

*When Israel
Was in
the Pulpit*



MISHKAN

■ A FORUM ON THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE ■ *Issue 67/ 2011*



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A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People

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Editor: Jim R. Sibley

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www.mishkanstore.org
mishkan@pascheinstitute.org

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Mishkan is a quarterly journal dedicated to biblical and theological thinking on issues related to Jewish Evangelism, Hebrew-Christian/Messianic-Jewish identity, and Jewish-Christian relations.

Mishkan is published by the Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies.

Mishkan's editorial policy is openly evangelical, committed to the New Testament proclamation that the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus (Yeshua) the Messiah is "to the Jew first."

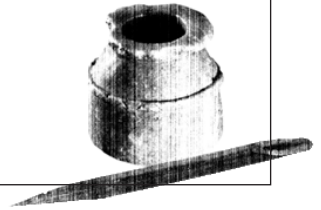
Mishkan is a forum for discussion, and articles included do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies, or Criswell College.

Mishkan is the Hebrew word for *tabernacle* or *dwelling place* (John 1:14).

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

When Israel Was in the Pulpit

By **Jim R. Sibley**



The nineteenth century, especially in Great Britain, witnessed a tremendous interest in Israel and the Jewish people in the pulpits of evangelical churches. Paul Wilkinson introduced us to this interest in our last issue with the first installment of his study of "What the Church Left Behind: Israel's Restoration and Christ's Return." In the current issue, he continues with his extremely interesting article. Neither Wilkinson nor the editors of this issue are interested in merely promoting a wistful nostalgia for "the good old days," but to inspire interest in Israel by pastors in our day as well.

In this issue of *Mishkan*, we present transcripts of historic sermons about Israel and the Jewish people. The bulk of sermonic material is so great that a very limited selection is offered here. Many sermons were published only after the preacher had opportunity to expand them. As a consequence, published sermons may run between thirty and eighty pages long, and this was also a factor in our selection for *Mishkan*. Often, the language sounds quaint to our twenty-first-century ears, and frequently vocabulary or punctuation obscures the meaning. We have tried to preserve the character and content of the original, while at the same time making the sermons more readable and comprehensible for the modern reader, and especially for the non-native English speaker. An additional note is necessary on the use of historical materials such as these sermons. The reader must be aware that they were written in an entirely different historical context, and it would be wrong to judge them or their vocabulary by the sensitivities and conventions of our day.

We begin with Adolph Saphir, a Jewish believer who was "mighty in the Scriptures." If this is your introduction to Saphir, you are encouraged to find and read some of his outstanding books and articles. Robert Murray

M'Cheyene was a part of the famous "mission of inquiry" that sought to find promising venues for Jewish ministry and eventually resulted in the establishment of Presbyterian work in Budapest, Hungary. When he returned to Scotland from this journey, M'Cheyene preached a message to his church based on Romans 1:16. It was this work in Hungary that saw, among its first fruits, the salvation of Adolph Saphir.

Earlier, in 1809, the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Jews was established, and one of the early sermons preached to both Jewish believers in Jesus and Jewish seekers was given by Andrew Fuller, a Baptist clergyman who, as a founder of the Baptist Missionary Society, had been closely associated with William Carey and the birth of the modern mission movement. His sermon "Jesus the True Messiah" shows a mastery of Scripture and an awareness of rabbinic arguments that oppose the identification of Jesus as the Messiah.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon is still known as the "Prince of Preachers." In his day, it is estimated that he preached to 10,000,000 people, and his published sermons remain in print and are widely read and quoted today. Spurgeon preached a number of sermons about the Jewish people, Israel, and related topics. In "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews," Spurgeon takes us to the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37, in order to show us what God has in store for Israel—physical, political, and spiritual restoration.

From 1832 to 1879, the Rev. John Cumming was the popular and influential minister of the National Scottish Church in Covent Garden, London. Though he is not as well known today, and though some of his anti-Catholic writings seem "over-the-top" by today's standards, there is much of value in his sermon "Palestine Reconsecrated."

Israel's restoration is yet incomplete. This is true physically (as more than half of the Jewish population still lives in the Diaspora), politically (as Israel is still not at peace with her neighbors), and spiritually (as the growing remnant is still very small). Since God has not forgotten Israel, neither should we. It is time for Israel to be restored to the pulpits of our countries, until the Lord restores them according to His Word. When was the last time you heard a message about Israel and her need of the good news of salvation? If the church has left Israel behind, it is time for her to return and to rectify the omission.

This issue is completed with a comprehensive review of Michael Vlach's newly republished book, *Has the Church Replaced Israel? A Theological Evaluation*. Vlach adds an important voice to the growing chorus of scholars who are challenging the cherished perspectives of Replacement Theology.



God's Purpose in Israel*

by **Adolph Saphir**

Christian friends, the object of this Convention, as I understand it, is to deepen our interest in the work of evangelization among the Jews, and the method which is adopted is that, besides hearing what the Lord is doing among Israel at this present time, we should principally go to the Scriptures, in order to see what God has revealed to us as to His purposes concerning the nation. This method is, no doubt, the true method with regard to all spiritual work of the Church, also with regard to the mission to the heathen. Let us remember how very soon the missionary character of the Church was forgotten, and the Church, instead of obeying the commandment of Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations (in fact, that it was chiefly a missionary association), neglected this great and important calling. The mission to the heathen also has for its only authority the Word of God; and it is astonishing how a commandment so simple and distinct, and how a duty which you would have imagined would be eagerly greeted by the impulse of gratitude, of affection, and of compassion, was forgotten for so long a time, in the churches of the Reformation especially. Now we are accustomed to hear of mission-work among the heathen nations, and to find that a great multitude of people are interested in it, and regard it with respect; but it was only at the commencement of the last century, and with great difficulty, the attention of the Church was roused to this important duty; and even in the general assembly of the Church of Scotland there were a number of ministers who thought that the state of heathenism was so utterly corrupt, and that there was so much to be done in our own country, that it was altogether an Utopian project to think of converting the idolaters, and that it was not our imperative duty to trouble ourselves with their wretched condition, until one simple minister rose and said to the moderator, "Rax me the Book" (reach me the Book), and then he opened it at Matthew xxviii., and read out the verses the Duke of Wellington called "your marching orders," when a young clergyman spoke to him in doubtful terms of missions to the heathen nations.

*This sermon was delivered at the Jewish Convention held at Mildmay Park in October 1889.

But with regard to the Jewish nation especially it is necessary that we should be clear as to the Scripture ground and as to the Scripture teaching concerning God's people, for I am perfectly convinced that our only strength is there.

The Jewish Mission is comparatively of recent date. The early Church very soon lost the true understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures, and in the mediæval Church the interest in the Jews was exceedingly limited. Nor was the mediæval Church in a position to evangelize the Jews in an enlightened and in a successful manner, for they themselves resembled too much the Jews; and as the Jews had corrupted the Old Testament religion by their traditions, and as the Jews had forgotten that righteousness was by faith, and went about establishing a righteousness of their own by works, exactly the same thing happened in Christendom. Hence the mediæval Church did not itself possess the Gospel in sufficient clearness and intensity to attack the Jews, or to bring near to them the blessings of the Most High. Besides that there was a paganizing of Christianity which was especially obnoxious and hateful to the Jews. The image-worship and other things, into which it is impossible for me now to enter, would, from the very outset, impress the Jews with the fact that this was not the true religion of God, and that it was their solemn duty to keep as far removed from it as possible. There were some splendid exceptions. There were some men who had already, more or less, the full light of the Gospel burning in their hearts, and love to Israel animating them. Such a one was Bernard of Clairvaux, who, perhaps, of all Church fathers came nearest to the teaching of the Reformers, and who, in words most touching and most lucid, set before the Church the truth that Israel was still beloved of God, and that the time was coming when she, who was now desolate and in spiritual blindness, would be brought to Jesus, who would receive her with the love of a Bridegroom. Besides that, the mediæval Church, although not utterly forgetful of her duty to Israel, and although bringing to Israel to some extent the great leading facts of the incarnation and the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies in Jesus, yet, quite in accordance with the whole spirit of the Papacy, did not fight the spiritual fight with spiritual weapons, but with carnal weapons; and with persecutions and the outward authority of the State they sought to frighten and terrify the Jews, and to allure them with all kinds of temporal advancements to forsake their religion.

It reads very beautifully when Portia says, "The quality of mercy is not strained." Shylock, the Jew, is represented as a hard, severe, cruel, and vindictive man; but what quality of mercy did the Jews experience from Christendom during the Middle Ages? Even in this country of England, with what injustice and with what cruelty were they persecuted and tortured! When it pleased God to kindle the light of the Reformation the Church was in one respect in possession of the light to go with it unto the Jews; for the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans and the whole Epistle to the Galatians were not merely illustrated with great clearness, but they were, so to speak, reproduced by the testimony of Luther and of his friends. And it was only natural that Martin Luther turned his attention to Israel—

he was such a lover of Scripture, he had such an intense appreciation of the unity of the Old and the New Testaments, and of the fact that Jehovah is the living, loving God who is finally manifested in Jesus; the Person of Jesus Christ was, in such a peculiarly deep and intense manner, the centre of his whole theology and of his whole life, and he himself had passed so much through an analogous experience with that of Saul of Tarsus, in seeking with all earnestness and zeal to approach God by his own worthiness, and to work out a righteousness of his own. All these things brought the Jews, and the way of presenting the Gospel to the Jews, exceedingly near to the mind and the heart of Martin Luther; and many attempts did he make, both to show to the Christian Church the position of Israel, as his famous tract shows, which is entitled that Jesus was a born Jew, and also to argue with the Jews, and to convince them that that which they were most earnestly seeking had come already, and was treasured up in the Person of Jesus. But after awhile he had sad experiences—his efforts were disappointed, he saw the exceeding great blindness which has happened to Israel, and the obduracy of their prejudices; and also very likely he was not able to fully meet that which was true in the objection of the Jews, the tenacity with which they held the promise given to the fathers and their national position, looking forward to the realization of that great kingdom which has its centre in the throne of David. Then in impatience he gave up all efforts, and thought that it was of no use, and that they were altogether a rejected people. Oh, what a difference between him, who in so many respects came nearest to the great apostle in the whole course of Christian Church history, and the apostle Paul? The Jews stoned the apostle, the Jews scourged him, the Jews tortured him, the Jews persecuted him year after year; but no persecution, no bodily suffering, no reproach, was able to eradicate that intense love which burned in his heart, or to remove that heaviness and sorrow which he bore continually concerning the chosen people of God. And whence this difference? Because Luther did not understand clearly “the mystery” explained in Romans xi.

There is one fact which deserves to be noticed—that in the Christian Church, since the middle of last century, Christians have taken an interest in the people of Israel, and have made efforts to evangelize them; but it has always been the case, that the Christians who took an interest in Israel, and evangelized Israel, were those Christians who not merely, thoroughly, and cordially, and without any reservation believed in the divine authority of the Scripture from Genesis down to the book of the Apocalypse, but who accepted the scriptural teaching that Israel was God's nation, and that, although set aside for a time, there were still promises which must surely be fulfilled to them, and that that nation had a future before it when God Himself should interfere, and in a way which perhaps we are not able to understand, show forth His power and His goodness, and bring them again unto Himself in their own land. This is the fact. This fact cannot be controverted, and leads me to say this, that however much people may profess an interest in the Jewish Mission, that interest is not strong enough to stand the strain, that interest is not intense enough to stand the test of experi-



ence; and it will soon decay and languish unless it is grounded on the Word of God. A parallel case is this: Jesus asks Peter, "Lovest thou *Me*?" Then He says, "Feed My sheep." It is not love to the sheep that will sustain Peter in feeding them. It is the fact that they are Christ's sheep. It is not because the sheep are lovable that his interest in them will continue. It is because Christ is lovable that his interest in them will continue. Likewise, unless you believe that *Israel is God's nation* your efforts to evangelize among Israel will soon languish and your patience will be exhausted.

But let us contrast the mission to the heathen and the mission to the Jews. I am anxious to show you why it is especially true with regard to the mission to the Jews that it must be founded upon the prophetic Word, and by "prophetic Word" I mean the whole Bible; for the history of the Bible is also prophetic, written by the Spirit of God, and intimately connected with

Likewise, unless you believe that *Israel is God's nation* your efforts to evangelize among Israel will soon languish and your patience will be exhausted.

the future. In the first place, none will take an interest in a mission to the Jews except a converted man. There are many people interested in missions to the heathen. Why? Because the sins, the crimes, the degradation, the wretchedness, the misery, of heathenism appeal to our human feelings and to our human consciousness.

And idolatry in itself is such an awful and terrible thing that it seems to every one who has the belief that there is one God a most desirable thing that idolatry should be destroyed. But when we come to the Jews, the Jews do believe that there is one God, the Jews do possess the Ten Commandments; the Jews, as far as morality is concerned, may compare themselves with any nation. The Jews themselves feel hurt and offended, and say to us, "Why do you send missionaries to us? Are we more immoral, are we more irreligious than the rest of the community in which we live?" And so it is that unless we know that faith in the divinity of our blessed Saviour is by the Spirit and essential, that righteousness is not by morality and by our works, but by faith in a crucified Redeemer, there will be no interest in missions to the Jews.

Secondly, the number of heathen nations compared with the number of Israelites. There are only about seven or eight million Jews. There are many hundred millions of idolaters. And then, again, it is generally imagined, although this imagination is not grounded upon fact, that the amount of result and fruit of labour has been much greater in the mission to the heathen than it has been in the mission to the Jews. If you look upon the mission to the Jews as one mission among missions, it is quite legitimate for a congregation or for a church to say, "We cannot do everything. We like missions to China." Another says, "We like missions to Africa." A third says, "We like missions to India. We take an interest in them. We have done our mission-duty as far as we are able." But it is not so. You must have a mission to Israel if you are in harmony with the teaching of the Word of God, and after that you must also have a mission to the heathen nations; but no mission to any heathen nation can for a single moment be a substitute



for the mission to the Jews, because the mission to Israel stands by itself, and is unique, and for the simple reason that Israel is, as we have heard, the people whom God has chosen, and concerning whom God has given promises, which are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, and which still await their fulfilment.

I have dwelt upon this point, perhaps, longer than many may think necessary; but I am perfectly convinced, for it meets me in conversation every day, that these simple and elementary truths are not known by the generality of professing Christians, that they do not see them, and that many do not understand why it is that there should be missions to the Jewish nation. We must go back to the Word of God, and to what they are pleased to call our prophetic theories. I wish that it was otherwise. I would fain put the Jewish Mission upon a foundation so broad that all who believe that Jesus is the only Saviour would give to it their interest and their heart. Why is it not enough? Are not the Jews human beings? Are not the Jews sinners? Is there any other Saviour to deliver us from our sin? Is there any Saviour to comfort us in our sorrow but Jesus? Why should the Jews not excite your interest as much as any other nation? And again, even the most shallow reader of the Scripture must make a difference between the Jews and the other nations. You cannot forget their past history. You cannot forget the wonderful revelation which God gave to their fathers, and the wonderful acts which He did in their behalf. The feeling of gratitude must still be burning within your bosom when you remember that the whole Scripture was written by Jewish hands; when you remember that the Psalms, which are so dear to you both for prayer and for praise, came from the sweet Psalmist of Israel; when you remember that your own apostle, who brought to you the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, was of the tribe of Benjamin; when you remember that Jesus, according to the flesh, was of the seed of David and of the seed of Abraham. And if it is not merely that as human beings and as sinners they need the Gospel, and that there is a special interest attaching to them on account of their past history, and that gratitude should prompt you to go forward and to rescue them, are not your compassions moved when you think of the wonderful sorrows of this nation, of the sufferings through which they have gone, of the persecutions which they have endured, of the misery in which they still are in their homelessness and many sorrows? And yet all these things will not suffice. And why not? Because it is only when we are brought into harmony with the mind of God, and when we look upon Israel with the eyes with which Jesus looked upon them, and with the eyes with which Jesus wept over them, that we shall go on in light, and in love, and in perseverance to the great, although the most difficult, work which is entrusted unto the Church on Israel's behalf.

But I think that the Jewish Mission in the present day is especially in harmony with the characteristic feature of the present stage of the Church and the Word. There is an old saying of which Bengel was very fond, "*Deus habet horas et moras.*" "There are pauses in history;" but during these pauses, which are occasioned by the unbelief, the ignorance, and the dis-

obedience of His own people, and are made subservient to the wisdom of God, the great Musician does not forget the melody, and at the proper time it is continued. The mediæval Church did not possess sufficient *Gospel* light, the Reformation Church did not possess sufficient *Prophetic* light, in order to go to the Jews. Now the time has come when the Church, to a certain extent, has entered into the understanding, not merely of the first eight chapters of the epistle to the Romans, but also of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of the same epistle, and therefore this is the time God has prepared. We cannot but feel in our conscience that now is the hour that we are to go forward, knowing that God has sent us.

