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A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS
A DEVOTIONAL TEACHING RESOURCE
FOR PILGRIMS TO ISRAEL

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Welcome to the Olive Press Research Paper – an occasional paper featuring articles that cover a wide spectrum of issues which relate to the ministry of CMJ.

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Articles do not necessarily portray CMJ's standpoint on a particular issue but may be published on the premise that they allow a pertinent understanding to be added to any particular debate.

During November 2011 a CMJ Shores Church Leader's Study Tour took place. The tour visited a number of key biblical sites in Israel. At each site I was able to give some Biblical reflection and teaching. The following paper provides an overview of some of this teaching, along with some brief travel information.

In preparation for each site, the tour group explored the idea that a site becomes a holy place, not so much by what may have happened at that place, but by the worship offered there over the generations, both by local believers and pilgrims.

We also reflected upon the idea that as Christians we worship a person not a place, but place (and time) becomes sanctified by the working of the Holy Spirit. This is, in part, the meaning of the incarnation, in which we celebrate the eternal becoming rooted in time and the omnipresent becoming defined by space.

A Pilgrim's Prayer:

May the God who called our father Abraham to journey into the unknown and guarded him and blessed him, protect me too and bless my journey. May His love support me, as I set out on the journey. May the Holy Spirit be with me on the way and may I be led back home in peace. I commend those I love to God's care and, for myself, I ask that the blessings of the Lord may touch me and all those I meet. Blessed are You O Lord, whose presence travels with His pilgrim people.

TEACHING DAY I: LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

Visit to the Ancient Port of Jaffa

We began our teaching tour in Jaffa (aka Joppa) which was the key Port of Israel in Old Testament times. The Jaffa Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem marked the start of the main route from Jerusalem



to the Port, a distance of around 38 miles. As we explored Jaffa, the focus for the first day was on the Prophet Jonah. As we read together parts of the book we were challenged by God's extensive and far reaching love. The final verse of the book (Jonah 4:11) proclaims; *"Should I not be concerned about that great City?"* That 'great City' was Nineveh, which was the centre of worldly power exercised by the Assyrian Empire. Jonah rebelled against the Lord's calling to go to Nineveh and he started out in the opposite direction. In fact, he was heading to the very extreme edge of the known commercial world at this time, as he sailed westwards towards Tarshish (southern Spain). As we looked out from the ancient port of Jaffa (tradition informs us that Jaffa was founded by Noah's son Japheth) and over the stormy Mediterranean Sea, we reflected together about the futility of running away from God's call and purposes. We also, in times of quietness, remembered the occasions we had been slow to heed God's call in our own lives and the way in which God often gives to us second (or many more!) chances, although not as dramatically as He did with Jonah (Jonah 2:10).

On a wider level, we also explored how Jonah needed a reappraisal of his worldview and his theological contours. As a Prophet of Israel, he was part of God's big picture of bringing God's light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6), yet he was reluctant in this calling and grudging of God's grace (Jonah 4:1).

For us as pilgrims to Israel, maybe this is an ideal time to reflect upon our own worldviews and theological contours. I suggested that what must be central for us is a celebration of God's desire to bless. This blessing is rooted in the goodness of the Creation Story (Genesis 1:28) and is reaffirmed in the calling of Abram (Genesis 12:1-3) and in the gift of the Messiah (Ephesians 1:3).

This desire to be blessed and to be a blessing to others is of course at the heart of the mission work of the Church. I reminded the group that it was also here in Jaffa (Acts 9:43), that Peter received a vision (Acts 10:11) which led him to reappraise his own worldview, travel to Caesarea and minister to Cornelius. There is some reluctance shown by Peter (as was the case with Jonah) to minister to the Gentiles in Caesarea. He was called to the Port

of Caesarea, which was the power centre of the Roman Empire in Israel (just as Nineveh was the power centre of the earlier Assyrian Empire).

