an almost universal influence of the *Covenant* theory upon theological thought, the resurrection of Christ is, when seen in its true Biblical setting, properly recognized as the very ground of all the purposes of this dispensation, and the basis upon which the new positions and possessions of those in Christ are made to rest. There is a wide doctrinal difference between those who see no special consequence in Christ's resurrection and those who see its momentous significance (V: 231–234).

Serious thought should be given to the need of divine wisdom in introducing to earnest men the successive steps in the greatest transition the world has ever experienced, namely, one from Judaism to Christianity. The stupendous change which demands the new birth of Nicodemus and the regeneration of Saul of Tarsus is not clarified or even approached by a *Covenant theology* which, while embracing a unifying idealism respecting a supposed single divine purpose, can ride unconsciously over these mighty changes as though they did not exist (V: 249)

Pseudo—Sabbath

It was to be expected, when *Covenant Theology* has so neglected the fact and meaning of Christ's resurrection, that there would arise much misunderstanding about the reason for the celebration of the first day of the week rather than the seventh. A recent article in a reputable religious journal is entitled. "The Sabbath Permanent but Moveable."

By this caption the writer intends to draw attention by stating what after all is a contradiction. The impossible task to which he has appointed himself is to prove that the Jewish Sabbath idea remains intact even though the precise day of the week is changed.

His thesis, as for all *Covenant theologians*, is that the structure of the Jewish Sabbath remains in force—for they have but one covenant—whether it be observed on one day or the other. Such blindness respecting the discriminating teaching of the Bible can be accounted for only on the ground that a man-made scheme of supposed continuity is embraced and followed without an unprejudiced examination of the Scriptures (V: 253),

School Of Paranoia

To many, the only body of interpretation which is orthodox is that which was recovered by the *Reformers*, or that contained in an ancient doctrinal statement. There is, however, a great body of truth which the *Reformers* were unable to consider and which is lacking in ancient creeds. It is this which worthy expositors have brought to light in subsequent days. Since these expositors are as capable in the field of analysis of revealed truth as were the *Reformers*, the results of their labors should at least have some consideration.

Two schools have developed among orthodox men: one which restricts all doctrine to the findings of men from the very early days of *Protestantism*, and one which while accepting the sound teaching of the *Reformers*, recognizes that much added light has fallen (by reason of the Spirit and His continued ministry) upon the Word of God in later days and that this is as worthy of consideration as the findings of men of former times. Of these two schools (Covenant and Dispensational) the first-named has too often looked upon the essential truth presented by the other as speculative, precarious, or perilous (V: 261,262).

Eschatalogical Error

A phenomenon exists, namely, that men who are conscientious and meticulous to observe the exact teaching of Scripture—the ruin of the race through Adam's sin, the Deity and Saviourhood of Christ —are found introducing methods of spiritualizing and vamping the clear declarations of the Bible in the one field of Eschatology.

The cause is not difficult to identify. When one is bound to a man-made *covenant* theory there is no room within that assumption for a restoration of Israel, that nation with all her earthly covenants and glory having been merged into the Church. There is but one logical consummation in that advanced by Whitby with all its reckless disregard for the Biblical testimony, namely, that a hypothetical grace covenant will eventuate in a transformed social order, and not by the power of the returning Messiah but by the preaching of the Gospel.

In the present time there are those who, misapprehending the prediction that the Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in all the world (Matt. 24:14), assert that Christ cannot return until the missionary enterprise has reached to all the inhabited earth. They do not recognize that the passage in question is found in a context belonging to the future Great Tribulation, and that because of the unending cycle of birth and death there could not be a set time in this dispensation when the missionary endeavor would be complete (V: 282).

Kingdom Misconstrued

Although the Millennial Kingdom occupies so large a place in Scripture, the theme of the Kingdom has been more misunderstood and its terminology more misapplied than any other

subject in the Bible. This is directly due to the failure, so inherent and far-reaching in *Covenant Theology*, to recognize the dispensational aspect of divine revelation (2 Tim. 2:15). Truth concerning the Messianic expectation (as that is set forth in the OT) does not imply that the Kingdom is the Church, nor does the NT, with its objectives centered in *heaven*, teach that the Church is the Kingdom.

Similarly, the earthly Kingdom that according to the Scriptures has its origin in the covenant made with David—which is mundane and literal in its original form, and equally as mundane and literal in uncounted references to it in all subsequent Scriptures which trace it on to its consummation--is by theological legerdemain metamorphosed into a spiritual monstrosity in which an absent King seated on His Father's throne in heaven [now David's heavenly throne, according to Neo-Dispensationalism] is accepted in lieu of the theocratic monarch of David's line seated on David's throne in Jerusalem (V: 315).

