

Doctrine



*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path...
The entrance of Your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple. Psalm 119:105,130*

Israel, the Church and Replacement Theology

Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls." Jeremiah 6:16

THEOLOGY

God has communicated with man, through two main covenants, one with the people of Israel, and one with the church. *Genesis 12:1-3, Luke 22:20*

DOCTRINE

“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend. You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest regions, and said to you, ‘You are my servant; I have chosen you, and not cast you away.’” Isaiah 41:8-9

Calvary Old Path believe that the nation of Israel, the Jewish people, remain God’s chosen people. This favored position does not depend on any merit or superiority on their part, but rather the loving nature of our God and His faithfulness (*Deuteronomy 7:6-8*).

These are the areas we will cover to help you understand our beliefs regarding Israel, the Church & Replacement Theology.

1. God’s Covenant with Israel.
2. What is Replacement Theology?
3. Scriptures Used to Support False Doctrines.
4. God’s Eternal Covenant with Israel.
5. What We Believe.

God’s Covenant with Israel

While Israel failed to fulfill the obligations of the conditional Mosaic covenant (*Exodus 19:3-24*) through their disobedience, there remain several covenants made by God with Israel which remain *eternal*.

With Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel, God established an unconditional covenant whereby He would establish a great nation from Abraham’s descendants in a land which He would give them *forever* (*Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-15, 15:4-5, 15:18-21, 17:4-8*).

With David, God confirmed an unconditional covenant whereby He would establish an eternal kingdom through David’s descendant, the Messiah (*2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 89:3-4, 89:34-37*). This yet-to-be fulfilled *eternal* covenant awaits the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, (*Isaiah 9:6-7, Amos 9:11, Luke 1:31-33, Acts 15:16, Revelation 19:16, 22:16*).

God, through His prophets, describes a new covenant with the nation of Israel (*Isaiah 59:21, Jeremiah 31:31-40, Jeremiah 32:40, Hosea 2:19-20*).

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep my judgements and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

This covenant of redemption and restoration will be accomplished through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual renewal of national Israel remains yet future, but once fulfilled, the bible teaches that it will remain forever (*Ezekiel 27:21-28, Jeremiah 32:40*).

What is Replacement Theology?

Integral to Calvary Old Path’s view of Israel is our position on replacement theology, or supersessionism.

Proponents of replacement theology, also known as supersessionism, believe that the promises and blessings of God to the nation of Israel have been transferred to the Christian Church; therefore, the Jewish nation is no longer God’s chosen people. We strongly object to this harmful teaching.

This false doctrine is **not** based upon a literal interpretation of the Bible, but rather depends upon an allegorized or spiritualized rendering of the many promises of God to national Israel. It depends on a very few so called “proof texts” which are taken out of context while ignoring many other scriptures which refute it, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Replacement theology is often espoused by those who have adopted an amillennial or postmillennial view of eschatology, which explains the diversity of its proponents, including Roman Catholics, Calvinists and Kingdom Now Dominionists.

Scriptures Used to Support False Doctrine

There are few scriptures which Replacement Theologians rely on to support their doctrine. Two supposed “proof texts” often cited are *Philippians 3:3 and Galatians 6:16b*. A careful examination of the context for both verses show that these claims are unfounded.

“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Philippians 3:3)

Adherents of replacement theology claim that the “we” of this verse somehow supports the position that the Church has supplanted Israel as God’s covenant people. A review of the entire third chapter of the epistle shows that the topic addressed is not the Church versus Israel, but law versus grace.

Scriptures Used to Support False Doctrines

In *Philippians 3*, the Apostle Paul is warning believers not to heed the “Judaizers,” a group which sought to force Gentile believers to follow the Law of Moses, including circumcision.

In verse 3, then, Paul is contrasting Jewish believers in Christ with the Judaizers, including himself with the former through the inclusive, “we.” This verse has nothing to do with the church replacing Israel, as is claimed.

In *Galatians 6:16b*, replacement theology proponents seize upon the phrase ... “the Israel of God” as a supposed reference to the Church as “spiritual an unbiblical concept of its own. However, if one reads this phrase in context, this is clearly a distortion.

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:15-16)

The epistle to the Galatians is devoted to the topic of salvation through grace apart from the law; it is directed to a fellowship composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers. Paul explains that Jewish believers in Christ as well as Gentile believers are each saved through faith, irrespective of circumcision. Here again, Paul is warning the Galatian believers of the influence of the Judaizers, who opposed the gospel of grace. The phrase “Israel of God” is meant to contrast Jewish believers in Christ with these Judaizers. To claim that this somehow refers to the church and the nation Israel makes no sense given the context of the specific scripture, or indeed the entire epistle.

God’s Eternal Covenant with Israel

While there are few scriptures, and those taken out of context, which are claimed to support this doctrine, there is much in the Bible that contradicts it. The Old Testament is filled with references to God’s eternal covenants with *the nation Israel*. Israel’s disobedience and *future redemption* are also repeatedly described in scripture. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul specifically teaches in the epistle to the Romans that God has not abandoned the Jewish people.

