

## **Making Disciples of All Nations, Part 2**

Scripture: Matthew 28:18b–20

Code: 2405

### **INTRODUCTION**

God's desire is to reach the lost of this world and bring them into fellowship with Himself. He "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9) and

would "have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). After all, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Therefore we should not be surprised at the command to make disciples since that has been God's intention from the beginning. Review

### **I. AVAILABILITY (v. 16)**

### **II. WORSHIP (v. 17-18a) Lesson**

### **III. SUBMISSION (v. 18b)**

"Jesus ... spoke unto them, saying, All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth."

A third element in fulfilling the Great Commission is submission to Christ's authority.

#### **A. The Definition of Christ's Authority**

Christ declared His absolute authority. The Greek word translated "authority" (exousia) means "privilege" or "power." It is freedom without any limitations. Jesus Christ has complete freedom of choice and action.

#### **B. The Range of Christ's Authority**

Christ displayed His authority over sickness (Matt. 4:23) and death (John 11:43-44). At the close of the Sermon on the Mount it was obvious His authority superseded all other religious teachers (Matt. 7:29). He had the authority to delegate power over disease and demons to His apostles (Matt. 10:1). He also has the authority to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6) and judge all men (John 5:25-29). John 10:18 says He had the authority to lay down His life and take it up again. That indicates the range of His authority.

Some day Christ will take the title deed to the earth and take possession of the world (Rev. 5:1-7). That can be seen in His authority over Satan, who tried to tempt Him, saying, "All these [kingdoms of

the world] I will give thee" (Matt. 4:9). But Jesus told Satan to be gone because He had no need to receive those kingdoms from Satan. One day "the kingdom of this world [will] become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15). That is the authority spoken of in Psalm 2, when He will crush all other powers and receive to Himself the authority of the universe.

### **C. The Source of Christ's Authority**

From whom did Jesus receive His authority? The prophet Daniel said, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man [Christ] came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14). Daniel had a vision of Christ at His second coming, a description similar to Matthew 24:30, where Christ describes His second coming as "the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven."

"Ancient of days" is an Old Testament title for God the Father. The Son comes to the Father, and the Father gives all authority to the Son, obliging everyone to serve Christ.

Other Scriptures show that the Father has given all authority to the Son. Isaiah 9:6 says the government is upon His shoulders. Acts 2:36 says God has made the Son to be both Lord and Christ. And Philippians 2:9-11 says God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name that every knee should bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

### **D. The Consummation of Christ's Authority**

There is coming a day when He will exercise the fullness of that authority. He will gather the kingdoms of the world to Himself and purge out all evil. After that Christ will submit Himself to the Father in an act of adoring worship (1 Cor. 15:27-28).

Because all authority is given to the Son, the believer is to submit himself to Him. His authority is binding. The disciples gathered on a hillside in Galilee had no choice but to obey Him.

Many want Christ to forgive their sins, but reject His authority to rule over them. Christ is both Savior and Lord and that calls for submission.

## **IV. OBEDIENCE (vv. 19-20a)**

The command to "teach [make disciples of] all nations" (Matt. 28:19) requires obedience. Mark 16:15 commands us to "go ... into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." In the words of Luke, "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:47).

Matthew 28:19-20 specifies the areas of obedience. The main verb is making disciples. The three participles are going, baptizing, and teaching--the means of making disciples.

## **A. Going to the World (v. 19a)**

"Go ye."

We're not to wait for the world to come to us. Rather, we're to go to the world. "Go ye" could be better translated "having gone." It isn't a command; it's an assumption. Going is a corollary to the command of making disciples.

### **1.To Israel**

Jesus said, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles.... But go, rather, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5-6; cf. Matt. 15:24). Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first" (Rom. 1:16, emphasis added). God's design was to reach the world through Israel.

However, Israel was unbelieving. Jesus illustrated that with a parable about a king who arranged a wedding feast for his son and called for his invited guests (Israel). But they refused to come. Some were indifferent and others hostile. So the king said to his servants, "Go, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage" (Matt. 22:9). Pictured here is apostate Israel, refusing their Messiah and forfeiting the celebration planned for them. The invitation is then given to another people.

