

A missionary vision: The great commission

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[0 : 00] And I'll read from verse 9. Daniel writes, As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat.

! His clothing was as white as snow, the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him.

Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court was seated, and the books were opened. And then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.

The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time. In my vision at night, I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.

[1 : 06] He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and power. All nations and peoples of every language worshipped him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away. And his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Verse 13 is the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, coming back into the glory of heaven.

And that is where he is now seated. And we're going to sing. Eight.

And I'm going to read verse 16 to verse 20.

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.

[2 : 24] Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. So this week, inspired from some of the stuff we've looked at in Acts, and some of the stuff we thought about last week from church history, we're coming back to the scriptures and hearing from the Lord Jesus himself about going into all the worlds.

Before we get there, I was thinking, as I've been thinking about this passage over the last couple of weeks, I remember growing up in the church up in Hurstwood Point, many similarities to us here in many ways.

From time to time, we'd be told to turn here, and it feels like the pastor fired us up for mission, and then I just felt deflated on the Monday, because I was rubbish at it.

That's not my aim, and that's not my prayer for us today. I hope this evening we will feel encouraged and helped by what Jesus says here.

[4 : 04] I myself know my complete weakness when it comes to sharing the gospel with others. But I do see Jesus, and looking at him in his words encourages me, and I pray we'll encourage all of us as we seek to continue this commission that he's given to his people.

I wonder when it comes to these verses, are we just very, maybe too familiar with them?

As I've looked at them over the last couple of weeks, I've seen they're quite wonderful. They're really wonderful. They're miraculous. The context of these verses are miraculous, because what's just happened before these verses?

You can call out. The resurrection. Jesus has risen. The tomb is empty.

He has before raised others from the dead, but now death itself came upon him. His lifeless body was laid in the tomb.

[5 : 34] But three days later, Jesus himself rose up in triumphant power. It's miraculous. Nobody has done that before.

It's miraculous. The context of these verses is miraculous. And its content is pretty miraculous too. Jesus says to 11 weak men to go to the whole world and make disciples of every nation. There were people like fishermen and tax collectors, and there was just 11 of them.

There's no planes. There's no cars. And they're told to go out into all the world, to all the nations. And make disciples. If that can even begin to happen, that's miraculous.

And not only that, but for someone to come, become a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's a miracle to you. In this room, we're surrounded by miracles.

[6 : 38] once our hearts were hard we're sinners we reject God and yet God brings us from death to life that's a miracle we are surrounded by miracles here this evening and as he's shown us in Jesus he is a God of miracles we've begun to see the great commission obeyed by the church in the book of Acts and in there already we have seen there is persecution that some of them are imprisoned and yet the church grows we've seen Satan tries to destroy it from the outside and today we saw Satan try to destroy the church from the inside with Ananias and Sapphira and yet the church still grows yet disciples are made yet people more and more people men and women were hatted to their number we saw this morning even after the dramatic deaths of Ananias and Sapphira and by the end of the summer we will see in Acts the first martyr

Stephen stoned to death why not just briefly turn to Acts chapter 8 verse 1 and maybe would someone with a loud voice like to read chapter 8 verse 1 to verse 3 Christopher thank you and Saul was there giving approval to his death on that day a great persecution broke out against the church of Jerusalem and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him but Saul began to destroy the church going from house to house he dragged off men and women and put them in prison so Stephen's been stoned to death and great persecution comes upon the church and yet even here

Jesus' words that we've looked at in Acts chapter 1 verse 8 about the nations hearing about the gospel going from Jerusalem Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth are being fulfilled in the scattering of God's people it takes persecution but God in that is doing what he set out to do the gospel is going to Judea and Samaria and before long it will go to the rest of the world and who's doing the persecution persecuting or some of it anyway it's Saul he tries to destroy the church and yet in the next chapter he's converted God works a miracle in his life and we know what wonderful things he did for the Lord Jesus and the baton of the gospel has now been handed over to us we live in Acts 29 there is no Acts chapter 29 but it's like we live in it the work continues and so how can we this is what I want to ask us this evening how can we go out in confidence this week and try and fulfill a bit more of this commission we can't do it by miracles we can't do miracles but

