

# The Challenge Posed by God's Covenant with Israel for Christian Mission



A Post-Supersessionist Messianic  
Jewish Missiology

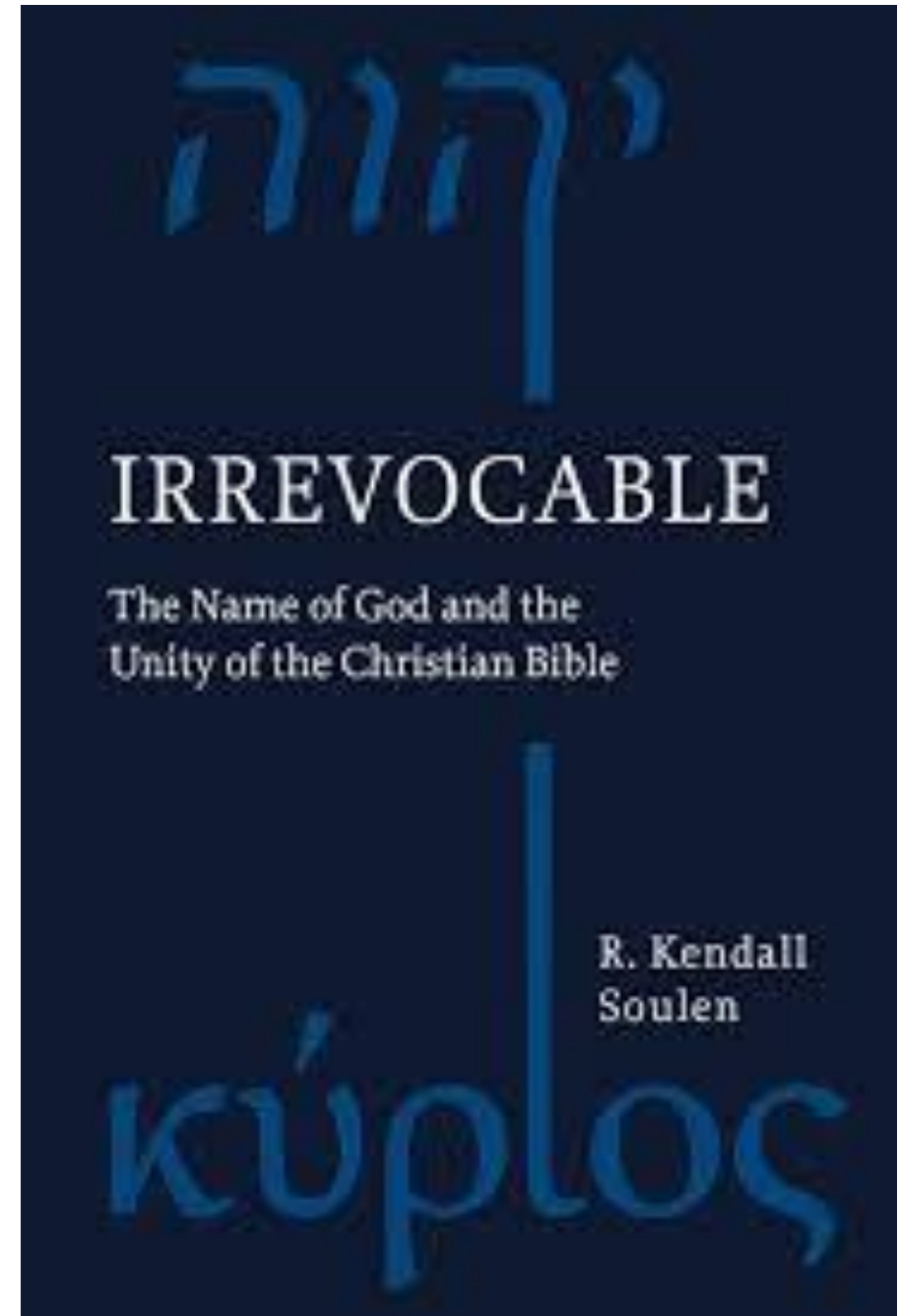
# The Central Question

- What happens to Christian mission if Israel remains elect?
- Mission cannot be replacement
- Mission becomes participation in God's covenant purposes



## The Main Thesis


- Israel is not merely instrumental
- Israel remains intrinsic to God's purposes
- The Church must rethink mission, witness, and identity



# Telling the Biblical Story

- Mission always rests on a story
- Creation–Fall–Redemption–Consummation gives coherence
- But can leave Israel as a temporary middle episode



A blurred background image of a desk. In the foreground, a white pencil holder contains several black pencils. To the right, a stack of white books is visible. In the background, a camera and a spiral notebook are out of focus.

# The Bible's Big Story

## A Canonical Narrative Approach

# Act 1. Creation

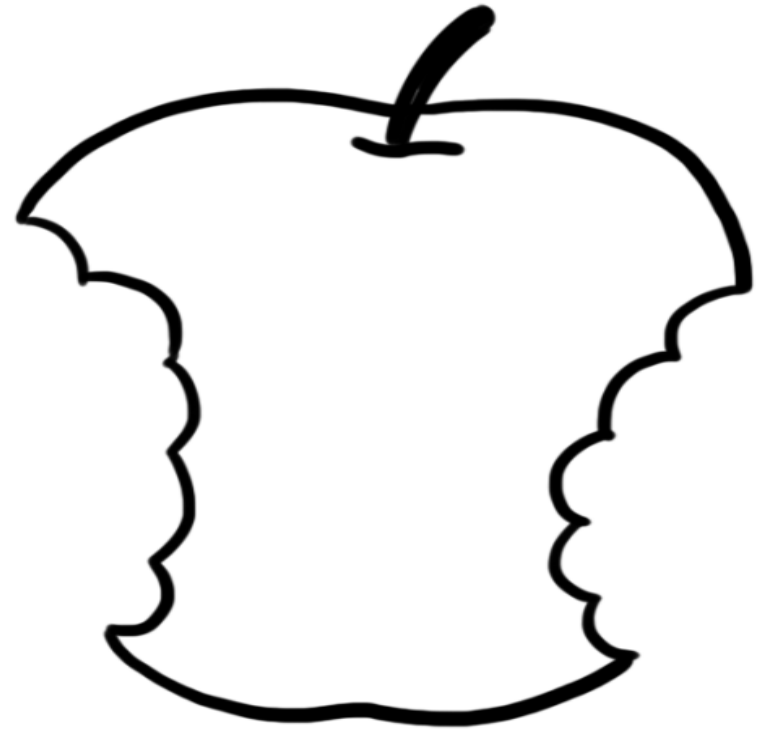
- God creates a place suitable for life, where humans, made in His image, can live under His rule and blessing.
- Purpose – Enjoy life responsibly



# Act 2. The Fall

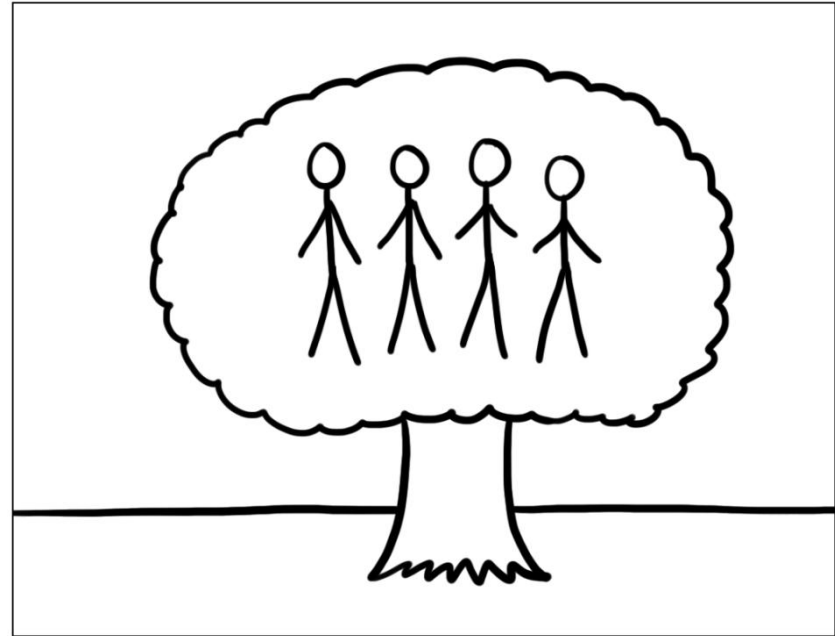
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- Sin entered the world when Adam & Eve ate a piece of fruit from the one forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. The Bible doesn't say what kind of fruit it was, so we draw an apple to represent whatever that fruit was.
- Genesis 3: "Earth: and "Life"
- Genesis 4-11 Consequences



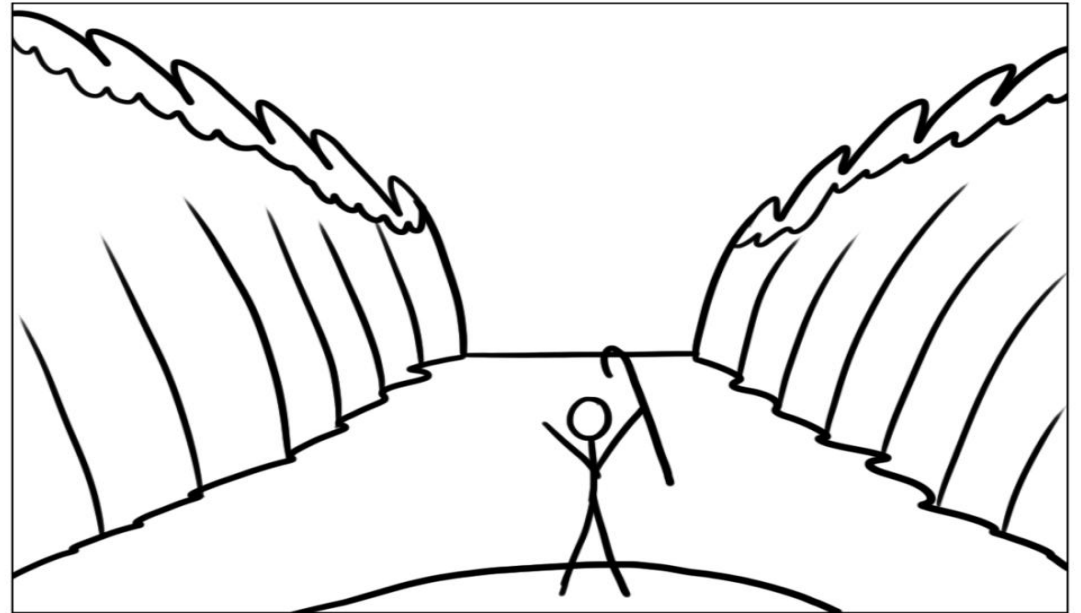
# Act 3. Scene 1. God chooses Israel

- Scene 1: A family tree is used to represent the family God chose to work through to eventually bless the entire world. The four people on the tree are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
- *Purpose – travel with hope*



