

REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

by

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Introduction:

When I suggested the topic of Replacement Theology at the last meeting, I was quickly made to realize that I had opened my mouth without thinking! Arnold asked me to deal with the subject. Despite all my objections, the Fruchtenbaum "Fishing Company" held onto its catch, so now I am landed!

Rationale:

My concern for this subject of "Replacement Theology" arose from my discovery that some avowedly evangelical leaders considered Jewish evangelism as at best marginal in reaching the world with the Gospel. Whereas there was much interest in mission to China or the communist world, or increasingly the muslim world, mission amongst Jews was seen as a waste of resources. The success of LCJE is therefore very gratifying. I was given some materials from Canon John Stott, Emeritus Rector of All Souls, Langham Place, London, and a world-renowned Evangelical scholar and spokesman. This material proclaimed the Church to be the "New Israel of God"; that the promises made to Abraham had been transferred to his spiritual offspring in Christ.

John Stott came to the University of Virginia a couple of years ago to deliver a series of lectures. The local chapter of the Fellowship of Witness, an Episcopal conservative evangelical group, invited members to a question and answer session with the venerable scholar. We were encouraged to submit our questions in advance. When the meeting convened, our chairman requested that the question I had submitted be addressed first. I asked, "Since the Scripture never uses the expression 'the New Israel,' in what sense can it be appropriate to so refer to the Church?" Of the one and a half hour session, forty-five minutes were devoted to this one question. I was told afterwards that the debate had been stimulating; that John Stott had appeared the typical English gentleman and I as a typically argumentative Jew! I will tell you more of the content of the discussion later.

Since I had to write this while on the road, one of the limitations imposed on me was the impossibility of looking up all my sources. Therefore, I shall not be presenting many references and quotations from scholars. I am not a student of theology so my presentation will be from a personal viewpoint; from where Replacement Theology impinges upon my ministry as a missionary among Jewish people.

I do not know where I first heard the phrase "Replacement Theology" to describe a particular viewpoint about the relationship between the Jews and the Christian Church in the economy of God. It is my understanding that the core of the teaching is that the Church is the "New Israel"; that because the Jews rejected Jesus, God rejected them as His chosen people; that He took away the kingdom from the Jews and gave it "to a nation producing the fruits of it" (Matthew 21:43), i.e., the Church.

John Stott's contention was that three promises were given to Abraham: first, that "In his seed all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen.12:3); second, that he would have progeny "as countless as the stars" (Gen. 15:5); and third, that God would give him "...this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates." (Gen. 15:18) Stott said that all of these promises in New Testament terms are fulfilled in Christ. According to Galatians, Christ is "the seed" through which the blessings of Abraham are mediated to the world. Paul states there is only one "seed" (Gal. 3:16), does he not?

As to the numberless and continuing progeny of Abraham, Stott referred to Romans 4 where Paul argues that it is those who have faith who are the children of Abraham, whether or not they are circumcised; and again to Galatians 3:7, "...those who believe are children of Abraham." Stott argued that the promise of the Land is not mentioned in the New Testament and is replaced by "the kingdom of God." He referred to such places as Matthew 21:43, quoted previously. He therefore concluded by saying that although the term "the New Israel" is not in Scripture, the content of the concept is. So although caution must be exercised, it is justifiable, indeed correct, to talk of the Church as the People of God superceding the Jews. That God through Christ replaced a national people with a people called out of all the nations, including Israel, but not confined to it. It is my experience that when this teaching is applied to evangelistic strategy, it means that the Jewish people as such have no special significance. It follows that the recreation of the State of Israel in 1948 is not a fulfillment of prophecy. Prophecies of restoration are seen as being fulfilled in the return from Babylon. A corollary which is often believed is that the disappearance of the Jews as a distinct people would not constitute a failure on God's part to keep His promises to Abraham. I will give you my responses to John Stott later.

History:

The doctrine of the rejection of the Jews in favor of the Church is nothing new. Clearly, there was already a questioning of the continuing place of the Jewish people in God's economy by members of the Church in Rome to which St. Paul wrote his letter. With the growth of friction between the Jewish and the Christian communities and in the aftermath of the disastrous rebellions of 66-70 AD and 132-135 AD, it is not surprising that scapegoats were sought and rationalizations invented. Jews blamed their misfortunes upon the Christians in their midst while the Gentile Christians found a way of distancing themselves from their now socially unacceptable and

shameful Jewish origins. The Letter of Barnabas, for instance, written probably between 70 and 100 AD searches the Old Testament for Scriptures which speak of God's annulling the covenant with Israel. Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew tells Trypho that the destruction of the Temple and the exile are "in fairness and justice, for you have slain the Just One and his prophets before him."

