

Replacing replacement theology: is the church the “New” Israel?

For many, many, many years . . . centuries, to be more precise, believers were taught that there is a stark contrast between “the Church” and “Israel.” “Israel” was seen as the “rebellious,” “law-bound,” “old,” “outdated,” “Jewish-other” while the “Church” was seen as the “sanctified,” “free,” “mostly-Gentile,” “new,” “grace-based” non-religion, though “religion” it was and has been. This dichotomy has created a needless split between most of Judaism and modern Christianity.

What will be written on the gates in New Jerusalem?

What will New Jerusalem look like?

One day, the Holy City, a.k.a. the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven. *Voilà!* All things made new!

John, the author of Revelation, describes this:

Jerusalem will have the **glory** of God ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Jerusalem will be like a radiant precious stone like **██████████** ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Jerusalem will be **██████████** like crystal ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Will it have the famed “streets of **gold**?” Of course! *You can find that in [Revelation 21:21](#).*

Jerusalem will also have a **great, high wall** made of around it ([Rev.21:12, 14](#)) with **12 gates** and **12 angels** above the gates. The Holy City will be laid out as a square shape ([Rev.21:16](#)) and is made of pure **gold**, “clear as glass” ([Rev.21:18](#)). Besides the gates, the city wall will have 12 foundations. On each of those will be written the names of the 12 apostles/emissaries of Yeshua (Jesus).

These believers made a huge evangelical impact on the world during their lifetimes and history shall never forgotten their contribution.

The foundations of the city wall will reflect the beauty of their devotion, for in order, the foundations will be made of , **sapphire**, , **emerald**, **sardonyx**, **carnelian**, , , **jacinth**, and ([Rev.21:19-20](#)).

But history has more-than-occasionally forgotten the contribution of some very important others. Which leads to this question:

What is so special about the gates?

The gates are 12 pearls, *dare I say, of great price* – each gate from a single ([Rev.21:21](#)). There are 3 gates per cardinal direction: north, south, east, west ([Rev.21:13](#)).



Each gate will be inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel ([Rev. 21:12](#)).

Wait? Doesn't traditional Christianity say that the 12 tribes have been basically replaced by the 12 apostles?

Doesn't mainstream theology teach that the "New" Testament is far more relevant to us today than the contents of the "Old"?

Isn't it taught in most seminaries that the "Church" has replaced the Jews as the chosen people?

Sadly, the answer is, "yes" . . . despite the flawed theology.

Supersessionism is (*lamentably*) alive and well. Antisemitism flourishes due to these types of errant doctrines.

Will the gates be etched with the names of Israel's tribes as though it were some type of politically correct memorial to days gone by?

Or is there a greater meaning here?

The God of the Bible is the God of ISRAEL

An honest hermeneutic (interpretation) must allow Scripture to speak, not impose an agenda on the Biblical text.

We must ask questions. What is Scripture saying to us? What is it that the Eternal One wants us to glean?

How have we injected our own biases into the text?

Are we reading from a posture of humility or from the lens of an entitlement culture?

Do we recognize that the God of the Bible is the God of *Israel*?

In regards to those 12 gates, we can ask a very simple question:

What is the function of a gate? Does it not “allow for”, or “inhibit” as the case may be, an entrance?

Would the church even have a prayer if it were not for God’s chosen people and the revelation of God entrusted to them?

Could the church even know a Savior if it were not for the prophetic words of the Hebrew Scriptures?

The gates allow for all to come in who have accepted and love our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus!).

The names of the 12 tribes of *B’nei-Yisrael*, the house of Israel, will be forever etched on the eternal gates.

No longer shall their names be diminished, forgotten, or

tossed aside.

Their heads shall be lifted up in redemption.

We must pray for Israel, for those who do not yet know that Messiah has come!

*Lift up your heads, O gates,
and be lifted up, you everlasting doors:
that the King of glory may come in.*

“Who is this King of glory?”

ADONAI strong and mighty,

ADONAI mighty in battle!

*Lift up your heads, O gates,
and lift them up, you everlasting doors:
that the King of glory may come in.*

“Who is this King of glory?”

ADONAI-TZVA’OT—He is the King of glory! Selah

Psalm 24:7-10 TLV (emphasis added)

The foundations of the wall are bound by the apostolic witness of the first believers, who themselves kept the very Jewish (and of course, Biblical) practices of keeping the Sabbath day holy, participating in the *moedim* (Biblical feast days), and honoring the **entirety of the Scriptures** available to them which at that time included most prominently the *Torah*.

The first believers, Jew and Gentile alike, had joined themselves to a *Jewish* movement founded by a Jewish Rabbi who also happens to be the Messiah – the Promised One, Yeshua haMashiach (Jesus the Christ), who came to save all of Israel, both the native born Israeli and the grafted in.

We must re-evaluate our

relationship to Israel

Yesterday was Holocaust Remembrance Day. It coincided this year with Tu B'Shevat, a tree planting day in Israel.

For too much of history, the church as a whole has held a very poor witness toward the Jewish people.

Some orthodox Jewish rabbis have concluded that the Holocaust was a judgment of *Christians* – demonstrating that the Christian Gospel fails the Jew due to the church's inaction and willingness to look the other way as Jewish lives were lost to Hitler's evil monstrosities.

Even today, many Christians seem indifferent to the Jewish homeland despite the miracle that is modern day Israel.