Deadly Rule Of Life

Covenantism, which has molded the major theological concepts for many generations, recognizes no distinctions as to ages, therefore can allow for no distinctions between Law and Grace. This dominating attitude of *Covenantism* must account for the utter neglect of life-truth in all their works of theology.

No more representative theological dictum from the *Covenant* viewpoint has been formed than the Westminster Confession of Faith, which valuable and important document recognizes lifetruth only to the point of imposing the Ten Commandments on Christians as their sole obligation, this in spite of the teachings of the Pauline Church Epistles which assert that the law was never given to Gentiles or Christians, and that the latter have been saved and delivered from it—actually dead to it (Gal. 2:19) (VI: 167).

Kingdom Gospel vs. Grace Gospel

Strong objection is offered by *Covenant theologians* to a distinction between the Gospel of the Kingdom as preached by John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Disciples, and the Pauline Gospel of the Grace of God. One *Covenant theologian* states that to make such a distinction is "unfortunate, " and "dangerous" (VII: 176).

Chapter 13 — Israel And The Church Contrasted

Dr. Chafer's *Contrast Between The Church And Israel*—(Covenant Theology and Neo-Dispensationalism notwithstanding):

Extent Of Biblical Revelation

Israel occupies nearly four-fifths of the text of the Bible. As to primary application, the Church occupies slightly more than one-fifth of the Word.

The Divine Purpose

Every covenant, promise, and provision for Israel is earthly, and they continue as a nation on the earth when it is created anew.

Every covenant or promise for the *Church* is for a heavenly reality, and she continues in heavenly citizenship when the heavens are recreated.

Birth

Israelites become what they are by physical birth. Each one is begotten of human parents and their inheritance is transmitted by human generation.

Christians become what they are by spiritual birth. They are begotten directly by God and are therefore His legitimate offspring. Their inheritance is immediate in that each is a child of God.

Nationality

Israel belongs to the earth and to the world system. Though above all nations in Jehovah's reckoning, they are still in the world as one of its nations.

The *Church* is composed of all nations, including Israelites, and sustains no citizenship here, but instead the believers are strangers and pilgrims.

Ministry

Israel was appointed to exercise an influence over the nations of the earth, and this she will do perfectly in the coming Kingdom age. Previously she undertook no missionary work, and proclaimed no gospel. She maintained her self-centered worship—she faced inward toward the tabernacle or temple, and all her benevolence was consumed on her own worship.

Immediately upon her formation, the *Church* is constituted a foreign missionary society. It is her obligation to face outward, and to those of her company is given the task of evangelizing the people of the world in each generation.

The Death Of Christ

That nation which demanded the death of Christ and which said by their officials, "His Blood be on us, and on our children," is guilty of that death; yet they will be saved as a nation on the ground of that Sacrifice.

A present and perfect salvation to the praise of God is the portion of the *Church* through the offering of the Lamb of God.

The Father

To Israel God is known by His primary titles, but not as Father of the individual Israelite.

The *Christian* is actually begotten of God and has every right to address Him as Father.

Christ

To Israel, Christ is Messiah, Immanuel, and King.

To the Church, Christ is Saviour, Lord, Bridegroom, Head, and Life.

The Holy Spirit

Only in exceptional instances and for unusual service did the Holy Spirit come upon an Israelite, and He withdrew as freely as He came, when the purpose was accomplished.

The *Christian* is permanently indwelt by the Spirit; and actually, he is not saved apart from this relationship to the Spirit (Rom. 8:9).[3]

Governing Principle

For fifteen centuries the Law of Moses was Israel's rule of daily life (Ps. 103:17, 18).

Believers, members of the Body of Christ, being wholly perfected in Him, are under the beseechings and directions which grace provides.

Divine Enablement

The Law system provided no enabling power for its achievement. There was constant failure because of the weakness of "the flesh" to which it was addressed (Rom. 8:3).

To the *Church* is provided, by the indwelling Spirit, enablement for every requirement. Paul could say, "Sin shall not have dominion over you"; the reasoning being, "Ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14).

Christ's Return

He returns as King to gather Israel into the land (Deut. 30:1–8; Jer. 23:7, 8; Matt. 24:31).

The Lord Jesus returns for His *Bride* and takes her with Him into heavenly glory (John 14:1–3).

Position

Though individuals in Israel attained to great usefulness, as did the prophets, priests, and kings; yet they never reached a higher distinction than that they were the *servants* of Jehovah.

Christians compose the Church, forever in Christ, members of the Body of Christ.

