



INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

*Providing interactive workshops and training on
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Many churches place a large emphasis on the need for their people to evangelize. Pastors have been taught that the "Great Commission" commands that all Christians everywhere evangelize. That it is their duty to reach the lost. Many churches place a heavy burden on the shoulders of their congregants to go their neighbors, friends, families, relatives, or whoever they are able to find, and bring them to Christ.

For several years, it has been my hope that God would have me teach in-depth on 'Evangelism.' As with all such burdens of my heart, I wait until He sends me to go teach those whom He has appointed and prepared. While preparing lessons to teach at a pastors' conference in Myanmar, this past October, I believed this was that time, so I reorganized my notes on evangelism. However, I knew that I needed to wait until the pastors were ready, and God opened the door.

At the conference we taught the pastors how to ask and answers questions as they studied. This group of pastors was very receptive, and the Lord used this time to open their eyes and teach them. As they practiced the study techniques we had explained. God transformed their understanding of several passages, showing them the true meaning.

Praise God! It was then that the Lord threw open the door. While we were studying what the Bible says are the duties and responsibility of pastors, they realized that we had not mentioned several areas which they thought were important. One of these was evangelism. "What about evangelism?" "Isn't the pastor supposed to evangelize?" "What about common Christians, is it their duty to evangelize?" "Whose job is it to evangelize?"

Two Areas of Confusion

Most of the confusion about whether Christians are commanded to evangelize comes from a lack of understanding two key areas.

1. The gospel message
2. The "Great Commission" found in Matthew 28:19-20; and Mark 16:15.

Matthew 28:16-20

Then **the eleven disciples** went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Recovering the Message of Gospel

We asked the pastors "What is the message the Bible calls the "gospel?" They gave us the usual answers mostly about; Jesus death and resurrection, forgiveness of sins, etc. Then we led them through their own study of how the word "gospel" is used in the New Testament, and what its message was.

As they studied the pastors realized that the gospel message that Jesus preached in synagogues around Galilee and Judea, and would later sent his Apostles to preach, was "the good news" about the "Kingdom of God."

The Kingdom of God had come. The prophecies which for more than a thousand years had foretold the coming of Messiah (Christ,) the great King of Israel had all been fulfilled. The great Gospel Proclamation was that "The long awaited Messiah has come! As promised He has set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed!"

For hundreds of years the children of Israel had been dispersed throughout the world. In as early as 740 B.C. the Assyrians began deporting Israelites and distributing them throughout their empire. Israelites continued to be relocated throughout the nations by the Babylonian and Persian Empires. Later during the Greek and Roman empires, from 330 B.C. thru the time of Christ, many more Israelites migrated to other nations setting up businesses there.

But even though they had spread throughout the world they all still waited and hoped for the coming of their Messiah (Christ.) Almost a thousand years had passed since all Israel had last been united under one king, King Solomon. The promised Messiah would be a great king and a descendent of King David. He would establish a kingdom which would never be destroyed. All the children of Israel, no matter where they lived, hoped and believed that God would one day send the promised Messiah. [*If you are interested to read more about "What is the Gospel," you can visit our website at www.ilti.org to read our previous newsletter.*]

For this reason, all Israel needed to hear the message that "Messiah has finally come, and He has set up His kingdom." It was necessary that messengers be sent throughout the world wherever these Israelites had been scattered and declare to them the good news that God's promise of the Messiah had been fulfilled.

Once these pastors knew and understood the message which the Bible termed "The Gospel," then they also understood to whom God wanted this message preached (evangelized.) This gospel message needed to be preached to all Israel, not only to those living in the land of Judea, but to those who lived elsewhere among other nations known to the Jews as the dispersion [*also called the Diaspora.*] Or in Jesus own words, "even to the end of the earth." [*See Acts 1:8, and also Deuteronomy 28:64*] This message needed go to all Israel no matter where they were. They must know their Christ (Messiah) had come.

