

## Israel as Hermeneutical Challenge

*BEST Conference on March 22 and 23, 2018*

Outlines and bios of contributors to the conference

**Koert van Bekkum**, *Ezekiel 47 and the Development in the Concepts of the Promised Land*

Koert van Bekkum, Ph.D. (2010), Theological University Kampen, is assistant professor of Old Testament at the Theological University Kampen. He is author of *From Conquest to Coexistence. Ideology and Antiquarian Intent in the Historiography of Israel's settlement in Canaan* (Brill, 2011).

### *Outline*

Geographical descriptions of the Promised Land in Genesis to 2 Kings are not only diverse in nature, but also reflect different social-historical backgrounds and contribute significantly to the message of these biblical books. In vision of the ideal land, Ezek 47 transforms the former ideal concept of Num 34:1–12 – which is also used in Josh 13:2–6, Judg 3:3 – into a new program of restoration. The conquest and destruction of the Promised Land is recreated into a restoration program comprising a new temple and new national borders and tribal allotments. The paper reflects on the Babylonian background of the text and its meaning in the context of Ezekiel 40-48, and brings the result in dialogue with a present-day Jewish (David Frankel) and Christian-Palestinian (Munther Isaac) views of the Promised Land.

**Matthijs Biewenga**, *The 144.000 in Revelation 7 – Universal church or remnant of Israel?*

Matthijs Biewenga works as a pastor of the Reformed Church in Mussel, the Netherlands. In 2014 he graduated at the TU Kampen, with a masterthesis about the meaning of Revelation 7, entitled: “Aarde en hemel looft Gods werk. Horen, zien en zwijgen met Openbaring 7”.

### *Outline*

Revelation 7,4 mentions the name of “Israel”. 144.000 sealed servants of God are originating from the tribes of Israel, 12.000 from every tribe. In the exegesis of this chapter a lot of attention goes to

the relation of this group with the other mentioned group: an innumerable multitude deriving from all countries, peoples, tribes and tongues. Are these groups the same or are they different and what exactly is their identity? The name "Israel" seems to be one of the difficulties in addressing this problem. Should this name be taken literally as standing for a remnant of Israel or is it a symbolical name for the universal church?

To unravel the meaning of "Israel" in Revelation 7, we need to know the arguments for and consequences of taking it either symbolic or literally. Further, we will need to take a look at the wider context of Israel and the 144.000 in the book of Revelation (for instance Revelation 14).

In this parallel session I will argue for a literal understanding of "Israel" in Revelation 7, taking into consideration the other characteristics of the first group and not neglecting the relation to the second group: the innumerable multitude.

**Hans Burger**, *Theirs are the covenants. Israel and the so-called covenant of grace*

Hans (J.M.) Burger (1974) is assistant professor of systematic theology at Theological University, Kampen. His present research focuses on hermeneutics, doctrine of Scripture and doctrine of the covenant. Recently, he published *Leven in Christus. Over de betekenis van het verhaal van Jezus* (Franeker, 2017).

### *Outline*

The reformed tradition has emphasized the unity of the covenant of grace. It seems that this covenant of grace with Christ as its mediator starts immediately after the fall in Genesis 3. The old and the new covenant, the two administrations of this covenant, are understood in the light of the difference of law and gospel. Israel's role often seems only prefigurative or prophetic. But how should we then understand the position of Israel in the covenant of grace?

This paper argues, firstly, that the concept of one covenant of grace is not helpful to understand Israel's role. Secondly, in this paper an alternative is developed starting from Paul's statement in Rom 9,4: theirs are the covenants. All relevant covenants are part of God's plan of salvation, They are part of a historical dynamic in which God reacts creatively to human weakness and sin, and show God's ideal of relationship (existence for others). Consequently, Israel cannot be missed but is (in different ways) crucial in God's ways to bring salvation to the world.

**David Courey**, *'How Odd of God': Zionism, Dispensationalism, and the Curious Case of Pentecostalism*

David Courey holds a PhD in theology from McMaster Divinity College and currently serves at Continental Theological Seminary (a Pentecostal school) and at ETF in Leuven.

