

A black and white photograph of a city skyline, including skyscrapers and a bridge, is shown upside down at the top of the page. The rest of the background is a plain, light color.

MATTHEW

The Upside umog Kingdom

Matthew 28:16-20

Our mission is to tell everyone about the King



Matthew 28:16-17

Our mission is to tell everyone about the King

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



Our mission is to tell everyone about the King

- In Matthew's story, these are Jesus' last words to His disciples, telling them what to do after He ascended to heaven, how to carry on His mission in the world.
- Eleven disciples were there, so we know this happened after Judas died, but before they chose Matthias to replace him.



Our mission is to tell everyone about the King

- The disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain Jesus had told them to go to in the Upper Room before His death (Mark 14:28).
- It is significant that Jesus would have them return to Galilee for the Great Commission because Galilee is where His ministry began, where He called them to be disciples.



Our mission is to tell everyone about the King

- We don't know for sure which mountain it was.
- It is likely the same mountain on which Jesus was transfigured, Mount Tabor in lower Galilee (Matthew 17).
- In the Old Testament, many theophanies of God occurred on a mountain – the sacrifice of Isaac, the burning bush, the giving of the Law, Elijah's battle with priests of Baal.



Our mission is to tell everyone about the King

- When the disciples saw the transfigured Jesus in all His glory, the disciples also worshipped when they saw Him resurrected.
- The text says some of them doubted (two different words)
- This word, *distázō*, can mean “to doubt or to hesitate.” They hesitated. It was like they couldn’t process it all. They didn’t know what they were supposed to do next or how to respond.



Our mission is to tell everyone about the King

- When they saw Jesus, all of the disciples fell down in worship, even if they still had some doubts or hesitations, even though they may have not quite understood what was happening or what it would mean for them.
- They saw Jesus and fell down in worship, just as anyone else who has ever seen His glory (Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 1:17).



Our mission is to tell everyone about the King

- The Bible promises us that one day everyone – in heaven, on earth, and under the earth – will bow before Jesus, even those who reject Him on earth (Philippians 2:10–11).
- When we finally see Jesus in all His heavenly glory, worship will be the only possible reaction.



Matthew 28:18-19

The Great Commission applies to all disciples in every time and place

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



The Great Commission applies to all disciples

- Jesus calls all of us – every person who claims to be His disciple – to be evangelists.
- That is the Great Commission – go make disciples.
- This is our life's mission as Christians.
- Not just the first generation of disciples, but every single one of us.



The Great Commission applies to all disciples

- Evangelist comes from the Greek word for “good news.”
- It simply means someone who tells other people the Good News about Jesus.
- All of Jesus’ disciples can and should be evangelists for Him in our everyday lives, wherever God has placed us.



The Great Commission applies to all disciples

- When we read the Great Commission in English, it may look like the command is to “go,” but the word “go” in is actually not the imperative verb of that sentence.
- “Make disciples” is the imperative. “Go” and “teach” and “baptize” are all participles, which means they describe when, where or how we make disciples.



The Great Commission applies to all disciples

- Last words are always important, but especially the last words of a great leader to his successors.
- It's the final charge of Jesus to them.
- This passage has come to be called the Great Commission because it was not just a commission to these first disciples but a universal commission for all disciples in every time and place.



The Great Commission applies to all disciples

- We are called to go into the world, taking the Good News with us.
- As Paul wrote in Romans, how will they know the Good News unless we take it to them? (Romans 10:14–15).
- We have to go out into the world and take the Good News to them.



Matthew 28:20

Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

- The disciples were probably wondering how they would be able to do all of this without Jesus, after He was gone, back to the Father.
- He had always been the One doing the miracles and astounding people with His teaching.
- In Matthew, Jesus promised He would always be with them. In Acts, He told them how – through the Holy Spirit.



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

- The disciples were just ordinary people, but Pentecost and the Holy Spirit changed them.
- In the beginning of Acts, it says that when the people “saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

- Jesus promised them at the Last Supper that when He went to be with the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit to be with them, guide them, teach them, lead them, and give them power (John 14:15–31).
- He even promised it would be to their advantage that He go away and send the Spirit instead (John 16:7).



