

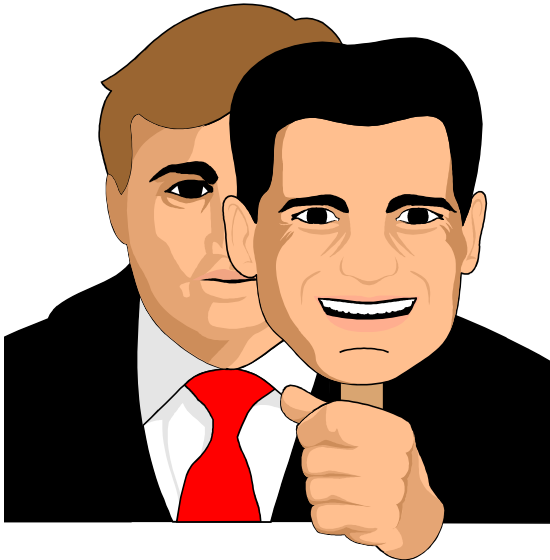
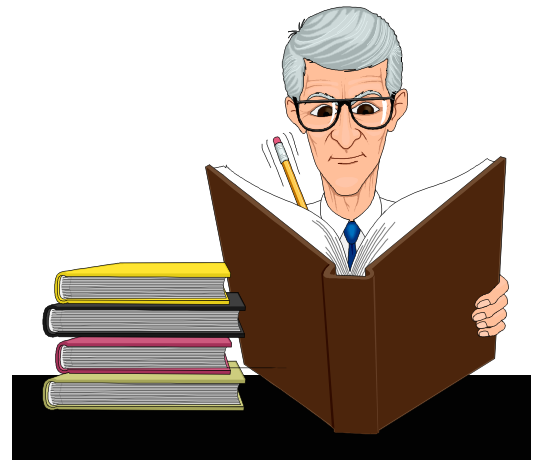
# Replacement Theology

By

**Dr. Renald E. Showers**

*Bible Teacher & Conference Speaker with  
Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.*

An Edited Transcription of His Message  
Part of a Series at the  
**New England Bible Conference**  
September 2006  
**The Middletown Bible Church**  
Middletown, CT



*A Timely Warning Concerning  
the Past, Present, & Future Consequences of  
Departing from  
the Literal–Grammatical Interpretation  
of the Bible*

# REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

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**T**HE BIBLE CLEARLY teaches that God is truth, and true. And the word true means He's exactly what He claims to be. He doesn't misrepresent Himself. God is truth which is another way of saying, God is Ultimate Reality. And since God is truth and ultimate reality, He's also the ultimate source of truth for mankind. But tragically, beginning about the end of World War I there began to grow, at least in our western culture and society, a growing denial of the existence of the personal Sovereign Creator God of the Bible. And, of course, one of the expressions of that—very popular in the 1960s—was the “God Is Dead Movement,” but that was just one such expression. So that we have a lot of people, at least in the western world today who basically are atheistic, or at least agnostic. Many say, “There is no such God.” Others say, “Well maybe there is, but I can't be sure about it.” Others say, “Well, maybe there is such a God, but He's totally irrelevant to our modern world and society today.” And, those concepts, very foundational to life and reality, have produced some very interesting consequences. One of the consequences that we are witnessing today is a denial of objective truth that's binding upon all of mankind.

What do we mean by **objective truth**? It is truth that stands as truth by itself, and it is the same truth for all of mankind regardless of your culture, regardless of your race, regardless of your nation, regardless of your language. It's unchanging truth that is the same for all of mankind, and all mankind is responsible to be aware of it and conduct life accordingly.

Put another way: objective truth is truth that was not invented by man. It's outside of man, and therefore, it's unchanging, and it's the same for all mankind whatsoever. And so we have an increasing denial of objective truth today, and that in turn has produced another denial—a denial of an objective standard for evaluating whether something is right or whether something is wrong.

How many times have you heard this expressed? “No one has a right to impose his or her concept of right or wrong upon another person. There is no absolute truth: **truth is relative**. It is subjective. It's up to each individual to determine for himself or herself what is truth. What is truth for this person is not truth for anybody else. And you might disagree with each other. And so there is no truth, no objective truth, no objective standard by which we can evaluate whether something is right or whether something is wrong.”

A good illustration of this: sometime ago *U.S. News & World Report* published an article about a professor who taught modern Western history at an American college. He said, years ago when they would deal with Naziism and the Holocaust, students would be horrified that there could be people that could be so brutal to systematically eliminate millions of people from the face of the earth. But he said, now today, students will say, “Well, I don't necessarily like what the Nazis did, but how can I say that what they did is wrong? We don't have any objective standards to determine whether something is right or is wrong. Maybe, if it served a good purpose for them, it was all right for them to eliminate six million Jews and millions of Gentile people as well.”

Then the article went on to quote a lady who was a literature teacher for many years. She said that every year she would have the students read a fictional story about a farming community in Midwestern America. Every Fall they would require all the farming people from the area to come together to determine which person would be their human sacrifice that year to guarantee a good harvest of crops. This professor of literature said in past years students were horrified at the idea that

somebody could think that it was legitimate to have human sacrifice, but she said now they're saying, "Well, I wouldn't want to be sacrificed like that, but if it's their religion, or if it's their culture, I can't say that's wrong."

Both this history professor and the literature professor were saying, "Our young people coming to us today have lost their moral compass. They don't think it's wrong to sacrifice a human being, but they get bent all out of shape about killing a whale or killing a seal." In other words, mankind isn't really the most significant life form upon the face of the earth.

Now, this whole concept has had a tremendous impact particularly in two areas. One area, **Literature**, and the other area, **History**. Let's think a little bit about Literature. Here's a concept that many have today and is being taught in university classrooms as: "The meaning that a writer intended to communicate in a document he's written is not important. Instead what is important is this: what meaning does the *reader* derive from reading that document? What meaning does the reader assign to that document? What meaning does the reader *want* that document to say?"

Before this kind of thought took place, the whole idea of reading a piece of literature was, "I want to understand what the *writer* meant by this. What concepts or meaning is the writer wanting to communicate to his readers?" To try to determine what the writer intended, you would give a literal interpretation. You'd give the words that he's using common ordinary meanings that would have basically the same meaning among people. But now, no, you don't have to give the words their common ordinary meaning. It's not important what the writer was trying to say. It's important what it says to you or what it means to you personally. And so, in a sense, you impose your meaning upon that work regardless of what the writer had to say.

