

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

THE *IN SITU* MEANING OF “TO OBSERVE ALL” IN MATTHEW 28:20 (NASB)

MASTER’S THESIS

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BY

DAVID S. GIFFORD

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## ABSTRACT

Christian leaders often bemoan the typical American believer for his lack of commitment to Jesus' commands. Wanting the blessing of God, she looks for it in all the wrong places. The Great Commission, however, commands Church leaders to teach their disciples "to observe all," *τηρεῖν πάντα*, that Jesus commanded. This thesis has the underlying assumption, therefore, that diminished faithfulness to commandments may stem from exegetical oversight. First, Christians may be overlooking the full meaning and significance of the verb *τηρέω*. A literature review revealed that the word implies four independent concepts, the primary one being observation; the others are guardianship, cognition, and obedience. Because of this etymological link with the sense of sight, and fully supported by scripture, this thesis proposes that disciplers must personify Jesus' commands so their students can observe them optically and behaviorally. The second exegetical oversight this thesis proposes is that Church leaders may be incorrectly identifying the Great Commission's core curriculum. A literature review discovered that there is no consensus surrounding the content of "all." Many theologians simply assume their readers already know what it means. Of those that directly address this issue, however, a multitude of views exist. Some scholars, nevertheless, do rally around Jesus' commands in Matthew as the content of "all"—but even these have a variety of interpretations. One major issue they disagree over is Jesus' support for commandments in the Law and the Prophets. Based on a variety of factors, this thesis concludes that the *in situ* meaning of "to observe all" in Matthew 28.20 is that Jesus' disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus commanded *in the Gospel of Matthew*. Because of Matthew 5.17-48, this also includes observing everything commanded in the Old Testament as reinterpreted in the light of Christ.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW .....	1
The Problem .....	1
The Purpose of This Study.....	3
The Importance of the Problem .....	4
Thesis .....	4
Literature Review.....	5
Presuppositions .....	20
Limitations .....	22
Approach and Methodology .....	23
CHAPTER TWO: THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF <i>THPEÏN</i> .....	26
<i>Thpeïv</i> Means “To Observe” .....	27
<i>Thpeïv</i> Is Best Amplified by <i>Keep, Heed, and Obey</i> .....	31
The Unsuitability of <i>Keep, Heed, and Obey</i> as Primary Translations of <i>Thpeïv</i> .....	32
Testing <i>Thpeïv</i> as “Observe” in the New Testament.....	35
What “ <i>Thpeïv</i> Commandments” Means.....	38
The Significance of <i>Thpeïv</i> to the Teacher/Disciple Relationship.....	40
CHAPTER THREE: THE CONTENT OF “ALL” .....	42
The Distinctives of Matthew’s Gospel vis-à-vis Mark.....	44
The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel .....	50
The Mission/Ethnicity Motif and the Great Commission.....	54
The Literature Review and the Content of “All” .....	66

Fulfillment Theology .....	71
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND APPLICATIONS.....	76
Conclusion .....	76
Applications .....	80
Finale.....	87
APPENDIX A.....	89
APPENDIX B .....	91
APPENDIX C .....	93
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	96

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Problem

Just as Israel lost the book of the Law, the Church in America has forgotten the significance of commandment observance (cf. 2 Chronicles 34:14-21). Dallas Willard writes, “More than any other thing . . . the practical irrelevance of actual obedience to Christ accounts for the weakened effect of Christianity in the world today.”<sup>1</sup> In church, over the airwaves, and in private devotions, Christians are regularly exposed to the holy commandments of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Willard argues that believers often “[choose] to not do what he said.”<sup>2</sup> Because evangelical Christians have been taught that their eternal salvation is not a function of righteous works, contemporary believers often discount the importance of producing them.<sup>3</sup> Grace has been transposed into licentiousness (Jude 4).

*Christianity Today* lays part of the blame for this problem on the 1974 Lausanne Conference; it focused on the evangelism aspect of the Great Commission to the neglect of the discipleship aspect.<sup>4</sup> A further perspective on this is that the quantitative goals of Christianity, such as conversions and water baptisms, are more easily exhibited than the qualitative. I attended a church camp at which the evangelist announced at week’s end that attendees had filled out sixty-nine cards declaring first-time decisions for Christ. This seemed wonderful until the registrar privately informed me that the number of campers was sixty-five. The world is often deceived by statistics and the Church occasionally mimics this error by justifying its activities

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<sup>1</sup> Dallas Willard, *Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998), xv.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> “Make Disciples, Not Just Converts,” *Christianity Today*, 25 October 1999, 28, accessed 15 November 2014, Proquest. It is popular in some circles to question the supposedly unscriptural term *Great Commission*; the use of it here neither refutes nor denies that, but is only as a well-known way of describing such an immense directive.

with misapplied facts.<sup>5</sup> If it were somehow possible, documenting authentic moment-by-moment compliance with Jesus' commandments would provide meaningful data. Nonetheless, *Christianity Today* calls evangelism without discipleship spiritual child abuse.<sup>6</sup>

Josh McDowell argues that inattention to discipleship has led to the overall decrease of Christianity in America.<sup>7</sup> This is only logical when one considers the reflexive nature of the Great Commission. If Church leaders do not teach the next generation the importance of observing commandments, then there is every reason to believe that the commands to go, and make, baptize, and teach disciples will be overlooked, too.<sup>8</sup>

Scripture makes an unmistakable connection between faithfulness to commands and religious prosperity. The LORD multiplied Abraham's descendants because Abraham hearkened to his commandments (Genesis 26.4-5). The outcomes of defiance, however, are much less rosy. Willard likens a Christianity divorced from following God's law to a house built on sand.<sup>9</sup>

This is not the first time the Western Church has faced this crisis. In c.1605 Arndt wrote, "Everyone wishes very much to be a servant of Christ, but no one wants to be his follower."<sup>10</sup> All in all, evangelical leaders agree that commandment observance needs a present-day recovery.

One thing that contemporary leaders do *not* agree upon, however, is the particular commandments Jesus stipulated via the Great Commission. Matthew's phrase, "teaching them to

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. "Make Disciples, Not Just Converts," *Christianity Today*, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Josh McDowell and David H. Bellis, *The Last Christian Generation* (Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006), 11-30.

<sup>8</sup> In this thesis the words *commandment(s)* and *command(s)* are used interchangeably.

<sup>9</sup> Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 140.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Arndt, *True Christianity, 1605-1610*, trans. by Peter Erb (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979), 22.



observe *all* that I commanded you” (NASB), has specific content in view. Many theologians, however, unconsciously operate in the *sensus plenior* of the text because they have not critically considered Matthew’s literary intention.<sup>11</sup> Paul said God’s word must be “rightly divided” (2 Timothy 2.5, KJV). It is essential, therefore, to understand the *in situ* meaning of “all” in Matthew 28.20a.

Another overlooked subject in this discussion is the meaning of *τηρεῖν*. While it absolutely includes the concept of obedience, its connotations suggest much more than rote conformity. This particularly affects the pedagogy of the teacher/disciple relationship.

### **The Purpose of this Study**

The larger purpose of this study, therefore, is to increase the observance of Jesus’ commands, especially those in Matthew. Because the Great Commission is itself a command, the manifest destiny of Christianity, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is fully dependent on this. Observing commandments is indispensable for every jot and tittle of Christian faith and life.

By themselves, however, words on paper will not initiate this change. They only transmit the light that accomplishes the work of God (Isaiah 55.11). The immediate purpose of this study, therefore, is to discover and describe the *in situ* meaning of “to observe all” in Matthew 28.20.<sup>12</sup> In this way, Christians can know exactly what Jesus and Matthew expect them to do.

To this end, this study shall do three things. First, it shall exegete the Greek word *τηρεῖν* (“to observe”), describe what it means “to observe” commandments, and reveal how that word impacts the relationship between Christian leaders and their students. Secondly, it shall identify

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<sup>11</sup> When the thesis of this paper is contrasted with the views of the authors represented in the literature review, one discovers that many theologians have a larger view of “all” than Matthew intends. Ogden, Barna, and Blomberg are examples of those who unconsciously employ this *sensus plenior* (fuller sense) of “all.”

<sup>12</sup> The *in situ* (in place) meaning is what Matthew thought Jesus had in mind when he published the Gospel.

the commandments Matthew believed that Jesus included in the word “all.”<sup>13</sup> Finally, it shall suggest a variety of applications of how the *in situ* meaning of “to observe all” should be utilized to promote contemporary Christianity.

### **The Importance of the Problem**

This study is important so that Christians will refocus on commandment observance. After reading this thesis, Christian leaders will be able to identify the commandments the Great Commission requires them to teach. They will also understand the importance of modeling in the teaching of commandments. As Christian leaders implement the modeling and teaching of Jesus’ vital commandments, the larger purpose of this thesis can be realized.

Consequently, Christians will learn what commandments the Great Commission calls them to observe and what it means to observe them. By the grace and work of God, this diffusion of light will result in increased obedience to Christ’s commandments. This is important so that the Church can bring glory to God and expedite Jesus’ return (2 Peter 3.12). May the Spirit of God guide the development of this thesis and publish it to men and women of goodwill.

### **Thesis**

This thesis argues that the *in situ* meaning of “to observe all” in Matthew 28.20 is that Jesus’ disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus commanded in the Gospel of Matthew. Because of Matthew 5.17-48, this also includes observing everything commanded in the Old Testament as reinterpreted in the light of Christ.<sup>14</sup> In addition, those who teach others

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. limitations. This thesis does not intend to compose an exhaustive list of commandments, only to reveal where they are located. In addition, there is no reason to exegete πάντα, “all;” its meaning is not disputed.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. limitations and subjects for further study. To keep the focus of this thesis narrow, “reinterpreted in the light of Christ,” is intentionally left undefined. This generally refers to Christ’s views on how Old Testament commandments apply in the present age, regardless of how theologians might formulate those views. This would include both the New Testament’s view of the Old Testament and interpreting the Old Testament Christologically.

shall personify all these commandments so their students can observe them optically and behaviorally.

### Literature Review

Behind this problem of declining commandment observance is a critical disconnect in the literature. First, no single work addresses “to observe all” in the composite way this work does. Customarily, reference works exegete the Greek word behind “to observe” and only some theological works address the content of “all.” Secondly, no existing work connects the various connotations inherent in *τηρεῖν* to the mechanics of observing commandments or to the modeling duty of teachers. Thirdly, and most importantly, there is no consensus concerning the content of “all.” Many theologians simply proceed on assumptions without intentionally addressing the issue. In addition, those that critically study the content of “all” have a great variety of opinions. In short, no existing work shares this study’s thesis on the *in situ* meaning of “to observe all.”

#### Literature Review of *Τηρεῖν*

*Τηρεῖν* is the present active infinitive of *τηρέω*.<sup>15</sup> Overall, *τηρέω* is used seventy-one times in the New Testament, primarily in John’s Gospel, the Catholic Epistles, and Revelation (cf. Appendix A). Matthew uses it six times. *Τηρέω* is also used in the Septuagint and outside of the canon. Josephus (37 – c.100 AD) and Philo (c.25 BC – c.50 AD) both use the word.

Balz and Schneider evaluate the use of *τηρέω* in the New Testament. They write, “About half the occurrences of *τηρέω* are used for *keep/follow* (the law/commandments).”<sup>16</sup> In the context of commandments, these authors say *τηρέω* means “keep” and/or “follow.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Except in titles and quotations, from this point on *τηρέω* will be used to preclude the need of differentiating between the present active infinitive of the verb and the basic form of the verb.

<sup>16</sup> Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 3: 355.

In the Septuagint, several passages show that *τηρέω* often means “watch,” but it can signify “protect.” Genesis 3.15 in the NETS reads, “He will *watch* your head, and you will *watch* his heel.”<sup>18</sup> The Hebrew Bible’s word in Genesis 3.15 means “to gape upon,” thus “to lie in wait for” and “to bruise.”<sup>19</sup> Both languages share the optical and contemplative roles in this passage.

The seeing/thinking connotation of *τηρέω* is also evident in other LXX passages. Ecclesiastes 11.4 (NETS) reads, “One who *watches* the wind will not sow.”<sup>20</sup> Jeremiah 10.10 in Brenton’s version warns, “*Watch* his intentions.”<sup>21</sup>

The LXX of Proverbs 2.11b (NETS), however, states, “Holy insight will *protect* you.”<sup>22</sup> In this context, *τηρέω* suggests guardianship. Nonetheless, the optical and contemplative connotations are preeminent in the Septuagint.

Josephus also used *τηρέω*. In his works, as rendered by Rengstorf, it means, “To observe, keep in mind – to observe strictly, follow, [or] comply with (laws, commandments, [and] customs).”<sup>23</sup> In reference to commandments, *τηρέω* suggests seeing, cognition, and compliance.

Danker, Bauer, and Arndt (*BDAG*) also translate *τηρέω*. They say it means, “Persistence in obedience, [to] keep, [to] observe, [to] fulfill, [to] pay attention to, esp. of law and teaching.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3: 355.

<sup>18</sup> Albert Pietersma, and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8, accessed 14 April 2015, ProQuest ebrary.

<sup>19</sup> "Hebrew Lexicon: H7779 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 6 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H7779&t=NASB>.

<sup>20</sup> Pietersma and Wright, *NETS*, 655.

<sup>21</sup> The *NETS* does not offer Jeremiah 10:10. Charles Lee Brenton, ed., *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha with an English Translation* (USA: Zondervan, 1978), 927.

<sup>22</sup> Pietersma and Wright, *NETS*, 625.

<sup>23</sup> Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, ed., *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus* (Lieden: Brill, 1983), 4: 183.

<sup>24</sup> Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1002.

The visual and contemplative components are once again mentioned. Practically speaking, however, commandments are to be obeyed, kept, and fulfilled.

Concerning *τηρέω*, Detzler writes,

The word used for “keep” in the Greek New Testament is *tereo*. . . . In a figurative sense it speaks of “observing a body of teaching,” or “obeying a law,” or “fulfilling some commandment.” In ancient Greek the word *τηρέω* meant to take note of some fact or to keep it in view. . . . In the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, the word means to observe a law, or keep the Law of Moses.<sup>25</sup>

Once again, the observational and cognitive connotations of the verb are linked with the practicality of keeping, obeying, and fulfilling commandments.

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)* looks at the meaning of *τηρέω* in multiple works. It says, “Outside the New Testament . . . the basic meaning is ‘to keep in view,’ ‘to take note,’ [or] ‘to watch over.’”<sup>26</sup> In Philo *τηρέω* is rare; it means “to pay heed.”<sup>27</sup> Observation, cognition, guardianship, and attentiveness themes are paramount outside the Christian scriptures.

Concerning the LXX, the *TDNT* says,

*Τηρέω* appears 39 times, mostly in the Wisdom lit. . . . *Τηρέω* means concretely “to aim at something” . . . in Gn. 3.15; . . . [it also means] “to keep watch,” “to pay attention,” . . . [or] “to watch over.” . . . In the Wisdom lit. [it means] “to observe,” “to keep,” . . . [or] “to notice.”<sup>28</sup>

Many of these meanings imply vision, attentiveness, and concentration, all of which are present in “to observe.” “Keep” implies guardianship.

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<sup>25</sup> Wayne A. Detzler, *New Testament Words in Today's Language* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986), 246.

<sup>26</sup> Gerhard Friedrich, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 8: 140.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

Within the New Testament, the *TDNT* testifies that the “literal meaning . . . [of *τηρέω* is] ‘to guard’ . . . ‘to keep’ . . . ‘to maintain’ . . . [or] ‘to protect.’”<sup>29</sup> It adds, the “transferred meaning . . . [of *τηρέω*] is shown by its frequency [in the New Testament] to be ‘to take note of,’ ‘to observe,’ [or] ‘to keep,’ especially regarding doctrine or commandments and precepts.”<sup>30</sup> In sum, the visual, cognitive, and guardianship aspects of the word are robust, with obedience implied.

The *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (NIDNTT)* says *τηρέω* can have three meanings in classical Greek. First, it can mean “have in view, perceive, [and] observe;” in the active voice, this occurs while one “wait[s] for the right opportunity,” but in the middle voice it is so one can “be on one’s guard.”<sup>31</sup> Secondly, *τηρέω* can mean “guard, watch over, [and] preserve (things, persons, or ethical values).”<sup>32</sup> Its third classical Greek meaning can be “pay attention to, obey, [and] comply with.”<sup>33</sup> In the LXX, the “predominant meaning . . . is that of religious observance, relating either to God’s commands . . . or those of wisdom.”<sup>34</sup>

Concerning the LXX and the New Testament, the *NIDNTT* contrasts *τηρέω* with *φυλάσσω*, “guard, preserve, [and/or] keep.”<sup>35</sup> It references Proverbs 13.3 and Daniel 9.4, where they both occur, and proffers that the use of *φυλάσσω* outnumbers *τηρέω* in the Old Testament (400x to 38x) whereas *τηρέω* is more popular in the New (70x to 31x).<sup>36</sup> Although multiple

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<sup>29</sup> Friedrich, *TDNT*, 141-42.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 142-43. According to this work, the use of *τηρέω* in reference to commandments is considered “transferred.” Detzler, however, calls this “figurative.” The opposite of these is “literal” or “concrete.”

<sup>31</sup> Verlyn D. Verbrugge, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology: Abridged Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 562.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 562-63.

counterexamples exist, the *NIDNTT* says *τηρέω* is more likely to be used in the New Testament for Christian commands and *φυλάσσω* for “Jewish . . . traditions rejected by Christians.”<sup>37</sup>

According to *NIDNTT*, *τηρέω* in the New Testament “means: (a) guard, keep watch . . . (b) keep . . . (c) keep blameless, uninjured . . . (d) protect . . . (e) hold fast . . . [and ‘about half of the occurrences’ mean] (f) follow [or] obey.”<sup>38</sup> In Revelation it “has the force of [one] holding fast a confession both in facing false doctrine and in meeting a martyr’s death.”<sup>39</sup> In Matthew 28.20, *τηρέω* has the meaning of “obey.”<sup>40</sup> The *NIDNTT* confirms the ancient link joining *τηρέω* and the nuances of sight, thought, and guardianship, and its ultimate application in obedience.

### Literature Review of “All”

Although reference works largely agree on the meaning of *τηρέω*, a consensus does not exist concerning the content of “all.” Generally speaking, authors and/or works that address this issue—or could, but fail to do so—may be logically divided into two categories. The first group is theologians or works that focus on discipleship from a practical perspective. The second category is those who study the Great Commission more broadly, usually from a theoretical, exegetical, and/or critical viewpoint.

#### *Discipleship Theologians*

Generally speaking, “discipleship” theologians do not seek to identify the specific commandments included in the Great Commission’s call to discipleship.<sup>41</sup> The primary

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<sup>37</sup> Verbrugge, *NIDNTT*, 563.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Matthew’s commission text contains Jesus’ only command to make disciples. In addition, the word translated “make disciples,” *μαθητεύω*, is not found in the other three Gospels. Cf. Jacques Matthey, “The Great

counterexample is Tom Blackaby, who inventories many of the commandments of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.<sup>42</sup> Although Blackaby does not list all the commandments, he offers a variety of categories that “focus on the most complete and clearly understood commands.”<sup>43</sup> Blackaby also makes a distinction between Jesus’ verbalized commands and his “general observations . . . warnings . . . conversations . . . [and] teachings/lessons.”<sup>44</sup> In this sense, Blackaby’s book is a summary of Jesus’ imperatives in the four Gospels.

Although less specific, William Putman also generally points to Jesus’ commands in all four Gospels. He writes, “Discipleship . . . is also about teaching people to obey the commands Jesus gave us.”<sup>45</sup> Arguing that the Bible imparts both rules and goals, Putman also offers a list of theological ideas spiritual children need to be taught.<sup>46</sup> Beyond Blackaby and Putman, other discipleship theologians are often more general in regards to the content of “all.”

Greg Ogden, Dallas Willard, and Aubrey Malphurs each have unique positions. Ogden builds his discipleship ideas from commandments in the whole Bible, but especially focuses on those in the epistles.<sup>47</sup> In *Transforming Disciples: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, he advocates a triad model of one mentor and two disciples, a “disciplined way of life,” and being

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Commission according to Matthew,” *International Review of Mission* 69, no. 274 (1980): 167, accessed 23 October 2014, *ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost*. Whether stated or not, discipleship theologians find their directive in Matthew 28.19.

