



MBS179

A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS



By **Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum**



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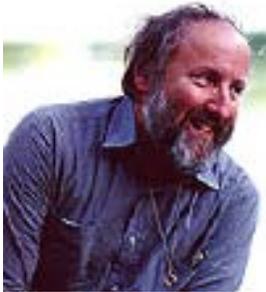
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*For what great nation is there, that has a god so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is whensoever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?
Deuteronomy 4:7-8*

I. WHAT THE CHURCH HAS RECEIVED FROM THE JEWS

All together, five specific things that the Church has received from the Jews can be listed: the Scriptures, the Savior, salvation, the concept of the local church, and spiritual blessings.

A. The Scriptures

The first thing that the Church has received from the Jews is the Scriptures. This is brought out by four Scriptures.

1. Deuteronomy 4:7-8

For what great nation is there, that has a god so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is whensoever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

The Mosaic Law served as God's standard of righteousness. If a Jew in the Old Testament wanted to know what the righteous standard of God was, he had the Mosaic Law to turn to. It served as the rule of life for the Old Testament saint. But these two verses point out that this was given uniquely to Israel.

There were two unique things, which God gave to Israel. The first thing that was uniquely given to Israel was the concept of one God and God revealed Himself to Israel in a way that He has not revealed Himself to any other single nation. The second thing, which God gave uniquely to the Jewish people, is the Law, which was the primary Scriptures of that day. With the completion of the Law, God gave the first five books of Scripture, and for a while, these were the only Scriptures. Again, this was something God gave to the Jewish people.

2. Psalm 147:19-20

He showed his word unto Jacob, His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel. He has not dealt so with any nation: And as for his ordinances, they have not known them. Praise ye Jehovah.

This passage states that God had revealed these scriptural truths to Israel in a way that He had not revealed them to any other nation. No other nation has had this unique privilege. Again, the emphasis is that God had given these things to the Jewish people.

3. Romans 3:1-2

What advantage then has the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God.

Paul points out in these verses the supreme privileges of Israel. The advantage of the Jew was not in the realm of salvation, for Jews are not saved because they are Jews. Jews, like Gentiles, are saved by grace through faith in the substitutionary death and Resurrection of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah. But they do have the advantage in another field, and that is in the realm of Scripture, for unto the Jews were revealed *the oracles of God*, the Scriptures.

The supreme privilege of Israel is not that salvation comes to the Jews because they are Jews, rather it is because they were given the Scriptures, that they have received the revelation of salvation.

4. Romans 9:4

who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.

Paul lists various features or facets of the Scriptures, pointing out that these are in the ownership of the Israelites. There are four facets of Scripture given to the Israelites. First, *the covenants*, which refer to the four unfulfilled, unconditional, eternal covenants God has made with Israel: the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. The second facet he mentions is *the giving of the law*, which refers to the one covenant God made with Israel that was both conditional and temporary: the Mosaic Covenant. The third facet is *the service*, which refers to the Levitical service, the Levitical system; the whole realm of Scripture dealing with the Levitical system also belongs to the Israelites. The fourth facet is *the promises*, specifically, the promises of the prophets.

These various facets include all of the promises of the prophets, but especially the promise of Messianic salvation. But it is more than that, because the word *promises* is in the plural.

5. Conclusions

There are three conclusions regarding the Jews and the Scriptures. First, the Scriptures are of the Jews in that they were produced by the Jews, and they were guarded by the Jews; this is true both of the Old and New Testaments.

Secondly, the Scriptures are to the Jews; they were committed to the Jews for safe keeping. It was not a day when the printing press was around, so mass production of copies of the Scriptures was impossible. Thus, the Jews were instructed to be the guardians of the Word of God. When one old text became worn out, too old to use, the Jews would carefully make new copies; it was committed to them for safe-keeping.

Thirdly, the Scriptures are about the Jews. They record Israel's redemptive history, but they also predict Israel's redemptive future. Thus, the Church has indeed received the Scriptures from the Jews.

B. The Savior

The second thing that the Church has received from the Jews is the Savior in that Yeshua was a Jew.

1. The Jewishness of the Savior

The Jewishness of the Savior is brought out several times in Scripture. For example, in John 4:9, the Samaritan woman clearly recognized Him to be a Jew for she stated: *How is it that you, being a Jew, ask drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?*

Later, in Romans 9:5, after stating that the Scriptures are of the Jews in verse 4, Paul adds in verse 5: *of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh.* As to His *flesh*, His humanity, Yeshua was a Jew and He belonged to the Jewish people.

