

Understanding Israel: 3 Core Camps & 1 Unorthodox view:

Dispensational Theology - In theology, a dispensation is the divine administration of a period of time; each dispensation is a divinely appointed age. Dispensationalism is a theological system that recognizes these ages ordained by God to order the affairs of the world. Dispensationalism has two primary distinctives: 1) a consistently literal interpretation of Scripture, especially Bible prophecy, and 2) a view of the uniqueness of Israel as separate from the Church in God's program. Classical dispensationalism identifies seven dispensations in God's plan for humanity. (1) Innocence, (2) Conscience, (3) Human Government, (4) Promise, (5) Law, (6) Grace/Church Age, **We are here awaiting the rapture**, and (7) Kingdom. Really made popular by John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) who is widely credited as the "father of dispensationalism,"

Can be very adamant about the political support of the modern Nation of Israel and often see its establishment in 47/48 as a key part of prophecy. Usually comes along with Pre-Mill Rapturist Theology

Taught heavily by John MacArthur or David Jeremiah.

Clearly confess Jesus alone as the path to Salvation.

Covenantal Theology – Believe that God's covenants are available for all His people and have been fulfilled through Christ and His Church. The New covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34 has fulfilled the old and Jesus has instituted the New Covenant, in his blood. He mentions as much during the "last supper." **Look to a future where God may/does have a future plan for ethnic Israel.** Embraces the "mystery of God's relationship with the Jews." This, along with Replacement Theology, was/is the dominant view for most of Christian history and is the current view in the Catholic Church / Reformed Theology

Taught by Calvin, Zwingli, and Edwards in the past and men like J.I Packer, R.C. Sproul, John Piper, Voddie Baucham, and Kevin DeYong in modern times

Clearly confess Jesus alone as the path to Salvation.

Replacement or Fulfillment Theology – View the Church as the "New Israel" or the complete Fulfillment of Israel. Where Israel failed, the Church will take her place and all of the promises, made by God, towards Israel are now applied to the Church. This view begins to take root early in the Church around approx. 150AD as more and more gentiles come to faith and continue to have schisms with the Jews. The early Church fathers, who were all Messianic Jews, had all died and largely been replaced by Gentiles with whom the faith was exploding. The Sunday day of worship are outriggers of Replacement theology in an effort to distance themselves from the Jewish people. **This view believes there is no future plan for ethnic Israel.**

Can be associated with Anti-Semitism

Clearly Confess Jesus alone as the path to Salvation.

Two Covenants Theology – Believes God relates to the Jews still through the covenants of Sinai and to Christians through the New Covenant fulfilled in Christ. Essentially holding to two paths of salvation, one for the Jews and one for the Gentiles.

Most prominent teacher, in modern times, would be John Hagee.

Many would consider this outside of orthodox Christianity, your pastor included. This suggests that Jesus was simply opening a way for gentiles vs being THE way for all, Jews and Gentiles. Paul seems to make this point crystal clear in all of Romans.

So how can or should we consider the modern Nation of Israel?

Remember 1st, Israel – Jewish People – are a people with or without “land to their name.” From times wandering, exile, or displacement, Jews are still Jews even if they don’t live in a certain place.

Even if God does still have a plan for the Jewish people (Dispensational / Covenantal) the modern state of Israel is still a country. They have laws, both good and bad. And they can/do take actions that are both good and bad. None of the theology presented forces you to be unthinking or uncritical towards Israel out of “devotion to Christ” as some politicians recently argued.

It's important to also recognize, Modern Israel is HATED and unfairly targeted by much of the Middle Eastern World. The common Chant of “from the River to the Sea Palestine will be free.” Is not about a two state solution but a driving out or cleansing all together of the Jewish people. Anti-Semitism still runs rampant throughout the world. There is nothing Christian about any time of Anti-Semitism or Racism.

A few key points before we proceed into the text:

Jesus Christ is the way to salvation, for the Jew and Gentile alike.

Be careful to hold future events with grace – apocalyptic literature isn’t always so cut and dry.

Strive to see where some are mingling the political with the theological

Read Romans, Daniel, Revelation – get good commentaries, listen to good sermons, seek God’s wisdom.

Paul's Anguish Over Israel

9 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, ⁴the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised!^[a] Amen.

God's Sovereign Choice

⁶It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."^[b] ⁸In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. ⁹For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."^[c]

¹⁰Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. ¹¹Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: ¹²not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."^[d] ¹³Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."^[e]

¹⁴What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

¹⁶It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. ¹⁷For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."^[f] ¹⁸Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

¹⁹One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?" ²⁰But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"^[g] ²¹Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

²²What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—²⁴even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵As he says in Hosea:

"I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," ²⁶and, "In the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'"

²⁷ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea only the remnant will be saved. ²⁸ For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.”^[k]

²⁹ It is just as Isaiah said previously: “Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

Israel’s Unbelief

³⁰ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.”

10 Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ² For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. ⁴ Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

⁵ Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: “The person who does these things will live by them.”^[a] ⁶ But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’”^[b] (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’”^[c] (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,”^[d] that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”^[e] ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”^[f]

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”^[g]

¹⁶ But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?”^[h] ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. ¹⁸ But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did:

“Their voice has gone out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.”^[i]

¹⁹ Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says,

“I will make you envious by those who are not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.”^[j]

²⁰ And Isaiah boldly says,

“I was found by those who did not seek me;
I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”^[k]

²¹ But concerning Israel he says,

“All day long I have held out my hands
to a disobedient and obstinate people.”^[l]

The Remnant of Israel

11 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: ³ “Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me”^[a]? ⁴ And what was God’s answer to him? “I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”^[b] ⁵ So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

⁷ What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened, ⁸ as it is written:

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that could not see
and ears that could not hear,
to this very day.”^[c]

⁹ And David says:

“May their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them.
¹⁰ May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever.”^[d]

Ingrafted Branches

¹¹ Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if

their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

²² Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. ²³ And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

All Israel Will Be Saved

²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way^[g] all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

²⁷ And this is^[f] my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”^[g]

²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now^[h] receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Doxology

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and^[i] knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!

³⁴ “Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?”^[j]

³⁵ “Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay them?”^[k]

³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.