<sup>42</sup> Tom Blackaby, *The Commands of Christ: What it Really Means to Follow Jesus* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2012), 2-23.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>45</sup> William James Putman, *Real-life Discipleship: Building Churches that Make Disciples* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2010), 21.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-118.

<sup>47</sup> Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building your Life in Christ (Expanded Edition)* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 17-229.



“biblically informed.”<sup>48</sup> In that book he recommends *Discipleship Essentials*.<sup>49</sup> In a chapter therein entitled “Walking in Obedience,” Ogden references Ephesians, Romans, and Galatians.<sup>50</sup>

Willard is typical of most discipleship theologians in that he does not identify the content of “all.” His thesis, however, is that implementing Christian disciplines makes commandment observance more likely to occur.<sup>51</sup> In *The Great Omission* (2006), Willard minimizes the importance of obedience, saying, “Through discipleship, obedience will take care of itself.”<sup>52</sup> In contrast, spiritual formation, Christian mysticism, and spiritual disciplines are Willard’s paths to existential salvation.<sup>53</sup> Wesley Mills offers no protest.<sup>54</sup> As quoted in the introduction of this thesis, however, Willard’s *Divine Conspiracy* (1998) recognizes the importance of obedience.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, his works do not specify what Matthew intended by “all.”

Malphurs says every church should establish its own discipleship goals, such as attendance and baptism, to make people more like Jesus.<sup>56</sup> He also argues that individual believers have the right to choose not to be disciples.<sup>57</sup> Malphur’s book, *Strategic Disciple*

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<sup>48</sup> Greg Ogden, *Transforming Disciples: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2003), 15-33.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>50</sup> Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*, 206-13.

<sup>51</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006), 69-138; Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 311-73.

<sup>52</sup> Willard, *The Great Omission*, xiv.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-138.

<sup>54</sup> Wesley A Mills, review of *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*, by Dallas Willard, *Library Journal* 131, no. 12 (2006): 86, accessed 15 November 2014, Proquest.

<sup>55</sup> Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, xv.

<sup>56</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Strategic Disciple Making: A Practical Tool for Successful Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 34-35 & 116.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.

*Making*, focuses on the preparation and process of making disciples, as opposed to describing the commandments the Great Commission commands Christians to observe.<sup>58</sup>

*Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* contains an abundance of imperatives but never isolates “all” the commandments the Great Commission entails.<sup>59</sup> Barna writes, “True discipleship . . . demand[s] that an individual constantly strive to live in harmony with God’s laws and commands.”<sup>60</sup> He finds the justification for discipleship in Matthew 28.19 and argues that “disciple making is not optional.”<sup>61</sup>

The article "Make Disciples" in *Compass* also has this all-purpose view of “all.”<sup>62</sup> To Pope Benedict XVI, discipleship is simply Christian education and, as such, he does not promote any specific commandments in his list of requirements to deal with today’s “educational emergency.”<sup>63</sup> What is important, he says, is “closeness and trust” . . . “truth” . . . the “experience of suffering” . . . and “finding the right balance between freedom and discipline.”<sup>64</sup>

“Make Disciples, Not Just Converts” in *Christianity Today* also has a non-distinct interpretation of “all.”<sup>65</sup> The article objects that the discipleship aspect of the Great Commission has been overlooked and recommends spiritual formation, Christian maturity, the Holy Spirit,

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<sup>58</sup> Malphurs, *Strategic Disciple Making*, 4-5.

<sup>59</sup> George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 1-186.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>62</sup> Barry Brundell, ed., "Make Disciples," *Compass* 42, no. 2 (2008): 1-2, accessed 15 November 2014, Proquest.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>65</sup> “Make Disciples, Not Just Converts,” *Christianity Today*, 28-29.

and “creating a discipling community.”<sup>66</sup> The only commandment mentioned in the article is the command “to teach . . . disciples to observe all that [Jesus] commanded.”<sup>67</sup>

In the excellent *Called to Reach: Equipping Cross-Cultural Disciplers*, William Yount and Mike Barnett do not identify the commandments intended by “all.”<sup>68</sup> Rather than describing what disciplers should teach, they focus on seven character traits disciplers should develop.<sup>69</sup> This important issue is argued in chapter 2, but their book does not deal with the content of “all.”

The final discipleship theologian reviewed is Bill Hull, who epitomizes the Church’s contemporary problem. In a quality book he reminds his readers that Jesus calls his disciples to teach others “to obey everything” Jesus commanded.<sup>70</sup> Two pages later he drives his argument home: “All is the Great Commission’s key word—*all* authority, *all* sacrifice, *all*-out effort, *all* the time, [and] for *all* the people.”<sup>71</sup> Hull, however, neglects to include “*all* the commandments.”

### *Great Commission Theologians*

The views of scholars in the “Great Commission” category are more diverse. They are sometimes subtle, occasionally technical, and often leave certain issues unanswered or assumed. In his article entitled “Gospel as Conquest: Mosaic Typology in Matthew 28:16-20,” Kenton Sparks’ thesis is that Matthew views Jesus’ mission to convert the nations as their ultimate

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<sup>66</sup> “Make Disciples, Not Just Converts,” *Christianity Today*, 28-29.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>68</sup> William R Yount and Mike Barnett, *Called to Reach: Equipping Cross-Cultural Disciplers* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2007), 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>70</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 25.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

destruction.<sup>72</sup> Although he slightly misquotes Jesus' command to teach the nations "to obey everything I have commanded," he does not specifically identify what "everything" is.<sup>73</sup> In this sense, Sparks is similar to many "discipleship" authors: the meaning of "all" is assumed.

Daniel Harrington's insight concerning "all that I commanded you" is simply that the phrase "treats the teaching of Jesus as authoritative."<sup>74</sup> He continues, "The disciples are commanded to carry on what was a major task [i.e., teaching] of the earthly Jesus in the Gospel."<sup>75</sup> "All" is assumed to be everything Jesus said, wherever it is found.

In *The New American Commentary*, Craig Blomberg writes, "Obedience to all of Jesus' commands forms the heart of disciple making."<sup>76</sup> For preachers and teachers, this includes "relevant exposition of all parts of God's word."<sup>77</sup> Blomberg is among those that take "all" in Matthew 28:20a to generally mean all the commandments in the Bible germane to Christians.

Like Harrington, D. Hiebert believes the word "all" "underscores the authoritative nature of [Jesus'] teaching."<sup>78</sup> This means that nothing can be added, removed, "watered down," or changed and that Jesus completely renounces "antinomianism."<sup>79</sup> Hiebert also says "all" refers both to everything Jesus taught plus "expanding, deepening, [and] spiritualizing . . . the Law and

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<sup>72</sup> Kenton L. Sparks, "Gospel as Conquest: Mosaic Typology in Matthew 28:16-20," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (2006): 661, accessed 15 November 2014, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 660.

<sup>74</sup> Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 1 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, Michael Glazier, 1991), 415.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 433.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, "An Expository Study of Matthew 28:16-20," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149, no. 595 (1992): 352, accessed 2 December 2014, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 352-3.

the Prophets.”<sup>80</sup> Hiebert connects “all” in 28.20a to everything Jesus commands—regardless of where it is found—plus Jesus’ upgraded version of Old Testament commandments.<sup>81</sup>

Don Fanning, on the other hand, clearly identifies the location of the content of “all.” He says Matthew 28.20a “refers to the on-going training in all the commands of the NT.”<sup>82</sup>

Fanning’s article does not address how Matthew 5.17-20 activates Old Testament commands.

Also like Sparks, Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller are representative of those who assume everyone already knows the content of “all.” They write, “What they [the apostles] teach is also typical of Matthew’s perspective: they are to teach others ‘to observe all that I have commanded.’”<sup>83</sup> Although they specifically mention Matthew’s Gospel in that quotation, their *Biblical Foundations for Mission* surveys the entire Bible; it would be presumptive to suggest that Senior and Stuhlmueller limit “all” to the commandments of Jesus in Matthew.<sup>84</sup>

To R. T. France, the antithesis of teaching “all” that Jesus commanded is teaching “abstract ideas.”<sup>85</sup> In another work he writes, “The basis of living as the people of God will henceforth be the new ‘commandments’ given by Jesus.”<sup>86</sup> Although both of these works exegete Matthew’s Gospel, France does not particularly confine “all” to Matthew’s Gospel.

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<sup>80</sup> Hiebert, “An Expository Study of Matthew 28:16-20,” 353.

<sup>81</sup> Scripture references that do not name the book should be understood to reference the Gospel of Matthew.

<sup>82</sup> Don Fanning, “The Great Commission,” *Eruditio Ardescens* 1, no. 2 (2014): article 2, 17, accessed 16 February 2015, Digital Commons.

<sup>83</sup> Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 252.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, v-x.

<sup>85</sup> R. T. France, *Matthew*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 415.

<sup>86</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1118.

Mortimer Arias' primary argument is that the Great Commission must be read in the context of Matthew.<sup>87</sup> He deliberates, "Strangely enough, most of those who appeal to the Great Commission do not often go to the Gospel of Matthew for the content of the Gospel."<sup>88</sup> Like France, Arias does not categorically say "all" points only to Jesus' commands in Matthew.

David Bosch's view is similar. He writes, "Matthew 28:18-20 has to be interpreted *against the backdrop of Matthew's gospel as a whole* and unless we keep this in mind we shall fail to understand it."<sup>89</sup> This statement, however, does not unmistakably confine "all" to the commandments in Matthew's Gospel.

According to Edgar Krentz, Matthew specifically highlights the commandments of Jesus in five major sermons and drives home the importance of command observance in the book's conclusion, the Great Commission.<sup>90</sup> He adds, "Matthew envisages the use of his Gospel as a manual for teaching Christian life."<sup>91</sup> Krentz, however, stops short of saying that the content of "all" in Matthew 28.20a points only to Jesus' commandments in those five discourses.

W. D. Davies posits that "all" in Matthew 28.20a primarily points to the Sermon on the Mount. He writes, "The ethical instructions which [Jesus] issues are identified with those which he had given to his own while on earth, and, we may assume, particularly those recorded in the

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<sup>87</sup> Mortimer Arias, "Church in the World: Rethinking the Great Commission," *Theology Today* 47, no. 4 (1991): 410, accessed 11 November 2014, Proquest.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.

<sup>89</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 58, accessed 15 April 2015, Google Books.

<sup>90</sup> Edgar Krentz, "Missionary Matthew: Matthew 28:16-20 as Summary of the Gospel," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 31, no. 1 (2004): 30, accessed 30 November 2014, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

SM.”<sup>92</sup> Davies recognizes that some commandments outside that sermon may also be included in “all;” where they may be found is left unanswered. It is noteworthy to see Davies’ use of *assume*.

John Meier connects Jesus’ teaching ministry instigated in Matthew 4.23 with “all” in 28.20a through the Sermon on the Mount and the other four discourses.<sup>93</sup> He writes, “It is to all this teaching that the risen Jesus refers in the final commission.”<sup>94</sup> Technically speaking, Meier does not include the commandments before 4.23 and those between the discourses. He does, however, summarize: “[Matthew’s] gospel is meant to be a public lectionary, catechism, and manual of order to be proclaimed in and read by his entire Church.”<sup>95</sup>

Additionally, Meier calls the rapport between Jesus’s teaching and the Law Matthew’s “burning question.”<sup>96</sup> Eschatologically, Jesus is both the fulfillment of prophecy and “Fulfiller of the Law.”<sup>97</sup> In three of the Sermon on the Mount’s antitheses (cf. 5.31-42), Meier says Jesus “revokes the letter of the Law and replaces it with his own diametrically opposed command.”<sup>98</sup>

Paul Minear views the Great Commission as the conclusion of Jesus’ training of his disciples and, like Meier, limits the meaning of “all that I commanded you” to Matthew’s five discourses.<sup>99</sup> He pens, “The five earlier sermons provided them with the agenda of commands to

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<sup>92</sup> W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge [England]: University Press, 1964), 360.

<sup>93</sup> John P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel*, *Theological Inquiries* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 46-7.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>99</sup> Paul Minear, *Matthew: The Teacher’s Gospel* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), 141.

be taught and obeyed.”<sup>100</sup> Also like Meier, Minear does not technically include ‘free-standing’ Matthean commandments. For example, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4.17) was spoken prior to Matthew’s first discourse.

Benjamin White says “all” is everything Jesus commanded in Matthew, including “full Torah observance” based on Jesus’ “own authoritative interpretations.”<sup>101</sup> He writes,

[Jesus] is clear about the content of this apostolic teaching: the preservation of everything that he had commanded his disciples earlier in the Gospel. . . . [This includes] his programmatic call to observe every ‘letter and stroke of a letter’ of the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>102</sup>

White continues, “Jesus’ advocacy for the complete observance of Torah throughout Matthew makes it highly probable . . . he expects Gentile converts to perform all aspects of Torah, including circumcision.”<sup>103</sup> While many of the authors herein reviewed may include certain aspects of the Old Testament in “all,” White is the only one that contemplates circumcision.

Frederick Bruner writes, “I think Jesus’ commands probably encompass *the whole Gospel*, for Jesus’ whole life is a command.”<sup>104</sup> Bruner’s italics are somewhat unclear; they at least reference the book of Matthew, but may also suggest the Gospel message as a whole. This inclusion of Jesus’ life in the commandments enjoined by the Great Commission is distinctive.

Concerning the Torah, Bruner writes,

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<sup>100</sup> Minear, *Matthew: The Teacher’s Gospel*, 141.

<sup>101</sup> Benjamin L White, “The Eschatological Conversion of ‘All the Nations’ in Matthew 28.19-20: (Mis)reading Matthew through Paul,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 36, no. 4 (2014): 354-356, accessed 15 November 2014, <http://dx.doi/10.1177/0142064X13519375>.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>104</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, vol. 2, *The Churchbook: Matthew 13-28*, rev. and exp. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 826.



Jesus does not command the teaching of the Torah or . . . the prophets. Nevertheless, Jesus' deep respect for the Hebrew Bible . . . will keep disciples in that book, too. . . . However, Jesus' explicit command here does set priorities.<sup>105</sup>

Bruner seems to overlook the fact that one of Jesus' commands in Matthew is, "Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets" (5.17, NASB). Then again, the priorities Bruner refers to may be his recognition that "all I have commanded you" is past tense; he says the tense excludes anything that might be added after "Easter."<sup>106</sup> In addition, Bruner criticizes those who preach resurrection and grace as more important than Jesus' commands. He writes, "The Great Commission . . . forbids all such resurrection excess, antinomianism, or 'Christian Atheism.'"<sup>107</sup>

Concerning the commandments enjoined by Matthew 28.20a, Jacques Matthey writes,

The content to which Matthew refers here can be either the total message of Jesus, or the five main speeches. I think that the reference is more specific: the places where Jesus finally confirms and interprets the commandments of the Old Testament, especially the Torah, as expression of God's will.<sup>108</sup>

Matthey says there are two possible views of "all" but then proffers a third, private interpretation (cf. 2 Peter 1.21). He then quotes and agrees with a German scholar. Bornkamm says the content of "all" is "the will of God as proclaimed through the Law and the Prophets and as interpreted and realized in full power of authority in Jesus' teaching and summarized in the love commandment."<sup>109</sup> Although Matthey is somewhat double-minded, his preferred view sees "all"

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<sup>105</sup> Bruner, *Matthew*, 827.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Jacques Matthey, "The Great Commission according to Matthew," *International Review of Mission* 69, no. 274 (1980): 171, accessed 23 October 2014, *ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost*.

<sup>109</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, "Der Auferstandene und der Irdische," in *Zeit und Geschichte*, ed. E. Dinkler (Tubingen: Mohr [Siebeck Publishing], 1964), 187, as quoted in Jacques Matthey, "The Great Commission according to Matthew," *International Review of Mission* 69, no. 274 (1980): 171, accessed 6 January 2015, *ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost*.

only as Jesus' revitalization of the Torah. According to Matthey, Jesus' "full power of authority" is not sufficient for him to say anything that does not find some basis in the Old Testament.

According to M. Eugene Boring, "'All' [in 28.20a] reflects the 'all' of 26.1.'"<sup>110</sup> He adds, "It refers not only to the Sermon on the Mount but to all of Jesus' teaching contained in the Gospel as well, especially the five great discourses."<sup>111</sup> Boring recognizes that Jesus does not mention the Torah in 28.20, but adds, "Jesus' teaching that fulfills the Torah (cf. 5:17-20) is the sole content of the disciples' teaching."<sup>112</sup> Similar to Matthey, but here applied specifically to the Gospel of Matthew, Boring holds that all of Jesus' commands find their roots in the Torah.

In sum, a variety of theological positions exist concerning the content of "all." Some are undeveloped, others more precise.<sup>113</sup> Some authors have creative ideas. None of those reviewed, however, have the same position as this thesis. Christian scholarship needs this focused study.

### **Presuppositions**

This work primarily uses the NASB and presupposes that the Bible is the word of God (2 Timothy 3.16). It also presumes that the people of God, as a community, are its lawful interpreters (Matthew 18.18). Those without a proper Christology may not be trusted to speak authoritatively about God's word (1 John 2.22). Nevertheless, truth is truth wherever it is found; if unworthy authors are quoted, one must recall how Balaam learned an angel was in his path.

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<sup>110</sup> M. Eugene Boring, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8, Ministry Matters Electronic Book (Nashville: Abington Press, c.1994-2004), under "Matthew 28:16-20, The Great Commission," accessed 2 January 2015, <http://www.ministrymatters.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/library/#/tnib/9e6d9ade43180460960188affa93c1e2/introduction.html>.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> I have tried to accurately determine what each author says. The views of some authors, however, are less than precise.

This study has several presuppositions in the realm of epistemology. First is the belief that God wants His people to know His will and benevolently helps them discover it (John 7.17). Secondly, this study presupposes that revelation is progressive (John 1.16).<sup>114</sup> Finally, it presumes that true knowledge is not irrelevant facts but vital for the contexts of life (James 1.22).

In addition, this study presumes the traditional order of the Gospels. Mark was published before Matthew, Matthew before Luke/Acts and John. Furthermore, this work presupposes the early date for Matthew's Gospel, that Matthew was aware of Mark's Gospel, and that John's Gospel and 1 John are generally contemporaneous.

Finally, this thesis presupposes the inspiration of the words and strokes that make up the original biblical manuscripts (Matthew 4.4; 5.18; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13). The Bible is a unique semiotic system whose building blocks are "every word of God" (Proverbs 30.5, NASB). It must, therefore, be translated as closely as possible to the word-for-word method, not with practices such as Transformational-generative Grammar and dynamic equivalence. Typical of this view is the ESV, which writes,

The English Standard Version™ is founded on the conviction that the words of the Bible are the very words of God. And because the words themselves—not just the thoughts or ideas—are inspired by God, each word must be translated with the greatest precision and accuracy. . . . The English Standard Version™ does not try to "improve" on the original in light of today's culture or by using trendy language. Instead, the utmost care has been taken to express God's Word in English that most closely captures the meaning of the original, with understandability, beauty, and impact.<sup>115</sup>

Concern for the Bible's words goes to the heart of Christianity's identity. It is "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints," not a religion subject to private linguistic

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<sup>114</sup> Use of the word *progressive* means that God reveals himself over a period of time. This has occurred in history and is seen in the unfolding nature of the canon. It also refers to the people of God's personal and corporate discovery of that truth over time through natural and special revelation. The contemporary use of the word that suggests truth and morality are moving away from traditional beliefs is not intended.

<sup>115</sup> Biblia.com<sup>beta</sup>, accessed 20 February 2015, <http://biblia.com/books/esv>, under "resource info."

interpretations (Jude 3, RSV; 2 Peter 1.20). Men must change their lives to fit God's word, not change his words to fit their preferences.

Given this one constraint, this thesis uses an all-of-the-above methodology to discover the best English verb that corresponds with the meaning of the original language Bible word. It admits that etymology can be misused, but its proper and full use must not be discouraged. When a word's history offers meaning that finds theological support in other Bible locations or common sense warrants, truth is confirmed (Matthew 18.16). Comparing and contrasting Greek Bible words, including their etymologies, uses, and connotations helps one to "rightly [divide] the word of truth" for the purpose of translation (cf. 2 Timothy 2.15, KJV).

