ISRAELU

# LOVE WHAT GOD LOVES:

## SEEING ISRAEL THROUGH THE FATHER'S EYES

COURSE STUDY GUIDE

COURSE ONE | LESSON FOUR




THE FAMILY OF GOD IS
REAWAKENING TO SEE ISRAEL
THROUGH THE FATHER'S EYES —
NOT AS REJECTED OR REPLACED
BUT LOVED AND WITH A FUTURE
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**Welcome to Lesson Four, *What Happened to the Israel God Intended? The Error of Replacement Theology.***

This lesson highlights the spiritual battle over Israel's identity, revealing how Satan has used Replacement Theology to distort Israel's role and create division between the Church and the Jewish people.

# WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ISRAEL GOD INTENDED? THE ERROR OF REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

## IN ESSENCE

Satan is in the identity theft business. He distorted Israel's God-given identity by introducing a false doctrine into the early Church called Replacement Theology. For centuries, this doctrine has been a destructive tool causing division and great pain both within the Church and between the Church and the Jewish people.

Replacement Theology is the belief that due to Israel's sin, God has rejected Israel as His chosen people. The position asserts that Israel's unique role in redemptive purposes and the divine promises that bear their name have been transferred to the Church.

Replacement Theology undermines God's covenant faithfulness and desire for a unified family, resulting in indifference towards Jewish salvation and fostering antisemitism within the Church. Just as Israel has been partially blinded from seeing her Jewish Messiah, much of the Church has been blinded to God's enduring plan for Israel.

The family of God is reawakening to see Israel through the Father's eyes – not as rejected or replaced but loved and with a future.

## GETTING STARTED

*Group leader, read the* In Essence *summary as you begin your time together. This will help set up the direction for this lesson.*

As you open the group time, give everyone an opportunity to answer this question.

- Whose identity would you like to borrow for a day and what would you do in those 24 hours?

It's important to stay true to who God has made us. Let's join the lesson and learn more about a strategic threat to Israel's identity that has had significant impact over hundreds of years.

## LESSON FOUR VIDEO

*Group leader, stream the video teaching.*

As you watch the video teaching, use the following prompts and space provided to record anything that stands out to you.

1. **Satan is in the identity theft business.**

2. **Satan introduced a dangerous doctrine into the Church called Replacement Theology which presents an altered view of both Israel and the Church.**

3. **"I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil."**

4. **By distorting Israel's identity, Satan could divide the Church.**

*Gentile Church leaders concluded that God had rejected national Israel. If God rejected Israel, then the Church would do the same.*

5. **The Church, composed of Jewish and Gentile believers, distanced herself from her Jewish roots and persecuted the Jewish members.**

6. **The allegorical method of Bible interpretation was taken to the extreme.**

7. **Replacement Theology has tragic implications.**

8. **“Pursue, overtake, and recover all.”**

9. **All God has declared over Israel and the Church will come about. What the enemy has stolen will be recovered because of Jesus’s victory.**

*The Old Testament can’t only be for Israel, and it can’t only be about the Church. It’s literally true and spiritually applicable.*

## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Group Leader, read aloud the questions and prompts below and lead the discussion.*

1. **More costly and devastating than identity theft in our natural lives, is spiritual identity theft, when Satan tries to distort our individual God-given design.** Does that statement resonate with you? Have you experienced this threat? If so, in what way(s)?

   **Why do you think this is a major tactic of the enemy?**

2. **Have a volunteer read this definition of Replacement Theology.**

**Defined:** *Replacement Theology is the belief that because of Israel's sin, God has withdrawn their unique role as a servant nation, and is no longer using the Jewish people, as a people, in His redemptive purposes. The promises given to Israel in the Old Testament now find their fulfillment through the Church.*

**Prior to this lesson, were you aware of this belief? If so, what are your thoughts about it?**

3. **Which of these statements, if any, have you heard?**
   - The Church is the new Israel.
   - Christians are spiritual Jews.
   - God rejected Israel and chose the Church.
   - The Church will inherit all the promises in the Old Testament, but the curses remain with the Jewish people.
   - Jewish suffering over the millennia confirms that God has rejected them.

**If any of these resonate with you, there may be some Replacement Theology present.**

4. **If God would reject Israel, or withdraw their divine calling as servants for His purposes because of their sin, what stops Him from doing the same to Christians?** Said another way, if God would break the Abrahamic Covenant, which He said was everlasting, what stops Him from breaking the New Covenant? Will He?

