

My message title for this second lesson in this three part series is:

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the Remotest Parts of the Earth

Tonight we are going to deal with Jesus' purpose in sending His disciples into all the nations with the gospel. We will want to grasp what that means to us, and why we need to be prepared to do this. As we begin tonight, can **we grasp the fact that God intended many, many more people to rule, than just the two created in the Garden?** Can we understand that the commands to

- To be fruitful,
- To multiply,
- To fill the earth, and
- To subdue (or tread upon the earth)

Was for the purpose of replacing the host of angel originally created to rule this earth!

Will you bear with me for a few moments while we summarize basic Scriptural history? I think it is important to see the how and why things transpired as they did. There really was a purpose for all of it, and in understanding the purposes behind it, we might better understand the purpose for our work in the spreading of the Gospel.

So, let's think about a few things for a moment. God is a God of order, and we know that He originally created a host of angels (innumerable) to rule over the earth. This was His order of things. And we know that a third of those angels rebelled and ultimately disqualified themselves to rule. We also know that the two thirds who did not follow Lucifer in his rebellion, could not continue to rule with him, but now surround the Throne of God, and are sent out as ministering spirits to minister to those of God's Family who are about to receive their inheritance.

This province of God's created Universe — the earth — is presently in complete disarray due to the corruption of God's original order with respect to the rulership over the earth. And so, God created man with the intention to fill those places of rulership in the heavens over the earth, and restore order. He created man in His Own Image and Likeness, and covered them with glory, yet creating them "naked" in the sense that they were awaiting their outer garments of splendor and majesty....awaiting their testing of obedience.

Those innumerable thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities mentioned in Colossians 1:16, and 20 will ultimately be reconciled when Jesus takes His rightful place as the King of *kings* and the Lord of *lords*. Kings and lords that will fill vacated position of rulership in the heavenlies in that coming day when Jesus takes His rightful place on the Throne over the earth.

I wonder how many He needs! I wonder what the number is... the total number of all three-thirds!

And all of this number, all of these replacement rulers would come from the two who were created at the beginning and placed in the Garden and commanded to *be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it and rule over it!* It's no wonder that these were commands God gave them.

Satan could have only watched while those 6 days transpired in Genesis chapter one. He could have/would have listened intently as he grew to understand God's purpose in creating man; and as a result of this understanding, he and his fallen angels set out to stop this from happening. We see the result of their work, in many places. First in the Garden at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, when he asked the woman "Has God said...?" then deceived the woman by saying, "You shall surely not die!!!" We know that she ate, and gave to her husband and he ate. They both died that day! They both became utterly naked that day, having lost their covering of glory! This death disqualified the man from ruling, because he could not rule in a dead state.

Remember, in the truest sense, TO LIVE (or to have LIFE) means to be in union with God. It is our spiritual birth that allows union with God in the Ages of Ages. This is separate and distinct from LIFE in the coming Age means to be in union with Christ and His Glory, in the coming age. And to be separated in either sense is to be DEAD. But even in death, a person is still an eternal being. Consider this question:

Prior to his fall, was Adam *an eternal being*? Yes, He was created an eternal being, for only eternal beings can rule with God! And would the death that was brought about through disobedience to God's command, mean that he was *no longer an eternal being*? No. Death simply meant that he was separated from God and now unable to fulfill the position for which he was created. And if the one created for the purpose of taking Satan's place was dead, then he would not be able to take that place of rulership.

Thus, Satan took the course of action that he took and was successful in bringing about the disqualification of man to rule in his stead. The thing that Satan evidently didn't know was that *the Lamb of God had been slain from before the foundation of the world!* In God's economy Jesus Christ was *slain before foundations of the earth* were ever laid.

In this, God was totally prepared for the scenario that took place in the Garden at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Following the fall of man, God simply began to reveal His *eternal* plan. And His eternal plan had to do with the redemption of man. God would bring forth a Redeemer for mankind, from the seed of the woman, who would crush the head of the serpent, placing mankind back in the position of coming into the rulership over the earth.

