



## SAVED TO SERVE

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### "I AM MADE ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN"

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will discuss the meaning of Paul's words, "I am made all things to all men" and how it applies to our lives and our work of evangelism.
  2. What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 9:20-23?
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3. These words of Paul are sometimes used by Christians to validate methods of reaching sinners that contradict Biblical principles. Do these words by Paul give us license to sin and break godly principles when evangelizing? 1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:9
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4. **Note:** We will prove in this lesson that when Paul said "I am made all things to all men," it meant that he used what he held in common with men to win them to Christ. Additionally, it means that he did not at first present objectionable truths to people until after winning their confidence. We will see how using this principle in our daily lives can be beneficial to win souls to Christ, and how contrarily, when this principle is misapplied, it can be detrimental to ourselves and others.

5. Paul said, "unto the Jews I became as a Jew." When preaching to the Jews, how did he identify himself? Acts 21:39; Acts 22:3
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6. What two things did Paul use to reach the Jews?

a) Acts 22:17, 18

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b) Acts 28:17, 23; Acts 26:21-23

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**"Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more."...He labored for men of every nation, tongue, and people, and sought to meet the varied classes on their own ground. He avoided making prominent the difference between himself and them. He strove to lay aside his personal feelings, and to bear with the prejudices of the persons for whom he was laboring." {LP 160.1}**

**"When working for the unconverted Jews, he did not at once begin to preach that which they regarded as dangerous heresy, but commenced with doctrines upon which they could agree. Beginning with Moses and the prophets, he led them gradually from point to point, comparing scripture with scripture, tracing down the fulfillment of prophecy, showing the evidence that Messiah was to have come, and the manner of his coming. He then clearly presented before them the object of his coming, and what he was to have done upon earth, and how he was to have been received." {LP 160.2}**

7. Paul also had a separate method of evangelizing the Gentiles. On various occasions, how did he identify himself which allowed him to testify of Jesus before civil leaders? Acts 22:25-27
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8. Because Paul was a Roman and he appealed to Rome when the Jews sought to kill him, he was able to preach in the courts to individuals such as the governor Felix, King Agrippa, and others in Rome (See Acts chapters 23-26). Besides his testimony, what did Paul preach unto the Gentiles? Acts 26:23; Acts 24:24-25
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9. **Note:** Acts 17 is another example of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. When they had an altar with the inscription, "To the Unknown God," Paul used that to preach to them of Jesus Christ who had died and risen again for their sins. Additionally, Paul preached to the Gentiles that it was not necessary to keep the ceremonial laws of Moses because of Jesus' sacrifice. See Galatians 6:12-18.

**"With the Gentiles his manner of labor was different. He plainly informed them that the sacrificial offerings and ceremonies of the Jews were no longer to be observed, and preached to them Christ and him crucified."** {LP 161.2}

**"The apostle in his labors encountered a class who claimed that the moral law had been made void, with the precepts of the ceremonial system. He vindicated the law of ten commandments, and held it up before the people as a rule of life. He showed that all men are under the most solemn obligation to obey that law, which Christ came to make honorable. He taught that Christ is the only one who can release men from the consequences of breaking the divine law; and that it is only by repentance for their past transgressions, faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and a life of obedience, that men can hope to receive the favor of God."** {LP 161.3}

10. **Note:** Paul gives us an example of "to the weak became I as weak" in 1 Corinthians 8:4, 9-13. Paul knew that there is only one God and that all other gods or idols were false and had no power. However, he explains that if a brother was convicted on the point of not eating food offered to idols and saw another brother such as Paul, eating food offered to idols, it would embolden the weaker vessel to sin. He was teaching not to negatively influence another person to sin by your example.