In the second place, the great battle-field at present is the Old Testament. The Church of Christ has been driven to the study and the defence of the Old Testament, whether she likes it or not. It ought always to have been so. It was a great mistake at any time to imagine that if you insulate the four Gospels from the epistles which follow, and from the Old Testament which precedes, and only hold up the person of Jesus Christ in His beautiful and perfect humanity, that that will be a lever for you by which to lift up the great mountain of unbelief and of infidelity. No, it will not, it has not done so; it cannot do so. Ah! if we had only simply believed our divine Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles, we would never for a single moment have dreamt that it might be so. Men speak of Judaising. Oh, we might speak of Paganising, and of Gentilising, or Hellenising in the Church, which will be, unless God avert it, the very ruin of the Church. Jesus Christ said, "If you believe Moses [*ipso facto*] you believe Me, for Moses wrote of Me." Jesus Christ founded His whole person, all His words, all His acts, all His miracles, all His methods, all His sufferings, all His death, all His resurrection upon Moses and upon the prophets. He knew no other method of convincing the disciples on their way to Emmaus, of converting the fools into wise men, and of converting the slow of heart into men of burning hearts, but this—that, beginning with Moses and showing to them all the Scriptures, He showed to them the divine method concerning Christ.

And seeing now that the Old Testament is the battle-field, never mind the apparent results, the difficulties of the destructive criticism. We know that the end of the conflict is sure, and for this let us thank God. The Church must look into the Old Testament, and the Church must give up all the phantomising and vague explanations which have been in vogue even among orthodox Christians for such a long time, and must see that Israel, the concrete Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, form the subject of the Old Testament from beginning to end. Old and New are one. The whole Old Testament, the friend of the mission to the heathen, and the guarantee of the mission to the heathen, says the idols "shall be utterly destroyed." The New Testament, the Book of the Church based upon the Old, breathes also the promise of the Old, and says, "All Israel shall be saved." I, therefore, say that the mission to the Jews at the present is the mission for the present time, said that the Church of Christ is prepared inwardly and outwardly to take up this work.



We speak much at present about realizing the person of Jesus, that Jesus is the centre of Christianity; and modern theologians boast of it as a peculiar excellence that they do not look upon Jesus merely as the manifestation of God, but that they have come nearer to an appreciation of the humanity of Jesus. I do not enter into what truth there may be in this assertion, but this I will say: What is the humanity of Jesus? How do we understand the humanity of Jesus? He came not to Rome; He came not to Athens; His goings forth are from of old; He is the Son of David; He is the Son of Abraham; He came as the minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promise made unto the fathers. Jewish was His humanity, and the more we are in harmony with Jesus as He lived in the Word of God, in Moses, in the Psalms, and in the prophets, the more shall we understand the human aspect of Jesus Christ. It is no great understanding of the human aspect of Jesus Christ that I know that He had a body; that He required to eat, and to drink, and to sleep; that He was tired, or that I know that He had emotions like all human beings; that He rejoiced, and that He was sad, and that He was moved with compassion, and that He was angry. The spiritual human life of Jesus is His real human life—His faith in God, His communion with the Father, His prayers, His conflicts, His love; and all this was Jewish, in this sense—you will not misunderstand what I mean—that Israel was the divinely-prepared soil, out of which He came forth, and that He was the realized Ideal, prefigured by the patriarchs and prophets.

The Jewish Mission in the present day has also reached another stage on account of the peculiar change which has come over Israel itself; and this is the last point upon which I shall dwell, because I see that the time is passing. When Israel rejected the key which alone is able to open that wonderfully complicated lock, the Old Testament, their own history, and the promises which God had given to them, it could not be otherwise but that they should invent other keys, and these keys had, as it were, to force the wards of the lock; and so, in course of time, we cannot be astonished how utterly far astray they went from the truth which was revealed to their fathers, and which, to a great extent, was seen by the fathers.

Rabbinism for a number of centuries kept the Jews in its iron grip, but Rabbinism and Talmudism have become *effete*. What has been substituted for them? Monotheism, but no Jehovahism; the idea of the unicity of God, but not the knowledge of the living and the loving God, of whom our dear chairman spoke to-day, who could not have communion with His people until at last He came down in the person of His own Son. Monotheism is not able to satisfy the conscience, or give peace and joy to the heart, and, therefore, there are in Israel multitudes who are poor in spirit, who are hungering and thirsting, who have the consciousness that they are blind, and miserable, and wretched, and who are longing after the living water that will satisfy the craving of their soul.

The attitude of Israel to the person of Jesus Himself has become changed, and to the New Testament, which formerly thousands and thousands would not even touch with their hands, regarding it as an unclean thing. It is most astonishing how many thousands of Jews within the last few years have be-

gun to read that Book, and to read it in an attitude of comparative candour. Rabinowitz is a wonderful sign of the times, and the message which, as a Jew, he brings to the Jews, that Jesus is our Brother, whom we sold into Egypt, has awakened a marvellous echo; and although we may not be able to point to many results as far as baptism is concerned, and the organization of such things as appear outwardly and can be registered, yet the amount of interest which has been called forth among the Jews throughout all Europe in the testimony which has been raised by him, clearly shows that there is something special in the present day, that the Jews have entered into a new phase, that the field is prepared, that the hour has come, that it is our duty to go in faith and in love, and bring to them the glad tidings of salvation.

I find that I am not able to enter upon what was really the subject of the address that was assigned to me. I hope that you will kindly forgive me. I am the more reconciled to this necessity, as I know that the subject of the promises to Israel will be taken up by the speaker that succeeds me. I trust that this Convention will be a blessing to us, and a blessing to the cause which we have at heart.

Author info:

Adolph Saphir (1831–91) came to faith as a result of the ministry of 'Rabbi' John Duncan and William Wingate during the Pesth revival in Hungary. He served as pastor of several Free Church of Scotland churches and authored twenty-five volumes, including a two-volume commentary on the Book of Hebrews.



Our Duty to Israel*

by **Robert Murray M'Cheyne**

"To the Jew first." (Rom. i. 16)

Most people are ashamed of the gospel of Christ. *The wise* are ashamed of it, because it calls men to believe and not to argue; *the great* are ashamed of it, because it brings all into one body; *the rich* are ashamed of it, because it is to be had without money and without price; *the gay* are ashamed of it, because they fear it will destroy all their mirth; and so the good news of the glorious Son of God having come into the world a Surety for lost sinners, is despised, uncared for—men are ashamed of it. Who are not ashamed of it? A little company, those whose hearts the Spirit of God has touched. They were once like the world, and of it; but He awakened them to see their sin and misery, and that Christ alone was a refuge, and now they cry, None but Christ! none but Christ! God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ. He is precious to their heart—He lives there; He is often on their lips; He is praised in their family; they would fain proclaim Him to all the world. They have felt in their own experience that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Dear friends, is this your experience? Have you received the gospel not in word only, but in power? Has the power of God been put forth upon your soul along with the word? Then this word is yours: I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

One peculiarity in this statement I wish you to notice. He glories in the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first; from which I draw this DOCTRINE—*That the gospel should be preached first to the Jews.*

(1) *Because judgment will began with them*—"Indignation and wrath, to the Jew first" (Rom. ii. 6–10). It is an awful thought, that the Jew will be the first to stand forward at the bar of God to be judged. When the great white throne is set, and He sits down upon it from whose face the heavens and earth flee away; when the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books are opened, and the dead are judged out of those things

* Preached November 17, 1839, after returning from the Mission to the Jews.

that are written in the books; is it not a striking thought, that Israel—poor blinded Israel—will be the first to stand in judgment before God?

When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him—when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats—when the awful sentence comes forth from His lips, Depart, ye cursed—and when the guilty many shall move away from before Him into everlasting punishment—is it not enough to make the most careless among you pause and consider, that the indignation and wrath shall first come upon the Jew—that their faces will gather a deeper paleness, their knees knock more against each other, and their hearts die within them more than others?

Why is this? Because they have had more light than any other people. God chose them out of the world to be His witnesses. Every prophet was sent first to them; every evangelist and apostle had a message for them. Messiah came to them. He said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The word of God is still addressed to them. They still have it pure and unadulterated in their hand. Yet they have sinned against all this light—against all this love. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers its chickens under its wings, and ye would not!" Their cup of wrath is fuller than that of other men—their sea of wrath is deeper. On their very faces you may read, in every clime, that the curse of God is over them.

Is not this a reason, then, why the gospel should first be preached to the Jew? They are ready to perish—to perish more dreadfully than other men. The cloud of indignation and wrath that is even now gathering above the lost will break first upon the head of guilty, unhappy, unbelieving Israel. And have you none of the bowels of Christ in you, that you will not run first to them that are in so sad a case? In an hospital, the kind physician runs first to that bed where the sick man lies who is nearest to die. When a ship is sinking, and the gallant sailors have left the shore to save the sinking crew, do they not stretch out the arm of help first to those that are readiest to perish beneath the waves? And shall we not do the same for Israel? The billows of God's anger are ready to dash first over them—shall we not seek to bring them first to the rock that is higher than they? Their case is more desperate than that of other men—shall we not bring the good Physician to them, who alone can bring health and cure?—for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

I cannot leave this head without speaking a word to those of you who are in a situation very similar to that of Israel—to you who have the word of God in your hands, and yet are unbelieving and unsaved. In many respects, Scotland may be called God's second Israel. No other land has its Sabbath as Scotland has; no other land has the Bible as Scotland has; no other land has the gospel preached, free as the air we breathe, fresh as the stream from the everlasting hills. Oh, then, think for a moment, you who sit under the shade of faithful ministers, and yet remain unconcerned and



unconverted, and are not brought to sit under the shade of Christ, think how like your wrath will be to that of the unbelieving Jew! And think, again, of the marvellous grace of Christ, that the gospel is first to you. The more that your sins are like scarlet and like crimson, the more is the blood free to you that washes white as snow; for this is still His word to all His ministers, Begin at Jerusalem.

(2) *It is like God to care first for the Jews.*—It is the chief glory and joy of a soul to be like God. You remember this was the glory of that condition in which Adam was created. “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” His understanding was without a cloud. He saw, in some measure, as God seeth; his will flowed in the same channel with God’s will; his affections fastened on the same objects which God also loved. When man fell, we lost all this, and became children of the devil, and not children of God. But when a lost soul is brought to Christ, and receives the Holy Ghost, he puts off the old man, and puts on the new man, which *after God* is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is our true joy in this world to be like God. Too many rest in the joy of being forgiven, but our truest joy is to be *like Him*. Oh, rest not, beloved, till you are renewed after His image, till you partake of the divine nature. Long for the day when Christ shall appear, and we shall be fully *like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is.

Now, what I wish to insist upon at present is, that we should be like God, even in those things which are peculiar. We should be like Him in understanding, in will, in holiness, and also in His *peculiar affections*. “Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.” But the whole Bible shows that God has a peculiar affection for Israel. You remember, when the Jews were in Egypt, sorely oppressed by their taskmasters, God heard their cry, and appeared to Moses: “I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people, and I have heard their cry, for I know their sorrows.”

And, again, when God brought them through the wilderness, Moses tells them why He did it. “The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people, but because the Lord loved you” (Deut. viii. 7). Strange, sovereign, most peculiar love! He loved them because He loved them. Should we not be like God in this peculiar attachment?

But, you say, God has sent them into captivity. Now, it is true God hath scattered them into every land: “The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers!” (Lam. iv. 2). But what says God of this? “I have left Mine house, I have forsaken Mine heritage, I have given *the dearly beloved of My soul* into the hand of her enemies” (Jer. xii. 7). It is true that Israel is given for a little moment into the hand of her enemies, but it is as true that they are still the dearly beloved of His soul. Should we not give

It is true that Israel is given for a little moment into the hand of her enemies, but it is as true that they are still the dearly beloved of His soul. Should we not give them the same place in our heart which God gives them in His heart?

them the same place in our heart which God gives them in His heart? Shall we be ashamed to cherish the same affection which our heavenly Father cherishes? Shall we be ashamed to be unlike the world, and like God in this peculiar love for captive Israel?

But you say, God has cast them off. Hath God cast away His people which He foreknew? God forbid! The whole Bible contradicts such an idea. "Is Ephraim My dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore My bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 20). "I will plant them again in their own land assuredly, with My whole heart, and with My whole soul." "Zion saith, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. xlix. 14). "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." Now the simple question for each of you is, and for our beloved Church, Should we not share with God in His peculiar affection for Israel? If we are filled with the Spirit of God, should we not love as He loves? Should we not grave Israel upon the palms of our hands, and resolve that through our mercy they also may obtain mercy?

(3) *Because there is peculiar access to the Jews.*—In almost all the countries we have visited, this fact is quite remarkable; indeed, it seems in many places as if the only door left open to the Christian missionary is the door of preaching to the Jews.

We spent some time in Tuscany, the freest state in the whole of Italy. There you dare not preach the gospel to the Roman Catholic population. The moment you give a tract or a Bible, it is carried to the priest, and by the priest to the government, and immediate banishment is the certain result. But the door is open to the Jews. No man cares for their souls; and therefore you may carry the gospel to them freely.

The same is the case in Egypt and in Palestine.—You dare not preach the gospel to the deluded followers of Mahomet; but you may stand in the open market-place and preach the gospel to the Jews, no man forbidding you. We visited every town in the Holy Land where Jews are found. In Jerusalem and in Hebron we spoke to them all the words of this life. In Sychar we reasoned with them in the synagogue, and in the open bazaar. In Chaifa, at the foot of Carmel, we met with them in the synagogue. In Zidon also we discoursed freely to them of Jesus. In Tyre we first visited them in the synagogue and at the house of the Rabbi, and then they returned our visit; for when we had lain down in the khan for the heat of mid-day, they came to us in crowds. The Hebrew Bible was produced, and passage after passage explained, none making us afraid. In Saphet, and Tiberias, and Acre we had the like freedom. There is indeed perfect liberty in the Holy Land to carry the gospel to the Jew.

In Constantinople, if you were to preach to the Turks, as some have tried, banishment is the consequence; but to the Jew you may carry the message. *In Wallachia and Moldavia* the smallest attempt to convert a Greek would



draw down the instant vengeance of the Holy Synod and of the government. But in every town we went freely to the Jews: in Bucharest, in Foxany, in Jassy, and in many a remote Wallachian hamlet, we spoke without hindrance the message to Israel. The door is wide open.

In Austria, where no missionary of any kind is allowed, still we found the Jews willing to hear. In their synagogues we always found a sanctuary open to us; and often, when they knew they could have exposed us, they concealed that we had been there.

In Prussian Poland, the door is wide open to nearly one hundred thousand Jews. You dare not preach to the poor Rationalist Protestants. Even in Protestant Prussia this would not be allowed; but you may preach the gospel to the Jews. By the law of the land every church is open to an ordained minister; and one of the missionaries assured me that he often preached to four or five hundred Jews and Jewesses at a time. Schools for Jewish children are also allowed. We visited three of them, and heard the children taught the way of salvation by a Redeemer. Twelve years ago the Jews would not have come near a church.

If these things be true,—and I appeal to all of you who know these countries if it is not—if the door in one direction is shut, and the door to Israel is so widely open, oh, do you not think that God is saying by His providence, as well as by His word, Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Do you think that our Church, knowing these things, will be guiltless if we do not obey the call? for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

(4) *Because they will give life to the dead world.*—I have often thought that a reflective traveller, passing through the countries of this world, and observing the race of Israel in every land, might be led to guess, merely from the light of his natural reason, that that singular people are preserved for some great purpose in the world. There is a singular fitness in the Jew to be the missionary of the world. They have not that peculiar attachment to home and country which we have. They feel that they are outcasts in every land. They are also inured to every clime: they are to be found amid the snows of Russia, and beneath the burning sun of Hindostan. They are also in some measure acquainted with all the languages of the world, and yet have one common language—the holy tongue—in which to communicate with one another. All these things must, I should think, suggest themselves to every intelligent traveller as he passes through other lands. *But what says the word of God?*

“It shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing” (Zech. viii. 13). To this day they are a curse among all nations, by their unbelief—by their covetousness; but the time is coming when they shall be as great a blessing as they have been a curse.

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men” (Mic. v. 7). Just as we have found, among the parched hills of Judah, that the evening dew, coming silently down,

gave life to every plant, making the grass to spring, and the flowers to put forth their sweetest fragrance, so shall converted Israel be when they come as dew upon a dead, dry world.

"In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. viii. 23). This never has been fulfilled; but, as the word of God is true, this is true. Perhaps some one may say, If the Jews are to be the great missionaries of the world, let us send missions to them only. We have got a new light; let us call back our missionaries from India. They are wasting their precious lives there in doing what the Jews are to accomplish. I grieve to think that any lover of Israel should so far pervert the truth as to argue in this way. The Bible does not say that we are to preach *only* to the Jew, but to the Jew *first*. "Go and preach the gospel to *all* nations," said the Saviour. Let us obey His word like little children. The Lord speed our beloved missionaries in that burning clime. The Lord give them good success, and never let one withering doubt cross their pure minds as to their glorious field of labour. All that we plead for is, that, in sending out missionaries to the heathen, we may not forget to begin at Jerusalem. If Paul be sent to the Gentiles, let Peter be sent to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad; and let not a by-corner in your hearts be given to this cause; let it not be an appendix to the other doings of our Church, but rather let there be written on the forefront of your hearts, and on the banner of our beloved Church, "To the Jew first," and "Beginning at Jerusalem."

Lastly, Because there is a great reward. "Blessed is he that blesseth thee; cursed is he that curseth thee." "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love her." We have felt this in our own souls. In going from country to country we felt that there was One before us preparing our way. Though we have had perils in the waters, and perils in the wilderness, perils from sickness, and perils from the heathen, still from all the Lord has delivered us; and if it shall please God to restore our revered companions in this mission in peace and safety to their anxious families,¹ we shall then have good reason to say, that in keeping His commandment there is great reward.

May I not take the liberty of adding to this striking declaration, that we must not only be evangelistic, but evangelistic as God would have us to be,—not only dispense the light on every hand, but dispense it first to the Jew?

