

## Review

Last Sunday morning, we read of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Immediately after, the enemies of God concocted a plan to deny the reality of the resurrection.

### **28:16 The Eleven**

Notice that Matthew calls them the eleven disciples. "Of course," you think. "Why is that such a big deal? Judas hung himself, and the twelve became the eleven."

That's actually not the usual point of controversy. The divisions begin with what takes place after they become "the Eleven" (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:9; 33; etc.). You see, at some point, the apostles begin to be called "the Twelve" again. "Certainly," people say. "Right after Paul became an apostle, because the apostle Paul is the twelfth apostle." People make a huge deal out of this, asserting and arguing for Paul being the twelfth apostle.

Now, it is certain that Paul was an apostle. But it is important to understand that there were many more apostles than just the original twelve and Paul. The word "ap-OS-tol-os" means "one who is sent out." And during those early years, many men were sent out by the Lord to preach the gospel to a lost and dying world. In Acts 14, Barnabas is called an apostle. In Romans, Paul mentions two more apostles, saying,

**Rom. 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.**

In Galatians, Paul mentions that Jesus' half-brother James, who formerly did not believe, was an apostle in Jerusalem.

**Gal. 1:19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.**

Silvanus and Timothy are also called apostles in the book of 1Thesalonians (1Thes. 1:1; 2:6).

And so there are many apostles. But when did the eleven become the twelve again? It was not when Paul joined up, but before. It was in Acts when Peter stood up, saying that because Judas betrayed Jesus, just as the Scriptures had written, it was necessary to fill his place, also

as the Scriptures had said. He said,

**Acts 1:20-26** “For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT’; and, ‘LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.’ Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us - beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us - one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Matthias was numbered with the eleven, and after that, the Bible calls them "the Twelve" again (Acts 6:2) - long before Paul was ever saved.

### **Proceeded To Galilee**

The angel who had rolled away the stone from the tomb told the women who had come that they were to...

**Matt. 28:7** “Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him...”

While they were rushing to tell the disciples about Jesus' resurrection, they came face-to-face with Him. He also told them,

**Matt. 28:10** ...“Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

The message the disciples got was consistent. It was obvious that the next step God wanted them to take was to head to Galilee.

I wonder how many of us have been hearing a consistent message from the Lord lately. A message about stepping out into serving, or into

obedience in some area? We've been hearing the directions, but have we been heading in that direction?

Fortunately, the eleven did go to Galilee. Realize that we're talking about a trip that was 70 or 80 miles. This was no small step of obedience, but they went.

They went to a certain mountain that Jesus had designated. Which one? We don't know. But He must have told them in advance, just as He had said to them on the night He was betrayed,

**Matt. 26:32 "...after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."**

### **28:17 Some Were Doubtful**

Jesus appeared to the eleven in Galilee. When people read this verse, it sounds a lot like some of the eleven doubted. But looking at the language, it becomes clear that "they" saw Him, and "they" worshipped Him. But "some" - meaning "others" - were doubtful. Possibly it was others who saw the resurrected Christ, or probably those that the disciples were telling about the resurrection of Christ.

Why did they doubt? The word "doubt" there (dis-TAD-zo) means to waver between two opinions. And it really isn't a mystery at all that people wavered back and forth, because we can still observe it plainly today.

Whether you prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ through historical evidence, or produce the living Jesus standing right in front of them, people will often still waver back and forth in doubt. Understand that their real hesitation isn't from deciding whether they CAN believe in the resurrection. Their real hesitation is that people are deciding whether they WANT to believe in the resurrection.

It's the same "back and forth" that Elijah saw in the Jews:

**1Kings 18:21 Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word.**

Hesitating between two opinions. You know, the only way to make a choice is to make that choice. "Yes, I will believe," or "No, I refuse to believe." Jesus said,

**Rev. 3:15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.'**

Yes or no, black or white. No more hesitation, it's time to make a decision. Believe or disbelieve, but don't go back and forth.

### **28:18-20 The Great Commission**

The apostles were given what has been called, "the Great Commission." It was a command to go out into the world and preach the gospel. He told us to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey His Word.

Saints, this is our commission, and really is the essence of the gospel with which we've been entrusted.

- Make disciples. This literally means "disciple all nations." To disciple is to teach someone about what it is to be a disciple. We must be disciples ourselves, and then lead others down that same path.

And remember, "all nations" includes OUR nation. So don't feel like you have to go to some faraway land to do your part in the great commission. I'm all for seeing people raised up for foreign missions, but don't neglect the opportunity to make disciples right here in your own city.

- Baptize them. In its simplest form, baptism is a public profession of faith. When we teach people to be disciples, they are then to be baptized as a signal to others that they have entered into new life in Christ.

- Teach them to obey His Word. The never-ending part of discipleship is teaching people to obey the Word of God. A big part of our daily growth and maturing in Christ is learning more and more obedience to the Scriptures. I haven't mastered it, and neither have you. And yet, we keep encouraging, exhorting, and - occasionally - rebuking one another to continue in the Word and grow in our obedience to it.

And as we continue in our fulfillment of the great commission, we must not try to do it in our own strength, skills, or ability. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus, and it is only through Him that our preaching will have power. If you feel like you're lacking that power, turn to Him, for He is near. Remember,

**Matt. 28:20 "...I am with you always, even to the end of the age."**