

an essay:

WHO IS OUR MODEL FOR EVANGELISM?

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I. INTRODUCTION

Who is to be the model for our evangelism as individual Christians and as a Church? Shall we look to the programs and means of the world, which is folly in the Eyes of GOD? Shall The Body of CHRIST on earth call upon fancy programs, market based business models and the world's corrupted entertainment to draw the unsaved into her doors? Shall The Church herself water down The precious Gospel of her Lord, removing the offense of The Cross that convicts sinners of their sins before The Holy One of Israel, that the wicked remain comfortable in their wickedness?

Or shall we look to the Special Revelation of GOD – The Holy Scriptures – in which we may find the True heart of evangelism written for our example? For is not GOD The Father an evangelistic GOD? Is not CHRIST JESUS an evangelistic Savior? Is not The Holy Spirit an evangelistic Spirit? And was not the early Church an evangelistic Church? If our faith in GOD is earnest, we must be as evangelistic as is The Father in The Holy Bible. If we in fact truly believe the CHRIST of Scripture, we must be evangelistic as is The Son in Holy Scripture.

If we are really filled with The Holy Spirit, will we not be as evangelistic as is The Holy Spirit in The Bible? If we are to walk as full Christians in this earthly life, can we expect to have the power and authority of The Savior Himself and not carry out The Great Commission in our lives and our Churches? The Holy Scriptures offer many examples of Biblical models of evangelism. We shall consider these 4: 1) GOD is a missionary GOD; CHRIST is a missionary CHRIST; 3) The HOLY SPIRIT is a missionary SPIRIT; 4) The early Church is a missionary Church.

II. EXAMPLE 1 - GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS A MISSIONARY GOD

JEHOVAH GOD The Father from the very beginning of creation was a missionary GOD. He walked with and communed with Adam and Eve in The Garden. After The Fall, He reached out to Noah and his family to preserve and missionize them. He missionized the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – appearing to them as The Angel of The LORD. Through Joseph He missionized and formed according to His will the nation of Israel in Egypt. And when His will was fulfilled for Israel to leave Egypt 400 years later, GOD missionized the Hebrews through His servant Moses. Then through Joshua, the righteous kings of Israel and Judah, then through all the prophets recorded in the Old Testament.

So we see the shadows of The Great Commission of The New Testament in GENESIS 12:1-3, in which GOD called Abram to become Abraham, “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I

will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”¹ Note that through Abraham, GOD promises to missionize all the nations of men by fathering the coming nation of Israel! There was never a time when GOD The Father was ever prepared to abandon His creation, nor man whom He made in His own Image!

So when Moses wrote The Torah under GOD’s Divine Inspiration, he recorded The LORD’s promise that through His Covenant nation Israel, every nation of men would be missionized. Thus NUMBERS 14:21 states, “But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD!”² And so The Psalmist records GOD’s same promise to missionize all the nations of the earth, for he promises Israel in PSALM 2:8, “Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”³ GOD speaks to all of mankind through The Psalmist to serve Him with fear, rejoicing and trembling. So ancient Israel was to be GOD’s sword of missionizing to all nations – to be a light unto the gentiles and a glory to The LORD.

But ancient Israel grew hard in her heart, and became an unwilling worker to evangelize the nations, that all men would come to the knowledge and worship of GOD. So in the Old Testament, we see repeatedly The Father promising to fulfill His promise to missionize all men, that His glory would fill all the earth. So we read of the promise of a time when GOD’s Word will be written upon the hearts of all men in JEREMIAN 31:31-34, “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah... After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” It will be the age when GOD’s missionizing of all nations will be fulfilled, “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD...”⁴ Can we as Christians today do any less?

III. EXAMPLE 2 - JESUS CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS IS A MISSIONARY CHRIST

So also GOD The Son revealed to us in The Gospels was a missionary Messiah. CHRIST begins His earthly mission as The Jewish Messiah, but ending as The universal CHRIST for all men! So first he

¹ KJV, GENESIS 12:1-3.

² KJV, NUMBERS 14:21.

³ KJV, PSALM 2:8.

⁴ KJV, JEREMIAH 31:31-34.

goes to the lost sheep of Israel, then also to the half-Jews of Samaria, then gives His Church The Great Commission – which envisions The Gospel spreading to all the corners of the earth! To go in the power and authority of CHRIST, and as He commands us His Church, we are commanded by Him to bring The Word of salvation to all men. Thus our Lord tells us in MATTHEW 8:11, “...many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven!”⁵

When we model our evangelism on CHRIST, we may go in the power and authority of The Master Missionizer! For He promises to be with us to the very end of the world; to empower us as Christians with His power and authority; to spread the knowledge of GOD to all nations by calling us His Church to teach all men everything that He has commanded in The Scriptures; to make as it were a CHRIST of every man! So we see the fulfillment of GENESIS 12:1-3 in MATTHEW 28:18-20, “...Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!”⁶ Can we as Christians today do any less?

