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Matthew 28

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Matthew 28.

Topics.

- Certain women go to the tomb and see angels.
- The Lord will rise on the third day.
- Jesus in his resurrected body appears to two women.
- The great commission.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter the chief priests and elders deliver Jesus over to Pilate; Judas attempts to return the thirty pieces of silver; chief priests and elders accuse Jesus before Pilate; Barabbas is released and a crown of thorns is put on Jesus head; Jesus is taken to Golgotha; Jesus cries, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The curtain of the temple is torn; tombs are opened and many of the faithful are raised; Joseph from Arimathea lays Jesus body in a tomb; and Roman soldiers guard it.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

MATTHEW 28:1-10

Certain women go to the Tomb and see Angels.

- **Matthew 28:1-10:** Now after the Sabbath (Saturday) toward the dawn of the first day of the week (Sunday) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

The end of the previous chapter finished with Jesus being laid in the tomb and soldiers guarding it. Then the woman and the disciples resting as it was Saturday which was the Jewish weekly Sabbath and also a Sabbath high day because it was the first day of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread which was also a Sabbath day, thus it was a double Sabbath (Matt. 28:1) (Mark 16:1-2). Now this chapter picks the story up after the Saturday a high Sabbath and toward the dawn of Sunday the first day of the week with the following four women taking spices and ointments they had prepared on the evening before the Sabbath day began (Luke 23:56) to anoint the Lord's body with.

Mary Magdalene: a repentant and sincere woman who had an affectionate love of Christ and who the Lord first appeared (Mark 16:9) (Luke 8:2).

The other Mary: it is uncertain who this other Mary is since she, and Mary the mother of Jesus (Matt. 27:56) (Mark 6:3) both had sons named James and Joses (sometimes called Joseph). Added to this Cleophas wife

Mary was the sister of Jesus mother and a friend of Mary Magdalene, all three women stood together at the cross. Thus, the other Mary could be Jesus Mother, or his Mother's sister (John 19:25).

Salome: was wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John (Mark 15:40) (Mark 16:1) (Matt. 4:21-22).

Joanna: was the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward (Luke 24:9-10) (Luke 8:3).

NOTE: John mentions only Mary Magdalene. Most likely, because he wanted to give a particular account of her interview with the risen Saviour, but he does not deny that others were present also, thus though he mentions only one he does not deny that there are more. Likewise, Matthew does not mention Mary and Salome (mentioned by Mark) or Joanna (mentioned by Luke).

The Lord will rise on the third day: the Angel tells Mary Magdalene and the other Mary that the Lord has risen, as he said he would. (V6). The following verses show that at least three times Jesus clearly told his disciples he would rise after three days and on the third day:

- Jesus said, "They will deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be *raised on the third day*" (Mat. 20:19).
- Jesus was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, *after three days he will rise*" (Mark 9:31).
- Jesus said, "They will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after *three days he will rise*" (Mark 10:34).
- Jesus said, "After flogging him, they will kill him, and on the *third day he will rise*" (Luke 18:33).

John in the following verse tells us that the disciples did not fully understand what Jesus meant when he said he would be killed and rise on the third day: -

- For as yet they (the disciples) knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead (John 20:19).

The third day was the first day of the week which was Sunday (Matt. 28:1) therefore Jesus was crucified on Friday. Some people have difficulty in accepting Jesus was crucified on Friday because he said, "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:39-40), but this can be easily explained when one understands that the phrase, "Three days and three nights" is a proper Jewish idiom for saying, "The third day" it does not mean three twenty-four hour days, but simply after three days, (i.e. on the third day such and such will happen). If there was proper recognition of this common Bible idiom there would be no difficulty in understanding what Jesus meant by the phrase, "Three days and three nights." It is simply another way of saying, "The third day."

Therefore, Jesus was in the tomb:

- After sunset Friday (Passover Day) (14th).
- All day Saturday (the Jewish high Sabbath) (15th).
- Until sometime Sunday morning (the first day of the week) (16th).

Giving the three Days:

- Part of Friday, all day Saturday and part of Sunday morning, giving the three Jewish days and three nights with Jesus rising on the third day.

This is supported by the very simple fact that Luke says it was the third day after Jesus had been crucified that he appeared to the two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:21). Therefore, Jesus must have been crucified on Friday because he appeared to the two men on the third day after the crucifixion which was Sunday the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1). For further information see the title:

- Three Days and Three Nights in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The women speak with an angel: as an angel of the Lord descended, a great earthquake took place and the stone the Roman guards had placed over the tomb to seal it rolled away. It is interesting to notice that the women spoke with the angel and the strong and muscular Roman guards fell in fear as dead men.

