

**Welcome to: -
Bible House of Grace.**



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

The Great Commission.
And
The Apostles and Miracles.
(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises
But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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The Great Commission the Apostles and Miracles.

Topics.

- The Great Commission in Matthew, Mark and Luke.
- The apostles and miracles.
- These signs will accompany those who believe.
- Nothing will hurt you.
- Serpents, vipers and scorpions.

The Great Commission in Matthew.

Matthew 28:16-20 ----- ¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (this is the last verse of the chapter).

The following are the two schools of thought within the global Kingdom of Christ concerning the Great Commission: -

1. The Great Commission only applies to the eleven apostles who Jesus directly spoke it too.
2. The Great Commission applies to every Christian brother and sister who belongs to the Kingdom of God and the family of Christ.

The aim of this article is to discover which of these two schools of thought are correct and answer the question does the Great Commission apply to all Christians or just the eleven apostles?

After Jesus death and resurrection the eleven apostles were abiding in a home on a mountain in Galilee as Jesus had previously directed them and Jesus appears (in his resurrected eternal body) and said to them: -

- Go and make disciples amongst all nations (in contrast to just amongst Israel) and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that he has taught them.

From these verses of Matthew we learn that:-

1. The apostles did not have to teach the unsaved everything from Genesis to Revelation to make disciples, but only those things Jesus had taught them.
2. Jesus said he would be with them until the end of the age, this could mean until they die or with everyone who shares the Gospel and the message of the cross until he returns.
3. Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth: ponder the enormity of this statement for a moment God has given His Son, the humble and sinless man who laid his life down to a brutal bloody and cruel death so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life all His authority and power.

This means that Jesus is now equally as powerful as his heavenly Father the source of all life and creator of all things.

The Great Commission in Mark.

Mark 16:15-16 ----- ¹⁵Jesus said to them (the eleven apostles) (v14) "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

From these verses we learn the following two things:-

1. The eleven apostles were to go to all creation this carries the idea of all nations, peoples and languages of the world in contrast to just Israel and the Jewish people.
 2. Jesus told the eleven apostles to proclaim the Gospel, not the history of Israel or the entire Old Testament this is because no one has to be a walking Bible encyclopaedia to be saved to eternal life, but they do need to know the things concerning Jesus, the message of the cross and the things he personally spoke and taught the apostles.
 3. Whoever believes the Gospel and is water baptized will be united to God and saved to eternal life.
 4. Whoever does not believe the Gospel will be condemned to eternal destruction (meaning judged to eternal death) (i.e., total extinction).
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The Great Commission in Luke.

Luke 24:45-48 ----- ⁴⁵Then he opened their (the eleven and those who were with them) (v33) minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things.

Prior to these verses Jesus had appeared to two men going to a village named Emmaus (v13) the Lord broke bread with them and then departed. The two men then travelled seven miles to the eleven apostles at Jerusalem and while telling the eleven and those with them that they had seen Jesus he appeared in their midst (v33).

Even after Jesus showed them his hands and feet they were still in disbelief (v41) so the Lord eats some fish with them and then told them that what they were seeing (the eternal resurrected body of Christ) is the words that he spoke to them and is the fulfilment of everything written about him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. While Jesus was with them he had told them a number of times that the Son of man must die and be raised on the third day.

Jesus tells the eleven and those that are with them (v33) because they have been eye witnesses to the all the events concerning him they are to be his witnesses and proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Then Jesus led them out as far as Bethany and was carried up into heaven (v50-51).

The Great Commission: -

- In Matthew applies to the eleven apostles (Matt 28:16).
- In Luke it applies to the eleven apostles and those who were with them (Luke 24:33).

Though the great commission primarily applies to the eleven apostles by extension it applies to every brother and sister in Christ since we are all called to share our testimony and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ so that others will have the opportunity to choose for themselves eternal life.

The Apostles and Miracles.

These Signs will Accompany those Who Believe.

Mark 16:17 ----- 17 Jesus said: these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

The two most common schools of thought within the global Kingdom of Christ concerning Jesus words, "These signs will accompany those who believe" are: -

- 1 They only apply to the eleven apostles who Jesus directly spoke it too.
- 2 They apply to everyone who believes.

Luke records the same Conversation: -

- Jesus said to the eleven apostles and those who were with them (Luke 24:33) "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

John records a similar conversation: -

- Jesus said to the disciples, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you (John 15:16).

The following are the two most common ways that these verses are interpreted: -

1. The words, "Those who believe" embraces all of those included in the whoever therefore it is supposed that even though Jesus is speaking to the eleven apostles he is directing his words to whoever believes in the Gospel and is baptised and believes in the name of Jesus. The problem with this interpretation is that the only recorded miracles are those done by the eleven apostles and a couple of disciples they transferred the gift to by laying their hands on them. There is no record of multitudes of believers casting out demons or healing people of all kinds of sicknesses.
2. Since the last verse of Mark chapter sixteen says, "They (the eleven apostles) went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20) it is believed that Jesus words, "These signs will accompany those who believe," only applies to the eleven apostles who he was directly speaking to.

Remember when he appeared to them at this time some did not believe it was him they thought they were seeing a Spirit, Jesus had to show them his hands and feet and eat some fish before they did believe added to this Thomas doubted when he first saw Jesus so the words to those who believe could be stated to those who amongst you (the eleven) who believe these signs will follow your ministry.

Throughout the New Testament the apostles are seen doing multitudes of miraculous healings yet there is no record of the thousands who did accept the Gospel message healing anyone.

