

Christ's Parting Charge

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Matt. 28:18-20

Matt. 28:18-20, *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

These words are rightly called “The Great Commission”, for it truly is a world-wide and time-lasting charge.

To whom was it spoken? Matt. 28:16, *“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.”*

Judas had already betrayed Jesus and was now dead, leaving but eleven of the original number of the apostles.

This great utterance of our Lord falls into three “great” parts:

- A great claim — *“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”*
- A great commission (2 parts):
 - The charge of evangelism — *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.”*
 - The charge of edification — *“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”*
- A great assurance — *“...and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”*

A great claim.

“All power” (authority).

Jesus nowhere claimed this authority before His death and resurrection.

- Jesus, at age 12, was obedient to his parents. Luke 2:41-51, *“Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they,*

supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

- His time was not yet come as a young man at a wedding feast. John 2:1-10, "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now."
- John 5:19, "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."
- John 14:24, "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."

Before His death no one prayed in His name, but now we are to pray to the Father in His name.

- John 16:23-24, “...*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*”
- Eph. 5:20, “*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*”

Before His death no one baptized in His name, but now we are to baptize in His name.

- Acts 2:38, “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*”

“All power is given unto me ...”

These words point to a definite time when this authority was conferred upon Him. When was it given?

Rom. 1:4, “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

Paul asks the question, then answers it himself: Eph. 1:19-23, “*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*”

Col. 1:18-19, “*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*”

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

This excludes the pope of Rome, Joseph Smith, Mrs. Baker Eddy, or any other man or woman who would assume the earthly headship of the church.

Religious division today is not so much over interpretation as it is over a lack of respect for proper authority — the authority of Jesus Christ.

A great commission. It is two-fold: it calls for evangelism and for edification.

The charge of evangelism.

“Go ye therefore...”

Because Jesus had all authority, He had the right to say to them, “Go”.

If someone came into your home and told your children to go and wash the dishes, or go and take out the garbage, by what authority would he be doing that. None.

Because Christ has all authority given by His Father, He has the right to make any commands He desires.

“... and teach all nations.” (Make disciples).

Under the New Testament, a disciple is a Christian.

Acts 11:26, “*And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*”

Hence, “Go and make Christians.”

In the great commission we learn how to become a Christian.

- **Believe.** Mark 16:15-16, “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”
- **Repent.** Luke 24:46-47, “*And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*”
- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” Acts 8:37, “*And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*”
- **Baptism.** Matt. 28:19, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the*

Holy Ghost.” Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

“... baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

This means baptizing by their combined authority.

This is the only thing to be done in the name of all three.

John 3:5, *“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*

The charge of edification.

“Teaching them to observe...”

That is, teaching those baptized believers. Christians need to know what to do to keep being saved, as much as the sinner needs to know what to do to be saved from the past (or alien) sins.

21 epistles in the New Testament are directed to Christians; hence, there is more sermon material to the church than to the alien sinners.

Therefore, we are to always endeavor to continue teaching Christians. 1 Tim. 4:6, *“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.”*

Why is this so necessary? That the church might *“continue stedfastly”* in the Lord’s service.

- Acts 2:42, *“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*
- Eph. 4:14, *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”*
- 2 Pet. 2:20-21, *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”*

“... observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

- Acts 20:20, *“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,”*

- Acts 20:26-27, “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

There are no non-essentials in the teachings of Christ, and there are no essentials outside of His teachings. 2 John 1:9, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”

A great assurance. This promise is three-fold.

A promise of personal presence — “*I am with you.*”

Not my representative, but “I”, myself. Heb. 13:5, “*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”

He won’t leave us, but we can leave Him.

- 1 Tim. 4:1, “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*”
- 2 Pet. 2:19-22, “*While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*”
- Matt. 18:20, “*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*”
- John 12:26, “*... where I am, there shall also my servant be...*”

An abiding presence — “*Always.*”

This word “*always*” separates Him from every other teacher the world has ever known. Heb. 13:5-6, “*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*”

A victorious presence — “... even unto the end of the world.”

All the time, to the very end of the world. Since the gospel message is to be preached, and in preaching it the Lord has promised to be with us unto the end of the world, then just that long is the gospel to be preached.

1 Pet. 1:25, “*But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*”

Centuries have gone by, empires have risen and fallen, countless changes have been made on this earth since these words were uttered by our Lord, yet the gospel remains the same.

Sometimes would-be reformers cry out, “We need a new and a different gospel for the new age.”

The world no more needs a new gospel than it needs a new sun to give light, nor a new earth upon which to live.

God made the sun, the air, the water, and the earth, and all these things will meet the requirements of physical man to the end of the world.

The same God gave to us the gospel of Jesus Christ, and it will be adequate to meet the needs of the lost men until Christ shall deliver the kingdom unto the Father.

No wonder Jude wrote in Jude 1:3 of “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*”

Although Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father, His abiding presence still protects, comforts, and blesses His chosen ones. Jesus to Paul at Corinth, Acts 18:10, “*For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.*”

- He is with us when we surround the Lord’s table. 1 Cor. 11:26, “*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.*”
- He is with us when we pray. Heb. 7:25, “*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*”
- He is with us when we sing praises to Him. Heb. 13:15, “*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*”

- He is with us when we are tempted. 1 Cor. 10:13, *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* 2 Pet. 2:9, *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”*
- He will be with us when we come to the valley of death to provide a safe passage across the valley of separation. Psalms 23:4, *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”*

Conclusion.

When you come to the valley of death can you claim the Lord as your guide?

Will He be there to strengthen and to guide you into the unending bliss of everlasting life?