Then with this, knowing that the Redeemer would come from the seed of the woman, Satan and his angels continued to do all they could possibly to thwart the plan of God. We see the result of that in Genesis chapter six:

Genesis 6

1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can know that for over a period of about 1600 years, a number of fallen angels left their first abode (the heavens) and came to earth for the purpose of having relations with the daughters of men, so as to corrupt the lineage of man, thereby corrupting the Seed of the woman. And as a result of this union the offspring is referred to in Scripture as Nephilim (which essentially means “fallen ones”):

Genesis 6

4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

The whole earth was so completely corrupted by this union and its result that God brought about the Flood in order to begin anew! Then at the end of the Flood, when Noah and his family and the animals that were saved through the Flood, came off the boat, we read:

Genesis 9

1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

And we can read it again a few verses down:

Genesis 9

7 "And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."

Moving ahead another 400 or so years, we can also see God calling Abraham and setting aside a people for Himself; we see God telling Abraham that he would have innumerable descendants and that kings would come from him and from Sarah. And not only was Abraham given promises concerning these things, but also Isaac in Genesis chapter twenty eight. Then, again, to Jacob, where we read:

Genesis 35:11 God also said to him, "I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you. 12 And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you."

Here again, we see being fruitful and multiplying having to do with kings (implying a kingdom) and a land (implying an inheritance within that kingdom)! And of course all of this — Israel being fruitful and filling the land (with descendants of Abraham) — is for the purpose of God setting up His theocracy within the nation and being King over the earth, with the nation of Israel being His administrators, filling earthly positions of

rulership, awaiting the filling of heavenly positions. And here we are only in the 35th chapter of the whole Bible. Then we can realize that the remainder of the OT basically deals with this process of God raising up a number of people to be rulers for Him!

And finally, 400 years after the close of the OT, with the Jews in the Land, Jesus came offering *the kingdom of the heavens* to Abraham's descendants. We know that Jesus spent the last three years of His seemingly short life on earth, walking throughout the land of Israel, offering the kingdom of the heavens to the only people on the face of the earth who could receive the offer. In fact, during this time, He had told His disciples that they were not to go to anyone but the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were not to go to the Gentiles.

We know the outcome of this. As a whole the Nation of Israel rejected the offer and crucified the One making the offer. This One who was ultimately the Seed of the Woman, the Seed of Abraham was put into the ground upon His death on the Day of Passover, only to come up out of the ground three days later on the day of the Feast of Firstfruits. And then for a period of 40 days, he revealed Himself, in His resurrected body to many people throughout Israel, all the while teaching them of things concerning the kingdom of God. Toward the end of this period of time (the 40 days of His post-resurrection ministry) He gathered His disciples together in order to send them out. Only this time their sending out would be beyond the borders of the Israel, beyond the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He said this to them:

Mt 28

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Mark 16

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Luke 24

46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

On the very day of His ascension back to the Father, we read this in the first chapter of Acts:

Acts 1

4 And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

And after a bit more explanation, He said to them:

8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

(As a side, I wonder what Jesus meant when He mentioned the remotest part of the earth??? I wonder where that is.)

Anyway, then of course we know that ten days later Pentecost happened! Their being Christ's witnesses began in Jerusalem with leadership of Peter. Early on Peter gave some very powerful messages, directed to the Men of Judea, asking them to repent from their sins, and from having crucified the Messiah, and telling them that if they would repent, the times of refreshing could come with the return of the Messiah. But time and time again, during those early days of the Church in Judea, the message continued to be rejected by the nation as a whole. Though many thousands of Jews came to faith in Jesus as Messiah, the leadership as a whole continued rejection, to the point that the day came (as detailed in Acts chapter seven) when Stephen was martyred! The very Jewish men who picked up stones to kill Stephen laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul, who totally approved of this stoning.

This event caused a great persecution, which caused the believing Jews to be scattered outside of Jerusalem, into surrounding regions of Judea and Samaria. And according to Acts chapter eight as Saul zealously "ravaged the Church dragging men off to put them in prison" those who had been scattered went about preaching the word! I think its interesting to notice the results of persecution. It caused a scattering! A taking forth of the word into the very areas that Jesus had told them to go into!

