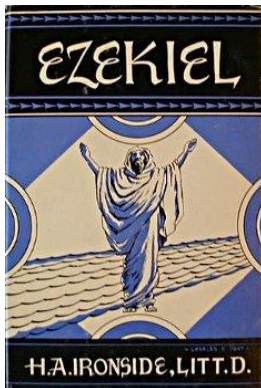


# EZEKIEL, IRONSIDE, & DISPENSATIONAL ERROR

Paul G. Humber, 2017



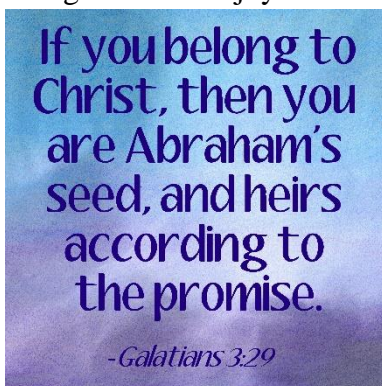
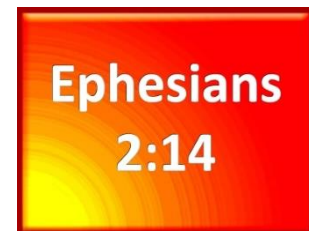
I have considerable regard and respect for Dr. Harry Ironside and recently went through his 1949 *Expository Notes on Ezekiel*. I affirm parts but also point out limitations. For example, on p253 he comments on Ezekiel 36, verses 22-31,



**“The Lord has declared, ‘I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land.’ Then in accordance with our Lord’s words to Nicodemus, He declares, ‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean:**

**from all your filthiness, and from all your idols.’ We know from other scriptures that this refers to the washing of water by the Word. In Psalm 119:9 we read, ‘Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word.’ When that Word is received by Israel and takes effect, it will result in the cleansing of their ways and thus fit them to enter again into fellowship with God.”**

This is a good summary, but there is also an error. Dr. Ironside’s primarily focus relative to Jews seems to have been to the future (“it will result in”), but there were many Jews in Israel who came to faith in Christ at Pentecost, and a Jewish “remnant” has continued down through the centuries. All of the Apostles were Jews, and believing Gentiles have been grafted into the Jewish tree/vine. The Jewish scholar Paul spoke of the wall between Jews and Gentiles being broken down (Ephesians 2:14, “broke down the barrier of the dividing wall”), and this was anticipated in the Old Testament (Isaiah 49:6). Esther 8:17 says, “In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And **many**



**among the peoples of the land became Jews,** for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.”

Becoming part of Israel is a spiritual matter—not physical. Ruth was no Jew but joined the line of motherhood to the Messiah. Paul wrote, “There is neither Jew nor Greek ..., “for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And **if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.**” This openness to both Jews and Gentiles goes back at least as far as Abraham (“in you [Abraham] **all the families of the earth will**

**be blessed**” (Gen 12:3b). It is not just Jewish families, but Gentile families, too!

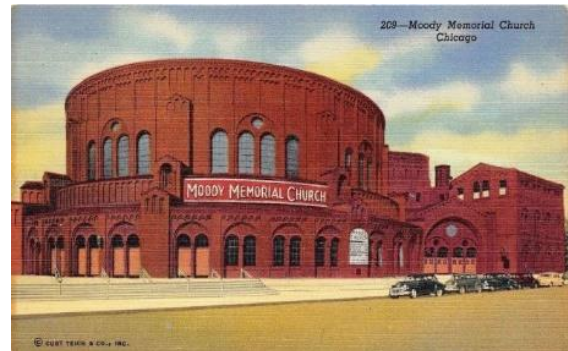
Ironside continued, “‘A new heart,’ He says, ‘will I give you,’ and ‘a new spirit will I put within you.’ This is the new birth of which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus. Had Nicodemus been as careful a student of the Prophets as his profession implied, being a doctor of the law, he

would not have been bewildered when Jesus spoke of being born of water and of the Spirit. He would have understood that the Word of God was to be applied to the hearts and consciences of the people in the power of the Holy Spirit. The stony heart of unbelief would be taken from them, and God would give them a heart of flesh. Moreover, He promised to put His own Spirit within them and cause them to walk in His statutes and delight in His ordinances.”

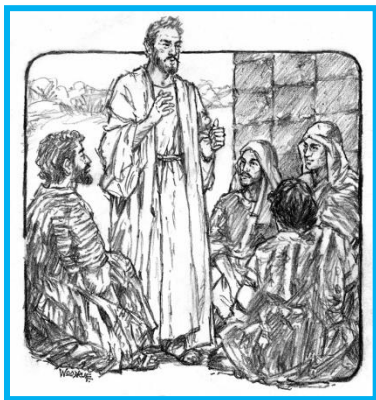


Those words are excellent, but then Brother Ironside, instead of staying on track with Nicodemus and believing Jews at Pentecost and down through the centuries, started talking about a second coming of the Holy Spirit: “**Just as truly as Scripture teaches the second coming of Christ so it predicts the second coming of the Holy Spirit. He came at Pentecost to baptize believers into one Body and to dwell in the Church, empowering it for testimony. He will be poured out from on high in the day of Israel’s restoration, and will indwell the regenerated people who will then be gathered back to their land, never more to be rooted out of it.**”

I love Dr. Ironside, but I am sad to say that there is flawed thinking in the above. Scripture does not predict. “the second coming of the Holy Spirit.” It predicts a coming of the Holy Spirit, which happened at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit has indwelt God’s people (both Jews and Gentiles) ever since.



