



Chapter 28

The Resurrection

**By: Michael Fronczak
Bible Study Resource Center
564 Schaeffer Dr.
Coldwater, Michigan 49036**

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Theme: The resurrection of Jesus; the giving of the Great Commission

Matthew's account of the Resurrection includes fewer details than the accounts of Luke and John. Yet to him alone we are indebted for the report of the soldiers (vv. 11-15) and for the full baptismal formula (v. 19). The substantial agreement of the four narratives, coupled with a wide variety of details and viewpoints, demonstrates their truthfulness and yet their independence of one another.

The Roman Soldiers

Roman soldiers: They enlisted for 25 years! If you served the 25 years you had it made; land was granted to you and all sorts of other benefits. Had to be a Roman citizen to join. Day and night the soldiers would train, unquestionably the best for that day and age. They had incredible ability to be disciplined. If they were sent to conquer a city, they would build a wall around it and be prepared to camp there for 10, 15 or even 20 years, as long as it took to starve the people out! They took what they did seriously, and they were so effective at it that they conquered the known world!

In the Roman army, if you were caught sleeping on watch, the penalty was death. In Matthew we see some of these men on a watch. The Roman soldiers were committed to make sure that nothing happened to that grave.

McGee Introduction: The arch of the gospel rests upon two great pillars: (1) the death of Christ, and (2) the resurrection of Christ. Listen to the apostle Paul as he defines the gospel: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

In the previous chapter we have seen the death and burial of the Lord Jesus, and in this chapter we will see His Resurrection. Both are essential to my salvation and yours. "Who [Jesus] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

The unique fact of the gospel is the Resurrection. All other religions record the death of their leader. *Only* the Christian faith records the Resurrection of its Founder. All other religious leaders are dead. *Only Jesus is alive*. This is important and imperative to know.

No gospel writer gives the complete details which concern the Resurrection. Each records that aspect of the Resurrection which contributes to the furtherance of the purpose which the Spirit had in mind. Therefore the four Gospels present a composite picture. No writer is seeking to give the entire and complete record but only that which serves his purpose. All the gospel accounts need to be put together to get the total picture, and no conflict or contradiction will appear among them.

Regarding the order of events connected with the resurrection of Christ, I would like to share with you a very fine note found in *The Scofield Reference Bible* on page 1043:

The order of *events*, combining the four narratives, is as follows: Three women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, start for the sepulchre, followed by other women bearing spices. The three find the stone rolled away, and Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples (Lk. 23:55-24:9; John 20:1, 2). Mary, the mother of James and Joses, draws nearer the tomb and sees the angel of the Lord (Mt. 28:2). She goes back to meet the other women following

with the spices. Meanwhile Peter and John, warned by Mary Magdalene, arrive, look in, and go away (John 20:3–10). Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees the two angels and then Jesus (John 20:11–18), and goes as He bade her to tell the disciples. Mary (mother of James and Joses), meanwhile, has met the women with the spices and, returning with them, they see the *two* angels (Lk 24:4, 5; Mk. 16:5). They also receive the angelic message, and, going to seek the disciples, are met by Jesus (Mt. 28:8–10).

The order of our Lord's *appearances* would seem to be: On the day of His resurrection: (1) To Mary Magdalene (John 20:14–18). (2) To the women returning from the tomb with the angelic message (Mt. 28:8–10). (3) To Peter, probably in the afternoon (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5). (4) To the Emmaus disciples toward evening (Lk. 24:13–31). (5) To the apostles, except Thomas (Lk. 24:36–43; John 20:19–24). Eight days afterward: (1) To the apostles, Thomas being present (John 20:24–29). In Galilee: (1) To the seven by the Lake of Tiberias (John 21:1–23). (2) On a mountain, to the apostles and five hundred brethren (1 Cor. 15:6). At Jerusalem and Bethany again: (1) To James (1 Cor. 15:7). (2) To the eleven (Mt. 28:16–20; Mk. 16:14–20; Lk. 24:33–53; Acts 1:3–12). To Paul: (1) Near Damascus (Acts 9:3–6; 1 Cor. 15:8). (2) In the temple (Acts 22:17–21; 23:11). To Stephen, outside Jerusalem (Acts 7:55). To John on Patmos (Rev. 1:10–19). Matthew presents Jesus as the King. The features of the resurrection story which contain the element of the spectacular and sensational are given. There is a fanfare of trumpets in the account given in Matthew. He was born a King. He lived as a King. He died a King, and He arose from the dead a King. Matthew tells of the earthquake, of the angel's descent, of the stone rolled away, of the frightened guards, and of the effort by the religious rulers to cover up the fact of the empty tomb.

Compare Luke's gospel with Matthew's account. There is quietness and a subdued tone which characterizes Luke's purpose. The women come in the stillness of the early morning, and the stone is already rolled away. The Lord Jesus appears to two unknown disciples on an obscure road leading to Emmaus and then to the disciples in a secret room of a house of unknown address. Luke is recording the human story while Matthew is presenting Him in His kingly office. Both records are accurate, as are the records in the other two gospels, but they are presented from four different viewpoints.¹

Why is Easter different from Passover?

Easter: Anticentus of Rome claimed the "church" should recognize the first Sunday after the first full moon following the Spring Equinox, as the day of Y'shua's resurrection (which later was called Easter), and the Friday before that as being the day of crucifixion (Good Friday). In addition, because the Roman Church wanted nothing to do with Judaism they decreed that if Easter ever fell on the same day as Passover (a rare occurrence), Easter had to be postponed one week.

Christ was not crucified on Good Friday – He was crucified on Passover, 14th of Nisan. Christ was not resurrected on Easter Sunday – He was resurrected on Feast of First Fruits on the 17th of Nisan.

¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:151). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

(Deuteronomy 21:22-23) ²²And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: ²³His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Matthew 28:1

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

‘Sabbath’ should be “Sabbaths” plural. Denotatively this means that there was more than one Sabbath. Sabbath does not just mean Saturday, it can also mean “Holy Day.” Or “High Holy Day” Connotatively, it might be construed that “at the end of the Sabbaths” could mean at this point the Sabbaths are over. The Sabbaths were ordained for man, for rest. From this point on we can rest in Jesus Christ as well as rest on the Sabbath.

[end of the sabbath] Literally, the end of the Sabbaths or after the end of the week. See Sunday the Christian Sabbath.

[sabbath] The weekly Sabbath, not the special Sabbath of the feast which was two days before. See Leviticus 23:7.

[began to dawn] *epiphosko*, Gr 2020, Strong’s *ep-ee-foce’-ko*; a form of Greek 2017 (epiphauo); to begin to *grow light* :- begin to dawn, × draw on. Very early in the morning (Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1) and when yet dark (John 20:1).²

[began to dawn] Two points are important to understand here. First of all, Y’shua did not rise from the grave on Sunday morning, as most Christians believe, for the tomb was found empty shortly after dark the evening before:

(Matt 28:1) *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn [epiphosko], toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*

Many look at the English word “dawn” and conclude, without a word study in the Greek, that is automatically means early morning. However, what the Greek word *epiphosko* really means is “to draw on,” or “draw near.”

