

DISPENSATIONALISM AND UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY WITH ISRAEL

By

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ABSTRACT

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I incorporated various public opinion surveys regarding the nature of Dispensational concepts to convey the prevalence of Dispensational theology in America. I incorporated demographic data regarding survey participants in an effort to show characteristics of Dispensational thought and what segments of the population were most likely to be in agreement with these ideas. This information was used as a springboard to examine the history of Dispensationalism in the United States and how support for Israel has been formed by such ideologies. I found that Dispensationalism is a salient belief and is responsible for a considerable amount of public support for actions of the state of Israel. Although gradations of Dispensational beliefs exist, I approximated that about 30 million Americans support the state of Israel due in part to their Dispensational beliefs. Furthermore, I found that lobbyist groups and Dispensational clergy leaders have mobilized such support for Israel and have played a significant role in influencing Congressional and Executive figures towards a decidedly pro-Israel perspective.

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CHAPTER 1

EXPLANATIONS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY SUPPORT OF ISRAEL

Our two nations have a lot in common, when you think about it. We were both founded by immigrants escaping religious persecution in other lands. We both have built vibrant democracies. Both our countries are founded on certain basic beliefs, that there is an Almighty God who watches over the affairs of men and values every life. These ties have made us natural allies, and these ties will never be broken.

-President George W. Bush

The relationship between America and Israel is one of the most unique relationships in global politics and has been shaped by factors beyond the traditional motivations responsible for inter-state support. Such support is often shown through large monetary contributions the U.S. government makes toward Israel. For example, in August 2007 the government agreed to grant Israel 30 billion in military aid in what was categorized as "a long term investment in peace."¹ Israel also received approximately three billion dollars in aid during the 1994 fiscal year and 2.62 billion in 2004. Israel was the top recipient in 1994, followed by Egypt, and second in 2004 (with Iraq in the lead due to restructuring efforts).² Traditionally, Israel has benefited the most from U.S. aid over the last 50 years. Other manifestations of support are found in political rhetoric, statements of praise for Israel and condemnation for Israel's enemies.

America has a special bond with Israel for many reasons. Israel's status as a liberal democracy, the feeling that America must protect the Israelis who are ethnically and culturally connected to the West, and the recent severity of terrorism from Islamic extremists further aligns these two countries. This study begins by analyzing some of the prominent reasons for

¹ Steven Erlanger. "Israel to Get 30 Billion in Aid From U.S." New York Times, Aug. 17, 2007.

² United States Dept. of State. "Foreign Aid: An Introductory Overview of U.S. Programs and Policy." Mod. April 2004. <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/31987.pdf> (10 Sept. 2007).

supporting Israel and then offers an alternate possibility that is seldom discussed when evaluating foreign policy support.

Support for Israel is also appealing, in part, due to the historical guilt for Jewish plight and humanitarian sorrow for the events of the holocaust. These are still viable reasons for support today. Many people still act compassionately towards Israel because of the horrors of forced removal and systematic execution of the Jews throughout 1930s and 1940s in Europe. Historical mistreatment in Russia also adds to the list of human rights abuses that the Jewish nation has faced in modern history.³ Such compassion still forms a union of individuals who believe that the suffering of the Jewish people must be repaid in the form of national liberty, expressed through Israel.

Another popular reason explaining U.S. policy towards Israel is that Israel is democratic. The idea of a democratic state in the Middle East was important throughout the era of the Cold War as Israel provided a bulwark against Soviet communism. This certainly played a role in regards to the amount of military and economic aid Israel received from America as a token of democratic solidarity. The idea behind this rationale is that the Middle East is inherently unstable and the U.S. needs a democratic ally in the region. Democratic governments represent political entities with which the U.S. can interact with confidence and certainty. The U.S. has aided in establishing non-democratic regimes in order to achieve national interests but these typically did not achieve the economic and security goals the U.S. had hoped for (U.S. regime building in Panama and Chile are indicative of this). Democracies are far less likely to go to war with one another, thus providing another good cause for their proliferation. Universal democracy has been part of the American foreign policy agenda for years and Israel's status as a democracy provides a strong impetus for continuing to push democratic ideals in the Middle East.⁴

With the end of the Cold War, the U.S. recognized a new reason to support a stable democratic Middle Eastern country. Replacing the threat of communism was the threat of Islamic

³ See *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question 1855-1881* by John Doyle Klier.

⁴ This is the claim often made by the American Israel Public affairs Committee (AIPAC). The lobbying efforts of AIPAC will be elaborated on in Chapter 6.

extremism. Israel is often conceptualized as a democratic stronghold in a region subject to the duress of Islamic legal codes which are understood as an impediment towards Western-style concepts of liberty. This idea became more emboldened post 9/11 and the subsequent American military endeavors in the region are a testament to this. Charles Hill, fellow at the Hoover Institute, argues that the strategic importance of Israel is actually greater than it was during the Cold War saying,

Israel's economy is a model for the region; its democracy, while probably not attainable any time soon by others in the region, is nonetheless an example of good governance, political transparency, and open intellectual exchange. And Israel's military capacities, faced as it is with non-state, anti-state Islamist terrorist polities to its north and south, requires America's utmost understanding and support.⁵

Democratic institutions are often connected by civil ties of free expression and gender and ethnic equality. Israel and the United States both generally value civil liberties and, although not divorced from personal biases, recognize the importance of tolerance for the greater good of society. The availability of free expression allows for cultural and institutional transitions to occur under the aegis of the law, thus reducing the need for revolutionary tactics.

Another prominent rationale for support is that of intelligence sharing. Israeli intelligence aids the American government in calculating risk and assessing potential threats of aggression. Intelligence sharing strengthens U.S-Israel ties by the recognition of a mutual enemy in Islamic extremism. Israel has become quite adept at recognizing and eliminating terrorist threats. Israel possesses excellent counter-terrorism abilities and these abilities are useful as American interests have recently become a focal point in terrorist aggression. For example, a source reported in September 2007 that Israeli intelligence notified the United States that North Korea

⁵ Charles Hill, "Responses to the Israel Lobby and American Interest." *Middle East Strategy at Harvard*. February 19, 2008. http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/mesh/2008/02/israel_lobby_and_american_interest/ (22 Fe. 2008).

was sharing nuclear information with Syria. This is just one example of many possible instances where the U.S. and Israel share intelligence regarding a mutual threat.⁶

Along with intelligence sharing are other intellectual pursuits made in Israel that are beneficial. Weapons development and deployment, scientific discoveries and scholarly works of literature are some of Israel's major contributions. Israelis are known for pursuing high degrees of education and for being a prosperous, innovative and enterprising society. These contributions are in line with American ideals of intellectual pursuits being their own reward. Intellectual enlightenment contributes to the marketplace of ideas which American and Israeli cultures both respect and admire. The historical consensus regarding the Jewish nation as an important component to the civilization of man was echoed in a long-ago letter by John Adams, "I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize man than any other nation."⁷

Another reason for Israeli support is also one of the more controversial. The idea that regional peace should be established by having Israel possess superior firepower is predicated on the notion of power transition theory and what measures best achieve peace. Power transition theory would explain peace by superior military power this way: The Middle East is chaotic and in need of structure. Israel, through superior weaponry, can provide this structure by eliminating regional parity. This is contrary to a balance of power approach which would contend that peace exists through a balance of regional power capabilities between Israel and other Middle Eastern states.⁸

This is a cursory introduction to several prominent explanations designed to elucidate U.S. support for Israel. These are all viable alternatives for explanation but, even taken in aggregate, may fall short of completion. They do not take into account the possible impact of

⁶ Glenn Kessler and Robin Wright. "Israel, U.S. Shared Data On Suspected Nuclear Site." Friday, September 21, 2007, page A01. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2007/09/20/AR2007092002701.html>, (25 Sept. 2007)

⁷ Rohr Chabad House at Stanford. "Reflections on Jewish History." Mod. 2006.http://chabadstanford.org/pages/wisdom_center/Article/12.html, (27 Sept 2007)

⁸ Douglas Lemke, "The Continuation of History, Power Transition Theory and the End of the Cold War" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 34, No. 1, Feb. 1997, pp. 22-36.

Dispensational Christian theology.⁹ Perhaps no other ideology has shaped U.S. support in the same way as Dispensationalism. It is a passionate ideology rooted in a religious interpretative framework. Dispensationalism is often represented in Christian fundamentalism and Christian Zionism, with the latter two being more popular areas of study. Relegating a study to these aspects without mention of their Dispensational roots does not permit a complete analysis because it is Dispensationalism that aided the development and proliferation of each. Because it is religious in nature, its adherents are passionate about its concepts and prioritize its goals above all else. Its prevalence in American culture shows that it may influence foreign policy by four cardinal means. First, through the salience of public opinion and its influence on congressional members who seek to satisfy constituent desires. Second, the influence on foreign policy decision making due to lobbyist organizations and other special interest groups. Third, the activities of prominent Dispensational leaders both in and out of government who have helped facilitate a Dispensationally oriented foreign policy agenda. Fourth, the beliefs of presidents and the Dispensational pressures that are put upon their decision making.

This study will explain what Dispensationalism teaches, how Dispensationalism came to be so influential and how this influence can be measured as a possible explanation of foreign policy support towards Israel. This will provide a unique analysis to the well studied field of American-Israeli relations. With an understanding of Dispensationalism one can become more aware of the reasons behind support for Israel and therefore become more equipped to anticipate future foreign policy challenges. Dispensationalism provides a possible explanation to a complex subject. At times its influence may be direct and at others it may be speculative. Either way, its importance to the U.S. and its dealing with matters related to Israel should not be dismissed.¹⁰

⁹ Dispensationalism is continually being revised. *Progressive Dispensationalism* may differ from this account. For purposes of this study, *historical Dispensationalism* will be used.

¹⁰ Dispensationalism includes more than what will be covered in this paper. The goal is to introduce the basics of its end times beliefs at a superficial level. The word Dispensationalism and Dispensationalist in this study is meant as a general, umbrella term emphasizing some of its more prolific beliefs specifically those related to Jews, Israel and eschatology. Dispensationalism is therefore measured by adherents to specific Dispensational beliefs.

CHAPTER 2
THE ESSENCE OF DISPENSATIONALISM

"Christians Must Continue Their Undying Support for Israel"¹¹

- Reverend Jerry Falwell

The essence of Dispensationalism can be summarized in the above quote by Jerry Falwell. This chapter will explain Dispensationalism so that a firm foundation may be established in order to appreciate the full range of Dispensational influences and how they came to be an indelible part of America. Dispensationalism usually passes unnoticed in foreign policy evaluations and with an appropriate understanding of its teachings, a more comprehensive approach to explaining American support for Israel may be developed.

Dispensationalism teaches that God deals with humanity under a series of discontinuous arrangements. This means that God deals with the Church (Christians) and the Jews in different ways, and certain Biblical prophecies concerning the Jewish fate must come to fruition before the Second Advent. Events in the Holy Land are thus incorporated to represent eschatological prophesy. This, in turn, leads people to analyze and conduct foreign policy under the guidance that these events will fulfill the Biblical prophecies of Israel. Support for another country based on economic, security or any other political reason is typical in international relations, and represents a cultural kinship based on mutual values and aspirations. Support for another country based on a Biblical exegesis is much more complicated, especially when such support can conflict with other vital national interests. Dispensationalism elevates Israel in a unique way equaled by no other force. Israel is favored by Dispensationalists because Dispensationalists believe it is favored by God. Non-dispensationalists, such as Covenantalists, argue that Israel (the country)

¹¹ Jerry Falwell. "Christians Must Continue Their Undying Support for Israel."
http://www.preteristarchive.com/dEmEnTiA/dd_falwell-jerry_02.html (5 Sept 2007).

is different from Israel (the Church), and that the Bible discusses Israel as the continued body of God's people represented by Jews in the Old Testament and by Christians in the New Testament. Covenantalists contend that the New Testament use of the term Israel is not dealing with an independent state located in Palestine, but rather the designation of all Christians and the continuation of Israel (the Church) as God's people.¹² Whereas Dispensationalists believe in separate arrangements between God and Jews versus God and Christians, Non-dispensationalists believe that Christians fulfill Old Testament prophesy as the new "Israel" and that the Jews are no longer associated as God's elect. This opinion is known as Supersessionism, or Replacement Theology.¹³ Dispensationalists, however, believe God has offered the Jews an earthly kingdom in Palestine while saving the heavenly kingdom for Christians. This dichotomy is central to the disagreements between Dispensational and Covenantal Christians.¹⁴ For clarification and consistency purposes, the term "Israel" will represent the sovereign state and the term "Church" will represent Christians.

To appropriately comprehend Dispensationalism and its relevance to foreign policy, one must first understand the main views of Biblical (especially New Testament) eschatology. There are three main fields of thought concerning the End Times found in Christianity: Premillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Amillennialism. Dispensationalists hold a Premillennial view but Premillennialists are not necessarily Dispensationalists. The differences between each are rooted in Biblical hermeneutics concerning the Second Coming of Christ. Revelation chapter 20: 1-10 speaks of the Millennium:

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ²And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

⁴Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of

¹² Covenantal Theology, also called Federalism, highlights covenants of Works, Grace and Redemption. See writings by Calvin and Jonathan Edwards.

¹³ Alan Torres, "Replacement Theology," *The Biblicist*. <http://www.biblicist.org/bible/replace.shtml> (27 March 2008).

¹⁴ Rodney J Decker. "Dispensationalism." <http://faculty.bbc.edu/rdecker/disp.htm> (12 Aug 2007).

Jesus and the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

⁷And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, ¹⁰and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ¹⁵

The main issue to be decided is what the Millennium actually means. Should it be taken literally, or is it figurative? Has it already taken place, or is it imminent? Each view addresses the nature of the Millennium in a unique way. The complexities found in interpreting Revelation should be noted. As this is a highly difficult book to understand, even by the most dedicated scholars, the descriptions of the various positions in this analysis should be regarded as cursory, not comprehensive and certainly not conclusive. ¹⁶

Christian Eschatology

Amillennialism

Amillennialists believe that the Millennial rule of Christ mentioned in Revelation is not to be taken literally. This view holds that the thousand years is symbolic and denies a physical millennial reign by Christ on earth. The reign of Christ need not reflect an actual earthly reign, but rather the allowance of the Church on earth to flourish. In this sense, Christ reigns through his people whom he has designated.

Looking at Revelation 20:1-6; an Amillennialist would conclude that the thousand year reign is not described in a literal futuristic context, but rather in a symbolic account of the realization of the Gospel. Amillennialists propose that the current age of the Church exists during

¹⁵ The Bible. English Standard Version

¹⁶ Revelation is the primary book on the Millennium. However, many other Biblical books refer to end times prophecy, particularly Mathew and Daniel.

the Millennium. There is some ambiguity as to whether the thousand years is literal or figurative. Regardless, most Amillennialists place the current time period as part of the Millennium where the Church is allowed to flourish. In this sense they believe that the binding of Satan referenced in Revelation 20:2 means that he is unable to inhibit the nations of the world from knowing the Word of God, not that there will be a utopian earthly reign of Christ whereby Satan's powers will be absent from the world. More importantly, Amillennialists see Revelation 4-6 (as well as 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10) as evidence that the thousand year reign is placed before the Second Coming of Christ, not after. Amillennialists believe that the First Advent of Christ ushered in the Millennium and that the Second Advent will initiate the Last Judgment.

In a method called progressive parallelism, a prominent theologian named Anthony Hoekema was able to posit that with a proper organization of Revelation, not based on chronology of written text, but rather on a grouping of thematic elements, one may see that Revelation 20 is composed of seven sections for which context supersedes chronological placement in terms of Millennium designation. Hoekema argues that "chapters 20-22 comprise the last of the seven sections of the book of Revelation and therefore do not describe what follows the return of Christ. Rather, Revelation 20:1 takes us back once again to the beginning of the New Testament era."¹⁷ Amillennialism is prominent in Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. In fact, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, "The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism."¹⁸ Furthermore, Reformed minded Christians often look to the writings of John Calvin and St. Augustine for ammunition against other millennial views.¹⁹

¹⁷ Anthony Hoekema. "Amillennialism." http://www.the-highway.com/amila_Hoekema.html (9 Aug. 2007).

¹⁸ The Holy See. "Catechism of the Catholic Church." Part 1 Section 676. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s2c2a7.htm (9 Aug. 2007).

¹⁹ See John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and St. Augustine's *City of God* and *Confessions*. These are often interpreted to deny a Premillennial view while assuming an Amillennial perspective.

Postmillennialism

Like Amillennialism, Postmillennialism denies the Premillennial idea of an earthly reign of Christ. Both also deny the Secret Rapture (the sudden ascension of believers into Heaven) and a futurist approach to the Tribulation (the time where believers will experience intense persecution)²⁰. Postmillennialists believe that the world will continue to become better and better as the Word of God spreads across the globe. This will create peace and harmony and thus usher in the Second Coming. Like Amillennialists they believe that the Second Coming ends human history and is followed by Armageddon. This point of view takes a more optimistic approach to the state of civilization, assuming that the world will get progressively better with time. Preterism, the belief that many if not all of the events described in Revelation have already occurred, is prominent in both Postmillennialism and Amillennialism. Postmillennialism is also like Premillennialism in that both believe there will be an earthly kingdom of God. Unlike Premillennialists, however, Postmillennialists believe that this earthly kingdom will not be ruled physically but rather through the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit.²¹ Although not as popular as Amillennialism and Premillennialism, this perspective has been endorsed by influential Christian leaders throughout history. For example, St. Augustine previously ascribed to this point of view before switching to a more Amillennial opinion.

Postmillennialism is not heavily supported by most Christian denominations although the Reconstructionist movement lends support to this notion and transcends denominational lines.²² A prominent Postmillennialist, Lorraine Boettner, has offered a definition of Postmillennialism which reveals the essence of the Postmillennial belief:

That view of last things which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the Gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the

²⁰ Dispensationalists often interpret Daniel 9:27 as evidence in support of the Anti-Christ and the Great Tribulation and Thessalonians 4: 13-18 in support of the Rapture (the word "Rapture" does not appear in the Bible; its ascendance to a theological norm is based in hermeneutics).

²¹ Larry Harriman. "Prophecy Made Simple: Introduction to Biblical Doctrines concerning the end time." http://www.ifbreformation.org/Prophecy_Intro.aspx (10 Aug. 2007).

²² B.A. Robinson. "Dominionism." *Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance*. Mod. 18 May 2005. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/reconstr.htm>. (10 Aug. 2007).

hearts of individuals, that the world is eventually to be Christianized, and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the "millennium" . . . the second coming of Christ will be followed immediately by the general resurrections, the general judgment, and the interdicting of heaven and hell in their fullness.²³

Premillennialism and Dispensationalism

Premillennialism, also simply called millennialism, offers the third and final main eschatological perspective regarding the Millennium. Premillennialists place the Second Coming after the Rapture and the Tribulation. It is the most literal of the three main views and the most insistent on an earthly reign of Jesus lasting for exactly 1,000 years. Accordingly, the current age of the Church is recognized as occurring before the actual Millennium. Premillennialism can be grouped into two camps: Historic, or Older Premillennialism, and Dispensational Premillennialism. There are 10 major departures Dispensationalists take compared to Historic Premillennialists.

- Dispensationalism downplays the foresight of the Church in Old Testament prophecy
- Dispensationalism says that the great burden of Old Testament prophecy falls on the Jews.
- Dispensationalism teaches that the earthly kingdom was designed to initiate at the First Advent.
- Dispensationalism teaches that the current age was unforeseen in the Old Testament because the Jews rejected Christ.
- Dispensationalism teaches that time is to be divided into seven dispensations, with current time as the sixth and the Millennium as the seventh.
- Dispensationalism teaches that the Second Advent will exist in two sections; the Rapture and the Revelation with the Great Tribulation occurring in between. Essentially, Dispensationalists believe in three comings of Jesus: the First Advent, the Rapture (Jesus to retrieve His saints) and the Revelation (Jesus with His saints).

²³ James P. Dawson. "Millennial Views." Mod. 1998 <http://www.jp dawson.com/REVELATI/milview.html#B>, (10 Aug. 2007).

- Dispensationalists teach that no signs will precede the Rapture. They believe that it will be secret and instantaneous. The Rapture may occur at any moment, but the Revelation must occur after the seven year Tribulation.
- Dispensationalism teaches three resurrections: those before the Millennium, those after the Millennium and those at the Revelation. Older Premillennialists believe that only the righteous before the Millennium and the unrighteous after the Millennium will be resurrected.
- Dispensationalism teaches that the events in the Book of Revelation are to be understood in a futurist manner; they are, in fact, literal events which will happen from the Rapture to the Revelation.
- Dispensationalism teaches novel dogmatic principles (e.g. Secret Rapture) which were absent two centuries ago, even in Premillennialism.²⁴

Dispensationalism has taken a stricter, more literal interpretation of scripture than that of Older Premillennialism. It is now a very widely held Premillennial belief and is often associated, incorrectly, as a synonym for Premillennialism. This association must be avoided. Premillennialists believe in the nearness of the End Times and the Millennium, but do not incorporate the role of Jews as facilitator of such events in their methodology and do not espouse a Pre-Tribulation rapture. Furthermore, Premillennialism has been an important part in shaping American theology as it relates to world events even before Dispensationalism was developed. James Hutson says, "the [American] Revolution had an impact on American theology, specifically on millennialist expectations- the belief that, either before or after some unfathomable cataclysm, Christ would return and reign on earth in power for a thousand years."²⁵ The relationship between world events and theological expectations would play heavily on later Dispensational-Premillennial developments.

²⁴ John Gerstner. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt Publishers Inc, 1991), 18-20.

²⁵ James Hutson. *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1998) 47.

The varying millennial beliefs are not strictly based on Revelation 20. Each group seeks to extend a greater Biblical continuity with respect to prophetic interpretations. For instance, Revelation also inspires four main alliances without specific focus on the Millennium, although millennial connections are inferred. Preterism, as already briefly mentioned, contends that much prophesy has already been fulfilled. The Historicist equates the current state of the Church to the Tribulation age and sees relevant prophesies in the contemporary times. The Idealist does not believe that Biblical prophesies indicate specific times for which humanity can possibly predict. Lastly, the Futurist believes that prophesies will be revealed in the future but are not relevant to current conditions.²⁶ Some of these terms will be referenced when discussing Dispensationalism's history and its rise to prominence within evangelical circles. There are also various subsets of these broad terms which require outside consulting, as they deviate from the focus of this analysis.

The Roots of Dispensationalism

The roots of Dispensationalism are found in attitudes supporting Jewish restoration of a homeland in Palestine. The concept of a Jewish state has been discussed as an important component of world affairs long before the actual establishment of Israel in 1948. In 66 C.E. many Jews led an insurrection against the Roman authorities in Judea. This eventually led to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70. Many Jews were killed or enslaved by the Romans and many more fled the region attempting to seek refuge in surrounding Mediterranean locations. This would be the last time until the 20th century whereby Jews would make up a significant portion of the population of the land of Ancient Israel.²⁷

Support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine was largely ignored throughout much of Catholic Europe from the latter years of the Roman Empire well into the High Middle Ages

²⁶ Apologetics Index. "Tribulation." Mod. 24 Nov. <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/t24.html>, (12 Aug. 2007).

²⁷ Martin Goodman. *The Ruling Class of Judea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

(roughly 4th to 16th centuries). During this time Jews were routinely expelled from European cities and provinces due to widespread anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Ironically, England was at the forefront of both

Table 2.1
Main Views in Christian Eschatology

<p style="text-align: center;">Timeline of Dispensationalism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">First Advent...Secret Rapture of Church...Tribulation...Second Advent...Millennium...Last Judgment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Timeline of Historic Premillennialism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">First Advent...Tribulation...Second Advent...Millennium...Last Judgment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Timeline of Postmillennialism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">First Advent...Millennium...Second Coming/Last Judgment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Timeline of Amillennialism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">First Advent...Symbolic Millennium...Second Coming/Last Judgment</p>
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Jewish expulsion and Jewish restoration (the latter is evidenced by the British Mandate). The Jews were formally expelled from England in 1291 by King Edward. In the fourteenth century John Wycliffe translated the Bible from French and Latin into English. In the sixteenth century William Tyndale conducted a Biblical translation directly from original Hebrew.²⁸ Both these new vernacular translations helped galvanize the English Puritans into a new form of piety. When Oliver Cromwell assumed power in 1649, he and other Puritans began identifying themselves as the new Israel and began to take a proactive approach to facilitating end times prophecy.²⁹

²⁸ Tyndale is also the name of the publishing company responsible for the *Left Behind* franchise.

²⁹ Gerhard Falk. *The Restoration of Israel*. (NY, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc, 2006), p. vii-2.

