

Survey and Interpretation of Matthew 27:55-28:20

A. Paragraph Titles

Women Were Observing (27:55-56)
Jesus' Burial (27:57-61)
Securing the Tomb (27:62-66)
He Has Risen (28:1-10)
Spreading Misinformation (28:11-15)
The Great Commission (28:16-20)

B. Main Units

I. Jesus' Burial (27:55-66)
II. Jesus' Resurrection (28:1-20)

The first main unit focuses on the events surrounding the burial of Jesus, including the preparation for burial and the stationing of guards in response to the chief priests' concerns of his body being stolen.

The second main unit begins after the Sabbath and focuses on Jesus' resurrection and the commissioning of the disciples that follows His resurrection.

Sub-Units

I. Jesus' Burial (27:55-66)
 A. Women Were Observing (27:55-56)
 B. Jesus' Burial (27:57-61)
 C. Securing the Tomb (27:62-66)

II. Jesus' Resurrection (28:1-20)
 A. He Has Risen (28:1-10)
 B. Spreading Misinformation (28:11-15)
 C. The Great Commission (28:16-20)

C. Structural Relationships

1. Causation with Contrast by Interchange

Jesus' words about rising after three days caused the chief priests to request that the tomb be made secure (27:63-64).

News of Jesus' resurrection caused the chief priests to spread misinformation that the disciples stole Jesus' body (28:11, 13).

There is another level of causation, through Jesus' death and resurrection, that leads to His statement that He has been given all authority (28:18), and His direct and public revelation that He is the Son of God (28:19), His sending the disciples to all nations (28:19), and His commissioning His disciples to teach His commandments (28:20). These statements are more specific and heightened than His previous words in Matthew, so through His death and resurrection, it is clear to the reader that something significant has changed.

The reaction of the chief priests (i.e., suspicion) to both the burial and resurrection of Jesus is in contrast to the disciples' reactions of fear, joy (28:8) and worship (28:17), although some disciples also had doubt (28:17). An even greater contrast is seen between the message of misinformation spread by the chief priests through the guards (28:11-15) and the message of discipleship spread by Jesus through His disciples (28:18-20). There is also a contrast between the priests' attempts to seal and guard the tomb (28:64-66) and the angel's announcement that Jesus is not there (28:6).

These three layers of contrast are structured as interchange, in which the story of the priests (27:62-66; 27:11-15) is woven through the story of the disciples (27:55-61; 28:1-10; 28:16-20).

Interpretive Questions

How does the cause of Jesus' burial and resurrection produce the effect of reaction from the chief priests, and how does it produce His final statements in verses 28:18-20? What are the major elements involved in the movement from cause to effect, and what is the meaning of each element? Why does the author include this causation? What are the implications of this causation?

What major differences are emphasized by the author regarding reactions of people and message that is spread and regarding the sealing and opening of the tomb? What is the precise and specific meaning of each of these differences? Why does the author deal with these differences as he does? What are the implications of these contrasts?

What are the major differences the author presents? What is the meaning of each difference? How does the interchange between the story of the disciples and the story of the priests strengthen these contrasts? How does the interchange shed light on each major difference? Why does the author emphasize these differences? Why does the author support or strengthen these contrasts by the use of interchange? What are the implications of this interchange?

Strategic Area

Verses 27:63-64 highlight the initial cause, i.e., Jesus' words about rising in three days, and this cause lies behind both reactions of the chief priests (pre- and post-resurrection).

2. Climax

There seems to be a climactic passage that includes a first-tier climax that Jesus has risen (28:6), followed by an even greater climax in His announcement that “all authority in heaven and on earth” has been given to Him (28:18), along with His commissioning of the disciples, by which His baptism (and His identification as the Son of God) and His teaching will be spread to “all nations” (28:19-20).

While the resurrection of Jesus is a significant high point in the narrative of Matthew’s Gospel, the reason 28:18-20 are the climactic verses is that this news represents the culmination of the reason for His resurrection. In a strict literary sense, the resurrection might seem to be the literal climax and the Great Commission the result of the climactic event. However, I would argue that the authority given to Jesus and His call to make disciples is the true climactic event, made possible by His death and resurrection.

Interpretive Questions

How does this unit reach its climax in verses 28:18-20? How does this climactic development shed light on the climactic passage and the material leading up to it? Why does the author include this climax in verses 28:18-20? What are the implications of this climax?

Strategic Area

The climactic verses are 28:18-20.

3. Cruciality

There is a turning point in this passage in verse 28:6, when the angel notifies the women that Jesus is not in the tomb because He has risen. The material leading up to this turning point focuses on the burial of Jesus, including the care of Joseph (27:57-60) the vigilance of the women (27:61, 28:1), and the suspicions of the chief priests, along with their effort to prevent something from happening (27:62-66).

After the turning point, the material moves in a different direction in reaction to the resurrection event: the women are sent to alert the disciples (27:7-8, 10), on the way they encounter the risen Jesus (27:9), the priests now have to spread misinformation (28:12-15), Jesus has all authority (28:18), and the disciples are commissioned to spread His baptism and teaching (28:19-20).

Interpretive Questions

How does the turning point in verse 28:6 shed light on the material before and after this pivotal verse? Why does the author include this cruciality? What are the implications of this cruciality?

Strategic Area

The turning-point verse is 28:6.

