

Series: On The Mountain: Matthew 28:16-20

Thoughts on the Mission of Christ for the Church.



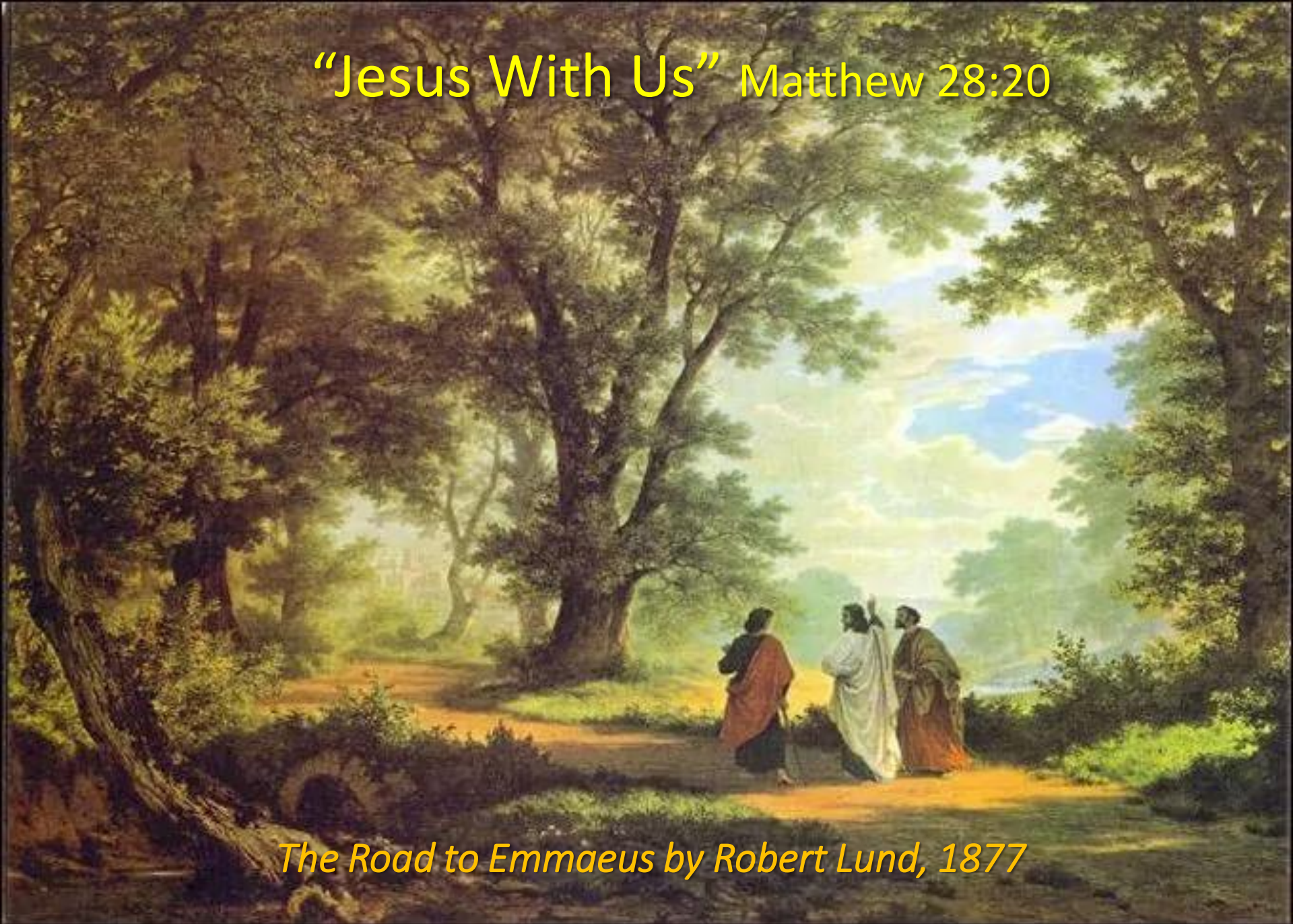
The view from the top of Mt Beatitudes (Mt. Eremos) In the distance is the Sea of Galilee and the city of Capernaum.

This summit less than 4 miles from the ancient site of Capernaum has for over 1600 years believed to be the site of the Sermon on the Mount. If it were on the Mediterranean coast it would be 75 feet below the surface of the ocean. This is also believed to be the site of the events in Matthew 28:16-20.

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July 9,16,23,30, 2023

“Jesus With Us” Matthew 28:20



The Road to Emmaeus by Robert Lund, 1877

“Jesus With Us” Matthew 28:20

*The Road to Emmaeus
by Robert Lund, 1877*



The word that begins the second phrase of verse 20 is a Greek word for “behold!” It is an interjection used for emphasis, essentially “pay attention!”. The phrase following is essential to the previous messages.

