

Masterwork of the Messiah

Expositional Study Of Matthew's Gospel

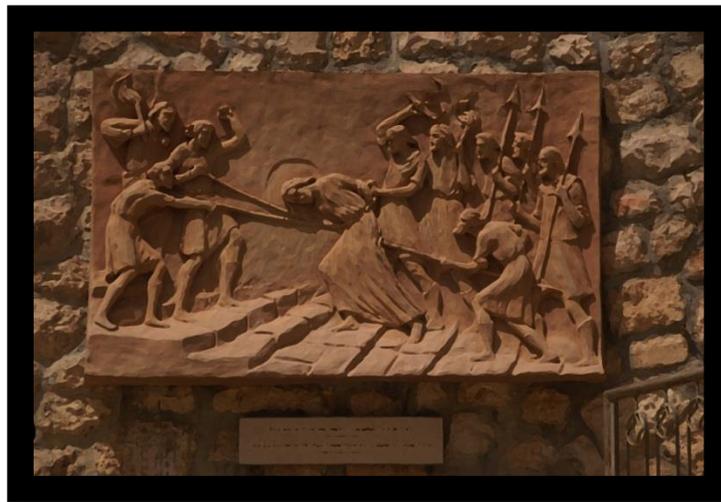
Final Orders For The Faithful

Matthew 28:18-20

Written By

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Last words, indeed, are lasting words, words which family and friends cherish and sometimes secure much needed wisdom, insight, and direction for life. Consider the profound, moving words of some of our past Presidents:

- James Polk, our eleventh President, married Sarah Childress when he was twenty-eight years old. Twenty-five years later, at the age of 53, he retired from the Presidency to Nashville, TN. Here the somewhat frail leader contracted cholera and passed into God's presence. His last, halting words were to his beloved wife, "I love you, Sarah. I ... love ... you." I'm sure she never forgot those words as she lived the next 42 years without the love of her life, and I'm sure those words encouraged her at many tough and lonely times.
- Andrew Jackson, our seventh President, was the last person anyone would have picked to be the nation's premier, powerful leader. Chronic hives left his body full of red welts from head to toe, smallpox almost killed him as a young man and left him with a marred complexion, a near-lethal fight with dysentery left him with abdominal cramps and internal bleeding, and a bullet lodged in his left lung from a duel caused him painful breathing problems

until he succumbed to tuberculosis at seventy-eight years of age in 1845. Yes, he was a man acquainted with personal adversity, but he charged forward with his life. Even though he never knew his father, who died before his birth, even though he watched his mother die from yellow fever while nursing Revolutionary War soldiers, even though his two brothers died in the war leaving him alone in the world, he went to school and received his law degree in 1787, married, and eventually became the leader of our land. On June 8, 1845, with family gathered around his bed, he is recorded to have said, "Please don't cry. Be good children, and we'll all meet in heaven." I'm sure his children never forgot that final command and word of encouragement.¹

Yes, last words are lasting words.

This truth is certainly substantiated with the last words of Jesus, the risen Messiah, at the close of the book of Matthew. He, as the God-man, faced death for our sin and on the third day He rose victorious over sin and death. On a windswept mountain in the Galilee region of Israel where He had started His magnificent, moving ministry, He appeared with the eleven disciples and probably five hundred additional followers to give them ... and us ... our marching orders prior to His glorious Second Coming (Matthew 24-25). Marching orders ... now there is a phrase many of you understand well as present or past members of the military. Jesus, as our risen King, left us with specific duties to be actively engaged in until He returns. I must say, there are no important words for us to understand as Christ-followers; therefore, let us not waste any time digging into them.

We Have Our Final Orders From The Risen Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20)

Final orders are not something you receive from your superior officer and yawn at, or put off for a more convenient time in your life. No. You receive and act upon them immediately because you have sworn and oath to this country and because you are loyal ... to the core. What is true, therefore, for your allegiance to an earthly superior is, by definition, infinitely more applicable when related to your relationship with Jesus, your risen Lord, Savior, and Messiah. His messianic kingdom is coming, as Matthew has carefully described throughout his divinely inspired book, and this profound truth leaves us with the mandate to live expectantly, excitedly, and obediently until the Messiah either comes for us in death or comes reveals Himself in the clouds of heaven. In light of this, I can't help but ask you a personal question: Are you fulfilling Christ's last words to you? He will settle accounts when He sees you (Matthew 25:15ff); hence it all-important for you to know what He wants from your life so you will stand before Him on that day with humble, excited joy.

Just what are Christ's final orders to us, to His saints, and to His Church? They are revealed in the closing three verses of Matthew chapter 28. I'll let Matthew tell you what he heard on that mountaintop as the wind blew through his tunic:

¹ Charles Panati, *Panati's Extraordinary Endings of Practically Everything And Everybody* (New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1989): 80-81, 86-87.