The Great Commission

The second area of confusion comes from a misunderstanding of what some call the "Great Commission" found in Matthew 28:19-20, and Mark 16:15. Pastors have been taught that this commission is an ongoing mandate that all Christians in every place, from generation to generation should evangelize. In some churches there is such a strong emphasis put on this command that many of their members suffer feelings of guilt, shame, and condemnation because they are not "winning souls." But does the Great Commission actually command all Christians preach the gospel message (evangelize) to their next door neighbor or in their workplace? Does God command Christians to spread the gospel?

Before we can answer these questions, we should first know that the title "The Great Commission" is a relatively new one. Throughout history most biblical scholars referred to Matthew 28:19-20, and Mark 16:15 as the "Apostolic Commission," recognizing that it was the commission given by Jesus to His "eleven" Apostles before His Ascension into heaven.

In-depth studies:

Like all other topics that we teach, we did not hurry to find the answer to these questions. Instead we led the pastors through a simple reading of these two parallel passages* without any preconceived ideas. We also had them study and examine every passage they thought relates to the **gospel and evangelism**.

[*A parallel passage is a passage found in another part of the Bible which describes the same event.]

The first thing they discovered is that only the eleven Apostles were present at time the commission was given. Judas Iscariot was not there; he was already dead.

Mark 16:14-20

Later He appeared **to the eleven** as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

All Scriptures Agree that “Great Commission” was for the Eleven Apostles

Even though, it seemed very clear to the pastors that Matthew 28:19-20, and Mark 16:15 say that Jesus gave this commission only to His eleven Apostles, we still needed to examine the rest of the Scriptures to verify whether our conclusion is correct. So we searched the rest of Scripture to see if they agreed with our findings that this commission was only for the eleven Apostles.

John agrees: In John’s Gospel, [John 13:26-17:26] he gives an extensive account of Jesus explaining to the eleven that they would soon be commissioned and sent out. They had already eaten the Last Supper. Jesus had washed their feet, and Judas had left to go betray Him.

Once Jesus was alone with the eleven He began explaining that He would soon leave, and He would appoint and commission them to continue His ministry and carry out His work. He promised that whenever they needed help, all they need to do is ask in His name and the Father would help them in the same way He had helped Jesus. He told them there was more they did not understand but that He would send the Spirit who would bring power from on high and guide them into all truth. All of these statements were a part of Jesus’ explanation to the eleven Apostles about their upcoming commission as His witnesses.

Luke agrees: In Acts 1:1-9, Luke tells us that Jesus commissioned His Apostles, whom He had chosen, to be witnesses of Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Luke also tells us that they were the ones to whom Jesus presented Himself alive after His suffering, and who saw Him. They were the ones with whom Jesus spent forty days teaching the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. They were also the ones whom Jesus commanded not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait and commence their commission after they had received the Promise of the Father, which is the Holy Spirit.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Acts 1:8-9

“To be witnesses”: The Main Task of the Apostolic Commission

To be a witness: When I was a young man I belonged to a Christian organization called “Fishers of Men.” We would go out two by two “witnessing for Christ.” As we “witnessed,” we would tell people about Jesus, their sins, and their need for salvation. **THIS IS NOT THE SAME TYPE OF WITNESSING THE BIBLE MENTIONS.** In Scripture, to be a witness you must have seen with your own eyes, and heard with your own ears.

When Jesus told the Apostles in Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth,” He was not talking about preaching salvation. He was telling the Apostles that they were being sent out as eye witnesses who could testify what they had personally seen and heard. The word witness in the Greek language is “martus.” It is a legal word for giving direct testimony (like in a courtroom.)

Peter understood that they were to be Jesus’ witnesses: We read in Acts 1:15-26 that God had originally chosen twelve apostles to be direct witnesses giving firsthand testimony. Judas Iscariot decided to turn aside from his apostleship, betrayed Jesus and then killed himself, therefore only eleven were left for the task. Peter asked for one disciple who had been with them from the beginning; who could act as eye witnesses to everything and take Judas’s apostleship. Two men met those qualifications; Joseph and Matthias. Peter asked God to choose which one should replace Judas. God chose Matthias. Matthias, having been present from the time of Jesus’ baptism until His ascension, could testify of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and ascension.

