

## Did the Church replace Israel? The foundation of the Church and Israel

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*This paper presents the relationship between the establishment of the Church and Israel. The author tries to answer a question that is important for contemporary theology: Did the Church replace Israel? The paper also poses another question that correlates with the first: Were the chosen people of the Old Testament “disinherited” upon the foundation of the Ecclesia? Of fundamental importance for understanding the Church–Israel relations is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, mainly its Declaration on the relations of the Church with non-Christian religions *Nostra aetate* (No. 4). It treats these relations from the history of salvation perspective, indicating a continuum between God’s old and new people. The document does not specify the mutual reference or deals with the soteriological status of the people of Old Covenant. In order to reveal the Church’s attitude to Israel, the author examined Jesus’ reference to the Torah and the key events in the work of the Church foundation: constituting of the Twelve and establishing of the Eucharist. They provide grounds for the claim that the Church is the Israel of the ultimate times. Regarding the Church-Israel relations from the perspective of the history of salvation provides the conclusion that God did not reject Israel, nor did He cancel its mission of the tradent of the revelation. The people of the Old Testament remained the carrier of what was fulfilled in Jesus Christ in the economy of salvation. Israel’s “disinheritance” did not occur upon the Ecclesia foundation.*

**Key words:** *Church and Israel, dialogue of the Roman Catholic Church with Judaism, foundation of the Church, history of salvation.*

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## Introduction

The pope's visits to the Greater Synagogue in Rome no longer surprise anyone, although they attract great interest not only among Catholics but also throughout the Christian world and among Jews. John Paul II was the first pope to visit it, which he did on 13 April 1986. Benedict XVI paid a visit there twenty-four years later, on 17 January 2010. Francis did the same six years later, on 17 January 2017. Other, similar meetings of the bishop of Rome with the Jewish community are widely discussed by social life commentators. It is notable that those are not only courtesy, symbolic or brotherly visits, but they also have an impact on the theological understanding of the Catholic Church with Judaism. No one needs convincing that it is unique compared to the other inter-religion dialogues. Christianity – as Francis reminds us – has Jewish roots and it cannot be understood without them<sup>1</sup>. This relation is not easy to explain from the theological perspective due to many erroneous biblical interpretations and polemic approaches<sup>2</sup>. It seems to be the most appropriate to present it with respect to the economy of Divine Revelation and the correlating economy of salvation<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, these obstacles are amplified by the historical resentments and mutual accusations, stereotypes and antagonisms, and mainly by the Shoah – the Jewish holocaust by Nazi Germany, aided by its allies (1933-1945)<sup>4</sup>. According to Joseph Ratzinger, the holocaust cannot be the single event in considering the Church's relation with Israel. The main reasons are theological. The main issue is the identity of Christianity, which is founded on the unity of the Old and New Testament. Joseph Ratzinger claims that it implies an “internal kinship” between the Church and Israel<sup>5</sup>.

The objective of this paper is to concisely present the relationship between the foundation of the Church and Israel, which will help to answer a question which is essential in theology: Did the Church replace Israel or, as Gerhard

<sup>1</sup> FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium. Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World* (24.11.2013), Rome, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013, 247.

<sup>2</sup> Łukasz KAMYKOWSKI, *Obraz Izraela i Żydów w myśli chrześcijańskiej. I. Historia*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II w Krakowie, 2017; Id., *Izrael i jego „misterium” w komentarzach do Listu do Rzymian św. Tomasza z Akwinu i Marcina Lutra, Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny*, 73 (2020) 3, 219-239.

<sup>3</sup> The author understands the economy of Salvation and the Divine plan of Revelation, which is accomplished as the history of Revelation. Therefore, since God always reveals Himself to redeem, there is a close relationship between the history of Revelation and the history of Salvation (cf. Marian RUSECKI, *Traktat o Objawieniu*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Księży Sercanów 2007, 125-133).

<sup>4</sup> Waldemar CHROSTOWSKI, *Na drogach dialogu Kościoła z Żydami i judaizmem*, *Pedagogia Christiana*, 26 (2010) 2, 73-75; Łukasz KAMYKOWSKI, *Obraz Izraela i Żydów w myśli chrześcijańskiej. II. Perspektywy*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II w Krakowie, 2019, 66-69.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph RATZINGER, *Die Vielfalt der Religionen und der Eine Bund*, Hagen, Urfeld 1998, 13-16.

Lohfink asks: Was Israel “disinherited”, as seen from the history of salvation perspective, upon the Church foundation?<sup>6</sup> This issue is not new, but it will be discussed in the context of modern theological research and official Ecclesial documents. The author hopes that the study will help to consolidate the conviction on the “internal kinship” between the Ecclesia and Israel.

