

Call and Commissioning

Bible Background • MATTHEW 28:16–20; ACTS 1:6–8

Printed Text • MATTHEW 28:16–20; ACTS 1:6–8 | Devotional Reading • COLOSSIANS

3:12–17

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson we will: COMPARE Jesus' commission in Matthew to His commission in Acts; AFFIRM that Jesus is with us in our commission; and ACCEPT our commission to make disciples of all nations.

In Focus

Sharon came to work disappointed in the outcome of last night's gubernatorial election results. She had been hopeful her candidate would win, but was now gravely discouraged.

John was obviously thrilled because his candidate did win. He was openly excited for the outcome of the race. He came to work energetic and bubbly.

Stephen's candidate lost the race also. However, he seemed as happy and jubilant as John. Sharon was confused. She knew Stephen was a Christian like her and she thought she knew who his candidate for governor was. Sharon asked Stephen what was going on.

Stephen assured Sharon he was disappointed his candidate did not win but he trusted God. Stephen told her, "I don't know what will happen now that we have a new governor. The thought of the changes he can possibly make are frightening. So, I chose to focus my attention on God. With God, all things are possible. I make my attitude reflect His power. My disappointment could hinder my testimony. I don't want to misrepresent God."

Sharon had to agree. She, too, wanted to be a faithful witness to Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Her candidate lost the race, but in Christ she was still a winner.

Christians confess they don't have all the answers but this doesn't disqualify them from offering a faithful witness to Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. In today's lesson, the disciples are taught to obey everything Jesus commanded. Are you a witness for Christ wherever you go?

Keep in Mind

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19–20, KJV).

Words You Should Know

A. Disciple mathetes (Gk.) — Committed learner under a teacher.

B. Commandment entole (Gk.) — Firm instruction, often referring to the Law of God when used in the New Testament.

Say It Correctly

none

KJV

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 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.

NIV

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

17 When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Acts 1:6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

7 He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know.

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The People, Places, and Times

Jerusalem. Under Rome, Jerusalem was conquered in 63 BC by Pompey and reached its pinnacle of grandeur and strength as a result of the building program of Herod the Great, whom Rome appointed king of Judea in 40 BC. Herod strengthened the Hasmonean walls, which had been built during the second century BC. At the top of the western hill, he built a huge palace complex for himself. To strengthen this and include more of the western area of the city, Herod then built a second wall that circled from the middle of the Hasmonean wall to a fortress north of the Temple Mount called the Antonia. To further strengthen this second wall, which was open to attack from the west, a quarry was opened in front of it that served as a defense moat. A section of this was not worth quarrying and it was left standing on the mound of limestone. It was called Golgotha, or the “skull” (John 19:17). This part of the quarry belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, who cut his family tomb into the

exposed hill of the quarry adjacent to Golgotha. This is now part of the Church of the Resurrection and probably was the burial place of Jesus.

Background

Matthew 28 begins very early on the Sunday morning when Jesus rose from the dead. Mary (the mother of Jesus) and Mary Magdalene came to view the tomb, only to meet the angel who informed them that the Lord has risen and has gone before them to Galilee. Later, Jesus met the two women and again instructed them to tell His disciples whom He called His brothers to meet Him in Galilee. Matthew skips the story of their journey to Jerusalem and, instead, tells of the bribing of the guards with the intention of discrediting the Resurrection by spreading the news that Jesus' body had been stolen. Before long, Matthew has the disciples meeting Jesus at a mountain to which He had directed them. This meeting in Galilee is the setting for the last five verses of the Gospel of Matthew. In these verses, Matthew records the first post-Resurrection exhortation that Jesus gave His disciples—to make disciples for Him in all nations, to teach them, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

If you actually went and made disciples of all nations, what would your life look like? If this is different from how it looks now, what are the reasons and how would you correct it?

Acts 1:6–8, on the other hand, is set just a mile outside Jerusalem, at the Mount of Olives from where Jesus ascended into heaven. As Luke begins his historical narrative of the birth of the church that makes the book of Acts, he has to tell of Jesus' ascension. But before we get to the ascension, Jesus gives the disciples a farewell speech with parting instructions. So this is the very last of Jesus' conversations with His disciples, taking place forty days after Matthew 28. Since that meeting on a hill in Galilee, we know Jesus met with His disciples both in Judea and in Galilee, but now, Jesus is ready to depart and, as we see in the book of Acts, the disciples are ready for the mission. He takes the occasion to encourage them to wait for the Spirit in Jerusalem who will empower them to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The Spirit will also help them understand that He had come to establish a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly one that could liberate Israel from Roman rule.