Brother Ironside’s statement (given again, “**He will be poured out from on high in the day of Israel’s restoration**”) is misleading, suggestive of some yet future period. The fulfillment of the Old



Testament promises, however, happened at Pentecost. James, the half-brother of the Lord Jesus, was a leader in the Jerusalem Church. How more Jewish can one get? He said, “Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, ‘After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name,’ says the Lord, who makes these things known from long ago.’ Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from

fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

Jewish James, leader of the core Jewish Church in Jerusalem, was saying that “the tabernacle of David which [had] fallen” was being rebuilt and restored then and there—not some 2,000 years hence. He was allowing Gentiles then and there into the Jewish Church in Jerusalem. God was breaking down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles. All who have faith in the Jewish Messiah are to be welcomed in the Jewish Church. Jesus is the Messiah for Jews and Gentiles both. This was predicted in Isaiah 49:6:

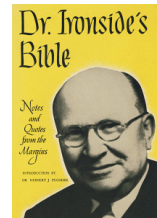
He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant/ To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations [Gentiles]/ So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Brother Ironside’s words, “...and will indwell the regenerated people who will then be gathered back to their land, never more to be rooted out of it” is flawed thinking. Peter, a Jew and an apostle, said that the entire earth will be burnt to a crisp (2 Peter 3:10), so how could Dr. Ironside write, “never more to be rooted out of it”? Jewish and Gentile believers both will be dwelling in the New Heavens and New Earth, and every believer will be rooted out of the Old Earth.

### Unqualified Affirmation of Ironside



← Here is a picture of Harry Ironside when he was young, and the second is of him much later.



On p258 (referring to Ezekiel 37:7-10), Brother Ironside wrote, “**So far as I have been able to discern this is the only place in sacred Scripture where we have prayer addressed directly to the Holy Spirit. Ordinarily, as we see in Eph. 2:18, prayer is by or in the energy of the Spirit to the Father in the name of the Son; but here we have a definite case where one was commanded to speak directly to the Holy Spirit, for the term “wind” here can mean no other than He who is the blessed life-giving Spirit of God.**”

I had noticed the same thing Dr. Ironside had discerned, so I am glad that he shared this in his book. He made a worthy point, and I learned from him!

### Loving Criticism of Ironside

On p145, Brother Ironside wrote, “**Since the carrying away of the people to Babylon, following the destruction of Jerusalem, there has never been a king recognized by God as sitting upon the throne of Israel. Hosea’s prophecy, found in the third chapter of his remarkable book, has had its fulfilment. Israel still abides without a king, without a prince, without a priest, and so shall it abide until Messiah Himself appears the second time to take His great power and reign.**”





But the Father wholeheartedly recognize His Son, Messiah Jesus, Descendant of David, as sitting upon “the throne of Israel”? The temple’s veil was rent in twain, and the Father’s Voice came down from heaven affirming His Son and revealing that Moses and Elijah were not even to be compared with Him! According to Revelation 1:5, Jesus is **the Ruler** of the kings of the earth. That does not mean Gentiles only. We have already considered the words of James—that God “rebuild the tabernacle of David which [had] fallen.” John 12:12-16 says, “On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, **even the King of Israel**.” Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, seated on a donkey’s colt.” These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.”

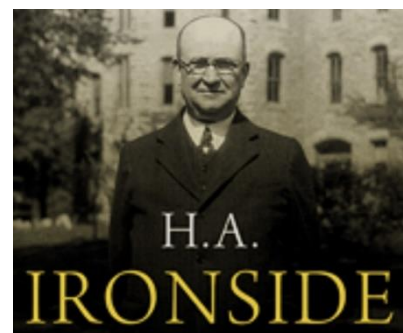
Additionally, when Jesus ascended on high, all heaven broke loose with Psalm 24, “Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that **the King of glory** may come in! Who is this King of glory? Jehovah of hosts, He is the King of glory.” If Jehovah Jesus is the “King of glory,” He certainly is the “King of Israel,” and there have been Jews down through the ages since Pentecost who have bowed the knee to King Jesus.

On p263, Brother Ironside wrote, **“Nor shall they ever again be driven out of the land which God gave by covenant to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ... The blood of that covenant has been shed already on Calvary’s cross, but not until the time of the end will Israel come into the good of it. Then after restoration to God and to their land, Jehovah will set His sanctuary in the midst of them.”**



Dr. Ironside did not seem to realize that Jesus IS the Temple of God. Jesus said, ““Destroy this temple [referring to His own body], and in three days I will raise it up.” He also seems to have been confused by a mistranslation of the Hebrew word, *olam*. The word in the text (Ezekiel 37:25) does not mean “for ever” (as per KJV) but *lasting*. Dr. Ironside’s “ever again” reflects this confusion. His statement, “not until the time of the end will Israel come into the good of it” seems to disqualify Pentecost. Surely Israel came “into the good of it” at that time, and All Israel (made up of believing Jews and Gentiles both) has been expanding ever since.