In addition, the translator must promote solidarity. When viable, he must have deference for prior translations, especially a language's earliest ones and those that have stood the test of time. Furthermore, since a one-to-one original-word-to-English-word translation is unattainable, translators must work to establish as much conformity as possible within specific books, among individual authors, and/or concerning specific uses and contexts. Testing a newly retranslated word for one passage in similar biblical contexts verifies the suitability of that meaning. It must conform theologically to the rest of the Bible and be grammatically correct in the English.

### **Limitations**

This paper admits various limitations. Since revelation is progressive, this work can only take the next step in the historical development of the theology it addresses. The contemporary pendulum has swung toward antinomianism; if it reverses toward legalism, future readers must remember God's "commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5.3).

Several more limitations exist. First, this thesis will not attempt to develop a list of the commandments the Matthean Jesus included in "all" in 28.20a. Secondly, although this work

will generally touch upon the issue, it does not attempt to solve what Meier calls Matthew's "burning question," how Jesus' teaching relates to the Old Testament.<sup>116</sup> Thirdly, this thesis makes no claim about Matthew's overall eschatology other than recognizing the link between the Great Commission and Daniel 7. Finally, this work will not refute the "community hypothesis," or the similar "audience hypothesis," concerning the recipients of the various Gospels.

### **Approach and Methodology**

This study has a two-pronged approach. The first phase is to exegete the Greek word *τηρέω*. Reference works were consulted that describe the meaning and connotations of the word within Matthew, the rest of the New Testament, and the Septuagint. In addition, reference works of appropriate secular literature have been evaluated, including that of Josephus and Philo.

To stay within contemporary norms, the use of *τηρέω* will also be analyzed in various English translations. One aspect of this will be to chart the interpretation of *τηρέω* in Matthew 28.20 in a plethora of English versions.<sup>117</sup> Another consideration is to survey the occurrences of *τηρέω* and similar Greek words in Matthew and the rest of the New Testament.

The goal of this first phase is to discover the single best English verb that translates *τηρέω*. In addition, amplification words shall be selected that bring out its connotations. The argument will show why the primary translation word is best, why the amplification words are advantageous, and why the amplifications are each not suitable as the primary translation.

In addition, the word will be tested back into Matthew and the New Testament to make sure it has high functionality. The verb chosen as the best English translation must be theologically and grammatically correct in the specific context of commandments. Eleven verses

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<sup>116</sup> Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 63.

<sup>117</sup> The survey of various translations, versions, and paraphrases does not constitute appreciation for every version's scholarship.

shall be tested, each in a different version of the Bible. In addition, four short scriptural narratives shall be offered as examples of how this work's translation and amplification of *τηρέω* functions in NASB prose. This part of the project will also describe both what it means to observe commandments and the significance of *τηρέω* to the teacher/disciple relationship.

The second phase of the approach is, in six steps, to do biblical and theological research surrounding the content of "all." First, an in depth literature review has been done to discover the present state of scholarship. Secondly, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark will be evaluated to show the distinctives of Matthew and how that relates to "all." Thirdly, the structure of Matthew shall be explored to show that Matthew 28.16-20 is the book's summary. Fourthly, the message of Matthew shall be evaluated to show that the *mission* and *ethnicity* motifs reinforce the structure argument that the Great Commission points back into Matthew's Gospel for the content of "all." The fifth step is to categorize and evaluate the literature review of "all." Because this thesis does not accept any of the existing interpretations of "all," this step is a proposal and refutation of objections to the thesis. The sixth and final step is to show how Matthew's *fulfillment* motif supports the thesis and links the content of "all" to the Old Testament.<sup>118</sup>

After these two phases are complete, general and specific applications for "to observe all" shall be explored for individual Christians, disciplers, evangelists and missionaries, and pastors and teachers. Individual believers must observe all that Jesus commanded and cultivate a positive view of commandments. Disciplers must both personify Jesus' commands in Matthew and use them as their core curriculum; specifically, they should focus on 18.15-18. Evangelists and missionaries should teach all that Jesus commanded, concentrating on the command to repent in 4.17. Pastors and teachers should expound Matthew as Jesus' authoritative commands.

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<sup>118</sup> This thesis will not attempt to solve this complex issue. It will only state the obvious in showing how Matthew 5.17-20 relates to "all" in 28.20a. Cf. limitations.

As subjects for further study, two applications are proposed for theologians. One project is to develop a comprehensive list of Jesus' commandments in Matthew. The other is to construct a theology of how Jesus fulfills and interprets the diverse commandments in the Old Testament.

This plan was chosen for several reasons. First, *τηρέω* is evaluated before "all" because that is Matthew's word order. Secondly, *τηρέω* is a verb and critical to what Matthew and Jesus expect people to do; consulting reference works is the way to discover its meaning. Thirdly, biblical and theological research is applicable to ascertaining what Matthew intended as the content of "all." Because they are the interpretive community, the people of God must also be consulted. Finally, applications of the thesis should be considered for various aspects of Christianity.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF *ΤΗΡΕΩ*

Chapter one pointed out that commandment observance is in decline and needs a revival. It also revealed, however, that contemporary theologians do not agree on the specific commandments Matthew and Jesus had in mind when the Great Commission was authored. In addition, the literature review showed that the Greek verb *τηρέω* has a variety of connotations with a strong connection to the sense of sight.

Chapter two, therefore, begins the formal argument of this thesis by evaluating the sundry meanings of *τηρέω* to determine the single best English verb to signify it. Not only will the literature review be consulted, but various existing translations will be evaluated. The goal is to discover the best translation for *τηρέω* in Matthew 28.20.

This chapter will also weigh the multiple connotations of *τηρέω* to select three additional English words that bring out its fuller meaning. Because the Great Commission is a fundamental text, the connotations of this vital and complex verb are significant. Jesus gave the church commandments; the execution of these determines the very definition and health of the faith.

Finally, chapter two will discuss the implications of *τηρέω* for the mentor/disciple relationship. Teaching people [to] “*τηρεῖν* commandments” presupposes a philosophy of education. Reflection upon such will improve Christian pedagogy.

*Τηρέω* in Matthew 28.20 is best translated as “to observe.” Other words that help describe and amplify its meaning are *keep*, *heed*, and *obey*.<sup>1</sup> In addition, *τηρέω* implies that those who teach others shall personify the commandments so their students can observe them optically and behaviorally.

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<sup>1</sup> *Heed* means “attend, bear in mind, be guided by, consider, follow, give ear to, listen to, mark, mind, note, obey, observe, pay attention to, regard, take notice of, take to heart.” “Heed,” *Reverso*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://dictionary.reverso.net/english-cobuild/heed>.



## *Τηρεῖν* Means “To Observe”

The best English verb to translate *τηρέω* in reference to commandments is “to observe.”

The literature review, summarized in table 1, reveals that *τηρέω* contains four interrelated ideas.

To observe commandments ultimately means that those commandments are obeyed, but the visual, guarding, and mental connotations of the word cannot be overlooked.

**Table 1. Literature review composite**

Category of meaning	Possible translation	Occurrences in the Lit. Review
Observation: “to observe” = 13 occurrences	<i>To observe (strictly)</i>	8
	<i>To keep (have) in view</i>	3
	<i>To perceive</i>	1
	<i>To aim at something</i>	1
Observation (with guardianship) = 6 occurrences	<i>To (keep) watch (over)</i>	6
Guardianship = 17 occurrences <sup>a</sup>	<i>To keep (blameless)</i>	9
	<i>To guard</i>	3
	<i>To protect</i>	3
	<i>To maintain/preserve</i>	2
Use of mental faculties = 10 occurrences <sup>b</sup>	<i>To take note of</i>	4
	<i>To pay attention to</i>	3
	<i>To pay heed</i>	1
	<i>To keep in mind/hold fast</i>	2
Obedience: “to obey” = 10 occurrences	<i>To obey (persistently)</i>	4
	<i>To fulfill</i>	2
	<i>To follow</i>	2
	<i>To comply with</i>	2

*Source:* This is a summary of the sources in this thesis listed under “Literature Review of *Τηρεῖν*.”

<sup>a</sup> Best verb that embraces these ideas is “to keep.”

<sup>b</sup> Best non-compound verb for this group is “to heed.”

*Τηρέω* comes from the noun *τηρός*, meaning a “watch” or a “guard.”<sup>2</sup> Based on the word’s literal meaning, commandments must be *guarded, kept, maintained, and protected*—

<sup>2</sup> “Greek Lexicon: G5083 (NASB),” *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?page=1&strongs=G5083&t=NASB>; “5083: Τερέό,” *Bible Hub*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://biblehub.com/greek/5083.htm>.

patently from being forgotten, broken, eschewed, or misapplied.<sup>3</sup> *Τηρέω* may also be related to *θεωρέω*, “to be a spectator,” *θεάομαι*, “to look upon,” and *ὀράω*, “to stare at.”<sup>4</sup> The link between *τηρέω* and these other words supports the fact that guarding something involves the use of sight.

Guarding something also implies the use of one’s mental faculties; consequently, various meanings of *τηρέω* discovered in the literature review develop the word’s visual and cognitive connotations. Commandments must be *observed, kept in view, watched, aimed at, noticed, kept in mind, heeded, paid attention to, and taken note of*. Practically speaking, however, commandments must be *obeyed, followed, and fulfilled*. *Τηρέω* has a variety of literary nuances.

The English transitive verb “to observe” includes both the literal and figurative aspects of *τηρέω*. To literally (optically) observe something means to look at it or watch it. To figuratively (behaviorally) observe a commandment means to do it.<sup>5</sup> Because a word’s figurative use stems from its literal use, aspects of that literal use may also be implied in the figurative. I.e., teaching people to follow commandments may be related to them seeing those commandments in action.

It is widely understood that best educational practice requires auditory, visual, and kinesthetic instruction. Preaching and academic instruction is primarily auditory instruction. This alone, however, is often insufficient in producing healthy disciples; contemporary American Christianity has many great forums of auditory instruction and yet obedience to commandments is often lacking. Therefore, to receive the best results from Christian instruction, discipleship

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 141-42.

<sup>4</sup> "Greek Lexicon: G5083 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*; "Greek Lexicon: G2334 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?page=1&strongs=G2334&t=NASB>; "Greek Lexicon: G2300 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?page=1&strongs=G2300&t=NASB>; "Greek Lexicon: G3708 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?page=1&strongs=G3708&t=NASB>.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Wayne A. Detzler, *New Testament Words in Today’s Language*, 246.

must also include the visual and kinesthetic aspects.<sup>6</sup> This visual feature of instruction must come through the personal example of teachers. In sum, the visual, cognitive, and guardianship facets of *τηρέω* are fully represented in “to observe.” In addition, because “to observe” has been historically used in connection with commandments, the word strongly implies obedience.

This is supported by the Old Testament. “To observe” is often used in reference to its commands and ultimately means they are to be obeyed. Concerning the Ten Commandments, Deuteronomy 5.32 (NASB) says, “So you shall observe to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left.” David said, “Depart from me, evildoers, that I may observe the commandments of my God (Psalm 119.115, NASB). Jeremiah complains, “The sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have observed the command of their father which he commanded them, but this people has not listened to [the LORD]” (Jeremiah 35.16, NASB). Those who read the Old Testament know that ‘observing commandments’ means those commandments are to be obeyed carefully, thoughtfully, and intentionally.

When the *NIDNTT* tries to force the conclusion that *τηρέω* is for New Testament commands and *φωλάσσω* is for those stemming from the Old Testament (LXX), it brings another issue to light.<sup>7</sup> Diachronic data must not be undervalued. When it is, one might seek to formulate a false reason why two words exist when his presuppositions suggest that one might do.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, the New Testament and Matthew’s use of *τηρέω* fully supports interpreting it as “to observe” when referring to commandments, regardless of the commandments under

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<sup>6</sup> This thesis does not consider the kinesthetic aspects of discipleship because the literary connections between it and *τηρέω* are lacking. Based on the best practices of education, however, disciplers must also walk their students through the learning process, critiquing their implementation of commandments.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Verbrugge, *NIDNTT*, 563.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the “semantic domain” approach in David Allen Black, *Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek: A Survey of Basic Concepts and Applications*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 124.

consideration. Appendix A shows the seventy-one locations *τηρέω* is used in the New Testament. Generally speaking, twenty-three of these relate to commandments and eleven more are used in reference to God’s word. Although the NASB primarily translates *τηρέω* as *keep*, “to observe” works better for verses that relate to commandments because it incorporates the visual factor.<sup>9</sup>

Matthew’s use of *τηρέω* also points to rendering it as “to observe.” Discounting the three times he uses it for literal guarding, the NASB translates *τηρέω* as “to observe” two of the three other times.<sup>10</sup> In point of fact, this is the case in the text presently under review, Matthew 28.20.

Beyond the NASB, table 2 shows that translating *τηρέω* as “to observe” in 28.20 is well-supported by a majority of versions. Twenty-four versions render it as “to observe;” only two offer it as *keep*. In sum, the best English translation of *τηρέω* in Matthew 28.20 is “to observe.”

**Table 2. Translation of *Τηρεω* in Matthew 28.20**

Translation of <i>Τηρεω</i>	“To observe”		“To obey”		“To do”	“To keep”	“To practice”	[ <sup>a</sup> ]
Bible Translation, Version, or Paraphrase	KJ21	AKJV	CEB	NIRV	CEV	DLNT	MSG	VOICE
	ASV	LEB	CJB	NIV	GW	WYC		
	AMP	MEV	ERV	NIVUK	NOG			
	Darby	MOUNCE	EXB	NLT	NLV			
	DRA	NABRE	GNT	NRSV	WE			
	ESV	NASB	ISV	NRSVA				
	ESVUK	NKJV	TLB	NRSVACE				
	GNV	OJB	NCV	NRSVCE				
	HCSB	RSV	NET					
	Phillips	RSVCE						
	JUB	WEB						
	KJV	YLT						

Source: “Matthew 28.20 (NASB),” *BibleGateway*, under “Matthew 28.20 in all English translations,” accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Matthew%2028:20>.

Note: For the meaning of the version abbreviations, cf. “Matthew 28.20 (NASB),” *BibleGateway*, under “Matthew 28.20 in all English translations.”

<sup>a</sup> Matthew 28.20 in the Voice paraphrase reads, “Then disciple them. *Form them in the practices and postures that [italics sic] I have taught you, and show them how to follow the commands I have laid down for you. And I will be with you, day after day, to the end of the age.*” Cf. “Matthew 28.20 (VOICE),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passages/?search=Matthew+28.20&version=VOICE>.

<sup>9</sup> “To observe” would also work well for *τηρέω* in other passages that have God’s word as its direct object.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Appendix A. The NASB translates *τηρέω* in Matthew as *keep* one time.

## ***Τηρεῖν* Is Best Amplified by *Keep, Heed, and Obey***

Because *Τηρέω* has many connotations, it is best understood when amplified by additional words.<sup>11</sup> Other than “to observe,” the three best words in the literature review that help describe and amplify *τηρέω* are *keep, heed, and obey*. Of those associated with the guardian aspect of *τηρέω*, *keep* has the greatest familiarity and carries the meaning well. Disciples must *keep* commandments in two ways. First, they must *keep* them by performing them (Matt 5.19 & 19.17). Commands that are regularly carried out are protected from being ignored or forgotten (Proverbs 4.5). Secondly, believers must watch over Jesus’ commands theologically to keep them from being misconstrued or misapplied (2 Timothy 3.16). Further support for *keep* is that it is the most prevalent word used by the NASB to translate the guardian aspects of *τηρέω*; this occurs thirty-seven times.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the NASB renders *τηρέω* as *keep* about fifty times overall.

*Heed* is the best word to amplify the cognitive aspects of *τηρέω*.<sup>13</sup> Christians should also *heed* commandments from two perspectives. First, they must heed them objectively, studying the Bible to understand both God’s purposes in the commandments and the particulars of how the Lord wants them implemented (2 Timothy 2.15). Secondly, believers must *heed* commandments subjectively, discovering how to correctly apply them to their unique contexts (cf. Romans 10.2). Commandments, therefore, must be taken note of, paid attention to, heeded, and kept in mind.

The NASB translates *τηρέω* as *heed* three times, all in the book of Revelation.

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<sup>11</sup> It is a presupposition of this paper that translation should proceed word-for-word. Proposing these three amplification words does not convolute this but allows, parenthetically, for further clarification “in the margin.”

<sup>12</sup> See the Appendix A, items graded G.

<sup>13</sup> According to table 1, the choices for this are limited. “Take note of,” “pay attention to,” and “keep in mind,” as compound verbs, have an extended and awkward cadence when expressed in sequence with single verbs such as *keep* and *obey*. “To pay heed” is the only phrase in the literature review that communicates the cognitive aspects of *τηρέω* and can be conveyed as a single verb, i.e., *heed*.

Finally, *τηρεω* demands that commandments are executed; this connotation is best amplified by *obey*. Christians must faithfully follow commands (Deut. 11.27-28). Although the NASB never translates *τηρέω* as “obey,” table 2 shows that seventeen versions do this in 28.20. Only when a commandment has been kept, heeded, and obeyed has one altogether observed it.

### **The Unsuitability of *Keep, Heed, and Obey* as Primary Translations of *Τηρεῖν***

Although they serve well as amplifiers, neither *keep*, nor *heed*, nor *obey* stand on their own as the best translation of *τηρέω*. First, none of them carry the strong visual connection implicit in the Greek. A guard or watchman’s primary duty is to keep his eyes focused on the property he protects. Metaphorically speaking, guarding commandments requires insight and knowledge. Wisdom is required if one is to effectively apply commandments to the situations of life (Proverbs 1.1-9). If commandments are employed without wisdom, blessing does not follow and the practitioner is left without positive reinforcement (Proverbs 1.22-33). Because observing commandments naturally invites harassment from the wicked, the blessings of observing them must be realized for disciples to persevere in difficult times (James 5.10-11). In addition, young believers often discontinue keeping, heeding, and obeying commandments if their eyes do not see those commandments being practiced by their teachers (1 Peter 5.1-5; 1 Samuel 14).

Secondly, *keep* is not the best translation of *τηρέω*. Although the NASB translates it this way in Matthew 19.17, tables 3 and 4 show that this is the only occasion of the eighteen times it translates any word as *keep* or *kept*. Thirteen times *keep* is used as a helping verb or in a manner that does not relate to this discussion. On the other four occasions, *keep* is used for *ποιέω* (3x) and *φυλάσσω* (1x). In the NASB version of Matthew, the connection between *keep* and *τηρέω* is weak and few other versions link them in Matthew 28.20. Table 2 shows that only the Wycliffe Bible and the Disciples' Literal New Testament translate *τηρέω* as *keep* in the Great Commission.

**Table 3. Use of τηρεω and similar verbs in Matthew and the New Testament**

Greek word	# In Mat.	NASB in Mat.	Mat. Refs.	Phrase of text in Matthew	# In NT
ποιέω	84	<i>do</i> <i>make</i> <i>keep</i>	[?x] [?x] 5.19 26.28 28.14	“keeps and teaches” commandments “keep the Passover” “keep you out of trouble”	572 [ <sup>c</sup> ]
ὕπακούω <sup>a</sup>	1	<i>obey</i>	8.27	“The wind and the sea obey Him”	21
καταμανθάνω <sup>b</sup>	1	<i>observe</i>	6.28	“Observe how the lilies grow”	1
τηρέω	3	<i>keep</i> <i>observe</i> <i>observe</i>	19.17 23.3 28.20	“to enter into life, keep the commandments” “that they tell you, do [ποιέω] and observe” “to observe all that I commanded”	71
φυλάσσω	1	<i>kept</i>	19.20	“All these things I have kept”	31

Sources: "Greek Lexicon: G4160 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4160&t=NASB>; "Greek Lexicon: G5219 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5219&t=NASB>; "Greek Lexicon: G2648 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2648&t=NASB>; "Greek Lexicon: G5083 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*; "Greek Lexicon: G5442 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5442&t=NASB>.

<sup>a</sup>The word comes from a root referring to *sound*, i.e., ‘the elements *obey* Jesus because they *hear* him.’

<sup>b</sup>The word means *learn thoroughly*.

