

The Church Will Never Replace Israel

'You (Israel) are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people for Himself out of all the peoples on the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you and choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the fewest of all people, but because the Lord loves you and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers. The Lord has brought you out of Egypt with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage ... If you hearken to these precepts and keep them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant of the love which He swore to your fathers' (Deuteronomy 7:6 to 12).

'Behold the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their forefathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt ... but this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: I will put My law within them; on their hearts I will write it, and I will be their God and they will be My people, says the Lord' (Jeremiah 31:31 to 33).

'Behold the days will come when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their forefathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt ... This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel: I will put My laws in their minds and I will write them on their hearts and I will be their God and they will be My people ... When the Lord speaks of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete, and what is obsolete will vanish away' (Hebrews 8:8 to 13).

The 'Replacement Theology' is an extremely serious error being taught in churches today. That error teaches that God has set Israel aside in favour of the church and the church is now the 'new' Israel. There is nothing in scripture that can justify that theology. We cannot take from the Jews or Israel their rightful Biblical place. The Lord made it clear He would make a new covenant with Israel and Judah. How that can be missed by the replacement theologians, shows their lack of knowledge of the scriptures. The replacement theology is just an expression of pride and anti-Semitism. The Lord said he would cause the Israelite kingdom (as in King David) to cease. 'I will end the kingdom of the house of Israel' (Hosea 1:4). The Lord said He would scatter the nation, not destroy it completely. "I am with you to save you; for I will make an end to all the nations where I have scattered you, but I will not make a full end of you," says the Lord' (Jeremiah 30:11). 'In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and together they will come to the land that I gave as an inheritance to your fathers' (Jeremiah 3:18). The Lord never brought to an end the house of Judah because our Messiah is our King and He comes from the house of Judah (Hebrews 7:14).

The Lord has chosen Israel to bring forth His Word and the Messiah. 'I am speaking the truth in Jesus. I am not lying; my conscience by the Holy Spirit testifies with me, that I have great sorrow and incessant anguish in my heart, for I wish that I myself were cut off from the Messiah for the sake of my brethren, my blood relatives, for they are Israelites, and to them belong God's adoption, the glory, the covenants, the Law, the temple worship and God's promises. To them belong the forefathers, and from them the Messiah, Who is exalted over all. God – blessed forever. Amen' (Romans 9:1 to 5).

Here is the scriptural proof that the church will never replace Israel. 'I ask then; did God reject His people? Of course not! That will never be! I am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham from the tribe of Benjamin. No! God did not reject His people whom He foreknew from the beginning. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah and how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord they have killed your prophets; they have destroyed your altars and I alone am left and they seek my life." What was God's reply to Elijah? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too at the present time there is a remnant, selected and chosen by God's grace' (Romans 11:1 to 5). 'The remnant that has survived of the house of Judah will again take root downward and will bear fruit upward' (Isaiah 37:31).

Paul warns Gentiles (non-Jews) not to be arrogant regarding salvation. 'If some of the branches (Jews) were broken off, while you, a wild olive shoot (a non-Jew) were grafted in among them (the Jews) to share the richness of the olive tree (salvation), do not boast over the branches (the Jews) and pride yourself at their expense. If you do boast and feel superior, remember it is not you (Gentiles) that support the root (the old covenant, Judaism and faith in God), but the root that supports you. You might say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. But they were broken off because of their unbelief (their lack of faith), and you are saved through believing (faith), so do not become proud or conceited but fear the Lord, for if God did not spare the natural branches (the Jews), neither will He spare you (non-Jews). Know then the kindness and severity of God; severity towards those who have fallen, and kindness towards you (Gentiles) – provided you continue in His grace otherwise you too will be cut off. Even those branches (Jews) who have

fallen, if they do not cling to their unbelief will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them in again. If you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and against nature grafted into a cultivated tree, how much easier will it be to graft these natural branches back on to their own olive tree? Do not be wise in your own conceits' (Romans 11:17 to 24).

