

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

- Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)
- Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King's baptism.
- Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)
- Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)
- Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)
- Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.
- Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.
- Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.
- Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.
- Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.
- Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.
- Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.
- Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.**

We now come to the finale of the book of Matthew and it ends on an exceedingly HIGH point!

Matthew wrote to Jews to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the true prophesied Messiah who would come to both deliver and reign over His people.

The book of Matthew builds to the climactic high point of the death and resurrection of Jesus as seen in Matthew 27-28. Upon the resurrection of Jesus His enemies immediately went about to try and snuff out the truth it. In contrast to this we have the proactive great commission of Jesus to His people which is given to further the truth throughout the entire world.

What ensued after the resurrection was a truth war over the truth of Jesus. This is a battle for the mind. Satan through his people is doing everything he can to suppress it; while God through His people is advancing the truth. This is what the “Great Commission” given here at the very end of Matthew is all about.

If a Christian understands all the rest of the gospel of Matthew but fails to understand this closing passage, he has missed the point of the entire book. This passage is the climax and major focal point not only of this gospel but of the entire New Testament. It is not an exaggeration to say that, in its broadest sense, it is the focal point of all Scripture, Old Testament as well as New. – ***John MacArthur***

Matthew 28:16–20 (NKJV)

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.

Prior to His death Christ had told His disciples that after His resurrection He would meet them in Galilee (Mt. 26:32). After His resurrection the angel at the tomb told the women to go and tell Christ’s disciples that He would meet them in Galilee (Mt. 28:7). And then after Christ met the women on resurrection morning He also told them to go and tell His brethren that He would meet them in Galilee.

So, this meeting in Galilee had consistently been announced as being a really important post-resurrection meeting. It was like announcing this was an all-important meeting and the importance of being there could not be underestimated. Christ’s followers were in effect instructed to be there where important instructions as to “where to go from here” would be made known.

The 12 disciples is now the eleven because Judas proved to be a traitor and committed suicide (Mt. 27:5). So the group of apostles for now was only eleven.

These 11 went away to Galilee as instructed to the mountain which Jesus had appointed. We are not told which mountain this was. Some of Jesus most important teaching was done at a mountain. We have the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5-7; Jesus revelation on the mount of transfiguration; and the Olivet discourse on the mount of Olives.

The foot of a mountain makes for a really good forum when addressing a crowd. But we are not sure which specific mountain is in view here in Matthew 28:16.

Most commentators believe that while the eleven led the delegation it would seem that many more were probably involved in this meeting. It is thought that telling the “brethren” of this meeting in 28:10 involved more than just the apostles. It is hard to believe the women who were charged with bringing this information would not be involved in this meeting since they knew full well of it.

By this time Jesus had already appeared to the apostles twice in Jerusalem and did not need to appear to them again, exclusively, in faraway Galilee (cf. Jn. 20:19-23; 20:24-29). And why take them as a group exclusively all the way to Galilee only to come back and then ascend to heaven before them from the mount of Olives just outside of Jerusalem (Acts 1:9-12).

Most believe that very probably the meeting in view here involved the meeting with over 500 brethren at once as mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 15 (cf. Mk. 16:15-18).

Slide # 2

1 Corinthians 15:6 (NKJV)

6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

Eighty-five percent of Christ’s ministry took place in Galilee and this is where the bulk of His true followers were found. Now upon His resurrection, Jesus had a special announcement for all His followers – the whole group was called on to be at this meeting in Galilee.

And it makes sense that Jesus would give this “Great Commission” which involved a world-wide mission - in Galilee which was known as “Galilee of the Gentiles” because of its boundary with Gentile territory (cf. Isa. 9:1; Matt. 4:13-16). Jesus had in effect been rejected by Jerusalem led by its religious leaders (Mt. 23:37-39); so now the mission took on a worldwide focus involving Gentiles as well as Jews. So it was appropriate that this “Great Commission” would be given in Galilee for a number of reasons.

17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

When the women on resurrection Sunday met Jesus Matthew 28:9 says they, “worshiped Him”. When doubting Thomas saw the risen Lord he said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” That is the language of worship.

