



Mikhael & Orit Murnane, Founders

Welcome!

Shalom and welcome to our Monthly "COME TO ZION" Newsletter website. This Newsletter update is sent out once a month to help you better connect with Israel, understand what God is doing in the land, know how to pray effectively and stand with the Israeli believers in Zion. Thank you for your interest and partnership with our ministry to the Jewish people. We value your prayers and appreciate you standing with us!

*From Zion,
Mikhael & Orit*

***ANOTHER PEOPLE HAVE REPLACED ISRAEL.....UNDERSTANDING
REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY !***

by

Mikhael Murnane

How many of you who grew up in the church were taught that Israel in the bible refers to the church and that the "The Chosen People" of God are the devoted Christians? Many denominations have taught elements of this or have embraced the full teachings of this errant teaching which is called 'Replacement Theology'

WHAT IS REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY?

Replacement Theology simply teaches that the church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Some people better know the older and much wider used term of "Supersessionism" which means that "the church supersedes Israel." God has now set Israel aside and made the church "The New Israel," the "new and improved" people of God. Within Replacement Theology there are many variations of replacing Israel, but there are two main approaches:

Most common approach:

Once the Messiah came over 2,000 years ago, Israel's mission was completed. The transition occurred at Pentecost in Acts 2, and the church took over as "The People of God," and became the only focal point of God's plan and purpose for world redemption. The church is now given all of God's promises and blessings (originally Israel's). God will no longer work through ethnic Israel, since the Jewish people are no longer a "chosen people." The church has replaced the Jewish people and the Land. These groups say today's Israel and the Jews are no different than any other ethnic group in the world. Some even more extreme groups also say that those in Israel today are not even real Jews descended from biblical times.

So, for example, when scripture speaks of Israel being restored back to their Land, it really means that the Christian church will be blessed, and inherit the earth. When it talks about the promises in the covenants, God's restoration, and the blessings over the Jewish people, it really means the Christian church who now makes up God's chosen people.

Second Approach (more radical):

Israel's place as the people of God was forfeited. This was a divine judgment on the nation for its rejection of the Messiah in the first century. Apart from repentance, the new birth, and incorporation into the church, the Jewish people have no future, no hope, and no calling in the plan of God. The same is true for every other nation or group in the world.

Martin Luther articulated this position most eloquently when he wrote: “For such ruthless wrath of God is sufficient evidence that they (i.e., the Jews) assuredly have erred and have gone astray...Therefore this work of wrath is proof that the Jews, surely rejected by God, are no longer His people, and neither is He any longer their God” (*On the Jews and their lies*, in Luther’s Works p. 265)

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

Elements of replacement theology can be traced back to Marcion (in 160 A.D) who carried on a theological crusade to purge the church of what he perceived to be “dangerous Jewish errors and influences.” Later, many of these anti-Judaic sentiments found their way into the thinking and writings of the early church fathers who were teaching that the Jews who rejected the Son of God were rejected by God.

John Chrysostom (344-407 AD) - was one of the greatest preachers in his days said: “There could never be forgiveness for the Jews, it is the Christian’s duty to hate Jews, and that the Jews worship the Devil”.

Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) - “God’s covenant with Israel is no longer valid, the gentiles had replaced them”

Eusebius (263-339 AD) - The promises and blessings of God are the gentiles while the curses were for the Jews” ...

Over time, statements like these became the basis of full-blown anti-Semitism in some sectors of Christianity. Anything Jewish was renounced. Teachings like The Millennium (the 1000 year of reign) were denounced as “Jewish fables” and the early church that was clearly Jewish was described as “primitive and unenlightened.”

By the 7th century any Jew who came to believe in the Messiah was required to completely denounce their Jewish ancestry and reject their heritage before they could be baptized....

And so, Supersessionism has been widely accepted in mainstream Christianity since the 3rd century and the church managed to successfully distant and separate herself from her Jewish roots and origin.

WHY IS REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY SO DANGEROUS?

If we look at the history of traditional Christianity we can see that replacement theology has already caused all kinds of persecution, and atrocities against the Jewish people throughout the centuries: pogroms, the Spanish inquisition, and eventually established the root thinking for the holocaust.

Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, suggested that Jewish synagogues, prayer books and teachings should be burned down, and the Jews of Germany should be confined to their homes and neighborhoods. The great founder of Protestantism was both a passionate anti-Semite and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority. He wanted Germany rid of the Jews. Unfortunately, Luther's advice was literally followed 4 centuries later by Hitler...

Much, if not most, of the modern Protestant church's thinking, teaching, and theology comes from 100's of years of Luther's teachings. Today Replacement Theology outwardly is not as hard line as before, but some subtle trails of wrong thinking and misperceptions still fill the churches. The results have been that most do not understand God's call for the Jewish People and the "Irrevocable Call" the Apostle Paul describes in the End Days (Rms 11:29). Actually we see in the scriptures that God's end time plan that He has put the Jew and the Church together in His plan for world redemption. Oh, the wisdom of God.

You might be surprised to hear how many well meaning Christians love Israel and visit Israel, because it is the Land of the bible, and this is where Jesus lived, but don't really see the connection between today's modern day Jews living in Israel and God's promises for Israel. Promises even in the New Covenant that God would regather His People back into the Land are overlooked or labeled "spiritual or figurative promises," and not real.

