

RADIO INTERVIEW



Dr. Sam Waldron



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*Iron Sharpens Iron
hosted by Chris Arnzen,*

Interview of Dr. Sam Waldron on
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Radio Station WNYG 1440 AM in New York and Connecticut

Chris Arnzen here interviews Dr. Sam Waldron, Academic Dean and Professor of Systematic Theology at *The Midwest Center for Theological Studies*, Owensboro, Kentucky, a thoroughly Reformed Baptist institution. Chris is himself a Reformed Baptist, which alignment tends toward amillennialism and supersessionism. With this in mind, Chris asked Dr. Waldron to respond to Dr. Horner's interview yesterday concerning his recent book *Future Israel*, published by Broadman & Holman. Hence the focus here of Chris is again upon the challenge to his eschatology which *Future Israel* presents.

In responding to Dr. Waldron, surely committed in his being a Reformed Baptist, I confess to unqualified acceptance of him as a brother in Christ. Hence there is a responsibility on my part to respond to him in a manner that is always seasoned with grace and at the same time speaks the truth in love. In years past I associated with Reformed Baptists, and at that time received considerable assistance while moving away from the environment of popular, Arminian evangelicalism. However it was John Bunyan who led me further away from necessary conformity to the *Second London Baptist Confession* of 1689, somewhat of a hybrid, and find a place of greater rest in the unalloyed Baptist *First London Confession* of 1644. So let it be understood that while I align in general with the attractive, warm-hearted Calvinism of Bunyan, Newton, Ryle, Spurgeon and Lloyd-Jones, nevertheless I cannot agree with systematic covenant theology or the augmenting of Christ with the sanctifying use of Moses via the Law, that Law which is said to be a creation ordinance. I mention this, not to rile Reformed Baptists such as Sam, but rather to be up front with regard to the underlying basis of the mainly critical **responses that follow**.

The following transcript has been slightly edited for the purpose of enhancing ease in reading without detracting in any way from the truth spoken. Having smoothed the text, which my good friend, Ron Warren, transcribed from the audio file, nothing has been willfully added, except where brackets are used for the purpose of adding clarity, or subtracted from the intended meaning of Sam. Some sentences have been slightly rearranged merely to make for better prose and easier understanding.

Let there be no misunderstanding. My overall impression is that Sam is basically arguing for classic Augustinian eschatology, especially with regard to Judaism, the main thrust of which, history overwhelmingly describes as being, in differing ways, a-Judaic (indifferent in opposition), or anti-Judaic (theologically in opposition), or anti-Semitic (malicious in opposition). All three of these categories, that can easily merge, are opposed by the pro-

Semitism of Scripture that Augustinianism tends to demean while alternatively hoping for the absorption of Judaism into homogenous, clone-like Christianity.

This radio interview, of March 11, 2008, came in the middle of a series of blog critiques by Sam on the web site of *The Midwest Center for Theological Studies*, concerning *Future Israel*, that commenced on February 26, 2008. The responses here generally relate only to this radio interview. However a separate critique of the series of blog comments is also to be found on the *Reviews* page of this web site. Of course there will necessarily be some overlap with regard to the issues that Sam raises.

CA- Yesterday, we seemed to stir up a lot of controversy on the internet over the issue of eschatology, because we had as our guest, my very good friend Dr. Barry Horner. Basically he has written a defense of premillennialism which is titled *Future Israel: Why Christian anti-Judaism Must be Challenged?* It is more than just a defense of premillennialism with regard to the nation of Israel. It is also a criticism of what he has labeled as anti-Judaism among those who are not premillennialism, especially amillennialism, but possibly postmillennialism and other [related] eschatological positions. Is it fair to say that your book *The End Times Made Simple: How Could Everybody Be So Wrong about Biblical Prophecy*, is a book defending amillennial eschatology?

SW- That is a fair statement to make. I do defend amillennialism and as well the position that I think is even more at the heart of Horner's critique, and that is the idea that the church is the New Israel of God.

CA- Lest anybody should misunderstand what you mean by the title, *The End Times Made Simple: How Could Everybody Be So Wrong about Biblical Prophecy?*, would you further explain what you mean here? You're not saying that you are the only one who has it right, are you?

SW- No, absolutely not. Actually that little phrase, *How Could Everybody Be So Wrong about Biblical Prophecy?* is lifted from a phrase in my book where I am referring to the millions of Christians who just assume that there is only one right view of biblical prophecy that surely all Christians have believed. For instance it would be the [popular] view of biblical prophecy that is taught in the *Left Behind Series*. So I would have them saying to me, [that is those who are considering my eschatology], in reaction to this position, that is so different from what millions and millions of Christians believe today, so "How Could Everybody Be So Wrong about Biblical Prophecy?"

CA- OK, though now give an overall view of your book, if you could, before we go into a critique of Dr. Horner's interview. I know that this is primarily what you want to do. Nevertheless, if you would, please give a brief description of your book on the end times.

SW- My book is really, in essence, a kind of simple systematic theology of prophecy dealing with the last things. What I try to do in it is give a little bit of an historical introduction to the basic views of eschatology held by Christians, and then I try to give a number of considerations that set the basic scheme of Scripture in terms of how eschatology and redemptive history should be viewed. Then I walk through different events in a chronological way, starting with the gospel age and then an intermediate state today to the second coming of Christ and the resurrection and the eternal state, that is the different events that Christians may ask about.

CA- Now when I try to explain an amillennial view to my premillennial and dispensational friends, very often they will look puzzled as if this is some new fangled heretical view of the end times [that has been introduced]. Isn't this amillennial view actually the most dominant view in all of Christendom probably until the 18th or 19th centuries?

SW- It is certainly fair to say that this is so for amillennialism if you will just simply consider the Christian tradition going back to the apostles over the past twenty centuries. The amillennial view [of eschatology] has, by far, dominated the church over a majority of those twenty centuries.

Comment 1. Here both Chris and Sam seem blindly entranced by the fact of amillennialism being the dominant eschatology over the past twenty centuries. Of course, in the main, this is the eschatology, not simply of "the Christian tradition," as Sam puts it, but of Roman Catholicism which is no more reliable than the soteriology of Roman Catholicism. Further, this Catholic, Augustinian eschatology was dominant until the seventeenth century mainly because of intolerant authoritarianism, which yoke was eased with the freedom of biblical enquiry that the Cromwellian interregnum allowed. A major thrust of *Future Israel* is that, while Augustinian amillennialism has indeed been the dominant eschatology for centuries, the weighty historic evidence, from a multitude of religious and secular sources, is that this has been a shameful legacy in terms of the treatment of the Jewish people by the Christian church (FI 15-36), exceptions notwithstanding. In this regard, along with many of a Reformed persuasion, Chris and Sam seem woefully ignorant of this heritage of which unbelieving Jews are well aware. It is for this reason that an Annotated Bibliography was included as Appendix E in *Future Israel*, it being highly recommended. When the shame of this heritage is fully grasped, it tempers the blithe consideration of this tragedy that many Christians tend to pass over.

CA- OK, now about this book written by Dr. Barry Horner. Dr. Horner has much in common with you as far as soteriology, [that is the doctrine of salvation] is concerned. He is what is know as a five point Calvinist, as the nickname goes. He is a firm believer in the doctrines of sovereign grace. He is also baptistic. He is committed to the believer's church if you will. And he would probably agree with much, probably not all of the 1689 *London Baptist Confession*.

But, this book that he has written seems to have troubled you. The book, as you know, was endorsed by a hero, I think, of all three of us, Dr. John MacArthur, who although not a Reformed Baptist, seems to be a contemporary hero of much of the Reformed Baptist world, if you will. Why do you think that somebody of the caliber of Dr. John MacArthur would endorse a book that you seem to have huge problems with?

SW- Well he endorses it I think because he and Horner see eye to eye on this one. On this particular view, it was [central] to his [first] sermon at the Shepherd's Conference, not this year but last year, [in which] he basically took up the major thesis of Horner's book. I think he regards Horner's book as giving a scholarly basis [to his own beliefs. It provided much of the scholarly basis and a pretty cogent argument for his position.

Comment 2. Clarification is appropriate here concerning John MacArthur's opening message at the 2007 *Shepherd's Conference*. None of that message was based upon *Future Israel* which then was in the process of being edited by *Broadman & Holman*. Because a CD of MacArthur's message was sent to me by a friend, and I found it essentially to be so very agreeable, I sent a copy of the *Future Israel* manuscript to John for perusal. It was then that he enthusiastically endorsed it and indicated that independently our hearts were in deep agreement on the fundamental thesis of *Future Israel*. It seems that divine providence worked with us independently and then together.