To worship (Gk. *prokuneo*) literally means to “bow down before”. It indicates submission and allegiance to a Higher Power. True believers bow before Jesus as our God-Master and Savior. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman God seeking for true worshipers (Jn. 4:23-24). This is the stuff of true faith.

Repeatedly we find true believers worshipping Jesus. Here again upon seeing Jesus they worshiped Him.

Remember Matthew is writing to Jews and every Jew knew that only God is to be worshiped. The very first commandment was, “**You shall have no other gods before Me.**” (Ex. 20:3). When Satan tried to tempt Jesus to worship him Jesus refuted him with Scripture saying that only God is to be worshiped (Matt. 4:10; Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Josh. 24:14).

True believers come to worship Jesus because they now believe in Him as the true God. This is a KEY point in the gospels and the resurrection emphatically declared Jesus to be the Son of God Who is worthy to be worshipped (Rom. 1:4).

But note it also says, “**but some doubted.**” That is an amazing statement. It speaks to the integrity and transparency of Scripture which tells it just like it is without varnishing the facts. If someone was fabricating this story about the resurrection they would never include a detail like this – but the Bible tells it like it is – our warts and all.

The word “doubted” (Gk. *distazo*) is the idea of “hesitated” (cf. Mt. 14:31). The only other place this exact word is used in the NT is in Matt. 14:31 where Peter in the storm took his eyes off Jesus and began to “doubt”. Even so Jesus said he did have a “little faith” even though it was clouded by temporary doubt. In other words, a person can entertain this sort of doubt and still be a person of faith.

However, remember that this was a crowd of over 500 people and most all of these people had not yet see the risen Christ. And perhaps initially Jesus was at some distance from them – but we are not told the details (cf. Lk. 24:16; John 21:4-14).

I was recently at an IFCA conference which had about 500 people present. We all ate together in a large hall. Now there were people there that I have known but yet in a crowd that size from any distance away I wasn’t quite sure if that was so and so or not. For some in the crowd they may have initially had a questioning experience like this.

However, it would seem that upon Jesus coming closer and addressing them that they all are shown to be true believers. Paul certainly alluded to this in 1 Cor. 15:6 where he in effect was appealing to the uniform testimony of these over 500 people whom he refers to as all being “brethren” who believed in the risen Lord.

By the way, the fact that some doubted adds weight to the fact that more than just the 11 were involved here. Jesus had earlier appeared to the 11 and verified Himself to them and so they were definitely not doubting the truth of the Resurrection at this point.

In view here was a brief hesitation on the part of some wondering whether or not this was truly Jesus appearing to them. After all the whole thing was surreal. But then those doubts quickly dissipated as Jesus came close and spoke to them.

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Now there is a statement that calls for worship! I think all the doubters instantly were turned into true worshipers. Certainly the One Who has “all authority” spoke these words with great convincing power and authority!

The language implies here that Jesus came close to them as He spoke to them. What an amazing life changing experience which they never forgot or got over as alluded to by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:6.

The all inclusiveness of this statement is amazing – appropriate only for One Who is Sovereign Lord over all. Notice He was not given “some” authority but “all authority” both in heaven and on earth. In other words Jesus has all authority in the entire universe.

The word “authority” (Gk. *exousia*) has the idea of delegated power along with the God-ordained right to use it (cf. Mt. 8:9; 9:6, 8; 10:1; 21:23, 24, 27). This is not just the force of power (Gk. *dunamis*) but rather the right or authority to use that power.

As God Jesus always shared in God’s sovereign authority over all. But as the second member of the God-head He assumed a unique humbling role as He assumed becoming a member of the human race. In the incarnation He set aside the independent use of His divine attributes and in humble dependence as a man He did only the Father’s will depending upon Him each step of the way.

In this state of humility He remained fully God but only expressed His authority as God ordained in His role as servant. Although His deity was veiled in His earthly ministry, yet there were glimmers of it throughout.

The Maji worshipped Him as a newborn baby (Mt. 2:2, 11). In His earthly ministry He taught “as one having authority” (Mt. 7:29). He healed with authority (Mt. 8:8-9). He demonstrated authority over sickness and disease (Mt. 4:23; 9:35); and over demons (Mt. 4:24; 8:32; 12:22). He demonstrated His authority to forgive sin (Mt. 9:6); He delegated apostolic authority to His chosen apostles (Mt. 10:1; Lk. 10:19, 17); He claimed authority over the Sabbath (Mt. 12:1-8). He has authority in judgment over resurrection to life and the resurrection to condemnation (Jn. 5:27-29). He had authority over His own life – to lay it down and to take it up again (Jn. 10:18).

