

## Introduction

**Encouragement:** You are now most of the way through Unit 1, which is the most abstract unit. Units 2- 4 are much more practical. Hang in there!

**Eschatology:** study of the last things. We are only going to be able to scratch the surface in three weeks.

### **Christians should be familiar with the main elements of the end-times.**

There is a tremendous amount of material devoted to this subject in both Old Testament and New Testament (as much as 25%). This alone suggests its importance.

Even though Paul was only in Thessalonica for a few weeks before he was booted out, he spent part of that time grounding them in this area so that he could say:

**(1 Thess. 5:1,2)** "Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well . . . "

The better we understand this area, the more motivated we can be to serve the Lord with hope. We can read the end of the book and see that we're on the winning side! Plus, many passages about the end of the age and the next life explain how these promises should motivate us in this life.

We see prophecy fulfilled in our own time (such as the regathering of Israel) and our faith is affirmed.

**All orthodox (traditional) views agree on the essentials: literal return of Christ, final judgment, heaven and hell.** They disagree on the meaning of things like the role of Israel and the nature of the "millennium." Tonight we will cover the BIG PICTURE on eschatology by discussing these views and explaining why we hold the one we do. Next week we will examine a key feature of Old Testament prophecy (double reference) and the key visions of Daniel. On week 9, we will go into details about the rapture, intermediate states, tribulation, beast, etc.

### **Covenantalism and Dispensationalism**

There are really only 2 basic positions—Covenantalism and Dispensationalism. **The terms "Covenantal Theology" and "Dispensational Theology" refer to two different ways of interpreting the biblical record of salvation history.**

## Covenantal Theology

**Covenant theology: A system of theology based upon God's covenants as governing categories for the understanding of the entire bible.**

It tends to emphasize the *unity* of God's working with mankind, though both views acknowledge the important role of covenants in salvation history. ("Covenants" are contracts between two parties.) Covenant theology normally speaks of three main covenants in salvation history.

**Covenantal Theology is typical of Reformed theologians.** This includes the Reformed and Christian Reformed, the Presbyterian, the Anglican (or Episcopal), and to some extent, Lutheran traditions. Classical Roman Catholicism also recognizes the same approximate divisions of scriptural history, (differing on the question of man's responsibility in the covenant of grace).

Taken together then, the Covenantal view must be considered by far the predominant view.

### **1. The Covenant of Redemption (before creation):**

**The Son's obligation:** Promises the Father to render perfect obedience (unto death) for our sins.

**The Father's obligation:** Promises to the Son:

all the Son's needs will be met;  
the Holy Spirit will be given to the church;  
salvation in all of its phases will be given to all believers;  
the Son will be exalted and glorified.

### **2. The Covenant of Works (from creation until the fall):**

**Man's obligation:** Adam must obey God's commands.

**God's obligation:** Rewards obedience with eternal life, and punishes disobedience with death.

### 3. The Covenant of Grace (from the fall until the second advent):

**Man's obligation:** Faith in God's promise, issuing in obedience to God's commands.

**God's obligation:** Salvation in all of its phases to the believer through the substitutionary work of his Son.

#### Comments:

- **Strengths:**

One of the strengths of the Covenantal position is that **it stresses that people have always been saved by grace through faith.**

- **Weaknesses:**

One of the big problems is that **it lumps everything between the Fall and the Second Advent together and tends to minimize some of the important differences in the way God works within that period.** For example, it refers to the church as beginning with the first believers in the Old Testament, rather than seeing it as a distinct phase of God's redemptive program beginning on the Day of Pentecost. This is why some churches feel the freedom to incorporate Old Testament practices like a liturgical worship service with an altar and priestly vestments.

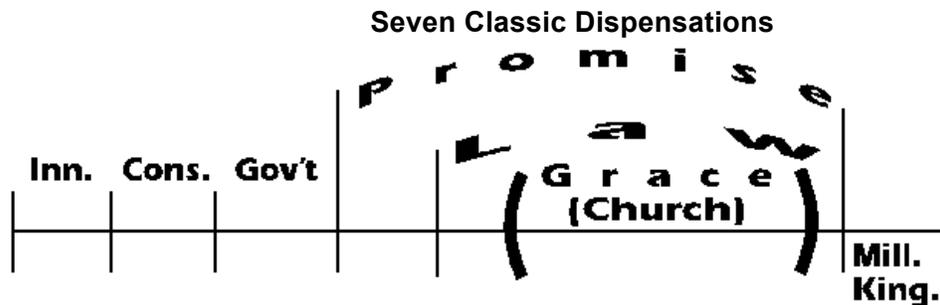
### Dispensational Theology

**Dispensational theology: A system of theology that stresses the differing ways that God works with man in salvation history.**

Dispensational theology tends to emphasize the *diversity* of ways in which God works with mankind.

