

WILL ISRAEL BE IN THE END TIMES & THE BOOK OF REVELATION? PART I

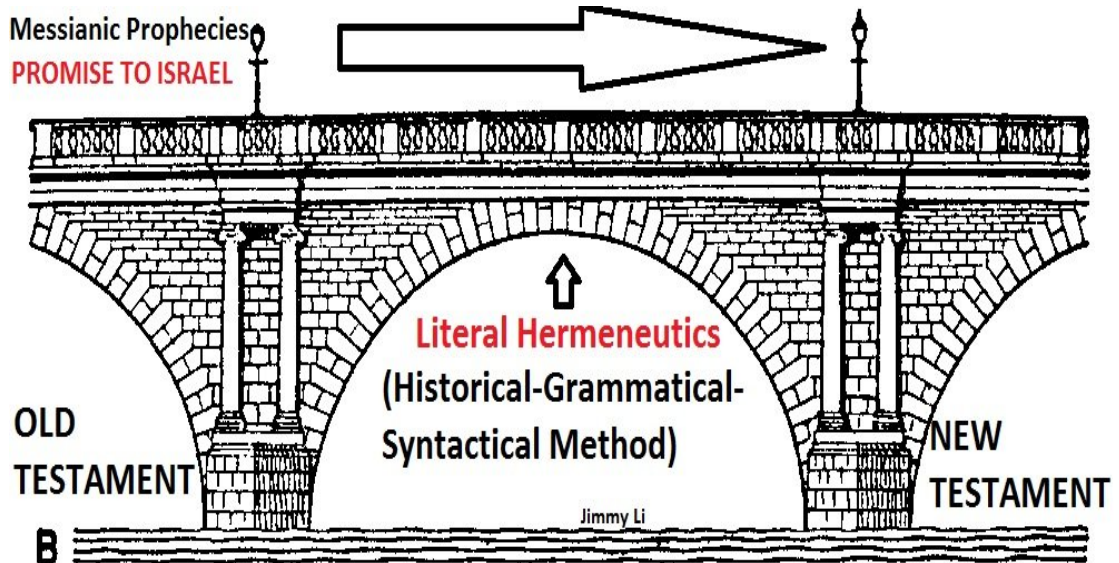
- I. Purpose: To understand what is replacement theology and why we believe the Jews and the nation of Israel will have a role in the book of revelation and one day experience national restoration in the Millennial Kingdom and beyond.
Then next week we will evaluate arguments against Israel being in the end times from the example of the latest Amillennial book by Sam Storm.
- II. What is replacement theology?
 - a. Some people believe that Israel is no longer God's people. They believe that God has the church replaced Israel for good and no promises given by God to them in the past applies anymore.
 - b. Replacement theology believes that the church has taken over Israel's place as God's special people.
 - c. Important note: While we believe the church is God's special people and a vehicle of salvation in the current church age, we also believe that does not take away Israel from being God's people; nor does that mean the promises God has for them no longer applies today.
- III. Sample of statements by those subscribing to replacement theology
 - a. Origen (185-254): "And we say with confidence that they [the Jews] will never be restored to their former condition. For they committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind."¹
 - b. Martin Luther (1483-1546): "Therefore the Jews have lost this promise, no matter how much they boast of their father Araham...They are no longer the people of God."²
- IV. Why we believe Israel will be in the end times:
 - a. The Book of Revelation makes explicit reference to Israel
 - i. Scriptures
 1. **Revelation 7:4**= "*And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:*"
 - a. Note how **verses 5-7** then breaks down the 144,000 into 12 literal tribes of 12,000.
 - b. Jehovah Witnesses' tend to see this reference to Jews as it being not literal. But if this is not literal, then the 144,000 is also not literal.
 2. **Revelation 14:1**= "*Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads*"
 - a. Note how this 144,000 allude back to the 144,000 back in **Revelation 7:4**.
 - b. Note how these Jews were with the Lamb "*standing on Mount Zion,*" i.e., Jerusalem.
 3. **Revelation 20:12**= "*It had a great and high wall, [12]with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel*"

¹ Origen, *Against Celsus* 4:22, ANF 4:506.

