

1. Introduction and Matt 28:19-20

These lessons take up the accounts of the Lord's commission, study the elements of the commission, and follow the apostles and preachers through Acts of the Apostles in order to see the fulfillment of what the Lord commanded.

Eph 1:3-14—a scripture that concisely tells what God had in mind for us in Christ from the very beginning—introduces these lessons. The examples in Acts of the conversions follow exactly what was pre-determined before time by God and commanded in the great commission by the Lord:

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Lessons from the Examples of the Great Commission and the Conversions

Introduction and Matthew 28:19-20

Mark 16:15-16 and Luke 24:46-48

Conversions of the Day of Pentecost— Acts 2

Conversions upon the Healing of the Crippled Man— Acts 3

Non-Conversions at Stephen's Sermon--Acts 7

Conversion of the Samaritans— Acts 8

Conversion of the Ethiopian— Acts 8

Conversion of Saul— Acts 9, 22, 24

Conversion of Cornelius— Acts 10, 11

Conversions of Lydia and the Jailer— Acts 16

Conversion of the Athenians— Acts 17

Conversions of Apollos and Those at Ephesus— Acts 18, 19

Non-Conversions of Elymus, Felix, and Agrippa— Acts 13, 24, 26

The Great Commission

Before ascending to heaven, the Lord commissioned his apostles to go unto the entire world

and preach the gospel. Over time, this commission has taken the name *great commission*. Three of the gospels contain accounts of what the Lord said. Each one differs in content but not purpose. As with all the scriptures, students must take into account everything that the scriptures say. Indeed, it is likely that the Lord spoke many more words on this important subject. As this lesson proceeds through each account, it will identify and define all the components of the Lord's commission. Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16; and Luke 24:46-48 record the words of the commission to the apostles. The definitions of the elements of the commission will come from the scriptures themselves—defining, as it were, Bible words with Bible thoughts, as expressed by the apostles and prophets. Each of the following lessons will trace the fulfillment of the Lord's commission in the preaching of the apostles and the obedience of the hearers.

Matt 28:19-20

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

In Matthew's account of the great commission, the Lord focused on how the apostles were to make disciples. The primary action word here and in all the accounts is *go*. The end in mind was to make *disciples*. The example of how the early Christians spread the gospel is the best way to define *going*. Acts 2:14 tells of Peter preaching the first gospel sermon: "14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.'"

The Christians responded similarly, in Acts 8:4, after the stoning of Stephen: "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."

The present participial phrases *baptizing them* and *teaching them* tell how the making of disciples was to occur. In Acts 2, after Peter's sermon, Luke describes what the people did. First, in Acts 2:41, "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." Second, in Acts 2:47: "Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Teaching was always to be the methodology used to make disciples and save their souls. The Old Testament (Isa 54:13) taught that Christians would be taught of God. Jesus reiterated this teaching in John 6:44-46:

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: "They will all be taught by God." Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

Teaching and preaching became the only method for making disciples. Baptism became the only culminating act of recipients in becoming disciples. The hearers of Peter's first sermon show this process, which the Lord commanded, in action. In Acts 2:41, Luke recorded, "Those who **accepted his message were baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." Luke further describes these converts: "Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who **were being saved** [Emphasis added]." Acts 2:47.

Conclusion

In Matthew's account of the Lord's commission, the apostles were to go to all nations, and teaching them to observe all things that the Lord had commanded. The hearers of this word

were to be baptized. The result was that they were, thus, made disciples, and that the Lord would be with them always, even to the end of the world.

Study Questions

Where are the three examples of the great commission found in the New Testament? _____

How were people to be made disciples according to Matthew's account of the great commission? _____

To whom were the disciples to preach? _____

Whom did the Lord add to their number? _____