### *1. Teachings of the Second Vatican Council as the foundation for an understanding of the Church-Israel relationship*

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council, mainly its declaration on the relationship of the Church with non-Christian religions *Nostra aetate* (No. 4) and the dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* (No. 16), radically changed the description and theological understanding of the Church-Israel relations. According to John Paul II, it became the turning point in the relations between the Catholic Church and Judaism, and individual Jews, an epoch-making event on the road to overcoming the old resentments, hatred and all manifestations of anti-Semitism, as well as to recognising the brotherhood in faith<sup>7</sup>. Article IV of the declaration *Nostra aetate* resulted in establishing the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews<sup>8</sup> by Paul VI on 22 October 1974 and in the initiation of the official dialogue of the Church with Judaism<sup>9</sup> and scientific research into Judaism<sup>10</sup>.

The Council Fathers stated that when one explains the mystery of the Ecclesia, one cannot disregard the unique bond and the spiritual heritage which connects it with the people of the Old Covenant. The Church, which in these documents is referred to as God’s new people, claims that the beginnings of its faith and ordination in Christ are in the faith and choosing of Abraham, as well as other patriarchs, Moses and prophets. It also sees the mystic sign of the Church’s salvation in the history of freeing Israel from captivity as shown in the

<sup>6</sup> Gerhard LOHFINK, *Jesus von Nazaret. Was er wollte, wer er war*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 2011, 273-274.

<sup>7</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *The address delivered in the Greater Synagogue in Rome* (Rome, 13.04.1986).

<sup>8</sup> Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews issued four important documents: *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate (n. 4)* (Rome, 1.12.1974); *Notes on the correct way to present Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church* (Rome, 24.06.1985); *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (Rome, 16.03.1998); *The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable (Rom 11:29). A Reflection on Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations on the Occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of “Nostra aetate” (No. 4)* (Rome, 10.12.2015).

<sup>9</sup> Chrostowski, *Na drogach dialogu...*, 73-75; Kamykowski, *Obraz Izraela i Żydów...*, 31-65; Grzegorz IGNATOWSKI, *Kościół i Synagoga. O dialogu chrześcijańsko-żydowskim z nadzieją*, Warszawa, 2000, 13-35.

<sup>10</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission issued a document: *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (Rome, 24.05.2001).

Old Testament. It received the revelation given in the Old Testament through the chosen people of the Old Covenant. It is also important what Apostle Paul reminds us in the Letter to Romans: although Israel did not accept salvation from Jesus Christ, “it was they who were adopted as children, the glory was theirs and the covenants; to them were given the Law and the worship of God and the promises. To them belong the fathers and out of them, so far as physical descent is concerned, came Christ” (cf. Rom. 9, 4-5). The apostles – the foundation and pillars of the Church – were Jews, as were many of the first Christians, who preached the revelation of salvation in Jesus Christ<sup>11</sup>.

The authors of the declaration *Nostra aetate* and the constitution *Lumen gentium* point out that rejection of the Gospel by a majority of the chosen people, or even fighting it openly, did not make God turn away from Israel. Jews are still loved by God for the sake of their ancestors. There is no change of mind on God’s part about the gifts He had made or of His choice (cf. Rom. 11, 28-29). It was stressed that no inherited or collective blame for the torture and death of Jesus can be attributed to the Jews as a nation<sup>12</sup>. Especially there is no theological justification for any discrimination against Jews or their persecution. According to another, extremely important claim in *Nostra aetate*, establishing the Church as God’s new people does not mean that Israel was rejected or cursed by God. This conviction of the Council Fathers has its grounds in the Holy Scripture.

The document is full of hope for reconciliation and unification of the Church with Israel. Through the cross, Christ reconciled Jews and all nations, and even more – He made them one entity (cf. Eph 2, 14-16). Therefore, the Ecclesia awaits a day, known only to God, when this universal communion comes true (cf. Isa. 66, 23; Ps. 65, 4; Rom. 11, 11-32).

Declaration *Nostra aetate* can be regarded as the foundation for an understanding of the Church-Israel relationship. It emphasises the elements connecting the people of the Old Testament with God’s new people. Moreover, it wishes to overcome the negative perception of Jews by Christians once and for all, by referring to theological arguments. It approaches the Church-Israel relations from the historico-redemptive perspective, pointing to the continuum between God’s old and new people. It does not specify the mutual relations or deals with the soteriological status of the people of Old Covenant. However, it has a breakthrough and epoch-making importance for explaining the relation in question.

<sup>11</sup> Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *The Gifts and the Calling of God...*, 14; Chrostowski, *Na drogach dialogu...*, 65-65.

