

# **CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

## **GOLDEN TEXT**

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”. (John 3:16)

## **USEFUL PRACTICE**

God's missionary nature can be seen in making his only Son a missionary, and the Church the successor of this sublime task.

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

**Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:17-20**

### **Isaiah 61**

1The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

### **Luke 4**

17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the

prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- I) **To reveal** the missionary God in the New Testament;
- II) **To show** Missions in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles;
- III) **To emphasize** Mission carried out in the Letters and in Revelation.

### Introduction

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus was the first missionary sent by the Father (John 20:21). Because he was sent by God, he brought along a rescue plan for humanity that involves all of his followers. Our Lord said to his first disciples, "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matt. 4:19). Therefore, we can say that the New Testament is a work of a missionary nature from beginning to end, where the Gospels, the book of Acts, the Letters and Revelation are instruments of true missionary work.

#### **I – THE MISSIONARY GOD REVEALED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

**1. The Bible shows a missionary God.** The Holy Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is an eminently missionary book because its inspiration emanates from a missionary God, the one who sends: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21; John 3:16). In the Old Testament, Israel was the instrument used by Him to achieve the divine objective, but Israel did not achieve it. However, from the New Testament onwards, God began to use the Church to fulfill this purpose, showing his great and sublime love to the world.

**2. A missionary perspective on the New Testament.** The teaching of the New Testament is completely missionary. Because the people of Israel failed in their missionary purpose, God organized a new people, the Church of Christ, so that it could carry out God's universal purpose in redeeming human beings. This is why Our Lord, the Only Begotten Son of God, was sent into the world, thus becoming the missionary par excellence (John 3:16). No wonder, Scottish missionary David Livingstone said, "God had an only Son and He made Him a missionary".

**3. The Church in the light of this revelation.** In the light of this biblical revelation, that of a missionary God in the pages of the New Testament, the Church of Christ has an unfinished task: to announce the Gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:19). This task began with God, who sent his Son with the same mission, which passed on to the New Testament Church and, currently, continues as the primary mission of the church today.

## **II – MISSIONS IN THE GOSPELS AND IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

**1. In the Gospels.** According to the Gospels, Jesus is the one sent by God to save and make his people a missionary agency. His ministry was marked entirely by missionary actions, demonstrating much love and compassion while announcing the message of salvation to all people (Isa. 61:1, 2). This missionary nature can also be seen in the formation of the Gospels as they were produced under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that people could know the Lord Jesus (John 8:32,36). It is no coincidence that each of the Gospels closes with the mandate of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21-23). This is their missionary nature.

**2. In the Book of Acts: the missionaries Philip and Peter.** In the Christian church, the first Christians and leaders had the mission to spread salvation to all people at all times. In this sense, Philip was the first cross-cultural missionary of the Early Church, sent to the road to Gaza, an ancient region of the Philistines, where he encountered a eunuch, a high official of the queen of the Ethiopians. After announcing the Gospel to him, he baptized him in water (Acts 8:26-39). Another important episode was when the apostle Peter recognized that, for God, all human beings are targets of divine love, making it clear that his message is addressed to all people, regardless of their nationality (Acts 10:34,35; 11:17,18) .

**3. In the Book of Acts: the missionaries Paul and Barnabas.** The apostle Paul, from persecutor of Christians, became the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15, 16; 3:8; 1 Tim 2:7; Titus 2:11). In Acts, we see that, through his ministry, the first church extended to all peoples, cultures and nations known at that time. In this context, we also have Barnabas who, after being sent by the apostles to Antioch, to shepherd those who converted through preaching to those dispersed from Jerusalem due to persecution, was sent by the church in Antioch, together with Paul, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the mission field. Thus, we can affirm that in Antioch was the first missionary church of a gentile nature (Acts 13:1-4).

## **III – THE MISSION CARRIED OUT IN THE LETTERS AND IN REVELATION**

**1. In the Pauline Letters.** The apostle Paul wrote his Epistles as a missionary. His missionary objective was to instruct, in doctrinal and practical matters, the churches he planted. For example, the Letter to the Romans is a letter in which the universality of sin and the process of salvation are taught; the Letter to the Ephesians brings the unity of the church from the fall of “the dividing wall of hostility” between Jews and Gentiles through Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:14); The Letters to Timothy and Titus deal specifically with qualifications for the calling of new leaders of planted churches, such as directing the affairs of a local church.

**2. In the General Letters.** The General Epistles give a strong testimony about Missions. For example: the Letter to the Hebrews demonstrates the discontinuity between the Old and New covenants, emphasizing the new one as “better” (Heb. 7:19,22), which, once accepted, God's mission will take us to the center of God's will, to do His will as He pleases (Heb. 13:20); The Letter of James contains practical wisdom for living the Gospel of Christ. And finally, Peter's Letters assure our position as God's people and the hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus.

**3. In Revelation.** In this book, the Lord Jesus reveals to the apostle John the conclusion of the long journey and the destiny of the entire human race. The seven churches located in the province of Asia Minor in chapters 2 and 3 should be seen as “missionary churches.” In this sense, the apostle John reports that God is interested in the salvation of all men (Rev. 5:9, 10; 7:9; 11:15).

## **CONCLUSION**

The New Testament clearly shows the way in which God planned the redemption of fallen humanity through the sublime missionary task. For this purpose, He sent His only Son who, with the price of blood, paid for the sin of men of all tribes, languages, peoples and nations, constituting them as his collaborators in the work of redemption of the entire Creation, fallen and prisoner of Satan. Now, if Missions are born from the heart of God, it must be in the heart of those who love missionary work.