4. Generalization

In verses 28:16-20, the author describes a general gathering of the disciples in which Jesus gives them instructions for the future. In the material leading up to this generalization, the author gives particulars about the disciples, including the diversity among the disciples (women – 27:55-56; Joseph of Arimathea – 27:57; and eleven of the original disciples called by Jesus – 28:7). Through the material that precedes the general gathering of disciples (even through the negative statements of the priests about the disciples in 27:64 and 28:13), the reader can experience the variety of ways the disciples respond to Jesus' death and resurrection, and can learn something about how they have followed Him. The particulars (27:55-61, 28:1-10) that lead up to the general gathering (28:16-20) bring a human face to the disciples as they are sent out to make more disciples (28:19-20). The general gathering (28:16-20) not only encapsulates the particulars of this segment; it also serves as a summarization of the discipleship elements woven throughout Matthew's Gospel.

Interpretive Questions

What is the meaning of the particular areas (including the diversity among and reactions of the disciples)? How are these particular areas generalized in the gathering of disciples in verses 28:16-20? How does the general gathering shed light on the particulars? Why does the author include this movement from particular to general? What are the implications of this generalization?

Strategic Area

Verses 27:55-61 encompass some of the main particulars (including diversity) leading up to the general gathering of the disciples.

5. Recurrence

This passage has recurring references to (and diversity of) disciples, including the women (27:55-56) who followed Jesus and ministered to Him (implies discipleship), Joseph from Arimathea (27:57), His disciples (including reference to "brethren") that He will meet in Galilee (28:7, 10), the specifically referenced "eleven disciples" (28:16), and the new disciples that are to be made (28:19). There is also a recurrence of negative reference to Jesus' disciples by the chief priests (27:64, 28:13).

Interpretive Questions

What is the primary meaning of the recurring element of “disciples”? How does each individual occurrence of “disciples” relate to and shed light on the others? Why does the author include this recurrence? What are the implications of this recurrence?

Strategic Area

Verses 28:16-19 is the strategic area in which the original disciples are gathered and commissioned to make more disciples.

D. Literary Form

This passage is a narrative.

E. Atmosphere

The atmosphere shifts dramatically from sad to rejoicing (and incredulous). It ends with a sense of empowerment, direction, and anticipation of the future.

F. Other Impressions

Two women named Mary are mentioned by name three times: 27:56, 61, and 28:1. They are the last people mentioned who stay at the tomb (27:61) and they are the first to visit the tomb after the Sabbath (28:1).

G. Detailed Observation/Inference

Interpretation of Matthew 28:18-20; context includes 16-17. What does Jesus mean by His exhortation to “Make disciples”? Use this lesson to synthesize your understanding of discipleship in Matthew’s Gospel.

Verse	Observation	Inference
28:18-19	These verses are linked by causation: “therefore” in verse 19. The authority Jesus has been given (28:19) causes the exhortation to make disciples (28:20). Jesus’ statement about His authority is a new statement that follows His resurrection. Jesus’ authority includes heaven and earth. He has been given <i>all</i> authority, not partial. It has been <i>given to Him</i> . This latter statement recalls Matthew 16:21 in which Jesus says He will “be raised.” The unmentioned power that raised	Disciples are made because of Jesus’ authority through His resurrection. Discipleship is based in Jesus’ complete authority over all of heaven and earth. Discipleship should reflect that Jesus has all authority.

	<p>Him and gave Him all authority has to be God. No other power, other than the one who has created everything, could give Jesus all authority of heaven and earth.</p>	
28:19-20	<p>The call to “make disciples” is particularized as baptizing and teaching.</p> <p>Keener adds that going out to the nations is also one of the particulars of this call to make disciples. (Craig S. Keener, <i>The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament</i>, 2nd edition, Kindle edition, Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014, Loc. 3580-3587).</p> <p>Keener notes that the call to make disciples (i.e., those who would study under Jesus) goes beyond the Jewish practice of that time, in which Jews living in Gentile lands would make converts but not disciples (Keener, Loc. 3587).</p> <p>Wilkins connects Matthew’s emphasis on teaching disciples (28:20) with the way Matthew has included Jesus’ teaching discourses throughout his Gospel (M. J. Wilkins, “Disciples and Discipleship,” <i>DJG</i>, 207).</p> <p>Wilkins notes that baptism and obedience to Jesus’ teachings differentiates growth of a disciple from a mere calling of a disciple (208).</p>	<p>There is a difference between a convert and a disciple of Jesus.</p> <p>Jesus has taught His disciples how to teach new disciples.</p> <p>Discipleship involves growth.</p>
28:19	<p>Baptism is done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the last two of which must have been newly associated with baptism. The reference to baptism in the name of the Holy Spirit links back to the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:16. Jesus describes His own baptism as fulfilling righteousness (3:15).</p>	<p>Discipleship is Trinitarian in nature.</p> <p>Baptism symbolizes a turning from sin toward righteousness.</p>

	Keener notes that Jewish people at the time would have recognized the Spirit of God as divine, so the idea of baptizing in the name of the Holy Spirit might not have been new. But the addition of “the Son” would have been new (Keener, Loc. 3587).	
28:20	Disciples are to observe not some but <i>all</i> of what Jesus has commanded. Wilkins notes that Matthew characterizes disciples by those who are with Jesus as opposed to the crowds and religious leaders who are not with Him (and are often against Him) (207).	A disciple’s commitment cannot be halfway. If a person is not with Jesus, she is against Him. There are no spectator disciples.
28:19	Discipleship is intended for all nations.	Every person in the world has an invitation to become a disciple of Jesus.
28:19	The disciples are told to “Go.”	Discipleship involves outward movement and being sent out by Jesus.
28:19	The disciples are told to make more disciples, and the sphere includes all nations.	Discipleship is intended to grow with no limits. Each disciple is to raise up other disciples. Part of discipleship is discipling others.
28:17	The author makes clear that not all of the disciples believed what they were seeing. Keener notes that the doubt might have reflected the Jewish understanding that resurrection would happen at the end times (Keener, Loc. 3580).	Disciples are susceptible to doubt and need to be aware of their own doubts. This doubt has to do with the truth of Jesus’ resurrection in one aspect or another.
28:17	The disciples’ first response was to worship Jesus. Worship had previous been given to God alone, so the idea of worshiping Jesus as the Son of God is new within the monotheistic faith of the Jewish followers of God.	Discipleship begins with worshipping Jesus.
28:16	Jesus told the disciples where to meet Him.	Even after His death and resurrection, Jesus continues to lead His disciples.
28:16	Jesus met His disciples on a mountain	

