

What is Dispensationalism?



"I shouldn't have had that last piece of pie — I think I just crossed over into the Dispensation of the Overfullness of Times!"

WHAT IS DISPENSATIONALISM?

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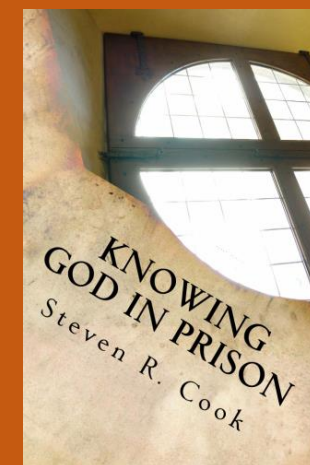
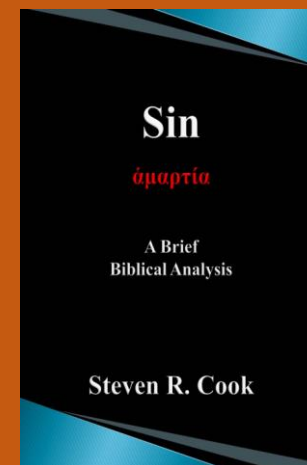
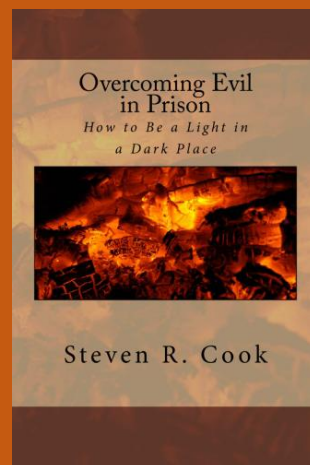
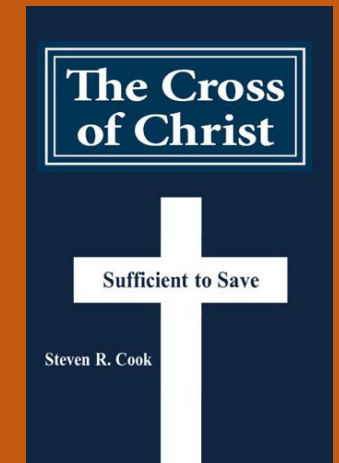
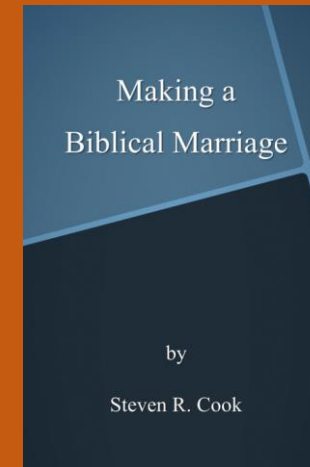
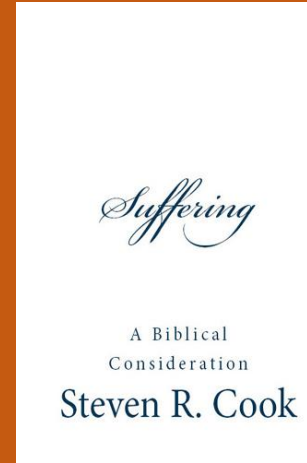
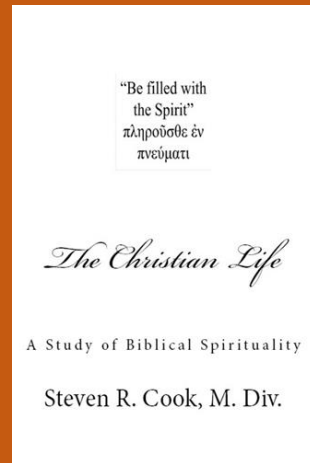
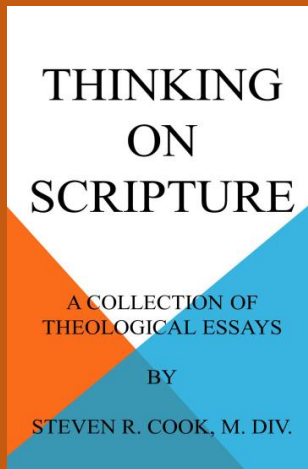
What is the Church?