And so the witnessing for Jesus began to move outside the borders of Jerusalem, into Judea and Samaria, just as Jesus had told them! But shortly thereafter, this Saul who had been riding throughout Judea and Samaria persecuting the believing Jews, was knocked off his horse on the way to Damascus one day. And he came "face to face" if you will to the very One he was persecuting — the Lord Jesus Christ! This "meeting" changed the focus of his zealousness. And as early as Acts chapter nine, we can read about God's call on this man's life. God gave a vision to a man named Ananias:

Acts 9

11 And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul..."

...15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel..."

Now, instead of persecuting those who had been preaching the Gospel, Paul began preaching the Gospel of Jesus the Christ. This was a real turning point for the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And many years hereafter, even while the re-offer of the

kingdom was still being made to the Nation of Israel, God was sending Paul also to the Gentiles.

So the question is: How would this be done? On the one hand you have Jews who would need to be given one facet of the Gospel, and Gentiles who would need to begin at a whole other point in believing. So how would Paul do this?

Thankfully we have record of exactly how Paul did this. And what a good example it is! We know that Paul spent up to three years in Asia Minor, ministering to the people there. Later while journeying through this area once again, he desired to encourage and warn the elders there in Ephesus, so he called for them. This is what he said to them:

Acts 20

18 ... "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

He did not shrink from declaring anything that was profitable for them. He did it publically from house to house. And he testified to both Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) alike. He goes on to say:

Acts 20

24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

Of course, when dealing with the Gentiles throughout his journeys, he would have to begin with the gospel of the grace of God, the facet of the gospel wherein an unsaved person is saved by grace through faith! But he didn't stop there! Keep reading:

25 And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will see my face no more.

After initially solemnly testifying to them gospel of the grace of God (for by grace you have been saved), Paul followed that with *the preaching the kingdom*, which is sometimes referred to as "the gospel of the glory of Christ according to II Co. 4:4! And look at how he accounted the combination of these two facets of the gospel messages:

26 Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

The Gospel of the Grace of God followed by the preaching of the kingdom equals to "the whole purpose of God."

This is good for us to think about for a moment. I think we should ask ourselves a few questions concerning these things. For example:

- Can a person receive the gospel of the glory of Christ, apart from the gospel of the grace of God? Of course not! The gospel of grace is the very foundation laid, which is Jesus Christ. But once the foundation is laid we must be careful how we build upon that foundation.
- Should a person be given the gospel of the grace of God, and it not be followed by the gospel of the glory of Christ? No! The gospel of the glory of Christ is the very reason (given by God) of why we are saved! It is for the fulfillment of the purpose for our creation, because the salvation by grace through faith does not ensure the fulfillment of our created purpose, it just opens the door to it. This would be similar to the way it was for Adam and Eve, *prior* to the fall, even at that point they had to prove themselves worthy through obedience before they could rule.
- How can we just give one part of the gospel and not be concerned with the whole purpose of God? How can we “be fruitful and multiply and fill” the heavens (in our case), if we are not concerned with both facets of the gospel as we WALK about this earth in the works that God has prepared for us to do from beforehand?

So we can plainly see that that GOSPEL message (the good news of Jesus the Christ) has two facets to it:

- The gospel of the grace of God, and
- The gospel of the glories of Christ.

It is not two gospels; but one gospel with two facets!
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So we have seen an example of how Paul ministered in the ministry that God had given him: to bear His name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. Now let's go to another example and catch a little more in the way of details in Paul's ministry. I think these details are good things for us to understand as we also bear the Name of Jesus to Gentiles and kings and children of God. Remember that at this time in Paul's ministry the re-offer of the kingdom was still open to the Jews. And so, according to the way and means of ministry at this time, he followed the prescribed set order according to this verse in Romans:

Romans 1

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

And so when Paul arrived at the city of Corinth, his first order of business was to go to the Jews!

Acts 18

4 And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. 5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul

began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles." 7 And he departed from there and went to the house of a certain man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue.

Can't you just see this. Paul shakes out his garment and claims freedom from the responsibility of their rejection (he had done his part), and leaves the synagogue, and stays with a man 'whose house was next to the synagogue'.

And according to vs. 11 of Acts 18, Paul settled there in Corinth for a period of a year and 6 months teaching the Word of God among them.

