

Dr. David Turner, Matthew

Lecture 12B – Matthew 28: The Resurrection of Jesus and the Mission of the Church

NotebookLM

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1) Abstract

This academic lecture from Dr. David Turner offers an in-depth examination of **Matthew chapter 28**, focusing on three key sections: **the resurrection of Jesus**, **the report of the guards**, and **the Great Commission**. Turner stresses the **crucial theological significance of Jesus' resurrection**, arguing that it is the cornerstone of Christian faith and essential for salvation and the church's foundation. He analyzes the **reactions and conspiracies surrounding the resurrection**, highlighting the contrast between the faithful and those who sought to deny the truth. Finally, the lecture emphasizes the **universal and ongoing mandate of the Great Commission**, underscoring Jesus' **supreme authority and perpetual presence** as the foundation for global discipleship, a task made possible despite human weakness through divine empowerment.

2) Briefing Document: Dr. David Turner's lecture on Matthew 28, titled "The Resurrection of Jesus and the Mission of the Church," outlines three main sections: the resurrection itself (28:1-10), the guards' report to Jewish officials (28:11-15), and the Great Commission (28:16-20). The lecture emphasizes the pivotal role of the resurrection in Christian theology and the global, enduring mandate given to Jesus' followers.

I. The Resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 28:1-10)

Turner highlights that the resurrection is "announced, not explained." Its central focus is the "empty tomb revealed by an angel."

- **Witnesses to the Resurrection:** Eight witnesses are identified:
- **The Father:** The "implied agent of all the passive verbs which state that Jesus will be raised up."
- **The Earthquake:** "Portends an apocryphal event."
- **The Glorious Angel:** "Actually makes the announcement."
- **The Empty Tomb:** "Says nothing but signifies everything."
- **The Faithful Women:** Who "hurried to announce the resurrection to the disciples."
- **Jesus Himself:** Who "meets the women on their way and reiterates that he will meet the disciples in Galilee."
- **The Guards:** Who "regain consciousness and tell the leading priests what has happened."
- **The Religious Leaders:** Whose "conspiracy to deny the resurrection is ironically an indirect testimony that it's true."
- **Theological Significance of the Resurrection:** Turner stresses that the resurrection is "the heart of the Christian gospel" and "the heart of redemption itself." He argues that without it, "there would be nothing."
- **No Savior:** Jesus would be "a deluded liar instead of an exalted Lord."
- **No Salvation:** Jesus' mission to save people from sins would end "ignominious[ly]."
- **No Apostolic Foundation for the Church:** The resurrection "turned the deserters back into disciples."
- **No Model of Sacrificial Living:** Jesus' suffering would not "end in glory," and the "cross is never replaced with the crown."
- **No Rectification of Wrongs/Final Judgment:** "The blood of the martyrs would cry out for all eternity without vindication," and "the resurrection guarantees the final judgment of all mankind."
- **Satan Would Win:** "Without the resurrection, Satan would win."

- **No Resurrection and Reward for His People:** The "eschatological promise of the coming kingdom" would not be fulfilled.

II. The Report of the Guards (Matthew 28:11-15)

Turner notes the irony of the guards' report: "the soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb become evangelists of Jesus' resurrection." The Jewish leaders, who had secured the guards to prevent a "resurrection hoax," now face a genuine one, forcing them to concoct a lie and pay the guards to spread it.

- **Refusal to Believe:** The leaders' "minds... are already made up about Jesus, and they do not wish to be confused by the fact of his resurrection. This intensifies their guilt." They accused Jesus of deceit, but "now they are the ones who willfully deceive people about Jesus."
- **Alternative Explanations Debunked:** Turner dismisses various alternative theories (disciples stole the body, wrong tomb, Jesus merely swooned, collective hallucination) as unsatisfactory. He states, "Only by an a priori worldview consideration, which rules out supernatural events up front, can one dismiss this account of Jesus' resurrection outright. It makes far better sense than any of these alternatives."
- **Gospel's Power:** Despite the leaders' obstinacy, Turner emphasizes that "one must never be pessimistic about the life-changing power of the gospel of Christ," citing Acts' account of "thousands of converts in Jerusalem, many of whom were priests."

III. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)

This section is described as the "climax of the Gospel of Matthew."

