

Romans 11 and the Replacement Problem

I will begin this paper by quoting a portion of scripture which is very important to both Jews and Gentiles alike which is:-

“Do not boast against the branches, but if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root but the root supports you” Rom 11v18

Whether we are comforted by it or not the Christian faith is firmly embedded in the history of Israel, this is because the church received certain promises from the Covenant that was made with Abraham. Who was the first man in the Bible to be called a Hebrew (Gen 14:13). In this covenant he was promised by God that he would inherit the land of Canaan (Gen 12:7, 13:15, 15:15) he was also promised that **“all peoples on earth would be blessed through you”** (Gen 12:3, 18:18, 22:18). This was again reiterated by the Apostle Peter in the New Testament in Acts 3:25, and again in Galatians 3:29 by Paul who said **“If you are Christ’s then you are Abraham’s seed.”**

This expresses the family relationship that every believer has in Messiah whether Jew or Gentile, furthermore the New Testament goes so far as to say that all who display Abrahams faith and deeds are **‘his true offspring’**. So we can now see that the question of origins is really a question of ‘roots’, so all who have accepted Jesus as their saviour and live up to that, are the real people of God.

But I often find that many believers are oblivious to that, and have no concept of it at all. Rather they insist that Jews and Gentiles be kept separate and that’s how they think of it in their mind, but God did not give us a Bible of two composite parts, neither is it 66 books with conflicting concepts and teachings. But it is one book recording the acts of God under eight primary covenants, so doctrinally there is no conflict between the two.

So Where Does Replacementism come into it? Well there is a teaching that came out a long time ago called Covenant Theology, and it teaches that all peoples were included in the plan of God from Adam therefore the people of God are not Israel as this is just a metaphor for the whole people of God not literal Israel. They take the scriptures Galatians 6:16 were it speaks of the Israel of God, as their text to prove that only the church is the Israel of God as it is only mentioned in the New Testament. This erroneous doctrine came from a number of scholars two of which were Charles W. Hodge and Lorain Boettner, they go on to say that because no earthly kingdom was ever promised to the Jews, only a spiritual kingdom was promised, therefore the Christian church is the fulfilment of all the Old Testament Prophets writings. They continue to say that the true invisible church is the one God has revealed in the last days, and as such they are **‘the Israel of God’**. It is called Covenant Theology because they believe that God’s covenants are summed up in two positions, one made up of works (Old Testament) and one of grace (New Testament) and it was completed by Jesus on the cross, therefore Jews have no place in the New Testament they had their chance and messed it up through idolatry and that is why God scattered them into the diaspora or rest of the world.

Now this is one of the chief exponents of anti Semitism as it attempts to take the Jews out of the scriptural context altogether regardless of what scripture says about the Jews in Jeremiah 30:16 or Jeremiah 31:35 and Gen 12:3 to name only a few, there are many more, but the greatest problem is that this is being taught in many Bible Colleges and it needs desperately to be reformed.

But Why Do I Have to Become Jewish?

Modern day Christians have traditionally taken one of two approaches when dealing with the subject of spiritual identity. The older and more commonly held view is that of Replacement or Covenant Theology which is something which in modern times surfaced as ‘Kingdom Theology’ or ‘Dominionism’ or ‘Reconstructionism’

under any and all these titles Israel is said to be replaced by the church. Old Dispensationism which was taught by the Brethren church said that Jews only had their promises on earth, while the church had all its promises in Heaven. All these positions are wrong and the main reason that Jews object to the church so strongly today is precisely for this very reason, and its hard hearted wrong application of scripture. But the scriptural view is clearly that the church is made up of both Jews and Gentiles, the one new man of Ephesians 2:11-15 and furthermore the Gentiles are only in the church because as we are told in Romans 11 they have been **grafted in**

to spiritual Israel or the real **'Israel of God'**. They had never before kept any of God's covenants, as had the Jews, so why on earth would God want to initiate them straight into His Kingdom. The Jewish people were a people that God had prepared over many centuries to receive the promise (Heb 11:39) and the covenant with Abraham showed that God had this grafting in, on His agenda all the time, so He could bless all nations with the blessings He had already worked into Israel. Remember He went to the Gentiles first and it ended up with all the problems in Genesis six and He had to totally destroy the world with the flood and start again.

So we see that Jews that find Yeshua do not have to take on board a pseudo –Christian culture in order to be accepted they have kept the seven covenants with God and now they simply have to move into the eighth and final covenant which we know as the New Covenant, and which is also a Jewish Covenant according to Jeremiah 31:31,

So where does the Gentile Element of the Church fit In All of This?

Well we read many times in the Apostle Paul's writings such things as this;

“Keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you “(1 Cor11:2)

“We command you Brethren in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.” (2 Thess 3:6)

Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:13)

“Do not go beyond that which was written” (1 Cor 4:6)

First of all we have to firmly reject replacement theology in all its forms, second we have to see that the Messianic Movement is the fulfilment of all the hard work that God has appointed through Jewish Missions over many years, so that now we are able to stand on our own feet and develop our own cultural identity. Third we have to recognise that Christianity is Jewish but not according to rabbinic ways, but according to the work and teaching of Yeshua Hamashiach, Jesus the Messiah, along with that of His faithful servants the Apostles who's job it was to pave the way for both Jews and Gentiles to live in Harmony together now that the middle wall of partition has been broken down. We are one people known as the church of which Christ Jesus is the chief cornerstone.