

**MATTHEAN MISSIOLOGY: MESSIANIC MESSENGER AUTHORITY,
AND THE GREAT COMMISSION**

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Missiologist R. Daniel Shaw recently wrote “Missiology, itself a very young discipline, is intrinsically cross-disciplinary, drawing from a multiplicity of sources, including theology, the social sciences, and religious studies.”¹ What Shaw did not include but surely counted was biblical studies and exegesis of Scripture. This article will draw on the tools used in biblical studies to show that the “Great Commission” has not been understood in the entirety of Matthew’s thought. With a fuller understanding of Matthew’s intention, those engaged in disciple making overseas or locally will have a deeper spiritual support. Sometimes, those laboring in disciple making can experience discouragement, especially when results are not what one hopes. The concept of “Messianic Messenger Authority” will take pressure off those who are working hard but not seeing desired outcomes.

In mission’s circles as well as academia, the phrase “The Great Commission” commonly refers to the ending of Matthew’s Gospel. Scores of academic and practical study has been devoted to it. Joachim Lange wrote a monograph in German² arguing that 28:19 was a Gentile commission, excluding the Jewish people.³ Günther Bornkamm wrote that it was “a summary of

¹ R. Daniel Shaw, “Beyond Contextualization: Toward a Twenty-first-Century Model for Enabling Mission,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 34:4 (October, 2010), p. 208.

² Joachim Lange, *Das Erscheinen des Auferstandenen im Evangelium nach Matthäus: Eine traditions- und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Mt. 28, 16-20* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1973).

³ Ibid. pp.300-305. On the issue of whether or not the Jewish people are included in the Great Commission, see R.T. France *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989) pp.235-237. See also Douglas R.A. Hare and Daniel J. Harrington, “Make Disciples of All the Gentiles,” *CBQ* 37 (1975):359-369 and John P. Meier, “Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19,” *CBQ* 39 (1977): pp.94-102.

the entire gospel of Matthew.”⁴ Gerhard Friedrich felt that the pericope was the culmination of Matthew’s gospel, and summarized something that was near to his heart.⁵

In this article I will argue that what is understood as “The Great Commission” has mainly been identified in light of the imperatival command to “make disciples.”⁶ Though this is a crucial aspect of the pericope, grammatically and syntactically, the ‘commission’ will be enriched by the concept of “Messianic Messenger Authority” which is authority passed down from God the Father to the incarnate Christ conferred to the body of believers. Paul Hertig argued that the phrase “teaching them to obey all things I have commanded you” is often ignored by the interpreters and practitioners.⁷ But as we will see here, the phrase “all authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me” has equally been ignored. Many who write academically and practically omit this aspect, but the text does not allow it.

Academic and Non-Academic Congruence

From the scholarly to the practical, the ending of Matthew’s gospel has a uniform understanding. What is emphasized is the verb *maqhteusate* (*mathēteusate*) to make disciples (of all nations). Robert Duncan Culver writes, “the point of the Great Commission is that wherever they are, they are to be carrying it out—making disciples. The commission is to make disciples of men of *any* nation as well as *all* the nations.”⁸ D.A. Carson writes, “The main emphasis, then, is on the command to ‘make disciples,’ which in Greek is one word,

⁴ Gerhard Friedrich “Die formale Struktur von Mt. 28, 18-20 *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* (80), 1983, p. 177,n. 114.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Some see it as a command for the evangelization of the world, see Sungchul Hong “On the Great Commission,” *Evangelical Journal* 12, 1994, p.67. On the issue “The Great Commission” resembling the commissioning stories of the Old Testament, see B.J. Hubbard *The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning: An Exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20* (SBLDS 19). (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974).

⁷ Paul Hertig “The Great Commission Revisited: The Role of God’s Reign in Disciple Making,” *Missiology* 29 (3), 2001, p. 343.