Years later, in his first letter to the Church at Corinth, he recalls to them how he initially approached them:

I Corinthians 2

1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

So here, in the city of Corinth, when the Jews rejected the message, Paul then began devoting his time to the Gentiles, initially bringing them the gospel of the grace of God — Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But it didn't take him a year and a half to preach the gospel of grace to them. In fact, we can see in this same chapter that as soon as he preached the simple message (the one that was not with superiority of speech or wisdom), he soon was preaching a message among the mature. Look what it says:

I Corinthians 2

4 And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; 9 but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

Once they were saved, apparently, Paul fairly quickly began speaking to them of the mysteries concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

And so we are witnesses to the faithfulness with which Paul executed his ministry, knowing how to proceed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To the Jew first, the message of the glories of Christ, then at their rejection, he turned to the Gentiles with the initial message of the gospel of the grace of God.

I am afraid this can be confusing to us. Perhaps not, but perhaps! What is our role in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ? And how do we know how to do it.

One thing that comes to my mind is something that someone said to me recently with regards to this. She said: It is sheep who beget sheep; shepherds don't beget sheep! Perhaps that is why Jesus was intimately concerned about the "lost sheep within the house of Israel" when He came to His own people. He is the Good Shepherd, isn't He? And so...at the final point of His ministry on earth, He sent out His disciples to make more sheep...to make disciples from all the nations, not just Israel.

And we have the prescribed way to do this, as laid out by Paul: First we preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Because it is *the death* of Jesus, by which we are saved unto eternal life. Nothing more. Not His burial, not His resurrection, not His ascension into the heavens. He *died* for our sins! Period. Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed. Period. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved! Period. Faith in nothing more than His death gives us our spiritual birth, our being brought into the Family of God. And it is through His Death that we are saved for eternity.

And although Paul initially preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he didn't stop there! The goal of Paul's teaching was not just to get them saved! Once these Gentiles were saved, he continued his work amongst them and gave them the whole counsel of God's Word. And so jumping ahead several chapters Paul then explains the second facet of the gospel:

I Corinthians 15

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved [literally "by which also you *are being saved*], **if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,** [We have seen that in chapter two, haven't we. But now we see again that Paul continued with the *whole council of God's Word*. With the foundation laid concerning the death of Christ according to the Scriptures, now we see the second facet coming into play:] **4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...**

Let's stay on this passage for a moment: Look at v. 1 and 2. So then Paul had *preached to them*, the second facet of the gospel which they *also* received, and in which they *also* stand, by which *also they were being saved* (present tense) *if* they held fast the word which Paul had continued his preaching (**that He was buried, and was raised from the dead**)...unless they believed in vain...unless their belief in the simple gospel message in

vain (not meaning that “it didn’t take”, but rather, meaning that the initial facet of the gospel *is not brought to its goal* which is the same as the goal or purpose of our creation. Because apart from RESURRECTION LIFE, there will be no fulfillment of the PURPOSE for our salvation.

I’d like to take a more in-depth look at this! Otherwise I am afraid we might miss something that would be valuable to us to understand even at the present time. Paul has very succinctly laid out the distinctions between the two facets of the Gospel; and there is good reason to make sure that these distinctions are clear. For the most part, people today do not understand these distinctions, and that causes a plethora of problems when it comes to anyone in the Church witnessing for Jesus. But I would like for us to put our current problems on hold for a few minutes, and focus on a very critical problem in Paul’s day, and one that he begins to hit head on here! (We’ll get back to our problems very shortly.)

After laying all of this out for the Church at Corinth in this first letter, right at this point in chapter 15, Paul begins to name the eye-witnesses of Jesus after His resurrection. Let’s pick it up again in v. 4:

I Corinthians 15

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

Paul spends some time here offering eye-witness proof of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. And I wondered why this seemed so vitally important to Paul in this letter. Perhaps it will help to see the problem of Paul’s day (as we have a similar problem, just a little different). Paul went on to explain to them that Christ’s resurrection had widely been taught there in Corinth. After all, he himself had spent one and half years there. They had been well-given the whole gospel of Jesus. And then he says:

I Corinthians 15

12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

In other words, to preach His Death would suffice to get people saved! Sure enough. But you can’t stop there with just getting people saved! And evidently some had been satisfied to believe in Christ’s death, but not willing to go further and believe in His resurrection. And if that were the case, then Paul says that the preaching of His death would in itself be in vain...because there would be no reaching the goal of salvation, the goal of our faith!

