

# MATTHEW

## Chapter 28

### *The Resurrection*

**After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. <sup>2</sup> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” <sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”**

**28:1** *first day of the week.* See note on Lk 24:1. (CSB)

Early Sunday morning. (TLSB)

*Mary Magdalene.* From the village of Magdala. Mary was present at the crucifixion, witnessed Jesus’ burial, and helped anoint His body (TLSB)

The village of Magdala is on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. Mary became a devoted follower of Jesus after He cast seven demons out of her (Mk. 16:9; Luke 8:1-2). She is often regarded as the sinful woman who anointed Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her hair (Luke 7:37-50). No one knows for sure, however, since the biblical account does not name the woman. Mary was among the women who witnessed the crucifixion and burial of Jesus (Mt. 27:37-50; Mk. 15:40, 47; John 19:25). On the morning of His resurrection she went to His tomb (Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1; Lk. 24:1; John 20:1). She was the first person to whom the risen Lord appeared (Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:11-29). (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

*the other Mary.* The wife of Clopas and sister of the mother of Jesus (see 27:56; Jn 19:25). (CSB)

Presumably “Mary the mother of James and Joseph” (27:56). (TLSB)

WENT...TOMB – That is, they set out at this time in order to visit the tomb of our Lord, and also to weep there, John 11:31, and to embalm the body of our

Lord, Luke 24:1. St. Matthew omits Mary Salome, mentioned by Mark; and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, mentioned by Luke. The other Mary was the wife of Cleopas, and mother of James and Joses, mentioned before, Matthew 27:56 (ACC)

**28:2** *There was.* The sense is "Now there had been." It is clear from the parallel accounts (Mk 16:2–6; Lk 24:1–7; Jn 20:1) that the events of vv. 2–4 occurred before the women actually arrived at the tomb. (CSB)

*a violent earthquake.* Only Matthew mentions this earthquake and the one at Jesus' death (27:51, 54). (CSB)

The earthquake that accompanied the angel's descent recalls the prophecy of Haggai 2:6-9. "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty." It seems significant that an earthquake marked both Jesus' death and His resurrection. These quakes were obviously more than coincidences of nature: both quakes signaled that great and mighty acts of God were taking place. It is as though the Father was tying the crucifixion and the resurrection of His Son together with a seismic knot. Since the women had also been at the cross, they may have made the connection. (PBC)

ANGEL...HEAVEN – Matthew is very particular in this, to show that the word angel is not to be taken in the sense of an ordinary messenger, who might have come from Joseph of Arimathea, or from any other; but in the sense of an extraordinary messenger, who descended from God, out of heaven, for this very purpose. It is likely that the angel had descended, rolled away the stone, and was sitting on it, before the women reached the tomb. (ACC)

ROLLED BACK – The angel opens the tomb, but Christ has already risen. (TLSB)

Not to open the grave for Christ was he come, but to show the empty grave to the whole world, to give absolute and undeniable evidence of the fact that the resurrection had taken place in spite of stone and seal and watch. (Kretzmann)

Jesus left the tomb in much the same way He would enter the locked room where His disciples were gathered later on that same evening (John 20:19). His glorified resurrection body was no longer bound by time and space. He simply went where He wanted to go. The walls of the tomb could not contain Him, just like a clear pane of glass cannot stop the rays of the sun from passing through. (PBC)

SAT ON IT – Resting, symbolizing Christ's victory over death. (TLSB)

**28:3 LIKE LIGHTNING** – His face was bright, causing his garments also to be brilliant. (TLSB)

He was clothed in garments emblematical of the glad tidings which he came to announce. It would have been inconsistent with the message he brought, had the angel appeared in black robes, such as those preposterously wear who call themselves his successors in the ministry of a once suffering, but now risen and highly exalted, Savior. But the world is as full of nonsense as of sin; and who can correct and bring it to reason and piety? (ACC)

**28:4 LIKE DEAD MEN** – Fainted or collapsed. (TLSB)

It was a fearful apparition to the superstitious soldiers to gaze upon one of the holy angels of God. It overwhelmed them; they fell over in a faint, and became as dead men. When God wants to carry out His will with regard to the salvation of mankind, no sinful man, no enemy, may resist Him. The resurrection of Jesus was the seal and final proof for the full atonement gained for the whole world, and all the efforts of the Jews and of Satan to hinder it were unavailing. (Kretzmann)

God can, by one and the same means, comfort his servants, and terrify his enemies. The resurrection of Christ is a subject of terror to the servants of sin, and a subject of consolation to the sons of God; because it is a proof of the resurrection of both, the one to shame and everlasting contempt—the other to eternal glory and joy. (ACC)

**28:5 DO NOT BE AFRAID** – This was the same greeting Gabriel gave to Zechariah (Luke 1:13) and to Mary (Luke 1:30). When the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream (Matthew 1:20) and when the angel appeared to the shepherds (Luke 2:10), the greeting was the same. That is the gospel in a nutshell. That is the message of Easter. King David has taught us to pray it and to take it to heart: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil” (Psalm 23:4). (PBC)

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

**28:6 HE IS NOT HERE** – In was gentle way of saying, “I told you so! You should not be surprised. You should have known He would not be here anymore.”

