

THIS VALLEY OF DECISION

Israel According to the Word



by COURTNEY VOGEL

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“For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution for the cause of Zion.”

(Isaiah 34:8, AMP)

The Bible warns of a growing “controversy” surrounding Israel that will swell as we near the end of this age. This controversy is not only the world’s dispute over Israel (called “Zion” throughout the Bible)– it’s also God’s personal dispute with the nations over how they have treated her. The issue of Israel is not merely a political issue; there are very real spiritual forces at play. I want to share what I believe to be the Father’s heart– both toward Israel and toward the Church– at this pivotal moment. When Jesus spoke about the end times, He discussed the deception that would both herald the arrival of, and characterize the entirety of, the time of the end.¹ It’s no secret that deception is running rampant in the world, but I discern a certain sneaky deception that has been granted access to the minds of believers in Christ also.

I didn’t begin to hear the whisperings of the concept that I now know has a name– replacement theology/supersessionism– until 2020. A dear friend proclaimed with all certainty that Israel is no longer “biblical Israel,” that they had sinned their way out of the covenantal promises that God had made with them, and that God was done with the Jews and had completely cut off His once-Chosen ones in favor of the Christian Church. At the time I had no words to explain why this sat so uncomfortably in my heart, but it did. If God could simply revoke what He declared throughout Scripture to be an everlasting promise to Israel, what assurance would I have that He wouldn’t also revoke my salvation– the very thing in which I feel completely secure? As I write in the fall of 2025, this theological construct has really exploded.

In early summer, out of nowhere, I felt an odd urgency to read His Word with the goal of understanding His heart as it relates to Israel and the Jewish people as a whole. I had never felt any desire whatsoever to delve into this, so I knew this was the desire of my Father for me, and not my own. As soon as I set out to learn, He began leading me toward countless scriptures that showed me His deep compassion and never-ending pursuit of the Jewish people; yes, they are indeed still His Chosen ones. After giving me a solid foundation on the subject, He started sending people my way: some asking what I thought about replacement theology, some adamantly claiming Zionism is evil (we’ll tackle that later), and some who left me speechless as they cruelly lambasted the Jewish people in a way that I knew not only wasn’t the heart of my Father, but also completely flew in the face of the written Word of God. The issue of Israel’s right to the land has

nothing to do with their obedience, holiness, or worthiness; it has everything to do with the very nature of our promise-keeping God, and if He is capable of broken promises, upon what is our faith actually based? Many blessings in the Bible offered to Israel, including victory, prominence, and prosperity, depend on their obedience. The promise of this specific land to this specific people, however, and the enduring nature of their election, are unconditional.

The urgency I feel to get this out to those who have a heart to hear has recently returned, so I humbly share what I believe with every fiber of my being to be the Father's will and heart toward the land, the people and the promise that is Israel. I am convinced that replacement theology is a Satanic deception, and it is crucial that we align ourselves fully with God's revelation on the matter, which shines with unmistakable clarity throughout His Word, as we swiftly near the end of the age. I sense, and therefore want to convey, no condemnation whatsoever on this issue. He has shown me His heart of compassionate desire for His church to be on firm ground as we near the end. My goal is not to provoke feelings of condemnation, criticism, or defensiveness; rather, this is an invitation to approach these words with a heart earnestly seeking truth and a desire to stand in alignment with God's Word rather than the shifting ways of the world.

Our Jewish Messiah *will* return, and in sobering lucidity the Word tells us precisely why He ultimately returns, where He returns, what He will do upon His return, and who He battles when He returns— and I think it wise for us to study and learn so that we can be sure we are on the right side of history when the Day of the Lord unfolds.

Note: All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible, 1995 Edition* (NASB 1995), unless otherwise noted.

A Specific Promise to a Specific People in a Specific Land

Genesis 15 laid out a specific promise to a specific person, to be passed on through specific heirs, who would inherit a specific area of land *and* the promise of the land *in perpetuity*. At this point, Abraham was still called “Abram,” but for the sake of simplicity I will call him Abraham throughout. Immediately after God promised Abraham possession of this land, he asked God, “How may I know that I will possess this land?”² What God did in response to this question truly serves to erase any question as to the requirements upon the Jewish people for the upholding of this particular covenant. First, some historical context is needed.

During the time of Abraham, covenants were executed in a peculiar way by today’s standards. Animals were slaughtered, cut in half, and each half of the animal was laid opposite the other half with a path between the halves. *Two* parties would walk through this “blood path” to create a bilateral agreement (an agreement requiring action from both parties to fulfill the obligations necessary for the binding of the covenant). They were symbolically vowing to the other party that the fate that befell the dead animals would befall the promiser if they broke the vow. This is a self-curse oath.

What happened next between God and Abraham is vitally important. When it was time to walk the blood path between the animals that God had ordered Abraham to slaughter in preparation for the vowing of the covenant, *God put Abraham into a deep sleep* and the presence of God, displayed as terror, great darkness, smoke, and flame passed through the pieces *alone*.³ This signified a one-sided, unilaterally-binding agreement, dependent upon the performance of only one of the parties involved to fulfill the obligation: God Himself. This meant that Abraham was not responsible for any performance or requirements on his part. God was, in essence, vowing, “May it be done to me what became of these animals if I don’t keep my commitment to this promise.” What was the promise?

“On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying,
‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of
Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates...’ ”

(Genesis 15:18)

Later, God tells Abraham that He will not only establish the covenant with Abraham, but also throughout the generations of his descendants after him, for an everlasting covenant, and that the land will be an everlasting possession to his descendants.⁴ God gives more specificity surrounding which descendants will be the

recipients of the covenant when He tells Abraham that his wife will bear him a son, Isaac, and that God will also confirm this covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant for *his* descendants after *him*.⁵

The everlasting covenant is confirmed through Isaac directly by God in Genesis 26:3-4, and through his son Jacob in Genesis 28:13-15. There are many scriptures that reiterate the eternal nature of the promise of the land to the people of Israel, but this passage is most succinct and clear:

“O seed of Israel His servant, sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!
... Remember His covenant forever, the word which He
commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant
which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac.
He also confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, **to Israel
as an everlasting covenant**, saying, ‘To you I will
give the land of Canaan, as the portion of your
inheritance.’ ”

(1 Chronicles 16:13, 15-18, emphasis mine)

The word used in the covenant for “everlasting” is the Hebrew “*olam*” and it means eternal, forever, perpetual, permanent, and without end. In fact, it’s the same word that’s used to describe how YHWH God always was and always will be. In Psalm 93:2b, “You are from **everlasting**,” this is the same word, “*olam*.” Its Greek counterpart, “*aiōnian*,” is the word that, as believers, provides our assurance of salvation:

“... through His [Jesus’] own blood, He entered the holy
place once and for all, having obtained
eternal [*aiōnian*] redemption.”

