

# Church 101

## Lesson 2

### The Great Commission

#### PART I EXPLANATION

**Introduction:** The church as an organization has been given a commission directly by Christ. Each individual church is to be a colony of heaven, made up of citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and in subjection to the laws and leadership of their King. They are to be His representatives upon this earth by actively expanding the kingdom of heaven by fulfilling their commission. This is the function of the church. This is how it operates. The purpose of the church is to bring glory to God through Christ, but its function is to **spread the gospel, baptize, and make disciples.**

If a church is not fulfilling its commission, it is dysfunctional, i.e. it is not operating properly. If a widget business doesn't produce or sell any, there is a major problem with the business. If something doesn't change, the business will soon be bankrupt and cease operations. The same is true of a church. If a church loses sight of its function of preaching and making disciples, eventually it will fall away and diminish. A church that ceases to be evangelistic soon turns cannibalistic. When a church doesn't focus its attention beyond its four walls, it commonly starts criticizing other churches or even its own members to feel more spiritual. By putting others down it serves to exalt its perspective of self. When our attention is properly focused upon making disciples, it keeps the members from becoming too focused upon what others are doing and prevents discord in the church.

There is much difference of opinion as to who the authority to fulfill this commission was truly given. Did Christ give His authority to the apostles? Did He give it to individual Christians? Did He give it to ministers of the gospel? Or did He give His authority to His church? Who exactly is it that has the authority to carry out this commission? This authority could not merely have been given to the apostles, because they are all dead and the apostolic office was restricted to twelve men who met certain qualifications. If the authority were given solely to them, the authority would have ceased to continue beyond the first century. The authority could not be given solely to individual Christians or ministers because the individual who baptized you could later prove to be a false prophet. Certainly Christ did not give His authority to false prophets. No individual possesses the authority to carry out the Great Commission apart from a church.

The authority to preach and baptize is given to the local church. The church has received its commission from Christ to spread the gospel throughout the world and contained in that commission is the necessary authority to carry on that work. The primary purpose of a commission is to specify the task to be accomplished along with the authority to carry it out. Military officers are commissioned and given authority to command and carry out the mission. No individual is allowed to act independently on their own authority and take command of the mission, regardless of ability or experience. The assembled church is granted authority from Christ to baptize its converts in the name (or authority) of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is God's plan for spreading the gospel throughout the world.

**Definitions:** *For English use the Webster's 1828 Dictionary and copy all appropriate definitions for each word. For the Greek and Hebrew use a Strong's Concordance and copy the definition. The Strong's number is in parenthesis.*

English: **Commission** -

Greek: (1849) **exousia** *ex-oo-see'-ah* -

**Quotation**: “We ought to regard the Christian church, not as a luxurious hostelry where Christian gentlemen may each one dwell at his ease in his own inn, but as barracks in which soldiers are drilled and trained for war. We should regard the Christian church, not as an association for mutual admiration and comfort, but as an army with banners, marching to the fray to achieve victories for Christ, to storm the strongholds of the foe, and to add province after province to the Redeemer’s kingdom.” Spurgeon

“And so here, not encouragement, but obligation is the inference that is drawn from that tremendous claim. (i.e. all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth) Because I have all power, therefore you are charged with the duty of winning the world for its King...a non-missionary church never has much of Christ’s presence.” Alexander Maclaren

“Our admission into the visible church is in order to something further; when Christ hath *disciplined* us, he hath not *done with us*; he *enlist* soldiers that he may *train them* up for his service.” Matthew Henry

**Confessions** (Look up and read these articles)

**New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith of 1833**

Article XIV Baptism and the Lord's Supper

**London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**

Chapter 26 Of the Church – paragraph 7

Chapter 28 Of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

**PART II EXPLORATION**

**Key Questions** (*Answer in writing*)

1. Who is the Great Commission given to the visible or invisible church? Explain.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is the significance of the word ‘power’ in Mt. 28:18?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why did Christ not give His commission only to the apostles?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Why was the commission not given to individuals or ministers?

5. What three things are we to 'Go' do to fulfill our commission?
  
6. In Matthew 28:20 what promise are given if we attempt our commission?
  
7. What happens to a church that ceases to be 'evangelistic'?
  
8. Where does the London Confession (ch 28) say the ordinances are to be continued?
  
9. Who does the London Confession (ch 26 paragraph 7 say the authority is given to?
  
10. What is the purpose and what is the function of the church?

**Key Scriptures:**

Mt. 28:18-20 We are commissioned to go and \_\_\_\_\_ all nations the gospel and to baptize them in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, \_\_\_\_\_ them to \_\_\_\_\_ and not just know the commandments of Christ.

Mk. 16:15 We are to preach the gospel to \_\_\_\_\_ not just who we want to preach it to.

Luke 24:46-47 We are commissioned to preach \_\_\_\_\_ and remission of sins in His \_\_\_\_\_ among all \_\_\_\_\_ beginning at Jerusalem.

John 20:21-23 We are commissioned the same as the Father \_\_\_\_\_ Christ.

Acts 1:8 We are empowered to be witnesses by the \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Key Chapter(s)** (*Read daily and summarize in your own words the meaning of the chapter*):

Acts 8

### **PART III EXPECTATION**

**Memory verse:** Mt. 28:19-20

**Personal Definition:** *(Write a definition in your own words)*

Commission -

**Personal Confession:** *(Study the confessions and write your confession in your own words)*

Authority to perform the ordinances -

**Meditation question:** *(be prepared for discussion)*

How is the authority of the great commission transferred in the organizing of a new church?

**Extra Credit:** Make a list of five people in your sphere of influence. Pray for them each day and try to have a Bible study to explain the gospel or send them a gospel message to listen to.