<sup>c</sup>“4160: poieó,” *Bible Hub*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://biblehub.com/greek/4160.htm>.

**Table 4. Use of observe, keep, heed, and obey in Matthew (NASB)**

Word	# of Occurrences	Greek Word and Occurrences	References
<i>observe</i>	3x	τηρέω, 2x καταμανθάνω, 1x	23.3;28.20 6.28
<i>keep, kept</i>	18x	ποιέω, 3x φυλάσσω, 1x τηρέω, 1x σιωπάω, 1x [helping verbs and other], 12x	5.19;26.18;28.14 19.20 19.17 26.63 [various]
<i>heed</i>	1x	ἀκούω	10.14
<i>obey</i>	1x	ὕπακούω	8.27

Sources: Table 3; “Keep (NASB),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, [https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?qs\\_version=NASB&quicksearch=keep&startnumber=309](https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?qs_version=NASB&quicksearch=keep&startnumber=309); “Kept (NASB),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January, 2015, [https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?qs\\_version=NASB&quicksearch=kept&startnumber=90](https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?qs_version=NASB&quicksearch=kept&startnumber=90); "Greek Lexicon: G4623 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4623&t=NASB>.

Thirdly, *heed* is not the best stand-alone translation of τηρέω in 28.20. Although it is the best word to relay the cognitive aspects of τηρέω, the literature review only associates this use

with Philo.<sup>14</sup> In addition, table 4 indicates that Matthew's only use of *heed* in is in 10.14 where it serves as the translation of ἀκούω, "to hear." I.e., τηρέω entails seeing, but the NASB uses *heed* to translate a word with hearing undertones. Furthermore, table 2 shows that no Bible scholars translate τηρέω in Matthew 28.20 as *heed*. It cannot be used as the word's primary rendition.

Fourth and finally, *obey* is not the best translation of τηρέω. Granted, seventeen English translations take this approach and obedience is the ultimate satisfaction of a commandment.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, translating τηρέω as *obey* confuses the goal with the process. Commandments must be observed, contemplated, and guarded as precious before they can be wisely executed.

Because people are not robots, but are made in the image of God, they do not respond well to commandments concerning which they have no understanding or passion (cf. Romans 8.3-8). Table 4 shows that the NASB's only use of *obey* in Matthew is to signify ὑπακούω in 8.27. This is the passage in which the disciples are amazed that the winds and sea obey Jesus. The Greek word literally means to hypo-hear, to submit under a command.<sup>16</sup>

While the NASB translates Paul and several other New Testament writers using *obey* in reference to people, in Matthew this is not the case. Commandments most certainly must be obeyed, but that does not happen without insight, thought, and treasuring the commandments given by Jesus (1 John 3.24). He was not a dictator but fashioned his disciples as his personal friends (John 15.15). Τηρέω in Matthew 28.20 is best translated as "to observe," with *keep*, *heed*, and *obey* providing additional explanatory power.

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<sup>14</sup> Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 8: 141.

<sup>15</sup> See table 2.

<sup>16</sup> "Greek Lexicon: G5219 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 Jan 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5219&t=NASB>.



## Testing *τηρεῖν* as “Observe” in the New Testament

Having established these designations by reviewing numerous reference works, biblical principles, and a host of versions (including the highly regarded NASB), the ultimate proof of scholarship is its ability to communicate meaning. The methodology for two tests is as follows. First, “observe” shall be tested as the translation for *τηρέω* in a variety of versions and sentences that have commandments as their direct objects. Secondly, “observe, keep, heed, and obey” shall be tested as a compound set in four short NASB passages relating to commandments.

### Testing “Observe” in Sentences about Commandments

In table 5, “observe” has been tested in eleven New Testament sentences that have either general or specific commandments as the verb’s direct object. In addition, a different version has been selected for each of the eleven sentences. To make this test meaningful, the sentences that have been chosen do not already translate *τηρέω* as “observe” in their corresponding versions.

Table 5: Testing “Observe” in Complete Sentences

Text	Vers.	Status	Text
Mat. 19:17b	NASB	Existing	“There is <i>only</i> One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep [ <i>τηρησον</i> ] the commandments.”
		New	“There is <i>only</i> One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, [observe] the commandments.”
John 9:16a	NIV	Existing	“Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not keep [ <i>τηρεῖ</i> ] the Sabbath.’”
		New	“Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not [observe] the Sabbath.’”
John 14:15	KJV	Existing	“If ye love me, keep [ <i>τηρήσατε</i> ] my commandments.”
		New	“If ye love me, [observe] my commandments.”
John 14:21a	ESV	Existing	“Whoever has my commandments and keeps [ <i>τηρῶν</i> ] them, he it is who loves me.”
		New	“Whoever has my commandments and [observes] them, he it is who loves me.”
James 2:10	NET	Existing	“For the one who obeys [ <i>τηρήσει</i> ] the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”
		New	“For the one who [observes] the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”

Text	Vers.	Status	Text
1 John 3:22	DARB Y	Existing	“And whatsoever we ask we receive from him, because we keep [τηροῦμεν] his commandments, and practise [ <i>sic</i> ] the things which are pleasing in his sight.”
		New	“And whatsoever we ask we receive from him, because we [observe] his commandments, and practise [ <i>sic</i> ] the things which are pleasing in his sight.”
1 Jn. 3:24a	RSV	Existing	“All who keep [τηρῶν] his commandments abide in him, and he in them.”
		New	“All who [observe] his commandments abide in him, and he in them.”
1 John 5:3	WYC	Existing	“For this is the charity of God, that we keep [τηρῶμεν] his commandments; and his commandments be not heavy.”
		New	“For this is the charity of God, that we [observe] his commandments; and his commandments be not heavy.”
Rev. 1:3a	CJB	Existing	“Blessed are the reader and hearers of the words of this prophecy, provided they obey [τηροῦντες] the things written in it!”
		New	“Blessed are the reader and hearers of the words of this prophecy, provided they [observe] the things written in it!”
Rev. 12:17	GNV	Existing	“Then the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went and made war with the remnant of her seed, which keep [τηρούτων] the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
		New	“Then the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went and made war with the remnant of her seed, which [observe] the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
Rev. 14:12	YLT	Existing	“Here is endurance of the saints: here (are) those keeping [τηροῦντες] the commands of God, and the faith of Jesus.”
		New	“Here is endurance of the saints: here (are) those [observing] the commands of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

*Sources:* Appendix A; “Matthew 19.17 (NASB),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matt+19.17&version=NASB>; “John 9.16 (NIV),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOHN+9.16&version=NIV>; “John 14.15 (KJV),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOHN+14.15&version=KJV>; “John 14.21 (ESV),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOHN+14.21&version=ESV>; “James 2.10 (NET),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JAMES+2.10&version=NET>; “1 John 3.22 (DARBY),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+john+3.22&version=DARBY>; “1 John 3.21 (RSV),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+john+3.21&version=RSV>; “1 John 5.2 (WYC),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+john+5.2&version=WYC>; “Revelation 1.3 (CJB),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+1.3&version=CJB>; “Revelation 12.17 (GNV),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+12.17&version=GNV>; “Revelation 14.12 (YLT),” *BibleGateway*, accessed 31 January 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+14.12&version=YLT>.

The only verse that has a minor but inconsequential issue is John 14.15. Because of familiarity with previous translations, the traditional ear wants to hear, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (KJV). Nevertheless, “If ye love me, observe my commandments” is better because “observe” carries a fuller sense of the Greek meaning.

Using “to observe” to translate *τηρέω* when the direct object is commandments has strong explanatory power and leaves the reader fully aware of the texts’ intentions. Translating *τηρέω* in this way yields results that are grammatically correct. In addition, the retranslated verses are all consistent with Holy Scripture and orthodox theology.

#### Testing “Observe, Keep, Heed, and Obey” in Passages on Commandments

To test the amplified sequence of “observe, keep, heed, and obey” as an extended sequence for *τηρέω*, four narratives have been chosen. Of the seventy-one occurrences of *τηρέω* in the New Testament, John is by far the largest user with thirty-six occurrences. Two narratives, therefore, have been chosen from his writings. In addition, Paul uses *τηρέω* eight times, one of which has been selected. Finally, Matthew uses *τηρέω* six times. Because of the focus of this thesis, his Great Commission text has been designated. Once again, the four passages relate specifically to commandments.

First, John 15.10 (NASB) is hereby tested: “If you [observe, keep, heed, and obey] My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have [observed, kept, heeded, and obeyed] My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” Secondly, 1Timothy 6.13-14 (NASB) is assessed.

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you [observe, keep, heed, and obey] the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 2.3-6 (NASB) is the third passage selected for this screening.

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we [observe, keep, heed, and obey] His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not [observe, keep, heed, and obey] His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever [observes, keeps, heeds, and obeys] His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Finally, Matthew 28.16-20 (NASB) is tested.

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to [observe, keep, heed, and obey] all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

All these insertions result in script that is both grammatically correct and consistent with Holy Scripture and orthodox theology. In conclusion, *τηρέω* is best translated as “to observe (and keep, heed, and obey).” It has high functionality in all texts relating to commandments without alteration for context. *Τηρέω* in Matthew 28.20 means Jesus’ disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus commanded in Matthew.

### **What “*Τηρεῖν* Commandments” Means**

Based on the literature review, the Bible, and the conclusion that *τηρέω* means “to observe (and keep, heed, and obey),” a clear picture begins to emerge as to what it actually means [to] “*τηρεῖν* commandments.” First of all, commandments must be observed. The literal meaning of this English word means they must be seen, watched, aimed at, focused on, and continuously kept in view. To do this, disciples must read and study the commandments so they can envision the details of what God wants them to do (Psalm 119.11). In many cases, however,

personal reading and Bible study is not enough.<sup>17</sup> New believers must also observe mature believers living out the commandments (1 Peter 5.3). Only through example can they can perceive the various ways commandments can and should be implemented (1 Corinthians 11.1).

Secondly, commandments must be kept. While this also implies obedience, it points to the fact that they must be guarded, watched over, maintained, and protected. They cannot be allowed to fall into neglect, misuse, or hypocritical interpretation. Vigilance is necessary, not only to uphold commandments, but so that novices, atheists, and pagans do not twist or subvert them. Commandments must also be protected from antinomianism and pseudo-professional attacks that negate or deemphasize their importance. Believers must cherish and treasure God's commandments as their source of identity, blessing, and power.

Thirdly, commandments must be heeded. They must be taken note of, paid attention to, and kept in mind. What is observed and seen through spiritual insight must be analyzed by the brain. The mind must be used to study how other believers execute them, and to properly implement them so they are guarded and protected from misuse. Apologetics is not only for professional theologians; every believer must be able to defend his personal choices as biblically and spiritually sound (2 Timothy 2.12; 1 Peter 2.9). Constant self-evaluation—comparing and contrasting one's activities to Jesus' commandments—is necessary so application remains subject to noetic appraisal.

Finally, commandments must be obeyed, followed, complied with, and fulfilled. They must leave the realm of the concept and enter concrete reality. Because time matters, they cannot be delayed, avoided, or diminished in execution (Hebrews 3.7). The will of the disciple must become fully engaged to activate his body to perform and accomplish commandments.

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<sup>17</sup> Yount and Barnett, *Called to Reach*, 211-224.

Obedience without insight and desire is slavery, but these are meaningless if commandments do not produce the intended behavioral results.

Inspiration is vital in all four aspects of implementing commandments, but especially for obedience. When the body is engaged, whether in speech or action of the torso and appendages, the history of the universe is changed. The world is affected for good when commandments come to fruition in holy activity. Obedience in Spirit and truth is the only thing that creates the wonderful results for which commandments have been given (John 4.24).

Commandments must be observed (and kept, heeded, and obeyed). Spoken antithetically, they must not be ignored, disrespected, disregarded, or contravened. They represent the character and desire of the Divine Author and to resist them is to reject his purpose and will for the cosmos (Exodus 20.5). However, to observe (and keep, heed, and obey) God's commandments yields his eternal and bountiful blessings. Commandments are never burdens, but the means God uses to exalt his people (1 John 5.3; Psalm 119.98; Micah 4.2). They are prophecies of the saints' lives.

### **The Significance of *Τηρεῖν* to the Teacher/Disciple Relationship**

Christians, like all men, are social creatures. They do not exist in a vacuum and their behavior has far-reaching effects. This makes it crucial that believers faithfully engage Jesus' commandments. Christians are the light of the world and worldlings, often silently, are watching. Those who are "in Christ" embody the Spirit that convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16.8).

Of all believers, however, Christian leaders should represent the apex of the realization of Christ. They stand as the Lord's best examples, not only to the world, but also to young disciples. Because disciples of Jesus Christ are multifarious individuals, instruction must occur in ways that appeal to various learning styles. Disciples must not only hear commandments taught,

they must observe them being performed. This type of observation happens through young disciples watching their community, and especially its leaders, contextualize commandments into their own daily lives.

Those who disciple others must personify commandments so their students can observe them. Said another way, disciplers must behaviorally observe commandments in order for their disciples to optically and behaviorally observe them. Yount and Barnett advocate seven characteristics that disciplers must exemplify, one being the development of a biblical character.<sup>18</sup> Barnett writes, “The discipler lives a life of biblical character—putting into practice the principles, teachings, and models of the Bible as demonstrated through the life of Jesus Christ.”<sup>19</sup> These principles and teachings are embodied in straightforward commandments.

In our fast-paced, disjointed, and codependent world, Christ-like character on the part of the discipler is still a necessary component of the discipleship process. Jesus told his disciples-turned-apostles they were his witnesses (Acts 1.8). Christian leaders, therefore, must faithfully observe (and keep, heed, and obey) Jesus’ commandments so their disciples can observe Jesus in them. Displaying the bona fide Jesus is the key to making disciples (1 John 3.2; Hebrews 12.2).

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<sup>18</sup> Yount and Barnett, *Called to Reach*, ix.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE CONTENT OF “ALL”

Chapter two revealed the significance of the word *τηρέω* in the Great Commission. Jesus wants his disciples in all nations to observe (and keep, heed, and obey) his commandments. He wants them to understand his commandments, think them through, defend them, and fulfill them. In addition, Jesus especially wants his commandments faithfully displayed by mature believers so younger ones can observe what is typical and expected.

Although the Great Commission uses commandment language, Christianity is not a system of blind, mindless slavery. The Holy Spirit inspires a dynamic and personalized application of Christ’s commandments to the contexts of daily life. It must also be noted that the Holy Spirit is not an excuse to ignore commandments, but rather the source of liberty from sin that enables believers to faithfully observe commandments (Romans 8.4; 2 Corinthians 3.17).

Along with spiritual liberty, however, believers need a common understanding of the commandments Jesus wants them to observe. If every believer does what is right in his own eyes—chooses which commands he wants to obey and how he wants to obey them—the witness of Christianity is diminished. In addition, the accumulated wisdom of Christian history would become degraded if each generation of believers “reinvents the wheel.” Jesus’ commandments do not change; he calls all men, and especially his disciples, to change their behavior to his eternal standards (Malachi 3.6; Matthew 4.17; 28.19-20).

The Bible contains many commandments and each one of them is vitally important in its prescribed context. The Great Commission, however, is distinctive in that it is a meta-command, a single commandment that commands the teaching of many other commandments. Believers, therefore, need to know exactly which commandments Jesus and Matthew have in mind when Matthew’s Gospel says, “teaching them to observe ‘all’ that I commanded you.”



This thesis readily acknowledges that these words of Jesus can be applied to everything God wants Christians to do. Context, however, is important; before believers can extrapolate the *sensus plenior* of the text, they must understand Matthew's literary intention. This thesis argues that the *in situ* meaning of "to observe all" in Matthew 28.20 is that Jesus' disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus commanded *in the Gospel of Matthew*. Because of 5.17-48, this also includes observing everything commanded in the Old Testament as reinterpreted in the light of Christ.

This thesis accepts the traditional order of Gospel publications. *Gospels* offers one typical view: Mark was "written c.60—70 CE" and Matthew "after 70 CE."<sup>1</sup> In addition, "Luke probably wrote his gospel around 80—85 CE, not far from the time [after] Matthew produced his work."<sup>2</sup> Concerning John, "the final version . . . was probably produced about 90—100 in Ephesus."<sup>3</sup> In sum, the order of Gospel writing was Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John.<sup>4</sup>

This sequence is helpful in explaining Matthew's focus on commandments vis-à-vis Mark. Rejection of this order, however, does not negate this manuscript's conclusions. If the Greisbach hypothesis is true and Mark truly intended to eschew Matthew and Luke's discourses, this thesis, and the contemporary need to refocus on commandment observance, still stands.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Matthew," in *Gospels*, eds. John Muddiman, and John Barton (Oxford, GBR: Oxford University Press, 2010, 27, accessed 3 February 2015, ProQuest ebrary.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Franklin, "Luke," in Muddiman and Barton, 137.

<sup>3</sup> René Kieffer, "John," in Muddiman and Barton, 187.

<sup>4</sup> Streeter, as quoted in Bauckman, connects the Gospels with the four early centers of Christianity. Combining this with authors and dates, a simplistic itinerary emerges: Mark from Rome in the 60s, Matthew from Antioch in the 70s, Luke from Caesarea in the 80s, and John from Ephesus in the 90s. Cf. Richard Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. C. M. Tuckett, "The Griesbach Hypothesis in the 19th Century," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* no. 3 (April 1979): 29-60, accessed 3 February 2015, ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost, 45. The suggestion that Mark intended to downplay Jesus' teachings and commandments does not speak well of him if antinomianism was on the rise. On the other hand, if Matthew wrote before Mark and antinomianism was finally in decline, one wonders why 1 John was still necessary. The Gnostic heresy, against which 1 John was written in

## The Distinctives of Matthew's Gospel vis-à-vis Mark

General Colin Powell said, “There is no such thing as a stupid question, only stupid answers.”<sup>6</sup> This relates to our present discussion in terms of the reasons people put forth for the differences between the Gospels, and more specifically, the Synoptics. Many contemporary authors assume that each Gospel was written to a different community. It is not the purpose of this work to debunk the well-venerated community hypothesis. Richard Bauckham and his partners have already done an excellent job in this regard. *The Gospel for All Christians* restores the common sense belief that all the Gospels were written to the entire Church.<sup>7</sup>

Another hypothesis for the existence of multiple Gospels is Dean Flemming's audience hypothesis.<sup>8</sup> Whereas the community hypothesis places the recipients of each Gospel directly under its own writer's ministry, and likely together geographically, the audience hypothesis finds the recipients of each Gospel in distinct cultural settings. Flemming argues that the community hypothesis is valid for the epistles because they are occasional, but it is unfounded for the Gospels.<sup>9</sup> He proposes, in opposition, that the Gospels were each written to a different Christian subculture.<sup>10</sup> For example, Matthew may have targeted “Jewish Christians with a high regard for the Mosaic Law” while Mark's target audience had an intercultural membership and was

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c.85—95 AD, was connected with antinomianism. Cf. A. Plummer, *The Epistles of S. John* (Cambridge: University Press, 1889), 34-37, accessed 3 February 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015063898756;view=lup;seq=1>.

<sup>6</sup> Jerry Weissman, *Presentation Skills That Will Take You to the Top (Collection)* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, 2013), under “Chapter 1 . . . How to Handle Special Questions,” accessed 3 February 2015, Google Books.

<sup>7</sup> Bauckham, *The Gospels for all Christians*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Missions* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 234-35.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 235.

suffering persecution.<sup>11</sup> Although Flemming disparages “mirror-reading,” he does not escape its influence.<sup>12</sup>

It is also not the purpose of this work to critique the audience hypothesis, but there are at least two issues that these hypotheses do not sufficiently address which relate to the distinctives of Matthew as contrasted with Mark. The first issue is one of authorial integrity. Did Matthew write to massage his readers’ prejudices, or did he write to teach them what to believe and how to live? Jesus’ ministry confronted his culture and this is the stated purpose of all Scripture. It is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, [and] for training in righteousness,” not for patting people on the back (2 Timothy 3.16, NASB). Contextualization is always wise, but to suggest Matthew writes Scripture to curry favor with men is outlandish.

