

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

May 26, 2019

“Discipleship 201”



9:00 ~ Fellowship.

10:00 ~ Service with the King's Kid's - Communion is for all who are Christians

NEWS

Next Sunday Services at 8:00 & 10:30, Adult Sunday school at 9:30

VBS June 17th to the 21st

Church Camp August 23rd to the 25th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at

aletheiachristianfellowship.podomatic.com

Like us on Facebook ([aletheiachristianfellowship](https://www.facebook.com/aletheiachristianfellowship))

Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, secretary@myaletheia.com, kids@myaletheia.com

1) To whom was the Messiah sent? To whom did He send the Apostles? Who was excluded?

2) What God gives you is not yours to keep, but as you give it away, you receive even more. What are we to make of that principle?

3) How can Christians apply this passage?

MATTHEW 10:5-15 ~ ⁵NASB These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; ⁶but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ⁸“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. ⁹“Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, ¹⁰or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. ¹¹“And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. ¹²“As you enter the house, give it your greeting. ¹³“If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. ¹⁴“Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵“Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

They were sent _____ to the “Lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Jesus wanted them targeting _____ Jewish people.

Because of that, Christians have interpreted the passage in ways to apply the mission to _____, so that the remainder of the passage will apply to Christians.

The most common method is to take it allegorically. The “House of Israel,” is reinterpreted as _____.

We’re in chapter 10, which is still the _____ time of Jesus’ ministry. (Matthew 15:24). Who are the “Lost Sheep”? Jeremiah 50:6 or Isaiah 53:6?

The phrase “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles,” literally means don’t travel on a _____ that leads to non-Jewish people. The word translated “Gentile” is ἔθνος (ēth-nōs). (Acts 8:9, Acts 10:22).

Matthew 28:19, ^{19NASB}“Go therefore and make disciples of all the *nations* (ἔθνος), baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 28:20, ^{20NASB}“Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”

The Jewish people were chosen by God for Him to display His holiness, His intolerance of sin, His wrath and His patience, His Agapê and His grace. As well as show the human _____ that resists Him even so.

God is Faithful. (I Corinthians 1:9, Deuteronomy 7:9).

God promised that He would personally enable the Jews to enter into His eternal rest. Jesus was that promise fulfilled. He was a _____ Messiah. God chose to bless others at the same time, but that was _____. (Romans 1:16, etc.).

As the 12 constantly moved around they were, first and foremost, to “_____.” This was the teaching that Jesus had thus far given them. This is not the _____ as we know it now.

Ultimately it was a Message exhorting readiness by way of humble repentance. Prepare your heart for the _____ and the salvation He brings.

Jesus said, “Freely you received, freely give.” What they were to give away, wasn’t _____ in the first place. Go be conduits through whom God gives to others.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Verses 9&10, "Do not," is not in any way ambiguous. Never are you to acquire, procure or possess, any _____ at all. Beyond that, do not bring any _____.

The idea was that they were to be fully _____ upon whatever provision was given. There was to be no _____ of anything.

They were commanded to travel to a place without any _____ at all. Just show up and ask the first one you encounter and then be content with whatever happened.

"The worker is worthy of his support," applies to the whole, complete dependence upon God, motif. This very _____ demonstrates in the _____ world a total dependence on the provision of God. (Deuteronomy 25:4, I Corinthians 9:9-11, I Timothy 5:18).

"Shake the dust off your feet." Is an overt physical act _____ an eternal judgment. The condemnation was acknowledging the reality that those opposed to God are already judged.

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 10a ~ 051919

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

SUMMER SCHEDULE

8:00 am Service

9:30 am Adult Sunday School

10:30 am Service with King's Kids

Summer schedule starts June 2nd, Services at 8:00
& 10:30, Adult Sunday school at 9:30

