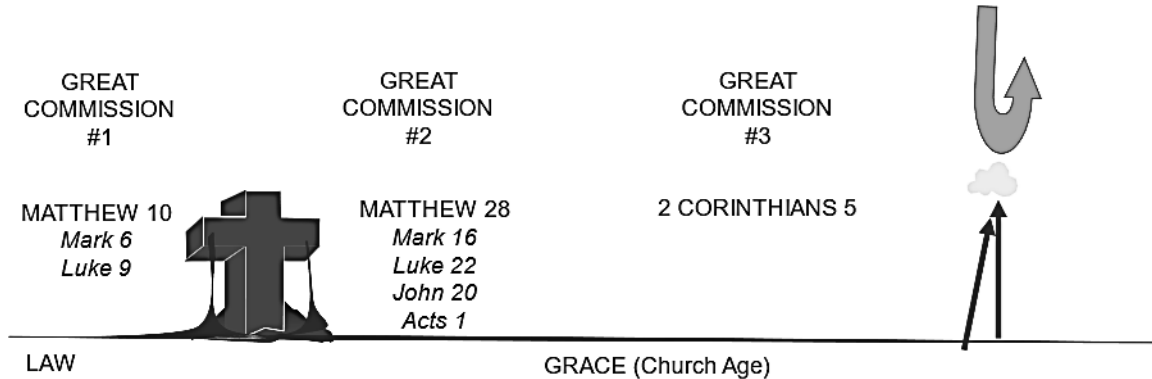


**THE THREE GREAT COMMISSIONS**  
*A Sermon by Dr. Dave Reese*

I will do a little preaching, Bible study, and just about everything here tonight. I want to talk tonight about the three great commissions, and I'm going to put our time marker up here, the cross.



Although the cross made a big change in everything, Bible-wise, did you know that actually, as far as the record goes, many times men did not know – especially right after, in the early part of Acts – what the cross meant? They had to wait until later on to get the meaning that we understand: that Christ died for our sins on that cross.

The way you know that is that in Acts 2, Peter didn't preach that Christ died for our sins. In Acts 2, Peter preached that Israel had rejected their Savior, they had crucified Him, and they were to repent – not of watching TV, not of smoking, not of drinking – but of rejecting and crucifying Christ. And because he said, "I'm coming back," Peter and the others expected Him to come at any time. So, we're going to look at the three great commissions.

I'd like you to take your Bible, first of all, and look at Matthew 10 with me, please.

You hear people talking about "The Great Commission," but actually, there is more than one commission in the Bible that the Lord gave His disciples. One commission that the Lord gave His disciples, the twelve apostles, had to do with twelve tribes – a nation.

Why did Jesus choose twelve apostles? Well, because there are twelve tribes in Israel, and each one of those apostles is going to sit upon a throne, judging a tribe of Israel during the millennial kingdom. And then Israel – the twelve tribes of Israel, that nation – is going to be over the Gentiles. That's the gospel of the kingdom: the Gentiles will receive their blessing after Israel is blessed. That's why the Lord chose twelve apostles to deal with one nation.

But then, God chose another apostle. A good question to ask someone is, why did God choose another apostle whenever He already had twelve? Some people say God chose him to take the place of Judas Iscariot. But God tells you in His book that the twelfth apostle had already been chosen long before Paul even got saved. Of course, that twelfth apostle is Matthias.

In Acts 2, Peter didn't say it directly, but the Word of God says, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven..." (Ac. 2:14) So, Peter with the eleven makes twelve. They had just prayed, asked God, quoted Scripture, and used the Scriptural method of selecting and making a choice. That apostle, by the way, also had to begin at the baptism of John all the way until the day Jesus was taken up – in other words, from the baptism of John to the bodily ascension- to qualify as an apostle. Only two fit the bill, and Matthias is the one that God chose, and he's numbered with the eleven. So you already have twelve apostles.

So why do you need another apostle, unless there's a different program? That's exactly what it is. You have twelve apostles for the twelve tribes, having to do with a nation and the gospel of the kingdom. Then God chooses another apostle, the Apostle Paul, one man who is the apostle to the Gentiles, with the message for the body of Christ. So God changes His dealings from Israel to the body of Christ, where in Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free." (Gal. 3:28) There's no distinction between nations in Christ – it's one body.

A body is quite different from a nation. A nation is an organization; a body is an organism. A body has a head, and Christ is the Head of the church. Christ is King over the nation of Israel, the King of kings, over all kings. But Jesus is never said to be the King of the church. Never said to be. He is King of kings, yes, but He's never said to be,

in His relationship to the church, the king of the church because we're a body. He's the head of the body. The Bible is very exact on these things.