On November 14th 1655, the Council of State, under Cromwell's leadership, assigned delegates to discuss the possibility of allowing Jews back into England. The precepts to this measure were based on a new found appreciation for the Hebrew language, and in turn, for the Jewish people. This committee became known as the Whitehall Conference and its establishment allowed Jews to eventually become recognized citizens of the Commonwealth and religious toleration was advocated by the government. This allowed the Jews to flourish in England and set the stage for more comprehensive restoration efforts in the future. Protestantism had a remarkable influence on Jewish restoration efforts. The prevalence of Supersessionism did not dramatically aid the restoration effort; it took another more literal Judeo-centric doctrine to facilitate those ends.³⁰

Dispensationalism as an independent ideology can be attributed to the Plymouth Brethren movement. Many church going people in Great Britain and New York became dissatisfied with organized religious bodies. In the early nineteenth century, these individuals began to agree on a noticeable amount of prophetic signs. Ian Rennie describes their mutual prophetic feelings; "One sign was the conversion of the Jews...Another sign of the Second Advent was the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world, and the partial decline, at least, of opposing forces."³¹

Nearly every movement, be it political or theological, owes considerable gratitude to the efforts of a single leader. On Behalf of Israel, by Yaakov Ariel, provides a tremendous amount of information on the Dispensational movement and its principle advocates. The Plymouth Brethren had their first influential leader in John Nelson Darby. Darby is often known as the father of Dispensationalism because he was its first key advocate. Born in London in 1800, he served in the Church of England in 1825 but Darby became frustrated with the established church. He was set on bringing the church back to its foundational heritage, one without the corruptions he felt were a part of the modern church. He took an increasingly elitist position and viewed the Church

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ian Rennie, "Nineteenth Century Roots" in *Handbook of Biblical Prophecy*, ed. Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), p. 46.

as only comprising evangelical Protestants. Prior to Darby, most Premillennialists were of the historicist kind. Darby, through Dispensationalism, refocused the prominent Premillennial view towards that of Futurism. Modern Dispensationalists are thus Futurists in their Premillennial approach, while Older Premillennialists maintain the historical perspective. Both expect the end of days to occur in the near future. The main difference is that Historicists believe that eschatological events already occurred, while Futurists are waiting for such occurrences. Futurists often see current events as the end of one dispensation and the therefore the imminence of the next. Dispensationalists view the next dispensation as the Millennium; therefore their outlook on current conditions is organized to reveal the near finale of the current dispensation with anticipation for the Millennial Kingdom.³²

Although Darby is considered the father of Dispensationalism, the essence of his theology was not completely novel. The application of a Futurist approach to Premillennialism can be traced to a Jesuit named Francisco Ribera who proposed the possibility that the Antichrist may in fact come after the termination of the current age, essentially affirming the possibility of different dispensations and suggesting that the current age may in fact lead to the last and final age, the Millennium.³³ Of course, the Catholic Church did not adopt this theology and it never gained prominence in Christianity until the efforts of Darby in the late nineteenth century.

Darby's unique gift to this burgeoning theology was the concept of the Secret Rapture. This doctrine teaches that Jesus will return to earth to meet the Church in the air as his saints are raised from Earth. Then, after the seven year Tribulation, Jesus will come back to establish his Earthly kingdom. Dispensationalists, shrewdly, refrained from assigning an exact time for this to occur.³⁴ In this way they could avoid the embarrassing miscalculations of the Millerites.³⁵ Timing

³² Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*. (NY, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1991), pp 11-14.

³³ *Ibid*

³⁴ *Id* at 15

³⁵ The Millerites were Historicists and predicted the Second Coming to occur in April of 1843. By 1845 its followers, understandably frustrated, abandoned the movement and attained success in the Adventist Church. The Adventists thus continued the Premillennial belief of the Historicist variety. See Ohio Historical Society. *Millerites*. Mod. 2005. <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=607> (13 Aug 2007).

of the Rapture has been a subject of ambiguity within Dispensational camps. Darby held to a Pre-Tribulation Rapture and that belief still resonates strongly with modern Dispensationalists. Today, the idea of a Pre-Tribulation secret rapture is one of the most distinguishing features of Dispensational theology.

Darby spread Dispensationalism to the United States and Canada through several visits throughout the late 19th century. Those denominations most affected by Darby's teachings were mainline Protestants, particularly Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists. An early Dispensational devotee was James H. Brooks. Brooks, a Presbyterian minister, is notable for writing a popular book titled *Maranatha: or the Lord Cometh* (1870). This book proved popular and established Mr. Brooks as a leader in Dispensational thinking. He strongly advocated that Jews were the nation of God and supported Jewish immigration to Palestine. Along with his books, he also published a periodical called *The Truth*. He believed in evangelizing to the Jewish people and viewed his calling as a Premillennialist would aid in their spiritual restoration. He wanted Jews to retain ties within their religious and ethnic communities so that more Jews would come to know Christ.³⁶

Prior to the late 1800's Dispensationalism operated without a formal conference to establish official creeds. Brooks helped change that and thus helped Dispensationalism grow in both popularity and scholarship. From 1883 to 1897 a group of Premillennialists met for an annual conference in Niagara, Ontario. The Niagara Conferences helped organize Dispensationalism into a coherent doctrine. It also helped suppress other Premillennial views, specifically those against a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. In 1878 Brooks identified 14 articles essential to his theology. These were known as the "Fundamentals of the Faith" and provided the first instance of a coherent Dispensational creed.³⁷ The five main points were: Biblical completeness, total depravity of humanity, the necessity of regeneration from sin, atonement of Jesus, and the Premillennial return of Christ. From 1910 to 1915 a series of publications called

³⁶ Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*. (NY, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1991), pp 25-28.

³⁷ *Id.* at 29

The Fundamentals were distributed based on these teachings. This gave way to a much broader movement under the new name "Christian Fundamentalism" which continues to affect American culture and foreign policy today. This brand of fundamentalism still resonates in modern times with a strong Dispensational perspective.³⁸

In 1909 Cyrus Scofield published a King James Version of the Bible along with reference notes and commentaries concerning Biblical passages. According to Ariel, "the publication most instrumental in spreading Dispensationalism in America was the *Schofield Reference Bible*."³⁹ While there already existed a series of publications asserting Dispensational perspectives, the *Schofield Reference Bible* was essentially a Dispensational study guide alongside Bible verses. Scofield's commentaries introduced important Dispensational language into popular vernacular. Emphasis on the "Great Tribulation" and the process for Jewish eschatological fulfillment was abundant throughout the book.⁴⁰

As a result of Scofield's impact on theological understanding, the word *Scofieldism* is applied to an opinion with a Dispensational viewpoint which mirrors that found within the notations of the *Reference Bible*. This Bible continued to be used by many fundamentalist churches well into the 1960s and is still used at higher learning institutes such as Dallas Theological Seminary. Below is an excerpt from the *Scofield Reference Bible*:

The day of the Lord is preceded by seven signs: (1) The sending of Elijah Mal. 4.5; Rev. 11. 3-6); (2) cosmical disturbances (Joel 2. 1-12; Mt. 24. 29; Acts 2. 19,20; Rev. 6. 12-17); (3) the insensibility of the professing church (1 Thes. 5. 1-3); (4) the apostasy of the professing church, then become "Laodicea" (2 Thes. 2.3); (5) the rapture of the true church (1 Thes. 4.17); (6) the manifestation of the "man of sin", the Beast (2 Thes. 2. 1-8); (7) the apocalyptic judgments (Rev. 11.-18.).⁴¹

³⁸ B.A. Robinson. *The Cardinal Doctrines of Protestant Christianity*. Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance. Mod. 18 June 2007. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/chrcarddoc.htm> (18 Aug. 2007)

³⁹ Yakkov Ariel. *On Behalf of Israel*. (NY, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1991), p 48.

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ C.I. Scofield. *Scofield Reference Bible*. (NY,NY: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 1349.

The Seven Dispensations

Scofield defined the seven dispensations in a publication called *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*.⁴² These dispensations were organized as chronological, successive agreements between God and his people.

- **Man innocent.** This dispensation covers the origin of man in Adam and his subsequent expulsion from Eden. Man's innocence was broken when he ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil of which God explicitly warned against. Evidence for this is found in Genesis.
- **Man under conscience.** After the Fall of Man, resulting from disobedience to God, man was now governed by his own conscience for the judgment of right and wrong. This dispensation allowed man to populate the earth. Man ultimately became wicked and corrupt, thus ushering in the Flood so as to restore man's righteousness. Evidence for this is found in Genesis.
- **Man in authority over earth.** After the Flood, God allowed eight people to survive and rebuild humanity. Noah and his family found grace in the eyes of the Lord and man was allowed to establish government. Man's hubris resulted in God confusing his language during the construction of the tower of Babel. This judgment effectively ended the third dispensation. Evidence for this is found in Genesis.
- **Man under Promise.** This dispensation establishes God's covenant with Abraham. Some promises were given as unconditional signs of God's favor with Abraham and his descendents (Israelites) while other promises were given based on the adherence of dutiful obligations. Those promises given based on the obedience of the Israelites to the commandments of God were broken by impiety. The result was that God punished them by servitude in Egypt. This ended the fourth dispensation. Evidence for this is found in Genesis and Exodus.

⁴² C.I. Scofield. *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*.. (Finlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing, 1961), pp. 13-16.

- **Man under law.** God's grace saved the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. His commandments were brought down by Moses from Mount Sinai. Continual violation of the law saw the Israelites wander the desert, establish a kingdom and have that kingdom divided, conquered and driven from the land. This dispensation covers most of the Old and New Testament.
- **Man under grace.** The atonement of Jesus for the sins of man established a new dispensation of grace, offered freely to both Jews and Gentiles. Judgment will come to all the earth and believers will be raised and taken to heaven during the Rapture. The Tribulation will ensue whereby there will be great turmoil on earth. After this, Christ will return and begin the Millennial reign. Many New Testament verses aid this understanding (Daniel 12:1, Rev. 3:15). Dispensationalists believe humanity is nearing the end of this dispensation.
- **Man under the personal reign of Christ.** Christ will reign over the restored Israel for the Millennium. He will reign from Jerusalem and his saints will be associated in this glory. Satan will eventually gather his army and challenge God after the 1,000 year reign. Satan will be defeated and those aligned not with God will be judged. There will then be a new heaven and new earth. Evidence for this is found in Revelation.

Another main feature of Dispensationalism, and the one with the most impact on foreign policy with Israel, is the role the Jews play in the end times. Dispensationalists believe that God's Old Testament covenants with the Jews were not changed through the Messiah, and consequentially are still valid. Dispensationalists specify three main covenants. The first is the covenant with Abraham. Genesis 12: 2-3 says, "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."⁴³ The second covenant is with Moses. Exodus 20 spells out this covenant through

⁴³ The Bible, English Standard Version

God's issuance of the Ten Commandments and is applied to those who keep and hold Mosaic Law. The Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7 elaborates on the previous two by God promising to sustain David's lineage.⁴⁴

The Dispensational conception of the Jews in the End Times is not easy to understand. Because Dispensational ideas are seldom understood, even by those who claim to profess such opinions, a blanket comment about how Dispensationalists feel about the Jews proves problematic. This is because congregational members of Dispensational churches are often unaware, or simply dismiss, other aspects of the Dispensational agenda. Traditional Dispensational teachings profess that the Battle of Armageddon will take place in northern Israel after the Tribulation has ended, marking the end of history and the beginning of the thousand year rule of Jesus. By the time this happens, two-thirds of the Jews will have died and the others will have converted to Christianity. Gershom Gorenberg, author of *End of Days* (2000), expresses his dismay, "As a Jew, I can't feel comfortable with the affections of somebody who looks forward to that scenario." He adds, "essentially it's a five act play in which the Jews disappear in the fourth act."⁴⁵

Dispensationalists remain steadfast for their support for the Jews, according to their Biblical understanding that God will love those who cherish Israel. In the face of such criticism, Dispensationalists express that what they want is what is best for the Jewish people and that they care about their ultimate salvation. Accordingly, the Jews will continue to play a huge part in the sixth and seventh dispensation, whether they agree to or not. Dispensationalists posit that the Antichrist will gain prominence during the Rapture and sway many people under his false prophesy. Coincidentally, the Beast will rise and create a new version of the Roman Empire and rule mightily until he is dethroned by Christ.⁴⁶ Given this perspective, it is possible to see how many Jewish related incidents in the Middle East could possess a hint of prophesy, thus

⁴⁴ Yakkov Ariel. *On Behalf of Israel*. (NY, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1991), pp 16-17.

⁴⁵ Bob Simon. "Zion's Christian Soldiers." Mod. 8 June 2003. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/10/03/60minutes/main524268.shtml>. (20 Aug 2007).

⁴⁶ David Harrington Watt. "The Private Hopes of American Fundamentalists and Evangelicals", 1925-1975. *Religion and American Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (summer, 1991), pp. 155-175.

explaining the increased scrutiny, involvement and attention Dispensationalists place on Middle East events.

The hermeneutics of Dispensational understanding facilitate its theological positions concerning the Millennium and the role of Jews in Biblical eschatology. This interpretative framework is guided by principles of Biblical inerrancy and literalism. It is the belief in a literal Israel that facilitates a Levant-oriented end times theology. Without this literal interpretation, Dispensationalism would not have reason to equate Middle East events as indicators of the next dispensation. Dispensationalists employ an exegetic method hinged on obvious, apparent Biblical messages. Accordingly, these messages are complicated and distorted by incorporating symbolism and allegory. In fact, early American Dispensationalists helped initiate the cause for fundamentalism by defying liberal interpretative trends.⁴⁷

Dispensationalists resist the notion of a more metaphoric approach to prophesy understanding and thus opt to take Biblical passages at face value. Critics of this approach often cite contextual errors which lead to a false literalism that lacks Biblical merit when properly understood. This is especially the case when Non-Dispensationalists compare the text to earlier Greek editions and other biblical passages which support a more symbolic rhetoric.

Over the years, Dispensationalism has grown to encompass a wide audience. Christian fundamentalists have readily adopted Dispensational end times theology as have many "pop-culture Christians" including those who are not active church goers and who are simply nominal Christians. Each are important in Dispensationalism's impact on foreign policy relations. Nominal Christians may find Dispensationalism appealing due to the certitude of their eschatological beliefs and the notion that Christians will escape the Tribulation through the secret rapture, thus not experiencing the suffering of the world. For many Christians who accept these teachings without knowledge of the nature or history of Dispensationalism, pop-culture religious fiction, such as the *Left Behind* franchise, provides them with the theology they seek.

⁴⁷ Yakkov Ariel. *On Behalf of Israel*. (NY, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1991), pp 18-19.

Dispensationalism also possesses its share of subsets. For instance, Ultradispensationalism, and Progressive Dispensationalism differentiate themselves from traditional Dispensationalism in a number of ways. While these distinctions may be important from a theological perspective, however, they are largely negligible when discussing the core values of Dispensationalism in the aggregate and the foreign policy implications therein.⁴⁸

Higher Education

Dispensational institutions of higher learning are very important to the perpetuation of dispensational ideals. They provide a scholarly outlet for theological discussion, where historic approaches to Dispensationalism can end with novel conclusions, thus creating a more complete analysis of what Dispensationalism actually means and what implications it has for the future. Knowing the history and contributions of these academic institutions helps aid in the understanding of Dispensationalism as a whole and how it has achieved popular success during the 20th century. Studying Dispensational schools also highlights the works of prominent Dispensationalists who were influential in the origins of these institutions. This in turn leads to a better comprehension of Dispensationalism and its influence on U.S. policy. Dispensationalism must be understood in the broad context for which it exists. It must be acknowledged as a self-sustaining ideology capable of its own promotion. Centers of Dispensational research and teaching help aid in this task.

There are many Dispensational colleges and universities throughout the United States, as well as a notable Dispensational college located in Canada.⁴⁹ Dispensationalism is an international belief, although its extraordinary popularity is largely American. The scope of Dispensationalism must be understood to be large in order to grasp the far reaching effects of its

⁴⁸ For more information on other Dispensational subfields see *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* edited by Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock.

⁴⁹ See Prairie Bible Institute, Alberta, Canada

doctrines. This discussion will involve the main two Dispensational schools of higher learning. This judgment is based on historical longevity, Dispensational affinity, and prominence of Dispensational alumni.

Moody Bible Institute, located in Chicago, is one of the premier Dispensational schools and traces its history to the efforts of Dwight L. Moody. Moody was born in 1837 in Northfield, Massachusetts and moved to Chicago in 1856. He became interested in spreading the Gospel through publishing after he noticed that many bookstores did not carry a sufficient amount of Christian literature. He addressed listeners at what was then known as the Chicago Evangelization Society, which he founded in 1886. He founded the Bible Institute Colportage Association in 1894 in an effort to produce a greater amount of Christian literature for an affordable price so that even the economically disadvantaged would have an opportunity to read about theology. He also influenced C.I. Scofield and requested that Scofield become a pastor at the church Moody was attending at the time in Northfield, Massachusetts. Scofield was also in charge of Moody's funeral services, also in Northfield.⁵⁰ After his death in 1899, the Chicago Evangelization society took the name of Moody Bible Institute in his honor. Moody was a popular preacher and author in his own right, traveling throughout the United States and Europe to lecture and preach.⁵¹

According to its doctrinal statement, Moody Bible Institute has adhered to "non-charismatic, dispensational, and generally Calvinistic" principles. Their views on the end times are textbook Dispensationalism:

The Church of Jesus Christ is a distinct entity from Israel in the ongoing program of God... Christ will return in the air preceding the seven-year Tribulation at which time He will receive into heaven all believers who constitute His church. During that tribulation period God will bring salvation to Israel and the nations while exercising judgment on unbelievers.⁵²

⁵⁰ Petersburg Gospel Center. "C.I. Scofield." Mod. 2004. <http://www.gospelcenterchurch.org/scofield.html> (31 Aug. 2007).

⁵¹ Moody Bible Institute. "History of Moody Bible Institute." Mod 2007. http://www.moodyministries.net/crp_MainPage.aspx?id=62 (31 Aug 2007).

⁵² Moody Bible Institute. "Doctrinal Statement." Mod 2007. http://www.moodyministries.net/crp_MainPage.aspx?id=334&terms=dispensational (31 Aug.2007).

Moody Bible Institute has thus influenced Dispensational thinkers for over a century and continues to be a respected theological school. Jerry Jenkins, the co-author of the Dispensationally based, apocalyptic *Left Behind* series, is one of many prominent persons affiliated with the college⁵³. The influence D.L. Moody had on C.I. Scofield is especially notable because it shows how Dispensationalism has spread from one generation to the next, with the latter generations building on the works of the former.

The major center for Dispensational edification is Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). No other institution has had a greater impact on Dispensational understanding and promotion than DTS. Because of this prominence more time must be spent understanding the contributions of DTS, specifically those of its founder, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer.

Chafer is an important figure in Dispensational history. He was born in Ohio in 1871 and had a Reformed upbringing. Chafer moved to Northfield, Massachusetts in 1901. It was in Northfield where he met C.I. Scofield who was the pastor at Trinitarian Congregational Church, the same church where Moody preached. He and Scofield formed a strong friendship. Chafer, along with Scofield, founded the Philadelphia School of the Bible in 1913 and Chafer wrote several books defending Pre-Tribulation, Dispensational Premillennialism. In 1922 he moved to Dallas and became a pastor at one of Scofield's former churches and remained professionally affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In 1924 he founded the Evangelical Theological College which would later be named Dallas Theological Seminary. He served as president of DTS until 1952.⁵⁴

DTS has followed in this tradition by continuing the promulgation of Scofield and Chafer style Dispensationalism. Article Five of the DTS doctrinal statement identifies Dispensationalism as an integral component in their belief system saying, "We believe that the dispensations are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on the earth through man under varying

⁵³ Jerry Jenkins. "Jerry's Biography." Mod 2007. <http://www.jerryjenkins.com/bio.html> (2Sept 2007).

⁵⁴ John D. Hannah. "Chafer, Lewis Sperry." <http://www.tyndale.edu/dirn/bios/chafer.html> (31 Aug 2007).

responsibilities."⁵⁵ DTS also stresses the coexistence between the doctrine of dispensations and the doctrine of covenantal grace: "We believe that the dispensations are not ways of salvation nor different methods of administering the so-called Covenant of Grace."⁵⁶ DTS produces some of the most well known Dispensational writers in the country, with many kept on staff for research and teaching positions.⁵⁷ DTS has become known as the preeminent Dispensationally oriented seminaries in America and the world, with over 2,000 students from all 50 states and over 50 countries.⁵⁸

Conclusion

As a theological movement, Dispensationalism has evolved and proliferated under the tutelage of other prominent Dispensational thinkers. Moody was a prominent Dispensational figurehead and mentored Scofield. Scofield then became a Dispensational leader who in turn mentored Chafer. Thus, Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary were both brought about by the social and professional connections between these men. Dispensationalism relied on the leadership of theologically ambitious men who persevered enough to set themselves apart by forming institutions according to their convictions based on Biblical literalism and Dispensational perspectives.

Also important in early 20th century Dispensationalism is its prominence within Reformed churches. The Northfield Church, which was so influential in spreading Dispensationalism, was a Congregational church with a Calvinistic heritage. Chafer's involvement with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also reveals the link between Reformed churches and early Dispensationalism. The Presbyterian Church struggled early on with Dispensationalism and by the 1940's it was openly opposed to the idea. Accusations were made that Dispensationalism is inherently Arminian (free will theistic), a common perspective that is still held today. The departure of tacit

⁵⁵ Dallas Theological Seminary. <http://www.dts.edu/about/doctrinalstatement/> (31 Aug 2007).

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Notable affiliates include Hal Lindsey and Craig Blaising.

⁵⁸ Ibid

support of Dispensationalism by Reformed churches allowed the Dispensationalist (and fundamentalist) movement to take on a more Arminian theological base which explains its prevalence in non-denominational and Baptist churches, both Southern and American. Some Dispensationalists contend that Calvinism and Dispensationalism can work in tandem with one another but this merger has little popular appeal. Although Dispensationalism is not confined to a particular denomination, the fact remains that its popularity is overwhelmingly found in Arminian oriented churches, despite the Calvinist leaders who helped aid its advancement.⁵⁹

The salience of Dispensational thinking in American culture has permeated the minds of many people who are not knowledgeable about dispensational teachings, apart from what they see or hear in the media or from friends. Dispensationalism has thus become the de facto truth for many Americans who accept its teachings without a great detailed understanding of what it is and without the knowledge of other prominent Biblical interpretive methods. The following chapters will discuss the impact that Dispensationalism has on American formal policy initiatives with Israel as well as its influence on the American public, who either actively or passively accept its theological legitimacy.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Some argue that Dispensationalism eventually leads to Arminianism and thus is mutually opposed to Calvinism. For such arguments see *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*.

⁶⁰ For further illustrations regarding Dispensationalism and prophecy, see charts by Clarence Larkin. These charts can be viewed and ordered at > <http://www.armageddonbooks.com/clarkin.html><

CHAPTER 3

DISPENSATIONALISM: PUBLIC OPINION AND AMERICAN SALIENCE

I have in my life been a member of a church of almost 20,000 members. I have read *all* of the Left Behind books in the original series. I voted for Bush *twice* (and his father *twice*). I was born and raised in the southern part of the United States. To add insult to injury I recently bought my first SUV. To those like Phillips I am a hyper-demon responsible for the coming destruction of a once-great country.

- Dr. Mike Stallard, Baptist Bible Seminary

In this somewhat sarcastic response to a prominent political strategist, Dispensational critic and *American Theocracy* author Kevin Phillips, Dr. Stallard illustrates his opinion of how Dispensational critics view Dispensational supporters, with himself being the latter. He goes on to argue that Dispensationalists are not the radical zealots bent on world destruction as some critics claim them to be. In a single paragraph Dr. Stallard has described many prominent stereotypes applied to Dispensational adherents: Being from the South, voting Republican, and attending a mega-church are all popular conceptions of Dispensational followers. He even mentions SUV ownership, probably in reference to accusations that Dispensationalists are anti-environmental because "under the spell of such potent prophecies [Dispensationalists] cannot be expected to worry about the environment."⁶¹

Religion and politics sometimes share a very close relationship in this country, so it should come as no surprise that religious organizations possess a tremendous amount of influence on policy. Christian fundamentalists also contribute a significant amount to policy initiatives in government. Many people are guided by their Dispensational understandings and act accordingly. What are the primary areas of Dispensational influence and what demographic characteristics can be identified? How large and influential are these bodies? What do public

⁶¹ Glenn Scherer. "The Godly Must Be Crazy." Mod. 24 Oct 2004. <http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2004/10/27/scherer-christian/> (22 Aug. 2007).

opinion polls reveal about the nature of this belief? This chapter examines the prominence of Dispensational thinking with relevant and tangible survey statistics. It is necessary to understand Dispensationalism as more than an abstract concept. It should be regarded as a genuine ideological force that has actual, practical significance in contemporary American society.

The close relationship Dispensationalism has with Christian Fundamentalism gives some idea as to who Dispensationalists are and where they are located geographically. For instance, Dispensationalism can be found mostly in small towns in the South.⁶² There are a variety of factors which explain this. One may be the prevalence of Baptist churches. Baptist churches have embraced Dispensationalism more than other denominations, although traditional Baptist theology makes no such association with Dispensational tenets. Despite the stereotypes, Dispensationalism may be taught in a rural church with a dozen or so members or an inner city mega-church with over 5,000 members. It is precisely this adaptability and cross-section representation which makes Dispensationalism so influential in American politics. The relevance of public opinion surveys is that they show how strong Dispensationalism is and thus reveals the potential effect it may have on government representatives. How Dispensational proliferation plays on Congressional representatives and presidential hopefuls will be analyzed in Chapter 6.

