

Text: Selected Texts

Title: Israel, the Church, and the Purposes of God – part 2

Has God permanently abandoned ethnic Israel???

- Some say, yes—that the church has replaced Israel
- Some say that the church has taken Israel's place and now assumes all the blessings promised to ethnic Israel, and that Jews will be saved in the future as they become a part of the church.
 - In other wds, that Jews will be saved through the gospel and become a part of the Church, but God has no role for ethnic, national Israel in the future and in God's future Kingdom.

Supersessionism: Bruce Waltke: "The NT teaches the 'hard fact that national Israel and its law have been permanently replaced by the church and the New Covenant.'"

Lorriane Boettner: "It may seem harsh to say that God is done with the Jews, but the fact of the matter is that He is through with them as a unified national group having anything more to do with the evangelization of the world. That mission has been taken from them and given to the Christian Church."

Hermon Ridderboss: "The Church springs from, is born out of Israel. On the other hand, the Church takes the place of Israel as the people of God."

R.T. France: "There is to be a new people of God in place of Old Testament Israel."

A long history of theologians referring to the Church as replacing Israel.

The idea is that Israel missed her visitation and rejected their Messiah. Therefore, God has permanently abandoned national Israel and given all the blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants to the NT Church.

Yet, there must be a resign of the Messiah over the earth—Jesus must rule over the nations with a 'rod of iron' and He is going to have a capital city, Jerusalem—there is a ruling nation over the nations at that time—the Scriptures teach that the nation will be a repentant Israel—a new Israel, a redeemed Israel.

The predominant view of replacement theology is the 'Punitive View'—that God punishes Israel permanently for rejecting the Messiah.

- No one denies that God has given Israel severe consequences for rejecting their Messiah.
- The question is: 'Is God's judgment of Israel permanent or temporary'???
- Is God angry with Israel and permanently setting them aside???

An economic view of replacement theology—not that God has angrily rejected Israel but that God planned for Israel to be 'phased out' and the Church to become the new people of God—that God would shift His redemptive economy away from an ethnic people and place upon a multicultural group, the Church.

AD 160, Justin Martyr became the first church leader to view the Church as the 'new Israel'

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 gave many theologians reason to view Israel as permanently abandoned by God.

Q—Has the NT Church replaced ethnic Israel???

Q—Does the NT Church now receive all the OT promises made to ethnic Israel???

Prop: Reasons why we believe God has a future for the nation Israel:

#1. Because OT passages promise a future salvation and restoration of Israel.

See: Deut 30:1-10—this is the 'big picture' plan for Israel

- In Deut 28-29, God promises blessings and curses depending on how the people respond to God's commands
- Cf. Ezek 36, Lev 26—the storyline is carried throughout the Bible
- After 'dispersion' there will be a new covenant—the Mosaic Covenant simply shows man his sin
- The OT is promising both spiritual blessing (making men right with God) and a literal prosperity—the restoration impacts the planet—the curse will be reversed—the restoration will involve land, animals, possessions, etc.
- The Bible never refers to the physical blessings that God gives as a negative thing—it is a sign of God's grace and fulfillment of His promises.
- The physical blessings of the New Covenant will take place at the Second Coming.

See: Ezek 36:22ff—Notice: how God intermixes spiritual salvation and tangible physical blessings

- The people will be 'dispersed' among the nations because of their disobedience
- The people will be regathered 'from all the lands and bring you into your own land'
 - There is nothing in Scripture about the Church being 'dispersed, regathered, or brought into their own land.'
- Notice: multiplied grain, multiplied fruit of the trees, multiplied produce, and never any famine. That will require a divine suspension or complete reversal of the curses God brought to the earth itself.
 - When will that happen??? At the Second Coming when Christ comes to rule the earth—He reverses the curse and the land becomes like the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall (36:35)
- Ezek 16:60-63—the Lord will remember the covenant He made with Abraham and Israel in her youth
 - Significant is that her restoration will be by grace and not by merit
 - An 'everlasting covenant' is a reference to the New Covenant
 - The NC is unconditional, saving, and everlasting
 - Isa 59:21—"As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the Lord: "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the Lord, "from now and forever."

- Israel could never keep the Mosaic Covenant—so, the New Covenant is all about God’s grace and God’s forgiveness through Christ
- Ezek 20:43—“There you will remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done.”
- There will be a salvation and a restoration of Israel—Ezek 37 is a visual demonstration of what is promised in Ezek 36.
- See: Ezek 37:1-14—‘I will bring you into the land of Israel’ (37:12), ‘your own land’ (37:14).