## I. THE GREAT COMMISSION FOR ISRAEL BEFORE THE CROSS

Now, Matthew 10. Let's look at this commission that the twelve have. Here you have the first commission given to the twelve.

The Bible says to rightly divide it, (2 Tim. 2:15) and it also says comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Cor. 2:13) So we'll do both tonight. We're going to rightly divide the book, try to do that, and then we're going to compare some things. I believe it will answer some questions as we go along.

I've been driving by the Church of Christ sign down here on my way to church for about, I don't know, five or six weeks. Their sign changer must be stuck or sick – but I don't think so – because they've got a verse up there which they pulled out of Acts, where a man who did not know the gospel of God's grace says, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." (Acts 22:16) That verse has been on that sign, on both signs, up for the last six weeks. I don't know if they're trying to brainwash me or something. Maybe they hope that I'm going to drive by there, or somebody's going to drive by, see that verse, "Arise, be baptized," and run right inside to get baptized. I'm sure they've got the baptistry ready, because they believe you've got to be baptized to be saved.

That is a prime example of failing to rightly divide the Word of God. And so you've got an issue – a different church all based on, for the most part, the belief that you must be "bup-tized" in order to be saved.

If you say something often enough, you know, you get a little funny twist in your words. Really, I have to say, I haven't heard a Campbellite down here in Texas say it like this, but I don't know. Do they say it like, "bup-tized"? I know what they do in most places, "bup-tized," right? Do they? "Arise and be bup-tized." "Bup-tized." I don't know how they get that.

So I'm thinking sometimes there may be some devil around that likes baptism and he's bup-tized. Maybe he's teaching them these things. You might say, "Oh my goodness, you better not say that." Well, you know, a saved person can even be influenced by a devil. Yeah, he sure can be influenced by a devil. I mean, Peter was saved, and the devil used him to rebuke Christ about going to the cross.

The Word of God warns us here in the church age, that there are some who follow doctrines of devils. "Forbidding to marry" – that's one of them; "commanding to abstain from meats" – that's another one. (1 Tim. 4:3) The devils get involved in preaching.

A fellow sitting up here on the front row reminded me of something when Brother Billy told him, "We are not ready to take the offering yet; just sit down." Well, sitting up here on the front, they looked mighty dignified. It reminded me of the little girl who went home and said, "Daddy, you know what the preacher did?" And, of course, the preacher had all the deacons sit on the front row, but she didn't get it quite right. She said, "He had all the demons in the church sit on the front row tonight."

All the demons of the church, well, a devil can certainly affect us and does affect many people, because there are some folks who know nothing about rightly dividing the Word of Truth. There are even saved people who believe you should not eat certain meats in order to really please God. They have just never seen the passage there in Timothy where it says it's a doctrine of devils to command to abstain from meats. God said every creature of God is good. (1 Tim. 4:4)

A fellow asked me one day, "Does that mean about marriage?" I said, "Sure. It says some people, you know, forbid marriage and command to abstain, but it says, 'Every creature of God is good, nothing to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.'" I said, "Just make sure you thank God before you marry her." I was trying to get him married – he needed to be married. He didn't need to stay single; he was dangerous single. So I was trying to get him hooked up, trying to get him married.

Matthew chapter 10.

**Matthew 10:1-2 (KJV) ¶ And when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power ... <sup>2</sup> Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; ...**

I'll come back to verse one in just a minute, because I want to get it in a certain order. In verse number five,

**Matthew 10:5-6 (KJV) ¶ 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: <sup>6</sup> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

And so, they were to:

### 1) Go to Israel only.

That is the people they are to go to. There's no way in the world you could claim Matthew 10 as your commission, just based on that – but it's in the Word of God. Here are some people that Jesus told, “You go to Israel only.” And then look at verse number seven,

### 2) Preach the gospel of the kingdom.

**Matthew 10:7 (KJV) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

And that phrase “at hand” means it's close. He didn't say it's in your hand. We have a lot of figures of speech using hand – “in my hand,” “within our hand's reach.” God is not worshiped “with hands;” “stone cut out without hands.” There are many figures of speech involving the hand. But when you say, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” it's not here yet, but it's close. It could be.

And by the way, over in Luke 9, when Luke gives his account, he says these men go out and, not only do they preach the kingdom of heaven, but they also preached the kingdom of God.

