

Exegesis of Matthew 28:18-20

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Preliminary Information

Jesus told the disciples before His Passion that He would meet them in Galilee after His resurrection from the dead, Matthew 26:32. The angel at our risen Savior's empty tomb, as well as our living and resurrected Lord Himself, relayed this same message to the disciples through the women who had come to anoint their crucified Lord's body, Matthew 28:7,10.

At the Galilean mountain the Lord had appointed, as Jesus made His appearance, some believed and worshipped, but there were still those who doubted the Savior's resurrection. Some commentators believe Christ's appearance in Matthew 28 when He gave His Great Commission is the same occasion the apostle Paul referred to when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:6, "After that, he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep." Biblical scholars also believe that the words of Christ in Matthew 28:18-20 are parallel to Mark 16:15ff and to Luke 24:46-49.¹

Verse 18

καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων, Ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς.

Translations

NKJV: And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

NIV: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

My Translation: And after He came near Jesus spoke to them, saying, "All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Vocabulary

ἡ ἐξουσία - 1. Freedom of choice; right to act, decide, or dispose of one's property; 2. Ability to do something, capability, might, power. 3. Authority, absolute power, warrant. 4. The power exercised by rulers or others in high position by virtue of their office. a. ruling power, official power. b. the domain in which the power is exercised. c. the bearers of the authority—authorities, officials, government.²

Grammar Note

ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς - ...frequently anarthrous, especially after a preposition.³

Concerning the distinction between ἐλάλησεν and λέγων we are told:

¹ John Ylvisaker wrote: "To argue that Mark 16:15 ff. is a different wording of the command of Christ given in Matthew is in conflict with the Scriptural doctrine of inspiration, and stamps Mark, in effect, as an unreliable writer. Jesus has spoken the words in Matthew and also in Mark on this occasion, and the one version does not necessarily exclude the other." John Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1932, page 780.

² Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957, page 277f.

³ James Hope Moulton and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963, page 174.

Two different words are here used to express speech, with a nice distinction which can hardly be conveyed without paraphrase. The verb *λελειν* is used of speaking, in contrast with or as a breaking of silence, voluntary or imposed. Thus the dumb man, after he was healed, *spoke* (*ελαλησεν*); and Zacharias, when his tongue was loosed, *began to speak* (*ελαλει*). In the use of the word the writer contemplates the *fact* rather than the *substance* of speech. Hence, it is used of God (Heb. i. 1), the point being, not *what* God said, but the fact that he spoke to men. On the contrary, *λεγειν* refers to the *matter* of speech. The verb originally means to *pick out*, and hence to use words *selected* as appropriate expressions of thought, and to put such words together in orderly discourse. Here, then, we have Jesus first *breaking silence* (*ελαλησεν*), and then *discoursing* (*λεγων*).⁴

ἐδόθη μοι -

The aorist ἐδόθη states a fact, “was given,” and refers to the human nature of Jesus alone: for according to the divine nature all authority belonged to the Son from all eternity.⁵

πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆν -

All authority, πᾶσα ἐξουσία (not δυναμις) = the active power, the full ability to do as one wills. Two domains are mentioned, ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, **in heaven and on earth**. All authority in each. Nothing more comprehensive can be conceived.⁶

With these words Jesus claims to be the Son of Man who was given all authority by the Ancient of days (see Daniel 7:13,14). The authority that has been delegated to him by the Father he now delegates to his disciples. “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you (John 20:21).”⁷

For Further Reading:

On the two natures of Christ and the communication of attributes, Cf. Art. VIII of the Formula of Concord.

Summary

From the context of verse 17, it would appear that when the disciples first saw Jesus on the Galilean mountain, He was at a distance. As He came closer to His followers—presumably so they could see it was really Him and so they could hear Him—He spoke to them. Jesus said He had been given (referring to His human nature) all power in heaven and upon the earth.

Verse 19

πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,

Translations

NKJV Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

⁴ Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company (Reprint of Second Edition, 1888), page 149.

⁵ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1943, page 1171.

⁶ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Eisenach Gospel Selections*, Columbus, OH: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1928, page 577f.

⁷ G. Jerome Albrecht and Michael J. Albrecht, *The People's Bible: Matthew*, Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996, page 442.

