

Biblical Missionaries

Jesus: The Master of Missions

Lesson #7 for August 15, 2015

Scriptures: 2 Timothy 1:8-9; Daniel 9:24-27; Isaiah 1:1-14; 42:1-9; Matthew 10:5-6; Luke 2:8-14.

1. Since Satan's rebellion in heaven, the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—have had to deal with misrepresentations, accusations, and lies. When human beings joined Satan's side by accepting his lies at the tree, God initiated the plan that had been set in place from eternity to rescue humanity. Their goal is to, once again, restore humanity to full unity and harmony with divinity.
2. History split into two (B.C. and A.D.) at the coming of Jesus. He set aside His divinity to take upon Himself human nature, to reach out to us in our deep need. (Philippians 2:5-11)
3. The issues in the great controversy were resolved by clear and decisive answers to Satan's lies and accusations. That made it possible for us to go on our mission to the world with intellectually convincing and powerful arguments about God's character and government. Scriptures point out three main methods that are assigned to us in carrying out that mission: 1) Bible study, 2) Prayer, and 3) Witnessing. In this lesson we will study how the Master of missions did it Himself and how He instructed His first disciples.
4. How often did Jesus meet with people from other nations and other faiths? How often was He a missionary outside Judea or Galilee? Can you name several occasions? He often saw Romans. The Samaritan woman as recorded in John 4; the Canaanite woman as recorded in Matthew 15:21-28; the demoniacs of Gadara as recorded in Mark 5:1-20.
5. There are a number of passages in the Bible suggesting that God's plan to deal with sin originated in eternity past. Think of some of the passages in the Old Testament that look forward to the coming of the Messiah and what He would do for us. (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 42:1-9; 53:1-12; 61:1-2; Daniel 9:24-27; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 9:9) To summarize, the Bible teaches that He will: 1) Lift up the oppressed; 2) Come at the time prophesied; 3) Forgive sin; 4) Establish justice; 5) Fulfill vision and prophecy; and 6) Rededicate the temple. God will come down to: 1) Be with us; 2) Set people free; 3) Open the eyes of the blind; 4) Bring light to the nations; and 5) Crush the head of the serpent by revealing the truth. And that is just the beginning of the list. Are those the texts and tasks that He talked about on the road to Emmaus?
6. The Creator of the entire universe chose to identify Himself with us so much that He took upon Himself humanity in order to answer the issues in the great controversy with irrefutable evidence. We can choose to let God help us to live the kind of life He lived; or, we will die the kind of death He died—separation from God!
7. Even in the Old Testament, there are passages suggesting that the gospel was supposed to go to the entire world. But, with the coming of Jesus even in connection with His birth and dedication, the focus of God was to carry the gospel from the base that had been established among the Jews—even though most understood it poorly—to all the world. Read Luke 2:8-14,25-33; 3:3-6; and John 1:29. These verses tell us that Jesus was to: 1) Bring joy to all people, 2) Be a light to reveal God's will to the Gentiles, and 3) Bring glory to His people, Israel. The whole human race would see God's salvation. The Lamb of God was to take away the sins of the whole world and to restore harmony to the universe.
8. So, what is to be our response to all of that? **Are we to have the same mission that Jesus had?** See John 17:4,6; Ephesians 3:9-10; and *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890, par 6-9. We tend to focus almost all of our time and effort into ministry to our own church.

The missionary spirit needs to be revived in our churches. Every member of

the church should study how to help forward the work of God, both in home missions and in foreign countries. **Scarcely a thousandth part** of the work is being done that ought to be done in missionary fields. God calls upon His workers to annex new territory for Him. There are rich fields of toil waiting for the faithful worker.—Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 29.

Let not the youth be ignored; let them share in the labor and responsibility. Let ministers put to use all their ingenuity in devising plans whereby the young members of the church may be led to co-operate with them in missionary work....**Scarcely a thousandth part of the work is being done that ought to be done in missionary fields.**—Ellen White, *SW*, March 1902 par 10. [Bold type is added.]

9. To understand why Jesus said apparently contradictory things at different times in His charges to His disciples, we need to look at the chronology of His ministry. (Compare Matthew 10:5-6 and 15:24 with Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8.) See also Chronology of the Gospels on the website www.Theox.org under Teacher’s Guides, Gospels.

Early Ministry-Baptism to Cana Wedding	Autumn A.D. 27 to Spring A.D. 28
Ministry in Judea - First Passover to rejection by the Sanhedrin	Passover in Spring of A.D. 28 to second Passover in Spring of A.D. 29
Ministry in Galilee - Second Passover to third Passover and retirement from public ministry in Galilee	Spring of A.D. 29 to Spring of A.D. 30 with rejection in Galilee
Retirement from public ministry in order to focus on training His disciples	Spring of A.D. 30 to Autumn of A.D. 30
Ministry in Samaria and Perea	Autumn A.D. 30 to Spring of A.D. 31
Passion week - Fourth Passover to ascension to heaven	Spring of A.D. 31

10. In the earlier passages in Matthew, Jesus was sending out His disciples on their first missionary journey around Galilee. It was not a time to expand their mission into wider territories. So, who were “the lost sheep of the house of Israel”? (Matthew 10:5-15) After His resurrection, His challenge to them was to spread the gospel to the entire world.
11. Jesus was born and raised as a Jewish male. He accepted and lived according to the Jewish culture. He ministered in that culture. But, the impact of His incarnation was universally applicable. (John 1:29) In order for His mission to be successful, it first had to be based on a solid foundation on a strong and stable geographical and cultural base. But, when that had been accomplished to some extent, it was time for the mission to reach out in ever-widening circles. Shouldn’t we be going back to Jesus’s directions for our mission?
12. How well does your church or your Sabbath school class do at its mission? It is so easy to become wrapped up in church programs focused inwardly. What are the dangers in that?
13. Read Matthew 5:13-14; Mark 14:9; Luke 14:10-24; and Matthew 13:36-43. These passages make it very clear, once again, that Christ’s followers—His disciples and us—are to be **salt** and **light** to the whole world, to preach to all the world, and to reach out to all classes of people. It is always easy to find excuses that seem plausible when one either does or does not want to do something. How can we avoid that trap?
14. How much do you know about what Jesus and His disciples did between His resurrection and His ascension? There are five specific passages in the Gospels and Acts discussing specific events of that period. (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-16; John 20:19-23; 21:15-17;