SEE THE PLACE – This proves the angel’s testimony. (TLSB)

The tomb in which our Lord was laid was no doubt like the rest of the Jewish burying places, a receptacle for the several dead of a whole family, divided into separate niches, where each had his place. Come and see the place—was tantamount to, Come and see the niche in which he was laid—it is now empty; nor was there any other body in the place, for the tomb was a new one, in which no man had ever been laid, John 19:41; so there could be no deception in the case. (ACC)

## ***>Why Did Jesus Fold the Napkin?***

>

**>This is one I can honestly say I have never seen circulating in the e-mails so; I'll  
>start it, if it touches you and you want to forward it.**

>

**>Why did Jesus fold the linen burial cloth after His resurrection? I never noticed  
>this....**

>

**>The Gospel of John (20:7) tells us that the napkin, which was placed over the  
>face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes..**

>

**>The Bible takes an entire verse to tell us that the napkin was neatly folded,  
>and was placed at the head of that stony coffin.**

>

**>Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb  
>and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.**

>

**>She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved..**

**>She said, 'They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where**

- >they have put him!
- >
- >Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. The other disciple  
out ran
- >Peter and got there first. He stopped and looked in and saw the linen  
cloth lying
- >there, but he didn't go in.
- >
- >Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen  
wrappings
- >lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up  
and lying
- >to the side.
- >
- >Was that important? Absolutely!
- >Is it really significant? Yes!
- >
- >In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, you have  
to understand
- >a little bit about Hebrew tradition of that day.
- >The folded napkin
- >had to do with the Master and Servant, and every
- >Jewish boy knew
- >this tradition.
- >
- >When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure  
that it was
- >exactly the way the master wanted it.
- >
- >The table was furnished perfectly, and then the servant would wait,  
just out
- >of sight, until the master had finished eating, and the servant would  
not dare touch
- >that table, until the master was finished.
- >
- >Now if the master were done eating, he would rise from the table, wipe  
his fingers,
- >his mouth, and clean his beard, and would wad up that napkin and  
toss it onto the
- >table.

>  
 >**The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded  
 >napkin meant, "I'm finished."**  
 >  
 >**But if the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it beside  
 >his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because.....**  
 >  
 >**The folded napkin meant,  
 >"I'm coming back."**

**28:7 TELL HIS DISCIPLES** – The 11 remaining disciples. (TLSB)

Thus these faithful women proclaim the Gospel to those who were afterwards to be the teachers of the whole human race! Behold what honor God puts upon those who persevere in his truth, and continue to acknowledge him before men! (ACC)

I HAVE TOLD YOU – The angel emphasizes his trustworthiness. (TLSB)

**28:8 AFRAID YET FILLED WITH JOY** – They were still frightened, but glad at the news. (TLSB)

While the appearance of the messenger, of the holy angel of God, filled them with fear, his message of the resurrection of their Lord and Master filled them with the greatest delight. Hurriedly they leave the grave, to run and bring the good tidings to the disciples. "That the angel is so much concerned about announcing the resurrection of Christ to the disciples who were now lying there with lack of faith and a bad conscience, is a certain indication that the Lord Jesus Christ has risen for the sake and comfort of those of little faith, yea, for those without faith, in order that they might have the benefit of His work, find help and refuge with Him.... That Christ lives. He lives for our benefit, that we should ever be defended by Him and protected from all distress." (Kretzmann)

**28:9 JESUS MET THEM** – The women saw more than the empty tomb that morning; they saw the risen Christ Himself. (TLSB)

Christ bestows his graces and consolations by degrees, first by his angels, and then by himself. He does not reveal himself to incredulous and disobedient souls; he appears not even to these women till he has tried their faith and obedience by his ministering angels. (ACC)

CLASPED HIS FEET – This was a sign of homage. (TLSB)

WORSHIPED HIM – They bowed before their Lord. (TLSB)

I am suggesting that when Matthew writes that they “worshiped him,” he wants his believing hearers/readers also to know that this risen Lord, who shares a single divine name with the Father and the Holy Spirit (28:190, is the same God whom they worship. (CC)

They worship Jesus, the man Jesus, who, as the angel said, “is crucified” (28:5). This is no other than the person who died in the darkness three days before and the second person of the Trinity (28:19). (CC)

**28:10 DO NOT BE AFRAID** – Earlier (cf 5, 8), the women are awed by the events. (TLSB)

This was undoubtedly the first appearance of the risen Christ. As they were hurrying city-ward, and probably before they had left the boundaries of the garden, Jesus came to meet them, giving them the wonderful greeting. All hail! Rejoice! There is only joy and peace and lasting happiness in the kingdom of the resurrected Lord. The women, recognizing Him, fell down at His feet in the fullness of their joy and adoration. At the same time, the exuberance and the excitement caused them to cling to Him, as though in fear of losing Him once more. (Kretzmann)

MY BROTHERS – Jesus still refers to His disciples as family. (TLSB)

And therefore Jesus again calms them. No fear should live in their hearts henceforth and forever, but only the desire to bring the joyful news to the apostles, whom He here lovingly calls His brethren. They were now nearer to Him than ever before. In spite of their defection, He knew that their faith was not lost forever, but only hidden by fear. This message was intended as cheering, consoling tidings, to renew faith and hope and trust in their hearts. In the same way, all believers in Christ and His resurrection are now the brothers and sisters of Christ in the fullest and best meaning of the term. For by and through their faith they have become partakers of all the glorious fruits of Christ's resurrection. And thus they have been placed by God the Father on the same level with His own Son Jesus Christ, being coheirs of the eternal joy and blessedness with Him. (Kretzmann)

There may be further significance in the fact that Jesus calls them “My brothers” rather than “My disciples.” He seems to be inviting them to think of themselves as His colleagues, much as ministers today refer to each other as “the brethren.” Their seminary training was just about over. Soon they would be preaching the

same gospel Jesus had been preaching for the last three and half years while they watched and learned. (PBC)

Someone has said that the phrase “Do not be afraid” is found at least 365 times in the Bible. At one for each day.

