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BIOGRAPHICAL TIMELINE OF JESUS - GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Birth & Early Years 1:1-2:19		Preparation & Testing 3:1-4:17		The Ministry of Jesus 4:18-25:46				Death & Resurrection 26:1-28:20	
Genealogy of Jesus 1:1-17	Birth & Stay in Egypt 1:18-2:19	John the Baptist Prepares 3:1-17	Preparation & Testing in the Wilderness 4:1-17	Fishermen, Teachings & Healings 4:18-9:38	Selection & Instruction of 12 Disciples 10:1-37	Miracles, Rebukes, Parables, & Transfiguration 11:1-20:34	Jesus Teaches in Jerusalem 21:1-25:46	Scheming, Betrayal & Crucifixion 26:1-27:66	Resurrection & the Great Commission 28:1-28:20

TOPICAL BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTERS IN MATTHEW

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genealogy & Birth of the Messiah 2. Wise Men & Escape from Herod 3. John the Baptist & Baptism of Jesus 4. Trials, Testing, and Beginning 5. The Beatitudes & Expounding Truth 6. Contrast of Sincerity vs. Hypocrisy 7. Warnings & Teachings 8. Initial Healings & Miracles 9. Healing, Calling Matthew, & Teaching 10. The Twelve Apostles 11. Responding to John the Baptist 12. Parables & Rebukes 13. Jesus Explains Sewing 14. Feed 5000 & Walk on Water | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. A Lesson on Faith & 4000 Fed 16. Yeast and Self-Denial 17. Transfiguration & Healing 18. Lost Sheep & Forgiveness 19. Teaching on Divorce, Wealth 20. Vineyard, & Father Decides 21. Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem 22. Few Are Chosen, Golden Rule 23. Denouncing Scribes & Pharisees 24. Persecutions Foretold 25. Parables of Bridesmaids & Talents 26. Lord's Supper 27. Death of Jesus 28. Resurrection of Jesus |
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MATTHEW: STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS & RESULTING QUESTIONS

A. RECURRENCE OF THEMES:

Demons: (4:24; 7:22; 8:16, 28, 31, 33; 9:32, 33, 34; 10:8; 11:18; 12:22, 24, 27, 28; 15:22; 17:18)

Faith: (6:30; 8:10, 13, 26; 9:2, 22, 29; 14:31; 15:28; 16:8; 17:20; 21:21, 22; 23:23)

Fatherhood: (1:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; 2:22; 4:21, 22; 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11, 21; 8:21; 10:20, 21, 29, 32, 33, 35, 37, 11:25, 26, 27; 12:50; 13:43; 15:4, 5, 13; 16:17, 27; 18:10, 14, 19, 35; 19:5, 19:19, 29; 20:23; 21:30, 31; 23:9; 24:36; 25:34; 26:39, 42, 53; 28:19)

Fulfillment of Prophecy: (1:22, 2:15, 17; 2:23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9)

Healing: (6:22; 8:8, 13; 13:15; 14:36; 15:28)

Hypocrisy: (6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29; 24:51)

Son-ship: (1:1, 20, 21, 23, 24; 2:15; 3:17, 4:3, 6, 21; 8:20, 29; 9:2, 6, 27; 10:2, 3, 23, 37; 11:19, 27; 12:8, 23, 32, 40; 13:37, 41, 55; 14:33; 15:22; 16:13, 16, 17, 27, 28; 17:5, 9, 12, 15, 22; 19:28; 20:18, 28, 30, 31; 21:9, 15, 28, 37, 38; 22:2, 42, 45; 23:35; 24:27, 30, 36, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:2, 24, 45, 63, 64; 27:40, 43, 54; 28:19)

Spirit: (1:18, 20; 3:11, 16; 4:1; 5:3; 8:16; 10:1, 20; 12:18, 28, 31, 32, 43, 45; 22:43; 26:41; 28:19)

Teaching: (4:23; 5:19; 7:28; 8:19; 9:11; 9:35; 10:24, 25; 11:1; 12:38; 13:54; 15:9; 16:12; 17:24; 19:11, 16; 21:23; 22:16, 24, 33, 36; 23:3, 8; 26:18, 55; 28:20)

QUESTIONS:

- Why do these themes reoccur so often?
- Why did the author of Matthew choose to accentuate these particular themes, as opposed to others?
- Do these words sometimes convey different themes, or are they cohesive throughout the book of Matthew?
- How can one implement the teachings learned through these themes to everyday life? What makes them relevant for today?

B. COMPARISON & CONTRAST

- Jesus uses comparison to draw parallels between spiritual principles, and readily identifiable aspects of everyday life. Such an example is of a sewer as he sews his seed. Jesus is giving an example of a normal, everyday activity, but tying this closely to the preaching of the gospel, giving an example of seed that falls on fertile or unfertile ground.
- Jesus uses contrast to show the difference between two or more things. One example is when he is contrasting hypocrisy with sincerity and he talks about how a proud man will boast of himself in prayer and giving, while a person of sincere faith will fast or pray quietly, and give in secret, as to not draw attention to oneself in arrogance. He also is himself a direct contrast to the lifestyle of the

Pharisees, who enjoy their positions of political power, yet carry no heavenly authority. On the other hand, Jesus has all authority over heaven and earth, and has chosen the form of an unassuming son of a carpenter.

QUESTIONS:

- Why does Jesus so often use parables, metaphors, and similes to illustrate his points? Wouldn't he have been just as effective if he'd just spoken the truth outright?
- In trying to relate to his audience in a historical sense, did Jesus risk alienating future generations by losing relevance to their societal norms?
- Is it a safe assumption to think that because the world, as under the influence of Satan, will always be contrary to God that Jesus' words are timelessly appropriate?

C. CRUCIALITY

- At what seems to be the worst part of this story, Jesus is crucified like some common criminal. In a matter of days, he went from being welcomed into Jerusalem with much acclaim, to being hung naked, barely recognizable, on an instrument of shameful torture. By human logic, this would seem to have been an utter failure on the part of Jesus to pass himself off as deity in human form. However, as is often the case in God's timing and method, this is undoubtedly the single most powerful event of all time. Jesus, the image of the invisible God, came to earth, made himself in the image of his own creation, only to be brutally killed by those he created. He suffered the punishment that we all deserve, and because of this, has set all of mankind free. This is perhaps the greatest use of cruciality in literature ever.

QUESTIONS:

- Why did the author of Matthew choose to write the book in such a way?
- Couldn't he have fully explained the need for an atoning sacrifice at the beginning of the book, rather than making it seem like the genealogy of a king who would be rising to power?
- Or, was the whole point of doing so to have the readers realize that Jesus assumed his throne not by force, but by ultimate submission?

D. PARTICULARIZATION & SUMMARIZATION WITH CLIMAX:

- The author of Matthew gives a brief summarization of the genealogy of the Messiah, and a short account of his birth and infancy (Matt 1:1-2:23). Instead of describing in great detail the early years of Jesus' life, the author instead touches on this briefly and then moves on to the more formative years of ministry. In doing so, particularization is used by going from a general, loose idea of the beginnings of Jesus to the end result which is the bodily incarnation of the

Godhead. This of course, leads up to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, pointing to the ultimate message of Jesus which is love & salvation.

QUESTIONS:

- Why is it important that the New Testament start with the genealogy of Jesus? Does this beginning bear any relevance to the final outcome?
- Why is there so little written about the years before he began his ministry?
- Is the overall story of Jesus somehow diminished by not knowing about the stages of his development as a human being?
- Were these details purposely omitted, or was there little known about Jesus as a child and teenager?
- If the author purposefully wrote this way, what are the connotations that are meant to be understood?

E. PREPARATION / REALIZATION:

- The beginning of the book of Matthew is a literary preparation for telling the story of Jesus. It begins very broadly, with the description of the lineage of Jesus. It ends up with the realization, through the sacrifice of salvation at the cross, that Jesus “will be with you always, to the end of the age,” both now and when we meet him face to face in heaven.

QUESTION:

- Was this a purposeful literary technique, or simply the natural result of trying to conquer such a powerful topic? In other words, is it the topic itself that requires preparation and realization in order to fully grasp it, or is there another possible way of presenting the story?

F. INTERROGATION:

- The problem or question in the case of the book of Matthew is this: Israel is in need of a redeemer, their messiah. In fact, all of humankind is of a fallen nature and requires a miraculous deliverer to save them from their self-inflicted fate. The solution is presented throughout the book, especially at the end through the resurrection of Jesus and his proclamation that indeed he is the way, the truth, and the life.

QUESTION:

- It is almost pointless to ask, however the question of a savior could raise many varied solutions. In Biblical times, the solution may not have seemed as clear-cut as we now see it. No doubt, there were many who were skeptical about would-be messiahs making claims to the throne. So, I dare to ask the question: Did Jesus have to die, or was there another way to fulfill the prophecies of the Messiah?

G. INCLUSIO:

- Jesus repeats the words “Blessed are the...” in the Beatitudes (Matt 5:1-11).
- Jesus repeats the words “You have heard...” and “But I say...” to emphasize his point that he is raising the standard of moral living (5:22-44).

QUESTIONS:

- Would these points that Jesus made be as effective had he not used this method of speaking?
- What are the implications of his repetition of key words and phrases throughout his ministry here on earth?
- Is this consistent with the character of God throughout the ages, repeating various points that he wants to drive home?

H. INTERCALATION:

- It has been noted that the death of John the Baptist didn't happen chronologically where it is recorded in the gospel of Matthew (Chapter 14). The author of Matthew must have decided that it would make for a more effective point if written in this manner.

QUESTION:

- What possible benefit can be gained by reading this account of the gospel with the beheading of John the Baptist?
- On the flip-side of that coin, what can be gained by reading Matthew in the correct chronological order?
- Does it make a difference either way in one's understanding of the gospel?
- Why did the author choose this more unconventional method instead?

