

# **“God’s Biblical Blueprint For Missions”**

**“Preventing Wasted Money And Fruitless Efforts”**



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## Acknowledgment

I want to begin this "Acknowledgment Page" first, by giving the Lord Jesus Christ praise and appreciation for the 50 plus years that He has given me to serve Him as a full-time preacher in the roles of a pastor, a vocational evangelist, a teacher, and for the past 40 years a missionary in hundreds and hundreds of prisons here in America and around the world. The past 31 years of these have been in Africa. God was so wonderful to save me as a nine year old boy in Vacation Bible School here in the foothills of North Carolina, and then call me to preach the Gospel at the age of 18. I am probably the most unlikely person that God every called because I did not grow up in a dedicated Christian home. My father was a lost religious man, and my mother was a saved lady who lived a casual Christian life, but our home was not a dedicated home. So, I must give Jesus all the praise and honor for finding this ordinary country boy like He did the early disciples, and then calling me to be one of His servants. Truly, if God could have used me, there is hope for everyone else. So, thank you Jesus for being so good to me. I am honored to still be your ambassador. Had Jesus never extended His call to me, for sure this book would never have been written.

The second person I want to sincerely thank for helping me with this long project is my dear wife, Jo Anne. We have been married now for over 50 years, and down through all of these years, she has been right by my side, standing with me, and supporting my work so faithfully, and she really has done this during the months that I have been giving so much time to this project. She is truly the greatest wife God ever gave to one of His preachers! Also, I need to tell you that she has literally spent hours and hours proofreading this book. So, Mom, thank you for being so wonderful once again!

The third person I would like to acknowledge is our GIMI Office Administrator, Patsy Little, who has done so much for our ministry and covered a lot of office work in my place while I have spent hours working on this manuscript. Patsy is one of the Godliest Christian ladies Jo Anne and I have ever known. And even recently, she made a very hard trip to Africa with us, and just did an amazing work for Jesus while she was there. In addition, Patsy helped my wife in proofreading this work because she is excellent in English grammar and composition. She even teaches this in our new Bible College.

I would like to also dedicate this work to our GIMI Board of Directors. Many

of these directors have served on our board for years and years, and this writing project would never have been possible without the faithful support of these dear servants down through the years that helped me to keep this mission work going for so long so that I could glean much of the information I have included in the text from my 68 trips to Africa. Thank you folks, for standing with us through all of these years of service.

I would also like to dedicate this book to all of the wonderful missionaries, both Southern Baptist and others as well, that I have had the privilege of working with during my years of working in Africa. They have been some of the greatest people I have ever known, and I must say they taught Jo Anne and me much that we have learned carrying on this work. Two outstanding missionaries from this group were Mickey and Alice Parish, the precious husband and wife team that had this African ministry before we took over for them in 1999. Brother Mickey went home to be with Jesus last spring, but he is still living on very much in this book, as I have tried very hard to use what he and Sister Alice gave to me through the many years we worked together. Mickey and Alice were two of the greatest missionaries I have ever known.

The last person I want to dedicate this book to is my dear personal friend, Pastor Odell Daughtry who pastors the North Bay Fellowship in Ingleside, Texas. I have known Pastor Daughtry for many years. And, Jo Anne and I have had the privilege of visiting with Pastor Daughtry and his people many times since we took over Gateway International Missions. Pastor Daughtry and his first wife, Patsy, started out helping us many years ago. After Sister Patsy went on home to heaven, we have enjoyed so much fellowshiping with Pastor Odell and his new wife, Linda. Linda is a precious lady, and North Bay is one of the strongest missionary-minded churches on earth. We owe much to these precious people who have been such an encouragement to us down through the years. And, they have purchased so many of my materials which I hope have been a blessing to their people. We do hope to see these dear people again next January if we are able to make another trip back to Texas.

Finally, I want to somewhat sarcastically dedicate this new book to all of those preachers and missionaries who have done such a terrible job down through the past many years in destroying a lot of wonderful mission work by pushing to implement the new strategy that has taken the missionaries away from the fields where God placed them, and moved them to other fields where few people have been getting saved just because they seem to believe

that they are much smarter than God Who called them to start with. It is truly because of the damage that has been done to world missions by these misguided people that God gave me the burden to write this book. They might not like me for writing it, but I do pray that some of the new missionaries who God calls will read this book, and because of what they learn, they might return to the plan that God has given us in His Word for world missions. If they do, my goal will have been reached because thousands will be saved once again through missions in places “where the fish are biting”, rather than fishing in waters where the doors have been closed or are not even open. Thus, my purpose for taking the hours and hours to write this material will be a dream come true. May God richly bless each of you that reads this material.

Eternally grateful,

Dr. Stan A. Frye  
President of GIMI  
John 4:35

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# Introduction

Today as I begin this new book, I must tell you that I have the most burdened and heaviest heart that I have ever had. Let me just give you a few things about myself and my ministry so that you might understand where I am coming from. My wife, Jo Anne, and I both got saved when we were nine years old in two rural Baptist churches here in North Carolina. The occasion for our salvation experiences was Vacation Bible School, which she and I still love with all of our hearts. As soon as we graduated from high school, Jo Anne and I got married as teenagers, and we began serving Jesus together. Since both of us got saved in Southern Baptist churches, we started attending a Southern Baptist church together after we got married. We were taught that Southern Baptist churches were probably the most Biblically aligned churches in existence, and we were very happy serving the Lord through the ministry of a Southern Baptist Church.

Soon after Jo Anne and I got sold out to Jesus and started serving Him faithfully, God really began to deal with my heart about preaching the Gospel. When I first began to realize that God was indeed speaking to my heart about preaching the Gospel, I almost went into a state of panic. Yet, after running for one entire year, I decided that I would never be happy until I surrendered my life to the call of God. So, in early 1966, I surrendered to the call of God to preach the Gospel in full-time ministry. Soon thereafter I resigned my job in a furniture shop and went away to Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute, a Southern Baptist sponsored school. During my years at Fruitland, I was exposed to Southern Baptist church life and all that was available and being taught in SBC churches, including their great SBC mission program which was financially supported and sustained by the Cooperative Program which was considered to be the best mission and support program that had ever been designed. So, I began learning everything I could about the SBC mission programs, and when I became a young pastor, I tried very hard to support everything the Southern Baptist Convention brought down the pike. But, it didn't take me very long to learn that the Southern Baptist Seminaries in those days were basically controlled by liberals which denied the inerrancy of the Scriptures and promoted their liberal theology wherever and whenever they could within the SBC churches. Of course, the day finally came when the conservatives within the convention decided that they had had enough of this liberalism and the direction that the seminaries were

going. So, with the leadership of Judge Paul Presslar of Houston, Texas, Dr. Adrian Rogers, of Memphis, Tennessee, and Dr. Paige Patterson, also of Texas, the conservatives started the long journey of taking back the six seminaries from the liberals who controlled them. The only seminary that still had a lot of good conservatives was Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas. This effort to reclaim the seminaries from the liberals started in Houston, Texas in 1979, and over the next many years, the conservative pastors and church leaders started traveling all over America to their Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings in order to vote in and elect new conservatives who would help lead in the fight to reclaim the seminaries from the liberal administrators and professors. I was one of those conservative pastors that traveled in this effort, as well as others. When we finally saw that success was being accomplished and that it looked like the conservatives would accomplish their objective, there was an air of celebration, with the exception of the liberals and their liberal pastors. Truthfully, among these liberals or "moderates", as they wanted to be called, there was very little celebration, but instead much anger, bitterness, and even some tremendously ugly reactions. Why, in one meeting I attended in Dallas, Texas, I even heard pastors cursing and using God's name in vain after they had lost a vote when the new President, Charles Stanley, had been elected. I have never seen any pastors act like these pastors did on that morning in Dallas.

After a lot of prayer, devoted determination, and persistence, the conservatives eventually, through a long process, took back the SBC from the liberals or "moderates". When this happened, you would have thought that Jesus had come to set up His millennial Kingdom here on earth if you talked to conservatives. Well, that victory had been won, but now the hard work had to begin. Who was going to take over all of the leadership roles in the convention after the liberals left? Bear in mind that for years and years there had been a liberal bureaucracy controlling almost everything that went on in the convention, including the SBC Foreign Mission Board. This SBC Foreign Mission Board, which the conservatives changed the name of to the International Mission Board, had done a remarkable job on the foreign fields where the SBC maintained ongoing mission work, even with some of the moderate missionaries who were career missionaries. Some of these dear people may not have been as conservative as we might have liked, but they did know how to do missions on the foreign fields, and their work really flourished, sometimes with mission stays as long as forty years. God's



Kingdom was being enhanced and thousands of people were coming to Christ.

But something dramatically changed after the conservatives took over the convention. I mean not to be overly critical, but having been a pastor for 50 years and having observed these changes, I believe I can truthfully say that many of the convention roles were filled by the buddies of conservative leaders who were not qualified to serve in the roles. As a result of this, many of the organizations and ministries began to suffer seriously, including the SBC International Mission Board and the newly named Home Mission Board which was changed to the North American Mission Board. Over the next several years, things began to go south in most all of the mission work of the SBC.

I know that I won't win many friends when I say this, but one really bad decision that the conservative brethren made was when they brought a tongues speaking missionary from the Muslim fields of Indonesia to head up the IMB for the next seventeen years. During the leadership of this new president, Jerry Rankin, the entire focus of the IMB was changed from productive and fruitful mission fields all over the globe to the unreached people groups with a priority on Muslim countries. Think of this, many of the fields where thousands were being saved were forsaken by the IMB in order to move the missionaries to Muslim fields where one or two people get saved per year, but still spending the same amount of money as they were where thousands were coming to Christ. It blows my mind to see the wasted millions of dollars which were, and still are, going down the drain every year in order to try to force doors open in countries where God has not opened the doors, or possibly where He has already closed the doors because the people there rejected the Gospel. As the result of this "new strategy" as it is now called, we have taken the missionaries from the fields where God was using them to encourage the nationals to win people to Christ in droves, and placed them on fields where God never called them, in order to try to push open a door that is closed. No wonder we have had so many missionary families returning to America after God has called them to a particular field, when those in charge of the IMB felt that they knew more about where the missionaries should be than the God Who called them did. And, isn't it ironic that when we remove the missionaries from fields where thousands are being saved to Muslim fields where very few are getting saved, then the Muslims come in after the missionaries have left, and with Saudi Arabian

money, take over the former fields, and pay people to become Muslims. Folks, I have been working in Africa for over 31 years, and this is what I am seeing happen in most all of the countries where we have mission work going on. The SBC missionaries used to be there helping to win thousands to Jesus, and now because the IMB has capitulated these countries to the evil one with the excuse that we need to reach the unreached people groups. And in doing this, we must totally disregard what Jesus said in **Matthew 10:5-15**, when He said the following: ***"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when you come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."*** Jesus told His disciples this as He sent them out to go into the cities and preach the Gospel. If the people received the message, then the disciples were to stay there and keep preaching. But, if the people rejected the message, then the disciples were to go to the outskirts of the city and shake the dust off of their sandals and go on to another city where the message of the Gospel would be received.

### **Changing Our Mission Program To Accommodate Our Bias**

During my 31 years of working in Africa, I have made 68 trips to this great continent. I have watched with intense observation the change by many SBC and other independent missionaries concerning the focus or bias of their ministries. I have watched as many of these missionaries on the fields and the pastors back in the churches in America have begun to criticize

evangelism as the main thing. Dr. Jerry Rankin, former President of the IMB wrote a note to my dear friend, Dr. Johnny Hunt, and told him that my concept as a missionary was like I was a "Neocolonialist" with my work in Africa. Then, he made the saddest statement I have ever heard when he said this, "The object of the Great Commission is not to populate heaven with as many souls as possible, but the object is to take the Gospel message to as many people groups as possible, and let them win their people to Jesus." Folks, if I believed that the object of the Great Commission was not to populate heaven with as many souls as possible, I would close my Bible and shut the doors of the churches because there would be no reason to meet or to carry on the work of winning people to Christ, which I believe is the main mission of the church. Go to **Acts 2:41-47**, and you will find that worship didn't even occur until after people got saved and were brought into the fellowship of believers. So, why has such an emphasis been placed upon taking the Gospel to unreached people groups instead of going to places where the doors are open for proclamation? I personally believe that this attitude is just because one missionary went to a particular field where he was called by God, and when you go in obedience to God's call, the place where God sends you is hot on your heart. I have seen this going on for years. If a person makes a mission trip to a particular field, that field becomes very dear to that person, and probably they will not be interested in another field. Thus, when the former President of the IMB came to take over the huge ministry at the IMB, he decided to focus on the type of people, Muslims, to whom he had given years and years of his life. But, did he have the right to take the focus off the world and just give attention to the Muslims. To me this is just as bad as having a targeted group of motorcycle riders, cowboys, or sportsmen and starting a church just to reach these types of people. Personally, I believe this is not only foolish, but it is totally unbiblical. We can't use our bias and personal preference to determine that this is the only group we will try to reach. I believe God is nowhere near this kind of thinking. If Muslims are to be won, God will have to open the doors by His Sovereignty, and not by our personal bias and preferences. Yet, today we are using our personal preferences to make all of our missionaries go to the Muslims at the cost of removing missionaries from thriving fields of ministry.

## **Down Playing Evangelism And Promoting Discipleship**

Recently, I have read about 10 books on changes that must be made in modern missions. Almost all of these books are saying that mass evangelism and even personal evangelism from door to door in the community will no longer work. In fact, I know a recent young "punk" pastor who lied and told his congregation that "soul winning" is not taught in the Bible. Of course, the reason he feels this way is that he is very lazy and doesn't want to go and knock on doors. I also have heard that now he is against giving a public invitation. Folks, this man needs to read the Bible and study the ministry of Jesus Who was always calling people to come follow Him publicly. And very frankly, he needs to get out of the ministry because he is doing irreparable damage to the cause of Christ.

The truth is that all during my long life of serving Jesus as the pastor of local growing churches, I have always pushed evangelism as the priority of the local church. And, down through these years all the way back into the 1960's I have heard the push for discipleship as opposed to evangelism. Why, I can even remember the "Deeper Life Movement" from back in the late sixties and early seventies. My pastor, Dr. Homer Lindsay, at the great First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida used to say, "There is no deeper life on earth than to reach into hell and rescue a lost sinner." Yet, we now hear the rumblings of these pro-discipleship and anti-evangelism people who just believe that evangelism never leads to discipleship, therefore, we must put the emphasis upon discipleship and living in community. Folks, this mess sounds like super spiritual people, but the truth is, we don't save people, but Jesus does as He brings them under conviction and then changes their hearts and lives when they respond to the Gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, when they genuinely get saved, they will have a deep desire for discipleship, learning more about Jesus, and learning Jesus Himself, all at the same time. Therefore, I can assure all of us that it is not God's will for us to withhold the Gospel message from any people group or person if we have the opportunity to share Christ with them, even if we can't be there to mentor the new convert until he or she grows up in the Lord. It is flat wrong for us to say or imply that we shouldn't tell somebody about Jesus unless we can remain with them to see them become avid disciples of Jesus. You would think that the story of Jesus with the thief on the cross would stop this kind of thinking, but it hasn't. The thief was going to die that day, and he wanted to go to paradise with Jesus. So, Jesus answered his

request and took him to paradise with Him. He didn't have time for discipleship. Do you think Jesus should have allowed him to go on to hell? I don't think anyone should be withheld the Gospel message if we have the privilege to tell them, and therefore, where do these so-called spiritual people come up with this foolishness. We need to feel what the great preacher D.L. Moody felt when once he stated, "I look upon the world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.'" From the book, "Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?" by James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness, page 64.<sup>1</sup> We so desperately need this attitude about winning people to Christ. There are almost seven billion people in the world, and at least two billion have never even heard the simple plan of salvation. Therefore, we need to get into the lifeboat and go rescue the perishing.

### **Twisted Theology In Order To Convince The Muslims**

In the 600 page book entitled, "Discovering the Mission of God," Jerry Rankin says on page 181, that he believes the day will come when the Muslims will respond to the Gospel and come out of their violence and terrorism in order to follow Christ. Rankin states it like this, "I believe that in the near future we will look back and see how God has used these events to break down the barriers of the Muslim world." And then on page 182, Rankin says, "Threats should simply compel us to speak the Word of God more boldly and with confidence. And when we do, we can expect God to extend his hand to demonstrate his power through signs and wonders through the mighty name of Jesus."<sup>2</sup> Unless I am completely stupid, Dr. Rankin seems to be saying that the completed Scriptures are not enough to win the Muslims to Jesus, but it will require new signs and wonders to convince them. There is only one thing wrong with this. It belittles the power of the Word of God and the importance of the Holy Spirit in conversion. I sincerely believe that we moved through the apostolic age in the first century A.D., and yet, this Baptist man is saying that we need signs and wonders to convince the Muslims to come to Christ. And this man ran the International Mission Board for 17 years. Is there any questions why the IMB and even many of the American churches are so declining when we have had people like this leading us?

## **Whatever Happened To Biblical Doctrine?**

In this day when so many pastors and congregations are taking the name of their denominations off of their church signs, it might sound a little too intolerant to mention that when we do Biblical missions, we still ought to have some basic Biblical truth which we teach to those who come to Christ. I say this frankly because of what my wife and I have witnessed for years and years on the African mission fields. When we first started going to Africa 31 years ago, you could find churches everywhere that were proud of their denominational beliefs, but not so today. Do you know why this is so true? The reason is that most of the African pastors leading the churches are not being trained in Biblical doctrine, but instead they are being taught by television preachers who know very little about Biblical doctrine and truth. These pastors are being trained to believe that we should base what we believe on the experiences of others or ourselves. A lot of this is happening because responsibility for training our pastors on the mission fields has been given up to these false television and radio preachers in order to save money. I can attest this wholeheartedly in Africa, because probably over 90% of the Baptist pastors speak in tongues, practice sign gifts, and still hang on to the doctrines of the transitional apostolic church. When I approached the IMB of the Southern Baptist Convention some while ago and asked the question, "How are you going to train the pastors of the churches if you close down your foreign seminaries?" I was told that they would be trained by the internet. The internet? Where in the world will these pastors get the money to purchase \$1,000 plus computers, and then pay at least \$100 per month to stay connected to a server somewhere? So, what we have in our African churches is saved people who have become educated and/or trained by television preachers with ties to almost no Biblical churches. But instead, they are on their own just simply preaching anything that comes down the track. For example, one of the preachers that teaches African pastors on television said several years ago that Jesus had to have been born again when He descended down into hell to declare victory over death, hell, and the grave. And then the preacher said, "If Jesus had not been born again, then we would never have been able to be born again." My friends, this is complete foolishness, but this is what pastors on the mission fields are getting, and many are believing as truth instead of being trained in good conservative Biblical institutions. So, what we now have is the shirking of responsibility by those who should be training pastors, who should in turn train and educate other followers of Christ in the churches. They should not

be educated by television preachers or other charlatans who come along the way.

### **The Monumental Tragedy Of Misunderstood, Misguided, And Misdirected Modern Missions**

The above heading almost became the title of this book. However, after thinking very much about the title and spending much time in prayer, I decided to approach the subject matter of missions from a positive viewpoint. In other words, I decided to entitle the book, **"God's Biblical Blueprint For Missions"**, simply because if we learn God's blueprint for carrying on mission work, then we don't have to elaborate on the negative. But, I do want to mention that all through this book I do plan to mention many of the misunderstood, misguided, and misdirected ideas and strategies that are being tossed about, developed, and even experimented with throughout the world today in the name of missions. Yet, the greatest truths that we need to do missions today is exactly what Jesus gave to His disciples when He sent them out to share the Gospel with the world. Plus, we need to follow the simple plan that the First Century Church followed when they set the pattern for us in the Book of Acts. It is truly my prayer that I won't come across too cynical in this text, but that I will be able to set forth some true Biblical principles that can be used in our mission programs yet today for some teachable people to learn from, and then implement the principles that will work in their particular situations. However, I do have a fear, and it is that people will avoid using these principles simply because they seem very Biblical and somewhat traditional. I say this because a younger generation of Christians and pastors seem to be looking for that quick-fix program or plan that will win the world to Jesus without much effort on their parts. This idea is totally ridiculous, and I do pray that this younger generation will wise up and pay attention to the principles that have always worked in winning people to Jesus here at home in America, and yes, even on the mission fields of the world. We still have the same relevant Gospel, the same Word of God, the same powerful Holy Spirit, and the same mandate given by our Lord to every believer. This mandate is called the Great Commission. Let's put **"God's Biblical Blueprint For Missions"** into action, and watch Him build His church and Kingdom. There are no shortcuts, just the necessity of following His plan, staying anointed with the Holy Spirit, and working hard at touching the lives of thousands of people all over the world. Surely, we have to be very careful and very sensitive to the cultures

of the world to do mission work, but we have to be more careful and sensitive to carrying out God's blueprint and plan in the way that He has given it to us. We don't need to add anything to the plan, and we certainly don't need to take anything away from it. The lost world is waiting for us to bring them the message, but it won't happen if we don't do God's mission work in God's way. Now, let's go forth in this study and discern what God's plan is, and then activate His plan, not according to our way, but according to His plan. Let's review this plan in the rest of this book. I surely pray that you will be blessed and that millions will be brought to Christ through God's plan for worldwide missions. Let's determine that we will not change or improvise His plan to accommodate our preferences.



# **“God’s Biblical Blueprint For Missions”**

**Scripture Passage For This Study:  
Matthew 10:1-42**

# **Chapter One**

## **"The Preparation For Doing Missions"**

### **v.1**

As we begin to dig into this wonderful passage of Scripture from the Book of Matthew, I want us to take a long hard look into how our wonderful Lord and Savior prepared His disciples for their mission which was ahead. Bear in mind that Jesus spent three and one half years mentoring, training, and discipling these unique and very different men for a ministry that would last over thirty years. Of course, we know that His preparation was extremely successful, because over the next thirty years, these disciples from various backgrounds went in different directions over the globe and turned the known world upside down for Jesus Christ. They were truly obedient to the Great Commission which our Lord gave to them and us. They were bold and courageous as they shared the Gospel message with thousands of people. And, we do need to remember that all of the original disciples that Jesus sent out with the message of Christ to a lost world, ultimately died a martyr's death, with the exception of John who died a natural death after being imprisoned on the Island of Patmos. Jesus taught these disciples how to do missions and how to proclaim the message of the cross and the resurrection to those who had never heard it. They were very successful in their efforts because they did missions His way.

And may I say that it is truly my desire to see the churches of this modern society get back to the blueprint that Jesus established for us, starting with His twelve disciples. Of course, I am talking about the twelve disciples because Matthias had been chosen to replace poor Judas who had hanged himself. And, I want to remind you that without the benefits of telephones, cell phones, computers, smart phones, automobiles, ships, or airplanes, these devoted servants of God who were figuratively speaking, "on fire for Jesus", shared the Gospel with the known world in just 30 years. Yet today, I don't see many American churches even making a dent in their lost and wicked communities. The world is going to hell, and very few people really care. Even scores of pastors don't even care while they are pastoring local churches. I do pray that this book might be used by God to whet our appetites to become passionate about bringing people to the Savior. Now, let's take a look at how Jesus prepared His followers to do missions.

## **There Must Be An Enduement With Power Over Satan.**

Before Jesus sent His disciples out to share the Gospel on their first mission experience, He gave them power over Satan and unclean spirits. He knew that they could not function on their fields of mission without the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome Satan and all of his demonic forces. Please pay attention to what we are told in **Matthew 10:1a, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out..."** Jesus knew that His disciples would be faced with spiritual warfare from the very first moment they started telling the world about Him. He knew that in the flesh, His followers would be no match for Satan, therefore, He gave them the fullness and anointing of the Holy Spirit before they set out to share the Gospel message. Bear in mind that the day of Pentecost had not yet come, and every believer was not being filled with the indwelling presence of Christ automatically during this transitional time from the Old Testament to the New Testament Church age. Therefore, Jesus just endued these servants with His power so that they would be able to cast out demons and preach the Gospel in strange places without fear. And, when we read in the beginning of the Book of Acts, we find that the 120 disciples in the Upper Room waited until they were filled with the Holy Spirit before they set out to obey the Great Commission. The power of the Holy Spirit in a disciple's life is mandatory if this disciple is going to win people to Christ and be victorious over Satan.

I think I should interject a thought which I believe is very important for this modern age of "churchianity". I need to tell you that we are in a day of complete extremes when it comes to the power of the Holy Spirit. We see professing believers on one side that are so dried up and ritualistic that there is no life whatsoever. These people defend themselves by talking about all of the wildfire concerning the Holy Spirit in the world today. They either make fun of what is going on in emotional churches that have mere emotion and no sound theology, or they run away from any thought of the power of the Holy Spirit just because they are very fearful of the very thought of being filled with the Holy Spirit. In other words, the people just can't seem to find the balance that is taught in the Bible about the power of the Holy Spirit. But, I must remind you that all of our efforts will be fruitless unless the servants of God are empowered by God's Holy Spirit to carry out the Great Commission. And, it is these who downplay the importance of the Holy Spirit who are no match for Satan when he comes their way. In fact, many of

these dried up and formal professing believers rarely even confess to the power of Satan as their enemy. They seem to think that the devil might just be the figment of a misguided preacher's imagination. So, they accomplish very little for Christ because they are powerless, and many times faithless as well.

The other extreme that we witness in this modern world is the wild and somewhat crazy group of people who look for a demon behind every bush. They blame every sickness, every problem, and even every bad thing that happens to a professing believer as being an attack of Satan. Now don't get me wrong, I do know that Satan is so vile and evil that he wants to destroy every good thing that comes our way, and he will cause a multiplicity of problems for us if God takes down the hedge and allows him to get to us. But, we must also remember that because we live in bodies that are under the curse because of the sin of Adam and Eve, we will also have problems because sin brings forth sickness and ultimately death. Therefore, we face many problems and difficulties because of our own mistakes, our self-inflicted wounds because of our personal sins. Then God allows some hard things to happen to us because He is trying to conform us to His own image. It is good for us to remember that we can never have a testimony until we have come through some tests. Therefore, sometimes God allows us to face a lot of horrific tests to make us into His image. And, I need to say that sometimes when we are looking to see why Satan did something to us, we probably need to be evaluating why God has allowed us to go through these times of suffering. We need to discover what God is trying to teach us, rather than look for the devil in every situation we encounter.

While I am talking about this, I need to further expand the truth about misguided and misunderstanding people who believe they have the power to readily rebuke Satan in this present age. We must never forget that during the transitional period between the Old Testament and the Church Age following the day of Pentecost, God did indeed give the power for many sign gifts and deliverances to validate and authenticate the message of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, in this dispensation of time, we don't need all of these sign gifts, deliverances, and other proof gifts to validate the Gospel message because we have the complete revelation of God in His written Word. And in a book entitled, "Overcoming the World Missions Crisis: Thinking Strategically to Reach the World", there is a chapter on demonology written by John F. Hart, and in the text, he makes

a profound statement about the exaggerated use of trying to cast out demons in this modern generation. Listen to what he says in this great text, "A danger of the radical spiritual warfare movement is its tendency to ignore the Sovereign will of God. For a believer to exercise some imagined authority over the demonic world might be foisting humankind's will on God. To bind the demons behind Job's illness and to rebuke the spirits behind the tragedies to his family and their possessions (**Job 1:13-19**) would be to oppose God's will."<sup>3</sup> Folks, this writer is talking about our assuming too much authority and power and pretending that we know what is best for someone, even over the will and desires of God. We must truly be careful about assuming and presuming that we have power to just go around looking for demon possessed people in order to display our power over Satan. If we get caught up in this false behavior, we might end up like the seven sons of Sceva in **Acts 19**. Please read this Scripture passage with me and see what I am trying to warn us about. **Acts 19:11-17, "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."** So, we find the sons of Sceva trying to mimic the power of Paul, but only to their own demise. We must be so very careful not to copy, mimic, or try to duplicate the power in other people's lives, but we surely do need the genuine power of the Holy Spirit if we are going to have success in our mission endeavors.

So, I just want to reemphasize that we must get our lives clean and be filled or endued with the power of God's Spirit before we start any mission activity. We must not try to copy what others have done or are doing. Just remember that the seven sons of Sceva were probably lost Jews who wanted more power, but for the wrong reasons. May we not be guilty of doing the

same thing.

## **There Must Be An Enduement With Power Over Sickness.**

We now come to the second point about the power that Jesus gave to His early disciples in preparing them for their mission work. In the previous point, I talked about the authority or power that Jesus gave His disciples over demons. I discussed the fact that it is possible for a believer to assume too much authority trying to cast out demons from demon possessed people, and end up interfering with God's will for an individual that God might just have been testing. The example that I gave is how God allowed Satan to attack Job, but He was allowing this in order to show the devil that Job would not bow or bend to the devil.

The second power that Jesus gave to His disciples was the power to heal all manner of sickness and disease. Please remember that at the time Jesus was providing the power of the Holy Spirit for the disciples' upcoming ministry was during the transitional time between the Old Testament and the Day of Pentecost. And, the purpose for this special power and these special sign gifts was to authenticate the message that the disciples would be preaching. Truthfully, as we are told in **Matthew 10:6**, the disciples were to go to the **"lost sheep of the house of Israel"**. Now, let's get the picture! These disciples were mostly uneducated and common men that Jesus had called to follow Him. Therefore, the learned Scribes and Pharisees would not pay any attention to anything these ignorant men said, unless they had some way to validate the message of the Gospel that they would preach. So, Jesus gave them power to cast out demons, and now the power to heal all manner of sickness and disease. Pay attention to what Matthew Henry said in his commentary. "He gave them power to *heal all manner of sickness*. He authorized them to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine, to prove that it was of God; and they were to work useful miracles for the illustration of it, to prove that it is not only faithful, but *well worthy of all acceptance*; that the design of the Gospel is to heal and save."<sup>4</sup> Folks, do you get the truth that we find here? Jesus was giving His disciples the power of the Holy Spirit so that they could preach the truth of the new Gospel of His upcoming death, burial and resurrection, so that they could validate and affirm their message. There is no doubt that nothing touches the hearts of hurting people like the miraculous deliverance and healing of friends and

family members. The disciples were being prepared for the great ministry that was ahead.

I need to mention at this point that in this day since the written Word of God has been completed, there is no need for new signs and wonders because the message of the Gospel is validated by the power of the Word of God and the manifestation of God's Holy Spirit power in bringing people under conviction and to the saving of souls. But yet, God is very much interested in the total man; body, soul, and spirit. Therefore, we need to go out to share the Gospel message with the Word of God, with the power of the Holy Spirit, and with a genuine concern for those who are controlled by Satan and those who are sick. This might mean that we may need to purchase some medicine, take doctors and nurses, do medical clinics, and of course, lay hands on sick people so that they might be healed. Bear in mind, that in this dispensation of time, God uses doctors, nurses, and medicine, as well as miraculous healings. But, I do want to attest the fact that when God heals someone miraculously as He did when He healed my lungs, no individual gets the glory, but it is only Jesus that must be praised. This is why in **James, chapter five**, we are instructed to bring the Elders (plural) and anoint with oil the sick person because when more than one person is there in prayer, no individual will know whose prayer actually was answered. Thus, only God gets the praise for the miracle. When God healed me of my dreadful lung disease back in November of 2013, I had hundreds and hundreds of people praying for me all over the world. Therefore, there is no way that we could possibly know whose prayer was answered, but we can know that only Jesus did the healing. So He gets the glory!

Now before moving on in our study, I want to mention something very important. We could discuss, argue, debate, ponder, and deliberate for literally hours and days about the possibilities and relevance of the doctrine or gifts of healing for this generation. Yet, the truth is that only God heals, whether through a divine miracle or through doctors, nurses, medicines, or medical procedures. But there are two prominent lessons that we must learn from this story of Jesus' giving His disciples power before they went out to minister. First, we too, must be still long enough to confess our sins and ask God to fill us with His Holy Spirit before we go. And when we go, we must go with a genuine compassion for those who are demon controlled and sick. We must compassionately touch their lives with the love of Jesus and the

Gospel message which alone can change their lives. I want to say that we have made the telling of the old Gospel story much harder than it really is. All we need to do is to go in the power of the Holy Spirit and share the love and Word of Jesus while we touch the lives of thousands of people.

So now, I want to ask many of you, my readers, a very important question. I want to ask every one of you that has contemplated going to the mission field this question. I also want to ask those of you that go to church each week and then go out of your church into your mission field where you work, where you go to school, to college, to the university, or maybe to some other full-time ministry, like preaching, teaching, evangelism, etc. The important question is, "Have you stopped to be still long enough to deal with any sin in your life, and have you asked God to prepare you for your service by filling you with His Holy Spirit and anointing you for your ministry"? If you have, that is wonderful! If you have not, then you need to stop reading this book and go get alone with Jesus and ask Him to endue you with His power before you go out to share the Gospel with a lost world. If you will do this and mean it with all of your heart, then, you will have a very fruitful and productive ministry. But, if you go only in the power of the flesh, you will fail and falter and come back embarrassed and ashamed. May God help us to not go until we are full of Him!

