

**EDITORIAL:
PROCLAIMING CHRIST
TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH**

Iosif J. Zhakevich
Ph.D., Harvard University
Associate Professor of Old Testament & Managing Editor
The Master's Seminary

* * * * *

Proclaiming Christ and bringing salvation to the ends of the earth has always been the heart of God. In his Pentecost message, Peter pointed to God's plan of redemption from eternity past and declared that Christ had been "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:22–23). At the beginning of human history—when Adam and Eve fell—the suffering and triumph of Christ was the first prophecy God announced. God focused on Christ and proclaimed, "He [Christ] shall bruise you [the serpent] on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen 3:15). As God subsequently made a covenant with Abraham and promised to bless specifically Israel, He also promised to save the Gentiles, saying that "in you [Abraham] *all the families of the earth* will be blessed" (Gen 12:3; cf. Gal 3:8; emphasis added). God designed His salvation of sinners to go out to all the nations.

Scripture indicates, in fact, that the glory of God is displayed in His deliverance not only of one nation but of many nations—of both Jews and Gentiles. In Isaiah 49:6, God says to the Messiah:

It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to cause the preserved ones of Israel to return; I will also give You as a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth. (cf. Isa 42:6)

While God chose Israel and called them "a holy people to Yahweh" (Deut 7:6), He also saved Gentiles such as Rahab (Josh 2; 6:17, 23–25), Ruth (Ruth 1:16), the Ninevites (Jonah 3), the Samaritan woman (John 4:7–45), the centurion at the cross (Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:25–40), and sinners from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue (Rev 7:9). Thus, the prophet Isaiah proclaims, "Yahweh has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God" (Isa 52:10; cf. 24:16; 45:22; Pss 22:27; 48:10; 98:3; Mic 5:4).

Moreover, Isaiah exclaims an astounding prophecy that God would one day redeem even Israel's archenemies—Egypt and Assyria. In Isaiah 19:24–25, the prophet writes that these nations would ultimately worship Yahweh alongside Israel:

In that day Israel will be the third *party* with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom Yahweh of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”

Yahweh is a God of salvation of all the nations—whether Jew or Gentile—and He desires all peoples to worship Him. Psalm 117:1 calls everyone to praise Yahweh: “Praise Yahweh, all nations; laud Him, all peoples!”

The gospel, therefore, is global. When Christ charged His disciples to preach repentance after His resurrection, He sent them out to all the world. Jesus said:

Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (Luke 24:46–47; cf. Matt 28:18–20; Acts 1:8)

God intends for the gospel to reach the ends of the earth, so that every knee would bow at the name of Jesus and that every tongue would confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil 2:10–11).

The honor God promised His Son was global. In Psalm 2:8, God the Father declared to His Son, “Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as Your possession.” Then in Zechariah 9:10, God declared that “He [the Messiah] will speak peace to the nations; and His reign will be from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth” (cf. Ps 72:8). As the gospel reaches the ends of the earth, all peoples will turn to and worship Christ.

God's grand, global, and glorious work of redemption is aptly put on display in John's vision of a vast multitude worshipping God. In Revelation 7:9–10, John describes:

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Such exaltation of God is the reason Scripture calls all believers to proclaim Christ to the ends of the earth.

The focus of the current issue of *The Master's Seminary Journal* is global missions and the biblical charge to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. In the first article, M. Scarborough delivers a biblical case for churches to send out missionaries into the world and for missionaries to establish churches on the mission field (“A Missions Imperative: Developing a Mature Church”). Kyle C. Dunham then explores the role of the Abrahamic Covenant in world missions (“The Abrahamic Covenant as the Foundation for Missions”). Chris Burnett follows this with an exegetical study of the Great Commission (“The Missionary's Guide to the Great Commission: An

Exegetical Analysis”). Jason S. DeRouchie examines Paul’s unwavering commitment to proclaim Christ (“‘Him We Proclaim!’ Paul’s Motivation, Means, and Mandate for Missions in Colossians 1:24–29”). Cherif Arif describes Isaiah’s influence on Paul’s view of the future salvation of Israel (“Missions and the Isaianic Influence on Paul’s Understanding of Israel’s Salvation and Restoration in Romans 11:26–27”). Brian Kinzel and Oleg Korotkiy discuss the historical reality of the hatred of Israel and God’s response to those who hate His chosen people (“The Biblical Perspective on the Hatred of Israel and Its Implications for Antisemitism: To Be the Enemy of Israel Is to Be the Enemy of God”).

E. D. Burns provides the history of contextualizing the gospel in missions and exhorts believers to preach the Word faithfully (“‘The Conflict Is Upon Us’: Resisting Ecumenism and Hyper-Contextualization”). Dave Deuel brings out the reality of human weakness and God’s power in missions, accentuating the believer’s necessary dependence on God to achieve work on the mission field (“Disability, Weakness, and Prayer in Mission”). Finally, Scott N. Callaham emphasizes the importance of and need to provide theological education to missionaries going on the field and to those who become believers on the field (“A Biblical Proposal for Theological Education in Mission”).

The ultimate intent of this collection of articles is for the believer to be encouraged to proclaim Christ throughout the world so that sinners from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue would turn to worship God.