

THE PROCLAIMING OF THE GOSPEL

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Exactly what is this Great Commission that Jesus gave to his disciples before going to heaven? Is it the gospel message? And if it is the gospel message, to whom is this gospel message to be directed? And what is to be accomplished by proclaiming the gospel message?

The biblical answer to these questions may surprise you, because they are not what is taught in most professing Christian churches today.

The first thing that we notice about this Commission is that it is not a request, it is a command to proclaim the gospel. Notice what is said:

"Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen" (Matt.28:19-20 Para.).

This assignment that Jesus Christ gave to his followers to proclaim the gospel is often called the Great Commission, because it should be a priority in the life of a Christian in this age. The English word gospel comes from the Greek word that means a good message. But who is to receive the gospel message.

Who Will Receive the Gospel?

When Jesus sent his disciples out to proclaim the gospel, he specifically sent them to the house of Israel. The gospel record says that, "Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, do not go into the way of the Gentiles' [the Gentiles were non-Israelites and Jesus specifically told his disciples not to go to these peoples, nor into the cities of the Samaritans]: "But rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt.10:5-7 KJV).

But why did Jesus not want his disciples to go to any one but the house of Israel?

During the events of the healing of a woman from Canaan, Jesus said, "I am only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". See Matt.15:21-28.

When we analyze the scriptures that concern where the gospel was first proclaimed, it becomes clear that the assignment to preach the gospel requires that the Father's message be taught to the covenant people

(Israel) first, then to all other nations.

Once again, just prior to the end of this age, the gospel message will be primarily directed toward national Israel, which is comprised of the House of Israel (the lost ten tribes of Israel) and the House of Judah (the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi). See Isa.58:1; Rev.18:4-5.

But why would God only be concerned with these nations and not all other nations of the world

The historical record clearly shows us where the ten lost tribes are today, and they are not the House of Judah, which mostly comprises the Palestinian nation of Israel today.

All of the information on where the ten tribes of Israel are today is readily available if anyone wants to do a small amount of research.

What is to be accomplished by the gospel message?

The gospel message is primarily a warning, a witness, and an instruction to be proclaimed as follows:

It is a witness and a warning to specific individuals who are being called to salvation. It is sent to inform them, and if they do not accept the Father's call and respond appropriately, they will suffer the punishment of eternal death in the Lake of Fire.

It is an instruction to those who truly believe the Father's good news to begin to practice his ways, become his sons through repentance and baptism, and become involved in proclaiming the good news.

It is a witness and a warning to the world at large that God the Father exists and is intervening in world affairs in order to implement the next phase of his plan for humanity.

Who is to Proclaim the Gospel Message?

The apostles and the early church preached the gospel message with great spiritual and physical power through the written word and personal and public evangelism.

During the time just prior to the return of Christ, the elect of God will again preach the true gospel message in much the same manner as the early church. Only this time, it will be preached with even greater power than it was by Jesus Christ or the early church. During this time, the gospel message will be proclaimed not only as a means of personal salvation but also as a means of national salvation, and as an announcement that Jesus Christ is coming to assume total rule over the earth and its inhabitants.

Although the primary responsibility for preaching the gospel fell to the apostles and those specifically chosen and sent to evangelize, the responsibility was not theirs alone; it was to be a task shared by all of the elect of God. All of those who believe the gospel message and have accepted its terms and conditions for salvation must participate in the proclaiming of the good news message. See 1.Cor.12:1-31. But exactly what is this message?

Jesus told his disciples to teach the things that he had commanded. This command not only referred to the things that he had taught during his earthly ministry in human form but also the things he had taught Israel as the Creator God before he came to earth as a human. Please read Jn.1:1-11; Eph.3:9; 2.Tim.3:16.

Notice what Jesus said in Mark 16:

"And he said to them, You go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; and he that does not believe shall be damned" (Mk.16:15-16 Para.).

All who hear the Father's good news message are held accountable for their response to it. All those who hear the message with understanding and truly believe its message, then act upon it in a positive manner will be spared from eternal death. However, those who hear with understanding and turn their back on the opportunity that is presented to them will suffer eternal death in the Lake of Fire.

A short review of the early church and its preaching of the gospel message clearly shows that, when the early church disappeared as a powerful unified organization, the preaching of the gospel message as taught by Jesus Christ also disappeared.

