

# the NOVEMBER 1977 CHOSEN PEOPLE

THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET □ The Ministry of the Word in Jewish Work □ Sharing with the Orthodox by Howard Kaspin □ Mall Work: Outreaches in New York, New Jersey and California □ Close-up on Canada by Tom Walker.

The Dead Sea Scrolls (Ilsa 59.17-61.4) Photo/John C. Traver © 1970





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# from the president

DR. DANIEL FUCHS



Dearly Beloved Friends:

How do you spell it? "Freedom"? Or perhaps, with tongue in cheek, "Free-dumb"? This month we will be celebrating our 201st Thanksgiving Day. We had high hopes last year when our leaders eloquently reminded us of our national heritage. We still have hopes but somehow they have been diluted by the events of this past year.

Perhaps it was New York's blackout. In recent years the "Big Apple" had longer blackouts but they were not nearly so disastrous. They evoked heroism, not vandalism. In spite of our eloquence of last year we now realize that our cities are sick.

*Maybe it's an omen that our Liberty Bell has a crack in it . . . a sort of warning that if we don't protect the casting of our rights with utmost intelligence and care, our proclamation of freedom will toll with resounding silence.*

*This is not to suggest that we Americans could even remotely be considered a nation of dullards. Certainly our history of monumental achievements proves quite the contrary. But for some untenable reason we have allowed our understanding of "sweet land of liberty" to be altered by permissive lawmakers whose lofty attitudes have demeaned the public's trust.*

*"40 For Presidents", July-August 1977, p. 5.*

While we deplore the "permissive lawmakers" we realize that in a democratic society these lawmakers frequently echo the thinking of their constituencies. We can sympathize even though we strongly disagree with this permissiveness but we cannot condone this permissive attitude which we frequently meet on behalf of evangelical leaders. This attitude is most evident in the realm of what we might

call evangelical permissive literature.

This month our issue is devoted to "Literature in Evangelism." Literature is one of the most effective tools of evangelism. God has revealed Himself through His Word and it is from this Book that we receive our message of evangelism for the world.

However, the message of Scripture is being eroded by our modern permissive evangelical literature. Almost twenty years ago in April 1959 A. W. Tozer wrote in "The Alliance Witness":

*The reading habits of the average evangelical Christian in the United States are so wretchedly bad as actually to arrest his spiritual development and block the progress of the faith he professes to hold.*

*So powerful is the effect of the printed page on human character that the reading of good books is not only a privilege but an obligation, and the habitual reading of poor ones a positive tragedy.*

By "poor" books I mean the religious trash being turned out these days by the various publishers under the name of Christian.

*Were a Christian to backslide and read a "bad book" secretly, as the proverbial schoolboy is said to read the dime novel behind his geography book, one could hope that he might later come to himself and leave the swine pen for the father's house; but what are we to say when bad books become part of the approved curriculum for evangelical Christians in almost all churches? What can we do when books of a mental level not above nine years are hailed as master works and given rave reviews in the religious press? . . .*

*All this accords with the false philosophy current among us which holds that to read anything religious is bet-*



ter than nothing, so we continue to produce literary mediocrities, vapid, amateurish, illiterate, and dedicated to the proposition that anything goes if only somewhere in the book someone makes the point that everybody ought to be born again. No matter how impossible the book in style and substance, if it puts in a dutiful plug for the gospel now and then, the evangelical leaders will bless it with their imprimatur and nihil obstat. Indeed it is hardly too much to say that illiterate religious literature has now become the earmark of evangelicalism. It is lamentable that we are content to leave quality to Catholics and liberals.

The major cause of the decline in the quality of current Christian literature is not intellectual; it is spiritual. To enjoy a great religious work requires a degree of consecration to God and detachment from the world that few modern Christians have experienced. The early Christian fathers, the mystics, the Puritans, are not hard to understand, but they inhabit the highlands where the air is crisp and rarefied and none but the God-enamored can come.

Please do not misunderstand me. The description is sadly true, but thank God it is not the whole truth. We can thank God that He is leading in a growing movement where responsible Christian men of great talent are using their gifts of the Spirit in producing a grade of Christian literature that is excellent.

This is especially true in the realm of Jewish evangelicals where many talented Hebrew Christians have climbed the spiritual highlands "where the air is crisp and rarefied." We need this kind of literature so that in the "year of the evangelical" we will spell its new-found freedom correctly. We are not free to be dumb.