### **2.To the Gentiles**

God chose the small group of people gathered on the hillside in Galilee and a few other disciples in Jerusalem to reach the lost world. Through them He would do the work that the nation of Israel had refused to do.

Paul is an illustration of a disciple who reached out to the lost world. He was sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 26:18).

## **B. Baptizing People (v. 19)**

"Baptizing [all nations] in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

### **1. The significance of baptism**

The Greek word baptiz[ma]o means "to immerse" or "dip." Baptism is the outward sign of one's inward faith in Christ. It's an act of obedience by which a person demonstrates the reality of his salvation. Salvation is not visibly seen, but is a supernatural, spiritual transaction. The fruit or result of salvation, however, should be evident. If one doesn't see the result, there's reason to question whether salvation took place. In the early church, the initial fruit of obedience was baptism, and there's no reason for that to be any different now. It's the means by which an individual testifies to his or her union in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4). Galatians 3:27 says, "As

many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

Matthew 28 marks the first time since Jesus died and rose again that believers could be baptized as a demonstration of their identity with all Christ did for mankind. The book of Acts shows that when people were converted, they were soon baptized. The Great Commission tells us to preach the gospel and baptize others. That means we're to tell people that salvation is something they not only believe, but also publicly confess--baptism being the first step. When someone is reluctant to publicly confess Christ in that way, we have reason to question the genuineness of his faith. Jesus said, "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). That is a public confession.

## 2. Clarifications about baptism

### a) In relation to salvation

Any religious rite or act is impotent with respect to salvation. Faith and baptism are sometimes mentioned together in Scripture, but no one is saved by baptism itself.

Mark 16:15-16 states, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Some say that means baptism is a part of salvation. However, verse 16 continues, "But he that believeth not shall be damned." The issue is believing, which will manifest itself through a willingness to make a public confession.

Ephesians 4:5 speaks of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The teaching of Acts 2:38 is that one should "repent, and be baptized ... for the remissions of sins." Baptism is an intrinsic part of discipleship because it demonstrates genuine faith. However, it is but a symbolic act of identifying with Christ. One is saved through faith alone (Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8-9). Who Is a Disciple?

A disciple is someone who confesses Christ as Lord and Savior, believing that God has raised Him from the dead and declaring that belief publicly through baptism.

A disciple is not a second-level Christian. One does not have to wait to become a disciple at some future time in his Christian life. Some say there are many Christians who aren't disciples. They know the Bible teaches that to be a disciple, one has to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Christ (Mark 8:34). If one is not willing to do that, he is not worthy to be Christ's disciple (Matt. 10:38). They say some Christians aren't up to that level of commitment, but according to Matthew 28:19-20, a disciple is made at the moment of salvation. One cannot separate discipleship from conversion. When one is saved he receives a submissive spirit that manifests itself by a willingness to make a public confession and obey whatever else Christ commanded. Even when the believer is disobedient, it goes against his deepest desire, which is to obey.

### b) In relation to a formula

Baptizing "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (v. 19) is not necessarily a formula for baptism, although those words are commonly used in baptisms. In the book of Acts people were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16) or Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38). To baptize someone in the name of Jesus Christ is simply to picture his union with Him.

However, Matthew 28:19 is the fullest statement possible. Baptizing a believer in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shows this union is not only with Christ, but also with the Godhead. It's a rich and comprehensive statement.

Christ put Himself on the same level with the other two members of the Trinity. Note that the verse doesn't say, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit." Neither does it say, "In the names of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The mystery of the Trinity is one name with three Persons. "Name" refers to all that a person is and does, so here it speaks of all that God is as the Trinity. "In" (Gk., *eis*) could mean "into," "unto," or "in." Baptism represents one's coming into union with the Trinity through Jesus Christ. Now one becomes

a disciple at the moment of salvation and that involves a full union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but that transforming reality is demonstrated by the beautiful ceremony of baptism. Baptism is an important step of obedience. In the New Testament we see that everywhere the gospel was preached, those who believed were soon baptized (Acts 2:41; 8:38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16).