If there is no resurrection to LIFE, how can anyone then fulfill their created position? A person cannot RULE DEAD!

Paul goes on to explain what this false teaching has done within the Church at Corinth. It has caused Paul's correct message to become skewed in the eyes of their understanding. He says:

I Corinthians 15 (continuing)

15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

If what the people are saying (those who are teaching that there is no resurrection from the dead) were true, then Paul would be found to be a false witness of God, because Paul had taught that God raised Jesus from the dead. And if God did not do this, then the dead are not raised, and Christ could not have been raised, and if this were all true, then faith in the death of Jesus (salvation by grace through faith) becomes worthless, because to what end would it be.

And not only all of this would be true, if the truth was that God did not raise Jesus from the dead, but it would also be true that we would still be in our sins! Why would that be the case? Because if Christ were not raised from the dead, then He would not be in the heavens, acting as our High Priest, with His blood on the Mercy Seat in the heavens, cleansing us from our ongoing sins. A dismal picture! And eventually the end result of this type of preaching would come to this logical conclusion:

I Corinthians 15 (continuing)

32...If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.

And the logical result of all this would be:

I Corinthians 15 (continuing)

18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

What a sad state of affairs —

- if Christ were not raised from the dead;
- if there was no resurrection
- if our Passover Lamb had been sacrificed, and that was the end of the story!

We would be, of all men, most to be pitied! But Alleluia! That is not the WHOLE TRUTH! That is not the WHOLE GOSPEL; it is not the whole council of God's Word. There is more! Paul corrects this "stopped-short-message" with the remainder of the truth:

I Corinthians 15 (continuing)

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die,

- Remember this death?
- Remember the two trees in the Garden?
- Remember the choice between the Tree of Life, and the “tree of death” if I may say it like that?
- Remember the statement, “When you eat...You will surely die!” And the deception, “You will surely not die!”
- Remember death means being separated from God and His Glory.
- Remember their becoming naked (losing their covering of glory) separated now from the purpose of their creation, that to rule in glory with the garments of Splendor and Majesty in the very image and Likeness of Him Who created man?

In Adam all die...Again, a very dismal picture! If it were to remain there, then man is to be most pitied! But the story in the Garden did not stop there! There was, in God's Economy, the Lamb that was slain from before the foundation of the World, Who would come through the seed of the woman (and as we have already seen the Seed of Abraham). In the economy of God, there were those created in Christ Jesus to do WORKS which God prepared for them to do beforehand! And in order to do this...in order to fulfill God's created purpose for mankind, MAN HAD TO LIVE! And so we see that though:

I Corinthians 15 (continuing)

22 ... as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits,

Christ, the first fruits. Wasn't He the Seed (of Abraham)? The Seed that died, and was placed in the ground? And wasn't He the One raised on the third day, the very day of the Feast of FIRST FRUITS, when the Barley sheaf was waved. The One raised first, with MANY to follow in the resurrection?

And by The Seed of the gospel being planted in us, (the foundation laid that is the only foundation that can be laid, Jesus Christ), we can have LIFE. Not just life in the spiritual sense of our bodies being in the ground and our spirits present with God for all of eternity, but LIFE in another sense! LIFE in the Coming Age, if we would but believe it and ACT according to that belief. This One who came up out of the ground, shall make all who die in Him alive!

But how and why will all of this be done? Let's keep reading:

I Corinthians 15 (continuing)

23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father...

OH!!! It's all connected to the kingdom! The fruit that Jesus bore in His death will be raised, for the purpose of filling His kingdom in the heavens. At the end of which time (at the end of 1,000 years) He will have abolished all rule and authority and power. Look what Paul says next:

I Corinthians 15 (continuing)

24 then comes the end [the end of the 1,000years] when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

Then a parenthetical statement:

25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

For He must reign...this Jesus, the Second man, the Last Adam, together with His Wife, who was taken out of His Body must reign. Raised from the DEAD, covered in glory, clothed in Splendor and majesty, these WILL REIGN! Until He has put all enemies under His feet, even DEATH!

