

# The Rebirth of Israel

✖ For 1,800 years, the church fathers ranted that the church is the new Israel. To prove that God had turned His back on the Jews, they pointed to the wandering, tormented Jews of the Diaspora, saying, “If God is with them, why has this homeless befallen them?”

They forget that for the most part European Jews were living in states controlled by the Church of Rome. They existed without rights, without property, without legal redress, and without human dignity. The medieval church created its own self-fulfilling prophecy. Replacement theologians ignore a fundamental fact in the biblical text. When God removes or destroys something, you never hear from it again. Like Sodom and Gomorrah, which were so thoroughly destroyed, archaeologists can't even find the ashes of those cities. The cities are twice dead, plucked by the roots and cast over the wall to be turned and forever forgotten.

If the church fathers were correct and Israel was indeed replaced, she should have vanished like snow in the desert sun. By all rights, she should have disappeared, but she didn't. On May 5, 1948, a theological earthquake leveled replacement theology when the state of Israel was reborn after 2,000 years of wandering.

From the four corners of the earth, the seed of Abraham returned to the land of their fathers. They arose from their Gentile “graves” (Ezek. 37:12) speaking 60 different languages, and they founded a nation that has become a superpower in forty years. Far from passing away, the state of Israel is building, growing, inventing, and developing. The desert is indeed blooming like a rose, just as Isaiah the prophet promised (35:1).

You can't avoid the central issue. If God was finished with

the Jews and Israel, if they were really a cast-off relic of the past without divine purpose or destiny, why did He allow the state to be miraculously renewed?

If replaced, why reborn? The resurrection of God's chosen people is living prophetic proof that Israel has not been replaced. They were reborn in a day () to form the state of Israel that shall endure until the coming of the Messiah.

If Israel as a nation had not been reborn, if the Jews had not returned to the land, if the cities of Israel had not been rebuilt, if Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) had not been occupied, if the trees the Turks cut down had not been replanted, if the agricultural accomplishments of Israel had not been miraculous, there would be a valid reason to doubt that the Word of God is true.

However, in the light of the above-mentioned miracles, none can doubt the absolute accuracy of the prophetic scriptures concerning the rebirth and restoration of the Jewish state.

Read God's Word and listen as His prophets declare His intention for the Jews to inhabit Israel. See Isaiah 35:10; 61:4; 44:26; Ezekiel 20:33-34, 40-42; 34:28-30; 11:17-19; Jeremiah 31:10-12; 30:3, 10-11, Psalm 126:1-2; 107:1-3; 1:14-17.

The Old Testament prophets are clear and united in their opinions that replacement theology is completely wrong, misguided, ill conceived and incorrect. The Jews have not been replaced, for they will return to Jerusalem, the city of God, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be their God.

Jesus did not support replacement theology. Jesus was the greatest teacher of the ages. Christ gave us three chapters (Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21) that are prophetic and present the chronological events of the future from His time until His second coming. In Matthew 24:3, His disciples asked Jesus three questions:

1. When shall these things be? This question referred to the destruction of the temple. Jesus answered in Luke 21:20, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you know that its desolation is near." This prediction was fulfilled in when the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem.

2. What will be the sign of Your coming?

3. When is the end of the age? In spite of "kingdom now" theology (whose adherents believe the church will be so victorious that we will usher in the millennial age), this world is coming to an end. In Galatians 1:4, Paul wrote that Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (emphasis added).

There is not a single hint in one of these passages supporting replacement theology. Paul did not mention the demise of the Jewish nation, nor did Jesus.

Let's look at Matthew 24:15-18, where Jesus described the great period of tribulation that will come upon the earth. This verse assumes that Israel is living in its homeland and in control of the city of Jerusalem. "Therefore," said Jesus, "when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes."

The "holy place" Jesus mentioned is the temple in Jerusalem. The Jews are in control of the temple at this time right before the Tribulation. How could they control the temple without being in control of Jerusalem? How could they be in control of Jerusalem if they were replaced?

"Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains," Jesus said. Judea is what the media now call the West Bank. Jesus' statement assumes that in the last days the Jews would be

living on the West Bank. In the next several verses, Jesus describes a general evacuation of the population in and around Jerusalem because of a pending military attack.

