

Session 6

Significant Hindrances and Misconceptions to Standing with Israel

A. Introduction

1. There are two significant hindrances and misconceptions that cause God's people to take an unbiblical approach with regard to the nation of Israel. These have caused the Gentile Church today to be largely disinterested, unaware, or even misguided and arrogant towards Israel and God's purposes for her and through her.
2. The two main issues are:
 - a. Replacement Theology;
 - b. Misguided Biblical Eschatology.

B. Replacement Theology

1. Replacement Theology is the idea that God has decided to cancel and nullify every covenant and promise that He had made with Israel because of her rejection of Jesus and her rebellion towards Him, and has transferred these covenants and promises over to the Gentile Church.
2. Other terms for this are "supersessionism" or "fulfilment theology". The word "supersessionism" comes from the verb "to supersede", which implies that one thing is being replaced by another.
3. Theologians who embrace Replacement Theology believe that the global Gentile Church is now the "spiritual Israel" and thus the recipient of the promises and blessings that were originally given to ancient Israel.
 - a. References to "Israel", "Mount Zion" or "Jerusalem" in the Bible are replaced with the Gentile Church.
 - b. In essence, as explained by Mike Bickle: "Replacement theology spiritualises rather than interprets in a literal, plain sense way the prophetic promises given to Israel. It embraces a non-literal, allegorical interpretation of these promises and/or insists that most of the End-Time prophecies about Israel have been fulfilled in history."
 - c. Thus, under this theology, the Jewish people are no longer considered "God's chosen people" and that the Old Covenant has been completely replaced by the New Covenant.
 - d. This erroneous belief has unfortunately become a spiritual stronghold in many parts of the global Gentile Body of Christ over centuries of Church history.

4. There are two schools of thought within Replacement Theology when it comes to the Abrahamic Covenant:
 - a. Abolitionists — These believe that the Abrahamic Covenant that God made with Abraham and His descendants has been completely nullified. Instead, every Gentile believer would now receive the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant (and thus are called spiritual sons of Abraham; Gal. 3:29), and not the Jewish people.
 - b. Reconstructionists — These believe that the Abrahamic Covenant has been reconstructed in a manner where many of His promises for Israel are now only spiritual promises and blessings, and not literal ones. For example, the return of the people to the land of Jerusalem is now interpreted allegorically.
5. There are also two views of supersessionism that can overlap with the above two and that are not mutually exclusive:
 - a. Punitive Supersessionism — This view believes that due to the Jewish people's rejection of Jesus at His First Coming, God in turn rejected them, displaced them, and turned the covenants over to the Gentile Church.
 - b. Economic Supersessionism — This view believes that Israel's role in God's plan and purposes has been given to the Church after Jesus' First Coming and the establishment of the Church.
6. Additionally, many replacement theologians also do not believe that the curses and judgements that God said He would bring upon Israel in the event she turns away from Him apply to the Church today. Instead, they believe that only His blessings apply to the Gentile Church.
7. Despite the beliefs of Replacement Theology, Scripture has never stated that the Abrahamic Covenant has been abolished. It is crucial for the Gentile Church to read and interpret Scripture plainly and literally.

C. Misguided Biblical Eschatology

1. This refers to inaccurate views of the End Times which will cause the Gentile Church to neglect our mandate in Romans 11:11 to provoke Israel to jealousy through standing with her in her time of greatest need.
2. Two common inaccurate views of Biblical eschatology are:
 - a. Pre-tribulation rapture — This is the view that the Church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation, with some believing that Israel will face the tribulation on her own.
 - b. Amillennialism — This is the view that the 1000 years in Revelation 20:6–7 are not literal but symbolic and figurative. Thus, the fulfilment of these 1000 years is spiritualised. This view also interprets verses about the End Times as being symbolic of trials in our own lives and not pointing to actual literal events.

3. Both views cause the Gentile Church to have a diminished view of the reality of our call to stand with the Jewish people.
4. Scripture actually calls the Gentile Church to stand with Israel and provoke her to jealousy in her most critical hour as a nation and in her most horrific trials (Jer. 30:7).
 - a. The Jewish people will be fleeing from their homes and looking for places of refuge in the midst of End-Time persecution (Matt. 24:16–20).
 - b. This is the very time when the Jewish people will need a fiery global prayer movement that would stand in the gap to carry and cover them in the grace of God (Isa. 62:6–7).

D. The Implications and Dangers of Accepting These Misconceptions

1. They deny the faithfulness of God and His covenants.
 - a. Holding on to Replacement Theology contradicts God’s faithfulness to His Word and denies that He is faithful to Israel.
 - i. In Genesis 17:7, God says that He has made an “everlasting covenant” with Abraham and His descendants.
 - ii. In many Old Testament Scriptures (e.g. Jer. 32, Zech.), God assured His people that even though He would scatter them because of their sin and rebellion towards Him, He would ultimately restore them and plant them back in the land. The return of the state of Israel in 1948 is a down payment of this promise and a witness of His faithfulness.
 - b. The New Covenant does not replace the Abrahamic Covenant, but is part of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant. It is one major step towards seeing His promises to Abraham and Israel fulfilled.
 - c. Thus, God’s covenant with Israel is still valid and His Word in Scripture is still true today. He is faithful and will see them to completion.
2. Our view of Israel will not be in alignment with God’s view of her.
 - a. Replacement Theology results in a misunderstanding of and misalignment with Scripture that will lead to indifference and passivity. When taken to the extreme, it can also lead to antisemitism and hatred for Israel and the Jewish people.
 - b. It is crucial that we take the time now to cultivate understanding, wrestle with this issue, and align with God on this. Without a firm and biblically based foundation, we will be easily influenced by secular views and false narratives regarding Israel that are propounded by secular media.

3. The Gentile Church will not walk in the fullness of our Romans 11:11 call.
 - a. The Gentile Church's call in Romans 11:11 is to provoke Israel to jealousy. This is accomplished primarily through the greater oneness with the Father and Jesus (Jn. 17:23), moving in the greater works (Jn. 14:12) and expressing the greater love (Jn. 15:13).
 - b. When the Jewish people see the global Gentile Body of Christ standing with her as one without regard for our own lives and moving in great signs and wonders, their hearts will be provoked to jealousy. They will return to God in repentance and finally accept Jesus (Yeshua) as their Messiah.
 - c. Holding on to the belief that the Gentile Church will not be around in Israel's time of trouble or that she will not go through such trouble will leave us unprepared for the pressure that will come.
 - i. Our focus will be on self-preservation and saving our own lives instead of speaking comfort to her as called by God (Isa. 40:1–2).
 - ii. We will not start preparing ourselves to stand with her. It is necessary to see through the lens of a coming intensifying war instead of viewing things through the lens of a time of peace. Having a wartime mindset will cause us to prepare and live differently from a peacetime mindset.

E. Conclusion

1. The Apostle Paul's cry for the Gentile Church to acknowledge Israel's future destiny in God was rooted in Biblical truths and foundations.
2. Although God has partially and temporally rejected Israel due to her rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, we need to understand that the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's storyline and salvation plan does not necessitate the exclusion of the Jewish people.
3. It is crucial to take time to respond in obedience, put off wrong mindsets as we ask God to renew our minds, and completely align to Him on the issue of Israel.