By

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What is Dispensationalism?

Purpose of this presentation:

To explain what the church is, and is not, based on a plain reading of the Bible.



The Essence of Dispensationalism

Charles Ryrie states:

“The Essence of dispensationalism is (1) the recognition of a consistent distinction between Israel and the church, (2) a consistent and regular use of a literal principle of interpretation, and (3) a basic and primary conception of the purpose of God as His own glory rather than the salvation of mankind.”

Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, Ill. Moody Press, 1995), 45.

The Essence of Dispensationalism

Ryrie further adds:

“A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the church distinct.”

“This is probably the most basic theological test of whether or not a person is a dispensationalist.”

Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, Ill. Moody Press, 1995), 39.

What is the Church?

The church refers to the body of Christ which began on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. It is comprised of Jews and Gentiles who have believed in Jesus as Savior. The church exists universally as an organism, the global presence of Christians who form the body of Christ. The church also exists locally as an organization, a nearby assembly of believers who gather together for Bible study, worship, fellowship, and the practice of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Christian church is a mystery not revealed in the Old Testament and is separate from Israel, having a different identity and purpose.

The Meaning of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

The term *church* is a common translation of the Greek word ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*, which means "*called out ones, assembly, congregation, or community of Christians.*"

Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 303-304.

General use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

The New Testament writers use the word both in a general and technical sense. When used in a general sense, the word refers to any assembly, such as an assembly of non-Christian residents in a city (Acts 19:32, 39, 41).

General use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

“So then, some [angry residents of Ephesus] were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly [ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*] was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together.” (Act 19:32)

General use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

“But if you [the angry residents of Ephesus] want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly [ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*]. For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's events, since there is no *real cause for it*, and in this connection we will be unable to account for this disorderly gathering.” After saying this he dismissed the assembly [ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*]. (Acts 19:39-41)

General use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

It is interesting that the assembly mentioned in Acts 19 refers to pagan worshippers of the Greek goddess Artemis and does not refer to Christians at all (Acts 19:34-35).

General use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

The word ἐκκλησία *ekklesia* is also applied to Israel as a general assembly or congregation (Matt. 18:17; Acts 7:38; Heb. 2:12). In Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus addresses the subject of discipline within the fellowship of a community (ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*); however, the evidence of the passage favors a Jewish assembly (i.e. a synagogue) and not the Christian church.

General use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

In Acts 7:38 Stephen is speaking to a Jewish audience and mentions “the congregation [ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*] in the wilderness.” Stephen’s use of the word ἐκκλησία *ekklesia* simply refers to the *assembly* of Israelites who were brought out of Egypt by Moses.

In Hebrews 2:12 the writer quotes Psalm 22:22, in which the Septuagint has the term ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*, again, used in a general way of an *assembly* or *congregation* of Jewish people.

Technical use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

When applied to Christians in the New Testament, ἐκκλησία *ekklesia* takes on a technical meaning and refers to those who have been joined spiritually to the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23) by means of personal faith in Jesus as Savior (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Eph. 2:8-9).

Technical use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

The first reference to the Christian church occurs in Matthew 16:18 after Peter had confessed that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16), and based on the rock-solid truth of Peter’s statement, Jesus said, “I will build [future tense] My church [ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*]; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

Technical use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

Jesus' future tense statement reveals a church that was not in existence when He spoke. The Christian church began on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit began His baptizing ministry of placing believers into the body of Christ. Concerning this work of the Holy Spirit, Paul writes, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13; cf. Gal. 3:26-28).