VBS June 17th to the 21st

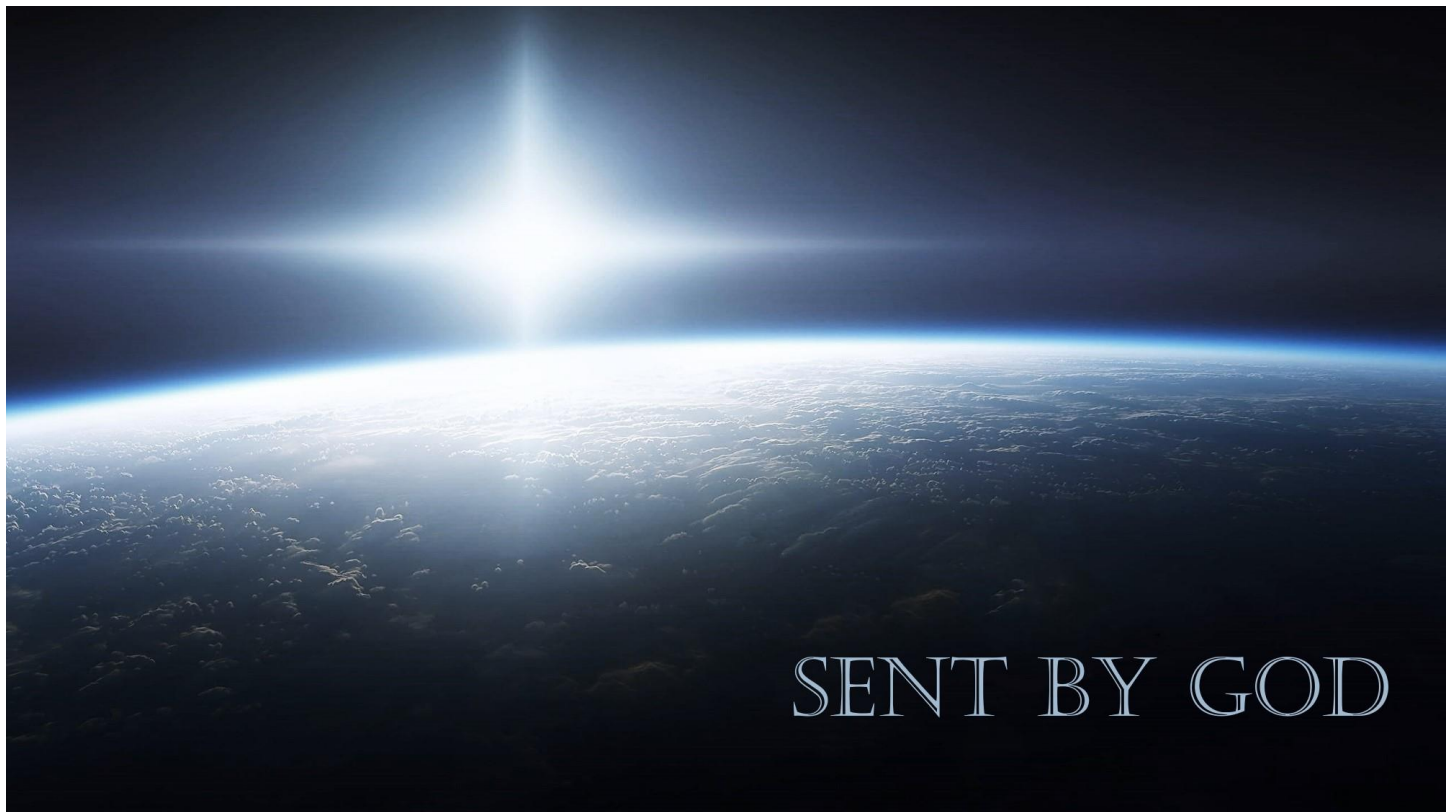
Church camp August 23rd to the 25th

Welcome Friends

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW
A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

Last week we laid out some ground rules in order to better understand, not only what the Bible says and means, but also how it applies. Let's reread...