Yes, at the end of the 1,000 years (at the end of the time when those who had believed and had done what was necessary in order to share in Christ's glory, who now has shared in His age-lasting glory) at the end of this time, this Day of the Lord, NOW the last enemy to be abolished can be abolished — DEATH. Now at the end of the 1,000 years Jesus can wipe away the tears from the eyes of His lazy and slothful servants, who had been cast out into the outer darkness 1,000 years prior, where there had been weeping and gnashing of teeth. Now their tears can be dried, and the kingdom of the Son offered to the Father that the Throne of the Father and the Throne of the Lamb can become One Throne, and God can be all in all.

This is the message that Paul preached to the Church at Corinth.

This is the message...the ministry of reconciliation that has been give to us to fulfill. So that we can bear fruit, multiply, and fill the heavens with people who first heard and believed the gospel of the grace of God, and then who heard and believed and acted in accord with their belief the Gospel of the glory of Christ. Saved people who would know and understand that Jesus DIED for their sins, that they might LIVE. And the only way they can LIVE is to be obedient in the work that God has created us to do, to WALK in that work! And the whole purpose of God must be understood correctly in order for it to be given correctly.

If we were to look around in Christendom today, we would see such confusion in the Church concerning the correct way to evangelize! In some ways it is more convoluted

than the situation was in Corinth. At least they understood the distinctions between the fact that Jesus died according to the Scripture (our Passover Lamb has been crucified) and the fact that he was buried and rose from the dead, according to the Scripture. Their problem was that they were just focusing on one facet of the gospel and not the whole gospel.

What gets confusing today is that most Christians believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. And in believing in that, it LOOKS like they are preaching the whole purpose of God, but they are not! Because there is no distinction made between the two facets of the gospel, the whole is lumped together, but it is lumped together simply for the purpose of getting someone saved. The goal then becomes that when they die, they will go to heaven.

The problem with that is that they bring over the parts of the good news that have to do with LIFE in the coming age, and mix it all up with LIFE in the eternal ages, combining it all into the free gift, leaving out the fruitful work that we are to do in order to receive our inheritance. Works become a bad word in those communities of believers, with virtually no understanding of the reason for man's creation or salvation.

In this, there is no understanding of the Scriptural distinctions between the two facets of the Gospel: the gospel of the grace of God and the gospel of the glories of Christ.

On the other hand, we have those who understand the kingdom and the good news concerning the saved, and they become so focused on their own personal growth, that they are not being fruitful and multiplying, thereby not filling up the numbers that perhaps God would give them to add to their numbers! I have even been personally told by a person in one of these types of groups, that really they (meaning the people in their group) have grown so deep in the Word that it would be pretty impossible that anyone could be added to their group, because they are so far into the depths, that they would hardly be able to go back and help someone grasp what they have grasped!

It's a mess out there! So can we know how the spreading of the Gospel is to be done? Can we come into an understanding of how God wants us to do this? You bet we can!

We have got to understand that there are TWO FACETS of God's Word, and if we are to be fruitful, and increase in numbers, filling the realm of the heavenly kingdom, then we must be about the work of making disciples. That could mean laboring in a person's life wherein someone else has planted, the foundation has already been laid. And now you tell them about the reason they have been saved, and about the resurrection and why, and the JSOC, and rewards or loss thereof... going from there.

Or it could mean telling someone who is not saved that Jesus died on the cross. He died for them, and they can become part of His family and receive magnificent promised, but first you just have to believe!

I am not saying to go start knocking on doors. Or taking a class on evangelism explosion. Or standing on a street corner with a megaphone in hand. I am not talking about this. But what about your world? Your sphere of influence? Who has the Lord put on your heart? What about your family, your children, your neighbors, your workplace! There may be some potential sheep there, or some potential disciples there.

And what about the remotest parts of the earth. God may not have called you or me there, but I have seen him call some people there to Timbuktu. It is His intention for His gospel to get out! And who better to give it than a person who understands the whole purpose of God for man! We must do it! We must not shirk it! We'll continue in this with my next message tomorrow.