**28:1–10** The women see the empty tomb and the angel, who proclaims that Christ has risen. Though Christ’s resurrection terrifies His enemies, such as the guards at the tomb, it brings great joy to His followers. Rejoice today in His resurrection and pray for His reappearing. • Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen. (TLSB)

### *The Guards’ Report*

**<sup>11</sup> While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. <sup>12</sup> When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, <sup>13</sup> telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ <sup>14</sup> If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” <sup>15</sup> So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.**

**28:11–15** Only Matthew tells of the posting of the guard (27:62–66), and he follows up by telling of their report. (CSB)

**28:11 REPORTED TO THE CHIEF PRIEST** – While all this was taking place, and while the women were hurrying to the city with their joyful news, the soldiers of the watch gradually awakened from their stupor into which they had been thrown. The damage had evidently been done, and they must make the best of it, for there was no denying the facts. A few of them were delegated to make the report of the morning’s happenings to the chief priests, who were responsible for their presence at the grave. (Kretzmann)

Matthew is the only one who documents how the guards were bribed by the leaders of the Jew. Since this story was still being widely circulated at the time when Matthew wrote his Gospel, he wanted to set the record straight. (PBC)

**28:12 CHIEF PRIEST HAD MET WITH THE ELDERS** – As in 26:3–4, it may not have been a full meeting of the Council. (TLSB)

The chief priests do not even bother to try to dispute the facts with the guards. They accept their report as accurate and true. After all, the report is not coming from the disciples or some other interested party. So the first thing the chief priests do is consult with elders of the people. They had worked together to



accuse Jesus before Pilate and now they worked together to try to cover up the truth. (PBC)

GAVE...MONEY – Amount unclear. (TLSB)

The matter was serious enough to demand a meeting of the Sanhedrin, in order to consider ways and means to prevent damage to themselves and their cause. It was finally resolved to bribe the soldiers, to give them a considerable sum of money. They were not at all careful about the amount, they gave with a free hand; for the lie which they taught the soldiers to repeat was surely the essence of stupidity. (Kretzmann)

**28:13-15** The story concocted by the chief priests does not work. How would the soldiers know that the disciples came if they had been sleeping? How could they not have heard the door of the tomb opened? But the story was enough to convince those who wanted to reject Jesus. (TLSB)

**28:13** DISCIPLES CAME – They were to spread the report that the disciples of Christ came by night, while they were sleeping, and stole the body. The soldiers are to have been asleep, and yet to have seen the thieves, and known that they were disciples! (Kretzmann)

**28:14** KEEP YOU OF TROUBLE – Of far greater importance to the soldiers was the promise which the members of the Council were forced to give, namely, that they would guarantee to straighten out the matter in case the governor should ever find out about it; they would vouch for their safety. For a Roman soldier to be found asleep at his post was anything but an easy matter for him. (Kretzmann)

**28:15** STORY...CIRCULATED – So the ridiculous report went out among the Jews and became a common rumor among them, taxing their credulity, to be sure, but saving their face, as they fondly hoped. (Kretzmann)

**28:11–15** The guards report Christ's resurrection to the authorities, but the authorities prefer to create and spread a lie. Though many have been deceived over the centuries, the Good News of Christ's resurrection has triumphed over the skepticism of Christianity's critics. • "Jesus lives! The vict'ry's won! Death no longer can appall me; Jesus lives! Death's reign is done! From the grave will Christ recall me. Brighter scenes will then commence; This shall be my confidence." Amen. (LSB 490:1) (TLSB)

*The Great Commission*

**<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all**

**nations, baptizing them in<sup>a</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

We do not know for sure how much time passed between Jesus' appearance to the women on Easter Sunday and His appearance to the eleven in Galilee. We do know that Jesus appeared to various people in various places over a period of 40 days before He ascended into heaven. It may well be that this incident took place near the end of those 40 days. (PBC)

**28:16** *eleven*. Judas had committed suicide (27:5). (CSB)

“the eleven disciples.” Considerable attention has been given (inside and outside of Lutheran circles) to the question of whether Jesus' commission to the disciples in this text applies to them primarily (or even in a more exclusive sense) as representatives of the pastoral office, or whether it applies to them also (or primarily) as representatives of the whole Church. Suffice it to say that it is both possible and necessary to understand Jesus' “Great Commission” as having application both to pastors and to the wider Church, bearing in mind both the proper distinction and the proper relationship between the pastoral office and the priesthood of all believers (see “The Power and Primacy of the Pope,” 31; also “Of the Church” in *A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, 1932). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

*Went to Galilee*. Jesus fulfills his second promise (given in 26:32, reiterated in 28:7,10) by returning to Galilee, where his authority and his presence will continue to expand, not only to Israel's lost sheep but now also to all the Gentiles and nations of the earth (28:18-20). In Matthew's narrative of Jesus, Galilee is the place of light, of mission (See Is. 9:2-7). (CC)

Nolland, *Matthew*, 1261: “In some sense what had taken place in Jesus' ministry is to begin afresh and on a new level in the ministry of the disciples now.” (CC)

Galilee is also the place of reconciliation and restoration. Only Jesus could be the obedient Son and Messiah, and so he had predicted the apostasy of his apostles and that of Judas would betray him (26:21-25, 31-35). In the same breath, however, Jesus had promised his restoration and reunion. Matthew does not narrate precisely when and how the reconciliation happened. As he introduces this last unit, however, it is clear that the reconciliation has taken place. (CC)

The name of the northernmost province of the three provinces of Israel. The name was already used in OT time (Joshua 20:7; 1 Kings 9:11). Galilee was given to the tribes of Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali (Joshua 19:10-16, 224-39).

