

# The Theology of Covenants

The Lord made a covenant with Abraham on several different occasions. The first time was when God commanded him to leave his home:

**Genesis 12:1-3:** “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

This is what God promised:

- To make Abraham a great nation
- To bless Abraham
- To make Abraham's name great
- To make Abraham a blessing
- To bless those who blessed Abraham
- To curse those who cursed Abraham
- That in Abraham all the families of the Earth would be blessed

Later on God made another covenant with Abraham. It was similar to the one in chapter 12 but it contained some additional promises:

**Genesis 17:1-8:** “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram,

and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger; all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

There's a lot of information there! It should be noted that these promises don't cancel out the earlier ones. Instead they *add to* what God said before. This is what God promised:

- To make a covenant with Abraham
- To give Abraham many descendants
- To make Abraham the father of many nations
- To make an everlasting covenant between Himself and Abraham, *and* between Himself and Abraham's descendants
- To be a God to both Abraham and Abraham's descendants
- To give to both Abraham and his descendants all the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession

Those are the promises God made to Abraham in what

theologians call the “Abrahamic Covenant”. On the surface this looks pretty straightforward. Despite the simple nature of the passage, however, there are two different schools of thought which have arisen to interpret these promises. One method of interpretation is **Covenant Theology**, and the other is **Dispensationalism**. These two approaches are entirely different and are as opposed to one other as they can possibly be.

It's *vital* that we understand both systems because they impact the way the rest of the Bible is interpreted. The system which you follow will determine how you view Israel and how you interpret prophecy. It's a critical area of study which is often neglected.

The names of these two systems are very misleading. Covenant Theology does *not* mean you're interpreting the Bible as a series of covenants, and Dispensationalism does *not* mean you're interpreting the Bible as a series of dispensations. Everyone agrees that there are covenants in the Bible! The Abrahamic covenant is just one of many. (The word “covenant” appears in the King James Bible an astonishing 280 times!) Likewise, everyone agrees that the Bible speaks of dispensations. For example:

**Ephesians 1:9-10:** “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:”

The dictionary defines a dispensation as a “divinely appointed order or age”. For example, there was one order of doing things before the Fall in the Garden of Eden, and another one afterward. There was one way of doing things before the Flood, and another one afterward. There was one way of doing things before Christ died and rose again, and another one

afterward. Those are all examples of dispensations.

This means the dispute is *not* about whether Bible has covenants and dispensations because the Bible clearly has both. Instead the issue comes down to this: what's the correct method for interpreting these covenants?

## ***Covenant Theology***

The cornerstone of **Covenant Theology** (which I strongly disagree with) is that the church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people. That's why Covenant Theology is often called Replacement Theology. It teaches that when Israel rejected Jesus as her Messiah, God rejected Israel as well and replaced the Jews with the church. The only people who are special to God are those who are within the church because the Jews have lost their special position. God no longer has a plan for them and they're no more special to Him than any other nation.

This has a lot of implications. First of all, covenant theologians teach that Israel has no right to any land in the Middle East. They say when the Jews rejected Jesus they lost whatever special promises they might have had. That's why churches which believe in covenant theology are sometimes hostile toward Israel: they believe that Israel is an enemy of God and ought to be defeated. It's not uncommon for such churches boycott Israel or speak up on behalf of those who are attacking her.

Because they believe the church has replaced Israel, they also believe that God's promises to Israel have been transferred to the church. In order to accomplish that they reinterpret the covenants in the Bible (such as the Abrahamic Covenant) in spiritual and symbolic ways. Instead of blessing the Jews the Lord now blesses the church. The passages in the Old Testament which talk about Israel are reinterpreted as addressing the church.

Since they believe that God has rejected Israel, they also believe that Israel will never reign over the world during a literal millennium. Instead they interpret the millennium symbolically. Covenant theologians always become amillennial because the

millennium deals with Israel and they believe God has rejected Israel. No covenant theologian could ever accept an interpretation of Revelation that included a literal Israel ruling over the entire world.

