

“Reverse the Curse”

Acts 1:8 & Genesis 11:4

November 5, 2017

VIDEO: *“Follow Me”* (Confusion, Corruption/Curse, & Cure)

INTRO: Can you see that *“confusion”* on the issue of what it means to “follow Christ” could be considered both a *“curse & corruption?”*

*Do you see yourself as part of the **cure???***

T/S: Let me show you what I mean and then we’ll jump into our text for this morning...

VIDEO: *“I Am A Missionary”*

“Missions exists because worship doesn't.”

- John Piper

Welcome to our **45th week** in a row of focusing on biblical, **Christ-like discipleship...**

TITLE: *“Reverse the Curse” (with the Church)*

BIG IDEA: *“God WILL empower His people to make disciples locally, regionally, & globally”*

TEXT: *Acts 1:8*

PREVIEW:

- **Expel the Confusion:** *Divine-Design*
- **Expose the Curse:** *Devilish-Deception*
- **Explain the Cure:** *Disciple’s-DNA*

I. **Expel the Confusion:** *DIVINE-DESIGN*

- Where does discipleship begin in the Bible?
 - **Genesis 1:28**
- Where does discipleship end in the Bible?
 - **The last word... “Amen”**
- Growing God’s glory goes from cover to cover!

VIDEO: *“Biblical Basis of Mission”*

II. **Expose the Curse:** *DEVILISH-DECEPTION*

- **Devil & the devilish**
- **Doubt** *(Did God really say...?)*

- **Distraction**
- **Distortion**
- **Division**
 - **Tower of Babel** Genesis 11:1-5

¹ Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.
² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there... ⁴ Then they said,
 “Come, let us build ourselves **a city and a tower** with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

- See the real curse... Confusion
- See God’s plan continued... “fill the earth...”
- **See our days & ways in the sins & selfishness:**
 - **Saying NO when God says Go!**
 - Building “walls” of self-centered “safety”
 - “Making names for ourselves” vs. God
 - **Staying vs. Going...**
 - **Consuming vs. Carrying...**

III. **Explain the Cure: DISCIPLE’S-DNA**

- **D = Definitions**
- **N = Notifications**
- **A = Applications**

A. **DEFINITIONS**

i. Follow

- Come after...
- Go for...
- BE like...

VIDEO: “I Didn’t Feel Called...”

- 3 C’s
 - **Command**
 - **Commission**
 - **Condition** (Luke 14:27)

▪ Fruitful

It is crucial to realize that being fruitful is not something that is accomplished by mere human willpower, but only by the power of God and His Holy Spirit working in and through the believer in Christ. Being fruitful is a work of God's grace (Philippians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:10; John 15:1–5).

Good fruit cannot be judged on mere external acts. If that were the case, then the Pharisees would be the most fruitful of all people. Instead, Jesus calls them white-washed tombs because although they appear good on the outside, inside they are rotten (Matthew 23:27–28). They are not motivated by love for Jesus and their aim is not to glorify God. Instead, they are motivated by self-

righteousness with the aim of appearing righteous before men (Matthew 23:5–7). They bear bad fruit disguised as good fruit.

Being a fruitful Christian works from the inside out. For instance, the apostle Peter in his second book, chapter 1 verses 5–8, states, "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice that it is not actions, but qualities, that have the priority. God first transforms our inner being, which then results in our bearing good fruit outwardly. If we are not first inwardly made alive to God, our outward good deeds are mere hypocrisy. - CompellingTruth.org

ILLUSTRATION:

See the Love of Christ in the LAW of CHRIST

- The Great Commandments & Great Commission...
 - ~ *As the Father has sent Me...*
 - ~ **The Good Samaritan**
 - * Love
 - € Vertical

€ Horizontal

€ Missional

* Authenticity

€ 1 John 3:15-18

€ you have done for Me

* No geographic or cultural walls

▪ Faithful (Holman Bible Dictionary)

FAITHFUL = *Steadfast, dedicated, dependable, and worthy of trust. It is derived from the Hebrew root... that gives us the word "amen."*

The faithful person is steadfast, unchanging, and thoroughly grounded in relation to the other. This sort of fidelity, or faithfulness, is used in both the Old Testament and the New Testament to describe God's relation to the world and to describe the quality of relationship that Israel and Christians are called upon to have with God and with one another.