When this military attack comes, warned Jesus, don't go to Jerusalem for safety. You will have only a few minutes to save your life. Flee to the mountains outside Jerusalem as a matter of civil defense. Jesus continues, "let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes."

The rooftops in Jerusalem, both now and in Jesus' time, are flat. There is usually an outside stairway leading to the ground. When this attack comes, Jesus warned, don't worry about saving anything in the house, just run for your life. And if you are in the fields, laboring in your work clothes, don't run back to the house to change.

Jesus continues," But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:19-21).

Why woe to those who are pregnant and with nursing babies? Why pray that your escape would be not in winter or on the Sabbath? Because an escape would be much more difficult. This verse again indicates that the religious Jews are in control of an Israeli government where the laws of the Sabbath are being strictly enforced.

I don't know if you've had the opportunity to travel in Israel on the Sabbath, but I can assure you that everything shuts down on Saturday. There is no transportation. Even the elevators in the hotels and high-rise apartments stop on every floor automatically.

If an Arab missile with a nuclear warhead or poison gas struck

Jerusalem on the Sabbath, the attack would result in mass destruction.

Jesus confirms that the Jews are back in Israel in Matthew 24:22 when He says, “and unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”

“The elect” are the Jewish people. If Jesus and the prophets were convinced that Israel would return to the land, and if they were certain Israel had not been cast aside or replaced in the economy of God, how is it that America’s replacement theologians have come up with a different idea? Did it spring from narcissism? Anti-Semitism?

### **Replacement Theology is Idolatry**

Replacement theology violates the Ten Commandments. First Samuel 15:23 tell us, “For rebellion is a sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”

This verse says two things: (1) rebellion equals witchcraft and (2) stubbornness equals idolatry. Who is a stubborn person? People who refuse to change their ideas even when they are in direct conflict with God’s Word are the worst kind of stubborn. These people idolize their opinions and are soon in open rebellion against the will and Word of God.

Christians would never dream of allowing their pastor to preach with a statue of Buddha draped around his neck – that’s open idolatry. But they think nothing of permitting their pastor, whose stubborn personal opinions about Israel are exactly opposite the Word of God, to lead them into dangerous deception.

Has the church replaced Israel? Not in the opinion of Jesus and the prophets of Israel. The canon of scripture and modern history are witnesses to the fact that Israel has been reborn and will endure forever.

From the dark days of Jewish persecution in Germany, a legend has survived. According to the story, a pastor, acting out Nazi orders, looked upon his congregation and told them, "All of you who had Jewish fathers will leave and not return."

A few worshippers rose and slipped out of the sanctuary. The pastor then said, "All of you who had Jewish mothers must go and not return." Again, a few worshipers arose and departed. Suddenly those who remained in their pews turned pale and began to tremble with fear. The figure of Christ on the cross above the altar loosed itself and left the church.

Think about it. If Jesus Christ came to your church this Sunday morning, would the ushers let Him enter the front door? He would appear small and slender, with penetrating dark eyes, a swarthy complexion, and prominent Semitic features. He would have ear locks, hair uncut at the corners, and full beard. His shoulders would be draped with a talit, or prayer shawl.

If Jesus identified Himself to your congregation as a rabbi who befriended prostitutes and socialized with tax collectors and people with AIDS, would He be welcomed? If He confessed that He was hated by the government and traveled with twelve unemployed men with full beards and shoulder-length hair, could they find a seat in your pews?

If your deacons asked Him about His doctrinal position and He responded, "I believe in baptism by immersion, casting out demons, and healing the sick," would they let Him stand behind your pulpit? If He commanded your wealthiest church members to sell all they had to give to the poor, if He entered your beautiful church gym and turned over the bingo tables shouting, "My house shall be called a house of prayer," would you call the police?

The simple truth is this: After 2,000 years of anti-Semitic teaching and preaching, we have lost sight of the Jewishness of our Hebrew Savior. But He was born to Jewish parents, His

ancestors were Jewish, He was raised in the Jewish tradition, He lived and worshiped as a Jew, He died as a Jew, and He will return as a Jew. When you kneel tonight to pray, the one who hears you is a rabbi named Jesus of Nazareth.