One only has to review a few of the many thousands of different ideas and teachings that people have about the gospel to understand that there is something very wrong with what people have believed and taught, and what people believe and understand about the gospel message today.

Today, we find many groups and organizations teaching what they believe to be the gospel, however what many of these groups teach does not even faintly resemble what the early church taught.

What we find today is great confusion as to who Jesus Christ was, what constitutes the gospel message that Jesus brought, and what the Bible actually says is truth.

Although there are many variations among the counterfeit gospels, these gospels usually contain a perversion of the truth concerning Jesus Christ and his

relationship with God the Father prior to his human existence, as well as perversions about Jesus' physical life, his death and resurrection and how to obtain salvation.

Many sincere people feel that they have heard the gospel message. However, what most people have heard is a false good news message, that is no good news at all, but that is designed to keep them from learning the truth about what the Sovereign God and his Son are working out here on earth.

In order to teach and observe the things that Jesus taught, one must first truly understand what he taught.

It is a biblical fact that what has been taught by popular Christianity since about a 100 A.D. is not the good news message that Jesus taught.

It is also a biblical fact that the true gospel will again be taught just prior to the return of Jesus Christ as Conquering King.

The Gospel and the Early Church

The apostles and the early church went forth evangelizing and spreading the Father's good news concerning Jesus Christ, salvation, and the Kingdom of God. Their spiritual zeal literally changed the course of history as they taught the Father's good news message of salvation. However, it was not in the plan of God to save the world during Jesus' lifetime nor during the apostolic age of the church; if this had been his plan, he would have done it. See Isa.6:8-10, Matt.10:34-36, 13:10-15, Mk.4:11-12; Lk.8:9-10.

Few realize the awesome power that Jesus placed at the disposal of the early church in order for them to fulfill their commission to proclaim the Father's good news message.

SIGNS, WONDERS AND MIRACLES

Jesus Christ had tremendous power at his disposal; he used this power at his discretion and authorize others to use this same power. Among his authorizations of power from the Father were the following:

- Power to heal the sick and raise the dead (Lk.7:20-23; Acts 5:15)
- Power to control evil spirits (Matt.17:14-18; Mk.16:17-18)
- Power to manipulate natural laws (Matt.8:23-27; 14:25)
- Power to create physical things (Matt.14:15-21; Jn.2:1-11)

- Power to destroy the physical existence (Matt.21:18-22; Lk.9:54)
- Power to bring curses (Matt.21:18-22; Acts 13:9-12)
- Power to give and take life (Jn.17:2; Acts 5:3-10)
- Power to enlist angelic help (Matt.26:53; Acts 12:6-7)

There are at least 21 distinct authorizations of spiritual/physical gifts of power from God noted in the New Testament that were given to the organized and unified Body of Christ. See our study paper concerning the spirit of God and spiritual gifts.

If your interested in understanding what these spiritual and physical gifts are, get a copy of our study paper concerning the spiritual and physical gifts of God.

There are many accounts in the New Testament of the elect using these powerful authorizations at their discretion to perform miraculous works in order to fulfill their commission. See Acts 5:1-15; 6:8; 13:8-11; 15:12.

Notice what Jesus says in Mark chapter 16

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new languages; They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover" (Mk.16:17-18 KJV). See also Acts 1:4-5,8.

Greater Power to Come

Notice what Jesus says in John chapter 14:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater, than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. And whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (Jn.14:12-14 KJV).

As powerful as the apostolic era of the church was, they did not do a greater work than Jesus. They did perform many great acts and miracles as a powerful witness. However, the historical record clearly shows that they did not do a greater work than Jesus.

Notice what is said by the prophet Joel about the end of the age just before Christ returns:

"And I will pour out my spirit on my slaves and on my slave-girls in those days. And I will give signs in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the

moon to blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord" (Joel 2:29-31 Para.).

Just prior to the return of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords, the prophecies show the dynamic power of the holy spirit again being manifested through the elect of God. During the time of the end, the church of God will have all of the spiritual and physical authorizations that Jesus and the early church had and more. There will be a group of God's people who will be filled with tremendous spiritual and physical power with which they can defy the very laws of the physical universe. No spiritual or physical power will be able to stop them from performing their God-given task to proclaim the entire gospel message, teach the truth of God, and announce the good news of the coming Kingdom of God.

Theirs is a greater work because their task is greater than that of the early church. Therefore, they require greater power to proclaim the gospel and warn a sinful and rebellious world that it is about to meet its Creator.

