

Are The Church and Israel Two Different Peoples of God?

Israel and the Church

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Saints (Num. 16:3; Deut. 33:3) | 1. Saints (Eph. 1:1; Rom. 1:7) |
| 2. Elect (Deut. 7:6, 7; 14:2) | 2. Elect (Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1) |
| 3. Beloved (Deut. 7:7; 4:37) | 3. Beloved (Col. 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4) |
| 4. Called (Isa. 41:9; 43:1) | 4. Called (Rom. 1:6, 7; 1 Cor. 1:2) |
| 5. Church (Ps. 89:5; Mic. 2:5 (LXX)
Act. 7:38; Heb. 2:12) | 5. Church (Eph. 1:1;
Acts 20:28) |
| 6. Flock (Ezek. 34; Ps. 77:20) | 6. Flock (Luke 12:32; 1 Pet. 5:2) |
| 7. Holy Nation (Exod. 19:5, 6) | 7. Holy Nation (1 Pet. 2:9) |
| 8. Kingdom of Priests (Exod. 19:5, 6) | 8. Kingdom of Priests (1 Pet. 2:9) |
| 9. Peculiar Treasure (Exod. 19:5, 6) | 9. Peculiar Treasure (1 Pet. 2:9) |
| 10. God's People (Hos. 1:9, 10) | 10. God's People (1 Pet. 2:10) |
| 11. Holy People (Deut. 7:6) | 11. Holy People (1 Pet. 1:15, 16) |
| 12. People of Inheritance (Deut. 4:20) | 12. People of Inheritance (Eph. 1:18) |
| 13. God's Tabernacle in Israel
(Lev. 26:11) | 13. God's Tabernacle in Church
(John 1:14) |
| 14. God walks among them
(Lev. 26:12) | 14. God walks among them
(2 Cor. 6:16-18) |
| 15. Twelve Patriarchs | 15. Twelve Apostles |
| 16. Christ married to them (Isa. 54:5;
Jer. 3:14; Hos. 2:19; Jer. 6:2; 31:32) | 16. Christ married to them
(Eph. 5:22, 23; 2 Cor. 11:2) |

See the difference?

NEITHER DO WE.

The other day I came across another Bible teacher I like, Dr. Sam Waldron. He was raised in Dispensationalism and came out of it through diligent study of God's Word. His excellent talk from the Scriptures totally disproves the basic foundation of Dispensationalism which says God has two Covenant peoples, Israel and the Church. Why do I think this talk is excellent? Because Dr. Waldron compares Scripture with Scripture in a clear easy to understand manner. And he uses 7 different Bible passages to prove his point! Only a man of God filled with the Holy Spirit who has studied the Bible throughout his entire life can do that. I got the main points of the talk from the YouTube below the transcription.

Samuel E. Waldron (born 1951) is a Reformed Baptist and professor of Systematic Theology at Midwest Center for Theological Studies (MCTS). In addition to teaching at MCTS, he is a pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Owensboro, Kentucky. (Source: <https://www.theopedia.com/samuel-e-waldron>)

Transcription of the main points of Dr. Waldon's talk

- Dispensationalism has been the prevailing system of eschatology taught about among evangelicals for the last 100 to 150 years. So even if you don't know the name you've probably heard it. You've heard it from a televangelist. You've heard it from a TV preacher. You've seen it in the bookshelves of Christian bookstores. You've seen it everywhere. And you've seen the movies, the *Left Behind* movies which popularize dispensationalism even though you didn't know that was the name.
- The four systems of eschatology that have been held by Orthodox Christians are dispensational premillennialism, historic

premillennialism, amillennialism and post-millennialism.

- The Church / Israel distinction is the basic distinctive of dispensationalism.
- The first distinctive of dispensationalism is that a dispensationalist keeps Israel and the Church distinct. A man who fails to distinguish Israel and the Church will inevitably not hold to dispensational distinctions.
- Fundamental to dispensationalism is the idea that God has two different peoples and He pursues his purposes for them in alternating dispensations. Israel in the Old Testament period, the Church now, and in the millennium again He deals with Israel. So, two distinct peoples of God. Everything depends on dispensationalism on this distinction. Everything depends on the fact that there are two peoples of God for dispensationalism. This is why your Christian friends and other churches get so excited about all the things going on in the Middle East because they think that the nation of Israel in the Middle East is one of the two peoples of God. Now, my purpose in this hour is simply to show you that **they are completely wrong.**
- The Church is universal and spiritual as opposed to Israel, the old Israel.
- Seven New Testament passages clearly teach that the Church is the new Israel of God.

