This is a message on theme beginning at Jerusalem by Doctor Charles Lee Feinberg, dean and professor of Old Testament at Talbot theological seminary. In Luke's gospel, the last chapter, there are some very vital and important words so significant a gospel by Luke. Luke 24 then, verse 44, reading to the end of the chapter, "And he said unto them, 'These are the words which I spoke unto you when I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me.'" Then open he there understanding that they might understand the scriptures and said unto them, "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem and you are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my father upon you but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high. And you let them out as far as to Bethany and he lifted up his hands and blessed them and it came to pass. While he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven and they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God, amen." You will notice that in this portion, verses 44 to 53, there is one city and only one city that is especially prominent and that is Jerusalem. Repentance, verse 47, and remission sin should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. Verse 49, terry ye the city of Jerusalem. Verse 52, they worshiped and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Beginning at Jerusalem. Now there are several passages of scripture in the New Testament that have direct and important bearing on the manner, the way, of presenting the gospel in this age called the age
of the church, yet, they have been grossly distorted on the one hand or they have been gravely misunderstood on the other hand. Now there are these, one of the one read already, Luke 24:47, "Repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name and to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem." And now there is Acts 1:8, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth." Another very important portion along this very same line is acts 3:26, "Unto you first God having raised up his servant sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." And Another, Acts 13:46, "And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said it was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you seeing you thrusted from you and judge yourself unworthy of eternal life [lull] will turn to the gentiles." Then the very well-known passage in the great epistle to the Romans, Romans 1:16, "For I'm not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." And then a final portion Romans 2:6 to 11, "God will render to every man according to his works, to them that by patience and well doing seek for glory and honor and in-corruption, eternal life. But unto them that are factious and obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness shall be [wrapped] in indignation, tribulation, and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil of the Jew first and also of the Greek but Glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek for there is no respect a persons with God." Now friends, though these scriptures are eminently clear, been read many times, they have been quoted, they have been preached upon, they're eminently clear. Yet there are those who become greatly incensed, they become very agitated, wrathful, when they are plied, in their plane common sense, evident meaning. Now there are number of reasons having been put forth to lessen or to obviate the force of these passages. For instance, one of
them is, beginning in Jerusalem means begin in your home field and home church and how many missionary conferences go on that theme, you'd think beginning in Jerusalem meant home missions, beginning in your home field and home church while there is ample, biblical, ground for working in the home field but to say beginning in Jerusalem means beginning you home field and home church, this applies scripture in a way that clouds the primary reference and interpretation. This case, then Jerusalem can mean any place in anything, anywhere in the world. I wonder if we are prepared to do that with the references to Jerusalem, as in Isaiah 2, that the mountain of the house of the Lord then in Jerusalem shall be exalted above the hills and above the plains and nations shall come unto it and so on. Are we going to do that with the reference in Isaiah 2? You try it and see the confusion. Another evasion to lessen the force of these passages is a second argument. It's that Jews did have it first. In other words, Paul is just speaking of the order in which the gospel, in historic times, was proclaimed. So here, you have a statement just of the historical nature of what has happened. What has been? One bible teacher, for instance, said, therefore in expressing to the Jew first, Paul was not at all prescribing an order of presentation of the gospel throughout this dispensation. He's simply recognizing the fact that to the Jew who had the law and divine provisions the gospel offer had first been presented and then to the gentiles. To claim that the gospel must be preached first to the Jews throughout this dispensation, he goes on to say, it's utterly to deny God's word that there is now no distinction between Jew and Greek, either because of the fact of sin, Romans 3:22, or to the availability to salvation, Romans 10:12. Not this dear man of god, able man, does not realize that Paul, in those passages, is speaking of the method of receiving salvation and they are all around the same basis. All the sin comes short of the glory of God and God is written his grace to all, to both Jew and Gentile or Greek. For whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Those passages