KEY VERSES AND STRATEGIC AREAS

- The brief layout of Jesus' genealogy and birth. This gives the appropriate background information and lets the reader know that the person of whom the book is being written is someone of royal blood (1:17-2:19).
- The preparation for the coming of Jesus as heralded by John the Baptist is important to note, because it is a fulfillment of scripture as he is the voice crying out in the wilderness. Also, he baptizes Jesus, signifying the beginning of Jesus' ministry. From here, we see Jesus go on to successfully resist the trials of Satan (3:1-4:17).
- The ministry of Jesus is extremely important, including but not limited to: the calling of his disciples; miracles & healings; teaching, parables, rebuking; and the typology of the transfiguration and the last supper (4:18-25:46).

- Death and Resurrection of Jesus. This is perhaps of utmost importance, for it is through this series of events that our eternal salvation is made possible. Also, Jesus makes the Great Commission to his disciples (26:1-28:20).

HIGHER CRITICISM OF MATTHEW

- The author of the book of Matthew may or may not have been a follower of Jesus. Evidence within the text itself points to the possibility of it being Matthew or one of the other disciples, because of many firsthand recollections of Jesus.
- The intended audience of the book of Matthew was probably for someone who had not yet heard of Jesus, because it gave both biographical background information, as well as the practical account of miraculous events that continue to shape our perception of the world today. It may have been to Jews, or perhaps scriptural scholars, because there are quite a few instances referring to the Old Testament.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

- The book starts out listing the contributors to the lineage of Jesus, and makes an arrowhead point towards the end that converges on Jesus as the Christ. It starts out as any other account of a kingly family tree would be laid out, yet reveals in the end that this is no mere earthly king. However, the early years of Jesus' life are somewhat ambiguous, as is the ending with his implied ascension to sit at the right hand of the Father.
- Between these two smaller foggy areas, there is a solid message of teaching, healing, casting out of demons, fulfillment of prophecy, and relation of God to Jesus (and implicitly to mankind) as Father to Son.
- Jesus warns us time and again about the dangers of hypocrisy and the importance of faith and reliance on the Holy Spirit for guidance.

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SURVEY OF MATTHEW 1:1-17

Introduction	Genealogy			Summary
Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3	Paragraph 4	Paragraph 5
	Abraham - David	David - Jechoniah	Jechoniah - Jesus	
(Matt 1:1)	(Matt 1:2-6a)	(Matt 1:6b-11)	(Matt 1:12-16)	(Matt 1:17)

STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Recurrence: There is the recurrence of the listing of father and sons throughout the Matthew 1:1-17.

Climax: There is arguably a movement from lesser to greater, starting with Abraham and going to Jesus. The argument could arise because the three key people mentioned are Abraham, David, and Jesus. One could perhaps say that those in between the three are not as great as the three themselves, but the importance of Jesus could be seen as the ultimate zenith of this genealogy.

Particularization: This is evident because the genealogy starts off fairly general with Abraham, and many Jewish people considered themselves to be his children. The scope is narrowed, and finally peaks in verse 16 with Jesus as the Messiah.

Causation & Preparation / Realization: This is fairly obvious and perhaps not worth mentioning. The cause and effect of fatherhood is seen in their offspring. The same applies with preparation and realization, as the genealogical background is given.

Summarization: This is seen in verse 17, as the author recaps the lineage of Jesus that has been provided.

QUESTIONS:

It is understood that in Biblical times, the use of the male side of a family in tracking ancestry was especially important. Why then, are the females listed only when there is a certain exception that sets them apart? Examples: Tamar (incest), Rahab (prostitute), Ruth (Gentile), Bathsheba (wife of Uriah = adultery w/ David), Mary (virgin birth).

The author of Matthew lists in verse 17 that there were fourteen generations between Abraham & David, David & deportation to Babylon, and deportation & Jesus. This would add up to 42 generations total, however this is not the total number listed. Was this a miscount on the part of the author of Matthew, or were some omitted from the list, and if so, why were they taken out?

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SURVEY OF MATTHEW 1:18-2:23

Name him	Birth of the Savior in Bethlehem			Hidden infancy of Jesus		
Emmanuel	Wise Men	Herod's Plan	Homage	Escape	Massacre	Return
1:18-25	2:1-2	2:3-8	2:9-12	2:13-15	2:16-18	2:19-23

STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS:

- Recurrence: There are several instances in which God communicates things to people through their dreams. An angel appeared to Joseph (1:20); the 3 wise men were warned (2:12); an angel warns Joseph (2:13); the Lord appeared to Joseph (2:19-20); Joseph warned again (2:22).
- Comparison / Contrast: Both Herod and the 3 wise men seek to find Jesus, but for entirely different reasons. The cruelty of Herod is drastically different than the benevolent intentions of the 3 wise men.
- Cruciality: It would appear that the power and influence of Herod would have allowed him to find and kill the infant Jesus. However, the provision of the Lord was evident in continually making a way of escape.
- Causation: The birth of Jesus sets several things into motion. Some of these are: 3 wise men traveling from the East; Herod killing infants in Bethlehem; the eventual redemption of all mankind.
- Preparation: We are given the background information of how the birth of Jesus was to take place, and also see Joseph's initial reaction to the whole thing (1:18-25).

QUESTIONS:

- Before reassurance was given him by the angel in his dream, did Joseph believe that Mary was with child because of the Holy Spirit? If so, then why did he seek to dismiss her quietly (or at all)? Did he not want to be a part of what God was bringing about? Was this simply an issue of ego; that was not chosen to father Jesus?
- Why was it necessary that Jesus was birthed by a woman but not a man? Couldn't he have just descended from heaven fully-grown and begun his ministry? Obviously, by his sovereignty, it could have been possible. Why then, did God choose to send the Son in this manner?
- Why is Mary's encounter with the Lord not listed in this gospel? Did the author of Matthew purposefully leave out her conversation with the angel who announced she would carry the Christ Child? Is her dialogue comparably insignificant to Joseph's?
- Why was Herod's reaction to the annunciation of Jesus' birth a hostile one? Did he not realize after having consulting the chief priests and scribes that Jesus was the Messiah? He must have, since he was so terrified of the implications. If so, why did he think that he could prevent God's plan from coming to fruition?

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SURVEY OF MATTHEW 5:17-48

A. PARAGRAPH TITLES:

- Law and the Prophets (5:17-20)
- Concerning Anger (5:21-26)
- Concerning Adultery (5:27-30)
- Concerning Divorce (5:31-32)
- Concerning Oaths (5:33-37)
- Concerning Retaliation (5:38-42)
- Love for Enemies (5:43-48)

B. UNITS / SUB-UNITS & STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Law & the Prophets	Jesus Raises the Standard Concerning:					
	Anger	Adultery	Divorce	Oaths	Retaliation	Enemies
(5:17-20)	(5:21-26)	(5:27-30)	(5:31-32)	(5:33-37)	(5:38-42)	(5:43-48)

- Recurrence of Contrast (by Interchange): Jesus is quoted several times in these passages (5:21-48) as saying “You have heard that it was said... But I say to you...” He is exemplifying his previous statement in 5:17-20 that he has not come to abolish the law or prophets, but fulfill. He is expounding upon the mere letter of the law, letting those who would hear his words know that he is not looking simply for legalism, but an attitude of the heart. All throughout 5:17-48, there is contrast. Jesus will make one statement, and then say something contrary to previous assumptions. This follows a simple A-B-A-B pattern.
- Comparison: Jesus compares the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees to that of a person seeking to enter the kingdom of heaven. He tells us that we must exceed them in righteousness (5:20). In verses 5:46-48, Jesus compares the reader to God the Father, exhorting us to be perfect, as in the likeness of the Lord.
- Cruciality: This is seen all throughout 5:17-48, as Jesus draws key differences between what people are familiar with, namely the law, and what he deems to be acceptable and necessary. The crucial part is that one could formerly keep the law outwardly and be inwardly fraudulent. However, with this new teaching, Jesus made it clear that the truly important change is not without, but within.
- Particularization: There is slight particularization in each major theme made in these passages. Much like the recurrence of contrast, Jesus starts generally by speaking of the commonly known law, and then particularizes as he brings to a fine point the new exhortation concerning each topic.
- Causation: Again, in each key theme, Jesus begins by talking about the problem, and makes reference to the awaiting judgment. The cause is of course is sin, judgment the effect.

- Preparation / Realization: In verses 5:17-20, Jesus describes the purpose of his ministry, coming to fulfill the law, and not abolish it. He then outlines some of the major debates in the law, all of which concern sin and punishment. The end realization is that through Jesus, we are expected to be perfect just as God is perfect.

C. INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS:

- Why did the author of Matthew write using recurrence of contrasting interchange? Couldn't he have listed all of the phrases beginning with "You have heard that it was said..." in one section, and then finish off with all of Jesus' additional exhortations? By breaking each topic into its own section, was he trying to emphasize the topics themselves, or rather the method of contrast that Jesus used when speaking?
- Did the author mention the comparison of righteousness of the Pharisees and also the perfection of God because he believed it was possible and necessary? Or are these listed in order to show that we are severely in need of Jesus himself for such capabilities?
- Why is cruciality employed in describing Jesus' words? Could the author instead have used a more positive method, describing them in a more encouraging light? For instance, he could have said that Jesus talked about a topic and then added to it, rather than making Jesus seem almost confrontational with the old and established law.
- The use of particularization would imply that the author of Matthew expected the reader to have at least some familiarity with the previously established Law of Moses. Would the additional teachings of Jesus have worked as well without a brief mention of the law? Is there another literary style that would have better served the passage, perhaps generalization?
- In using causation, why doesn't the author list all the topics in which judgment may occur as a result of sin? What is he trying to say about these particular subjects that set them apart from other potential ones?
- On the same note, why are preparation and realization not used to enclose a wider range of topics, such as prayer & fasting, which come after Jesus' exhortation to be perfect as God the Father? Could it be that the author wanted to separate the sinful themes from the sacrificial religious ones?

