

# **God's Mission My Mission**

## **Mission to the Unreached: Part 2**

Lesson #11 for December 16, 2023

Scriptures: 1 Kings 11:1-6; Matthew 4:23-25; 8:10,13; 15:22-28; Mark 7:24-30; Acts 10:34-35.

1. How can we minister to the “unreached” in the cities?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] From the beginning, a loving God sought His lost children (*Gen. 3:9*); and, to our day, this same loving God is still seeking to reach the lost (*see Rev. 14:6–12*), including the lost in the cities. **In 2018, the United Nations published its latest findings, which say that 55 percent of the planet’s population lives in urban areas, and this will grow (if time should last) to 68 percent by 2050. We have no choice: we must witness to those in the cities.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, December 9.<sup>†§</sup>

2. Genesis 3:9 seems like it describes a gentle effort to contact Adam and Eve. Revelation 14:6-12 sounds more like a terrible warning than a loving appeal. Is it possible that God has given us this warning because He realizes that the end is upon us?
3. How many Seventh-day Adventists do you think are actively trying to witness to people in urban areas? In this lesson, we will notice that Jesus made several efforts to reach groups of people, even individuals, who were not Jewish. One of His most remarkable missions was the time He traveled with His disciples outside of Galilee and all the way to the area of Tyre and Sidon. Do you think the disciples were comfortable traveling in that area?
4. Later, many of the disciples, as well as Paul and his associates particularly, made a major effort to reach out to people living in cities, even in the capital of the empire, Rome. Do we have any evidence that either Jesus or any of His disciples ever traveled to the cities of Tyre or Sidon during His ministry? No! The Bible says that they went to the “region” or “territory” of Tyre and Sidon.

**Matthew 15:21:** Jesus left that place and went off to the **territory near** the cities of Tyre and Sidon.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Matthew 15:21). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>†‡</sup>

5. What kind of people lived in these cities and in the surrounding territory? Had the Hebrew people had any previous experience with them?

**Judges 3:1-6:** <sup>1</sup> So then, the LORD left some nations in the land to test the Israelites who had not been through the wars in Canaan. <sup>2</sup>He did this only in order to teach each generation of Israelites about war, especially those who had never been in battle before. <sup>3</sup>Those left in the land were the five Philistine cities, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived in the Lebanon Mountains from Mount Baal Hermon as far as Hamath Pass. <sup>4</sup>They were to be a test for Israel, to find out whether or not the Israelites would obey the commands that the LORD had given their ancestors through Moses. <sup>5</sup>And so the people of Israel settled down among the Canaanites,

the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

<sup>6</sup>They intermarried with them and worshipped their gods.—*Good News Bible*.\* [Compare Exodus 23:20-33.]<sup>‡</sup>

6. ***That is exactly what would have happened to the Israelites in Egypt if God had not prevented them from living among the Egyptians! When the Israelites moved to Egypt, Pharaoh gave them a separate area in which to live, and the Egyptians were not to associate with them since they herded flocks. That allowed them to grow into a nation. (See Patriarchs and Prophets 130-131. See also 1 Kings 5:1-12; 1 Kings 11:1-6.)***
7. In Joshua's day, the children of Israel were supposed to enter the land of Palestine and either chase out all of the Canaanites and the associated peoples or, if necessary, to destroy them.
8. Even in the days of David and Solomon, they had a fairly close working relationship with the peoples in those areas, so close that Solomon married young women from those areas. The results were disastrous.
9. But, Jesus recognized that people in those cities and throughout the cities in the rest of the Mediterranean world would need the message of the gospel. Jesus made intentional efforts to face the biases and bigotry of His disciples and challenge them to reach out to such peoples.
10. What challenges face us as we seek to reach out to urbanites in our day? To live in many cities today is a challenge because of: 1) The high cost of living, 2) Racism, 3) Bigotry, 4) Nationalism, and 5) Constraints on religious freedom and religious expression in many areas. This is true especially in the "10-40 window." Nevertheless, God's end-time people are given the specific challenge to go to the cities and spread the gospel.
11. So, what can we do if we cannot go to those areas? At least we can pray for those who do live in the cities and those who minister to the urban population.

