

6 reasons why Replacement Theology is false, and the Church has not replaced the nation of Israel in God's plan.

"I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. We do not think enough of it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this."

--Charles H. Spurgeon¹

"To argue that God replaced Israel with the church is to depart from an enormous body of biblical evidence."

--Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.²

A. **What is Replacement Theology?** Replacement theology (also known as supersessionism) essentially teaches that the Christian Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Thus, adherents of Replacement theology believe the Jews are no longer God's chosen people, and that God's covenants with them have been cancelled. In other words, according to Replacement theology, the Jewish people today no longer have any unique part to play in God's plans – they are just like any other nation on the earth (English, Spanish, Chinese, etc.). All the stuff God wanted to do with the Jews in the Old Testament, He is now doing instead with Christians.

- Here, in point form, are the main tenets of Replacement Theology:
 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 Israel (the Jewish people and the land) has been replaced by the Christian Church in the purposes of God, or, more precisely, the Church is the historic continuation of Israel to the exclusion of the former.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, Chinese or Egyptians.
 3. Since Pentecost of Acts 2, the term "Israel," as found in the Bible, now refers 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and blessings ascribed to Israel in the Bible have been taken away from the Jews and given to the Church, which has superseded them.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.
- As a result of these beliefs, Replacement theology is forced to interpret the many prophecies in Scripture about Israel³ in allegorical and 'spiritualized' ways; they have to find ways of reading the Christian Church into all of those prophecies about the future instead of the literal nation of Israel and the Jewish people, since the Church has replaced the Jews in God's plan for the world.

B. **Why Replacement Theology must be refuted:**

1. ***It is unbiblical and forces a twisted and 'spiritualized' interpretation onto huge chunks of prophetic Scripture – hundreds of passages are affected.***
2. ***It cannot explain the continued existence of the Jewish people, nor the miraculous rebirth of the state of Israel in 1948.*** According to Replacement theology God is finished with the Jews (as of the New Testament). Thus, people who believe Replacement theology cannot give glory to God for the many astounding miracles that have occurred in the past century with respect to the rebirth of the modern state of Israel because, according to their theology, *God wouldn't do that for the Jews.* Who, then, is responsible for what has happened? Replacement theology can only answer, 'not God.' What about the miracles? No explanation. Thus, Replacement theology has the effect of

¹ Spurgeon, "The Church of Christ," NPSP 1:213-14. Can be accessed online at the website entitled "The Spurgeon Archives," <http://www.spurgeon.org/misc/eschat2.htm#note55> (accessed May 9, 2012).

² W.C. Kaiser Jr., "An Evangelical Response," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. C.A. Blaising and D.L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 364.

³ Prophecies about the future restoration of Israel, about the Jews returning to the land of Israel from being scattered around the world, and prophecies about the Jews turning to Jesus with all their heart, and being blessed by Him *in the land of Israel* at His Return (many Scriptures provided later in this paper).

repudiating one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God in the world today – the miraculous rebirth of the nation of Israel.

3. **Throughout history it has paved the way for ‘Christians’ to engage in anti-Semitic behavior.** The Christian Church has a horrific and embarrassing history of persecuting the Jewish people, and that history of persecution would never have been possible without Replacement theology. Note: I should here make something clear – Replacement theology isn’t in itself racism and many of the people today who hold to Replacement theology are not racists. But, Replacement theology is the open gate through which all ‘Christian’ persecution of the Jews has had to travel throughout history. See, it would be impossible for anyone who believes that the Bible teaches that (1) God’s covenants with the Jews are still intact, (2) that the Jews are still God’s chosen people, and (3) that God is planning to someday save the Jews and bless them above all the other nations of the earth – it would be impossible for a person who believes that the Bible teaches such things to then turn around and persecute the Jews in the name of that Bible. In order for a person to persecute the Jews in the name of Christianity, said person must first come up with a theology that allows him to do so *biblically* – a theology like Replacement theology, which says that God has rejected the Jews in anger, and has no more place for them in His plans. Only then can hatred for the Jews be placed under the banner of Christianity, as has happened so frequently throughout history.

C. **6 Reasons Why Replacement Theology is not a Biblical Doctrine.**⁴

- A summary of the 6 reasons:
 1. The Bible explicitly promises that God’s covenant with the Jews would be *eternal* (ie. unbreakable).
 2. The New Testament explicitly states that the Old Testament promises and covenants to Israel are STILL the possession of Israel, even during this Church age and even while the nation is currently in a state of unbelief.
 3. The Old Testament explicitly teaches the future, permanent restoration of the nation Israel.
 4. The New Testament *reaffirms* the Old Testament expectation of a future salvation and restoration of Israel.
 5. Nowhere in the entire New Testament is the term ‘Israel’ used for those who are not ethnic Jews. Thus, there is no biblical basis for identifying the Church as the ‘new Israel.’
 6. If God could break His covenant with the Jews, then we cannot trust Him to keep His promises to us Christians!
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 1. **Reason #1: The Bible explicitly promises that God’s covenant with the Jews would be *eternal* (ie. unbreakable).**
 - a) *Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD of hosts is his name: ³⁶“If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever.”³⁷ Thus says the LORD: “If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the LORD” (Jeremiah 31:35-37 ESV).*
 - ◆ Have you seen the sun, moon or stars today? If so, you can know that the nation Israel still has a place in God’s plan because this passage clearly states that so long as the sun keeps coming up God will never reject the Jewish people (‘offspring of Israel’) – no matter what they do (v. 37b).
 - ◆ This fact is confirmed in the New Testament where Paul says, “*I ask, then, has God rejected his people [the Jews]? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.* ² God has NOT rejected his people whom he foreknew” (Romans 11:1-2 ESV).

⁴ The body of points in the next two sections are based on a paper written by Michael J. Vlach, Ph.D.. Though I have expanded on the points and written the points in my own words, I used his point form outline as a template (though I have simplified the outline to 6, as he had 12 in his original document). Most of the quotes from various commentaries and theologians are taken from his paper. You can access his original paper, which as I mentioned is in point form and is entitled “*12 Reasons why Supersessionism/Replacement Theology Is Not a Biblical Doctrine*,” online at: <http://www.theologicalstudies.org/page/page/4425336.htm> (accessed Dec 7th, 2010).