<sup>12</sup> Chrostowski, *Na drogach dialogu...*, 71-72.

## 2. *Jesus and the Torah*

The subject matter outlined in the introduction will be elaborated on by examining Jesus' attitude to the Torah. This seems reasonable because Israel saw its redemption in obedience to the Law imparted by God – the Creator, Saviour and eschatological Judge. The Torah and the Decalogue included in it is God's redemptive gift to His people, whom He freed from the Egyptian captivity and to whom He sacrificed His life<sup>13</sup>. Israel's faith "collided" with Jesus' claims, presenting Himself as God's Son, who fulfils the Torah, because it is in Him (in His words and deeds) that the final God's redemption starts<sup>14</sup>. Jesus' reference to the Law is essential in the relation between the Church and Israel.

In order to show Jesus' convictions, one has to observe and stress that, being a Jew, Jesus moved within the space of the Israeli community, He was a part of it. He knew perfectly well that His nation saw the Torah as the source of the universal rules of the social order. He relied on the rules, norms and rituals provided by the Law. In His teaching, He used the Old Testament tradition to show Israel's social order in a new eschatological dimension<sup>15</sup>. On the one hand, Jesus was a Jew of His times, being under the influence of the whole Israeli tradition, but on the other – according to the Christian faith – He is the Messiah, the true God. Considering the first premise, one can say that Jesus continues the history of people of the Old Covenant, whereas the other shows breaking up with the continuity of the history, as He fulfils Israel's mission and expectations and even overcomes and exceeds it in an eschatological manner<sup>16</sup>.

It says in Matthew's Gospel that one of the Pharisees asked Jesus about the greatest commandment of the Law (Mt 22, 34-36). In reply, he heard:

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets too." (Matt. 22, 37-40).

In this way, Jesus linked two commandments: to love God from the *Book of Deuteronomy* (6, 4) to love one's neighbour from the *Book of Leviticus* (19, 17-18)<sup>17</sup>. The first is part of the prayer *Hear, Israel*, which reminds that only Jeho-

<sup>13</sup> Gerhard LOHFINK, *Braucht Gott die Kirche? Zur Theologie des Volkes Gottes*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1998, 98-115.

<sup>14</sup> Waldemar CHROSTOWSKI, Kościół a Izrael, *Collectanea Theologica*, 73 (2003) 1, 74-78; Hugolin LANGKAMMER, *Stary Testament odczytany na nowo. Wprowadzenie. Treść teologiczna. Etos*, Lublin, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1992, 263-265.

<sup>15</sup> Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?...*, 198-199.

<sup>16</sup> Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *The Gifts and the Calling of God...*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Hugolin LANGKAMMER, *Etyka Nowego Testamentu. „Jeśli chcesz wejść do królestwa Bożego”*, Wrocław, Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej, 1995, 112-119; Franciszek DRĄCZKOWSKI, *Miłość syntezą chrześcijaństwa*, Lublin, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1991, 95-96.

vah must be worshipped and made the centre of one's existence, and the other is part of the everyday sanctity law and applies to members of God's people, brothers and sisters in the faith of Israel. This love also embraces settled foreigners and strangers, who can count on respect and support (Lev. 19, 33-34), and even enemies (Ex. 23, 4-5). It must be emphasised that Jesus' utterance does not contradict the Law. He does not establish "a new Torah", but preaches within its framework<sup>18</sup>.

Jesus' attitude to the Torah is shown in the antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matt. 5, 21-48). The six theses, a reminder of the Law given to Israel by God on Mount Sinai, are supplemented with antitheses: "But I say this to you". The first concerns killing someone, the second – adultery, the third – divorce, the fourth – an oath, the fifth – revenge, the sixth – loving one's enemies. Although the theses themselves were obvious and beyond dispute for every member of God's people, Jesus provided a provoking interpretation, oriented towards discovering the roots of God's commandments and showing their deep sense in the perspective of the commandment to love God and one's neighbour. Jesus has the good of man and man's salvation in mind. He does not preach against the Law, but against pure legalism, which distorts the Law<sup>19</sup>. In this case, He also does not abolish the Torah, He does not establish a new Decalogue. Although He uses the legal phrases in His antitheses, He does not do it to establish a new Law, but to shake those who listen to Him and to reveal the true will of God<sup>20</sup>.

When Jesus comes to the world, God's rule over the world is ultimately revealed, i.e. the first and the most important commandment, of prime importance in the Law, fulfils itself. Jesus' conduct shows that the Torah remains for Him a permanent point of reference in His teaching and mission<sup>21</sup>. This is confirmed in two important texts. He explains in the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. In truth, I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved. Therefore, anyone who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but the person who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 5, 17-19). A similar explanation is provided in the Epistle to the Romans: "Are we saying that the Law has been made pointless by faith? Out of the question; we are placing the Law on its true footing." (3, 31). Gerhard Lohfink points out

<sup>18</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret...*, 275-278; Id., *Braucht Gott die Kirche?...*, 153-154.