**Matthew 9:35-38:** <sup>35</sup> Jesus went round visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the Kingdom, and healed people with every kind of disease and sickness. <sup>36</sup>As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>So he said to his disciples, "The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. <sup>38</sup>Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest." —*Good News Bible*.\* [How did Jesus mean for that "command" to be fulfilled? Who is the "owner of the harvest"?]<sup>‡</sup>

12. The city which Jesus dealt with the most during His ministry was the city of Jerusalem. How did He feel about His efforts, trying to reach the people in Jerusalem?  
**Luke 19:41:** He came closer to the city [Jerusalem], and when he saw it, he wept over it.—*Good News Bible*.\*<sup>‡</sup>

13. Try to imagine what you would do if you were seriously ill, disabled, or needing medical attention in Jesus's day. The word got around very quickly that Jesus was performing miracles of healing.

**Matthew 4:23-25:** <sup>23</sup> Jesus went all over **Galilee**, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the Kingdom, and healing people who had all kinds of disease and sickness. <sup>24</sup>**The news about him spread through the whole country of Syria, so that people brought to him all those who were sick, suffering from all kinds of diseases and disorders: people with demons, and epileptics, and paralytics—and Jesus healed them all.** <sup>25</sup>**Large crowds followed him from Galilee and the Ten Towns, from Jerusalem, Judea, and the land on the other side of the Jordan.—Good News Bible.\*†**

**Mark 3:7-8:** <sup>7</sup> Jesus and his disciples went away to Lake Galilee, and a large crowd followed him. They had come from **Galilee, from Judea, <sup>8</sup>from Jerusalem, from the territory of Idumea, from the territory on the east side of the Jordan, and from the region round the cities of Tyre and Sidon.** All these **people came to Jesus because they had heard of the things he was doing.**—*Good News Bible.\*†* [Some came more than 200 miles!]<sup>‡</sup>

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] After the encounter with the Pharisees, Jesus withdrew from Capernaum, and crossing Galilee, repaired to the hill country on the borders of Phoenicia. Looking westward, He could see, spread out upon the plain below, the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon, with their heathen temples, their magnificent palaces and marts of trade, and the harbors filled with shipping.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 399.1.<sup>‡</sup> [What famous “evangelist” came from Sidon? Jezebel came from Sidon, married King Ahab, and determined that she would “convert” all of the children of Israel to become worshippers of Baal!]<sup>‡</sup>

14. Many people who live in urban settings are driven by the desire for money, fame, property, etc. How can we convince them that there is something beyond all of that which is worth much more? Should we be praying for the Holy Spirit to create a hunger for something better? Would He be willing to do that?
15. It is interesting to compare the words from Matthew and Mark in these settings when Jesus reached out to non-Jewish peoples. The Gospel of Matthew seems to have been written more specifically for a Jewish audience. The Gospel of Mark which was “Peter’s Gospel” written by Mark was written primarily for a Gentile audience. Notice the differences between the two.

**Matthew 15:22-28:** <sup>22</sup> **A Canaanite woman** who lived in that region came to him. “Son of David!” she cried out. “Have mercy on me, sir! My daughter has a demon and is in a terrible condition.”

<sup>23</sup> But Jesus did not say a word to her. His disciples came to him and begged him, “Send her away! She is following us and making all this noise!”

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus replied, “I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.”

<sup>25</sup> At this the woman came and fell at his feet. “Help me, sir!” she said.

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, “It isn’t right to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

<sup>27</sup> “That’s true, sir,” she answered; “but even the dogs eat the leftovers that fall from their masters’ table.”