VIDEO: *"Stories of Influence"*

Plod = *working with steadfast laborious diligence*

ILLUSTRATION: [Africa Inland Mission](#)

Peter Cameron Scott, (1890)... a gifted vocalist, was on the **steps of an opera house** ready to pursue a career as a singer, when God challenged him, **“Will you seek a life of self-glory?”**

He obeyed God’s call, received some missionary training, and at age 23 he sailed for Africa. Within a few months, his brother joined him, but the **harsh African climate** and environment that became known as **“the white man’s graveyard”** took its toll. **His brother died.**

Peter built a **crude coffin**, **dug the grave himself**, and buried his brother. **Alone at the grave, he recommitted himself** to preach the gospel in Africa.

His own health broke, and he went first to England and then back to the U.S. to **recruit others** for the cause. **In 1895, at age 28, he established the Africa Inland Mission.**

But just **14 months after he and his party had landed** on African soil, **Scott fell ill and died.**

After Scott’s death, the mission nearly failed as one after another of the workers died.

By the summer of 1899, only one missionary remained on the field.

But they persisted...

and ten years after the mission’s founding, there were 31 missionaries on the field.

In the early years, more missionaries died from the harsh conditions than people came to Christ.

But still more missionaries came, arriving with their goods packed in coffins.

The Africans were amazed at such determination. They said, “Surely only a message of great importance would inspire such actions.”

Today this mission’s fruit is measured in the millions!

B. NOTIFICATIONS

- i. Pre-fall - Genesis 1:28
- ii. Post-fall - Genesis 9:1; 12:3; 22:18
- iii. People - Exodus 19:6
- iv. Psalms - Ps.2 & 67...
- v. Prophets - Isaiah 49:6

“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob & to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

- vi. Peter...
- vii. Paul...
- viii. Prince of Peace - Great Commission!

C. APPLICATIONS

- i. **Obey & Abide** the Creator
- ii. **Love & Live** the Crucified

iii. Deploy & Disciple the Commissioner

CLOSE:

In the end... there will only be 3 categories of people:

- *Delusional*
- *Deceivers*
- *Disciples*

VIDEO: *"Risk It ALL"*

Lord... PLEASE.....

- **Expel** the confusion...
- **Expose** the corruption...
- Let us BE... **EXEMPLIFIERS** of You, **our**:
 - *Cure*
 - *Christ*
 - *King!*

Let's Pray!

NOTES:

(The Great Commission in the Old Testament)

The mission of God lies behind the whole of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament and the particular task which we call missions today. So one of the earlier texts we will look at is the text in Genesis 12, because in that text we find the tremendous revelation of Yahweh to Abraham where he reveals to Abraham a covenantal promise which is marked by God's initiative. **In that covenant, which is Genesis 12:1-3, God makes three promises to Abraham which are repeated on several occasions to Abraham and again through Isaac and through Jacob.**

- 1. He promises Abraham that He will bless him personally.** That is to say, there is a **numerical blessing**. Abraham is one person. His wife Sarah is childless. Yet we read that **God is going to multiply his descendents and make them as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore.** These are some of the metaphors that are used to describe this personal, numerical blessing made to Abraham.
- 2. But secondly, it is not only a personal blessing made to Abraham, it also comes as a national blessing with specific geographic implications.** He promises Abraham that he will take possession of the gates of their enemies, that he will become a mighty nation, his descendents would take possession of the land

which we now call the Promised Land, the land promised to Abraham. So there's a numerical blessing to Abraham, there's a national blessing to the people of Israel...

3. Then, thirdly, there's **this marvelous spiritual blessing to "all nations on the earth."** That text, **Genesis 12**, which **says, "And in your seed all peoples on earth will be blessed through you"** [cf. **Genesis 22:18; 26:24; 28:14**].

So this is a passage which is extremely important and is repeated to Abraham at several important junctures.

For example, in **Genesis 22:17-18** he says these words: "I will surely bless you and make your descendents as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore." That is the numerical blessing. Secondly he tells him, continuing in **v. 17**, "Your descendents will take possession of the cities of their enemies." That's the second part of the blessing, a national blessing. And then thirdly, **v. 18**, "and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me."

So these three parts of the covenant, the numerical, the national, and the spiritual ("to all nations") are repeated in almost the exact same words to Isaac in Genesis 26:3 and 5, to Jacob in Genesis 28:13-14, and numerous times and in various ways throughout the Pentateuch.