### **C. Teaching People (v. 20a)**

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Since the new convert desires to learn so he can obey, he needs to be taught "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). One cannot be a disciple apart from a life of obedience and a desire to follow Him as Lord.

Jesus said to the people gathered on the mountain that they were to teach everything He had commanded them. He previously said, "The Holy Spirit ... shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you" (John 14:26), and the Bible writers wrote it all down. The Spirit has made that teaching available to every believer in the Word of God. Each believer is to submit himself to it in obedience. Hebrews 5:9 says, "Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." True converts are those who obey Christ. Romans 6:13 says, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." That speaks of an obedient faith.

### **V. POWER (v. 20b)**

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

#### **A. Christ's Presence**

The Greek word translated "lo" is an exclamation to gain attention, and the word translated "I" is emphatic: "I, no less than I, the living risen Son of God, am with you." The believer has great comfort knowing he remains in Christ's presence. He also has great power available to him as a result.

#### **B. Christ's Permanence**

"Always" literally means "all the days," and "end" means "consummation," not cessation. It's a consummation of many diverse elements into a grand finale. Christ will be with the believer until the consummation of this age. His abiding presence is what makes the task of reaching the world possible. In fact, He "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20, emphasis added). Conclusion

No wonder Matthew concluded his gospel with an "amen," which means "so be it." God desires availability, Christ-centered worship, and a submissive spirit that results in obedience. In return, our Lord provides not only all the right instruction, but also the power of His own presence.

## **A Lifesaving Station**

An unknown author wrote that on a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur, there was once a little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea. With no thought for their safety they went out day and night, tirelessly rescuing the lost. Many lives were saved so the station became famous.

Some of those who were saved, along with others in the surrounding area, wanted to become associated with the station. They gave of their time, money, and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought, new crews were trained, and the lifesaving station grew.

Some of the members were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They felt a more comfortable place should be provided, so they replaced the emergency cots and beds and put better furniture in a new, larger building.

Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members. They decorated it exquisitely because they used it as sort of a club. Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on lifesaving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do the work.

The lifesaving motif still prevailed in the club's decorations, and there was a liturgical lifeboat in the room where club initiations were held. About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in loads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick. The beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where the shipwreck victims could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the lifesaving activity because they thought it was a hindrance and unpleasant to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted on lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out they were still a lifesaving station after all. They were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of various kinds of people shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast, which they did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and another lifesaving station was founded. History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit that coast today, you'll find a number of exclusive clubs along the shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent, but most of the people drown.

Isn't it easy for the church to lose sight of its mission?

## **Focusing on the Facts**

1. What is a necessary third element in making disciples?
2. Name the source of Christ's authority. Support your answer with Scripture.
3. What is the fourth necessary element of the Great Commission?
4. What are three areas of obedience?
5. Whom did God initially select to witness to the world? Whom did God choose as a replacement?
6. What New Testament character is an illustration of witnessing to the lost world?
7. Explain the significance of baptism.
8. In the early church, the initial fruit of obedience was \_\_\_\_\_ .
9. Explain why Mark 16:15-16 teaches that salvation is through faith alone. Give other Scriptural support that salvation is apart from works.
10. True or false: According to Matthew 28:19-20, a true disciple is made at the moment of salvation.
11. True or false: Discipleship does not exist apart from a life of obedience to Christ. Give two verses to support your answer.
12. How has the Spirit made His teaching available?
13. What is the fifth necessary element in making disciples?
14. What brings about power in the believer's life?
15. How can a church lose sight of its mission?

## **Pondering the Principles**

1. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you" (John 15:14). Commenting on obedience A. W. Tozer wrote, "The man that believes will obey; failure to obey is convincing proof that there is not true faith present" (Signposts: A Collection of Sayings from A. W. Tozer, Harry Verploegh, ed. [Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1988], p.138). Is your life characterized by a teachable and submissive spirit ready to obey the commands of Christ?

2. David was aware of God's presence when he said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Ps. 46:1-2). The promise of Christ's presence is also a promise

of His power. Throughout the day, meditate on the fact that Christ is always with you. Search the Scriptures for other verses that also show that truth.

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