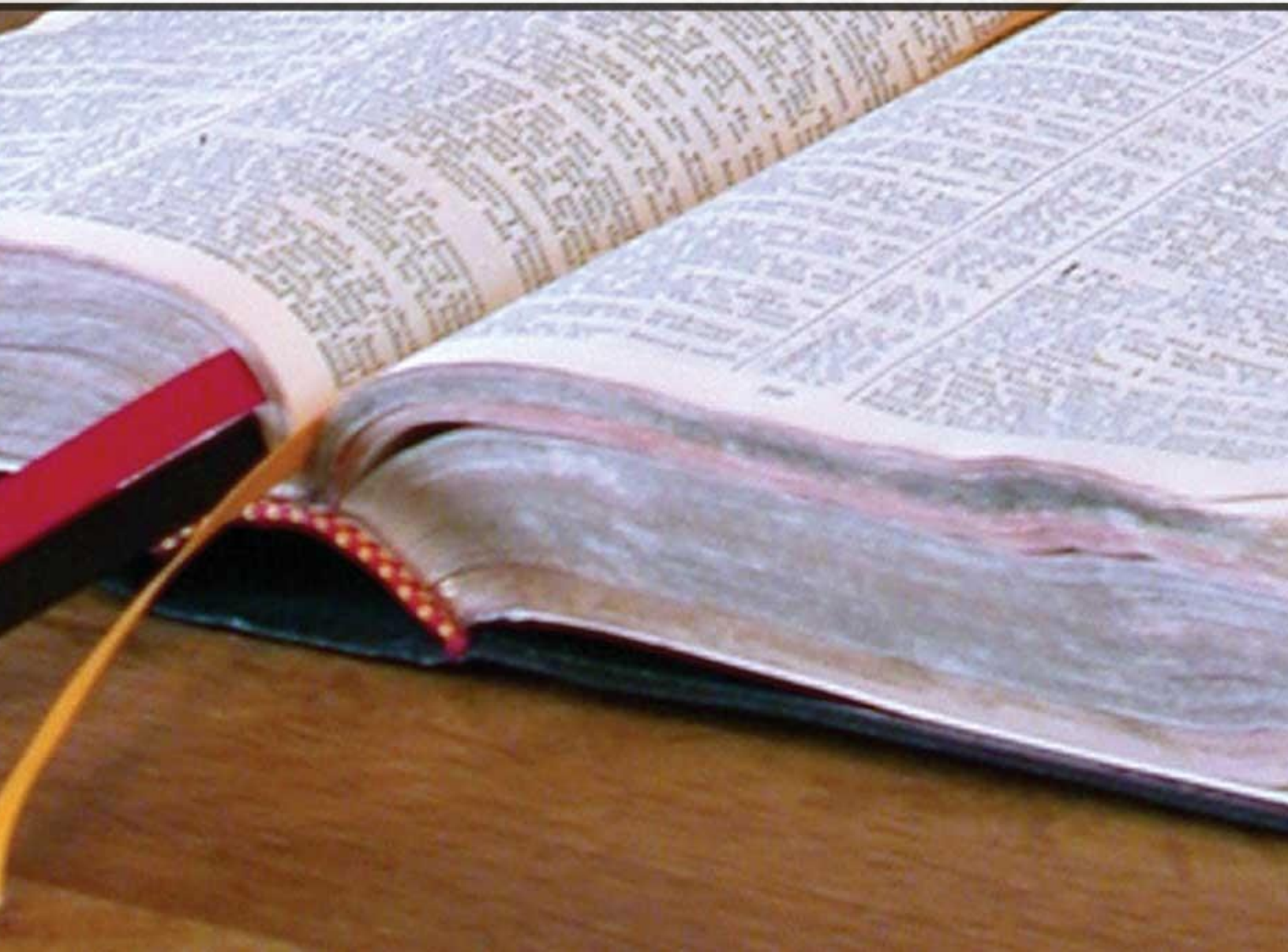




Bonus Bible Studies
The Great Commission Challenge

by Scott Lynn

**CHEAT SHEET
TEACHER'S GUIDE**



Let's compare two of the most famous commands in scripture:

Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** ²⁰ **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Acts 2:36-39 NKJV

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Are these the same command? Are they a contradiction?

- Some say these disagree and command us to do two different things. Whose words are better? The words of Jesus or the words of Peter?
- But if they disagree, how do we know we can even trust the New Testament? Let's look at the last commands of Jesus in the Gospels and open our hearts to God's word. Although the passage in Matthew 28 is called the Great Commission, you will find that Jesus actually commissioned the church three times after the resurrection.
- Pay attention to the context of each passage. What happened first and when and where did Jesus appear in each. Let's make sense of the story.
- I have highlighted the context indicators in green. And the **exact commands** in purple. **Anything connected with His ascension into Heaven is in grey.**
- Then we'll look at exactly what Jesus said and how it compares to what the Apostles said and did.
- Our hope is that scripture lines up with no disagreement. Let's get started and see what we find...