**"Paul did not make light of the conscientious scruples of those who were weak in faith or dull of comprehension. He did not display his superior knowledge, and show contempt for their ignorance; but he placed himself as nearly as possible on a level with them, manifesting for them true sympathy and love, and leading them to nobler and more elevated views. He says, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." By cheerful, patient kindness and Christian courtesy, he won the hearts of the people, quieted their prejudices, and endeavored to teach them the truth without exciting their combativeness. All this he did because he loved the souls of men, and desired to bring them to Christ that they might be saved."** {LP 162.1}

11. What other group of individuals in sacred history came close to others in order to evangelize, and how did they do it? See quotation below.

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**"While the Waldenses regarded the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom, they were not blind to the importance of a contact with the world, a knowledge of men and of active life, in expanding the mind and quickening the perceptions. From their schools in the mountains some of the youth were sent to institutions of learning in the cities of France or Italy, where was a more extended field for study, thought, and observation than in their native Alps. The youth thus sent forth were exposed to temptation, they witnessed vice, they encountered Satan's wily agents, who urged upon them the most subtle heresies and the most dangerous deceptions. But their education from childhood had been of a character to prepare them for all this."** {GC 69.3}

**"In the schools whither they went, they were not to make confidants of any. Their garments were so prepared as to conceal their greatest treasure—the precious manuscripts of the Scriptures. These, the fruit of months and years of toil, they carried with them, and whenever they could do so without exciting suspicion, they cautiously placed some portion in the way of those whose hearts seemed open to receive the truth. From their mother's knee the Waldensian youth had been trained with this purpose in view; they understood their work and faithfully performed it. Converts to the true faith were won in these institutions of learning, and frequently its principles were found to be permeating the entire school; yet the papal leaders could not, by the closest inquiry, trace the so-called corrupting heresy to its source."** {GC 70.1}

12. In the time of Jesus, what was the relationship like between the Jews and the Samaritans? John 4:9, 27

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13. **Note:** Despite the prejudice that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans, Jesus wisely came close to the woman by asking her for a favor, a drink of water. He did not dwell on the differences between the two races of people but won her confidence by using what they had in common (their need of water) and directed her to Himself as the Messiah.

**"A woman of Samaria approached, and seeming unconscious of His presence, filled her pitcher with water. As she turned to go away, Jesus asked her for a drink. Such a favor no Oriental would withhold. In the East, water was called "the gift of God." To offer a drink to the thirsty traveler was held to be a duty so sacred that the Arabs of the desert would go out of their way in order to perform it. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour was seeking to find the key to this heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of a kindness might have been rejected; but trust awakens trust. The King of heaven came to this outcast soul, asking a service at her hands. He who made the ocean, who controls the waters of the great deep, who opened the springs and channels of the earth, rested from His weariness at Jacob's well, and was dependent upon a stranger's kindness for even the gift of a drink of water."** {DA 183.4}

14. We will now transition to see how the principle of becoming all things to all men can be misapplied and bring with it lasting negative effects. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the apostles taught that there was no longer a need to keep the ceremonial laws which included the practice of circumcision. To whom primarily was Peter called to preach the gospel, and to which group of people was Paul called to preach the gospel? Galatians 2:2, 7, 8

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15. What did Paul rebuke Peter for doing when other Jews were around? Galatians 2:12-16 **Answer:** Peter ate with the Gentiles but separated himself from them whenever the Jews were around because the Gentiles were uncircumcised. Therefore, Paul rebuked him for being a hypocrite because Peter knew that people were not justified by the law but by faith in Jesus. When Peter was with the Gentiles, he was trying to be like the Gentiles, but when he was with the Jews, he acted like them by holding on to their prejudices and those specific customs that were no longer essential for salvation!

16. Notwithstanding Paul's knowledge of Christ and the gospel, he too made mistakes. Near the end of his life, he took the principle of being "all things to all men" too far and this prematurely shortened his ministry. What vow did Paul take which was unnecessary for him to take since it was connected to the ceremonial laws? Acts 18:18; Numbers 6:18

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a) Why did Paul intend to go to Jerusalem? Acts 18:21 (Note: This too was done away at the cross and was no longer necessary to observe).