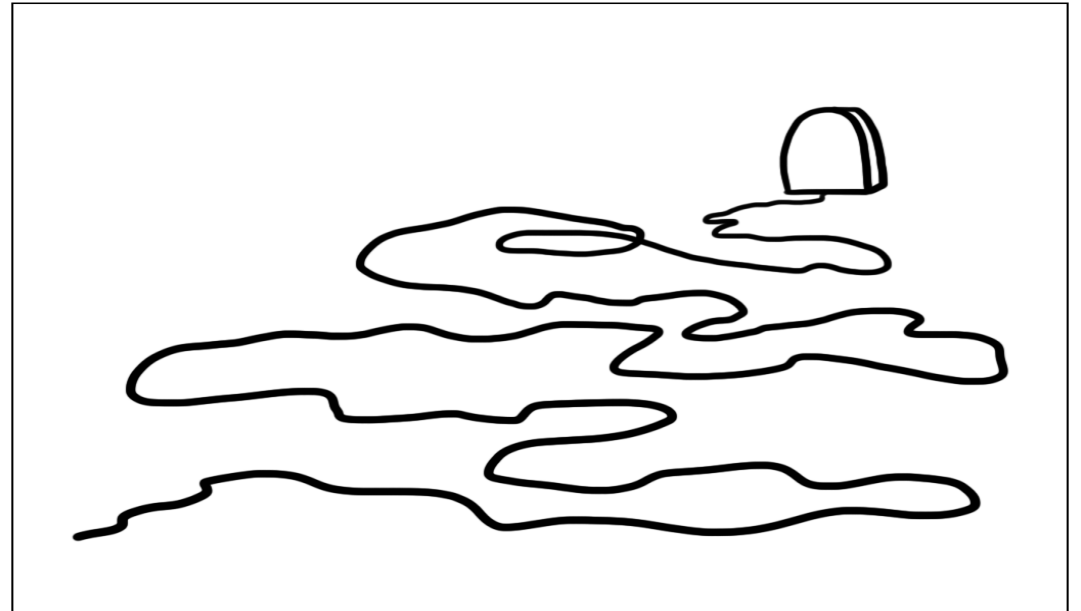
# Act 3 Scene 2 - Moses

- The picture shows God, through Moses, parting the Red Sea
- *Purpose – escape from injustice*



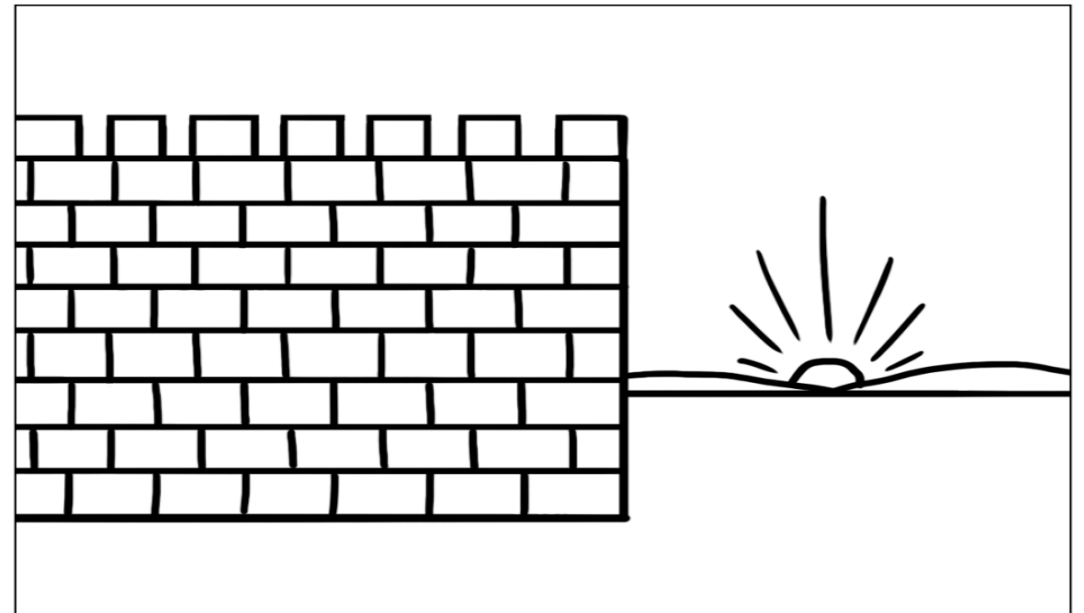
# Act 3 Scene 3 - Waiting

- A line randomly wanders around the page until it ends at a headstone which represents the death of the unbelieving generation.
- *Purpose – learn to rely on God*



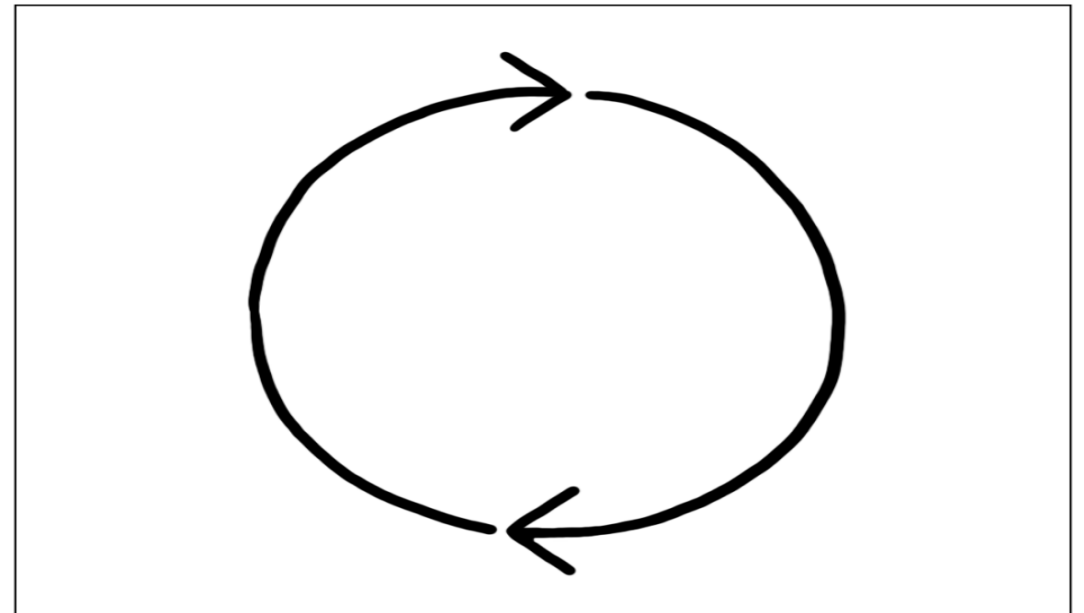
# Act 3 Scene 4 - Promised Land

- The walls of Jericho mark the first town the Children of Israel conquered as they reclaimed the promised land.
- *Purpose – live in peace, security and with justice*



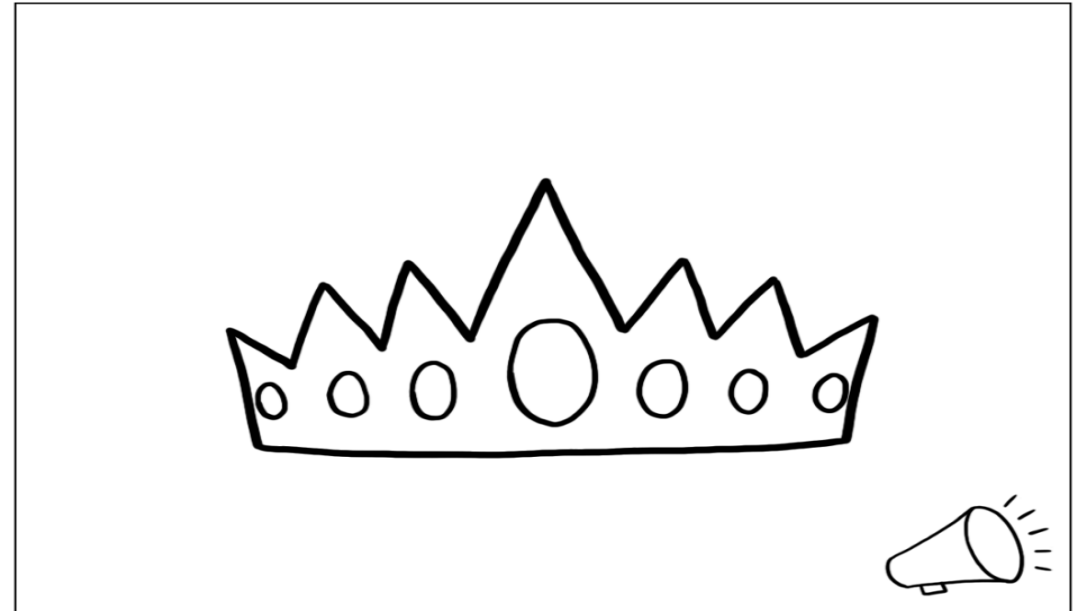
# Act 3: Scene 5 - Judges

- Two arrows create a never-ending circle representing the Children of Israel turning to God and then away from God, over and over again.
- *Purpose – history repeats itself*



# Scene 6. Kings

- The crown represents the Kings the people asked God to give them. The megaphone reminds us that during this time God sent prophets to warn the people and call them back to Him.
- *Purpose – God's way or ours?*



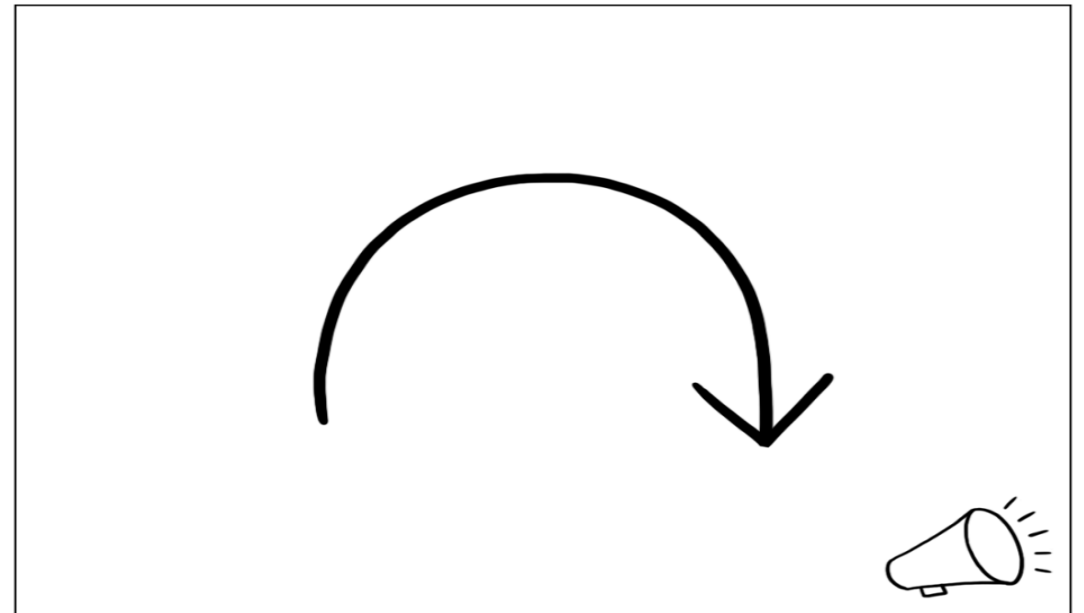
# Scene 7. Consequences

- A sad face with tears is used to represent the tragic consequences of sin. The megaphone shows that the prophets continued to plead with the people to turn back to God.
- *Purpose – reflect, repent, return*



# Scene 8. Return

- A U-turn arrow shows that God brought His people out of exile and back to their land. And again the prophets spoke, which is represented by the megaphone.
- *Purpose – receiving God's forgiveness and restoration*



# Scene 9 - Waiting

- The 400 silent (??) years of waiting between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament.
- *Purpose – watching and waiting*



*Shhh...*

**Old Testament**

Dawn of time

- Creation
- Fall
- Noah
- Babel

Early 2nd millennium

- Call of Abraham
- Isaac
- Jacob
- Joseph

13c BC

- Moses: Exodus, Sinai
- Joshua: Entry and conquest of the land
- Judges and Samuel
- Saul, David, Solomon

1000

925

**Judah**

Schism

**Israel**

Isaiah

- Elijah, Elisha
- Hosea, Amos
- Exile to Assyria

722

586

Jeremiah

Exile to Babylon

538

Partial return from captivity

Ezekiel  
Lamentations  
Dan 1-7?