Now, you see, that's another problem if you have the kingdom of God with no change, or if you think the kingdom of God is only a spiritual thing and the kingdom of heaven is always a material thing. You've got a problem, because those men were not preaching what we preach when we preach the kingdom of God. We don't preach the kingdom of heaven; we preach the kingdom of God. But we do that because our message has nothing to do with God's kingdom coming down here from heaven on earth. Our gospel doesn't say it's going to be heaven on earth. “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” We preach the kingdom of God in the sense that it's not down here upon this earth as meat and drink, but as righteousness, peace, joy and the Holy Ghost. (Rom. 14:17) It's a position. We've been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. We're in the kingdom of God already; we're seated with Him in heavenly places.

But here, the kingdom of God is a very physical, very material thing. They could see it. They saw a preview of the kingdom of God on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Jesus was transfigured before them, and they saw Elijah and Moses talking with Him. So, they preach the kingdom of God there (Luke 9), as well as the kingdom of heaven. But this certainly is not the message that we preach.

Notice number three, they have:

### 3) Miracles.

Verse one says,

**Matthew 10:1 (KJV) ¶ ... he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.**

**Matthew 10:8 (KJV) Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.**

And so number three, they certainly are able to perform miracles, and in particular, miracles of healing. And it goes beyond just healing – they are able to also raise the dead. They can recognize devils and cast them out.

And then another thing he gives, number four, they have:

### 4) Miraculous provisions.

Look at verses 9 and 10:

**Matthew 10:9-10 (KJV) Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, <sup>10</sup> Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.**

There'll be no offerings taken, no money, no provision made. I'm just going to put “no money here,” “no provision made” whatsoever for tomorrow or the next day – they are going to be miraculously taken care of. You don't provide gold, silver and brass in your purses. You don't provide a bag – that's a scrip. Bible defines that for you in 1 Samuel 17:40. Don't provide a scrip for your journey. (Mt. 10:10) Neither two coats – you don't carry two coats. You just wear neither shoe or yet staves, you know, to keep all those dogs off of you.

And he said, “For the workman is worthy of his meat.” In other words, God will take care of you. “I'll take care of you. You don't have to carry an extra set of clothes.” I mean, did not Israel wander 40 years in the wilderness and their shoes didn't even wear out? That's a good set of shoes. I don't think they were Mason; I don't think they

were Rockport either. But they were God's shoes. God kept them wearing out, and the garments didn't wear out either. God can take care of all those things.

And so they had miraculous provisions for them, but they were not to take money up from folks, not to try to get money for this or for that, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses.

Number five, look at verse 11. It was a:

#### **5) Limited visitation.**

Boy, it wasn't a Thursday night deal, you know, where you go visiting, or a Wednesday night going house to house. He said this, in verse 11:

**Matthew 10:11-14 (KJV) And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. <sup>12</sup> And when ye come into an house, salute it. <sup>13</sup> And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. <sup>14</sup> 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.**

You'll notice in verse 11, He said, "There abide till you go thence." You find somebody that receives you, stay with them. No house-to-house visitation. Evidently, God prepared places for them, and whenever they went, God opened the hearts of folks, and they were to stay in that house. So God is preparing them.

They go to Israel only. They preach the kingdom of heaven – kingdom of God is at hand. They've got miracles, and that goes with this gospel of the kingdom. They take no money. Their visitation is limited, and they only go to the Jew.

Now, that is a commission that Jesus gave to his disciples. He sent them out. This is before the cross. Nobody knows anything about the cross here, all right?

## **II. THE GREAT COMMISSION FOR ISRAEL AFTER THE CROSS**

After the cross. Let's take your Bible and please turn to Matthew 28. Now, you've got three accounts of this. Actually, you've got four accounts you can find, but the main three are in Matthew, Mark and Luke. You can get a lot at the end of these chapters, and then you get some at the end of the gospel of John. But the majority of this commission is found in Matthew, Mark and Luke. You have to read all of them to get the total picture, but it's not hard to get it.

So in Matthew 28, Jesus said in verse 19:

**Matthew 28:19 (KJV) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ...**

Now, you're going to say you're going to say that this commission right after the cross is a revision of this commission before the cross. So they are to go to all nations. However, there is a condition on that, and the condition is this: you start at Jerusalem.

#### **1) Beginning at Jerusalem**

In Luke 24:47, dealing with the time after the cross, as the Lord is getting ready to leave his disciples, He makes it very clear:

**Luke 24:47 (KJV) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

Look at John 20:21.

