

Bible Missions

Notes taken from "A COURSE ON MISSIONS" Taught by David F. Reagan
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I. WHAT IS MISSIONS?

A. Various Definitions of Missions

1. Missions is "the sending forth of authorized persons beyond the borders of the New Testament church and her immediate gospel influence to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in gospel-destitute areas, to win converts from other faiths or non-faiths to Jesus Christ, and to establish functioning, multiplying local congregations who will bear the fruit of Christianity in that community and to that country." – *A Biblical Theology of Missions* by George W. Peters (p.11).
2. The "threefold work of missions: (1) Evangelism; (2) Baptism (church planting); and (3) Indoctrination (church grounding and maturing)." – *Biblical Missions* by Roy F. Dearmore – Read **Matthew 28:18-20**.
3. "Christian Missions is the Proclamation of the Gospel to the Unconverted Everywhere According to the Command of Jesus Christ." – Notes from a Missions Course. Read **Mark 16:15; Romans 10:13-15**.
4. Missions is "the Christian church trying to win others to the Christian faith, especially through a group of selected workers called missionaries." – *An Introduction to the Study of Christian Missions* by Harold R. Cook (p.10).
5. Missions is "the fulfillment of the Great Co-Mission." – in a conversation with a missionary.

B. General Considerations

1. Neither the word *missions* nor the word *missionary* is found in the Bible. Rather, they are used to describe concepts that are not given particular labels in scripture. As such, Biblical concepts must be established around a general agreement concerning the chosen labels of *missions* or *missionary*.
2. *Mission* comes from the Latin word *missio* and means a sending or sending away (Acts 13:1-4). A mission is defined as a sending out with authority to perform a special duty. A mission has several components:
 - a. The one who sends

- b. The sent one
- c. The duty that is to be performed
- 3. As to the New Testament church:
 - a. Her mission is to fulfill all the duties given to her by her head – the Lord Jesus Christ. This includes the following ministries:
 - 1) The ministry to the Lord (Acts 13:2)
 - 2) The ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18)
 - 3) The ministry of the word (Acts 6:4)
 - 4) The ministry of the saints (1 Corinthians 15:16; John 13:34-35)
 - b. Missions is the church's responsibility to reach the unreached all around the world. An old independent Baptist slogan: *"Every church should be headquarters for world missions."*

II. WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR MISSIONS?

A. The Great Commission

1. The Text of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8)
2. The Recipients of the Great Commission – the Sent Ones
 - a. The Apostles (in context)
 - b. The Church (in pattern / in practice) – Acts 1:8,15; 2:1,4; 8:1,4; 11:19-21 "These and many other verses show us that the early followers of Christ did not think that the command to tell the world about Christ only applied to the eleven disciples present at the giving of the Great Commission."
 - c. However, certainly we understand and would have to admit that some of the things that Christ commanded his disciples on the Mount of Olives only applied to them and to the early church. For example:
 - 1) The sign gifts which were given to the apostles (Mark 16:16-18)
 - a. Casting out devils
 - b. Speaking in tongues
 - c. The taking up serpents
 - d. The drinking of poison
 - e. The laying of hands on the sick
 - 2) The power to remit or retain sins (John 20:23)
 - 3) The going to the Jew first
 - 4) The starting of the gospel first in Jerusalem

3. The Extent of the Great Commission
 - a. All nations (Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:47)
 - 1) To Jews
 - a) Jerusalem
 - b) Judea
 - c) Samaria
 - d) Uttermost parts of the earth
 - 2) To Gentiles
 - a) Peter's call to Cornelius (Acts 10)
 - i. Call upon the housetop
 - ii. Preaching before the audience assembled by Cornelius
 - b) The turning unto the gentiles
 - i. The stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:51-60)
 - ii. The three turnings to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-47; Acts 18:5-6; Acts 28:28)
 1. The gentiles believed
 2. The giving of the Holy Ghost
 - b. Every creature (Mark 16:15)
 - c. Uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8)
 4. The Content of the Great Commission
 - a. Go (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15)
 - b. Teach (Matthew 28:19)
 - (1) Preach the gospel (Mark 16:15)
 - (2) Preach repentance and remission of sins (Luke 24:47)
 - (3) Be witnesses (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:48)
 - c. Baptize (Matthew 28:19)
 - d. Teach to observe all things (Matthew 28:20)
 5. The Authority and Power for the Great Commission
 - a. Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-19; John 20:21)
 - b. Holy Ghost (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)

B. New Testament Teaching – (for the Church and individual believers)

1. The Ministry of Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)
2. Reconciliation found in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16)
3. The Responsibility of Believers (Romans 1:14-16; 1 Corinthians 15:34; 1 Thessalonians 1:7-8)
4. The Example of the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 11:1)
 - a. Where Christ is not named (Romans 15:20-21)
 - b. To the regions beyond (2 Corinthians 10:12-18; esp.v.16)

III. WHAT DISTINGUISHES HOME FROM FOREIGN MISSIONS?

A. Home Missions

1. By definition, refers to missionaries who remain in the sending country
2. Not considered true missions by some; others think that church-planters who remain in the states should support themselves by working
3. Traditionally, refers to those who plant churches in parts of the country that have few true churches
4. Now includes evangelizing ministries such as prison ministries, juvenile ministries, street work ministries and Jewish ministries that never plant new churches
5. Sometimes includes non-evangelizing support ministries such as legal ministries, air transport ministries, printing ministries, literature ministries and education ministries (many Bible colleges raise missionary support).

B. Foreign Missions

1. By definition, refers to missions outside the country of the supporting church
2. The tradition concept of missions and considered by many to be the only true missionary work

IV. IS THE GOSPEL TO THE JEW FIRST TODAY?

A. Exclusively to the Jew

1. The ministry of Jesus Christ (Matthew 15:21-28; Romans 15:8)
2. The ministry of the twelve
 - a. The First Commission (Matthew 10:1-42—esp.v.5-6)
 - b. The changing of Peter's mind (Acts 10:9-16, 34-35; Acts 11:1-4,18)
 - c. The later ministry of Peter (Galatians 2:7-9)

B. Historically to the Jew First

1. Before Cornelius (Acts 3:25-26)
2. After Cornelius
 - a. Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13:44-46)
 - b. Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 18:4-6)
 - c. Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:16-31)
 - d. The teaching of Paul (Romans 1:16; 2:9-10)

C. Doctrinally, No Distinction (Acts 15:11; Galatians 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:11-17; Colossians 3:10-11)

D. Practical Applications

1. Missions to Jews and, by application, to other special groups is allowed by Biblical pattern (Galatians 3:28 with 2:7).
2. However, all are one in Christ; therefore, exclusive messianic congregations made up of saved Jews and Gentile wannabes are unscriptural because they divide where Christ has done away with division (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 1:11). This is like having a church only for women and those who want to live like women.
3. Some churches make a Jewish missionary their first missionary; scripture does not command this but it is an acceptable following of God's pattern.
4. If we really want to follow the pattern of the Apostle Paul, we should go to the Jews of an area first when we go to establish a new church. Again, this is not commanded but it would be following the pattern of Paul.