It's actually quite interesting that when Moses stands before the people **in the opening chapter of Deuteronomy**, that great passage, which occurs **some 400 years after the original promise to Abraham**, you nevertheless have this wonderful experience where **Moses says to the people in vv. 10-11**, when he looks out over the nation of Israel that's gathered there, **poised to go into the Promised, he says in v. 10: "The Lord has increased your numbers today so that you are as many as the stars in the sky."** So Moses acknowledges even before they go into the Promised Land that the first part of the Abrahamic promise has been fulfilled within Egypt itself. But **God's plan was never that the Israelites would simply be numerous and multiply exceedingly as slaves in Egypt.** The 430 years of Egyptian slavery was soon to be passed by the next stage which actually calls them to take possession of the land. And so there is a long process, throughout the book of Joshua especially, where we find the Israelites taking possession of the land and fulfilling almost completely, but certainly significantly, the geographic portion of this, that they will take possession of the land that God promised to Abraham.

The problem, of course, is this third part of the blessing, the spiritual blessing to all nations. That becomes very, very difficult for them to sometimes gain possession of because they are so busy worrying about maintaining their possession of the land.

They eventually get exiled, and therefore it becomes extremely difficult for them to even think about the larger, global implications of their calling as the people of God. I do

want to point out also that in the larger lectures we not only demonstrate how this promise is found in the Law, the Pentateuch, but also how it's found in the Prophets and the Writings.

We have tremendous promises found in Scripture. For example, in **Psalm 2, where we have the nations of the world to whom has been given this great promise that God wants to bless them, and instead we meet in Psalm 2 the nations raging and plotting against the LORD – that is Yahweh – and against His anointed one – that is the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.**

And in that wonderful passage in Psalm 2, you have the Father promising the Son, not just that He would save Israel, but instead, a much broader agenda which is part of the mission of God. **“I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession” – so this great promise that God will, in fact, bless the nations. This is done throughout the Old Testament in a number of ways.**

This also appears not only in the strand of the Law and the Writings, but **also in the Prophets** themselves where you have a number of examples where you have **the leadership of Israel recognized this tremendous hope that God was bringing them to and would carry them to through His abundant promises.**

For example, take the passage in Isaiah 49:6ff.
This passage, which is quoted in the New Testament, is a tremendous insight into the great vision of God for the people of God. This, like Psalm

2, is a conversation between the LORD and the Suffering Servant, the Messiah, who we of course now know is our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what the LORD says to Jesus Christ. He says to Him, pathetically:

“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light to the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

Now, **this is an extremely important passage because here are the Israelites facing exile**, facing the loss of even the second part of the Abrahamic covenant, and **yet, the vision of Isaiah is not just that they would be restored to their land** — that would be the greatest prayer of any Israelite. “Oh, come back from exile. Be restored to the land.” **But instead, the vision is always much, much greater.** He says, *“It is too small a thing if your prayer is only that I save the tribes of Israel and bring you back from exile.”* He says, *“The real vision is that I will make you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”* **What a great vision!**

And this, of course, is picked up on very readily by the New Testament. The apostle Paul, for example, when he talks about the missionary journey to the Gentiles, he **quotes this passage and he says specifically, “This is what the**

Lord said commanding us” – that is commanding the church – “to take the message to all peoples on earth.”

The apostle Paul understands that this Messianic promise which is fulfilled in Christ’s coming is brought in application to the world through a very strong message & emphasis on the role of the church of Jesus Christ in the world.

In the larger lectures we explain more carefully how this process happens. **If you read Acts 13 we find that this is exactly the point that Paul makes.** Paul says in reference to his turning to the Gentiles, in **Acts 13:46**, ***“We had to speak the Word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us.”***

He says “us” there; he doesn’t say “what He commanded Christ” but “what He commanded us” – that is, the church!

“I will make you” – which we normally think of as a reference to Christ, the Messiah, but it’s actually here in the Greek, in the singular text which would make it refer to Christ, “I will make you” that is Christ, “a light to the

Gentiles.” But Paul has said this is commanded to the Church. So, “I will make you a light to the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

So this is a promise made about Christ, but it is brought to the world through the instrumentality of the obedient church who obeys the Great Commission and brings this great message out into all the earth.

So, in summary, the Old Testament has strong emphasis on God’s heart for the nations, not just Israel but all nations, found in the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

This, of course, is explored in greater detail in the expanded lectures that are available through biblicaltraining.org.