are plainly an unmistakably speaking of the method of receiving salvation. Not the method of its propagation, not the method of its preaching, not the method of its being spread abroad, also how does the fact that the Jews had it first bring the gospel, in God's way, now to the unsaved Jew in our day in time? And yet, there is a third evasion. We're told God has cast them off. Meaning what? Well, that God is through with them, they have no future, they have no present, they are relegated to the area of the lost, finally, irretrievably. Now that's to call God a liar and no one can do that and be held guiltless. How is that? Well God said, "I see them" did God cast out his people? God forbid. God did not cast off his people, which he foreknew. Please read that in Romans chapter 11, 1 and 2. And Paul goes in the rest of that 11th chapter of Romans to a very masterful presentation of how that could never be God's purpose, now, for Israel to be cast off irretrievably, gives himself as one of the proofs that that's not true. He gives the present chosen remnant, even now there is an election according, there is a remnant according to the election, grace and then finally how that cannot be true that God has cast them off irretrievably because in God's full wonderful program, in his hour, the hour of his choice, we read in the word of God that all Israel shall be saved, as it is written. The Lord shall come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob for this is my covenant within for when I shall take away their sin. But there is still that claim that God has cast them off. Remember, in Isaiah 49:15, Israel thought that too. Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she shall not have compassion for the son of her womb? Ye, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee? Speaking of evangelizing the Jews, bishop Felltham of London, England, was certainly right when he said, "It is still the most unpopular and the most misunderstood enterprise amongst the Christian people. Now the reasons behind the definite charge to begin at Jerusalem and the necessity for its fulfillment are, in the first place, the command of Christ. Before the cross, Christ made it plain how he wanted his
message spread. Matthew 10, verse 5 and 6, we read, "These twelve Jesus sent forth and charged them saying, 'Go not, into any way of the gentiles and enter not into any city of the Samaritans,'" told them not to go to these places but to, rather, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now, after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ he commanded again, as we read in Acts 1:8, he commanded them to begin in Jerusalem and then to go into all of Judea, Samaria, and to the outer most part of the earth. Where, friend, is the slightest hint in all of the New Testament, in fact anywhere in the New Testament, that this order has been changed, that has been revoked, that is has been nullified? Where was this commission ordered? Do you have a passage of scripture that show it was changed? What scripture cancels this word already given? If we use Acts 1:8 for missions around the world, why can't we use its plain statement as to where that particular plan and program of God is to begin? Is it a fallible Christ that we're worshiping? Furthermore, this is the blessed way in which Christ indicates that the Father has marvelously answered his prayer on the Christ, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do". That's grace, that's grace going out to those who have sinned grievously and his grace going out at the very place where the sad tragedy took place. They tell us that one of the most tragic of events occurred during the battle of San Juan preceding the historic surrender of Santiago in the charge on San Juan hill early in the month of July, 1898, it was lieutenant Orr, after whom we have a camp Orr in our country, lieutenant Orr, the head of a hand full of soldiers, was one of the first to reach the top of that hill as they charged the San Juan Hill. But just as he passed over the brow of San Juan, he saw a wounded Spanish soldier. He was lying on the ground, saw the man was in evident pain, needed help, so he pointed to him and said, "Take care of that man!" meaning that no harm was to be done. That all possible aide was to be given to him as soon as possible. Well, the Spaniard saw the motion of the officer’s hand. He didn't understand the language of
Lieutenant Orr, thinking it was a command to his soldiers to shoot, he raised his rifle, the wounded man did, he fired and Lieutenant Orr, brave and kind man that he was, dropped dead. The Spaniard had actually shot his best friend. When the men following Lieutenant Orr saw how cruelly that the Spaniard had misjudged his action, they were wild with rage and literally riddled the body of that murderer with bullets and rolled it into the trench. My friends, in wondrous contrast, our God, instead of sending legions of angels to avenge the death of his well-beloved, only begotten son, sent the disciples with a message of love and how making it clear that they were to begin at Jerusalem. In the second place, the necessity of starting at Jerusalem is to be seen in the example of the apostles. Now the disciples and apostles so understood the charge, the command, to begin at Jerusalem. To The Jew first. And for the first fifteen years, not a record, the first fifteen years of the churches history on earth, their ministry was confined to Israel. God didn't mean for it to be there and there alone but that's how clear they understood where the ministry was to begin, they didn't make any mistake on that but it took persecution, Acts 8, to make the disciples and apostles realize that God wanted the Gentiles included also. Without exception, the example of the apostles, they went to the Jew, first of all, they began with a Jew. More the remarkable, I would say, is this type of action on the part of Paul, why? Because he was commissioned as an apostle to the Gentiles but notice his practice and it will be most enlightening if you take God's word and read it through just as you find it. Acts 9 verse 20, and immediately he, this is Paul in the 9th chapter, right after his conversion, immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the son of God and then we find the Apostle Paul, you remember in the 13th chapter of Acts, he is in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. Acts 13:14, when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia and went into the synagogue, Acts 13:14, on a Saturday and sat down and after the reading of the laws, they do