- ◆ Passages like these pose a huge problem for Replacement theology because Replacement theology explicitly teaches that God has rejected His covenant with the Jews, and replaced them with Christians.
- b) Furthermore, the Old Testament repeatedly states that God’s promises to the Jewish people of the land of Israel were *everlasting* promises which could never be broken. ‘Everlasting’ means permanently and forever. Even though God has twice temporarily removed the Jews from the land of Israel as punishment for their sins, He has always and at all times considered the land of Israel to be their rightful inheritance because of His covenant with them.
 - 1) *“And I will give to you [Abraham] and to your offspring after you [the Jews] the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God”* (Genesis 17:8 ESV).
 - ◇ Either God is a God of who keeps His Word, or He is not. In this passage He clearly tells Abraham that the land would belong to his descendents (the Jews) *forever* – anything less than forever would mean that God lied to Abraham, something which is impossible for God to do (Heb 6:18).
 - 2) *“[God] remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to ISRAEL as an everlasting covenant, saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance”* (Ps 105:8-11 ESV).
 - 3) *Remember his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, ¹⁶ the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, ¹⁷ which he confirmed as a statute to Jacob, as an everlasting covenant TO ISRAEL, ¹⁸ saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan, as your portion for an inheritance”* (1 Chronicles 16:15-18 ESV).
- c) This truth is confirmed in the New Testament as well: *“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable”* (Romans 11:29 ESV).
 - ◆ Here is New Testament confirmation that the land of Israel will always belong to the Jewish people. In this passage Paul is talking specifically about the Jews and is driving home the point that though most of the Jewish people rejected Christ, God will never reject the Jewish people. As part of Paul’s argument that God will never reject the Jewish people, he makes the above statement that ‘the gifts of God . . . are irrevocable.’ What this means is that once God gives a gift He never takes it back. In the specific context of this passage Paul is saying that God’s gifts to the Jewish people through Abraham will never be taken back – which would most certainly include the land of Israel (see above passages).
 - ◆ Some people may try to argue, however, that the word ‘gifts’ does not apply to the land of Israel. Two things must be said in response to that:
 - 1) First of all, the word ‘gifts’ here has to apply to all the gifts God gave the Jews – this passage certainly cannot be twisted to say that only *some* of God’s gifts are irrevocable since Paul states clearly *‘the gifts,’* meaning all of His gifts.
 - 2) Secondly, if the word ‘gifts’ doesn’t apply to the land of Israel, one would be hard-pressed to figure out what other gifts Paul could be referring to. What other gifts did God give to the Jews that could be irrevocable? It is clear from the above passages (Gen 17:8, Ps 105:8-11, 1 Chron 16:15-18) that one of the main gifts God gave to the Jews was the land of Israel.
- d) Elsewhere Paul also said, *“To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does NOT annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void”* (Galatians 3:15-17 ESV).
 - ◆ In this passage Paul states unequivocally that God never voids a promise. *Never*. That means that God’s promise to Abraham (the Jewish people), which includes the land of Israel (see above passages), can never be voided.

e) The heart of Replacement theology is this idea that God's promises to the Jews were contingent on their obedience, instead of being eternal promises based on God's character. But this goes contrary to so much Scripture – for another example, *“Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? ² Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. ³ What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? ⁴ By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged” (Romans 3:1-4 ESV).*

◆ Paul here states categorically that the unfaithfulness of the Jews could never nullify the faithfulness of God.

f) **Objection:** Adherents of Replacement theology will no doubt here wish to mention the many passages in the Old Testament where God promised to punish the Israelites and drive them out of their land if they were unfaithful to Him. But what these people fail to take into account is the fact that before punishing the Jews God always promised to bring them back! In other words, whenever God punished the Jews by driving them out of the land of Israel, He always considered it to be a *temporary* disciplinary arrangement rather than a permanent breaking of His covenant with them. For just one example out of many, consider Jeremiah 30: *“The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. ³ For behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord, and I will BRING THEM BACK to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it.” ⁴ These are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah: ⁵ “Thus says the Lord: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace. ⁶ Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? ⁷ Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it. ⁸ “And it shall come to pass in that day, declares the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off your neck, and I will burst your bonds, and foreigners shall no more make a servant of him. ⁹ But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. ¹⁰ “Then fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the Lord, nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from far away, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease, and none shall make him afraid. ¹¹ For I am with you to save you, declares the Lord; I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you [prophesying the dispersion of the Jews throughout the nations], but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished. . . . [But] I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwellings; the city [Jerusalem] shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be” (Jeremiah 30:1-18 ESV).*

2. Reason # 2 why Replacement Theology is an unbiblical doctrine: The New Testament explicitly states that the Old Testament promises and covenants to Israel are STILL the possession of Israel, even during this Church age and even while the nation is currently in a state of unbelief.

a) Romans 11:29: *“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (ESV).*

◆ As stated above, this statement of Paul's comes in the context of his discussion of God's faithfulness to the Jews *in spite* of their unfaithfulness; and Paul clearly states that God's promises to the Jews are 'irrevocable.' In other words, the Church can NEVER replace the Jewish people in God's plan.

b) Romans 9:3-5: *“For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them BELONG the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them BELONG the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen” (ESV).*

◆ Here Paul declares – present tense! – that the covenants and the promises *still* belong to Israel. Paul said this *during* the Church Age! Thus, based on this passage alone Replacement Theology is refuted – God has not cut the Jewish people out of the covenant He made with them, nor is He planning to give the blessings He

promised to the Jews to the Church instead (though, of course, the Church will certainly *share* in many of the blessings that God will give the Jews).

3. Reason # 3 why Replacement Theology is an unbiblical doctrine: The Old Testament explicitly teaches the future, permanent restoration of the nation Israel.

