

## Session 08

## Replacement Theology

## Quotes

**Justin Martyr (AD 100–165)**, defended Christianity against a Jewish enemy, claimed Christians “are the true Israelitic race - “the seed of Jacob,” now refers to the Christians.: "The Scriptures are not yours, but ours."

**Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon (c. AD 177)** declared: "**Jews are disinherited from the grace of God.**"

**Tertullian** ), prominent church theologian from North Africa, (AD 160-230, ? 145–220) in his treatise, "Against the Jews," announced that **God had rejected the Jews in favour of the Christians. Esau = Jews; Jacob= Christians.**

**Origen (AD 185–253)**, the president of the school of theology in Alexandria, allegorical, or spiritualizing, method of interpreting the Bible - “Israel” can mean the church

**Cyprian (AD 195–258)**, bishop of Carthage, stated that he “endeavoured to show that the Jews, according to what had before been foretold, had departed from God, and had lost God’s favour, while the Christians had succeeded to their place.

**Melito, Bishop of Sardis (died around the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century)** - the first Christian to accuse the Jews of killing God - Christ), "On the Passover" around AD 170. **Jews/ model - law/parable - gospel/fulfilment church/reality. The people were made void when the church arose."**

#### What is it? The basis of Replacement Theology

(Summary from [www.lldolphin.org/replacement/](http://www.lldolphin.org/replacement/))

- 1) **Israel** (the Jewish people and the land) **has been replaced** by the Christian Church in the purposes of God, or, more precisely, the Church is the historic continuation of Israel to the exclusion of the former. The Jewish people are now **no longer a "chosen people."** In fact, they are no different from any other group, such as the English, Spanish, or Africans.
- 2) Apart from repentance, the new birth, and incorporation into the Church, **the Jewish people have no future, no hope, and no calling in the plan of God.**
- 3) **Israel rejected Jesus Christ at His first coming. God repealed the, everlasting, Abrahamic Covenant** and forever rejected Israel as a nation. "**Israel,**" as found in the Bible, now refers to the **Church.** The promises concerning the Land are spiritualized and transferred to the church.
- 4) **The promises, covenants and blessings** ascribed to Israel in the Bible have been **taken away from the Jews and given to the Church,** which has superseded them. However, **the Jews are subject to the curses** found in the Bible, as a result of their rejection of Christ.

#### How did it develop?

**Jewish church - persecution - scattering - Gentiles - Paul - increasingly non-Jewish - Jewish hostility - Acts 15 - Gentiles in majority by AD 100 - conflict (Romans) - Greek/Roman mindset - began to think “of themselves as the true spiritual heirs of Israel,” and “claimed for themselves the promises which the Hebrews held that Yahweh had made to them.”**

**After the Second Jewish Revolt (AD 133-135)** put down by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, theological and political power moved from Jewish Christian leaders to centres of Gentile Christian leadership such as **Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch.** It is important to understand this change, because it influenced the early Church Fathers to make anti-Jewish statements as Christianity began to disconnect itself from its Jewish roots.

**Christianity, a new religion, was illegal - persecution - frustration of the Christians bred an animosity towards the Jewish community, which was free to worship without persecution.**

**What does the Bible teach?**

- **The Covenant with Abraham.** This was a **covenant of blessing, in widening circles** - Abraham, then his descendants, and finally, through the Seed, Gal. 3:16, extended/enlarged to include the Gentiles, v13-14.

**The part relating to the Land** was specifically to **his descendants**, Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8, and was described as **an everlasting Covenant** 17:7.

Similarly and connected is **the promise that Israel will continue as a nation to the end of time**, Jeremiah 31:35-37 - a nation without a land is a contradiction. It is a miracle that Israel maintained a national identity for centuries in the absence of territory.

**Circumcision** was commanded as a sign of belonging to the physical descendants of Abraham, Gen 17:10-11, John 7:22, and still applies, but only to Jews, Acts 15:24, 16:3.

- **The Sinai (Old) Covenant** was made **exclusively with Israel**. It has no direct reference or relevance to Gentiles. It was a **temporary covenant**, defining the nature of the relationship between Israel and the God who had redeemed them from Egypt and thereby separated them from the Gentile world for His own special purpose, Ex. 19:3-6.

The laws were a **reflection of God's character and were designed to segregate them from the Gentile world**, a holy nation that would be the channel of blessing to the world, through the promised Seed, Gen. 3:15, Rev. 12:1-5. These laws were a **combination of moral, social, agricultural, and cultic**. Many of these regulations could only be kept in the context of the Land, e.g. centralized Temple worship/Feasts.