Public Opinion and Israel Favorability

Public opinion polls are instrumental in showing the salience of Dispensational beliefs regarding the End Times and the conception of Israel as the pivotal player in fulfilling Rapture prophesy. Public opinion has a tremendous influence on who gets elected in Congress and what measures these elected officials propose once in the legislature. Public opinion also weighs heavily on the President, both directly from the constituent groups who aided the election and also from those elected officials who pressure the president to take certain foreign policy objectives in favor of Israel. Government officials may or may not truly believe in the

⁶² More on where Dispensational ideas are consolidated and further demographic data may be found in Chapter 4.

Dispensationally supported Israeli initiatives, but, because key parts of the public are so adamant about such measures, individual convictions may give way to constituent and political acquiescence. This chapter examines Dispensational ideas by analyzing various opinion polls in order to determine the extent of Dispensational agreeableness in this country, which in turn, will led to a concrete analysis of these influences on foreign policy measurements.

Public opinion surveys asking questions related to America's perception of its role concerning Israel have existed for quite some time but have been more common in recent years. An interesting benchmark to see how Americans have viewed Israel is to look at the average percentage of people in support of Israel. American support for the Jewish people over the Arabs is nothing new and is not necessarily relegated to Dispensational camps. Early public opinion polling both before and after the establishment of Israel reveals that Americans were overwhelmingly in support of the creation of Israel.⁶³

Figure 3.1 shows an early survey about public opinion in regards to the creation of Israel. Taken in 1945, three years before Israel declared independence; this survey shows that 59% of Americans supported a Jewish state in Palestine and 19% opposed. The question also suggests that the rationale for Jewish support is based in part on their sufferings throughout Europe. A few years later during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, a survey asked who Americans sympathized with more, the Jews or the Arabs. Figure 3.2 shows that while many people were unsure or neutral about the conflict, the Jews still had a favorability of 32% compared to 13% for the Arabs.

⁶³ Survey Methods: The survey results were all based on telephone dialing of national adults aged 18 and older. I have extracted the survey data from a central database, and directly from the source to use as secondary research. For more information visit the survey source as referenced in the figure box. The surveys rely on at least 1,000 respondents, randomly selected with a 95% confidence level, meaning that the percentage reported accurately reflects the national adult population within plus or minus 4-4 percentage points. Question wording and other logistical difficulties may have also influenced the reported findings.

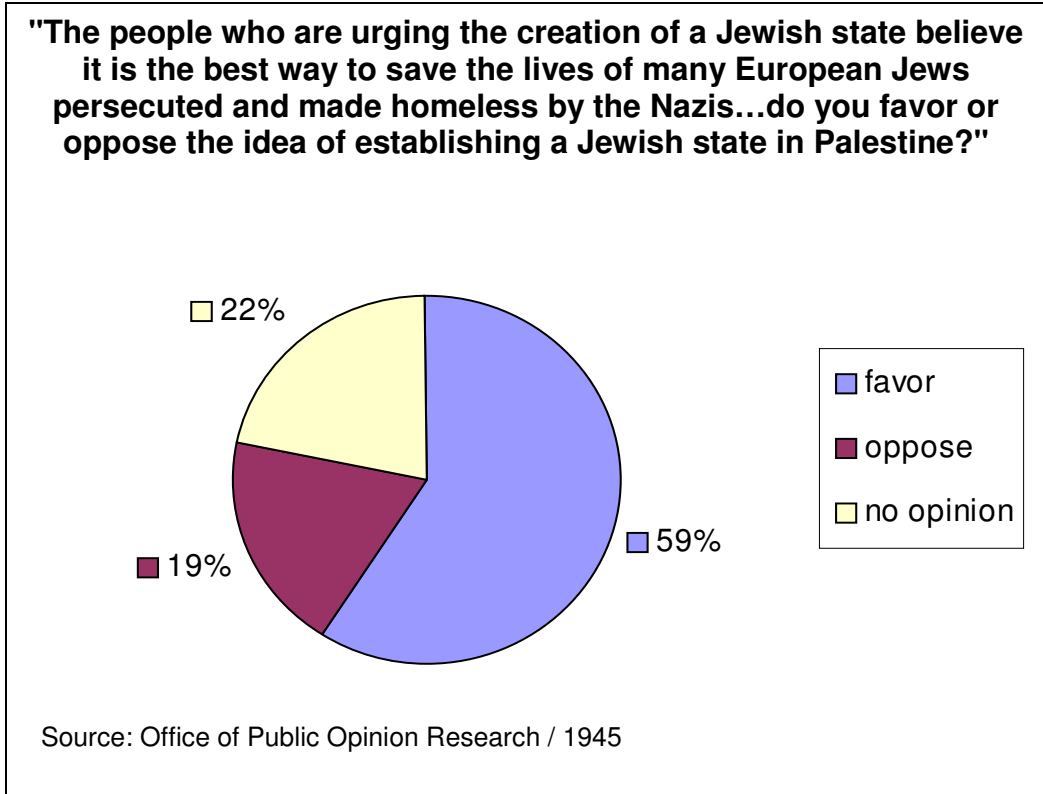


FIGURE 3.1 ISRAEL FAVORABILITY IN 1945

Public opinion favored the creation of Israel both before and after the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. However, a long term trend line best illustrates the consistency of such support over the Arabs. The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise shows numerous Gallup polls taken from 1967 to 2007 revealing that public support for Israel has been consistently higher than support for Arab nations. Figure 3.3 shows a 40 year period of American public perception of Israel, contrasted with that of Arab nations. Beginning in June 2-7 1967, support was 38% for Israel and 3% for Arabs. In 1977 a jump in support for both occurred as Israel showed 44% and Arabs 8%. Support for Israel dropped to 37% in 1988 while support for Arab nations rose to 15%. 1997 saw a slight increase for Israel to 38% but a significant decrease for Arab nations to only 8%. Finally, 2007 saw a dramatic increase for both Israel and Arab nations with Israel receiving 58% support and Arab nations receiving 20%.

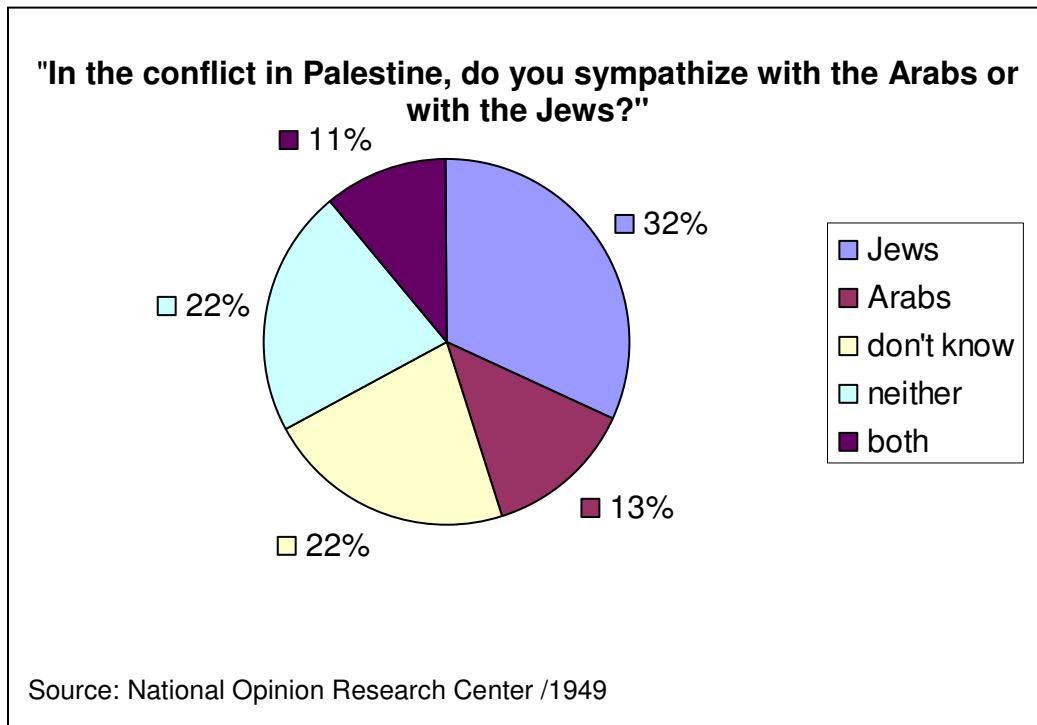


FIGURE 3.2 SYMPATHY FOR ISRAEL IN 1949

The questions remained consistent throughout the years with exception that beginning in 1993 Gallup began qualifying the Arab description by asking about Palestinian Arabs instead of Arabs in general. The distinction between Arabs and Palestinian Arabs may have played a part in the rise of public support for Arabs (Palestinian Arabs) but it may have also emboldened support for Israel, as evident in surge of recent years. Averages for all polls since 1967 have been approximately 46% in favor of Israel and 12% in favor of Arab nations. Those years listed in Figure 3.3 shows the data of support during a given time of the year, and thus give an account of the support trend for a 40 year period. However, support for both Israel and Arab nations saw varying degrees of fluctuations both in the given years and in the interim between the next represented survey statistic. These results should be regarded as a means to understand the disparity between support for Israel compared to that for Arab nations as well as to show that although support rises and falls, Israel remains considerably ahead in terms of survey support.

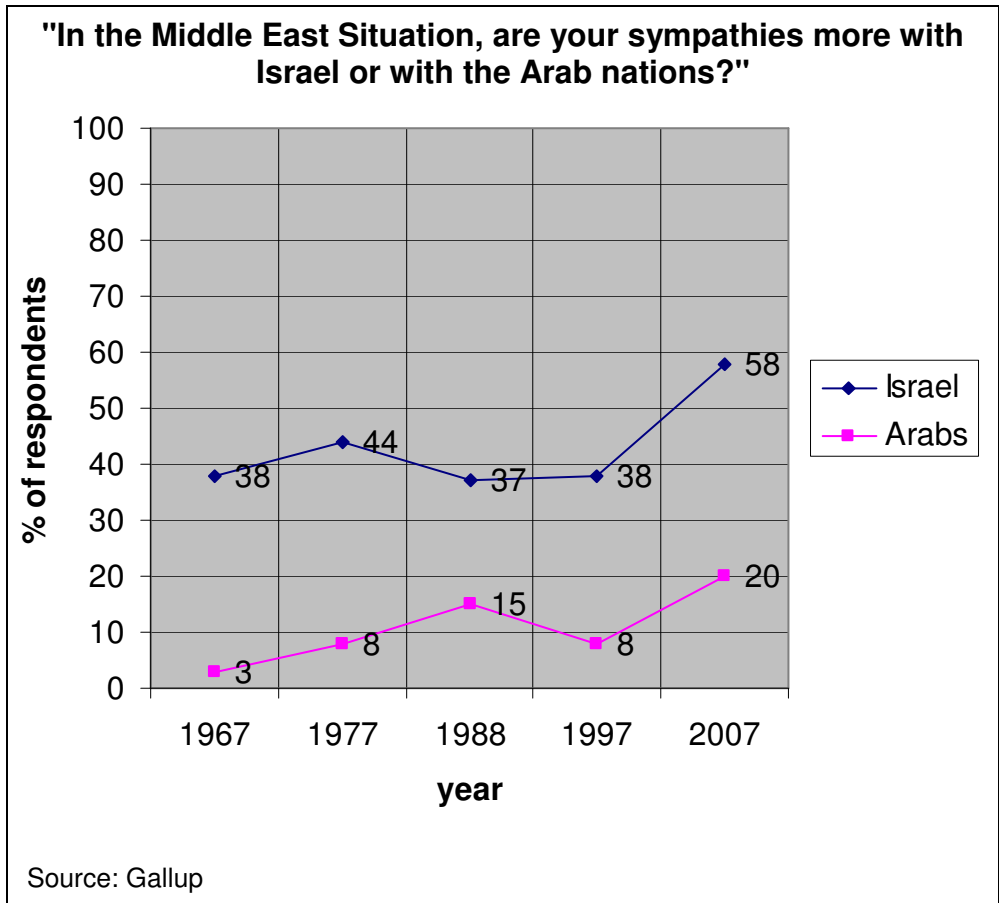


FIGURE 3.3 FORTY YEAR TREND LINE OF ARAB AND ISRAELI SYMPATHIES

Although support for Israel has been consistently higher than support for Arabs, the trends have experienced moments of marked fluctuation. Support for either side was not always a gradual progress as hinted at by Figure 3.3. Certain years saw tremendous highs and lows for each. These often corresponded to world events which helped increase or decrease favorability. For instance, from June 2-7 1967, support for Israel was at 38% (as seen in Figure 3.3). However, another poll later that month saw a climb of 56% in support of Israel. June also saw a 40 year low of Arab support at 3%. The answer for this dramatic climb seems to be the 1967 Six-Day War.

The war clearly resonated pro-Israeli sentiments in the United States leading to a favorability rating not seen until January 1991 where favorability reached a record 64 %. Arab favorability would reach a high of 28% in September 1982; the same time Israel support fell to a record low of 32% possibly in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon earlier that summer. Figures 3.4 and 3.5 illustrate the fluctuations in survey opinions, reflecting various crucial issues present at the time.

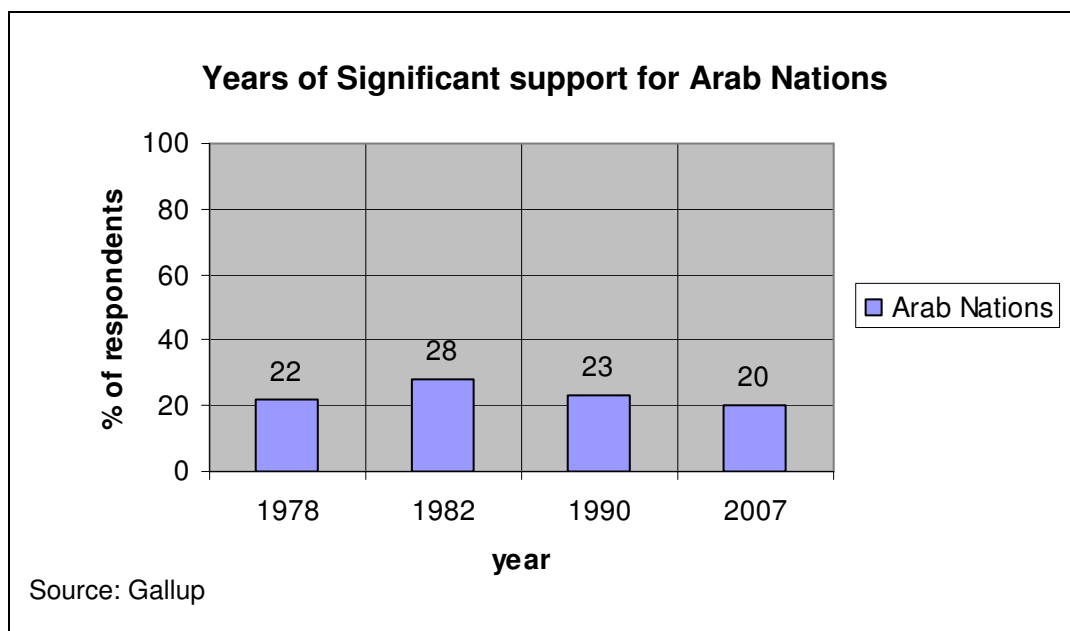


FIGURE 3.4 SUPPORT FOR ARAB NATIONS

According to data collected from the Jewish Virtual Library, Israel benefited from a continual average rise in support by the American public since the 1970s. In the 1970s, support averaged 42%; the 1980s saw 46%; and since 1990 support has hovered around 50%. Compare these statistics with support of the Arabs/Palestinians and the disparity becomes even more apparent. Support for the Arabs/Palestinians has declined since the 1980s where it averaged

nearly 15%. It has dropped to less than 14% since 2000, virtually staying the same given the margin of error, and on average Israel is supported by a 4 to 1 margin.⁶⁴

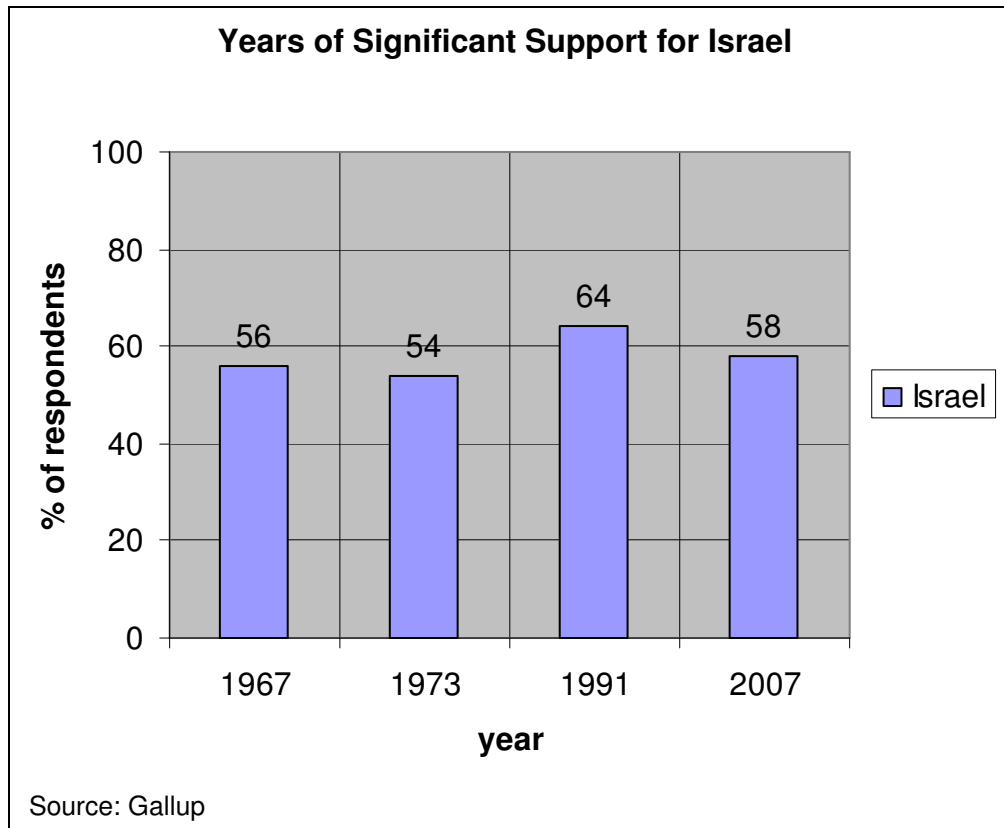


FIGURE 3.5 SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

The evidence shows that Americans in general support Israel over Palestinians and other Arabs, but what are the religious and racial characteristics of respondents with these opinions? In 2004, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reported Israeli support statistics based on race and religion. Figure 3.6 asks "Should the U.S. support Israel over the Palestinians?" These responses illustrate the differential opinions held by individuals of various races and religious affiliation. It should come as no surprise that Jews advocate the strongest support for Israel

⁶⁴ American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise: Jewish Virtual Library. *American Sympathy Toward Israel and the Arabs/Palestinians*. Mod 2007. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/polls.html> (6 Sept. 2007).

reporting, 75% in favor. Evangelical Protestants (the group most aligned with dispensational theology) come next with 52% of respondents voicing support for Israel. Evangelical Protestants and Jews are the only demographic group represented in this poll where more than half of adherents support Israel. The others follow this order: Mainline Protestants 33%, Latino Protestants 37%, Black Protestants 24%, Catholics 31%, Latino Catholics 25%, unaffiliated 20%. The average for the entire sample was 35% for Israel, 37% for Palestine, a virtual tie considering the margin of error.

At first glance, Figure 3.6 appears to contradict the results in figures 3.3-3.5. This is slightly deceptive. Notice the question wording from Figure 6: *Should the U.S. support Israel over the Palestinians*, versus Figure 3.3. *...are your sympathies more with Israel or with the Arab nations?* Question wording may have played an important part in shaping public opinion. To be sure if this is a valid assumption, look at the results of Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7 shows a different statistic than Figure 3.6, one that seems more closely aligned with those of the Gallup findings in Figures 3.3-3.5. Like Figure 3.6, Pew is responsible for conducting this survey, but unlike Figure 3.6, Figure 3.7 shows a more one-sided favorability for Israel. The average difference in support is 28% in favor of Israel, far different than the slightly higher support for Palestine found in Figure 3.6. Interestingly, White evangelicals were the only demographic group who favored Israel by over half in both surveys. The reason behind the consistency of their opinions could rest in the Dispensational nature of their beliefs, whereby this foundation is not easily swayed by the choice of words, rather it is a deep-rooted, unyielding

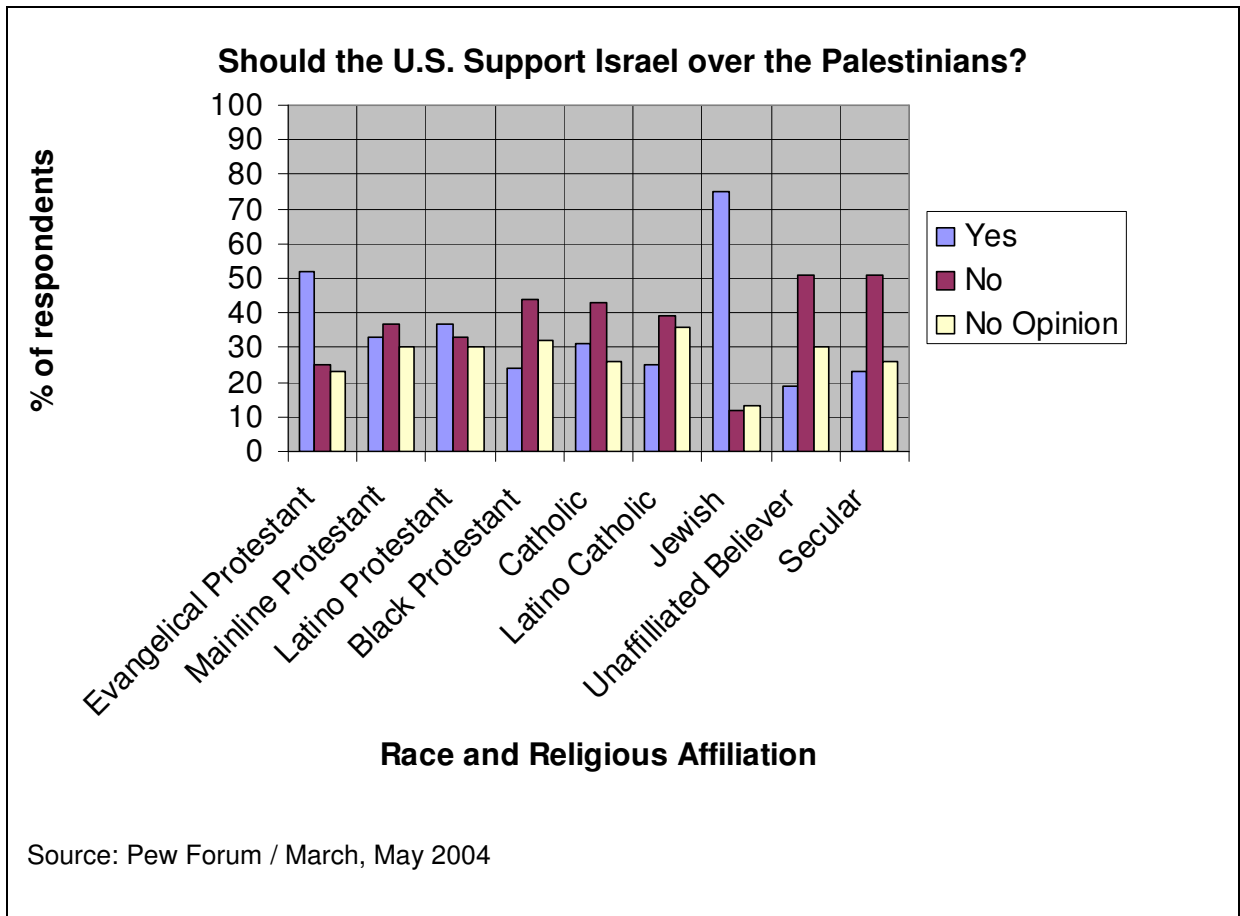


FIGURE 3.6 SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AND PALESTINIANS BY RACE AND RELIGION

conviction predicated on their theological conception. The tally of support for Israel is as follows: Whites 41%, White Evangelicals 55%, White Mainline denominations 34%, White Catholics 39%, Blacks 40%, Hispanics 40%, and Seculars 24%. The support by White evangelicals is significant because they account for about 26% (roughly 75 million people) of the entire national population and provided a significant (40%) share of the votes for President Bush in 2004.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. *American Evangelicals and Israel*. Mod.2007. <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=80> (5 Sept. 2007)