*Outline*

North American Pentecostalism was forged in the heart of the nineteenth century prophetic movement, as such it was steeped in dispensational assumptions about Israel and the church, leading it to form its own curious adaptation of dispensationalism as a fundamental hermeneutic. With the scholarly ripening of Pentecostal reflection, and the quest for an authentically Pentecostal hermeneutic, there has been significant rejection of apocalyptic eschatology in academic circles, as well as a popular retreat from Zionist affirmation in congregational life. This paper inquires as to other theological paths toward a reconnection with a Israel, finding encouragement in the so-called “new Christian Zionism” (Gerald McDermott), and progressive covenantalism (Gentry and Wellum).

**Jaap Dekker**, *The Restoration of Zion/Jerusalem: Reading Isaiah 60-62 as Part of Christian Scripture*

Dr. J. Dekker holds the Henk de Jong Chair as Professor of Biblical Studies and Identity at the Theological University Apeldoorn and serves as Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Enschede, the Netherlands.

**Hélène Evers**, *Israel in the Church Order of The Protestant Church in the Netherlands*

Dr. Hélène Evers serves the Sionskerk in Zwolle as minister of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN). She read Law (1983-1987) and Theology (1987-1992) at Utrecht University. In 2000 she took her doctoral degree in Theology with a dissertation on the background and principles of the Church Order of the Netherlands Reformed Church (De Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk). She is lecturer in Church Law at the Evangelical Theological Faculty (ETF) Louvain, Belgium, and President of the General College for Church Order of the PKN.

*Outline*



In my contribution I would like to show the position of Israel in the present Church Order of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (2004) and its legal predecessors from 1942 to today. In 1951 the Netherlands Reformed Church was the first church in the world that made dialogue with Israel a part of its Church Order, discontinued its Mission among Jews and stopped teaching replacement theology.

The place of Israel in the Church Order has evolved to become quite prominent. Since 2004, Israel plays an essential part in how the Church sees and describes herself. In the very first Article this Church presents her visiting card, which includes a reference to Israel. Moreover, the Church Order describes the “unrelinquishable” relationship of the church with the people of Israel.

The text of Article 1 section 1 reads:

The Protestant Church in the Netherlands, according to her confession, is an expression of the one holy apostolic and catholic or general Christian Church, that looks forward to the coming of the Kingdom of God, sharing in the expectation that was accorded to Israel.

**Raymond R. Hausoul, *Land ho! Israel, the Land and the Christian Inheritance***

Dr. Raymond R. Hausoul (1979) wrote his dissertation on *The New Heaven and the New Earth* (2017), as a continuation of his publications on the land of Israel. He works as a pastor in Ypres (Belgium) and is affiliated researcher of Systematic Theology at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit in Leuven, Belgium.

*Outline*

The promise of the inheritance of the land is one of the most important promises of Israel. How does this situation evolve after Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension? Commentaries demonstrate that explanations of the NT inheritance depend heavily on the interpretation of Israel and the hermeneutical views concerning the OT promises of the land. In my lecture I investigate three main views on the Christian inheritance: (1) the inheritance replaces the promise of the land and is spiritually realised today; (2) the inheritance redefines the promise of the land to the new creation, which is both, physically and spiritually, realised in the present and the future; and (3) the inheritance does not nullify or replace the promise of the land and is fulfilled as well in the earthly Canaan as in the new creation. I will specifically focus on the extent to which these views influence our theological thinking about Israel. In the elaboration of this, shifts within Christian theology call

for vigilance against a replacement theology and against a one-sided dispensationalism. I will argue that we must guard against spiritualisation, generalisation, and evaporation of what God has promised in all concreteness to Israel.

**Arco den Heijer**, *Proclaiming the Gospel by prophetic apology: Paul's Performance at the Barracks (Acts 21:40-22:24) and Christian Witness in Jerusalem Today*

Arco den Heijer MA studied Theology in Apeldoorn and Classics in Nijmegen. Since 2016, he is doing PhD research on the public performance of Paul in the book of Acts, as part of the BEST research group and supervised by prof. dr. P.H.R. van Houwelingen (Theological University Kampen).

#### *Outline*

This paper examines Paul's performance at the stairs of the Antonia Fortress (Acts 21:40-22:24), which ends with a reference to a temple vision in which the Lord commanded Paul to go to the Gentiles because the Jews in Jerusalem would not accept his testimony. It will be argued that this narrative does not imply that the Jews of Jerusalem have wasted their chance to repent and that the proclamation of the Gospel should henceforth be focused on the Gentile world. On the contrary, it urges the reader/hearer of the book of Acts to continue to reach out to Israel. This becomes clear when considering, a) that Paul's speech is a response to the charges brought against him; b) that Paul demonstrates his commitment to the people of Israel in the way in which he defends his mission to the Gentiles; c) that Israel continued to be a living reality for the Christian communities who first heard the book of Acts, as it still is for the church today. Finally, through the particular way in which Luke legitimates the salvation of non-law-observant Gentiles, the narrative equips the church to engage in the encounter with Israel in an attitude of humble gratefulness.

