

Replacement Theology and the Apocalypse

First we begin with a broad definition; Replacement theology (also known as supersessionism) essentially teaches that the church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Adherents of replacement theology believe the Jews are no longer God's chosen people, and God does not have specific future plans for the nation of Israel.

Does the "church" replace Israel?

It seems that we have to go back to basics here. There has only ever been one church from the beginning of time. Eve was called the "mother of the living" as she was given the promise of messianic redemption through one of her descendants; Abraham became the founder of the "Jewish world" also through messianic faith that came with a particular promise concerning the land. The promises to Abraham's descendants were unconditional in that only God passed between the pieces of the cut-up sacrifice. That does not mean that disobedience would not be punished, or that some Jewish descendants of Abraham would be excluded from sharing in the promise. What it does mean is that **God would uphold the promise**; that despite disobedience God would find a way to vouch safe the land inheritance through a Jewish Abrahamic descendant (Jesus Christ). Faith in that descendant would be constituted under a New Covenant. The Old Covenant with Israel would pass away because it had been fulfilled in Christ (the New Israel). So, all the old elements – the law and the temple – the promise of land –dwelling safely etc are now fulfilled in Christ and his future saints who are the New Temple and the New Jerusalem. However, it is still the same church (from the beginning of time). **The Jewish nation has not been replaced by the church but will reach its manifold destiny *within that church*.** The nation was always meant to be a "kingdom of priests" that dispensed justice and the knowledge of God to the world but it failed. It failed because (like Adam) it could not keep the law. It failed because it lacked faith. It failed because it became narrowly exclusivist and relied on its own (non-existent) righteousness. It failed because of human weakness. Despite all this God has sworn by himself (on himself) that Abraham's descendants would possess the land (have a national presence).

Who are Abraham's descendants?

This may seem like a superfluous question – the descendants of Abraham are the Jewish people.

"They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham". (John 8.39)

Jesus was not impressed by their claim to Abrahamic (Jewish) descent. A true child of Abraham should do the “works” of Abraham. This puts paid to the claim, “I am a Jew (a descendant of Abraham) and therefore the land belongs to me (because God promised it).” However, what are the “works” of Abraham?

The works of Abraham

Works refers to keeping the law. Abraham kept the whole law 430 years before it was even given!

“And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in **thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed**; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws”. (Gen 26.4-5)

How was it possible for Abraham to retrospectively “keep the whole law”? How can you obey something that does not even exist yet! Not only that, but he must have done it “perfectly” (walk before me, and be thou perfect Gen 17.1). Did Abraham “keep” all 613 Torah commandments that the Jews of Jesus’ day recognized? This extent of “law keeping” was something that even the “most righteous” Jew would not dare lay a claim to. How then did Abraham achieve this impossible task? **The simple answer is that he had faith in God and believed in the promise of the Messiah.** That one statement sums up the whole of the law and the Prophets. Jesus says;

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad”. (John 8.56)

Abraham saw the place of sacrifice “afar off” with the eye of faith. He named the place **Yahweh-Jireh** (Yah will be seen) and he rejoiced (a play on the name of Isaac which means laughter).

Afar off = Yah will be seen = saw my day = rejoiced = Isaac

So, by this one faithful act Abraham kept the whole law. He becomes the father of the faithful both of Jew and Gentile who share the same hope. A Jew is then more than a literal descendant who shares the same genetic make-up as Abraham: “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” (Rom 2.29).

A national presence?

Scripture is clear – there will be a national presence – **but it is not the current Zionist state.** The Jews are still in denial, they are still disobedient to the will of God. But God is stronger than man and is able to transform that which is dying into a living wholesome people who fulfil their destiny. However, first there “shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book”. (Dan 12.1).

The Apocalypse

Christians who teach that the book of Revelation has nothing to say to the Jews are advocating replacement theology (even if they are unaware of the fact). It is all very well to assert that the Jewish nation will miraculously repent (en mass) upon the return of Christ but that is never how God has worked in the past. God has always sent his message (or messengers) to the nation before judgement. This often resulted in a repentant remnant. Most of the time the nation was destroyed and carted off into exile with only a few faithful heeding the warnings – these are repeat patterns. The Christian Church does not replace a physical Jewish presence in the land (as promised to Abraham) and the Apocalypse is not solely directed at “false Christianity”. Christian-Zionism is an oxymoron – a contradiction – a false god. Those who support and cheer lead Zionism unreservedly, are setting themselves up to be deceived ---beware:

“As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes”. (Rom 11.28)