The land was fertile and a number of important routes crossed the area (Is. 9:1). (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

At the time of Christ, Galilee extended from Mt. Hermon on the North to Mt. Carmel on the south, and from the Jordan River on the east side to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. Herod Antipas was its ruler. Jesus performed the major part of His ministry there. The twelve disciples, except Judas Iscariot, were all from Galilee (Mk. 14:70). The leaders of Judea hated Galileans, who were known by the way they talked. (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

*had told them. See v. 10(CSB)*

Jesus had named a certain mountain in Galilee to His disciples, where He would meet them after His resurrection, but we know neither the time of this meeting nor the location of the mountain. It had been His express command that they assemble there, and after they had received the confirmation of this word by the message of the women on Easter morning, they went to keep the appointment. (Kretzmann)

This instruction probably was conveyed to the eleven through the women described in vv 1-10. The women were commanded twice – first by an angel (v. 7), then by Jesus Himself (v. 10) – to relate the order. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

The rendezvous of the eleven with Jesus was probably the occasion also of His appearance to the “about five hundred brethren” who according to 1 Cor. 15:6, saw Him together at one time after Easter. When it was reported in the circles of the faithful that Jesus would meet with His disciples in Galilee, the whole number of believers who celebrated His resurrection flocked to the mountain in the north country to see and hear Him again. There in the seclusion and peace of Galilee, far away from the hostile Jews in Judea, the Savior could communicate with those near and dear to Him the final matters of the central importance to Himself and the church. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

THE MOUNTAIN – That a mountain setting was selected doubtless marked outwardly the fact that a noteworthy event was to transpire; for it was on a mountain that Jesus had preached His great sermon (chapters 5-7), on a mountain after spending a night in prayer He had chosen the twelve apostles from among His many disciples, on a mountain He had discoursed with the multitudes and then fed the five thousand and four thousand respectively. Now on a mountain He would issue the Great Commission. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Mountain is used as symbolical of strength and stability. (Unger’s Bible Dictionary)

The location is unknown. Traditionally it is thought to be the Mount of Transfiguration. (TLSB)

**28:17** *worshiped him*. As with the worship of the two Marys (28:9), so now with the Eleven, we can imagine that this is worship in deepest sense; the seed of all true Christian worship is seen here in Matthew's short description. (CC)

France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1110, suggests "There is little doubt that here Matthew intends the full sense of 'worship,' implying that Jesus is now recognized as more than human – cf. the same verb used of the disciples with the exclamation 'You are the Son of God' in 14:33." (CC)

*Some doubted*. No one knows for sure what or why they doubted or which of the Eleven are in view. My own guess is guided by what Jesus says next. That is to say, I take Jesus' words in 28:18-20 as his response to those among the Eleven who doubted. It seems unlikely that any of them would doubt that it was Jesus himself or that he was raised for the dead. For my part, it seems likely that what caused their doubts was what lay ahead of them. Just as Peter doubted (14:31) when he took his eyes off Jesus and saw "that the wind was strong" (14:30), perhaps some of the Eleven doubt because they know what is coming and they have their eyes on that. Jesus had taught them in both the Missionary Discourse (9:36-11:1) and the Eschatological Discourse (24:1-26:1) that the time of mission would now be at hand and that they would be sent to herald the Good News of the reign of God. Now Jesus will begin to build his church, entrusting the comprehensive teaching by which the doorway to salvation under God's reign is opened. Although the gates of Hades will not ultimately prevail against the church (16:17-19), still, out of those gates will pour hostile forces and ideas (16:22-23). Opposition, persecution, and coldness of heart (24:12) await them in their efforts. There on the mountain in Galilee, the Eleven worship Jesus, but in the face of what the future holds, some doubted (28:17). Jesus' words now address and assuage their doubt. (CC)

*hoi de edistasan*, "but some doubted." This is not the same word (*apistos*) used to signify the "doubt" (tantamount to unbelief) attributed, for example, to Thomas in Jn 20:24–25, 27. Helpful is Jeffrey A. Oschwald's comment, drawing on the work of R. T. France: "The verse . . . gives us a picture not of disciples refusing to worship Jesus because they did not believe in him, rather of disciples who were so confused and overwhelmed by the sight of their risen Lord that they did not know what to do. . . . Hesitation is, humanly speaking, quite understandable here" ("Homiletical Helps" in *Concordia Journal* 37:2 [Spring 2011], 147). The Church Father Chrysostom observes: "If 'some doubted,' herein again admire the Evangelists' truthfulness. Even up to the last day, they were determined not to conceal even their own shortcomings" (*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b—Matthew 14–28*, ed. Manlio Simonetti; gen. ed. Thomas C. Oden [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002], 313; hereafter ACCS). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

Upon seeing Jesus, those present worshiped Him, though some were unsure. Does this mean they did not believe in the risen Christ, or simply that they entertained reservations? The meaning of *distzo* can range from “doubt” (Mt. 14:31) to “hesitate” (BAGD), he still expresses faith when he calls to Jesus, as Lord, to save him (Mt. 14:30). The other gospels too depict some of Jesus’ followers in varying degrees of uncertainty, even after His resurrection (e.g., Mk 18:8; Lk 24:11, 25; Jn 20:24-29). Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

Suddenly Jesus appeared before the eleven, Matthew goes on to report. The overwhelming effect of His divine presence was to lead the larger number to prostrate themselves in worship. How are we to understand this doubt attributed to “some” among the eleven? The apostles surely were not all alike; and there is the possibility that the perversity of their flesh, the deceitfulness of their hearts, darkened the faith of the minority in the miracle of the resurrection. A more likely explanation, however, is that some of the disciples questioned within themselves whether the figure who presented himself before them was indeed the resurrected Christ. Nothing in the context points to the matter of the resurrection itself. To assume these disciples’ uncertainty as to the identity of the person who stood at some distance from them would appear, furthermore, Easter afternoon the travelers from Emmaus “found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (Luke 24:33-34); and that the disciples in Jerusalem were glad, when they saw the Lord already Easter evening (John 20:20). There were also subsequent contacts of the eleven with the risen Christ during the forty-day period prior to His ascension. Perhaps the new glorious mode of Christ’s resurrection appearance was strange, wonderful, and such as to perplex. Mary Magdelene had not at first recognized Jesus in the garden Easter morning. We may further recall that even before Easter the entire band of disciples had not recognized Jesus when He was walking on the Sea of Galilee. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Though not in rank unbelief, they had a hard time absorbing the events that had transpired. (Cf. Luke 24:39). (TLSB)

**28:18-19** Though all God’s people are to bear witness to the Lord (cf Ps 145; Is 43:10), the focus here is on the apostles and their calling as leading witnesses and representatives of Jesus. (Compare to the authorization in Mt 10:1–7.) (TLSB)