Now, as you can imagine, that can be a disaster when you go to interpret *this* piece of literature—God's Word. A disaster if you believe that it is not important what the human writers were intending to communicate when they penned the Words of Scripture; if you believe all that's important is what *I* think it should say, or what *I* want it to say, or what is meaningful to *me* whatsoever.

Concerning God's Word, it's even more important to determine, not what the human writers intended to write, but what meaning the ultimate Author of the Scriptures intended to communicate, namely the Holy Spirit. Turn with me if you would please to 1 Corinthians chapter two.

In 1 Corinthians chapter two Paul was writing to Greeks, who put great stock on manmade wisdom. And Paul, starting out in chapter two, verse one, says,

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. (2) For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. (4) And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: (5) That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men [*which by the way, is always changing*]*—that your faith not stand [not have it's foundation] in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

So he said, when I came to you to present my message, I wasn't presenting it to you in manmade wisdom—philosophical jargon. I know that's what you'd like to hear as Greeks, but I determined not to give it to you that way. He probably was thinking, "Some of them are going to say, 'Well, then what did you present to us if it wasn't wisdom?'" Well, notice what he says, verse seven: "But we speak the wisdom of God." "I wasn't giving you manmade wisdom, but I was giving you wisdom, the wisdom of God. That was my job, to present to you what the Ultimate Reality, the Ultimate Source of truth, Almighty God has to say to you as human beings."

He goes on to indicate that he and other apostles and New Testament prophets derived this wisdom of God by revelation. The Holy Spirit delivered by Divine revelation this truth that God wanted mankind to have and delivered it to apostles and New Testament prophets who would record that.

But then notice what he says when we come to verse 13. Having talked about all this revelational truth that was freely given to us of God, he says, verse 13: “Which things we also speak.” Paul thereby was saying, “We apostles received this revelational truth from God. Now it’s our job to deliver it to you exactly the way God delivered it to us, without changing it, without adding, without deleting from it.” “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

The Greek word translated “comparing” has the idea of *combining*. What he says is, “When we present the revelational wisdom that God communicated to us through the Holy Spirit, revealed to us through the Holy Spirit, we are presenting that to you not with words that man dictates, but what the Holy Spirit indicates we should use as words to communicate this truth, combining the Spirit revealed thoughts with Spirit prompted words. When I came to you, and I had the job of communicating to you in understandable fashion Divine truth that God revealed to me through the Holy Spirit as an apostle of Christ, the Holy Spirit was working with me, supernaturally enabling me to *combine* the Spirit revealed truth He revealed to me with the Spirit prompted words that He wanted me to use to communicate that truth, so it comes across to you accurately, *exactly* the way God wanted it to be understood.”

Paul thereby was saying that the ultimate source of the Scriptures is the Holy Spirit, not man. Peter said, “Holy men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” As a result, if a person says, “What we read in this Book, it’s not important what the authors meant; those ideas aren’t important. What’s important is what I get out of it personally or what it means to me personally. And I want it to mean what I want it to say.” That person thereby is rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit, the Ultimate Author, and that has very serious consequences.

What is now prevalent within our culture and society is this concept: that the meaning the writer intended to communicate, what he has written, is not important. What’s important is what the *reader* thinks about it, what the reader gets out of it and wants it to mean.

The other area that’s affected by this concept is the realm of **history**. Very liberal, radical, even Marxist, history professors in universities are revising history, contrary to what actually happened. They tell students that what actually happened is not important. “What’s important is what we think *should* have happened back then, or what we *wish* had happened back then.” So they’re totally revising history. The reason they do it is because they have an agenda in mind that they want to bombard upon young minds in order to use these young people to change society the way they want society to be changed. They will purposely revise what actually happened in history and totally mislead the young people to fit their agenda—**revisionism**.

Once you go down that route, there’s no absolute truth that is the same for everybody, regardless of your culture, your race, your nation, what period of history, what language you have. There’s no absolute standard of right and wrong by which you can determine whether something is right or wrong. Once you go down that path with these changes taking place, you’ve automatically stepped out of the realm of reality, and your thoughts now are contrary to reality. That’s what happens.

I want to give you some examples of this present trend, first from the secular realm and then from the religious realm.

An example of the way this has changed the approach to literature and what meaning you derive from literature is the present trend in our courts in the United States. Activist judges claim the intention

of the authors of the United States Constitution is not important. What they intended to be true for our nation and how it would operate according to law is not important. What is important is that we have the right to change the literal interpretation of the Constitution to apply it to society today. They say the Constitution is a living organism, and, therefore, it can be changed any way we want it to be changed in order to fit the way we want Law to go today and the way we want society to move today in America. That's true of some of the judges, the liberal ones, in the United States Supreme Court. And that's true of judges on other levels throughout our whole legal system in America. They're activist judges because they have an agenda. "We don't like what has been true of our nation in the past. We want to impose our socialistic philosophy upon the nation and change it; and, therefore, we don't have to be concerned about what the authors of the U.S. Constitution intended to be carried out legally in our country."

They will do this to try to enforce their own life view and their concept of what they want society to be upon the rest of the nation. This is an instance of radically changing the intended meaning of literature, namely the literature we call the United States Constitution.

Another example of this trend from the secular realm is from revisionist history. There are people today who are denying the reality of the Holocaust of World War II. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the leader of Iran, insists the Holocaust never took place. He claims the Jews have perpetrated this hoax for their own purposes in the world.

Contrary to reality there are history professors in America who totally deny that the Holocaust ever took place. Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem has all the official handwritten records of the Nazis, records of every Jew they eliminated—six million of them. Their names, what articles of clothing they brought to the prison camps with them and all the rest. There they are, all the official German records; and yet people say that never happened. That's a fiction. There are still Jewish people who were in those concentration camps alive today who by God's grace survived, and they've got the tattoos and marks on their bodies that demonstrate it happened. They were there, and they lost members of their family. And yet these revisionists say that never happened. That's purely a myth that the Jews have tried to perpetrate upon society to have complete control of society and make society go the way they want it to go. Revisionism—completely contrary to reality of what has taken place.

Now, some examples from the religious realm. First is Islam's relationship to Israel. Muslims historically have said that they believe the Pentateuch, the five Books of Moses, are God's Word. They believe that many of the Psalms in the Bible are God's Word. They believe that significant portions of the Gospels of the New Testament are God's Word, *but* they also say those portions of the Bible have been corrupted from what they were originally, and they've been changed from what they were originally.

In Genesis 17 God promised to establish the Abrahamic Covenant with Isaac and his descendants (Israel), not with Ishmael and his descendants (the Arabs). The Muslims say that's one place where Genesis is corrupted, for God really promised to make the covenant with *Ishmael* and his descendants, not Isaac and his descendants." And so the Abrahamic covenant, they say, is between God and the Arab people, *not* with the people of Israel. Revisionism—revisionism of historic literature there.

Muslims claim that the Jews had no connection to the land of Israel; that Solomon's Temple was not built by *true* Jews. Solomon's Temple was built rather by Canaanites at the Temple Mount at Jerusalem. The Jewish Temple that they did have in ancient times was over at Nablus or maybe in Bethlehem, but not in the Temple Mount. They also claim that the *true* Hebrews that God entered into relationships with were Arab Bedouin tribesmen living over in Arabia. They claim that the Jews that are in the land today are descendants of the Khazar Turks. They're weren't the true Hebrews. Actually the true Hebrews were the Arab Palestinian people. Another example of revisionist history.

Yasser Arafat—*incredible*—created a non-existent Canaanite king that he called “Salem.” Notice, the tie-in with Jerusalem: *Jeru Salem*. On radio he spoke very magnificently, movingly about the incredible character of this Palestinian “Salem,” who was their forefather.

There is a Jewish organization in Israel called Palestinian Media Watch. Every day they are listening to all the Palestinian broadcasts, telecasts, all the literature that they are producing, and everything else to see what the Palestinians are thinking with regard to Israel. As a result of listening to all these things the Palestinians are saying, this is what the Jewish Palestinian Media Watch says: “By turning Canaanites and Israelites into Arabs and Judaism of ancient Israel into Islam, the Palestinian authority takes authentic Jewish history which was documented by thousands of years of continuous literature and crosses out the word Jewish where it appears in the ancient literature and substitutes the word Arab in place of where the word Jewish appeared in ancient literature.” Totally revising actual history.

One of the key Muslim religious leaders in the Middle East said, “The Palestinians go way back to the Garden of Eden.” Muslims are trying desperately to get rid of all evidence that there was any Jewish relationship to Jerusalem, to the Temple and to the Land. Over the last several years they’ve been digging underneath the Temple Mount. And they’re taking out of there artifacts that go back to the time of Solomon when the first temple was built, truckloads of it, and they’re taking it out and dumping it like garbage on the countryside.

How are they able to do that? When Israel gained control of the whole city of Jerusalem in ’67, including the Temple Mount, they gave authority over the Temple Mount to the Muslim religious leaders in the Land of Israel. And the Israeli government has allowed the Muslim religious leaders of Islam in Israel to continue exercising complete authority over that Temple Mount. And so the Muslims determine who may go up in there; who may not go up in there. Now Israel had a practical reason for doing that, because they knew if they took that Temple Mount away from Muslim authority, they’d have a Jihad of hundreds of millions of Muslims all over the world coming against them. They didn’t want that. And so they’ve allowed the Muslims to have complete control over the Temple Mount, and that’s why the Muslims have been doing what they can, digging underneath the Temple Mount to the point that there’s one whole section that they are fearful may collapse. And they are trying to get rid of all archeological evidence that the Jews had anything to do with that Land or the Temple Mount in past history.

There is one prominent Jewish archeologist who is taking teams of people out to that garbage dump, and they’re spending hours and days and weeks sifting through all this stuff that the Muslims have dumped out there to get some of the artifacts. So they are finding artifacts which go back in Israel’s history and that demonstrate that Jews have been there ever since they invaded the land of Canaan. There have always been Jews there. Even in captivities there was always a remnant of Jews left in that land up to modern day times. An example in the religious realm of history revisionism by Muslims with regard to Israel and its right to the land.

Now, let me take another example of Revisionism (or if you want to call it Replacement, replacing one concept with another) in denominationalism. Up until 1920, the Presbyterian Church USA had a very solid Bible-based doctrinal statement that Presbyterian clergymen were compelled to abide by in order to remain ordained within the Presbyterian Church. Now granted it had Covenant Theology in it, but in other areas they were very sound on what the Bible is, its Divine inspirational authority. They were very sound on who Jesus is, what He did on the Cross and bodily resurrection and all the rest.

In the 1920s, they began trying to get all of the Presbyterian clergy to sign the doctrinal statement that they’re in complete agreement with it. The leadership of the denomination, which at that time were conservative and Bible-based, were shocked to find how many of their clergy could not legitimately

sign that doctrinal statement. Many of them were younger men who had come recently out of their Presbyterian theological seminaries. And a lot of these young men said, "If we have to sign that we agree with the literal interpretation of this doctrinal statement, we can't sign. The only way we can sign it is if you will allow us to interpret the meaning of that doctrinal statement the way we want it to mean. If you will allow that, we will sign it." Tragically, because there were so many of the Presbyterian pastorate by that time who were that way, the leadership said, "we can't lose all these men. This will destroy the denomination." So they caved in to that pressure and allowed them to sign it with tongue in cheek, "I can sign it as long as you allow me to interpret it the way I want it to read and the way I want it to be understood, but not giving it a literal interpretation and understanding."

Church historians say that was the turning point in the Presbyterian Church USA from a denomination that had been doctrinally sound for many, many decades, even centuries, to one in which liberalism could sweep in tremendously and incredibly change that denomination over several decades.

Another area in which this trend has made an impact in religious circles has been religious feminism. Let me deal first with Liberal religious feminism. *Time* magazine, probably about ten to twelve years ago, ran a fascinating article on the impact that feminism is having in some mainstream denominations, the more liberal denominations. They pointed out that their feminist beliefs have gone to the point where now some of these women, some of whom are theology teachers in seminaries, are raising the question, "Is it possible for a woman to be saved through the death of a male Savior?" And many of these women concluded, "No, a woman cannot be saved through the death of a male Savior." As a result, they developed a new crucifix with a woman nailed to the cross, and they called her Christa.