D. KEY VERSES / STRATEGIC AREAS:

- In 5:17-20, Jesus gives the reason that he has come to dwell within creation. He tells the disciples that he is here to fulfill the law and all prophecy concerning him.
- Through 5:21-47, Jesus tells about what the law says, and then expounds upon the requirements, basically raising the bar for those who seek righteousness.
- In 5:48, Jesus gives a nearly impossible exhortation saying "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." This was previously unthinkable, yet as the one who commands it, Jesus also did it.

E. LITERARY FORMS:

- It appeared to me that in light of the dialogue of Jesus, discursive and logical literary form was being implemented. He is appealing to the intellect and one's knowledge of the law in order to bring about revelation of his teachings.
- I also thought I observed prose narrative being implemented, as the teachings including the phrases "You have heard that it was said... But I say to you..." are arranged in such a way that they are almost form stanzas reminiscent of a poem. This isn't to say that a poetic literary form is in action, rather that the style lends itself, albeit in a slight way, to the completion of the color of the story.

F. OTHER IMPRESSIONS:

- I believe that Matthew 5:17-48 is the segment of which 5:46-48 is a part. Originally, I had thought that possibly all of chapters 5, 6, and 7 belonged together as a segment, but after closer examination found that the key theme that set apart verses 5:17-48 is Jesus' expounding upon the law, raising the standard.

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DETAILED OBSERVATION of MATTHEW 5:46-48

Matthew 5:46-48 (Greek)

46 ἐὰν γὰρ ἀγαπήσητε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, τίνα μισθὸν ἔχετε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ τελῶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν;

47 καὶ ἐὰν ἀσπάσησθε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὑμῶν μόνον, τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ ἔθνικοι τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν;

48 ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν.

Matthew 5:46-48 (English)

46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

CLAUSIAL BREAKDOWN:

1. For if you love those who love you
2. what reward do you have
3. Do not even the tax collectors do the same
4. And if you greet only your brothers and sisters
5. what more are you doing than others
6. Do not even the Gentiles do the same
7. Be perfect, therefore
8. as your heavenly Father is perfect

OBSERVATIONS

1. The first clause is conditional. The words “for if” raise your awareness that the rest of the sentence will have a certain essence of contingency.

2. The second clause answers the condition of the first. By asking the question of reward, it insinuates that one actually does exist.

3. The third clause asks a question in reference to the two preceding clauses. In doing so, it makes the point that even tax collectors love those who love them.

4. The fourth clause talks about being exclusive to greeting only those who are your brothers and sisters.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the author trying to say here? Is loving others a result of you loving them, or is their affection a result of your initial statement of friendliness?

2. Was the author talking about a literal, tangible reward, or was he speaking about an eventual reward in heaven? Could it be that he was merely speaking figuratively?

3. Obviously, the key is to not merely love only those who love you. Is the author saying that we must love all people, or simply to avoid acting like a tax collector?

4. Is this to say that there are some who only greet members of their family? Is it a reference to people who appear exclusive?

OBSERVATIONS

5. The Greek says τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; literally meaning “What extraordinary [thing] are you doing?” It really does not make mention of others, as in the NRSV.
6. The author expresses his general disgust Gentiles, yet says that even they care for their brothers and their sisters [families]. His words are spoken with conviction.
7. In the Greek, the phrase ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι is translated “Therefore will be you perfect” indicative of a promise, rather than a command as in the NRSV.
8. The promise/command of the seventh clause is compared to God the Father. We (the readers) are to aspire and strive to be holy and flawless just as the Lord himself.

QUESTIONS

5. Is the author trying to say that love between siblings, as well as other close relatives, is an inherent part of being family? Is this not extraordinary of itself?
6. Is Jesus saying this because the distinctions between male & female, Jew & Gentile, master & slave not to have been done away with by his crucifixion?
7. In light of this, is the method of attaining this promise following the above commands (among others)? Or is the original NRSV translation the correct one?
8. Does the author really think that it is possible to attain perfection in our current fallen human state? Could he be giving the reader too difficult a goal to attain?

SUMMARY:

I feel the most important clauses and corresponding questions were: 1, 5, 6, 7, & 8. I was particularly intrigued by the differences between the NRSV (on which I was raised) and the literal Greek translation of the same passages. Although I typically subscribe to more conservative views of scripture, for the purposes of this assignment, as well as expanding the horizon of my academic scope, I asked some questions that bordered on misinterpretation. As a result, I feel the skew of focus is justified.

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INTERPRETATION of MATTHEW 5:46-48

QUESTION: What are the meanings of *love* and *perfect* as used in Matthew 5:46-48?

EVIDENCE	INFERENCES
<p><u>Preliminary Definitions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Love – A deep, tender, ineffable feeling of affection and solicitude toward a person, such as that arising from kinship, recognition of attractive qualities, or a sense of underlying oneness. ○ Perfect – Lacking nothing essential to the whole; complete of its nature or kind. (American Heritage Dictionary) 	<p>→ It can be assumed that if those whom Jews typically despised were capable of such love, then surely the followers of Christ, the face of the invisible God, would be able to exude such care and concern for each other. This is what Jesus insists upon.</p> <p>→ This meaning is reflected in the Biblical text, but could also be referring to being without defect or blemish.</p>
<p><u>Context:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In verses 5:46-48, Jesus is quoted as having said: “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” <p>This passage is preceded by Jesus’ teaching concerning retaliation and generosity, saying to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile.</p>	<p>→ In light of the instructional tone of the preceding passages, we can infer that Jesus is again offering teachings regarding love and perfection. He is not disapproving of loving those who love you, rather is exhorting those to whom he is speaking to rise above the mere behavior of tax collectors (sinners), and do more. He is telling us not to strive for the perfection of other worldly people around us, and implying that the only standard by which we should measure ourselves is that of God the Father. And since he has said that he and the Father are one, <i>he</i> is that example.</p>
<p><u>New Testament Word Usage:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Greek word for love <i>αγαπω</i>, appears in the following NT verses: Matt. 5:43f, 46; 6:24; 19:19; 22:37, 39; Mk. 10:21; 12:30f, 33; Lk. 6:27, 32, 35; 7:5, 42, 47; 10:27; 11:43; 16:13; Jn. 3:16, 19, 35; 8:42; 10:17; 11:5; 12:43; 13:1, 23, 34; 14:15, 21, 23, 28, 31; 15:9, 12, 17; 17:23f, 26; 19:26; 21:7, 15, 20; Rom. 8:28, 37; 9:13, 25; 13:8f; 1 Co. 2:9; 8:3; 2 Co. 	<p>→ In all these instances, this root word <i>agape</i> is used to describe love (primarily of Christian love); show or prove one's love; long for, desire, place first in one's affections. On several occasions, it is used to refer to how one is commanded to love his neighbor. In a few other instances, it is used to describe one's love for a homeland. At first glance, it could be thought (erroneously) that this word means love in</p>

<p>9:7; 11:11; 12:15; Gal. 2:20; 5:14; Eph. 1:6; 2:4; 5:2, 25, 28, 33; 6:24; Col. 3:12, 19; 1 Thess. 1:4; 4:9; 2 Thess. 2:13, 16; 2 Tim. 4:8, 10; Heb. 1:9; 12:6; Jas. 1:12; 2:5, 8; 1 Pet. 1:8, 22; 2:17; 3:10; 2 Pet. 2:15; 1 Jn. 2:10, 15; 3:10f, 14, 18, 23; 4:7f, 10, 19; 5:1f; 2 Jn. 1:1, 5; 3 Jn. 1:1; Jude 1:1; Rev. 1:5; 3:9; 12:11; 20:9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Greek word for perfect τελειος, appears in the following NT verses: Matt. 5:48; 19:21; Rom. 12:2; 1 Co. 2:6; 13:10; 14:20; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15; Col. 1:28; 4:12; Heb. 5:14; 9:11; Jas. 1:4, 17, 25; 3:2; 1 Jn. 4:18 	<p>respect to familiar people or places. However, this is also the word used to describe the love that God has for us, and the love with which we admonish God. It can be concluded then, that this is not love's alternate definition: A feeling of intense desire and attraction toward a person with whom one is disposed to make a pair; the emotion of sex and romance.</p> <p>→ In all these instances, this root word <i>teleios</i> is used to describe perfection as a sense of completeness, wholeness, or full-grown (adult) maturity. It can also be seen in terms of having achieved full effectiveness, as seen in James 1:4.</p>
<p><u>Inflections:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 5:46, Love has two forms: ἀγαπήσητε (verb subjunctive aorist active 2nd person plural) ἀγαπῶντας (verb participle present active accusative masculine plural) ○ In 5:48, Perfect has two forms: τέλειοι (adjective normal nominative masculine plural no degree) τέλειός (adjective normal nominative masculine singular no degree) 	<p>→ Because <i>agape</i> is being used in both of these ways, it can be assumed that the love between the two parties is reflexive. That is, it is nearly automatic, occurring as a reciprocal pattern.</p> <p>→ Because the first instance is plural and has no degree, we can assume that this perfection is required of many, though probably beyond those who are masculine, and is required without limit. The second instance is singular, obviously in reference to God, again without a limit.</p>
<p><u>General Literary Form:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The question of loving those who love you comes with the suggestion of a possible reward, albeit it is a reference that there will be no reward if more is not done than the bare minimum. ○ The exhortation to be perfect as God is perfect, however, comes with no mention of a reward of any kind. 	<p>→ One could suppose that Jesus is saying that “loving those who love you” is so commonplace that to think of a reward for doing something so utterly normal would be ridiculous. We are to be more than the common Gentiles, and love all the more so.</p> <p>→ It could be assumed that there is no reward for perfection. However, it is more likely that perfection's reward <i>is</i> perfection.</p>
<p><u>Atmosphere:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The author of Matthew, assuming he has made an accurate quote, has Jesus giving his exhortation in a convicting and humbling manner. He is telling the reader to be better than sinful tax collectors and Gentiles, but not only that, but to be as perfect as the Lord. 	<p>→ This points to a significant increase in the moral standard of living. Because it comes immediately after Jesus has expounded upon former teachings, we now have a new objective given to us. No longer is the bare minimum going to suffice. We must imitate God's character.</p>