	<p>in Galilee. Galilee is mentioned in verses 28:7, 10, and 16, as well as in 27:55 where it is used to identify Jesus from Galilee. The mountain recalls the Transfiguration of Matthew 17:1-8 and the teaching of His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-2). Keener notes a biblical tradition by which God “often revealed himself on mountains” (Keener, Loc. 3580).</p>	
28:19	<p>Disciples are made.</p> <p>Keener notes, “Rabbis made disciples by teaching them” (Loc. 3593) and notes the distinction that “Jesus’ followers are the make disciples for Jesus, not for themselves” (Loc. 3580) (the latter is what rabbis would have done).</p>	<p>The effort of disciples is required in making other disciples.</p> <p>Disciples are made for Jesus, not for the person who is discipling them.</p>
28:19-20	<p>In contrast to the sending out of the disciples in Matthew 10:5-8, the disciples are now told to baptize and teach and are not restricted to a certain location, but rather are told to go to all the nations. This sending out follows Jesus’ death, resurrection, and receipt of all authority.</p>	
28:20	<p>New disciples need to be taught and observe everything Jesus commanded His original disciples.</p>	<p>New disciples are to “follow after” Jesus in the same way the original disciples followed after Him (Matthew 16:24-26).</p>
28:20	<p>Jesus is <i>always with</i> His disciples. He is not ever away from them. This statement follows a reference to the Holy Spirit (28:19). There seems to be an implication that Jesus will be with His disciples through the Holy Spirit. Whether the author intends this implication or some other reference to how Jesus is present, the author makes clear Jesus is present with His disciples, even beyond this meeting with them. His statement about His authority (28:18) implies that He will continue to oversee everything. In the context of making new disciples, the</p>	<p>Jesus continues to be an active partner in disciple-making.</p> <p>Jesus reveals His deity to His disciples in every aspect of their life and growth.</p> <p>Jesus continues to transform His disciples by the power of His Holy Spirit. He is always accessible. A new disciple can expect the same relationship and interaction as Jesus’ original disciples.</p>

	<p>implication is that Jesus will continue to be present in that process. The translated word “always” appears in the Greek as <i>πασας τας ημερας</i> (“all the days”) (Thayer’s).</p> <p>Keener considers Jesus’ statement of His omnipresence (in conjunction with His inclusion in the names of baptism) “a proclamation of his deity” (Keener, Loc. 3593).</p> <p>Wilkins notes that Jesus is always present to transform His disciples and He is always there for them to follow (208). Just as He did for His disciples throughout Matthew’s Gospel. So the new disciples literally are disciples of Jesus.</p>	
28:16	Jesus directs His disciples where to meet Him.	
28:19	The disciples are called to baptize other people. The previous Jewish practice (other than John the Baptist) was for people to purify themselves by washing. (See E. Ferguson, “Baptism,” <i>DJG</i> , 66).	Baptism is part of the repentance process of discarding the old life and embracing new life with Jesus (although repentance continues through the transformation process with Jesus). Disciples of Jesus are called to baptize new disciples.
28:20	In Greek, “observe” is <i>τηρεω</i> which means “to observe” and “to keep” especially with regard to a commandment (Thayer’s).	Disciples are expected to keep everything Jesus commanded the original disciples.
28:20	In Greek, “commanded” is <i>εντελλομαι</i> which means “to order, command to be done” (Thayer’s).	
28:20	In Greek, “to the close of the age” is <i>εως της συντελειας του αιωνος</i> translated as “until the completion [or consummation] of the age [with reference to the age leading up to Christ’s second coming]” (Thayer’s). In conjunction with “all the days” (see above), it seems the author is indicating that Jesus will be with the disciples every day until His second coming.	The current age is not the end-all and the kingdom of heaven has not fully arrived until Jesus comes again. Therefore, Jesus’ exhortation to make disciples comes with a sense of urgency. He is available every minute to empower this discipling process. A disciple of Jesus needs to actively participate in this process in an immediate and active sense.

<p>28:19</p>	<p>The author refers to baptizing “in the name of.” In Greek, “in the name of” (εις το ονομα του) has the connotation of “into the ownership or possession,” while the Hebrew equivalent means “with reference to” (E. Ferguson, “Baptism,” <i>DJG</i>, 68).</p> <p>The naming of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in connection with baptism recalls Matthew 3:16-17 in which all three of these named persons are involved, except that Jesus is not yet identified as the Son of God. Matthew is unique among the Gospels in connecting the repentance of baptism with the coming of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 3:2). (See E. Ferguson, “Baptism,” <i>DJG</i>, 67).</p>	<p>Disciples belong to Jesus. Upon their baptism, they are brought into the kingdom of heaven.</p>
<p>28:19</p>	<p>The author references the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the context of baptism, and by extension discipleship of all nations is also done in the name of the Trinity.</p>	<p>Jesus intends that all nations will be under His rule. He does not exclude anyone from being invited to become His disciple. However, discipleship requires the response demonstrated throughout the Gospel of Matthew of giving up the old life to follow Jesus and embracing new life with Him.</p>
<p>28:18</p>	<p>In Greek, “authority” is εξουσια which means “the power of rule or government” universally (Thayer’s). Because the authority has been given (assumed by God), God has made Jesus the universal power of rule and government.</p>	<p>Disciples are subject to and empowered by Jesus’ lordship.</p>
<p>28:18</p>	<p>The author refers to Jesus’ authority in heaven. The Greek word for “heaven” used in this context is ουρανω. Thayer’s relates this term to God’s kingdom of which Jesus is now lord. The author particularizes Jesus’ lordship in how He directs the disciples where to meet Him (28:16), how He commands them to keep His commandments and to teach others to keep those same commandments</p>	<p>From His resurrection, Jesus became lord and ruler of heaven and earth, with the authority and power to command His disciples. Jesus made clear that He would continue to lead them every day, including in the process of making other disciples, until His second coming. Disciples make other disciples by the authority of the lord of the kingdom of heaven.</p>

