

## ISRAEL: YESTERDAY, TODAY, & FOREVER (*Dispensationalism*)

The “D” in dispensationalism is for DISTINCTION. There are a variety of views within the larger camp of dispensationalists, but the core trait of ***dispensationalism*** is that it sees a distinction between God’s program for Israel and His program for the Church. Israel is NOT the Church and the Church is NOT Israel.

Dispensationalists believe that all of God’s covenant promises to Israel will yet be literally fulfilled – including the promises of earthly blessings and the Messianic Kingdom. God promised the land of Canaan to Israel forever and that must yet be fulfilled – and it will be when the Lord comes and sets up His future kingdom (cf. Gen.13:14-17, Ex. 32:13).

On the other hand, “***Covenant Theology***” believes that such prophecies are allegorically or symbolically fulfilled in the Church. They believe that while Israel literally received the JUDGMENT passages, the Church is now “***spiritual***” Israel and fulfills the BLESSING passages. Thus, they believe that the Church has now replaced Israel. This is called “***Replacement Theology***”. This is wrong – DEAD WRONG!

It is terribly inconsistent to think that Israel literally got all the curses for her disobedience, but now the blessing passages are somehow fulfilled spiritually in the Church.

Consistency says that just as Israel experienced the curses, they will in the future experience the fulfillment of the blessing passages as well. Both will be fulfilled in Israel exactly as prophesied in the Scriptures. This is rightly dividing the Word. ***This takes Scripture for what it plainly says.***

There are over 2,000 references to Israel in the Bible, and Israel always means Israel. The Bible refers to God as “***the God of Israel***” over 200 times. The NT refers to Israel 73 times and Israel always means Israel. 70% of Scripture is about the story of Israel. This prominence alone shows us just how important this is to the heart of God.

Sadly, there are many people who spiritualize or allegorize the meaning of Israel resulting in a serious misunderstanding of Scripture. If you get Israel

right, it will enable you to get prophecy right. If you don't get Israel right, you will never get prophecy right.

There are three things you should ever keep in mind. In the Bible, Israel always means Israel. Church always means Church. And Kingdom always means Kingdom. Keep these three straight, and it will take you a long way in rightly dividing the Word of God. There is a consistency in the Scriptures in regard to Israel, the Church, and the Kingdom.

**Gentile Emphasis:** Genesis 1 – 11 (Race as a whole) – c. 2,000 years

**Jewish Emphasis:** Genesis 12 – Malachi & the Gospels – c. 2,000 years

**Church Emphasis:** Most of the NT from Acts on – c. 2,000 years

**Kingdom to Come:** Prophecy – 1,000 years merges into Eternal State

Augustine once said, “***Distinguish the ages, and the Scriptures will harmonize.***” Sadly, he did not properly apply that truth to his own teaching.

### **2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)**

**15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Rightly dividing the word (getting the divisions of Scripture right) certainly includes getting Israel and the Church right. It is so serious, that only those who get it right will find themselves “approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed”.