

## The Jew First

There used to be a truly terrible stigma associated with “Nazi,” National Socialism. “Nazi” meant ardently anti-Semitic. It was widely agreed that being anti-Semitic was wrong. After the Holocaust, there was the voice from the Jewish community: Never again!

Yet, throughout the world, there is today the rise of anti-Semitic movements. It is on the far left. It is on the far right. The stigma has been erased. Is this part of the preparations for the Tribulation? A question that Herman previously raised to the congregation. “Do these people (anti-Semites) even know why they hate Jews?” Sounds like Jason Bourne, “Do you even know why you are supposed to kill me?”

Jesus said the Tribulation would be the greatest tribulation, greatest suffering ever. So we have to surmise that the Jews will go through something worse than the holocaust.

**Matthew 24:21 For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.**

**Matthew 24:22 Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.**

The believing survivors of the Tribulation will emerge into the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Jew will no longer be looked down upon. The Jew will be looked up to in admiration.

**Zephaniah 3:20 “At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together;**

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**Indeed, I will give you renown and praise  
Among all the peoples of the earth, When I  
restore your fortunes before your eyes,” Says  
the Lord.**

Listening to one of Herman’s lessons on Romans, he lamented that “we have to make some headway.” The point of these lessons is not to cover the book of Romans in a set number of weeks. It is to be guided by the Holy Spirit in such a fashion that the listeners are “edified,” or “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18) I feel Herman’s “pain” at not making headway, but I must stop from time to time to share the richness of God’s grace to be found in His Word.

This week’s study starts with last week’s verses. The underlined text is the topic of today’s lesson.

**Romans 2:6 who (God) will render to each person according to his deeds:**

Romans 2:7 (Wuest Translation) to those on the one hand who by steadfastness of a good work seek glory and honor and incorruptibility, eternal life;

**Romans 2:8 but to those on the other hand who out of a factious spirit are both also non-persuadable with respect to the truth and persuadable with respect to unrighteousness, wrath and anger.**

**Romans 2:9 Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man who works out to a finish the evil, both upon the soul of a Jew first and also upon the soul of a Gentile,**

Romans 2:10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who works out to a finish that which is good, both to a Jew first and also to a Gentile.

**Romans 2:11 For there is no partiality in the presence of God. (Just a quick note: this phrase about God is said at least two other places in the**

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New Testament: Acts 10:38 by Peter and again by Paul in Galatians 2:6. That is indicative of the importance of this concept to both Paul and Peter. We must apply that principle to our lives, in our dealings with people: no partiality.)

Paul, in Romans 1:16 and now in Romans chapter 2 verses 9 and 10, says “the Jew first.” The question comes to mind: Why? That is an obvious, logical question. Paul will hint at some benefits to being a Jew in verses that follow. But I want an obvious, logical list of reasons to answer this question of why the Jew first? Why?

There may be a coherent list of points on the subject of why the Jew first somewhere on the internet. I didn’t run across one that satisfied my lesson objectives of having a list of points. So I brainstormed and came up with the following points. I do not claim this list is all-inclusive. I do think it provides sufficient evidence that Jesus and as a result, Peter and Paul, went to the Jew first with the gospel and why. Here is the overview of the points so you don’t get lost in the details that follow. I am sure that once taught, they will be revised. But they are what they are currently.

1. **Salvation** came from the Jews.
2. **Scripture** was given to the Jews
3. **Savior** Jesus was sent to the Jews
4. **Servants** of God, Peter and Paul went to the Jews first
5. **Seal** of Covenants to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses
6. **Sovereign** Faithfulness of God to the Jews
7. **Superiority** of the Jews in the Millennial Kingdom

OK, I bowed to the seminary penchant for points starting with the same letter.

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I. **Salvation** came from the Jews.

A. Jesus said “salvation is from the Jews.” He is talking to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well.

**John 4:22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.**

Jesus says these words to the Samaritan woman at the well in John chapter 4. There may be a hidden irony in Jesus’ words. He is the salvation. He is a Jew. His presence is an announcement that salvation is from the Jews.

It is not just that salvation came from the Jews, but the messages from God for the need for salvation and then the documentation of that person who would be the Messiah, who would provide salvation, they came to the Jews.

It starts in the book of Genesis.

**Loss of Fellowship/Righteousness**

**Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

Adam and Eve sinned by doing what God had forbidden. SIN.

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**Genesis 3:7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

**Genesis 3:8** They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

They lost fellowship because they lost righteousness.  
RIGHTEOUSNESS.

### Loss of Everlasting Life

**Genesis 3:22** Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”

Loss of “live forever,” in otherwords, everlasting life.  
LIFE. Once the penalty of sin is paid for at the cross, there remains the deficits of life and righteousness.

### Promise of Salvation

**Genesis 3:15** And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

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The gospel message from God was first given immediately after Adam sinned. This is identified by conservative theologians as the “Proto-Evangelium” or first gospel. “Her seed” and “He” are references to the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

- B. A human being had to provide for salvation by going to the cross. In Adam all die. In Christ all (believers) will be made alive.

**1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.**

Paul’s “all.”

**1 Corinthians 15:45 So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.**

Since there was one man, the Messiah, who would be the “seed of the woman,” the Bible meticulously traced the ancestry of that man, Jesus Christ (the Messiah).

- C. Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

Below is only the beginning and the end of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. The point of the genealogy is that it shows that Jesus was a Jew. It shows that He is the “seed.” Hence, salvation came from the Jews.

**Matthew 1:1 The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son**

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**of Abraham: (Keep in mind for further discussion, the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants.)**

**Matthew 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.**

The genealogy was a Jewish genealogy of Jesus the Messiah.

II. **Scripture** was entrusted to the Jews

The need for salvation was documented in Adam's sin, in Genesis. As we have seen in the book of Job, God had to clean the unclean. That was to be accomplished by the Messiah on the cross. There are many prophecies of the Messiah and His suffering. For instance, Isaiah chapter 53.

**Isaiah 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.**

**Isaiah 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.**

**Isaiah 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way;**

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**But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all  
To fall on Him.**

This documentation of a future Messiah was given to the Jews, in Hebrew, the language of the Jews.

**Hebrews 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the (Jewish) prophets in many portions and in many ways,**

**Hebrews 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.**

In one of Peter's early sermons:

**Acts 3:19 Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;**

**Acts 3:20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,**

**Acts 3:21 whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy (Jewish) prophets from ancient time.**

**Romans 3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?**



**Romans 3:2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.**

**Deuteronomy 4:5 “See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it.**

**Deuteronomy 4:6 So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’**

**Deuteronomy 4:7 For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him?**

**Deuteronomy 4:8 Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole (written) law which I am setting before you today?**

There are other passages that could be quoted. The point is that the Jews were the custodians of the Old Testament which contained both the need for salvation and the prophecy of God’s solution. The Old Testament is referred to by Jesus and the New Testament writers as “Scripture.” So it is only logical, that because they held as

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custodians the sacred scriptures that they should be the first to hear about the cross and resultant justification that is possible as a result.

III. **Savior** Jesus was sent on a mission to the Jews

Jesus sent out His disciples only to the Jews:

**Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans;**

**Sent out.** This is the verb apostello, to send on a mission to a specific people. In this case the Jews.

**Matthew 10:6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

Jesus, Himself, specifically said he was sent to the House of Israel. In other words, to the Jew first. In His case, only to the House of Israel. He was not sent to a foreign land or a foreign people as Jonah was. No, he was specifically sent to Israel. This country, this people was the center of the prophecies contained in the Scriptures given to the Jews. However, it did not prevent Him from responding to faith wherever He found it. Sometimes in Gentiles.

“Sent” in Matthew 10:24 means sent on a mission. God the Father sent the Son on a mission to His people, the Jews. That was the focus of His mission.

In the extended quote below is verse 24 which contains the pertinent quote. The entire context is presented. It is a moving narrative on faith. It is also a moving narrative on Jesus’ compassion showing that He could deviate from his mission to respond to true faith. It was a faith that was mostly lacking among the Jews with a few

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outstanding exceptions. God always responds to true faith. Trust in HIM.

**Matthew 15:21 Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.**

**Matthew 15:22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.”**

The woman is identified as a Canaanite woman. In Jewish eyes, the Canaanites were not just Gentiles, but they had been a snare to the sons of Israel which led to the exile in Babylon.

**Matthew 15:23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, “Send (not our word apostello) her away, because she keeps shouting at us.”**

**Matthew 15:24 But He answered and said, “I was sent (apostello) only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”**

Based upon D. A. Carson’s translation of this verse, it is translated OK. A literal translation from the Greek might be difficult for English speakers to understand. The translation from the NASB captures the intent of the Greek.

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Also, when we read the rest of that passage, the woman pleads with Jesus in faith. He relents, responding to her faith and heals her daughter.