“Go therefore.” “Therefore” (*oun*) always implies a previously expressed basis. What is it in this case? The basis is Jesus’ assurance in v 18 that “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Pastors preach, teach, and administer the Sacraments not on their own authority but on the basis of Christ’s authority (cf. Mt 21:23–27)—an authority manifested in seeking to serve (Mt 12:15–21) and to save the lost. It is this same authority that serves as the

foundation for every form and variety of the Church's participation in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

The command to "go" is given now that Jesus has completed the mission that gives rise to the mission. But God himself has been about this business from "before the foundation of the world" when "he chose us in" Christ to be "holy and blameless" (Eph 1:4). The mission has *always* been God's mission. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

**28:18** JESUS CAME TO THEM – God's amazing, saving grace; He could have stood atop the mountain; challenged them to climb the rest of the way; condemned those who doubted. Not so! He treated those doubters as He treated Thomas in John 20:24-28. (Koehneke)

When, as verse 18 tells us, "Jesus approached and spoke to them" then surely all uncertainty disappeared. The entire apostolic band was eager to hear what their Lord had to say. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

AND SAID – There are two different words for "speak" and "say"; emphasis on the Lord's verbal communication with us to disclose His heart, His will, His desires, His purposes for us; He takes the initiative; His word is truth. NOT "Now what do you have to say for yourselves?" BUT "I will tell you what you need to know to carry out my plan for you." (Koehneke)

ALL AUTHORITY – *ezousia*. Absolute power (Bauer)

Christ's human nature, which had refrained from exercising the divine authority belonging to the person of Christ, now is fully exalted and given free use of divine authority (cf v 19). "He can also powerfully effect and do everything that He says and promises" (FC SD VII 43). "The Church's authority and the State's authority must not be confused. The Church's authority has its own commission to teach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments [Matthew 28:19–20]. Let it not break into the office of another. Let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world to itself. Let it not abolish the laws of civil rulers. Let it not abolish lawful obedience" (AC XXVIII 12–13). (TLSB)

Authority is illusory unless backed by real power (Kittel p. 563). It means no hindrances, to be able, unlimited opportunity. It also means that an action is not prevented by a higher norm or court, that it may be done or is not forbidden. There are three foundations: (1) Denotes the power which decides. It signifies the absolute possibility of action which is proper to God, who cannot be asked concerning the relationship of power and legality, He is the source of both. Luke 12:5 and Acts 1:7 speak directly of God's incontrovertible freedom. (2) The power of decision is active in a legally ordered whole. The power of God is variously displayed in the sphere of nature. (3) Can denote the freedom which is

given to the community. For authority imparted to the community the outstanding characteristic is that the Church owes its existence and nature to Christ. It needs ennoblement even to enter the Kingdom of God. (Kittel – Volume 2, Pages 562 & 566).

This is plan “A” and there is no plan “B”.

To possess authority means to have both the right and the power to rule and enforce obedience according to one’s wishes. Jesus asserted that his was the absolute, the total control over all created things in heaven – the entire angelic host and the spirits of the saints already in glory and over all forces of nature, devils, and all the rest of his animate and inanimate creation. Whole creature world had to submit to His will and respond to His command; no hostile power could withstand Him. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

No dying philosopher ever uttered so all-embracing charge to his followers, nor did any world conqueror. The best Augustus of Rome could manage for his last words was a witty borrowing from Greek theater: “Have I played my part in life’s farce well enough? Then clap your hands and take me off the stage.” Other famous last words are not much more profound than this. Jesus, however, was not dying. He was instead establishing an almost limitless objective for Christianity, and the only thing more amazing than the words themselves is the fact that they have been fulfilled. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

God the Father originally gave Christ this authority according to His human nature already at the time of Jesus’ incarnation. This happened at the time of His very conception when He took on human nature, and the divine and human were united in the one God-man, Jesus Christ. During the period of His humiliation, which extended from His conception to His death and burial, however He in His humanity did not continually use the omnipotent authority which had been given Him. Now the Savior would rule in the interest of His Church and the success of the saving work He has assigned it. Paul later referred to this great truth in Ephesians 1:19-23. The Savior’s assurance must have mightily heartened the disciples who had dedicated their lives to His service. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

The Savior’s assurance must have mightily heartened the disciples who had dedicated their lives to His service. It is likewise a strengthening encouragement to us who are the Lord’s own in this concluding period time of history to realize and believe with all our hearts that, despite the spreading of anti-Christian power and the advance of evil in our generation, the glorified Christ continues to govern the affairs of men, of nations, of history and the machinations of Satan. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)



The speech of Jesus is majestic, but His whole bearing was friendly and intended to take away all apprehension of whatever kind among them all. His final commission is a wonderful bit of solemn oratory. As He stands before them, in His spiritual body, true man as ever during His earthly life, but no longer in humility and weakness: all power in heaven above and on earth beneath is given to Him. He is the almighty God, with unlimited authority. (Kretzmann)

**28:19** THEREFORE – oun - Now – (Young's Concordance)

Inferential, denoting that what it introduces is the result of or an inference from what precedes. (Bauer p. 593)

He could not only give commands to His disciples but also clear the way and do everything necessary for them to carry out His commands. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Shows that what otherwise would be absolutely impossible now becomes a glorious possibility, yes an assured reality. (Lenski)

GO – poreuthentes – As you are going through life...each moment of your life. – The disciple-makers must go out where these people are. Not as in the OT period by attracting them to Jerusalem, the Temple, and its worship, but by traveling out to all the unbelieving and presenting them with Word and Sacrament where they live. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Ongoing, continuing, relentless. One of our greatest problems is that we want to stay put and turn inward. (Koehneke)

Set in motion, to bring on the way, to lead. In the NT it means to go, to take a journey that only ends in eternity. (Kittel – Volume 6, Page 573)

The participle is merely auxiliary to the main verb, having gone, disciple. (Lenski)

MAKE DISCIPLES – In the NT mathetes occurs only in the Gospels and Acts. It is a common word attested for certain some 250 times. Apart from a few exceptions, disciple (mathetes) denotes the men who have attached themselves to Jesus as their Master. Unlike the people of Jesus' day, they did not choose him but he chose them (John 15:16). Disciple (Mathetes) always implies the existence of a personal attachment which shapes the whole life of the disciple and which in its particularity leaves no doubt as to who is deploying the formative power. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 441).