The only other place where this word is used can be found in the book of Luke, where it describes the end of the Preparation Day and the “drawing near” of the High Sabbath day. This certainly would not be early morning, as the Sabbath day always begins at sunset, not sunrise. This would be in line with the following verse describing the time of day that our Savior was placed in the tomb, the only other place where *epiphosko* appears:

² Dake Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

(Luke 23:53-54) *And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man before was laid. And that day was a preparation and Sabbath drew on (epiphosko).*

Barnes: In the end of the sabbath. The word *end* here means the same as after the sabbath; i.e., after the sabbath was fully completed, or finished, and may be expressed in this manner: "In the night following the sabbath, for the sabbath closed at sunset, as it began to dawn," etc.³

Barnes: As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week. The word *dawn* is not of necessity in the original. The word there properly means, as the first day *approached*, or drew on, without specifying the precise time. Mark says, Mark 16:1,2, that it was after "the sabbath was past, and very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun;" i.e., not that the sun *was risen*, but that it was about to rise, or at the early break of day. Luke says, Luke 24:1 that it was very early; in the Greek, *deep twilight*, or when there was scarcely any light. John (John 20:1) says, it was "early, when it was yet dark;" that is, it was not yet full daylight, or the sun had not yet risen. The time when they came, therefore, was at the break of day, when the sun was about to rise, but while it was yet so dark as to render objects obscure, or not distinctly visible.

Barnes: Came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. From Mary Magdalene Christ had cast out seven devils. Grateful for his great mercy, she was one of his firmest and most faithful followers, and was first at the sepulchre, and was first permitted to see her risen Lord. The *other Mary* was not the mother of Jesus, but the mother of James and Joses, Mark 16:1. Mark says that Salome attended them. Salome was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of James and John. From Luke, (Luke 24:10,) it appears that Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, (Luke 8:3,) was with them. These four women, Mark says, having brought sweet spices, came to anoint him. They had prepared a part of them on the evening before the Sabbath, Luke 23:56. They now *completed* the preparation, and bought more: or it may be that it means merely that having bought sweet spices, without specifying the time when, they came now to embalm him. John mentions only Mary Magdalene. He does this probably because his object was to give a particular account of her interview with the risen Saviour. There is no contradiction among the evangelists; for, while one mentions only the names of a part only who were there, he does not deny that *others* were present also. It is an old maxim, that "he who mentions a few, does not deny that there are more."

The other Mary was not Jesus' mother. She could have been the wife of Clopas (John 19:25). Or, if she was the mother of James and John (Matthew 27:56), she may have been Jesus' aunt.

³ Barnes' Notes

After Shabbat, toward dawn on Sunday, literally, “And late of the *Shabbatot*, at the drawing on toward [number] one of the *Shabbatot* [= weeks].” Jewish days begin at sundown, so that “the first day of the week” includes Saturday night, *Motza·ei-Shabbat* (“the going out of *Shabbat*”); see Ac 20:7&N, 1C 16:2&N.⁴

Ten distinct resurrection appearances of Christ prior to His ascension can be documented in Scripture (cf. also Mark 15:24; 1 Cor 15:4). The order of those appearances follows: (1) to Mary Magdalene near the tomb (John 20:11-18); (2) to the women returning from the tomb (28:9, 10); (3) to Peter (Luke 24:34); (4) to the disciples approaching Emmaus in the evening (Luke 24:13-32); (5) to all the disciples except Thomas, who was absent (Luke 24:36-43); (6) to the disciples, including Thomas, on Sunday night one week later (John 20:26-31); (7) to seven disciples beside the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25); (8) to more than 500 people possibly on an appointed mountain in Galilee (28:16-20; possibly parallels 1 Cor 15:6); (9) to James the half brother of Jesus (1 Cor 15:7); and (10) to the apostles at the ascension (Acts 1:3-11).⁵

Yashanet.com: In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, As noted, Yeshua and His followers remained in the faith of Israel and its Torah, and this observed the Sabbath on the "last" day of the week, i.e., from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. The Biblical method of counting the "days of the week," is Day 1, Day 2, etc, through Day 6, followed by the Sabbath.

Spurgeon: While the Jewish Sabbath lasted, they paid to it due respect. They did not even go to the sepulchre to perform the kindly offices of embalmment; these holy women found their way back to their Lord's tomb. Woman must be first at the sepulchre as she was last at the cross. We may well forget that she was first in the transgression; the honor which Christ put upon her took away that shame. Who but Mary Magdalene should be the first at the tomb? Out of her Christ had cast seven devils, and now she acts as if into her he had sent seven angels. She had received so much grace that she was full of love to her Lord.

Matthew 28:2

And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Why did the angel move the stone? To let the girls in!

[there was a great earthquake] Sometime between sunset Saturday and dawn Sunday, this took place. The resurrection had already happened by the time the women arrived at the tomb before daylight (Mark 16:4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1). It took place on the first day of the week after the regular weekly Sabbath, could have been Saturday evening after

⁴Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 28:1). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

⁵ Believers Study Bible

the Sabbath or very early on the first day for the Jews, but still Saturday night. (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2,9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1,19) and three days and three nights after the crucifixion (Matthew 12:40).

[earthquake] The second one in three days (Matthew 27:51).

[descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it] Had descended and was sitting on it when they arrived (Matthew 28:5; Mark 16:5).

Life Application: The stone was not rolled back so Jesus could get out, but so others could get in and see that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, just as he had promised.

Matthew 28:3

His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

Cf. Heb 1:7 gives a physical description of angels.

[like lightning, and his raiment white as snow] This kind of appearance demonstrated by what power the stone had been rolled away. On other occasions angelic appearances were like men without such show of power (Hebrews 13:2).

It is interesting to note the description of the angel because this is very unusual in Scripture (see Dan. 10:6; Rev. 10:1 for other descriptions).

Interestingly, "the angel of the Lord" is often associated with the Messiah. How then could this angel be the Messiah as He is speaking of Himself being elsewhere? (See Matthew 27:46).

Matthew 28:4

And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

[keepers did shake, and became as dead men] As soon as they could get away they fled to tell the story (Matthew 28:11).

[shake] Examples of shaking before God:

1. Eliphaz (Job 4:14)
2. Moses (Hebrews 12:21)
3. Ezekiel (Ezekiel 12:18)
4. Many men (Daniel 10:5-7)
5. The guard (Matthew 28:4)
6. Paul (Acts 9:6)
7. The jailer (Acts 16:29)

[dead men] Examples of prostrations:

1. Abraham (Genesis 15:12-17)
2. Moses (Deut. 9:18,25)
3. Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:28; Ezekiel 3:23; Ezekiel 4:4-17; Ezekiel 43:3)
4. Daniel (Daniel 8:17; Daniel 10:5-19)
5. Disciples (Matthew 17:6)
6. The guard (Matthew 28:4)
7. Paul (Acts 9:4)
8. Peter (Acts 10:10-16)
9. John (Rev. 1:17; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 22:8)

Clarke: The keepers—became as dead men—God can, by one and the same means, comfort his servants, and terrify his enemies. The resurrection of Christ is a subject of terror to the servants of sin, and a subject of consolation to the sons of God; because it is a proof of the resurrection of both, the one to shame and everlasting contempt—the other to eternal glory and joy.⁶

Matthew 28:5

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

The angel “answered” them, the woman must have done something to prompt an answer, perhaps a scream or even a gasp.