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

- They would have full access to God's Spirit at all times. The Spirit would give them supernatural wisdom (1 Corinthians 2) and power (Acts 1:8).
- He would bring them new life, make them a new creation, and grow His spiritual fruit in them, changing them from the inside out (Galatians 5:16–26).



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

- Jesus' mission for His disciples is at the very end of the book of Matthew, but at the very beginning of the book of Acts – because the Gospels are the story of Jesus' work on earth and Acts is the story of how the Church continued His mission in the world.
- In Acts, Jesus told the disciples how they were to fulfill the Great Commission of making disciples:



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

- 1. Through the power of the Holy Spirit - when the Spirit said go, they went. When the Spirit said stop, they stopped.
- The Spirit empowered them to do mighty things.
- You could even call the book “The Acts of the Holy Spirit” instead of “The Acts of the Apostles” because it is really the story of the Spirit working through them.



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

- 2. By being His witnesses - they don't have to tell the whole story of the whole situation, because they don't even know that. They just have to tell their story, what they know to be true. The same is true for us as witnesses for Christ.
- We simply need to tell what we know, what we have seen and heard, what Jesus has done in our lives.



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

- Jesus told His disciples they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem (their city), in Judea (their nation) and in Samaria (their enemies), and to the ends of the earth.
- Through the rest of Acts, we see them doing just that
- In the same way, we can be His witnesses where we already are or to the ends of the earth, wherever God calls us.



Jesus will be with us as we carry out His Great Commission

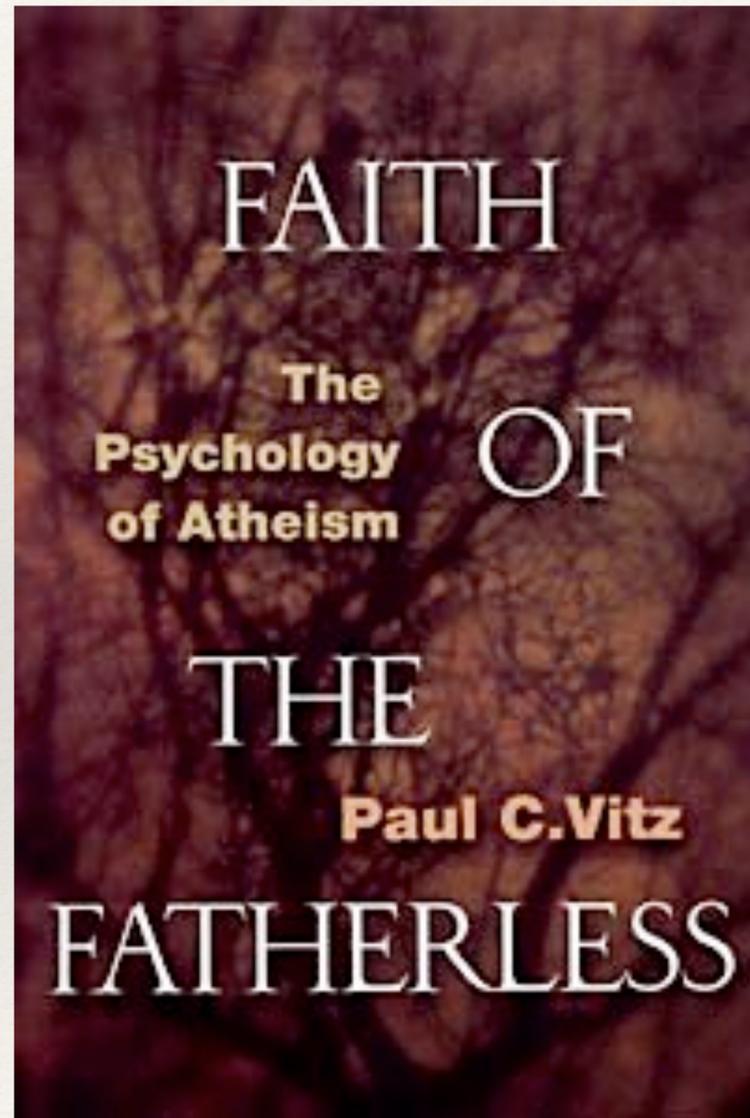
- You are a witness – both with your words and with your life.
- The Holy Spirit does the work of changing people’s hearts (1 Corinthians 3).
- Like the disciples in the book of Acts, we are to follow the Holy Spirit wherever He leads, to speak the truth boldly, and to pray for God’s intervention (Acts 4:23–31).