- Ezra, Nehemiah
- Haggai, Zechariah
- Malachi

**Intertestamental period**

68 BC

400 years under the Greeks  
Romans in Judea

Daniel 8-12?

**New Testament**

0-33 AD

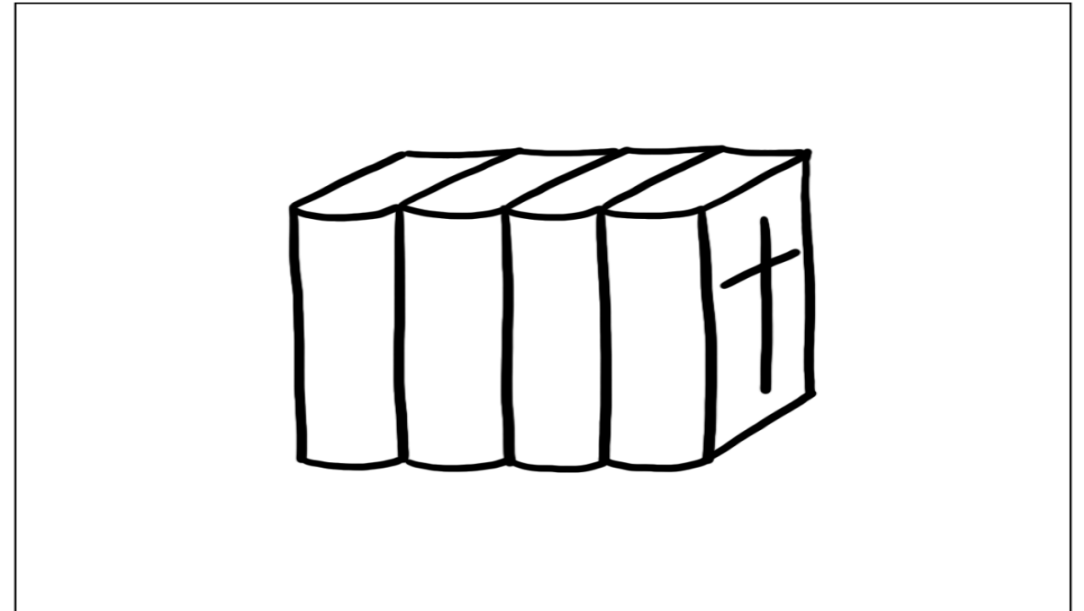
- Jesus of Nazareth
- Pentecost: birth of the church
- Paul
- End of NT period

96?

- Present day
- New creation

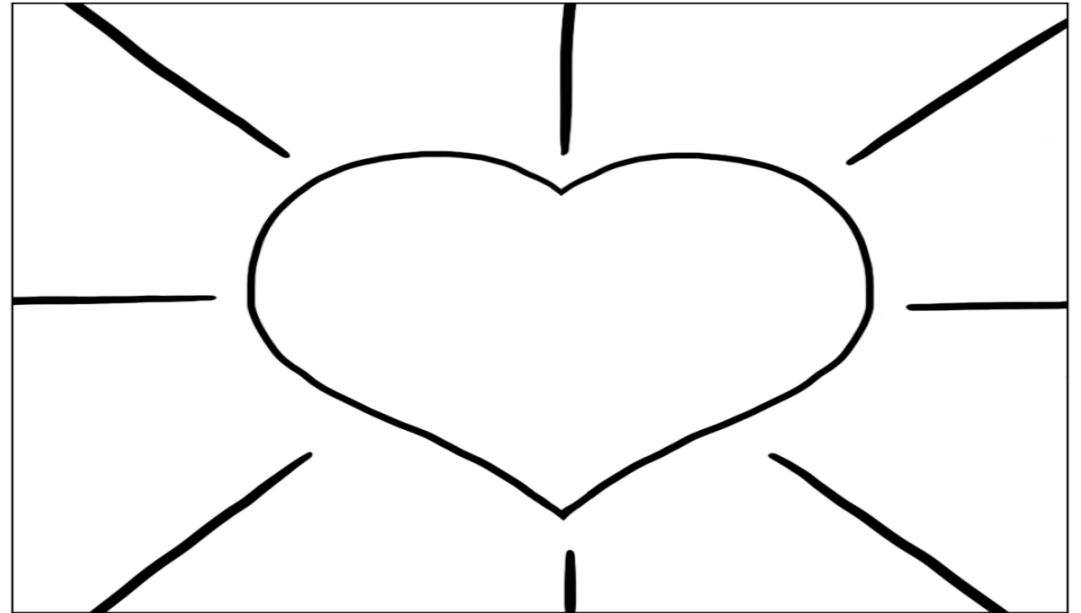
# Act 4 : Jesus

- Four books represent the first four books of the New Testament – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The cross on the cover reminds us that these are the books that tell us about the life and death and resurrection of Jesus.
- *Purpose – follow Jesus as your rabbi and teacher*



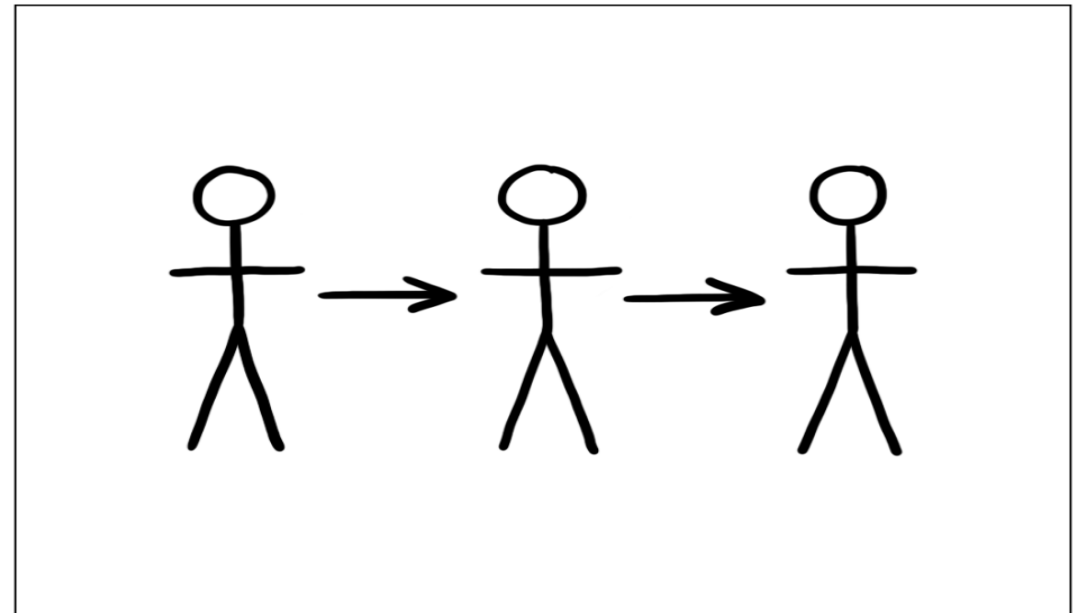
# Act 5 Scene 1 - Holy Spirit

- Since Jesus' death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit now comes to live inside all who believe. We say that He is living in our hearts. The lines represent His power that now works in and through us.
- *Receive his power*



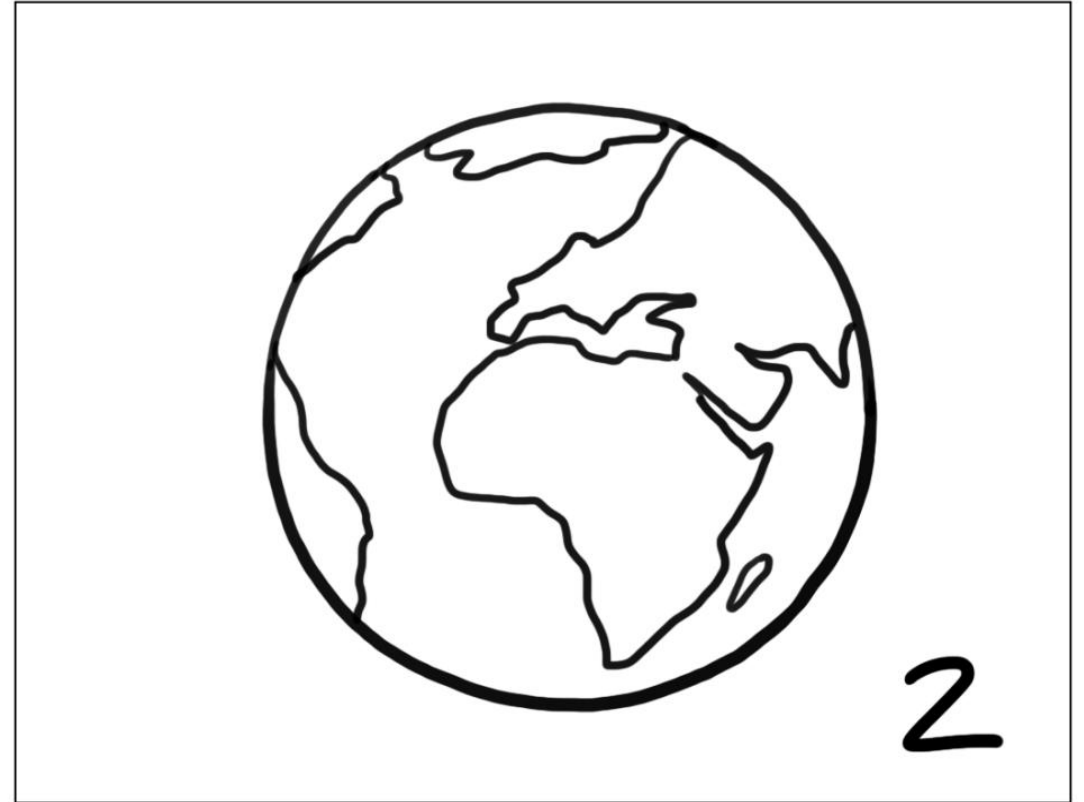
# Act 5 Scene 2. Making Disciples

- We are to tell others about Jesus and help them become His disciples. Then they are to tell others about Jesus and help them become His disciples.
- *Go and tell – use words if necessary*

