

# Israel & the Church

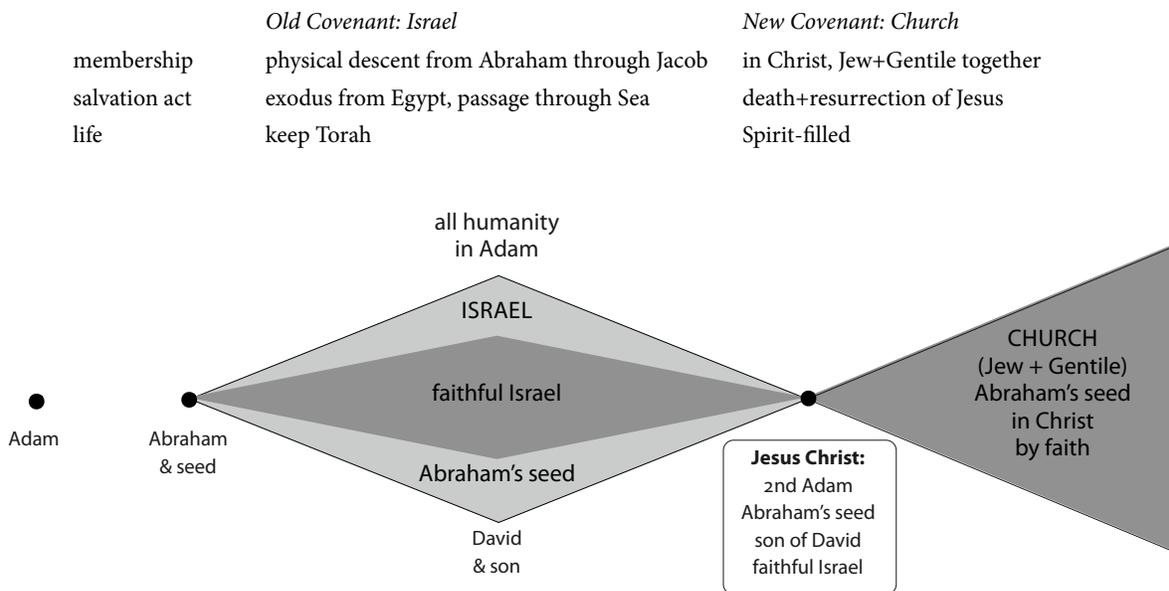
Bernard Bell  
PBCC • 2017.07.16

## The Biblical Story

### Covenant Theology

Views Biblical history as two covenants:

- covenant of works: with Adam in the garden.
  - Adam's vocation: rule (Gen 1:26-28), priestly: serve+obey (Gen 2:15)
  - Adam failed to be faithful, and with him all humanity "in Adam." Expelled from garden sanctuary.
- covenant of grace: begins with Gen 3:15. Encompasses all other covenants:
  - Noah: keep creation going
  - Abraham: Promise: seed, blessing, nations blessed (Gen 12:2-3); homeland (12:7); faith in God's promise reckoned to him as righteousness.
  - Old/Sinai: with Israel
    - God's people: I will be your God, you will be my people, and I will dwell with you.
    - vocation: kingdom of priests (Exod 19:5); serve+obey.
    - failure: not faithful; expelled from Land (a partial recreation of Eden)
  - David: a son whose eternal reign God will establish and who will build temple for God; father-son relationship with God (2 Sam 7:12-14)
  - New: in Jesus, who fulfilled the Old Covenant, is focus of Abrahamic, Davidic covenants.
    - the last Adam; the second man, from heaven (1 Cor 15:45,47), the very image of God (Col 1:15)
    - son of David, son of Abraham (Matt 1:1): the one to whom the covenant promises pointed
    - the seed (s.) of Abraham (Gal 3:16) who births the seed (pl.), God's people
    - the king over God's kingdom, builder of his temple
    - faithful to Torah even to death, fulfilling Old Covenant
    - Jesus is the "lens" in the middle of time
    - God is summing up all things in Christ, things in heaven and on earth (Eph 1:10)



