

**The Errors of Replacement Theology**  
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Sources:

*A Refutation of Replacement Theology*, March 1, 2018, by David Cloud  
[https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/a\\_refutation\\_of\\_replacement\\_theology.php](https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/a_refutation_of_replacement_theology.php)

*Proof Texts of Replacement Theology*, December 11, 2017 by David Cloud,  
<https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/proof-texts-of-replacement-theology.php>

*The Coming Apocalypse* by Renald Showers

*The Error of Replacement Theology*, Clarence H. Wagner, Jr.

Plus original material by the author, Dr. John Cereghin

Replacement Theology (also called Supersessionism) is the doctrine that the church has replaced Israel in God's plan and that the Church is now Israel. This is held by many Protestant groups, Puritans, Amillennialists, Postmillennialists, non-dispensationalists, the Roman Catholic Church and the self-styled "New IFB", the cult led by Steven Anderson of Phoenix, Arizona.

Any commentator who sees the Church in the Old Testament prophets (especially Isaiah 40-66) holds to some form of Replacement Theology. The *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* is guilty of this. On the chapter and page headings in the Prophets, Thompson often makes the prophecies refer to the Church and not to Israel.

Replacement Theology was introduced to the Church shortly after Gentile leadership took over from Jewish leadership. It's main teachings are:

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 Israel (the Jewish people and the land) has been replaced by the Christian Church in the purposes of God, or, more precisely, the Church is the historic continuation of Israel to the exclusion of the former.
2. 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.
3. 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. The same is true for every other nation and group.
4. Since Pentecost of Acts 2, the term "Israel," as found in the Bible, now refers to the Church. 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and blessings ascribed to Israel in the Bible have been taken away from the Jews and given to the Church, which has superseded them.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.

**Verses showing that God will never cast away His people Israel**

1. **Leviticus 26:44** And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God.
2. **Jeremiah 30:11** For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

**3. Romans 11:2 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.**

**4. 1 Corinthians 10:32- Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.**

A. If God was done with Israel, then why does Paul mention Israel as a separate entity?

5. A literal interpretation of all the Old Testament prophets and the Book of Revelation makes it clear that after the Rapture, God returns to Israel and starts dealing with them again (which He stopped doing in A.D. 70 after the destruction of the Temple). He calls out 144,000 literal Jews in Revelation 7 and we know they are literal Jews as their tribes are mentioned.

6. Where in Scripture does it say that the covenants to Israel have either been nullified or transferred to the Church? Has the Abrahamic Covenant ended? Or have the Kingdom Promises been transferred to the Church? No verse of Scripture gives any indication of this.

7. The resurrection of the modern nation of Israel in 1948 is also strong proof that God is not finished with Israel. Here is a nation that had its capital and temple destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70 and the people driven from the land. Yet for 1,900 years, they maintained their culture, religion and language in their exile. In 1948, God did the unthinkable and re-established them in their own land. If God was finished with Israel, why would God go through all the trouble to re-establish the nation?

### **History of the teaching:**

In the first century AD, the church was well-connected to its Jewish roots, and Jesus did not intend for it to be any other way. Jesus was Jewish and the basis of His teaching is consistent with the Hebrew Scriptures. In Matthew 5:17-18 He states: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

Separation between Judaism and Christianity began as a result of religious and social differences. There were several contributing factors: 1) the Roman intrusion into Judea, and the widespread acceptance of Christianity by the Gentiles, complicated the history of Jewish Christianity; 2) the Roman wars against the Jews not only destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem, but also resulted in Jerusalem's relinquishing her position as a center of Christian faith in the Roman world; and, 3) the rapid acceptance of Christianity among the Gentiles led to an early conflict between the Church and Synagogue. Paul's missionary journeys brought the Christian faith to the Gentile world, and as their numbers grew, so did their influence, which ultimately disconnected Christianity from its Jewish roots.