- ◇ Replacement theology says that God no longer has a covenant with the Jewish people and that Israel no longer has a unique part to play in God's future plans for the earth; but the Old Testament clearly teaches the opposite – it states repeatedly that at the end of the Age God will bring the Jewish people back into the land of Israel (this has already happened) and raise them to a position of tremendous blessing and honor and prosperity among the nations (this has not yet happened), as His special possession on the earth *forever*. Here are just 6 examples (out of many):
 - a) Deuteronomy 30:1-6: Israel would experience dispersion because of disobedience but would one day be saved as a nation and experience restoration to its land.
 - b) Jeremiah 30, 31, and 33: This prediction of the New Covenant promises a restoration of the Jews in the land of Israel that includes spiritual blessings and physical blessings which will never end once started. Note that the New Covenant that God promises in these passages is a covenant with the *Jewish* people, not the Gentile nations, something the apostle Paul was anxious that Gentile Christians not forget (Romans 11) – it is God's amazing mercy to now '*graft*' Gentiles into this salvation promised to the Jews, but Gentile Christians do not *replace* the Jews! (Rom 1:16; 11:1, 28)
 - c) Ezekiel 36-39: This passage promises the future salvation and restoration of the nation Israel to its land, as well as God's personal involvement in fighting for the Jewish people against the nations of the world in a gigantic End-Time battle. Afterwards, the Jewish people will live with God's presence, blessing and protection in the land of Israel forever (39:21-29).
 - d) Amos 9:11-15: In this passage God promises to someday restore the Jewish people to the land of Israel, and to bless and protect them there forever.
 - e) Zephaniah 3:14-20: In this passage God promises to someday live among the Jewish people in Israel, and to bless and protect them there forever. This passage also predicts that at that time the Jewish nation will be lifted up above all the other nations (v. 20).
 - f) Zechariah 12-14: In this passage God promises that when Jesus returns all the Jewish people who are then alive will see Him and repent and be saved (12:10-13:2). Afterward, God will call them 'my people' (13:9) and will fight against the other nations of the world on their behalf (14:3, 12); then He will make Jerusalem His home and the capital city of the world, and will protect the Jewish people and the land of Israel forever (14:11).
 - g) Isaiah 60: God promises to one day make Jerusalem the capital city of the world, and the Jewish nation the most blessed nation of all the nations of the world.
- ◇ Question: Does God know the future? Yes. Could God ever be wrong about a prediction He makes? Of course not! How then does Replacement theology explain the above passages? The above passages are just a small sampling of the many passages in the Old Testament where God clearly stated that He will one day permanently restore the Jewish people to the land of Israel and bless and protect them there forever. Will God be wrong about this? Perhaps He could not foresee the future properly? Absurd! The fact that God repeatedly stated that He would one day permanently restore the Jewish people to the land of Israel, and prosper them there, means that it will most assuredly happen (God sees the future). And if we know that in the future God will permanently restore the Jews to the land of Israel and bless and prosper them there, then we can rest assured that God has not rejected His covenants with them, nor has He replaced them with the Church. Replacement theology is refuted based on this point alone.

- ◇ Objection: of course, an adherent of Replacement theology may here wish to argue that the above prophecies are all figurative, and that those promises no longer apply to the actual Jewish people, but rather to Christians. But this leads to many problems:
 - a) First of all, as stated earlier, the Jewish people *did return* to the land of Israel in 1948 – miraculously and against all odds – and have been there ever since. Replacement theology is at a loss to explain this momentous historical event and the Old Testament prophecies which so clearly predicted it, since Replacement theology has for centuries taught that these prophecies *do not literally apply* to the literal Jewish people.
 - b) And secondly, interpreting all of the Old Testament predictions and promises about the restoration of Israel in allegorical and ‘spiritualized’ ways reduces the prophecies to absurdities. Even a cursory read through the passages above reveals detailed predictions involving the Jewish people and specific places and things – if the prophecies are all supposed to be read allegorically what do all the details mean? And if the Christian Church is replacing the Jewish people in all of these prophecies, does that mean the Christian Church is going to physically inherit the land of Israel?
 - c) Which brings up a third problem – What kind of a God is the God of the Bible if He makes specific, detailed promises to the Jewish people, which He then deliberately breaks by using the excuse of ‘My predictions were only allegorical?’ Imagine a father who promises to take his son on a fishing trip, but when the big day arrives tells his devastated son that his promise was only ‘allegorical’ and that when he had originally made the promise, the word ‘son’ was just a symbol for ‘daughter,’ and the phrase ‘fishing trip’ was just an allegory for ‘shopping trip.’ What kind of a God is that? Can He be trusted?

4. Reason # 4 why Replacement Theology is an unbiblical doctrine: The New Testament *reaffirms* the Old Testament expectation of a future salvation and restoration of Israel.

- ◇ As we just saw, the Old Testament explicitly teaches a future restoration and salvation of the Jewish people in the land of Israel. But as has been mentioned, Replacement theologians have to interpret all of those passages allegorically since their theology teaches that God no longer has a covenant(s) with the Jewish people (since the Jews have been replaced by the Church). But Replacement theology here runs into another huge obstacle – the *New Testament repeatedly reaffirms* the Old Testament expectation of a future salvation and restoration of Israel. Clearly the New Testament writers believed that God’s covenant with the Jews was still intact, and did not see the promises to the Jewish people in that covenant as being allegorical. Here are just a few examples of passages where the New Testament teaches a future, literal restoration and salvation of the Jewish people:
 - a) Acts 1:6-7: In this passage the disciples ask Jesus, who is just about to ascend back into heaven, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?” Clearly the apostles all believed in a future, literal restoration of the nation of Israel and the Jewish people! And this was after forty days of kingdom instruction from Jesus *after* His resurrection (Acts 1:3). As Scot McKnight states in his book about Jesus’ vision for national Israel, “Since Jesus was such a good teacher, we have every right to think that the impulsive hopes of his audience were on target. This is not to say that they, at times, drew incorrect references or came to inaccurate conclusions about time or about content, but it is to admit that Jesus believed in an imminent realization of the kingdom to restore Israel and that he taught this with clarity.”⁵
 - b) Luke 21:24: In this passage Jesus predicts that the Jewish people will be trampled on until the ‘times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,’ referring to the time just before Jesus’ 2nd Coming. But this implies that there is an ongoing distinction between the Jewish people and the Gentiles, and that after the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, that Israel will be restored again. None of this would be possible if Replacement theology is correct.
 - c) Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30: In these passages Jesus clearly teaches that at His Return His disciples will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of *Israel*. But this means that the nation of Israel will be restored and in existence at Jesus’ Return, and that the Jewish people will continue to be a distinct and unique