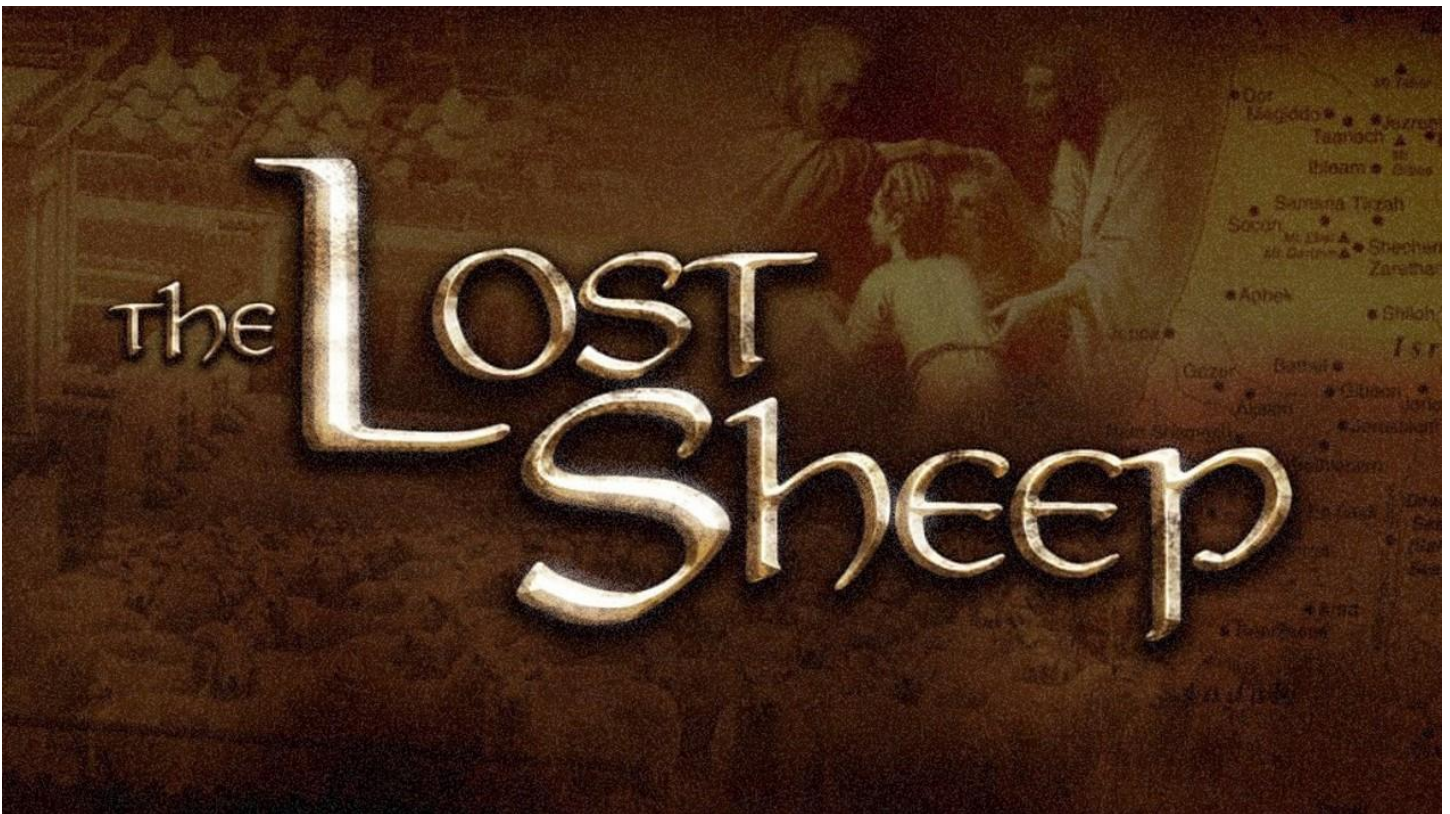


Matthew 10:5-15 ~ 5These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. 9“Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, 10or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. 11“And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. 12“As you enter the house, give it your greeting. 13“If the house is worthy, give it your

blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. 14“Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. 15“Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

Jesus hand-selected 12 men from His larger group of disciples. He commissioned them, bestowing upon them His mission, His ministry, His power and His authority, all so they could proclaim His Message.

As the Father sent Jesus, Jesus sent them and just like Jesus, they were to be teachers and preachers bringing the people hope.



What people? Exclusively the “Lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Jesus wanted them targeting only Jewish people.

Because of the unambiguously stated audience, Christians, over the centuries, have interpreted the passage in a variety of inconsistent and convoluted ways to suit their agenda and theology.

Generally, the goal is to get the terminology to apply to non-Jews, so that the remainder of the passage can apply to Christians, or at least to certain Christians.

The most common method is to take it allegorically. The “House of Israel,” is reinterpreted as the true Christian church and so, the “Lost sheep” of that house, are those unsaved people, who will be saved, once the impoverished, itinerant preacher comes calling.

There are many problems with all such attempts, not the least of which, is taking the Bible figuratively, where it is clearly literal. There is nothing at all to suggest that this didn't actually happen as described.

When we realize that these instructions were for a specific group and purpose, that they were applicable for a limited time and place, then convoluted interpretation becomes unnecessary.

1) 12 Apostles corresponds to the 12 Tribes of Israel.
2) The Message was not the Gospel we know, but the exhortation to repent that only Jewish people would have readily understood then. 3) The Messiah was promised to the Jews and only by their overflow of blessing to the rest of the world.