Covenant Theology teaches:

- That the church has replaced Israel
- That God has taken His promises away from Israel and has given them to the church
- That Israel isn't special in God's sight
- That the modern nation of Israel has no right to exist and isn't any more special to God than any other nation
- That Revelation should be interpreted symbolically
- That the millennium is purely symbolic and not literal
- That prophecies and covenants should be understood spiritually, symbolically, and allegorically, *not* literally

The points of Covenant Theology aren't arbitrary. They all logically follow from the idea that the church has replaced Israel. Its entire system of interpretation comes from that point. For example:

- God made Israel certain promises, some of which haven't been fulfilled. If the church has replaced Israel then those promises *must* be transferred to the church. Otherwise God would have broken His Word.
- Many of the promises in the Old Testament are very specific and there's no way to transfer them to the Church. (For example, no one believes the church has a right to the land of Canaan.) The only way to make this system work is to interpret prophecies “spiritually” or allegorically. If you interpret them literally you'll end up with Dispensationalism. Covenant Theology forces you to interpret the Old Testament in a symbolic way because any other method of interpretation would disprove

Covenant Theology.

- If God has rejected Israel and His promises to Israel no longer apply to Israel then the Jews have lost their right to the land of Canaan. That means the Jews are occupying land that doesn't belong to them – and on top of that they're the enemies of the gospel because they've rejected Christ. Therefore churches who believe in Covenant Theology are often hostile toward Israel. They do this because that's what their theology teaches.
- If you interpret Old Testament prophecies literally you'll arrive at the conclusion that God has set aside 7 years for chastising Israel, after which Israel will be saved, Jesus will return as Israel's king, and Israel (with Jesus as King) will rule over the whole world for 1000 years. However, if you believe that God has rejected Israel then God can't possibly have set aside a time that's specifically aimed at Israel. Therefore prophecy must be interpreted symbolically.

Covenant Theology will lead people to reject Israel, to interpret the Bible in a very non-literal manner, and to become amillennial. That's where the system leads. The more you study it the more you'll be drawn to those conclusions.

Covenant Theology also teaches that people in the Old Testament were saved by believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is despite the fact that the Bible didn't reveal *any* of those things until the time of Isaiah, and no one understood what Isaiah was talking about until after Christ died and rose again!

I find this impossible to believe. Although Adam and Eve knew that a Messiah was coming (Genesis 3:15), mankind wasn't told that the Messiah would die and rise again until *thousands of years later*. How could people possibly have believed something God hadn't revealed? How could Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have believed in a gospel that hadn't been given to mankind? It doesn't make sense.

Dispensationalists agree that mankind has always been saved by grace through faith alone. The difference is that the *content* of that faith has changed from one dispensation to the next. The Bible tells us that Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness (Galatians 3:6, James 2:23). God didn't tell Abraham everything He's told us. However, Abraham believed what he *had* been told and God accepted that. People in the Old Testament were saved by *believing what God had revealed to mankind up to that point* – not by believing something God was still keeping a secret!

I reject Covenant Theology because I believe the evidence against it is too great. Dispensationalism is a much better system.

## ***Has the Church replaced Israel?***

If the church has replaced Israel then you'd expect that fact to be mentioned somewhere in the Bible, but it isn't. There are no verses which say that the church has replaced Israel as God's special people. Moreover, the Bible never refers to the church as “Israel”. In every case the word “Israel” refers to Israel and the word “church” refers to the church.

What the Bible actually says about all of this is quite different from what Covenant Theology teaches. The church hasn't replaced Israel. Instead we've been *grafted in*:

**Romans 11:17:** “And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;”

The Bible says that some of the original branches of the tree – meaning Israel – were broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in. That does *not* mean we've replaced Israel, as the apostle Paul takes great pains to point out:

**Romans 11:11-12:** “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?”

Israel has fallen but they have *not* been replaced! Through their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles. However, God hasn't forsaken Israel. The salvation of the Gentiles is intended to provoke them to jealousy. One day the Jews will be saved and will be grafted back in:

**Romans 11:23-29:** “And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

Notice that the gifts and calling of God are without



repentance! That means when God makes a promise He won't go back on it. God made a covenant to take away Israel's sins and that's exactly what He is going to do. God chose Israel as His own people and they will forever remain exactly that.

For now Israel has been blinded and hardened, but that's not because God has rejected Israel. Instead it's so that the Gentiles might be saved. After God has finished obtaining a people among the Gentiles He will take away Israel's blindness and "all Israel shall be saved".