⁵ Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teaching of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 130-131.

nationality into eternity. According to E. P. Sanders, Matt 19:28 "confirms the view that Jesus looked for the restoration of Israel."⁶

- d) Matthew 23:37-39/Luke 13:34-35: In these passages Jesus prophesies that Israel will one day accept Him as her Messiah. As Donald Senior states in his commentary on Matthew, "In Matthew's perspective, the rejection of Jesus by the leaders is indeed a grave sin, one that brings divine judgment. Yet the story of God's relationship to Israel is not concluded, and the day will come when Jerusalem will again receive its Messiah with shouts of praise."⁷ (underline added for emphasis)
- e) Romans 11:26-27: In this passage Paul clearly states that at the end of this Age "all Israel" will be saved, and he directly ties this fact to the New Covenant promises given to Israel in the Old Testament (Paul quotes Isaiah 59 and 27 to prove his point). In other words, this passage teaches that when Jesus Returns the Jewish people who are alive will all turn to Him and be saved – every last one. And, according to Paul, God will *ensure* that this happens because of the covenant He made with the Jewish people back in the Old Testament. Where, then, is Replacement theology left?!? God makes no such promise (of total salvation) to any other nation on earth. Clearly the Jews have not been replaced by the Church. Here are some quotes from other respected theologians confirming this point:
- ◆ C.E.B. Cranfield: *"It is only where the Church persists in refusing to learn this message, where it secretly-perhaps quite unconsciously-believes that its own existence is based on human achievement, and so fails to understand God's mercy to itself, that it is unable to believe in God's mercy for still unbelieving Israel, and so entertains the ugly and unscriptural notion that God has cast off His people Israel and simply replaced it by the Christian Church. These three chapters [Rom. 9-11] emphatically forbid us to speak of the Church as having once and for all taken the place of the Jewish people."*⁸
 - ◆ Jonathan Edwards: *"Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews in Romans II."*⁹
 - ◆ In his comments on Rom 11:26-27, Ernst Kasemann rightly states that *"Christianity is already living in the new covenant"* while *"Israel will begin to do so only at the parousia* (technical term for Jesus' 2nd Coming)."¹⁰

5. Reason # 5 why Replacement Theology is an unbiblical doctrine: Nowhere in the entire New Testament is the term 'Israel' used for those who are not ethnic Jews. Thus, there is no biblical basis for identifying the Church as the 'new Israel.'

- ◇ Replacement theologians call the Church the 'new Israel,' because in their theology the Church has replaced the Jewish people. The New Testament, however, never once uses the term 'Israel' to refer to someone who is not an ethnic Jew. Thus by very definition, calling the Church the 'new Israel' is unbiblical since it's not actually in the Bible. Let me repeat this: nowhere in the entire Bible is it ever stated that the Church is the 'new Israel,' and nowhere in the entire Bible are Christians said to have replaced the Jewish people. Below is a break-down of the New Testament's use of the term 'Israel:'
- a) The term 'Israel' is used seventy-three times in the New Testament and always refers to ethnic Jews. The vast majority of these refer to national, ethnic Israel while a few refer specifically to Jewish *believers*, rather than all Jews in general (for example, Gal 6:16). Try replacing the words 'the Church' wherever Israel is mentioned in the New Testament and things become silly and nonsensical. For example, 1 Corinthians 10:18 says *"Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?"* If you put 'the Church' where Israel is mentioned in this passage, the whole thing becomes nonsensical: have sacrifices ever been a

⁶ E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 103.

⁷ Donald Senior, *Matthew*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 264.

⁸ C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, in *The International Critical Commentary*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Limited, 1979) 448.

⁹ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1, Banner of Truth Trust, reprint, 1976, 607.

¹⁰ Ernst Kasemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. And ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 314.

part of Church practice? Are there altars for offering sacrifices in churches? Of course not! Paul is clearly here talking about the Jewish people when he says 'Israel,' and the same is true everywhere else in the New Testament wherever the word 'Israel' is used.

- b) Replacement theologians have no answer for this, the fact that the New Testament still consistently refers to national Israel as 'Israel' even *after* the establishment of the church (Acts 3:12; 4:10; 5:21, 31, 35; 21:28), while all the time maintaining a distinction between Israel and the Church. In Acts, both Israel and the Church exist simultaneously – 'Israel' is used twenty times and *ekklesia* (church) nineteen times, yet the two groups are always kept distinct.

◇ **Objection: Two passages Replacement theologians try to use in order to build their doctrine that Christians have replaced Jews in God's plan, and the Church is the 'new Israel.'**

- a) Romans 9:6-8 – *"But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring"* (ESV).

◆ Replacement theologians take the statement 'it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring' to mean that Christians have now replaced the Jews in God's covenants. But context is everything – several verses earlier Paul clearly stated that the covenants and promises *do* still belong to the Jewish people (verses 1-4)! A simple read through chapter 9 confirms that Paul's point here is not that believing Gentiles are now considered Israelites, but rather, that not *everyone* who is physically a Jew will share in the promises made to the Jewish people. Only believing Jews will inherit the promises made to the Jewish people. That is the point of this passage, not that Gentile believers have now somehow mystically becoming the new Jews of God's covenants, thereby replacing ethnic Jews.