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Contextually, verse 18 serves as a transition between Christ’s appearance to the crowd of believers and to what is commonly called The Great Commission. The coordinating conjunction “and” (καὶ) at the beginning of this verse demonstrates the close connection between the historical and undeniable resurrection of Jesus and His desire for His followers in light of His impending ascension in Jerusalem prior to Pentecost (Acts 1). Put differently, the Great Commission, or Christ’s Final Orders, cannot and should not be divorced from the reality of His resurrection. It is because of His resurrection we are left with a definite mission to the godless, Christ-rejecting, we’ll-believe-anything-so-long-as-it-is-not-Christianity, and sin-loving world.

When Matthew states, “*And Jesus came up,*” he employed the intensive verb *proserchomai* (προσέρχομαι), a word which etymologically primarily means a physical approach of one person to another or others.² Jesus didn’t hover above the crowds. On the contrary, He physically entered their dimension with His resurrected body and moved in and among them. I’m sure this rag-tag group of believers never forgot this revelation, and I’m sure it is what emboldened them

² Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979): 713: **προσέρχομαι** mid. dep.; impf. προσηρχόμεν; fut. προσελεύσομαι; 2 aor. προσήλθον (also προσήλθα B-D-F §81, 3; Mlt-H. 208); pf. προσελήλυθα; plpf. 1 pl. προσεληλύθειμεν (Just., A II, 2, 3) (Aeschyl., Hdt.+) prim. ‘come, go to, approach’.

① to move towards

ⓐ of physical movement *come/go to, approach* (esp. oft. in Mt, about 50 times; s. JEdwards, JBL 106, ’87, 65–74) w. dat. of pers. (X., Cyr. 1, 4, 27; Aelian, VH 9, 3, end; En 14:25; Jos., Ant. 12, 19; Just., D. 2, 4 al.) Mt 5:1; 8:5; 9:14 al.; Lk 23:52; J 12:21; Ac 9:1; 10:28 ‘visit’; 18:2; MPol 16:1; GJs 20:4 (deStrycker; without dat. Tdf.). W. dat. of place (Herodian 2, 6, 5) Hb 12:18, 22; AcPl Ha 11, 13; εις Ἱερουσαλήμ 8, 30. Abs. Mt 4:11; Lk 9:42; Ac 8:29; 20:5 v.l. (s. CMaurer, TZ, 3, ’47, 321–37). MPol 4. Uncertain AcPl Ha 2, 2. The ptc. is freq. used w. verbs denoting an activity, to enliven the narrative προσελθὼν εἶπεν (cp. BGU 587, 2 [II B.C.]; Jos., Ant. 9, 194) Mt 4:3; 8:19; 18:21; see also 13:10; 15:12; 25:20, 22, 24; Mk 6:35; 14:45; Lk 9:12. pr. προσεκύνει Mt 8:2; 9:18 v.l., et al. pr. ἔπεσεν 26:39 v.l.; cp. Mk 14:35 v.l., et al. (s. προσέρχομαι 1). Foll. by inf. denoting purpose (1 Macc 2:23) προσήλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπιδειξάσθαι *his disciples came up to show* Mt 24:1. προσερχομένου αὐτοῦ κατανοῆσαι Ac 7:31. Cp. 12:13.

ⓑ of approach to or entry into a deity’s presence, transf. sense of 1a: *approach* (Cass. Dio 56, 9, 2 τοῖς θεοῖς προσερχόμεθα; PGiss 20, 24=Mitt-Wilck. I/2, 94; Jer 7:16; Sir 1:28 μὴ προσέλθῃς αὐτῷ [=τῷ κυρίῳ] ἐν καρδίᾳ δισσῆ; Philo, Plant. 64, Deus Imm. 8; Tat. 18, 2; Ath. 18, 1) pr. τῷ θεῷ Hb 7:25; 11:6; cp. 1 Cl 23:1; 29:1. W. dat. of place τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος Hb 4:16. Also abs. προσέρχεσθαι means *come to God* in a cultic sense. 10:1, 22. Some hold that pr. in Hb may connote the forensic idea ‘appear in court’ (POxy 40, 4 [II/III A.D.]; 2783, 25 [III A.D.]; PRyl 234, 6 [II A.D.]). The cultic aspect prob. furnishes the clue to the abs. πυκνότερον προσερχόμενοι 2 Cl 17:3.—To Jesus 1 Pt 2:3 (of proselytes, FDanker, ZNW 58, ’67, 95f; w. πρόσ as Lucian, Ver. Hist. 2, 28; Ex 34:32; Josh 14:6).

ⓒ of inanimate things, *come upon* transf. sense of 1a (Soph. et al.; cp. Eur., Or. 859 προσήλθεν ἐλπίς; BGU 614, 21) pr. τινὶ *someh. comes upon or over someone* φρίκη μοι προσήλθεν Hv 3, 1, 5. ὑμῖν ἰσχυρότης 3, 12, 3. Without a dat., which is easily supplied fr. the context m 5, 1, 3.

