

## **The Rise of Philo-Semitism and Premillennialism during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries**

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Let me therefore beg of thee not to trust to the opinion of any man... But search the scriptures thyself... understanding the sacred prophecies and the danger of neglecting them is very great and the obligation to study them is as great may appear by considering the case of the Jews at the coming of Christ. For the rules whereby they were to know their Messiah were the prophecies of the old Testament... It was the ignorance of the Jews in these Prophecies which caused them to reject their Messiah... If it was their duty to search diligently into those Prophecies: why should we not think that the Prophecies which concern the latter times into which we have fallen were in like manner intended for our use that in the midst of Apostasies we might be able to discern the truth and be established in the faith...it is also our duty to search with all diligence into these Prophecies. If God was so angry with the Jews for not searching more diligently into the Prophecies which he had given them to know Christ by: why should we think he will excuse us for not searching into the Prophecies which he had given us to know Antichrist by? ... They will call you a Bigot, a Fanatic, a Heretic, and tell thee of the uncertainty of these interpretations [but] greater judgments hang over the Christians for their remises than ever the Jews felt. But the world loves to be deceived, they will not understand... Be not ashamed to profess the truth...<sup>1</sup>

“Ideas have consequences”<sup>2</sup>, and one’s eschatology affects what one thinks of the Jews and the modern state of Israel. The abandonment of Premillennialism for Amillennialism (denying a literal millennium) and Preterism (believing eschatological events were fulfilled by the end of the Roman Empire) denies Jews the hopes given to them in the Bible, and contributes to attitudes of Antisemitism.<sup>3</sup> These aberrant doctrines did not exist in the early church, but were developed later in Christian theology.<sup>4</sup> An idealist form of Amillennialism first appeared in the Alexandrian school led by Clement of Alexandria and Origen around 200-250 AD, and became systematized in the work of Augustine of Hippo around 400 when Christianity became the dominant religion. Preterism, on the other hand, has not been found in Christian theology until the seventeenth century, and even then is was not full-blown Preterism, but mixed with historicism (believing that the book of Revelation traced the entirety of church history).

Although Christianity began as a Jewish sect nearly two millennia ago, it gradually morphed into a Gentile religion quite different than its Jewish roots. The Roman occupation of Judea fostered many messianic movements, foremost among them were the followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaac Newton, “Rules for Interpreting the Words and Language of Scripture”, in Newton’s hand, unpublished Yahuda MS.1 in Jerusalem University Library published in Frank Manuel *The Religion of Isaac Newton* (Oxford, 1974), 108-109, Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Weaver; *Ideas Have Consequences* (University of Chicago, 1948).

<sup>3</sup> My own research into sixteenth to eighteenth century Apocalypticism began after a debate with an Amillennial Preterist colleague of mine at Colorado Christian University in 2007. It culminated in my book *Dispensationalism Before Darby: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Apocalypticism* (Lampion Press, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Ice; “The History of Preterism” in Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice eds. *The End Times Controversy: The Second Coming Under Attack* (Harvest House, 2003), 37. See also: Henry Alford, *Alford’s Greek Testament: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary* 4/1 (Guardian Press, [1875] 1976) 245; in Ice, 45.

Many of Jesus's closest followers believed that God would intervene in history at the 'end of days' by crushing injustice and evil and establishing peace on Earth. ... Gradually, the Jesus movement became one that included both Jews and gentiles. ... Paul did not say that Christianity should replace Judaism, even though others claimed that he had said this. ... Paul cautioned non-Jewish Christians to show respect to Jews as a people who had a covenant, or agreement, with God. ... In the years after the destruction of the second Temple, only two major Jewish groups, or sects, survived – the Pharisees and the followers of Jesus. The Pharisees' emphasis on traditional Jewish law contributed to the development of rabbinic Judaism...<sup>5</sup>

Second and third century Christians still expected Jesus Christ to return to a rebuilt Jerusalem, among them: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Tertullian.<sup>6</sup> The split between Jews and Christians did not come as early as many suspect, as Christians could still be found worshipping in synagogues well into the third century.<sup>7</sup> The earliest overtly anti-Semitic remark is found in "Homily on the Passover" by Melito, bishop of Sardis in the late second century. He was the first to claim that Jews had "murdered God" and that Christians should not identify with them.<sup>8</sup>

The real break between Judaism and Christianity came in the fourth century with the reign of Constantine. In 315 an Edict of Constantine called Judaism both "dangerous" and "abominable".<sup>9</sup> In 325 at the Council of Nicaea, none of the attending bishops were Jewish Christians, but all were Gentiles. One of those in attendance was Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, author of *Life of Constantine*, and generally recognized by historians as an apologist for the (supposedly) first Christian emperor. Preterists love to use Eusebius as an example of someone who supports their view, but do not take into consideration the historical background of the fourth century and the motives of this imperial propagandist for the emperor Constantine, who wrote a panegyric rather than an accurate history.<sup>10</sup> In 341 at the Council of Antioch, Christians who celebrated the Jewish Passover were excommunicated,<sup>11</sup> and in 363 at the Council of Laodicea, they were forbidden to celebrate the Jewish Sabbath as well.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Phyllis Goldstein; *A Convenient Hatred: The History of Antisemitism* (Facing History and Ourselves, 2012), 24-25.

<sup>6</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chs 22, 80; Abba Hillel Silver, *The History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (MacMillan, 1927), 33-35; Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (Oxford UP, 1971), 26-27; among 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century authors who cite early church fathers who were millennial: Joseph Mede, Nathaniel Homes, Increase Mather, and Joseph Perry.

<sup>7</sup> Goldstein, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Melito of Sardis, "On the Passover" in *Kerus: The Journal of Northwest Theological Society* 4/1 (May 1989) 5-35. Cited in Goldstein, 31.

<sup>9</sup> Laws of Constantine the Great, October 18, 315: Concerning Jews... *Internet Jewish History Sourcebook*, Fordham University, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/jewish/Jews-romanlaw.html>

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea; *Theophania*, 4/18. For a good academic source see Timothy Barnes; *Constantine and Eusebius* (Harvard University Press, 1981). For a preterist source see: <http://www.preteristarchive.com/StudyArchive/e/eusebius.html>

<sup>11</sup> "[O]bserving Easter with the Jews, the holy synod decrees that he shall be...an alien from the Church." *Canon 1 of the Council of Antioch* (341 AD).

<sup>12</sup> "Christians should not Judaize and should not be idle on the Sabbath, but should work on that day; they should, however, particularly reverence the Lord's Day and, if possible, not work on it, because they were Christians." *Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea* (360).

