

## ISRAEL: GOD'S KEY TO WORLD EVANGELISM

### LESSON ONE

#### Andrew Murray, missionary to Africa, had this to say:

"Pray for the Jews. Their return to the God of their fathers stands connected, in a way we cannot tell, with wonderful blessing to the Church, and with the coming of the Lord Jesus. Let us not think that God has foreordained all this, and that we cannot hasten it. In a divine and mysterious way God has connected His fulfillment of His promise with our prayer. His Spirit's intercession in us is God's forerunner of blessing. Pray for Israel and the work done among them, and pray too, 'Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!' Isn't it marvelous that God condescends to hear and answer prayer? 'To you therefore, who believe, is the preciousness.'"

#### A) DIVINE PRIORITY

Romans 1:16 - "...to the Jew first..."

The consistent command was to bring the gospel to the Jewish people first (Luke 24:47, Acts 1:8).

"The gospel is the power of God, and the proper procedure is for it to go to the Jew first. The governing verb, *is*, is in the present tense, which emphasizes continuous action and controls both clauses: the gospel *is* the power of God and the gospel *is* to the Jew first.... Applying this verse to the Great Commission, the gospel, wherever and by whatever means it goes out from the local church, must go to the Jew first. This is the biblical procedure for evangelism regardless of the method."<sup>4</sup>

Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israeology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries Press, 1993), page 852

"Paul, some twenty years after the gospel had been on Gentile soil, writes this letter to the Roman Christians. It is apparent from both 1:16 and chapters 8-11 that the priority of Jewish evangelism was still in effect for Gentile Christians living in a Gentile world! Even though Paul teaches the essential equality of the Jew and Gentile in the Body of Christ, he still maintains both the separate priority and preeminence of Jewish evangelism, as well as Jewish eschatological blessing and accountability. The implication seems obvious; even for a Gentile living in the Gentile world, there are still theological and biblical reasons for the priority of Jewish evangelism."

Robert M. Hicks, *Mishkan, Issue No. 10, Romans 1:16 and the Priority of Jewish Evangelism*, (Wheaton, IL, Caspari Center, 1989), page 10.

Hudson Taylor, missionary with China Inland Mission many years ago, with great joy on the 1st day of January of each year, from far off China, sent a contribution to John Wilkinson, founder of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews in England in 1876, and on the check Hudson Taylor would write, "To the Jew First." Not to be outdone by this literal obedience to the Word of God, Mr. Wilkinson would send a personal check of his own to Mr. Hudson Taylor for the China Inland Mission, & would write on the check, "And also to the Greek."

The consistent command was to bring the gospel to the Jewish people first - Luke 24:47, Acts 1:8.

This should be understood as "priority" and not "historically." If this is true the methodology of the early church should bear witness to this divine order.

## LESSON TWO

It is important to keep in mind, as we follow the ministry of Paul that he was "the apostle to the Gentiles," Romans 11:15.

- 1) Jerusalem Church
  - a) Pentecost Sermon (Acts 2:14-41) vss. 14, 22, 36
  - b) Temple Sermon (Acts 3:12-26) vss. 12, 13, 25-26
  - c) Stephen's Sermon (Acts 7:2-53) vs. 2  
"our fathers" vss. 2, 38, 39, 44, 45  
"your fathers" vss. 51, 52
  - d) Antioch Mission (cf. Acts 8:4 and 11:19-26) vs. 19
- 2) Paul
  - a) Initial efforts - Acts 9:20-21
  - b) First Journey
    - (1) Cyprus - Acts 13:4,5
    - (2) Antioch - Acts 13:14, 16, 26, 42-48
    - (3) Iconium - Acts 14:1
  - c) Second Journey
    - (1) Philippi - Acts 16:12,13
    - (2) Thessalonica - Acts 17:1,2
    - (3) Berea - Acts 17:10,11
    - (4) Athens - Acts 17:16,17
    - (5) Corinth - Acts 18:4-6 (vs. 6 same type of situation as Acts 13:46 at Antioch)
    - (6) Ephesus - Acts 18:19
  - d) Third Journey  
Ephesus - Acts 19:8-10
  - e) Subsequent Travels
    - (1) Jerusalem - Acts 22, 23 vss. 22:1-3; 23:11
    - (2) Caesarea - Acts 24 - 26 vss. 24:5,24; 26:2,3,20;
    - (3) Rome - Acts 28:17-29 vss. 17, 23

The example of the early church certainly indicates that a special emphasis on "Jewish evangelism" was given a high priority among the apostles and early believers.