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17. When Paul was come to Jerusalem, what did the brethren unwisely counsel him to do because of the rumors by the Jews that Paul taught people to disregard the law of Moses? Acts 21:18-24 (The answer is in verses 23-24)

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a) What happened to Paul as a result of heeding this counsel by the Christian brethren to appease the Jews? Acts 21:26-27, 31-33; Acts 25:10, 12

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18. Was it God who prompted the Christian brethren and Paul to make those concessions to appease the Jews? Read the following quotations.

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**"The brethren hoped that Paul, by following the course suggested, might give a decisive contradiction to the false reports concerning him. They assured him that the decision of the former council concerning the Gentile converts and the ceremonial law, still held good. But the advice now given was not consistent with that decision. The Spirit of God did not prompt this instruction; it was the fruit of cowardice. The leaders of the church in Jerusalem knew that by non-conformity to the ceremonial law, Christians would bring upon themselves the hatred of the Jews and expose themselves to persecution.** The Sanhedrin was doing its utmost to hinder the progress of the gospel. Men were chosen by this body to follow up the apostles, especially Paul, and in every possible way to oppose their work. Should the believers in Christ be condemned before the Sanhedrin as breakers of the law, they would suffer swift and severe punishment as apostates from the Jewish faith." {AA 404.1}

**"Many of the Jews who had accepted the gospel still cherished a regard for the ceremonial law and were only too willing to make unwise concessions, hoping thus to gain the confidence of their countrymen, to remove their prejudice, and to win them to faith in Christ as the world's Redeemer.** Paul realized that so long as many of the leading members of the church at Jerusalem should continue to cherish prejudice against him, they would work constantly to counteract his influence. **He felt that if by any reasonable concession he could win them to the truth he would remove a great obstacle to the success of the gospel in other places. But he was not authorized of God to concede as much as they asked.**" {AA 405.1}

**"When we think of Paul's great desire to be in harmony with his brethren, his tenderness toward the weak in the faith, his reverence for the apostles who had been with Christ, and for James, the brother of the Lord, and his purpose to become all things to all men so far as he could without sacrificing principle—when we think of all this, it is less surprising that he was constrained to deviate from the firm, decided course that he had hitherto followed. But instead of accomplishing the desired object, his efforts for conciliation only precipitated the crisis, hastened his predicted sufferings, and resulted in separating him from his brethren, depriving the church of one of its strongest pillars, and bringing sorrow to Christian hearts in every land."** [AA 405.2]

19. Paul's life is both an example and warning to us about how we should relate to others to win them to Christ. Let us now meditate on the closing points of this lesson. Chiefly, who became "all things to all men"? Philippians 2:5-8; Romans 8:3

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20. What kind of people did Jesus call to repentance? How many are guilty before God? Matthew 9:9-13; Romans 3:23

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21. Like Paul, how should we view ourselves so that we can see our great need of Jesus? 1 Timothy 1:15

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22. Did Jesus break godly principles to win sinners to Himself? Therefore, whose example should we follow? 1 Peter 2:21-23; Hebrews 4:14-15

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23. What does Jesus promise when we are feeling weak physically, mentally, and spiritually? 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

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24. What are Jesus' words to us when we feel like our sins are too great to be pardoned? Isaiah 1:18

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25. Once we are experiencing this salvation, who are we to share it with? Revelation 14:6

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26. Like Jesus, what characteristics must we have in the work of winning souls?

a) Proverbs 11:30 \_\_\_\_\_

b) Matthew 10:16 \_\_\_\_\_

27. **Note:** In Matthew 10:11-15, the Lord gives us the underlying theme as we seek to be all things to all men. We are to meet the people where they are as we share the gospel with them. Then, those that receive the message of truth should be the ones that we continue to work with. If the person is not willing to hear the message, we should respect their decision and continue to look for others who are willing to hear the truth. When we use Christ's method of evangelism we will find success as we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us.