I will not cite further instances from the long history of glorifying Christianity as a superior religion by pinning blame on the Jews for deicide or by finding expression of God's rejection of them from the Scriptures. It may be summed up by reference to the two statues which stood outside Strasbourg Cathedral. Victorious "Christiana" stands erect with a crown on her head and a scepter in hand. The scepter rests on the shoulder of the companion statue, stooping "Judaica" who holds a broken reed and whose eyes are blindfolded.

While it is true in my view that Christianity is correct and Rabbinic Judaism is wrong about who Jesus of Nazareth was -- namely the Messiah, the only Son of God -- nonetheless I believe that political and other selfish considerations have blinded the eyes of Christians as to the true position of the Jewish people after Jesus and consequently have obscured the Gospel message from the Jews. Anti-Judaism need not, indeed ought not, lead to anti-Semitism.

I am not suggesting that John Stott et al are antisemitic as such, but I believe that their negative view of God's covenant is based on arguments similar to those which have inspired antisemites and is false to the God of Israel, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apology

It seems clear to me from my reading of Scripture that any suggestion that God would annul His own covenant with Israel as a people and transfer it to others is entirely opposite to the whole tenor of the Bible, the nature of covenant and indeed to the nature of God Himself. Certainly God talks about punishing Israel for their adultery and even of destroying them; but on every occasion he recoils from total destruction. For example, Hosea 11:6 says "Swords will flash in their cities, will destroy the bars of their gates and put an end to their plans." But in verses 8 and 9 God continues, "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?....My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor devastate Ephraim again. For I am God and not man -- the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath." Perhaps the strongest statement that God will not desert the Jewish people, despite all their wickedness, is in Jeremiah 31:35-37. "...Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched, will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the Lord." I do not think that it is insignificant that this passage follows the promise of a new covenant which goes beyond all the former covenants. In addition, it is essential not to miss the fact that even the new covenant is to be made "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," not with some other people.

When we turn to the New Testament, while clearly the emphasis is upon two amazing facts -- namely that the Jewish people and in particular the religious leadership did largely reject Jesus, and that God wanted to have mercy upon the Gentiles also -- nevertheless there is plenty of evidence that this did not spell the end of God's covenant with the Jews. It seems to me that advocates of replacement doctrine must ignore the plain meaning of sayings like that of Jesus, "I have not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil them" (Matt. 5:17); or of Paul, "Did God reject his people? By no means!" (Romans 11:1) A question I asked John Stott bears repetition. If you had been Moses or Isaiah and God told you that your words had been fulfilled by annulling the covenant and transferring its promises to a group which would be largely Gentile, would you feel satisfied or cheated? "For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken." (Isaiah 53:8)

When Peter spoke to the crowd of orthodox Jewish pilgrims who were in the Temple for Shavuot and said "the promise" -- of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit -- "is for you and your children and for all who are far off -- for all whom the Lord our God will call," (Acts 2:39) he was speaking subsequent to the crucifixion. Yet Peter considered this to be something for Jews, indeed maybe only Jews, since "those who are far off" was a way of saying the Diaspora, Jews living outside of the Land of Israel.

What then was Jesus talking about when he said "the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit"? (Matt. 21:43) Matthew says explicitly that the chief priests and the Pharisees recognized that Jesus was speaking about them. Jesus was not talking about taking the kingdom away from Israel and giving it to a Gentile nation that would be more righteous; nor even to the Church. He said that he was giving the kingdom to a body of people who would produce the fruit. History suggests to me that the Church does not qualify to have the kingdom anymore than Israel did, if fruit-bearing is their *raison d'être*! The context is the parable of the tenants in the vineyard. I believe Jesus was saying that authority over God's people, Jews and Gentiles (the vineyard), would be taken from the present leadership (chief priests and Pharisees) and given to another group (perhaps the Apostles) who would get them to bear the fruit. Certainly the first and second century expansion of the Jewish Church under the Apostles and their immediate successors was a tremendous "fruit-bearing" time among the people of God. At any rate, the main point is not one about who is in the kingdom, but who rules in the kingdom."

Another Scripture often quoted by advocates of the replacement doctrine is Matthew 23:38. "Look, your house is left to you desolate." This comes from Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. He continues, "for I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Many evangelical scholars would consider that latter sentence as a prediction that this would be Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem until he was recognized as the true Meshiach from God. Until that day says Jesus, there will be an emptiness in Judaism. Moishe Rosen has expressed it this way: "They

are a nation of missionaries without a mission, a messenger people without a message." (Share the New Life, page 8) It is quite inadmissible to render the word "desolate," as, for instance, the New English Bible does, as "forsaken by God"! It is also quite clear that the desolation is temporary -- "until you say...."