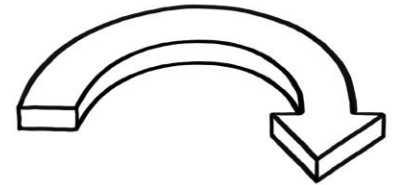
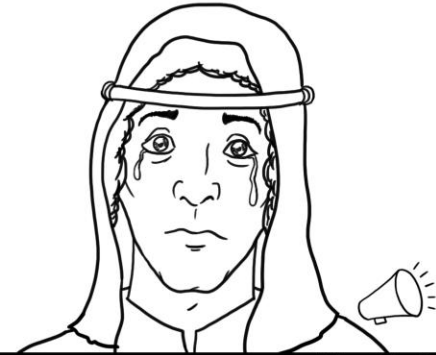
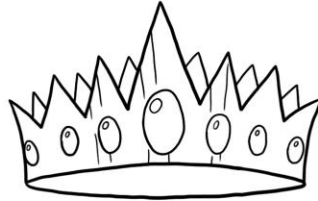
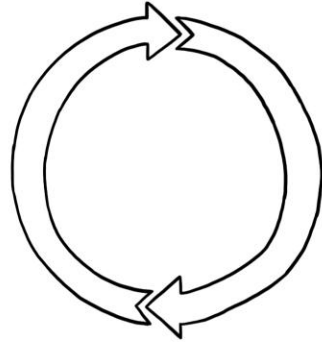
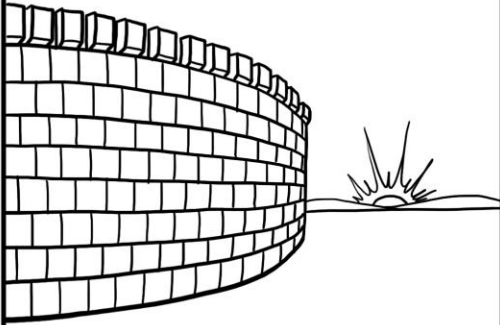
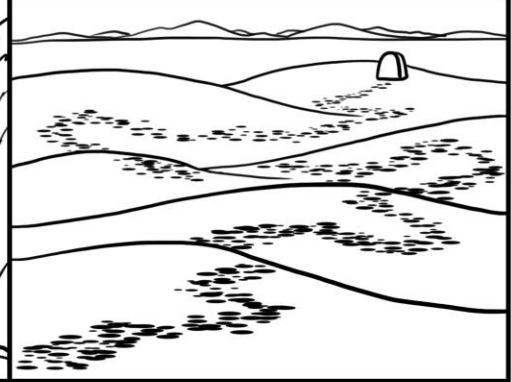
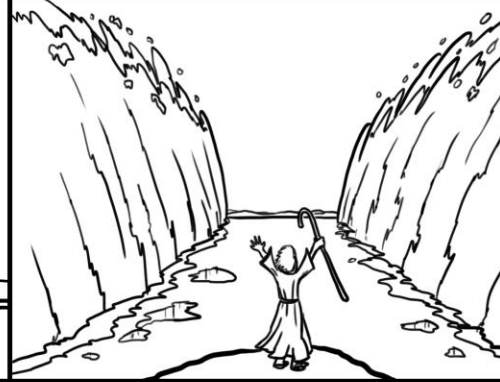


# Act 6. New Beginnings

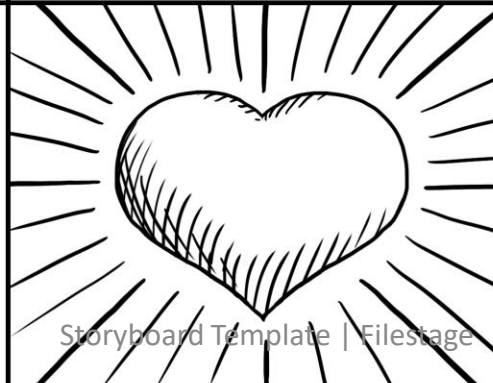
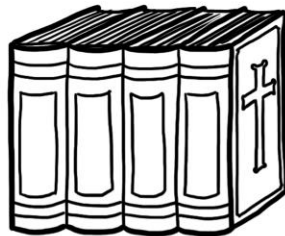
- Here we draw another picture of earth, but with a two. This represents the new earth and heaven that God will create in the future when Jesus comes again.
- *The best is yet to come!*



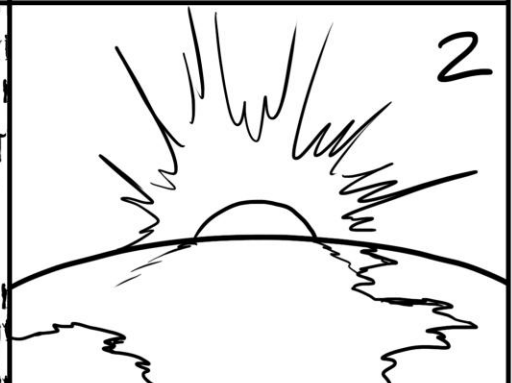
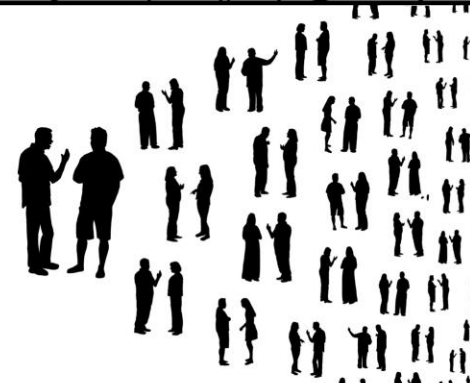
# The Whole Picture – 16 Scenes



*Shhh...*

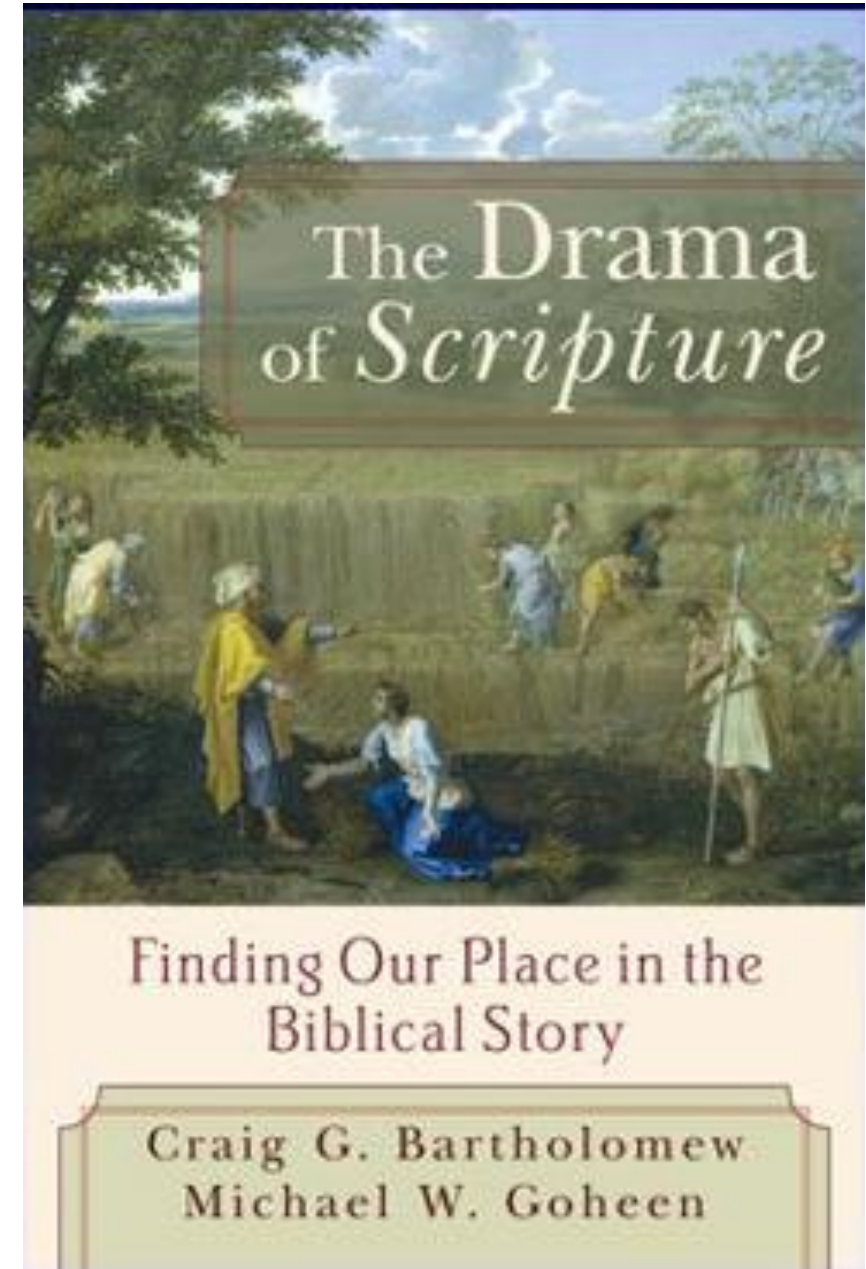


Storyboard Template | Filestage



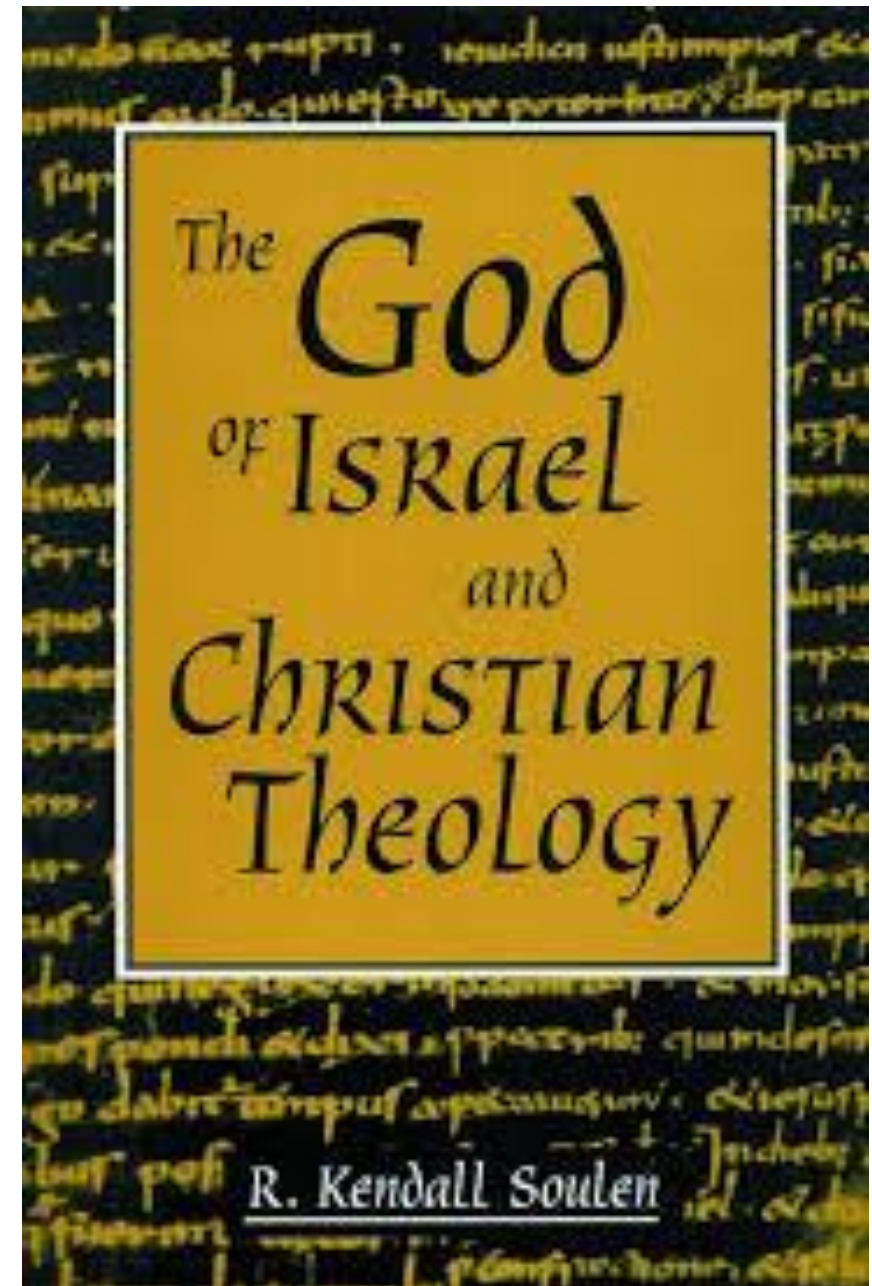
# A Drama in 6 Acts

- Creation
  - God creates the world – humanity the climax
- Fall
  - Humanity sins, rebels against God, goes own way
- Israel
  - God bears with humanity, begins the work of restoration through Abraham and his children, the people of God
- Jesus
  - God sends his own son, the Messiah Jesus, to deal with sin once for all through dying and rising again
- Church
  - The giving of the Holy Spirit renews Israel and includes the nations in the people of God, sent out to renew and restore God's creatures and creation
- New Creation
  - Jesus will return and the consummation of all things will result in new (renewed?) heavens and earth



