

Lesson 25: Chapter 28 “He is Risen”

Servant’s preparation:

http://www.suscopts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew_28.pdf

Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson in the bible study of St. Matthew, please mention this book overview.

- ✓ Who is St. Matthew? He was one of the twelve disciples; he was a tax-collector before Jesus called him to follow Him.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Jews, it is designed to prove that Jesus is the Messianic king of Old Testament (OT) prophecy.
- ✓ What is its theme? Jesus is the King of the Heavenly kingdom, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.

Remember:

Last week, Matthew chapter 27 described the betrayal of Jesus, starting with Judas's remorse and suicide after Jesus's condemnation by the Roman governor Pilate, who is pressured by the crowd to crucify Jesus in favor of the prisoner Barabbas. Jesus is then mocked, whipped, and crucified at Golgotha, where supernatural events occur, including darkness, an earthquake, and the tearing of the temple veil. After Jesus's death, Joseph of Arimathea buries His body in a new tomb, which is sealed and guarded by soldiers at the chief priests' request.

Memory Verse:

28:19-20 “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, 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.

Lesson Goal:

The Great Commission is a call to evangelism and discipleship, making the sharing of the Gospel and the teaching of Christ's teachings a central mission for us, believers, until the end of the age.

Lesson:

The Vacant Tomb (28:1-10)

As soon as the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, Cleophas’s wife, ran to look at the tomb. For their sake, God sent His angel, and an earthquake occurred, and the stone was rolled for the angel to sit on; the angel scared the guards and received the two women. The presence

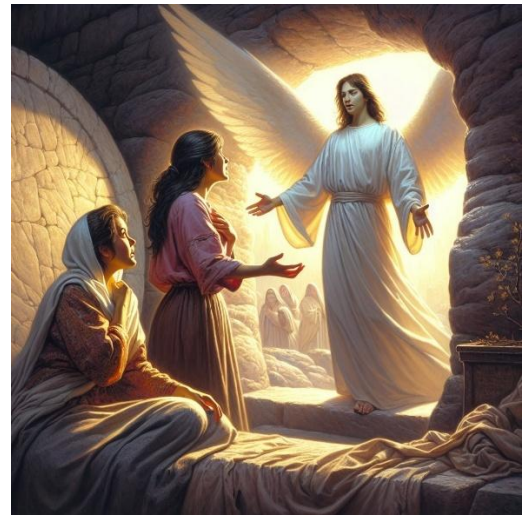
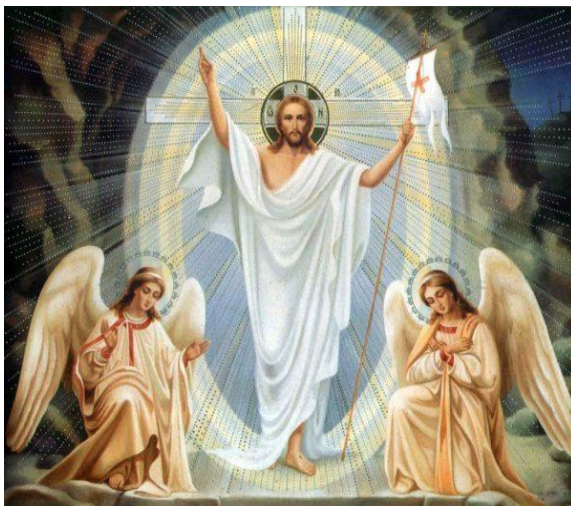
of the angel also prevented the soldiers from putting another body in the tomb instead of Jesus. The angel offered them a message for preaching the resurrection among the disciples (Matt 28:7)

The resurrection happened after the Sabbath, at dawn on Sunday. The resurrection was fulfilled with the power of His authority.

As soon as they ran in great joy and yet fear to preach, they met the Lord Jesus who gave them peace and allowed them to touch His feet and kneel down to Him in worship.

The Apparitions of Christ were

1. To Mary Magdalene alone, near Jerusalem, (Mk 16:9; Jn 20:11-18)
2. To the women returning from the tomb (Mt 28:9-10)
3. To Simon Peter alone (Lk 24:34)
4. To the two disciples going to Emmaus (Lk 24:13)
5. To the apostles at Jerusalem, excepting Thomas, who was absent
These were all the same day (Jn 20:19)
6. To the apostles at Jerusalem a second time, when Thomas was present, (Jn 20:26,29)
7. At the Sea of Tiberias, when seven disciples were fishing (Jn 21:1)
8. To the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Mt 28:16)
9. To about five hundred brethren at once in Galilee (1 Cor 15:6)
10. To James only (1 Cor 15:7)
11. To all the apostles on Mt. Olivet at His ascension, (Lk 24:51)



The Soldiers Are Bribed (28:11-15)

The chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate saying that the Lord is deceiving them, even though He has declared His resurrection ahead of time (Matt 27:63). Instead of those priests preaching to the Gentiles of the Messiah, they came forward preaching the ingratitude and disobedience. It is as if they shut the door of faith against themselves, whereas it has been opened to the Gentiles. Now when the Lord has risen, the Roman soldiers came to testify of the resurrection

to the Jewish leaders. Unfortunately, they did not accept their testimony, they rather offered bribery to share with them their misleading ideas and to deny the resurrection. The chief priests were fully convinced of the resurrection or else they wouldn't have bribed the soldiers.