One further New Testament Scripture that speaks about a rejection of Israel is in, of all places, Romans 11, verse 15! "For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world..." However, it must be noted that this comes after Paul's categorical denial that God has abandoned his people (v. 1). You will also realize that I stopped in mid-verse. Paul goes on to ask "If their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" Obviously, whatever is meant here by "rejection," it is partial and temporary and in no sense constitutes the displacement of the people as a whole or the abrogation of the covenant. I believe that it means that for the specific purpose of enabling Gentiles to be incorporated into the People of God without the barrier of becoming Jews, God "laid to one side," or rather "hardened the heart" of some of the Jewish people, so that they rejected Jesus. I for one contend that this "hardening" has not yet been removed; but I believe the ending of that limitation as foretold in Romans 11:25ff is soon to come! In any case, Paul concludes that Israel will be restored to full potential because "God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." (Rns. 11:29) I believe that "gift and call" was God's call to Israel as a people to be His priests and His primary witnesses to the nations. It does not carry the implication that Jews are saved because they are Jews.

St. Paul's evidence for his claim that God has not abandoned his people and his covenant is the presence of a righteous remnant. The implication in Paul is that this righteous remnant is those who recognize Jesus as Messiah. I would prefer to speak of this remnant as Paul does in Romans 4, as those "who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised" (v. 12), because I am convinced that there are some for whom the face of the Jewish Jesus has been so marred that it is impossible for them to recognize Him, but who, as Abraham did, look to God "to provide himself with the lamb for the sacrifice."

I have discovered that following truth in the Christian life is much like walking on a narrow path between two equally steep precipices. In this case there are those who maintain that the covenants between God and Israel have ended and been replaced by a new covenantal relationship with the Church; on the other hand, there are those who will maintain that the covenants are everlasting because they are God's covenants and that therefore the Jews do not need the "New Covenant" mediated through Jesus. I believe it is necessary to maintain both that God's covenants are indeed intrinsically eternal (that later covenants do not annul former covenants but either complement or include former covenants like concentric circles), but also that all covenants are mediated through Jesus who is the "amen" to all God's promises (2 Cor. 1:20). It is also essential to be clear what the terms of each covenant are.

For instance, the Noahic Covenant promises that God will never again destroy the earth by flood nor cease to maintain the cycle of seasons. Mankind's part is to observe the few principles concerning the sanctity of life which the Lord gave Noah. God does not promise eternal life to each individual who keeps those laws, nor does He promise never again to destroy the Earth as such. So with the Abrahamic Covenant, there was no promise of salvation for keeping the Covenant either for Abraham or his descendants! Abraham obtained righteousness by "believing God." (Gen. 15:6) The Mosaic Covenant brought God's Torah into the picture. Paul says that the Law was to act as a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ (Gal. 3:24); that is, to bring us to the end of self-righteousness and point us to the substitute Lamb of God as the expiation for our sins. Paul suggests in Romans 10 that we have two options for obtaining righteousness: by keeping the law 100% or receiving it by grace; a substitute sacrifice having been offered in our place. No one, except for Jesus, has been able to make the 100% standard. Those two options are available whether we are "nominally" Jewish or "nominally" Christian. The important distinction therefore is not whether we are Jew or Gentile, male or female, slave or free, but whether we are seeking salvation by our own works (which is impossible) or receiving it by grace through faith.

The New Covenant terms are that God has provided in Messiah ("My Servant") the perfect substitute for our sins, that salvation is available to all who believe (whether Jew or Gentile) and that by giving His Holy Spirit to dwell in us, God will write His law in our hearts as Jeremiah 31 promised, thereby giving us the means to live a life in accordance with His law. This last is something the earlier covenants did not provide at all. If you like, that means it is easier for us than for the ancient Israelites to keep covenant, so that failure is even more heinous for us than for them.

The Abrahamic Covenant does not have to do with eternal salvation, whereas the Mosaic and the New Covenant do. Interestingly, the Abrahamic Covenant is without conditions, apart from Abram's leaving Ur of the Chaldees and going to the land God would show him. The Mosaic Covenant has conditions attached. Those promises which come forward from the Abrahamic Covenant are circumscribed in the Mosaic: for instance, though the land would belong to Israel always, enjoyment of it according to Deuteronomy 28 is conditional upon obedience to Torah and disobedience would bring natural calamity and eventually exile. However, the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31 is again stated without conditions, except that it is to be received by faith. It is something God promises to do, for His own Name's sake.