May we all be reminded of what happened to these same disciples after they had been serving Jesus for a good long time. Peter, James, and John had just been on the Mount of Transfiguration where they had witnessed the majestic glory of God. They came down from the mountain and the next thing you know, they were powerless to help a man's son who was possessed of a devil. Let's read this passage of Scripture together. **Matthew 17:14-21, "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is a lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith**



***as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.***” These disciples learned a tremendous lesson on this day, but they had to be extremely embarrassed to do so!

## **Chapter Two**

### **“The People Who Are Chosen To Do Missions” vs. 2-4**

It goes without saying that today the evangelical churches here in America are in serious trouble. Almost all of the information that we receive about these evangelical churches is negative and it reveals just how the churches have lost their way and continue to dwindle and die. Yet, because many of the so-called spiritual leaders of the evangelical church moment are so revered and placed upon a phony pedestal, it seems that no one will hold these people accountable for their contributions to the decline of the churches here in America. Most of these people who have willfully allowed the churches to dwindle and die on their watch just seem to be oblivious to what is going on. I think the major cause of the situation that we find ourselves in as evangelical churches is that hand-picked buddies have been placed in leadership positions, when in fact they are not qualified to hold these positions. Thus, they try to lead ministries they are not prepared to lead, and they try to cover up the decline of the churches by getting involved in things other than promoting evangelism worldwide. For instance, right now there is a push in our major denominations to involve the people in social and crisis humanitarian assistance with the emphasis placed upon helping to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, build the houses, and alleviate the burdens. Most of the time this is done without doing much personal or collective evangelism. I believe this direction of ministry has happened because evangelism and baptism numbers are way down, so these church leaders are trying to save face before a watching world. Of course, there is nothing wrong with trying to alleviate human suffering, if we don't forget that our primary responsibility is to share the Gospel and try to get these people saved. Therefore, maybe we should stop and take a look at how we choose our leaders and see if they have been called by God to these positions of leadership, or if they have jockeyed for the position through a buddy system while not being qualified to serve in these capacities. If this has happened, as I believe strongly it has, then there is no wonder we have the critical mess in the churches across America. So, our responsibility should be to evaluate those who are trying to lead in world missions and make sure that we stop this buddy-system in order to get the kind of people that God wants to lead our churches, our mission organizations, and our evangelical

efforts to win people to Christ.

By the way, I think that I should tell you that getting good leaders is not always based upon the kind of education, background, and ministry experience they have had, but it depends more on the people's love for Jesus and whether they carry a real heartfelt burden to win the world to Christ. The last thing our churches need today is another administrator who only wants to take care of the organization or church, and then maintain what he or she already has. A maintenance mentality is killing the churches because it is a self-centered way of giving attention to self, rather than take the Gospel to a lost and dying world.

Therefore, in this chapter, I want us to take a look at the kind of people Jesus chose to start His worldwide mission program called the Great Commission. We need to remember that the original twelve that Jesus sent forth to win the world were truly a conglomerate of people from various backgrounds and vocations. Yet, in spite of the quirks and peculiarities of these men, our Lord turned the known world upside down in just about 30 years. Please remember that these disciples had no technology, automobiles, telephones, computers, copying machines, and none of the wonderful tools that we have today. Yet, they were used by God under the power of the Holy Spirit to share Christ everywhere that God sent them and everywhere He led them along the way. Ultimately, every one of them paid the price of dying a martyr's death with the exception of John, the beloved apostle of our Lord. Surely we can study these chosen missionaries and see what kind of people we should be choosing today to carry on our mission activity. Please follow along carefully in the next many paragraphs and see if you can find some really great characteristics for our chosen missionaries today. Just remember what Paul told us in **I Corinthians 1:26-29**. Notice these words! ***"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; That no flesh should glory in his presence."*** Folks, do you see what Paul is saying? He is telling us that God relishes the thought of taking nobodies and doing great things with them in order that He alone will

get all the glory. This Scripture doesn't tell us that God doesn't use any mighty or noble people, but it tells us that God doesn't use many like this. God simply calls ordinary men and women to carry on His will and work to prove to a lost world that success is not dependent upon the educated, sophisticated, acclaimed, applauded, or highly esteemed. But, true success in the spiritual realm is dependent upon God called, God equipped, and God sanctified servants who are willing to surrender everything to Him so that His wonderful Holy Spirit will work through their sold out lives. This means that whomever God uses must abandon everything else in the world in order to be totally surrendered to Jesus. He or she must measure whatever they do in His service by a much higher standard than the average believer thinks or lives. When this happens, the surrendered saint will then receive the condemnation and criticism of those who make no attempt to be completely sold out to God. Yet, if we are going to be fruitful as God has intended, then we will just have to accept and endure the rejection, the castigation, and sometimes even the bitterness and revenge of those we love dearly. Just remember that our Lord suffered tremendous rejection, condemnation, and bitterness, although He had never even sinned. And, remember that these disciples we are going to talk about in this lesson suffered unbelievable abuse and ultimate death because of their love for Jesus and His Kingdom!

#### **A. God Chose An Impulsive Fisherman. (Peter) v. 2a**

In the **second verse** of our text from **Matthew 10**, we find that the first disciple that was listed is Peter. We know an enormous amount about Peter from our study of the Bible, but we also have learned much about him from history. Let's take a look at Peter and see what kind of man Jesus chose to be His primary spokesman.

It is very important to note that Peter was first called Simon, whose name means "hearer". Before he started following Jesus, he was only a hearer of Jesus, and not a believer in Jesus. No doubt that Jesus saw in Simon much potential, although he may have had some rough characteristics.

Peter was a Galilean fisherman who had a brother named Andrew. Peter and Andrew were the fishing partners of James and John. Fishing was extremely hard work which would have required a huge amount of strength to pull in the fish nets full of fish, and no doubt it was fearful work due to the many sudden storms which came to the Sea of Galilee. The fishermen's lifestyle

had to be harsh, sometimes extremely demanding, and one which no doubt would contribute to the stubbornness and rebellion of the fisherman. As we well know, Peter was always putting his foot into his mouth which seems to reveal that he might have been quick-tempered and impulsive in words and action. In fact, Peter was bold but often times in the wrong. Once he even rebuked the Lord and said the he was willing to die for Jesus even though at the arrest and trial of Jesus he denied Him three times (**Matthew 16:21-22**). Fishermen at that time were gruff, unkempt, vile, shabbily dressed, and often used vulgar language. They were full of vigor and had boisterous tempers. This is perhaps why James and John were called the "Sons of Thunder" in **Mark 3:17**. We are not sure how old Peter was when Jesus called him to follow Him, but it is estimated that he was between 30 and 40 years old, according to the Smiths Bible Dictionary, Volume 4, page 2446.<sup>5</sup> According to **John 1:43; 12:21**, the brothers, Andrew and Peter, came from the Galilean village of Bethsaida. Peter was married, but we are not sure about Andrew. And, before Jesus called Peter to follow Him, he was a disciple of John the Baptist down at the Jordon River. In fact, this is where Jesus called Peter to follow Him the first time.

Peter was a steadfast disciple of Jesus in spite of the fact that sometimes he was impulsive and often times was putting his foot into his mouth figuratively speaking. Yet, Jesus saw great courage in Peter, and obviously, He saw Peter with a lot of potential. He knew that Peter would make a great spokesman for the team of disciples once the Holy Spirit had come upon him at Pentecost. Peter and the other disciples would become apostles ("the sent ones") after Jesus ascended back into heaven. In other words, Jesus chose loud, boisterous, and impulsive Peter to become one of His first missionaries. And as we now look back, we know assuredly that Peter became a missionary to the Jews while Paul eventually became the missionary to the Gentiles.

Now I think it is time for us to discuss the great characteristics of Peter that we can see so much needed in the choice of today's missionaries. Please bear in mind, that we have already mentioned most of Peter's character traits before, but I want to mention them again, plus add some more to them in order for us to get a picture of the needed traits for modern day missionaries for us to send out from our churches. Please notice that Peter was by no means perfect, but he was willing to learn from his mistakes and confess his sins quickly so that he could become a greater servant of our

wonderful Lord.

Before going any further, we need to notice that Peter was truly called by God, and that he settled that call by turning loose of everything he owned and followed Jesus completely, eventually even unto death. But we must not forget that it took three invitations by Jesus to Peter before he would fully surrender to the call of Jesus. The first time Jesus called him was down at the Jordon River where John the Baptist was baptizing. Then, Peter slipped back and went back to fishing for fish again. Then, the second time Jesus called Peter was up at the Sea of Galilee. But once more, Peter slipped back and went to fishing again. Then came the third time, and this was the final call. This time Peter adhered to the call once more at the Sea of Galilee when Jesus taught him the great lesson about fishing on the right side of the boat. This time Peter was so amazed at the miracle of fishes that he left everything and followed Jesus **(Luke 5:1-11)**. From this time forward, he did not turn back again.

Now, it might seem somewhat ridiculous to consider a man like the Apostle Peter to look for some positive character traits for a missionary, but the truth is that Jesus loves to take people with rough edges and polish them until they are smooth so that He can then mold them into vessels of honor fit for the Master's use. This is what He did with Peter. This formerly rough angry fisherman became a dynamic preacher and missionary. And, this is what He wants to do today with those He calls from various background and professions to polish them to be vital and vibrant servants on the mission fields of the world. Let's now take a look at some of Peter's other character traits and see how we might find some modern day Peters fit for Gods use.

First, I want us to see that in spite of all of his problems, when Peter finally surrendered to the call of God, he did so with all of his heart. The third time Jesus called him, he left his boat, his nets, his source of income, his friends, his family, and he followed Jesus immediately. There was no second guessing our Lord on this occasion, but he just said good bye and started traveling with Jesus. He left everything and followed Jesus. This was truly a lifetime commitment to our Lord!

Now, let me ask you if you have truly surrendered everything to follow the Lord? Have you abandoned all and started on the journey following the man from Galilee as He wants to lead you into the mission fields of the world?

Have you said good-bye to all the stuff that you have and the friends and family, whom you love? Have you so simplified your life that you will not allow anything to hold you back? I pray that you can answer yes to these questions, but if you cannot, then today would be a good day to do so. You might even want to stop reading this book and just surrender to Jesus and report for service right now. I would be thrilled if you would do this, and who knows, you might just be another disciple like Peter.

## **Quick To Repent And Teachable**

The second character trait that we see in Peter which would be found in a modern day missionary is that Peter was always quick to repent and immediate to cry out for forgiveness. In spite of the fact that sometimes Peter was loud and boisterous and put his foot into his mouth, figuratively speaking, he was readily humbled and repentant when he was exposed. We can find an example of this in **Matthew 14:22-33**. Please notice this great passage of Scripture: ***"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth, thou are the Son of God."***

This story of Peter's walking to Jesus on the water surely reveals how impulsive Peter was, but when he suddenly began to sink, he cried out to

Jesus for help. Then, when they walked into the boat, Peter and the other disciples bowed down and worshipped Him with broken and contrite hearts. Yes, Peter was always impulsive, but yet, ready to repent when he was exposed.

This is a great character trait for any God-called servant or missionary. When a follower of Jesus is always ready to repent of a sin committed or a wrong done, then that person usually has a teachable spirit. I believe Peter had this teachable spirit, especially after the Day of Pentecost, and so should every disciple of our Lord Jesus. Non-teachable people rarely are successful. They can't learn or grow in the Lord if they have stopped being teachable. If they already have the answers, they will surely find some shocking experiences on the mission field. And folks, I don't believe we need to have a strategy session to teach teachableness to our missionaries. What we need to have is a worship service and pray for them to get their hearts truly broken, and then God will give them a teachable spirit. Teachable spirits can only come from intimacy with Christ.

### **Was Peter Educated?**

In **Acts 4:13**, we find these words, ***"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."*** These verses seem to indicate that Peter and John were unlearned and ignorant men. However, I beg to differ with this opinion. The verse tells us that the Jewish priests, the Sadducees, and probably even some Pharisees were extremely angry at Peter and John, therefore, their opinion of Peter and John was just merely perception. It is truly impossible for me to believe that these Galilean fisherman were unlearned and ignorant because of the multitudes of people from all the known world which they met continuously while selling their fish. Peter and John were commercial fishermen who met people from all walks of life, and therefore, they needed to know math, languages with which to communicate with buyers, some science, possibly some marine biology, and many other learned subject matters in order to carry on their business. These speculations are attested in Smith's Bible Dictionary, Volume IV, page 2446. Please follow what the writer says about Peter and his brother Andrew. "It is not probable that he and his brother were wholly uneducated. The Jews regarded instruction as a necessity, and legal enactments enforced the



attendance of youths in schools maintained by the community. The statement in **Acts iv.13**,... is not incompatible with this assumption."<sup>6</sup> In other words folks, the law in those days required the children to attend schools in the communities where they lived, and the children were exposed to much reading in the Old Testament law, thus making it possible for them to become very educated if the children applied themselves. Therefore, Peter, his brother Andrew, and the other fishermen were probably very well educated up to a point, and God chose to use them mightily after they finally decided to follow Jesus and obey His will for their lives.

Based upon what we have just been discussing, I therefore believe that when it comes to modern day missionaries, they need to be first called by God, have a very teachable spirit, and then be trained and educated to the fullest extent with what training and education is available. I also want to say this because I have spent 31 years going back and forth to African mission fields, I see those missionaries that have been trained and those who have not. Thus, I see it is mandatory that every missionary be trained properly in the basics as well as in the subjects that he will need to face the learning curve in any field where he or she might go. So, Peter was somewhat of a self or God educated man, but he was not an ignorant man just because he was a rough and loud fisherman. It would behoove all potential missionary candidates to search out the best place to be schooled properly, and then proceed to the field of service where God calls him or her.

### **What Changed Peter From A Coward To Courageous?**

Most of us who have been saved for a long time have read the stories about Peter in the Bible for years and years. And, it is true that we have seen the demonstration of Peter's cowardly behavior while he was encamped with the enemy's campfire. Yet, as we have followed the story of Peter, we have seen in just a short while this same cowardly preacher, who was hiding at the enemy's campfire, standing in the temple area of Jerusalem crying out to people from 16 nations that the Jesus they crucified is the only way to heaven. He spoke with clear boldness, and he was willing to lay down his life for his beloved Savior who had been crucified and then resurrected from the dead. What was it that completely changed Peter? I'll tell you what it was! It was the manifested presence of the Holy Spirit Who descended on the day of Pentecost after the disciples waited in Jerusalem as they had been commanded by Jesus. In other words, it was not Peter's boldness that made

him a great preacher and a sent apostle, but it was the power of the Holy Spirit that gave him a new courage to proclaim the truth of the Gospel without fear or favor.

## **Peter's Evangelism Methods**

As we think about Jesus' calling Peter to be the leader in His small group of disciples, I think we need to take a sincere look at the evangelism methods of Peter in order to see how some of our present-day evangelism experts are truly "missing the boat". I am sure you have heard some of the "punk pastors" say that mass evangelism and door-to-door evangelism is now very much outdated and will not work anymore. For instance, in the large book entitled, "Discovering the Mission of God", on pages 459-461, the writer, David Garrison makes some absolutely ridiculous statements about evangelism methods in his defense of the "Church Planting Movement".<sup>7</sup> Garrison says on page 459, "Church planting movements are more than mass evangelism. We have all seen the work of dynamic evangelists whose Gospel proclamations draw thousands to salvation. But what happens after the stadium empties and the evangelist moves on to a new city? Too often, the commitment to Christ ends with the mass meeting".<sup>8</sup> Folks, this is one of the silliest statements I have ever read. Literally millions of people have been saved through mass evangelism meetings, and a huge amount of these have ended up faithfully serving the Lord in and through local churches. To make a generic statement like this about mass evangelism is so wrong that I would go so far as to say it is a lie and also a grievous sin. In fact, the result of any mass evangelism effort is dependent upon the follow up of those that are sponsoring the meeting. This is true even for one-on-one evangelism, also. If the person who leads someone to Christ doesn't take the necessary steps to follow up on the person's making the new decision to follow Christ, then we can expect that the person will stray from his commitment. So, to say we should do away with mass evangelism and only concentrate on church planting is just not Biblical. We can see my statement to be true just simply by learning about how Peter, the lead disciple, did evangelism.

In **Acts 2**, we find the story of how Peter preached the Gospel in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost to thousands of people from sixteen different nations in Jerusalem with 3,000 people getting saved. A short time later 5,000 people got saved in one day. Then the Bible tells us that multitudes

came to Christ. In addition to those being saved in the mass meetings under Peter's preaching, scores of people were being saved through house-to-house evangelism. Then, after all of these people came to Jesus, they were baptized and identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, they became members of the local church in Jerusalem. So, the key to retaining the converts from mass evangelism, or any type of evangelism, is in having people to carry out good follow up. But, to say that mass evangelism should be replaced by cell group church planting is just a modern-concocted idea that is being promoted by people who are looking for better results to support their non-biblical method of planting churches.

### **Blatant Lies Are Being Told.**

To support his unbiblical belief about church planting, Mr. Garrison attacks the church growth movement as well as trying to place his church planting methodology over any other kind of evangelism. To prove what I am saying about this author, I am going to include three large paragraphs he has written in order to help you see how utterly ridiculous his idea is. These next three paragraphs are found on page 460 of his Book, "Discovering the Mission of God". I hope you will read these paragraphs closely and get as angry as I have about this stupid strategy of cell group church planting which is being promoted all over the world today instead of trying to win the masses to Jesus.

"There are at least three areas where the church growth movement differs significantly from church planting movements. First, the church growth movement has come to associate bigger churches with better churches. Growing mega churches has become an increasingly common part of the evangelical landscape. Church planting movements, on the other hand, exhibit the principle that smaller is better [This statement is totally stupid.]. Intimate house churches are at the heart of every church-planting movement [So very sad.]."9

"Second, the church growth movement has directed many missionaries to focus on perceived "harvest fields" or "responsive fields" at the expense of unreached—and what may appear to be unresponsive fields. By contrast, a descriptive analysis reveals that God has chosen to launch most church planting movements among the least likely candidates: unreached people groups, which have often been dismissed by those looking for more

responsive fields [Whose analysis? Where in the Bible does it show where God has chosen to only use cell-group house churches with unreached people groups?].<sup>10</sup>

Now we come to Garrison's third foolish statement found on page 460 of the same book I have mentioned before. Pay close attention to the following paragraphs. "Third, the church growth movement advocates pouring resources, particularly foreign missionaries, into responsive harvest fields—the rationale being that there are limited harvesters [These limited harvesters were mentioned by Jesus, not by some misguided human rationale.], so we should conserve them from difficult areas and invest them instead into people groups that have already proven to be responsive to the Gospel."<sup>11</sup>

"Despite reasoned arguments to the contrary, descriptive analysis has revealed that pouring more and more foreign resources into the harvest is actually contrary to the way God is at work in church planting movements [This is truly a phony argument and not true at all.].<sup>12</sup> I would like to say that to have this idea that God is only working through the church planting movement and not in other evangelism efforts is truly a lie, and one that should never be believed. With this interpretation, one might believe that it is just all right to let masses of people die and go to hell where the fish are really biting, figuratively speaking, while we force open doors to the unreached people groups where God has not opened the opportunities freely. And very sad to say, we are using "Covert Mission Activity" claiming to be language trainers, doctors, bookstore managers, etc., when in fact we are lying to cover up that we are going to these unreached people to tell them about Jesus. My question is, "Is it all right to lie, even to share the Gospel?" I have never found this to be true in the Word of God.

### **Back To Our Man, Peter!**

Now it is time to bring this thought about Peter's evangelism methods to a close just by simply saying, Peter used mass evangelism, personal evangelism, friendship evangelism, and every other method necessary to see masses of people get saved. Therefore, any missionaries we send to the fields should be God called missionaries who will use any and every method to win as many people to Jesus as possible just like Peter, and yes, just like Paul the Apostle did as well. May God help us to not get hung up on

just one method or strategy like we are seeing among Southern Baptist and even some other denominations today. What a loss to see people perish because they already have the Gospel in their country, but not enough missionaries and preachers to get them the Gospel where they are, “even in those ripe harvest fields” which we are told to leave alone. Why, even Peter would be offended by this modern-day church foolishness!

## **B. God Chose An Impressive Fisherman. (Andrew) v. 2b**

We now move on to the second person that Jesus chose to be in the leadership of His group of disciples. That person was Andrew as listed in the second part of **verse 2**. And truly, the choice of Andrew was a dynamic choice because of the kind of man he was, the character he demonstrated, his passion to win individuals to Christ, and because of his faithful dedication to follow Jesus whatever the cost, and to constantly go after others who needed to get saved and likewise follow Jesus. We are going to take a look at Andrew in this section of our study. Hopefully we will learn that people in this generation with the same characteristics of Andrew will make great choices to be chosen for service in the worldwide mission of the Great Commission. Now, let’s take a good look at Andrew and discover how God used him mightily as one of His chosen apostles.

### **Where We First Discover Andrew**

We first find Andrew mentioned in the Bible in John 1:35-42. Please pay attention to the following verses and discover this marvelous future apostle of our Lord. ***"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour [4:00 p.m.]. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt***

***be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."***

It is very obvious from these Scripture verses that Andrew was initially a follower of John the Baptist and no doubt trusted the preaching of this somewhat rough preacher from the desert. Peter and he were down at the Jordan listening to this non-orthodox preacher when Jesus appeared to them all. Immediately, John the Baptist recognized Jesus and told everyone there that Jesus was the Messiah. From that moment on, Andrew and his brother, Peter, left John and began to follow Jesus. In fact, Jesus confronted these two brothers and asked them what they wanted from Him. No doubt when Jesus turned toward them, they were somewhat embarrassed and told Jesus they wanted to know where He was staying. Jesus told them to "follow Him and come and see". He took them to the place where He was staying and invited them in to spend the evening with Him.

After this first encounter with Jesus, we are told that Andrew took Peter possibly aside in the house and made an emphatic declaration to him that they had for sure found the Messiah, the Christ. And the statement which says that Andrew took Peter to Jesus seems to imply that maybe it was the next morning when he did this. Thus, we find immediately that Andrew loved to bring people to Jesus. What a lesson we can learn from Andrew's example. Therefore, we must conclude that although he was always in the background behind Peter, he for sure must be considered "the first home missionary... [and] the first foreign missionary" in the early church.<sup>13</sup>

"That's the way Andrew usually seemed to minister: one-on-one. Most pastors would love to have their churches populated by people with Andrew's mentality. Too many Christians think that because they can't speak in front of groups of people or because they don't have leadership gifts, they aren't responsible to evangelize. There are few who, like Andrew, understand the value of befriending just one person and bringing him or her to Christ."<sup>14</sup> Truthfully, probably the greatest need in our churches today is for individuals to carry a burden to bring other individuals to Jesus. If we had this happening in all of our churches, then thousands of people would be getting saved, and the Gospel would be taken to the world in fulfillment of the Great Commission. So, may God give us some dynamic Andrews who find others and bring them to Jesus so that they can get saved and discover eternal life.

## **Andrew Was Perfectly Happy Being A Second Man.**

Much is said today about the value of second men who serve behind another person as a loyal supporter of the one in the front. The need for gracious and submissive second men is so great, but there are too few people who are willing to fulfill this role. Yet, in the person of Andrew, we find a tremendous example of this second man. Everywhere in the Bible where you find Andrew, he always seemed to be in the background serving others and helping to meet their needs. Being very inconspicuous did not seem to bother Andrew at all. He seemed to realize that even if he was in a secluded position with no one really watching him, God was taking knowledge of his service.

Some have stated that Andrew was always working in the shadow of Peter, but he seemed to not mind this at all. My, how we need people on the mission fields of the world today that do not have to be number one. Truthfully during my 31 plus years of working in Africa, I have witnessed too many people come to work in Africa with what I call, "the bull in the china shop" concept and actions. Thus, many times they have been identified with the colonialists who used to have colonies in Africa and woefully treated the African people. People who come with this type of attitude rarely ever last long on the African fields. They do not accomplish very much because they seem to run roughshod over the African people. Yet, we know that Andrew was never pushing to be seen or to be out in the forefront, but he was there when Jesus or the other disciples needed him.

Pay attention to the following paragraph found in John MacArthur's book, "Twelve Ordinary Men", on page 73. "Andrew is the very picture of all those who labor quietly in humble places, 'not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart' (**Ephesians 6:6**). He was not an impressive pillar like Peter, James, and John. He was a humbler stone. He was one of those rare people who is willing to take second place to be in the place of support. He did not mind being hidden as long as the work was being done."<sup>15</sup>

One incident in the Bible that really illustrates the humility and inconspicuous attitude of Andrew is found in **John 6:8-9**, where Andrew comes forth to share with Jesus that he has found a lad with five barley loaves and two fishes. How could that small amount of food feed so many? But as we who

are believers know so well, "little is much when God is in it". We all know what Jesus did with the loaves and fishes. He ended up feeding the multitude because of the inconspicuous deed of Andrew. By this event, we know that Andrew was humble, because had he not been so, when Jesus had completed this huge miracle, he would have been boasting and parading his pride because he found the lad with the loaves and fishes.

I believe this would be a good place to say that the Scriptures never attach any dishonor to Andrew for doing or saying the wrong thing at any time. For sure, he was not like impulsive Peter who was always "putting his foot in his mouth" by hasty statements. We can find no place in the Bible where Andrew sought the center of attention or revealed any jealousy toward the other more prominent disciples. Therefore, we must conclude that Andrew was a hardworking servant of God who was completely contented with serving others without boasting, bragging, or allowing his ego to get him in trouble. Again let me say, "God please send us some Andrews for this generation".

### **Andrew Was A Real Man!**

We don't know much about the size of Andrew, but we do know from history that his name means "manly" which would be very well demonstrated as he helped to pull the huge 100 feet long drag nets in from the Sea of Galilee. This kind of fishing required much strength and was enormously demanding of any first century fisherman. Therefore, we must conclude that Andrew was strong and was not afraid of work. in **Matthew 4:18-20**, we find these words, ***"And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*** This was probably the second time that Jesus had called Andrew and Peter, but they had gone back to fishing instead of fishing for men as they had promised. We know that after this event, there was a third call that finally got the proper positive response from Andrew and Peter. And so it is with many people today, God has to sometimes call them several times before they will respond. Of course, the right thing to do is to respond immediately and completely in order to get the blessings of God right away and continue on to a fruitful ministry.

We might say that Andrew was a man's man, but one that did not magnify himself at all while he served Jesus. But yes, even this manly man



surrendered to follow Jesus completely without any reservation, and so should every man do this today. "Thank God for people like Andrew. They're the quiet individuals, laboring faithfully but inconspicuously, giving insignificant, sacrificial gifts, who accomplish the most for the Lord. They don't receive much recognition, but they don't seek it. They only want to hear the Lord say, 'Well done.'" <sup>16</sup>

"And Andrew's legacy is the example he left to show us that in effective ministry it's often the little things that count—the individual people, the insignificant gifts, and the inconspicuous service. God delights to use such things, because He has ***"...chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence"*** (I Corinthians 1:27-29)."<sup>17</sup>

### **Whatever Happened To Andrew?**

"In fact, the Bible does not record what happened to Andrew after Pentecost. Whatever role he played in early church history, he remained behind the scenes. Tradition says he took the Gospel north. Eusebius, the ancient church historian, says Andrew went as far as Scythia. (That's why Andrew is the patron saint of Russia. He is also the patron saint of Scotland.) He was ultimately crucified in Achaia, which is in southern Greece, near Athens. One account says he led the wife of a provincial Roman governor to Christ, and that infuriated her husband. He demanded that his wife recant her devotion to Jesus Christ and she refused. So the governor had Andrew crucified."<sup>18</sup>

"By the governor's orders, those who crucified him lashed him to his cross instead of nailing him, in order to prolong his sufferings. (Tradition says it was a saltire, or an X-shaped cross.) By most accounts, he hung on the cross for two days, exhorting passersby to turn to Christ for salvation. After a lifetime of ministry in the shadow of his more famous brother and in the service of his Lord, he met a similar fate as theirs, remaining faithful and still endeavoring to bring people to Christ, right to the end."<sup>19</sup>

### C. God Chose An Impatient Fisherman. (James) v. 2c

We now come to the third man that was chosen by Jesus to be one of His apostles and a missionary which He would send forth to help carry out the Great Commission. In our discussion of Peter and Andrew, we discovered that those two men were completely opposite. Peter was an impulsive fisherman that often spoke up when he should have been still. Then, Andrew was the disciple standing back in the shadows. Now I want to discuss the third disciple within the inner circle of Christ's followers, and his name is James.

James has been called the apostle of passion because like his brother John, he was often quick to get angry and like Peter, he often spoke up when he should have remained silent. The only time we find James mentioned in the Book of Acts is in **Acts 12:1-2**, where the Bible tells us that he was the first martyr of the early church. Pay attention to the following verses. ***"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."*** "Even the fact that James was the first to be martyred—and that his martyrdom was accomplished by no less a figure than Herod—suggests that he was not a passive or subtle man, but rather he had a style that stirred things up, so that he made deadly enemies very rapidly."<sup>20</sup>

We do know that there is definitely a place in spiritual leadership for people who have loud type "A" personalities. We have learned this by the likes of Elijah, John the Baptist, and even Nehemiah. James was much like these Old Testament characters. "He was outspoken, intense, and impatient with evildoers."<sup>21</sup> Just maybe James learned his passionate zeal from Jesus Himself. Do you remember the way Jesus went into the temple area and ran the money changers out with a scourge? This event is found in **John 2:13-17**, ***"And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when He had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it is written, THE ZEAL OF THINE HOUSE HATH EATEN ME UP."*** More

than likely, what James saw Jesus do in this incident probably helped to stoke the fire of zeal in him. Surely, if Jesus the Christ could clean the house with this type of zeal, then James could be obsessed with this kind of passion as well. "But sometimes zeal is less than righteous. Zeal apart from knowledge can be damning (**cf. Romans 10:2**). Zeal without wisdom is dangerous. Zeal mixed with insensitivity is often cruel. Whenever zeal disintegrates into uncontrolled passion, it can be deadly. And James sometimes had a tendency to let such misguided zeal get the better of him."<sup>22</sup> "Twelve Ordinary Men", by John MacArthur, page 86. Two incidents in particular illustrate this. One is the episode where James wanted to call down fire. The other is the time James and John enlisted their mother's help to lobby for the highest seats in the Kingdom. These incidents are mentioned in **Luke 9:51-56** and **Matthew 20:20-24**. So, we need to see that God can indeed even use those who are impatient and compulsive as He did James.

We need to remember that James was the younger brother of John, and that they both were the sons of Zebedee, a well-to-do fisherman and business man in Galilee. And probably because of the home that they came from, both James and John were somewhat arrogant and self-sufficient leading to an attitude of impatience and aggressiveness. It is very important for us to remember that James and John wanted to be seated first in the Kingdom of God, but Jesus promised them suffering. "James wanted a crown of glory; Jesus gave him a cup of suffering. He wanted power; Jesus gave him servanthood. He wanted a place of prominence; Jesus gave him a martyr's grave. He wanted to rule; Jesus gave him a sword—not to wield, but to be the instrument of his own execution. Fourteen years after this, James would become the first of the Twelve to be killed for his faith."<sup>23</sup>

"History records that James's testimony bore fruit right up until the moment of his execution. Eusebius, the early church historian, passes on an account of James's death that came from Clement of Alexandria: '[Clement] says that the one who led James to the judgment-seat, when he saw him bearing his testimony, was moved, and confessed that he was himself also a Christian. They were both therefore, he says, led away together; and on the way he begged James to forgive him...And thus they were both beheaded at the same time.' Thus in the end, James had learned to be more like Andrew, bringing people to Christ instead of itching to execute judgment."<sup>24</sup>

"James is the prototype of the passionate, zealous, front runner who is

dynamic, strong, and ambitious. Ultimately, his passions were tempered by sensitivity and grace. Somewhere along the line he had learned to control his anger, bridle his tongue, redirect his zeal, eliminate his thirst for revenge, and completely lose his selfish ambition. And the Lord used him to do a wonderful work in the early church."<sup>25</sup>

## **What We Can Learn From James!**

There are many lessons that we can learn from this study of the Apostle James which should help anyone interested in doing mission work for our Lord anywhere in the world. Although there are many negative characteristics which James possessed, there are a lot of positive traits or attributes which can benefit any person seeking to follow the will of God to the mission field. Let's take a look at these and glean what we can from these traits to help those of us who are serving Christ in any field of ministry.

