

**THE GREAT COMMISSION IN MATTHEW 28.16-20**

Matt 28:16 (ASV) But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17 And when they saw him, they worshipped [him]; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

<sup>16</sup>Οἱ δὲ ἕνδεκα μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, <sup>17</sup>καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν. <sup>18</sup>καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς. <sup>19</sup>πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, <sup>20</sup>διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

**1. Introduction**

**2. Matthew 28.16-20**

- a) last words
- b) two parts; three sayings; four alls
  - (i) eleven disciples
  - (ii) to Galilee
  - (iii) to the mountain
  - (iv) they worshipped [him]
  - (v) some doubted
  - (vi) Jesus approached and spoke to them saying
  - (vii) given to me
  - (viii) therefore
  - (ix) having gone, *disciple*, baptizing, teaching
  - (x) all nations / gentiles
  - (xi) into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
  - (xii) I am with you
  - (xiii) end of the age

**3. The “culmination and combination of all Matthew’s central themes” (Blomberg)**

- a) disciples:

*mathētēs*: Matt 5:1 8:21 8:23 9:10, 11 9:14 9:19 9:37 10:1 10:24, 25 10:42 11:1, 2 12:1, 2 12:49 13:10 13:36 13:52 14:12 14:15 14:19 14:22 14:26 15:2 15:12 15:23 15:32, 33 15:36 16:5 16:13 16:20, 21 16:24 17:6 17:10 17:13 17:16 17:19 18:1 19:10 19:13 19:23 19:25 20:17 21:1 21:6 21:20 22:16 23:1 24:1 24:3 26:1 26:8 26:17, 18, 19, 20 26:26 26:35, 36 26:40 26:45 26:56 27:57 27:64 28:7, 8 28:13 28:16 28:19

- (i) A disciple is a pupil/apprentice – 9.10; 10.24

- (ii) who accompanies the Master
  - becomes part of the teacher's circle
  - is with him wherever he goes – 5.1; 8.23; 9.19; 28.16
  - is beside him in all sorts of situations – 9.10; 12.1; 15.23; 15.32; 19.13; 20.17; 24.1; 26.17; 26.35; 26.40; 28.16
  - and who eats with him, travels with him, and is there with him as he teaches and performs miracles and engages in controversies
  
- (iii) and who is instructed by the Master in public and in private, with special access to receive secrets, ask questions and take things further – 13.10; 13.36; 15.12; 16.13; 16.20; 16.24; 17.10; 17.19; 18.1; 19.10; 19.25; 20.17; 21.20; 24.3; 26.1
  
- (iv) The disciple, as an apprentice, does jobs for the Master – 14.19; 15.32; 15.36; 21.1; 21.6; 26.17
  
- (v) but beyond this, he is identified with the Master – 10.24; 10.42; 9.10; 12.1; 15.2; 26.26; 26.35
  - so much so that the disciple becomes like the Master and is regarded by the Master as family – 10.24, 12.49
  
- (vi) And so, the disciple represents the Master and does his work – 10.1; 17.16, 19 (weak reps), 19.13 (bad reps)
  
- (vii) and, is called/directed by the Master to go and make other disciples / make the nations into disciples

*A disciple lives with the Master, learns from the Master, serves the Master, becomes like the Master, identifies with the Master, represents the Master, and does the Master's work.*

b) worshipped

*proskuneō* in Matthew

- 2:2, 8, 11 – wise men and Herod
- 4:9 (x2) – Satan and Jesus
- 8:2 – man with leprosy
- 9:18 – Jairus
- 14:33 – those in the boat
- 15:25 – Canaanite woman
- 18:26 – unmerciful servant
- 20:20 – mother of Zebedee's sons
- 28:9 – women on Easter Day
- 28:17

c) authority

*exousia* (+) in Matthew

- 7.29; 8.9; 9.6-8; 10.1; 20.25; 21.23-27; 28.18

d) nations

universality in Matthew

- 1.1 (son of Abraham)
- 1.5 (Ruth)
- 2.1-12 (magi)
- 3.9 (raise up children from stones)
- 4.15ff (Galilee)
- 5.13-14 (city/light)
- 8:5ff (centurion+)
- 8.28 (Gadarenes)
- 10.18 (Gentiles)
- 11.21-22 (Tyre and Sidon)
- 12.21 (Is 42 quote)
- 12.41-42 (Nineveh, Queen of the South)
- 13.32, 38, 47 (birds of the air; field is the world; fish of every kind)
- 15.21-28 (Canaanite woman)
- 16.13 (Caesarea Philippi)
- 21.41-43 (kingdom given to a people)
- 22.8-10 (go and invite)
- 24.14 (gospel to whole world)
- 24.31 (elect from the four winds)
- 25.31-32 (all the nations judged)
- 26.13 (gospel in whole world)
- 27.54 (centurion)