First passage: Galatians 6:16

- “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

Now, there are two, and only two ways, of taking the phrase “Israel of God” here. It may be taken to refer to the Church. Or it may be taken to refer to those circumcised Christians of Jewish descent and that they are distinctively opposed to the whole church, the Israel of God. That’s the way dispensationalism takes it. That’s the way dispensationalism must take this passage. And thus taken, the Israel of God only refers to part of the church. The question is simply which of these two interpretations is correct? Is the Israel of God the whole church or is it just the Jewish part of the church? You understand? So there’s much that could be said by way of showing that the Israel of God here is the whole church of Christ. There is one thing that I think is actually conclusive about what the meaning of this text is here. It’s the context. Context is king, as I tell my students thousands of times. Context is king in the interpretation of the Bible. You notice that the phrasing question, “the Israel of God” occurs almost at the end of the letter to the Galatians in the last chapter in verse 16. And this means that if we’re going to understand what Paul is talking about here, we have to read backward through the letter. And when we do that, a startling thing comes to view. In the immediately preceding context of Galatians 6:16, Paul is engaged in a polemic against those who were compelling the Galatians to be circumcised. And Paul pursues this polemic in the immediately preceding verses by affirming that those who do this (the circumcised Jews), do not even keep the law themselves.

Galatians 6:13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

He then asserts the true boast of the Christian is the crucifixion of Christ, not the circumcision of the flesh, verse 14.

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

And following this, Paul emphatically declares that in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters, but a new creation.

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

In this context, it would be startling indeed for Paul to finish his polemic by referring to a subgroup of Christians that solely on the basis of the fact that they are circumcised are the Israel of God and the whole church isn't. Do you see the problem? Well, the church is described as the new creation. It is the new creation, not circumcision or uncircumcision, that makes a man a member of the Israel of God.

- The complete meaninglessness of physical circumcision in the new age with regard to Christ Jesus is emphatically asserted. It is faith working through love rather than circumcision which marks the recipients of God's covenant blessings in Christ.
- To exclusively attribute the phrase Israel's God to circumcised Jewish Christians is to imply that only the reception of circumcision would make a Christian a member of the Israel of God. And to say that in this context is frankly impossible.
- In reality, there are only two possibilities available for the dispensational position. Either it's significant to be a member of the Israel God or it's insignificant. If it's insignificant, why does Paul bother to mention it?

In Galatians 4:28, Paul describes the Gentile Galatian Christians as the children of promise.

Galatians 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. – Including the gentile Galatian ones.

- To exclude Gentile Christians from the Israel of God in Galatians 6:16 is parallel to excluding them from the children of promise in Galatians 4:28.
- If Paul makes it crystal clear in this context, that it is impossible to

avoid the conclusion that Gentile Christians are entitled to the description of children of promise, and they are sons of the Jerusalem above, Paul knows nothing of the kind of distinction Dispensationalism attributes to the phrase "Israel of God."

- Another passage that raises interesting questions for dispensationalism is Galatians 3:29. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." But of course, if we follow the dispensational line of argument, "all who belong to Christ is of the seed of Abraham, but they're not the Israel of God." Do you see the problem? Well, upon what strange dispensational distinction between being the seed of Abraham and the Israel of God is such a contrast! Well, there is no answer to that question. In light of the context of Galatians 6:16, in the letter of Galatians as a whole, there is every reason to reject the dispensational understanding of the phrase "the Israel of God". Instead, we should regard it as parallel meaning to sons of Abraham, seed of Abraham, children of promise, and being sons of Jerusalem above. In none of these phrases, there's any question that Gentile Christians are included. And there ought to be no such question with regard to the Israel of God in Galatians 6:16. The only reason for John MacArthur and his dispensational brethren to exclude the Gentile from the Israel of God in Galatians 6:16 is the doctrinal presuppositions of dispensationalism, not the exegetical constraints of Scripture. The entire letter is a polemic against the Judaizers who insisted on the necessity of physical circumcision for authentic Christianity and true membership in the people of God. Consequently, when dispensationalists argue that physical circumcision is necessary for membership in the Israel of God, they are out of step with the argument of the entire epistle.

Second passage: Romans 2:25-29

- Romans 2:25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.
26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?
27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?
28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:
29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

I had a dispensational teacher, a dear man of God, old Professor Crawford in Bible college. His comment on this passage was something like this. "You can make cooked carrots out of physical carrots, but you

can't make Jews out of physical Gentiles." The point was, that you have to be a Jew to become a spiritual Jew. Now, I love Dr. Crawford, but he's completely wrong. And what he says can't be made to match with this passage. This passage says very clearly that in verses 26 and 27 the uncircumcision of the Gentile will be regarded as circumcision if one meets the spiritual qualifications. It also says that in verses 28 and 29, he is not a Jew who is one outwardly. He is a Jew who is one inwardly by the spirit, not by the letter. So if a Gentile is an inward Jew, he is a Jew for Paul's purposes.

