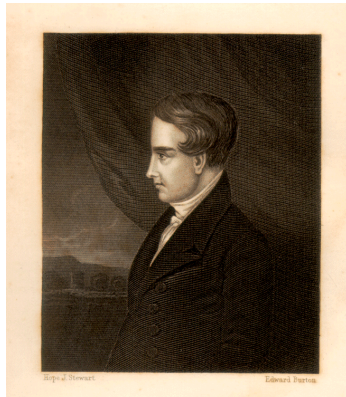


# OUR DUTY TO ISRAEL



*by Robert Murray M'Cheyne*

Text format and layout © 2000 by Robert R. Congdon  
All rights reserved

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

Romans 1:16

Most people are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. *The wise* are ashamed of it, because it calls men to believe and not to argue - *the great* are ashamed of it, because it brings all into one body - *the rich* are ashamed of it, because it is to be had without money and without price - *the light-hearted* are ashamed of it, because they fear it will destroy all their mirth; and so the good news of the glorious Son of God having come into the world a Surety for lost sinners, is despised, uncared for - men are ashamed of it.

Who are not ashamed of it? A little company, those whose hearts the Spirit of God has touched. They were once like the world and of it, but He awakened them to see their sin and misery, and that Christ alone was a refuge, and now they cry, none but Christ - none but Christ! God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ.<sup>1</sup> He is precious to their heart - he lives there - He is often on their lips - He is praised in their family - they would fain proclaim Him to all the world. They have felt in their own experience that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Dear friends, is this your experience? Have you received the Gospel not in word only, but in power? Has the power of God been put forth upon your soul along with the word? Then His word is yours - I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

*A Robert Murray M'Chenyne Sermon*

One peculiarity in this statement I wish you to notice. - He glories in the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first, from which I draw this doctrine

***That the Gospel should be preached first to the Jews.***

***Why? Because judgment will begin with them***

"*Indignation and wrath,*"<sup>2</sup> to the Jew first. It is an awful thought that the Jew will be the first to stand forward at the bar of God to be judged. When the Great White Throne is set, and He sits down upon it from Whose face the heavens and earth flee away - when the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books are opened, and the dead are judged out of those things that are written in the books, is it not a striking thought that Israel - poor blinded Israel - will be the first to stand in judgment before God?

When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats - when the awful sentence comes forth from His lips, depart ye cursed -- and when the guilty many shall move away from before Him into everlasting punishment<sup>3</sup> - is it not enough to make the most careless among you pause and consider, that the indignation and wrath shall first come upon the Jew - that their faces will gather deeper paleness, their knees knock more against each other, and their hearts die within them more than others?

*Why is this?* Because they have had more light than any other people. God chose them out of the world to be His witnesses. Every prophet was sent first to them; every evangelist and apostle had a message for them. Messiah came to them. He said, "*I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*"<sup>4</sup> The Word of God is still addressed to them. They have it pure and unadulterated in their hand; yet they have sinned against all this light - against all this love. "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers its chickens under its wings, and ye would not!*"<sup>5</sup> Their cup of wrath is fuller than that of other men - their sea of wrath is deeper. On their very faces, you may read in every clime, that the curse of God is over them.

Is not this a reason, then, why the Gospel should first be preached to the Jew? They are ready to perish - to perish more dreadfully than other men. The cloud of indignation and wrath that is even now gathering above the lost, will break first upon the head of the guilty, unhappy, unbelieving Israel. And have you none of the bowels of Christ in you, that you will not run first to them that are in so sad a case?

In a hospital, the kind physician runs first to the bed where the sick man lies who is nearest to die. When a ship is sinking, and the gallant sailors have left the shore to save the sinking crew, do they not stretch out the arm of help first to those that are readiest to perish beneath the waves? And shall we not do the same for Israel? The billows of God's anger are ready to dash first over them - shall we not seek to bring them first to the Rock that is higher than they? Their

## ***A Robert Murray M'Chenyne Sermon***

case is more desperate than that of other men - shall we not bring the good Physician to them, who alone can bring health and cure? - for the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

I cannot leave this head without speaking a word to those of you who are in a situation very similar to that of Israel - to you who have the Word of God in your hands, and yet are unbelieving and unsaved. In many respects, Scotland may be called God's second Israel.