There are statements in the above verses that cannot apply to the Christian Church. The nation of Israel was adopted as God's chosen nation. The Law was not given to the church – it was given to Israel. Worship was instigated by God and given to the Levites; a tribe from the children of Israel. The 'fathers' were the scriptural fathers of Israel; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and we know that the Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 35:10). The Lord made the covenant with Abraham – an ancestor of Jesus, Who became our Messiah, and Who came from the Jews – He did not come from the church – He started the church. The church never can be Israel. The Lord never calls Israel the church and He never calls the church, Israel. The word Israel is never ever used as a synonym for the church. Our salvation comes solely from the Jews (John 4:22). It began with the Jews and from them, the church has been built up.

God made a firm promise to the Jewish people leading up to their acceptance of Jesus being The Messiah for all mankind. They will have their spiritual eyes opened to see the new covenant, not written by the finger of God, but this time written in the blood of Jesus, then all of the Jews who are living in Israel at that time will be born-again and saved. When all these events take place, the whole world will not be able to argue the fact that the Jews are God's chosen people and the land of Israel is the land chosen for them to possess. The prophecies for these events were spoken by the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, then Jesus Himself, then the Apostle Paul in a step-by-step process. Ezekiel 37:21 to 28: 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every country and bring them into their own land." (Note: The Lord regards Israel as the land belonging to the Jewish people and they began returning to Israel last century.)

The prophecy continues in Ezekiel 37:22: "I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king (ruler) will be king to them all and they will be no longer two nations (Israel and Judah), neither will they be divided into two kingdoms any more." (Note: This prophecy had been fulfilled. Israel has one Prime Minister and is no longer divided into two nations).

Ezekiel 37:23: "They will not defile themselves any more with their idols and their detestable things or with any of their transgressions, but I will save them out of all their backslidings in which they have sinned, and I will cleanse them. So they will be My people, and I will be their God." (The Jewish people have not worshipped idols for hundreds of years as they have dedicated themselves to serving God more and more over the centuries. The next step for them is to accept Messiah Yeshua, aka Jesus, as their Messiah. That is when the prophecy Jesus spoke of will be realised. Jesus said two things: (1) "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). (2) "I declare, you will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Matthew 23:39).

When that happens, Ezekiel 37:24 to 28 will be fulfilled. "David My Servant (David's descendant Jesus is meant here) will be King over them and they will all have one Shepherd. They will walk in My ordinances and heed My statutes and do them. They will dwell in the land in which your fathers dwelt, that I gave to My servant Jacob and they will dwell there, they and their children and their children's children, forever. My Servant David (Jesus) will be their Prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It will be an everlasting covenant with them and I will bless them and multiply them and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My tabernacle will be with them. I will be their God and they will be My people. The nations will understand that I AM the Lord Who sanctified Israel, when My sanctuary will be in their midst forevermore" (Ezek 37:21 to 28). Jesus has already ushered in the new covenant, but many Jewish people have not yet accepted it. Paul wrote the final step in the long process. "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery Brethren; a temporary partial hardening has befallen Israel but only until the last of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved. As it is written, the Deliverer will come from Zion. He will banish ungodliness from Jacob (Israel). This is My covenant to them, when I will remove their sins forever" (Romans 11:25 to 27).

So we can see that God has not cast away Israel. Most certainly Israel has stumbled but has not completely fallen. When the last of the Gentiles whom God foreknows has repented and has come into the Kingdom of God, then God will save the whole nation of Israel. We need to humble ourselves before God and magnify His grace in our hearts. Whenever the Lord speaks about rejecting Israel, it is usually followed by the word 'until'. 'For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until her righteousness shines like brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns' (Isaiah 62:1). 'Give Him no rest until He establishes Jerusalem and makes her a praise on all the earth' (Isaiah 62:7). 'He will give them up until the time that she who is in labour gives birth (to the church) then the rest of His brothers will return to the children of Israel' (Micah 5:3). 'A temporary hardening has befallen Israel until the last of the Gentiles has come in' (Romans 11:25).

The Jewish people have not been cut off completely, but they have to accept Jesus as their Saviour and Messiah, and be born-again just as all Gentiles do, in order to be saved for eternity (Romans 1:16). We do not have to condone their mistakes, just as we would not condone the mistakes some Christians make, however, we must love them, support them, honour them, accept them and help them whenever possible, if we want to be blessed. We are strongly instructed to comfort God's people, to speak kindly to Jerusalem and show the Jews that their previous sins have been pardoned (Isaiah 40:1 & 2). Not to do so is disobedience and we know disobedience is sin.

