

Turning Jewish hearts away from Catholicism

Nigel Bernard

When Christ returns, Elijah will turn the heart of the children to their fathers. This involves the Jews turning to the promises believed by men such as Abraham. As a comparison with Malachi and Proverbs shows, it also involves turning away from the false religions of the world, particularly Roman Catholicism.

IN MALACHI 4 it is written: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD [Yahweh]: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (vv. 5,6). These words will be fulfilled after the resurrection and judgement, but before Armageddon. So when Christ reveals himself to the Jews they will have been prepared by the teaching of Elijah.

In this article we see how this prophecy can help us to understand the spiritual state of Jews today. We will do this by using a passage from Proverbs which provides a key to understanding where the hearts of the Jews are *now*. It shows that, as with all peoples, the Jews are in danger of being deceived by the Babylonian harlot.

Righteous fathers

In Luke 1 the angel said to Zacharias concerning John: "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (v. 17). This is a quotation from Malachi 4:6, but the latter part of the verse has been changed. The word "children" has been replaced by "disobedient", and "fathers" has been replaced by "the wisdom of the just". So the children are disobedient and the fathers are just, or righteous. In John's day the fathers were no more righteous than their children. The "fathers" referred to in these words were the faithful fathers of old, such as Abraham, who was "justified" (Jas. 2:21).

John, in the spirit of Elijah, turned the disobedient heart of the children to the righteous fathers of old. He did this by showing that they

should seek to be the spiritual sons of Abraham by repenting rather than rely on simply being the natural descendants of Abraham: "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Lk. 3:8). But John could only partially fulfil the words of Malachi. One reason for this was that for "the hearts of the fathers" to be turned, the fathers obviously have to be alive. Yet Abraham and the other fathers were dead. John foreshadowed the greater work of Elijah which is yet to take place.

Proverbs 23

When the hearts of the children have truly been turned to their righteous fathers then the children will be righteous too. This is spoken of in Proverbs 23: "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him" (v. 24). When the Kingdom is established, Abraham will rejoice because he will be surrounded by his righteous children. A few verses later there is a key verse which links with Malachi: "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (v. 26).

Psalms 28 provides an example of where the Hebrew word for "turn" in Malachi 4 ("render" in the psalm) and the Hebrew for "give" in Proverbs 23 occur in parallel: "Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert" (v. 4). This verse provides support for linking Malachi 4:6 and Proverbs 23:26. When the heart of a child turns to his father he gives his heart to his father.

But Proverbs 23 also speaks about what the heart of a child should turn *from*. One of the things that the father warns his son against following is drunkenness: "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags" (vv. 20,21). This theme is continued later in the chapter: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without



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cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright" (vv. 29-31).

A second thing to be avoided is the whore: "For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men" (vv. 27, 28). Notice the word "For", linking it with the verse already quoted concerning the son giving his heart to his father. In verse 33 the danger of drink is shown to be related to whoredom, for a consequence of drink is that "Thine eyes shall behold strange women".

When the heart of a son turns to his righteous father he is turning his back on strong drink and fornication. That John and Elijah should be chosen to fulfil the words of Malachi is fitting given what children have to be turned *from*. Of John, the

angel said: "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink" (Lk. 1:15). So John was a sound example to warn against strong drink. Elijah had opposed the greatest of whores, the woman Jezebel, to the extent that she tried to kill him: "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time" (1 Kgs. 19:1,2).

Spiritual significance

Simply from a natural perspective, Proverbs 23 provides sound advice. Fathers in the world today would achieve much if they prevented their sons from becoming drunk and committing fornication. But the significance of the words of Proverbs and Malachi is deeper than this. If the children spoken of in Malachi 4, by implication, are turning from drink and fornication, what does this typify?

John and Elijah were not just opposing drunkenness and fornication. They were opposing the spiritual wickedness which these things typified. This spiritual wickedness was within the first-century ecclesias. As Christ said to the ecclesia at Thyatira: "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (Rev. 2:20). This spiritual wickedness developed into the Roman Catholic Church.

In Revelation 18 drink and fornication are combined to describe this system: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her" (v. 3). It is this from which the hearts of the children must be turned. Elijah will appeal to the Jews to turn away from the lure of Rome and turn to the promises made to the righteous fathers of old.

Revelation 18 is speaking of the time when Christ is King in Jerusalem, for the messenger comes from the political heavens and the earth is "lightened with his glory" (v. 1). In this prophecy Christ and the saints are turning their attention to Europe, and the Babylonian harlot who holds sway there. Still living in Europe at this time will be many Jews. Through the work of Elijah they will have been urged to turn away from Babylon and towards their fathers. In this context the

call goes out from Jerusalem for the Jews, God's people, to leave Babylonian Europe to escape the judgements which will come upon that land: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (v. 4).

The papacy has been making efforts to bring Judaism, along with other religions, within its thrall. The Jewish response to the election of Pope Benedict XVI was warm. As Israel Singer, the chairman of the World Jewish Congress, stated:¹

"We view Pope Benedict XVI as an outstanding intellectual, as an authentic Catholic and as a person who, despite his conservative and authentic views, had the ability to be able to reach out. He has spent his time over the

last 20 years speaking publicly against anti-Semitism and changing Catholic doctrine on that subject. So I have to take him at his word. He said that the passages in the Christian Bible condemning individual Jews that have been used to justify anti-Semitism should be regretted. I'm pleased to have a partner in dialogue as the head of a church of 1.2 billion people with that kind of view".

The work of Elijah will reverse the trend exemplified by this quotation. He will turn the hearts of the Jews away from the Babylonian harlot and to the wisdom of the righteous fathers such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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1. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4469809.stm#singer>.

The translation of Enoch

Malcolm Edwards

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5).

THIS PASSAGE has caused much speculation, and not a little controversy, over the questions of where Enoch was taken and whether or not he actually died. Immortal soul believers sometimes cite this passage to support their view, and also the record in Genesis 5, which says: "and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (v. 24).

In reply to this argument, it does not say in either passage that Enoch died, nor that his soul went to heaven; it seems to be implied that he was taken bodily. Hebrews 11:5 says he "was not found", which strongly suggests that his *body* was no longer on earth. Nevertheless, because Psalm 89:48 asks, "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?", and Romans 5:12 states that "death passed upon all men", there are some who believe that Enoch did actually die, especially since Hebrews 11 says later, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises" (v. 13).

It might be replied that, though these passages speak generally, God may make exceptions to His own rules if He so wishes. For example, although Romans 5:12 goes on to state that "all

have sinned", it is obvious that Jesus is excepted. It is very likely that "These all died in faith" does not refer to Enoch's times at all, but to the period from Abraham onwards, in keeping with the immediate context of the promises to the fathers. The link with the previous verse would support this: "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable" (v. 12).

Nevertheless, it is possible that the expression "he was not" means that God buried Enoch secretly, as was the case with Moses. If this is so, we must try to explain what is meant by the phrase, "should not see death". It is suggested that it refers to Enoch being removed so as not to witness the death of Lamech son of Methusael, of the line of Cain, who was guilty of slaying a man (Gen. 4:23,24). The problem with this explanation is that Hebrews 11:5 does not specifically say, "should not see Lamech's death". Furthermore, the similar expression, "shall not see death", in Psalm 89:48, quoted above, clearly means 'shall not die'.

The view preferred by our pioneer brethren was that Enoch did not die. Brother Thomas had no difficulty in believing that he was taken up to God without experiencing death. He says in *Elpis Israel*: "Jesus was changed . . . into a spirit, and was therefore enabled to pass through it [the ether