The Great Commission in the Old Testament

*by L. Michael Morales
Ligonier Ministries – Table Talk Magazine*

Properly conceived as grounded in God's own kingship, **the Great Commission begins before humanity's fall away from communion with God. On the sixth day, man was commissioned by God to fill and subdue the earth, and to rule over the creatures** (Gen. 1:27).

Accordingly, one might justly define the Great Commission as “ruling and subduing” the earth and its creatures—an understanding we will need to unpack.

To be sure, the phrase “ruling and subduing” has deeply negative connotations in our modern world, filled as it is with memories of horrific tyranny and the abuse of power. Nevertheless, **we should note that this commission was given *before* the descent into sin and misery, precisely within the context of man in union with God—that is, given to man as bearer of the image of God (v. 26), created both to fellowship with God and to mediate the blessed reign of God over all the earth.**

The theology here is twofold. First, Adam is to gather up all creation into the seventh-day praise and adoration of God—that is what it means to “rule and subdue.” He is charged to set apart (“sanctify”) creation increasingly until

the whole earth is holy, filled with the abiding glory of God.

Second, there is no blessing to be enjoyed, be it ever so marginal, that does not derive from the reign of God—that is the joy of what it means to “be subdued,” especially so after the expulsion from life with God. For this reason, we gladly teach our children that Christ executes the office of a king “in subduing us to himself” (WSC Q&A 26).

The Great Commission bestowed upon Adam entailed that his kingship would be in the service of his priestly office, namely, that he would “rule and subdue” for the sake of gathering all creation to the Creator’s footstool in worship. The Sabbath consummation was the heart and goal of the sixth day’s commission.

Once we understand the Great Commission as a function of kingship, we are in a better place to assess this agenda throughout the rest of the Old Testament. God’s reign is universal, and from the beginning, His plan of salvation aimed at all the families of the earth, never overlooking the fact that He “shall inherit all the nations” (Ps. 82:8).

Here, the role of...

Genesis 1–11 as a prologue to Israel’s narrative cannot be overemphasized, for Israel’s own identity and sacred

calling springs from this universal context and is ever determined by it.

After the nations are scattered into exile from the tower of Babel, God calls Abram in Genesis 12, promising that through him “all the families of the earth will be blessed” (v. 3).

This promise is later reiterated to Abraham: “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice” (Gen. 22:18; see 18:18). It is then vouchsafed **to Isaac (26:4), and then **onward to Jacob** as the father of the twelve tribes of Israel **(28:14)**.**

Coupled with this promise is the undercurrent of kingship. Abram had been promised that “kings will come from you” (17:6), and a genealogy is followed that will blossom forth into the line of David. **Eventually, through Israel, a king would arise to gather the nations back into the presence of God.**

Israel, moreover, was brought into covenant fellowship with God at Sinai in order to live as a priestly kingdom and holy nation (Ex. 19:6)—that is, to be a light unto the Gentiles.

The parallel defining attributes *priestly* and *holy* must be understood in the sense of being set apart unto the Lord

God for the sake of the nations; Israel was to be a mediator between God and the nations.

This sacred calling had much more to do with *being subdued* than with *subduing* other peoples. Israel needed to be consecrated and sanctified—transformed into the servant of God for the sake of the world—to glorify God before the nations.

Psalm 67, one of many psalms calling the Gentiles to praise God, declares plainly that Israel had received mercy and even the priestly blessing so that God's way would be known on earth, and so that His salvation would encompass the nations.

Through Israel's early period, however, "there was no king in Israel," which meant "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (**Judg. 21:25**). In other words, without one to incarnate God's reign, Israel would persistently fall away into apostasy. **Israel needed to be subdued before it could be a light unto the Gentiles.**

Upon the installation of David as king of Israel, the Great Commission became a divine charge to a human king once more. Psalm 2, likely used during Israel's coronation ceremony, is instructive on this point. In the midst of the raging nations, the Lord declares, "As for me, I have set my

king on Zion, my holy hill” (v. 6). The king then professes the divine decree: “The LORD said to me, ‘You are my son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession’ ” (vv. 7–8). The phrase *my son* draws us once again to Adam and to another facet of the theology of the Great Commission.

In a unique sense, Adam may be called the “first-born” son of God (begotten *and* made). Luke’s genealogy of the Messiah, for example, brings us back to Seth as “the son of Adam” then on to Adam as “the son of God” (**Luke 3:38**; see **Gen. 5:1–3**). As God’s “first-born,” then, Adam’s inheritance was as wide as his commission: the whole earth—for “the cattle on a thousand hills” and “the world and its fullness” are his (**Ps. 50:10, 12**). Adam possessed, in other words, the inherent right to rule and subdue all the earth on his Father’s behalf and for the sake of his Father’s glory.

