

# Replacement Theology | Frank LeMunyon

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[ 0 : 00 ] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. Good to see you all here this morning, the first day of the week.

Praise the Lord and to study His Word. When David asked me a number of months ago if I would like to speak, and I accepted it.

And what the Lord led me to in both when I spoke three weeks ago as well as this morning is about Israel. Israel is very much in the news.

We just heard the past week about evangelicals are so happy when it was mentioned that Trump had moved the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

And so there's just a lot of things in the news about Israel. Well, my talk today will bring up thoughts about Israel as well as a nation.

[ 1 : 09 ] The title of my talk is Replacement Theology. That's a mouthful, isn't it? But you'll see why it's called Replacement.

And let's take a look at a definition here, not from Webster's Dictionary, but from a man named Dr. Kenneth Gentry. He's a replacement theologian.

And he has said this, Now, that says a lot, and it immediately has a negative connotation.

It is saying in so many words that if God made promises to Israel, as he did in Genesis, well, these theologians in the third and fourth centuries said, well, that's not quite the whole picture.

The Lord has changed his mind. Because Israel has rejected the Savior at the cross, and therefore, the privilege that they had has been taken away from them, and it's now given to the church.

[ 2 : 39 ] So the replacement is that what was a promise to Israel, and all the blessing that it endures, it's now been placed over to the church.

And I'm going to unfold today from Romans 11 that that is not a true theology, that the Word of God is going to, in every way, refute that type of thinking.

Because if it was to be believed, we would then have to say, you know, God says I change not. But guess what? They said he does change.

And we're going to show that God does not change. But let's take a look at the origin of this type of thinking, but let's begin by a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we just thank you for the privilege of opening your Word and to expound from it the truth of what you would deliver to us, that the eyes of our heart would be truly blessed by what the truth of Scripture is.

[ 3 : 53 ] You had said to your Heavenly Father, you said, Thy Word is true. And so, Lord, we just pray this morning that as we open your Word, that we will clearly see what is truth against what is not true.

And so, Lord, we just ask your blessing at this time. Amen. All right. I wrote here a question. It's what is the origin of replacement theology? And it comes down to this.

Early church theologians in the 2nd and 3rd century, such as Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and then later on, Eusebius.

He's more or less in the 3rd and 4th century. They held, to what the early disciples believed, to the premillennial view that there will be a future period of a thousand-year reign on earth in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

And so, if we were to start out with things we remember since childhood, and that would be like the promises given to Abraham.

[ 5 : 05 ] Abraham was called. He was a heathen. But the Lord selected him. His name was Abram. And in Genesis 17, he said this to Abram, I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you, and I will establish my covenant between me

and you and your descendants after you throughout their generation for an everlasting covenant to be God to you, and to your descendants after you.

And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.

So, here we have a commitment, an untraditional commitment, by God himself to Abram, that this is what I'm going to do for you.

So, right away, with this replacement theology, they are saying, well, that's not true. And how wrong they are.

Because, not only did God give this promise to Abram, but he reaffirms it in Genesis 26 to Isaac, and then he reaffirms it again in Genesis 28 to Isaac.

[ 6 : 37 ] And so, if you were to study through the, not only through the books of Moses, where we got that information, but in the prophets, the major prophets of Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and then the other minor prophets as well, we would clearly see that the Lord kept reiterating the promises of being a God to those people, to give them a land, to give them prosperity, and by rightful thinking, as we will see in Romans 11 today, God intends to do that.

And so, but let's look at the other church theologians here. Coming along about 100 years later or so, church theologians during the 3rd and 4th centuries, such as Clement, Clement of Alexandria, Origen of Alexandria, and Augustine held the view that there is no future millennial period for the nation of Israel.

And so, that's where the error crept in, was at that time. And it was Origen, well, after listening to a guy named Pleno. Pleno was a rabbi at the school of Alexandria in Egypt, who was promoting, through a combination of Greek philosophy and the scriptures, the Old Testament scriptures, to come up with this idea that, now that the church is formed, that Israel has no future.

And so, from that point on, were going to create allegories, similes, spiritualizing, spiritualizing. They were going to take passages that truly speak of Israel's future and spiritualize away those truths. And unfortunately, down through the ages, we have people like Martin Luther and John Calvin, who also rejected premillennialism, or were of the same thought as Augustine, to say that the program has changed.