This silence would seem to evidence that Jesus promise that signs and wonders would follow those who believe primarily refers to the eleven apostles he was directly speaking to.

This is not figurative language, because the apostles did go out and do amazing miracles:

- Peter tells Ananias and Sapphira they lied to God and they were struck dead by the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-10).

- Peter's healed the sick and other were healed by his shadow (Acts 5:15-16).
- Phillip delivered many and healed the lame and paralysed (Acts 8:6).
- Many signs and wonders were done by the apostles (Acts 5:12).
- The people held the apostles in high esteem (Acts 5:13).
- A viper fastened on Paul's hand and it had no effect (Acts 28:1-31).
- Handkerchiefs that touched Paul's skin were taken to the sick and their diseases and mental illnesses were healed (Acts 19:12).
- Paul laid his hands on certain disciples and they were able to speak in a foreign language they had never learned, but others clearly understood (Acts 19:6).
- Paul cast out a spirit of divination (fortune-telling) from a woman (Acts 16:18).
- Angels delivered the disciples out of prisons.

(There is no mention of any disciple drinking anything poisonous and living).

Mark 16:19-20 ----- ¹⁹So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them (the eleven apostles) (v14) was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that after Jesus ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Lord by his Spirit empowered the eleven apostles to do amazing signs and wonders. Jesus by his Spirit is doing whatsoever they asked.

Nothing will Hurt You.

Though Jesus words, "Nothing will hurt you" may apply to the eleven apostles physical well-being it is more likely that it refers to their salvation and carries the following two ideas: -

1. That nothing will rob them from salvation and eternal life.
2. It does not matter where they go, whether it is to the unclean or satan worshippers if they are proclaiming the Lord's name nothing will damage, harm or hurt their eternal salvation.

Under the Old Testament law if the people of Israel touched any unclean thing or ate any unclean food it would separate them from God until they followed certain laws of washing and purification. Jesus is telling the apostles nothing will separate them from God if they are proclaiming his name no matter what they touch, eat, drink or no matter how bad the environment they go into is.

Serpents, Vipers and Scorpions.

Jesus said: -

Mark 16:18 ----- ¹⁸They (the eleven apostles) (v14) will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover (Mark 16:18).

Luke records as similar conversation: -

- The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go ---- NOW GO TO VERSE SEVENTEEN ---- ¹⁷The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the

demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:1-20).

Scorpion: comes from the Greek word skorpios and means to pierce from a sting.

Jesus tells the eleven apostles and the seventy-two disciples that they will not only tread on serpents and scorpions, but also be able to can drink poison and it will not hurt them, yet there is no mention in Scripture of the seventy-two or the apostles drinking poison or treading on serpents and scorpions other than Paul getting bitten by one. So what did Jesus mean?

Jesus told the seventy-two disciples not be amazed that the spirits are subject to them. The spirits he is referring to in the context of this conversation are the serpents and scorpions who are under the power of the enemy. The disciples have proclaimed the Gospel and many who were under the power of the enemy of God have responded and accepted Christ.

The serpents and scorpions in this context refer to any wicked or corrupt person, government or influence on the mind that would hinder a person from responding to the Gospel.

In Jesus generation this would particular apply to the religious leaders (the Chief Priests, Pharisees and Scribes) who had the religious power and authority over the people of Israel, but were so prideful, legalistic and hypocritical that they had made it almost impossible for those seeking God to find Him.

The following verses of Malachi (the last book of the Old Testament) also gives some incite since Malachi uses similar language.

Malachi 4:2-3 ----- ²for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness (echoing Jesus) shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

In these verses Malachi tells us that all who fear God will tread down the wicked underfoot and that they will be as ashes under their feet. This is the same as saying, "They will tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy."

The writer of the following Psalm uses similar language: -

Psalm 91:11-16 ----- ¹¹For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. ¹²On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. ¹³You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot. ¹⁴"Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. ¹⁵When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honour him. ¹⁶With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

The lion, the adder and the serpent in this context are symbols of: -

- Power and authority.
- Deceit and cunning.
- The devil and satan.

When Jesus said to the eleven apostles and the seventy two disciples, "I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you." He was telling them the following two things: -

1. If they are proclaiming his name those that are prideful, arrogant and wicked will have no power over them in regards to their salvation and eternal life no matter how much authority and power they may have.
2. If they go into the synagogues of satan, pagan temples and dwell amongst the wicked to proclaim the Lord's name none of these things will have any influence over them to destroy their relationship with Christ or their eternal salvation.

It is interesting to notice: -

When Jesus spoke of the Pharisees and Sadducees (the corrupt religious leaders of his generation) he said: -

- You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (Matt. 3:7).
- You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? (Matt. 12:34).
- You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? (Matt. 23:33).

Viper: in these verses comes from the Greek word echidna, and means an adder or other poisonous snake (literal or figurative).

The Scribes and Pharisees believed they were right before God because they descend from Abraham, served in the Temple and strictly adhered to the ceremonial rites and holy days and kept all the religious Jewish customs and traditions, but they were hypocrites, they said one thing, but did another, all their outward deeds were done to appear holy, but inwardly they had the same murderous spirit as their fathers who killed the prophets. We know this because they not only plotted to kill Jesus the Son of God, but also aggressively set out to persecute, flog, kill and crucify the New Testament prophets and anyone confessing the name of Jesus.

The Scribes and Pharisees would say one thing and appeared to be righteous on the outside, but their actions told a totally different story is it any wonder Jesus called them serpents and vipers.

For further information see the title: -

- Serpent.
- In, Satan and his family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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