Interpretation of Others:

- “Jesus thus provokes his hearers to shame by comparing their ability to obey the love commandment with that of tax gatherers and non-Jews (the latter were generally idolaters), the epitome of moral reprobates. Most people would have agreed that everyone, including sinners, loved those who loved them. Indeed, both Jewish and Greek sages sometimes admonished against hating one’s enemies, although the more common sentiment in practice - then as today - was to make sure you did your enemies more harm than they did to you.” (Keener 204)
 - “The commandment to be perfect in the same way our Father is perfect is to be seen in this context of love. His perfect love is without discrimination; our love is to be open to all people, friends and enemies. We should not read the word ‘perfect’ as a philosophical or moralistic perfection... The Greek word is *teleios*, a word which carries the meaning of culmination, of maturity, of achievement in function. We were created in the image of God, and having perverted this image in sin we are re-created in grace and predestined ‘to be conformed in the image of his Son’ (Rom. 8:29, KJV). The goal of the disciple is to live in this perfection, this *teleios*, this extension of the love of Christ. It is an active word and, in context, means that our love must be all-inclusive as God’s is all-inclusive.” (Augsburger 82)
- His use of the word shame is a powerful insight into the meaning behind Jesus’ words. When I live out my life, I often see myself being a thermometer, simply taking the temperature of the surrounding world I live in, and reaching equilibrium at the lowest common point. In this tendency to remain in equivalent balance, I will often repay to others the malice they have done to me, sometimes in abundance. Through examination of Keener’s interpretation of Matthew 5:46-47, it can be inferred that we are to out-love our enemies, showing benevolence where we would otherwise not. It is indeed a difficult thing to do, as it goes against fallen human nature.
- In direct opposition to the previous thermometer analogy, to be perfect as the Father is perfect means to be a thermostat. Whenever the temperature begins to drop, we as believers in Christ are to turn up the spiritual fire and restore the warmth of love to the world. We are to be mature, in our prime so to speak, modeling the example set forth by Jesus himself. It has been said that a metallurgist is not satisfied with the piece of metal he is working on until he can see his reflection in it. We as God’s creation should allow ourselves to be worked and refined until the master can see himself reflected in us. I found it particularly comforting that the word *teleios* doesn’t mean without a single flaw, as it would be particularly nerve-wracking to imagine having to go through life walking on eggshells, never risking failure. It can be inferred therefore, that we are to strive for perfection in the sense that we are to be complete, lacking nothing as we are filled by Christ to do God’s will.

GENERAL SUMMARY: My initial assumptions about the words *love* and *perfect* in Matthew 5:46-48 proved correct. Not only are we to love our neighbors, brothers, and sisters, but as well everyone who would seek to do us harm and steal of our possessions. We must be relentlessly forgiving; just as is the One in whose image we are created.

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SURVEY of MATTHEW 13:1-52

A. PARAGRAPH TITLES:

- The Parable of the Sower (13:1-9)
- The Purpose of the Parables (13:10-17)
- The Parable of the Sower Explained (13:18-23)
- The Parable of Weeds Among the Wheat (13:24-30)
- The Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31-32)
- The Parable of the Yeast (13:33)
- The Use of Parables (13:34-35)
- Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds (13:36-43)
- Three Parables (13:44-50)
- Treasures New and Old (13:51-52)

B. UNITS / SUB-UNITS & STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Parable	Explanation		Parables			Explanation		Parables	
Sower Parable	Purpose of Parables	Sower Parable Explained	Weeds and Wheat	Mustard Seed	Parable of Yeast	Use of Parables	Weeds Parable Explained	Three Parables	Treasures New and Old
(1-9)	(10-17)	(18-23)	(24-30)	(31-32)	(33)	(34-35)	(36-43)	(44-50)	(51-52)

- **Recurrence:** The concept of sowing seed shows up throughout this passage, and is used in more than one parable to indicate faith or receptivity towards the gospel. Jesus is explaining how the various locations of the soil are like the condition of those to whom he is preaching the good news (13:4-9), and the seed is representative of the gospel message. It is the same message, sown to all, but not everyone receives it in the same way. By indication, Jesus is to be seen as the sower. He also talks about how the seed of wheat and weeds can be planted together, comparing it to the trickery of the devil following up the gospel. In this case, it is not the location of the seed that is the issue, but the type of seed itself. The bad seed produces negative results, and is discarded, whereas the product of the good seed is kept, in spite of the weeds springing up around it. In the parable of the mustard seed (31-32), Jesus uses the physical size of the seed as an illustration, and not as a type in relation to the gospel message. He says that those who are like this have great potential for growth in the Lord.
- **Contrast:** Jesus contrasts the understanding of the disciples and the masses on a couple of occasions (13:11, 17). However, he is mainly contrasting the understanding of the people with the clarity of his message. Throughout the passages contained in Matthew 13:1-52, he makes no secret to his disciples that the message he is bringing forth will not be understood by everyone, and that only a select group will be able to understand these parables.

- Comparison: Jesus compares the good news of the gospel to seed that has been sown over a variety of areas. As previously mentioned, he is likening himself to the sower, casting to those who would receive the salvation which he gives freely.
- Interrogation: The problem is that the average Jew of Jesus' day, a group of such he is addressing here, would not have understood the great mysteries of the things of God if he had told them plainly. The solution, it appears, is to speak to them of heavenly themes in plain terms that they are familiar with, those of parables. However, Jesus speaks plainly to the disciples, and explains his parables to them, in order that they might understand what he is talking about and why he is being so cryptic. Perhaps I am one that does not yet fully understand the deeper implications of this chapter, but I think it would be easier to understand something if someone told me of it plainly, rather than mixed up their meaning in allegories.
- Interchange: There is a somewhat evident pattern of alternation between a parable given to the people by Jesus, and then a follow-up, private explanation to the disciples of its meaning. This follows an A-B-A-B-A pattern; A being in reference to a parable or series of parables, and B referring to their explanations.
- Intercalation: Throughout Matthew 13:1-52, there is constant allusion to the gospel being like seed, Jesus being like the sower, and the devil being like weeds. However, seemingly in the middle of this passage, in verse 33, Jesus uses the example "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of flour until all of it had leavened." This is in reference to neither seed nor sower, but to a woman preparing the wheat, the fruition of initial planting. Jesus also compares the kingdom to a treasure, pearl, and fishing net. While not outlandish in and of themselves, they do break the flow of the previous seed and sower analogies.

C. INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS:

- Did the author use recurrence consciously, or simply because this is order in which Jesus actually gave the parables? If it is intentional, why did he separate all the parables having to do with seed, and not lump them together? It seems to me that it would have been simpler and perhaps easier to understand if they were all in one section of the segment. Is he making the implication that though similar, each parable is unique in and of itself and should be treated as such?
- Why did the author contrast the simplistic presentation style of the gospel with its far reaching implications (13:10-17)? Is the implication here that he wanted to distance the understanding of the common people from the understanding that Jesus (and the disciples) had about heavenly things?
- Since he gave several parables, why did Jesus, in his extensive knowledge of scripture and the human condition, not use a wider variety of parable examples? Is this a result of the author's writing style, consolidating all the sower/seed parables together in this chapter, saving other examples for other parts of the book?
- Again, the question of interrogation. It is perceptible why the author would have used interrogation, in order to describe the dilemma of and understanding barrier between Jesus and the crowd. My question is why did Jesus use parables and not just speak plainly to the people in a way they could understand? Was he adhering

- to Old Testament references, in order that he may fulfill them, or were the common people of his time truly incapable of grasping his true intentions without the necessary illumination of the Holy Spirit?
- Why did the author of Matthew use this A-B-A-B-A pattern? Would it not have made more literary sense to pattern it in an AAA-BB pattern, in which the parables came first, followed by their explanations? Granted, he could have done this in keeping with chronological order, or perhaps it really is a stylistic issue to emphasize the distinctiveness of the separate parables acting on their own, accompanied by their explanations.
 - What is the implication of the insertion of the parable of the yeast in verse 33? Is this somehow a spike in an otherwise smooth passage about sower/seed parables? Is this to break up any possible monotony, or is it a key verse that should be focused upon to reveal greater implications? Or again, it could possibly be in place simply because this is the order in which Jesus gave the parables.

D. KEY VERSES / STRATEGIC AREAS:

- I do not find that this is a passage that can be reduced to few key strategic verses in its scope. One must take them all into account together, for most of them deal with the same subject matter, that of the parables of the sower and the seed. If anything, the verses which seemingly stand out from the rest should be given special attention, such as the parable of the yeast, or those concerning treasure, pearls, or a fishing net (44-48). Also of particular interest would be those in which Jesus instructs the disciples privately, letting them in on the secrets of his parables (10-17, 51-52).