Third passage: Romans 9:6-8

- Romans 9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:
7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.
8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Now, dispensationalists maintain that the "all Israel" here are the true children of promise and that it only includes believing Jews. And once again, context is king in the interpretation of Scripture. In this context, how should we understand the phrase "all Israel" and "children of promise"? We have to look at the immediate, the near, the further and the wider context. First of all, the immediate context. And I may surprise you to hear me say that in the immediate context, Paul is thinking primarily about Jews, physical Jews. Paul is explaining an obstacle to the acceptance of the gospel of Christ. That is what he is doing in the entirety of Romans 9 to 11. He is answering an objection against the Gospel and that objection is basically, well, if the gospel is true, if Jesus is the Messiah, how come the whole Jewish nation has rejected him? And how could that be? Well, Paul's response is **the doctrine of the remnant**. And here is what he's saying. Paul maintains to this question a uniform response throughout Romans 9 through 11. From the beginning of God's dealings with the nation of Israel, **the promises have always been to the believing remnant of the Jewish nation** and *not* to every fleshly descendant of Abraham or Israel. And he makes the point in Romans 9 through 11 that **God's promise was never to every Jew**. It was to Jacob and not Esau. It was to Isaac and not Ishmael. No, the promise was not given to every Jew, a physical descendant of Abraham. Later, he will argue that his own example as a believer in the Gospel of Christ. And the account of Elijah in the Old Testament also proved that God has not abandoned his promises to Israel. God has kept his promises. Paul's a Jew. Paul is saved. Paul has been the recipient of the promise of God. The elect remnant is saved. God has kept his promise and he's done so by saving the elect remnant. Therefore, I have to acknowledge that Paul's main point here is to prove that this elect remnant of Jews shows that God has kept his promises to Israel. But saying this is not Paul's main

point doesn't prove that it's his only point, Or that Gentile Christians are not part of the children of promise.

- If you go down to Romans 9:23-26, you're going to see that Paul begins to explicitly include Gentiles in the people of God.

Romans 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

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

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

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

So this passage now affirms that Gentiles are included in the people of God. Isn't that perfectly clear?

- We must go to the further context. If you go back to Romans 2:25-29, where Paul says he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, he is a Jew who is one inwardly, how can you avoid the implication that Gentiles are part of the elect remnant to whom God is fulfilling his promises? Paul here in Romans 2:25-29, as we have seen, makes it very clear that Gentiles are spiritual Jews.
- Galatians 4:28 is language identical to Romans 9:7. It identifies the Gentile, Galatian Christians as children of promise. Both the Greek word for promise and the Greek word for children used in Romans 9:7 are used in Galatians 4:28. And so the true Israel is identified as the children of promise. So you cannot exclude Gentiles.

Fourth passage: Philippians 3:3-4

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

4 ¶ Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

Philippians 3:3 also makes clear that the qualifications to be the new and true circumcision are not physical. Paul is encountering the claims of the Judaizers which he mocks in verse 2.

Philippians 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

They are the mutilation, that's translating it nicely. They are the

mutilation as he has called them in that verse. We Christians, he asserts, are the circumcision. Thus the Christian community is seen as the true Israel of God. And several things actually confirm this understanding. According to Acts 16, there was no Jewish synagogue in Philippi. There were women, but there was no Jewish synagogue. Thus the Philippian believers are clearly mainly converted Jews, like that Philippian, not converted Jews, but Gentiles like that Philippian jailer, remember, who was no Jew. They are saved Gentiles. Circumcision then is synonymous with Israel. Paul uses it synonymously in a number of other passages.

- In the phrase, “put no confidence in the flesh”, Paul denies that fleshly, physical qualifications are in any way relevant to being one of the true circumcision. He specifies the nature of the fleshly qualifications that he is discounting in the immediately succeeding context. Look at what he says. When he says, put no confidence in the flesh, he doesn’t say, “I put no confidence in my sinful nature.” That’s not what he’s saying. He says, “I’m putting no confidence in any physical advantage I might have as making me part of the circumcision. Although I myself, verse four, might have confidence in the flesh, if anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more, circumcised the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, the Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law of Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to the righteousness which is in the law found blameless. See, Paul makes clear here in Philippians 3, that the conditions for being identified as God’s circumcision, the true circumcision, those conditions, those qualifications are exclusively spiritual.