<sup>19</sup> Joachim GNILKA, *Jesus von Nazaret. Botschaft und Geschichte*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1990, 213-225.

<sup>20</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret...*, 285-292.

<sup>21</sup> Łukasz KAMYKOWSKI, „Cały Izrael”. *Ku katolickiej wizji Izraela i Żydów*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej w Krakowie, 1996, 79-93.

that Jesus does not contradict the Torah, but He preaches within its framework, putting the commandment to love God and one's neighbour at the prominent position and preaching His kingdom. He does not abolish the Torah, does not replace it with a new one, but provides its authoritative interpretation. He finds a primaeval, creative will of God arising from His universal rule, first in Israel and through it in all peoples. Therefore, Jesus is not a "new Lawgiver" and the Sermon on the Mount is not "a new Torah". He preached the Law, taught how to fulfil it in the perspective of worshipping the one God and following His will. Jesus fulfilled the Torah with all His life and He renewed it in Himself. He can be called a definitive interpreter of the Law. Therefore, considering Jesus' teaching, one can ascertain that no part of the Torah was rejected by Him<sup>22</sup>.

If the Founder of the Church did not abolish the Torah, then the Ecclesia can never give it up, but it should interpret it as guided by Jesus, subjecting it to God's rule and will. Therefore, the people of the Old Covenant, who is the tradent of the Law, cannot be replaced by a new one, as this would repeal the Torah. Jesus Christ's Church does not replace Israel in the history of redemption, but it is its continuation, another stage in this history. For this reason, it is justified to call it Israel of the ultimate time.

### *3. The Church – Israel of the ultimate time*

The full and ultimate revelation of God in Jesus Christ starts the mission era – the ultimate times. God's kingdom, foretold by prophets, becomes visible in Jesus' words and deeds. The future, awaited by Israel, has come. To have a part in it, God's people of the Old Covenant have to believe in "the new", personalised in Jesus Christ, and to convert, by accepting the new social order. The coming of God's kingdom is the main motif of Jesus' teaching. He proclaims God's universal rule (Mark 1, 15). It must be understood as a process of ultimate gathering of God's people, i.e. an Ecclesia-forming gathering<sup>23</sup>. This proclamation, which is, so to speak, a summary of Jesus' whole preaching, refers to the Book of Isaiah, which presents and elucidates the concept of "good news" and the "reign of God" (52, 7-12). In light of the vision in the Book of Isaiah, God himself returns to Sion to gather His people in the diaspora and lead them back to their native land. The coming of God and rebuilding Israel is one work, showing God's glory and power. This event must be understood as the re-creation of Israel. When preaching the Divine kingdom, Jesus gathers and again creates God's people of ultimate times. He perfectly personifies

<sup>22</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret...*, 302-305.

<sup>23</sup> Hugolin LANGKAMMER, *Nowy Testament o Kościele*, Wrocław, Wydawnictwo św. Antoniego, 1995, 23-25.

God's actions of the type shown in the Old Testament<sup>24</sup>. The Constituting of the Twelve and Jesus' death on the cross, anticipated during the Last Supper, are the most solemn sign actions aimed at founding Israel of the ultimate times – the Church, whose aim will be to fulfil God's kingdom in the world<sup>25</sup>.

Jesus starts the creation of God's people anew by ordaining the first disciples (Mark 1, 16-20; Matt. 4, 18-22; John 1, 35-51). Establishing (creating) the Twelve is the culmination point of this activity. It is a symbolic and highly Ecclesia-forming act. They represent the twelve tribes of Israel. They are the germ and the centre of renewed God's people of ultimate times – the Church. The institution of the Twelve is oriented towards the renewal of Israel. The new creation of Israel starts in it and God's kingdom reveals itself in the new creation of Israel. A "space" is necessary where God's rule can be fulfilled so that it is not an abstract and shapeless reality. God's people is such a "space". Initiation of God's kingdom starts in Israel and through Israel it is to reach all nations. It is Israel's mission to be an "intermediary" and a "tool" in the Divine plan of salvation<sup>26</sup>. This is why Jesus addresses His teaching to the people of twelve tribes, and He sends His disciples to the people (Matt. 10, 5-6). In line with the economy of revelation and of salvation, God's rule over the world has its beginning in Israel and is fulfilled in the circle of Jesus' disciples. The Twelve constitute the beginning of God's new people – the redemptive community of the ultimate times; they are the sign of Divine rule. As a "little flock" (Luke 12, 32), they were entrusted with the Divine kingdom, in which they already have their share (Mark 10, 29-30)<sup>27</sup>.