- ▶ **Read Hebrews 6:13. What did God use to confirm His covenant with Abraham?**
- ▶ **Read Titus 3:5. What is the New Covenant based on?**

5. **In Jeremiah 31:31-37 God promised the New Covenant of our salvation.** Does God intend to abandon or cast-off national Israel? What is the sign of God's faithfulness to national Israel, the sons of Jacob?

6. **Read Jeremiah 33:23-26.** What were the people saying? What "I will" promise did God give in v. 26?

7. **Read Leviticus 26:43-45.** Will God reject Israel?

## CONCLUSION

The dangerous doctrine of Replacement Theology brought profound damage to the Jewish community, and to the health of the Church. The distortion of identities caused division in the Church, confusion of roles, and a misrepresentation of God's character. It has been a weapon in Satan's hand to thwart the good and holy purposes of God. Sadly, the doctrine is still alive in many seminaries and churches, but we're living in a day when God is awakening His Church to a correct understanding of Israel.

More formidable than Satan's relentless efforts to divide, is God's willingness and all powerful ability to restore. *He calls us to partner with Him to pursue, overtake, and recover all.*

God has not rejected Israel from their calling but keeps His covenant with them. The fixed order of day and night – the sun's rising and setting – the expanse of the heavens and the foundations of the earth are His witnesses.

## CLOSE IN PRAYER

*As you close your time together, see if anyone within your group has a need for prayer, and take a few minutes to cover those.*

Ask the Holy Spirit to identify any mistaken identities in your life. Where has the enemy tried to distort God's design for individuals in your group?

Ask the Lord to identify any evidence of Replacement Theology.

## PERSONAL STUDY FOR BETWEEN SESSIONS

This section is designed for your personal study to help you dig deeper into some of the themes from the teaching and discussion.

DAY ONE

# ISRAEL'S TRUE IDENTITY

A primary aim of this course is for us to see Israel through the Father's eyes. There's been an abundance of confusion over Israel's identity because of Replacement Theology, also known as "supersessionism." A tandem blessing to understanding Israel, is seeing the Church's true identity. Both are significant to the Father, and they need to be to us as well.

### ISRAEL

- Abraham's family and homeland are eternal provisions guaranteed within the Abrahamic Covenant. **(Gen. 12, 15, 17)**
- Abraham's natural descendants, through Isaac and Jacob, are the Jewish people, or Israel. A "seed," the greatest promised Son through Abraham, would be the Messiah. **(Gen. 35:10-12; Gen. 22:18 and Gal. 3:16)**
- God also promised Abraham spiritual children, from the Gentile nations, who would be joined to Abraham through their individual faith in Jesus, through the New Covenant. **(Gen. 17:4-6; Isa. 56:6-8)**
- God chose Israel to be His special treasure, a vessel of purpose, as a servant and witness of God to all people. Their chosen status, however, never guaranteed personal salvation, which only comes through faith in Jesus. **(Deut. 7:6-7; 26:18)**
- In both Testaments, some of Israel believed in the Messiah as Abraham had done and others did not. The believers are known as the "remnant" and the "Israel within Israel." **(Rom. 9:27)**
- Unbelief in the Messiah didn't disqualify the natural sons of Abraham from being part of the natural family, but it did disqualify them from inclusion in the remnant of believers. **(John 8:39-47)**

What do we learn about the Church in the verses below?

1. **Read Ephesians 2:11-22.** How is the union of believing Jews and Gentiles described? What various terms did Paul use to describe the new entity?

2. **Read Ephesians 3:4-6, 11.** How did Paul identify the "mystery of Christ"? According to verse 11, how long has this been God's plan?

What a beautiful eternal plan of God to reach all nations with the gospel. Gentile believers have been grafted into the divine calling given to the Jews as witnesses of the Lord to all people, to make disciples in all nations, and prepare for the Lord's return.

3. **Why would Satan be so determined to divide the Church?** Read John 17:17-23. What is the result when the disciples of Jesus, the Church, is one – unified?

   How is unity described in Psalm 133:1-3, and what will the Lord command in that relational atmosphere?

