

**Stand in the Gap:
Finishing the Unfinished Work of Christ in an Age of Gospel Privilege
Matthew 28:16-20**

- I. Introduction: Conversations on privilege and equity
- II. What is “Gospel Privilege?”
 - a. David Johannes: “The unearned advantage that’s meant for everyone.”
 - b. My definition: *The unearned advantage which some parts of the world (mostly, but not exclusively Western Europe and North America) enjoy as opposed to the estimated 3 billion people who still live places where the gospel has not yet taken root.*
- III. Global Realities of Gospel Privilege and Gospel-Drought

Global Realities of Gospel-Privilege:

Population // Estimated reached/unreached

- 7.7 billion total population
- 3.23 billion of the total population remain unreached
- **41.7% percent of unreached people on earth**

Scripture // Estimated reached/unreached

- 7,359 language groups on earth
- 704 languages with a complete bible
- 1571 languages with the New Testament
- 2726 languages in process
- 2002 language groups do not have Scripture translated into their language
- **There are at least 171 million people who still do not have a single verse of Scripture in their own language.**

Ministers // Full time Christian Ministers serving the World // 5.5 million workers

- Christian Ministers in the Reached World // 4.19 million local workers (75.9%)
- Christian Ministers serving the Unreached // 20,500 local workers (0.37%)

Missionaries // Full time Missionaries serving the World // 400,000 workers

- Missionaries serving the Reached World // 309,315 foreign missionaries (77.3%)
- Missionaries serving the Unevangelized // 77,610 foreign missionaries (19.4%)
- **Missionaries serving the Unreached // 13,315 foreign missionaries (3.3%)**

Global Reality: Some regions of the world are blessed with gospel-privilege while others live in gospel-drought

- The ratio of Christian ministers and missionaries working among the Unreached is 1 worker for every 216,300 unreached people
- There are more than 78,000 Evangelical Christians for every one unreached people group

“I think the lack of gospel access is the greatest injustice of all time.”
— David Johannes

“We talk of the Second Coming [of Christ]; half the world has never heard of the first” –
Oswald Smith

IV. The Great Commission in Context: Finishing the “Unfinished” Work of Christ

1. How is Jesus’s work already “Finished”? (vv. 16-18)
2. What aspect of Christ’s Work Remains Unfinished? (vv. 19-20a)
3. How will Christ’s work be finished? (v. 20b)

V. How is Jesus’s work already “Finished”? (vv. 16-18)

- a. READ v. 16-18
- b. Homecoming?: Jesus’s Calls the Disciples Back to Galilee

1. Matthew 4:12-17 (quoting Isa. 9:1-2)

¹² Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³ And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

*¹⁵ “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—*

*¹⁶ the people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,*

*and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned.”*

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

God’s salvation has come into the world for both Jews and Gentiles (starting in Galilee) through Jesus

- c. Go Tell it on the Mountain?: Significance of mountain-top experiences in Matthew
1. Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)
 2. Jesus prays on the mountain (Matt. 14:23)
 3. Jesus is transfigured before His disciples on a mountain (Matt. 17:1-3)
 4. Jesus teaches about the future of the Temple, His return, and coming judgement on a mountain (Matt. 24-5)
 5. Jesus's last meal, betrayal, and arrest is on a mountain (Matt. 26)

God's glory, character, and purposes have been revealed through Jesus

- d. The GC Fulfills Daniel 7:14.

Daniel 7:14

*And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.*

God's authority, kingship, and reign over the nations has been revealed in Christ

VI. What aspect of Christ's Work Remains Unfinished? (vv. 19-20)

- a. READ v. 19-20a (What is the nature of the command? Who are the nations?)
- ***Christ's work remains "unfinished" in the sense that the benefits of salvation have not yet reached all the intended beneficiaries***
- a. BUT who exactly are the "nations" we are to disciple?

1. Ethnae: "ethnic" or "ethnicity" – PEOPLE GROUPS

“[A people-group] is a significantly large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class, or caste, situation, etc. or combination of these.” (Ralph Winter, “Unreached Peoples: Recent Developments in the Concept,” 12).

2. Biblical scholars have shown that this construction (“all nations”; *ta ethnae*) occurs 18 times in the NT, and only once refers specifically to Gentile individuals. The others reference people-groups. Based on this evidence, John Piper concludes:

“Therefore, in all likelihood, Jesus did not send his apostles out with a general mission to win as many individuals as they could but rather to reach all the peoples of the world and thus to gather the ‘sons of God’ which are scattered (John 11:25) and to call the ‘ransomed from every tongue and tribe and people and nation’ (Rev. 5:9), until all redeemed persons from ‘all the peoples praise him’ (Rom. 15:11).” (John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 210).