Christ's Earthly Reign

Israelites are appointed to be *subjects* of the King in His earthly kingdom.

Members of the *Body* of Christ are to reign with the King as His consort in that Kingdom.

Priesthood

3Stanford, *Miles Stanford*, (Garland, Texas: Electronic edition by Galaxie Software) 1999.

Israel *has* a priesthood. The Church *is* a priesthood (IV: 47–52)

Chapter 14 - "Dispensationalism, Israel And The Church"

Neo-Evangelicalism is a compromise toward Liberalism. Its progenitors were Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, Dr. Edward J. Carnell, and Dr. Harold John Ockenga. It was spawned in the barren milieu of Fuller Seminary.

Neo-Dispensationalism is a compromise toward Covenantism. Its progenitors are Dr. Craig A. Blaising, Dr. Darrell L. Bock, and, in absentia, Dr. Robert L. Saucy. It was spawned in the Chaferless milieu of Dallas Theological Seminary.

What can Neo-Dispensationalism do to you? It can bring you down to earth with a thud, and relentlessly grind and *ground* you. It can make you a partaker of Israel's comparatively paltry New Covenant, and thereby subject you to the laws of its Sermon on the Mount, and Millennial Kingdom. It can reduce you to a hybrid—part Christian and part reconstructed kingdom Jew.

You, a totally new creation in the ascended and glorified Lord Jesus Christ. You, one spirit with Him who is your very Christian life. You, having died to the law and to the world, and already blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, co-heir with Him. You, raised and seated in Christ, at the Father's right hand.

If you should settle for anything less, anything earthly, horizontal (kingdom), then you are already a neo-dispensationalist. May it never be! "If (since) ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ (and you) sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye *died*, and your *life* is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:1–4). Appear with Him to reign with Him, as His beloved Bride, over Israel's Millennial and eternal Kingdom.

The book we are about to briefly scan is the introduction to so-called progressive dispensationalism, i. e., Neo-Dispensationalism (my term). The manuscript was considered by the Dallas administration and faculty, and deemed to be within the bounds of the school's Doctrinal Statement, and acceptable for publication. The tone of the book is ironic, but the content is "arsenictic. "

Dispensationalism, Israel And The Church - The Search For Definition

Dr. Craig A. Blaising and Dr. Darrell L. Bock, editors. Zondervan Publishing House, 1992, 402 pages. Dr. Blaising is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, and Dr. Bock is Assistant Professor of NT Literature and Exegesis—both at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Foreword, pp. 10-12.

Dr. Stanley N. Gundry, ex-dispensationalist, Vice President of Academic Books, Zondervan Publishing House.

Dr. Gundry closes his Foreword as follows:

> "I am pleased that as the publisher of this title, I can present a book to dispensationalists that will stimulate their search for an even better understanding of God's Word, and that I present to non-dispensationalists a book that will show them a side of *contemporary* [emphasis mine] dispensationalist thinking that perhaps they were not aware even existed.

> "And who knows? If non-dispensationalists would be as willing to be open to new understanding of biblical truth and to refinements of their own theological heritage as the forward-looking dispensationalist writers in this book, perhaps the two camps will eventually discover that they have far more in common than they ever believed possible" (p. 12).

Introduction, pp. 13-34

Dr. Craig A. Braising, progressive dispensationalist:

> "The study of biblical theology—especially with regard to the role of history in divine revelation and contextualized studies of NT views on the fulfillment of OT prophecy—has led dispensationalists to *reexamine biblically the distinction between Israel and the church* [emphasis mine].
>
> "This does not lead in turn to a simple identification of Israel and the church, a position that dispensationalism has traditionally rejected. But it has led many dispensationalists to abandon the *transcendental distinction* of heavenly versus earthly peoples in favor of a *historical distinction* in the progressive revelation of the divine purpose.
>
> "The unity of divine revelation, of the various dispensations, is found in the goal of history, the kingdom of God. And since this kingdom is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the dispensational unity of Scripture and of history is Christological as much as it is eschatological.
>
> "This present book of biblical studies finds its identity precisely at this point: the hermeneutical reexamination of the relationship between Israel and the church, which in turn contributes to the process of self-definition currently underway in dispensationalism [emphasis his]" (pp. 33,34).