⁸ Robert Duncan Culver “What is the Church’s Commission? Some Exegetical Issues in Matthew 28:16-20” *Bulletin of Evangelical Theological Society* (2), 1967, pp.115-116.

mathēteusate . . . Disciples are those who hear, understand, and obey Jesus' teaching."⁹ Jack Kingsbury writes, "the disciples . . . are commissioned to go and make all nations his disciples (28:19)."¹⁰ David Bosch summarizes Matthew's gospel by writing "Christians find their true identity when they are involved in mission, in communicating to others a new way of life, a new interpretation of reality and of God, and in committing themselves to the liberation and salvation of others."¹¹ Robert Coleman writes,

Here is the **focus** of the . . . Great Commission: . . . The mission is to reach "all nations," meaning all the peoples of the earth, an emphasis consistent with the other accounts of Jesus' parting commission. This will happen through "making disciples" which, as the only verb in the original text, gives direction to the participles "go," "baptizing" and "teaching." . . . The only reason for going anywhere is to make disciples. . . . The whole thrust of the Commission, giving validity to every effort, is the **discipling of nations**.¹²

The Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University in cooperation with the Great Commission Research Network publishes a journal titled *The Great Commission Research Journal* which they state: "Church growth is that careful discipline which investigates the nature, the function, the health of Christian churches, as they relate to the effective implementation of the Lord's Great Commission to make disciples of all peoples (Matthew 28:19-20)."¹³ Peter Wagner argued that the basis for missions is the Great Commission call of "making disciples."¹⁴

B.J. Hubbard's study on the section as a 'commissioning narrative' patterned after Old Testament commissioning (e.g., Gen 12:1-4) also leaves out the aspect of authority; breaking it down, the pericope has five of seven commissioning elements: introduction (v.16), confrontation

⁹ D.A. Carson "Matthew," in Frank E. Gaebelin (ed.) *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) pp.595-596.

¹⁰ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story* (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1986) p.92.

¹¹ David Bosch "Matthew: Mission as Disciple-Making," in David Bosch *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2003 18th printing) p.83.

¹² Robert Coleman, "The Great Commission Life-style," in Robert Coleman (ed.) *Evangelism on the Cutting Edge* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1986) p.128, bold mine.

¹³ <http://apps.biola.edu/gcr/about/>. Accessed on June 8, 2011.

¹⁴ C. Peter Wagner, *On the Crest of the Wave: Becoming a World Christian* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1983) 108-109.

(vv.17-**18a**), reaction (v.17b), the commission (vv.19-20a) and reassurance (v.20b).¹⁵ What is notably missing is 18b, the statement of Christ's authority. From academia to applied missiology, the emphasis is on the verb to "make disciples."

Shaw recently wrote that missions is undergoing a shift, from doing to being, "a transition is needed from preaching the Gospel to living the Gospel."¹⁶ Within the Great Commission is a command to **being**, but what we have shown above is that most emphasis the **doing**. This article will draw out the 'being' of the Great Commission which will enhance the doing. Shaw writes, "What is critical is that mission emerges from an attitude of heart that God uses to do God's work in the world at large. God is about the business of drawing human beings to God's self, and they, in turn, desire to draw others to God."¹⁷

Though Shaw does emphasize a shift, in reality, the two entities of being and doing are essential to be done in tandem. By drawing out the being of the Great Commission, this article emphasizes to the missionary/ Christian worker the theological hope and support of the spiritual authority Jesus 'commissioned' on them in the missionary task [(being) Messianic Messenger Authority] with the work of making disciples (doing) in hopes of alleviating personal pressure people put on themselves by putting the focus of disciple making back on the divine agency of missions.¹⁸

Grammar and Syntax of Matthew 28:18, 19

We have seen from above, most of the references to the Great Commission focus on Matthew 28:19 with the verb *maqhteusate* (make disciples) as the focal point of the argument.

¹⁵ Hubbard *Apostolic Commissioning* and Carson, "Matthew," p.592. Bold mine.

¹⁶ Shaw, "Beyond Contextualization" p. 211.

¹⁷ Ibid. pp.212-214.

¹⁸ The Apostle Paul also makes this argument when dealing with the disunity of the Corinthian believers. Quoting from the NIV, Paul states in 1 Corinthians 3:6 "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."