"Dispensations" (Greek: *oikonomia*) refer to economies, or different ways in which God works with man in salvation history (see Eph. 1:10; 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:4). In the classic Dispensational scheme, each dispensation begins with an offer by God and ends with failure by man and a period of divine judgment.

The Dispensational view is of more recent origin, arising from the evangelical awakening in America and England. Through the work of Jesse Penn-Lewis, T. Austin Sparks, J. N. Darby (who is given credit for formally bringing the view to light), Dwight Moody, C. I. Scofield (who included it in the Scofield Bible), Watchman Nee, Lewis Sperry Chafer, John Walvoord, and Hal Lindsey, this view has become widespread and popular today. It is the view of most Pentecostals, Brethren, many Baptists, and most independent Bible churches.



#### 1. Innocence, or Untested Holiness (Genesis 1-3):

- God offers man eternal life for obedience.
- Man rebels, and is expelled from the Garden of Eden.

#### 2. Conscience (Genesis 4-6):

- God offers to govern man through his conscience.
- Man sears his conscience, and God brings the universal flood.

#### 3. Government (Genesis 7-11):

- God offers to govern man through civil government (Genesis 9:6).
- Man corrupts civil government, and God brings the confusion of tongues and scatters man.

#### 4. Promise (Genesis 12 — Millennial Kingdom):

- God promises to bless Abraham and his descendants, and all nations through them.
- Jacob's sons apostatize and God brings them into slavery in Egypt.

#### 5. Law (Exodus 20 — Millennial Kingdom):

- God promises to grant Israel the promises he made to Abraham conditional to their obedience to his Law.
- Israel apostatizes, undergoes exile and dispersion, and is finally purified through the Great Tribulation.

#### 6. Grace or The Church Age (Pentecost — Rapture):

- God **temporarily** suspends working through Israel as his chosen nation and offers to work through all believers in Jesus.
- The church apostatizes and is judged in the Great Tribulation after true believers are rescued through the Rapture.

#### 7. Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20):

- God fulfills all of his promises to national Israel after the Second Coming of Jesus.
- Satan ignites a rebellion against Jesus, which God terminates and then judges all men at the Great White Throne.

#### Comments:

- **Strengths:**
  - **We believe this view is superior to Covenantalism in several key areas.**
    - **Dispensationalism is committed to a *literal hermeneutic* when interpreting biblical prophecy.** They have aroused lots of interest in this area of biblical truth.
    - **Dispensationalists emphasize that the primary application of an Old Testament passage is to the original audience (e.g. OT priestly practices abandoned under the church-age dispensation).**
- **Weaknesses:**

**Some of the early dispensations seem to be forced.** Paul seems to lump everything from Adam to Moses together (Rom. 5:14). More recent Dispensationalists (Progressive Dispensationalism) have moved away from these rigid distinctions.

**Some Dispensationalists have also given this view a bad name by getting overly dogmatic about how certain passages must be fulfilled** (LINDSEY SAYING REV. 9:7-10 REFERS TO MILITARY HELICOPTERS), setting dates for Christ's return ("88 REASONS WHY CHRIST MUST RETURN BY 1988"), etc.

**It has a negative cast** (judgments ending each dispensation) when in fact God is progressively accomplishing his redemptive plan.

**Some dispensationalists overlook pressing social issues** because they believe the world is getting worse and worse and that our role is primarily to rescue the lost (e.g. painting a sinking ship).

**Summary: At Xenos we do not agree with Classic (Scofieldian) Dispensationalism. We identify ourselves more with the progressive dispensationalist (Darell Bock. Christianity Today. September 12, 1994. p. 26-29.) We acknowledge the unity of God's working through history and through Israel, but we see a clear distinction between the Old and New Covenants that lead to the following key theological distinctions.**

#### Key Theological Distinctions

##### 1. How does the Covenantal-Dispensational view affect *Ecclesiology*?

**Covenantal:** Covenantalists define the church as all believers during all of history. Therefore, like Roman Catholicism, **they often feel free to use Old Testament material in church structure**, which leads to things like infant baptism, religious calendars, ritualism, etc. At different times in history, some covenantalists have equated their nations and city states with God's people (e.g. New England Puritans).

**Dispensational:** Because Dispensationalists **see the Church Age as a distinct period in salvation history** (beginning on Pentecost), they usually call for a more radical break with Old Testament worship and structures.

## **2. How does the Covenantal-Dispensational view affect Soteriology?**

**Covenantal:** Many Covenantalists place more **emphasis on the Law** in sanctification.

**Dispensational:** Dispensationalists tend to **stress grace** in this area, as we will see in Unit 2 . . .

## **3. How does the Covenantal-Dispensational view affect Pneumatology?**

**Covenantal:** Some Covenantalists believe the Holy Spirit **indwelt believers in the Old Covenant**.

**Dispensational:** Dispensationalists say the **Holy Spirit indwelt believers only after Jesus' death on the cross**.

## **4. How does the Covenantal-Dispensational view affect Eschatology?**

**It determines how you view the millennium and Israel's future role . . .**

**In recent years, representatives from both groups have moderated their positions.**

**Covenantal:** Covenantalists have acknowledged **more distinction between the Old Covenant and New Covenant**. They also reject the notion of a literal thousand year millennial kingdom after Christ returns and a future role for national Israel. See more on this under Amillennialism and Postmillennialism below.

**Dispensational:** Dispensationalists have acknowledged **more unity between the periods**.

### **Key Millennial Kingdom Passages**

**Definition:** What is the millennial kingdom? There are many biblical passages, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, that describe **a future period of human history in which God substantially reconciles the world to himself and reigns over the world through the Messiah and his people Israel**. Consider these passages, and write down in your Bible's margin the key characteristics of this period.

**(Psa. 2:6,8,9)** I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill. (8) Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. (9) You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.

### **Messiah rules a worldwide theocracy centered in Jerusalem.**

**(Isa. 65:17-25)** "Behold, I will create **new heavens and a new earth**. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. (18) But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. (19) I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. (20) Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. (21) They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (22) No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. (23) They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. (24) Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. (25) The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

**"New heavens and new earth" here refer (according to the following context) to the millennial kingdom rather than the new universe of Rev. 21,22.** In both Isaiah and Revelation the "new heavens and new earth" refer to a *new era* in God's dealing with humanity. It is not a specific term that relates to only a specific period of history.

**Isaiah refers here to the millennial kingdom and pictures it as a time of joy, peace, and economic prosperity. Jerusalem is exalted.** The curse on nature (including human sickness) will be substantially (though not entirely) removed.

**(Zeph. 3:11-13)** On that day you will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to me, because I will remove from this city those who rejoice in their pride. Never again will you be haughty on my holy hill. (12) But I will leave within you the meek and humble, who trust in the name of the LORD. (13) The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid."

**The wicked will be separated from the righteous, who enjoy unending ("never again") peace and security.**

**(Zech. 14:16-19)** Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. (17) If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. (18) If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The LORD will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. (19) This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

**The Messiah rules in Jerusalem and executes swift justice on those who oppose him.** There is some observance of the Jewish religious calendar.

**The following section on feasts is an aside for teacher's reference**

**Feast of Tabernacles:**

**The fourth annual festival was the feast of tabernacles** (2 Chron. 8:13; Ezra 3:4; Zech. 14:16), also called the feast of ingathering (Ex. 23:16; 34:22), the feast to the Lord (Lev. 23:39; Judg. 21:19). Sometimes it was simply called "the feast" (1 Kings 8:2; 2 Chron. 5:3; 7:8; Neh. 8:14; Isa. 30:29; Ezek. 45:23,25) because it was so well known. Its observance combined the ingathering of the labor of the field (Ex. 23:16), the fruit of the earth (Lev. 23:39), the ingathering of the threshingfloor and winepress (Deut. 16:13), and the dwelling in booths (or "tabernacles"), which were to be joyful reminders to Israel (Lev. 23:41; Deut. 16:14). The "booth" in Scripture is not an image of privation and misery, but of protection, preservation, and shelter from heat and storm (Pss. 27:5; 31:20; Isa. 4:6). The rejoicing community included family, servants, widows, orphans, Levites, and sojourners (Deut. 16:13-15).