Fifth passage: Ephesians 2:11-19

- I think of this as one of the most important and clearest passages in the New Testament where Paul is addressing the whole issue of who is God’s Israel explicitly in this passage.

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

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

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:
17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.
18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.
19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Now verse 11 begins with a number of comments about fleshly circumcision, which must not be overlooked as we examine the passage. Paul describes his readers in verse 11 as Gentiles in the flesh, so he is explicitly addressing Gentiles here. You see that. This description is significant in two respects. First Paul is clearly concerned in this passage with the contrast between ethnic Gentiles and ethnic Israel. Second this phrase strongly implies that Paul regards the believing Gentiles he is addressing as only Gentiles in the *flesh*. Paul emphasizes that unbelieving ethnic Israelites are only *called or named* circumcision. The whole verse, in other words, implies that to judge someone's Jewishness or Gentileness by physical circumcision is a mistake by implication believing Gentiles are the true circumcision.

- Now as we move on to verse 12, we find the first half of a contrast, a temporal contrast which concludes in verse 13. In the past Gentiles were separated or excluded from five things mentioned in verse 12. Do you see that? They were separate from Christ and excluded from the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope without God in the world. They had no hope, no God, no hope, no covenant, no Commonwealth of Israel, no and no and they were separate from Christ. Verse 13 states, the second half of this contrast in the present time believing Gentiles are brought near, brought near. Well, pray tell in this context, brought near to what? All the things from which they were separated in verse 12. They are brought near to Christ, to the covenants of promise, to hope, to God, oh and I forgot one didn't I? They are brought near to the Commonwealth of Israel. In verse 13 then Paul says explicitly that Gentiles are brought near to the Commonwealth of Israel. They are married near to participants in the Commonwealth of Israel and this means, it seems clear to me, that they are Israelites. Americans are citizens of America. Israelites are citizens of Israel. These Gentiles are citizens of Israel.

Paul continues to build on this new unity between Jews and Gentiles in verses 14 to 18. Notice the emphasis on the new oneness between believing Gentiles and believing Israelites. The dividing wall Paul emphasizes in a number of different ways has been broken down. In the Church of Christ, there is one new man. The one flesh of Christ was broken to reconcile us on the one cross of Christ. Consequently, there is one body of Christ. See all of that oneness there. The culmination of Paul's argument though which began in verse 12 is found in verse 19. The language used in verse 19 is reminiscent of the language and concepts in

verse 12 that refer to the Commonwealth of Israel. We are called, Gentiles are called fellow citizens with the saints. Now that clearly means that these Gentiles are fellow citizens with the Jewish saints. There is nothing else it could mean. They are fellow citizens with the saints.

Do you know what is even more significant? See that word citizen there in verse 19. It is from the same root that is translated as Commonwealth in verse 12. The phrase in verse 12 is the palatous to Israel and the phrase citizen in verse 19 is sumi. You can hear it again. Palatei we get political polity. All our words like that from this Greek word. They are sumpoliti. Sumpolit fellow citizens. Fellow citizens of Israel because they've been brought near to Israel. So when Paul says the Ephesian Gentiles are fellow citizens, he assumes they are citizens of the same Commonwealth as those Jewish saints. In other words, they are citizens of Israel. Thus Paul directly asserts here that Gentile believers are citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel and no longer foreigners.

- Paul adds two additional words that solidly affirm what we've just been saying that affirm this new reality in a most explicit way. He says that Gentile believers are no longer strangers and aliens. Do you know the way those words are used in the Old Testament? Strangers and aliens? The term stranger and alien, the term stranger and alien refer to the status of Gentiles who lived in the land of Israel but who were not permitted to enter the congregation or Commonwealth of Israel. They were excluded from the Kahlil, Israel, the Commonwealth, the Assembly of Israel. The term stranger often met someone outside the congregation of Israel like Ruth and like other Gentiles who lived in the land. The word alien was frequently used in a similar fashion throughout the Old Testament. It referred to a Gentile who lived in the land who wasn't part of Israel. But now Paul says these Gentiles are no longer strangers and aliens. The only thing they can be is citizens of Israel. In summary, it seems to me that these are powerful and cogent reasons to claim that there is explicit evidence for the membership of physically uncircumcised Gentile believers in the New Israel of God in Ephesians 2, 11-19.