What they had done confirmed the resurrection; for the news spread that the body was not in the grave, and as for the theft, this was unacceptable, why?

- A. The soldiers would not dare to go to sleep on guard.
- B. Could they be so sound asleep as not to be awakened with all the noise of removing the stone? Certainly not.
- C. The disciples were weak at that time and would not dare to steal the body.
- D. If the soldiers were asleep, how could they possibly know that it was the disciples who stole Him, or indeed that any person stole Him?

The Great Commission (28:16-20)

The fact that Galilee was the site chosen for the disciples to meet the Lord Jesus, the One risen from the dead, means the renewal of the covenant. For in Galilee the Lord has chosen most of His disciples and has sent them on their preaching mission. Because they were weakened in the crucifixion events, He brought them back to the very same site, granting them the power of His resurrection, to start a new, carrying new possibilities and potentials.

Jesus wished to provide all the authority He has to His apostles, and hence they would have it in their mission as agents for Him! He has granted them divine authority by His fiery Holy Spirit. He commanded them to baptize the nations in the mystery of the Trinity.

V20: It is as if He is saying "Do not say the work you are burdened with a difficult one. It is I who can do all things easily with you".



A Summary of the Gospel of St. Matthew

Let us review what we have learned over the past few months in our bible study of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Matthew wanted to show how Jesus is the continuation and fulfillment of the whole biblical story of God and Israel, so he emphasizes that:

- Jesus is the Messiah from the line of David
- Jesus is a new, authoritative teacher like Moses
- Jesus is God with us, or in Hebrew, Emmanuel

The book of Matthew has been designed with an introduction and a conclusion that act as a frame around five clear sections in the center. Each of those sections concludes with a long block of Jesus' teaching.

Matthew 1-3: Jesus as the Messiah and Emmanuel (God with Us)

Chapters 1-3 set the stage by attaching Jesus' story to the Old Testament Scriptures. Matthew opens with a genealogy of Jesus that highlights Him as the messianic son of David and the son of Abraham who will bring God's blessing to all nations.

After that, we come to the famous story about Jesus' birth and how it fulfilled the Old Testament prophetic promises about how the nations would come to honor the Messiah who was born in Bethlehem. More than that, Jesus' conception was by the Holy Spirit, and He was named Emmanuel, which amounts to a claim that Jesus is no mere human. He is God with us, the God of Israel embodied as a human.

Matthew 4-7: Arrival of God's Kingdom and the Sermon on the Mount

In the first main section (chs. 4-7), Jesus steps onto the scene announcing the arrival of God's Kingdom. He has come to confront evil, especially spiritual evil and its legacy of demonization, disease, and death. He is here to restore God's reign over the world by creating a new family of people who will live under His rule.

After Jesus begins healing people, He takes His followers to a mountain and delivers His first block of teaching, the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7). Here, Jesus explores what it looks like to follow Him and live in God's Kingdom. It's an Upside-Down Kingdom where there are no privileged members—the poor, the nobodies, the wealthy, the religious, everyone is invited to turn and follow Jesus and join His new family. Jesus makes clear that He's not here to set aside the commands of the Torah but rather to fulfill them through His teachings, which transform the hearts of His people to truly love God and their neighbor, including their enemies.

Matthew 8-10: The Kingdom's Power and Invitation to Discipleship

The next section shows Jesus bringing the Kingdom into reality in the day-to-day lives of people (chs. 8-10). Matthew has arranged nine stories in which Jesus brings the liberating power of God's Kingdom to bear on the lives of normal people. There are stories here about people who are sick, broken, or in danger. Jesus heals or saves all of them by acts of power.

In chapter 10, we continue into the second large block of teaching in the book of Matthew, as Jesus extends His reach by sending out 12 disciples. He teaches these disciples how to announce the Kingdom of God as well as what to expect once they do. While many among Israel will accept the Kingdom of Jesus, Israel's leaders stand to lose a lot if they repent. They will likely reject and persecute Jesus and His followers, and those followers should be ready for it.

