

Our Responsibility to Israel



God's Abundance (Part 18)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. We've seen that God makes His abundance available to us for every good work—2 Corinthians 9:8. Let me quote that once more:

> "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound to every good work." (NIV)

There is no shortage of God's grace. God is able to provide all our needs and He commits himself to do that. He commits himself to provide actually above our needs. He provides abundance that's over and above what we need. But the point is the abundance is made available for every good work. It's not for our own selfish indulgence, but it's for every good work. And it's not pleasing to God that we seek His abundance with selfish motives. Rather we must seek it in order that we may be able to do the good works that God requires of us as believers.

In my talk yesterday I focused on one important good work: helping the poor and especially widows and orphans.

Today I'm going to focus on another important responsibility that all of us as Bible believing Christians have, but unfortunately it's one that many of us have neglected: our responsibility to the Jewish people. To understand this we need to begin with the words of Jesus Himself. In John chapter 4 verse 22 Jesus is speaking to the Samaritan woman whom He met at the well of Jacob and He says this:

> "You [that's you Samaritans] worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know [we Jews]; for salvation is from the Jews." (NASB)

That's a basic statement of tremendous importance especially coming from the lips of the Saviour Himself. "Salvation is from the Jews." Maybe you've never really considered that. And yet if you do consider it, it's an indisputable historical fact. There is no other source of salvation but the Jewish people. Suppose there had been no Jews in history. What would be the consequences? Let me suggest some of them. There would be no patriarchs, no

prophets, no apostles. Bear that in mind—all the apostles of the New Testament were Jewish. No Bible—every book in the Bible is authored by a Jew. And finally, no Savior because, remember, Jesus by His human birth is Jewish. How would we get on without patriarchs, prophets, apostles, the Bible or the Savior? It's obvious—there would be no salvation. All Bible-believing Christians of all other races owe their entire spiritual inheritance to the Jewish people. We owe to them an incalculable debt. There is no one who can calculate the debt that one race is the channel through which God provided all those blessings—patriarchs, prophets, apostles, the Bible and the Saviour—to all other nations.

Now, something that many of us have overlooked, and I want to say that I'm not of Jewish background myself. Many of us have overlooked, and God today I think is speaking to many of us, that He requires all of us to acknowledge our debt to the Jewish people and to do something about repaying it. Listen to what Paul says in Romans 11 verses 30 and 31, and he is writing specifically to Gentile believers. This is what he says:

> "For as ye [Gentile believers] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief... [That's the unbelief of the Jewish people. That's the unbelief of the Jewish people that caused them to reject Jesus and it was the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus that made salvation available to all other races. So Paul says,] As ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through the unbelief of the Jews: Even so have these [Jews] also now not believed that through your mercy [the mercy of the Gentiles] they also may obtain mercy." (KJV)

Now, the phrase "through your mercy" can be interpreted more than one way. It can be "through the mercy that you received from God" or it can be "through the mercy that you show in turn." I believe it means both. I believe to us as Gentiles has been granted the mercy of God that came through the unbelief of the Jews but that also as we receive mercy from God we are obligated to show mercy. And we are obligated to show mercy to those through whom His mercy came to us.

Further on in Romans chapter 15 verses 26 and 27 Paul specifically applies this not merely to some spiritual repayment but to material and financial repayment of the debt. This is what he says and he is speaking about an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem which he was taking up amongst the Gentile churches. He says:

> "For Macedonia and Achaia [that's the churches in Macedonia and Achaia] were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. [That is churches that were primarily Gentile in their constitution decided to make a gift of mercy to the poor Jewish believers in Jerusalem. And then Paul comments on this in the next verse.] They were please to do it and, indeed, they owe it to them. [It's not just something that we do without any obligation, but we owe it.] ...and, indeed, they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings." (NIV)

I wonder if you have ever read that passage, or heard it, or understood it. Let's say it again:

> "For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jew's spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings." (NIV)

That is right there in the New Testament. Now the unfortunate truth is that over many centuries multitudes of Christians so far from seeking to repay their debt to the Jews have compounded it many times over. Now many Christians today are lamentably ignorant of past history of the Christian church. Consequently, they do not realize the awful way in which we Christians have compounded our debt to the Jewish people.

