

All This I Will Give You, Part 3

God and Government

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Bible Text: Matthew 28:16-20; Daniel 7:9-14
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Our text is taken from Matthew 28:16-20.

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.’

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

May we pray.

Help me, Lord, to tie these things together in such a way that we, too, would worship him who was born of the virgin Mary and laid in a manger. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This is a fascinating passage of scripture, and you may think why are we at Christmas time preaching about the Great Commission that comes at the very end of the gospel of Matthew? Well, there are several reasons.

First of all, I’m still on the theme “God and Government,” and we will explore that a bit further today.

Secondly, I told you I would preach on this text two weeks ago when I was with you.

Thirdly, if you look at it and analyze it, it’s all about the birth of Jesus woven into it where he says, “Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age.”

That takes us back to the birth of Christ in the very first chapter of the gospel of Matthew because his name would be Immanuel (Matthew 1:23), “With us, God” (Ἐμμανουήλ, *cf.* Isaiah 7:14; 8:8 (לֵאמֹר אֵמָנּוּ)).

So, in the birth of Jesus at the very beginning of this gospel, as at the very end of this gospel, we’re reminded of the virgin birth of Christ, that a virgin would conceive and bear a son and would call his name “God with us.” And so “God with us” at the birth of Christ is “God with us” just before he ascends to heaven.

Now, just a note: Jesus does not ascend to heaven right after the last verse of Matthew because this takes place in the Galilee (Matthew 28:10, 16), in the northern part where Jesus did most of his work. His ascension to heaven took place near Bethany, just outside of Jerusalem; that’s when, as Acts 1 tells us, that when he blessed them, he was taken up to heaven and the clouds covered him, and the disciples were told by the angels, “This same Jesus whom you’ve seen shall so come in like manner as you’ve seen him go—The clouds of heaven—in the clouds of heaven.” (Acts 1:9-11)

Now, there’s something else I think that’s important to say here and that’s this, that in the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus, it’s very difficult to put it all together (Just as it is when different witnesses testify. And even though they are telling the truth, their accounts differ slightly because of different perspectives). If you’ve ever been on a jury, and I was never allowed to get on a jury because there are three people that no lawyer wants in a jury room: a doctor, a lawyer, and a preacher, because those three professions can take over a jury when the doors are closed. (But I once served on a Grand Jury and was foreman of it and, boy, did I learn about Louisiana politics.)

Anyhow, there are things that we should make note of here, and that’s this, that in the resurrection narratives the women go, and they see that the tomb is empty, they go to report it. Peter and John run and see that the tomb is empty and later the women encounter Jesus, and they grab his feet (Matthew 28:9), and in particular Mary Magdalene is singled out there (John 20:16-17), but it’s more than Mary. And then we discover that when Jesus goes into the Galilee, where he told them he would meet them on a mountain, evidently that’s the place that more than 500 believers were gathered on that one occasion according to 1 Corinthians 15:6—more than 500 brothers at once. And so, we have the original 11, we have meeting in the Galilee, and we have this Great Commission given in Galilee.

Now, there are another couple of things I'd like to point out and notice in verse 19 he says, "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."

Now, some people have made a big deal that the name of the Father is Jesus, and the name of the Son is Jesus, and the name of the Holy Spirit is Jesus. **That is not true.** Anyone who tells you that the name of the Father is Jesus is simply ignorant or being disingenuous.

The name of God, the name he has always had, his personal name is Yahweh (YHWH, יהוה), and Jesus' name is a compound name meaning "Yahweh is salvation." It's identical to the name Joshua in the Old Testament: "The LORD is salvation" (Ἰησοῦς, יהושע, יְהוָה שׁוּעַ). And that's what Joseph was instructed to name this boy, "You will name him Jesus" (Matthew 1:21, cf. Luke 1:31, where Mary is also instructed to name him Jesus).

Why name him Jesus? Because "He will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). So, when we baptize someone in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we are not baptizing them in the name of Jesus, nor are these three names here titles, as if the one person has three different roles. He does, but we're baptizing them in the **name** of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Now, one interesting passage of scripture that I discovered, if you want to turn back to the book of Ruth, and we see something in verse 2. This is the story of a man from the tribe of Judah and his wife Naomi, and so notice verse 2. "The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and,"—if you like to mark a Bible, scratch the "s" off of the word "names" because it says "the **name** of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion."

The name. That's what it says in both the Hebrew scriptures (וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי-בָנָיו (מְהֵלֹן וְכִלְיוֹן)), it's the single word "name," and also in the Greek translation (καὶ ὄνομα τοῖς δυσὶν υἱοῖς αὐτοῦ Μααλων καὶ Χελαιων), and so what we discover here is his sons name were Mahlon and Kilion. That's interesting, isn't it?

So, we could say, using Hebrew grammar and Greek grammar, that baptizing them in the **names** of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that's just a little aside that's important. Why is that important?

It's important because there are cults, and I use that word very carefully, there are cults that deny the Trinity, and those cults that deny the Trinity tell

you that unless you are put underneath the water and the words “in the name of Jesus” are said over you, you’re going to go to hell.

Now, anybody that teaches that is a cult teacher. So, you’ve got to remember this: Why is it, then, that we read in the New Testament sometimes people were baptized in the name of Jesus, sometimes in the name of Christ Jesus, sometimes in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? (Acts 2:38; 8:16; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27)

Those are descriptive things, but what did Jesus himself explicitly teach us to say? That we are to baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Now you say, “Well, how did we get there?” Well, we got there because the gospel of Matthew was not written before the book of Acts. In other words, Matthew’s gospel is written after a period of time. It was written during the first century by a man who was one of the original apostles of Christ, and he wrote exactly what Jesus commanded. Why didn’t they do that?

Well, they didn’t do everything exactly the way Jesus said and part of that is that there’s no hard and fast rule in the New Testament about how to do things.

Are you validly baptized if you’re baptized in the name of Jesus? Sure. Christ Jesus? Sure. The Lord Jesus Christ? Sure. And in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Sure. Absolutely. That’s explicitly what Jesus taught, and we need to understand **there’s no New Testament book of Leviticus.**

That’s why when we have the Lord’s Supper in a few minutes, it doesn’t make any difference if I say as I lift the cup, “This cup is my blood of the new covenant,” as Matthew and Mark record it (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24), or if I say, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood,” as Paul has it and as Luke has it (1 Corinthians 11:25; Luke 22:20). Which is right?

You know, nowhere in the New Testament are people warned (about baptism), “You know, if you do this thing in the wrong way, you’re going to die.” But when it comes to the Lord’s Supper people are warned to examine themselves lest they become sick because of unconfessed sin, because of a rebellious heart (1 Corinthians 11:27-30). So, the Lord’s Supper, in one way, is a more serious sealing ordinance, or sacrament, than is baptism because we’re warned, “Examine yourself to be sure that your heart’s right with the Lord. Don’t hold onto sin and bitterness and take the Lord’s Supper because

you can get sick and some people have even died,” says Paul (1 Corinthians 11:30).

So, again, what I want us to understand is the New Testament doesn't give us a book of worship. The Old Testament does: It's Leviticus; it's all spelled out. So those things are very important as we consider it, because occasionally people will raise that issue and say, “Well, have you been baptized in Jesus' name? Have you spoken in tongues? If you haven't been baptized in Jesus' name, and you haven't spoken in tongues, then I'm sorry, friend, you're going to hell.” And people who tell you that are sincere and sincerely wrong.

Now, I wanted to notice something else here because this is very critical: Some of them doubted. Why did they doubt? Because they saw Jesus from a distance, and there's something about Jesus' resurrection that's very significant: Jesus didn't have to have the stone rolled away to exit the tomb. Why? Because when Jesus' body was raised from the dead, it was transformed and transfigured; He could do things with his physical body you and I cannot do.

It was a physical body. You remember how he proved it to them? He said, “Do you have anything here to eat?” (Luke 24:41-43) And they gave him some bread, they gave him some fish. He ate the fish. He ate the bread. So, his physical body was a physical body. It had bones and meat and had blood just like your body has bones and meat and blood, but it was transformed, and when you and I experience the resurrection from the dead, we're going to have a body just like Jesus. We'll be able to go right out of here through those walls. We'll be able to move instantly as Jesus did, and yet we'll still have a physical body.

I really understand that, don't you? No, I'm being sarcastic. I don't understand **how** that can be. I know **that** it can be. Just as I do not understand **how** God can be one God, and yet eternally exists in three persons. I don't understand **how** that can be, I underneath **that** it can be, **because the Bible teaches it.**

Nor can I figure out how Jesus can be really and truly God—100% God and yet 100% human in one person and not adding up to 200% but only 100%. I don't understand it, but I accept it in faith **because the Bible teaches it.** I don't know **how**, but I know **that** Jesus is true God and true man.

Now, we notice something else: That they doubted him because there was something about the risen Christ that made them wonder, “Who is this?”—because his body was so transfigured. That's why the two disciples on the

road to Emmaus were talking with him and while he talked with them, they said, “Our hearts burned within us” (Luke 24:32). But it was only when they went in the house with him, and he broke the Lord’s Supper, broke the bread and gave it to them, that—and that alone is when they recognized Jesus (Luke 24:31, 35). So, Jesus was changed remarkably in his resurrection, but he didn’t look exactly the way that he had looked when he walked the earth before he died.

Now, I want you to notice something else here, and that’s why we’re on this text, notice the red letter and, of course, I’m a person who believes that the entirety of the Bible should be in red letters, but look at verse 18. “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’”

Now, I want you to hold your hand there and turn to the book of Daniel, Daniel 7. This is what Jesus is alluding to here. Daniel 7, that is on page 1,384 and listen to what he sees, Daniel sees in a vision. Look at verse 9, it’s very important.

9 As I looked, ‘thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. [That’s God the Father.] His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

And now notice what we have here. We have here in verse 13,

13 ‘In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, (the ultimate man, the true human) coming with the clouds of heaven. (Do you recognize this, coming with the clouds of heaven?) He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

Look at verse 14 because this is exactly what we’re reading in Matthew 28.

14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Hold your hand there and go to the gospel of Luke and notice when Jesus is quizzed by the high priest in the gospel of Luke, what he says and the response of the high priest.

Luke 22 and that's page 1,639, beginning at verse 66. Luke 22:66, "At daybreak," this is after Jesus has been arrested, "the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them." If you are the Messiah, 'If you are the Christ,' they said, 'tell us.'"

Now, notice what Jesus answers. It's profound.

"Jesus answered, 'If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer.'"

Now look at verse 69. Where is this taken from? You know where this is taken from, it's taken from Daniel 7:

"But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.'

They all asked, 'Are you then the Son of God?'" And Jesus said, "'You are right in saying I am.' Then they said, 'Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.'"

So, what we have in the book of Daniel is fulfilled at Jesus' ascension to the right hand of the Father and notice again, look at verse 14 of Daniel 7:

"He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

That takes us again back to the end of the gospel of Matthew, and this is what Jesus is saying, Jesus is saying that he is the Son of God, that he is also the Son of man of Daniel, and he's saying that he became something in his resurrection he had never been before. What was it that I pointed out two weeks ago based on Romans 1? Jesus was declared to be, not the Son of God by his resurrection, but **the Son of God with power**, with authority—the Son of God with power, the Son of God with authority, by his resurrection from the dead.

So, here's something we need to notice about Jesus, three things.

First, He always has been the Son of God, that is, very God of very God, begotten not made (John 1:1-3, 14). Jesus has always been God. He has always been the Son of God. That's the first thing.

But, secondly, in his conception in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary, we see three actors.

First of all, we see God the Father who sends his Son to become incarnate in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary.

Secondly, we see the Lord Jesus Christ as God entering into the womb of the blessed virgin Mary and being joined to her.

And thirdly, we see the Holy Spirit who takes a single ovum, a single egg, of Mary, and just as you sometimes see in nature in an act of parthenogenesis, he causes that single egg, that single ovum of Mary to become a real and true human being without the need for a human male to be involved.

And so, Jesus' substance, his material substance, his body, if you will, including his entire human nature is taken entirely from the substance of Mary who by a miracle of the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, has created that single egg to be the physical human nature of Jesus. So, you see all three persons in his conception.

You see all three persons in his baptism, don't you? The Father speaks from heaven, "This is my Son." The Holy Spirit comes down from the Father to the Son and alights on him, so you see the Holy Spirit. And, of course, you see Jesus (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-33).

And that's why this gospel ends as it does with the Triune God very much acting.

And we see something else here, what we see here is, this Great Commission is the beginning of the millennium. This Great Commission is the beginning of the millennium.

The millennium begins with the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ who ascends and sits at the right hand of the Father and from there he sends the Holy Spirit who 10 days after Jesus ascended to heaven comes on the church.

The millennium, we'll look at that another time—probably opened a can of worms prematurely, but that's okay, we'll gather them back in later on in a couple of months—but that is about the church, and it's about the extension of the authority of Christ.