Acts 1:6-9) During these encounters, Jesus made it clear to His disciples that they were to go into all the world to all people everywhere—to the whole world, to the whole human race. They needed a paradigm shift—“fruit basket upset.” Just as the Father had sent Him, so He is sending us to feed His lambs, to feed His sheep, and to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

15. What did the disciples say to their wives and families when they got home after seeing Jesus ascending into the heavens and giving His final charge to them?
16. We know a fair amount about the ministry of Paul to the northern shore of the Mediterranean. We also know a fair amount about the ministry of Peter primarily to the Jewish people but later to some of the same areas covered by Paul. We know a little about Phillip’s work in Samaria and with the Ethiopian. But, what about the other disciples? Matthew apparently traveled to Ethiopia; Thomas to India. Early church fathers say that besides writing the Gospel, Matthew primarily ministered to the Hebrews. Later, he may have traveled to places such as Ethiopia, Persia, Parthia, Macedonia, and Syria. Clement of Alexandria said that Matthew lived on a vegetarian diet. While it is possible that he died a martyr’s death as recorded by some, others suggest that he died a normal death. (Brief summary of material from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*)
17. While we know very little about Thomas, it seems that he traveled east to Parthia in Mesopotamia and possibly even to India. There are a number of apocryphal writings attributed to Thomas, most of which, of course, are unreliable.
18. As we know, Christianity was a forbidden and illegal religion during the times of the apostles. How did it grow so rapidly to the point where the enemies of Christianity had already said that they were turning the world upside down in their generation? (Acts 17:6)
19. Matthew 24:14 (GNB) says unequivocally: “And this Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all nations; and then the end will come.” Later in that same chapter, Jesus added: “No one knows, however, when that day and hour will come—neither the angels in heaven nor the Son; the Father alone knows.” (Matthew 24:39, GNB)
20. Thus, we can be certain that the second coming is approaching. But, we are not to set specific dates.

We are not to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed. Jesus has told his disciples to “watch,” but not for a definite time. His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892 par 10; *Selected Messages, book 1*, p. 189.2; *Evangelism* 221.1; *Heaven* 166.1.

21. How would you compare the obstacles which the early apostles met when trying to spread the gospel in their day with the obstacles we face today? The disciples went out with nothing! What are the main obstacles that prevent you from witnessing to others today?
22. What can we as a Sabbath school class do to extend the healing and saving ministry of Jesus Christ in our own communities? Do we have a mission to reach out to other church members to share the good news about the great controversy as well as reaching out to the world to share the gospel? Do all Adventists really understand the great controversy?
23. In Jesus’s ministry on this earth, He always sought to provide complete healing of body and soul. Today, we call that a wholistic ministry. Is it possible for us to carry out a wholistic ministry in our day?
24. We have been sent as ambassadors. That is the modern English equivalent of *missionaries* or *apostles*. We are to be constrained and compelled in our daily ministry by the love of

Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:14) Our goal is to make others His friends also. (2 Corinthians 5:18) Jesus had compassion on the crowds and healed every kind of disease and sickness. (Matthew 9:35-36)

25. We need to recognize that real mission is motivated by love and not by a feeling of obligation. Jesus loved the crowds despite the fact that they were worried and acted helpless without a Shepherd.
26. What methods should we use in our workplace and in our communities to spread the gospel? How good are we at explaining every detail of what we believe?
27. It has been said that *Jesus* is “God spelled out in language human beings can understand.” Would that statement also be true about His mission? For a modern example, look at C. S. Lewis.
28. Read Isaiah 42:1-9. How comprehensive is this prophecy about the work of Jesus? It clearly spelled out that He would reach out to Gentiles, the blind, those in prison, and those who sit in darkness. His mission was to bring justice, share light, open eyes, and release captives. Shouldn’t we do the same? Compare Jesus’s statement about His own mission as recorded in Luke 4:18-21.
29. Jesus always combined His healings with a saving message. He was a healer of both physical and spiritual maladies.
30. In our day, what are the risks of focusing too much on a social gospel or focusing too much only on individual salvation?
31. Read Matthew 10:7-8. On their first missionary journey, did the disciples really heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and drive out demons? In what ways are we to duplicate a mission like that? Notice that Jesus sent His disciples out to people’s homes. He did not send them out to give meetings!

Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.”

There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen.—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.3-4.

32. Clearly, Jesus did not just preach His message to people; He lived it. He ministered to every need that He saw.
33. When the right time comes, we can promise them what Jesus promised them: Complete healing—physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. It may not be right now. But, for those who accept Him into their lives, the results are absolute.
34. As they would conquer another territory, the Romans would send in the general with his troops. But, along with them would be a diplomatic ambassador or legate. It was the legate’s responsibility to arrange peace terms, determine boundaries, and draw up constitutional provisions. His goal was to bring them into the family of the Roman Empire. Could we do a similar thing in our day? What kind of terms would you draw up for bringing someone into the gospel? Are we capable of bringing people into the family of God? Is that what Jesus wants us to do? If we were sent out today, what would we do?

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