VII. How will Christ’s Unfinished Work be Finished?

- a. Answer: stand in the gap!
- b. By making disciples by “going” and “teaching”
- c. Grammar Geek: Jesus’s commands
 3. English translation: Imperative (Go), main verb (make disciples) and participles (teaching, baptizing).
 4. However, some translations take the English imperative as a temporal participle: “as you are going...”
 5. However, this participle (“go”) an “**attendant circumstance**” or “**circumstantial participle**”, which communicates an action that is coordinate to the main verb by taking on its mood. Since main verb (“make disciples”) is in an imperative (command), the participle in front takes on the same mood.
 6. Examples from Matthew of attendant circumstance/circumstantial participle:
 - a. Matthew 2:13 – “**Get up!** *Take* the child and his mother, flee to Egypt!”
 - b. Matthew 9:13 – **Go** and *learn* what this means. . .”
 - c. Matthew 11:4 – **Go** and *tell* John what you heard and see.”
 7. Why does this matter? As one scholar puts it, “to take the participle as an adverbial temporal, “as you go”, turns the Great Commission into the “Great Suggestion”.

“To Go” [make disciples] implies intentionality, purpose, and commitment

- a. What does it mean to teach all that Jesus commands? Go back to Matt. 4 and Matt. 22.

¹⁷ *From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

³⁷ *And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”* ³⁸ *This is the great and first commandment.* ³⁹ *And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* ⁴⁰ *On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

What do we teach the nations?:

To Acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the world’s true King by loving Him with all our heart, soul, and mind, and others as yourself in His name.

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship, therefore, is the fuel of missions. It’s the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God’s glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God.” (*Let the Nations Be Glad*, 35).

Main Point: *The Great Commission calls the church to “stand in the [historical] gap” between the first Easter day (2,000 years ago) and those who have not yet heard the gospel*

- X. Application: Standing in the Gap Today in an Age of Gospel-Privilege
 - a. What would Matthew want?
 - b. Rejoice in your gospel-privilege.**
 - c. Pray for more laborers to go into God’s ripe harvest.**
 - d. Go to the “Gap” the Lord of the harvest directs you towards**
 1. Richard
 2. Gail/Marsha
 3. John Allen Chau: Imperialist, Idealist, or Idiot for Jesus?

Brief Bio of John Allen Chau:

Born in 1991 in Vancouver, WA

Attended Oral Roberts University

Trained by “All Nations” Missionary Organization in Kansas City, MO

Died November 17, 2018 at the hands of Sentinelize islanders (bow and arrow)

North Sentinel Island: (from Washington Post):

North Sentinel Island, a 20 square-mile speck of Indian territory in the Andaman archipelago, 30 miles west of Great Andaman in the Bay of Bengal, and home to one of the world’s least-contacted and least-understood groups of indigenous people, known as the Sentinelese. The island’s population, unique [genetically](#), linguistically and culturally, isolated for millennia, is notably unfriendly to outsiders. It is one of the small pockets of mystery remaining in our increasingly known world. The entire island sits within a protected zone patrolled by the Indian government, and it is illegal to approach from as far as six miles away, let alone visit it.

Last month, Chau paid five local fishermen 25,000 rupees—about \$350—to break the law and take him close to the island on November 14 under cover of darkness in their 30-foot-long wooden boat. On November 15, he assembled his foldable kayak and headed ashore, only to be met with arrows and forced to retreat; the next day, he paddled in again. On November 17, the fishermen saw the Sentinelese dragging his apparently dead body along the beach.

Questionable Motives?: (from Washington Post)

Questions remain about Chau and his motivations, and of course questions about the island and the islanders: Was he a missionary or an adventurer? A pure-hearted emissary or an arrogant colonialist? Many readers, encountering mention of North Sentinel Island and its inhabitants for the first time, were left scrambling to understand a place seemingly sprung from the mists of history. Where and what is it? And who are these people? And could such a place really still exist in the 21st century? And if it does, why would someone risk not just his own life, but the lives of the Sentinelese, their isolation meaning that they have little built-up immunity to disease; a common cold could wipe out the population? Particularly given their demonstrated history of not wanting to be contacted?

Chau’s Heroes:

“Adventurers like John Muir, Bruce Olson, and David Livingston [sic] inspire me to go travel and explore, and I definitely get my inspiration for life from Jesus.”

Letter to Family/Parents:

Bryan and Mary and Mom and Dad,

You guys might think I am crazy in all this but I think it's worth it to declare Jesus to these people.

Please do not be angry at them or at god if I get killed-rather please live you lives in obedience to whether He has called you too and I'll see you again when you pass through the veil.

This is not a pointless thing-The eternal lives of this [Sentinelese] tribe is at hand and I can't wait to see them around the throne of God worshipping in their own language as Revelation 7:9-10 states.

I love you all and I pray none of you love anything in this world more than Jesus Christ.

SOLI DEO GLORIA (Glory to god)

Jim Elliott Quote:

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” – Jim Elliott

The remotest places will be reached, the darkest corners will be given light, and the hardest hearts will be melted – because king Jesus will succeed.