But your souls shall be enriched also, and our Church too, if this cause find its right place in your affections. It was well said by one who has a deep place in your affections, and who is now on his way to India,

that our Church must not only be evangelical, but evangelistic also, if she would expect the blessing of God. She must not only have the light, but dispense it also, if she is to be continued as a steward of God. May I not take the liberty of adding to this striking declaration, that we must not only be

1 Drs. Black and Keith were at this time still detained by sickness abroad.

evangelistic, but evangelistic as *God would have us to be*,—not only dispense the light on every hand, but dispense it first to the Jew?

Then shall God revive His work in the midst of the years. Our whole land shall be refreshed as Kilsyth has been. The cobwebs of controversy shall be swept out of our sanctuaries, the jarrings and jealousies of our Church be turned into the harmony of praise, and our own souls become like a well-watered garden.

Author info:

Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813–43), a Scottish minister, served as pastor of St. Peter's Church, Dundee. He was a member of the Mission of Inquiry sent out by the Church of Scotland to find locations suitable for establishing Jewish missions.





Jesus the Messiah*

by **Andrew Fuller**

Though I have preached the gospel between thirty and forty years, yet I do not recollect to have ever entered a pulpit with such feelings as at present. In respect of the *subject*, I feel it an honour to plead the cause of my Lord and Saviour, but I am not without apprehensions, lest it should suffer through my manner of pleading it. I must therefore entreat, that if anything which may be delivered should be found to be improper, you would impute it not to the cause, but to the imperfection of the advocate.

I have also some peculiar feelings on account of the *audience*, part of which, I am given to understand, are of the house of Israel. I cannot help recalling to mind the debt we owe to that distinguished people. They have been treated with both cruelty and contempt by men professing Christianity; but surely, not by Christians! To them, under God, we are indebted for a Bible, for a Saviour, and for all that we know of the one living and true God. Who, then, will not join me in the language of the Apostle? "Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God for Israel, is, that they may be saved!"

The passage on which I shall found what I have to offer, is in the fortieth Psalm, the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses:

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."

No Christian can doubt whether the passage relates to the Messiah, seeing it is expressly applied to him in the New Testament;¹ and if a Jew should raise an objection, he will find it difficult, if not impossible, to give a fair exposition of it on any other principle. Who else, with propriety, could use

* This is an abridgement of a sermon delivered at the Jews' Chapel, Church-Street, Spitalfields, on November 19, 1809.

¹ Heb 10:5–10.



the language here used? Certainly, David could not. Whether the Messiah, therefore be already come, as we believe, or be yet to come, as the body of the Jewish nation believes, it must be of his coming that the prophet speaks. The question at issue between them and us, is, not whether the Scriptures predict and characterize the Messiah, but whether these predictions and characters be fulfilled in Jesus.

That we may be able to judge of this question, let it be observed that there are three characters held up in the passage I have read, as distinguishing the Messiah's coming, viz. that the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Mosaic law would, from thence, be superseded; that the great body of Scripture prophecy would be accomplished; and, that the will of God would be perfectly fulfilled. Let us calmly and candidly try the question at issue by these characters. It is intimated, that whenever the Messiah should come,

I. The Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the Mosaic Law Were to Be Superseded by Him

"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: then said I, 'Lo, I come.'" I am aware that modern Jewish writers contend for the perpetuity of the ceremonial, as well as of the moral law; but in this they are opposed, both by Scripture and by fact.

As to *Scripture*, it is not confined to the passage I have read, nor to a few others: it is common for the sacred writers of the Old Testament to speak of sacrifices and ceremonies in a depreciating strain, such as would not, I presume, have been used had they been regarded for their own sake or designed to continue always. Such is the language of the following passages:

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."² "Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings: they have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds; for every beast of the field is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountain; and the wild beast of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon me in the day of, trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shall glorify me."³ "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and

² 1 Sam 15:22.

³ Ps 50:7-15.

contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."⁴ "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me,' saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts?"⁵ "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, ye heap up your burnt offerings with your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. But when I brought your fathers out of Egypt, I spake not unto them of burnt offerings and sacrifices; but this I commanded them, saying, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.'⁶ "And, in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."⁷

Such, O ye children of Israel, is the language of your own Scriptures. That the covenant made with your fathers at Mount Sinai was never designed to be perpetual, but to be abolished at the coming of Messiah, is manifest from the words of the prophet:

"Behold, the days come," saith the Lord, "that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord) but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days," saith the Lord, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," saith the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquities, and will remember their sins no more."⁸

From this passage, a New Testament writer argues (and do you answer it if you can): "In that he saith, 'a new covenant,' he hath made the first *old*. Now, that which decayeth, and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." And respecting their sins and iniquities being *remembered no more*: "Where remission of these is, *there is no more offering for sin*."⁹

Is, it not, then, in perfect harmony with the tenor of your Scriptures, that Messiah, when described as coming into the world, should say, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required: then said I, 'Lo, I come,'"

4 Ps 51:16–17.

5 Isa 1:11–12.

6 Jer 7:21–23.

7 Dan 9:27.

8 Jer 31:31–34.

9 Heb 8:13 and 17–18.



plainly intimating that he would come to accomplish that which could not be accomplished by sacrifices and offerings; and that, as these were but the scaffolding of his temple, when that should be reared, these should, of course, be taken down.

But I have asserted that, in maintaining the perpetuity of the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, your writers are not only opposed by Scripture, but by fact. Whether Messiah the prince be come, or not, sacrifice and oblation have ceased. We believe they *virtually* ceased when Jesus offered himself a sacrifice, and in a few years after [they] *actually* ceased. Those of your nation who believed in Jesus, voluntarily, though gradually, ceased to offer them; and those who did not believe in him, were compelled to desist, by the destruction of their city and temple. You may adhere to a few of your ancient ceremonies, but it can only be like gathering round the ashes of the system: the substance of it is consumed. "The sacrifices of the holy temple," as one of your writers acknowledges, "have ceased."

The amount is, whether Jesus be the Messiah, or not; his appearance in the world had this character pertaining to it, that it was the period in which the sacrifice and the oblation actually ceased. And it is worthy of your serious inquiry, whether these things *can* be accomplished in any other than Jesus. Should Messiah the Prince come at some future period, as your nation expects, how are the sacrifice and the oblation to cease on his appearance, when they have already ceased nearly eighteen hundred years? If, therefore, he be not come, he can never come so as to answer this part of the Scripture account of him. It is suggested, that whenever Messiah should come,

Should Messiah the Prince come at some future period, as your nation expects, how are the sacrifice and the oblation to cease on his appearance, when they have already ceased nearly eighteen hundred years?

II. The Great Body of Scripture Prophecy Should Be Accomplished in Him

"In the volume of the book it is written of me." That the prophetic writings abound in predictions of the Messiah, no Jew will deny; the only question is, "Are they fulfilled in Jesus?" You know (I speak to them who read the Bible) that *the seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent*. You know that God promised Abraham, saying, "In *thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." You know that Jacob, when blessing the tribe of Judah, predicted the coming of Shiloh, unto whom the gathering of the people should be. You know that Moses spake of a *prophet* that the Lord your God should raise up from the midst of you, like unto him, to whom you were to hearken, on pain of incurring the Divine displeasure. You know that the Messiah is prophetically described in the Psalms and the prophets under a great variety of forms; particularly, as the *anointed* of the Lord, the King, the Lord of David, to whom Jehovah spake, the *child born*, whose name should be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the

Prince of Peace, the *rod out of the stem of Jesse—God's servant*, whom he upholds; his *elect*, in whom his soul delighteth, him whom *man despiseth*, and whom the *nation* abhorreth, a *man of sorrows*, and *acquainted with grief—the Lord, our righteousness—Messiah the Prince, the Branch, the Messenger of the covenant*, etc. Thus it was that in the volume of the book it was written of him. Whoever proves to be the Messiah, your fathers rejoiced in the faith of him.

In trying the question, whether the prophecies be fulfilled in Jesus, it will be necessary, for the sake of perspicuity, to class them under different heads, such as time, place, family, etc.

First, the *time* when Messiah should come is clearly marked out in prophecy. It was said by Jacob, when blessing the tribes, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, *until Shiloh come*; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."¹⁰ All this was true in respect of Jesus. Till he came, though the ten tribes were scattered, Judah continued a people; and retained the government: but soon after his death, they were dispersed among the nations, and have been so ever since. "Kings and princes," says one of your own writers, "we have none." If, therefore, Shiloh be not come, he can never come within the limits of time marked out by this prophecy.

Again, it is clearly intimated in the prophecy of Haggai, for the encouragement of the builders of the second temple, that the Messiah should come *during the standing of that temple*; and that the honour that should be done it by his presence would more than balance its inferiority, in other respects, to the first. "For, thus saith the Lord of hosts, 'Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will *shake* all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory,' saith the Lord of hosts. 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,' saith the Lord of hosts. 'The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former,' saith the Lord of hosts."¹¹ All this was literally fulfilled in Jesus. But soon after his death, the second temple was reduced to ashes: if, therefore, Jesus was not the Messiah, it is impossible that this prophecy should ever be accomplished.

Again, the prophet Daniel was informed by the angel Gabriel as follows:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

¹⁰ Gen 49:10.

¹¹ Hag 2:6–9.



And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst (or half part) of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.¹²

That there should be some difficulty in fixing the dates and other minute particulars in this prophecy, is no more than may be said of many others, which yet, upon the whole, are clear and decisive. The prediction of the seventy years captivity was not understood by Daniel till he had studied the subject with attention:¹³ and, though he made out "the number of years," and concluded that they were *about* fulfilled, yet he does not appear to have discovered the exact time of their being so. Nevertheless, the prophecy of seventy years was undoubtedly fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity; and this of seventy weeks of years is certainly fulfilled in the appearance and death of Jesus. Whether Christian writers agree as to the exact time when these seventy sabbatical weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, began or not, thus much is certain, that they must have been fulfilled *about* the time that Jesus appeared and suffered, or they never can be fulfilled.

Such was the effect of this and other prophecies upon the minds of the Jewish nation, that about that time, there was a general expectation of the Messiah's appearance. Hence, though your fathers rejected Jesus, yet they soon after believed in *Barchocab* [Bar Kochba], and crowned him as their Messiah; which involved them in a war with the Romans, wherein they are said, to have had a thousand cities and fortresses destroyed, and to have lost more than *five hundred and eighty thousand men!* The predicted events which were to be accomplished at the close of these weeks, viz. "finishing transgression, making an end of sins, making reconciliation for iniquity, bringing in everlasting righteousness, sealing up the vision and prophecy, and anointing the Most Holy," are in perfect harmony with the New Testament history of Jesus; and, though unbelief may blind the minds of your nation to some of them, yet, the "sealing up of the vision and prophecy," is a matter so notorious, that one would think it were impossible to deny it. Jesus foretold the destruction of your city and temple by the Romans; and his apostles foretold things relating to the Christian church; but from that time your nation has been, not only "without a king, without a prince; and without a sacrifice," but *without a prophet.*

Moreover, it is predicted by Daniel that shortly after the Messiah should be cut off, the people of the prince that should come would destroy the city and the sanctuary, and that the end thereof should be desolation. And

¹² Dan 9:24–27.

¹³ Dan 9:2.

is it not fact, that about forty years after the death of Jesus, both your city and sanctuary were destroyed by the Romans; and that such a flood of desolation and misery attended it, as was unexampled in your history, or that of any other nation?

Taking the whole together, it behooves you to consider whether, if this prophecy be not fulfilled in Jesus, it can ever be fulfilled and whether it be possible to ascertain the fulfillment of any prophecy?

Secondly, the *place* where Messiah should be born, and where he should principally impart his doctrine is determined: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Speaking of Galilee of the nations in connection with the birth of the child, whose name should be called "the Mighty God," it is said, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."¹⁴ These prophecies were literally and manifestly fulfilled in Jesus; and it is scarcely credible that they can be fulfilled in any other.

Thirdly, the *house*, or *family*, from whom Messiah should descend is clearly ascertained. So much is said of his descending from David, that I need not refer to particular proofs; and the rather, as no Jew will deny it. The genealogies of Matthew and Luke, whatever varieties there are between them, agree in tracing his pedigree to David. And though, in both, it is traced in the name of Joseph, yet this appears to be only in conformity to the Jewish custom of tracing no pedigree in the name of a female. The father of Joseph, as mentioned by Luke, seems to have been his father by marriage only; so that it was, in reality, Mary's pedigree that is traced by Luke, though under her husband's name; and this being the *natural* line of descent and that of Matthew the *legal* one, by which, as a king, he would have inherited the crown, there is no inconsistency between them.

But whatever supposed difficulties may, at this distance of time, attend the genealogies, it is remarkable that no objection appears to have been made to them in the early ages of Christianity; and when, had they been incorrect, they might easily have been disproved by the public registries which were then in being. Could the Jews in the time of Jesus have disproved his being of the seed of David, his Messiahship would at once have fallen to the ground; and for this they could not be [lacking] in inclination. Had there, moreover, been any doubt on this subject, the emperor *Domitian*, in searching after those who were of the seed of David, would not have ordered the relations of Jesus before him, who, when interrogated, did not deny but that they were descended from him.¹⁵

Finally, if the genealogy of Jesus be called into question by the modern Jews, how are they to prove the Messiah, whenever he shall come, to have

¹⁴ Mic 5:2; Isa 9:2.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *Eccl. History* 3.20.



descended from David; since, if I am not mistaken, they have now no certain genealogies left amongst them?

Fourthly, the *kind* of miracles that Messiah should perform is specified. Isaiah, speaking of the coming of God to save his people, says, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."¹⁶ That such miracles were performed by Jesus, his enemies themselves bare witness, in that they ascribed them to his connection with Beelzebub. When his Messiahship was questioned, he could say, in the presence of many witnesses, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." The miracles of Jesus were distinguished by their benevolence. They were all works of mercy, as well as of power; and this accorded with the character given of the Messiah in the seventy-second Psalm, that he "should deliver the needy when he cried; the poor also, and him that had no helper." Hence the blind cried out, "Son of David, have mercy on us."

Fifthly, it was predicted of the Messiah that he should, as a king, be distinguished by his *lowliness*, entering into Jerusalem, not in a chariot of state, but in a much humbler style, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."¹⁷ To fulfill this prophecy, it was necessary that the Messiah should descend from parents in low circumstances; and that the leading people of the land should not accompany him. Had they believed in him, and introduced him as a king, it must have been in another fashion. But it was reserved for the common people and the children to fulfill the prophet's words, by shouting, "Hosanna, to the Son of David; blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Sixthly, it is predicted of the Messiah that he should *suffer and die by the hands of wicked men*.

"Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom *man despiseth*, to him whom *the nation abhorreth*."¹⁸ "As many were astonished at thee, (*his face was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,*) so shall he sprinkle many nations."¹⁹ "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was wounded* for our transgres-

16 Isa 35:5-6.

17 Zech 9:9.

18 Isa 49:7.

19 Isa 52:14-15.

sions, he was *bruised* for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his *stripes* we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation; for he was *cut off out of the land of the living*; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . . It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."²⁰ "The Messiah shall be cut off; but not for himself."²¹

The attempts that have been made to explain away these prophecies, especially the fifty-third of Isaiah, and to make it apply to Israel, as a nation, are marks of a desperate cause.

Is it not marvelous that the enemies of Jesus should so exactly fulfill the Scriptures in reproaching and crucifying him; using the very speeches, and inflicting the very cruelties, which it was foretold they would? "He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."²² "They parted my garments, and for my vesture they did cast lots."²³ "They gave me gall to eat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."²⁴ "They pierced my hands and my feet."²⁵ These things were not true of the writers, but they were true of Jesus. In him, therefore, they were fulfilled.

Seventhly, it was foretold that the Messiah, after being cut off out of the land of the living and laid in the grave, *should rise from the dead*. Nothing less can be implied by all the promises made to him as the reward of his sufferings; for if he had continued under the power of death, how should he have seen his seed or prolonged his days? If his kingdom had been that of a mortal man, how could it continue as long as the sun and moon? How was he to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, unless he survived that travail? But more than this, it is foretold that he should rise from the dead at so early a period as "*not to see corruption*."²⁶ The argument of Peter from this passage has never been answered.²⁷ David said, "Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," but David did see corruption. He refers to him, therefore, of whom it is witnessed that he saw no corruption.

20 Isa 53:3–8, 10–11.

21 Dan 9:26.

22 Ps 22:8.

23 Ps 22:18.

24 Ps 69:21.

25 Ps 22:16.

26 Ps 16:10.

27 Acts 2:24–32.



Lastly, it was foretold that *the great body of the Jewish nation would not believe in him; and that he would set up his kingdom among the Gentiles*. Such is evidently the meaning of the prophet's complaint, "Who hath believed our report?"²⁸ and of the Messiah's words, in another part of the same prophecies, "Then I said, I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God! And now, saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him"—Though Israel be not gathered, "yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth."²⁹

Your writers complain of ours for interpreting the promises to Israel *spiritually*, and the threatenings *literally* (!) and tell us that they are not greatly obliged to us for it. But this is misrepresentation. Our writers neither interpret all the promises to Israel spiritually, nor all the threatenings literally. They expect your return, and that at no very distant period, to your own land: for, besides many Old Testament prophecies to this effect, he that said concerning the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," added, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."³⁰ And, in regard of the *threatenings*, the heaviest of them all is that which is expressed by Isaiah (6:9–12), "Go tell this people; hear ye, indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, 'Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.'"