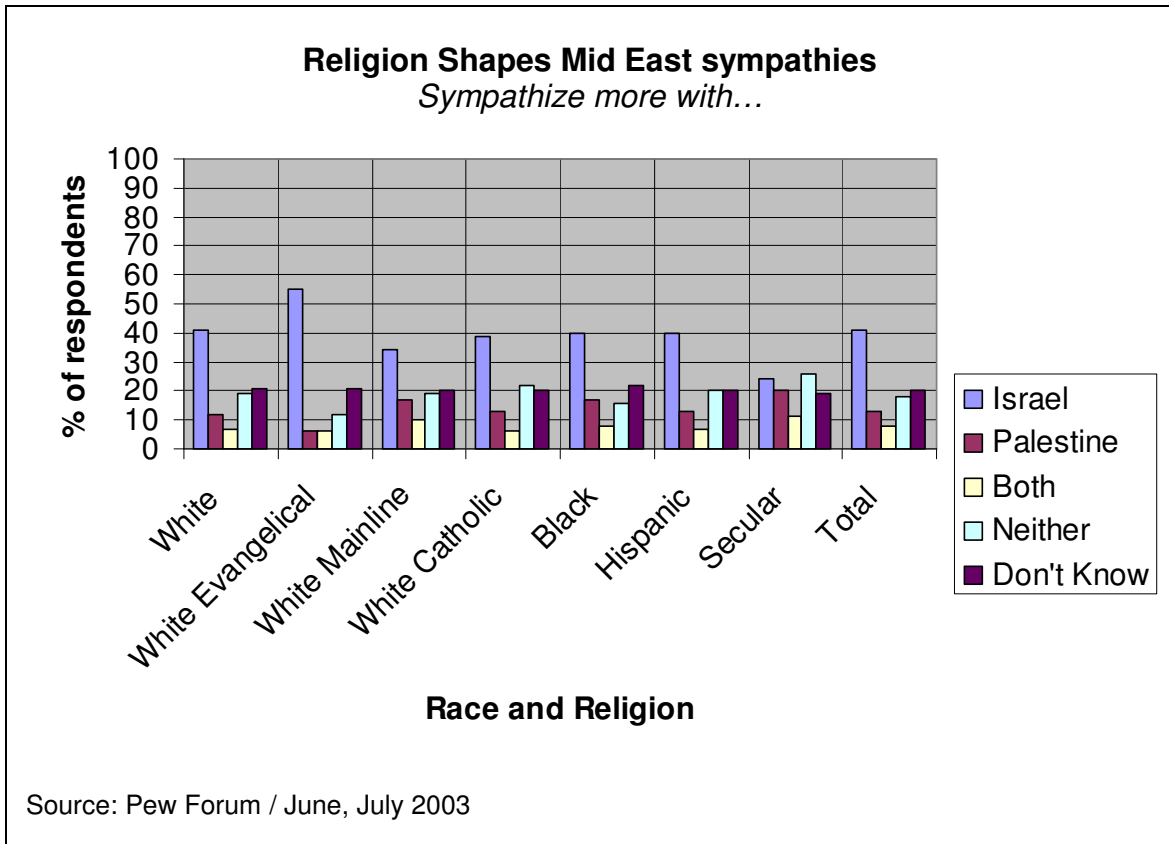


FIGURE 3.7 SYMPATHY FOR ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS BY RACE AND RELIGION

In conclusion, these results demonstrate how public opinion regarding Israel can be subject to question wording effects, but these effects have little impact on Dispensational support. White evangelicals provide most of the Dispensational support and this demographic seems consistent in their support for Israel. Whether or not the U.S. should support Israel yields different results than questions evoking emotional sympathy. This shows that on a practical foreign policy level, many Americans are pragmatic and diplomatic, not overwhelmingly zealous about either side. Figure 3.6 shows Americans more as impartial mediators. However, on a sympathetic level, Americans still widely favor Israel. What is most relevant is that Dispensationalism's

prevalence in evangelical Protestantism remains true in its support for Israel regardless of question wording.⁶⁶

Dispensational Attributes in Public Opinion

It is suitable to look at more direct Dispensational type opinions regarding Biblical prophecy and end times scenarios in order to truly appreciate dispensational popularity. To continue with Pew research surveys, Figure 3.8 shows the same racial and religious breakdown as Figure 3.7 and was part of the same general survey composite. The main difference is it asks a more specific question relating Israel to the Second Advent. It is no surprise that White evangelicals are the most convinced about Israel's place in end times theology. The only group more adamant about their opinion, and of the opposing viewpoint, are the seculars, among whom 76% say that Israel is not related at the Biblical prophecy. The total for the survey shows 36% agree that Israel is part of Biblical prophecy concerning the Second Coming, while 46% think Israel is unrelated. It is clear that a significant number of people believe that Israel is important in establishing the Second Advent and though not a majority opinion, it is a formidable amount. To put it another way, roughly one in three American adults recognize Israel as important for the Second Advent which provides a tremendous political movement for the pro-Israel cause.⁶⁷

Figure 3.9 asks what events are taken to be signs of Biblical prophecy. The conclusions of Figure 3.9 illustrate the various responses to such an inquiry. Of the most popular responses, 16% said world wars. Another 10% said Arab and Jewish conflict in the Middle East and 6% each said Israel as an established state and AIDS. Most people (76%) either didn't know, gave another answer or didn't respond. It appears that events involving Israel and the Middle East take precedent in determining prophecy. Respondents were allowed multiple answers and taken

⁶⁶ Evangelical Protestants are those who identified themselves as "born again or evangelical Christians." Secularists included atheists, agnostics and those whom are generally non-religious.

⁶⁷ Ibid

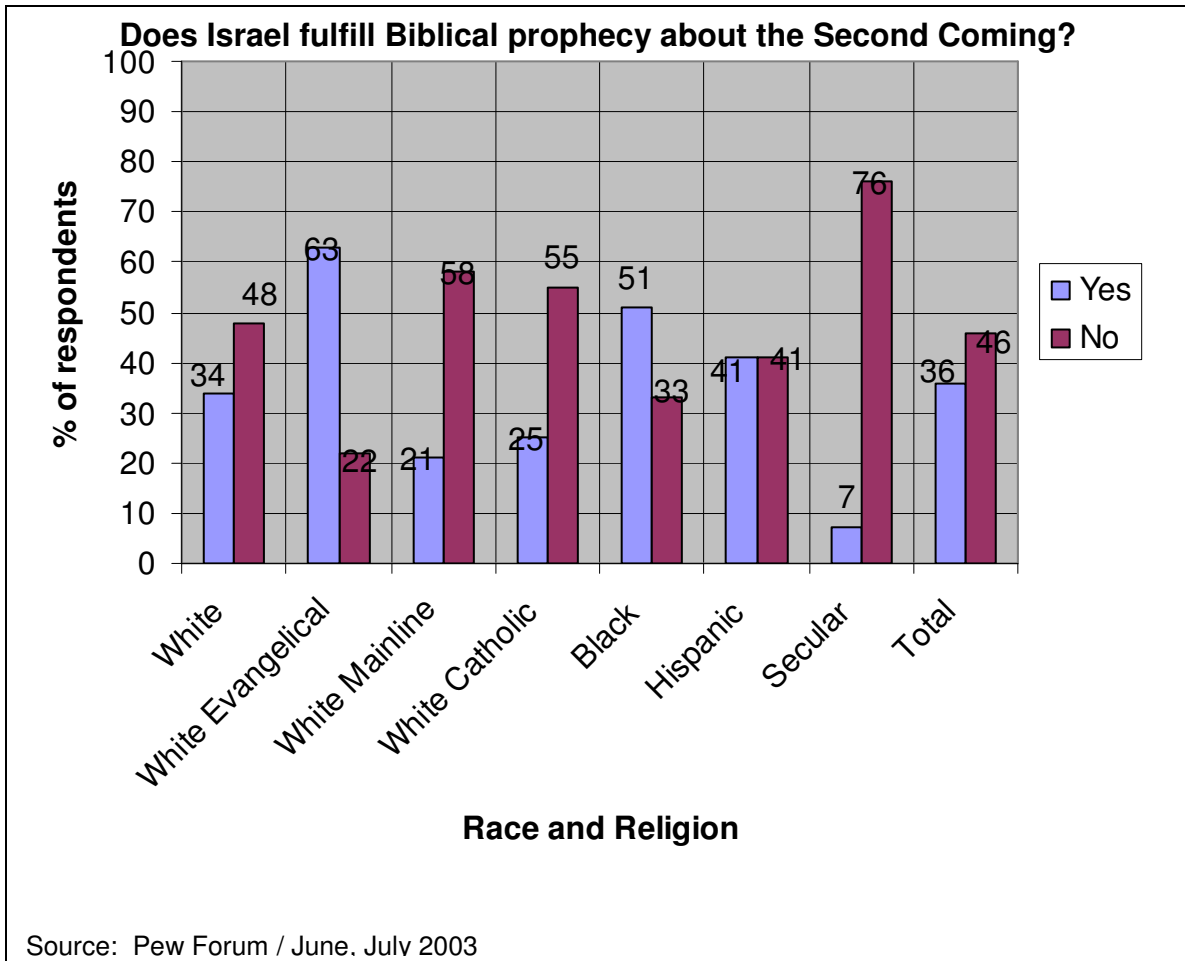


FIGURE 3.8 ISRAEL AS FACILITATOR OF SECOND COMING BY RACE AND RELIGION

in aggregate, responses concerning Israel, the Jews and Middle East events supersede other response topics. For example, when the responses "establishment of Israel" and "Middle East conflict" are combined, the tally comes to 16%. Although not shown as top responses, the Holocaust received 2%, and Middle East peace agreement and the Gulf War each garnered 3%. This tally comes to 24%. A sizable portion of the population therefore interprets general Middle East events as signs of Biblical prophecy, with Israel being the focal point of such prophetic assumptions.

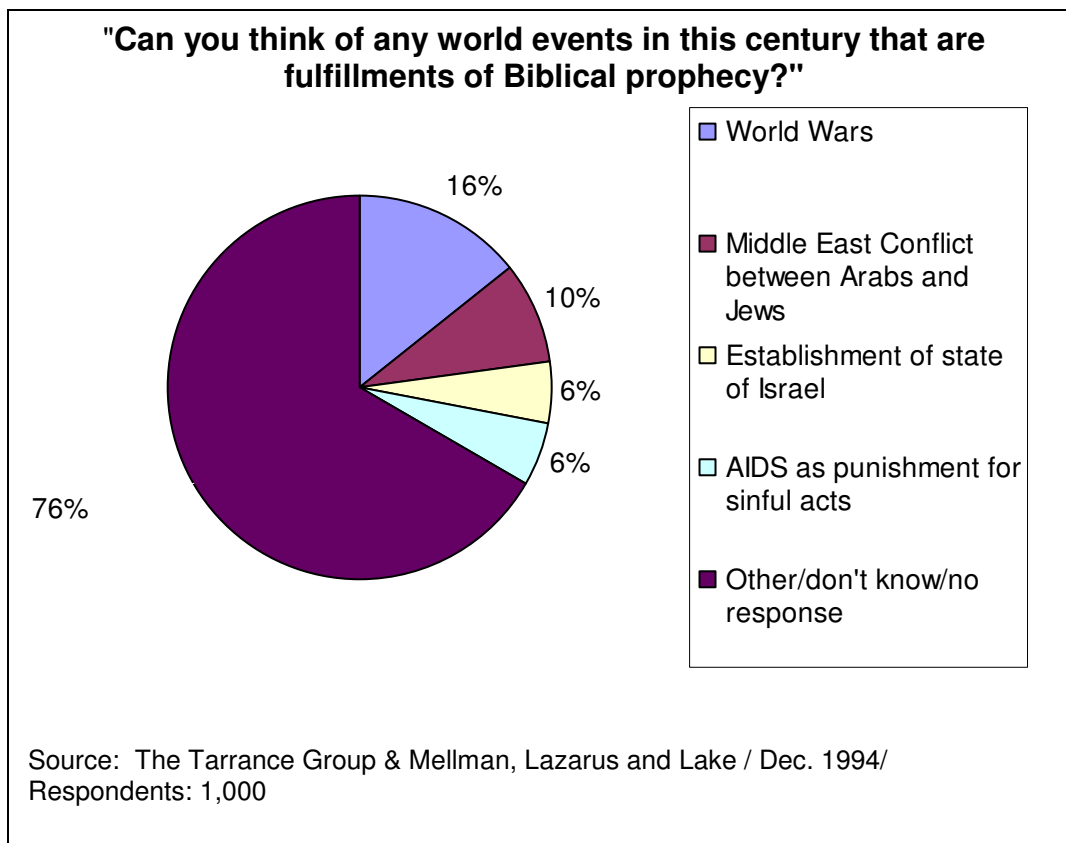


FIGURE 3.9 WORLD EVENTS AND PROPHECY

Another interesting survey reveals more specific reasons for supporting Israel. Figure 3.10 asks those who already voiced support for Israel if Biblical prophecies describe such support. This Harris Poll shows that 43% of respondents admitted to supporting Israel with 36% of those supporters doing so for Dispensational reasons. Taken as a national representation of the approximately 207 million adults in 2002, roughly 89 million people support Israel and of these supporters, approximately 32 million do so because of a Dispensational type eschatological belief.⁶⁸ It is safe to say that Dispensationalism promotes a fair amount of total support for Israel and is therefore an important component of pro-Israel sympathies.

⁶⁸ U.S. Census Bureau

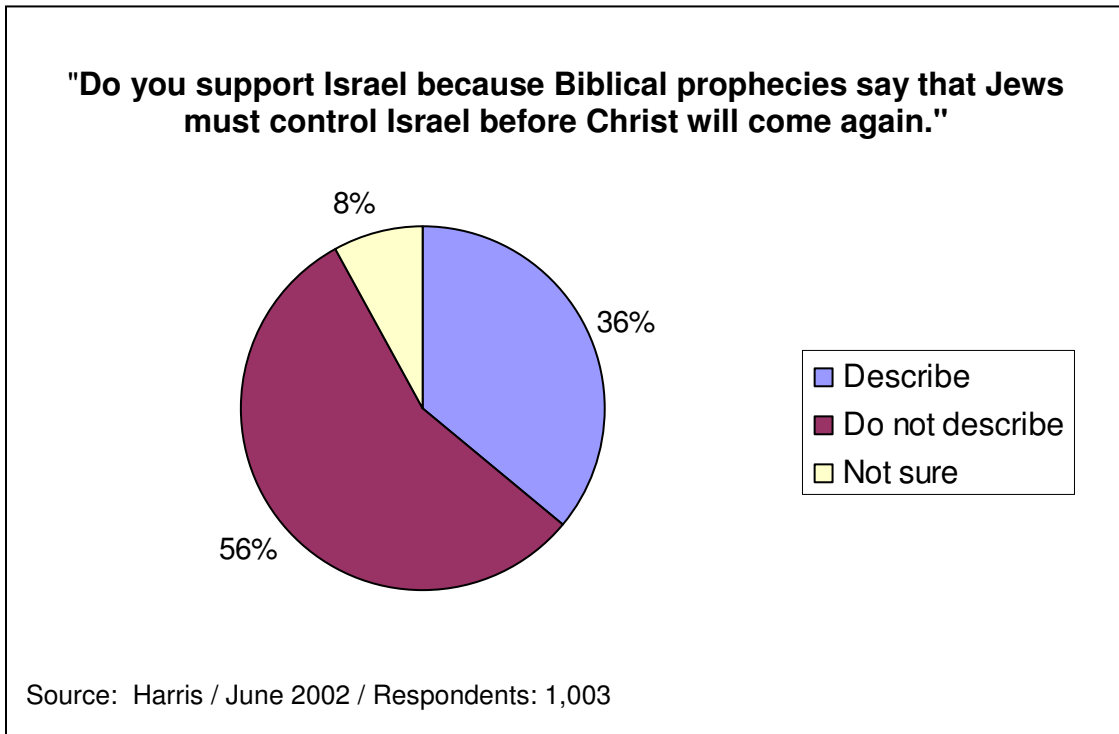


FIGURE 3.10 SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL BECAUSE OF DISPENSATIONALISM

Figure 3.11 confirms the consistency of previous data. This 2006 poll asks whether or not people believe that the state of Israel is a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. Unlike Figure 3.10, it is not predicated on personal support for Israel. This question addresses the concept of Israel as Biblical fulfillment whether or not support is due. Slightly more than one-third (35%) responded that yes, Israel is a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, while 47% said it was not. The remaining 18% didn't know or did not answer. A key distinguishing feature between Figures 3.10 and 3.11 is that Figure 3.11 asks an unqualified question of whether Israel is related to Biblical prophecy, giving a greater sample of the national adult population. Conversely, Figure 3.10 only asks its question to those already in support for Israel. Figure 3.11 allows a wider audience to answer and therefore its results are more salient in terms of national public opinion. Figure 3.11 shows that support for Israel or not, over one-third of the American adult population espouses a

direct Dispensational type view that the creation of Israel is directly related to the Second Coming. This view, however, does not necessarily equal support.

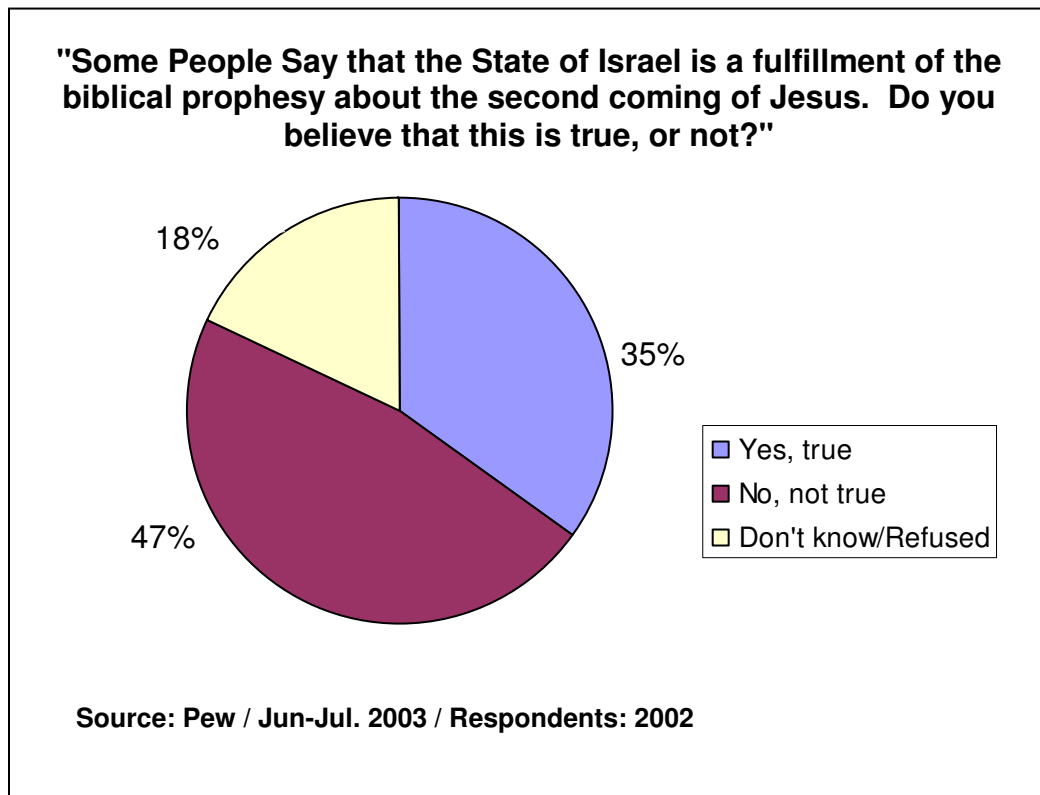


FIGURE 3.11 ISRAEL AS FULFILLMENT SECOND COMING PROPHECY

With respect to Dispensationalism's impact on foreign policy, it is important to remember that a majority opinion is not necessary to have a significant impact. What can be gathered from these surveys is this:

- Americans are much more likely to sympathize with Israel over Palestinians and other Arab nations.
- Americans are more evenly divided when asked if the government should support Israel over Palestine.
- A strong percentage believes that events in the Middle East are relevant to end times scenarios.

- A sizable minority believes in Dispensational concepts of the Rapture and Biblical literalism in regards to other eschatological prophecies.
- Approximately 32 million Americans ascribe to a Dispensational notion directly related towards Israel support, while another 35 million believe that Israel's creation is a precursor for the Second Advent.
- Besides Jews, evangelical Christians show the highest and most consistent support for Israel.⁶⁹

What these results help clarify is how Dispensational influences permeate theological mindsets. Dispensationalism is a far more comprehensive interpretation of Scripture than the limitations set forth by analyzing Israel in end times scenarios. The goal in presenting these surveys is to illustrate Dispensational concepts, not necessarily Dispensationalists. Biblical literalism, and Israel centrality to prophetic fulfillments are all products of dispensational teachings, but are not necessarily the sole owners of such understandings. Furthermore, the Dispensational alignment with evangelicals who generally support Israel over Arab nations shows that the permeation of Dispensational concepts is quite extensive in regards to both support of Israel and Israel's primacy as an end times facilitator. It is probable that many people who believe in Israel as a fulfillment of prophecy also harbor strong pro-Israel feelings of support as the surveys attest to this assumption.

⁶⁹ Figures 3.9 through 3.11 were extracted from the scholarly database LexisNexis

CHAPTER 4

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF DISPENSATIONALISM

Chapter three provided a lens for recognizing many aspects of Dispensational theology and how they relate to public opinion on Israel. It also revealed data about how prevalent certain beliefs are regarding Israel and end times. Dispensationalism is not a denomination, and therefore is not easily recognized by specific denominational adherents. It must be measured by attitudes. Fortunately, survey resources lend such demographic information to compare with the survey results.

A central question towards understanding the nature of Dispensationalism is to understand who Dispensationalists are. This can be done by cross-tabulation methods, taking into account specific characteristics of those who gave Dispensational-type responses to various questions. By incorporating demographic data, such as region, age, political affiliation, and gender, a more complete analysis of the composition of Dispensationalists within the American mosaic may be attained.

One characteristic that is important when analyzing Dispensationalism is to look at the regional variation of its ideology. Figure 3.11 of the previous chapter asked, *Some people say that the state of Israel is a fulfillment of the biblical prophesy about the second coming of Jesus. Do you believe this is true, or not?* A "yes" answer to this question presents a fair look at those respondents who hold a Dispensationally oriented end times belief. Although Dispensationalism does not monopolize all "yes" answers to this question, it does offer a glimpse into what may be termed "soft" Dispensationalism. This describes those who believe in the Dispensationally supported idea of Israel as representing the catalyst for the final dispensation.

The data in Figure 4.1 shows how respondents who answered "yes" to this question are represented geographically. This figure breaks down "yes" respondents as 30% of those in the

Northeast, 29% of those in the Midwest, 49% of those in the South and 30% of those in the West. Respondents in the South are approximately 20 percentage points more likely to agree with Israel as a part of end times prophesy when compared to other regions. It is clear that Southerners are

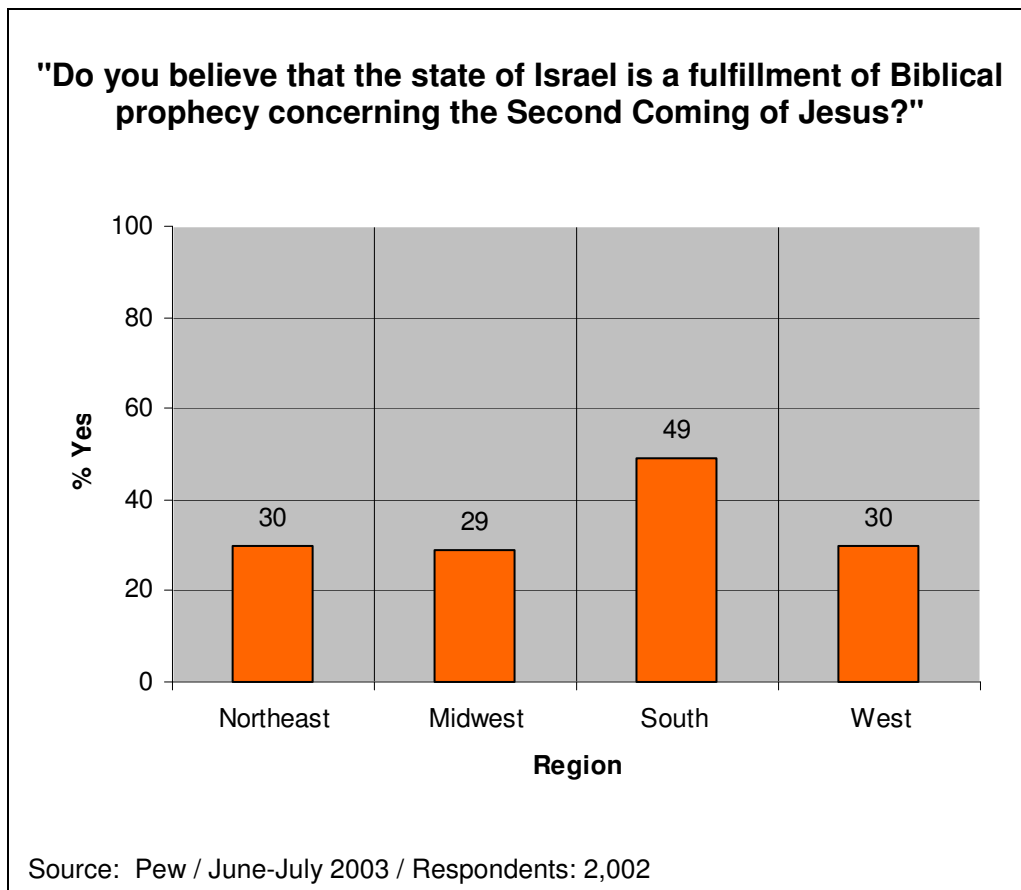


FIGURE 4.1 DISPENSATIONALISM BY REGION

more likely to believe in the creation of Israel as a sign of prophesy than people in any other geographic region. Another interesting variable would be to look at political party affiliation within these regions as well. Figures 4.2 through 4.4 give more information concerning the politics of these respondents.

