

(Review by HD, July 2019)

THE FORGOTTEN BRIDE
HOW THE CHURCH BETRAYED ITS JEWISH HERITAGE

By David Lambourn

2019, published privately via Amazon KDP

ISBN 978-1-0988-3114-1

The author takes the Bible at its face value. With this stance he is able to argue for the restoration of the nation of Israel as the People of God in the end, thus fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies which to date remain unfulfilled. While admitting that this subject had been expounded before, the author hopes his new work will re-ignite the debate over the place of Israel in God's plan, and go some way to counter Replacement Theology.

Using the Rachel/Leah rivalry in Jacob's marriage as a picture of the relationship between the God of Israel and his human people, Lambourn focuses on the possible feelings of the nation of Israel. According to the chronicled covenants between Israel and her God, Israel expected to continue to serve and represent YHWH for ever – as God's "Wife" - but the community that sprang up around the life of Jesus of Nazareth increasingly believed and acted as if it has taken over Israel's place of primary intimacy with God. The author draws attention to some of the many terrible mistreatments of Jews that the Church has, in the main, encouraged since 130AD. For those in the Church unfamiliar with this history, this should be required reading, not least to understand why evangelism to Jews is difficult. Lambourn puts this grim story down to Satan's long-term efforts to exterminate the Jews, both prior to and after the Incarnation, and so prevent Biblical prophecies being fulfilled. He believes that when the Church is anti-Semitic, it is this spirit that has inspired it.

The author analyses texts from the gospels of Matthew, Luke and John and the writings of Paul that have been used to support the argument that it was God's intention to replace Israel with the Church. In every instance, Lambourn argues successfully that this was never the case. This is a very useful section of the book.

From this argument for a common destiny for Israel and the Church to be the People of God, Lambourn tries to understand how this works. He leans partly on the book of Ruth, about a Moabite woman who gave up her foreign nationality by marrying a Jewish man and being absorbed into the nation of Judah, and on Paul's epistle to the Romans, where Paul speaks of the Church as a wild olive branch which needs to be grafted into the original Hebraic one. Thus, the author advocates the Church having a humble and co-operative attitude to Israel. This would be expressed in supporting the nation of Israel in its current reinstatement to the land of Israel. The author does not neglect to mention several of the problems in and around present-day Israel due to the resistance of non-Jewish people to this reinstatement. In referring to Joseph's life in Egypt, and his acceptance of his old family in its need, the Author acknowledges that true repentance and tears on all sides are necessary for reconciliation. Humanistic influences and self-determining attitudes in the state of Israel today will need to be abandoned. Lambourn foresees Israel doing just that when she recognises and accepts her Messiah in Jesus as he returns, according to Zechariah, Chapters 12-14.

Lambourn does not go into Messianic versus non-Messianic Jewish theology, nor into different understandings about the End Times and the Kingdom of God. These would have made a far weightier book. As it is THE FORGOTTEN BRIDE provides plenty of clear and easy-to-read answers to the question of whether the Church has now replaced Israel as God's 'special People'.

I would have appreciated a subject index but, failing this, of Bible references. [It is understood these may be added to a revised edition]. Contact with the publisher is presumably via Amazon, as no publisher address is given.