**Rob van Houwelingen**, *"They Displease God and are Hostile to Everyone". Antisemitism in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16?*

P.H.R. (Rob) van Houwelingen is Professor of New Testament at the Theological University Kampen (NL), the Netherlands, as well as Extraordinary Professor of New Testament at the North-West



University, Potchefstroom and Research Associate in the Department of New Testament Studies, University of Pretoria (RSA).

### *Outline*

The passage regarding the Jews in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 may be labelled one of the hardest texts in the New Testament. Because it has an antisemitic reception history, contemporary Bible readers feel uncomfortable with this passage.

Razor-sharp is in particular the wording of verse 15, where it is said of Jews that ‘they displease God and are hostile to everyone.’ This is what, among other things, the emeritus-professor from Utrecht, P.W. van der Horst, New Testament scholar and expert of early Judaism, was referring to when addressing this topic on a seminar on Church and Israel, saying: ‘There are texts in the New Testament that very effectively justify the hatred of Jews. In the church we should not preach on, but against, these texts.’ Or should, perhaps, the sermon rather be directed towards a certain interpretation of these texts?

In this session, I will present a cursory exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 in order to understand what the authors – the three missionaries Paul, Silvanus and Timothy – have to say and what their message means for the church today.

**Arnold Huijgen**, *Israel as Question: A Reconsideration of Kornelis Heiko Miskotte’s Essay on Israel as Hermeneutical Challenge for the Church*

Dr. Arnold Huijgen (\*1978) is Professor of Systematic Theology at the Theological University Apeldoorn, The Netherlands.

### *Outline*

In the Dutch Reformed tradition, Israel has long been a central theme. Kornelis Heiko Miskotte already explored the hermeneutical challenge of Israel for the Church in a brief essay in 1934. In this presentation, the seven questions Israel poses for the Church will be highlighted and discussed with respect to their hermeneutical relevance.

**Mark S. Kinzer**, *Function of the Voice of an Ecclesiola ex Circumcisione in the Church* and

### *Jewishness & the Jewish People in N.T. Wright*

Rabbi Dr. Mark S. Kinzer (PhD, University of Michigan) is President Emeritus of Messianic Jewish Theological Institute and co-chair of the Helsinki Consultation on Jewish Continuity in the Body of Christ. He is the author of *Post-missionary Messianic Judaism* (2005), *Israel's Messiah and the People of God* (2011), and *Searching Her Own Mystery* (2015).

### *Another Reformation—The Revived Ecclesia ex Circumcisione & Christian Theology - Outline*

This presentation will propose that the Jewish-Christian and Messianic Jewish movements of recent centuries represent the first stages of a revival of the *ecclesia ex circumcissione* which perished in the patristic era. The term is here defined as designating a range of diverse corporate environments populated largely by Jews, each of which is shaped by faith in Jesus the Messiah embodied in recognizably Jewish patterns of thought and life.

Further, the presentation will argue that the *ecclesia ex circumcissione* offers unique challenges and opportunities to both Protestant and Catholic traditions. It will suggest that a Jewish form of the *ecclesia* must be post-Protestant in emphasizing the corporate and historical character of the people of God, but must also confront Catholicism with its inadequate catholicity. The emergence of such an *ecclesia ex circumcissione* has the potential to spark a new reformation which heals old wounds and transcends apparently unbridgeable divisions.

### *Jewishness and the Jewish People in N.T. Wright - Outline*

N.T. Wright has stated often that his purpose is to recapture the Jewishness of Jesus, Paul, and the entire New Testament. To a great extent he has succeeded in realizing this aim. He has done so through re-describing the underlying narrative structure of the gospel message in a way that places the people of Israel front and center. He has also drawn fruitfully upon basic Jewish theological themes (such as monotheism, election, and eschatology). At the same time, Wright's interpretation of the New Testament undermines an essential affirmation of Jewish life, namely, the positive covenantal significance of the Jewish people in post-Jesus history.