The first thing we learn from James is that although he had an angry spirit like his brother, John, he got his spirit under control and used his passion and zeal in a wise way. Having been in full-time ministry for over fifty years, it has been my experience that it is much easier to get more accomplished through zealous people that you might have to hold back now and then, than it is to have to push lazy nonassertive people to get their work accomplished. Yes, if we have zeal, it must be under control and wise, but this trait that James seemed to have had, obviously gave him strength to persist in time of persecution.

Secondly, James was a man who could take the zeal that he was prone to use improperly, at the wrong time, and in a wrong way, and turn that zeal into a positive attribute for the progress of the Kingdom of God just like Jesus did when He cleared the temple area of the money changers. Without a doubt, the work of Christ is in great need today of those who will redirect their zeal toward the work of Jesus in telling the world about the Gospel message. We have too many people that are spiritually and functionally listless. In other words, they are lazy and their get up and go has got up and gone. May God give us many zealous people on fire for Jesus like the disciple James was.

A third thing that we notice about James is that he was able to overcome his selfish ambition and develop an "others' focus" in his life and work. Many

people start out like James did, with a very selfish ambition. But then as they grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus, they become conscious of the great needs of others and redirect their time, money, and their energy toward those who need to be loved and shown the Good news of Jesus. We need great disciples like this in the mission fields of the world today. Having been a full-time pastor for so many years, I have seen the sad results of too many people who allow their selfish attitude and motives to destroy the work of Christ in reaching others. Truthfully, I have seen this for years and years in some of the large denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention. Great programs like the Cooperative Program start out well, like it did way back in 1925, but then through the years, when it became a catchall program for every kind of ministry and business you can think of, it lost its true mission emphasis because of the selfish people who have used it for their pet projects and programs. Thus, its promotion became simply a promotion for the program itself, rather than a promotion for worldwide missions as it was first intended. Therefore, the selfish ambition like James started out with has to be changed by the power of God, and a refocus has to take place if we are going to win multitudes to Christ.

Another great characteristic we notice in the life of James is that he got over wanting to be number one in the Kingdom in heaven as we discussed earlier in this chapter. He developed a cooperative spirit with our Lord and the other disciples. And, I would like to say right here that this is probably one of the greatest needs of the hour if we are going to carry out the Great Commission and win multitudes to Christ. I say this because of the tremendous division within the body of Christ today. All over the world we have a huge number of Christian ministries that are just doing a few things well and making a small impact when they could be joining other ministries and working together with them, just simply by standing by the fundamentals of Biblical truth and letting a lot of those personal preferences go which are dividing the body of Christ. We need to get back to the unity of the Book of Acts like we find in **Acts 1-3**, in order to bring people to Christ rather than arguing and fussing about so many nonessential differences. May God bring back a spirit of unity which can only happen when we start demonstrating cooperation like James patterned for us while working in the flesh with Jesus and the other disciples. It is now time for us to work in cooperation with others in the flesh to take the Gospel to the world.

The last characteristic that I want to mention in the life of James the Apostle

is that he was a very courageous man, even unto death. We have already discussed his courage to witness, even to the man who took him to his execution. Yet, we need to take a real look at the churches and mission ministries of today and ask, "Where are the courageous Christians and preachers today here in America?" Now I know that hundreds and hundreds of believers in foreign countries are suffering, and even dying, for the cause of Christ. Yet, here in our country of America, there seems to be an absence of believers, preachers, and other church leaders who will stand up for what is right. Instead, we have preachers and other church leaders who are seeking to be politically correct, and they are compromising with every wicked idea, philosophy, and perversion that is coming down the pike. I have never seen such a day in my life when so few are standing up against the murder of unborn babies, the perverted lifestyles of homosexuals and lesbians, the skyrocketing proliferation of pornography, and the contamination of our churches by wicked and worldly behavior. America is crying out for more preachers like Dr. Franklin Graham, who pulls no punches with all of these wicked sins and even stands against the false religions of Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mohammedism. We must have some more disciples like James, who would even be ready to die for the truth of the Gospel and the holiness that serving Jesus requires. I honestly must say that I don't know if I could be faithful unto death, but if that time ever comes, I surely pray that I could be like James and die for Jesus!

#### **D. God Chose An Intense Fisherman. (John) v. 2d**

We now come to the fourth man that God sovereignly chose to be one of His first apostles and of course, His personal missionary. This man's name is John, and no doubt most every Christian who has ever read the New Testament, is familiar with this man's ministry and his writings in the New Testament. Like James, his older brother, John was the son of Zebedee a commercial fisherman in Galilee. John and his family probably lived originally in Bethsaida near the Sea of Galilee. Of course, the work of a commercial fisherman demanded that he spend much time with his brother and father fishing on the Sea of Galilee and along the shore line cleaning and mending fish nets. Therefore, John had to be a strong man like his brother, because together, they had to cast out and draw in the fish nets that were probably 100 feet long. John was a hard working young man and a man that was probably somewhat rugged in his disposition and behavior. It would be very difficult for him not to be like this when we consider the demanding hours

and hours of hard work that fishermen had to do, especially working at night as most fishermen did. And from this hard and rough life, it would seem that, like James, John became a man with many negative traits in his life. We shall look at some of these in this section of this book.

John was obviously a very rugged and harsh man to begin with in his life. Listen to what John MacArthur says, "He was rugged and hard-edged, just like the rest of the fishermen-disciples. And again, he was every bit as intolerant, ambitious, zealous, and explosive as his elder brother. In fact, the one and only time the synoptic Gospel writers recorded John's speaking for himself, he displayed his trademark aggressive, self-assertive, impertinent intolerance."<sup>26</sup> "So it is clear from the Gospel accounts that John was capable of behaving in the most sectarian, narrow-minded, unbending, reckless, and impetuous fashion. He was volatile. He was brash. He was aggressive. He was passionate, zealous, and personally ambitious—just like his brother James. They were cut from the same bolt of cloth."<sup>27</sup>

In **Luke 9:54**, we can see that John was very fiery because he joined his brother James in wanting to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans that rejected Jesus on His way to Jerusalem. Pay attention to this verse. ***"And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?"*** So, we can surely see that John had an angry temperament and that he was quick to judge before he spent his three years with Jesus. Once again, this reminds us that God can take rough, ordinary men and eventually turn them into vessels of love and truth. He did this for James and John, and He surely can do it for us as well.

I also think that we should mention that John was also competitive and very intolerant of others that he did not like or with circumstances he could not change. And, surely as we study John, we must see that he was filled with elitism (felt "better than others") and a genuine lack of love for others. If **I Corinthians 13:4-5** would have been available for John to read in his day, he would have needed very much to learn that ***"[Love] suffereth long, and is kind; [love] envieth not, [love] vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;"*** Please notice that I changed the old English word, charity, to the more understood word, love, because it reveals what kind of love we all should be displaying. John was just simply a somewhat

"out of control" man in his early life. But, the change that traveling with Jesus for three years would make in him was truly enormous. Quite a lesson for us to learn. If God can take a rough and rugged fisherman and make him into the beloved disciple of our Lord, then surely God can do the same for us.

What Jesus did for John in those three years of mentorship was to help John acquire a genuine balance in his life. Pay attention again to what John MacArthur says about this. "But three years with Jesus began to transform a self-centered fanatic into a man of balance."<sup>28</sup> It was during these three years that John learned how to balance presenting truth with showing love. John also learned how to balance ambition with humility; a much needed lesson for every child of God to learn. This is especially true if a person is going to be a totally surrendered missionary for the cause of Christ. In other words, there has to be a lifestyle of demonstrated love, but when it becomes necessary to take a stand and push on for truth, then a real disciple of our Lord will show his ambition and courage and do so.

John was an apostle who was included in the inner circle of our Lord. Peter and James were the other two. It would seem that maybe this position in the inner circle contributed to John's having a certain amount of pride, because in **Mark 10:35-40**, John and James ask that they might both sit next to Jesus in glory. But, Jesus told them that was not for Him to determine, but that it would be determined by God the Father for those whom He had prepared it for. Because of the sin of presumption which James and John manifested, the other ten disciples got angry with these two inner circle disciples. Pay attention to the following, "You have to be careful being part of the inner circle that pride does not creep in unaware and you think you are better than others. To whom much is given, much is required also."<sup>29</sup> In other words, John, along with his brother, James, let their pride get out of control to the extent that they did indeed believe they should receive special privileges. Thus, by the end of the three plus years that John spent with Jesus, he truly was humbled and became a great servant of the Lord. So, to start out with so much pride, it is very obvious that God really changed John into a loving compassionate man of God.

"The most amazing thing that happened to the three in the inner circle was the transfiguration. Jesus took Peter, James, and John and brought them to a high mountain apart from the others. (**Matthew 17:1**) Jesus was



transfigured before them and His face did shine as the sun and his raiment like the light. **(17:2)** Behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus about the decease he should accomplish at Jerusalem. **(Luke 9:31)**<sup>30</sup> Now, let's include more of this story from the Bible itself. **Luke 9:32-36, "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."** This wonderful mountain top experience for these three inner circle disciples had to have been the most glorious thing these men saw while here on this earth. Therefore, their lives had to be changed, and I believe that John the Apostle never got over this experience. In supposition, let me say that through this Transfiguration experience, I believe John came to understand that Jesus was indeed Deity, God in the flesh, and just maybe this experience was why he became so close to Jesus and ended up being the only disciple at the crucifixion. It was at the crucifixion that Jesus made sure that John would be the one to take care of His mother after the crucifixion. It may just be that the Transfiguration experience contributed to the intimacy that John had with Jesus. One thing we do know is that John seemed never to be the same again after the Transfiguration.

## **Truth And Love**

When we study the life of John, we must see that he was truly a loving, compassionate man who always spoke the truth with conviction and depth. If you count the number of times that John used the term love in his writings, you will find that it is used as least 80 times by this disciple. Jesus, for sure, changed John during the three years that He trained him, and John came forth from his personal seminary with the theme of love flowing from his personality and in his writings. Thus, we must learn from John the importance of being filled with the love of God, and we must be ready to stand for truth if we are going to be New Testament missionaries or

preachers. We need to also remember that John used the word truth 45 times in his Gospel and epistles. As we look around us during these days of so much apostasy, we might see some men and women of God talk about love, but we hear very little about truth. Therefore, it is one of my ultimate desires to see a revival of love and truth in our churches today; especially here in America.

While we are talking about the love that John demonstrated, I think it is worthy of our attention to note that John was the only Gospel writer that mentioned the incident where Jesus washed the disciples' feet in the Upper Room. You can find this text in **John 13:1-17**. Obviously, this experience meant much to John, because it never left his mind. Therefore, when he wrote the story of Jesus and the Gospel message, John included it in his text. However, it seems to astound me that neither of the other Gospel writers mentioned it. So, we must presume that the incident was a truly moving experience for John because he witnessed the true humanity and humility of Jesus after having seen the Deity of Christ in the Transfiguration.

We need to also notice that the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet in the Upper Room was probably the greatest picture of eternal security that was ever given. When Jesus came to wash Peter's feet, Peter told Him to wash him all over. But Jesus then told Peter if he had already been washed, he did not need to be washed all over again. But instead, he only needed to wash his feet that had come in contact with the dirt of the world. The same is so true for us. We only get saved one time, but daily we need to confess our sins (plural) where we come in contact with the world. No wonder John included the story of the foot washing in his Gospel account.

"We learn from the beginning of John's Gospel that he lived for a long time after the beginning of the Christian era. His epistles reveal that he rose to a position of influence within worldwide Christianity, and shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem moved to Ephesus in Asia Minor. At this strategic location he became the pastor of the church in Ephesus and had a special relationship to other churches in the area, as we know from his letters to the seven churches in Asia. His brother, James, was the first of the apostles to die. John on the other hand, was the last to die. Almost all of the other apostles met violent deaths, but John died peacefully in Ephesus at an advanced age, around the year AD 100."<sup>31</sup>

"While in Ephesus John was exiled to Patmos, a penal colony off the coast of Turkey. This is confirmed by Eusebius, Chapter XVIII, i. According to early tradition, the sacred text of the Book of Revelation was given to St. John and set down while he was in the cave that is now known as the cave of the Apocalypse, which cave is now hidden within, and below, the buildings of the Monastery of the Apocalypse. This monastery was built in the 17th century to house the Patmias—a theological school that was established at that date, and its structures have been very little altered since then. The buildings constitute an ensemble of cells, class-rooms, flowered courtyards and stairways, with chapels dedicated to St. Nicholas, St. Artemios and St. Anne—this last one being built in front of the open side of the cave. The holy cave, or grotto, itself has long since been transformed into a small church dedicated to St. John the Theologian. In the grotto, signs remain that long tradition hold and bears witness to St. John's presence—in one corner there is the place where he laid his head to rest; near it the place where he rested his hand to raise himself from the rocky floor on which he slept; not far away the place where he spread his parchment; and, in the roof of the cave, the triple fissure in the rock through which he heard 'the great voice as of a trumpet.' The cave is small, and the light is dim; it is a place that draws one to meditation, prayer, worship contemplation...a place of which a man might say, 'How fearful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.'"<sup>32</sup>

So now, historians believe that they did indeed find the cave where John spent so many latter years of his life. It was there that he probably wrote the Book of Revelation. Although it is speculation, it is believed that John was eventually released from the Isle of Patmos, and that he lived out his final years in Ephesus.

John the Apostle, or John the Disciple, whichever one we call him, was truly a remarkable man. Jesus absolutely changed him from a "son of thunder" to a preacher/missionary of love and truth. Truly, God does choose ordinary men who are sometimes rough, rugged, and hot tempered, and then He changes them into useful servants of God. The fact that He so dramatically changed John to the "beloved disciple" should give all of us hope to be successful preachers, missionaries, and simple servants of God. Obviously, Jesus loved John very much because He gave him the great privilege of seeing heaven and where we all will spend eternity one day. My concern is that we will be faithful to take a lot of others to that same heaven with us. If we will

do this, we can then say that we have obeyed the Great Commission!

Before moving on to the next apostle that Jesus chose to carry on His missionary work, I want to mention that one of the great characteristics of John the Apostle was his teachableness. It is obvious to me that Jesus did not waste those three plus years that He spent with John because John was changed dramatically from an impulsive harsh man into the “beloved disciple” just simply because he demonstrated a teachable spirit. Listen to what John MacArthur says in his book, “The Twelve Ordinary Men”. “John got the message. He learned the lessons. He grasped the character of Christ in a powerful way. And he became a choice human model of what righteous, Christlike character ought to be.”<sup>33</sup> Later on the same page of his book, MacArthur said, “Obviously, John had learned the lessons he needed to learn. He had learned to be a humble, loving servant—or else Jesus would not have given him the care of His own mother. He told Peter, **‘Feed my sheep.’ (John 21:17)**. He told John, **‘Care for My mother.’**”<sup>34</sup> In other words, John had become a meek man with a teachable spirit, and one that was willing to learn whatever Jesus taught him.

May I say that I have worked on the mission fields of Africa for over 31 years, and there is no greater quality that a man or woman can have than that of teachableness. When it comes to learning from Jesus through His Word and Holy Spirit, being devotedly teachable is an absolute must. Jesus is always teaching His servants, and thus we must be willing to open up our hearts and minds in order to learn the lessons He wants to teach us. And then, because working on the mission fields of the world demand so much cultural learning, a missionary will seal his own death warrant to fruitfulness and effectiveness if he or she doesn’t keep a teachable spirit. So, we learn from John the Apostle that every missionary should be open to learning.

Just before leaving the Apostle John with the teachable spirit, I would like to say that all over the world today, especially here in America, our churches and the work of God is being cursed by non-teachable pastors, evangelists, and other church leaders. This lack of teachableness has resulted in arrogant, know-it-all attitudes which are producing some of the most pride filled churches. Truthfully, it is killing many churches because these egocentric church leaders won’t listen to any senior servant of God. I truly fear what is ahead for our churches here in the United States and all over the world, unless a spirit of humble meekness with a teachable spirit returns

to the pulpits and church leadership positions. May God answer our prayers and send us some broken and contrite church leaders who will open their hearts and minds and learn from others. Our churches and mission fields are begging for humble servants who will learn devotedly from Jesus and from other senior church leaders who have been truly successful in their ministries as church leaders, pastors, and missionaries. Thank God for the example that John set for us! May we follow his example!

### **E. God Chose An Intelligent Friend. (Philip) v. 3a**

As I begin the discussion of the fifth disciple that God chose to be one of His missionaries, I must confess that I have been away from working on this manuscript for many months due to some health problems, a tremendously hectic schedule of ministry, and, truthfully, from just being very tired. But today I return to this wonderful work with a new excitement and enthusiasm about this project. Why? Because I want the entire Christian world to return to **"God's Biblical Blueprint for Missions"**. Worldwide today we are doing an absolutely abysmal job of trying to win people to Christ. Therefore, I want to get us back to the way God intended for His mission work to be done when He first sent out His disciples. So, here we go with trying to share some very valuable information with all of you that might be reading this book.

Today I want to introduce you to the fifth disciple chosen by our Lord as He sent them out two by two to share the Gospel message. This fifth man's name is Philip. We discover this man in **Matthew 10:3**, where Philip is mentioned along with Bartholomew and some of the other disciples. I mention Bartholomew because it is believed that he may have been Philip's traveling partner as they went by twos to share the Gospel. And, it is believed by most scholars that Philip was chosen to be the leader of the second group of four, like Peter was the leader of the first group of four.

The name Philip is a Greek word which means "a lover of horses". It is not known why he was not given a Jewish name here in the Scriptures, because he was a Jew and was working with the other Jewish disciples. We do need to know that this Philip was not the same deacon Philip that preached to the Ethiopian Eunuch as he rode in the chariot on his way home from Jerusalem. But this Philip was from the city of Bethsaida along the Sea of Galilee, as was Andrew and Peter. You can find the verse that tells you this in **John 1:44**.

Because he “likely grew up with Andrew, Peter, James, and John. Many believe he was a fisherman by trade because of his association with the above fishermen and his return to fishing after the resurrection in **John 21**.”<sup>35</sup> Let’s take a look at a description of this dear man called Philip from the pen of John MacArthur. “Piecing together all that the apostle John records about him, it seems Philip was a classic ‘process person.’ He was a facts-and-figures guy—by-the-book, practical-minded, non-forward-thinking type of individual. He was the kind who tends to be a corporate killjoy, pessimistic, narrowly focused, sometimes missing the big picture, often obsessed with identifying reasons things can’t be done rather than finding ways to do them. He was predisposed to be a pragmatist and a cynic—and sometimes a defeatist—rather than a visionary.”<sup>36</sup>

I believe it is very much worth mentioning that Philip was the very first disciple that Jesus called personally and told him to follow Him. It would seem that Philip was the first disciple to be sought out by Jesus and explicitly called to follow Him. We find this encounter in **John 1:43**. Pay attention to this call. ***“The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.”*** It would seem to me that this was a planned trip by our Lord to call Philip to be one of His apostles. Isn’t it ironic that here we have the Son of God taking the initiative in calling people to follow Him. He is still doing this today if people will just listen to His call and respond the way Philip did. Philip responded immediately to the call of Jesus and went and found Nathanael, or Bartholomew as he was also called, and told him that he had found the Messiah. Read this glorious passage of Scripture on the way Philip responded. **John 1:44-45, “Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”** In other words, Philip recognized immediately that this was the Messiah that had been promised by the Word of God. No wonder he surrendered to follow Jesus at once.

May I stop for just a minute and tell you that the way Philip stopped everything and responded to the call of Jesus is the way that every believer should respond. If we had scores and scores of people responding to the call of God the way Philip did, our mission fields would not be begging for missionaries and multitudes would not be dying every day and going to hell.

If you as a reader of this book don't get anything else I must include in these writings, please take notice of the way that Philip responded to the call of God and go and do likewise.

### **Philip Had A Seeking Heart.**

It is very obvious when we read the story of Jesus' calling Philip to come follow Him that Philip had a seeking heart and probably had been looking for the coming Messiah like many other Jews were anticipating. And, we need to mention that Philip was a personal evangelist because just as soon as he responded to follow Jesus, he went looking for Nathanael to tell him that he had found the Messiah as promised by the Law of Moses. Without a doubt, Jesus had been working on the heart of Philip a long time before He actually called Philip to come follow Him. Doesn't it stand to reason that even today, God works on the hearts of His needed servants a long time before He actually personally calls them? Therefore, should we not open our hearts, tune in our minds, and submit our spirits to Jesus so that when He calls or enlists us to serve Him, we should be ready to respond as Philip did. Let me share with you a couple paragraphs from John MacArthur's book that further reveals how God called Philip to be one of His first missionaries.

"The ease with which Philip believed is remarkable. In human terms, no one had brought Philip to Jesus. He was like Simeon, **'waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him'** (Luke 2:25). He knew the Old Testament promises. He was ready. He was expectant. His heart was prepared. And he received Jesus gladly, unhesitatingly, as Messiah. No reluctance. No disbelief. It mattered not to him what kind of one-horse town the Messiah had grown up in. He knew instantly that he had come to the end of his search."<sup>37</sup>

"That is frankly out of character for Philip, and it reveals to what a great degree the Lord had prepared his heart. His *natural* tendency might have been to hold back, doubt, ask questions, and wait and see. As we are about to discover, he was not usually a very decisive person. But thankfully, in this case, He was already being drawn to Christ by the Father. And as Jesus said, **'All that the Father gives Me will come to Me'** (John 6:37, emphasis added)".<sup>38</sup>

## Philip The Bean Counter

Several writers have called Philip “the bean counter” because of the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. This miracle of Jesus is the only one that is mentioned in all four Gospel accounts. Jesus had been teaching the multitudes as the day was coming to an end. The Gospel accounts tell us that there were at least 5,000 men plus women and children. There could have been as many as ten to twenty thousand people needing to be fed. So, in **John 6:5**, we find the following words, ***“When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”*** It is very plain to me that Philip must have been the administrator of the disciples while Judas Iscariot was the treasurer of the group. Philip no doubt was the one in charge of planning their meals and making sure that they always had enough food to eat as they traveled all over Galilee and Judea. Therefore, Jesus asked him what they should do. Someone has said that Philip was probably the one in the group that would question the decisions of the group of disciples every time they had to make certain choices. Thus, Philip became the pragmatic, logistical man who was needed to organize for every opportunity and challenge the disciples would face. And some writers have said that Philip may have been the man to stand in one of our churches and question everything the church tried to vote on or accomplish. He was what I would call, “a nuts and bolts” type of a fellow, but one that was so valuable to the group of disciples.

Philip was indeed the very practical guy who someone said must have already started counting the heads of the multitude when Jesus asked him about feeding the multitude as described in this incident in **John 6**. Please get the picture. There were ten to twenty thousand people there near Galilee that were ready to receive the Gospel, but in the mind of this practical servant, Philip, the need for food over rode the opportunity to share the Gospel. Listen to the words of John MacArthur. *“What a glorious occasion! Jesus is going to teach the crowd. What a tremendous opportunity for the Lord!—all pessimistic Philip could see was the impossibility of the situation.”*<sup>39</sup>

I have been a pastor for 50 years. Through this half-century of ministry, I have witnessed scores of people like Philip who just wanted to question whatever the situation was and the decisions that needed to be made. They never seemed to get much accomplished, but they always were there to



speak up when something was being discussed. Obviously at the time of this great potential miracle near the Sea of Galilee, “He had already figured out that four thousand barley cakes would never be enough to go around. His thoughts were pessimistic, analytical, and pragmatic—completely materialistic and earthbound”.<sup>40</sup>

“One of the supreme essentials of leadership is a sense of vision—and this is especially true for anyone whose Master is Christ. But Philip was obsessed with mundane matters and therefore overwhelmed by the impossibility of the immediate problem. He knew too much arithmetic to be adventurous. The reality of the raw facts clouded his faith. He was so obsessed with this temporal predicament that he was oblivious to the transcendental possibilities that lay in Jesus’ power. He was so enthralled with common-sense calculations that he didn’t see the opportunity the situation presented. He *should* have said, ‘Lord, if You want to feed them, feed them. I’m just going to stand back and watch how You do it. I know You can do it, Lord. You made wine at Cana and fed Your children manna in the wilderness. Do it. We will tell everyone to get in line, and You just make the food.’ That would have been the right response. But Philip was convinced it simply couldn’t be done. The limitless supernatural power of Christ had completely escaped his thinking.”<sup>41</sup>

We need to notice in this story that Andrew had more faith than Philip did because Andrew found the lad with two fishes and five barely loaves and brought him to Jesus. Thus, the multitude was fed because of the miracle that our Lord performed with the fish and loaves. Philip just missed out on really seeing his faith move a mountain because of his skepticism. We surely do need to learn from this story and realize that no mountain is too big for Jesus if we have the faith to believe He can move it.

### **Philip Brought Some Greeks To Jesus**

We now need to notice that Philip was a man who brought others to Jesus. We find this in **John 12**. The Bible tells us in this chapter that certain Greeks came to Philip and asked him to take them to Jesus. Bear in mind that Philip may have been a Hellenized Jew because the name Philip was a Greek name. It is obvious that because Philip was given to rules and practical things, he did not take the Greeks personally to Jesus, but instead, he took the Greeks to Andrew and requested that he introduce them to Jesus. Of course this

was Andrew's reason for living—to bring others to the Savior. So, Andrew took these Greeks to meet Jesus. Notice something here. Philip did not have the courage to take these Gentile Greeks straight to the Savior. He tried to sidestep the normal rules and go via Andrew to introduce these Greeks to the Lamb of God. In other words, Philip didn't have the boldness that Andrew did. But, Philip was courageous enough to bring people to Christ indirectly even if he could not take them himself. Thus we learn that God can use any believer as a witness, even if he can't win a person to Christ himself. It is safe to say that Jesus received the Greeks gladly and shared with them His love and message of salvation, because Jesus never turns down anyone who is sincere in seeking Him.

### **Philip's Foolish Statement In The Upper Room**

Philip had been with Jesus and the other disciples for three years. He had heard Jesus teach and preach. He had eaten many times with Jesus, and no doubt laughed with our Lord and the other apostles many times. If anyone should have known that Jesus was indeed God incarnate, in the flesh, surely Philip should have known. For all of those three years, Jesus had taught that God was His Father and that He was God's Son. Yet in the Upper Room when Thomas questioned Jesus about where He was going, and how could He be the way, Philip made a very foolish statement. In **John 14:8**, Philip said, ***"...Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."*** Jesus said unto Philip, ***"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?"*** **John 14:9**. In other words, Philip was saying, "Lord prove to me that you are really God". Yes Lord, show me who you really are, and we will believe you". Once again Philip was being that rational practical man that had to see evidence that Jesus was truly God. Philip just had trouble really believing unless it could be explained in human terms. So, Jesus had to rebuke him for his unbelief.

Very much like Philip, there are many today who demand that God prove Himself to them before they will believe in Him. Of course, to fail to believe without seeing proof is to need no faith or to exercise none. And without faith, it is impossible to know God and further, it is impossible to please God. So, Philip was a demander of proof, but God still used him mightily in His service. God relishes the thought of taking those who struggle with belief and doing mighty things with them. Philip was an example of one man like this, but God gloriously used him. "Tradition tells us that Philip was greatly used

in the spread of the early church and was among the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom. By most accounts he was put to death by stoning at Heliopolis, in Phrygia (Asia Minor), eight years after the martyrdom of James. Before his death, multitudes came to Christ under his preaching."<sup>42</sup>

#### **F. God Chose An Insensitive Friend. (Nathanael-Bartholomew) v.3b**

Our sixth disciple chosen by our Lord to be a missionary was Nathanael or Bartholomew as he was called in a few places in the Scripture. The name Nathanael means "God has given". Obviously God had chosen Nathanael to be a disciple and a servant of our Lord Jesus while He carried out his earthly ministry. According to **John 21:2**, Nathanael came from the town of Cana where Jesus performed His first miracle by turning the water into wine. It is obvious also that Nathanael was a dear friend of Philip because in **John 1:45**, we are told that Philip went to find Nathanael in order to bring him to Jesus. We can probably conclude that Philip and Nathanael were close friends like Andrew and Peter, and also like James and John. However, not a lot is known about Nathanael, but I will do my best to share enough from the Scriptures to give you some character traits which Nathanael demonstrated.

#### **A Love For The Scriptures**

Some scholars believe that Nathanael may have been Philip's Bible study friend, and they both seemed to be very familiar with the Law of Moses and the prophets. Pay attention to the following verse in **John 1:45**, "***Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.***" So seemingly, Philip and Nathanael had been studying the Old Testament and were very intelligent about the coming Messiah, and even the town where He would live. Therefore, we must conclude that both Philip and Nathanael loved the Scriptures, and thus they must have had a great faith in the God of the Scriptures.

May I say that any God-called preacher or missionary must indeed love the Scriptures and spend hours and hours studying this blessed Book? To do less would be to try to build a ministry in a church here in America or do work out on the mission field without the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding that is so desperately needed to have a fruitful and productive ministry. Yet today, it would seem that less and less attention is given to

God's Word while much time is spent on entertainment, recreation, and a shallow commitment to Christ and His Kingdom. It should be our prayer that God might raise up a new generation of preachers and missionaries that love the Bible and are willing to spend whatever time is necessary to become Biblical scholars who can exegete the Scriptures and then make them very practical to the people where they serve.

### **Nathanael Was A Man With A Sincere Heart.**

Nathanael was truly a man with a sincere and honest heart. In **John 1:47**, we find these words. ***"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"*** This verse tells us that Nathanael had a heart filled with no hypocrisy or deceit. Just try to imagine Jesus Christ making this statement about any man! What a tremendous attestation to Nathanael's credibility and sincerity! He was truly a man of integrity which is so needed today in the lives of pastors, preachers, and missionaries. I have already mentioned integrity earlier in this book, but folks, we live in an age when almost no one has personal integrity! And the thing that has literally devastated me over the past several years is that pastors and missionaries are some of the worst examples of people with integrity that I have ever met. Now please don't misunderstand, but what I am saying is that so many of God's servants profess integrity, and then deny it by the way they live or by the words they say. They just have the sinful tendency to say one thing with their tongues, and then don't carry out what they profess or promise. So, Nathanael was described by Jesus as having a sincere heart with no deception or guile. May God give us more people on the fields of service with this tremendous character trait.

### **Nathanael Was A Man With An Expectant Faith.**

When Jesus made the statement that Nathanael was a man with no guile in his heart, Nathanael responded with an eager or expectant faith. In **John 1:48**, we find these words: ***"Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."*** The very fact that Jesus knew the heart of Nathanael before they had met personally caused this newly chosen servant to actually question Who this man was. In other words, Nathanael wanted to discover more about this Man Who knew so much about him, even without meeting Him in person. Thus,

we see the eager or expectant faith that Nathanael demonstrated, and which obviously caused Nathanael to sincerely confess that Jesus was indeed the expected Messiah. Look at **verse 49, "Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."** This is truly the confession that every person coming to Christ must openly confess! And, before a person can truly follow Jesus as a true disciple, this person must indeed confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. So, Nathanael's expectant faith caused him to make the necessary confession that we all must make before we can genuinely serve Christ with a sincere heart.

Now, the application we must see in this trait that Nathanael demonstrated is that no person can ever be a genuine preacher, pastor, or missionary unless he really has confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Then, this person must live every day with this expectant faith so that he might bring others to this point in their lives. We evangelicals call this confession the act of salvation when we seriously repent of our sins and confess Jesus as our Master. And I need to say, that one of the greatest traits that any servant of God can have is to live with an expectant faith, because every God-called servant will need this faith to serve faithfully and also to believe God for the financial support that is needed to take the Gospel to the lost world. Before I close this thought, let me simply say that Nathanael probably had this expectant faith because he loved and studied the Scriptures on a regular basis. The Bible tells us, **"So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."** Romans 10:17.