Peter confirms: In Acts 10:34-42 we read the account of Peter preaching to Cornelius and his household. Peter explained to Cornelius that it was to ‘us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people.’ Peter confirms that Jesus gave the job of preaching the gospel to those whom He ate and drank with before he ascended into heaven. Not only does Peter’s testimony agree with the great commission in Matthew and Mark but with all other New Testament accounts as well.

Why the Eleven?

A series of questions were raised; Why did Jesus only give this commission to his eleven Apostles? Why did Jesus not give this commission to the rest of his disciples who also followed him wherever he went? Why did Jesus not give this task to the multitude of people who listened to his teachings and believed in him?

Answer: This important commission was only for the Apostles. Because only the eleven were qualified to carry out this task. [Judas Iscariot disqualified himself when he chose to betray Jesus and then hang himself.]

Early in His ministry, Jesus separated these men from all His other disciples [Mark 3:14] and called them "Apostles." [In the Aramaic language this is Shaliah, meaning an authorized representative, emissary, or ambassador.] After Jesus had chosen these men to be his Apostles He spent three and a half years training and equipping them, preparing them to be His ambassadors. They were with Jesus from the time He began His earthly ministry until the day that He ascended. The Apostles traveled with Him wherever He went. They heard everything He taught. When not ministering to the crowds, Jesus took extra time to explain and teach them what He had not explained to others. They were to be eyewitnesses, recounting everything Messiah had taught and done.

Once Jesus' earthly ministry was complete, and it was time for Him to ascend to heaven, He gave His authority to them, and commissioned them as His Apostles to carry on His work.

Luke writes about the day the Apostles began their commission

In Acts 2:14-41 Luke writes how the Apostles commenced their commission immediately after the Holy Spirit had come upon them on the Day of Pentecost. This was only ten days after Jesus gave them this commission.

During each of the three annual feasts, men of Israel who lived in Judea, Samaria, and other nations, would travel to Jerusalem to celebrate. Luke tells us that the people staying in Jerusalem who had come to this feast were both Jews and proselytes, devout men from every nation under heaven.

God performed a miracle! Peter and those gathered together with him, began speaking in other languages. Everyone who had come to Jerusalem for the feast, heard them speak in his own language. In Acts 2:5-11, Luke lists several languages spoken that day. [Luke lists languages or dialects of those from Parthia, Media, Edom, Mesopotamia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Judea and Cappadocia, Egypt, Libya - Cyrene, Crete, Arabia, and Rome.] The Apostles' work had begun; the word was going out to the nations!

Luke tells that as soon as the Spirit came upon them, the Apostles followed Jesus' instructions and began testifying. Peter stood up with the other eleven Apostles* witnessing and preaching the gospel to those men of Israel who were attending the feast. It was only the Apostles who stood up; none of the others who had been with them when the Spirit fell stood up and preached to the multitudes.

[*The Lord Jesus through Holy Spirit chose Matthias to replace Judas.]

Peter and other eleven Apostles standing with him were direct eye witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. Peter boldly preached that God had made Jesus the Lord and Christ (Messiah their King.) Peter called them, as men of Israel, to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so they could receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost was the first day of the Apostles' commission. It was very fruitful day. Luke records that three thousand souls were added to them on that day alone. From that day onward the gospel message rapidly started going out to all the nations. At first the Apostles stayed in Jerusalem. Daily they would go to the temple, boldly preaching and teaching all that Jesus had said, done, and taught. Whenever men of Israel came to Jerusalem they would hear the Apostles teaching. Each day more believed and more were added to the kingdom. [Luke tells of five thousand more who believed shortly after Pentecost. See Acts 3:1-4:4].

The Day of Pentecost [also known as the Feast of Weeks] was a very important day for people of Israel. It was one of the three great yearly feasts in which God required men of Israel to come and appear before the Lord their God.