Ponder for a moment: the angel not only shows the women that Jesus is gone, but tells them he is on his way to Galilee and they will see him there, imagine their extreme joy and excitement as they immediately race from the tomb to not only to tell the disciples but to see the risen Lord.

Jesus appears to the two women: as Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are on their way to tell the disciples the Lord has risen; he appears to them and they immediately fall and worship him. Jesus tells them not to fear, some might ask, "What they might fear?" Obviously not Jesus because they took hold of his feet and worshipped him. Since it is after he told them to go and tell the disciples they have seen him that he speaks the words of comfort, "Do not be afraid" it is most likely that their fear would be of the persecution of the religious leaders, the chief priests and scribes who have just had Christ killed and are fiercely and aggressively against anyone who proclaims Jesus, especially that he has risen. Remember they told the soldiers who were guarding the tomb to say that Jesus body had been stolen by his disciples (Matt. 28:12-13).

The following is the most likely scenario of the woman who went to the tomb based on the accounts gleaned from (Matt. 28) (Mark 16) (Luke 16) (John 20). The first people to go to the tomb very early in the morning on Sunday the first day of the week (the third day) were Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and Salome. It seems they all began to go to the tomb together but Mary Magdalene appears to have raced ahead of the others and been the first to arrive at the tomb (Luke 24:10) (Mark 16:1). A little while after Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb the other Mary arrives and they both see one angel sitting on the stone outside the tomb who tells the two Mary's Jesus is risen. They then leave the tomb to go firstly to tell Peter and another disciple (Mark 16:7) all that they have seen and heard. After Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had left the tomb to go to the disciples, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and Salome arrive at the tomb, they enter into it and also see two angels. The two angels tell these three women that Jesus is risen and they then also go to tell the disciples. Meanwhile Peter and the other disciple with him after hearing what Mary Magdalene and the other Mary said run to the tomb with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary following them (Luke 24:12) (John 20:2).

Peter and the disciple with him arrive before the two Mary's and they go into the tomb and also see the two angels and then go home (Luke 24:12, 34) (John 20:3-5, 8, 10). After Peter and the disciple with him leave Mary Magdalene and the other Mary arrive at the tomb and rather than go with Peter they stay behind and while weeping and looking into the empty tomb Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary outside the tomb. The two women then go and tell the other disciples that Jesus is risen. (It is most likely that the other Mary is not mentioned in some accounts because it is uncertain who she was).

From information gleaned from the other Gospels we find that the women who told these things to the apostles were:

- Mary Magdalene.

- Mary the mother of James and Joses.
- Salome.
- The other Mary.
- Joanna.
- Other women from Galilee that were with them.

It is most likely the women ministered from their own homes going out in groups of two or three sharing the Good News with their friends and those in their surrounding regions rather than all lodging together in the same house. For further information see the title:

- Tomb (events that took place, first day) (third day).
- In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

MATTHEW 28:11-15

The Story that was Spread Amongst the Jews.

- **Matthew 28:11-15:** While they (the women) were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹²And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers ¹³and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴And if this comes to the governor's ears (Pilate), we (the chief priests) will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

Ponder for a moment: imagine the chief priests' horror when they heard the words of the guards, "Christ has risen." They said Jesus was a threat to their empire while he was alive and they feared he would be a greater threat if the common people began to hear stories that the Lord had risen. The entire reason for commanding Pilate to make the tomb secure (until the third day) was for fear that that his disciples would steal his body and tell the people that Jesus had risen from the dead. They knew that a risen Saviour would be a greater threat to them and their religious empire than when he was alive on earth and now the very thing they feared and tried to stop has happened; only his body was not stolen, but actually raised from the dead to be seen by many (Matt. 27:64). The news is so threatening to the chief priests they call a special meeting with the elders to discuss how they will handle the bad news (for them) so they pay the guards a large sum of money to lie to the people and tell them that Jesus disciples stole his body while they were sleeping.

The practical lesson: these religious leaders are at the head of the nation of Israel and stand before God in the LORD'S temple. They have tremendous knowledge of the Old Testament scrolls and enormous authority, power and influence over the entire nation of Israel, but their heart is a million miles away from the heart of God. They are in the ministry for their own selfish ambition and gain they love the money and wealth, the fame, the importance and being held in esteem by their followers. This should caution us today not to think that because a religion has opulent church buildings, well versed teachers and multitudes of followers worldwide it means that their teaching is in tune with the heart of God. The religious leaders of Jesus era had all these things, but they lead the nation away from God and ultimately to destruction.