Chapter 1, pp. 37-67. — "The Reign Of The Lord Christ"

Dr. Darrell L. Bock, progressive dispensationalist:

> "The descriptions *invisible* and *visible* do not characterize the kingdom as ineffective or secret now, versus powerful later. Rather, the terms are intended Christologically to describe the nature of Jesus' rule. In the current period, he is not visible, though he sits in heaven and reigns from the right hand of God through the work of the Spirit in his disciples. In the future period, he will reign visibly on earth. The kingdom is present in both periods.
>
> "The kingdom is a powerful manifestation of God's activity in the world, but the King's visibility differs between the two periods. The kingdom community in the present era is the church, where transformation should be manifest. This present form of the kingdom of God is the church existing among other kingdoms of earth.
>
> "In this present community, people are to get a glimpse, a "sneak preview," of what is to come, as Jesus' rule is evident in the lives of believers. In the future that rule will be manifested through the visibly present Jesus, who will reign with full justice and righteousness in a kingdom over all. In the era to come,

> the kingdom will swallow up the other kingdoms and complete the promises made to Israel" (pp. 46,47).
>
> "*Being seated on David's throne is linked to being seated at God's right hand* [emphasis his]. In other words, Jesus' resurrection-ascension to God's right hand is put forward by Peter as a fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, just as the allusion to Joel fulfills the new covenant.
>
> "The throne on which Jesus is said to sit is the one promised to David's descendant through the Davidic promise of 2 Samuel, which was initially passed on through Solomon. Jesus sits there as David's promised Son on David's promised throne. This fits OT imagery as well. The idea of sitting describes the idea of rule, as the parallelism of Jeremiah 22:30 shows. As the Davidic heir, Jesus sits in and rules from heaven" (pp. 49, 50).
>
> "The heavenly seating of Jesus is presented as an initial yet certain fulfillment of the Davidic promise and is a presupposition to the right to bestow the Spirit in accordance with the new covenant promise. Salvation of the 'last days' (v. 39) are present" (p. 52).
>
> "Jesus rules from heaven, not earth, and thus the kingdom is invisible only in the sense that the rule does not originate visibly from earth. And yet this invisible kingdom, lacking a visible king, is a "sneak preview" kingdom in that this new community is to show God's active power in the transformation of sinners from sin to righteousness.
>
> "The transformation previews what the consummate rule of righteousness and justice for all in the coming phase of the kingdom will be like. Thus there is continuity with the future kingdom in the present kingdom, though there is a distinction in the visibility of the King in the two phases of the reign and in the fact that the current kingdom lacks political, nationalistic elements" (p. 53).

It will be noted throughout this book that Neo-Dispensationalism is kingdom-oriented, and would fasten "The Kingdom" upon everything and everyone. As far as Dr. Bock's heavenly Davidic throne is concerned; he should have heeded Dr. Chafer:

> "David was not promised a heavenly spiritual throne, and the one who contends that David's throne is now a heavenly rule is by so much obligated to name the time and circumstances when and where so great a change has been introduced" (*Systematic Theology* IV: 324).

Chapter 2, pp. 68-97. — "The New Covenant And The People(s) Of God"

Dr. Bruce A. Ware, progressive dispensationalist. Dr. Ware is Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School:

> "Between the two extremes of a strict distinction between Israel and the church (two new covenants and hence two distinct peoples of God) there is a middle position that would suggest that Israel and the church share theologically rich and important elements of commonality while at the same time maintaining distinct identities.

> "One of these elements of theologically rich commonality is their co-participation in the one new covenant, and the basis upon which they are united as one people of God. And yet, their distinct identifies should be maintained insofar as we can legitimately distinguish clearly different manners by which that one covenant is fulfilled" (pp. 92,93).
>
> "Israel and the church are in fact one people of God, who together share in the forgiveness of sins through Christ and partake of his indwelling Spirit with its power for covenant faithfulness, while there are nonetheless distinguishable covenant participants comprising what is one unified people.
>
> "As the title of this chapter suggests, they are in fact the united 'people(s) of God,' one by faith in Christ and common partaking of the Spirit, and yet distinct insofar as God will yet restore Israel as a nation to its land. One new covenant, under which differing covenant participants join together, through Christ and the Spirit, as a common people of God—this, then, is the grace of the marvelous provision of God" (pp. 96, 97).

When Israel's New Covenant is usurped, all becomes of the earth, earthy. NeoDispensationalism would bring the Bridegroom's unique-in-the-universe-Bride down to the commonality of the earthly kingdom. Come up hither!