② to apply oneself to someth., *turn to, occupy oneself with a thing* (Diod S 1, 95, 1 τοῖς νόμοις; Plut., Cato Min. 764 [12, 2]; Epict. 4, 11, 24; pap; Sir 4:15 v.l.; 6:19, 26; Philo, Agr. 123, Migr. Abr. 86 ἀρετῆ; Just., D. 112, 5 τοῖς προφητικοῖς λόγοις; PYale 83, 15) οὐ προσελεύθη ἐπὶ προσευχῆν σου D 4:14; *devote oneself to* εἴ τις μὴ προσέρχεται ὑγαίνουσιν λόγοις 1 Ti 6:3 (s. προσέχω 2b). pr. τῷ θελήματι αὐτοῦ (=τοῦ θεοῦ) 1 Cl 33:8.—M-M. TW.²

to fulfill His final orders to the letter as we read about in Acts, despite widespread ridicule and opposition.

In the last clause of this transitional verse, Matthew recounts how Jesus based His final orders on His unique cosmic position as the risen Savior and Messiah. Couched in different terms, Jesus established His divine authority to even articulate these final orders. As the victorious messianic King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 17:14; 19:16), Jesus holds *all* authority in the heavenly and earthly spheres. Authority, *exousia* (ἐξουσία), is Greek term associated with total, complete governmental power as possessed by a ruler.³ Jesus exercised His divine authority during His ministry:

³Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979): 352-353: ἐξουσία, ας, ἡ (Soph., Thu.+; ins, pap, LXX, En, pseudepigr., Philo, Joseph., Just., Tat. 30, 1; Mel., P. 104, 810 [Bodm.]) from ἐξεστίν.

① a state of control over someth., *freedom of choice, right* (e.g., the 'right' to act, decide, or dispose of one's property as one wishes: BGU 1158, 13 [9 B.C.] = Mitt-Wilek. II/2, 234, 13 legal t.t., esp. in wills: POxy 272, 13; BGU 183, 25 ἔχειν αὐτὴν τὴν ἐ. τῶν ἰδίων πάντων; PTeht 319, 21.—Sir 30:11) ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν *have the right* 2 Th 3:9 (Just., D 16, 4). W. inf. foll. (Teles p. 23, 14; 24, 11; Tob 2:13 S; 7:10 S) J 10:18; 1 Cor 9:4ff; Hb 13:10; Rv 13:5; B 4:2. W. obj. gen. foll. (τίς οὖν ἔτι ἔχει μου ἐξουσίαν; Epict. 3, 24, 70; διδόναι ἐξουσίαν τῶν πετεινῶν Did., Gen. 61, 24) εἰ ἄλλοι τῆς ὑμῶν ἐ. μετέχουσι 1 Cor 9:12. Also ἐ. ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς *the right to the tree of life* Rv 22:14. W. verbs of two constr. ἔχει ἐ. ὁ κεραμεὺς τοῦ πηλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φουράματος *the potter has a right over the clay, to make fr. the same lump* Ro 9:21. ἐ. ἔχειν περὶ τινοῦ (4 Macc 4:5) *be at liberty w. regard to a thing* (opp. ἀνάγκην ἔχειν) 1 Cor 7:37; cp. 8:9; ἐ. ἐν τ. εὐαγγελίῳ *a right in the gospel* 9:18. ἐν τῇ σῆ ἐ. ὑπῆρχεν *was at your disposal* Ac 5:4 (Esth 4:17b; Appian, Liby. 52 §226 ἐν ἐ. εἶναι τί τι=someth. is at someone's disposal, is within one's power).