What we will see here is that the coordinating or inferential conjunction *ou=n* (“therefore,” but can also be translated as “then” or “accordingly”) in **Matthew 28:19** connects *maqhteusate* to **Matthew 28:18** *evdo,qh moi pa/sa evxousi,a evn ouvranw/| kai. evpi. Îth/jÐ gh/jÅ* (All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me).¹⁹

Coordinating conjunctions function by showing logical relationships. Wallace writes that the use of these conjunctions “gives a *deduction, conclusion, or summary* to the preceding discussion.”²⁰ One cannot discuss the commission in 28:19-20 without mentioning 28:18 and in this case, because Christ has all authority, then the logical application would be to make disciples of all nations. Lenski writes, “Therefore, *ou=n* has a peculiar force here; it draws a conclusion from the gift of all authority bestowed upon Christ; it puts all this power and authority behind the command to evangelize the world. This *ou=n* shows how what otherwise would be absolutely impossible, now becomes gloriously possible . . . an assured reality.”²¹ Osborne writes, “On the basis of (‘therefore’ [*ou=n*]) his authority, Jesus now commissions his disciples. The Risen Lord’s universal authority makes possible the universal mission.”²² Turner writes, “The conjunction *ou=n* (*oun*, therefore) is crucial. Having been exalted, Jesus is now in a position to send out his disciples in mission. Mission is possible because Jesus is potent.”²³ Because of the conjunction *ou=n*, Matthew 28:19-20 cannot be understood independently from Matthew 28:18. Due to the coordinating conjunction, we must reassess the verbs in the Great Commission pericope.

VEdo,qh (has been given) in 28:18 is verb indicative aorist passive 3rd person singular of *di,dwmi* (to give) and is often referred to as a ‘divine passive.’²⁴ The divine passive attributes

¹⁹ See also D. Edmond Hiebert, “An Expository Study of Matthew 28:16-20,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149:595, 1992, pp.347-350.

²⁰ Daniel B. Wallace *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) p.673.

²¹ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Eisenach Gospel Selections*, (Columbus, OH: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1910) p. 580.

²² Grant R. Osborne *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010) p.1079.

²³ D. L. Turner, *Matthew: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) p.689.

²⁴ See also Osborne *Matthew* p.1078.

Christ's authority as given directly from God. On the divine passive, Joachim Jeremias writes that it is used, "in veiled terms God's mysterious activity in the end time."²⁵ The importance of *evdo,qh* is often diminished in the pericope in favor of *maqhteu,sate*. As we have seen above, making disciples has been the focal point, but the "making disciples" should be rooted in the authority of God that is given to Christ and freely bestowed upon the disciple.

What God has divinely given to Christ to bestow on us is authority. *evn ouvranw* (in heaven) expresses the sphere of Christ's authority. The preposition *evpi*. (on) used with *Îth/jÐ* *gh/j* (earth) also has a spatial nature. Matthew expresses that Christ's authority is universal, in the spiritual and physical realms. The authority is also all encompassing, over every aspect in God's creation.

We have seen that the grammar and syntax of 28:18 and 28:19 connect the two verses and that the divine passive (has been given) in Matt. 28:18 has been overshadowed by the verb 'to make disciples' in 28:19. One needs to connect the authority given by God to the imperative of making disciples. We will now look into authority in Matthew to better understand the authority Christ bestows on his followers.

Authority in Matthew

evxousi,a (authority) is used around ninety times in the Septuagint and about half of the references refer to royalty and eminence.²⁶ Edwards writes,

The second largest number refers to God's authority or to surrogates of God, such as priests (1 Esdr 8:22), Jerusalem (Sir 24:11), Israel (Ps 113:2), or the covenant

²⁵ Joachim Jeremias *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (NY:Scribner's, 1971) p.13. Jeremias argues that there are at least 100 examples in the NT of the divine passive. On the divine passive, Wallace, *Grammar* p.437 writes, The passive is also used when God is the obvious agent. . . . assuming that its use was due to the Jewish aversion to using the divine name.