Many Gentile Christians interpreted the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem as a sign that God had abandoned Judaism, and that He had provided the Gentiles freedom to develop their own Christian theology in a setting free from Jerusalem's influence. 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 centers of Gentile Christian leadership such as Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch.

As the Church spread within the Roman Empire, and its membership grew increasingly non-Jewish, Greek and Roman thought began to creep in and completely change the orientation of Biblical interpretation through a Greek mindset, rather than a Jewish or Hebraic mindset. This would later result in many heresies, some of which the Church is still practicing today.

Once Christianity and Judaism began to take separate paths, the chasm became wider and wider. Judaism was considered a legal religion under Roman law, while Christianity, a new religion, was illegal. As Christianity grew, the Romans tried to suppress it. In an attempt to

alleviate this persecution, Christian apologists tried in vain to convince Rome that Christianity was an extension of Judaism. However, Rome was not convinced. The resulting persecutions and frustration of the Christians bred an animosity towards the Jewish community, which was free to worship without persecution. Later, when the Church became the religion of the state, it would pass laws against the Jews in retribution.

As the apostasy grew during the early centuries after the apostles during the era of the "church fathers," the clear apostolic teaching about Israel was rejected. Following is a brief survey of this from *The Coming Apocalypse* by Renald Showers:

1. Quotes from the Chyurch Fathers

a. Justin Martyr (AD 100-166), in *Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Tropho a Jew*, said that Christians 'are the true Israelitic race.' He also asserted that the biblical expression 'the seed of Jacob' now referred to Christians, not Jews.

b. Tertullian (160-220) wrote an anti-Semitic discourse titled *An Answer to the Jews*.

c. Origen's (185-254) allegorizing method of interpretation permitted him to read almost any meaning he desired into the language of the Bible. It allowed him to claim that the word Israel in the Bible can mean the church, not national Israel.

d. Cyprian (195-258) wrote *Three Books of Testimonies against the Jews*. He stated that in this work, he 'endeavoured to show that the Jews, according to what had before been foretold, had departed from God, and had lost God's favour, which had been given them in past time, and had been promised them for the future; while the Christians had succeeded to their place. Like Tertullian, he interpreted God's statements to Rebekah concerning the twins in her womb (Ge. 25:23) allegorically Esau representing the Jews and Jacob representing the Christians. The implication is that the Christians have inherited the birthright that the Jewish people have forfeited. He declared, 'The Gentiles rather than the Jews attain to the kingdom of heaven.

e. Constantine (272-337), the first Roman emperor to declare himself a Christian, became sole ruler of the entire empire in AD 323. He began an increasingly hostile policy toward the Jews. In 329 'the death penalty was ordained for those who embraced the Jewish faith, as well as for Jews versed in the Law who aided them.'

i. In AD 306, Constantine became the first Christian Roman Emperor. At first, he had a rather pluralistic view and accorded Jews the same religious rights as Christians. However, in AD 321, he made Christianity the official religion of the Empire to the exclusion of all other religions. This signaled the end of the persecution of Christians, but the beginning of discrimination and persecution of the Jewish people. Already at the Church Council in Elvira (Spain) in AD 305, declarations were made to keep Jews and Christians apart, including ordering Christians not to share meals with Jews, not to marry Jews, not to use Jews to bless their fields, and not to observe the Jewish Sabbath.

ii. In AD 321, Constantine decreed all business should cease on "the honored day of the sun." By substituting Sunday for Saturday as the day for Christian worship/rest, he further advanced the split. This Jewish Shabbath/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.

f. Sylvester, bishop of Rome from 314-335, incited the inhabitants of the Roman Empire against the Jews.

g. John Chrysostom (347-407) delivered messages *Against the Jews*.