Major sections of prophecy and promises (Ezek. 36-37) are simply dismissed, brushed under the carpet (similar to Isaiah 53 “Suffering Servant” in Judaism), and the scripture itself becomes the weapon to justify the stand.

I just don't understand when I see Christians coming to “kiss the stones” wherever Jesus walked, but don't really care to “meet the living stones” real people....God's chosen people—the Jews .

PALISTINIANS AND REPLACEMENT THINKING

In April this year (2011) an anti-Israel conference called “Christ At The Checkpoint” (CATC) was held for the second year in Bethlehem sponsored by the Bethlehem Bible College. The speakers were Palestinian-Christians, and pro-Palestinian/anti-Israel Christian activists from the UK and the USA.

The central point of this conference was the suffering of Palestinians as the result of the “illegal occupation of Arab land by the illegitimate State of Israel.” The speakers spoke mainly about oppression, violence and evil when speaking about the Jewish control over the Land of Israel and IDF security activities. “Justice & peacemaking” was used in referring to the need of Palestinians to retake the lands lost in 1948 and 1967 wars; the requirement to establish a Palestinian state; the importance of influencing.....

Christian believers across the planet to stop supporting the planting of trees in Israel, to boycott Israeli products, and lobby their own politicians to diminish support for Israel's democratically elected government and her policies. The speakers described their great love of the Jewish people, but at the same time described the injustice evil and moral occupation of Palestine and crimes against humanity by the criminal state of Israel.

The speakers at CATC conference demanded that the security fence/wall and checkpoints be taken down giving free access (which will allow the return of suicide bombers crossing into Israel again), and demanded that

Arabs be allowed to return to their “ancient homeland,” meaning giving the Land to the Muslims.

The speakers also explained that the Israel of today has nothing to do with the Israel of the bible. In other words, the Old Testament scriptures concerning Israel are no longer in effect. The offspring of Abraham that the bible talks about is only about Jesus, not the Jews.

They further stated that any promises concerning Israel have only a spiritual application and therefore literal interpretation is false. The conference concluded that the modern state of Israel is in no way a fulfillment of scripture.

WHY MANY ADOPT THIS “REPLACEMENT” VIEW

In a “nut shell” there are two main reasons to this distorted view from Palestinian history:

1. Suffering and victimhood — When Israel declared its independence in 1948 many Arab countries declared a Jihad war against her. During the war Arab leaders urged Israeli Arabs to flee their villages and cities for their safety till after the war. These Arabs moved up the coast to Beirut, down the coast to Gaza, or the West Bank and East Jerusalem and waited for the big victory over the newly established Jewish state, but Arab victory never came.

Arabs that fled to the surrounding countries were put in refugee camps. Since then they have been used as “pawns” and as a political and military tool that would try to fight and destroy the Jewish state. The remaining Arabs who stayed in the West Bank and Gaza refused Israeli citizenship and preferred to maintain their “refugee status” in order to one day return and be compensated for their loss of land.

For different reasons (security, political and economical) the state of Israel refused to allow the return of Arab refugees from other countries into Israel proper....the result is a deep hatred toward Israel. This is the way it is

viewed in Palestinian eyes: Palestinians were brutally attacked by cruel anti-Islamic forces (Israel), their land unjustly taken from them, they are now forced to live under cruel oppression.

2. Fear of Islam — The traditional Christian Arab population in Israel is only about 8%. And the remainder are of Muslim Arabs....They are surrounded by mostly 100% Sunni Islamist. This makes them vulnerable to Islamic fanaticism and their lives are constantly in danger with Hamas and Muslims.

These Christians are considered of second-class status, rejected by the Muslims as inferior and are viewed as collaborators with infidel and spiritual heirs of the Crusaders, those that the Muslims fought against in 1099 to free Jerusalem for Islam.

As a result some Arab-Palestinian Christians almost “bend over backwards” to prove themselves faithful, and even more worthy and committed to the Arab cause, and can have an even more radical approach in their resistance to the Jewish state.

MESSIANIC RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRISTIAN PALISTINIANS

There is no doubt that our relations with Christian Arabs (Israeli or Palestinian) is very complex, but there are also many wonderful Arab brothers and sisters in Israel. We have good relations with most Arab pastors, and many others in the West Bank and Gaza do love Israel and believe the word of God concerning Israel's right to the Land.

These brothers are also severely persecuted by both Muslims and their Replacement Theology colleagues for standing with Israel. In the Messianic community we love and pray for them and work together to advance the Kingdom of God in their villages assisting them and supporting them any way we can. Whenever an Arab brother comes to fellowship with us there is always much joy in this reunion and fellowship and you can sense the love and respect for one another.

We do pray and hope for a quick restoration with our relationship with Arab Palestinians and the healing hand of God on both sides. As much as it is up to us (the Messianic believers) we seek true fellowship and reconciliation with our Arab brothers. This became very noticeable in the recent Youth Conference “Elav” with the participation of young Christian Arabs and Palestinians from the territories.

(Resources and materials for this article were taken from Maoz Ministries April 2012 newsletter, Messianic teacher and leader Avner Boskey “The ABC of Replacement Theology Palestinian style”, and Dr. Gary Hedrick, President of CJF Ministries)