As redemptive history progresses, Israel then becomes, as it were, God’s second “firstborn” son. To be noted here, the Lord was quite particular as to the words Moses was to speak at his opening confrontation with Pharaoh: “Thus says the LORD: ‘Israel is my son, my firstborn. So I say to you, let my son go that he may worship me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn’ ” (**Ex. 4:22–23**; see **Hos. 11:1**). The final sign from God, celebrated annually at Passover, would drive that original revelation deep into the heart of Pharaoh.

Returning now to Psalm 2, David, as head of Israel and by divine promise (**2 Sam. 7:14**), could be considered God's son in a special sense, as he had evidently received the mantle of Adam as a function of his office. By his anointing, David inherited Adam's role as "son of God" and king of the earth. "I will make him my firstborn," God says, "the highest of the kings of the earth" (**Ps. 89:26–27**). It is important to understand that *only as the anointed king* did David receive the promise to rule and subdue the nations. **David's commission was to spread the will and reign of God over the earth—his "enemies" were not merely political or personal, but the enemies of God, kings who had set themselves against the Lord and His anointed.** In reality, however, the goal of subduing Israel would prove quite enough.

Worse still, it was Israel's kings themselves who led God's sheep astray into perverse rebellion and heinous idolatry. The exile was inevitable.

Yet, remarkably, within the context of Israel's apostasy, God promised to raise up a Davidic Servant who would not only lead the tribes of Jacob through a new exodus but who would also be given "as a light for the

nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (Isa. 49:6).

This same Servant, we go on to read, would suffer God’s judgment in bearing the sins of many, that as an exalted priest he might “sprinkle many nations” (Isa. 52:13–53:12; see 1 Peter 1:1–2).

Having atoned for the sins of his people, this coming Messiah—the last Adam, the seed of Abraham, the true Israel, the greater David, the Suffering Servant, the Son of God—would ascend on high to reign from the heavenly Mount Zion, from the right hand of God the Father... Matthew 28, then, is but the embrace of the inheritance promised in Psalm 2.

Yet this kingship is in the service of a priestly office, to usher us into God’s presence through the veil of torn flesh and shed blood. Through His outpoured Spirit, Jesus reigns to subdue and summon all creation to the adoration of His Father (1 Cor. 15:24–28), subduing us day by day ever more deeply that we might learn how to “glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

The Great Commission – An Exploration of the Old and New Testament

Thomas Schirrmacher Category: Perspectives Issue: 07-2009

The Great Commission as Climax of the Four Gospels

In Christian tradition, “the Great Commission” is a term for the instruction of the resurrected Jesus Christ to his disciples—that they should spread his gospel to all the nations of the world. In a narrower sense, the term defines five specific texts in the New Testament. In an even narrower meaning, the term often just defines Matthew 28:16-20.

Jesus' most important concern between the resurrection and his ascent into heaven seems to have been world missions, made possible by his sacrificial death on the cross as the most important aspect of his suffering, death, and resurrection. All four Gospels include some form of the Great Commission given in the period of time following the resurrection (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:13-53, particularly vs. 44-49; John 20:11-23, particularly vs. 21-23; and Acts 1:4-11).

In each Gospel the sending of the disciples into the world at the end points back to the twelve apostles being chosen by Jesus in the beginning.

Jesus chose the disciples “that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:13).

From the very beginning, the goal of their intensive training through living and working with him was to prepare them for the Great Commission.

Their training as missionaries was not arbitrary, but clearly according to Jesus' deliberate plan:

- First, Jesus preached alone.
- Second, Jesus preached while the disciples observed.
- Third, Jesus let the disciples preach while he observed.
- Fourth, Jesus sent the disciples out for a short mission (Matthew 10:1-11; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6) and discussed the results with them.
- Last, Jesus sent the disciples alone. They then began to do the same with other Christians.

Thus, **training toward independence is a central element of missions. The Great Commission in the Gospel of Matthew (28:16-20) is not only the end of the Gospel of Matthew, it is also its climax and its goal.** For this reason, Matthew emphasizes from the first chapter on that the good news is also for the heathen (e.g., 5:14; 9:37-38; 12: 8-21).

