

“BELIEVE!”

Matthew Chapter 28

> **BELIEVE!** - To place one's trust in God's truth; one who takes God at His word and trusts in Him for salvation. A belief that saves is one that rests in the finished work of Christ; it trusts God alone for salvation (John 3:16). Believers are those who have trusted God with their will as well as their mind (Rom 1:16; 3:22; 1 Thess 1:7). Some of the classic New Testament references dealing with belief, or faith, are John 3:16,36; Acts 16:31; Rom 3:21-5:1; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-10; and 1 John 5:1.

I) BELIEVE IN THE “RESURRECTION” OF JESUS CHRIST! (v1-15)

- **Jesus predicted His death and resurrection - Matt 12:40** - *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* **Matt 16:21** - *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.* **Matt 17:22-23** - *Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up."* **Matt 20:17-19** - *Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."* (Let's read **Matthew Chapter 28:1-8**.)

(v1-8) The order of events on the resurrection morning were as follows: In the early morning, the women went to the tomb of Jesus to anoint His body, even though they did not know how they could get into the tomb (Mk. 16:2-3). There were the three, Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James, Mk. 16:1; Lk. 24:10), and Salome, followed by other women who had accompanied Jesus from Galilee (Lk. 23:55—24:1). The three women found the stone had been removed by an angel (Mt. 28:2). Mary Magdalene hurried to tell Peter and John, who ran toward the tomb (Jn. 20:2-4). Meanwhile, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and then the other women arrived at the tomb, entered it and saw angels who assured them Jesus had risen. They ran from the tomb in fear and joy to inform His disciples (Mt. 28:8). Peter and John arrived at the tomb, entered, observed, and left (Jn. 20:4-10). Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb, stood weeping, and Jesus revealed Himself to her (Jn. 20:11-18). As the other women were on their way to tell His disciples, Jesus appeared to them (Mt. 28:9-10).

(v9-10) - Notice three key words of Jesus in verses 9 and 10: (1) “Rejoice!” (2) “Don’t be afraid!” (3) “Go and tell!” Dr. Luke writes in Acts ch. 1 that we have many **“infallible proofs”** to the resurrection of Christ! (Acts 1:1-3 - *The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*) **Let’s look at these “infallible proofs” according to the eyewitnesses:** (1) After His resurrection he appeared first to Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:11-18); (2) Jesus appeared to the women returning from the tomb (Mt. 28:5-10); (3) Jesus appeared to Peter (Lk. 24:34); (4) Jesus appeared to His disciples on the Emmaus road (**Lk. 24:13-48**); (5) Jesus appeared to the apostles, Thomas not present (24:36-43); (6) Jesus appeared again to His disciples with Thomas present (**Jn. 20:24-29**); (7) Jesus appeared to the seven by the Sea of Tiberias (Jn. 21:1-23); (8) Jesus appeared to over five hundred brethren (1 Cor. 15:6); (9) Jesus appeared to James (1 Cor. 15:7); (10) Jesus appeared again to the eleven apostles (Mt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:3-12); (11) Jesus appeared to Stephen, the first martyr (Acts 7:55); (12) Jesus appeared to Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3-6). Many of these eyewitnesses died martyrs’ deaths because they preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These lives went from fear to unlimited courage. They **prayed and witnessed with great power (Acts 4:23-33)** They **found power in persecution and rejoiced (Acts 5:40-42)**. The early **Christians went everywhere with the word of the Resurrection in power (Acts 8:1-4; Acts 17:18-32; 23:6-8; 24:15-21)**! They chose death, with faith in the resurrected Christ, rather than to deny that faith and be delivered (**Heb. 11:35**).

(v11-15) - The corrupt religious leaders, soldiers, and all those that deny the resurrection of the Son of God will one day find themselves guilty before God. They continually deny the **infallible proofs** of God's Word, His Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, those that believe with all their heart will one day find themselves in the glory of the resurrection of Christ! (Listen to one commentator's rebuttal to this clever deception of the corrupt religious leaders.)

Jesus promised that He would die for our sins, and He did! Jesus promised that He would rise again on the third day, and He did! Jesus promised that He would forgive our sins, fill us with the Holy Spirit and change our lives, and He has! Jesus promised that He will come again and receive us unto Himself whether through death or the rapture of the church, and He will! **Remember He has promised in John 14:1-3** - *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."* **Phil 3:20-21** *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.* **Let's go out in a blaze of GLORY! Let's read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58.**

II) BELIEVE IN THE "GREAT COMMISSION" OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST! (v16-20)

(v16-17) The word *worship* in Greek is *proskuneo* (pros-koo-neh'-o); **it is used of an act of homage or reverence to God or to Christ, meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand; to fawn or crouch to, to prostrate oneself in homage; do reverence to, adore.** Jesus said in John 4:23-24 - *"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* The English word *worship* comes from the Old English word **worthship**, a word which denotes the worthiness of the one receiving the special honor or devotion. When we're in heaven, after the rapture of the church, we'll be worshipping Jesus - Rev 5:11-12 - *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"* Worship practiced becomes a witness proclaimed!