## Israel and the Church

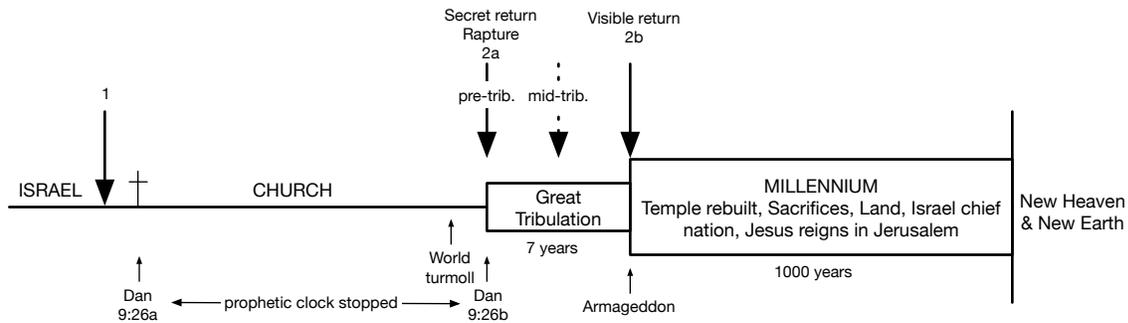
### Dispensationalism

- J.N. Darby (1800-1882), founder of the Plymouth Brethren
- Cyrus I. Scofield (1843-1921): *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (1888), *Scofield Study Bible* (1909, 1917).
- Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952): founded Evangelical Theol. College (1924), renamed Dallas Theol. Seminary (1936).

“The Scriptures divide time...into seven unequal periods, usually called dispensations... marked off by some change in God’s method of dealing with mankind;... each ends in judgment.” (Scofield)

	Dispensation	Period	Judgment
1	Innocence	Garden	expulsion
2	Conscience	to Flood	Flood
3	Human government	Noah–Babel	confusion of tongues
4	Promise	Abraham–Egypt	bondage to Egypt
5	Law	Sinai–Christ	exile
6	Grace	Church age	Great Tribulation
7	Messianic	Millennium	great white throne

### Dispensational premillennialism



- Rapture: Christ returns secretly to remove the church from the world (1 Thess 4:17); non-Christians are left behind (Matt 24:40-41). Pre-/mid-trib.: Christ returns before/in middle of the 7-year tribulation.
- Great Tribulation: 7 years=70th week of Daniel 9. The prophetic clock, which had stopped at Dan 9:26a with the death of Jesus, resumes ticking at 26b.
- Armageddon: Christ returns visibly to defeat enemies gathered at Armageddon.
- Millennial kingdom: all OT prophecies fulfilled literally for Israel; temple rebuilt, sacrifices resumed, Israel rises to world prominence, Jesus reigns on David’s throne, etc.

### Relationship between Israel & the Church

Four views:

1. Dispensational: Israel was God’s people in the OT, to whom all the OT promises were made. She will again be God’s people in the millennium, when those promises are literally fulfilled for her. In the meantime, the Church is something completely different. It has no organic relationship with OT Israel; it is a parenthesis in time.
2. Both...and: God’s OT prophetic promises are being fulfilled spiritually today in the Church, but will be fulfilled literally in millennium in Israel (former PBC statement). Progressive dispensationalism.
3. One people of God: God destroyed the wall of division between Jew and Gentile, so that Gentiles can join Jews in the one family of God as children of Abraham.
4. Replacement: the Church has replaced Israel as the people of God.