The chief priests power over the Roman governor: the chief priests tell the guards not to fear or stress when Pilate (the Roman governor) hears of their lie (i.e. that the body of Jesus was stolen from the tomb while they were sleeping), because they will talk to Pilate and persuade

him not to punish them. This shows the confidence the religious leaders of Jesus era had in their power and authority over the Roman secular rulers of their nation (v14).

To this day: (v15) the words, "This story (the disciples stole Jesus body) has been spread among the Jews to this day," means that the story was still around at the time Matthew wrote his Gospel which some say was eight, others say eighteen, and others say thirty years after Christ's resurrection, but Justin Martyr, who wrote in the second century, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, says that the Jews dispersed the story by means of special messengers sent to every country. This means the story was still current among the Jews at least a hundred years after Matthew wrote the words, "to this day." The wonder is that such an incredible lie lasted so long, but it simply shows that those who are resolved not to come to the light will cling to straws.

MATTHEW 28:16-20

Jesus appears to the Eleven Apostles.

- **Matthew 28:16-20:** Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me primarily means everything regarding eternal life, forgiveness of sin, salvation and the promises of God are all in Christ as the following Scripture shows:

- Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6).

Jesus eleven apostles see the Lord in his resurrected, immortal and eternal body and he tells them to go and make disciples in every nation by baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus then tells the apostles to teach new disciples to observe everything that he has commanded them (v20) meaning teach them to walk in the lifestyle Jesus has taught them (i.e. the Sermon on the Mount and the Royal law, "Love your neighbour as yourself."

NOTICE: once a person has been taught enough Scripture to see their fallness before God's Holiness and it brings them to honest repentance and sorrow and their need to accept Christ as their eternal Saviour and they respond by being baptised into Christ and faithfully follow him. Then the primary focus in making them a disciple is not so much about doctrine, but behaviour. Once a person is connected to Christ and trusting in him for their salvation then the dominant focus of teaching switches from doctrine to behaviour. This is because unless a teacher is living the life that they proclaim no-one is going to respect them or their teaching. To be good disciple of Christ and a wise and faithful servant is primarily about right behaviour (i.e. how to live a lifestyle that honours God's name and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith. To achieve such a lifestyle, we need to live by the Ten Commandments which Jesus summed up by saying: -

- You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and strength and 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).

These two commands of Jesus shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that to live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith we need to:

1. Love the God with all our heart and all our mind (Matt. 22:37-38).

2. Love our neighbour as ourself (Matt. 22:39).

These are the only two commandments anyone needs to know simply because if a person loves their neighbour as themselves they will never hurt or harm another human in anyway therefore no other commandment would ever be broken. In the book of Romans Paul states:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

This clearly shows that the spirit of the law is love because each law protects the innocent from harm and hurt. Paul in his letter to the Galatians wrote:

- The whole law is fulfilled in the words: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14).

And that:

- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Gal. 5:22-23).

There is no law against love because love does no harm, James calls Jesus command to “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:28-31) the Royal law (James 2:8), this is because it means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves. Loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do-good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah’s time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land. Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves.

- Micah wrote: “What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God” (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: “The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing” (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: “Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights” (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour. The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus in this sermon calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. Biblically a wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans, in contrast to this a good person is one who worships God and the Lord Jesus Christ and do all they can, to do what is right, and what is just (i.e., fair for all). To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ.

For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE GREAT COMMISSION (V18-20)

Though Jesus words,

- Go into all nations and make disciples (v19).

Can by extension be applied to all who belong to Christ, but it should always be remembered that Jesus is talking to the apostles when he spoke these words. This is important to keep in mind, because in some churches those who sit in the congregation can come under guilt simply because they are not "Going into all nations and making disciples," and because of this guilt are robbed from enjoying the spiritual life Christ desires to have with them. This is why it is important to always be aware that not everyone who followed Christ became an apostle of the Lord or went to mission fields. Many were simple men and woman who had the responsibility of raising their children and working to financially support them. Unless one is specifically called to a particular ministry, Jesus only expects us to apply the principle of the great commission to those we meet in our everyday lives. For most being an evangelist will simply be manifested in their testimony, their lifestyle and their kindness and acceptance toward those they come in contact with as they cope with the stress and mundane things of everyday life.

But some doubted: (v17) how amazing is this, those who doubted had seen the miracles Jesus did, seen the dead raised to life, been told the Son of man will be killed, but will rise again on the third day and now he is standing before them in his resurrected body and yet they still doubt. Such is the way of the human mind and the power of doubt. This is why when witnessing some people will require a lot of Scriptural teaching, and spiritual proof while others are willing to believe on very little.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