Chapter 3, pp. 98-126. — "The New Man Of Ephesians Two"

Dr. Carl B. Hock, Jr., progressive dispensationalist. Dr. Hock is Professor of NT, at Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary:

> "Ephesians is critical for a theology of the relationship between Israel and the church. Markus Barth has stated that 'not in all the Pauline epistles (not to speak of all the books of the NT) is the relationship of the church and Israel in Christ described as intensely and strikingly as in Ephesians'" (p. 98).
>
> "The whole argument in Ephesians 2 is that Jewish privileges have been extended to Gentiles through Christ. The Messiah, citizenship, covenants, promise, hope, and knowledge of the true God belonged to 'us' and not to 'you.' They are now available to 'you' only because the Messiah sent for 'us' has made them available to 'you.' Any exegesis that negates this movement from 'us' to 'you' destroys Paul's theology of Jewish advantage" (p. 101).
>
> "The key to Paul's theology is not Gentile incorporation into Israel but a new sharing with Israel in Israel's prior covenant and promise" (p. 108).
>
> "The Gentiles are brought now to Israel in Christ to share with Israel in its covenants, promise, hope, and God. They do not 'become Israel,' they *share* with Israel" (p. 113).

Here is the very heart of Neo-Dispensational error! Wrongly-divided Word! Not knowing *who* they are in Christ, and *where* they are in Christ, and what they *have* in Christ, they would seek to make something of Israel, and have us come down to it as the source of blessing.

They would have us, with them, stoop to purloin from Israel's earthly New Covenant—sins forgiven, the indwelling Spirit with the kingdom law written upon the heart, subservient to the King, under theocratic kingdom rule, etc. But that is not *Christianity*! In the Millennial Kingdom the reinstated nation of Israel will be the center of leadership and blessing—for the *Gentile nations* of that kingdom!

But now, in this dispensation of Grace, the individual Israelite and Gentile must come down to the common level of sin, via the Word supplied by the Jew, and by simple faith in the Son of God become a member of the heavenly Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the *Church*. "What then, are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles)? No, in no way; for we have before proved both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin" (Rom. 2:10).

The Israelite in Christ, as well as the Gentile in Christ, is a totally new heavenly creation, and needs nothing from the nation Israel—whether it be now, in her Millennial Kingdom, or in eternity. Nothing.

Chapter 4, pp. 127-155. — "The Church As The Mystery Of God"

Dr. Robert L. Saucy. Dr. Saucy, progressive dispensationalist, is professor of Systematic Theology, at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University:

> "The revelation of the equal participation of Israel and the Gentiles in God's salvation through union with Christ is a realization of OT prophecy" (p. 150).

Note that he says "Israel," the *nation*, instead of the *individual* Israelite. The nation Israel will never be in union with Christ. Hers will be a "kingdom" salvation, totally different from the Church's heavenly "life" salvation.

"Our examination of the mystery in Ephesians 3 leads us to a mediating position between traditional dispensational and non-dispensational views. The unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ is taking place in the church in partial fulfillment of OT promises. Messianic days have dawned, albeit in a way not clearly anticipated in the prophecies.

> "Rather than one grand age of fulfillment under the messianic reign, the prophetic fulfillment has been divided into two ages related to the two comings of Christ. In this first step of fulfillment, the spiritual messianic salvation is already present in the gospel. This gospel is broadly spoken of as the mystery, or the mystery of Christ, or the mystery of the gospel. The specific spiritual unity of all peoples entailed in this gospel is the content of the mystery of Ephesians 3" (p. 151).

> "We have seen that the mystery of the church is vitally related to the OT promises of spiritual salvation in the messianic era. It is part and parcel of the one great mystery of Christ--namely, God's eschatological salvation through His Son" (p. 153).

Dr. Saucy is here seeking to obliterate vital distinctions, and thereby make "all peoples" of God one—and that via Israel's messianic kingdom salvation. But this has nothing to do with the heavenly Church. Please come in, Paul!

Chapter 5, pp. 156-187. — "The Israelite Imagery Of 1 Peter 2"

Dr. W. Edward Glenny. Dr. Glenny, progressive dispensationalist, is Professor of NT, at Central Baptist Seminary:

> "Old Testament Israel was a pattern of the church's relationship with God as his chosen people. Therefore, Peter uses various aspects of the salvation, spiritual life, and service of Israel in its relationship with Yahweh to teach his recipients the greater salvation, spiritual life, and service they enjoy in Christ.
>
> "In his use of the three *people of God* citations in 1 Peter 2:9, 10, the apostle is teaching that there are aspects of the nation of Israel's experience as the people of God that are also true of the NT church. These elements of continuity include election, redemption, holy standards, priestly ministry, and honor of the people of God. This continuity is the basis for the application of the title *people of God* to the church in 1 Peter 2:9, 10" (p. 186).

The Church is never going to know her unique, heavenly position and Christ-like characteristics short of Paul and his Church Epistles.

