

Review: Has God really finished with Israel?

This is a review of a recent book, *Has God really finished with Israel?*, by Mark Dunman. Mark is local, known to us and leads a prayer meeting for Israel. He is not a Jewish Root radical and disagrees with some of their extreme tenets; nevertheless he is a sworn enemy of so-called 'Replacement Theology'. This paper is a critical, but friendly, assessment of the book.

Introduction

A book on this subject written by a scientist seeking evidence is very welcome. So also is the irenic approach taken by the writer, especially in the early stages of the book (it is less evident at the end). It is certainly more irenic than some recent publications on similar themes and it is interesting that he does not adopt some of the extreme doctrines held by many Jewish Root groups.¹ He also highlights some failures written by opponents of Jewish Root theology – which need to be taken into account. One, the distinction between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant, finds me in complete agreement. Furthermore, he is more honest than many on the failures of modern Israel regarding the treatment of the Palestinians and agrees that this is problematic.

Finally, and unusually, he does not base his position on Dispensationalism, which is refreshing but confusing since Messianic-Christianity came out of this system. Presumably he is a Historic Premillennialist (he does not use this term); which is odd since the key proponents of this eschatology disagree with him on the place of Israel.

However, choice of the word 'Zionist' to denominate his position is unwise and provocative.² Using a controversial political title to name a Christian group is a mistake. There are even many orthodox Jews that oppose Zionism and its key principles in Israel today. This is a bad example of utilising something from the world to describe spiritual things.

At this point I have to part company with Mark as he makes some very serious mistakes. This is due to an overriding principle of focusing on the OT and a pretty rigid literal interpretation of it. Anyone who fails to understand the foundational import of the teaching of the apostles in the NT (in fulfilment of Jesus' promises in John 16) is going to make serious mistakes.

These mistakes cover a range of issues, exegetical, theological and even historical; therefore I will demonstrate a number of errors under each of these headings. However, at the beginning I need to deal with a number of general observations and practical issues for the sake of clarity.

¹ Such as denying the Palestinians any right to the land they occupied legally for centuries. Mark also agrees with me, contra Jewish Root teachers, that the dispersion of the Jews after 70 AD resulted from their rejection of the Messiah (p60).

² He calls himself a Christian Zionist; however he makes a distinction between Classical Christian Zionism (his position and that of David Pawson) and Dispensational Christian Zionism (the position of Jacob Prasch, John Hagee, Tim LaHaye).

The printing

The book is generally a reasonable quality paperback published by New Wine Press. The print is clear (but the font is a little small and light for me) and the line spacing and margins are adequate.

However, there is a big problem – all the appendices, glossaries and indexes are not in the book but are found on a separate website. This is a big problem. Mark says that more people are doing this; well they are all wrong. This is contrary to the protocols of publishing and makes it very difficult for the reader, especially if his computer is switched off and upstairs (what if he has no computer?). I understand that he was limited to 200 pages but some way ought to have been found to remedy this (some chapters are superfluous and the appendices could be in a smaller typeface). What is worse is that the website papers cannot be copied and saved so that the reader could store them on his computer to read at will.

Overall error

The chief error Mark makes, and this is a serious matter, is one that all messianic groups make. It is the decentralising of Christ, both in theology and the focus of Scripture. Christ is to be pre-eminent in the church and all its thinking (Col 1:18); Mark's thesis fails this test.

We will examine a number of instances of this in our detailed examination of his thesis but a simple point comes to mind after reading virtually all his book in one sitting. This is that, despite covering a wide range of Biblical topics: the covenants, the prophetic promises, law, typology and so forth, Mark speaks about the Lord Jesus relatively infrequently. He does not ignore him, but the Lord comes a very poor second after Israel, Jews and Jewishness. Now that is because this book is about Israel, you may say, but that is irrelevant if you are searching for the true meaning of covenant, law, prophecy etc.

With all due respect, this mistake veers very close to blasphemy. It ignores the central place of Jesus Christ in the interpretation of Scripture.

Scapegoating

While Mark is irenic in some ways, he cannot hide the fact that he is very unhappy with Stephen Sizer. It feels as if he is on a personal crusade to scapegoat him, making repeated mention of him throughout the book. Other writers in his opposing camp get a few mentions (e.g. David Holwerda or Colin Chapman) but Sizer crops up everywhere.

This is unfortunate and tends to give the impression that Mark is prejudiced and unreasonable. This public demonising of Sizer actually led a friend of mine (after reading up on Sizer and finding he was a godly evangelical brother) to leave Mark's prayer group.

Replacement theology

Mark discusses this term a few times, and has a chapter on it at the end (which is very unbalanced). However, even in his historical description of it he does not properly explain whence it derives.

The term is fairly recent and was coined by the enemies of those who are supposed to hold it. It is not a term that most of those in that supposed position would recognise, nor would they use it of themselves. When I first heard this derogatory term many years ago I wondered what it meant until I finally realised it meant me.

Replacement theology, in essence, refers to those who hold that the promises to Israel in the OT were fulfilled in Christ, and thence, the church. It is odd to make this a term of

derision and error since everyone in church history believed this until Dispensationalism took root in the mid-1800s, originally in a heretical and scandalous church.³ As we will see later, contrary to Mark's understanding, it was Dispensationalism that first proposed the split between the church and Israel, which eventually led to all the various messianic and Jewish Root heresies a hundred years later.

So, originally all evangelical church groups believed that the promises to Israel were fulfilled in Christ and practised in the church – all Calvinist (Covenant Theology) groups (Presbyterians, Particular Baptists, Puritans, Congregationalists, Independents), all Lutheran groups, and even pretty much most Arminian groups (General Baptists, Methodists).

After the development of Messianic-Christian groups a few decades ago, which was a splintering from Dispensationalism, which was itself a rogue theology, they needed to scapegoat those who denied the value of fleshly Israel in the covenant. So they came up with the derogatory title, 'Replacement Theology', which branded everybody a heretic except this small rogue group. Even many Historic Premillennialists come under this condemnation.

Mark uses this title throughout and so would attack all Biblical theologians by it (say those who would consider themselves Calvinists).

Now another modern way of dividing up the church is on the basis of eschatology. All those in the earlier mentioned churches would fall into one or another of these: Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, Historic Premillennialism or Dispensational Premillennialism. However, only Dispensationalists would definitely support Messianic-Christian and Zionist claims and this was absent in church history until the 19th century. Some Historic Premillennialists may also support it, but not all.

So, a minority group that emerged from Dispensationalism, a group with a new interpretation of the Bible, a group that did not exist in 20 centuries of church history, and a group contrary to orthodox Biblical theology, coined this term to denigrate virtually everybody in church history until 1832.

Now it is true that there were some Postmillennialists (a minority position until the 20th century), such as a few 17th century Puritans, that believed in a future revival of the fortunes of Israel as a nation. Yet these were still believers in 'Replacement Theology'.

I am forced to deal with 'Replacement Theology' in critiquing Mark's thesis, but that does not mean that I accept it as a genuine title for my position. Indeed, the Reformed (Calvinist) theological view is that Jews are not excluded from the promises but are accepted on the basis of faith and repentance. Jews and Gentiles are welcomed as equal citizens in God's kingdom; Jews are included not replaced. It is not that Gentiles have replaced Jews, but that Christ has inherited the promises to Israel and Christ welcomes everyone with faith; that is all the elect from all nations.

Specific comments

- Page 139: '*Replacement theology and its cousin, anti-Semitism*'. Unnecessarily pejorative and untrue.

³ Edward Irving's 'Apostolic Church' in London, which eventually fell into complete disgrace. Darby developed the error and promulgated it.