So even in His incarnation the authority of Jesus as the God-Man shone through and yet it was somewhat limited in His servant role. But now in the resurrection Jesus as a MAN (as the God-Man) has been given unleashed authority over all. He has been exalted above all. God has now put a MAN (yes, Jesus the God-Man) in charge over everything.

God ordained that man rule for him, but the first Adam failed miserably in that assignment. Jesus, the second Adam has succeeded. Jesus our greater brother has been made Lord over all.

Human authority is only in place as ordained by God.

Slide # 3

Romans 13:1 (NKJV)

1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

When Jesus was on trial before Pilate he tried to act like a big shot saying, “Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” Jesus responded, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.” (Jn. 19:10-11).

Authority is ultimately given by God according to His sovereign will and purposes. Even the Antichrist who will claim to be God-Almighty will only be able to do what he does because it is granted him to do so.

Slide # 4

Revelation 13:5 (NKJV)

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

But here is the thing – all the human authorities are given SOME authority but is very limited in terms of time and scope. But in contrast the risen Lord has been given absolutely ALL authority in heaven and on earth. All are made to report to Him. He is in absolute charge.

Slide # 5**Acts 2:36 (NKJV)**

36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Turns out the gospel is a total LORDSHIP story!

Slide # 6**Philippians 2:9–11 (NKJV)**

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

“Jesus” is said to be His human name because it was given to Him in relation to His birth (Mt. 1:21). It means Savior – more literally Jesus means “God-Savior”. But this human (namely Jesus) has in the resurrection been HIGHLY EXALTED that at the human name of Jesus “every knee should bow” and “every tongue should confess” that He is Lord. All will be made to see and recognize that this human (Jesus) has been exalted to the position of being Lord (Master) over all! He is the One through Whom all of God’s authority is mediated!

Jesus called this special meeting to announce His resurrected exaltation to this special group of devoted followers. In the resurrection total victory has been achieved. Jesus has been totally vindicated by God and given total sovereign authority over every realm! Can you imagine the response of this crowd! It had to be overcome with awe and worship. If they worshipped before this announcement they certainly did afterward.

There is a lot of talk by politicians and so forth of the importance of being on the right side of history. Well, history is ultimately HIS STORY – that is God’s story. And the centerpiece of it all is the risen Lord. To be on the right side of HISTORY is to be on the right side of the Lord Jesus Who has total authority over all.

Slide # 7

Revelation 1:8 (NKJV)

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, **the Almighty.**”

Revelation 1:17–18 (NKJV)

17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; **I am the First and the Last.**

18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, **I am alive forevermore.** Amen. And **I have the keys of Hades and of Death.**

There has never been a meeting like this with such a large crowd of mere mortals who had the unbelievable privilege of meeting with the One Who in His resurrection was given all authority over the entire universe. Imagine, if some had said, “Well I am too busy to make that meeting” or “It is just not that important”. Are we even in the place where we get the message! So many are so negligent. These who showed up were blessed beyond measure to first hand get this most important message from the most important person in the world (cf. Col. 1:18).

But here is the point! This statement of Jesus having all authority was not just spoken in a vacuum. He didn’t just make the statement to cause wonder and awe. No, rather He made the statement to reinforce the commission He about to make – what we commonly call “The Great Commission”.

It is the comprehensive authority of Christ that stands behind the commission to go and make disciples.

A few weeks ago we had an evangelism outreach in which we knocked on people’s doors in an effort to share the gospel with them. Subsequently a lady called me and introduced herself by saying, “I have a complaint”. And she went on to say that some people from our church had come by her house and shared the gospel with her family – including the fact that they are sinners! She was so offended by this and kept saying to me, ***“What gives you the right to do this?”*** Well how about “Jesus”? I took her to this passage but she didn’t seem to hear a word I was saying.