Matthew 28:8-20 NKJV

So they [the two Mary's that went to the tomb] went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. ⁹ And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

[Skipping the part where the soldiers are bribed to maybe save a tree or two.]

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. ¹⁷ When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* ²⁰ *teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;* and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

Where did this take place? _____

Can you order the events? _____ (1st read all four passages)

What was commanded? _____

Luke 24:13-53 NKJV

[We start reading right after they visited the tomb]

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" ¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?"

[Walking they talk with Jesus and He teaches them while they are unaware]

²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to

stay with them. ³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

³² And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” ³³ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

³⁶ Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” ³⁷ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸ And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

⁴⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” ⁴² So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³ And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ Then He said to them, “These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.” ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

⁴⁶ Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

⁵⁰ And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

From the account in Luke...

Where did this take place? _____

Can you order the events? _____ (1st read all four passages)

What other account matches 24:13? _____

What was commanded? _____

Mark 16:8-20 NKJV

So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. ⁹ Now when He rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹ And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

¹² After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³ And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.

¹⁴ Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵ And He said to them, **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.** ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

¹⁹ **So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.** ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Where did this take place? _____

Can you order the events? _____ (1st read all four passages)

What was commanded? _____

Acts 1:1-12 NKJV

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.

(check out Luke 19:29 to learn where this occurred)

Where did this take place? _____

Can you order the events? _____ (1st read all four passages)

What was commanded? _____

We've looked at the final words of Jesus, record in Luke, Mark, Matthew and in Acts 1. Here is a quick answer key to the questions asked so far, and **let's compare the final words of Jesus with Peter's command in Acts 2:38-39.**

Spoiler alert: they line up perfectly. Peter not only agreed with Jesus. He was only repeating the commands of Jesus. If you only look at Matthew, you might miss this, since this commission only gives part of the story, but if you look at all the words of Jesus, every part of Acts 2:38 directly matches what Jesus said. For years, theologians have made the statement that Peter was authorized to speak Acts 2:38 because he held the "keys of the kingdom" and was authorized to declare something new (see Matthew 16:19). I am not disputing his Apostolic authority, but **Peter declared nothing new in Acts 2:38. He told the crowd exactly what Jesus commanded him to teach.**

	Luke 24:13-53	Mark 16:8-20	Matt 28:8-12	Acts 1:1-12	Acts 2:37-40
Who is speaking?	Jesus				Peter
What was the order of events?	1 st	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Includes a call to repentance	✓				✓
Includes an instruction to baptize	?	✓	✓		✓
For the remission of sins	✓				✓
To be done in Jesus name	✓				✓
The name of Father Son & HG			✓		
You will receive the Holy Ghost	✓			✓	✓
Mentions speaking in tongues		✓			✓
The power to reach the lost	✓			✓	✓
This message is for the whole world	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

So to review, Jesus commissioned his followers three times after the resurrection, the first time recorded in Luke and Mark (Mark records part of it in a 3rd person voice). The second time is on the hillside in Galilee recorded in Matthew. The third time is on the hillside of Olivet in Bethany in Acts 1, right prior to the ascension.

Can you find anything that Peter commands in Acts 2:37-40 that is not directly stated by Jesus in His final words? Nope, you cannot. Peter obeyed the Lord.

Jesus instructs us to plainly perform baptism for the remission of sins in his name (Luke 24) and connects this to baptism in the titles of God in Matthew 28. The only logical conclusion is that Jesus is the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Otherwise you need to explain why Jesus give the instruction two different ways. And you would have to explain why the disciples ignored the direct command of Jesus and baptized in His name when He instructed them to use a different form.

Acts 2:38 Homework Assignment

Some accuse Apostolics of focusing on Acts 2:38 kinda a lot! And it is a fair accusation, it's a verse that holds great meaning – describing the very moment most of us really discovered the reality of God in our lives. But the accusation carries an implication that if we didn't have Acts 2:38, we (the Apostolics) would somehow be in trouble in our attempts to teach salvation the way we do.

So let's try this out. As a thought exercise: how much do we really need Acts 2:38 to teach salvation the way we do? Pretending momentarily that Acts 2:37-41 was not in the Bible, how many passages in scripture can you find to teach Acts 2:38 salvation, without actually using Acts 2:38?

To be specific, find passages that teach the necessity of repentance, water baptism and of receiving the Holy Spirit. There are quite a few, but I won't give you my list here, I leave it to you to dig it out for yourself. Email me your list and I will send you mine if you want it.

The best things in the Word of God are the things you dig out for yourself! So dig in and answer for yourself, can you teach Acts 2:38 without Acts 2:38? Let me know how you do, and I will share my answer to this challenge.

In His Service,

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