	(28:20) (see Greek definitions above), how Jesus says He will continue to be with them until His second coming (28:20), and in Jesus' expression of His authority (28:18) (see definition above).	What Jesus commanded to be done in the disciples' lives is intended to usher in the kingdom of heaven.
28:18	Jesus has also been given all authority on earth. For the earliest readers who expected the Messiah to replace the earthly kingdoms, this verse indicates that He has done so. The author links "in heaven and on earth," recalling Matthew's theme of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus' resurrection seems to expand the understanding of the kingdom of heaven to include earth.	In the context of Jesus' second coming (see above reference to "the completion of the age"), this verse suggests the kingdom of heaven as something that is not completely manifested yet. In the context of Jesus' exhortation to make disciples, and the earlier theme of sending disciples to announce the kingdom (Matthew 10:7), it seems that the kingdom is advancing on earth as in heaven (recalling Matthew 6:10 and 18:18), even though the fulfillment of the kingdom awaits the second coming of Jesus (Matthew 28:20).
28:20	The disciples are to teach new disciples to keep Jesus' commandments. Keeping commandments is an action that disciples must take of their own initiative. Wilkins notes how Matthew highlights both the positive and negative attributes of Jesus' disciples and how Matthew hinges these on whether or not a disciple responds obediently to Jesus' teachings (207).	New disciples of Jesus need to be taught obedience to His commandments. However, it is up to the disciple to respond in obedience. Obedience is a key to whether a disciple will produce good or bad fruit.
28:20	Jesus has already given the commandments that the disciples are to teach. Jesus has already made disciples (as Matthew's Gospel has demonstrated throughout), so He has already taught and modeled what the disciples are now charged to do. Wilkins notes that Matthew chronicles Peter's discipleship as an example of what to follow and what not to follow	Matthew's Gospel provides a guidebook for how to make disciples by following how Jesus made His disciples, what He commanded them, and how He taught them. Because Matthew is only one part of the New Testament, the foundations of making disciples are not limited to what is printed in Matthew's Gospel. However, Matthew's

	(208).	Gospel provides a model and a starting place for discipleship.
28:18	R. Beaton notes that Jesus’ “power and authority are located in the arrival of the kingdom of God and made visible in the lives of the people whom Jesus encounters” (“Authority and Power,” <i>DJG</i> , 62). Beaton also notes that power is what is needed “to accomplish the task” (64). Beaton describes Jesus’ use of power and authority (in contrast to earthly authority, especially religious authority) as one that brings a restoration of what God intends life in His kingdom to be (64).	Jesus empowers His disciples to continue ushering in the restoration life of the kingdom of heaven. While the kingdom of heaven will not manifest fully until the second coming of Jesus, the kingdom has already begun to arrive. It is spread by way of Jesus’ disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit.
28:18	Matthew refers to “authority” (εξουσια) 10 times in his Gospel: 7:29 (the crowds noted Jesus taught with more authority than the religious leaders), 8:9 (the centurion’s recognition of how Jesus operated in authority), 9:6 (Jesus’ statement of His authority to forgive sins), 9:8 (the crowds noting the authority to forgive, exercised by Jesus, was given to men), 10:1 (Jesus’ delegation of His authority to the disciples the first time He sends them out), 21:23 (twice), 24, 27 (the religious leaders question Jesus’ authority in teaching and from where He has received His authority, and in turn He asks them a question they cannot answer), and the present verse 28:18 (Jesus’ tells His disciples He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth; therefore, He sends them out to make disciples). In comparison with Matthew’s use of authority in 9:6, Keener notes that 28:20 takes it further to include a kingdom perspective (Keener, Loc. 3580). Keener also notes the allusion to	Jesus delegates His authority to His disciples, including authority to forgive sins (9:6), cast out unclean spirits, and heal every disease and infirmity (Matthew 10:1), all of which are indications that the kingdom of heaven has arrived and all of which are ways the Holy Spirit empowers the disciples to help people find realignment of their lives in the kingdom of heaven.

