

# Go Tell the World



Week Thirteen

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Matthew 28:19, 20



See videos at  
[www.inversebible.org/SDAH13-a](http://www.inversebible.org/SDAH13-a)

## THE ADVENT MISSION

Studying the Bible correctly is more important than simply getting the right answers. In math classes, students are graded more on the process they used than their answer. It sometimes took our church decades to adopt certain beliefs or practices because God wanted us to reach the conclusion the right way.

Adventist mission is based on the Great Commission in Matthew 28. This chapter emphasizes each Christian's responsibility to share the gospel. Our first official missionary, J.N. Andrews, was sent to Switzerland about ten years after our church was founded. Michael Chehowski had previously done some unofficial missionary work but hadn't told any of the new believers about the Seventh-day Adventist church organization. Some of those believers learned about it and sent word to Battle Creek, and Andrews went with the commendation that "we sent you the ablest man in all our ranks" (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5 [1990], 436). Andrews had lost his wife two years prior, but went with his son Charles, then twelve, and daughter Mary, then sixteen. Both children helped start a publishing house and an Adventist periodical in French.

By the end of the century, missionaries were going to the South Pacific, Africa, Asia, and South America. This work was not easy; they had to travel by ship, communication with the church in America was slow, and they often had to build the membership and church building from scratch. Stories about these pioneers' fortitude are truly inspiring. There's still a great need for missionaries today. Could God be calling you?



## **inScribe**

Write out Matthew 28:19, 20 from the translation of your choice. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What kind of shortcuts do we try to take to make Jesus' commission to take the gospel to the whole world easier?

What are ways we can fulfill the gospel commission at home?



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## A CALL INTO UNENTERED AREAS

The early Advent believers sought to be faithful to the Bible in all they did, and this devotion drove the church's mission forward. Compelled by a desire to see the church grow, James White published an article in *The Review and Herald* in 1852 saying some of the brethren should consider moving west to Iowa. Several families answered the call and moved from New England and New York, where a large community of believers was located. The church continued to expand across the U.S. in the following years, and the first missionary went overseas in 1874.

The church was initially reluctant to go overseas, but once they committed to it, the small group of only 3,500 showed a remarkable dedication to reaching the world. Missionaries traveled to South America, Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific in the 1880s and 90s, establishing churches, schools, sanitariums, health food companies, and printing presses almost everywhere they went. This structured approach to mission is something the world church still benefits from today, and, amazingly, the church still owns many of the properties that were purchased back then. Though it was a very dangerous job and many who went never returned due to illnesses such as malaria or tuberculosis, the stories of how the work started in each continent and country are fascinating and uplifting.

What drove this small church was an understanding that the gospel needed to go to every nation. They initially believed that simply reach the immigrant populations in America and would sufficiently fulfill the gospel commission, but they eventually realized they actually had to physically go to every people group in the world. Leaving our comfort zones is never easy, nor is it easy to follow God's call into previously unreached areas, but the command in Matthew is simple: Go.

The book of Matthew contains several elements that would have been particularly hard for the Jewish audience in the first century to swallow. For example, Matthew is the only Gospel writer to mention the wise men who came from the East (Matt. 2:1), and he highlighted other Gentile believers as well, such as the Canaanite woman and the Roman centurion whom Jesus said had greater faith than anybody in Israel (Matt. 8:5–13; 15:21–28). Matthew's Gospel also begins with a mind-blowing genealogy that follows Jesus' ancestors all the way back to Abraham. This genealogy includes the names of four women with bad reputations: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Deceivers, a prostitute, Gentiles, and adulterers were all in Jesus' direct lineage at the very beginning of the book, and were all shunned by Jewish society. The decision to include their names must have been deliberate—a rebuke to Jewish exclusivity and an attempt to let the Jewish readers know that Jesus has room for all in His family.