Matthew 11-13: Different Reactions to Jesus

This leads into chapters 11-13, where Matthew has collected a group of stories about people responding to Jesus and His message. It's a mixed bag. Some react positively; they love Jesus and recognize Him as the Messiah. While the reactions of Israel's leaders are negative, as the Pharisees and temple teachers reject and challenge Jesus altogether.

Jesus isn't surprised or thrown by these diverse responses. In fact, He focuses on them in the third large block of teaching starting in chapter 13. Here, Matthew has collected many of Jesus' parables about the Kingdom: the farmer throwing seed on four types of soil, the mustard seed, the pearl, and the buried treasure. These parables are like a commentary on the stories that you've just read. Some accept Jesus with enthusiasm, while others reject Him, but God's Kingdom will continue spreading despite these obstacles.

Matthew 14-20: What It Means for Jesus to Be the Messiah

In chapters 14-20, the next main section of the book, Matthew explores the different perspectives people had about what it meant for Jesus to be the Messiah. Jesus keeps healing sick people, and twice He miraculously provides food for huge crowds in the desert, one of which is made up of Jewish people (ch. 14), the other non-Jewish (ch. 15). This sign is very similar to what Moses did for Israel in the wilderness (Exod. 16), so lots of people become excited about Jesus and think that He's the great prophet and Messiah.

The religious leaders, however, are not convinced. Their view of the messiah is centered and built on passages such as Psalm 2 or Daniel 2 about a victorious messiah who will deliver Israel and defeat the pagan oppressors. From their point of view, Jesus is a false teacher who's making blasphemous claims about Himself, so they increase their opposition and start hatching a plan to kill Him.

In chapters 16 and 17, Jesus withdraws and teaches His closest disciples what it really means for Him to be Israel's Messiah, because it's not what they expect.

Jesus continues into the fourth large block of teaching in chapter 18, followed by another series of teachings in chapters 19 and 20. These are all about the upside-down nature of Jesus' messianic Kingdom and how it turns our normal value system on its head. In the community of the servant King, you gain honor by serving others. Instead of revenge, you forgive and do good to your enemies. You gain true wealth by giving it away. To follow the servant Messiah, you must become a servant yourself.

Matthew 21-25: Jesus Confronts Israel's Leaders

In the next section (chs. 21-25), we watch the two kingdoms clash, Jesus' Kingdom and that of Israel's leaders. Jesus comes to Jerusalem for Passover, riding in on a donkey as the crowds hail Him as the Messiah. Jesus immediately marches into the courtyard of the temple to clean it from traders. His actions speak louder than words. As Israel's king, Jesus was asserting His royal authority over the temple. The temple was compromised by the hypocrisy of Israel's leaders, so He challenged their authority. The leaders are deeply offended, and in chapter 22, they try to trap Jesus and shame Him in public debate. They fail, and as a result, they determine to have Him killed.

In response, Jesus delivers His final block of teaching (chs. 23-25). First, He offers a passionate critique of the Pharisees and their hypocrisy before weeping over Jerusalem and its rejection of God's Kingdom. Jesus withdraws with the disciples and starts telling them what's going to happen. These leaders are going to execute Him, but in doing so, they will be creating their own demise. Instead of accepting Jesus' way of the peaceful Kingdom, they are going to take the road of revolt against Rome, so the city and the temple will be destroyed.

Matthew 26-28: Jesus' Trial, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

With all this ringing in the disciples' ears, the story comes to its climax in chapters 26-28. That night, Jesus takes the disciples aside to celebrate a Passover meal. Jesus uses bread and wine to institute the sacrament of Eucharist, showing that His coming death would be the sacrifice to redeem people from their sins.

After the meal, Jesus is arrested and put on trial before the Sanhedrin. He's charged with blasphemy against God and brought before the Roman governor Pilate. Pilate thinks that Jesus is innocent, but he gives in and sentences Jesus to death by crucifixion. Jesus is led away by the Roman soldiers and is crucified.

You'll notice here that, just as in the opening chapters, there are lots of references to the Old Testament. Matthew is showing that Jesus' death was not a failure but rather the surprising fulfillment of prophetic promises. Jesus came as the servant Messiah who was rejected by His own people. But instead of judging them, He is judged on their behalf and bears the consequences of their sin.

The book concludes with the risen Jesus giving a final teaching called the Great Commission. He is now the true King of the world, so He sends the disciples to all nations with the good news that Jesus is Lord. He is inviting everyone to His Kingdom through getting baptized and following His teachings.

Echoing all the way back to the first chapter with His name, Emmanuel, or "God with us," Jesus' last words to His disciples are, "I will be with you." It's a promise of Jesus' personal presence that will be with us until His second coming.

