

December 2019

Dear friends of Israel and the Jewish people,

Most know Paul was Jewish but called to the Gentiles. His specific calling was to plant churches, as a Jew, to reach non-Jews. His goal...to expand the gospel to all nations. Change lives. Congregations were planted throughout Asia Minor. Some say up to 23 churches were planted by Paul directly or indirectly!

In 54 AD Paul penned a letter to believers in Rome with a great burden. His burden expressed in the first chapter of his letter:

“I am not ashamed of the gospel it is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe; to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.” Romans 1:16

There are mostly friendly debates within the Christian community surrounding Paul’s statement, “...to the Jew first...” But. What did he mean?

Following are just a few options:

- **The historic or chronological view:** Jesus went to the Jew first; or another way of looking at the verse, historically, is that the gospel came to, and through, the Jew first. Therefore Paul was just speaking chronologically. And that’s it.
- **The present day or Paul’s day view:** Paul went to the Jew first. He practiced “...to the Jew first...” In his missionary efforts he went to the synagogue first. They rejected him. Then he moved on to the Gentiles. The Jews are not a priority anymore. They might be important. But no more important than anyone else.
- **The priority view:** Paul was saying that not only in his, but in OUR mission effort (even today), we need to prioritize the gospel to the Jewish people. They are special for many reasons. Not only did he (Paul) prioritize the Jewish people in his efforts (by going to the synagogue first) but his desire was for the Gentile arm of the church to do the same (then and now).

The last view holds that Paul was intentionally reaching Gentiles for the gospel and planting churches SO THAT the (Gentile) church would prioritize the Jewish people in their mission efforts. Not at the expense of being Kingdom-minded and reaching the entire world, but in the process of being Kingdom-minded and reaching the entire world.

To paraphrase Paul in my own words he was saying in the “...to the Jew first...” verse (Romans 1:16), *“In the process of being Kingdom-minded Christians and taking Jesus to the whole world **DON’T FORGET** to take Jesus to the Jewish people. He came to us through the Jews. We need to take Jesus back to the Jews. And they need to be a part of, if not in, the front of our efforts.”*



I've been asked the question..., *“So, wait...(pause), if I meet two people on the street, one is Jewish, and the other is not...are you saying that I am commanded to talk to the Jewish person first?”*

My answer is, of course, “no.” Talk to whom you feel most equipped, and comfortable, to help. **“...to the Jew first...” is a principle, not an individual command. But it is a BIG principle.**

Our ministry practices “...to the Jew first...” as our model. We follow the lead of Paul (and dare I say Jesus?). We go to Jewish people first (locally and in Israel) and then we reach Jewish people through already established relationships that they have with their Christian friends.

2019 has been a very fruitful year for us and a year of growth. This year we have:

- Spoken about Jesus to Jewish people from around the world.
- Ministered to thousands of Christians to help them understand the Jewish roots of our faith and share Jesus with their Jewish friends.
- Brought Anna Beth Havenar to Atlanta as our new Community Outreach Coordinator. She has been with our ministry for three years, two of which were spent in Israel. Anna Beth will be helping me, building relationships with the American and Israeli Jewish communities in the Atlanta area, coordinating outreach and partnership events locally and abroad, as well as helping organize and lead our trips to Israel.
- Spent time in Israel, leading two tours as well as partnering with several other Jewish ministries in Israel to do on the ground work in the land we love so much. In Israel we met with social media ministries at Israel College of the Bible, engaged with Jewish students at Tel Aviv University, ministered at a soup kitchen in Tel Aviv to the homeless, drug addicts, and prostitutes. And we visited with a messianic congregation and a Baptist ministry accomplishing fruitful work for the sake of the Kingdom.
- Strengthened relationships with our Jewish friends (and helped others do the same), with synagogues, the Jewish community, and our presence in the local church.
- Witnessed Jewish people put their faith in Jesus for the first time!

We are looking forward to a new year filled with more fruit for the sake of Yeshua (Jesus), the Kingdom, and the gospel “...to the Jew first...”!

Please remember us in your prayers as we end one year and begin another. Also please remember us in your giving. **I do believe that every Christian, every church, and every mission committee, should have like Jesus, and like Paul, a “to the Jew first” mentality.**

Have a blessed celebration of the birth of our Messiah and a Happy New Year!

As always...in Him,

Murray Tilles
Director, Light of Messiah Ministries



**Light of Messiah Ministries is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization.
All contributions made by December 31st, 2019
will be received by January 31st, 2020.**