Why Preach Christ to the Jews? Part 1

By Charles Feinberg

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The subject of this cassette message is: Why preach Christ to the Jews? Why preach Christ to the Jews? I'd like for you to turn with me to that Monumental book given to the Apostle Paul by the spirit of God. It's the first of the epistles in the order of our New Testament books Immediately after Acts. Romans 1 Verses 15, Better yet, verses 14-18. Romans 1 Verses 14-18, "I am debtor", says Paul, "Both to the Greeks and to the barbarians", that's the non-Greeks, "both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome Also. For I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it", That is to say in the gospel, "is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith". My dear friends, this passage Has a companion text along with it and that's in Romans 11 Verses 11-15. Says Paul In these important words there in what we call the Jewish chapters, Romans 9 to 11, now this is Romans 11:11-15. "I say then, have they", meaning the Jews, "stumble that they should fall?" means fall irretrievably, Irrecoverably, God forbid. "But rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them is the riches of the world and the diminishing of them, the riches of the Gentiles how much more their fullness for I speak to you Gentiles inasmuch then as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office. If by any means I may provoke to jealousy, jealous imitation them who are my flesh and might save some of them. For if the casting away of
them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"
I've read then, from the first chapter of Romans and from the 11th chapter of Romans. And we're
thinking now in this cassette message on, "why preach Christ to the Jews?"

Now as you well know friends, there's so many different and varied phases of Christian
activity that one does well before he enters upon any one of them to ask whether it has a
reasonable basis or foundation in the scriptures. Now Jewish Missions, or preaching the gospel to
the Jews, can claim no exception to this general rule. Either It rests upon a reasonable basis in the
scriptures or it's not worthy of our consideration, our prayer, time, or effort. There is no middle
ground, we cannot be doing this and that and the other all at the same time. You heard of that
story of that truly confused general who jumped on his horse and rode off in all directions.
There's no way to make any progress in that fashion. One doesn't get anywhere, he doesn't
achieve a goal doing that.

And so, "Why should we preach Christ to the Jews?" Now some think they have proper
reasons for not being interested in the evangelization of the Jews. But actually as you view them
more closely, they are merely excuses. For instance, there is the oft repeated excuse," Israel is a
peculiar people". Now that argument, or excuse, can be leveled with just as much force against
any people or peoples that differ from us in any of their manners or Customs or languages. In a
very real sense, Though, Israel is peculiar, peculiarly God's. Deuteronomy 14:2 tells us that God
has chosen them from among all the nations of the earth to be his own special people. And that's
just one more reason that they should have peculiar efforts directed to them for their
evangelization. Others say it's just a temporary problem. We are told that assimilation, or
enlightenment, or even intermarriage will render the question negligible. A number of years ago
the great English Jewish writer Zangwill wrote a tremendously telling work, The Melting Pot.
And in it, he shows that although many may be melted in the pot, and may become homogeneous and be incorporated in the areas where they are, there's something about the people of Israel that God has designed. He doesn't emphasize the God though that we know that God has designed that they might be perpetuated, that they might be preserved. And that as a nation.

Now as for assimilation, it's been well said that Israel is like Jonah. The whale could neither assimilate him nor exterminate him and all the attempts that have been made to exterminate him. Attempts at annihilation began with Pharaoh of Egypt in the book of Exodus and that's because that was the beginning of their national history. And as soon as they began to become a nation, Satan leveled all his guns against them. And then you look down through the histories and you see Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. taking the last two tribes into Babylonian captivity after the northern tribes had been taken into Assyrian captivity in the year 722 or 721 B.C. And then along came Haman. In the latter part almost the end of the sixth century B.C. and nothing would suit him but to wipe out all Jews, men, women, and children. Nothing more or nothing less would suit his devilish hatred and venom against them. He wanted to wipe them out completely. And then we read in the second century B.C. about 168 to 165 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanies, one of the rulers in Syria. He was a Greco-Syrian monarch. He had come from one of the generals of Alexander. Alexander had four great generals: Ptolemy, Salukis [sp?], Lysimachus, and Cassander [sp?], and Antiochus Epiphanes was one of the Descendants of the Seleucid dynasty. He tried to wipe the Jews out, tried to proscribe and to prohibit all their religious feasts, all the religious customs. He even had a sow offered up on the altar in Jerusalem and an image of Zeus put in the holiest of holies. And then Titus in 70 A.D. We know how Israel is scattered throughout the world. Oh as far as extermination is concerned, annihilation is concerned, many have tried it, to say nothing about the devastations of the Crusades and the
persecutions of the Middle Ages, and the Spanish Inquisition, and present day suppressive and oppressive measures even after the miserable Hitler Nazi regime. You would have thought the world had seen enough but there are still oppressive, suppressive measures against Israel. The conclusion is inevitable then, friends, that Israel is an everlasting nation. God said so. It was at the time when Israel, you would think, was down at the lowest ebb where one prophet had been for a number of years indicating there was no hope for them except in the matter of capitulating To the Great Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar. It was Jeremiah. And yet that same prophet who again and again indicates that they are definitely, unmistakably headed for judgment, Captivity too. It's he who says in Jeremiah 31 verses 35 to 37, "Thus saith the Lord who give up the sun for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and the stars are for light by night, who divideth the sea when its raves roar, the Lord of hosts is his name; If these ordinances", that means if these orderly operations of nature, "depart from before me", if they quit, if they cease, if they're cancelled out, "saith the Lord, Then the seat of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the Lord, if heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seat of Israel for all that they have done Saith the Lord". So Israel, that's the only conclusion we can come to, Israel is an everlasting nation. It's the Jeremiah who tells us in the same book that, "Though I make an end of all the nations, whither I've scattered you I will not make a full end of you". So excuses, Friends, are never a proper response to a reasonable need.