### **Nathanael Was A Man With A Prejudice.**

Up to this point in our study of Nathanael, we have been discussing some of his positive character traits. However, we cannot complete talking about this somewhat unknown man without mentioning that, without a doubt, he was a very prejudiced man toward the people of Nazareth, Jesus' home town. Please read **John 1:46**. Here we find these words: **"And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."** This verse tells us that Nathanael's doubt that any good person could come from the town of Nazareth reveals his outright prejudice toward the people that lived in the home town of our Lord. Dr. John MacArthur tells us that Nathanael's prejudice toward the people of Nazareth "was not a rational or biblical

objection; it was based on sheer emotion and bigotry. It reveals what contempt Nathanael had for the whole town of Nazareth."<sup>43</sup>

Because of Nathanael's genuine prejudice, we can see that God would have had to really change his heart before He would be able to use him as a missionary. But, it also reveals how God takes pleasure in using the common, weak, and lowly things of this world to confound the wise and powerful. Personally, I believe that God relishes the thought of taking nobodies with no obvious promising futures and doing great things with them. He even calls people from some of the most despised locations and from some of the worst towns and cities on earth to get His Gospel out. John MacArthur also says, "It was inconceivable to Nathanael that the Messiah would come out of a tacky place like Nazareth."<sup>44</sup> Yet, we must be quick to see that although Nathanael was truly a prejudiced man, he was also one that was willing to be shown the truth immediately because in **John 1:49**, he quickly confessed Jesus to be the Messiah. Pay attention to these words. ***"Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."*** Nathanael's history of being faithful to study Old Testament prophecy made it easier for him to recognize the true Messiah once he had this encounter with Jesus. We too must spend much time in the blessed Word of God if we are going to see and believe the mighty works that Jesus wants to do through us, His preachers, teachers, and missionaries. We dare not allow any of our ethnic or racial prejudices to hinder us from being God's anointed missionaries to the world. The world has had enough of this prejudice down through history. May we never be found guilty of allowing our prejudices to hinder us from becoming the greatest servants of God we possibly can be.

Before leaving this point about prejudice, we need to understand the negative damage that prejudice does to the reception of the Gospel. John MacArthur says again, "Men's ears are closed to the gospel by many kinds of prejudice—racial prejudice, social prejudice, religious prejudice, and intellectual prejudice. Prejudice effectively caused the majority of the Jewish nation to remain deaf to the Messiah. Satan had stationed at the Ear-gate of Israel Mr. Prejudice and his band of deaf men."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, how dare we allow our unchristian prejudice to hinder us from becoming what God wants us to become, but even more so, that we should be an obstacle to the reception of the Gospel by thousands of people. The love of Christ transcends all of these prejudices, and we must make sure that we don't allow them to dwell

in our hearts and minds.

## **Final Thoughts About Nathanael**

As I stated earlier, very little is known about Nathanael. The brief description that I have tried to provide from the Scriptures is about all that we know of him. However, there is some speculation about Nathanael's ministry and death in history. "Early church records suggest that he ministered in Persia and India and took the Gospel as far as Armenia. There is no reliable record of how he died. One tradition says he was tied up in a sack and cast into the sea. Another tradition says he was crucified. By all accounts, he was martyred like all the apostles except John."<sup>46</sup>

"What we do know is that Nathanael was faithful to the end because he was faithful from the start. Everything he experienced with Christ and whatever he experienced after the birth of the New Testament church ultimately only made his faith stronger. And Nathanael, like other apostles, stands as proof that God can take the most common people, from the most insignificant places, and use them to His glory."<sup>47</sup>

Friends, please remember that we are discussing in this long chapter those people who are chosen to do missions. Surely after this brief study of Nathanael, we can again see that God takes those who are not known much in this world to carry His Gospel to a lost world. When this happens, we all can see the miracle of God's power and purpose. We must recognize that when God uses unknown people from secret places, then He always gets the glory for whatever is accomplished. May God call and send us many Nathanaels.

## **G. God Chose An Incredulous Friend. (Thomas) v. 3c**

As we continue our study of the people that God chooses to do His mission work, we come to the man named Thomas. The name Thomas, or Didymus as he is called in **John 11:16**, literally means "the twin". We know nothing about the other twin that may have been his brother or sister. Yet, from the meaning of his name, we can believe with some certainty that he had a twin at the time of his birth.

Not a tremendous amount of information is known about Thomas, but most

believers think of him as “Thomas the Doubter”, or “Thomas the Pessimist”. Because of the fact that Thomas was not present in the Upper Room when Jesus showed up to greet the disciples the first time after the resurrection, he vowed later that he would not believe that Jesus was indeed alive unless he could place his hand into the scars of Jesus’ hands and side. Please notice these next few verses and glean some truth about the character traits of Thomas. **John 20:26-29, “And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”** In other words, Thomas was very quick to doubt, but praise God, he was very quick to admit his wrong and confess Christ as the Lord.

### **Thomas Had Heroic Pessimism.**

Earlier in the **Gospel of John**, in **chapter eleven**, we find the pessimistic Thomas making a courageous statement. Let me encourage you to read the following verses. **John 11:14-16, “Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us go, that we may die with him.”** Did you get the truth of what God is trying to share with us about Thomas? Jesus was trying to tell all the disciples that His delay in getting to Bethany to minister to Mary and Martha until Lazarus had already died would turn out to be a good thing in the end. So, Jesus basically told them not to worry because Lazarus was merely sleeping. Then the other disciples responded to Jesus by telling Him that Lazarus was not just sleeping, but that he was dead. When Thomas heard that Lazarus was already dead, he made a tremendous statement that some would see as foolish, but I see as courageous. Thomas was just simply confessing that if it would be necessary to die for Jesus like Lazarus had just done four days before, that he would be willing to do it. Yet, we know that Lazarus died from a disease, but the impulsive commitment of Thomas was so commendable. Therefore, I think we could truly say that in spite of



Thomas' skepticism and doubt, he was still a courageous servant of God.

To gain further insight into this thought, read the following quotes from Dr. John MacArthur. "Now that is pessimistic, and that's typical for Thomas. But it is a heroic pessimism. He could see nothing but disaster ahead. He was convinced Jesus was heading straight for a stoning. But if that is what the Lord was determined to do, Thomas was grimly determined to go and die with Him. You have to admire his courage."<sup>48</sup>

"It is not easy to be a pessimist. It is a miserable way to live. An optimist might have said, 'Let's go; everything will work out. The Lord knows what He is doing. He says we won't stumble. We will be fine.' But the pessimist says, 'He is going to die, and we are going to die with Him.' Thomas at least had the courage to be loyal, even in the face of his pessimism. It is much easier for an optimist to be loyal. He always expects the best. It is hard for a pessimist to be loyal, because he is convinced the worst is going to happen. This is heroic pessimism. This is real courage."<sup>49</sup>

I think this would be a good time to share with you that in spite of Thomas' renowned pessimism, he has been considered by scores of people to have been a great missionary. "It is evident that Thomas, who as a disciple was pessimistic and filled with doubt, became a vigorous missionary. The weight of scholarship has grown so great, concerning his mission to Babylon, Persia and India, that it must be accepted as probable."<sup>50</sup>

Also, let me mention some additional thoughts about Thomas' missionary work. "The one great insight about Thomas himself, which comes to us from the history of Thomas in Babylonia and India, is that he was a fearless evangelist and a great builder of churches. Those people in the modern world who would accept Christianity but who would reject the *church* (i.e., assembly or local congregation) as the central human instrument in the strategy of God have divorced themselves from the apostolic tradition. Were the apostles to return to earth today, they would have little time for those who imagine there can be a churchless Christianity. Such 'Christianity', if we even dare call it that, is incapable of survival."<sup>51</sup>

"If we would have Christianity survive, our first loyalty must be to the One whom Thomas called, 'My Lord and my God,' and secondly to the only divinely ordained institution on earth, the local assembly or congregation of His

people. No one can estimate how many millions of Christians came to believe in Christ because of Thomas. They are beyond counting. The churches which Thomas founded in India have kept Christianity alive and extended the faith which survives there to this day."<sup>52</sup>

### **Thomas Was Truly Devoted To Christ.**

In spite of his doubt and pessimism, it is truly obvious to me that Thomas loved Jesus with all of his heart. This love is especially shown in the Bible in **John 14:1-6**. Please notice these verses carefully. ***"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*** This beautiful passage of Scripture reveals to us that Thomas and the other disciples had a fear that Jesus would leave them, and they would not know where He had gone. Jesus comforts their hearts and tells them that they should not be worried or troubled by His departure. The reason that they did not need to worry was because Jesus Himself was, and still is, the only way to heaven. Thus, we can see from Thomas' response that he had a deep love for Christ and wanted to be devoted to Him, wherever Jesus went.

Yes, Thomas may have been a doubter and skeptic about some things, but his true love and devotion made him a wonderful missionary for Christ as we have already discussed. Truthfully, I think that we could go so far as to say that Thomas was an example of strength to the rest of the apostles.

### **Thomas Was Faithful Until The End.**

We are not exactly sure why Thomas was so readily doubtful and pessimistic before he came to believe, but maybe it was because he had a melancholic temperament with which he had been born. If this were true, then any kind of trauma or personal rejection that came his way would have made him even more negative and skeptical. But from many ancient records, it seems

that Thomas was devoted to Christ until he died a martyr's death. John MacArthur says, "There is a considerable amount of ancient testimony that suggests Thomas carried the gospel as far as India. There is to this day a small hill near the airport in Chennai (Madras) India, where Thomas is said to have been buried. There are churches in south India whose roots are traceable to the beginning of the church age, and tradition says they were founded under the ministry of Thomas. The strongest traditions say he was martyred for his faith by being run through with a spear—a fitting form of martyrdom for one whose faith came of age when he saw the spear mark in his Master's side and for one who longed to be reunited with his Lord."<sup>53</sup>

So, my dear readers, we have now seen in God's selection of this seventh apostle, or disciple, that God still relishes the thought of taking ordinary nobodies and doing phenomenal things with them in His service and for His glory. He did this with Thomas, and He is still doing it in this dispensation of time as well. This study on Thomas just reminds me that God can take pessimistic and skeptical people and fine tune them to become stalwart saints in His service. May God choose and fine tune scores of missionaries for His service in this present time. The fields are truly white unto harvest, but the laborers are few!

#### **H. God Chose An Implicated Fellow. (Matthew) v. 3d**

Today in our study of the kind of people God chose to be His missionaries, we come to the man named Matthew. In **Matthew 10:3**, we are just simply told that "**Matthew the publican**" was chosen as one of the twelve disciples. I think it is rather significant that although Matthew himself had written this very text, he doesn't even mention anything about himself at all. The only other place that Matthew is mentioned in this, his own Gospel, is found in **Matthew 9:9**, where Jesus calls him away from his tax table to leave everything and follow Him. The wonderful thing is that Matthew immediately left everything to follow Jesus without argument, reluctance, reservation, or hesitation. Truly our world would probably have already been evangelized if every human being would have had the same attitude of surrender that Matthew did when Christ called him. Let's take a look at the tremendous change that God made in Matthew's life and how God used this insignificant, hated man to help the other disciples change their world for Jesus.

## **Matthew Would Have Been Considered A Notorious Sinner.**

I do want to mention that the word “implicated” which I have used to describe Matthew seems to be a very adequate word. The reason’s being is that almost all tax collectors during the days of Jesus were hated people because of their terribly corrupt behavior. They stole the people’s money while trying to please Rome. Implicated means that almost all people would have felt that Matthew was truly a bad guy, but of course, he had not been convicted in a court of law. Therefore, I will say that he was surely “implicated”.

One thing that we need to know is that in spite of the fact that we have very little information given about Matthew, we can surely assume that he was a wicked man just because of the reputation of all tax collectors in those days. Thus, we can surely assume, with much assurance, that Matthew was a notorious sinner because this was the typical conduct of publicans. Some have said that Matthew may have been more wicked than any of the other disciples, but of course this would be difficult to prove when we consider that Judas Iscariot was included in the group of disciples when he was for sure a devil. Yet, Matthew was an evil man who was dramatically changed by Jesus.

## **Matthew Was A Publican: A Despised Tax Collector!**

“Matthew was a tax collector—a publican—when Jesus called him. That is the *last* credential we might expect to see from a man who would become an apostle of Christ, a top leader in the church, and a preacher of the gospel. After all, tax collectors were the most despised people in Israel. They were hated and vilified by all of Jewish society. They were deemed lower than Herodians (Jews loyal to the Idumean dynasty of Herods) and more worthy of scorn than the occupying Roman soldiers. Publicans were men who had bought tax franchises from the Roman emperor and then extorted money from the people of Israel to feed the Roman coffers and to pad their own pockets. They often strong-armed money out of people with the use of thugs. Most were despicable, vile, unprincipled scoundrels.”<sup>54</sup>

## **Matthew Responded Immediately To The Call Of Jesus!**

Very little is said about Matthew’s call to follow the Lord, with the exception of **Matthew 9:9**. Please pay attention to these words, “***And as Jesus***

***passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.***" The place for this calling was probably just outside the gate of Capernaum where most tax collectors liked to station themselves. By doing this, as the people came in and out of this well-known city, it would have been much easier for them to take the money from the people. So, Matthew just simply walked away and began to follow Jesus.

Matthew's immediate response reveals several things to me. First, it is obvious that he had been paying attention to the ministry of Jesus, and no doubt, had been listening to His message as Jesus went in and out of Capernaum. Secondly, I believe his response reveals an empty heart that had been searching for something more than money to satisfy the longing of his soul. We might say that the message and ministry of Jesus had brought conviction to him. Thus, when Jesus came and extended this public invitation, he was more than ready to leave it all and follow Christ.

I think the call of Matthew was amazing. I say this because it took at least three times for God to call Peter, James, and John to get their undivided attention, whereas it only took one direct and personal call to get Matthew to forsake it all and follow Christ. Folks, I don't know what you think about this, but I sincerely believe this is the kind of response we need to be getting today from those God has called to the ministry and to become missionaries. After preaching in so many churches all around the world, I believe we have multitudes of people sitting in our churches that God called many years ago, but for whatever reason or excuse, they were not willing to pay the price to get to the fields to which God had called them. Therefore, we have a lot of preacher and missionary "should have beens" in our churches who are sitting there, frankly speaking, completely out of the will of God.

### **Matthew Had A Tremendous Burden For His Friends And Colleagues**

In **Matthew 9:10**, we find these words, ***"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down, with him and his disciples."*** Now read the next two verses, ***"And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, They that be whole need not a***

***physician, but they that are sick.” Matthew 9:11-12*** It is so obvious from these verses that just as soon as Matthew started following Jesus, he decided to gather as many of his friends and other tax collectors as he could, and bring them to his house to meet Him. I have no doubt that because of his job and the money he possessed, he probably had a very nice place. But now, Matthew was no longer interested in what he had for selfish motives, but his attention now turned to others who needed the same Jesus that he had found. In other words, it was now time to use whatever he had for the glory of God in an attempt to reach souls.

This would be a good time for me to say that I don't understand how people who say they got saved can then go on living for self and carry no burden for those around them. Yet, this is what is happening all over the world in our churches, but especially here in America. During my life time, I have never seen so many pastors and church leaders who absolutely show very little concern for the lost world that is perishing and going to hell at the rate of over 80,000 people every twenty-four hours, as I am seeing now. This leads me to believe that scores of these people are not yet truly saved, because if they were, they would have a burden like Matthew did. It is my prayer that God might break the hearts of scores of people for those who need Jesus!

### **Religious People Criticize But Don't Care.**

When Matthew became burdened about his friends and colleagues, that really needed Jesus, he invited them to his house to meet Him. Now we have a major problem. The problem was that Jesus had gone to meet with open sinners and no true prophet of God should have done this, according to the big religious people called the Pharisees. They looked down their stiff noses at all of these "sinners". They couldn't stand the thought that this new religious man named Jesus just disregarded all of their Jewish rules and laws and went to where the truly sin-sick were. I promise you that there are many places in the world today where we would find this same arrogant egotistical attitude in many churches because these so-called spiritual leaders can't stand the thought of spending time fellowshiping with low down terrible thieves, extortionists, and corrupt people like those that may have come to Matthew's house after he got saved.

May I tell you that I once experienced this attitude in a large church that I

pastored? Let me tell you this story briefly. In this highly respected church, there was a woman who had been the secretary for over 30 years. Truthfully, she controlled everything about the church. She determined what pastors would conduct the funerals and go to the hospitals. She made sure that only the "right people" could see me as the new pastor.

One day at the conclusion of a worship service, this feeble little old lady came up into the pulpit area to ask me if my wife and I might consider going with her and her husband out for a meal sometime in the near future. This couple was very poor. The husband carried a newspaper every morning, and the dear lady had had brain cancer which resulted in her looking very bad, even to the point of losing her hair. Because of their poverty, they would not have had any money to take us out to eat were it not for a gift card the husband had received at Christmas while carrying the paper one morning. That very moment, I told this dear lady that my wife and I would be happy to go with them for a meal at a buffet to be paid for by the gift card. Folks, the next day when I told my Pharisaical secretary to put the appointment on my calendar, she almost refused to do it. She demonstrated her total disdain for the couple. I must tell you that Jo Anne and I went with the couple to eat a meal and had a delightful time. But, this was the beginning of a difficult time with this dear secretary because we had embarrassed her by associating with this low caste couple. Thank God for the Matthews who never forget where they have come from, and they do their best to bring their friends and colleagues to the same Jesus that changed their lives.

This story of how Matthew immediately followed Jesus and then caused him to want to see his friends and colleagues saved has made such an impact on me as I write this book, that I want to give you the Scripture from Luke's account of this same event. Please notice the following verses: **Luke 5: 29-32, "And Levi [Matthew] made Him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."**

Obviously, this feast at Matthew's house was a huge event with scores of people's being there. I sense that Matthew was so excited about his

newfound faith in Jesus that he wanted everyone he knew to find what he had found. So, the people came, and they met Jesus first hand. We don't know how many of these people may have been saved, but we do know the proud arrogant attitude that the Pharisees had. And, I will tell you that this Pharisaical attitude makes me sick on my stomach. I suppose the reason I feel this way is because of the 40 years that I have worked in prisons all over the world. I assure you that I would never be working in prisons if I had the attitude of the Pharisees. There might just be one of you reading this book that thinks you are too good to get your hands dirty with these scoundrels and thugs. Well, if that is true, please know that we don't need you as a missionary. We need genuine people and not religious bigots; and this is bigotry in the real sense. We must resolve to go after the "down and out" as well as the "up and out". Just remember that the burden Matthew had after he came to Jesus is the same burden that we need to have if we are going to be great missionaries. We must always remember that we can never get people saved until we show them that they are lost. And, we never can get people well until they recognize they are sick. Thus, the religious elite will never see themselves in need of Jesus until they admit how spiritually sick they really are. I have one question for you. What kind of people do you enjoy spending time with? Those like the publicans or those like the Pharisees? Thank God for the way He changed Matthew and gave him a burden for others.

### **Why Did Matthew Bring The Sinners To His House?**

Have you ever stopped to think about why Matthew invited these publicans and other sinners to his house after he got saved and started following Jesus? I am sure that we could come up with many suppositions, but let me just mention a few. First, I believe Matthew invited them to the feast at his house because he wanted to start his mission work at home where he probably had done the most damage and influenced the most people wrongly. It only stands to reason that he was a very influential man with the other publicans and tax collectors. Maybe he was one of their corrupt leaders that caused many a young man to go down the wrong pathway. Or, maybe he had stolen so much money from the people that he needed a time to confess the wrong he had done and even beg their forgiveness for his negative influence on them. It may have been that he was the one who sold the Roman franchises to other tax collectors and he needed to make restitution for this terrible wrong. Do you remember what Zacchaeus did when he came



down from the sycamore tree and went with Jesus to his house? This story is found in **Luke 19:1-10**. Zacchaeus simply promised publicly that he would restore fourfold whatever he had taken unjustly. So, maybe this is why Matthew wanted these people there, to right his wrongs and start being a positive influence on them since he was now following Jesus.

“Why did Matthew invite tax gatherers and other lowlifes? Because they were the only kind of people he knew. They were the only ones who would associate with a man like Matthew. He didn’t know any of the social elite well enough to invite them to his house. He was a tax collector, and tax collectors were on the same social level as harlots (**Matthew 21:32**). For a Jewish man like Matthew to be a tax collector was even worse. His occupation made him a traitor to the nation, a social pariah, the rankest of the rank. He would also have been a religious outcast, forbidden to enter any synagogue.”<sup>55</sup>

Let me add one further thought about why Matthew brought all of his friends and colleagues to his house to meet Jesus. Read carefully the following words which Dr. John MacArthur wrote. “This is virtually all we know about Matthew: He knew the Old Testament, he believed in God, he looked for the Messiah, he dropped everything immediately when he met Jesus, and in the joy of his newfound relationship, he embraced the outcasts of his world and introduced them to Jesus. He became a man of quiet humility who loved the outcasts and gave no place to religious hypocrisy—a man of great faith and complete surrender to the lordship of Christ. He stands as a vivid reminder that the Lord often chooses the most despicable people of this world, redeems them, gives them new hearts, and uses them in remarkable ways.”<sup>56</sup>

When I read that last paragraph, I am encouraged, because we are told that God relishes the thought of taking lost sinners who are selfish and fleshly and changing them dramatically through the new birth. Then He makes them His humble servants who change the world through their missionary endeavors. This is what God did with Matthew and the other disciples, and this is what He is still doing today, if saved people will totally and completely leave everything this world has to offer and come follow Jesus. May God give us many more Matthews in these last days before the return of the King.

## Whatever Happened To Matthew?

After discussing Matthew for the past several pages, we should now be able to attest the fact that God really changed this wicked and secular man after he responded to the call of Jesus to come follow Him. Matthew went from a wicked self-centered man hooked on making money to a dynamic saved person with a heart for those around him. He went from a so-called traitor of the Jewish people to an avid believer in Jesus as the true Son of God, a descendant of David. Therefore, we have in Matthew another living example on how God takes ordinary, unknown people and changes them into dynamic servants of God. We definitely need an abundance of new missionaries following in the footsteps of Matthew.

So, whatever happened to this dear man called Matthew? Well, I have read many reports from scholars, both Catholics and Protestants, but no one seems to agree. Therefore, I will just say that it is believed by several historians that Matthew spent at least 15 years in Jerusalem until he was forced by persecution to go preach the Gospel to Gentile nations. His first trips to these nations were called missionary journeys. Tradition says that the Gentiles gave him a much better hearing because he related to a higher class of people. It is believed that he went to Persia, and then maybe later on to Ethiopia in North Africa. Some scholars, and a lot of traditionalists, believe that Matthew was later martyred in Ethiopia, or possibly even Egypt, by either being burned at the stake or by being stabbed in the back. We can't be sure about this. Some legends tell us that after he had preached and criticized the morals of the King of Ethiopia, a soldier in the king's army stabbed this servant of God, and he went home to heaven to be with the one Whom he had promised to follow. He did follow Jesus to his death and became a martyr for the faith like all of the other disciples with the exception of Judas Iscariot and John the beloved.

I would like to close this section on Matthew by saying that the world is a better place because of the great truth of the Gospel which Matthew gave to us in written form. And, I think that we should relish the fact that Matthew gave us the clearest Great Commission of all of the Gospel writers as is found in **Matthew 28:16-20**. May this wonderful missionary chosen by God be an example for us. May we like Matthew answer the call of God immediately when we receive it, then allow Jesus to save us and dramatically change us, and then get the kind of burden that Matthew had for those

around him and even the rest of the world. Surely, Jesus chose a great vessel unto honor for His missionary work.

### **I. God Chose An Insignificant Fellow (James the Less). v. 3e**

We now move on to the ninth apostle chosen by our Lord to become one of His original missionaries. According to the list of the apostles given in **Luke 6:14-16**, this next apostle was the man called James the son of Alphaeus. And, according to **Mark 2:14**, where the call of Matthew is given, Matthew is also listed as a son of Alphaeus. Therefore, we must conclude that Matthew the tax collector and James, the son of Alphaeus, were indeed brothers. Although very little is really known about Matthew, as I stated earlier in this book, even less is known about this James. However, in **Mark 15:40**, we are told that there was a lady named Mary who was the mother of James the Less, whom of course we are talking about. So, with these bits and pieces, we must conclude that this James the Less was the son of Alphaeus and his wife, Mary, and that he was the sibling/brother of Matthew, the tax collector. Beyond this, very little is known about this James, except he was named as one of the disciples.

The word “less”, referring to James, really means “younger” or “little” in the Greek New Testament. This provides the thought that “Little James” may have been a nickname because of his age or, possibly, his size. We do need to remember that several people are named James in the Bible. Therefore, there is much confusion about this James. I believe that he was indeed the son of Alphaeus and Mary, and he may have even been the cousin of Jesus. You are free to go back and study this for yourself, but I have come to this conclusion.

We do need to remember that in this book we have already discussed James the son of Zebedee who was the brother of John the Beloved and one that was also chosen to be a disciple by our Lord. We also know from the Book of Acts that there was a James, who was the half-brother of our Lord, who later became the pastor of the first church in Jerusalem. He became the second martyr of the church; Stephen’s of course being the first.

### **Very Little Is Known About Little James.**

To find very much information on this first disciple in the third group of four

is almost impossible. It was as if he suddenly appears on the scene, is chosen by Jesus to follow Him, and then almost nothing else is known about him. Obviously, he must have been a devout believer in God and, like Matthew, he was probably very familiar with the Old Testament and the promise of the Messiah. It would be almost impossible to be brought up in the same home with Matthew and not be exposed to the study of God's Word. We know that their home was indeed a learning institution because of the education that Matthew must have had to carry on the job of a tax collector. And, we know from the writing of the Book of Matthew, he believed strongly that Jesus was indeed the fulfillment of the Old Testament concerning the coming Messiah. Based upon this supposition, we must also suppose that "Little James" had the same kind of exposure to Old Testament truth that Matthew received. Therefore, I believe that this James was a small, maybe even much younger, man who responded to the call of God to follow Christ. No doubt he stayed faithful to Jesus until the day he was also martyred for the cause of the Gospel.

"Early church history is also mostly silent about this man named James. Some of the earliest legends about him confuse him with James the brother of our Lord. There is some evidence that James the Less took the Gospel to Syria and Persia. Accounts of his death differ. Some say he was stoned; others say he was beaten to death; still others say he was crucified like his Lord."<sup>57</sup> We for sure don't know how James truly died, but we can be sure that he loved Jesus and was faithful to Him unto the very end.

### **What Can We Learn From Little James?**

Because we don't know much about James the Less, it would seem that we might not be able to discern much about what kind of missionaries God chooses; however this is not true. We can learn first that even if we are not known by others, we are known by God. Therefore, if we feel so insignificant, God still has a plan for our lives. And because He does, it is our responsibility to listen for His call and then surrender to His will for our lives.

Secondly, it would be good for us to learn that God does take those who are not in the lime light to do mighty things for His glory. Therefore, we must not sit back and reason away our significance, because God can, and will, use us if we allow Him to do so. You see folks, the main thing for us to remember is that even if we are not known by men, God knows everything about us.

He will recognize us at the Judgment Seat of Christ for the good we have done. Of course, the final rewards will be given based upon our faithfulness, the motives we have demonstrated, and, of course, whether Jesus gets the glory for our service. So, we must always remember that God keeps the records and He will not forget one thing we have done. I say this also because I have met so many wonderful servants of God down through the years of my ministry that almost no one knew, yet they were doing a marvelous job of service in the most non-conspicuous way.

Therefore, we can surmise that James the Less was not loud and boisterous as Peter, James, the son of Zebedee, and even John the beloved apostle. But we must conclude that he was faithful, non-assuming, non-pretentious, and didn't need earthly glory because of an egocentric temperament. May I tell you that there is room for every kind of servant, if that servant is truly surrendered to Jesus Christ "lock stock and barrel"? May someone reading this book become another James the Less with total commitment without the need for personal glory. I would say that this kind of servant is just as important as those who are always in the forefront and in the lime light!

## **J. God Chose An Inconspicuous Fellow. (Thaddaeus) v. 3f**

Our next chosen vessel who was selected by Jesus to be one of his first missionaries is a man with three names. In our text of **Matthew 10:3**, we learn that one of his names is Lebbaeus and another name is Thaddaeus. In **Luke 6:16**, the third name for this tenth disciple is Judas, the son of James. Please notice what Dr. John MacArthur says about this man with three names. "Judas the son of James actually had three names. (Jerome referred to him as 'Trinomious'—the man with three names.) In **Matthew 10:3**, our text for this study, he is called 'Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.' *Judas* was probably the name given him at birth. *Lebbaeus* and *Thaddaeus* were essentially nicknames. *Thaddaeus* means 'breast child'—evoking the idea of a nursing baby. It almost has a derisive sound, like 'mama's boy.' Perhaps he was the youngest in the family, and therefore the baby among several siblings—specially cherished by his mother. His other name, *Lebbaeus*, is similar. It is from a Hebrew root that refers to the heart—literally 'heart child'."<sup>58</sup>

"Both names suggest he had a tender, childlike heart. It is interesting to think of such a gentle soul hanging around in the same group of four apostles

as Simon the Zealot. But the Lord can use both kinds. Zealots make great preachers. But so do tender-hearted, compassionate, gentle, sweet-spirited souls like Lebbaeus Thaddaeus. Together, they contribute to a very complex and intriguing group of twelve apostles. There's at least one of every imaginable personality." <sup>59</sup>

So my dear readers here was a little-known man, with three different names, that God called to be in the last group of four disciples to work with all of the other disciples.

In **Luke 6:16**, Luke describes this Judas as the brother of James. But in the Greek language the word is not the brother of James, but it is the "son of James". Therefore, most scholars believe that this man Judas, also named Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus, was the son of James the fisherman who was selected to the apostleship in the first four choices of our Lord. Thus, almost for sure, we can say that this Judas was the grandson of Zebedee and the nephew of the Apostle John. We learn from this, that he had been a fisherman and probably lived with his family in the Capernaum area north of the Sea of Galilee.

## **Some More Things To Know About Judas The Apostle**

Although the Bible doesn't give us a lot of information about this three-named apostle, we can derive some additional thoughts from one other passage of Scripture. We also have some supposed information from tradition and legends. We do know that this Judas, (Jude), which is the same name, but is not the same man who wrote the epistle Jude, which is near the end of the New Testament. That author Jude was probably the brother of our Lord Jesus Himself. Therefore, we can't discern a lot about this Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus, but we can take a look at this last passage of Scripture to discover something interesting about him.

"The New Testament records one incident involving this Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus. To see it, we return to the Apostle John's description of Jesus' Upper-Room Discourse. In **John 14:21**, Jesus says, '**He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.**' Then John adds, '**Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, how is it that you will manifest Yourself to us, and**

***not to the world?*** “Here we see the tender-hearted humility of this man. He doesn’t say anything brash or bold or overconfident. He doesn’t rebuke the Lord like Peter once did. His question is full of gentleness and meekness and devoid of any sort of pride. He couldn’t believe that Jesus would manifest Himself to this rag-tag group of eleven, and not to the whole world.”<sup>60</sup> And yet, isn’t it ironic that while Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus was wondering why Jesus would not show Himself to the entire world, Jesus was preparing Judas to be a part of His world mission program?

This one question from the lips of Thaddaeus reveals a tremendous amount about his love for not only Jesus, but also for the entire world. And folks, there are no greater traits that any missionary can have than to love Christ with his or her entire heart, and then have a love for the entire world that will be the motive for being a faithful missionary.

Listen to John MacArthur once more as he speaks about this Judas. “This was a pious, believing disciple. This was a man who loved his Lord and who felt the power of salvation in his own life. He was full of hope for the world, and in his own tender-hearted, childlike way he wanted to know why Jesus wasn’t going to make Himself known to everyone. He was obviously still hoping to see the kingdom come to earth. We certainly can’t fault him for that; that is how Jesus taught His disciples to pray (**Luke 11:2**).”<sup>61</sup>

## **What Happened To Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus?**

“Most of the early tradition regarding Lebbaeus Thaddaeus suggests that a few years after Pentecost, he took the gospel north, to Edessa, a royal city in Mesopotamia, in the region of Turkey today. There are numerous ancient accounts of how he healed the King of Edessa, a man named Abgar. In the fourth century, Eusebius the historian said the archives at Edessa (now destroyed) contained the full records of Thaddaeus's visit and the healing of Abgar.”<sup>62</sup>

Several other writers agree that after the King of Edema was healed by Jude through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jude was permitted to preach the Gospel in that area with thousands coming to Christ. Later on, we are told that he moved north into what was then Armenia and preached there with his friend, Simon Zealotes, stirring up much opposition. Later in the city of Suanir a huge mob started screaming at Jude and Simon because they

refused to worship some pagan deities. Jude turned to Simon and calmly said, "I see that the Lord is calling us." They then began to be pelted with stones, and tradition says, that a wild man ran with a spear and killed Jude, while Simon was sawed into pieces, because of the furry of the crowd. Just think about this! Jude Lebbaeus Thaddaeus, a mild-mannered, warm, and compassionate friend, died a gruesome death while demonstrating a calm spirit ready to meet the Savior. I think all of us need to know that the death of these two wonderful servants was probably in what is now Iran. Is it any wonder that these wicked people still oppose God and His servants? May God give us plenty more missionaries like Thaddaeus.