So let me return to John Stott and his "evidence" for the Church's being the "New Israel." First, his contention, that the blessing of Abraham is through his "Seed" which is Christ alone. Paul's argument in Galatians 3 is that salvation is based on God's free gift not on human work and he makes use, in typical Rabbinic style, of the fact that "seed" is a collective noun and so is singular. However, the generally accepted meaning of "seed" is "progeny" as in Genesis 15 where Abraham is told that his seed will be as the stars and as the

sand on the sea-shore. Hardly just one unit! So although in a specific way the promise is fulfilled in Christ alone, that does not exhaust the meaning of the promise. There continues to be a blessing for the world through the Jewish people as a people. An interesting statistic which gives evidence of the continuance of the promise is that 23% of Nobel prize winners are Jewish, even though the Jews are less than 0.33% of the world's population.

Second, the question of who are the descendants of Abraham. Certainly Paul argues that all who believe in Christ are spiritual offspring of Abraham, the man who believed God, whether they are circumcised or not. But Paul is not at all suggesting that the physical descendants of Abraham are no longer heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant. He is saying that salvation is not a matter of physical descent, but of faith. Salvation is a gift promised in the New Covenant, not the Abrahamic.

If the Israelites ceased to have significance as a people after the death and resurrection of Jesus, why has God preserved them through thick and thin as a distinct people? I believe that Jesus' words "this generation will not pass away until all is fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34) is a New Testament reaffirmation of God's commitment to preserve the Jewish people, since the word translated "generation" can mean "race" or "people."

The third and final "evidence" for the "New Israel" concept is, in my view, the weakest of all. The New Testament, it is true, gives scant reference to the promise of a land to Israel. Its focus, in keeping with the New Covenant as opposed to the Abrahamic Covenant, is the kingly reign of Christ in the lives of His subjects, both Jew and Gentile. However, as I pointed out to John Stott, the disciples did specifically ask the risen Jesus when the kingdom would be restored to Israel (Acts 1:6). If John Stott is right, and there is no longer a kingdom for Israel, Jesus would surely have said so at that point. Instead, He told them not to worry about the schedule of events, but rather to get on with the job of being His witnesses. Silence in the New Testament about such an important Old Testament promise bespeaks an assumption that the promise continues, rather than that it has been abrogated.

It is necessary to look at one more Scripture which is quoted by replacement advocates (Gal. 6:16). Paul says "Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even (and) to the Israel of God." Much ink has been spilt over whether the Greek word kai here joins two different groups and should be translated "and," or whether it adds an additional description of the same group and should be translated "even" as in the New International Version. I personally hold to the latter of these, though it is the less common usage. I believe that the "Israel of God" means all in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles. But, no matter how you translate kai, it is not possible to use this Scripture to support replacement ideas. Whether or not he refers to the Church as the "Israel of God," Paul is not speaking here about the role of the nation of Israel, nor of the relations between Israel and the Church. Significantly, he does not use the term, the "New Israel." He says that the significant factor for him is not circumcision (nor the lack of it) but being a new creation in Christ.

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When Paul does deal with the subject of the relation of Israel and the Church in Romans 9 through 11, he quite clearly maintains that Israel has not been abandoned by her God, nor replaced by the Gentile believers.

CONCLUSION

Someone may ask whether this teaching, even if in error, is mild and unimportant in comparison with the real threat to Jewish missions posed by two-covenant theologies or by anti-missionary propaganda and aggression. Is it worth risking alienating friends in the evangelical constituency by insisting on the continuing importance of the Jewish people as such in the plans of God?

I believe that while two-covenant adherents are attacking our work from outside, such teaching as Replacement Theology is undermining the call to Jewish evangelism from within. We need to learn a lesson from the fact that Luther's words bore fruit in Hitler's actions. I find apathy and even opposition from those who should be encouraging witness to Jews because they adhere to this false theology. They do not see any virtue in focusing mission on such a small group as the Jews are! Or they find fault with Jewish missions because of our support for the State of Israel which they see as without Biblical basis, and contrary to a true Christian attitude towards the oppressed Palestinians.

As long as the Church, God's "New Israel," is heir to all God's promises, it is not surprising that only the curses are left for the Jews. Followers of Replacement Theology are also susceptible to the anti-missionary lie that one cannot be both a Jew and a Christian. That Paul said "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation...to the Jew first and also to the Greek " (Romans 1:16) is lost on them.

Recently, I saw a movie on evangelism among Muslims. It talked about the need to fashion a different key to unlock the door to different Islamic groups. I say God has given to us in the Scriptures the key to reaching the world for Christ -- that is the Jewish People. Replacement Theology rejects that key and encourages Christians to seek one that is man-made. I believe it is as dangerous a teaching as the Two-Covenant Theory and far more subtle.

Discussion

Nessim: Just an observation. I have struggled with the view that the New Testament does not support what the Old Testament says. There are two counts against it. One is that we are introducing a false dichotomy between the two and, secondly, we're saying that the New Testament has to repeat everything that the Old Testament says or the Old Testament is not valid. But the Old Testament stands on its own rights. And it is, in fact, the foundation of the New, and not the other way around.

