

New Vision for a New Day

Bible Glossary, People & Places

Billy Graham

Sermon Reference

Billy Graham is mentioned as the convenor of the Lausanne Conference on world evangelization in 1974 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Background Context

Billy Graham (1918–2018) was one of the most influential evangelical Christian leaders in the 20th century. A renowned American evangelist, his global crusades reached millions with the gospel message, fundamentally shaping modern evangelicalism. Graham's emphasis on personal conversion, biblical teaching, and mass evangelism underscored his ministry. Over decades, he pioneered the use of mass media—television, radio, and print—to broadcast the gospel rendering evangelism accessible on a global scale. His commitment to unity among Christians was epitomized in his promotion of evangelical cooperation and his establishment of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

In 1974, Billy Graham convened the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland. This conference assembled 2,700 delegates from 150 nations, creating a pivotal global platform to strategize the spread of the gospel. The resulting Lausanne Covenant set a benchmark for evangelical mission theology, emphasizing the responsibility of the church to reach all peoples with the good news of Jesus Christ. It also balanced evangelism with social responsibility, thereby broadening the scope of mission in the contemporary world.

Billy Graham's ministry was marked by his role as a spiritual advisor to multiple U.S. presidents and international leaders, expounding the Christian gospel with clarity and integrity. His approach was deeply rooted in Scripture, uniting preaching with a call to repentance and faith. His global influence extends beyond his lifetime, inspiring generations of evangelists, missionaries, and ordinary believers to actively engage in world evangelization.

His importance in biblical history and evangelical heritage lies in his embodiment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), influencing the modern missionary movement through large-scale evangelistic efforts. Graham's leadership in the Lausanne Conference helped create a renewed global vision for missions, blending biblical truth with practical outreach, which continues to impact mission strategies today.

Troas (Alexandria Troas)

Sermon Reference

The port city where Paul received the Macedonian vision (Acts 16:9-10) and later where Eutychus fell from a window and was raised from death by Paul (Acts 20:6-12).

Importance in the Bible

Troas is pivotal because it represents the launching point of Christian mission to Europe, marking the gospel's transition from predominantly Jewish regions to a broader Gentile world (Acts 16:9-10). This city stands as a sacred geographic juncture where obedience to God's call catalyzed the spread of Christianity into new continents. Furthermore, the miracle of Eutychus' resurrection at Troas (Acts 20:7-12) demonstrates God's power and validation of the church's mission work. Troas is an enduring symbol of divine guidance, perseverance, and the expansion of God's kingdom in the New Testament narrative.

Background Context

Troas, also known as Alexandria Troas, was a significant ancient city located on the northwest coast of Asia Minor, near the ancient kingdom of Troy. As a Roman port city, it served as a key commercial and strategic hub in the Mediterranean region during the first century. Its location was significant for travel and commerce between Asia Minor and Europe, making it an ideal meeting place and gateway for early Christian mission work into Europe. Troas had a mixed population of Greeks and Romans and would have had thriving economic and social activity, including cultural exchange, which set the stage for Paul's missionary efforts.

The city's importance in the New Testament is primarily related to the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys. Paul stopped in Troas during his second missionary journey, as recorded in Acts 16, waiting for a divine direction which came in the form of a vision—a man of Macedonia pleading, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' This vision compelled Paul and his companions to cross into Europe bringing the gospel beyond Asia Minor for the first time. This moment marks a historic expansion of Christianity into the European continent, establishing Troas as a symbolic threshold between two worlds—Asia and Europe—and one of the birthplaces of Christian mission work in Europe.

Years later, Troas is again mentioned in Acts 20, where Paul returns there on his journey back to Jerusalem. The story of Eutychus, a young man who fell from a third-story window during Paul's extended preaching and was restored to life, highlights the early Christian community's gatherings and worship in the city. The narrative underscores both the challenges and the miraculous nature of early church ministry. Troas reflects a blend of ordinary human experiences and the supernatural working of God's power through the early church's missionary efforts.

Troas' significance extends beyond geographical location to theological symbolism in the Bible. It embodies moments of divine direction, human response to the call of God, and the expansive mission to reach the Gentiles with the gospel. The events there symbolize the struggles and victories inherent in Christian mission, providing a vivid example of

God's provision and empowerment for evangelism. Its role as a crucial setting for Paul's directive vision and subsequent missionary journeys situates Troas as a pivotal place in the unfolding story of early Christianity.

Paul the Apostle

Sermon Reference

Paul is the central biblical figure in the sermon: he experienced the vision of the Macedonian man (Acts 16:9-10) while in Troas, leading to evangelism in Europe; later visited Troas again where Eutychus was raised from the dead.