<sup>28</sup> So Jesus answered her, “You are a woman of great faith! What you want will be done for you.” And at that very moment her daughter was healed.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [Notice that Mark mentioned people coming from Tyre and Sidon. So, the news about Jesus had spread at least that far.]<sup>‡</sup>

16. The Canaanites were despised by the Jews. The Jews would not have had anything to do with that woman. On the other hand, Mark recorded the story like this:

**Mark 7:24-30:** <sup>24</sup> Then Jesus left and went away to the territory near the city of Tyre. He went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not stay hidden. <sup>25</sup>A woman, whose daughter had an evil spirit in her, heard about Jesus and came to him at once and fell at his feet. <sup>26</sup>The woman was a **Gentile, born in the region of Phoenicia in Syria**. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>But Jesus answered, “Let us first feed the children. It isn’t right to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

<sup>28</sup> “Sir,” she answered, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s leftovers!”

<sup>29</sup> So Jesus said to her, “Because of that answer, go back home, where you will find that the demon has gone out of your daughter!”

<sup>30</sup> She went home and found her child lying on the bed; the demon had indeed gone out of her.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

17. Notice that Mark called her a woman, a Gentile, born in Phoenicia. The Gentiles would recognize her as being one of them. Matthew, by contrast, called her a Canaanite. To his Jewish audience, she would be despised.

18. Notice again these interesting words:

**Mark 7:24:** Then Jesus left and went away to the territory near the city of Tyre. **He went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not stay hidden.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

19. Was Jesus trying to hide? Why was He in that house? Was that a time for Him to focus on the education of His disciples?

20. What do you think the disciples thought of Jesus, reaching out to that Canaanite woman? The Canaanites were the people that the Israelites were supposed to have driven out of Palestine or even destroyed completely when they came from Egypt. They followed the customs that were practiced in Sodom and Gomorrah! (See Genesis 18.)

21. What can we learn from Jesus’s approach to that woman?

[EGW:] Christ did not immediately reply to the woman’s request. **He received this representative of a despised race as the Jews would have done.** In this He designed that His disciples should be impressed with the cold and heartless manner in which the Jews would treat such a case,

as evinced by His reception of the woman, and the compassionate manner in which He would have them deal with such distress, as manifested by His subsequent granting of her petition.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 400.2.†‡

22. We should not need to be told that God loves everyone. That should be clear, even from John 3:16. Then notice also:

**1 John 2:2:** And Christ himself is the means by which our sins are forgiven, and not our sins only, but also the sins of everyone.—*Good News Bible*.\* [**God forgives sins by treating us as if those sins had never happened! See Hebrews 10:17-18.**]‡

[BSG:] In the unreached neighborhood of the cities, there are many who long for hope. During Christ's time, what prevented God's people from bringing hope of the Messiah to such foreign cities as Tyre and Sidon? Nationalism, pride, and prejudice blinded God's people to the opportunities to see those nearest to them who longed for the hope foretold by the prophecies of the First Advent. Today in the cities, there are many population groups with whom Jesus Christ wants His people to share the "blessed hope" of the Second Advent (*Titus 2:13*). **And just as Jesus didn't care what their nationality or race was, neither should we.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday, December 13.†‡§

**Titus 2:13:** As we wait for the blessed Day we hope for, when the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ will appear.—*Good News Bible*.\*

23. What other stories give us some clear indications about how we should relate to people who are not from our comfort circles?

24. Look at the interaction between the Holy Spirit and Peter.

**Acts 10:9-35:** <sup>9</sup> The next day, as they were on their way and coming near Joppa, Peter went up on the roof of the house about noon in order to pray. <sup>10</sup> He became hungry and wanted something to eat; while the food was being prepared, he had a vision. <sup>11</sup> He saw heaven opened and something coming down that looked like a large sheet being lowered by its four corners to the earth. <sup>12</sup> In it were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and wild birds. <sup>13</sup> A voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat!"

<sup>14</sup> But Peter said, "Certainly not, Lord! I have never eaten anything ritually unclean or defiled." [Did Peter recognize that voice as the voice of Jesus?]

<sup>15</sup> The voice spoke to him again, "**Do not consider anything unclean that God has declared clean.**" <sup>16</sup> This happened three times, and then the thing was taken back up into heaven....