This awful judgment was indeed to issue in *temporal* calamities, but the judgment itself is *spiritual*; a judgment, the nature of which prevents your feeling it, but which is a greater evil than all your other punishments put together.

Such are some of the evidences from which we conclude that Jesus is the true Messiah. Time, place, family, miracles, character, sufferings, resurrection, and rejection by his own countrymen, all are fulfilled in him. Never was such a body of prophecy given and accomplished in any other case. If

Your writers complain of ours for interpreting the promises to Israel *spiritually*, and the threatenings *literally* (!) and tell us that they are not greatly obliged to us for it. But this is misrepresentation.

28 Isa 53:1.

29 Isa 49:4–6.

30 Luke 21:24.

you still shut your eyes upon the light, you must abide the consequence; for our parts, we feel the ground we stand upon, when saying, "We know that the Son of God is come." It is declared, that when the Messiah should come,

III. The Will of God Would Be Perfectly Fulfilled by Him

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Agreeably to this, the Messiah is denominated God's *servant*, whom he would uphold; in whom he would be glorified; and who should bring Jacob again to him.³¹

The will of God sometimes denotes what he approves, and sometimes what he appoints. The first is the rule of our conduct, the last of his own; and both we affirm to have been fulfilled by Jesus.

In respect of the divine *precepts*, his whole life was in perfect conformity to them. All his actions were governed by love. Your fathers were challenged to convince him of sin; and you are challenged to do the same. Yet your nation reckons him an impostor! Was there ever such an impostor? Nay, was there ever such a character seen amongst men? Should the account given of him by the evangelists be objected to, we might answer from Rosseau, "The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospels; the marks of whose truth are so striking and invincible, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."³²

When a sinful creature is described as having the law of God in his heart, it is said to be *written* there, or *put in him* by the Spirit of God; but of the Messiah it is said to be *within him*. His heart never existed without the impression, and therefore needed not to have *it put in him*. Such was Jesus; and such the spirit that he manifested throughout his life. Let the character, besides him, be named, who dares to rest the truth of his pretensions on his being found to be "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"!

But it was not merely to fulfill the Divine precepts that the Messiah was to come, but to execute his *purpose* in saving lost sinners. Even his obedience to the law was subservient to this, or he could not have been "the Lord our righteousness." He was God's servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, to give light to the Gentiles, and to be his salvation to the end of the earth. In accomplishing this, it behoved him to endure the penalty, as well as obey the precepts, of the law. "His soul must be made an offering for sin"; he must be "cut off out of the land of the living"—"cut off, but not for himself"; and this that he might make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

Such was the doctrine of the ancient Israelites, and such is that of the New Testament. If it be true, let me entreat you to consider the consequences.

31 Cf. Isa 42:1; 49:3, 5.

32 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Works* 5:215–18.



First, while you hold fast the traditions of later ages, you have renounced the religion and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in doing this have rejected the only way of salvation. Your ancient fathers depended for acceptance with God on the righteousness of the promised Messiah, but on what do you depend who believe not in Jesus? Was not the charge of the apostle true, and is it not true to this hour, that going "about to establish their own righteousness, they had not submitted to the righteousness of God"? Your ancient fathers were holy men of God, but can this be said of such of you as believe not in Jesus? Far be it from us to load you, in a single instance, with unmerited reproach, but we must needs say we have neither seen nor heard, either in your public worship or ordinary conversation, anything resembling the religion of the Bible. Again, if the thing which I have attempted to establish be true, your fathers crucified the Lord of glory, and you, by approving the deed, make it your own. And this accounts for several things which have befallen your nation, and which otherwise are not easily accounted for, such as the destruction of your temple and city within forty years of the event, your scattered condition for so long a period, and the spirit of obduracy and bitterness to which, during that period, you have been given up. We see nothing like it in any other nation upon earth. Finally, if what has been advanced be true, Jesus Christ will one day come in the clouds of heaven, and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him shall wail because of him! Consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.

We doubt not but the time will come when your nation shall look on him whom their fathers pierced, and shall mourn as one mourneth for an only son, but if it be not so with you, it is the more affecting. To see, at the last judgment, not only Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, but millions of your own unborn posterity, sitting down in the kingdom of God, and ye yourselves cast out, is inexpressibly affecting!

I have lately looked into some of the modern Jewish writings. It would be going beyond my limits to attempt an answer to many of their objections to the gospel, but I will touch upon a few which struck me in the course of reading.

They find many things spoken in prophecy of the reign of the Messiah, which are not as yet fulfilled in Jesus, such as the cessation of wars, the restoration of the Jewish nation, etc., and argue from hence, that Jesus is not the Messiah. But it is not said that these effects should immediately follow on his appearing. On the contrary, there was to be an "increase of his government," yea, a "continued" increase.³³ Jesus may be the Messiah, and his reign may be begun, while yet, seeing it is not ended, there may be many things at present unfulfilled. It might, with equal propriety, have been objected to the religion of your fathers in the days of Samuel, that the promise made to Abraham of giving his posterity the whole land, "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,"³⁴ had not

33 Isa 9:7.

34 Gen 15:18.

been fulfilled. It certainly had not at that time, but it was fulfilled in the days of David and Solomon. And thus, we are persuaded, it will be in respect of the cessation of wars, ere Christianity has finished its course. The kingdom of the Messiah was to continue as long as the sun and the moon.³⁵ It was to be *set up* during the reign of the fourth monarchy, but was itself to survive it, and to stand for ever.³⁶

But they object that the doctrine taught by Jesus was *not of a pacific tendency*—that, on the contrary, it was, by his own confession, adapted to produce division and discord. “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, but a sword, for I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”³⁷ These words, however (as a child in just reasoning would perceive), do not express what the gospel is in its own nature, but what it would occasion through the hatred of its enemies. They describe not the bitterness of believers against unbelievers, but of unbelievers against believers, for the gospel’s sake. The good works of Abel excited the hatred of Cain, but ought Abel to be reproached on this account? The message of peace sent by Hezekiah to the remnant of the ten tribes, inviting them to come up to the Passover at Jerusalem, occasioned the same bitter contempt amongst the idolaters, as the gospel does amongst the unbelievers of your nation. Yet surely it was a pacific message notwithstanding, and ought to have been differently received.³⁸ We might as well reproach the God of Israel for his messages to Pharaoh, having hardened his heart; yea, for his laws given at Sinai having been the occasion of all the wickedness of your fathers; for if he had given them no laws, they had not been guilty of transgressing them!

They further object, with their fathers, that Jesus *pretended to be the Son of God*, and so was guilty of blasphemy. But if he were the Messiah, he was the Son of God. Did not God, in the second Psalm, address him as his Son, and are not the kings and judges of the earth admonished to submit to him under that character?

Much has been said of your believing in *one* God, and who requires you to believe in more than one? If you infer from hence that there can be no plurality of persons in the Godhead, you contradict your own Scriptures, as well as ours. Who made the heavens and the earth? Did not *Elohim*? And did he not say, “Let *us* make man”? Who wrestled with Jacob? And who appeared to Moses in the bush? Was it not *Jehovah*? Yet he is represented, in both cases, as the Angel, or *Messenger of Jehovah*.

Some of the *precepts* of Jesus are objected to, as being impracticable, and Christians [are] accused of hypocrisy for pretending to respect them, while none of them act up to them; that is, “when they are smitten on one

35 Ps 72:5.

36 Dan 2:44.

37 Matt 10:34–36.

38 2 Chron 30:19.



cheek, they do not offer the other."³⁹ But this is perverseness. Jesus did not mean it literally, nor did he so exemplify it when smitten before Pilate. Nor do the Jews so understand their own commandments. If they do, however, it will follow that they break the sixth commandment in every malefactor whose execution they promote, and even in the killing of animals for food. The manifest design of the precept is to prohibit all private retaliation and revenge, and to teach us that we ought rather to suffer insult, than to render evil for evil. This may be a hard lesson for a proud spirit, but it is a true exposition of that law which requires us to "love our neighbour as ourselves," which is inconsistent with every feeling of *malice*, whatever provocations may have been received.

But this is not all; the very agony of Jesus in the garden provokes the malignity of these writers. The anguish of his soul on that occasion is ascribed to *pusillanimity*! Have they a right, then, when judging of his conduct, to take it for granted that he was not the Messiah, and that his death was like that of another man? Certainly they have not. The objection, if it has any force, is this—his [lack] of fortitude is inconsistent with his being the Messiah. To this we answer, supposing him to be the Messiah, there was nothing inconsistent in any of those fears, and sorrows which he expressed. For, if he were the Messiah, he must, according to prophecy, have suffered immediately from the hand of God as well as from man. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him. . . . It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief."⁴⁰ But if the agony in the garden were of this description, there was no [lack] of fortitude in it. So far as the wrath of man was concerned, Jesus feared it not. He endured the cross, and even despised the shame, but, under the hand of God, he both feared and felt; and I never understood before that it was pusillanimous to fear or feel under the hand of the Almighty! But we need not marvel, for he who, in the language of prophecy, complained of having "gall given him for meat, and vinegar for drink," added, "they persecute him whom thou hast smitten!"⁴¹ All these objections prove the truth of what was said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again," or, to speak in Jewish language, except he be *circumcised in heart*, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." The gospel is a system that cannot be received by a mind blinded by prejudice, or a heart hardened in sin. He that receives it must repent, as well as believe. It is in hope that God, peradventure, may give some of you repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that these addresses are made to you. And, though some may make light of them, and even mock, as the idolaters did at Hezekiah's messengers, yet we will deliver our messages, that, if you perish, your blood may not be required at our hands.

O! ye children of Israel, our hearts' desire and prayer to God for you is that you may be saved! Consider, we entreat you, whether you have not

39 Rabbi Tobias Goodman, "An Address to the Committee of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews" (1809), 25.

40 Isa 53:5, 10.

41 Ps 69:21–26.

forsaken the religion of your forefathers; whether the Psalms of David express the feelings of your hearts; whether, if you really loved the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you would not believe in Jesus; whether, if you had just views of your own law, you would not despair of being accepted of God by the works of it; whether your rejection of Jesus be not owing to your insensibility as to your need of a Saviour; whether, if you really believed the Old Testament, you would not believe the New; [and] finally, whether the bitter malignity, which is so frequently discovered against Jesus and his followers, be consistent with true religion?

But I shall conclude with a few words to professing *Christians*. I can perceive, by what I have seen of the Jewish writings, how much they avail themselves of our disorders and divisions to justify their unbelief. Let those who name the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Let us beware of valuing ourselves in the name, while we are destitute of the thing. We may yield a sort of assent to the doctrine just delivered, while yet it brings forth no good fruit in us. These are the things that rivet Jews in their unbelief. They have no right, indeed, to entrench themselves in prejudice against the Lord Jesus on account of our disorders: he is no more accountable for them, than the God of Israel was for the disorders of their forefathers. But though it be wrong in them, it is more so in those who furnish them with occasion of offence. There is a woe upon the world, because of offences, seeing they stumble and fall over them, but there is a heavier woe on them through whom they come.

He that *winneth* souls is wise. I hope all the measures that are taken for the conversion of the Jews, will be of a winning nature. If they be malignant and abusive, they must not be opposed with the same weapons. The servants of the Lord must not strive, as for mastery, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. Whatever is done, for children or adults, I trust it will be in an open, candid way, like that of our Saviour, who did good to the bodies of men, as a means of attracting their attention, and conciliating their affection to the word of everlasting life.

Author info:

Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) served as pastor of Baptist churches in Soham and Kettering, England. He was a theologian and founding father of the English Baptist Missionary Society. C. H. Spurgeon described Fuller as “the greatest theologian” of his century.

The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews*

by **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**



This vision [Ezekiel 37:1–14] has been used from the time of Jerome onwards, as a *description of the resurrection*, and certainly it may be so accommodated with much effect. But, while this interpretation of the vision may be very proper as an accommodation, it must be quite evident that this is not the meaning of the passage. There is no allusion made by Ezekiel to the resurrection, and such a topic would have been quite apart from the design of the prophet's speech. I believe he was no more thinking of the resurrection of the dead than of the building of St. Peter's at Rome, or the emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers. That topic is altogether foreign to the subject in hand, and could not by any possibility have crept into the prophet's mind. He was talking about the people of Israel, and prophesying concerning them; and evidently the vision, according to God's own interpretation of it, was concerning them, and them alone, for "these bones are the whole house of Israel." It was not a vision concerning all men, nor, indeed, concerning any men as to the resurrection of the dead, but it had a direct and special bearing upon the Jewish people.

This passage, again, has been very frequently, and I dare say very properly, used to describe *the revival of a decayed Church*. This vision may be looked upon as descriptive of a state of lukewarmness and spiritual lethargy in a Church, when the question may be sorrowfully asked—"Can these bones live?" But while we admit this to be a very fitting accommodation of our text, yet we are quite convinced that it is not to this that the passage refers. It would be altogether alien to the prophet's strain of thought to be thinking about the restoration of fallen zeal and the rekindling of expiring love; he was not considering the Reformation either of Luther or of Whitefield, or about the revival of one Church or of another. No, he was talking of his own people, of his own race, and of his own tribe. He surely ought

*This is an abridgement of a sermon preached on Thursday evening, June 16th, 1864, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, in aid of the Funds of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Jews.

to have known his own mind, and led by the Holy Spirit he gives us as an explanation of the vision, not—"Thus saith the Lord, My dying Church shall be restored," but—"I will bring My people out of their graves, and bring them into the land of Israel."

With very great propriety, too, this passage has been used *for the comforting of believers in their dark and cloudy days*. When they have lost their comforts, when their spiritual joys have drooped like withering flowers, they have been reminded that God could return to them in grace and mercy, that the dry bones could live, and should live; that the Spirit of God could again come upon his people; that even at the time when they were ready to give up all hope and lie down in despair, he could come and so quicken them that the poor trembling cowards should be turned into soldiers of God, and should stand upon their feet an exceeding great army.

Once more. There is no doubt that we have in this passage a most striking picture of *the restoration of dead souls to spiritual life*. Men, by nature, are just like these dry bones exposed in the open valley. The whole spiritual frame is dislocated; the sap and marrow of spiritual life has been dried out of manhood. Human nature is not only dead, but, like the bleaching bones which have long whitened in the sun, it has lost all trace of the divine life. Will and power have both departed. Spiritual death reigns undisturbed. Yet the dry bones can live. Under the preaching of the Word the vilest sinners can be reclaimed, the most stubborn wills can be subdued, the most unholy lives can be sanctified. When the holy "breath" comes from the four winds, when the divine Spirit descends to own the Word, then multitudes of sinners, as on Pentecost's hallowed day, stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army, to praise the Lord their God. But, mark you, this is not the first and proper interpretation of the text; it is indeed nothing more than a very striking parallel case to the one before us. It is not *the case itself*; it is only a similar one, for the way in which God restores a nation is, practically, the way in which he restores an individual. The way in which Israel shall be saved is the same by which any one individual sinner shall be saved. It is not, however, the one case which the prophet is aiming at; he is looking at the vast mass of cases, the multitudes of instances to be found among the Jewish people, of gracious quickening and holy resurrection. His first and primary intention was to speak of *them*, and though it is right and lawful to take a passage in its widest possible meaning, since

"no Scripture is of private interpretation," yet I hold it to be treason to God's Word to neglect its primary meaning. The preacher of God's truth should not give up the Holy Ghost's meaning; he should take care that he does not even put it in the background. The first meaning of a text, the Spirit's meaning, is that which should be brought out first, and though the rest may fairly spring out of it, yet the first sense should have the chief place.

The meaning of our text . . . is . . . that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and . . . that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel.

The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, *that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality*; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, *that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel.*

I. There Is to Be a Political Restoration of the Jews.

Israel is now blotted out from the map of nations; her sons are scattered far and wide; her daughters mourn beside all the rivers of the earth. Her sacred song is hushed; no king reigns in Jerusalem; she bringeth forth no governors among her tribes. But she is to be restored; she is to be restored "as from the dead." When her own sons have given up all hope of her, then is God to appear for her. She is to be re-organised; her scattered bones are to be brought together. There will be a native government again; there will again be the form of a body politic; a state shall be incorporated, and a king shall reign. Israel has now become alienated from her own land. Her sons, though they can never forget the sacred dust of Palestine, yet die at a hopeless distance from her consecrated shores. But it shall not be so forever, for her sons shall again rejoice in her: her land shall be called Beulah, for as a young man marrieth a virgin so shall her sons marry her. "I will place you in your own land," is God's promise to them. They shall again walk upon her mountains, shall once more sit under her vines and rejoice under her fig-trees. And they are also to be re-united. There shall not be two, nor ten, nor twelve, but one—one Israel praising one God, serving one king, and that one king the Son of David, the descended Messiah. They are to have a national prosperity which shall make them famous; nay, so glorious shall they be that Egypt, and Tyre, and Greece, and Rome, shall all forget their glory in the greater splendour of the throne of David. The day shall yet come when all the high hills shall leap with envy, because this is the hill which God hath chosen, when Zion's shrine shall again be visited by the constant feet of the pilgrim; when her valleys shall echo with songs, and her hill-tops shall drop with wine and oil. If there be meaning in words this must be the meaning of this chapter. I wish never to learn the art of tearing God's meaning out of his own words. If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage—a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualised away—must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a king is to rule over them.

Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. [Ezek 37:21–22]



Let this be settled, however, that if there be meaning in words, Israel is yet to be restored.

Yet not in vain—o'er Israel's land
The glory yet will shine;
And he, thy once rejected King,
Messiah, shall be thine.

Then thou, beneath the peaceful reign
Of Jesus and his Bride,
Shalt sound his grace and glory forth,
To all the earth beside.

The nations to thy glorious light,
O Zion, yet shall throng,
And all the list'ning islands wait
To catch the joyful song.

But there is a second meaning here.

II. Israel Is to Have a Spiritual Restoration or a Conversion¹

Both the text and the context teach this. The promise is that they shall renounce their idols, and, behold, they have already done so. "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols." Whatever faults the Jew may have besides, he certainly has no idolatry. "The Lord thy God is one God," is a truth far better conceived by the Jew than by any other man on earth except the Christian. Weaned for ever from the worship of all images, of whatever sort, the Jewish nation has now become infatuated with traditions or duped by philosophy. She is to have, however, instead of these delusions, a spiritual religion: she is to love her God. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." The unseen but omnipotent Jehovah is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth by this ancient people; they are to come before him in his own appointed way, accepting the Mediator their sires rejected; coming into covenant relation with God, for so our text tells us—"I will make a covenant of peace with them," and Jesus is our peace, therefore we gather that Jehovah shall enter into the covenant of grace with them, that covenant of which Christ is the federal head, the substance, and the surety. They are to walk in God's ordinances and statutes, and so exhibit the practical effects of being united to Christ who hath given them peace. All these promises certainly imply that the people of Israel are to be converted to God, and that this conversion is to be permanent, for the tabernacle of God is to be with them, the Most High is, in an especial manner, to have his sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore; so that whatever nations may apostatize and turn from the Lord in these latter

¹ This section is not numbered in the original.



days, the nation of Israel never can, for she shall be effectually and permanently converted, the hearts of the fathers shall be turned with the hearts of the children unto the Lord their God, and they shall be the people of God, world without end.

They are to be restored, and they are to be converted too. We take this for our joy and our comfort, that this thing shall be, and that both in the spiritual and in the temporal throne, the King Messiah shall sit, and reign among his people gloriously.

Now I come to the practical part of my sermon this evening.

III. The Means of That Restoration²

Looking at this matter, we are very apt to say, "How can these things be?" How can the Jews be converted to Christ? How can they be made into a nation? Truly, the case is quite as hopeless as that of the bones in the valley! How shall they cease from worldliness? How shall they be weaned from their bigoted attachment to their Talmudic traditions? How shall they be lifted up out of that hardness of heart, which makes them hate the Messiah of Nazareth, their Lord and King? How can these things be?" The prophet does not say it cannot be; his unbelief is not so great as that, but at the same time, he scarcely ventures to think that it can ever be possible. He very wisely, however, puts back the question upon his God—"O Lord God, thou knowest; and if thou knowest it, Lord, we will be content to leave the secret with thee; only tell us what thou wouldst have us to do; we ask not food for speculation, but we do ask for work; we ask for something by which we may practically show that we really do love the Jew, and that we would bring him to Christ." In answer to this, the Lord says to his servants, "*Prophesy upon these bones,*" so that our duty to-night, as Christians, is to prophesy upon these bones, and we shall then see God's purpose fulfilled, when we obey God's precept.

I want you to observe that there are two kinds of prophesying spoken of here. First, the prophet prophesies *to the bones—here is preaching*; and next, he prophesies *to the four winds—here is praying*. The preaching has its share in the work, but it is the praying which achieves the result, for after he had prophesied to the four winds, and not before, the bones began to live. All that the preaching did was to make a stir, and to bring the bones together, but it was the praying which did the work, for then God the Holy Ghost came to give them life.

A. It is the duty and the privilege of the Christian Church, *to preach the gospel to the Jew*, and to every creature, and in so doing she may safely take the vision before us as her guide.

It is the duty and the privilege of the Christian Church, to preach the gospel to the Jew, and to every creature, and in so doing she may safely take the vision before us as her guide.

² This section is numbered 2 in the original.

What are we to preach? The text says *we are to prophesy*, and assuredly every missionary to the Jews should especially *keep God's prophecies very prominently before the public eye*. It seems to me that one way in which the Jewish mind might be laid hold of, would be to remind the Jews right often of that splendid future which both the Old and the New Testaments predict for Israel. Every man has a tender side and a warm heart towards his own nation, and if you tell him that in your standard book there is a revelation made that that nation is to act a grand part in human history, and is, indeed, to take the very highest place in the parliament of nations, then the man's prejudice is on your side, and he listens to you with the greater attention. I would not commend, as some do, the everlasting preaching of prophecy in every congregation, but a greater prominence should be given to prophecies in teaching the Jews than among any other people.

But still, *the main thing which we have to preach about is Christ*. Depend upon it, dear brethren, the best sermons which we ever preach are those which are fullest of Christ. Jesus the Son of David and the Son of God; Jesus the suffering Saviour by whose stripes we are healed; Jesus able to save unto the uttermost—here is the most suitable subject for Gentiles, and God has fashioned all hearts alike, and therefore, this is also the noblest theme for Jews. Paul loved his countrymen; he was no simpleton; he knew what was the best weapon with which to assail and overcome their prejudices, and yet he could say, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Lift up the Messiah, then, both before Jew and Gentile. Tell of Mary's Son, the eternal Son of God, the Man of Nazareth, who is none other than the incarnate Word, God made flesh, and dwelling amongst us. Preach his hallowed life—the righteousness of his people; declare his painful death—the putting away of all their sins. Vindicate his glorious resurrection, the justification of his people; tell of his ascent on high, their triumph over the world and sin; declare his second advent, his glorious coming, to make his people glorious in the glory which he hath won for them, and Christ Jesus, as he is thus preached, shall surely be the means of making these bones live.

Let this preaching resound with sovereign mercy; let it always have in it *the clear and distinct ring of free grace*. I was thinking as I read this chapter just now, that of all the sermons which were ever preached, this sermon to the dry bones is the most Calvinistic, the most full of free grace, of any which were ever delivered. If you will notice it you will find that there is not an "if," or a "but," or a condition in it; and as for free-will, there is not even a mention of it. It is all in this fashion—"Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." You see it is all "shalls," and "wills," and covenant purposes. It is all God's decrees declared, and declared, too, as if there were no possibility of man's resisting them. He does not say, "You dry bones, you shall live if you like, you shall if you are willing." He doth not say to them, "You shall stand upright and be an exceeding great army if it pleases you

to consent to my power." No, but it is, "I will," and "you shall." As for will, it is altogether put out of the question, for how shall the dead have a will in the matter? And so, dear friends, I would have the gospel preached both to the Jew and the Gentile with a very clear and distinct note of free, sovereign, almighty grace. Man has a will, and God never ignores that will, but by his almighty grace he blessedly leads it in silken fetters. We must have God's truth, and the whole of it; and more distinct utterances concerning evangelical doctrines and the grace of God are required both for Jews and for Gentiles. Preach, preach, preach, then, but let it be the preaching of Christ, and the proclamation of free grace. The Church, I say, has a model here as to the matter of preaching.

And I am certain that she has also a model here *as to her manner of preaching*. How shall we preach the gospel? Was Ezekiel to go and talk to these bones, but never to say a word to them by way of command? Was he to explain the way of salvation, but never bid them walk in it? No; after he had declared covenant purposes, he was then to say, "Thus saith the Lord, ye dry bones *live*." And so the message of the gospel minister when he has declared the purposes of divine grace, is to say to sinners, "Thus saith the Lord, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; trust Christ, and you are saved." Whoever you may be, Jew or Gentile, whether your speech be that of the land of Canaan or of a Gentile tongue, whether you spring of Shem, Ham, or Japheth, trust Christ, and you are saved; trust him, then, ye dry bones, and live. Withered arm, be outstretched; lame men, leap; blind eyes, see; ye dead, dry bones, live. The manner of our preaching is to be by way of command, as well as by way of teaching. Repent and be converted, every one of you. Lay hold on eternal life. "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

We have a model here, moreover, *as to our audience*. We are not to select our congregation, but we are to go where God sends us; and if he should send us into the open valley, where the bones are very dry, we are to preach there. I trust that my brethren of the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews* will never confine their labours to the good Jew, the respectable Jew, the enlightened Jew—let them seek after him among the rest—but I hope they will also seek after the ignorant, the degraded, the poor, and the fallen. Preach to the dry bones, then. Do not say, "Such-and-such a man is too bigoted;" the case rests not with him, nor with his bigotry, but with God. Those bones were very dry, but yet they lived. There is very little to choose after all, between one man and another, when all are dead; a little difference in the dryness does not come to much account when all are dead in sin. That some men are drunken and some are sober, that some men are debauched and some are chaste, makes a very great difference in the moral and civil world, but a very little difference indeed in the spiritual world, for there the same things happen to them both. If they believe not they shall alike be lost, and if they trust Jesus Christ they shall alike be saved. Let not, therefore, the greater viciousness of a



people, or their greater hardness of heart, ever stand in our way, but let us say to them, dry as they are, "Ye dry bones, live."

And here, again, we have another lesson *as to the preacher's authority*. If you will observe, you will see the prophet says, "Hear the Word of the Lord." We are to go neither to Jew nor to Gentile upon our own errand, or bearing our own words. I have no right to command a man to believe this or that, except I be an ambassador of God, and then, with God's authority to direct and empower me, I speak no longer as a man following his own wit, but as the mouth of God. So let every one of us go, when we are trying to save souls, feeling the hand of God upon us, with a soul big with anxious thoughts and heaving high with earnest desires: let us speak

"As though we ne'er might speak again,
As dying men to dying men,"

taking hold upon God's arm and beseeching Him to work by us and through us for the good of men. Remember, Christian, however humble you may be, when you speak God's Word, that Word has an authority about it which will leave a man without excuse if he rejects it. Always put to your fellow-man the truth which you hold dear, not as a thing which he may play with or may do what he likes with, which is at his option to choose or to neglect as he sees fit; but put it to him as it is in truth, the Word of God; and be not satisfied unless you warn him that it is at his own peril that he rejects the invitation, and that on his own head must be his blood if he turns aside from the good word of the command of God.

Thus, then, we have, I think, all the directions which are necessary for us to preach; and what this Society, and every other Society which aims at the conversion of sinners has to do, is to go and preach, preach, preach, not spending too much upon printing, nor upon schools, nor ecclesiastical buildings, but preaching the Word; for after all, this is the battering-ram which is to shake the gates of hell and break its iron bars. God has chosen "the foolishness of preaching" that he might by it save those who believe. Preaching is the blast of the ram's horn ordained to level Jericho, and the sound of the silver trumpet appointed to usher in the jubilee. It is God's chariot of fire for bearing souls to heaven, and his two-edged sword to smite the hosts of hell. His ordained servants are at once warriors and builders, and the Word serves them both for spear and trowel. Preach, then, from morning till night, at every time, and on all occasions, "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and Israel shall yet live.

B. But now we come to speak of that in which you can all take a part. Perhaps you cannot take a part in preaching the Word, though I would that ye all could; and I covet for you all the best gifts; but in the second form of prophesying you can all take your share. After the prophet had prophesied to the bones, he *was to prophesy to the winds*. He was to say to the blessed Spirit, the Life-giver, the God of all grace, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Preaching alone doth little; it may make the stir, it may bring the people together.

There is an attractiveness about the gospel which will draw the people to hear it; and there is, moreover, a force about it which will excite them, for it is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;" but there is no life-giving power in the gospel of itself apart from the Holy Spirit. The "breath" must first blow, and then these bones shall live. Let us betake ourselves much to this form of prophesying. Brethren and sisters in Christ, you who care for Israel, go before the Lord now and henceforth, in earnest, importunate prayer. Strive to feel more than ever conscious of the utter indispensability of this matter. Feel that without Christ you can do nothing. Blow ye your trumpet, and tell out loudly what you have done; ye have sown much, but ye shall reap little unless ye are trusting in the Spirit of God. There is always this danger to which we are exposed, though some, I know, think that it is a danger which does not exist—I mean the peril of looking to the strength or the weakness of the instrumentality, and being either puffed up by the one or dejected by the other. You are enough for your work if God be with you; and if you be but a handful you are too many for your work if God be not with you. God never objecteth to human weakness, when he comes to work he prefers it, for it makes a platform for divine power. What did he say to Gideon—"The people are too many for me;" he did not say that they were too few. You never find a case in Scripture, of God's saying that the people were too few, but it was, "The people are *too many* for me." Man's strength is more in God's way than man's weakness. Nay, human weakness, inasmuch as it makes elbow-room for God's strength, is God's chosen instrument. "Therefore will I glory in infirmities," said the apostle, "that the power of God may rest upon me." Rest then, upon the Holy Spirit as indispensable, and go to God with this for your cry, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

And then, *let it be earnest prayer*. That "Come from the four winds, O breath," reads to me like the cry, not of one in despair, but of one who is full of a vehement desire, gratified with what he sees, since the bones have come together, and have been mysteriously clothed with flesh, but now crying passionately for the immediate completion of the miracle—"Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Here is continual vehemence and force here; here is just that which makes a prayer prevalent. O, let us cry mightily unto God!

We hamper the arm of grace; we do, as it were, restrain the Almighty energy. O for greater faith, to believe that nations may be born in a day, that multitudes may be turned unto God at once, and we shall yet see it—see what our fathers never saw, and what our imaginations have never dreamed. We shall leap from victory to victory, marching on from one triumph to another, until we meet the all-glorious Saviour. Charging foeman [enemy] after foeman, and routing army after army, we shall go on,

Man's strength is more in God's way than man's weakness. Nay, human weakness, inasmuch as it makes elbow-room for God's strength, is God's chosen instrument.



conquering and to conquer, until we salute him who cometh upon the white horse of triumph, followed by all the armies of heaven. Brethren, be of good courage in your work of faith and labour of love, for it is not, and shall not be in vain in the Lord.

Author info:

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–92) pastored for over forty years at Exeter Hall, Surrey Music Hall, and the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Thousands upon thousands gathered to listen to his lively sermons every Sunday.



Palestine Reconsecrated*

by **John Cumming**

That land of glorious traditions so recently the scene of cruel massacre,¹ has yet a magnificent future in reserve.

For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wildernesses like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. . . . Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you. Isaiah 51:3, 11, and 12

One thread of connection links the words of the prophet into a grand and brilliant prophecy. The third verse predicts the restoration of the land to more than its ancient fertility and beauty; the eleventh verse foretells the return of the inhabitants to the land in a state of felicity and joy, intermingled with no sorrow, and broken by no mournings for ever; and in the first line of the twelfth verse is announced the author of both the regeneration of the land and the restoration of the people: "I, even I, am he that comforteth you." Let us direct our attention, first, to the regeneration of the land; secondly, to the restoration of its people; and lastly, to the author of it all, who comforts them, and also comforts us who believe while we suffer.

I. The Regeneration of the Land

For a moment let us consider what the land was—what it is—and what it is prophesied it will one day be. Read the ancient inspired portraiture of that

* This is an abridgement of a sermon delivered to his congregation at the Scottish National Church in Covent Garden, London, in 1860.

¹ Editor's note: The Massacres of 1840–60 were massacres of Maronite Christians by Druze in Lebanon.

rare and beautiful land. It was a land of unprecedented fertility, salubrity, and beauty. Often two harvests were gleaned in one year. The very valley in which the Dead Sea, like the ghastly picture of death, sleeps and festers continually, was once exquisitely beautiful and munificently fertile as Paradise itself. We find Judea spoken of as a good land—a land that flowed with milk and with honey.

The flowers were in perennial bloom, instead of being, as in this country, often nipped by the frosts in early spring, and even when they burst into their fullest beauty in our summer, poor and mean in comparison of what the flowers of Palestine were—flowers on some of which Eve looked, and on which Eve's daughters and sons shall look again. The flowers of Judea bloomed in ceaseless beauty, and retained their glory throughout the year.

Our experience at present of one part of the year—the offspring of the curse—is dreary enough; though what are called the evergreens—the laurel and the laurestinus and the holly—seem spared to us, notwithstanding the curse, to keep the pathway open for summer that is gone to return again. Take away the sweet evergreens of winter, and the gap between the two summers would seem almost impassable. But now they keep the pathway open for the summer of 1860 to return as the summer of 1861. The bees swarmed in the air of Syria, finding sweet blossoms all the year, and the grass kept green for the cattle all the seasons; so that it came to be justly depicted as a land overflowing with milk and honey.

The grapes in Palestine, of the most delicious flavour, were so common that the people boiled them as vegetables for their meals, as well as made use of them for wine to refresh and cheer them. The terraces upon Lebanon and on the mountain sides rose one over the other, till the fruits of all climes were produced; the fruits of the more northern climes in the cooler air upon the heights of the mountain chains; and the fruits of tropical climes on the lower terraces on the slopes at the foot of the mountains. Palestine seems to have been the spot on which the curse last and most lightly fell.

Having seen, without referring minutely to the original passages of Scripture, what Palestine was, let us now ascertain what it is. Read for information the most interesting sketch that I know, namely, Lamartine's, *Travels in the East*; it is full of poetic beauty, of fine thought, accurate and truthful. We find there a picture of what Palestine now is. It is described by him and by others as bare, deserted, riven by the lightning, torn by the earthquake; literally, according to the curse denounced, its rain is become powder and dust as it falls; its sky at this moment is as brass, and its soil, out of whose bosom sprang such beauties, and such flowers, and such crops as I have delineated, is now rent and cloven into fissures by the intolerable and parching heat.

