

NOTES FROM WEEK SIX KEYNOTE SLIDES

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4:1–11 Verses 1–11 introduce the throne-room vision of chs. 4 and 5. These chapters form one scene in which John is invited to behold future events (v. 1). He depends heavily on Moses, Ezekiel, and Daniel to describe the wonders he witnessed. The vision in these chapters includes the introduction of the Lamb and leads to the seal judgments in ch. 6.

4:1 After these things Refers to the reception of the letters to the seven churches. The phrase used here indicates that John received this vision after the previous one.

former voice Belonging to the glorified Christ (1:10).

Come up here A summons to behold the visions (compare Ezek 3:12; 11:1).

which must take place after these things See Rev 1:19 and note.

4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit This phrase occurs again in 17:3 and 21:10; it functions as a reminder that John is experiencing a prolonged vision. See note on 1:10.

a throne was set in heaven Suggests sovereignty and power. Various aspects of the vision in this chapter reflect aspects of Ezekiel's and Isaiah's visions of God (Ezek 1; Isa 6).

seated on the throne God (see Rev 4:8, 11).

4:3 jasper and carnelian stone Ezekiel describes Yahweh in a similar way (Ezek 1:26–27). In Exod 24:10, Moses also describes the divine presence of Yahweh using precious stones. Like Ezekiel and Isaiah, John does not attempt to give a precise description of God. Instead, he describes the overall effect of His glorious presence.

4:4 twenty-four elders May symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles, together representing the whole people of God. If true, this would fit with the context of [Rev 2–3](#) of shared rulership for believers (see [note](#) on [2:7](#)).

4:5 which are the seven spirits of God See [1:4](#).

4:6 sea of glass In Revelation, the sea likely symbolizes forces of chaos (see [13:1](#) and [note](#); [21:1](#) and [note](#)). A calm sea points to God's ability to subdue chaos and bring order.

four living creatures Possibly an allusion to the cherubim described in [Ezek 1](#) and [10](#) (see [note](#) on [Ezek 1:5](#)), or the seraphim of [Isa 6:2–3](#). The number four often represents the entire created order (e.g., [Rev 7:1](#); [Jer 49:36](#)). Thus, these creatures may represent all living things worshipping God.

full of eyes in front and in back The multiplicity of eyes symbolically suggests unceasing vigilance or great wisdom (compare [Ezek 1:18](#)).

4:7 living creature was similar to a lion While John and Ezekiel both describe four living creatures in their visions, the descriptions vary. In [Ezekiel 1](#), all four creatures are identical. In Revelation, each has only one face and resembles a different creature: A lion, an ox, a human, and a flying eagle. Ezekiel's creatures have four wings, but John's have six, like the seraphim in [Isa 6:2](#). John's creatures are full of eyes, but the eyes in Ezekiel are on the wheels that move the creatures.

4:8 Holy, holy, holy This echoes the song of the seraphim in [Isa 6:2–3](#).

4:10 put down The phrase describes submission: the 24 elders, though wearing crowns, realize the ultimate source of their power—God Himself, the Great King.

4:11 our Lord and God Domitian (who ruled from ad 81–96), who may have been the Roman emperor during John's exile on Patmos, demanded that his subjects call him "our lord and god." John sets up a clear contrast between the true king and the one whose rule will eventually be done away with.

WESTERN THEOLOGY IS PRIMARILY BASED UPON

Reformer Martin Luther:

Working through old research notes, I rediscovered an interesting quote from Thomas Jefferson (*yes, that Thomas Jefferson*). He certainly has an opinion or two to share about Revelation.

In short, he doesn't have anything good to say about that last book of the Bible. He describes it as "the ravings of a Maniac, no more worthy, nor capable of explanation than the incoherences of our own nightly dreams."

And then there's Martin Luther, the acclaimed Protestant Reformer. In the first preface of his translation of Revelation in 1522, Luther's descriptions are also quite negative. He describes the book as being "neither apostolic nor prophetic," saying further that he "can in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it" (*LW* 35:398). After accusing the author of Revelation of being somewhat smug and rather puzzling, Luther confesses, "My spirit cannot accommodate itself to this book. For me this is reason enough not to think highly of it: Christ is neither taught nor known in it" (*LW*, 35:398-399). Luther later discarded this preface and replaced it with a new one in 1530. The second preface doesn't carry the same negative tone as the first. In fact, he thinks readers can indeed "profit" from the book, particular in terms of finding "comfort" in the hope it emits, as well as the "warning" it gives with respect to trials and persecution (*LW* 35:409). He ends his new preface with the following paragraph:

"In a word, our holiness is in heaven, where Christ is; and not in the world, before men's eyes, like goods in the market place. Therefore let there be offenses, divisions, heresies, and faults; let them do what they can! If only the word of the gospel remains pure among us, and we love and cherish it, we shall not doubt that Christ is with us, even when things are at their worst. As we see here in this book [of Revelation], that through and beyond all plagues, beasts, and evil angels Christ is nonetheless with his saints, and wins the final victory" (*LW* 35:411).