Clarke: I know that ye seek Jesus—Speaking after the manner of men, these women deserved to be the first witnesses of the resurrection of Christ: during life they ministered to him, and in death they were not divided. They attended him to the CROSS, notwithstanding their attachment to him exposed them to the most imminent danger; and now they come to watch and weep at his TOMB. The common opinion is, that women are more fickle and less courageous than men. The reverse of this I believe to be the truth, in those who are thoroughly converted to God; and who, previously to conversion, whether man or woman, can be trusted in any case?

Matthew 28:6

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

[**he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay**] Angels testify of the resurrection (Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5-6,23).

He is risen, as he said. He had often predicted that he would rise, but the disciples did not understand it, and consequently did not expect it, Matthew 16:21, 20:19.

Life Application Notes: 5-7 The angel who announced the good news of the resurrection to the women gave them four messages: (1) *Do not be afraid*. The reality of the

⁶ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

resurrection brings joy, not fear. When you are afraid, remember the empty tomb. (2) *He is not here.* Jesus is not dead and is not to be looked for among the dead. He is alive, with his people. (3) *Come and see.* The women could check the evidence themselves. The tomb was empty then, and it is empty today. The resurrection is a historical fact. (4) *Go quickly and tell.* They were to spread the joy of the resurrection. We too are to spread the great news about Jesus' resurrection.

Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. Why? (1) Just as he promised, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that he will accomplish all he has promised. (2) Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ is ruler of God's eternal kingdom, not a false prophet or imposter. (3) We can be certain of our resurrection because he was resurrected. Death is not the end—there is future life. (4) The power that brought Jesus back to life is available to us to bring our spiritually dead selves back to life. (5) The resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world. Jesus is more than just a human leader; he is the Son of God.

He has been raised. This is the central fact about the Messiah—he is not dead but alive! Many people think of Yeshua as a great teacher who lived and died two thousand years ago: end of story! But the same documents that tell of his life, teachings and death also tell, in the same matter-of-fact way, of his resurrection—and not merely of a resuscitation only to die again later, but of a new creation by God (Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15, Messianic Jews 7), so that he can never die but is our brother, savior, king and *cohen gadol* forever. Faith in a dead Messiah is no faith at all. To trust in Yeshua is to trust in someone who is alive and is in intimate, continuing relationship with everyone in his Community (Yochanan 17).⁷

This is the divine announcement of the Resurrection. Jesus had left the tomb before the stone had been rolled away. Later He would enter a room with a locked door. The glorified body of Jesus was radically different from the body with which He was born.⁸

Matthew 28:7

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

We are to find later that they meet in a preappointed place. Here the angels denote “Galilee,” which is a fairly large area, what we would call a “county.”

His Resurrection

Jesus' resurrection is the most important fact of our lives. The fact that He died for our sins is important because it provides the basis by which God can forgive us, but it has no validity unless He rose from the dead. The fact that the tomb was empty is proof that His

⁷Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 28:6). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

⁸McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:152). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

redemption is sufficient (innocent and adequate). If His enemies could have produced the body, or a body, they would have done so.

Josephus, *Antiquities*, book 18, chapter 3, section 3: Josephus describes the fact that Jesus appeared to his disciples on the third day. This is documented by a historian who is an unbeliever!

Who raised Jesus from the dead? According to Hebrews 13:20, it was the Father. According to the gospel of John 2:19, 20, 21, and John 10:17,18 it was the Son. On the other hand, Rom 8:11 describes it as the work of the Holy Spirit. This really leads to the fact that all the great acts, each event can be found ascribed to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity is established in the linguistics of the text.⁹

Clarke: Go quickly and tell his disciples—Thus these faithful women proclaim the Gospel to those who were afterwards to be the teachers of the whole human race! Behold what honor God puts upon those who persevere in his truth, and continue to acknowledge him before men!

McGee: The angelic announcement ceased at this point. From here on the message would be told by human lips—“Come, see.... go quickly, and tell.” But before any individual attempts to witness, he must first have an unshakable conviction of the truth of the Resurrection. He must have it settled in his own mind that Christ died for his sins and was buried—“Come, see the place where the Lord lay”—and that Christ rose again—“He is not here: for he is risen.” Then with these convictions, he can “go quickly, and tell.” My friend, you and I are to *go*, and we are to *tell*.¹⁰

Matthew 28:8

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

They Heard He Was Alive (Matt. 28:2–8)

“And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred” (Matt. 28:2, NASB). Two angels had appeared (Luke 24:4) and one of them had rolled the stone away from the door. Of course, the soldiers on duty were greatly frightened by this sudden demonstration of supernatural power. The stone was not rolled away to permit Jesus to come out, for He had already left the tomb. It was rolled back so that the people could see for themselves that the tomb was empty.

One of the angels spoke to the women and calmed their fears. “He is not here! Come, and see!” Keep in mind that these women, as well as the disciples, did not expect Jesus to be alive.

What did they see in the tomb? The graveclothes lying on the stone shelf, still wrapped in the shape of the body (John 20:5–7). Jesus had passed through the graveclothes and left them behind as evidence that He was alive. They lay there like an

⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Matthew, khouse.org

¹⁰ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:152). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

empty cocoon. There was no sign of struggle, the graveclothes were not in disarray. Even the napkin (which had been wrapped around His face) was folded carefully in a place by itself.

We cannot examine this evidence in the same way the believers did that first day. But we do have the evidence of the Word of God. Jesus was not held by the bonds of death (Acts 2:24). He had promised to arise from the dead, and His Word was never broken.

The remarkable change in the early believers is another proof of His resurrection. One day they were discouraged and hiding in defeat. The next day they were declaring His resurrection and walking in joyful victory. In fact, they were willing to die for the truth of the Resurrection. If all of this were a manufactured tale, it could never have changed their lives or enabled them to lay down their lives as martyrs.

There were over 500 witnesses who saw Jesus alive at one time (1 Cor. 15:3–8). These appearances of the risen Christ were of such a nature that they could not be explained as hallucinations or self-deception. The people who saw Him were surprised. It would have been impossible for over 500 people to suffer hallucinations at the same time. Even the Apostle Paul, who was an enemy of the church, saw the risen Christ; that experience transformed his life (Acts 9).