Its gardens, in which Solomon walked, are all dismantled, and the place of them is known no more—plague, pestilence, and famine, brood upon some districts of Palestine almost continually. The very sea seems to retire from the land, as if fearful of being infected by touching it. Its cities are cit-



ies of the dead; and its clustering tomb-stones loom up like reefs amidst the eternal sea, as if to show us what a rich argosy has made shipwreck there. The soil is still pregnant with hidden fertility; but there is no hand to cultivate and no reaper to enjoy it. The birds of prey darken the air with their wings; and the wild animals make their lairs in its tombs, its broken columns, its deserted capital. The Bedouin and the Arab are its lords and its dangerous tenants; and no capital will be invested, and no wealth will be laid out in enterprise where the Bedouin and the Arab of the desert are the lords of the land. Its springs are dried up; its magnificent Jordan has lost its ancient roll and volume of water. The bare rocks were once gardens; the mountain-sides and slopes were once covered with vines. What a change since Moses looked forth from Mount Nebo, and admired its beauty, its magnificence, and its fertility! Such is Palestine now.

Let us see what it will be. That day is not yet come. It is nearer than a good many think; but whether it be near or remote, we know what it will be by looking through the perspective of unfulfilled prophecy. Hear what God says it will be: "For the Lord will comfort Zion; it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing." "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise; thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

This is a great thought, that, however lost and ruined that nation may be, it has in its bosom all the hoarded possibilities of a glorious restoration. There is no sin beyond forgiveness; there is no sorrow beyond comfort; there is no land so desolate as to be beyond the reach of restoration by Divine power, if pledged in the prophecies and promises of God.

There is no sin beyond forgiveness; there is no sorrow beyond comfort; there is no land so desolate as to be beyond the reach of restoration by Divine power, if pledged in the prophecies and promises of God.

II. The Restoration of the People

Having seen what the land was, having seen what it is, having learned from prophecy what it will be, let us now turn our attention to the restoration of its people. "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Its people are described as then the redeemed of the Lord; "redeemed not with gold, nor silver, nor any such corruptible thing; but with the precious blood of a Lamb without spot and without blemish" [1 Pet 1:18-19]; redeemed from Satan, from sin—redeemed from the captivity in which they now are, and from the dispersion of which they are now the suffering and the miserable victims; gathered out of every land; brought home in the ships of Tarshish a present to the Lord of hosts, a redeemed people, intro-

duced into a redeemed land—the days of their sorrow, their captivity, and mourning ended for ever. “Then,” saith the prophet in this passage, “they shall return.” Their land is reserved for them; it is not a new land for a new and a strange people; they return to a land that is their own. There is not a Jew of the least sincerity who does not look to Jerusalem as his capital, and to Palestine as his native land. There is not a Jew, who has one atom of the feeling of a Jew, whose heart does not turn to Zion as the needle inclines, trembling, but constantly, towards the pole.

Why has God kept a people distinct from all nations, with this yearning in their hearts, and these prophecies in their sacred books, unless it be that these prophecies shall be all fulfilled, and these yearnings met, and that they shall return to Zion as their home, to Jerusalem their capital, to Palestine their native land? The Greek is lost; the Roman is absorbed; the Saxon, the Norman, and the Dane are merged in ourselves and in other nationalities, but the Jew remains perfectly distinct.

You cannot mistake a Jew—his voice, his features, all indicate his eastern origin; his hopes, and that shadow of an ancestral crime that seems to spread over his countenance, mark the Jew as the man of destiny, reserved for a great purpose, and insulated and kept distinct from the nations, that he may return, and come with songs to Zion, with everlasting joy upon his head. How exquisitely musical are these words: “They shall come with singing unto Zion!” The instant that the signal, the *Jehovah-nissi* elsewhere alluded to, appears on the mountains, the Jews will come singing their own sublime songs, those Psalms of David that have been sung in their synagogues; that have swelled from the banks of the Jordan; that have echoed in musical reverberations in the midst of their magnificent temple; that were heard upon the banks of Chebar, when they hung their harps upon the willows; that you may still hear, though on stammering lips, in their synagogues in their own ancient and magnificent tongue. The Jew will return singing those sublime hymns, when his mouth, in the language of one of them, shall be filled with laughter, and his tongue with melody, because the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.

Like rivers rushing from a thousand lands, and finding their confluence in one, the Jews shall rush to Jerusalem, on waves that chime in music as they roll, no more to dry up under a second curse, nor to disappear under the judgments of another invader. But it is also said: “Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: sorrow and mourning shall for ever flee away.” The language is so beautiful that an attempt to explain it is only to mar it. They shall return with songs of joy, with mourning and sorrow exiled from their hearts for ever; and God shall wipe away all their tears from all their eyes.

Are there any signs of this at the present day? According to the ancient date of prophecy, the seven times of the suffering of the Jews, calculated according to data on which all students of prophecy are agreed, we are led to suppose that not earlier than 1867, and it may be later, it cannot be much later, God will arise, and have mercy upon Zion, and see the set time to favour her come. Our calculations may be wrong; the data on which they are based may be mistaken; in these things we are neither absolutely



certain nor infallible; but taking the data that are most probable, and calculating according to a scale that seems indisputable, the hour of Israel's emancipation is rapidly approaching. And when the Jews are restored, then will be the fullness of the Gentiles; their restoration being to us like life from the dead.

At this moment many of the Jews are returning to Jerusalem; some of them cultivating the land, others of them seeking to take possession of their capital; and all of them waiting for the mystic Euphrates, that is the Turco-Moslem power to dry up; and the instant that the Crescent has waned, and the Turk lets go his grasp of Palestine, the conflict will begin, a dreadful conflict, whose it shall be; the Jew will claim it justly as his own, by title-deeds more ancient than any; and God will settle him in the land, for He has said it: "They shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

Many things seem to gather round that land, the burden of such prophecies, the centre of such thrilling interests; and to give it a very grave importance amidst those deepening complications, which seem as if the stirring of the waters, prior to the descent of the angel to impregnate those waters with all the elements of health, and happiness, and peace.

III. The Author of It All

The prophet, having thus told us first the regeneration of the land, second the restoration of the people, bids us look to God as the author of it all; as the author of all this to them, and of all that is good to us; for what does he say? "I, even I," saith the Lord, "am He that comforteth you."

If that be applicable directly to the Jews, it is also morally applicable to us. We also need comfort, and there is only One who is the spring and the fountain of it. In every lot there is a crook; even the heart that is most frequently bounding has some moments when it is breaking. In some nook of every heart there is some secret, known to itself, that is the source of many an anxious thought, the cause of many a bitter moment. What can heal that heart, what can give comfort? Every created thing saith, "Am I in God's stead?" Every created thing to which you can have recourse is a broken cistern. But if you look up to Him who is the Comforter, and lean upon his own glorious promise, "I, even I, am He that comforteth you," you shall find a comfort that the world cannot give, that the world cannot mar; and you will be comforted indeed. If it be true that we are more or less the children of sorrow; that we are born to trouble, in consequence of sin, as the sparks fly upward, it is a very interesting question, applicable to each of us Gentiles as well as to the Jews, How does God comfort us? Suppose you are in some great trouble, how will God comfort you?

In the first place, He will comfort you by showing you the necessity of that trouble. Do you ever think of this, that there is no chance; and secondly, that not a pang can pierce a human heart for which there is not a need-be? Not an ache can gnaw the frame; not a grief can pierce the heart;

not a shadow can darken the soul, which is not permitted because there was a needs-be as real as that Christ should die upon the cross that you should be saved. It is comfort to know that no affliction is random, that no bereavement is accident; but that each is permitted or sent because it was a medicine essential for our health and happiness. Thus God comforts us. He comforts us in trouble by revealing to us what is the source of trouble.

If our troubles spring from the dust, if our sorrows come from the ground, then we cannot construe them or interpret them as anything but chance incidents or strange phenomena, to the explanation of which we have no clue or thread whatever. But we are told that not a trouble can befall us that has not been first in God's bosom; that not a tear can start in the eye that He has not first meted, and estimated, and weighed, and pronounced to be expedient for us.

Admit for one moment that chance is the parent of your troubles—that accident is the author of your bereavements—and what a gloomy place must the grave be! what a sad heart must the mourner's be! what an unhappy man must the victim of trouble be! But when we know that the blow that strikes the heaviest is from our Father's hand; that the sorrow that pierces the heart with the keenest agony lay in his bosom before it received its mission to touch us; surely it is a truth, "I, even I, am He that comforteth you."

And in the third place, God comforts us by showing us the end of that trouble. If the sorrows, bereavements, disappointments, griefs, secret and open, had no end, and no grand object, and no great purpose to accomplish, then they would be intolerable; but He tells us, "Though no tribulation for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, yet afterwards it worketh out the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby" [Heb 12:11]. He tells us that "all things work for good to them that love God" [Rom 8:28]; and through the mouth of an apostle He has said, "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory" [2 Cor 4:17]. And therefore the necessity, the end, and the source of our troubles, revealed to us by God, take away the edge of them, and make at least tolerable that which if inexplicable would be altogether intolerable.

He also comforts us by compensatory enjoyments in the meanwhile. Have you not sometimes felt that your bitterest hours, on the reminiscence

of them a few years afterwards, were, after all, your sweetest? Have you not often found springs unexpected in the desert? When one joy has died out, has not another and a brighter taken its place? When one sweet flower has been cut down, has not a lovelier and a more fragrant one sprung from its root? There is no condition in which you have ever been, as there is no condition in which a Christian can be placed, in which you will not find that

There is no condition in which you have ever been, as there is no condition in which a Christian can be placed, in which you will not find that if God takes away one blessing, He gives not another blessing, richer, more beautiful, and more precious.



if God takes away one blessing, He gives not another blessing, richer, more beautiful, and more precious.

Then “I, even I, am He that comforteth you.” God comforts us in the midst of troubles by sanctifying those troubles to us. Not only are they needful, but God makes them work for good. The tear that springs from the heart cleanses the eye, and enables you to see beyond the limited horizon of time, and to catch a glimpse of the glory of that better rest that remains for the people of God. We cannot live always in sunshine; we need shadow. I pity those whose life is one uninterrupted, prosperous career; I pity from my heart the man who has no aches, nor sorrows, nor troubles, nor griefs, nor trials. He may be a Christian; God forbid that I should pronounce; but he [lacks] one of the marks of God’s children; for “what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? If ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards, and not sons;” but if you have chastisement, then you bear the seal and mark from heaven that you are the children of God, and if children then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. And lastly, He will comfort us, as He will comfort the Jews, by delivering us from all our troubles, and introducing us into a rest more glorious than Canaan ever was, and more bright and beautiful than eye hath seen, or ear hath heard, or man’s heart in its happiest imaginings hath ever conceived.

Thus we have Palestine as it was, like the Eden in which we were: we have Palestine as it is, like the earth that we now dwell on; we have Palestine as it will be, like the Rest that remaineth for the people of God; we have the Jew redeemed, as we must be, by precious blood; we have his return to his land, and our restoration to our rest, by the guiding hand of the Spirit of God; and lest our hearts grow too heavy, and our spirits despair, and our exile become intolerable, and our yearning for our homes too intense to enable us to fulfill life’s duties, He comforts Jew and Gentile now by intermingling with our troubles great comforts, by interweaving with our darkness bright lights; and by showing us that our afflictions are all needed, and are all sanctified, and that they are all working together for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose.

Author info:

John Cumming (1807–81) was a Scottish minister who served as pastor of the Church of Scotland congregation at the Scottish National Church, in Covent Garden, London, and authored approximately 180 books.



What the Church Left Behind

– *Israel's Restoration and Christ's Return, Part 2*

by **Paul Wilkinson**

In the previous article we looked at some of the key men and movements in the church which were instrumental in recovering the doctrine of Israel's national restoration and unveiling the blessed hope of Christ's return. We will now consider how this torch of prophetic truth was passed from one generation to another, beginning where we left off last time: with the man who was used by the Sovereign Lord during the nineteenth century to awaken many slumbering believers to the truth of His prophetic Word.

Powerscourt, Darby, and the Plymouth Brethren

A year after the doors had closed at Albury Park Mansion in Surrey, England, another series of prophecy conferences opened at Powerscourt House, situated approximately fifteen miles from the center of Dublin, in the Wicklow Mountains. In 1831, Lady Theodosia Powerscourt, who had attended the first Albury Conference in 1826, opened her magnificent home to a group of men who, like their contemporaries in Surrey, were preoccupied with the rising tide of apostasy in the church, the promised restoration of the Jews to the Land of Israel, and the second coming of Jesus. Many of these men, most notably John Nelson Darby (1800–82), belonged to a new evangelical movement known as the Plymouth Brethren. One crucial distinction which set the Powerscourt delegates apart from many of their contemporaries was their belief that the events prophesied in Daniel and Revelation related to a *future* period of seven *literal* years, as represented by the seventieth "week" or "seven" of Daniel 9. Of even greater significance, however, was their belief that this seven-year period of tribulation would not, and could not, commence until the church of Jesus Christ had been "raptured" or "translated" from the earth.

With one sudden jolt, the church had been awakened to the truth concerning the second coming of Jesus. The doctrine of the *two-stage* return of Christ, first *for* the church and later *with* the church, had once "ruled the intelligence, sustained the hope, and inspired the conduct, of the

apostles";¹ it had at last been revived. A severe jolt in Darby's own life had proved to be the major catalyst for this momentous recovery, as he himself testified in his writings:

An accident happened [in October 1827] which laid me aside for a time; my horse was frightened and had thrown me against a door-post. During my solitude, conflicting thoughts increased; but much exercise of soul had the effect of causing the scriptures to gain complete ascendancy over me . . . At the same time, I saw that the Christian, having his place in Christ in heaven, has nothing to wait for save the coming of the Saviour, in order to be set, in fact, in the glory which is already his portion "in Christ" . . . It seemed to me that the good hand of God had thus come to my help, hiding my spiritual weakness under physical incapacity.²

The more Darby studied the Scriptures, the more he understood Israel's place in the purposes of God, and the more vigorously he combated replacement theology in all its various guises. He also grew increasingly convinced that the church, as the Bride of Christ, was not destined for the time of God's wrath (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9). Despite the many battles he would fight during his ministerial life and the personal struggles he would endure as a pilgrim along Christ's narrow path, Darby was never the same following his convalescence in Dublin. Thereafter, his life was characterized by the same joyful expectation and longing for his Savior's return as had characterized the Thessalonians. In his article "The Freshness of Faith," Darby offered the following insight into Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica:

Do not expect anything from earth, but look for something from heaven, and this God's Son Himself, "even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come" [1 Thess. 1:9–10] . . . All the question is totally and finally settled: sin is borne once, and He who bore it is raised from the dead . . . This sets me in perfect freedom; and it does more, because it links me up with Christ in heaven. I know He is coming. Why? Because I know Him there . . . We are really waiting for something: for what? For the Person who has so loved us . . . We love His appearing, but we love Himself better. Therefore we wait for Him to take us to Himself . . . I cannot be waiting for God's Son from heaven if I am expecting wrath . . . Suppose God said, "Tonight," etc., would you say, This is what I want? If not, there is something between your affections and Christ.³

1 John Nelson Darby, "The Hopes of the Church," in *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, vol. 2, ed. William Kelly (Kingston-on-Thames: Stow Hill Bible & Tract Depot, n.d.), 291.

2 Darby, "Letter to Prof. Tholuck," in *The Letters of J. N. D.*, vol. 3 (Kingston-on-Thames: Stow Hill Bible & Tract Depot, n.d.), 298–99.

3 Darby, "The Freshness of Faith," in *The Collected Writings*, vol. 21, 359–63.



Is This What You Want?

Suppose God said, "Tonight." What would you and I say? As the Scriptures gained their rightful place in his life, Darby soon realized that in every letter of the New Testament "the coming of the Lord Jesus is made the prominent object of the faith and hope of believers."⁴ For Darby and many of his fellow Brethren, the imminent return of the Lord Jesus for His bride, and her being taken away to be with Him in His Father's house (John 14:1–3), shone forth with the full brightness of God's revelation. Writing from Neuchâtel, Switzerland, in 1839, Darby described how his mind was forever occupied with "the near coming of the Saviour, the gathering together of His own, and the sanctification and joy of those who are manifested."⁵

Darby's gravestone in Bournemouth, England, tells us that this faithful, though much maligned and misunderstood servant of God, "departed to be with Christ" on April 29, 1882. As we await with Darby "the trumpet call of God," may we take as much encouragement as he did from Paul's words to the Thessalonians: "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess 4:15).⁶

JOHN NELSON DARBY

'As unknown and well known'

Departed to be with Christ

29th April 1882

Aged 81

II COR. V. 21.

Lord let me wait for Thee alone

My life be only this

To serve Thee here on earth unknown

Then share Thy heavenly bliss.

J.N.D.

By understanding the everlasting nature of God's faithfulness, as revealed in His covenants and through the words of His servants the prophets, Darby and many of his fellow Brethren rediscovered the key to unlocking biblical prophecy, and in the process helped to unveil the blessed hope of the church. We are indebted to the Lord for raising up the Plymouth Brethren, for they were a generation of men who upheld the authority of His Word, took His promises literally, proclaimed His glorious appearing, and called upon true believers everywhere to live lives worthy of their calling, in readiness for their upward call. The Puritan and Wesleyan revivals of the

4 Darby, "Reflections upon the Prophetic Inquiry," in *The Collected Writings*, vol. 2, 25.

5 Darby, "Letter to Mr. Maylon," in *The Letters of J. N. D.*, vol. 1, 31–32.

6 All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible unless noted otherwise.

sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries undoubtedly breathed new life into a stagnant church by breaking the shackles of Rome, restoring the Bible to the common man, and preaching justification by faith in Christ alone. However, until the Brethren revival of the early nineteenth century, much of the Bible, and in particular the writings of the Old Testament prophets, was still chained to a system of theology which maintained: 1) that the church had replaced Israel as the people of God; 2) that the promises relating to Israel's national restoration were to be applied spiritually to the church; and 3) that the Lord Jesus Christ would not return to the Mount of Olives to establish His thousand-year reign on earth.