What kind of witness can your friends see from your life? Does it testify of Jesus' kingship and love for the world?

At-A-Glance

1. Resurrection Over Doubt (Matthew 28:16–17)
2. Doubt to Disciple Nations (vv. 18–20)
3. Disciple to Witness (Acts 1:6–8)

In Depth

1. Resurrection Over Doubt (Matthew 28:16–17)

Both Matthew 28 and Acts 1 are Scriptures that record events that took place after the Resurrection. Matthew 28 is basically the first encounter between Jesus and the disciples post-Resurrection. Acts 1 is the last such encounter. They both carry the same thread of thought: how to keep the movement (later called The Way and eventually the ekklesia or church) going and growing. Critical to this growth of the movement was the practice of discipleship. After the traumatic event of Jesus' crucifixion and death, the disciples had to wonder what they were to do now. Jesus was dead and had not left them any instructions on how to carry on His mission and ministry. Moreover, one of His own disciples, Judas, had betrayed Him then hung himself (Matthew 27:5). So

when word came for them to gather in Galilee where He would meet them, it had to be an exciting turn of events.

When they gathered at the mountain in Galilee, Jesus was there to meet them. Upon gazing at their Lord and Savior one more time, the eleven disciples began to worship Him (v. 16). This was spontaneous praise and thanksgiving for the Messiah who had transformed their lives. He was alive!

In spite of seeing Christ with their own eyes and worshiping Him, a few had doubt creep into their hearts and minds (v. 17). Sometimes the foundation of our faith can be overcome with thoughts of uncertainty. When we cannot explain the spiritual, we tend to ignore or dismiss it. But the disciples continued to worship Him in spite of their doubts. We have to continue to worship and serve Christ in the midst of our uncertainties because our faith will increase as we grow spiritually.

Do you recall a time when you struggled to worship God because you had doubts about Him? Share your experience.

2. Doubt to Disciple Nations (vv. 18–20)

Jesus tells His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. God gave all power and authority to Jesus (v. 18). This means when God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand, He was given power and dominion over all things in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 1:20–23). The disciples were under His authority and called to make more disciples (v. 19). The disciples understood what Jesus meant by “making disciples.” He had just done this with them for the past three and a half years. He was telling them to go and do what He had done with them so that other people could also become disciples of Jesus. He told them to teach the new disciples everything He had taught them. This is how disciples are made—through teaching them what Jesus says and what it means for our daily lives. And this command to make disciples goes to every follower of Christ. Disciples have to make other disciples until the nations learn the teachings of Christ and how to live accordingly. We are to go teach any person who will listen, regardless of race or nationality, about Jesus. When they accept Him as Lord and Savior, they are to be baptized as a sign of their union and commitment to Christ. And we are to teach them to be devoted to the Word of God (vv. 19–20).

Jesus ended His Great Commission with the promise that He will always be with us (v. 20). The disciples may have been puzzled how Jesus would remain with them. But Jesus promised to send His Holy Spirit to be present with them—and us— forever (cf. John 14:16, 26).

Why is baptizing and teaching the Word to new believers so important?

3. Disciple to Witness (Acts 1:6–8)

Acts 1 continues on the same theme of discipleship, adding that the disciples would be Jesus’ witnesses in the entire world. Thus, in word and deed, they would testify of the teachings and the works of Jesus to the world. Jesus spent forty days after the Resurrection with the disciples teaching them about the kingdom of God. He urged them to remain in Jerusalem to await the coming promise of the Holy Spirit. While gathered with them on one occasion, the disciples questioned Him about restoring Israel’s kingdom (v. 6). Many Jews thought the Messiah’s coming meant they would be freed from Roman rule and He would be their new king. But Jesus told them these events would happen according to the Father’s timetable, which was a secret.

Most importantly, they needed to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit before they went forth to witness for Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the other parts of the world (v. 8). Without the power of God we can do nothing. The Holy Spirit gives us direction and power to act. The word translated “witness” can also be translated “martyr.” Following Christ happens at a cost. His followers are called to be witnesses and martyrs at the same time. Some will be called to obey even to the death—unto martyrdom— and that is part of the

sacrifice that comes with following Christ. We are invited to lay down our lives for the sake of His kingdom, and to do this, we need the Holy Spirit's empowerment.

How is your life a witness for Christ?

Search the Scriptures

1. Where were the disciples supposed to teach about Jesus to make disciples (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8)?
2. What part does the Holy Spirit play in discipleship and making disciples (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. How is making disciples connected to witnessing for Christ?
2. How does discipleship work in your church? Are you discipling anybody at the moment? Are your disciples making other disciples?
3. The disciples seemed not fully prepared for the work that Jesus had for them. They did not fully understand the kingdom and dealt with doubt. Yet, Jesus still trusted them with the mission of discipling the nations. What does this teach you about God's mission?