In no other form of witness is the need for quality in literature so evident as it is in Jewish evangelism. That is why your mission works so hard to produce a quality of literature that will entice the Jewish mind to continue reading, to study, to investigate, to discern, and to accept the Lord.

Your mission, by God's grace, leads not only in the quality of the literature which it produces but in the quality of its presentation. We believe that

our literature should present our Lord in an appealing way. We have learned that it is possible to produce good quality as inexpensively as poor quality. The secret is in good management. Also because so many of our friends use our literature we can print it in quantity and thus keep our costs down.

Never underestimate the effectiveness of the attractive printed page. We have used radio and television but our most effective mass media ministry is still attractive, well-printed literature. Incidentally, if you haven't received a copy of this year's Jewish Art Calendar it is still available.

The ABMJ publishes good literature but even good literature is not effective gathering dust on shelves. It must be distributed! We do this by mail and our missionaries do it in person, but you, too, can distribute literature to the Jewish people in your neighborhood. Please help us to reach Jewish people everywhere!

Faithfully yours in His service,

*Daniel Fuchs*

Dr. Daniel Fuchs



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A challenging, but fruitful aspect of the ministry.

# SHARING WITH THE ORTHODOX

by HOWARD KASPIN  
Denver, Colorado



The anti-Jesus tracts which circulate in our area are mainly the products of one particular ultra-orthodox rabbi. God brought me together with him in a marvelous and miraculous way.

Looking for a particular book on Judaism, I was told of a man who offered what I sought. The man turned out to be our anti-Jesus rabbi.

I had heard stories of unpleasant confrontations between this rabbi and Jewish believers. Meeting him over a subject of common interest (the book I wanted) we got along quite well and became friends. This is undoubtedly because I submitted our meeting entirely to God and did not go in the power of self-confidence.

In the course of our subsequent discussions, this rabbi has admitted that a suffering and even dying Messiah is taught in Scripture. He acknowledges the chronology of Daniel 9:24-27, but asserts that Daniel's *maschiach* (messiah — "anointed one") is not the Messiah but merely a prince of temporal power.

I have found that he is also heavily involved in *Kabala* and *Gematra* (mystical Judaism). He is seeking answers but in the wrong places.

I look forward to each meeting with this rabbi. It is hard to hold him to one topic for very long, but he realizes that not all his beliefs are beyond disputation.

One of the most interesting Orthodox Jews brought across my path is

Yossi, an Israeli who once was an atheist. He arranged to meet with me because he was upset about a Persian Jew at his college who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

When I came to his house at 5:30 one evening I expected a short visit. I did not even bring my Bible, anticipating five minutes to give my testimony and ten minutes for him to scold. I left at 1:00 a.m. after he had opened the Hebrew Scriptures and we had reasoned non-stop for 7½ hours!

He has many objections to my faith. First, he said I "believed in the devil." I pointed out that Satan is portrayed in the *Tenach* (Old Testament) as a personal being. Yossi maintained that Satan is only a personification of the "evil inclination." Later he also revealed that he did not believe that Job ever really existed. I asked him if he believed there was a Moses!

We discussed many intricate points, but his attitude is summed up in one statement which he made. He said that the *Tenach* is the inspired, infallible Word of God; but if he reads anything in it which seems to contradict his ideas about Judaism, he concludes that he is reading incorrectly. (This is not an untypical attitude in Orthodox Judaism.)

Dealing with well-taught Orthodox Jews is a difficult but challenging part of the ministry. With prayer and love, true knowledge of God can be added to their zeal (Rom. 10:2).

“Mall work,” says Dave Woods, Missionary, N.Y., “consists of a booth on a busy thoroughfare or shopping center where we spend twelve hours each day giving away literature. We find ways and opportunities to witness, answer questions and have friendly conversations. Sometimes our witness can become very intense. But whatever the situation, we always rely on God’s promise that His Word will never return to Him without accomplishing its purpose.” (See Isa. 55:11.)

# MALL WORK

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA.**  
Jerome Fleischer

Many profitable conversations have begun around a literature table. At a recent conference of Jewish believers a young Jewish professor of nuclear physics reproached me with a statement I had made in my message that evening. “How can you call Aristotle stupid?” he asked. My explanation was simple. Compared to the complete trustworthiness and wisdom of the Scriptures, Aristotle, as well as our great rabbis, were incredibly limited. As I showed him proof of the Bible’s inerrancy through fulfilled prophecy, he listened carefully.