²⁶ James R. Edwards "The Authority of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 37/2, 1994, p.218 footnote 3: Forty-four times 2 Kgdms 20 13, 1 Esdr 4 28, 40, Tob 1 21 (S), Esth 3 13, 8 13, Prov 17 14, Wis 10 14, Isa 39 2, Dan 3 2, 3, 97, 4 31 (S), 34 (S), 37a (S), 37b (S), 37c (S), 5 7 (S), 16 (S), 29 (S), 6 4 (S), 7 27 (Th), 28 (S), Bel 25, 1 Mace 1 13, 6 11, 10 6, 8, 32, 35, 38, 11 58, 14 4, 2 Mace 3 6, 24, 4 9, 24, 7 16, 10 13, 3 Mace 7 12, 21, 4 Mace 4 5, 5 15, 6 33

(Sir 45:17). In only nine instances, or in roughly ten percent of its occurrences, is *exousia* used other than of royal or divine authority. In six of these it describes various forms of human authority, twice it is used of nature (Ps 135:8-9), and once it is used of the demonic (Dan 7:6 [Th]).²⁷

Edwards goes on to write:

LXX and intertestamental literature *exousia* is used predominantly of supernatural powers and authorities, especially of God and God's works, representatives and emissaries. . . . In the LXX, and there primarily in Daniel and Maccabees, *exousia* is often used for kingship. Kings . . . in the ancient Near East . . . were believed to derive their authority from God. Repeatedly in the literature *exousia* is given by God or a supernatural power to kings, priests, the saints, and so on. It is thus authority from without, conferred rather than innate, official rather than native. The combined evidence allows us to conclude that *exousia* normally was reserved for or derived from supernatural authority.²⁸

Edwards gives us a good starting point of *exousia* being magisterial and supernatural, Matthew's gospel references the kingdom fifty times so a royal understanding of authority fits well into Matthew's schema of the kingdom.

exousia occurs 102 times in the New Testament, "it is used of God, Jesus, and the authority conferred on the Church and/or disciples by the gospel, but also of Satan, spiritual powers, and various forms of human authority. *Exousia* typically resides in or emanates from God or the supernatural realm. When it concerns human and earthly powers it generally describes political, religious, or military authorities."²⁹ In Matthew, the term is specifically used by Jesus and the apostles.

1. *Authoritative in teaching and position* (7:28-29).³⁰ The first appearance of *exousia* in Matthew's Gospel occurs in this pericope and begins the first of five standard endings that

²⁷ Ibid. Edwards goes on to discuss *exousia* in the Pseudepigrapha and Qumran.

²⁸ Ibid. pp.219-220.

²⁹ Ibid. p.220.

³⁰ The words in Matthew 7:28-29 "at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes," appears almost verbatim in Mark 1:22 and Luke 4:32. See also James Reese 'How Matthew portrays the communication of Christ's authority', *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 7 (1977) pp. 140-141.

conclude discourses.³¹ Jesus has just taught the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew writes that the crowds were amazed and that Jesus spoke as one who had authority (evxousi,a) not as their teachers of the law.³² Jesus taught in a style unlike what the crowds were accustomed to. While most teachers cited scholars and sages from the past as the basis of their teaching, Jesus' teaching came straight from God. Carson writes, "In his authority Jesus differs from the 'teachers of the law' . . . Many of them limited their teaching to the authorities they cited, and a great part of their training centered on memorizing the received traditions. They spoke by the authority of others; Jesus spoke of his own authority."³³ Keener writes,

Other Jewish teachers regularly cited earlier sages' opinions . . . and though later teachers sometimes came to regard their tradition as tantamount to God's word, Jesus' contemporaries never would have said, like Jesus that people would be judged according to how they treated a particular teacher's words. With greater authority than the scribes who expound the law, greater authority than Moses who gave it (5:1), the authority indeed of the one who will judge humanity on the final day (7:21-23), Jesus declares God's word, and the people recognize that he speaks with authority unlike their other teachers.³⁴

France writes, "To set authority of his teaching in contrast with that of the scribes is a bold claim, since the scribes were the authorized teachers of the law who in virtue of their training and office had a right to expect the people to accept their legal rulings."³⁵ Matthew communicates that Christ does not need to rely on revered Jewish sages for his influence, his teaching stands from his position given to him by God the Father.

Later, when Matthew closes his gospel, the command in **Matthew 28:20** "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you," echoes the authoritative teaching and position here in 7:28-29. Also, Christ's authority teaching in 7:28-29 also foreshadows Christ's authority given to

³¹ Carson, "Matthew," p.195. The other four are Matthew 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1. See also C.S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (2009) p. 256 and Turner *Matthew* pp.224-225.

³² Ibid. Carson states that Matthew 8:1-11:1 is the kingdom extended under Jesus' authority.