The incident is told of an ungodly man who was once exhorted to become a Christian. His defense was that he couldn't understand the Bible. He said, "I cannot learn from reading the Bible. Where certain races came from, that’s why I never became a Christian". He was then asked whether it was his custom to attend to the most important duties of a life first or whether it
was his custom to attend to the matters of less importance first. He said, "Well of course, as an intelligent person, I always put the same important things first. I always put significant things at the head of the list as any intellectual man would do". He was then asked whether he regarded this as more important or that as more important. Which did he regard as the more important question, where a certain race came from or where he was going? Well after some hesitation he said, "Well Where I'm going, of course". You see, like many others, he was ready to hide behind flimsy excuses rather than face his recognized duty and opportunity. Away with excuses, dear friends, away with them once and for all. Let's turn to scriptural reasons and that's the best. That's what we must see our lives guided by.

Let's turn to reasons from Scripture why we should preach Christ to the Jews. Now the first reason and it is an all commanding reason, it is an all sufficient reason if we had no other one. This would suffice in itself and it's that command of the Lord Jesus Christ, Not a suggestion of the Lord Jesus, but a command of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read this in Matthew 10 verses 5 and 6, it's After the wonderful list, The first listed in the Gospel of Matthew on the twelve disciples, the names of the twelve always beginning with Simon Peter And ending with Judas Iscariot who also betrayed him. Now notice verse 5 of Matthew 10, "These 12 Jesus sent forth and commanded them saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter not." don't do this, don't do that, but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. You say, "Oh yes my good preacher, that’s Matthew 10, that’s before Christ was [inaudible], that's before he was ridiculed. That's before he was put upon a Roman gibbet. It was before he died and was crucified". True he said, "Go Not to the Gentiles, not to the city of the Samaritans but go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel". But I'm sure you, as well as all others who know the scripture, will readily admit that the book of Acts is after not only the life ministry
of the Lord Jesus on earth, It's after his crucifixion, after his burial, after his glorious resurrection in power. And listen to what he says in Acts 1:8, "They had asked him", the disciples had asked him, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" seems as everything, as though everything is already cleared. All is clear sailing now since your work on the cross has been completed. Will you then at this time restore the Kingdom of Israel? Our Lord Jesus said, "It’s not for you to know the Times or the seasons". Believers of this age are not to be occupied with those things. The father has put those in his own power but oh what a strong word to show what our business is. "but ye shall receive power When the Holy Spirit is come upon you, when he's come upon you and You shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part", Singular, The last part, "unto the uttermost part of the earth". Did you notice that? Both in Jerusalem and in all Judea there is the command of Christ, still the same. Still the word go to Israel. Go to my brethren according to the flesh. Go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Now how can anyone claim to follow Christ and love him and yet not perceive that his heart yearned for his people Israel? Notice the depth of feeling in his words in Matthew 23:37, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her. How often would I have gathered together my children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings but ye would not? Oh how often would I", he was heartbroken, "How often would I but you would not". And how he wept over them as he sat above Jerusalem and said, "Oh if you'd only known in this day, the hour of your visitation, the hour when God visited you with intended blessing but now these things are hid from your eyes".

Jeremiah The great prophet, called the weeping prophet, in his lamentations, five chapters in the book of Lamentations, cries out bitterly, mournfully, inconsolably for the destruction of his people. He is crying because of that but his heart's not more tender, nor that of any of the Old
Testament servants of God, Than is the compassionate heart of the Holy One of Israel. Moses was not as tender, nor was Daniel nor Ezra, nor Nehemiah, Those whose prayers we have at great length. No. No one was as tender as the Holy One of Israel. And we know the command of Christ full well, "I am sending you to them". And you remember the great Abrahamic promise, "I will bless them that bless you and I will curse him that curseth you".