Religious feminism is affecting the whole realm of theology. In 1993, the Presbyterian Church USA, along with some other groups, sponsored a conference called The Re-imagining Conference.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of it was for women in different denominational churches to gather together and re-imagine what the church would be like if it were the way they wanted the church to be.

Here are some statements that were made at that conference. One woman who was a Lutheran pastor made this statement, "We did not last night name the name of Jesus. Nor have we done anything in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit," and there was laughter and loud applause.

Then a lady who was a professor of theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York said this, "I don't think we need a theory of atonement at all. Jesus came for life. Atonement has to do so much with death. I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff."

There was a Korean lady, a theology professor in Seoul, Korea, who said this, "When we do pronic healing, we believe that this life giving energy came from god, and it's everywhere. It's in the sun, it's in the ocean, it's from the ground, it's from the trees. If you feel very tired, you feel you don't have any more energy to give, what you do is sit in silence. Maybe you go to a big tree, ask permission from tree, 'Give me some of your life energy,' or ask the sun to give you some life energy." That's Pantheism. God is all. All is God. Nature is God.

Then there was another lady who stood up and gave her personal name and said, "I am co-covener of the CLOUT Council. CLOUT stands for **C**hristian **L**esbians **O**ut **T**ogether." Loud applause. She went on to say, "We are keenly, painfully aware that the world is not safe for lesbian women, and often the least safe place is the church. How can we together re-imagine our churches so that every woman may claim her voice, her gifts, her loves, her wholeness. We invite at this time every lesbian, bi-sexual, trans-sexual woman who's willing and able to come forward quickly and encircling this podium facing out as a circle." And as women came forward loud applause erupted and lasted for minutes. Then a Roman Catholic lady, who was very much involved in theological issues, stood up and said, "We need

to reinvent the family.” And I won’t read to you in this mixed audience her idea of how we need to reinvent the family. Absolutely incredible!

Then, according to this article, the most shocking thing of this Re-imaging Conference was the communion service. They used milk and honey as the elements in the communion service. And the leader of this service sang, “Our mother Sophia, we are women in your image.” The crowd sang the refrain, “Sophia, creator god. Let your milk and honey flow, Sophia, creator god. Shower us with your love.” Female god, Sophia.

Incidentally, the *Time* magazine article claimed one woman who had been very vocal at first, an advocate of the whole feminist movement within mainline denominations said, “Whoa, wait a minute. This is going too far. This is paganism. This is not Christianity at all.” And said, “I want no part of this.” But it’s changing even the realm of theology today, because again, we want it to be the way we want it to be, not what the Scriptures say. Now that would be Liberal Feminism.

Let me deal a little bit with Evangelical Feminism. Some women who claim to be evangelicals have had two different approaches to what the Bible says about distinctive roles of male and female. One group says, “Well the Bible does say, ‘Yes, that there are distinctive roles that God has related between males and females,’ but that’s where the Bible is in error. That’s erroneous.” But once you say that, there goes inspiration of the Scriptures out the window. That was their way, of evangelicals, trying to deal with what the Bible says about distinctive roles God has created for male and female.

Other evangelical feminists said, “No, we believe the Bible *is* Divinely inspired of God and therefore authoritative.” What they say is, “Paul was not in error in what he said. However, we must interpret what he said about distinctive roles God has ordained in light of culture at that particular time, and let the culture determine what Paul meant by those statements.” The problem with that approach is this: every reason Paul gave (for example in 1 Corinthians eleven, 1 Timothy, and Titus) for distinctive roles that God has ordained between male and female are all non cultural reasons. Not one of them is a cultural reason for those distinctive roles that were given in the Scriptures. So again, it’s a revisionism and a replacement of what the Bible is saying.

If you’re going to give the Bible a literal, historical, grammatical interpretation, you’ll come out right in the end. But if you don’t like that, and you want to change the way you approach it, you’re going to come out contrary to the original meaning of the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit determined when He prompted, for example, the apostle Paul to write what he wrote; and even things that were written in the Old Testament that talk about how God ordained distinctive roles at the time of Creation between male and female.

Then, another area of this line of thinking— revisionism, changing, replacing the literal meaning of things—has been the ordaining of homosexual clergy now in mainline denominational churches. What they say is this. “When the Bible says that a man is not to lie with another man as he would with a woman, that’s not forbidding all forms of homosexual relationships. It’s only forbidding if one person enforces this upon another person. That’s what God’s condemning in the Bible. But if two men consent to this kind of relationship, or two women consent to this kind of relationship with each other, that’s okay from God’s viewpoint. It’s only if one party is trying to enforce this against the will of another party that’s being condemned by the Bible.”

Well, where does the Bible say that? In the Old Testament God clearly states, “A man is not to lie with a man the way he would lie with a woman.” Can’t we understand language? That’s all it says. No exceptions. But to get around it, they say, “It’s not what the writer wrote and intended that’s important. What’s important is, what does it say to me, and what do I want it to say.”



We also have a problem today with a movement called Progressive Dispensationalism. There's some replacement going on in that as well and reinterpreting some passages of Scripture that are very clear. A number of years ago, I was ministering at a particular place in another state of our country, and it so happened that two of the major proponents of Progressive Dispensationalism were at that same place at that time. When I arrived at the place where I was to minister, there was a note waiting for me which said I was to meet with these two men on one of the days that I was there, and I did.

Let me give you some background so you understand why I was told I was to meet with them. Several months before that, while I was teaching full time at Philadelphia College of Bible, the men of the Bible Department of the college got together to discuss this whole new trend called Progressive Dispensationalism. And every one of us said, "We are totally opposed to Progressive Dispensationalism because we believe it is contrary to Scripture."

Somehow between then and the time I was where these two proponents of Progressive Dispensationalism were located, word had gotten to them that the Bible men at Philadelphia College of Bible were opposed to what they were proposing. When I met with them, they said, "We understand that the Bible men at Philadelphia College of Bible don't like Progressive Dispensationalism." I said, "You're right, we don't." And they said, "Well, why?" I said, "Because we're convinced it's contrary to Scripture." They said, "Well, in what way?" And I said, "Well, for one thing your view claims that, when Jesus ascended to Heaven and sat down beside God on His throne, Jesus was thereby sitting down upon the throne of David. As a result you're equating God's throne with the throne of David." And the one man said, "Well, what's wrong with that?" I said, "Thirty some years after Jesus ascended to Heaven and sat down beside God on His throne, He said in Revelation, chapter three, verse 21: 'To Him that overcomes *I will* [emphasis added] (*now this is future tense*) grant Him to sit with Me on My throne just as I overcame and the Father granted Me to sit with Him on His throne.'"