At the feast they would give God the first fruits of their grain harvest. This great celebration recognized that it is God who blesses their harvest. [Deuteronomy 16:10-16]

Every day, throughout the year people came to the temple. They would come when they said a vow, when dedicating a child, or for one of the various offerings. Three times a year, men of Israel were called to assemble before God in one of the three great feasts; Passover, Pentecost, and the Feasts of Tabernacles. They would travel from wherever they lived to Jerusalem to attend these feasts. While in Jerusalem the Apostles would preach to them. Many believed, and as these men returned home Christianity spread. A few years later, as persecution increased, the Apostles left Jerusalem and went to Judea, Samaria, and to the men of Israel who lived in the dispersion. They went everywhere preaching the gospel to all who had eagerly waited so very long to hear its message.

Understanding What Jesus Said

It is important for us to understand the commission itself. The New Testament was originally written in Greek, (not Hebrew.) The Greek language is a very precise language. In many ways it is more precise than our own English language. This is especially true with the use of verbs. Unlike the English language, Greek verbs are modified by Mood, Voice, and Tense. This is especially important with commands. We know when something is a command in the Greek language, because the Greek language always uses an "Imperative Mood" when a thing is a command. Because Greek is such a precise language we know which parts of the commission are commands and which parts are not.

In Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:14-20:

- Jesus spoke in the "Imperative Mood" when he ordered the eleven to preach, make disciples, baptize, and teach.
- Jesus used a "Passive Participle" when he said "go" therefore & "go" into all the world.

It is interesting that "go" is a passive participle. The passive denotes an event happening without any emphasis to a person actively doing it themselves. Jesus was not ordering His Apostles to go, but was simply acknowledging that they would go. The closest way I can express in English what Jesus so easily told the Apostles in Greek, would be "going therefore," or "going into the all the world," or "as you go."

Jesus did not command His Apostles to go. This is why, for the first several years, the Apostles stayed around Jerusalem. They were not postponing or being disobedient. Jesus **had not** commanded them to go. He had commanded them to preach, make disciples, baptize, and teach.

Kosmos: Another area of confusion about the Apostles' commission stems from the word "**world**" used in Mark's passage. *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."* Mark 16:15. The word translated "world" is "kosmos" in the Greek language. Kosmos NEVER means planet Earth!

The concept behind "Kosmos" is complex order. This word is used when describing something that is highly organized. For example: we use "cosmos" [*the English spelling*] to describe the intricacies and structure of the universe. It is often used to describe stratum of society. Some English equivalents might be: "Those two are worlds apart," or "The world we live in," or even "He has his own world view."

Scriptural examples of the Greek word 'kosmos' include:

- "*The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.*" John 7:7;
- The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!" John 12:19.
- "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." John 12:25

Conclusion: The Apostles' mission was that as they went into the world, they were to preach the gospel, make disciples, baptize them, and teach them everything they had heard Jesus teach and command.

Jesus did not tell them to go and evangelize the Earth!

Unfortunate Misunderstanding

The reason some believe that the Apostles' commission extends to Christians today is that they have a false impression that the Apostles never completed their mission. This belief that the Apostles failed at their mission comes from an unfortunate misunderstanding about what they were commissioned to do. There are some who teach that the Apostles were supposed to go throughout the whole earth, to every tribe, tongue, nation and people and tell them about God, sin, heaven, hell, and salvation.

We have already seen that Jesus had not commanded the Apostles to go. But the question remains, did Jesus expect them to preach the gospel to every tribe, tongue, nation and people? Did Jesus expect them to accomplish that which almost 2,000 years later has yet to be completed? **No.** *That is not what He commanded nor expected.*

Matthew 24:14 Most of this misunderstanding about the commission comes from Matthew 24:14. Let us examine this verse closely. Before we can truly understand Matthew 24:14 or any verse of Scripture we must first examine the passages which surround it, and any other related passages we can find.

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The word "World" in Matthew 24:14: We learned earlier that the word Jesus used in Mark's version of the Apostolic Commission was "kosmos." Matthew 24 however uses a completely different word. Matthew 24 uses the Greek word "oikoumene" as "world." Like kosmos, oikoumene NEVER means nor can be translated Earth. Oikoumene is a very specific word which means "our own world or society". The Greeks used 'oikoumene' when talking about the world inhabited by the Greeks, The Romans used it to mean the Roman Empire, and all its subjects. By Matthew choosing to use this word He was making it clear that Jesus meant Israel's world.

