

Matthew 28:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Analysis

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. These are Jesus's final recorded words in Matthew's Gospel, spoken after His resurrection on a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20). This conclusion to the Great Commission provides both the church's mission content and Christ's ongoing presence as guarantee.

"Teaching them to observe" (διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν/didaskontes autous tērein) defines disciple-making. Didaskontes ("teaching") is present participle—continuous instruction, not merely initial evangelism. Tērein ("observe") means to keep, guard, obey—not merely know intellectually but practice obediently. Discipleship isn't information transfer but life transformation through teaching that leads to obedience.

"All things whatsoever I have commanded you" (πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν/panta hosa eneteilamēn hymin) encompasses the full scope of Jesus's teaching—nothing omitted, nothing negotiable. This includes the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7), kingdom parables (chapter 13), instructions on church life (chapter 18), and all His ethical, theological, and missional teaching. The comprehensive "all things" prevents selective obedience or cultural accommodation that abandons difficult teachings.

"And, lo" (καὶ ἰδοὺ/καὶ idou) is an attention-grabber: "Behold! Pay attention!" What follows is supremely important—the guarantee enabling the Great Commission's fulfillment.

"I am with you" (ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι/egō meth' hymōn eimi) echoes God's covenant promises throughout Scripture. ἐγὼ εἰμι (egō eimi, "I am") resonates with Yahweh's self-revelation to Moses (Exodus 3:14) and Jesus's own "I am" declarations in John's Gospel. Christ promises His personal, powerful, perpetual presence—not merely abstract blessing but His very person accompanying His people.

"Alway" (πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας/pasas tas hēmeras)—literally "all the days"—means every single day without exception. Not occasionally or when convenient, but continuously throughout all circumstances, trials, and seasons.

"Even unto the end of the world" (ἔως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰώνος/heōs tēs synteleias tou aiōnos)—better translated "unto the consummation of the age"—extends Christ's presence until His return and the establishment of the eternal kingdom. The age's consummation is eschatological—the final fulfillment when Christ returns, judgment occurs, and God's purposes reach completion.

"Amen" (Ἀμήν/Amēn) solemnly affirms the promise's certainty and truth. So be it. It is reliable. You can stake your life on it.

Historical Context

Matthew's Gospel, written for a Jewish-Christian audience (likely 60s-80s AD), consistently presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises and the authoritative teacher of God's will. The Gospel's structure parallels the five books of Moses, positioning Jesus as the new and greater Moses giving the new and better law.

This final verse brilliantly bookends Matthew's theological framework. The Gospel opens declaring Jesus is "Emmanuel"—"God with us" (Matthew 1:23, quoting Isaiah 7:14). It closes with Jesus promising "I am with you always." What was

prophesied is now fulfilled; what was promised continues perpetually.

For Matthew's original audience facing persecution, exclusion from synagogues, and pressure from both Jewish and Roman authorities, Christ's promise of perpetual presence provided essential encouragement. They weren't abandoned or alone—the risen Lord accompanied them daily in their mission.

The mountain setting (Matthew 28:16) recalls significant mountains throughout Matthew: the mountain of temptation (4:8), the mountain of the Sermon (5:1), the mountain of transfiguration (17:1). Mountains in Scripture often signify places of divine revelation and covenant making (Sinai, Zion). Jesus, on a mountain, commissions His disciples and promises His presence—establishing the new covenant community with its global mission.

The command to teach "all things whatsoever I have commanded" established the apostolic authority to transmit Jesus's teaching—the foundation for the New Testament Scriptures. Early Christians understood they weren't free to modify Jesus's message to suit cultural preferences; they were stewards of revelation to be faithfully transmitted (1 Corinthians 11:23, 15:3).

Throughout church history, this verse has motivated and sustained missionaries, church planters, and persecuted believers. From Apostolic missions throughout the Roman Empire, to Celtic monks reaching Northern Europe, to modern global missions, Christ's promise—"I am with you always"—has empowered ordinary people to attempt extraordinary things for God's kingdom, confident in divine accompaniment rather than human capability.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's command to teach 'all things whatsoever I have commanded' challenge selective Christianity that embraces comfortable teachings while ignoring difficult ones?
2. What is the connection between making disciples (teaching them to obey) and Christ's promise of His presence—how does His presence enable obedience?
3. In what practical ways should Christ's promise 'I am with you always' affect our daily decisions, emotional responses, and risk-taking for the gospel?
4. How does understanding this promise as lasting 'unto the end of the age' (eschatological timeframe) shape our urgency in fulfilling the Great Commission?
5. What's the difference between knowing Christ is with us theoretically versus experiencing His presence practically, and how do we move from mere doctrine to lived reality?

Interlinear Text

διδάσκοντες	αὐτοὺς	τηρεῖν	πάσας	ὅσα	ἐνετειλάμην				
Teaching	them	to observe	all things	whatsoever	I have commanded				
G1321	G846	G5083	G3956	G3745	G1781				
ὑμῖν·	καὶ	ἰδού·	ἐγὼ	μεθ'	ὑμῶν	εἰμι	πάσας	τὰς	ἡμέρας
you	and	lo	I	with	you	am	all things		
G5213	G2532	G2400	G1473	G3326	G5216	G1510	G3956	G3588	G2250
ἔως	τῆς	συντελείας	τοῦ	αἰῶνος	Ἄμην				
even unto	the end		G3588	of the world	Amen				
G2193	G4930		G165		G281				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 41:10 (Parallel theme): Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Joshua 1:5 (Parallel theme): There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Psalms 46:7 (Parallel theme): The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Genesis 39:21 (Parallel theme): But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Psalms 46:11 (Parallel theme): The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Matthew 1:23 (Parallel theme): Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Matthew 18:20 (Parallel theme): For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Mark 16:20 (Parallel theme): And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Exodus 3:12 (Parallel theme): And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Colossians 1:28 (Parallel theme): Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: