



Epilogue: The Proclamation of the Kingdom

Alive

Matthew 28:1 – 15

This part of the story Matthew creates doubt as he wants your whole-hearted faith or your considered refusal. He does not want the dithering discipleship which is mistaken for genuine Christianity → verse 17 some of the disciples doubted Jesus after his resurrection.

- The message of the Kingdom demands complete surrender or none at all, and only those who have grappled with this truth are ready to pour out their lives in its cause.
- The empty tomb meant lives could never be the same again, they needed to stop and doubt and consider and decide as the resurrection was a public display that Jesus Christ is supreme King of the universe and we need to lay down our lives in his service.
- The Jews and the Romans did not try to suppress the message of the empty tomb because they had no beliefs, but because they were totally blinkered in their beliefs refusing to doubt even in the face of unquestionable evidence.

*'All doubts, however skeptical and cynical they may seem, are really a set of alternate beliefs. You cannot doubt Belief A except from a position of faith in Belief B. For example, if you doubt Christianity because "There can't be just **one** true religion", you must recognize that this statement is itself an act of belief. If you went to the Middle East and said, "There can't be just one true religion," nearly everyone would say, "Why not?" The reasons you doubt Christianity's Belief A is because you hold unprovable Belief B. Every doubt, therefore, is based on a leap of faith.'*

Tim Keller, The Reason for God (2008)

Matthew urges us to doubt our doubts as much as our beliefs because *doubt* can save us from *unbelief*.

- i. The Romans tried to *ignore* the empty tomb but doubt exposed their story as unbelief.
 - ❖ The soldiers would have been killed if they had been asleep on their watch, yet they walked free.
 - ii. The Jews tried to *deny* the resurrection, but doubt quickly exposed their unbelief.
 - ❖ How could the disciples have stolen the body from a sealed tomb under Roman guard?
 - iii. Doubt exposes the (relatively modern) speculation that the tomb was never empty at all.
 - ❖ The Jews and the Romans did not even try to deny that Jesus' body was missing because they knew it was gone.
- If after doubting we come back to the conclusion that Jesus rose from the dead, our lives can never be the same again.
 - The word Matthew uses for *doubting* in verse 17 is *distazo*, the same word he used in 14:31 to describe Peter *wavering between two opinions*.

Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and is now vindicated, glorified, and enthroned as Lord of the universe. The risen Lord Jesus deserves our everything – beyond a shadow of doubt.

The Great Commission

Matthew 28: 16 – 20

Worshipping Jesus is not enough; hence Matthew mentions two of Jesus' ten resurrection appearances and completely fails to mention his ascension → *Worship is not a substitute for obedience.*

Jesus loves it when we worship him but loves it even more when we obey him. The vindicated Son of God has been crowned with all authority, and now *the nations are his inheritance, the ends of the earth his possession.*

- This affects every nation of the world, not just our lives.
 - ❖ Matthew ends with a commission not just to make disciples *in* all nations, but to make disciples *of* all nations.
- The Great Commission was terrifying to the untraveled group of disciples, as it is for us all.
 - ❖ BUT! Jesus' yoke is easy and light, therefore we don't need to be terrified.
- Jesus ends his Great Commission with a promise that he will bear the burden of extending his rule through us.
- All authority belongs to Jesus, who will see people saved into the Kingdom of God from every nation, tribe, and language, as his People turn their worship into radical obedience to his Great Commission Revelation 7:9.

Do not get distracted: the Revolution has begun, and you have a role to play.

Conclusion:

The Revolution Has Begun

Matthew 9:9

- The Jewish leaders hated tax collectors, barring them from synagogues and refusing their money for offerings → they believed them to be beyond God's redemption.
- Jesus of Nazareth was a different kind of rabbi → more concerned with exposing sins of the teachers of law.
- The tax collector was called by Jesus and he shifted his eyes from the coins to the carpenter, from the face of Caesar (money) to the face of the Saviour.
- The first thing Levi did was throw a party, introducing other tax collectors to Jesus, the rabbi who had given a new start → he changed his name to Matthew meaning *Gift-of-the-Lord* – as a mark of the lavish grace which God had poured upon his life.
- Matthew had joined the Revolution, and his new name spoke of his new life to come.
- Matthew would be flogged, imprisoned and eventually martyred for following Jesus. He would give his life to proclaim the message of the Kingdom in the pagan lands of Persia, Parthia, and modern day Georgia.

Make no mistake Jesus of Nazareth sparked the greatest Revolution the world has ever seen, and he deserves nothing less than your total devotion. He invites you to play your part in his Kingdom by giving you the same invitation which he gave to Matthew so many years ago: *"Follow me."*

This is King Jesus. This is the long-awaited Messiah. This is the only true Lord of your life. So come. Leave behind your excuses, your compromises, and your half-hearted religion.

Jesus the Messiah is calling you.

The Revolution has begun!