Later he returned with his wife, a Messianic Jew. This young believer desired the kind of knowledge and wisdom which is available only through the Word of God. I advised her to study, providing her with some of our ABMJ literature and information about books and materials which would help her. I assured her and her husband that while Aristotle was a brilliant man, only one who knows God and follows Him can be truly wise.



**BERGEN COUNTY, N.J.**

Gary Derechinsky



“A lot of opposition — but a lot of good contacts.” That’s the way Mr. and Mrs. Gary Derechinsky (Missionaries, N.J.) summed up their recent witnessing experiences at a well-trafficked mall in Bergen County, N.J. For two full twelve-hour days, believers manned a colorful booth that featured Jewish art calendars, Jewish food and handicrafts and a wide selection of Messianic literature. “Our booth was probably the most popular,” recalled MaryLou Derechin-



**LOS ANGELES, CA.** Dana Kasdan

Dana Kasdan and Harry Mosell had some specially written broadsides produced on a very limited budget. Naturally, they printed an address and phone number on the back of their pamphlets as avenues of response. They prayed earnestly for results, but the response was hardly what they expected! When they saw that their

supply of literature was running out, they felt encouraged to pray the Lord would provide the funds to print more broadsides. They asked the Lord for \$125.00. Still looking for a reply from an interested broadside recipient, Dana went to his post office box. There he found the Lord's answer. A Christian who had somehow



gotten one of their pamphlets sent \$125.00 to help in the continuation of this evangelistic ministry. What a lesson this is. Some sow. Some water, But God, in His perfect timing, brings the increase. It is for us to be faithful in the ministries to which God calls us.  
*submitted by Alfred Emery  
Los Angeles, California*



sky. At one point a young man berated Gary loudly for his faith. Suddenly a curious crowd developed as a local storeowner rose to the ABMJ worker's defense. "If he wants to believe in Jesus, what's that to you," shouted the shopkeeper in Gary's defense. Putting into practice a message he'd recently heard on making the most of any opportunity, Derechinsky openly defended himself for the benefit of the evergrowing throng. Over one hundred unwary spectators

heard the Gospel that day! Many young-in-the-Lord Jewish believers were encouraged to man the booth and witness publicly for perhaps their first time. And a young Jewish man with his own booth received literature and asked many serious questions. At Gary's next Bible study he made a profession of faith. "We're looking forward — a little less fearfully — to doing this again next year," agreed the couple.

**LONG ISLAND, N.Y.**  
Dave Woods

Mall work makes me think of 1 Peter 3:15, "... be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you . . ." We never knew what attracts a person to our booth. Perhaps a tract title stands out or maybe a color. The display itself may draw a person's attention to our booth. But whatever a person takes with him we know that God's promise goes with it.







Snodkowski

## An old shoe box steps up his witness

When Sam Lawson enlisted in the U.S. Navy the Lord began to drastically change his Christian life.

Stationed in Puerto Rico, he began to work with the teenagers in a small church.

As the study progressed the group reached the point of the last week of Jesus' earthly life. Studying the material, Lawson became aware of the importance Jesus placed on the Passover. "I wanted to find out why," he recalled. "So I talked to our pastor. He referred me to some materials explaining the connection between the Seder (Passover ceremony) and the Lord's Supper."

This literature only whetted Sam's appetite. "I began to look more earnestly for further information, praying for God's guidance." Noticing an announcement that Passover would be celebrated with a Seder for the Jewish personnel on base, Lawson decided to attend. Observing it first hand, he became even more curious.

Speaking again to his pas-

tor, Lawson told him of his experience. The pastor gave him an old shoe box of ABMJ tracts he had received from a friend years earlier.

"I discovered in that shoe box," said Lawson, "a collection of almost every ABMJ tract printed. I eagerly read and digested these then wrote to the ABMJ for additional literature. The more I read, the more enthralled I became.

"Jewish evangelism became something very exciting and real in my Christian experience," admitted Lawson. While still in Puerto Rico, he and his pastor shared the joy of seeing a young Jewish man come to know the Messiah. "He told us he had been wrestling with this decision for four years."

Since his release from the Navy, Lawson has continued to speak to Jews and Gentiles alike about the added dimension God has given him through the knowledge of the Jewish people and His plan for them.

## Returning to 'God talk'

Recently the Jewish publication "Present Tense" (Summer 1977) published an article entitled "Onward (Hebrew) Christian Soldiers." Although the authors suggested that Jewish believers are "out to grab our kids," we realize that the quickening of Jewish souls can only be a work of the

Holy Spirit.

The authors concluded the article with a challenge: "American Jews must seek ways to satisfy basic emotional and spiritual hungers. It is time to return to 'God talk' prayer and the search for personal relationship and communion with God."

## Weekly Bible studies bear fruit

Ruth Fleischer Snow (ABMJ Communications Specialist) was blessed recently when she had the opportunity to see Sarah confess her faith in Jesus as her Messiah and Savior. Sarah, a Jewish pediatrician, is one of several professional people Ruth has been having weekly Bible studies with.

Prior to this wonderful day of salvation, they had discussed many issues which troubled Sarah and her professor-husband. In addition to open discussions, Ruth also gave Sarah pamphlets and

books which helped her understand. The Lord used these materials to challenge her and encourage her to further study the Scriptures.

Although Sarah's husband is not yet a believer in Jesus, we are trusting God for his salvation. Through the witness of Sarah's life, study of the Bible and the valuable tool of literature (especially since Ruth is no longer located in their area) we know that God will reap the harvest as we have sown the seeds.



ABMJ Vice-President Harold Sevensen confers with Ruth.

## Donna Jean Wood winds up N.E. tour

Donna Jean Wood, Hebrew Christian singer who recently performed as a featured soloist at the Pentagon, will be winding up an extensive Northeast tour this month. She will also be appearing on the West Coast at the following places: Nov. 3-5—Class Convention, Pasadena, Ca.; Nov. 6—Faith Missionary Church, Pomona, Ca.; Nov. 12—Church of

the Nazarene, Panorama City, Ca.; Nov. 13—Central Christian Church, Downey, Ca.; Nov. 20—Neighborhood Church of Ontario; Nov. 26—Emmanuel Baptist Church of Fullerton, Ca.; Dec. 2-11—Concert Tour in Southwest region. Contact Dr. Tom McCall for details (214) 369-3274.







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## CLOSE-UP ON CANADA



In the Northern Provinces, an active, vital work continues to move forward for the Lord.  
by TOM WALKER

Last year our branch organized a special telecast of the Passover film in Montreal, Quebec and Southern Ontario. From the provinces, many sent for the book offer mentioned at the conclusion of the telecast. In our home area, as Ralph McKinnan viewed the film in his living room, something mysterious and wonderful began to happen.

Mr. McKinnan ordered the booklet *Israel a Modern Miracle* and began receiving the ABMJ's monthly magazine, *The Chosen People*. After reading several copies his negative attitude towards the Jewish people began to change. Still he had deep personal problems. Born the illegitimate son of an Indian girl, McKinnan grew up on an Indian reservation. As an adult he indulged in the ways of the world which cost him his first wife and son.

With his present wife things began to go downhill two Christmases ago. "I couldn't face the realities of life, my irresponsibility—my failure to cope with marriage made life unbearable for my wife and she threatened to leave."

Then a ray of hope. In an issue of *The Chosen People*, McKinnan noticed an ABMJ retreat to be held in Ontario. At the Fairhavens Conference grounds, 70 miles south of Toronto, our first 3-day fall retreat was just beginning when Ralph arrived.

The Spirit of God and the warm Hebrew-Christian fellowship of guest speakers Zola Levitt, Dr. Tom McCall and Rev. Richard Cohen melted Mr. McKinnan's heart. On Saturday afternoon as Dr. Tom McCall demonstrated the Passover, Mr. McKinnan watched with unusual interest. No doubt his mind returned to the recent Passover telecast which had disturbed him so greatly.

As Dr. McCall described the pierced holes, the burned stripes of the unleavened

bread, and the great price the Lord Jesus paid for his redemption, McKinnan wept.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life—what wonderful words for my lost and searching soul," McKinnan told me.

Later that evening Dr. McCall helped McKinnan accept Christ. After breakfast the next morning, he willingly testified to his new found faith.