Secondly, the community and audience hypotheses do not fully consider the question of time. The four Gospels were written over a period of about thirty to forty years in the most definitive period of Christianity. It is not surprising that the passing of a decade would create a new set of issues the next Gospel would need to address. Things being deemphasized in the oral tradition may need to be written down, different circumstances may exist in the political climate, and new heresies may need to be confronted. The community and audience hypotheses tend to compare the Gospels without full consideration of all the variables that time entails.

The larger point concerning both the community and audience hypotheses is that they do not satisfy all of one’s questions as to why four Gospels exist. Admittedly, this thesis does not

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<sup>11</sup> Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 236 and 241-44.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 235. “Mirror reading” supposes that the text of a scriptural passage is “a mirror of the hypothetical community” for which the work was composed; scholars, therefore, “can reconstruct its specific theological view or conflicts” based on the text. This is similar to the TV game show *Jeopardy!* The answers are provided; the goal is for contestants to guess the questions.

seek to discover those answers. It does, however, look at the *prima facie* evidence concerning the fact of Matthew's significant amount of hortatory discourse.

David Sim, an avid supporter of the community hypothesis, asks, "Why did Matthew see the necessity to expand [on] Mark as much as he did?"<sup>13</sup> Quantitatively speaking, since Mark had already written a Gospel of sixteen chapters, why did Matthew write one of twenty-eight? Since this thesis presupposes that Matthew knew of Mark's Gospel, the obvious answer lies somewhere in the difference between the books. Sim provocatively argues, "It is . . . apparent that [Matthew] was dissatisfied with his primary source in a number of ways."<sup>14</sup>

Dissatisfaction with Mark's Gospel, however, was not a necessary precondition to Matthew's work. The Model T was a great invention in its day, but so was the Mustang. One does not need to disparage Mark to see the need for Matthew any more than one needs to despise antique automobiles to appreciate newer ones. The Gospel never changes, but new challenges and contexts require new emphases and explanations. The great and eternal God gives his people what they need in every generation (Psalm 100.5).

Nevertheless, Sim serves the cause by identifying a variety of distinctives between Mark and Matthew. The first obvious distinction is that Matthew "greatly supplemented the teachings of Jesus."<sup>15</sup> Sim also writes, "The Matthean Jesus spells out clearly in 5.17-19 that all of the Mosaic Law without exception is to be obeyed until the *parousia*."<sup>16</sup> Another difference he notes

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<sup>13</sup> David C. Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark: Did Matthew Intend to Supplement or to Replace His Primary Source?" *New Testament Studies* 57, no. 2 (2011): 177, accessed 3 December 2014, <http://dx.doi/10.1017/S0028688510000366>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

is that Matthew has a greater “focus on eschatological matters.”<sup>17</sup> Although Sim is less than orthodox on some issues, he does acknowledge, “[Mark] needed to be updated to meet the needs of [Matthew’s] intended readership. . . . [Yet they] shared a good deal in common.”<sup>18</sup>

Sim also argues that a supposed tension between Mark and Matthew reflects an internal struggle in the first century Church. He writes, “Mark wrote his Gospel from a clear Pauline perspective” and “depicts Jesus as engaging in a (Law-free) Gentile mission.”<sup>19</sup> Matthew, on the other hand, “expands the teachings of Jesus and presents a view of the Torah that stands completely against the position of Mark and Paul.”<sup>20</sup>

It is freely recognized that the early Church labored to make the adjustment from Judaism to an independent Christianity. It is no small accusation, however, to propose that a Gospel writer countermands existing Scripture, in this case the canonical writings of Paul and Mark. An orthodox view of scripture allows, rather, that Matthew saw the Church moving toward antinomianism and wrote his Gospel as a corrective. Matthew never refutes Mark or Paul; he wisely threads the theological needle by putting forth a Gospel that works for both camps.<sup>21</sup>

To do this, Matthew judiciously stakes out the middle ground between the legalists and the antinomians. To confront the latter, he focuses on Jesus’ commandments, including those that impact Jesus’ doctrine on how the New Testament relates to the Old. It must be emphasized, on the other hand, that Matthew is also one of the Bible’s greatest critics of legalism. Fourteen times

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<sup>17</sup> Sim, “Matthew’s Use of Mark,” 181.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Cf. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 59-61.

he uses the word *hypocrite*; the remainder of the New Testament uses it only four times. In sum, Matthew 5.17-20 is highly compatible with Romans 8.3-4, Matthew 20.1-16 with Ephesians 2.8.

Nevertheless, Sim argues that Matthew wrote his Gospel with the intention of replacing Mark's.<sup>22</sup> In further support of this, and of Luke and John's hypothetical collusion with Matthew, Sim writes, "It is well known that from the second century onwards Mark slipped almost into oblivion in the Christian church."<sup>23</sup> After "initial success in his (their) bid to eradicate the Gospel of Mark," Sim says it is ironic that "Mark sits within the New Testament amidst the other Gospels and right next to the Gospel of Matthew."<sup>24</sup> This thesis resolutely embraces the inspiration and validity of all Scripture; Sim's overstatement of the case, however, helps to highlight the distinctions between Matthew and Mark.

As Sim noted, the first and most obvious difference between them is Jesus' extended discourses, the foremost reason that Matthew is longer. Quantitatively, these five sermons must be related to Matthew's reason for writing another Gospel. In point of fact, the most salient issue of the Greisbach hypothesis is that Mark purposely removed the teachings of Jesus.

From various angles, therefore, one can see that the battle rages around Jesus' commandments. Does Mark remove them or does Matthew add them? Does Sim marginalize them in a community or does Flemming restrict them to a subculture? In the 1600s Arndt said no one wanted to follow Jesus. In the contemporary Church, Willard says the idea of obedience to Christ's commandments is practically irrelevant. Jesus speaks boldly, however, in what scholars agree is Matthew's conclusion: "[Teach the nations] to observe *all* that I commanded you."

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<sup>22</sup> Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark," 188-191.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 189-190.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

The Gospels are the primary books that describe the teachings and commandments of Jesus. When Matthew finished his Gospel, it became the single, largest collection of Jesus' words. Mark had been written earlier but did not contain such a large body of Jesus' teaching. Luke and John had not yet been inscribed. Although James and some of Paul's epistles were likely written prior to Matthew's Gospel, they contain little "red letter" copy.

When one looks at Matthew's Gospel of twenty-eight chapters in a "red letter" Bible, there are more red words than black. Discounting the historical narrative before Jesus began his ministry and the final chapters in which he was mostly silent, the red to black ratio tips even further to the red. The Gospel of Mark, however, is only sixteen chapters and has a lower red to black ratio.<sup>25</sup> France recognizes, "[Matthew] contains proportionately more ethical and pastoral teaching than the other Gospels, and . . . it is set out in a more obviously systematic way."<sup>26</sup>

When Matthew finished writing the Great Commission, his Gospel became the most complete record of Jesus' commandments in the world. Two thousand years later, it is still the largest canonical collection of Jesus' words. Matthew covered Jesus's commandments so thoroughly that Mark was left with almost nothing exclusive.<sup>27</sup> There is reason to believe, therefore, that Matthew composed his Gospel as a comprehensive treatise on the commandments of Jesus.<sup>28</sup> Matthew intended "*all* that I commanded you" in his conclusion to point directly to Jesus' commandments in his Gospel. He did not supplant the Gospel of Mark, but he did declare what he saw to be the full body of Jesus' commands.

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<sup>25</sup> Jesus' surplus of "black letters" in Matthew, as contrasted with Mark, may also teach by example.

<sup>26</sup> France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Mark contains as little as one universal command that Matthew does not include (cf. Mark 9.39).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 14.

## The Structure of Matthew's Gospel

Scholars have long recognized that the Gospel of Matthew has a definite structure based on Jesus' sermons. Matthew did not simply cut and paste with Mark's text, but formed his own argument with a well-defined conclusion. Beginning with the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew's prose is defined by five large bodies of teaching.<sup>29</sup> Along with the motifs mentioned in the next section, this structure points directly to the Great Commission as his conclusion.<sup>30</sup>

Jesus' five great discourses provide both structure and meaning to Matthew's Gospel. Because they are highly embedded in the surrounding material, especially the material immediately prior to each discourse, there is some debate concerning their precise beginnings.<sup>31</sup> Each discourse, however, ends with a statement that has noticeable form.

To be more specific, Bauer argues that these ending statements are not terminations but serve "to connect the discourses with what follows."<sup>32</sup> Although they have some diversity, these 'transitions' all follow a formula which can be described in a three-fold division. They begin with the temporal participle *ὅτε*, "when," proceed through a temporal subordinate clause, and end with the main clause.<sup>33</sup>

The first discourse, the Sermon on the Mount (5.1-7.29), is the longest and most didactic recorded lecture of Jesus Christ. Revered as such through the ages, it follows, and thus helps

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<sup>29</sup> For an extended description of Matthew's structure, see David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> Edgar Krentz, "Missionary Matthew," 30.

<sup>31</sup> Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 129-30

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*



define, Jesus' announcement of God's kingdom (4.17). The sermon's audience was also defined in chapter 4: Jesus's disciples and the Jewish multitudes.<sup>34</sup>

Known for its simplicity and beauty, the Sermon on the Mount reveals Jesus' overall perspective on life. Its most thought-provoking declaration, however, is Jesus' absolute defense of the Law and Prophets (5.17-20). In the midst of his radical reinterpretation of Judaism, he boldly affirms he is fulfilling everything God has ever commanded down to the smallest detail. The Sermon's transition statement to the next section is 7.28-29 (NASB), "[And it happened] when Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Bauer connects this homily to the next two chapters of healings as the practical demonstration of Jesus' authority.<sup>35</sup>

The second discourse, which Bauer calls the "missionary discourse," is Matthew 10, or more technically, 10.5-32.<sup>36</sup> This chapter juxtaposes Jesus' instruction for the disciples' ministry against his own (chapters 8 and 9) and begins to lay the groundwork for Jesus' national rejection in chapters 11-16.<sup>37</sup> The missionary discourse ends with the transition in 11.1 (NASB), saying, "When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities."

The parables of the kingdom discourse in chapter 13 stands in the midst of Jesus' conflict with the Jewish leadership. In an increasingly exposed situation, the use of parables to closet his teaching is Jesus' technique to continue the instruction of his disciples. In chapters 14 through 16, Jesus further withdraws from the Jewish national spotlight and begins to prepare the disciples

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<sup>34</sup> Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 129.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

for his crucifixion.<sup>38</sup> This third discourse ends with the transition, “When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there” (13.53, NASB).

The fourth discourse, which some call the “community discourse,” is Matthew 18. Bauer connects it with 16.21-28.20 through “the overarching theme of the cross and self-denial.”<sup>39</sup> In it the disciples are given principles that address the intra-community relationships of the people of God. It ends in 19.1 (NASB) with the transition, “When Jesus had finished these words, He departed from Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.”

The eschatological discourse (chapters 24 and 25) is placed between Jesus’ conflict with the Jewish leadership (chapters 22 and 23) and his final days with his disciples.<sup>40</sup> The meta-narrative of this discourse is the theme of reversal; though Jesus is about to be crucified, he will have the final word by returning to establish his kingdom. This last discourse ends in 26.1-2 (NASB) with the transition, “When Jesus had finished *all* these words, He said to His disciples, ‘You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion.’”

Bauer is diligent to show that these five great discourses are fully connected with Matthew’s narrative. In points of fact, the historical material between the sermons also includes the teachings of Jesus, plus there are historical asides in the midst of the discourses.<sup>41</sup> Bauer concludes, “In terms of literary structure, therefore, the discourses function to underscore the climax of 28:16-20.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 130.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

Table 6 demonstrates how the transitions actually divide the Gospel into six sections. Because it is the final section, 26.3-28.20 does not need a transition similar to the others. The Great Commission, however, is the de facto ending-transition of the sixth and final unit. The transition it introduces is the transition from Judaism to Christianity.

**Table 6. Matthew's six sections and their transitions**

Section	Ref.	Transition to the Next Unit
#1 1.1-7.29	7.28-29	"[And it happened] <u>when Jesus had finished</u> these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."
#2 8.1-11.1	11.1	" <u>When Jesus had finished</u> giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities."
#3 11.2-13.53	13.53	" <u>When Jesus had finished</u> these parables, He departed from there."
#4 13.54-19.1	19.1	" <u>When Jesus had finished</u> these words, He departed from Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan."
#5 19.2-26.2	26.1-2	" <u>When Jesus had finished</u> all these words, He said to His disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion."
#6 26.3-28.20	28.18-20	"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"  [Acts 1.9: "And <u>after He [Jesus] had said these things</u> , He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.""]

Source: NASB.

Moreover, the Great Commission has the import of a sixth and final discourse. It is distinguished from the others, however, by its brevity and by the fact that it is given by the risen Lord. As Matthew recorded in 26.1, Jesus had finished all his words and even refused to speak in

his own defense before Pilate (27.14). The Great Commission, as both a miniature discourse and a mega-transition, sends “all” of Jesus’ commandments to the nations via his disciples. Matthew 28.16-20, therefore, is the conclusion, climax, and launching pad of Matthew’s Gospel.

When Jesus had finished speaking, he commanded his disciples to speak. He commanded them to teach the nations to observe all that he had commanded them. Matthew purposely wrote his Gospel to include and highlight Jesus’ commands. Mark had included some of them in his Gospel, but Matthew adds five major discourses. Matthew’s discourses and transitions, plus the final Great Commission discourse/transition, provide the structure that brings this to light. The *in situ* meaning of “to observe all” in Matthew 28.20 is that Jesus’ disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus specifically commanded in the Gospel of Matthew.

### **The Mission/Ethnicity Motif and the Great Commission**

Another proof of the Great Commission’s governing place in Matthew, and thus of our thesis, is Matthew’s mission-ethnicity motif. His Gospel is a well-ordered description of God’s initiative “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” that culminates in 28.16-20 (Romans 1.16, NASB). Following the development of this motif through Matthew’s Gospel supports the claim that “all that I commanded you” points uniquely back to the commandments therein.

God’s original plan was for Israel to light the way so the nations could also realize justice, peace, and prosperity (Psalm 9.11; Isaiah 60.3; Micah 4.2). Having become corrupt, however, Israel ignored and/or misinterpreted both God’s commandments and her own mission. The ministry of Jesus, therefore, was to get the people of God back on track. Doing this, however, required him to reconfigure their conceptions about their identity, mission, and commandments for living. Matthew’s extraordinary challenge, therefore, was to explain both that nothing had changed and that everything had changed.

## Mission and Ethnicity in Matthew

### *Chapter One*

In chapter 1, Matthew neatly details Jesus' presumed paternal heritage through Abraham, David, and Joseph. Despite four Gentile great grandmothers and the Babylonian captivity, Jesus' Jewish credentials are not in question. The real question, though, is how Jesus will deliver the Jews from oppression and how that deliverance impacts the Gentile world. The book of Matthew describes the metamorphosis of Jesus from a Jewish baby to a victorious international leader.

### *Chapter Two*

Even before Jesus was born, his Gentile connections accumulated. Magi had been tracking the stars and would arrive to proclaim him King of the Jews. As a baby, he escapes an assassination plot from a Roman-backed rival to his throne by moving to Egypt. A few years later he moves back to Israel. Jesus is defined in terms of the great centers of civilization.

### *Chapter Three*

Jesus' baptism under John adds two additional features on his resume. First, Jesus identifies with those in Israel seeking change through religious renewal. Secondly, a voice from heaven identifies him as God's Son, confirming his heavenly, and thus universal, ethnicity.

### *Chapter Four*

In chapter 4 Jesus declares he is a revolutionary; people that want to get in on God's coming kingdom must change their lifestyle. Jesus' decision to select his associates from Galilee, and to begin his ministry there, was no accident. He obviously maintains his distance from those who will eventually kill him, but this northern location is proximal to Syria, the eventual home and birthing point of Gentile Christianity. During that tenure, "The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with

various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them” (4.24, NASB). Jesus knows Jerusalem kills God’s prophets (23.37) and begins to prepare the way for Acts 11.19.

#### *Chapter Five*

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reaffirms the Jewish law but makes numerous changes and additions. He judges the Pharisee’s righteousness as insufficient and holds up an even higher standard. Jesus’ most radical call, however, is for Jews to love and pray for their enemies. Taken on a national scale, this specifically includes the Romans and other Gentiles.

#### *Chapter Six*

The Lord’s Prayer in chapter 6 confirms Jesus’ aspirations for the kingdom of God to cover the entire earth. Other teachings in this chapter explain the economics of bringing that about. Personal status and material possessions must be sacrificed as a means to the larger goal.

#### *Chapter Seven*

Chapter 7 begins to explain the difference between those who will be part of God’s kingdom and those who will not. Those who practice lawlessness—those who reject Christ’s commandments—are unworthy. The sanctity of a united Jewish nation is called into question.

#### *Chapter Eight*

Jesus’ many miracles in chapter 8 further prove his authority, but the healing of a Roman centurion provokes Jesus’ exposé of the coming ethnic reorganization. “Many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness” (vv. 11-12, NASB). Not only will some Jews be disqualified, Gentiles will be welcomed.

### *Chapter Nine*

In the midst of other miracles, a noteworthy exorcism in chapter 9 leads to the expression, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel” (v. 33, NASB). The public is beginning to realize that someone greater than a run-of-the-mill prophet is in their midst and the Jewish hierarchy becomes jealous. Matthew takes the time in this chapter to discreetly introduce himself, suggesting he has firsthand knowledge of everything from here to the end of the book.

### *Chapter Ten*

Chapter 9 closes with Jesus’ prayer for assistants and chapter 10 begins with naming who they are. The Twelve are quickly dispatched only “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (v. 6, NASB). This “house of Israel” ministry not only excludes Samaria and the Gentiles, but may also, at this point in time, exclude Judea (cf. 2 Samuel 12.8). France notes, “They are thus in practice restricted to Galilee.”<sup>43</sup>

Although some question its authenticity or placement in chapter ten, v. 23 (NASB) reveals something of Jesus’ timetable; the disciples “will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.” According to France, this sentence is the beginning of the enthronement theme that runs through 16.27-28, 19.28, 24.30, 25.31, and 26.64 and that finds its mark in 28.18.<sup>44</sup>

France says the coming of the Son of Man under discussion in 10.23 is not his *παρουσία* to earth (cf. 24.37, 39) but his *ἐρχόμενον* into God’s heavenly throne room (cf. 24.30).<sup>45</sup> This presentation of Jesus to God the Father was predicted in Daniel 7.13-14 and finds its preliminary

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<sup>43</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 382.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 396.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 924.

fulfillment in the Church carrying the Gospel to the nations (Daniel 7.18; Matthew 28.20).<sup>46</sup>

Sparks says the Gospel is the ultimate satisfaction of Israel's ancient destiny to rule the nations.<sup>47</sup>

Rather than destroying them, they are to be converted.

Whether or not one agrees with France's eschatology or Sparks' analysis, the Great Commission's connection with Daniel 7 by means of the Son of Man appellation is inescapable (cf. 26.64). Matthew had alluded to this nomenclature in 8.20 and 9.6, but 10.23 is the first time he uses it relative to his chronology and the eschaton. Jesus' use of this self-reference occurs twenty-nine times in Matthew and 10.23 is the point where this aspect of the mission motif explicitly begins to target the Great Commission.

### *Chapter Eleven*

In 11.21 Jesus tells Chorazin and Bethsaida that Tyre and Sidon would have repented if they had received an equal number of miracles. Contemporary believers might wonder why Jesus did not allow his disciples to go and preach there, but Jesus' 'prejudice' toward Israel was only a first-things-first strategy. Jesus continues to both define what it means to be Jewish (vv. 24-25) and suggest his eventual movement toward the Gentiles.

### *Chapter Twelve*

In chapter 12, Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba bear witness against Israel; Jesus is even ready to excommunicate his own family. Many Jews are simply going to be disqualified from his kingdom. As the "Lord of the Sabbath," Jesus reveals his authority to interpret even the Ten Commandments (12.8, NASB). In v. 18, he quotes Isaiah's prediction that the Christ will proclaim justice and hope to the Gentiles.

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 927.

<sup>47</sup> Sparks, "Gospel as Conquest," 661.



### *Chapter Thirteen*

Because the adversarial relationship with the Pharisees is on the rise (chapter 12), Jesus teaches in parables. The figures of the mustard seed and leaven in chapter 13 further allude to the international nature of Jesus' coming kingdom. His denunciation of the Jewish nation in vv. 14-15 is severe: their ouster from God's program is coming due.