Notice what the prophet Habakkuk says to the tribes of Israel who are scattered among the nations in the end of this age:

"Behold you [the various tribes of Israel] among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, you will not believe, though it were told you" (Hab.1:5 KJV Para.). See also verses 1-4.

Very few people believe the word of God today, because it is not preached by professing Christianity today, and those that teach it are truly hated for what they teach.

Paul said

"Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, you despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it to you" (Acts 13:40-41 KJV). See also Isa.29:9-14.

The Open Door

In the last years of the apostle John's life and during the time when the once powerful and dynamic church of God was disappearing from the world scene, Jesus Christ revealed to John the major events that would take place and the conditions that would exist at the time of the very end before Christ returns. One of the major things that will be happening during the time of the end is the proclaiming of the gospel message to the world with great physical and spiritual power, a message that

very few have heard since the disappearance of the early church.

Notice what is said in Revelation 3, verses 7 to 10:

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have a little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them to come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you" (Rev.3:7-10 NIV).

Jesus says that he will make those who claim to be his followers and the sons of God to come and fall down at the feet of those who are truly sons of God and are truly his followers.

Jesus said that he will open a door that no one can shut and through his door the elect will go teaching the true gospel that has not been taught for centuries.

At the time of the end, centuries after the door through which the early church preached the gospel had been shut and locked, Jesus Christ will open another door through which the gospel will be preached. This time, the door will remain open and cannot be shut by anyone except Jesus Christ who opened it. During the time of this prophetic open door, the gospel will be preached to the world and the great commission will be accomplished by the powerful, unified children of God:

It is through this open door that no one can shut that the elect of God will perform a powerful work and witness to the world.

It is through this door that great numbers of people will come to repentance and obtain salvation just before the return of Jesus Christ to rule the earth.

It is through this door that the elect of God, through the power of the holy spirit, will send forth the wrath of God upon the religions and governments of this world just prior to the return of Jesus Christ.

The gospel message that Jesus brought from the Father and that his people preach is so dynamic, so powerful, so diametrically opposite to what has been taught by this world's religious leaders and philosophers that the vast majority of people will hate and reject it when they hear it.

National Israel

But why is the prophecy to go to national Israel? When

one does a detailed analysis of the prophecies concerning the end of the age, it becomes apparent that the fulfillment of these prophecies surrounds national Israel and the nations closely associated to them. It is primarily to these people that the gospel was preached by the early church, and it is primarily to these people that the gospel will be preached during the end of the age.

A small amount of research into the travels of the apostles will show that they went to the scattered nations of Israel throughout the world preaching an proclaiming the Father's good news message to them.

In his letter to the church at Rome, the apostle Paul spoke of preaching the gospel to national Israel prior to and during his lifetime and during the time of the end.

Paul says in chapter 10 of Romans:

"For the scripture says that, whosoever believes on him [speaking of Jesus Christ] shall not be ashamed. . .For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (vs.11-13).

Paul opens his comments by affirming that salvation only comes through Jesus Christ and no other. Paul says:

"How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without one to teach them? And how shall one teach unless one is sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those that preach the good news of peace, and bring good news of good things" (vs.14-15).

It is a fact that one cannot believe in God the Father or Jesus Christ, if one has never heard of them; therefore, someone must be sent to convey this information in order for there to be belief.

Speaking of a prophecy of national Israel, Paul says:

"But they have not all obeyed the good news. For Isaiah said, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith comes by hearing and hearing, by the word of God. But I say, Have not they heard? Yes truly, their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the habitable world" (vs.16-18). See Isa.53:1; Psa.14:4.

Here Paul speaks of both a fact of history and prophetic events of the future. The ancient nation of Israel did not, as a whole, believe or obey the good news message that they were given by the Creator God through his priesthood, his prophets, and his servants prior to his coming to earth as the Messiah.

The majority of the Jews and other Israelites who lived during the time of Christ, the apostles, and the early church did not believe the Father's gospel message either, and the majority of the House of Israel and the House of Judah who are scattered among the nations of world today will not believe the Father's gospel until after the return of Jesus Christ.

How did the nation of Israel hear the gospel after the death of the apostles and the disappearance of the early church? And how will they hear it just prior to the return of Jesus Christ?