Hebrews 7:14 states: *For it is evident that our Lord has sprung out of Judah,* meaning He was a member of the Tribe of Judah; being a member of the Tribe of Judah meant that He was indeed a Jew.

Another passage that clearly brings out His Jewishness is Galatians 4:1-7. The main point of the context is the distinction between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. Verses 4-7 state: *but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that you are no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.*

According to this passage, Jesus was *born under the law*, meaning He was a Jew. Furthermore, He was born a Jew for two reasons as seen in the switching of pronouns between the third person pronoun *them* to the first person pronoun *we* in verse 5. The first reason that He was born a Jew was to *redeem them* [Jews] *that were under the law*. The second reason He was born a Jew was *that we* [Jews and Gentiles together] *might receive the adoption of sons*.

2. The Concept of the Kinsman Redeemer

Another passage concerning the importance of the Jewishness of Yeshua is Hebrews 2:14-17: *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and*

blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily not to angels does he give help, but he gives help to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

The emphasis in this passage is to show why Jesus had to come as a human being and, more specifically, as a Jewish human being. It distinguishes, first of all, between fallen angels and fallen men.

Verse 16 points out that God did not choose to provide salvation for angels and, for that reason, Yeshua never took on “angelanity.” He never became an angel to become a substitutionary atonement for other angels. God provided salvation only for humanity, and so God became human. But because there was a special connection with the work of redemption in connection to Israel under the Law, verse 16 points out that He did not come as just any man; He came specifically as a member of *the seed of Abraham*. He came as a Jew.

The background of what the writer is dealing with is the kinsman redeemer concept of the Old Testament. There were several ways that a Jew could get himself into trouble under the Law. One of those ways was to fall into a state of indebtedness beyond his ability to repay. If that happened to him, there was only one option available to him; that was to sell himself into slavery, work for his master for six years, and then be released on the seventh year, the Sabbatical year.

Once he sold himself into slavery, there were two other options open to him. The first option was to serve out the six years. The second option depended upon having a kinsman who was willing to pay off his indebtedness to release him from slavery early. However, under the Law there were three requirements to being a kinsman redeemer. First, he had to be the next of kin; a total stranger could not do it. Secondly, he had to have the price of redemption. He had to have enough resources of his own to pay off his kinsman's debts. And thirdly, he had to be willing to pay the price, for the Law did not make it mandatory; it was optional.

That is what is happening in this context. Since, humanly speaking, by serving sin, man becomes a slave to sin; everybody, all humanity, has become enslaved to sin. The Jewish people, in particular, because of their inability to keep the Law perfectly, fell under the enslavement of the curse of the Law. In order to fulfill the first requirement of kinship, Jesus had to be born a human being, but specifically a Jew. Secondly, He had to have the price of redemption, which, in this case, was innocent blood. And thirdly, He had to be willing to pay the price, because the Law did not make it mandatory. Indeed, Yeshua was willing to pay the price. In John 10:18, it was Jesus who stated: *No one*

takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. Thus, the whole concept of His redemptive work is closely tied into the fact that Yeshua was a Jew.

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C. Salvation

The third thing that the Church has received from the Jews is salvation. As He was speaking to a Samaritan woman who had her own way of salvation, Jesus stated in John 4:22: *Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.*

There are three ways that *salvation is from the Jews*. First, the promise of Messianic salvation was given to the Jews. Secondly, there is the plan of salvation in that it required Jewish blood. And thirdly, the first proclaimers of salvation were Jews. In these ways, indeed, the Church has received salvation from the Jews.

D. The Concept of the Local Church

The fourth thing that the Church has received from the Jews is the concept of the local church. This comes from the concept of the assembly, the local synagogue, which is an entirely Jewish concept. Even the term “elder,” which is the main term used for church leadership, has Jewish origins, because there were elders in the Jewish community. So the whole concept of the local assembly is a Jewish concept.

Furthermore, the practice of baptism was a Jewish practice long before it became a church practice.

Finally, even communion is something that came from the Jews, because communion is a shortened version of the Jewish Passover. The two major elements of the Passover, unleavened bread and wine, are the two things that Jesus brought into the church concept to be observed until He returns.

The Church has received these three things from the Jews: the local assembly, baptism, and communion, all having Jewish origins.

E. Spiritual Blessings

The fifth thing that the Church has received from the Jews is spiritual blessings. This is brought out very clearly by two significant passages.