Jesus gathers Israel. For the God's people, accepting Jesus is a decisive moment of fulfilling God's will, which is well known and defined in the Torah. The Teacher creates the Twelve as if in the centre of Israel. Thus, He gives it a new form and a new beginning anchored in the ultimate times<sup>28</sup>. It does not come from the existing – natural and religious – structures. Setting up a new institutional structure – the Church – on the foundation of His nearest disciples, He reveals what the new true fulfilling of the Law and the primaeval Divine plan for Israel's new social order involves<sup>29</sup>. Appointing the Twelve marks the beginning of the ultimate fulfilment of the promise written in the Book of Isaiah (41, 17-20; 43, 1. 16-21), according to which God "creates" His people anew. Jesus' disciples will manifest the new beginning of the people of twelve tribes and will proclaim it to all in Israel. Therefore, the Twelve is a figure and a permanent

<sup>24</sup> Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?...*, 162-164.

<sup>25</sup> More on this subject in: Paweł RABCZYŃSKI, Ustanowienie Dwunastu w dziele fundacji Kościoła, *Studia Elbląskie*, 19 (2018) 377-390; Id., Ustanowienie Eucharystii w dziele fundacji Kościoła, *Studia Warmińskie*, 57 (2020) 167-179.

<sup>26</sup> Langkammer, *Nowy Testament o Kościele...*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?...*, 135-138.

<sup>28</sup> Gnilka, *Jesus von Nazaret...*, 187-189.

<sup>29</sup> Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?...*, 201-203.



sign of gathering, renewal and creating anew of God's people. Jesus' words and deeds build a new reality of Israel of ultimate times – the Church<sup>30</sup>.

Jesus' death for Israel complements the gathering and creation anew of God's people in the sign of the Twelve. It is anticipated during the Last Supper. Jesus again gathers the Twelve around Himself for a solemn paschal supper. The disciples gathered in the Cenacle represent God's people of the ultimate times. It is why they were ordained, which was already mentioned. When a prayer is being said before the solemn meal, Jesus gives bread to those present and says: "Take it and eat, this is my body" (Matt. 26, 26; cf. Mark 14, 22). He Himself interprets it as sacrificing His life: "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22, 19; cf. 1 Cor. 11, 24). He explains that the broken bread symbolises Himself and foretells His death on the cross. After the meal, He gives His disciples a chalice with wine and, similarly, makes a reference to His death: "Drink from this, all of you, for this is My blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matt. 26, 27-28; cf. Mark 14, 24; Luke 22, 20; 1 Cor. 11, 25)<sup>31</sup>.

The phrase "Blood of the Covenant" used by Jesus is a reference to the founding act of Israel, which was done at Mount Sinai by the ceremony of sprinkling the altar and the people with sacrificial blood (Ex. 24, 4-11). The Teacher's words over the chalice mean that His blood will not be spilled fruitlessly, His death will not be in vain. It renews and fulfils the old covenant between God and Israel and establishes a new one – in Jesus' Blood (cf. Jer. 31, 31-34). Therefore, it is a new founding act for Israel, creating it anew. It is only Jesus' death that ultimately gathers and unites God's people, making it the Israel of the ultimate times<sup>32</sup>.

The phrase "for many" refers first to Israel and, through it, to other nations. It is indicated by the fact that during the Last Supper Jesus gathers the Twelve – representatives of the people of twelve tribes – and that He refers to the Covenant of Sinai, which God made with Israel and how He wishes to renew it. One must also take into account the fact that the words about "the many" were taken from the Book of Isaiah, specifically from the fourth Servant Song (Isa. 52, 13 – 53, 12), and they refer to pagan nations. The phrase becomes universal

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, 250-251.

<sup>31</sup> Gerhard LOHFINK, *Gegen die Verharmlosung Jesu. Reden über Jesus und Kirche*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 2013, 366-368.

<sup>32</sup> Walter KASPER, *Sakrament der Einheit. Eucharistie und Kirche*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 2004, 126-127; Gnlika, *Jesus von Nazaret...*, 286-289; Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?...*, 237-240; Langkammer, *Nowy Testament o Kościele...*, 25-27; Józef KUDASIEWICZ, *Teksty ustanowienia Eucharystii*, in: *Biblia o Eucharystii*, ed. S. Szymik, Lublin, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL 1997, 76-82; Gabriel WITASZEK, *Eucharystia jako Nowe Przymierze (Jr 31, 31-34)*, in: *Biblia o Eucharystii*, ed. S. Szymik, Lublin, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL 1997, 31-34.

in this context. Therefore, Jesus dies for Israel and other nations. “For many” should be understood as “for all”<sup>33</sup>.

