

"Replacement Theology"

Tonight, in our study of the Kingdom we are going to look at Replacement Theology and how it came to be but most of all I want you to see the dangers of wrong theology. What is Replacement Theology? It is the belief that because the first century Jews rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah then God has forever rejected the Jews and has replaced Israel with the church. Those who believe in Replacement Theology say that Israel has no right to even be in the Middle East. They say they should be driven out and scattered among the nations. Where did this idea come from? Who even started such a thought within the church? Replacement theology started about one hundred years after the apostles. There were several men who played major roles in getting this theology to find root within the church. After the 1st century the church was made up mostly of Gentiles. When it began it was Jewish for the first several years but when the persecution came the Jews scattered and the Gospel went to the Samaritans and then the Gentiles. There were several Gentile church leaders who were anti-Semitic and this is where the Replacement Theology got its roots.

Justin Martyr (100-165AD)- Claimed Christians are the true Israelite race. The seed of Jacob/literal Jewish people instead refers to the Church not the Israelites.

Tertullian (145-220AD)- He reinterpreted Genesis 25.

Genesis 25:21-26

²¹ And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

²² And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

²³ And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

²⁴ And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

²⁵ And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

²⁶ And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

Tertullian taught that the older brother in this text (Esau) was the Jews and the younger brother (Jacob) was the church. So, the Jews were to serve the Gentile Christians/church.

Origin - (185-253 AD.) - President of a school in Egypt. He developed the allegorical method of Bible interpretation. He said you cannot take the Bible literally but you must find the spiritual meaning within the text. He claimed Israel in the Bible was spiritual Israel/the New Testament Church.

Cyprian - (195-258AD) - He was the bishop of the church in Carthage. He taught that the Jews lost God's favor when they rejected their Messiah and the Christians had therefore taken their place.

Effects of this Teaching

Two major areas were affected over time.

Ecclesiology - This is how the church is to function.

Eschatology- This is the study of future things.

Ecclesiology

This is how ecclesiology changed with Replacement Theology. Those who believed in Replacement Theology believed that since God had a priest hood in Israel, He must want one within the church which they say was the new Israel. In the Old Testament there was one high priest and many subordinate priests under him so they believed that God would want the same thing in the church. Therefore, they established an order of priests. The church had pastors, deacons, and elders but who was to watch over them to see if they did their work? Then they developed offices such as Bishops, Monarchical Bishops, Metropolitan Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals, the Pope.

Next, they addressed blood sacrifices. They said that Israel in the Old Testament had a sacrificial system in which blood sacrifices were offered therefore God must want the new Israel/the church to have the same. But animal sacrifices could not be made. So slowly, and over several centuries, they began to introduce that when communion was taken that a miracle took place. They believed the bread miraculously turned into the body of Jesus Christ and the wine miraculously turned into the blood of Jesus Christ. So, they believe that each time communion is served that Jesus dies each and every time. This is completely contrary to the Scriptures.

Hebrews 10:10-14

¹⁰ *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

¹¹ *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:*

¹² *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

¹³ *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

¹⁴ *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

The idea that Jesus dies every time communion is served is to say that His death on the cross two thousand years ago was not sufficient to pay for the sins of mankind. They do not believe His work was complete so they believe He must die over and over to save them.

Eschatology

When the church began its eschatology was "chiliasm" which was the belief Jesus Christ was going to return to the earth in a glorious second coming and He would then set up His Kingdom and He would reign on this earth for one thousand years. This was accepted and believed to be a literal Kingdom as we looked at in our study. The Old Testament prophets taught this Kingdom to be a literal Kingdom.

Isaiah 65:20-25

²⁰ *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*

²¹ *And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.*

²² *They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

²³ *They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.*

²⁴ And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Revelation 20:1-6

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

³ And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

⁶ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

These are just a few of the passages that speak of the Kingdom and we understand them to be literal as did the early church. This was taught by the apostles to be literal. Now let me explain what happened. Some of the early Gentile leaders who believed in Replacement Theology saw this teaching as being Jewish. They therefore said, "We cannot accept this since it is Jewish. We therefore must come up with a different view which God must have had when He gave the passages." Then there was a man who came on the scene named **Augustine**. He was a very influential church leader in North Africa. Because of the influence of anti-Semitic teaching and Greek philosophy on his life before he was saved, he decided that this Kingdom could not be seen as literal. Augustine determined that the Kingdom spoken of had to be a spiritual form of the Kingdom that would come upon the earth. It would then be a spiritual form of God's rule upon the world. He then began to apply the allegorical method also when it came to future events being recorded in the Bible. He therefore applied this to the message of the prophets and to the book of Revelation. Based upon the teaching of Augustine the book of Revelation cannot be seen as literal but when it is studied, we must look for hidden spiritual meanings behind what is being said. Augustine developed an entirely new view called "Amillennialism." This word is very clear concerning what he believed. "A" means "No" and therefore the word means "No Millennium" or "No thousand-year Kingdom." Augustine also introduced something else which we see today. He taught that the church is the Kingdom. Let me show you a couple passages that he twisted.

Daniel 2:39-44

³⁹ *And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.*

⁴⁰ *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.*

⁴¹ *And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.*

⁴² *And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.*

⁴³ *And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.*

⁴⁴ And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

The Kingdom which Daniel spoke of here, is what Augustine taught to be the church.

Daniel 7:3-7, 13-14

³ And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

⁴ The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

⁵ And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

⁶ After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

¹³ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

¹⁴ And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Augustine taught that the Kingdom mentioned here was the church. He was the first person to teach that the New Testament church was the Messianic Kingdom. Now we need to understand what happened because of this teaching. The Roman church grabbed tightly onto what Augustine taught. Because the Kingdom of God will have absolute authority over the world as taught in the Bible the Roman church which believed they were the Kingdom, also believed they had the right to exercise God's authority over the world. From this belief the Roman church became a very powerful political religious force.

This belief in Replacement Theology resulted in hundreds of thousands of Jews being slaughtered throughout the Middle Ages. The Jews became known as "Christ killers" and they were killed in the name of Jesus Christ.

In the 1500's the Protestant Reformation took place. The Reformers rejected much of the teaching of the Roman church but there is one teaching that they did not reject and that was Replacement Theology. They believed the church was the new Israel. Not every reformer advocated for persecution of the Jews, but there was one who did. His name was **Martin Luther**. He began by telling his people to be kind to the Jews so they could be won to Christ. But that did not work and Luther became very hateful toward the Jews. He started to tell the people to burn their synagogues, tear down their houses, outlaw their public worship, and deal with them mercilessly. Let us notice some of what Luther said concerning the Jews.

- *First to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians.*
- *I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed.*
- *I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them.*
- *I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb.*
- *I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews.*
- *I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping.*
- *I commend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam.*
- *" ... Eject them forever from this country.*
- *"I have come to the conclusion that the Jews will always curse and blaspheme God and his King Christ, as all the prophets have predicted.*

Luther became so hateful toward the Jews that Hitler called Luther, "OUR GREAT NATIONAL HERO!"

Conclusion:

From all of this we can see why we are studying the coming Kingdom. We can clearly see what the wrong theology will do to those who accept it.