The Great Commission and the Old Testament

Although the apostles spoke of Jesus' commandment several times after Pentecost (Acts 1:2, 10:42), they never cited the Great Commission directly. **Peter combines the Great Commission with a reference to the Old Testament as an argument for his preaching the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10:42-43).**

According to Jesus, all parts of the Old Testament speak not only of his coming, dying, and rising, but of forgiveness to be preached to all nations.

For this reason, it is not surprising that **the Great Commission according to Luke is derived directly from the Old Testament (Luke 24:43-49)**. According to Jesus, all parts of the Old Testament speak not only of his coming, dying, and rising, but of forgiveness to be preached to all nations.

The Content

Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew's Gospel justifies world missions by the assurance, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (28:18), and that he will always be with his Church (28:20). Thus, **the Great Commission is not only an assignment but also a promise. Jesus himself carries the responsibility for discipling all nations, for, he says, "I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18)**. The success of world missions confirms the promise of Christ's dominion.

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 includes the command to make all people "pupils" (disciples). The first step is personal conviction and repentance. Baptism in the name of the Trinity must be experienced personally. This is still the way God has chosen to win whole nations. Thus, the

goal of converting whole people does not contradict the need for personal repentance.

Conversion and baptism according to the Great Commission do not mark the conclusion, but the beginning of personal renewal, as well as the renewal of the family, church, economics, state, and society. Every individual should become a pupil (disciple) of Jesus Christ. **In the command to teach “them to obey everything I have commanded you,” the Great Commission includes the exhortation to teach the whole range of biblical ethics. In transforming the individual, his or her everyday life, and his or her environment, mission overcomes sinful structures and visible injustice.**

History: The prevailing historic view until the eighteenth century was that the Great Commission had been directed to the New Testament apostles alone. However, there were theologians who held to the modern view. These included St. Augustine, the German reformer Martin Bucer, and the Dutch Reformed missiologist Gisbert Voetius. The change was introduced in 1792 through William Carey’s book, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.

Carey pointed out that the Great Commission was binding “even to the end of the age.” One of his best arguments for the validity of the Commission was the fact that it included the command to baptize that all churches and theologians considered valid. If the Great Commission was directed only

to the apostles, churches would have had to stop baptizing people. Carey also argued that the Great Commission would be fulfilled, as was authorized by the power of the Lord of Lords.

Carey's view became more and more common, and soon the Great Commission became the most quoted base for Christian mission in all confessions. In the 1960s, missiologists in the ecumenical movement wanted to exchange the commission or command for the *missio Dei* concept. Today, however, both views are seen to complete each other.

In higher criticism there have been several attempts to prove that none of the Great Commissions in the New Testament stem from Jesus. However, the debate has not come to a common conclusion.

In the Church Growth Movement, initiated by the American Methodist missionary to India Donald McGavran, the Great Commission according to Matthew received special emphasis. The Church can only grow if it spreads within people groups; and it can only grow if people are not made Christians, but are disciplined into mature Christians who then again make the Great Commission their own task.

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[Alliance](#), and director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo). Schirrmacher has four doctorates (theology, cultural anthropology, ethics, and sociology of religions).

Question: "What does it mean to be a fruitful Christian?"

Answer: The Bible often uses the metaphor of fruit to describe the produce of our lives. Fruit can be either good or bad (Matthew 7:18; Luke 6:43). Romans 7:5 says, "For when we were in the realm of the flesh . . . we bore fruit for death." A fruitful Christian will produce better results: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life" (Proverbs 11:30).

Fruit is the direct result of whatever controls our hearts (Matthew 15:19). The fruit of a life not surrendered to Jesus includes "sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage," and many more evil acts (Galatians 5:19–20). In contrast, the [fruit of the Spirit of God](#) is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22–23).

God the Father is the gardener (John 15:1), and He desires us to be fruitful. Jesus said, "[I am the vine](#); you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). As branches cling to the vine, we cling to Christ, drawing our very life from Him. The goal is "much fruit," as

Christ uses us to bring about blessed, celestial results in a broken, fallen world.