We're in chapter 10, which is still the Jew only time of Jesus ministry. In Matthew 15:24, five chapters later,

Jesus was still able to say of Himself, 24bNASB “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

We’ll take a closer look at all of that, but for now, we take it from the top. We know the “Lost sheep of the House of Israel,” were Jews, but who exactly? It would be easy to assume that Jesus meant the shepherdless people that He felt Divine compassion for at the end of the chapter 9. In such a case, Jeremiah 50:6a, would apply: 6aNASB “My people have become lost sheep; Their shepherds have led them astray.” It would be the down and out, abused and marginalized people of the lower classes - the ones the leaders have led astray.

While such people were primed for the Message Jesus preached and were far more needy of His assistance, their acceptance was often an illusion. As owners of a human heart, you’d think we’d be better at judging them, but we’re not.

So many people equate financial poverty with a humbly receptive heart. Often it only seems so. Starving people will gladly agree with you, while you’re feeding them. Once their bellies are full... Story about the Guatemala agent’s query each week.

There's no telling who will be genuinely soft-hearted. The receptive heart is a heart that is broken, weak and humble. It is a heart ready to repent. A state enabled by the Holy Spirit. Anyone can be broken and so anyone can potentially be receptive.

I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't ask you right now, how is your heart?

While the mission was primarily directed to the common people, Jesus' Message was for all the descendants of Israel, just as Isaiah said in his Messianic prophecy. Isaiah 53:6a, 6aNASBA
All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.

So, the mission was to the Jewish people, further confirmed by...



The phrase “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles,” literally means don’t travel on a road that leads to non-Jewish people. The word translated “Gentile” is ἔθνος (ěth-nōs). It is best translated as “ethnic group.” Any ethnic group can be meant. It is used to describe the ethnic group of the Samaritans in Acts 8:9 and to describe the ethnic group of the Jews in Acts 10:22.

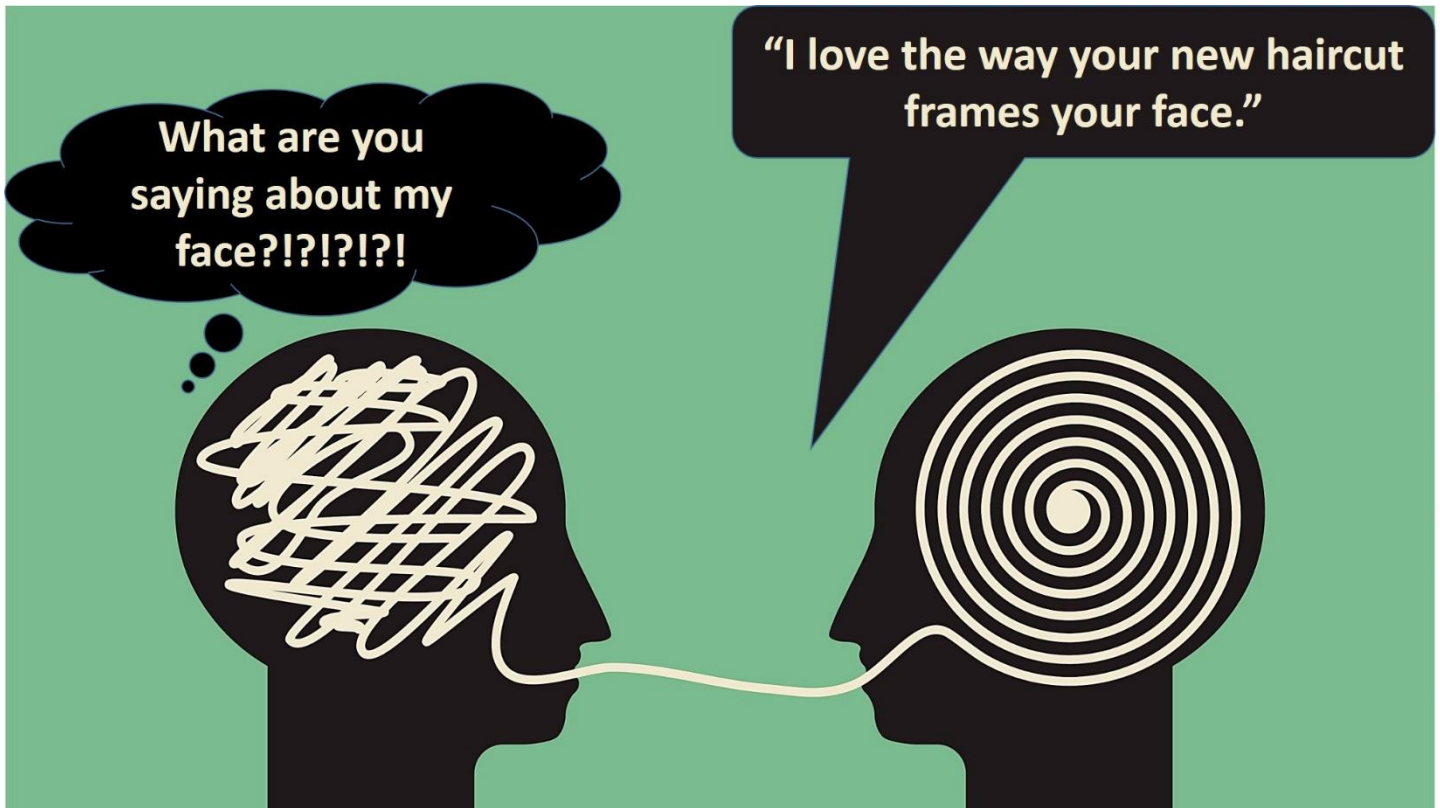
The word primarily describes people of the same ethnicity, but can at times, more loosely, be used to denote a nation, or an ordered community of people with something in common - a shared religion, political system, geographical region, or culture.

