

Doctrine of the Jerusalem Principle

1. Simply stated, the Jerusalem Principle is the principle of facing up to one's failures in life.
2. Prior to His Ascension, Jesus told His disciples to return to Jerusalem, and become a bold witness for Him, not in the power of the flesh, but in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - *Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*
3. Outside the city of Jerusalem, the Disciples had abandoned Jesus in the hour of His greatest need. They did not mean to desert Christ, but they did.
4. In his flesh, Peter had been determined to defend Jesus to his death, but he failed and fled into the night. In the flesh, Peter denied the Lord of Glory three times.
5. Despite his moral, and spiritual, failure, Peter, along with the other Disciples, was instructed to return to Jerusalem. They were to face up to their failures. They were to be fundamentally and forever different, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
6. It is not easy to face up to our failures because of the victimization mentality that dominates the soul.
7. Being a victim of our own failures is as old as Adam and Eve. When they disobeyed against the known will of God, they experienced shame and guilt.
8. In a frantic effort to minimize their shame and guilt, they sewed fig leaves together.
 - *Genesis 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*
9. The fig leaves might have given them a brief moment of self-esteem. They might have felt better about themselves. They might have looked more attractive to one another. But the source of their failure had not been dealt with.
10. In the cool of the evening, as was His custom, the Lord came looking for Adam and Eve. The sinful couple heard the voice of the Lord, and fled.
 - *Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

11. Adam and Eve fled from the Lord in fear, and shame. They were afraid because they already knew there was a price to pay for their transgression.
12. Eve had been lied to. The Devil had told Eve she would not be punished for her cosmic rebellion against the Living God.
 - *Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*
13. Instinctively, Adam and Eve framed what they believed was a rational defense against the penetrating questions of the Lord.
14. The first question the Lord ask was very simple, “Where art thou?”
 - *Genesis 3:9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*
15. Every person should be self-aware. Every person should be able to answer the question, “Where am I in my relationship to God?”
16. Every person should be self-aware, and give an answer to why they sin, or transgress the Law of God. Several reasons provide an honest, ultimate reason for sin. When the “Why” question arises, the answer will be one, or all, of the following.
 - There is pleasure in sin. The pleasure principle of sin is recognized in Hebrews 11:25.
 - There is the will to power. People love to be in charge of their own lives. The power principle is illustrated in the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:12.
 - A person believes the action they take is in their own best interest. A person might be deceived in that belief, as Eve was in Genesis 3:6, but that is still the driving motive.
17. By asking His question of Adam, the Lord was not seeking information. In His omniscience, He knew precisely where Adam, and Eve, were hiding. What the Lord wanted was an honest dialogue.
18. People know if they are right with God, or not. Adam and Eve knew they were not right with the Lord, and confessed it by their inappropriate behavior of fleeing from His presence.
 - *Genesis 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*
19. It was a clever ploy on the part of Adam. He was trying to put God on the defense. “God, I am afraid of you.”
20. That was not true of course. Adam had not been afraid to rebel against God. He had not been afraid to try to cover up his transgression. He had not been afraid to imply that God was wrong to make him afraid.

21. No sooner did Adam speak than his own words condemned him.

- *Genesis 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*

22. Instead of agreeing with God about His transgression, instead of saying, “Yes Lord, I did eat of the tree that you told me not to eat of”, Adam launched a more aggressive attack against the Lord, while playing the part of being a victim.

- *Genesis 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

23. Turning to the woman, the Lord asked Eve a question to see if she would be more honest than Adam.

- *Genesis 3:13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

24. In Eve’s response there are two thoughts that leap out.

- Eve was a quick study. Listening to Adam’s response, Eve, in a brilliant moment of identification with her husband said, in essence, “Lord, I too am a victim. The serpent beguiled me, the Devil tricked me, and I did eat.”
- Eve was insane. If the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over, and over again, expecting different results, then there is a sense in which Eve was absolutely insane.

25. That is what sin does to people. It drives them to being a victim. It can drive them to the brink of madness.

26. In every mental institute there is a large number of people who are religiously inclined. They talk God talk all the time. They sing religious songs. They read the Bible. They quote Scriptures. They are capable of saying religious things. But they are not mentally whole.

27. Not understanding spiritual truths, the word has made it easy for people, living in a state of sin, to develop a philosophy of victimization through psychobabble.

28. A whole new vocabulary has been created to foster the Adam and Eve Syndrome. One example is Freudian psychology.

29. In Freudian psychology, the reason why an adult acts badly is rooted in a difficult childhood. They are victims of their mother and father.

30. Then, mom and dad lay down on the couch, and suddenly they are not to blame for their attitude, and actions, for they are products of their own childhoods.

31. The cycle continues backward all the way to Adam and Eve, who blamed God.

32. When people feel they are a victim of God, that somehow He is to blame for their immoral choices, lifestyle, and brokenness, they become angry with Him.
33. In their anger, in their depraved thinking, in their worldly wisdom, a variety of techniques are used to cover spiritual, and moral, nakedness.
34. Consider some of the modern day Fig Leaves that are used by people to avoid confessing honestly to God the evil they have done thereby accepting personal responsibility.
35. People, even professing Christians, try to find ways to explain their behaviour.
- The attempt is made to justify behavior that God has condemned. Individuals will spend countless hours justifying that which is unjustifiable.
 - ❖ Some will argue that the situation demanded the sinful behavior. “What was I supposed to do?” Joseph Fletcher posed this question in his 1966 book, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*.
 - ❖ Some will just say, “This is how I am made. I am who I am.” This is being heard more, and more, in the homosexual community. People with perverted lifestyles argue, “God made me a gay person”. That, of course, is blasphemous.
 - The attempt is made to deflect condemnation, by saying, “I know what is right, and I know wrong, but, I am weak of will.”

Rare is the person who knows religious language, who will say, “I am not weak of will. I am wicked, and I am willfully sinful.”

Augustine was one rare honest sinner. He would pray, “Lord, make me chaste, but not now.” Later he prayed, “Now Lord, now.”
 - Another common way to deflect personal condemnation is to condemn one’s own behavior first, and then continue in the bad behavior. The idea is that if I condemn myself, I can continue to do wrong.

Many people will go church in order to be railed against by the pastor from the pulpit, so they can return to an inappropriate practice. Going to church is cathartic. It is therapeutic.
36. What the Lord desires, is for people, not to blame Him for whatever is wrong in life, but to accept personal responsibility, receive correction in righteousness, and begin to do what is right, even when Paradise is lost.
37. There is evidence that Adam and Eve did what was right, even though they lost their innocence, became subject to shame and death, and were cast out of the Garden of Eden, lest they be confirmed in unrighteousness by eating of the Tree of Life.

38. The evidence is that a godly child was born, named Abel. Tragically, his brother, Cain, grew up to kill Abel, who was righteous. However, “Who taught Abel the proper way to worship, if not Adam and Eve?”
39. The larger lesson to learn is that there is life after moral failure, there is redemption on the other side of the most severe transgression. There is also the Jerusalem Principle, which says, “Face your failure.”
40. Christian, return, in your heart, to the place of your transgression. Return as a person who is fundamentally, and forever different.
41. Return in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - *Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*
 - *Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*