Matthew Chapter 24 begins with Jesus telling his disciples *that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed*. They responded by asking Him what signs they should look for to know when this would happen? Matthew 24:14 is a part of Jesus' answer and is only one of several signs they were to expect before **God destroyed Jerusalem and the temple**.

To better understand Jesus' prophecy please take a few minutes to read over Matthew 24:1-31, Mark 13:1-27 and Luke 21:5-28. Each is a narrative about Jesus' prophesy about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. As you read those passages ask yourselves basic questions like: **Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?** Only after we ask ourselves these questions can we comprehend any passage's true meaning.



Who? Jesus was talking to His disciples, specifically Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mark 13:3 tells us who.)

What? The destruction of the temple, the signs of His coming to destroy it, and the consummation (the end) of the first covenant age.

When? Only after all the signs had been fulfilled would the temple be destroyed.

History and the Bible both show that everything took place exactly as Jesus had prophesized. Each sign that Jesus foretold was fulfilled before Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. Apostle John wrote that many false prophets had already come (John 4:1); Luke tells of a great famine throughout the world took place in the days of Claudius Caesar (41-54 A.D.) This great famine took place during the Apostles' lifetime (Acts 11:28.) Many devastating earthquakes happened in various places; Colosse and Laodicea were partially destroyed by an earthquake in 60 A.D. Josephus, the Jewish historian, writes that there was an earthquake while Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans, shortly before its destruction. (Wars of the Jews, Book 4, Chapter 4, Paragraph 5)

The Bible and history record that the Jews delivered several of the Apostles up to tribulation and killed them. Luke tells that James, the brother of John, was killed by King Herod and Peter was also put into the prison (Read Acts 12). We know that the Jews took Paul and beat him several times (Acts 16:37; Acts 21:32; 2 Corinthians 6; 2 Corinthians 11). Paul was brought before the rulers of the Jews, Felix and Festus the governors of Judea, King Agrippa and Caesar to testify about Christ (Acts 23-26)

Where? Jerusalem and the temple.

Historical records show that in 66 A.D. war erupted between Rome and Jewish rebels. Three and a half years into this war, 70 A.D., Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed.

Why? Because the Jews killed Messiah.

Jesus did not explain why in the passages we are studying (Matthew 24, Luke 13 or Mark 21.) This answer is found in other passages like Matthew 21:40-41, 22:7; Luke 19:27, 42-44; and Daniel 9:26. God judged Jerusalem and destroyed the temple because they had killed God's prophets and then His son.

How? God sent the Roman army.

Luke's rendition of Jesus' prophecy tells clearly that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies Jerusalem would soon be destroyed. *"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. (Luke 21:20)*

Jesus' prediction happened exactly as He foretold. Once the gospel had been preached to the Jews all over the world, God sent the Roman armies to destroy Jerusalem and the temple. The Romans besieged Jerusalem during Passover, forty years after Jesus' death and resurrection. *Jesus died at the time of Passover in 30 A.D. The war between the Romans and Judah ended in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D.*

The historical records show that during the feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread the Roman army surrounded the walls of Jerusalem and shut the Jews inside. Within a few weeks, people ran out of food and supplies and many died. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, killed about 1.1 million Jews, and burned the temple to the ground in 70 A.D.

Summary: What have we learned about Matthew 24:14? We learned that Jesus prophesied that before God would destroy Jerusalem and the temple, the gospel of the kingdom would have been taught throughout their world. For centuries the Jews had spread out among the nations of the Persian, Greek and Roman empires. [Jews referred to these Israelite people in other nations as the "Diaspora" (dispersed ones.)]

Jesus had promised that "this generation will not pass away" before his prophecy was fulfilled. (Matthew 24:34, Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32) Forty years later everything He prophesied had been fulfilled, and the gospel had been preached to all who were waiting for their Messiah. [See: "What is the Gospel" at www.ilti.org.] Once all Israel, no matter where they lived had heard that message, the end came. God destroyed the temple.

Are others commissioned?