1. "From Thomas Jefferson to Alexander Smyth, 17 January 1825," Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-4882>. Accessed on 7/28/20 at 8:01am.
2. Quotes from Luther come from *Luther's Works: Word and Sacrament*, vol. 35, edited by E. Theodore Bachmann. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960.

SUPERSESSSIONISM

Paul the Apostle is often cited by those who believe that Jewish law is no longer valid.

Supersessionism, also called **replacement theology or fulfillment theology**,^[1] is a Christian theological doctrine which describes the theological conviction that the Christian Church has superseded the nation of Israel assuming their role as God's covenanted people,^[2] thus asserting that the New Covenant through Jesus Christ has superseded or replaced the Mosaic covenant exclusive to Jews. Supersessionist theology also holds that the universal Christian Church has succeeded ancient Israel as God's true Israel and that Christians have succeeded the ancient Israelites as the people of God.

Often claimed by later Christians to have originated with Paul the Apostle in the New Testament, supersessionism has formed a core tenet of Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant churches for the majority of their history. Many early Church Fathers—including Justin Martyr and Augustine of Hippo—were supersessionist.^[3] Most historic Christian Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, Methodist Churches and Reformed Churches, hold that the Old Covenant has three components: ceremonial, moral, and civil (cf. covenant theology).^{[4][5]} They teach that while the ceremonial and civil (judicial) laws have been fulfilled, the moral law of the Ten Commandments continues to bind Christian believers.

Rabbinic Judaism disregards supersessionism as offensive to Jewish history. Islam teaches that it is the final and most authentic expression of Abrahamic monotheism, superseding both Judaism and Christianity. The Islamic doctrine of tahrif teaches that earlier monotheistic scriptures or earlier interpretations of them have been corrupted by later interpretations of them, while the Quran presents a pure version of their divine message.

What is Replacement Theology?

According to Replacement Theology, post the Pentecost event of Acts chapter 2, the term “Israel,” as found in the Bible, now refers to the Church. Therefore, the Jewish people are now no longer a “chosen people.” They are no different from any other national group, such as the English, Spanish, or French.

Replacement Theology teaches that apart from repentance, the new birth, and incorporation into the Church, the Jewish people have no future, no hope, and no calling in the plan of God. The promises, covenants and blessings ascribed to Israel in the Bible have been taken away from the Jews and given to the Church, which has superseded them. However, the Jews are subject to the curses found in the Bible, as a result of their rejection of Christ.

What does this Doctrine of Replacement Theology produce in the Church?

- **Arrogance** concerning its Duty & Destiny. When the Church boasts against the Jews and Israel, the Church becomes “branches” without “roots.” Many Christians boast of being New Testament (NT) Christians (ie: from the “Book of Acts” forward). As such, they see no reason to study the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament).
- **Allegorization** of prophecies concerning Israel. Once Replacement Theology has been established as a foundational doctrine it turns all of the Prophetic Scriptures dealing with a future Israel into mystical predictions about the Church. They fall into the trap of changing the Primary understanding with any Secondary application.
- **Aberration** from sound Biblical exegesis. It produces historic errors like British Israelism where the people of Western European, particularly those in Great Britain, are the direct lineal descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.
- **Amillennialism** (No Millennium). This is a classic misapplication of Biblical Eschatology. In other words, if there is “no Literal Israel” in the future then there is no need for a future Kingdom.
- **Anti-Semitism** (Hatred of the Jews) This is the natural result of Arrogance + Allegorization + Aberration + Amillennialism. **In 1543 Martin Luther wrote a pamphlet entitled “On the Jews and Their Lies.” They are: “A miserable and accursed people,” “Stupid fools,” “Miserable, blind and senseless,” “Thieves and robbers,” “The great vermin of humanity,” and “Lazy rogues.”**
Luther went on to write: “For such ruthless wrath of God is sufficient evidence that they [the Jewish people] assuredly have erred and gone astray. Even a child can comprehend this. For one dare not regard God as so cruel that he would punish his own people so long, so terrible, so unmercifully. Therefore, this work of wrath is proof that the Jews, surely rejected by God, are no longer his people, and neither is he any longer their God”
- In 1924 at a Christian gathering in Berlin, Hitler spoke to thousands and received a standing ovation when he made the following proclamation: “I believe that today I am acting in accordance with the will of Almighty God as I announce the most important work that Christians could undertake — and that is to be against the Jews and get rid of them once and for all.”

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