The events in Acts 10 mark a new beginning in the outworking of the Gospel and the developing of the Messianic community (Church), as for the first time, non-Jews (Gentiles) are brought into the community (Acts 10:48). This is done not by Gentiles becoming Jewish proselytes, but by a saving faith in the person and work of Jesus. This reality is marked by the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:47 is perhaps the key New Testament verse, with regards to the unity of Jews and Gentiles, within the purposes of God. We rejoiced at this unity so wonderfully expressed by the words of Peter; *“They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have”*, while at the same time, reflecting upon the on-going diversity which God gives within His Church.

BEERSHEBA

TEACHING DAY 2: THE SHEPHELAH AND NEGEV

Visit to Beersheba

As we left the urban sprawl of Israel’s largest city Tel Aviv, I reflected on its name. *Tel* means old hill, and certainly there is evidence of layers of settlements in this area dating back to the end of the



Stone Age. *Aviv* means spring. Tel Aviv is therefore a reminder that something new has ‘sprung into life’ out of the old. This new ‘springing’ can be traced back to the 60 Jewish families who moved out of Jaffa in 1909, to establish a new settlement among the coastal sand dunes. The recent growth of Tel Aviv has been remarkable.

We then drove through the Shephelah region and into the Negev. Shephelah refers to the lowlands and foothills of south central Israel. In the Bible, this area is linked to the tribe of Judah. It is in this region (the valley of Elah) that the battle between David and Goliath took place (1 Samuel 17). As we reflected on this event, I drew attention to two key facts of this battle. Firstly, David put his trust in the Lord (1 Samuel 17:37). The question to us is, where and in whom do we invest our trust? How is this trust worked out in our living and decision making? Secondly, David rejected wearing Saul’s armour to fight Goliath (1 Samuel 17:39). The point for us is that we need to know our own identity, gifting and calling. We need to be ourselves in ministry, rather than slavishly following the methods and patterns of someone else. We must not be distracted by others (John 21:21-22), but we must, at all times, remain focused on our own calling.

On leaving the valley of Elah we travelled through part of the Negev to the city of Beersheba, about 56 miles south of Jerusalem. Beersheba has been an important crossroads in the southern Negev since at least 3500 BC. Today it is the regional centre of the Negev. In Biblical times, Beersheba was connected with the narrative of Abraham (Genesis 21), Isaac (Genesis 26) and Jacob (Genesis 28). There is also a link with Elijah (1 Kings 19:3). Abraham's Well is in the old part of town, but the site the Patriarchs would have known lies a short distance to the east. Since excavations began in 1951 at Tel Sheva (the Mound of Beersheba), one can see fortifications dating from the time of King Solomon and a later Roman fortress. As we looked out from the Tel, I reflected on the callings of the Patriarchs, along with the spirituality of the desert. Jesus Himself retreated to the desert; it may be in the desert where we gain a stronger sense of space, emptiness, beauty, vulnerability and pilgrimage. We are reminded that, as Christians, we are on a journey; we are in one sense a truly nomadic and pilgrim people.

TEACHING DAY 3: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PROPHETS

Visit to Caesarea, Mount Carmel and Nazareth

It was in the great Roman Port City of Caesarea (31 miles from Tel Aviv) that the Messianic community had its first

direct mission contact with non-Jewish people (see day 1). Later it was this port which Paul used as a starting point for a number of his missionary journeys. Paul was imprisoned here on his way to trial in Rome (probably in the year 56). Later Caesarea became a Christian centre and was home both to Origen (a leading Christian theologian) in the 3rd century and Eusebius (the 'Father of Church History') in the 4th century.

We read together Acts 23:23-35 and reflected upon Paul's ministry. I suggested it was important for us to see Paul as having a dual role, as an Apostle to the Gentiles, but also as a Prophet to Israel (for a fuller exploration of Paul's dual role see *The Case for Enlargement Theology* and *Paul, The Man and the Teacher* – details in the Bibliography).

Also, as we stood amongst the awesome ruins of Caesarea, the great gateway city of the Roman Empire, we reflected upon how the early Church and Rabbinical Judaism responded to Roman rule and the many challenges of religious paganism (for a fuller exploration of this see *Versus Israel* – details in the Bibliography).