The most vitriolic anti-Semite of the Church Fathers was John Chrysostom, who in the 380s and 390s delivered to the Church in Antioch a series of homilies *Against the Jews*, calling Christians to no longer keep the Jewish Sabbath or any of their other festivals:

You have put on Christ, you have become a member of the Lord... Why do you keep the Sabbath and fast with the Jews?<sup>13</sup>

Although those Jews had been called to the adoption of sons, they fell to kinship with dogs... thereafter the order was changed about: they became dogs, and we became the children. ... Although such beasts are unfit for work, they are fit for killing [for it was] the Jews who had crucified him.<sup>14</sup>

Chrysostom called Jews “the most miserable of all men”, “inveterate murderers, destroyers, men possessed by the devil,” and the synagogue “a place of shame and ridicule”, “a den of thieves”, “a cavern of devils.” He claimed that Christians who participated in Jewish worship would go to hell.<sup>15</sup> In 388 Ambrose of Milan demanded that the Emperor Theodosius no longer guarantee the rights of Jews. When a synagogue was burned by a Christian mob, Emperor Theodosius commanded that it to be rebuilt, so Bishop Ambrose of Milan excommunicated him for supporting “a house of impiety, a receptacle of folly.”<sup>16</sup> Augustine of Hippo, who admitted that he had once held to a futurist premillennial view, later rejected it claiming that the millennium had already arrived and that Jews were no longer God’s chosen people, but were replaced by Christians.<sup>17</sup>

This shift in Christian theology from Premillennial Philo-Semitism to Amillennial Anti-Semitism should not be underestimated, for it became the foundation of anti-Semitism throughout church history. This shift was noticed by Robert Maton in the seventeenth century, “after the 320. Yeare of our Lord... many a truth and error did change titles with each other, as popish ignorance, superstition, and idolatry grew.”<sup>18</sup>

For the next fourteen centuries anti-Semitism was the rule in Church history. Even the sixteenth century reformers, Luther and Calvin, assumed the virulent anti-Semitism in the millennium of Papal dominance. Luther said of the Jews, “I have no hope for them... these children of the devil...”<sup>19</sup> Concerning the possibility that Jews would return to the land of Israel, Luther said,

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<sup>13</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Galatians* 2:17.

<sup>14</sup> John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews*, Homily 1, paragraph ii-iii.

<sup>15</sup> Goldstein, 35-37.

<sup>16</sup> Goldstein, 34.

<sup>17</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, book XX, chs.7-9. Chapter 9 is titled “What the reign of the saints with Christ for a thousand years is, and how it differs from the eternal kingdom.”

<sup>18</sup> Robert Maton, *A Treatise of the Fifth Monarchy or, Christs Personal Reign on Earth, One Thousand Years with his Saints* (London, 1655), “An Answer to Mr. Petrie’s Preface”, no pagination, page before D.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on the Minor Prophets, Luther’s Works* (St. Louis edition) 20: 2030 in *What Luther Says* (Concordia Press, 1959), II, 687.

all the prophecies which say that Israel and Judah shall return to their lands...have been fulfilled long ago. The hopes of the Jews are utterly vain and lost... When the prophets say of Israel that it is all to come back or be gathered...they are certainly speaking of the new covenant and the new Israel.<sup>20</sup>

In like manner John Calvin taught of the Jews that “God blinded the whole people...I have never seen a drop of piety or grain of truth or...common sense in any Jew.”<sup>21</sup>

The first inkling of a turning point away from anti-Semitism appeared when Calvin’s successor Theodore Beza began to consider references to Israel in the Bible as referring to Jews, instead of Christians. Many of Beza’s notes made it into the margins of *The Geneva Bible* (1560), which influenced English Puritans to consider a role for the Jews in biblical prophecy.<sup>22</sup> John Bale, a bishop who fled to Switzerland in the reign of Queen Mary and was influenced by Beza, also believed that Jews had a role in biblical prophecy, claiming that “the Gospell...last of all shall return again to the Jews...he that hath dispersed Israel, shall bringe him againe to his folde.”<sup>23</sup> John Foxe, a reader of *The Geneva Bible* and author of *The Book of Martyrs*, also saw a future for the Jews: “the promises remaining still in their force. Even so the Iews [have] a promised place in Sion.”<sup>24</sup>

Edmund Bunny, sub-dean of York Cathedral, in *The Scepter of Judah* (1584) asked Christians to love God’s people the Jews. In *The Coronation of David* (1588) Bunny expected the return of the Jews anytime to their own land.<sup>25</sup> Frances Kett, Cambridge fellow in *The Glorious and Beautiful Garland of Mans Glorification* (1585) called for the Jews to return to their land, but was burned as a heretic shortly thereafter.<sup>26</sup> Giles Fletcher, Queen Elizabeth’s ambassador to Russia in 1588, speculated that Tartars near the Caspian Sea were the lost tribes of Israel, because “all Israel”, not just Judah, must return in the last

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. II, 687-688.

<sup>21</sup> John Calvin, “Daniel” Lecture XI in *Calvin’s Commentaries*.

<sup>22</sup> Side note to Romans 11:25 in *The Geneva Bible* “the time shall come that the whole nation of the Iews...shal be ioyned to the Church Christ.” Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism*(Reiner, 1973), 24. Ed Hindson, *The Puritan’s Use of Scripture in the Development of a Biblical Hermeneutic*, unpublished doctoral dissertation University of South Africa, 1984), 84. Stephen Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 17.

<sup>23</sup> John Bale, *the Image of Both Churches after the most wonderful and heavenly Revelacion of Sainct John* (1545) in R.O. Smith, *More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (Oxford, 2013), 58.

<sup>24</sup> John Foxe, *Sermon Preached at the Christening of a certain Jew* (1578), 64 in Robert O. Smith, *More Desired than our own Salvation: the Roots of Christian Zionism* (Oxford UP, 2014), 64.

<sup>25</sup> Edmund Bunny, *The Scepter of Judah* (1585) and *The Coronation of David* (1588) in Silver, 173. Tommy Ice, “Lovers of Zion: A History of Christian Zionism”, [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article+1028&context=pretrib\\_arch](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article+1028&context=pretrib_arch)

<sup>26</sup> Francis Kett, *The Glorious and Beautiful Garland of Man’s Glorification Containing the Godly Misterie of Heavenly Jerusalem* (n.p., 1585) in Stephen Spector; *Evangelicals and Israel: the Story of American Christian Zionism* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 25. Mentioned in Tommy Ice’s “Lovers of Zion.”

days: “these Israelitisch ten tribes are somewhere extant, and by God’s providence, as a People kept interely...because all Israel shall be called.”<sup>27</sup>

Thomas Draxe, a vicar in Essex, believed Gods’ covenant with Israel to be eternal, and called Christians to not despise the Jews:

God...selected the Iewes to be his onely peculiar and beloued people, with whom he made such a singular couenant of mercy and saluation. ...it is a maruelous worke of God...that the Iewes (howsoeuer wandering and dispersed in all countries, almost) should stil continue such a distinct and vnconfounded nation. [God] is vnchangeable in his decree & couenant. [He would never] cast away... his people [with whom he made] so sollemne a couenant...Gods couenant is an euerlasting couenant, his mercy extendeth vnto a thousand generations. [We should] acknowledge our selues debtors vnto the Iewes ...we must pray for their recouery, and do our vttermost dilligence...to allure and win them to the Gospell. ...we must not rashly condemne the Iewes, nor expel them out of our Coastes and countires, but hope well of them, pray for them, and labour to win them by our holy zeale and Christian example. ...we must not vex and reuile them, lest God when he receiuet them againe into fauor, hee deseruedly exclude and cast out vs, for our contempt & vnthankfulness. ... Let us not dispise the Iewes... If God loue the Iewes for their Fathers sake and for his couenant made with them...we must herein follow and imitate the Lords example.<sup>28</sup>