This presentation will explore Wright's achievement and failure, and suggest that correction of the failure is the best way to secure the achievement.



**Gert van Klinken**, *Ecclesiastical Documents in Reformed Churches in Holland and Germany, 1948-1970: 'dialogue' and 'witness' under discussion*

Gert van Klinken (\* 1960) is docent Kerkgeschiedenis aan de Protestantse Theologische Universiteit, locatie Amsterdam. Hij publiceert onder meer op het terrein van joods-christelijke verhoudingen in de 19e en 20e eeuw.

#### *Outline*

Israel and the Church was published by the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1959. In a radical interpretation of the work of Karl Barth, the dialogue between Church and Israel was presented as a unique understanding between the two prime receivers of God's revelation in the Bible. This dialogue was played out at a higher level than any that could be attained by other world religions. Judaism and Christianity constituted parallel lines toward the common future of the Messiah (DRC 1959, 18–20).

Israel and the Church is a much discussed document in the field of Jewish-Christian relations. The Christian authors felt that dialogue, as they saw it, remained compatible with efforts to win the Jewish dialogue partner over to the recognition of Jesus as their Messiah. After 1963, this position was confronted by theologians belonging to the Arbeitsgruppe Christen und Juden (Berlin). They rejected the dual aims of dialogue and 'bearing witness' as incompatible. The ensuing discussion shows an ongoing relevance for the present situation, more than half a century hence.

**Bart Koet**, *Conflict management in Corinth. A Comparison between the Openings of 1 and 2 Corinthians*

Bart J. Koet is Professor of New Testament Studies and Early Christian Literature at the Tilburg School of Catholic Theology (the Netherlands). His main field of research is the way interpretation of biblical traditions is used, particularly in the New Testament (especially Luke-Acts and Paul), Rabbinic scriptures and early Christian literature. He pays special attention in his research to the connection between the interpretation of Scripture and the phenomenon of dreams. Over the past few years, he has also written extensively about leadership in the Early Church. The last book he edited was *Multiple Teachers in Biblical Texts*, Louvain, CBET 88, Peeters, 2017 (together with his colleague

Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen). A book about Augustine and his views on deacons will be published in 2018 by Brill, Leiden.

#### *Outline*

In this lecture we assess the relations between the openings of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. These openings have a similar structure. This similarity is an invitation to look for the agreements and the differences between the two openings. In both introductions a repetition of the words evokes prophetic language and in this way important biblical concepts as 'calling' in 1 Corinthians and 'comfort' in 2 Corinthians are employed. In such a way these openings indicate that the prophets of Israel are a decisive frame for the Corinthian audience(s).

#### **Kees van der Kooi**, *Twofold Ecclesiology, Twofold Soteriology*

Cornelis van der Kooi (1952) holds the chair for systematic theology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and is director of the Herman Bavinck Center for Reformed and Evangelical Theology.

#### *Outline*

Taking my cue from Hendrikus Berkhof I will elaborate on the structural duality that the theme of Israël builds into Christian doctrine. The duality surfaces in Christology (1), in the place that that Israël has in Christian doctrine (2), in the doctrine of revelation (3), in ecclesiology (4) and in soteriology (5). As a general conclusion it can be said that this theme is a vivid reminder in Christian doctrine that history is open and that God has not yet come to the end of his works.

#### **Gert Kwakkel**, *Israel and the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Similar Prophetic Texts*

Gert Kwakkel (Nigtevecht, The Netherlands, April 14, 1959) is professor of Old Testament at Theologische Universiteit Kampen, Kampen, The Netherlands, and at Faculté Jean Calvin, Aix-en-Provence, France. He graduated as PhD on a thesis on the so-called psalms of innocence at Groningen State University, The Netherlands, in 2001.

#### *Outline*

In Jeremiah 31:31-34, God promises to make a new covenant with the houses of Israel and Judah. This raises the question of whether the new covenant is a purely inner-Israelite affair. To answer this question, other texts in Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel referring to covenant making during or after the Babylonian exile will be examined. Do these texts allow for the idea that non-Israelites could also be involved in the future covenant? And to what extent is ownership of the promised land part of the privileges granted by the covenant?