Matthew 28:20 [ESV]

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. **And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

“Jesus With Us”

Matthew 28:20

*Jesus Teaching by the Sea
of Galilee by James Tissot*



This interjection is used often in the New Testament. It is a Greek word which comes from a word “to see”. It is an interjection meant to get our attention. It would be like our English “Look!” or “See here!” it is a command to pay attention to the following statement.

“Jesus With Us”

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of Galilee by James Tissot*



What Jesus was sharing was essential to the previous circumstances. The struggle with doubt expressed in verses 16-17, the affirmation of Jesus' authority in verse 18, the command to make disciples in verses 19-20. But the essential part of this moment comes with the closing words of Matthew's gospel. In fact, Matthew has structured his gospel with this phrase in mind.

Matthew 18:17-20 *18-20 [ESV]

17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

18 Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

“Jesus With Us”

Matthew 28:20

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The Christian community is charged with accountability of its members. Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit is present in the the body of believers and empowers them to examine actions, doctrines and attitudes which are contrary to God’s word and purpose. In 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 John the church elders are charged with examining spiritual matters and teaching to determine if it is in alignment with God’s word.

“Jesus With Us”

Matthew 28:20

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of Galilee by James Tissot*



The church is charged with holding those who identify as Christians accountable for bad behavior. They are to examine charges of bad behavior brought forward with the humbling realization that Jesus is present in their deliberations through the power of the Holy Spirit and they are accountable to him for those decisions or their apathy.

John 14:18-20 [ESV]

18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

“Jesus With Us”

Matthew 28:20

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of Galilee by James Tissot*



Jesus promised that he would send his Holy Spirit to lead and guide us in our walk of faith. The Holy Spirit’s presence as the Spirit of truth, the guarantee of salvation, helper and guide allows us as Christians to walk with confidence in this world.

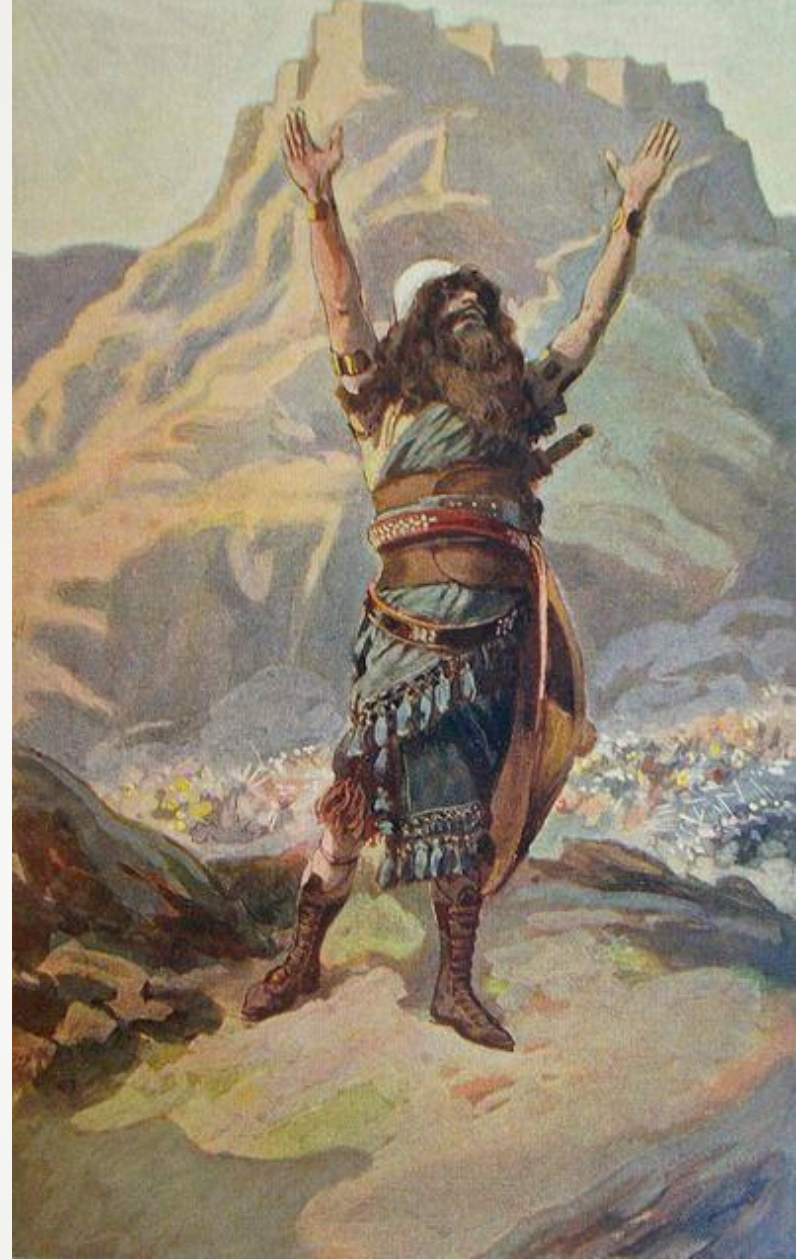
Joshua 1:5-6 [ESV]