- **Setting the Scene (28:16-17):** The meeting in Galilee is fitting as the disciples are Galileans, and Galilee's previous association with Gentiles anticipates the "mandate for mission to all the nations." The mountain setting echoes "the giving of the Torah from Mount Sinai, as well as the previous mountain experiences in Matthew." While the disciples worship Jesus, "there is doubt," described as hesitation or wavering rather than outright unbelief.
- **The Power of Jesus (28:18):** The Great Commission is "sandwiched between two Christological assertions":

1. "Jesus has been given all authority in 28:18." This echoes Daniel 7 and anticipates Pauline teaching on the exalted Jesus, showing that "the glory which the disciples saw briefly at the transfiguration is now the permanent mode of Jesus' life as the exalted Son of Man."
 2. "Jesus will be with the disciples all the days as they obey his mandate until the end of the age in 28:20b."
- **Jesus' Program (28:19-20a):** The mission is possible "because Jesus is potent."
 - **Universal Mission:** The command is to take the message to "all the nations," including both Gentiles and Jews. "Universal lordship means universal mission."
 - **Making Disciples:** The "central responsibility of the disciples is to reproduce themselves, to make more disciples." "Go, baptize, and teach, essentially describe how a disciple is made."
 - **Baptism:** "A single act" distinct from Jewish ritual washings, and performed with the "triadic formula, which invokes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."
 - **Teaching:** New disciples are to be "taught to obey all that Jesus commanded." This teaching "is not merely to convey information, but to change lives from disobedient to obedient behavior." It includes Jesus' interpretation of the Law of Moses.
 - **Role of the Church:** "All this implies the central role of the church as God's primary agency for mission."
 - **The Promise of Jesus' Presence (28:20b):** This promise "forms an inclusio... around the theme of the presence of Jesus" in Matthew (from Jesus being called Emmanuel in 1:23). This presence is "permanent, lasting until the end of the age." It assures disciples of Jesus' guidance during "difficult times of dispute and discipline."
 - **Key Repetition of "All":** The passage emphasizes the word "all":
 - Jesus has "all authority."

- Disciples are to be made of "all the nations."
- Disciples are to obey "all that Jesus commanded."
- Jesus will be with them "all the days." This "universality of Jesus' power and the perpetuity of his presence provide the dynamic for the universal discipleship mandate program." Despite the "daunting" task and the "weakness of the people of God," the mission can be accomplished "in the power of Jesus" and his comforting "presence with us all the days until the end of the age."
- **Theological Summary of the Great Commission:**
 - **God's Power Overcomes Infirmities:** Jesus builds his church "on their foundational ministries" despite the disciples' weaknesses, teaching that "God's power can overcome our infirmities."
 - **Christology and the Kingdom:** The Commission is "based in Christology," with Jesus describing his "kingly authority in terms taken from Daniel 7.13." The kingdom has "both realized and unrealized elements."
 - **True Discipleship:** The focus is on "making true disciples who obey Jesus, not just casual hangers-on." These disciples are to be made "not only from Israel but from the nations," fulfilling earlier "hints that Matthew has dropped about openness of certain Gentiles to Jesus."
 - **Cosmic Implications/New Humanity:** The universal mission has "cosmic implications" as "a new humanity begins to be formed, a new community of believers in Jesus which goes way beyond ethnic things which divide us... or social distinctions... or even sexual difficulties." This obedience fulfills the "original creation mandate" given to Adam and Eve, leading to "a regeneration of the world itself."
 - **Immanuel Presence:** As disciples carry out the mission, they "will experience the faithful Immanuel presence of Jesus," who will guide them through the Spirit in both external and internal challenges. This presence endures "until the age ends at his return," when "God's will finally be done on earth as it is in heaven."

3) Study Guide:

Matthew 28: The Resurrection of Jesus and the Mission of the Church – Study Guide Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to the lecture, what are the three main sections of Matthew 28?
2. List three of the eight witnesses to Jesus' resurrection mentioned in Matthew 28:1-10.
3. Why is the resurrection of Jesus considered the "heart of the Christian gospel" and the "sine qua non" of Matthew's theology?
4. How did the report of the guards about Jesus' resurrection ironically intensify the guilt of the Jewish leaders?
5. What are some of the alternative explanations for Jesus' resurrection that the lecture dismisses as unsatisfactory?
6. Explain the significance of Jesus meeting his disciples on a mountain in Galilee, as described in Matthew 28:16.
7. What is the meaning of the "doubt" some disciples experienced when they saw Jesus, as mentioned in Matthew 28:17?
8. According to the lecture, what are the "two Christological assertions" that bracket the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20a?
9. Describe the three main activities involved in making disciples, as outlined in the Great Commission.
10. How does the repetition of the word "all" in Matthew 28:18-20 emphasize the universal scope of Jesus' mission and power?