Behind the work of making disciples stands the authority of the One Who has all authority in heaven and on earth. There is no higher authority. We need no other authority! This one with all authority said..

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:19-20 is commonly called “The Great Commission” – and rightfully so. Grammatically it is made up of three participles and one main verb that is the central command. To keep this really simple participles are descriptive words related to the main verb – often ending in “ing”.

Slide # 8

Go – literally “Going” [participle]

Make disciples [Main Verb]

Baptizing [participle]

Teaching [participle]

What I want you to see is that the main verb that drives the entire commission is that of making disciples. ***Make disciples*** is the ONE command around which the entire mandate is focused.

“***Go therefore***” means in light of Christ having “***all authority***” He therefore instructs us to go and make disciples. It is Christ’s authority behind it that drives this great commission.

The first participle translated as “***go***” is perhaps best understood as “***As you are going***” which assumes that Christ’s followers will be going. We see the same sense of this in Acts 1:8.

Slide # 9

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be witnesses to Me** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Thus, the expectation is that we will be going and we shall be His witnesses wherever we find ourselves. This is a given expectation!

It is expected that the Church will be going to the world – the sense is not that the world will show up at our door. Rather we are to be going to them. The Church is an edifying context – an equipping context, but our mission field is out there. We are to be going to them – they are not commanded to come to us. Now once you are in the family, then you are commanded to “not forsake the assembling” but that is for those who are already believers (Heb. 10:25).

As we believers are on our pilgrim journey – wherever that finds us we are to be busy about the business of making disciples of all the nations. This is our great mission in life. We are on a mission and that mission is singularly to make disciples.

Making disciples suggests a process – a process of intentional outreach. Jesus described it in terms of being “fishers of men” (Mt. 4:19).

The word “disciple” (Gk. Matheteuo) has been called a “beautiful combination” word.

Slide # 10

Disciple...

- A believer
- A follower
- A learner

We often talk about Christians as being “believers” and that is right and biblical. But there is a right kind of faith and a bogus kind of faith. Jesus described a true saving kind of faith as a faith that follows Him.

Slide # 11

John 10:26–28 (NKJV)

26 But you do not **believe**, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and **they follow Me**.

28 And **I give them eternal life**, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

True faith follows Christ and it is they who have eternal life. We don’t receive eternal life by following but if we have true faith we will follow – not perfectly – but certainly. Following is the fruit of true faith (cf. Jn. 8:31).

Note the change here. Earlier in Christ's ministry the disciples were told to not go to the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel – that is only to the Jews (Mat. 10:5-6). But in contrast this new commission has “***all the nations***” in view.

Israel in the OT had an inward focus. They were not commanded to go to the world – rather the world was to look at Israel and see the living God on display there. Now the focus is outward – now we are to go to the world.

Slide # 12



Slide # 13



As we are going the first thing we are to do is make a disciple. As seen in the book of Acts this means we share the gospel. We work with people in seeking to share with them the truth of Jesus Christ. And when they respond in faith we are to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Note he did not say to circumcise disciples but rather to baptize them. This signifies a break with the old system under Judaism. The Church is a whole new thing – not to be confused with Israel.

What Jesus said was followed to the letter in the book of Acts. When people responded in faith to the message they were immediately baptized. There is no exception to this pattern in the NT Scriptures. In the NT Church Age as recorded in the book of Acts - covering the first 30 years of the Church - there is no example of an unbaptized believer.

When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost the people were “cut to the heart” and said, “what shall we do?” Peter said, “***Repent and be baptized***”. A clear indication of true repentance was that they were immediately baptized.

When the gospel went to the Gentiles upon hearing the message they believed and spoke in tongues showing that they had received the Spirit exactly as the Jews did 5 years earlier.

Peter then commanded them to be baptized (Acts 10:44-48; 11:17). This is the consistent pattern in the book of Acts as they carried out the great commission precisely as instructed by Christ.

The commission in Matthew 28:19-20 as carried out in the book of Acts shows that immediately upon conversion people were considered to be disciples and on that basis were immediately baptized. This forever ends the argument as to whether or not to be a believer is also a disciple.

Jesus said to baptize disciples and believers without exception in Acts were immediately baptized showing they were immediately considered to be disciples. In fact, getting baptized is one of the first evidences that one has become a disciple. A true faith follows and one of the first steps in following is getting baptized.

