

# Israel's Great Commission & Ours

A 10-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

## About This Series

This series examines the so-called “Great Commissions” of Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, and Acts 1 in the light of right division, demonstrating that they are Israel’s commissions — not the marching orders of the Church, the Body of Christ today. Keith Blades walks through five key issues that identify these commissions as belonging to God’s program with Israel: the gospel they contain, the time frame for their fulfillment, the signs and ordinances they involve, the nations they address, and the prophetic scriptures they fulfill. The series concludes with two lessons devoted to the Body of Christ’s own great commission — our ambassadorship as set forth by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5 and Ephesians 3 and 6.



## Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 1	Setting the stage — right division and why the Great Commissions are Israel’s, not ours
Lesson 2	God’s Word laid out in order — the dispensational flow from Genesis to Revelation
Lesson 3	Issue 1: The Gospel of the commissions is the Gospel of the Kingdom, not the Gospel of grace
Lesson 4	Issue 2 (part 1): The time frame of the commissions belongs to Israel’s program
Lesson 5	Issue 2 (part 2): The order of the commissions reflects Israel’s prophetic program
Lesson 6	Issue 3: Water baptism and the signs of the commissions pertain to Israel’s program
Lesson 7	Issues 4 & 5: The Gentile nations and the prophetic fulfillment of the commissions
Lesson 8	Issue 5 (cont.): 1 Peter 2 and the remnant’s influence among the Gentile nations
Lesson 9	Our ambassadorship, Part 1 — the gospel of reconciliation to men (2 Corinthians 5)

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 10	Our ambassadorship, Part 2 — displaying God's wisdom in heavenly places (Ephesians 3)

## Lesson Summaries

L1

**Setting the Stage** *Right Division and Why the Great Commissions Are Israel's*

- The so-called “Great Commissions” (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, Acts 1) are Israel's commissions — not the marching orders for the Church, the Body of Christ today
- The series assumes familiarity with right division (2 Timothy 2:15) and the distinction between God's program with Israel and the present dispensation of Gentile grace
- Those unfamiliar with right division are encouraged to first study Keith's foundational series on rightly dividing God's Word
- We are not commissionless — the Body of Christ has its own great commission found in the epistles of the Apostle Paul (Romans–Philemon)
- The series briefly introduces five issues that clearly identify the Great Commissions as Israel's, then turns to our own ambassadorship as believers today

L2

**The Dispensational Framework** *Time Past, But Now & To Come*

- God has laid out his Word in the exact order he intends — it is not to be systematized, rearranged, or forced into man-made theological categories
- Genesis through Acts 8: God's time-past program with the nation Israel
- Acts 9 (Paul's conversion): God raises up a brand new apostle, suspends his program with Israel, and ushers in the dispensation of Gentile grace
- Romans through Philemon: Paul's epistles — our direct curriculum for this dispensation of grace
- Hebrews through Revelation: written for and about the resumption and fulfillment of God's program with Israel
- Right dividing means knowing which portion of God's Word belongs to which program — and handling it accordingly (2 Timothy 2:15)
- Christians who try to fulfill the Great Commissions today are sincerely out of line with God's program — not living in harmony with this dispensation of grace

L3

**Issue 1: The Gospel of the Commissions** *The Gospel of the Kingdom — Not the Gospel of Grace*

- The Gospel proclaimed in the Great Commissions is the Gospel of the Kingdom — not the Gospel of reconciliation that Paul preaches for this

dispensation

- The Church, the Body of Christ, was not the issue during the Lord's earthly ministry or in the opening chapters of Acts
- No prophetic passages are being fulfilled today in the dispensation of grace (Romans 9–11) — the commissions belong to Israel's prophetic program
- The Gospel of the Kingdom: repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand — Israel's long-awaited kingdom being proclaimed as near
- God is forming a new creation — the Church, the Body of Christ — out of believing Jews and Gentiles alike, with a distinct gospel not proclaimed in those commissions
- Christians beginning to grasp right division sometimes stumble at the Great Commissions — but the answer is dispensational clarity, not compromise