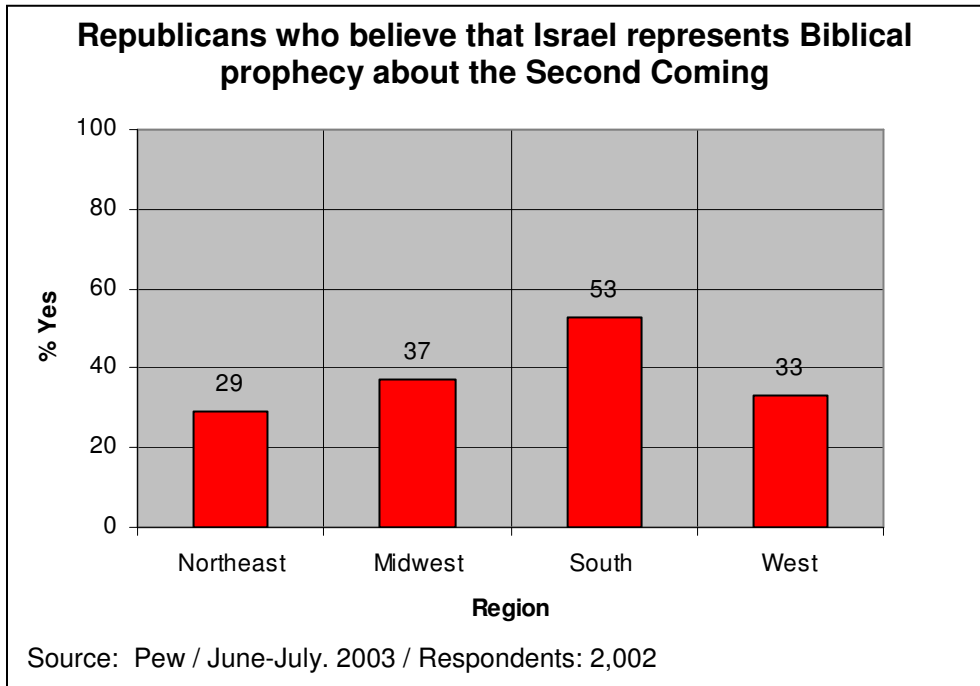


FIGURE 4.2 DISPENSATIONALISM BY REPUBLICANS

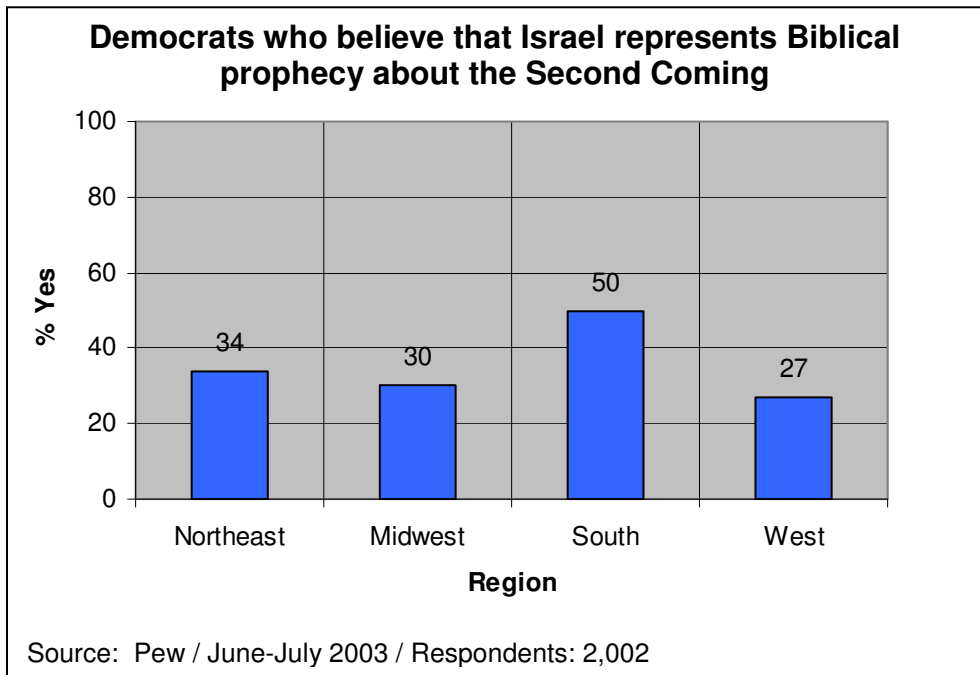


FIGURE 4.3 DISPENSATIONALISM BY DEMOCRATS

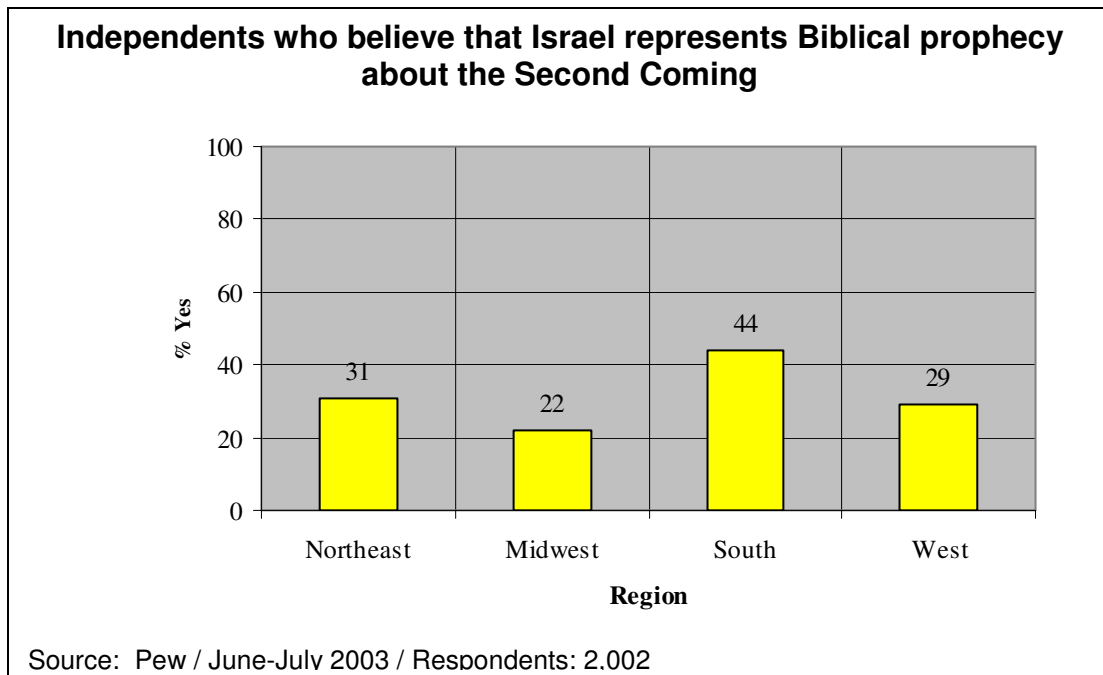


FIGURE 4.4 DISPENSATIONALISM BY INDEPENDENTS

Figures 4.2 through 4.4 show how political party affiliation is less important than region when measuring the extent of Dispensationalism. Approximately 53% of Southern Republicans, 50% of Southern Democrats and 44% of Southern Independents affirmed Israel as facilitator of the Second Coming. As a whole, compare that with 40% of Republicans, 38% of Democrats, and 33% of Independents. Dispensationalism is often associated, incorrectly, as strictly Republican. While Republicans answered yes more frequently than Democrats, it is the geographic region that makes most of the difference, not political affiliation.

Another interesting statistic is to examine how those who answered “yes” to this question also sympathize with the Israeli’s in the ongoing dispute in that region. Table 4.1 (page 57) shows that an overwhelming 57% of those who gave a Dispensational answer also sympathize with Israel, compared to only 9% who sympathize with the Palestinians.

Table 4.1

Percent Israel and Palestinian sympathies, by those who offered a Dispensational answer

	Israel	Palestine	Other	Total
Yes, true	57	9	34	100
No, not true	34	18	48	100
Don't Know	28	5	67	100

Note: Rows represent the opinion that Israel represents the Biblical prophesy concerning the Second Coming of Jesus and columns represent Israel or Palestine sympathies. Rows sum across to 100%.

For those who did not give a Dispensational answer, Israeli sympathies showed 34%, while Palestinian sympathies were 18%. Israel still receives more sympathy even if a dispensational answer is not given. However, there exists a very large and significant increase in Israel sympathy when an individual also believes that Israel signifies the Second Coming.

In Chapter 3 it was mentioned how belief in Israel's role in end times does not necessarily equal support or sympathy. Of the estimated 67 million Americans who agreed on Israel's place in end times, 57% (approximately 38 million) sympathize primarily with the Israeli cause. This is slightly higher than the earlier survey representing about 32 million, perhaps signifying problems in question wording or response inconsistencies. Or, it may illustrate the constant change in perception that many people have depending on world events. Further information on where Dispensationalism flourishes can be found by looking at city size and how it affects a persons likelihood to believe that Israel fulfills prophecy concerning the Second Coming. Figure 4.5 reveals such information. It shows that those living in towns and cities are more likely to agree with this assessment compared to those living in rural areas and suburbs. Those in towns responded "yes" at 41%, those in cities, 36%, those in rural areas, 37% and those in the suburbs, 31%.

The previous figures and tables were compiled using information relating to the question of Israel as a facilitator for the Second Coming. This is an orthodox Dispensational belief and provides a worthwhile comparison to Israel support. However, it is important to also understand information relating to more "hard" Dispensational opinions. The previous pages illustrated a core Dispensational belief but such belief is not strictly unique to Dispensational doctrine. One major departure Dispensationalism took from Historic Premillennialism was that of the Pre-Tribulation rapture, mentioned in Chapter 2.

In order to gauge the demographics of these "hard" Dispensationalists, data involving belief in Pre-Tribulation rapture is cross-tabbed with party identification, gender and age. The results show that there is very little variation between party identification and gender but a significant increase in this belief by age. Interestingly, those who believe that Jews must control

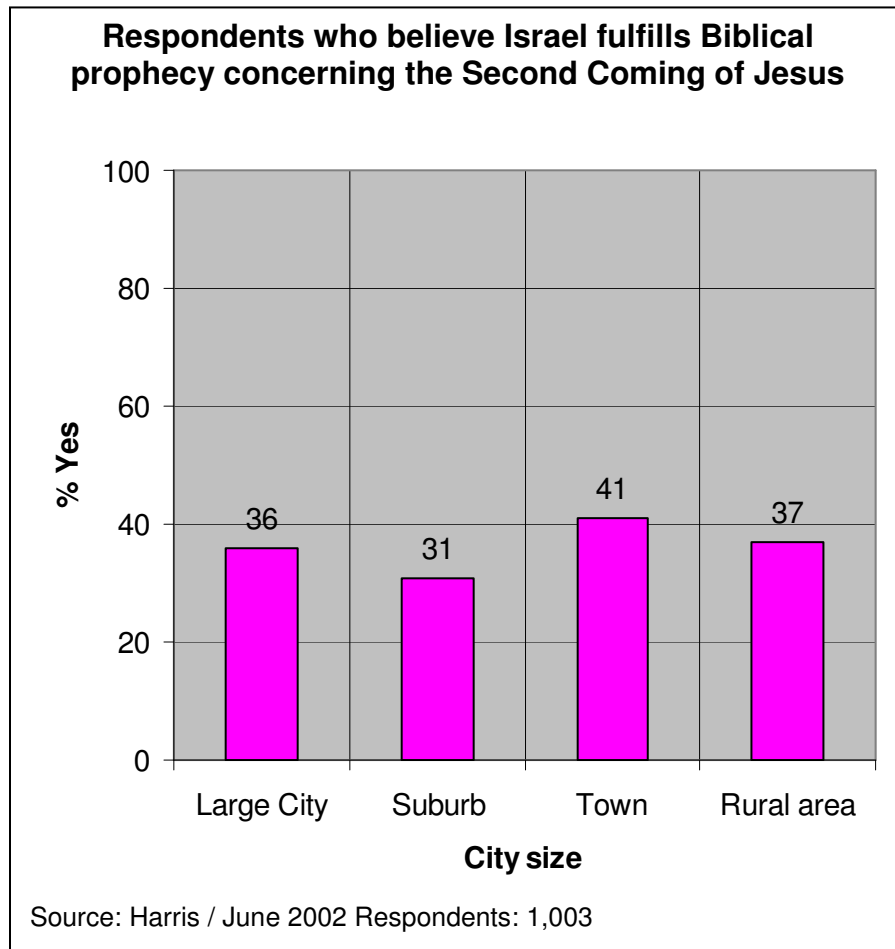


FIGURE 4.5 DISPENSATIONALISM BY CITY SIZE

Israel for Christ to return and support Israel for this reason have similar response rates along demographic lines as those who believe in the pre-tribulation rapture except when it come to gender and age. Table 4.3 shows that, once again, party identification remains statistically constant, however men, although less likely to believe in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture than women, are more likely to support Israel for Dispensational reasons. Also, whereas age increases showed a rise in Pre-Tribulation belief in Table 4.2, here age reveals the opposite finding. As evident In Table 4.3, the older one gets, the less likely they are to support Israel because of Biblical prophecies concerning the return Christ.

Anytime multiple public response rates are calculated, there will be inconsistent data. Figure 4.6 reports on the consistency of Dispensational answers. This question asks, *Please tell me whether you think each of the following will or will not happen when the world comes to an end.* There were three choices, for which a “will happen”, “will not happen” and a “world will not end” were possible responses:

- Choice A: “There will be a major war somewhere in the Middle East.
- Choice B: “People who God has decided to save will be lifted up to Heaven in an event called the Rapture.”
- Choice C: “People who God has decided not to save will be left behind on earth and endure a period of suffering called the tribulation.”

Respondents were to identify those choices for which they were in agreement. Choice A received a “will happen” answer from 12%, Choice B, 13% and Choice C, 14% of total respondents, only 9% choice both B and C. Choice C mentioned the word “tribulation” But did not mention “rapture,” although it theologically assumed the Rapture has taken place. This may have caused respondents to offer inconsistent answers. When consistency is analyzed in this context, it shows that approximately 19 million people believe in “hard” Dispensationalism. The Pre-Tribulation rapture is a key idea in how Dispensationalists view eschatological scenarios and if taken as a percentage of the entire U.S. population, one may accurately claim that nearly 29 million Americans affirm a Dispensational outlook on end times events. This is slightly less than the earlier estimate of 32 million, perhaps revealing that when Israel support is addressed in a Dispensational context, favorability opinions tend to be higher. The previous estimate addresses more of the “soft” Dispensationalist who supports Israel based on a default Christian sense and this recent estimate is tailored more towards “hard” Dispensationalists who are more aware of its teachings. Of course, the degree of Dispensational acceptance is difficult to judge in full and “soft” and “hard” designations may each cover a wide, loosely defined spectrum.

Table 4.2

Percent who believe that people who God has decided not to save will be left behind on earth and endure a period of suffering called the tribulation⁷⁰

<u>Total</u>	<u>Party ID</u>			<u>Gender</u>		<u>Age</u>			
	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
14	12	15	12	13	15	10	9	18	23

⁷⁰ The question asked in 4.2 was, "Please tell me whether you think the following will or will not happen when the world comes to an end: People who God has saved will be left behind on earth and endure a period of suffering called the tribulation."

Table 4.3

Percent who support Israel because they believe that Jews must control Israel before Christ will come again⁷¹

<u>Total</u>	<u>Party ID</u>			<u>Gender</u>		<u>Age</u>			
	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
36	35	35	38	41	30	41	38	35	27

54

⁷¹ The question asked in 4.3 was, "Please tell me whether each of the following do or not describe why you support Israel: Because Biblical prophecies say that Jews must control Israel before Christ will come again."

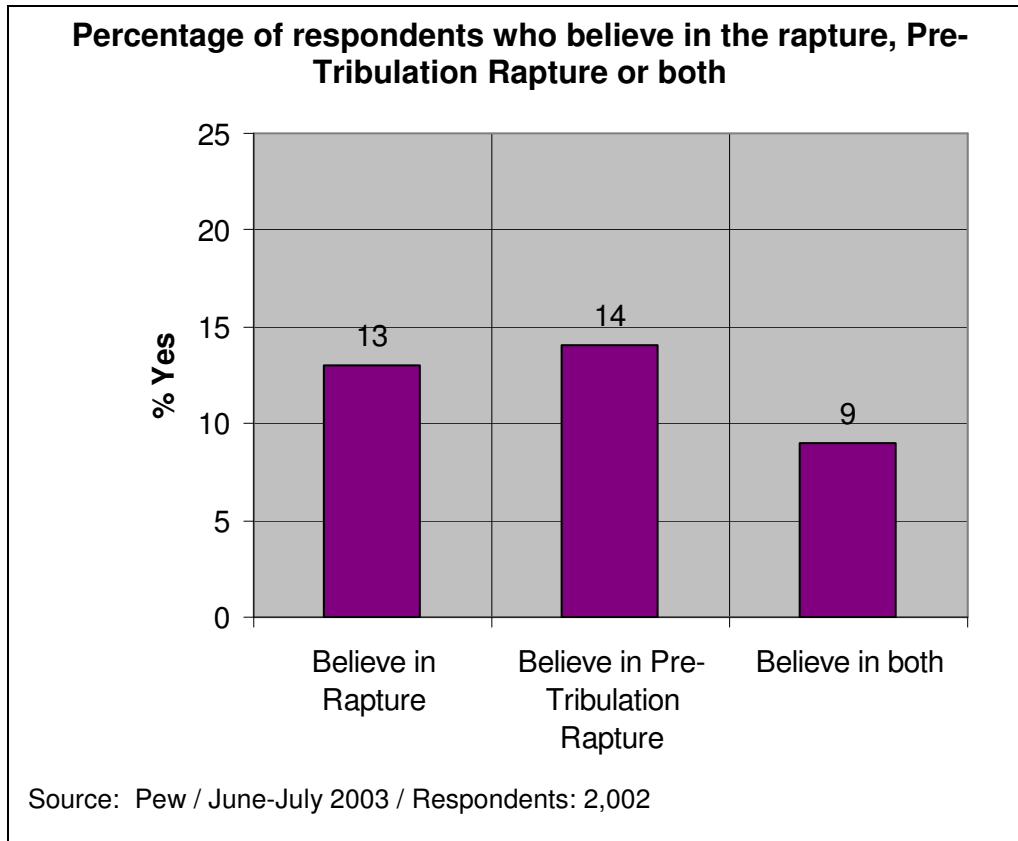


FIGURE 4.6 RAPTURE AND TRIBULATION

This chapter has analyzed various characteristics of dispensationalists, recognizing the implications of both “soft” and “hard” adherents. Of particular notation is how Dispensationalism impacts a person’s sympathies regarding Israel. Because Dispensationalists sympathize with Israel at about a 6:1 ratio, Dispensationalists are about twice as likely to support Israel compared with Non-Dispensationalists. Furthermore, their prominence in the South creates a solid constituency for legislative representatives to continue a decidedly pro-Israel agenda based on Dispensational support.

Chapter three introduced some characteristics of Dispensationalism, however, there are several more important points that should be addressed:

- Dispensational attitudes are most prominent in small towns in the South.

- Question wording and response inconsistencies make it difficult to pinpoint a specific number of Dispensational adherents
- Although Dispensationalism is more accepted as age increases, Dispensationalist support for Israel actually decreases with age.
- Questions related directly to Israel may increase Dispensational acceptance

Approximately 19 million people gave a consistent Dispensational answer compared to 29 to 32 who generally agree with its basic end times teachings.⁷²

⁷² It is important to remember that Dispensationalism is merely a subset of Christian theology and, although measurably significant, should not be conflated as essential Christian dogma.

CHAPTER 5

THE EARLY INFLUENCES OF CHRISTIAN ZIONISM AND ISRAEL REALIZED

"Israel must and is preserved to be chief among the nations (Jer. XXXI, 7). Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. ii, 3)."

-Dispensationalist missionary Dr. Ernest F. Stroeter, 1886

The following pages will demonstrate the varying means of Dispensational influence and the results therein. From the early stages of Zionism in the 19th century to contemporary developments today, this chapter will reveal the early influences of Christian Zionism on foreign policy and its similarities with Dispensationalism, charting the efforts of early Dispensational leaders aimed at Jewish resettlement in Palestine. This chapter will also highlight the exposure that President Truman had to Dispensationalism and how this may have influenced the quickness of his recognition of Israel's independence, when others close to him cautioned against the swiftness of this political move.

In the late 19th century Dispensationalism as a separate theological movement was still in its infancy but growing strong. C. I. Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer and Dwight L. Moody were still budding scholars and had not yet left their mark on Dispensational scholarship. John Nelson Darby had left his mark and it was manifested in William E. Blackstone. Blackstone was not an academic, nor was he a theologian. He was a Dispensationalist who strongly believed in the nearness of the Millennium and was quite ambitious in his objectives. In 1891, Blackstone spearheaded a petition to return the Jews to Palestine. The "Blackstone Memorial" was submitted to President Benjamin Harrison:

...to secure the holding at an early date of an international conference to consider the condition of the Israelites and their claims to Palestine as their ancient home, and to promote, in all other just and proper ways, the alleviation of their suffering condition.⁷³

Previously Blackstone had visited Palestine and famously described it as "a land without a people and a people without a land"⁷⁴ In *On Behalf of Israel*, Yaakov Ariel details the effects of Blackstone's activities. He notes that most of the 413 signatures were signed by people who were not dispensationalists and that many people saw the petition as a humanitarian call for help. Blackstone saw Jewish restoration as achieving a political and humanitarian end as well as a hope for the Second Coming. The Memorial was submitted a few years prior to the first Zionist Congress (1897) in Basel and may have influenced the writings of Theodore Herzl, specifically *Der Judenstaat* (1896)⁷⁵ where Herzl advocates that "We must investigate and take possession of the new Jewish country by means of every modern expedient"⁷⁶

Blackstone was unable to change public policy with his 1891 memorial, but he was able to influence prominent Zionists, Jewish and Christian, to take a more aggressive position for a Jewish homeland. He petitioned Presidents Harrison and Cleveland as well as various secretaries of state to consider his request for a Jewish homeland. In 1903, the Chicago Methodist Preachers Meeting endorsed Blackstone's memorial and sent their resolution to President Teddy Roosevelt and Secretary of State John Hay⁷⁷

In 1916 Blackstone submitted another petition aimed at President Woodrow Wilson designed to pressure the government to support a Jewish homeland. By this time Blackstone has significant funds to support his Dispensational objectives. Having previously been entrusted with approximately two million dollars from the owner of the Union Oil Company of California for evangelical purposes, Blackstone used these resources to promote Dispensationalism abroad,

⁷³ William E. Blackstone. *The Blackstone Memorial, 1891*. American Messianic Fellowship. <http://www.amfi.org/blackmem.htm> (14 Sept 2007).

⁷⁴ Yakkov Ariel. Quoted in *On Behalf of Israel*. (NY, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1991), p 69.

⁷⁵ Id at 70-78

⁷⁶ Theodore Herzl. *Der Judenstaat* translated *The Jewish State*. The Jewish Virtual Library. Mod 2007. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzl2e.html> (14 Sept 2007).

⁷⁷ Yakkov Ariel. *On Behalf of Israel*. (NY, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1991)

specifically Eastern Europe. This new resolution was supported by many Protestant churches, including the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., who separately presented it to Wilson, himself a Presbyterian. By this time Zionism had become a significant lobbying power. Blackstone was in close contact with prominent Zionists including Louis Brandeis (future Supreme Court Justice) and Nathan Straus (owner of Macy's Department stores). Louis Brandeis went so far as to say to Blackstone, "You are the father of Zionism as your work antedates Herzl."⁷⁸ Wilson was not a Dispensationalist, but he was a devout Protestant and probably dealt with pressure to conform to the increasingly Protestant demand for a Jewish state and to support the Balfour Declaration in 1917.⁷⁹

The extent to which Blackstone influenced foreign policy is hard to pinpoint. While he attempted to influence various leaders through his association with Zionist activists, it is unclear as to whether such activities would have still flourished in the same manner without his participation. His interactions with various presidents and government officials provide an early indication of Dispensational backed policy initiatives aimed specifically at the Jewish people. He certainly was not the most responsible for a Jewish homeland, but he did provide a way for Zionists to gain more credibility. This was done by unifying the Zionist cause with the Christian cause thus affirming Christian Zionism. Christian Zionism had already existed in a loose form, but it had not yet experienced such coherent theological credibility.

Given Wilson's idealism and the political climate post WWI, it is probable that the President would still have supported the coalition for Jewish restoration even without Dispensational appeal. However, this is merely speculation; the reality was that Christian Zionism matured during these years and the product of this maturity is evidenced by the increased Zionism with Protestant Christianity which transpired. The early 20th century saw the rise of Dispensational education and the major theological figures born from them. Although significant during this period, it would not be until the Carter administration that Christian Zionism

⁷⁸ Jeff Halper. Quoted in *Israel as an Extension of American Empire*.
<http://www.counterpunch.org/halper11072005.html> (15 Sept 2007).