② potential or resource to command, control, or govern, *capability, might, power* (on capacity for someth. cp. Did., Gen. 162, 5: ἡ προσαίρεσέως ἐξουσία; cp. 1 Esdr 4:28, 40; 2 Macc 7:16 the king can do what he pleases because he has the capability for doing so) ἢ ἐ. τ. ἵππων ἐν τ. στόματι αὐτῶν ἐστίν Rv 9:19; cp. vs. 3; 13:2, 4; 18:1; Mt 9:8; Ac 8:19. W. inf. foll. to indicate the thing that one is able to do (En 25:4 ἄνασθαι; Diod S 4, 52, 4 ἀμύνασθαι εἶχεν ἐξουσίαν; Mel., P. 104 [B] πάντα κρίνει); ἐκβάλλειν τ. δαιμόνια Mk 3:15. ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τ. γέενναν Lk 12:5; cp. J 1:12; 7:1 v.l.; Rv 9:10; 11:6. W. gen. of the inf. foll. τοῦ πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφρων Lk 10:19; ποιεῖν ἐ. *exercise power* Rv 13:12. ἐ. ἔχειν τινός *have power over someone* (Epict. 4, 12, 8) GPt 3:7; ἑαυτοῦ IPol 7:3; also ἐ. ἔχειν ἐπὶ τινοῦ Rv 20:6; cp. AcPl Ha 1, 3. Esp. of God's power (Theodor. Prodr. 5, 313 ἡ θεῶν ἐ.; Da 4:17; Jos., Ant. 5, 109; 18, 214) Lk 12:5 (cp. 2 Cl 5:4); Ac 1:7; Jd 25; Hs 9, 23, 4. πάντων τ. ἐξουσίαν *power over all* Hm 4, 1, 11; Hs 9, 28, 8. πᾶσα ἡ ἐ. 5, 7, 3 (En 9:5). τὴν κατὰ πάντων ἐ. MPol. 2:1. τέλους ἐ. *power over the end* PtK 2 p. 13, 22. ἐ. ἐπὶ τ. πληγὰς *control over the plagues* Rv 16:9. Also of Satan's power Ac 26:18; ending of Mk in the Freer ms.; B 2:1.—The power that comes fr. God can involve transcendent knowledge, and both may be expressed by ἐ. (Herm. Wr. 1, 13; 14; 32). So his hearers conclude fr. Jesus' teaching that he must have ἐ. (i.e. it is not necessary for him to first ask what the traditional practice or interpretation requires) Mk 1:22 ('license' of a Jewish teacher L-S-J-M Suppl., '68; against this AArgyle, ET 80, '68/69, 343); cp. Mt 7:29 (Rtzst., Poim. 48, 3, Mysterienrel.³ 302; 363; JStarr, HTR 23, 1930, 302-5; HWindisch, Pls. u. Christus '34, 151ff; DDaube, JTS 39, '38, 45-59; HFlowers, ET 66, '55, 254 ['like a king']; DHudson, ET 67, '55/56, 17; JCutts, JTS 8, '57, 111-18 [Jesus and the 12]). The prep. expr. κατ' ἐξουσίαν *in accordance w. knowledge and power* Mk 1:27 and ἐν ἐ. Lk 4:32 belong to this classification; cp. 4:36. The close relation of ἐ. w. 'gnosis' and teaching also B 18:1.—But it is not always possible to draw a hard and fast line betw. this sense and

③ the right to control or command, *authority, absolute power, warrant* (Sextus 36: the πιστός has ἐ. fr. God) ἐ. καὶ ἐπιτροπή (cp. Ps.-Pla., Defin. p. 415c ἐξουσία, ἐπιτροπή νόμου) *authority and commission* Ac 26:12. ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς; *by whose authority are you doing this?* Mt 21:23, 24, 27; Mk 11:28, 29, 33; Lk 20:2, 8. ἐ. διδόναι τινί *put someone in charge* (Diod S 13, 36, 2; 14, 81, 6; cp. Vi. Aesopi G II p. 39, 6 P.; En 9:7; TestJob 3:6; Jos., Ant. 2, 90; 20, 193) Mk 13:34; PtK 2 p. 14, 13. οἷς ἔδωκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τὴν ἐ. *to whom he gave rights over the Gospel* (for its proclamation) B 8:3. ὅτι τὸ ἄρχειν ἐξουσίας ἐστίν *that ruling depends on authority* 6:18. Of apostolic authority 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10; ISm 4:1. Of Jesus' total authority Mt 28:18 (cp. Herm. Wr. 1, 32; Da 7:14; DStanley, CBQ 29, '67, 555-73); Hs 5, 6, 1. W. gen. of the one who has authority ἐ. τοῦ Χριστοῦ Rv 12:10 (Just., A I, 40, 7). W. gen. of that over which the

authority is exercised (Diod S 2, 27, 3; IDefixWünsch 4, 21; Ps 135:8; ; Wsd 10:14; Sir 17:2; Jos., Vi. 190) ἐ. πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων *over the unclean spirits* Mt 10:1; Mk 6:7; cp. J 17:2; Hm 4, 3, 5; PtK 2 p. 14, 13; 1 Cl 61:2; ISm 4:1; τούτου τοῦ λαοῦ Hs 8, 3, 3. Also ἐπί w. acc. (cp. Sir 33:20) Lk 9:1; cp. Rv 6:8; 13:7. Likew. ἐπί w. gen. (cp. Da 3:97) Rv 2:26; 11:6b; 14:18. παρά τινος (also ἀπό τινος Orig., C. Cels. 2, 13, 56) indicates the source of the authority (s. παρά A3b) Ac 9:14; 26:10; Hs 5, 6, 4 (restored from the Lat.; ἐ. λαμβάνειν as Diod S II, 42, 6; TestJob 8:2f; 16:4; Vi. Aesopi G II p. 39, 4 P.) and κατά τινος the one against whom it is directed (TestJob 16:2 κατ' ἐμοῦ; 8:2 κατὰ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων μου 'over my possessions'; Sb 8316, 6f κύριε Σάραπι δὸς αὐτῷ καταξουσίαν κατὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν αὐτοῦ; Orig., C. Cels. 7, 43, 25) J 19:11 (HvCampenhausen, TLZ 73, '48, 387–92); B 4:13. W. pres. inf. foll. (cp. X., Mem. 2, 6, 24 and 35; Diod S 12, 75, 4; 1 Macc 10:35; 11:58; Jos., Ant. 4, 247) Mt 9:6; Mk 2:10; Lk 5:24; J 5:27. W. aor. inf. foll. (Jdth 8:15; 1 Esdr 8:22; 1 Macc 1:13) 19:10. Foll. by gen. of the pres. inf. (4 Macc 5:15) Hm 12, 4, 2.—RDillon, 'As One Having Authority' (Mark 1:22); CBQ 57, '95, 92–113.