(v18) **Listen to what Barnes writes in regards to Christ power or authority (depending on translation)** - "The "Son of God," as "Creator," had an original right to all things, to control them and dispose of them. (See John 1:3; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:8.) But the universe is put under him more particularly as Mediator, that he might redeem his people; that he might gather a church; that he might defend his chosen; that he might subdue all their enemies, and bring them off conquerors and more than conquerors, Eph 1:20-23; 1 Cor 15:25-27; John 5:22-23; Phil 2:6-11. It is in reference to THIS, doubtless, that he speaks here POWER or AUTHORITY committed to him over all things, that he might redeem, defend, and save the church purchased with his own blood. His mediatorial government extends, therefore, over the material world, over angels, over devils, over wicked men, and over his own people."

(v19) **When people are saved they need to be BAPTIZED.** There are two sacraments the church is commanded to practice, **BAPTISM and COMMUNION.** *Baptism* is a public testimony of the inward change, which has already occurred in the believer's life. *It serves as a public identification of the person with Jesus Christ,* and thus also as a public testimony of the change that has occurred. (Baptism does not save, Paul expounds on this in 1 Cor. 1:10-18.)

- In regards to "**GO!**" Porter Barrington, an evangelist writes - "Soul winners are made, not born. Therefore to be an effective witness, **you must be taught, trained, and motivated by the power of the Holy Spirit.**" Statistics tell us that 95% of all Christians have never lead another person to Jesus Christ. **Listen to Jesus- Matt 4:18-20-** *And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will **make** you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. **Notice in verse 19 we are told to go and witness the gospel to and make disciples of ALL THE NATIONS!** A DISCIPLE is a student, **LEARNER,** or pupil. In the Bible the word is used most often to refer to a follower of Jesus.*

Let' GO AND WITNESS! Here's seven practical steps on how to share your faith-

#1- Share your personal experience of salvation. Don't give your life story. It should not take more than a few minutes to tell how the Lord Jesus Christ saved you.

#2- Tell them that God LOVES them according to John 3:16-17- *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

#3- Inform the individual that we are all sinners according to Rom 3:23- *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (They may tell you that they're a good person, but you must ask them if they are holy, for God is holy & perfect. Various sins practiced by many are listed in John 3:18-21; 1Cor. 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8). The sin that keeps people out of heaven and headed to hell is their rejection of Jesus Christ to the point of death. Remember, no sin is greater than God's forgiveness.

#4- Explain to them about the wages of sin & the gift of God- Rom 6:23- *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Sin produces spiritual and physical death, whereas abundant and eternal life comes through Jesus Christ!

#5- Invite them to become "BORN AGAIN!"- John 3:1-8, 36.

#6- Encourage them to say the sinner's prayer – In Rom 10:9-10 it says - *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* **Sample prayer of salvation (have them repeat after you):** "Dear Jesus, please forgive me for all of my sins. I confess to you that I'm a sinner and I want you Jesus to be my Lord and Savior, please fill me with your Holy Spirit so I can be born again. Help me to follow you all the days of my life. Thank you Father for loving me, and thank you Jesus for saving me. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

#7- Bless their new life in Christ with these scriptures: 2 Cor 5:17- *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* **Rom 5:1-2-** *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* **Rom 8:1-** *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.* **Eph 2:8-10-** *For by GRACE you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

(v20) General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, said that he was worried about the church losing the message of the true gospel. He warns the church regarding four areas of compromise: **(1) Christianity without Christ (2) Forgiveness without repentance (3) Salvation without regeneration (4) Heaven without Hell.**

Over forty times in the Book of Acts we are told that the disciples *taught or preached the Word of God*. As Christians we're encouraged, "*as newborn babes, DESIRE the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*" (1 Peter 2:2-3). In 2 Peter 3:18 we are called to "*GROW in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" In 2 Timothy 2:15 we're exhorted to "*STUDY to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

When it's all said and done and we enter heaven may we hear the glorious words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the JOY of your lord.*" (Matt 25:21)