And I said, "If language means anything, Jesus is drawing a clear distinction here between the Father's throne, where He's seated now, and His throne that He's *going* to sit upon to rule the earth in the future." One of those men gave a response to that, and to this day I still don't understand what he was saying. It seemed to me it was such a nebulous response that made no sense to me whatsoever. But here's a clear statement that Jesus Himself made, drawing a distinction between His throne He will sit upon in the future and the Father's throne where He's seated right now. To my way of thinking, the only way you can get around that is to reinterpret that passage and not give it its literal meaning.

Progressive Dispensationalism's slogan is "Already Not Yet." What they're saying is, "There's a sense in which the Kingdom of God that was foretold for the future in the Old Testament is already here. That future Kingdom of God is already here in spiritual form, but there's a sense in which it's not *yet* here. It's not *yet* here in political form." The only way you can have some aspect of it already here, is if Christ right now is on the throne of David, because the Bible makes it very clear that the Kingdom is not set up until Jesus is on His throne that was promised to Him.

Remember what Gabriel said to Mary [Luke 1:32-33], "He will receive the throne of His ancestor David to sit upon." So again, not giving words their common ordinary meaning—literal interpretation—but making it say what you want it to say, not what it actually says. And so there at least, you have to say, "Well the intention of Jesus in that statement of Revelation 3:21 is not important. What is important is what it means to us."

Now, what I want to do for most of the rest of the time this afternoon is deal with what we've normally called **Replacement Theology**. That's the view that says, "Because Israel rejected Jesus in His first coming, God has forever rejected the nation of Israel, and He has no present program for the nation of Israel. There's no future program for the nation of Israel. God has replaced Israel with the Church, and therefore, the Church is now God's Israel. They're the people of God, and so the Church

now inherits all the promises that God gave to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the people of Israel, for example, in the Abrahamic Covenant.”

I want to point out that this view of Replacement Theology is not new. It actually began less than 100 years after the Apostles were gone from the scene. Less than 100 years after the Apostle John died in 100 AD, there were prominent church leaders who began this whole concept that God’s done with Israel, and the Church is now God’s Israel.

I have some specific quotes, so I’m going to read a good part of this. I trust you’ll bear with me on this, because I want to be accurate in what I’m presenting.

Church historians point out that for the first several years the church was totally Jewish in membership. The Book of Acts makes that very clear. But, as a result of persecution by unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, Jewish believers, such as Stephen and others, were scattered out of Jerusalem. Some of them took the Gospel to the Samaritans. Peter, Acts chapter ten, was required by the Holy Spirit to go to the home of a Gentile, Cornelius, and open the door to Gentiles to get saved and come into the Church.

As a result, by the end of the first century the Church was primarily Gentile in membership. Once the Church became predominantly Gentile in membership, it began to experience significant changes in contrast to what it was when mainly Jewish in membership.

Within 100 years after the Apostles of Jesus Christ were gone, the majority of Gentile Christians regarded the Jewish Scriptures as authoritative. But many of the Gentile Christians began to think, “of themselves as the true spiritual heirs of Israel and claimed for themselves the promises which the Hebrews felt that Yahweh had made to them.”

Adolph Harnak who was probably the world’s foremost church historian in the late 1800s and early 1900s made this statement: “The Christians held the Jews having been rejected by God, they themselves, [in other words, the Christians] had become the chosen people.” In other words, these Christians began claiming that God permanently ended Israel’s unique relationship with Him as a nation and replaced it with the Church as His unique people, and thus, the Christians were now the Israel of God.

Some Gentile Church leaders within 100 years after the Apostles were gone were very anti-Semitic. Because they were, they played a key role in this significant shift away from the original understanding of the Scriptures regarding the nation of Israel’s relationship with God. In response to Jewish attacks against Christian beliefs some of these church leaders resorted to new methods of Biblical interpretation and wrote rebuttals with varying degrees of anti-Semitic content. In other words, the rebuttals against the adversary Jews were rather anti-Semitic.

For example, Justin Martyr, who lived from 100 to 165 AD and was a Christian apologist, defended Christianity against its enemies. He made the following claim in his work entitled, *Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Trypho, a Jew*: The Christians “are the true Israelitic race.”

He also asserted that the Biblical expression, “the seed of Jacob,” when properly understood, now refers to the Christians, not to the Jews. And church historians point out that was a significant shift in understanding the Scriptures from what they had been originally. Tertullian, another prominent church leader, who lived from c155 to c225 AD and was located in North Africa, wrote a work called *An Answer to the Jews*. This was an anti-Semitic discourse. He interpreted God’s statements to Rebekah concerning her twins, Esau and Jacob in her womb, in the following manner: Esau, the older brother represents the Jews; Jacob, the younger brother represents the Christians. Considering what God said about Esau and Jacob, “The older brother will serve the younger brother,” Tertullian said, “This

indicates that God thereby revealed that the Christians would overcome the Jews, and the Jews would serve the Christians.” He thereby allegorized God’s statement contrary to what God intended.

Origen, who lived from 185 to 253 AD, was the president of the very influential school of theology at Alexandria, Egypt. Origen greatly influenced the church’s acceptance of the allegorical and spiritualizing method of interpreting the Bible. This method stands in contrast to the literal, historical, grammatical method. And this method permitted him to read almost any meaning he desired into the language of the Bible. It allowed him to claim that the word “Israel” in the Bible can mean the Church, not national Israel.

That method also led him into heresy in some areas of doctrine. For example, he rejected the concept of physical resurrection and believed in universal salvation for all human beings and fallen angels. His allegorizing, spiritualizing method permitted him to come up with those concepts contrary to the Bible.

Church historian Philip Schaff, who’s written a multi-volume set on Church History, made this statement about Origen’s approach to interpreting the Bible: “His great defect is the neglect of the grammatical, historical sense and his constant desire to find a hidden mystic meaning. His allegorical interpretation is ingenious but often runs far away from the text and degenerates into the merest caprice.”