Explicitly or implicitly the disciple is always accompanied by the teacher (didaskalos) around whom the disciples gather. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 442).



The term appears in Acts 6:1 and refers not specifically to the personal disciples, but to all Christians. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 443)

The emphasis is not so much on the incompleteness or deficiency of education as on the fact that the one learning, that his education consists in the appropriation or adoption of specific knowledge or conduct, and that proceeds deliberately and according to a set plan. There is no disciple without a teacher. The process involves a corresponding personal relationship. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 416)

The groups which assembled around the great philosophical teachers of antiquity were much too solidly established to disintegrate when teachers died. On the contrary, it increased responsibility for the work and strengthened commitment to it. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 423)

Acts 11:26, "...The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."  
Xristianismos, being a Christian as expressed in lifestyle, simply means discipleship. (Kittel – Volume 9, Page 576).

The call of Peter to discipleship (Luke 5:1ff.) is also a call to work with Jesus (5:10). This is no accident, nor is it exceptional. It perhaps corresponds to the fact that the disciples called by Jesus are His disciples. As He Himself does not turn inwards into Himself, but girds Himself for service, so He directs the gaze and powers of His disciples to His task, which by their association with Him is also theirs. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 452).

One who accepts, learns from and follows a teacher and instruction. A disciple of Jesus is one who devotes himself to Jesus in this way. This is possible only when through the miracle of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, a person is enabled to accept Jesus as his Savior and Lord, and this for this reason seeks to learn of Christ and doing His bidding. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Jesus gives us the tools to make disciples: Baptism and His teaching. (TLSB)

This imperative, of course, means, "to turn into disciples". (Lenski)

John 8:31-32, "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" A disciple is someone who continues to learn from Jesus (His Word).

John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." A disciple is loving.

In the case of a Christian repentance continues until death, for all through life it contends with the sins that remain in the flesh. As St. Paul testifies in Romans 7:23, he wars with the law in his members, and he does this not with his own powers but with the gift of the Holy Spirit which follows the forgiveness. This gift daily cleanses and expels the sins that remain and enables man to become truly pure and holy. (Tappert – Page 309)

“Aim at heaven and you’ll get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you’ll get neither.” C.S. Lewis “Mere Christianity”) his kingdom, and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well.” Unlike false leaders who are interested only in themselves and use people to attain their ends, Jesus is interested in us, whom he enables to have life to the full when he states in John 10:10, “...I have come that they (the sheep) may have life, and have it to the full.” (CSB)

Someone has said that Jesus gives us life without the big “if” in the middle. With Jesus life takes on meaning and has an eternal future. He gives life that delivers joy, rests content, and blossoms in glory. We believe, and we receive that life from Jesus. (PBC)

Luke 14:26-27, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes even his own life – he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:27, “And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” A vivid hyperbole, meaning that one must love Jesus even more than his immediate family. A disciple is committed to Jesus and follows Jesus wherever that may lead.

John 15:8, “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit showing yourselves to be my disciples.” Luke 6:43-45, “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Christian character is produced by the Holy Spirit, not by the mere moral discipline of trying to live by law. Paul makes it clear that justification through faith does not result in acting without moral restraint. For other lists of virtues see 2 Corinthians 6:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-3; 5:1-2,8-10; Colossians 3:12-17. (CSB)

2 Timothy 3:15-17, “and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching (God’s Word tells us all we need to know about salvation that is ours in Jesus’ death and resurrection),

rebuking (God's Word refutes the demonic lies that undermine the fact of Christ's work on our behalf), correcting (God's Word sets us on our feet when we fall into sin) and training (God's Word educates us about the favorable verdict already rendered because of Jesus and helps us to share that good news) in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." "Man of God" is used of the Christian. (Kittel – Volume 1, Page 364).

From Professionally Speaking – May 1992...Seven basic characteristics of a disciple

1. Christ's Disciple puts Christ first (Luke 14:25).
2. Christ's Disciple is committed to Christ's teachings (John 8:31).
3. Christ's Disciple denies self and follows Him (Luke 9:23)
4. Christ's Disciple glorifies God (John 15:8).
5. Christ's Disciple has joy (John 15:11).
6. Christ's Disciple loves as Christ loves (John 15:12-14).
7. Christ's Disciple bears fruit (John 15:8).

*all nations.* Contrast 10:5–6. (CSB)

Not just the Jews, but Gentiles too (cf 10:5–6). (TLSB)

It appears as an adjective here and then three more times in the verses ending Matthew's Gospel: "all nations," "all things – everything," "all the days – always." In biblical numerology four refers to creation – all four corners. The fourfold recurrence of this "all" assuredly alerts us to the sweeping, all-compassing nature of Christ's concluding declarations to His disciples then, and also for our illumination now. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

ethnee – When Martin Luther translated the Bible into German, he used the word Heiden, which means "the heathen." Although the Eleven were all Jews, they were to preach the gospel to Jew and Gentile alike. This was in keeping with God's ancient promise to Abram: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3). It is significant that Jesus chose to utter these words in Galilee, where Jews and Gentiles had been in frequent contact with one another for centuries. (PBC, Page 443)

And since this is true, therefore they, in going forth, in doing the work of their apostolic mission, should make disciples of all nations. The whole earth should be their sphere of activity. (Kretzmann)