- h. Ambrose (340-397) used the Jewish people as 'a type of the infidel.' He regarded the Jewish soul to be 'irrevocably perverse and incapable of any good thought' and asserted that 'burning a Jewish synagogue was not a crime.'
- i. Hilary of Poitiers (AD 291-371) wrote: "Jews are a perverse people accursed by God forever."
- j. Gregory of Nyssa (died AD 394), Bishop of Cappadocia: "the Jews are a brood of vipers, haters of goodness..."
- k. Jerome (AD 347-407) describes the Jews as "... serpents, wearing the image of Judas, their psalms and prayers are the braying of donkeys."
- l. Augustine (354-430) influenced the future direction of organized Christendom more than any person since the apostle Paul. Augustine's *Tract Against the Jews* was so influential that derogatory arguments against Jewish people throughout the Middle Ages were usually called 'Augustinian.' Augustine applied the allegorical method of interpretation to the prophets and Revelation. He interpreted the first resurrection and millennium of Revelation 20 as salvation of the soul at the new birth. Augustine developed the idea that the church is the kingdom of God foretold in such Scriptures as Daniel 2 and 7 and Revelation 20. In *The City of God*, Augustine was the first person to teach that the organized catholic church is the Messianic kingdom and that the Millennium began with the first coming of Christ. 'Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him.'
- m. Cyril, bishop of Alexander (378-444) drove the Jews from the city. 'He assembled the Christian mob, incited them against the Jews by his excessive fanaticism, forced his way into the synagogues, of which he took possession for the Christian,' and handed over the Jews' property 'to be pillaged by the mob, ever greedy of plunder.'
- n. In the early 4th century, Eusebius wrote that the promises of the Hebrew Scriptures were for Christians and not the Jews, and the curses were for the Jews. He argued that the Church was the continuation of the Old Testament and thus superseded Judaism. The young Church declared itself to be the true Israel, or "Israel according to the Spirit," heir to the divine promises. They found it essential to discredit the "Israel according to the flesh" to prove that God had cast away His people and transferred His love to the Christians.

2. Imperial Rome, in AD 313, issued the Edict of Milan, which granted favor to Christianity, while outlawing synagogues. Then, in 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:

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

These and other restrictions were confirmed over and over again by various Church Councils for the next 1,000 years.

3. This became the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. The view that God is finished with Israel was behind the persecution of Jews by the Catholic churches, such as during the Crusades.

4. Replacement Theology was brought out of Rome by the Protestants in the 16th to 18th centuries. Martin Luther became extremely anti-Jewish toward the end of his life and called for the princes to persecute them and mobs to set upon them, 'even as Moses did, who slew three thousand of them in the wilderness.' He called for their synagogues to be destroyed, their houses pulled down, and their books burned.

5. Covenant Theology also adopted Replacement Theology within its theological system. It taught that since Israel rejected Christ as Messiah, God has forever rejected the nation of Israel as His people and replaced Israel with the Church. The Church is now the Israel of God and inheritor of the blessings God promised to national Israel. Thus, most Protestant churches hold the same doctrine that the Roman Catholic Church does in regards to the Jews.

Most of this doctrine came from frustration over Jewish persecution of the Church and their later rejection to convert to the Gospel. Since they refused to convert to Scripture, the idea was that God must have rejected them and if He did, then the Church must have replaced Israel.

### **Proof Texts Considered**

Replacement Theology takes a few verses out of context to try to establish their doctrines.

#### **1. Matthew 21:43 - Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**

A. If this verse were isolated, it could teach that God was finished with Israel and that the church has replaced Israel, but it cannot possibly teach that since Christ Himself said that He is not finished with Israel. He said they would not see Him TILL they repent (Matthew 23:39).

B. Jesus says that the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from the nation of Israel, NOT the Kingdom of Heaven. Some of the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom would be taken away from Israel during the Church Age as they continue in their blindness, but the Lord never said anything about the Kingdom of Heaven (the literal and political Kingdom which is instituted after Revelation 19) would ever be taken away from Israel. Since most who hold to Replacement Theology are reject a dispensational understanding of Scripture, they miss the distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven and many do not even believe in a literal Millennial kingdom.

