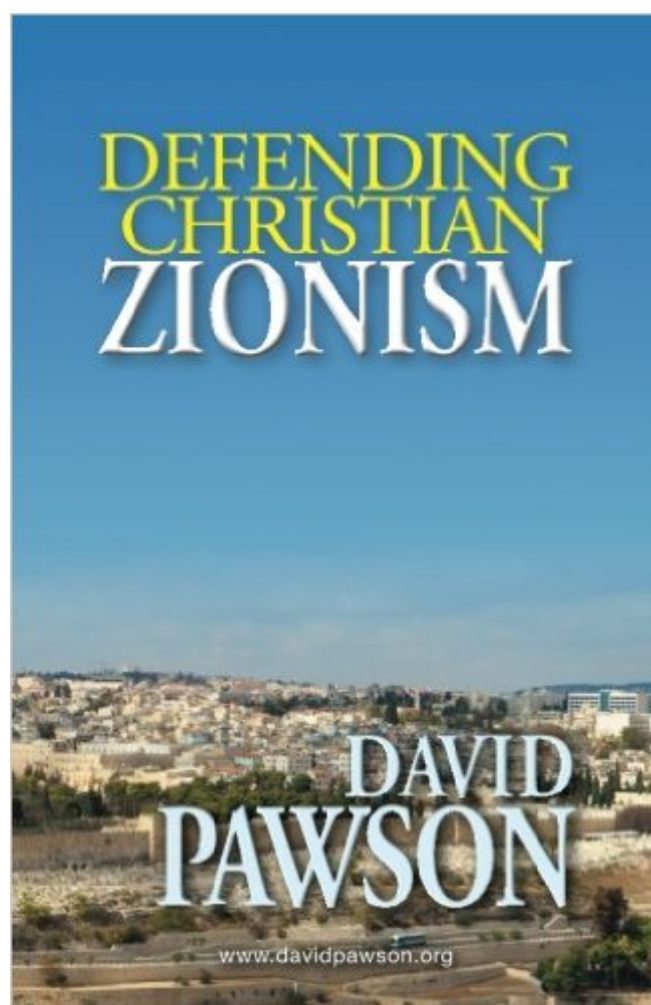


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Defending Christian Zionism



Synopsis

Has God brought the Jewish people back to Palestine? How can both Jews and Christians be God's chosen people? How many covenants are there in the Bible? Do all Christian Zionists accept dispensational teaching? Does the God of Israel ever change his promises? These are some of the questions that must be faced in the light of current attacks on Christian Zionism by some evangelical writers. David Pawson believes that Christians need very clear biblical understanding before making political pronouncements about conflict in the Middle East.

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Customer Reviews

David Pawson, Great Britain's reigning Prince of Bible Teachers, has written a remarkable and much needed Biblical defense of Christian Zionism. Defending Christian Zionism was initially published as a response to the anti-Zionist, amillennial teaching of Stephen Sizer's book, *Whose Promised Land?* published in 2002. Sizer's book, a modified version of an anti-Zionist thesis he wrote for his doctorate, became a popular seller in Great Britain where Sizer rapidly emerged as the leading voice of anti-Zionism in that country's somewhat moribund (by US, Canadian and Australian standards) evangelical community. Pawson's book demolishes the anti-Zionist arguments of Sizer with common sense, sound historical research and vigorous analysis of Biblical proof texts. Pawson is unafraid to accept and concur with Sizer's entirely reasonable criticism of some aspects of Christian Zionism (such as John Hagee's "Dual Covenants" approach) as well as any unbalanced use of dispensationalism that forces an un-Biblical interpretation on a text. But in doing so, Pawson never "throws out the baby with the bathwater." Instead he meticulously analyzes the flaws of

replacement theology, amillennial and post-millennial prophecy interpretations, and the dangerous influence of politics on the debate. Pawson is a proud English Christian whose sadness over his country's disappointing legacy regarding Palestine is tangible. He also takes a much-needed shot at fellow theologian John Stott's curious support of Sizer's book. Stott is a respected Bible teacher whose anti-Zionist position seems entirely out of character with his legacy. Stott's glowing praise for Sizer seems particularly misplaced. Pawson addresses this and other controversies with reasonableness and objectivity, digging deep into scripture and history to draw his conclusions. The result is a clear-headed, much needed primer that every serious student of the Bible should consider with an open heart. After all, your destiny in Christ may very well depend on your attitude toward that piece of land in the Middle East that God gave to Abraham and his descendants... forever. Highly Recommended. And best when read alongside Joel Richardson's new book, When a Jew Rules the World.