See: Isa 49:3ff—the Servant—‘My Servant’—can refer to God’s people Israel—and in some cases, as here, can refer to the Messiah as in Isaiah 42, 52-53

- Notice: the mission of Messiah is to ‘bring Jacob back’—not make ethnic Israel insignificant
- God will not stop with the salvation of Israel but will bring blessings to the nations
- God doesn’t bring blessings to the nations by making them ‘Israel’
 - Isa 19:24-25—Egypt is still Egypt, Syria is still Syria
 - Gentile nations will exist as they are and God uses Israel as the vehicle to reach them
- 49:8—even in a section that speaks about Jesus (the Servant) the land is still mentioned

See: Zeph 3:14-17, 19-20—‘at that time’—the time when the Lord restores Israel and Israel’s fortune in the Millennial kingdom

See: Amos 9:11-15—the context is Israel being restored to the land

Notice: God promises in the OT to keep Israel forever.

See: Jer 31:35-36—the preservation of Israel as a nation is connected to the fixed order of the sun, moon, and stars.

#2 The NT affirms the OT promises made to Israel.

The NT does not reinterpret the OT and change the OT message but affirms it and continues it.

- Matt 5:17-18—“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”
- Every OT prophetic promise that God made to Israel must be fulfilled.

See: Matt 19:27-28—“Then Peter said to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?” And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

- If God planned to permanently ‘phase out’ ethnic Jews, why does the Lord Jesus speak about a ‘regeneration’ and the ‘twelve tribes of Israel’???

See: Matt 24:15-16—“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.”

- Jesus speaks of the ‘abomination of desolation’ referred to in the Book of Daniel—(Dan 9:27).
- The reality that Jesus, the Apostle Paul, and other NT writers rely upon the OT promises made to Israel tells us that we should rely on them as well.
 - Jesus and the NT writers are not ‘reinterpreting the OT’ based upon the NT

See: Acts 1:3—the disciples had 40 days of training/understanding with the risen Savior—so that, after the 40 days of instruction by the Lord, the disciples ask in 1:6, “Lord, is it at this time that You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”

- Replacement theologians say the disciples were just misunderstanding, but that is hard to believe for two reasons: 1) they just had forty days with the risen Lord being instructed and it seems unbelievable that they could get it so wrong here about the kingdom of God, 2) Jesus doesn’t rebuke or correct the disciples but simply says that the timing is not for them to know. Implied, is that the disciples were right in anticipating a restoration of national Israel
- They had a right view of the nature of the kingdom—they had an expectation of the restoration of Israel, yet they are not to know the timing of it.
- 1:9—tells us that this is where the church fits into God’s program—we have the responsibility to carry the gospel forward (the Great Commission)
- We know not when the Kingdom will be established and when the Day of the Lord comes
- Our focus is gospel proclamation to nations who are hostile to God
- Significant, because after the resurrection and on the day of Jesus’ ascension into heaven, the disciples are still looking for the restoration of Israel.
- Jesus is saying that is going to occur, but it is not for you to know when.

See: Acts 3:19-21—following the Day of Pentecost and all the events that were taking place Peter speaks about the fulfillment of Isaiah 52-53

- Then, he tells them what they need to do—to repent and have their sins be ‘wiped away’
- Notice: also, that if they repent and return to Christ, the Messiah will come.
 - With Messiah’s coming there is the refreshing and ‘restoration of all things’
 - Peter ties this to the OT promise
 - In other wds, the OT prophets spoke about the suffering Servant coming and Christ has thus fulfilled that—Compare: 3:18 and 3:21
 - Just as Christ has fulfilled the OT promise of Messiah coming and suffering for our sin, so He must fulfill the promise to restore ‘all things’ as promised in the OT—the blessings to the nations, crops being restored, etc.
- We must study the OT because it is the foundation for what will take place for Israel

Rom 11:25-26—“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

See: Rom 9:1-5—Notice: that the ‘covenants’ still belong to Israel (present tense)—they must repent to experience those things

See: Rom 11:28-29—God will be faithful to Israel and what He has promised

- When we see God's faithfulness to His promises to Israel, we are encouraged in God's promises to us, to the NT Church
- God's promise to Israel is an irrevocable promise

See: Rev 7:4-9—the context is the Tribulation—why are the twelve tribes of Israel even mentioned if they have no future in God's kingdom program???

- NT prophecy still shows Israel as being relevant in God's purposes

Rev 11:1ff—the holy city Jerusalem is mentioned

- A rebuilt temple in Jerusalem will exist during the Tribulation (cf. 2 Thess 2:4)
- There's reference to 'worshippers' in the temple

The title 'Israel' is used 73x's in the NT and always refers to ethnic Jews

- Israel is still called Israel, even after the establishment of the Church.
- The NT doesn't reinterpret the OT
- The NT reaffirms the OT

Jesus viewed the OT promises to Israel as still valid.

The OT talks about a restored Israel

The NT talks about a restored Israel

Replacement theology is not a biblical doctrine.