The Enduring Legacy of Replacement Theology

This erroneous method of interpreting the Bible had been championed in the early centuries of the post-apostolic church by many of the so-called "church fathers," most notably Origen of Alexandria (c. A.D. 185–254) and Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354–430). This method, or hermeneutic, was later adopted and developed by the Protestant Reformers of Europe, the most influential being the French theologian John Calvin (1509–64). It was then enshrined in all the Protestant creeds and catechisms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the Puritan *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646), all of which were Calvinistic, supersessionist (i.e. replacement theology), and amillennial ("no millennium"). Much of the church continues to follow this method of interpretation, which is why so many Christians today are not only opposed to Israel but also asleep to the coming of the Lord.

The denial of Christ's future millennial reign on earth, the accompanying restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and the preceding rapture of the true church, underpins the amillennialism, postmillennialism, and preterism of influential church leaders such as Rick Warren, John Stott, Tony Campolo, Brian McLaren, Stephen Sizer, Naim Ateek, Gary Burge, Bill Hybels, Terry Virgo, and Hank Hanegraaff; of church denominations such as the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church of Great Britain, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, and the United Church of Christ—not to mention the World Council of Churches; and "Christian" organizations such as the Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem (known as "Sabeel"), World Vision, and Christian Aid. This erroneous method of interpreting the Bible theologically underpins their pro-Palestinian agenda and anti-Israel crusade. By not standing in the counsel of God (cf. Jer 23:16–31), all of the aforementioned leaders, denominations, and organizations are hurting Israel, handicapping the church, and dishonoring God's holy name.

Jesus Is Coming

Although the impact of Darby's teaching in the United Kingdom was significant, it was limited in scope. Many of the speakers at the early Keswick con-



ventions in the Lake District in the north of England, which began in 1878, along with a number of the early Pentecostal pioneers, were undoubtedly influenced by his premillennial eschatology, if not by his ecclesiology. However, it was in the United States and Canada that Darby's understanding of the end-times made its greatest and longest-lasting impression.

In 1862, Darby set out on the first of what would prove to be seven preaching tours of North America. His first tour had been arranged with a view toward encouraging those among the Brethren who were struggling out in the prairies, but with America reeling from Civil War, the Lord took Darby across the United States to open the eyes of many in the wider church who had lost sight of their blessed hope. Among those who were profoundly influenced by Darby's premillennial and pre-tribulational teaching were Dwight Lyman Moody (1837–99), Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843–1921), and the Chicago businessman turned clergyman William Eugene Blackstone (1841–1935).

In 1878, a year after Darby had completed his final tour of America, Blackstone published *Jesus is Coming*, "probably the most widely read premillennialist book of its time."⁷ Written to show that Israel's restoration was an "incontrovertible fact of prophecy . . . intimately connected with our Lord's appearing," it was translated into forty-two languages, including Yiddish. By the time of Blackstone's death in 1935, over 1.3 million copies were in print. In his book, Blackstone makes the following appeal:

But, perhaps, you say: "I don't believe the Israelites are to be restored to Canaan, and Jerusalem rebuilt." Dear reader! have you read the declarations of God's word about it? Surely nothing is more plainly stated in the Scriptures . . . We beg of you to read them thoroughly. Divest yourself of prejudice and preconceived notions, and let the Holy Spirit show you, from His word, the glorious future of God's chosen people, "who are beloved" (Rom.11:28), and dear unto Him as "the apple of His eye." Zech.2:8.⁸

The Blackstone Memorial

On March 5, 1891, Blackstone presented a petition to President Benjamin Harrison in response to the pogroms which had been perpetrated against the Jews of Russia. In his petition, which became known as the "Blackstone Memorial," he urged the American President to persuade the leaders of Europe to convene a conference "to consider the condition of the Israelites and their claims to Palestine as their ancient home."⁹ Although

7 Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875–1982* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 137.

8 William Eugene Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1932), 235, 176, 162.

9 "Palestine for the Jews: Copy of Memorial Presented to President Harrison, March 5th, 1891," in *Christian Protagonists for Jewish Restoration* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 1–14.

the petition failed to achieve its stated goal, Blackstone had given much-needed impetus to the Zionist movement, which, under the leadership of Theodor Herzl, was seeking to alleviate the suffering of European Jews and ultimately to establish a homeland for the Jewish people. Blackstone later sent Herzl a copy of the Old Testament, in which he had marked all the scriptures pointing to Israel's restoration. His purpose was to convince the non-religious Herzl, who was then considering viable alternatives to "Palestine" as a homeland for the Jews, that there could only ever be one land to which the Jewish people could return—*Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel).

As supportive as Blackstone was of the Zionist cause, he never shifted his focus away from the Lord Jesus, as so many in the pro-Israel "camp" today have done. He understood that the greatest need of the Jewish people was not their return to the Land—as important as that was—but their turning, through repentance and faith, to their Lord and Messiah Jesus. At a Zionist gathering in Los Angeles in 1918, Blackstone declared:

He understood that the greatest need of the Jewish people was not their return to the Land—as important as that was—but their turning, through repentance and faith, to their Lord and Messiah Jesus.

I wish all of you Gentiles were true Israelites in your religious life, and I wish all of you Jews were true Christians. I am and for over thirty years have been an ardent advocate of Zionism. This is because I believe that true Zionism is founded on the plan, purpose, and fiat of the everlasting and omnipotent God, as prophetically recorded in His Holy Word, the Bible.¹⁰

The Pre-Millennial Bible

Another Christian leader who was profoundly influenced by Darby's eschatology was Cyrus Ingerson Scofield. A veteran of the American Civil War who was later appointed district attorney for Kansas by President Ulysses S. Grant, Scofield converted to Christ in St. Louis in 1879, and soon became one of the staunchest advocates of the pre-tribulation rapture and Israel's national redemption. In his book *Prophecy Made Plain*, Scofield accused advocates of replacement theology of doing "more to swerve the Church from the appointed course than all other influences put together."¹¹ He also made a very important, though often overlooked, connection between having a right biblical understanding of Israel and enjoying a true, intimate fellowship with the God and Shepherd of Israel. This was Scofield's personal testimony:

10 Quoted in David A. Rausch, *Zionism within Early American Fundamentalism 1878–1918* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979), 268.

11 C. I. Scofield, *Prophecy Made Plain: Addresses on Prophecy* (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), 52.



I confess with shame that there was a time in my Christian life when I thought lightly of prophecy; when I said to myself, if not in words, at least in fact, "What has that to do with me? What I wish to know is how I may be saved; how I may get blessings; how I may get to Heaven. Never mind what God intends to do with the Jewish people; never mind what His purposes are towards the world; He will in due time fulfil all these things. Why should I care particularly what He is going to do with Israel? I am not an Israelite." I say there was a time when that was my attitude towards the prophecies. Do you not see that I was actually refusing the most intimate fellowship with the Lord?¹²

In 1890, Scofield launched his *Bible Correspondence School Course of Study*, which was later used by Moody Bible Institute in Chicago to promote pre-millennial dispensationalism around the world. Scofield is, however, best remembered for his popular *Scofield Reference Bible*, which was published in 1909 and which was completed with the collaboration of a wide circle of experienced Bible scholars in England and the United States. Over 5 million copies were sold in the first sixty years of its publication. Whatever we may think of study Bibles, Scofield's version inspired generations of Christians across the United States, and throughout the world, to stand with Israel and to sound the midnight cry: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh" (Matt 25:6, KJV). The immensely popular Left Behind series of rapture novels, written by Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye, owes a tremendous debt to the teaching of men like Darby, Blackstone, and Scofield. These novels may not be to everyone's liking, but many people have come to faith through reading them, while many Christians have been roused from their spiritual slumber. Little wonder, then, that they have come under such sustained and vitriolic attack.

A Banner Unfurled

By heralding the any-moment rapture of the church, and by proclaiming the Lord's subsequent return to Jerusalem, Darby and those who interpreted prophecy as literally as he did raised a banner for truth beneath which successive generations of believers have rallied. This banner is the Lord's, of course, and not Darby's, but it has been and will continue to be entrusted to faithful men and women whose hearts are devoted to Christ, and who are looking and longing for His glorious appearing (2 Tim 4:8). With so many in the church still shackled to the amillennial, supersessionist dogma which has been passed down through the ages, and which Protestant Reformers like John Calvin failed to overturn, let us pray more earnestly that the Lord will open blind eyes and deaf ears, so that His church may perceive what He is doing in these last days.

¹² Ibid., 13.

A Prophetic Witness

On December 13, 1917, at a crowded public meeting in Queen's Hall, London, an Anglican minister by the name of Hanmer Webb-Peploe began his address with these words:

It is indeed a matter of rejoicing to realise that so many as are now gathered here before God are interested in the special subject now to be considered, and to think with holy hope and expectation that the Lord Jesus Christ may soon be among us, taking to Himself His bride to be for ever with Him.¹³

The Queen's Hall meeting in London, which was convened in order to consider various aspects of the doctrine of the second coming, effectively launched the Advent Testimony Movement, which continues today as Prophetic Witness Movement International (PWMI). The torch of prophetic truth in Britain now passed from men like Darby and the Plymouth Brethren to a new generation of prophetic witnesses whom God called to shine the light of His Word into a nation darkened by war and into a church deadened by apostasy.

F. B. Meyer: "Archbishop of the Free Churches"

During the late summer of 1917, two Baptist ministers, J. S. Harrison and Alfred Bird, believed that the time had come for a wake-up call to be brought to the church. They were convinced, along with many other evangelical leaders of the day, that the First World War held great prophetic significance and that the signs of the times were pointing unmistakably to Israel's national restoration and Christ's personal return. Harrison and Bird now made contact with a man who not only shared their convictions, but who also commanded respect across many denominations in the church: Frederick Brotherton Meyer (1847–1929).

Biographer Ian Randall suggests that with the exception of John Clifford, "Meyer was probably the most celebrated Baptist minister of the early twentieth century."¹⁴ A much loved pastor, a tireless champion for the poor and needy, a formidable crusader against immorality, and a popular writer of biblical biographies and devotional commentaries, Meyer served as president of the Free Church Council in 1904 and president of the World's Sunday School Association and the Baptist Union in 1907. The *Daily Telegraph* hailed him as "The Archbishop of the Free Churches,"¹⁵ while the *New York Observer* described him as a preacher of "international fame" whose services were "constantly sought by churches over the wide and

13 *Advent Testimony Addresses Delivered at the Meetings at Queen's Hall, London, W.C., December 13th, 1917* (London: Chas. J. Thynne, 1918), 7.

14 Ian M. Randall, *Spirituality and Social Change: The Contribution of F. B. Meyer (1847–1929)* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 57.

15 Bob Holman, *F. B. Meyer, "If I Had a Hundred Lives"* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2007), 7.



increasing empire of Christendom."¹⁶ Meyer responded positively to Harrison and Bird, and in turn contacted two men who were well respected in prophetic circles: Alfred Henry Burton (Brethren) and Earl Legh Langston (Anglican), the chairman and secretary of the Prophecy Investigation Society (P.I.S.) respectively.

The Prophecy Investigation Society

The P.I.S. was founded on May 24, 1842, when Henry Montagu Villiers, later Bishop of Durham, convened a conference at St. George's Anglican Church in Bloomsbury, London. His inspiration was the Albury Park and Powerscourt Conferences of the 1820s and 1830s which, as we have seen, brought together a number of Britain's leading evangelicals to study biblical prophecy. Many who had attended the Albury Conferences helped to establish this new Society, which, as Villiers outlined in his opening address, was dedicated to investigating "the certainty, nature, and scriptural prominence of the Second Advent."¹⁷ Many leading prophecy scholars of the nineteenth century joined the P.I.S., including Edward Bickersteth, Alexander McCaul, Hugh McNeile, Henry Grattan Guinness, E. W. Bullinger, David Baron, Walter Scott, J. C. Ryle, Ada Ruth Habershon, and Amzi Clarence Dixon.

A meeting of the Society in 1897 was opened by another eminent student of prophecy, Sir Robert Anderson (1841–1918). Anderson was the former Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in London who had led the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard during the "Jack the Ripper" case. He had also been a close friend of Darby and had preached with Darby in Ireland. Many believers on both sides of the Atlantic have been indebted to Anderson's writings, which include his classic work *The Coming Prince* (1881). When the Society asked Anderson to write a manual on Daniel's seventy weeks, he produced what would be his final treatise, entitled *Unfulfilled Prophecy and "The Hope of the Church"* (1917). In his conclusion he wrote the following:

If even a very few Christians in every place would begin to "speak often one to another" about the Coming of the Lord, they would soon come together to pray for His Return . . . and to pray the prayer which He Himself has given us, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."¹⁸

Anderson went on to become an important ambassador for the Advent Testimony Movement until his home-call in 1918.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ H. Montagu Villiers, "The Certainty, Nature, and Scriptural Prominence of the Second Advent," in *The Second Coming, the Judgment, and the Kingdom of Christ: Being Lectures Delivered during Lent, 1843, at St. George's, Bloomsbury. By Twelve Clergymen of the Church of England. With a Preface by the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, Rector of Watton* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1843), 1–25.

¹⁸ A. P. Moore-Anderson, *Sir Robert Anderson and Lady Agnes Anderson* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1947), 168.

Breakfast at Meyer's

Back to the summer of 1917. Having spoken with Burton and Langston about the need for a new campaign in Britain, Meyer invited a small group of his ministerial friends to a prayer breakfast in London on October 15, 1917. These men were asked to consider "whether, in view of the momentous happenings in Europe, it might not be desirable to awaken the church to consider the synchronising of those events with the predicted signs of the Lord's Second Advent." As Meyer later recalled, "The unanimous sentiment was that the hour was ripe for the issuing of a call to the church."¹⁹ A second breakfast was arranged shortly afterwards, and a statement, later known as the Advent Testimony Manifesto, was finalized. Events now began to take a dramatic turn.

On October 31, 1917, British and ANZAC forces under the command of General Edmund Allenby captured Beersheba from the Ottoman Turks. Allenby now set his sights on Jerusalem. On November 2, in a letter written by Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild of the Zionist Federation, David Lloyd George's government formally approved "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" (the Balfour Declaration). It seemed to Meyer and his colleagues that the Lord was giving them a clear signal to move forward in His sovereign purposes, and on November 8 they released the seven-point Advent Testimony Manifesto to the press. Of particular importance was the expressed conviction of the signatories that "the Revelation of our Lord may be expected at any moment," that "the completed Church will be translated [raptured] to be 'for ever with the Lord,'" and that "Israel will be restored to its own land in unbelief, and be afterwards converted by the Appearance of Christ on its behalf."²⁰ Of the ten signatories to the Manifesto, several were already household names, not only in the United Kingdom but also in the United States:

- Dr. F. B. Meyer (Baptist)
- Rev. Alfred Bird (Baptist)
- Rev. J. S. Harrison (Baptist)
- Dr. G. Campbell Morgan (Congregationalist)
- Dr. A. C. Dixon (American, Baptist)*

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19 Frederick A. Tatford, *The Midnight Cry: The Story of Fifty Years of Witness* (Eastbourne: Bible and Advent Testimony Movement, n.d.), 21–22; cf. F. W. Pitt, *Windows on the World: A Record of the Life of Alfred H. Burton, With Selections from His Writings* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1938), 40–41.

20 "The Significance of the Hour," in *Advent Testimony Addresses*, preface.

Dr. Dinsdale T. Young (Methodist)
 Pastor W. Fuller-Gooch (Independent)*
 Dr. J. Stuart Holden (Anglican)*
 Preb. H. Webb-Peploe (Anglican)*
 Preb. F. S. Webster (Anglican)*

(*denotes membership of the P.I.S.)

The P.I.S. unanimously endorsed the Manifesto, and after hearing Meyer address them in person, resolved to assist him in organizing “a great public meeting in Queen’s Hall on the Lord’s Coming.”²¹ Those who gathered in London on December 13, 1917, were still coming to terms with the dramatic news of Allenby’s liberation of Jerusalem just four days earlier, when four hundred years of Ottoman rule came to an end without a shot being fired. Among the crowd of 3,000 at Queen’s Hall that day was a 16-year-old boy by the name of Frederick Albert Tatford (1901–86), a future president of the Advent Testimony Movement who recalled how “the atmosphere was electric, and one felt almost as though the Lord might come that very night.”²² As Tatford later wrote, interest in the doctrine of the Lord’s return now “spread like a prairie fire”²³ across Britain and further afield.

The Transatlantic Connection

The first Council of the newly formed Advent Testimony Movement comprised the ten signatories to the Manifesto, plus several additional members of the P.I.S. Not surprisingly, the first person to be elected president was Meyer. A contributory factor to the establishment of the Movement was the relationship which had developed some years earlier between several members of the first Council (notably Meyer, Morgan, Holden, and Webb-Peploe) and a number of leading evangelicals in the United States, including Adoniram Judson Gordon, Moody, and Dixon. These men, who were among the founding fathers of American dispensationalism, had been greatly influenced by the end-times teaching of Darby and were soon sharing pulpits and conference platforms with their British counterparts on both sides of the Atlantic.