God cannot and *will never* cast away His people! Not only does Romans 11 make this clear, but the Old Testament does as well:

**Jeremiah 31:35-37:** "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD."

There's nothing Israel can do to forfeit the promises God made to them. He will never cast them off! The apostle Paul said that all Israel shall be saved, and so they will be. The Old Testament speaks of a time when the hearts of the Jews will change:

**Hosea 3:4-5:** "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an

image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days."

These verses tell us that "in the latter days" the Israelites will return and fear the Lord.

Zechariah said the same thing:

**Zechariah 12:10:** "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

Before Jesus was crucified He said that Israel wouldn't see Him again until they accepted Him as their Messiah (Matthew 23:39). Zechariah looked forward to the day when that would happen – when Israel would look upon their Messiah, whom they have pierced, and would mourn for Him and repent of what they had done. The day is coming when Israel will repent and be saved, just as the Old Testament prophets foretold.

That's actually what the seven-year tribulation is all about. It's a time God has set aside to punish this word for its wickedness *and to bring Israel to salvation*<sup>1</sup>. At the end of the tribulation the Jews will repent and be saved, and Jesus will return and rescue them from the antichrist (Revelation 19:11-21).

The point is that God has *not* abandoned Israel and has *not* cast her off forever. Israel has been blinded for a time so that the Gentiles might be saved, but that blindness is only temporary.

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1 For more information on this topic, see: <http://stories.cyragon.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/The-Purpose-of-the-Tribulation.pdf>

As both the Old and New Testaments tell us, one day Israel will be saved.

Dispensationalism teaches that God hasn't replaced Israel with the church, but instead *both* are His chosen people. Israel and the church are two separate things. There are some Jews who are saved and are part of the church, but Israel and the church are two distinct entities – just as France and the church are distinct entities. There may be Frenchmen who are in the church but that doesn't turn the church into France.

## ***Has God Taken His Promises Away From Israel?***

As Romans 11:23 said *when talking about this very subject*, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. There are no Scriptures which say that God has taken away His promises and given them to the church.

If you look at the promises that God made to Israel it becomes clear they could never apply to the church. For example, look at the promises God made to Abraham:

**Genesis 17:8:** “And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

God made an unconditional promise to Abraham that He would give him and his descendants all of the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. Notice the word *everlasting*. That means that no matter what, for the rest of time, the land of Canaan will always belong to the Jews. God may remove them from the land for a time due to their obedience, but *the land will always remain theirs*.

Covenant Theology teaches that because of Israel's disobedience they've forfeited this promise and no longer have a

right to the land at all. But look at what the verse says! The land was given to them as an *everlasting possession*. If they lost the land then it wouldn't be an everlasting possession anymore, would it? In that case God would have broken His promise.

Covenant Theology also teaches that all of God's promises to Israel have been transferred to the church. Does the church now have a right to the entire land of Canaan? Of course not – so covenant theologians have “spiritualized” this verse to be a reference to some vague spiritual blessings. Is there any passage in the Bible which interprets God's land promise to Israel in that manner? No, there isn't. In every instance both the Old and New Testament interpret that promise literally.

If you interpret the Bible in a normal, straightforward, and literal manner then you'll arrive at dispensationalism. That belief system teaches that God hasn't rejected Israel, and the reason it teaches this is because *the Bible says that God hasn't rejected Israel*. It teaches that Israel has an everlasting right to the land of Canaan because *that's what God promised Abraham*. It's not complicated! Dispensationalism takes God at His Word and doesn't invent allegorical interpretations that have no Scriptural basis.

## ***Is The Millennium Purely Symbolic?***

Covenant Theology teaches that the modern nation of Israel has no right to any land in the Middle East. Because of this it rejects the idea that Israel will one day rule over the world during the millennium. Covenant theologians argue that the millennium is symbolic of the age we're living in now. They teach that at this very moment the devil is bound and the church is reigning triumphant over the world through the gospel. This interpretation is known as amillennialism.

So what does the Bible have to say? Well, Revelation tells us that at the beginning of the millennium a great angel binds Satan and imprisons him so that he's unable to do any more harm until the millennium is over:

**Revelation 20:1-3:** “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

This passage is clear that during the millennium the devil has been removed from this world. He can no longer deceive anyone or oppose the church. In fact, the devil can't even travel anymore because he's been cast into the bottomless pit and imprisoned.