I'm going to read a short extract from my booklet Our Debt to Israel which brings this out:

> "Few Gentile Christians are aware of the deeply ingrained, but seldom stated, attitude of the Jews toward them. The Jews have suffered persecution in many different forms from many different peoples, but—in their view of history—their cruellest and most consistent persecutors have been the Christians. Before we reject this view as untrue or unfair, let us glance briefly at the kind of historical facts upon which it is based. In the Middle Ages the Crusaders, on their way through Europe to 'liberate' the Holy Land massacred entire Jewish communities—men, women and children—numbering many hundreds. Later, when they did succeed in capturing Jerusalem, they shed more

blood and displayed more cruelty than any of Jerusalem's many conquerors before them—except perhaps the Romans under Titus. All this they did in the name of Christ and with the cross as their sacred emblem. (For this reason I personally am never happy to see any genuine presentation of the Gospel described by the words 'crusade.') Later still, in the ghettos of Europe and Russia, it was Christian priests carrying crucifixes who led the mobs against the Jewish communities—pillaging and burning their homes and their synagogues, raping their women and murdering those who sought to defend themselves. Their justification for this was that it was the Jews who had 'murdered Christ.' Again, within living memory, the Nazis—in their systematic extermination of 6 million Jews in Europe—used as their instruments men who were professing Christians—mainly Lutherans or Catholics. Furthermore, no major Christian group, in Europe or elsewhere, raised their voices to protect or condemn the Nazi policy against the Jews. In the eyes of the Jews, multitudes of Christians stand condemned merely by their silence. To undo the affect upon the Jewish people of these experiences—and countless others like them—will take more than tracts or sermons. It will require acts—both individual and collective—that are manifestly as kind and merciful as the previous acts were unjust and cruel."

That's a quotation from my booklet Our Debt to Israel. Now let's ask ourselves simply and practically—what can we do to repay our debt to the Jewish people? I want to read again from my booklet Our Debt to Israel.

"First, we can express and cultivate an attitude of sincere love for Jewish people. Most standard forms of 'witnessing' practiced by Christians do not reach the heart of the Jewish people at all. In fact, they frequently anger them and alienate them. But it is amazing how the apparently hard exterior of a Jew will melt when confronted by warm unfeigned love. In nineteen centuries of dispersion among the other nations there is one thing that the Jews have seldom encountered—and that is love! Secondly, in Romans 11:11 Paul says that 'salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them [Israel] to jealousy.' This is another significant way in which we can repay our debt to the Jews—by enjoying and demonstrating the abundance of God's blessings n Christ in such a way that the Jews may be made jealous and desire what they see us enjoying. Thirdly, the Bible exhorts us to seek the good of Israel by our prayers: 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.' Fourthly, we can seek to repay our debt to Israel by practical acts of kindness and mercy. In Romans 12:6–8 Paul lists seven different gifts which Christians should cultivate and exercise. The last one he mentions is that of 'showing mercy.' I believe it is appropriate that we Christians exercise this gift not merely toward individual Jews, but toward Israel as a nation. Thus we would in some measure expiate the countless acts of injustice, cruelty and barbarity which have over the centuries been inflicted upon the Jews—often in the name of Christianity."

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about our obligation to all nations.

Radio Program

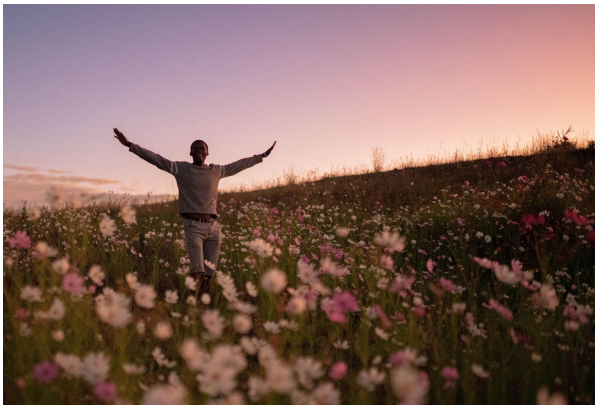
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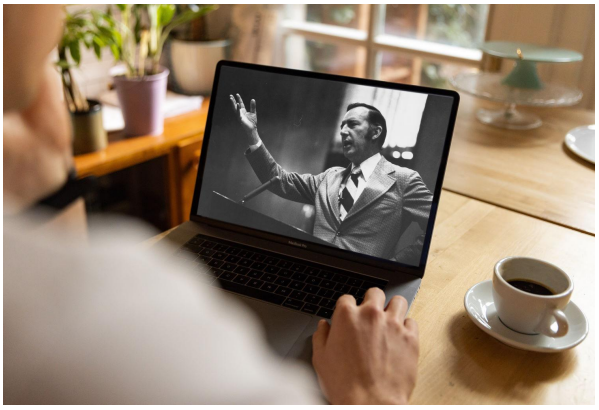
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