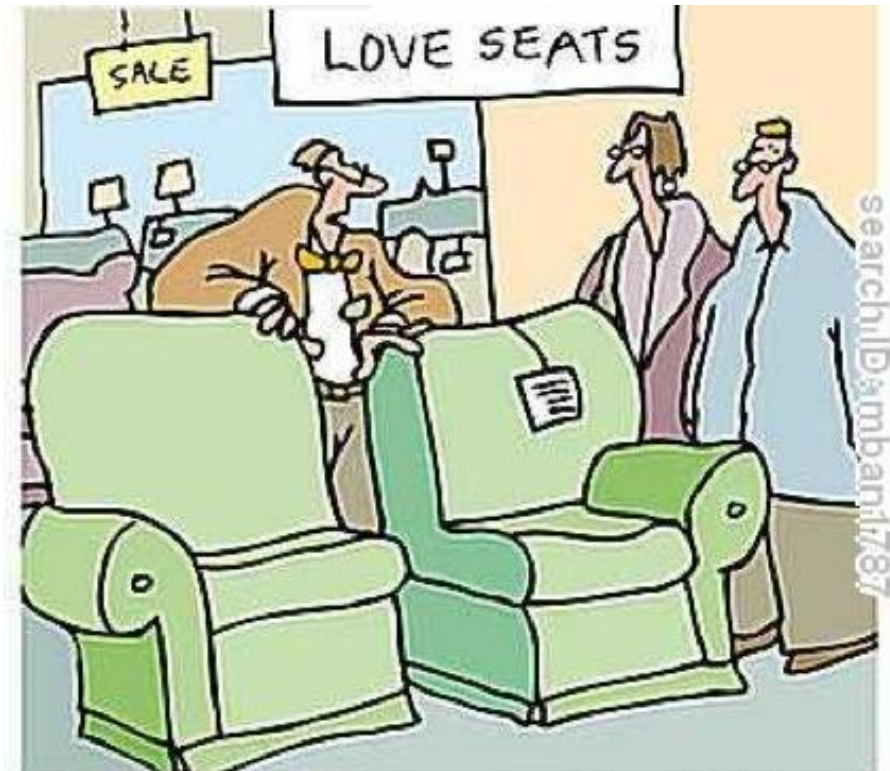
## Soulen's Challenge

- Supersessionism can be structural
- Israel may be included but not central
- The biblical story must be retold around God's irrevocable covenant



# Defining Supersessionism

- *Super* – *sedere/cedere*
- The election of Israel has been revoked and replaced by the Church
- Jewish People, Law, Land and Worship no longer have any theological significance except as pointing to and fulfilled in Christ
- Practice of Judaism by Christians is *mortifera* and anathematised



"This model is very popular with those who aren't really sure what they want."

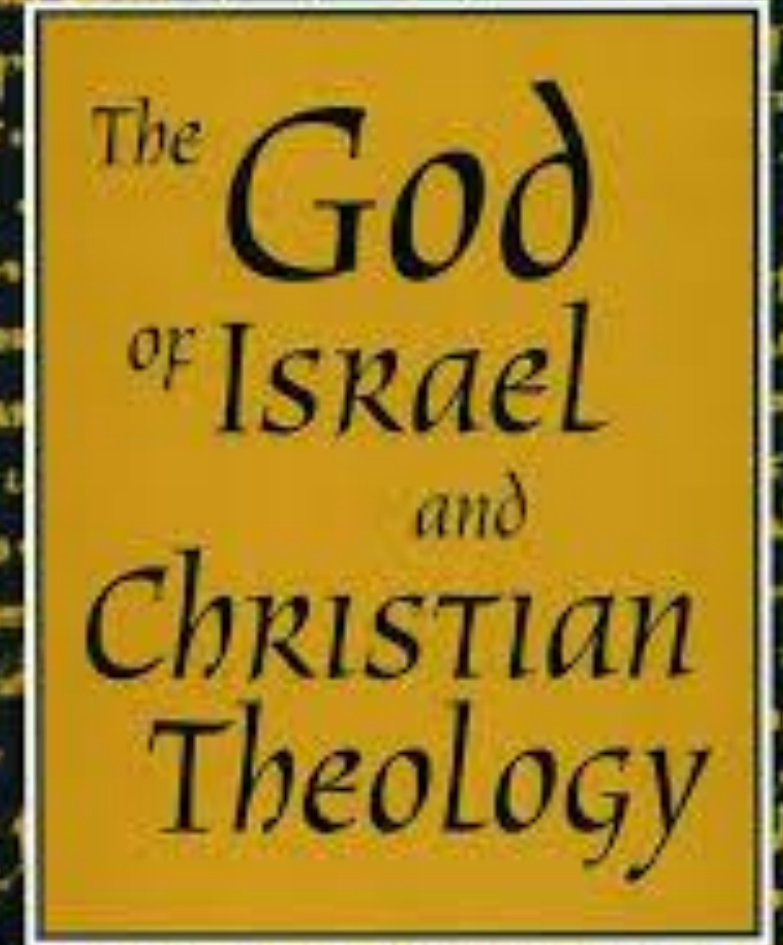
# 3 Types of Supersessionism

- **Punitive supersessionism** – Israel punished for her rejection of Jesus
- **Economic supersessionism** – Israel no longer needed in the purposes of God – no continuing theological significance outside the Church
- **Structural supersessionism** – the Christian reading of the biblical canonical narrative goes from Creation and Fall to Redemption and Consummation omitting the Election of Israel as Blessing to the Nations



# Problems of Supersessionism

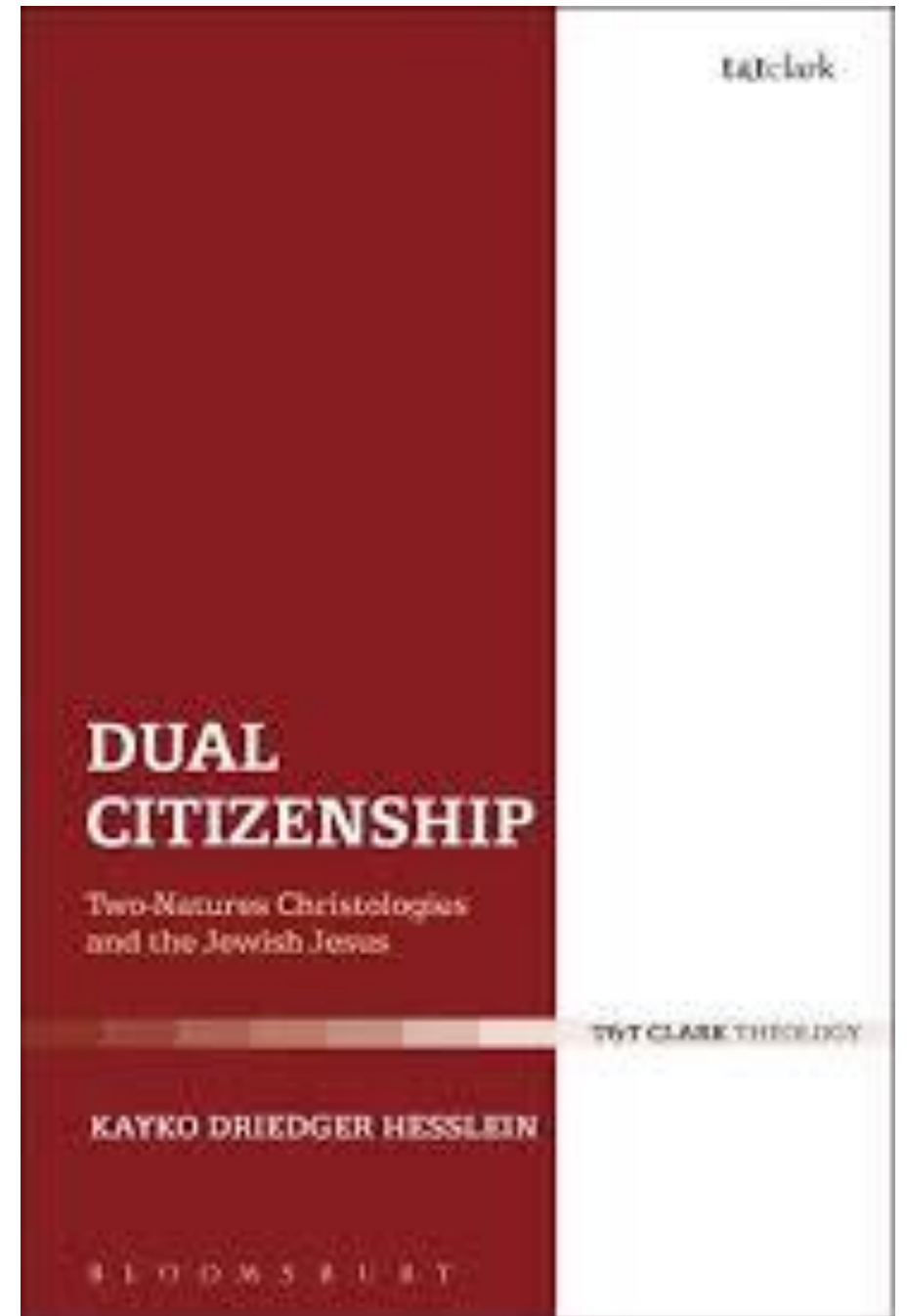
- Spiritualises and evaporates the particular into the universal
- Imports anti-judaism into Christian theology and history
- Fails to do justice to issues of ethnicity and cultural identity
- Denies the ongoing election of Israel into which the nations are grafted
- Goes against the grain of scripture



R. Kendall Soulen

# Consequences

1. Separation of Old and New Covenants
2. Separation of Jesus from His People
3. Separation of Jesus from the history of Israel
4. Separation of the human Jewish Jesus from the Divine Eternal Christ
5. Separation of the Jewish people from the God of Israel



# How to Respond to Supersessionism

- Maintain the ongoing call of Israel (the Jewish people)
- Recognise Yeshua as Messiah of Israel
- Share the Good News of Yeshua with Israel and all Nations
- Repent, receive forgiveness, be reconciled, make restitution
- Rejoice!



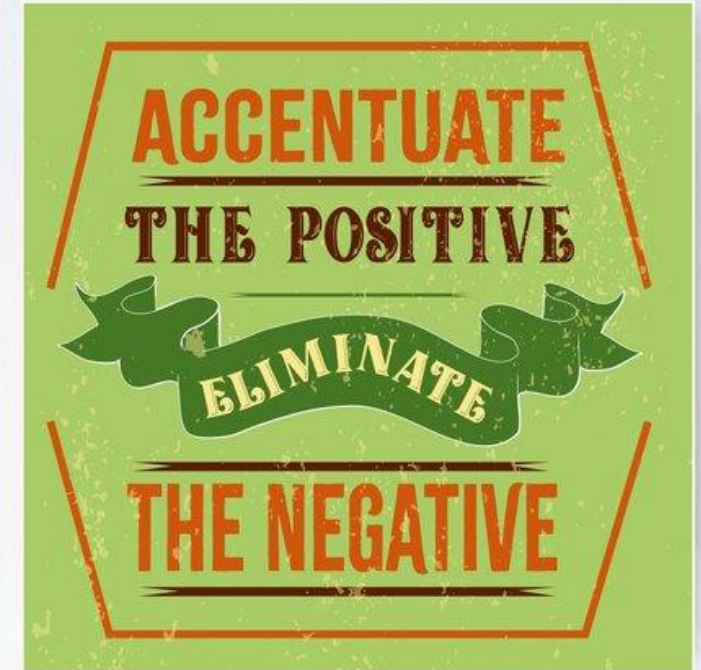
You've got to accentuate the positive  
Eliminate the negative  
Latch on to the affirmative  
Don't mess with Mr. In-Between

You've got to spread joy up to the maximum  
Bring gloom down to the minimum  
Have faith, or pandemonium's  
Liable to walk upon the scene

To illustrate this last remark  
Jonah in the whale, Noah in the ark  
What did they do  
Just when everything looked so dark?