5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

“Jesus With Us” Matthew 28:20

God promises Joshua that he will be with him as he has been with Moses. The ability to do what God wants in our lives demands confidence and courage. It is only as we trust that Jesus Christ is with us that we can have confidence. In Matthew 28:20 Jesus says to his disciples, “I am always there”. Jesus is with us though we do not always feel his presence or see his hand.



Joshua by James Tissot

July 30, 2023

“Jesus With Us” Matthew 28:20

For Joshua that was enough to give him confidence to accomplish God’s will. That does not mean we will not make mistakes and sometimes miss God’s will or purpose. Joshua on several occasions certainly did. But it means that in the midst of circumstances God will be at work in our lives.



Joshua by James Tissot

July 30, 2023

Daniel 3:10-30 *16-19 [ESV]

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated.

“Jesus With Us” Matthew 28:20



This fresco of the fiery furnace is from the Catacomb of Priscilla, dating to late 200s AD. The final decade of the 3rd century was very difficult for Christians in the Roman Empire

For the disciples to be confident as they entered a world that would often be hostile they would need assurance that Jesus was alive, he was all powerful, that he had commissioned them. Jesus promised them that he would be with them. In John's gospel he had promised them the night before his death that he would send his Spirit to be with them.

“Jesus With Us” Matthew 28:20



Fresco of the fiery furnace is from the Catacomb of Priscilla, dating to late 200s AD

John many decades
latter at the end of the 1st
Century facing the 1st
official persecution of
Christians under Diocletian
would write to them about
the power of Christ within.
For Christians, the
presence of Christ with
Shadrach, Meshach and
Abednego in the fiery
furnace and their courage
and confidence before
Nebuchadnezzar was
heartening.

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Matthew 28:20



This fired brick bears the imprint of King Nebuchadnezzar, these are found in Babylon in huge numbers and is testament to Nebuchadnezzar's desire to build with fired brick to leave a permanent memorial.

July 30, 2023

Acts 4:16-22 *18-20 [ESV]

18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,

20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

Christianity would in spite of its criminal designation by the Roman Government for over 200 years continue to grow and develop until it conquered the Roman Empire. Much as the 3 Hebrew children and Daniel conquered the Babylonian empire.