*baptizing them.*† The adverbial participle (i.e., without the article) denotes that baptism is more than a sign. It is a means of grace. Disciples are made by "baptizing them" and by "teaching them" (v. 20), also an adverbial participle. The Word (teaching) and the sacraments (e.g., baptizing) are the means through

which the Holy Spirit produces faith, which is a gift of God (Eph 2:8–9) and which results in fruits of faith (Eph 2:10; Gal 5:22–23). (CSB)

Washing with the water of new birth. “Baptism is no human plaything, but it is instituted by God Himself” (LC IV 6). “It is necessary to baptize little children, that the promise of salvation may be applied to them, according to Christ’s command to baptize all nations (Matthew 28:19). Just as in this passage salvation is offered to all, so Baptism is offered to all, to men, women, children, infants. It clearly follows, therefore, that infants are to be baptized, because salvation is offered with Baptism” (Ap IX 52). (TLSB)

Here included are all aspects of missionary outreach, witnessing for Christ, confessing the faith, preaching the Gospel, sending and supporting missionaries and their work – everything that precedes and leads to the administration of baptism to young and old alike at home and abroad. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

There is a whole host of things that, in the push and shove of daily Christian living and mission, go into the process of getting people to the point where they are baptized, as well as enabling them to be taught comprehensively to guard everything that Jesus commanded all of his people to guard. All one has to do is read the rest of the NT (or just the Gospel of Matthew) to learn the importance of loving one’s neighbor (even the enemy [5:43-48]), doing good deeds that direct glory to the Father who is in heaven (5:16), working together to restore and preserve one’s fellow disciples (18:15-20). This means that the commission to “make disciples” is given here in only the barest of skeletal forms. (CC)

*1 Peter 3:15, “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”*

*1Peter 2:1-9, “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup> now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. <sup>4</sup> As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— <sup>5</sup> you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” <sup>7</sup> Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” <sup>8</sup> and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”*

“People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care. “  
(John Maxwell ‘The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader’ P. 103)

In every era those who oppose the Christian faith justify their opposition by pointing to bad behavior by Christians. Paul, Peter, John and James all call Christ’s followers to lead exemplary lives – not just because holy lives please God, but also “ so that in every way (we) will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive” (Titus 2:10) (Today’s Light Bible)

*in the name of.*† In Judaism this phrase indicated that a person was being effectually committed to something or someone. One circumcised “in the name of the covenant” was committed to the covenant, brought under its blessing and placed under its obligations. A person baptized “in the name of the Father” has God as his gracious Father. Baptized in the name “of the Son,” one receives all the benefits of the Son’s redeeming act. Baptized in the name “of the Holy Spirit,” one receives the life-giving, life-sustaining power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the enacted gospel of the Trinity. (CSB)

“the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Only Matthew’s Gospel contains this classical trinitarian formula, and it comes—as a kind of climactic revelation—at the very end of his Gospel. The doctrine of the Trinity unfolds in Matthew’s Gospel through a concentrated and developed focus on the person and work of Jesus as the God-man who reveals God to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (See “The Development of the Trinity in the Gospel of Matthew” in David Scaer’s *Discourses in Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004].) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

“Name” is singular, followed by the threefold naming of the divine persons. This illustrates the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Those baptized in the name of the Father has God as their Father; baptized in the name of the Son, they receive all the benefits of the Son’s redeeming act; baptized in the name of the Spirit, they receive the life-giving, life-sustaining power and presence of the Spirit. Christian Baptism is founded on this institution. (TLSB)

**28:20** TEACHING THEM – TEACHING – didasko – The form in which Jesus teaches is that of a Jewish teacher of the period. After reading of the Scripture portion which took place standing, Jesus seated Himself like other expositors of the time and based His address on the passage just read. Jesus does not restrict His teaching to exposition of the Law. For one thing, He is against estimation of the Law merely for its own sake. For another, He stands in irreconcilable opposition to the lifeless casuistry which does not start with the situation of the one who needs the counsel of experts in the religious sphere, but irrespective of his own questions, subjects him to its own principle and system, bringing about religious separation from those who for practical reasons, or for conscience sake cannot allow themselves to be bound by it. The whole teaching of Jesus is with a

view to ordering of life with reference to God and one's neighbor. Thus His teaching constantly appeals to the will, calling for a practical decision either for the will of God or against it. (Kittel – Volume 2, Pages 139-140.)

Disciples are made not only through Baptism, but through the ongoing catechetical work of the Church. (TLSB)

“I wonder whether Peter, Paul, Moses, and all the saints fully and thoroughly understood a single word of God so that they had nothing more to learn from it, for the understanding of God is beyond measure. To be sure, the saints understood the Word of God and could also speak about it, but their practice did not keep pace with it. Here one forever remains a learner. The scholastics illustrated this with a ball which only at one point touches the table on which it rests, although the whole weight of the ball is supported by the table. (Luther's Works – Volume 54 P. 9 No 81)

TO OBEY – tereo - To guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye on it. (Strongs)

Christians are called to do more than “obey”; they are called to treasure God's Word in their hearts. (TLSB)

To go back and reread this Gospel! No one can exhaust this book the first time through. Now that we have made it to the end, we can go back and see new things in the opening chapters that did not dawn on us the first time. (PBC)

This teaching is not to be a mere intellectual process. Jesus says “teaching to guard,” which means to obey and preserve, and also to preserve and to keep inviolate. A living reception in the heart is had in mind, an assimilation by means of faith, one that will henceforth control and mold the entire character and life. (Lenski, Page 1179)

*Ephesians 4:11-15, <sup>11</sup> It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”*

*Hebrews 5:11-14, <sup>11</sup> We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. <sup>12</sup> In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! <sup>13</sup> Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with*

*the teaching about righteousness.*<sup>14</sup> *But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*”

From Stanley Hauerwas and John Westerhoff's, "Schooling Christians."...