	<p>Daniel 7:13-14 (Keener, Loc. 3580). In this passage from Daniel, a son of man is presented to the Ancient of Days and is “given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.” The kingdom described in Daniel is everlasting and indestructible. The reach of this kingdom to all of the nations parallels Jesus’ discipling instructions in Matthew 28:19.</p>	
28:19	<p>The Greek for “make disciples” is a verb μαθητευω meaning “to make a disciple; to teach, instruct [someone]” (Thayer’s). Because the two words seem separated in English (i.e., to make a disciple), it is significant to realize that in Greek, the verb encompasses the process of discipling.</p> <p>The passive of this verb is used regarding Joseph of Arimathe’a (27:57), indicating that Joseph was made a disciple of Jesus.</p> <p>Wilkins indicates that this verb includes both calling and growth (208).</p>	<p>Discipling is a growth and transformational process led by Jesus through and in His disciples. The one who is becoming a disciple experiences and participates in this transformational growth process.</p>
28:16	<p>The Greek for disciple (μαθητης) is a noun. Thayer’s defines this word as a “learner, pupil, disciple.” Thayer’s distinguishes “disciple” from “student” (διδασκαλος). Thayer’s also describes a disciple as someone who <i>follows</i> another’s teachings, in the Gospels especially referring to Jesus’ teachings; and the Jews who became <i>adherents</i> of Jesus (emphasis added).</p>	<p>A disciple is not simply a student of Jesus or someone who learns about the teachings of Jesus, but rather someone who follows Him, lives by and is transformed by His teachings.</p>
27:55-61, 28:1-10	<p>Verses 27:55-61 and 28:1-10 show particularization and variations of Jesus’ disciples: Women (27:55-56, 61, 28:1-10) who followed Jesus, ministered to Him, watched as He died, sat by His tomb, visited His tomb and were told He has risen, and went to tell the news with fear and joy; Joseph of Arimathe’a (27:57-60) who was</p>	<p>Jesus’ disciples are a diverse group of real human beings who experience a range of emotions, make mistakes, who are loyal to Him, and who show their love for Him in different ways.</p>

	<p>wealthy, had access to and influence with Pilate, prepared Jesus for burial and gave Him his own tomb; and 11 of the original disciples (28:16), also referred to as brethren (28:10) who followed Jesus' direction to meet Him on a mountain in Galilee, worshiped Him, has some doubters among them, and received His commissioning to go and make more disciples for Jesus.</p> <p>Wilkins confirms that the women with Jesus were considered disciples, having given up their old lives to follow Him. Wilkins also notes that women disciples were unusual in Palestine of that time (205).</p>	
<p>28:16</p>	<p>“Disciple” as a noun (μαθητης) (mostly in the plural, with three times singular) appears in Matthew’s Gospel 74 times across 21 of the 28 chapters. Clearly the “disciple” is a significant subject in the Gospel of Matthew. Discipleship with Jesus, the arrival of the kingdom of heaven, and the ways these connect are important themes in Matthew’s Gospel.</p>	<p>Discipleship plays a pivotal role in growing and being transformed in relationship with Jesus and in the spread of the kingdom of heaven.</p>
<p>28:16</p>	<p>As Matthew describes the closing scene between Jesus and His disciples, it is helpful to survey briefly what the reader has learned about disciples from Matthew:</p> <p>In Matthew’s Gospel, disciples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Followed Jesus up a mountain (5:1, 17:6, 28:16) • Listened to Jesus teach (5:1, 13:10) • Were taught how to practice piety (6:1-4) and how to pray (6:5-15) and how to fast (6:16-18) • Were told not to be anxious (6:25) • Were called to leave old ways 	<p>By reviewing Matthew’s description of the disciples as they interact with Jesus, a reader can learn what is involved with being a disciple of Jesus. His disciples are in an active relationship with Him, and He does not withhold truth, His ways, and His teaching from them. They are His family.</p> <p>A disciple of Jesus turns from her old life to follow Jesus, lives as a disciple, loves as Jesus loves, is open to correction by Him, receives delegated authority from Jesus for the purpose of making disciples and demonstrating the arrival of the kingdom of heaven, and worships Him.</p>

	<p>and follow Jesus (4:19-22, 8:21-22, 9:9, 16-17)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were rebuked for fear and lack of faith (8:26, 14:31, 17:16-20) • Witnessed Jesus' power (8:26-27, 21:21-22) and healings (9:19) • Joined Jesus as He ate with sinners (9:10-11) • Learned that being in Jesus' presence and following Him is more important than religious rituals or money (9:14-15, 15:2, 26:8) • Received authority from Jesus to cast out unclean spirits and heal every disease and infirmity (10:1) • Were instructed by Jesus (11:1, 28:19-20) • Were referred to as Jesus' relatives and as those who do the will of His Father in heaven (12:49, 28:10) • Were taught parables and the meaning of them (13:10, 36) • Learned how good soil of the heart produces good fruit in the kingdom of heaven (13:23) • Witnessed Jesus feed crowds miraculously (14:15-19, 15:32-36) • Went with Jesus away from the crowds (14:22) • Were rebuked for lack of understanding (15:15, 16:8-9) • Were taught that defilement comes from the heart (15:15) • Were warned to avoid the teachings and practices of the Pharisees (16:6, 12, 23:1-3) • Were told that He would suffer at the hands of religious leaders in Jerusalem, be killed, and be raised on the third day (16:21-22, 20:17-19, 26:1-2) 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were rebuked for being on the side of Satan and not God in arguing against God's will (16:23) • Were told to take up their cross and follow Jesus (16:24) • Were told that if they save their life they will lose it, and if they lose their life for Jesus' sake, they will find it (16:25-26) • Were present (some) at the Transfiguration (17:6) • Were told to become like children and that the kingdom of heaven belongs to children (18:1, 19:14) • Were warned not to be sinful and not to tempt anyone to sin (18:1) • Were told to forgive others (18:21-22) • Were told how worldly ways can block entering the kingdom of heaven (13:22, 19:23-24) • Were told that God brings salvation (19:25-26) • Entered Jerusalem with Jesus (21:1, 6) • Were told to have faith and with it would come the same power they saw from Jesus (21:21-22) • Listened to Jesus describe the tribulation to come (24:3) • Ate the Passover with Jesus and heard Him speak about the new covenant (26:20, 26:26-29) • Sang a hymn with Jesus (26:30) • Vowed to stay with Jesus and were told they would fall away (26:31-35) • Were asked to pray and watch with Jesus (26:36-38) • Were chastised for falling asleep instead of watching and praying (26:40-45) 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forsook Jesus and fled (26:56) • Were not trusted by the religious leaders (27:64) • Were told that Jesus was risen (28:8-9) and were told that He was given all authority in heaven and on earth (28:18) • Were used as scapegoats in the story fabricated by the religious leaders (28:13) • Met with the risen Jesus on a mountain in Galilee (28:16) • Worshiped the risen Jesus (28:17) • Had some doubters among them (28:17) • Were told to go and make disciples of all nations (28:19-20) 	
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H. Summary

