

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

November 12, 2017

"Beginning from Jerusalem"

by Frank Himmel

According to Luke's gospel, Jesus' final words to His apostles were:

Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (24:46-49).

Why Jerusalem? Why was it the beginning point for gospel preaching?



Jerusalem was the **prophesied** beginning point. Seven hundred years earlier, Isaiah had foretold that in the last days "the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (2:3; cf. Mic. 4:2). Isaiah was contrasting the future glory in the city with its current shame. In his day, Jerusalem's citizens were paying little attention to the word of the Lord. They were more like Sodom and Gomorrah in their level of respect for God (Isaiah 1:10).

Jerusalem was the **practical** beginning point. God's offer of salvation in Christ was "to the Jew first and also the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Just a few days after Jesus' ascension, Jews from all parts would gather to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. That would give the apostles an ideal opportunity to preach the gospel to multiplied thousands all at once.

Beyond these considerations, Jerusalem was also the **appropriate** beginning point. The gospel is God's gracious offer of forgiveness in His Son Jesus. What better way could divine mercy be illustrated than to first preach it to the very crowds who crucified Jesus? The Lord prayed from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). That prayer would be answered when His opponents were given the opportunity to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38).

Jerusalem was an appropriate beginning point in another way: it illustrated Jesus' enemies inability to discredit His resurrection. Jesus' resurrection was ▶

A Liberal in the Garden of Eden

by Frank Himmel

Some people do not want to hear the Bible’s prohibitions of homosexuality, divorce, drunkenness, immodesty, and the like. They dismiss the conclusion that such things are wrong as a matter of a conservatives’ “reading” or “interpretation” of Scripture. That assertion implies that “readings” or “interpretations” which reach opposite conclusions are equally valid.

I wonder what such a person would do with this statement: “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17). If a liberal wanted to eat of the forbidden tree, or if he wanted you to feel good about doing so, he would somehow



interpret the instruction to mean that death would **not** be the result. (After all, God is a God of love and forgiveness. Surely He would not condemn someone just for eating the wrong thing. Besides, God gave us our appetites!)

But wait! Someone in the garden actually did view the instruction this way. His name was Satan. And he was wrong—dead wrong. So were Adam and Eve when they were deceived by him and disobeyed God.

Folks, “God does not mean what He says” is the oldest lie in the world. Do not fall for it. ■

Beginning from Jerusalem - *continued from p. 1*

the ultimate proof of who He was (Matthew 13:38-40; John 2:18-22; Romans 1:4). If His enemies could have disproved His resurrection, they would have forever discredited His claims. Preaching the gospel at the very place these events took place gave them the best opportunity to do so. They could not. It is significant that just a short time later, Gamaliel, a prominent member of the Jewish high court that condemned Jesus to death, cautioned his fellow Council members that it was possible that Christianity was from God (Acts 5:34-39).

The offer of salvation that was preached “beginning from Jerusalem” is still available today. To receive it you must comply in the same way as 3,000 did the first day it was preached: believe in Jesus, repent, and be baptized in His name. Will you accept God’s gracious invitation? ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Carlos Garcia	John Baucom	Adam Gibson
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Bruce Williams	Daven Daniel
OPENING PRAYER	Greg Winget	Jason Chandler	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Bruce Hollander	Bruce Hollander	
CUP	Kerry Gray	Kerry Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Stachys McCloud		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Albert Lee Harrison
CLOSING PRAYER	David Gray	J B Williams	Albert Harrison Sr