④ power exercised by rulers or others in high position by virtue of their office, *ruling power, official power* (Ps.-Pla., Alc. 1, 135b al.; LXX; Jos., Bell. 2, 140, Vi. 80) ἐ. ὡς βασιλεὺς Rv 17:12f (Diod S 2, 45, 1 βασιλικὴν ἐ. ἔχειν; 14, 32, 5 ἐ. λαμβάνειν); ἐ. τοῦ ἡγεμόνος Lk 20:20; cp. J 19:10f, s. 3 above. ἐ. ἐπάνω δέκα πόλεων Lk 19:17. ἄνθρωπος ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν τασσόμενος *a man under authority* 7:8 (MFrost, ET 45, '34, 477f); cp. Mt 8:9; Hs 1:3.—The power of a particular office (Diod S 1, 70, 1; 14, 113, 6 ἡ ὑπατική ἐξουσία; Plut., Mar. 406 [2, 1], Caes. 734 [58, 1]) ἐπαρχική ἐ. *the power of prefect* Phlm subscr.

⑤ bearer of ruling authority

ⓐ human *authorities, officials, government* (Dionys. Hal. 8, 44; 11, 32; POxy 261, 15) Lk 12:11 (here and elsewh. in NT w. ἀρχή, as also in Pla.); Ro 13:1, 2, 3 (with 13:1b cp. the express. 'ancient saying' [s. Hes., Theogony 96 ἐκ δὲ Διὸς βασιλῆς. On this HFränkel, Dichtung u. Philos. des frühen Griechentums '62, III n. 6] in Artem. 2, 36 p. 135, 24; 2, 69 p. 161, 17 τὸ κρατοῦν δύναμιν ἔχει θεοῦ—the ruling power has its authority from God; Wsd 6:3; Jos., Bell. 2, 140 οὐ δίχα θεοῦ περιγενέσθαι τινὶ τὸ ἄρχειν ... ἐξουσίαν); Tit 3:1. For the view that the ἐ. of Ro 13 are spirit powers, as b below, s. OCullmann, Christ and Time (tr. Filson) '50, 191–210.—On the subj. in gener. s. LGaugusch, D. Staatslehre d. Ap. Pls nach Ro 13; ThGl 5, '34, 529–50; JUITman, Onder Eig. Vaandel 15, '40, 102–21; HvCampenhausen, ABertholet Festschr. '50, 97–113; OCullmann, Zur neuesten Diskussion über die ἐξουσίαι in Rö 13:1. TZ 10, '54, 321–36, D. Staat im NT '61² (Eng. tr.: The State in the NT '56, 93–114); against him AStrobel, ZNW 47, '56, 67–93.—GCaird, Princip. and Powers '56; RMorgenthaler TZ 12, '56, 289–304; CMorrison, The Powers That Be '60; EBarnikol, Rö 13. Der nichtpaulinische Ursprung der absoluten Obrigkeitsbejahung v. Rö 13:1–7 '61, 65–133; HSchlier, Principalities and Powers in the NT '61 (Eng. tr.); MBorg, NTS 19, '72/73, 205–18. οἱ ἐπ' ἐξουσίαν ἀχθέντες *those who are brought before the authorities* Hs 9, 28, 4.

ⓑ of transcendent rulers and functionaries: powers of the spirit world (TestLevi 3:8; TestSol 20:15 B), sg. (w. ἀρχή and δύναμις) 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; Col 2:10. Pl. (w. ἀρχαί as Just., D. 41, 1; cp. Orig., C. Cels. 4, 29, 22) Eph 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:15; (w. ἄγγελοι, δυνάμεις) 1 Pt 3:22. Cp. the v.l. for ἄρχειν Papias (4).

⑥ the sphere in which power is exercised, *domain* (4 Km 20:13; Ps 113:2) Lk 4:6. ἐκ τ. ἐξουσίας Ἡρώδου ἐστὶν *he comes fr. Herod's jurisdiction* 23:7. ἐ. τοῦ σκούτους *domain of darkness* 22:53; Col 1:13 (opp. the βασιλεία of Christ). Hence ἐ. τοῦ ἀέρος simply *domain of the air* Eph 2:2; s. ἀήρ 2b.