Liberating Lesson

As we respond to Jesus' call to follow Him, we also respond to His call for us to make disciples for Him. Embracing one without the other is not possible if we are to be true followers. As we become disciples, we must endeavor to disciple others. We are part of a disciple-making movement in which real disciples make other disciples. We disciple others not only by teaching them the words of Jesus but also by letting them see the witness of our lifestyles. What is holding you back from answering the call to be a missionary for Christ? We do not need to be fearful because God is with us. He will guide and protect His people. May our congregations spend more energy making disciples and not making members!

Application for Activation

This week take the time to pray and specifically ask God to reveal to you how He is calling you to share the Gospel. He may have you start in your home because it is often the most difficult place to be a witness when we live with unbelievers. You may also want to speak to your pastor and local missionaries in your church or those who serve overseas. They may be able to offer spiritual guidance. Answering the call does not always mean you have to leave your job.

1. Become serious about discipleship—both to be a disciple and to disciple others locally and among the nations.
2. Be very intentional about following the countercultural nature of the demands of Christ in our individualistic consumer culture.
3. Seek to stay connected to the Holy Spirit for the power that helps us make disciples and effective witnesses in the world.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1:6–8

In many communities a person's last words receive very special attention. Loved ones want to honor the dying person's wish as best as they can, more so if the person is a respected elder or somewhat influential in society, especially when the words prescribe what should happen in the future. Such words often concern straightforward issues like where to be buried or, at times, complex wishes like relocating an entire village to avoid conflict. In some African cultures, people revere the dying words of an influential person as though such words had come from the future, usually from the spirit world of the ancestors, to guide the community from a vulnerable and needy today to a safe and prosperous tomorrow. This belief shapes the way some people read the Bible, especially the last words of people like Moses, Joshua, David, Paul, and especially Jesus Christ.

This week's verses take place after the Resurrection and give us the climax of all Jesus' exhortations, which is foundational to the way we think about mission and evangelism.

Matthew 26:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.

The disciples have trekked up north from Jerusalem and were now at the agreed location in Galilee—on the mountain where Jesus would show Himself to the eleven for the first time since that fateful Friday when they abandoned Him. On this mountain, Jesus would begin His efforts to reconnect, reconcile, and recommission His disciples. Matthew points out that the disciples were no longer the band of twelve as had been the case throughout the Gospel—until just a few days ago. Now, they remain with eleven disciples. By saying, “the eleven disciples,” Matthew surprises us into remembering not only that Judas had left the team (and that for a few weeks, his place would remain vacant), he also reminds us of all the events of that weekend: Peter had denied the Lord; the disciples had scattered in fear; and the disciples were still vulnerable and less-than-perfect human beings after spending three and a half years with Jesus.

The women were also most likely part of the trip to Galilee, but Matthew's focus here is on the male disciples. We do not hear a great deal about the women in general, but we know for certain that the ministry of Jesus had many women supporters and followers. The apostles went to Galilee at the instruction of the women—this simple fact affirms the ministry of the women in their community.

Galilee is important for Matthew. This encounter between the risen Jesus and the disciples is peculiar to Matthew's Gospel. This is where the disciples started their journey with Jesus, where He began His ministry and gathered most of His disciples. Many of them were Galileans—an identity that brought about Peter's denial of the Lord and put them at risk in Jerusalem (Matthew 26:73–74).

¹⁷ And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

There must have been some anticipation as they approached the mountain. What would He look like and what would He say to them? And then, they saw Him: the Jesus they had seen die on the Cross was alive. In keeping with prophecy, He had proven He was stronger than death by coming back to life three days after dying. He is indeed king over death and thus is worthy of their worship. In response, they prostrate themselves before Him. Indeed, worship is the only acceptable response to seeing Jesus, especially as in this case; they are seeing Him for the first time after the Resurrection. When the women saw Him, they, too, worshiped (Matthew 28:9), and now the disciples did the same.