NIV Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

My translation: Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Vocabulary

μαθητεύσατε - 2 plural, 1 aorist, active imperative, from μαθητεω.

Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich: 1. intransitive- be or become a pupil or disciple; 3. transitive- make a disciple of, teach.⁸

Thayer: 1. intransitive- to be the disciple of one; to follow his precepts and instruction. 2. Transitive- to make a disciple;
to teach, instruct.⁹

βαπτίζοντες - nominative plural masculine present active participle, from βαπτίζω- baptize, wash with water.

Grammar Notes

The Hellenistic transformation of intransitive actives into causatives is represented in μαθητευειν: it meant first “to be a disciple”..., then became a deponent (Mt. 13:52, 27:57 v.l.), and from this there developed a new active “to make disciples of” (28:19, A 14:21).¹⁰

αὐτούς - “them.” Regularly pronouns take their grammatical form from a substantive antecedent expressed or understood. Sometimes, instead of direct agreement with the grammatical form of an expressed antecedent, we have logical agreement, in some instances with actual or assumed sex rather than grammatical gender (Mt. 28:19)...¹¹

οὖν- “Therefore.” Jesus could issue this command of v. 19, based upon His ἐξουσία:

Therefore, οὖν has a peculiar force here; it draws a conclusion from the gift of all authority bestowed upon Christ; it puts all this power and authority behind the command to evangelize the world. This οὖν shows how what otherwise would be absolutely impossible, now becomes gloriously possible, yea, an assured reality.¹²

πορευθέντες - nominative plural, 1 aorist middle participle, from πορευομαι. In our translation we give the word “go” the sense of an imperative, based on the following comments:

Literally the original says, “Having gone, therefore, make disciples...” In such cases the participle as well as the verb that follows it can be—in the present case must be—interpreted as having imperative force.¹³

⁸ Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, page 486.

⁹ Joseph Henry Thayer, *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Lafayette, Indiana: AP & A, 1979, Page 386.

¹⁰ F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961, page 82.

¹¹ H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, The Macmillan Company, 1955, page 135.

¹² Lenski, *Eisenach Gospel Selections*, page 580.

¹³ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973, page 999.

When a participle functions as a circumstantial participle dependent on an imperative, it normally gains some imperatival force...¹⁴

How new and different Christ's command must have sounded to the ears of the apostles! Lenski makes the point: "Hitherto men were welcomed when *they* came to Israel, the people of God, now the people of God are to go to men everywhere."¹⁵

"Teach" vs. "Make Disciples"

The King James Version (KJV), upon which many of us grew up, translated μαθητεύσατε as "teach": "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..." However, the New International Version (NIV), which we currently utilize, adopted the translation "make disciples of" for μαθητεύσατε: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." There have been some, even in confessional Lutheran circles, who have charged the NIV translation of Matthew 28:19 is tied to the Reformed tenets of Donald McGavran's and C. Peter Wagner's Church Growth Movement (CGM). To be exegetically honest, however, we must say that "make disciples of" was the preferred translation among Greek scholars and conservative biblical commentators long before there was a NIV or a CGM:

Vincent (1888): "make disciples of."¹⁶

Albert Barnes: "The word rendered *teach*, here, is not one that is usually so translated in the New Testament. This word properly means *disciple*, or *make disciples of*, all nations."¹⁷

P.E. Kretzmann (1921) uses both "discipling" and "making disciples."¹⁸

Lenski (1943): "The heart of the commission is in the one word μαθητεύσατε. This imperative, of course, means, 'to turn into disciples,' and its aorist form conveys the thought that this is actually to be done. The verb itself does not indicate *how* disciples are to be made, it designates only an activity that will result in disciples. It connotes results not methods and ways. The translation 'teach' is, therefore, unfortunate and even misleading to those who are not able to examine the original."¹⁹

For Further Reading:

For a more thorough discussion of the translation of μαθητεύσατε, refer to a paper by Prof. Jerald Plitzuweit presented at the Northern Wisconsin District Convention (WELS), Appleton, WI, June 18, 1996, concerning the topic: *The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20) with special reference to μαθητεύσατε and the translation, "make disciples."*

πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

The word "all" plays a dominant role in all three verses of this text under our consideration. Jesus has been given all power; He commands us to make disciples of all nations; He wants us to baptize and teach all nations all things He has commanded us. How these verses tie in so beautifully with the biblical doctrine of universal justification! Let's pay close attention to Ylvisaker here:

¹⁴ D.A. Carson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984, vol. 8, page 595.

