

## 2115 - The GREAT COMMISSION - Mat 28:16-20

PRELIMS. These are famous verses - known in theology as **The Great Commission!** No more important commission has ever been given to men. The **future** of the world **depends** on the **obedience** of the Church to these words of Jesus. If the gospel does not go out to the world, the world will never be what it was meant to be, and would never fulfil its true purpose (and it would be a **defeat** of God's rule/dominion over His creation)! All men will agree that something **is radically wrong** with the world. As Xns, we believe that the fulfilment of the Great Commission is the **only answer** to **all** the ills of this sinful world. We also believe that God, the Creator, has **not left** us to our own devices! He has given us an **infallible rule** to direct us - the **Holy Scriptures!**

### **AN AMAZING STATEMENT**

It is amazing that the **eleven** apostles, **having already seen** the resurrected Jesus, on 2 or 3 occasions, and seeing Him this time in Galilee, that **some doubted!**[17] It shows the **power** of **unbelief** in the human heart! **Despite** the **testimony** of the **eyes** (which is usually taken for granted), and the testimony of their previous **experiences** in even handling the risen Saviour (eg, Thomas), some doubted!

I think it is true that **every** time people saw Jesus **after** the resurrection, they did **not recognise** Him! Mary thought He was the **gardener**; disciples did not recognise the **Stranger** on the shore; etc! We must remember the disciples were going through a very traumatic time in their minds/emotions/faith, and at such times people **do question reality!** This was their biggest **shock/disappointment!** Gr [18]='to come to' as in NIV *Then Jesus came to them and said...* They did not recognise Him **at a distance**, but after meeting Him, **none** ever questioned His resurrection!**APP** No excuse for us today, with the **added testimony** of **empirical/scientific evidence** + years and years of private testimonies and conversions over the centuries!

Notice how they greeted the Saviour! *they worshipped Him!*[17] That was the **immediate** response of most of them. They did that often! We read *they fell down before Him* [Mar 3:11, 5:33; Luke

8:28]! **APP** Friends, they saw Jesus Christ as **GOD!** I think it is **sad** that in so many churches when the worship starts, people do **not show** any **special** reverence! They come into God's presence just the same as they come into anyone else! No bowing, no raising of the hands, nothing! In the **Legal world**, they **bow** when the Judge comes in! There is **protocol** when we stand before the **Queen!** So should X!

## **A FEW THINGS ABOUT the GREAT COMMISSION**

Many people can repeat the Great Commission with **gusto!** But not many know the **basis** or the **grounds** upon which the whole commission is based *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me*[18] It was **that** which gave the apostles such **confidence** in their message. The message had authority - **from the Risen Christ!!**

It was the **Eleven Apostles**, **not** ordinary disciples, but the ones who had been with Jesus for 3 years and learned from Him, who were given this command. Now Jesus **had already** given them **authority** (same word exousia), to do wonderful things in His name. *And He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction* [Mat 10:1]! They had that **special ministry of** performing wonderful works **to attest** the **authority** they had to speak in X's name! Their miracles **confirmed** their authority from Christ!

On that previous occasion, Jesus gave the Apostles something else - He gave them **direction!** He **specified exactly where** they were to go - and where they were **NOT** to go! *Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter **no town** of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel* [10:5,6]! **Why** should they not go **everywhere?** Why, did Jesus **specify** one place and **not** another? (1) Because it is **God's plan**, not their's, and (2) He **knows** where His chosen people are? But **NOW**, the authority Christ was giving them was **TO GO to the GENTILES** to all the world - because His chosen people are among all nations! **APP** Encouraging for us as we have the gospel!

God **calls** preachers to certain places because **God** has His people **there!** That is **why** someone is called to a certain place to minister! That is the **theology** behind a ministers' call to a congregation!! Listen to Paul after stating that everyone who calls on the name of

the Lord will be saved. (Ie, whoever **worships** Him as Lord in truth)  
This is what Paul adds after saying that: *And how are they to **believe** in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?...So **faith** comes from **hearing**, and hearing through the **Word of Christ** [Rom 10:13-17]* And what is that 'Word of Christ'? Ans: The gospel is that Christ died for our sins. *I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures [1C15:3]*

It is by hearing/believing **this authoritative message** that people are saved. This is the authoritative message: '**Christ has accomplished salvation**'! It is important for us to remember that **salvation belongs to X**, He has it, **not us**, not the Church! Jesus has salvation, salvation it is **bound-up** in Him, **alone**! That is why we must be **united** to X!

We **ambassadors** go out with **THIS** message, that Christ has done it all, He **started** and **finished** it, He is the **author and finisher of our faith** - therefore 'Come to Christ'. *Come to **Me** all you who are heavy laden and **I** will **give** you rest. Take My yoke and learn from Me for I am gentle and lowly...you will find rest for your souls*

There **IS no message** to proclaim apart from what Jesus Christ **has done**! Without X's life, death and resurrection, there **IS no gospel** to preach! The Church has **authority** from the **Risen Christ** to proclaim **this** message - and **no other** message. Remember X's words on the Cross - *it is **finished*** ? What was finished? All that was necessary for saving people. All that **God specified that was necessary** for saving people. Christ had to satisfy whatever God the Judge said was **justice** for the sins of mankind against Him! \*I'll never forget hearing a **Judge say in Court** to the **jury**, 'You must accept **what I say** the Law is. You cannot decide yourselves what the Law is'! You cannot disagree with what the Law says is wrong! So, we cannot say what sin deserves - only God can do that!! X **satisfied every requirement and demand** God asked for in payment for sin.

So, it is not to Church you need to come. It is not to the minister you need to come. You need to come to Jesus Christ Himself. You as an individual, need to get down on your knees before God! Sincerely confess your sins. And **humbly ask, not for justice but for mercy**!

And so, **Christ** sends out preachers. It is only X that has the **authority** to do so! But Christ **has passed on** to the Church the **responsibility of attesting** who has this call!! Remember **Paul** *He who set me apart before I was born...in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles* [Gal 1:15,16], and then I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas & when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be **pillars**, **perceived** the grace that was **given** to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should **go to the Gentiles** [Gal 2:1-9]. Thus, Presbyterians have a Court called a Presbytery, who **judge** if a person really has a call from God, or is it simply a person's own desire to preach without a call from God! Just as we in APC have **Jodo** who claimed to have this call, and met the Presbytery, who **attested** that he had! **All students** for the ministry have to have this examination by the Presbytery a Presbytery who have the '**passed-on authority of Christ to judge**' if a person has this call or not. A great responsibility for the Church!

That is what X was referring to when He said to the Apostles *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven* [16:19]! \*That authority to **confirm a call**, has **strengthened many preachers** down through the centuries, in times of **doubt** and **discouragement**. They can assure themselves and say, 'it was not just an idea I had, or a passing phase,' for the Presbytery of other 'called servants of God' **agreed** my call was a genuine call from God to preach the **glorious gospel!**

People today do not mind **you** believing in a **privatised/personal** Saviour - that does **not provoke** them. It is the **public proclamation** that Jesus Christ is **Lord of all** that is objectionable! It is the public proclamation that He **commands all men everywhere to repent** that upsets our generation - they say that is **arrogant/intolerant!** But it is **true!** Jesus: **upon this rock** (*Thou art Christ the Son of the living God*) *I will build My Church*. The Church has **X's authority!** **Secular humanism, militant Islam, moral relativism**, do **not** have the '**authority**' the Church has - nor the **power** to change hearts! The **Holy Spirit** of Christ **alone** can do that! And may He do it to each of us if He has not done it already.