[ 8 : 55 ] And Martin Luther, understandable, because with, he was anti-Semitic to begin with, and therefore he saw no future for the Jewish as a nation.

He believed that a Jew could be saved, an individual Jew, and as Paul and other disciples have taught, and all the Gospels have taught us.

But when it came to the nation of Israel as a people, then Martin Luther had different ideas. And John Calvin is a surprise. John Calvin, who in his teaching, you would clearly see that he would say that as much as you can literally, grammatically, historically teach, or extract from Scripture a truth, then go with it that way.

But when it came to prophecies that were unfulfilled, then John Calvin seemed to waver. And when I read what, I forgot John, I'll think of his name later, let's see, John, not just, I'll bring that up in a minute.

But, okay, so my purpose this morning is to demonstrate from Scripture that when God makes a covenant, he doesn't change his mind.

[ 10 : 17 ] And so, let's turn to, in this morning, in your Bible, to Romans chapter 11. Probably one of the best passages that is dealing with the subject.

And again, these are statements from the Holy Spirit himself to the Apostle Paul, long before these theories that would come along in the third and fourth century of the church.

But it starts out, we're going to really focus on the verses 11 through 36 in detail, but I can't help but bring up the first verse of chapter 11.

Because after Paul has given quite a treatment in chapters 9 and 10 about his love for Israel, for the nation of Israel, and wanting for them to turn to Christ, to accept the Messiah as their Lord and Savior, and to believe on him with all their heart.

And in chapter 9, he even says this, a familiar verse, speaking to Israel in this point, as well as to all of us, that if you will confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

[ 11 : 41 ] And so here, he's talking in the midst of a chapter devoted to talking about Israel, but for us, very much so. And many of us may have come to Christ through that verse alone.

But he says in verse 1, after saying all this, he's going to say, and I say then, in other words, because of all this, God has not rejected his people.

Has he? May it never be. And so that sets the stage that we're going to see where Paul is going to say, God has always been faithful and always will be faithful to, and so the first, I won't go into the detail of the first 10 verses of this chapter, but it does bring up the fact that Paul says, hey, I'm a Jew, and I, the Lord spoke to my heart and saved me.

And also when Elijah was all upset after the big challenge on Mount Carmel, I was on Mount Carmel a year and a, a little over a year ago, and it looked like about a third of an acre of mountaintop there.

I was at the very top, about 1,800 feet up, and I could look over the edge and I could look down at the river where 400 properties were eventually going to be killed, and you could look off in just a few little distance there.

[13:06] You could see the Mediterranean, and you could see where Elijah was talking about a small cloud that was coming and was going to get bigger and say to King Ahab, I suggest you get out of here with your chariot because if a rain's coming, which there hadn't been a rain for a while, you better get out of here.

You may be in trouble. So, but anyway, stood on that mountaintop, and, but later on, Elijah down at Mount Sinai is all despondent, and the Lord, he said, you know, I'm the only one.

That seems like in Israel that's left. And the Lord said, no, I have 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee. And so, the Lord has his remnant.

Regardless of what point in history, whatever dispensation that it might be, the Lord has his remnant. And that's the thought here today, that there always will be a people of the Lord's choosing.

Verse 7, and that will be the only other verse I'll point out in the first 10. What then? What is Israel seeking? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained.

[14:19] But those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened. Okay. So, let's go to verse 11, and we're going to go into a rather detail-by-detail of an argument here for why we should reject this type of replacement theology.

And you see that on your sheet, the first question, or actually, before our first question, a statement made in verse 11, the first half of that verse.

I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be. But by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make them jealous.

And so, the idea here is, yes, Israel did stumble, but, so as to fall, and the concept here is, if they stumbled and they fell, was the falling permanent?

And, the response from the Apostle Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, once again, to say very strongly, may it never be. Okay.

[15:33] But then we come to the question. the second half of verse 11. Why would Israel be made jealous if there is no future? Think about that.

Down through the history, why would it be necessary if these people of replacement theology say they're no longer in the picture?

Then why down through the ages would Israel have to be made jealous by the Gentiles? My wife and I, for over 30 years, had a Jewish friend, still a friend, and whenever we had dinner with her, or, this woman is super rich.

I mean, she's probably one of the top three people in the St. Louis area in wealth. And she would say to Bonnie and I, she'd say, you know, I'm jealous of what you have.