- Page 139: ‘*Anti-Semitism and replacement theology grew hand-in-hand in the early church ... it was always allied with contempt for the Jews*’. This is rubbish. Those fathers embodying so called ‘replacement theology’ instigated many missions to the Jews, as did many others throughout church history right up to today.
- Page 139: the discussion of state churches persecuting Jews is irrelevant since most of them were not really Christian at all but became fashionable places to keep in favour with the emperor. State churches later in history were often bereft of many genuine believers.
- Page 140: ‘*Replacement theology ... was grounded in a lack of love which over the centuries bore some very unsavoury fruit.*’ This is just a disgrace – and note that this is slandering genuine believers by bearing false witness; something that God promises to condemn severely. Calvinists have repeatedly in history developed missions to the Jews and treated them kindly (e.g. Cromwell). You cannot tar all with a brush that only applies to some.
- Page 140: ‘*has very ugly roots*’. As I make clear in this review, the root of what he calls ‘Replacement Theology’ lies in the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. Such a statement is, therefore, blasphemous.
- Page 141: ‘*Anti-Semitism ... a natural outlook of the church*’. More slander without evidence (not very scientific). Multitudes of Calvinists have been lovers of the Jews and treated them well. This is basically saying that most of the church is racist. That is a slander too far. All his earlier irenic manner has gone out of the window.
- Page 144: ‘*Fathers ... began to see Jews ... more as enemies.*’ More slander. See my comments on Trypho later.
- Page 148: ‘*The Church Fathers either failed to recognise Paul’s teaching or they failed to act upon it ... they failed to exercise the love of Christ*’. This is just a misrepresentation of the writings, usually by taking them out of context. In fact the fathers usually reflect Paul’s teaching very accurately on this matters. [See ‘Dialogue with Trypho’ later.]
- Page 149: The quote from Diprose refers to the historical situation of Jews being deprived of citizenship etc. by the 7th century. Mark blames this on Replacement Theology. What he fails to take into account (and this happened throughout history) is that the sins of the Jews, especially usury, but also lying on oath (allowed in the Talmud) make them undesirable by their own actions. In fact, this was the fulfilment of the curse of God upon them as prophesied by Moses.

Principles of interpretation

It is vital for anyone commenting on Scripture or defending a theology to have sound rules of interpretation. Without these, reams of paper can be filled that are all worthless if the underlying principles are false.

Now, we do not have the option of inventing our own rules, as some Jewish Root false teachers have done, but we have to discern what the rules of interpretation are that Scripture demands. Paul puts it this way:

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15

‘Rightly dividing’; means, handling aright, following straight paths. Metaphors such as a stonemason cutting stones straight or a farmer ploughing a straight furrow have been used to illustrate it. False teaching arises from crooked exegesis; and this is certainly the case with many of Mark’s conclusions. He fails to interact with the guiding interpretations laid down by the apostles in the NT; indeed, on occasions he says something completely contrary to a clear NT statement, which he has ignored.

There are many rules of interpretation which apply to Mark's work, some of these could be listed as:

- The later explains the earlier.
- The clear explains the mysterious.
- Didactic verses explain prophetic or complex passages.
- Scripture explains itself.

Therefore, men have no authority to make what they will out of OT prophecies; indeed we are warned about this:

No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. 2 Pt 1:20

We must interpret prophecy according to the rules laid down by Scripture itself.

Now one very important rule was laid down by the Lord Jesus in his last hours on earth; it is that the apostles would be the final arbiters of his last will and testament. Jesus promises that the apostles would be guided into all truth by the gift of the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit would bring the things of Christ to them after he had ascended to heaven – AFTER.⁴ Thus the words of the apostles are the final words of Jesus Christ to his church and these must form the authoritative basis for all interpretation problems in the Bible.

Not only does the later explain the earlier, or the clear explain the difficult, but the NT explains the OT. To ignore this (or worse to deny it as many Jewish Root people do) is to blaspheme Christ himself; to disobey his very clear instruction.

The apostles themselves prove this matter. Despite three years of instruction with Jesus they absolutely failed to understand OT prophecies, or even basic principles in the law regarding Christ. Jesus said to them, 'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now,' (Jn 16:12). All the revelation up to that point, including all OT prophecies, could not be properly understood until the Holy Spirit opened the mind of the apostles afterwards. Having gained this understanding of truth, the apostles then laid down the foundation as to what the prophets mean. We have to evaluate prophecy on the basis of apostolic truth.

Mark discusses this matter at a couple of points and actually discards apostolic interpretation⁵ and prefers private interpretation based on human logic that the literal interpretation of an OT prophecy is the obvious meaning; even if the NT contradicts this.⁶ In other words, his interpretation is better than that of the apostles. This is characteristic of Jewish Root and Messianic-Christian Zionist groups. It is a serious and fundamental error. The denial of the value of the NT to establish doctrine is anti-Christian because it opposes Christ, speaking through his apostles.

Ignorance of key Bible books

As with all other Jewish Root and Messianic-Christian teachers, Mark shows little knowledge of vitally important Scriptures that cover this whole issue, the books of Galatians and Hebrews.

The discussion of what God thinks of fleshly Israel, whether God has finished with Israel, what is the place of Jewishness, what was the purpose of OT Israel, and who inherited the Abrahamic covenant are all expounded in these books. It is impossible to form a Biblical

⁴ Jn 16:12-15.

⁵ Especially on a website appendix and p89. On page 91 he says, '*insistence on viewing the Old Testament in the light of the New becomes a snare.*' This is in direct opposition to what Jesus himself stated. It is blasphemy.

⁶ He says this on page 86.

opinion on these issues without an exposition of the themes in these books. Mark has not done this. Indeed, Mark comes to conclusions that these books utterly contradict.

It is a grave mistake to ignore these two books, as we will demonstrate later.

In a sense what we have covered so far is enough to show the serious folly of Mark's chief conclusions. Nevertheless, having covered these general issues, we will now look in detail at Mark's points.

We cannot go through every error, since that would require a book of equal size; I intend to demonstrate a sufficient number of errors that are typical of the whole.

Theological errors

Points of agreement

The sovereignty of God

Let's begin with something positive. Any sane Bible believer ought to accept that Israel has gained its possession of the land by the permission of God. There can be no other conclusion unless you deny Scripture.

God is sovereign and all nations are under his hand. He established the borders of nations (Acts 17:26) and so the return of Jews to the land of Palestine /Israel was decreed by God in eternity. That is certain. There can be no argument that God controlled this return.

However, that does not demand the conclusion that God favours the Jews as a special race separate from all other nations. Nor does it mean that God loves Jews in their unregenerate state. Nor does it require the interpretation of the OT prophecies that Mark insists upon.

The uniqueness of the Abrahamic covenant

Mark is also correct in his insistence on the uniqueness of the Abrahamic Covenant. It preceded the Mosaic Covenant (the Old Covenant) and was entirely different. In fact, it foreshadowed the Gospel of Christ and much is made of this by the apostles (which Mark misses entirely). Thus Mark's conclusions about the fruit of this covenant are wrong. However, he is right to show that it is separate from and unlike the Mosaic Covenant.

The key position

Mark's position is revealed early on in the book:

It is about supporting and praying for the nation of Israel and the Jewish people as a whole. It is about regarding the Jewish people as being in some way different from all other ethnic groups.⁷

This can be broken down as:

- Supporting the fleshly Israeli nation, whether sinful or righteous.
- Supporting Jews in general, whether sinful or righteous.
- Regarding Jews as being different from any other ethnic group.

This is so flagrantly wrong it is hard to imagine why anyone can't see through it.

⁷ Page 30.

If Israel commits war crimes, atrocities or civil rights abuses,⁸ we are still to support it. If Jews commit crimes or belong to groups that are wicked, we support them.⁹ Worse, there are historic Christians amongst the Palestinians; the numbers of evangelicals may be small but they are present. Western Messianic-Christians support Israel in its policies against Palestinians that actually persecute Christians. This is so deluded as to be shocking.

Needless to say, this is contrary to direct commandments in God's word not to do this. We are not to support wickedness at any level. We are not to fellowship with wickedness. We must condemn unrighteous governments who oppress the poor. We are to separate from people who walk disorderly. If I need to supply proof texts for this (there are hundreds) then the reader needs to question whether he is a Christian at all.