Answer Key

1. The three main sections of Matthew 28 are: first, the resurrection of Jesus (28:1-10); second, the report of the guards to the Jewish officials about the resurrection (28:11-15); and third, the Great Commission (28:16-20).

2. Three of the eight witnesses to Jesus' resurrection are: the Father (implied agent of raising Jesus), the earthquake (portending an apocalyptic event), the glorious angel (making the announcement), the empty tomb (signifying everything), the faithful women (announcing the resurrection), Jesus himself (meeting the women), the guards (reporting to the priests), and the religious leaders (whose conspiracy indirectly testifies to the truth). (Any three are acceptable).
3. The resurrection is the heart of the Christian gospel because without it, Jesus would be a deluded liar, there would be no salvation, no apostolic foundation for the church, no model of sacrificial living, and no rectification of wrongs. It is the necessary prerequisite ("sine qua non") for multiple key theological themes in Matthew.
4. The Jewish leaders had secured guards to prevent a resurrection hoax, but these same guards then reported a genuine resurrection. This forced the leaders to concoct a lie and pay the guards, intensifying their guilt by willfully deceiving people despite direct testimony of the event they sought to prevent.
5. The lecture dismisses alternative explanations such as the disciples stealing the body, the women visiting the wrong tomb, Jesus merely swooning and later reviving, or the disciples experiencing a collective hallucination. These theories are deemed unsatisfactory because they don't adequately explain the recorded events.
6. The meeting on a mountain in Galilee is fitting because the disciples were Galileans and would return home. It also reminds the reader of the giving of the Torah from Mount Sinai and previous mountain experiences in Matthew, lending a sense of authority and divine significance to the commission given there.
7. The "doubt" some disciples experienced can be translated as "hesitated" or "wavered," and is linked to the theme of "little faith" seen elsewhere in Matthew. It doesn't necessarily refer to outright unbelief but rather a lack of spontaneous worship or full comprehension, highlighting their human weakness despite Jesus' presence.

8. The two Christological assertions are: first, the statement that Jesus has been given all authority (28:18), and second, the promise that Jesus will be with the disciples all the days as they obey his mandate until the end of the age (28:20b). These claims of Jesus' power and presence empower the mission.
9. The three main activities involved in making disciples are: "go" (to all the nations), "baptize" (new disciples in the triadic formula), and "teach" (new disciples to obey all that Jesus commanded). These actions describe how a disciple is reproduced and nurtured within the church.
10. The repetition of "all" ("all authority," "all the nations," "all that Jesus commanded," "all the days") underscores the universal scope of Jesus' dominion, the global reach of the mission, the comprehensive nature of the teaching, and the perpetual presence of Jesus. This reinforces that the daunting task is achievable through Christ's complete power and enduring presence.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the resurrection of Jesus as the "heart of the Christian gospel" according to the lecture, elaborating on at least four theological themes that depend on it.
2. Analyze the interaction between the Jewish leaders and the guards in Matthew 28:11-15. How does this passage highlight the leaders' culpability and indirectly affirm the truth of the resurrection?
3. Examine the context and preparation for the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-17. What do the setting (Galilee, mountain) and the disciples' mixed response (worship, doubt) reveal about their understanding and readiness for the mission?
4. Elaborate on the "Christological assertions" that bracket the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18, 20b). How do Jesus' "all authority" and "constant presence" provide the necessary foundation and empowerment for the universal discipleship mandate?
5. Discuss the nature of "making disciples" as presented in the Great Commission, including the specific actions involved (go, baptize, teach). How