Matthew begins his gospel showing us that Jesus includes everyone in His family; he concludes the book with the Great Commission, instructing us to share the gospel with all. Matthew's story of Jesus' ministry cannot be embraced without living the mission to take the gospel to all people.

REMOVING NATIONAL BOUNDARIES

It's interesting to note that after His resurrection, Jesus did not heal anyone else nor address another general audience. His own public ministry was completed at His death, and He took the time to give comfort and a few final instructions to His closest followers before ascending to heaven.

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus declared that He had been given “all authority... in heaven and on earth.” Notice that the authority was not given to the disciples directly. The authority was given to Jesus through His victory over the grave. Jesus promises that His disciples will not be left alone; His presence would be close beside them wherever they go (v. 20), and through His abiding presence, He gave them His power and authority. When the disciples would “go,” they would not need to fear. Even when going into the most hostile regions, they would go backed by the highest Authority and the greatest Power in the universe.

Matthew ends his book by sharing that the good news of Jesus is to be shared with everyone regardless of nationality or background, an idea that was offensive to first century Jews who had an exclusive, elitist mindset. The commission is to go to “all nations” (28:19), a call that is echoed from Matthew 24:14. This core value, of reaching all nations with the good news of Jesus, firmly established Christianity as the first international religious movement.

The gospel commission removes national boundaries and sets a precedent for a multi-racial, multi-ethnic movement. Regardless of nationality or ethnicity Christians are part of the same family and share the same missional vision (Gal. 3:28). When we're truly converted, the desire to share the gospel is a calling that cannot be ignored and cannot be restrained by any social divider. Ellen White echoed the Christian's outward focus in *The Desire of Ages*: “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary” ([1898], 195). Biblical Christianity removes the barriers of race, nationality and social customs. As Christians we are called to focus on a common mission; to make Jesus known to the world. In order to accomplish this we must overcome national and regional bigotry and demonstrate Christ-like love. We have a world to reach.

Matthew 28:20 introduces an essential aspect of the Great Commission: teaching. God wants us to love Him with our hearts *and* our minds (Mark 12:30). He wants us to pursue an intelligent faith. The process begins with discipleship, progresses to baptism, and continues to more teaching. Discipleship means teaching through mentorship and coaching. Notice that the new believer learns before baptism and continues learning after baptism. There is no true religious experience without instruction in major biblical truths.



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Why do you think Jesus didn't make any major public appearances after His resurrection?



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What relationship do the following verses have with Matthew 28:19, 20?

Luke 10:2

Luke 19:10

Matthew 24:14

2 Corinthians 5:17–20

Psalms 67

Romans 10:13–15

Revelation 14:6

Acts 10:34, 35

Acts 1:8

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What other verses come to mind in connection with the primary passage?

Review your memorized verse from Matthew 28:19, 20.

OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE

Jesus’ closing words in Matthew have echoed through the centuries, inspiring countless generations of Christians to live dangerously, risk all, and take the gospel to new frontiers. His travels covered a relatively small geographical area across distances that today would take less than two hours to drive, yet He instructed His disciples to go into every nation in the world. This instruction tells us that He expected His disciples to extend the work farther than He did during His earthly lifetime (see also John 14:12).

A leader is often judged by their legacy, and the work the church has accomplished since Jesus left shows the enduring impact He continues to have today. The mission work that has taken place through the centuries is one evidence of the power behind the message. Countless sacrifices have been made, many giving their very lives, to push the gospel into new and unreached areas.

Jesus spent a lot of time in public ministry, but He spent even more time simply living with His disciples, teaching them, and preparing them for this global mission. Through the ministry of discipleship Jesus demonstrated the importance of succession planning. It is important to train and equip others, who may have less experience or natural talent, to function as future leaders within the movement. In a sense, the church is running a relay race in which every runner needs to prepare to pass the baton of responsibility to the next runner. Perhaps the most important thing that successful church-planters, missionaries, evangelists, administrators, and local church leaders can do is share responsibility with the next generation and mentor them in the work.