I begin with an opening comment. Then I look at two theological points. Then I get into "Defending Christian Zionism"; especially in regard to Chapter 2 on the COVENANTS. Then a conclusion; and some other key book recommendations. Opening Comment: For a while now, I have sought books that adequately conveyed the fact that the WAY is a new COVENANT with Israel. (Note: Which wild-branch Gentile disciples continue to partake of, by continuous faith INTO Yeshua; and by CONTINUING in God's kindness - otherwise, having been grafted in, they will be cut back out). It is NOT a new religion/faith/relationship that is totally distinct from Judaism (let alone the monstrous "Reformed" idea that it is basically the culmination of TULIP-style predestination). Alas, in the main, Western "Christianity" (sincere though it be), has its doctrinal roots in Augustine or Arminius; rather than Abraham. "Defending Christian Zionism" is a MUSCULAR little book which calls time on the arch-distortion that is "Replacement Theology" (i.e., the idea that God has basically finished with the Jewish people; and that "The Church" has replaced Israel as the people of God; even that "The Church" is the "New Israel"). So many evangelicals think constantly about "revivals"; so few seemed concerned with ROOTS. To somewhat echo Isaiah 37:31 (and 2 Kings 19:30) dynamics, it is high time that the Western contingent of the EKKLESIA Bride took firm root DOWNWARD (into Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), in order that she would OPTIMALLY bear God-glorifying fruit UPWARD. ***** Two Theological Points: 1) The (NEW Covenant) WAY is about FRUITION (of the PROMISE to, and HOPE of, the fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). It is NOT about REPLACEMENT; let alone the creation of a distinct new faith! As even a cursory reading of Acts will show, Paul sought to bring BOTH Jews and Gentiles, not to some new faith, but to the SAME

(PROPHETIC) HOPE of his fathers. Israel is an Olive Tree into which wild branch Gentiles are grafted and connected to Israel (and to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). The Covenant with Abraham, and the Old and New Covenants with Israel, have both CONTINUITY and DISTINCTION: they are (respectively) akin to a plant's ROOT, STEM and FLOWER. Alas, for almost 2,000 years in the West, the New Covenant has (in effect) been SNIPPED from its covenantal (and Hebraic) root and stem, given a makeover, and presented to the world as the property of the Gentile Church (!!!); worse still, a Church that considers herself to be "The NEW Israel." Note FRUITION-based, apostolic evangelism (in ACTS): Acts 2:29-31; 3:13-16, 22-26; 5:30-31; 9:20; 10:42-43; 13:32-42; 17:1-3; 22:3, 14; 23:1; 24:14-16; 26:6-7, 22-23; 28:23. A new faith/religion? Paul's missionary journeys were basically a practical example of Israel's Psalm-96 call to tell of God's "glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds among all the peoples." (Psalm 96:3; NASB) Something that Paul (a Jew who loved his Jewish kinsmen), did with unsurpassed loyalty and dedication to Yeshua Messiah. Yeshua was Paul's MARVELLOUS deed of God (so to speak: that He had SENT His very Son). Paul was not bringing some new faith to the ends of the earth; rather, he was a newscaster (as it were) of what the God of Israel had long PROMISED and now brought to pass. Yeshua was Paul's Jeremiah-FORETOLD (and Jeremiah-FULFILLING) NEW-Covenant PASSOVER. As the saying goes, 'Get with the [Psalm 96] program' - Paul was getting with it! FRUITION. The difference between Paul and his Jewish kinsmen, was not that Paul had converted to "Christianity" and become a "Christian" (!!!); but, that whereas Paul now fully realized the HOPE, PROMISE and Messiah of Israel had COME, his unbelieving Jewish kinsmen were still veiled. Genesis to Malachi, and Matthew to Revelation, rather than being counterproductively labelled as the "Old and New Testaments," are better classed as FOUNDATION (or Root) Scripture and FRUITION (or Fruit) Scripture, respectively; for to refer to them as such, rightly establishes and restores the gradual and seamless revelation of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - from Genesis onwards. Note: When I say that the WAY is not a new faith, I mean ONLY in so far as one is truly giving HEADSHIP to God-breathed Scripture; and to the HOPE of (and PROMISE to) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But indeed, when men (IN EFFECT) give headship to man-breathed writings like the Talmud and the "Institutes of the Christian Religion," then yes, "Judaism" and "Christianity" ARE different (and UNSCRIPTURAL) faiths. 2) The New Covenant and EKKLESIA Bride is CONCENTRIC in nature; NOT Separate. By way of illustration, imagine (if you will), two unlined A4 pages of paper. On BOTH pages, the entire area of the page represents all mankind/peoples; and both pages have two circles: Circle 1 represents/encompasses Jews according to FLESH-circumcision (i.e., male - and female - physical descendents of Jacob); Circle 2 represents/encompasses the EKKLESIA Bride. The