In fact, the NT goes out of its way to state that Jews are not different from Gentiles in God's plans at all:

Equal in the Gospel

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. Rm 1:16

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. Rm 10:12

Equal standing in judgment

But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness -- indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honour, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. Rm 2:8-11

Notice here that it is explicitly stated that God is not partial between Jews and Greeks. How dare men put a dividing wall between them.

Equal in Christian fellowship

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:28

Equal in the new man

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Col 3:11

There are two types of people in God's word but it is not Jews and Gentiles, it is the righteous and the wicked.

So, Mark's essential fundamental position is very seriously wrong and contrary to the ethical commands of God in both the OT and the NT.

Why no evidence of his position in the NT?

Although the Messianic-Christian (Jewish Root, Christian Zionist) position on OT prophecy is essentially a matter of Biblical interpretation, it covers so many fundamental issues (covenant, eschatology, the people of God, church, the land etc.) that it becomes a virtual theological system. The basic theology of a Messianic-Christian differs greatly from, say, a Calvinist.

⁸ Israel is in more breaches of UN Security Council resolutions than any other nation; scores more than Saddam Hussein ever was.

⁹ Certain Israeli Prime Ministers, and other ministers, were murderers belonging to the Stern gang in the early days of Israel. Christians who supported these were supporting non-Christian murderers.

This then begs an obvious question. Why is there no evidence of this theology in the NT?

We explain elsewhere the vital importance of relying upon apostolic teaching to establish doctrine and the NT covers all the issues that we need. If we cannot find any trace of this theological system in the NT then it cannot be accepted. Furthermore, if apostolic teaching actually contradicts Messianic-Christian theology (which it does) then the system is not only unwarranted but also dangerous and demonic.

Thus, for instance, we find no practical outworking of this theology in the NT either. We are never told to do the things that Messianic-Christians tell us to do. For instance:

- We are not told to pray for Jerusalem.
- We are not told to pray for Israel.
- We are not told to pray for the fortunes of any material nation.
- We are not told that the physical land of Palestine (Israel) is of any importance at all.
- We are not told that Jews are to be treated any differently from Gentiles in the Gospel.
- We are not told that God loves Jews as a race.

So, there is no system of theology in the NT that bears any resemblance to that of Messianic-Christians; furthermore there are no practical commandments to do the things demanded by this theology.

This is a very serious problem for Messianic-Christians.

Denying the attributes of God

Here and there Mark makes passing statements that are deep theological errors. He does not necessarily use these as a foundation for an argument, but these comments demonstrate Mark's serious lack of Biblical understanding that presumably arise from an Arminian theology. For example:

God's immutability

On page 44 Mark states that Moses persuaded God to change his mind. Does he not see the massive error involved here? He has stated that a mere man, a sinner, had the power to make the mighty God do something he did not want to do and was contrary to his will. This is idolatry of the first order.

This is not what happened, neither does it ever happen in prayer, nor in the pursuit of the Gospel (as in the case of Jonah and the Ninevites). This results from not understanding clear texts on God's attributes such as:

God *is* not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? Num 23:19

The Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He *is* not a man, that He should relent. 1 Sam 15:29

It *is* impossible for God to lie. Heb 6:18

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Jm 1:17

Scripture establishes that God does not change, lie, or relent. However, Scripture does accommodate human weaknesses and often pictures God in anthropomorphic terms to help us understand his actions. God always intended (and predestined) that Israel would continue after the wilderness sin and drew Moses into fellowship with him by inspiring his

intercessory prayer. In this interlude, it was Moses that changed and grew not God. This is always the case with prayer.

To say that God changes his mind is a serious error.

God's sovereignty

Despite sometimes affirming God's sovereignty, Mark also occasionally denies it. His theology has no proper foundation.

For example on page 44-45 Mark states that a nuclear conflagration arising from Israel's presence in the Middle East would '*seriously affect God's plan of salvation and must surely impact his sovereign will*'. Firstly, a hypothetical argument has little point in establishing his basic thesis (not very scientific). But, more importantly, he appears to believe that mere men could damage God's will and affect his plan of salvation. How preposterous! This suggests that Mark has little understanding of the Bible's God at all.

Mark differentiates between God's permissive (discretionary) and decretive (sovereign) will; i.e. that God actively controls some historical things but other things happen without his direct control that he merely allows and which may be contrary to his higher will.¹⁰ This is an Arminian mistake, which seeks to give man some sort of independent free will. God is sovereign over all things. Nothing is outside God's will.

I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever: for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' Dan 4:34-35

There are not two conflicting wills in God; there is only one will and that is sovereign and decretal.

Exegetical errors

'Israel' and 'Jew'

Mark, with all Zionist Christians, maintains that when 'Israel' or 'Jerusalem' is mentioned in the Bible (especially in the NT) it always means the nation and the capital city; and when 'Jew' is mentioned it always means an ethnic Jew.¹¹ This is the literal approach to Scripture. It is false.

Israel

Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.
Acts 7:23

Here it means Jacob.

'Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.' And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed. Rev 7:3-4

¹⁰ E.g. p44; '*Has God let it happen under his discretionary will but would much rather it had not happened, or is it his sovereign will.*'

¹¹ For example, p132.

This is the elect, those who are saved, (typified as Israel, the people of the covenant [12 x 12 x 1000]).

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbour, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. Heb 8:10-11

If this is natural Israel then Christians are not in the covenant of salvation. This is the New Covenant that Jesus said was to all the elect from every nation.

They *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called'. Rm 9:6-7

In essence, Paul is saying that genuine Israelites ('princes with God') are not all Jews but only some; only those who are the seed of Abraham. His argument in this chapter is about election and his choice of example is important. This example is explained by Paul further in Galatians where he points out that the true Seed of Abraham is only Christ. Thus those who are in Christ are also considered to be Abraham's seed – i.e. Christians and no one else. Thus 'of Israel' does not refer to modern day Israel, or to Jews, but to Christians.

Paul openly states this as he develops his argument about sovereign election when he says, 'even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?' (Rm 9:24). He adds, 'I will call them My people, who were not My people,' (Rm 9:25). Gentiles were not God's people before, but they are now. God's people (Israel) are both Jews and Gentiles who are called by God.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God. Gal 6:15-16

This is a much disputed passage; but one thing is absolutely certain – it cannot mean the fleshly nation of Israel. It is possible that it means the saved elect out of national Israel (converted Jews) but it cannot mean fleshly Israel. Most sound commentators throughout history take it to mean the church.

Now we cannot spend much time debating this but simply note the context:

- 'Israel of God' is not a phrase ever used of national Israel; it only appears here.
- Paul, throughout this letter, is condemning Judaisers (v13) and is critical of Jews in general for their persecution of the church. He refers to this in verse 12.
- He specifically states that the marks of Judaism (circumcision) are worthless and that what counts is being in Christ (v15).
- He specifically says that the world has been crucified to him and him to the world – this includes Israel as part of the world (v14).
- He specifically says that what counts is a new creation, spiritual life (v16) that eliminates Israel which is part of the old creation and fleshly.
- Having made all this clear, how could he suddenly reverse it all to include fleshly Israel? That is nonsense.

- He then wishes peace and mercy on those who walk according to this rule, the rule of a new creation in Christ following the cross. Fleshly Israel is not in this place at all but against it (persecuting Christians). Thus 'Israel' cannot mean national Israel. It is either a corporate term for the church (which is used in many places; see Rev 21 later), in which case *kai* means 'even' not 'and' (which is not common but is completely acceptable). Or it means the converted Jews now in Christ in which case *kai* means 'and'.

Whatever the case, it is certain that 'Israel' does not mean the fleshly nation.

Jew

For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfil the law, judge you who, *even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?* For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God. Rm 2:25-29

Paul's point, at this stage of his argument in Romans, is to prove that only those who keep the law are justified (i.e. no one). He has just spent several verses showing that Jews did not keep the law and dishonoured God. He thus concludes: "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written. For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision' (v24-25). Jews become as bad as Gentiles when they break the law.