Draxe also believed the Jews would reestablish Israel and live there before the battle of Armageddon:

The Jews will return to their own land] and continue gloriously on the earth for one generation, that... all the world may take full notice of their general calling [then] the final destruction of the Turke...in a place called Armageddon.<sup>29</sup>

The charge that Jews are “Christ killers” has been made since the second century, especially by the Roman church. Hugh Broughton is the first after the Medieval period to have shifted the blame back to the Romans. In *A Revelation of the Holy Apocalypse* (1610) he titled a woodcut of the Whore of Babylon as “The empire of Rome, that crucified our Lorde and serveth Satan in might and hypocrisy.”<sup>30</sup>

Modern historians are beginning to recognize the degree of Philo-Semitism held by the Puritans. According to Steven Spector, Yale PhD and professor at Stony Brook, “Many Puritans no longer applied Old Testament narratives solely to themselves as re-embodied Israel. Rather, now they believed that the covenant remained in effect for the Hebrews’ physical descendants. And the Jews’ return to Zion was, for them, the necessary prelude to the coming of the Messiah.”<sup>31</sup>

Early Puritan Thomas Brightman, a rector in Bedfordshire, wrote expository commentaries on Daniel and on the book of Revelation, both published after his death in 1607. He called the Jews “our Brethren”,

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<sup>27</sup> Giles Fletcher, *Israel Redux: or the Restauration of Israel* (London, 1677), 3; publication of MSS written by Fletcher in 1590s.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Draxe, *The Worlde's Resurrection, The general calling of the Iewes* (London, 1608), preface, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Draxe, *An Alarm to the Last Judgment* (London, 1615), 109-110.

<sup>30</sup> Hugh Broughton, *A Revelation of the Holy Apocalypse* (n.p., 1610), 33.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 17.

who “would rebuild Jerusalem...hasten[ing] a series of Prophetic events that would culminate in the return of Jesus.”<sup>32</sup> Shortly thereafter, Cambridge don Joseph Mede admitted that he was “of the same mind with the Jews” and believed there were many commonalities between Jews and biblical Christians.<sup>33</sup>

Henry Finch, barrister and Member of Parliament, wrote *The Worlds Great Restauration and Calling of the Jews* in 1621 insisting that “where Israel, Iudah, Tsion, Jerusalem, &c. are named [it] meaneth not the spiritual Israel...but Israel properly descended out of Jacob’s loynes...really and literally of the Iewes... that one day they will come to Ierusalem again...”<sup>34</sup>

Finch cited nearly every book in the Bible to support his claim. From Ezekiel 37-39 he wrote of Israel:

The bringing of them to their owne country from all places where they were scattered... The inhabiting in their country for euer... The perpetuity of God’s Couenant...the grand enemy is Gog... that is to say, the Turke... The destruction of this enemy... God’s fighting against them from heauen [and] the Saracens pointed at under the name of the King of the South...declining upon the Iewes...<sup>35</sup>

Ephraim Huit (Hewitt) who founded one of the first churches in Connecticut, in *The Whole Prophecie of Daniel Explained* (1638) insisted that God’s love for the physical descendants was unconditional:

The Lord having chosen the posterity of Abraham to be a particular Inheritance established with them a covenant of holiness, of happinesse, which though they did often violate...yet did their Remainder continue the beloved of the Lord, at least for the fathers sake, and their faithlesnesse made not the faith of God of none effect: still the Lord had them in his thoughts of peace.<sup>36</sup>

Huit believed the passage in Daniel 7:18 “the Saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom” referred not to Christians, but to Jews in a future earthly kingdom.

God’s Church as a Bride royally attired descends from Heaven...yet the holy Jews well knew, that none but they called of the Lord were these Saints. ...for Saints and Jewes are confounded everywhere in this Prophecie, and Saints never otherwise taken.<sup>37</sup>

He went on to claim that the Jews “will shake off their Turkish hard bondage” which will result in the reestablishment of Israel. Huit then claimed that the King of the North (Turks) and the King of the South (Arabs) would invade Judah resulting in the battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas Brightman, *A most Comfortable Exposition of th last and most difficult part of the Prophecie of Daniel* (London, 1644), 920-33; and *A revelation of the Revelation* (Amsterdam, 1615), 557-559, 851-852, 932,933; cited in Ed Hindson, *The Puritans’ Use of Scripture in the Development of an Apocalyptic Hermeneutic*, unpublished dissertation (Univ. So. Africa), 139.

<sup>33</sup> Jeffrey Jue, *Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586-1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Dortrecht, 2006), 127-129.

<sup>34</sup> Henry Finch, *The Worlds Great Restauration. Or The Calling of the Iewes*(London, 1621), 6-7.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-54,57.

<sup>36</sup> Ephraim Huit, *The Whole Prophecie of Daniel Explained, by a Paraphrase, Analysis, and brief Comment* (London, 1643), 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-207.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-207, 331-333.

John Archer, minister to an English congregation in Holland, also taught the return of the Jews to Israel in his work *The Personal Reign of Christ on Earth* (1642).

Israel and Judah...shall be one people for ever...the Cities and the Tribes shall be built againe, and inhabited by natural Israelites, especially Jerusalem, which shall be the most eminent city then in the world, or that ever was in the world...<sup>39</sup>

Robert Maton in *Israel's Redemption* (1642) believed the Bible contained too many promises of a coming Messiah and a restoration of the Jews to their homeland to be written off as metaphorical. He also said that one should only consider the return of the Jews from Babylon in the fifth century BCE, for the Bible promised of another one, "not from Babylon, but from the foure corners of the earth: and that together with Ephraim, with the ten Tribes from Assyria, which as yet never came back, and therefore this is not yet fulfilled."<sup>40</sup> To those who espoused replacement theology Maton replied, "how can that belong to the Gentiles which was promised onely of the Jews."<sup>41</sup>

Peter Bulkeley, Puritan preacher and founder of Concord New Hampshire, in *The Gospel Covenant* (1646) asked his readers to

seeke the peace of Jerusalem, the prosperitie of Sion... By virtue of the Covenant made with their fathers, they shall be delivered out of the bondage in which they are now holden... The promise is made here [Ezekiel 37] to Judah and Israel...it is not to be shewed...that the ten Tribes of Israel...were ever restored since their captivie, or united to Judah againe...both Judah and Israel shall be called againe. ...In Rom. 11 the whole Chapter, the Apostle purposely speaketh of the rejection of the Jews, but withal shewes that it was neither total nor final... then he comes to speak of their calling again.<sup>42</sup>

Speake unto God in their behalf, and say, Lord restore they ancient people... It si from them that the means of salvation is come to us, the Law is called their Law... Wee own them this...they are our brethren, and our flesh... Oh pray for them, that the blessings of Abraham their father may come upon them.<sup>43</sup>

John Dury preached a sermon to the Long Parliament in 1645 titled *Israels Long March out of Babylon to Jerusalem*. Dury spent much of the 30 Years War traveling Europe to unite all Protestants against Rome, then after the war working to allow Jews to once again settle and trade in England. In 1649 the new parliamentary government under Lord Fairfax received a series of petitions, one from Johanna and Ebenezer Cartwright. They were living in Amsterdam, and had made the acquaintance of several Jews.