◆ As William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam so succinctly put it in their commentary about this passage: *"But St. Paul does not mean here to distinguish a spiritual Israel (i.e. the Christian Church) from the fleshly Israel, but to state that the promises made to Israel might be fulfilled even if some of his descendants were shut out from them. What he states is that not all the physical descendants of Jacob are necessarily inheritors of the Divine promises implied in the sacred name Israel."*¹¹

- b) Galatians 6:16 – *"And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God"* (ESV).

◆ Replacement theologians take the phrase 'Israel of God' in this passage to refer to the Church, so that the Church has somehow replaced ethnic Jews as the new Israel in God's plan. But nowhere does this passage state that the 'Israel of God' refers to Gentile Christians! It is purely an assumption made by those who believe in Replacement theology. In fact, the 'Israel of God' here simply refers to *Jewish* believers, who are thereby distinguished from their unbelieving Jewish kinsmen.

◆ As Ronald E. Diprose in his book entitled 'Israel and the Church,' *"Galatians 6:16 is insufficient grounds on which to base an innovative theological concept such as understanding the Church to be the new and/or true Israel."*¹²

¹¹ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), 240.

¹² Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: the origins and effects of Replacement Theology*, p. 44 – accessed online at: http://books.google.ca/books?id=iU_M3irhwvkC&pg=PA44&lpg=PA44&dq=Ronald+E.+Diprose:+%E2%80%9CGalatians+6:16+is+insufficient+grounds+on+which+to+base+an+innovative+theological+concept+such+as+understanding+the+Church+to+be+the+new+and/or+true+Israel&source=bl&ots=Y7a4n8tqOE&sig=WBvPFRFFg7uK5STYUHXK6NvZdJk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=VjOsT_7BCorc9AT2jaka&ved=0CE0Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false (May 10, 2012).

6. Reason # 6 why Replacement Theology is an unbiblical doctrine: If God could break His covenant with the Jews, then we cannot trust Him to keep His promises to us!

- ◇ Something that Replacement theologians rarely stop to consider is the following: If God could break His covenants with the Jewish people, what's to stop Him from breaking His covenant with us Christians as well? As theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg has remarked, "*How could Christians be certain of their own comparatively new membership in the circle of God's elect if God for his part did not remain faithful to his election in spite of Israel's unbelief? This is the apostle's point when he advocates the inviolability of the election of the Jewish people (11:29; cf. 9:6). He has in mind also Christian assurance of election.*"¹³

D. Dealing with Replacement theology's favorite proof-texts.

1. Galatians 3:7, 29 – "Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham." . . . "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (ESV).
- a) These are, perhaps, Replacement theology's favorite texts because in them Christians are called 'sons of Abraham' and 'Abraham's offspring.' Replacement theologians take these passages to mean that Christians are now Abraham's offspring *instead* of the Jews, and thus, that the Jewish people have now been *excluded* from the promises and covenants that God made with them back in the Old Testament. But this is a very shallow interpretation because it completely ignores the many passages of Scripture that directly contradict it (eg. Rom 9:4; 11:1-2; 11:26-27; 11:29; Jer 31:35-57; and many other passages, see section above).
- ◆ In truth, the only thing this passage actually says is that Gentile believers are now *included* under the covenant and blessings and promises that God had previously given only to the Jewish people. Thus, this is not an exclusionary passage about the Jewish nation, but rather an inclusionary passage for Gentile believers – Gentile believers are now included in what God had already started with the nation of Israel.
- b) Perhaps it would be helpful to here draw a distinction between Jewish *individuals* and the Jewish *nation*. On an individual level, Jewish individuals are saved in the same way as Gentile individuals – by faith in Christ. This is the one and only plan of salvation for all people on the earth, whether Jew or Gentile. Hence Paul's statement above 'that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.' Thus, on an individual level, Jewish individuals who reject Christ are just as unsaved as any Gentile unbeliever – they will be cast into hell at the end of their days, and will not inherit any of the blessings or promises God made to the nation of Israel.
- ◆ On a *national* level, however, God has made promises (ie. 'covenants') to the Jewish *nation* that He is bound to keep: He has said that the land of Israel will be the Jews' inheritance forever (Gen 17:8; Ps 105:8-11; 1 Chron 16:15-18; Rom 11:29; etc.); He has said that He would one day write His laws in the Jewish people's hearts and turn their hearts towards Him (Jer 31:33); and He has said that He would one day bring the Jewish people back into the land of Israel and save all those living at that time (Ez 39:21-29; Zech 12:10-13:9; Rom 11:26-29). God has promised the Jewish people that He will do all of these things, so we can be sure that He will. And nowhere in Galatians 3 does Paul state that these promises to the Jewish people (on a national level) have been cancelled, or that the Church has replaced the nation of Israel in the receiving of those promises. His only point is that believing *Gentile* individuals can now know the joy of salvation along with believing *Jewish* individuals.
- c) The truth of the matter is that Replacement theology puts too much emphasis on Paul's use of the terms 'sons of Abraham' and 'Abraham's offspring' in Galatians 3. Yes, Paul here uses the term to describe Gentile believers, but this cannot be taken to mean that, in God's eyes, Gentile believers have now replaced the nation of Israel as Abraham's descendants. Why? Because even a brief study of the New Testament shows that the

¹³ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3*, "The Church as the People of God," p. 471 (accessed online at <http://books.google.ca/books?id=LA6Yoa6sPWkC&pg=PA471&lpg=PA471&dq=b.+Wolfhart+Pannenberg:+%22How+could+Christians+be+certain+of+their+own+comparatively+new+membership&source=bl&ots=E7dM9io6x8&sig=BgBe5F6P-EP9YJ2VMYArAfhZutA&hl=en&sa=X&ei=BeWqT-bUDYai8QTOp TVDw&ved=0CFQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false> May 9, 2012).

terms ‘sons of Abraham’ and ‘Abraham’s offspring’ are elsewhere used ONLY of the Jewish people. Thus, Galatians 3 does not prove that believers have replaced the Jewish people as the only ‘sons of Abraham.’ There are four different ways the New Testament uses the term ‘sons of Abraham’ (or ‘Abraham’s offspring’):

- 1) First, the term ‘sons of Abraham’ (or ‘Abraham’s offspring’) sometimes refers exclusively to the Jewish people, the biological descendants of Abraham (eg. Acts 3:25; 13:26; 2 Cor 11:22);
- 2) Second, it can refer to individual Jewish believers (cf. Isa 41:8 with Rom 9:6);
- 3) Third, it is also once used to specifically identify Jesus (Gal 3:15-16);
- 4) Fourth, it can be used in a spiritual sense for both believing Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:7, 29 as above).