¹⁵ Lenski, *Eisenach Gospel Selections*, page 580.

¹⁶ Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, page 149.

¹⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1962, page 145.

¹⁸ Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, The New Testament, vol. 1, 1921, page 162.

¹⁹ Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, page 1172.

Jesus came to save all men, He bare the sins of all on the accursed tree, He atoned for all through His death, He would have all hear the Gospel, He desires that all men shall be His disciples, no one excepted.²⁰

One question with which some commentators have concerned themselves is whether or not “all nations” includes the Jews. “All nations” have been understood in two basic ways: 1) All Gentiles, i.e., all nations except Israel (cf. Mt. 4:15; 6:32; 10:5,18; 12:18,21; 20:19,25); 2) All people, including Israel (cf. Mt. 21:43).²¹ We would tend to agree with Hendriksen:

It is very clear from the story of the non-Jewish wise men (2:1-12), who came to worship the newborn King, and from such other passages as 8:11, 12; 15:28; 21:43; 22:8-10, that from the very beginning the evangelization of the world was included in the purpose of God. See also John 3:16; 10:16. Matthew too, as has been pointed out, had nothing less than this in mind. But as was stated in connection with 10:5, “In God’s plan it was *from Jerusalem* that the gospel must spread out among the nations.” Cf. Acts 1:8. Therefore the divinely instituted order was, “To the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).²²

Lutheran and Reformed Views of βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς

In considering what the commentators have to say about the phrase βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς, it’s interesting how interpretations fall along denominational and theological lines. Christ’s followers make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching. Notice how such Lutheran writers as Kretzmann, Lenski and Ylvisaker correctly and properly discuss the means of grace, the gospel in Word and sacrament, in connection with the making of disciples:

And this discipling should be done by two means of grace. First there is the means of making disciples by baptizing...²³

Two participles of means then state how all nations are to be made into disciples: by baptizing them and by teaching them. The order in which these two participles appear is not accidental. Jesus sees beyond the first missionary stage of the gospel work when adults must be taught before baptism can be administered to them; he sees his church being established among the nations and children thus entering it in infancy, and this by means of baptism.²⁴

Baptism is mentioned before the instruction, but this arrangement is not proof positive that baptism must precede teaching in every case. Less reason by far do we have to join the Baptists in the conclusion that instruction must always precede baptism. God has not established a certain order in this matter for the individual. The orthodox Church may therefore use its God-given Christian liberty and discretion according to the conditions that may be encountered.²⁵

While the participle βαπτίζοντες is not an imperative, it yet receives imperative force from the main verb which is imperative. Here Jesus prescribes how we are to make disciples, and what he wants us to do he states in these words which are thus called «the baptismal formula.»²⁶

²⁰ Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, page 781.

²¹ Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, page 596.

²² Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, page 999.

²³ Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, New Testament, vol. 1., page 162.

²⁴ Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel*, page 1173.

²⁵ Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, page 781f.

²⁶ Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel*, page 1177.

Even the Reformed commentator Hendriksen offers a clear and succinct exegesis of this section. But after these words he reveals his Baptist leanings in denying baptism for infants and as a means of grace:

The main verb is “Make disciples.” Subordinate to this are: *a.* baptizing them, and *b.* teaching them. In such a construction it would be completely wrong to say that because the word baptizing precedes the word teaching, therefore people must be baptized before they are taught. It is rather natural that baptizing is mentioned first, for while a person is baptized once (ordinarily), he continues throughout his life to be taught.