You know, I've recently written, and it is soon to be published by *Reformed Baptist Academic Press*, a critique of Dr. MacArthur's sermon called *MacArthur's Millennial Manifesto*. It is a friendly response, and my first chapter is entitled "John MacArthur is my friend." And because he really is a friend of Reformed Baptists, he is a wonderful champion of the truth, I only take up his sermon because I think he raises, as Horner does, some issues that are crucial to Christian theology. And so I felt it deserved to be addressed, and Dr. MacArthur does us all a favor by raising those issues even as Horner does in his book.

Comment 3. It is good to learn of Sam's friendly attitude toward John MacArthur, in spite of the charge of John being a dispensational premillennialist. However, my greater concern is whether Sam is a friend of the Jews, not merely at a token, societal level according to United Nations recognition, but rather that passionate Pauline interest whereby, in acknowledging himself to be a Jew in the present, specifically of the tribal territory of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1), he is therefore a "kinsmen according to the flesh, . . . to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers" (Rom. 9:3-5). The passion of Paul for the Jewish people is not only persistent, in the face of animated opposition, but indomitable through all of his missionary journeys (FI 253). However, in hearing of Sam's eschatology in this interview, as well as reading his extensive blog comments, it seems to have a restrictive, un-Pauline tone that is not uncommon with Augustinianism.

CA- Dr. MacArthur has given us the honor and privilege of being interviewed on this program. And several times I have interviewed Phil Johnson, he being president of *Grace To You Ministries*. He also is a wonderful brother in the Lord and very capable of defending biblical orthodoxy. But now, what can you address [concerning] some of those issues that you are most concerned about [in the challenge of *Future Israel*]?

SW- Sure, well I think the central thing, the main thesis of Horner's book is substantially that of supersessionism. By this term he describes everyone who rejects the idea of a distinct future for national and territorial Israel, being inclusive of the promised land. Supersessionism, which includes all amillennialism in his parlance, is basically anti-Semitic. Now in his book he substitutes for anti-Semitism the terminology of anti-Judaism. But, I think the thesis of his book, and I have been writing about this and think I have got the evidence to prove it, is basically that the whole Augustinian, amillennial stream, that says the church is the new Israel of God, is basically anti-Semitic. [By that I mean it is so] more or less, but not necessarily with all being anti-Semitic. And I think that is a pretty powerful accusation to make and I think it needs to be answered.

Comment 4. The matter raised about my terminology with regard to anti-Judaism as distinct from anti-Semitism, was carefully explained yesterday, namely that the former is more theological while the later is more visceral and malevolent, and that the former can lead to and merge with the later. Certainly this was my motivation in making this distinction in *Future Israel*. Sam responds to this with more detail in his Blog # 2, to which I will there respond, and I might say rather unfairly because he attempts to accuse me of a more broad charge of amillennialism with anti-Semitism than is accurate. He appears to really want to nail me on this. He especially seems to pass over the mass of evidence provided concerning the Reformed camp where much anti-Semitism is beyond dispute, let alone anti-Judaism. Also he avoids the distinction I have made with regard to tone, say by way of contrast of Pieters and Boettner with Burge and Robertson, the former two being more visceral in attitude in their Augustinianism than the more theological attitude of the later two. Again, I wonder if Sam has really come to grips with the weight of historic evidence that points to relentless anti-Semitism in the Christian church over the centuries and up to the present. He cannot have it both ways, that is readily boasting in Augustinian roots and then avoiding what those roots produced. If he questions this, he needs to do some more reading such as the recommendations contained in the Annotated Bibliography of *Future Israel*; he also needs to speak with some good Jewish historians in this regard. Once he does this, it is likely he will feel a sense of shame concerning the travesty that Christianity has perpetrated in not heeding Paul's exhortation Romans 11. Further, as a starter, why not read *Constantine's Sword* by James Carroll or *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* by Robert S. Wistrich.

CA- Well, would you disagree with him though that there had been figures throughout history who have claimed an amillennial eschatology who were in fact anti-Semitic or at least said things that would appear to be anti-Semitic?

SW- Oh no, I don't disagree with that all. I mean it is clear I think; just take for instance Martin Luther. That as great a man as Martin Luther was [anti-Semitic], I think scholars generally agree, however you explain it, [since] he made some statements that were pretty horrible in terms of their anti-Semitic sentiments. And [for this reason] he was what Horner calls a supersessionist and an amillennarian. It's clear that there are some people in that stream. And in a milder way Horner argues going back to Augustine himself that we [amillennarians] are anti-Semitic, according to one of his statements, or more than one of his statements. My argument is simply that historical association doesn't prove that to be amillennial is anti-Semitic. I can enlarge on that if you would like? But I don't want to start lecturing.

Comment 5. Yet again, Sam seems to want to minimize the weight of historic evidence which indicates that the thrust of Augustinian amillennialism through the centuries preceding the Reformation, and beyond, was significantly anti-Semitic, course while allowing for exceptions, even if at least it would not suffer the Jews to be butchered! It will not do for Sam to tamely say that "there are some people in that stream" of Augustinian/Lutheran, anti-Semitic amillennialism. Yet again Sam, you need to do much more reading of church history in this field. Of course being amillennial does not *ipso facto* make you to be anti-Semitic; I have never said that. But being amillennial does, in most cases, make you an eschatological child of Augustine, even if somewhat ignorant of your parentage. If then, as Sam suggests, the inevitable logic of this inheritance does *not* necessarily lead to anti-Semitic disparagement of the Jewish people in general, then how come the eschatology of amillennialism does not produce a Pauline passion and distinctive place for the Jews and Israel as you read about in Bonar, Ryle and Spurgeon? Reformed amillennialism does not have a good record in terms of fervent, distinctive interest in evangelistic outreach to the Jews, especially through the founding of and active loving participation in Jewish missions. The theological reason for this is not difficult to discern.

CA- I would like for you to enlarge on that.

SW- OK well, it is the same kind of argument substantially that amillennials can make about premillennials. Premillennialism is the dominant eschatology of the cults. It is the eschatology of Seventh Day Adventism, the eschatology of Jehovah Witnesses; it is the eschatology of the Mormons. And by the way, premillennialism is also associated with being an heir of second chance-ism, the idea that people will have an opportunity to be saved after the second coming of Christ. Now if I were to argue on that basis because there are many, many premillennialists who are Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists that also hold to being heirs of second chance-ism, that therefore premillennialism leads to, this necessarily indicates

that premillennialism causes serious doctrinal heresy and error. I think it would be right for many premillennialists to respond to me and say that that argument isn't logical, a *non sequiter*. Because an historical association like that doesn't prove causation. And in the same way, Horner's ability to list men like Augustine or Luther and others as having made anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic statements, doesn't mean their amillennialism or supersessionism was the sufficient or efficient cause of that anti-Judaism or anti-Semitism. Does that make sense?

Comment 6. There is contorted logic here. To begin with, I have already mentioned how all three major eschatological systems have their perverted offshoots (FI 203). Amillennialism tends in a gnostic and platonic direction that makes it averse to Hebrew earthy realism; postmillennialism tends toward a legislated Mosaic kingdom, and more recently hyper-preterism; premillennialism tends toward unbalanced earthly materialism. However, these are *all* deviations, perversions from the norm. None of these are less prone to heresy. However, Augustinian eschatology with its anti-Judaism/anti-Semitism is not deviation from the norm; it is the norm! Further, with regard to the so-called "premillennialism" of the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventists, they are also decidedly very far from the norm. Mormons believe in the restoration of Abraham's seed, that is the arising of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. Whereas Isaiah 43:12 tells of the Lord declaring to Israel, "you are My witnesses," the *Jehovah's Witnesses*, expecting a millennial, earthly kingdom, have embezzled this commission. The *Seventh Day Adventist Church* believes that God's final word to Israel is "desolate" according to Matthew 23:38, while ignoring the restorationist indication of v. 39 that follows. So while all three sects see no future for Israel, they expect a glorious future earthly kingdom, which is not so far removed from Sam's belief of the kingdom of heaven come to a redeemed, physical earth [*The End Times Made Simple*, 225-241]. Regarding an "historical association not proving causation," this is all too true when the historical events concerned are the exception, infrequent. But when the historical events are prevalent, dominant, and a pattern of identical causation is revealed, then a common causation is a reasonable conclusion. So John Gager concludes in his authoritative work: "For Christianity in its early stages, the real debate was never between Christians and Jews but among Christians. Eventually the anti-Jewish side won. Its ideology became normative, . . . for subsequent Christianity and Western culture. . . . The voice of the losing side fell silent" (*The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, p. 269).

