

# THE GREAT COMMISSION

**BIBLE TEXT** : Luke 24:49-53; Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20

LESSON 252 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Luke 24:49-53**

<sup>49</sup> And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

<sup>50</sup> And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

<sup>51</sup> And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

<sup>52</sup> And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

<sup>53</sup> And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

### **Matthew 28:16-20**

<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

<sup>17</sup> And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

<sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

<sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

### **Mark 16:15-20**

<sup>15</sup> And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

<sup>16</sup> He that believeth and is baptized

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **NOTES:**

#### **In Galilee**

During Jesus' forty days on earth after He arose from the grave, He appeared to His disciples a number of times. We have read about some of those times. Our lesson today is about a talk that Jesus had with His disciples when they met in Galilee, as Jesus had appointed.

Jesus had told the eleven disciples that He would "go before" them into Galilee after He had risen (**Matthew 26:32** <sup>32</sup> But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee). The angel at the empty tomb told the women to remind the disciples that they could see Jesus in Galilee (**Matthew 28:7** <sup>7</sup> And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you). Before the women had reached the disciples, Jesus had met them and said: "Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me" (Matthew 28:10).

When the disciples saw Jesus, they worshiped Him, but some doubted. They did not have enough faith to believe that this was the same Jesus whom they had seen nailed to the cross. Had not Jesus said "It is finished," when He bowed His head and died? Had not one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side from which came blood and water? Had not their leader been buried in the sepulcher of Joseph, in a garden? Some of the disciples were doubtful that now the same Jesus stood before them.

#### **Raised from the Dead**

The disciples had seen Jesus raise others from the dead. They had seen Lazarus (**John 11:43-44** <sup>43</sup> And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. <sup>44</sup> And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go) and the son of the widow of Nain (**Luke 7:12-15** <sup>12</sup> Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. <sup>13</sup> And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. <sup>14</sup> And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. <sup>15</sup> And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother) raised from the dead by Jesus. They knew that Jairus' daughter had been dead but was raised to life by Jesus (**Mark 5:35-42** <sup>35</sup> While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? <sup>36</sup> As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. <sup>37</sup> And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. <sup>38</sup> And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. <sup>39</sup> And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. <sup>40</sup> And they laughed

shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

<sup>17</sup> And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;  
<sup>18</sup> They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

<sup>19</sup> So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

<sup>20</sup> And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. <sup>41</sup> And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. <sup>42</sup> And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. ). Even though they had been witnesses to these miracles, some refused to admit that Jesus Himself had risen from the grave. The resurrection of Jesus was wonderful. Neither before that time, nor since, has there ever been anything like it; but Jesus, the Son of God, came forth from the grave by His power and at a time foretold.

### Doubt

God has recorded for us the doubting of Thomas. When the other disciples told him that they had seen Jesus, Thomas said: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). When he saw Jesus and Jesus spoke to him, it was not necessary for Thomas to put his hand into Jesus' side nor to put his finger into the nail-prints of Jesus' hands. Thomas believed. Jesus said: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

There were others who had doubted, too (**Mark 16:11** <sup>11</sup> And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. **Luke 24:11** <sup>11</sup> And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.). Perhaps they did not speak as Thomas had spoken, but in their hearts it was hard for them to believe the report that Jesus had risen from the dead.

### Reproof

Jesus reproved the disciples for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Neither of these has a place in the heart and life of Jesus' followers. It is necessary that faith take the place of doubt. One must have faith in order to be saved (**Mark 16:16** <sup>16</sup> He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.). One must have faith to keep saved, because the just live by faith (**Habakkuk 2:4** <sup>4</sup> Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. **Hebrews 10:38** <sup>38</sup> Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). One must have faith to have his prayers answered (**Mark 11:24** <sup>24</sup> Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. **Matthew 21:22** <sup>22</sup> And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.). Those who believe in Jesus shall have everlasting life (**John 3:36** <sup>36</sup> He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. **John 6:47** <sup>47</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.) but the unbelieving shall have eternal punishment (**Mark 16:16** <sup>16</sup> He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. **Revelation 21:8** <sup>8</sup> But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.).

Jesus loved His disciples but He warned them that with

unbelief and hardness of heart they could not be His disciples, they could not spread the Gospel, and they could not work miracles in Jesus' name.

### **The Power of Jesus**

To encourage the disciples and to help their faith, Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). What a powerful Christ we serve! There could not be any greater power than the power in Heaven and in earth. Jesus has power over earthly and physical things as well as over heavenly and spiritual things. Jesus did not take this power upon Himself; all power in Heaven and in earth was given to Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus also had the authority, and He was in a position to send forth His disciples. Jesus was their Leader. He was the Son of God. He gave the command to the disciples that they should spread the Gospel. This was their commission. It was His plan for their future work.

### **Instructions**

In a few words Jesus told His disciples what their work was to be. Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." When the twelve disciples had been sent out at another time, they were instructed to go only to the Israelites ([Matthew 10:5-6](#) <sup>5</sup> *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:* <sup>6</sup> *But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*). At this time Jesus gave the command to go into all the world, and to teach all nations. The whole world was the place for the disciples to work — not just a portion of the world.

Jesus must have given this commission to all His followers. It would have been impossible for the eleven disciples alone to spread the Gospel through all the world, but the followers of Christ are trying to do so. The Bible and portions of it are translated now into more than 1100 languages and dialects. The Apostolic Faith has published papers and tracts in 50 languages and sent them into 200 countries and islands.