(Hebrews 9:12, clarification mine)

As believers it’s fairly easy for us to understand and graciously accept our eternal redemption; why is it so hard for us to accept with humility the eternal duration of the promise to the Jewish people? Many in the replacement theology camp will try to use the “if you, then I...” statements that God makes to the Jews throughout the Old Testament as evidence of the breach of covenant that has “resulted in their expulsion from the covenant.” Clearly, however, these are statements of blessing such as prosperity, protection, fruitfulness, and prominence among nations that are on offer to

them for their obedience; if they choose not to obey, there are chastisements for disobedience. Never is it said that the election of Israel, nor His gifting of the land to them, is dependent upon their performance. Also take notice that His chastisements aren't light! Their repeated *temporary* expulsions from the land in their multiple exiles were chastisements from the Lord. He repeatedly tells them that if they aren't obedient and instead worship other gods, that He will remove them from the land and then bring them back when they "remember" Him. The ultimate chastisement and divine discipline is yet to come in what will be the hardest of all: the time of Jacob's Trouble.⁶ Not one of the chastisements, however, is representative of a withdrawal of Israel, by God, from the covenant, nor is it a cancellation of the covenant by God, as Paul notes that "the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable."⁷ Do we think that our own inevitable failures and disobedience disqualify us from our eternal redemption? Of course not! So why are the rules different for the Jews, especially since the nature of *this* covenant was unilateral, depending solely upon God for its upholding? The fact that God put Abraham into a deep sleep while God Himself made the covenant is proof that it did not depend on the Jews to uphold any certain conditions to receive this particular covenantal offering.

I've heard it argued that the covenant ended with Jacob. Though I'd argue this is baseless simply from the perspective that it clearly wouldn't be everlasting at that point, I'll also provide some scriptures to put this claim to rest. This was promised 400-500 years after Jacob's death:

“For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them... Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them... driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today.”

(Deuteronomy 4:31, 37a, 38)

“Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day.”

(Deuteronomy 10:15)

This was 1,400 years after Jacob's death:

“This is what the Lord says: ‘If I have not made My covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth, [only] then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I **will** restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.’ ”

(Jeremiah 33:25-26, NIV, clarification and emphasis mine)

The covenantal promise that God made to this specific people in this specific land was unilateral, everlasting, and unconditional.

Who is Israel?

Romans chapters 9 through 11 are such a beautiful gift to the Church. Paul's ability to speak directly to the source of the prideful arrogance that the Church would eventually profess, in its belief that it has usurped the election of the Jews, is absolutely incredible. Let's go ahead and get the most common argument used by replacement theologians out of the way. Romans 9:6-8 is commonly taken completely out of context, and is weaponized against the Jewish people in a way that only demonstrates the arrogance lurking in the hearts of many Christians:

“For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but ‘Through Isaac, your descendants will be named.’ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.”

Somehow it's argued that this can mean two flagrantly false things: 1) There are “real” Jews and “fake” Jews. 2) Christians replace national Israel as the “real” Israel. Here are the distinctions that are actually being drawn, however: 1) The promise wasn't through Abraham's entire lineage; Ishmael was not the child through whom the promise

was conveyed— it was Isaac. 2) Even amongst the children of promise (through the line of Isaac), not all are saved. The first distinction should be obvious, but a quick journey back through Genesis will make it clear. Abraham asked God to bless Ishmael as the child to live in His blessing. God literally said, “No,” and went on to prophesy the birth of Isaac, and proclaimed that *he* instead would be the child through whom the everlasting covenant would be continued. God goes on to say that He would still make Ishmael fruitful (which He has, as Ishmael is the progenitor of the Arab peoples and interestingly, eventually Muhammad) but restates that the covenant will be established through Isaac.⁸

Let’s dig into the second distinction that is being drawn by Paul as he describes what it means to say “they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel.” We need make no assumptions as to his intended meaning, as Paul describes exactly what he means later in the same chapter:

“Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved’... Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works.”
(Romans 9:27, 30-32a, NIV)

Not all Jews receive salvation because they have not loved the truth of Christ as Savior, therefore, only a remnant of the many will be saved. Why? Even for the Jews, faith in Christ is still a requirement for salvation. The land covenant was offered with no strings attached; however, to receive salvation for ANY person requires faith in Jesus as Savior. Let’s not forget, however, that there is still a remnant who will be saved out of Jacob (Israel). Clearly nothing in this text suggests that there are “fake” Jews, nor that the Church has taken over the role of Israel. If we keep moving ahead in Romans, we get even more clarity surrounding precisely what Paul was saying:

“But as for Israel He says, ‘All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.’ I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!... God has not rejected His people...”
(Romans 10:21-11:1a, 2a)

It is in this next section that we begin to see evidence of our role as the Church in this grand mystery, but it's not to replace nor fulfill the role of Israel. Paul says, still speaking of Israel:

“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.**”

(Romans 11:11, emphasis mine)

And now the stunning, humbling truth of how we as Gentiles were ever offered the gift of salvation:

“God gave them [Israel] a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not...a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”

(Romans 11:8, 25b, clarification mine)

God has hardened the hearts and blinded the eyes of the Jews for a time. Why? For our sake. For us to have a chance to choose Christ. For how long has Israel been hardened? Only until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. What happens after that? The very next verse tells us:

“And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will banish ungodliness from Jacob.’ ”

(Romans 11:26, ESV)

Why will He banish ungodliness from Jacob?

