

## WORLD MISSIONS

**The apostle John** commended missions when he wrote, “for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles” (3 John 7). These ministers go forth to preach the gospel and propagate Christianity. They go forth to convert the nations. This is an excellent service, for they went forth for God and for His name’s sake. The principal aim of all ministers of the gospel should be to gather and build up a people for the glory and honor of the Lord.

However, others who are not called to preach may contribute to the progress of this work. Churches and all who love the cause of Christ should work together to support the propagation of true religion in nations dominated by false religion. We must have large hearts that are willing to share our resources beyond our private circles (Phil. 4:14–16). Then we are “fellow helpers to the truth,” as we earnestly desire, pray for, and contribute our help in the propagation of the gospel in the world (3 John 8).

When Christ preached the gospel of the kingdom, He visited not only the great and wealthy cities, but the poor, obscure villages (Matt. 9:35). The souls of those who are least in the world are as precious to Christ, and should be to us, as the souls of those who are greatest. The Lord Jesus is moved with compassion for people (v. 36), not merely because of their temporal and physical problems, but especially for their spiritual needs. He sees their ignorance and carelessness though they will soon perish. Christ is a very compassionate friend to precious souls. It was mercy to souls that brought Him from heaven to earth, and then to the cross. Like sheep without a shepherd, the nations have no spiritual king to guide them faithfully to God (v. 36; cf. 1 Kings 22:17). No creature has more of a tendency to go astray than a sheep, and becomes more helpless when it wanders. Sinners are lost sheep, and false teachers fleece the sheep rather than feeding them (Jer. 23:1–8; Ezek. 34).

Therefore the Lord stirs up His disciples to pray for laborers to bring in the spiritual harvest (Matt. 9:38). There is a great deal of work to be done, multitudes of people who need instruction from the Word of God. It is God’s work to send out laborers. Christ makes ministers (Eph. 4:11). All who love Christ and souls should show it by their earnest prayers to God, that He would send more skillful, faithful, wise, and hard-working preachers. It is a good sign that God is about to give a special mercy when He stirs up His people to go the throne of grace (Ps. 10:17). Just as Christ called His disciples to pray and then sent them out to preach (Matt. 9:38–10:8), so too God’s preachers must pray, “Here am I, send me” (Isa. 6:8), and also pray that God would send others.

The risen Christ has commissioned His servants, saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt. 28:18–20). Christ has universal dominion as the Mediator (John 17:2). He purchased it (Rom. 14:10), and now He is taking possession of it (Ps. 2:8). He commissioned first His apostles, and then their successors, the ministers of the gospel in all nations to the end of the world. Salvation by Christ must be offered to all, and none excluded except those who exclude themselves by their refusal to believe and repent.

Christ the Mediator is setting up a kingdom; bring the nations to be His subjects. Christ is setting up a school; bring the nations to be His students. Christ is raising up an army of truth and love to war against the powers of darkness; enlist the nations to serve under His banner. Conquer the nations for Christ, so that they may be truly happy!

—Adapted from Matthew Henry, *Commentary* on 3 John 7; Matt. 9:35–38; 28:18–20