The symbolic acts of Jesus referred to above, aimed at establishing the Israel of the ultimate times – the Church (constituting the Twelve, the Last Supper) as well as Jesus’ death on the cross, refer to the Old Testament and the Old Covenant. Thereby, they confirm that the history of God’s people is continued and fulfilled in Jesus and then in His Church. The history of revelation and salvation runs without interruption from the people of the Old Covenant to the people of the New Covenant. Jesus on the cross ultimately reveals the universal kingdom of God, His will and His glory. He does it so that Israel, and through Israel – the whole world, attains salvation (cf. John 17, 1-8). He gathers anew the dispersed God’s children (John 11, 52), offering them to share God’s kingdom. The work of salvation, started with Jesus Christ’s self-revelation, has its complement in the gathering of God’s people of the ultimate times.

#### *4. A look at Church-Israel relations from a history of salvation perspective*

To explain the Church foundation in relation to Israel requires one to look at the genesis of Ecclesia in the perspective of the history of revelation and salvation. When studying the economy of revelation, contemporary theology stresses the need for the presence of the revelation throughout history, so that it can always be available to all men. God always reveals Himself to redeem. The presence of the revealed reality in history is a consequence of God’s common redemptive will and the fullness and finality of Salvation in Jesus Christ. God wishes all people to be saved and to come to know the truth (1 Tim 2, 4), and His will is implemented in the one and only common redemptive mystery of Jesus Christ: “Only in Him is there salvation; for of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved” (Acts 4, 12)<sup>34</sup>. Since Jesus’ earthly existence was very short, an institution had to be established to continue His epiphanic and soteric work, thereby making it commonly acces-

<sup>33</sup> Lohfink, *Gegen die Verharmlosung Jesu...*, 129-133; Kasper, *Sakrament der Einheit...*, 127-129; Kudasiwicz, *Teksty ustanowienia Eucharystii...*, 79-80.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph RATZINGER, *Unterwegs zu Jesus Christus*, Augsburg, Sankt Ulrich, 2003, 55-76; Ireneusz S. LEDWON, *Pełnia i ostateczność objawienia w Jezusie Chrystusie*, in: *Wokół deklaracji Dominus Iesus*, ed. M. Rusecki, Lublin, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2001, 57-71; Id., „... i nie ma w żadnym innym zbawienia”. *Wyjątkowy charakter chrześcijaństwa w teologii posoborowej*, Lublin, KUL, 2006, 311-456; Krzysztof GÓŹDŹ, *Jedyność i powszechność tajemnicy zbawczej Jezusa Chrystusa*, in: *Wokół deklaracji Dominus Iesus*, ed. M. Rusecki, Lublin, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL 2001, 85-97; Zbigniew KUBACKI, *Jedyność Jezusa Chrystusa. O jedyności i powszechności zbawczej Jezusa Chrystusa w kontekście chrześcijańskiej teologii religii*, Kraków, WAM, 2005, 31-117, 351-519; Andrzej A. NAPIÓRKOWSKI, *Jezus Chrystus objawiony i objawiający. Chrystologia fundamentalna*, Kraków, WAM, 2008, 23-189.

sible in history. To this end, Jesus established the Church with which He is united, in which He is constantly present and which He manages through His Holy Spirit. The Church exists as the redemptive mystery, being part of the Revelation<sup>35</sup>. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the fullness of Christ's redemptive mystery also belongs to the Church, connected inextricably with its Lord. Because Jesus Christ is still present and conducts His redemptive work in the Church and through the Church<sup>36</sup>. Being a kind of historical extension of Jesus' existence in History, the Church has become a carrier and transmitter of Divine Revelation – and, in consequence, salvation – for all people of all time, i.e. its tradent. Therefore, the theological conclusion that the Church is necessary for salvation. It is based on the fact that Jesus Christ is the only intermediary and the only path to salvation, present for us and always available in His Church. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, the Ecclesia is a universal sacrament of salvation<sup>37</sup>. Where there is Christ and His redemptive grace, there is always the Church – a tool for salvation, permanently bonded to its Founder, although in a mysterious way. In this sense, one can say that there is no a-ecclesial space in the economy of salvation. The epiphanic and soteric mission of the Son of God assumes the foundation and mission of the Church. In God's plan, the Ecclesia has an essential connection with the salvation of all men, regardless of the formal or visible belonging to it<sup>38</sup>. In this sense, the Church can be called a community, the redemptive sign of Jesus Christ<sup>39</sup> and the last stage in the history of salvation<sup>40</sup>.