difference between standard "evangelical" thinking on the one hand, and scriptural thinking on the other, is as follows: In evangelical thinking, the two circles are separate; there is zero overlap; and Circle 1 is regarded as Judaism/Old Israel, and Circle 2 as "Christianity"/"The Church"/ "New Israel"; (evangelical lip service aside) they are (in effect) seen as two distinct and mutually exclusive faiths/religions. In scriptural thinking (by contrast), Circle 2 is WITHIN Circle 1: they are concentric. The inner circle being the EKKLESIA Bride, which consists of HEART-circumcized NATURAL and WILD branches; the area outside the inner but within the outer circle being UNBELIEVING Jews (natural branches)/Israel (in the FLESH-circumcision sense). The inner circle being the Israel that is indeed Israel (Romans 9:6-7; speaking of Jews); and being the "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16; comprising of believing Jews and - grafted in - Gentiles). To put it another way, the EKKLESIA Bride is Israel in the deepest and highest sense of the term. It is thus something of an evangelical curveball to speak in terms of "Israel AND the Church" (for these days, speaking in that way tends to imply two separate circles, rather than concentric). For it is not a case of "Israel AND the Church"; it is a case of the (HEART-circumcized) Ekklesia (and Israel of God) WITHIN (FLESH-Circumcized) Israel. Soteriological Note: If a Jewish disciple fails to CONTINUE in God's kindness (and fails to abide/remain in the True Vine; fails to OVERCOME and endure TO THE END), they go back out to the outer circle (a non-abiding Gentile would go back outside both circles). The destiny of those who REMAIN within Circle 2, being the new Jerusalem; the destiny of all those outside Circle 2 being the lake of fire. ***** On "Defending Christian Zionism": This work, which began as a refutation of Stephen Sizer's off-base thinking on Israel, has ended up becoming David's most concise and helpful work on the Covenants of Scripture; on Israel (people and place); and on the (LAST of the) Last Days. I say that, as someone who has read 22 of David's books (including "Israel in the New Testament"; "When Jesus Returns"; and "Unlocking the Bible"). David begins the book by nutshelling the thinking of sincere but mistaken teachers of "PRE-Trib Theology" ("Dispensationalists"). He also explains the difference between "Dispensational" as opposed to "Classical" Zionists: basically, the former have unfortunately allowed the thinking of Darby to affect their study of Holy Scripture, while the latter have views in line with disciples who lived in the first few centuries after Messiah returned to His Father. In Chapter 2 - on the five Covenants - he gives a very helpful introductory comment on the difference between reading things FROM Holy Scripture on the one hand, and reading things INTO Holy Scripture on the other. The latter method has taken some folk away from the God's plumb Word, and intellectually guided them through the gates - so to speak - of one of several man-made wineskins: TULIP Theology and PRE-Trib Theology to name two (and yes, even "Arminianism"/"Wesleyanism.") In Chapter 4, David homes right in on the ROOT