### *Chapter Fourteen*

The telling of John the Baptist's execution in chapter 14 serves to heighten the intensity of the divide between the political establishment and the reformers. In addition, compared to the quantity of miracles in chapter 9, the quality of miracles in 14 suggests Jesus' ability to reach out beyond the land of Israel. He feeds multitudes and controls weather and marine conditions.

### *Chapter Fifteen*

Despite Jesus' refuge in Galilee, his miracles have drawn Jewish leaders from Jerusalem. Like Elijah, he temporarily crosses the border to elude them. In the area of Tyre and Sidon Jesus exorcises a demon from a Canaanite woman's daughter only after he makes it clear that this is an exception in the present ministry plan. His mission is "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," not to Gentile "dogs" (vv. 24 and 26, NASB). After Jesus returns to Galilee and does more miracles, people "glorify the God of Israel" (15.31, NASB). The crowds appreciate that his ministry has returned 'home.'

### *Chapter Sixteen*

Operating once again near the border, Jesus announces his global Church in Caesarea Philippi. This Roman city is immediately adjacent to Dan, Israel's classic northern limit (cf. Judges 20.1). Calling himself the Son of Man, Jesus applauds Peter's moniker that he is also "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16, NASB). In v. 19 Jesus further reveals his universal

aims. Even though he will “be killed,” the powers of Hades (i.e., the armies of the nations) will not stop the spread of his kingdom because his disciples can bind and loose anything in their way (cf. vv. 18-21, NASB).

### *Chapter Seventeen*

After this beloved (Davidic) Son of God receives Moses and Elijah’s blessing, he turns around and pays the two drachma tax from which “sons are exempt” (v. 26, NASB). There is some debate over the identity of this tax because the evidence points two ways. First, the two drachma amount fits well with the temple tax, the annual collection from all Jews to maintain the tabernacle or temple (cf. Ex. 30.11-16).<sup>48</sup> Secondly, however, the temple tax is normally handled by the priests (cf. Psalm 2; 2 Kings 12.4-5), yet Jesus asks, “From whom do the kings of the earth collect [taxes]?” (v. 25, NASB). The obvious explanation is that Jesus is accusing the Sadducees and priests of overstepping their bounds, acting like kings rather than reconciling people to God (cf. Matthew 16; Acts 4.1).

The larger point here, however, is that Jesus is God’s Son and that God’s kingdom is not simply in heaven; it is also on earth. Even though Jesus has divine power, his decision to act diplomatically sets him off as different from the contemporary Jewish priests that presume to be kings. Ultimately, the suggestion that the Jewish hierarchy is equivalent with Gentiles kings is a mission/ethnicity issue. The Son of God, who is also the Son of Man, will rule over them as if they were Gentiles. God’s program is radically changing.

### *Chapter Eighteen*

In chapter 18 Jesus tells his Church to treat an unrepentant brother as “the Gentile and the tax collector” (v. 17, NASB including notes). Considering the universal distaste for tax

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<sup>48</sup> For the equivalence of two drachmas and the half shekel, cf. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 261.

collectors, the second part is understandable. France argues that the first part, treating someone as a Gentile (*εθνικός*), must be taken in the “conventional Jewish sense.”<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, it is easily argued that Jesus is speaking like Jeremiah, reinterpreting the definition of Jews and Gentiles (Jeremiah 23.14). Paul later takes this further in passages such as Romans 11.13 and Galatians 2.12. Along with similar passages in Matthew 5.47 and 6.7, the very presuppositions of Jesus demolish ethnic stereotypes and thus pave the way for his internationalism.

### *Chapter Nineteen*

Jesus’ move to Judea in chapter 19 is his first physical step toward the cross and the coming change in the ethnic focus of mission. Concerning the apostle’s reward in 19.27-30 France writes, “Jesus’ disciples under the leadership of the Son of Man constitute a ‘new Israel’ over against the old, failed regime.”<sup>50</sup> The twelve apostles take the place of Jacob’s twelve sons. This substitution points forward to the Great Commission: how these twelve pursue their mission and spiritually ‘multiply their seed’ determines the future ethnicity of the Son of Man’s kingdom.

### *Chapter Twenty*

Analysts offer various applications for the parable in 20.1-16. None, however, mention the indignation Jacob’s sons might feel when they discover that Judah’s Shiloh chose twelve Johnny-come-latelies to share their thrones (cf. Genesis 49.10; Revelation 4.4). Related to this is how 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews felt when Shiloh’s Twelve began to inundate God’s kingdom with goyim.

### *Chapter Twenty-one*

Despite the children’s ‘Hosannas,’ the Jewish temple needed a second cleansing (cf. John 2.15). In a symbolic gesture, Jesus cursed an isolated fig tree. Israel had not produced the fruit

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<sup>49</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 694.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 744.

God was seeking and had lost her reason to exist. As the parable accuses, she had taken the proceeds from the vineyard but refused to pay the rent. “The kingdom of God will be taken away from [her] and given to a people producing the fruit” (v. 43, NASB).

#### *Chapter Twenty-two*

Chapter 22 tells the parable of the King that prepared a wedding feast for his Son. When the primary guests would not come, others were invited who were “both evil and good” (v. 10, NASB). The Jews were chosen to manage God’s kingdom, but their snub caused the Gentile’s invitation.

#### *Chapter Twenty-three*

In chapter 23 Jesus consigns Jerusalem, and thus the Jewish people, to desolation and spiritual darkness until they bless those who come in his name. Although he condemns the Pharisees on eight points, he throws them a bone: they own “the chair of Moses” (v. 2, NASB). Others should “do and observe” (*ποιήσατε καὶ τηρεῖτε*) all that they say, but never follow their example (v. 3, NASB).

#### *Chapter Twenty-four*

Chapter 24 reveals that this change of mission will be coupled with the destruction of the Jewish temple. More than that, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come” (v. 14, NASB). Chapter 24 predicts what the Great Commission is about to authorize.

#### *Chapter Twenty-five*

The parables of chapter 25 insinuate that the Jews have been foolish bridesmaids and lazy servants. The Son of Man’s ultimate judgment, therefore, will not be at the national level separating Jews from Gentiles. He will judge at the personal level and separate sheep from goats.

### *Chapter Twenty-six*

In deciding to kill Jesus, “the chief priests and the elders of the [Jewish] people” bring about the very revolution Jesus had been predicting (v. 3, NASB). Outing Judas at the same time he converts the Passover meal into the Christian love feast is poetic irony. As John would later say,

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1.11-13, NASB)

Jesus’ national and personal rejection by the Jews paradoxically restores the people of God’s ancient mission with respect to ethnicity (cf. Genesis 12.2-3). This “son of Abraham” realigns the missionary target of Jesus’ posterity with that of the *Missio Dei*: all the nations (Matthew 1.1, NASB).<sup>51</sup>

### *Chapter Twenty-seven*

To reinforce the idea that judgment is personal, not national—or that Jesus is not simply taking the side of the Gentiles over against the Jews—Pilate, reluctantly, and the Roman soldiers, merrily, baptize the ethnic revolution in mission with water and blood. Hoping to also crucify Jewish messianic hopes, Pilate notes Jesus’ crime as, “The King of the Jews” (v. 37, NASB). By that same moniker, Jesus was both worshipped and crucified by Gentiles (cf. 2.2). With Jews and Gentiles on both sides of his kingdom, Jesus’ bifurcation of humanity is complete.

### *Chapter Twenty-eight*

Both Jewish and Gentile leaders abrogated their authority by condemning a righteous man. By crucifying Jesus, they jointly presented this Son of Man before the Ancient of Days. He

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. John D. Harvey, “Mission in Matthew,” in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William J. Larkin, Jr., and Joel F. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 126.

would render the supreme verdict: “And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him” (Daniel 7.14, NASB).

As Jesus would convey to his disciples,

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (28.18b-20, NASB)

Jesus launches the Church’s mission to the Gentiles. One’s ethnicity must never again be seen to impact one’s fortune and destiny. That is determined by becoming a disciple of the Triune God and learning to observe all that Jesus commanded.

#### Matthew’s Mission/Ethnicity Motif and the Content of “All”

Throughout Matthew, Jesus’ mission was primarily to the Jews. He was born in their land, became a rabbi in their land, and was crucified in their land. When he took on apprentices, he sent them to minister in that same land. Jesus’ ministry was to the ‘lost sheep’ in Israel.

During that ministry, Jesus came in contact with Gentiles. Eastern wise men brought gifts to cover his sojourn in Egypt. An Idumean Jew in cahoots with the Romans tried to kill him at birth. Jesus stood trial before a Roman prefect; a Roman cohort carried out his gory execution.

More than this, however, Jesus ministered to Gentiles. He healed many Syrians who crossed over into Israel and made a brief personal excursion into Syrophenicia. There he healed a Canaanite. Jesus also proclaimed his Church’s establishment in a Roman city at the northern border of Israel. Although his mission was to Jews, Jesus was no stranger to Gentiles.

At the same time, Jesus’ relationship with the Jews was tenuous. Not only did they eventually demand his crucifixion, religious hypocrites constantly tested him. On the other hand, Jesus’ closest followers were Jews, as were most of those he taught and healed. It was the

rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leadership and Jerusalem mob, however, that ultimately caused the breach in the national relationship that had more or less existed since the time of Abraham.

Jesus' response to this Jewish dichotomy, however, was to redefine membership in God's kingdom based on one's relationship to him and his commandments. Those who believed in him and validated his commandments by doing them became his insiders; those who resisted were given over to judgment. Jesus was not impressed with empty pleas or vows of faithfulness. He insisted on the ancient Hebraic proclivity for righteousness: "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (5.20, NASB).

Jesus' definition of himself is that he is Daniel's Son of Man. Throughout his ministry he constantly built upon that theme, connecting it with his eschatology. Jesus' promise to the high priest in 26.64 (NASB), "From now on [alternate reading, NASB] you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven," was his declaration that his reign was beginning.

Soon after his resurrection—and most likely before 500 people—Jesus' announcement of having all authority in heaven and on earth was the climax of this Son of Man nomenclature (cf. 1 Corinthians 15.6). His subsequent words take the scope of his mission, now put in the hands of his disciples, to the next level: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." In one phrase Jesus resolves twenty-eight chapters of political and literary tension and changes the mission and ethnic composition of the people of God. The disciples now become the disciplers and the subject matter of their teaching is "all" that Jesus had commanded them.

The unique position of this text in the Gospel of Matthew supports our thesis. The Great Commission is Matthew's climax and conclusion; it derives its full significance from the very

content of this Gospel.<sup>52</sup> The *in situ* meaning of “to observe all” in Matthew 28.20 is that Jesus’ disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus commanded in the Gospel of Matthew.

### **The Literature Review and the Content of “All”**

In the literature review, approximately thirty theologians and/or works were evaluated to determine the present state of scholarship concerning the content of “all.” Table 7 summarizes these positions as stated in the works, and on the pages, quoted in the literature review. For journals, I read the entire article. For books I read extended sections to discover both their larger thesis and how that connected with their views concerning the content of “all.” Many of the interpretations are unique, but a handful of categories can be discerned. As will be seen, some authors have intricacies added to their basic interpretation.

#### Category Zero – “All” Equals “All”

Many of these authors and/or works assume their readers already know which commands Jesus and Matthew have in mind. For the purpose of this study, this group represents category zero because these titles make little to no attempt to define which commandments Jesus has in view. These authors and works simply talk about the importance of observing “all” and/or “everything” Jesus commanded.” Hull, Sparks, and Harrington represent this category.

These authors usually have meta-narratives other than defining “all.” They often talk about “discipleship,” reminding Christian leaders of its importance or offering some blueprint of what that should look like. This thesis, however, has no response to these authors and works because they do not seek to define the content of “all.”

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<sup>52</sup> For an excellent review of how various theologians acknowledge the central place of the Great Commission in Matthew’s Gospel, cf. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 58.



**Table 7. Summary of literature review concerning the content of “all”**

#	Author/Work	The Content of “All” for Christian Discipleship
1.	Blackaby	The commands of Jesus in the four Gospels
2.	Putman	The commands of Jesus in the Gospels plus other NT theological ideas.
3.	Ogden	Commands from the whole Bible, especially the epistles.
4.	Willard	Non-specific; focuses on spiritual disciplines et. al.
5.	Malphurs	Every church should establish its own discipleship goals
6.	Barna	All of God’s laws and commands
7.	Benedict 16 <sup>th</sup>	Non-specific, Christian education
8.	<i>Christianity Today</i> 10/99	Non-specific, all Jesus commanded
9.	Yount & Barnett	Non-specific; focuses on 7 character traits for disciplers
10.	Hull	Non-specific, all Jesus commanded
11.	Sparks	Non-specific, “everything” Jesus commanded
12.	Harrington	Non-specific, all Jesus commanded
13.	Blomberg	Non-specific, all the commandments in the Bible germane to Christians
14.	Hiebert	Everything Jesus taught plus “expanding, deepening, [and] spiritualizing . . . the Law and the Prophets”
15.	Fanning	All the commands in the New Testament
16.	Senior & Stuhlmueller	Non-specific, all Jesus commanded
17.	France	“The new ‘commandments’ given by Jesus”
18.	Arias	The Great Commission must be read in the context of Matthew
19.	Bosch	“Matthew 28:18-20 has to be interpreted <i>against the backdrop of Matthew’s gospel as a whole.</i> ”
20.	Krentz	Identifies Matthew and its five discourses, but does not limit it to Matthew
21.	Davies	The Sermon on the Mount plus other non-specified commands
22.	Meier	Matthew’s five discourses plus Jesus’ reinterpretation of the Old Testament
23.	Minear	Matthew’s five discourses
24.	White	All Jesus’ commands in Matthew, including “full Torah observance”
25.	Bruner	“The whole Gospel,” but not the Torah and the Prophets
26.	Matthey (& Bornkamm)	“The will of God as proclaimed through the Law and the Prophets and as interpreted and realized in full power of authority in Jesus’ teaching and summarized in the love commandment.”
27.	Boring	Jesus’ teachings in Matthew sourced from the Torah

*Source:* Please see literature review for the sources of this information and quotations.

### Category One – “All” Equals Everything God Commands

One generalized position that some authors take is that “all” in 28.20a refers to everything God wants Christians to do. This is not that different from category zero and is also

often an assumed argument. Ogden, Barna, and Blomberg are representatives of this position. This is the ultimate *sensus plenior* of the text because it is the largest possible interpretation.

This view does not satisfy the question of this thesis because it does not consider the text's *in situ* meaning. It embraces commands from all over the Bible, including ones in the epistles written after Jesus' ascension and after Matthew wrote his Gospel. Matthew could not have had these commandments in view. In addition, Jesus' statement in 28.20a references all that he commanded, past tense. Neither Jesus nor Matthew referenced commands yet to be revealed.

With a curious twist, Bornkamm (and Matthey) also take this view. The twist is the idea that all of Jesus' teachings are rooted in the Old Testament. Granted, the connection between them is pervasive, but a single counterexample refutes an unqualified proposition.

Although many of Jesus' antitheses in Matthew 5.21-48 have Old Testament precedents, Jesus' teaching on oaths has no such justification. Moses commanded Israel to swear by the LORD's name and Jesus said, "Make no oath at all" (Deuteronomy 6.13 & 10.20; Matthew 5.34, NASB). Jesus was not a parrot of Moses, but 'like Moses' in that he wrote original commandments (cf. Deuteronomy 18.15 and Acts 3.22).

Moreover, the Old Testament is only a "shadow" of the fullness of Christ (Colossians 2.17, NASB; Hebrews 10.1, NASB). A Christocentric view looks at the Old Testament in light of the New, not the New in light of the Old. Although the connections and similarities are pervasive, all of Jesus' teachings do not find a root in the Law and Prophets.

#### Category Two – "All" Equals New Testament Commands

The second general view that multiple authors take is that "all" refers to commandments found in the New Testament. Fanning and Putman are in this category. This interpretation, while useful to the Church age, does not satisfy the question of this thesis.

Once again, some of the commandments in the epistles were written after Jesus gave the Great Commission and after Matthew published it. Jesus did not explicitly include things he or the Holy Spirit would say in the future. 28.20a speaks of things Jesus commanded, past tense.

#### Category Three – “All” Equals Jesus’ Commands in the Gospels

The third possible view is that “all” refers to everything Jesus commanded in the four Gospels. This interpretation has a logical appeal and is taken by Blackaby and France. Hiebert is also in this group, adding Jesus’ reinterpretation of the Old Testament because of 5.17-48.

The problem with this interpretation is that it does not consider Matthew’s literary intention, the *in situ* meaning of the text. When Matthew wrote his Gospel, Luke and John were not yet written; Matthew could not have known what commandments they would later transcribe. Although the Gospel of Mark was written before Matthew’s, it has little to no teaching that Matthew does not also include. In addition, Matthew wrote his Gospel as a comprehensive dissertation of the commandments of Jesus. When Matthew penned the Great Commission, Jesus’ phrase, “all that I commanded you,” specifically looked back into his Gospel.

#### Category Four – “All” Equals Jesus’ Commands in Matthew

The fourth view is that Matthew looks primarily into his own Gospel for the content of “all.” This interpretation has quite a few adherents, and, in the main, agrees with our thesis. Nevertheless, there are a number of divergent interpretations within this group, some of which are quite intricate. None of these, however, agree exactly with our thesis.

##### *Only Matthew’s Five Discourses*

One subgroup in this category is that the content of “all” is found in Matthew’s five discourses. Minear takes this view. The problem with this view is that Matthew records

commands outside the discourses. “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” is before the first discourse (4.17, NASB). Certainly this is included in the content of “all.” Meier’s position is similar except that he includes Jesus’ reinterpretation of the Old Testament. Except for Meier’s exclusion of Jesus’ commands outside the five discourses, he has the same position as this thesis.

#### *All Jesus’ Commands in Matthew plus Full Torah Observance*

White, on the other hand, includes all the commands in Matthew but also adds full Torah observance. This cannot be a correct interpretation of the content of “all” because he specifically mentions circumcision, which the early Church adamantly rejected as a necessary Christian practice (1 Corinthians 7.19). This cannot be a correct interpretation of the content of “all.”

#### *Jesus’ Commands in Matthew that (by the way) Find Their Source in the Torah*

Boring’s view of the content of “all” includes all the commands of Jesus in Matthew, but his approach to 5.17-20 gives him a perspective similar to that of Bornkamm. He writes, “Jesus’ teaching that fulfills the Torah (cf. 5:17-20) is the sole content of the disciples’ teaching.”<sup>53</sup> This statement is incorrect for two reasons. First, Jesus’ command against making oaths has no basis in the Torah. Secondly, 28.20a commands the disciples to teach 5.17-20, which in turn requires them to teach the Old Testament based on Jesus’ interpretations. The disciples do not get their marching orders from Moses, but from God’s Son. Although Boring’s overall conclusion about the content of “all” is correct, his understanding of which way 5:17-48 points is backwards.

In sum, no theological consensus exists concerning the content of “all.” In addition, none of those reviewed have the same view as this thesis. Meier and Boring’s interpretations are very close, but technicalities prevent a complete match.

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<sup>53</sup> Boring, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, under “Matthew 28:16-20, The Great Commission.”

This section, however, has revealed that Jesus' interpretation of the Old Testament is an important factor in the content of "all." As stated above, it is not within the scope of this work to settle such a "burning question." Because it represents a clause of this thesis, however, a general statement must be offered.

### **Fulfillment Theology**

It was previously asserted that Matthew's extraordinary challenge was to explain to his readers both that nothing had changed and that everything had changed. To do this, Matthew makes a Herculean effort to describe the changes that Jesus brings to religion by using the theme of fulfillment theology. Some people think that his reason for giving such an explanation is because Matthew's community or audience is primarily Jewish. The issue, however, is much larger than how it affects Abraham's seed.

Continuity between Judaism and Christianity is important for the reputation of God. He does not change—and he cannot be seen to have done so (Malachi 3.6). Gentiles also require an explanation for the apparent change in God's program. If God is to be worshipped as just, true religion cannot favor one *ἔθνος*. Religion is ultimately man's response to God's nature.