E. LITERARY FORMS:

- Prose Narrative is used in chapter 13, giving an account of the teachings of Jesus in a sort of story-telling manner, one that is both informative and gives variety, fleshing out the passages into a substantial dialogue.
- Parabolic literature is also most definitely present. In fact, these parables of Jesus are what make the concept of parabolic literature what it is today. Just as Jesus probably engaged the principles of analogy to his preaching, so too has the author of Matthew employed it in his writing style. The result is an easily understandable (unless you were a first century Jew) message that can be related to people of modest backgrounds.
- During the parable of the wheat and the weeds (24-30), and towards the end of the chapter, in verses 36-52, Jesus is talking in a masked eschatological sense, in reference to the end of the ages when all shall have to give an account for their lives. The good ones, those who bore fruit from the seed of the Lord shall be saved, and allowed into God's storehouse. Those who did not, but sprung up into weeds, shall be collected and cast off into the fire. This is almost Revelatory in nature.

F. OTHER IMPRESSIONS:

- I am still somewhat unsure as to the use of the parable of the yeast (33), and the parable in verse 52 about the scribe doesn't seem to fit into the rest of the chapter.

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INTERPRETATION of MATTHEW 13:1-52

Briefly before Jesus delivers the parable of the sower, there is usage of preparation in the description of the setting (1-2). The author lays out the scene, telling of the great crowds that had gathered to hear Jesus speak, so numerous that he had to sit in a boat while the people listened from the beach. There is recurrence of the theme of the sower or seed throughout many of the parables, as well as that of comparison and contrast. Interchange is also present inasmuch as the chapter seems to alternate between parables and some kind of explanation of their purpose.

Parable of the Sower

In this parable (3-9), Jesus talks about seed thrown by a sower landing in various locations, with mixed results. The first seed falls upon the path, an area firmly trodden upon, rendering it infertile. It is quickly eaten by the birds. The second handful of seed falls upon rocky ground and begins to grow, but is scorched by the sun and quickly withers for lack of soil depth. The third batch falls among thorns, by which it is choked. The final tossing of seed falls upon good soil and brings forth a multiple yield of grain. Throughout this parable, there is consistent repetition of cause and effect. In each case that the seed is unfruitful, there is first the reason for it, and then the end result, which is the seed dying. In the last part of the parable, the cause again comes first, and the end result is abundant life.

Jesus himself gives the explanation to this parable in verses 18 through 23. He says the seed which has fallen on the path is like a person who receives the word of the kingdom, yet does not understand it. Satan wastes no time in quickly snatching it up before it can be fully understood. The rocky ground is compared to a person who initially joyfully receives the gospel, yet because there is no depth of character, when trouble or persecution arises, the person immediately falls away. The soil which fell upon the thorns is like a person who receives the word, but allows the other cares of this life to choke it out. Finally, the good soil is like a person who rightly receives the word, and it takes root in their lives, bearing fruit.

Parable of the Weeds

This parable in verses 24 through 30 seems to have a more progressive, story-like style depicting again a sower who put seed down in his fields. There is less clear-cut repetition as in the preceding parable, yet causation is still present. The message here is slightly different than that of the original. Instead of the weeds choking out the good seed, the weeds and the wheat grow up along side each other. The master instructs his reapers to wait until the time of harvest, and to pick the weeds and wheat alike, burning the weeds

but keeping the wheat. The reason given for this is that if they plucked the weeds prematurely, then they would uproot the good wheat as well. It is possible that particularization is present here, because the master originally instructs his servants to deal with both wheat and weeds alike (general), and then gives more specific instructions to be done at a later date (particular).

Again, Jesus explains this parable to his disciples later on in the chapter (36-43). The sower is of course, Jesus himself as the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed are the children of God. In this case, there is a separate sower, unlike the first parable. This second sower is the devil, who in all his craftiness sows his weeds in amongst the master's grain, knowing full well that they will be allowed to flourish until the day of final judgment. The end result is unaffected, however. Those who are the faithful recipients and bear yield for God are saved, and the others are destroyed.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

This parable compares the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed. Though it is seemingly insignificant, this smallest of all seeds becomes a large plant, "the greatest of shrubs" in which birds make their nests. Jesus does not personally provide an interpretation of this parable, perhaps because he thought of it as self-explanatory, or perhaps because the author of Matthew did not deem it necessary to include its explanation. In either case, one must wonder why the explanation is absent. It would seem that the reason for this may be both. Jesus may have meant for this to be interpreted for themselves by the people who heard it, and the author of Matthew may have wanted to reader to go through the same exploratory thought process.

To me, this parable is reflective of the kingdom of heaven in that right now, we do not see heaven in all its glory. We are bound by flesh, remaining for now in this lifetime within the confines of the world. However, the seed of the word has been planted in our lives and continues to grow, until on that fateful day we see heaven in all its fruition. I also see it as indicative of a person's potential. While someone may not seem that all capable of achieving success by whatever standard, it is often those who face the most adversity who accomplish the most. As my old wrestling coach used to say, "It's not the size of the dog in a fight, it's the size of the fight in a dog" that makes the difference of who succeeds. In this case, being the underdog, or mustard seed, is not a bad thing at all.

Parable of the Yeast

This short, one verse parable of 13:33 simply says "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." That's it, no further explanation or later teaching by Jesus based upon it. This one is interesting, and kind of breaks the mold a bit, because rather than being a male sower, it talks about a female cook. It still pertains to that of the general theme of wheat and harvest however, due to the flour as one of the ingredients. As was the case with the parable of the mustard seed, the reader is left to his own understanding.

To me, this parable appears to be speaking about how the kingdom of heaven is to operate through us, the believers. Just as a little yeast can leaven an entire batch of dough, so are we supposed to be able to affect the world around us. I've heard it said that we are to be thermostats, not thermometers. We aren't supposed to simply reflect the spiritual temperature of the climate around us, letting ourselves lose our inner fire. We are to be thermostats that automatically fire up those around us when they start to wane in their faith. The same is true of Christians as the yeast, when the heat is on, we need to rise to the occasion.

Three Parables of the Kingdom

These three parables are also a departure from the two main parables involving the sower. In verse 44, Jesus is quoted as saying the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure in a field, which someone is willing to sell all their possessions in order to obtain. In verses 45 and 46, Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant who finds a pearl of great value, again selling all he has so he can buy it. In verses 47-50, Jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven like a net, catching many fish of different kinds. The fishermen haul aboard this net, and pick through the fish, keeping the choice kind, and throwing out the bad ones. Jesus says that this will be like the end of the age, in which the righteous will be separated from the unrighteous in final judgment.

Apart from the last of the three, the other two parables are again given without direct interpretation by Jesus. It could be inferred though, that in talking about heaven, Jesus conjured up thoughts of Israel, whose people viewed themselves as God's treasured and chosen people. It would have made perfect sense that if someone found such a treasure, it would be worth it all to purchase. However, the second parable of a pearl would have been seen as somewhat of an insult to the Jewish people present for its hearing. Pearls came from an animal considered by their culture to be unclean. The thought of selling even some, let alone all, of one's possessions in order to buy a pearl was outlandish for them. In this sense, I believe that Jesus was talking about the Gentiles receiving the word of God. He uses two typologies to refer to the same meaning. Jews and Gentiles alike are to be equal partakers of the word of God. Jesus will be like the people in the two parables, giving all that he has, his deity and humanity, to purchase mankind with the ransom of his sacrifice.

Treasures New and Old

The final parable is as short as the preceding three. In verse 52, Jesus talks about how a scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household. "He brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." This was somewhat perplexing to me, because it also lacked an explanation. However, after further thought and examination, I believe that Jesus is referring again to Jews and Gentiles. The Jews would have been the old treasure, set aside long before as the chosen people of God. The new addition to the storehouse of treasure would have been the Gentiles, through whom Jesus made available salvation and acceptance, as exemplified in his years of earthly ministry. The scribe, I believe, is a reference to the apostles and disciples, who will be

responsible for the care and upkeep of the word, which is to be shared with both the new and old people of God.

Meaning and Function of 10-17 and 34-35

In explaining the purposes of the parables to his disciples in verses 10-17, Jesus quotes from Isaiah saying that though he speaks to the people, they will not understand. He tells the disciples that they are privileged for being given understanding of spiritual things. Also in verses 34-35, Jesus makes reference to prophecy given by Isaiah. It could be said that there is literary interrogation at work here. The problem is that neither the disciples nor people of the multitudes fully grasped the meanings of Jesus' parables. The solution for the disciples was for Jesus to simply give them his direct interpretation. The problem of the lack of understanding for the people seemingly remains unsolved. However, through the great commission, Jesus instructs his apostles to go and make disciples of all the nations, in which case the ignorance of the people was to have been enlightened. This commission still exists today, and as believers of the word by faith, we are to do our duty.

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DETAILED OBSERVATION of MATTHEW 16:18-19

Matthew 16:18-19 (Greek)

18 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σοὶ λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ πύλαι ᾗδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς. **19** δώσω σοὶ τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ ὃ ἂν δήσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὃ ἂν λύσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

Matthew 16:18-19 (English)

18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. **19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

CLASIAL BREAKDOWN:

1. And I tell you, you are Peter
2. and on this rock I will build my church
3. and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it
4. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven
5. and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven
6. and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven

OBSERVATIONS

1. In clause 1, Jesus is quoted as saying “you are Peter” (Πέτρος). He apparently feels the need to rename him, although it cannot be known for sure if this is the first time Simon was ever called Peter by Jesus. This comes immediately following Simon Peter’s confession of “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (16:16)

2. The meaning of this new name is as stated, “the rock.” Jesus says that he will build his church upon this rock, who is Peter himself.

QUESTIONS

1. What was wrong with Peter’s original name, Simon? Is Jesus somehow rejecting the meaning behind the name Simon, stemming from the original spelling of the tribe of Simeon? Could Jesus be rewarding Peter for his positive confession about the personage of the Christ?