Rosen: I agree with Elie, but I think that it should be stated that whereas the New Testament is based on the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is the foundation, when it comes to hermeneutics, one of the hermeneutic principles, the principles of interpretation, is that the Old Testament should be interpreted through the New Testament. The reason for that rule is that you have progressive doctrine and you start with what is closest to you and work backwards in the principle of interpretation. We're not saying anything different, I just feel that that is an important hermeneutical rule which must be laid down. It's not wrong to begin interpreting from the Old Testament forward; that's not wrong. But eventually you have to recapitulate and find the wholeness by going through the New Testament to the Old Testament, which will not lead us to any different conclusions.

Ice: The problem today is the way it is being applied. These people are a priori assuming that there is a conflict between the Old Testament and the New Testament and that the New Testament is then used to reinterpret the Old and say that Israel is replaced. We would agree with what you said that the New Testament illuminates and helps us understand the Old and that there is no conflict between the Old and the New. Whereas these replacement people, in my opinion, are creating conflicts and creating a dialectic which they are then resolving with their so-called New Testament theology, their salvation theology, which they are using to do away with those things.

Rosen: Inherent is that eventually you must project the validity of the covenants with the Jews.

Rubin: Obviously you present this information in different circles, and you sound like you're ready to do battle, which I appreciate. What kind of reactions are you getting amongst those people? Are they listening at all to these points or are their minds totally made up?

Bottomley: John Stott's reaction was that "we will beg to differ," and that was the end of it. So his mind seems to be made up. But I believe that God's Word bears fruit and its a seed planted. I certainly find other folks who have been ignorant of the debate and have just simply assumed things who are beginning to question and recheck the Scriptures.

Kearney: I find in Romans 11 that if you say the Church is now Israel it gets so confusing. Then you're saying that branches of the Church were broken off, and they will be grafted back in, easier than branches that were already grafted in. You've got both the natural branches and the unnatural branches referring to the Church. It's so confusing. My question is, how do you bring in the Olive Tree analogy from Romans 11 into this whole thing and the significance of restoring the natural branches to the Olive Tree?

Bottomley: I believe the Olive Tree is a picture of relationship with God, the root of which is Christ. The basis of all relationship, therefore, is through Him, with God. It's natural to the Jewish people to be part of that. However, some have been broken off and are outside of that. The Gentile wild olive has been grafted in; it is something that is not part of our natural background, but we have been given it contrary to our nature. Therefore, it is the most natural thing in the world for a Jew to be related to God through Jesus. That's the language I would use.

Kearney: Are we, as Gentile believers, grafted into Messiah? Or are we grafted into the Jewish people? Or both?

Bottomley: I don't think the Olive Tree is Christ. I think the root is Christ. But I know people will argue with me about that. I think the Olive Tree represents relationship with God.

Rosen: You're making a very common mistake in theology. You're taking a metaphor, the Olive Tree, and trying to make it walk on all fours. Anytime you do that you are going to come off with something that's wrong. Symbolically, the Olive Tree represents Israel; but on the other hand, on the grafting in, you have to be grafted into God. Where it's broken off, if you take that as a historical lineage, that means that all of the life is now flowing into the graft and where is there room for any of the original branches which we are. Those of us who are Jewish believers in Jesus are grafted in too. The more you try to go around this, on this metaphor, you'll have a hard time figuring it out.

Kolb: I know many Lutheran theologians have used the term, "New Israel," and called that the Church. But they arrive at it not through what you described and knocked down as replacement theology. Can't you arrive at calling the church the New Israel through a fulfillment theology? An additional theology? Like Paul keeps talking in Ephesians and Colossians, about the mystery that was hidden for generations and now has been revealed, that Gentiles and Jews together are the new people of God. Although the New Testament doesn't use the term, Lutheran theologians have just applied that term, "New Israel," to the new people of God.

Bottomley: I think it would be the most natural thing in the world for Paul to use that expression, if he wanted to. He certainly talks about the New Covenant. The fact that it isn't there, to me, is significant because it poses a danger.

Kolb: You're saying that using the term is a danger. Would you agree with the fact that there is now one people of God, which is comprised of Jew and Gentile alike? That's the teaching of Paul as I understand it.

Bottomley: In terms of salvation, yes. Not in terms of covenant agreement with God. I still think there is covenant agreement with the Jewish people, saved and unsaved, that has not been abrogated.