Technical use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

Dr. Robert Lightner comments:

“The Holy Spirit of God is the primary agent who identifies the believer with other believers. Each one is a member of the body, and each member is united with the other members and with Christ (Rom. 6:1–4).”

Robert P. Lightner, *Handbook of Evangelical Theology: A Historical, Biblical, and Contemporary Survey and Review* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1995), 229.

Technical use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

It is mainly in the writings of Paul that the Christian church is identified as *the body of Christ*. Note the following Scriptures:

- *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Eph. 1:22-23)*
- *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. (Eph. 5:23)*

Technical use of ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

- *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Col. 1:18)*
- *I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church. (Col. 1:24)*

Believers *in Christ* ἐν Χριστῷ

Paul first learned about the body of Christ when he, as an unbeliever, encountered the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus when he was persecuting Christians and putting them in prison. While on the road, the Lord Jesus appeared to him in a bright light, which caused him to fall to the ground, and then a voice said, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Act 9:4; cf. 22:7; 26:14). When Paul asked, “who are You Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5). Paul learned that an attack on Christians is an attack on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Believers *in Christ* ἐν Χριστῷ

Dr. Stanley Toussaint writes:

“The question, ‘Why do you persecute Me?’ (cf. Acts 9:5) is filled with significance for it shows the union of Christ with His church. The Lord did not ask, ‘Why do you persecute My church?’ The reference to ‘Me’ gave Saul his first glimpse into the great doctrine of Christians being in Christ.”

Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 375–376.

Believers *in Christ* ἐν Χριστῷ

The prepositional phrase *in Christ* (ἐν Χριστῷ), or *in Christ Jesus* (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) is theologically rich; for it reveals the believer's place of union with Christ as part of His body, the church.

Excurses: Identification

This positional identification is also a reality for believers living during the Tribulation.

After His Second Coming, Jesus will evaluate Gentiles—both saved and lost—and either bless or curse them based on how they treat persecuted Jewish believers during the seven year Tribulation (Mat 25:31-34).

Excurses: Identification

Jesus will praise Gentile believers, saying:

“I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.” (Mat 25:35-36)

Excurses: Identification

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’” (Mat 25:37-40)

Excurses: Identification

Jesus will rebuke Gentile unbelievers:

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’”

(Mat 25:41-43)

Excurses: Identification

“Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’” (Mat 25:44-45)

The charge is one of passive abuse where people see persecuted believers and do nothing.

Excurses: Identification

“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.” (Gal 6:10)

Faith in Christ

When a person believes in Jesus as Savior he/she is united to the body of Christ by means of the Holy Spirit. This is a new designation in which ethnic, social, and gender identity are all secondary to the believer's new identity of being in Christ Jesus.

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:26-28)

Faith in Christ

One is added to the body of Christ by the simple act of faith in Christ. When the Philippian jailer asked Paul, “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30); Paul replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Act 16:31).

πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ σωθήσῃ συ (Act 16:31)

Believing in Jesus means we trust Him to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves; to save us. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Faith in Christ

And everyone said:

Amen!

The Universal Church

The New Testament church is understood both in a universal and local sense. The universal church refers to the global existence of the body of Christ. This is the organic church as it exists all over the planet. Several passages in the New Testament communicate the idea of a universal church.

Universal Church

- “Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God” (1 Cor. 10:32)
- “God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:28)
- “He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

The Universal Church

What is noticed in these and other places in Scripture is the use of the term *church* without a specific location (Matt. 16:18; Acts 8:3; 9:31; 20:28; Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 15:9; Eph. 3:10, 21; 5:23, 32; Col. 1:18, 24).

The Universal Church

Dr. Robert Lightner states:

“There are a number of usages of *ekklesia* that do not seem to refer to a local assembly of believers. Instead, they speak of that company of believers formed on the day of Pentecost into the body of Christ, which has been growing ever since as sinners trust Christ alone as Savior and are added to it. This company of the redeemed is called the church without consideration of whether or not those who are a part of it are members of local churches.”