**Sent.** It is the Greek verb *apostello*, to send on a mission. As Herman taught, this verb emphasizes the people the “apostle” was sent to. In this cases it is the Jews in the House of Israel. The priority of the Jews in Jesus’ mission.

**Lost sheep.** This brings in the sheep and shepherd metaphor. Jesus is the shepherd, the shepherd of His people.

**Matthew 15:25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”**

**Matthew 15:26 And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”**

**Matthew 15:27 But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”**

**Matthew 15:28 Then Jesus said to her, “O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed at once.**

Why was Jesus sent to the House of Israel? He is the shepherd of His people. They are called lost. The shepherd must gather them together to protect them. In this case, He must give them the good news which points, for the Jew, to salvation and to the “kingdom.”

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“Through symbolic, prophetic actions like cursing the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14, 20-25; Matt 21:18-22) and cleansing the temple (Mark 11:15-19; Matt 21:12-17; Luke 19:45-48, John 2:13-16), as well as strong prophetic denunciations (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21, 13:6-9), Jesus made his particular focus on Israel clear.<sup>1</sup>”

IV. Peter and Paul’s ministries: Jew first, then Gentile

Peter’s Ministry started on the day of Pentecost and continued. He was the apostle to the Jews.

**Acts 2:14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.**

Peter’s ministry started at Pentecost and was directed at the Jews. As Paul later said,

**Galatians 2:7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised**

**Galatians 2:8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),**

The need for salvation, the documentation of the promise resided with the Jews. So it is only logical that they would be the first to “get it.”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/why-did-jesus-say-he-came-only-for-israel/>

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It is also interesting to note that Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles did not become a believer until Jews had first been evangelized. Phillip and Peter were involved in the first ministries to Gentiles, first to Samaritans and then Cornelius, a Roman centurion. That was after a mission was set up in Jerusalem.

During Peter's ministry, he became surprised that the non-Jews, Samaritans, were included in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 8:14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John,**

**Acts 8:15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.**

**Acts 8:16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

**Acts 8:17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.**

And later in the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, the gospel was given and the Holy Spirit was given.

**Acts 10:34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,**

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**Acts 10:35** but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

**Acts 10:44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

**Acts 10:45** All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

V. Covenants to the Jews

Promise to Abraham started the blessings.

**Genesis 12:1** Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you;

**Genesis 12:2** And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

**Genesis 12:3** And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Also Genesis 12:7, Genesis 15:18-21 and Genesis 17:8

To Isaac

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**Genesis 26:2** The Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you.

**Genesis 26:3** Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.

**Genesis 26:4** I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

**Genesis 26:5** because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.”

To Jacob/Israel

**Genesis 35:11** God also said to him, “I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you.

**Genesis 35:12** “The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you.”



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This is another of those topics that could only be covered comprehensively in many hours of lectures.

VI. God's faithfulness to His people

Once I started working on this point, it dawned on me that this is way bigger than just a single point in a single hour lesson. So this point is more an overview of some aspects of God's faithfulness.

A. **Vocabulary.** One aspect of God's faithfulness can be seen through the vocabulary of the Bible, especially the four Hebrew words used in the Old Testament.

“At least four Old Testament Hebrew terms highlight God's faithfulness: *'emet* (faithfulness), *'emuna* (steadiness, reliability), *hesed* (loyalty), and *zakar* (remember). Each of these terms speak to different aspects of the concept of faithfulness.<sup>2</sup>”

B. **Promised Events.** Another aspect of God's faithfulness can be seen through individual events toward Jewish ancestors. This is just a sampling.

God was faithful to His promise to provide a savior at the time of the great flood. He kept one family who were believers alive.

**Genesis 8:1 But God remembered (one of the words for God's faithfulness) Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.**

God promised Abraham a son. He was faithful to His promise.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/faithfulness-of-god/>

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**Genesis 18:10** He said, “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.

**Genesis 21:1** Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised.

**Genesis 21:2** So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.

C. Prophetic Events

God fulfilled prophecy which are special promises of God. There are many prophecies fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 2:4** Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

**Matthew 2:5** They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet (Micah 5:2):

**Matthew 2:6** ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come

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**forth a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.””**

There are numerous prophecies that could be quoted.

VII. In the Millennial Kingdom, the Jew will be given renown among all the peoples of the earth. So in the culmination of history, the Jews will be given prominence. First.

**Zephaniah 3:20 “At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” Says the Lord.**