does this mandate extend beyond the original disciples and have "cosmic implications" for a "new humanity"?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **A Priori Worldview Consideration:** A foundational belief or assumption about the world that is held prior to, and often shapes, empirical observation or evidence. In the context of the lecture, it refers to a predisposition that rules out supernatural events before examining the evidence for Jesus' resurrection.
- **Apocryphal Event:** In the context of the lecture, an event that signals or is associated with the end times, or a significant divine intervention often accompanied by supernatural signs. The earthquake at the tomb is described as portending such an event.
- **Apostolic Foundation for the Church:** The essential role of the apostles, particularly Peter and his fellow disciples, as the initial and authoritative leaders and teachers upon whom Jesus built his church. The resurrection is seen as critical for restoring them to this role after their desertion.
- **Christological Assertions:** Statements or claims about the nature, identity, and authority of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 28, these include Jesus having "all authority" and his promise of "constant presence."
- **Crucified Life:** An "oxymoron" taught by Jesus, referring to a life that is "dead to self-interest" and lived for others, embodying self-sacrifice rather than selfish pursuits.
- **Discipleship Mandate:** The core command given by Jesus in the Great Commission for his followers to "make disciples" of all nations. It encompasses going, baptizing, and teaching obedience to Jesus' commands.
- **End of the Age:** An eschatological term referring to the conclusion of the present world order, often associated with final judgment and the full establishment of God's kingdom. Jesus' presence is promised "until the end of the age."

- **Eschatological Promise:** A promise related to the "last things" or end times, particularly concerning the coming of God's kingdom and future judgment/rewards.
- **Emmanuel:** A Hebrew name meaning "God with us," used to describe Jesus in Matthew 1:23, signifying God's presence on earth through him. This theme bookends the Gospel of Matthew with Jesus' promise of presence in the Great Commission.
- **Great Commission:** Jesus' final command to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20, mandating them to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them to obey his commands.
- **Inclusio:** A literary device where a common theme, word, or phrase is used at the beginning and end of a text or section, forming "bookends" and highlighting the theme's significance throughout. The theme of Jesus' presence acts as an inclusio in Matthew.
- **Passion Narrative:** The part of the Gospels that describes Jesus' suffering, trial, and crucifixion. The resurrection is presented as the climax of Matthew's passion narrative.
- **Rectification of Wrongs:** The idea that all injustices and evils committed since the Fall will eventually be put right, with accountability and justice being served. The resurrection is seen as guaranteeing this final judgment.
- **Resurrection Hoax:** The fear or claim by Jewish leaders that Jesus' disciples would steal his body and falsely claim he had risen from the dead. This was the stated reason for securing the tomb with guards.
- **Sine Qua Non:** A Latin phrase meaning "without which not," indicating an indispensable and essential condition. The resurrection of Jesus is described as the sine qua non for several theological themes in Matthew.
- **Son of Man:** A significant title for Jesus, often associated with Daniel 7, where a figure is given universal and eternal dominion. In Matthew, Jesus' authority and mission are linked to this figure.

- **Triadic Formula:** The specific phrasing used for baptism in the Great Commission, invoking "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," distinguishing Christian baptism from other ritual washings.
- **Universal Lordship:** The concept that Jesus, through his resurrection and exaltation, has been given supreme authority and dominion over all nations and all people. This implies a "universal mission" to spread his message globally.

4) FAQs:

What is the central focus of Matthew 28:1-10 regarding Jesus' resurrection?

The central focus of Matthew 28:1-10 is the announcement, not the explanation, of Jesus' resurrection. It centers on the empty tomb, revealed by an angel who rolled away the stone, causing an earthquake. This event overwhelms the guards, causing them to faint, but for the faithful women, it signifies that Jesus is indeed the Messiah and they no longer need to mourn but must announce His resurrection to His disciples. The passage presents eight witnesses to the resurrection: the Father (implied agent), the earthquake, the glorious angel, the empty tomb, the faithful women, Jesus Himself, the guards who report to the priests, and ironically, the religious leaders whose conspiracy to deny it indirectly confirms its truth.

Why is the resurrection of Jesus considered the "heart of the Christian gospel" and "the heart of redemption itself"?

The resurrection of Jesus is foundational to Christian theology, extending beyond just the passion narrative. Without it, Jesus would be a deluded liar instead of an exalted Lord, His predictions of rising from the dead would be false, and He would only be worthy of pity, not faith. It is essential for salvation, as Jesus' mission to save His people from their sins would have ended in ignominy if He remained in the grave, rendering the blood of the new covenant shed in vain. The resurrection also provided the apostolic foundation for the church, turning the scattered disciples back into followers. Furthermore, it serves as the model for sacrificial living, completing the idea that suffering leads to glory. Without the

resurrection, there would be no rectification of wrongs done on earth, no final judgment, and Satan would "win." It is also crucial for the promise of the coming kingdom, as Jesus could not be exalted to His throne if He remained in the grave, and the rewards promised to His apostles and followers would be void. In essence, without the resurrection, "there would be nothing."

