

Who Must Go?

The Mission of the Church

Matthew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (ESV)

REVIEWING THE GLOBAL MISSION

The global nature of the Great Commission is as undeniable as it was improbable.

- *The disciples were naïve and unskilled.*
- *They lacked financial resources.*

Nonetheless, by the end of the first century, Christianity could be found all over the empire.

- *Unlike paganism, Christianity pervaded all of society, both geographically and socially.*
- *The spread of Christianity knew no bounds.*

THE COMMAND

The imperative in the Great Commission is to make disciples by preaching the Gospel as Christ's witnesses, commanding repentance and belief. "Going" is secondary but required because disciples will come from every nation of the earth.

MISINTERPRETATIONS

There are two, extreme misinterpretations of this command, aggravated by the failure to recognize the primary imperative.

- *The command is only for the original 11?*
 - *More than the 11 were present when Jesus gave this charge.*
 - *The first to make disciples in other regions were not the Apostles.*
 - *The commission tells them to teach **all** that Christ commanded, including the command to make disciples of all nations.*
- *The command is for every individual?*
 - *The rule in the church was to remain where you were when God called you.*
 - *God wants people in all walks of life.*

A COMMISSION FOR ALL

The Great Commission is given to the church collectively. Not all will go. But, according to Scripture, those who remain behind, share in the work through prayer and financial support.

Ac 8:1-2, 4 *...And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem,² and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, **except the apostles.**⁴ Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.*

Ac 9:31 *So the church throughout **all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up.** And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it **multiplied.***

Ac 11:19-21 *Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to **no one except Jews.**²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus.²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.*

1 Cor 7:17 *Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.¹⁸ Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision.¹⁹ For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.²⁰ Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.²¹ Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)²² For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.²³ You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.²⁴ So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.*