Dionysus, who was a disciple of Origen and lived from 190 to 264 AD, became a very influential bishop of the Church at Alexandria, Egypt. He succeeded in asserting that an allegorical interpretation of the prophets is the only legitimate exegesis of what the prophets said in the Old Testament, not the historical, grammatical, or literal method in determining what they said.

Cyprian, who lived from 195 to 258 AD and was the bishop of a church in Carthage, North Africa, wrote *Three Books of Testimonies Against The Jews*. He stated that he “endeavored to show that the Jews according to what had before been foretold had departed from God. The Jews had departed from God and had lost God’s favor which had been given them in past time and had been promised them for the future while the Christians had succeeded to their place.” In other words, the Christians had inherited the place the Jews had with God, “deserving well of the Lord by faith and coming out of all nations and from the whole world.” He, much like Tertullian, had interpreted God’s statements to Rebekah about her twins, Esau and Jacob in her womb, in the following allegorical manner, “Esau the older brother represents the Jews. Jacob the younger brother represents the Christians.” And the implication of that is this, the Christians have inherited the birthright that the Jews forfeited. Remember Jacob inherited Esau’s birthright, because Esau forfeited it to his brother. He also declared that the Gentiles rather than the Jews obtained the Kingdom of Heaven.

John Chrysostom, a very prominent preacher in the Eastern Church, was the bishop of the huge Sancta Sophia Church in Constantinople, in what today is Turkey. He lived from 347 to 407 AD. He delivered messages which have been printed word for word, entitled, *Against The Jews*. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Chrysostom, Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria, and Ambrose, the bishop of Milan “potently affected the fate of the Jewish people.” Chrysostom viciously attacked the Jews in some of his messages. These are just some samples of how Replacement Theology developed quite early in the history of the Church.

Having given those examples, I want to point out two major effects that Replacement Theology had upon the Church. For the next several centuries Replacement Theology played a significant role in producing major changes in two areas of organized Christendom: ***Ecclesiology*** and ***Eschatology***.

Replacement Theology prompted some dramatic changes in ***Ecclesiology***. Ecclesiology addresses such issues as: What is the Church? What’s its nature? What’s its function? There’s a scholar in

Europe, Dr. Ronald Diprose. He's originally from Australia. He took a Master's Degree of Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, north of Chicago, then went to Europe to a theological school, and did his Ph.D. work there in theology. In his doctoral dissertation, he dealt with the subject of Israel and the Church. His dissertation has been published with the title *Israel and The Church*. He quotes far more of these church leaders than I have here, and he shows how their Replacement Theology played a key role in the development of the whole Roman Catholic system.

As a result of Gentile leaders concluding that the Church is now the Israel of God, they began to appropriate to the Church things that God had instituted specifically for the nation of Israel. For example, they began to say, "Since the Church is now Israel, since God gave Israel a priesthood, then He must want the Church to have a priesthood." They began changing the titles of church leaders, such as pastors, to priests. Then they said, "Since God gave Israel a multi-tiered priesthood with one high priest at the top, and layers of priesthood underneath, He must want the Church to have a multi-tiered priesthood with one high priest at the top and layers of priesthood underneath." Slowly but surely they began to develop more and more of the hierarchy until they had come to one man at the top, namely the Pope.

Then they said, "Since God gave Israel continuing blood sacrifices, He must want the Church to have continuing blood sacrifices. But now, it can't be animals. We have to relate it to Christ." So slowly but surely they began changing the significance of the Communion service. Instead of the bread and wine simply representing the body and blood of Christ, they began saying that there's a miracle that takes place when communion is observed in which the bread is converted into the literal flesh of Christ, and the wine is converted into the literal blood of Christ, so that every time Communion is observed Jesus is being sacrificed again and again and again as a continuing blood sacrifice for the sins of the people. And that led to the Catholic view of transubstantiation. *Trans* means across, *substantiation*, substance. In one sense, this bread is transferred over into flesh. In another sense, this wine is transferred over into blood. And that led to the whole service of the Mass within the Roman Catholic Church.

Thus, Replacement Theology played a key role in changing Ecclesiology, the nature and function of the church; but it also played a key role in changing **Eschatology**. In the area of Eschatology early replacement theology prompted the rejection of the Church's original view called **Chiliasm**. Chiliasm is from a Greek word which means one thousand. And Chiliasm was the view that today we call premillennialism. It's the view that in the future Jesus Christ will return bodily to the earth, set up a literal, political Kingdom of God upon the face of the earth and rule the world for God for the last one thousand years of history. Church historians across the board from many denominations all agree that was the original eschatological view of the Church—Chiliasm, what we call premillennialism.

Chiliasm was the predominant view of Orthodox Christianity from the first until the third century AD. But as early as 170 AD, some leaders of the Greek church in the eastern part of the empire began to reject Chiliasm. There was a strong anti-Semitic spirit in the eastern church. Because many Jews of Jesus' day rejected Him, and many of their successors refused to believe in Him, Gentile church leaders in the eastern church increasingly began to call Jews "Christ killers" and developed a strong bias against anything Jewish. And because the Church's original view of Chiliasm was the same eschatological hope that had motivated Jews for centuries, these Gentile church leaders began calling Chiliasm a Jewish view. And they said, "Because it's Jewish, it must be rejected." They began to stigmatize it as a **Jewish view**, and some even went so far as to say, "It's heretical."

Some even rejected the prophetic Scriptures from which Chiliasm was derived. For example, Dionysus, the student of Origen, who was the bishop of the church of Alexandria in Egypt, believed that the rejection of Jewish Chiliasm would never be secure so long as the Apocalypse of John (the

Book of Revelation) passed for an apostolic writing and kept its place in the Bible. And so this church bishop went on an all out crusade to prejudice the Greek Church against the canonicity (the Divine inspiration) of the Book of Revelation, and he succeeded to the point that the Eastern Church (the Greek Church) totally removed the Book of Revelation from the Bible in the Fourth Century, and kept it out for several centuries up into the Middle Ages, until finally Chiliasm was finally buried within the Eastern Church. Once Chiliasm was buried, they put it [the Apocalypse] back into the Canon of Scripture. That was the Eastern Church.

