

The Great Commission

Lesson 7: The Echoes of the Great Commission

- › John 20:21 - Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”
- › Luke 24:47-49 - You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”
- › Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Chronology of the Other Commission Verses

- › Matthew's Great Commission was likely the first full declaration of the commission given by Jesus near the ascension in the latter part of the forty days.
 - First, the space and time markers that are given to us in the scriptures.
 - In John 20:26, “eight days later”, likely not enough time for the disciples to go and return from Galilee (a four-seven day journey)
 - John's account of the restoration of Peter in John 21 (Sea of Tiberius/ Galilee), John relates that this is the third appearance of Christ to the Disciples, the next one outside of Jerusalem. We would put this before the appearance of Him on the Mount in Galilee in Matthew 28.
 - Matthew 28:16 - “The eleven went to Galilee” ...where he delivers the Great Commission.
 - The perspective of Paul is given in 1 Corinthians 15. It's a summary statement that gives us some insight into the chronology of the events.
 - Second, the chronology of these scriptures helps us to see how the language and focus of Christ changes from simply explaining the resurrection to preparing the disciples to continue the mission after He ascends.
 - All of the Great Commission language comes after the resurrection.
 - Matthew 28:18 - And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”
 - His authority was cemented in the Resurrection.
 - At the peak of that transition is Matthew 28:19-20, when the full thrust of the Great Commission is given.

- **The verse in Matthew is the core commission, with Luke and Acts supporting the details of that commission.**

John 20:21

- › Based on our assembled chronology, Jesus appears to his disciples in John 20:21, on the Day of the Resurrection, and utters these words.
 - This is an echo of his previous statement in John 17:18 - *As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*
- › It being a short statement and tying in so clearly with the high priestly prayer, lacks the specific details to be considered a central commission text. But it stands as a witness to God's plan and intention of what comes in the fullness of the Great Commission. In Matthew.

Luke 24:44-49

- › Similarities:
 - The proclamation of Jesus Christ to “all the nations.”
 - The “beholding” of the promise of the Holy Spirit.
- › Unique statements:
 - The clear proclamation of the repentance required for salvation.
 - Understand that to believe in Christ is not simply to believe in the historical Jesus, but that he is the Son of God and died for the sins of mankind. Those who repent and believe have a share in Him.
 - Mark 1:15 - *and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*
 - An appeal to the fulfillment of Scripture.
 - The appeal to Scripture, “it is written.” Both Matthew and Luke have the highest number of allusions or quotations of the Old Testament.¹
 - Luke’s version that plays deeper into the narrative of the lives of the disciples
 - Luke's narrative continues into the Book of Acts, giving us more detail on how the actual Great Commission was executed for the first few decades of the Church.

¹ <https://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/46209/in-which-one-of-the-four-gospels-is-the-old-testament-quoted-the-most>; <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/quotes.cfm>

- The specificity of where the disciples should start.
 - Luke's command shares that they will begin in Jerusalem.

Acts 1:8

- › Similar:
 - A continuation of the Holy Spirit being given to the disciples.
 - A commissioning of power and authority from Jesus Christ to the disciples.
- › Unique statements:
 - The radial spread of the Gospel is foreshadowed here.
 - Starting in Jerusalem, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth.
 - This progression does not highlight nearly as much as Matthew's does the universal application of the gospel to all people. Yet its intent is the same (Acts 13:47).

Enhancing our understanding of the Great Commission

- › **We proclaim a gospel of repentance to those who are to be saved.** We're not to simply just go baptizing people who are willing, but those who are truly moved by the Spirit to true conversion by repentance and belief. (Mark 1:15, Acts 11:18, 2 Cor. 7:10, 2 Tim. 2:25)
 - Luke 24:46–47 – "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."
- › **The Word of God is the essential tool of the Great Commission.**
 - This means we just teach and instruct from the scriptures, both in evangelism and in discipleship. The Word of God is central to all that we do in disciple-making.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16–17 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- › **The Commission is in Jesus' control.** Jesus Christ planned exactly how his gospel would spread and instructed them to "behold" that plan. It is a truth only given to the disciples once they become his witnesses in the power of the Holy Spirit. We'll do the work of Christ's Commission, and He is with us, working out His commission.

40 Days: Resurrection to Ascension Timeline

Appearance	Location	Scripture
Day 1 - Resurrection Day		
Women find the Tomb Empty	Tomb, Jerusalem	Matt 28:1-8 Mark 16:1-8 Luke 24:1-8 John 20:1
Peter and John Run to the Tomb	Tomb, Jerusalem	Luke 24:12 John 20:2-10
Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene	Tomb, Jerusalem	John 20:11-18
Jesus Appears to the Other Women	Road from the tomb, Jerusalem area	Matthew 28:8-10
Jesus Appears to Peter (Cephas)	(Likely) Jerusalem	Luke 24:34 1 Corinthians 15:5
The Road to Emmaus	Emmaus, west of Jerusalem	Luke 24:13-35
Jesus Appears to the Disciples Behind Locked Doors	Jerusalem	Luke 24:33-49; John 20:19-23, Mark 16:14
Day 8 - Week Later		
Jesus Appears to the Disciples w/ Thomas Present	Jerusalem	John 20:26-29
Days 14-30 (est) - Period in Galilee		
Jesus Appears to the Disciples at the Sea of Galilee, Restoration of Peter	Sea of Galilee (Tiberus)	John 21:1-23
Jesus Appears on the Mountain in Galilee, gives the Great Commission	Mountain in Galilee	Matthew 28:16-20 Mark 16:15-18*
Jesus Appears to More Than Five Hundred Brethren	(Likely) Galilee	1 Corinthians 15:6
Jesus Appears to James	Unknown	1 Corinthians 15:7
Jesus Appears to All the Apostles	Jerusalem area	1 Corinthians 15:7
Day 40 - the Ascension		
Final Instructions	Jerusalem	Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8
The Ascension	Mount of Olives near Bethany	Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-12