² Quoted from Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*, (Nashville: Baker Academic, 2010), 86.

This is after Christ's second coming, the Tribes are here memorialized on the gates.

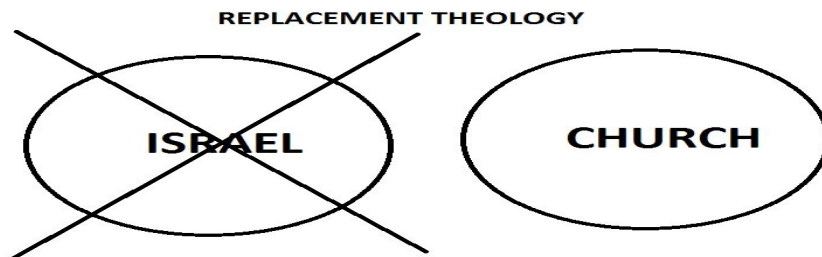
- ii. The problem: Some see the Book of revelation as symbolic and that this allusion to Israel is symbolic and not literal and represents the church.
Next week we will evaluate whether replacement theology is justified from the passages they say is their support.
- b. God's promises through the Covenants must be kept because of who God is. Therefore because God has to fulfill His covenants we expect this to unfold in the end times after His second coming.
 - i. Note: The reason why God has to keep His promise is because of who He is; here we see our systematic theology, in particular, our theology proper reinforce our conclusion that God will keep His covenant.
 - ii. God does not lie
 - 1. "So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us."(Hebrews 6:18)
 - 2. See also **Numbers 23:19, Malachi 3:6, Romans 3:4, Titus 1:2**, etc.
 - iii. God is all powerful to keep His promise (**Matthew 19:26, Luke 1:37, etc**)
 - iv. Therefore, He will keep His promise to Israel.
- c. The same heremenutics we use to show that Christianity is true via Messianic prophecies, is the same hermeneutics we see that God has His future promises for Israel.



- d. The New Testament itself teaches that Israel has not been replaced by the church.
 - i. See **Romans 11:25-29**.
 - ii. No where does the Bible ever teach the church has replaced Israel. This will be the subject next week when we see the verses Sam Storm will attempt to bring up to say it's otherwise.

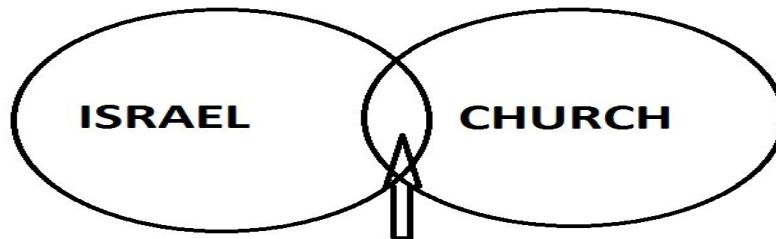
WILL ISRAEL BE IN THE END TIMES & THE BOOK OF REVELATION? PART I

- I. Purpose of today's lesson: We will evaluate arguments against Israel being in the end times from the example of the latest Amillennial book Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative (2013) by Sam Storm.
- Specifically, we are looking at chapter six titled, "Who are the People of God? Israel, the Church and 'Replacement' Theology"
 - Note: Time does not permit us to go over everything Storms says in one session; nevertheless we will evaluate some of his arguments in the order they appear in the book to demonstrate the principle of refuting Replacement theology argument.
- II. **Sam Storm's Replacement Theology in his own words**
- "I do not believe it is God's purpose to reconstitute or re-establish a theocratic nation separate from the Church. The Church is the only 'holy nation' (1 Peter 2:9) that will inherit the promises of the covenant."³
 - "The 'Israel of God' (Galatians 6:16), therefore, in and for whom the promises will be fulfilled consists of believing Jews and Gentiles, the natural and unnatural branches in the one olive tree of God."⁴
- III. **Methodological consideration**
- We need to ask: How do we prove that the church/Gentile believers have replaced the nation of Israel? That is, what must someone do to demonstrate replacement theology is true?
 - Remember what Replacement Theology Teaches:
 - There is no more restoration of Israel in the future; Church has superceded Israel and the church is Israel. The national promises to Israel have expired.