³³ Ibid. Carson also writes pertaining to the Sermon on the Mount, "Jesus' entire approach . . . is not only ethical but messianic—i.e., Christological and eschatological. Jesus is not an ordinary prophet who says, "Thus say the Lord!" Rather, he speaks in the first person and claims that his teaching fulfills the OT."

³⁴ Keener *Matthew* pp.256-257.

³⁵ France *Matthew* pp.298-299.

him by the father in 28:18. Christ possessing all authority takes pressure off the missionary/ecclesial/ministry worker as God has given Christ the duty of responsibility and not the laborer.

2. *Representative authority* (8:5-13).³⁶ Before chapter eight, there are previous references to healing.³⁷ This was the first instance where Jesus heals from a far and is not in the presence of the one he heals. A Roman centurion comes to Jesus with a request for healing. Rather than asking Jesus going to the residence of the paralyzed servant, the centurion asks Jesus to heal on the spot. Christ's authority does not require physical presence, the authority is spiritual. Keener writes, "Jewish people considered long-distance miracles especially difficult and rare, the domain of only the most powerful holy men like Hanina ben Dosa . . . Stories of sages who could simply speak a decree and it happened . . . were rare."³⁸ France writes, "A military man recognizes 'authority when he sees it. The centurion has both superiors and inferiors in the military hierarchy; he both receives and issues order, and orders are expected to be obeyed."³⁹ Carson writes,

All 'authority' . . . belonged to the emperor and was delegated. Therefore, because he was under the emperor's authority, when the centurion spoke, he spoke with the emperor's authority, and so his command was obeyed. A foot soldier who disobeyed would not be defying a mere centurion but the emperor . . . This self-understanding the centurion applied to Jesus. Precisely because Jesus was under God's authority, he was vested with God's authority, so that when Jesus spoke, God spoke.⁴⁰

³⁶ France *Matthew* pp.309-310 writes, "This is the only miracle story which Matthew shares with Luke (7:1-10) and not so with Mark. The basic story line is the same, but Matthew typically omits material which he regards as unessential to the narrative, the warm relations between the centurion and the local Jewish community, and his use of Jewish elders as intermediaries."

³⁷ Deliverance is also associated with healing, **Matthew 4:23-24** "healing every disease and every affliction among the people. . . they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those **oppressed by demons**, epileptics, and paralytics, and he **healed them**." References to healing and deliverance in Matthew are: 4:23-24; 8:2-17, 28-34; 9:1-7, 18-33, 35; 10:1, 7-8; ; 11:5; 12:9-13; , 15, 22; 14:14, 34-36; 15: 21-28, 30-31; 17:14-18; 19:1-2; 20:29-34; 21:14.

³⁸ Keener *Matthew* p.267

³⁹ France *Matthew* pp.314-315.

⁴⁰ Carson, "Matthew," p.201. Reese *BTB* p.140 states that Matthew 8:9 has almost the exact phrase found in Luke 7:8 but the scene is not in Mark

Carson goes on to write, “To defy Jesus was to defy God: and Jesus’ word must therefore be vested with God’s authority that is able to heal sickness.”⁴¹

This account as well as another healing account in 15:21-28 share two distinctions from other miracle stories: both involve Gentiles, showing that Christ was for all, and both involved healing from a distance. Keener writes, “all three Synoptic Gospels emphasize the Gentile mission (Mt 28:19; Mk 13:10; Lk 24:47), only Matthew includes both full stories (8:5-13; 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30; Lk 7:2-10).”⁴²

Matthew’s commission at the end of the book contains an emphasis on “all the nations.” He communicates this aspect in 8:5-13. Jesus has authority not just for the Jewish people but also for the Gentiles. Since Jesus is “God with us” (1:23), “Matthew wants to show the immediacy and supremacy of Jesus’ authority.”⁴³ We know that theologically, Jesus is the exact representation of the father (Hebrews 1:3) but here, Jesus acts as God’s representative in his place. Likewise, Matthew’s commission has an aspect of representation: “baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” The authority of Christ allows his disciples to be representatives of God and his supernatural power.