“This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins...they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

(Romans 11:27, 28-29)

We can clearly see that on the day of the Lord's return, all Israel alive at that time will be saved. Right up until the end of the age there is a clear distinction between Israel and the Church. Right up until the end of the age God declares that He has not forgotten nor forsaken His everlasting, enduring covenant that began with Abraham:

“He remembers His covenant forever, the word
that He commanded, for a thousand generations...”
(Psalm 105:8, ESV)

This partial and temporary blinding of the Jews to the truth of Christ is indeed for our benefit. I've never been more humbled. Though they stumbled over Yeshua (Jesus),⁹ not recognizing Him as their Messiah, they did not fall permanently. But instead, *because* of their transgression and blindness, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Why? To provoke the Jews to jealousy, so that eventually *they* can also be recipients of the mercy that *we* were shown. Paul speaks directly to the Church:

“For just as **you** once were disobedient to God,
but now have been shown mercy because of **their**
disobedience, so **these** also now have been disobedient,
that because of the mercy shown to **you they** also
may now be shown mercy.”
(Romans 11:30-31, emphasis mine)

We, the Church, as wild olive branches, were grafted into the rich root that sustains the natural olive tree (Israel).¹⁰ This in no way denotes a permanent replacement of the natural branches of the olive tree, nor even the permanent placement of the wild branches (us) to the tree!

Let's dig into Paul's metaphor of the olive tree, because it is the very picture of God's covenantal plan of salvation for the world. Paul states in Romans 11:16 that the root of this tree is holy, so the branches are, too. What is the root? The holy root of the Jewish olive tree is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob— the patriarchs of the faith— *and* the enduring covenant God made with them. This is because the life, identity, and promises of Israel all flow from God's oath to these patriarchs. The nourishment of this root is Christ, who fulfills and upholds the promises of this covenant. The natural branches of this tree are the original heirs of the promise: the Jewish people, some of whom have been broken off because of unbelief. Believing Gentiles, grafted in by faith in Christ, are pictured as wild branches, and are sustained by the root, which again is the sustaining

promises of God, given to Abraham. Our grafting is strictly based on grace and not merit. This complete olive tree stands as a living picture of a divine mystery God foresaw— one tree, one root, many branches, all sustained by Christ, who nourishes the root— Israel’s covenant. The image reveals both unity and distinction: Gentile believers share in Israel’s spiritual blessings, yet without erasing her identity, usurping her national promises, or replacing her destiny, for Israel’s restoration is still to come. In this single, continuous story of redemption, the Church is neither inferior nor superior to Israel, but is graciously joined to the same root of promise by the mercy of God. Friends, our very salvation depends upon the root of the tree to which we have been grafted— the covenant God made with Abraham. To suggest that God’s promises to Israel are dead is to strike at the very root that upholds our salvation! We need Israel, not as a relic of the past, but as a living, breathing reminder that God’s faithfulness does not fail. Through Israel came the covenants, the prophets, and the Messiah Himself; the same covenant mercy that sustains her sustains us.

Paul now gives staggering warnings directly to the Church on what this grafting does and does not mean for us, along with clear and decisive instructions on staying in our own lane in this grand mystery.

Paul’s Explicit Warnings to the Church

Paul proceeds in Romans 11 with nine verses that provide unavoidable, straightforward warnings directly to the Church on how we are commanded to proceed, with this new knowledge of precisely the manner in which our grafting has taken place. I’m perplexed as to how the reading of these verses can result in anything other than absolute humility toward the Jewish people. Let’s take the passage in its entirety, bearing in mind that Paul is speaking to the Church here, and that the branches that are “broken off” are unbelieving Jews:

“But you must not brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. You are just a branch, not the root. ‘Well,’ you may say, ‘those branches were broken off to make room for me.’ Yes, but remember— those branches were broken off because they didn’t believe in Christ, and you are there because you do believe. So don’t think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. For if God did not spare the original branches, He won’t spare you either. Notice how God is both kind and severe.

He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in His kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off. And if the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree. You, by nature, were a branch cut from a wild olive tree. So if God was willing to do something contrary to nature by grafting you into His cultivated tree, He will be far more eager to graft the original branches back into the tree where they belong. I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will only last until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ.... Many of the people of Israel are now enemies of the Good News, and this benefits you Gentiles. Yet they are still the people He loves because He chose their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For God's gifts and His call can never be withdrawn."

(Romans 11:18-25, 28, NLT)

The text could not possibly be clearer! We are forewarned against boasting against the natural branches, but what, if not boasting, is replacement theology? Here's my simple summary of the above passage of scripture. Do not become arrogant toward the Jews, and remember the root of this family tree is the covenant God made with the patriarchs. The life flowing through that root is Christ Himself, as the ultimate fulfillment and sustainer of the covenant. He supports this tree— both the natural *and* wild, grafted-in branches. You stand in this family tree solely because of your faith in Jesus, who is the life-source that makes the root fruitful. If you do not continue in God's kindness by faith and obedience, you will also be cut off. He didn't spare unbelieving Jews— you most assuredly won't be spared! Jews who don't continue in their unbelief, and instead now choose to believe on Christ for their salvation, will simply be grafted right back into the tree! Do not be uninformed of this mystery! Don't be wise in your own estimation, nor conceited in your own "wisdom." A temporary, partial hardening of the hearts of the Jews/Israel has happened only until every Gentile that will be saved, has been saved.

What wisdom there is in this mystery of God! If this temporary transgression of Israel results in riches for the Gentiles and the whole world through the offering of salvation, imagine how much *more* good will come from their completion (eventual acceptance of Christ)! ¹¹Their *temporary* rejection yielded reconciliation of the world to God Himself. Therefore, how wonderful their acceptance will be when they see Him (Yeshua) coming on the clouds, resulting in the resurrection of the dead! ¹² The fact that they are temporary enemies of the Good News is the only thing that brought us into the fold.¹³ We would be wise to remember that the Jews are yet still God's choice as His portion, and are still loved by Him for the sake and fulfillment of His promise to the patriarchs.¹⁴

Zionism

First mentioned scripturally in 2 Samuel 5:7, the term "Zion" was used to name the Jebusite fortress that the newly anointed King David took (along with the entire city of Jerusalem eventually) for the nation of Israel. This was 3,000 years ago. Throughout the Bible we see the term expand from referring simply to the City of David, to the Temple Mount, to Jerusalem entirely, to the Jewish people as a whole ("daughters of Zion," etc.). In fact, God declared:

“... I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion,
My holy mountain.”