It does not mean “Gentile” - at all - has nothing to do with that. In the Bible, the word is most often used from a Jewish point of view, in its plural form. That means in the Bible, it most often means, ethnic groups, or nations other than the Jewish ethnic group, or nation and so it is often translated as “Gentiles” - people other than Jews.

Even though “Gentiles” is an acceptable translation here, I think a more consistent way to go would be the way the Holman Bible translates it: 5bHCSB “Don’t take the road leading to other nations.” When we do it that way, we can more easily see that the mission was clearly to the Jewish nation alone, and more importantly, it makes it more obvious that Jesus changes this mission scope, later in this Gospel.

I mentioned last week that the same word ἔθνος, is rightly translated in the Great Commission as “Nations,” rather than “Gentiles.” There, in Matthew 28:19, Jesus commanded this same group of men, minus Judas, to 19NASB “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, all and every, ethnic group on earth), baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

So, at the end of this Gospel, Jesus' command, Don't go to any other nation, changed to, go to all of them.



The way rhetorical language worked back then was to give the primary and most important command in a series a place of prominence, where it would stand out above the rest. The easiest way to do that is the way it was done in this instance... You put it first. Everything else flows from that.

Technically, the way the passage works is 1) Jesus summoned - He chose them. 2) He gave them His authority before He gave them any responsibility. 3)

they were named. 5) Jesus gave them the primary purpose they were to fulfill - preach!

You skipped number 4. Yes, I did, before giving them their actual commission, the job, they were to perform, the task, Jesus outlined the scope of the work. That's how important it was. 5bHCSB "Don't take the road leading to other nations, and don't enter any Samaritan town. 6Instead, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

If, which means since, the primary and, by far the most important command does not apply to us today, why do we insist on trying to shoehorn ourselves into the lesser commands that follow?

That's the whole reason Christians have tried to reinterpret the scope of the audience. A literal, exclusively Jewish audience makes the universal application of the commands, incompatible and capricious - pure folly.



Last week, I also said that unlike the chapter 10 set of commands, the Great Commission commands in chapter 28, absolutely applied to every Christian person throughout time. Why? The next words Jesus spoke in the Great Commission command were:
20NASB“Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

“Teaching” each and every new Christian precisely what Jesus taught them in total (we haven’t heard it all yet), and then discipling, or disciplining them, to ensure that they “Observe,” or do, or follow, or replicate, that

same teaching, generation upon generation to this very day and beyond.

To round it out, the last part about being with them “To the end of the age,” ties directly back to the “Baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

From day one of the Christian community, people from every ethnicity were made into disciples of Jesus Christ and once they were acknowledged as such, the church baptized them into the Body of Believers as full-fledged, card-carrying, secret-handshake, members of the church and as such they had Jesus fully with them, as they carried forward His mission and ministry for another generation. It has been this way for 2,000 years. Nothing in that has ever changed.



But, at the time of our narrative, the 12 were strictly forbidden from travelling toward non-Jewish areas. The NlrV captures the intent well: 5bNlrV“Do not go among those who aren’t Jews.”

The Message Bible can be very good at times, but as a paraphrase, it often misses the mark entirely, as here, with 5b&6MSG“Don’t begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don’t try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood.”

This was not about starting small, or staying close to home, or making it easier with a more receptive crowd - this was about fulfilling the mission of the Messiah.

The Jewish people were the chosen people of God - make no mistake about that at all. God selected them very specifically, very carefully and with His Own Divine purposes in mind. The Jews were not chosen because they were the biggest, best-est, or brightest - they were chosen so that God could physically, graphically, manifestly, demonstrate His nature and character to the world through them.

