MATTHEW 28

Mat 28:1 - Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

* The time of these events is significant!
* Mary Magdalene and the “other Mary” came to Jesus tomb after the Sabbath (Saturday) around the dawn of the Sunday sun (“first day of the week”).

Mat 28:2 - And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

Mat 28:3  His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

Mat 28:4  And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

* SIDE NOTE: We will not attempt to extract all of the details of the resurrection mentioned in other gospel accounts and add them to this study, rather, we will add them and harmonize them as we work through those books.
* It is however, important to have a general knowledge of the other resurrection accounts so we don’t draw false conclusions from Matthew’s text.
  + Verses 2-4 are a good example.
  + The events in verses 2-4 are not witnessed by the two Marys. They take place before the Marys arrive.
  + Some time passes between the events of verse 4 and verse 5.
* Before the women arrived, there was an earthquake and an angel of the Lord rolled back the stone which stood at the entrance of the tomb.
* The guards charged with keeping the tomb closed were so terrified they “became like dead men.”

Mat 28:5 - But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

Mat 28:6 - He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

Mat 28:7 - Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”

Mat 28:8 - So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

* When the women arrived, the angel informed them Jesus was no longer there.
* Christ had risen and the place in the tomb His body had once occupied was vacant.
* The angel tells them to find the Apostles and let them know the Lord will meet them in Galilee just as He had promised.
  + Jesus had mentioned this while eating the Passover meal.
  + Mat 26:31-32 - Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”
* Mary and Mary ran to accomplish their mission with fear and great joy.
  + Fear was a very common emotion experience by those in the Bible who encountered spiritual beings.
  + Joy would have filled their hearts at the good news of Jesus’ resurrection.

Mat 28:11 - While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place.

Mat 28:12 - And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers

Mat 28:13 - and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’

Mat 28:14 - And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”

Mat 28:15 - So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

* Upon waking, some of the guards who had become “like dead men,” went into Jerusalem to inform the chief priests of what had happened.
* They agreed with the elders to pay off the guards, instructing them to lie if asked about what had happened.
  + They were to tell people the Apostles stole the body while they were asleep.
  + This would have been a pretty embarrassing story for a Roman guard to spread but the money and the chief priest’s promise to protect them must have been sufficient.
  + Roman guards faced serious punishment for neglecting the things entrusted to them, even death in some cases.
* This lie became very popular among the Jews.
* No doubt the Jewish rulers worked very hard to promote it.
* APPLICATION:
  + Some people will never believe because they don’t want to believe.
  + Jesus had predicted His resurrection in 3 days.
  + The Jews had done everything possible to squelch rumors about a third day resurrection.
  + Jesus is unexplainably missing on the third day.
  + This event, along with the multitudes of miracles in Jesus’ ministry, were more than sufficient evidence to believe in Christ.
  + But they still wouldn’t.
  + They came up with a highly unbelievable lie to keep them from having to believe.
* APPLICATION:
  + Be careful before swallowing a narrative just because it is popular.
  + The chief priests and elders had lots of money and lots of influence and they promoted a narrative about these events that became very popular.
  + But it was dead wrong.
  + Just because some people with money and influence and prestige push a narrative, doesn’t make it true and doesn’t mean its conclusions heavily biased (reminds me of the evolutionary narrative).

Mat 28:16 - Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

Mat 28:17 - And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

* The final scene of the book of Matthew is the departure of Jesus back to Heaven.
* The Apostles went to a mountain (not specified) on which the Lord had arranged to meet them.
* When they saw Jesus, they worshipped and “some doubted.”
* You may wonder, as I did, how can they still have doubts?
  + The other gospels reveal they had met with Jesus and even touched Him.
* Have you ever wanted something so badly that when you got it, even when it was in front of your eyes, you remained skeptical?
  + Rather than giving yourself over to joy, you were slow to believe for fear you were deceived and your joy would be taken away from you.
  + Probably were the phrase “to good to be true” comes from.
  + This is the sentiment behind the happy expression “I can’t believe it.”
* For some of the 11, it was going to take more time to believe it was real.
* But we know they all eventually found the evidence compelling enough to live (and die) to share the reality of Jesus’ resurrection.

Mat 28:18 - And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Mat 28:19 - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 - teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

* All authority necessary to redeem a people, gather His Church, defend them against every spiritual evil, defeat sin and death, and bring them to God, belonged to Christ.
* It is only in Christ and in His Kingdom that these things are possible.
* Now that these things had been revealed to the Apostles they were commanded to go tell others, so that they too could be a part of the eternal kingdom.
* They were to make disciples of “all nations” and baptize them by the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
* APPLICATION:
  + Many churches seem to ignore Jesus’ instruction of baptism.
  + Some churches don’t baptize, some do it sporadically, some suggest it’s a good thing to do if you get around to it.
  + But as we see in this passage, baptism is commanded.
  + It is as clear as any other command in the Bible and we shouldn’t ignore it.
  + When we study the book Acts, we will see a very clear precedent of baptism accompanying conversions (people got baptized when they realized they needed Christ).
* APPLICATION:
  + The word “trinity” isn’t used in the Bible but verses show why that understanding of the nature of God exists.
  + People didn’t just make up the triune God idea. It comes from the Bible.
* The Apostles were to teach the new disciples to observe all of Jesus’ commands.
* Jesus then reassures them He will be with them until the “end of the age.”
  + No doubt this references the end of time (Matt 13:39; 49)
  + This would have been comforting to a group of Apostles who probably felt inadequate to carry out the mission given to them.
  + They would all rely heavily on the help sent from Christ to complete their role in the early Church.
* I think it is also appropriate to apply this promise to ourselves.
* Christ will not abandon us as we seek to serve Him in this life.