

Jesus Bible Study Series

Week #10 (Chapter Nineteen)
Challenged by Jesus on the Mountain

HMR
Men's Bible Study

Main Idea

The Great Commission is often referred to as the Great Omission. In our hectic lives it is easy to dismiss the importance of making disciples and living for others, as opposed to the me-first mentality the pervades our society. Make no doubt about it, when Jesus left he was very clear in His message – **make disciples**. As Christians we are called to not only be disciples, but also to start making disciples. A writer once said – *you cannot bring anyone closer to Christ than you are yourself*. As you look at your life how is your pursuit of Christ and what impact are you having on those around you to follow Him?

Deep Thoughts

The Great Commission was Jesus' marching orders for the troops that remained behind, as well as for those who would follow them. The message was simple – **go and make disciples**. As Christians today how much of our lives are really focused on this command? It is so easy to become distracted by the things of this world that we forget why we are even here. As Paul wrote in Romans 8, as Believers **we were predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son**. This is no small order. As a result of His call on our lives, God expects us to be about His business; not ours, not our families, not our bosses, and not even Madison Avenue. Worse yet, we have convinced ourselves that we are really not that bad and that the Lord understands our busyness and our neglect of Jesus' command to make disciples. **There is no delusion like self-delusion**. On the flip side God continues to desire our best even when we have failed Him in the past. Don't let discouragement rob you from today's joy in having a restored relationship with Him. In this lesson we continue our focus on abiding in Christ by understanding who He was, who He is, and who He calls us to be.

Supporting Scriptures Matthew 28:16-20; John 17:6-19 and 20-26; and Acts 1:1-11.

Questions for Consideration

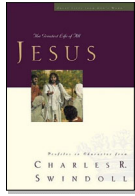
1. Read Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1:1-11. The place of the Ascension is not distinctly mentioned in the Gospel of Mark. Luke 24:50 states that the event took place in Bethany, while it appears from Acts that it took place on the Mount Olivet (the "Mount of Olives"). After the Ascension the apostles are described as returning to Jerusalem from the mount that is called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, within a Sabbath day's journey.
 - a) What specific instructions were given to Believers?
 - b) In the history of the Church, how has the Gospel been most effectively communicated in a manner that resulted in changed lives?
2. What are some of the challenges that minimize our effectiveness in making disciples? What role does comfort play in this?
3. Read John 17:6-19 and 20-26. This chapter is known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. In just a few hours following this prayer, Jesus would be arrested by the Jewish leader and subsequently crucified. In this prayer Jesus shows His selflessness as our High Priest (Heb 6:20), even though He knew what awaited Him on the Cross.
 - a) What did Jesus pray for His disciples?
 - b) How is Jesus' prayer in verses 6-19 different from what we read in 20-26?
4. Read the "country club" story on pages 283 – 285 of Dr. Swindoll's book. How does the church today resemble the once-effective life-saving station in this story?



Modern view from the Mount of Olives

Take-away Points

The thought of leading someone to Christ puts many a Christian in morbid fear. The problem with many of today's evangelism programs is that they were developed by and for people who are naturally outgoing with a salesmanship approach to daily communication (not that there is anything wrong with that). However, for most people these programs are unnatural and force them to feel like fakes in an already disingenuous world. What is natural is that when we are living for Christ we show (and tell) the world what Jesus looks like. The way we treat others (Believers and non-Believers) in all circumstances is a testimony of our relationship with Jesus. **In the church today we need a greater focus on living for Jesus and challenging those Believers around us to do so, and less emphasis on making church palatable to the unbelieving world and trying to sell Jesus as the next cure-all for whatever ails America.**



Jesus Bible Study Series

Week #10 (Chapter Twenty)
Watching for Jesus in the Air

HMR
Men's Bible Study

Main Idea

For almost 2,000 years we have been waiting for the return of Jesus and odds are, we have a few more years left. There is a reason that we do not know when Christ will return – *to keep us on our toes*. When Jesus returns the world will never be the same, much like the way He changed the face of humanity the first time that He came. Jesus has always been about changing lives and His greatest desire is for those of us who know Him to live in passionate pursuit of His Father. We've come to the end of our series, but certainly not to the end of our study in learning to be more like Jesus. For us this is a life-long pursuit. May Jesus create in us a desire to live holy lives; lives completely committed to Him.

Deep Thoughts

Of all the ways that Jesus could have left the planet, He chose to do it among His closest followers in a rather non-descript manner – much like how He arrived. It seems that even in His ascension Jesus was not about Himself; it was always about His Father and furthering the work of the Kingdom. The only real scary part of this story is that He left us in charge while he is away for a non-displaced period of time (with the obvious assistance of the Holy Spirit). In His graceful way, God has somehow allowed you and me to be involved in the process of leading others to Him. While God certainly assumes the role for calling Believers to Himself, He allows us the joy of making disciples who are committed to the cause. The question we must constantly ask ourselves is – are we fulfilling the Great Commission? Are we living for Jesus on a daily basis? There are so many distractions that vie for our attention. Learning to contend with the distractions of life is the greatest challenge that faces every Believer. Our only hope is placing our trust in Christ. **Jesus is our Plan A and we have no Plan B.** This is the last lesson in our series. May you and I live lives focused on abiding in Christ by understanding who He was, who He is, and who He calls us to be.

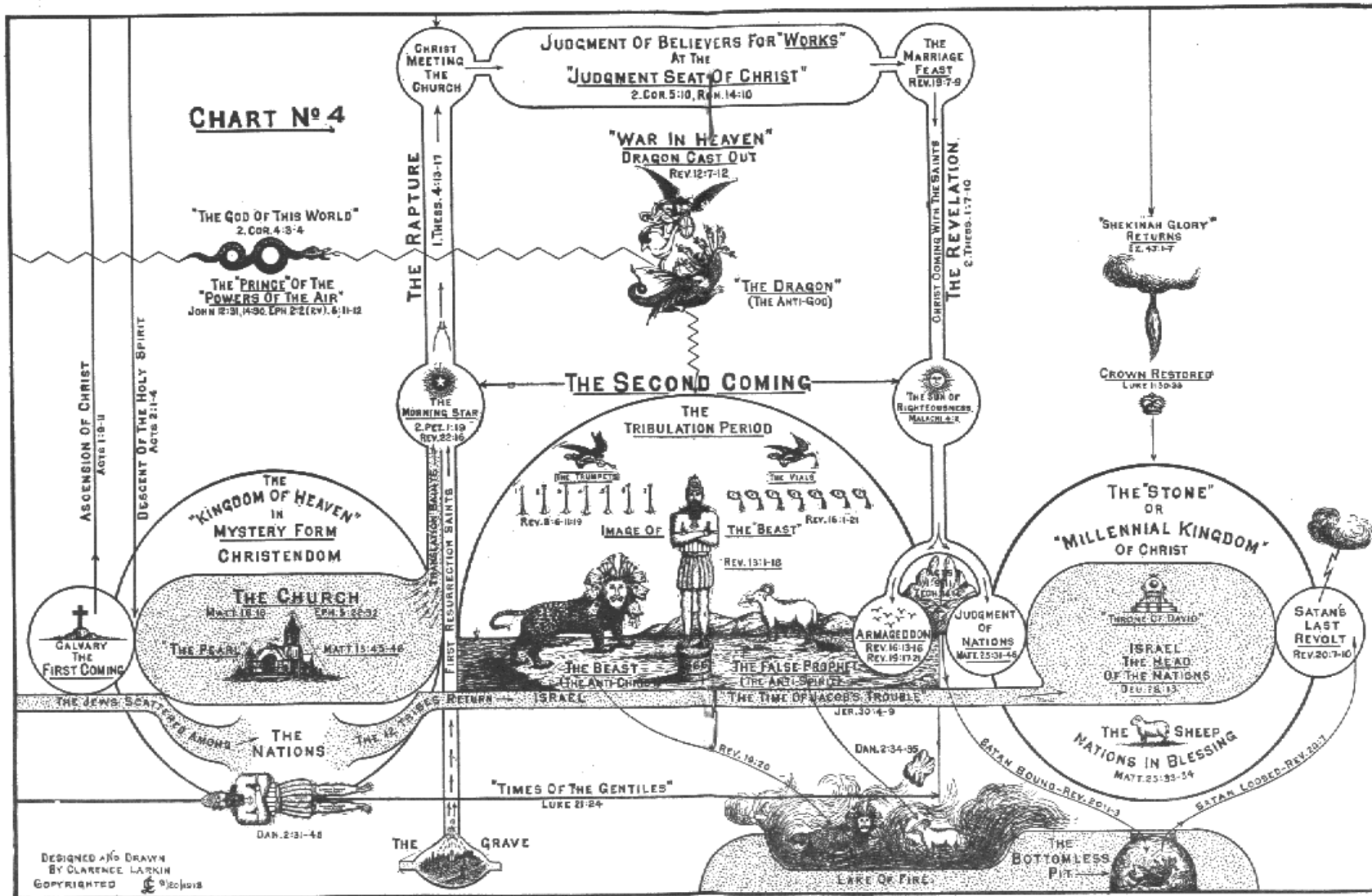
Supporting Scriptures Matthew 24; John 14:1-3; and I Thessalonians 4.

Questions for Consideration

1. Read the text from Dr. Swindoll's book on page 290. For what reasons did God allow Jerusalem to be destroyed? Considering that this occurred in 70 A.D. do you think that God had any other motives other than dealing specifically with the Jews?
2. Read Matthew 24 and specifically review verses 42 – 44. For what reasons did God not communicate to us the timing associated with Christ's return? How are our lives to be impacted by the absence of this information?
3. In Matthew 24:45-51 we see a very stern warning about failing to live for Jesus. While coming to know Christ is extremely important and should be a focus of the church, all too often we neglect the call for holy living. From an application standpoint, what are ways in which we do not honor Jesus with our lives? According to Jesus what could be the consequences of not living for Him and have you ever seen this vetted out in the life of another Believer (maybe even your own)?
4. Read I Thessalonians 4. There are two major ideas presented in this chapter. First, we need to live holy lives and be serious about in our commitment to Him (not casual). Secondly, we need to be looking for Christ. What event is described in verses 13 through 18?
5. The return of Christ is an event for which all Christians are waiting, regardless of our different interpretations. Since the first century there has been great debate about the timing of specific events. Some of the questions associated with any End Times study include the following questions. Look at the chart on the back of this page for a graphical End Time presentation by Clarence Larkin from 1918.
 - What is God's plan for each time period (or End Time event)?
 - What role does the nation of Israel play in End Time events?
 - What future events await us?
 - What role will the antichrist play and what actions will he complete?
 - What judgments await the Believer and non-believer?

Take-away Points

Studying prophecy is one of the most exciting elements of any comprehensive Bible study effort. With our limited view of time, it is enthralling to think about the future and what God has planned for humanity. At the same time, the study of prophecy is not meant to be an academic exercise. The study of prophecy should change our lives and compel us to live for Jesus on a daily basis. The anticipation in awaiting Christ's return should create in us a desire to *seize the day* and make the most of every opportunity. **The world needs Believers who are committed to the cause of Christ and the Kingdom.**



Clarence Larkin, *The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World*, Copyright 1918, page 12.