Chapter 6, pp. 188-229. — "The Future Of Ethnic Israel In Romans 11"

Dr. J. Lanier Burns. Dr. Burns, progressive dispensationalist, is Professor of Systematic Theology, at Dallas Theological Seminary:

> "The end of this survey shows that dispensational theologians have constantly distinguished Israel and the church, while dispensationalism has undergone remarkable developments over time in terms of a *common destiny* [emphasis mine] in the city of God, a shared new covenant, and, most recently, a recognition by many scholars of a present form of messianic kingdom that removes the parenthetical idea. The dispensational position as a whole must now precisely redefine the distinctiveness and interrelationships of the church within the progressive historical phases of God's kingdom" (p. 225).
>
> "With a more profound reading [of Romans 11], one could expect a renewed appreciation of the root of Israel for all believers and a measure of rapprochement for the many groups that love their Messiah with their hearts, souls, and minds" (p. 226).
>
> "It is best to say that Israel did not become the church. Jews and Gentiles were uniquely joined as believers in a new entity that *did not abolish* distinctive identities and purposes."

"A renewed appreciation of the roots of Israel for all believers" indeed! My "roots," as a member of the Body of Christ, are in their heavenly Source, the ascended and glorified Vine.

As for "distinctives and purposes" not being abolished, Paul says that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

(There is no need to comment on Chapters 7–9.)

Chapter 10, pp. 293-328. — "The Scope And Center Of Old And NT Theology And Hope"

Dr. Kenneth L. Barker. Dr. Barker, progressive dispensationalist, is Executive Director, NIV Foundation Center, International Bible Society:

> "The only proper role the law can play for unregenerate people is to reveal the darkness of their sin against the backdrop of the radiant light of God's holiness, and point them to the Saviour.
>
> "But for the person of faith it is the gracious revelation of God's righteousness and it is to be followed as the grateful and joyful expression of faith (cf. Pss. 1, 19, and 119). There are, however, certain obvious exceptions such as the purely ceremonial laws" (p. 296).
>
> "If the OT moral law is no longer in force, how can 'all Scripture' be 'useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness' (2 Tim. 3:16)? One of the legitimate continuities, then, between the Old and New Testaments is God's moral law expressed *throughout* Scripture. It is more in keeping with the totality of biblical teaching to insist that the ethical and spiritual commands of the OT, the numerous imperatives of the NT, and Christ (or the law of Christ, or the royal law of love) are *all* part of the believer's rule of life" (p. 297).
>
> "As I perceive the grand sweep of what God is doing, the old sharp distinction between Israel and the church begins to become somewhat blurred. In my understanding of Romans 11 and other passages, both entities are involved in the present and future forms of God's kingdom as well as in the eternal state."

One wonders how Dr. Barker qualified for this book, except for the fact that he contributes to the Covenant aspect of it. One yearns for a bit of grace, in the midst of all these "Kingdom" essays—essays which assay to relate the Church to Israel, and put all under Kingdom law.

Response #1, pp. 331-346. — "A Response"

Dr. William A. VanGemeren. Dr. VanGemeren, ex-dispensationalist, now Covenant theologian, is Professor of OT at Reformed Theological Seminary.

It is interesting to note that the term "rebuttal" is not used. Actually, there is very little that these Covenant theologians could rebut—most receive their avid response!

Dr. William A. VanGemeren:

"Darrell Bock ("Reign of Christ") focuses on the theology of the kingdom from the vantage point of Luke's presentation of Jesus 'as the fulfillment of promises and covenants made to Israel.' He agrees with covenant theology that the eschatological kingdom was inaugurated in the ministry of Jesus and is evidenced in his rule over the church. Gentiles share with Jews in the spiritual benefits of Jesus' kingdom (forgiveness, Spirit, new covenant). This view of the kingdom stands in clear contrast to the older dispensational thesis that the offer of the kingdom was withdrawn" (p. 334).

"Covenant theologians will appreciate the change in dispensational teaching regarding the church. According to Carl Hock ("The New Man"), the church is an important stage in the unfolding of God's plan as Gentiles are incorporated in the new humanity. He defines 'the new man' (Eph. 2) as a participant in Israel's heritage, which includes the covenants, the promises, and the revelation of God" (p. 340).

It is sad to watch these brilliant "dispensational" scholars in their abject failure to rightly divide the Word of truth. Here Dr. Saucy is quoted as seeking to relate the Church, whose "salvation" is heavenly—*in* Christ as her Head and Life—with Israel's kingdom "salvation," *outside* of Christ--under His earthly law-reign as King. Two entirely different dispensations, salvations, and peoples!