Conversely, when Gentiles keep the law (even without it) it counts just as if they were circumcised. In fact, Gentiles who keep the law will judge Jews who do not. What counts is keeping the law's requirements, not being an outward Jew (circumcised).

So, Paul concludes, being a Jew is inward not outward. Circumcision of the heart is what counts with God not circumcision of the flesh. What counts is praise from God for doing good. What Paul is doing is playing on words because the root meaning of Jew is 'praise' (Judah). If you want to be a Jew, if you want praise from God, then fulfil the law from the heart.

Circumcision of the heart only occurs when a person becomes a new risen creature in Christ after conversion:

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Col 2:11-12

Only a spiritually circumcised person can do good and fulfil the law. Only those who have died in Christ and have been raised with Christ have a pure heart.

Thus Paul distinguishes between a true Jew who does right and is praised by God, and a fleshly Jew who breaks the law and only receives praise from men. He distinguishes between spiritual people and fleshly, national Jews. So the true Jew here is not a national, fleshly, ethnic Jew.

Jerusalem

For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar -- for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children -- but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.
Gal 4:24-26

Here are two Jerusalems contrasted. The first is fleshly Israel in bondage; the second is the church. The first is national Israel, which is under the Mosaic Law; the second is the spiritual fulfilment of Israel – the church that includes Jews and Gentiles (the ‘mother of us all’). ‘The ‘all’ includes Gentiles; note that Paul was speaking to Galatian Celts. The Jerusalem above includes Celts. There is no way that this can be soundly interpreted differently.

The bondswoman corresponds to the Jerusalem ‘that now is’ – fleshly Jerusalem in Palestine. Paul uses the symbolism of Hagar to show that fleshly Jews are in spiritual bondage.¹² The Jerusalem above equals the city which comes down from heaven in Revelation.

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev 21:1-2

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. Rev 21:10

The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it. Rev 21:23-24

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. Rev 22:1-3

This is not earthly, fleshly Jerusalem but the church symbolised as coming down to earth in the new world. Virtually no one in history has doubted this until recent years.

Conclusion

It is completely false to say that Israel and Jerusalem always mean the historical places in the Near East. Paul also distinguishes between spiritual Jews (Jews or Gentiles that keep the law) and fleshly Jews who break the law.

The rigidly literal interpretation of these words breaks down and must be rejected.

Prophecies

Mark’s key mistake is to ignore the clear and authoritative interpretations of the OT prophecies made by the apostles. For instance:

Jer 31

Mark applies this to Israel the nation, ‘*I do not see how God could have expressed his intentions with regard to Israel more clearly*’ (p66). Yet the apostles apply this repeatedly to the church in Christ. The OT promise was only ever to the remnant, not the sinful majority,

¹² Which he also states in didactic terms, e.g. Gal 2:4, 4:9, 5:1.

and the remnant of national, OT Israel is subsumed into the church, the body of Christ, after the cross. Thus the church contains both Jew and Greek.

Those who are loved with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3) are the remnant, the elect. God does not love, and never did love, the sinful majority in Israel who were cursed. The people in view are the redeemed, the ransomed (Jer 31:11). The reference to Ramah weeping (Jer 31:15) is applied to the time of Jesus in the NT (Matt 2:18). Thus ‘the hope in your future’ (Jer 31:17) refers to the hope in Christ, not national restoration. The prophecy culminates in the promise of a new covenant (Jer 31:31) and this is directly taken by the NT to refer to salvation in Christ and the New Covenant on which it is based. Hebrews repeatedly mentions this passage and applies it to Jesus who is the fulfilment of it and the mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 12:24).

If you rip this prophecy away from its NT counterpart and insist that it is fulfilled in modern Israel, then you not only blaspheme Christ, the fulfilment of it, but you also have to give up any pretension of being a Bible honouring student.

1 Chron 16:15-18

Mark presumes that this promise, of the Abrahamic Covenant, is the promise of the land of Canaan to fleshly Israel, fleshly human descendants of Abraham, forever.

However, this completely ignores the very specific explanation of Paul that the inheritor of the Abrahamic Covenant was not Isaac in the flesh but Christ. The Seed of Abraham is Christ. [We discuss this separately later.]

Isa 35:1-2

Mark applies this directly to modern Israel yet the prophecy states,

The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God.

I am saddened that Mark uses duplicitous methods here.

First he stops the quotation half way through verse two. This is because the rest of the verse cannot apply to modern Israel; the nation does not include Lebanon. This is plainly deceitful.

Furthermore, the wilderness and the wasteland is not blossoming as a rose. There are many large areas of wasteland and wilderness in Israel (such as the Negev desert). This is a failure to interpret the text literally, which he claims to do.

Isa 43:5-7

The promise that God’s sons would be re-gathered is only applicable to the elect remnant. [See on the ‘remnant’.] The majority in Israel were never God’s sons and were condemned. God says of wicked Israelites, ‘I was angry with that generation, and said, “They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.” So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest.”’ Heb 3:10-11.

Ezek 37:19-22

Mark attributes the fulfilment of the joining of the two houses of Israel under one king to be in the creation of modern Israel.

Firstly, this is again destroying his literal interpretation that he claims to hold. The re-gathering of Jews in Israel was not under a king. This shows how Christian Zionists twist Scripture in a superficial way to suit themselves.

Secondly, all Scripture points to Christ and not Israel. The culmination of the prophecies for Israel are concluded in Christ not an earthly nation.

Thirdly, the one king that will be over them so that they are no longer two nations can only be Christ. Even Jewish commentators would consider this king to be a coming Messiah. This future king can only be Jesus, the inheritor of the covenant with David. Therefore, this prophecy was fulfilled by Christ after his incarnation. There has been no king in Israel since the time of Ezekiel, except Christ.

Mark does another common thing in Christian Zionism, he selects the bit of the prophecy that suits him and neglects the context that does not. This passage goes on to say:

They shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore. Ezek 37:25-28

So, the first thing is that there is no doubt that this king is Jesus Christ, the Son of David. But there is more:

- God makes a covenant of peace with them, which is everlasting. This is a new covenant and can only mean the New Covenant that Christ brought in. So the time is when Christ is king and his New Covenant brought in.
- God sets his sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. This can only be the church and nothing else. There are no material sanctuaries or temples anymore after the cross. Indeed, God no longer dwells in temples made with hands (Acts 7:48, 17:24).
- The result of this re-gathering under a king is that the nations will know that God sanctifies Israel. This can only mean new life and forgiveness of sins resulting from the new covenant. The current fleshly nation does not testify to God at all but most Jews hate Christ and the texts of Judaism blaspheme him often. Neither is Israel in any way sanctified but rather is extremely wicked.

There is no way that this prophecy can be considered to be fulfilled in modern day Israel. It is an absolute nonsense.

Amos 9:14-15

Mark sees the fulfilment of this in the re-gathering of Jews in Israel from which they will never be expelled. However, James in Acts 15:14-18 directly applies this passage to the church where Jews are gathered with Gentiles into the household of God.

Again mark ignores the context that does not suit him. The other details of Amos 9:9-15 are:

- God will gather all Israel from among the nations (v9).
- All sinners in Israel shall die, only the righteous are gathered (v10).
- On that day the tabernacle of David is rebuilt. James attributes the fulfilment of this to the ministry of Jesus gathering the church from the nations.
- This re-gathering includes all Gentiles who are called by God's name (v12).

None of this is applicable to modern fleshly Israel. All Jews have not been sieved out of the nations and brought to the land; the majority live in other nations. All wicked Jews have not yet been killed. Clearly the gathering of the righteous is in the church not in fleshly Israel. Neither has there been a gathering of righteous Gentiles into the land of Israel.

The only fulfilment of this prophecy is spiritual, centring in the work of Christ in the church. Elect Jew and elect Gentile are gathered in the church and planted in the land, which is now universal --the whole restored world.

