

16D The Works of Jesus – The Great Commission

Let us examine exactly what is the 'great commission' and how the early believers in Jesus the Anointed One actually carried out these instructions.

Matthew the Levi, who many believe was of the priestly family going back to the tribe of Levi recorded:

Matt 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.

Mark was a Jew.

Mark 16:14-18: 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."**

Luke was a gentile, a Greek. He recorded the following, plus he also did write the book of Acts.

Luke 24:44-53: Then He said to them, **"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."** And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, **"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."** And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

John, who some also believe was from the priestly family, and related to Jesus, the youngest of all disciples, and the last gospel to be written, records a commission very different than the others. He records the principle of forgiveness, and a conversation between Peter and Jesus.

John 20:21-23: So Jesus said to them again, **"Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."** And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, **"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."**

In the verse below some people believe this was Jesus telling Peter, that he was to head the church (people). But I believe the point being made is that Peter could never say to Jesus that he agapeo Him. Jesus asked Peter twice if he agapeo Him, both times Peter said that he phileo Him, but never did Peter say he phileo Jesus more than the others. On the third and last time, Jesus asked Peter if he phileo Him, not agapeo. I ask you, what grieved Peter? Yet, Jesus never did reject Peter.

John 21:14-19: This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, **Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love (25 agapao: to love (in a social or moral sense) Me more than these?"** He said to Him, **"Yes, Lord; You know that I love (5368 phileo: to be a friend to (fond of [an individual or an object]), i.e. have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling) You."** He said to him, **"Feed My lambs."** He said to him again a second time, **"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love (agapao) Me?"** He said to Him, **"Yes, Lord; You know that I love (phileo) You."** He said to him, **"Tend My sheep."** He said to him the third time, **"Simon, son of Jonah, do**

you love (phileo) Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, **"Do you love (phileo and not agapao) Me?"** And he said to Him, **"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (phileo) You."** Jesus said to him, **"Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish."** This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, **"Follow Me."**

Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" **Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."** And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added

Acts 3:19-24: **Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,** and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

Acts 4:1-4: Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, **being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.** And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Note who is upset here and why. The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection of any sort, but the Pharisees did.

Acts 5:13-19: And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

Note, the Sadducees again. This sect consisted of wealthy landowners. They held prominent positions, who were politically liberal, and very conservative theologically. They refused the validity of the oral law, and some say accepted only the first five books of the bible. Judea was controlled by the Romans at this time, to maintain prominent positions and own land, you would have to support the majority rule, in this case, the Romans (who practiced Mithierism).

Acts 5:33-42: When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. **Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God."** And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, **they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.** So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

The Pharisees did believe in the resurrection.

Acts 6:8-15: And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us."

Note that men were secretly induced to and set up false witnesses to say things like Stephan spoke against the law. My question is, why set up false witness to say that Stephen (a Hellenist Jew) spoke against the law? For if we are to believe what is preached today, that we are no longer under the law, and Stephen is a product of the 'New Church' he evidently did not speak against the law or Moses.

Acts 7:1: Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?"

Stephen's 'defense' included a long dissertation regarding the Torah, including verses that prophesy the coming Profit. He concludes with the statement below.

Acts 7:51-55: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it." When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

Note: The Sanhedrin did not stop Stephen's speech or get upset until he said they received the law but did not keep it. They let him continue speech even after he said they were betrayers and murderers. They did not even get upset when he mentioned the Just One (referring to Jesus the Anointed). There is so much more in this event, that I still don't know, but I know it is very important, because it is at this point, and the stoning of Stephen that many believers fled (but not the apostles). Just who was in that Synagogue of the Freedmen?

Acts 8:4-8: Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles that he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

Acts 8:14-18: Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Who were the apostles or the apostle at Jerusalem who sent Peter and John? Was it James the brother of Jesus?

Acts 8:26-35: Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

Acts 9:1-3: Then **Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.**

Note: The 'high priest' at this time was a political appointment that required the approval from Rome. What does this say about Saul at this time? The term 'The Way' is what the early Jewish and God Fearers who believed in Yeshua called themselves. They did not refer to themselves as 'christians'.

Acts 9:3-9: And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, **"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."** So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, **"Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."** And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Acts 9:17-22: And Ananias went his way and entered the house; **and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."** Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and **he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.** So when he had received food, he was strengthened. **Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.** Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?" But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 9:26-30: And when **Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.** When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

Note the Hellenist, who were Greeks who became Jewish or were Greek speaking Jews. Stephan was a Hellenist

Acts 9:32-35: Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. **There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.**

Note: Lydda comes from a Hebrew root word 'lod' that means to travail, or head of a family of returning exiles. This city was located in the area of Benjamin.

Acts 10:1-6: There was a certain man in Caesarea called **Cornelius**, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, **a devout man and one who feared God with all his household**, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!" And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, **"Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.** Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is **Peter**. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. **He will tell you what you must do."**

Note: Cornelius belonged to a group of people referred to as 'God Fearers'. This group of people ate kosher, observed the Sabbath and festivals, and in many cases converted to Judaism.

Acts 10:9-15: The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. **In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.** And a voice came to him, **"Rise, Peter; kill and eat."** But Peter said, **"Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."**

Note: Peter is still observing kosher laws, even after Yeshua was slain / resurrected / and ascended to heaven. This is even after Yeshua had the discussion about hand washing and what defiles a person.

Acts 10:17-23: Now while **Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house,** and stood before the gate. And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. **While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."** Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?" **And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you."** **Then he invited them in and lodged them.**

Note: Do you think this vision / trance was Yahweh changing His mind about kosher laws? Did not Yeshua while on earth always answer the questioning thoughts of His talmidim? So here the Spirit of the Lord tells Peter to go with these none Jews, not you may now eat swine etc. Besides, Cornelius already ate kosher, and since the men told Peter, that Cornelius was a 'God Fearer', don't you think Peter knew that he ate kosher? Do consider that Peter's explained this vision to the brethren never included a dissertation on aborting kosher practices, but instead the Word was to be preached to all nations, not just Jews.