CAESAREA



From Caesarea, we travelled inland to Mount Carmel. Carmel means ‘Garden of God’ and has a mention in the Songs of Songs (7:5). Here we focused upon the ministry of Elijah, beginning with the story of the widow of Zarepeth (1 Kings 17:7-24). Zarepeth was a small coastal town, near Tyre and was a well-known centre of Baal worship. It was here God heard Elijah’s cry (1 Kings 17:32). We are reminded throughout the Bible that God is a God who hears (Exodus 2:23-24, Psalm 40:1-3, Nehemiah 6:16) and responds to the cries of His people.

We later reflected that the name Elijah means the ‘Lord is (my) God’. The meaning of his name becomes the essence of his message, as Elijah proclaims the Lord as the only true God. The climax of this message is reached in the contest with the Prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:16-42). This great victory is then followed for Elijah, not with great celebrations, but with a period of deep despair (1 Kings 19:4). We reflected together on how we cope with and understand the ‘highs and lows’ of Christian ministry. We also explored the understanding of the remnant (1 Kings 19:18) in Biblical Theology (for a fuller exploration of this, see the Olive Press Research Paper ‘*Elijah and the Covenant*’ – details in the Bibliography).

From Carmel we drove to Nazareth (18 miles from Tiberius / 22 miles from Haifa), where we remembered the question, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” which Nathanael asked in John 1:45-46. This demonstrates how Nazareth was not a powerful or important religious centre for Jewish life at that time. In fact, Nazareth remained a ‘back-water’ village until late Byzantine times. However, Nazareth had a synagogue (Luke 4:16), but probably had no resident Rabbi. This may be why Jesus had to wait for one of His visits to Jerusalem to find a religious leader to ask questions of and listen to (Luke 2:46).

At Nazareth, I taught about Mary, the mother of Jesus, especially looking at how Mary can be seen as a pattern for our own discipleship. I suggested that Mary responds in six ways, therefore providing us with a template for discipleship:

- 1) When speaking with Gabriel about the forthcoming conception of Jesus, Mary makes an open-ended and faithful response to God, “*I am the Lord’s servant, may it be to me as you have said.*”
- 2) She finds the appropriate support she needs through her friendship with Elizabeth.
- 3) She knows the Scriptures, see for example how her song of praise in Luke 1:46-55 is constructed from the Old Testament Scriptures. Mary’s song, in many ways, also echoes Hannah’s song (1 Samuel 2).
- 4) She treasures and ponders what God has given to her, deep within her heart (Luke 2:19).
- 5) There are a number of times when words were spoken (John 2:4, Mark 3:33) which could have caused some offence. There is no record of Mary choosing to do this.
- 6) She perseveres right to the end. She is one of the few who stay with Jesus at the cross (John 19:25) and she is a key part of the early Messianic community (Acts 1:14). (For a

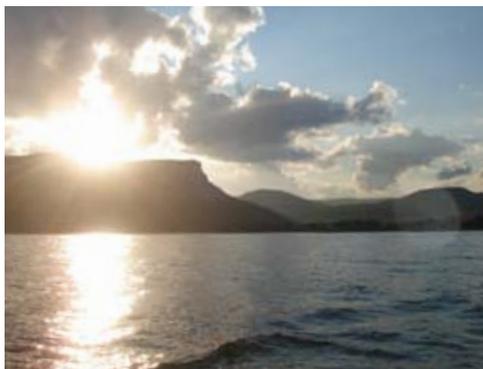
fuller exploration of both Elijah and Mary, see Bible Talks 4 and 6 in *Receive the Truth* – details in the Bibliography).

LAKE GALILEE

TEACHING DAY 4: AROUND LAKE GALILEE

Mount of Beatitudes, Capernaum and Kursi

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Our first visit was to the Mount of Beatitudes, (9 miles north of Tiberius). This is a traditional site selected by the Franciscans and marked with an attractive chapel (paid for, alarmingly, with gifts from Mussolini), although the Gospel accounts do not offer a specific location for the well-known “Sermon on the Mount” Jesus gave.

