

# EXPLORATION: BIBLE

By Chip Thompson

Simeon took baby Jesus “up in his arms and blessed God and said, ‘...my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of **all peoples**. **A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel**” (Luke 2:30-32).

## SCARLET THREAD #10

**The Jewish Messiah is Savior of both Jews and Gentiles**

One “Scarlet Thread” connection that is often overlooked is the fact that Jewish scriptures prophesied the Jewish Messiah would be the Savior of “all peoples.” In about 700 B.C., Isaiah wrote, “Indeed He (God) says, ‘It is too small a thing that You (the Messiah) should be My Servant to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as **a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth**” (Isaiah 49:6).

Think about these facts. The Jewish nation was small and occupied an insignificant territory in the Middle East. Their promised Messiah, Jesus, was a lowly man who was born in a shepherd’s cave. His stepfather was a mere carpenter. During his life, Jesus only gathered a small band of followers, many of whom were illiterate fishermen. The Romans crucified Jesus when he was about thirty-two years old, and he was buried in a tomb in Jerusalem. His disciples all affirmed that Jesus rose from the dead but who would believe this claim? It seems IMPOSSIBLE that this lowly Jewish man would one day be worshipped by people from every nation on earth.

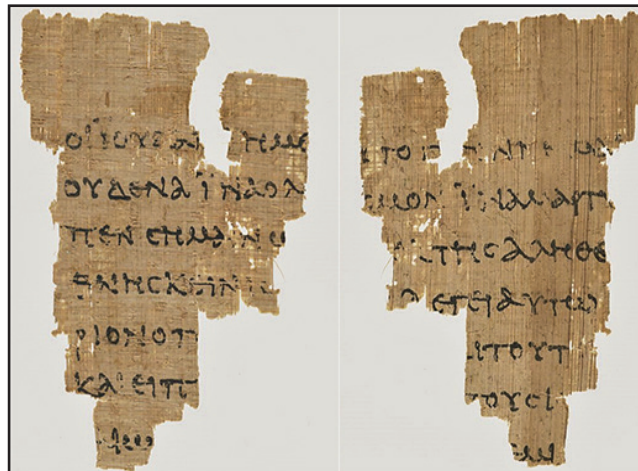
With these thoughts in mind, Jesus Christ’s final command to his followers was this, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations**...” (Matthew 28:18-19). Did the early followers of Jesus obey this command?

In the basement of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is an archeological inscription. It pre-dates 130 A.D. and proves the early disciples did indeed take the final command of Jesus seriously.



**This is The Armenian Boat Inscription. It says, “Yes Lord, we will go.” [photo by Chip Thompson, 2018]**

In addition to this, the Lord’s Apostles did not write their New Testament letters in the common language of the nation of Israel. They wrote their letters in Greek, the primary language of the ancient world. Why? Because the gospel was for everyone, for both Jews and Gentiles.



**Rylands Papyrus 52, is officially the earliest Greek New Testament fragment, it dates to about 125 A.D. Today, however, scholars have documented approximately 6,000 ancient Greek New Testament manuscripts that date from the second century onward. [Photo by permission: Wikipedia commons]**

Archaeology also supports the growth of Christianity amongst Gentile believers. The remains of hundreds of ancient churches have been excavated, but very few were Jewish churches, most were built by Gentile believers. In Rome, the Santa Pudenziana Church

contains an ancient mosaic that shows the noteworthy influence of Gentile believers on Christianity.



**This fourth century mosaic contains depictions of three ancient churches that were built in Jerusalem. The large building above the right hand of Jesus is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, built by Emperor Constantine in about 325 A.D. On Christ’s left side are two churches. An octagonal church, built by Gentile believers, which connected to a rectangular structure, a Judeo-Christian Synagogue, built by the Lord’s Apostles in the 1st Century A.D. [photo by permission, Joel Kramer, 2021]**

Church history tells us the twelve Apostles obeyed Jesus and spread the Christian gospel to the ancient world. By the fourth century A.D. Christianity became the official religion of the entire Roman Empire. And today, the religion founded by the Jewish Messiah and his small band of followers is the largest world religion numbering 2.4 billion believers.

And, in the United States of America, on the other side of the world from where it all started 2,000 years ago, you would be hard pressed to find a town without at least one Christian Church.

“Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! for great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of Yahweh endures forever. Praise the LORD!” (Psalm 117:1-2).