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<sup>39</sup> John Archer, *The Personal reign of Christ on Earth* (London, 1642), 26-27.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Maton, *Israels Redemption or the Prophetical History of our Saviours Kingdome on Earth* (London, 1642), 3-7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Bulkeley, *the Gospel-Covenant; or The Covenant of Grace Opened* (London, 1646), preface, 3-4, 17-18.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

They asked the new government to allow Jews to reside and trade in England after 300 years of banishment. Their argument reflected the philo-Semitism of John Bale, Thomas Brightman, Joseph Mede, Henry Finch, John Archer, Robert Maton, and John Dury. This culminated in the visit to England of Mennasseh ben-Israel, a Jew who fled the Inquisition to reside in Amsterdam, and resulted the Jews once again being allowed to trade and reside in England.<sup>44</sup> Mennasseh ben-Israel's book *The Hope of Israel* was translated into English in 1652 by Moses Wall, who wrote "That the Jews shall be called as a nation, both Judah and Israel, and shall return to their owne Land, and have an earthly kingdome again."<sup>45</sup>

Robert Hooke, seventeenth century pastor of New Haven, Connecticut, rejected the Preterist view and expected the future return of the Jews "unto to their own Land":

Some have conceiv'd that there shall be no other calling of them than what was their return out of Babylonish Captivity...but Isaiah speaks of a Remnant left, which should be recover'd a second time. Chap.11.11.<sup>46</sup>

Hooke identified the 144,000 in Revelation not as Christians, but as "the tribes of the children of Israel." He expected that "the power of the Turk shall be lessened...to make way for the Jews to repossess their own Land," and cited passages by the Apostle Paul of Christ coming as "a thief in the night...at the last trumpet" when "we shall all be changed." Then "the kings of the earth, and the whole world, shall be gathered together" for the battle of Armageddon, resulting in the return of Christ.<sup>47</sup>

In an anonymous pamphlet of 1688 the author claims to have met with a group of London Jews and to have discussed the meaning of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37 and the prophetic days in Daniel 8. He concluded, "I do believe you will be in your own Land 7 years before this highest number will be accomplished." He advised them "prepare to go home to your own land...there you will be invested with that great Glory that is so often prophesied of by your prophets...then a nation shall be born at once."<sup>48</sup>

French Huguenot Pierre Jurieu in *The Accomplishment of the Scripture Promises* (1687) cited numerous promises from the Hebrew scriptures that the Kingdom of Israel would be restored gloriously, and would no longer be forsaken. Because these promises have not been fulfilled, Jurieu concluded they were future:

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<sup>44</sup> Robert O. Smith, *More Desired than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 95ff.

<sup>45</sup> Moses Wall, in a letter to a critic, November 5, 1650, in Lucien Wolf, ed., *Mennasseh ben Israels Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London: MacMillan, 1901), 61.

<sup>46</sup> William Hooke, "To the Reader," in Increase Mather's *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* ([Boston], 1669), no pagination.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Anon., *The Jews Jubilee: or, the conjunction and resurrection of the Dry Bones of the whole house of Israel* (London, 1688), 1-2,30.



Twill without doubt be said, that the Jews shall have the fulfilling of these great promises, through their return and calling, which will be at the end of the World. Indeed 'tis a Position in true Christianity, that the Jews shall be called again. A thousand Oracles promise this. The Miracle, by which God doth preserve this Nation, proveth it, as I think most irresistibly. For [it] cannot be imagined, that God should for two thousand years preserve this people, scattered among the Nations... This plainly speaks, that God preserves them for some great work.<sup>49</sup>

Having encountered what we now call “replacement theology” (Christians have replaced Jews as God’s people), Jurieu insisted that God was not through with the Jews, but would keep his promises to them:

The Messiah belongs to the Jews, he was promised to the Jews, this Nation from its very original hath been fed with the hopes of the Messiah’s coming... At last he comes, and this people sees their Temple burnt, their capital city razed, their Service abolisht, their posterity disperst throughout the world, and made the execration and contempt of mankind... There must come a time, that shall be the reign of the Messiah and the Jews, in which this Nation shall be exalted (as hath been promised to them) above all Nations, they must reign in their Saints...the Gentiles are evidently distinguisht from the people of Israel: Israel rules over the Gentiles; the Nations must rejoice in her light: All Nations must come day and night unto mount Sion, and to the City of Jerusalem. The Kings of the Gentiles must be her Protectors...Gentiles must serve her. In a word, let all these Oracles be viewed, and it will be seen that the people of Israel must be the ruling, the chosen, the Holy people...shall the promises [God made to them be] only upon the Gentiles? This is not probable at all.<sup>50</sup>

Samuel Petto, English Calvinist and Congregational pastor, also had an expectation that the Jews would return to their own land. In *Revelation Unvailed* (1693) he wrote that both the Papacy and the Turks would continue to decline.<sup>51</sup> Then a restoration of the nation of Israel would take place. According to Petto, “it will be a sudden, unexpected thing, a Nation to be born in one day.”<sup>52</sup> Petto identified the Turks and their allies as Gog and Magog, the Turks being “the King of the North” and the Arabs “the King of the South”, who would invade Israel “after the restoration or return of Israel.”<sup>53</sup>

Seventeenth century Puritans took the Hebrew Bible more seriously than their Christian predecessors. This Philo-Semitism did not end when Puritanism fell out of favor in the later seventeenth century, which can be shown in the works of Isaac Newton, William Whiston, and others. However, another doctrinal perspective began to take hold in the early eighteenth century, Amillennial Preterism, which was referred to as a “New Way” or “New Hypothesis” by both Preterists and Premillennialists. It was not Premillennialism, but Preterism, that was new.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., ii, 299-301.

<sup>51</sup> Samuel Petto, *The Revelation Unvailed: or, An Essay towards the Discovering I. When many Scripture Prophecies had their Accomplishment, and turned into History. II. What are now Fulfilling. III. What rest still to be* (London,1693), 124,129,131, 162,

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 137-138.

The seventeenth century saw the first glimmerings of Preterism, the idea that prophetic passages in the New Testament had already occurred, explained by events in first century. Preterism could easily exist alongside Postmillennialism, as both rejected a future Apocalypse. Although all the early Preterists were Roman Catholics, the first Protestant Preterist was Hugo Grotius, who was reaching out to Rome by accepting Thomist Natural Law theory and rejecting the idea that Rome was the antichrist.<sup>54</sup> From 1640 to 1645 both Grotius and Thomas Hobbes were in Paris, Grotius as an ambassador and Hobbes as an exile. Both were writing on Natural Law theory, and surely had some contact with one another. In *Leviathan* Hobbes repeatedly questioned the accuracy of the Bible, which led to claims that Hobbes was an atheist. Preterism later spread to Henry Hammond, Richard Baxter, and Daniel Whitby.<sup>55</sup> According to Increase Mather, the motivation of Grotius and other Preterists was that they were “endeavoring to persuade the world that he [the pope] is not Antichrist... They jump with the papists in believing the Antichrist to be one particular man...”<sup>56</sup> Grotius did end up converting to Catholicism, while later English Preterists influenced by Grotius did it out of unbelief or in a desire to make their theology more respectable due to the threat of growing deism.