(Joel 3:17)

“For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired
it for His habitation. ‘This is My resting place
forever [says the Lord]; here I will dwell,
for I have desired it.’ ”

(Psalm 132:13-14, clarification mine)

God claims Zion as His own, and Micah 4:7 informs us that upon His return, Christ will rule and reign from Mt. Zion, in Jerusalem. In Hebrew, the word is “tzion” and means “marking,” which makes sense because as shown above, God has indeed “marked” Zion as His own.

Today, Zionism is the belief that the Jewish people have a right to their sustained presence in their ancestral homeland that God gave them 4,000 years ago through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and his descendants after him, for an everlasting covenant.¹⁵

While worldly “wisdom” would have you believe otherwise, this is the literal, complete definition of the term. Has it been distorted and misappropriated by Satan into a meaning that hints at something more dark and sinister, one laced with cryptic and concealed aspirations? You bet. However, an honest and straightforward reading of Scripture clearly indicates that God is, indeed, Himself a Zionist.

Firstly, God has clearly given this specific piece of land to this specific line of descendants through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, “for a thousand generations.”¹⁶ Furthermore, Zechariah 1:14 informs us that God is jealous (protective) over Jerusalem and Zion, and doesn’t take kindly to those who come against her. In fact, Zechariah 2:7-8 (CEB) proclaims:

“... Zion...He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye.”

And He has plans for Zion:

“ ‘Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,’ declares the Lord!”
(Zechariah 2:10)

The same sentiment is later confirmed in Zechariah 8:2-3, 7-8:

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her... I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Behold, I am going to save my people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.’ ”

There is also judgment coming from God, through Christ’s return, for the cause, or the controversy, of Zion.¹⁷ Before we examine just five of the many passages having to do with the return of Jesus (who is, of course, the King of the Jews), I implore you to pay

close attention to the very Jewish context upon which the return of Jesus is based. If the Church is now Israel, why are these passages dealing with literal Jerusalem, where the Jews live? Why are nations and people groups punished for their treatment of national Israel if it's actually all about the Church? We cannot forget that the Church was among the worst of the persecutors of the Jews! I believe that the following verses will make it abundantly clear that God is, indeed, a Zionist, and still retains plans to save literal, physical Israel upon Christ's return:

“But you, O Lord... will arise and have compassion
on Zion.”

(Psalm 102:12-13)

“In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: ‘Do not be afraid,
O Zion, do not let your hands fall limp. The Lord your
God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over
you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice
over you with shouts of joy... Behold, I am going to deal
at that time with all your oppressors... Indeed I will give
you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,’ says the Lord.”

(Zephaniah 3:16-17, 19-20)

After chastising Edom for violence against Jacob (Israel), the Lord says Edom will be covered with shame and cut off forever. Edom is corrected for their yet-future gloating over Israel during the time of Jacob's Trouble. Just as they have dealt viciously with Israel, so have other nations, and God will make the nations drink the cup of His wrath as punishment for their treatment of Israel:

“Because just as you drank on My holy mountain [Zion],
all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and
swallow and become as if they had never existed.”

(Obadiah 16, clarification mine)

We can tell this next passage is in an end times context because we are told in verse 1 of Micah 4 that “it will come about in the last days...” and in verse 7 that the result of this will be that “the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion.” It will come

about that when the nations all eventually come against Zion, they will be unaware that the Lord is orchestrating their gathering to destroy them on behalf of Zion:

“Writhe and labor to give birth, daughter of Zion,
like a woman in childbirth... many nations have
been assembled against you who say, ‘Let
her be polluted, and let our eyes gloat over Zion.’
But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, and
they do not understand His purpose; for He has gathered
them like sheaves to the threshing floor. Arise and thresh,
daughter of Zion, that you may pulverize many peoples.”
(Micah 4:10-13)

“On this mountain [Zion] the Lord of hosts will prepare
a lavish banquet for all peoples [to welcome His reign
on earth], a banquet of aged wines—choice pieces
[flavored] with marrow, of refined, aged wines. And
on this mountain He will destroy the covering that is
[cast] over all peoples, and the veil [of death] that is
woven and spread over all the nations. He will swallow
up death [and abolish it] for all time. And the Lord
God will wipe away tears from all faces, and He will
take away the disgrace of His people from all the earth;
for the Lord has spoken. It will be said in that day,
‘Indeed this is our God for whom we have waited that He
would save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us shout for joy and rejoice in His salvation.’ For the
hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain [Zion].”
(Isaiah 25:6-10a, AMP)

Clearly, Jesus’ return will serve to remove ungodliness from Jacob,¹⁸ unleash punishment on all nations that have persecuted the Jews,¹⁹ and set up Jesus’ rule from Zion. We cannot ignore the very Jewish nature of our Savior, His return, and His eventual reign. After all, there is no scripture about all Gentiles being saved when they see His return, but Paul guarantees that once the fullness of the Gentiles that will be saved have been saved, all Israel alive in that day of the Lord’s return will be saved.²⁰

Conclusion

God makes it clear in Malachi 3:6 that because He doesn't change, the sons of Jacob (Israel) will never be destroyed. An honest, unbiased reading of the preceding pages makes clear that God meant exactly what He repeatedly affirmed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob— the fathers of both the Jewish and Christian faiths: His covenantal promises are eternal and unending. Therefore you, dear Christian, have a choice to make. Will you choose to let the pridefulness and arrogance, which perhaps Paul already saw beginning to grow and fester in the first century church, cause you to boast against Israel? It is impossible to read Romans 9-11 and determine that God is “done with the Jews,” the Church has “replaced Israel” or even that the Church is the “fulfillment of Israel.” It is clear throughout these chapters that there is a definite distinction made between Israel and Gentile believers. Of course salvation ultimately requires faith in Jesus as Messiah— even for the Jews. Paul made this clear when he stated that they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel... instead, it is merely a remnant of Israel that will be saved... because faith is what leads to salvation.²¹ To somehow suggest that this means that the Church is the ultimate fulfillment of Israel is intellectual dishonesty at best, and demonic deception at worst. Why such strong language? Jesus said:

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather **your children** together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, **you will not see Me again until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

(Matthew 23:37-39, emphasis mine)

You cannot escape the fact that it will be the conversion of national Israel, as they finally acknowledge Christ as their anticipated Messiah, that precipitates the return of our Savior. This not only means that there is a clear distinction between Israel and the Church at the very end of time, but it also explains the cunningly evil plan that Satan has employed: cut off the Jews at all cost. Why? He knows that Christ's return will result in his imminent and permanent destruction. Therefore, if he can destroy the Jews, he can prevent their collective acceptance of Yeshua (Jesus), and thereby prevent the return of their long-awaited Messiah and his own end. Perhaps the most sorrowful realization one can come to is the fact that Satan successfully employed the Christian Church as one of

his most eager and willing tools to antagonize, dispossess, and destroy the Jews throughout history:

- As early as church fathers Justin Martyr, Origen, Jerome, and Augustine, we see the thread beginning to weave throughout Church history of the boasting against the Jews that Paul repeatedly warned about in Romans 9-11.