Does this describe the church age? No, it certainly doesn't! The New Testament warns us repeatedly that we must be on our guard because the devil is actively attacking the church:

**1 Peter 5:8:** “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”

The apostle Peter told us that not only is Satan “seeking whom he may devour”, but he's also walking around! Someone who's locked in the bottomless pit can't possibly be *walking around the world*. If the devil was bound then he would be unable to seek and devour.

This verse was written during the church age – the very age in which covenant theologians teach that the devil has been rendered harmless. The Bible contradicts them and warns us to put on the armor of God, because we're in a very real battle against the forces of darkness:

**Ephesians 6:11:** “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Who does Paul want us to stand against? *The devil*. If Satan was bound and could no longer cause any harm then the devil wouldn't be a problem, would he? But both Peter and Paul believed that Satan was *not* bound. They believed he was still roaming around and was capable of causing great harm. The Bible simply does *not* teach that Satan is currently bound. Instead it teaches exactly the opposite.

The Bible also does *not* teach that the church is reigning triumphant in this age. Instead it teaches that the world hates the church and persecutes it. We're not reigning over this world; instead we're beaten down, hated, despised, and rejected. All over the world Christians are hunted, imprisoned, and executed on a daily basis. The apostle Paul went so far as to say this:

**I Corinthians 15:19:** “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

Paul was saying that if Christianity was only good for this life and had no reward in the life to come then we are the most miserable of all people. Why? Because in this life Christians are faced with terrible persecution.

Jesus warned us this would happen:

**John 15:18-20:** “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also

persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”

**John 16:33:** “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Did Jesus say that the church would reign triumphant over the world during this age? Absolutely not! Instead He said that we would be hated, despised, hunted down, and executed – and that's exactly what happened. It's impossible to believe that we're now reigning with Christ.

But there's another problem. Take a look at what else Revelation says:

**Revelation 20:4-5:** “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”

Who lives and reigns with Christ? *The martyrs*. The passage clearly says that the martyrs are *resurrected* and live and reign with Christ. They were dead but they lived again.

Has this already happened? Have the martyrs been resurrected from the dead? Do they currently reign over the Earth? Of course not! Satan hasn't been bound, the church doesn't reign, and the martyrs haven't been resurrected. Therefore the idea that the millennium is symbolic of the church age is conclusively

wrong. Amillennialism is a false doctrine.

Revelation 20 should be interpreted in a normal and straightforward way, which is exactly how dispensationalists interpret it. Dispensationalism teaches that *in the future* Satan will be bound and unable to deceive the nations any longer. The dead martyrs will be raised back to life and will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

## ***Should Prophecy Be Interpreted Symbolically?***

Covenant Theology teaches that prophecy should be interpreted symbolically. It claims that the millennium is symbolic of the age we live in now, and Revelation is a symbolic look at the struggle between good and evil. It doesn't interpret prophecy literally.

There are some significant problems with this approach to interpretation. While it's true that the Bible contains symbolism, the proper way to interpret the Bible's symbolism is *to use the Bible itself to provide the interpretation*. The Bible always interprets its own symbols! If you want to know what a symbol means, all you have to do is look it up in the Bible and see how the Bible defines it.

For example, take this verse from Revelation:

**Revelation 1:12:** “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;”

How should the seven golden candlesticks be interpreted? The answer is *not* to decide for yourself what you think they mean. That's a very serious mistake! No Scripture is of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20). We don't have the right to assign our own meanings to prophecies. Instead we must believe the interpretation that the Bible provides, which can be found a few verses later:



**Revelation 1:20:** “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

What are the seven candlesticks? They represent the seven churches. We know this because that's what the Bible says. *This is how you interpret the symbolism in the Bible!* This is the *only* way it can be done.

Covenant Theology doesn't take this approach. Instead covenant theologians decide *for themselves* what they think a passage might mean. They don't use the Bible to interpret prophecy because the Bible doesn't support their system of interpretation. *There are no passages in the Bible that offer a symbolic interpretation of any prophecy.* Instead every single prophecy is interpreted literally by the apostles *and fulfilled literally as well.*

The Bible has many prophecies about the first coming of Christ. Do you know how many of them were fulfilled literally? All of them! Do you know how many were fulfilled symbolically? Not a single one. Every single prophecy in the entire Bible that's been fulfilled – and there are hundreds of them – *has been fulfilled literally.* Not a single one has ever been fulfilled symbolically.