Importance in the Bible

Paul's missionary zeal, initiated by visions such as in Troas, facilitated the gospel's expansion into Europe and the Roman world, fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). His epistles codify Christian doctrine and praxis, making him indispensable for understanding New Testament theology. Collectively, Paul's life and ministry exemplify God's sovereignty in directing missionary work and empowering leaders to spread Christianity across cultural frontiers.

Background Context

Paul, originally known as Saul of Tarsus, was a first-century Jewish Pharisee who transformed from a zealous persecutor of Christians to one of Christianity's most ardent apostles. His life and ministry are foundational to the growth and theological development of the early church. After his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), Paul dedicated his life to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, especially among the Gentiles, marking a significant expansion of Christianity beyond its Jewish origins. His missionary journeys, documented in the Book of Acts and his epistles, established numerous churches across Asia Minor, Greece, and Europe.

Paul's visionary experiences, such as the Macedonian call in Troas (Acts 16:9-10), exemplify God's direct intervention guiding his missionary outreach. This vision was a turning point, directing Paul to preach in Europe for the first time, significantly influencing the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. Paul's adaptive strategy, coupling personal journeys with epistle writings, integrated theology with practical Christian living, which shaped the foundational doctrines of the church as articulated in the Pauline epistles.

Not only a missionary, Paul was a prolific theologian whose letters to early churches—Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and more—clarify concepts such as justification by faith, the role of the Spirit, Christian ethics, and eschatology. His epistles continue to serve as doctrinal pillars, profoundly affecting Christian theology and practice across denominations. Paul's work underscores the inseparability of vision, obedience, and scriptural teaching in fulfilling God's mission.

Paul's significance extends beyond historical missionary efforts; he embodies the principle of obedience to divine calling, reliance on the Holy Spirit, and perseverance

amidst persecution. His example illustrates the cost and joy of evangelism and discipleship. Through his leadership, the early church transitioned from small, scattered communities into a robust movement impacting diverse cultures, fundamentally shaping Christian identity as a global faith.

Eutychus

Sermon Reference

Eutychus is the young man in Troas who fell asleep during Paul's lengthy sermon, fell from a third-story window, and was raised from the dead by Paul (Acts 20:7-12).

Importance in the Bible

Eutychus is important as a symbol of new life and the ongoing ministry in early Christian communities. His resurrection by Paul serves as a divine sign confirming the apostolic mission and God's presence within the church. The account highlights the human elements within worship and mission—fatigue, vulnerability—and God's empowering grace that transcends these weaknesses. Moreover, Eutychus represents the youth and future generations of the church, reminding believers of the need for continued vision, revival, and engagement to sustain the Great Commission.

Background Context

Eutychus is a little-known figure in the New Testament, only mentioned in Acts 20:7-12 during Paul's third missionary journey. His story occurs in the city of Troas where early Christians gathered to worship. The narrative paints a vivid picture of early Christian gatherings that could last late into the night, emphasizing communal worship, teaching, and fellowship. Eutychus, described as a young man whose name means 'fortunate' or 'favored', symbolizes the youth within the early church, a demographic vital for the continuity and growth of Christianity.

The incident where Eutychus falls asleep and tumbles from a third-story window is unique and stands out in Acts. This dramatic event not only shows the human frailties within the church community but also highlights the power of God working through Paul as he raises Eutychus from the dead. The resurrection of Eutychus points to a pattern seen throughout Acts—God's miracles authenticate the apostolic message and encourage fledgling churches. His story underscores the risks and unpredictable circumstances of missionary and church life, while affirming God's sustaining grace. Although a minor character, Eutychus personally embodies the potential for new life and vision within the younger generation of believers. Against the backdrop of Paul's vision bringing the gospel to Europe, Eutychus represents the next generation's challenges and opportunities. The narrative invites reflection on generational transfer of ministry, inspiration, and spiritual vitality, essential for the ongoing expansion of God's kingdom.

Loren Cunningham

Sermon Reference

Loren Cunningham is noted for a vision he had in 1956 in the Bahamas, which inspired the founding of Youth With A Mission (YWAM), a global evangelical missions organization.

Background Context

Loren Cunningham is a contemporary Christian leader and missionary who founded Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in 1960. His life and ministry emerged in the 20th century context of burgeoning global missions and evangelical expansion. At the age of 20, during a devotional time in the Bahamas, Cunningham experienced a profound visionary encounter involving a dynamic world map covered by waves that represented young people taking the gospel across the earth. This vision dramatically shaped his destiny and the trajectory of his ministry.

YWAM, founded on Cunningham's vision, has since grown into a vast international movement dedicated to training and mobilizing young Christians for missionary work. With over 1,100 locations in more than 180 countries and a staff exceeding 18,000, YWAM's impact on global missions is extraordinary. The organization emphasizes spiritual formation, evangelism, discipleship, and community service, equipping young people to engage in cross-cultural missions and holistic ministry. Cunningham's vision emphasized not only evangelism but the role of youth as energetic agents for spreading the gospel worldwide.