CA- Yes, in fact I would agree with that. But let me give you an example of one of the quotes in his [Horner's] book. It concerns Albertus Pieters, who is fairly contemporary, and who went home to be with the Lord in 1987. As a former professor of bible and missions at *Western Theological Seminary* in Holland Michigan, He was also a Reformed Church in America scholar. So he writes that. "God wills that after the institution of the New Covenant, there should no longer be any Jewish people in the world, yet here they are, a sad, yet very sad fact brought about by their wicked rebellion against God." Now that could appear, in fact it does to me to be a very anti-Semitic remark. Now could his eschatology have fueled that?

SW- Well let me put it this way. It's certainly true that if some adopt what Horner calls his Judeo-centric eschatology, then they will probably be immune pretty much to anti-Semitism. Just like, I'm unlikely to find many hyper-Calvinists who will hold to the error of open theism who deny that God knows the future. In the same way, in a sense it is true if you are a supersessionist. I don't particularly like that language, in fact I have argued that I am not a supersessionist, even though I am amillennial. But if you are a supersessionist, you at least unlock the door that leads down the hallway to anti-Semitism. By unlocking that door that leads down the hallway to anti-Semitism doesn't mean that you have walked through the door. It just means that it might be possible for you to walk through the door. And in the same way, you know, in a man, some errors make men immune to other errors. If a Christian man has an infatuation with a woman, say a non-Christian woman that he ought not to be infatuated with, then that infatuation and his pursuit of that woman may make him immune from being attracted by other women that would be equally bad choices for him. It doesn't mean that the first infatuation is a good thing. What I am arguing is, yes it maybe true that [Judeo-centric eschatology may be like that which Horner asserts and may make them premillennialists] immune to anti-Semitism in the form of anti-Judaism. It doesn't mean that amillennialism leads to anti-Semitism no more than premillennialism leads to being [associated with] a cult of some kind.

Comment 7. Chris asks a very good question here that gets to the heart of what *Future Israel* is all about, that is here in a specific situation. The word "fueled" is also very appropriate. Sam's answer really avoids the obvious, namely that there is a high likelihood that Pieter's eschatology does indeed result in his anti-Semitism, certainly in this particular instance. But is this instance so unusual and non-representative? I think not. The best we can say of Sam's first illustration is that being "in the hallway" is really tantamount to being anti-Judaic and heading in a direction that could easily lead to passing through the door into anti-Semitism. The relationship here is close. The second illustration is quite immaterial. To say that amillennialism does not necessarily lead to anti-Semitism is true of itself, that is if no evidence within history is considered. But if the evidence is overwhelming, if it is normative, then a relationship and conclusion can be made. So I believe that the evidence is generally conclusive and therefore the relationship is generally to be concluded as normative. Concerning broad premillennialism, the sects quoted are peripheral, certainly not normative. But Augustinian eschatology is normative for amillennialism and pervasive in Reformed Christianity, and even more so when Lutheranism is included.

CA- Right, and one of the things that Dr. Horner objects to is the critics of his book who are labeling him as a dispensationalist. He insists that he is a historic premillennialist [in *Future Israel*]. So, what is your response to that?

SW- Well, in *End Times Made Simple*, I argue that there are four major eschatological systems historically in the Christian tradition that have been held by genuine Christians. And, I want to

make clear that I think that Horner holds to one of those four orthodox [systems] of Christian eschatology. I don't say orthodox in the sense that I think that each of them is basically correct. They are eschatology's that are consistent with Christian orthodoxy. And I argue that you have postmillennialism [as a system]. You may want to think of it, on a spectrum, of postmillennialism being on the far right and you have amillennialism as you move back toward the left. And then you have historic premillennialism and then you have dispensational premillennialism. Now, in *End Times Made Simple* I argue that the difference between dispensational premillennialism and historic premillennialism has to do primarily and essentially with the church/Israel distinction asserted by dispensationalism, and I show that the early premillennialism and the premier example of this is Justin Martyr of the second century. He rejected the church/Israel distinction of dispensationalism because the church was the Israel of God. So I argue that the mark of historic premillennialism is that it holds that the church is the new Israel of God and that dispensational premillennialism rejects that and holds that the church and Israel are two separate entities or separate people of God. I think that also holds for the well known modern historical premillennialist George Eldon Ladd who would also hold that the church is the Israel of God. At any rate it is clear from his book that Horner thinks that there is a distinct future for Israel in the Millennium. This means national integrity, it means territorial integrity, in the land of Palestine and that this whole thing is sufficient, and this whole thing means a distinction from the church as the people of God. In fact, he says at several points in his book that it is not sufficient to say that there is going to be a revival among the Jews and they will be converted into the church at the end of the age. In fact in several points in the book he rejects that as an adequate eschatology and insists that the mark of an adequate eschatology is the national and territorial integrity of Israel in the Promised Land, and to say that Israel is going to be converted into the church denigrates Israel. Now to me Chris, that is clearly the Church/Israel distinction of dispensationalism and marks him out as a dispensational premillennialist whether or not he wants to be called that.

Comment 8. The argument that Sam employs to prove that Justin Martyr ushers in historical premillennialism is true from one perspective, but not another. Basically from Justin up to the time of the Cromwellian interregnum, the church was consistently authoritarian. Free enquiry into the Bible was at best very difficult, especially prior to the advent of printing. The church established its doctrine, and woe betide anyone who attempted to be novel and not abide by what the priest taught, especially in the area of eschatology where the Roman Catholic Church clung to the notion of it being the new, superceding Israel of God. I have referenced that in England, before 1640, newspapers were illegal, then in 1645 there were 722. In 1640, 22 books were published, then over 2,000 in 1642 (FI 152). Also during this period up to Cromwell, the treatment of the Jews had been abysmal. They had also been expelled from England since 1290, again until Cromwell allowed them to return, after which eschatological speculation erupted (FI 28, 152). So it is from the seventeenth century on ward that historic premillennialism began to prosper, and with it there came its frequent alignment with restorationism, that is the return of the Jews to Israel. Onward to the present then, it is not

right to associate Ladd with the centuries of premillennialism that followed under the scholarly direction of Joseph Mede, John Alsted, Thomas Brightman, John Archer, Johannes Piscator, and then more recently Joseph Seiss, George Peters, David Baron, Adolph Safir, Nathaniel West, etc. Of course the real weakness of Sam's point here is readily exposed if he is simply asked if Bonar, Ryle, and Spurgeon were dispensational premillennialists since it is abundantly clear from their writings that they were simply both premillennial and pro-Judaic in a restorationist sense. Their eschatology was broad based during the nineteenth century. But further, has not Sam read in *Future Israel* over and over again that I believe in one people of God under which subsumes both Jewish and Gentile Christians, a unity with a God ordained diversity? This is not dispensationalism.

CA- One thing I would like to ask you, and you have already touched on this. You said that Dr. Horner's eschatological view would be within the periphery of biblical orthodoxy in terms of the allowance of different interpretations of the last days. Wouldn't you say that most of the main views held within Christendom on the end times remained acceptable except if you go into such views as the hyper-preterists, who deny the second physical bodily return of Christ. And you also even have some strange dispensationalists who are not within the realm of orthodoxy who actually believe that during the tribulation that people must earn salvation by their good deeds and so forth?

SW- Yes that is right. I argue that the very dispute about even the millennium as well as the tribulation point us to what is the primary tenet that all Christian eschatology's must hold to be orthodox, and that is to say the second coming of Christ. Premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism may all disagree about the relationship of the millennium to the second coming of Christ. But that very disagreement assumes that they all agree that there will be a second coming of Christ. Similarly with the pre tribulation, post tribulation, and mid tribulation positions [on the rapture], all agree even in their arguments on the second coming of Christ. So the future second coming of Christ, the bodily visible second coming of Christ in [relation to] the events of the resurrection and judgment are intimately related, so that this is the mark of an orthodox Christian eschatology. And I think dispensational, historic premillennial, amillennial, and postmillennial [Christians] all generally hold that. You are right however, I don't believe that hyper-preterists are orthodox. I think they are heretics and because of their view of eschatology's substantially changes the end of the story. The Bible comes to us as a great story, a great metanarrative [a story about stories], and hyper-preteritism and some other forms of eschatology that professing Christians have espoused, have actually changed the nature of the story. And I think that takes them into heterodoxy.