Fulfillment theology, therefore, is the multi-faceted way Matthew connects the Old and New covenants; understanding it begins with a study of the words. Eighteen times in his Gospel Matthew uses *πληρώω* (17x) and *ἀναπληρώω* (1x), both which mean "fulfill." Fourteen of these occurrences describe Old Testament prophecies that Christ's life fulfilled. See Appendix B.

These prophecies detail the fact that Jesus fulfilled God's ancient revelations about the Christ that were predicted by the Hebrew prophets.<sup>54</sup> Isaiah predicted that Jesus' mother was

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<sup>54</sup> Because prophecy is "in part," the original declaration does not necessarily give the full scope; that is only seen in retrospect (cf. 1 Corinthians 13.9).

going to be a virgin and Hosea said Jesus would be called by God out of Egypt. Jeremiah knew that the restoration of God's kingdom would entail collateral damage to Jewish babies. One or more prophets had predicted that Christ's nomenclature would be connected to Nazareth. Isaiah knew that Jesus would minister in Galilee and be a patient, gentle leader that would also minister to Gentiles. In addition, Isaiah had predicted that Jesus would do many miracles, that the Jews would torture and kill him, and that he would sacrificially allow that to happen.

If prophecies about major events in Jesus' life were insufficient to convince Matthew's readers, even minor details had been predicted. Asaph knew Christ would teach in parables and David knew his distant heir's clothes would be the subject of gambling. Somehow Zechariah knew that Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on a young donkey. He also knew Christ would be sold for thirty pieces of silver and that the blood money would be used to buy a field that had originally belonged to a potter.

To solidify the argument that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament, Matthew quotes or makes direct reference to Israel's ancient scriptures at least fifty-eight more times. This is shown in Appendix C. Most of these are also from the prophets, including Daniel. Many, however, are from the Law, the book of Genesis, and the historical writings, especially concerning events linked to David's life. For example, John the Baptist's ministry was predicted and Nineveh, the Queen of Sheba, and Abel all stand ready to judge Jewish doubters.

As a writer, Matthew did his homework. He wanted the world to know that Christianity was not a new-fangled proposition. Appendices B and C show over seventy-three clear quotes or direct references between Matthew's Gospel and the Hebrew canon. Although they are not described in this work, minor literary allusions and other less obvious connections also exist.

Jesus was the long-awaited Christ and fulfillment of Israel’s ancient hope. From his birth to his miracles and teachings, even to his rejection and the very details of his death, Jesus was exactly what Abraham, Moses, David, and all the prophets had had in their collective mind for thousands of years. Matthew even has the devil and Jesus’ enemies quoting scripture in Jesus’ favor; they are witnesses under oath proving that he fulfilled God’s eternal plan.

As if all of these predictions, quotations, and literary connections are not enough, Matthew uses *πληρόω* in four additional locations that involve strong sober irony. In this way Matthew draws considerable attention to this word and the theology it embodies. As shown in table 8, two of these references relate directly to fulfillment theology. They all, however, represent sources of antagonism to the Pharisees.

**Table 8. Other uses of *πληρόω* (fulfill)**

#	Reference	Phrase of Text
1.	Matt. 3.15	“But Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ ”
2.	Matt. 5.17	“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”
3.	Matt. 13.47-48	“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled [ <i>πληρόω</i> ], they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away.”
4.	Matt. 23.32	“Fill up [ <i>πληρόω</i> ], then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.”

Source: NASB

In 3.15, Matthew gives Jesus’ reason for getting baptized; it is ironic that the perfect Son of God would have to submit to a ritual that signified the removal of sins. The Pharisees, on the other hand, refused baptism and thus “God’s purpose for themselves” (Luke 7.30, NASB). Their sanctimoniousness and Jesus’ secularity were at odds (Matthew 9.11).

More ironic, however, is 5.17-20. Jesus’ statement that his mission did not involve the abolition of the Law or the Prophets, but upholds their every “jot or tittle” (KJV), is poetic

medley in the face of the drastic and far-reaching revolution he affected. Jesus certainly did not fulfill the Jewish leaders' expectations concerning the Law and Prophets.

His fulfillment of them was on his own terms. First, he fulfilled them on the macro scale of their purpose in bringing *shalom* to mankind. Secondly, Jesus personally fulfilled the commandments through his obedience to the Law. Thirdly, Jesus' atonement fulfilled Judaism's sacrificial system; his prediction, and its later fulfillment in the temple's destruction, made most of the Law's cultic minutiae impossible to keep. Fourthly, Jesus' declaration in 5.17-20 affirmed the Old Testament for the Church's observance, subject, of course, to his reinterpretation of it. Fifthly, by rising from the dead and sending the Holy Spirit upon the Church, Jesus gave the people of God the power to fulfill the Law "according to the Spirit" (cf. Romans 8.3-4, NASB).

Sixthly, Jesus' most artful fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, however, was his reinterpretation of Zion's manifest destiny of pacifying the Gentiles. Rather than killing them, Jesus intended to love them, convert them, and teach them to submit to his commands. Only those that personally resisted would suffer. In this regard, the Great Commission is the Son of Man's capstone, his marching orders for Zion's exaltation (Daniel 7.13-27; Isaiah 2.3). Gentiles who observe "all" that Jesus commanded can escape the genocide they deserve.<sup>55</sup> In further irony, Titus subjected the Jews in Jerusalem to genocide within that very generation.

Matthew's two other uses of *πληρώω* also antagonize the Jewish leaders. Rather than affirming their favored nation status, the Lord would "fulfill" the kingdom of God with various kinds of people and then discard the bad ones (13.47-48). The real kicker, however, comes in 23.32. Jesus commands the Pharisees to "fulfill" the sins of their fathers so that they can be the

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<sup>55</sup> Sparks, "Gospel as Conquest," 651-663.



very ones God discards into hell. To their further chagrin, Jesus said the Hebrew prophets had also predicted this.

Matthew's fulfillment theology accomplishes its goal. Everything is staying the same *and* everything is changing. The Great Commission is the ultimate conclusion, not only to Matthew's Gospel, but to Israel's 750-year-old question (cf. Acts 1.8).

This discussion of the theology of fulfillment also leads to our short answer to Matthew's "burning question." Because Jesus reaffirms the Law and the Prophets, our thesis recognizes that "all that I commanded you" has an important relationship to Old Testament commandments. All that Jesus commanded also includes all that Moses and the Prophets had commanded . . . with a caveat: Jesus is not only the fulfiller of the Old Testament; he is also its ultimate interpreter.

Many Old Testament references in Appendix C begin with statements such as, "It is written," or ask the question, "Have you not read?" A few begin with, "You have heard that it was said," or, "You have heard that the ancients were told." Jesus often corrects misconceptions about the Law, but sometimes he changes the law. As the Son of God, this is his prerogative.

In 5.18-48, Matthew offers six consecutive examples of how Jesus reinterprets Old Testament commandments. Scattered throughout Matthew's Gospel there are additional examples (e.g., 4.6, 9.13, 12.3-5, 19.4-7, and 24.1-25.46). Through his person and with his words, Jesus communicates the light that reveals how all scriptures must be interpreted (4.16; 22.15-17; John 5.39). The *in situ* meaning of "to observe all" in Matthew 28.20 is that Jesus' disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus commanded in the Gospel of Matthew. Because of Matthew 5.17-48, this also includes observing everything commanded in the Old Testament . . . *as reinterpreted in the light of Christ*.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND APPLICATIONS

### Conclusion

Christians hail the Great Commission as the Church's dual mandate for ministry: 1) make disciples and 2) teach them "to observe all," *τηρεῖν πάντα*, that Jesus commanded. Contemporary Christian leaders, however, recognize that obedience to Jesus' commands is in decline. This thesis suggests this problem has at least two theologically based causes. First, Christians may be overlooking the full significance of *τηρέω*. Secondly, Church leaders may be rushing into discipleship programs without correctly identifying the Great Commission's core curriculum.

Concerning *τηρέω*, there are four basic facets of the word. First, it is etymologically connected to the sense of sight. Secondly, *τηρέω*, a verb, is related to the noun *guard*. Thirdly, observing and guarding anything implies mental activity. Fourthly, when *commandments* are the direct object, *τηρέω* and "to observe" are related in scripture to the expectation of obedience.

The significance of *τηρέω*, therefore, is that commandments shall be observed, kept, heeded, and obeyed. For commandments to be fully observed by disciples, they must be modeled by the teacher doing the discipling. In this sense, "to observe" carries both an input and an output connotation. As our thesis declares, those who teach others shall personify all Jesus' commandments in Matthew so their students can observe them optically and behaviorally.

In addition, *keep*, *heed*, and *obey* further amplify the meaning of *τηρέω*. To *keep* commandments means they must be guarded and protected from being forgotten, perverted, or misapplied. Commandments must also be *heeded*, that is, paid attention to and thought about within the believer's heart and mind. Finally, Christians must obey commandments; they must faithfully and wisely execute them in all the contexts of their daily lives.

Concerning the core curriculum of the Great Commission, Jesus commanded his disciples to teach the nations “to observe *all* that [he had] commanded [them].” Although theologians do not yet agree on the content of “all,” this thesis works toward that end. It argues that the *in situ* meaning of “to observe all” in Matthew 28.20 is that Jesus’ disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus commanded in the Gospel of Matthew.

There are three major reasons to restrict the content of “all” to Jesus’ commands in Matthew. First, Matthew’s Gospel, being the second one written, distinguishes itself from Mark by its large volume of Jesus’ teaching. In five major discourses and a corresponding increase in “red letters,” Matthew writes his Gospel as a comprehensive catalog of Jesus’ commands.<sup>1</sup> A contrast of Mark and Matthew reveals that Matthew leaves very little as exclusive to Mark.

Secondly, Matthew masterfully uses three literary techniques to point his entire work directly at the Great Commission. This supports our thesis because 28.16-20, as Matthew’s literary conclusion, should only reference material covered in the body.<sup>2</sup> These literary techniques are as follows.

1. Matthew’s structure, which is often defined by its five discourses, points to the Great Commission as its conclusion. Each discourse ends with a similar transition, the final one being, “When Jesus had finished *all* these words” . . . he began to prepare the disciples for his crucifixion (26.1, NASB). Although Jesus provides some minor instructions to his disciples in the last few chapters, it is clear that his public declarations are complete. When Jesus speaks of

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew’s increased number of “black letters” may also add to Jesus’ body of instruction by way of his life’s example.

<sup>2</sup> “Writing a Conclusion,” Walden University Writing Center, accessed 31 March 2015, [http://writingcenter.waldenu.edu/Documents/Scholarly-Writing/Writing\\_a\\_Conclusion.pdf](http://writingcenter.waldenu.edu/Documents/Scholarly-Writing/Writing_a_Conclusion.pdf).

“all” in 28.20a, the reader makes the connection to the “all” in 26.1. What Jesus taught the Jews is what the apostles shall teach all nations.<sup>3</sup>

2. Another technique Matthew uses to target the Great Commission is his development of the mission/ethnicity motif. Although Jesus’ primary mission was to the lost sheep of Israel, he made concrete preparation for the early Church to later include Gentiles and establish itself in Syria. In addition, Jesus’ life and words polarized the Jews; some followed him and others demanded his crucifixion. This national rejection by the Jews, coupled with Jesus’ rejection by the local representatives (Herod and Pilate) of the existing international Gentile hierarchy (Rome), made God’s judgment an individual matter. When Jesus sends the apostles to the nations, both the story line and the mission/ethnicity motif find a satisfaction the reader desires.

Related to the mission/ethnicity motif is the Son of Man nomenclature that Jesus uses throughout the book. His promise to Caiaphas in 26.64 is a direct reference to Daniel 7. Jesus’ claim in 28.18 (NASB) to “all authority . . . in heaven and on earth,” therefore, is an unmistakable statement of global Messianic, and thus Jewish, triumph.<sup>4</sup> Once again, the entire Gospel climaxes in the Great Commission through the combined mission/ethnicity motif.

3. The final technique that points to 28.16-20 as Matthew’s conclusion is his theology of fulfillment. Jesus is not only the one who multifariously fulfills the Law and the Prophets, Matthew’s entire Gospel is suffused in Old Testament quotes and allusions. With further effect, Jesus’ paradoxical claim in 5.17-20 focuses the attention of both Jews and Gentiles on how this relates to the content of “all.” The Jews expect Jesus to uphold the Old Testament; the Gentiles

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<sup>3</sup> Although some argue that Jews are henceforth excluded, most scholars agree that they have only lost their privileged class and are still included as part of the nations. Cf. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 65.

<sup>4</sup> God’s scepter on earth, however, would “depart from Judah”—and include both Jews and Gentiles as Christ’s Church—because Shiloh has now come (cf. Genesis 49.10, NASB).

want him to abolish it. Jesus and Matthew's explanation is extraordinary and powerful: Jesus affirms the complete text of the Old Testament in theory, maintains that he personally fulfills it, and gives a variety of examples of how he reinterprets its mandatory ethical demands.

Via 5.17-20, therefore, the content of "all" commanded in 28.20a reaches back and incorporates the Old Testament. Jesus' six antitheses in 5.21-48, including other reinterpretations of the Law peppered throughout Matthew, set Gentile believers at ease: the fulfiller of the Law is also its interpreter. Matthew wisely leaves the vast majority of Old Testament commands unaddressed; future believers must discover how the light of Christ applies to those directives.

Nevertheless, in sending the apostles to teach the nations to observe all that he had commanded, Jesus fulfills Israel's ancient destiny to enlighten and rule them. The Gentiles will be pacified by love and become faithful observers of the Law and the Prophets. As her Messiah, Jesus answers Israel's 750-year-old question with a call to theological and social warfare.

The third major reason to associate the *in situ* meaning of "all" in 28.20a with Jesus' commands in the Gospel of Matthew is that no other scenario is logical. "All" cannot include commands in Mark, which was written before Matthew, because Matthew wrote an all-inclusive treatise on Jesus' commandments. In so doing, he also enveloped the Gospel of Mark, leaving it little to nothing that Matthew does not also include. In addition, "all" cannot include anything commanded by Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the epistles, or the Church after Jesus' ascension because Jesus' statement in 28.20a is past tense. Finally, "all" cannot include commands in Luke or John, published after Matthew, because Matthew could not have known about them.

Because the preincarnate Son helped author the Old Testament prior to Matthew's Gospel, that is the only other scripture that can be included in the *in situ* meaning of "all."

Matthew himself positively confirms this in 5.17-20. The most significant issue surrounding the content of “all,” therefore, does not involve the New Testament but the Old.

This is also evident in the literature review. More than a few critical theologians see the dominant place of Matthew’s Gospel in the content of “all.” Their variance, however, often surrounds how Matthew connects to the Old Covenant. This thesis maintains only that the Son of God is the ultimate interpreter of the Old Testament; it does not get into the nuts and bolts of what that entails. In sum, “all that I commanded you” points back to Jesus’ commands in the Gospel of Matthew. Because of Matthew 5.17-48, this also includes everything commanded in the Old Testament as reinterpreted in the light of Christ.

### **Applications**

Real estate agents say the three most important things about property are “location, location, and location.”<sup>5</sup> Nothing is enigmatic in this statement; it relates the simple fact that a property’s location affects its value. Similar properties in different locations have different values based on the alleged benefits and drawbacks associated with those locations. *Location* is repeated thrice in the oft-quoted phrase to drive home this straightforward reality that buyers and sellers often overlook. In the same way, the applications of this thesis, though they address different contexts, are highly similar. We intone, “*Observe all* that Jesus commanded, *observe all* that Jesus commanded, and *observe all* that Jesus commanded.”

Beyond this generality, however, one specific application shall be offered each for individual believers, disciples, evangelists and missionaries, and pastors and teachers. In addition, theologians will be challenged with two subjects for further study. Abundant

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Weintraub, “Location, location, location,” *About Home*, About.com, accessed 31 March 2015, [http://homebuying.about.com/od/marketfactstrends/qt/013008\\_location.htm](http://homebuying.about.com/od/marketfactstrends/qt/013008_location.htm).

explanation has already been given to the significance of “to observe;” the specific treatments proffered, therefore, will primarily focus on applications of “all.”

### One Application for Individual Believers

The principle application of this thesis, therefore, is for all believers “to observe [and keep, heed, and obey] all” that Jesus commanded in Matthew’s Gospel. The Lord has no patience for those who observe some commandments but reject others. Calling Jesus “Lord” but neglecting to observe *all* his commandments is considered “lawlessness” (7.21-23, NASB). In addition, observing Jesus’ commands legalistically, but neglecting the Spirit of them, leaves one lacking the assurance of salvation (19.16-22). This thesis, therefore, calls all Christians to an across-the-board and spiritual approach to Jesus’ commands (John 6.63).

One foundational factor in observing all that Jesus commanded is for believers to cultivate a favorable view of Jesus’ commandments (22.37-38).<sup>6</sup> It is difficult for anyone to be faithful to commands that they do not believe are in their best interest (19.21-22; Revelation 9.20; Hebrews 12.2). God’s purpose in giving commandments is so people have advance notice about the results of certain behaviors. Proverbs 6.23 (NASB) says, “The commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light.” People who ignore commands choose actions that lead to pain and suffering (cf. Genesis 3.17). As Jesus said, that can be avoided; “If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments” (19.17, NASB).

This is why rendering *τηρέω* as *obey* is more than a translation error; it is a theological gaffe because it short-circuits the process implied by the word’s connotations. Believers must employ their higher order powers before they can own a command enough to obey it under

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<sup>6</sup> The following argument finds support outside of Matthew but is applicable to commands therein.

duress. Ignoring a disciple's cognitive process and expecting raw obedience can only work short-term. For long-term faithfulness, however, higher order beings require the constitutional change that comes with the influx of light (John 3.3, 8.32).

When John declares that Jesus' "commandments are not burdensome," he suggests that some people think they are (cf. 1 John 5.3, NASB). Dathan and Abiram refused Moses' summons because they thought they were resisting his tyranny (Numbers 16.13). When Eve ate the forbidden fruit, she thought she would obtain something valuable that God had been parsimoniously withholding from her. Eve, Dathan, and Abiram, however, had been clearly told otherwise by God or his representative. Those who despise God's commandments, therefore, are disclosing their mistrust and/or hatred of God (Exodus 20.6; John 14.15).

Many "so-called" Christians have a negative view of commandments (cf. 1 Corinthians 5.11, NASB). They misinterpret Paul, who, while arguing about the importance of faith in Christ, said that no one is humanly able to observe enough commandments to 'purchase' eternal life (Romans 7.9-10). Paul was neither disparaging commandments nor their observance, only the presupposition that one could observe them without faith. In the very next chapter Paul says that Christians can and do obey God's Law because they have the Holy Spirit (Romans 8.4).

"So-called" believers, therefore, are only attempting to assuage their consciences or steal the respect of others when they regurgitate flawed theology rather than observe all that Jesus commanded. They would be better served by doing what works: procuring the Holy Spirit so they have the faith and desire to follow the way of life Jesus described and exemplified (Luke 11.13; Romans 8.4-8; Matthew 16.24). Those who believe and try, but sometimes fail, can find forgiveness; those who choose to walk in darkness, however, cannot (1 John 1.5-10). In sum, the



application of this thesis for individual believers is that they observe all that Jesus commanded in Matthew through cultivating a favorable view of Jesus' commandments.

### One Application for Christian Disciplers

Disciplers have a double responsibility; they must both personify the content of "all" and include the teaching of it in their curricula. One specific application of this is for disciplers to exemplify and teach Matthew 18.15-18. Included in Matthew's "community discourse," this pericope is foundational to the effectiveness of the Christian community. Being the boots-on-the-ground in the war against depravity and alienation, disciplers must get this right. They must faithfully teach and personify 18.15-18 among their charges. This command, however, has not been sufficiently schooled in the recent past. Contemporary Christians are often ignorant of this text or think that it only applies if a local church needs to excommunicate someone in major sin.

The opening commandment of this pericope, however, is very broad: "If your brother sins [against you], go and show him his fault in private" (NASB). Certainly deference needs to be used and petty issues unilaterally forgiven, but the imperative is unmistakable. The opposite of showing one's brother his fault is executing some type of vengeance or simply closing one's heart and walking away.