Can you imagine? She knew that we were almost dirt poor. But it just shows some scripture that she knew that there's something in the life that my wife, Bonnie, and I had was a clear indication of what our salvation had brought us.

[16:48] It brought us joy and it brought us peace and satisfaction and on and on. And this woman, I don't want to mention her name, but she said, I would like to have what you have.

To this day, she hasn't come around and accepted. But it just shows you that, so the question here is, why would Israel be made jealous if there is no future?

Okay, the next question. Oh, and one might say, one writer said, you know what? Israel is jealous because of the Messiah we have, a Jewish Messiah.

And Israel is jealous because of the wealth and materialism that perhaps the Gentiles have, but more so is the idea of the riches of our salvation.

But as one writer said, you know, sometimes the church and its hypocrisy and its not standing up against abortion and just not standing for Israel and so forth are demonstrating that maybe, after all, that maybe the Jews are not so jealous after all because they look at us and they say, you know, what a poor example.

[ 18 : 03 ] So there may be a measure of truth in that. All right, let's look at verse 12. Now, if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be?

So the question is, why would there be fulfillment for Israel if there is no future? Why would Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, bring up the subject of that they have a chance for fulfillment?

Because reverse, the replacement theology would say, Israel has no future. If you were to attend, perhaps, any one of the four seminaries in the St. Louis area, a Catholic seminary, a covenant seminary for Protestant, or for other Protestant, but I'm thinking of a particular group.

But anyway, I'll think about it in a minute. A Lutheran seminary, and I forgot, oh, an Episcopal seminary. You could walk almost to the Eden, and you would say, hey, would they preach on this passage this morning?

I would say no. If they did, they would spiritualize it away. And you would not come away with any of the truth as Paul would be presenting it. And then, in the seminary, they're dispensing that type of thinking to those who are going to sit in the pulpits of Presbyterian, the word I was looking for, or any one of these other seminaries.

[ 19 : 56 ] But, so, we have here, why would there be fulfillment for Israel if there is no future? And I'm trying to think of a good analogy to this.

If somebody had a \$1,000 investment, and it turned out to be wise, and it resulted in \$50,000, I'd say, okay, so they had a nice growth.

But what if somebody already was in a financial situation where they were \$20,000 down, but through some smart investment, they reached \$50,000?

They'd say, well, who is the one that benefited the most? The one that went from negative all the way to the large positive, right? And so, I think of Israel that way.

What Israel has lost in a major way could turn to be a major gain. And so, maybe that's the thinking here about what their fulfillment would be like.

[ 20 : 57 ] Okay, let's take a look at verses 13 and 14. But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles, inasmuch then as I am the apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry.

If somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. Well, Paul's ministry all along, whatever letter he has written and proclaiming the gospel, he has seen many, he has, he's gone into a synagogue and he has seen leaders of a synagogue come to know Jesus Christ and other Jews as well.

And though, even though his ministry throughout the land of Turkey, Galatia, Corinth, and Grecian cities as well, clearly saw one by one individual that have come who were Jewish of a background come to know Jesus Christ as their savior.

And so the idea here is that Paul is not saying in verse 14 that he is saving some of them. It's the Lord's work that's doing the saving. But rightfully so, sometimes we come away from a Bible camp or witnessed somebody and said, you know, I had the privilege of leading that person to the Lord. Well, you know, we did. Perhaps lead them to the Lord, but the Lord did the work, right? And so, maybe that's what Paul is saying here. If somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

[ 22 : 32 ] And then verse 15. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

All right. So the question posed here, why would there be acceptance for Israel if there is no future? Because what the Lord is saying here through the Apostle Paul, he said, what would it be like if they did accept him?

It would be like life from the dead. It would be so dramatic, that type of change. All right. Now let's look at verse 17. Well, let me sum up some thoughts there.

If there is no future for Israel according to replacement theology, why are they made jealous? Why promise fulfillment?

Why mention acceptance and reconciliation? Let's take a look at what Paul had just said previously in chapter 5 of Romans, beginning with verse 8.

[ 23 : 47 ] But God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than, having now been justified by his blood, through him, for if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the reconciliation.

Verse 12, Therefore, just as through one man's sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because of sin, for until the law of sin was in the world, but sin was not imputed when there was no law.

Well, well, the idea here is that we were enemies of the Lord as well, and through reconciliation we were brought into the family of God as children of God.