Richard Baxter was one of the first to attack the prevalent millennial view of the seventeenth century. In *The Glorious Kingdom of Christ, described and Vindicated, Against the bold assertion of a future calling and reign of the Jews, and 1000 years before the Conflagration* (1691) he admitted that “the chief writers for the Millennium are Conformists, (and men of general Learning and Piety among them).” He also pointed out that Millenarianism and an expectation of a Jewish return to Israel was quite popular in his day, but then disagreed with them, saying that

the ten tribes will never be found and called... Whether there will be any Jerusalem monarchy of Jews, or any further Conversion of them... I know of no such promise in Gods Word, but I find it in many books of men, and hear it in the Prayers and Sermons of many men, so good, and of so good repute, that divers of my Friends dissuade me from so contradicting them...<sup>57</sup>

Baxter went on to insist that all prophecies of a return of the Jews or a war of Gog and Magog already took place “under Zorubbabel and the Maccabees”, and that the Turks would never allow it to happen.

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<sup>54</sup> Hugo Grotius, *Annotationes in Vetus et Novum Testamentum* (1642).

<sup>55</sup> Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations...of the New Testament* (1653); Richard Baxter, *The Glorious Kingdom of Christ, described and Vindicated, Against the bold assertion of a future calling and reign of the Jews, and 1000 years before the Conflagration* (1691); Daniel Whitby, *Paraphrase and Commentary of Christ's Coming to Judgment* (1716).

<sup>56</sup> Increase Mather, *Dissertation Concerning the Future Conversion of the Jewish Nation* (1709), 8. See also Cotton Mather, *Things to be look'd for. Discourses on the Glorious Characters, Conjectures...the Latter Days* (Boston, 1691), 65-68; and Henry More, *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos; or the Revelation of St. John the Divine unveiled* (London, 1680), vi-ix.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Glorious Kingdom of Christ, described and Vindicated, Against the bold assertion of a future calling and reign of the Jews, and 1000 years before the Conflagration* (1691), contents.

In spite of the anti-Semitic preterist attacks in the early eighteenth century, philo-semitic Premillennialism continued into the Age of Reason. Isaac Newton “believed in the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, the restoration of Jerusalem and of the temple there.”<sup>58</sup> His study of the Bible brought him to expect a restored Israel in the last days:

...the mystery of this restitution of all things is to be found in all the Prophets...so few Christians in our age can find it there. For they understand not that the final return of the Jews captivity and their... flourishing kingdom at the day of judgment is this mystery. Did they understand this they would find it in all the old Prophets who write of the last times as in the last chapters of Isaiah... ‘I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whether they be gone and will gather them on every side and bring them into their own land...the nations whom the dragon deceived...did compass the beloved city and were devoured by fire from the throne.’ ...This was God’s covenant with Abraham when he promised that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan for ever, and on this covenant was founded the Jewish religion...it ought to be considered and understood by all men who pretend to the name of Christians.<sup>59</sup>

Newton’s friend and successor at Cambridge William Whiston published *The Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies* also expressing a great confidence in the return of the Jews to their own land, which would always be theirs forever:

The Ancient Prophecies of the Messias are of two sorts; and as some of them concern his first coming to suffer...are comparatively few; so the rest of them concern his second coming to advance his Kingdom and restore the Jews: these are by much the greater number...his coming was so frequently declar’d to be for the Salvation, Deliverance and Restoration of Israel...<sup>60</sup>

The Seed or Posterity of Abraham, Isaak and Jacob should conquer and obtain the Land of Canaan ...instated in them for an indefeasible Inheritance: So that tho’ they should many times be expell’d thence and carry’d Captive for their Sins, yet should their Title endure; and they should at last return to it, and be resettled in it... This glorious and everlasting Covenant made with Abraham, Isaak and Jacob...the Land of Canaan’s being their unalienable Possession and Inheritance, is in the Scripture very frequently and very emphatically expressed.<sup>61</sup>

Whiston then cited God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:7-8, where God promises the land to Abraham “for an everlasting covenant...an everlasting possession.” Then how these promises were extended to Isaac in Genesis 24:7; Jacob in Genesis 26:4; 35:12; 48:4; Moses in Exodus 3:8,17; Deuteronomy 30:1-5; 34:4; and repeated throughout the Hebrew scriptures. Whiston concluded:

According to these Promises, that this Land of Canaan should be to the Children of Israel and everlasting Possession...*then the Lord they God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion*

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<sup>58</sup> Eugen Weber, *Apocalypses* (Harvard, 1999), 165 quoting Frank Manuel, *Isaac Newton: historian* (Mass: Cambridge, 1963).

<sup>59</sup> Isaac Newton, “Of the Day of Judgment and World to Come”, Yehuda MS.6 folio 12r-19r, Jerusalem University Library; in Frank Manuel; *The Religion of Isaac Newton* (Oxford, 1974), Appendix B, 126-127,130.

<sup>60</sup> William Whiston, *The Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies. Being Eight Sermons...at the Cathedral* (Cambridge,1708), 39.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-119.

*upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee... I believe it is not far off... God will ultimately and completely, as he promised, Give to the seed of Abraham all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.*<sup>62</sup>

Responding to Whiston's Historical Premillennial system was Peter Allix. In 1707 he came out with several tracts ridiculing any hopes the Jews may have that they were still God's people.<sup>63</sup> Daniel Whitby went a step further in rejecting the millennialism prevalent in the seventeenth century. He is considered the first "to have systematized postmillennialism."<sup>64</sup> His "New Hypothesis" allegorized the millennium and claimed that Christians had replaced Jews as God's people. All promises given to Israel were supposedly transferred to Christians. Among hundreds of authors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Whitby is surely the most explicitly Preterist and anti-Semitic. In 1703 he came out with his *Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament* claiming that the Jews were no longer God's people, and even those who sought God were excluded:

The unbelieving Jews, wanting the faith of Abraham shall be deprived of the blessings to his seed; for they who seek to enter, and shall not be able, because the Master has shut the door... from whom the kingdom of God was taken away...<sup>65</sup>

As a Preterist, he believed that Christ's second coming came when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem:

till the Son of Man be come with his Roman army to destroy that nation, and to burn up their cities. ... he by the Roman army will destroy them, and their capital city... there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth : so shall it be with the Jews, the children of the kingdom. ... when you see the abomination of desolation... i.e. the Roman army compassing Jerusalem... her desolation draweth near... it relates not to the final judgment, but to the time of the destruction of the Jews by the Roman army... the disciples ask their Lord, where shall this be? And Christ answers... where the carcase (Jews) are, there will the eagles (i.e. the Roman army, whose ensign was the eagle) be gathered together.<sup>66</sup>

He went as far as to call Jews "Christ killers", and to advocate that Gentiles not Jews were God's people:

Christ's prediction of the dreadful judgments which should befall that nation, for murdering their Messiah... to punish the unbelieving and obdurate Jews... [and] erect a kingdom among the Gentiles, and then coming, as it were, back to punish the Jews, according to these words of his, *the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached throughout the world for a testimony to all nations,*

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 120,123.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Allix, *An Examination of several Scripture Prophecies, which the Reverend M[r].W[histon] hath applied to the Times after the Coming of the Messiah* (London, 1707); and *Two Treatises: I. A Confutation of the Hopes of the Jews II. An Answer to Mr. Whiston's Late Treatise on the Revelations* (London, 1707).

