



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Matthew 28:16-20

(16) Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. (17) When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. (18) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

### Acts 1:4-8

(4) And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' *He said*, 'you have heard from Me; (5) for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'" (6) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. (8) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'"

*New King James Version*

By stating this as He did, He was admonishing the apostles not to become fixated on the fulfillment of prophecies but to remain focused on preaching [the gospel](#). For that end, He will give them power. He wanted them to concentrate on the job at hand. The Great Commission, though, is now not only global geographically, but in terms of time, it is also totally open-ended. Moreover, no God-given, intermediate goals are in sight. The church today

must take its cue from the way [Jesus Christ](#) handled the situation with the [first-century church](#).

What began at this critical time in history was that God's global re-educational institution—the church, the [Israel of God](#) ([Galatians 6:16](#))—was taking its first steps in teaching *everyone* worldwide how they should live. The church Jesus founded was beginning to preach the gospel from this starting point in both place and time, an activity that will eventually reach every person who has ever lived. In other words, beginning then, the church became the focal point of God's reeducation program.

Jesus was transitioning His work from what was merely an Old Covenant, Israelite, religious organization—of interest to relatively few outside Israel—to an educational organization that in terms of time will span thousands of years and become of intense interest to everybody. In directing the apostles in this way, Christ wanted His church to inaugurate this work yet keep it contained within the parameters He and the Father set as the church progressively developed at the speed it could handle effectively.

It may be helpful to remember that the earliest brethren in the church had to face their public responsibilities to Jesus without the help of what is now roughly one-third of the Bible—the New Testament. Scholars posit that the gospel of Mark was written first, followed by Matthew, Luke, and John. The earliest possible date even for Mark appears to be around AD 40, but some place it as late as AD 65.

In addition, it appears that I Thessalonians was the first of the epistles circulated within the church, but the apostle Paul did not write it until approximately AD 50. How many new converts even possessed their own copy of an [Old Testament](#) in their homes? Very few. There were no printing presses, no radio and television broadcasting, and no computers. To purchase a copy of the Old Testament would have cost a working man an entire year of wages! Was there a reference work similar to a *Strong's Concordance of the Bible* for somewhat more serious researching? Of course not.

Looking back in this way confirms that the early preaching of the gospel was a work of [faith](#), highly dependent on the apostles' spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. What likely sustained the members' spirituality was the spoken

word delivered to people who listened carefully and concentrated with great intensity. These “pioneers” were remarkable, spiritually-minded people.

The Jewish religious leadership perceived that the apostles lacked preparation for such a huge responsibility ([Acts 4:13](#)). This terminology does not mean that the apostles had received no education at all. The wording expresses that the Jews considered the apostles to be common men who lacked the educational advantages they would have received had they been prepared for such public evangelism in rabbinical schools. However, recall that [Mark 3:13-14](#) establishes that Jesus chose and appointed those He specifically wanted as apostles so that they might be with Him (that is, to witness His teaching and activities), and He sent them out to preach. Undoubtedly, He was searching for budding characteristics that He could build upon. He prepared them well to carry out their responsibilities.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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