CA- Yes they have a very depressing eschatology that this world continues to go on into infinity, into the future. Or at least most of them believe that. One of the most serious things that the hyper-preterists, not to be confused with the partial preterists, [believe is that they] also seem to deny the physical resurrection of Christ and as well as our physical resurrection.

SW- Well, you know I have read enough from hyper-preterists to know that they say all sorts of different things about that, but it seems to me that their view, their assertions, at least with regards to the resurrection of Christians leads directly to your conclusion, Chris. And I think their logical dispositions make them guilty of that conclusion. Honestly, I am not sure about their assertions about the resurrection of Christ, but when you talk about the possibility of Christians being resurrected and somehow translated into some other dimension and their bodies still being in the grave, that's not a Christian doctrine of resurrection.

CA- Yes, the reason why I drew the conclusion that I came to was that, of course I can't broad brush because I haven't read what every hyper-preterist has ever written, I have heard statements like, "our bodies will be raised with the same type of body Christ had", and statements like, "it was a real body, but it was a spirit body," that type of thing.

SW- Yes, and that is a complete misunderstanding of what Paul meant by spiritual bodies and heavenly bodies. In the first place, in I Corinthians 15, heavenly bodies like the sun, moon and stars are physical. When he refers to our bodies as heavenly spiritual bodies as well, he can't mean that they are not physical, not taking up space.

Comment 9. Concerning this detour into hyper-preterism, which has tended to arise within a Presbyterian and reconstructionist environment, I am in full agreement with this critique by Chris and Sam.

CA- Going back to our main concern here, what is the fundamental issue at stake in Dr. Horner's book according to you?

SW- I think the fundamental issue is his claim that Augustinian theology, supersessionism as he describes it, Augustine eschatology, is basically anti-Semitic, [that is] more or less, but necessarily anti-Semitic.

Comment 10. Whereas Constantine and Eusebius, Chrysostom, Ambrose - Augustine's spiritual father, were unquestionably and fervently anti-Semitic, Augustine rejected the preceding militancy by indicating, "Don't kill the Jews, just keep them in subjection as witnesses to their perfidy." So the standard for centuries, the norm, was established by the premier Roman Catholic theologian. Of course the militant variety of anti-Judaism continued to percolate to the surface. But the main point here is that this stream of anti-Semitism was the norm for Roman Catholicism, and not an uncommon aberration. Yet again, Chris and Sam need to do a lot more reading in this realm.

CA- Yes, and that is a strong charge to make I believe. I agree with you, though there have been people in our camp that could rightly be called anti-Semitic from history, perhaps even in contemporary settings. But there are Jews who agree that the current nation of Israel is truly

not the nation that God intended. There are the Hasidic sects who believe that, but no one would dare call them anti-Semitic. Correct?

Comment 11. Yes it is a strong charge because of the deep roots of this pervasive problem. It is not made lightly, and indeed it is for this reason that *Future Israel* has included considerable detail; without it the challenge would have more easily been brushed aside. Sadly, I have stated that the Roman Catholic Church has shown more evidence of repentance in this matter than the theological fathers of the Reformed movement. In the Annotated Bibliography refer to the Catholic authors, Callan, Carroll, Flannery, Hay, Mussner, and Remaud. So it is not enough merely to say “there have been people in our [Reformed] camp that could be rightly called anti-Semitic.” We are not writing about a few unsavory examples, that is merely the obscurity of “people” here, but rather a strong, dominant historic current that can so easily be traced in volume after volume of Reformed writings that align with Vos, Turretin, and Augustine, etc. The history of Europe is replete with evidence that this is so. Therefore, in a similar way, to make recourse to the minority voice of Hasidic sects is really a diversion that doesn’t prove anything, especially in the light of the relatively large and growing population of Israel along with the supporting diaspora around the world.

SW- I would have used that argument Chris, but I hadn’t thought of that. Its too late. You are in the midst of a large population of Hasidic Jews there in New York City aren’t you? So that is a great argument. I mean, I actually think, well let me say it this way, I was at symposium entitled “Whose Promised Land” at *Southern Seminary* [Louisville] a number of years ago, and there were representatives of amillennialism, historical premillennialism, and dispensationalism there, and none of them wanted to assert that the present nation of Israel in the Promised Land, or Palestine, was the fulfillment of prophecy. I was shocked that the dispensationalist there didn’t want to say that, but he didn’t. So I think the whole idea that the State of Israel in its secular non commitment to the Messiah, in it’s religious rejection of the Messiah, that this could be the fulfillment of prophecy which always associates with the return to the Promised Land, is just a terrible, unbiblical idea.

Comment 12. Yet again, Sam, you need to read Bonar and Ryle, along with a whole slew of historic premillennialists such as those already referenced. Then consider as to whether these Christian stalwarts adhere to such a “terrible, unbiblical idea.” To be honest, I have to confess that this is what I think of Augustinian amillennialism, and you raised this terminology, not myself. Further, I believe I have a lot more evidence to prove that this is the normative quality of this anti-Judaic/anti-Semitic eschatology. Once more it seems clear that the problem here is one of ignorance, especially at a historical level. But there is something even more serious here and it touches on much of the attitude of European Christianity toward the Jews and their divine disenfranchisement. It is that the reason why theological restorationism is such a “terrible, unbiblical idea” is the present reality of modern Israel’s “non commitment to the Messiah, . . . its religious rejection of Messiah”! A simple question then follows. If tomorrow

Israel, as a nation, was to experience a revival and believe in the Lord Jesus as its Messiah, would this then provide biblical legitimacy for the nations claim to the land? Here Sam is suggesting that the unbelief of Israel is the ground of their permanent disenfranchisement. And here Sam's Calvinism begins to be placed on the back-burner, so to speak, because it is plain in Scripture that Israel's ultimate, national salvation is not based upon the obedience of faith, that is "believe and I [God] will restore you," but the sovereignty of grace, the "vindication of the holiness My great name," whereby the divine implantation of a "heart of flesh" will result in the obedience of faith (Exek. 36:22-28; cf. 37:1-23; Jer. 31:31-37). Sam surely believes in the sovereignty of grace for the Gentiles and a remnant of Jews, nominally so called, but not the Jews as a whole according to God's covenantal integrity. Romans 11:28 makes this abundantly clear (FI 291-309).

CA- Well, [that was] one of things I brought up yesterday with Dr. Horner, and he conceded that there was indeed a danger here, [that] is the danger of catering to the sinful pride of Jews in their ethnicity. And in some senses to do so could actually be maintaining anti-Semitism when you are constantly focusing on the fact that the huge difference that this individual possesses [is that of] being ethnically Jewish. In some ways you could be harboring an anti-Semitism that might not be on the surface hatred. But it could, you know, have a favorable view toward the Jewish people in almost a backhanded kind of way.

Comment 13. As mentioned earlier, all three major eschatological are open to deviation from the norm. Yes, there is such a thing as a carnal philo-Semitism evidenced in Christians and non-Christians. Some Christians seem to want to stay friends with Israel and so maintain a muted gospel witness. However Paul was decidedly philo-Semitic and no less enthusiastic in his evangelistic outreach toward his kinsmen according to the flesh, without neglecting material support (Rom. 15:25-27). So this is the stance of *Future Israel*, a gospel priority toward the Jew that does not neglect material and national support, lest we could be charged with "passing by on the other side" (Luke 10:31-32).

SW- Well, I do think that Horner exposes himself to the charge of reverse racism in his book. And I think his eschatology leads to the idea that unless you— his basic idea, the idea of Judeo-centric eschatology he represents, is [that] unless you favor Israel in distinctive ways you are anti-Semitic. Which means it is not enough to treat Jews and Gentiles in the same way; you have to favor Israel because God favors Israel, and unless you do that you are a racist. That is the way he is using the language, I am convinced of that. So there is here a kind of reverse racism that I think [of Gen. 12] his kind of eschatology is exposed to. If his eschatology is right and God basically himself is a God who favors the Jews over everybody else, then I suppose that theology would justify reverse racism, wouldn't it? But I think that is not the right approach to the issue.