L4

### **Issue 2 (Part 1): The Time Frame** *The Commissions Belong to Israel's Prophetic Program*

- The Lord originally commissioned the apostles to preach the same message as John the Baptist: repentance and the kingdom of heaven at hand
- Matthew 10: the Lord mapped out the program for the apostles until he returned and established the kingdom — cities of Israel, signs following
- Mark 16:15: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" — the gospel is still the Gospel of the Kingdom
- Matthew 24: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached among all nations for a witness" — this is a fulfillment issue for Israel's last days, not today
- There are five aspects of the one commissioning the Lord gave during the 40 days between resurrection and ascension, recorded across all four Gospels and Acts 1
- The bulk of those commissioning details find their fulfillment in the day of the Lord's wrath — still future, on Israel's time schedule

L5

### **Issue 2 (Part 2): The Order of the Commissions** *Jerusalem First — A Matter of Program, Not Practicality*

- The commissions specify a geographic order — Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth — which reflects Israel's program, not a practical strategy
- The children of Israel are filled first — the Gentiles are dealt with in connection with Israel's last days and the day of the Lord's wrath
- Originally the apostles were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel — Gentiles and Samaritans were excluded from the early scope
- The time frame for the Gentiles to hear under these commissions is the day of the Lord's wrath — the final seven years of Israel's program
- God interrupted his program with Israel when he raised up the Apostle Paul — these commissions were not rescinded, they were paused by a dispensational interruption
- Today no one can legitimately fulfill those commissions — God neither expects nor wants the Body of Christ to attempt to do so

L6

### **Issue 3: Water Baptism and the Signs** *Ordinances and Signs That Belong to Israel's Program*

- Matthew 28:19: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" — this is Israel's commission, not a commission for the Body of Christ today
- Water baptism as commanded in the Great Commissions is a sign pertaining to Israel's program, not to this dispensation of grace
- The signs associated with the commissions (tongues, healing, casting out demons, handling serpents) are sign-gifts belonging to Israel's last days — not operative today
- God is not administering this dispensation of grace with the rudiments of Israel's world: water baptism, physical circumcision, sabbath keeping, or feast observances
- We are under grace — not law — and the absence of these signs does not indicate a failure of faith but a proper understanding of dispensational distinctions

L7

### **Issues 4 & 5: The Gentile Nations and Prophetic Fulfillment** *The Nations in the Commissions Belong to Israel's Program*

- Issue 4: The nations appearing in the Great Commissions are being dealt with in connection with Israel's program — not the present dispensation of grace
- In the day of the Lord's wrath, the Gentile nations are taught submission to Israel's program — hence the inclusion of water baptism, calendar observances, and law-keeping
- Issue 5: The Great Commissions fulfill what the Old Testament prophets foretold about the day of the Lord and Israel's last days — they are prophetically scripted events
- The fifth and final issue establishing Israel's ownership of these commissions: they align precisely with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the prophets' descriptions of the day of the Lord
- With all five issues in view, it is unmistakable that Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, and Acts 1 are Israel's commissions — to be fulfilled in Israel's program

L8

### **Issue 5 (Continued): 1 Peter 2** *The Remnant's Witness Among the Gentile Nations*

- 1 Peter 2 addresses the remnant of Israel scattered among the Gentile nations — modeling the influence and witness role they will have in the day of the Lord
- Peter instructs: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles" (v.12) — an impact and influence concept tied to the commissioning
- God's wisdom in having this epistle written with the remnant in a scattered state — it parallels the exact situation the remnant will face when Israel's program resumes
- The remnant's identity (1 Peter 2:9): a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation — fulfilling the prophetic description of Hosea and Exodus

- This lesson closes the five issues establishing Israel's ownership of the Great Commissions, and prepares for the turn to our own ambassadorship today