**John 20:21 (KJV) Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.**

How did the Father send him? Look at Matthew 15. He said, "As my Father sent me, even so send I you. You're to go to all nations." But there is something here in Matthew 15:24.

**Matthew 15:24 (KJV) But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Another interesting thing is that although they are supposed to go all nations, they are to begin in Jerusalem. That is the capital of Israel. Not only they are to begin at Jerusalem, but they are to go to the Jew first. This is the way they understood it.

Look at Acts 8. We can see how the disciples understood this. They faced a lot of persecution. They have been preaching in Jerusalem, but Jerusalem has not repented. Saul is after them, trying to destroy that early church and eliminate it. Look at Acts 8:1.

**Acts 8:1 (KJV) ¶ And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, ...**

Look at the next three words,

**Acts 8:1 (KJV) ¶ ... except the apostles.**

I've heard men preach this and say that they are completing the Great Commission here. That is not what the book says. There is a persecution, and the church is scattered – not because they are obeying some commission, but because they are afraid. Only the apostles stay at Jerusalem, being obedient, because Jerusalem has not yet repented yet. They are to begin at Jerusalem, then go out to Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. You see, they are expecting the nation of Israel to repent from crucifying Christ.

Look at this same subject here in Acts. Notice, “except the apostles.” Look at Acts 11, and let's kind of follow these guys that were scattered abroad. Look at Acts chapter 11: 19. They are not going out completing any so-called Great Commission. They're sticking with what the Lord told them – just go to the Jew. They actually disobeyed when they got out of Jerusalem because of persecution, but they are still trying to kind of serve the Lord.

You know, we do that a lot of times. We just get about half of it and don't really serve God wholeheartedly. Look at Acts 11:19

**Acts 11:19 (KJV) ¶ Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen...**

That's your Acts 8:1, folks – they're scattered out.

**Acts 11:19 (KJV) ... travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.**

They knew they weren't supposed to do anything but preach to the Jews. But they ran out of Jerusalem because they were scared. The apostles stayed there and obeyed the Lord. They didn't get out. Why, even when Peter finally does go to a Gentile as late as Acts 10, boy, he is called on the carpet for it. He only went because God told him to go, and he didn't want to go. He wanted to make sure that thing was what was happening.

I'm sure Peter was kind of confused about things. He was right in a time whenever God was changing the program. Folks say, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8) Yes, He is. God is the same always, but that verse did not say God always does the same thing. The verse says, God in His nature, person, and essence – He is always just, He is always holy, God is love, God is righteous, and God is omniscient. That never changes, but God certainly changes in His dealings with men.

Well, not only that, but this included baptism. By the way, the commission before the cross also had baptism. John preached baptism for the remission of sins, (Mark 1:4) and Peter does exactly the same thing. (Acts 2:38) We won't go to all the passages, but the Word of God says Jesus didn't baptize; but His disciples did.

And so, under number two here, you had to have baptism.

## **2) Baptism for the remission of sins.**

(Like our Church of Christ friends over yonder, they've got it up on the sign. That's a big thing for them.)

This commission is just the same thing as the Kingdom Gospel (Mr. 1:14,15) – it is just a revision of the previous commission. (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 10:7) They are still preaching Kingdom Gospel. They start at Jerusalem first. Nobody knows anything at all about what happened at the cross yet. They are preaching repentance for crucifying and rejecting Christ (Acts 2:23, 36-38), so that He'll come back. That's how the times of refreshing will come. (Acts 3:19)

So, look at Mark 16:16. Men call it “The Great Commission.” He that believeth and is “bup-tized.”

**Mark 16:16 (KJV) He that believeth and is baptized ...**

(“Baptized” – I'm just going to say it like an old southern boy.)

**Mark 16:16-18 (KJV) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with**

**new tongues; <sup>18</sup> They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**

So not only do you have baptism here, but you've got to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Some Baptists have a hard time believing Acts 2:38, but it's there. You don't really shock a Campbellite just telling him, "Hey, I believe in Acts 2:38." Peter believes you had to be baptized to get your sins remitted. You'd be on Bible ground. Of course, then he has a fit whenever you show him over there in 1 Corinthians (1:17) where Paul said, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

The gospel we preach today has nothing at all to do with baptism. You can get saved and never come close to water. You can go to heaven and never come around water. Paul said, "I baptized," and he gives a couple of names. He said, "Besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." (1 Cor. 1:16) Why, if baptism was necessary for salvation, don't you think Paul would have had some records of it? I would. Paul said, "I don't even know if I baptized another one." It was not that important to him. The important thing is preaching the gospel.