Comment 13. The charge here of “reverse racism” by Chris and Sam is extreme and one wonders if it is simply a riposte in the face of the opposite charge of Augustinian amillennialism being anti-Judaic/anti-Semitic. The justification here, “[that] unless you favor Israel in distinctive ways you are anti-Semitic” is categorically untrue, as has been made plain in Comment 4. Sam wants to lock me up under a charge that would then enable me to be called extreme, harsh, in attributing such a unqualified, despicable term to a large number of Christians. Yet the weight of evidence in the whole of *Future Israel* concerning the anti-Judaic/anti-Semitic roots and ongoing stream of Augustinian amillennialism has virtually been ignored. However I have no problem with being called pro-Semitic in a Pauline sense, though I wonder if Sam would just as readily also charge the apostle with “reverse racism”? This leads us to the incredible statement that, “[for Horner] it is not enough to treat Jews and Gentiles in the same way; you have to favor Israel because God favors Israel, and unless you do that you are a racist.” Words almost fail me in expressing my astonishment here, especially concerning a Calvinist who is so obviously committed to the doctrine of “particular election,” but again it would seem, only with regard to the Gentiles and a remnant of Israel. Has God treated Jews and Gentiles “in the same way?” Such a suggestion is absurd. Why then have they been called the “chosen people”? The reason is plainly stated in Deuteronomy 7:6-8, and this election of God is said to be according to “the oath which He swore to your forefathers,” v. 8. Is God a “racist here”? Is Paul a racist when he writes of the gospel going first to the Jew (Rom. 1:16; 2:9; Acts 3:26), and maintains this priority in all of his missionary endeavors? But further, what of Paul telling us that, “from the standpoint of God’s choice/election¹ they [unbelieving Israel] are beloved for the sake of the fathers” (Rom. 11:28)? Is not this New Testament racism?

CA- Well, there is also a fact, and I brought this up with Dr. Horner, that there is a confusing aspect to the command [of Gen. 12:3 that] those who favor Israel God will favor, and those who oppose Israel God will oppose. To hold that in a contemporary fashion, in a strict sense in dealing with the nation of Israel, how do we favor Israel when even in a practical way, when even there are orthodox Jews and Zionists who are very opposed to the atheistic, socialist governments of Israel? I have had orthodox Jews on my program who are Zionist who are opposed to [and are] very radically opposed to the Israeli government, because they feel the government is stripping them of their civil and human rights.

SW- Right.

Comment 14. Concerning the interpretation of Genesis 12:3 in relation to today, the necessity is not to understand this passage “in a contemporary fashion,” as if this would provide a new slant to the meaning, but rather obtain God’s singular, original intent. I have read of many holding to anti-Judaism who struggle to escape from the obvious intent of this verse, such as

¹ The attempt to interpret “the election” here as a reference to “a remnant according to God’s gracious choice” (Rom. 11:5) ignores both the parallelism of this verse and the fact that it is decidedly a minority opinion among scholars (FI 294-96).

the suggestion that it only relates to the individuals Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whereas the obvious antecedent of “you” here is the “great nation” of v. 2. The basic principle here is well illustrated in Scripture (Gen. 30:27; 39:5; 41:38-40; Exod. 1:8-14:31; Luke 7:4-6; Acts 10:1-48), and at length in the Book of Esther. To again mention the Jewish minority that opposes Zionism in the face of the pro-Zionist population of Israel and the diaspora abroad is to miss the point. It is like asking, “Who is my [Jewish] neighbor?” when it is clear that when material need is the matter in question, I endeavor to help without any thought of discrimination. As a biblical Christian Zionist, and I do not hesitate to embrace this term, I support the earthly groaning of God’s beloved enemy, endeavoring to have the same attitude toward the unbelieving Jew as God did to adulterous Israel according to Hosea.

CA- And on top of it, [there are] Christians obviously having rights, those who are Jews who convert to Christianity [and have] some of their rights stripped [away].

Comment 15. Yes, Jewish Christians do have troubles in secular Israel. That ought not really surprise us any more than Messianic Christians being spurned by orthodox Jews. When have I even hinted that the present nation of Israel is some sort of ideal state. At one level, the functioning of Israel as an advanced economic democracy in the heart of the Middle East displays a vast superiority over the surrounding, less productive Arab states, some monarchical, some patriarchal, and others despotic. At another level, read the appreciative yet critical assessment of the former prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu (FI 323-24).

SW- Let me give you an example of a place in which I think Horner kind of exhibits this kind of misreading of Scripture. He quotes Romans 11 and the text, I am searching for it, just a moment here, that talks of how we should not become proud but stand in awe, at least that is what the ESV says, but the word in the NASB I think is fear. And he basically asserts on the basis of that word in Romans 11, that people should fear the Jews. That is his assertion on the basis of that text. When he [Paul] says, “quite right they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by you faith, do not be conceited but fear.” and when he [Horner] writes about it in the book he talks about it as fearing the Jews. Fearing to mistreat the Jews? I think, in the context of Romans 11, [that] the fear is [to be] directed toward God, not the Jews. I think it is fairly clear that that is the case. And to me this is the kind of reading of Scripture that contributes to the exposure to the charge of a kind of reverse racism.

Comment 16. Concerning Romans 11:20, the exhortation of Paul to the Gentile believers in Rome was that, according to the interplay of God’s righteous dealings, first with the Jews and then the Gentiles, especially as portrayed by means of the analogy of the fig tree, they should respond “with fear” NASB, or “stand in awe” ESV, that is concerning their own status in the sight of God. The context of v. 21 supports this. The thought of fearing the Jews was never in my mind. While Paul does not explicitly state the object of the verb in v. 20, it is obvious from v. 21 that it is God. My only reference to v. 20 that might be misunderstood concerns the

exhortation, “that Gentile Christians are to humbly and respectfully regard unbelieving Jews with fear” (FI 1). Yet this is exactly what Paul is saying in that verse. However I would also add that Christians ought to have a distinctive regard or respect (not fear) for even the unbelieving Jew, especially on account of the Jewish heritage of biblical Judaism and the gospel (John 4:22; Rom. 9:3-5; 15:26-27). A Christian who does not comprehend this perspective ought to rethink his roots.

CA- Is a strictly literal interpretation of the Old Testament consistent with the New Testament?

SW- I really thank you for raising that question Chris. Let me say that I think with that question that we get to probably the most important question, more important than the charge of anti-Semitism in certain ways. [This is] the most important issue raised by Horner in his book. The reason I say this is the most important issue is because I think [it is] central and vital to the claims of Christianity and its claim to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament. [In] Christianity, Christ claimed to be the fulfillment of its traditions of the messiah. He claimed that his priesthood, through the author Hebrews, replaced the Levitical priesthood. He claimed his sacrifice put an end to the sin offerings, the burnt offerings of the Old Testament. And though this is much in dispute, I think he claimed and, the church claimed, and the apostles claimed, that Israel was, not the replacement, but the fulfillment of Israel, that the church is constituted by a Jewish Messiah, by twelve Jewish apostles, and a Jewish nucleus of believers engrafted into that old olive tree, also Gentile believers, and when they are grafted in they become citizens of the commonwealth of Israel in its new form. By the way, when I describe myself and my view that way, this is why I reject the idea of replacement theology and supersessionism. I don't regard the church as the replacement of Israel, but as the fulfillment and the continuation of Israel with Gentile addition in the new age. Anyway, what I am saying is, if Christianity isn't the fulfillment of the Old Testament, what is it? And in asserting a Judeo-centric eschatology which insists that, vital to the Old Testament and the fulfillment of the Old Testament, there is a distinct national and territorial future for ethnic Israel in the Promised Land, Horner is substantially asserting that, not Christianity in its present form and not the church as the new Israel, but a future millennial Israel, distinct from the church, a national and territorial Israel in the Promised Land, is really what the Old Testament is driving toward and prophesied. Now to get to the question that you raised, this is why the question of a literal interpretation of the Old Testament, in being consistent with the New Testament, is so important. And I like to go to Ezekiel 40- 48, because I think this provides a real excellent test case for how a literal interpretation that refuses to find a figurative mode of communication in the prophets ends up. Ezekiel 40- 48 prophesies a new literal temple, it prophesies a Zadokite Levitical priesthood. It prophesies sin offerings and burnt offerings. It prophesies, if you move back to Ezekiel 38- 39 their [Israel] being ruled over by David. Now I don't think you can read Ephesians 2 or Hebrews or the New Testament as a whole and think that those prophesies are going to be fulfilled in the future. To think that those prophesies are going to be fulfilled in the future with a Zadokite and Levitical

priesthood performing sin offerings and with all the other provisions of sacred booths, means the resurrection of the Old Covenant Law. It means the resurrection of the Old Covenant, of the old temple and the old priesthood, all of the things in the books of Hebrews and Ephesians that say they have been abolished and have been abolished by the breaking of the dividing wall in Ephesians 2. So in my view, and I heartily acknowledge Barry as a brother in Christ, nevertheless there are important issues here, and the most important issue is this; it is whether either Christianity or a millennial temple are the fulfillment of the Old Testament. And there is a lot hanging on the way you answer that question.