<sup>28</sup> He said to them, "You yourselves know very well that a Jew is not allowed by his religion to visit or associate with Gentiles. **But God has shown me that I must not consider any person ritually unclean or defiled....**"

<sup>34</sup> **Peter began to speak: "I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis. <sup>35</sup> Those who worship him and do what is right are acceptable to him, no matter what race they belong to."**—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

25. God was using a vision to directly confront Peter with his religious pride and bigotry against the Gentiles. What lessons do you think God intended for us to learn from the story of the woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon? And also from Peter's vision and interaction with Cornelius? Do we have any bigotry? Nationalism? Or, even spiritual pride to overcome?
26. A number of years after Peter had that experience with Cornelius, another experience took place that gives us a little hint about the challenges of dealing with prejudices which we have had since we were children. This story also involves Peter.

**Galatians 2:11-13:** <sup>11</sup> But when Peter came to Antioch, I [Paul] opposed him in public, because he was clearly wrong. <sup>12</sup> Before some men who had been sent by James arrived there, Peter had been eating with the Gentile brothers and sisters. But after these men arrived, he drew back and would not eat with the Gentiles, because he was afraid of those who were in favour [sic-Br] of circumcising them. <sup>13</sup> The other Jewish brothers and sisters also started acting like cowards along with Peter; and even Barnabas was swept along by their cowardly action.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

27. Do you think Peter learned anything from this interaction with Paul?

28. Jesus had some very challenging words about the people who live in our day.

**Luke 18:8:** “I tell you, he will judge in their favour [sic-Br] and do it quickly. But will the Son of Man find faith on earth when he comes?”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

29. It is very interesting to notice what Jesus said or indicated about various non-Jewish individuals.

**Matthew 8:10:** [Speaking about a Roman official:] “**I have never found anyone in Israel with faith like this.**”—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

**Mark 2:5:** [When Jesus was dealing with the men who brought that paralyzed man to Peter's house and lowered him down through the roof:] “Seeing how much faith they had.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Matthew 20:29-34:** [Jesus responded to blind beggars outside Jericho.]‡

30. We do not know whether the blind beggars described in Mark 10:46-52 were Jews or not. In any case, Jesus responded to their call. Compare Matthew 20:29-34 and Luke 18:35-43. Notice in Luke 18:43 Jesus said to them: “**Then see! Your faith has made you well.**”

[BSG:] This list includes people with faith that shone even in dark cities. In Capernaum, Jesus highlights several people with faith. In Matthew 8:10, 13, we see a converted pagan centurion with great faith. We meet four faith-filled friends who ripped up the roof to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus (*Matt. 9:2, Mark 2:5*). In Mark 10, we meet the former blind man, Bartimaeus, whose faith shines bright in Jericho.

At the same time, we would expect that among God's people there would be great faith. Yet, even in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth, little faith—or even outright unbelief—was the limiting factor to Christ's ministry. Among His disciples, several times Jesus says of Israel, “O ye [thou] of little faith!” (*Matt. 6:30, Matt. 8:26, Matt. 14:31, Matt. 16:8*). And in Matthew 17:17, Jesus

exclaims, “O faithless and perverse generation!”—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, December 14.†Ω§

31. It is interesting to see how Jesus commended the faith of foreigners and decried the lack of faith of the Jewish people themselves. Why was that?
32. Do we have any way of knowing where real faith might be found? Can we tell it by looking at the people who walk down the streets in big cities?

[BSG:] Challenge: Open your heart in prayer for a greater portion of faith with which to share your love for those near and far.