<sup>64</sup> "Daniel Whitby", Wikipedia.org ; Crawford Gribben called him a "gradualist and pro-Enlightenment postmillennial" in *Protestant Millennium*, xii. See also several other popular websites by searching "Preterism".

<sup>65</sup> Daniel Whitby, *Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament* (London, 1703), on Matthew 8:11.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., on Matthew 10:22, 22:7, 24:12, 24:42. See also Whitby's *Paraphrase and Commentary Upon all the Epistles*, (London, 1700), 1, 400 (on 2 Thessalonians 2:3) where he claimed "no Nation under Heaven more deserved to be stiled the Man of Sin then did the Jewish Nation. ... This Character doth also very well agree to the Beast mentioned in the Revelations."

*and then shall the end (of the Jewish polity) come. Matt.24.24.* This parable doth certainly respect the Jewish nation... upon this account are stiled his enemies, and devoted to destruction by him.<sup>67</sup>

He even seemed to refer to Jews as the Antichrist:

The son of perdition: this also perfectly agrees to the Jews, not only because Christ was to smite them with the breath of his mouth...and to smite the land with a curse...but because they are set forth as vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, Rom.9.22, as men appointed to wrath, 1Thess.5.9....this agrees exactly with the great whore, who is to go into destruction, Rev.17.8,11.<sup>68</sup>

Whitby's replacement theology and antisemitism was first refuted by M. Marsin, who called Whitby a "Worldly Esau." She claimed that he hatred Israel, believed Christians had replaced Jews as God's people, and that "their Doctrine must needs be false, who assert that the Promises are now made good to themselves." She called them "goats", who would be separated from the sheep on judgment day and "cast into outer darkness."<sup>69</sup> By the end of Whitby's life this Preterist and father of Replacement theology denied both the immortality of the soul and the Trinity. Even Whitby referred to his Preterism as a "New Hypothesis." The overwhelming number of sources in the seventeenth century show that Premillennialism was far more common than Preterism, which was most often held by heterodox thinkers.

There were other Preterists besides Whitby who were anti-Semitic. In 1716 pastor of Old South church Boston Joseph Sewall believed when Christ first came it was for "the Abolishing the Dispensation of Moses", in spite of the fact that Jesus said that he did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. He also claimed that "Christ's coming [was] to Destroy Jerusalem".<sup>70</sup> This is so different from the Hebrew Scriptures which repeatedly speak of the Messiah coming to rescue Jerusalem. It is also a change from seventeenth century Puritanism, expecting a restoration of the Jews to their own land, but in the eighteenth century we have a leading New England Puritan calling for their destruction.

In spite of the growth of Preterism in the early eighteenth century, Premillennialism did not fade but actually grew more confident. Somerset vicar Nathaniel Markwick cited many biblical passages to support the idea that the Jews were still God's special people and the promises to them were still valid, among them Leviticus 26:44-45: "I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my Covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., on Matthew 25:14. See Whitby's essay "A Parallel Betwixt the Jewish and Papal Antichrist in their Apostacy" in *Paraphrase and Commentary*, ii, 494-496.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., on 2 Thessalonians 2:3. This is confirmed in Robert Fleming, *Discourse on the Rise and Fall of Antichrist* (Belfast, 1795), footnote page 17; a reprint of Fleming's *Apocalyptical Key* (London, 1702). Whitby tries to identify the Jews as Antichrist.

<sup>69</sup> M. Marsin, *An Answer to Dr Whitby, proving the Jews are not to be called into the Gospel of the Christian warfare...till after the Lord, with Messiah's Second coming...*(London,1701),27-28. In Matthew 25 sheep are separated from goats at judgment.

<sup>70</sup> Joseph Sewall, *The Certainty & Suddenness of Christ's Coming to Judgment, Improved as a Motive to Diligence* (Boston,1716),4.

remember the Covenant of their Ancestors...” and insisted that this “prophecy is not yet fulfilled.”<sup>71</sup> His view of the restoration of Israel was quite Zionistic: “All Israel shall be redeemed and restored to their Land in the Right of him who cannot be disseized, under the Promise of him that cannot lie.”<sup>72</sup> Markwick believed “the present Gentile church” was only a stopgap measure, a temporary parenthesis to God’s real plan where Gentiles were merely “Servants and Handmaids to the Jews...” They were

“a substituted or surrogate Church, to keep up God’s Name and Worship in the World, and to continue till the Jew, called by the Lord...be called again, to the bringing in of the Fulness both of Jew and Gentile.”<sup>73</sup> When Antichrist does come, Markwick believed “they who struggle with, and shall infallibly overcome him, are the main Body of Israel, in Conjunction possibly with some few Thousands of the Gentile Church, being faithful adherents of God’s Word... that small Remnant of true Christians, which an universal Corruption...shall have left remaining.”<sup>74</sup>

In 1747 *A Treatise of the Future Restoration of the Jews and Israelites to Their Own Land* was published. Attributed to Samuel Collet, it emphasizes the right of the Jews to the land God gave them:

The following Treatise being designed to shew, that you, who are now dispersed among the Nations, will, in a short time, with the rest of the Israelites, be restored to your own Land...it pleased God to make choice of your great Ancestor Abraham, with his Posterity...to give them the Land of Canaan for an everlasting Possession...exalt them above the rest of the World...you have a Promise of a Restoration to your own Land...and in the last Ages be established over the whole Earth...<sup>75</sup>

In spite of being forced off their land for over a thousand years, Collet believed the land was still theirs:

Promises made by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that he would give to their Seed the Land of Canaan for an everlasting Possession. ...the Jews have been expelled that Country for almost seventeen hundred Years, and continue even to this time dispersed among all the Nations of the Earth...the Land of Canaan lies in a manner desolate. [God promised] that he would give it to them for ever. After this God established an everlasting Covenant with Abraham, and with his Seed, to be a God unto them, and to give them all the Land of Canaan for an everlasting Possession; which Covenant at the same time limited to Isaac, and his Posterity, exclusive of Ishmael, and his Descendants...this Promise was once more limited to Jacob and his Posterity, exclusive of Esau and his Children.<sup>76</sup>

Collet also believed the restoration of Israel would be followed by an invasion by Gog (the Turks), which would culminate in the battle of Armageddon, but be resolved with the coming of Christ and his saints to set up the Millennium.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Nathaniel Markwick, *Six Small Tracts; I. A somewhat more express explicit Enarration, or Character* (London, 1733), 71.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>75</sup> [Samuel Collet], *A Treatise of the Future Restoration of the Jews and Israelites to Their Own Land* (London, 1747), iii-v. Boswell cites Collet as Dr. Johnson’s “old friend” in *Life of Samuel Johnson* (Boston, 1832), v.2, note on page 522.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28,57-63.