Comment 17. Sam does raise a vital question here. Is New Testament Christianity the fulfillment of the Old Testament? Now there is a language difficulty here. "New Testament Christianity" is that contained in the twenty seven books of the second division of the Bible called "The New Testament." The "Old Testament" is commonly understood as the thirty nine books of the first division of the Bible. Yet the term "Old Testament/Covenant" really means, in a strict sense, the old Mosaic Covenant inaugurated through the tables of the Law entrusted to Israel through Moses. Now, is Christianity the fulfillment of the old Mosaic Covenant? The answer is "yes" (Matt. 5:17; Romans 7:1-4; 8:3-4; Heb. 8:13). Is Christianity the fulfillment of all of the thirty nine books of the Old Testament? The answer is "no." Certainly we move from promise in the first division of the Bible to fulfillment in the second division of the Bible. But not all of the Old Testament is promise. So further, is Christianity the fulfillment of biblical Judaism? Again the answer is "no." The examples that Sam provides, re New Testament fulfillment concerning the Levitical priesthood and the Levitical offerings, all pertain to the passing away of the old Mosaic Covenant. If Sam is saying that Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism, as is common with Augustinianism, then again we say "no." By way of example, Augustinianism, in misinterpreting Romans 4:13, commonly says that the land, as originally promised according to God ordained tribal boundaries, is fulfilled in the whole world through the New Testament. However remember that Judaism or the Hebrew faith, including the promise of the land, has its origin in Abraham as signified by circumcision. This means that the Hebrew faith, circumcision for the Hebrew, and the promise of the land were not nullified in the New Testament (Gal. 3:17-18). Hence this is a major dividing point with Augustinian amillennialism. Concerning hermeneutics and a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Ezekiel 40-48 in particular, let me suggest moving to the file where Sam's blogs, #14-#18, as well as my responses, consider this subject with more detail. It is sufficient to ask that anyone following this path first read Ezekiel 36-48, not just 40-48, with care, always considering if the details invite a more literal or allegorical interpretation.

CA- Yes, I even addressed the point yesterday with Dr. Horner. Many in amillennial and postmillennial camps of eschatology would say that to believe in a future return to the sacrificial system, even if you were to say, as it is claimed by many of the premillennarians, [that these sacrifices] could in fact refer to a memorial service, there are many in the

amillennial and postmillennial camps who would still find that to be a blasphemous mockery of the once for all sacrifice of Christ.

Comment 18. Suffice to say here that, concerning the coming Messianic/millennial kingdom, there is a strong indication that there will be a memorial celebration with Jesus Christ being present (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18).

SW- Well it is not only a blasphemous mockery, and I think I would have to agree with that, but it is also a giving up of the literal interpretation of the Old Testament because the text does not say in Ezekiel, “memorial”, it says “sin offering”. And what that [term “sin offering”] means everywhere else in the Old Testament is indisputable.

Comment 19. This reminds me of Luther’s stubborn, letterist response at Marburg regarding the interpretation of Christ’s words, “this is My body” (Matt. 26:26), by which he upheld consubstantiation rather than the correct, figurative literal understanding of Zwingli and Oecolampadius. So William Tyndale wrote: “Thou shalt understand, therefore, that the Scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth, whereunto if thou cleave thou canst never err nor go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way. Nevertheless, the Scripture uses proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the proverb, similitude, riddle or allegory signifieth, is ever the literal sense, which thou must seek out diligently.”² Hence we maintain that all Scripture is to be interpreted literally, yet there is both a plain literal and a figurative mode of literal interpretation. However we will consider this further when responding to Sam’s series of blog comments.

CA- You have already addressed what you think to be the primary issue at hand with Dr. Horner’s book. But what do you think is the major danger of dispensationalism in general? I will even include here historical premillennialism and dispensationalism together. What is the major danger they both pose to an orthodox biblical theology would be?

SW- Well, let me say first of all that, as I said earlier, I don’t regard Barry and others of his position as historic premillennialist. So the criticism I am going to give right now, or the thing that I think is important in terms of where their views lead, doesn’t apply to historic premillennialists like George Eldon Ladd and Justin Martyr. But, having said that, I think their views inevitably lead to a depreciation of the church, whether it is done in a fashion by classic dispensationalism or whether it is done the way they [historic premillennialists] are doing it. The church becomes at best only one of two peoples of God, only one of two plans of God. And with the emphasis that they themselves place on eschatology as being Judeo-centric and

² J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism’ and the Word of God*, pp. 103.

not, he didn't say church centered, did he? He said Judeo-centric which leads to a depreciation of the church. Christians need to know that God's plan for the world, for the salvation of the world involves the church and involves in some measure the success of the church in taking the gospel to the world, in baptizing a great multitude whom no man can number in all the nations, and the plan for the salvation of the world is the gospel preached by the church of Christ and the planting of churches of Christ in all nations. And it seems to me that a Judeo-centric eschatology inevitably leads to a church of Christ sharing the center of eschatology with the Jews, or actually being moved to the periphery of what they understand biblical eschatology being all about.

Comment 20. Whether Sam considers myself to be a historic premillennialist or not is a matter of indifference to me. He really does not settle the matter. I say this because I know that the stance of *Future Israel* is definitely that of historic premillennialism, and the indisputable proof is that of the eschatology of Bonar, Ryle and Spurgeon who are also historic premillennials. Evidence for Sam obviously dodging the issue here is in his Blog #14 of March 24. Even a Reformed Baptist, a confessed amillennialist from New Zealand, attempts to correct Sam by pointing out that in *Future Israel* I am an old school historic premillennialist, like Spurgeon and Nathaniel West, from which position Ladd moved away. In response, Sam desperately wriggles and turns attempting, contrary to clear evidence, to cast doubt on Spurgeon and Bonar by suggesting that they held to an intermediate position. Then he stubbornly continues to call me a dispensationalist because I hold to a Church/Israel distinction which Spurgeon did not. This leads me to comment on Sam's criticism that *Future Israel* tends to lead to depreciation of the church because of it being made an entity separate from Israel. Yet time and time again I profess belief in one redeemed people of God, having a unity that is comprised of diversity including Israel and the surrounding Gentiles nations. This Spurgeon did believe, as did Bonar, Ryle etc. Let me quote Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. in this respect. "The church is grafted into Israel, not Israel into the church. . . . God never made a formal covenant with the church. . . . The church has no other covenant than the one our Lord made with Israel (Luke 22:20; Heb. 7-10). . . . [T]here is one people ("the people of God") with a number of discernable aspects within that one people (such as Israel and the church), and there is only one program of God (the "kingdom of God") with numerous aspects under that single program."³ In the light of this, when Sam says that, "it seems to me that a Judeo-centric eschatology inevitably leads to a church of Christ sharing the center of eschatology with the Jews," I am troubled at his expressed discomfort and feel that he qualifies for Paul's admonition in Romans 11:17-24, as well as the necessity of better comprehending the eschatological elevation and glory that will come to Israel according to Romans 11:25-32.

CA- I would like you to respond to the same question that I posed to Dr. Horner. I find it strange that people who are dispensationalist would very frequently use the accusation of

³ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, pp. 361, 364, 366, 367.

anti-Semitism against people who are amillennial and postmillennial. And yet there seems to be a strange dichotomy going on with them, an irony regarding their gleeful joy of witnessing the return of Jews globally to Israel. And while simultaneously viewing in their eschatology that two thirds of them will certainly be slaughtered there, and from what most of these dispensationalists are saying this is going to happen soon, and it could be any day now, yet they are very happy, in fact raising money to get airplanes filled with Jewish individuals from the former Soviet Union and other places to go to the promised Land. Yet it seems strange that that would not be considered anti-Semitic, as long as they could see bible prophecy in their minds being unfolded, even though it means that these people will be ruthlessly and brutally murdered, two thirds of them, most of them, and they seem to be very happy about the fact that they are returning there.