Of course, Christians have experienced His resurrection power in their own lives. While the inward, subjective experience *alone* would not prove our Lord's historic resurrection, when combined with the other evidences, it adds great weight to the case. Still it is possible for people to be self-deluded. "Believers" in all kinds of cults will claim their way is true because of what they have experienced. But Christians have the weight of church history, Scripture, and dependable witnesses to back up their own personal experiences of faith.

"Come and see!" was followed by "Go and tell!" We must not keep the Resurrection news to ourselves. The angel sent the women to tell (of all people) Christ's own disciples. They should have been expecting the news, but instead, they questioned it even when they heard it.¹¹

Spurgeon: That seems a strange mixture, fear and great joy, awe and delight, doubt and faith; yet the joy was greater than the fear. It was not joy and great fear, but "fear and great joy." Have we never had that mixture — drops of grief, like April showers, and peace and joy, like sunlight from heaven, making a glorious rainbow reminding us of God's covenant of peace? A holy fear, mingled with great joy, is one of the sweetest compounds we can bring to God's altar; such were the spices these holy women took away from Christ's sepulchre. Fear and joy would both make them run to bring his disciples word. Either of these emotions gives speed to the feet; but when "fear and great joy" are combined, running is the only pace that records with the messengers' feelings.

¹¹Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Mt 28:2). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

Matthew 28:9

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

The Twelve Appearances of Christ:

1. To Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:15-16)
2. To the women at the tomb (Matthew 28:9)
3. To two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31)
4. To Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5)
5. To the ten apostles (John 20:19)
6. To the eleven apostles (John 20:26)
7. To the seven apostles (John 21:1-22; this was after the second Sunday)
8. To the eleven apostles on a certain mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16)
9. To the twelve apostles, including Matthias (1 Cor. 15:5; Acts 1:26)
10. To five hundred brethren (1 Cor. 15:6)
11. To James, the Lord's brother (1 Cor. 15:7; Galatians 1:19)
12. To all the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7; Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-12,26)

[hail] An old Saxon word for health.

[held him by the feet] This was after He had told Mary not to touch Him for He was going to ascend to God (John 20:17). It proves that they could touch Him, but not detain Him at this time.

[worshipped him] Prostrated themselves in worship.

Clarke: Jesus met them—Christ bestows his graces and consolations by degrees, first by his angels, and then by himself. He does not reveal himself to incredulous and disobedient souls; he appears not even to these women till he has tried their faith and obedience by his ministering angels.

All hail—Anglo-Saxon, Health be to you!, Be ye safe, rejoice.

Held him by the feet. Or threw themselves prostrate before him. This was the usual posture of supplication. See 2 Kings 4:37. It does not mean that they took hold of his feet, but only that they cast themselves down before him.

Spurgeon: Saints running in the way of obedience are likely to be met by Jesus. Some Christians travel to heaven so slowly that they are overtaken by follies or by faults, by slumber or by Satan; but he who is Christ's running footman shall meet his Master while he is speeding on his way.

Matthew 28:10

Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

First time that Jesus calls His disciples, “brethren.” And that is predicted in Ps 22:22.

[**brethren**] Christ used this endearing term to let His disciples know that He would not reproach them for their past cowardice and unbelief and that all the past was forgiven and forgotten forever.

Clarke: Go, tell my brethren—This is the first time our Lord called his disciples by this endearing name: they no doubt thought that their Lord would reproach them with their past cowardice and infidelity; but, in speaking thus, he gives them a full assurance, in the most tender terms, that all that was passed was as buried for ever.

Barnes: Go tell my brethren. There is something exceedingly tender in the appellation here used, "my brethren." Though he was risen from the dead—though about to be exalted to heaven—yet he did not disdain to call his disciples his brethren. This was calculated still farther to silence the fears of the women, and inspire them with confidence.

Barnes: Into Galilee. Galilee was the northern part of the land. There the Saviour commenced his ministry; and there, away from the noise and confusion of the city, he purposed again to meet them, in retirement and quietness, to satisfy them of his resurrection, and to commission them to go forth and preach the everlasting gospel.

Jesus told the women to pass a message on to the disciples—that he would meet them in Galilee, as he had previously told them (Mark 14:28). But the disciples, afraid of the religious leaders, stayed hidden behind locked doors in Jerusalem (John 20:19). So Jesus met them first there (Luke 24:36) and then later in Galilee (John 21).

1–10 The empty tomb and the risen Lord (cf. Mk. 16:1–8; Lk. 24:1–11.)

This is not an account of how Jesus rose from the dead but of how his resurrection was discovered. The miraculous removal of the stone was not in order to let Jesus out but to let the women in to see the empty tomb. Each of the gospels presents a different story of how the fact was discovered, but none of them describes the event itself.

Unlike the Jewish leaders, the women had properly rested on the Sabbath. Now they could return *to look at the tomb*; Matthew mentions no intention to go in. But the appearance of *an angel of the Lord* (described in language appropriate to God himself; Dn. 7:9; 10:6) changed that. He had come to show them that Jesus had already *risen*, and to that end he removed the stone and showed them inside the empty chamber *where he lay*. The women should not have been surprised, since this was *just as he said*, and the angel went on to remind them (7) of a more specific promise of Jesus, to meet the disciples again in *Galilee* (26:32). The women’s reaction, *afraid yet filled with joy*, is surely a very natural response. The angel himself was terrifying (4), and the absence of

cf. compare

the body unnerving. But, however little they yet understood it, here was hope in place of despair and the promise of seeing Jesus again.

His disciples would have to wait until Galilee to meet Jesus, but not so *the women*. Only Matthew mentions their meeting with the risen Jesus in vs 9–10 (though their *clasping his feet*, and the message to *my brothers* remind us of Mary Magdalene in Jn. 20:17). In a society in which women were second-class citizens, their prominence in the accounts of Jesus' resurrection is striking. Jesus repeated what the angel had said, but with the lovely addition of the phrase *my brothers*: after the disciples' failure in 26:56, this would have conveyed a vital message of reassurance.¹²

Matthew 28:11

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

Some of the watch. Some of the guard that had been set around the tomb to keep it safe. Probably the leaders, or officers, came to give a true account of what had happened.

Spurgeon: While good people were active, bad people were active, too. Some of the watch, having recovered from their fright, came into the city to report the startling scenes they had witnessed. It is noteworthy that they did not go to Pilate; they had been placed at the disposal of the chief priests, and therefore, while some of them remained on guard at the sepulchre, others of the soldiers went to their ecclesiastical employers, and showed unto them all the things that were done, so far as they knew the particulars. A startling story they had to tell; and one that brought fresh terror to the priests, and led to further sin on their part.

Matthew 28:12

And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

[large money unto the soldiers] How much is not stated, but they had to pay from 12 to 72 men depending on how many were used in the change of guard every 3 hours for 3 days. It was many times more than what they paid for the betrayal. That is just like sin. One has to commit much more sin trying to cover up than what he commits in the first sin. Even then, sin is never fully covered by man. It will always be found out. But sin can be forgiven, covered, cleansed, and forsaken by a sinner's confession and faith in the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7-9; Ephes. 1:7; Rev. 1:5).