At this site, overlooking the Lake of Galilee, we reflected about the Kingdom. The Kingdom is neither a place nor a future event (although as Christians we look with hope towards the second coming of Jesus and the consummation of the Kingdom) for the Kingdom is here and now. Yet we live with the real tension that there is a ‘now’, but also there is a ‘still to be’ and a ‘not yet’ of Kingdom power and Kingdom living. The Kingdom comes upon you and is in you, it is God’s redemptive Spirit at work from small beginnings, like a mustard seed, or yeast in the dough. The Kingdom is the central message of Jesus in His Galilean preaching, and discipleship (following Jesus) is the central method for entering into the reality of Kingdom living.

We read together the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5:1-17, and I taught that we need to see The Beatitudes as a whole and as a progression. A progression in the sense that the first blessing is addressed to a wide and inclusive group namely the poor. This is followed by another wide group, those who mourn. From this point, the general focus becomes more specific – namely, the meek and those who hunger for righteousness. This ‘narrowing in’ continues until the final blessing, which focuses in on a very specific group, namely, those who are persecuted because of their closeness to Jesus. The term “blessed” (the original Greek word is *Makarios*) is a key theme of the Psalms (see for example, Psalm 32:1-2 and 33:12) and it literally means blissfully happy or even, as translated in some of the earliest English versions of Scripture, can mean lucky. This blessing is an outworking of the gift of grace, it is not something which can be earned, but rather it is to be received.

This sermon marks the first of the five great teaching segments in Matthew chapters

5-7, 10, 13, 18 and 24-25. Perhaps these five sections deliberately echo the five books of the Torah? This section closes (Matthew 7:24-27) with Jesus emphasising the need for us to put into practice what He has taught, with such “amazing authority” (7:29). At one level, this teaching can be explored as a new Torah (Messianic Torah?), as Jesus Himself came to fulfil (correctly interpret and apply) the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17).

We then travelled on to Capernaum (11 miles north of Tiberius) which was the centre of Jesus’ Galilean ministry. Capernaum is described as his home town (Matthew 9:1) and it was from here that Jesus called Peter, Andrew and Matthew to follow Him and become His disciples. Also, the local synagogue was the setting for much of His teaching and preaching.

Our final stop was at Kursi (on the east side of the Lake of Galilee) where we explored the remains of the 4th century (Byzantine) Church, which marks the place of the healing of a demon possessed man. We read together the account in Mark 5:1-17. Mark gives the fullest account of this event, which is somewhat unusual, for in most cases within the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew or Luke tend to record additional information and extend the (earlier?) account given in Mark.

I spoke here about this event and firstly mentioned this took place on the ‘other side’ of the Lake. In other words, this was a Gentile area (hence the herding of pigs). The demon possessed man had clearly lost his sense of identity (verse 9) and self-control. Jesus ministers to him by asking the man “What is your name?” first. It is important to understand that our name is linked so closely to our identity and our self-awareness, as we are reminded by Proverbs (Proverbs 7:1 “A good name is better than precious ointment”). Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, calls His sheep by name (John 10:4). In response, it is the demon who speaks for the man, indicating how the man has lost everything, including his identity. Jesus begins the process of restoration and deliverance of the man. The demons are sent out of him into a herd of pigs, feeding on a nearby hillside (Mark 5:11). Immediately, the pigs rushed into the Lake and drowned.

I see how this dramatic sight was the way Jesus chose to reassure the man his demons had totally gone. I imagine Jesus gently and lovingly saying; “They are no more, please remember the great splash, it is over, they have all gone!” So the drowning of the pigs is primarily a public visual assurance for the man of the inner spiritual reality of his deliverance. Yet also this drowning is a reminder of how man is worth so much more than the herd of 2,000 pigs. We also must celebrate our own great worth, in as much as we are made in the image of God and we are redeemed by God sending His one and only Son to die for us; He paid the ultimate price for you and for me (1Peter 1:18-21).