- Adolf Hitler used the antisemitic writings and declarations of Martin Luther as he crafted his Satanic plan to eliminate the Jewish people entirely.

- Currently, we see a growing swell of Anti-Semitism in the Christian Church, evidenced by Holocaust denial, the rise in replacement theology/supersessionism, and the propagation of wild political conspiracies that suggest that it is actually logical that a people group that makes up less than 1/5 of 1% of the world's population is somehow responsible for all evil since the beginning of time.

If we use just a modicum of critical thinking, we can clearly ascertain that of course Satan wants to destroy the Jews! So naturally it follows that he would attempt to turn what *should* be their most natural ally, the Church, into their enemy. Perhaps what's most alarming, however, is that despite Paul's admonitions that the Enemy would do exactly this, somehow the Church has ignored his explicit and unambiguous warnings entirely.

Is this an argument that the government in Israel makes every right decision, or that the Jewish people are above reproach? Of course not! But the issue has never truly been that; such arguments can serve merely as shallow rationalizations to veil the pridefulness and arrogance in the hearts of some believers that leave us wanting to exalt ourselves above the Jewish people.

Another trope commonly employed today is the argument that "certain Jewish ethnic groups around the world aren't *real* Jews," despite genetic testing that proves otherwise. The Jews were repeatedly exiled to different lands! Doesn't it naturally follow that people of Jewish descent would start showing up in Europe, North Africa, Russia, etc., and that they would begin to marry people from these places? This somehow makes them "fake" Jews? It's also been suggested that the Jews currently in Israel aren't the "real" Jews. Who or what are they, then? If that's the case, Satan clearly missed the memo, as he's been viciously seeking the destruction of these very people since they came back into the land in 1948!

Have you ever stopped to marvel at the miraculous nature of the survival of such a hated people group? From the Church turning against them, to the Holocaust, to October 7, 2023, to the modern-day ground swell of anti-Semitism, how can one deny their Chosen nature? Why else would Satan work so hard to kill them, ostracize them, and turn the entire world against them? With Zechariah's warning that to come against

Israel (Zion) is to touch the apple of God's eye,²² surely it is unwise to claim authority as the arbiters of who is, or is not, "truly" a Jew.

Another scheme of the Enemy is the Church's current predilection for the idea that "the Jews are good and are to be supported, but Zionism is evil." By now it should be obvious that this is nothing more than an attempt to invent nuance where none exists. Zionism is the belief that the Jewish people have a right to their sustained presence, in their ancestral homeland that God gave them four thousand years ago, through Abraham and later confirmed through Isaac and then Jacob and "for a thousand generations after."²³ Thus, not only is there no difference between the Jews living in the land today and those to whom the original promise was made, but those living there now are the very recipients and fulfillment of the promise!

We, as the Church, were only invited in by the mercy of God, in His decision to partially and temporarily harden the hearts of the Jews, giving them a spirit of stupor resulting in spiritual blindness and deafness, that they should reject Jesus Christ, *only until* the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, at which point *all Israel* alive during the Day of the Lord will be saved.²⁴ There are two noteworthy conclusions to be drawn from this: 1) The distinction between Jews and Gentiles is unmistakable; one cannot infer that this is speaking of "spiritual Israel" (the amalgamation of saved Jews and Gentiles) which will be saved at Christ's return, as some like to assert, since the preceding verse discusses Gentiles separately. 2) The delineation between the Church and Israel is still distinct at the *very* end of the age.

Israel is still beloved by God, and though many are currently living in disobedience, so once were you and I. We all have been stuck in disobedience at one time or another, so that God may show mercy to all.²⁵ Paul warns: continue in the kindness [gentleness, goodness] of God or you will be cut off. Likewise, any in Israel who do not continue in unbelief will simply be grafted back into the root that sustains *you and I*.²⁶

Zechariah 12:9-10 (AMP) gives shocking detail as to the depth of the sadness that will exist in Jerusalem upon Christ's return:

"And in that day I will seek to destroy all the nations
that come against Jerusalem. I will pour out on the house of
David and on the people of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace
(unmerited favor) and supplication. And they will look at
Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him as one
mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him
as one who weeps bitterly over a firstborn."

It is at this point, when they realize their error, Paul tells us all Israel will be saved. The spirit of supplication that will be poured out is a gift and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, which leads to a contrite and repentant heart. A contrite heart is defined as a heart filled with sincere remorse and a deep sorrow for one's failings, showing a willingness to repent and submit. Their eyes are currently blinded, *by God*, for the sole purpose of presenting you and I with the opportunity for salvation and eternal life with Christ. The only appropriate response by the Church to this profound offering is humility. There is no room for pride— this is solely the work of God. When Jesus comes back, the spirit of stupor, which led to their current temporary spiritual blindness, will be replaced by the Holy Spirit. Friends, we have not replaced Israel, nor are we the fulfillment of Israel. We are wild olive branches that have been offered the incredible honor of being grafted into the rich, holy root of the Jewish olive tree. Laid in Zion is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.²⁷ Yeshua. The Jews largely have, thus far, stumbled over this rock; He wasn't who they were expecting. Oh, but the plans God has for them at Christ's return.