Replacement Theology has been a weapon in the enemy's hand to disrupt unity within the Body of Messiah. Many early Church Gentile fathers didn't just reject unsaved Israel, but even the believing remnant - *all Israel*. The condemnatory charges were charged to the Jewish soul, at Jewish people as a whole. Jewish believers were forced to renounce their Jewish heritage, as if it were a sin. From the early centuries as the Jewish people were scattered throughout the nations and Abraham's land was occupied by others, it was easy to believe God had cast off Israel as a chosen instrument. The Church erred in thinking God's disfavor toward Israel was permanent. It's God's choice of Israel, God's choosing, that is permanent!

Perhaps the greatest modern miracle happened in 1948 when Israel became a sovereign nation again on her ancient homeland, with Hebrew as a resurrected mother tongue.

Did the Church *replace* natural, ethnic Israel as the chosen people? Is natural Israel no longer a witness to the world that God exists and that He is faithful to His word? Has God rejected them?

**4.** Read **Ezekiel 39:7.** Speaking of an end times scenario, what does Ezekiel prophesy? Where will God set His name and who will come to know Him through it? What name of the Lord will be revealed to the nations?

Now, read verses 21-27. Summarize what the nations will know and what will bring the revelation. Will Israel be a witness of God in her righteousness only or even through her iniquity?

**5. Writing about natural Israel, what question did Paul ask in Romans 11:1, 11?** What was the answer?

What do you learn about Israel and God in verses 28-29?

What do you learn about Israel and God in Isaiah 54:7-8?

## REFLECTION

Has God rejected the natural descendants of Abraham – the Jewish people as a whole? Are they no longer chosen for the purpose of being a witness of God to the world? Has the Church become the new Israel?

In your own words, how would you answer these questions? It's important. What impact does this have on your thoughts about Jewish friends, co-workers...Israel? Is there an action step you sense the Lord presenting to you?

*Abraham's family is God's family. There is one family of faith with distinction among the family members. The Jewish family remains Jewish and the Gentiles remain Gentile.*

## FURTHER STUDY

If you'd like more on the topic of Replacement Theology, scan this QR code, or click on this link for an article written by Dr. Wayne Hilsden, entitled "Replacement Theology: What is Supersessionism?"

DAY TWO

# HOW ARE THE OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES TO BE APPLIED?

Are they for the Church? Are they for natural Israel?

Yes, the entire Bible can be spiritually applied to all believers. Let's study and embrace the whole Bible! This is also true: the Old Testament promises cannot be removed from Israel. The promises that are spiritually applicable to the entire Body of Messiah, are literally true for Israel and cannot be stripped from them.

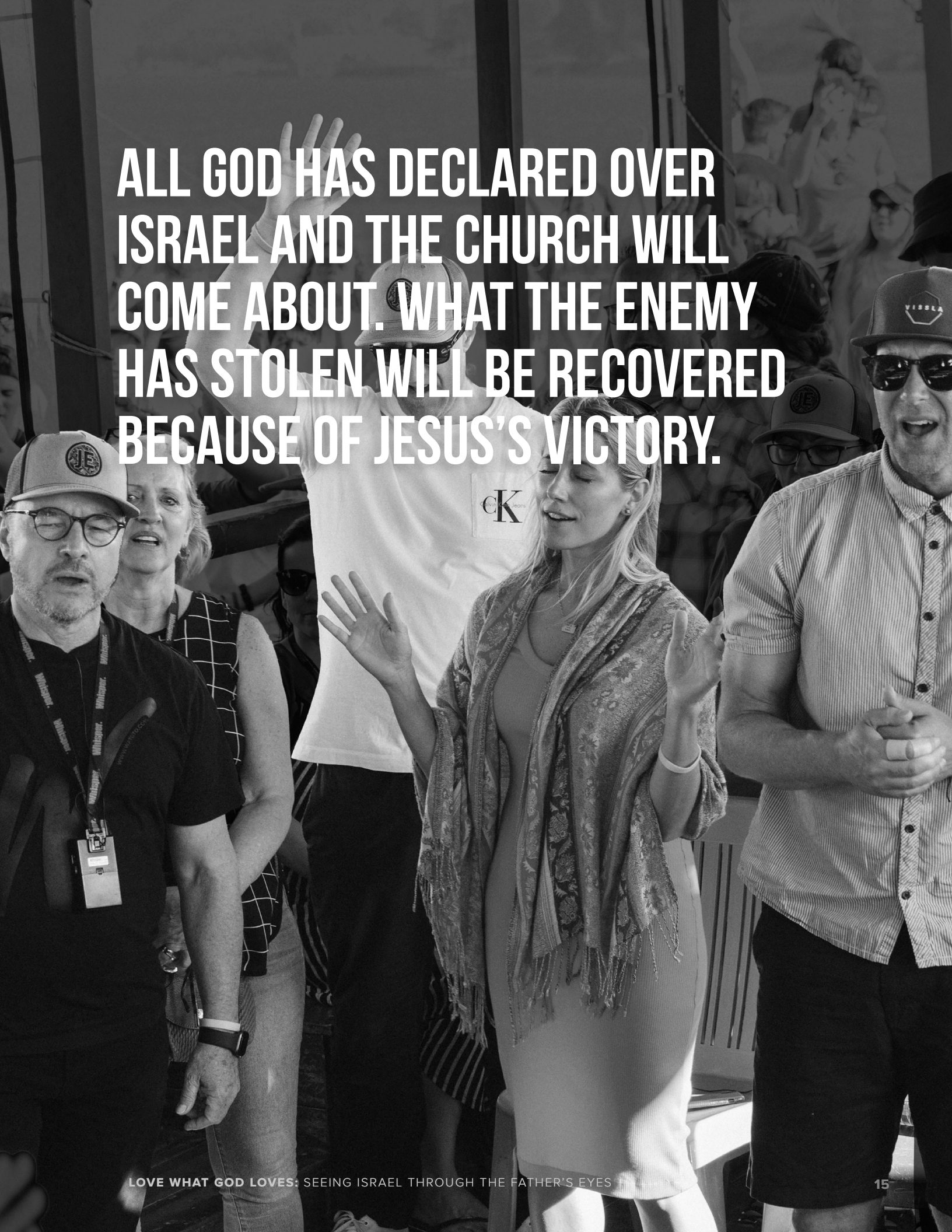
1. **Read the following verses about the Old Testament Scriptures and write out who they are for and what their intended purpose is.**