This act of deliverance shocked the locals (Mark 5:17). The man pleaded with Jesus to allow him to go with Him, but Jesus knew the man’s fuller healing and deliverance would come when he was reconciled to his own family (verse 19). In being reconciled he became an evangelist, his witness preparing the way for the later preaching of the Gospel in

Decapolis. A similar evangelistic preparatory work is carried out by the Samaritan woman, as recorded in John 4:39.

GATE INTO DAN

TEACHING DAY 5: EXPLORING THE GOLAN

Caesarea Philippi



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We travelled from Galilee up to Caesarea Philippi (aka Banyas/Paneas), which is located in the foothills of the snow-capped Mount Hermon, about 46 miles from Tiberius. Firstly, we visited the nature reserve, in which is situated both the archaeological remains of the ancient settlement of Dan (traditionally spoken of as the northern limit of Israel) and a source of the River Jordan. Here we reflected on the imagery of living water and read together John 7:37-44. I reminded the group that water is the most used metaphor in the bible for the work of the Holy Spirit, for water cleanses us, refreshes us and sustains us. This truth has a special resonance in the semi-arid desert areas of Israel. Just as the deer pants for streams of water (Psalm 42:1), so our true spirituality seeks a full baptism in the Holy Spirit of God. Water also always flows to the lowest point, in the same way the life of the Spirit is one which reflects 'lowliness of heart' and humility. This humility was indeed demonstrated supremely in the life of Jesus (Philippians 2:6-8).

Also at Caesarea Philippi, we remembered Peter's central and crucial profession of faith. We read Matthew 16:13-19 together and I explained Peter's confession had taken place at the very spot which had become a centre of Pagan worship (the shrine of the god Pan). It is worth noting therefore that Peter confesses Jesus as the Son of the Living God, in contrast to the dead (false) gods of the surrounding cults of Paganism.

This confession was based upon a revelation of God in Peter's life (Matthew 16:17). It is upon this confession and the subsequent ministry of the apostles (Ephesians 2:20) in which Peter played a leading role (see Acts 2:14, 3:1, 4:8, 8:14, 8:17, 10:27 and 10:48), that the Church was built (for a fuller discussion on the role of Peter, see Bible Talk 9 in *Receive the Truth* – details in the Bibliography).

This building of the Church took place in a largely Roman/Greek Pagan culture. So the growth of the early Church can be fully understood, only in this 'missionary' context. The power of the Gospel will triumph over the gates of Hades (Matthew 16:18) and as the Church community grows, the apostolic leaders of the community are given the responsibility (the keys) to bind and to loose. I understand the Church establishes a Messianic/Holy Spirit

empowered *Halalkah* (way of interpreting the Law, in order to live), which allows for unity between Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus to be established and maintained.

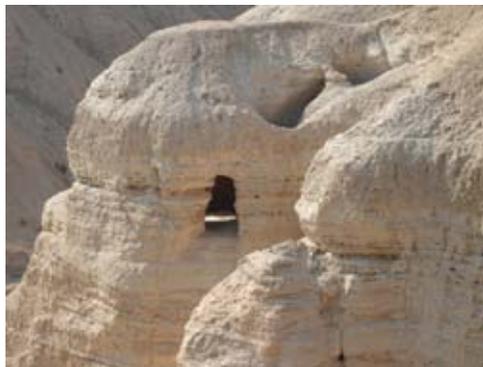
As we left Caesarea Phillipi to drive south, we reflected upon our own confession of faith and I taught, based on Romans 10:9, that every true confession must be built upon Jesus and have both an inner reality (believe in your heart) and an outward expression (confess with your mouth).