#### **K. God Chose An Idealist Fellow. (Simon The Canaanite) v. 4a**

The eleventh disciple that was chosen by our Lord is described in **Matthew 10:4**, as Simon the Canaanite. In other places, he was called Simon the Zealot, which implies that he may have been an insurrectionist in Palestine who had given himself to the goal of getting rid of the Roman dominion of the land of Israel. Of course, if he was a member of the group called Zealots, he was truly an idealist who was stubborn, radical, and one that was not to be denied. The Jewish Zealots were a radical political party working for the violent overthrow of Roman rule in Israel. Some people envisioned these Zealots as forerunners of the modern Palestinian Liberation Organization. We might compare these Zealots to modern terrorists. They were a widely feared outlaw political party. By all observations, they were ruthless characters who were hell-bent on getting rid of the Roman control of Israel. They probably feared no one and manufactured fear everywhere they went. Yet, Jesus saw fit to call this man named Simon the Zealot, or as Matthew called him, Simon the Canaanite.

Some people believe that because of the name, Simon the Canaanite, he was from the town of Cana in Galilee where Jesus performed His very first miracle. This could be true, but there is no Biblical or historical evidence to that effect. In fact, the word Canaanite comes from the Hebrew root word "qanna", which means "to be zealous". Thus, it would seem that he was chosen by Jesus probably so that He could dramatically change this fiery, hot-tempered man into an aggressive "pushing on" servant of God. It would seem to me that this is usually what God does. He calls men and women from different jobs and backgrounds and utilizes what they have learned in previous roles for His glory in a new place of service. Do you remember how



God called Moses from the backside of the desert as a shepherd to be the leader of the Israelites and to bring them from Egyptian bondage? So, in addition to the inconspicuous James the Less, Jesus calls a very red hot patriot for his country and one that was an extremist in whatever he did for his cause.

You see folks, it takes people from every background with every kind of temperament and attitude to get the work of world missions accomplished. And much to the chagrin of many modern mission leaders, if these people will stay out of the way, God will get His called servants to the right fields where their unique temperaments and character traits will be accepted and used mightily by our Lord. But it would seem that many of these mission agencies, like the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, feel that they are smarter than God. So, God calls His servant missionaries and places upon their hearts the right fields, but then, these so called mission experts move the missionaries to the “unreached people groups” where the leaders believe they should be. I have never seen any more arrogance among Christian leaders than I do in these failed attempts to know more than God!

### **Now, Back To Simon The Zealot!**

Please pay attention to the following paragraphs. “The Zealots were extremists in every sense. Like the Pharisees, they interpreted the law literally. Unlike the Pharisees (who were willing to compromise for political reasons), the Zealots were militant, violent outlaws. They believed only God Himself had the right to rule over the Jews. And therefore they believed they were doing God’s work by assassinating Roman soldiers, political leaders, and anyone else who opposed them. The Zealots were hoping for a Messiah who would lead them in overthrowing the Romans and restore the kingdom to Israel with its Solomonic glory. They were red-hot patriots, ready to die in an instant for what they believed in.”<sup>63</sup>

One big question I have as I think about the early disciples is, “Why did Jesus choose a rebel rousing man like Simon the Zealot to serve on His team?” Well, let me share with you again from John MacArthur. “It is amazing that Jesus would select a man like Simon to be an apostle. But he was a man of fierce loyalties, amazing passion, courage, and zeal. Simon had believed the truth and embraced Christ as his Lord. The fiery enthusiasm he once had for

Israel was now expressed in his devotion to Christ.”<sup>64</sup>

Folks, the astonishing truth to me is how Jesus called the man Simon and worked with him for three years, and then Simon was more committed to Christ than he had been to the Jewish nation’s trying to overthrow Roman rule. Let me just mention one unbelievable proof of Simon’s change. Before he met Jesus, he hated Rome and any person that represented Rome. But after he met Christ and Jesus changed his heart and soul, he became a loyal team member with Matthew who had stolen money from the Jews for Rome. If Simon had never been dramatically changed, he probably would have killed Matthew because of his loyalty to Rome. Don’t ever tell me that Jesus can’t change the heart of any person that will come to Him. He surely did Simon’s and He has millions of other servants’ as well.

### **Simon’s Death In Iran**

I told you in the discussion of Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus that it is believed strongly that Simon the Zealot and he were both killed on the same day in what is modern day Iran. It is believed that Judas was speared to death after being stoned, while Simon was sawed into pieces by an unruly mob. But before his death, it is believed by many scholars that Simon left Jerusalem after the great persecution to the early church and traveled down to North Africa. Some say that he went to Egypt, Libya, Spain, and then probably on to Britain where he preached the Gospel to a Roman-controlled England. While he was in Britain, a queen by the name of Boadicea, came against the Roman occupying forces with the threat of destroying all Romans. With the threat of turbulence and blood shed, it is believed that Simon went to the south of England, then back east to Armenia, and then was killed as a martyr.

### **The Dramatic Changes Jesus Makes In The Lives Of Those Who Follow Him**

We have now covered the calling of eleven disciples which Jesus chose to be His ambassadors as new missionaries for spreading the Gospel. All of these chosen men came from different backgrounds, although quite a few of them came from the same area of Galilee. The amazing thing about all of these men is how Jesus so wonderfully changed them from selfish, self-centered, and secular backgrounds to lives of total surrender and committed devotion

to Jesus, the One who called them. They were dramatically changed, and with their commitment, they dramatically changed the known world in the next thirty years. Please remember that it is believed all of these first eleven came from Galilee, whereas the selection of the twelfth one comes from another place outside of the Galilee region.

Now the practical application for us is that when Jesus, in His sovereignty as the Son of God, chooses us from whatever background, He can and will change us for His use and glory in this worldwide effort of winning people to Him. We don't need to be well-equipped to answer His call, but we do need to make ourselves available and demonstrate a teachable spirit so that we can become what He wants us to be. Surely, if God can take a zealous aggressive rebel like Simon the Zealot and change him into a dedicated servant that was willing to die for Him, He can change and equip us for the task of world missions. Now, get ready for the shock and the surprise of why Jesus called a lost man to be one of His disciples.

#### **L. God Chose An Illegitimate Fellow. (Judas Iscariot) v. 4b**

We now come to the last of the twelve disciples that is listed in our text in **Matthew 10**. In the last part of **verse 4**, we are given the name of Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. What a terrible way to be remembered! Just think about how this name has followed Judas Iscariot ever since the time that he betrayed the Savior all the way up until now. Would you agree with me that this would be a terrible legacy for any man to leave behind? I would for sure say that it would be a terrible thing. And yet, Jesus said in **Matthew 26: 24** the following words: ***"The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."*** Just imagine Jesus Christ's making the statement that because of Judas' upcoming betrayal, it would have been better for him to have never been born. Some scholars believe that this literally means it would have been better for Judas to have been aborted before his birth rather than to have been born, grow up, and betray the beloved Savior, then commit suicide and ultimately end up in hell. I remember vividly preaching a sermon on this text many years ago entitled, "The Tragedy Of Human Existence". I must tell you that it was one of the most God-blessed sermons I have ever preached during my 50 years of ministry. Just to think that a person would be birthed by his mother, grow up as a child, reach the age of accountability, and then

reject the Savior Who was so close (close enough to kiss Him) and betray Him into the hands of sinful men. Just try to imagine the guilt that Judas Iscariot experienced. But rather than repenting to Christ, he repented to those to whom he had sold Jesus, and then he died a gruesome death and plunged into the fires of hell.

## **Why Did Jesus Call Judas Iscariot To Be His Disciple?**

I must tell you that I cannot even fathom why the precious Son of God would have chosen Judas Iscariot to be the last disciple of the twelve, when we know through His omniscience, Jesus already knew the kind of man Judas would turn out to be. Why did Christ choose this man that He called the son of perdition in His great intercessory prayer? This prayer is found in **John 17**. Please notice in **verse 12** what Jesus said. ***"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."*** Jesus was saying that Judas Iscariot was the fulfillment of several Old Testament passages found in the Book of Psalms and in the Book of Zechariah. In other words, this wicked son of perdition came into the world to be an instrument in the hands of Satan to kill the Savior. But, this same Savior loved him enough to give him many chances to put his faith and trust in Jesus for at least three years. Let's take a look at some positive and also some negative points about why Jesus chose Judas Iscariot, even if His choice ended up in tragedy. The study of this man should open all of our eyes to what it means to say no to Jesus!

## **Some Positive Points About Why Jesus Chose Judas Iscariot**

### **Jesus Chose Judas Because Of God's Sovereignty!**

I would like to say that the first positive point I desire to make about Jesus' choice of Judas Iscariot is simply the Sovereignty of God. I am by no means a Calvinist, but what I mean by this statement is that God in His complete Sovereignty selected Judas simply because He knew him before he was ever born, just like He knew all of us before we were born. I believe that in God's Sovereignty He had planned, although Judas would betray Jesus that He would still give Judas ample time to repent before he died. I believe this because God knows all of us and what we will ultimately do with His message of grace and forgiveness, and He knows this through His foreknowledge. Yet,

God does not predestine a person to die and go to hell. It is not His will that any perish, but that all come to repentance. Thus, Jesus selected Judas Iscariot to be a disciple because He wanted to give him a chance to receive eternal life in spite of the dastardly deed he would do to betray the Savior.

### **Jesus Sincerely Desired For Judas To Get Saved!**

In line with what I have just said in the previous paragraph, I also believe that Jesus selected Judas Iscariot because He wanted to give him the opportunity to be saved. Just think about it! For three years Judas walked hand in hand and side by side with the Savior, but He had no saving faith in Christ. Like so many today, Judas only walked with Jesus as a big pretender, or hypocrite, as we see all around us in this late hour. I personally believe that no human being ever had such a great opportunity to come to Christ as Judas Iscariot did, and then walk away to hell. He ate with Jesus, slept with Jesus, prayed with Jesus, sung with Jesus, walked with Jesus, and was taught by Jesus. But, his damnable pride stood in his way of getting saved. This very well may have happened because he wanted an earthly kingdom that would overthrow Rome, just like Simon the Zealot wanted to begin with, but the difference was that Simon allowed Jesus to change him while Judas Iscariot said, "No."

### **Jesus Chose Judas Because He Had Great Potential.**

We now come to another point on why Jesus chose Judas as one of His disciples if He already knew that Judas was going to reject Him and ultimately turn out to betray Him. I believe Jesus chose him because Judas had great potential if he would have only responded to Christ in a positive way and gotten saved. You see, even if Christ did know through His sovereignty that Judas would ultimately reject and betray Him, he was given the freedom to make the right or wrong choice. Looking back, we do know he rejected Christ, but still he was given a choice because Jesus loved him.

When we study the life of Judas during those three years that he was involved personally with the other disciples in the ministry of our Lord, we do see that he had much potential. He was a man that seemed to have trustworthiness up to a point because our Lord and the other disciples designated him to handle the funds for the group. Obviously, he was good with the details of bookkeeping, although we discover in his ridicule of Mary,

who anointed the feet of Jesus with the alabaster box of ointment, that Judas had worldly motives. I believe that Judas was probably educated fairly well, or he could not have handled the math required in taking care of the money. And bear in mind, that he was the only disciple that did not come from Galilee where some of the other disciples were fishermen. So, I believe we can safely assume that Judas had several good qualities. He may have been a people person with much charisma toward others, as seems to be indicated even in his convincing the Jewish rulers that he could take them to Jesus. He did have a convincing personality which could have been so profitable to the Kingdom of God, if he would just have gotten saved and followed Jesus genuinely. Truly, Jesus knew that Judas had tremendous potential and He didn't want to see this potential go to waste, but Judas made the wrong choice, and thus lost it all; even his soul in hell.

Before moving on to some negative points about Judas, let me say that for over 50 years I have watched hundreds and hundreds of people with great potential profess Christ, maybe even follow Him for a while, and then throw all of this potential away because they were not willing to pay the price for total surrender and commitment to Jesus. I often think about what Moses felt when God took him up on Mount Pisgah just before he died and gave him a vision of the Promised Land. But within, Moses knew that he would never be able to go there because of his defiant disobedience of God when he was told to only speak to the rock. But, out of his anger, he smote the rock, which represented Christ, a second time. Just try to imagine how Moses felt when he just got a glimpse of what he could have had. Now stop and envision how terrible Judas must be while dwelling in hell for ever and ever, knowing fully well that for three years he walked side by side with Jesus Christ and yet, rejected Him and lost all of his potential for being in this world. It is my sincere prayer that every child of God will reach his or her potential by simply abandoning all to serve Jesus. The children of God will not die and go to hell, but they most assuredly will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and be rewarded according to their faithfulness, or lack thereof, while they were here on earth. I promise you that if Judas could speak to us today, he would resoundingly tell us not to make the wrong decision about surrendering to Jesus Christ and serving Him in order to reach our potential.

## **The Negative Points About Judas That Led To His Disaster!**

Now that we have looked at a few positive possibilities as to why Jesus

selected Judas as one of the disciples, we need to take a careful look at Judas' negative traits which contributed to his wasted life and ultimate end in hell. I will list a lot of things here, but I will not delineate on most of these very long.

I think we could see first that Judas was a great big religious pretender. He had religion, but not salvation. We can rightly say that he was a true phony or hypocrite as Jesus liked to call these religious pretenders. **Matthew 23**, reveals Jesus' true attitude toward these deceivers. These kind of people talk the talk, but they don't walk the walk. They do everything in their power to convince others that they are genuine, but eventually they are exposed for the phony charlatans that they really are. They, in fact, may cover up their empty hearts for many years, like Judas did for three years, but the day will come when they will be exposed, as was Judas. Because of his nice personality, Judas was able to deceive others for a good while, but eventually, the real Judas began to come out. Then, everyone knew that he was living a lie and professing something he did not possess. May I say that as a pastor I have seen this phoniness in scores of people who I have tried to pastor and work with, and honestly, I probably hate it just as much as Jesus did? I just wish that we could somehow show these people their phoniness before it is too late and they lose everything, and possibly end up in hell like Judas did. Judas had tremendous potential, but he lost everything because he was not genuine.

### **Judas Was A Terribly Selfish Man.**

Another negative trait of Judas Iscariot was his extremely selfish attitude. This was so vividly demonstrated on the occasion, which I mentioned earlier, when Mary Magdalene anointed Jesus' feet with an entire alabaster box of ointment. You can find this story in **Mark 14:1-9**. This dear lady, who had been forgiven and saved by Jesus, came to pour out her lavish love for Him in preparation for His upcoming death. We are told that the alabaster ointment may have cost her a year's wages, thus demonstrating her sincere love for the Savior. Yet, when she did this extremely sacrificial act, Judas, pretending to care for the poor and needy, chided her. He never cared for the poor and needy, but in fact, he was a selfish and greedy man who enjoyed very much being in control of the money. And, although I can't prove this, I believe that because Judas actually thought Jesus had come to set up an earthly Kingdom, he thought he might one day be something like the

Secretary of the Treasury. He was absolutely crazed by the thought that he might have a great position in Christ's new earthly Kingdom. He just didn't "get it" that Jesus had come to establish a spiritual Kingdom instead of one to overthrow the Roman rule in Israel during those days. So, because Judas had a superficial understanding of why Jesus had come, he missed out on not only a position, but he missed out on heaven, a position of service, and reaching his potential if he had become a true believer.

Therefore, the end of this discussion must come to a conclusion by recognizing the tragic end of Judas and his life potential. He fellowshiped with Jesus for over three years, kissed Him on the cheek in Gethsemane, and yet, walked away to commit a terrible suicide and plunge into hell. He not only died a very undignified death with his bowels hanging from his abdomen, but he went from a rope in the valley of Gehenna where the fires burned in the garbage dump every day, nonstop, straight into the real fires of hell. He is yet there today. God sovereignly gave Judas Iscariot the opportunity to be a great missionary in His new Kingdom work, but because he rejected Christ as his Savior and died lost, we are now discussing the legacy of his failed opportunities and lasting testimony which brings reproach upon his name forever. No one ever names one of their sons Judas Iscariot. Therefore, Judas' life was a total waste. But the lessons we learn from his cataclysmic end should warn every person on earth about living selfishly for self and Satan, instead of answering the call of God to become one of His great missionaries. It is my prayer that no one who ever reads this book will end up the way Judas did; so close to Jesus, but yet so far away. Just remember, only the genuine people who put their trust in Christ will ever be able to reach their potential in His Kingdom work as one of His missionaries. May God forbid that one person ever come so close to Jesus and walk away to hell!

### **The Moral Of Judas' Life!**

Before moving on in our study of the kind of missionaries God chooses, I want us to take a look at the moral of Judas' life to see what we can learn for our own lives. These moral lessons are given to us by Dr. John McArthur in the last chapter of his book, "Twelve Ordinary Men", pages 197-198. Let's take a look at these and let God speak to our hearts.

Lesson 1. Judas is a tragic example of lost opportunity.

Lesson 2. Judas is the epitome of wasted privilege.



Lesson 3. Judas is the classic illustration of how the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

Lesson 4. Judas exemplifies the ugliness and danger of spiritual betrayal.

Lesson 5. Judas is proof of the patient, forbearing goodness and loving-kindness of Christ.

Lesson 6. Judas demonstrates how the sovereign will of God cannot be thwarted by any means.

Lesson 7. Judas is a vivid demonstration of the deceitfulness and fruitlessness of hypocrisy.<sup>65</sup>

We have now come to the conclusion of our discussion of the first missionaries that God chose to send forth from Jerusalem to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in fulfillment of the Great Commission. Eleven of these first chosen turned out to be great servants of God as they went everywhere declaring the Good News of Jesus Christ. The only problem we have now in the selection of these disciples is, what did Jesus do to replace Judas Iscariot who turned out to be a devil, died a gruesome death, and plunged into hell? According to **Acts 1:15-26**, Peter recommended to the other disciples that they choose a replacement for Judas by casting lots between Joseph Barsabas and Matthias. Both of these men had been faithful to God and had been following the ministry of Jesus since it began in Galilee. However, after almost 60 years of studying the Word of God, I am totally convinced that Peter ran ahead of God in the selection of this new disciple. As a result of this, a good man was selected, but not the man God had planned for. I believe that man was the Apostle Paul, who would later get saved and surrender his life to following Christ, even after he had persecuted and killed so many early Christians.

#### **M. God Chose An Incredible Fellow (Paul The Apostle).**

It truly is hard for some people to accept, but it is very plain to me, that Peter and the other disciples got in too big of a hurry when they selected Matthias to take the place of Judas Iscariot. They just felt that since Judas was dead there had to be a replacement right away. So, they cast lots and chose Matthias, but we never hear another word about him in all of the Bible. We don't really know where he went in ministry or what happened to him.

Some secular and some religious historians have made speculation about him, but there is not any concrete evidence that he had a successful ministry. And truthfully, the casting of lots is only mentioned twice in the New Testament. Both of these instances turned out to be tragic. One was when Peter and the other disciples cast lots to choose Matthias, and the other was for the clothes of Jesus on the way to Calvary. It is true that God allowed the use of casting lots to determine His will in the Old Testament, but not after the Old Testament was complete. Therefore, just as Peter made a tragic mistake running ahead of God by using gambling, gambling in this day is totally wrong. If you want to read a good chapter on this, go to Dr. M.R. DeHaan's book on Jonah and read chapter four. You will see why gambling should not ever be used in this dispensation of time to try and discover the will of God. So, we must conclude that Peter's premature selection of Matthias ran ahead of God's will, because God had planned for Saul of Tarsus to become Paul the twelfth apostle or disciple.

Please pay attention to what Paul said in **I Corinthians 9:1-2**. ***"Am I not an apostle" Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.***" These two verses of Scripture tell us explicitly that Paul was an apostle chosen by God, and that he had seen Jesus Christ in His resurrection body, which was a requirement for all true apostles. Now the question is, "when did Paul see Jesus Christ?" In **II Corinthians 5:16**, we find these words, ***"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."*** This verse is debatable, but I believe Paul is saying here that there was a time before he got saved on the Damascus Road when he had literally seen Jesus in the flesh, probably at some point in Jerusalem. This may have happened after the resurrection of Christ because we are told in **I Corinthians 15:6**, ***"After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."*** Therefore my friends, I sincerely believe that God called Paul to be the Apostle that would take the place of the dead Judas Iscariot, and because He did, the world would never be the same again. Paul probably became the greatest servant of God that the world has ever known. And because I wrote my Master of Divinity degree thesis on Paul, I sincerely believe that no other follower of Christ has ever done more for Him than the Apostle Paul. Therefore, let's take a look at some of the wonderful character

traits of Paul the Apostle and see why God chose this faithful servant as one of His first missionaries.

### **Some Character Traits Of Paul The Apostle**

Having studied the life of Paul diligently for one entire year, when I worked on my Master's thesis, I could share with you scores of wonderful character traits of this dear servant of God. But for this time, let me just share some of my personal observations about Paul's character and cite the value of these traits in the life of any missionary.

First of all, we need to see that Paul was very persistent. This means that regardless of what he faced, he always kept pushing on for the glory of God. We can find this many times in the Book of Acts, and of course, many times in his epistles. He was faithfully dedicated to finishing his race as he mentioned in **Philippians 3:10-14**. We might say that in spite of so many problems and difficulties, Paul just kept pushing forward regardless of the cost.

The second thing I want to mention about Paul is that he was also very patient. Many times through his 30 plus years of ministry, he was faced with insurmountable problems, but he rarely showed much frustration. He just waited until God gave him the go-ahead or opened the doors. He did show some impatience in dealing with Barnabas over John's Mark's cowardly return from his first missionary journey, but, in time, He was ready to forgive John Mark for his mistake. We will talk a little more about this shortly. The story of this frustration in Paul's life can be found in **Acts 15**.

The third character trait that stands out in Paul's life is his motivation of genuine love. In **II Corinthians 5:14**, Paul said, "***For the love of Christ constraineth us;***" Paul was saying that the love of Christ in his heart motivated him, and others who were really sincere in Christ's service, to keep sharing the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul demonstrated great love for Jesus and for those whom Jesus loved. In **I Corinthians 13**, his text reveals the love of Christ, which continually motivated Paul to "keep on keeping on" with his ministry.

The fourth character trait I will mention is that Paul was very courageous. Oh yes, there were times that he demonstrated some fear, but overall, he

was a courageous man in his travels, in his preaching, in his testimony, and in his daily service for Jesus. He was not a man to be easily discouraged or deterred from his goal to share the Gospel message with as many lost people as possible. Paul had just simply come to live for one thing, and that was to preach and teach the truth wherever God opened the door. We can find his courage demonstrated over and over during his three missionary journeys and on his final trip to Rome. Paul had learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but courage was facing his fear and bringing it under the control of the Holy Spirit. We, too, must learn this from Paul's example!

The fifth trait of Paul was his genuine humility. Paul exemplified a true humble spirit, and truthfully, if anyone could have ever had a justifiable reason for pride, he could have. But, he did not conduct himself as an arrogant Pharisee or scribe, but as a humble servant. This does not mean that he cowered down to difficult situations, but he demonstrated his humility when it came to what he had accomplished. Paul was ever ready to give God the glory for everything that he was able to accomplish. This trait is so needed in the lives of every missionary.

I also want to mention that Paul the Apostle was characterized by an uncompromising spirit when it came to standing for what he believed and what he lived. This was his sixth character trait. This trait was especially demonstrated in **Acts 15**, when he had the spat with Barnabas about whether to take John Mark on the second missionary journey. Paul refused to back down, give in, or acquiesce to Barnabas' argument to take John Mark along. Paul just felt that this mission trip was too important to allow it to be possibly hindered by a young man who had turned back on the first missionary journey. So, Paul was adamantly against taking John Mark, and because of this uncompromising attitude, Barnabas took John Mark in another direction, and Paul took Silas with him.

The seventh character trait that I would point out about Paul is that he had a yielding spirit, when it was necessary, in order to win people to Christ. Truthfully, this was about the only area of his life that he would yield in, just simply because he wanted to see all people get saved. Pay attention to what he said in **I Corinthians 9:19-23**. ***"For though I be free from all men, yet I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might***

***gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.***" Paul might not give in when he was challenged about doctrine, but when it came to winning people to Christ, he would do what was necessary to identify with the potential converts. He also, had a yielded spirit when it came to his loyalty to Christ. Many times throughout his epistles, he talked about his total surrender to Jesus Christ. So, we first must yield to the Lordship of Christ, and then we must humble ourselves and yield our strong wills in order to identify with a potential convert who needs desperately to be saved. So, Paul was truly a yielding man!

The eighth trait that I would like to mention about Paul is that he was very ethical and a man of integrity. I will not list a particular Scripture here, but in many places in his life and ministry we can find where Paul would not compromise his Christian ethics or integrity. To him, this was very important because he did not want to negate or harm his testimony. And in spite of everything he went through and faced, I find no place where he failed in his ethics and lost his integrity or honesty. In other words, Paul was "the real deal"! He was not a phony or hypocrite, but instead was genuine "to the bone". He knew that to be dishonest in what he said or did would harm the cause of Christ. Therefore, he followed the narrow road of good ethics and integrity as he walked through this life. Every missionary should also be a man or woman of genuine Christian ethics and integrity. The fruitfulness of a person's ministry is dependent enormously upon ethical behavior and honest deportment.

The last character trait that I will mention which made Paul a great missionary was his forgiving spirit. There are many places in the Scriptures where this is revealed, but let me just mention two. First, there is the story of John Mark who turned back on Paul's first missionary journey. Paul was initially very upset with John Mark, but while Paul was in the Roman prison, just before he would be killed, he wrote to young Timothy and told him to bring Mark to see him for he would be profitable to Paul and the ministry. This is found in **II Timothy 4:11**. Please read this verse. ***"Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."*** Folks, do you see the forgiving spirit of Paul for

this man that had so disappointed him on the first journey? Now, Paul instructs Timothy to bring Mark to Rome so that he could minister to Paul and, no doubt, carry on part of Paul's ministry after he would be gone on to heaven. Then, the second place we see the forgiving spirit of Paul is found in **II Corinthians 2:4-8**. Please read these verses carefully as Paul tells the Corinthians to forgive the man who had been thrown out of the church at Paul's instructions because he had committed incest with his stepmother. Obviously the man had repented, and now Paul tells the church to forgive him. Notice the verses. ***"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him."*** Folks, do you feel the genuine love and forgiveness that Paul admonishes the Corinthian Christians to demonstrate toward this man who had sinned terribly, but now had repented? So, Paul shows his loving forgiveness toward this person. This too, should be the model for every Christian missionary, and yes, every believer, to practice on the mission field or here at home as well. We will never learn to show compassion and empathy unless we learn to forgive, even those who have been guilty of grave sins.

### **A Summary Of Paul's Character Traits**

Before closing this section on God's choice of Paul the Apostle as His replacement for Judas Iscariot, let me take just a moment and summarize these character traits so that we can look for these traits in the lives of those that we might choose to go to the mission fields. The following are the traits which Paul possessed. He was a persistent man, a patient man, a courageous servant of God, a humble or meek man, an uncompromising man when it was needed, a yielding servant of God and one who was yielding to others when it was necessary to see people saved, an ethical man (or a man of integrity), and a forgiving man. These wonderful traits made Paul the Apostle a tremendously fruitful servant of God and a successful missionary during his many years of service in the first century. Paul set an excellent

pattern for every would-be missionary to follow, and it would behoove every missionary candidate to dig deeply into the life of Paul and see what this great missionary was really like. I know of no one who could ever excel above the pattern that Paul set for missionary work and evangelism.

### **Jesus Chose Ordinary People To Carry Out His Great Commission!**

As we conclude this long second chapter on the kind of people that Jesus chose and then commissioned to be the first missionaries, it would seem very evident now that God does cherish the idea of taking little-known, ordinary people and using them mightily in His program called the Great Commission. During this second chapter, we have discussed in detail how He chose thirteen different and unusual people to be his first disciples; one of which was a lost man and ended up in hell because he rejected the Gospel message that he heard Jesus preach for over three years. This chapter ended with the selection of Paul the Apostle who became the Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul may not have walked and traveled with Jesus and the other disciples during those three years of special training and mentoring, but we do know that Paul walked and fellowshiped with Jesus for over 30 years, although Jesus had already gone back to heaven bodily. We also know that Paul, along with the other disciples, became a great missionary. If it were not for the selection of these God-changed and God-called servants, we would probably never have received the Gospel message and be saved today. Therefore, we owe much to these first missionaries. Hopefully, we will follow the selection process and the proper training for those of this generation, and for generations to come, in preparing them for the mission fields of the world. May we not fail or falter in this huge responsibility. But if we do, it won't be Jesus' fault because He definitely gave us a pattern to follow in choosing our missionaries to keep carrying out the Great Commission.

## Chapter Three

### “The Definite Place To Start Our Missions” vs. 5-6

I have been in the ministry a very long time; in fact over 50 years. And, I must tell you that I have never seen so much confusion in our churches all over the world about where we are to start doing missions. I hear some very fundamental pastors saying that we need to start at home in our own “Jerusalem” and not do much more. Then, I hear others say that we need to start with international missions somewhere else in the world in order to get our people more interested and excited about the work. There are those who start their mission program based upon the major emphasis of their particular denomination. Some people believe that evangelism is the place to start, while others say that we should start with humanitarian assistance and somewhat slip up on the blind side of people with the Gospel message so as to not embarrass them. On and on we could go trying to find the starting point for our mission programs, but why don’t we just stop and see where Jesus sent His first missionaries with the Gospel message. Now, I am aware that there might be some necessary difference in where we start based upon the culture where we live and the opportunities which God provides, but truthfully, the best place to start is where Jesus sends us.

It is so important that we don’t run ahead of Jesus in starting, and it surely is important that we don’t drag behind. If we are going to select missionaries by the plan that Jesus established for us, then we need to follow His plan for where we start. So, let’s take a look at these two verses of Scripture in order to get just a glimpse of where we should begin our mission effort.

#### **A. We must start our mission program by ruling out our personal preferences. v. 5**

Let me ask you to please read the following verse of Scripture: **Matthew 10:5 - “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:”** Jesus told these early disciples that He had laid out the plans for them. They were first to begin with the Jewish nation because they believed in the true God, Jehovah. And, because it was through the prophecy of the Old Testament prophets that the Messiah was



promised to Israel, the disciples were sent to them first because it would be much easier to reach them than it would be to reach the pagan Gentiles who were usually polytheistic in their beliefs. And also, because it was not yet time to take the Gospel message to the Gentiles in the plan of God, the disciples were to start at home with those who would be more familiar with the Old Testament Word of God and, no doubt, be more responsive to the new Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These Jewish people would have at least been familiar with the prophecy about the coming Messiah, and they would be more inclined to listen to the message about Jesus' being the Messiah.

There is much for us to learn about where we should start our mission work based upon where Jesus told His disciples to start. First, we need to start near home with people that are most familiar to us. This doesn't mean that they will be necessarily more attentive to our message, but these people should be similar to us in culture, ethnicity, personal knowledge of the Scriptures based upon what they have heard from the past generations, and the preaching of the present preachers and churches. They may not have put their personal faith in our Savior yet, but they will at least have been exposed to the truth of God found in the Word of God, if our communities have a generally traditional view of the Bible and its content.

Secondly, if we start sharing the Gospel with the people in our immediate area, then we should have a better understanding of the culture and traditions which we will be dealing with during our local mission efforts. The Jewish people were the best choice for presentation of the New Gospel because Jesus was born to a Jewish family and lived in, and with, the Jewish traditions and values. Therefore, Jesus told the disciples to start only with the Jewish people because the time was not yet ripe for the Gentiles to receive the Gospel.

The third thing that I would point out about Jesus' command to start with the Jewish community at home is that dealing with people we are more familiar with lessens the fear that people might have in trying to adjust and acclimate to a brand new culture and people with all of their idiosyncrasies and peculiarities. The last thing that a new missionary or evangelist needs as he or she starts their mission ministry is to have a terribly fearful experience and end up bewildered or scared for a long time to come. So, I believe it is best to start where we are until we become more confident of our abilities with the help of the Holy Spirit. Then we can move on to new

fields of opportunity and new territories. Of course, this thought reminds us that no person should ever try to be a personal witness, a personal evangelist, or a missionary until he or she has had some proper training. And, this training should not be a short-cut experience. It should be one that adequately prepares the person to go into the mission field with confidence, assurance, and a good understanding of what will be required to win people to Christ in the field where God sends them. I say this because I have noticed over the past few years, that a lot of people who say they have been called by God to the mission field try so hard to short-cut their training and go to the field unprepared and prematurely. This may be especially true where the field is very difficult. And, if this ends up happening, the inexperienced missionary will probably get discouraged, fearful, or so uncomfortable that they don't stay on the field very long until they come back home. I have even seen this happen with some of our Gateway International Missions people. So, we must come to the conclusion that we will start at home or nearby until we get prepared for another field that will have a tendency to really challenge us and get us "out of our box" and into a new area with confidence and courage.