Okay, let's move on to verse 17. Verse 17 has to do with the subject of grafting.

[ 25 : 24 ] I don't know if any of you have ever tried grafting. No. All right. I have an example of it. I brought this rose and I brought a knife. And when I was 15 and 16 years old, that's 65 years ago, I worked on a farm.

It was Mr. Anderson's vegetable farm. But he allowed my boss, George, to have so many acres for creating patented roses.

Now, I don't know if the word patented is used nowadays, but back then we took wild rose stems and we made patented roses out of them. So what we did was all day on a Saturday or after school on certain summer nights, we got to the farm.

It was about 25 miles away and we were taken to our section on the farm and we were given a whole bunch of roses, long stem, and we would tear off the leaf and then there would be this bud there and we would take the knife, a Swiss Army knife, and we would cut that bud and then I would be down on my knees and I would bend this seedling, a little plant, toward me and I would cut a tee on the back side of it and I would take that bud, maybe if there was some pulp behind it, I would take that pulp out of there and I would put that bud down in that tee and then I had a whole bunch of rubber bands, open-ended rubber bands and I would tie one just below the bud and I would tie one just above the bud and then I would move over to the next one.

So I was allowed maybe because look, I was making 50 cents an hour so I couldn't waste the boss's time, you know, so I had to move on and have one done in five minutes and move on to the next one.

[ 27 : 24 ] So maybe at the end of the day I did 80 of them and probably over the summer I probably did a couple thousand of them but we would take patent roses. It might be called American Beauty, it might be called Peace, it might be called by other names Yellow Rose of Texas or what have you and I would go down those aisles and I would just be making roses, patented roses all day.

So anyway, when I saw the subject in this chapter 11 I thought, oh, I know a little bit about roses but you know what, after I, quit that work, I never had another rose in my property until recently.

I do have a few roses. I bought four this year which is surprising but of all the years I think I had a home I never remember planting roses very much.

But anyway, let's look at, let me read verses in getting back to chapter 11 verses 17 through 24. But if some of the branches were broken off and you being a wild olive were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree do not be arrogant toward the branches but if you are arrogant remember that it is not you who supports the root but the root supports you. You will say then, well, branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. Quite right. They were broken off for their unbelief but you stand by your faith.

[ 29 : 08 ] Do not be conceited for if God did not spare the natural branches he will not spare you either. Behold then the kindness and the severity of God to those who fell severity but to you God's kindness if you continue in his kindness otherwise you also will be cut off.

And they also if they do not continue in their unbelief will be grafted in for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted in were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree how much more will these who are the natural

branches be grafted in into their own olive tree.

All right. Through this passage once again we're not talking about the individual Jewish person who had through the church age and continues to have the ability to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior.

I the church that I recently attended I had four couples that were friends of my wife and I and they were all converted Jews. One happened to be the the head of the Midwest Messianic Center Marty Goliath and and so just in my presence every Sunday were these people who were very much examples of those who came to Christ even through their Jewish heritage.

But here Paul once again is speaking to the nation of Israel and he is demonstrating how that yes branches are broken off.

[ 30 : 56 ] A good example of here we have this olive tree and a good number of the branches are broken off. and at the same time that we have that broken off we have that the Lord has allowed the Gentiles to be grafted in among them.

I don't picture that the Gentiles are grafted into Israel. I picture more that they're grafted in among with Israel.

I picture the root as the resource and the pleasure of God and that Israel enjoyed that pleasure through their position with their olive tree and the Gentiles enjoying this because God has said that he has allowed them to be grafted in and with the warning to the Gentiles to not be arrogant about their position.

In fact as they would say in verse 19 the Gentiles you will say then branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.

Well Paul's going to partly answer that. He's going to answer the first part of it. Quite right. They were broken off because of their unbelief.

[ 32 : 18 ] He wasn't going to say they were broken off because you deserve to be drafted in. He wasn't going to say that. He said quite right. They were broken off for their unbelief.

But you stand by your faith. In other words I don't know what quite that means but kind of like Gentiles step back be happy with your new found faith in Christ and let it go at that.

Don't be conceited but be reverent or be in fear because Anittas is not the next verse is not in any way an idea that somebody could lose their salvation for if God did not spare the natural branches he will not spare you either.

