

God's Grand Story pt 17 The Great Commission, Israel & the Nations

Intro: Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

- 1. Church-Wide Prayer: Mothers Day** – strongest prediction of a healthy civilization was the MOMS! Healthy and strong moms produced a healthy a strong society! When we look at another study – for youth having mental health struggles – the best way to help them – is to help the MOMS. Moms have a MAJOR impact on us!
 - **Pray for your mom by name!** However the Spirit leads.
 - For mom's who've lost kids, suffered tragedy, heart break, other - for strength & peace
 - For mom's who feel exhausted, spent, nothing left - for rest, strength & fortitude
 - For foster, adoptive, single, step, biological mom's - wisdom, courage, compassion, perspective, focus, and ability to disciple their kids to Jesus!
 - Mom's are teachers, shepherds, counselors, business owners, disciple makers, cooks, organizers, janitors, providers, mentors, and MORE! "The health of a society can be measured by the health of its moms" - for empowerment from God to ENJOY BEING MOM

INTRO: The Great Commission, Israel & the Church

STATS FOR THE WESTERN CHURCH:

1. Religious (ALL religions) weekly attendance in decline Canada (EFC survey, reported in Faith Today, 2020) 1946 – 67% 1996 – 30 % 2019 – 11% 2022 – 7% (2022)
2. **60%** of youth leaving Christian churches in Canada & USA. (EFC Hemorrhaging Report, 2012); **70%** (Barna, 2023)
3. **35,000,000** young people in America are projected to leave the faith by 2050 (Pinetops Foundation, 2018, cited by Sean McDowell, Set Adrift, 2023)
4. For every person who becomes a Christian in America, four more leave the faith (Pew Research, 2015).

We are in trouble! YES! BUT - I am convinced we are here for such a time as this – be it the end or not! God has a plan for us! **IF WE WILL ONLY DISCOVER IT AND FULFILL IT!**

A. The Great Commission – the mission of the Church

Matthew 28:16-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Two main signs that happen before Jesus returns:

- 1. Great Tribulation: Global controversy regarding Israel. She will be attacked by a collation of nations.**
 - **Revelation 11:1-2** Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court

outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

- **Matthew 24:15-16** “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
 - **Zechariah 14:2-4** For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.
 - **Isaiah 35:2-4**...They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”
2. **The Gospel to EVERY people group** – every tribe and tongue having within itself a pocket of people who are able to disciple others.
- **Matthew 24:14** And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
 - **Acts 1:6-8** So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
 - **Revelation 5:9-10** And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”
 - **Revelation 7:9** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

The Great Commission - our PURPOSE! Our ROLE. Our part to play in God’s Grand Story!

- **FIRST: this is what we are expected to be doing! It’s our part! STAY AWAKE!**
- **SECOND: the state of the Western Church is at stake! REAL PEOPLE. ETERNITIES.**

B. The purpose of the Great Commission

Acts 1:1-3 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Luke 24:25-27 And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44-49 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Matthew 28:18-20 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

1. **Purpose: A mission to prepare the world for Jesus' 2nd coming by teaching people to OBEY Jesus.**
 - **Dietrich Bonhoeffer:** “Salvation without discipleship is cheap grace.”
 - A disciple of Jesus is someone who obeys Jesus and teaches others to do obey Jesus
 - Lukes’ version adds REPENTANCE FROM SIN FOR FORGIVENESS to the list!
2. **Purpose: The Great Commission is HOW God will fulfill His promises to Israel**

Acts 1:6-11 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

- They understood this commission to be the NEXT STEP in fulfilling God’s PROMISES.
- NOT a NEW TRACK or NEW MISSION!!

From Genesis to Abraham!

Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

AFTER THE FALL → God chose ISRAEL as his elect, his Kingdom of priests, through whom he would bring ultimate REDEMPTION and RESTORATION!

His promise to Abraham included:

- Promised Land (they are partially in that land now – but they will be FULLY in the LAND – FOREVER)
- Great nation – not just size, but also in righteousness! They will know the Lord – NOT HAPPENED
- Blessing to ALL Nations!

Romans 11:11-36 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous...

Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?...

Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

- Great Nation – requires them to BE a nation, size, land, but also GREAT → RIGHTEOUS. God defines GREATNESS as knowing him and loving him.
- God plans on using the GENTILES as a means to PROVOKE Israel to jealousy! God is not done with Israel!
- Note: the kindness and severity of God. We are required to CONTINUE IN HIS KINDNESS or we will be CUT OFF – same for Israel & Gentiles!
- The Great Commission is HOW he intends to bless the nations (proclaim the Good News and prepare people and creation for the return of JESUS!) and to provoke Israel so that she repents and becomes a righteous nation!

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. **And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,**

“The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.

- ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED! The gifts and calling of God are IRREVOCABLE!

- UNTIL the fullness of the Gentiles come in!

C. Israel's Story is our Story! Israel's Salvation is our Salvation! (worship team come and keys play)

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Joseph – was the favorite son of Jacob, Jacob sent Joseph to his sons in the field, Jacob's other sons rejected Joseph and sold him into slavery, as a result Joseph ended up at the right hand of Pharaoh and married a gentile bride, eventually leading to the salvation of Israel when famine struck! Wild story!

Jesus – the favorite son, sent to the twelve tribes of Israel, he was rejected by them and crucified, he rose again and is seated next to the Father in the Heavenly realms, he has now gone after a gentile Bride (US!!!) in order to provoke Israel and lead to HER ULTIMATE SALVATION!!

Israel was chosen as God's elect! His kingdom of priests! Why? Because God wanted to choose her. NOT BECAUSE SHE WAS WORTHY OR GREAT. God pursued Israel. Rescued her from slavery. Led her to the promised land. BUT they continued to rebel. He continued to provide for her in the desert, but also punished her and she suffered for her rebellion. BUT God refused to reject Israel fully – he would judge them, but when they repented, he would always forgive and deliver them.

WE GENTILES have been chosen by God to be a kingdom of priests! NOT BECAUSE WE ARE WORTHY! God pursued US! Rescued US from slavery! He brought us by the hand towards the promised land! And we too continue to rebel! And he disciplines us in our sin too! BUT he does not reject us! When we repent – he forgives us our sins and delivers us!

IF GOD DOES NOT SAVE ISRAEL – what would ever make us think that he would save us?

D. Engaging with the Great Commission!

YES – LOVE GOD & LOVE PEOPLE!! Of course! How can we say we love God if we are not obeying him?

LOVE GOD, LOVE PEOPLE, BE DISCIPLED, MAKE DISCIPLES – you cannot remove a single word or portion from this statement without undermining the others. They ALL work together.

STEPS for engaging the Great Commission:

- **BE Discipled: are you stuck? unsure where to start?** CONSIDER: JOIN a discipleship group doing The Way this summer! email: eunicem@mysouthland.com
- **MAKE Disciples: "Each one, reach one"** - Pray for, love, serve, share Jesus, build relationships, pray or do Bible study, etc. with one person. IF they are already hungry for more - consider doing The Way - Abide or Grow Character with them over summer. IF not there yet, how can you build relationship with them this summer?

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2024

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Israel & Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal**: Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers