

The biblical
foundation for
evangelism theology
religion essay



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God's power and authority cannot be contained or measured by any human or natural standard. He knows all things, even the thoughts and actions of mankind. His knowledge is without limit and His wisdom perfect. No secret is hidden from God as He is in every imaginable and unimaginable place at any time at the same time. He is the only true steadfast being one will ever encounter. Hebrews 13: 8 confirms God is " the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Bonnke 2007: 51-52)

The Nature of God

God's nature is clearly evident in His love for His creation and especially His concern for those who don't know Him. He calls mankind His children to whom He gave the gift of life through the ultimate sacrifice by crucifixion of His only Son, Jesus Christ.

God also declares that He is spirit, He is everlasting, He is light and He is love (Bonnke 2007: 53-54).

The Old Testament Provision for Sojourners

God's love and compassion for His creation and His desire for all to be saved is evident even in the Old Testament where various accounts of salvation from destruction can be found. The usual way of salvation was brought through the yearly sacrifice of an innocent lamb that needed to die in exchange for the sin of man. This ritual was to be replaced by the future promise of a deliverer who would bring about eternal forgiveness for sin, once and for all. (Bonnke 2007: 55)

Old Testament prophets prophesied regarding this messiah and coming king who would fully restore Israel in relationship with God. (Bonnke 2007: 56)

The New Testament

In Bethlehem a sinless boy of promise was born. He came to be entitled Jesus Christ and His destiny was to die so that the guilty might live. His ministry completed God's plan of redemption. He promised His followers the empowerment of the Holy Spirit who would enable them to boldly proclaim the everlasting good news of salvation, through Jesus Christ, to the entire world. (Bonnke 2007: 57)

Peter and Paul are two examples of how the power of the Holy Spirit enabled them to proclaim the gospel. Fearful Peter denying his affiliation with Jesus Christ was now fearlessly proclaiming the gospel. In the name of Christ Paul faced many sufferings and even death. Beyond all rationale they were compelled with the responsibility to tell the world of what Jesus had done. "With the blessing and assurance of salvation comes the responsibility of evangelism" (Bonnke 2007: 58)

Power for evangelism

Jesus was aware of his disciples' weaknesses and that they needed anointing and power through the promised Holy Spirit baptism to tell all about the good news of Jesus Christ. (Bonnke 2007: 58)

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples. This once unknown power has now equipped these simple, weak and fearful fishermen with boldness, power and a new desire for evangelism. Pentecost
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marks the beginning of God's plan for the proclamation of what Jesus' death and resurrection means to all mankind. A message to be shared with the whole world (Bonnke 2007: 59)

The disciples had to be witnesses unto Jesus " both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). In application this suggest that the first field of witnessing was to be their own, then nationally including those rejected by society, and then to the entire world (Bonnke 2007: 60).

Through the evident power of the Holy Spirit, three thousand people received salvation after hearing this first sermon brought by Peter. The impact of what the disciples had received was clear and the flames of evangelism was burning bright. " The purpose of the Great Commission was a reality" (Bonnke 2007: 61).

Models for personal and public evangelism.

Modern day evangelists have the privilege of learning from the works of those who laid the foundation of evangelism. Although strong military movements influenced various religious views, Christianity remained steadfast in its viewpoints and even continued to grow in influence even under adversity and persecution (Bonnke 2007: 64)

Philip

Philip was the first recorded evangelist in the New Testament and appointed to oversee the welfare of widows and children in the church at Jerusalem (Bonnke 2007: 64).

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He became a very active preacher in Samaria where he cast out demons and healed the sick. Simon the magician was highly impacted by Philip's public ministry in this town.

Afterwards Philip was guided by the Holy Spirit into Gaza where he ministered on a personal level to an Ethiopian eunuch. Philip found this eunuch reading the writings of Isaiah and explained to him how Jesus Christ was the fulfilment of these prophecies. The eunuch accepted the message and was baptized (Bonnke 2007: 64-65).

Paul

Paul ministered in Macedonia, far beyond the borders of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. He was once a persecutor of the Christian believers, but now filled with the Holy Spirit he had an intent to tell the world about the gospel of Jesus Christ . He did so against any Satanic resistance. Even being imprisoned for his beliefs did not stop his mission. Prison just became another venue. Paul also had fears like any normal human being, yet by the power of the Holy Spirit he overcame his fears and preached with authority and conviction, knowing God was with him (Bonnke 2007: 65)

The church and evangelism

Evangelism and mission will always be stimulated with the church's emphasize on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They have become a new people identifying themselves using the Greek term ecclesia which translates as assembly or congregation. Although division have been caused

at times through different viewpoints within the church, the unifying purpose of evangelism still stands.

Conclusion