God's chosen people, with whom He established His eternal covenants, is consistently described as *the nation of Israel* throughout scripture. A few examples

Deuteronomy 29:9-13

Ezekiel 16:60-62

Jeremiah 31:31-32

Ezekiel 37:26-27

Jeremiah 32:40

God's Eternal Covenant with Israel

From the context, it is clear that Israel, and no other nation or entity, is meant. As Dr. Thomas Ice simply puts it: "Israel always means Israel." To claim, as do replacement theology supporters, that one may simply substitute the word "church" wherever one finds the word "Israel" (preferably in favorable circumstances, of course) is to do violence to the text and demonstrate contempt for the Word of God.

Replacement theology asserts that God has permanently rejected Israel due to her disobedience. This position directly contradicts scripture as the Bible is filled with references to a future redemption and restoration of that nation. Israel's disobedience lead to her expulsion from the land, captivity and dispersion. Yet God promises throughout the Old Testament to return the nation to the land of their inheritance and restore the nation to a right relationship with Him.

"Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, And you return to the LORD your God

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"Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, And you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your

children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you...And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:1-3,6)

“And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first. I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me.” (Jeremiah

Other examples include:

Psalm 14:7

Jeremiah 24:6-7

Psalm 53:6

Ezekiel 36:22-38

Psalm 130:7-8

Ezekiel 37:12-28

Amos 9:14-15

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Joel 3:16

God’s Eternal Covenant with Israel

it is important to note that the creation of the modern nation of Israel in 1948 is itself a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy. However, this event alone does not fulfill all the promises of God to His people. Much is still future, including Israel’s salvation through recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ, her Messiah, in the end times.

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” (Zechariah 12:10)

The New testament also contradicts the false doctrine of replacement theology. Just one example includes the Apostle Paul’s explanation to the Romans of the future of Israel. In this epistle, Paul explains to his primarily gentile audience that many Jews, not recognizing Jesus as Messiah, continued to attempt their own righteousness through the law, not understanding that “...Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Romans 10:4). Nevertheless, salvation is not possible through the law, but only through faith in Jesus Christ, both to Gentile and Jew, “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:12-13).

What then, it follows, is to become of the nation of Israel, if they have not recognized the Messiah? Has God given up on his people?

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away his people whom he foreknew.” (Romans 11:1-2a)

The apostle Paul makes it clear that God has not discarded the nation of Israel! Through her disobedience, grace has been extended to the Gentiles and we who believe have been grafted in to the blessings of Israel, which are obtained through *faith*. He uses the allegory of the wild and native branches of an olive tree to explain this relationship. A remnant of Jews had accepted Jesus as the Messiah then, as now, and Paul explains through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that the rest would be provoked to jealousy, *as foretold in the Old Testament*:

“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.”

God’s Eternal Covenant with Israel

“They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.” (Deuteronomy 32:21)

If God had discarded his people Israel, why would He want to provoke them to jealousy? Paul continues to explain that they can be *reconciled to God*, through faith in Jesus Christ:

“For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be, but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15)

“And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.” (Romans 11:23)

While it was true then, as it is true now, that Jewish individuals can come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, what of the nation of Israel? Paul explains that God has a future plan of redemption for that nation, which Calvary Old Path believes will occur in the end times:

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins.” (Romans 11:25-27)

Paul quotes *Isaiah 59:20-21* to indicate this end times redemption, when Israel will recognize the Redeemer who shall come to Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ. (See also *Zechariah 12:10, Matthew 24:30, Revelation 1:7.*)

Walter Kaiser concludes this of replacement theology, which he describes as “*just plain bad news for both the church and Israel.*”

“This substitution and supersession of the church for Israel runs directly counter, not only to the repeated expectations of the Old Testament prophets, but also to the painstakingly careful analysis offered by the Apostle Paul in Romans 9-11.”

What We Believe

Replacement theology is categorically rejected by Calvary Old Path as false doctrine. It is unbiblical, based upon a non-contextual interpretation of a few scriptures while ignoring the many Old and New Testament scriptures which contradict it.

In the Bible, Israel means *Israel*, not “code” for the Church. God has not cast off His covenant people; The free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ is currently available to whosoever will turn to Him, Jew or Gentile. There remains a future redemption of Israel, as indicated by the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament prophets as well as the New Testament writers, including the apostle Paul.

God will fulfill the many promises He has made to restore and redeem her through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We of the body of Christ, the Church, can take comfort in the fact that our God is true to His word.

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On the Path Discernment Ministry

Discernment is always mentioned in scripture in a favorable light. Discernment was promoted as a way to avoid error and cause the believer to continually be seeking and watching with vigilance. Accordingly, these materials are provided for you in order to assist you in growing in your knowledge and understanding of God's Word. We have taken great care to give a thorough and expansive explanation of the positions of the church.

Calvary Old Path of Cypress
5202 Lincoln Ave.
Cypress, CA. 90630
714 236-1288
Email : discern@oldpath.net www.oldpath.net

These booklets are provided to explain Old Path's teachings on topics of theology and doctrine. Should you have questions on doctrinal matters or would like further clarity on these positions, you can email us and we will assist you by researching the needed matters. However, we do not provide these booklets with the intention of debating.