We know the command full well. In clear, unmistakable language yet remains for us one thing, to do it gladly, willingly, and readily. Now we have our marching orders. It's our portion. It's our business to please our commander. As good soldiers of the cross to please him. How? In all things. now if there were no other Reasons, I submit to you if there were no other reason for preaching Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ In his saving grace, if there were no other reason for preaching him to the Jews, we already have an incomparable reason an incomparable rationale, And yet when we turn to the epistles as I’ve read at the beginning of this message in Romans 1:16. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek", that's still an age in which the Jew is included. He is to be visited by messengers of the Gospel to preach the truth to them.

So we have the example of Paul along with the command of Christ in Matthew 10 and Acts 1:8. We have Romans 1:16 and then I also read that marvelous chapter, Romans 11. I want to read just verses 13 and 14 again. Romans 11 verse 13 and 14, we read, "For I speak to you Gentiles", and Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles as Peter was to the Jews, "For I speak to you Gentiles inasmuch as I am the apostle of the gentiles, I magnify mine office", that means I do the work God has committed to me. I take care of my duty. I'm magnifying my office. I perform it by the power of God in the way that it should be. If by any means, what’s your motivation Paul? If by any means, Not only that he might win gentiles to the Lord Jesus as savior and Lord but
"that I may provoke to jealousy them who are my flesh", that's Israel, "and might save some of them". My dear friend you and I nor anyone else can read the Acts of the Apostles without noting very carefully that Paul was called to the Gentiles. At the same time, you can't fail to notice that he always had the Salvation of his own people at heart. Do we not have his own statement in Romans 9:1-5 that he has as an angina He says, "I have continual sorrow, Great heaviness in my heart". He said, "I could even ask God to curse me eternally, have me suffer eternal perdition if my own brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh might come to know Jesus of Nazareth as the son of David, as the Messiah, as the savior of our souls". And remember the Apostle Paul was no second class follower of Christ. How many of us would dare to say what he said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "be ye followers of me even as I am also of Christ"? Which one of us would dare say anything like that? Yet he did. And don't miss it when you read Acts, please. He never missed the synagogue in any of his missionary journeys. I've heard so many people say, "Yes he was in one place and then when there was so much opposition stirred against his message The Jews came and set up a riot and all." that he said, "lo, I go I've given you the message, you wouldn't receive it. I go to the Gentiles". Did that happen? Yes. But will you please notice, read on the record, the very next town that he went to, and the very next place that he reached. He went immediately to the synagogue. He never missed the synagogue in any of his missionary journeys and he didn't expect to find Gentiles in the synagogues but he expected to find the Jews. Yes he did say, "Lo I go to the Gentiles". But when you read Acts There are 28 chapters and in that last chapter of Acts you find Paul still asking the Jewish elders to come to him, to his home, So that he might explain to them the gospel of their messiah who has come According to the promise of God. And I've often said, I repeat too, that if Acts had 128 chapters instead of just 28, in the 128th chapter I can assure you the Apostle Paul would still be taking the
marvelous gospel that saved him, that redeemed him, he would want for his own kinsmen
According to the flesh, those who were bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, he would want
them also to have this marvelous opportunity of trusting that one as savior. Yes. He didn't think
that they had enough chances. Although they had too much he wanted them to have the way of
life explained to them as well.

So we have two marvelous, I think all compelling, reasons why we should preach Christ
to the Jew: The command of the Lord Jesus himself. Did he ever say so? Yes, unmistakably. And
Paul, did he ever do it? Oh what an example. How could he do it when he was a missionary? He
was an apostle to the gentiles. He always found time to get to the synagogue as well. If you want
something done always ask a busy man and if you want to know how busy the Apostle Paul was,
read 2 Corinthians chapter 11 and 12 and you'll see how many things he did, but he always had
time to include Israel.