⁷⁹ Yakkov Ariel. *On Behalf of Israel*. (NY, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1991), pp 79-93.

would become the major political ideology is today. Without Dispensationalism, Zionism would not have experienced the same level of support by the American populace. It was this marriage that helped give credence to Zionist goals in the Middle East. Furthermore, it was Blackstone's most significant legacy in the evolution of Dispensationalism and U.S. policy.

Zionism appealed to Dispensationalists who provided a much more solid and larger political base than traditional Jewish Zionists. Few Jews have any interest in Dispensationalism for their own beliefs, yet many come together with fundamental Dispensationalists who prioritize the Jewish people as central to their beliefs. From WWI to the creation of Israel, the solidification of Christian Zionism will be shown to have predicated on Dispensationalism, aiding in the transformation of Israel into a sovereign state and how the state of Israel lends further authority to their theology.

Like Dispensationalism, Christian Zionism is not officially governed by a set of confessional principles. Christian Zionism is an ideology based on a theology; it is politically induced faith. Christian Zionism is similar to Dispensationalism in many ways, and it often draws certain aspects of Dispensationalism (support for Israel) and ignores others (Pre-Tribulation Rapture). There are seven major tenets of Christian Zionism as outlined by Stephen Sizer.⁸⁰ The table on the following page compares Christian Zionism with Dispensationalism to illustrate the similarity.

Sizer often uses the terms fundamentalism, Dispensationalism, and Christian Zionism interchangeably. Due to their overwhelming similarity (especially with regards to Israel), it is a useful tool to follow Sizer's lead. The "Bible Belt" has been referred to Israel's "safety belt", owing to the interchangeability between fundamentalism, Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism. Dispensationalism is the theological, exegetical foundation from which fundamentalism and Christian Zionism emerged, and it is therefore suitable to assume Dispensational tenets when

⁸⁰ Jeff Halper. *Israel as an Extension of American Empire*. <http://www.counterpunch.org/halper11072005.html> (15 Sept 2007). See Table 5.1.

discussing fundamentalism and Christian Zionism in the context of Israel, Jews and end-times prophecy.

Table 5.1

Christian Zionism Contrasted with Dispensationalism

<u>Christian Zionism</u>	<u>Dispensationalism's Agreeableness with Christian Zionism</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A literalist hermeneutic 2. The Jews remain God's chosen people 3. The Jews have a divine right to the land in the Middle East 4. Jerusalem is their exclusive capital 5. The Jewish temple must be rebuilt 6. The Arabs are the enemies of God's people 7. The world will end soon in the great battle of Armageddon but Christians who support Israel will escape death 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes, in order to usher in the Millennium 6. No, Anyone against Israel is against God's plan, not collectively Arabs although a seemingly high percentage could be considered enemies. The tumultuous history might show Arabs as enemies of Israel but there is little merit in dispensationalism chastising Arabs as natural enemies of God 7. Yes, some Jews will be saved by accepting Christ, others must die but Christians will Raptured into Heaven

The years between the World Wars saw little dynamic activity between Christian Zionism and U.S. policy. The British oversaw the Mandate for Palestine and under the pretenses of the Churchill White Paper of 1922, clarified the intentions of Balfour by denying the claim that Great Britain was attempting to create a fully Jewish state in Palestine. After WWI, America largely returned to its previous doctrine of passivity in foreign affairs. Although debates between Jews and Christian Zionists continued over the prospect of Jewish resettlement, neither pursued major policies to facilitate this end. Fundamentalism was a growing voice in America but it did yet have the political influence it enjoys today. Many Americans were sympathetic to Jews, but lacked the religious fervor to turn that sympathy into an activist movement. The Great Depression of the 1930s and WWII thereafter, created a climate whereby Jewish restoration was not at the forefront

of issues. Many people had greater personal interests to worry about than Jewish resettlement in Palestine. All this changed shortly after WWII when the nation of Jews in Palestine declared theirs an independent political state in 1948. Suddenly, the creation of political Israel gave real, tangible evidence supporting Dispensational prophecy in the Middle East.⁸¹

The effect Dispensationalism had on the events leading up to the creation of Israel and the quick recognition of sovereignty from President Truman are important to the overall evolution of the Christian Zionist and U.S. government relationship. Christian Zionism had already played a significant role in the British Mandate, although the extent of Dispensationalism in British politics was (and remains) minor.⁸² There was a loose connection between American and British Zionists during this time. Although the British were at the forefront leading up to the 1948 declaration of Israeli sovereignty, American Christian Zionists still played a notable role.

The American Palestine Committee (APC) was founded in 1932 by Emanuel Neumann, a staunch Zionist. This was in response to the British Passfield White Paper which itself was in response to growing tensions between Jews and Arabs in the Palestine. The Passfield paper made it clear that a Jewish homeland was not central to the Palestine Mandate, effectively hinting that the British were willing to broker a deal with both sides with a territorial and political compromise. APC was composed of some very prominent governmental figures including Supreme Court Justice Harlan Stone, House Leader Henry Rainey, and New York Senator Robert Wagner. Its statement echoed that of Blackstone: "The fulfillment of the millennial hope for the reunion of the Jewish people with the land of its ancient inheritance, a hope that accords with Biblical prophecy..."⁸³ There is no strong evidence to suggest that Neumann and the many prominent supporters of the APC were theologically tied to Dispensational doctrine. Their reiteration of Blackstone-type support of Jewish resettlement by invoking the millennial concept

⁸¹ Irvine Anderson. *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*. (University Press of Florida: 2005) 75-80.

⁸² Christian Zionism was an integral part of British society but Dispensationalism was less than in the U.S. The similarity of Christian Zionism and Dispensationalism for this analysis is based on the Christian Zionism in America, not Great Britain.

⁸³ Irvine Anderson. *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*. (University Press of Florida: 2005) 76.

helped continue the tradition of Zionism based in part on Dispensationally oriented prophetic hopes.

The APC was mostly Republican but when F.D.R was elected in 1932 they aligned with the Democrats. This would not be the only time that Christian Zionists would change political party affiliations. Another significant change would take place in the 1980s and 90s, whereby the Christian Zionists heavily migrated towards the GOP. The APC succeeded in convincing several prominent Christian clergy to join their cause. Christian Zionism during the 1930s and early 1940s was not overcome with outright claims of Biblical literalism as a means of garnering support. Prophecy was used when convenient, but was not yet a central motivation.

The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent recognition of its claim of sovereignty by the U.S. government was a complex series of affairs dating back many years, involving many political and civic leaders in Great Britain, the United States, and Palestine. A major question that historians sometimes ask is whether Truman's recognition of Israel was according to national interest. Irvine Anderson (2005) offers three main accounts for Truman's decision to recognize Israel. First, Truman desired to secure the New York Jewish vote, 1948 being an election year; second, the pressure of Zionist lobbying; and third, a less popular but perhaps equally influential was Truman's own upbringing, the latter being advocated by Anderson. While Anderson asserts that Truman's Christian upbringing was an important part of his hasty decision to recognize the sovereignty of Israel, this assertion seems to be too general. Was it simply a Christian upbringing, or rather a Dispensational exposure which allowed Truman to view his role in Israel's existence under the umbrella of divine purpose and fulfillment?

As a child, Truman was part of both Baptist and Presbyterian churches and was well acquainted with the Bible. In his adult life he was a member of the APC and met socially with Justice Brandeis. He seemed by many accounts to have a predisposition to favoring Jewish sovereignty over Palestine. White House Counsel, Clark Clifford said of Truman that, "he

[Truman] felt the Jews derived a legitimate historical right to Palestine"⁸⁴ It was also said that Truman even quoted an Old Testament verse to support this claim.⁸⁵ In fact, this predisposition is a major factor for Anderson's explanation of how the Jewish state came to be. Anderson writes that "so many people in Britain and the United States have been influenced by childhood stories from the Bible about Abraham, Joshua and, the Promised Land...that much of the electorate in both countries has been predisposed to support the return of the Jews to Palestine."⁸⁶ Anderson also claims that Truman was quoted as saying, "I am Cyrus. I am Cyrus", in reference to the ancient Persian King who exiled the Jews from Babylon back to their homeland in the 6th century B.C.E. Whether or not Truman offered his recognition contrary to national interest is debatable, with people on both sides presenting compelling arguments. Whatever the case, Truman chose to listen to his domestic advisor Clark Clifford instead of his Secretary of State George Marshall, the latter advocating a U.N. trusteeship over Palestine.⁸⁷

Truman was likely exposed to a form of "soft" Dispensationalism throughout his upbringing. Associating the Israel of the Old Testament with Jewish people and a Jewish Homeland is quite common. This is one aspect of Dispensationalism which permeates Christian understanding. When Anderson writes of the influence of childhood stories of the Promised Land and how people may see this manifested in the state of Israel, he is effectively pointing to an idea, not monopolized by Dispensational teaching, but still very central to Dispensational theology. Whereas "soft" Dispensationalism may include elements unique to Dispensationalism, it does not include the full knowledge of what these elements mean and how they are important to Dispensational understanding.

⁸⁴ Id at 88

⁸⁵ Deuteronomy 1:8: "Behold, I have given up the land before you, go and take possession of the land which the Lord hath sworn unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

⁸⁶ Irvine Anderson. *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*. (University Press of Florida: 2005) 1.

⁸⁷ Id at 67

On midnight May 14th 1948, the British Mandate effectively ended British supervision and proclamations of Israeli independence were made to take affect midnight May 15th. At 6:11 pm Eastern Standard Time (12:11 am in Palestine) the President released the following statement:

This Government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new State of Israel.⁸⁸

One may speculate on a myriad of reasons as to why Truman acted as he did in his haste to recognize Israeli sovereignty. One reason may have been the influence of his friend Eddie Jacobson and the meeting Truman had with Chaim Weizmann, the president of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the World Zionist Organization in March of 1948. After this meeting Truman affirmed that the U.S. would recognize Israel immediately provided the U.N. trusteeship stalled.⁸⁹

The relationship Truman had with Jacobson and the meeting with Weizmann certainly helps explain the Truman's position on Israel. However, the Biblical literalism predisposition explanation offered by Anderson makes for an interesting thesis for Anderson and provides benefits for this study as well. It has been said of Truman that he had, "an almost fundamentalist respect for the Bible."⁹⁰ While unlikely supported by end times theology, Truman and many Americans (as Anderson notes) do operate under a cultural and religious inclination towards supporting Israel. In Truman's case it was not Dispensationalism as a separate ideology that affected his decisions. Dispensationalism, like many ideologies, exerts indirect influence as well as direct influence, often with equal tenacity. There is little way of knowing whether or not Truman was exposed to explicit Dispensationalism through his church membership or if his views on Israel came from other source. Given the location, (small town Midwest), denomination

⁸⁸ John Snetsinger. *Truman, the Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel*. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1974) p. 111.

⁸⁹ Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. "The United States and the Recognition of Israel: A Chronology." <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/israel/palestin.htm> (22 Feb. 2008).

⁹⁰ Merlin Gustafson. "The Religion of President," *Journal of Church and State* 10 no.3 (Autumn 1968): p. 380.

(Presbyterian), and time period, it is plausible yet speculative to conclude that he was. However, it is entirely possible that Truman used a literal Biblical interpretation of Israel as a way of rationalizing a political move. Churches, even Non-Dispensational ones, were (and are) not completely immune from the permeation of Dispensational theological imperatives. If Anderson's thesis on Truman's fundamentalist inclination and the inferences about Dispensationalism's influence on those inclinations hold up, one may conclude that Truman's actions and beliefs exemplify the extent that Dispensationalism reaches. This coupled with his involvement in the APC shows that Dispensationalism's impact on Truman's decision making should not be overlooked.

A realistic conclusion would be to say that Dispensationalism played an indirect, secondary role in Truman's life, both in his Biblical understanding and his political affiliations. Dispensationalism's impact on Zionism (Christian and otherwise) and Biblical interpretative methodology is undeniable. Truman's association with the APC and their espousal of Blackstonian millennialism should not be dismissed. The mixture of Dispensationalism, fundamentalism and Christian Zionism has not fully come together at this time, although one can see the precepts of this inevitability. They were already shared by many but not yet identified as one. The catalyst for this association was the state of Israel. With Israel realized, Dispensationalists had new reason to hope that the Millennium was near.

CHAPTER 6

DISPENSATIONALISM AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

And the Lord Said to Jacob...
"Unto thy offspring will I give this land!"

Pray that President Bush Honors God's Covenant with Israel.
Call the White House with this message

-National Billboard Campaign Message

In 2002, the United States, along with Russia, the United Nations and the European Union, proposed a two-state solution to the Israel/Palestine problem called the Roadmap for Peace. The proposal called for Israel to pull out of lands it has occupied since 2000, stop settlement expansion in the West Bank, and offered performance based incentives (free elections and terrorist condemnations) for Palestine to establish its own sovereign state. It was predicated on the notion that Israel would support the two state agenda and that Palestinian leadership would acknowledge Israel's right to exist and curtail acts of terrorism.⁹¹ The plan in its essence seemed like a suitable compromise to a region plagued with violence.

However, the withdrawal of Israeli settlements in the West Bank did not satisfy Dispensationalists. Dispensationalists rely on Israel to expand, rather than retract in order to meet their prophetic goals. The billboard message, repeated above, was established to convince the President, by way of public outcry, that God's plan is for Israel to occupy the lands outlined in the Old Testament and that the Roadmap for Peace was not in line with what God desired. The message of this billboard was also cited by Congressman Tom DeLay during his address to the

⁹¹ United States Dept. of State. "Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East: Israeli/Palestinian Reciprocal Action, Quartet Support." Mod. 16 July 2003. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/22520.htm> (Sept 14 2007).

Israeli Parliament.⁹² The advertisement of these Dispensational billboards is a good example of Dispensationalists' efforts to influence foreign policy. The Road Map for Peace has not yet come to fruition.

The series of billboard messages illustrates one way in which Dispensationalism attempts to impact foreign policy. Dispensationalism is often manifested in other ways that influence foreign policy, both directly and indirectly. This chapter will examine Dispensationalism in special interest groups, prominent non-political Dispensational leaders and the personal associations of several recent presidents.

Dispensationalism and Special Interest Groups

Edward Tivnan describes 1954 as "the year of the pro-Israel Lobby" (1987: 39).⁹³ The American Zionist Council of Public Affairs (AZCPA) was formed in this year in order to aid the growing frustrations Zionists felt toward President Eisenhower. Eisenhower took a firm tone against Israel during the Suez War and which essentially said to Israel, "If you don't withdraw [your forces from the Sinai] we'll cut off your money."⁹⁴ Not until the 1950s did the Israel lobby become an indelible part of the legislative experience. In many ways, it was the pragmatism of Eisenhower not to take a staunch Zionist stance that helped facilitate the increase in pro-Israel PACs and lobbyist groups.⁹⁵

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War also played a critical role in mobilizing fundamentalist support for Israel, as evident in public opinion trends mentioned earlier. It was also used as a sign of legitimacy for Dispensational-Premillennialism. *Christianity Today* editor L. Nelson Bell wrote, "That for the first time in more than 2,000 years Jerusalem is now completely in the hands of the Jews gives the student of the Bible a thrill and a renewed faith in the accuracy and validity of the

⁹² Norton Mezvinsky. "The Impact of Christian Zionism on the Arab-Israeli Conflict." *Nth Position*. March 2005. <http://www.nthposition.com/theimpactofchristian.php> (22 Feb. 2008).

⁹³ Edward Tivnan. *The Lobby*. (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1987) p. 39.

⁹⁴ Richard H. Curtiss. *Stealth PACs: Lobbying Congress for Control of U.S. Middle East Policy*. (Washington D.C. : American Educational Trust, 1990) p. 21.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*

Bible (Wagner 1998)."⁹⁶ It was precisely this sort of attitude that pervaded many strands of American Christianity which in turn engaged more and more Christian Zionists in the fight to preserve and restore ancient Jewish land. Dispensational advocates then became much more aggressive and organized in their passion to defend and promote the territorial rights of Israel.

The main Israeli lobbying group is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which came from the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs (AZCPA) in 1954. The AZCPA changed its name to AIPAC in 1959 due to the perceived offense of the word "Zionist". Under the direction of the AIPAC, millions of dollars have been spent on political contributions from various pro-Israel PACs to Congressional members in order to achieve a continuing pro-Israel foreign policy. Although Jewish support remains its stronghold, AIPAC has also received support through donations from Dispensationalists who are concerned that Israel be given the utmost amount of unwavering support. During the 2007 policy conference, a notable Dispensationalist, Christian Zionist and founder of Christians United for Israel (CUFI) pastor, John Hagee,⁹⁷ gave a keynote speech in an effort to mobilize Christian support for Israel.⁹⁸ His speech illustrates the nature of the relationship between Dispensationalists and the AIPAC:

There are millions of evangelical Christians across America who consider the Jewish people the apple of God's eye, who see you as the chosen people, a cherished people, and a covenant people with an eternal covenant that will stand forever. Ladies and Gentlemen of AIPAC it's a new day in America. The sleeping giant of Christian Zionism has awakened; there are 50 million Christians standing up and applauding the State of Israel.⁹⁹

While supported by Dispensationalists because of foreign policy issues favoring Israel, AIPAC publicly expresses a purely political rationale for supporting Israel. According to AIPAC, they support Israel because of, "An alliance between two free and democratic nations... has strength, resiliency, and longevity not possible in relationships with non-democratic countries."

⁹⁶ Donald Wagner. *Evangelicals and Israel: Theological Roots of a Political Alliance*. The Christian Century, November 4, 1998, pp. 1020-1026.

⁹⁷ Hagee, the San Antonio pastor of Cornerstone Church, also donated 1 million dollars to help resettle Russian Jews to Palestine in 1998 (Halsell 1999).

⁹⁸ CUFI claims to be supported by 50,000 pastors and their congregations. See the sections dedicated to Jerry Falwell and John Hagee for more information on CUFI.

⁹⁹ John Hagee. AIPAC Policy Conference 2007. March 11, 2007.

<http://www.aipac.org/Publications/SpeechesByPolicymakers/Hagee-PC-2007.pdf> (21 Sept 2007).

They continue to say, "Our relationship with Arab nations depends on continued control of the current dictator, monarch, or regime. It is in our interest to strengthen relationships with democracies."¹⁰⁰ These reasons are all secondary motivations for support of Israel by Dispensationalists, who believe it is their Christian duty to support Israel in order to please God.

The Israel lobby, as manifested in the AIPAC, has many of its goals in line with Dispensational fundamentalists. The Israel lobby generally wants money, congressional support for Israel, and complete Israeli control over Jerusalem. Fundamentalists aid in producing all three. To illustrate the power of the Israel lobby, consider this example. In 1981, Congress and President Reagan approved the sale of 5 airborne warning and control system aircrafts (AWAC) to Saudi Arabia. AIPAC lobbied heavily against this measure but they eventually failed. What they did show was the amount of force they were willing to exert in order to drive their political agenda. The effects of the Israel lobby in the aftermath of the AWAC sale were experienced firsthand by Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Charles Percy. Although the vote was close (a four vote margin) Percy was singled out for his involvement in its passage. He voted in accordance of the sale of AWACS and in the next election, pro-Israel PAC's contributed \$329,825 to assist in Percy's defeat. Democrat Paul Simon was the beneficiary of this monetary onslaught against Percy and was elected over Percy in 1984 by nearly 90,000 votes.¹⁰¹

The story of Percy serves as a cautionary tale for those who oppose pro-Israel initiatives. In the modern congressional structure of career politicians it should come as no surprise that lawmakers may be wary about advocating an idea contrary to that of powerful special interest groups. The lobbying power of AIPAC and its subsequent endorsement by fundamentalist Christians provides little leeway for politicians to act with a balanced or pro-Palestinian approach. A balanced perspective proves especially difficult for those congresspersons whose constituency is comprised of Dispensationalists.

¹⁰⁰ Irvine Anderson. *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*. (University Press of Florida: 2005) p. 117.

¹⁰¹ Grace Halsell. *Prophecy and Politics*. (Westport, CN: Lawrence and Hill Company, 1986) pp164-165.

Table 6.1
Monetary Contributions

<u>Total U.S. Aid to Israel 1948-2000</u> 82 Billion
<u>Total Pro-Israel Funds to Congressional Candidates 1978-2004</u> 39,532,465
Source: Washington Report on Middle East Affairs < http://www.wrmea.com/ >

In 1984 the Reagan administration hosted one of several seminars on Israel. The AIPAC was represented along with Dispensational and Christian Zionist, leaders Tim and Beverly Lahaye, Hal Lindsay, Pat Robertson, and Jerry Falwell. These meetings had a two pronged affect: they allowed the administration to sustain support from the Christian fundamentalists and allowed the Israel lobby to press their pro-Likud agenda policies on the administration and Christian Zionists.¹⁰²

An important step in the evolution of the AIPAC and Dispensationalism was the annual AIPAC meeting in 1995. Ralph Reed, director of the Christian Coalition, was invited and the two groups effectively formed a bond by which the pursuit of pro-Israel agendas would be the primary focus. William N. Dale comments, "Relations between the two movements have become progressively closer since then and they cooperate to prevent any governmental action that they deem contrary to Israel's interest."¹⁰³

Even so, there were still many Dispensationalists who still viewed the Israel lobby as a far left, Jewish affair, one that they wanted no part of and one that went against their social conservatism. However disapproving many Dispensationalists were towards social liberalism,

¹⁰² Don Wagner. "For Zion's Sake" *Middle East Report*, No. 223. (Summer, 2002), pp. 55.

¹⁰³ William N. Dale. "The Impact of Christian Zionism on American Policy." AmericanDemocracy.org Mod 2003 <http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2004_0406/dale_impact/dale_impact.html> (17 Sept 2007).

this was secondary to the divinely decreed support of Israel, to which many reluctantly acquiesced. For many Dispensationalists, the world would not be around much longer and so social legislation was in many ways, largely irrelevant to the initiation of prophecy.

A 1997 edition of *Fortune* lists AIPAC as the second most powerful lobbyist group and the Christian Coalition as the seventh.¹⁰⁴ The friendship between Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and AIPAC was a natural part of a larger paradigm shift taking place in Zionism and fundamentalism.¹⁰⁵ This shift is evident in the associations between liberal Jewish groups, mostly of the northeast urban variety, and conservative Christians, spread throughout rural and suburban America.

In the 1970 Hal Lindsey published his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which became a bestseller and a useful tool for rallying around end times prophecy. Lindsey compared contemporary events to Biblical prophecy, thus reaffirming what Dispensationalists had been wanting to hear: that the end is near and modern political happenings were in accordance with these prophecies:

The Arab-African confederacy headed by Egypt (King of the South) launches an invasion of Israel. This fatal mistake spells their doom and begins the Armageddon campaign."...but the king of the north shall rush upon him (the Israeli leader) like a whirlwind, with chariots (mechanized army) and horsemen (cavalry), and with many ships" (Daniel 11:40b).^{106 107}

The success of this bestseller is a testament to its influence.¹⁰⁸ The paradigm shift by evangelicals was this: instead of focusing on stewardship, grace and civic responsibility, focus should be forthrightly applied to Israel with an unconditional fervor. As Robert Trice said of this

¹⁰⁴ Jeffrey Birnbaum. "Washington's Power 25..." CNN. Mod 2007
http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/1997/12/08/234927/index.htm
(17 Sept 2007).

¹⁰⁵ There is debate as to whether or not Pat Robertson is a Dispensationalist, Historic Premillennialist or Postmillennialist. Regardless, the point is that the Christian Coalition and Mr. Robertson align themselves with Dispensational Christian Zionists in their fervent support for Israel.

¹⁰⁶ Hal Lindsey. *The Late Great Planet Earth*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1970) pp153-154.

¹⁰⁷ Hal Lindsey was also permitted to speak to Pentagon officials concerning nuclear war with Russia.

¹⁰⁸ This book sold over 30 million copies in 54 languages and the New York Times called it the number one bestseller of the decade.

relationship, "American economic and military assistance for Israel has depended less on the proficiency of its own lobbying efforts than on pro-Israel sentiments of American Christians."¹⁰⁹

The alliance between Dispensationalists and Zionist lobbyists help each achieve their goals: Each doing what they believe they must in support of Israel.

Another example of this shift in priorities was the transition of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) into more Dispensationally based policies. In 1967, the same year as the Arab-Israel War, Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson met as likeminded individuals committed to restructuring the SBC according to Dispensation theology. Patterson exhibited his control by pushing a Dispensational candidate, Adrian Rogers, as head of the SBC. Since then the Southern Baptists have been closely associated with Dispensationalism and have had to wrestle with its legitimacy within their own ranks.

It should not be assumed that Dispensationalism is the standard form of Baptist theology, but rather that it is a pressing issue that pervades the SBC institution and certainly exerts a strong influence on the SBCs theological affirmations. A notable Baptist scholar assesses Dispensationalism influence in Baptist academia:

The seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention resisted premillennialist dispensationalism. The establishment wanted to avoid schism and focus on evangelism. However, Evangelical-Fundamentalist culture grew rapidly in the 1980s. One of its greatest successes was to incorporate the Southern Baptist Convention under its broad umbrella. Thus, premillennialism, handmaiden to Fundamentalism, also became the acceptable position of many Southern Baptist pastors in the 1980s and 1990s (Pitts 1999).¹¹⁰

Another Baptist leader, John F. Bough, echoes that sentiment saying, "I do not believe it is possible for Baptists who put Christ in first in their lives to stay in the fundamentalist-dispensationalist camp, where politics take first priority. I stand with Herbert Reynolds, Baylor University chancellor, when he challenges *mainstream* Baptists to move forward..."¹¹¹

Regardless of any theological disputes, the following years saw the Southern Baptists take on a

¹⁰⁹ Irvine Anderson. Quoted in *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*. (University Press of Florida: 2005) p. 116.