PROBLEM of Stephen Sizer and those of his viewpoint: they have CONFUSED the MOSAIC with the ABRAHAMIC covenant; not giving due regard to the distinctions and differences between the two. In fact, given the Western Contingent of the Bride has largely lost the Covenant BONEWORK of Holy Writ, Chapter 2's discussion of the five Covenants makes this book one of the most important he has ever written. Figuratively speaking, I believe the Covenants ("Noahic"; "Abrahamic"; "Mosaic"; "Davidic"; and "Messianic" - as David calls them) are the very BONEWORK of Holy Scripture; furthermore, the call to be holy as God is holy, and to love both God and one's neighbor (in tandem with the in-breaking Kingdom of God), is perhaps the VERY SPINE of First and Second Covenant Scripture. David has now brought out an entire book on the five Covenants, called "By God, I Will." (see below). The Abrahamic, Mosaic and Messianic Covenants: When God put the ABRAHAMIC Covenant in place, He (in effect) divided mankind into TWO groups (perhaps one might say that that division physically began with Abraham, and then got finalized - through Isaac - in Jacob): one group repeatedly referred to in First Covenant Scripture as the people/nation (and now known as Jews); one group repeatedly referred to as the peoples/nations - comprising all other people groups (and now collectively known as Gentiles). This distinction still holds true - note for instance, Romans 15:8-12. In Galatians, Paul said 'There is neither Jew nor Greek' in MESSIAH Yeshua - Galatians 3:28; but he did not say there was neither Jew nor Greek "in the WORLD." That is to say, in the WORLD, the division into TWO groups (that began with Abraham), is STILL in place. As Stephen Sizer would correctly point out, Paul did indeed say (in reference to the ABRAHAMIC Covenant and PROMISE), "and to his Seed" SINGULAR (and seed-wise there meaning Messiah, not Israel - Galatians 3:15-18); but one must be careful not to take what Paul says about Abraham and the (singular) Seed recipient of the ABRAHAMIC (PROMISE) Covenant, and then wrongly also apply it to the (plural) people/nation recipients (i.e., physical descendants of Jacob/Israel) of the MESSIANIC Covenant. The writer of Hebrews clearly tells us (referring back to Jeremiah 31) that God has made a new COVENANT WITH the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Hebrews 8:8); i.e., NOT JUST WITH Abraham (and NOT a new ABRAHAMIC Covenant). People-WISE, God is there referring to Israel (the Jewish people, Paul's 'kinsmen according to the flesh'; the physical descendants of Jacob/Israel); Covenant-WISE, God is there referring to the MESSIANIC Covenant. From the Mosaic to the Messianic; from EXTERNAL to INTERNAL; OBLIGATION to INCLINATION: The Mosaic (First, Old) Covenant was God's PLUMBLINE-Tutor (so to speak) to lead the Israelites to Messiah Yeshua (see Galatians 3). And as Paul has said (see 2 Timothy 3:14-17), the Tanakh (Genesis to Malachi) is able to make one wise to salvation. Thing is, without the HOLY Spirit, Israel (God's covenant people) naturally veered off to the left or the right

(AWAY from God's MOSAIC Plumblin; and TOWARD the very lifestyle of the surrounding nations). But, the NEW Covenant foretold by Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 31) has NOW COME (see Hebrews). The NEW (Second, Better) MESSIANIC Covenant INTERNALIZES God's Kingdom standards for life: The Mosaic Covenant was EXTERNALLY written on STONE (and today on paper); but, the Messianic Covenant is INTERNALLY written on hearts. Furthermore, Jew and Gentile branches who believe INTO Messiah Yeshua (see Romans 11), thereby move from OBLIGATION (to keep God's commands), to INCLINATION (to keep God's commands). To be more specific, INSTEAD OF constantly (rebellious and) veering AWAY from God's Kingdom lifestyle, Jew and Gentile disciples (i.e., those who behave like a seed in GOOD SOIL), have an inbuilt desire to (albeit imperfectly) walk the [plumb]line (note: as opposed to Jew and Gentile disciples who behave as a seed upon stony ground, or among thorns). The Abrahamic Covenant meanwhile, has ALWAYS been INTERNAL. Indeed, perhaps one might say that the Messianic Covenant is the Abrahamic Covenant in FULL BLOOM/FLOWER.*****Conclusion: This book is something of an edification sandwich: The first slice of bread lays the Israel foundations. The mega-nutritious filling is a discussion of the five Covenants. The second slice of bread being an agile and concise overview of the (LAST of the) Last Days (albeit from a plain vanilla POST-Trib stance; instead of what I believe to be a more accurate view: POST-Trib, [but] PRE-Wrath). Abrahamic roots must INCREASE; Augustinian and Arminian roots must DECREASE. The WAY is a NEW Covenant with Israel; not a distinct new faith/religion. Concentric in nature; not separate. Israel is an Olive Tree, which believing Gentiles are GRAFTED INTO (WITHOUT a requirement of "circumcision and adherence to the Law of Moses"); not a caterpillar which a Gentile Grace-Butterfly FLIES FROM! The WAY is not some new hope and promise; rather, is it the SAME HOPE of (and promise to) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - now come to FRUITION. In terms of other key books, I'm putting three GAME CHANGER books here. In addition to that, and given how exceptional David Pawson is, here are some other books of his to consider getting at some point: GAME CHANGER 1:Â Remarriage is Adultery UnlessÂ For centuries, the remarriage issue has been A Tale of TWO [False] Exceptions. Courtesy of failing to understand two pairs of Greek words (PORNEIA and MOICHEIA; and DOULO and DEO), the Ekklesia has furnished itself with two FALSE exceptions: 1) ADULTERY (through not understanding the difference between PORNEIA and MOICHEIA). 2) DESERTION (through not understanding the difference between DOULO and DEO). This game changer RESTORES Genesis-implemented ONE FLESH (Lifelong) Marriage (Genesis 2:24). GAME CHANGER 2:Â The Normal Christian Birth: How to Give New Believers a Proper Start in LifeÂ David Pawson's game changer on ACTS-rooted (and truly TRINITARIAN) evangelism. Quoting