Barnes: **And when they were assembled,** They deemed the matter of so much importance as to justify the calling together of the great council of the nation.

¹²Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Mt 28:1). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

Notwithstanding all their caution, it was plain that the body of Jesus was gone. It was farther plain that the disciples would affirm that he was raised. It was not improbable that Jesus would himself appear, and convince multitudes that he was the Messiah; and that the guilt of putting him to death would, after all their caution and cunning, be charged on them. They had been at great pains to procure his death. They had convinced Pilate that he was dead. They had placed a guard for the express purpose of preventing his being taken. It would be in vain, after this, to *pretend* that he was not dead; that he was in a swoon; that he died in appearance only. They had shut themselves out from this, which would have been the most plausible plea; and whatever course they might now adopt, they were *obliged* to proceed on the admission that he had been *really dead*, and that all proper measures had been taken to prevent his being stolen. They concluded, after consultation, that but one way was left—to bribe the soldiers, to induce them to tell a falsehood, and to attempt to convince the world that Jesus, in spite of themselves, and in the face of all probability, and been really stolen.

Large money. Much money. This was given to bribe them; to induce them to conceal the truth; and to affirm what they knew was false.

Spurgeon: For money Christ was betrayed, and for money the truth about his resurrection was kept back as far as it could be: They gave large money unto the soldiers. Money has had a hardening effect on some of the highest servants of God, and all who have to touch the filthy lucre have need to pray for grace to keep them from being harmed by being brought into contact with it.

The lie put into the soldiers' mouths was so palpable that no one ought to have been deceived by it: "Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept."

A Roman soldier would have committed suicide sooner than confess that he had slept at his post of duty. If they were asleep, how did they know what happened? The chief priests and elders were not afraid of Pilate hearing of their lie; or if he did, they knew that golden arguments would be as convincing with him as with the common soldiers: "If this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you."

The soldiers acted just as many men have continued to do from their day to ours: They took the money, and did as they were taught.

"What makes a doctrine straight and clear?
About five hundred pounds a year,"

Matthew 28:13

Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

Romans do not sleep on watch! The whole story is preposterous, it is *possible* for a guard to fall asleep, but not the whole watch. The disciples would have had to move the huge stone quietly without waking the guards.

Why did these Roman soldiers go to the Chief Priests first? Perhaps, they knew that the Chief Priests would have the biggest equity in the result. They also recognized that it might be worth money. They were in deep trouble, but they were able to get bribes and leverage on the boss so they would not be accountable for their failure. If the story was true, why would they not track down the disciples, and search for the body.

“Much money”: Probably more than 30 pieces of silver!

[Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept] Seven points proving their story absurd:

1. That so many guards under a death penalty would all fall asleep.
2. That they could remain asleep during the moving of a big stone and body.
3. That several disciples needed to move such a stone and body could be quiet enough not to rouse a single guard.
4. That disciples could accomplish this in secret working among soldiers stationed at the very door of the tomb.
5. That if the guards were all asleep they could know who took the body.
6. That their word was contradicted by hundreds of godly men who were eyewitnesses and would not lie or be bribed like pagan soldiers.
7. That the miraculous events from the day of Pentecost on confirmed the truth of Christ's resurrection.¹³

Matthew 28:14

And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

we will persuade him, and secure you—The “we” and the “you” are emphatic here—“we shall [take care to] persuade him and keep you from trouble,” or “save you harmless.” The grammatical form of this clause implies that the thing supposed was expected to happen. The meaning then is, “If this come before the governor—as it likely will—we shall see to it that,” &c. The “persuasion” of Pilate meant, doubtless, quieting him by a bribe, which we know otherwise he was by no means above taking (like Felix afterwards, Ac 24:26).¹⁴

Matthew 28:15

So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

“until this day” refers to the day that Matthew is writing.

11-15 Jesus' resurrection was already causing a great stir in Jerusalem. A group of women was moving quickly through the streets, looking for the disciples to tell them the amazing news that Jesus was alive. At the same time, a group of religious leaders was plotting how to cover up the resurrection.

¹³ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

¹⁴ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 28:14). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Today there is still a great stir over the resurrection, and there are still only two choices—to believe that Jesus rose from the dead, or to be closed to the truth—denying it, ignoring it, or trying to explain it away.

So they took the money, and did as they were taught—thus consenting to brand themselves with infamy.

and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day—to the date of the publication of this Gospel. The wonder is that so clumsy and incredible a story lasted so long. But those who are resolved *not* to come to the light will catch at straws. JUSTIN MARTYR, who flourished about A.D. 170, says, in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, that the Jews dispersed the story by means of special messengers sent to every country.¹⁵

The Final Subversion

Guards faced serious consequences for falling asleep on the job (indeed, Roman guards could be executed), including jobs guarding the corpses of crucifixion victims (see the first-century Roman writer Petronius *Satyricon* 112). But the priestly aristocracy had enough influence to protect their own interests. Like Judas (26:15), the guards act partly on mercenary motives. They should have seen enough to know better than to go along with the religious authorities' plan, but the bribe and the potential penalty they face for allowing Jesus' body to disappear ensures their cooperation. (The officials' promise to protect the guards from Pilate may involve more bribery; Pilate was known to be susceptible to this form of persuasion.) Matthew would be unlikely to report a charge against the resurrection that had not actually been made (28:15), and his report indicates that the Jerusalem authorities had sought to explain the empty tomb—but had never tried to deny it.¹⁶

11-15. While the women were running to find the disciples and tell them of the Resurrection, another group was moving rapidly to counteract the truth. Some of those who had been guarding the tomb overcame their fear, **went into the city, and reported to the chief priests all that had** transpired. It was imperative that the priests have an explanation to counter the truth. After deliberation **the chief priests and elders . . . devised a plan. They gave the soldiers** who had guarded the tomb **a large sum of money** and told **them** what to report to their superiors. The fabricated lie was that the **disciples** of Jesus had come **during the night and** had stolen **away** the body of Jesus

¹⁵Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 28:15). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

resurrection ***Resurrection**. Although some scholars earlier in the twentieth century derived the idea of Jesus' resurrection from Greek mystery cults, it is now widely understood that early Christian belief shared little in common with the Mysteries' myths, which simply reenacted a seasonal revivification of fertility. Rather, Jesus' resurrection was rooted in a Jewish hope, which in turn was rooted in notions of God's covenant, promise and justice from early in Israel's history. Most Palestinian Jews believed that God would resurrect the bodies of the dead (at least the righteous, and many believed also the wicked), at the end of the age (Dan 12:2). There was, however, never any thought that one person would rise ahead of everyone else; thus Jesus' resurrection, as an inauguration of the future kingdom within history, caught even the disciples by surprise.