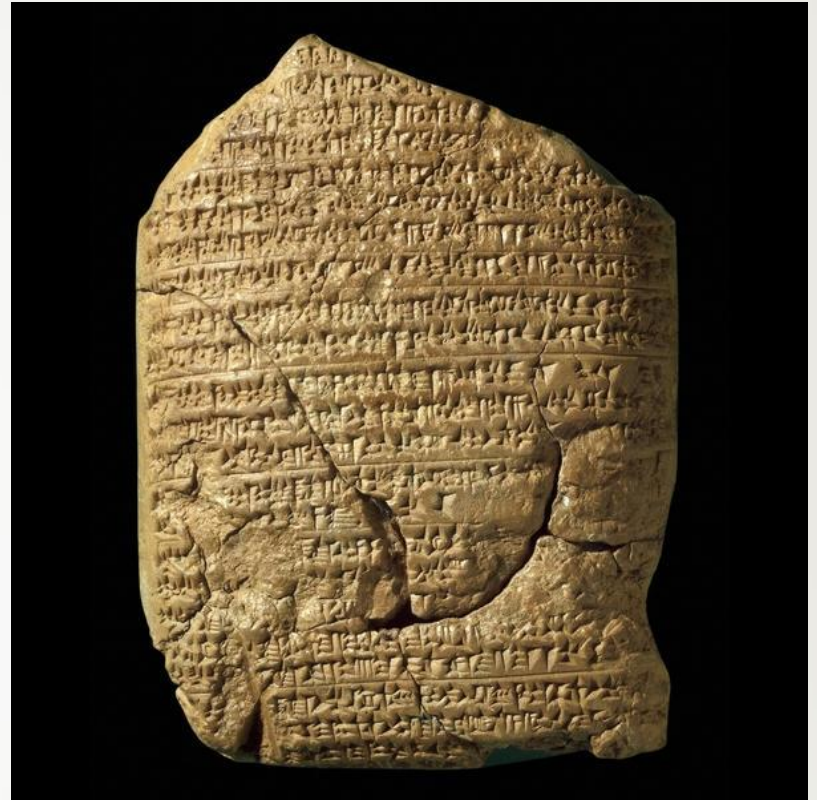
“Jesus With Us” Matthew 28:20



This is the only representation of Nebuchadnezzar that we have, this was unusual among Mesopotamian kings. Perhaps this reticence was the result of his experience in Daniel 3.

“Jesus With Us”

Matthew 28:20



This is the “Nebuchadnezzar Chronicle” also called the “Jerusalem Chronicle” from the Babylonian Chronicles. It covers the 1st eleven years of his reign. [r. 605-562 – 43 years].

It is the presence of Christ with us through the power of the Holy Spirit which gives us assurance, confidence and determination. In the centuries following one motif that became popular in Christian grave art in the catacombs was reference to Daniel 3 and the fiery furnace. In the 1st centuries where local persecutions could break out randomly. Christians must have continually felt ill at ease.

Acts 18:9-11 [ESV]

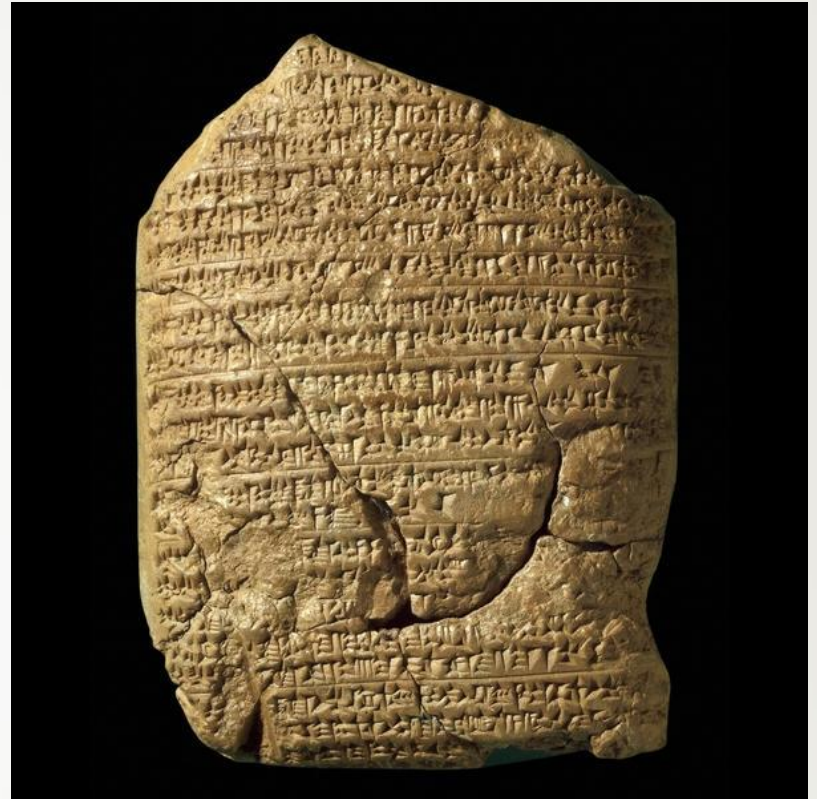
9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent,

10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."

11 And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

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July 30, 2023

Yet in spite of this, Christianity thrived and it was because of the promise of Jesus that no matter what circumstances we walk through he is with us.

Paul as a broken man in Corinth is reassured by a vision of Jesus confirming his presence with him in the city of Corinth. This would give Paul the confidence he needed to continue the work. It is quite a different situation that Paul faces in 2 Timothy 4:16-18

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2 Timothy 4:16-18 [ESV]

16 At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!

17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul faced his moment in the fiery furnace. He knew that he would die for the faith. God was not going to deliver him from Nero's execution, though he had spared him from death in the arena. Yet, Jesus was still with him and delivered him.

"Jesus With Us" Matthew 28:20



Fresco of the fiery furnace is from the Catacomb of Priscilla, dating to late 200s AD

1 John 4:1-4 [ESV]

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

“Jesus With Us”

Matthew 28:20



The view from the top of Mt Beatitudes (Mt. Eremos) In the distance is the Sea of Galilee and the city of Capernaum.

As we walk through this world we know that Jesus is with us. We know that he is greater than anything in this world.