from the prologue: "Many 'Christians,' including myself, were badly delivered ... The typical sinner's prayer is seriously inadequate ..." **GAME CHANGER 3: Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices** Viola and Barna's game changer on the UNSCRIPTURAL foundations of the "Institutional Church." Quoting from the preface by Tyndale House Publishers: "Perhaps you wonder why a publisher of Christian books would release a book that questions so many common church practices ... they [Frank Viola and George Barna] are asking us to thoughtfully consider the source of our churches' traditions and then ask how these practices square with Scripture ... Many in the church hold to tradition, even if it is not grounded in Scripture, and these same people wonder why the church seems to be losing its relevance and impact in the contemporary world." **Jesus Baptises in one Holy Spirit** On evangelism; specifically on RECEIVING the Holy Spirit. **Practising the Principles of Prayer** An UNSUNG and practical look at prayer. **The Maker's Instructions** An informative look at The Ten Commandments. **Leadership is Male: What does the Bible say?** On gender roles. **By God, I Will** A Bible X-Ray; of the Covenant BONE-WORK of Holy Scripture. **Word and Spirit Together: Uniting Charismatics and Evangelicals** On the need for BALANCE. **Once Saved, Always Saved?: A Study in Perseverance and Inheritance** On the falsity of "Eternal Security." ***** **General Comment:** I've read dozens of books ABOUT Scripture: autobiographies; accounts of so-called "Church History"; Scripture overviews; and books that tackle various heresies. But I have limited my book reviews on , to the mere fraction that I would recommend to others: to books which collectively bring people up to speed on the last 2,000 years; and which provide both vaccine and remedy against some of the most pernicious teachings that have arisen - including (but alas, not only!) Replacement Theology; Replacement SPOUSE-ology (divorce and "remarriage"); Cessationism; Eternal Security (OSAS; Calvinism/Reformed Theology); PRE-Trib Theology ("Dispensationalism"); "Sinner's Prayer" (and largely BINITARIAN) evangelism; and the (1 Samuel 8 DEJA VU) Building-Pulpit-Pew model. Scripture teachers have a tendency to bring out book after book (after book!); authoring perhaps a lifetime total of millions of fallible words. Add a few teachers together, and you're talking TENS of millions of fallible words; thereby reducing the 800,000 words of Holy Scripture, to a drop in the ocean of (albeit sincere) DISTORTION. Worse still (and deny it to the hilt though many readers will), that ocean of distortion embedded between their ears, becomes the HEAD (and a theological lens/VEIL); Scripture the TAIL. Most of my recommendations are now on Kindle; so free samples can be downloaded to your Kindle; or, onto any gadget on which you have installed a free Kindle App (such as your smartphone; your tablet; or your PC). To see my other reviews, just click on my name at the start of this review.

Pawson responds to Stephen Sizer's refutation of the teaching of Christian Zionism by clearly outlining the arguments and attempting to address them in order. The book seemed about 90% fair in characterizing the non-Zionistic view, and perhaps a bit desperate in some places to keep the Zionistic boat afloat. Surprisingly, Mr. Pawson actually refutes the doctrines of dispensationalism which normally stand as the eschatological basis for his Zionistic views.

This is a concise presentation in answer to Stephen Sizer's replacement theology. Pawson does an excellent job of refuting the common replacement theologians' arguments, his exegesis of scripture passages on the subject is sound. I recommend it as a very nice introduction to the topic

Too complex and not focused.

A balanced perspective on a very sensitive subject.

very good information.

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