2. What is the implication of the meaning behind his new name? Is this referring to firmness of character? Does Peter somehow gain this sturdiness now that he’s been renamed, or did he already have it previously and is now assuming the name he deserves to better reflect who he is?

3. Jesus says to Simon Peter that the gates of Hades will not prevail against it, meaning they will not prevail against the rock that Peter is or is being made to be. It is interesting that Jesus used the word gates (πύλαι) to describe Hades, since a gate is an inanimate object.

4. Peter is given the keys (κλειδας) to the kingdom of heaven.

5. Jesus appears to be willing to trust the judgment of Peter to bind things on earth, and seems willing to match Peter's actions on earth with those of heaven. Jesus seems to be inconsistent with his character judgment of Peter, because a few verses later, he says to him "Get behind me Satan!" (16:23)

6. Jesus also gives to Peter the authority to loose things on earth, and again promises to loose the same things in heaven.

3. Does this mean that through Peter, Jesus is going to build the church for the purpose of breaking the gates of Hades? If so, then is this a glimpse the typology of Jesus taking death and Hades captive, setting the prisoners behind those gates free?

4. What is the significance of Jesus giving to Peter the keys of the kingdom? Is there significance to heaven having more than one key (plural noun in the Greek)? What are the implications of the illustrations of gates and keys? If Jesus gave the keys to heaven, then why not the keys to Hades? Does he prefer that the gates of Hades be broken, as opposed to unlocked?

5. Why does Jesus not say directly that Peter will have the authority to bind things on earth *and* in heaven? Is this his way of maintaining sovereignty over Peter's decisions? Is there really a need to bind things in heaven, assuming that heaven is already under God's control? What is the implication in this character inconsistency?

6. Is Jesus referring to judgment or blessing? Assuming that Peter will be binding things that are contrary to God, will he be dispensing judgment upon that which is bound, or blessing on those who are found deserving? Could it be that he will have the authority to do both? Is this a one-time deal, or an ongoing promise?

SUMMARY:

I feel that there is significance to the new name of Peter, but am curious as to whether or not there is significance in his former name Simon. Perhaps it is that he is being given the name Peter in addition to Simon, but one could reason that this is not the case since he is primarily referred to as simply Peter from this point forward. I also think that the passage concerning the gates of Hades is of particular importance. I'm not sure if this expression is referring to a location, or the forces of hell represented by the illustration. Equally puzzling is the apparent parallel between the binding and loosing of things on earth and in heaven. Still, the passage's main point is that of Peter's concreteness.

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DETAILED OBSERVATION of MATTHEW 16:24-28

Matthew 16:24-28 (English)

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

25 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

26 For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

27 “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.

28 Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

CLAUSIAL BREAKDOWN:

1. Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers,
2. let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.
3. For those who want to save their life will lose it,
4. and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.
5. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?
6. “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father,
7. and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.
8. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

OBSERVATIONS

Verse as a Whole:

Jesus again is talking directly to his disciples about his seemingly paradoxical method of thinking. He tells those who want to follow him to give up their lives, and take up their cross. Those who try to save their lives will lose them, yet those who give them up willingly for his sake will save them. Jesus places emphasis upon retention of one’s life as being more important than gaining the world. He tells them of a time of reckoning that is to come. In the end of the passage, he makes a puzzling reference towards death and the coming kingdom.

QUESTIONS

1. Why does Jesus use this somewhat contradictory method of teaching his disciples? Wouldn’t it be simpler to just tell them plainly what he means? Is this to be read as a sort of parable?
2. Why is Jesus telling his disciples what it takes to be his followers? Wouldn’t it be safe to assume that because they’re disciples they already know what it means to be Christ’s followers?
3. In verse 28, what was Jesus implying about death and the coming of the Son of Man to his kingdom? Is he referring to his resurrection after the three days, or making reference to the 2nd coming?

OBSERVATIONS	QUESTIONS
<p>Clause 1: It is clear in this passage that Jesus is speaking only to his disciples. Judging from the context, he is about to make a point in response to Peter, having already told him “Get behind me Satan,” (16:23). He seems to be implying by prefixing his sentence with “If any want to become my followers,” that they do not yet truly exhibit the qualities necessary to be considered his followers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is the author making the distinction here between the two words <i>disciples</i> and <i>followers</i>? Aren't the disciples supposed to be the more committed of the two categories? 2. Why did the author choose to include the disbelief of Peter (16:22-23) before Jesus' clarification of what it meant to be his followers (disciples)? 3. Is Jesus implying that they need to practice what they preach?
<p>Clause 2: The author of Matthew recounts the words of Jesus instructing his would-be followers to deny themselves and take up their respective crosses as they follow him. Once again, he seems to be raising the standard of what it means to follow him. It no longer seems enough to simply listen to and believe his words, but it would appear that action must be taken in order to validate one's claims of discipleship.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By saying that they must take up their cross and follow him, is Jesus saying that they must endure the suffering of carrying a cross, or is he making the point that they need to be willing to die for their faith? 2. What is the meaning of the phrase “take up their cross?” Is there one singular cross, or is it different for each person? Is it possible that both cases are true, that the “cross” has many meanings?
<p>Clause 3: It seems basic human nature to want to preserve the well being of the individual. Yet, Jesus instructs his disciples to do that which is completely unnatural. The penalty for trying to save one's life is that this person will on the contrary lose their life. So, Jesus appears to be saying that if we do what is normal, what everybody naturally has a tendency to do, we are doomed to eventually fail in vain.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is there such a sharp contradiction between basic human nature and the requirements to be a follower of Christ? Is it because Jesus is requiring his followers to model his lifestyle to the point of suffering and death? 2. By taking up one's cross, could this be considered an act of trying to save one's life by following Jesus' teaching? 3. Is Jesus referring to a person's physical, earthly life, or the life of their spirit?
<p>Clause 4: Jesus seems to be calling people to a suicide of sorts, in order that they may not ultimately lose their lives. Yet, he makes the distinction that those who lose their lives for his sake will find them, and that simply losing one's life will not enable them to find their lives again. It could be inferred that he is saying the only cause worth dying for is his own, the cause of the cross. It is the only one that yields a return.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the meaning of losing one's life? Is this referring to giving up one's profession (fishermen), or to dying? 2. What is the author trying to emphasize by including this contrast? Is this a figurative statement, or was it meant to be taken literally? 3. Does context allow for varying interpretation, meaning that the disciples would lose their lives literally, yet later followers would not?

<p>Clause 5: Jesus poses the rhetorical question asking what is the point of gaining the entire world if you forfeit your life? He also asks what the world could possibly have to offer for such an exchange, rephrasing his original question. He is asking the question referring to people in the plural, so he is speaking not only to Peter, but all the disciples, and most likely to everyone who would eventually read his words.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is meant by the phrase “gain the world?” Is this a reference to the wealth of the world, or is it in reference to anything that detracts from following Christ? 2. Assuming he’s quoting directly, why does the author include both instances of the question? Is he placing special importance on the fact it’s given twice? 3. What are the implications for those who follow Jesus in today’s context?
<p>Clause 6: Jesus foretells of his future coming with his angels in the glory of the Father. It appears to be a warning, letting the disciples know that he will be back to check up on how his words have been carried out. However, it could be read that the Jesus and the angels are returning in order to glorify the father.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was Jesus trying to make the point that he would be back with some sense of immediacy, or that he would be back in the end times? 2. Did the disciples have any way of knowing of how soon he was speaking? 3. What were the implications that Matthew’s author wishes us do draw?
<p>Clause 7: This clause states that Jesus will repay everyone for what has been done. While it may sound ominous, it could be read in a positive light. Depending on what a person had done by this time, this could either be a very bad or good thing. This clause appears to be a turning point in the context, because before it came the one concerning forfeiting one’s life and gaining nothing from the world. The following speaks of not tasting death.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is the author meaning to portray Jesus as he quotes him here? Is it to be read in a negative or positive light? Could it be that it is simply a promissory statement of things to come, and that all will be dealt with fairly based on their works? 2. Is this turning point in the context being emphasized by the author, or is it simply a result of the brilliance of word phrasing by Jesus himself? What inferences can be drawn from this?
<p>Clause 8: Jesus says in this clause “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” This is perhaps the most perplexing statement made in this passage, because of the company of disciples to whom Jesus was speaking, all of them died.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To whom was Jesus referring to in this statement? Were not the disciples the only people present to hear him say this? To what event is he referring? 2. In an eschatological sense, when reading this, I think of the 2nd coming. However, Jesus could have meant some disciples would live until his ascension. Is this death physical or spiritual?

SUMMARY: I believe the key clauses in this passage were 2, 3, 4, 5, & 8. They raised some interesting questions concerning what it takes to be a true follower of Christ. After examination of this text, it is clearly better to take up the cross and follow Christ, rather than suffer the loss of one’s life for pursuing after things in the world, which do not last.

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SURVEY OF MATTHEW 27:55-28:20

A. PARAGRAPH TITLES:

- Witnesses of the Crucifixion (27:55-56)
- The Burial of Jesus (27:57-61)
- The Guard at the Tomb (27:62-66)
- The Resurrection of Jesus (28:1-10)
- The Report of the Guard (28:11-15)
- The Great Commission (28:16-20)

B. UNITS / SUB-UNITS:

Jesus & Believers		Pharisees & the Guard	Jesus & Believers	Pharisees & the Guard	Jesus & Believers
Witnesses of Crucifixion	Burial of Jesus	Guard at the Tomb	Resurrection of Jesus	Report of the Guard	The Great Commission
(27:55-56)	(27:57-61)	(27:62-66)	(28:1-10)	(28:11-15)	(28:16-20)

C. STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS & QUESTIONS:

- Cruciality by Chiasm: The climax of this passage is also the pivot point of the whole crucifixion/resurrection story. It appears to have an A-B-C-B-A pattern. When all chances of hope seem to be lost, the angel at the tomb shows up, scaring the Roman guards to near-death, and he tells Mary & Mary that Jesus has indeed fulfilled his amazing promise of returning again after three days. The Pharisees, thought to be triumphant, realize what has happened, and do their best to keep the spread of the news to a minimum, bribing the guards who were present for this supernatural display of God’s power. Ironically, it is those who make claim to being God’s elect that have wrought deception and destruction towards his divine plan. It has been said that there is no success without a successor; in the end of chapter 28, Jesus is ultimately shown as victorious, as he equips the disciples to continue his ministry.