We as the body of Christ have a very important role to play in these end times. Just as the Bible predicted two thousand years ago, the entirety of the world is beginning to turn against Israel. What is our response to be? Do unto the brothers (and sisters) of our Jewish Savior what He commanded: feed them, clothe them, invite them in, and visit them.²⁸ Our churches aren't talking about it, but the time of Jacob's Trouble will descend upon Israel at some point in the coming years. If you're like most western Christians, you've been told you don't need to prepare for this, since you won't be present for it. That's another deception to be tackled at another time, as it's outside the scope of this current discussion. Jewish tradition is not expecting a future Antichrist figure— might the Church be expected to tell them what the New Testament says to do when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies at the end of the age?²⁹ When I read Revelation 12:13-17, and the vivid imagery of what happens during the Great Tribulation, not only am I struck by the clear indication that first Satan will go after Israel, and *then* he will go after Christians, but I am also curious of how verse 14 will ultimately play out. It reads (with my clarification): "But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman [Israel], so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time [3.5 years], [away] from the presence of the serpent [Satan]." I have no idea whether this will involve the Church or not. But if so, what does it look like for the Church to step up to such a task of caring for Israel during her darkest hour? One thing is clear: it does require a change in course *now*, away from the deception of replacement theology, to be able to stand with willing arms held open to God, and a humbled heart ready to stand with His people if we have the opportunity to do so.

You *will* have a choice to make. It's actually very simple: will you choose to stand with Israel in a real and tangible way that actually costs you something, or will you receive the cup of God's wrath? Zechariah 14:12 serves as a stark reminder: there *IS* a right side of history– and you'll want to be on it...

“Now this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth.”

Yeah. It's graphic. But if all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that we can be equipped for every good work,³⁰ then this is no exception. If you are a follower of Christ, you must choose whether pride and arrogance, or God's written Word, will guide your actions in the years ahead. Yes, the cause of Zion, the issue of Israel and the Jewish people, is no mere matter of politics or opinion– it is the very dividing line of history, the choice to stand *with* the covenant-keeping God, or to set oneself *against* Him.

“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of **My** people, and **My** inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up **My** land. They have also cast lots for **My** people...Let the nations be aroused and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations... for the Day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.”

(Joel 3:1-3a, 12, 14b, emphasis mine)

It is in this context that the judgment of Matthew 25:31-46, of the sheep and the goat nations, by Christ, occurs. Despite the fact that every idea in the New Testament hearkens back to the Old Testament, and illuminates it in a way that only adds clarity, many of our churches today do not teach from the Old Testament. It is to our severe

detriment that this is the case. When you study the numerous Old Testament accounts from the prophets about the Day of the Lord, and compare them with the parallel passages in the New Testament— found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, Romans, Revelation, and others— you see with stunning clarity what that day entails. The day of the Lord’s return unfolds in the context of a Jewish Messiah, returning to His Jewish homeland, with the express purpose of judging entire people groups based on their treatment of His Jewish people. The result will be that He finally “removes ungodliness from Jacob.”³¹ After all, this was, is, and will always be His covenant with them, when He takes away their sins.³²

There are layers of meaning behind the fact that the site of this final judgment of the nations is called the Valley of Jehoshaphat— meaning ‘the Lord has judged’ – and is also referred to as ‘The Valley of Decision’ or ‘The Valley of Threshing.’ Yes, Jesus will make His decision, but, dear friend, so must you— before His time of judgment arrives. There is a very real Enemy lurking who wants to convince you that Israel isn’t Israel, that God is “done” with the Jews, that everything is now about the Church, and that Zionism means something other than what it literally means. God, however, says otherwise. Israel is still Israel, right up until the last day when Christ returns, and it will, in fact, be the very location to which Jesus returns. God says that He still has a plan for national Israel and the Jewish people. Scripture confirms that it’s not all about the Church. And finally, there are examples too numerous to list to confirm that God is Himself a Zionist. Now the choice is set before us— stand with Israel and the Jews, or with those destined for destruction— when our Savior returns to judge the nations for their treatment of *His* people, *His* portion, and *His* land, Israel. The Valley of Decision calls.

Notes

- ¹ Matthew 24:4, 11; Mark 13:5
- ² Genesis 15:7-8
- ³ Genesis 15:12, 17
- ⁴ Genesis 17:7-8
- ⁵ Genesis 17:19
- ⁶ Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1
- ⁷ Romans 11:29
- ⁸ Genesis 17:18-21
- ⁹ Romans 9:32b-33
- ¹⁰ Romans 11:17
- ¹¹ Romans 11:12; Genesis 22:18, 28:14
- ¹² Romans 11:15
- ¹³ Romans 11:28a
- ¹⁴ Deuteronomy 4:37, 7:7-8, 10:15; Genesis 17:7; Romans 11:28b
- ¹⁵ Genesis 17:19, 28:13
- ¹⁶ Psalm 105:8-11
- ¹⁷ Isaiah 34:8
- ¹⁸ Romans 11:26
- ¹⁹ Joel 3:1-2
- ²⁰ Romans 11:25-26
- ²¹ Romans 9:6b, 27, 32
- ²² Zechariah 2:8
- ²³ Psalm 105:8-11
- ²⁴ Romans 11:8, 25-27
- ²⁵ Romans 11:30-32
- ²⁶ Romans 11:17-24
- ²⁷ Romans 9:32b-33
- ²⁸ Matthew 25:34-40
- ²⁹ Luke 21:20-21
- ³⁰ 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- ³¹ Romans 11:26
- ³² Romans 11:27

Common Arguments for Replacement Theology

“God is against Israel, so the Church should be as well.”

God is not *against* Israel in the sense of permanent disregard for, nor hatred of, Israel. Romans 10:21-11:2 says, “But as for Israel He says, ‘All the day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.’ I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!... God has not rejected His people...” The story of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the story of repeated blessings and chastisements, by God, of His people. In fact, Amos 3:1-2 says, “Hear this word which the Lord has spoken against you, sons of Israel... ‘You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.’ ” It is *because* of His love for, and election of, the Jewish people *that* He chastises them when they are disobedient. When our children are disobedient, we correct them. Never in Scripture are we told of the permanent dissolution of Israel in the eyes of God.

If you and I were friends, and I saw you at the grocery store with your young children, and they started throwing a fit, thrashing around on the floor, screaming and being disobedient, would you take kindly to me suddenly spanking or berating your children on your behalf? Would it be my role to step in and chastise your children because you are a treasured friend of mine? Of course not! Why do we, the Church, believe it’s our place to punish Israel on behalf of God, their Father?

Jeremiah 30:10-12 (ESV) says, “ ‘... fear not, O Jacob my servant,’ declares the Lord, ‘nor be dismayed, O Israel... for I am with you to save you... I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.’ ” The prophet continues later, in 31:37 (ESV), “Thus says the Lord: ‘If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done...’ ” When we compare these verses with the myriad of others in the body of this document, we clearly see that God is not against Israel; to the contrary, they will all be saved at the day of the Lord’s return (Romans 11:26).