- **Romans 15:4**

- **1 Corinthians 10:11**

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

The whole Bible is for the whole Church – all believers, Jewish and Gentile, and remains applicable to natural Israel. As the apostle Paul studied the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) and God gave him revelation, Paul saw the truth that the "mystery of Christ," the Gentiles included in the family of faith, was spoken of beginning with Moses and throughout the prophets.



ALL GOD HAS DECLARED OVER ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH WILL COME ABOUT. WHAT THE ENEMY HAS STOLEN WILL BE RECOVERED BECAUSE OF JESUS'S VICTORY.

**2.** Read **Romans 15:8-12** and answer the following questions.

- **Verse 8:** To whom did Christ become a servant and why?

- **Verse 9:** Who else did Christ serve and why?

- V**erse 10:** Paul quotes Moses in Deut. 32:43. The Gentiles are called to rejoice, how?

  Rejoice *with His people*, not in place of His people, but alongside – a family of faith. Note there remains a distinction between the Gentiles and Israel.

The Scriptures were written with us in mind, and we're part of the story. They were written for our use, for our edification and cleansing. The Word of God, like the Word made flesh, Jesus, (John 1:14) is for all.

The Scriptures are still for natural Israel. As literal as Israel's formation was and the prophesied years of chastisement and sorrow have been, so too, the promises and prophecies of Israel's restoration will be literal. There are promises that remain for natural Israel. Let's be sure to leave those in place, and partner with the Lord in praying and believing for the salvation of Israel, for their full restoration.

## REFLECTION

The Song of Solomon is the "Song of Songs" (Song of Solomon 1:1), in other words, it's the highest, the supreme, song ever written. In the same way that Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords – inspired by the Holy Spirit, Solomon wrote the Song of Songs. There isn't a higher love song.

- Is it written to Solomon's wife, Shulamite, of their marital love?
- Is it a song from God's heart to Israel? Isaiah records that Israel is God's wife.
- Is the song speaking of Jesus and His Church? Paul wrote that we are His Bride.
- Is it a song written from the Lord's heart to you, personally?

*How about yes and amen to each option?* Only God can write something so profound and timeless that it is specific to an individual, true for a nation, and applicable to an international family of faith.

In the song, the Bridegroom set His affection upon an unlikely candidate. The bride had been mistreated by others, didn't at all see herself as special or lovely, but He saw something different. He would walk with her over the years, in every season of their relationship, the highs and the lows, and she would be transformed by His love.