It has proven to be an unbelievably difficult row to hoe. A nation set apart by God for His purposes is such an incredible responsibility and such a monumental burden.

We look back over 4,000 years of Jewish history and often think that somehow, we could have done a better job. I talked to a young man last week who said when he was merely a devoutly religious person, he would read the Old Testament and always wonder why God chose such a stupid group of people. Then he came to the end of himself and genuinely surrendered to Christ and became an on-fire disciple. Now, through the

illumination of the Holy Spirit, he recognizes his own imperfection and so when he rereads the Old Testament, he knows that he could have done no better. But for the grace of God, we'd be just as stiff-necked. as the "Lost sheep of the House of Israel."

God chose them to display His holiness, to display His intolerance of sin, to display human weakness, to display His wrath and His patience, to display His Agapê and His grace, to display the human arrogance that resists Him even when He makes Himself completely approachable.

It is a hard thing to be chosen by God. If that's not your experience, let me suggest that you're not doing it right.

God is faithful. How many believe that? I hope all of us believe that because the Bible says precisely that. I Corinthians 1:9, 9aNASB "God is faithful."

In Deuteronomy 7:9, God is defined as faithful - in other words, being faithful is one of His intrinsic characteristics - it is His nature and character to be faithful to Who He is and what He says.

God established the Jewish people fully knowing there were going to be problems starting the first hour of the first day. God promised them repeatedly that He Himself would come and save them. He Himself would come and turn their hearts to Him.

There could not have been a Messianic hope in Israel 2,000 years ago, without a Messianic hope built up in the Jewish people for 2,000 years previous to that!

God promised and swore on His Own Name, that He would personally enable the Jews to enter into His eternal rest.



Jesus was God with us, the very Message of the Living and Almighty One true God who came and took on a flesh suit.

We know that, but please do not for a moment forget that Jesus was a fully Jewish Messiah specifically sent in answer to a promise to a fully Jewish people.

Jesus was fulfilling His primary purpose in focusing His energy and attention of the Children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

At the time, an argument could be made that the Samaritan people were partially Jewish - for these

purposes, partial was not good enough and so Jesus added the clarification, you will avoid other nations, and if you were wondering, yes, that includes the nation of the Samaritans.

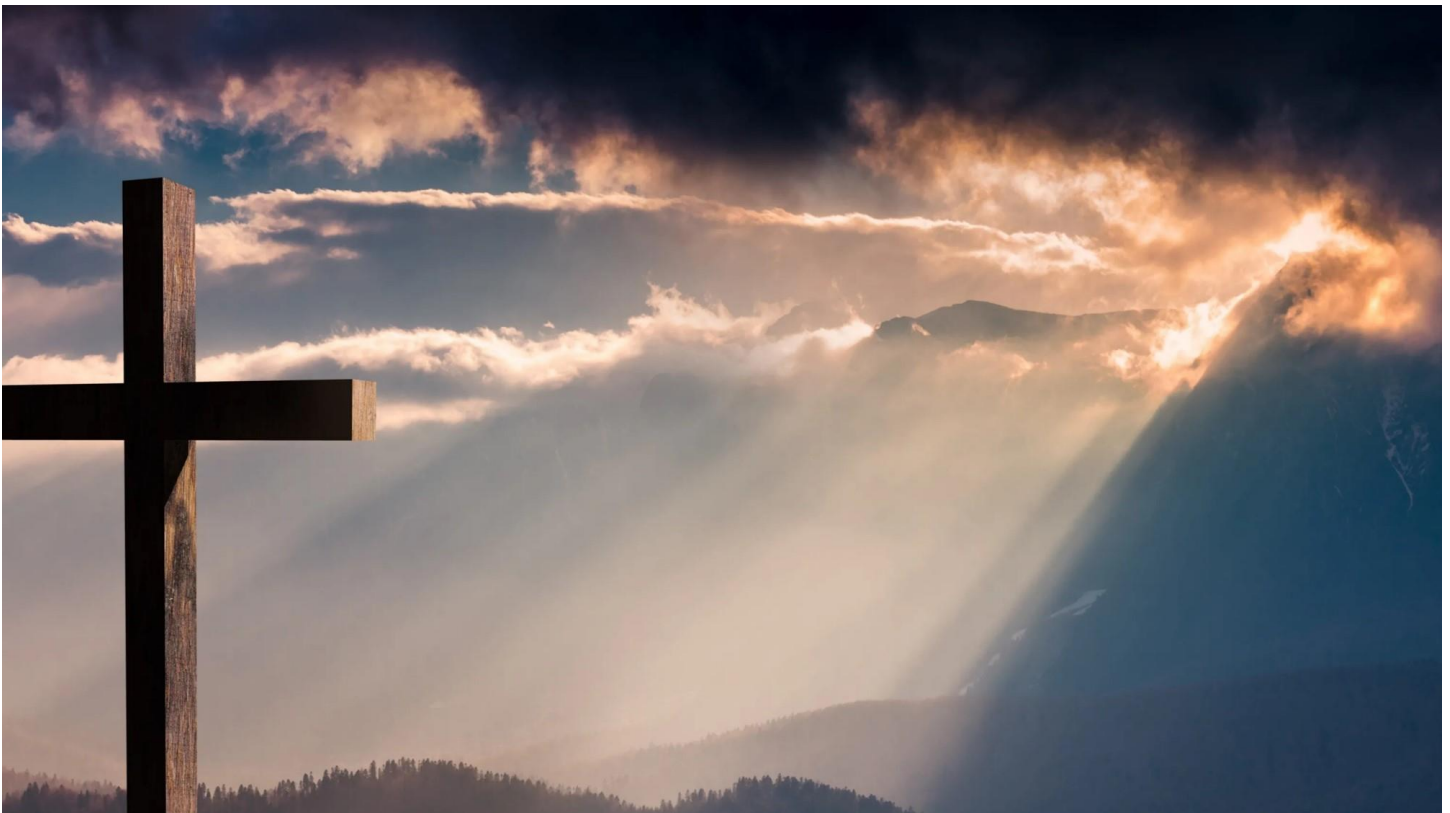
As if the prohibition weren't enough, Jesus added explicitly, that they would go to the house or nation of Israel only.