I have personally noticed that contemporary Christians routinely shy away from this command because it requires interpersonal confrontation.<sup>7</sup> The result is that some believers become overly forgiving and lower their expectations for Christian relationships. Others spend their lives jumping from one church to another and learn that running from problems is necessary for spiritual survival. Both of these extremes, however, are unhealthy because they diminish the

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<sup>7</sup> This aversion is consistent with postmodernism.

spread of the Gospel. The commandments in Matthew 18.15-18 were given to support righteousness, unity, and the growth of the Church; to disobey them has the opposite results.

There is an even greater problem in the contemporary Church, however, surrounding this commandment. When Christians take the early steps toward reconciliation and those steps fail, it is often difficult to find pastors and church leaders to complete the multi-step process. One seasoned pastor told me that he personally avoids the due process in this text because it often leads to people leaving his church. He prefers, contrariwise, to ignore unhealthy relationships in the hope of maintaining the highest possible numbers. This, however, is both folly and a violation of “all” in 28.20a. A pastor, more than anyone, should implement the discipleship aspects of the Great Commission. One application of this thesis for disciplers, therefore, is that they model and teach all that Jesus commanded in Matthew 18.15-18.

#### One Application for Evangelists and Missionaries

Evangelists and Missionaries should use preaching and teaching to charge their listeners to observe all that Jesus commanded. One specific text they should concentrate on is Matthew 4.17. Along with the Great Commission, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (NASB), is a meta-command. It specifically requires hearers to discontinue all known sin. It is also a first-level commandment because a disciple is not “made” until he observes it. The very foundation of making disciples, therefore, is directing people to observe the command to repent.

In contemporary society, however, this commandment has become increasingly unpopular. The American media shows images of religious extremists carrying a placard or screaming, “Repent.” In addition, peer pressure in America discourages public displays of religious confrontation; directing someone to repent is often considered laughable. The humanistic presupposition is that people no longer repent, and that only fools think they might.

Jesus, however, gives the reason that repentance is necessary: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” In the original context, this meant that the Son of Man was about to establish his kingdom on earth. Sinners and unbelievers needed to repent so they could conform to the new administration and not be destroyed with those who refused. Because Christ’s kingdom is now already established, the urgency for unbelievers to repent is even greater. Instructing people to observe the command to repent is one application of this thesis for evangelists and missionaries.

### One Application for Pastors and Teachers

One application of this thesis for pastors and teachers is that they should expound the Gospel of Matthew from the perspective of commandments. Matthew makes a distinction between two types of teaching: Jesus taught with authority and the scribes did not (7.29). The expression, “Thus saith the LORD” (KJV), is found 413 times in the Old Testament. It is primarily used by the prophets, particularly Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They used this phrase to tell Israel, in no uncertain terms, exactly what God wanted her to do.

Contemporary pastors and teachers, however, often teach like the scribes. They refer to commandments as God’s advice, his wisdom, and his recommendations. They do not charge their audiences to observe commandments, but beg them to do God a favor and take a step in his direction. “Wouldn’t it be nice if everyone . . .?” and, “You really need to consider doing. . . .” Commands are commands and should be taught as such.

In addition, the Great Commission is not Jesus’ Big Suggestion or his Wonderful Idea. For several years he taught the crowds and his disciples with verbal authority. After his resurrection, however, his position was even stronger: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Jesus commanded his disciples to teach the nations “to observe all that I

commanded you.” Contemporary pastors and Bible teachers, therefore, should teach Matthew from the vantage point of commandments.

#### Two Applications for Theologians (Subjects for Further Study)

This thesis implies a variety of subjects for further study; two of them, however, stand out. First, theologians need to develop a comprehensive list of Jesus’ commands in Matthew.<sup>8</sup> This could be used for both discipleship programs and public preaching. Teaching through Matthew “verse by verse,” offering instruction for each commandment, is an academic application of this thesis.<sup>9</sup> More practically, discipleship programs could use this list for instruction, training, and assessment.

One of the issues such a project would entail is defining what a *command* and/or *commandment* is. Blackaby argues that there is a difference between Jesus’ imperatives (commands) and the other types of instruction he delivers.<sup>10</sup> For example, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” is hardly the command to be poor in spirit (5.3, NASB). Another example is in the parable of the sower in 13.3-23. Although it is implied, Jesus does not command people to be “good soil” (NASB). Bruner, however, is on the other end of the spectrum. He argues that “Jesus’ whole life is a command.”<sup>11</sup> Defining this issue and listing all that Jesus commanded in Matthew is a noble application of this thesis.

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<sup>8</sup> Lakes Community Chapel in Medford, NJ has identified and synthesized c.1422 commandments of Jesus in the four Gospels. Dr. Joe Olachea, Jr., interview by author, c.20 September 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Calvary Chapel advocates the “line upon line” method of biblical instruction, as opposed to topical studies or systematic theology. Cf. Chuck Smith and Brian C. Nixon, *Line upon Line: Resources Expounding upon God’s Truth* (Santa Ana: Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> Blackaby, *The Commands of Christ*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 826.

Secondly, and possibly more importantly, theologians need to develop a comprehensive theology of how Jesus fulfills and reinterprets the various commandments in the Law and the Prophets. The first goal of this work would be to list all the commands in the Old Testament. Judaism has identified 613 commandments and that list could be used as a starting point.<sup>12</sup>

After the list was developed, commandments would need to be categorized and evaluated as to how they should be interpreted in the light of Christ. Commandments relating to animal sacrifice have been fulfilled by Jesus and no longer apply (Hebrews 7.27). On the other end of the spectrum are the ethical commands of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' fulfillment of these revealed his qualification as the spotless Lamb of God, but the commandments themselves remain applicable for the Church age. Between these two loci, however, is a vast sea of commandments that remains uncharted to the average believer.

Listing and categorizing the commands of Jesus in Matthew and the Old Testament (as reinterpreted in the light of Christ) will give disciples and pastors a body of teaching from which to work. This theological work needs to avoid legalism and should also include international input.<sup>13</sup> These projects are applications of this thesis as subjects for further study.

## **Finale**

Jesus commanded his Church to make disciples of the nations and to teach those disciples “to observe all” that he commanded. Contemporary Christian leaders, however, contend that existing believers are neglecting commandment observance. This author, therefore, believes the Church needs to rediscover the Gospel of Matthew. It was written as a comprehensive treatise of

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<sup>12</sup> John J. Parsons, “Taryag Mitzvot: 613 Commandments of Torah,” *Hebrew for Christians*, accessed 31 March 2015, <http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Articles/Taryag/taryag.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Timothy Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 13.

the teachings and commands of Jesus and threads the theological needle between legalism and antinomianism. Matthew did not write for a select community or audience, but to all the saints.

The *in situ* meaning of “to observe all” in Matthew 28.20 is that Jesus’ disciples shall observe (and keep, heed, and obey) all that Jesus commanded in the Gospel of Matthew. Because of Matthew 5.17-48, this also includes observing everything commanded in the Old Testament as reinterpreted in the light of Christ. In addition, those who teach others shall personify all these commandments so their students can observe them optically and behaviorally.

“Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness’” (Paul of Tarsus, c.67 AD, 2 Timothy 2.19).

Appendix A: Use of *τηρέω* in the New Testament (NASB)

#	Reference	Phrase of Text	Qty.	Use
1.	Matt. 19:17	“Keep the commandments.”	1	C
2.	Matt. 23:3	“All that they tell you do and <i>observe</i> .”	1	C
3.	Matt. 27:36	“They began to <i>keep watch over</i> Him.”	1	G
4.	Matt. 27:54	“those who were with him <i>keeping guard over</i> Jesus”	1	G
5.	Matt. 28:4	“The <i>guards</i> shook for fear.”	1	G
6.	Matt. 28:20	“teaching them to <i>observe</i> all that I commanded you”	1	C
7.	Mark 7:9	“the commandment of God in order to <i>keep</i> your tradition”	1	C
8.	John 2:10	“You have <i>kept</i> the good wine until now.”	1	G
9.	John 8:51	“If anyone <i>keeps</i> My word he will never see death.”	1	W
10.	John 8:52	“If anyone <i>keeps</i> My word, he will never taste of death.”	1	W
11.	John 8:55	“But I do know Him and <i>keep</i> His word.”	1	W
12.	John 9:16	“He does not <i>keep</i> the Sabbath.”	1	C
13.	John 12:7	“She may <i>keep</i> it for the day of My burial.”	1	G
14.	John 14:15	“If you love Me, you will <i>keep</i> My commandments.”	1	C
15.	John 14:21	“He who has My commandments and <i>keeps</i> them”	1	C
16.	John 14:23	“He will <i>keep</i> My word.”	1	W
17.	John 14:24	“He who does not love Me does not <i>keep</i> My words.”	1	W
18.	John 15:10	“If you <i>keep</i> My commandments”	2	C
		“just as I have <i>kept</i> My Father’s commandments”		C
19.	John 15:20	“If they <i>kept</i> My word, they will <i>keep</i> yours also.”	2	C,C
20.	John 17:6	“And they have <i>kept</i> Your word.”	1	W
21.	John 17:11	“Holy Father, <i>keep</i> them in Your name.”	1	G
22.	John 17:12	“While I was with them, I was <i>keeping</i> them in Your name.”	1	G
23.	John 17:15	“but to <i>keep</i> them from the evil one”	1	G
24.	Acts 12:5	“Peter was <i>kept</i> in the prison.”	1	G
25.	Acts 12:6	“Guards in front of the door were <i>watching over</i> the prison.”	1	G
26.	Acts 15:5	“to direct them to <i>observe</i> the Law of Moses”	1	C
27.	Acts 16:23	“commanding the jailer to <i>guard</i> them securely”	1	G
28.	Acts 24:23	“for him to be <i>kept in custody</i> and yet have some freedom”	1	G
29.	Acts 25:4	“Paul was being <i>kept in custody</i> at Caesarea.”	1	G
30.	Acts 25:21	“Paul appealed to be <i>held in custody</i> for the Emperor.”	2	G
		“I ordered him to be <i>kept in custody</i> until I send him.”		G
31.	1 Cor. 7:37	“decided this in his own heart, to <i>keep</i> his own virgin”	1	G
32.	2 Cor. 11:9	“I <i>kept</i> myself from being a burden to you, and will <i>continue</i> [Lit. and I will <i>keep</i> ] to do so.”	2	G
33.	Eph. 4:3	“diligent to <i>preserve</i> the unity of the Spirit”	1	G

#	Reference	Phrase of Text	Qty.	Use
34.	1 Thess. 5:23	“soul and body be <i>preserved</i> complete”	1	G
35.	1 Tim. 5:22	“ <i>Keep</i> yourself free from sin.”	1	G
36.	1 Tim. 6:14	“that you <i>keep</i> the commandment without stain”	1	C
37.	2 Tim. 4:7	“I have <i>kept</i> the faith.”	1	G
38.	James 1:27	“and to <i>keep</i> oneself unstained by the world”	1	G
39.	James 2:10	“whoever <i>keeps</i> the whole law and yet stumbles in one”	1	C
40.	1 Peter 1:4	“will not fade away, <i>reserved</i> in heaven for you”	1	G
41.	2 Peter 2:4	“pits of darkness, <i>reserved</i> for judgment”	1	G
42.	2 Peter 2:9	“and to <i>keep</i> the unrighteous under punishment”	1	G
43.	2 Peter 2:17	“for whom the black darkness has been <i>reserved</i> ”	1	G
44.	2 Peter 3:7	“reserved [ <i>θησαυρίζω</i> ] for fire, <i>kept</i> for . . . judgment”	1	G
45.	1 John 2:3	“if we <i>keep</i> His commandments”	1	C
46.	1 John 2:4	“and does not <i>keep</i> His commandments, is a liar”	1	C
47.	1 John 2:5	“but whoever <i>keeps</i> His word”	1	W
48.	1 John 3:22	“because we <i>keep</i> His commandments and do the things”	1	C
49.	1 John 3:24	“The one who <i>keeps</i> His commandments abides in Him.”	1	C
50.	1 John 5:3	“that we <i>keep</i> His commandments”	1	C
51.	1 John 5:18	“He who was born of God <i>keeps</i> him.”	1	G
52.	Jude 1:1	“beloved in God the Father, and <i>kept</i> for Jesus Christ”	1	G
53.	Jude 1:6	“Angels who did not <i>keep</i> their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has <i>kept</i> in eternal bonds.”	2	G
54.	Jude 1:13	“for whom the black darkness has been <i>reserved</i> forever”	1	G
55.	Jude 1:21	“ <i>Keep</i> yourselves in the love of God.”	1	G
56.	Rev. 1:3	“and <i>heed</i> the things which are written in it”	1	C
57.	Rev. 2:26	“who <i>keeps</i> My deeds until the end”	1	C
58.	Rev. 3:3	“what you have received and heard; and <i>keep</i> it, and repent”	1	G
59.	Rev. 3:8	“have <i>kept</i> My word, and have not denied My name”	1	W
60.	Rev. 3:10	“Because you have <i>kept</i> the word of My perseverance, I also will <i>keep</i> you from the hour of testing.”	2	W
61.	Rev. 12:17	“who <i>keep</i> the commandments of God”	1	C
62.	Rev. 14:12	“who <i>keep</i> the commandments of God and their faith”	1	C
63.	Rev. 16:15	“Blessed is the one who stays awake and <i>keeps</i> his clothes.”	1	G
64.	Rev. 22:7	“Blessed is he who <i>heeds</i> the words of the prophecy.”	1	W
65.	Rev. 22:9	“of those who <i>heed</i> the words of this book”	<u>1</u>	W
			Total	71

Source: "Greek Lexicon: G5083 (NASB)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed 31 January 2015, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?page=2&strongs=G5083&t=NASB#lexResults>.

Note: C = “in reference to Commandments” (23x); W = “in reference to God’s Word” (11x); G = “in reference to some type of Guardianship” (37x).

Note: Authors: Matthew (6x), Mark (1x), John (36x), Luke (8x), Paul (8x), James (2x), Peter (5x), Jude (5x).



Appendix B: OT Scriptures Matthew Describes as  
Fulfilled (*Πληρώω*) by the Christ Event

#	Reference	Phrase of Text	Source
1.	Matt. 1.22-23	“Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,’ which translated means, ‘GOD WITH US.’”	Is. 7.14 Is. 8.10
2.	Matt. 2.15b	“This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.’”	Hos. 11.1
3.	Matt. 2.17-18	“Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: ‘A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE.’”	Jer. 31.15
4.	Matt. 2.23b	“This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: ‘He shall be called a Nazarene.’”	[ <sup>b</sup> ]
5.	Matt. 4.14-18	This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ‘THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES—THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED.’”	Is. 9.1-2
6.	Matt. 8.17	“This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ‘HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES.’”	Is. 53.4
7.	Matt. 12.17-21	“This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ‘BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL-PLEASSED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES. HE WILL NOT QUARREL, NOR CRY OUT; NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS. A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT, UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY. AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE.’”	Is. 42.1-4

*Continued below*

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8.	Matt. 13.14	“In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled [ἀναπληρώω], which says, ‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.’”	Is. 6.9-10
9.	Matt. 13.35	“This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ‘I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.’”	Ps. 78.2
10.	Matt. 21.4	“This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ‘SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, “BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.’”	Zec. 9.9
11.	Matt. 26.54	“How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it [the murder of the Christ] must happen this way?”	c. Is. 53
12.	Matt. 26.56a	“But all this [the betrayal of the Christ] has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets.”	c. Is. 53
13.	Matt. 27.9-10	“Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: ‘AND THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE OF THE ONE WHOSE PRICE HAD BEEN SET by the sons of Israel; AND THEY GAVE THEM FOR THE POTTER’S FIELD, AS THE LORD DIRECTED ME.’”	Zec. 11.12-13
14.	Matt. 27.35	“And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, ‘They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots [KJV].’”	Ps. 22.18

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*Source:* All quotations NASB unless otherwise noted.

<sup>a</sup> Capital letters in the NASB refer to quotations of other scripture.

<sup>b</sup> Multiple proposals have been put forth, including Isaiah 11.1, Judges 13.5, Isaiah 53.2, and Isaiah 52.13-53.12.

Appendix C: Other OT Quotations and References in Matthew (NASB)

#	Reference	Phrase of Text
1.	Matt. 2.5-6	“They said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for <u>this is what has been written</u> by the prophet: “AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.””
2.	Matt. 3.3	“For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, ‘THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!’”
3.	Matt. 4.4	“But He answered and said, ‘ <u>It is written</u> , “MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.””
4.	Matt. 4.6	“And said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for <u>it is written</u> , “HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU”; and “ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.””
5.	Matt. 4.7	“Jesus said to him, ‘On the other hand, <u>it is written</u> , “YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.””
6.	Matt. 4.10	“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For <u>it is written</u> , “YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.””
7.	Matt. 5.14	“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”
8.	Matt. 5.21	“ <u>You have heard that the ancients were told</u> , ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’”
9.	Matt. 5.27	“ <u>You have heard that it was said</u> , ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.’”
10.	Matt. 5.31	“ <u>It was said</u> , ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE.’”
11.	Matt. 5.33	“Again, <u>you have heard that the ancients were told</u> , ‘YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.’”
12.	Matt. 5.35b	“Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.”
13.	Matt. 5.38	“ <u>You have heard that it was said</u> , ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’”
14.	Matt. 5.43	“ <u>You have heard that it was said</u> , ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’”
15.	Matt. 7.23	“And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’”
16.	Matt. 9.13a	“Learn what this means: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE.’”
17.	Matt. 10.35-36	“For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.”
18.	Matt. 11.5	“The BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.”
19.	Matt. 11.10	“This is the one about whom <u>it is written</u> , ‘BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.’”

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20. Matt. 11.29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.”
21. Matt. 12.3 “But He said to them, ‘Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, he and his companions . . . ?’”
22. Matt. 12.5 “Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?”
23. Matt. 12.7 “But if you had known what this means, ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,’ you would not have condemned the innocent.”
24. Matt. 12.40 “For just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”
25. Matt. 12.41 “The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.”
26. Matt. 12.42 “The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.”
27. Matt. 13.32c “THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”
28. Matt. 13.43a “Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father.”
29. Matt. 15.4 “For God said, ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,’ and, ‘HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.’”
30. Matt. 15.7-9 “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’”
31. Matt. 16.27 “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.”
32. Matt. 17.3 “And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.”
33. Matt. 18.16b “So that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.”
34. Matt. 19.4 “And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE?’”
35. Matt. 19.5 “And said, ‘FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.’”
36. Matt. 19.7 “They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?’”
37. Matt. 19.18-19 “Then he said to Him, ‘Which ones?’ And Jesus said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”
38. Matt. 21.9 “The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!’”
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39. Matt. 21.13 “And He said to them, ‘It is written, “MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER”; but you are making it a ROBBERS’ DEN.’”
40. Matt. 21.16.b “And Jesus said to them, ‘Yes; have you never read, “OUT OF THE MOUTH OF INFANTS AND NURSING BABIES YOU HAVE PREPARED PRAISE FOR YOURSELF?”’”
41. Matt. 21.33 “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey.”
42. Matt. 21.42 “Jesus said to them, ‘Did you never read in the Scriptures, “THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES?”’”
43. Matt. 22.24 “Teacher, Moses said, ‘IF A MAN DIES HAVING NO CHILDREN, HIS BROTHER AS NEXT OF KIN SHALL MARRY HIS WIFE, AND RAISE UP CHILDREN FOR HIS BROTHER.’”
44. Matt. 22.32 ““I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB.’ He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”
45. Matt. 22.37 “And He said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’”
46. Matt. 22.39 “The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”
47. Matt. 22.33-34 “He said to them, ‘Then how does David in the Spirit call Him “Lord,” saying, “THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET”?’”
48. Matt. 23.30 “And say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’”
49. Matt. 23.35b “. . . from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”
50. Matt. 23.39 “For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!’”
51. Matt. 24.15a “Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet . . .”
52. Matt. 24.29 “But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”
53. Matt. 24.30b “And they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.”
54. Matt. 24.31a “And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds.”
55. Matt. 26.31b “For it is written, ‘I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.’”
56. Matt. 26.64 “Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.’”
57. Matt. 27.43a “HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET GOD RESCUE Him now, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM.”
58. Matt. 27.46 “About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’”
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