Christians are made not born. Baptism is the sacrament by which the church makes Christians – that is, by which persons are raised to new life in Christ, incorporated into Christ's body (the church), infused with Christ's mind and character, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be Christ's continuing presence in the world. Page 262

Through Christian initiation within a Christian community of faith, persons are formed and transformed into the person that baptism establishes them to be. This process, historically known as catechesis – to echo the Word – is the means by which a community re-presents Christ (his life, teachings, death and resurrection) in symbol, rite and common life and thereby fashions novices so that they might join the community in representing Christ to the world. Page 262

Catechesis necessitates three deliberate or intentional, systemic or interrelated, sustained or lifelong processes essential to Christian faith and life: formation, education and instruction. Page 266

Instruction aids persons to acquire that knowledge and those abilities useful for responsible personal and communal Christian life in church and society. Instruction alone, however, can produce a person who knows all about Christianity but who does not intend to be a Christian. Nevertheless, without the benefit of instruction, persons may not know what faithfulness is, what it implies, or how to decide what is faithful. Pages 266-267

Education aids persons to reflect critically on their behavior and experiences in the light of the gospel so that they might discern if they are being faithful and when they might need to change their behavior. Christians need to make education a natural way of life and not just a program, as they engage in critical reflection on every aspect of their lives.

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Formation aids persons to acquire Christian faith (understood as a particular perception of life and our lives), Christian character (understood as identity and appropriate behavioral dispositions), and Christian consciousness (understood as that interior subjective awareness or temperament that predisposes persons to particular experiences). For example, Christian formation is the participation in the practice of the Christian life of faith. Page 267

Instruction informs. Education reforms. Formation both conforms (nurtures) and transforms (converts). Page 267

Formation is related to a natural process called enculturation; when enculturation becomes intentional it is called formation. Education is necessary for faith formation, and instruction is important for faithful education, but formation is foundational because it is the primary means by which Christians are made.  
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Several biblical texts come to mind...

Psalm 1:1 “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”

Deut. 6:6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.<sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Christians cannot expect to resist the values of the unbelieving world if they devote one hour of the week to meditating on God’s word and the other 167 hours to providing for the needs of their bodies and enjoying worldly entertainment. We need regular Bible study with fellow Christians. We need to recognize the importance of regular family devotions and personal Bible study. We need to cultivate the habit of remembering and applying the truths of God’s word when we are confronted with temptations or faced with decisions in daily life. God’s children will find their greatest joy and satisfaction in studying his word and thinking about it day and night. (Psalms 1 of People’s Bible Commentary, Page 42)

EVERYTHING – He asks that his disciples teach those who are converted and baptized not only to know (academically), or keep in mind, but also to observe, or do His will – and to do so not only 90% but all 100% of the things he has commanded his disciples. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

It may be noted here, too, that the divine will for every follower of the Lord includes this, that he strive to make use of the special gift of grace with which God has endowed him for service in the Kingdom (Romans 12:6-8). (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

In urging the second aspect of the process of disciple-making Jesus directs the eleven and the whole church to bring to realization , in the case of fellow believers, what His Word elsewhere tells us is the final purpose of all the Triune God’ saving activity in their behalf, and of their being brought into existence as



the people of God – and this is that thy might be and live to please Him. God saves people via the means of grace and the church which administers them in order that they may serve Him. St. Paul writes in 2 Cor 5:15: He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.” (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

The second means of making disciples is that of teaching them to observe closely all things which Jesus has committed to His disciples, to expound to them the counsel of God to their salvation. Not human notions, but the Word of the Gospel, the inspired Word of God shall be the content of all preaching in the Church of Jesus Christ, no more, no less. (Kretzmann)

Not only Christ’s moral injunctions (the Law) but also His invitation to trust in Him (the Gospel). (TLSB)

*with you.* Matthew ends with the reassuring and empowering words of him who came to earth to be “God with us” (1:23). (CSB)

This is not a general sort of promise of Christ’s presence with his disciples; rather, it is a promise that sustains and enables the making of disciples. The church will not go out alone as she baptizes and teaches. Jesus will be going with her. In that sense, although the Great Commission is, on one level, Jesus’ command to which Jesus commits himself; he will undergird and accompany the performance of it. “The one who receives you receives me” (10:40). With this authority (28:18) and this promise (28:20), Jesus speaks to their doubt. (CC)

“I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Chrysostom, again: “He promised to be not only with these disciples but also with all who would subsequently believe after them. Jesus speaks to all believers as if to one body. Do not speak to me, he says, of the difficulties you will face, for ‘I am with you,’ as the one who makes all things easy” (ACCS, 313). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

Among other things these words imply that Christ’s blessing would attend the presentation of the apostolic word by future believers. This is a pledge that extends far beyond the lifetime of those present with Jesus in Galilee; it reaches even to the end of time. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Like parents encouraging a child to walk – encourage (words – arms out – sometimes hanging on by 1 finger). Hug and kiss when he/she succeeds. Immanuel = God with us

And if His commission is carried out in this manner, then His promise also will stand secure, that He will be with us all the days until the end of time. When this

age comes to its close, when He Himself will usher in the new age by the dawn of His Judgment Day, then only will the work of the Church have come to an end. (Kreztmann)

Not only in Spirit but also according to His human nature. He is present especially in His Church and congregation on earth as Mediator, Head, King, and High Priest. This presence is not a part, or only one half of Him. Christ's entire person is present, to which both natures belong, the divine and the human – not only according to His divinity, but also according to, and with, His received human nature. (TLSB)

*end of the age.* When He returns visibly. (TLSB)

**28:16–20** Christ commissions His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations through Baptism and teaching. Christ promises to be with us, and He is the one who makes disciples through our baptizing and teaching. Today, remember your Baptism and confirmation in the faith, which are precious blessings for the Lord's disciples. His love and care are new for you every morning. • Send us, Lord, to make disciples in Your name in accordance with our callings in life. Amen. (TLSB)