



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Matthew 28:16-20 & Acts 1:6-8 **New Revised Standard Version** **April 28, 2019**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, April 28, 2019**, is from **Matthew 28:16-20 & Acts 1:6-8**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Matthew 28:16) Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

Matthew wrote a shortened version of Jesus' resurrection appearances and added some facts some of the other gospel writers omitted (this is to be expected of any biographer or Bible commentator). From the gospels we learn that the disciples did not immediately believe the women and do what Jesus commanded them to do through the women's testimony; however, the eleven did eventually go to Galilee as Jesus had commanded them (perhaps to the Mount of Transfiguration—see Matthew 17, or to the place where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount—see Matthew 5-7). They would never have gone back to Galilee to see Jesus if Jesus had not convinced them in Jerusalem that He was raised from the dead. Based on all the evidence they had, Jesus called them foolish and slow to believe (see Luke 24:25). The eleven went, perhaps along with others (the Bible does not tell us how many went); however, Jesus did appear to more than 500 at

one time and this may be that time and place (see 1 Corinthians 15:6).

(Matthew 28:17) When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Just as the women worshiped Jesus on Resurrection Sunday, the disciples also worshiped Jesus when He appeared to them on the mountain. Rather than doubting His resurrection (which they had become convinced of by Jesus himself in Jerusalem), I believe that some (perhaps none of the eleven, but others is the crowd) doubted whether they should worship Jesus as God. Jesus' response when He gave them the Great Commission (see below) answers the doubt about whether they should worship Him as God. As the Son of God, God the Father gave Jesus *all* authority in heaven and on earth. It may also be that some doubted it was Jesus and they did not recognize Jesus until He spoke to them. Many of them may not have had perfect 20/20 vision, so they saw Him indistinctly. After Jesus came closer to them and spoke to them, they recognized him, and He took away their doubts. In a similar way, Mary did not recognize Jesus (thinking He was the gardener) until He spoke to her (see John 20:15-18). In the next verse, Matthew recorded Jesus' spoken words called "The Great Commission."

(Matthew 28:18) And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of Man, and the Messiah, did not grasp after power and authority. He did not grasp after equality with God (see Philippians 2:6). As the Son of God, before Jesus was born and became a man, He possessed all authority in heaven and on earth. As God, all things were created by him and through him (see John 1:1-3). Now, as fully God and fully human, having humbled himself and completed His work of redemption by His sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, His heavenly Father gave him authority as King over all creation. Jesus is far greater than the ideas the Jews had of a Messiah who would be a King of Israel in King David's image. Jesus is King over all the earth, over all people and nations. Jesus is King over all in heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven (see Matthew 26:64 & Mark 16:19).

(Matthew 28:19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Jesus commanded all His disciples/learners to make other disciples—not just among the Jews but among all people of all nations, because He is King over all the nations on earth. The first eleven disciples are also called apostles. Jesus’ command did not apply only to the apostles. Jesus commands all His disciples to make other disciples. Jesus’ command was not only to the eleven apostles or only to a professional religious class, but to all disciples until Jesus comes again—that includes all who trust in Jesus today. Jesus intends that His disciples will so influence, teach, and live according to His loving and truthful example that at some point so many people in a nation are so transformed by faith in Jesus Christ that that nation might be looked upon as substantially a Christian nation—not because Christian rulers, teachings, and commands have been imposed or forced upon the people, but because the vast majority of the people have been transformed by the Truth and the Holy Spirit. Those who chose to follow Jesus as King, Lord, and Savior were to demonstrate their faith by being baptized and by their obedience to Jesus’ commands. Baptism shows forth that a new way of life has begun for the true believer in Jesus. Notice: Jesus used “Name” in the singular when speaking of baptizing in the name of “the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” He declared clearly that worshipping him as God was right and permissible, for the Three Persons are One God. (For a deeper analysis, see my article “Matthew 28:16-20 Reconsidered,” which appeared in *The Expository Times*, March 1979, currently available in “Resources” on the *International Bible Lessons Commentary* website.)

(Matthew 28:20) and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Jesus’ Kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven” was to come into visible existence as those the disciples helped and prayed for became disciples too. No one was to be made “a Christian” or disciple of Jesus by force or by threats (which is truly impossible), but by

teaching the truth about Jesus and praying for the Holy Spirit to make the truth of Jesus come alive in a person's heart leading them to bow before Jesus as their King, Lord, and Savior. Because Jesus is King over all with authority over all, everyone is to be taught to obey Jesus, every command of Jesus is to be obeyed, because in that way Jesus is honored as King over all and people are protected from doing evil to themselves and others. In their endeavor to teach all people to obey Jesus, Jesus encourages His disciples (all who trust in Jesus as King) by telling them He will be with them always. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit indwell all Christians.

(Acts 1:6) So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”

This verse seems to continue the conversation between Jesus and the disciples on the mountain. With Jesus being given all authority, they reasonably asked Jesus when He would use His authority to overthrow the Roman occupation of Judea and restore the kingdom of Israel by becoming its rightful King or putting one of them in charge as King of the Jews. To them, Jesus was still a national king rather than King of the universe.

(Acts 1:7) He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

Jesus replied that there are certain facts or truths that they did not need to know, at least not at that time. Their vision of what Jesus should do as King was distinctly opposite from what Jesus wanted them to do—make disciples of Jesus Christ in all the nations of the world. Jesus Christ was and is King over all, including King over all nations, not just over one nation that would rule over all other nations, but it would take the disciples many years to learn the extent of Jesus' purpose for them.

(Acts 1:8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The disciples would receive divine power from the Holy Spirit when He came upon them. In the Spirit's power, they would tell others the truth about Jesus beginning in Jerusalem—among the type of people they were most familiar with, and where many witnesses could also confirm what they said. Then, they would go to the Jews and Gentiles in Judea and Samaria (where they had been taught by Jesus about evangelizing Samaritans when He spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well). Like those in Jerusalem, these people would also be familiar with the Old Testament, the Law of God, and Moses' teachings; therefore, they could more easily teach them how Jesus fulfilled their expectations. After they grew in faith and experience as witnesses for Jesus, they would be prepared by the Holy Spirit to go to all the nations, tribes, and people throughout the earth.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Do you think the eleven disciples would have gone to see Jesus in Galilee if they had not first been convinced in Jerusalem that He was raised from the dead? Give a reason for your answer.
2. What do you think some of the people doubted?
3. What did Jesus say about himself? What does that mean to you?
4. What are some commands Jesus gave the disciples? Should we obey them too?
5. What were the disciples to receive and how would this gift help them? Will this gift also help Christians today?

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