Yet, (here in Acts 2) baptism is indeed for the remission of sins. Boy, how many of my King James buddies have fallen out with me over that. They sure have. They just can't believe Acts 2:38. They want to get the body of Christ in Acts 2, no matter what it takes. You can't find Peter saying that Christ died for our sins. Peter says, "You get baptized for the remission of sins, and you repent, so that the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19) Peter is preaching in Acts 2 and 3 that you get your sins blotted out when Jesus comes back.

### **3) The Jew first.**

The third thing here is similar to the kingdom gospel (before the cross), just a revision of it with a few changes. The big change is that they are commanded to go to all nations now, but they start with the Jew. If the Jew repents or Jerusalem repents, then the kingdom gospel goes to the nations. This was all prophesied, folks. This is no new thing at all.

Look at the book of Micah. We've been looking at Micah in the Sunday school time. (Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephah, etc.) Micah 4:1. This is prophesied. This was already revealed and had been preached about, that it will be the Jew first, then the Gentile.

**Micah 4:1-2 (KJV) ¶ But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. <sup>2</sup> And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

See, the Gentiles are going to come in. Look at Isaiah 60. There are many passages in the Old Testament that prophesied that, first of all, it's the Jew that are going to get blessed, and there are going to be a lot of miracles associated with it, and then the Gentiles are going to come in.

**Isaiah 60:1-4 (KJV) ¶ Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. <sup>2</sup> For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. <sup>3</sup> And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. <sup>4</sup> Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at *thy* side.**

You get over there in those prophets and they say there's a day coming when there are going to be ten men taking hold of the skirt of one Jew and say, "We'll go with you, because we've heard God is with you." (Zech. 8:23) That is going to happen. And so what you've got here is a prophesied event. It was opened. It was purposed by God and revealed.

In Genesis 12, God said to Abraham, "I'll bless thee, and in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." The blessing is going to be in Abraham. It is understood as we go through the many passages in the Bible, the order is, first of all, the Jew, then the Gentile.

But if you look at what we're preaching, the message we preach is the purpose of God that was not prophesied, but that was hidden. Although God purposed it before the foundation of the world, it has been hidden until it is revealed through the Apostle Paul.

So you've got one gospel that has been prophesied, opened, and preached, and it has to do with, first of all, Israel being blessed, then the Gentiles being blessed. Look at Colossians 1.

**Colossians 1:24-25 (KJV) Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: <sup>25</sup> Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me ...**

To Paul.

**Colossians 1:25 (KJV) .. for you, ...**

To do what?

**Colossians 1:25-26 (KJV) ...to fulfil the word of God; <sup>26</sup> Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:**

Paul said, "...that was given to me." Look back at the book of Ephesians. Two books back to the book of Ephesians. "Ephesians" is a Gentile word. That's not a Jewish name.

**Ephesians 1:3 (KJV) ¶ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us ...**

Past tense.

**Ephesians 1:3 (KJV) ... with all spiritual blessings...**

That's everything.

**Ephesians 1:3 (KJV) ... in heavenly *places*...**

That is not down here on this earth. That is in heavenly places, positionally.

**Ephesians 1:3 (KJV) ... in Christ:**

Not in the Baptist church, not in the Methodist church, but it is in the person of Christ.

**Ephesians 1:4 (KJV) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

Look at verse number 7,

**Ephesians 1:7-9 (KJV) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; <sup>8</sup> Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; <sup>9</sup> Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:**

So, God purposed these gospels. He purposed to bless the nations through Israel. But God also purposed that he would bless us through the gospel of God's grace. Even though all of this is a genuine offer of the kingdom, God knew that Israel was going to reject Christ. Just like they rejected the prophets in the Old Testament, God knew Israel was going to reject the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles. He knew they were going to reject the apostles filled with the Holy Ghost, baptized with the Holy Ghost, and sent out by Jesus Christ. And so Israel is going to be set aside, and through Israel's fall, blessings are going to come to all nations.

But God is not going to forget His promise, because this kingdom they preached is going to come. That kingdom, the dominion of a king, is going to come. And it will come when Jesus comes back to this earth, sets up His kingdom. It will be the twelve apostles sitting upon twelve tribes of Israel, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and then the Gentiles coming to Christ through Israel. Israel will be a kingdom of priests. That's what God promised them back there in Exodus. They will be peculiar people.

And so these things were prophesied by God about Israel, openly purposed by God before, yes. And God knew about all this but prophesied and openly told in the Bible and the prophets. But the gospel we preach in this period of time, God hid it. It was hidden. I think one reason it was hidden – just a very practical reason – is so that all of these would be genuine offers. It would be a genuine offer.