How do the Jewish leaders respond to the report of the guards, and what does this reveal about their character?

The Jewish leaders' response to the guards' report is to concoct a hoax and pay the guards to spread a false story—that the disciples stole Jesus' body while the guards slept. This reveals their intensifying guilt and their deliberate refusal to acknowledge the fact of Jesus' resurrection. They had previously accused Jesus of being a deceiver, but now they are the ones willfully deceiving people. Their minds were already set against Jesus, demonstrating their unwillingness to be persuaded even by undeniable evidence, echoing a past refusal to believe Moses and the prophets. Ironically, their very efforts to deny the resurrection become an indirect testimony to its truth.

What is the significance of Jesus meeting His disciples in Galilee for the Great Commission?

The meeting in Galilee for the Great Commission is significant for several reasons. As the disciples were native Galileans, it was a natural place for them to return after Passover. More importantly, Galilee had a previous association with Gentiles (Matthew 4:14-16), making it a fitting location for a mandate of mission to "all the nations." The meeting on a mountain also reminds the reader of significant previous events, such as the giving of the Torah from Mount Sinai and other mountain experiences in Matthew, lending authority and gravitas to the commission.

Despite their worship, what notable reaction do some disciples have when they first see Jesus in Galilee, and what does this indicate?

When the disciples first see Jesus in Galilee, while they worship Him, some also "doubted." The word translated as "doubted" can also mean "hesitated" or "wavered," and is linked to the theme of "little faith" as seen with Peter walking on water (Matthew 14:31). This surprising reaction indicates that even after the

resurrection, and despite their worship, some disciples still struggled with full belief or spontaneous, unwavering worship. The remedy for this doubt, as the text suggests, will be found in their growing realization of Jesus' power and presence.

What is the Great Commission, and what are its key components according to Matthew 28:18-20?

The Great Commission is the climax of Matthew's Gospel, a mandate for discipleship given by Jesus. It is "sandwiched" between two Christological assertions: Jesus' statement that He has been given "all authority" (28:18), and His promise to be with the disciples "all the days... until the end of the age" (28:20b). Based on Jesus' universal authority, the core responsibility of the disciples is to "make disciples of all the nations." This involves several key activities: "going" to the nations, "baptizing" them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (initiating them into the church), and "teaching" them to obey "all that Jesus commanded." This teaching involves not just conveying information but transforming lives into obedient behavior, drawing from Jesus' major discourses and interpretations of the law. The mission is universal, extending to both Gentiles and Jews.

How does the recurring word "all" in the Great Commission passage emphasize its themes?

The repetition of the word "all" in Matthew 28:18-20 powerfully emphasizes the universal and comprehensive nature of Jesus' authority, mission, and presence. Jesus has been given "all authority." Disciples are to be made of "all the nations." These new disciples are to be taught to obey "all that Jesus commanded." And finally, Jesus promises to be with His disciples "always," which literally means "all the days." This repetition highlights that Jesus' universal power and His perpetual presence provide the dynamic for the universal discipleship mandate, empowering the disciples to undertake the daunting task of reaching and teaching all humanity.

How does Matthew's Gospel, especially the Great Commission, present a theology of the kingdom and a new humanity?

Matthew's Gospel concludes with a theology of the kingdom that is both realized and unrealized. Jesus' resurrection and exaltation inaugurate the kingdom's presence more fully than His earthly ministry alone. However, the disciples are tasked with actively working towards the full manifestation of this kingdom on earth. The Great Commission also emphasizes making "true disciples" who genuinely obey Jesus, not just passive listeners. This mission extends to "all the nations," reflecting Matthew's earlier hints about Gentile openness to Jesus (e.g., Gentile women in His genealogy, the wise men, the Roman officer, the Canaanite woman, and even the Roman soldiers). By discipling people from all nations, a "new humanity" begins to form—a community of believers that transcends ethnic, social, and sexual divisions. This obedience to the mission mandate, therefore, acts as a byproduct that fulfills God's original creation mandate given to Adam and Eve, moving towards a "regeneration of the world itself" where God's will is finally done on earth as it is in heaven. The disciples are assured of Jesus' faithful "Immanuel" presence through the Spirit as they undertake this cosmic mission.