Church has now replaced Israel

- Often advocates of Replacement Theology arguments end up showing this:



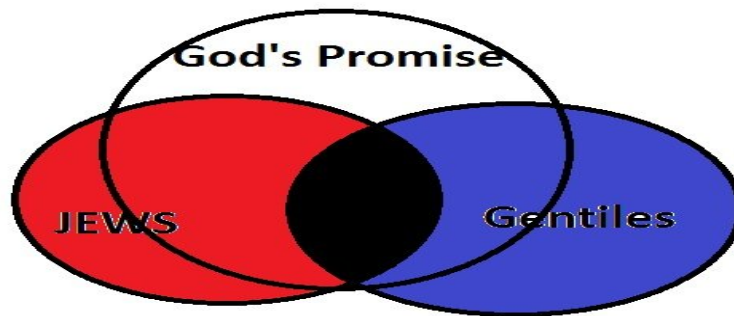
Parallel of Church and Israel

³ Sam Storm, *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative*, (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), 227.

⁴ Ibid, 188.

- i. It is not enough to show there are parallels between the church and Israel nor the fact that some language of Israel's role is now also the responsibility of the church.
- ii. Again, advocates of replacement theology must show that Israel no longer has a role. That is, there must be a specific verse that Israel is no more or the Church is now Israel.
- d. Other times advocates of Replacement theology arguments amount to this:

Referents of God's Promises



- i. Referent: Recipients of God's promises.
- ii. Advocates often show how an Old Testament promise has also been given to one referent then conclude the other referent no longer has the promise. But this does not disprove the other referent no longer has God's promises!
- iii. One can add more referents (Gentiles) to God's original promises but this does not necessarily mean that the original referents (Jews) are no longer heirs to God's promises.

IV. Sam Storm's Arguments from Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative

a. **Ephesians 2:12-13**

- i. Passage: *"¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."*
- ii. Storm's Argument:
 1. "To what have Gentiles been brought 'near'? Certainly, near to Christ or to the salvation and forgiveness that his 'blood' (v.13) has obtained. But as I examined this passage more closely I began to realize that it wasn't simply salvation to which Gentiles had been brought near but to the very things stated in verse 12 from which they had previously been separated."⁵
 2. "Whatever a believing Jew can point to in the Old Testament and say, 'Mine,' is no less the inheritance and future of a believing Gentile."⁶
 3. Conclusion: "The focus on God's presence, the repository of his power, is no more and never again shall be an ethnically united people-group who share a common ancestry, but rather a

⁵ Ibid, 184.

⁶ Ibid, 185.

spiritually united Church who share a common faith in Jesus Christ.”⁷

iii. Response:

1. No where in Ephesians 2 do we read anything about how God’s power “is no more and never again shall be an ethnically united people-group...”
2. “Being near to something does not mean assumption of its identity.”⁸
 - a. That is, just because one referent share in something with another referent does not mean that one becomes that referent.
 - b. Illustration: Ben Fong shares the same name and privilege as members of our church with Ben Cheung doesn’t make them the same person.
3. One can be a believing Gentile and believing Jew while also being in one group, the Church.
4. If Paul wanted to say believing Gentiles and believing Jews are now the same thing, he would have used instead the preposition compounds of εἰς instead of .⁹
5. If Jews and Gentiles are all the same thing with no distinction, it would not make sense why Paul continued to talk about Jews and Gentiles (Romans 1:16, Romans 11, 1 Corinthians 1:24, etc).

b. **Galatians 3:15**

- i. Passage: “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is ^[ai]neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”²⁹ *And if you ^[ak]belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s ^[al]descendants, heirs according to promise.”*
- ii. Storm’s Argument: “But, if you are ‘in Christ’ through faith and thus belong to him, then you too ‘are Abraham’s offspring’ or ‘seed’ and thus you too are an heir of the covenant promises!”¹⁰
- iii. Response:

1. Our verse here cannot mean there are no more Jews as distinct from Greeks in terms of identity.
 - a. Otherwise there really are no more distinction between men and women and being slave and free is the same thing.
 - b. What the verse means is that our status alone is not going to hinder us to God’s promises for all people.
2. Again, just because Gentiles are added to the promise doesn’t mean Jews don’t longer has the national promises of God!
3. Note again the verse does not here teach that the church has now become Israel, or Israel no longer will have God’s promises to them.