Comment 21. Let us start with the projected slaughter of two thirds of Israel. This is not a matter to be scoffed at when six million Jews were lost during the Second World War, which holocaust was preceded by the murder of other millions over past centuries. However it is really a matter of what Scripture says. Here is a reference to Zechariah 13:8 and in the light of 13:1, probably refers to God's judgment of the Jews at 70 AD and 135 AD rather than at the end of this age. Yet it may also look ahead as well to 14:2-6 in anticipation of a more clear eschatological judgment, a time of great darkness, that befalls Jerusalem at the return of Christ for the purpose of saving His people from their enemies. As to the contemporary return of the Jews to Israel, I believe that any Christian ought to be moved with astonishment at this prophesied event, though perhaps glee is not the right word here. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones certainly so moved was in 1980 (FI 224-25). Hence should Christians encourage Jews to go to their slaughter? First, what Chris fails to mention is the principle of "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" (I Pet. 1:11) in relation to Israel. So Zechariah 14:1, 8-21 speaks of the glory that will be Israel's after the sufferings of Zechariah 14:2-7. Second, many Scriptures describe the eventual return of the Jews to Israel according to the will and enabling of God that yet employs human instrumentality (Deut. 30:1-6; Hos. 3:4-5). Third, the logical conflict projected is surely intimating, though wrongly, that the Jews should resist the urge to return, and consequently disobey the Lord's sovereign will for them at this juncture, as described in the preceding point.

SW- No I can't explain this, nor do I want to explain this kind of dichotomy in their mindset. However this does give me an occasion to say that one of the ways in which I find strange, personally, the charge of anti-Semitism, is that though there are many amillennialists who are pro-Palestinian out there today, and I am not criticizing them at this point, my whole mindset on a political level, not a theological level, is that the United States should be very supportive of the state of Israel. And it [this mindset of mine] is certainly that radical Islam that dominates the rest of the [Middle Eastern] region, is a much greater danger to us than the relative more free and democratic state of Israel. On the political level I am very supportive of Israel. But, that is very different than at a theological level.

Comment 22. Sorry Sam, but there is no kudos for this! Your goodwill here is wholly based upon a secular premise, that being a carnal, pragmatic worldly estimation of Israel, and not as God does in presently declaring Israel to be His “beloved enemy” for the sake of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which promise is declared to be “irrevocable” (Rom. 11:28-29). You are also letting us know, by your own statement, that your understanding of the term “Israel” is not biblically based, but rather is a cosmetic, convenient societal appellation that can easily be used with a degree of ambiguity about it. Such a usage Paul never employed. The whole point of a Judeo-centric premillennialism, at its very root, is the fact that its understanding of “Israel” is based upon exegesis resulting in biblical theology and not the imposition of meaning upon “Israel” in the New Testament, where in fact its consistent national meaning is overwhelming.

CA- Yes, in fact a friend of mine who is premillennial, just today, said to me that he believes that he agrees that we should not support the nation of Israel on everything, but [we should] with regard to the defense of their land there, especially because they remain to be, by far, more friendly to our nation [the United States] than any of the Muslim [nations] in the Middle East.

Comment 23. I sense here a *quid pro quo* reason for supporting the modern state of Israel. All I can further say here is, “Show me instances in *Future Israel* where uncritical support for modern Israel is evident, and I will show you instances where there is critical support.” This charge, of supposed blind loyalty, so often proves to be groundless. It is a commonly made accusation against Christian Zionists by those who usually oppose attribution of any divine involvement in the coming forth of the modern state of Israel.

SW- Sure, and I don’t [believe in total support as well]. People can talk [and argue] about this at a political level. But I regard them as having a right to the Promised Land, not on the basis of the Bible, but upon the nations, the basis of the United Nations Charter.

Comment 24: What a contradiction we have here and further proof of the tendency toward ambiguity, referenced in Comment 22, on the part of Augustinian amillennialism when talking of Jewish matters in a New Testament context. On the one hand, the land of Israel is spoken of as “the Promised Land.” On the other hand this is obviously loose talk that evacuates a commonly understood biblical name of its accepted meaning, and especially its covenantal implications. I have read of others, having an affinity with Sam’s eschatology here, who patronizingly write of their support for Israel having a right to its own land. The problem is that they, often holding Palestinian sympathies, believe it could be located in Africa, Canada or Greenland, etc., but not in the land of Israel by divine right. Suppose if the United Nations, having in the past charged Israel with racism, then having rescinded this charge, was later again to decide that the Arabs really ought to be in charge of Palestine, with the Jews under their governance, would Sam go along with this because of it being a UN resolution? We thank

Sam for his honesty here. But we do not appreciate his regard for the corrupt United Nations that is also known for having a large anti-Semitic representation.

CA- But, you are very unashamedly a believer in the doctrines of sovereign grace known as Calvinism. Don't you believe that obviously God in His sovereignty had a purpose for the reestablishment of this nation?

Comment 25. Thanks Chris for a good question. However in your reference to the *particularity* of God's sovereign involvement in the formation of the modern state of Israel, you are treading on thin ice indeed. Sam has just stated that Israel has "a right to the Promised Land, not on the basis of the Bible, but upon the nations, the basis of the United Nations Charter," that is on a "political [not a theological] level." Some similarly see God's overall sovereignty involved here, but not in a particular, Abrahamic, covenantal sense.⁴

SW- Yes, I am certain that it is the accomplishment of His providence. Obviously I can't say that I think it was the fulfillment of prophecy in direct sense because most of the places that are quoted [from the Bible] to prove that, I think, are misquoted and actually should be interpreted in a more biblically figurative fashion. But I will say that according to my view, the bible does predict that ethnic Israel will continue to exist as a distinct entity until the end of the age. My understanding of Romans 11 leads me to conclude that in every age, in this present age until Christ comes back, a remnant of elect, physical, ethnic, Israelites, I would say Jews, will be saved and that a remnant of Jews is to be an essential part of what the church is supposed to be. So, I believe that ethnic Israelites, ethnic Jews, will continue to exist in some sort of distinct fashion to the end of the age. I think Romans 11 assumes that. I don't personally hold that this means a mass revival at the end of the age, but the establishment of the state of Israel does provide a vehicle whereby the distinctive ethnic Jewishness is continually set before the world's mind and a vehicle of fulfillment of what I think the prophecy of Romans 11 is about.

Comment 25. To begin with, we thank Sam for his honesty in confessing his commitment to a more "biblically figurative" hermeneutic with regard to Old Testament prophecies. In this regard I would love to learn of his careful exegesis of Ezekiel 36-37 and Zechariah 14.

Concerning the existence of the modern state of Israel, Sam does refer to God's more general "providence" to start with. Nevertheless he is to be commended for going further in attempting to engage the problem of Israel's present ethnic existence and Romans 11. However a major difficulty arises when he says that, "I believe that ethnic Israelites, ethnic Jews, will continue to exist in some sort of distinct fashion to the end of the age." Sam your problem becomes so evident here when you speak of, "some sort of a fashion"! I suspect you yourself appreciate your trouble here. You are forced by the weight of evidence in Romans 11 to admit

⁴ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Israel of God*, p. 194.

to “some sort” of ethnic identity for the Jews, though it is not really clear if this is an covenantal identity established with Abraham. Ethnicity is one thing, but what of nationality and territory? You appear to reject these categories in Abrahamic covenantal terms while “somehow” attempting to hold on to a form of ethnicity. Not for a moment do I believe that Paul, the converted Messianic Rabbi, writes here with such a bifurcated approach. Further, your belief that merely a remnant of Jews will be saved throughout this age without any climactic national conversion at the end of this age, leaves you with the same problem, as well as another. It is the sense of climax that Paul obviously presents in Romans 11 that you do not come to grips with (11:12, 15, 23, 25-27, 30-31). In the same vein, your exegesis here loses sight of Paul’s excitement in terms of the glorious eschatological prospects in which Israel plays such a significant role.

CA- Dr. Waldron would you not think it as odd that the charge of anti-Semitism is very frequently laid at the feet of all systems of prophecy that reject a distinct national and territorial future for ethnic Israel, and yet some of those who are optimistic amillennialists and postmillennialists have a more hopeful view of a vision for the future of Jews than the dispensationalists do?