1. Romans 15:27

Ye, it has been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in [material] things.

This verse clearly states that Gentile believers have become partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings.

2. Ephesians 2:11-16 and 3:5-6

Exactly what that means is detailed in the second passage, which is in

two parts. The first part is Ephesians 2:11-16: *Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.*

The second part is in Ephesians 3:5-6: *which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it has now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

The point of these passages is that God made four unfulfilled covenants with Israel, which were unconditional and eternal. All of God's spiritual blessings are mediated by these four covenants. They also point out that God made another covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, which was *the law of commandments* (2:15). One of the many reasons for this other covenant, the temporary one, was to serve as a *middle wall of partition* to keep Gentiles as Gentiles away from enjoying Jewish spiritual blessings. When Yeshua died, He broke down this *middle wall of partition*. Now, by faith in the Messiah, Gentiles as Gentiles can begin to enjoy the spiritual blessings of these Jewish covenants. They have not become “taker overs,” but *partakers* (3:6). The spiritual blessings of salvation, the indwelling Holy Spirit, provision, care, answered prayer are Jewish spiritual blessings of which Gentile believers have become partakers.

II. WHAT IT HAS COST THE CHURCH TO WITHHOLD THE GOSPEL FROM THE JEWS

By the fourth century, Jewish evangelism effectively ceased. When Jewish evangelism ceased, the number of Jewish believers began to dwindle until they eventually disappeared from church history. Only in the 1800s did the number of Jewish believers begin increasing again at a somewhat rapid rate, comparatively speaking.

But the failure of the Church to share the gospel with the Jews has led to four major problems: the Church has lost her balance, the Church has lost her blessings from God, the Church has lost her doctrinal unity, and the Church has lost her doctrinal purity

.A. The Church has Lost her Balance

Ephesians 2:11-16 not only teaches that the Church has received

spiritual blessings from the Jews, but it also deals with the concept of the *one new man*, the Church. Paul points out that this *one new man* is composed of both Jewish believers and Gentile believers in verse 15. For the Church to keep her balance, it needed both Jewish believers and Gentile believers united into one body.

However, because of the failure to proclaim the gospel to the Jews, the Church has lost her balance; many of our church splits and doctrinal problems have arisen because there were no Jewish believers in the Church to provide a corrective measure.

B. The Church has Lost her Blessings From God

The second thing the Church has lost by withholding the gospel from the Jews is her blessings from God.

1. The Principle of the Covenant: Genesis 12:3

I will bless them that bless you, and him that curses you will I curse.

One of the ways one can curse the Jews is by withholding the gospel from them. Those who take a stand against Jewish evangelism, and even worse, those who fail to practice it, are automatically depriving themselves and the Church of blessings from God.

2. The Outworking of the Covenant

Withholding the gospel from the Jews was a way of boasting over the Jews, the broken branches. This is something that Paul warned against in Romans 11:13-29, when he warned the Gentile world, the wild olive branches, not to boast against the natural, Jewish branches, which were broken off. But when Gentile believers took a haughty attitude, saying, "The Jews are beyond salvation," in essence, they began boasting over the Jewish branches.

This boasting takes on various forms. One of the major forms is in the systematic theology known as "Covenant Theology." There are three major lines of Covenant Theology: Covenant Postmillennial, Covenant Amillennial, and Covenant Premillennial. All of these lines identify the Church as the "New Israel" to a lesser or greater degree. All of them are saying that some of the promises that God made to Israel will never be fulfilled to literal, ethnic Israel, rather, they will only be fulfilled to the Church. Covenant Theology, which has appropriated the Jewish blessings for itself while leaving the Jews with the curses, is guilty of boasting over the branches, and that is exactly what the Book of Romans as a whole argues against.

The Book of Romans, the first systematic theology, contains the themes of biblical faith in doctrine and practice. In the first eight chapters, Paul deals with the theology of God's righteousness. He points out that the righteousness of God has been revealed against all the unrighteousness of men, and that all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, have failed to attain God's righteousness. Because man, on his own,

cannot attain the righteousness of God, God took the step of providing righteousness for man by means of His Son.

There are three facets of God's righteousness in the work of salvation. The past aspect is justification; once a person has become a believer in the Messiahship of Yeshua, he is once-and-for-all justified from sin. The present facet of the salvation of God's righteousness is sanctification; the Holy Spirit is now indwelling us, slowly conforming us more and more to the image of the Son of God. The future facet of God's salvation is glorification; we shall some day be glorified, and we shall be like Him. This is the theology of God's righteousness.