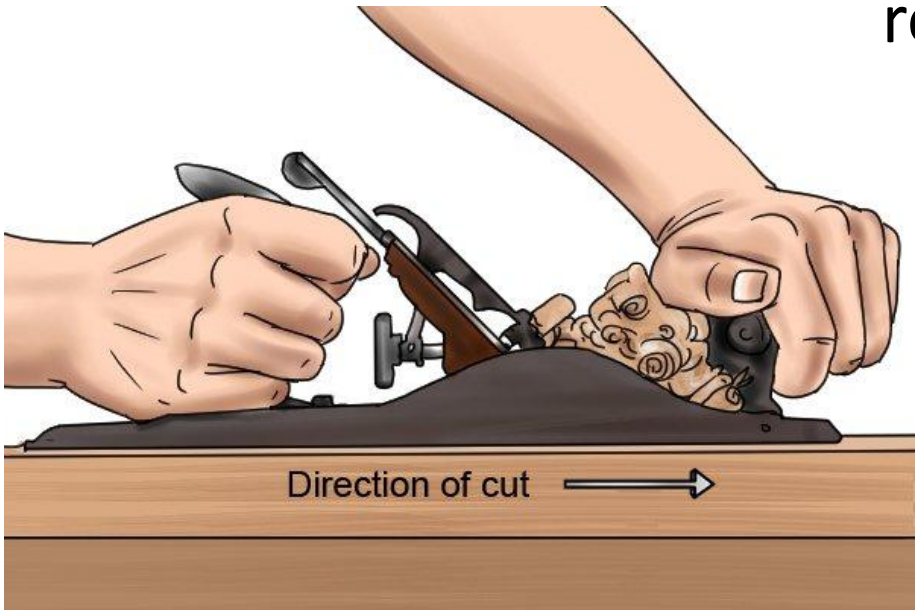
Man, they said we better- Ac-cent-tchu-ate the positive  
E-lim-i-nate the negative - Latch on to the affirmative  
Don't mess with Mr. In-Between  
No, do not mess with Mr. In-Between - Do you hear me?

Oh, listen to me children and, uh, you will hear  
About eliminatin' of the negative and an accent on a positive  
And gather 'round me children if you willin'  
And sit tight while I start reviewin' the attitude of doin' right



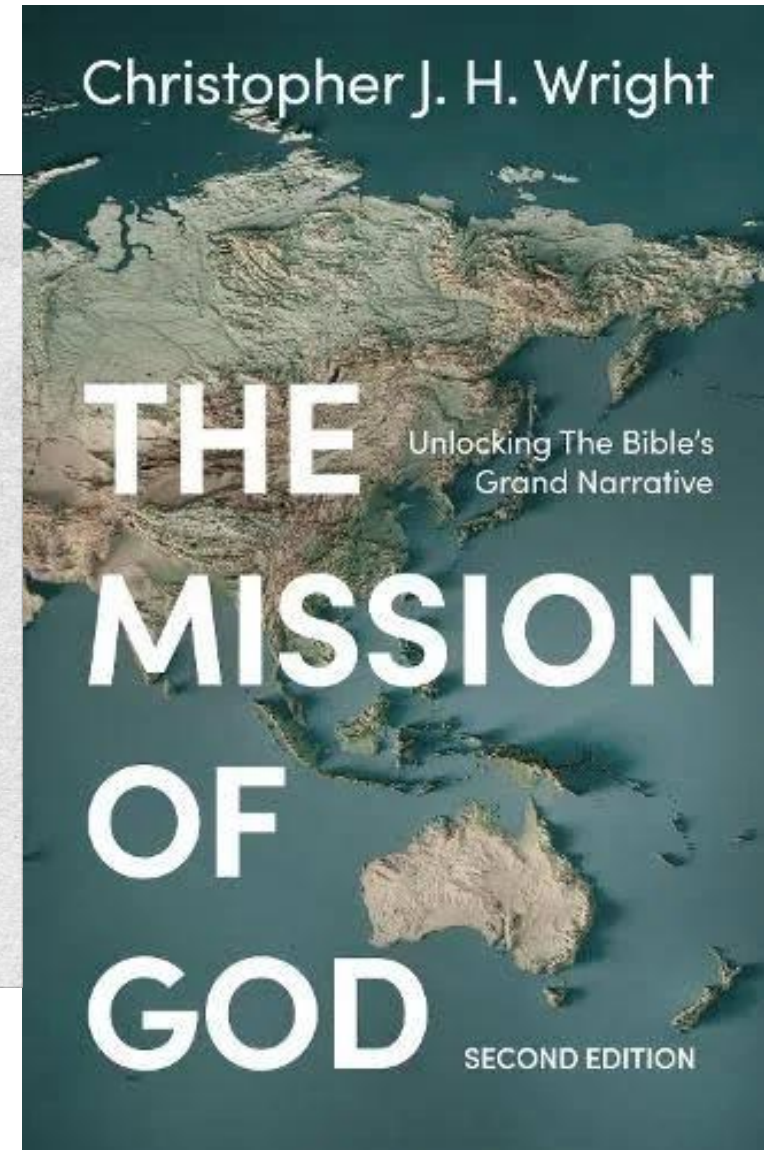
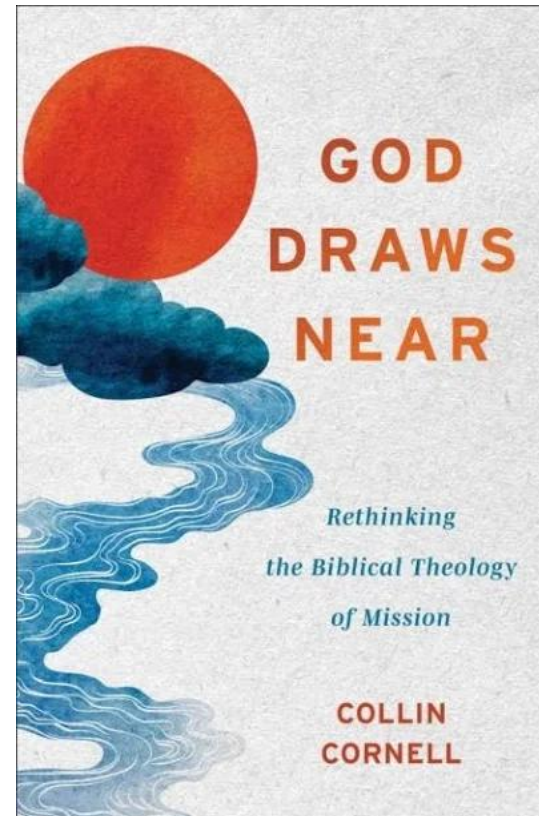
# Our Response – Reading with the grain of Scripture

- Antisemitism
- Anti-Judaism
- Anti-Zionism
- Anti-Israelism
- Love of the Jewish people and all humanity
- Within Judaism – reading with the grain of Scripture
- Within Zionism – Understanding the narratives
- With prophecy – post-supersessionist hermeneutic
- Death and Resurrection of Yeshua – death and resurrection of Israel



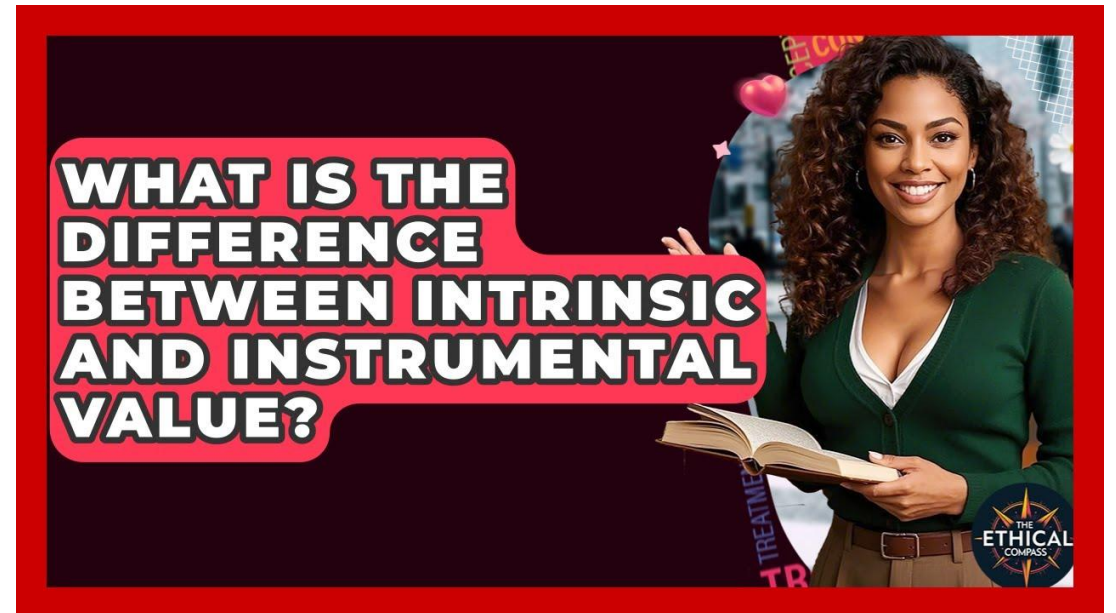
## Wright, Cornell, and Mission

- Wright: mission belongs to the whole Bible
- Cornell: mission is more than repair
- Mission is repair leading to communion with God



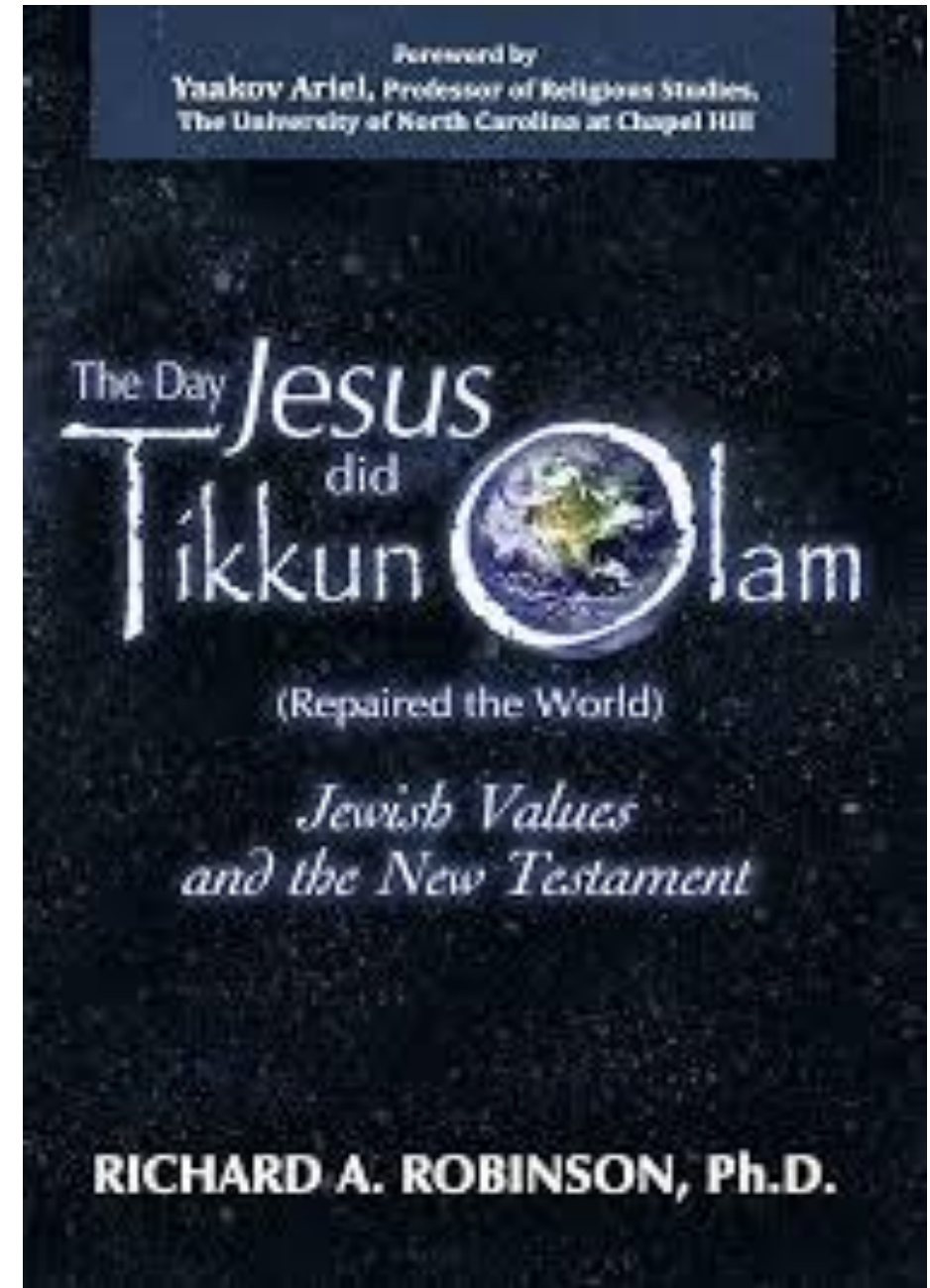
# Instrumental or Intrinsic Israel?