Questions

1. Definitional: What was the intent of the author in using this method? Did he specifically emphasize the pivotal point, or is this simply a result of the miraculous nature of the resurrection? To whom is he writing this recount of these events?
2. Rational: Why has the author chosen to arrange the story in chunks, rather than group together all accounts of Pharisees & Guards together, as well as those concerning Jesus and his followers?
3. Implicational: What are the implications of this obviously critical pivot point?

- Contrast by Interchange: Throughout verses 27:55-28:20, there appears to be an interchange in the pattern of A-B-C-B-A. There is an alternation between the mention of Jesus & Believers and the Pharisees & Guards as shown in the chart above.

If put into movie form, this would make for good scene breaks, switching scenes back and forth between the good and bad guys, so to speak. It shows the difference between how the followers of Jesus related to his death, and how the legalistic Pharisees and Roman soldiers (as well as Pilate) viewed it.

Questions

1. Definitional: What is the author of Matthew trying to point out by using this method of layout? Is this how the order of events happened chronologically, or has literary liberty been taken in order to better tell the story?
 2. Rational: Why has the author gone to such lengths in order to contrast the attitudes of the Pharisees & Guards with those of the followers of Jesus?
 3. Implicational: What are the implications of such a distinctive layout?
- Preparation / Realization: There is a brief opening in 27:55-56, introducing the disciple Joseph, who asks Pilate for the body of Jesus. He buries Jesus in a tomb that has been prepared for him. This section serves a twofold purpose. It transitions from the crucifixion to the burial, and prepares for the turn of events triggered by the resurrection. The realization is of course, that Jesus is in fact alive and risen from the dead, shown in verses 28:1-10, 16-20 in which the angel pronounces the good news and Jesus commissions the disciples for spreading the gospel.

Questions

1. Definitional: What was the author attempting to do by listing but a few of Jesus' followers present for his crucifixion? Were these the people the author deemed to be most important to the story of the resurrection?
 2. Rational: Why didn't the author list all of the disciples that were present at the crucifixion? Could the author have instead listed only Joseph in the opening passage (27:55-56), since he is the one who is mentioned as burying Jesus?
 3. Implicational: What implications can be drawn from this brief list of believers?
- Climax: This passage opens in the post-crucifixion of Jesus, mentioning the names of a few people who were witness to his death. This is perhaps the lowest point of the story, where all is apparently lost because the would-be savior has been slain in a most shameful manner. He is then buried in a tomb, like any other common mortal. The Pharisees think that this is where the story ends, and post a guard just to make sure there will be no more deceptions made by Jesus' followers. The climax of the story comes in the middle sub-unit of 28:1-10 in which the angel proclaims to the two Mary's that Jesus has risen from the dead. There is also another high point at the end (28:16-20) in the Great Commission.

Questions

1. Definitional: What is the significance of starting this section at 27:55, at the post-crucifixion, rather than simply at Joseph's request for burial rites? How does the author's use of the emotional ups and downs of the story impact the peak of the narrative?

2. Rational: Why didn't the author just use a straight-forward, factual recount of the resurrection? Did he feel that by narrating the story, it would be more powerful?
3. Implicational: What are the implications of this style usage, as well as its meaning?

- Interrogation: While the problem in this instance isn't directly mentioned within Matthew 27:55-28:20, it is implicated many times throughout the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. It is the ageless struggle of mankind against God, rejecting him, yet desperately in need of his reconciliation and redemption. The answer comes definitively in the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of the earth.

Questions

1. Definitional: What is the problem that the crucifixion/resurrection is a solution to, and why is it not specifically mentioned? To whom is the author writing?
2. Rational: Is it possible that the author intended the book of Matthew to be read by those with prior working knowledge of scripture?
3. Implicational: What are the far-reaching implications of the resurrection story?

D. KEY VERSES / STRATEGIC AREAS:

- The key verses to be taken into consideration are 28:1-10 and 28:16-20. These are concerned with the annunciation of Jesus' resurrection, as well as the commissioning of the disciples by Jesus to continue the ministry of spreading the gospel. However, these verses cannot be taken apart from the context. It is important to realize that there was a very real political and spiritual conflict going on between the current ruling parties. On the surface level, the Pharisees were attempting to maintain religious control, and appealed to Rome to uphold civil order. The unseen struggle is between the principalities of Satan against God and his divine plan of redemption. In both cases, the enemy appears to have won, but God trumps the naysayer through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

E. LITERARY FORMS:

- Prose Narrative abounds throughout this brief passage of scripture. It reads very much like a screenplay, due largely to the author's use of dramatic structures in his writing. There is both a sense of urgency and serenity that comes from reading these verses. One realizes the epic struggle between good and evil, and becomes engaged with the text, yet can take heart in the fact that Jesus wins the contest once and for all.

F. OTHER IMPRESSIONS:

- I'm still uncertain as to why such a short list of witnesses is given at the beginning of this segment (27:55-56). When one thinks of the most influential disciples and apostles, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee" (and implicitly Joseph who buried Jesus), these individuals aren't usually at the top of the list. Yet, the author of Matthew has chosen to list them, leaving absent some of the more renowned disciples.

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DETAILED OBSERVATION of MATTHEW 28:18-20

Matthew 28:18-20 (NRSV)

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

OBSERVATIONS

Termal:

Jesus is quoted in verse 18 as using the word *authority*, as opposed to other applicable words such as *power* or *control*.

He is also quoted as saying make disciples of all *nations* in verse 19, as opposed to using words such as *people* or *countries*.

I also thought it was interesting that he is quoted as using the words end of the *age* as opposed to end of *time* or end of the *world*.

Grammatical:

In verse 18, Jesus is quoted as having said all authority has been given to him, rather than saying *I have been given all authority*.

In verse 19, each part of the trinity is listed as “...name of the Father *and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” rather than a normal list such as “...name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

In verse 20, Jesus basically says teach them to obey what I’ve commanded *you*, and not what has been commanded to *them*.

QUESTIONS

Definitional:

Why does Jesus use the word *authority* here, instead of other words which had similar meaning?

Could it be that he is imparting this authority, and as such, did not use a word that insinuated direct intervention?

Did Jesus use the word *nations* to refer to both countries and the people they contain?

What is meant by the word *age* in this case?

Is it possible that the author of Matthew is paraphrasing Jesus in his quotes? And if so, then why has he chosen to use these specific wordings of Christ, rather than paraphrase in another manner?

Rational:

Since the disciples had already accepted Jesus as the Son of God, was reminding them of his authority even necessary?

Was there a particular order in which Jesus wanted the disciples to go? (ex: Paul being forbidden to speak the gospel in Asia)

Structural:

Jesus begins by stating that the authority of heaven and earth rests within him, and then continues to give instruction regarding discipling, baptism, and teaching. He seems to have thought it important to first show the legitimacy of his power, adding verification to his commands. Since it is a direct quote, it can be assumed that the author of Matthew didn't rearrange the wording.

Logical:

It stands to reason that only someone who has all authority over heaven and earth could realistically give such demanding orders. To make disciples of all the nations by one's own efforts and resources would be a daunting, if not impossible, task. He has promised to be with them, to the end of the age, through which this assignment is not only possible, but required.

Contextual:

Within the segment of Matthew 27:55-28:20, these three verses (18-20) compose the close of the passage. It is the *Great Commission* of Christ, instructing his followers to carry on the work which he began. It follows a series of events after Jesus' death, including his resurrection and the deceptions of the Pharisees in their attempts to cover up the truth of the gospel.

In the broader book context, this is the finish of Jesus' physical presence on earth. It contains his closing remarks, in reflection of all that he has done, and all the far-reaching implications that his sacrifice has done for mankind. No doubt, it must have been a very emotional time for the disciples. Up until this point, Jesus had led by example, and they were now receiving the charge to do his work in his absence, but not without the promise of continued presence. Such is the mystery of faith.

Was Jesus referring to the era in which they were living, or the entire era of the earth's existence, as indicative of his presence with future believers?

Implicational:

Since Jesus said that all authority of heaven and earth is his, and that he would be with the disciples (and by implication, all believers) until the end of the age, does this mean that the authority of heaven and earth is vested within those who follow everything he has commanded?

Assuming that all the instructions and exhortations given in Matthew 28:18-20, as well as the book as a whole, are applicable to Christians today, what are the implications of being called by his name?

How does this affect the lives of people who still seek to live out the truth of the gospel in their own lives, though miracles (evidence of their faith) don't seem to be as prominent as in the age of Jesus' earthly ministry?

What are the implications of Jesus being with us to the end of the age? Are we all expected to live out the Great Commission, or is there a select few to whom it applies?

Like in Biblical times, there were many who believed and followed Jesus, but not all were called to preach or be disciples and apostles, how are we to discern who is to do what? Was it possibly easier for those who lived with and physically saw Jesus, since he was the one who originally called the disciples in person?

