

Chia & Lim Defended

In October 2018, an open letter was sent by representatives of the 'Church of Judah' in Inner Mongolia, declaring their separation from the ministry of Elijah Thomas Chacko. Within the space of just five days, The Westminster Tradition had responded by publishing a collection of violently worded refutations, purported to be 'against the allegations and cavils of the church of Judas Iscariot'. The two missionaries to China (Joel & Jeshaiiah) were repeatedly and falsely denounced as being the authors of the Church of Judah's separation letter. In truth, the separation letter had been written by Hushai Guo and Ephratah Chen in conjunction with the co-workers of the Church of Judah. That Joel and Jeshaiiah were not directly responsible for the separation letter was implicitly acknowledged in the first batch of refutations by the fact that four brothers from China (Hushai, Jesher, Eliakim and Elihu) were listed on the title page. In an unprecedented move, their full three-part Chinese names were published – a deliberate disclosure which would have made it easy for the Chinese authorities to identify them. The names of their ten antagonists were given only in shortened form e.g. Haziel Qi ('Hazel' is his baptismal name and 'Qi' is a relatively common surname in China). By means of these and later publications, Joel and Jeshaiiah were subject to a smear campaign which was commissioned by Elijah Chacko and sent far and wide through official Westminster Tradition channels.

In the ensuing publications, Joel and Jeshaiiah were called: *turncoats; ambitious; treacherous; proud; wicked; snakes (double-headed); venomous; confused; instruments of Antichrist; blasphemers against the Holy Ghost; worse than heathens; hardened; unrepentant; fools; having the marks of the children of perdition; apostate; boastful; self-righteous; evil grapes; mad dogs; low class; audacious; despicable; possessing the greed of Gehazi and Balaam; full of evil spirits; foxes; wolves; stiff-necked; uncircumcised; mockers; slanderers; ambitious; clowns; cursed like Meroz; vicious; like devils; trampers of the Church of Christ; gangsters; the mouthpieces of the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet; following in the steps of Absalom; like unto Korah, Dathan and Abiram; like unto Cain and Saul; like unto Ahithophel; like unto Judas Iscariot; selling their souls; conspirators; preaching another gospel; presumptuous; reprobate; absurd; devilish; bastards; engaging in dirty tactics; thieves; not worthy of answering; resentful; bitter; resistant to the law; subtle; playing church politics; wanting to rule over God's people; confederate; loving the praises of men; superficial; lacking doctrinal capability; without conviction, gratitude or substance; stubborn; hypocrites; without integrity; like unto their father, Satan; Simoniacal; egomaniacal; evil-doers; irrational; having no fear of God; caring only for their own selfish agendas; disturbers of the Chinese churches; vicious; vindictive; having an overwhelming hate...*

In these publications, the accusatory name-calling goes on and on and on. Approximately fifty individuals bore testimony against Joel and Jeshaiiah. The above list is far from exhaustive and was gleaned from just a fraction of the statements.

A number of those who had long known Joel and Jeshaiiah extended the scope of the criticism, insisting that their behaviour was not new. Martha Tan, for example, wrote that *'the ambitious traits and treacherous blood run in the Chia family right from the eldest to the youngest.'* Joash Lee resorted to hearsay, writing that *'the brothers who know Joel always comment that he is vindictive.'* Actually, Martha and Joash were merely parroting Elijah's own accusations that he'd been making against Joel all these years. In 1998, Elijah's adultery had been exposed by Alex Chacko (Elijah's biological brother) and Sarah Chia (Joel's biological sister). Since then, Elijah has been trying to weaken the credibility of Joel's family. Phinehas David Yeoh told the author in person that were it not for presiding pastor, Jeshaiiah would be a homosexual by now. He also said that for many years Jeshaiiah had shown himself to be unspiritual, doctrinally lazy and always sleeping in public gatherings. Others cited the infrequency with which Joel and Jeshaiiah's responses were published in The Jerusalem Times as proof of their spiritual shallowness.

The accusations contained in these official publications are so many, so damning, so vague, so disproportionate and so violent, that they call into question their own credibility. They also raise a number of important issues:

- I. Was the treatment of Chia and Lim scriptural and fair?***
- II. If Chia and Lim were so utterly wicked, why were they entrusted with the most important missionary endeavour ever attempted by The Westminster Tradition and commended so highly by all within The Westminster Tradition (and above all Elijah Chacko himself)?***
- III. Why have the majority of the China brethren defended Chia and Lim and separated from Elijah Chacko's ministry?***

- I -

Was the treatment of Chia and Lim scriptural and fair?

In short, no. It was unscriptural. It was unfair. It was a propaganda exercise.

From the very beginning, the law of Moses has provided the principles whereby apostates should be judged:

*'If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; **then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you...**' (Deut 13:12-14).*

*'If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them... **and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel...**' (Deut 17:2-4).*

Joel and Jeshaiiah were accused of being children of Belial, who had gone out from among the brethren (1 John 2:19) and withdrawn from The Westminster Tradition, teaching a perversion of Elijah Chacko's doctrines which the China brethren had not formerly known. Having heard of these things, the right response from Elijah Chacko would have been to enquire diligently (from all parties) and take disciplinary action against Joel and Jeshaiiah only if the accusations were true, and the thing certain.