These considerations clearly show that the foundation of the Church is part of the economy of salvation. It is stressed in the constitution *Lumen gentium* of the Second Vatican Council that the Ecclesia has always been present in God's redemptive plan, which He has been implementing since the creation of the world, until the eschatological new creation. The redemptive plan has been revealed gradually, in accordance with God's pedagogy. Therefore, the Church "has been revealed through types, miraculously prepared in the history of the

<sup>35</sup> Marian RUSECKI, *Wiarygodność chrześcijaństwa*. I. *Z teorii teologii fundamentalnej*, Lublin, Towarzystwo naukowe KUL, 1994, 218.

<sup>36</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Dominus Iesus. Declaration on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church* (6.08.2000), Rome, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 16.

<sup>37</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium. Dogmatic constitution on the Church* (Rome, 21.11.1964), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus...*, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Hans WALDENFELS, *Kontextuelle Fundamentaltheologie*, Paderborn-Wien-Zürich, Ferdinand Schöningh, 1988, 340; Salvador PIÉ-NINOT, *Tratado de Teología Fundamental. Dar razón de la esperanza (1 Pe 3, 15)*, Salamanca, Secretariado Trinitario, 1996, 196-198; Rusecki, *Wiarygodność chrześcijaństwa...*, 217-255; Id., *Znak*, in: *Leksykon teologii fundamentalnej*, ed. M. Rusecki et al., Lublin – Kraków, Wydawnictwo M, 2002, 1378.

<sup>40</sup> Salvador PIÉ-NINOT, *Kościół jako ostatni etap historii zbawienia*, in: *Chrześcijaństwo jutra. Materiały II Międzynarodowego Kongresu Teologii Fundamentalnej*, Lublin, 18-21 września 2001, ed. M. Rusecki et al., Lublin, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2001, 403-443; Marian RUSECKI, *Traktat o Kościele*, ed. K. Kaucha, P. Królikowski, J. Mastej, Lublin, KUL, 2014, 60-62.

Israeli nation and in the Old Covenant, established in the ultimate times, it was revealed through the Holy Spirit and it will have its glorious fulfilment at the end of time". The history of salvation ends in the eschaton "with a gathering in the universal Church at the Father's", that is, by achieving the fullness of salvation<sup>41</sup>.

The establishment of the Church is not a single act, but a dynamic trinitary process, fulfilled in the history of revelation and salvation. Ecclesiology is God's redemptive plan and His Son's acts, imparted to man through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, one should not look for an exceptional event in the history of salvation, which could be regarded as the founding act of the Church. Nowadays, it is emphasised that Jesus Christ's whole life, His words and deeds, were of the Ecclesia-forming nature. Following this trail and in accordance with the ecclesiology of the constitution *Lumen gentium*, the International Theological Committee identified ten significant stages in the process of establishing the Church:

1) the Old Testament promises about the people of God, promises presupposed by the preaching of Jesus and continuing to maintain their validity for human Salvation; 2) Jesus' generous appeal to all His listeners, an appeal aimed at their conversion and carrying an invitation to believe in Him; 3) the call and institution of the Twelve as a sign of the future reconstitution of all Israel; 4) the renaming of Simon to Peter and his privileged place in the circle of the disciples and his mission; 5) the rejection of Jesus by Israel and the schism between the Jewish people and His disciples; 6) the fact that Jesus, in instituting the Supper, persists in preaching the universal Reign of God, which consists in the gift of His life for the benefit of all; 7) the rebuilding, thanks to the Lords Resurrection, of the ruptured communion between Jesus and His disciples, and the postpaschal initiation into ecclesial life, strictly speaking; 8) the sending of the Holy Spirit, which makes the Church a divine creation (the "Pentecost" of the Lucean conception); 9) the mission to the Gentiles and the Church of the Gentiles; 10) the definitive break between the "true Israel" and Judaism<sup>42</sup>.

The basic and ultimate structure of Christ's Church is formed at this stage. It is apparent that one cannot discuss the foundation of the Church without referring to the history of revelation and salvation and to its important component – God's people of the Old Testament.

God's salvation plan for the whole mankind, through Jesus Christ's paschal sacrifice and through the Church, has its beginning in the chosen people – Israel<sup>43</sup>. God revealed Himself to His people gradually, through His missionaries as the only and saving God. After being freed from the Egyptian captivity

<sup>41</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*..., 2.

<sup>42</sup> International Theological Commission, *Select Themes of Ecclesiology on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Closing of the Second Vatican Council* (Rome, 5.10.1985), I. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Gnllka, *Jesus von Nazaret*..., 194-203.

and after making the covenant at the Sinai, the people of twelve tribes became God's people, a depository of His teaching and promises. God gave Israel the Law for it to know how to fulfil its mission and how to disseminate the salvation entrusted to it<sup>44</sup>.