⑦ Various opinions are held about the mng. of 1 Cor 11:10 ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἄγγελους. Many now understand it as *a means of exercising power* (cp. δύναμις 1b.—It is abstract for concrete, as βασιλεία [1] in Diod S 1, 47, 5: a stone figure ἔχουσα τρεῖς βασιλείας ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς—that wears three symbols of royal power [diadems] on its head), that is to say, the *veil* (κάλυμμα is v.l. for ἐ. here; s. critical apparatus in N.) by which women at prayer (when they draw near to the heavenly realm) protect themselves fr. the amorous glances of certain angels. But the veil may also have been simply a symbol of womanly dignity, esp. befitting a Christian woman, and esp. in the presence of holy angels (s. Cadbury below).—WWeber, ZWT 46, 1903, 487–99; Dibelius, Geisterwelt 12–23 al.; EFehrle, Die kultische Keuschheit im Altertum 1910, 39; RPerdelwitz, StKr 86, 1913, 611–13; LBrun, ZNW 14, 1913, 298–308; GKittel, Rabbinnica 1920, 17ff; Billerb. III 423–35; KBornhäuser, NKZ 41, 1930, 475–88; WFoerster, ZNW 30, '31, 185f; MGinsburger, RHP 12, '32, 245–47; OMotta, ET 44, '33, 139–41; CSpicq, RB 48, '39, 557–62; EBlakeney, ET 55, '44, 138; SLösch, TQ 127, '47, 216–61; JFitzmyer, NTS 3, '57, 48–58; HCadbury, HTR 51, '58, 1f (Qumran parallels); MHooker, NTS 10, '64, 410–16; AISaksson, Marriage and Ministry in the NT '65, 176–81; GSchwartz, ZNW 70, '79, 249 (Aramaic background).—LCerfaux et JTondriau, Un Concurrent du Christianisme, '57. S. on ἄγγελος 2c.—V.l. for ἄρχειν Papias (4).—DELG s.v. εἰπί. New Docs 2, 83f. M-M. EDNT. TW. Sv.³

- He healed disease and sickness at will (Matthew 4:23; 9:35).
- He commanded and controlled powerful demons with a word (Matthew 4:24; 8:32; 12:22).
- He evidenced the power to raise the dead from the grave (Matthew 9:23-26; Luke 7:11ff).
- He laid His life down and He picked it up again, as He prophesied (Matthew 12:40; John 10:18).

Once He completed His salvific, messianic mission, all authority in the seen and unseen worlds truly flowed to Him from the Father. And because He possesses all authority and all power, nothing (and I mean nothing) will thwart the work of His Church, nor the establishment of His prophesied Davidic Empire (2 Samuel 7; Isaiah 2; 9; Psalm 89). For a group of uneducated, socially rejected and isolated commoners from Galilee, these words were profound because they, by definition, demonstrated that they could, in fact, fulfill His final orders. His power would be their power to carry His gospel message forward despite the best moves of the Devil and his sinister kingdom.

- A compromised Supreme Court will not thwart His saints.
- A digressive governmental structure disguised as highly progressive will not thwart His saints.
- A brutal enemy like ISIS can destroy Christian artifacts, churches, and even saints themselves, but they will not thwart His saints.
- The ACLU can array themselves legally against saints exercising their rights based on the Constitution, but they will not thwart His saints.

Christ's final orders to His saints will be fulfilled because He has the cosmic, divine authority to assure their realization in all realms of existence. Can I hear an "Amen," church?

Any Jew listening to Christ that day would have naturally and theologically gone back to the prophetic words of Daniel, words which serve as the bedrock for Christ's words here. After Daniel spoke prophetically about the final godless kingdom of Anti-Christ in the last days, he wrote:

⁹ I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took *His* seat; His vesture *was* like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, its wheels *were* a burning fire. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened. ¹¹ Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. ¹³ I kept looking in the night visions, and

behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. ¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed (Daniel 7).

The world appears to be slipping into darkness; however, the darkness will be overcome by the light of the kingdom of the Messiah when He appears. Yes, when He appears all earthly kingdoms will fall before Him, as will all the demons who influenced them. They will fall because He, and He alone, is the authoritative Savior and King.

Based, therefore, on Christ's absolute cosmic authority as the one, true Messiah, He gives us our clearly defined final orders. There are several ways we could dissect them, but for our purposes I would like to boil them down to two main concepts.

Be A Reacher (Matthew 28:19a)

We are called to be reachers of lost souls. Christ's opening words express this quite clearly:

¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; ...

Grammatically, the Greek text is most illuminating. The main verb in these verses is the imperative "make disciples" (μαθητεύσατε). All the other verbs, viz., going, baptizing, and teaching, are participles deriving their imperatival force from this pivotal, all-important verb. In the first century, men aligned themselves with a particular rabbi and they learned from him the ways and wisdom of God. Where believers are concerned, our main obligation is devote our lives to studying our Rabbi, Jesus, so that our lives mirror His, and we are to make sure others grow spiritually as they learn from Him as well. More on that in a moment. Suffice it to say, we must be careful not to slip into the misguided notion that our most important duty is to go forth with His gospel, but all evangelistic going must have as its end goal the creation of a sound, stable, growing disciple and learner of Jesus.