Challenge Up: How did you come to know Jesus and the precious three angels' messages? List three spiritual blessings that you have experienced from Jesus in your personal life.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, December 14.‡ [People remember personal stories better.]‡

[EGW:] Among those whom the Jews styled heathen were men who had a better understanding of the Scripture prophecies concerning the Messiah than had the teachers in Israel. There were some who hoped for His coming as a deliverer from sin. Philosophers endeavored to study into the mystery of the Hebrew economy. But the bigotry of the Jews hindered the spread of the light.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 33.2.‡

[EGW:] **The Lord Jesus, the mighty Saviour, has died for these souls. He can arouse them from their indifference, he can awaken their sympathies, he can soften their hearts, he can reveal to their souls the beauty and power of the truth.** The Master-worker is God, and not finite man; and yet he calls upon men to be the agents through whom he can impart light to those in darkness. God has jewels in all the churches, and it is not for us to make sweeping denunciation of the professed religious world, but in humility and love, present to all the truth as it is in Jesus. **Let men see piety and devotion, let them behold Christlikeness of character, and they will be drawn to the truth.... They are to lift up Jesus, the world's Redeemer; they are to hold forth the word of life.**—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*,\* January 17, 1893, par. 5.†‡ Compare *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1184.4.

1. [BSG:] What are some of the immediate needs in the areas where you live that could give you and your church the opportunity to reach out to souls who don't know the truths that we do?
2. Look at Ellen G. White's words ... [as quoted from *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* above] regarding those of other faiths: “God has jewels in all the churches, and it is not for us to make sweeping denunciation of the professed religious world.” In other words, how can we show people the error of their ways while at the same time not denigrating the people personally?
3. “ ‘When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?’ ” (*Luke 18:8, NKJV*). **What does Jesus mean by this rhetorical question? What is the difference between faith and belief? Why might people who have the correct belief be found void of faith**

**when Christ returns?**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Friday, December 15.<sup>†‡§</sup>

[BSG:] Although the Gospel according to Matthew was written specifically for a Jewish audience, the presence of Gentiles near Jesus is a recurring theme in its narrative, sometimes in contrast to the devotion of Israelites. For example, while the Magi (Persian astrologers) come a long way to honor Israel's true king, the chief priests and scribes (Herod's wise men) make no effort to do so. A Roman centurion's faith is praised by Jesus as greater than that of Israelites (*Matt. 8:10*). The Gentile execution squad is the first to confess Jesus' divine Sonship after His crucifixion (*Matt. 27:54*). In this distinctive way, Matthew highlights three things: (1) God's redemptive plan has always included all the nations on the earth; (2) Gentiles are not insensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit; and (3) laying aside ethnic, cultural, and religious prejudice to love and serve others, as Christ did, is a prerequisite to effective cross-cultural ministry. Thus, apart from being a call to global mission, Matthew's Gospel also is a message of ethnic reconciliation in Christ.

The other Gospel writers also highlight notable interactions of Jesus with Gentiles: **He extended His outreach to the Gentile region of the Gadarenes (*Mark 5:1*), He healed a Roman centurion's servant (*Luke 7:1–10*), and He ministered to a Samaritan city (*John 4*).** Jesus' interactions with foreigners revealed that the kingdom of God is for all nations, Jews and Gentiles alike. Jesus demonstrated in practical ways that God has always been concerned with extending His love and forgiveness to all nations.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 145.<sup>†‡§</sup> [If we believe that the gospel must be spread to the whole world, what are we doing about the "10/40 window" and people in India and China and Russia?]<sup>‡</sup>

33. **From Genesis 12:1-3, we can see clearly that it was God's plan for the descendants of Abraham to spread their teachings about God throughout the entire world.** They were to be a blessing to others and others were to bless them. This plan was formulated before this earth was created. Consider just a few of the foreigners who interacted with the Israelites earlier in the Old Testament: Rahab, Ruth, Uriah the Hittite, the Queen of Sheba, Job, and Melchizedek.