I want to stop here long enough to say that I really have a problem with people who choose their mission field just based upon the choices of some mission organization or even a local church. I sincerely believe that it is time for us to get back to allowing God Himself to send us to the fields where He wants us to go. We should not allow our personal preferences or the preferences of mission organizations alone to determine our field of service. This of course should be done as we faithfully serve Christ where we are, continue to seek His face and will to make the right choice, and be willing to put personal preferences out of the way. I say this because over the past many years of my life, I have seen good missionaries go out to the fields where they are sure God has called them, and their supervisors or directors decide to move them to another field and totally disregard the call of God on that person's life. This has really been true with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention over the past 20-25 years. I believe it is a slap in the face of almighty God to move dear missionaries from the Philippines to China just because someone sitting in the home office believes that is where they need to be at the present time. Poor God! He doesn't know where the missionaries are really needed, or maybe He even made a bad mistake when He sent a missionary family to Brazil where

thousands were getting saved, and then the President of the International Mission Board knows for sure that God really meant for them to be in Indonesia winning two people a year from the Muslim faith instead of winning thousands to Christ from Catholicism down in South America. If you sense some sarcasm, you are exactly right! I believe this kind of foolish practice is helping to kill modern mission activity and world evangelism.

So, we must start our mission work by ruling out where we, or others, would choose for us to go. We must start faithfully at home, until God decides to send us to greater opportunities and challenges. Mission organizations must stop trying to play God in the call to missions. Every missionary must go wherever Jesus sends him or her after starting at home faithfully until he or she is prepared to go farther for the Lord. Bigger opportunities will not come our way unless we are found faithful where we start. And by the way, I am so tired of people that go to Africa with one of our teams, and while they are there they just win scores of people to Christ, and then, they come back home and don't ever go on outreach visitation or try to win people to Christ back here. Something seems to be wrong with this kind of persons' motives for going on mission trips. Maybe they just want to look good and come home to tell the story about how God used them on the trip. We must be careful with this type of mission activity.

## **B. We must start our mission program by ruling in His preferences. v.6**

In **verse 6 of this chapter**, Jesus tells His disciples where they are to start their mission work. In **verse 5**, He had told them they were not to start with the Gentiles or any city of the Samaritans. Of course the Gentiles were considered to be dogs by the Jews, and the Samaritans were considered half-breeds. We do know that the Samaritans came from the intermarrying of the Jews with pagan women during the Babylonian Captivity. So truthfully, they were half-breeds. It was not that Jesus didn't love them, but for reasons which we have already covered, the disciples were instructed not to start with these pagan Gentiles. According to this **verse 6**, they were to start their mission work with the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But you might say, "Why did Jesus just send the disciples to the lost sheep of Israel to begin with?" The answer to that is in **Genesis 12**, where God made a covenant relationship with Abraham. This covenant had to be

established with Israel through the Messiah before the Gospel of the Kingdom of God could be proclaimed to the Gentiles. Thus, Jesus restricts the first preaching of the Kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel. This was truly God's plan to take the good news of the Kingdom to His chosen nation first, but now that that was accomplished, it is time for us to take the Gospel to the entire world. So in order to do this, we must have on our hearts what Jesus has on His; the souls of men, women, boys, and girls regardless of their race, ethnicity, class, or nationality. We have been given the Great Commission along with the early disciples. Therefore, Jesus' preferences should be our preferences.

Before moving on to our next point, I would like to say that for over 40 years I missed something in **Acts 1:8**, which clearly revealed the place where all mission efforts should begin. The verse says, ***"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."*** Jesus told His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, after this happened, they were to take the Gospel "both" to four different places. I don't know whether you have ever seen this before, but both is not four! So, what was Jesus saying to His disciples and to us as well? He was saying that we, as God's servants, should take the Gospel to our home area of Jerusalem and to the rest of the entire world all at the same time. In other words, it is not that we should take the Gospel to one area as opposed to another one, but that we are to take the message of salvation to all of the world, all at the same time. Therefore, to share Christ with only one or two places in the world is to disobey our Lord who told us to include the entire world as a part of our entire mission program. So today, I am appealing to you to get involved by starting at home and then taking the Good News to all of the earth, all at the same time. This is truly the Great Commission, and it is still just as great as it ever has been. Now that we know where to start, we must get busy proclaiming the Gospel because time is running out, and Jesus is coming again soon.

## **Chapter Four**

### **“We Must Understand The Definite Task As We Do Missions” vs. 7-8**

It seems to me that much of the confusion in the world of Christian missions today should never be. Why? Because Jesus gave His early disciples the tasks they were to be doing as they were sent forth from Jerusalem to fulfill the Great Commission. Therefore, why should we be struggling with what we should be doing and where the main emphasis should be as we answer the call to world missions? The command that Jesus gave to the disciples was clear and simple. They were to go with the right message and they were to carry out the right ministry. And may I say, that they had to be careful not to be steered away from that message and that ministry. My question again is, “Why do we try to make so complex what we should be doing in our mission efforts, if Jesus’ Great Commission was so plain?” So, before getting into the message and the ministry of our mission tasks, let me give a warning to every church, every para-mission organization, and to every would-be successful missionary.

#### **We Must Avoid “Mission Drift”!**

Back in 2015, I purchased a book entitled, “Mission Drift”, written by Peter Greer and Chris Horst, and published by Bethany House Publishers. I read this book very carefully. I must say that I agree wholeheartedly with these authors about the content of this book. It talks about the propensity of many churches and mission ministries to start out with a major emphasis upon evangelism and winning people to Christ, and then, because of the desire or need for funds, these churches and organizations move away from how they were originally founded. Many examples of these churches and organizations are listed in the book, but I just want to say that I truly agree with the thesis of this book because I have seen this happen for numbers of years as I have worked in Africa and other countries. Also, I have seen numbers of churches that have started with a full-fledged effort to win people to Jesus, and then moved away to a ministry with a maintenance mentality or to a mission of humanitarian aid instead of keeping “the main thing the main thing”; that of course is winning people to Christ. The

tendency to have “mission drift” in any church or ministry is very tempting due to the need for so much support to keep the work going. All we have to do to really see this is take a look at the many colleges and universities that were started many years ago here in America as training centers for preachers and missionaries, only to move away from their primary purpose in order to get special financial grants and investments. Today, many of these institutions are nothing more than liberal think tanks that are destroying our society by the promotion of non-biblical values and immoral living. We will just never know the extent of the damage that has been done to America by the administrations and professors in these colleges and universities, just because they allowed their mission to drift with the winds of financial gain. Also, scores of churches that used to be on fire winning multitudes to Jesus are now dying because their emphasis has changed from evangelism to maintaining the numbers that they have or, just making sure that the buildings are kept up, the staff gets paid, and the in-church programs are promoted. This happens many times just because a new pastor comes in with a major push for discipleship as opposed to evangelism, and the mission program is changed from soul winning to humanitarian disaster relief work. Truthfully folks, this shift, or drift, to disaster relief is not a bad thing, but it is usually a save-face operation to keep the dying church from looking bad in the denomination or in the community where it is located. And, having studied the histories of dying churches and denominations through my many years of ministry, this major emphasis upon do-good service is usually the dying death rattles of a church or denomination. These people feel that we must have some victories to show the people if we are going to get them to keep giving money to the church or denomination. Therefore, let me sound a loud warning to all of our evangelical churches to stop this “mission drift” and get back to the task that Jesus gave His early disciples, and to us as well, to take the Gospel message to the entire world. Now, let’s look at that task which Jesus has given to us and make sure that we obey Him in our efforts.

#### **I. Notice the message we are to preach as we do missions. v. 7**

In **verse 7** of our text, Jesus told His disciples that they were to go forth to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of heaven because the time for the Kingdom had come. They were instructed to go forth with courage and declare that Jesus had come to introduce the new Kingdom to Israel, which truthfully would not have a literal physical fulfillment, but that it would be a

spiritual Kingdom which all men, both Jew and Gentile, would eventually be offered. The message these disciples was to proclaim was to be delivered so that men could be saved and then be a part of God's Kingdom while here on earth waiting for their ultimate entrance into heaven. Of course, I do know that ultra-dispensationalists don't believe that the Kingdom of heaven was for our present dispensation, but I do. And, I believe that each of us as born again children of God can be a vital part of this Kingdom now, and also to help enlarge this Kingdom by the proclamation of the Gospel during the time that we have here on earth. In other words, the Great Commission was not just for the early disciples as some men believe, but it is for every child of God to help take the Good News unto the entire lost world.

**A. The message we are to preach is a message with boldness. v. 7a**

In **Acts 4:13**, we find these words, ***"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."*** When the first persecution of the early disciples started in the Book of Acts, Peter and John stood with boldness and proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ, and that the lame man who had been made to walk again was healed by this Jesus. Of course, there was some sarcasm toward them because the people called them unlearned and ignorant. But, we know from our earlier discussion in this book that these disciples were not as ignorant and unlearned as many assumed, but they were men who had learned from their experience as commercial fishermen in Galilee. Yet, here in this passage of Acts, we find these men carrying out the task Jesus had given them with boldness. In other words, they declared the message of the Gospel with the authority which Jesus had given to them. And remember, here in Acts, the Holy Spirit had already been given to the early church, and so their boldness and power came from their call and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

So, our task as we do missions is to proclaim the message of the Gospel with the authority and boldness which only God's Holy Spirit can give us. We are not to fear or be intimidated by the task that is before us, but we are to preach the message of salvation and redemption to a lost world and invite everyone to enter the Kingdom of God. As we carry out this task, we are to do it with the love of Jesus Christ and to proclaim the simplicity of the Good News so that men, women, boys, and girls can be saved. And, we must

go to where Jesus opens the doors. But, we are not to allow our boldness to try to knock down closed doors. We are to preach the right message to the people where God has opened the doors, and when He no longer wants us there, then He will open doors elsewhere. The message is plain! We must share the message of God's amazing grace with everyone wherever God might send us. We must not run from the call like Jonah did when God called him and tried to send him to Nineveh.

## **B. The message we are to preach is about the brevity of time. v. 7b**

In the last part of **verse 7**, Jesus told His disciples that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. This message alone told the disciples that time was short and whatever they were going to do to get the Gospel of the Kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel needed to be done immediately. We need to understand this same message almost 2,000 years after Christ gave the Great Commission. Time is surely running out, and He is soon coming again. Therefore, we must busy ourselves about getting the Gospel to the lost world. We cannot, and we must not, delay with the message of salvation because the only hope that mankind has is in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. All of the other religions of the world cannot provide the way to heaven. Only Christ can do this! Do you remember what Jesus told Thomas in **John 14:6**, when he said the following, **"....I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** If there is any other way to heaven besides our Lord Jesus, then this verse is a lie and Jesus is a liar. But, we emphatically know that this is not true. So, as we assume the responsibility to take the Gospel to the lost world just before the imminent return of our Lord, we must go knowing fully well that the message we have is the only hope for all mankind. So, because of the brevity of time, we must not fail or "fumble the ball" in this task of sharing the Gospel message.

## **II. Notice the ministry we are to practice as we do missions. v. 8**

As we look into **verse 8**, we immediately see that as Jesus was sending His disciples out to the task of missions, they were to start with the power that God gave them to do unbelievable miracles. This was to affirm the message of the Kingdom which these preachers were to preach. These miracles were not for show, or just to draw attention to the new Gospel that they were proclaiming. These miracles were to give credibility to their message because



of the religious skepticism of the Scribes, the Pharisees, and others who had never been shown the truth of the Gospel. It was now time for God to “place new wine in old wine skins”; this being the Gospel of the new covenant which was to fulfill the law of the Old Testament. Therefore, the miracles were given just for the transitional time between the Old and New Testaments, and not for every missionary to try to perform for the rest of their lives and ministry. I say this because of the scores of religious pretenders and charlatans who “snooker in” thousands of people promising them that every sick person will be healed and every demon possessed person will be set free. When God completed the final chapter of the Bible, His Divine and Holy Word, all that was, and still is, necessary is for us to believe in the authority and inerrancy of the Blessed Book. Therefore, do I believe God can perform miracles yet today? Why, of course I do! But, I also know that we don’t need miracles to give authenticity to the Word of God. All we need is to believe that when God speaks in this dispensation, He speaks through His Word. Yet, I do want us to take a closer look at the miracles the disciples were given the power to perform to see how this relates to the missionary task for us today.

#### **A. It should be a ministry to those who are sick. v. 8a**

Yes, God does heal! He heals through doctors, nurses, medical technology, and medicine. He also heals miraculously, because all healing comes from God, just like every salvation experience is of God, and not man. Therefore, we learn from the first part of this verse that we, as God’s servants, should include in our mission task the ministry of reaching out to the physically sick as well as sharing the Gospel message. Ministering to the sick should never be our primary task, but it should only be a means to get to the heart of suffering people in order to share with these patients an even greater message, that’s being the complete healing of the soul by the experience of salvation. Therefore, ministering to the sick should only be a secondary effort by which we share the love of Jesus with those who are sick and suffering. This is especially important for those who might be approaching imminent death because of their diseases.

May I say that through Gateway International Missions, we have literally spent thousands and thousands of dollars in doing medical clinics in Africa, providing medicine to those who cannot afford it? We have reached way out to those who are suffering so much. But, we have never allowed “mission

drift” to get us sidetracked from the main purpose, the task of trying to win people to Christ.

#### **B. It should be a ministry to those who are secluded. v. 8b**

The second statement in this verse tells us that Jesus told the disciples to minister to those who had leprosy. Of course, for a person with leprosy to be healed from this dreadful disease was truly a great miracle of affirmation to attest the authenticity of the message they were to preach. And, because the leper was an outcast from society and usually was placed outside the gates of the city in leper camps or colonies, there is the implication that our mission ministries should be to the isolated, the secluded, and the lonely. In other words, it just seems that the outcasts who no one else wants to have contact with, are the kind of people that Jesus wanted to minister to. This should be our pattern for service in our mission work.

As we are looking for people to share the Gospel message with, we should be finding those who are all alone and forsaken by their own families, their friends, their work colleagues, and even their church people. We should make sure that we reach out to the lower classes, the rejected, the poor, those in prison, and those for whom no one else cares. Please notice what Jesus said in the synagogue in Nazareth as He was starting His ministry. **Luke 4:18-19, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”** These words from the lips of our Savior were a partial quote from **Isaiah 61:1-2**. Jesus was sharing them with His followers in Nazareth and telling the religious crowd why He had come. In our text here in **Matthew 10**, Jesus was just reconfirming His ministry purpose to His disciples so that their new task would be the same task He came to carry out before He died on the cross. We will never go wrong ministering to those whom other people have neglected.

#### **C. It should be a ministry to those who are silent. v. 8c**

In the next part of this **verse 8**, Jesus tells His disciples that they should go

forth and raise the dead from the graves. Of course, we know once again that He is talking about another form of miracles that needed to be carried out to prove to their listeners that the new message of salvation was truly genuine and authentic. And, there are several examples in the New Testament where the disciples did raise people from the dead. But the most important resurrection was, and still is, when God raises a lost man or women from spiritual death by providing eternal life through the Gospel message. Do you remember what Paul said in **Ephesians 2:1**, where we find these words? ***"And you hath he quickened [resurrected], who were dead in trespasses and sins;"*** In other words, people who have never been saved are spiritually dead, and they must have the new birth to bring them to life again in Christ. Thus, we need to realize that although we are not seeing the transitional physical resurrections from the dead today to confirm the Gospel message, better still, we are able witnesses of those who get saved and experience their new life in Christ. So, our task is to go to those wherever God might lead us and open doors, and tell these spiritually dead people about the new life found only in and through Jesus Christ. I would like to encourage all of us once more to "get on our hearts and minds what Jesus has on His"; the souls of men, women, boys, and girls.

#### **D. It should be a ministry to those who are Satanic. v. 8d**

Now we come to the last admonition which Jesus gave to His disciples as He commissioned them to take the Gospel to their mission fields. He had told them to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead. All of these were sign gifts which they were to use to give authenticity to their message. The last thing He mentions here in **verse 8** is that they were to go and cast out devils. This, my friends, was a big challenge for the disciples. They would be in hand to hand combat with Satan, and the only way they could possibly win would be through the divine power of the Holy Spirit. So, they were commanded to go through the power of the Spirit, but sad to say, it wasn't very long until the disciples came before Jesus and confessed that they could not deliver a man from the power of Satan. Please pay close attention to the next few verses found in **Matthew 17:14-21**. ***"And when they were come to the multitude there came to Him a certain man, kneeling down to Him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered***

***and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."***

Now, let's get the complete picture. Jesus had commissioned His disciples to go out into their mission fields, confront Satan, and deliver those who were demon possessed. In this **chapter seventeen**, the disciples had just been on the Mount of Transfiguration and witnessed Christ in all of His glory. Then, they came down to the bottom of the mountain and began to carry on their ministry. Here came a very distraught father who had a demon possessed son. The disciples had just tried to cast this demon out, but obviously because of a lack of faith, they were not successful. So, the father proceeded to take his son to Jesus. The first thing Jesus did was to rebuke His followers for their lack of power. The second thing He did was to rebuke the demon inside of the son and demand that he leave the boy. The boy was delivered and completely set free. After this, the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him why they could not cast out the demon. Jesus told them because of their unbelief, they didn't have enough genuine faith to overcome the devil. It is a shocking thing to think about, but these powerless disciples were unbelieving believers! Now isn't that a paradox! Yet, the disciples who indeed did believe in Christ for their salvation, with the exception of Judas, did not believe strongly enough to set the young man free from the power of Satan. There is no question that the disciples had probably taken for granted the seriousness of dealing with the devil in these encounters. What a tremendous challenge they had on their new mission fields, even before the Great Commission was given.

The lesson we learn from the last part of this verse is that Christ has commanded us to go to our mission fields and be so full of His Holy Spirit and faith that we can be victorious over Satan and all of his demons. We haven't been given the responsibility of delivering demon possessed people just for signs to authenticate the Gospel message, but we have been given the power

and authority to confront Satan and his cohorts with the power of the Gospel and watch Jesus deliver the demon controlled people once and for all. You see folks, it is the power of the Gospel to set people free from the power and influence of the devil, and it is our privilege to watch these evil people be set free, in and through the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. We must learn that we can't be victorious over Satan without the necessity of prayer and fasting. But when we do avail ourselves of these special requirements, God will give us the joy of seeing many people delivered by the power of the Gospel message.

There is another lesson that we must learn. That lesson is that when we go forth to do missions, we might as well expect diabolical defiance and rebellion from the devil because he doesn't want people to get saved and be delivered from under his influence. Yet, this is why God calls us to go with the Good News and present the truth of the Gospel message in the power of the Holy Spirit, because this is the only hope that anyone has to overcome demonic aggression and even demonic possession. Therefore, we should not be at all intimidated by our enemy because Christ has already defeated him on the cross, and He has given us His power to be victorious over this terrible enemy. Having just made my 68th trip to Africa a few weeks back, I can readily attest the fact that Satan is still trying to fight everything we do to share the Gospel. He did this on our last trip, and he has faithfully done it for the past 31 years that we have been working in Africa. Truthfully, I must testify that I long for the day when he is cast into the Lake of Fire along with his colleagues, the Antichrist and the False Prophet who will be over the world church. What a glorious day of celebration that will be.

Before we move on to **verse 9**, let me make one more observation about the last few words of **verse 8**. Jesus closes this verse by saying to His disciples, "***freely you have received, [therefore] freely give.***" What Jesus is telling these first missionaries is that since they had been so freely blessed with the power to do mighty miracles for the Kingdom of God, therefore, they must take everything they had been given and redirect it to others. If we have been given a ministry, then we are to minister to others. If we have been given a service from our Lord, then we are to freely serve others. If we have been given money, then we should use it to bless others with the Good News of the Gospel. And, we are not to charge for our services, although God does expect His people to take care of His servants. Therefore,

it is all about others! We are to make others the main emphasis as we carry out our task as missionaries.

## **Chapter Five**

### **“The Provisions We Must Provide For Ourselves As We Do Missions” vs. 9-10**

As we follow the next step in **“God’s Biblical Blueprint For Missions”**, we come to a couple of brief verses where Jesus told His disciples what kind of provisions they were to take with them on their first missionary journey. Of course, we must remember that because this was the first mission adventure for the disciples without the earthly presence of Jesus, they needed to be guided specifically on what they should take with them. And the summation of these two verses is that God would provide everything these missionaries would need to take the Gospel first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Please bear in mind that Jesus knew His disciples would not be gone very long or very far on this first mission adventure, therefore we must not read too much into the preparations that had to be made and the provisions that had to be taken with them. But, there are some wonderful things in verses nine and ten that we must glean to help us know how we should prepare our modern day missionaries as they head for the fields. God always knows very well what He is doing, thus we need to learn everything we can from this **chapter** of **Matthew** in order to move out well prepared for the journey.

#### **A. We are first to provide an empty belt full of faith. v. 9 (money belt)**

In **verse 9** of our text, Jesus said the following words. ***“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses.”*** The purses that are mentioned here are believed to be the money belts which travelers in those days wore around their waists and under their robes for safety and protection. Of course Jesus knew that the disciples had very little or no money at all. He also knew that He would give them the faith they needed to appropriate whatever they would need for the trip. So, He told them not to worry about gold, silver, or copper, as brass was known in that day. But, they were instructed not to waste time in getting to the fields, but to go out completely trusting Him for whatever they needed. It is believed by most commentators that Jesus was also telling the disciples not to charge for their services in ministry like many of the religious Pharisees did at that time. So,

the truth was that when the disciples knew that God had called them to the mission field, they were not to worry and fret over what would be needed to be faithful and reap the harvest for the Lord. They were not to waste time in begging a long time for their support, like a lot of missionary candidates do today before ever getting to the fields. Now, I don't mean that it is wrong to present the work about the fields where the missionaries are going, but I believe it is wrong to spend years trying to make sure that we have everything in order for the work before we actually get to the fields where God sends us. If we spend four or five years trying to make sure that every base is covered and every need is met before we leave for the work, then my friends, there will be no need for faith.

I would like to stop right here and interject several thoughts. Having been brought up in Southern Baptist Churches, it was a rarity that our churches ever saw an international missionary because the missionaries didn't travel to any churches, especially to the smaller country churches. They just depended upon the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas offerings to provide the funds to support the missionaries while they were on the fields. I believe there are some very positive things about having this kind of mission support, but it surely does eliminate almost any interaction between the missionary candidates and the churches. Truthfully, this kind of total mission support would take away the necessity of faith because the International Mission Board supplied what the missionaries would need. And, I must tell you that down through my 50 plus years of ministry, I witnessed many convention personnel adamantly forbid the SBC Missionaries from raising any funds on their own. But isn't it now rather ironic that the IMB authorities are presently asking missionaries to take early retirement and come off the fields because funds are low. And believe it or not, we are now seeing the IMB missionaries being sent to the churches to raise support because missionary giving is so low; even to the point of having to sell foreign SBC international seminary properties just to try to get money to keep things afloat because the strategy of missions has so changed and been redirected toward the Muslims and unreached people groups. If there are no reports of people getting saved on the fields, who wants to keep supporting these mission efforts? I personally believe that over the past 20 plus years, the leaders of the SBC and the IMB have literally wasted millions of dollars "fishing in holes where the fish aren't biting", while forsaking the places where "fish were being caught" by the thousands. I sincerely believe that some of these leaders will have to answer to God for



stealing money from the churches while funneling their efforts to places where God no longer has the doors open.

**B. Secondly, we are to provide an empty bag full of faithfulness. v. 10**

**Verse 10** is an extension of Jesus' words to His disciples as they prepare to go to their mission fields. In this verse they are instructed not to even take a filled scrip, or knapsack, filled with food and supplies for their journey. And they were told not to even take two coats, two pairs of sandals, or the shepherd staves for their own protection as they journeyed. Instead they were to travel only with the bare necessities of life, and they were to trust God for food, water, clothing, shelter, and protection. Jesus told them that they would find what they would need in the homes of the people that received their message and showed them hospitality. They would be rewarded with the necessities of life by those who responded positively to the Gospel message. And, these disciples were told that when homes were opened to them because of a positive acceptance of the Word of God that they would preach, they were to just stay there until everyone who would listen respectfully had the privilege of hearing this new Good News, before moving on to the next town or village. In other words, Jesus promised the disciples that He through the people that believed their message, would minister to them freely. And as stated back in **verse 8**, the disciples were to receive God's provisions gratefully and then go on freely giving to other new people the Good News of the Gospel.

Here in **verse 10**, we are told that all that God-called missionaries need is a life of total faithfulness and an active faith in Jesus Christ Who has extended the call, and for sure, He will provide where He guides. Yes folks, it requires a lot of faith to respond to the call of God, to leave our comfortable homes and spaces, and get "out of the box" and go forth with the Gospel message. But, if we will be willing to do this, God has promised that He will not only be our provider, but He will also be our protector. Therefore, our concerns and worries should not be about what we will need for the work that God has called us to do, but our concerns should be about downsizing our lives and moving to the "front of the line" in order to get to the front lines of world missions. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and if He needs to sell a few, or many, cows to get His Gospel to the world, He will do so. Oh yes, it is not easy to raise funds and continue to "pray in" what we will need to keep our world mission efforts thriving, but it will be rewarding when we

see how God chooses to use the unconventional, and sometimes the unbelievable, methods of supplying our needs to share His love with the world. So, our biggest concerns should be responding to the call, going where He wants us to go, exercising our sincere trust and faith, and then, with a spirit of expectancy, watch how God provides. Sometimes He will use people we know and other times people we don't even know exist. But I assure you, that in spite of some worrying and fretting from time to time, there will be some excitement and fun in seeing how God provides. There is one thing for sure! If we allow God to meet the needs, then He will get the glory and not the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. Of course right now, it would seem that unless God does a tremendous miracle and sends revival that will cause the leaders to go back to the Book of Acts strategy in missions, the SBC mission work, along with many other mission ministries, will soon be history. I am sure that some of these leaders who have made such a mess of a former great mission endeavor meant well, but they failed enormously and turned the mission effort away from Jesus' plan on how to do missions. They tried very hard to redirect the focus away from where "the fish were biting", and instead, go and win two Muslims to Christ every year. The sad thing about this is that millions of dollars have continued to be spent while few people have been coming to Jesus. Maybe the problem was, and is, that mission leaders have tried to send the missionaries out to the fields where they have a special affinity, like Jerry Rankin did for the Muslim world, instead of sending them to where God has called and sent them. And just maybe, these dear missionaries have been sent out weighted down with belts and scripts full of too much strategy, and every need provided, only to pervert the simple plan Jesus gave to the first missionaries; His disciples! There is one thing for sure, when mankind decides to try to change or improve God's method of doing things, he always messes things up enormously. Jesus sent the disciples out with a simple plan to share the Gospel with the world, and in just over 30 years, they turned the known world upside down with that Gospel. We have been here in America for 240 years, and we are doing less with the Great Commission than the early disciples did proportionately back in the first and second centuries. Maybe we just need to really down size our operation, return to the Biblical Blueprint God gave us through His Son and in the Book of Acts, and get with the program again. Time is running out, and we need to get busy! Thirty-million lost souls plunging into hell from this earth every year should wake us up!

## **Chapter Six**

### **“The Places Where We Are To Do Missions” vs. 11-15**

Where in this great big world are we to do missions? This is a question that seems to really baffle some well-meaning mission boards, some churches, and even some missionaries. We have reached the point today that it would seem many mission organizations are more interested in making their own decisions about where to send workers than they are in the choice God makes about where to send His representatives. I have already mentioned that often times God sends missionaries to a particular field, and then their mission organization decides this is not the place where they need to be. So those in authority arbitrarily decide to move their personnel to fields in the 10/40 window of the world where they can concentrate on unreached people groups. Of course, we know that this is a human organized strategy where people are trying to improve on God's plan of world missions instead of concentrating on the fields where thousands are coming to the Savior. I am still trying to find in the entire Bible, and especially in the Book of Acts, this misguided concept of world missions. Yet, as I mentioned in the introduction to this book, if the object of the Great Commission is not to populate heaven with as many saved souls as possible, then I suppose this newfangled mission strategy is sufficient to win one or two Muslims per year to Christ instead of our missionaries helping our national evangelists and pastors win multitudes to Jesus by “fishing in the waters where the fish are biting”. But, I do believe it is God's will, in the Great Commission, for us to take the Gospel to every place in the world where He opens the doors. We are to stay there until every last soul is saved, or God closes the doors and moves us on to other receptive fields. Isn't it rather ironic, that this new strategy of world evangelism now down plays the importance of having crusades, like Dr. Billy Graham has used for years to win mega-multitudes to Christ? Poor Dr. Graham! He did it the wrong way! Really?

If we are going to know where we are to do mission work today, then we must take a look at where Jesus sent His disciples when He first sent them out two by two. Let's take a close look at where these disciples were sent in order for us to learn how to follow their pattern.

## **A. We are to do missions where the people welcome our message. vs. 11-13**

I know this blows away the mission concept of Covert Mission Activity, but folks, Jesus told His early disciples that they were to go from city to city and from town to town. Wherever the people responded to the Gospel in a positive way, the disciples were to stay there and keep preaching until they had done all they could to win the city or town to Christ. Please take a close look at the following verses. **Matthew 10:11-13, "*And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when you come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*"**

These three verses provide for us a tremendous amount of information on where we should do missions. We should do missions where the missionaries, with their message, are received and shown true hospitality. In these verses, Jesus tells the disciples to go into a city or town and look for the house of a typical citizen who has enough financially to help take care of the guests and shows abundant hospitality to the missionaries. If the hosts received the missionaries with open arms, then the disciples were told to declare a special blessing of sanctification upon the family who lived in the house. This was a very revered Jewish practice in those days, and it was a very significant act of thanksgiving and appreciation to the people who gladly received the missionaries.

### **Worthy Did Not Mean Wealthy!**

When Jesus told the disciples to go to a home in the city or town and find a home that was worthy, He did not mean that they had a lot of money or would be able to provide lavish care for the missionaries. What He told them was to look for a host who would have the wherewithal to meet the living necessities of the missionaries, but more importantly, to find a host that had moral and spiritual character which would be the right and safe haven for the Kingdom representatives to live and work in while they were in town. I believe Jesus did this primarily because He was concerned with the reputation of these disciples, and He did not want them to be in a situation where they could be accused or lied about because they were staying in a

questionable place. You see folks, the integrity of the message they would be preaching can be and often is tarnished by foolish mistakes that the messengers make; and sad to say, many times for the wrong reasons. What I mean by this is that sometimes men and yes, women of God, get their eyes on nicer places with many more amenities, so that they can be more comfortable. But, often times when this happens, the servant of God may set themselves up for more temptation, more misunderstanding, more criticism, and even worse, the destruction of their own testimonies. Believe me, I know all about this because for eleven years of my 50 years of ministry, I traveled as an itinerant full-time evangelist. And, especially back in my early years, I had to stay in some of the worst places on earth. I spent many a night longing to be in a more comfortable place where there were no little kids opening my door at all times regardless of how I was dressed, or where there were no dogs and cats roaming through my room with all of their contagious allergies. Yes, I longed for better living quarters and circumstances, but I never ever moved unless I got in a bad situation where maybe the wife was going to be at home while her bi-vocational husband pastor was at work, or like one night in Pensacola, Florida where the pastor put me in a motel where they didn't even ask for me to register. It was a house of prostitution, and I literally feared for my life the short time I was there. Yes, I openly confess that I have spent days and nights in some very terrible places, but I don't ever remember spending nights in a prison cell like these first missionaries often did.

### **Evangelist Moves To A Better Hotel In Las Vegas**

In these verses, 11-13, Jesus told the disciples to go into a good home where they and their message were accepted, and to stay there until their task in that city or town was completed. This passage reminds me of an incident that I must tell you about before moving on to the next point. Many years ago I traveled as a full-time vocational evangelist, and I preached in 37 states in America. One of those states was Nevada. Once while preaching my second revival in the wicked and sinful city of Las Vegas, the pastor I was preaching for told me about another evangelist he had had there in a revival meeting. When I was there in two revivals, I stayed in a Holiday Inn Express hotel, which indeed did have a casino for gambling. Of course, there was not a hotel in town which didn't have a casino. My room cost around \$125.00 per night. However, when the other evangelist came to the same

church, the pastor was going to put him into a \$125.00 per night hotel, and the evangelist didn't think this was nice enough for him. So, he asked the pastor for the \$125.00 per night in cash, and then he moved to another hotel casino where the cost was \$300.00 per night for the room. He felt that he was such a well-known evangelist that he needed better accommodations. So, he moved rather than having to endure that terrible Holiday Inn Express. I guess you could say that I was "suffering for Jesus" as just a common down to earth preacher. Well folks, I am very glad that I was a nobody, because so were the disciples of Jesus when He sent them out to the mission fields. By the way, that well-known evangelist who had to upgrade his room later fell morally. I am so saddened about that. When we get to the place that we think we have arrived and are too good to stay in modest places, it is time for us to go back to where we came from and remember how far God has brought us.