“The Jews don’t even believe! Why would we support them in their unbelief?”

Where did we get the idea that they were supposed to be in belief at this point in time? The Jews were only ever going to come back into the land in unbelief! Scripture is

clear that it won't be until the Day of the Lord that they recognize Him whom they pierced:

- Deuteronomy 4:30 says, "When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, *in the latter days* you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice" (emphasis mine).

- Ezekiel 39:22, in an end times context says, "And the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God *from that day onward*" (emphasis mine).

- Zechariah 12:10 clearly states Israel will remain hardened to the truth until the divine intervention of the Messiah's arrival: "...the house of David... the inhabitants of Jerusalem... they will look on Me whom they have pierced... they will mourn..."

Furthermore, when we see the *reason* they don't recognize Him as Savior, our only proper response is humility. In Romans 11:25, speaking to the Church, Paul says, "... do not... be uninformed of this mystery– so that you will not be wise in your own estimation– that a partial hardening has happened to Israel *until* the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved" (emphasis mine). It is for your sake and mine that God has supernaturally blinded their eyes and ears to the truth of salvation through Christ; but it will end up that all Israel alive at Christ's second coming will be saved. Their partial blinding, *by God*, to the truth, is what allowed the Gentiles to be grafted into the rich root of the Jewish olive tree.

“Galatians 3:16 says, ‘Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.’ This invalidates the covenant to the Jews because Christ is the ultimate fulfillment.”

This verse is often isolated in an attempt to support the doctrine of replacement theology. However, if we read Galatians 3 in its entirety, we have no problem understanding the context of verse 16. The purpose of Galatians 3, in an historical context, was to remind the Church at Galatia that their salvation was not achieved through works (the Law), as the Judaizers were attempting to convince them, but solely through their faith in Christ. Galatians 3 informs us of 4 truths: 1) Salvation is through faith in Christ, not works. 2) We could never achieve salvation under the Law. 3) It is through Christ that the promised blessing of the nations, through Abraham, is fulfilled. 4) Through Christ, now all have access to God, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social status.

For the sake of this discussion we will explore point 3: it is through Christ that the promise spoken to Abraham is fulfilled. What promise? Paul tells us a few verses earlier: "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,

proclaimed the good news [of the Savior] to Abraham in advance [with this promise], saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’ ” (Galatians 3:8, AMP). Paul was referring to Genesis 22:18: “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...” Therefore, Galatians 3:16 is stating that it is in the person of Christ that this promise will find fulfillment. Christ, having atoned for the sins of all, is the one, singular seed through whom all the nations will be blessed. It’s silly to suggest that this verse serves to disregard or nullify the original covenant with Abraham of the election of the Jews as God’s Chosen, and the land promise that followed. The Abrahamic promises are ultimately confirmed through Christ– they aren’t revoked or canceled! Christ’s *fulfillment* of the promises *secures* Israel’s ongoing promises; it doesn’t replace them. The entire point of this passage is to remind the Galatians that their promises depend on Christ’s faithfulness, not Israel’s performance.

Paul was not suggesting that there weren’t *any* promises to multiple seeds of Abraham. A reading of Genesis chapters 15 and 17 will serve to confirm that a real tangible promise was given to Abraham *and his descendants after him*, with a real, physical land area being the gift. There are many mentions throughout Genesis where it’s clear that the promises were literal, and were applicable through “a thousand generations” from Abraham. This has been discussed at length in the body of this work; I refer you there for further scriptural evidence.

Furthermore, Galatians 3:17–18 (NLT) makes it clear that this promise to Abraham was not based on works (the Law), but was a gift from God: “... The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the Law to Moses. God would be breaking His promise... God graciously gave it to Abraham as a promise.” Yet many who embrace replacement theology claim that Galatians 3:16 teaches the opposite—that the Jewish people cease to remain God’s Chosen. But that interpretation collapses under the weight of Paul’s own words. Paul, in Romans 9–11, written only a few years after this, emphatically reaffirms God’s enduring covenant with Israel, distinguishing between Jew and Gentile even until the return of Christ. To read Galatians 3 as erasing that distinction is to disregard the consistency of Paul’s message and the faithfulness of God’s promises. By God’s grace, the promise to Abraham has been extended to all nations, without negating the rest of God’s covenantal promises that are to the Jews.

I believe it’s also supremely important to note that God calls Himself “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” throughout the Old *and* New Testaments. This title functions as a sort of divine signature. Read Acts chapters 3 and 7, and you’ll find that even after the death of Christ, God still identifies Himself this way, as the God of covenant relationship and continuity. If the covenant with the Jews was invalidated by the Advent of Christ, why would God continue to call Himself by this name even *after*

the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? God's very identity is anchored in covenant faithfulness!

“Galatians 3:28 tells us that there is now no more distinction between Jews and Gentiles.”

Galatians 3:28-29 says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek... neither slave nor free man... neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.” Clearly Paul isn’t saying that there are no longer differences between these people groups; he’s saying that ALL now have access to salvation through Christ Jesus, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social status. Paul obviously still saw differences between males and females. After all, he later wrote extensively about gender roles in Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Timothy 2:9-15. Furthermore, Paul elaborates on this idea of oneness in Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:11-14, 27:

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many... Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.”

It is hermeneutical dishonesty to say that Paul was suggesting Jews are no longer distinct from the Church, or that the Church has replaced Israel. We *individually* come together to form one body. Just read his lengthy writings on the subject in Romans 9-11 and his intentions will be made abundantly clear. Because this was addressed at length in the body of this work, I refer you there for deeper discussion.

One final point to address is Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:29: “And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.” Here again, Paul is not overturning what he later affirms in Romans 11—that God’s covenant with Israel still stands. To suggest that all promises to Israel have been transferred to the Church is to ignore both the timing and the context of his writings. Rather, Paul is declaring that faith in Christ unites Jew and Gentile within the same

redemptive family. The family tree of Christ includes both the natural branches and those grafted in by grace, just as he explains in Romans 11:17–24. We are heirs together of the promise of salvation through Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of God’s word to Abraham—that through him, all nations of the earth would be blessed.