¹¹⁰ William A. Pitts, "Southern Baptists and Millennialism, 1900-2000: conceptual patterns and historical expressions," *Baptist History and Heritage*, Spring 1999.

¹¹¹ Grace Halsell. *Forcing God's Hand*. (Beltsville, ML: International Graphics, 2003) pp 106-110.

much more political and Dispensationalist tone, evident in their departure from historical norms of strict church-state separation and local church autonomy.

The transitional movement of Christian Zionists from Democrats to Republicans in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s was an important part of the fundamental-Zionist relationship. President Carter's acknowledgement of a Palestinian homeland may provide an explanatory reason why many Dispensationalists left the Democratic Party in support for Ronald Reagan in 1980.¹¹² Carter was not the social conservative that many Dispensationalists thought he would be, and Carter was also not as pro-Israel as they would have liked.¹¹³ The alienation felt by Falwell and other fundamentalists who previously supported the born-again Southerner Jimmy Carter, allowed the shift over to the Republicans who embraced this powerful voting bloc. Tim Lahaye and Jerry Falwell began the Moral Majority in 1979, and subsequently mobilized fundamentalist support for Ronald Reagan in the 1980 presidential election, firmly establishing the close relationship between Dispensational ideologies and political conservatism.

Equally important was the transference of Dispensationalism into Baptist churches. Before the Dispensational Baptists secured power in the SBC, many other church bodies had sufficient time to formally address the doctrine and propose their official positions regarding the Israel-Palestine quagmire. Part of the problem for the Zionists was that the National Council of Churches was becoming increasingly sympathetic to the Palestinians.¹¹⁴ Zionist groups already had much Dispensational support, but desired more. The proliferation of fundamental-literalism advocating pro-Israel policies was embraced by many Zionists who had influence, but needed the numbers to sustain it.

¹¹² It should be noted that although Republicans are only slightly more likely to be Dispensationalists, Dispensational leadership still remains considerably stronger in the Republican party.

¹¹³ More information on President Carter and Dispensationalism can be found on page 87 of this chapter.

¹¹⁴ Halsell. *Prophecy and Politics*. (Westport, CN: Lawrence and Hill Company, 1986) pp 148-149.

The Presbyterian Church supported a “balanced resolution” from 1969 to 1995 advocating, “a shared common authority for a unified Jerusalem.”¹¹⁵ The Episcopalian Church, Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church exhibited similar positions. The United Methodist Church took no formal stand but generally produces neutral literature in their *World Outlook* publication. Zionists were missing their Christian supporters and rise of fundamentalism, with much credit to Mr. Falwell, allowed for a renewed partnership.¹¹⁶

Zionist lobbies shifted in tandem with the fundamentalists. The Zionist lobbyists' identification was predicated on supporting Israel and in aligning with Dispensationalists they saw a pragmatic way to garner further support. Zionists tended to advocate a more liberal political stance on social issues (abortion, gay marriage) than the fundamentalists, but their rationale for allegiance was this: we can tolerate the social conservatism of the Dispensationalists as long as Israel remains a top priority. As fundamentalists moved more and more towards a politically oriented pro-Israel agenda Zionists moved away from pushing a more liberal domestic agenda. Both moves were for the sake of Israel.¹¹⁷

It is difficult to determine whether a congressman votes according to agenda driven PAC's or whether he is truly sincere. In terms of Israel, Congress consistently and repeatedly votes so overwhelmingly in favor of measures of support that, regardless of AIPAC contributions, a given Congressmen is likely to support Israeli causes. Legislation in favor of Israel is often introduced and passed without much incident. Recent legislation measures involving Israel attest to this fact:

House Congressional Resolution 149: Recognizing the 57th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel. Introduced on 5/11/05. Passed (397-0) on 5/23/05

House Congressional Resolution 438: Urging member states of the United Nations to stop supporting resolutions that unfairly castigate Israel and to promote within the United Nations a more balanced and constructive approach to resolving conflict in the Middle East. Introduced on 9/14/05. Passed (400-1) on 12/6/05.

¹¹⁵ Irvine Anderson. Quoted in *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy*. (University Press of Florida: 2005) p. 106

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Halsell. *Prophecy and Politics*. (Westport, CN: Lawrence and Hill Company, 1986)

House Congressional Resolution 21: Calling on the United Nations Security Council to charge Iranian Leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad with violating the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and United Nations Charter because of his calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. Introduced on 1/9/07. Passed (411-2) on 6/20/07.¹¹⁸

While not major pieces of legislation, the quickness of their passage and the margin of support both show that pro-Israel legislation is a popular way for congressmen to appease the strong Israel lobby and their pro-Israel constituents, specifically fundamentalists. These resolutions also address issues beyond the economic and military spectrum, thus affirming a legislative moral support for Israel and censure for those actors in opposition.¹¹⁹

Perhaps the issue that most represents the mixture of Dispensationalism with the political process is that of the proposal to move the U.S. embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem. This measure was proposed in 1995 and passed both houses of Congress. The bill claimed that since 1967 Jerusalem has been undivided Israeli land and "Whereas in every country except Israel, the United States maintains its Embassy in the city designated by the host country,"¹²⁰ the United States should seek to relocate the embassy to Jerusalem. The bill provided an "out" clause whereby the president could delay the transfer for six months citing national security interests. In 2000, another bill was proposed in the House meant to reaffirm the Jerusalem Embassy Act. Since the approval of the Act, Presidents Clinton and Bush have repeatedly delayed its execution, aware of the political ramifications of such a move in the Arab world. Ironically they still reaffirm the Act's initial objective. President Bush expressed his opinions through the following memorandum:

I hereby determine that it is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States to suspend for a period of 6 months the limitations set forth in sections 3(b)

¹¹⁸ Congressional Quarterly. Roll Call Votes. Another interesting note is that Ron Paul dissented on H.C.R. 438 and 21 and Dennis Kucinich dissented on H.C.R. 21. Both set forth presidential bids and it would be interesting to analyze the effects AIPAC and other Pro-Israel groups have on their candidacy.

¹¹⁹ The previous example of Senator Percy shows the difficulties a politician in opposition to AIPAC may face.

¹²⁰ Library of Congress. *H. Con. Res. 171*. <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c110:1:./temp/~c110rHM0pO::> (18 Sept 2007).

and 7(b) of the Act. My Administration remains committed to beginning the process of moving our Embassy to Jerusalem.¹²¹

In response to the continual delay of the Jerusalem Embassy Act, a group called the Jerusalem Prayer Team released a Dispensationally charged letter to President Bush in support for Israel by invoking national security interests as well as claiming "History records that God deals with nations in accord with how these nations deal with Israel."¹²² The Jerusalem Prayer Team is endorsed by the Christians United for Israel, itself a product of prominent Dispensational mega-church pastor, John Hagee. The Jerusalem Prayer Team has been publicly endorsed by a diverse group of individuals. Some notable ones include: President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush, Former Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel Ambassador Danny Ayalon, Jerry Falwell and Dispensational minister, Tim Lahaye.¹²³

The Jerusalem Embassy Act was initiated by Senator Bob Dole in 1995 as a precursor for gaining Jewish and Christian support for his presidential candidacy. The Act passed with overwhelming support in the House and the Senate.¹²⁴ Dole had previously been speaking to lobbyist groups such as the AIPAC and conservative religious groups, including Falwell's Liberty University before his proposal of the Act. Dole's advocacy for the embassy move is in contradiction to earlier opinions in which he was opposed to the idea.¹²⁵

The saga of the Jerusalem Embassy Act paints a complex portrait of how Dispensationalism can affect foreign policy agendas. Dole clearly saw the need to appeal to fundamentalists and Jewish groups in order achieve campaign contributions and official endorsements of support. He acted politically to achieve both goals by endorsing a measure

¹²¹ George W. Bush. *Memorandum for the Secretary of State on Jerusalem Embassy Act*. The White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050615-5.html> (18 Sept 2007).

¹²² Jerusalem Prayer Team. "Operation Jerusalem." <http://jerusalemprayerteam.org/petition.html> (18 Sept 2007).

¹²³ Id at <http://jerusalemprayerteam.org/endorsements.asp> (18 Sept 2007)

¹²⁴ The Jerusalem Embassy Act votes were in favor: 93-5 in the Senate and 374-37 in the House.

¹²⁵ Conrad Goeringer. "Proposed Embassy Move Has Serious Theo-Political Consequences." *Theist Watch*. Mod 16 May 1995. <http://www.skepticfiles.org/american/16may95.htm> (20 Sept 2007).

generally believed to be supported by both groups. In this case, the prominence of Dispensationalism drew Dole away from a previous position into a more strategic political position aimed at securing votes from fundamental Christians.¹²⁶ Dole recognized that he needed the fundamentalist Christian support and introduced an act designed to appeal to that group's most passionate ideology.

The political maneuvering of postponing the Act's implementation by Clinton and Bush show another form of strategic behavior designed to appease pro-Israel groups, yet not be responsible for what could be a foreign policy disaster. President Bush's endorsement of the Jerusalem Prayer Group is an example. Whether or not he believes in its cause, or simply recognizes the need to sustain fundamentalist Christian support is irrelevant to the fact that he recognizes the importance of this special interest group for his political advancement. The political pragmatism of Bush and Clinton not to go through with the Act's implementation is further evidence of the struggles leaders face when an interest group must be appeased enough to get support, but not enough to create a potentially dangerous policy move, one which could seriously alienate Palestinian leadership and inhibit the peace process. It is likely that presidents will continue to cite national security issues as the basis for a continual postponement of the Act. For now, Dispensationally influenced special interest groups seem satisfied with the status quo of the American-Israel relationship, although a more proactive American role in supporting Israel would certainly be favored.

The Dispensational Activities of Jerry Falwell and John Hagee

This analysis now turns towards an examination of Dispensationalism with emphasis on individual Dispensational advocates. This will take shape by analyzing two influential Dispensational leaders. Information previously discussed will be built upon further by analyzing in greater detail the Dispensational activities of Jerry Falwell and John Hagee.

¹²⁶ In 1990, Senator Dole argued against the possibility of moving the embassy to Jerusalem.

It would be remiss to conduct an analysis of Dispensationalism and foreign policy with Israel and not cover the life and works of the late Reverend Jerry Falwell. Falwell was the greatest facilitator of Dispensationally oriented foreign policy pursuits in the last 30 years. He organized the precedent for modern Christian Zionists and achieved a status among many Israeli politicians as a representative of conservative American Christianity. He was sought by prominent political leaders from the United States and Israel for advice and counsel and liberally dispensed such advice to his American and Israeli audiences.

In the preceding pages, this analysis has shown how world events involving Israel have given ammunition and legitimacy to Dispensational ideals. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war is a particularly strong example of a Dispensational awakening: the rise in support for Israel within the general public, the catalyst for the Southern Baptist Convention moving towards Dispensational theology, the success of *The Late, Great, Planet Earth* and the increase in pro-Zionist lobbying activities.

The 1967 War saw territorial gains for Israel in the form of the Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula, West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. Grace Halsell (2003) speaks of her exchange with two Presbyterian ministers who have studied Falwell's life. "Until 1967, Falwell in his sermons never mentioned Israel", says Dr. Price, "After 1967, Falwell made Israel his main topic."¹²⁷The discussion with Dr. Price and Goodwin told of some interesting things about Falwell. Falwell, referring to the war, told Israel that they need not adhere to international law. Seemingly, he said this because Israel belongs to God, and is therefore not subject to worldly statutes. Halsell continues to report that Falwell was treated to an all expense paid trip to Israel and was supported by Prime Minister Begin to go into the West Bank and proclaim it divine Jewish land.

The relationship Falwell had with Israeli leaders is astonishing considering Falwell held no political office and had no direct authority on foreign policy. His reception of the Jabotinsky medal for being a strong ally of Israel is further evidence of his value to Israeli politicians. Anderson (2005: 114) says,

¹²⁷ Grace Halsell. *Forcing God's Hand*. (Beltsville, ML: International Graphics, 2003) pp 99-100.

Israeli leaders from Begin through Netanyahu saw him as an important ally. When Begin ordered the bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, the first person he called in the United States for support against a negative reaction was not a Jewish senator or rabbi - it was Jerry Falwell.

Anderson continues on to mention that Falwell called a meeting of government members following the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and that Netanyahu regularly met with Falwell on his visits to the United States.

Falwell was seen by Israel's Ministers as a representative of evangelical Christianity. Although he only spoke for a percentage of Christians, he did provide a strong voice for millions of fundamentalists who looked to him as a beacon of Christian stewardship. Falwell's legacy can also be seen in the Moral Majority. As a politically influential, Dispensationally based lobby group, it saw greater longevity and preponderance than many other groups of its kind. In 1979, Jerry Falwell, Tim Lahaye and others set up the Moral Majority as a "pro-life, pro-traditional family, pro-national defense and pro-Israel platform."¹²⁸ The pro-life, pro-traditional family, pro-national defense had been previously supported by a broad conservative bloc. It was the addition of "pro-Israel" that helped this coalition affirm a distinctive Dispensational flavor.

The Moral Majority has also credited itself with aiding in the defeat of communism by supporting Ronald Reagan. It disbanded during the 1990s and helped Bush successfully win the presidency in 2004 under the new title, Moral Majority Coalition. Along with social conservatism, it has remained actively committed to a Dispensational, pro-Israel sentiment as a means to galvanize support for its cause in both domestic and foreign matters.¹²⁹

Falwell made some impressive associations with various political leaders over the years. Because he was not a political leader himself, he did his best to be a mentor and counselor; as well as act as an ambassador of Christian conservatism. According to himself, he was responsible for the personal conversion of Senator Jesse Helms to the pro-Israel cause. Helms,

¹²⁸ Moral Majority Coalition. "Timeline." http://www.moralmajority.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=29 (27 Sept 2007).

¹²⁹ Ibid

had previously been an opponent of Israel but performed an incredible turnaround, largely due to Jerry Falwell.¹³⁰

In 1984 Helms was campaigning for reelection in the U.S. Senate in his home state of North Carolina. Helms and Falwell had been friends and perhaps Helms realized the extent of Dispensational Christianity in his home state and recognized its voting power. During the 1984 election, AIPAC spent \$222,342 in favor of Helms' opponent, James Hunt. This was due to the fact that Helms had the lowest senator rating according to the AIPAC. Helms was able to win by a slim margin and subsequently became one of the most pro-Israel senators. Soon after he won his re-election in 1984 he became the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee. Since then he has consistently advocated pro-Israel causes and joined the fight to move the American Embassy to Jerusalem.¹³¹ Allen Kellum, editor of the *MidEast Observer*, said the following in response to the possibility of the Israel Lobby using Falwell to convert Senator Helms to their cause:

Helms was reelected even when he was against aid to Israel. But the Israelis may have used Falwell to tell Helms: 'Look, you saw what happened to Senator Percy. We defeated him. And if you do not change you will not get elected the next time you run.' But as for those taking the actual credit for making Helms do the flip flop, a conservative Israel lobbying group, called Americans for a Safe Israel, did that (Kellum cited in Halsell 1986: 166).

Falwell, like many Christian Zionists, looked to Israel as a means to usher in the Millennium. The Oslo Accords were seen as an impediment to this goal, particularly the provision concerning Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. Falwell and others were displeased at the thought of Israel reducing its territory. When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the United States in January 1998, he met with Jerry Falwell before meeting with President Clinton. Over 1,000 supporters of Falwell were in attendance at the meeting where Falwell assured Netanyahu that he would "tell President Clinton to refrain from putting

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Lucille Barnes. "Retiring Sen. Jesse Helms Caved to Pro-Israel Lobby Halfway Through His Career." Mod. March 2002, <http://www.wrmea.com/archives/march2002/0203034.html>, (25 Sept. 2007).

pressure on Israel"¹³² to conform to the Oslo accords. He also agreed to contact over 200,000 evangelical pastors with this same message.

Falwell has been a part of many petitions and endorsements of Christian Zionist causes. In 1997 he endorsed an advertisement placed in the *New York Times* entitled, "Christians Call for a United Jerusalem."¹³³ Along with Falwell were Pat Robertson, Ed McAteer (President of the Religious Roundtable), David Allen Lewis (President of CUFI) and others who expressed their Dispensational world view:

We, the undersigned Christian spiritual leaders, communicating weekly to more than 100 million Christian Americans, are proud to join together in supporting the continued sovereignty of the State of Israel over the holy city of Jerusalem. We support Israel's efforts to reach reconciliation with its Arab neighbours, but we believe that Jerusalem or any portion of it shall not be negotiable in the peace process. Jerusalem must remain undivided as the eternal capital of the Jewish people.¹³⁴

This advertisement was sponsored by a formidable Christian Zionist organization called the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) which aims, "to present to Christians a true understanding of what is taking place in the Land today so that world events may be interpreted in the light of God's Word."¹³⁵ Various Biblical passages were used to support this mandate. The group also claims to be the largest international network of Christian Zionists. It began in 1980 with the assistance of the Israeli government. These "embassies" have since spread to 37 countries worldwide and are full of political overtones expressing a Christian unity with Israel of a Dispensational variety. The ICEJ is consistent with traditional Dispensational ideals and was responsible for organizing the first International Christian Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland in 1985, in the same hall used by Herzl nearly one hundred years prior (Robinson 2007).

It is worth mentioning the influence of CUFI and Falwell's small but important role in it. As mentioned earlier, CUFI aligned with AIPAC but it has also exhibited a fair amount of influence

¹³² Don Wagner. "For Zion's Sake" *Middle East Report*, No. 223. (Summer, 2002), pp. 55.

¹³³ This advertisement was a response to an earlier ad sponsored by Churches for Middle East Peace who advocated a shared Jerusalem. See Wagner 1998.

¹³⁴ International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. "Christians Call for a United Jerusalem". *New York Times*. 18 April 1997, www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/united.html, (28 Sept 2007).

¹³⁵ International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. "The Objectives of the ICEJ." <http://www.icej.org/articles/objectives>, (14 Sept 2007).

by itself. CUFI is a recent special interest development. It resulted from the efforts of John Hagee and the success of his Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, TX and his televangelism. CUFI is not even two years old but Hagee is no novice. Journalist Max Blumenthal discusses the conversations he had with CUFI's Washington lobbyist, David Brog (2006).¹³⁶ Blumenthal notes that Hagee raised over 8.5 million dollars in support of Israel and had Prime Minister Netanyahu speak at a fundraiser at his Cornerstone Church. Hagee is also close with former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay. Blumenthal expresses this relationship by saying "Washington's Republican leadership is just a phone call away."

Falwell's direct involvement with CUFI is notable due to the passion of his speech and the immediate effects felt in Washington. In July of 2006 CUFI organized a banquet consisting of more than 3,000 evangelicals. Some prominent speakers were Israeli Ambassador Daniel Ayalon, Republican Senators Sam Brownback and Rick Santorum as well as RNC Chairmen Ken Mehlmen. Falwell's speech provided the most fervor, "I will rebuke the State Department for any and every time it told Israel to stand down and show restraint," for which a resounding applause followed. The next day CUFI attendees went to Congressional offices to lobby in support of Israel's campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon. This push coincided with an AIPAC-authored House resolution affirming support for Israel. Brog also told Blumenthal about the close association he has had in the Bush White House and how CUFI is an ally of AIPAC (Blumenthal 2006).

Falwell was a strong influential Dispensational leader and spokesmen. He, along with other Dispensational leaders, claimed to speak for 100 million people, but this seems an exaggeration. A more conservative estimate would be about 30 or 40 million.¹³⁷ But even so, he could still say he spoke for a similar amount of people as the most populous state of California and because he commanded a national audience, in some ways he was arguably more influential than a governor or a senator. More importantly though, his followers vote often and are politically

¹³⁶ Max Blumenthal. "Birth Pangs of a New Christian Zionism." *The Nation*, 8 August 2006.

¹³⁷ Refer to public opinion data on Dispensational beliefs

involved. Even after his death in 2007, reverence is held for his contributions to evangelism and political activism. His passion for what he believed was what drew people into his camp and allowed others to feel a similar passion. His leadership as a Dispensational figure ranks among the early Dispensational pioneers but with many more political associations. The thickening of the political institutional system with these interest groups and lobbyists, as well as his use of the media, allowed Falwell to directly reach an audience that previous Dispensationalists were unable to address.

Dispensationalism lost an important leader in Falwell but much like the legacy Scofield left to Moody, Falwell's will certainly be picked up in leaders such as Hagee. It is difficult to determine whether a non-political office holder will ever have such profound association with successive foreign heads of state and if that influence will be felt at home and abroad. A new step will be taken in the future as Dispensational leaders build on the legacy of Falwell to continue the fight for the furtherance of Israel.

The activities of John Hagee have already been discussed in the context of CUFI and his association with Jerry Falwell. There are, however, some things about Hagee that deserve attention, beyond those already mentioned. Hagee is important not just for what he has done, but also for what he will do, given that he is a likely Dispensational successor to Falwell. He is a very popular man and along with CUFI, he has his own namesake ministry. His ministry encompasses a wide range of issues but remains consistent in priority of Israel as form of divine ordinance. According to his website, there are 7 reasons why Christians should support Israel, each supported by a Bible verse understood in a literal, Dispensational context.¹³⁸

In 2004 Hagee and his Cornerstone Church hosted the 24th annual night to honor Israel. This consisted of a celebration of Jewish culture and customs through music, food and language. A large Star of David hung side by side an American flag and patriotic hymns, both American and Israeli, were juxtaposed with Bible verse readings illustrating the necessity of Israel as God's holy nation. Several political speakers were in attendance. Former Republican presidential candidate

¹³⁸ See John Hagee Ministries at <http://www.jhm.org/support-israel.asp>

and current President of American Values Gary Bauer delivered a keynote speech declaring that Washington knows to listen to Hagee because Hagee speaks for millions of people. Congressman Ted Poe also addressed the crowd, which numbered in the thousands. In 2004 over two million dollars was raised by Hagee's ministry in support for Jewish resettlement and Israel-wide social programs. Each Night to Honor Israel consists of religious and political figures. The most recent event in 2007 once again had Gary Bauer as a speaker along with Benjamin Netanyahu via satellite and a visit from John McCain.¹³⁹

McCain's involvement in this capacity may appear to be a strategic political move as part of his bid for the presidency. He is not known to be a Dispensationalist and is generally regarded as a mainline, moderate Christian. This brings up some interesting points regarding Dispensational preponderance. Dispensational leaders have elevated the case for Israel so strongly that it is now an important part of presidential campaigning. McCain may likely support Israel for other reasons than Hagee but it is Hagee's Biblical understanding that has allowed such a forum to exist. Another 2008 presidential candidate who recently visited Hagee's Cornerstone Church and Falwell's Liberty University is Mike Huckabee. It is unclear if Huckabee is Dispensational, but what is clear is that Dispensational leaders still remain an important endorsement for some presidential candidates.

Dispensationalism as an influence because of the political apparatus it creates is seldom investigated in the greater context of Christian Zionism. The constructs of Christian Zionism are apparent but the Dispensational roots of such constructs are often ignored. Events sponsored by Dispensational organizations for the specific purpose for promoting Israel are now a regular part of the political process. Their popularity draws exposure and thus political hopefuls see such involvement as an integral part of both campaigning for office and sustaining employment once elected. The creation of a forum for pro-Israel emotionalism is a contribution made possible by the continued proliferation of Dispensational theology.

¹³⁹ Ibid

Other prominent attendees of Hagee's pro-Israel functions are House Minority Whip Roy Blunt, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senator Joe Lieberman.

In recent news, Hagee has advocated a pre-emptive strike against Iranian targets because he believes Iran poses a direct threat to the national security of Israel and the United States. In a recent PBS documentary, Hagee spoke about his theological reasons for such action and explains why he supports Senator Joe Lieberman. Lieberman went so far as to compare Hagee's leadership importance to Moses. Hagee explains that if Israel and the United States attack Iran, Russia and Iran will attack Israel and prophecies in the Book of Ezekiel will come to fruition. He exclaims, "[God] crushed Pharaoh, Haman, and Hitler so that Israel and the world 'shall know that I am the Lord'." ¹⁴⁰ Hagee offers his own predictions by saying that war with Iran is inevitable and warns his congregation to prepare for the Rapture.

The way Hagee constantly evaluates world events and relates them to the Bible is popular in many Dispensational schools of thought. According to Hagee, Hurricane Katrina is seen as a punitive measure in response for the United States pulling Jewish settlers out of the Gaza Strip. Hagee has also recently introduced a book in which he insists that Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah and therefore the Jews cannot be held accountable for rejecting him as the Messiah. This new book will surely cause controversy in the Christian community and is intent on becoming a formidable theological proof in defense of Christian Zionism. ¹⁴¹

Dispensationalism in the Executive

Proponents of Dispensationalism have affected the presidential office and thus helped shape the executive leadership in this country on matters concerning Israel. President Truman's personal association with Dispensationalism was already discussed in chapter 5 and now Dispensationalism's influence on Presidents Carter through George W. Bush will be analyzed.

