

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
12-27-23

Matthew 28

Jesus Has Risen – Verses 1-3

¹ After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ² 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. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

28:1 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb: They came to finish the preparation of Jesus' body, which was cut short by the Sabbath (Luke 24:1-3). So after the Sabbath on Sunday (the first day of the week), they came to the tomb — fully expecting to find the dead body of Jesus.

28:2 There was a great earthquake: Matthew alone notes this earthquake. The earthquake did not cause the stone to be rolled away; if anything, the angelic rolling of the stone prompted the earthquake. "The earth shook both at Christ's passion and at his resurrection; then, to show that it could not bear his suffering; now, to show that it could not hinder his rising."

28:3 An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it: When the women came to the tomb, they saw the stone rolled away and an angel sitting on the stone. The door to the tomb was wide open. The stone that enclosed the body of Jesus in the tomb had been like the gate of a prison cell, trapping the body of Jesus in the grave. Now it became a place of rest, as the angel sat on it.

The Angel's Message – Verses 4-6

⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

28:4-5 The angel who announced the good news of the Resurrection to the women gave them four messages: (1) Do not be afraid. The reality of the Resurrection brings joy, not fear. When you are afraid, remember the empty tomb. (2) He is not here. Jesus is not dead and is not to be looked for among the dead. He is alive, with his people. (3) Come and see. The women could check the evidence themselves. The tomb was empty then, and it is empty today. The Resurrection is a historical fact. (4) Go quickly and tell. They were to spread the joy of the Resurrection. We, too, are to spread the great news about Jesus' resurrection.

28:6 Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. Why? (1) Just as he promised, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that he will accomplish all he has promised. (2) Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ is ruler of God's eternal kingdom, not a false prophet or impostor. (3) We can be certain of our resurrection because he was resurrected. Death is not the end— there is future life. (4) The power that brought Jesus back to life is available to us to bring our spiritually dead selves back to life. (5) The Resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world. Jesus is more than just a human leader; he is the Son of God.

Mary Magdalene And Mary Of Bethany Meet A Risen Jesus – Verses 7-10

⁷ 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.” ⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

28:7 Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead: The angel commanded them to be the first messengers of the good news of Jesus’ resurrection. Since these women were some of the few people courageous enough to publicly identify themselves with Jesus, it was an appropriate honor.

28:10 By “brothers,” Jesus probably meant his disciples. This showed that he had forgiven them, even after they had disowned and deserted him. Jesus told the women to pass a message on to the disciples— that he would meet them in Galilee, as he had previously told them (Mark 14: 28). But the disciples, afraid of the religious leaders, stayed hidden behind locked doors in Jerusalem (John 20: 19). So Jesus met them first there (Luke 24: 36) and then later in Galilee (John 21).

The Guards’ Report – Verses 11-15

¹¹ 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. ¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³ telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ ¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵ 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 Jesus’ resurrection was already causing a great stir in Jerusalem. A group of women was moving quickly through the streets, looking for the disciples to tell them the amazing news that Jesus was alive. At the same time, a group of religious leaders was plotting how to cover up the Resurrection. Today there is still a great stir over the Resurrection, and there are still only two choices: to believe that Jesus rose from the dead, or to be closed to the truth— denying it, ignoring it, or trying to explain it away.

Jesus Instructs His Disciples Regarding Their Duty After His Departure – Verses 16-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

28:18 God gave Jesus authority over heaven and earth. On the basis of that authority, Jesus told his disciples to make more disciples as they preached, baptized, and taught. With this same authority, Jesus still commands us to tell others the Good News and make them disciples for the kingdom.

28:18-20 When someone is dying or leaving us, his or her last words are very important. Jesus left the disciples with these last words of instruction: They were under his authority; they were to make more disciples; they were to baptize and teach these new disciples to obey Christ; Christ would be with them always. Whereas in previous missions Jesus had sent his disciples only to the Jews (10: 5-6), their mission from now on would be worldwide. Jesus is Lord of the earth, and he died for the sins of people from all nations. We are to go— whether it is next door or to another country— and make disciples. It is not an option but a command to all who call Jesus “Lord.” We are not all evangelists in the formal sense, but we have all received gifts that we can use to help fulfill the great commission. As we obey, we have comfort in the knowledge that Jesus is always with us.

28:19 Jesus’ words affirm the reality of the Trinity. Some people accuse theologians of making up the concept of the Trinity and reading it into Scripture. As we see here, the concept comes directly from Jesus himself. He did not say baptize them in the names, but in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word Trinity does not occur in Scripture, but it well describes the three-in-one nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

28:19 The disciples were to baptize people because baptism unites believers with Jesus Christ in their death to sin and their resurrection to new life. Baptism symbolizes submission to Christ, a willingness to live God’s way, and identification with God’s covenant people.

28:20 How is Jesus “with” us? Jesus was with the disciples physically until he ascended into heaven and then spiritually through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 4). The Holy Spirit would be Jesus’ presence that would never leave them (John 14: 26). Jesus continues to be with us today through his Spirit.

28:20 The Old Testament prophecies and genealogies in the book of Matthew present Jesus’ credentials for being King of the world— not a military or political leader, as the disciples had originally hoped, but a spiritual King who can overcome all evil and rule in the heart of every person. If we refuse to serve the King faithfully, we are disloyal subjects, fit only to be banished from the kingdom. We must make Jesus King of our lives and worship him as our Savior, King, and Lord.