When we have committed ourselves to Christ and live to please Him, the natural result is behavioral choices that look like His. He was clear that true followers of Christ will **be recognizable by their fruit: “Do people pick grapes from thorn-bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them” (Matthew 7:16–20).**

There are many ways Christians can be fruitful. True fruitfulness begins in the heart with the fruit of the Spirit. That inner fruit affects outward actions; our words and our **activities will glorify the Lord, and God’s will is accomplished. God’s desire is to transform us into the** image of Christ (Romans 8:29) and make us as fruitful as He was. In our allegiance to Him, we want to be characterized by good works (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:7; Colossians 1:10), humility (Ephesians 4:2; Titus 3:2), and forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13). We want **to always be ready to “give an account for the hope that is within you” (1 Peter 3:15). We desire to be the “good soil”** Jesus spoke of in the [Parable of the Sower](#) in Matthew 13:3–9. The result of spiritual fruitfulness is that God is glorified, we grow, and others come to know Christ—this is the ultimate fruitfulness for a child of God (Matthew 5:16; Acts 20:26–27; Mark 16:15).

What is meant by being a fruitful Christian?

In Scripture, fruit is a metaphor used to describe the outward demonstration of one's inward disposition. Our "fruit" includes things like our behavior, attitude, words, and thoughts. Fruit can be either good or bad. Naturally, all people produce bad fruit (i.e. sinful actions, deeds, or behavior; see Matthew 15:18–20; Romans 7:5; Galatians 5:19–21). Our bad behavior/fruit is a natural result of being born with bad hearts (Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 5:12). We are born with a sinful nature and thus we naturally produce bad fruit. Therefore, the first and most important thing towards understanding what it means to be a fruitful Christian is to understand what it means to be a Christian. This may seem obvious, but the truth is that many people have misconceptions about what it means to be a Christian. Many people believe that doing outwardly "good" deeds, going to church, or being born to Christian parents, makes them Christian. However, God's word teaches that a Christian is one who has been born again through faith in Jesus Christ and is therefore a new creation who is indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:9–11).

The contrast between the fruit or works of the flesh

produced by the non-Christian and the fruit of the Holy Spirit produced in the Christian is clearly set forth in Galatians 5:19–24: "Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Those who have been born again spiritually and belong to Jesus Christ produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

It is crucial to realize that being fruitful is not something that is accomplished by mere human willpower, but only by the power of God and His Holy Spirit working in and through the believer in Christ. Being fruitful is a work of God's grace (Philippians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:10; John 15:1–5).

Good fruit cannot be judged on mere external acts. If that were the case, then the Pharisees would be the most fruitful of all people. Instead, Jesus calls them white-washed tombs because although they appear good on the outside, inside they are rotten (Matthew 23:27–28). They are not motivated by love for Jesus and their aim is not to glorify God. Instead, they are motivated by self-righteousness with the aim of appearing righteous before

men (Matthew 23:5–7). They bear bad fruit disguised as good fruit.

Being a fruitful Christian works from the inside out. For instance, the apostle Peter in his second book, chapter 1 verses 5–8, states, "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice that it is not actions, but qualities, that have the priority. God first transforms our inner being, which then results in our bearing good fruit outwardly. If we are not first inwardly made alive to God, our outward good deeds are mere hypocrisy.

However, this is not meant to dismiss or demean the necessity of the good fruit or good works themselves. The faith that God gives us to receive Christ is a faith that works. True saving faith, as opposed to a hypocritical false profession of faith, will make us fruitful. A dead faith is no real faith at all (James 2:17).

So, what does this fruit look like? Good fruit is seen in a change in our disposition, attitudes, affections, and actions. Those sins which we formerly loved become loathsome to us (Romans 6:21). We begin to love others with the love of Christ (John 13:34–35). We more easily

forgive (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13). As we are given opportunity, we seek to do good to everyone (Galatians 6:9–10). We exercise our spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11–16). We share the good news of salvation and make disciples (Matthew 28:18–20). We are grateful and give praise to God (Colossians 3:15). We seek to do all things for God's glory (Colossians 3:17). We confess our sins to God and pray for His continual work in us (1 John 1:9; Philippians 1:6). We strive to know God and to do the things which please Him, knowing that we can bear no true fruit apart from Him (John 15:1–12).

Being a fruitful Christian is not accomplished by checking off a "to do" list but by having our essential being and character changed, renewed, and progressively conformed to the image and likeness of Christ (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). To be fruitful means to follow Christ. To love what He loves. To do what He commands from a loving motive and with a joyful spirit. This obedience is both predestined by and empowered by God Himself which removes any grounds for boasting in how fruitful our lives or ministries become (Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 1:28–31). It is by God's grace and our abiding in Christ that we produce good fruit (John 15:4–5). The fruit is good because God is good and we ascribe all the glory to Him for it (Philippians 1:11).