Consider how Joel and Jeshaiiah were actually dealt with:

- A. The Church of Judah's open letter of separation was sent out on 5th October. Within five days, Joel and Jeshaiiah were irreparably smeared. Just five days were deemed sufficient to solicit, translate, collate, edit and distribute the personal statements of ten China brethren. Is this 'diligent enquiry'? The e-mail sent out by The Westminster Tradition was entitled: 'Responses to Open Letter from China Brethren'. But who

exactly is 'The Westminster Tradition'? Who solicited these responses? Why were these ten unrepresentative 'China Brethren' chosen? Who did the translation work? Who drew up the list of recipients? Who disseminated this special edition? Upon what basis were the names of Hushai, Jeshar, Eliakim and Elihu appended to the document? Who owned the three e-mail addresses on that same title page? [Answer: 'jeremiahlambs' and 'churchofjuda' = Hushai Guo; 'woundedlambs' = Hananiah Chew (hiding under the false name of 'Yacob Jeremiah')]. Unlike most Westminster Tradition publications, there is no indication as to the identity of the editorial team. The whole document is fit for only one task: to bury Joel and Jeshaiiah under a mountain of unsubstantiated accusations and utterly destroy their reputation. Elijah Chacko felt this needed to be done swiftly and decisively. He used the statements of these China brethren against Joel and Jeshaiiah, taking care to conceal his own involvement.

- B. Joel and Jeshaiiah were given neither means nor opportunity to defend themselves.
- C. They were deliberately kept in the dark with respect to both the existence and nature of the accusations being published against them. When I contacted Jeshaiiah to gauge whether the more serious accusations were true, I had to start by detailing what they were!
- D. The first publication (see a) was entitled 'Refutations By Our Brethren In China Against The Allegations And Cavils Of The Church Of Judas Iscariot...' The Westminster Tradition renamed the Church of Judah as 'The Church Of Judas Iscariot'. This clearly proves that a verdict had already been reached against the Church of Judah. They were already viewed as reprobate. How could Elijah Chacko (who was in the US) and his editorial team (who were scattered across the globe) gather sufficient information, cross-check facts and interview people on both sides of the conflict to establish beyond doubt the truth and certainty of the accusations in so short a time? The whole affair was a kangaroo trial. It was a show trial.
- E. The Chinese congregation in Singapore was kept equally ignorant of the letter of separation sent out by Church of Judah. They were told they did not need to know what had happened – that it was enough to know that teacher Chia had apostatised. Without any knowledge of events, they were instructed to choose who they would stand with: Elijah or Joel?
- F. Likewise, the members of the churches in China were not sent these publications directly, but they were sent to Haziel Qi, who decided when and to whom he wished to pass them. Since very grave charges had been brought by the Church of Judah against Haziel (see Church of Judah Separation Letter, Point 1), it was entirely inappropriate to entrust Haziel with this responsibility, effectively making him Information Commissioner.

- G. The first denunciations of Joel and Jeshaiiah were sent out well before the information gathering process was complete.
- H. The Westminster Tradition is not lacking those who have legal knowledge – one of whom is Elijah Chacko’s own daughter Ruth Mary Thomas, who is Judicial Law Clerk to the Hon. Anil C. Singh, a judge on the New York State Court. Ruth Mary was in communication with her father on the very day that The Westminster Tradition published the first accusations against Joel and Jeshaiiah. It is inconceivable that those who prepared this publication were unconscious of the basic principles of justice: that Joel and Jeshaiiah should be given a fair hearing before an impartial tribunal. This is a scriptural principle (Matt 18:15-17), and one which is also enshrined in international human rights law.

Joel and Jeshaiiah were treated as arch-heretics, but were never asked to give a summary of their doctrine.

‘A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject’ (Tit 3:10).

The two teachers were rejected without having been clearly and publicly admonished. Even in former and severer days, those such as Servetus or the disciples of Arminius (the Remonstrants) were given opportunity to present their doctrine. Not Joel and Jeshaiiah. Without hearing or proper admonition, they were labelled heretics, cut off from The Westminster Tradition and shunned. Nobody would dare communicate with them if they wished to avoid being tarred with the same brush.

Many expressed disgust at Joel and Jeshaiiah’s treatment of Elijah Chacko. The two were condemned as treacherous and ungrateful, turncoats who had bitten the hand that fed them and made merchandise of all they had received. The reader should consider: is our allegiance to man more important than our obedience to God? Do we practice Sola Scriptura, or Sola Elijah? Why should Joel and Jeshaiiah not abhor that which they believe is evil and cleave to that which they still believe is good (Rom 12:9b)? Why should they rescind that which is good, just because they received it from their former pastor? Does Elijah Chacko have intellectual property rights over the eternal Word of God? Should they dissimulate and pretend (like many hypocrites within The Westminster Tradition) that they agree with everything Elijah has ever taught and done? It is unreasonable to maintain that because Joel and Jeshaiiah once endorsed Elijah’s doctrines, they should not have liberty to repent. To disagree with Elijah Chacko is not a sin. Joel and Jeshaiiah should have been judged impartially by the Word of God. If they ever publish their defence, it behoves us all to seriously consider the contents. We serve a God of justice and judgement; a God Who is upright and impartial. If we are His children dear brethren, we are called to be like Him.

