



Lesson Six

His Call to the Nations

Memorize: Matthew 28:18-20

"Shall I tell you what sustained me amidst the toil, the hardship, and the loneliness of my exiled life? It was the promise, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end.'"

David Livingstone

Getting Started

Early in his ministry Jesus clearly communicated that he was the Messiah and that he had come to be the Savior of the world. Jesus had less than three years to liberate his Jewish disciples from their nationalistic cultural biases. It was vital for the disciples to realize that the gospel of the kingdom is for all peoples and that his mandate was to the nations, not to a nation. This week you will continue to study how Jesus awakened his disciples to his global purpose.

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1. **As you study the following passages, notice what is significant about each event, what Jesus is conveying, and who his audience is.**
 - a. Jesus' ministry to non-Jews
 1. Matthew 4:23-25

 2. Matthew 15:21-28. Be careful how you interpret this event. In Matthew 15:1-20, Jesus had just taught on the subject of what is clean and unclean. Then notice where he took the disciples. Remember what Matthew 4:24 reveals about Jesus' ministry to Gentiles. In Matthew 15:24, to whom is Jesus speaking?

 3. John 4:5-26
 - b. Gentiles and Samaritans are used as object lessons by Jesus to shake up the cultural bias of the Jews.
 1. Matthew 8:5-13

2. Luke 10:30-36

3. Luke 17:11-19

c. Jesus opens the eyes of his disciples to his global purpose through his teaching.

1. Matthew 5:13-14

2. Matthew 24:1-14

3. Luke 13:22-30

2. Call to the Nations

After the resurrection, as Jesus moved closer to his ascension to the right hand of the Father, he made it clear that his purpose was global and his mandates were to catapult his followers to the nations. The following passages are restatements of the Great Commission that God gave to Abram found in the purpose clause of Genesis 12:3, *“And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*

Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God blessing the families of the earth through Abram (Galatians 3:14). His mandate to his followers will never be understood if their only grasp of the “Great Commission” is gained from Matthew 28:19-20. Full understanding is achieved when we study all five of Jesus’ restatements of the Great Commission given after the resurrection.

- a. As you study each statement notice the similar and different emphases.
 1. Matthew 28:18-20. Two hints: The imperative verb is “make disciples.” Nations does not mean a political entity or geographical boundary of a country. Nations comes from the Greek word “*ethne*.” Of whom are we to be making disciples?

2. Mark 16:15-16

3. Luke 24:44-49

4. John 20:21-23. John's account of Jesus' restatement of the commission will take on new meaning if you take the time some day to read the gospel of John and focus on Jesus' use of the word "sent" or "send." Examples: John 5:36-38; 6:38-39; 12:44-49.

5. Acts 1:3-8

Jesus not only gives us the mission of taking his message to the nations, he also empowers us to accomplish it.

- b. Taking into consideration the verses you just read, write a summary statement that describes Jesus' global mandate.

3. Meditation

- a. What has God taught you through your meditation on Matthew 28:18-20 this week?

Selah

"So today the Holy Ghost, if we would but hear his voice, would call a halt on much of our religious activity and even our revival plans ... and the beckoning finger of the "Man of Macedonia" would call us to the new West which has arisen upon the horizon ..."

A.B. Simpson

Kazaks of China

Although some are familiar with the Kazakhs (**kah**-zahks) of Kazakhstan, most people do not realize that there are more than a million Kazaks (**kah**-zahks) just over the border in China's Xinjiang (**shih**n-jee-ahng) Province (see map on page 8). The majority of these people are rugged, semi-nomadic mountain dwellers, still following in the footsteps of their ancestors. Kazaks of China are more traditional in culture than their cousins in Kazakhstan, and they use an arabic script of Kazak instead of cyrillic, which means that until very recently there was no Bible they could read and understand.

Kazaks consider themselves Muslim, but they do not practice many Muslim rituals such as going to the mosque and praying five times a day. Instead they continue to carry on the animistic traditions of their ancestors. They believe that spirits control the environment around them and that they must appease these spirits or live in fear. They pray to their ancestors for help.

Kazaks in China love their identity as shepherds and enjoy the independence and slow pace of mountain life. Rapid development is changing the landscape and forcing many Kazaks to abandon the lifestyle they know. Many struggle to find jobs in cities and some have turned to alcoholism to cope.

Kazaks are uniquely ready to embrace the gospel, but because of political and spiritual barriers it has not yet been preached to them. Praise God for the 200 known Kazak believers in China, but pray that there will be new opportunities to preach and to receive the gospel in this part of the world. Only a handful of Christian workers are reaching these gentle and open people.

Prayer Points

- The services of a *shaman* (**shah**-muhn, witch doctor) are especially important among nomadic Kazaks. They believe the *shaman* can expel diseases or control the weather. Pray that God will free Kazaks from bondage to these spiritual forces.
- Pray that more people will take the gospel to the Kazaks. There are only a few Christians ministering to them.
- Pray that the newly translated Bible would get into the hands of spiritually hungry Kazaks in China.
- Pray for Kazaks to find good jobs to support their families.