- Instrumental: Israel serves a purpose and fades
- Intrinsic: Israel remains beloved and covenantally central
- This changes how we understand mission to Jews



# Tikkun Olam: Repair and Communion

- Tikkun olam means repair, ordering, justice, restoration
- Repair is necessary but not ultimate
- The goal is covenantal communion



# Covenant as the Shape of Communion

- God draws near as the God of Israel
- Communion does not bypass Abraham, Torah, Israel, or Messiah
- Mission serves God's dwelling with Israel and the nations



# The Mission of God and Humanity

- Mission begins with God, not the Church
- God creates, calls, sends, redeems, and dwells
- Humanity is called to image God and steward creation



# The Mission of Israel and the Nations

- Israel: kingdom of priests, holy nation, bearer of blessing
- Nations: called to humility, gratitude, and solidarity
- The nations are grafted in, not substituted for Israel



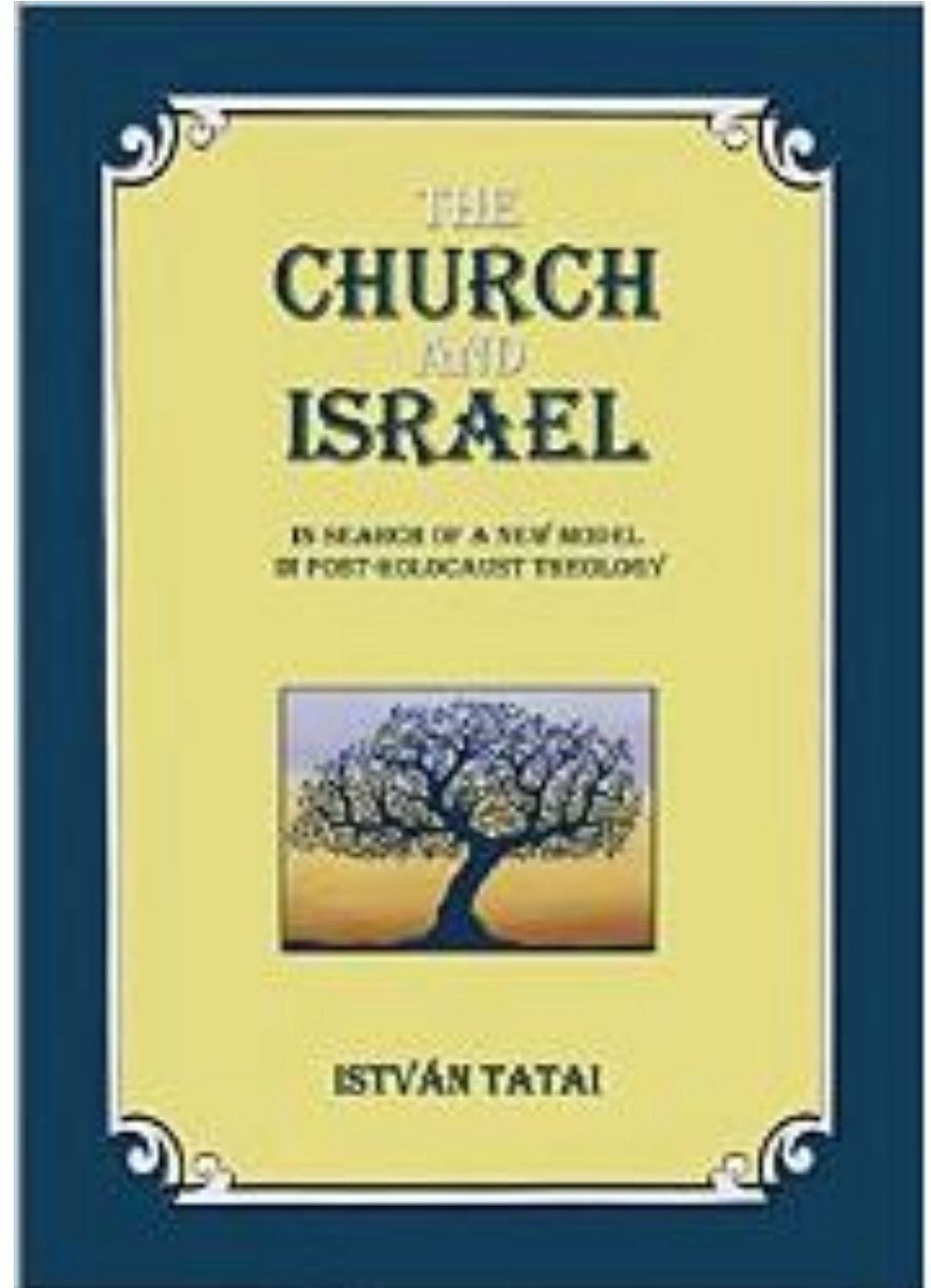
# The Mission of the Church

- The Church proclaims Messiah and disciples the nations
- It is one body, not a replacement Israel
- Unity in Messiah does not erase Jewish and Gentile distinction



## The Mission of Messianic Jews

- Jewish disciples of Yeshua remain Jews
- They witness within Israel and the ekklesia
- They are a living sign of covenantal continuity



Level	Missiological significance
God	Source and telos of mission: creating, blessing, calling, covenanting, sending, redeeming, judging, restoring, and dwelling.
Humanity	Creational vocation to image God, steward creation, cultivate life, and live toward communion with God and neighbour.
Israel	The covenantal people through whom God blesses the nations, reveals his faithfulness, and maintains an ongoing vocation.
Nations	Recipients of Abrahamic blessing, called to humility, gratitude, solidarity, partnership, service, and non-boasting toward Israel.
Church	The reconciled body in Messiah, called to proclaim, disciple, embody the kingdom, and live as differentiated communion.
Messianic Jews	A living sign within Israel and the ekklesia that Jewish covenantal identity and faith in Yeshua belong together.

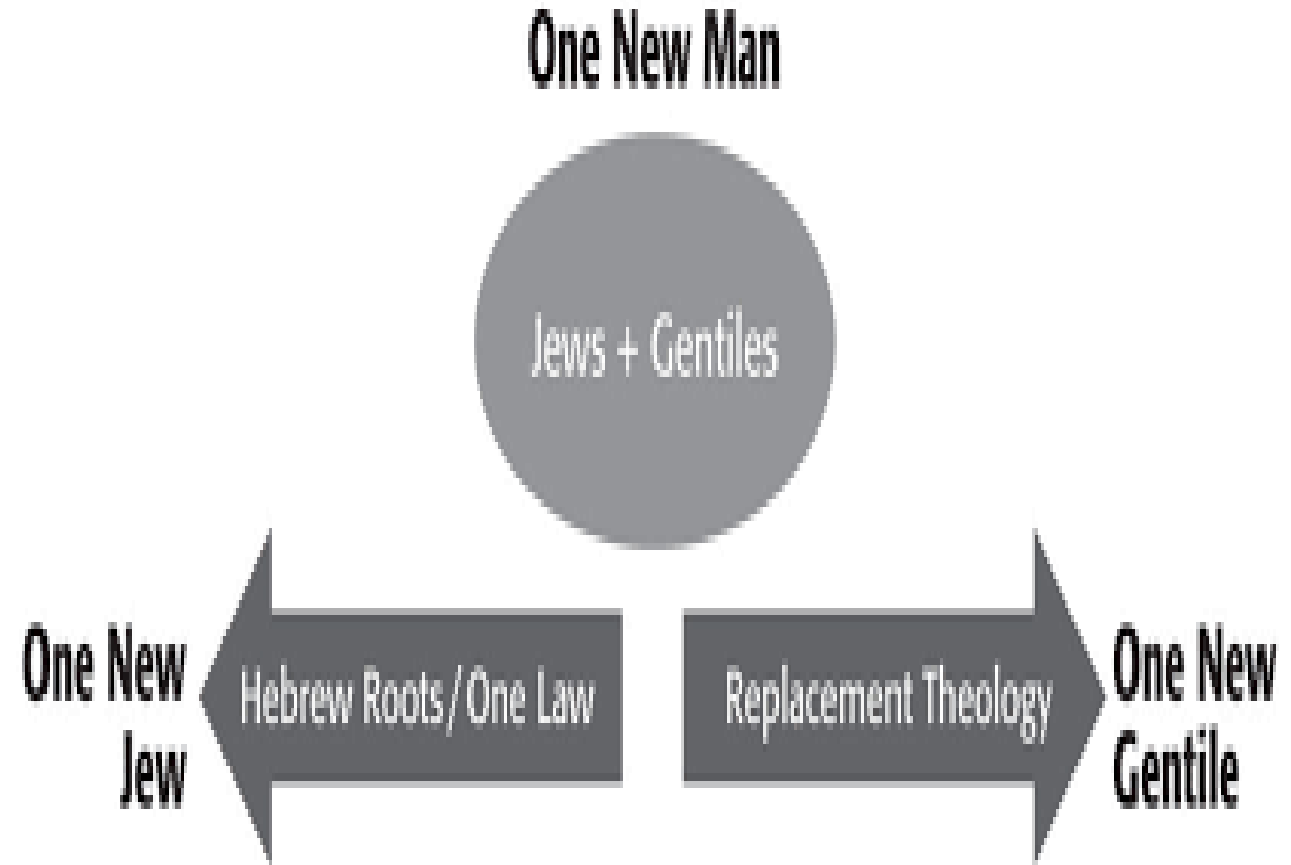
## Romans 9–11

- Israel's gifts and calling are irrevocable
- Gentiles are grafted into Israel's olive tree
- “Do not boast over the branches”