The concepts “baptizing” and “teaching” are simply two activities, in co-ordination with each other, but both subordinate to “make disciples.” In other words, by means of being baptized and being taught a person becomes a disciple...²⁷

Then there are those who are blatantly Reformed in their opinions, and who allow their preconceived notions to determine their exegesis—which ends up being, in reality, an “eisegesis”:

Without being conjoined by *καί*, therefore not coordinate with, but subordinate to the *βαπτίζοντες*, intimating that a certain ethical teaching must necessarily accompany in every case the administration of baptism: *while ye teach them to observe everything*, etc. This moral instruction must not be omitted when you baptize, but it must be regarded as an essential part of the ordinance. That being the case, infant baptism cannot possibly have been contemplated in *βαπτίζω*, nor of course, in *παντα τη εθνη* either.²⁸

εἰς τὸ ὄνομα - “in” or “into the name?”

Ylvisaker’s interpretation of *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα* seems a bit ambiguous: “This baptism shall be ‘in,’ literally ‘to,’ the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.”²⁹ Lenski, on the other hand, is very emphatic in expressing his opinion. Lenski seems to be responding to those of his day who claimed the *εἰς* meant “on the authority of”:

εἰς τὸ ὄνομα means, “in the name,” not, “into.” This is the use of *εἰς* in the Koine, which all the newer grammars treat in full. R. 592 says without qualification: “In Matt. 28:19 *βαπτίζοντες εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*, and Rom. 6:3, etc., *εἰς Χριστόν* and *εἰς τὸν θάνατον* the notion of sphere is the true one.”³⁰

Hendriksen, however, doesn’t seem to think using “in” or “into” makes much difference. We would tend to agree with him:

Should we baptize “in” or “into”? The debate on this has already lasted many years. [Here he refers specifically to Lenski in a footnote-SK]. Now since even in English—at least in conversational style—“in” frequently has the sense of “into”—“Children, come in the house”—a decision on this point may not be quite as important as some try to make it. Nevertheless, all things considered, I believe “into” is defensible. Neither “into” nor “in” is necessarily wrong. A good case can be made for either.³¹

βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος·

By baptism God gives himself to us; the Father becomes our Father and adopts us as his children (Gal. 3:26,27; John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1); the Son becomes our Redeemer, for we are baptized in his death and

²⁷ Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, page 1000.

²⁸ H.A.W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Gospel of Matthew*, Peabody, MA: Hendriksen Publishers, Inc., 1983, page 530.

²⁹ Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, page 782.

³⁰ Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel*, page 1175.

³¹ Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, page 1000f.

cleansed by his blood to be his own (Eph. 5:26) and have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:12-13), so that his righteousness is our glorious dress (Matt. 22:11; Is. 61:10) and we are members of his body (Eph. 5:30; 1 Cor. 12:13; John 15:4); the Holy Ghost becomes our comforter and the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 11:22), we become his temple in which together with the Father and the Son he dwells (1 Cor. 3:10). In this way we assume *a new relation to God* by means of this sacrament of regeneration, our heart and spirit being renewed and pursuing a new direction through the joint operation of the three divine persons.³²

To baptize to the triune God is to place the one who is baptized, through baptism, into communion with the Trinity, in such a way that the object of the act is His possession and is dedicated to His service.³³

Summary

Based upon the authority Jesus spoke of in verse 18, our Lord is able to command His followers to go throughout the entire world and make disciples of Christ from every nation. We are to do this by dispensing the means of grace—the Gospel in Word and sacraments. We make people from all over the world Christ’s followers by baptizing them into the name of the Triune God, and as we see in the next verse, by teaching them all of God’s Word.

Verse 20

διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

Translations

NKJV teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

NIV and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

My translation: teaching them to keep all things I commanded you; and behold, I am with you all the days until the completion of the age.

Vocabulary

διδάσκοντες- nominative plural masculine present active participle, from διδασκῶ teach, instruct.³⁴ Thayer: to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses; to be a teacher; to discharge the office of teacher, conduct oneself as a teacher.³⁵

τηρεῖν - 1. Keep watch over, guard; 2. Keep, hold, reserve, preserve someone or something- a. for a definite purpose or a suitable time; b. keep etc. unharmed and undisturbed; 3. Keep=not lose; 4. Keep=protect; 5. Keep, observe, fulfill, pay attention to.³⁶

³² Rohnert, quoted by Lenski, *Eisenach Gospel Selections*, page 585.

³³ Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, page 782.

³⁴ Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, page 191.

³⁵ Thayer, *The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, page 386.

