

DISPENSATIONALISM AND 'REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY'

... Guest article by a full preterist in Canada

REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY: WHAT IS IT, AND WHO IS "REALLY" TEACHING IT?

According to Dwight Pentecost, one of the leading modern advocates for the Dispensational view of eschatology (along with Tim LaHaye, Tommy Ice, Hal Lindsay, John MacArthur), in his book "Things to Come," said, "The fact remains that Old Covenant Israel remains the 'determinative purpose of God.'"

The idea, or doctrine, that the church could conceivably be the fulfillment of God's promises to Old Covenant (OC) Israel is according to Hal Lindsay, "a dangerous doctrine." They call this "replacement theology."

However, if we really look at the facts: Dispensationalism teaches that God's eternal covenant is with the nationalistic physical people of Israel, but due to Israel's unbelief in Christ as the Messiah, God had to temporarily put Israel aside, and put His prophetic clock and promises on hold, and **made up** the era of the church, which they say was never mentioned or was ever the plan of God in the Old Testament. This **made up** temporary church era we are all in now will continue until a rapture where the church is taken off of this planet, where again God can then go back to His original plan with His exclusive dealings with the physical nation of Israel and have them accept their Messiah this time. **If this is not in reality "replacement theology," then I do not know really what is.**

Dispensationalists acknowledge that the church is a spiritual entity, a spiritual temple, a spiritual people, with spiritual sacrifices and the like. However, they believe that the church and all of the things just mentioned will one day all be **replaced** again with, and by, a literal temple, literal priesthood and literal sacrifices in a literal city again.

I ask you:

- 1) Which is worse: to replace the spiritual heavenly Jerusalem with an earthly carnal Jerusalem?
- 2) Which is worse: to replace the spiritual temple – the body of Christ, with a physical temple made with hands? In Dan 2:44-45, we are told that the Kingdom God would set up will stand **forever**... are we now told to believe another temple built with hands, is to replace the one **not made with hands**?
- 3) Which is worse: to replace a spiritual priesthood with earthly priests again? John told us in Rev 1:5-6 that Christ made **us** a kingdom of priests, and Peter said in 1 Pet. 2:5 that **we** offer up to God spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the future, is there going to be a reinstatement of the earthly priests and sacrifices?

- 4) Which is worse: to replace the spiritual temple, spiritual priesthood, spiritual sacrifices, with a physical temple, physical altar, and physical priesthood?
- 5) Which is worse: to replace the “one time for all time” perfect sacrifice of Christ, which was foreshadowed by all those physical sacrifices... **to replace His perfect sacrifice again with all those animal sacrifices which could never take away sin**, and which God clearly told us he never wanted in the first place (Heb. 10:4-8)?
- 6) Which is worse: Dispensationalists say it is wrong to replace all of physical things with the spiritual things of Christ. **I ask you, is it not worse to replace the spiritual things of Christ with the carnal, material, physical, ineffective things of Israel?**

This is a very serious issue. Teaching the fulfilled position in the church is not at all “replacement theology.” It is **fulfillment theology**, and that means that God rejecting physical Israel was not arbitrary and capricious – **it was God fulfilling His promises to true Israel in the way that He originally intended** (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:7-8, 16-17, 28-29).

Let’s take a look at which doctrinal position honestly teaches the ultimate form of “replacement theology,” and which doctrine really is the dangerous theology:

Think about this: if it is a dangerous doctrine to say that Israel has been replaced by the church:

- How much more dangerous is it to say that the **blood bought body of Christ will one day be replaced again by OC nationalistic Israel?**

INDISPUTABLE FACTS: OC ISRAEL, THE LAND, THE TEMPLE, THE CITY, THE PRIESTHOOD, THE SACRIFICES:

- 1) Were all **shadows** of better things to come (Col. 2:16-17). So, whatever they pointed forward to was inherently **better** than the Old Covenant form.
- 2) Christ and the church is the substance, the body, the reality.
 - Israel, the land, the temple, the sacrifices, the priest, etc were completely ineffective – they could **not** bring man back into the full presence of God. They could **not** remove sin. They could **not** repair the breach between heaven and earth since Adam that condemned man under sin to the condemnation of eternal death in the Lake of Fire.
 - However, Christ through His shed blood on the cross accomplishes **all** of that. Paul said that **it was God’s eternal purpose** that in the administration (or stewardship) of the “fullness of the times He might **gather together in one all things in Christ**, both which are in heaven (unseen realm) and which are on the earth (seen realm) – in Him” (Eph. 1:9-10). (**Gather together**: Greek = *anakephalaioó* = *recapitulate, gather up in one. Summing up all the parts as a comprehensive (organized) whole.*)

HELPS Word-studies: (“recapitulate”) shows the head as the “organizing center,” causing all the parts to work together in harmony.

* Is this not in perfect harmony with “the times of **restoration**” in Acts 3:21 (*Greek = apokatastasis = put back in proper condition. See context in vs. 19-24*), and is a synonymous term with “time of **reformation**” in Heb. 9:10 (*Greek = diorthosis = put back in normal or right position. See context in vs. 8-11*), and is this also not in harmony with the purpose and final state of things after the final trumpet in **Rev. 11:15**?

SO HERE IS THE QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT – WHICH IS WORSE:

1) To say that Old Covenant Israel, which pointed forward to the better things, and the better things are Christ, to say therefore that **the church has fulfilled the shadows and types represented by Old Covenant Israel**?

Or,

2) Is that worse than saying that the ineffectual, temporary, carnal, shadow, non-blood bought earthly Old Covenant kingdom given under Moses (Old Covenant sacrificial system) – will one day replace the **effective, eternal, superior Kingdom of Christ**?

Dispensationalism teaches that one day the Kingdom of Christ in the church will be replaced in the distinctive role as God’s covenant chosen people. The church will be removed from the earth and replaced on earth by Israel as God’s distinctive, chosen covenant people. And the Old Covenant distinctives, between Jews and Gentiles, will one day be restored and reconstituted (**This in effect would completely destroy Paul’s arguments in Galatians 3 and 4 of stating there is now in Christ no distinction ever again between Jew/Gentile**).

SO, I WOULD ASK MY DISPENSATIONAL FRIENDS, WHOSE “REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY” IS MORE DANGEROUS:

1) Dispensationalism, which actually anticipates the removal and the replacement of the blood bought church/body/Kingdom of Christ?

2) Or, Preterist eschatology, which says that the church has not **displaced** Israel, but that the blood bought church/body/Kingdom of Christ **is the glorious fulfillment** of all that Old Covenant Israel foreshadowed?