Pittaway: I am very tempted to get into this Olive Tree discussion because I have a different interpretation than everybody here, but I would probably get run out on a rail. I hold that it is Judaism, that Judaism was called out by God, starting with Abraham, to show the world how he would reach the world and the good news is that it comes for us Gentiles too. I

read the New Testament in light of the Old Testament, as well as the Old in light of the New. But aside from that, and I'd love to debate that with anybody, the point I really want to make is that if everybody here, and I gather this is a meeting of evangelicals, wants to prevent accidentally teaching that the New Testament supersedes and makes void the Old Testament, and I don't think there is anybody here that wants to teach that intentionally when your people evangelize somebody, give them a Bible. Not the New Testament, which I was given when somebody tried to evangelize me at one point -- they said here's the Bible. I opened it up and it started with Matthew and even I knew the Bible started with Genesis. When you hand somebody the New Testament, the inference is that this is the Bible. Give them the entire Bible, both testaments, that God gave to all of us, and teach out of the Old Testament. You can start with Torah. If you start with the five books, and end with Joshua, move to Matthew, go to the Book of Revelation, skipping the epistles, you have a one-for-one mapping. The foundation of the Messiah was in Torah. Joshua and Revelation outline each other. That's difficult to pull out, and maybe some people have a problem with that kind of exegesis, but if you want to ground your people in who the Messiah is you can start with the Torah; Genesis 3:15 and it moves forward. By the way, in the Book of Joshua, if you translates the place names and the town names from Hebrew back to English you have the story of the cross. All of it is in Torah, as well as in Matthew. When you teach the two together, you won't have these conflicts. You won't have somebody saying that Christianity is a new religion. I was told once that Christianity was the result of a sun stroked rabbi with a guilty conscience. He took it to the Jewish people but they were too smart, they wouldn't buy it. They took it to the goyim and it was close enough to the truth, they didn't know any better, so they bought it. But we can get around all of this by teaching both. When you evangelize somebody, evangelize them with the entire Bible. If you're not teaching the whole of the Bible, when you get home, start teaching the whole Bible. At least start with Torah, as well as with Matthew. And you won't have this problem of somebody coming in. I talk to so many people who don't even know what the Old Testament says; it's incredible.

Estep: Would you elaborate where right toward the end you made a statement about a key to reaching the world, to reaching Jewish people.

Bottomley: Yes, I believe that God chose the Jewish people to be his primary witnesses, to be a kingdom of priests, to be a light to the Gentiles. Paul says that the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. I still believe that to reach the Gentiles God's strategy is to go through the Jewish people, to reach them first and then to send them out to reach the rest of the world. It is my contention that ten Gentiles will catch hold of the skirt of a Jew and say, "Let us go with you for God is with you." My experience in Jewish evangelism is that if you catch the vision to reach Jewish people, you'll also catch the vision to reach the rest of the world. It seems to me that when we're talking about evangelism, those people who object fiercely to Jewish evangelism probably don't want to evangelize anybody. The two seem to me to go very closely together.

Ward: This is the first time I have ever heard something that I have felt for a long time. Of the general two views of that verse, number one is that it is historic, which means that the Jewish people had their shot and it's all over. What I generally get out of Jewish Christians is that it is preferential treatment because of Abraham. Well, being non-Jewish that offends me. But I believe it's strategic. Paul, for example, talks about there being a ten percent of the congregation having the gift of evangelism. Most congregations have no Jewish people in it. I think it's strategic if God puts the gift of evangelism in a much greater

proportion than the Jewish people, which would seem to be the case if we are to be his primary witness, or to be a witness.

Kolb: If that is the case, would not the Messianic congregations be growing at a far faster rate than what they are?

Snyder: In understanding the call, we still have to be awakened often times with a challenge. Very often, especially those of us who are Jewish believers, we find a haven in congregation. We encounter opposition from friends and family. Often times we can find within the context of our congregation a haven, a safe place into which we feel comfortable and secure. Unless there is something that shakes us up and say, "Wait a minute, this is not the Mayo Clinic, this is a field hospital, get back out into the battle," then we're inclined to stay in the clinic. Maybe.

Bottomley: It has been the experience, for instance, of the Scottish revival that came when Scottish evangelicals started sending missionary teams to the Jews on the continent. Revival swept Scotland as a result. Concerning the chronological, go to the Jews first, they had their shot, if somebody says that to you at Romans 1, go have a look at Romans 2 where it says that trouble will come to those who do evil, to the Jew first, good will come to those who do good, to the Jew first. If it's chronological, the Jews are off scott free. They had their chance.

Ward: But the historic view is the predominant view.