L9

### **Our Ambassadorship, Part 1** *The Gospel of Reconciliation to Men (2 Corinthians 5)*

- The Body of Christ is not commissionless — we have our own commissions in our epistles: primarily 2 Corinthians 5, Ephesians 3, and Ephesians 6
- Our commissioning is described as an “ambassadorship” — we function as ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20)

#### **Two Aspects of Our Ambassadorship**

- Part 1: With men — the gospel of reconciliation, beseeching men to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18–21)
- Part 2: In the heavenly places — displaying God's manifold wisdom before principalities and powers (Ephesians 3:9–10)
- Both aspects of our ambassadorship are founded upon the great dispensational change God has made — the reconciling of the world, the setting aside of Israel, the holding back of the day of wrath
- An ambassador who does not understand this dispensation cannot properly or adequately fulfill his ambassadorship — the foundation must be grasped first
- Paul defends his ambassadorship against charges of being “mad” or “craz” — the same dispensational message that made him a target will similarly challenge those who faithfully proclaim it today
- The message: God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing men's trespasses, holding back the day of wrath — be ye reconciled to God

L10

### **Our Ambassadorship, Part 2** *Displaying God's Wisdom in Heavenly Places (Ephesians 3)*

- The second aspect of our ambassadorship: making an impact in the heavenly places before principalities, powers, mights, and dominions (Ephesians 3:9–10)
- Paul describes being “an ambassador in bonds in connection with the mystery of the gospel” — wrestling against spiritual forces in the heavenly realm (Ephesians 6:19–20)
- By heralding the mystery of Christ and the fellowship of the mystery, we display God's manifold wisdom before the angelic realm — a privilege rarely understood
- This aspect of our ambassadorship is rarely noticed or treated, yet it stands as an equal commission alongside the gospel of reconciliation to men
- The practical application: revel in, talk about, and proclaim the mystery of the gospel — what God is doing in this dispensation of grace, why he brought it in, and what it accomplishes
- Ephesians 3:9–10: to make all men see the fellowship of the mystery, that through the Church the principalities and powers in heavenly places might know God's manifold wisdom

## Key Doctrinal Distinctions

### Day of the Lord's Wrath vs. Dispensation of Grace

The day of the Lord's wrath is the climactic period in God's program with Israel — the fifth and final installment of the fifth course of punishment, described throughout the Prophets and in the book of Revelation. It is the time when God imputes men's trespasses to them and judges the world for its iniquity. The dispensation of Gentile grace, by contrast, is the present age in which God holds back that wrath, reconciles the world unto himself through Christ, and does not impute men's trespasses unto them (2 Corinthians 5:19). Understanding this distinction is foundational to the entire series: the Great Commissions find their primary fulfillment in the day of the Lord's wrath, while our ambassadorship today operates within the dispensation of grace.

### The Gospel of the Kingdom vs. The Gospel of Reconciliation

The Gospel proclaimed in the Great Commissions is the Gospel of the Kingdom — the announcement that Israel's long-awaited Messianic kingdom is at hand. It required repentance from Israel, was accompanied by miraculous signs, and is directed toward Israel's prophetic program. The Gospel we proclaim today in this dispensation of grace is the Gospel of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18–21) and the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19) — not the fulfillment of promises made to Israel, but the revelation of a mystery hidden in God since before the world began. Confusing these two gospels leads to the misapplication of Israel's commissions as if they belong to the Body of Christ today.

### Israel's Commissions vs. Our Ambassadorship

Israel's Great Commissions (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, Acts 1) are given to Israel's apostles, operating in Israel's program, to be fulfilled primarily in the day of the Lord. They include the Gospel of the Kingdom, water baptism, signs, and a geographic order rooted in Israel's national program. Our ambassadorship, by contrast, is revealed through the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5 and Ephesians 3 and 6. It is built upon the dispensation of Gentile grace, carries no signs, involves no distinction between Jew and Gentile, and operates with the Gospel of reconciliation and the mystery of Christ. These are distinct commissions for distinct programs — they must never be conflated.