¹⁶Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 28:16). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

while the soldiers were asleep. Such a report would not have been well received by the officials for a soldier who fell asleep on guard duty would be put to death (Acts 12:19). The Jewish leaders realized this as well, but promised to make things right with the superiors. When this was brought to the attention of **the governor**, they promised to **satisfy him and keep the soldiers out of trouble.** Such satisfaction obviously would involve the payment of another large sum of money. **The soldiers took the money** offered by the Jewish leaders **and did as they were instructed.**

As a result, **this story was widely circulated among the Jews**, and many believed the disciples had really stolen Jesus' body. But the logic of the explanation does not hold up. If the soldiers were asleep, how would they have known what had happened to the body of Jesus? And why would they admit "sleeping on the job"? The disciples' courage during this period was not sufficient to carry out such a plot. They were afraid and had scattered when Jesus was arrested. To execute this kind of plot was beyond their ability. But the truth is often harder for a person to believe than a lie, and many still swallow this lie.¹⁷

They Met the Living Christ Personally (Matt. 28:9–15)

It is when we are obeying God's Word that He comes to us. Jesus had already appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden (John 20:11–18; Mark 16:9). Notice that our Lord's first two Resurrection appearances were to believing women. These faithful women were not only the last to leave Calvary, but they were also the first to come to the tomb. Their devotion to Jesus was rewarded.

"All hail!" can be translated, *Grace*. What a marvelous greeting for the Resurrection Day! The women fell at His feet, took hold of Him, and worshiped Him. There must have been some fear in their hearts, for He immediately assured them with His typical, "Be not afraid!"

Not only had the angel commissioned them, but the Lord also commissioned them. The phrase "My brethren" revealed the intimate relationship between Christ and His followers. Jesus had spoken similar words to Mary Magdalene earlier that morning (John 20:17). Jesus reinforced the instructions of the angel that the disciples meet Him in Galilee (see Matt. 28:7). In the Garden, Jesus had told His disciples that He would rise from the dead and meet them in Galilee; but they had forgotten (Matt. 26:31–32).

While the believers were worshiping the living Christ, the unbelievers were plotting to destroy the witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. By now, some of the soldiers had realized that they were in a desperate plight. The Roman seal had been broken, the stone had been rolled away, and the body was not in the tomb. For a Roman soldier to fail in his duty was an offense punishable by death (Acts 12:19; 16:27–28). But the soldiers were shrewd: They did not report to Pilate or to their superior officers; they reported to the Jewish chief priests. They knew that these men were as anxious to cover up the miracle as were the soldiers themselves! Between the chief priests, the elders, and the soldiers, they put together a story that would explain the empty tomb: The body was stolen.

By examining this story, we see that it actually *proves* the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus' body was stolen, then it was taken either by His friends or His enemies.

¹⁷Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:93). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

His friends could not have done it since they had left the scene and were convinced that Jesus was dead. His enemies would not steal His body because belief in His resurrection was what they were trying to prevent. They would have defeated their own purposes if they had removed His body. And, if they had taken it, why did they not produce it and silence the witness of the early church?

Anyone who stole the body would have taken the body *in the graveclothes*. Yet the empty graveclothes were left in the tomb in an orderly manner. This was hardly the scene of a grave robbery.

The religious leaders had given money to Judas to betray Jesus. They also gave money to the soldiers to say that the body had been stolen. These Romans would have demanded a large price, for their lives were at stake. If their superiors heard that these soldiers had failed, they could have been executed. Even if the story got to Pilate, he was not likely to do much about it. He was sure that Jesus was dead (Mark 15:43–45), and that was all that mattered to him. The disappearance of Jesus' body created no problems for Pilate.

Mark Twain once wrote that a lie can go around the world while truth is still lacing up her boots. There is something in human nature that makes it easy for people to believe lies. It was not until the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the powerful witness of the Apostles, that the Jews in Jerusalem discovered the truth: Jesus Christ is alive! Any sincere person who studies this evidence with an open heart will conclude that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a historic fact that cannot be refuted.

Our Lord also appeared to the two Emmaus disciples that day (Luke 24:13–32), and also to the ten disciples in the Upper Room in Jerusalem (John 20:19–25). A week later, He appeared to the eleven disciples and dealt with Thomas' unbelief (John 20:19–25). On that first Easter Sunday, Jesus also made a special appearance to Peter (Luke 24:33–35; 1 Cor. 15:5).

That day began with the disciples and the women thinking Jesus was dead. Then they were told that He was alive. Following that announcement, they met Him personally. There was one more stage in their experience.¹⁸

Matthew 28:16

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

Matthew is sometimes called “the Gospel of the Mountains” because he gives prominent position to the Sermon on the Mount (ch 5,6,7), the Transfiguration (ch 17), the Triumphal Entry and Mount of Olives private briefing, and finally this mountain.

“mountain”: Mt 26:32; 28:7; Mk 16:7.

¹⁸Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Mt 28:9). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

Then the eleven disciples. Judas was dead, leaving but eleven of the original number of the apostles.

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee—but certainly not before the second week after the resurrection, and probably somewhat later.

into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them—It should have been rendered “the mountain,” meaning some certain mountain which He had named to them—probably the night before He suffered, when He said, “After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee” (Mt 26:32; Mk 14:28). What it was can only be conjectured; but of the two between which opinions are divided—the Mount of the Beatitudes or Mount Tabor—the former is much the more probable, from its nearness to the Sea of Tiberias, where last before this the Narrative tells us that He met and dined with seven of them. (Jn 21:1, &c.). That the interview here recorded was the same as that referred to in one

place only—1Co 15:6—when “He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remained unto that day, though some were fallen asleep,” is now the opinion of the ablest students of the evangelical history. Nothing can account for such a number as five hundred assembling at one spot but the expectation of some promised manifestation of their risen Lord: and the promise before His resurrection, twice repeated after it, best explains this immense gathering.¹⁹

Matthew 28:17

And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

Even then some doubted! Why?

[doubted] Greek: *distazo* (GSN-1365), hesitated. Only here and in Matthew 14:31.

Barnes: But some doubted. As, for example, Thomas, (John 20:25.) The disciples had not expected his resurrection; they were therefore slow to believe. The mention of their doubting shows that they were honest men—that they were not easily imposed on—that they had not previously agreed to affirm that he had risen—that they were convinced only by the strength of the evidence. Their caution in examining the evidence; their slowness to believe; and their firm conviction after all their doubts, and their willingness to show their conviction, even by their death, is most conclusive proof that they were not deceived in regard to the fact of his resurrection.

¹⁹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 28:16). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Matthew 28:18

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

“all authority”: Phil 2:9-11.

[given unto me in heaven and in earth] The Father gave all power to the Son after He achieved redemption. It had been His equally with the Father and Holy Spirit before becoming man, but He had become limited while being a man (Luke 2:40,52; Phil. 2:7; John 8:28). See Christ's Union With the Father. Now His glory is restored (John 17:5; Ephes. 1:20-23; Col. 1:15-18).

All authority. In his risen state, Jesus exercises absolute authority throughout heaven and earth, which shows his deity. His authority has been given by the Father, which indicates that he remains subject to the Father (see note on 1 Cor. 15:28).