I believe it would be good for all of us as God's chosen servants to follow the example that Dr. John MacArthur says Paul patterned in **Philippians 4:11-13**. ***"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."***<sup>66</sup>

Yes, as God's missionaries, we must learn to take the Gospel to every place where He opens the doors and the people welcome our message. We must stay there and work until the city or town is evangelized. And, we must stay in a reputable place, where our testimony and character is not questioned, and concentrate on those who are receptive. I don't believe we should go covertly to a place, lie about why we are there, and then try to force open the doors and slip up on the blind side of the residents in order to try to win them to Jesus. As we will see in the very next verse, if our message is rejected, we are to travel on to another town where God will open the doors.

#### **B. We are do missions where the people welcome us as the messengers. vs. 14-15**

We continue this solemn thought about where we should do missions by saying that in **verse 14**, Jesus tells His disciples that if they go into a town

and the people reject them personally and yes, even reject the Gospel message, they are to go to the outskirts of the city and shake the dust off of their sandals and move on to the next place. Jesus at no time tells them to stay there, hide underground, and try to gradually win one or two without the city officials' knowing about it. It is never right to use deception, because if Jesus wants people to be saved in a certain city, He will open the doors and instruct His missionaries to walk through them. Do Christians have to serve Jesus underground in many countries of the world today? Well, of course they do because many countries have communistic, atheistic, and Muslim governments that hate Christians. So, if the church in these countries is going to exist, they have to meet underground. But, this doesn't give us the right to lie about why our missionaries go to a certain country, stay there in disguise as an English teacher, book store operator, or some other professional, while having the primary purpose of sharing the Gospel. The Sovereign God of the universe doesn't have to use lying, which He has condemned, to get His Gospel to the lost world. It is only those who believe that God has to have them and their underhanded deceptive practices to get His Good News to the world. We absolutely can't pretend to believe in the mighty Sovereignty of God, while using a deceptive evil plan to sneak the Gospel into places where God hasn't opened the doors wide. We refute our argument that God is omnipotent if we lie to share His Word.

### **Cities That Reject The Gospel Shall Be Judged Like Sodom and Gomorrah In The Day Of Judgment!**

Now, we must close the thought of where we are to do missions by looking at **verse 15**. This verse is a tremendously solemn verse, because as the disciples were instructed to shake the dust off of their sandals and move on to another city where they and their message would be received, Jesus warns the negatively rejecting city of their coming judgment. He states that their judgment will be worse than God's righteous judgment on the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They were literally wiped off of the face of the earth with fire and brimstone. So what must this coming judgment be upon the towns and cities that reject the Gospel message? Personally, I don't think we can even imagine how serious it is to reject the truth of the Gospel. Yet, we have been distinctly warned. As we look around us here in America, surely the judgment of God is on its way for this generation of perverts, baby killers, ruthless politicians, violent drug users, and religious fools who

have rejected the true message of salvation. Truly, these who have decided to live in such debauchery have totally rejected the authority of the Bible, God's Holy Word. And when we reject the authority of God's Word, then we reject the truth that God exist! If we think in our minds that God doesn't exist, then we reject the idea that a day of accountability and judgment is coming to each of us if we don't get saved. Therefore, if there is no God to answer to, then there is no need to worry. Thus, we can live as we want to live. But yet, deep within the heart of every human being, that person knows that God does exist because of his or her personal conscience and even the presence of God in nature. This is described so well in **Romans 2**, where we are told that the entire world is without excuse before God.

So friends, where have we been commissioned by our Lord to do missions? We are to do missions in whatever town or city Jesus has opened the doors and where the people in that town or city receive and welcome the messenger and the message. This seems very easy to understand, but yet multitudes are still trying to do missions in places where the doors are closed and the message is rejected. We can give a thousand excuses or make-shift reasons, but none can justify the wasted money and fruitless efforts of mission boards and agencies who have tried to force so many wonderful missionaries out of fruitful waters into the deserts of unreached people groups and the wildernesses of Muslim and atheistic nations. I sincerely believe that great will be the punishment of deceived mission ministries, churches, and even missionaries who believe that the adventure of working in dangerous territories is just as important as winning thousands and thousands to Christ. If there is rejoicing in heaven over every sinner that gets saved, and we know this is true as we read in **Luke 15**, then there must be horrible sadness over the estimated 80,000 people in the world who go to the fires of hell every 24 hours. Why are we "fishing where the fish aren't biting"?



## **Chapter Seven**

### **“Notice The Persecution We Will Face”**

#### **vs. 16-25**

As we begin this chapter of my book, I wish very much that we could leave it out. Why? Because it will discuss the persecution that is promised to those disciples who devotedly serve Christ as His missionaries. In the last chapter, we talked about where missionaries should do ministry as we discussed the disciples’ being instructed to go to towns and cities where they and their message would be received with hospitality. In other words, they were warned by Jesus, not to push things to the edge when it came to the rejection of their message and themselves as they entered into the towns and villages. Now suddenly in **verses 16-25**, we come face to face with the warning Jesus gave to His first missionaries as He sent them out to proclaim the Gospel. They were warned that real persecution would befall every one of them, and that they would have to learn how to deal with this undeserved persecution. This persecution would not be from those who would necessarily reject their message, but it would come from several groups of people; some of which the disciples would least expect. And, may I say that this kind of persecution is still coming to those today who are serious about living for Christ and proclaiming the message of eternal salvation to a world that hates Jesus and His Word.

#### **A. Jesus tells His disciples that it will be vicious persecution. v. 16**

In **verse 16** of our text, Jesus tells the disciples that He is sending them out like sheep into the midst of ravaging wolves. These demonic wolves would be waiting for these spiritual sheep to come forth out of the protection of the sheepfold and the Shepherd. These sheep would walk or wander right into the midst of these pernicious attackers; many of which would be wearing sheep’s clothing. These wolves could not be defeated by the power of the sheep alone, but they could be defeated by the power of the Holy Spirit living on the inside of every believing sheep. So Jesus tells the disciples that in order to defend themselves against the wolves, they would need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Now the Jewish people considered the serpent to be a very shrewd creature characterized as cunning, smart, and cautious. The disciples were told that they would need to emulate a

serpent in order to be wiser than the wolves that would attack them. Then, Jesus told them that they also needed to be peaceful and calm like a dove. I don't think that Jesus was telling these new missionaries to be completely passive and never offer any resistance or rebuff. I believe that just like a dove, who is not the aggressor looking for a fight, we as God's servants must be like them. Isn't it so ironic that God uses the portrait of a dove to indicate the character of the Holy Spirit who lives within every believer? So, I believe that Jesus is making the point that the disciples were to be smart enough to avoid fights with the wolves, and they were to use a confident calmness to withstand the attacks of those who probably wore sheep's clothing, but yet inwardly, were vicious wolves ready for the attack. In other words, the disciples were not to be distracted away from their mission by arguing with the wolves who were pretending to be sheep. I do, however, want to mention that if we have to be wise like serpents, then sometimes we might need to defend ourselves, especially against false religions as we will see in a moment. So, I believe we can say that the worst attacks we will have are the phony pretenders who walk outwardly as religious sheep, but inwardly they are truly vicious wolves who have no other goal but to kill and destroy. If you will go back and read our discussion of the disciples that were chosen by Jesus to be His first missionaries, then you will see the viciousness of those who attacked and persecuted God's servants.

#### **B. Jesus tells His disciples that it may be violent persecution. v. 17**

So, the first persecutors that the disciples were warned about were religious hypocrites pretending to be sheep, but were attacking like wolves. Now in this verse, Jesus tells His followers that the attacks will be violent and will come from those who are very religious in the synagogues and Jewish courts. In fact, He states that the synagogues which were designed for the teaching of the law and prophets would be used for literal scourging by these religious infidels. In other words, these religious people would turn against these first missionaries because they didn't seem to fit into the religious mold of these devout Pharisees and Scribes. So, instead of being spiritual people and welcoming the new Gospel of the coming Kingdom, the religious Sanhedrin were threatened by the Gospel message that would be preached by the disciples. And so it is today in America and in other parts of the world. Religious people who claim to "have it all together" reject the simplicity of the Gospel message, and they mock and smirk when they hear the Gospel.

Rather than wanting to believe the truth, they try to argue with the truth and even try to kill the deliverers of this truth.

**C. Jesus tells the disciples that it ultimately will be vindicated persecution. vs. 18-20**

The word vindication actually means “to absolve, acquit, or clear something up”. When Jesus told His disciples that persecution was going to come, He also said that they would be brought before kings and governments on His behalf in order to give testimony about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, any persecution that they had to endure would be vindicated before the lost world, even the Gentiles to whom Jesus was not sending them immediately. They were to start with the lost sheep of Israel, but eventually they would be brought to publicly testify before the Gentile world.

In **verse 19**, we are told that when the disciples were to be brought before the religious and pagan courts, they should not worry about what they would say, because the Holy Spirit within would tell them what to say in their own defense. Jesus promised that His Spirit would give them everything they needed to say at the very hour and moment that they would need a defense. This was truly a message of confidence for the disciples, and it should still be to us, too. Often times today, we can’t even get believers who have professed Christ for years to go out to share their faith. And, here in this story we find Jesus Christ promising the disciples that He would speak through them and in them for their defense against false imprisonment and possible unwarranted punishment. May I emphatically say that many have been the times down through my many years of ministry when Jesus has given me the words to say, not only in witnessing to people as His missionary, but also as His spokesman in the pulpits of many churches around the world. Even in the face of persecution, ridicule, disdain, and possible suffering, we can rest assured that God’s Holy Spirit will speak through our minds and lips, because He is the seal of our salvation. We never have to worry about our testimonies being vindicated, if we totally and completely depend upon the Holy Spirit.

**D. Jesus tells the disciples that it may ultimately be vilifying persecution. vs. 21-22**

Persecution is never a pleasant experience, especially if it results in torture,

imprisonment, and ultimate death. This is what mostly happened to the original disciples. But, there are other kinds of persecution. There may be verbal persecution, ridicule, rejection, and even betrayal. And, this is what Jesus promised to His beloved disciples as He was sending them forth to the mission field. He told them that in addition to being persecuted by religious and pagan courts, there would come a day when they would also be seriously persecuted by their own family and friends. In fact, later on in **Matthew 10:36**, Jesus said these words: ***"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."*** It is very hard to accept this promise, but I can truly attest this statement by our Lord. Why? Because the greatest foes or enemies that my wife and I have ever had are those members of our families and church families whom we have given our lives to. In fact, I believe the most severe hurt we have ever had to endure is not the ridicule of strangers, the misunderstanding of distant people, but it has been the rejection and sometimes the walking away by those we thought were our closest friends; even those we have done most to try to help than anyone else. Some of this rejection has been because of jealousy, while some of it has come because of the high standards we have set for ourselves and our families. Truthfully, if our standards coincide with Biblical standards, then these family members and friends are made to feel very uncomfortable because of our convictions and standards. I have been accused of "raising the bar too high", and yet, I have often said, "Jesus has raised the bar much higher than I." So, missionary candidates, if you are serious about giving your lives to the ministry or missions, then just expect that your greatest opponents will be your own family members and your closest friends.

Let's take a close look at verses 21-22, and catch the seriousness of this persecution coming from our families and close friends. Please notice the following copy of these verses. **Matthew 10:21-22, *"And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."*** Folks, I must tell you that I cringe when I read these two verses. How could a man deliver his brother up to death because of the message of salvation which the brother preaches? How could a father deliver his child to be killed because of his strong misguided religious beliefs? How could children rise up against their parents and have them put to death because of the truth of the Gospel

which they believe? And yet, this is happening everywhere in the cult of Mohammedanism. Parents are being hated and killed because of their faith in the true God. Sons and daughters are being tortured and put to death because of their love for Christ by the Muslim religion. Every person that professes to be a Christian is not only hated, but they are persecuted, disowned, raped, tortured, and killed just because the Muslim religion calls them infidels. But there is a promise here which Jesus gave to His disciples as they were being sent out. He tells them if they will stand firm, hold on, and remain faithful, they would be saved from this hellish behavior by family members and friends who refuse to believe in the Gospel of grace and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. This promise probably has two fulfillments. The first is a promise to those Jews who will be saved here on the earth during the upcoming Great Tribulation. And then, I believe this is a gracious promise to every missionary who goes forth to declare the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Before moving on to the next point, I would like to add that it is never fun to be hated because of your love for Christ, His work, and His ministry. Yet, my wife, Jo Anne, and I have experienced this many times. Why have we been hated? As I have already stated, maybe jealousy or discomfort because of our strong convictions and standards. But there is one thing we know, we have never been hated the way Jesus was by the religious crowd on His way to Calvary. Therefore, whatever persecution we have to endure, we must remember that Jesus took the persecution and penalty for every man, woman, boy, and girl. He did it because of His unconditional love for us. How dare we even consider quitting, running away, or relaxing in our service to the King of kings and Lord of lords! Yes, suffering is not pleasant, but I would rather suffer while standing for my Lord than to bring reproach upon His name after all He has done for me. Yes, persecution will come; but we must keep on with the work and mission God has given to us.

#### **E. Jesus tells the disciples that it must be vigilant persecution. v. 23**

We now come to one of the most important points that we can mention about the persecution that we will face on the mission fields of the world. It is very obvious that we will have to suffer much for Jesus Christ if we do anything at all for His Kingdom. And truthfully, the more we do for Jesus with faithful service, the more persecution and suffering we will have to endure. Yet, I want to mention something that may not be understood by a lot of

people in mission work, if they don't understand the truth of **verse 23**. This truth will be missed especially by those who believe in and practice covert mission activity. The point I want to make is that it is not something spiritual to remain in a place of severe persecution if there is a way to get away from the suffering. I say this because there are multitudes of people who think that it is super-spiritual if they disregard all warnings and remain in imminent danger while on the fields of mission service. Now, I don't question the motives of some people for staying in life-threatening situations because of their love for the people, but it is absolutely foolish for people to stay in a precarious or threatening situation when there is a way to flee from persecution or possible death. Truthfully, after 50 plus year of ministry and studying the history of missions, I believe many servants of God have died unnecessarily and prematurely, when they could have been saved from terrible persecution and death. You see folks, in **verse 23**, God tells us that it is quiet okay for a persecuted believer to flee from imminent danger, because it is much better to survive and continue more ministry somewhere else than it is to have a martyr's complex and die unnecessarily. Now, I am not saying that people would never die on the mission fields of the world, but I am saying that foolish decisions sometimes lead to premature deaths because the missionaries didn't use common sense and wisdom. Of course, I also know that God has to allow these deaths, but He may do this to teach other missionaries not to be so foolish. Therefore, my dear missionary friends, if you find yourself in imminent danger, Jesus gives you permission to flee for safety's sake until you can return to your post after things settle down, or until you can prayerfully relocate to a safe place and continue your work. These words are not Stan Frye's words, but they are the words, in red, spoken by none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. So dear missionary friends, pay attention and retain a vigilance. If your situation becomes very dangerous, then flee for your and your family's safety.

Folks, there is one more promise here in **verse 23**. The promise is both prophetic and very practical. Jesus told His Jewish disciples, as they were going forth to do missions, that if they wanted to flee because of persecution, there would be a day when Jesus would come again and deliver them from all persecution. I believe this is talking about His second coming in the Revelation at the conclusion of the seven years of tribulation. He will usher in the millennial reign of Christ and set up the Kingdom He promised to Israel. And, I believe there is a practical point here. That is, Jesus Christ

will be faithful to all of His missionaries until the day He comes again. As the Bible says in **Matthew 28:16-20**, He will be with every missionary who is carrying out the Great Commission until the end of the age. So, let's claim His presence and power as we continue our mission work wherever He sends us, or wherever we have to flee if severe persecution comes.

### **One More Point That Must Be Made!**

Before we move on to the next point about certain persecution in the life of a committed missionary, let's look at some wonderful words from Dr. John MacArthur once again. These words give additional permission for suffering missionaries to flee the persecution instead of being martyred for the cause of Christ. Read carefully these words. "Persecution is never to be sought or endured for its own sake;... We have no right to provoke animosity or ridicule. And Christ urges escaping persecution when doing so is expedient and possible. We are not obligated to stay in a place of opposition and danger until we are killed, or even imprisoned. ***'Whenever they persecute you in this city,'*** Jesus says, ***'flee to the next.'***"<sup>67</sup>

"This is the pattern Paul followed throughout his ministry. (see Acts 12-14, 17). When persecution became so severe in one place that he could no longer minister effectively, he left and went to another. He was not afraid of persecution, and many times he was severely beaten before he left a city. At least once he was stoned and left for dead. But he did not try to test the limits of the opposition. He endured whatever ridicule, reviling, beatings, and imprisonment were necessary while he ministered. But he left a place when his effectiveness there ceased."<sup>68</sup>

#### **F. Jesus tells His disciples that it will be a validated persecution. vs. 24-25**

As we continue to discuss the persecution that Jesus promised would come to all of His missionaries, we discover in verses 24-25 that this persecution should not be unexpected, because Jesus Himself went through terrible suffering for our sins. Thus, why should we think that we should not suffer like our Master? Pay close attention to these verses as I quote them for your consideration. **Matthew 10:24-25**, ***"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master***

***of the house, Beelzebub [Satan], how much more shall they call them of his household?"*** Jesus uses this parabolic illustration to let His disciples know that He suffered tremendously from the religious hypocrites who even called Him the devil. Therefore, they should not expect any less from the same type of people on the mission fields of the world. What Jesus was trying to do with His disciples was to validate the authenticity of the suffering of His servants. In other words, if the evil ones would attack and persecute the Son of God, then all of God's missionaries would know for sure that they were faithfully serving Jesus if they too received the same kind of persecution. So my friends, it is very obvious that all of God's servants will suffer persecution. And if it comes for preaching the Gospel like Jesus preached, then these servants will know they are in the will of God.

Therefore, every truly God-called missionary should expect persecution if he or she really answers the call of God and goes to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ with a lost world. As we have already seen, this persecution will probably start with our own family, but it will go much further than this as the missionary becomes more useful and fruitful in the Kingdom of God. If we want to evaluate how successful we are being in storming the gates of hell with our ministries, then all we have to do is evaluate the kind and the scope of persecution that comes our way. If we receive no persecution, then we are not being effective. Why? Because we are in a spiritual warfare with Satan and his demons, and as long as we do nothing to promote the cause of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel, we will not be bothered. But, if we really get on fire for Jesus in attempting to tell the world about the Gospel message, then we might just as well begin to look for horrific persecution.

By the way, if these evil religious people called Jesus the devil, what do you suppose they will call any of us who really sell out to be fruitful missionaries? Maybe we should take a look at our persecution and decide if we are really being fruitful on the fields of our mission work. The success of our work may not be evaluated by the number of souls that pray to receive Christ, but it certainly can be evaluated by the type of persecution that comes our way. No, we should not pray for persecution, but we must not miss what God is trying to show us through it all. There is no wonder that Paul said to Timothy in his last letter, ***"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II Timothy 2:3)***. We will never be the kind of missionaries that make Jesus proud, unless we learn to expect certain



persecution coming from every direction when we really get sold out to God. So, let's ask God for the wisdom and strength to endure the persecution that Satan sends our way, and then, let us ask Jesus to equip us to be the best soldiers we can be in the army of our Lord.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **“The Promises We Must Claim As We Do Missions” vs. 26-31**

God surely knew how much suffering and persecution His faithful missionaries would face as they attempted to share the Gospel with a lost world. So after He told His disciples how much persecution and suffering they would have to endure as they worked in their mission fields, He provided some words of encouragement and comfort by sharing with them many promises that they could claim, and He would fulfill, to help them get through the persecution and mistreatment of those who would reject their message. This is truly a wonderful promise to every God-called servant because there will indeed be much suffering, persecution, disappointment, and even the temptation to quit many times while on the fields of the world as we try to share the Gospel message. And truthfully folks, there is just no way that we could possibly endure what we have to face, were it not for the promises of God, and especially the one in **Matthew 28:16-20**, where Jesus did indeed promise to be with His disciples, even until the end of the age. Therefore, if we are going to be able to remain faithful in spite of the many trials we shall face, then we must not only recognize the promises God made His disciples, but by faith, we must claim these promises as we need them daily while on the job in world missions. So now let's take a look at the promises Jesus gave to His first missionaries and begin claiming them as we move forward with world missions, especially during this generation.

Let us now take an in-depth look at the promises that Jesus gave to His disciples as He was preparing them for their mission fields. Let us begin to claim these promises, not only when we get on the mission fields where God is sending us, but let us also claim these sure promises as we face the enemy even while we are making preparation to go to the fields. There will be many disappointments and discouragements along the way, even as we try to get the proper training and raise our missionary support to prepare us for our mission fields of service. We just need to remember if the devil can attack us with discouragement and suffering while we are preparing for the fields, then there is a great possibility that we may never even get to the fields where God is sending us. If Satan can successfully get us

sidetracked in our homeland, then many lost people on our potential fields will die and go to hell, and we will miss out on the best that God has for us in His will and service.

## **Are You Hiding From God Like Jonah?**

This is the reason that so many genuinely God-called missionaries are lost in the crowds in our churches teaching Sunday School, singing in the choir, serving on committees, and just trying to do a little rather than going in obedience to the call of God where He had chosen for them to go. You might say that we have a lot of modern-day Jonahs in our churches just waiting for God to send the big fish of chastisement because these servants of God are hiding in the bottom of ecclesiastical boats, thinking that God will never find them. But folks, rest assured that God knows where you are, and so, you better start claiming the promises of the Lord in order to defeat the devil and get to the fields where God has sent you. Jonah committed the sin unto death and died in the fish's belly. Yet, God gave him another chance, resurrected him from the dead, and sent him on his way to Nineveh. So, let my words be a warning and a challenge to you to stop your running and your hiding and get going to where God has called you! Truly, God is the God of second chances, but don't push your luck too far!

### **A. There is the promise of courage for illumination. v. 26**

In **verse 26** of our text, Jesus told the disciples not to fear because of the persecution that they would experience. In fact, He says that one day their service to Him will be vindicated and the truth will be known about all of those who have persecuted these missionaries unjustly. There is a tremendous implication in this verse. That implication is that if God's servants are wrongly persecuted, every detail of their persecution will be uncovered and these disciples will stand before Jesus clear of any charges. In addition, these persecutors will be held accountable for their wicked behavior, and they are the ones that will be completely exposed as hypocrites. And to add a personal note, I can't wait to see all of these phonies exposed and judged for their ruthless mistreatment of true servants of God.

The reason I say this, as I have already mentioned in this book, is that I detest hypocrites, period. I have been the object of much of this persecution

down through my many years of ministry. If this sounds vindictive, then maybe you should read some of David's prayers in the Psalms concerning those who persecuted him as a servant of God.

So dear servants of God, you need to claim the courage to look beyond your present unjust suffering toward that day when your service will truly be vindicated at the judgment of God. Just remember, there is an ultimate payday for every human being who pretends to be religious, but doesn't have a genuine relationship with Christ. Those who have made you suffer because they don't have a real relationship with the Savior will one day be the ones who will receive the suffering.

### **B. There is the courage for proclamation. v. 27**

Don't be intimidated! This is what Jesus tells his disciples in **verse 27**. He instructs these servants not to be afraid, but to just be faithful in proclaiming whatever word He would give to them. Even if His message had to be given in darkness, figuratively speaking, the disciples were to proclaim it everywhere with no reluctance, and let everyone know the truth of His Word. In other words, Jesus told His disciples that they were responsible for telling the lost world about the coming Kingdom of God and the hope found only in Jesus Christ. They were not to fear because He would give them courage to obey this command.

Folks, there are reasons that Jesus gave the disciples the command to stand upon the housetops and proclaim the Gospel message. The reasons are because of the importance of the message they were to proclaim and because of the authority that God gave them in order to share the truth of His Word. There is truly power in the Word of God, and although we are to always proclaim the Word with love, we are never to be fearful of declaring the whole counsel of God just because His Word is the final word to all humanity. This is very true, even if multitudes deny, castigate, doubt, or even defiantly rebel against His Word. It is still the final truth. Therefore, it would behoove the leaders of our countries, and especially here in America, to remember that the final word is not their empirical decrees, but the final word is just simply the precious Word of God. So, when we are proclaiming His Word here at home or out on the foreign mission fields, we can know that in spite of whatever we have to face, His Word is truth! And because it has been written down, we cannot argue with it. As the Bible says in **Matthew**

**24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."** These are the words of Jesus! Therefore, we must remember that God's Word is final, regardless of what other laws, and yes, even what our U.S. Constitution says. We better remember that the U.S. Supreme Court can rule that gay marriage is fine, but yet, God's Word declares it to be not just a little bit wrong, but it is an abomination in the eyes of God (**Romans 1**). What we think, or even what our judiciary system says, cannot change the final Word of God.

So, if we are going to be faithful missionaries on the fields of the lost world, then we must not fear. We must stand up on the housetops and in every opportunity God gives us, and proclaim boldly that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven, and that the Word of God is final. You cannot go to heaven except through Jesus Christ, and no other word trumps the Word of God; not the New World Translation, the Book of Mormon, the Koran, or any of the other false bibles or doctrines of the false cults. Therefore, we who have the final Word must declare it to the entire world as God opens the doors for us to do so. The cost of this distribution, requirements for missionaries, and even severe sacrifices should not be a hindrance to us proclaiming the Gospel on the fields where God sends us.

### **C. There is the courage because of our preservation. v. 28**

In **verse 28**, Jesus tells His disciples that they have no reason to fear because they are already preserved and protected by Him. Therefore, they just need to reverence Him the One Who is able to save, not only the body of an individual, but also their soul from spiritual death and hell. Although God never gives us dying grace until it is time to die, we can still rejoice in the fact that when we take our last breath in this body, we shall awaken in the regality of heaven and in the presence of the very angels of God. So, our attention should be given to proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ so that all humanity will have the privilege of at least making the decision to accept Him as their Savior. For if they do not, then they will ultimately be cast into the eternal Lake of Fire from which no person ever escapes.

What Jesus told His disciples, here in **verse 28**, is vividly illustrated by the story of Jonah in the Old Testament. While running away from the call of God,

he was cast into the sea and swallowed by a great fish. On the way down into the fish's belly, he began to pray and cry out to God for deliverance. However, God didn't keep him from dying, but instead He would resurrect him three days later. Thus, his body died, but in Sheol he prayed with his conscious soul for God to give him another chance. What Jesus is telling the disciples is that we should not be afraid of dying physically, because we will continue to live on in heaven. Jonah was conscious in the place of departed spirits, and he cried out to God with his spirit. But eventually, Jonah was released from paradise and taken to heaven with the event of Christ's resurrection.

So, we come to this conclusion! God's servants must not fear what might happen to their physical bodies on the fields of mission service, but they are not to develop a martyr's complex and go looking for a place to die. If God leads to another place of service in safety, as I said earlier, then we must go to do an even greater work. But, if things happen suddenly and we do die on the field of service, we need not fear because we are already preserved for eternity because of our salvation experience. Therefore, the bottom line is that since we are truly saved and preserved for eternity, we must place more emphasis upon getting the message of salvation to those who have never heard and are facing death without Jesus Christ.

#### **D. There is the courage for appropriation. v. 29**

In the Book of James, we find these words, "**....ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.**" **James 4:2b-3**. These verses in James tell us that many people don't have their prayers answered because they don't ask God for what they need, while others pray with the improper motives in order to get things to consume them with the lusts of the flesh. I believe this is what Jesus is trying to show His disciples in **verse 29** of our text. He tells them that not even a sparrow can fall from heaven without His knowing about it. So therefore, Jesus knows every need that His servants have or ever will have. The only problem is that many times His servants don't have the courage to claim from Jesus the resources that we already possess in order to carry out His mission in and through us. The need might be for protection. If so, let's step up and claim His protection. If we have need for food, then we need to ask Him confidently. If we are trying to raise support in order to go to the mission field, then we must have faith enough to trust Him to supply what we need. If we

have a family member that is trying to stand in our way of getting to where God wants us to be, then we must ask God to solve the problem and change the heart of that individual that has become an obstacle to our mission effort. On and on we could go, listing the needs that God wants to meet for us. But let's just meditate upon this verse.

We are told by some scholars that the word for fall in this text might even be hop! If so, then Jesus is telling His disciples that a little sparrow can't even hop over the ground without God's knowing everything about it. Therefore, we need not fear because in His omniscience, He knows everything that is going on in our lives.

We are also told in the first part of this verse that two sparrows are sold for a farthing. A farthing in the New Testament days was one of the smallest coins available. The people knew that two sparrows were sold as a food item for the cost of one farthing, which was about one sixteenth of a day's wage. These two little sparrows were then eaten somewhat like appetizers or finger foods. So, if these two very little creatures are under the seeing eye of God every moment, then why should we who are God's servants worry about having our needs met. What we must do is stop and reverence the Sovereignty of God Who has called us to the mission field in the first place. But, I must confess having worked on the mission fields in Africa for over 31 years, there have been some times that I have forgotten how big God is and I have demonstrated a lapse of faith. My problem is that often times, I have failed to claim or appropriate what God has in store to help me carry out the mission work He has given me to do. Therefore, I must today ask Jesus to forgive me for doubting Him and then give me a greater faith to claim what is needed for my work. Maybe you need to do the same as well!

#### **E. There is courage for consideration. v. 30**

In this verse, I really like how Jesus shows us His watch care and His omniscience in relationship to knowing the very number of hairs on our heads. This might seem to be a little simplistic or maybe even ridiculous, but the truth is that Jesus knows everything about us, down to how many hairs we have on our heads. There are those who are supposed to know who tell us that there are approximately 140,000 hairs on the average person's head. Of course, I also know that some of us don't have nearly as many as we used to. But, if we multiply 140,000 by the almost seven billion people in

the world today at the time of this writing, then I think we could conclude that God must have tremendously infinite knowledge. Therefore, as we demonstrate courage to consider Who we are serving and working for, we have no need to fear. This is what Jesus is trying to get across to His disciples, and I pray that He is getting this across to us as we study His Word. Folks, we must remember how much God loves us and how much He wants to use us as His missionaries.

#### **F. There is the courage for evaluation. v. 31**

At the risk of sounding just a little repetitious and maybe even redundant, in this verse we continue the thought that we need to have courage to stop and really evaluate how important we are to Jesus and His Kingdom work. Now, I don't mean that we should let our pride run away with this idea, but sometimes we just seem to act like it really doesn't matter if we are faithful to Christ and His work at all. This verse tells us that if Jesus is keeping count of the hairs on our head, then surely we are very important to Him. This should not give us more pride, but it should surely humble us that He has chosen us to be His ambassadors. And beloved friends, we should never get over the amazement that God chose us to serve on His team. If we can always remember Whose we are, and Whom we serve, then we should remain encouraged, even if we are prone to get discouraged easily, like me. My prayer is that God will always give me the courage to honestly evaluate who I am so that I don't forget Whose team I am on. If we can stop often and make an evaluation of who we are and what our purpose is in the mission work of God, then we will be able to find encouragement to "keep on keeping on" in our mission work.



## **Chapter Nine**

### **“The Profession We Must Make When We Do Missions” vs. 32-33**

Up to this point, we have covered a lot of verses of Scripture and discussed a lot of information which Jesus has given to us concerning His Father’s Biblical Blueprint For Missions. Like the disciples, we have been given a tremendous challenge to do missions God’s way, rather than the way of a denomination or some mission organization. What I have tried to do in this study is get us to go straight to the Word of God and follow the plan that Jesus gave His disciples as He was getting ready to send them out to their mission fields. Hopefully, we have by now learned that if we do missions God’s way, we will be fruitful and productive, even if we have to face some severe persecution. You see folks, when we study the Scriptures in context, we don’t have to come up with our own denominational or organizational plan and then try to find some Scripture to prove our biased points. We just simply let God show us His plan. This is what we have tried to do up to this point.

Now as we move on in our study, it is my prayer that we might be able to glean everything God wants us to have from His blueprint for missions. We will get this information if we don’t approach the rest of the study with a preconceived bias which we have developed because of the brainwashing of some church, some pastor, some denomination, or some mission organization. If this has happened to you, then you approach the Bible to find Scripture passages that give you a proof text to support your man-made plans or proposals. I do pray that you will open your heart and receive from Jesus what He wants all of us to know about His plan for missions because the lost world is waiting for us to bring them the Gospel, and Jesus is soon coming again to hold us accountable for what we have been trying to do. I pray that we will be found faithful when He comes.

#### **A. This is to be a public profession. v. 32**

It seems very evident to me that after Jesus told His disciples that they would indeed suffer persecution and that they didn’t need to fear because

His Father knew everything they were facing, He then tells His chosen first missionaries that they should never be ashamed of Him in any situation. In fact, they should always be ready to publicly confess Christ before all men. The word confess here means "to agree with God about Who He was and how Jesus came to save men". Our Lord was very emphatic when He told the disciples that if they unashamedly would confess Christ before men, then one day, He would give a good witness before His Father in heaven on their behalf.