In Robert Hort's *Sermon on the Glorious Kingdom of Christ on Earth* he affirmed the Jews' claim to the Promised Land:

the Land of Canaan, is promised to Abraham and his Seed, as their future Inheritance and Reward. The Promise is frequently repeated; it is confirmed by an Oath; it is joined with the Promise of the Messiah, and the Land is particularly distinguished. It appears to me a strange Interpretation of the solemn Covenant of God; to say, that nothing more is intended by it than that the Posterity of Abraham, some Hundred Years after, should possess the Land of Canaan; ... the Inheritance of the Land of Canaan is promised to the Patriarchs themselves in Person, as well as to their Seed. They therefore must in Person possess this Land, after their Resurrection...<sup>78</sup>

Hort then criticizes the Amillennial interpretation:

There yet remains to be considered another Interpretation of the Covenant; namely, that by the promised Inheritance, Heaven is to be understood. But this also appears to be without Foundation. ... Now if I must believe, after all, that Heaven is here intended, and that the Land of Canaan... shall not be the Inheritance of these Men... I know not what Certainty there can be in the holy Scriptures, interpreted in this arbitrary manner.<sup>79</sup>

Thomas Newton, the Bishop of Bristol, also believed God's care continued for the Jewish people:

The Preservation of the Jews is really one of the most signal and illustrious acts of divine Providence. ... what but a supernatural power could have preserved them in such a manner... God's promises to them are not yet made good in the full extent... we have all imaginable reason to believe, since so many of those prophecies are fulfilled, that the remaining prophecies will be fulfilled also; that... the Jews will in God's good time be restored to their native city and country... the great Empires, which in their turn subdued and oppressed the people of God, are all come to ruin... let it serve as a warning to all those, who are for raising a clamour and persecution against them. ... *I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them.* (Lev.xxvi.44)<sup>80</sup>

Thomas Reader's book *Israel's Salvation: or, An Account... of the Grand Events which await The Jews* is a prime example. The Jews would convert, "return to their own Land", prosper and live peacefully there until the invasion of Gog and Magog. The Messiah would then return for the battle of Armageddon, rescuing them and bringing in the Millennium. Note in this open "Letter to the Jews" the high degree of honor Reader holds for Jews, for they possess

a glory, as never belonged to any other nation under heaven, let me freely speak to you of those gifts and callings of God in your favor... your dispersion upon the face of the earth has been long, and very tedious, especially in some countries; yet, while the Lord has made a fast end of the nations which destroyed your ancestors, his eye and his hand have been visibly upon you... when I consider the love which he shewed to your ancient patriarchs and prophets, whose honored descendants had the lively oracles committed to them, even all the deeds and writings which contain the hopes of the whole world... transmitted to me through me of your nation... Those promises still stand... the undeceiving pledge which God has given you of the certain happiness of your unborn posterity...

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<sup>78</sup> Robert Hort, *A Sermon on the Glorious Kingdom of Christ upon Earth, or the Millennium. Preached at Christ-Church, Dublin, on... Advent, 1747.* (London, 1753), 31, 33.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Newton, *Dissertation on the Prophecies* (London, 1754), I, 216, 218, 239-241.

your future glory. ... I have often joined with other Christians in earnest prayer to God for you. ... I have been much supported by the certain expectation of what God yet designs to do for you...<sup>81</sup>

He went on to cite passages throughout the Bible concerning the land which God gave to Abraham and his descendants the Jews forever:

This covenant being absolute, must be irrevocable; ... more firm and stable than the most durable things in nature. ... *the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed;*<sup>82</sup>

He concluded “that the Jews must indisputably be restored, both to their ancient temporal and spiritual glory.”<sup>83</sup> He insisted “Canaan was promised *for ever*, to the seed of Abraham”, and even set a date for this event, “A.D. 1866.”<sup>84</sup> The world at Israel’s return will be “a time of great moral darkness in the world;” Antichrist as the Turks “will tread down Jerusalem, till their time come to be visited of God in a way of vengeance”, but “they cannot prevent the Jews repossessing their own land.”<sup>85</sup> Sounding like Hal Lindsey in his *Late Great Planet Earth*, Reader warned any invader not “to wage unequal war with omnipotence,” that “the land of Canaan is at present under the Turkish yoke; but the victorious Russians will probably dispossess them about A.D. 1866.”<sup>86</sup> Reader also sounds like current End Times author Joel Rosenberg in believing that Gog will include Russia, Persia and other nations of the Middle East who want to “root out the Jews from the earth; who now eminently stand in the way of their universal dominion over the souls, bodies, and substance of men...but in fact they are gathered to the *battle of that great day of God almighty, Rev.xvi.13,14.*”<sup>87</sup>

John Baillie, dissenting minister of Newcastle, preached a sermon in 1792 on “The Conversion and Universal Restoration of the Jews”:

Surely if the history of any nation claims our attention, how much more that of a nation, stamped by sacred authority, and stiled, by way of eminence, The People Of God! A people from whom every nation under heaven have derived all their sacred and divine knowledge, and in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. ...the descendants of Abraham, the friend of God, now scattered and dispersed and fallen...will one day be collected from all the ends of the earth, and shall rise to a degree of eminence and felicity, far surpassing that of the most splendid period of their history.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Thomas Reader, *Israel’s Salvation: or, An Account from the Prophecies of Scripture of the Grand Events which await The Jews, to the end of time* (London, 1788), introductory “Letter to the Jews”, 5-7.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-24; quoting Genesis 12:7; 17:7-8;28:12-15; Exodus 6:8; 20:24; Joshua 1:2-3; Numbers 23:19; Romans 9:29; Isaiah 54:10.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 61. Hal Lindsey, *Late Great Planet Earth* (Zondervan,1972). He too identifies the king of the north as Russia: Reader,95.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 90. Joel Rosenberg, *Epicenter* (Tyndale, 2008).

<sup>88</sup> John Baillie, *Two Sermons: The First...; The Second on Time, Manner, and Means of the Conversion and Universal Restoration of the Jews* (London, 1792), 47-48.



Then, according to Baillie, the time would come when the Jews would “surprise the universe with a new thing, *A Nation is born at once.*”<sup>89</sup>

James Bicheno, Baptist pastor of Newbury in Berkshire in the 1790s, observed a widespread expectation that the Jews would be restored to their own land:

the resurrection of the Jews from the dead, is allowed, on all hands, to be their rising to civil and political existence, when they shall be restored from their dispersions and bondage to their own land and to liberty; and the spirit which is promised, Ezek. xxxvii. 14...the spirit of political and civil life.<sup>90</sup>

Bicheno then wrote on what he expected to occur next in the prophetic calendar:

The next signs of the times which I shall notice respects the Ottoman empire. In Dan. xi. 40-45 we have a prophecy of the calamities which the people of the fourth monarchy, or rather the Papal church, should suffer from the king of the South, or the Saracens; and from the king of the north, the Turks, ...for the children of thy people, (the Jews) there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation, even at that same time; and at that time, they people (the Jews) shall be delivered...preparatory to the return of the Jews to their own country, which the Turks now possess, and at which time such troubles will afflict the nations as have never been known.<sup>91</sup>

Bicheno went on to identify two threats to the Ottoman Empire, Wahabis from the Arabian peninsula and the Russians to the north, whom he identified as Gog, Magog, Meshech and Tubal of Ezekiel 37.