No other land has its Sabbath as Scotland has - no other land has the Bible as Scotland has - no other land has the Gospel preached, free as the air we breathe, fresh as the stream from the everlasting hills. O then, think for a moment, you who sit under the shade of faithful ministers, and yet remain unconcerned and unconverted, and are not brought to sit under the shade of Christ, think how like your wrath will be to that of the unbelieving Jew. And think, again, of the marvelous grace of Christ, that the Gospel is first to you. The more that your sins are like scarlet and like crimson, the more is the blood free to you that washes white as snow; for this is still His word to all His ministers, begin at Jerusalem.

### ***Why? It is like God to care first for the Jews.***

It is the chief glory and joy of a soul to be like God. You remember this was the glory of that condition in which Adam was created. "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*"<sup>6</sup> His understanding was without a cloud. He saw, in some measure, as God seeth. His will flowed in the same channel with God's will. His affections fastened on the same objects which

God also loved. When man fell, we lost all this, and became children of the devil, and not children of God. But when a lost soul is brought to Christ, and receives the Holy Spirit, he puts off the old man, and puts on the new man, which *after God* is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is our true joy in this world to be like God. Too many rest in the joy of being forgiven, but our truest joy is ***to be like Him***. O rest not, beloved, till you are renewed after His image, till you partake of the Divine nature. Long for the day when Christ shall appear, and we shall be fully *like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is.<sup>7</sup>

Now, what I wish to insist upon at present is, that we should be like God, even in those things which are peculiar. We should be like Him in understanding, in will, in holiness, and also in His *peculiar affections*. "*Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.*"<sup>8</sup>

But the whole Bible shows that God has a peculiar affection for Israel. You remember when the Jews were in Egypt, sorely oppressed by their taskmasters, God heard their cry, and appeared to Moses - "*I have seen, I have seen, the affliction of My people, and I have heard their cry, for I know their sorrows.*"<sup>9</sup>

And, again, when God brought them through the wilderness, Moses tells them why He did it. "*The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people, but because the Lord loved you.*"<sup>10</sup> Strange, sovereign, most peculiar love. He loved them because He loved them. Should we not be like God in this peculiar attachment?

*A Robert Murray M'Chenyne Sermon*

But you say God has sent them into captivity. Now, it is true God hath scattered them into every land - "*The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how they are esteemed as earthen pitchers?*"<sup>11</sup> But what says God of this? "*I have left Mine house, I have forsaken Mine heritage, I have given the **dearly beloved** of My soul into the hand of her enemies.*"<sup>12</sup> It is true that Israel is given, for a little moment, into the hand of her enemies, but it is as true that they are still the dearly beloved of His soul. Should we not give them the same place in our heart which God gives them in His heart? Shall we be ashamed to cherish the same affection which our heavenly Father cherishes? Shall we be shamed to be unlike the world, and like God in this peculiar love for captive Israel?

But you say God has cast them off. Hath God cast away His people which He foreknew? God forbid! The whole Bible contradicts such an idea. "*Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.*"<sup>13</sup> "*I will plant them again in their own land assuredly, with My whole heart and with My whole soul.*"<sup>14</sup> "*Zion saith, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*"<sup>15</sup> "*And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*"<sup>16</sup>

Now the simple question for each of you is, and for our beloved Church, Should we not share with God His

peculiar affection for Israel? If we are filled with the Spirit of God, should we not love as He loves? Should we not grave Israel upon the palms of our hands, and resolve that through our mercy they also may obtain mercy.

***Why? Because there is peculiar access to the Jews.***

In almost all the countries we have visited this fact is quite remarkable; indeed it seems in many places as if the only door left open to the Christian missionary is the door of preaching to the Jews.<sup>17</sup>

We spent some time in Tuscany, the freest state in the whole of Italy. There you dare not preach the Gospel to the Roman Catholic population. The moment you give a tract or a Bible, it is carried to the priest, and by the priest to the Government, and immediate banishment is the certain result. But the door is open to the Jews. No man cares for their souls; and therefore you may carry the Gospel to them freely.

*The same is the case in Egypt and in Palestine.* - You dare not preach the Gospel to the deluded followers of Mahomet; but you may stand in the open market-place and preach the Gospel to the Jews, no man forbidding you. We visited every town in the Holy Land where Jews are found. In Jerusalem and in Hebron we spoke to them all the words of this life. In Sychar we reasoned with them in the synagogue, and in the open bazaar. In Chaifa, at the foot of Carmel, we met with them in the synagogue. In Zidon also we discoursed freely to them of Jesus. In Tyre we first visited them in the synagogue and at the house of the Rabbi, and then they returned our visit; for when we had lain down in the khan for the heat of mid-day, they came to us in crowds. The He-

*A Robert Murray M'Chenyne Sermon*

brew Bible was produced, and passage after passage explained, none making us afraid. In Saphet, and Tiberias, and Acre, we had the like freedom. There is perfect liberty in the Holy Land to carry the Gospel to the Jew.

*In Constantinople*, if you were to preach to the Turks, as some have tried, banishment is the consequence; but to the Jew you may carry the message. *In Wallachia and Moldavia* the smallest attempt to convert a Greek would draw down the instant vengeance of the holy Synod and of the Government. But in every town we went freely to the Jews - in Bucharest, in Foxany, in Jassy, and in many a remote Wallachian hamlet, we spoke without hindrance the message to Israel. The door is wide open.

*In Austria*, where no missionary of any kind is allowed, still we found the Jews willing to hear. In their synagogues we always found a sanctuary open to us; and often when they knew they could have exposed us, they concealed that we had been there.

*In Prussian Poland*, the door is wide open to nearly 100,000 Jews. You dare not preach to the poor Rationalist Protestants. Even in Protestant Prussia this would not be allowed; but you may preach the Gospel to the Jews. By the law of the land every church is opened to an ordained minister; and one of the missionaries assured me that he often preached to 400 or 500 Jews and Jewesses at a time. Schools for Jewish children are also allowed. We visited three of them, and heard the children taught the way of salvation by a Redeemer. Twelve years ago the Jews would not have come near a church.

If these things be true, and I appeal to all of you who

know these countries if it is not - the door in one direction is shut, and the door to Israel is so widely open - O do you not think that God is saying by His Providence as well as by His Word, Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Do you think that our Church, knowing these things, will be guiltless if we do not obey the call? For the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

***Why? Because they will give life to a dead world.***

I have often thought that a reflective traveller, passing through the countries of this world, and observing the race of Israel in every land, might be led to guess, merely from the light of his natural reason, that a singular people are preserved for some great purpose in the world. There is a singular fitness in the Jew to be a missionary of the world. They have not that peculiar attachment to home and country which we have. They feel that they are outcasts in every land. They are also inured to every clime; they are to be found amid the snows of Russia and beneath the burning sun of Hindoostan. They are also in some measure acquainted with all the languages of the world, and yet have one common language - the holy tongue - in which to communicate with one another. All these things must, I should think, suggest themselves to every intelligent traveller as he passes through other lands. *But what says the Word of God?*

*"It shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah and house of Israel; so **will I save you**, and ye shall be a blessing."*<sup>18</sup>

To this day they are a curse among the nations, by their unbelief - by their covetousness; but the time is coming when they shall be as great a blessing as they

*A Robert Murray M'Chenyne Sermon*

have been a curse.

*"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."*<sup>19</sup> Just as we have found, among the parched hills of Judah, that the evening dew, coming silently down, gave life to every plant, making the grass to spring, and the flowers to put forth their sweetest fragrance, so shall converted Israel be when they come as dew upon a dead dry world.

*"In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard **that God is with you.**"*<sup>20</sup> This has never been fulfilled; but as the Word of God is true, this is true.

Perhaps some one may say, "If the Jews are to be the great missionaries of the world, let us send missions to them only. We have got a new light - let us call back our missionaries from India. They are wasting their precious lives there in doing what the Jews are to accomplish." I grieve to think that any lover of Israel should so far pervert the truth, as to argue this way.

The Bible does not say that we are to preach *only* to the Jew, but to the Jew *first*. "*Go and preach the Gospel to **all** nations,*"<sup>21</sup> said the Saviour. Let us obey His Word like little children. The Lord speed our beloved missionaries in that burning clime. The Lord give them good success, and never let one withering doubt cross their pure minds as to their glorious field of labour.

All that we plead for is, that, in sending out missionaries to the heathen, we may not forget to begin at

Jerusalem. If Paul be sent to the gentile, let Peter be sent to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad; and let not a bye-corner in your hearts be given to this cause - let it not be an appendix to the other doings of our Church, but rather let there be written on the fore front of your hearts, and on the banner of our beloved Church, "*To the Jew first,*" and "*Beginning at Jerusalem.*"<sup>22</sup>

***Why? Lastly, Because there is great reward.***

Blessed is he that blesseth thee; cursed is he that curseth thee.<sup>23</sup> Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love her.<sup>24</sup> We have felt this in our own souls. In going from country to country, we felt that there was One before us preparing our way. Though we have had perils in the waters and perils in the wilderness, perils from sickness and perils from the heathen, still from all the Lord has delivered us; and if it shall please God to restore our revered companions in this mission in peace and safety to their anxious families,<sup>25</sup> we shall then have good reason to say, that in keeping His commandments there is great reward.