Gen 15:17-21

This is the promise to Abraham to possess the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, including all the Canaanite nations. Mark sees the fulfilment of this in modern Israel. However, this is another case of ignoring what it literally says. The promise includes land that far extends what Israel occupies today.

Mark, with no evidence, says that most writers believe that the 'River of Egypt' refers to the Wadi el-Arish (the Brook of Egypt) south of Israel's border, not the Nile (page 122). He gives no proof of this and offers no references. This is special pleading to force his preferred conclusion into the text. But even so, the promise would still include Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. However, most historical commentators, including Jewish commentators, took the 'River of Egypt' to mean the Nile. Even common sense dictates this. Every sane person believes that the River of Egypt is the Nile.

Thus, for instance:

- The Targum of Jonathan calls it the river of Egypt; it may be rendered, '*from the river Mizraim or Egypt*', for the name of Egypt was given to the river Nile as well as to the country.
- So it is called by Homer (*Odys.* 14. vid. Pausan. *Boeotica*, sive l. 9. p. 859.).
- So also Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliothec.* l. 1. p. 56.).
- So also (Rollin's *Ancient History*, vol. 1. p. 92.).
- It is also the case with technical Christian commentators, such as: '*The river (נהר) of Egypt is the Nile, and not the brook (נהל) of Egypt (Num 34:5), i.e., the boundary stream Rhinocorura, Wady el Arish.*' Keil and Delitzsch, *Comm. on OT*, in. loc.

So, this cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, refer to modern Israel, which occupies a very small portion of what this prophecy referred to.

As in many other cases, Christian Zionists have to twist, alter, splice, plus cut and paste OT prophecies to suit what they want. This is not literal interpretation; it is exegetical nonsense; it is crooked exegesis, which is what Paul condemns.

Mark's fallacy gets worse. On page 105, in his conclusion to comments about the Abrahamic Covenant, he says, '*Without risk of being contradicted by God, that Israel has been restored as a nation in modern times to fulfil this promise*'. Apart from the exegetical fallacies that already contradict this, God himself contradicts this explicitly in the NT. The fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant promises is not to modern Israel but to Christ. God's words are found in Galatians and they specifically contradict what Mark has said. This, therefore, is blasphemy. [We look in detail at this elsewhere.]

Many of my criticisms here are very obvious for any reasonable reader to spot. They do not need great technical acumen, merely unbiased observation (the very thing Mark promised to bring to the debate as a scientist). One, therefore, has to come to the conclusion that

Mark (as other Christian Zionists) is completely deceived by this error, that skews even the way he reads plain Scriptures. This is evidence of a great delusion. The Christian Zionist error is one of the end-time delusions that Jesus and Paul warned would overwhelm the end-time church.

We cannot keep going through prophecy after prophecy; enough has been shown to prove that Mark's interpretation is deeply flawed and his choice of verses obliquely selective. Every example he shows can be better interpreted in the light of the NT.

There is an odd statement on page 81 which may help understand Mark's position. He says '*in the prophets we read the actual words that God spoke ... in other writings the words are human thoughts or records*'. It appears that Mark believes that only prophecies are God's actual words in Scripture. Although all is inspired, only prophecies are verbally inspired.

This would explain why he puts so much weight on OT prophecies and ignores the NT. But it is a serious mistake. Paul explains that '**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**', (2 Tim 3:16). All Scripture is God-breathed; that is, verbally inspired. Every word in the Hebrew, Syriac and Greek autographs is God's choice.

Mark has a seriously deficient understanding of the authenticity and authority of Scripture.

In another place (p147) he says that the early church had no Scripture, except the OT, for centuries; this is blatantly untrue. It was true at the very beginning, but portions of the words of Christ and apostolic letters circulated very quickly. We must also not minimise the importance to the early church of genuine prophecy, necessary before the NT was written. This sort of prophecy swiftly died out because apostolic letters and Gospels were produced quickly under the hand of God.

We now know that the Gospels were written very early on and quickly distributed. Letters were copied and passed from congregation to congregation and written down again. Collections of letters into a proto-NT were being published in the second century and the canon was being discussed then. It is likely that early NT collections were being made even in the first century. Marcion had spread his Gnostic heresies and was excommunicated in 144, but before then he had published his version of the canon. This forced theologians to start deciding on which material was genuine.

So, individual believers may not have had much Scripture at the very beginning (OT or NT) but very quickly portions became available, probably centred in elders and passed around house churches. The great likelihood (due to the prohibitive cost of copying and materials) is that the early churches did not have copies of the OT at all, or only perhaps a few portions, but did have copies of apostolic works. So, the truth is the opposite of what Mark suggests.¹³

Other exegetical errors

Mark (like all Messianic Christians) seeks to interpret Scripture literally; that is the whole basis of his argument. However, this is never done consistently by Messianic Christians.

¹³ Actually he contradicts himself within the same page. On page 147 he first says, '*the canon of accepted Scripture was the OT*'. Then he later says, '*Paul's letters were considered authentic Church writing from early on*'. Double mindedness here.

When they feel like it, such folk interpret allegorically, typically, and symbolically. However, sometimes they just fail to live up to their own position.

On page 70 Mark does exactly this. He quotes from Ezek 39:25-29 and applies it directly to the 20th century, ‘*This is what has happened in the twentieth century*’. The prophecy includes the following:

- They [the whole house of Israel] shall forget their shame and treachery against God.
- They shall dwell securely in the land.
- None shall make them afraid.
- They will vindicate God’s holiness in the sight of many nations.
- They shall know God as Lord.
- God will leave none remaining among the nations any more.
- God will pour out his Spirit upon them.

I think that any sane reader will conclude that none of this has happened at all. If the prophecy has to be taken literally (as Mark demands) then these literal things should have taken place when Israel occupied Palestine. They did not. Therefore, this prophecy has nothing at all to do with Jews regaining Palestine. Not even the most extreme twisting of the prophecy can be made to suit Mark’s purposes.

Mark’s exegesis is shockingly poor or deliberately deceitful. How can you base an argument on such false teaching?

Historical errors

Anti-Semitism

Mark argues that Replacement Theology (not a term I accept) has always been, or tends to, anti-Semitism. This is plainly a lie.

Mark mentions Justin Martyr’s, *Dialogue With Trypho* (every Jewish Root teacher copies this) as an example of anti-Semitism. Yet Trypho himself did not see it this way; indeed Justin explains how he and his fellow Christians sought to pray for Jews and evangelise them so that they could be saved. Indeed, after his discourse, Trypho thanked Justin for his efforts. If the Jew that Justin was talking to (subsequently written down in his ‘Dialogue’) had no complaint, why do others condemn it as anti-Semitic?

The truth is that, though some of the father’s writings could be sharp (that was normal practice then), they were not anti-Semitic because they entertained Replacement Theology. Indeed, some established missions to the Jews.

In fact, Calvinism (the chief Replacement Theology system) has, in many generations, established missions to the Jews. Oliver Cromwell (a Calvinist) welcomed the Jews when other nations had rejected them. Murray M’Cheyne, for instance, went to Israel and favoured evangelistic works for the Jews. Indeed, there are Calvinists leading missions to the Jews this very day.

It is just a sinful lie to say that Replacement Theology (say Calvinism) makes people anti-Semitic. I am a Calvinist and have had many Jewish friends and esteem very many Jewish musicians, actors, writers, journalists etc.

Genetics and race

Jews are not a race but are an ethnic group. The question is, how pure is this group? This is a question that Mark deals with since it has been brought up by opponents and especially Palestinian authors.¹⁴

His answer is that '*The [Jewish] descendants do not have to be ethnically pure*'.¹⁵ But this is nonsense. The whole argument of Jews and Jewish Root teachers is that the modern Jews inherit the promises made to Abraham because they are direct blood relatives through Isaac and Jacob but not Esau. Volumes are written about this. Indeed, the claims to the land (even as made by Mark) are based on inheriting the promises to Abraham because they are blood descendants.