Meyer’s connection with the United States can be attributed in large measure to the close friendship he enjoyed with Moody, which quickly developed following their first meeting in York in 1873. That year Meyer was the first minister to welcome Moody and his colleague Ira D. Sankey to England, opening his church in Priory Street, York, to them for several weeks. In so doing Meyer unofficially launched the first great Moody-Sankey mission to Britain, which resulted in thousands of souls being saved.

21 Unpublished Minutes of the Prophecy Investigation Society, 14–15 November 1917.

22 John McNicol, *20th Century Prophet* (Eastbourne: Prophetic Witness Publishing House, 1971), 34.

23 Tatford, 30.

During Moody's stay in York, he and Meyer (then aged 36 and 26 respectively) frequently prayed together in the Priory Street vestry. As Meyer later recalled,

What an inspiration when this great and noble soul first broke into my life! . . . The little vestry there—how vividly I remember it—was the scene of our long and earnest prayers as we knelt around the leather-covered table in the middle of the room . . . and I remember that Mr. Moody, at the great Free Trade Hall, Manchester, referred to that little room as the fountain from which the river of blessing for the whole country had sprung.²⁴

The following letter, dated February 16, 1897, was written shortly after Meyer had addressed a series of meetings which Moody had arranged for him at Carnegie Hall in New York:

My Dear Meyer,

My dear Brother, let me tell you how glad I am that you came to this country. I find it is much easier to preach in Boston and New York than it was last month. The ministers have got a great blessing . . . I trust the Good Lord will take you safely back to your own land, and soon bring you back to this country. It will never be known in time what amount of good you have done in fourteen days you have been with us, and hundreds of thousands will follow you across the deep with their prayer. I hope you will let me know the first day you can be with us again, and stay as long as you can and help us in this great country, for our need is great.

Your true friend,
D. L. Moody.

Meyer described that particular fortnight of ministry in America as "certainly the most wonderful time of my life."²⁵

The Passing of the Torch

On November 2, 1926, a meeting of the renamed Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement was held at Queen's Hall in London. Among the speakers that day was Dr. Alfred Henry Burton, one of the original founders of the Movement, who gave a sober reminder of the obligation resting on all those who bear witness to the truth of the Lord's return:

These gatherings will fail if they do not result in the salvation of those who are lost. But we thank God we have seen it in other places where

²⁴ William R. Moody, *D. L. Moody* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 145.

²⁵ W. Y. Fullerton, *No Ordinary Man: The Remarkable Life of F. B. Meyer* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1993), 39–42.



this witness has been given; we have seen worldly people finding salvation in Christ, and thus becoming members of that church which will be caught up in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.²⁶

Three years later, Burton succeeded Meyer as president of the Movement. Though little has been written about him, one striking piece of information came to light during the course of my research. In my book, *For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby* (2007), I included extracts from eye-witness accounts of Darby's final hours in Bournemouth in April 1882. The author of one of those accounts was previously known to me only by his initials, A. H. B. I have since discovered that these were the initials of Alfred Henry Burton, one of Darby's closest friends. I further discovered that as Darby passed into the presence of the Lord, he was holding Burton's hand. This struck me as being extremely significant. It seemed as if Darby's lifelong work in recovering and popularizing the doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture of the church had been passed on, like a torch, to the next generation of prophetic witnesses, which Burton represented. The story of Elijah and Elisha came to mind (2 Kgs 2:11–15).

With the nation of Israel coming under sustained theological and political fire from many quarters of the church, and with the doctrine of our Lord's any-moment return being scoffed at and undermined by theologians and clergy alike, may we stand firm on God's Word and be encouraged by the example set by the faithful witnesses we have looked at in these two articles. May we hold aloft, with Christ's love and grace in our hearts, the same torch of prophetic truth, living lives "worthy of the calling" which we have received, "until the day dawns and the morning star arises" in our hearts (Eph 4:1; 2 Pet 1:19).

Author info:

Paul Wilkinson (Ph.D., Manchester University) is associate minister at Hazel Grove Full Gospel Church, Stockport, Cheshire, and a council member of Prophetic Witness Movement International in the UK.
pwilkinson71@ntlworld.com

26 Quoted in Tatford, 80.

Has the Church Replaced Israel?

– A Theological Evaluation



by **Mark Adler**

There are at minimum 4,950 references to the people of Israel in Scripture. Having devoted so much of His Word to the Jewish people, it should be strikingly apparent that God has a unique plan for the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yet, Christendom through the centuries and in modern times has persisted in a sweeping reinterpretation or outright denial of this major biblical theme, espousing a concept variously known as supersessionism, replacement theology, or fulfillment theology. Michael J. Vlach, professor of theology at The Master's Seminary in Sun Valley, CA, has written a succinct overview of the historical, hermeneutical, and theological underpinnings of supersessionism. Instead of taking a reductionist approach to the supersessionist arguments, Vlach seeks to carefully grapple with key texts. "The main issue of this book is whether the Bible indicates that the NT church is the replacement or fulfillment of Israel and whether national Israel has any

future in God's plan" (p. 5).

Part one of the book (chapters 1–2) serves as an introduction to the theological topic of supersessionism. As any seasoned logician knows, one must comprehensively delineate key terms at the outset of any discussion; Vlach is careful to do this. His survey of the definitions of supersessionism from Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Ronald Diprose, R. Kendall Soulen, Herman Ridderbos, Hans K. LaRondelle, and Loraine Boettner crystallizes its core beliefs, namely that "(1) the nation Israel has somehow completed or forfeited its status as the people of God and will never again possess a unique role or function apart from the church, and (2) the church is now the true Israel that has permanently replaced or superseded national Israel as the people of God" (p. 12).

Also in this opening section, essential discussions of three variations within supersessionism are elucidated: punitive (Hippolytus, Origen, and Luther), economic (Rudolf



Has the Church Replaced Israel?
A Theological Evaluation

MICHAEL J. VLACH
NASHVILLE: B & H ACADEMIC, 2010,
228 PP., \$19.99, PAPER.

Bultmann, Karl Barth, Vern S. Poythress, and N. T. Wright), and structural. Additionally, distinctions between strong supersessionism (no national salvation for Israel) and moderate supersessionism (national salvation) are considered. Moderate supersessionists cited are Karl Rahner, George Eldon Ladd, Wayne A. Grudem, and Millard J. Erickson.

Having developed the structural groundwork in the two opening chapters, part two (chapters 3–7) considers supersessionism in church history. Chapter 3 begins by examining three factors leading to supersessionism: “(1) the increasing Gentile composition of the early church, (2) the church’s perception of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and 135, and (3) a hermeneutical approach that allowed the church to appropriate Israel’s promises to itself” (pp. 28–29). Vlach makes bountiful use of primary sources (Eusebius, Justin, Origen, Tertullian, etc.) in his discussion of these factors.

Chapter 4 traces supersessionism in the Patristic Era (A.D. 100–430) through the influence of Justin, Origen, and Augustine. Vlach provides some rather shocking quotes from these patristic writers. For example, Origen, in *Against Celsus*, deems Israel as forever “abandoned because of their sins . . . they will never be restored to their former condition” (p. 38). Augustine, who adopted such supersessionism, apparently by default, echoed these sentiments in *On the Psalms*: “. . . we are Israel, the seed of Abraham. . . . The Christian people then is rather Israel” (p. 40). Vlach poses an interesting question with which Augustine wrestled, namely, “If the church was the new Israel, for what purpose did Jews of the other Israel exist?” (p. 41). As disturbing as these statements were, Vlach is vigilant in portraying their views on Israel not only in terms of Israel’s past and present, but also with regard to Israel’s future. He devotes well over half of this chapter to examining evidence that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, and Augustine did believe that the nation of Israel would

come to faith in Christ in the last days, in fulfillment of both scriptural prophecies and Romans 11.

Chapter 5 discusses supersessionism in the Medieval Era but comprises only three pages because, according to Vlach, “little doctrinal development occurred in relation to supersessionism” (p. 51). Despite the glaring brevity of this chapter, his discussion of medieval art with regard to supersessionism is quite fascinating.

At the south entrance of the Strasbourg Cathedral in France stand two female statues. One represents *Ecclesia* (the church) while the other symbolizes *Synagoga* (the synagogue). *Ecclesia* stands triumphant with a crown on her head and a royal robe draped across her shoulders. Head up, her gaze is confident, and her posture is noble. The staff and chalice in her hands represent her divine authority. *Synagoga*, however is looking down, and a veil covers her eyes. The staff she carries in her right hand is broken, and the Torah she holds in her left hand appears ready to slip. *Synagoga* stands defeated. (p. 51)

Vlach cites similar carvings and sculptures at Reims Cathedral, at Notre Dame de Paris, and at Erfurt Cathedral in Thuringia, Germany. In a bold move to accentuate his thesis, *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* adorn the cover of Vlach’s book: certainly an attention-grabbing choice.

Luther’s and Calvin’s supersessionist views are the crux of discussion in chapter 6 (Reformation Era). Once again the chapter is brief, yet it pinpoints the issues at hand with striking quotes from the primary sources. Quoting from Luther’s 1543 tract “Concerning the Jews and Their Lies,” Vlach nails Luther’s anti-Semitism on the door for all to read. Referring to Jews as “miserable and accursed people,” Luther goes on to write, “Listen, Jew, are you aware that Jerusalem and your sovereignty, together with your



temple and priesthood, have been destroyed for over 1,460 years?" (p. 56). Solidifying existing belief that the church has permanently replaced Israel, Luther wrote, "Thus all the Gentiles who are Christians are the true Israelites and new Jews" (p. 57). While Calvin shared these views, he was more temperate in his tone; he did envision a prospect for conversion of Jews into the body of Christ. Vlach closes this chapter on supersessionism in the Reformation era with brief summaries of the positions of Melancthon, the editors of the Geneva Bible, some English Puritans, and Dutch Reformed theologians.

Chapter 7 summarizes supersessionism from the eighteenth century to the present time. The author structures this chapter around three key figures (Kant, Schleiermacher, and Barth), then shifts to the impact that the Holocaust, the State of Israel, *Nostra Aetate*, and the rise of dispensationalism had upon supersessionism and the church. Concise declarations from varied international denominational bodies affirming that the church has not abrogated God's covenantal promises to Israel are cited in this chapter (e.g. Mennonite European Regional Conference, Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland, National Conference of Brazilian Bishops, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.]). With regard to dispensationalism, Vlach lists significant theologians (e.g. John Nelson Darby, Cyrus I. Scofield, Charles C. Ryrie, John F. Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, Alva J. McClain, Robert L. Saucy, and Darrell L. Bock), institutions (e.g. Dallas Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute, etc.), and other key ministries (e.g. Navigators, Campus Crusade for Christ, etc.).

Part three of the book (chapters 8–10) focuses on the hermeneutics of supersessionism. In his assessment, the hermeneutical foundation of supersessionism rests upon three mainstays: "(1) the interpretive priority of the NT over the OT, (2) the belief in a

nonliteral fulfillment of OT texts originally addressed to Israel, and (3) a view of typology that sees national Israel as a type of the church" (p. 91). Vlach presents a critical overview of these three pillars, admitting that a full treatment of the arguments was beyond the scope of his book. Passages addressed include Acts 2/Joel 2; Acts 15/Amos 9; Romans 9/Hosea 1–2; Hosea 11/Matthew 2; and Romans 11. He concludes that these "passages do not come close to overturning or redirecting the multiple and explicit references to a future for national Israel found in both the OT and the NT" (p. 104). Vlach characterizes supersessionist treatment of OT typology as excessive and warns of the two extremes to avoid: 1) disregarding the legitimate types that clearly exist in Scripture, and 2) "treating nearly everything in the OT as types, pictures, and shadows" (p. 107).

In chapter 10, the author turns to what he considers to be the four *sine qua non* of a non-supersessionist hermeneutic based upon a historical-grammatical-literary foundation:

- 1) The starting point for understanding any passage of the Bible, including those in the OT, is the passage itself.
- 2) Progressive revelation reveals new information, but it does not cancel unconditional promises to Israel.
- 3) National Israel is not a type that is transcended by the church.
- 4) Old Testament promises can have a double fulfillment or application with both Israel and the church (p. 109).

As Vlach elaborates on each of these four essentials, he incorporates insights from several journal articles and monographs by R. Saucy, J. Feinberg, P. Feinberg, Fruchtenbaum, Bock, Peters, Sauer, W. House, and C. Ryrie. Vlach compiles some incisive questions and quotes from these theologians: "The superstructure does not replace the

foundation" (Ryrie), "In what sense can the OT really be called a *revelation* in its original meaning [if the NT reinterprets the OT]? How can God be truthful and change the meaning of His promises?" (P. Feinberg) (p. 114).

Part four (chapters 11–16) surveys a number of theological themes related to the supersessionism issue. In chapters 11 and 12, Vlach summarizes the most prevalent theological arguments used by supersessionists. He then evaluates each of these in chapter 13. With regard to Galatians 6:16, Vlach makes the point that, based on the context of the passage, "Paul was addressing Christian Jews with his 'Israel of God' statement" (p. 144). Additionally, he notes that whenever Paul uses the term "Israel" he refers to ethnic Jews, and "no other passages identify the church as 'Israel'" (p. 144). Specific topics examined include the significance of Christ's words in Matthew 21:43 ("the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to . . ."); the translation of *kai* in Galatians 6:16 ("and upon the Israel of God"); the meaning of "Israel" as used in Romans 9:6; the use of the word "Jew" in Romans 2:28–29; the terminology used in 2 Peter 2:9–10 and Galatians 3:7, 29; and the three supersessionist interpretations of "all Israel" in Romans 11:26.

In his closing remarks, Vlach summarizes the essential error of supersessionism.

In their desire to emphasize the unity in salvation that Jews and Gentiles have experienced, supersessionists have mistakenly concluded that such unity excludes a special role for Israel in the future. But salvific unity does not erase all ethnic and functional distinctions. Gentiles are now partakers of Israel's covenants, and national Israel will be saved and restored with a role of service to the nations. (pp. 204–05)

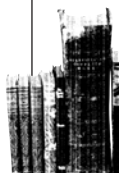
Vlach then makes an appeal to his supersessionist readers to reconsider their position in

light of the overwhelming body of evidence from Scripture, as did biblical scholar C. E. B. Cranfield. In an appendix to the book, Vlach addresses the misconception that the church had roots in the Old Testament. He insists that simply because the Septuagint uses the word "*ekklesia*" (Greek, "congregation") to translate "*qahal*" (Hebrew, "congregation") does not prove that the church existed in the Old Testament.

Vlach is to be commended for much that is in his book. First, he boldly asserts his own position that supersessionism is not a biblical doctrine in the introduction, yet he is careful to fairly explain the assortment of supersessionist perspectives. In addition, he keeps his focus squarely on the issue of supersessionism and is not easily diverted onto tangential issues (e.g. dispensationalism, amillennialism, etc.). He wisely invests a good portion of the book in defining terms and developing a structure to examine the issues (i.e. punitive, economic, structural, strong/moderate). Also to be commended are the ranges of approaches he pursues in both examining and dissecting supersessionism: historical, hermeneutical, and theological.

Readers will appreciate his generous use of primary sources and detailed annotations and footnotes. His book is semi-technical and yet will engage both academic theologian and popular Christian audiences. Vlach maintains clear and cogent arguments and supports all of his claims with succinct exegetical expertise.

Limitations include thin coverage of Origen, Aquinas, and the Medieval Era (A.D. 500–1100). In addition, there is a rather abrupt shift of focus in chapter 7 from a survey of key people to key events. Also, the book is missing a sufficient discussion of modern denominational views pertaining to supersessionism (charts would have been helpful). And, while the book was not intended as a treatment of covenant and dispensational theology, a more detailed



overview would have been helpful. Finally, a more inclusive discussion of some of the results of supersessionism with regard to the plight/persecution of the Jews in the Diaspora may have contributed to a more full-orbed treatment of the issues at stake.

Limitations pale in comparison to the strengths and significance of this work. Vlach delivers on his promise to fill the void in the literature of the supersessionist/non-supersessionist debate through this engaging treatment of the evidence on both sides of the issue. *Has the Church Replaced Israel? A Theological Evaluation* would make an excellent supplemental text in seminary or Bible college courses such as hermeneutics, ecclesiology, Israelology, or eschatology. Vlach's book ought to be a ready resource for all believers involved in any aspect of Messianic Jewish ministries.

Author info:

Mark Adler is a Ph.D. Educational Studies student at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, La Mirada, CA, and a Bible teacher at Woodcrest Christian School, Riverside, CA.
adlerfamily@aol.com

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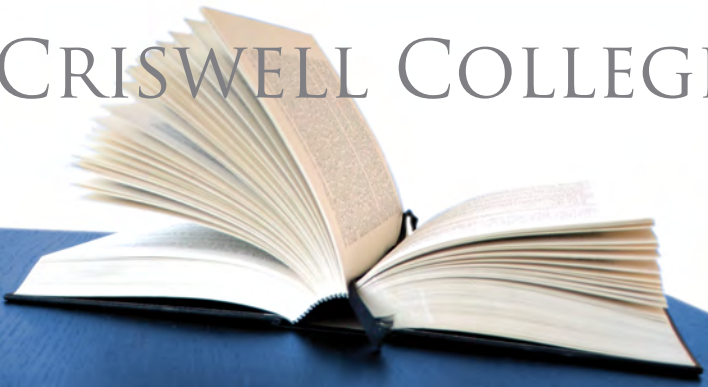
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