

Replacement Theology began early

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Replacement Theology teaches that Jews lost all their title to the promises in the Bible to Israel as the “chosen people” and inheritors of the Promised land because of their rejection of Yeshua as Messiah, transferring all the promises to the Christian church. It really began before the 1st century was over. Let’s look at how things developed via a short review of Christian church history in terms of its relationship with the Jews. (All of these men were Gentiles trained in Greek philosophy.)

1. **Ignatius of Antioch, 90 CE (common era):** Pushed for the severing of the Christian church from Passover in favor of the creation of “Easter”. (See R. Beckwith *Calendar and Chronology: Jewish & Christian*.) He wrote letters to Gentile communities against “Judaizing,” “There is no need of obsolete practices ... those who practice Judaism are like tombstones and graves merely inscribed with the names of men.”

He also stated that those who partook of Passover were the partners of those who killed Jesus.

2. **Marcion, early 2nd century (140s):** He argued that the “Old Testament” was no longer valid and that the Gentiles had replaced the Jews. He found the OT account offensive to his Greek philosophical worldview and fought to have it removed from the canon. He taught that the vengeful, angry God of the Jews was a totally different God from the loving, reconciling God of the Gentiles. He was excommunicated as a heretic, but the damage had been done.
3. **Justin Martyr:** In 160 CE wrote the work “A Dialogue With Trypho,” in which he claimed God’s covenant with Israel was no longer valid and that the Gentiles had replaced them. “Jews” he claimed, are separated from other nations and “justly suffer”.
4. **Melito, Bishop of Sardis, 167 CE:** He brought the first recorded charge of deicide, or the killing of a deity, against the Jewish people. (Peri-Pasca)

5. **Origen:** Born in 185 CE, he taught the interpretation of Scripture¹ as allegorical rather than literal, based on Greek philosophy (Greek philosophers were embarrassed by stories from the OT as well as the Greek mythologies)

With the introduction of Origen’s allegorical method of interpretation in the third century, the faith of the Church concerning the kingdom began to change. As the anti-Judaic posture spread in the Church, what was once considered heresy was put forward as the new orthodoxy. The millennial restoration of Israel began to be considered a carnal Jewish doctrine, which no orthodox Christian could believe.

He taught the Greek rather than Hebrew concept of body/soul/spirit. Although some found him heretical he was tolerated and had much influence.

He wrote, “The calamities, the Jews have suffered because they were a most wicked nation, which, although guilty of many other sins, yet has been punished so severely for none, as for those that were committed against Jesus.”

6. **Tertullian, 190s CE:** Wrote a treatise called “Against the Jews” He blamed the Jews for the death of Jesus. “They are the seed plot of all calumnies against us.”
7. **Eusebius, 3rd-4th century:** Church historian who wrote “The Life of Constantine” celebrating the union of the Church with the Roman Empire. He taught that that the promise of Scripture was for the Gentiles and the curses were for the Jews. The Church was the true “Israel”. He preserved Constantine’s letter to the churches post Nicaea. This is what he wrote concerning the edict for the removal of the celebration of the resurrection from the same date as Passover:

“... concerning the most holy day of Easter ... For what can be more beautiful, what more venerable ... than that this festival, from which we receive the hope of immortality, should be suitably observed by all in one and the same order, and by a certain rule. And truly it seemed to everyone a most unworthy thing that we should follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this most holy solemnity, who polluted wretches! Having stained their hands with a nefarious crime are justly blinded in their minds.... Let us have nothing in common with the most hostile rabble of the Jews. We have received another method from the Saviour. ... let us withdraw ourselves my much honoured brethren from that most odious fellowship.... A suitable reformation should take place in this respect... this fault (the celebration of the Passion at Passover) should be so amended that we may have nothing in common with the usage of these parricides and murderers of our Lord ... and have no fellowship with the perjury of the Jews.”²

8. **Constantine, 3rd-4th centuries:** This Roman emperor used Christianity to unite a divided Roman Empire. He had his wife and son murdered after his so-called conversion. The “vision” he had in that showed a cross [Ed.: must have been the handle of a sword!] and a voice saying “In this sign conquer” justified the violence from that point on! He worshiped Mithras the Sun-God — *Sol Invictus* (the Invincible Sun) — whose weekly celebration day was Sunday, and whose birth date was celebrated on December 25. Constantine legislated the Sunday Laws changing the Sabbath celebration to Sunday.