He argues that Gentile proselytes would gradually have their lines genetically mixed with ethnic Jews over time and thus the Abrahamic line was kept relatively pure. This contradicts Jews themselves. When the ten tribes were deported, the bloodlines were deliberately mixed with Gentiles. Those that remained in Samaria also became racially mixed. In time communities were redeveloped in Samaria so that it became a nation of its own. Yet, at the time of Jesus, only a few hundred years after the deportations, Jews in Judaea hated Samaritans as a people and did not consider them to be Jews.

In 700 years Judaeans considered Samaritans to have lost their Jewishness by racial admixture. Mark is expecting us to accept that after two thousand years of dispersal and admixture the current Jewish nation is pure.

However, even if Mark's ideas have some validity, his theory cannot cope with a mass ethnic invasion. But that is what happened. 90% of modern Jews are not Semites, but are of Turko/Mongolian blood - descendants of Japheth. Modern Jews are of two types: Sephardim and Ashkenazim. The Sephardim arose from Spanish Jews who were expelled in the 15th century. In the 1960's they were numbered at about 500,000. The Ashkenazim, which means 'Khazar Jews', numbered 11 million at this time.¹⁶ The Jewish Encyclopaedia explains that these Jews were Chazars (or Khazars), a people of Turkish origin genetically related to Hun, Uigur and Magyar tribes. The Chazar kingdom was established in Russia before the foundation of the Russian monarchy by the Varangians in 855 AD. This warring tribe converted to Judaism at the end of the 8th century and adopted Jewish forms of life: synagogues, schools, Hebrew letters etc. Eventually the Chazars were conquered by the Russians and the Chazar royal family fled to Spain, but the majority of the people stayed in Russia.¹⁷ Most of modern Jewry is from this stock.

The establishment of the Jewish State of Israel was the result of political intrigue between mostly Khazar Jews and British and American politicians. This intrigue involved lying to and breaking promises with the local Arab princes who had supported Lawrence of Arabia in the First World War.¹⁸ Even the Rabbis at American Neturei Karta ('Friends of Jerusalem') state, '*The Zionist State of Israel [has] no legitimate right to exist ... The Jews know that the creation of a Jewish state before the coming of the Mesiach (Messiah) is blasphemous and heretic*'.¹⁹

¹⁴ Page 164-5 plus appendix on website.

¹⁵ Appendix Six.

¹⁶ Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe*, p181.

¹⁷ *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Vol. IV, article on Chazars, pp1-5.

¹⁸ For more information see Jewish sources such as Alfred Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection* and Rabbi Stephen Wise's autobiography *Challenging years*, p186-9, 197.

¹⁹ *New York Times*, 18 April, 1983.

Having mentioned the matter of the Khazar Jews being the main source of modern Jewishness, Mark just dismisses it saying it lacks evidence – but he gives no evidence or argument for this dismissal and ignores weighty authors that support it (such as Arthur Koestler and Alfred Lilienthal).

The evidence is overwhelming and it is supported by the Jewish Encyclopaedia and even various rabbis and whole sections of orthodox Jewish parties. Mark's simple dismissal has no weight against this. The conclusion is that the majority of modern Jews are not descendants of Abraham but are Khazar converts. This alone would nullify any argument to being the historical owners of Israel.

Minor issues that have repercussions

Mark states that (regarding eschatology) there are four positions:

The four positions are Premillennialism, Postmillennialism, Amillennialism and a more recent one, Preterism.²⁰

This is both incorrect and insufficient.

The fourth is not Preterism but Dispensational Premillennialism. This is actually very important because Mark shows ignorance about this system, which is actually what his theology rests upon.²¹ He defines it badly, missing its key point (on website and page 33) and draws wrong conclusions about it.

Preterism is not normally considered as eschatology; indeed it is a type of interpretation, chiefly based upon the Book of Revelation alone.²² Neither is it recent but is an ancient way of looking at Revelation. There are a very few extreme Preterists troubling some churches in America at this time, but this is not a widespread issue and nor is it a detailed eschatology; these can be dismissed.

Furthermore, this is insufficient even to concisely describe the types of eschatology, as there are important sub-groups that have a bearing on his arguments. Dispensationalism affects his theology. Postmillennialism has sub-groups, of which some affect his theology (some embrace Jewish things some don't). Plus he needs to explain what Historic Premillennialism is and that this is divided into some folk who embrace Israel and the majority who don't.

His ignorance is further demonstrated when he says,

It is important to know that these alternative views exist, because only one of them, Premillennialism, attaches importance to the return of the Jews and the restoration of the nation of Israel.²³

When 'Premillennialism' is referred to in this way it usually means Historic Premillennialism (HP). This is the eschatology demonstrated by people such as: George Eldon Ladd, Ellicott, H. Grattan Guinness, S.H. Kellog and Millard Erickson. Many HP

²⁰ Page 32.

²¹ He mentions this on page 33 but defines it very badly, misses its most important fundamental point (the separation of the Jews from the church) and then dismisses it. It is almost as if he wishes to distance himself from the radical Dispensationalists who champion Messianic-Christianity.

²² Averting that the prophecies were fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of heathen Rome. It merely covers the early church having no relevance after John's time.

²³ Page 32.

teachers do not included significant teaching about Israel and some deny their right to the land today. The main expositor of this system, GE Ladd does not support Mark's thesis. The summary of doctrine found in Millard Erickson's *'Introducing Christian Doctrine'* finds no mention of Mark's thesis in his discussion of Premillennialism (apart from a brief mention under 'Dispensationalism').

The system that attaches importance to the Jews is Dispensationalism.

So having said that this information is important to his study, he evaluates it wrongly, insufficiently and makes mistakes. This does not bode well for his future argumentation.

The curse of the law

On page 109 Mark says, *'If the whole nation ignores God's laws then they will be separated and expelled from the land and become subject to other nations. This is God's ultimate sanction.'* This is not true; the sanctions are far more severe than that.

Moses uttered many curses upon Jews that contravened God's law, one after another; terrible curses throughout Deut 27. In Deut 28 he adds,

15 If you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

16 "Cursed *shall you be* in the city, and cursed *shall you be* in the country.

17 "Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

18 "Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

19 "Cursed *shall you be* when you come in, and cursed *shall you be* when you go out.

20 " The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.

21 "The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess.

22 "The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

23 "And your heavens which *are* over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you *shall be* iron.

24 "The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

25 "The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.

26 "Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten *them* away.

27 "The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.

28 "The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.

29 "And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save *you*.

30 "You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes.

31 "Your ox *shall be* slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey *shall be* violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep *shall be* given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue *them*.

32 "Your sons and your daughters *shall be* given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail *with longing* for them all day long; and *there shall be* no strength in your hand.

33 "A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually.

34 "So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see.

35 "The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

36 "The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods -- wood and stone.

37 "And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you.

38 "You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it.

39 "You shall plant vineyards and tend *them*, but you shall neither drink *of* the wine nor gather the *grapes*; for the worms shall eat them.

40 "You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint *yourself* with the oil; for your olives shall drop off.

41 "You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity.

42 "Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land.

43 "The alien who *is* among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower.

44 "He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

45 "Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.

46 "And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.

47 " Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything,

48 "therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.

49 "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand,

50 "a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favour to the young.

51 "And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, *or* the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you.

52 "They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you.

53 "You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you.

54 "The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind,

55 "so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

56 "The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter,

57 "her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

58 " If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD,

59 "then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues -- great and prolonged plagues -- and serious and prolonged sicknesses.

60 "Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you.

61 "Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed.

62 "You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.

63 "And it shall be, *that* just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.

64 " Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known -- wood and stone.

65 "And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul.

66 "Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life.

67 "In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.

68 "And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, 'You shall never see it again.' And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy *you*."

Mark grossly underestimates God's judgment on Israel. This is part of a constant refusal to read what God's word actually says and water things down to suit his agenda. It is the worst kind of exposition.

The inheritance of the land

On page 117 Mark says, '*The words "possession" and "inheritance" are not used about any other people in relation to the land*'. Is this true?