Sixth passage: Galatians 3:29

- Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 3 is a defense of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Paul defends his doctrine first by appealing to the voice of experience and verses 1 to 5 and then by appealing to the voice of Scripture and verses 6 to 29. Paul's main contention in verses 15 to 29 is that the promise of the Abrahamic covenant is more ultimate in the history of redemption than the law. This points to the fact that it is promise, not law, which is the determining factor in God's covenant dealings. Paul points out that the Abrahamic covenant's promise was made with Abraham's Messianic seed, verses 16 and 19. And then in verses 23

to 29 Paul points out the implication of all this by introducing the concept of union with Christ. We are united to Christ by faith. We are united with the Messianic seed. Have you contemplated the implications of that? We are united with the Messianic seed if we believe, no matter our nationality. If the Messianic seed gets all the promises, if all the promises are yea and amen in Christ, what promises? The Old Testament promises to Israel. If all the Old Testament promises to Israel are yea and amen in Christ and we are in Christ even if we are Gentiles, what? We get the promises because we are Abraham's seed in Jesus Christ. So here Paul takes that which was the boast of the Jews that they were Abraham's seed and transfers that title of honor to the Church. More importantly, he regards the Messianic seed and those in union with him as the one ultimate eschatological fruition of the Abrahamic covenant. And this is important because the Old Covenant issued forth from the Abrahamic covenant. But neither that covenant nor that people, Old Covenant, Old Israel is regarded as the ultimate fruition of God's promise to Abraham. It is the Messianic seed and us in the Messianic seed that received the promises.

Those in Christ are Abraham's seed and thus the true Jew. He inherits all of Israel's promised blessings. Since we are in union with Him we inherit them in Him. We too then as Gentile Christians are Abraham's seed and true Jews.

Seventh passage: Romans 11:16-24

- Romans 11:16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.
17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;
18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.
19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.
20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:
21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.
22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.
23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.
24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is

wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

So here's what shocked me when I first read this passage with my own eyes in Bible college. You read the Bible like you've been taught to read your Bible in your church. You grow up a little bit you finally realize that not everything you were taught in the First Baptist Church of Michigan was actually right, and so you start reading the Bible with new eyes. Here's what shocked me. the entire analogy of the olive tree. See, if I was to go with what I'd been taught, I would have assumed that God planted a new olive tree with the Church or that you had the old olive tree and now a new fig tree which was the Gentile church. But this passage is why I use the word trans-dispensational. It talks about the Old Covenant in the Old Testament times. It talks about the New Testament times and it says that throughout the whole time, there are not two trees, just one olive tree. That one olive tree doesn't get cut down and destroyed when the new dispensation comes, no, the unbelieving branches get cut off and Gentile branches get grafted into the one and the same old olive tree. When we remember that dispensationalists themselves regard the distinction between Israel and the Church as basic to their system, it's easy to see how devastating Paul's teaching here is to dispensationalism as a whole. There are not two trees, there's one olive tree throughout the whole history of the world. And that means there's one Covenant people of God, not two. That means that the really exciting things going on in the world are going on here this morning and not in Palestine.

- Now what are the practical lessons from this? I told you that if the Church / Israel distinction falls, all its consequences go with it. What are some of those consequences? This undermines entirely the doctrine of pre-tribulationism. Why did they divide Christ's second coming into two phases, one before the tribulation and one afterward? The answer is that one of those comings is for the Church and the other those comings is for Israel. That's what's going on here. What do they do with all the passages in the Gospels, for instance, that say that when Christ comes again He comes in glory and his disciples receive Him and it's at the end of the tribulation? They say, "Well, that's that's the coming for Israel not for the Church." That's the only defense that pre-tribulation has. It can't explain them otherwise unless it has the Church's real distinction, but it doesn't, and that distinction is wrong, and therefore pre-tribulationism falls apart.
- This means that the promises to Israel belong to you, the Church, and this also means that the future glory of Israel belongs to us. This means as well that the history of the Bible doesn't have two different themes, God's work in Israel and God's work in the Church. It has one theme. That theme is redemption. It is God's glory in Christ, the redemption of the true Israel. That's the whole theme of the Bible. This means that the fulfillment of the Old Testament is not a future millennial Israelite kingdom. The fulfillment of the Old Testament as the New Testament teaches everywhere is Christ and His Church. And this

means that the Church doesn't share the dignity of being the people of God with another entity.

- The dignity of the Church is enhanced by the realization of its heritage in Old Testament Israel. The church is the combination of God's age-long purpose of redemption. The Church is one with and the heir of all His covenant dealings. It does not share its dignity as the people of God with a different future Israel. We are those upon whom the ends of the ages have come. We are those through whom God is fulfilling His plan of world redemption.

Please also listen to the video.