Leventhal: Don't you think that in terms of at least this group there is a more fundamental issue? I don't believe we're going to see any changes, even in this room right here. There are some in this room who hold to replacement theology and some don't. My concern is not turning Covenant Theologians into Dispensationalists and vice versa, because I don't think that's for the most part possible. My concern is that if there is a person who says that Israel has been set aside and that all the promises are to be fulfilled spiritually in the Church, and a good part of Christendom believe this, my concern is not to change that position, because I don't think it's changeable. The issue is whether you assume along with that position that there's no place for Jewish evangelism. All those I have read that hold to the fact that the Church now has fulfilled these promises, always leaves room just prior to the return of Christ for a coming of individual Jews to Christ, not as a nation. An ingathering of individual Jews will come to faith, not in a national sense. That's fine towards the end of the age before Christ comes back, but my concern is that it seems in a lot of churches that those who have assumed the replacement position are not concerned about evangelism for Jews, but it is almost like Jews won't believe, or they can't believe, or they're under the judgment of God in every generation, that kind of business. My concern is going back into our communities where we're going to be doing our own works, our own ministries, also coming into contact with other churches that will have those that accept this position, how to get them into the position where they can commit to at least some kind of Jewish evangelism. I think that's more practical than trying to say, "Okay, we're going to get all these replacement individuals to change." They're not going to change. They're committed just like I'm committed to a system that I believe is right. They're committed men and women of integrity. These are not people outside the spectrum of evangelicalism.

Bottomley: That is what really concerns me because I don't believe there is a way of doing it unless you can change their view point. I believe it's embedded in the replacement idea, it's imbedded that there's no need for Jewish evangelism. I think the two go together and

I think it's behooving upon us to get them to reexamine the Scriptures and ask God's Holy Spirit to do the changing.

Lapides: I think it was Leopold Cohn, maybe Joseph Hoffman Cohn, who said that if a church takes the position not to the Jew first, the church usually ends up not to the Jew at all. Unfortunately, that has proven to be true. When I look at Romans 1:16 I also have to take it in light of Romans 9:4 where Paul says, "to whom belongs," present tense, concerning the Israelites, "the covenants, the promises, the glory from whom is the Messiah, even Yeshua." It's not so much that the Jew gets preferential treatment; there is a priority, a strategy of priority from Romans 1:16 that says the Jew has been given a greater responsibility because of the covenants, because the Jewish people are the depository of Scripture. I think that is the motivation. I have read so many things. The Jewish people are like anybody else. We just have to treat them like a typical pagan. I want to scream when I hear that because it's not true. Jewish people are not like anybody else. God has been dealing with them for thousands of years. There's a history there. I think that's why Romans 1:16 relates to that history. I think that's important.

Glasser: Some of the things you said are very stimulating. One of the things you said was that if something is not mentioned in the New Testament, then it is not necessarily something that God has forgotten or set aside. To me what came to mind was the passage in Romans 9 where Paul lists the things that belong to the Israelites: the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs, etc., etc. He ends up with Christ. But he doesn't mention the land. On this point you would have to say, "Why didn't he mention the land?" The land is one of the three elements of the original Abrahamic promise. Here is a place where the New Testament holds this question. On the basis of your principle, I don't know what to do.

Lapides: Are you saying there is a necessity to mention the land or can you realize that he did mention the covenants and the land is included in the covenants. As soon as he says the word "covenant," he's covered it.

Glasser: But land is so prominent in Jewish law.

Bottomley: One has to remember, of course, that they were in the land. There wasn't the sense of having lost the land at that point, in the same way as we see it today.

Rosen: Though tradition might call for the use of the term "New Israel" without it being scriptural, when you are trying to communicate something to people you have to be careful what you are communicating. It is like the term proselytizing. I don't know how in the world that ever got applied to anything that we do. It means persuading people, or Gentiles, to accept Judaism. I never saw any American society to promote proselytizing. It is nothing that we ever use to describe our own activities. It is only used by the opposition. So if the Lutheran church is using the term "New Israel," do they mean New Israel in the sense of the New Testament, meaning that the Old Testament is also valid. In a sense, the wide usage of this inaccurate term, it describes the Church which doesn't need any other description than the Church. The use of the term, a term that I would never use, conveys what others call the teaching of contempt, with the idea that the Old Israel is obsolete.

Another thing that I wanted to address myself to was something that Jack Estep raised. Don't look to the Messianic congregations to see the abundance of Gentiles. Look to the outreach ministries like ours. So far as recorded decisions, there were 392 Jewish people. We're running 12 to 1 on Gentiles to Jews. If you think that the churches are willing to follow up, you're wrong. We get all these Gentiles who say we'll follow up on the Jews, will you follow up on the Gentiles? The people who support our ministry support us to do Jewish work and you can get these people right near your church and they might join your church. Most of the time they'll get a form letter from the pastor inviting them to a service. That's about what you can expect. We're getting 12, 13, 14 to 1. And the fact that we're willing to start doing the case loads, including Gentiles, we'd all have overflowing case loads. One thing that you're not saying, you feel that the local congregation is the normative means of evangelism. I say, no. The order: first to evangelize, carry out the apostolic work. Number two, from the fruit comes a community of faith. It's not yet a congregation. The apostles do not found the congregation, the believers do. Then, the congregations send out apostles. The problem with congregational planting is that it reverses the Great Commission. Instead of saying, go, you're saying, come. Come to our congregation, instead of go into the world. The apostles are "go" people. The pastors are "come" people.