The Bible talks about the “obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:25-26). We are not saved by the obedience of works (including that of baptism) but we are saved by the obedience of faith. The response of faith is itself a response of obedience, but then if it is real, it is expected that one will OBEY the Master whom they have come to believe in, starting with His command to be baptized.

Slide # 14

Acts 16:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord **opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.**

15 And when she and her household **were baptized**, she begged us, saying, “If you have **judged me to be faithful** to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

How do you know whether a person has made a saving faith response. Well, ultimately only God knows the heart, but we do see the outward fruits. And the fruit of saving faith is obedience. When Lydia responded positively to the message Paul preached she showed it by being baptized. Then she said to Paul, “If you have judged me to be faithful”. Well, how could he know? She was a brand new believer. Well, he could judge her faithful by here response of obediently being baptized. That is the consistent response of true believers throughout the book of Acts.

It was assumed that when a person trusted in the Lord Jesus, he or she would be baptized. – ***The Nelson Study Bible***

The word baptize literally means “to immerse” or “to dip under”. It also has a secondary meaning which means “to dip into dye” with the metaphorical idea of permanent identification. The KJV translators worked in a context where they did not want to upset the Church of England which practiced sprinkling as the mode of “baptism”. So instead of translating the word baptize, they simply transliterated it which then stuck in terms of English translations. An actual translation of Matthew 28:19 goes like this...

Slide # 15

Matthew 28:19 (NKJV)

19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing [immersing] them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The Holy Spirit very specifically chose this precise word and it is for this reason that we practice immersion. This is what Jesus said to do. The Holy Spirit could have chosen other words. The Greek word EKCHEO means “to pour”. The Greek word RHANTIZO means “to sprinkle”. But inspired Scripture never uses these words. Without exception it always uses the words (baptisma or baptizo), meaning to immerse.

Immersion is the most appropriate mode of baptism, not only because the Greek word behind it connotes immersion but even more importantly because that is the only mode that symbolizes burial and resurrection.

Although the act of baptism has absolutely no saving or sacramental benefit or power, it is commanded by Christ of His followers. The only exception might be physical inability, as in the case of the repentant thief on the cross, a prisoner who is forbidden the ordinance, or a similar circumstance beyond the believers control. The person who is unwilling to be baptized is at best a disobedient believer, and if he persists in his unwillingness there is reason to doubt the genuineness of his faith (see Matt. 10:32-33). – **John MacArthur**

This is a great point: Can one truly be a true follower (disciple) of Christ if they are unwilling to follow Him in this most basic command to be baptized. How sincere is a person if they are not willing to confess Christ and identify with Him as He commanded? Do they really know Him as Lord? That is very questionable.

In our culture, we often take baptism way too lightly! It is often seen as just a ritual. However, throughout history in most cultures, it has been seen by all as signifying radical conversion in which the person is sold out to Jesus!

This word baptize signifies a most solemn reality. It most accurately reflects our COMPLETE identity in Christ. We are not partially identified, but FULLY, just like a cloth dipped in dye is completely identified with the dye. The Spirit used this precise word for this reason. As believers we are constantly said to be IN Christ. Immersion pictures our complete identification of being IN CHRIST. We are thoroughly and permanently colored with and identified with Him. That is the meaning of baptism. The very word reflects the nature of our forever, intimate, indissoluble union with Christ.

There are two great mistakes one can make concerning baptism. One can see it as a sacrament that confers saving grace. That is a fatal error. However, one can also see it as insignificant since it does not save a person.

Paul makes a clear distinction between the gospel by which we are saved when we believe it and the ordinance of baptism that follows. In Romans 1:16 Paul says the gospel is “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” and then in 1 Cor. 1:17 Paul makes a clear distinction between the gospel and baptism saying, “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel”.

The gospel is the message of Who Christ is and what He has done to secure our salvation. It’s all about Jesus. Baptism is an outward testimony of faith openly identifying with the truth of Christ. We are saved by faith in Christ’s finished work, not in anything we do including baptism – because that would be a works salvation which is soundly condemned by Paul in Galatians.