*Daniel 7:14 - I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. **And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.***

Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

How many names? Rather in “the name” Yashua (which is the name of all in one).

[therefore ...] In view of My authority, I commission you with full power of attorney to carry on the work that I have started (note, John 16:23).

Great Commission Fourfold:

1. Go. This applies to all believers, not only preachers. The invitation to salvation is for all alike, so why should not the responsibility of getting the invitation to others be for all alike? We have the same rights, privileges, promises, and provision for equipment for service, so all should help in every possible way to evangelize the world according to our ability and direction from God. There is no excuse for millions of church members leaving this work to only a few who seek to obey the Great Commission.
2. Teach (Greek: *matheteuo* (GSN-3100), to make disciples, enroll as a learner or pupil). Used only here and in Matthew 13:52; Matthew 27:57; Acts 14:21. Not the ordinary word for teaching, as in point 4 below.
3. Baptize all disciples. See note, *Matthew 3:6 and note, *Acts 8:38.

4. Teaching (Greek: *didasko* (GSN-1321), give instruction). It is translated "teach" 93 times. The idea here is more that of instructing than of enrolling disciples to be taught.

Barnes: Teach all nations. The word rendered *teach*, here, is not the one that is usually so translated in the New Testament. This word properly means *disciple*, or *make disciples of*, all nations. This was to be done, however, by teaching them, and by administering the rite of baptism. *All nations*. The gracious commission was the foundation of the authority to go to the Gentiles. The Jews had expected that the offers of life, under the Messiah, would be confined to their own nation. Jesus broke down the partition wall, and commissioned his disciples to go everywhere, and bring the *world* to the knowledge of himself.

[in the name of] This means "by the authority of." Here it means by the authority of all three persons and not by the authority of Jesus only. He is the one authorizing us to recognize the others as well as Himself. This will help us to understand Acts 2:38; Acts 8:16; Acts 10:48; Acts 19:5. It is by the authority of Jesus Christ that we baptize at all, and it is by His authority that we baptize in the name of (by the authority of) all three persons.

[Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost] Some argue that these are not names, but the dictionary says that the word name is "any word" or "title" by which any person or thing is known. This is not just any Father, any Son, or any Holy Ghost, but it is the Father of Jesus Christ, and the Son of the Father, and the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Divine Trinity. Any Bible reader would know who these three persons are if mentioned by these names in any scripture.

18-20 When someone is dying or leaving us, his or her last words are very important. Jesus left the disciples with these last words of instruction: they were under his authority; they were to make more disciples; they were to baptize and teach these new disciples to obey Christ; Christ would be with them always. Whereas in previous missions Jesus had sent his disciples only to the Jews (Matthew 10:5-6), their mission from now on would be worldwide. Jesus is Lord of the earth, and he died for the sins of people from all nations.

We are to go—whether it is next door or to another country—and make disciples. It is not an option, but a command to all who call Jesus "Lord." We are not all evangelists in the formal sense, but we have all received gifts that we can use to help fulfill the Great Commission. As we obey, we have comfort in the knowledge that Jesus is always with us.

Matthew 28:20

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Once again, we see that the Torah is for everyone, Jew and gentile -- as what He "commands" is obedience to the Word of God.

“world” or “age”: The end of a particular time segment. That the doesn’t imply that the world ends then, the world as we know it does, the end of the age.

The Great Commission

Matthew is a Levi presenting the King of Israel, Mark presents the suffering servant, Luke presents Jesus as the Son of man, John is interested in the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, His deity. Matthew is interested in Jesus’ Messiahship!

Note that Matthew has left out the ascension! Remember that it is not a milestone in respect to Jesus’ Messianic Mission (however His return will be).

If we compare the commissions given in the four Gospels, you will find that they are not the same. Many will state that this (v. 19-20) is the Great Commission. No problem if you see this as a great missionary commandment. The other gospels make it very clear that we are to do this. There are some scholars that believe, technically, that this has never been fulfilled and it will be fulfilled by Jewish evangelists (144,000). This view is consistent with the Messianic presentation because it will be a presentation consistent with Revelation 7 and 14. Some scholars may be splitting hairs, this may be wrong. Whatever may be lacking here, is certainly present in the other gospels.

[all things whatsoever I have commanded you] This states what we are to teach all nations to the end of this age: "all things" that He commanded His disciples. No man or church has a right to qualify or limit, to add to or take from, any of the original teachings and practices of Christ and the apostles. This means that every jot and title of the New Testament from Matthew 1:1 to Rev. 22:21 is the contract we are now under and all of it must be taught and practiced by Christians.

[world] Greek: aion (GSN-165), age, not the end of the earth or man, proving that the gospel program, as originally started, was to continue until Christ comes again.

Clarke: Teaching them to observe all things—Men are ignorant of Divine things, and must be taught. Only those can be considered as proper teachers of the ignorant who are thoroughly instructed in whatsoever Christ has commanded. Persons who are entrusted with the public ministry of the word should take care that they teach not human creeds and confessions of faith, in place of the Sacred Writings; but those things, and those only, which Jesus has commanded.

Life Application Notes: The Old Testament prophecies and genealogies in the book of Matthew present Jesus’ credentials for being King of the world—not a military or political leader, as the disciples had originally hoped, but a spiritual King who can overcome all evil and rule in the heart of every person. If we refuse to serve the King

faithfully, we are disloyal subjects, fit only to be banished from the kingdom. We must make Jesus King of our lives and worship him as our Savior, King, and Lord.

Adam Clarke Conclusion:

1. IN concluding my notes on this evangelist, I cannot express myself better than in the words of the late Mr. Wakefield, to whom this commentary has been in many instances indebted. "I have now finished my observations on the Gospel of Matthew: a piece of history, it must be acknowledged, the most singular in its composition, the most wonderful in its contents, and the most important in its object, that was ever exhibited to the notice of mankind. For simplicity of narrative, and an artless relation of facts, without any applause or censure, or digressive remarks, on the part of the historian, upon the characters introduced in it; without any intermixture of his own opinion, upon any subject whatsoever; and for a multiplicity of internal marks of credibility, this Gospel certainly has no parallel among human productions."
2. One thing the pious and intelligent reader has, no doubt, already noticed: there is not one truth, or doctrine, in the whole oracles of God, which is not taught in this evangelist. The outlines of the whole spiritual system are here correctly laid down: even Paul himself has added nothing; he has amplified and illustrated the truths contained in this Gospel; but, even under the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, neither he nor any other of the apostles have brought to light any one truth, the prototype of which has not been found in the words or acts of our blessed Lord, as related by Matthew, in the work which has already passed under review. The Gospel by St. Matthew is the grand text-book of Christianity; the other Gospels are collateral evidences of its truth, and the apostolic epistles are comments on the text. In the commencement of this work, I stated my wish, "to assist my fellow laborers in the vineyard to lead men to HIM who is the fountain of all excellence, goodness, truth, and happiness;—to magnify his LAW, and make it honorable;—to show the wonderful provision made in his GOSPEL for the recovery and salvation of a sinful world;—to prove that God's great design is to make his creatures HAPPY; and that such a salvation as it becomes God to give, and such as man needs to receive, is within the grasp of every human soul."—General Preface, before Genesis. And having thus far done what I could, in reference to these great and important purposes, here I register my thanks to the ever-blessed God, Father, Word, and Holy Spirit, that he has permitted me to cast my mite into this sacred treasury, to add my feeble testimony to his Eternal Truth; and has spared me, in the midst of many infirmities and oppressive labors, to see the conclusion of this Gospel, a consummation which I had long devoutly wished, but which I had scarcely hoped ever to see realized. May the Divine Author of this sacred book give the reader a heart-felt experience of all the truths it contains; make and keep him wise unto salvation; build him up in this most holy faith; and give him an inheritance among the blessed, through Christ Jesus, the Friend of mankind, and the Savior of sinners, who is the object and end of this glorious system of truth! And to Him, with the Father and Eternal Spirit, be glory and dominion, thanksgiving and obedience, for ever and ever, Amen and amen!²⁰