Comment 26. Chris does not make it clear what he means by the term “optimistic amillennialist.” At a guess he may have in mind the idea of an eschatological mass conversion of the Jews just prior to Jesus Christ’s return, the result of which will be their incorporation into the one body of God’s people, the church, and the loss of all distinctive Jewish identity. Chris, you have to be kidding about this being more “optimistic” here, particularly for the Jew, especially in the light of the fact that a large number of amillennialists believe in a climactic time of tribulation at the end of this “millennial” age when Satan “must be released for a short time” (Rev. 20:3). The postmillennialist does claim greater optimism because of his belief in the increasing Christianization of this age that will climax at Christ’s return, except that his optimism here is so obviously a hopeless delusion. However the Judeo-centric premillennialist is more realistic about present encroaching evil as well as Christ’s triumph when “the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one” (Zech. 14:9). Again, the principle applies here for the Christian of, “the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow” (I Pet. 1:11).

SW- It’s true you know, and one of the remarkable things about Horner’s book that I was really enthused about, but now am able to sort it out in my mind, is that it is not enough for an amillennialist or postmillennialist to believe that there will be a mass revival of ethnic Jews at the end of the age who will be brought to Christ and then into the church. No, there must be a distinct national and territorial future. So, your right, the simple idea of the Jews being saved, being brought into the church of Christ, doesn’t satisfy Dr. Horner at all. He wants much more than that in terms of national and territorial future for them.

Comment 27. Sam, you certainly have it right here. Without apology “it is not enough for an amillennialist or postmillennialist to believe that there will be a mass revival of ethnic Jews at the end of the age who will be brought to Christ and then into the church.” Let me tell you why. Although you yourself have denied belief in a mass revival of ethnic Jews, nevertheless let me respond to this as an amillennial standard. It is an historic fact, as *Future Israel* has made abundantly clear, that Augustinian amillennialism has a bad ethical record in the face of your claim. By this process of absorption into the church comes the elimination of Judaism. Yes, so many of the anti-Judaic church fathers also wanted to see the salvation of the Jews and their inclusion into the church. But that hardly justifies their shocking anti-Judaic/anti-Semitic attitudes. Augustine believed in a future mass conversion of the Jews according to Romans 11, yet he established the principle of centuries of Jewish suppression and humiliation. Luther wanted to see the Jews saved, yet his record of anti-Semitism is both notorious and shameful! Yes, I do want to see the Jews saved, and there will be a mass conversion just prior to the return of Christ. However a holy end must come about through a holy means. So it is pro-Judaic premillennialism which is that proven means, especially in the realm of distinctive evangelistic outreach toward the Jewish people. Again, yes, it is unquestionably true that “the simple idea of the Jews being saved, being brought into the church of Christ, doesn’t satisfy Dr. Horner at all. He wants much more than that in terms of national and territorial future for them.” A further reason is that I want God’s integrity to be upheld in terms of his unilateral promise to Abraham so that it is not reasoned away according to the agenda of considerable Gentile scholarship. I want Christ’s Jewish people entering into the promises of God whereby their generations of humiliation are replaced, according to sovereign grace, by a distinctive, Christ-provided exaltation in fellowship with their Gentile brethren. Because Israel’s Messiah declared that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22), it is absurd to suggest that these same Jews will not be saved, according to distinctive promise, whereby “they will look on Me whom they have pierced . . . [with] great mourning in Jerusalem. . . . The land will mourn, every family by itself. . . . In that day there will be enscribed on the bells of the horses, ‘HOLY TO THE LORD.’ . . . Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 12:10-12; 14:20-21).

CA- I would like you to really open up your heart and offer our listeners with what you want most etched in their hearts and minds regarding this topic before we depart?

SW- Well, thank you for the opportunity Chris. I was thinking about this over the break. What I want to say to your listeners is, I am an amillennialist, but I am not a supersessionist, and I do not believe in replacement theology. And that terminology means that someone believes that the church as a Gentile institution has replaced a Jewish institution. I believe the church is Jewish, it has a Jewish messiah, it was built on twelve Jewish apostles, it has a Jewish nucleus, and there is no room for anti-Semitism in the church of Jesus Christ. And if you believe as I do that the Jewish foundation and character of the church is [to be] maintained and in one sense is gloried in because of our Jewish messiah, then the whole idea that such a view, which is not

replacement theology, not supersessionism, would lead to anti-Semitism, is just crazy. And I appreciate Dr. Horner, even in his book where he says a couple of nice things about me even if I am an amillennialist. So I do appreciate Dr. Horner. I do want to emphasize [a final point about the] terminology of the church replacing Israel or superseding. This is the fact; the church is, was and continues to be a Jewish institution because of its foundation and its origin.

Comment 28. There are some fine statements here by Dr. Waldron with which I would heartily agree, though probably ambiguously. There are some aspects of his eschatology that deviate, to a degree, from normative amillennialism, and I have recognized these in *Future Israel* (FI 217-18, 251). However such excellent comments here cannot be esteemed in isolation, but rather in the light of all that Dr. Waldron has stated. It also needs to be remembered that *Future Israel* is not a distinctive critique of Dr. Waldron's eschatology, though obviously he has described some felt pain concerning a number of the major issues that I have raised. These have especially been blog responses that will be dealt with in the separate blog analysis. However here Dr. Waldron believes in the term "fulfillment," not "replacement" or "supersession," or "absorption," or "progression" with regard to the relationship of the Christian church to Israel. So the question still remains as to whether "fulfillment theology" results in various degrees of anti-Judaic/anti-Semitic doctrine and expression? It is fascinating to find that a number of Augustinian amillennialists employ the terms "replacement theology" and "supersessionism," and others prefer to opt for "fulfillment theology," as though it might be more gentle in meaning, having a gradualism that tempers the harshness of "replacement theology." Even so, while I believe that there is some flirting with semantics here, let us simply consider the term that Dr. Waldron prefers to employ. So we have these two entities, Israel and the church. Does the former blend into or merge with the later so that we end up with a "new Israel"? That is what Waldron appears to have agreeably referenced four times, namely that "the church is the new Israel of God." The problem is that nowhere is such terminology used in the New Testament. If Paul had wanted to describe such a transition, there are two places in Romans where it would have been ideal for him to do so (2:25-29; 10:18-21). However he responds by going in the opposite direction and actually upholding the continuance of national Jewish identity (3:1-2; 11:1-6). The only possible parallel with Dr. Waldron's thought is Galatians 6:16 where Paul writes of "the Israel of God," which, according to the majority view of scholars, is referencing the "[Jewish] remnant according to God's gracious choice" (Rom. 11:5). Refer to *Future Israel* (FI 263-69). As stated earlier, there is one redeemed people of God, though not in a homogenous sense since it will be comprised of both distinctive Jews and distinctive Gentiles (Ps. 67:3-4; 86:9; 102:15-16; Isa. 60:1-5; Mic. 4:1-3; Hag. 2:7; Zech. 8:20-23; 14:16-17). This is made plain in Galatians 3:28 where the unity of being "all one in Christ Jesus" includes the diversity of being "Jew and Greek, male and female." So when Dr. Waldron declares that "the church is, was and continues to be a Jewish institution because of its foundation and its origin," he is somewhat playing with language since, from what precedes, he means that the homogenous people of God all have a Jewish flavor, like the lyrics of Irving Berlin, "the song is ended, but the melody lingers on." The reason for this claim

is his belief that in the future kingdom of Christ, there will be no distinctive Jewish Christians, no distinctive Jewish nation centered in Jerusalem, and no distinctive land of Israel as originally and covenantally promised. Now as to Dr. Waldron's repudiation of anti-Judaism/anti-Semitism, it is commonly understood that both Judaism and Semitism, in context here, refer to a people, a nation, and a land, or ethnicity, nationality, and territory as plainly promised to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). However Dr. Waldron has plainly denied these categories. They were valid in the Old Testament but are now invalid in the New Testament in a covenantal sense, the transition process being called "fulfillment." Consequently, not for a moment do I believe that Paul, in the present tense, describing himself as an "Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 11:1), would agree with Dr. Waldron's "fulfillment theology." In terms of eschatology, I believe that we have here the bud of anti-Judaism that can easily produce the bitter fruit of anti-Semitism. The testimony of history, according to a breadth and depth of testimony, is indisputable in this matter.

CA- I want to thank you so much Dr. Sam Waldron for being my guest today. I want to repeat your website; it is www.mctsowensboro.org.