### Theological implications of #3

- Israel finds its *telos* (goal) in Jesus the Messiah, the true Israelite.
- The prophetic promises to Israel are fulfilled in Christ.
- The people of God in the OT was primarily ethnic Israel as physical children of Abraham through Jacob. But Gentiles could be incorporated by faith (Rahab) and Israelites cut off through faithlessness (Achan). Faith(fulness) was the defining characteristic: a faithful remnant within a faithless majority.
- The NT people of God is Jew and Gentile together united in faith in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ the faithful Israelite. Gentiles are grafted into Israel's story as inheritors of the Abrahamic promises. For both Jew and Gentile, Abraham is our father—the father of faith.
- This is not replacement theology or supersessionism. The Church has not replaced Israel as God's people. There is a continuity through the “funnel” of Jesus, the true Israelite, the seed of Abraham.

## Modern Israel

### Israel after Jesus

- 70 Destruction of Temple during First Jewish Revolt (66-73). Dispensationalists read Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matt 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) as applying to the Tribulation; others as applying to AD 70. Pharisees the only Jewish sect to survive. The rabbis regrouped at Yavneh/Jamnia to consider how Judaism could survive without the temple → Rabbinic Judaism.
- 130 Emperor Hadrian decided to rebuild Jerusalem as Roman city. Provoked Second Jewish Revolt (132-135). Hadrian razed city, rebuilt as Aelia Capitolina; Jews expelled from Jerusalem; Judea largely depopulated of Jews; Judea renamed Syria Palestina. The rabbis moved to Galilee, where the oral law was written down as the Mishnah (c. 175 in Sephoris) then developed into the Palestinian Talmud (c. 400 in Tiberias).

### Re-establishment of Israel

The birth of Zionism (the move for a Jewish homeland) which led to the rebirth of Israel originated in European anti-Semitism. It was a secular movement by non-religious Jews.

- 1878 Petah Tiqva founded as first Jewish agricultural settlement in the land.
- 1881 Eliezer Ben-Yehuda immigrated to Palestine and revived the Hebrew language.
- 1882 First Aliyah (wave of immigration) fleeing pogroms in Russia (Pale of Settlement).
- 1896 Theodor Herzl's book *The Jewish State*, calling for creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, in response to the Dreyfus Affair (a grave miscarriage of justice against a Jewish French army officer, 1894, which Herzl covered as a journalist). Herzl, as many other European Jews, had sought to assimilate into society. The Dreyfus Affair convinced him this would be never work.
- 1897 Herzl convened the First Jewish Congress, Basel. “Zionism aims to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law.” Herzl elected president of World Zionist Federation. The founder of Zionism.

During WW1 Britain made 3 mutually contradictory agreements:

1. 1915 McMahon-Hussein Correspondence: between the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali and Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt, promising an Arab state in Arabic-speaking provinces of Ottoman Empire in return for an Arab Revolt against the Ottomans.
2. 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement. Sir Mark Sykes & François Georges-Picot divided up the Middle East between the British and the French.
3. 1917 Balfour Declaration, in a letter from British Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, to Lord Rothschild: “His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

## Israel and the Church

Until the end of World War I, Palestine was part of the Arabic territories of the Ottoman Empire.

1920 Treaty of San Remo. Britain given League of Nations mandate to administer Palestine (& Trans-Jordan), including “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

Britain divided Mandate territory into two parts (west and east of the Jordan R.):

- Palestine under direct British rule.
- Transjordan: autonomous under rule of Hashemite family from kingdom of Hejaz, per the McMahon Correspondence (1915). Hussein’s son Abdullah made Emir of Transjordan; capital Amman. Britain excluded this territory from Jewish homeland provision. Granted independence 1946 as the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan (>Jordan, 1949).

After World War II a near-broke Britain announced it could no longer afford to run Palestine, and turned the matter to the newly-founded UN.

1947.11.29 UN General Assembly adopted the UN Partition Plan for Palestine: independent Jewish and Arab states in an economic union with protection of religious and minority rights; UN-administered Jerusalem (*corpus seperatum*). Land split 56% Jewish, 44% Arab; at the time Jews owned 5% of the land. Zionist leaders accepted; Arab leaders rejected.

1948.05.15 Israel declared independence. War of Independence. Creation of refugee crisis. 400+ Palestinian villages destroyed. Palestinians call this *al-Nakba* (the Catastrophe). Israel placed the Arabs under military rule until 1966 (20% of population).