What were they to do? They were to go. They were being sent out as travelling messengers, not settling anywhere for long. Some Christians think this is the correct model for evangelism - some think it is the only model. Why? Because Jesus ordered these guys to do

it that way. Again, this is descriptive, not prescriptive. Biblically, there is absolutely no command for Christians to be ever on the move. In fact, the primary Biblical model is for each local area to establish a church group that puts down roots in that community.

As the 12 constantly moved around they were, first and foremost to “Preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” This is the teaching and preaching of the Message that Jesus had thus far given them.



Please note, this is not the Gospel as we know it. The Cross hadn't happened at this point. The Message they proclaimed had nothing to do with Christ's vicarious

death, Resurrection and Ascension, let alone what all that meant. This Message was the Messianic Message to the Jewish people that Jesus shared on the hillside above Capernaum overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

It was a Message of hope and encouragement as well as a Message of extreme demands. Ultimately it was a Message exhorting readiness by way of humble repentance. Prepare your heart for the Messiah and the salvation He brings.

Jesus repeatedly said, you have heard God say through the prophets of old, but I say... By what authority did Jesus teach and preach such a radical new Message?

By the same signs and wonders He empowered the Apostles to perform. "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." Realize, that if Jesus was simply saying that you need to be better at following the Judaism you've already been taught - there was zero need for any supernatural confirmation.



Jesus then gave the 12, what seems like a logically extrapolated principle or axiomatic conclusion. “Freely you received, freely give.” Since you have been blessed, go out and do likewise. It’s more than that, it’s not merely an attitude of generosity because you’ve received generosity. It’s far more than the pay it forward mindset most assume. What’s at issue here, is that what they were to give away, wasn’t theirs in the first place. Go be conduits through whom God gives to others.

Beyond that, it is a command. Based on other passages it’s reasonable to say, don’t hoard the gift you’ve received, let it flow from you to others.

The final principle I want to mention is the nature of the gift means that it can never run out. It isn't like Jesus freely gave them each 100 denarii and told them to likewise give, and as they obeyed, they would get poorer. The gift of God never runs out or even runs low - in fact the more you give, the more you receive.

Verses 9&10, "Do not," is not in any way ambiguous. It means never. Never ever, for even a moment, are you to acquire, procure or possess, any money at all.



No need for a purse, wallet or bank account if you never have any money to deposit. Gold, silver and

copper refer to the coins of the day. We used to have gold coins like the \$20 Double Eagle, silver coins like the Peace Dollar, and copper coins like the ubiquitous penny.

Zero cash, checks or credit cards in your wallet. No calling home from Western Union, no getting an advance from the bank - no money at all, ever.