**The promise concerning the Land was qualified but not abolished by the Sinai Covenant.** God warned that loss of enjoyment of life in the Land and, ultimately, **temporary exile** from the Land would result from **breaching the terms of the Covenant**, Leviticus:18:24-28, Deuteronomy 28:27-28.

However, there was **also a promise of restoration** - exile would not be permanent Deut:30:1-6. **The Sinai law did not abrogate the covenant with Abraham.** It merely interrupted enjoyment of the blessing for a period of time, Ezek. 36:22-32, 37:19-23. This was true also of the exile of 70 AD - Jesus implied this, Luke 13:35, c.f. Zechariah 12:8-10.

**Gentiles are not, and never have, been under this system of law**, either total or in part. It simply does not apply to us. We do not need to be set free from the Sinai law; we have never been subject to it. We **need to be careful with pronouns** when we read the New Testament, e.g. Galatians. This does not mean that we are free to decide how we are to live. Gentiles always had a revelation of God **through creation and conscience**, Psalm 8:1, 3-4, 19:1-6, Romans 1:18-20. **As disciples of Jesus we have His Torah (teaching)**, and also through His apostles. This, of course, also reflects the character and purposes of God and, therefore coincides with aspects of the older Torah. Jesus did not provide a commentary on Moses - He spoke with His own fresh authority, Matt.5:21-48, c.f. Matt. 17:24-27, Ex. 30:11-16.

- **The New Covenant replaced the Sinai (Old) covenant.** It was **initially made with Israel**, Jeremiah 31:31-34, and subsequently extended to the Gentiles, as promised in the covenant with Abraham. The nature and scope of the blessings of the New Covenant were identified by Jeremiah and also by Paul. There are **two components - forgiveness/justification**, Gal. 3: 5-9, Heb. 8:12, 10:17 and **the gift of the Holy Spirit**, Gal. 3: 13-14, Who writes the eternal Torah on our hearts, Heb.8: 8-11, 10:16. Peter made the same point in Acts 2:38-39. **The New Covenant has no bearing on the question of Israel as a nation or their connection with the Land in any respect whatsoever.** Rather it reveals the nature of the blessing of the Gentiles that was concealed in the original covenant with Abraham, c.f. Ephesians 2: 11-22, 3:1-6.

**The Land promise was never cancelled or transferred.** The NT never suggests that the covenant with the descendants of Abraham has been cancelled Acts 1: 6-7, 3:19-21, Romans 9: 1-5. God has pledged His word and, therefore, His reputation as a faithful God. This is the ultimate issue.

### Effects on the Jews

- **Anti-Semitism**

AD 306, **Constantine** became the first Christian Roman Emperor. **AD 321, he made Christianity the official religion of the Empire to the exclusion of all other religions.** This signalled the end of the persecution of Christians, but **the beginning of discrimination and persecution of the Jewish people.**

**AD 313, Imperial Rome, issued the Edict of Milan, which granted favour to Christianity, while outlawing synagogues.**

**AD 315, another edict allowed the burning of Jews if they were convicted of breaking the laws.** As Christianity was becoming the religion of the state, **further laws were passed against the Jews:**

- The ancient privileges granted to the Jews were withdrawn.
- Rabbinical jurisdiction was abolished or severely curtailed.
- Proselytism to Judaism was prohibited and made punishable by death.
- Jews were excluded from holding high office or a military career.

**The writings of the Church Fathers changed in character.** No longer was it on the defensive and apologetic, but **aggressive, directing its venom at everyone "outside of the flock," in particular the Jewish people** who could be found in almost every community and nation. During this period, we find more examples of anti-Jewish bias in Church literature written by church leaders:

- **Hilary of Poitiers (AD 291-371) wrote: "Jews are a perverse people accused by God forever."**
- **Gregory of Nyssa (died AD 394), Bishop of Cappadocia: "the Jews are a brood of vipers, haters of goodness..."**
- **St. Jerome (AD 347-407) describes the Jews as "... serpents, wearing the image of Judas, their psalms and prayers are the braying of donkeys."**

At the end of the 4th century, the Bishop of Antioch, **John Chrysostom** (Golden Tongued), the great orator, wrote a series of **eight sermons against the Jews.**

**"The synagogue is not only a brothel and a theatre; it is also a den of robbers and a lodging for wild beasts. No Jew adores God... Jews are inveterate murderers, possessed by the devil, their debauchery and drunkenness gives them the manners of the pig. They kill and maim one another..." "It is against the Jews that I wish to draw up my battle... Jews are abandoned by God and for the crime of decide, no expiation is possible".**