1949 Armistice Agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria. The Green Line was the Armistice line between Israel and the Jordanian-administered West Bank. Israel occupied 78% of the land.

1967.06.05-11 Six Day War. Israel captured West Bank (incl. East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip, Golan Heights. Annexed Golan Heights; 1980 declared Jerusalem its eternal, undivided capital. Palestinians call the Six Day War *al-Naqsa* (the Setback).

### Peace Efforts

- 1978 Camp David Accords: Begin, Sadat, Carter. Israel–Egypt peace treaty. Sadat, Begin awarded 1978 Nobel Peace Prize. 1981 Sadat assassinated.
- 1993 Oslo Accords: Rabin, Arafat, Clinton. PLO recognized Israel; Israel recognized PLO as Palestinian Authority. Ararat, Peres, Rabin awarded 1994 Nobel Peace Prize. 1995 Rabin assassinated by Jewish extremist.
- 1994 Israel–Jordan peace treaty.

Palestinian resistance: First Intifada (shaking-off, 1987-1991), Second Intifada (2000-2005)

2017 is a year of significant anniversaries:

- 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration (1917)
- 70th anniversary of the UN Partition Plan (Nov 1947.11.29) (→ *Nakba*)
- 50th anniversary of Six Day War (1967.06.05-11) and capture of the West Bank and east Jerusalem (*Naksa*).

Options for a peaceful settlement:

1. A single Jewish state, annexing the West Bank and Gaza. But, with a higher birth-rate, the Arabs would eventually outnumber the Jews.
2. A single secular state, with a mixed Jewish and Arab population. But Israel would cease to be the Jewish state.
3. Remove the Palestinians: it seems to many that Israel is trying to make life so difficult for the Palestinians that they will leave. Many Israeli Jews think the Palestinians belong in Jordan. Israel is increasingly accused of apartheid and ethnic cleansing.
4. Two-state solution: a Palestinian state beside Israel. But what happens to the Israeli Arabs? to the West Bank settlements? Israel is adamant about not giving up East Jerusalem. Facts on the ground (settlements, wall, separate infrastructure) makes a separate Palestinian state increasingly remote.

### Observations

- Both Jewish and Palestinian narratives are steeped in pain:
  - Jewish: Zionism was a response to virulent anti-Semitism in Europe.
  - Palestinian: Nakba (the Catastrophe, 1948), Naksa (the Setback, 1967), 50 years of Occupation.
- Today it is cool to be Jewish, but anti-Semitism is not far in the past.
- There are extremists on both sides who want to obliterate the other.
  - Jewish: a Jewish state from the sea to the river (Mediterranean–Jordan); maximalists want the east side of the Jordan as well, even all the land from the Euphrates to Sinai (cf. Gen 12:7).
  - Palestinian: Hamas.
- one side's freedom fighters are viewed as terrorists by the other side
- Zionism started as a secular movement; the founders of the state of Israel were secular. Religious (Orthodox) Jews opposed Zionism. Recently, religious Jews have begun to exert a much stronger influence.
- Fundamentalist Jews, Moslems and Christians are quite similar.
- most just want to live in peace
- Justice will not be accomplished by removing Israel.
- Israel has swung to the right
- Fight for Israel's identity. Ultra-Orthodox Judaism is rapidly increasing.
- The modern state of Israel has nothing to do with Jesus, Israel's Messiah; no theological connection to OT Israel.
- evangelical American Christian unquestioning support for Israel is an impediment to Moslem relations
- Christian Zionism's love for Israel has questionable motives. It supports Israel in order to reap the blessing God promised to those who bless Abraham (Gen 12:3) and to fulfill biblical prophecy, hastening the end times.
- True love for the Jews is to long for them to recognize their Messiah, e.g. Jews for Jesus.
- Palestinian Christians, caught in the middle, have suffered particularly
- We should support the Christians in the middle who are trying to bridge the divide.