- **CompellingTruth.org**

Acts 1:1-8

A. God's VISION (vv 1-2)

B. God's FUSION (vv 3-7)

C. God's MISSION (v.8)

Genesis 1:28... 9:1... ch.10... 11:4.... ch.12

Link Acts 1:8 & 8:1... to Genesis 1:28; 9:1, 11:4, 12:?

Connect Isaiah 49:6!!!

Also bring the "Love of Christ" AND the "Law of Christ" into focus & application here...

The Love of Christ

The LAW of CHRIST

- The Great Commandments...

- The Great Commission...

- ~ As the Father has sent Me...

- ~ The Good Samaritan

- * See principles

- = Love

- € Vertical

- € Horizontal

- € Missional

- = Authenticity

- € 1 John 3:15-18

- € you have done for Me

- * No geographic walls

- The Great Church...

- ~ Built of "Samaritans"

- * Saved "Samaritans"

- * Sanctified "

- * Surrendered "
- * Serving "
- * Sent "Samaritans"

Creator

Genesis 1

John 1

Creation

Everything

Everyone

Everywhere

Corruption

Genesis 3

John 3

Foiled

Flood

Flounder

Fakes

Finale

Covenant(s)

Garden

Noah

Abraham

Moses

David

Jesus
Church
Children

Distinct
Deliberate
Delivered
Deployed
Disciples
Challenges

Patterns
Problems
Persistent
People
Powers
Christ

Lord
Missionary
Savior
Cross

Death
Defeat
Defining (Discipleship)
Church

Christ's-ones (Christians & Children)

- Ambassadors
- Armor-wearing Army
- Aroma
 - * Smell of life to some
 - * Smell of death to others

Challenged (spiritual warfare)

- Word
- Worship
- Walk
- Worry
- Wolves

Commissioned

- BRING... glory to God
- BUILD-make disciples (head, heart, hands)
 - * Engage
 - * Explain
 - * Equip
 - * Empower
 - * Exemplify
 - ~ Deliver the Word
 - ~ Develop the Worshippers
 - ~ Deploy the Workers

- BE ekklesia in koinonia & homothoomadon!

Coming-again

Promised

Proven (resurrection)

Power
Purify
Punish
Completion

Home

- Dreaded arrival (abusive home)
- Excited arrival (i.e. Me after long journeys)

Hell

Heaven

Tie in the 5 Solas...

Be fruitful & multiply...

- In the Garden (Genesis 1:28)
- Out of the Ark (Gen. 9:1)
- Unto Abraham (Gen. 22:15ff)
- Through the Prophets (Isa. 49:6 & ch.53)
- Coming of Christ (to seek & save the lost)
- Going as His Church (Matt. 24:14 & 28:18ff)
- Coming again.... (Rev...)

William Carey: a portrait of perseverance

- "Expect great things from God & attempt great things for God."
- "I can plod." (March 11, 1812... tragic fire)

- James 1:3-4

- "We have only to keep the end in view, and have our hearts thoroughly engaged in the pursuit of it, and means will not be very difficult."

QUOTE: "Missions exists because worship doesn't." - John Piper

Hebrews 13:14!!! We seek not this city...

Connect the Great Commission to both the Tower of Babel AND Christ's promise that once the whole world has heard the gospel, then He will come again!!!

- Every knee will bow...

- Revelation's description of the finale

- See all 5 contexts & expressions of the Great C

Quote: "The greater the fight, the richer the victory." - Nik Ripken (author: The Insanity of God & The Insanity of Obedience)

Are you living as a sheep amongst sheep?

Attend or Attain... What do you want?

Matthew 13:44... Treasure in a field!

Some that are comfortable on Sunday will be crushed & condemned on Judgment Day - JDP

Goodwin College: "We're ready when you are."
(Hartford, CT billboard - Saturday 8:25AM)

Following is fruit-producing...Following is fruitful!

Fruit reveals the root (good OR bad).

Good fruit = "fruit of the Spirit"

Bad fruit = "fruit of the selfish"

See Galatians 4 (good AND bad listed)

See John 15... to glory God... bear much fruit

Define:

- Follow
- Fruitful
- Faithful

- Design
- Define
- DNA

Faith's fruit is following... and following is the fruit of faith! -

JDP

You are saved by grace thru faith, not of works...

AND

Faith without works is dead faith (does not save!)

LIKE

John 3:36... faith/believe = obey & live!

PLOD = to work with steady, laborious diligence