



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #343
Jesus' Resurrection and Eternal Ministry
Six More Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Over 40 Days

Jesus' Eighth Resurrection Appearance: "The Great Commission"
MT 28.16-20 (Parallel text: I Cor. 15.6)

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(I Cor. 15.6) After that, he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

16 ^{MT}So the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed 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 I command you to make disciples of all nations. Do this by continuing to go, by continuing to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and by continuing to teach them to keep on obeying everything I have commanded you.

"Look! I myself am surely with you always, until the consummation of the age."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On a Familiar Mountain in Galilee
Timeline	April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IX: The Resurrection and Eternal Ministry of Jesus
	The Resurrection and 40 Day Ministry of Jesus
	6 More Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Over 40 Days
Title:	Jesus' 8th Resurrection Appearance: The "Great Commission"

Today's reading describes Jesus' eighth resurrection appearance. It is one of the most famous of the eleven appearances, because of the "Great Commission" Jesus delivered there. It occurred on the mountain in Galilee that Jesus had used repeatedly for teaching his disciples, including "the Teaching on the Mount."

Most scholars believe that this was the appearance that the apostle Paul referred to when he wrote that *"more than 500 of the brothers at the same time"* saw Jesus. Because Jesus spent the greatest length of time (about two years) ministering in Galilee and the surrounding areas, it makes sense that more than 500 men had believed in him there, and were present for this appearance. This would mean that Paul was familiar with the "Great Commission" as well. The same basic content of this commission appears in all four of the resurrection appearances recorded by Luke, Paul's co-worker, which verifies Paul's knowledge of this "Great Commission" appearance.

Jesus had laid great stress on this resurrection appearance in Galilee in the gospel of Matthew. He first mentioned it before his death: **"After I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."** (MT 26.32) Jesus directed the angel to speak of it to the women, in the empty tomb. *"Look! He is going before you into Galilee, there you will see him."* (28.7) Then, in Jesus' second resurrection appearance to the women on the road he had emphasized it again: **"Go and take word to my brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they shall see me."** (28.10) The point was clear: The group appearance Jesus had commanded in Galilee was important.

Jesus made himself visible while he was still at a distance from the large group of disciples. Most of them worshipped him in response. We have seen that worship became the standard response to Jesus after his resurrection, for his identity as YHWH became undeniable in his resurrection. Some of the people doubted. This probably refers to doubt about whether it was really Jesus or not, because of the distance, rather than doubt about the resurrection itself.

Jesus responded to their worship by drawing near to them, and then speaking to them. It is always like that. When we corporately praise and worship his invisible resurrection presence with us, he draws nigh to us, and speaks his word to our listening hearts. This was a beautiful picture of what happens when the church worships its Lord.

The "Great Commission" consisted of a statement of rationale, a central command, and a glorious promise.

The statement of rationale for the command was Jesus' Divine claim: **"All authority in heaven on earth has been given to me."** Only an omnipotent God can say such a thing. "All authority" (or power) means that there is no force in all the universe that Jesus does not control. He is the KING of all creation. This fact leads directly to his command.

The central command was **"to make disciples of all the nations."** Because Jesus is LORD of all, every living person owes him worship and obedience. This message must be communicated to every nation, people-group, and person in the world, in their own language, so they can fully understand the glory of their King, and give him the loving obedience by faith that he alone is worthy to receive.

Jesus gave three sub-commands as the primary means of obeying his central command to make disciples of all the nations. All three are to be non-stop, continuous activities. The first was to constantly **"keep on going"** to the nations with the message of Jesus. Evangelism cannot be the "come to Church" type. It has to be the "go to them and tell them" kind. Every linguistic, cultural, religious, social, geographical, and economic barrier must be overcome by our "going" activities. This is evangelism.

Merely going and communicating the good news about King Jesus' reign is not enough. We must also **"keep on baptizing them"** in to the Name of the Trinity. This is the call to conversion, and commitment to Christ as Lord and Savior. The gospel demands a response to King Jesus by its very nature, and we Christians must lead those we evangelize to privately and publicly commit themselves to following Jesus through baptism. This is conversion.

The third sub-command was to **"keep on teaching them"** all of Jesus' commands, so that they will continue a life-style of growing obedience. This third command is what makes obedience to the central command to **"make disciples of all the nations"** possible. Only when obedience to everything Jesus commanded in the gospels is the passionate lifestyle of all believers will our commitment be strong enough to overcome every barrier to making disciples of the nations. Our obedience to the third sub-command is far from complete in contemporary Christianity, so our fulfillment of the central command also remains incomplete, after 20 centuries of church history.

Jesus' promise of his unending presence with us is what makes obedience to the central command possible. He has all the power in the universe under his control. He is present in and with us all the time. Therefore, obedience to his command to make disciples of all the nations is more than possible—it is inevitable if we will but rely upon him to accomplish it through us.

Going to every person in the world—in their own language—and communicating the good news of Jesus in a way that they repent and believe, and express that faith in baptism, then go on to learn every command of Jesus and obey them all out of passionate love for him... Jesus gave this command to 500 people with no resources other than his power and presence. This was the most impossible command ever given, yet at the same time it is the most possible command because of the power and presence of Jesus that accompanies it.

More than half of the resurrection appearances of Jesus included some element of the "Great Commission" in their content. This was obviously the key concern of Jesus during his forty days of ministry after his resurrection. The work that he had accomplished through his death and resurrection must be faithfully communicated to every person in the world, or else it would have been done in vain.

We must not miss this central message of the eleven resurrection appearances: Jesus is counting on working through us to complete his mission of **"making disciples"** out of all the people on earth. Our Lord has a massive, God-sized vision for us to accomplish.

APPLICATION:

How is your commitment to the Great Commission controlling the direction and daily content of your life? If you do not have a clear answer to that question, your obedience is unfocused, and incomplete.

The Great Commission is not one option among many—it is the direct command of Jesus to everyone who believes in him.

What do you need to do to fully accomplish your part in the Great Commission?

Who are you "going" to?

Whose baptisms are you participating in?

How are you doing in learning and obeying ALL the commands of Christ yourself, and teaching others to do the same?