"Fulfillment statements" in St. Matthew's Gospel: [Refer to Page 7 of this study for all prophecies]

- ❖ **Jesus childhood: 1:23; 2:15, 17 1-18, 23**
- ❖ **Galilean ministry: 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17 16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35 21; 13:35**
- ❖ **Jesus' last week in Jerusalem: 21:4-5; 27:9 5; 27:9-10**

Takeaways and Lesson Delivery Ideas:

Use if class time allows.

Will The Real Jesus Please Rise ?

This activity begins with an encounter with three imaginary theologians, Rev. Julius Wishyheart, Prof. Malcom Souldeath, and Dr. Herbert Faithstrong.

Rev. Wishyheart represents the viewpoint of the liberal Christian scholar, Prof. Souldeath represents the viewpoint of the skeptic, and Dr. Faithstrong represents the viewpoint of the orthodox Christian.

Ask three of your youths in advance to be prepared to read these three theological statements or, for fun, have youth role-play the theologians. Will the Real Jesus Please Rise:

Well, let's listen to them as they express their views on what happened after the Crucifixion:

1. Rev. Julius Wishyheart: At some point soon after Jesus' death, after the disciples had recovered from their initial shock and grief, they began to reflect on all that Jesus had taught them. It was at that point that they realized that He had not really left them. His inspiration would always be with them. And because He was God and had returned to eternity to join God the father. To express this concept, and especially to teach it to new converts, they created parables, just as Jesus had done like "The parable of the Ascension". The last chapter of Luke is true, but not literal. The things described there did not literally happen, but the ideas they illustrate are true. Christ is alive in God and in our hearts.

2. Prof. Malcolm Soul-death: Obviously, Jesus, having royally botched his life, wound up being executed by the Romans with the blessing of the Jewish leaders. The disciples—poor, naive dupes that they were—could not bear to admit their stupidity and failure and return to their homes in Galilee. So, in the days following the Crucifixion, while they were hiding from the Jews like cowards, they cooked up the story of the Resurrection. Somehow, they convinced other simple people that they were telling the truth. They told this story enough times that they probably began to believe it themselves. And this story became the foundation for the church, which has perpetuated the mythology of Jesus for some 2,000 years.

3. Dr. Herbert Faithstrong: Jesus was right when He said that only those who have the childlike qualities of faith and trust can enter the Kingdom. If God is who we believe Him to be, if He could create the universe, if He is omnipresent and omnipotent, what is so hard about believing that He could raise Jesus from the dead? Neither of your theories, Rev. Wishy-heart, and Prof. Souldeath, explains the incredible change that occurred in the disciples in just a matter of days. No lie could take the cowardly Peter and turn him into the dynamic Peter who boldly preached in Jerusalem just a few weeks later. No myth could take the band of frightened, defeated, and demoralized disciples and turn them into giants who turned the entire known world upside down in a matter of a few years. Only the supernatural power of God, shown in the resurrection of the Christ, could cause that!

Well, who do you believe this time?

Youth will probably select the third one since it is the one they have heard all their lives. But press them to support their choice: Why do they agree with Dr. Faithstrong? Why do they think his position is superior to the other two? Why do they believe the other two are wrong? Let us explore the validity of resurrection.

Was Jesus's body really not in the tomb on Sunday morning?

- Being buried by Joseph of Arimathea could not be made up by gospel writers because he was a popular Jewish figure that everyone would notice if not true.
- We are sure there were guards either Roman or Jewish guarding the tomb or else the Jewish leaders would not have confirmed their presence by claiming they were asleep when the disciples stole the body.
- 24: 12 "Stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves." If the disciples had stolen the body, they would not have folded the linens, but they would have stolen the body as quickly as possible.



Did Jesus rise from the dead?



What if the disciples were deceived that they saw Him after He rose as the atheist professor said?

As we know that no one was at the tomb while Jesus was rising but like any event, we have evidences for its occurrence even without seeing it. We know He died on the cross as proven by the physicians then we have eyewitnesses who saw Him after His resurrection. Why were they not hallucinating?

1. The early Christians could not have been hallucinating as a group over 500 could not imagine the same exact event.
2. The early movement of Christianity spreading in many countries shows that people have been convinced and touched by that faith to the extent of death.
3. No one in the first century would have believed in Jesus as God unless they were sure He rose from the dead.
4. The empty tomb is verified even by Jesus's enemies.
5. Jesus is not a legendary, but a true story and He was referred to by many non-Christians as a great teacher. If He is a great teacher, He could not have lied when He claimed He is God or else everyone would have called Him a crazy man, not a great wonder maker and teacher. He fulfilled numerous prophecies written hundreds of years before Him, He performed miracles and lived a sinless life. Finally, Jesus predicted and accomplished His own resurrection.

ALL HONOR AND
GLORY BE TO GOD
FOREVER AND EVER!

Amen.