

The Great Omission

Dan Stolebarger

Have you noticed that two passages seem to always comprise the foundation of every Christian Mission's Board? The first is the Great Commission and the second the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, **Matthew 28:19-20**

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." **Acts 1:8**

How many times has one heard these verses expounded upon regarding the need for Believers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth? Recently I have come to the conclusion that we might have missed the boat when it comes to our exegeting these passages. Usually when it comes to the Acts passage, we parse this verse in two; the last part we take literally but the first part we tend to allegorize. We get the "ends of the earth" but Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria we turn into some kind of personal mission and we create these concentric circles. Jerusalem becomes our family members; Judea extends to our city and finally Samaria our country.

BUT...what if Jesus intended for these three locations to be taken literally? What if Jesus intended for His Church to be His witnesses in Jerusalem? Wouldn't that be consistent with Paul's teachings in Romans, that God is not finished with Israel and exhorted Believers to be a part of their restoration?

¹¹ I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. **ROMANS 11:11**

As we read the end of Romans, doesn't Paul call upon the Gentile Church to remember the Jews?

²⁶ For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. ²⁷ It pleased

them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. **ROMANS 15:26-27**

Take a moment and ponder the following ... How many churches (Christian) have taken this passage literally? How many missions groups consider Jerusalem, Judea (Israel proper) and Samaria (West Bank) as a focus for their mission programs?

As the days get darker and things are exploding in the Middle East, we see the hand of God bringing back the Jewish people to the Land He promised them. Not only has He brought them back, He is now currently protecting them as they are encircled by the 'bulls of Bashan' who seek nothing more than their annihilation.

In these days I believe it is time for Believers to take a stand and to refuse to be silent. It is time not only to pray for the peace of Jerusalem but to pray for Jewish eyes to be open to receive their Messiah and to see the Islamic prisons in the West Bank flung open and the captives set free.

Believers, take the time to PRAY for direction in regards to missions and be laser focused regarding the Great Commission. Let's not remove the "C" and omit Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria rendering it the Great Omission. It is time to get Israel back on our ministry maps. Can you imagine the power that would be unleashed if all our Christian Fellowships began to pray for the final restoration of the Jewish people and, like Isaiah of old, we too would say those words ... "Here am I, send me!"

Whenever I am asked the question, "So, what can I do in regards to Israel?" My answer is always the same ... the first step is simply to go there. Take the time to see with your own eyes the Land where it all began and listen to His leading. For me, my life changed 14 years ago after I visited Israel for the first time!

(Dan Stolebarger is the Co-Founder of Holy Ground Explorations and leads a variety of expeditions to the Holy Land. For more information go to www.holygroundexplorations.com)