even today, and the prophets who rules the synagogue said to them saying, "Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people say on" then Paul stood up and beckoning with his hand and gave us that remarkable, gave them and us, that remarkable address, his sermon in Antioch of Pisidia. But where? In the synagogue. In the synagogue. Then but you say along the way he was greatly opposed and what did he do? Well, he turned from them to the Gentiles in each individual city that when he went into the next city, notice Acts 17, when they pass through Amphipolis and Apollonian, they came to Thessalonian to where was what? A Synagogue of the Jews and Paul, as his manner was, please notice that Acts 17:2, as his manner was went in unto them three Sabbath days reasoning with them out of the scriptures. Opening and alleging that Christ had suffered and risen again from the dead and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ. Some of them believed and consorted with Paul in silence and the devout Greeks of great multitude and the chief woman, not a few, there you have Paul in the synagogue in Thessalonian, just as he was in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. Now, in Acts 19 verse 8, we read that Paul went into the synagogue, Paul at Ephesus. Then we read, he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and believed not but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them and separated the disciples disputing daily in the school of Tyrannous. This continued for the space of two years where he certainly tended the Jews. Wait ‘til the end of this tenth verse. So they're all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And then, we need not labor the point any further, the only thing we need to do now is look at the last chapter of Acts. And Acts has 28 chapters, look at the 17th verse. After Paul gets with great labor and great travail, gets to Rome, we find in Acts 28: 17 came to pass that after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews
together. And when they were coming together, he said to them, "Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. “Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me? But when the Jews spoke against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had anything to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." My dear friends, how can you miss it? He was always visiting the synagogue even though he was a commissioned apostle to the Gentiles. He was always visiting the synagogue and it wasn't because he was expected to find Gentiles there. He expected to find Jews and he did, too many among the slight to accuse ourselves that we are not called to witness to the Jews or support their evangelization. But here is Paul, going again and again, if there were 120 chapters in Acts, instead of 28, I can verily assure you that in that last chapter, Paul would still be going to his brethren to minister unto them the word of life according to the plan that God has given. But these people said they're not called to witness to the Jews. They remind us of an incident in which the older of two men was arguing with a younger men and was urging on this younger man the claim of missionary service and the young man kept saying, answering him, with a familiar excuse, "But I've never felt any compelling call" to the younger man "To give my life in that way. Really, I've never felt any compelling call", the other asked, "Are you sure you are within calling distance?" Very revealing question. Now the charge of the scripture is in the third place, the first you remember is the command of our Lord Jesus, the second example is the apostles, now thirdly the charge of the scripture is fully supported by the logic of it. There is divine logic behind the command, begin, at Jerusalem to the Jew first. Please, let us make this clear once and for all. First, it is not a matter of preeminence or
precedence although had God had certain favor to pets, for all who sinned, Romans 3:23, "All who sin come short of the glory of God." And remember, all without exception are offered riches of grace. God is rich in his grace to all, to Jew and Gentile, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Not a matter of preeminence, not a matter of precedence, not a matter of favoritism, it is a matter first, last, and always a matter of order. When rescuing folk from a burning building, there has to be some order. There must be some method. Everybody can't be told to jump into the net first. There has to be an order. In baking a cake, there has to be an order. You can't put all the mixture into the oven and then add the baking soda and the baking powder, of course not. You have to have an order. The command to the Jew first is the divine strategy, it's the divine plan, whether we like it or not it is the divine plan and strategy for world missions. Listen to Paul in Acts 13 verse 