The Universal Church

The universal church exists all over the earth. When the rapture of the church occurs, all believers, wherever they are on the planet, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-18). That is, the church, as it exists globally, will be removed from the earth and taken to be with Christ. Also, whenever we meet another Christian, we are meeting someone who belongs to the global body of Christ, whether they belong to a local assembly or not.

The Local Church

The word church is also used to refer to a local assembly of those who regularly meet at a specific location. Luke mentions “the church which was at Jerusalem” (Acts 8:1), and “the church that was at Antioch” (Acts 13:1). Paul mentions “the church of God which is at Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2), “the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi” (Phil. 1:1), and “the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colossae” (Col. 1:2). The apostle John wrote the book of Revelation to churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (Revelation 2-3).

The Local Church

Christians met in the homes of specific church members within each city. Luke records Paul's ministry to Christians in Ephesus and explained that he taught "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). Paul mentions several home churches such as the one run by Aquila and Priscilla and "the church that is in their house" (1 Cor. 16:19), and about "Nymphas and the church that is in his house" (Col. 4:15), and "to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house" (Phm. 1:2).

The Local Church



The Local Church



CATCH

Church at the Cook House

The Local Church



The Local Church



The Local Church

To be a local church there must be: 1) a gathering of Christians, 2) at a specific location (home or other facility), with 3) an accepted authority (Pastor/Elder/Overseer).

Who Were Members?

From several writings in the New Testament we get a demographic breakdown of church members, which consisted of:

1. Men and women (Eph. 5:22-23)
2. Parents and children (Eph. 6:1-4)
3. Slaves and free persons (Eph. 6:5-9)
4. Rich and poor (1 Tim. 6:17-19; Jam. 2:2-5)
5. Spiritual and carnal (1 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 6:1)
6. Mature and immature (1 Cor. 2:6; 1 Pet. 2:2).

Who Were Members?



What was the Early Church Doing?

We can also surmise that home churches generally had few members because of the size of the homes (probably not exceeding 50 persons) and the fellowship probably tended to be personal, with an emphasis on learning God's Word and enjoying Christian fellowship. Luke gives us a snapshot of some of the values and practices of the early church in which he tells us "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

What was the Early Church Doing?

“And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:44-47)

What was the Early Church Doing?

What Luke gives us is descriptive of early church practices.

1. Devotion to authoritative teaching by the apostles.
2. Fellowship with other Christians.
3. A communal meal as well as the Lord's Supper.
4. Prayer sessions.
5. Sharing personal resources to meet needs.
6. Unified thinking = "one mind".
7. Worshipping God.

The Primary Purpose of the Church?

The primary purpose of the church is to glorify God. Paul states, “we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:12), and “to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever” (Eph. 3:21; cf. Rom. 11:36; 16:27; 1 Pet. 2:5). Other purposes of the church include evangelizing the lost (Matt. 28:18-20), edifying believers through biblical teaching so they might advance to spiritual maturity (Eph. 4:11-16), praying for one another (Jam. 5:16), and showing love (John 13:34).

A Divided Understanding

One of the dispensational distinctives is that Israel and the church are separate. The church, which is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), is a company of believers, made up of Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor. 10:32), who have been spiritually united with Christ by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28). The church, as the body of Christ, was revealed to the apostles only in the New Testament (Eph. 1:22-23; 3:1-12; 5:32; Col. 1:24-27).

A Divided Understanding

Covenant theologians see the church existing as one people of God, a single group of people that goes all the way back to Genesis.

Wayne Grudem states,

“The church is the community of all true believers for all time.”

Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 853.

A Divided Understanding

John Frame comments,

“Israel was the church of the old covenant; the New Testament church is the Israel of the new covenant, what Paul calls ‘the Israel of God’ (Gal. 6:16).”

John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 235.