3. *Authority over physical and spiritual realms; future conferred authority* (9:1-8). Jesus heals and forgives a paralyzed man. Matthew’s description of the scene is much less detailed than Mark’s. Omitted from Matthew are the details of the paralytic being let down through the roof and the great crowd of people present in the room. Matthew goes right into the issue of Jesus healing and forgiving sins that evoke conflict with the teachers of the law. A common theme in the Gospels is Jesus’ conflict with religious leaders, in this case, the teachers of the Law also referred to as scribes. Even Messiah cannot forgive sins, only God. Osborne writes, “this

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Keener *Matthew* p.263.

⁴³ Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) p.144.

kind of authority can only come from God, and thus the one with this power can be trusted in his other claim of authority.”⁴⁴ The religious leaders would see this as blasphemy.⁴⁵ Gundry writes, “The stress thus shifts from forgiveness of sins to the figure of Jesus as the Son of man, a heavenly figure in Dan 7:13-14, retains his authority on earth.”⁴⁶ With Emmanuel “God with us,” and the promise that Jesus will be with us until the end of the age, this offers his followers hope in the fact that the one they follow is indeed Lord of all and will never forsake. The authority Jesus has over the physical realm (healing paralytic) and the spiritual (forgiving sin) foreshadows the authority Jesus was given by the father in 28:18, Christ’s authority extends from heaven and earth.

Reese writes that Matthew 9:8 is unique to Matthew in that he alone closes the account with the reference “they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.”⁴⁷ Matthew 9:8 shares this distinction with Matthew 28:18. Neither has a parallel in the Synoptics.⁴⁸ Reese goes on to write on Matthew 9:8,

This miracle is part of the artificially constructed section of ten miraculous cures found in Mt. 8:1-9:34. This unit forms a balance to the Sermon on the Mount. Together these picture Jesus revealing by word and mighty deed. By this comment linked to the display of authority by the earthly Jesus, Matthew calls attention to the transfer of that authority to the Church and its continued use to reconcile sinners.⁴⁹

Reese goes on to write that Matthew,

⁴⁴ Osborne *Matthew* p.328.

⁴⁵ See Mark 2:62-63; Matthew 26:57-68; John 5:16-29; 18: 12, 13, 19-24

⁴⁶ Gundry *Matthew* p.164. On the issue of Matthew 28:18 being influenced by Daniel 7:14 see R.T. France *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2007) pp.1112-1113, and footnote 22 and 23 on the respective pages. See also W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison “Matt. 28:16-20:Texts behind the Text” *Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 72, 1992, pp.89-98. John Nolland *The Gospel of Matthew* (New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2005) p. 1264 writes, “Impetus to find freshly given authority here also comes from the identification of echoes of Daniel 7:13-14. . . . Daniel 7:13-14 says of ‘one like a son of man/humanity’ that ‘to him was given authority’ that had reference to ‘all the nations.’”

⁴⁷ Reese “Christ’s Authority,” p.140. Translation ESV

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Sees the function of the earthly life of Jesus as bestowing the transcendent authority of Jesus Immanuel to the believing community. This intention accounts for the frequent mention of the disciples of Jesus in Matthew—64 times. It also offers a motive for his elimination of a mission of the disciples while Jesus is still with them although he gives them authority over unclean spirits (10:1).⁵⁰

Is 9:8 a foreshadowing of 28:18? The phrase *to.n do,nta evxousi,an toiau,thn toi/j avnqrw,poij* (who had given such authority to men) has been a source of scholarly discussion: mainly, how does the meaning of *toi/j avnqrw,poij* (men, human beings) function in the pericope. Matthew's addition in Greek is best translated as men or humankind. Why would this be added to Jesus? Was Matthew emphasizing the humanity of Christ? Was he showing that the crowds did not acknowledge Christ as Messiah or the Son of Man?⁵¹ Looking at Matthew as a whole and given the fact that 9:8 and 28:18 are unique to Matthew without reference to the other two Synoptic Gospels or John, it is likely Matthew is foreshadowing Christ allowing his church to participate in his authority (e.g. 10:1;16:18-19; 18:18-19).⁵² Nolland writes, "Matthew's use of 'authority' picks up immediately on v.6, but the plural 'humans' (*toi/j avnqrw,poij*) is initially a surprise. Almost certainly it anticipates the developing situation in which the Christian community comes to participate in and continue to benefit from the authority demonstrated here by Jesus."⁵³ Both Mark 2:12 and Luke 5:26 omit the reference of men/humankind and only record the amazement of the crowds. The fact that 9:8 and 28:18 of Matthew are not found in the other Synoptics with the commissioning of the 12 disciples immediately following in chp.10 indicates an emphasis on Christ allowing his followers participation in his authority.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p.141

⁵¹ See Osborne *Matthew* p.329.