Three years later Bicheno published *The Restoration of the Jews*, in which he expected their return to Israel at any time to prepare for the Last Days.

The proximate signs of the coming of Jesus Christ being nigh at hand, marked out in the scripture prophecies...The kingdoms which have given their power to the beast [papal] will be revolutionized- The Power of the Turks will be overturned- And, in the midst of these conclusions, troubles and revolutions, the Jews will be put in motion, and return to take possession of their ancient country. Of all these singular and astonishing events which the prophecies have taught us to look for, and to consider as the signs of our Lord’s near approach, there is no one which will be more calculated to strike the attention of mankind... as the Restoration of the Jewish people...it will, with irresistible force, command the serious attention of all true Christians. How near the Restoration of the Jews may be, is impossible to say.<sup>92</sup>

Bicheno believed the promises made to Abraham were permanent and eternal, and that the survival of the Jews as a people was miraculous:

it was to be an “everlasting covenant;” and he promised that although for their sins he might hide his face from them for a moment, yet, still, with everlasting kindness should not depart from them, nor the

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>90</sup> J. Bicheno, *The Signs of the Times; or, The Dark Prophecies of Scripture Illustrated by the Application of Present Important Events*, part II (Philadelphia, 1797), 26.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>92</sup> J. Bicheno, *The Restoration of the Jews, The Crisis of all Nations; or, An Arrangement of the Scripture Prophecies, which relate to the Restoration of the Jews, and to some of the most interesting circumstances which accompany* (London, 1800), 4-5.

covenant removed. And that the Apostle Paul believed...they were not cast off for ever, is plain to every one who reads with attention the eleventh chapter to the Romans. ...God hath, as by a continued miracle, preserved the Jews a distinct people, so that, different from what has happened to all other conquered nations, though scattered, hated and persecuted, more than any other people on earth, they have yet tenaciously adhered to their religion and rites... But, doubtless, they are preserved for very important ends. ...not only that they will sometime be restored, but that they may be restored soon. That whatever happens, great opposition will be made of it...it will be an illustrious fulfillment of prophecy...striking attention, and deeply affecting the minds of all serious Christians.<sup>93</sup>

Bicheno believed that this restoration would take place at any time, even before their conversion:

The Jews, after their present long captivity, will be gathered from all nations, and again be restored to their own country, and be made a holy and happy people. That their restoration shall be effected at a time of great and general calamities and revolutions; and at the time of the fall of the fourth monarchy, and of the Turkish empire in particular. – That the commencement of their deliverance will be before their conversion. – That it is most likely they will be first put in motion by some foreign power, and this power is some maritime one in these western parts of the world. ...they themselves, also, will endure great sufferings, so that great numbers of them, it is probable, will perish. When these things come to pass, or, at least, when they have made some progress, mankind will witness incontrovertible proofs of the truth of revelation, as were never before so generally seen. How long it is to the time when “the dry bones of the house of Israel” will begin to move...no one can say how near, or how distant, the time may be, when God will fulfill his promises to the Jewish nation.<sup>94</sup>

Consider how close Bicheno was in his prognostication. Jews were “gathered from all nations, and... restored to their own country...at a time of great and general calamities and revolutions... [T]he fall of...the Turkish Empire [as well as those of Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, as well as the two World Wars]...before [the Jews] conversion...first put in motion by some foreign power...some maritime one in those western parts [Britain]... [The Jews] will endure great sufferings, so that great numbers of them...will perish [Pogroms, Holocaust]. Note his final words: “mankind will witness incontrovertible proofs of the truth of revelation...when God will fulfill his promises to the Jewish nation.”<sup>95</sup> This was written over thirty years before Darby’s speculations and 150 years before the actual birth of Israel.

While the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century is generally characterized as rejecting religious enthusiasm, eschatological speculation continued nonetheless, even among those considered to be intellectual leaders. Although the supposed “rational” theology of Preterism developed out of both sixteenth century Catholicism and eighteenth century Deism, many continued to believe in a return of the Jews to their own land, a rapture of the saints, a tribulation and battle of Armageddon, and a second coming of Christ to begin his millennial reign on earth.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>94</sup> James Bicheno, *The Restoration of the Jews, The Crisis of All Nations; or, and Arrangement of the Scripture Prophecies, which relate to the Restoration of the Jews...drawn from the present situation...* (London, 1800), 110-111.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

**16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century Authors who were Philo-Semitic and expected the Restoration of Israel**

Edmund Bunny (sub-dean of York)	1585	John Milton (apologist and poet)	1671
Francis Kett (Cambridge fellow)	1585	Praisegod Barebones (MP, dissenter)	1675
Giles Fletcher (ambassador to Russia)	1595	Pierre Jurieu (Huguenot émigré)	1689
Thomas Draxe (vicar in Essex)	1608	Samuel Petto (Suffolk dissenter)	1693
Thomas Brightman (Cambridge fellow)	1611	M. Marsin (Quaker woman)	1701
Sir Henry Finch (barrister & MP)	1621	Isaac Newton (Cambridge don, Mint)	1706
William Gouge* (Cambridge fellow)	1621	William Whiston (Cambridge don)	1708
Joseph Mede (Cambridge don)	1627	William Lowth (Oxford felo, prebWinc)	1714
Thomas Goodwin* (presMagdalenOxf)	1641	John Abernethy (Belfast Presbyterian)	1716
John Archer (Eng pastor Amsterdam)	1642	Philip Doddridge (Northampton dissenter)	1731
Robert Maton (Oxford Puritan divine)	1642	Nathaniel Markwick (Somerset vicar)	1733
John Dury* (Puritan, royal chaplain)	1645	Samuel Collet ('old friend' of Dr. Johnson)	1747
Peter Bulkeley (Puritan pastor Concord)	1646	Robert Hort (chaplain to Abp of Ireland)	1753
William Twisse* (rector/vicar in Berks)	16	Thomas Newton (Bishop of Bristol)	1754
Herbert Palmer* (presid. QueensCamb)	16	William Torrey (Pastor Weymouth MA)	1757
Elizabeth Avery (5 <sup>th</sup> Monarchist woman)	1647	Charles Wesley (Methodist hymnist)	1762
Peter Sterry* (Cambridge fellow)	1648	William Hooke (min. New Haven MA)	1669
Moses Wall (translator of benIsrael)	1652	Grantham Killingworth (Norwich Baptist)	1772
Henry Jessey (Baptist divine)	1656	John James Bachmair (German grammar)	1778
Nathaniel Homes (London Puritan)	1653	Thomas Reader (Taunton dissenter)	1788
Josephus Philo-Judaeus (tractarian)	1654	John Baillie (Newcastle dissenter)	1792
Petrus Serrarius (Dutch divine)	1656	James Bicheno (Berkshire Baptist)	1797
William Sherwin (London dissenter)	1665	Benjamin Farnham (CT House of Repr)	1800

\* Member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines

See my book *Dispensationalism Before Darby* for information on those on this list not in this paper.