A Divided Understanding

James Smith writes,

“The fall of Babylon was part of God’s plan for his people. Assisted by Gentile nations, God’s people would once again settle in the land of Canaan. Israel would one day take possession of Gentiles and they would become servants in the Lord’s land. This is best taken to be a reference to the new Israel of God—the church of Christ—conquering the nations through the power of the Gospel.”

James E. Smith, *The Major Prophets*, Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1992), Is 14:14a.

A Divided Understanding

Covenant theologians such as Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, Louis Berkhof, Edward Young, J. I. Packer, R. C. Sproul, John Piper, and many others argue that Israel is the church and the church is Israel; they are the same.

Though I have a great love for covenant theologians and am profoundly thankful for much of their writings, I respectfully disagree with their understanding of the church.

Show Love and Grace

I like the statement,

*In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty;
and in all things, love.*

Who is a Jew?

When one reads back through the Old Testament there were basically two groups of people on the earth: Jews and Gentiles. This distinction began with the call of Abraham, when God called him into a special relationship and promised to bless the world through him (Gen. 12:1-3). Biblically, a Jew is a Jew because he/she is a biological descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:5; 17:7, 19; 22:15-17; 28:13-14; Ex. 2:24-25).

Who is a Jew?

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum states,

“The biblical basis for defining Jewishness lies in the Abrahamic Covenant which promised that a nation would descend from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Genesis 12:2a; 13:16; 15:5; 17:1–2, 7; 22:17; 26:4, 24; and 28:14; from which a simple definition of Jewishness can be deduced.”

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, Rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1994), 748.

Who is a Gentile?

A Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew. And a Gentile, no matter how hard he/she tried, could never be a biological Jew. Certainly Gentiles could participate in the Jewish blessings if he/she embraced God. Rahab and Ruth believed in God, but, though saved and in the line of Christ (Matt. 1:5), were never regarded as biological Jews. Ruth continued to be called a Moabitess, even after her conversion (Ruth 2:2, 21; 4:5, 10).

Jews, Gentiles, and Christians

The Jew and Gentile distinction continued for millennia until the formation of the Christian church. Now, in the church age, there are three groups of people: Jews, Gentiles, and the church. This is why Paul makes the comment, “Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God” (1 Cor. 10:32).

The church is now a third group that consists of Jews and Gentiles who have trusted in Christ as their Savior and been joined to the body of Christ.

Israel is Distinct from the Church

Though both Israel and Christians are the people of God, the Christian church is distinct from the nation of Israel. Several observations from the New Testament provide a compelling case.

First, the term *Israel* occurs 73 times in the New Testament (30 times in the Gospels, 21 times in the book of Acts, 19 times in the Epistles, and 3 times in the book of Revelation), and not once does it refer to the church.

Israel is Distinct from the Church

Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes,

“The term *Israel* is either used of the nation or the people as a whole, or of the believing remnant within. It is never used of the Church in general or of Gentile believers in particular.”

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, 699.

Israel is Distinct from the Church

The fact that Israel is still called Israel, even after the church is formed, argues that Israel is not the church.

Israel is Distinct from the Church

Second, the word *Jew* occurs 186 times in the New Testament (84 times in the Gospels, 76 times in the book of Acts, 24 times in the Epistles, and 2 times in the book of Revelation), and refers to anyone who is a biological descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The word *Jew* is never used of Gentiles or the church.

Israel is Distinct from the Church

Dr. Ryrie states,

“The distinction between Israel and the church is verified by several facts. (1) In the New Testament natural Israel and Gentiles are contrasted *after* the church was clearly established (Acts 3:12; 4:8, 10; 5:21, 31, 35; 21:19). (2) Natural Israel and the church are clearly distinguished, showing that the church is not Israel (1 Cor. 10:32). The apostle’s distinction would be meaningless if Israel were the same as the church.”

Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 462.