### Signs and Ordinances in Israel's Program vs. Our Walk of Grace

The commissions of the Gospel accounts come with attached signs (Mark 16:17–18) and ordinances (water baptism, Matthew 28:19) that are integral to Israel's program. These signs and ordinances were the rudiments of the world by which God administered his program with Israel under law. In this dispensation of grace, God is not administering things through such signs and ordinances. There is no water baptism, no circumcision, no sabbath observance, and no sign gifts operating today in line with this dispensation. Attempting to practice these things as if they carry the same authority as in Israel's program is a failure of right division, not an expression of greater faithfulness.

## Prophetic Program (Israel) vs. Mystery Program (Body of Christ)

God's program with Israel is a prophetic program — foretold in the Old Testament scriptures, unfolded in the Gospels and Acts, and yet to be fulfilled in the day of the Lord and the coming kingdom. The Great Commissions belong to this prophetic program. By contrast, the program in which we live today — the mystery — was hidden in God before the world began, never before revealed, and first disclosed to the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 3:1–9). No prophetic passages are being fulfilled today. The Body of Christ and its ambassadorship are mystery realities, not the continuation or extension of Israel's prophetic commission.

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## Key Scripture References

<b>Matthew 28:19–20</b>	The “Great Commission” — Israel's commission to baptize and teach all nations
<b>Mark 16:15</b>	“Go ye into all the world” — the Gospel of the Kingdom proclaimed to every creature
<b>Matthew 24:14</b>	“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached” — a witness in Israel's last days
<b>Acts 9</b>	Paul's conversion — the hinge point: Israel's program suspended, dispensation of grace begins
<b>2 Timothy 2:15</b>	Rightly dividing the word of truth — the foundational principle for understanding the commissions
<b>2 Corinthians 5:18–21</b>	The ministry and message of reconciliation — the foundation of our ambassadorship
<b>2 Corinthians 5:20</b>	“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ” — our commission described
<b>Ephesians 3:1–10</b>	The mystery of Christ revealed to Paul — our program and commission in the heavenly places
<b>Ephesians 6:19–20</b>	Paul as an ambassador in bonds — wrestling for the mystery of the gospel
<b>Romans 9–11</b>	God's dealings with Israel explained — set aside now, fullness yet to come
<b>1 Peter 2:9–12</b>	The remnant of Israel as a holy nation, influencing the Gentiles — a type of the commissions

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### “TIME PAST”

(Ephesians 2:11-12)

1 2 3 4 5

Creation  
Flood  
Abraham  
Moses  
LAW  
Crossing Jordan  
Davidic Cov.  
Elijah  
Elisha  
Assy/Baby Captivity

### “TO COME”

(Ephesians 2:7)

5

The Lord's Day of Wrath  
Christ Returns to Israel  
Kingdom of Heaven is Set Up

**ISRAEL** — “The Circumcision” “nigh unto God”

**GENTILES** — “Uncircumcision” “far off” “without God in the world”

**THE LAW serves as a “middle wall of partition.”**

### “BUT NOW”

(Ephesians 2:13)

DISPENSATION of the GRACE OF GOD

“Mystery of Christ” is Revealed

“BOTH ONE”  
“ONE NEW MAN”  
now being formed

### “TO COME”

(Ephesians 2:7)

Israel's Program is Resumed and Fulfilled

Christ Reappears to Paul

The Day of Pentecost

The Lord Jesus Christ

John the Baptist

The 12 Apostles

The Day of Pentecost

Christ Raptures Church

Genesis	Josh.	Jud. Ruth	1 Sam 1-16	1 Sam 16 to 1Kgs 12	1 Kgs 12 to 10:31	2 Kgs 10:32 to 16:20	2 Kgs 17:1 to 25:30	Ezr Neh Est	The Silence of God	Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts	Romans	Hebrews
Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deut.									Isa., Jer., Lam. Ezrk., Dan Hos., Joel, Amos Oba., Jon., Mic. Nah., Zeph. Hag., Zec., Mal.			1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus and Philemon	1 James 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude The Revelation

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