The same can be said for all of the prophecies that have been fulfilled since the time of Christ. The prophecy that Israel would become a nation again in a single day (Isaiah 66:8) was widely mocked – right up until 1948 when it was *literally fulfilled.* The prophecy that the Jews would regain Jerusalem was also widely mocked until it actually happened. All of the prophecies that covenant theologians tried to interpret allegorically *are being fulfilled literally.* That tells me there's something wrong with their system of interpretation. Their predictions have failed over and over again, while the predictions

of dispensationalists have been proven right.

## ***The Tribulation***

Prophecy has *always* been fulfilled literally and there's no reason to believe that will change. For example, let's take a look at the 70 weeks of Daniel:

**Daniel 9:24:** "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."

The angel Gabriel told Daniel that seventy "weeks" had been set aside. This is one of those times where our translations of the Bible are in error. The word in verse 24 isn't the Hebrew word for week, which is *shavuot*. The verse instead uses the word *shavuiim*, which simply means "sevens". It doesn't refer to seven *days* but seven of *something*. It's like the English word "dozen". When someone says "a dozen" it tells you they're talking about twelve of something, but without more information that's all you know. A better translation of verse 24 would be *70 sevens*. In this context the item that's being counted is years. 70 sevens therefore refers to 70 periods of seven years, or 490 years.

These 490 years have been set aside *for Israel and for Jerusalem*. This time period is being set aside *to make an end of sins*. This is God's 490-year plan to save Israel and end their rebellion! At the end of these 490 years Israel will repent and believe in Jesus as their Messiah. This supports what Paul said in Romans: one day all Israel shall be saved. This time of 70 weeks is God's plan to make that happen.

The Bible provides more detail about those weeks:

**Daniel 9:25:** “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.”

The Messiah will appear 483 years (that's 69 periods of 7 years each) after the decree goes out to rebuild Jerusalem. This period is broken into two parts: there's a period of 49 years and a period of 434 years. After the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued it took 49 years to rebuild that city. 434 years after Jerusalem was rebuilt, the Messiah was crucified. There were 483 years from the time the decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem until the death of Christ on the cross. That means *the first 69 weeks were fulfilled literally.*

When Christ died the Jews had two options. One option was to accept Him as their Messiah. If they had done that then Jesus would still have died but history would have taken a different course. The tribulation would have started shortly after His crucifixion and seven years later the millennial kingdom would have begun. There would never have been a church age at all.

However, the Jews rejected Jesus. Because of their disobedience the last 7 years of this 490 year period were put on hold and the church came into being. As long as the church is in this world the end won't come. At some point, however, the rapture will occur and Jesus will take the church out of the world. After the church is gone the antichrist will rise to power and the last 7 years of that 490 year period will begin – the 7 years of the tribulation. Once the tribulation is over the 70 weeks will be fulfilled and the millennium will begin.

It's not reasonable to think that the first 69 weeks were literal and the last 7 is symbolic. Prophecy is *always* fulfilled literally. Since the first 69 weeks were fulfilled literally it only

makes sense to believe that the last week will be fulfilled literally as well. Dispensationalism looks forward to a literal fulfillment of prophecy.

## **Conclusion**

I believe that Covenant Theology (also known as Replacement Theology) is wrong. God hasn't replaced Israel with the church. Satan isn't bound in this age. Prophecy should be interpreted literally, not allegorically. The Jews really *have* been given the entire land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel, just as He promised Abraham.

That last point is one of the greatest dangers with Covenant Theology. Many churches which believe in Covenant Theology are actively trying to cause Israel harm – by preaching against them, boycotting them, and even aiding Israel's enemies. This is a terrible error. God promised to judge those who try to cause Israel harm, and that's exactly what He's done throughout history. One day God is going to punish all nations for what they've done to the Jews, who are His chosen people:

**Joel 3:1-2:** “For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”

This event is also known as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The book of Revelation has quite a bit to say about it:

**Revelation 19:11-21:** “And I saw heaven

opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of

him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

Any nation that makes itself the enemy of God's people will be judged for it. Those who fight against God's people are actually fighting against God.