³⁶ Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, page 822f.

ἐντειλάμην - 1 singular, 1 aorist middle indicative, from ἐντελλῶ - in the middle voice it means command, order, give orders or ordain.³⁷

συντελείας - completion, close, end.³⁸

διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐντειλάμην ὑμῖν

Verse 19 spoke of baptism. Verse 20 begins with the other means of grace that God's people use to make disciples of all nations. The Holy Spirit uses these means to create faith in Christ within people's hearts. Jesus is not referring here to just any teaching, but teaching everything He has commanded us. This is nothing other than His Word, the Holy Scriptures, the Bible:

The second means of making disciples is that of teaching them to observe closely all things which Jesus has committed to His disciples, to expound to them the counsel of God to their salvation. Not human notions, but the Word of the Gospel, the inspired Word of God shall be the content of all preaching in the Church of Jesus Christ, no more, no less.³⁹

...the reference is to Jesus' instruction in general from the moment He appeared in His prophetic capacity. His instruction shall be kept both as to the Law and the Gospel, inwardly and outwardly, in doctrine as well as in life, in our confession—this is His will to all who would be His disciples.⁴⁰

...teaching them, present participle, implying that Christian instruction is to be a continuous process, not subordinate to and preparing for baptism, but continuing after baptism with a view to enabling disciples to walk worthily of their vocation.⁴¹

A living reception in the heart is had in mind, an assimilation by means of faith, one that will henceforth control and mold the entire character and life. Hence also this teaching will be so dear to the heart that no man will be allowed to take it away or in any way to alter it by false teaching.⁴²

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

In the past, some have suggested that our Lord's Great Commission was intended only for the original apostles. These closing words, however, show that Christ is directing His Great Commission to Christians of all time. The apostles would not live physically and bodily upon this earth until the Last Day. The words of Matt. 28:18-20 are thus addressed not only to the apostles, but to Christ's followers of every age and time, even to those who will be alive physically and bodily at His second coming.

ἐγώ...εἰμι-

"I am..." reminds us of the name of God in the Old Testament, Jehovah, as well as what Jesus said to the Jews in John 8:58, "'I tell you the truth,' Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!'" Jesus Himself is the great I AM.

³⁷ F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965, page 72.

³⁸ Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, page 210.

³⁹ Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, New Testament, vol. 1., page 162.

⁴⁰ Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, page 783 (footnote).

⁴¹ W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, vol. 1, 1974, page 340.

⁴² Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, page 1179.

For what is this finished Gospel but the interpretation, full and clear at last, of that great Name of the old covenant, the name Jehovah: “I AM,” “I AM THAT I AM” (Exod. iii. 14)? All of the Old Testament revelation is gathered up in this final utterance, “I AM—with you”...⁴³

Nor is it just our Lord’s divine nature that is present with us: “...the entire person of Christ is present, to which both natures belong, the divine and the human...”⁴⁴ What a comfort as we go about our Lord’s business of making disciples of all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Triune God and teaching them all of God’s Word!

There is no vagueness about this assurance. It has been called a promise; it is *a fact*. Note the emphatic introduction: “Remember,” or “Take note,” “Pay close attention,” “Look.” The pronoun “I,” included in the verb, is also written as a separate word and is very emphatic, as if to say, “No one less than I myself am with you.” “With you” not just “forever” but “all the days,” or “day in day out.” Think of these days following each other one by one, each with its own trials, troubles, and difficulties, but each day also accompanied by the assurance, “My grace is sufficient for you. I will never leave you or forsake you.” This continues on and on until the close or consummation of the age. And even then there is nothing to fear; see Matt. 25:31-30.⁴⁵

Summary

Along with baptizing people in the name of the Trinity, we also make disciples by teaching them all the truths of God’s Word, the Bible. As Christ’s believers carry out His Great Commission, the great I AM, Jehovah, the God-man, will be with us with His strengthening and protecting presence until He comes visibly again on the Last Day.

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⁴³ John Munro Gibson, *The Expositor’s Bible: the Gospel of St. Matthew*, London: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1903, page 450.

⁴⁴ The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Article VIII, Of the Person of Christ, *Concordia Triglotta*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921, page 1043.

⁴⁵ Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, page 1003.

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