To his credit, Brother Ironside asked, relative to future sacrifices, **“The question is, Are sacrifices and offerings to be reinstituted at Jerusalem in the coming day?”** Further down, in the same paragraph, he wrote, **“The one offering of our Lord Jesus Christ has set aside completely all the offerings of the legal dispensation: therefore, may we not take it for granted that in this vision of Ezekiel, while it was necessary to picture spiritual realities in connection with the redemptive work of Christ by the sacrifices such as were still being offered at**



that time, yet when the fulfilment of all prophecy takes place Israel will understand **for the first time** the real meaning of the work of Christ and see how it answers antitypically to all the offerings that were prescribed under the law.”

His statement, “Israel will understand **for the first time**,” however, is flawed, for many Jews down through the ages since Pentecost have understood it to be so. Dr. Ironside did not realize that Israel = Jesus and all who are attached to Him by faith (both believing Jews and Gentiles).<sup>1</sup>

On p291, Dr. Ironside wrote, “**The sanctuary consists of two rooms as of old, the holy and the most holy places,**” but this cannot refer to some yet future temple as it was all fulfilled when Jesus said from the cross, “It is finished!” The veil then (not 2,000 years hence) was rent from top to bottom. Believers (both Jews and Gentiles) now have free access to the Father through the blood of the Lamb, God the Son.

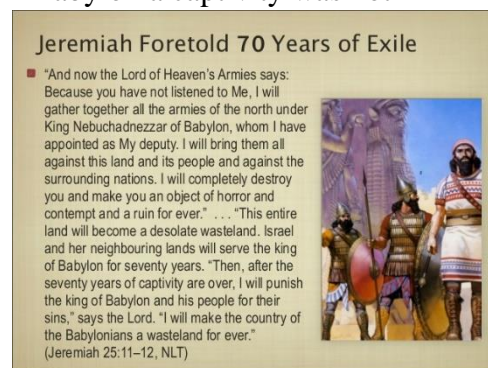
Dr. Ironside acknowledged that the future (in-his-mind) altar must focus on the cross: “**The altar here is, of course, the altar of sacrifice; and it speaks of the work of the cross.**” I am glad that Dr. Ironside did not allow for the false view that a new sacrificial system will resume. Such, however, should have been a clue to him that the return from Babylonia captivity was not something yet future but something that occurred historically as mentioned both by Nehemiah and Ezra. Jeremiah, in fact, specified the duration of the captivity—that it would be 70 years—not over 2,000 years hence.

On p315, Brother Ironside makes an excellent notation: “**Christ died as the paschal lamb, not for the Church of this age alone but for Israel and the nations as a whole. All who are ever saved in any age or in accordance with any dispensation will owe everything for eternity to the blood of the Lamb of God.**”



Amen, Brother, but the Gentiles coming into the Israel Church under the leadership of Jewish James and Jewish Apostles has not been postponed for 2,000 years. It all began at Pentecost, and Jews and Gentiles both constitute, together with the Lord Himself (who is identified explicitly in Scripture as “Israel”) the True Israel of God. God is interested in People (Jews and Gentiles)—NOT real estate. This entire earth (including the land we call “Israel”) will be exterminated.

Brother Ironside, on p321, wrote, “**In the coming great day of Israel’s restoration they will enter fully into the meaning of the year of Jubilee, the year of liberty,**” but did not the Lord Jesus Himself proclaim that He was and is the fulfillment of the “Year of Jubilee”? Jesus read from the Old Testament and said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor ... to proclaim the



<sup>1</sup> The reader is encouraged to get the booklet, “ISRAEL the MAGNIFICENT”, by the present author.



favorable year of the Lord ... And He began to say to them, **'Today** this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" Why think of "the coming great day of Israel's restoration" as future, when all "the promises of God" have been fulfilled by Christ?

Israel (made up of both Jews and Gentiles) started being saved at Pentecost, and the Lord has been continuing to expand it ever since. All Israel (believing Jews and Gentiles both) will be saved. It's not a land; it's God's elect. Jesus was/is God's elect Messiah; and those who trust Israel Jesus become part of His Body—the whole Temple of God.

"EVER WELCOME TO THIS HOUSE OF GOD ARE STRANGERS AND THE POOR." - D. L. MOODY

**DR. H. A. IRONSIDE**  
PASTOR OF THE  
**MOODY MEMORIAL CHURCH**  
Clark and LaSalle Sts. at North Ave.  
WILL PREACH  
**SUNDAY, OCT. 31, 1937**  
11:00 A.M. - "The Spirit of Adoption."  
7:30 P.M. - "Is There an Unpardonable Sin?"  
Friday, Oct. 29, 7:45 p.m. Dr. Northcote Deck of the Solomon Islands.  
SUNDAY SCHOOL with Classes for all - 9:45 a.m.  
LARGE CHORUS CHOIR (OVER) GREAT PIPE ORGAN