3. **Read Song of Solomon 7:10** and write out what the bride comes to be confident in? How does this speak to you, do you know it for yourself?

4. **The choir sings of the bride in SOS 8:5a.** Where is she coming from? What is her posture in the days of her maturity? What does it tell you about her?

**5. What did Solomon instruct her to do in SOS 8:6-7?** How did he describe his love?

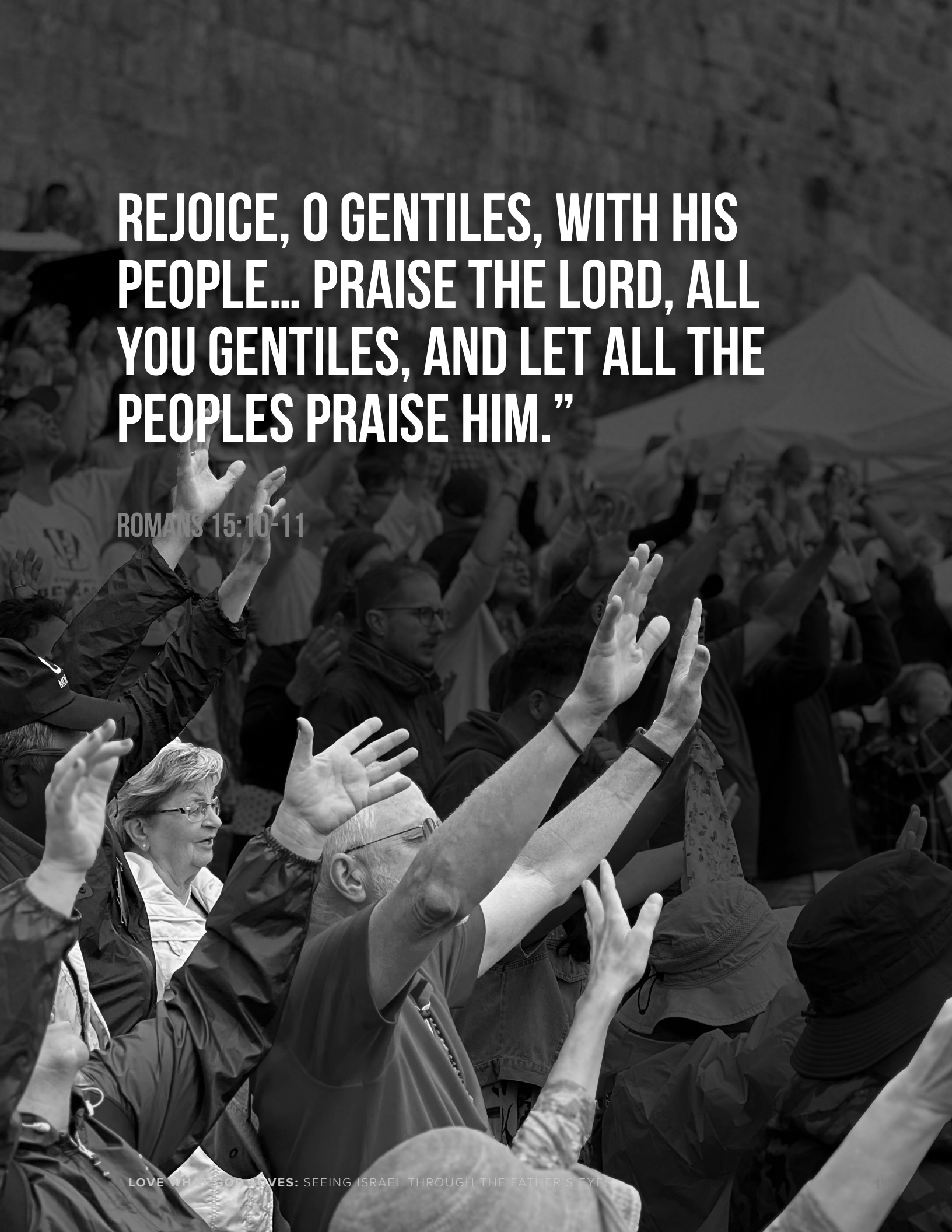
The bride matures to the point of having a vineyard of her own that she's eager for her Bridegroom to see. She's been fruitful, there is a harvest that awaits.

6. **Read SOS 8:14 and Revelation 22:17, 20.** What is the bride's call in these verses? Could it be the same call in both scriptures? What is Jesus's reply in verse 20?