ASK KERBY



A graphic of a white sheet of lined paper with a green sticky note pinned to the top left. The sticky note has a blue question mark and the text "ASK KERBY". The paper has horizontal lines for writing.

Faith of the Fatherless



- Psychologist Paul Vitz studied the lives of prominent atheists and found that most had an absent father or a defective father.
- Our concept of our heavenly Father can often be influenced by our experience with an earthly father.

Faith of the Fatherless

- After studying the lives of more than a dozen of the world's most influential atheists, Dr. Vitz discovered that they all had one thing in common: defective relationships with their fathers.
- The relationship was defective because the father was either dead, abusive, weak, or had abandoned the children.
- When he studied the lives of influential theists during those same historical time periods, he found they enjoyed a strong, loving relationship with a father (or a father substitute if the father was dead).

Friedrich Nietzsche

- Friedrich Nietzsche lost his father (a pastor) before his fifth birthday.
- One biographer wrote that Nietzsche was “passionately attached to his father, and the shock of losing him was profound.”
- Dr. Vitz writes that Nietzsche had a “strong, intellectually macho reaction against a dead, very Christian father.”
- Friedrich Nietzsche is best known as the philosopher who said, “God is dead.” It certainly seems possible that his rejection of God and Christianity was a “rejection of the weakness of his father.”

Sigmund Freud

- Sigmund Freud despised his Jewish father, who was a weak man unable to support his family.
- Freud later wrote in two letters that his father was a sexual pervert, and that the children suffered as a result. Dr. Vitz believes that Freud's Oedipus Complex was an expression of "his strong unconscious hostility to and rejection of his own father."
- His father was involved in a form of reformed Judaism but was also a weak, passive man with sexual perversions. Freud's rejection of God and Judaism seems connected to his rejection of his father.

Bertrand Russell

- Bertrand Russell was one of the most famous atheists of the last century.
- His father died when Bertrand Russell was four years old, and his mother died two years earlier. He was subsequently cared for by his rigidly puritanical grandmother, who was known as “Deadly Nightshade.”
- Dr. Vitz points out that Russell’s only other parent figures were a string of nannies. When one left, the eleven-year-old Bertrand was “inconsolable.”
- “I am conscious that human affection is to me at bottom an attempt to escape from the vain search for God.”

Voltaire

- Another philosopher during the French Enlightenment disliked his father so much that he changed his name from Arouet to Voltaire.
- The two fought constantly.
- At one point Voltaire's father was so angry with his son for his interest in the world of letters rather than taking up a career in law that he "authorized having his son sent to prison or into exile in the West Indies."
- Voltaire was a strident critic of religion, especially Christianity with its understanding of a personal God.

Ludwig Feuerbach

- Ludwig Feuerbach was a prominent German atheist who was born into a distinguished and gifted German family. His father was a prominent jurist who was difficult and undiplomatic with colleagues and family.
- The dramatic event in young Ludwig's life must have been his father's affair.
- His father publicly rejected his family, and years later Feuerbach rejected Christianity.
- One critic of religion said that Feuerbach was so hostile to Christianity that he would have been called the Antichrist if the world had ended then.