[EGW:] Outside of the Jewish nation there were men who foretold the appearance of a divine instructor. These men were seeking for truth, and to them the Spirit of Inspiration was imparted. One after another, like stars in the darkened heavens, such teachers had arisen. Their words of prophecy had kindled hope in the hearts of thousands of the Gentile world.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 33.1.<sup>‡</sup>

[EGW:] Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. **Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have**



**befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly,** those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, **they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature,** and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 638.2.†‡

[EGW:] Divine love has been stirred to its unfathomable depths for the sake of men, and angels marvel to behold in the recipients of so great love a mere surface gratitude. Angels marvel at man's shallow appreciation of the love of God. Heaven stands indignant at the neglect shown to the souls of men. Would we know how Christ regards it? How would a father and mother feel, did they know that their child, lost in the cold and the snow, had been passed by, and left to perish, by those who might have saved it? Would they not be terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would they not denounce those murderers with wrath hot as their tears, intense as their love? The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God's child, and those who reach out no helping hand to their perishing fellow beings provoke His righteous anger. This is the wrath of the Lamb. **To those who claim fellowship with Christ, yet have been indifferent to the needs of their fellow men, He will declare in the great Judgment day, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity."** Luke 13:27.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 825.4.†‡ [Are we ignoring people around us?]

34. It seems clear that Melchizedek was regarded by Abraham as a faithful follower of God. When someone blesses another person, it is assumed that the one who is blessing, is regarded as being "higher" than the one he or she blesses. Thus, Abraham regarded Melchizedek as his superior. See the story in Genesis 14.

35. So, what should we conclude from this lesson?

[BSG:] It is important to note that God's unrelenting missionary outreach to His creatures in various ways does not make believers' involvement in mission irrelevant. **Matthew 28:18–20 and 1 Peter 2:9** [Compare Exodus 19:5-6.] **point out that making disciples for Christ is our fundamental reason for existence both as a church and as individual believers. It is a privilege for us to be co-laborers with God in what He could accomplish perfectly well without our participation. Also, knowing that God is ahead of us, preparing the ground for the sowing of the gospel seed, is another incentive to accept the privilege He graciously extends to us to be part of His team.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 146-147.†‡ [Why doesn't God send angels to evangelize the world? Or, has He?]

36. Jesus stated specifically in John 10:16 that He had/has other sheep outside of the Jewish community. Does that mean that He also has people outside the Christian community? As we have noted, Jesus frequently reacted favorably with non-Jewish peoples.

37. After Jesus was gone, the disciples had a conference in which they seriously considered the issue of reaching out to Gentiles and making them Christians. The results are recorded in Acts 15.

38. Notice, interestingly enough, the words recorded by Luke in Acts 15:28-29.

**Acts 15:28-29:** <sup>28</sup> “The Holy Spirit and we have agreed **not to put any other burden on you besides these necessary rules:** <sup>29</sup>eat no food that has been offered to idols; eat no blood; eat no animal that has been strangled; and keep yourselves from sexual immorality. You will do well if you take care not to do these things. With our best wishes.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

39. What did these requirements have to do with the gospel? Even in the disciples’ day? There was so much prejudice against Gentiles that these requirements were necessary and these instructions important to allow former-Jewish believers to associate with newly baptized Gentile believers. Do we have any problems with prejudice like that in our day?

40. In Exodus 19:5-6, God called upon the children of Israel to be as priests and to represent Him to people around the world. Since the children of Israel did not fulfill that challenge, Peter in 1 Peter 2:9 has given the same challenge to Christians.

**1 Peter 2:9:** But you are the chosen race, the King’s priests, the holy nation, God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous [*sic-Br*] light.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*‡</sup>

[BSG:] Convinced of his apostleship to the Gentiles (*Rom. 11:13, Rom. 15:16, Gal. 2:7*) and boosted by the proceedings of the Jerusalem Council (*Acts 15*), Paul dedicated the bulk of his ministry to the Gentiles. His unflinching commitment to this mission propelled the gospel outside the borders of the nation. **God’s aim for commissioning Paul to the unreached Gentiles was to show that His offer of salvation is for all people.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*<sup>\* 147.†§</sup>

[BSG:] Whatever the social, cultural, and religious background of the unreached people we encounter and minister to, we need to acknowledge that we cannot effectively minister to any group of people without first freeing ourselves from stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination toward them. We, therefore, need to pray that God will liberate us from any such prejudice.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*<sup>\* 148.‡</sup>

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