**Augustine** (AD 354–430), bishop of Hippo, tackled this issue in his **"Sermon Against the Jews."** He asserted that even though the Jews deserved the most severe punishment for having put Jesus to death, they **have been kept alive by Divine Providence to serve, together with their Scriptures, as witnesses to the truth of Christianity.** Their existence was further justified by the service they rendered to the Christian truth, in **attesting through their humiliation, the triumph of the Church over the Synagogue. They were to be a "Witness people" - slaves and servants who should be humbled.**

**The rulers of the Holy Roman Empire regarded the Jews as serfs** of the chamber (servi camerae), and utilized them as slave **librarians to maintain Hebrew writings.** They also utilized the services of Jews in another enterprise - **usury, or money-lending.** The loaning of money was necessary to a growing economy. However, **usury was considered to endanger the eternal salvation of the Christian,** and was thus forbidden. So, the church endorsed the practice of lending by Jews, for according to their reasoning, their **Jewish souls were lost in any case.**

**Replacement theology continued during the 16th century Protestant Reformation.**

Many of the reformers maintained the a-millennial view that the Roman Catholic Church had adopted from Augustine. As a result, in much the same manner as the Roman Catholic Church, **they believed that they had the right to enforce their beliefs and policies upon all people, including Jews.**

Not all advocated persecution of Jews but **when they rejected Luther's preaching and his claim that Christ was the Messiah, he wrote a nasty pamphlet entitled "On the Jews and their Lies." He advocated burning their synagogues and forbidding them to pray, to give thanks, to praise God, or teach publicly.**

**Adolph Hitler** read Luther's statements to the German people to justify the systematic elimination of millions of Jews in the Holocaust. **A recent survey of European Jewry** revealed one in four Jewish people fear going out in the public or displaying his or her Jewish identity. The recent anti-Semitic "comedy" and the use of a substitute Nazi salute.

**Replacement Theology is like a cancer in the Church that has not only caused it to violate God's Word concerning the Jewish people and Israel, but it made us into instruments of hate, not love in God's Name.**

**Muslims are prominent in Anti-Semitism** in France and other countries.

- **Persecution**

**By the Middle Ages, the theological basis of Christian anti-Semitism was completely established.**

Patriarch Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, expelled the Jews and giving their property to a Christian mob. The Crusades, the accusation of communion host desecration and blood libel by the Jews, forced wearing of distinguishing marks, the Inquisition, the displacement of whole Jewish communities by exile, ghettos, destruction of synagogues and Jewish books, Pogroms - physical persecution and execution and the Holocaust.

**It continues today in many parts of the world, especially in Europe.**

- **Anti-Zionism**

**Anti-Semitism takes new forms - anti-Zionism (a nation with no place to live).** Replacement Theology and anti-Zionism are like Siamese twins.

**Covenant theology** emerged as a system of theology in the Reformed churches of Switzerland and Germany in the **16th and 17th centuries** and spread to the Netherlands, Scotland, and England, and eventually to America.

It is a **human construct**, a system or framework for interpreting God's dealings with His creation. It describes **three covenants, none of which is directly specified in Scripture** - the **covenant of redemption** (pre-creation agreement within the Trinity regarding the plan of salvation, the **covenant of works** (with Adam and at Sinai), and the **covenant of grace**. **These three covenants are obviously related to the Biblical Covenants but impose a system of interpretation on them that identifies the church as Israel.** The Abrahamic Covenant becomes a subsection of the covenant of grace and, logically, infant baptism replaces circumcision as a sign of inclusion in the Covenant of children of believers.. Some argue that this does not involve replacement theology as it seems to do, **commonly associated with anti-Zionism.**

**The Christ at the Checkpoint** website states:

“The mission of **Christ at the Checkpoint** is to challenge evangelicals to take responsibility to help resolve the conflicts in Israel-Palestine by engaging with the teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God.”

**Stephen Sizer** is one of the chief proponents and organizers of the Christ at the Checkpoint conference hosted by Bethlehem Bible College. In an interview with Iraq's *Aletejah TV*, **Sizer labeled as “nonsense” any theology that would take at face value what God called his irrevocable promises to national Israel.** Christians who do this, said Sizer, are just in it for themselves. **“A lot of Christian Zionism is based on greed,”** Sizer informed his **Muslim audience.** “We want God to bless us. If we bless the Jews, God will bless us. And that's a very popular theology in America. It's called ‘prosperity gospel,’ the idea that God is blessing us materially because we support the Jewish people.” The whole idea, Sizer continued, is “nonsense theologically, but if you want to be wealthy it's very tempting.” **Most of us would agree that any such idea is nonsense!**

The emphasis is on "**human rights**" as defined by the "**international community**". This rejects the testimony of Scripture and exalts the wisdom of man.

