

Is “Replacement Theology” Heretical?

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This article appeared in the 2025 Spring issue of *Fulfilled!* Magazine

MAYBE I’VE BEEN LIVING under a theological rock, but there’s been this debate/argument/accusation/refutation/fleeing/running away from the charge of “replacement theology,” as if it is akin to being a Satanist, anarchist or even a heretic. However, as a believer who interprets prophecy as being fulfilled, I am used to the label ‘heretic.’ The more I think about ‘replacement theology’ as something equated to anti-Semitism, the more I realize there may not be a better term to describe the new covenant the Savior won for us.

Isn’t replacement theology proven in the reality that our old sinful nature was replaced with the glory of God, and that it’s not just a matter of our wretched sinful man being cleaned up, re-purposed and civilized, and that we now just need to try really hard?

Here’s what Yeshua said (ESV used for all quotations):

Mark 12:8-9 – *“And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.”* Then, someday 2000 years later, he will bring those wicked tenants back, reform them, and again put them in charge as fulfilled tenants!

Ok, so that last sentence isn’t part of the verse. I added that for comedic absurdity.

He was going to replace them (not fulfill them)!

Here’s what Yahweh said in Isaiah 3:16-24:

“The LORD said: Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing along as they go, tinkling with their feet, therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the

crescents, the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the signet rings and nose rings; the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils. Instead of perfume there will be rotteness; and instead of a belt, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty.”

Notice that there is no mention of God redeeming those former items, polishing them up, praying over them, and re-gifting them in the new kingdom? Nope. He **replaced** them.

Here’s what Paul wrote about replacement theology:

1 Cor 15:42-49 – “What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable . . . It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. Thus it is written, ‘the first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven . . . Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.”

Paul clearly reveals that there is a principle involved with the kingdom; God creates a visible, real example of a spiritual reality that will occur at a later time in their history. I am going to show that this principle is demonstrated in numerous facets of Scripture.

God **replaced** Jacob’s name with Israel. He did not redeem his name or **fulfill** his name.

Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah. Saul to Paul. Kephas to Peter. How were these names fulfilled? They weren’t. They were **replaced** with a new name.

Jesus even went so far in His teachings as to say this:

John 15:15 – “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

Jesus did not say, “From now on I am **fulfilling** the name ‘servants’ to now mean friends.” No, it was a total name **replacement**.

Paul, in his writings, understood this new replacement concept:

Col 1:13 – *“He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”*

Paul did not write, “He has purified and fulfilled the dominion of darkness to become an acceptable vessel for his use, and has fulfilled us into this newly remodeled, formerly dark kingdom.” No, he wrote that God replaced it.

Rom 1:25 – *“. . . who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.”*

Paul did not write, “. . . who fulfilled the truth of God for the lie.” No, these 1st century Jews exchanged/replaced the truth of God for the lie.

So, we see, even in the smallest of expressions and figures of speech, the thread of replacement theology.

Replacement theology has only been demonized by the Church to protect the misunderstood future blessings of national Israel. This misunderstanding of the physical kingdom vs. spiritual kingdom goes unnoticed, mainly by futurist Zionists. Zionists are the ones who want to continue to live in a fantasy that Jesus will split that eastern sky and set up a physical reign in Jerusalem. That can’t happen in their world if Jews are no longer God’s really, really, real first true love. They can’t comprehend God putting away His first wife, even one who cheated on Him with every yahoo in town.

None of these Zionists would stand for that kind of unfaithfulness in their own marriage, but they think God would? None of them would divorce an unfaithful spouse and remarry a faithful, loving spouse with the intent of someday remarrying the first spouse. If we can’t accept that type of dysfunctional behavior, why would we think Yahweh would? Aren’t we made in His image? Didn’t Paul say we have the mind of Christ? Are we not on the same wavelength as the Father when it comes to sin? Do we know something God doesn’t know?

This entire argument of villainizing believers who see replacement theology as a theme demonstrated throughout Scripture is only being pushed as a narrative by those wanting to keep national Israel as the

avored child. The Christian Church is now seen as the “ugly-red-headed-buck-toothed-step-child” who Yahweh can’t wait to move past in order to once again return to the unfaithful, covenant-breaking prostitute of the Old Testament.

I think this ideology borders on mental illness. Think about it: how insane would a new, second wife appear if the husband came home one day and found all the marriage photos from the husband’s first marriage distributed all over the house? There are the honeymoon photos by the nightstand. Wedding photos on the fireplace mantle. Vacation photos on the dining room wall. How many of you second wives would do that? That behavior would make you clinically crazy. Didn’t your husband engage in replacement theology when he divorced his first wife and replaced her with you? I would say the only family members who cling to fulfillment theology, in a marital context, are the discontent and angry spawn of the first marriage: “Someday dad will remarry mom and get rid of this new step-mom.”

This is exactly the behavior of many Jews and Zionists. They don’t recognize the new covenant wife. They don’t recognize Christians as spiritual Israel, Mount Zion, the new covenant community, the new vineyard tenants, or any other contrast laid out in Scripture, and John Hagee sycophants ignorantly follow in lock-step to this misunderstanding.

Instead of parsing out just this minute portion of replacement theology to defend the Jews, Zionists must be consistent in their total rejection of replacement theology to protect the ‘Jewish Nation.’ But doing this strips Scripture of its authority and message - that Yahweh practiced replacement all throughout Scripture.

Talk about replacement theology; even Paul’s name underwent a replacement. Even his mode of receiving instruction was replaced, not fulfilled.

Gal 1:11-12 – “But I make known to you, brothers, the gospel preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Hmm. Wasn’t the previous mode of understanding transmitted via temple education? (Even the former means of understanding was replaced.)