We are living in a time when prophecies are constantly being fulfilled and the favor of Adonai continues to rest upon His people, Israel.

As believers, we must take up the task of a course correction!

We need to re-evaluate our frame of reference and **pastors must commit to preaching *accurately* from the entirety of Scripture.**

The enemy, *ha-satan*, has worked diligently to sow confusion among believers and has been successful.

Many believers today are **incredibly distanced** from the Truth, and don't realize it. It is no coincidence that the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath Day observance to Sundays, that new liturgical seasons were invented, and the Biblical feast days were **abandoned** in favor of manmade celebrations that focus on egg-laying rabbits and decorated evergreen trees. All of these **distractions** have lured the church as a whole away from the very Gospel we want to share!

Even Bible Studies tend to focus on what the apostles

achieved, and would likely highlight their place in the New Jerusalem, but so many gloss right over the fact that **united within the design of the city wall will also be the heritage of the twelve tribes of Israel.**

The New Jerusalem shows us the continuity from Old to New Testament.

All of the confusion that the devil has sown will be forever defeated. Continuity, unity, and justice will all be restored.

The gates of the enemy shall be forever torn down and the New Jerusalem gates will gleam in all their glorified splendor. Won't it be amazing?!

Hope for Israel

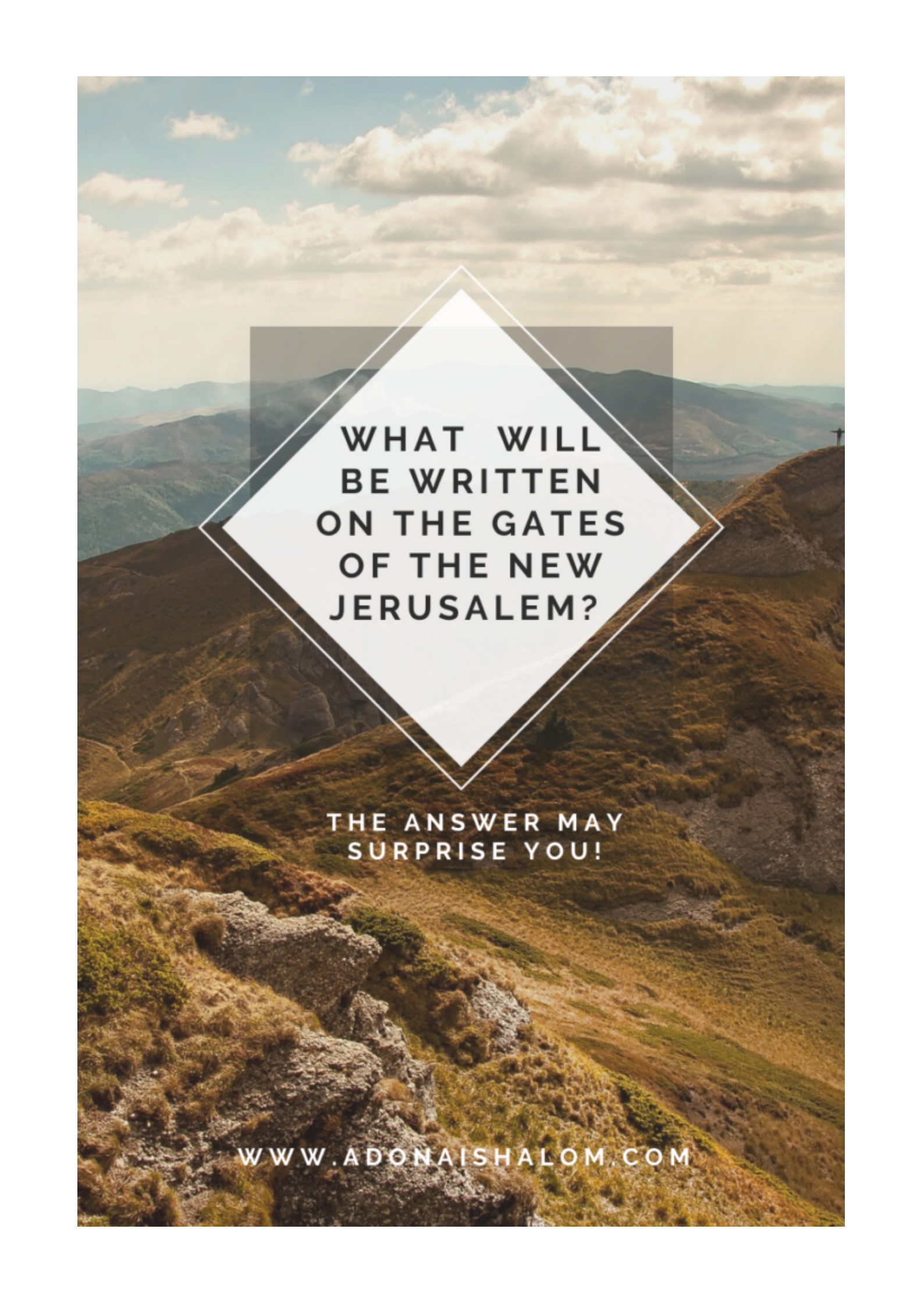
Lift up your heads, O gates!

For the King of Glory shall come in, shall restore all things, and His people shall forever live together with the Lord Most High in the New Jerusalem!

The New Jerusalem will be a beautiful place! Whenever you feel discouraged, remember one day all things will be made new!

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