Israel is Distinct from the Church

In the New Testament, there are Jewish unbelievers (Acts 14:2; 19:8-9), and Jewish believers (Acts 10:45; 14:1). This is what Paul referred to when he said, “For they are not all Israel who are of Israel” (Rom. 9:6). That is, one could be a biological Jew and not belong to the remnant of saved Jews who accept Jesus as Messiah.

Israel is Distinct from the Church

There are Gentile unbelievers (Acts 14:2-7), and Gentile believers (Acts 13:48; 21:25). Both Jews and Gentiles are distinguished in several passages (Acts 4:27; 9:15; 14:2, 5; 21:11, 21; Rom. 3:29; 9:24), as well as Jews and Christians (Gal. 2:11-14), Gentiles and Christians (Acts 11:1), and all three at once (Acts 14:4-5; 1 Cor. 10:32).

Israel is Distinct from the Church

In the book of Galatians, Paul draws a distinction between Gentile and Jewish believers, where he states, “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them [Gentile Christians], and upon the Israel of God [Jewish Christians]” (Gal. 6:16).

Covenant theologians commonly reference Galatians 6:16 to argue that the church and Israel are the same; but this fails to consider the language of the text.

Israel is Distinct from the Church

Dr. Fruchtenbaum comments,

“The first group is the *them*, the *uncircumcision*, the Gentile Christians to and of whom he [Paul] had devoted most of the epistle. The second group is the *Israel of God*. These are the *circumcision*, the Jewish believers who, in contrast with the Judaizers, followed the rule of salvation by grace through faith alone.”

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, 691.

Israel/Church Distinctions

Israel	Church
Israel is a nation (Ex. 19:6)	The church is not a nation (Rom. 10:19)
Israel was promised land (Gen. 12:1; 15:18; 17:8)	The church goes out to many lands (Matt. 28:19-20)
Israel was mentioned throughout the Old Testament and recognized by other nations (Num. 14:15; Josh. 5:1)	The church was a mystery not known in the Old Testament (Eph. 3:1-6; Col. 1:26-27; cf. Rom. 16:25-26)
Israel was under “the Law” of Moses (John 1:17)	The Church is under the “Law of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21)
Israel’s priesthood was specific to Aaron and the tribe of Levi (Num. 3:6-7)	All Christians are priests to God (Rev. 1:6)
Israel worshipped first at the Tabernacle and later the Temple (Ex. 40:18-38; 2 Chron. 8:14-16)	For Christians, their body is the temple of the Lord and they gather locally where they want (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
Israel offered animal sacrifices (Lev. 4:1-35)	Christians offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5; cf. Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15)
Israel was required to tithe from the produce of their land (Deut. 14:22-23; 28:29; Num. 18:21)	No tithe required from Christians, only a joyful attitude when giving, “for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7)

A Future for Israel

God's current plan in human history is being worked out through His church. However, we should never draw the conclusion that God is finished with Israel. He is not. Israel as a nation is under divine discipline (Matt. 23:37-39; Rom. 11:25-27), but God has a future plan to restore them and to bless the world through them.

A Future for Israel

God's covenant promises to Israel are still in effect (Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 9:1-5; 11:1-2), which promises point to a future regathering of the nation of Israel in the Promised Land (Isa. 14:1; 60:21; Jer. 30:3; Ezek. 11:17; 20:42; 37:12; Amos 9:14-15), a King and kingdom (2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:3-4, 34-37; Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14; Luke 1:31-33; Matt. 6:9-10; 19:28; 25:31), and a righteous rule (Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6; Rev. 11:15; 19:11-16), which will last for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6). Jesus is the son of David, the son of Abraham, and He will inherit the throne of His father and rule on earth.

Summary

The church is distinct from Israel and Gentiles. The church, which is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), is a company of believers, from Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor. 10:32), who have been spiritually united with Christ by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28). More so, the church exists both in a universal and local sense, as an organism and an organization. Once the church is caught up to heaven at the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18), God will resume His plan with national Israel and fulfill all the promises made to them (Rom. 9:1-5; 11:1-2; 25-27).