There are two major differences that have happened to Israel in this age that has not happened in the past 2,000 years; the rebirth of the nation of Israel and the regathering of the Jews to Israel. There is no parallel to that in any previous century, and because of the resentment caused by the Jews returning to Israel, there will be a time of real trouble. "Behold, the day is coming when I will release from exile My people Israel and Judah and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they will possess it", says the Lord ... "Alas! For that day will be so great, none will be like it. It will be the time of Jacob's (Israel's) trouble, but he will be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:3 & 7).

Even the name 'Israel' for their reborn country was debated. Some favoured the name Judea but God said it would be one nation, one people, one language under His name. One name for God is El, so with a vote of the people, the new nation was named Israel. The Lord said, "In the latter days you will understand it perfectly" (Jeremiah 30:24). That means Israel would understand all of prophecies regarding these events in the latter days. That comment indicates we are now in the latter days, because now Israel understands the prophecies regarding their return to Israel. We need to remember, that when these words were spoken, Israel and Judah were nations still in their promised land, so it would not have made sense to them at the time. God also said they would be given a pure language and everyone in Israel would speak the pure language given to them. A dedicated Jewish man brought the Hebrew language out of antiquity for the new nation of Israel to speak as their national language, just as was prophesied. 'For then I will return to the people a pure language so they may all call on the name of the Lord to serve Him, shoulder to shoulder' (Zephaniah 3:9).

The prophecies regarding the restoration of Israel is coming to fulfilment in our day. We need to stand in the gap on behalf of Israel and pray. God is raising up Christians all over the world who will give themselves devotedly to intercession and the practical support of Israel. All of us who are not Jewish owe every spiritual blessing to one People – the Jewish people. Where would we be without them? Totally and hopelessly lost! Just as the Jews were God's answer to our salvation, so now our intercession for Israel and the Jewish people is God's answer to the present situation in Israel. There are three specific, practical topics of intercession we need to put to God. We must pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6). One day, peace really will come to Jerusalem. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to raise up a heart cry to God from the people of Israel. One theme in the Books of Exodus and Judges is this; they cried to the Lord. The children of Israel cried to the Lord because of their taskmasters (Exodus 3:7). The Lord did not move to deliver Israel from Egypt until they cried out to Him in desperation. Other times the Lord raised up a deliverer or a prophet after Israel cried out to Him – after they had repented of sin (Judges 3:9 & 15; 4:3; 6:6; 10:10). God only responds after people cry out to Him from the heart. Therefore the Lord will wait and at the sound of their cry, when He hears it He will answer (Isaiah 30:18 & 19). We need to pray He will raise up a leader in Israel who will do God's will and whom the people will follow. God never uses a committee – He chooses and uses one man; like Moses, like Joshua and like Daniel.

We need to take the Lord seriously. God meant what He said when He gave the land of Israel to the Hebrew people as an everlasting possession. Settlers in Israel are people who take God at His word. They are very committed. Israel is Israel and will always be God's chosen land and its people, His people. The church is the church, begun by Jesus and built up by the apostles then spread around the world. The church will never replace Israel, and currently, the two are separate peoples, but right at the end of this age, the born-again Jewish believers in the house of Israel and the born-again body of believers that make up the church, will unite as one and become the Bride of the Lamb, Who is Jesus our Messiah (Revelation 19:7 to 9). The new Jerusalem, sent down from heaven by God will be beautified, adorned and arrayed like a bride, then God will declare that He will personally live with us forever through all eternity (Revelation 21:1 to 3).

God's Purpose For The Church

'The purpose is that through the church, all men may see what the Administration of the mystery is, which for eons has been hidden in God, Who created all things through Jesus so the manifold (varied) wisdom of God,

might be revealed to the evil rulers, principalities and powers in heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He put into effect through Jesus our Lord' (Ephesians 3:9 to 11).

'His gifts were varied; He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some shepherds, and some teachers. His intention was the perfecting of His consecrated people so they could do the work of ministering and building up His body, which is the church, so the church might develop until we all (Jews and Gentiles together) attain the unity of faith and in the full knowledge of the Son of God, we might arrive at spiritual maturity, to the measure of the stature of fullness of Jesus' (Ephesians 4:11 to 13).