Since the death of the apostles, Israel has heard the gospel message preached throughout the centuries through the publishing of the Bible—the most published and read book ever written. Wherever you find racial Israelites throughout the world, you will find the Book of the Law and/or the Old and New Testament being preached and/or taught. You will find one or both of these books in almost every home, business, library and lodging place in an Israelite nation.

Just prior to the return of Jesus Christ, all of Israel, wherever they have been scattered throughout the nations of the world, will hear the gospel loud and clear through a powerful and dynamic witness, but they still will not believe and repent:

Paul said in chapter 10 of Romans:

"Did not Israel know? First Moses said, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a nation of no understanding I will anger you. But Isaiah is very bold, and said, I was found of them who did not seek me; I was revealed to them that did not ask about me" (vs.19-20). See Deut.32:21; Isa.65:1.

The people and nation that Moses and Isaiah spoke of are those whom God the Father has called to salvation through Christ during the gospel age. These people are the Sovereign Father's holy nation of kings and priests who have been drawn from national Israel and other nations of the world. These are called to salvation outside of the covenant relationship with national Israel and are called to proclaim the Father's good news message to the House of the Israel and the House of Judah and the world at large just prior to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings.

Notice what Paul says about national Israel:

"But to Israel he said [speaking of God], All the day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contradictory people" (Rom.10:21).

God has sent many prophets, preachers, and teachers of his word to Israel since he made a covenant with their

ancestors centuries ago. And today, he is still stretching out his hand to this disobedient and rebellious people.

A DECEIVED WORLD

The problem today is that the whole world is deceived concerning what the gospel is and who God the Father and Jesus Christ are.

Many who profess to believe in the God of the Bible do not truly believe in the reality of Satan the Devil; however, this evil being is real. It was he who first deceived Adam and Eve. And it is he, along with other evil spirits, who is actively deceiving the entire world with evil worship systems, philosophies, political/governmental systems, and a false messages of peace, prosperity, and salvation:

Notice what the Book of Revelation has to say about this great evil spirit:

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, that deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev.12:9 KJV).

Jesus clearly says that the whole world is being deceived by this powerful evil spirit and those who were cast out of heaven with him. The Bible shows that the only ones that have not come under the deceptive influence of this incredibly powerful and evil being are those that truly have the spirit of God.

The major reason for so many different religions, philosophies, and political/governmental systems in the world today is Satan's deception. Satan began his master plan to destroy the work of God with the deception of Adam and Eve and he has been going about his devious business ever since.

Jesus revealed to the apostle John that, prior to his return, the whole world would be in a state of deception. The whole world including the vast majority of those who profess to follow the true God have been deceived into believing false concepts and false philosophies that are supposed to bring peace, prosperity, and salvation, but in reality, they eventually bring just the opposite:

Notice what the apostle Paul says about this great deception in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 13 to 15:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2.Cor.11:13-15 KJV). See also Deut.13:1-5;

Jer.23:21-22.

Yes, Satan has many ministers (servants) and organizations, both religious and political, disguised as messengers of light (Rev.2:9; 3:9). His servants are in every strata of society, from common people to leaders of religions and nations. If you were to ask these people if they were evil servants of Satan, they would most likely become very offended. Deceived people do not know that they are deceived, otherwise they would not be deceived.

The Bible shows that Satan is the god of this world (2.Cor.4:4). The whole world, including the vast majority of Christianity, has come under the deceptive influence of this incredibly powerful, evil spirit-being. They look to his false religions, philosophies, and political/governmental systems for salvation from their social and spiritual ills.

However they will find no salvation from this evil spirit-being, they will only find death and destruction.

Jesus warned that many false prophets shall arise, and that these false prophets would deceive most people. See Matt.24:11.

It is the majority of people in today's world who are deceived into thinking that the way to peace and happiness can be obtained through human effort alone. Jesus said:

"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and there will be many who will go through this gate: Because difficult is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few will find this gate and way" (Matt.7:13-14 Para.).

It is to a world that has been deceived for thousands of years into thinking that they can solve their own problems that the gospel will again be proclaimed with tremendous and awesome power. It is to this deceived world that the plan of God is again being revealed as the only means of personal and national salvation.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God is a far cry from what has been taught over the centuries by a false Christianity. The true gospel is so dynamic, so powerful, so diametrically opposed to what has been taught for centuries that most people will not believe it when they hear it; they will reject it as a false message.

