

BOOK REVIEW OF ARTHUR F. GLASSER'S "ANNOUNCING THE KINGDOM: THE STORY OF
GOD'S MISSION IN THE BIBLE"

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INTRODUCTION

Mission in itself is a common word used in today's vernacular with different purposes and meanings. It is synonymous with calling, task and duty that are assigned not only to one but also to an entire group of people. This is a book review of Glasser's work that seeks to analyze his efficiency in providing new knowledge to theological enthusiasts. It begs to question whether his work is of significance to the academic world and to the common reader. More importantly, it is an assessment of his ability to convince and impart values formation in the field of missionary work. It reviews his work as a viable source of information that will be inspirational for people to appreciate and devote themselves into missionary life.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

The book begins similar to the Bible by tracing the steps of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. It quickly highlights the plight of the Israelites under an oppressive regime and the consequent missions sent by God in different time periods of the Old Testament. God's mission is always made clear such as citing important Biblical passages to illustrate God's purpose. In a simple illustration, Glasser emphasizes why Eve was created which was to be Adam's companion. In this regard, Glasser is able to provide clear depictions that readers can research themselves to show how the concept of mission can actually be traced to God, the Creator himself. Thus, every being has a purpose and was created for his glory including man.

A large portion of the book is devoted to the Israelites and the prophets who were called by God to complete certain tasks or duties. This includes Noah who was given the assignment of building an ark because of an impending flood. Glasser draws attention to Abraham as the Father of all Nations in particular his fulfillment of the mission given to him

in spite against his own personal will; Abraham was blessed with a long line of descendants and an abundant life. More importantly, the ultimate mission of God was the creation and building of Israel as a nation. Glasser explores the role of Moses and his struggles as the prince of Egypt in spite being an Israelite himself. Moses was given an enormous duty to lead God's chosen people into exodus wherein Glasser recounts various hardships, stumbling blocks and internal struggles amongst the Israelites themselves.

The human aspect of missionary work is not lost in Glasser's writings providing clarity and insight to an otherwise daunting book title of announcing the kingdom of God. The role of the kings of Israel is given attention each with their own mission or connection with God either through dreams and direct conversation or contact. Towards three fourths of the book is an analysis of Jesus, the Messiah's coming and provides historical and biblical connections to provide key questions as to whether Jesus is the Son of God. Glasser provides different perspectives highlighting Jesus' role as the Savior and the fulfillment of God's mission and promises to his chosen people. Glasser takes into consideration many of Jesus' works in the New Testament from his birth; gathering of apostles, miracles and significantly a large portion is dedicated to an analysis of his teachings such as the parables. Glasser also includes the concept of the work of the Holy Spirit wherein even after Jesus' death it is still mentioned that further inspired his apostle ministry to further conduct missionary work.

The author's main thesis is clear which is to prove that missionary work is based on Biblical teachings. His scholarly depiction of this perspective is an propagation of missionary work as an extension of Jesus, the Messiah's own purpose and mission on Earth. As mission has become synonymous with evangelization. Glasser's thesis aims to distinguish the two concepts into more accurate terms. Evangelization has become a military like enthusiasm to further a purpose and cause. It is like mission work since it preaches the gospel but many

evangelicals may be lacking in adequate theological understanding with the difference between missionary work and evangelization.

In the author's analysis of mission work, he is able to cite that charming people was the missionary style of the Old Testament wherein many prophets were good orators. The New Testament discusses the travels of Jesus and the Apostles wherein their missionary work was a proclamation of the Messiah's arrival. It is important to note that the word kingdom was avoided in the New Testament but rather the author emphasizes on how prophets including Jesus was able to win over the crowd convincingly. It is in this way that the author hopes to inspire missionaries to use their talents not even creating miracles in the same level to continue on as it their purpose as God's children. Significantly, Glasser's work leans towards Christian beliefs especially with Jesus being the Son of God and the Messiah. In his analysis of Jesus, he is able to illustrate that Jesus was in fact establishing God's church whose role is to be missionaries united together. As such, all believers should engage in missionary work.¹

This is a contemporary analysis of age old values wherein he cautions readers that one is not immediately granted access to God's kingdom instead this should be earned through missionary endeavors. Missionary is also a team or communal effort wherein all participate in forming a combined effort of time and resources to aid others. More importantly, Glasser illustrates that one need not have spiritual gifts in order to do missionary work. It is evident in one's actions that people are able to do wonders in their own human capacity.

In fact, Glasser even asserts that Jesus never intended to build an actual physical Church, which counters many Catholic dogmas and even religious history itself. It is in this

¹ Arthur F. Glasser. *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible*. (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 267

manner that the missionary works of the Church for ages are discredited by the author. This is contradictory to his thesis creating confusion to readers. Most notably, since he is espousing readers to conduct missionary work, which is normally done with the Church they are associated with. More importantly, by citing numerous Biblical Scriptures his words mean to undermine the authority of Churches to in fact organize missions, values formation and even religious learning. This is prevalent even towards the end of Glasser's book wherein he justifies missionary work even if they are non-believers in Christ. This is a radical statement for someone who quoted the Bible throughout the entire book.²

First, he espouses missionary work by tracing the events from the Old to the New Testament. He admires the works of prophets in paving the way for the coming of the Messiah. He cites the prophet's skills and accomplishments while using this to promote missionary work. But retreats in the later part to accommodate non-believers in Jesus Christ. It would seem that he should have stopped his sequential analogy and simply quoted the Old Testament if he was to state this. Second, nearly all religions are based in the Bible giving non-credit to their missionary work through the ages and using the Bible solely indicates author bias. More importantly, while the book espouses mission work and cites the good deeds of many men and women from the Bible the author himself writes in a judgmental manner. This shows an incoherence with his thesis and purpose of the book making it seem the Church such as the Roman Catholic Church having not adequately accomplished its missionary work through the years. It is in this manner that the book is flawed by placing incoherent statements on the latter pages.

CONCLUSION

² Arthur F. Glasser. *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible*. (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 221

Arthur F. Glasser's "Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible" is still recommended based on the research and effort done by the author. Glasser writes with enthusiasm and his passion is infectious throughout the book. It is this passion for missionary work that fueled his desire to conduct an evaluation of the Bible, its key figures and Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God in fact is the mission of all men as to aspire through good hearts and deeds to be able to enter the gates of heaven upon death. Mission work is one of those ways that an ordinary citizen can establish closer relations with the Creator and earn his way to heaven so to speak.

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