The Western, or Latin Church, held onto Chiliasm longer than the Greek Church of the east. In the west, Chiliasm was still a point of orthodoxy in the Fourth Century. In other words, in the 300s AD, if you were in the western church and you didn't believe in Chiliasm, you were regarded as being contrary to the orthodox teaching of the church.

But after the Fourth Century, the western church began to join the revolt against Chiliasm. Teaching from the Greek church was brought to the West by influential church leaders such as Jerome and Ambrose. As a result of being taught by Greek theologians of the east for several years, Jerome, who lived from 345 to 420 AD, declared that he had been delivered from "Jewish opinions," and he ridiculed the early beliefs of the Church in Chiliasm.

Ambrose, who lived from 340 to 397 AD and was a very influential bishop in Milan, Italy, said the Jews were "a type of the infidel." He regarded the soul of Jewish people to be irrevocably perverse and incapable of any good thought and asserted that burning a Jewish synagogue was not a crime.

Ambrose was the spiritual mentor of Augustine. Augustine got saved indirectly as a result of the preaching of Ambrose, and then Ambrose disciplined Augustine for a while. In fact, in the City of Milan today there is a huge Roman Catholic Cathedral called *The Duomo*, built in the 1300s. A number of years ago, when they were digging out for a subway system in Milan, a huge hole opened up. When the diggers went inside, they saw ruins underneath this big cathedral. They called in the archeologists, and research demonstrated these were the ruins of a Christian church building that had been built maybe in the late 300s, early 400s AD. They also found out this is where Ambrose baptized Augustine. And if you get down there, it surely wasn't sprinkling. It's a *huge* baptistry with steps going down into it. So he had great influence upon Augustine, and Augustine became the bishop of Hippo in North Africa. Church historians say that Augustine influenced the future direction of organized Christendom more than any person since the apostle Paul. It appears that Ambrose's anti-Semitic views impacted the thinking of Augustine. Augustine published a work called, *Tract Against the Jews*. It was so influential that derogatory arguments against Jews throughout the Middle Ages were usually called Augustinian.

In the early years of his Christian faith, Augustine adopted the Chiliasm view of the early church, but later he rejected it. It appears that the anti-Semitic views of Ambrose and Jerome motivated him to do so because of the thought that Chiliasm was Jewish. But another factor that prompted that was the influence of Greek philosophy upon his thinking. Augustine was deeply immersed in all different forms of Greek philosophy before he became a Christian, and when he became a Christian, he still was enamored with it. One of the teachings of Greek philosophy was this: anything physical or material is automatically evil because it's physical or material. And only what is non-physical, non-material is good. And so he began to incorporate that concept of Greek philosophy into his Christian theology, and he said this, "If I take the Biblical passages on the Kingdom of God literally, they promise an earthly political kingdom with great physical and material blessings. But because material and physical blessings would be evil (because anything material or physical is evil), that's carnal, and therefore, there's no way those Biblical passages can be taken literally about the future Kingdom of God." To his way of thinking, in order for the Kingdom of God to be good, it must be totally spiritual in nature.

One church historian said, “Thus for him the millennium had become a spiritual state into which the church collectively had entered at Pentecost in which the individual Christian might already enjoy through mystical communion with God.” In other words, he allegorized the future Kingdom of God and said it’s totally a spiritual kingdom; and the Church is now that spiritual kingdom and that was set up by Christ during His first coming; and so the Kingdom is already here in a spiritual form, and the Church is that Kingdom.

In order to avoid the implications of some of the millennial passages of the Bible, he applied the allegorical method of interpretation to the prophets and to the Revelation of Jesus Christ. For example, Augustine interpreted the first resurrection that John refers to in Revelation, chapter twenty, as the present spiritual resurrection of the soul which takes place at the new birth, not the future bodily resurrection of people.

Covenant Theologians over the last decade have come out with a Covenant Theology Study Bible called the *Geneva Study Bible*. When they come to that statement in Revelation twenty about the first Resurrection after the Tribulation Period, their footnote says, “This is not physical resurrection. This is the spiritual resurrection that happens when a person experiences the new birth.” However, interestingly, they said this, “If perhaps it’s physical resurrection, then the premillennialists are correct.” Interesting! But see again, “we are not going to give the words their normal, ordinary meaning, because we don’t like that. We have to interpret it the way it’s meaningful to us, the way we want it to be.” That’s what happened here.

The rejection of Chiliasm necessitated the development of a new eschatological view. And so Augustine developed a new eschatological view called Amillennialism, which means no millennium. This view denied a future earthly political Kingdom of God over which Christ will administer God’s rule for the last thousand years of this present earth’s history. In this view Augustine developed the idea that the Church is the Kingdom of God foretold in such Scriptures as Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Revelation 20. In his book called *The City of God*, he became the first person to teach the idea that the organized catholic (universal) church is the Messianic Kingdom, and that the millennium began with the first coming of Christ. According to this view, when Christ comes out of Heaven for His Second Coming, that ends this earth’s history and everything goes immediately into the future eternal state.

The Roman Catholic church adopted, strongly advocated, and maintained Replacement Theology, and also adopted and strongly advocated Augustine’s amillennial view throughout the Middle Ages. And so the Roman Catholic Church, believing that it is the Kingdom of God on earth foretold in the Bible, also believed that it had the right to enforce its beliefs and policies on all people, including political rulers, pagans, and Jews. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church developed into a powerful, religious, political machine that dominated every aspect of life in western Europe, even to the point of setting up, dominating, removing and humiliating kings and emperors. And this played a key role in the persecution of Jews by the Roman Catholic Church and Roman Catholic political rulers for centuries to come.

Throughout the Middle Ages hundreds of thousands of Jews were massacred by organized Christendom in the name of Jesus Christ. Jews were forced to get Christian baptism against their will. “Either you get baptized and thereby become a Christian, or we execute you.” If they didn’t execute them, and Jews refused to be baptized, then they would take the children of the Jews away from them. “You are not allowed to raise them, because you would raise them as Jews.” They would put them in Christian homes, so they would be raised as Christians. The Crusaders in England and France, before they marched to the Middle East, slaughtered thousands of Jews in the name of Jesus Christ with the cross as a symbol on their uniforms or their shields.