◆ **Conclusion:** In his book *The relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, John Feinberg says this about the four different senses in which the term ‘sons of Abraham’ is used in the New Testament; “no sense (spiritual especially) is more important than any other, and no sense cancels out the meaning and implications of the other senses.”¹⁴ In other words, Replacement theology cannot use Galatians 3 to say that ‘the sons of Abraham’ only applies to believers, and not to the nation of Israel. Thanks to Jesus’ death on the cross Gentile believers have now been *included* in the promise of salvation that God made to Abraham, but this does not mean that God’s promises to the nation of Israel are null and void.

d) **It may here be helpful to differentiate between the various promises God made to the Jewish people in the Old Testament, some of which Gentile believers have now been grafted into (thank God!), and others which are still just for national Israel:**

God’s promises to the Jewish people in the Old Testament		
Now applies to believing Jews and Gentiles	1. The promise of salvation and forgiveness for sins (Jer 31:34; 33:8; Ez 36:24-33; 37:23; Zech 13:1-2,9; Isa 43:25; 53:11-12).	Spiritual promises
	2. The promise of the Holy Spirit (Isa 44:3; Ez 36:27; Joel 2:28-29; Zech 12:10).	
	3. The promise of new hearts that want to do right and want to love God (Jer 31:33; 32:39-40; Ez 11:19-20; 36:24-29).	
Still applies only to the Jewish people	4. The promise to re-gather the Jewish people into the land of Israel (Ez 36:24-29; 37:21-28; 39:25-29).	Physical promises
	5. The promise to give the land of Israel to the Jewish people forever (Gen 17:8; Ps 105:8-11; 1 Chron 16:15-18; Ez 37:25-28; Rom 11:29).	
	6. The promise to bless the nation of Israel above all the other nations of the earth (Isa 49:22-23; 60:3-22; Jer 33:9).	
	7. The promise to fight for the Jews against all their Gentile enemies on the Day of the Lord (Ez 38:17 – 39:22; Zech 14:3, 12).	
	8. The promise that every Jew who is still alive when Jesus returns will get saved (Zech 12:10-13:2,9; Rom 11:26; Jer 31:33-34).	

◆ It is important to note that *all* of these promises were originally made only to the Jews. Through Christ’s death and resurrection, however, Gentile believers came to be included in the spiritual promises pertaining to salvation, the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and the Holy Spirit. Where Replacement theology goes wrong is in ignoring the fact that this still leaves a number of the specifically *physical* promises (like the re-gathering of the Jews to the land of Israel, and the promise to the Jewish people of their permanent possession of the land of Israel) that can only be applied to the Jewish people.

◆ Note: the seventh promise in the list on the chart above states that at Jesus’ Second Coming every Jew who is alive will be saved. This is a unique promise that applies only to the Jewish people. No such thing is promised for any other nation of the earth: for example, there is no promise that every Canadian living on the earth

¹⁴ John Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. John S. Feinberg (Wheaton: Crossway, 1988), 73.

will be saved when Jesus returns, nor every Italian or Persian or Chinese or African or anyone else. But every Jew that is alive on the earth when Jesus returns will be saved. How? There are no shortcuts here; all of these Jews must be saved in the same way that every other believer throughout history has been saved – by turning to Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and eternal life. There is no other way to be saved. Thus, this promise is the promise that at Jesus' Return every Jew that is still alive will willingly give their life to Jesus and repent of their sins (see Zech 12:10-13:2). Once again we see that Replacement theology here proves false; it teaches that there is no longer any difference between the Jewish people and the other nations of the world. But we see here that there still are a number of unique promises which apply only to the Jewish nation and not to any of the other nations on the earth.

2. **Ephesians 2:11-22** – In this famous passage Paul talks about the fact that, through Christ, 'the dividing wall of hostility' (v. 14) has been taken down between Jews and Gentiles, and how Gentile believers have now become 'fellow citizens' with the Jewish saints (v. 19). Replacement theology takes these statements to mean that there is now no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. False! Elsewhere Paul states that in Christ *'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ'* (Gal 3:28 ESV). Does this mean that there are no longer any gender differences between men and women who have become Christians? Absurd! Men remain men after coming to Christ and women remain women. Paul is not here saying that in Christ men and women become identical and indistinguishable, nor that in Christ Jews and Gentiles become identical and indistinguishable. What Paul is saying is that, in Christ, men and women and Jews and Gentiles and slaves and masters are all *equal*. Equal and identical are two very different things. Equal in Christ means that all these different groups of people are equal before God in terms of status in Christ – they are saved in the same way (by faith), and receive the same Spirit and the same benefits as a result of their salvation. But they are still distinct from each other in terms of identity and roles in God's plan for the earth. Men and women continue to have different roles from each other in Christ (eg. When's the last time you saw a pregnant *man*?!?), and the same is true of Jews and Gentiles. The fact that in Christ Gentile believers have been made 'fellow citizens' and have become 'one' with the Jewish people (Eph 2:14) does not mean that they are now indistinguishable from Jews in God's eyes, nor that the Jewish people have ceased to hold a unique and distinct place in the historical working out of God's redemption of the world.