Somebody said, "I want to see how God could offer something, and then know it wouldn't really take place." Well, if God doesn't know the end from the beginning, He's not God. And what God does is God lets you do what you want to do. God will use your will, but He'll not twist your arm to make you go to heaven. But He knows what you're going to do before you do it. He wouldn't be God if He didn't.

God made Adam with a will, and Adam could choose to obey Him or disobey Him, but God also knew that Adam did not have to disobey Him. God knew that He could obey Him, but God also knew that He was going to disobey Him. And He knows everything about every person who has ever lived on the face of this earth, right down

to the hairs on your head at any given moment. And He knows the thoughts and intents of your heart and mind, and every person's.

He knows everything's going to work out over there in the Middle East. He knows how all that stuff's going to go. Boy, you can't figure it out. They got some that, boy, they got guys talking now, folks. See, this crowd of fanatical Muslims are talking about end of the world stuff. And they want to be involved in ending the world. And what they mean by that is they want to wipe out America along with Israel. And you know what happens with that. When somebody starts going after Israel, you know what happens – God goes after them. He's been after them for a long time, sitting over there in dirt.

And we ain't got any sense. We've been buying all that oil from them. We ought to go over there and take it away from them, or else start digging over here and get the oil we've got. We've got plenty of oil over here. We've got enough sitting somewhere up in Iowa or Idaho, or someplace, to fuel America for 200 years. I'm all for digging wells and telling the Arabs what to do with their oil, and not even give them a market. See how that goes over.

God knows all about this. What a wonderful thing to sit in all the mess of this world that's going on and to know that God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly place in Christ Jesus.

Boy, folks, there are people that want to go back to Acts. I don't want to go back to Acts. No, thank you. I'm glad to be right where I am. You want to go back to Acts? You want to get beaten back there in Jerusalem? You couldn't get back there to get any blessings. Man, what a messed-up, mixed-up thing folks get into. I'd rather be over here where salvation is eternal, where salvation is secure, where it's based on the faith of Jesus Christ and not my faith, and where I'm guaranteed that when Jesus comes back, He's going to catch me out of this mess. God has not appointed me to wrath, but to obtain salvation. (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 5:9) What a wonderful promise that is!

#### 4) Signs and miracles.

Now look please, back again. They had signs following them. They had these miracles – drink deadly things. You look in Israel's history. Remember that blood back there in Egypt and how the water turned into blood, but God kept all their drinking water right. Remember the snakes and Moses, those snakes – a sign. It wasn't a sign to a Gentile; it was a sign to the Jews. God said, "They will believe you, Moses." Moses said, "They won't believe me." And God said, "All right, second class for you. What's that in thine hand?" And then you had to have signs to satisfy a Jew. Jews require signs. (1 Cor. 1:22)

All right, now in Mark, also. "And these signs will follow them that believe." Not only the apostles had miracles, but the people. You see, over here (before the cross), it didn't say that the believers would have miracles. But over here (after the cross), their miracles would be passed on. So the apostles, and then everybody that believes would do these things as well. It's a revision.

So still preaching the gospel of the kingdom, not preaching the cross. You won't find the preaching of the cross there in Acts. You look in there sometime, make yourself a little project and study how many times Peter was preaching about the resurrection. "The resurrection, the resurrection, the resurrection." He deals with the cross like it's a crime, and it was. Israel rejected their King and crucified Him.

#### 5) Observing the Law.

And then, not only that, but look at Matthew 23:1.

**Matthew 23:1-3 (KJV) ¶ Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: <sup>3</sup> All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.**

They sit in Moses' seat. Jesus said, "All that they teach you to do, do it." The problem with them is they don't do what they say. They're hypocrites. So Jesus said, though, "You observe the law. They sit in Moses' seat, teaching the law. You obey what they tell you."

In Matthew chapter 28:19, He said, "You go and teach. You baptize them." Then look at verse 20.

**Matthew 28:20 (KJV) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: ...**

Folks want to go in there, just take that, and say, "Well, Jesus told us to love one another." But they don't want to say that Jesus told His disciples, "Keep the law." He said, "I didn't come to destroy the law. I came to fulfill it."

Paul later on tells you very plainly in Romans that the law hath no more dominion over you. You're dead - dead to the law – because you're identified with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. What a change. It's amazing to me that folks can't at least see the change.



Well, "Observe the law. You teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

#### **6) Having all things common with all men.**

And then not only that, but they're going to have all things common with all men. Matthew 10.