What does "going" entail? Good question. It means you are committed to constantly looking for opportunities to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to Jews and Gentiles alike.⁴ Jesus instructed His disciples to go to Israel first with the gospel (Matthew 10:6) for they were His chosen people. When they rejected Him and His message and messiahship as a nation, He commanded His disciples to reconnoiter and go to the Gentiles (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:23). He had primed them for this strategic shift by all the Gentiles He had reached out to during His mission among them (The centurion's servant, Matthew 8:5-13; the Canaanite woman with a

⁴ Stuart K. Weber *Matthew*. Vol. 1. Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 485, offers this insight on what it means to "go:" *Going* means crossing boundaries to make disciples—going across the street, going to dinner with an unbelieving friend, going into the inner city, going beyond one's comfort zone to make the gospel accessible to the lost. Living life is "going" with a purpose, every day. *Going* also implies our support of people who are literally going to other cultures. We must support global outreach financially and support the people going emotionally and personally as well as through prayer.

possessed daughter, Matthew 15:21-28, the Samaritan woman at the well, John 4 ... to name a few). Everything about Jesus's life as the Rabbi, taught His disciples, His learners, the importance of going personally to people who were lost and enslaved to sin. Matthew, for one, understood this command for there came the day when he, a hated tax collector in Galilee, experienced a life-changing visit by the Lord Jesus (Luke 5:27). Don't you know Matthew had tears in his eyes every time he reflected on the day the Lord came to his tax booth on the road around Galilee? I can't help but ask you, "Who will be in heaven because you purposefully stopped by their tax booth to talk to them about spiritual things?"

Going with the gospel is what we, as disciples, are to be about. We are to go personally to the people God brings into our lives, and we are to go into all the world with His gospel, either personally or through missional activity. God has grown this church over the years because we are personally and corporately committed to going forth with His glorious, life-giving gospel. Many people have traded kingdoms and are now members of Christ's kingdom for all eternity because we have been faithful to go. Some have joined the Church at large because we've faithfully supported the work of numerous devoted missionaries in strategic areas; however, some have also joined this local church, as well, because they are getting fed here and are being challenged to grow in the faith.

A military officer approached me one day between services and recounted how he had led a life of atheism prior to being assigned to D.C. God worked in his life through various saints and eventually he came to worship with us a God he didn't know or even believe in. You can guess what happened. God grabbed his head and his heart and today he is a growing saint in the Lord Jesus, and is one committed to going forth with the gospel.

We are a church which goes with the gospel, and because that is true He has blessed us with numbers of changed lives. The fact we need to build a new sanctuary and additional classroom and office space merely demonstrates God has richly blessed our obedience; however, there is so much more work to do, is there not? There is always another Matthew who needs Jesus. Will you take the gospel to him?

Prior to my trip to Israel two weeks ago, someone asked me why I didn't hire a messianic Jew, a believing Jew to be my guide. I could, however, in my answer to this person I informed them I am on a mission from God to reach my guide and my driver for Christ. I've been on this mission for several years now, but I'm looking for the Spirit of God to take the words they hear in the teaching from the Bible at the various sites and allow them to find salvation and redemption through the person and work of Jesus, the Messiah.

Let me re-state the obvious: We are an evangelistic church. If you are here to soak up good teaching in a variety of venues, to build relationships with great people, or to have your children exposed to the moral structure of the Bible, you, my friend, need to broaden your horizons if you are a believer. We are not a holy huddle, as a church. No, we will challenge you and train you to go forth with the gospel because Christ has given us strict orders to do so. So, I ask you again, "Who will be in heaven because you went to them with the gospel?"

Be A Teacher (Matthew 28:19b-20a)

Let me restate Christ's commission again:

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; ...

When we go with the gospel, some of the gospel seed will fall on rich soil and produce faith and spiritual life because it will be received (Matthew 13). Once that person is saved, we, then, have a divine obligation to make sure they progressively move from spiritual infancy to adulthood. How do we do that? We grow people into mature followers of Jesus in a variety of ways, and these growth venues are called discipleship:

- We spend quality time with them, as Jesus did with His disciples.
- We hold them accountable for their words and actions, as Jesus did with His disciples.
- We teach them the Scriptures so they will know what they are supposed to obey, as Jesus did with His disciples.
- We challenge them to be in the Word privately and corporately on a consistent basis, as Jesus did with His disciples.
- We pray with and for them, as Jesus did with His disciples.
- We model godly, holy behavior before them, as Jesus did with His disciples.
- We show them the importance of selfless service, as Jesus did with His disciples.
- We show them how to respond to opposition and conflict for their faith, as Jesus did with His disciples.
- We teach them the importance of giving of their monies to support the work of God.
- We teach them to use their spiritual gifts to benefit the body of Christ.
- We challenge them to be committed to the corporate worship of the living God.
- We need to help them understand everything Jesus taught so they can mirror His holy character to those around them.
- We, well, I'm sure you can fill in the blank with additional thoughts and concepts.