²⁰ Adam Clarke's Commentary

even unto the end of the world. Amen—This glorious Commission embraces two primary departments, the *Missionary* and the *Pastoral*, with two sublime and comprehensive *Encouragements* to undertake and go through with them.

First, The MISSIONARY department (Mt 28:18): “Go, make disciples of all nations.” In the corresponding passage of Mark (Mk 16:15) it is, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” The only difference is, that in this passage the *sphere*, in its world-wide compass and its universality of *objects*, is more fully and definitely expressed; while in the former the great *aim* and certain *result* is delightfully expressed in the command to “make disciples of all nations.” “Go, conquer the world for Me; carry the glad tidings into all lands and to every ear, and deem not this work at an end till all nations shall have embraced the Gospel and enrolled themselves My disciples.” Now, Was all this meant to be done by the Eleven men nearest to Him of the multitude then crowding around the risen Redeemer? Impossible. Was it to be done even in their lifetime? Surely not. In that little band Jesus virtually addressed Himself to all who, in every age, should take up from them the same work. Before the eyes of the Church’s risen Head were spread out, in those Eleven men, all His servants of every age; and one and all of them received His commission at that moment. Well, what next? Set the seal of visible discipleship upon the converts, by “baptizing them into the name,” that is, into the whole fulness of the grace “of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” as belonging to them who believe. (See on 2Co 13:14). This done, the Missionary department of your work, which in its own nature is temporary, must merge in another, which is permanent. This is

Second, The PASTORAL department (Mt 28:20): “Teach them”—teach these baptized members of the Church visible—“to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” My apostles, during the three years ye have been. with Me. What must have been the feelings which such a Commission awakened? “WE who have scarce conquered our own misgivings—we, fishermen of Galilee, with no letters, no means, no influence over the humblest creature, conquer the world for Thee, Lord? Nay, Lord, do not mock us.” “I mock you not, nor send you a warfare on your own charges. For”—Here we are brought to

Third, The ENCOURAGEMENTS to undertake and go through with this work. These are two; one in the van, the other in the rear of the Commission itself.

First Encouragement: “All power in *heaven*”—the whole power of Heaven’s love and wisdom and strength, “and all power in *earth*”—power over all persons, all passions, all principles, all movements—to bend them to this one high object, the evangelization of the world: All this “is *given unto Me*.” as the risen Lord of all, to be *by Me placed at your command*—“Go ye therefore.” But there remains a

Second Encouragement: “And lo! I am with you all the days”—not only to perpetuity, but without one day’s interruption, “even to the end of the world,” The “Amen” is of doubtful genuineness in this place. If, however, it belongs to the text, it is the Evangelist’s own closing word.²¹

²¹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 28:20). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

This “Great Commission” of Yeshua is stated with varying emphases at Mk 16:15–20, Lk 24:46–49, Yn 20:21–23 and Ac 1:8.

Make people from all nations into *talmidim*. This must have shocked his hearers, who surely thought that the Messiah was only, or at least primarily, for Jews. Today the situation is reversed, for many Christians think it wrong to evangelize Jews. But their position is inconsistent; for if they really respect Yeshua they should obey his command to make people from all nations, including the Jewish nation, into *talmidim*.

Immersing them (see 3:1N) into the reality of the Father, the Son and the *Ruach HaKodesh*. KJV has “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Christianity has tended to regard this phrase as a “baptismal formula” to be pronounced when someone is baptized. This understanding leads to such questions as: What is this “name” of the Father, Son and Spirit? Is it Jehovah? Jesus (compare Ac 2:38, 8:16)? or something else? Must all three “persons of the Godhead” be mentioned for a baptism to be valid?

So far as I am concerned, these questions miss the point. First of all, Greek *eis* generally means “into” rather than “in.” Secondly, although “name” is the literal meaning of Greek *onoma*, “immersing into a name” describes no possible literal act. My rendering expresses what I believe to be the intended meaning, since in the Bible “name” stands for the reality behind the name. While “in the name of” can mean “on the authority of,” that seems weak here; more is meant than identifying who authorizes immersion. It is possible that the Greek for “into the name” renders Hebrew *lashem*, “for, for the sake of, with reference to”; if so, the *JNT* renders the sense well.

The Father, the Son and the *Ruach HaKodesh*. This is the closest the New Testament comes to stating the proposition that *YHVH*, *Adonai*, the one God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov, consists of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (compare 2C 13:14). The word “trinity” appears nowhere in the New Testament; it was developed later by theologians trying to express profundities which God has revealed about himself. The New Testament does not teach tritheism, which is belief in three gods. It does not teach unitarianism, which denies the divinity of Yeshua the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It does not teach modalism, which says that God appears sometimes as the Father, sometimes as the Son and sometimes as the Holy Spirit, like an actor changing masks. It is easy to wander astray into error or nonsense in thinking about God, since his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8). Some Messianic Jews use the term “triunity” in conscious avoidance of the word “trinity,” which has such a non-Jewish, traditionally Christian ring to it, and in order to emphasize the unity of God as proclaimed in the *Sh·ma* without neglecting what this verse highlights. But the bottom line is that it is more important to believe God’s word and to trust him than to argue over particular doctrinal or verbal formulas used in attempting to describe the nature of God.

There is also a textual issue. Although nearly all ancient manuscripts have the trinitarian formula, Eusebius, the Church historian, who may have been a non-trinitarian, in his writings preceding the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E., quotes the verse without it. Most scholars believe the formula is original, but papers by Hans Kosmala (“The Conclusion of Matthew,” *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*, 4 (1965), pp. 132–147) and David Flusser (“The Conclusion of Matthew in a New Jewish Christian Source,” *ibid.*, 5 (1966–7), pp. 110–119) take the opposite view.²²

²²Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 28:19). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.