⁷ Ibid, 188.

⁸ Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*, (Nashville: Baker Academic, 2010), 152.

⁹ Ibid, 154.

¹⁰ Sam Storm, *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative*, (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), 190.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES AND THE COMING OF CHRIST: REVELATION 2-3

- I. Review and Purpose: The last two week we have established that ethnic Israel will have a role in the end times, so today we will see the Church's place in the end times from the reference to the Church in **Revelation 2-3** and see how it support an imminent (at any moment) rapture of the church.
- Note: After our evaluation, we will close with practical implications for our lives from our study.
- II. Context: **Revelation 2-3** in the book of Revelation
- a. **Revelation 1** is an introduction to the book.
- Vision seen at Patmos (**Revelation 1:9-16**)
 - Encounter with Jesus (**Revelation 1:17-18**)
 - Vision explained (**Revelation 1:19-20**)
 - Note how **verse 19** gives the outline for the Book of Revelation.
 - Verse 20** interprets the vision.
- b. **Revelation 2-3** records seven letters to the seven churches **in the past but present during the Apostle John's day**.
- c. **Revelation 4-22** is John's heavenly vision of the **future**.
- III. **Revelation 2-3** makes allusion to the coming of Jesus Christ
- a. To six of the seven churches, Christ explicitly refers to His second coming. Only to Smyrna is there no word about Christ's second coming.
- b. Positive vs. Negative Coming of Christ
- Positive
 - Thyatira (**2:25**)
 - Passage: "Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come"
 - This is addressed to the faithful in the church who had "deeds, love, faith, service and ^[h]perseverance"(v.19)
 - Verse 25** is the introduction to **verses 25 through 28** of the incentive to persesvere against Jezebel.
 - Philadelphia (**3:11**)
 - Passage: "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown."
 - Right before this, in **v.10**, Jesus tells them they will be spared the global tribulation of the world. So we see here His second coming for the church does not mean participation of that hour of testing.
 - Laodicea (**3:20**)
 - Passage: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."
 - Matthew 24:33, Mark 13:29, Luke 12:36, James 5:9** indicates that "door" is an eschatological reference and not the "door" to your heart, etc.
 - Contextually, **verse 21** refer to an eschatological event so it make sense to see this as talking about Christ's second coming.
 - Negative
 - Ephesus (**2:5**)

- a. Passage: “Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the ^ld deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.”
- b. While not as obvious, in the Greek it is better to understand this as “or else I am coming” but “WHEN I am coming.”¹¹
- c. By the Lampstand being removed, it cease being a Church of Christ and spared from the hour of testing of the whole world.

2. Pergamum (2:16)

- a. Passage: “Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.”
- b. Here we see Christ’s active judgment upon those who held to false teachings.

3. Sardis (3:3)

- a. Passage: “So remember ^lt what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.”
- b. **Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, Revelation 16:15** indicates that the “thief” motif is an eschatological reference.¹²

IV. When will both comings take place?

- a. “The common feature of the two types is that both comings are imminent. They could occur at any moment to implement the anticipated results for the designated objects. The only way that both comings can be imminent is for them occur simultaneously.”¹³
- b. Revelation 3:10 global hour of testing is further described in the rest of the Book of Revelation.
- c. Note the church’s absence in **Revelation 4-18**.

V. Implications:

- a. We live a life of continual holiness knowing He can come any moment.
- b. We live a life repenting of sins constantly, knowing He can come any moment.

¹¹ Robert Thomas, “The ‘Comings’ of Christ in Revelation 2-3,” in *The Master’s Perspective on Biblical Prophecy*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002), 120.

¹² Ibid, 124.

¹³ Ibid, 125.