### **To Teach and to Preach**

To travel into all parts of the world is not enough. Jesus said they should teach and preach. Jesus did not leave it to the disciples to choose what to teach. He said, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." They were to teach the Gospel — not parts of it, but all that Jesus taught, the whole Word of God.

### **Believers**

All people do not believe the Gospel of Jesus. Those who do not believe "shall be damned," but those who believe and observe — doers as well as hearers of the Word — shall have salvation.

It is the duty and privilege of the believers to be baptized in water. They are to be baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Jesus set the example as well as gave the command for water baptism. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan river by John the Baptist ([Mark 1:9](#) <sup>9</sup> *And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.*). At the baptism of Jesus, the "Spirit like a dove" descended upon Him ([Mark 1:10](#) <sup>10</sup> *And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:*) and

God spoke out of Heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

To baptize means to immerse. Biblical accounts tell how the people went into the water and came out again (**Mark 1:9-10** <sup>9</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: **Acts 8:38** <sup>38</sup> And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.). In the writings of Paul, water baptism is likened to burial with Christ and resurrection with Him (**Colossians 2:12** <sup>12</sup> Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.).

Water baptism does not actually wash away one's sins. It is an outward symbol of what has taken place in the heart. Water baptism is only for those who are saved. It is for those who believe. (**Acts 2:41** <sup>41</sup> Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. **Acts 8:12** <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. **Acts 18:8** <sup>8</sup> And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. **Acts 19:5** <sup>5</sup> When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) All those who were baptized by the Apostles were believers. Philip wanted to make sure that the eunuch was a believer before Philip baptized him. As they were riding along in a chariot, Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch. The eunuch said, "Here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Acts 8:36, 37). When the eunuch proclaimed his faith in Jesus as the Son of God, Philip baptized the man. To be baptized in water according to the Bible brings a great blessing. By being baptized in obedience to Jesus' command, a person shows that he wants to be among Jesus' followers.

## Power

The Great Commission that Jesus gave His disciples was a charge, a trust, and a work to do. With this work He gave them authority and power to do it. Jesus told them that He would send the promise of the Father, and that they were to tarry in Jerusalem until they were "endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This power would enable them to work miracles in Jesus' name.

There were signs which would follow them that believed. These signs that Jesus mentioned did follow His disciples. "In my name shall they cast out devils." Paul freed a damsel from an evil spirit (**Acts 16:18** <sup>18</sup> And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.), and Peter healed those who were vexed with unclean spirits (**Acts 5:16** <sup>16</sup> There came also a multitude *out of* the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.).

"They shall speak with new tongues." They were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:4** <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance), and the believers at

other times received the same witness when they were baptized with the Holy Ghost (**Acts 10:46** <sup>46</sup> For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, **Acts 19:6** <sup>6</sup> And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.).

"They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." A lame man at the beautiful gate of the Temple was healed when Peter and John went to pray, as Peter said: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:1-8). Many other sick people have been healed when believers have prayed in the name of Jesus.

"They shall take up serpents." Paul felt no harm when a poisonous snake fastened itself upon his hand as he gathered sticks for a fire (**Acts 28:3-6** <sup>3</sup> And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. <sup>4</sup> And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. <sup>5</sup> And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. <sup>6</sup> Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god). Paul did not do this purposely and presume upon the mercy of God. It was an accident, and therefore God protected Paul.

"And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." There is no account in the Bible where a believer did "drink any deadly thing." It is understood that this means if it is taken by mistake. In more recent years, it has been reported that God has protected His people when deadly drinks have been taken by mistake.

These signs have followed the believers, and also today the power of God is seen among those who believe the whole Word of God. The days of miracles are not passed. People are delivered from the power of the devil. Sin is cast out of their lives, and sick bodies are healed when the prayer of faith is uttered in the name of Jesus. Have you ever seen any of these signs which Jesus said would follow His believers? Do you know of anyone who has been healed by the power of God when they were anointed and prayed for? (**James 5:14-15** <sup>14</sup> Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.)

To have the power of God and to have these signs following them was just as much a command and a commission as to go and preach the Gospel. All of us cannot be missionaries in foreign lands, but we can help to spread the Gospel. Someone must tell the people of our own land, too.

### Spreading the Gospel

Is there anything a child can do? A child can fulfill the Great Commission by inviting his neighbors and friends to church and to Sunday School. A child who is saved can tell his playmates how to receive salvation. A child can be an example of a believer and let his light shine. A child can pray for the missionaries at home and in the foreign lands. A child can pray for the religious literature that is sent into all parts of the world. A child can do more than pray; he can give, too.

**'If to go or stay I would tell  
love's story. Use me. Lord, O**

### **use me**

Are we doing all we can to carry out Jesus' commission? Are we being obedient to Jesus' command? In order to do this, we must keep in touch with Jesus at all times. He said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Jesus has promised to be with His followers, even with us today. The eleven disciples did not live to the end of the world. Jesus meant that He would be with all His people, in every land and age, if they would obey His Word. Jesus said: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 Why did the disciples go into Galilee?
- 2 How did they know that Jesus would meet them there?
- 3 Why did Jesus upbraid the disciples?
- 4 What harm will doubt do?
- 5 How much power does Jesus have?
- 6 Where are Jesus' followers to preach?
- 7 What are they to preach?
- 8 Tell about water baptism.
- 9 What signs will follow believers?

Who has promised to be with the believers?