God can and God is sending his people out into the world so how can we go out in confidence this week two things firstly because of Jesus' authority Jesus' authority and we're going to turn to some other bits of scripture a fair number to see what kind of authority Jesus has because look there in verse 18 Jesus said all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me what does that authority look like well firstly turn with me to John chapter 1 verses 1 to 4 and again if somebody would be able to just read that out for us that would be great John chapter 1 1 to 4 thank you Jesus has always had authority as he is eternally God and this verse helps these verses help us to see that and not only that but he had authority to bring creation into being verse 3 through him all things were made without him nothing was made that has been made and so as he tells us to go out to all the nations make disciples of all the nations we're doing it in this world that he has created he has authority over and turn back to Daniel 7 we'll pause for a little while here we read those verses at the beginning Daniel 7 and let me just remind you of verses 13 to 14 in my vision at night

[13 : 16] I looked and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven he approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence he was given authority glory and sovereign power all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him his dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed one like a son of man comes to the ancient of days he's not coming from he's coming to the ancient of days he approached the ancient of days this is talking to us of what happened as Jesus ascended into heaven in Acts chapter 1 this is a window into what was going on as he ascended this is the coronation of the son of man claiming his throne in heaven as the one who rose from the dead who conquered death and he was given all authority verse 14 he was given authority glory

and sovereign power and Jesus he says

I have all authority this shows us how majestic his authority is as he goes into heaven as he goes back to his father as he sits on the throne he is given authority glory and sovereign power later in verse 14 he talks of his dominion his rule his dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never pass away rulers in this world they come and they go but Jesus his rule will never pass away and his kingdom well it's from all nations verse 14 all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed we just have very little kingdoms in comparison with Jesus his kingdom from all nations peoples of every language throughout history this is a vast kingdom and so

Jesus told his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations because he has authority his kingdom is going to be made up of people of all nations and one day the bible shows us that every knee will bow before this great king the king Jesus Alistair Begg writes really helpfully on this talking about how our society is intolerant to evangelism how we're told to respect and tolerate all people and that in some respects is absolutely right we do want to respect all people but but we need to be convinced of the gospel we need to be convinced of the lord

Jesus and his power and authority and that one day he's going to return and so we need to make sure we go out to the world knowing that Jesus has given the authority to tell people of him he says this in his little book on the book of Daniel if Jesus is not the son of man whom Daniel saw in his vision then yes evangelism is the worst thing we could do but if Jesus is that son of man then there is coming a day when every knee will bow down to him and some will shout out with joy but others will wail with anguish and so how can we be silent of that and still call ourselves loving of others if Jesus is the risen ascended king and one day every knee will bow down to him how can we not tell others of him it's not loving to stay silent it's not loving just to hold our tongues and not say anything of the

Lord Jesus people are going to one day meet him this great king who has authority over all people all nations Colossians chapter 1 verse 15 to 17 thinking again of Jesus authority Colossians chapter 1 and when we get there if somebody could read that passage Colossians 1 15 to 17 that would be great a song of some of man is the image of the invisible God the first form of all creation for in him all things were created things in heaven and the earth visible and invisible whether thrones or ploughs or rulers or authorities

[19 : 31] All things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together.

Thank you. Verse 17 says Jesus is before all things and in him all things hold together. In him all things were created and in him all things hold together.

We're sitting on our chairs this evening because in him all things hold together. The world is held by the Lord Jesus. That's more of the authority that he has.

It is held in his hands, creation. Mark 1, 32 to 33. See some more of Jesus' authority.

And again when we get there if somebody could read that for us that would be lovely. That evening after sunset people brought to Jesus all the sick and demons possessed.

[20 : 49] The whole town gathered at the door. Oh and probably verse 34 actually. And Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons.

But he did not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. Here we see Jesus' authority over sickness. Over disease. And even over demons.

Over evil. Jesus has authority over these things. More of Jesus' authority is seen in John chapter 10, 17 to 18.

Do turn there. And again when someone gets there if you could read it out for us that would be lovely. For this reason the Father loves me.

As I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me. But I lay it down with my own cause. I have authority to lay it down.

[21 : 59] But I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have to seek. We've already noted the miracle of Jesus' resurrection.

And we see in these verses how he has authority to lay down his life and to take it up again. And that's remarkable because that's authority we just don't have.

We don't have the authority to give ourselves life. None of us chose to be born. And neither should we have the authority to take our lives either.

But Jesus who is God. Who is creator. Who is sustainer of all things. He has the authority to do that. He has authority over life and over death.

And final verse. Revelation 17 verse 14. Revelation 17 verse 14. And again when someone gets there please do read it out for us.

[23 : 18] Thank you.