#### **2. Acts 1- Christ taught that the kingdom of Israel will be restored.**

A. Christ had taught the disciples about was the kingdom that was promised in Old Testament. He had not taught them that the Church has replaced Israel, because just before He ascended, the disciples asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). They believed that Israel's kingdom would be restored, they just didn't know when. Christ's reply makes it clear that they were all on the same page about the future of Israel's kingdom. He said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts 1:7,8).

B. If the disciples had still misunderstood Christ's teaching about Israel's kingdom, this would have been the perfect time to have corrected their thinking. But Christ didn't say, "You are confused; there is no restoration of Israel's kingdom." Instead, He told them that the timing of the re-establishment of the kingdom is God's business, and they need to focus on their own business in this present time, which is preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth.

#### **3. Romans 2:28-29 - For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.**

A. Paul was showing the Jews of his day that their outward conformity to the law was not true righteousness and could not save them. Romans 2:28-29 is a simple statement that the true Jew, meaning the Jew that pleases God, the Jew that God intended when He made the Jews, is not one who merely observes the outward rituals of the Old Testament. Rather, he is one who is circumcised in the heart and loves God and His Word, as Abraham, Samuel, David, Deborah, Jeremiah, and Mary and Joseph.

B. This is not saying that an unsaved Jew is not a Jew or that unsaved Israel is not Israel. It is certainly not saying that a Christian is the true Jew and that the Church is Israel. All such things have to be read into the passage.

**4. Romans 9:6 - Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.**

A. The context of this statement is found in Romans 9:1-8. Paul is expressing his love for Israel even in her unbelieving condition. He recounts her great benefits in having the covenants and the law and the fathers and chiefly as being “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.”

B. Since the question would arise how could God’s promises to Israel be reconciled with her present rebellion, Paul answers this. He says, “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” He is simply saying that a Jew is not saved because he is born into Israel and is of the physical seed of Abraham. Just because someone is born into Israel or converts to Judaism doesn’t mean he automatically inherits the promises of God. The promises of God are not through the law of Moses.

C. Paul proves this by pointing out that not all of Abraham’s children inherited his promises (Romans 9:6-8). This is what Paul had already stated in Romans 2:28-29.

D. In this passage, Paul uses the term “Israel” in two ways. First, he uses it to refer to all Jews and to all the nation Israel (Romans 9:4). Then he uses it to refer to the true Israel which is the saved Israel (Romans 9:6).

E. Romans 9:6 does not say that a Jew is not a Jew or that an Israelite is not an Israelite. It is not saying that the true Israel consists of New Testament Christians. Paul says nothing here about the church replacing Israel. He is simply explaining what a true Israelite or Jew is before God. He is saying that salvation is not by being a physical descendant of Abraham.

**5. Romans 11:16-24 - For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”**

A. This passage is used by those who hold to Replacement Theology to teach that the Church and Israel are one tree. But the context of Romans 11 itself teaches that the Church is not Israel and that Israel has a future in God’s plan and that her Old Testament covenants will be fulfilled.

B. Romans 9:15 says that as there is a casting away of Israel, which is what we see in the current dispensation, so there will be a receiving of Israel which will be associated with the resurrection of the dead (Romans 11:15).

C. What we see in Romans 9:16-24 is that the Church, though different from Israel, is closely associated with Israel (Romans 11:16-24). The root is not Israel herself. The root is Abraham’s covenant and Abraham’s Seed Jesus Christ. Both the church and Israel are connected with this Root. There is one tree but different branches. An Old

Testament saint like Samuel and a New Testament saint like Apollos are both children of Abraham, one literally and one spiritually. Some of the natural branches growing from the root were broken off because of unbelief, and when they repent they will be grafted back in.

