

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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Great Commission – To All the Nations

This issue is an abbreviated version of this subject, as presented in article #64. See link for a more complete presentation: *Fullness of the Nations*: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art64.pdf>

And approaching the Jesus, spoke to them, saying: Has been given to me all authority in heaven and on earth. Go forth disciple All the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things which I have enjoined upon you. And behold, I am with you all the days, till the end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20 Diaglott-NT)

What follows does not negate or argue against the need to reach individuals and disciple them to Christ, and, by the way, not to man's ministry or emphasis. What is proposed is that the so-called *great commission* is much more than this; it is about reaching nations. It is a call to change the heart and mind of nations and to teach them about God's Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness. This type of discipling has pretty much failed in our present age. The good news is that it will kick into high gear, so to speak, in the next age with the manifestation of the sons of God, the rulers of the Kingdom of Christ. It is proposed that this is what Jesus had in view when He commanded His disciples. Let us underline a few points.

All Authority

First, Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, a fact reiterated by Paul and Peter.

When ... He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named.... He put all things in subjection under His feet.... Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, messengers and authorities and powers, having been made subject unto him. (Ephesians 1:20-22 NASB; 1 Peter 3:22 Rotherham)

Teach All Nations

Second, Jesus commanded His disciples to go forth as teachers, as ones who teach all the nations. **To disciple** means **to teach**, which is more than making people into something called a *disciple*. It is more about them coming to know the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth and to come under this authority as a nation.

A National Commission

Third, since Jesus referred to *all the nations*, this raises the commission to a national level, and not so much the individual level. It is a much higher level command than simply going forth to preach the good news to individuals or to tell people how to "get saved" or about the "church." It is a command to reach the nations of the world; to reach the kings, the princes, the presidents, the legislators, the administrators, etc. to teach them God's way of governing according to His Divine Law, not man's law. It is to teach them about God's judgments, so that they will learn righteousness and how to govern the people of the earth with righteousness, justice, impartially, mercy, etc. Only in this way will the nations and its citizens learn that God's way is the best way and that God's love for all mankind is perfect and it will never fail to produce **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law** (Galatians 5:22-23).

Immersing Them (Nations)

Fourth, the nations are to be *immersed*. The above translation was chosen for its use of the word *immersing* rather than *baptizing*, which most identify as the ritual of immersing new believers in water. Without negating the need for individual baptism, it is proposed the commission immersing is on a much higher level. Taking the macro view of Jesus' command in light of all the nations, it seems just as likely that He commanded that the nations be immersed in the name of God the Father and His Son, Jesus, recognizing that the heart of the Kingdom of God is spiritual; it is a spiritual Kingdom led by the Spirit of God. This was Jesus' way of telling us to immerse the nations in the spiritual Kingdom of God; fully dip them into God's way. The result will be that the nations will have the name of God written upon them. Simply, they will be God's people and citizens of His Kingdom.

Observe All

Fifth, the nations need to be taught **to observe all**, or as one translation states, *keep the rules*. The word *observe* comes from the Greek word *tereo*, which means "to watch over, guard, or in a deeper sense, to keep, to observe, give heed to." Given this, the command is to teach the nations all that they need to know to keep or guard. From a national level, this *all* must pertain to the Divine Law of God, for it is the only way that a Kingdom nation knows how to rule or govern righteously. The Spirit of God is presently putting the laws of God into minds and hearts, so that **"they shall no more teach each one their neighbor, and each one his brother, saying, Know the Lord; because all shall know Me, from the least of them to their great ones"** (Hebrews 8:11). This is the hope set before all mankind. When all know the Lord in this fashion, then the Son will **hand over the Kingdom to the God and Father** (1 Corinthians 15:24). But to reach this end, the Israelite nations must be taught and immersed, taking on the name of God, meaning they must submit to His sovereignty and come under the rule of Jesus the King.

With You

Sixth, Jesus has promised to be with all who teach the nations, meaning those who go forth as led by His Spirit will have no fear and will bear the fruit of the Kingdom. He is invested in this commission to reach the nations and bring them into His Kingdom.

To the End of the Age

Seventh, this commission goes to the end of the age. But, to what age is Jesus referring? Recall that Matthew was written to Jews and that it deals with the **Kingdom of the Heavens** that they were looking for to come about in their day through a political Messiah. They were looking for a new age, a Messianic Age. To the Sadducees' question about the resurrection, Jesus spoke of that Age (Matthew 22:23-32), which will occur at the end of our present age or, if you will, with the commencement of the next age. It is possible, even likely, that Jesus included our present age and that Age in His commission. Jesus was looking to the end of the seventh day, which is His 1,000-year reign over the earth with His conquerors seated upon His throne. It is during the next age that the nations will truly learn God's righteousness and how to govern according to His Divine Law, for the conquerors will teach *all* the nations to observe *all* the law that has been written on their hearts. Today, we can only achieve a limited level of success that, as the end of our present age draws near, seems to be more on the order of failure than success. However, in that Age, there will be far more success than failure, for **then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father** (Matthew 13:43). This will be the age of the great harvest that many are mistakenly looking for in our present age. The great harvest will be when **the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea** (Habakkuk 2:14).

Jesus' Great Commission is a command to teach the nations of the earth the truth of the Kingdom of God, or more specifically, the Kingdom of Christ, or as John penned, the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Christ's commission to all the nations will not fail. Be encouraged, the best is yet to come.

It shall be done, all to the glory of God.