QUMRAN

TEACHING DAY 6: THE DESERT AS REFUGE

Qumran and En Gedi

We arrived at Qumran (12 miles south of Jericho on the west bank of the Dead Sea) and here, in this desolate desert landscape which is part of the great Rift Valley running from the source



of the Jordan to the lakes of central and eastern Africa, we traced the beginnings of this 'monastic' (Essenes) community to around 150 BC, when 50 very religious Jews left the priestly corruption of Jerusalem to set up a true/new Israel and to await the coming of the Kingdom. This deeply devout male community (possibly an offshoot of the pious Hasidim who had originally supported the Maccabees), followed a life of poverty, penance and celibacy (although some female corpses have been found in the community cemetery). This community was very strict and sectarian and lived on this site for about 100 years, until an earthquake (31 BC) forced them to leave the site. They returned some 30 years later and stayed until the Roman army destroyed the community in the final year of the Jewish war of independence. The audio visual presentation at the Visitor Centre suggests that perhaps John the Baptist was at one point a member of the community. The presentation goes on to suggest he left or was excommunicated because of his more 'universalist understandings' of God's redemptive purposes. While such ideas are intriguing, as are the various speculations about the link between Jesus and the Essenes, it is impossible to make any definitive connection.

Qumran is best known as the home of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Scrolls include two complete copies of Isaiah, plus fragments of many other Biblical and Apocryphal books, along with an Aramaic version of the book of Enoch. Also there is what is known as the Temple Scroll, which contains detailed descriptions of the Jerusalem Temple, plus commentaries explaining the prophetic writings in relation to the history /practice of

the Essenes community. All of this material has significantly advanced the study of the Hebrew text and the understanding of aspects of Jewish religious life during part of the Second Temple period.

As we walked around the ruins of Qumran and glanced up at the 11 caves above us in which the Scrolls were rediscovered between 1947 and 1956, I reflected on issues of community. How as Christians are we called to be “in the world, but not of it”? How should we build community life, what should our values be and what should be our legacy? What does Kingdom holiness look like for us today? In all of this, there are no neat answers, yet a profound challenge exists. This challenge had special resonance as we read together Romans 12:1-3.

We then travelled 18 miles south, down the desert road to En Gedi. En Gedi is a beautiful oasis fed by a small spring/waterfall and is mentioned in the Song of Songs (1:14-15). En Gedi is also the place where David and Saul had a significant encounter. We read of this in 1 Samuel 24:1-7. I drew out in my teaching from this text that David honoured Saul and refrained from killing him, because David had recognised Saul was still the Lord’s anointed. It is important for us to recognise God’s anointing, especially in terms of ministry; we must refrain from trying to grab or manipulate for ourselves positions of status. Our ministries must spring from God’s call and gifting not from our own agendas and striving. We must recognise that genuine ministry flows both from the office God has given and from His on-going gifting. Gifts are to be used in service and not owned as medals. As we walked through the oasis, we looked south to glimpse the great mountain fortress of Masada, the scene of so much conflict and suffering. We reflected and remembered again that the power and goal of Christian ministry is so different to the power and goal of the world.

TEACHING DAY 7: DISCOVERING JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF JESUS

Temple Mount and Excavations at the Southern Wall

We walked through the streets of the Jewish quarter which had been carefully restored since 1967 and onto the Temple Mount. The story of the Temple begins with King David capturing Jerusalem and making it into the capital and religious focus for the newly

TEMPLE WALL



confederated Israel. David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6). Later, his son Solomon, helped by his newly acquired Phoenician allies, began building the Temple (1 Kings 6) and placed the Ark within the Temple (1 Kings 8). The Temple was then dedicated and the Lord appeared to Solomon and affirmed the centrality of the Temple saying, *“I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this Temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there”* (1 Kings 9:3).

The Temple was one of the great buildings of the ancient world, but was totally destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. The second Temple was built to replace it 70 years later, as the exiles returned from Babylon. We reflected on this by reading together Haggai 2:3-9 and discussing the roles of Nehemiah (the only autobiographical book in the Bible) and Ezra. This second Temple was transformed and massively enlarged by the building projects (not completed until 64 AD) of Herod the Great. This Temple (aka Herod’s Temple) stood completed for only six years, before being destroyed by the Romans.