In light of the theology of God's righteousness in chapters 1-8, Paul then deals with the practice of God's righteousness in chapters 12-16. The question is, "Okay, so what difference does that make?" He shows how one should work out God's righteousness in a day to day experience. That is the reason the Book of Romans is the great book of both the doctrine and the practice of God's righteousness.

Between the theology of God's righteousness in chapters 1-8, and the practice of God's righteousness in chapters 12-16, Paul deals with the issue of Israel and how God's righteousness works its way out in His dealings with Israel, past, present, and future in chapters 9-11. Concerning the past, Israel's rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus did not catch God by surprise in chapter 9; it was very much part of the divine plan. Concerning the present, God is not dealing with Jews nationally, but with individual Jews so that whosoever, Jew or Gentile, calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved in chapter 10. Then, he deals with both the present and future in chapter 11. In the present, even today, there is a Remnant among the Jews according to the election of grace. There are Jewish people individually coming to saving faith, and these become the Remnant of Israel, the true Israel of God. Concerning the future, the day is coming that, when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, all Israel will be saved. So Paul deals with the theology of Israel or Israelology between his discussion of the theology of God's righteousness and the practice of God's righteousness.

3. The Center of One's Theology

The point is clear: the Jew must be the center of one's theology. This is the exact area where Covenant Theology has failed. Dispensationalism fulfills this biblical demand. Covenant Theology fails to fulfill this demand because of its consistent confusion between Israel and the Church.

Because of the role of Israel in Dispensational Theology, there is a sense of urgency in the realm of Jewish evangelism. That is why, even today, most Jewish missions in this country are being supported by dispensational churches, rather than by Covenant Theology churches.

Their attitude toward Jewish evangelism becomes a standard of judgment upon their theology: *for by their fruits ye shall know them*. Covenant Theology fails to take Israel into consideration because of their confusion between Israel and the Church; for them, the Church is the whole “bag” of God's program.

A theology of any kind that leads to a failure to proclaim the gospel to the Jewish people shows them to be guilty of boasting over the broken branches. Those who boast over the broken branches are failing to receive certain blessings from God.

C. The Church has Lost her Doctrinal Unity

The third thing the Church has lost is her doctrinal unity. The many churches have split over issues that might have been alleviated simply by having the Jewish perspective.

1. The Issue of Baptism

For example, the Church has split over the issue of baptism in two ways. One way is the mode of baptism: Is baptism by immersion or by sprinkling or by pouring? The answer is: Only by immersion. It should be kept in mind that baptism was a Jewish practice long before it was a church practice. If there were Jewish believers in the congregation of whom they could ask, “How did Jews practice baptism?” they could answer, “We always practiced it by means of immersion.” Furthermore, what about infant baptism? Jews do not immerse infants. Immersion is for those who are old enough to make a decision.

Baptism is one major area the Church has split over and lost her doctrinal unity, an issue that might have been resolved if the Jewish believers had not disappeared from the church.

2. The Issue of Communion

A second example is the issue of communion or the Lord's Supper. Churches have split over the issue of transubstantiation or consubstantiation. But they could have asked the Jewish believer, “What is the meaning of communion?” He could point out that this was simply part of the Passover, and that Yeshua took the two major elements of the Passover, the bread and the cup, and identified those two elements with His body and His blood.

The key word in the Passover is “remembrance.” That is what Jesus emphasized: to do this in remembrance of Him. This is the meaning of the Lord's Supper; there is no such thing as the bread or the wine changing into the body or blood of the Messiah.

3. The Teaching of Amillennialism

A third example of how the Church has lost her doctrinal unity is the teaching of Amillennialism that says that while, Messiah will some day

come back, He is not coming to establish any kind of literal kingdom on this earth. A Jewish believer could say, “You could not say that without endangering His Messianic credentials.” For example, if Yeshua had not been born of a virgin, He is not the Messiah, because that is part of His Messianic credentials. Or, if Jesus had not been born in Bethlehem, He is not the Messiah, because that is part of His Messianic credentials. Or, if Yeshua had not died the way it is described in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, then He is not the Messiah, because that is part of His Messianic credentials. By the same token, if Jesus is not coming for the purpose of establishing a literal kingdom on this earth, then, once again, He is not the Messiah, pure and simple, because that, too, is part of His Messianic credentials.