- Disciples are made because of Jesus' authority through His resurrection. Discipleship is based in Jesus' complete authority over all of heaven and earth. Discipleship should reflect that Jesus has all authority.
- There is a difference between a convert and a disciple of Jesus.
- Jesus has taught His disciples how to teach new disciples.
- Discipleship involves growth.
- Discipleship is Trinitarian in nature.
- Baptism symbolizes a turning from sin toward righteousness.
- A disciple's commitment cannot be halfway. If a person is not with Jesus, she is against Him. There are no spectator disciples.
- Every person in the world has an invitation to become a disciple of Jesus.
- Discipleship involves outward movement and being sent out by Jesus.
- Discipleship is intended to grow with no limits. Each disciple is to raise up other disciples. Part of discipleship is discipling others.
- Disciples are susceptible to doubt and need to be aware of their own doubts. This doubt has to do with the truth of Jesus' resurrection in one aspect or another.
- Discipleship begins with worshiping Jesus.
- Even after His death and resurrection, Jesus continues to lead His disciples.
- The effort of disciples is required in making other disciples.
- Disciples are made for Jesus, not for the person who is discipling them.
- New disciples are to "follow after" Jesus in the same way the original disciples followed after Him (Matthew 16:24-26).

- Jesus continues to be an active partner in disciple-making.
- Jesus reveals His deity to His disciples in every aspect of their life and growth.
- Jesus continues to transform His disciples by the power of His Holy Spirit. He is always accessible. A new disciple can expect the same relationship and interaction as Jesus' original disciples.
- Baptism is part of the repentance process of discarding the old life and embracing new life with Jesus (although repentance continues through the transformation process with Jesus). Disciples of Jesus are called to baptize new disciples.
- Disciples are expected to keep everything Jesus commanded the original disciples.
- The current age is not the end-all and the kingdom of heaven has not fully arrived until Jesus comes again. Therefore, Jesus' exhortation to make disciples comes with a sense of urgency. He is available every minute to empower this discipling process. A disciple of Jesus needs to actively participate in this process in an immediate and active sense.
- Disciples belong to Jesus. Upon their baptism, they are brought into the kingdom of heaven.
- Jesus intends that all nations will be under His rule. He does not exclude anyone from being invited to become His disciple. However, discipleship requires the response demonstrated throughout the Gospel of Matthew of giving up the old life to follow Jesus and embracing new life with Him.
- Disciples are subject to and empowered by Jesus' lordship.
- From His resurrection, Jesus became lord and ruler of heaven and earth, with the authority and power to command His disciples. Jesus made clear that He would continue to lead them every day, including in the process of making other disciples, until His second coming. Disciples make other disciples by the authority of the lord of the kingdom of heaven.
- What Jesus commanded to be done in the disciples' lives is intended to usher in the kingdom of heaven.
- In the context of Jesus' second coming (see above reference to "the completion of the age"), this verse suggests the kingdom of heaven as something that is not completely manifested yet. In the context of Jesus' exhortation to make disciples, and the earlier theme of sending disciples to announce the kingdom (Matthew 10:7), it seems that the kingdom is advancing on earth as in heaven (recalling Matthew 6:10 and 18:18), even though the fulfillment of the kingdom awaits the second coming of Jesus (Matthew 28:20).
- New disciples of Jesus need to be taught obedience to His commandments. However, it is up to the disciple to respond in obedience. Obedience is a key to whether a disciple will produce good or bad fruit.
- Matthew's Gospel provides a guidebook for how to make disciples by following how Jesus made His disciples, what He commanded them, and how He taught them. Because Matthew is only one part of the New Testament, the foundations of making disciples are not limited to what is printed in Matthew's Gospel. However, Matthew's Gospel provides a model and a starting place for discipleship.

- Jesus empowers His disciples to continue ushering in the restoration life of the kingdom of heaven. While the kingdom of heaven will not manifest fully until the second coming of Jesus, the kingdom has already begun to arrive. It is spread by way of Jesus' disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus delegates His authority to His disciples, including authority to forgive sins (9:6), cast out unclean spirits, and heal every disease and infirmity (Matthew 10:1), all of which are indications that the kingdom of heaven has arrived and all of which are ways the Holy Spirit empowers the disciples to help people find realignment of their lives in the kingdom of heaven.
- Discipling is a growth and transformational process led by Jesus through and in His disciples. The one who is becoming a disciple experiences and participates in this transformational growth process.
- A disciple is not simply a student of Jesus or someone who learns about the teachings of Jesus, but rather someone who follows Him, lives by and is transformed by His teachings.
- Jesus' disciples are a diverse group of real human beings who experience a range of emotions, make mistakes, who are loyal to Him, and who show their love for Him in different ways.
- Discipleship plays a pivotal role in growing and being transformed in relationship with Jesus and in the spread of the kingdom of heaven.
- By reviewing Matthew's description of the disciples as they interact with Jesus, a reader can learn what is involved with being a disciple of Jesus. His disciples are in an active relationship with Him, and He does not withhold truth, His ways, and His teaching from them. They are His family.
- A disciple of Jesus turns from her old life to follow Jesus, lives as a disciple, loves as Jesus loves, is open to correction by Him, receives delegated authority from Jesus for the purpose of making disciples and demonstrating the arrival of the kingdom of heaven, and worships Him.