**The feast began on the fifteenth day of Tishri** (the seventh month), which was five days after the day of atonement. It lasted for seven days (Lev. 23:36; Deut. 16:13; Ezek. 45:25). On the first day, booths were constructed of fresh branches of trees. Each participant had to collect twigs of myrtle, willow, and palm in the area of Jerusalem for construction of the booths (Neh. 8:13-18). Every Israelite was to live for seven days in these during the festival, in commemoration of when their fathers lived in such booths after their Exodus from Egypt (Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15). The dedication of Solomon's Temple took place at the feast (1 Kings 8:2).

**After the return from Exile, Ezra read the law and led the people in acts of penitence during this feast** (Neh. 8:13-18). Later, Josephus referred to it as the holiest and greatest of the Hebrew feasts. Later additions to the ritual included a libation of water drawn from the pool of Siloam (the probable background for Jesus' comments on "living water," John 7:37-39) and the lighting of huge Menorahs (candelabra) at the Court of the Women (the probable background for Jesus' statement, "I am the light of the world," John 8:12). The water and the "pillar of light" provided during the wilderness wandering (when the people dwelt in tabernacles) was temporary and in contrast to the continuing water and light claimed by Jesus during this feast which commemorated that wandering period.

**The eschatological visions which speak of the coming of all nations to worship at Jerusalem refer to the feast of booths on the occasion of their pilgrimage** (Zech. 14:16-21). (Holman's Bible Dictionary- Article on Festivals)

**(Rev. 20:1-10)** And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. (2) And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for **a thousand years**, (3) and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. (4) I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (5) (The

rest of the dead did not come to life **until the thousand years were ended.**) This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for **a thousand years.** (7) **When the thousand years are over,** Satan will be released from his prison (8) and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. (9) They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. (10) And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

**This is the only passage that specifies the duration as 1000 years.** Some of the saints are resurrected at the beginning, and they play a priestly and governing role in this kingdom. "First resurrection" refers in context to the first resurrection described in this passage—the resurrection of the tribulational martyrs. The second resurrection is the resurrection of the damned at the Great White Throne.

**Realize that the above passages are only a small minority of the biblical material on this subject.** There are *hundreds* of passages in the Old Testament alone devoted to this kingdom, which (along with *Messiah*) is the hope of Israel.

As you read these passages, how should you interpret them—literally or figuratively? This is one of the crucial differences between Covenantalism and Dispensationalism. Dispensationalism insists that these passages will be literally fulfilled for Israel, while Covenantalism says they are being fulfilled figuratively for the Church, or that they will be fulfilled figuratively in the eternal state.

**Old Testament promises to Israel . . .**

<b>Dispensationalism</b>	will be	literally fulfilled	for Israel
<b>Covenantalism</b>	are being will be	figuratively fulfilled OR figuratively fulfilled	in the Church in the eternal state

Let's survey the main millennial views . . .

**Millennial Views**

**Amillennialism (Covenantal)**

Timeline....



**Definition:**

**The millennial kingdom will not literally appear**

**Role of Israel:**

**This view holds that because Israel rejected her Messiah, the Church has inherited the promises that were originally given to Israel. This means that *Israel no longer has any special place in the plan of God.*** The Old Testament millennial kingdom promises are being fulfilled by the church in a spiritualized rather than literal way. The amillennial position is that the millennial kingdom will never appear in any literal way.

**View of the Church:**

**The Church is "spiritual Israel"** (Romans 2:28,29; Philippians 3:3; Galatians 6:16) **which has inherited all of God's unfulfilled promises to Israel.** Satan is already bound as predicted in Revelation 20:2.

**View of the Kingdom:**

**The kingdom is "in our midst"** (Luke 17:21). Often, the amillennialist believes in a final intensification of evil (although not usually of seven literal years) preceding the Second Advent.

**History:**

**This view has its roots in the early church fathers (Origen and Augustine) after Constantine "Christianized" the Roman Empire. They were predisposed to view the millennial kingdom as synonymous to the Holy Roman Empire, and their allegorical method of interpretation opened the door for this kind of understanding. Anti-Semitism was also a factor driving this interpretation, although present-day Amillennialists are not anti-Semitic. It was accepted as the official position at the Council of Ephesus in 431, at which time belief in a literal millennium was condemned as superstitious. The Reformers accepted the amillennialist framework without essential change. Today, it is the dominant view in those sections of the Protestant and Catholic Church that take biblical eschatology seriously.**

### **Post-Millennialism (Covenantal) Timeline...**



#### **Definition:**

In the post-millennial view, **the Church will progressively "Christianize" the world (meaning Christianity will hold influence over society) ushering in a period of peace and prosperity.** This is the so-called millennial kingdom, but it is not 1000 years and does not literally fulfill the Old Testament passages like the ones above. After this period, Christ will return (according to some versions) to judge the world and usher in the eternal state.