Beyond that, do not bring any luggage, knapsack or backpack - not even a hobo or bindle stick.

Why? You don't need a bag for your stuff if you don't have any stuff. Do not have any extra stuff is a

reasonable way to interpret verse 10, but technically, it could be that you must not have any footwear at all, nor carry a staff for assistance and protection.

Either way, the idea was that they were to be fully dependent upon provision as needed and given. In other words, there was to be no stockpiling, or surplus, or storage of anything, including basic necessities like shelter, food, safety, replacement clothing, or anything else.

They were commanded to travel to a place without any plan at all, no reservation, no prior coordination, no foreknowledge, just show up and ask the first one you encounter - typically a village elder - who he thought would be hospitable enough to lodge, feed and care for impoverished, itinerant preachers.

Once they found someone generous enough to give them free room and board, they were to remain in that situation until it was time to move to the next village. Evidently, they were to be content with whatever God gave them, rather than trying to improve their accommodation.



I saved the Biblical maxim, “The worker is worthy of his support,” until here, because it applies to the whole complete dependence upon God motif. This very graphically, very radically, very strictly demonstrates in the physical world a total dependence on the provision of God.

They were to be led by the Holy Spirit, make no plans, take no provisions, or means of obtaining provisions, and just trust that God would supply.

God’s method of supply is nearly always through other human beings.

Deuteronomy 25 is often thought of as a listing of several seemingly unrelated Laws. One of them comes in verse 4, 4NASB “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.” Any reasonable person reading through that section of the Bible will easily deduce that God wasn’t really talking about oxen.

The Apostle Paul confirms as much in I Corinthians 9:9-11, 9NASB “For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.’ God is not concerned about oxen, is He? 10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. 11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?”

Because of Paul’s proper hermeneutical explanation, he can simply say in his later letter to Timothy, 18NASB “For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’” (I Timothy 5:18).

The same idea is assumed by Jesus. He was telling those guys, fully trust in the Lord for everything and He will provide through other people.

Don't be concerned that you will be taking charity - it's not charity, if you are working - it's wages, and "The worker is worthy of his wages."



Verse 12 starts a sub-section that concludes with Final Judgment. It's easy to think that we're jumping from a scene 2,000 years ago to the end of all things in what is still the future.

Not really. Jesus was still addressing them and their present, limited mission.

What He was saying was to initially assume the best. As you are welcomed into a home, “Greet the household” and all belonging there. Assume the best.

Time will tell, people will reveal themselves. “If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace.”

This primarily has to do with receptivity to the Message. The “Blessing of peace,” in this context is not a simple, cultural, “Shalom.” This is the “Blessing of peace,” found in accepting the teaching and preaching.

The statement, “Worthy of the Gospel,” in our terms today, has to do with receptivity to the Gospel, just like then, worthiness had to do with willingness to listen, understand, believe, accept and embrace the Message.

If people are unreceptive, unwilling, unteachable, disengage and by definition the “Blessing of peace,” will not remain with them. In effect it is the same as taking the blessing back.

Jesus went on to tell them, that in such cases they were to “Shake the dust off your feet.” That is an overt physical act with a supernatural effect. It is the same as

the prophets of old performing some task or doing some strange thing that had metaphysical meaning.

This was an act of Final Judgment. Jesus was giving them the authority to determine if a community was worthy - if they were open and willing or not. If not, they were to be condemned.

The condemnation of the Apostles, by judging a people's hardness of heart, was a recognition in them of the horrific Final Judgment of God still far into the future. This was a statement that the people were already judged, and the Apostles were given that insight into their future.

Now, I have said that these instructions applied to those men, 20 centuries ago and that is absolutely true. None of this has anything to do with us today as requirements, methods or even suggestions.

From this passage we gain understanding of what happened then - at that point in Jesus' ministry. Be careful about anachronistic interpretation.

What that means is we know how this Gospel ends, we know how the last 2,000 years have unfolded. Don't

allow that knowledge to wrongly influence your interpretation of the Bible.

There are some handy sayings that help keep things straight when interpreting the Bible, like, 1) “The plainest, most obvious meaning, must be the principle meaning,” 2) “The Bible is either absolute or it is obsolete,” and 3) “Context is king.” Another that helps with anachronisms is, 4) “The Bible can never mean, what it never meant.”

People, including well-respected celebrity preachers, frequently violate these and other hermeneutical tenants. The last one is so common; most people don't recognize it when they see it.



Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

SUMMER SCHEDULE

8:00 am Service

9:30 am Adult Sunday School

10:30 am Service with King's Kids