3. **Romans 11:17-24** – In this famous passage Paul stresses that believing Gentiles have now been grafted into God's tree, along with believing Jews, and that they now share in the blessings of God's promises and covenant. But it does not say that the church is now the true Israel. As Michael Vlach says in his book 'Has the Church replaced Israel?' *"There is a difference between saying that believing Gentiles (ie. the Church) participate with Israel in Israel's covenants and claiming that believing Gentiles become Israel. Gentiles are partakers of the covenants not taker-overs. This passage does not rule out a future role for national Israel or indicate that the church is now Israel."*¹⁵

4. **Romans 9:6-8** – *"But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring"* (ESV).
 - ◇ Replacement theologians take the statement 'it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring' to mean that Christians have now replaced the Jews in God's covenants. But context is everything – several verses earlier Paul clearly stated that the covenants and promises

¹⁵ This quote was accessed on Vlach's website, <http://theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/supersessionism/327-12-reasons-why-supersessionism-replacement-theology-is-not-a-biblical-doctrine> (accessed May 12, 2012).

do still belong to the Jewish people (verses 1-4)! A simple read through chapter 9 confirms that Paul's point here is not that believing Gentiles are now considered Israelites, but rather, that not *everyone* who is physically a Jew will share in the promises made to the Jewish people; only believing Jews will inherit the promises made to the Jewish people. That is the point of this passage, not that Gentile believers have now somehow mystically becoming the new Jews of God's covenants, thereby replacing ethnic Jews.

◇ As William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam so succinctly put it in their commentary about this passage: *"But St. Paul does not mean here to distinguish a spiritual Israel (i.e. the Christian Church) from the fleshly Israel, but to state that the promises made to Israel might be fulfilled even if some of his descendants were shut out from them. What he states is that not all the physical descendants of Jacob are necessarily inheritors of the Divine promises implied in the sacred name Israel."*¹⁶

5. **Galatians 6:16** – *"And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God"* (ESV).

◇ Replacement theologians take the phrase 'Israel of God' in this passage to refer to the Church, so that the Church has somehow replaced ethnic Jews as the new Israel in God's plan. But nowhere does this passage state that the 'Israel of God' refers to Gentile Christians! It is purely an assumption made by those who believe in Replacement theology. In fact, the 'Israel of God' here simply refers to *Jewish* believers, who are thereby distinguished from their unbelieving Jewish kinsmen.

◇ As Ronald E. Diprose in his book entitled 'Israel and the Church,' *"Galatians 6:16 is insufficient grounds on which to base an innovative theological concept such as understanding the Church to be the new and/or true Israel."*¹⁷

¹⁶ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), 240.

¹⁷ Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: the origins and effects of Replacement Theology*, p. 44 – accessed online at: http://books.google.ca/books?id=jU_M3irhwvkC&pg=PA44&lpg=PA44&dq=Ronald+E.+Diprose:+%E2%80%9CGalatians+6:16+is+insufficient+grounds+on+which+to+base+an+innovative+theological+concept+such+as+understanding+the+Church+to+be+the+new+and/or+true+Israel&source=bl&ots=Y7a4n8tqOE&sig=WBvPFRFFg7uK5STYUhXK6NvZdJk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=VjOsT_7BCorc9AT2jaka&ved=0CE0Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false on May 10, 2012).

E. The relationship between the Church and the Jews: how Christians and the Jewish people fit together under the umbrella of God's covenants.

- There is much confusion in the Church today about the relationship between the Church and the Jews with regards to God's covenants. Are both Christians and Jews God's people? Are both Christians and Jews saved? Replacement theology, as we have already seen, falsely asserts that Christians have replaced the nation of Israel as God's people. On the other side of the spectrum however, other theologies falsely assert that there are two separate peoples of God and that Jewish people are automatically God's people and can be saved even without accepting Christ. But what does the Bible say?
- In order to properly answer these questions we have to go back to the beginning – specifically, the fact that it has always been God's desire to live with human beings (Rev 21:3-4). After the fall of Adam, however, God was forced to separate Himself from humanity. But from the very moment that Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden of Eden God already had a plan of redemption in place. His plan was to find for Himself a family to live with (Ex 29:45-46) out of all the peoples of the earth, and from that family to produce a Messiah who could redeem the world from its sins. Thus, one of the first steps in God's plan of redemption was the finding and calling out of the patriarch Abraham. Here was a man of faith and obedience through whom a godly family could be grown, and through whom the Messiah could be raised up. Thus, Abraham's physical descendants – the Jews – became God's chosen people, or family, from out of all the nations of the earth. But from the very beginning God's plan was to save *everyone* – all the nations of the earth – not just Abraham's descendants. As God said to Abraham when He first spoke to him, *"and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed"* (Gen 12:3b ESV). It is not as though God loves Jews more than other people, it is just that they, because Abraham their father was a righteous man who was a friend of God (James 2:23), were chosen to be the vehicle of salvation through which the rest of the world could be reached and saved.
- Israel was to serve as God's vehicle of salvation in two primary ways:
 1. They were to be a light to the other nations of the world, attracting them to the one true God, Yahweh, by the justice of their laws and the goodness of their conduct (Deut 4:6-8; Isa 51:4);
 2. The Messiah (Jesus) would be born into their nation and He would save the whole world from its sins.
- The two points above each required a different set of promises. In the case of the Messiah, God gave to the Jews the promises of salvation which the Messiah would bring to the whole world: "I promise to forgive all of your sins" (Jer 31:34; 33:8; Ez 36:24-33; 37:23); "I promise to fill you with my Holy Spirit" (Isa 44:3; Ez 36:27; Joel 2:28-29; Zech 12:10); "I promise to give you a new heart that loves me and wants to do right" (Jer 31:33; 32:39-40; Ez 11:19-20; 36:24-29). These promises of salvation were always intended to be for the whole world and not just the Jewish people (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). In Old Testament times, however, the nations of the world did not know who Yahweh was; thus, these promises of salvation were given to the Jews alone, for safekeeping, until the time of the Messiah would come. At that time Jews and Gentiles alike would share in God's promises of salvation for mankind.
- Thus, though Jews and Gentiles were both destined to one day share equally in the promises of salvation *as individuals*, the Jewish *nation* had a unique role to play among all the Gentile nations. They were the keepers of the promises, as well as God's missionary nation to the other nations. As a result of these responsibilities which He had laid across their collective shoulders, God gave to the Jewish people additional promises, meant only for them, in order to enable them to carry out their mission, and also to reward them. One of these promises was the promise of the land of Israel – in order to be God's light to the nations, the Jews would need a piece of land in which to *be* a nation. Thus, God gave the Jewish people the land of Israel as their own special possession (Gen 17:8; Ps 105:8-11; 1 Chron 16:15-18; Ez 37:25-28). Furthermore, God also promised the Jews that at Jesus' Return (in the Old Testament this was known as 'the Day of the Lord') He would fight for them against all of their Gentile enemies (Ez 38-39; Zech 14). As an additional blessing, God also promised to ensure that at Jesus' Return to earth, every Jew alive would be given a spirit of repentance and would turn to Jesus willingly and wholeheartedly and be saved (Zech 12:10-13:2,9; Rom 11:26; Jer 31:33-34). These unique promises apply only to the Jewish people and not to any other nation – the Church has not replaced the Jews with respect to any of these! When God gives a promise that promise is eternal and irrevocable