"My marriage is much happier now," he shared with me recently. "I'm finding new Christian friends who rejoice over what Christ can do—miracles."

Of course this was just one of God's blessings at our recent conference. I'd like to extend a sincere word of thanks to those participating pastors and an invitation to any pastor interested in a single guest speaker or round-robin conference. The results are always rewarding.

A young Jewish woman entered our Hamilton office and remarked, "I never knew such a place existed." We had previously received a call from Mrs. Beth Anderson regarding the Mission and its outreach. A Christian friend had suggested she call us and now, it was a privilege to have her visiting with us.

My wife and I soon realized that this young lady had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as her Messiah. A transformation had taken place in her life and she longed for Christian fellowship. With an unmistakable radiance she began to share her testimony.

"I was born in a Jewish home and attended Beth Jacob Synagogue for special occasions. I studied Judaism from the age of four and also taught





Sunday school for a few years. I accepted Judaism without encouragement from my parents because of an inner fear of God.

"In April of '68 my husband Don was converted to Judaism just before we were married to keep peace in the family. I was socially and culturally involved in the Jewish community with charity work and Hadassah as Vice President of my chapter and Vice President of the Hebrew School P.T.A. (Plus I was a hopeless mah-jong addict.)

"In February '75 Don couldn't bear the emptiness and pointlessness of this fearful existence on earth and began to react psychologically to his fears. At this point he was sitting up late at night to the early hours of the morning in the living room with a loaded rifle waiting for doom to come through the front door.

"He knew he was in trouble and decided to seek the help of a psychiatrist, but in his own mind he started appealing to God, just to make sure God knew what was going on.

"For the next two weeks Don and a friend of his were searching for the names of a psychiatrist to visit. One night another friend whom Don hadn't seen much of since high school ten years earlier dropped over to the house and explained how he had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ.

"After listening to all this it had become painfully clear to Don who he was and who God was and what our relationship is here on earth. During the early part of the evening, I picked up on the theme of the conversation — excused it as garbage and went off

to bed.

"Don and Paul broke up at 6:00 a.m., having successfully changed the population census in Heaven and eventually the lives of everyone in the family.

"In view of my reaction to that late night conversation, Don decided to cool it and not push his new faith upon me in verbal tones. But his own attitude towards his personal affairs made it clear to me that this wasn't a silly fad, but a living testimony of the actual changes that had occurred within.

"Under pressure he was reacting peacefully and with good judgment in family affairs. A few months later I started discussing this strange 'new happening' in our house with a dear Jewish girlfriend. She directed me to a man, whom she knew to be a Hebrew Christian.

"I spoke to him by telephone for two hours on the relationship of Christ to the Jew. I sarcastically excused him from the phone after he asked if he could pray for me. I tried to do my housework but felt deeply troubled and soon found myself in tears.

"Shortly after this I was visiting with my father who was recovering from cancer surgery. We approached the home of a friend who had worked with my father. In the home I was exposed to a book called *The New Jews* and a verse of Scripture, John 3: 16. I went home to read the book and accepted the Lord Jesus with my heart and life."

Through prayer and Bible study it has been a joy to see Mrs. Anderson grow in the things of God.



*From bottom left clockwise: Mr. and Mrs. Tom Walker, director of ABMJ's Canadian work; Mrs. Beth Anderson, Mr. Ralph McKinnan and a scene from the Passover Telecast recently broadcast in Canada.*



# UNITED IN MESSIAH

by Rev. Larry Jaffrey  
Southeast Regional Director

It all began with a man who hands out tracts during his lunch breaks. This friend of the ABMJ called to tell me that a Jewish woman who had received literature from him had just accepted the Lord!

When I contacted Esther, she shared with me her new-found faith plus her desire to learn more about the Bible. I told her I was teaching a Sunday school class and we were studying the Trinity (often a big hurdle for Jewish people). She was excited and promised to come.

Following Sunday service, Esther asked if I could come by and speak to her husband. Les turned out to be extremely open to the Gospel.

I found out that Esther and Les had received several issues of *The Chosen People* magazine from the believer who had initially contacted them. Les had read them and found Dr. Heydt's "Questions and Answers" very helpful in understanding biblical Christianity. Although *The Chosen People* is written for believers, God used it to touch an unsaved soul.