Note it very carefully: People are not made disciples by being baptized; rather we are to baptize people who have already become disciples. We don’t baptize people to make a disciple – rather we baptize people because they have already become a disciple! That is critical!

As the Reformers were known to say, “We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves does not remain alone.” That applies to baptism. We are saved by faith alone, but if the faith is real the expectation of the NT Scriptures is that we will be baptized – not to be saved – but because we are already saved.

Making a disciple assumes that people have come to the knowledge of the truth – which is to say the truth of the gospel (1 Tim. 2:4). Even the baptism commission as spelled out by Christ assumes the convert by faith accepts the truth of the Trinity.

Note that this commission puts all 3 members of the Triune God on exactly the same level – all under the heading of the same name. This emphasizes the deity – the Godship of all 3 as all equally sharing the same essence of being God.

Matthew's language shows that a clear understanding of Jesus' nature and identity as God was required before baptism. – **HCSB**

Jesus said to baptize them in the name (singular) with the definite article emphasizing the oneness of God; but then under this singular name we have listed the triune Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Thus, the baptismal formula stated here gives us the clearest statement of the Trinity found in the NT. And the fact it is given in the great commission shows how basic this truth is to the true faith.

Slide # 16

"The Trinity of God is confessedly a great mystery, something wholly beyond the possibility of complete explanation. But we can guard against error by holding fast to the facts of divine revelation: that (1) with respect to His Being or essence, God is one; (2) with respect to His Personality, God is three; and (3) we must neither divide the essence, nor confuse the Persons."

- ***The New Scofield Reference Bible, p. 1046.***

Slide # 17

God is one in essence, but three Persons. This is mystery, but not a contradiction. It would be contradictory to say God was only one person, but also three persons. Or that God is only one nature, but that He also had three natures. But to declare, as orthodox Christians do, that God is one essence, eternally revealed in three distinct persons is not a contradiction.

- ***Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe***

Footnote: No where in Acts do we see this Matthew 28:19 baptismal formula directly applied (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:4-6). Often we see people were simply baptized in the name of the Lord or the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). It was evidently understood that Jesus is part of the Triune Godhead and that to be baptized in the name of the Lord was recognition of that reality. Baptism in the name of Jesus and baptism in the name of the Trinity in the early church coexisted side by side showing that if you truly get Jesus right you also get the Trinity right.

The faith to be proclaimed was in some sense Trinitarian from the beginning. **D.A. Carson**

It is no small thing to openly identify with the name of the triune Godhead. In baptism one is acknowledging that they identify with the truth of all Who God is. It is in fact a statement of allegiance. The whole surrounding context, including the fact that Jesus is worshiped; His claim to have all authority, and baptism indicating adherence to triune God indicates submission to God's overall Lordship authority.

Footnote: The command to baptize disciples rules out the baptism of infants. The Bible is clear that saving faith involves the knowledge of the truth and obedience to the faith. Babies are not capable of responding in this way. There is a condition of accountability and before people are in that condition where they can know right from wrong they are not accountable for sin before God. Accountability before God involves personal sin. This is seen in Rev. 20:13 where the lost in the end will be "judged, each one according to his works."

20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Not only are we to make disciples and baptize them, but then we are to continue teaching them all that Christ commanded. This is a long-term process. Disciples are made (in the sense of being brought to conversion) but then they need to grow. The goal is to bring them to maturity where they are reproducing disciples (Eph. 4:11-14; Heb. 5:12-6:3).

Now that they know WHO Jesus is and have openly identified with Him in baptism the issue is "How shall we then live?" This they need to be taught.

Note Christ here put the emphasis on His specific teaching – in contrast to the teachings of the OT. Certainly, Christ affirmed the OT and said that He came to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17). Certainly as Paul says, all Scripture is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16). However, here again, the emphasis is on the fuller revelation of what is found in New Testament revelation. Christ taught us a whole new system of GRACE. We are no longer under law, but under grace or what is called "the law of Christ" which is really the "law of love" as governed by the Spirit- and we need to be taught to live accordingly.