“Jeremiah 31:31-34, the pronouncement of the new covenant, erases national Israel’s guarantee of restoration and land, and instead sees the Church as having superseded the Jews as a new ‘spiritual Israel.’ ”

It’s interesting that this argument is attempted, as first and foremost the passage specifically states that this is yet *another* covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In fact, every explicit covenant made in the Bible was with Israel! If there was any doubt as to whether national Israel was pictured as the prophet wrote, we need only to keep reading. We see yet another promise of national Israel’s security as a nation before God. Let’s read the pertinent verses:

“ ‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people’... Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar... ‘If this fixed order departs from before Me’, declares the Lord, ‘then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever... If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, [only] then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done.’ ”
(Jeremiah 31:31,33b,35-37, clarification mine)

The stated recipients of the covenant— Israel and Judah— are named, and the terms are never redefined. It is clear that this covenant is with literal, national Israel, as God yet again promises the offspring of Israel won’t cease to be a nation before Him (v. 36) and that they won’t be cast off despite all they’ve done (v. 37) in their disobedience. This makes it impossible to “spiritualize” Israel and Judah away. Of course the Church participates in the new covenant, but we do not absorb nor replace

Israel in the process. Again, Romans 11:17-24 is a beautiful gift, showing how we are grafted into the rich root of the Jewish olive tree. Through Christ, we share in the blessings of this tree without nullifying Israel's national promises. Paul reminds us that the Church does not support the root of the tree— rather, the root supports us. The natural branches are Israel, God's covenant people, and the root represents the patriarchs of the Jewish nation and the promises God made to them. As grafted-in branches, we participate in the life of the tree, yet the tree remains fundamentally Jewish, rooted in God's faithfulness to His covenant people.

“It's often said that Genesis 12:3 promises blessings for those who bless Israel, but this verse was only speaking to Abraham, therefore, we aren't directed to bless Israel to be blessed ourselves.”

When I hear this argument, it makes me wonder why we so often struggle to bless Israel, or why we sometimes hold back from fully embracing the blessing God calls us to give. Genesis 12:1, 3 says, “Now the Lord said to Abram... I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse.” However, there's another example of the command to bless Israel, as *God Himself* has blessed them, that may be helpful to consider. Numbers chapters 22-24 relay the story of a pagan diviner (seer) who was often recruited to curse the enemies of certain tribes around the time of Moses. Three times Balak, an enemy of Israel, offered payment to Balaam in exchange for his cursing of Israel. And three times he learned that he could not curse what God had already blessed, and God had indeed blessed Israel:

“God said to Balaam... ‘You shall not curse the people,
for they are blessed.’ ”
(Numbers 22:12)

“...Balak has brought me... [saying] ‘Come curse Jacob
for me, and come, denounce Israel!’
How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And
how can I denounce whom the Lord has not denounced?”
(Numbers 23:7-8, clarification mine)

“When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless
Israel... he [Balaam] set his face toward the wilderness. And
Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping...and

the Spirit of God came upon him. He took up his discourse and said...‘O Jacob, O Israel... blessed is everyone who blesses you, and cursed is everyone who curses you.’ ”
(Numbers 24:1-3, 9b, clarification mine)

This is enough for me to understand the invitation to bless Israel.

“Modern-Day Jews are what the book of Revelation refers to as the ‘synagogue of Satan.’ ”

This is an incredibly unfortunate and bold claim of antisemites to justify their persecution of Jewish people. The term is used twice in the Bible:

“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”
(Revelation 2:9, ESV)

“Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie— behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.”
(Revelation 3:9, ESV)

First we will add some historical context. In the cities of Smyrna and Philadelphia (the cities in which were found the churches to whom these letters were written) were certain Jewish communities who actively worked against the Christians by turning them in to the authorities. These communities claimed to be representatives of God, yet actively opposed His Messiah and the early Church. Synagogue means “assembly,” so in essence John was saying that they claimed to be Jews, but served Satan’s goals by being an assembly of those who opposed the Gospel. It was not a racial or ethnic label, nor was it ever used against the entirety of the Jewish population. It is merely symbolic of spiritual opposition.

The earliest Church fathers, who lived and wrote from the first through third centuries and lived closest to the time of John the Apostle (who wrote Revelation), had a clear understanding of the term. Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, Hippolytus of Rome, and even Church fathers into the third and fourth centuries always used the term

metaphorically. Each of them used the term to represent hypocritical, heretical groups claiming to serve God when in actuality they were opponents of truth who, in a sense, worked for the Enemy. Never was it used by these Church fathers to apply to Jews collectively.

The term was used to target physical Jewish synagogues only after Christian rhetoric turned overtly anti-Jewish; before that, it had been a symbolic label for unbelief. It was in the medieval period that the term “synagogue of Satan” dominantly became a reference to Jews as a whole. In the time of the Reformation, it was not only used against Jews, but also against the Catholic hierarchy.

The term “synagogue of Satan” was never intended by the writer of Revelation to be used against Jews as a whole. It referred to a specific local conflict, not a judgment against the Jews. The Jews remain beloved and chosen for the fathers’ sake, right up until the second coming of Christ (Romans 11:1-27).

“The government of Israel is corrupt and I can’t support them.”

The Jewish people criticize their government openly and honestly. Israel is, after all, a free society and has the right and privilege to do so. As an American citizen, I am afforded this same privilege; I can freely disagree with my government. It seems to me to be perfectly reasonable to support the land, the people, and the enduring promise of Israel while disagreeing with their government on select issues. At the same time, it's worth considering whether we hold other nations to the same standards we expect of the Israeli government. And more importantly, being conscious and intentional about getting information from reliable sources seems practical. We need not search too hard to locate fabricated statistics seeking to discredit the Jews. The world consistently seeks to dismiss, defame and destroy the Jewish people. Seeking truth is one thing; obsessively digging for bogus figures to confirm a bias is another.

The Church forgets there’s a real Enemy bent on Israel’s destruction. If his aim is to undermine and derail God’s covenant promises, wouldn’t it be strategic for him to corrupt Israel’s leadership and distort her purpose? Scripture already says Israel is currently in a state of spiritual blindness—so why the shock that she occupies the land in unbelief? That unbelief is part of God’s plan for *our* redemption, yet Satan flips the script and weaponizes that condition to pit the Church against the very people through whom God revealed His plan. But Romans 11:28–29 exposes the lie: “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 fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” To despise Israel in her blindness is to side, knowingly or not, with the one who hates and opposes the promises of God.