#### **Role of Israel and the Church:**

**Post-millennialism, like amillennialism, holds that the church has inherited a spiritualized fulfillment of Israel's kingdom promises.**

#### **History:**

**This view is not widely held today.** This view finds important theological precedent in the early and medieval Roman Catholic church, when they identified themselves with the kingdom of God. It was also popular during the 18th and 19th centuries, corresponding to the ascendancy of optimistic humanism. Subsequent historical events (WW I, WW II, Cold War, Marxism, etc.) have dashed hopes for a period of world peace apart from God's supernatural intervention.

#### **Critique of Post- & Amillennialism**

**Both critiques center on the importance of a consistently literal hermeneutic for eschatological passages.**

**1. Post- and amillennialism interpret the Old Testament prophecies of the first Advent *literally*, but they interpret the Old Testament prophecies of the second Advent *figuratively*.**

**(Zech. 14:1-7)** Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. (2) For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. (3) Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. (4) And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. (5) And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! (6) And it will come about in that day that there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. (7) For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

**Dispensationalists:** Interpret this as a literal Battle between God and earthly kingdoms when Christ returns (his second advent).

**Allegorical Amillennial:** interpretation is represented by Matthew Henry's commentary on Zech. 14:1-7

**(Commentary, verse 2, 4, 5)** "Many of the Jews shall receive the gospel, and so shall prevent their being cut off from the city of God, his church upon earth... . (4, 5) the Gentiles (will be) made one with the Jews by the breaking down of this middle wall of partition (Eph. 2:14). A great mountain of the ceremonial law was in the way of the Jews' conversion, yet before Christ and his gospel it was made plain . . . The mountain being divided, one-half towards the north and the other half towards the south, there shall be a very great valley (means) a broad way of communication between Jerusalem and the Gentile world, by which the Gentiles shall have free admission into the gospel . . . The valley of the mountains is the gospel-church, to which are added of the Jews daily such as should be saved . . ." (Matthew Henry, *1-Volume Commentary on the Whole Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961], p. 1191).

**This hermeneutic leaves the interpreter in authority over the scripture. In addition, vast portions of scripture become unintelligible and therefore useless.**

**2. Both the Old and New Testaments explicitly state that God will fulfill all of his promises to Israel.**

#### **Old Testament**

**(Jer. 31:31-37\*\*)** "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. (32) It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, " declares the LORD. (33) "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (34) No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more. (35) This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD Almighty is his name: (36) "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "**will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me.**" (37) This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.

God will no more revoke his covenant with Israel than he will revoke his decree to make the sun and moon shine. In other words, **this covenant is in force for as long as this world lasts.**

**(Isa. 54:9-17)** "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. (10) **Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,**" says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (11) "O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. (12) I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones. (13) All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children's peace. (14) In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you. (15) If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. (16) See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to work havoc; (17) no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD.

**In the same way that God will be faithful to keep the covenant to Noah (never to destroy the world again by flood), he will be just as faithful to keep his covenant promises to Israel.**

See also Ezekiel 36:22-38; 37: 1-14; 39: 28-29; Joel 2: 28-3:21.

#### **New Testament**

**(Matt. 19:27,28)** Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" (28) Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

**Note that Jesus assumes a literal fulfillment of the millennial kingdom as the Old Testament describes it.**

**(Rom. 9:3-5)** For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. (4) Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. (5) Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

**Notice that Paul uses the present tense ("is" and "are") rather than the past tense ("was" and "were") to describe Jews' covenant privileges.**

