

The Two Commissions
Matthew 10:5—20

As the Disciples are first commissioned to go out and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom we notice that they had some very specific instructions to follow. These instructions included going only to the unsaved Israelite. The Disciples were recommissioned just before Christ's ascension into heaven when they were told to reach out to the whole world. A commission is a set of marching orders or instructions given with the authority to carry out the orders. We shall see that the disciples were told what to do, to whom they should go and were given the authority to carry out their orders. They were to act in place of Christ. Keep in mind that the Tribulation was only months away and that there was great urgency for the Disciples to reach to world before Christ returned at His Second Coming (Matthew 25:14).

Disciple's first commission (verses 5—23; Mark 6:7—13; Luke 9:1—6)

The Audience

Christ first tells the Disciples that they are not to go to the Gentiles but only to the lost sheep of Israel. They were also not allowed to go to the Samaritans at this time. We can see from this that sheep absolutely cannot be believers in the Age of Grace. So many churches preach that we are the sheep and Christ is our Shepherd when in actuality all of Israel are the sheep and within that flock are believers and unbelievers. Christ is not our Shepherd, He is our Head. To say otherwise twists the clear teaching of Scripture.

If God loves the whole world then why would he restrict the Gospel of the Kingdom to Israel? The answer is found in the means God will use to reach the world. Once Israel is saved then the Gentiles will be invited into a relationship with Christ. This is pictured with the Syrophoenician woman who understood that she as a Gentile would be eating the crumbs off the table of Israel (Matthew 15:21). Christ did not hate Gentiles but was playing by the prophetic playbook that stated that Gentiles will be reached through Israel's rise (Zechariah 8:22; Acts 3:24—25). This goes all the way back to the Abrahamic Covenant when God said He would bless those who blessed Abraham and his descendants and curse those who cursed them (Genesis 12:1—3). As long as the prophetic program concerning Israel is still in effect the goal has been to preach first to those in Jerusalem. Even though Christ began His public ministry outside of Jerusalem, as soon as he had gathered His Disciples and trained them they were commissioned and sent to Jerusalem first (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

Exodus 19:5—6 ⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Isaiah 60:1—3 ³ Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. ² For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. ³ And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

The Message

The Disciples were to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. This is the same message preached by John the Baptist (Luke 16:16) and by Jesus (Matthew 4:23; 9:35). The Law and Prophets foretold of the Kingdom and now with the King in their presence, the Kingdom was right in their midst or was at hand (Luke 17:21; Matthew 10:7). This Gospel of the kingdom included repentance, Israel turning back to God (Acts 3:19 as illustrated by the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin and the prodigal son in Luke 15) and baptism (Matthew 3:1—6; Acts 2:38).

The Signs

Along with the message that the Kingdom was right around the corner came the signs that Israel was trained to look for (Matthew 12:38; 16:1; 24:3; 1 Corinthians 1:22). These signs authenticated the message of the coming Kingdom and were actually a little foretaste of what the Kingdom will be like. The healings

were a foretaste of the absence of sickness in the kingdom, cleansing of lepers shows the cleansing Israel will experience before going into the Kingdom, raising the dead shows new life and casting out demons is a preview of a world free from Satan's influence.

The message of the Kingdom and the accompanying signs were so clear that there would be no excuse for those who rejected it. Those who helped the Disciples by housing and feeding them had the Disciple's blessing upon them while those who rejected them were cursed. Sodom and Gomorrah will be judged less harshly than those who do not help the Disciples (verse 15; Matthew 11:21; Luke 10:14).

Support

The Disciples were not to charge or take money for their healing ability. As they were given these gifts for free they were to exercise these gifts freely. They were to depend on the hospitality of the people who accept their message of the Kingdom. This is similar to what will happen in the Tribulation when Jewish brothers will need to help out fellow brothers to survive and give them the ability to continue to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom even during the Tribulation.

The Disciples were told to bring nothing extra, not even any food, but to depend on God to supply their needs through other Israelites. This is an indication that they were to go out quickly, without delay, and move speedily from town to town to get the Gospel of the Kingdom to all Jewish cities before it was too late.

Preparation

As the Disciples go out they will encounter intense persecution. Much of this persecution will come from their fellow-Israelites who reject the Gospel of the Kingdom and try to suppress the message because it threatens their power over the people (John 11:48). They will be as sheep among wolves. Without the power of God these men would have no hope of completing their task.

To prepare for their travels they were to do...nothing. They were not to bring money, food or extra clothing. They were also not to prepare in advance what they were going to say. God would provide the physical needs and the ability to say exactly what they need to say. In other words they needed to get out on the road without delay. The need is great but the workers are few (Matthew 9:37).

Disciple's second commission (Great Commission Matthew 28:19—20; Mark 16:15—18; Luke 24:46—47; John 20:21—23; Acts 1:8)

The second commission given to the Disciples is often referred to as the Great Commission. It is actually an extension of the first commission given to them in Matthew 10. The first commission was given to reach Israel with the Gospel of the Kingdom in preparation of the coming Kingdom. The second commission extends the Gospel to the Samaritans and the Gentiles but retains the same message and signs.

This commission preserves the biblically mandated order of Jerusalem first. Once the leadership in Jerusalem agrees to accept Christ as Messiah then the Gospel can be preached into Samaria and finally to the Gentiles. Unfortunately Israel rejected the call to repentance and rejected her Messiah so the Disciples never even left Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Israel's final rejection was the stoning of Stephen, a prophet sent by God filled with the Holy Spirit. With that God turned to Paul to deliver the message of Grace to the Gentiles.

Zechariah 12:6—8 ⁶ In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. ⁷ The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. ⁸ In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.

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