(Rom 11:29), thus we can rest assured that God will follow through on His Word to the Jewish people. Below is a chart which details God’s promises, showing which ones are for both Jews and Gentiles, and which ones are specifically just for the Jews:

God’s promises to the Jewish people in the Old Testament		
Now applies to believing Jews and Gentiles	1. The promise of salvation and forgiveness for sins (Jer 31:34; 33:8; Ez 36:24-33; 37:23; Zech 13:1-2,9; Isa 43:25; 53:11-12).	Spiritual promises
	2. The promise of the Holy Spirit (Isa 44:3; Ez 36:27; Joel 2:28-29; Zech 12:10).	
	3. The promise of new hearts that want to do right and want to love God (Jer 31:33; 32:39-40; Ez 11:19-20; 36:24-29).	
Still applies only to the Jewish people	4. The promise to re-gather the Jewish people into the land of Israel (Ez 36:24-29; 37:21-28; 39:25-29).	Physical promises
	5. The promise to give the land of Israel to the Jewish people forever (Gen 17:8; Ps 105:8-11; 1 Chron 16:15-18; Ez 37:25-28; Rom 11:29).	
	6. The promise to bless the nation of Israel above all the other nations of the earth (Isa 49:22-23; 60:3-22; Jer 33:9).	
	7. The promise to fight for the Jews against all their Gentile enemies on the Day of the Lord (Ez 38:17 – 39:22; Zech 14:3, 12).	
	8. The promise that every Jew who is still alive when Jesus returns will get saved (Zech 12:10-13:2,9; Rom 11:26; Jer 31:33-34).	

- God is STILL using the Jewish nation today.** Replacement theology teaches that since the book of Acts, when God sent the Gospel to the Gentiles (see Acts 10-11), the Jewish nation has ceased to play a unique role among the nations in God’s plan to redeem the earth. In other words, according to Replacement theology, the Jewish nation is now no different than Canada or Italy or Iran or Mexico in terms of God’s plan of redemption. In Replacement theology only the Church now serves as God’s light among the nations. Though it is true that the Church is God’s light among the nations, it is false and unbiblical to say that Israel no longer functions as a light for God among the nations *as well*. For example, many prophecies in Scripture speak of how God would one day bring the Jews back into the land of Israel in order to ‘vindicate His holiness’ in front of all the nations of the earth (see Ez. 20:41; 36:23-24; 39:27). In other words, what happened in 1948 when God brought the Jewish people back to the land of Israel and re-birthed the nation, was God vindicating His holiness to the world (ie. proving to the world, *through Israel*, that He is God and He is still in charge!). Indeed, the birth of the modern state of Israel is one of the most astounding miracles in all of history, and one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God anywhere. Thus, the Jewish people are still playing a unique role as God’s light among the nations, serving as proof for the existence of God. And in the future, on the great Day of the Lord when Jesus returns, God is going to fight for the nation of Israel in a gigantic battle (Ez 38:17 – 39:22; Zech 14:3, 12), and destroy all of her Gentile enemies, as even further proof to the nations that He is God. Ezekiel 38 clearly states that God is *specifically* setting up this battle in such a way that He can once again show Himself to the world *through Israel* (Ez 38:16). Thus, it is clear from Scripture that the nation of Israel still plays a unique role among all the nations of the earth in God’s plan to redeem the world.
- How is a Jewish person saved? A: In the same way that a Gentile is saved – by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22; 4:24; 10:9)!** On a national level, the nation of Israel is unique among the nations and is thus heir to some unique promises. But on an *individual* level, all people are the same before God (Gal 3:26-28) and no one can be saved apart from believing in Christ.

F. **Conclusion to this paper:** In conclusion, Ronald Diprose is right when he states that in order for Replacement theology to qualify as a biblical doctrine there needs to be "*positively, passages which clearly teach it and negatively, no passages which actually exclude it.*"¹⁸ On both counts, Replacement theology fails. The New Testament does not call the church "Israel," and nowhere does the New Testament state that the nation of Israel has been permanently rejected by God. Various texts such Matt 19:28; 23:37-39; Luke 13:35; 21:24; 22:30; and Romans 11:1 refute Replacement theology in that they teach or reaffirm the Old Testament expectation of a restoration of Israel. Thus, we agree with Walter Kaiser when he says, "*To argue that God replaced Israel with the church is to depart from an enormous body of biblical evidence.*"¹⁹

¹⁸ Ronald E. Diprose, Israel in the Development of Christian Thought, accessed online on Christianity.ca in an article entitled "*The Church is not Israel,*" by Mal Couch, (<http://www.christianity.ca/netcommunity/page.aspx?pid=4776> accessed May 16, 2012).

¹⁹ W.C. Kaiser Jr., "An Evangelical Response," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. C.A. Blaising and D.L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 364.