Response #2, pp. 347-359. — "A Response"

Dr. Bruce K. Waltke. Dr. Waltke, exdispensationalist, now covenant theologian, is Professor of OT, at Regent University (Canada):

"Although not monolithic, as these chapters show, reconstructed dispensationalism essentially believes that Christ inaugurated the fulfillment of Israel's covenants and promises and that the church actualized them. It denies that the church is a parenthesis with God's program for Israel" (p. 347).

"From David Turner's ("The New Jerusalem") distinguished study of Revelation 21–22 he draws the conclusion that the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth 'clearly portray(s) the essential transdispensational continuity of Israel and the church as the one people of God.' *That position is closer to Covenant theology than Dispensationalism* [emphasis mine]" (p. 348).

"On the basis of circumspect exegesis of Ephesians 3:1–14 and Romans 16:25, 26, Robert Saucy ("The Church as the Mystery of God") interprets *mystery* as 'the actualization or realization through Christ of that which the prophets foretold and longingly anticipated,' dismissing the traditional dispensational understanding of *mystery* as the revelation of truth not previously found in the OT.

"This remarkable development within dispensationalism also breaks down other distinctions between what historic dispensationalism designated as the earthly people of God versus the heavenly people of God. According to the new view, Christ inaugurated the new covenant at his first advent, and both Israel and the church share in it" (p. 349).

"I salute the editors and contributors for their openness, honesty, scholarship and ironic tone. This new perestroika within dispensationalism augurs well for the future of dispensational schools, especially Dallas Theological Seminary, with which most of them (as well as myself) are related as former students and/or faculty members.

"In the best traditions of that institute, they are committed to accurate exegesis of the Holy Bible, not confessions or doctrinal statements, and are willing to revise them if necessary in the light of their research. Older dispensationalists in that institution, who had no firm pedagogical heritage from historic Christian doctrine, were convinced that accurate exegesis would bear out their system.

"These younger dispensationalists, having come under the impact of realized eschatology, especially in renowned universities, know that careful exegesis must lead at the least to this restructuring of the historic model. Without that openness, honesty, and careful exegesis, dispensational schools would betray their commitment to inspired Scriptures rightly interpreted above uninspired confessions and would fail to attract bright, young minds and to raise up theologians to lead them.

"I should like to take this opportunity to thank the editors for inviting me to participate in their 'ongoing work of interpreting the Scriptures.' Significantly, these younger

dispensationalists cite older dispensationalists mostly to distance themselves from them" (p. 350).

"What strikes one dramatically in reading these chapters is the overwhelmingly convincing evidence in the NT for the 'already' fulfillment of Israel's covenants and promises in Christ and his church" (p. 355).

That would overwhelm and delight any Covenant theologian!

Response #3, pp. 360-376. — "An Epangelical Response"

Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Dr. Kaiser, non-dispensational, pro-Covenant, is Academic Dean at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Dr. Kaiser explains "Epangelical": "I have recently proposed 'promise theology,' or 'epangelicalism' (from the Greek root *epengel-*, meaning 'promise')."

> "An enormous amount of water has gone under the bridge in more than a quarter of a century since Charles Ryrie's *Dispensationalism Today* was published in 1965 by Moody Press. In fact, somewhere in the decade of the 1960s, one of the most significant developments in dispensationalism took place.
>
> "It happened so quietly, but so swiftly, that it is difficult to document, even to this day. This is what changed the course of dispensationalism: the view that there were *two* new covenants, one for Israel and one for the church, was decisively dropped [Dr. Walvoord, and Dr. Ryrie]. The implications of such a move are enormous, as the events that followed duly testified.
>
> "The New Covenant was made with 'the house of Israel and the house of Judah,' yet the church was obviously enjoying the benefits of this same covenant. They drank the 'blood of the covenant' in the Lord's Supper, and they had 'ministers of the new covenant.'
>
> "But when Israel and the church were viewed as sharing one and the same - covenant, the possibilities for major rapprochement between Covenant theology and dispensationalism became immediately obvious.
>
> "Moreover, that one factor ended the major roadblock in a key hermeneutical rule that dispensationalism had repeatedly stressed in the past: keep Israel's mail separate from the mail that was written for the church.
>
> "Thus, 2 Chronicles 7:14 ("If *my people*, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves… "), for example, did not need to be restricted, as had been taught, solely to Israel but could now be addressed to the whole church. On the same basis, the Sermon on the Mount was released from its future kingdom setting for use by the whole body of Christ now" (p. 369).
>
> "Traditionally, many dispensationalists have taught that the Sermon on the Mount was not applicable to the church today, but this view again reflected the fact that the relationship between law and grace was still seriously in need of theological development. But on this point another real advance can be seen in these chapters.