e) teaching

- Five discourses
- Jesus teaches at 4.23 5.2 7.29 9.35 11.1 13.34 21.23 26.55
- cp Exodus 7.2; Deut 1.3; 30.8; Josh 1.7; Jer 1.7

f) with you

- 1.23 – to deliver
- 18.20 – in the temple/church
- 28.20 – as disciple the world

g) mountains

- background

Eden, Ararat, Moriah, Horeb-Sinai, Carmel, Zion

Is 2; 11.9; 18.7; 25.6-9; 27.13; 30.29; 56.3-8; 57.13; Daniel 2.34-5; Joel 2.32; 3.17; Obadiah 17; Zech 8.3; Gal 4; Heb 12; Rev 8; 14; 21.

- Donaldson
  - the mountains in Matthew
    - 4.8 – temptation
    - 5.1 // 8.1 – teaching (14.23)
    - 15.29 – feeding
    - 17.1 // 9 – transfiguration
    - 24.3 – eschatological judgment
    - 28.16 – commissioning
  - eschatological themes relating to Mount Zion
    - enthronement – God’s king installed on the mountain
      - “all authority”
    - “ecclesiology” – God’s people gathered to/from the mountain
      - “disciple all the nations”
    - abiding presence – God’s promise to dwell with his people fulfilled on the mountain
      - “I will be with you always”

#### ***4. Continuity with and fulfillment of the Old Testament promise***

- a) the form
- b) key OT parallels:
  - (i) Genesis 1 and 9
  - (ii) Genesis 12
  - (iii) Joshua 1
  - (iv) Psalm 2
  - (v) Isaiah 40-66
  - (vi) Daniel 7
  - (vii) II Chronicles 36

#### ***5. Conclusion***

- a) GC as fulfillment of creation purpose
- b) GC shows that the turning point has been reached and passed
- c) and both of these *because of* Christ-centredness

*THE GREAT COMMISSION IN MATTHEW 28.16-20 – Quotes Sheet*

1. Matthew 28.16-20 as summary and climax of the gospel:

- “a compendium of important Matthaean themes” Gundry
- “almost a compendium of Matthaean theology” – Davies/Allison
- “they gather up the whole gospel” NT Wright
- “culmination and combination of all Matthew’s central themes” Blomberg

2. Keener on discipling all nations:

‘But ancient hearers would, and modern hearers should, recognize a drastic innovation in a command to disciple ‘nations’. To be sure, the discipling of nations is carried out through baptizing and teaching individuals in those nations; although exceptions to grammatical consistency in antiquity abound, it is probably significant that the object “them” attaching to baptizing and teaching (28:19-20) is masculine (*autous*) rather than neuter (*auta*), although “nations” (*ta ethnē*) is neuter. Nevertheless, the stark command to disciple “nations” implies more than producing disciples for any ancient teacher would, and in contrast to other disciplers Jesus’ followers would not disciple others to themselves (23:8).’

3. Davies/Allison on Daniel 7.13-14

‘allusion to LXX Dan 7.13-14. The two texts  
(i) contain common vocabulary [given, authority, all the nations] ...  
(ii) share the same word order [given + dative pronoun + authority] ...  
(iv) repeat the word *pas* (Daniel x2; Matthew x4),  
(v) concern ‘the transfer of power’ (Schaberg) ...  
(vi) recount an event of consequence for all the nations and  
(vii) depict the worship or service of the central figure.’

4. Peter Leithart, “Jesus as Israel: The Typological Structure of Matthew's Gospel” (unpublished paper).

- a. “Matthew organized his account of the life of Jesus as an Irenaeus recapitulation of Israel's history, in which Jesus replays both major individual roles of that history (Moses, David, Elisha, Jeremiah) as well as the role of the nation herself.”
- b. “Matthew's gospel begins like Genesis and ends like Chronicles and thus encompasses the entirety of the Hebrew canon.”
- c. “Jesus has recapitulated Israel's history in righteousness and now sends the new Israel to proclaim this news to the Gentiles.”