(I'm just taking a short route now. I've got to get my tennis shoes on. I've got to get my Reeboks or something on here.)

Matthew 10:10. And what else? Yeah, yeah.

**Matthew 10:9-10 (KJV) Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, <sup>10</sup> Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.**

You don't carry the money with you. (vv. 9,10) I also look at chapter 19.

**Matthew 19:27-28 (KJV) Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? <sup>28</sup> And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

And then He said:

**Matthew 19:29 (KJV) And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.**

You won't ever find words like that under the gospel of the grace of God. But Jesus said, "If you forsake it." In other words, you have all things common. You read there in the early part of Acts, and they had all things common with all men.

I visited one night a veterinarian. He had a booming business over there in Alabama. He was Pentecostal. I asked him, "What are you doing about church?" He said, "Well, I go to this church over here." New Life Church, they called it. And I said, "Well, do you believe what they believe?" He said, "I sure do." I said, "Well, what's some of the things you believe?" He said, "Well, you know, you get the baptism with the Holy Ghost." And then he said, "I believe that there's going to be miracles and signs and so on." I said, "Doc, do you really believe that?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "You mean, you're following Acts 2 and 3" Are you following that? He said, "Yes, I am." To the best of my ability, I'm following that. I believe that's what we ought to be doing.

Well, I took him to Acts 2:44, and I said, "Well, let's look at something." We sat down there in the house, and I looked over in the corner and noticed a big RV sitting outside. He had a big, nice, new four-wheeler. And there was about ten big fishing rods – deep-sea fishing stuff.

And I said, "Well, Acts 2:says":

**Acts 2:44-45 (KJV) And all that believed were together, and had all things common; <sup>45</sup> And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.**

I said, "Do you have any poor folks in your church over there?" He said, "Well, yeah, we do." I said, "What are you doing with all this junk?" Then he began to catch on that I was being very literal, just believing the book. I mean, Peter didn't have a fishing pole. He didn't have an RV, much less a house. Here's a guy sitting in a big house, all this junk around him, claiming to follow. There's nothing wrong with that, but I mean, claiming to follow Acts 2 and 3. Folks, it's plain – they had all things common with all men. They were just following a revision of that.

### **III. THE GREAT COMMISSION FOR THE CHURCH AFTER THE ASCENSION**

#### **1) Preaching the gospel of the grace of God.**

God changes some of those things for us in the gospel of God's grace. Thank God that He does. We'll have to save all the details of this later on. Look at 2 Corinthians 5. Here's our Great Commission.

**2 Corinthians 5:16 (KJV) ¶ Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: ...**

You see that?

**2 Corinthians 5:16 (KJV) ... yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.**

We have known Christ after the flesh, the days of His flesh, yet from now on, we don't know Him like that. He said, "You go to Israel only. He called that Gentile woman a dog." Paul said, "Wherefore, henceforth, know we no

man after the flesh.” We don't make a difference between people. We don't say it's to the Jew first, then to Gentiles. We don't say that somebody is like sheep and another nation is like a dog. We don't say that at all. Henceforth, know we no man after the flesh. You look on the outward side and decide you don't like that fellow? The Word of God says that we know no man after the flesh. Do you see it? And why? It's because of verse 15,

**2 Corinthians 5:15 (KJV) And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.**

We're under a different program altogether, folks. We're not in a program where you're looking at differences of nations. I'd praise God if one of those Muslim guys, those Arab guys, could get saved. I'll tell you what, I could fellowship with him just like I could a good old South Alabama boy. If he's saved, I'm not going to look at him after the flesh.

I told you about the man that came over to the Philippines with me. He actually believed that a black man didn't have a soul. He actually believed that a black man just was not counted as anything, didn't even believe he was a Gentile. He came over to the Philippines. He saw what some of our Filipino brethren were doing, how some of them had scars on their body being beaten by the Communists for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how they were living on so little, yet still rejoicing. And he just saw it and got blessings from all of that, and he didn't know it, but those Filipinos were a little dark-skinned. All of a sudden, it hit him. A light turned on. And you're talking about a fellow being confused. He went away confused. I don't think he ever got straightened out. If he had just believed the book, it says, “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh.”

Well, some of my dearest brethren in Christ are Filipino preachers, because I've seen what they've done. I must receive them like Christ received them. They're in the body of Christ. We're one in Christ. And Christ doesn't need a Jew nor Greek, bond nor free., male nor female. You see, I'm not saying that we all look alike. I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that we are one in Christ, and I am no better than He is. And He's no better than I am. Henceforth know we no man after the flesh.