The whole Bible is for the whole Church, and it remains equally applicable and promising for natural Israel who will one day be awakened to His love. *Come, Lord Jesus.*

## FURTHER STUDY

If you'd like more on the topic of God's love, scan this QR code, or click on this link for an article written by Estera Wieja, titled "Love What God Loves – What Does It Mean?"


REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE... PRAISE THE LORD, ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM."
ROMANS 15:10-11

DAY THREE

# WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

What an interesting question for the Lord to ask Jacob. Of course it wasn't for lack of information. The Lord touched a tender place in Jacob – his identity.

Jacob had fled from Beersheva twenty years earlier. On the way, the Lord appeared to him at Bethel, entrusted to him the Abrahamic Covenant promises that had belonged to his father, Isaac, and grandfather, Abraham. In Genesis 28:15, the Lord promised to be with Jacob, to keep him wherever he went, and to bring him back to the land promised in the covenant.

*Twenty years and a lot of drama had passed.* Jacob returned to the land of his inheritance as a wealthy man, with a full family, and in fear of his twin brother, Esau.

Let's pick up this encounter with the Lord. The passage says "a man" wrestled with Jacob, and Jacob said he saw God face-to-face. Hosea 12:4-5 tells us it was an Angel, the Lord. There is only one God/Man also known as the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, and it's the pre-incarnate Messiah, Jesus.

1. **Read Genesis 32:22-30.** What did the Lord change Jacob's name to and what reason was given?

The name *Israel* means "he (who) struggles with God," or "God prevails." No contradiction here, both understandings of the name have been, and are, true. Has Israel struggled with God over all the millennia? *Yes.* Has God prevailed on Israel's behalf? *Indeed, and it will continue to be so.*

How about you, *what is your name?* Who has God created you to be? What's your God-given identity?

2. **Read Psalm 139, the entire chapter if time allows, otherwise verses 1-6, 13-18.** What is your response to these truths?

3. **David called God's works "wonderful" in verse 14 and added "and my soul knows it very well."** Your soul encompasses your mind, will, and emotions. Does your soul know it well, that God's workmanship of you is wonderful? If not, what hindrances are in the way? Are they based in truth?

In addition to our natural abilities, God has entrusted every believer with supernatural abilities called spiritual gifts to enable us to accomplish our God-given calling. We can't leave home without our spiritual gift(s) and by no means should we consider swapping them out for someone else's. God has designed us uniquely and perfectly. Our natural gifts and spiritual gifts fit together and are exactly what we need for what He's called us to, individually.

4. **Read 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7.** What pattern does Paul present in verses 4-6?

**What things are identified as differing?**

**What are identified as the same?**

**For whose benefit are your giftings, according to verse 7?**

If you've never studied spiritual gifts, we encourage you to dig further into it. Read 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 for more.

**5.** **Read** **Ephesians 2:10.** What are we called, and for what purpose? When were these prepared for us?

**6. What truths do you read in Philippians 1:6 and 2:13?**

**7. What can we be assured of in Romans 8:28?**

We can't pretend to be someone we're not. Neither can we reject who God has made us to be and expect to be fulfilled, at peace, even happy. You were fashioned by God, on purpose, with a purpose, and it's critical to connect with that and go full steam ahead. Jesus said, "I must be about My Father's business." It's true for each of us!

## REFLECTION

What do you believe God has called you to in His kingdom? Write it out. If you're not 100% sure, that's okay. Take time to pray about it now and write down anything you hear as you listen to the Holy Spirit.



Read the *In Essence* lesson summary provided at the beginning of Lesson Four. As you have considered this topic of Replacement Theology and the importance of maintaining a true, God-given identity, have there been further questions come to your mind, or perhaps poignant moments when some dots were connected for you? If so, write them out.

Replacement Theology has been a two-pronged weapon distorting the identities of Israel and the Church with much pain, confusion and division as a result. Let's be rightly aligned to see Israel and the Church through the Father's eyes.

## FURTHER STUDY

If you'd like more on Israel's name and identity, scan this QR code, or click on this link for an article written by Doug Hershey, titled "What Does Israel Mean? Exploring This Important Biblical Name".

# ISRAEL IS GOD'S CHOSEN VESSEL, ENTRUSTED WITH A UNIQUE PURPOSE THAT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH CONNECTING US TO GOD.

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