⁵² This is the position by W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. 3 vols (Edinburgh:T&T Clark, 1988) vol 2, p.96; Rudolf Schnackenburg *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) p.88; Daniel J. Harrington *The Gospel of Matthew* (Sacra Pagina 1; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991) p.122; Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (The New Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963) p.273; Thomas F. McKenna "Matthew on Church Authority," *The Bible Today* 102, 1979, p.2038. This statement is countered by France *Gospel of Matthew* p.348 and footnote 50 and Osborne *Matthew* p.329 where Osborne states "the passage is christological, not ecclesiastical."

⁵³ Nolland *Matthew* p.383.

4. *Jesus gives disciples authority over unclean spirits and physical infirmities (10:1-8).*

After praying for more workers in 9:35-38, Jesus now prepares to send out the 12 in chp.10.⁵⁴

This is the first mention of the disciples as a gang of 12. Turner writes, “Jesus now commissions twelve disciples to extend his ministry of kingdom word and deed . . . Jesus takes initiative in calling (Matt. 4:18-22) and commissioning his disciples, and he extends to them his authority.”⁵⁵

Carson writes, “He whose word (chs.5-7) and deed (chs. 8-9) were characterized by authority now delegates something of that authority to twelve men.”⁵⁶ Osborne writes,

The primary theme in chs.8-9 was Jesus’ “authority” . . . over every infirmity and calamity . . . and he now passes that on to the Twelve. This is another remarkable aspect; they are not just sent out (to fail or succeed on their own) but are given the very authority God and Jesus share! Jesus is the “stronger” power who has bound Satan in his own fortress . . . and he now gives that very power to his disciples. . . . the very authority/power Jesus possesses has now been transferred to his followers. They will continue the work of God in Jesus and are empowered for that very task.⁵⁷

Jesus’ threefold ministry of teaching, proclaiming and healing in Matthew 4:23; 9:35 is conferred onto his disciples. Though the text reads that only one-third of his ministry is conferred, the ministry of healing/driving out evil spirits, 10:7 has Jesus emphasizing the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven. Mark 3:14-15 offers a little more clarity to the commission: “And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.” Just like in 9:1-8, Christ has authority over the spiritual and physical realms that his followers can experience.

5. *Authority of God; authority over the rabbinic/temple custom and religious chain of command (21:23-27).* evxousi,a appears four times in this pericope. Jesus is teaching in the

⁵⁴ This section, 9:35-10:4, is often referred to as a ‘Mission Discourse.’ See Osborne *Matthew* p.369.

⁵⁵ Turner *Matthew* p.264.

⁵⁶ Carson, “Matthew,” p.236.

⁵⁷ Osborne *Matthew* p.371.

temple which catches the attention of the chief priests and elders.⁵⁸ They ask Jesus where he receives his authority, Jesus is likely teaching the people without quoting from an older Jewish teacher or reference work much like in Matt. 7:28-29. The exact content is uncertain in Chapter 21 but we know from chapter 12 that Jesus' teaching of the Sabbath angers the Pharisees first where they charge his disciples with doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath (12:1-2) and to the point where they want Jesus killed (12:13-14). We also know from 21:45-46 that the chief priests and Pharisees knew Christ's parables he taught the people of the temple were focused on them. They were angered to the point where they wanted to arrest. Edwards writes,

He violates laws of purity by touching and cleansing a leper (Mk 1:40-45) and by association with sinners and tax collectors (Mk 2:13-17). He places in question the issue of purification by violating food prohibitions in fasting (Mk 2:18-22) and by eating with unwashed hands (Mk 7:1-23). He contravenes marriage laws in his teaching on divorce (Mk 10:1-12), and he openly denounces the scribes (Mk 12:38-40). In the question on the son of David he tacitly assumes supremacy over Israel's greatest king who, according to 2 Sam 7:14, would be the progenitor of the Messiah (Mk 12:35-37).⁵⁹