Look at verse 18.

**2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (KJV) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, ...**

There you have it. We're not going just to one. We don't go preaching the gospel of the kingdom, kingdom of heaven. We don't go preaching that Jesus is going to set up His kingdom here, kingdom hall. We've got nothing to do with those birds – Jehovah's Witnesses. We have the gospel of God's grace. It was unrevealed. And I tell you what, as far as most people understanding this thing, their understanding is still that blank. They know they can't do this. They know they can't really do that. And so they've just got a half-hearted thing where they're trying to do some kind of spiritualized following this stuff, and they don't really know where they stand, not knowing the doctrines of God's grace.

## **2) Working for a living**

T God changed that money thing too, you know. God changed that money deal. Look at having things common. By the way, do you remember in your Bible reading anywhere where the church at Jerusalem was suffering, (Rom. 15:26) and so Paul had to go among the Gentile churches and take them back some money? They had all things common, and it wasn't that they were disobeying God. They were doing it right. The program changed. No longer did common living (that Bible communism) work. You had to start working. Paul says, “If any man doesn't work, neither should he eat.” (2 Thess. 3:10)

## **3) Parents saving up for the children**

Jesus said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where thieves break through and steal.” (Mt. 6:19,20) Well, look at 2 Corinthians 12:14.

**2 Corinthians 12:14 (KJV) Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.**

God tells you in 2 Corinthians 12, “Lay up.” Lay up. Lay up.

## **4) Providing for one's own family (1 Tim. 5:8)**

Look at 1 Timothy 5:3.

**1 Timothy 5:3 (KJV) ¶ Honour widows that are widows indeed.**

What are widows indeed? Well, here it is.

**1 Timothy 5:4 (KJV) But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.**

If a widow has children or nephews, and these children are old enough to take care of her, they are supposed to take care of her.

**1 Timothy 5:5 (KJV) Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, ...**

In other words, nobody except her. She's alone. No children to take care of her. No relatives to take care of her.

**1 Timothy 5:5 (KJV) ... trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.**

If she has a good testimony, then that's the kind that you take care of. But if she's got relatives and family to take care of her, you don't take care of her. Now, notice, of course, you've got one that lives in pleasure. She's dead while she lives.

Look at verse number 9.

**1 Timothy 5:9 (KJV) Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old,...**

Under 60 years old.

**1 Timothy 5:9-10 (KJV) ... having been the wife of one man, <sup>10</sup> Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.**

She's 60 years old or older, and she doesn't have any children or any relatives to take care of her, then the church takes care of her.

**1 Timothy 5:11 (KJV) But the younger widows refuse: ...**

50 years old, sorry. The word of God says, "Refuse them." He's talking about taking care of them. If you're 50, you ought to be looking for you a man. He warned you about the young widows.

**1 Timothy 5:13 (KJV) And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.**

And Paul said,

**1 Timothy 5:14 (KJV) I will therefore that the younger women marry, ...**

He said it's good for you. Now watch it. He didn't say you "had to" get married. Remember that if you thank God for it, it's good. (Every creature is good, if you can thank God for it. It does not make any difference if you got buck teeth and maybe eat peanuts out of a Coke bottle.) If you can thank God for it, go ahead and marry her, you know. Beauty is skin deep. The other fellow said, "Yeah, but boy, that one's to the bone." I tell you. Yeah. Girls, he may not be much to look at. His ears may look like a taxi cab going down the street with doors both open, but he might be a good man. He might be a lot better than Tom Cruise, that's for sure.

**5) Prescribing medicine for sickness**

You see, you got no healing. Paul had to write a prescription here. Look at verse 23. 523,

**1 Timothy 5:23 (KJV) Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.**

Why don't you just heal him? Because the program changed, folks. Well, I'm going to stop there tonight.

We don't preach the gospel of the kingdom. There's a lot, a lot of differences, and we are to provide for our own.

**1 Timothy 5:8 (KJV) But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.**

You don't provide for your family and depend on the government or somebody else take care of you. You're worse than an infidel. You are supposed to work in this age. You are supposed to lay up, yep. You're supposed to use good judgment and finances.

That's why we're doing this thing. We're trying to pay off these bills and get these things out of the way, and do it on a cash basis where we don't have to. There's nothing wrong with getting a car on credit and all that kind of stuff, as long as you can make the payments. You're not in debt until you go overboard and can't make the payments. That's whenever you get in debt. Can't handle the thing. But at any rate, all right, let's stand together. God bless you, amen.

Got a little long-winded tonight.