And yet, some doubted. Many scholars agree that “doubt” here is better translated “indecisive” or “hesitated.” The disciples were still men of little faith so, as some worshiped, others hesitated (Matthew 14:31). Matthew

does not explain why they hesitated. Some scholars suggest those who hesitated were outside the eleven, which could be true if there were other disciples at the event who were not yet acknowledged in the text. Whatever the case, we see here that doubt or indecisiveness does not disqualify people from the faith. It shows again that the disciples were not perfect in their understanding of Jesus and yet they received the calling and training from the Master.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

It appears here that Jesus had been at a distance when they worshiped. He responded to the worship by coming close to them. This is also how God responds to worship; when praises go up, God's glory comes down (see Psalm 67). And so, Jesus comes toward them and begins to speak to them, "all authority is given to me." Jesus is letting His disciples know that their situation has changed. No longer is He simply the suffering servant, the Son of Man with nowhere to lay His head. He has become the risen Lord who has all power. Death no longer had power over Him; He had risen in glory.

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The resurrection of Jesus proves the authority that He has been given, which is greater than the authority they had seen as they journeyed with Him. It demonstrates that His words and teachings are trustworthy, He is all-powerful, and that what He says comes to pass, both in heaven and on earth. Therefore, because of this authority, the disciples were to go and make disciples for Him of all nations. Thus, Jesus' newly given authority has implications for His followers here on earth—it would change their lives.

Contrary to most English translations of verse 19, "go" is not a command in Greek; it is a past participle. A more direct translation would be "having gone." The going out is not even the issue. Jesus assumes you are already out in the mission field. The command, rather, is "teach all nations," which is lacking as a translation, too. "Teach" in verse 19 and "teaching" in verse 20 are different verbs in the Greek. "Teach" (v. 19) is *matheteuo* (mah-thay-TEW-oh, make disciples), which is related to the noun "disciple" (*mathetes*, mah-THAY-tace) and rarely made into a verb. Discipleship is an intense, committed path of learning under a master. "Make disciples" is the (grammatical) core of the Great Commission.

A disciple is both a student and a follower—a student who learns the teachings of the master and a follower who imitates his lifestyle. A first-century disciple did not enroll in a school but committed himself under a teacher or rabbi. Throughout their time with Jesus, the twelve had been disciples. Here, He commanded them to do what He had done with them to others. They had to teach whatever they had learned from Jesus to others while teaching them to do the same to others until disciples of Christ could be found in every nation. Disciple-making had been Jesus' strategy, and it would also be His disciples' strategy.

The grammar of the sentence is set up to show that making disciples will be done in two parts: baptizing and teaching. Baptizing would be both the initiation rite into the kingdom of God and the fellowship of the Spirit, as well as a public signal of identification with Jesus and His kingdom. Matthew adds that the baptism was to be in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. While this may not be a full articulation of later Trinitarian theology, it certainly reflects awareness, especially as at Jesus' baptism by John, that the Father, Son, and Spirit are involved in this all-important rite. Thus, those baptized in the name of the Father, Son and the Spirit share in Jesus' baptism and His authority. Scholars clarify to be baptized into the name is to be under the authority and into the possession of that name, like servants under a lord. Thus, by baptism, the convert becomes affiliated and therefore the protégé of the person named.

"Teaching" (Gk. *didasko*, dee-DASS-ko) is the other half of discipleship. The Twelve are to teach the new disciples to observe (Gk. *tereo*, teh-REH-oh; keep, watch, guard from harm) everything Jesus commanded

them. “Commanded” is entello (Gk. en-TELL-oh), related to the noun entole (Gk. en-TOE-lay), which is most often used in the New Testament to refer to the Law of Moses. Tereo (observe) is often paired with entole (commandment) throughout the New Testament (Matthew 19:17; John 15:10). Jesus’ word choice here brings to mind not just all that He taught His disciples during His incarnation, but all that they have ever learned about God from the Old Testament as well.

Jesus establishes a new way of life for His disciples and commands them to go and make disciples for Him in all nations. Earlier, Jesus had given them the limited commission in which they were only allowed to preach to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:5–6). Now, they are to make disciples in all nations, both Jews and non-Jews. Even though ethnos (Gk. ETH-noce) is generally translated “Gentiles,” in this case it is rightly translated “nations” because Jesus means not just the Gentiles, but all people groups of the world, including the Jews (cf. John 11:50–52; Acts 10:22). The prophecy that in Abraham all families of the earth would be blessed comes to fulfillment in this mission (Genesis 12:3).

Jesus finished His new commandment with an assurance that He would be with them to the end of the age. Such an assurance is greatly needed to accomplish their work. There will never be a time when Jesus’ disciples are not in His company as they go to make disciples in all nations, and this communion is not to be delayed. It is something that may be known here and now. He is forever Emmanuel, “God with us.” As God promised Joshua when he took over the ministry from Moses, Jesus was also telling His disciples that He would never leave them or forsake them. What a comforting assurance.