**Creig Marlowe**, *So-called "Replacement Theology" in Light of Israel's Future: A Contextual Consideration of Exod. 23,33; Lev. 26; Deut. 4,30-31; 2 Sam 7; and Jer. 23,31-33,49*

Originally from the USA, Creig lectures at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven, Belgium. His church background is mostly Baptist, and he studied at Western and Mid-America Seminary, followed by seminars with T. Muraoka at Leiden. He is currently writing a commentary on the Psalms for Kregel Publishers.

#### *Outline*

The research question stems from a concern that the current anxiety over, and opposition to, the long-held view popularly known as Replacement Theology is being driven more by politics or political correctness than exegesis. This lecture is about the hermeneutical and exegetical challenges involved in the development of a biblical theology and doctrine regarding the future of Israel as physical or spiritual. Specifically, the lecture will look at selected OT texts or passages that are pertinent in terms of a challenge for those that insist on a literal, future Israel or on the present State of Israel as fulfilled prophecy. Related to all this is the current criticism leveled against so-called Replacement Theology (Supersessionism) as anti-Semitic; hence, the question "Does replacement theology need to be replaced?" is considered in the larger context of examining a number of OT verses that call for closer, contextual investigation and theological application. The intent is not to solve all the issues but demonstrate the need more critical examination of positions that many interpreters treat as settled regarding what the OT says about future Israel.

**Michael Mulder**, *Paul's dual focus: 'Rejoice, o Gentiles, with his people'. An Intertextual Analysis of the Quotations in Romans 15:7-13*

Dr. Michael (M.C.) Mulder teaches New Testament, Judaism and 'Church and Israel' at the Theological University in Apeldoorn. He is director of the Centre for Israel Studies in the Netherlands and Extraordinary Professor (New Testament) at the North-West University of Potchefstroom, South-Africa.

### *Outline*

In Romans 15,7-13 Paul envisages two groups in the Christian community of Rome: the 'weak', and the 'strong', obviously Christians from Jewish and Gentile background. While Paul exhorts these two groups to unity, he continues to have an eye for a certain duality.

An intertextual approach to the four OT quotations in this pericope, will shed light on the way Paul reads the Scriptures and connects them to the actual situation of his time. A net of intertextual connections will show that these OT texts are quoted in a very conscious order and that they should be interpreted within a mutual relationship. This will be confirmed by discovering close connections between the texts the apostle cites, within Jewish liturgical traditions.

The conclusion will be that the quotations in this passage link to the dual focus of the work of Christ in his service to the circumcised, as described in verses 8,9a; to the dual focus of Paul's admonition in the context of Romans 15; and to his theological exposition in Romans 9-11. The unity of the congregation does not lead to a dissolution of Jews and Gentiles into one overarching people; rather it confirms the specific place of them both in an overarching divine plan.

**Mart Jan Paul, *The Servant as Covenant and Light (Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6, 8)*.**

Dr M.J. (Mart-Jan) Paul, Professor of Old Testament at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit at Leuven, Belgium; Lecturer of Old Testament at the Christelijke Hogeschool Ede, the Netherlands.

### *Outline*

The book of the prophet Isaiah pays considerable attention to the relationship between Israel and the other peoples. In the first song about the Servant we find God announcing "I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles" (42:6). In the second song, the expressions "covenant" and "light" are repeated and expounded upon (49:6, 8).

The intention is first to say something over the identity of the Servant and then to perform an exegetical analysis of the texts, particularly looking at the concepts of “covenant” and “light”. After we have made some choices in how we interpret these much-debated texts, we come to the question of what the relationship between Israel and the other peoples is, in particular how much the identity of Israel is maintained when redemption is expanded to include the peoples. The answer to this question will be looked at in the light of other Bible texts, including some from the New Testament, and we will move onto looking at aspects of Biblical theology that are important to systematic theology. The results have consequences for the actual relationship between the Churches and the Jewish people.

**Theo Pleizier**, *Israel in Christian Preaching. Spirituality, Agnosticism and Gratitude in Hermeneutical Reflection*

#### *Outline*

Israel is a recurring topic in Christian preaching. Obviously, because the people of Israel is one of the main characters in the biblical books that Christians call the "Old Testament". Besides, sermons sometimes contain wise proverbs or parables from Jewish sources. Preachers also introduce the Jewish people as active agents in the coming of the Kingdom. These examples indicate how in sermons Israel appears as a multidimensional phenomenon. Hence the first part of the paper focusses upon Israel as ‘homiletical reality’. The second part of the paper discusses a few hermeneutical approaches and presents a threefold hermeneutical framework that departs from the following criteria: doing justice to Israel as present reality, acknowledging the faithfulness of God and maintaining the unique character of Christian preaching. The final proposal considers hermeneutics as spiritual discipline and inquires how the Jewish-Christian and Christian-Christian relationships determines the reading and understanding of the Scriptures. Further, it argues for an agnostic epistemology in Christian eschatological discernment. Finally, it offers a hermeneutic of gratitude in which Israel’s uniqueness is celebrated yet not theologically overstated.