The following Sunday, Esther and Les came to church with their younger daughter — the older daugh-

**It all began with someone who knew the value of his lunch hour and a handful of tracts.**

ter refused to attend a Christian house of worship. But the next Sunday the entire family came, and I could see Les was being convicted.

I made arrangements to visit the family on the following evening. When I arrived, Les was loaded with questions. Most of these revolved around the issue of how God can love and forgive a sinful man. I asked Les if he would like to find God's forgiveness and victory over sin. He hesitated, not wanting to make a commitment he couldn't keep. But I explained that he wasn't committing himself to good deeds, but allowing Jesus to enter his life and work through him. Understanding this, he prayed to accept Jesus as his Messiah and Lord.

The entire family attended worship services that next Sunday. After the church service as they headed for home the daughter, who had refused to worship with them only three weeks earlier, asked Jesus to take over her life!

Today this Jewish family is united in Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. All this came about because of a man who used his lunch hour to faithfully hand out and use literature in his daily witness.





# Questions

# & Answers

Dr. Henry J. Heydt, Th.D. has served with the ABMJ for over thirty years. He is the author of "The Chosen People Question Box II."

**Question:** We read "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." I do, but just what does it mean?

**Answer:** Psalm 122 was sung by the pilgrims going up to Jerusalem, and as they entered the holy city (verse 2). David wrote it for such an occasion, centering the affections of Israel around the city and sanctuary. There is a beautiful play on words, "Pray for the peace of the city of peace." The Hebrew word *shalom* includes welfare or prosperity and happiness, and therefore the promise follows "they shall prosper that love thee." The verb *shall prosper* is cognate to the noun *peace*, and so we can read, "They shall have peace that love thee." The prayer had a literal significance and purpose for that day but since David based many of his Psalms on the promise in 2 Samuel 7, they have a prophetic outlook to the millennium when the holy city shall again be the center of the nation. Our use of the prayer today must look forward to

this time, for only the Prince of Peace can bring peace to Jerusalem.

There is a sense in which people pray for the peace of Jerusalem requesting salvation for the Jews, but this is not the primary significance of the Psalm.

**Question:** Will you please tell me about what time of day or night the Feast of Trumpets started?

**Answer:** The Feast of Trumpets began with the observance of the new moon of the seventh month (*Tishri*). This is in keeping with the reckoning of the sabbath from sunset to sunset since this feast, as well as the Day of Atonement, had sabbath characteristics (Lev. 23:23-32). The tractate *Rosh Hashanah* of the Talmud prescribes minute details for the observing of the new moon. Alfred Edersheim sums this up in his work, *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as they were at the time of Jesus Christ*, as follows:

The Council sat from early morning to just before the evening sacrifice, to determine the appearance of the new moon. The proclamation of the Council—"It is sanctified!"—and not the actual appearance of the new moon determined the commencement of the feast. Immediately afterwards, the priests blew the trumpets which marked the feast (p. 254).

During the whole of New Year's Day, trumpets and horns were blown in Jerusalem from morning to evening (p. 259).

The article on "Shofar" in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* states:

In the Pentateuch the use of the shofar is prescribed for the announcement of the New Moon and solemn feasts (Num. x.10; Ps. lxxi. 4), as also for proclaiming the year of release (Lev. xxv. 9). The first day of the seventh month (*Tishri*) is especially termed "a memorial of blowing" (Lev. xxiii. 24), or "a day of blowing" (Num. xxix. 1), the shofar.

At this season each year most of us pause in particular gratitude and give thanks to an Almighty God for the blessings of living in a free land. The privilege of acquiring assets — of accumulating and using savings from His providence — is an oft-overlooked blessing which we should not fail to remember thankfully.

In our discussions of financial matters with friends of this ministry, we've observed that most keep a large portion of their liquid assets in guaranteed, fixed-yield commercial accounts at various kinds of savings institutions. As expected, most of those retired from gainful employment rely on the interest from such funds to supplement other income for day-to-day living expenses.