IV. EXAMPLE 3 - THE HOLY SPIRIT OF ACTS IS A MISSIONARY SPIRIT

ACTS records the events of The early Church after The Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, where we see The HOLY SPIRIT in the first years of The Body of CHRIST on earth reaching out to men of all backgrounds! This models for us clearly that The HOLY SPIRIT is a missionary SPIRIT! For in ACTS 2 we find the 120 Faithful waiting in the upper room, when suddenly The Ruach of GOD comes upon them all, bringing the gift of tongues. The first Pentecost is recorded, documenting why The HOLY SPIRIT gave these Believers the gift of language. ACTS 2:5-6 tells us, “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”⁷ The HOLY SPIRIT here is missionizing to devout men of every nation, both Jews and Gentiles, causing The Gospel message of salvation in CHRIST to be heard in a multitude of languages!

There are many accounts in ACTS of how The HOLY SPIRIT worked through the Faithful of GOD to preach The Gospel. The Word of GOD was preached in Jerusalem, throughout all of Judea and Israel to all who would hear. The Gospel then was preached to the hated half-Jewish Samaritans. And

⁵ KJV, MATTHEW 8:11.

⁶ KJV, MATTHEW 28:18-20.

⁷ KJV, ACTS 2:5-6.

then we find Saint Paul embarking on missionary journeys to spread The Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. All the time, The HOLY SPIRIT empowered these early Christians, enabling them to missionize both lost Jews and Gentiles. So for us today, we as Christians must seek the anointing of The HOLY SPIRIT to evangelize all men of all backgrounds. For GOD loves all men and all are made by His hand in His Image! Can we as Christians today do any less?

V. EXAMPLE 4 - THE EARLY CHURCH OF THE EPISTLES ARE MISSIONARY CHURCHES

From the Epistle Letters to The Churches in the remainder of The New Testament, we find the clear message in greater detail of how The Apostles labored over the newborn Churches and converts. For those early Christians did not like ancient Israel try to keep their salvation and The Word of GOD only to themselves, but missionized even unto death all the nations of the earth! Saint Paul warns the Corinthian Church to be ambassadors of CHRIST, realizing that The Lord Himself has anointed them to be a light to men and a glory to GOD.

Saint Paul says in II CORINTHIANS 5:18-20, “And all things are of GOD, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by JESUS CHRIST, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for CHRIST, as though GOD did beseech you by us: we pray you in CHRIST's stead, be ye reconciled to GOD.”⁸ The early Church's Believers came to understand that they represented CHRIST to their fellow man, and that they should live lives that are reconciled to GOD. Paul tells the Corinthian Church that to them has been entrusted the very Word of Reconciliation and are called to a Ministry of Reconciliation. How so? By evangelizing men in both word and deed with both The Gospel and changed new lives of holiness in CHRIST JESUS. Can we today as Christians do any less?

VI. WHO THEN IS OUR MODEL FOR MISSIONIZING?

How it must grieve the Sacred Heart of JESUS Himself in Heaven when He sees Christians who, having faith, lack good works that would otherwise testify to lost men of the joy of salvation! How the angels before the very throne of The Almighty must lament when it is known Above that a Christian life below has left no mark on the world of men for the glory of CHRIST! How The Sacred Trinity must shed a tear over our names when our names are read from The Book of Life and it is found that we have never testified of The Cross to men whose souls never saw the light of The Gospel because we remained silent!

⁸ KJV, II CORINTHIANS 5:18-20.

For it is written in JAMES 2:20, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”⁹

Is it any wonder that many Christians, forsaking the Divine models of evangelism of their rightful spiritual heritage, lack joy and strength in this life? Shall Christians be as mini-Israelites, keeping the knowledge of salvation in CHRIST only to themselves within the walls of their Churches? Shall we place our lamp stands of Christian faith only for men to see by when we are in The Church on Sunday mornings? Shall we light the candles of our faith only where there is light, but put a basket over the flames of our salvation when we walk among men outside The Church?

O LORD GOD, may we in The Church today be moved to model our evangelism on the examples we find in Holy Scripture. May we evangelize as You, Father in Heaven, missionized men as recorded in The Old Testament! May we evangelize as You, CHRIST our Redeemer, missionized men in The Gospels! May we evangelize as You, HOLY SPIRIT, missionized men in The Book of ACTS! May we evangelize as did The Apostles and The early Church in The Epistles! O Divine Lamb of GOD, let not our hearts seek missionizing models of this world, but in all our efforts in obedience to Your Great Commission, may we seek instead to evangelize lost men as is recorded for us in Holy Scripture! AMEN.

⁹ KJV, JAMES 2:20.

VII. REFERENCES

“The Bible, King James Version - Old and New Testaments - with the Apocrypha [online].” The Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia. <http://etext.virginia.edu/kjv.browse.html#kjvbrowse>