I believe this verse, 32, is a revelation of what Jesus really expects from all of us as His children. Regardless of how much we are persecuted or harassed for being committed to Christ, we must stand firmly and openly profess or confess Him publicly before the entire world. In other words, we must not be ashamed of Jesus before others as we attempt to share the Gospel in this lost world wherever our mission field might be. I believe this verse implies that if we will stand up for Christ down here, He will not only defend us here on earth, but one day in heaven we will receive His public confession before the Father that we truly do belong to Him. If Jesus is truly not ashamed of us, then why should we be ashamed of Him in this politically and religiously correct world in which we live? I must tell you that every religion is not the same, and if we don't stand and declare that Jesus Christ is the only way to go to heaven, He will not defend and confess us before the Father which is in heaven.

Before I move on to the next verse, I would like to say that here in America, we see scores and scores of people who make public professions of faith while walking down front in an evangelistic or worship service. I don't question the well-meaning of hundreds and hundreds of these public decisions. Yet, having been a pastor for so long, I am literally appalled at how many of these decisions are never genuine or lasting. Why does this happen? Because some decisions are just emotional, others are just medicinal, some are even attention getting moves, and we could go on and on. But the fact is that when people genuinely get saved, they will not only make a verbal public confession in front of a church body, but they will live a new life in Christ because they have been transformed by the power of God.

Therefore, I do see a warning here for all of us. If we are going to profess Christ, then we must live a life that will give testimony that we also possess Him in our hearts and lives. The kind of profession that Jesus is talking about

in **verse 32**, is one that is genuine and unashamed to publicly confess with mouth and life that Jesus lives within. And before going on, I would like to mention that people who say they have gotten saved and will never follow through with water baptism are probably professing a lie. Again, genuinely saved people are not ashamed to publicly profess Christ before anyone; and baptism is always the first step.

## **B. This is to be a paid profession. v. 33**

I don't mean to cheapen the Gospel by using the word paid, but what I mean is that by the way we profess or do not profess Christ publicly, we will be paid or rewarded accordingly when we get to heaven. Jesus told His disciples in this verse that if they deny Him publicly by their words or even their silence here on earth, they will be denied before the Father which is heaven. Folks, this is truly a serious matter. Do you understand that if we are ashamed of our so-called faith in Christ down here on earth, He will deny that we belong to Him when we get up there?

I would just mention that right now, here in America, our country is in a literal mess, morally and spiritually, as I have mentioned many times before. Much of our problems today are not because of the evil that people commit, but they are because of the silence of the church when we should be taking a firm stand on the truth of the Word of God. We have allowed the loud wicked minority to cram their sins down our throats by their bullying, while we have hidden our heads in the sand just believing that things will just get better by themselves. I promise you that this is not going to happen. We as God's children and missionaries must speak up and stand up for what is good and righteous, even if this evil world doesn't like it. We must refuse to be bullied by these proliferators of wicked debauchery and perversion. We just need to remember that we will be defended before God the Father at the Bema Seat of Christ based upon how we have confessed and stood for Him down here on earth. Truly, in this age of tolerance, we don't need to be tolerating things that God has forbidden. Will you help us as modern day missionaries to stand tall for Jesus?

## **Chapter Ten**

### **“The Price We Must Pay When We Do Missions” vs. 34-39**

Earlier in our study of **Matthew chapter ten**, we covered the discussion that Jesus had with His disciples about persecution that could be expected for those who were serious about being faithful missionaries. Jesus told these first missionaries that they could expect persecution from big people, little people, family, friends, work colleagues, and many others. In other words, there would be no end to their persecution. But, He did tell the disciples that if the persecution got very severe and the people rejected their message of the Kingdom and the Gospel, they were permitted to flee to others towns and cities where the people would receive them and their message. Yet, this was a discussion of the potential hard times that were ahead for the disciples and all missionaries who would follow them.

So now, as we get closer and closer to the end of our study, Jesus shares some things with His disciples that probably were mind-boggling. In the verses that we will study in this chapter, we come to a strong warning once more to those who are truly serious about being faithful servants of almighty God. I personally believe that what Jesus wanted to do before He closed this specific message about ministry was to possibly disarm those who might seek missionary work as an adventure, instead of really being a faithful servant of God. And, I must tell you that in working in Africa for over 31 years, I have seen some of these missionaries who have gone on short-term trips for the wrong reasons. I have seen others who have moved to the fields to live; only to return home in short order because they weren't serious about going for the right reason. Therefore, what I believe Jesus is doing in these verses, 34-39, is to kindly shake the disciples up by warning them of some tremendous costs that would be involved in the missionary effort. By doing this, He was bringing them face to face with what they would have to sacrifice for the cause of Christ and His missions. No doubt, Jesus wanted to see what His men were made of before He sent them out on their own. So, He really got tough with them about the price they would have to pay if they were serious about the call to missions. These strong words from Jesus should weed out those who are not really called to missions by God, or they will help to prepare those who seriously have been called. He didn't want

them to be caught by surprise. So let's dig into these few verses to really see the price that genuine missionaries have to pay if they want to be successful on the field of service.

#### **A. The price includes the probable loss of our peace. v. 34**

Now this point might seem somewhat ridiculous because we have all been taught that when we are in Jesus and we are serving Him faithfully, that we will always have peace. Of course, this peace is what we receive in our hearts at the true moment of salvation. But in this verse, Jesus is telling His disciples that the last thing they might have once they start preaching the Gospel and doing missions in new places was peace. Jesus tells His disciples and all of us today that He didn't come to bring peace. When His people start faithfully proclaiming the Gospel, this effort will result in the lack of peace and probably bring division. The reason we reap division when we try to sow the love of God is that we are in a spiritual warfare with the devil, who doesn't want the world to hear the Gospel.

So, instead of peace endeavors, when we get serious about proclaiming the message of salvation, we must get ready because the preaching of the Word is like a sword which cuts and separates family members from each other. It also separates people from their original friends and colleagues that they had before they got saved.

So, Jesus just says, "Don't even think about peace," because it is not going to happen if we are serious about world missions. There may be some peaceful moments personally when people come to Christ, but overall, the Gospel sword will separate us from those who are not yet saved. Therefore, if any of you reading this book were disillusioned into thinking that serving God on the mission field would be easy, you need to stop before you get into real trouble. But, if God has truly called you to missions, then hopefully, this study from the lips of our Savior will help prepare you for what is ahead. "Take the ball and run with it!"

#### **B. The price includes the probable loss of our people. vs. 35-36**

As we move forward with our study of **Matthew 10**, we now come to verses 35-36. May I say that these are astounding and somewhat alarming verses? In these two verses Jesus basically tells His disciples if they are going to be

good missionaries, they must be ready to forsake everything in order to follow Him. This may even mean cutting ties with their own family members!

In **verse 35**, Jesus tells His servants that He came **"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."** The word variance here in the Greek means "to cut away from, or to sever the relationship". My, what a hard thing this is for us to accept. And bear in mind, Jesus was telling His disciples this before they went out to do missions. Yet, He was not telling them that He came to the earth to intentionally divide the family, but what He was telling them was that as the result of the preached Gospel about Him, families would have to cut or break relationships because some in the family would receive the Gospel message while others would reject it. As hard as it may seem, when we get serious about following Jesus and helping Him take the Gospel to a lost world, we are going to lose family members and friends. If we are not willing to do this, we will never reach our potential in the Kingdom work of God. Jesus and His call for our lives must be first! This foolishness about our families coming before the work of God, which we are hearing from some of our pulpits in America today, is straight out of the pits of hell. If the saints that lived before us would have felt this way, then you and I would probably not even be saved today because we would not have ever heard the Gospel. Therefore, let's be very careful that we don't talk ourselves out of a total surrender to Jesus based upon our love for our families and our ties to them. Yes for sure, we are to love our families, but they should never take precedence over our love for and our commitment to Christ and His Kingdom work.

Now, I want to insert a little testimony from my own personal life. My dear wife, Jo Anne, and I got married very young, when we were just teenagers. Many doubted that our marriage would last, but we determined before we got married that we were going to seek God's will for our lives and put Jesus first in every decision we tried to make in our marriage and for our future. Did we ever make wrong decisions? Why, of course we did, but we did not wallow in our self-pity and stay knocked down because we made the wrong decision. We just got up and started again, trying to put the work of the Kingdom in the forefront of our lives. By doing this, it has cost us some tremendous sacrifices within our immediate family, and it has cost us a huge divide in our extended families.

At the time of this writing, we have family members that criticize us for our level of commitment to the work of the Kingdom, while they are doing absolutely nothing to win people to Christ. They are forever occupied with hobbies, recreation, making money, and personal achievement in this world. Why, one time I asked one of these family members to consider making a mission trip to Africa with me. I was told by this person that they would not even pray about it. Yet, when my wife and I keep trying to carry on the work in Africa with as much commitment as our older bodies will allow, and as we keep trying to plant churches and win people to Christ here in America, we never get any encouragement from these extended family members. They only ridicule us because they think we feel we are better than them because of our strong convictions and our level of commitment to Christ. Why, one of these family members became so irate with me that he took it out on his former pastor and chewed him out because he thought this pastor was acting like me. Thus, he revealed his level of resentment and disdain that he has for me because of my desire to serve Jesus totally and completely without reservation. Through all of these years of ministry, Jo Anne and I have seen, explicitly before our very eyes, the things that Jesus predicted would come to any missionary who gave Christ and His Kingdom work total obedience and full commitment.

### **Our Family Members May Just Be Our Worst Enemies!**

**Verse 36** of this text is a strong affirmation from Jesus about what He had already said previously in **verse 35**. It is truly hard to accept, but He tells His disciples that as they would be getting ready to leave for their mission fields that they would be hated by their families and these family members would be the worst enemies they would have.

We don't know much about the family members of the early disciples, but I can attest personally that the more seriously my wife and I have become committed to Christ, the more we have been rejected by those we love the most. But, I must tell you that there is more to this than just our level of commitment. There are people in our extended families that are living in outright perversion and open sin. They and their family members detest us because we refuse to lower our standards to their lack of standards and approval of lesbianism, homosexuality, multiple marriages, couples living together unmarried, and blatant rebellion against almighty God and His Word.

Rest assured, folks, that I have been serving Jesus too long to lower the bar for family members or anyone else at this point. If anything, I want to raise the bar to where Jesus has placed it. Regardless of what our wicked society here in America says, righteousness still exalts a nation.

But missionary servants of God, you might as well get ready to cut some ties with your family if you get very serious about your mission work and winning people to Christ. We need to remember what Jesus said in **Luke 14: 26-27**, ***"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."***

### **C. The price includes the probable loss of our priorities. vs. 37-39**

Beloved friend, as I begin to share with you some of these final words from Jesus to His disciples before they left for their mission fields, I want to tell you once more that Jesus expects total and complete surrender of our lives to Him and His Kingdom work. Nothing less than our best will be acceptable by our Lord at His Judgment Seat. Therefore, we must stop and take a look at the priorities we have in our lives today. In order to get where Jesus wants us to be in His mission fields of the world, we are probably going to have to give up our priorities in life. This means that we have to "have on our hearts what Jesus has on His", and we have to make His priorities our priorities. And yet, this is the only place we will ever be happy in this life; living totally committed in the will of God! Are you living in the perfect will of God for your life? I hope you are!

**Verse 37** of our text is another reaffirmation of what Jesus requires for us to have the right priorities in life if we are going to serve Him. In this verse, He tells His disciples, and us as well, that we have to give up making our families priority in our lives. As harsh as this may seem, we must remember that Jesus gave up all of heaven and came down to this earth to die on the cross and to be resurrected from the dead in order to give us eternal salvation.

Therefore folks, don't you think He has the right to demand of us total commitment and surrender to Him and His Kingdom work as the priority of



our lives? I surely believe He does have this right, and we are fools if we don't make our family members second to everything Jesus wants from us.

## **We Are Not To Literally Hate Our Families!**

Just a few paragraphs back in this book, I mentioned that Jesus told us, in **Luke 14**, that in order to really serve Him, we had to hate our family members. This does not mean that Jesus wants us to literally hate our family. But, what this does mean is that if we are going to serve Jesus as His missionaries, then our love for Him and His work must be so great and strong that in comparison to our love for our families, it is as if we hate them. In other words, Jesus and His Kingdom must have priority in our lives. Do you have this priority in your life right now? If not, this would be a good time to close this book and just bow before Jesus in total and complete surrender. Make a vow to Him that for the rest of your life, He will be number one. If you will do this, you will begin to see amazing blessings from God upon yourself and your family members. The best way to save your family is to give yourself away to Him and give your family members a great pattern for them to follow. Even if they hate you right now because of your level of commitment, as some of mine do, in the long run, you will make a greater witness than you could in any other way.

Folks, we are told in archeological history that the terrible act of crucifixion originated with the Persians who had overthrown the Babylonians in what is today Iran and Iraq. It is thought that this horrible act of death may have been started by Darius the First because he knew of the horrific torture that the Assyrians had used in killing people; especially impalement on stakes along the roads into the cities. After crucifixion was instigated by the Persians, it was later used by Alexander the Great, the Greek King, to get rid of his war victims. Later crucifixion was used regularly by the Romans to put slaves and other dissidents to death. Of course, we know that this is the way Jesus was executed. So, when Jesus told His disciples, in **verse 38** of this text, that if they didn't take up His cross and follow Him, they would not be worthy of Him, what did He mean? I personally believe that in order to follow Him on the mission fields of the world that the cross would be suffering, sacrifice, possible torture, rejection, and ultimate death to every selfish desire they had. And, as we know, it meant literal death to eleven of the early disciples who chose to follow Jesus, including Paul who

died in Rome. If we don't accept the demands of the cross to follow Jesus, then we are not worthy to be called His follower, and especially not worthy to be called His missionary. So, prospective missionary, pastor, or evangelist, if you are not willing to die to self and suffer for Christ, you are not worthy to identify with Him as your Lord and Savior. All that dying to self and taking up His cross means is to simply submit to Him as Lord and Master. To do less is to make a mockery of His torture and crucifixion. Do you still want to be a missionary and follower of Christ? I surely pray that you do!

### **What Kind Of Life Are You Living?**

Last Sunday in our morning worship service, I quoted a man who said, "If you want to determine if you are really serving Jesus, just stop and ask yourself, what does it take to make you happy?" If you are just living for right now and not eternity, then you are on the way to losing your life, because when you die, you will lose everything. However, if your happiness comes from dying to self and faithfully serving Jesus, then real life is just ahead of you. You can enjoy much of it now as you involve yourself in reaching people with the Gospel message for Jesus. And then you will find ultimate joy when you get to heaven and see the people that you have had a part in bringing them there. I must tell you again that there is no greater joy on earth than leading people to Christ, knowing fully well that we will have forever in heaven to enjoy the fruits of our labors. I do pray that you are genuinely saved and have already surrendered your life to be a part of Christ's Kingdom work as His missionary. If you haven't, right now would be a good time. You must give up your temporary life to gain an eternity with celebration.

## **Chapter Eleven**

### **“The Profit We Gain For Doing Missions” vs. 40-42**

In this chapter of my book, we now come to the last three verses in Jesus’ discussion with His disciples on how they were to do missions as He sent them out to begin working two by two. These last three verses describe for us how much God will reward those who do missions according to His plan, and also, how He will bless those who receive with hospitality the man and the message God sends their way. It is rather unique that Jesus closes His discourse with these three verses just to show how important the proclamation of the Gospel really is. It is first, very important to Christ Himself. Secondly, it is also very important to those God calls and uses in mission work, and then, thirdly, it is very important for those who minister to the God-called missionaries because they are promised to receive the same blessings that the actual missionaries receive. Of course, this is just a reminder that the best way to do missions is with a team and with a team spirit. Then, the entire team will be eternally rewarded for their efforts to tell the world about Jesus! So, let’s praise God for the privilege of serving on Jesus’ team with Him as our Captain.

#### **A. The profit will include reverence for the One Who called us. v. 40**

Doing missions the right way according to **God’s Blueprint** will not only bear fruit with souls’ being saved and coming to Christ, but it will bring personal benefits to the missionary who proclaims the Word, benefits to those who receive and accept the servant of God and the message, and most of all, it will honor the Christ Who saved us and extended the call to us to be missionaries. And I might add, that when a person helps or waits upon a true missionary, that person will be rewarded by the Lord just as if he or she were waiting on Jesus. I think it is absolutely wonderful that God doesn’t pick and choose those who are necessarily special, but He blesses every person who serves directly as a missionary. He pours out His riches upon those who pray for the missionaries, support the missionaries financially, and even those who minister to the missionaries to give them some comfort and encouragement. The fact is that God never forgets anyone who has tried to do missions from the actual field missionary to the senior citizen ladies

back in the local church who have prayer meetings for their missionaries on the fields. You see folks, everyone who serves Jesus in any way to help with missions is special. This would be a good place for me to say that if a church stops being mission minded, that church will have just started its death rattles. I not only believe this, but I know this for a fact, having seen it in many churches by experience. In addition, I would like to say that the worst thing on earth that a church can do when it gets into financial trouble is to immediately start cutting back on mission support. When this happens, the church has started driving nails in its coffin. Missions are serious business to Christ, and missions should be important and serious to every local church.

#### **B. The profit will include rewards for those who have received. v. 41**

In this blessed verse, we are told that those who receive the prophet or missionary who proclaims the Word of God and brings the message of salvation shall be rewarded just like the preacher or servant who delivers the Gospel message. This truly shows how God loves those who take care of God's servant. It would behoove every child of God and every church member to pay attention to this verse. Why? Because if any person shows respect for the servant of God, that person will receive the same rewards that the preacher or missionary may receive. But, if a person rejects or disrespects the servant of God, it is implied here that he or she will suffer much loss.

#### **It Is Serious Business To Oppose The Servant Of God**

I believe this would be a good time for me to tell every reader that it is a serious thing for any person to reject or rebel against any true man of God; whether a pastor, an evangelist, or a missionary. Why? Because the person who preaches or teaches the Word of God has been given the authority of that Word, and to cause this servant heartache, discouragement, or even to be guilty of opposing this person is a very serious mistake. This doesn't mean that the servant of God will never be wrong or make a mistake, but it does mean that there must be respect for the office this person has been given by God. To cause hurt to a truly committed servant of God is to put one's self in tremendous danger. I say this not only because of what the Bible teaches, but also because I have seen the evident results of those who decide to cause unnecessary trouble or heartache for the preacher, pastor, evangelist, or missionary. Let me say that it is not pretty when this happens.

I will just give you a couple illustrations. Many years ago back in the 1970's, a dear pastor friend of mine was pastoring a church in the State of Tennessee. The pastor had been at his church for about three years. Just before he left home to go to Florida to preach a revival meeting, two of his deacons got extremely angry with him because he taught a series on the family. In this series, he taught a Bible passage dealing with sexual purity which God demands for marriage. These two deacons rebelled against what he preached and called the pastor some very ugly names.

The pastor and his wife were hurt tremendously, but in spite of the uncertain situation, the pastor drove on to Florida to preach the revival meeting. He had only been in Florida for a few days when his wife called him to tell him that the two deacons called a church business meeting the past Sunday evening and asked the church to vote their pastor out. The church responded and, indeed, voted this servant of God out of his position as pastor. The pastor's wife, absolutely in tears, contacted her husband in Florida and told him what had happened. This man of God told his wife not to worry, but just simply to pray about this situation. Well, the pastor finished the revival meeting in Florida and drove back home to Tennessee. He got home on Saturday evening just before the next Lord's Day services on Sunday.

When the pastor showed up at the church that Sunday morning, there stood these two deacons on the front porch of the church. They were stationed to tell him that he was no longer the pastor there and that he was not welcome to attend there. The pastor looked at the deacons and said to these men, "God called me here as your pastor. If He wants me to leave, I will go. If He does not want me to leave, I will still remain the pastor here." Then, the pastor fell down on the front steps of the church and began to pray. He prayed for God's will to be done in the matter, and he told God that if he was to no longer be the pastor, that He should tell him. And, if he was to remain the pastor, then God needed to remove the obstacles. After he closed his prayer, the pastor got his wife and drove back home. This was on Sunday morning, and before the next Wednesday evening service, both of these deacons had heart attacks and died! Folks, I kid you not! This really happened. The next Wednesday evening the entire church membership was extremely shook up, so they voted this man back in as their pastor. Later in the week there were two funerals at the church. Once again, it is a very serious thing to harass or harm the servant of God. If you do become an

opponent, you may put yourself in severe danger. Just remember, if you reject or oppose the servant of God, you are rejecting Jesus Himself.

### **This Second Story Really Happened!**

The second true story that I will give you concerns a telephone call that I received one day from a young pastor. The pastor had been at his church for about six years. There were a couple of deacons in his church that wanted to make the youth pastor the senior pastor. They started a crusade to push the pastor to resign. When the pastor called me he was very broken and didn't know what to do. So, I asked him what the church bylaws and constitution said about the method for getting rid of the pastor. The bylaws and constitution said that to remove a senior pastor, there had to be a three-fourth majority vote of the church. Therefore, I told this young man that he should not resign, but instead, force the hand of the two deacons to bring it to the floor of the church. He decided this was what he would do.

That day after I got off the phone with the pastor, I made phone calls to these two rebelling deacons because I knew both of them personally. I told both of them that unless their pastor had committed some immoral sin, stolen some church money, or had been preaching false doctrine, they had no reason to try to force him to resign. I also told them that if he was not guilty of either of these three things, they were putting their lives in jeopardy with God because they were attacking His servant. Well, these two men tried again to get the pastor to resign, but he refused to do so. They deacons then saw that they didn't have as great a following as they thought, so they backed down. But, it was too late! Shortly after this incident, one of the deacons started having serious heart problems which resulted in heart surgery. And then, just in a few months, the wife of the other deacon found him dead out behind their home. I want to say again, it is very serious to attack the servants of God, but it is also good to love and support them and their message. If you do this, you will be blessed by Jesus because He has been blessed by your good deed and respect.

### **Another Great Conclusion To This Thought**

Before moving on to the final verse of our study in **Matthew 10**, I would like for us to take a close look at what Dr. John MacArthur says about **verse**

**41.** Please read the following quotes carefully.

"Although many people reject the Gospel, many also believe. Those who accept the Gospel will accept the one who brings them the Gospel. The true disciple and minister of Jesus Christ is an agent of God. Not even the apostles had within themselves the power to forgive sin or reconcile men to God. But every Christian whose witness brings another person to Christ is God's instrument of salvation. In that sense, Jesus said, '**He who receives you receives Me.**' A person who receives us and our testimony also receives Christ because we are His ambassadors."<sup>69</sup>

"The person who receives the Son also receives the Father: '**and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.**' There is no such thing as believing in God the Father without believing in God the Son. Jesus told the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, '*You know neither Me, nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.*' A short while later he said to the same group, '*If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me*' (John 8:19, 42).<sup>70</sup>

"In His limitless grace God not only rewards a prophet for his faithfulness but also rewards anyone else **who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet**, even giving them **a prophet's reward**. The same principle, in fact, applies to every believer who is accepted for Christ's sake. **He who receives a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward**. In an incomprehensible sharing of blessing, God showers His rewards on every person who receives His people because they are His people."<sup>71</sup>

### **C. The profit will include a remembrance by the One Who is watching over us. v. 42**

We have now reached the final verse in this study of **Matthew 10**. In this chapter, our wonderful Lord has given us the true plan for world mission endeavors. It is rather unique how Jesus concludes this chapter with this verse. It almost appears that Jesus suddenly decides to share this simple but yet profound truth. The truth is that whatever we do for Christ, no matter how small it may seem, will indeed be rewarded. Even if we give a cup of cold water to a "little one" in the name of Jesus, we will be rewarded

by Jesus.

But the question is, who are these “little ones” that Jesus is referring to here in this verse? There is much speculation about who they are, but just let me be somewhat inclusive in my speculation just to remind us of the many opportunities that we may have to represent our King as we minister in His name. Maybe these “little ones” are new converts who have recently given their lives to Christ. Or, maybe they are those who have been serving Jesus for years in obscurity, without any acclimation or fanfare from others. Why, they may just be those little old ladies homebound or in a nursing home where we go to give a cup of cold water, a new toothbrush, and toothpaste, or just to sing a Christian hymn for their enjoyment. Maybe these “little ones” are those little children in prison with their moms in Africa where my dear wife has been ministering for years and years. The cup of cold water might be providing a milk cow for the prison so that the kids can have milk to drink. Or, it might just be providing diapers for the kids to wear or some orange juice to quench the thirst of both mom and child. And, this cup of cold water may be just giving out blankets or quilts to the children in prison to keep them warm during the damp and cold nights. But, whatever this deed which is done in the name of Jesus is, He has promised to reward the ones who have shared His love by meeting the needs of these “little ones”. Folks, it is so wonderful to know that Jesus takes knowledge of every kind deed or action that His servants or missionaries do in His holy name, if the purpose of the act or deed is to share the Good News of salvation. Therefore, we learn once more that mission work can be to the multitudes like on the day of Pentecost, or it can be to the mom and child in a forgotten prison in the dark regions of Africa or some other very primitive country. These mission endeavors can be to the ghettos of some of our major cities here in America. Wherever this mission action occurs, Jesus is observing and taking knowledge of it. Plus, He is ready to reward every deed, if it is done in His name and with the right motive. Folks, it is just like Jesus walking in our shoes and reaching out His hands through us to those who so need His love and ministry. Therefore, we must surrender our lives to Him totally and completely and involve ourselves in front-line missions if we are going to represent Him well as His ambassadors.



## **Be Blessed By This Story**

“While a young boy in a country village in England struggled hard to study for the ministry, an old cobbler helped him in whatever ways he could. The godly man encouraged the boy spiritually and helped support him with what little money he could spare. When the young man was finally licensed to preach, the cobbler said to him, ‘I always had in my heart the desire to be a minister of the gospel; but circumstances never made it possible. You are doing what was always my dream but never a reality. I want you to let me make your shoes for nothing, and I want you to wear them in the pulpit when you preach. In that way I will feel you are preaching the gospel I always wanted to preach, standing in my shoes.’”<sup>72</sup>

“Whenever we become the source of blessing for others, we are blessed; and whenever other believers become a source of blessing to us, they are blessed. In God’s magnificent economy of grace, the least believer can share the blessings of the greatest, and no one’s good work will go unrewarded.”<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion

Today I come to the conclusion of this book. I have been working on it for over one and one half years. This has been a very difficult project, but yet, it has been a blessing for me as I have studied much on **"God's Biblical Blueprint For Missions"** based primarily upon the Scripture which Jesus gave us in **Matthew 10:1-42**. And, although I never intended this just to be a Bible Commentary, I suppose you could say that I have tried very hard to do somewhat of an in-depth study of this text so that we could learn clearly the plan that Jesus Himself gave to His disciples as He commissioned them and sent them out to their first mission fields to proclaim the Gospel. Personally, I believe that in this modern-day church age, we have very much complicated the plan which Jesus intended to be very simple. And, isn't this what man always does when God tells him how He wants things to be done? God is explicit about showing His servants His divine will and purpose, and then these servants just decide that they are much wiser than God and try to do God's will man's way; inevitably messing things up in a very tragic way! But the sad thing about servants who disobey God and try to do things their way is that the usual end result is that multitudes and multitudes of lost sinners die without Jesus because the Gospel doesn't reach the hearts of millions and millions of people on the mission fields of the world. Thus, I suppose you could say that this is the purpose of all of my hard work on this book over the past many months! I suppose that you could also say that after all my years in the ministry I am sick of the direction world missions have gone over the past 25 plus years and of the declining results in winning people to Christ. I will say it again, but the main reason for dying mission work resulting in fields that no longer have active missionaries is the result of the **"Monumental Tragedy Of Misunderstood, Misguided, and Misdirected Modern Missions."** This is a big statement which many might see as foolish. Yet, this problem still lies at the very root of the decline of dying mission work on the fields of the world. The direct result of this wrong mission strategy which was innovated and started 42 years ago, but grew rapidly over the past 25 years, is that multitudes of people are dying without Christ to the tune of an estimated 80,000 people per day because they have never had a simple presentation of the Gospel message. And as I stated earlier in this book, this 80,000 number results in over 30 million people every year dying and going to hell in this world, with very few of them ever receiving the truth of the Gospel message.

## **The Tragic Results Of This Warped Mission Effort**

I could never feel good about the conclusion of this book without speaking once again to the tragic results of this warped mission effort which makes a lot of noise, but doesn't produce a whole lot of fruit. When mission strategy was dramatically changed 42 years ago (I will talk about this just a little more before I close) from an all-out push to win as many people to Christ through mass evangelism, special project proclamation, old fashion career missionaries, and many other wonderful ways, the fruitful harvest of multitudes of souls began to spiral downward, out of control. Since that time, the terrible trend has never been reversed. More and more churches are dying, mission programs are being canceled, missionaries are being asked to come home from the fields, very few new missionaries are going to the fields, and the work that is going on in world missions seems to be a lot of wasted efforts. Beyond these horror stories, millions and millions of dollars are being wasted in world missions, while a handful of souls are truly coming to Christ. Because the reports from the fields are only telling about two or three Muslims getting saved per year, instead of huge numbers of Masai warriors, etc. coming to Christ each year, giving to missions has dropped dramatically. Now, the mission organizations and boards are in a state of panic because there is not enough money to carry out the new strategy that was started back in 1974. The leaders of these organizations are pulling their hair out just wondering, "What has happened?" So, my purpose in writing this book has been to reveal what has happened to world missions, and hopefully, get us back to the simple plan Jesus gave His disciples when He sent them out. We must also go back to the Book of Acts plan for missions, which Paul and his associates followed as they turned the known world upside down for Christ in just a little over 30 years.

### **When Did This Mission Strategy Change?**

I have already discussed when our world mission strategy was changed for the worse, but let me be intentionally repetitious so that we will never forget that so much damage has been done to the world mission cause over the past 25 plus years. And, I do not mean to criticize negatively any of the well-meaning people that helped destroy the world mission program. I just want

to point out, once again, how we left the mission fields where spiritual fish were being caught in places where the fish were biting, and now we are working with unreached people groups of the world in and through the 10/40 window with very few fish ever being caught.

The decline and devastation of Christianity's world mission effort can be traced back to July, 1974 when the very first Lausanne Evangelism Conference was held in Switzerland which Billy Graham sponsored. There were many speakers at that conference, but there was one in particular that Satan used to convince the evangelists and missionaries that they were to completely change their mission strategy for world missions. That one speaker was Dr. Ralph Winter, a renowned professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. During his presentation, he spoke on "The High Priority-Cross Culture Evangelism" and convinced the participants that they were doing their evangelism and mission work with an improper strategy. So, they were told and convinced that they needed to move away from the very fruitful and productive ways that they had been using to win multitudes to Christ, and begin going to the unreached people groups of the world, even if they had to use covert mission activity to get into these places. Many of the people who were at the conference were told that God sent Mr. Winter to the conference, but I beg to differ. I believe a good man who meant well was used by Satan to influence thousands of evangelists and missionaries to change their strategy because it wouldn't work in this new generation. Therefore, ever since that date in 1974, and especially over the past 25 plus years, the leaders of scores of mission organizations have changed their strategy. The end result is just what Satan planned: few people getting saved and billions of dollars wasted trying to win just a few Muslims to Christ while masses of people die lost in the countries where God had dramatically opened the doors. One of the greatest purveyors of this new strategy was the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, which today is dying because of the poor leadership of people like former President, Jerry Rankin, who led this formerly great mission body down the road to almost destruction over the seventeen years he led this ministry. No wonder that the new president is begging older missionaries to take early retirement because there is not enough money to support them.

So, my dear beloved friends, this is the reason that I have worked so hard to write this book to admonish, hopefully, hundreds and hundreds of people who desire to win people to Christ through missions to get back to **"God's**

**Biblical Blueprint For Missions”.** I have tried so desperately to reveal that in this material. It is truly my prayer that God might use the chapters of this book where we have covered verse by verse Jesus’ commission to His disciples to take the Gospel to the world, and make it a source of inspiration to large numbers of His servants so that they will follow the plan He gave through His beloved Son and that they will go after the billions of lost sinners in places where God has opened the doors. It is also my prayer that God’s servants and ministries will quit wasting millions of dollars working in the wrong places, but that they will be good stewards of God’s provided funds to bring people to Christ. As I have stated earlier, Gateway International Missions, Inc. brings someone to a public profession of faith in Christ for every \$2.71 we spend in Africa. I just can’t image how many millions of people we could win to Christ through our national pastors and evangelists if we had the money that is wasted every year by these mission organizations and churches who go to these thousands of places where God has either never opened the doors, or where He has already closed the doors. To use my country illustration, “why aren’t we fishing in lakes and ponds where the fish are biting?”

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