**Lack of proportion** suggests that it is **fuelled less by love of the oppressed than by dislike/hatred of the Jews - Christian and secular aid organizations have been deeply influenced by selective and slanted information.**

It is remarkable how **converted Muslims have a revelation of the truth about Israel.** Traditional Arab Christians are usually Arab Christians rather than Christian Arabs (c.f. NI).

**Replacement Theology is at the root of Muslim rejection of the existence of the Jewish state.**

- **Deep wounds**

**Replacement Theology, and associated anti-Semitism, has caused a deep wound in the hearts of the Jewish people, increasing their inability to hear the message of Jesus as their Messiah - they speak of Him as "that man".** This wound is slowly being healed by acts of kindness by gentile Christians.

**Recent Catholic leaders have worked aggressively to reverse their historical antipathy toward Jews,** starting with **Nostra Aetate, a 1965 Vatican II document** often credited as a breakthrough in Catholic/Jewish relations. **John Paul II promoted Jewish relations** and Holocaust awareness as major tenets of his papacy. **Pope Benedict XVI, a German who grew up during World War II, did the same.**

For further details about this see Paddy Monaghan's comments at the following sites:

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-catholic-church-has-changed-its-spots/> ;

<http://www.whyisrael.org/2014/03/06/the-vatican-against-israel-jaccuse-by-giulio-meotti-a-catholic-response/>

#### Effects on the Church

- **In AD 321, Constantine** decreed all business should cease on "the honoured day of the sun." By **substituting Sunday for Saturday as the day for Christian worship/rest**, he further advanced the split. This Jewish Shabbat/Christian Sunday controversy also came up at the first real ecumenical **Council of Nicea (AD 325)**, which concluded Sunday to be the Christian day of rest, although it was debated for long after that. **Christianity was given the power of the Imperial State**, and the emperors began to translate the concepts and claims of the Christian theologians against the Jews and Judaism into practice. Instead of the Church taking this opportunity to spread its Gospel message in love, it truly became the **Church Triumphant, ready to vanquish its foes.**
- **Augustine taught that the organized Catholic (universal) Church is the messianic Kingdom, and that the Millennium began with the first coming of Christ.**

**This became the official doctrine of the church.** The **Roman Catholic Church maintained replacement theology** and Augustine's a-millennial view throughout the Middle Ages. **Believing that it was the kingdom of God on earth** foretold in the Bible, the Roman Catholic Church asserted that it had **the right to enforce its beliefs and policies on all people, including political rulers, pagans, and Jews**, and this dominated every aspect of life in western Europe.

**All of this is the result of complete confusion about the Biblical Covenants. The ones that apply to the church are the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant.** The Abrahamic Covenant contained two great blessings as described above. The New Covenant is the means by which these have been made available.

**Replacement Theology resulted in the church developing structures and practices that were intended only for national Israel. Bad theology produces bad practice.**

- **A hierarchy - High Priest, Priests, Levites - priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, pope, (and Protestant equivalents).**
- **Altar/Blood sacrifices**
- **Vestments**

## Israel

## Church

## Islam

- **Temple architecture and sacred space**
- **Sabbath/Sunday and sacred time**
- **Circumcision/Baptism**
- **Theocracy/ /Holy Roman Empire etc.**
- **Land of Israel/ Christendom**

**This has had catastrophic consequences for the church for centuries - a regression to legalism that has from time to time been relieved by various movements of the Spirit.**

- **Eschatology** (the final events of the world and humanity). **Replacement theology prompted the rejection of Chiliasm**, the church's original view of eschatology during the first three centuries. Chiliasm taught that Jesus Christ will return to the earth in the Second Coming, establish God's earthly political Kingdom, and administer God's rule for the last one thousand years of this present earth's history. (Today this view is called **pre-millennialism**.) **Chiliasm was the predominant view of orthodox Christianity from the first to the third centuries AD.**

Jews believed and taught that in the future, God's Messiah would establish God's earthly political Kingdom and administer God's rule over the world for the last age of this present earth's history. Although this view of eschatology was based on Old Testament prophecies, was taught by Christ and His apostles, and was the original view of the church, **the replacement theology of some anti-Semitic Gentile church leaders prompted them to reject Chiliasm because it was a Jewish view.**

**Augustine developed a new eschatological view called a-millennialism.** According to this view, the history of this present earth will end at Christ's second coming, and the future eternal state will begin.

- **Loss of understanding of the God of history. Division Sacred/Secular in understanding the world**  
Cyrus/1917 ff
- **Cut off from Hebrew roots/story of redemption; Christ/Messiah.**  
**It is a story, not a prelude to the real thing, nor merely a series of types and shadows.**