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**Wes Jones, Director of Stewardship**

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## STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

### The Judgment of the Lord

by DR. CHARLES LEE FEINBERG

This month continues in Chapter IV, 2. The Enemy on the Way. (5-18 continued)

In his descriptions of the invaders Jeremiah manifests poetic skill, deep emotion, and vivid imagery. The foe is compared to a lion (v. 7), a scorching wind or sirocco (v. 11), and watchers or besiegers (v. 16). The lion was used to represent the Assyrians and Babylonians, here of the latter. Lions in enamel have been removed from the Processional Way of Babylon. Cf. for the figure Dan. 7. So great was the Babylonian military prowess that it was feared among the nations of that day. For Israel it would mean disaster to the land, its cities, and its citizenry (cf. 43:5-7). The prophet encourages the people to lament, for there is no possibility of averting or escaping the visitation. Unrepentant, the nation could only expect doom. Until their sins received their merited punishment, the blow could not be deflected from them. In the hour of distress the very ones who should encourage the nation — kings, princes, priests, and prophets — will be devoid of courage. The reference to heart is not to understanding, but rather to stamina and valor. This lack is well illustrated by the Lachish Letters of the final siege of Jerusalem in 588-586 B.C.

10 This verse has been accorded more attention and occasioned more difference of interpretation than almost any other portion in the book. At first reading it appears that Jeremiah is blaming God for deceiving the nation. In the light of James 1:13 such action is impossible for the holy God of Scripture. The difficulty is not resolved by understanding the deception of the prophet in an attempt to mislead the people by uttering the message of God to them, for Jeremiah had never foretold at any time that Jerusalem would have peace. His message was always the opposite. Some have tried to explain the difficulty by reading with the LXX, "And they said,"

instead of "Then said I," that is, a quotation of the words of the false prophets. There is too little basis for such a textual reading; the same is true for reading "they" instead of "you (thou)."

One view suggests that the words are the prophet's, spoken in a time of deep depression. Actually, it was the false prophets who constantly deceived the people with false promises of peace and prosperity regardless of their ways. The solution is to be found in the manner in which the Jews spoke of evil in a world ruled by a righteous and holy God. God is said to do what He permits. Scripture often omits second causes and relates all to God as the First Cause. Cf. Exod. 9:12; Eph. 1:11; 2 Thess. 2:11; particularly pertinent is 1 Kings 22:21-23. Jeremiah is so moved emotionally at this point that it is probably better not to understand his remarks as ironical of the false prophets, as some writers have done. In short, the false prophets had spoken deceptively to the people; they had misled the people into false hopes; and God had permitted it all. Instead of peace extinction faced them. A better translation for the word "life" is "throat," a meaning well attested in the Ugaritic language. Cf. Isa. 5:14.

11-18 In a sense verse 10 is parenthetical for the prophet continues his portrayal of the invading army in verses 11-18. With the approach of the enemy the news will be carried by messengers in the manner indicated in this section of the chapter. The foe is likened to the sirocco from the desert which withers vegetation and brings much discomfort to man. For winnowing and cleansing a much less vehement wind is needed. The sirocco would carry off both wheat and chaff. Its purpose is not to sift but to judge; it will not separate good from bad,

but take all away. All will transpire at God's command. In order to depict the magnitude of the army and its swiftness, it is likened to clouds and then to chariots with horses. For a similar figure of cloud cf. Ezek. 38:16. The situation is not lost on the nation, for they cry out because of their ruination.

Amazingly enough, even at that late hour there was still time with opportunity for repentance. It must be remembered that prophecies of judgment are conditional; obedience to God reverses the threat of judgment. But inner cleansing, even to the thought life, must be present if the disaster is to be averted. The Lord's patience is wearied with their continued unfaithfulness, so he asks how long their minds will be centered on wickedness. The need for repentance is urgent. The foe is near; there is little time left to return to God. Dan was the northern boundary of the land; Mount Ephraim was the northern border of Judah, not far from Jerusalem. The invaders are making rapid progress. So unprecedented is the fate that will now overtake God's people, that the nations are called upon to witness the judgment soon to fall on Israel. Resistance has not availed against the invaders, so they are finally seen besieging the capital, Jerusalem. As watchmen guard their fields from predatory animals, so Jerusalem will be surrounded to cut off any who would escape. All has come upon her because of her own wickedness and rebellion. The calamity is bitter to bear, because they realize now it was induced by themselves. Her wounds are serious, reaching to the heart.

#### 3. The agony of Jeremiah (19-22)

19-22 The next verses have been variously interpreted as (1) those of the Lord, (2) those of the nation, or (3)



those of Jeremiah. It cannot be denied that the Lord was affected by the agony of His people; it is also true that the nation would express its agony at their plight; but it appears in keeping with the immediate and broad context of the entire book to understand the words of Jeremiah's personal involvement with the calamity of his people.