Butler: I just need to comment on what Moishe just said. As far as Messianic congregations, it has been my experience that, yes, Messianic pastors are "come" people, but we see that as a vehicle of going out. What it is good for is allowing people to come and know that there is an option just like you were doing it, or anyone else who is going out and saying that Yeshua or Jesus Christ is the Messiah. We're just doing it in a little different way.

REPORT: Reconstructionism, Kingdom Now, and the New Postmillennialism -
Tommy Ice

Discussion

Butler: Do you see a correlation between what a lot of people are being sucked into, civil disobedience? We see a lot of it in Los Angeles.

Ice: Operation Rescue. Let me just say this, the reconstructionists are split over Operation Rescue. Some are for it, some are against it. They would tend to reflect evangelical opinions overall. I could show you all kinds of arguments from both sides. The ones against it tend to see that it is a breakdown of law and society and this is not the way to go about it; it's anarchy, it's abolitionism. Whereas the others say that this is something we have to stand up for God, like Rahab the harlot did.

Pittaway: I first heard about this dominion theology and kingdom now in the context of pastoral teaching when I was receiving tapes from a Southern California church out here. At that time, three or four years ago, the teaching pastor was saying that he was becoming aware of what he described as a conspiracy. It was the kingdom now and he wanted to start warning us about it, to listen to words like dominion . . .

Ice: I don't think it's conspiratorial at all.

Pittaway: Is there any interstructure. You described it as atomic units.

Ice: It's a loose coalition of people just like this would be. They do have secret meetings, they've had secret meetings of leaders. But they're not conspiratorial, they're up front, they're open, they have over 100 books out there. They say a lot of it is to have dialogue between the different factions within the spectrum of dominion theology, and to discuss these issues behind closed doors. I have a friend who took notes in there and there is some very, very, very disturbing, radical things said in those behind-closed-door meetings.

Leventhal: I believe it was last November, 1988, Christianity Today had one of their institute discussions on this whole issue. It was a good summary. I heard that the way the merger took place between the reconstructionist in the early years were violent.

Ice: Many of the Word of Faith people, for what this is worth, have been preaching dominion in a personal life. You can turn the TV on and hear that you've got to give the devil a black eye and now they're giving him two black eyes. But you have to take dominion over your life. These reconstructionists have come in and said, "You've been doing it in your personal life to get health, wealth and prosperity personally, why don't you start doing it socially and politically?" So both of these movements are kind of merging together and they're teaching each other. One on how to have personal dominion and the other on how to have social and political dominion. That's what you're referring to. Bob Tilton was one of the first to invite Gary Demar to start holding some of his seminars in his church. We've had a tremendous wedding. Maranatha Ministries is heavy into dominion theology. I could go on and talk about a lot of the different things.

Lapides: I think one of the bottom line worst forms that I have seen of dominion theology as it is being married together with Word of Faith movement in the charismatic circles, is what you quote from a tape in your book. I've heard the tape, I've given it to Arnold, Rick Godwin's tape. Here you've got the whole idea of replacement theology. He

comes off very excited, "We are the new Israel, we need to take dominion," and he makes some very strong anti-Semitic statements about the Jewish people being accursed, and we're wasting time. Just to listen to that tape shows you the bottom line of where this stuff is.

Ice: Gary North has boasted that he already has a book in his computer for when Israel gets pushed into the sea or converted to Christ. My question is, why not print it now? Be a prophet. Another reconstructionist pastor reeled off the following explicatives against Israel by calling it "a sinful, apostate, Christ rejected, blasphemous, middle eastern nation as God's chosen people."

Fruchtenbaum: He refers to Israel as "the garlic people over there." It's in the book.

Ice: "Garlic breathed people over here," and he's teaching real strict covenant theology. The point is, reconstructionist theology is having impacts on things like the identity movement. Even though they claim they are not anti-Semitic, anti-Semitic groups are reading their stuff to sharpen their arguments. I can't blame reconstructionists for that. But I know for a fact that people like Pastor Everett Sullivan, for example, got into this through reading reconstructionist things and now he's into the identity movement.

SUPPER: 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

FOURTH SESSION: 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

REPORT: The Joys and Sorrows of a Missionary to the Jews - Ruth Wardell