- II -

If Chia and Lim were so utterly wicked, why were they entrusted with the most difficult missionary endeavour ever undertaken by The Westminster Tradition and why were they commended so highly by all within The Westminster Tradition (and above all Elijah Chacko himself)?

Contrary to many of the recent statements printed by The Westminster Tradition, Joel and Jeshaiiah were held in high esteem until very recently. The following are from Elijah's own mouth concerning these two missionaries:

'When it relates to the China brethren, we salute our missionary pastors, Joel Chia and Jeshaiiah Lim, who went in and out of China for many long seasons hazarding their lives. Months and days were spent in preaching and teaching. Thank God for His mercies that such labour has not gone in vain as God was gracious to condescend and pick some out of the fire of apostasy...' from preamble to The Camp of The Saints (published 04/04/14) by Elijah Chacko.

'For those who were hearing the messages for the first time, the rude awakening they received from the preachings may have come as a bolt of lightning. It could have been even more stunning and electrifying if they had not been prepared duly by our missionary pastors, Joel Chia and Jeshaiiah Lim. They were the teachers whose 'beautiful feet' Almighty God had providentially brought to their residential vicinities so they could hear the Gospel published as never before. If God had not sent out the teachers earlier and on several occasions, perhaps my exegesis of Scriptures could have been too jarring, blunt and shellshocking for our China brethren. But God has His ways and it is evident that the brethren from China were well prepared for the hard hitting, knife-edged and penetrative preaching sessions I had with them...' from preface to Thy People Shall Be Willing In the Day of Thy Power (published 04/04/14) by Elijah Chacko.

'This booklet... speaks particularly of the great grace of God upon the preachers that God had sent, including the two witnesses, Joel Chia and Jeshaiiah Lim, who were filled with the golden olive oil (Zechariah 4:12) to transmit it and the doctrines of grace to the cluster of audiences across the vast sub continent that China is...' from preamble to Blossom Abundantly (published 06/06/17) by Elijah Chacko.

From these three statements we can gather the following:

1. Joel and Jeshaiiah spent long seasons (months) in China preaching and teaching.
2. They went forth knowing that it might cost them their lives.
3. Their labour was not in vain. Their preaching was effectual.
4. They were viewed as being the 'beautiful feet' sent out by Almighty God.
5. They prepared the China brethren well. Elijah viewed them as both faithful and able.
6. They were considered to be filled with the golden olive oil (Holy Spirit).
7. They laboured to preach the doctrines of grace across the vast subcontinent of China. Great grace was upon them!

The last statement (from which points 6-7 are drawn) was made in June 2017, barely a year before Joel and Jeshaiiah were so thoroughly denounced. Some further deductions can be made from Elijah Chacko's statements and their contexts (baptismal exercises):

8. From 2011 to 2017, Joel and Jeshaiiah were away from home in the mission field, more than six months a year. Joel sacrificed his family upon the altar of his service in China.
9. Until relatively recently, Joel and Jeshaiiah were glad to bring back some of the fruits of their labour to conferences held in Malaysia. On one occasion, they arranged for 144 brethren to fly over to Malaysia. This was an expensive endeavour. The conference was held in peak holiday season during Chinese New Year. The expense was one which few of the China brethren could easily afford. If Joel and Jeshaiiah had sought personal enrichment, they would not have helped to impoverish those they hoped to profit from.
10. The China brethren spoke well of Elijah Chacko in their reflections, letters and baptismal testimonies. If Joel and Jeshaiiah had long been plotting and scheming - poisoning the China brethren and preparing to usurp their presiding pastor, this would not have been. It was only latterly that circumstances forced Joel and Jeshaiiah to look long and hard at Elijah Chacko's doctrinal legacy.

- III -
**Why have the majority of the China brethren defended
Chia and Lim and separated from Elijah Chacko's
ministry?**

This question will not be discussed at length. It is left to the reader to ponder upon, after recalling these brief considerations:

Doesn't the simultaneous, decisive separation of hundreds of China brethren who we formerly knew and held in high esteem, give us cause to pause? Letters of separation were independently sent by the Church of Judah, the Church of Shandong, the Church of Zebulun and the Church of Yunnan. If Joel and Jeshaiiah were truly as evil as The Westminster Tradition purported, wouldn't these churches have been only too glad to cast them off? Why did these churches instead choose to reject Elijah Chacko and his ministry? It would have been much easier to have rejected the two teachers. Consider also how ineffectual the curses of The Westminster Tradition have been. Though the fire of Elijah has been called down upon them, these churches continue. There is no divination or enchantment against such. Instead, they grow in faith, in hope and in charity. They study God's Word joyfully and with unfettered minds. They continue to gather regularly for Bible conferences. Jeshaiiah and Joel minister conscientiously to them, but refuse to rule over them. May God show mercy towards all who have shown mercy.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy' (Matt 5:7)

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