

12-09-12

Series: [The Great Commission](#)

The Great Commission (10)

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[Matthew 28:16-20](#)

(Continuation from 12/02/12)

The Making Disciples of All Nations, Part 1

Now what is necessary for effective evangelism? If we're going to make disciples of all nations, if we're going to reach the world, what is necessary? First, what I've given you in this introduction must be understood. But now I want you to look at five explicit or implicit elements. We're only going to examine two of them and the rest next time. These are in the text of [Matthew 28:16](#) to [20](#) and they are those things which are essential to effective fulfillment of the purpose for which the church exists: **availability**, **worship**, **submission**, **obedience**, and **power**.

First of all, let's look at **availability**. This is implied in [verse 16](#) in a very, very wonderful way. By the way, someone once said, "**The greatest ability is availability.**" I like that. It doesn't matter how talented you are if you're not available. The greatest **ability** is **availability**. And we see that here. There's going to be a great commissioning on this day and they're going to be people sent out into all the world with the promise of the presence and the power of the living Christ. But if you weren't there, you weren't going to be a part of that. The ones who were available were the ones who received the privilege.

[Matthew 28:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.

We'll stop at that point. Here's the **availability**. The word "but" should better be translated "so". It's a simple connective reflecting the response of the believers to Jesus' instruction. Back in [Matthew 26:32](#), He said, "**When I'm raised from the dead, I'll go before you into Galilee.**" After He was raised from the dead, notice [Matthew 28:7](#), "**The angel said to the women, He goes before you into Galilee, there you will see Him.**" When Jesus appeared to those same women later on in [Matthew 28:10](#), Jesus said to them, "**Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee and there shall they see Me.**"

In other words, before and after the resurrection, Jesus said He would meet with His disciples in Galilee. He was calling together a great conclave there for the purpose of commissioning them to reach the world. They were told then before His death and after His resurrection that they were to be there. And no doubt the word spread beyond the disciples to all the others who believed in Jesus Christ and they were all gathered, as we shall see, on that mountain on that appointed day.

Now we have no specific knowledge as to how Jesus communicated to them the time and the place...what day and what mountain. We don't know, it just says here that they went away into Galilee into THE Mountain, the Greek text says, the specific mountain which Jesus had Himself appointed. The verb form indicating there that it was by His

12-09-12

Series: [The Great Commission](#)

own discretion and His own will that He appointed a certain mountain to meet them. We don't know how that message was conveyed to them, but it was.

Now when did this happen? Obviously it was after His resurrection. Obviously, the day of His resurrection, He met the women, He went on the road to Emmaus, saw a couple of other disciples, saw the disciples that night in the upper room, saw them eight days later again in the upper room. So it would be at least after that eighth day. Then after that eighth day, when the disciples had seen Him, they would need a certain amount of time to journey north into Galilee, maybe a week. When they come into Galilee in [John 21:1-14](#), we see them fishing. And it seems that they have actually gone back to their old profession. They were in a boat that may well have been Peter's own boat, as if he were taking up his old trade, not really knowing what to expect in the future from the Lord, even though he had been told to go to Galilee and wait for the Lord to come.

So, the disciples had time to go back, to sort of reestablish their fishing enterprise. They were down there in the boat. You remember Jesus came, they couldn't catch anything. Jesus showed them that He had control over the fish. Called them to the shore, asked Peter if he loved Him three times, then commissioned them to serve and feed His sheep. So the Lord has had all of these several meetings. The first eight days in Jerusalem, maybe a week to go north, that would put it maybe at 15 days, maybe three or four days to sort of settle into the fishing, maybe it's 20 days later by the time this happens.

Now we know in [Acts 1:3](#) it says that Jesus showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs over a period of 40 days. So it's somewhere between 20 days maybe and 40 days that this occurs. It wouldn't be at the end of the 40 because the last appearance was at the Mount of Olives where He ascended. And the Mount of Olives is outside Jerusalem, they would have had to have another few days to get back there. So maybe somewhere between 20 and 35 days after His resurrection, but still with time to return to Galilee and see Him ascend, Jesus then calls together this group of people for this very special commissioning.

Now you say, "What group of people is this specifically?" I believe it is the group of people indicated in [1 Corinthians 15:6-7](#) where it says, "**Five hundred plus brethren saw Him at one time.**" Here is the gathering in Galilee with the 500 plus...that has been the consistent view of biblical teachers throughout the years. And I see that as being very accurate.

Now it only tells us in [Matthew 28:16](#) that the eleven disciples were there because, of course, they were central to the issue. They used to be called the "Twelve" but with the defection, apostasy and death of Judas who went to his own place, as [Acts 1:25](#) says, they were now reduced to eleven and they become known as the "eleven." But this sighting of Jesus here was not limited to them because in [Matthew 28:7](#), the angel said to the women, "**He goes before you into Galilee, there shall you see Him. Lo, I have told you.**" So it was for the eleven, it was for the women and presumably it was for all the other believers and disciples in Galilee who were to be commissioned for this

12-09-12

Series: The Great Commission

responsibility of reaching the world, the 500 at one time who saw Him as recorded in [1 Corinthians 15:6-7](#).

There's no reason for Jesus to go all the way to Galilee to have a meeting with just the eleven disciples, He had met them twice in Jerusalem. If He wanted another meeting with them, He could have done it. The command here given to go and make disciples of all nations doesn't know any hierarchy, that's a command given to everybody, whether you're an apostle or not, it fits all those who love and follow Jesus Christ. And certainly our Lord would have wanted to give this commission to the largest group possible and the largest group possible would be the 500 gathered in Galilee because there were so many more believers in Galilee than in Jerusalem.