Salvation

Before the foundation of the world, God the Father and the Creator God (who became Jesus Christ) set in motion a plan by which humans could be born into the Family and Kingdom of God. This plan requires true

belief in the true Sovereign God and his Son, repentance from sin, baptism, redemption, and salvation. See Acts 2:38; 3:19.

Over 1,900 years ago, the Father sent his Son to his chosen people to explain the method by which humanity could secure an abundant, happy, and prosperous life for all eternity. Instead of being overjoyed at this good news, the Jews murdered his Son and persecuted those who continued to proclaim his good news message.

One would think that because the gospel message claims to hold the keys to life and death for those who hear it, the message would be well received. However, this is normally not the case at all. Most who hear this message go about their daily lives as if what they heard will not effect them.

The Gospel Today

Today, just prior to the return of Jesus Christ to conquer the earth and establish his Father's religion and government over it, the true servants of God are to proclaim the good news of God the Father just as Jesus and the apostles did centuries ago.

Believe the Gospel

Jesus Christ said that those who truly believe the gospel message and are baptized shall be saved and those who do not believe shall be damned.

When the Creator God came to earth as the Messiah, he did not come to make this world a better place in which to live under its present leadership. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 10, verses 34 to 35:

"Don't think that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (Matt.10:34-35).

Jesus came to proclaim the good news of salvation for humanity, the coming Kingdom of God, and the preparation of a people to rule the earth with him. See Matt.24, Mk.13, Rev.5:9-10, 11:15; 20:4-6.

The sword of division and separation that Jesus brought is the Father's word and truth concerning the reason for all of humanity's ills and his solution to remove those ills—his good news message. It is this truth that cuts deep into the soul of each individual and causes a division and a separation between those who believe the Father's truth and those who do not. See Eph.6:17; Heb.4:12-13.

The End Shall Come

Jesus said that after the good news of the Kingdom of God is preached, something will end; this something that will end is human rule over the earth. Notice what Jesus says in Matthew 24, 14:

"This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then the end shall come" (Matt.24:14 Para.).

It is obvious that the preaching of the gospel by the early church did not bring an end to human rule on earth nor result in the return of Jesus Christ; therefore, this prophecy was for another time—the time of the end—This age.

Many prophecies speak of the time of the end in the context of cataclysmic earth-shaking events that will effect the heavens as well as the earth and all its inhabitants. It should also be obvious to anyone who studies the Bible and world events with an open mind that we are now living in the time just prior to the end spoken of by the prophets and Jesus Christ.

Death and Destruction

How could the preaching of anything, whether religious, philosophical, or political, precipitate an end to the world's governments? What is it about this message that will cause massive death and destruction to come upon this world?

It is not the message itself that will bring the end of human rule. The thing that will bring about the end of human rule is the wrath of God upon the earth because of people's refusal to accept the Father's good news message and respond appropriately.

The good news message is a call to repentance for the House of Israel and Judah first, then for the rest of Abraham's descendants and the world at large.

Because the vast majority of those who hear the Father's good news message will not repent, the Father is going to cause his wrath to fall upon the earth and its inhabitants. The horrible events that are coming with ever increasing rapidity are just a preview of the great devastation that will occur just prior to the Father sending his Son to conquer and rule the nations of the earth.

The Creator God first came as the Messiah to proclaim his Father's Good News of his coming government and taught how to enter the Family and Government of God. Jesus commanded his Father's children to proclaim this same Good News and announce that the next time he comes to earth, he will come as a Conquering King to

gather the elect of God and to enforce the way of peace, happiness, and prosperity upon humanity.

It matters little whether one believes the Father's good news message or not, because the events of the future will come to pass whether or not one believes this good news.

A Warning

Both Paul and Peter were inspired to issue a warning about what is going to happen to those who will not take the gospel message seriously. Notice what is said in these prophecies. Paul says:

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, until the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, coming in flaming fire and taking vengeance on them that do not know God, and that do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2.Thes.1:7-8 Para.).

Paul says to Timothy:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables" (2.Tim.4:2-4 Para.)

And this is exactly what happened after the disappearance and demise of the early church.

Notice what the apostle Peter said to those who truly understand the good news that the Father sent by his son:

"For the time has come to begin judgment at the house of God, and if it begins with us, what will be the end of the ones who disobey the Father's good news? And if the righteous are scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1.Pet.4:17-18 Para.).

I see that my time is up, if you want to know more about the subjects I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell from Bible Research .org.

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