Today, this call to participate in God’s mission of making disciples of the nations is given to everyone, both clergy and the laity. Of course, we are called to different assignments and maybe to different parts of God’s vineyard, but the truth is that every Christian is a missionary for God. The role of the career missionary may still exist, but it only supplements the missionary calling of all believers. Additionally, we are invited to engage in God’s mission wherever God is at work. This will be both in our neighborhoods and in countries on the other side of the world. It will especially most likely be outside the Sunday service at church. God is engaged in mission on Monday at work or school just as much as on Sunday. In a nutshell, God’s mission breaks the barriers between the clergy and the laity and also between the sacred and the secular. Jesus’ disciples are called to do the same.

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Here, Jesus is about to go to heaven. This is His last conversation with His disciples before returning to His Father. The ascension takes place in verse 9. Luke is clear that it has been forty days since the Resurrection. It is close to forty days since that meeting in Galilee (depending on how long it took the disciples to walk from Jerusalem). Over that period, Jesus had shown Himself to the disciples a few more times with numerous signs of His authority, proving to them that He is indeed the Son of God, the Messiah. He had also given them many instructions on what to do after He has ascended and left the mission to them. However, it seems even until His ascension, the disciples did not understand what He was about. They still expected Him to establish a kingdom that would liberate Palestine from Roman rule. As He waited to be lifted up to heaven, the disciples asked Him if now was the time to restore the temporal kingdom of Israel. They still hoped for an earthly kingdom in which Jesus would be the ruler to lead the Jews to subdue the power of Rome and dominate the nations. They totally misunderstood the timing of the kingdom. And yet, it is to these ill-prepared men that Jesus, in His grace, gives the responsibility of world mission.

This and many other stories that we see in the Gospels and the book of Acts suggest that while participating in God’s mission requires preparation, perfection is not a prerequisite. As the saying goes, “God does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called.” We are all called to participate in God’s mission in the world; we will learn a greater part of how to do that on the job.

⁷ And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. ⁸ 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 corrects the disciples' misunderstanding of the kingdom by simply stating that they would not, and indeed should not, know God's timetable. Times and seasons for everything are in the Father's hands who has securely established them in His authority. He had told them earlier that the kingdom was near them (Luke 10:9), or already within them (Luke 17:21), but it was a spiritual kingdom, not the one they had anticipated. This kingdom of heaven was already with them, but not in its fullness. Above all, whatever was already there of the kingdom was already but not yet growing. The kingdom expanded through making disciples, and hence, they were all called to be His witnesses. Further, they would receive the power through the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses all around the world. Of course, implied in Jesus' words is another command. The disciples would testify about Jesus, proclaiming the reality of His death and resurrection as well as His kingdom and lordship to make disciples around the world.

The Greek word for "witness" here is *martures* (mar-TOUR-es), which is elsewhere translated "martyrs." Living the life of a witness of Christ would be a sacrifice only possible through the empowerment of the Spirit. Such a life would reflect the instructions, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, even in the midst of persecution and death. It would essentially be a life laid down for the cause of His mission. He had told them before to pick up their crosses (Luke 9:23–24), love Him and His mission more than their lives (John 12:25), and follow Him. Essentially, witnesses would often proclaim the Good News as sheep among wolves (Luke 10:3)—their lives surrendered to God and yet always in danger.

Christ's ordering of the spread of the discipling church is reflected in the development of the story of Acts. The spread of the church in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria is explored in chapters 1 through 9. The wider spread unto the uttermost part of the earth (which some have interpreted as Rome) is in chapters 10 through 28. This instruction repeats the one given in Matthew 28—to make disciples of all nations. The kingdom of God is for all nations and not just the Jews. We see later in Acts the Spirit of God make proclaiming of the Gospel to the Gentiles possible both with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26) and the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:1). It was not until Acts 11 when the early disciples made a decision to preach to Gentiles, but even then, it was Jewish Christians who lived outside Palestine in the diaspora who made the move. It appears that even the apostles did not properly understand this global mandate for mission until much later. However, we see God breaking through in miraculous ways to invite the Gentiles into the kingdom.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Place of Renewal
(Isaiah 2:1–4)

TUESDAY

Body Building for Baptized Believers
(1 Corinthians 12:12–13; Colossians 3:12–17)

WEDNESDAY

Lydia and Household Baptized
(Acts 16:11–15)

THURSDAY

Jailer and Household Baptized
(Acts 16:25–34)

FRIDAY

Reaching New People
(Acts 18:5–11)

SATURDAY

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas
(Acts 1:12–17, 21–26)

SUNDAY

Disciples Called and Commissioned
(Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1:6–8)