What Is Replacement Theology?

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The term **replacement theology** is often used in different ways, which can make discussions confusing. Historically, it refers to the belief that the Church has permanently replaced Israel in God's plan, so that God's promises to Israel no longer have any future significance for the Jewish people as an ethnic nation. Our ministry rejects that view.

At the same time, we also reject the idea that God has two separate peoples with two separate plans of salvation—one for Israel and one for the Church. The New Testament teaches that there is one people of God united in Christ, composed of both believing Jews and believing Gentiles (Eph. 2:11–22; Gal. 3:28–29).

The phrase "replacement theology" is often used as a catch-all label, and sometimes it is applied unfairly to any Christian who disagrees with dispensationalism. Because of that, it is important to define terms carefully before using the label.

Historically, classical replacement theology taught that because Israel rejected Jesus, God permanently cast aside the Jewish people and transferred all of Israel's blessings to the Church. In this view, ethnic Israel no longer plays any meaningful role in God's redemptive plan.

Most Christians today who are accused of teaching "replacement theology" do not actually hold that position. Instead, they believe something closer to what is often called **fulfillment theology** or **covenant theology**. This view teaches that God's promises to Israel are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the true Israelite and Messiah, and that all who belong to Him—Jew and Gentile alike—share in those promises (Gal. 3:16, 29).

In other words, many Christians would say the Church has not *replaced* Israel. Rather, believing Gentiles have been graciously *included* in the people of God through Christ.

What Does the New Testament Teach?

The New Testament consistently presents salvation as coming through faith in Jesus Christ for both Jews and Gentiles. Paul explains that Gentile believers have been "grafted in" among God's covenant people (Rom. 11:17–24). He does not describe the Church as replacing Israel, nor does

he describe God as abandoning His promises to the Jewish people. In fact, Paul explicitly says, "God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew" (Rom 11:2).

At the same time, Paul also teaches that membership in God's covenant family is ultimately defined by faith in Christ, not ethnicity. Gentiles who were once "strangers to the covenants of promise" have now been brought near through Christ's blood (Eph 2:12–13). Through Him, God has created "one new man" from Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:15).

This means the New Testament presents both continuity and fulfillment. God remains faithful to His promises, but those promises find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ and in the people united to Him by faith.

What Is Our Ministry's Position?

Our ministry rejects classical replacement theology because Scripture does not teach that God has permanently discarded the Jewish people or broken His promises to them (Rom 11:1–2). At the same time, we do not believe Scripture teaches two separate covenant peoples of God or two parallel plans of redemption. The New Testament consistently presents Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises and the basis of unity between believing Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:11–22; Gal 3:28–29).

We therefore affirm:

- God has not rejected the Jewish people (Rom 11:1–2).
- Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ for both Jew and Gentile (Acts 4:12).
- Believing Gentiles are grafted into God's covenant people (Rom 11:17–24).
- The Church is not a replacement for Israel but includes all who belong to Christ (Gal 3:29).
- God's promises find their fulfillment in Jesus, the Messiah (2 Cor 1:20).

Key Scriptures to Study

- Romans 11:1–2 — Paul explicitly states that God has not rejected His people.
- Romans 11:17–24 — Gentile believers are grafted into God's covenant people.
- Ephesians 2:11–22 — Christ unites Jews and Gentiles into one body.
- Galatians 3:16 — God's promises ultimately center on Christ.
- Galatians 3:28–29 — All who belong to Christ are Abraham's offspring.

- Acts 4:12 — Salvation is found only in Jesus Christ.
- 2 Corinthians 1:20 — God's promises find their "Yes" in Christ.
- Romans 9:6–8 — Not all physical descendants belong to the true Israel of God.
- Jeremiah 31:31–34 — God's promise of the New Covenant.

Objections & Misconceptions

Common Objection: "If the Church shares in Israel's promises, isn't that replacement theology?"

Not necessarily. The New Testament describes believing Gentiles as being grafted into God's covenant people (Rom. 11:17–24), not as replacing them. Inclusion is not the same thing as replacement.

Common Objection: "Doesn't Romans 11 teach a future for ethnic Israel?"

Many faithful Christians believe Romans 11 points to a future large-scale turning of Jewish people to Christ. Others interpret the passage differently. What Christians broadly agree on is that God has not abandoned the Jewish people and that salvation comes only through faith in Jesus.

Common Objection: "Does this mean ethnic Israel no longer matters?"

No. Paul continues to speak of the Jewish people with deep affection and hope (Rom. 9:1–5; 11:28–29). The question is not whether the Jewish people matter, but how God's promises are fulfilled in Christ.

Why This Matters

This doctrine shapes how we understand the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, the role of Israel in redemptive history, and the unity of God's people.

Most importantly, it reminds us that God's faithfulness is seen most clearly in Jesus Christ. The Gospel is not about two peoples with two paths to God. It is about one Savior who has brought near both Jew and Gentile through His death and resurrection, creating one people redeemed by grace through faith.

Recommended Resources

- *Kingdom through Covenant* — Peter J. Gentry & Stephen J. Wellum

- *The Israel of God* — O. Palmer Robertson
- *Romans* — Douglas J. Moo
- *A Case for Amillennialism* — Kim Riddlebarger
- *Jesus and the Land* — Gary M. Burge