My elect shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there. Isa 65:9

The elect is both smaller (the remnant of Israel) and greater than national Israel (elect Gentiles).

Thus says the LORD: 'Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir? Why *then* does Milcom inherit Gad, And his people dwell in its cities?' Jer 49:1

That is, idolaters had inherited God. Milcom is the Ammonite God and he stands for the Ammonites.

Our inheritance has been turned over to aliens, and our houses to foreigners. Lam 5:2

Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance. Ezek 36:12

The enemy has said of you, 'Aha! The ancient heights [of Israel] have become our possession.' Ezek 36:2

Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave My land to themselves as a possession.' Ezek 36:5

More examples where the words 'inheritance' and 'possession' are used of other nations regarding the land and Israelites. Though this is admittedly a minor point, it shows that not enough care is taken when making global statements about Scripture.

Those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. Ps 37:9

The meek shall inherit the earth. Ps 37:11

***Those* blessed by Him shall inherit the earth. Ps 37:22**

The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell in it forever. Ps 37:29

This is just taken from one psalm; there are many such promises. Now Christians continually take the promises in the psalms to themselves. This is no exception. Quite rightly, believers apply this psalm to themselves. If the promise is true, then it includes Israel, a part of the earth. Thus those who inherit Israel are not necessarily Jews but those who wait on the Lord etc.

Once again Mark makes a statement about God's word that is not literally true.

Pollution of the land

On pages 124-5 Mark makes the point that the land is polluted by sin. He doesn't develop this much and makes a short point that the Canaanites were expelled for this reason. However, he fails to balance this out by explaining that the Israelites, throughout their history also polluted the land; in fact some prophecies say that they were worse than the Gentiles because they had the oracles of God and ignored them.

Sojourners

On page 125 he mentions that visitors and sojourners in Israel were to be treated fairly and righteously. He does not develop this and it appears superfluous to his argument (he does this often). However, it works against him since Israel does not treat the Palestinians fairly and righteously.

Ownership of land

Also on page 125 Mark states, '*other peoples, however long they have lived there in the last 2000 years, cannot claim God-given ownership of the land.*' This is odd since he earlier stated that Palestinians with written deeds have a legal right to the land. But it also contradicts his earlier mention of the sovereignty of God. If Palestinians have had ownership of the land for thousands of years, then this has been under the sovereignty of God who sets the boundaries of the nations (Acts 17:26).

Again, Mark just ignores a principle (even one he has established) when it pleases him, to aver that Jews own Israel.

Leaving Jewishness

On page 129 Mark says that many Jews feel bereft on leaving behind their Jewishness when becoming Christians. This is in complete contrast to the apostle Paul who was more a Jew than any modern Jew and was trained by Gamaliel. Yet he willingly threw it all away and even counted it as 'dung'²⁴ for the sake of knowing Christ (Phil 3:1-12).

Accommodating Jews to their past (or any other group for that matter) is not a way of evangelising with success. The point of becoming a Christian is that you follow Christ and leave your past behind; that is the meaning of repentance. Neutral things can be continued but stumbling blocks cannot.

Jewish converts (like any one else) need to learn what is acceptable to Christ from their family background and what is not. What is unacceptable is forming an entirely new type of church (a Messianic-Christian church) that is a syncretism of Christianity and Judaism. We are specifically told in the NT not to put ourselves in bondage to these old things, such as feasts, fast days, festivals, new moons and Sabbaths.²⁵ Thus to establish a synagogue type of Jewish Christian church is a serious mistake. Why not have an African-Christian church that accommodates shamanism and voodoo? The idea is nonsense.

This sort of thinking is joining the church to the world and James tells us that that makes us an enemy of God (Jm 4:4).

Two people of God

On page 129 Mark says, '*Why can God not have more than one chosen people at any one time? Scripture certainly does not forbid it.*' This is shocking and reveals an astounding poverty of Biblical theology.

²⁴ 'Skubalon' = animal excrement, rubbish, dung, worthless dregs; Phil 3:8.

²⁵ Col 2:16; Gal 2:4, 4:9, 24-25, 5:1.

Firstly, such a statement contradicts basic common sense and grammar (not very scientific for a scientist). If you chose one people to be your chosen people, then they are unique. To then also choose another people as well ruins the uniqueness of the first choice and invalidates the whole process. There can only be one chosen people for there to be a chosen people.

Secondly, the chosen people are the elect and God tells us that he chose the elect in eternity to be in Christ.

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself. Eph 1:4-5

Thus there is only one chosen people; those who were chosen in eternity to be in Christ.

The real chosen people in Israel in the OT were the elect remnant only; the rest were rejected (we discuss this elsewhere). Mark's argument that the Abrahamic Covenant insists that Jews are always the inheritors of this promise, and that this makes them a separate chosen people, fails to interact with the NT claim that Christ is the Seed of Abraham; only he inherits the promise (we discuss that elsewhere too).

All in all a shocking ignorance of Biblical information and theology (it is also based on Dispensational ideas that Mark is supposed to disbelieve).

God's sovereignty

On page 177 Mark suggests that sufficient prayer for Jews could have changed what happened in the Second World War and prevented the Holocaust.

This is evidence that Mark does not understand, or believe, the sovereignty of God as explained in Scripture.

Key failures

Failure to see the remnant

Mark completely fails to understand that the promises of God to his people are only applied to the remnant. This is clearly stated in the OT itself. The majority of Israel fails and is condemned but only the small remnant returns. For example:

'Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, "They always go astray in *their* heart, And they have not known My ways." So I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest.'" Heb 3:8-11 [Thus a whole generation of faithless Israelites perished in God's anger.]

They certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. Num 14:23 [This correlates with Heb 3.]

The LORD heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers.' Deut 1:34-35 23 [This correlates with Heb 3.]

Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah. Isa 1:9

The remnant of Israel ... will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand

of the sea, A remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness. Isa 10:20-22

In that day the LORD of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people. Isa 28:5

Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, Who have been upheld *by Me* from birth, Who have been carried from the womb. Isa 46:3

And it shall come to pass *that* whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls. Joel 2:32

The word 'remnant' appears 83 times in the OT, sometimes as a literal remnant of something but often as a reference to the true people of God in Israel. The concept of the remnant being the real inheritor of God's promises is not difficult to see, but it nullifies the foundation of Messianic and Zionist Christian teachings because it shows that the promises are not to the whole nation at all, and never were. It isn't Jewishness that is rewarded but faith, and only the elect are given faith by God in his grace.

Whatever *is* not from faith is sin. Rm 14:23

God's word is eternal and does not change. Whatever is not from faith is sin and sin is condemned by God. All those Israelites that had no faith and sinned in history were condemned. Only the remnant had faith and were saved by trusting in a future Deliverer.

Since the majority of Israel fell into condemnation, then God's eternal promises of life cannot ever have been for them (God does not change). The promises are only to those in Israel who had faith; only these were truly God's people.

Without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*. Heb 11:6

They could not enter in because of unbelief. Heb 3:19

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them [Israel]; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. Heb 4:2

In other words, the key people in the OT are not all in Israel but the elect. The message of the OT is for the elect, for those with faith, for those called by God. Israel as a whole is typical of the general call of God in the Gospel; but the remnant is typical of the internal, effectual call that changes people's hearts. This is entirely in agreement with the teaching of the apostles:

For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel. Rm 9:6

For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God. Rm 2:28-29

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!' Jn 1:47

Thus the majority of Israel is lost but the remnant is the elect, the people of God. The promise is based on faith and spiritual life, not the flesh.

Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved'. Rm 9:27

Paul sums this up in this way:

Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: 'God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.' And David says: 'Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.' I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. Rm 11:5-11 [See also chapter 9.]

The remnant is the elect in Israel who are saved by grace. Israel did not obtain as a nation by works; indeed the nation was blinded except for the elect. They stumbled on Christ, the stumbling block for Jews; but Israel does not completely fall away since elect Jews are saved by grace and through their rejection of the Messiah salvation came to the Gentiles.