Now that we have seen that the Bible makes it clear that the Apostolic Commission was only for the eleven whom Jesus called "Apostles," more questions arise. "Were they the only ones God appointed?" "What about others? Does God appoint people now?" "Who should evangelize?"

The New Testament is clear that God called, appointed, and commissioned others beside the twelve. [Such as: Paul, Barnabas, Phillip, and Timothy] Each received their own assignment and commission to evangelize. The scripture is clear that just like the eleven, God appointed these men only after they were qualified; only after they had been found worthy and faithful.

Preaching the Gospel is not a job for everyone!

God tested and approved Paul before commissioning him. Paul wrote that it was because Christ found him faithful, that He appointed him with the ministry of preaching the gospel. Paul says that he had "been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel." Also that the gospel "was committed to my trust" and "to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." (Read, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:8-13; 2 Timothy 1:8-11; and 1 Corinthians 9:14-18)

God Commissions Paul and Barnabas - Acts 13:1-2

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Paul and Barnabas had a different mission than the Twelve

Paul states that the other Apostles recognized that their mission was different, when he wrote in Galatians 2:7-9; “*they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*” The Apostles knew their own mission was to go through the land of the Diaspora (the nations where Jews lived) and tell them the news of the gospel; “*The Messiah has come! He has set up His kingdom!*” [Read: “*What is the Gospel*” at www.ilti.org.] The apostles also recognized that Paul and Barnabas were sent by Christ to preach to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas had their own mission and calling, and the Apostles had theirs.

Mission accomplished!

The Apostles did not fail. We do not have to guess to know that the Apostles and those others whom Jesus later commissioned finished their job. The Bible tells us they did. For example; Mark, in Chapter 16, not only tells us about the Apostolic Commission but also tells us that they completed their mission. Mark concludes by saying in verse 20 “*And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.*” **According to Mark they accomplished their mission!**

Paul agrees with Mark: Mark used a unique phrase when he wrote Jesus’ commission to the eleven. Jesus told them they were to “**preach the gospel to every creature.**” I truly believe God made no mistake when He had Mark write those words. Just as I also believe God made no mistake when the only other time the Bible uses this phrase is when God inspired Paul to use the same words.

Colossians 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which **was preached to every creature** under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

At the time Paul wrote to the Colossians, he had finished his job and was awaiting execution in Rome. He wrote telling them that the job was done and the task finished. His commission, and the Apostles’ commission, had both been completed within their lifetime. The Apostles and all those whom Jesus later commissioned, each finished their mission. They fulfilled their charge and completed their assignment. The Apostles completed their mission just as Jesus knew they would when He gave them their commission. Their mission was a success. It is already finished and does not need to be completed by us!

There is no mistake! God gave them the job, and God declared it complete! Amen

Today’s evangelists: Some may ask if the Great Commission has been fulfilled, is there still a need to spread the gospel? The answer is **YES!** Each generation needs to hear. Now that the Old Covenant has been replaced by the new one, both Jews and Gentiles need to know and understand it. In every generation God appoints and commissions His Evangelists. Ephesians tells us that Jesus is the one who commissions apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. [Read *Ephesians 4:11-16*] Evangelists are just like pastors, and teachers, God is the one who chooses, and commissions them. And He is also the one to whom those evangelists are directly accountable. ***Pray for them!***

My personal thoughts: Although it is not a command nor their job, many Christians love to tell the good news. Many cannot resist speaking about their life with God. This is natural; people love to share what is important to them. To tell the good news because your heart is bubbling over is good, but to share out of a false sense of duty or obligation brings only condemnation and guilt. Feel free to share, but don’t make it a law for yourself.
Amen

In Christ, I remain both His servant and yours,

Rev. Douglas Heil

Doug & Yai Are Coming to America!

It is official, after a two year absence, we are coming to the United States
February 17, until June 3, 2015.

While in the United States we will travel North, South, East, and West. If you would like us to come visit you, or you just want to check to see if we will be in your area, you can email us at Doug@ilti.org, call us at 1-800-961-0345, or talk to us on Skype. My Skype ID is douglas.heil.