When Constantine was issuing his Sunday laws, was he a consistent Christian? Hardly. At that very time, he was embellishing the Temple of the Sun in Rome. In the same year that he proclaimed his first Sunday Law — March 7th, 321 — he made several decrees maintaining pagan practices, such as consulting with heathen priests for guidance, who would then watch the flight of birds, or cut open animals, in order to know what advice to give. All this Constantine legitimised.

The day after giving his famous Sunday Law, Constantine made another law for pagan soothsayers. When lightning should strike a public building the pagan prophets were allowed to be consulted as to its meaning.³

¹ (Meaning the OT. Also please note: any time the term “Scripture” is used in the NT it is referring to the OT)

² *Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, Pp 51-54 following the ecclesiastical history in Gruber, *The Church and the Jews* pgs 33-35

³ Rabbi Yeshayahu Heiliczer, *The Story of Constantine*. www. aleph-tav.org

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It was Constantine who popularised the cross as a religious symbol. Prior to the 4th century, Christian symbols had been similar to those of the Jews: peacocks, palm branches, doves, vines, grapes, chalices and bread. The cross was a sign of shame to the Jews.

9. **John Chrysostom of Antioch, 387 CE:** He initiated and perfected the sermon genre in “Adversus Judaeos”.⁴ He was known as the “Golden Tongue”. He was a contemporary of St Augustine. He wrote of the Jews, “They are a synagogue of Christ-killers”. He compared the synagogue to a brothel. The synagogue was a “wild beasts’ den, devils’ citadel, a precipice and abyss of perdition, fit for people who live only for the belly ... they behave no better than pigs and goats in their gross lasciviousness and excess gluttony.”

He believed and taught that the Jews could never be forgiven, they worshipped the devil and it was a Christian’s duty to hate them. He became Bishop of Constantinople in 398.

10. **Jerome:** He was the “Hebrew expert” of Christendom. He wrote, “The sound made by Jews during worship is like the grunting of pigs ... the braying of donkeys” “Jews are incapable of understanding the Scriptures and should be severely punished until they confess the true faith.”
11. **Ambrose, 388 CE:** He defended the rightness of burning synagogues, putting the very existence of Judaism at risk.

12. Church councils:

a. **Council of Elvira, Spain, 306 CE:** Christians forbidden to marry Jews.

b. **Council of Nicaea, 325 CE, and Council of Antioch, 341 CE:** Christians are forbidden to celebrate Passover with the Jews.

c. **Council of Laodicea, 434–48 CE:** Christians are forbidden to worship on the Sabbath.

13. **Augustine:** Spiritualised biblical concepts and encouraged the use of allegory rather than the plain literal sense of the text. (This had begun with Origen.) Augustine taught, “The Kingdom of Heaven is only spiritual, is now, and is in men’s hearts. The Millennium is now and Satan is already bound.” This effectively served to diminish the Biblical teaching of the expectation of the coming of God’s Kingdom on earth and the millennial reign of the Messiah. Augustine wrote “The Jews deserve death, but are destined to wander the earth to witness the victory of the church over the synagogue.”

14. **Middle Ages:** Blood libel⁵, Jews are called “Satanic”, Crusades⁶, forced conversions and expulsion.

15. **Martin Luther, 17th century:** In *On the Jews and Their Lies* he wrote, “Jews are poisoners, ritual murderers, usurers; they are parasites on Christian society; they are worse than devils; it is harder to convert them than Satan himself; they are doomed to hell. They are in truth the Anti-Christ. Their synagogues should be destroyed and their books seized; they should be forced to work with their hands” He defined the Jew as “the born enemy of German Christians”. Luther’s work informed Hitler.

16. **20th century:** In 1905, Sergyei Nilus plagiarized much of French lawyer Maurice Joly’s 1864 anti-Napoleon III satire “Dialogue in Hell” for the Russian Czar Nicholas II-commissioned forgery *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.⁷

⁴ *Adversus Judaeos* means ‘Against the Jews/Judaism’

⁵ A charge that Jews drained the blood from Christian children to make Passover matzah.

⁶ The Crusaders locked Jews into their synagogues before setting them alight. While the flames roared they marched around them singing “For Christ and for God”.

⁷ *Protocols* is spurious forged work that supposedly documents a Jewish conspiracy for world domination. This work is published freely in the Arab world today, as is the claim of blood libel. “The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion: Plagiarism at its Best,” Jose De La Cruz, UC Santa Barbara, November 2003, www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/33d/projects/protzion/DelaCruzProtocolsMain.htm.