The church age is the age of conquest of all nations. That's what we have to remember here, that Jesus has been given all authority, all power, and so what happens is by his resurrection from the dead he is set apart, he is declared to be **Son of God with power, Son of God with authority**. That's

why he can say, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). He is something now that he was not before his death and resurrection. He’s now the Son of God with power. He’s now the Son of God with authority. He is now the one who approaches the Ancient of Days and receives all that power and authority in Daniel 7.

And notice because of that our commission. Our commission is to go to all the nations and, you know, it’s amazing as you look at nations that nations sometimes are converted.

That doesn’t mean that every single solitary soul in a particular nation becomes a Christian. Not at all.

But what it does mean is that nations are influenced by the power of the Holy Spirit converting individuals to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, according to Psalm 110 is the day of Christ’s power. Now he sends forth his army (Psalm 110:2-3).

Who is his army? You’re his army. I’m part of his army. The whole church of Jesus Christ is part of his army, but we don’t conquer by sword and spear, we conquer by sharing our testimony in Christ and by prayer. And as we speak the gospel to people, they’re won to Christ. And this is the answer to Christianity in politics.

It is an act of a fool for a minority of Christians to try to impose Christian standards on heathen people. How can you influence politics? Win people to Jesus, because when enough people are won to Jesus the politics change, and people voluntarily do things.

I look at the history of the world. I look at Great Britain, a hollow shell of what it once was.

Why did God raise up Britain? Because Britain embraced the gospel in a very powerful way, and Britain was determined to share that gospel throughout the world. The great missionary effort of the 1800’s came out of England. You think about people like William Carey and others, David Livingstone, and how they shared the gospel, how people were won to Christ.

But when Britain began to turn aside from Christ, what did he do? He, in essence, said, “Okay, you’ve had it.”

Now I look at the United States and the United States began to take Great Britain’s place. We began to send missionaries all over, all over the world. Do you know what city in the world at one time had more Presbyterians in it

than any city in the entire world, including anywhere in Scotland? What city was that? Anyone got a guess?

[unintelligible]

That's right. North Korea, Pyongyang—Pyongyang where the cult of the Kim family is set up to worship the Kim dynasty—that was the most Presbyterian city in the entire world—more Presbyterians in Pyongyang than anywhere else.

Satan hates the church. Satan hates you, and he has a terrible plan for your life. You know, that's kind of a play on "The Four Spiritual Laws." Satan hates you, and he has a terrible plan for your life. He wants to keep you from being a vibrant, witnessing Christian.

If you've got to witness with pain in your back, just keep on praising God.

If your smile is crooked, just keep on praising God, because the inner glow of knowing and loving the Lord Jesus Christ and maintaining a cheerful spirit, "come wind, come weather," that is the key, that's the secret.

So, God has called you. He has called Trinity Evangelical Presbyterian Church to share the gospel, because now is the day of opportunity (2 Corinthians 6:2). God has set before us an open door (Revelation 3:8). What are we doing?

The most important thing you can do is to pray. And after that the most important thing you can do is go and share.

Do you have to go to a foreign country to share? Do you have to be like the Baptist leader Lottie Moon, whom God used to win so many people to Christ in China?

Do you have to be like Hudson Taylor or others? No.

Do you know what? I'll guarantee you the church failed to reach the Muslim world, and now the Muslim world is serving you gas. Think about it.

Have you ever thought about witnessing to the guy that owns the gas station? You know, Muslims are not in this country someone to be afraid of.

If you show them respect, they'll show you respect. You can share your faith in Christ. Some will accept it. Some will reject it. But nobody is going to slit your throat in this country, at this time.

Share your faith. Why?

Because “We’ve a story to tell to the nations,” and the birth of Christ, as with his ascension, is marking this great era that will come to an end only when God has said, “The nations have been won to me.”

May we pray.

Lord, we pray that you would bless us with an awareness of the gospel that today is the day when Christ has been seated at the right hand of the Father, that today is the day when Christ, who was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, who was baptized with the work of the Father and the work of the Spirit on him, and who commissions us to go and put the mark of God's authority and ownership on everyone, compelling them to repent and believe the gospel.

Lord, we thank you that the gospel isn't about how we're good people but, Lord, even though we're bad people, it's about the Lord Jesus who loved us and gave himself for us. So now, Lord, as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we pray that you would bless us as we take of these elements that we would remember ourselves, that this, too, as in our baptism, is a pledge of being owned by you as your servants, as your emissaries, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.