'Every scripture is God-breathed (inspired) and is profitable for teaching, reproof, conviction of sin, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that the man (or woman) of God may be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:16 & 17). 'I command you in the presence of God and of our Messiah Jesus, Who will judge the living and the dead at His second coming and His Kingdom; preach the Word!! Keep the sense of urgency ... (2 Timothy 4:1 & 2).

'Do not neglect to assemble together as believers as some people do, but encourage one another, all the more faithfully as you see the Day of the Lord approaching' (Hebrews 10:25).

In simple language, God's purpose of the church is not to try to replace Israel because the church will never replace Israel. The purpose of the church is to reveal to the evil kingdom what the mystery of eternal salvation is about, and to help people grow spiritually in all areas of their lives so they will be able to reach spiritual maturity to the level of Jesus. Then we can spread the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, through the preaching of the Word of God, and we are called to fellowship together with other believers so we can encourage one another. The Lord is not talking about a religious group; He is talking about righteous people who habitually walk in righteousness and holiness, who have a close ongoing relationship with the Lord, and who worship Him. All born-again believers need constant refreshing through worship, breaking bread together, hearing the Lord speak through sermons, prophecies and receiving Holy Spirit inspired revelations or visions for saving the lost. 'Where there is no revelation (or vision), the people give up and perish, but He who keeps the commandments of God is blessed' (Proverbs 29:18). That kind of vision is a personal revelation from God for each individual person or the church they attend, in their situation and time. People must have a vision they can pursue so they can continue to move forward in God. A vision of the past is no more than history. When God's people do not have a fresh relevant vision they perish; they wither up and can become ineffective.

All pastors should encourage individuals in their flock to pursue their own revelation, as long as it lines up with the Word of God. A revelation from the Lord should never cause disunity, nor should the pastor feel threatened by the vision of another person. We all have our own God-given job to do to serve God, and a spiritually mature person should be free to obey the Lord using the talents the Lord has given them, without any interference from church leadership, on condition, the vision is from the Lord and the person wishing to obey the Lord must talk his ideas over with the leaders of the church, for they are accountable to God for our well-being (Hebrews 13:17). Talking things over is not interfering. We must all submit to the leadership of the church.

In the days of Eli there was no open vision. The people had the priesthood, the tabernacle, the law, Passover, festivals and sacrifices. They had everything that God had ordained, but they had no vision and the whole nation went into backsliding and defeat. God had to raise up a young boy named Samuel and give Him a direct revelation for Israel (1 Samuel 3:1 to 21). This kind of vision and revelation never supersedes or is contrary to scripture. Every new revelation must be in harmony with scripture, and even though it is in harmony with scripture, each generation of God's people need their own special revelation; what God would say to them at their time in their situation. We do need to be involved with a church to hear God purposes. When we study what is written to the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation, the Lord spoke to the churches, not to individuals (Revelation chapters 2 & 3). If the people were not in the church, they would have missed the message given for their church in their generation.

The Lord regards genuine believers as His friends. "I do not call you servants any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father' (John 15:15). 'The Lord will do nothing without first revealing His secrets to His prophets' (Amos 3:7). The Lord revealed to Noah, He was going to flood the earth, when it would happen and the reasons why (Genesis 6:13 & 17). He revealed to Abraham why He intended to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:17 & 20). Then He told Jonah exactly what He was going to do to Nineveh, when and why (Jonah 1:1 & 2; 3:2 & 4). Whenever God is going to do anything major, He always makes His purposes known to His people through prophetic revelation.

There is a destiny for every individual person and nation. The destiny for every nation differs, just as the destiny for individuals differs. 'The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nought ... blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord' (Psalm 33:10 & 12). This verse says; blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. If we look at the reverse side of that verse, we read; cursed is the nation whose god is not the Lord. The more believers the churches have, the more prayer is offered up for their nation.

The Lord has chosen Israel to bring forth His Word and the Messiah, but God is interested in every other nation too. Every nation has a destiny. Great Britain has certainly been one of the most blessed nations on earth. The Lord has used people from Great Britain to plant several other Christian nations, and thereby spread the Gospel. The United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and many other Christian nations, are all Gentile nations that have helped spread the Gospel in a wonderful way. Blessed are those nations because God is their Lord. The Gospel began in Israel and has spread from there by missionaries who have planted thousands of churches worldwide. Just as every person, church and nation have a destiny, so does each generation.