Blaise Pascal

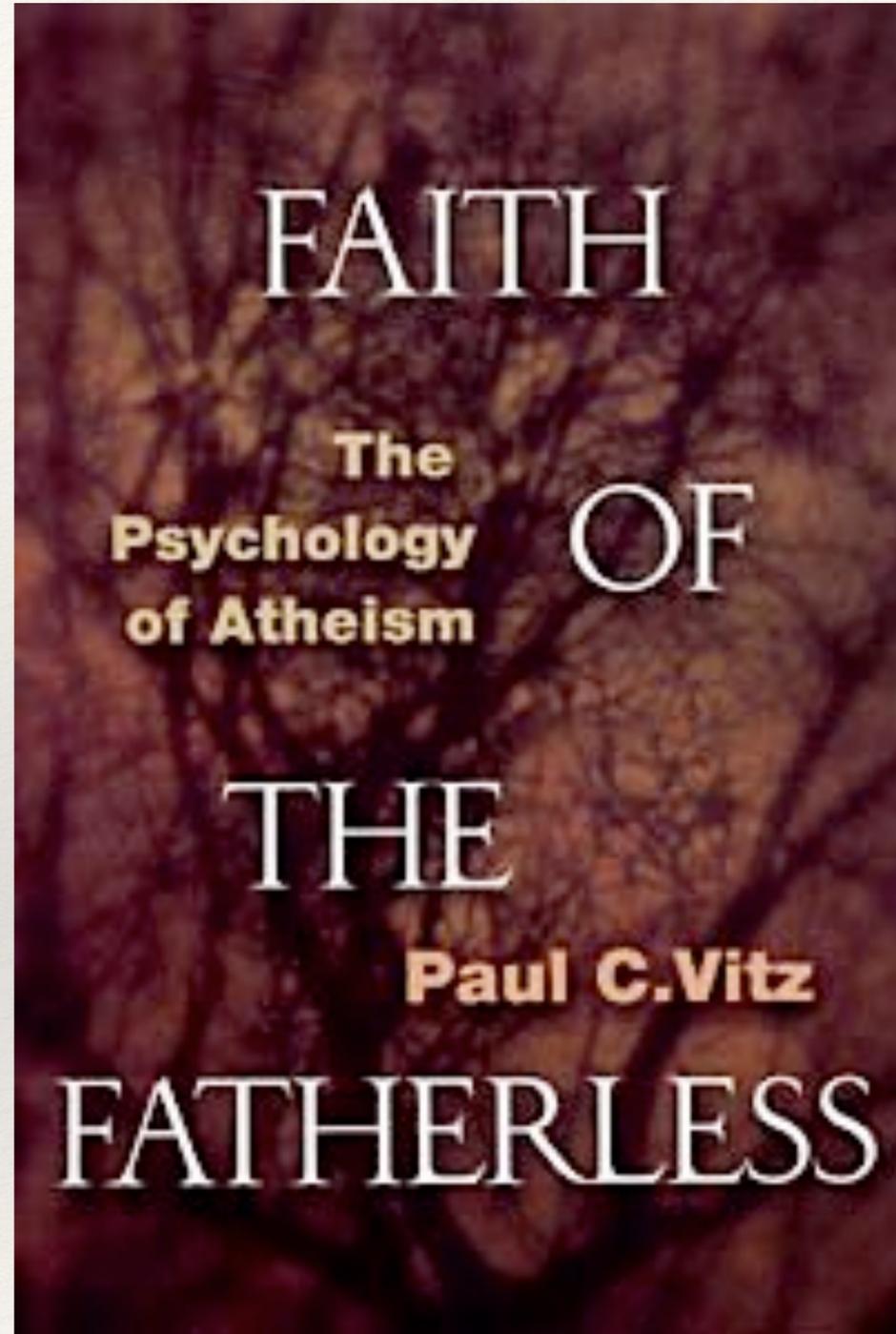
- Blaise Pascal was a famous mathematician and religious writer lived at a time in Paris when there was considerable skepticism about religion.
- He nevertheless wrote *Les pensées* (thoughts), a powerful and imaginative defense of Christianity, which also attacked skepticism.
- Pascal's father, Etienne, was a wealthy judge and also an able mathematician. He was known as a good man with religious convictions.
- Pascal's mother died when he was three, so his father gave up his law practice and home-schooled Blaise and his sisters.

Edmund Burke

- British statesman Edmund Burke is considered the founder of modern conservative political thought. He was partly raised by his grandfather and three affectionate uncles. He later wrote of his Uncle Garret, that he was “one of the very best men, I believe that ever lived, of the clearest integrity, the most genuine principles of religion and virtue.”
- His writings were in direct opposition to the radical principles of the French Revolution (*Reflections on the Revolution in France*).
- For Burke, God and religion were important pillars of a just and civil society.

William Wilberforce

- William Wilberforce was an English statesman and abolitionist. His father died when he was nine years old, and he was sent to live with his aunt and uncle. He was extremely close to his uncle and to John Newton who was a frequent visitor to their home. Newton was a former slave trader who converted to Christ and wrote the famous hymn “Amazing Grace.”
- Wilberforce first heard of the evils of slavery from Newton’s stories and sermons, “even reverencing him as a parent when he was a child.” Wilberforce went on to serve in parliament and was instrumental in abolishing the British slave trade.



www.probe.org