What Mark does is to apply God's promises to all Israel on the basis of the flesh, of nationality. Both the OT and the NT clearly show that this is not possible.

For instance, Mark says that the God has unfinished business with the Jews (despite their rejection of Christ) and the marriage between God and Israel implied in Isaiah 54:5-6 'will work' (p39). But this marriage relationship was only ever with the remnant, the elect. How can God be in covenant and related to sinners that are condemned to hell (which Scripture tells us happened to the majority of Israel). To suggest this fails to understand even the basic rules of theology.²⁶ Furthermore, there are NT Scriptures which say the very opposite (e.g. Matt 21:43).

To hold this position one has to ignore the NT and hold a position that contravenes all God says about total depravity and salvation.

Failure to understand the Abrahamic covenant fulfilment

This is immensely important and Mark ignores it completely.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise. What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. ... that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ... For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:16-29

Notice what is being said here:

- The covenant promises are given to the Seed of Abraham.
- That Seed is Christ; it is not Jews or natural Israel. This is a categorical theological statement by God's own word – the Seed is Christ.

²⁶ Just one example – it proposes that God changes. God loves all Israel at one point (and his love is eternal, unchanging and perfect); then at a later point he hates the majority of those he loves and sends them to hell in wrath. This is a serious heresy and sin.

- The Mosaic Law does not alter this promise made by God.
- Inheritance is not of the Law. (Jews are ostensibly under this law).
- The Seed is the one to whom the promise was made.
- The promise is enacted by faith not human descent.
- All believers (ones with faith) are in Christ and are thus also part of the Seed.
- All believers are sons of God in faith.
- All who are baptised into Christ (not water baptism) have put on Christ – and are thus part of the Seed.
- Those who are one in Christ are no longer considered by human denominations; there are not Jews or Greeks but one people in Christ; a heavenly people.
- Finally, 'if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise'.

This satisfies once and for all who are Abraham's Seed; who gain the promises given to Abraham by covenant – the answer is clearly – those in Christ. Thus Jews have nothing whatsoever to do with the promise at all.

This is simple and not difficult to grasp. It is also stated plainly in a NT document. The only way that Christian Zionists can miss this is due to deception or deliberate avoidance.

It is noteworthy that Mark makes no mention of it.

Failure to see that the kingdom is taken away from Jews

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. Matt 21:43

This is part of a passage where Jesus castigates the Jews for their rejection of him and it culminates with saying that the kingdom is taken away from Jews and given to another nation.

There is no getting away from this. It is plain and obvious.

One objection: Jesus applied this only to the Pharisees.

Answer: Jesus was speaking to the chief priests and the elders of the people who confronted him as He was teaching (v23); also to the chief priests and Pharisees (v45). These represent the people as a whole. The indictment of the leaders of the Jews applies to the whole nation. For this reason Jesus repeatedly stated that that was an evil and adulterous generation (Matt 12:39), or a wicked generation (Matt 12:45), a nation condemned (Matt 12:41, 42). The rejection of Jesus applied to the whole nation, not just a few leaders.

The kingdom cannot be in the hands of a few; it is a nation. As such the promise of the kingdom to Israel was taken away from the nation of Israel that bore no fruit, and given to a nation that would bear fruit (the church).

Failure to see the heavenly / spiritual fulfilment of prophetic promises

Mark continually sees a fleshly, earthly, fulfilment of OT prophecies in national Israel by taking an unnecessarily rigid literal interpretation that ignores apostolic conclusions, or even clear statements in the OT.

Abraham knew that the fulfilment of God's promises to him were not going to be in possession of Canaan but in heaven – on the new restored earth.

He waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. Heb 11:10

Just as Abraham understood the principles of resurrection (which is why he was prepared to sacrifice Isaac, Heb 11:19), so he also understood the general resurrection and waited for the heavenly city that he would inherit. Abraham had more faith and understanding than Jewish Root teachers today who have much more information at their feet.

Mark ignores all this and seeks to make a fleshly nation the inheritor of these promises being fulfilled on a material earth in sin. Mark's view is radically different to Abraham's.

Conclusion

I feel sad to have to do such a thorough critique because I sense that Mark is a good man and one I could have fellowship with. I warm to his irenic inclination and his honesty in dealing with national Israel's faults. He is not the rabid, extremist Jewish Root fanatic that we see elsewhere.

Yet the real issue is whether his thesis is true or not; does it support Christian doctrine; is it based on sound principles of interpretation; is it apostolic? The answer is resoundingly no.

Not only is it not these things, it contradicts clear NT statements and undermines apostolic doctrine. It even contradicts clear ethical teaching throughout the whole Bible. His thesis is damaging and will cause spiritual problems to those who support it. The worst of these is to take the attention of the believer away from Christ and focus it upon a worldly nation. As such, his thesis must be strongly condemned as heresy.

Think what Christian Zionism is really saying.

It states that a fleshly, unregenerate, sinful nation is the recipient of God's love, of God's covenant, of divine promises and God's inheritance. This is opposed to Biblical ethics and theology from cover to cover.

- Israel is a violent nation; it was birthed in murder, shady politics and violence – God is stated to hate such (Ps 5:6, 11:5).
- Israel stole land from the Palestinians (often with associated violence, brutality and killing of men, women and children) and continues to do so. God is said to hate those who work iniquity (Ps 5:5). When King Ahab murdered Naboth (via Jezebel) to steal his land, God promised to bring calamity upon him and judge him (1 Kg 21:21); God does not change and will judge Israel for doing the same.
- Israel is in breach of many UN resolutions for its inhumane actions, civil rights abuses and war crimes. God hates such (Jer 22:13; Rm 1:18).

Christian Zionism makes theological statements that are directly opposed to Biblical verses and ethics. It elevates man and denigrates God. This is exceedingly dangerous and wicked.

If Christian Zionists say that Israel the nation is a special case, that Israel is loved by God despite her great sins, then they are breaking God's word which says otherwise. They cannot overturn clear didactic instruction on the basis of a questionable (in fact, false) interpretation of OT prophecies. Furthermore, what motivation have Jews got to repent and believe in Christ if they are already loved and blessed by God?

But all this is in addition to the simple fact that the NT gives a very different interpretation of the promises, covenants and prophecies about Israel. It states that these were taken from national Israel and given to another (Matt 21:43). It states that the fulfilment of the prophecies, promises and covenants is Christ, not a fleshly nation.

So, the promises of the OT are not to fleshly Israel but to Christ – he is the Seed of Abraham. In fact the fulfilment is heavenly and spiritual not earthly and material. The kingdom of God has not yet come in its earthly consummation. That occurs after the Day of Judgment.

So, the NT denies that the prophecies and promise of the OT are for national Israel and that leaves her under the condemnation of the ethical commandments of God – for which she stands condemned.

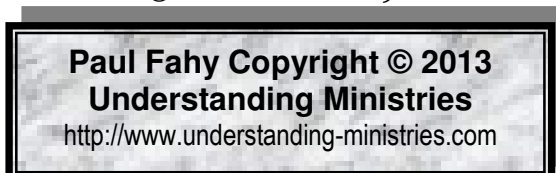
Far from God loving and blessing unregenerate Israel, God condemns her for her sins. To say anything else is to deny the whole scope of Biblical teaching.

Christian Zionism, Messianic Christianity and Jewish Root teaching are all lies. They twist OT prophecies to suit their purposes, deny the words of Christ and deny the final words of the Lord from heaven given to his apostles. The NT makes clear that any teaching which does this, which blasphemes Christ, is rooted in demonic doctrines.²⁷

Therefore, Christian Zionism is a demonic end-time teaching that arose from a deeply erroneous new theology (Dispensationalism) in the 19th century which is deeply unbiblical and contrary to sound teaching throughout all church history.

Sadly, Mark's book is just another (albeit softer and more reasonable) version of this error. It will do no good to Bible-believing Christians.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version
© Thomas Nelson 1982



²⁷ 'Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.' 1 Tim 4:1. Christian Zionism is an end-time doctrine that was absent in previous church history.