What about the Reformers? The Reformation began with Martin Luther in Germany in 1517. The Reformers of the 16th century Protestant Reformation broke away from the Roman Catholic Church in several key areas of ecclesiology and doctrine. However, having said that, they held on to the eschatology of Amillennialism in the Roman Catholic Church. The Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican Reformers rejected Chiliasm (today known as Premillennialism) as being Jewish opinions. They maintained the Amillennial view which the Roman Catholic Church adopted from Augustine.

Not all those reformers viciously attacked Jews. But Martin Luther was one major exception to that. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, during his early years as a reformer, Luther was full of compassion for the Jews' misery and enthusiastic for their conversion to Christianity. But toward the end of his life, he denounced them in unmeasured terms, saying that it is useless to convert any Jew and accusing them of a relentless hatred of Christianity and of all the crimes which their enemies ever charged them with such as, poisoning wells, ritual murder, cowardly assassination of their parents, etc. He wished the princes, the political rulers of Europe, to persecute the Jews mercilessly and the preachers in their churches to set mob violence against the Jews in their communities. He repeatedly urged that their synagogues be burned and was sorry that he could not destroy them himself with hellfire. He further advised that their houses be torn down, their books taken from them, their rabbis prohibited from teaching, that no safe conduct be granted them, that their usury be prohibited, that their public worship be interdicted (in other words, cut off), and that they be forced to do the hardest labor. He admonished everybody to deal with them in a merciless manner even as Moses did who slew 3,000 of them in the wilderness. He admonished his readers not to have the slightest intercourse with Jews. He said, "If I had power over them, I would assemble their most prominent men and demand that they prove that we Christians do not worship the one God under the penalty of having their tongues torn out through the back of their necks." Luther argued that the sufferings of the Jews are the just punishment for their rejection of Jesus.

When Adolph Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, he read Luther's statements about the Jews to the German people and said, "Look, even the greatest spiritual leader of our nation himself said, 'These people are the scourge of mankind, and for the good of mankind they should be totally eliminated from the face of the earth.'" Luther gave fodder—weapons wordwise—for Hitler and the Nazis to carry out their systematic elimination of Jews from Europe.

Covenant Theology began to develop as a system of theology in the Reformed churches of Switzerland and Germany in the 16th and 17th centuries and then passed from there to the Netherlands, Scotland and England. It was introduced to America primarily through the Puritans. Advocates of Covenant Theology adopted Replacement Theology in relationship to the nation of Israel, and so as a result, claim that, because Israel rejected Christ as its Messiah, God forever rejected the nation of Israel as His people and *replaced* Israel with the Church as His people. Thus, the Church is now the Israel of God, has inherited the blessings of God originally promised to national Israel. This meant that national Israel lost forever rightful claim of ownership to the land that God gave to it in ancient times. If carried to its logical conclusion, this also meant that the Church, including Gentiles, is the rightful owner of that land. And Covenant Theology, at least some advocates of it, continue to hold that view today. Now that doesn't mean that they automatically hate the Jews. And it doesn't mean that they believe that Jews should be persecuted, but it does mean that their adoption of Replacement Theology has affected their view of Israel's ownership of the land and its right to exist as a nation in the Middle East. The only way they can have that view is by employing an allegorical method of interpreting the Bible, rather than the historical, grammatical method of interpreting the Bible.

They allegorize two areas of the Bible: passages related to national Israel and passages talking about the prophetic future. So far, prophecies in the Bible that have already been fulfilled have been fulfilled according to the historical, grammatical, literal interpretation of those passages, not an

allegorical method. The fact that that is so, strongly implies that's how God intends *all* the prophecies in the Bible to be fulfilled, according to the historical, grammatical method, *not* an allegorical method.

Once you depart from the literal, historical, grammatical method of interpreting the Bible, you can make the Bible say whatever you want it to say. You've lost your anchor. The historical, grammatical method is kind of the wall around us to hold us in line, so we don't depart from what the Holy Spirit intended by the words of the Bible, that He enabled the writers of Scripture to combine with the revealed truth that God had given. Again, see what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:13, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

Let me close by recommending another book to you. Dr. Robert L. Thomas, who is the chief Greek New Testament man at Master's Seminary out in California, has published an excellent book entitled *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old*. It shows how today in evangelical circles there's drift away from proper methods of interpreting the Bible. It deals with how progressive dispensationalism has drifted away from it. Feminism has drifted away from the proper interpretation of the Bible. It even talks about how some missions are going too far in trying to contextualize the meaning of Scripture to a culture.

God gave the Scriptures in language that all people over the world should be able to understand once it's translated literally into their language. And, if we're going to allow culture to determine the meaning of the Bible, then you're not allowing the Bible to say what it wants to say. It should be that the culture conforms to the truth of the Bible, not the Bible conforming to what manmade culture has to say. So, you might want to see that book. It's very thorough. It is sounding a warning about the way evangelical Christianity is going right now, with the way it's handling the Word of God, and not sticking with the proper method of interpreting the Bible.

*Father, we've had to deal with some heavy things here this afternoon, but if nothing else comes across to us, we pray that we'll walk away with this, with a determination that by God's grace we will handle Your holy Scriptures the way You desire them to be handled and the way the Holy Spirit intended when He revealed Your truth to apostles and prophets and then worked with them supernaturally, so that they would record the content of that revealed truth with the exact words necessary for the meaning of that revealed truth to be presented exactly the way You wanted people to understand it. Lord, that was great work by the Holy Spirit. Forbid that any of us who have responsibility of handling Your Word or teaching other people that we would sacrifice that work because of some whim that we wanted to say something else than it's actually saying. We thank You for Your Word and the Divine authority that's carried with it. And we pray that we will allow it with proper understanding to be the ultimate authority over what we believe and over what we practice for Your honor and glory.*

*In Jesus Name we ask this.*

*Amen.*

➔ **Dr. Showers** (October 4, 2007):

"Significant parts of the manuscript are either already in print (chapters 7 and 8 of the updated and revised edition of my book **What On Earth Is God Doing?**) or scheduled to be in print (a book on Replacement Theology— **Israel And The Faithfulness Of God**—that I finished writing in January, and the Friends of Israel has agreed to publish)."



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1. [For more information about the 1993 Conference check online, e.g., <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/reimaging.htm>]