I think what is pictured here is that because the blessing of the calling that could come to Israel to the Gentiles has been very much there that if God wanted to shut the Gentiles off he could just as well do it.

So I think the thinking is there. behold verse 22 the kindness and the severity of God to those who fell the Jewish people punishment severity but to you God's kindness if you continue in his kindness otherwise you also will be cut off.

[ 33 : 37 ] Once again a statement not to the issue of being already a Christian but the Gentiles as an ethnic group having that.

Okay I better move along a lot more quick. Okay verse 25. Verse 25 is probably going to be the key to this entire talk. For I don't want you brethren to be uninformed of this mystery so that you will not be wise in your own estimation or your own opinion that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

And so the fullness of the Gentile has come in is when the church age has closed out. That's what the Lord is saying. The partial hardening exists.

Now if you take an individual person who came to know Christ as I mentioned my friends there's no such thing as a partial acceptance of Christ. They fully accepted Christ. There was no hardening for those and that's why the word partial is very important because the partial means hey there must be another part of that partial that makes the whole.

And that partial is that yes there are some their hearts were not hardened and that is by the Lord's calling by the Lord's grace and his mercy has allowed others to be saved.

[ 35 : 09 ] But he mentions here that there has been and there is a partial hardening that has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentile has come in.

And then verse 26 and so all Israel will be saved just as it's written and so forth. Well all Israel the Lord means here and that would be supported by other scripture.

He means all believing Israel because that's the only way Israel can be saved is by in the days to come. They have to trust the Lord Jesus Christ the same day that we have to.

Okay. Verse 28. From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake. But from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the father.

So what he's saying here is that hey let's face it. Israel doesn't like as a group. They don't like the gospel. When I went to Israel you had to be careful because there's a law there that you could be arrested if you handed out a tract or you spoke to anybody under a certain age forgot what that age was maybe 18 that you could wind up in jail.

[ 36 : 25 ] And also recently I was reading in some Christian literature that a group were given the license to broadcast from Israel to the Muslim world the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But Israel woke up and said wait a minute this just fits our own people. These people are proselytizing and so they shut them down. This all happened maybe in the last month or so.

And so clearly what the Lord is saying here hey from a standpoint of the gospel they're not happy with you they're your enemies. But from the standpoint of my choice from God's choice they are beloved because of the sake of the fathers because of Abraham Isaac and Jacob because who is our God?

He's the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. He's not the God of Abraham Isaac and Esau. He's the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. And verse 27 for the gifts and the callings of God are irrevocable.

What a statement that is. That's kind of what I had said at the very top of your handout. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

[ 37 : 43 ] I think of a passage in Malachi chapter 3. I can't I don't have time. We ran out of time so I'm just going to read two verses.

Verse 5 and 6. For then I will draw near to you for judgment and I will be swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely and against those who oppress the wage earner and his wages, the widow and the orphan and those who turn aside, the alien and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Verse 6. For I, the Lord, do not change. Therefore you, Israel, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. For I, the Lord, do not change. If I were to put it in Frank's vernacular for today, it would read like this. If I were to change, Israel, you're gone.

You don't exist. You're done with. But as the Lord says here, you have my mercy. You still, you are not consumed.

[ 39 : 02 ] The reason is, is because I, the Lord, I change not. How wonderful those words. All right, in closing, when I'd ask the musicians to come and join us, Paul says, verse 33, O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and unfathomable his ways.

Verse 36. For from him and through him and to him are all things. It's a wonderful doxology.

And I think it's a broader doxology, just not of the past three chapters of Romans, but I think because of all the wonderful things that Paul has brought to us in terrific doctrine, the, the just, let's see, when I think of Romans 3, therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then in the, chapter 5, therefore having, oh that's where it is, therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, and then chapter 8, therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And so, what a beautiful doxology.

[ 40 : 38 ] and when I think of verse 36, because it is one of my favorite, I think of it as speaking of the entire Godhead, when, for each part of it, but then I also see, I break it down to say, for from him, well what could be from God the Father?

That would be our Lord Jesus Christ. So from him, we have Christ. And what could be through him, but through our Lord Jesus Christ is the redemption, redemption, even the forgiveness of sin.

And what could be to him? And that would be the Holy Spirit who has brought us this wonderful revelation. And yet it applies to the entire Godhead. And it says in closing, to him be the glory forever.

Amen. Amen.