The Foundation of the Church, which is called God's new people, does not mean that the old one ceased to exist or that the new one replaced the old one. The Ecclesia is the fulfilment in Christ of the promises given to Israel, not its replacement<sup>45</sup>. It is groundless to oppose the pagans' Church to the Synagogue<sup>46</sup>. The Covenant that God offered to His people is irrevocable<sup>47</sup>. He remains faithful to Israel. The new Covenant made in Jesus Christ does not revoke or cancel the earlier ones but fulfils them. It is a culmination point of the promises of the Old Covenant. The New Covenant does not replace the Old Covenant, but founds it, is rooted in it and gives it a new meaning, extending it to include all peoples and nations. The Ecclesia is incorporated in the historico-redemptive continuity of the Old and the New Covenant, but also in the radical "newness" of Christ's mystery.

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Although the Church – as has been said before – is the last stage of the history of salvation, it does not mean that God rejected Israel and cancelled its mission of the tradent of the revelation. The people of the Old Testament remained the carrier of what was fulfilled in Jesus Christ in the economy of salvation. Israel "disinheritance" did not occur upon the Ecclesia foundation. According to the main idea of the *Epistle to Romans*, Israel is still the chosen and loved God's people, the people of the Covenant, which was never annulled, although the people did not accept the New Covenant (Rz 9, 4: "They are Israelites; it was they who were adopted as children, the glory was theirs and the covenants; to them were given the Law and the worship of God and the promises."; 11, 29: "There is no change of mind on God's part about the gifts He has made or of His choice."). However, it must be stressed that the Church cannot be understood only as a simple continuation of Israel. It was established by Jesus Christ as a new reality – the sacrament of salvation. God's new people gathered owing to Jesus' initiative as a response to His call. Their mission is to preach Jesus Christ as God's Son, the prophesied Messiah and Saviour. Its redemptive agency is universal and it concerns all – Jews and pagans. In this perspective, one can talk about the Church – Israel relation as a continuation, but also a discontinuity. Continuation manifests itself in the history of salvation, while discontinuity – in recognition of the one and only Saviour.

<sup>44</sup> Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *The Gifts and the Calling of God...*, 21.

<sup>45</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible...*, 65; Kamykowski, *Obraz Izraela i Żydów w myśli chrześcijańskiej. II. Perspektywy...*, 119-145.

<sup>46</sup> Chrostowski, *Kościół a Izrael...*, 84-88.

<sup>47</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993, 121.

Paweł Rabczyński\*

*Je li Crkva nadomjestila Izrael? Ustanovljenje Crkve i izraelski narod*

Sažetak

Ovaj članak prikazuje odnos između ustanovljenja Crkve i izraelskog naroda. Autor nastoji odgovoriti na pitanje koje je važno za suvremenu teologiju: je li Crkva nadomjestila izraelski narod? U članku se također obrađuje drugo pitanje povezano s prvim: Je li izabrani narod Staroga zavjeta »razbaštinjen« nakon utemeljenja Crkve (*Ecclesia*)? Za razumijevanje odnosa između Crkve i izraelskog naroda ima temeljnu važnost nauk Drugoga vatikanskog sabora, prvenstveno u Deklaraciji o odnosu Crkve prema nekršćanskim religijama *Nostra aetate* (br. 4). Ona obrađuje ovaj odnos iz perspektive povijesti spasenja, pokazujući kontinuitet između Božjega naroda Staroga i Novoga saveza. Ovaj dokument ne obrađuje pobliže međusoban odnos ili detalje o soteriološkom položaju naroda Staroga saveza. Radi otkrivanja odnosa Crkve prema izraelskom narodu, autor je istražio Isusovo oslanjanje na Toru i ključne događaje u utemeljenju Crkve: uspostavu Dvanaestorice i ustanovu Euharistije. Dvanaestorica i Euharistija daju temelj tvrdnji da je Crkva Izrael posljednjega vremena. S obzirom na odnos između Crkve i Izraela, iz perspektive povijesti spasenja, autor zaključuje da Bog nije odbacio izraelski narod niti je dokinuo njegovo poslanje da prenosi objavu. Narod Staroga saveza i dalje nosi ono što je ispunjeno po Isusu Kristu i ekonomiji spasenja. Nakon ustanovljenja Crkve nije se dogodilo »razbaštinjenje« izraelskoga naroda.

*Ključne riječi: Crkva i izraelski narod, dijalog između Rimokatoličke crkve i židovstva, povijest spasenja, ustanovljenje Crkve.*

(s engl. preveo Mato Zovkić)

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