Since we today have not physically seen Jesus face to face, are we similar or different from the Biblical disciples? ("Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." John 20:29)

GENERAL SUMMARY:

Having examined more closely the word usage in the Greek, the NRSV seems to be accurately translating the meaning behind the words attributed to Jesus by the author of Matthew. In light of this word study through detailed observation, I have to say that the passage can indeed be taken at face value. I do not have anything to expound further, other than to say that the words of Jesus are true. By this, we know that he really does have authority over everything, providing us his continued presence and support as we fulfill the mandate to bring the gospel of Father Son & Spirit to the entire world populace.

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INTERPRETATION of MATTHEW 28:18-20

QUESTION: What are the meanings of *authority* and *age* as used in Matthew 28:18-20?

EVIDENCE	INFERENCE S
<p><u>Preliminary Definitions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ἐξουσία – ἐξουσία, ας f authority, right, liberty; ability, capability; supernatural power; ruling power, government, official; jurisdiction (Lk 23.7); disposal (Ac 5.4); ἐ. ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς have a covering on her head (perhaps as a symbol of subjection to her husband's authority 1 Cor 11.10). ○ αἰῶνος – αἰών, ὠνος m age; world order; eternity (ἀπ᾽ αἰ. or πρὸ αἰ. from the beginning εἰς αἰ. and the strengthened form εἰς τοὺς αἰ. τῶν αἰ. always, forever); Aeon (personified as an evil force); existence, the present life (Mt 13.22; Mk 4.19). 	<p>→ It can be assumed from the cotext that Jesus is using <i>authority</i> according to its first definition, in that he has been given all power to be used at his liberty, to charge those he deems qualified to carry on the ministry of proclaiming the gospel. In a figurative way, the disciples can be seen under this authority as the bride of Christ.</p> <p>→ Due to the implicitly infinite nature of God, it can be safely assumed that Jesus is using this word for <i>age</i> as meaning eternity, and not simply in reference to the lifetime of the disciples to whom he was directly speaking, or for that matter, the lifetimes of those who were yet to come.</p>
<p><u>Context:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This passage fits into the immediate context of Matthew 27:55-28:20 which depicts the post-crucifixion activities of the disciples, Pharisees, Romans, and Jesus himself. The followers of Christ are in dismay over the death of their supposed savior. Joseph, a wealthy man from Arimathea, requests of Pilate that Jesus' body be given for burial. The Pharisees also petition Pilate. They plead that a guard be placed at the tomb of Jesus, in order to ensure that his disciples cause no further deception. Then, Mary & Mary encounter the angel at the tomb announcing that Jesus has risen from the dead just as he said. The Pharisees hear word of this from the guard they'd placed at the tomb, and instruct the guards not to tell others 	<p>→ It can be inferred that due to the grave seriousness of the verses that precede this passage, the disciples were going through a time of incredible sorrow and an excruciating sense of failure and hopelessness. Though Jesus had predicted the manner in which he must die throughout his time with them, nothing could have truly prepared the disciples for the profound loss of their mentor, friend, and Lord whom they respected and loved. Yet, with his resurrection, Jesus showed their concerns to be unnecessary, however legitimate. He returned to them and proclaimed that he had been given all authority in heaven and in earth. Nothing could have been more definitive than not only returning from, but conquering death. He now tells them to go forth, discipling,</p>

<p>what really happened. Following this, Jesus appears to his disciples, and gives them instruction regarding discipling, baptism, and teaching (Matt. 28:18-20).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the broader book context, this is the culmination of Jesus' physical ministry on earth. It contains his parting remarks, in retrospect of all he has done, and all the far-reaching future implications that his sacrifice has now made possible for every believer. 	<p>baptizing, and teaching those they encounter as they progress throughout the entire planet. Even today, he reassures and accompanies those who lovingly obey him.</p> <p>→ As is the case in this and all the gospels, Jesus laid out in no uncertain terms his claims to supremacy, in both potency and the duration of his power. He has all authority over everywhere, be it planetary or supernatural. In this power, he promises to remain present until the end of eternity.</p>
<p><u>New Testament Word Usage:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Greek word for authority, ἐξουσία appears in the following NT verses: Matt. 21:23f, 27; 28:18; Mk. 11:28f, 33; Lk. 4:32, 36; 20:2, 8, 20; 22:53; Acts 1:7; 5:4; Rom. 13:1f; 1 Co. 8:9; 9:12, 18; Jude 1:25; Rev. 6:8; 9:3, 10, 19; 12:10; 13:5, 7; 22:14. ○ The Greek word for age, αἰῶνος appears in the following NT verses: Matt. 13:22, 39, 49; 24:3; 28:20; Mk. 4:19; Lk. 1:70; 16:8; 20:34f; Jn. 9:32; Acts 3:21; 15:18; 1 Co. 1:20; 2:6, 8; 2 Co. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 3:21; Heb. 1:8; 6:5; 2 Pet. 3:18; Jude 1:25. 	<p>→ In light of the recurring New Testament usage of this word for <i>authority</i>, it can be inferred that it does not always carry the same weight with which Jesus uses it in 28:18. Rather, it refers typically to the charge of a public office. As God incarnate Jesus can lay claim to limitless jurisdiction.</p> <p>→ <i>Age</i> in these occurrences is being used in reference to a vast span of time, in some cases, that of eternity. To claim to have kingship over such a lengthy period of time would be outrageous, even for a great ruler. Yet, Jesus in his matchless majesty makes the promise that his rule endures evermore.</p>
<p><u>Inflections:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ἐξουσία is being used in the nominative case, indicating that it is the subject of the sentence Jesus is speaking. ○ αἰῶνος is being used in the genitive case, indicating that it is being used as a modifier to describe duration. 	<p>→ This gives the impression that Jesus is trying to emphasize the importance of the power which has been delegated to him.</p> <p>→ Jesus appears to be driving the point in person for the last time, that though he may be leaving them physically, he will remain.</p>
<p><u>General Literary Form:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The segment which contains this passage (27:55-28:20) is written primarily in Prose Narrative, as is the rest of the book of Matthew, with the exception of the parables. It is primarily factual, covering a few days of history. Yet, there is more to this recount than a simple crucifixion story due to the importance of whom it tells. 	<p>→ It can be inferred the author of Matthew wanted to convey to his readers with clarity the events surrounding the earthly ministry of Jesus, including the events taking place after his crucifixion and resurrection. The final verbally spoken mandate of Christ to his disciples was to simply preach the good news of salvation to anyone and everyone they encountered, as he went with them.</p>
<p><u>Atmosphere:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The atmosphere surrounding this passage is initially that of despair. 	<p>→ It can be assumed that, from the various reactions of the scattered disciples after the</p>

Some of the disciples were doubting their commitment to Christ now that he had been crucified like a common criminal. The Pharisees and Roman law had apparently succeeded in silencing an agitator and false messiah. The atmosphere takes a sudden turn in verses 28:1-10. The realization that Jesus has been resurrected turns the plot upside-down. It goes from a time of mourning to that of great rejoicing.

crucifixion, the followers of Christ were suffering from doubt and disbelief. Though he had proven himself as the Son of God on many occasions (too numerous to list them all in the gospels), his death seemed almost too much to endure for those who loved him. They seemed not to take into account the boundless authority that Jesus had demonstrated. It is perhaps for this reason that he reminds them of it again when giving the great commission.

Interpretation of Others:

- “All authority means supreme right to appoint to office: thence comes the great commission. It means right to require obedience – because of love poured out unto death, and now triumphant in the eternal kingdom. It means right to govern in both earth and heaven. A true faith is not chosen by men: it chooses men. It is not a garment that we can don or doff, but a very life. Christ claims to be the Lord of life.” (The Interpreter’s Bible, Abingdon 622)
- “To the close of the age. That phrase cannot be dismissed as apocalypticism... To early Christians this promise meant that when the curtain fell on all human history, Christ would remain as Friend and Lord. The climaxes of this planet do not take him by surprise, and they cannot usurp his power.” (The Interpreter’s Bible, Abingdon 625)
- “The Gospel closes with a promise. As his disciples carry out the great commission, Jesus will be with them to the end of the age. The text probably specifies the end of the age because at that time the Son of Man would return in his kingdom – after the nations had heard the good news of the kingdom, and hence been prepared for the judgment.” (A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, Keener 720)

→ Given the other evidence I’ve seen while doing this interpretation, I agree with Abingdon’s stance on Jesus’ use of the word *authority*. I hadn’t really thought of it in terms of a right of appointment, yet that is clearly what Jesus is doing in Matthew 28:18-20. He is giving the disciples authorization to not only proclaim the same good news he had, but to operate in the power with which he ministered. Since he has the authority over such power, he can give it to whomever he wants, in this case the disciples (and later believers).
 → I had previously thought *to the end of the age* to mean until the completion of the events predicted in the book of Revelation. However, Abingdon again brings to light an interesting perspective. Since God existed even before space-time was created, it stands to reason that he will continue to exist after it. So, though Jesus says he will remain until the end of the age, he is implicitly saying he will remain forever.
 → The inference above can be expounded upon to provide reassurance for Christians today. Since Jesus as the Word of God existed even before the creation of the world (and implicationally before time was created), and since Jesus has said that he will continue to abide for eternity to come, he obviously abides now, since present time will always exist at a singular point contained therein. From everlasting to everlasting Jesus was, is, & always will be.

GENERAL SUMMARY:

Though my preconceived notions of the meanings of *authority* and *age* weren't completely accurate, I believe my conceptualization of the everlasting power of Jesus was soundly formed. What I have additionally learned has helped to solidify my faith and also whet my appetite to delve further into the Bible to discover more insightful ways of understanding his word. It is humbling to consider that the more time one devotes to the study of God, the more one realizes that the surface has barely been scratched. Whether you've known Jesus for a day or an entire lifetime, you've only just begun to fully understand his love and what it takes to truly love him in return.