I. Commentaries

France, R.T. *The Gospel of Matthew*. NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007. 1085-1119.

France confirms my observation that the inclusion of the women shows that the people who are committed to following Jesus extends beyond the twelve (1086), and that Matthew gives a place of honor to the women in being the first to hear of Jesus' resurrection (1098). Joseph's act of burying Jesus in his own new tomb is more than an act of Jewish piety. France describes it as an "extravagant act of devotion" (1088), which seems another hallmark of discipleship. France notes that the passive verb that characterizes how Joseph "was disciplined" indicates he is from an unusual group, i.e., "a prominent member of Jerusalem society" (1089). France confirms my observation that the scope of discipleship in Matthew 28:19-20 has increased from the initial sending out of Matthew 10:5-6 (1107, 1114).

France adds to the significance of the negative words spoken of the disciples by the chief priests, in noting the religious leaders' recognition of the disciples' potential for endangering the religious establishment (1094). I noted that a characteristic of discipleship seen in Matthew is that the disciples were not trusted by the religious leaders. France's discussion adds another dimension to my observation, in that the religious leadership recognizes the subversive potential of Jesus' disciples and the carrying out of His teachings, even after His crucifixion. France also notes how the author uses the word "teach" to describe the lies that have been given to the guards by the religious leaders (1105). This confirms my structural observation of how the spread of Jesus' teachings through His disciples is in contrast to the spreading of the religious leaders' lies through the guards. He notes that Jesus' commandments do not undermine the Old Testament law but rather bring a new interpretation, and that salvation comes by obedience to Jesus (1119).

I noted that the disciples' first response in Matthew 28:17 was to worship Jesus, but France observes that the first disciples worship the resurrected Jesus are the women in Matthew 28:9. He also confirms my observation that discipleship requires a response (1114).

France notes the significance of Jesus' referring to His disciples as brothers, in light of their falling away (26:31) and how this connects with His words that after they scattered, He would go ahead of them to Galilee (26:32); hence, the emphasis on Galilee in Matthew 28. While I understood Jesus to refer to His disciples as family (Matthew 12:50), France notes the restorative emphasis on the family of God in reuniting Jesus' brothers (disciples) who had fallen away. There are echoes here of Matthew 18:10-22 about restoring a brother who has gone astray, along with the kingdom connection expressed in verses 18:18-20.

France confirms my observation of Jesus' presence that remains with His disciples as they begin to disciple others (1108). And that this is not only through the Holy Spirit, but the presence of Jesus Himself (1119), which I tried to balance in my observation as well. He adds the significance of the word "baptism" in that what once was a practice of repentance for Israel is now for all the nations (1108). The kingdom prophesied in Daniel 7:13-14 "has become present reality" (1112). France confirms my observation of the Greek meaning of Jesus as lord of heaven and earth, adding that this title was attributed to His Father by Jesus in Matthew 11:25 (1113).

Evans, Craig A. *Matthew*. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. 1st Edition. Kindle Edition. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Loc. 11837-12248.

Evans adds to my understanding of the allusions to Daniel 7 in that the description of the angel in Matthew 28:3 is similar to the description of God in Daniel 7:9 (Loc. 12021).

Evans notes that as the women worship and hold Jesus' feet (Matthew 28:9), the author illustrates that Jesus' resurrected body is a real body (Loc. 12082). In addition to the Trinitarian statement of Matthew 28:19, the description of Jesus with a real resurrected

body adds another dimension to Jesus' continued presence with His disciples (as noted by France), not only through the Holy Spirit but as the Son of God. This is also a reminder that I have prematurely introduced the power of the Holy Spirit prior to the story of Pentecost, so I need to amend my inference summary accordingly.

Evans' suggestion that the Greek in Matthew 28:16 be understood as "to the mountain where Jesus gave his commands" (12167) (I am not well-versed enough in Greek to evaluate that translation) prompted me to look up the Greek word *τασσω* from verse 28:16, meaning "to appoint on one's own responsibility or authority" (Thayer's). The use of this word possibly emphasizes the statement to follow about Jesus' authority (28:18).

Where the theme of revelation of God on a mountain in the Gospel of Matthew is similar to the revelation of God to Moses, Evans notes a similarity in God's charge to Moses in Exodus 7:2 and Jesus' charge to His disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 (12191).

Evans notes that disciples will be taught righteousness (in reference to Matthew 5:20) (12200) which lends possibility to my observation of the link between Jesus' words about righteousness at His baptism (Matthew 3:15) and the baptism of disciples (28:19). A review of Matthew 5 reminds me that Jesus taught righteousness to exceed that of the Pharisees and to mirror the perfection of the disciples' heavenly Father (Matthew 5:20, 48) and that this is a requirement to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20). In other words, discipleship in Jesus should produce fruit of righteousness.

Evans observes that "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20) relates back to Matthew 1:23, meaning that God is with His people (12245).

