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Replacement Theology in Bible Prophecy

One of the most interesting theories of end times Bible prophecy is called "replacement theology". Replacement theology asserts that references to Jews and Israel in prophecy actually refer to Christianity, in other words, God's "new" chosen people.

Many Bible scholars disagree and call the concept "blasphemy" and that replacement theology is a lie and Israel, for example, always and everywhere in Scripture can only refer to the nation of Israel, even in these end times. In like manner, they claim that Jerusalem must always and everywhere refer to that Holy City in Israel and a temple can only refer to a Jewish house of worship.

Conversely, some go to the other extreme and claim that all end times references to Israel in the Bible actually indicate Christianity. We will find that both sides of the issue have merit and that replacement theology is indeed valid but not in every instance.

Our Lord Himself, Jesus Christ, was the first to teach replacement theology. He said: "destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19-21). Of course, Jesus was not referring to the Jewish Temple in which he and his disciples were standing but rather He was referring to his own physical body, which he did raise up again on the third day. However, Jesus was also giving us a great prophecy because in these end times, His body is the Church and He will raise it up again after three days (three years of great tribulation), following its destruction.

So, we can see that replacement theology has a very legitimate, biblical, and sometimes even, a divine authority. Another example can be found in Revelation 11:2 where the "holy city" is trodden under foot by the Gentiles. Many Bible scholars mistakenly believe that the "holy city" must refer to Jerusalem. However, in this case the "holy city" refers to Rome and the Catholic Church. We know this because a few verses later (Revelation 11:8) John does refer to Jerusalem except he calls it the "great city". Now, we know from history, that the "great city" can only refer to Rome just as surely as in Scripture we

know the "holy city" must refer to Jerusalem. But since John refers to end times Jerusalem as the "great city" in Revelation 11:6, we know that he is juxtaposing those two entities. In the end times the roles of the "great city" and the "holy city" will be reversed. Today, the "great city" is Jerusalem and the "Holy city" is Rome, headquarters of the Vatican and the Catholic Church.

Another example is the Temple which St. Paul says the antichrist will set himself up in to be adored (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Many Bible scholars mistakenly believe Paul is indicating that a third Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem and animal sacrifice will be reinstated. That is a false interpretation. The Temple which the Antichrist sets himself up in is the Catholic Church. And in Daniel, the daily sacrifice which the Antichrist will take away from the Prince (Daniel 8:11-13) is not some kind of revived animal sacrifice, but rather the Holy Eucharist of the New Covenant. Thus we see that even the great Old Testament prophet, Daniel, can engage in replacement theology.

But not all end times Bible prophecy exhibits replacement theology. For example, in his chapter number nine, Daniel describes the current Middle East crisis and the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem. In Daniel 9:11, when the prophet refers to "all Israel" he is not describing the Church but rather he is describing the modern nation of Israel: "all Israel have transgressed your law". In other words, in this instance, there is no replacement theology. Daniel is warning today's decadent Israel which spends hundreds of millions of shekels to promote Tel Aviv as the "gay capital of Europe" and has legalized abortion.

In chapter 9, verse 16, when Daniel begs God to "let your wrath and your fury be turned away, I beseech you, from your city Jerusalem", he is talking about the modern city of Jerusalem. He does not use symbolic phrases like the "holy city" or the "great city". And in verse 26, when Daniel says "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and to the end of the war desolations are determined" Daniel is not talking about Jerusalem as a symbol of Rome or the Church but instead the real, modern day city. This is one of the abominations of desolation which Jesus warned about; it is the desolation which shall soon overtake the city of Jerusalem before the Antichrist enters there.

Another example in which replacement theology does not apply can be found in the book of Revelation when John sees 144,000 sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4). In this case he is not referring to end times Christians but rather he is talking about an actual remnant of Jews.

So, in conclusion, we see that discernment from the Holy Spirit is required in grasping end times Bible prophecy because sometimes replacement theology is, in fact, in full force and must be recognized or else the interpretation will be totally skewed.