The point can't be missed: We, as saints of the Lord Jesus, are called to *reproduction* and to *transformation*. We are not called to watch others produce spiritual offspring, nor are we called to just get bulked up on spiritual information, as if this is the test for true spirituality. No, we are called, individually and corporately, to share our faith so people are saved and to invest our lives in teaching people the Word of God and the disciplines of a disciple so they can grow up in Him. Jesus challenges us to help those who, by faith, move away from worldly, godless identification to learn what their new spiritual identification looks like.⁵

⁵ Leon Morris offers these wise words about what Jesus meant by teaching other saints His words: In other words, Jesus is concerned with a way of life. As we have seen throughout this Gospel, he continually urges his followers to live in a manner pleasing to God. He has objected to the sterile legalism of many in his day and has gone beyond the letter of the law to the things that are rightly seen as arising from its spirit. So there is to be instruction and there is

We are also called, as we see in these final orders to challenge new saints to get baptized. Why? We challenge them to be baptized not because it saves them, but because of three primary reasons:

- Baptism by means of water immersion definitively shows the new believer has identified, by faith, with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
- Baptism demonstrates publicly that the new believer boldly identifies with Jesus and desires to live their life for Him. As a sidelight, I must say it was an honor and a privilege to re-baptize saints from our tour group in the Jordan River two weeks ago. There is nothing like standing in this ancient, theologically important river. There is nothing like watching devoted disciples making another public declaration that Jesus is their Lord and they intend on following hard after Him.
- Baptism demonstrates they, as a new believer, are obedient to the Lord's commands. The import of this is clear: If you are obedient with the initial command of Jesus, then you'll be in a better position to be obedient to His additional commands as you seek to mature spiritually.

In light of this facet of the Lord's final orders, I can't help but ask additional pragmatic questions:

- Are you a spiritual reproducer or a spiritual consumer? When's the last time God used you to lead someone into His family? My prayer for you is simple: May God make you a powerful light to those about you.
- Are you a spiritual teacher, a saint devoted to the spiritual transformation of others into the image of Jesus, the Christ? Who are you pouring your life into so they can move on in maturity? For some it might be a child, a mate, or a friend, while for others it might be teaching a class at church. I am the result of the impact of many godly lives over many years invested into my life. I will never forget the names: My father, Al, and my mother, Sue. My mother's sister, who is now with the Lord, my Aunt Roberta. Thom Dworkis, a Navigator who taught me the importance of Scripture memorization. Nick Nicholas, a WWII Marine who taught me to feed on the Word of God. Dr. John Hartley, head of the religion department at Azusa Pacific University, who taught me how to love, think through, and apply the rich truths of the Old Testament. Ricky Sealy, my dear friend who succumbed to pancreatic cancer before I moved to Virginia. He taught me how to lead people and how to face adversity to God's glory. Dr. Bill Yeager, a tenacious WWII B 17 tail gunner, who came back to the States and faithfully shepherded his church for thirty years. He taught me what it means to be an under-shepherd of Jesus

to be purity of life. We should not miss the significance of *all the things*. Jesus is not suggesting that his followers should make a selection from his teachings as it pleases them and neglect the rest. Since the teaching of Jesus is a unified whole, disciples are to observe *all* that this means. Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992): 749.

before God took him home. I could list many more names, but I'm sure you get the point. I have been transformed by saints who lived transformed lives. Now, I'm simply seeking to live as they lived their lives in light of the Great Commission. Whose life are you investing in is the question, wouldn't you agree?

I don't know about you, but Matthew has been a challenging, transformative study. We started in chapter one with the genealogy list tying Jesus to the prophesied Davidic line as the Messiah, and we've come to the close with the Messiah and Savior in His resurrected state telling us what He expects from us until He comes back, and He is going to return. Until we see Him face to face, might He find us being deeply committed to His Final Orders. Additionally, until we see Him face to face, might we never lose sight of His promise, no matter how dark the day becomes:

... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Here the great "I AM" of time and space promises He will be with us no matter what.

- When you are opposed for living out the Final Orders, He will be with you.
- When your spouse finds your faith offensive, He will be with you.
- When you are ridiculed for believing in the narrow nature of the gospel, He will be with you.
- When the majority of the world rejects the gospel message you present, opting for false belief systems, He will be with you.
- When the ol' Devil buffets you with depression, confusion, and uncertainty, He will be with you.
- When the ol' Devil tempts you to get you off course, He will be with you.
- When adversity comes your way, when a storm threatens to sink your little boat, He will be with you.
- When He gives you an unexpected but rich spiritual harvest, He will be with you, smiling all the way.

And because He is with us, I have only one more thing to say: **March On!**