We explored the Temple Mount and the tunnels underneath the Western Wall Plaza, before coming to the excavations along the southern wall. Here we saw the mikveh pools, which provided the place for the mass baptisms as recorded in Acts 2. Here I began to teach about the Temple and Pentecost – Jesus growing up within a faithful Jewish family clearly had a great connection with the Temple. He was consecrated in the Temple (Luke 2:21-40). He went there as a child (Luke 2:41-52). He often taught within the Temple courts and this teaching was frequently linked to the main pilgrim festivals (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles) for which the Temple was the focal point. However, Jesus also redefined and challenged many prevailing Jewish understandings of the Temple. In John 2:19-21, He taught that He Himself (and His disciples?) is the true Temple/dwelling place of God. It is probably this claim, above all others, which eventually led to His arrest on the grounds of making blasphemous and politically subversive claims.

This understanding of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is at the very heart of the outworking of Pentecost (Acts 2). The highest description/definition of being a Christian is, I believe, presented in 2 Corinthians 6:16; *“For we are the temple of the living God...”* Here, theologians declare that pneumatology is imminent Christology. In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the person and work of the risen Lord Jesus. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not a gift from God, but it is the gift of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is poured out into our lives, not to make up for the absence of the risen and ascended Lord, but rather to confirm His presence. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are the gifts of the ascended (glorified) Lord to His people.

We need a theology which is truly ‘Biblically Trinitarian’. I believe this theology was at the heart of the early Church. What I mean by this, is we need to proclaim God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Sadly, I fear at times in the history of the Church the Holy Spirit has

been replaced by the Church, so perhaps the new Trinity became, in fact, the Father, Son and Holy Church. At other times the devotion to Mary means that for some, the Trinity seems more like the Father, Son and the blessed Virgin. For some within my Reformed Protestant tradition the Holy Trinity appears to be Father, Son and the Holy Bible. In some charismatic circles, the undermining of the Trinity is not to do with the loss of emphasis on the Holy Spirit, but on the loss of the Fatherhood of God. In this case perhaps the Trinity in practice is seen more as the Son, the Holy Spirit and the anointed individual/leader/healer/apostle etc.

We need openness to the work of the Holy Spirit, for the work of the Holy Spirit is vital in our salvation (we are born anew/again/from above/of the Spirit) in our justification (1 Corinthians 6:11) in our on-going renewal/personal transformation (the call to be filled with the Spirit as in Ephesians 5:16, is in the Greek present tense. It points to the need for us to keep on being filled) and in our ministries within the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-30).

As we are open and obedient to the Holy Spirit, I understand the Bible teaches our openness and obedience is manifested in four clear ways:

- 1) Transformed lives
- 2) Inspired utterances
- 3) Holy living
- 4) Empowered witness

All of these manifestations are rooted in and flow from a commitment to Jesus as Lord. May we all be open to receiving the gift of God (John 20:22).

YAD V'SHEM

TEACHING DAY 8: RACHEL WEeping FOR HER CHILDREN

Yad V'Shem – A Place and A Name

We visited Yad V'Shem, the Israeli Holocaust Memorial. The Memorial was created in 1957 and covers a beautiful site on part of Mount Herzl, with views

over and beyond Jerusalem. The experience of walking through the memorial and visiting the museum, which carefully and creatively tells the harrowing story of the Holocaust, is one which takes time to process. We all spent some time alone before returning to read together Isaiah 56:5, Psalm 79:2-10 and Joel 1:2-3.

I understand that all Jewish-Christian relations today are, to some degree, shaped by



the Holocaust. Often theologians speak of a Post-Holocaust Theology. I think this is a helpful term, but as I wrote in *The Case for Enlargement Theology* (p56), it is important that our theology is Biblical “...I understand that within the Bible, we are given a full and complete revelation of God’s redemptive purposes. Therefore, any event claiming to be a new revelatory act must be rejected. In this case, when some proponents of a Two Covenant approach declare that one must reinterpret Romans 9-11 in light of the ‘new revelation’ the Holocaust brings, my position would be to reject such a declaration. Clearly the Holocaust does bring into reality a new climate for Jewish-Christian relations, there is also unquestionable and appropriately new emotional contexts, however, these do not amount to a ‘new revelation’ on the same level, in terms of authority, as that of Scriptural revelation.”