One day the whole world will bow to the Lord God Almighty. 'All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before You, for the Kingdom is the Lord's and He is the Ruler over all the nations ... Posterity will serve Him. Future generations will be told of the Lord. They will come and declare His righteousness to a people yet to be born – that He has done it – that it is finished' (Psalm 22:27 to 31). 'The nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings (rulers) of the earth will revere Your glory ... Let this be recorded for the generation yet unborn, that a people yet to be created, will praise the Lord' (Psalm 102:15 & 18). These two passages of scripture are confirmed in Revelation. 'For you were sacrificed and with Your blood You purchased men (and women) for God from every tribe, language, people and nation' (Revelation 5:9).

It was God's job to give us His Word, and it is our job to proclaim and spread it. It is our mandate – our commission. God did not give us permission to edit or try to improve the Gospel – He just said preach it. When we proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom – then He will confirm it with signs following. The full Gospel is a declaration that Jesus is our King, because it is the Gospel of the Kingdom and every Kingdom needs a King. The full Gospel is not a weak or watered down religion – it is a message of power. We do not have to apologise for spreading the Word nor should we need to give any explanation. The Gospel is the Gospel of repentance, faith, power, then followed by good works. We have to teach with authority and boldness to all nations, tribe (family group) and language.

The outpouring of the Holy spirit is so we are equipped for these good works; for the harvest of unsaved souls. The Holy Spirit is not for us to feel warm and fuzzy and to build big, fancy buildings. It is to empower us to preach the Gospel to all nations, and to prepare the whole world for Jesus' second coming. That is why God is pouring out His Spirit. The 'rain' of the Spirit is given for the harvest of souls. 'Let us now fear the Lord our God, Who gives rain, both the early and the latter rain in its season; Who keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest' (Jeremiah 5:24). The early 'rain' was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the early church, and the latter 'rain' is the current outpouring of the Holy Spirit that is happening now.

If we do not consistently preach the Gospel to all nations, the following verse may be the result; 'The harvest is passed, the summer has ended, the gathering of the fruit is over, yet we are not saved!' (Jeremiah 8:20). 'So be patient Brethren till the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the harvest from the land. He remains patient until the early and the late rains. So you also must be patient. Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is near' (James 5:7 & 8).

Prophecy spoken out in the church is the revelation given by the Holy Spirit for God's purposes for His people, and how they are to be worked out. Some reasons for prophecy is to understand God's purposes, to find our place in God's purposes, to reveal God's vision for His people, to show direction and to warn about His impending judgement. Moses had such a close relationship with the Lord, they spoke face to face like friends (Exodus 33:11). That is the depth of relationship we need to establish with God, through Jesus.

Prophecy spoken in the church should always line up with scripture, although it can be meant for the individual church. Prophecy spoken by the Old Testament prophets and written down for us to read, are the prophecies Peter is referring to; 'We have the sure words of prophecy. You will do well to pay attention to it as to a lamp shining in the darkness, until the dawn comes and the morning star rises in your hearts. You must understand this; no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation, for no prophecy ever came from the will of man, but holy men of God spoke, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit' (2 Peter 1:19 to 21).

The morning star mentioned in this verse refers to the brightness of the dawn shortly before the sun rises. The best place to see the morning star is over the sea on the eastern side of the land. It is sometimes so bright we may think the sun is actually rising early. The world is in spiritual darkness and does not know or understand what is going on. In that dark place, we have the prophecy of scripture as a light. Peter was saying, if we listen to and obey the scriptures, the brightness of the morning star will rise in our hearts. It is the realisation of the enormity of our salvation. We no longer fear death or hell. Nothing has power over us. It is as though the realisation of salvation 'dawns' on us. We will have an inner light in our heart even though we live in a spiritually dark world. The sun (the Son) is rising in our hearts and He is coming back soon. His coming is the reason we have had so many prophecies given to us. We need to find our place in God for our individual lives, and one role of the church is to help us find our place. Prophecy awakens us to the fact that Jesus is coming back and we need to be ready and diligently working at the time of His appearing. Jesus said, "Blessed is the servant whom his master finds so doing when He arrives" (Luke 12:43).

Amen and God bless you.

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