It seems that much is lost of the prophet's thoughts and feelings, if these passages are denied an individualistic frame of reference. The scene is so real to him that he cries out in physical pain. Profound emotional reactions affect him physically. His personal anguish over the impending destruction is inescapable. The devastation is so wholesale that Jeremiah cannot suppress his profound sympathy with those whom he must denounce in obedience to the commission of God. Though accused of treason later, how can anyone reasonably deny the patriotism and love of Jeremiah for his people.

It cannot be denied that a small number may have felt the invasion and destruction deeply, but no one more keenly and clearly than the prophet. Fellowship with God and obedience to His service always serve to sharpen the sensibilities of His servants. Thus he is pained in soul and can scarcely endure the scene of judgment on his people. He longs to know the end of the travail (v. 21), so God answers that the trial will continue as long as they persist in disobeying God. Their trouble is that they have no fellowship with Him in the doing of His will (cf. Hos. 4:1). Their moral values were completely reversed: they majored in evil and minored in good.

#### 4. The cosmic catastrophe (23-26)

23-26 Writers have been unstinting in their praise of this beautiful vignette, and rightly so. It has been acclaimed as one of the most forceful

portions in all prophetic literature. It is undeniable that for vividness, simplicity, directness, breadth of reference, and gravity of subject matter the verses are unique in Scripture.

From a contemplation of Israel's calamity the prophet is led by the inditing Spirit to witness (mark the four-fold reference to his seeing) cosmic catastrophe. Chaos engulfs the physical world. It is the story of Genesis 1 in reverse. It may be taken to describe the coming Day of the Lord. All nature is upheaved and no area of life — geological, terrestrial, celestial, human, ornithological, horticultural, and demographical — is left untouched. The apocalyptic overtone is unmistakable.

#### 5. The desolation of the land (27-31)

27-31 Again, the prophet must impress his hearers with the actuality of the coming doom. What great literary genius is exhibited when he returns to the same theme, yet does so without boring his listeners. The thrust of the passage is that the die is cast, and nothing can reverse the decree. Jeremiah now indicates in prophetic discourse what he saw in spirit.

A ray of hope is held out for, although the calamity will be actual enough, the Lord will not allow it to accomplish the dissolution of the nation. There will be no reenactment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Cf. Lev. 26:44; Isa. 6:13; Amos 9:8; Mic. 5:6,7; for wording, Jer. 5:10,18; 30:11; 46:28. God is committed to the preservation of a remnant.

Because God has purposes of grace toward the nation, let no one presume that judgment will not fall. The decision was irrevocable; the fulfillment came in 586 B.C. For this destruction of the land the very heavens and earth would mourn. The Babylonians took over the military strategy of the Assyrians, becoming adept bowmen.

Archaeological monuments give

much evidence that the Babylonians were a people of archers. Before such an adversary the only course will be the escape to the rocky hills; the whole city of Jerusalem will be deserted. The desperate condition of Israel is finally pictured under the figure of a harlot who even in her desperate hour still tries to allure the enemy by her wiles.

Her lovers (lit. paramours) will be unimpressed and rather despise her. Her final agonies are depicted under the figure of a miscarriage of a first child with the mother in her final gasps. Though undeserving, the nation will not find Jeremiah deaf to her agonizing cries. The courtesan will be murdered by her lovers, but the prophet enters completely into her plight.

#### The Personal Word

If God is the moral Governor of the universe, and He is, and if sin is vastly destructive materially and spiritually, and it is, then as surely as the night follows the day, there must be God's visitation in wrath against all that is contrary to Him and His will. Man, whether in Israel or among the nations of the earth, has sought out numerous methods — from the presence of false prophets to claims of the innate goodness of human character — to maintain that there is a possible way to avoid the penalty for sin committed.

There are a multitude of ways, religious and non-religious — that men have advanced to right the wrong to their own satisfaction. But the accursed spot will not wash. Only God's method is effective, and that is the cleansing through the blood of the Messiah shed on Calvary for the sins of all men. It is a way that will not allow of substitutes; it is a method which avails eternally for Jew and Gentile, hence the uniqueness of the Christian faith and the biblical solution.



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