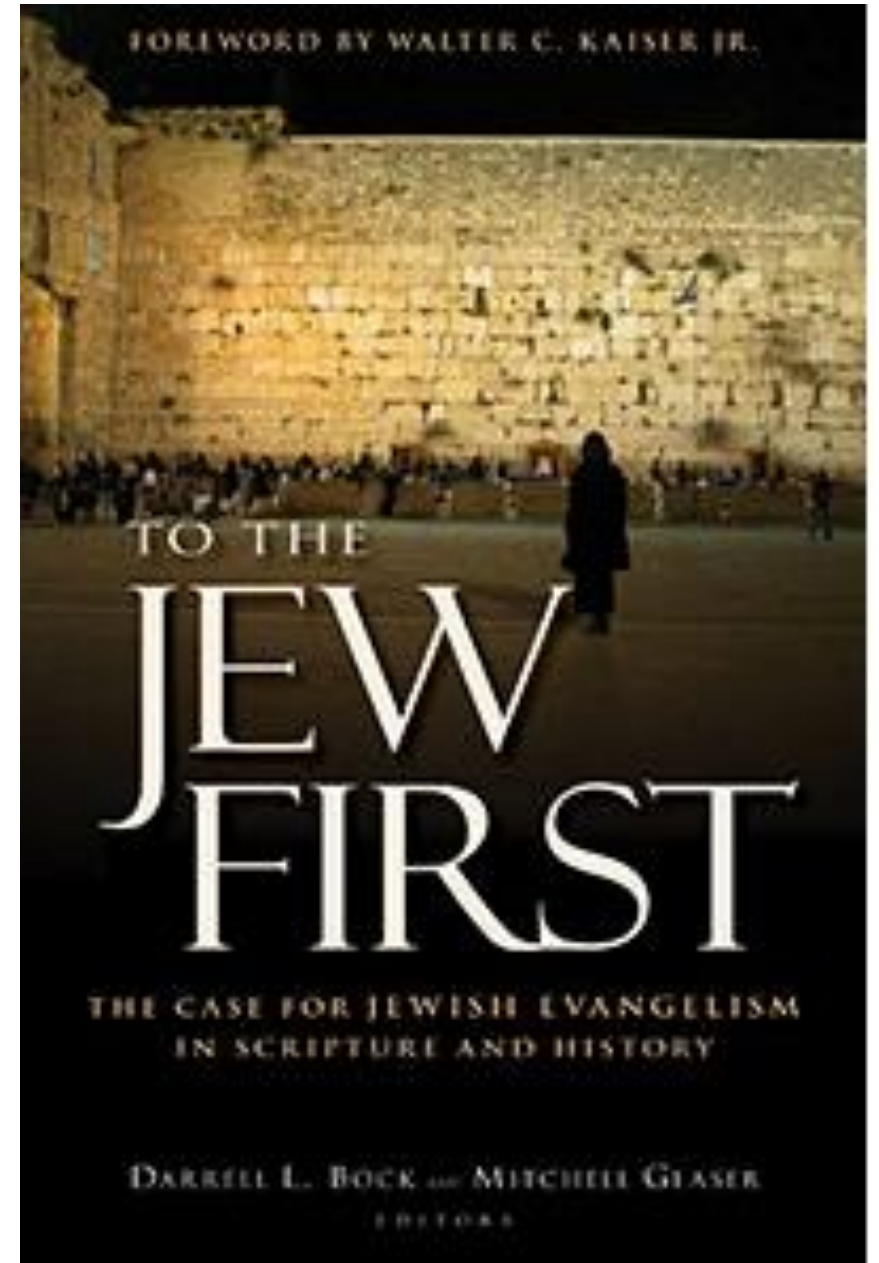
## Ephesians 2

- One new humanity is not a third race
- Jews and Gentiles are reconciled as two
- Peace in Messiah preserves differentiated unity



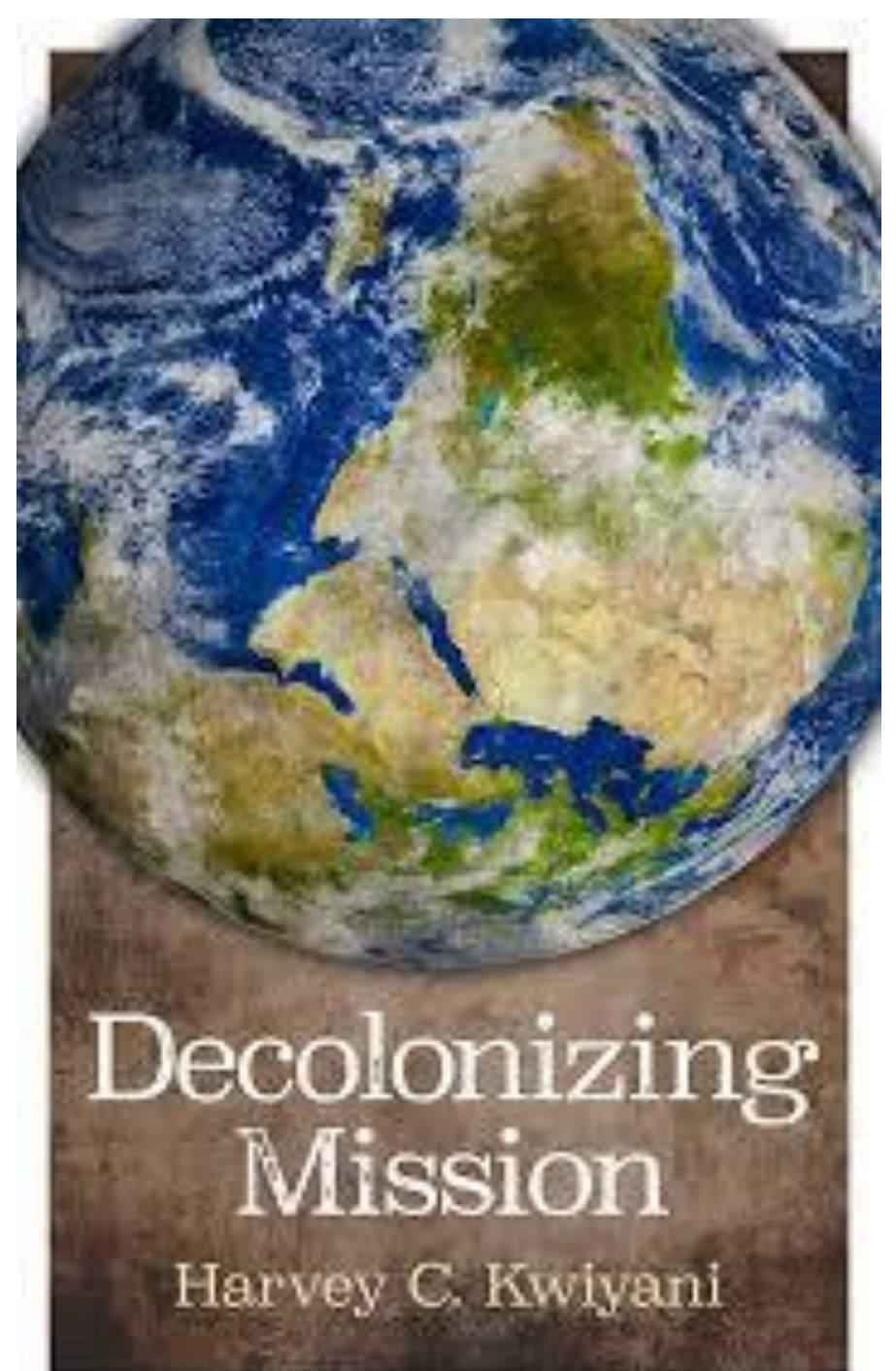
# Evangelism Reconfigured

- Not coercion
- Not erasure
- Not triumphalism
- Witness to Yeshua within Israel's continuing covenant



## Humility and Repentance

- Mission must reckon with anti-Judaism and the Shoah
- Postcolonial critique exposes mission tied to power
- The gospel does not need empire or the erasure of Israel



## Discipleship within Jewish Life

- Jewish believers should not be asked to abandon Jewish life
- Churches should support Messianic Jewish communities
- Jewish covenantal identity and faith in Yeshua belong together





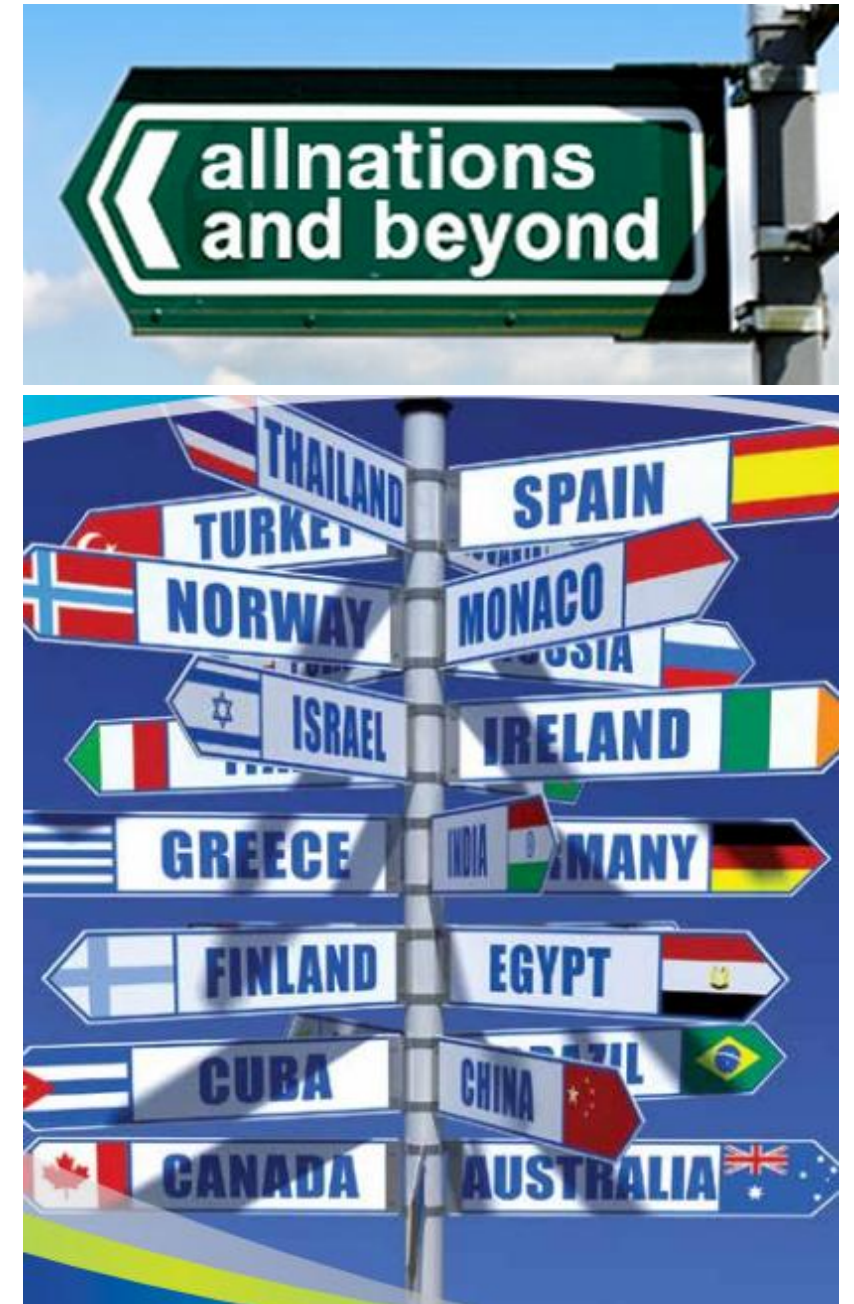
# Conclusion

- From replacement to participation
- From domination to humility
- From repair alone to covenantal communion



## Summary

The nations are included in Israel's covenantal story through Messiah, and Jewish disciples of Yeshua stand as living signs of the reconciliation still promised, still contested, and still awaited.



# Arrival in Israel – October 7 2023