¹⁴⁰ Public Broadcasting Services. "End Game in the Holy Land: Christians United for Israel, Theology and Politics again in the Middle East." 5 Oct. 2007.

¹⁴¹ Hagee's new book, *In Defense of Israel*, is a recent release at the time of this writing. It will certainly cause lively debate about Dispensationalism, with many arguing that his revolutionary historical take on the Canonical Gospels is a result of Dispensationalism taken to its conclusion. Some will insist it is heresy and others will praise its staunch Christian Zionism. Either way, it will likely catapult Hagee into a higher realm of Dispensational influence.

Dispensationalism in the White House can have extraordinary effects on how presidents see the world, Israel and their personal place in the overall eschatological context. The possibilities of these effects will be examined to determine how significant Dispensational notions played on each president's individual world outlook and how this relates to agenda setting policies with Israel. The American executive is unique in our governing institution because presidents have the ability to represent the nation as a whole and establish agreements with foreign heads of state. Have these agreements been shaped in part by Dispensational support for Israel? Has an Armageddon-oriented outlook impacted policy directives with Israel? There are number of methods used to procure such information, including presidential papers, personal affiliations and written biographies.

During the Carter years Dispensationalism had reached a pivotal point, whereby it already achieved modest success in sparking public sentiment concerning end times. Carter's position regarding a Palestinian homeland was in direct conflict with Dispensational goals. *The Late, Great Planet Earth* had galvanized Dispensational sentiment and leaders such as Jerry Falwell had begun to utilize such sentiment for political purposes. Carter, by mentioning a Palestinian homeland had upset Israel's Likud Party. The Likud party desired to gain sympathy from American Christians and aided the shift in fundamentalist support for the Democratic Party to that of the Republicans. After Carter's statement on Palestine, nationwide advertisements sponsored by a Christian Zionist group, Institute for Holy Land Studies, proclaimed, "The time has come for evangelical Christians to affirm their belief in biblical prophecy and Israel's divine right to the land."¹⁴²

Carter was not a Dispensationalist and although a large part of his constituency was Southern evangelical, Carter remained more in line with Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian Realist perspective.¹⁴³ Carter turned out to be more liberal, theologically and politically, than

¹⁴² Don Wagner. "For Zion's Sake" *Middle East Report*, No. 223. (Summer, 2002), pp. 55.

¹⁴³ Christian Realists recognize that the Heavenly Kingdom cannot be attained on Earth and seek more pragmatic ways of reconciling innate worldly sin and Godly virtues. Contrary to Christian

many conservative Christians had hoped. Carter advocated strong church-state separation, a position rapidly becoming less supported in the Dispensational Southern Baptist Convention. The Likud Party helped organize (mostly through the lobbying of AIPAC) Christians who felt abandoned by Carter and the Democrats into embracing Ronald Reagan and the Republicans. Among other reasons, the loss of Carter's core constituency to the Republicans allowed Reagan to overwhelmingly defeat Carter in the 1980 presidential election and showed how important the evangelical voting bloc could be.¹⁴⁴

Carter's denial of Dispensationalism through his theologically liberal evangelical beliefs satisfied neither the growing demand of Biblical literalism in Christian circles nor the political desires of many Israeli politicians. The capitalization Reagan made by appealing to Dispensational sensibilities was both convenient and appropriate, given Reagan's staunch anti-communism perspective. The role of Russia in end times prophecy was highlighted by Lindsay for religious purposes and Reagan for political and religious purposes. Reagan effectively used Armageddon rhetoric to play into the end times notions of Dispensationalists. The extent of Reagan's religious belief is a matter of contention. Some writings authored by Reagan show him to be a deeply religious person. The Israeli-oriented Armageddon beliefs of Reagan also permeated into the writings of journalists who, during the 1980s, wrote about a desire for nuclear war based on Armageddon principles.¹⁴⁵

There is considerable amount of information pointing to Reagan being a "soft" Dispensationalist, at least in terms of Armageddon interpretation. A modest assumption would be to say that he was interested in Biblical end times theology but was inconclusive about the nature of what it means. This would put him in the same camp as many Americans as a "soft" Dispensationalist; curious and tacitly accepting, but not zealous. There are others who believe

Idealism where Earthly perfection is desired and advanced. See *The Irony of American History* by Reinhold Niebuhr.

¹⁴⁴ Leo Ribuffo. "The New Christian Right in Historical Context." *Ethics and Public Policy Center*. Mod. June 2001. http://www.eppc.org/programs/religionandmedia/publications/pubID.1540,programID.37/pub_detail.asp, (4 Oct. 2007).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

that Reagan ascribed to the same degree of Dispensationalism as did religious leaders such as Falwell and Moody. Writer Andrew G. Lang testifies to the latter ¹⁴⁶

Lang insists that Reagan believed in nuclear confrontation inevitability. This raised serious concerns regarding his ability to effectively negotiate on arms reductions. His interactions with spiritual advisors such as Billy Graham, lend support to the notion that Reagan was in some part associated with dispensational thinking. Billy Graham was a vital part of Reagan's spiritual council and it is plausible to believe that Dispensationally based Armageddon beliefs were a topic of conversation. ¹⁴⁷ Reagan's Dispensational rhetoric was concentrated on end times, specifically the possibility of conflict between Russia and Israel as shown in his speech below:

Ezekiel tells us that Gog, the nation that will lead all the other powers of darkness against Israel, will come from the north. Biblical scholars have been saying for generations that Gog must be Russia. What other powerful nation is to the north of Israel? None. But it didn't seem to make sense before the Russian revolution, when Russia was a Christian country. Now it does, now that Russia has become communistic and atheistic, now that Russia has set itself against God. Now it fits the description of Gog perfectly (Cited in Halsell 1986: 45).

Reagan's end times sentiments seem to be in line with Dispensational eschatology. This was not the only instance of such Armageddon statements. Reagan had read *The Late, Great, Planet Earth* and his words echoed Lindsey's interpretation. The fact that Dispensationalism relies on current world trends to satisfy Biblical understanding has been previously mentioned. The Cold War was certainly a part of that interpretative apparatus and the threat of nuclear war likely advanced this understanding. Reagan's Armageddon beliefs may have played a significant part of his Cold War perspective. It is difficult to tell if he would have had the same view of Soviet aggression without such beliefs. There were certainly causes for alarm, such as tactical nuclear capabilities, that were not predicated on Biblical notions, but rather based on general fear and

¹⁴⁶ Halsell. *Prophecy and Politics*. (Westport, CN: Lawrence and Hill Company, 1986)

¹⁴⁷ Billy Graham is often cited as a Dispensationalist but may be a Historic Premillennialist. The closeness of these two theologies leaves much room for ambiguity. If Graham is in fact dispensational he has provided religious counsel to every president since Truman, thus making him the most salient Dispensational figure of the 20th century. He is not the focus of this paper because his Dispensationalism/ Premillennialism is not manifested in an explicit pro-Israel agenda. His influence is seen in sincere counsel to presidents that is mostly non-political (although certain political stances have been apparent and he has publicly endorsed Israel).

misunderstanding. If Reagan believed that Russia was going to attack Israel, it seems he did so in part because of Biblical support.

On other occasions, Reagan insisted that his views were not according to Armageddon theology. In a 1984 debate with Walter Mondale, Reagan expressed his views on Armageddon. He denied its importance in forming policy but said he had many discussions with proponents of Premillennialism. This denial poses contradictory conclusions to previous documented statements concerning prophecies. It is entirely plausible that Reagan, being the unflappable politician he was, played to his audience. He was astute enough to know that admitting to Armageddon nearness on national television would have been damaging to his credibility and presidential image. He said in his debate, "But no one knows whether Armageddon, those prophecies mean that Armageddon is a thousand years away or day after tomorrow. So, I have never seriously warned and said we must plan according to Armageddon."¹⁴⁸

Reagan was a talented enough politician to not be cornered into publicly affirming a foreign policy based on Biblical prophecy. However, this does not detract from its influence on his personal life. Reagan may have been a "soft" Dispensationalist, or he may have had strong convictions on the matter that he chose to conceal publicly. Reagan may have operated with a fundamental, literal interpretation of scripture and this interpretation was closely tied to world events. Russia's centrality to Reagan's apocalyptic views makes sense in his policies. If he did believe in Dispensationalism, it would certainly make sense in his policies. How can Armageddon occur if nations disarm? His anticipation and preparation of Soviet aggression were byproducts of his personal convictions; convictions possibly rooted in Dispensational teachings.

The foreign policy of George H.W. Bush was not shaped by Dispensationalism. Bush was not a Dispensationalist and there are no reasons to believe that he had the foreign policy outlook characteristic of Reagan. Fundamentalist Christian leaders experienced several scandals during the late 1980s, damaging their credibility as an influential voice on moral issues. The improprieties of Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker forced the growing fundamentalist movement to

¹⁴⁸ http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/search/speeches/speech_srch.html (5 Nov 2007).

abandon its assertiveness as the moral compass of America. Pat Robertson attempted to win the presidency but experienced little support. Bush did not embrace the apocalyptic overtones of Reagan. The end of the Cold War may have been a part of this absence. The Soviet Union's power was no longer relevant and the Dispensational outlooks characteristic of the past seemed superfluous.

The end of the Cold War coupled with a decline in fundamentalist influence allowed Bush to take positions devoid of overtly religious sentiment. Billy Graham was still sought for spiritual counsel, but there is no reason to believe that Bush had any sincere Dispensational beliefs. However, the Gulf War did aid in the resurgence of Dispensationalism. Saddam Hussein was often seen as the new evil man and his control over "Babylon" helped rekindle an interest in end times theology.

Unlike Reagan who experienced an amicable relationship with Israel's Likud Party, Clinton favored the Labor Party. The Labor Party addressed secular concerns and was more willing to engage in peace negotiations regarding the Palestinian issue. Dispensationalists felt that a shared Jerusalem abandoned the word of God, and thus continued to befriend the Likud Party, especially such influential actors as Netanyahu. The Oslo accords were seen as an egregious denial of God's will because of its denial of Israel's right to occupy Palestinian territory. Dispensationalists were in particular disagreement of Annex 2, Article II,

Israel will implement an accelerated and scheduled withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, beginning immediately with the signing of the agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho area and to be completed within a period not exceeding four months after the signing of this agreement.¹⁴⁹

Clinton, a Southern Baptist, did not fall in line with the Dispensational camp and during his tenure dissatisfaction for his personal conduct and political acquiescence helped mobilize fundamentalists ready for a new president, represented by George W. Bush (Wagner 2002).

President George W. Bush credits Billy Graham for his spiritual conversion. He was partly elected as a foil to the perceived reprehensible conduct of Clinton and owes a considerable

¹⁴⁹ 1993 Declaration of Principles, *Oslo Accords*. http://www.fmep.org/documents/Oslo_Accords.html (22 Feb. 2008).

amount of credit to fundamentalist support for his being elected. Certainly Bush was more what Dispensationalists wanted. He was a Southern, conservative Christian who favored social issues akin to Christian principles. But how was Bush to view the Middle East and Israel? Bush currently relies on counsel from Franklin Graham, son of the late Billy Graham. Franklin Graham is an outspoken Christian Zionist and seems more outspoken about Israel's status as God's nation than his father. As evident from the earlier public opinion data, Bush presides in a time where Dispensational Rapture theology is at a high point. Bush, who entered the presidency focused on domestic issues, has dramatically shifted to a foreign affairs focus. The impetus for this transition was the terror attacks of September 11.

The events of 9/11 gave further credence to Dispensational apocalyptic prophecies, believing the superior military capabilities of the United States would signal a final war in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein was still the evil Babylonian and violence in the region was still prolific. Fearing that the president might waver on his support for Israel, the Washington Rally for Israel was held whereby Christian Zionists once again meet with prominent political figures from the United States and Israel. One speaker proudly declared that "we [Christians and Jews] will never vacillate in our support of Israel. (cited in Mezvinsky 2005)." When President Bush called for Israel to withdraw troops from the West Bank he received a letter of disapproval from Falwell, along with over 100,000 emails in opposition to such a move (Mezvinsky 2005).

President Bush is known to be closely affiliated with Dispensational leaders and may harbor his own Dispensational feelings. The White House is careful to not link the Presidents policies to Armageddon Theology. The *Left Behind* series of Lahaye and Jenkins has been read by one in six Americans and one in three Republicans. The fictionalized series of Dispensational end times has also sold over 60 million copies and spurred several motion pictures and documentaries. Bush is careful to not express whether he has read these or not. (Weiser 2004).¹⁵⁰ The ramifications of such admission would allow his critics to charge that he is basing

¹⁵⁰ Glenn Weiser. *What Does the President Believe?* Mod. 2004 http://www.celticguitarmusic.com/Mland_Rapture.htm (10 Oct. 2007).

his policies on Armageddon theology. Bush appears to be a deeply religious man and has certainly politically benefited from the ascendance of Dispensationalism. However, Dispensationalism is popular within his constituency and his religious counsel. Its affect on the Bush administration can be seen in Bush's endorsements of Dispensational advocates, as already shown in the Jewish Prayer Team.

The affect Dispensationalism has on the presidency is modest but still important. Whether or not a president had a personal belief or whether they dealt with it politically, its influence in policy making was integral. Dispensational leaders, special interest groups, and cultural popularity have all aided the development of Dispensationalism in government. Its influence can be direct or indirect, explicit or implicit, revealed or hidden. Dispensationalism is an indelible part of political and religious philosophy and as an ideology has permeated American culture in a profound way. It is closely linked with certain churches and shares a common heritage with fundamentalism and Christian Zionism. American support for Israel may in fact owe as much credit to Dispensationalism as it does to any other single ideology.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This study presupposes that Dispensationalism possesses inherently political aspirations due to the primacy of Israel and the nature of Israel's place in ushering in Armageddon. It seems a natural development that Dispensationalism would become wrapped around policy issues regarding Israel and its geo-political surroundings. However, there are some who disagree with this initial assessment.

Susan Harding has written about the nature of Dispensationalism and asks whether it is primarily religious, politically consequential, or largely rhetorical.¹⁵¹ She cited Timothy Weber who argues that Dispensationalism is a primarily religious movement. This opinion may likely be shared by many Dispensationalist leaders who do not wish to politicize theology. However, when the Thomas Road Baptist Church lectured on "Iraq and Bible Prophecy", and when Cornerstone Church offered a fundraiser for Israel, it was clearly politically charged. Even if "pure" Dispensationalism is outside the political spectrum it still plays on voters who act according to their sincere beliefs. The argument of whether Dispensationalism is inherently political is a point of much contention. Jerry Falwell had said that his eschatological beliefs were not connected to political events, but his actions seem to counterclaim such a statement.

Part of the problem when discussing the political nature of Dispensationalism is based in semantics. What constitutes policy and what constitutes religion can be dissected, with each side not necessarily being "wrong." Critics in favor of an apolitical nature claim that Dispensationalism does have minor political consequences but this is not the nature of its appeal. There is some truth to their claim. People undoubtedly believe in ways regardless of political implications.

¹⁵¹ Susan Harding. "Imagining the Last Days: The Politics of Apocalyptic Language. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 48, No. 3. (Dec., 1994), pp. 14-44.

Dispensational appeal is certainly not uniform and there exists varying reasons of why people believe what they do. Dispensationalism has been introduced from the aggregate level to the individual level and examples from both have shown the manifestations of its appeal, utility and function. Dispensationalism may have apolitical characteristics in its dogmatic principles but its reality is shown through the political endeavors of its advocates.

Another point worth clarifying is what constitutes support for Israel. Moral support, presidential support, and congressional support have all been measured their Dispensational influences. But have these measures actually supported Israel in the sense that the Israeli people have benefited from them? This answer is naturally subjective. Many Israelis (Jews and otherwise) are in disagreement with what Dispensationalists call support. Some are plain outraged at their insistence that God has ordained Israel to perform certain tasks, including territorial expansion. When support is mentioned, it is used from the perspective of Dispensationalists and this study makes no claims as to whether such support is beneficial. Jews, Israelis and Dispensationalists are often at odds over the fate of Israel and this distinction should be noted.

In closing, discussion of both the assumptions and implications of this study are appropriate. Dispensationalism, first and foremost, is an exegetical way of interpreting scripture. This exegesis is predicated on Biblical literalism and Biblical equality. Dispensationalists use these methods as a basis for their Pre-Tribulation, Premillennial belief. When mentioning Biblical equality, it is meant that scriptural verses are regarded as equal in importance and free from contextual discernment. Every noun, verb, adjective and so on is equally and unequivocally understood as uniform with every other such word. Equality in scripture is evident through Dispensational concepts of the Millennium and the role of Israel.

Understanding the nature of Dispensational literalism can be tricky. For example, many Christians argue that an allegory is literally an allegory and a metaphor is literally a metaphor, often taking into account the scriptural context for which a given verse was written and how to relate such a verse to those before and after. Contextual-literal and historical-grammatical

hermeneutics are not a part of Dispensational understanding of the Bible. Dispensationalists contend that a word's meaning is exactly what it is and this is their consistent method for understanding the Bible. For Dispensationalists, when the Bible mentions a thousand years it means a literal thousand years and when it mentions an army invading Israel from the North it means just that. Dispensationalists are futurists, and so their literal understanding is based on what will happen not what has already happened, although future predictions are based on past and current events.

It is important not to paint Dispensationalism with too broad a brush. Some "leaky dispensationalists", like John MacArthur, disagree with contemporary Dispensational scholars in that traditional Dispensationalism took a valid exegetical concept beyond its natural utility. This analysis is offered as means to introduce Dispensationalism to the casual observer and to the familiar observer as a refresher, citing some novel additions along the way.

The study of Dispensationalism's influence on American support for Israel is not often given the exposure it deserves. Robert Woodberry and Christian Smith insist that when it comes to studying religious influences, "few social scientists or journalists are religiously active- especially in CP [Conservative Protestant] denominations- and perhaps because of this lack of familiarity, religious factors are frequently ignored or measured poorly."¹⁵² This might help explain why Dispensationalism, while well studied in theology schools, is not given much attention in political science.

Foreign policy explanations are often focused on political, strategic and cultural accounts. Understanding these explanations is crucial for developing a comprehensive awareness. However, Dispensationalism addresses all three of these explanations in various ways. Dispensationalism can be political through foreign policy support, strategic by acting according to God's plan for Armageddon and cultural by support based on Judeo-Christian monotheism and ethics. Support based on religion is certainly well studied but such inquiries often stop before they

¹⁵² Robert D. Woodberry and Christian Smith, "FUNDAMENTALISM ET AL: Conservative Protestants in America." *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 24 25-56, August 1998.

reach the roots of Dispensationalism. Dispensationalism is also unique because it leads people to support Israel even though they are not ethnically, or religiously connected to that nation. However, the goal of men like Hagee is to show that they are.

Dispensationalists will likely continue to look toward the Middle East for prophecy explanation. The War in Iraq is and will likely continue to be interpreted under Biblical pretenses, as will the ongoing Palestinian peace process. Religious fiction, such as *Left Behind*, is important because it shows how strong the interest in end times events is and how such interest facilitates dispensational agreement. *Left Behind* is religious fiction in the sense that not only are the characters fictional but the events in occurrence are also fictional. Some will disagree and say that it is based on Biblical truths. Even though its authors agree with the prophecies outlined in the series, they would probably argue that things will not unfold with such certainty. Their stories are probably a Dispensationally charged best guess at what will happen at the end of the world. Many people who read these books believe in their absolutism and take the stories as truth. Such fictionalized accounts of scripture appeal to entertainment and curiosity, much like Lindsay's *The Late, Great, Planet Earth*.

Recently an Islamic group requested Wal-Mart to pull the *Left Behind* video game because the protagonists are meant to shoot people with Muslim sounding names.¹⁵³ "Muslims are not believers in Jesus Christ- and therefore cannot be on the side of Jesus in the game."¹⁵⁴ This sentiment is foundational in basic Christian soteriology but does represent some future challenges. America's support for Israel is often seen as religious support; Christians vs. Muslims. Such disagreement is indicative of the future challenges America will face in the Middle East if foreign policy develops according to Dispensational interests. The success of *Left Behind* also shows that Dispensational rapture and Armageddon theology will likely continue to grow

¹⁵³ Another video game, *Call of Duty*, has WWII Allies killing people with German sounding names. There has been little outcry about this game signifying the *Left Behind* controversy as a product of an already tense relationship between Muslim and Christian communities.

¹⁵⁴ Michael McWhertor. *Islamic Group Wants Left Behind Game Pulled*. Kotaku. Mod. Dec. 2006 <http://kotaku.com/gaming/left-behind/islamic-group-wants-left-behind-game-pulled-223739.php> (9 Oct 2007).

within the American consciousness. What effect such growth will have on future foreign policy events remains to be seen. What is evident is that entertainment, whatever form it takes, can act as a distributor of Dispensational ideas and that this proliferation will continue to affect American policy through the collected efforts of the public.¹⁵⁵

This study is meant to provide a focused glimpse into an underdeveloped area of scholarship: the potentiality of a causal relationship between Dispensational theology and American support for Israel. Dispensationalism will continue to influence the theological perspective of Americans and in turn may affect policy endeavors. Dispensationalism is an indispensable component of the fabric of theological-political thought. Understanding Dispensational history, evolution, demographics and dynamics will allow a better understanding of future foreign policy developments by using such knowledge to anticipate future challenges. It will also give some explanation to our present situation and offer another valuable tool for increased perceptivity. This thesis has shown Dispensationalism as an alternative source for analyzing U.S. support of Israel. Its utility rests in its potentiality to illustrate such support. It is not conclusively regarded as the source for American support, but rather as a contender among other rationales. The hope is that upon reading this analysis further exploration into the nature of Dispensationalism and its influence on American support for Israel will be sought.

¹⁵⁵ See the Rapture Index at < <http://www.raptureready.com/rap2.html> > for more information regarding pre-Tribulation prophecy calculations.

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Amillennialism -- The belief that the Millennium mentioned in the Bible is not literal, but symbolic. Belief that the current age is a part of the Millennium.

Antichrist -- The embodiment of evil who will rule over the world and make war with God's people. He will be destroyed by Christ during the Second Coming.

Apocalypse - Literally translated from Greek as "revealed." The completion of Biblical prophecies relating to the end of the world.

Armageddon -- The final battle between God and Satan. With Satan defeated the worlds end is complete.

Arminianism -- The belief that came out of 16th century Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius whereby Calvinist doctrines of irresistible grace and predestination were denied.

Calvinism -- The belief that came out of 16th century Swiss Theologian John Calvin whereby salvation was affirmed to be attained by God's grace alone, free from works or human will.

Christian Reconstructionists -- Postmillennial, Reformed apologetics that encourage Christians to "reconstruct" their entire lives according Biblical principles.

Christian Zionism -- Those who believe in a Godly duty to support the Jewish people in achieving a Jewish homeland.

Covenant Theology -- The Biblical, architectural framework of God's dealings with humanity. Often seen in three covenants: Redemption, Works and Grace. Dispensationalists insist on discontinuity of these covenants in favor of their understanding of a series of discontinuous dispensations. Also called Federal Theology.

Dispensation -- A period in time whereby God administers an agreement with his people, discontinuing the previous agreement.

Dispensationalism -- A method of interpreting the Bible based on a literal hermeneutic. The belief that God deals with humanity through a series of dispensations. The belief that God has separate agreements with Jews and Christians whereby Jews are God's earthly people and Christians are God's heavenly people. Humanity is in the final dispensation and international events are interpreted as signs of the end.

End Times -- The events which are believed to occur before the end of the world.

Eschatology -- The study of the end times.

Exegesis -- An explanation of text. Examining the text as it was originally written and designed.

Fundamentalism -- A movement that began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries whereby Biblical interpretation became more literal and legalism more emphatic.

Hermeneutics -- The methodology and theory of interpretation, especially in regards to Scripture.

Holy Land -- The region of Palestine associated with Biblical histories.

Jewish Restoration -- The effort to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Last Judgment -- The time coinciding with the Second Coming whereby all souls, living and dead will be judged by Christ.

Millennium -- A time when Godly people will rule the Earth for thousand years and the Earth will be a paradise.

Postmillennialism --The Belief that the Millennium will occur after the Second Coming. It may be a literal or symbolic thousand years.

Premillennialism -- A belief that humanity is living in the time before an earthly millennial kingdom and that the rapture will occur after the tribulation.

Preterism -- The belief that some or all of the prophecies in the Bible have already come to fruition.

Rapture -- A belief that God's people will be lifted (raptured) up to Heaven before the world experiences destruction. Dispensationalists believe this will come before the Tribulation and that it will be secret or hidden. This means it will come without warning.

Reformed Theology -- The teachings of the Protestant Reformation, advocated by leaders such as John Calvin and Martin Luther, which affirmed salvation as God's free gift to His people which cannot be initiated or resisted by man.

Replacement Theology -- The belief that God's elect are represented by Christians, not Jews. God's covenants with the Church replace those with the Jews. Also called Supersessionism.

Saints -- The collective group of Christians.

Second Coming -- Also called the "Second Advent" or the second return of Christ. The First Advent was Christ's original arrival. Dispensationalists are often thought to believe in three comings of Christ. The First Advent, Christ coming again and Rapturing his Saints before the Tribulation, and the Second Advent.

Tribulation -- Seven years of unprecedented turmoil on Earth.

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