D. In Romans 9:25-27, Paul summarizes the issue of the Church and Israel. Israel is in spiritual blindness today, and that is what we see in modern Israel, but God isn't finished with blind Israel. She will be saved and converted, and God's covenants with her will be fulfilled. Words could not be plainer. When Paul says that "all Israel shall be saved," he is referring to Israel as a whole Israel and not to every Israelite. This is clear in comparing Scripture with Scripture. All Israel will be saved in the sense of the 12 tribes. Ezekiel tells us that God will restore Judah and Israel and they will be one (Ezekiel 37:15-20). But Zechariah tells us that only one-third of individual Israelites living in that day will be converted (Zechariah 13:8,9). Paul stated that a remnant of Israel will be saved (Romans 9:27).

**6. Galatians 3:16 - Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.**

A, Paul taught that Abraham's covenant is fulfilled in and by Christ. He is the promised Seed. He inherits the promises and distributes the blessings. But Paul nowhere says that Jacob's seed, the 12 tribes of Israel, have ceased to be the seed of Abraham. In the context, he is contrasting the covenant of Abraham with the covenant of Moses. He is proving that the law of Moses was temporary, and the blessing of Abraham and the salvation of God does not come through the law of Moses. It comes through Jesus Christ. See Galatians 5:17 - And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

**7. Galatians 3:26-29 - For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

A. This passage is speaking about Christ and those who are in Christ. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. All are saved the same way and all become part of the same body today. But this passage does not say that there is no Jew or Greek today. There are still Jews and Greeks in the flesh, but they must be saved in the same way through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul made this clear elsewhere, when he said that the gospel was to be preached to "the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16) and when he divided men into three major groups: Jew, Gentile, and the church of God (1 Corinthians 10:32).

B. New Testament believers are the seed of Abraham in Christ (Galatians 3:7). They are the children of God. But they are not the nation Israel and they have not replaced the nation Israel, and God is not finished with the nation Israel.

**8. Galatians 4:21-26 - Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.**

A. The allegory of Galatians 4 cannot support the allegorical interpretation of prophecy, because Paul never interpreted Bible prophecy allegorically, always literally. He

described a literal tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3), a literal Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12), a literal resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), a literal return of Christ with His saints (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14), a literal kingdom to come (2 Timothy 4:1), a literal fulfillment of national Israel's promises (Romans 11:25-27).

B. Paul's allegory is different from the allegorical method of interpreting prophecy, because in Galatians 4 Paul assumes the literal existence of Hagar, Sarah, Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, etc. He cites them as allegories only for the purpose of illustration. Those who interpret prophecy allegorically, though, say that Zion is not Zion and that the 144,000 in Revelation 7 is not 144,000 and that the 1,000 years in Revelation chapter 20 is not 1,000 years. This is not what Paul was doing in Galatians 4.

**9. Galatians 6:15-16 - For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.**

A. Those who believe in salvation by grace through Christ Jesus are the ones who are accepted by God and are the true Israel. Paul is saying here the same thing as he said in Romans 2:28-29; 9:6. This is not to say that an unsaved Jew is not a Jew or that unsaved Israel today is not Israel or that the church is Israel. Only by isolating Scripture and proof texting and spiritualizing that which can only be literal can one come to such conclusions.

B. Paul is using the term "Israel" in a different and broader way than he usually does, but elsewhere he plainly says that Israel is Israel and Jews are Jews. He taught that a remnant of Israel will be saved (Romans 9:27) and that God's covenants with her will be fulfilled (Romans 11:25-27).

**10. Philippians 3:3 - For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.**

A. New Testament saints are the true circumcision, meaning they fulfill the true spiritual meaning of circumcision, which points to the circumcision of the heart, to knowing and loving God from the heart, to a rejection of self-righteousness for the true righteousness in Christ, rather than mere external ritual and confidence in religion and ritual.

B. The verse does not say that New Testament believers have become the true Israel and replaced Israel. It doesn't say that God's covenants with Israel are fulfilled in the church.