5. Matthew Henry on Matthew 28.19:

[2.] What is the principal intention of this commission; to *disciple* all nations. *mathēseusate* - "Admit them disciples; do your utmost to make the nations Christian nations;" not, "Go to the nations, and denounce the judgments of God against them, as Jonah against Nineveh, and as the other Old-Testament prophets" (though they had reason enough to expect it for their wickedness), "but go, and *disciple them*." Christ the Mediator is setting up a kingdom in the world, bring the nations to be his subjects; setting up a school, bring the nations to be his scholars; raising an army for the carrying on of the war against the powers of darkness, enlist the nations of the earth under his banner. The work which the apostles had to do, was, to set up the Christian religion in all places, and it was honourable work; the achievements of the mighty heroes of the world were nothing to it. They conquered the nations for themselves, and made them miserable; the apostles conquered them for Christ, and made them happy.

6. Don Carson on Jesus's teaching:

'Remarkably, Jesus does not foresee a time when any part of his teaching will be rightly judged needless, outmoded, superseded, or untrue: *everything* he has commanded must be passed on "to the very end of the age".'

7. Terence Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain*

"There is solid evidence, therefore, to indicate that each of the three statements in 28.16-20 is deeply rooted in the eschatological expectations connected with Mount Zion. Matthew's closing passage is not to be seen merely as a compilation of Matthean themes with no inner cohesiveness – as something of a table of contents to the material of the Gospel. Rather, the mountain setting of v. 16 provides the clue to the connective thread running through the various elements of the passage and binding them tightly together. The passage as a whole partakes in a profound unity provided by Matthew's christological reinterpretation of Zion eschatology: the exalted Jesus is the gathering point for the eschatological people of God and the locus of God's presence with his people. The mountain setting functions as the vehicle by which these Zion expectations are transferred to Christ in whom they find their fulfilment. Whatever apocalyptic and Sinai overtones are present have been gathered up into this larger vision." (188)

"In Matthean perspective, therefore, it is when Jesus is 'on the mountain' that his significance and the nature of his mission are most clearly seen. Consequently it can be said that mountains in Matthew function not primarily as places of revelation or isolation, but as eschatological sites where Jesus enters into the full authority of his Sonship, where the eschatological community is gathered, and where the age of fulfilment is inaugurated." (197)

"In the final analysis, then, the mountain in Matthew is able to carry out its role as an eschatological site – specifically as the place of the enthronement of the Son, of the establishment of the end-time community, and of the inauguration of the new age – because of Matthew's consistent and undergirding christological reinterpretation of Zion eschatology for which Mt 28.16-20 provides the most certain indication.

So, when Matthew's mountain motifs viewed from the perspective of the final mountain in the chain, the true significance for Matthew of 'Jesus on the mountain' can be seen: in Jesus and his ministry all of the hopes which had been associated with Zion have been fulfilled. He is the promised messianic Son whose enthronement to universal [p.200 starts] sovereignty had long been anticipated. He was the one to whom the people gathered for healing, feeding, teaching and eschatological fellowship. Not only was he the one around whom the eschatological community gathered, but in a more profound sense Jesus was himself the fulfilment of the hopes for the restoration of Israel. Matthew defines Jesus' Sonship in terms not only of royal messianology but also of true Israel. In the opening chapters of the Gospel, Jesus is depicted as the one who was called to recapitulate in his own life the path of obedient Sonship that God's Son Israel had failed to complete. In Jesus' vindication on the Mountain of Commissioning, therefore, we see the fulfilment of the hopes of the restoration on Mount Zion: it was to Jesus, rather than to restored Israel—or better, to Jesus as the restored Son Israel—that the Gentiles were to gather to participate in eschatological salvation. This being the case, there was no continuing need for the temple. In Jesus rather than the temple is to be found the long-awaited fulfilment of the promise of 'God-with-us'. With Jesus something 'greater than the temple' has arrived (Mt 12.6). The procession of the Gentile Magi with their eschatological gifts has as its goal not Jerusalem nor the temple, but Jesus himself (Mt 2)." (199-200)