Keeping in mind Paul's explanation of the 'natural first' and then the 'spiritual second,' here are some examples of God-induced replacement theology:

- God used Yeshua's physical resurrection as a type and shadow of our spiritual resurrection
- The temple replaced with the presence of God in believers' hearts
- The 40-year exodus replaced by the 1st century transition period
- The law replaced by grace
- Ishmael's status replaced by Isaac
- Esau's birthright replaced by Jacob
- The lamb replaced by Christ
- The high priestly office replaced by Christ and us
- Moses replaced by Christ
- The feasts of harvest replaced by Pentecost
- Old Testament shadow of death (Passover) replaced by New Testament Passover
- Those slain in the desert replaced by those brought into the kingdom
- The old covenant law of death replaced by new covenant grace

I know some will argue that this process could be called fulfilled theology, which is a much kinder, gentler, more politically correct name. But Yeshua, acting as a judge in AD 70, did not send the Jews to their room, and He didn't ground them or take away their electronics for a week. Nor did He spank them. He judged them and He killed them. He put them away as He did Ishmael. They were replaced. There was no fulfillment theology there, as that group of people were not re-shaped, ironed and pressed, and made into the people of Yahweh. They were totally replaced.

What about Yeshua acting as judge? Here's what He said:

*Matt 23:34-35 – “Therefore **I send you** prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.”*

This is not Yeshua quoting from Isaiah. This was the Savior speaking as Yahweh. He is expressing His deity as Godhead. He said: “**I send you** prophets and wise men and scribes,” and then went on to predict what these wicked leaders would do.

So, “fulfillment theology”? Sure, that’s possible as a definition, but what really happens throughout Scripture is God shows Himself through a physical example that at some point gets replaced by a spiritual fulfillment. So, yes, fulfillment is the result **after replacement** occurs.

None of these examples I gave you were somehow morphed into something spiritual, by utilizing the pre-existing imperfect physical parts. The spiritual kingdom was not created from existing rubble from the temple. Jesus did not become our sacrifice by Yahweh changing the atomic structure of a lamb, thereby altering its state in order to preserve this flawed “fulfilled theology,” as some might claim.

I use the expression “fulfilled” all the time, but more and more I am convinced that we have been brow-beaten into submission by the mainstream Church and Scofield’s influence, attempting to change and abandon what I see as replacement theology. We have retreated and allowed the terms to be re-defined just to get along. “Gee, can’t we all just get along?”

I will clarify that, for the purpose of understanding prophecy as completed, yes, this is best described and understood as “fulfilled.” I am 100% on board with that. When it comes to the new covenant and the work Yeshua did to bring us back to Yahweh and establish the kingdom, absolutely that was fulfilled. But does that negate or demand that we can never interpret anything in Scripture as being “replaced”? Of course not. I’m just trying to get across the point that Yahweh continually did things that replaced the previous work; it did not just fulfill it. In the process of that, it may have also fulfilled it, but that is not clearly demonstrated in every point I’m presenting.

I reject the charge of replacement theology as heretical and see no reason to compromise. It seems Zionists are the ones who have set out to demonize this phrase for only one purpose – to secure the chokehold on the western Church by keeping the separation going between Jews and Gentiles.

This is ironic because Paul, more of a Jew than anyone living today, wrote: *“For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God”* (Rom 2:28-29). Total replacement occurred.

It seems to me that fulfillment theology is 100% valid in that the spiritual Jew has become fulfilled in the body of Christ, and only through belief in Christ can one become a true Jew. That’s how the kingdom was

fulfilled: the physical kingdom was replaced with a spiritual one, and the physical Jews were replaced with spiritual Jews.

So, as the classic rock band Argent once sang, “Hold your head up high”! Call it what it is. Replacement theology. Let’s take it back. I remember the band U2 performed “Helter Skelter” in concert, and lead singer Bono would introduce the song by saying, "This is a song Charles Manson stole from The Beatles. Well, we're stealin' it back."

So, in the spirit of hermeneutical contrast/comparison, we are U2 and the Zionists are Charles Manson, and replacement theology is now Helter Skelter.

Go ahead and start sharing from this perspective and study it out yourself. You will probably begin to find more examples of this replacement aspect in Scripture and add them to your arsenal of verses to prove this out.

Let’s start defending it. Stop acquiescing, doing the crab walk, making excuses, being politically correct, or being apologetic. There’s nothing wrong with God replacing an inherently flawed, purposely planned, obsolescent covenantal system.

For Zionists to prove a fulfilled-covenant kingdom instead of a replacement-covenant kingdom, the Zionist would have to find all the verses where God intended to merely re-form, re-shape, re-morph, and re-constitute all the particles of the old system. But that can’t be done. The evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of Yahweh replacing every physical visual representation of a coming new covenant with a spiritual new creation, not derived from anything existing in the old order. You know, new wine in old wineskins and all that... (in the voice of Lucy from Peanuts).

I am not arguing that all the preterist books and magazines need to change their titles to remove “fulfilled” from the covers. I think you know I’m speaking of other issues within the conversation. Christ fulfilled the entire law and fulfilled all the prophecies, but that’s not what we are battling right now. The naysayers have purposely created this narrative to drive the conversation. This is how I battle it. Sadly, these same accusers would admit that, in every instance mentioned in this article, ‘replacement’ was exactly what happened in the salvific history of God. But they just can’t get beyond themselves to incorporate that into the whole picture. Therefore, they have chosen to blindly throw out the baby with the bathwater, simply to hold on to this fictional hope of Jews forever being God’s holy and true people. I know some of you are

probably ticked about now, so go ahead and share your thoughts. We would love to hear them! Email me at: understandingthebible@yahoo.com ✝