46, "Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said it was necessary" it was necessary "for the word of God, that the word of God should first have been spoken to you but seeing you put it from you and turned yourselves unworthy of everlasting life", lull we turned to the Gentiles, but notice it was necessary that it should first have been spoken to you. Now, did not God have an order of creation in Genesis 1 and 2? Read it my dear friends, it is the standing marvel of all students of the scripture and of all open minded scientists as well. Didn't God have a plan for his creation in Genesis 1 and 2? Yeah, verily, he did. Was Adam least in importance because he was created last? No, he was the crown of God's creation. Friends, it is first, last, and always a matter of method, of order, of plan, not a preference. Now secondly, Israel is God's firstborn. When God wanted Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go, he said through Moses, Exodus 4:22, "Israel is my firstborn. Israel is my son, they are my firstborn." And you see the testing ground of all God's dealings with man, his testing ground is Israel. For whatsoever, Romans 3:19 tells us, "For whatsoever things the law said, it said to them
that are under the law." That's Israel. He gave them the law at Sinai, Exodus 20. Why, that "every mouth in Israel may be stopped." They wouldn't have any boasting, they wouldn't have any comeback to God. They wouldn't have any kind of argument to put up against God's condemnation of them for not believing. Remember that, that every mouth may be stopped but what's the rest of it? And all the world, what was true of Israel, they're failures, they're lack of ability to come up to God's great standard for justification, that would be true all the way around. Israel was God's experimental station and so we read, "Every mouth may be stopped, Israel, and all the world become guilty before God." Now thirdly, Romans 1:16, we're told is only applicable at the beginning of New Testament times. But, my dear friends, you know well enough that Romans 1:16 was written in the church age. It is post Calvary, after Calvary, it is post incarnation, after the incarnation of our Lord Jesus, after the earthly ministry of our Lord. Yes, it is after the decent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It is fairly and squarely and fully in the church age. Now, we are living in the church age, God does not change his principles of deity within any given dispensation. To say the least, it would be tremendously confusing because, even when God deals in one way in a given age or period or epic or dispensation with man, you'll get it tremendously confused if you don't believe it. Just look around you and you would never guess from what you hear in many churches, in bible classes, and conversations of Christians, you would never in all the wide world guess that we are in God's age of grace. You'd think we are right under the Law of Moses. It is not unusual for somebody to say, "Well, so and so did such and such. Good for them, well they've got what they deserved!" If that isn't out Mosesing Moses, that will out Moses Moses any day in the week. But God doesn't change his principles. Many of the full-fledged Jews are in every land. They're in every country. So my friends, the order can be carried out by the church everywhere. And so
many people say, "Well, how can I, here in America, go and bring the message to the Jews in Tokyo?" There are Christians in Tokyo, there are Christians in Tokyo who should be witnessing the Jews. That is not an evasion that is not an out for us, no, the Jews are in every land, in every country, in every climb, in every geographic area. So, the order can be counted on by the church everywhere because the church is everywhere, where there is a believer, a group of believers who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, as folk read these passages, somehow they have forgotten when they are finding fall. For instance, with Romans 1:16, they don't seem to realize that Romans 2:6 to 11 is also in the scripture and I read you a portion of the tribulation and wrath, for instance, what happens there? Upon every soul of man that doeth evil of the Jew first and also the Greek but glory, honor, and peace for every man that worketh good to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no respective persons with God. You see, there's a disavowal, in verse 11, that there is any partiality with God. The very word there. Judgement will begin with Israel. Now, those who think the whole matter is unfair, that is partial to the Jews and it favors them, why, they're accusing God. I've heard of a church that had close to a quarter of a million dollars in the church budget for missions but not one cent that I could find for the evangelization of the Jews. But notice, Romans 2:11, I read it to you. God is not a respecter of persons, means he doesn't play favorites. Robert Marie McChain, the dear man of God who had a tremendous heart of love for Israel and you remember he had such a burden for them that he went off to the near east, to the holy land, to bring the gospel in that day to the unsaved Jews, he died a very young man. You remember a great man of God, Dr. Marie McChain. But while he was gone, with other brethren to bring the message of redeeming grace to the lost Jews in the holy land, God caused a revival to break out in his own church back there in Scotland and it swept over that area again and again. Oh yes, you could never touch Israel
without some reverse blessing coming upon your own heart and your own work. Robert Marie McChain was right. He said, "First in perdition he found faithful, but if obedient to the truth, first in salvation, should hear it in that order."