People according to this verse will try and wage war against the Lamb. Will stand against the Lord Jesus. The risen reigning king.

And they won't be able to stand. For he is Lord of lords and king of kings. That's how great his authority is. And so when it comes to the words in the great commission.

Where Jesus stands up and says all authority in heaven and earth is given to me. Go and make disciples. That's how great his authority is.

Keir Starmer when he became prime minister. He had the authority to call in MPs. And give them different roles in his government. In the great commission.

[24 : 33] Jesus has even more authority in heaven and earth. To give us the role of going out into the world. And making disciples of all nations.

Baptizing them and teaching them. So how can we go out in confidence this week. To try and fulfill this great commission. Because Jesus has all authority.

We'll see one more thing in a moment. But first let's sing another song together. Let's sing of Jesus' authority as we sing this hymn.

Jesus the name high over all. Let's stand, we'll sing. And then we'll look at some more. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. So here's the question we're trying to help ourselves with this evening.

[25 : 44] How can we go out in confidence this week. To try and fulfill this great commission. Well first of all. We have seen that Jesus has all authority.

He has the authority to send us to go. And finally. Jesus is with us. Jesus is with us.

Have a look at Matthew chapter 1 verse 23.

Matthew chapter 1 verse 23.

Matthew chapter 1 verse 23. What does Emmanuel mean?

[27 : 04] God with us. God with us. And what does Jesus say at the end of the great commission? I am with you always. God with us. God with us.

Jesus is Emmanuel. God with us. God come to be like one of us. God come to live on this earth. Identifying himself with human beings.

And as we see Jesus grow up. As we see him rejected. And despised. And sent to the cross. On the cross we see he is with us. With us.

In our death. As he takes our punishment for our sins. He is kind of saying. I am with you.

I will die for you. And I will rise for you. And I will give you life. I am with you. And Jesus has shown throughout his life.

[28 : 03] And in his death and resurrection. And even in this great commission. He is Emmanuel. He is God with us. And that does not change.

Now he is in heaven. I am surely with you. Until the very end of the age. He is with us. He is with us. By his spirit. That verse in Acts chapter 1 verse 8.

Jesus said. You will be clothed with power from on high. My presence will be with you. He is with us.

And surely I am with you always. Jesus doesn't say anything. About not being with us. If we have not been obedient enough to him.

It doesn't depend on our performance. It doesn't depend. On how many people we speak to about the Lord Jesus. We are just simply told that he is with us in this.

[29 : 11] He is with us when we feel low. And when we feel like a rubbish Christian. He is with us when we have told everybody that day. That we know Jesus.

He is with us. Living as a Christian. Telling someone of Jesus. May at times feel like a very lonely path to tread.

We may feel we just stick out like a sore thumb. In the presence of unbelievers. Maybe so much so. That we try to hide it. Or maybe we just.

Try and hang out with just Christians. That we don't have to even go through the embarrassment. Of being with a non-Christian. And eventually admitting we go to church.

But Jesus goes with us. He is with us by his spirit. When we are at home. In our cozy little home.

[30 : 15] Because we would rather stay there. And he is also with us. When we go and speak to our grumpy neighbor next door. He is with us at the school gates.

When we chat to other parents. He is with us. Whilst our hair is being cut. And we have that great moment. About speaking. About our faith.

He will be with us. If we come and join. In a couple of weeks time. When the Americans are here. He will be with us. He will be with us.

If we come along to the cafe on Friday. And stand outside. And hand out leaflets. He will be with us. He is with us. Helping us. In our praying.

As we pray. For the kingdom to be built. As we pray. For this great commission to be. Fulfilled. Jesus will be with us.

[31 : 10] As we pray. There will never be a day. Or an hour. Or a situation. Where Jesus is not. With us. And so there should.

Could surely be. Nothing more. More. That Jesus could give us. Than his very presence. With us. Helping us.

In all of this. So this week. I think we can. Go out in confidence. Because we've been given. This task.

By the one. Who has all authority. In heaven and earth. And we can go. Because we go. Not alone. But with Jesus. Who promises to be with us.

Until the very end. Not until tomorrow. But until the very end. Unless the end is tomorrow. And so let that be a comfort. To us. This week.

[32 : 08] As we seek to live. For the Lord Jesus. As we seek to be witnesses. For him. In this world. That he has made. And that he holds. In his hands.

In this world. I'm going to sing. Another song in response. And then we'll. Pray together.