

Some Thoughts on the Great Commission
Sunday, June, 2020
Matthew 28:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Introduction: mission statements

I recently read part of an article about mission statements, popular with churches and businesses alike. It turns out that some companies haven't done a great job with their mission statements. For example, there's McDonald's.

"McDonald's brand mission is to be our customers' favorite place and way to eat and drink," begins McDonald's mission statement. That's fine, but then it continues: "Our worldwide operations are aligned around a global strategy called the Plan to Win, which center on an exceptional customer experience--People, Products, Place, Price and Promotion." This is vague and the subject and verb disagrees. If the subject is "global strategy" is the subject then the verb should be "centers" as opposed to "center". For churches, I believe the task of the mission statement has, to a large extent, already been articulated by Jesus Himself. Any mission statement for an individual congregation should be a re-statement or application of the mission statement for all churches. I'd like to make a few comments on the Great Commission today, specifically on one word.

Set the stage: On a Mountain in Galilee

Jesus meets, after His Resurrection on a mountain somewhere in Galilee. He arranged this before His death, but the Gospel writers never noted the location, so we are left to speculate. Many scholars believe that this even is mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, and that there were as many as 500 people there, not just the remaining 11 disciples. Verse seventeen says that when they saw Him they worshipped, but some doubted. Stunning, isn't it; that some doubted after all this.

All authority is give to Jesus

Mission not based on need.

The key verse for today is verse 18: And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Everything that He said after that his this statement as its base, that He has all authority in heaven and on earth. It's notable that the Great Commission is not based on need; that people need to know about Jesus so we should make disciples. People do need to know, but that is not the impetus, it is that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. But what did He mean by "authority"? What kind of authority does He really exercise if the world is this crazy?

He has authority over all creation for all time: Daniel 7:13-14 "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is a everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

He has authority to establish the permanent, true one-world government that will overthrow all others before it. We read Isaiah 9:6-7 almost every Christmas. Let's take another look at it: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

He has authority to give eternal life: John 17:2 ...as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

He has authority over the church, an institution not created by people: Ephesians 1:22 "and He put all things under His feet, and give Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

These are historic, and dangerous times, and I propose the death of our anxiety is found in the comfort of His authority. A.T. Robertson described the scene on that mountain brilliantly when he wrote "It is the [most sublime] of all spectacles to see the Risen Christ without money or army or state charging this band of five hundred men and women with world conquest and bringing them to believe it possible and to undertake it with serious passion and power." Christianity is the largest religion in the world and people all over the world will partake Communion this month, finding in it the same sacred meaning as we do. The authority of Jesus sustains the church, sustains our destiny, sustains the ongoing process and ultimate fulfillment of the Great Commission, and no amount of upheaval can change that. We can worship with confidence, for He has all authority.