The historical context of Cunningham's vision sits amidst the post-World War II era, a time when missionary activity was reimagined with greater emphasis on indigenous leadership, cultural sensitivity, and outreach to previously unreached people groups. Youth With A Mission pioneered flexible and innovative approaches to evangelism, training, and service, departing from traditional missionary paradigms. His vision is often cited as part of a broader 20th-century missionary renewal, blending personal encounter with worldwide Christian mobilization.

Cunningham's experience exemplifies how visions continue to be instrumental in shaping God's work in contemporary times. His leadership reflects a direct continuity from biblical patterns of visionary calling, such as those demonstrated by Paul and Peter, to the modern global church's missionary enterprise. The expansive reach and adaptability of YWAM affirm the enduring significance of visionary leadership in advancing the gospel in changing cultural and technological landscapes.

William Booth

Sermon Reference

William Booth is mentioned for his famous visit to Buckingham Palace in 1904 and his unwavering ambition for the salvation of souls.

Background Context

William Booth (1829–1912) was a British Methodist preacher and evangelist, best known for founding The Salvation Army in 1865. His ministry was characterized by a passionate commitment to social reform intertwined with evangelical zeal. Emerging from a background of urban poverty and hardship in England during the Industrial Revolution, Booth sought to bring both physical relief and spiritual salvation to the marginalized and destitute. His vision was a holistic approach to ministry combining evangelism with tangible acts of compassion and social justice.

The Salvation Army quickly became an international movement dedicated to ‘soul-winning’ and social ministry. Under Booth’s leadership, it expanded its reach to provide shelter, food, education, and healthcare, along with preaching the gospel. His dual emphasis on saving souls and serving the poor reflected biblical mandates such as caring for ‘the least of these’ (Matthew 25:40) alongside the Great Commission. Booth’s methods integrated paramilitary structure, open-air meetings, and accessible worship styles, marking a new era in evangelism and outreach to the oppressed.

Booth’s historical context includes the profound social upheavals of 19th-century Britain, where rapid urbanization gave rise to widespread poverty, crime, and vice. His ministry addressed these issues directly, pioneering what became known as ‘faith-based social action.’ The movement attracted diverse followers who saw in Booth’s vision a practical expression of Christian love. His advocacy influenced evangelicalism’s engagement with social issues, setting a precedent for later Christian social movements.

Booth’s visit to Buckingham Palace in 1904, and his statement about ambition centering on the souls of men, encapsulate his lifelong priority. This ambition was firmly rooted in the biblical understanding of human salvation as paramount above all worldly honors or material wealth. His legacy contributes to the broader Christian history by exemplifying how vision and passion can bridge personal faith with societal transformation, encouraging believers to both preach the gospel and model Christ’s love through action.

Peter (The Apostle)

Sermon Reference

Peter received a vision on the rooftop of Simon the Tanner which led him to preach the gospel to Gentiles, exemplifying a shift in evangelistic scope.

Importance in the Bible

Peter's importance rests in his pioneering role in the early church's theological and missional development, especially in the inclusion of Gentiles. His rooftop vision initiates a defining paradigm shift, affirming that salvation through Christ is available to all peoples (Acts 10). His example models submission to the Holy Spirit's guidance in carrying forward the gospel in the face of cultural and religious obstacles.

Background Context

Peter, originally named Simon, was one of Jesus' twelve disciples and a central leader in the early church. Known for being outspoken and impetuous, Peter's journey from a fisherman to the 'rock' upon which Jesus said He would build His church (Matthew 16:18) marks him as a foundational figure in Christianity. His leadership was crucial during the transition of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a worldwide movement encompassing both Jews and Gentiles.

The vision on the rooftop of Simon the Tanner, recorded in Acts 10, was a pivotal moment in church history. Peter saw a sheet lowered from heaven containing various unclean animals and was instructed by God to eat. This vision challenged Jewish purity laws and opened the door for acceptance of Gentiles into the Christian community. Peter's obedience led him to the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, where he preached the gospel leading to the first Gentile conversions. This event underscored the universality of salvation and helped define the church's mission beyond ethnic and cultural boundaries.

Peter's ministry included preaching at Pentecost (Acts 2), performing miracles, and guiding the Jerusalem church through challenging times, including debates over Gentile inclusion. His letters, 1 and 2 Peter, provide thoughtful teaching on suffering, holiness, and leadership under persecution. His martyrdom tradition in Rome and recognition as a chief apostle contribute to his honored place in Christian history and theology.

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