4. The Issues of Legalism

A fourth example of how the Church as lost her doctrinal unity is the issues of legalism. Churches have split over such issues as what part of the Law to keep or not to keep, what constitutes the Sabbath, as well as wine drinking and dancing. Again, nobody asked a Jewish believer, “What do these things mean in the Jewish frame of reference in which the Bible was written?”

D. The Church has Lost her Doctrinal Purity

The fourth thing that the Church has lost because she withheld the gospel from the Jews is her doctrinal purity.

1. By False Doctrines

One way that the Church has lost her doctrinal purity is by false doctrines such as that of Catholicism, which brought in the issue of images and began the practice of bowing down and “crossing” themselves before statues of Yeshua, of Mary, of Joseph, and the saints. Because they had withheld the gospel long enough for the Jews to disappear from the Church, Gentiles saw no problem with bringing in these images and bowing to them. No Jewish believer would ever have allowed for that kind of debasement of God's truth. The problem of Catholicism and all of the false teachings that came with it could have been avoided if there were Jewish believers in the Church.

2. Through Liberalism

Another way that the Church has lost her doctrinal purity is through liberalism. Liberalism began spreading in the churches at the turn of the twentieth century as ministers began denying such fundamental doctrines as the Virgin Birth, the inspiration of Scripture, and the literal Resurrection of Jesus. But again, this was because there were no longer Jews in the Church to put a cap on these kinds of false teachings. If a minister had stood in the pulpit and said that Yeshua was not born of a virgin, a Jewish believer would not accept it, because that is part of His Messianic credentials. If he had denied that

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Jesus rose from the dead, no Jewish believer could accept it because that, too, is part of His Messianic credentials. Furthermore, if he began to deny the inspiration of Scriptures, a Jewish believer who holds the Scriptures dearly and who knows that much Jewish blood was shed over the preservation of the Scriptures simply could not stand for that. And so the Church has also lost her doctrinal purity by withholding the gospel from the Jewish people.

III. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH TO THE JEWS

There are at least three aspects of the Church's responsibility to the Jews: evangelizing the Jewish people, sharing material things, and praying for the Jewish people.

A. Evangelizing the Jewish People

The first aspect of the Church's responsibility is in the realm of evangelism: the Church is responsible to proclaim the gospel to the Jew first.

1. The Principle of Evangelism - Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

This verse gives the principle of evangelism: whenever the gospel goes out, in whatever means it goes out, it is to go out *to the Jew first*. There is only one verb that controls the last two clauses, the verb is. It is in the Greek present tense, which emphasizes continuous action. This means that the gospel is continuously God's power to save, and so it is continuously *to the Jew first*. If one tries to reinterpret this verse, like so many have, as simply to mean that “the gospel was *to the Jew first*, but it is no longer,” the verse would then have to mean that “the gospel used to be God's power to save, but it is no longer.” If the gospel is always God's power to save, then it is always *to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*.

2. The Principle Applies to All

This principle applies regardless of the method of evangelism, whether it is person to person, door to door, radio, TV, mass evangelism, whatever. This principle applies regardless of specific individual calling. It applies to both active evangelism, when one is doing the work of an evangelist, and to passive evangelism, when one is supporting those who are doing the work of evangelism. Either way, the gospel is *to the Jew first*.

Some have said, “It is one thing for missionaries of Ariel Ministries to follow this principle, because they are doing the work of full time Jewish evangelism, but does this principle really apply to someone who was called to go elsewhere; such as China, Japan, the American Indian, Taiwan, Africa, Australia, New Zealand? Does it really apply

in these cases?"

Paul answers this very issue in Romans 11:13-14: *But I speak to you that are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry; if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh, and may save some of them.*

Here, Paul points to himself as one who was not called to go to Jews. His calling was to be the apostle of the Gentiles, while Peter was the apostle of the Jews. And yet, while Paul's calling was to be to the Gentiles, he never forgot the principle of Romans 1:16. Everywhere he went, he went *to the Jew first*.

3. The Principle at Work

Paul's actions in the Book of Acts shows this very principle at work, beginning in Acts 13:2-3: *And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

It was in Acts 9 that Paul received his commission to be the apostle of the Gentiles, but only as of chapter 13 is he sent out by the Church of Antioch to do just that. Now the apostle of the Gentiles goes out to the Gentiles, but his procedure is always *to the Jew first*.