J. Synthesis

- Discipleship is based in Jesus' complete authority over all of heaven and earth. Discipleship should reflect that Jesus has all authority. Jesus reveals His deity to His disciples in every aspect of their life and growth. Discipleship begins with worshiping Jesus but includes worshiping Father and Spirit as well, as discipleship is Trinitarian in nature. Jesus delegates His authority to His disciples, including authority to forgive sins (9:6), cast out unclean spirits, and heal every disease and infirmity (Matthew 10:1), all of which are indications that the kingdom of heaven has arrived and all of which are ways Jesus empowers His disciples to help people find realignment of their lives in the kingdom of heaven. Discipleship plays a pivotal role in growing and being transformed in relationship with Jesus and in the spread of the kingdom of heaven.
- There is a difference between a convert and a disciple of Jesus. A disciple is not simply a student of Jesus or someone who learns about the teachings of Jesus, but rather someone who follows Him, lives by and is transformed by His teachings. Discipling is a growth and transformational process led by Jesus through and in His disciples. The one who is becoming a disciple experiences and participates in this transformational growth process. A disciple's commitment

cannot be halfway. If a person is not with Jesus, she is against Him. There are no spectator disciples. New disciples are to “follow after” Jesus in the same way the original disciples followed after Him (Matthew 16:24-26). Disciples are expected to keep everything Jesus commanded the original disciples.

- Discipleship involves inner growth. In the kingdom of heaven, disciples of Jesus should produce fruit of righteousness, redefined as the perfection of their heavenly Father (Matthew 5:20-48). Disciples are human and are susceptible to doubt. They need to be aware of their own doubts. This doubt has to do with the truth of Jesus’ resurrection in one aspect or another, such as where fear interferes with faith (Matthew 8:26, for example). New disciples of Jesus need to be taught obedience to His commandments. However, it is up to the disciple to respond in obedience. Obedience is a key to whether a disciple will produce good or bad fruit. Jesus continues to transform His disciples. He is always accessible. A new disciple can expect the same relationship and interaction as Jesus’ original disciples. Even after His death and resurrection, Jesus continues to lead His disciples.
- Discipleship involves outward movement and being sent out by Jesus. Discipleship is intended to grow with no limits. Each disciple is to raise up other disciples. Part of discipleship is discipling others. Jesus intends that all nations will be under His rule. He does not exclude anyone from being invited to become His disciple. Every person in the world has an invitation to become a disciple of Jesus. However, discipleship requires the response demonstrated throughout the Gospel of Matthew of giving up the old life to follow Jesus and embracing new life with Him.
- Disciples of Jesus are called to baptize new disciples. Disciples belong to Jesus. Upon their baptism, they are brought into the kingdom of heaven. Baptism is part of the repentance process of discarding the old life and embracing new life with Jesus, realigning with the kingdom of heaven (although repentance continues through the transformation process with Jesus). Baptism symbolizes a turning from sin toward righteousness. Jesus has taught His disciples to be righteous, has redefined righteousness as the perfection of their heavenly Father (Matthew 5:20-48), and has taught that this degree of righteousness is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20). What Jesus commanded to be done in the disciples’ lives is intended to usher in the kingdom of heaven.
- From His resurrection, Jesus became lord and ruler of heaven and earth (a title which Jesus previously attributed to His Father in heaven in Matthew 11:25), with the authority and power to command His disciples. Jesus made clear that He would continue to lead them every day, including in the process of making other disciples, until His second coming. Disciples make other disciples by the authority of the lord of the kingdom of heaven. Disciples receive salvation by obedience to Jesus. Disciples are subject to and empowered by Jesus’ lordship. Discipleship is subversive to leadership that is opposed to Jesus.

- In the context of Jesus' second coming, Matthew 28:20 suggests the kingdom of heaven as something that is not completely manifested yet. In the context of Jesus' exhortation to make disciples, and the earlier theme of sending disciples to announce the kingdom (Matthew 10:7), it seems that the kingdom is advancing on earth as in heaven (recalling Matthew 6:10 and 18:18), even though the fulfillment of the kingdom awaits the second coming of Jesus (Matthew 28:20). Yet, in his allusion to Daniel 7:13-14, Matthew indicates that the kingdom of heaven is also here already, if not yet complete. Even so, the current age is not the end-all. The kingdom of heaven has not fully arrived until Jesus comes again. Therefore, Jesus' exhortation to make disciples comes with a sense of urgency. He is available every minute to empower this discipling process. A disciple of Jesus needs to actively participate in this process in an immediate and active sense. Jesus empowers His disciples to continue ushering in the restoration life of the kingdom of heaven. While the kingdom of heaven will not manifest fully until the second coming of Jesus, the kingdom has already begun to arrive. It is spread by way of Jesus' disciples empowered by Jesus Himself.
- Jesus' disciples are a diverse group of real human beings who experience a range of emotions, make mistakes, are loyal and devoted to Him, and show their love for Him in different ways. The effort of disciples is required in making other disciples. Jesus has taught His disciples how to teach new disciples. Jesus continues to be an active partner in disciple-making. Disciples are made for Jesus, not for the person who is discipling them. Matthew's Gospel provides a guidebook for how to make disciples by following how Jesus made His disciples, what He commanded them, and how He taught them. Because Matthew is only one part of the New Testament, the foundations of making disciples are not limited to what is printed in Matthew's Gospel. However, Matthew's Gospel provides a model and a starting place for discipleship.
- By reviewing Matthew's description of the disciples as they interact with Jesus, a reader can learn what is involved with being a disciple of Jesus. His disciples are in an active relationship with Him, and He does not withhold truth, His ways, and His teaching from them. They are His family restored to Him in the kingdom of heaven. A disciple of Jesus turns from her old life to follow Jesus, lives as a disciple, loves as Jesus loves, is open to correction by Him, receives delegated authority from Jesus for the purpose of making disciples and demonstrating the arrival of the kingdom of heaven, and worships Him.