We must never forget that the work entrusted to us is not about human achievement. Our work is the work of the heart. Jesus declared in Matthew 22:37 that the greatest commandment is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” We’re to love God with our whole being, which should remind us that knowledge alone isn’t enough; we need a daily renewal of our hearts so we can faithfully share God’s Word. This daily baptism of the Holy Spirit results in a very intimate relationship with God—a close relationship built on trust and loving companionship. As our trust in God deepens, we will be inspired to live on the edge. The disciples certainly gained boldness as they traveled to new frontiers in Europe, Africa, and Asia with all but one of them dying a martyr’s death.

What risks is God calling you to take? How is God calling you to engage in His work, whether at home or in a distant place? I urge you not to delay, even if His call takes you out of your comfort zone and into a difficult area. He *will* provide for you. Our church was founded with a total commitment to Jesus, His mission, and His message, and the work will end with no less commitment. God is looking for people who are totally dedicated to Him. Will you step out?



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Meditate on the primary passage again and look for where Jesus is.



What are some ways we can begin small when it comes to going and sharing the gospel?

What are some excuses we tend to make when we read the Great Commission? What excuses do you make?

What are some ways to find missionary opportunities, whether it be in your community or overseas?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

What is He saying to you personally through these texts?

Prayer Response:



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Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?

After this week's study of the  
chapter, what must you change  
in your life?

What are some practical  
applications you must make in  
your school, family, workplace,  
and church life?



Read more inSight from the  
Spirit of Prophecy at  
[www.inverseible.org/SDAH13-7](http://www.inverseible.org/SDAH13-7)

## EVERY MEMBER WORKING

"The Saviour's commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ.

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.' Revelation 22:17. Everyone who hears is to repeat the invitation. Whatever one's calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals. To them he can communicate the instruction received from his Lord. Ministry does not consist alone in preaching. Those minister who relieve the sick and suffering, helping the needy, speaking words of comfort to the desponding and those of little faith. Nigh and afar off are souls weighed down by a sense of guilt. It is not hardship, toil, or poverty that degrades humanity. It is guilt, wrongdoing. This brings unrest and dissatisfaction. Christ would have His servants minister to sin-sick souls.

"The disciples were to begin their work where they were. The hardest and most unpromising field was not to be passed by. So every one of Christ's workers is to begin where he is. In our own families may be souls hungry for sympathy, starving for the bread of life. There may be children to be trained for Christ. There are heathen at our very doors. Let us do faithfully the work that is nearest. Then let our efforts be extended as far as God's hand may lead the way. The work of many may appear to be restricted by circumstances; but, wherever it is, if performed with faith and diligence it will be felt to the uttermost parts of the earth. Christ's work when upon earth appeared to be confined to a narrow field, but multitudes from all lands heard His message. God often uses the simplest means to accomplish the greatest results. It is His plan that every part of His work shall depend on every other part, as a wheel within a wheel, all acting in harmony. The humblest worker, moved by the Holy Spirit, will touch invisible chords, whose vibrations will ring to the ends of the earth, and make melody through eternal ages.

"But the command, 'Go ye into all the world,' is not to be lost sight of. We are called upon to lift our eyes to the 'regions beyond.' Christ tears away the wall of partition, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle which their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He teaches us to look upon every needy soul as our brother, and the world as our field." (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* [1898], 822, 823.)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



Our early missionaries went to unreached countries with an unpopular message. How does this compare to our vision of missionary work today?

Why do you think we see fewer missionaries in our church today?

How does connecting God's power with the Great Commission affect your understanding of our ability to fulfill it?

Do you think the disciples understood the scope of the commission when it was given? Why or why not?

Do you think the church has done well with the teaching part of the Great Commission both before and after baptism? Why or why not? What are some ways we could improve?

What role does the local church play in the Great Commission?

How does the Great Commission apply to the evangelists and pastors? To the laypeople?