Act 13:5 states: *And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.*

Verse 14 states: *But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.*

Acts 14:1: *And it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed.*

Acts 16:12-13a: *and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer.*

Because this was a Sabbath prayer meeting, it means that it was a Jewish prayer meeting. Paul came to Philippi, but the Jewish community in Philippi was too small to have a synagogue, and he could not go immediately to the synagogue to proclaim the gospel. When there were not enough Jews in a community to finance a synagogue, the Jewish rule was that they were to have their prayer meeting on the Sabbath by a body of water. Paul waited until the Sabbath day, went to a place where he knew the Jews would gather, and fulfilled the commission to proclaim the gospel to the Jew first.

Another instance of showing the principle of Romans 1:16 at work is found in Acts 17:1-2: *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and*

Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures.

Again in Acts 17:10: *And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroea: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.*

And in Acts 17:16-17a: *Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with Jews and the devout persons.*

When Paul came into Athens and saw the city given over to idolatry, his spirit was provoked to preach to those who worshipped the idols. However, it was not the Jews who worshipped these idols, because, by then, idolatry had ceased to be a Jewish problem. It was the Gentiles of Athens who worshipped these idols, and he was provoked to preach to these Gentiles. But the principle of Romans 1:16 had to stand, so he went to the synagogue first in verse 17, and then he went on to the Gentile Greeks in verse 18.

Acts 18:1 states: *After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. Verse 4 states: And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.*

Verse 19 states: *And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.*

Acts 19:1 states: *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus.*

Verse 8 states: *And he entered into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God.*

Finally, in Acts 28:17: *And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews.*

Because Paul was a prisoner when he came to Rome, he could not go to the synagogue. So to fulfill Romans 1:16, he called the Jewish people to himself in order to proclaim the gospel *to the Jew first*.

Romans 1:16 is the principle; Romans 11:13-14 teaches that the principle applies to all; and the Book of Acts shows the principle and action at work. The gospel is always to go *to the Jew first*, both in active evangelism, when one is doing the work of an evangelist as these Acts passages show, but also in passive evangelism, when one is supporting those who are doing the work of evangelism.

B. Sharing Material Things

The second aspect of responsibility that the Church has to the Jew is to share material things with the Jews, especially Jewish believers. Romans 15:25-27 states: *but now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it has been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. Yea, it has been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been*

made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal [material] things.

This passage teaches that, because Gentiles have become *partakers* of Jewish spiritual blessings, a point that was made earlier, the Gentiles have become indebted to the Jews. The way the Gentile believers fulfill or pay off their indebtedness is to meet the physical needs of Jewish believers. This also includes the supporting of Jewish missions financially. This is a good example of passive evangelism *to the Jew first*. Gentile believers have the obligation to share with Jewish believers and Jewish missions in some material way.

C. Praying for the Jewish People

The third aspect of the Church's responsibility to the Jewish people is to pray for them. Psalm 122:6 states: *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper that love you.*

This verse begins with an imperative, a command: *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*. Those who pray for the peace of Jerusalem are promised blessings not available by other means. Those who pray will be blessed by God in keeping with the principle of the Abrahamic Covenant: *I will bless them that bless you*. According to Bible prophecy, the peace of Jerusalem is tied into the Second Coming.

The one prerequisite to the Second Coming is Israel's national salvation. The way to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is to pray for the salvation of the Jewish people. Isaiah 62:1-2 states: *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. And the nations shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.*

In the overall context that preceded this passage, Isaiah the Prophet has been given revelations of Jerusalem's future glory as a saved city and the capitol of a saved nation. Because of that prophecy, Isaiah now states that he will pray, and will continue to pray, until this comes to pass.

Later, in verses 6-7, he adds: *I have set watchmen upon your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*

The point of these two verses is that God has appointed angels upon the walls of Jerusalem. Their only ministry is to keep reminding God of His promise to make Jerusalem a center of the earth and a saved city. Not only is Isaiah praying, but angels are also praying for Israel's salvation.

One more example along this line is in Romans 10:1: *Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.*

Paul is an example of a New Testament saint; his prayer life consisted of, among many things, requests for the salvation of the Jewish people. This is the third responsibility of the Church to the Jews: to pray for the salvation of the Jewish people.✠

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS BIBLE STUDY, DR. FRUCHTENBAUM RECOMMENDS:

MBS002, 003, 005, 006, 007, 015, 018, 026, 027, 040, 062, 080, 087, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 134, 155, 157, 158, 176, 177 and 178