And then there is yet a third Very telling reason for preaching Christ, telling Christ,
sharing Christ with the Jews. That's the need of the people. The need of the people? Yes. In 1
John 2:23 we read, "Whosoever", that means anyone who denies the son, "Whosoever denieth
the son, the same hath not the father he that confesseth the son hath the father Also." there are no
three ways about it. Either one has the son by faith in him, received him as savior, and has God
the Father, knows the true worship, or he doesn't. There's no middle way. John tells us in his
marvelous gospel, John 14 and verse 6. He says, "I'd say to you that I am the way, Jesus said
unto him, 'I am the way'". When Philip wanted to know the way he said, "I am the way". Not a
way or a better way, not even the best way, "I'm the only way. I am the way, the truth, and the
life; no man", Jew, Gentile, anywhere in the world, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me."
Now too many believe, my friend, even when they don't say so that because the Jew is found in civilized lands, he's in prominent places of trust and leadership. He might be in the cabinet, he might be in the Supreme Court membership. He may be in places in the Senate or in the Congress, he may be in judgeships in the land. They believe, many do, though they won't come out always and say so that because the Jew is found in cultured lands and in prominent places of trusts and leadership that the Jew stands the less need of Christ than do the pagan nations and other unconverted peoples. My dear friends let me ask some pointed questions. Do we actually presume to maintain that civilization is a substitute for the cross of Christ? God forbid. Do we mean that attainment of whatever character, economic, intellectual, political whatever, do we mean to state that attainment can take the place of atonement? God forbid. Do we mean to say that the progress of men can render unnecessary the plan and purpose of God? A thousand times God forbid. Look at this people. Despite all of their advances, in spite of all their attainments, are they not completely, absolutely, yes eternally lost without Christ? You have to say yes. You have to answer affirmatively if the Bible teaches but one way of salvation. And there is only one way, John 14:6, Acts 4:12. There's no other way under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. And doesn't the Jewish mind furnish as fertile a ground as the gentile mind for atheism, for agnosticism, for materialism, for all the other miserable isms and infidelities of our day? You have to say yes. One is on the same plane as the other because Romans 3:23 has said, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God", and Romans 3:9 has indicated oh so plainly That we before laid the charge, we have made clear the indictment, the accusation, that both Jew and Gentile are under sin. And it's because of what Jeremiah told us in Jeremiah 17:9, "that the heart of man Is Deceitful Above All things is sick, desperately wicked. Who can know it?" And the longer we live the more we ask, "Who does know it?" So I say,
One's mind is just as susceptible as the other, Jew as Gentile, equally lost, equally undone, equally helpless and hopeless without the gospel. And then shouldn't the great perplexity of this nation now torn and peeled on every side even though they have their own land, but notice the enemies that surround them as an Ever Ready noose about their necks ready to snuff out their very breath, shouldn't their perplexity make our hearts tender, incline them toward the Jew? Are not many of them in a state of irreligion and ex-religion? I often feel sorry when some of my friends, some of my students, tell me about their attempts to bring the gospel to the unsaved Jew. They treat them as if they knew the Bible just as Moses would know the truth of God, or know the Lord just as Abraham did, Or Daniel. My dear friends, they are just as pagan and without religion they are in a state of irreligion and ex-religion as so much of the gentile, non-Jewish world around about us. According to some Jewish sources of information, somewhere between 60 and 80 percent of all Jews in America have no connection at all with synagogues or temples whether it's of the Orthodox, or Conservative, or Reformed branches of present day Judaism. The need of this people is clearly set forth in an Article that was written by a Jewish high school student some years ago in the Jewish forum. It went this way, he spoke with an amazing amount of insight. Said this Jewish high school student and I'm quoting, "I've gone to the synagogue for guidance in an Orthodox synagogue. I heard gibberish without meaning to me", because he didn't understand the Hebrew language which is beautiful indeed, it's the language of the Old Testament But he hadn't been trained in it. And he said, "I heard gibberish without meaning to me. The ritual with its Talith", that's the prayer shawl, "and the Torah", the Law of Moses, "seems strange to me. The atmosphere was alien, it was foreign. The sermon was useless despite its parable from the day's selection of the law and its inevitable moral." And I may stop long enough to say that in Orthodox Jewish synagogues there's not a message given every Saturday.
There is the reading of the law as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3 but there isn't a sermon always because the actual prayers and the reading of the scriptures from the scrolls takes up all the time that there is. But on occasion, the rabbi will give a sermon and this young man says the sermon was useless in spite of its parable from the day's selection of the law and its inevitable moral. "It had nothing to do with my problem." Besides he said, "The prayers were not read in a manner conducive to beauty", But as far as he was concerned, "instead they were mumbled, garbled, and twisted into empty syllables." Then he said, "I went to a reformed synagogue. The ritual and service were simple and easy to understand but cold. They lacked beauty and spiritual warmth. So I went to the Free Synagogue founded by a world famous rabbi considered one of the foremost leaders that American Jewry has ever afforded. Well that synagogue did have Attendance. There were Members of the congregation. But the rabbi said not one word about God. Not one word about the truths that would have to be in religion. He spoke instead about maltreatment of racial and political minorities, about the primacy of civil rights and political rights." He said, "All these things seem very distant when I think of my own burning problem". Think of this young man under conviction of sin and his knowledge of his need of God's help. He says, "When I think of my own burning problem and the similar problems of my friends all of those other things seem very distant." He said, "I went to the synagogue. I was offered nothing real", and then he gets personal with the leaders. He says, "Well you rabbis and laymen, you leaders, all of you

[End part 1]