## LESSON THREE

### Rev. John Wilkinson wrote the following in "The Divine Plan":

"God says 'First to the Jew,' and He will never alter it. And if we wish to have His blessing we must have it in obedience to Him, and we must alter our ways to His ways, and we must not wish Him to alter His ways to ours. The world will never be evangelized without the Jew. You may have your missionary conferences and your missionary meetings all over the world, but if the Bible be the Word of God you will never get the world evangelized without the Jew. In the interest of the Gentile world then, go first to the Jew. Put him in a prominent place in your prayers, and in your efforts and in your practical sympathies, and you will get blessing, for you will be on the lines of the Divine plan." John Wilkinson, Founder / Director of Mildmay Mission to the Jews in 1876

### B) DIVINE BLESSING

1) Genesis 12:3

### Dr. James M. Gray, directed Moody Bible Institute for over 30 years, said this:

"I would tremble to be guilty of fomenting an uprising against the Jews; not merely because I fear the law of the land, but because I fear God. The Jews are His chosen people. If the Bible be true, then the redemption of the human race on this earth, through the atoning merits of Jesus Christ, is ultimately to be brought about, not by the Church, as the body of Christ, which has a different mission, but by the nation of Israel. Let us do all we can by testimony and prayer to preach the Gospel 'to the Jew First,' as we are commanded to do, that we may by all means save some."

2) Romans 11:11-15 vs. 11 vs. 13,14 vs. 12,15

In the middle 1800's: "A story is told of those true friends of missions, both to Jews and Gentiles - Charles Simeon and Edward Bickersteth - to this effect: They were once presented at a meeting held in support of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. Charles Simeon was the speaker, and in closing his speech, he said that they had met together that day for the furtherance of the most important object in the world - the conversion of the Jews.

"When Simeon sat down, Edward Bickersteth, who was at that time a secretary of the Church Missionary Society, wrote on a slip of paper, 'Eight million Jews, eight hundred million heathen - which of these is the more important?' This paper he handed to Mr. Simeon, who at once turned it over and wrote on the other side: 'Yes, but if the eight million Jews are to be as "life from the dead" to the eight hundred million heathen, what then?' And this done he returned the slip of paper to Mr. Bickersteth."

World evangelism seems to be based on Jewish evangelism.  
Church history bares this truth out.

"A study of church history reveals the fact that all attempts to evangelize the Jews ceased about the time of Constantine the Great, and soon the church entered into the Dark Ages, a thousand years of spiritual night."

Rev. Charles H. Stevens D.D. , *What it has cost the Church to withhold Christ from the Jews*, pamphlet, pg. 6, undated

**Dr. Joseph Cohn wrote in "Beginning at Jerusalem":**

"Now it is only reasonable to expect that just as national Israel, when restored to God, will bring blessings to the entire Gentile world, so when individual Jews are brought into the Church, blessings will redound to those who bring them in. That is, we have a right to expect that individual Jewish conversions now must bring individual blessings to the Gentiles in the Church. With convincing recurrence, this is exactly what has happened throughout the history of the Church, and is still happening. This is also what Scripture teaches; for Paul tells us, in speaking of the possibilities of Jewish conversion, in Romans 11:15, 'What shall their receiving (conversion) be, but life from the dead?'...Abundant proof of the argument here presented is to be found in even a superficial glance over the pages of Church history." Cohn, Joseph Hoffman, *Beginning at Jerusalem*, pg. 251

**GOD'S BLESSINGS ON THE UNITED STATES**

"Conversion of the Jews took on the force of a social crusade in the early years of the American republic. One of its champions was the frail Hannah Adams, a distant cousin of the Presidents... Among her studies was a sympathetic history of the Jews...in 1816 (she) formed the Female Society of Boston and Vicinity for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews. The movement quickly spread among the intelligentsia of the young American republic—no fewer than 20 affiliated clubs were registered in New York alone—and John Quincy Adams and De Witt Clinton stood among its early backers."

Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1983), page 7.

Biblically, success in world evangelism is connected to Jewish evangelism. If this is the teaching of the Word of God, then the Church has missed out on one of God's primary methods for seeing people saved. Our neglect has been to the detriment of the salvation of people. Isn't it time we got back to God's mandate?

The gospel is to all people, yes, but "to the Jew first."