But your souls shall be enriched also, and our Church, too, if this cause find its right place in your affections. It was well said by one who has a deep place in your affections, and who is now in India, that our Church must not only be evangelical, but evangelistic also, if she would expect the blessing of God. She must not only have the light, but dispense it also, if she is to be continued as a steward of God. May I not take the liberty of adding to this striking declaration, that we must not only be evangelistic, but evangelistic ***as God would have us be*** - not only dispense the light on every hand, but dispense it first to the Jew.

## ***A Robert Murray M'Chenyne Sermon***

Then shall God revive His work in the midst of the years. Our whole land shall be refreshed as Kilsyth has been. The cobwebs of controversy shall be swept out of our sanctuaries - the jarrings and jealousies of our Church be turned into the harmony of praise - and our own souls become like a well-watered garden.

*Preached Nov. 17, 1839, after returning from the Mission to the Jews.*

*M'Chenyne ministered only seven and one-half years, dying March 24, 1843 at the age of twenty-nine. During those years he "stamped an indelible impress on Scotland."*

<sup>1</sup> Galatians 6:14

<sup>2</sup> Romans 2:10

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 25:41

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 15:24

<sup>5</sup> Luke 13:34

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:26

<sup>7</sup> 1 John 3:21

<sup>8</sup> 1 John 4:7,8

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 3:7

<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 7:7

<sup>11</sup> Lamentations 4:2

<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 7:7

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 31:20

<sup>14</sup> Jeremiah 32:41

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 49:14

<sup>16</sup> Romans 11:26

<sup>17</sup> See back fly-leaf for information on the Mission of Discovery,

<sup>18</sup> Zechariah 8:13

<sup>19</sup> Micah 5:7

<sup>20</sup> Zechariah 8:23

<sup>21</sup> Mark 16:15

<sup>22</sup> Luke 24:47

<sup>23</sup> Genesis 12:3

<sup>24</sup> Psalm 122:6

<sup>25</sup> Drs. Black and Keith were at this time still detained by a sickness abroad.

## THE MISSION OF DISCOVERY

The beginning of modern Jewish evangelism began with the *Mission of Discovery*. The Scottish people had a concern for the Jewish people dating from the time of the Reformation. The Geneva Bible's note for Romans 11:15 and 26 says, "He sheweth that the time shall come that the whole nation of the Jews, though not every one particularly, shall be joined to the church of Christ." Further, the Westminster *Directory of Public Worship* said that prayer was to be made for the Jewish people.<sup>1</sup>

By the mid-1830's the concern for the spiritual condition of the Jewish people resulted in the formation of a committee for Jewish outreach in 1837.

From this concern, came the *Mission of Discovery*, a trip commissioned by the Church of Scotland and taken by Dr. Alexander Keith, Dr. Alexander Black, Robert Murray M'Cheyne and Andrew Bonar in 1839.

The purpose of the trip was "to collect information respecting the Jews, their numbers, condition and character, - what means have hitherto been employed by the Christian Church for their spiritual good, and with what success, whether there are any openings for a mission to their nation, and where these are most promising."

The results from this journey were seen in the establishment of works of Jewish outreach. By 1841, Rev. Daniel Edward was sent to Moldavia to begin work with the Jewish people. Jewish missions had begun and had started in Scotland as a result of Scottish "concern to bring the news of the Messiah to Jewish people."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Bonar & R. M. M'Cheyne, *Mission of Discovery* [Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1996] p 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p 17.

Also available:

Reprint

*Israel My Glory* June/July 1989

**Lessons From the Past:**

**An Early Scottish Mission to the Jews**

**Coming**

Audio Cassette of

**Our Duty To Israel By Robert Murray M'Cheyne**

For these and other useful materials to help you reach out to the Jewish people with the good news of the Messiah, contact

**Dr. Robert R. Congdon**  
**Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry - UK**  
**Box 21**  
**12 South Bridge**  
**Edinburgh**  
**EH1 1DD**

**Phone/Fax: 0131-663-6113**

**Website: [www.internetBibleInstitute.com](http://www.internetBibleInstitute.com)**  
**email: [foiuk@onetel.net.uk](mailto:foiuk@onetel.net.uk)**