> "Instead of regarding Jesus' teaching on the Sermon as an interim ethic, a new predominant view is emerging that proclaims the Sermon on the Mount to be the ethic for Christians today. This new revelation of Jesus, it is rightly argued, taught the same truths as the OT taught; in fact, it gave them the same poignancy that the OT prophets gave to the law. Only when we misunderstand the meaning and purpose of the law can we misjudge the meaning and purpose of the Sermon" (p. 370).
>
> "Surely there is progress in this classical standoff when Robert Saucy acknowledges that the 'gospel of God' for which Paul was set apart was 'promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures' (Rom. 1:1, 2) and is certainly the same message that Paul later called 'the mystery of the gospel' in Ephesians 6:19. *What a wonderful breakthrough*! [emphasis mine].
>
> "Saucy sets the problem up *most wonderfully* [emphasis mine] when he next asks, 'If the mystery of Christ and that of the divine plan of salvation has already been the subject of OT prophecy, then in what sense can it be said to have been hidden and only now revealed by the NT apostles and prophets?'"

The plan of Israel's kingdom salvation was revealed by the OT prophets, but *not* that of the Church. The Word is to be rightly divided, not wrongly merged.

> "I am pleased at the large amount of agreement I find between Robert Saucy and myself in the content of the mystery. He clearly affirms that the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church is a partial fulfillment of the OT promises. This represents a *terrific amount of progress* [emphasis mine]. Yes, there may be *functional* distinctions between Israel and the Gentile believers in the future, but that does not impair their spiritual equality" (p. 373).
>
> "One of the *pleasant surprises* [emphasis mine] that has emerged from contemporary defenses of dispensationalism, as illustrated in this book, is that few, if any dispensationalists, feel compelled to raise the topic once dear to this system: the postponed kingdom theory" (p. 364).
>
> "A theology of the law is desperately needed. If nothing else convinces us, then note how many tens of thousands have been pressing into seminars in almost every major city in the land to find out how we should resolve basic youth conflicts by using principles from the law as repeated in the book of Proverbs! The church is hungry for teaching in this neglected area" (p. 375).

Conclusion, pp. 377-394. — "Dispensationalism, Israel And The Church: Assessment And Dialogue"

Dr. Craig A. Blaising and Dr. Darrell L. Bock:

> "The authors of this book have conducted extensive reinvestigation of the relationship between Israel and the church in NT theology. Although other aspects of their relationship and other biblical texts could yet be examined, enough has surfaced in these studies to indicate a revision in the dispensational view.

> "There are important distinctions between Israel and the church in biblical theology, but there are also real theological connections that link them together in ways not expressed previously in dispensational thought. What is striking is the extent of these unseen connections demonstrated throughout the essays of this book" (p. 377).
>
> "The *present phenomena* [emphasis mine] of dispensationalists biblically revising what they think about Israel and the church in order to reflect more accurately their relationship in Scripture is precisely a crisis between the Scripture principle and the dispensational principle with the supposed *sine qua non*. Such a crisis is not external but internal—that is, within the principle of tradition, within what had been thought to be the definition of Dispensationalism.
>
> "When these things are considered along the line of historical understanding of the dispensational tradition, it is evident that what is now taking place is the emergence of a new phase in the history of American dispensationalism. The complexity of the situation is such that a new biblical understanding of Israel and the church, a change in the method of defining dispensationalism, and the emergence of a new Dispensationalism are all interrelated features of the same phenomena" (p. 378).
>
> "Ephesians 2 is clear that the barrier between Jew and Gentile is removed for all time. This is one of the transdispensational features of Christ's work. Millennial saints will be Christians, and their identity in Christ will transcend their racial distinctions, just as it should be in the current era of the church. Nonetheless, just as one can see that the church today is basically Gentile, the community of the future will see the renewal of Jewish inclusion.
>
> "No longer is either tradition [Covenantism and Dispensationalism] locked exclusively into a dualism that keeps heaven and earth apart. Groups in both camps are taking a fresh look at these matters and seem to be traveling along similar lines" (p. 387).

The "similar lines" that Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology are locked onto are horizontal-Israel's New Covenant, Synoptics, Sermon, and Kingdom—all Law-oriented.

But *Grace and Truth* came by Jesus Christ—*from heaven*, to Paul, for the Church.

"If [since] ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1–3).

We have not added a new dimension to Dispensationalism. Rather, we have sought to reestablish that which has been neglected. Welcome back, Paul!