**Faydra L. Shapiro**, *Christians Reflecting on Israel. What Does It Contribute?*



Dr. Faydra Shapiro is an Orthodox Jew with a lifelong interest in Christianity. She holds a PhD in Religious Studies from McMaster University and directs the work of Israel Center for Jewish-Christian Relations.

Faydra began her career as a professor of Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University for 13 years. Her first book, *Building Jewish Roots: The Israel Experience*, won a National Jewish Book Award in 2006. After immigrating to Israel with her family in 2008, Faydra was eager to bring her academic expertise, unique experience, warmth and charismatic teaching together to have an impact on the ground, in Israel. Her second book, *Christian Zionism: Navigating the Jewish-Christian Border*, shows how this movement significantly engages basic questions of identity and the borders between Judaism and Christianity. Faydra also regularly writes academic articles and popular op-eds on Jewish-Christian relations.

Faydra is passionate about building greater understanding between Jews and Christians, knowing firsthand how we can strengthen one another in our respective traditions. She is also a committed wife and mother. She and her husband Shaul, together with their six children, live in a tiny little community on a hilltop in the Galilee.

**Eveline van Staalduine**, *A Christian Canon Without Old Testament: Reflections on Notger Slenczka's Tractate Die Kirche und das Alte Testament*

Dr. E. van Staalduine-Sulman (PhD 2002) is (as of January) professor of the Reception History of the Hebrew Bible in Antiquity at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She has published on Targum and Midrash as well as on evangelical reception history of the Old Testament.

#### *Outline*

In 2013 Notger Slenczka published his tractate *Die Kirche und das Alte Testament*, in which he proposes to no longer accept the Old Testament as authoritative within the Christian Church. One of his main arguments is that the particular relationship between God and Israel does not fit the universal message of Christianity. Another argument concerns the dialogue between Israel and the Church: our relation with the Jews would benefit if we no longer claim the Hebrew and Aramaic part of our Bible.

Although agreement can be reached about some of Slenczka's ideas and aims, I will argue that the opposition of particular versus universal is not valid, that Slenczka's proposal is more or less motivated by the Lutheran ecclesial practice, and that "giving back" the Hebrew Bible to the Jews does not help us in our dialogue with Jews nor in our theological reflections on the relationship Israel-Church.

**Wim van Vlastuin, *Retrieving Wilhelmus à Brakel's Expectation for Israel***

Willem van Vlastuin (1963) worked initially as a pastor. In 2002 he finished his PhD-thesis on Jonathan Edwards' doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the context of revival. At present he is professor of Theology and Spirituality of Reformed Protestantism at the Vrije Universiteit at Amsterdam. He is also dean of the seminary of the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk at this university. In 2014 he published *Be Renewed. A Theology of Personal Renewal* and his *Catholic Today. A reformed conversation on catholicity* is forthcoming. He is married with Wilma Wiersma and together they have six children.

*Outline*

It is well known that the representatives of Puritanism and 'De Nadere Reformatie' expected the restoration of the people of Israel by the return to their country and their recognition of Jesus. Related to this national conversion of God's people, they believed in a great spiritual revival in the worldwide church. In this contribution the understanding of one of these representatives - Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711) - is analyzed and described.

In the 21e century this post-reformation theology of Israel is not self-evident. On the one hand this position raises the question how we have to look at the Arabic Christians who live sometimes already twenty centuries in the land of Palestine. On the other hand, the developments in Biblical theology have continued. In particular, the eschatological perspective of the New Testament asks probing questions about the concept of the unfulfilled promises of the Old Testament.

In this contribution these issues are explored to analyze in depth the critique on the remaining special position of Israel. This will be used as an 'interpretative framework' to resume the expectation for the restoration of Israel with the use of the concept of retrieval. The interaction of an old theological position with contemporary insights will lead to a transformation of the old theology which will be relevant for the present.