There is much Jesus has done to anger the religious leaders. Edwards goes on to write, "Rabbinic discussions in first-century Palestine were oriented primarily around four compass points of law: Sabbath observance, ritual purity, foods, marriage. Each of the four would later develop into either individual tractates or entire divisions of the Mishna. Each of the four is also vigorously challenged by Jesus."⁶⁰

The question asked "by what authority you do this" by the religious leaders expresses their bewilderment on why someone would teach so strongly without backing of prior religious

⁵⁸ See also Turner *Matthew* pp.508-509.

⁵⁹ Edwards, "Authority of Jesus," p.225. Mk inserts mine.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Matthew writes that there are two groups of people present while Mark mentions three in Mk 11:27-33. These three groups, Mark mentions encompass, what is known as the Sanhedrin. Matthew writes that there are two groups of people present while Mark mentions three in Mk 11:27-33. These three groups, Mark mentions encompass, what is known as the Sanhedrin. Matthew writes that there are two groups of people present while Mark mentions three in Mk 11:27-33. These three groups, Mark mentions encompass, what is known as the Sanhedrin.

tradition.⁶¹ But the Sanhedrin seems to be in denial. Throughout the Gospels, the religious leaders, the very ones who should be models and welcome Jesus, are his adversaries and are blinded to God's revelation by unbelief.⁶² Then what authority does Jesus have over these things? Edwards writes, "The 'these things' of which the Sanhedrin inquires can be understood only if they are seen as consequences of the authority of the Son of God. What Jesus does as God's servant has meaning only because of who he is as God's Son. The *exousia* of Jesus is in fact the *exousia* of God."⁶³ Much like 7:28-29, Jesus' teaching means that his authority to teach does not come from a past Jewish Sage but from God in heaven. The command to teach in Matt. 28:20 can now be practiced in light of Matt. 21:23-27. The follower of Christ receives his/her authority directly from God and is not dependent on past traditions.

Conclusion

Missions needs to be about both "being" and "doing." If the Great Commission is the heart of missions, then this balance is important. What we have seen is that the emphasis on the Great Commission has been in the area of doing: making disciples of all nations. Though this is a crucial aspect, we have shown that grammatically/syntactically, the "being" aspect of "Messianic Messenger Authority" in Matt. 28:18 must be linked to the doing of 28:19-20.

The "Messianic Messenger Authority" is an authority given to Christ by God which is conferred to believers who follow Christ. The authority conferred is one that is holistic, encompassing the spiritual and physical realms (28:18 heaven and earth as well as 9:1-8; 10:1-8),

⁶¹ Edwards "Authority of Jesus p.227 writes, "If the Sanhedrin wants to know whence Jesus received authority to do "these things" it must reconsider John's baptism. A decision about John is a decision about Jesus. If John's baptism were simply of human origin, then there may be something to the Sanhedrin's accusation. But if John's baptism was of God—as the crowds believed and the Sanhedrin evidently feared—then Jesus' authority is the authority of God". On the issue of Jesus' authority and the baptism of John, B van Iersel, *Reading Mark* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1989) p. 148 writes, "All [Jesus'] actions and words are connected with John and go back to the spirit of God's descent on him after he had accepted baptism at John's hand Jesus has the right to act the way he does because of what the voice from heaven said to him He, more than the authorities, is more at home in the temple, because God has called him his dear son"

⁶² See also Carson, "Matthew," p. 448.

⁶³ Edwards, "Authority of Jesus" p. 227

an authority to teach from God (7:28-29; 21:23-28), authority that allows one to be God's representatives and conduits of his power (8:5-13), to do his work (9:1-8; 10:1-8).

When missionaries/ministers/pastors/laypeople embark on the work of making disciples, they do so with the supernatural authority from their risen Messiah. The Great Commission worker does not have to depend on his/her ability and strength but can also rest in the authority and sovereignty of God in the missionary endeavor. No matter how difficult the work, all authority in the spiritual and physical realm resides in Christ, not the individual. God will accomplish the task by his power and through his workers. The worker only needs to do his/her best to make disciples and leave the rest to the power and authority of God.