What Christ taught certainly involves what He taught during the course of His earthly ministry, but then also by extension what He further revealed in NT truth through His apostles who were really a further extension of Christ's personal ministry. After writing the gospel of Luke, he then wrote in Acts 1:1 that this account was about "all that Jesus began both to and teach". What Jesus continued to do and teach – essentially through His apostles is then unfolded in the N.T. Scriptures which we study and teach today. And those words are enduring! (cf. Acts 2:42).

Slide # 18**Matthew 24:35 (NKJV)**

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but **My words will by no means pass away.**

The lifelong task of every true disciple of Christ is to learn and study “the whole counsel of God” as Paul described it in Acts 20:27. And note it is not enough merely to teach intellectually what Christ taught but also to teach them to observe (that is to obey) what Christ taught. Head knowledge is not that impressive – what God wants is HEART OBEDIENCE! It’s not about how many verses you memorize – but about how many verses you live!

Jesus concluded this “Great Commission” with the promise to always be with His people, “even to the end of the age.” (cf. Acts 23:11; 27:23-24; 2 Tim. 4:16-17). The “Amen” is not in the older manuscripts. It has been pointed out that this is not really a promise per se but rather a stated FACT!

The Jews knew of only two ages; the present pre-kingdom age, and the kingdom age to come. Christ repeatedly uses “the end of the age” to denote His second coming (cf. Matt. 13:37-50).

The great commission is sandwiched between Christ’s statement of having all authority and the abiding promise of His spiritual presence. His promise is to be with us until the great commission is completed and of course, forever thereafter we shall personally be with the Lord in His presence (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

But we don’t face this daunting task of making disciples the world over alone. Christ is with us! This ensures that He will build His Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Mt. 16:18). In the incarnation Jesus is said to be “Immanuel” which is translated as “God with us” and now in the resurrection, His spiritual presence via the Holy Spirit continues to be with us (Jn. 14:16-20; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 13:5; Rev. 2:1; 21:3).

Note this commission was clearly not just given to the eleven or only to those of that generation because what Christ has instructed has application to the very end of the age – that is through the time of His second coming.

In John 17:20 Christ in His high priestly prayer prayed for those who would believe on Him through the apostle’s Word. Thus, the truth as given by Christ through the apostles is transmitted from generation to generation. One generation hands the baton of the great commission off to the next and so it goes until the end of the age (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2).

Note there is 4 “alls” connected with the giving of the Great Commission.

Slide # 19

- v. 18 “**All** authority...”
- v. 19 “...make disciples of **all** the nations...”
- v. 20 “teaching them to observe **all** things...”
- v. 20 “...with you **always**... [all the days]”

Thus the closing words of Matthew’s gospel are very comprehensive in nature. They lay out in clear and unequivocal terms what is the MISSION of the Church. This is why we are here. Our great assignment as Christ’s people is to carry out His great commission of making disciples.

Christ on the night before His crucifixion prayed to the Father, “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” (Jn. 17:4). Now He gives us His presence to finish the work of the great commission He has given us to do. What great statements of assurance. Our Lord has all authority and He is ever with us. With that reality in mind we can face the daunting task of the Great Commission.

As we see the day of Christ’s coming approaching much of the professing Church seems to have lost sight of our mission. Many seemingly think our mission is to promote fellowship. After all the Church is a great place to hang out as we await the rapture. Some think the mission of the Church is social programs. Some seem to think the mission of the Church is to promote praise and worship.

Now all of these things have their place – and indeed an important place – if properly understood. But they are not the essential MISSION of the Church. If the mission is fellowship we might as well go instantly to heaven where fellowship is perfect. If the mission is meeting social needs we might as well go straight to heaven where no one will ever need again. If the mission is more perfect praise and worship then what are we doing here – because perfect praise and worship will be in heaven. This is NOT why Christ left us here. This is not what the great commission is all about!

All of these objectives can be better accomplished in heaven. There is only one thing that we won’t do better in heaven and that is making disciples. Not a single disciple will be made in heaven! Now is the time to make disciples! This is the GREAT MISSION of the Church as given by Christ in the Great Commission. This is our great work for such a time as this! This is why Christ died. It’s ultimately about making disciples of all the nations!

For some believers, judgment day will reveal that their lives were all about a great omission instead of being faithful to the great commission. May the responsibility of the GREAT commission truly be GREAT in our eyes. God help us to be faithful!