I also recommended the recent Olive Press paper, *Practical Foundations for a Post-Holocaust Messianic Soteriology* (details in Bibliography) for those who want to reflect more on this and other related issues.

HOLY SEPULCHRE

TEACHING DAY 9: IN THE STEPS OF JESUS

Following Jesus Through Jerusalem

We began by visiting the Garden of Gethsemane (in the Kidron Valley, east of Jerusalem). We explored how the agonising decision of Jesus, which led to our redemption, took place in a

garden and how this has echoes with the decision of Adam, leading to the fall of humanity, which also took place in a garden. Jesus, as the new Adam, made the faithful choice which brought life, while the old Adam made a faithless choice which brought death. We read together Romans 5:12-19, and reflected upon the obedient sacrifice of Jesus and the eternal consequences flowing from this.

We also read Luke 22:39-53 and Hebrews 5:7-10. I taught how Jesus was tempted in the garden to flee or to fight. Both are natural reactions at times of significant stress and danger. Both of these reactions at this point would have been wrong. Jesus knew His calling was not to flee or fight, but to stand firm in His calling and to obey the leading of His Father. In our own spiritual struggles we are called not to flee or fight, but also to stand firm (Ephesians 6:11, 6:13 and 6:14) within God’s purposes using the resources God gives.

From the Garden of Gethsemane, we walked down the Mount of Olives back into the Old City of Jerusalem to visit the Holy Sepulchre. This original 4th century building,



rebuilt on a smaller scale by the Crusaders (12th century), marks the place of both the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. H.J. Richards in his helpful guide to the Holy Land (details in Bibliography) states; *“No site in the Holy Land is more yearned for by the Christian pilgrim than here where Jesus died and was raised to life by the Power of God, yet no site is more likely to initially disappoint him, hemmed in as it is now by a constantly expanding city... Yet no site, if he revisits it often enough will eventually endear itself to him more. It has little to do with ‘the green hill far away’ of his dreams. But its power to evoke the centuries of history it enshrines, to bring together Christians of all shades and persuasions, and to inspire the patent devotion of its pilgrims, especially the poor—these will eventually overcome the surprise the pilgrim first experiences here, and move him to find a deep peace within these walls.”*

Our final visit in Jerusalem was to another garden. The Garden Tomb (situated on the Nablus Road, close to the Damascus Gate) originally known as Gordon’s Tomb, after General Gordon who, in 1883, believed he had found the site of Calvary. Clearly this beautifully cared for garden and the prayerful guide who showed us around, helped to create an atmosphere for worship and reflection. Perhaps this place has special importance for the atmosphere it helps stimulate in contrast to the initial feelings generated for many by visiting the Holy Sepulchre. One can fully appreciate why this site has gained significance, especially among Evangelical Christians.

As we sat in the garden, we read together Psalm 130 and John 19:38-20:16. I taught on how Nicodemus came to give Jesus a decent burial, fit for a King. The description of the amount of spices used (John 19:39) follows the pattern described in 2 Chronicles 16:14 and other Rabbinical sources, as what was required for a royal burial. This, I believe, was for Nicodemus his costly act of devotion and personal witness to Jesus as his King. Yet for Nicodemus his devotion appears far too late. His life must have been filled with so many ‘if only’ moments, flowing right back to that first meeting in secret with Jesus (John 3).

Many of us have our own ‘if only’ moments. The past can hold us all back, yet there can always be new beginnings. This new beginning is clearly seen as the risen Jesus spoke to the distraught Mary Magdalene, calling her by name (John 20:16). In the same way the glorious Gospel of Jesus beckons all of us, both personally and corporately as a body. The Holy Spirit of the risen Lord is able to heal the greatest hurt and bring about the most powerful transformation. May each one of us be open to this and be faithful in sharing the reality of our transformation with others. Such openness and sharing is the prime result within the Gospels of every genuine encounter with the risen Lord.

We concluded our time in the Garden with worships songs and a final declaration of praise, namely;

Yeshua has died; Yeshua is risen; and Yeshua will come again!

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