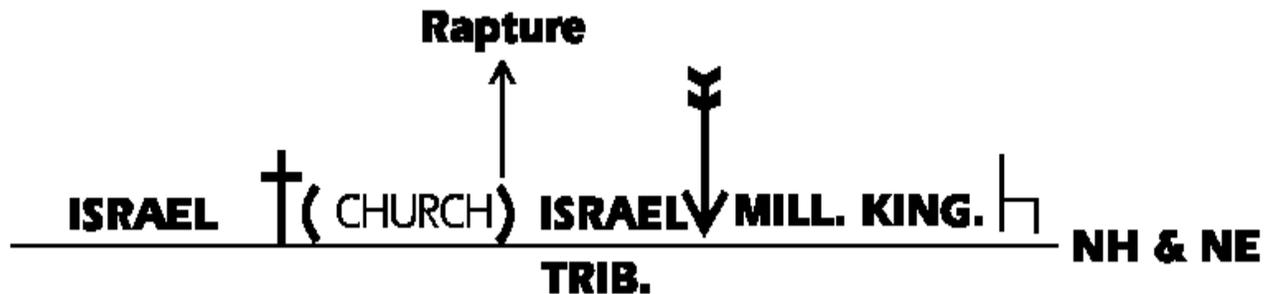
**(Romans 11:25-29\*)** I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, **for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.**

**Paul is crystal clear here that God will never revoke his calling of Israel or their role in the millennial kingdom.**

See also Matthew 24:20ff.; Luke 21:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:4ff; Revelation 7:3-8; 11:2 for excellent evidence to support this view.

**Pre-Millennialism (Dispensational)**

**Timeline...**



**Definition:**

**Jesus will return to judge the wicked and establish a literal 1000 year reign on earth (the Millennial Kingdom).** This view holds that the present age is preceding the literal theocratic rule of Christ on earth as foretold in the Old Testament and affirmed in the New Testament..

**Role of Israel and the church:**

**The Church, it is claimed, partakes *partially* in the promises given to Israel,** by virtue of the fact that we are "spiritual Israel," **but the literal and complete fulfillment of those promises are still to be expected at a later date.**

**Interpretation of the "Kingdom" passages:**

Premillennialists claim that prophecies concerning the second Advent **can be and should be interpreted according to the same hermeneutical restrictions as applied to the predictions of the First Advent.** As a result of this literal interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, premillennialism has a much more detailed doctrine of the end-times. While it agrees that God's kingdom has a present aspect, it insists the the kingdom in its fulness will come only at Christ's future bodily return.

**History:**

**The early post-apostolic church, as evidenced by the writings of early church leaders, was pre-millennial.** However, as G. E. Ladd and amillennialists have repeatedly pointed out, their end-times scenario was not well developed. Even if this point is granted, it still cannot be argued that they were amillennial. After going into eclipse after the time of Augustine (along with a literal

hermeneutic), this view **reappeared in the early 19th century in connection with the Plymouth Brethren and the rise of Dispensationalism**. Since then, it has been popularized by authors such as C. I. Scofield, L. S. Chafer, John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, and Hal Lindsey.

#### **Critique of Pre-Millennialism (Dispensational)**

**1. There are clear instances in which the New Testament authors say that the Church has received a spiritual (non-literal) fulfillment of promises originally intended for the nation of Israel. (Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2:16ff.; Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews 10:16,17)**

**This does not prove that there is no literal fulfillment of those same**

**passages.** Dispensationalists respond that **these are examples of *partial* fulfillment**, and that the partial fulfillment pointed out in the Church Age does not negate the literal fulfillment at the 2nd Advent (see Rom. 9-11). We will take a closer look at this phenomenon next week.

**2. Premillennialists have difficulty presenting a consistent interpretation of all predictive prophecies.**

The differing views on Ezek 37,38 are cited. **Since the amount of material involved makes it difficult to harmonize all of them, it is unlikely that we will understand how they all fit together until that time** (Dan. 12:4,8-10). For this reason, we should **stick with the main and clear features of the end-times** and avoid dogmatism about many of the details.

At least Dispensationalists try, using hermeneutical principles, to present a consistent interpretation of all the predictive prophecies rather than interpreting them allegorically or ignoring them altogether!

**3. Amillennialists hold that the millennium cannot be literal, since it involves animal sacrifice (see Ezekiel 40-48), which allegedly contradicts the argument of Hebrews. Dispensationalists view these sacrifices as commemorative of Jesus Christ's sacrifice**, just as the Last Supper is for the Church. Thus, animal sacrifice functions as a foreshadowing of Christ's death under the Old Covenant, while it functions as a commemoration under the New Covenant.

#### **Memory Verses**

**Jer. 31:31-37\*\*** - God's promise of the New Covenant for Israel (not just for the Church) will be fulfilled.

**Rom. 11:29\*** - God's promises to national Israel are irrevocable.