

Greek Contextual Analysis and Exegetical Paper of Matthew 16:22-28

by

Raleigh Bagley III

August 14, 2021

Abstract

As the OT closes on an annotation of anticipation of the promised Messiah, a son of David to rule forever as the king of Israel, the NT opens with an annotation on Scripture's fulfillment. The evidence that the kingdom of God has arrived is Jesus' resurrection from the dead: "all authority in heaven and earth" is this mark. The book of Matthew echoes Old Testament themes and covenants: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (1:1). The words translated "the book of the genealogy" (*biblos geneaseōs*) recall the first book of the Bible, which is the only other place where the phrase *biblos geneaseōs* occurs (Genesis 2:4; 5:1), suggesting here the inauguration of the new creation in Christ."¹ Matthew's citation of Jesus' words in his teaching the disciples regarding prayer to the Father, "thy kingdom come" is the reference (future) of his kingdom inaugurated, but not yet consummated (6:10), though God's will is contested by Satan— both he and death will be crushed (1 Corinthians 15). Matthew also declares that Jesus is the Christ, the son of David, the Son of the living God, a point signaled in the first verse. He is the promise of the Davidic dynasty. The kingdom of God has arrived because it has arrived in Jesus Christ. One notes that Jesus does not associate himself as the Christ or the son of David, however Matthew does this regularly. "The most important text is 16:13-20, where Peter declares that Jesus is the Christ, though subsequent events reveal that Peter did not understand the nature of Jesus' messianic ministry. Peter's declaration functions as one of the climaxes in Matthew's narrative, demonstrating that Jesus' disciples are finally beginning to grasp his identity."² By using the exegetical method, one will endeavor to outline, exegete, understand the original author's meaning of the text, and apply the theology of Matthew 16:22-28.

Keywords: exegetical methodology, faithfulness to Christ

¹ Thomas Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 433.

² *Ibid.*, 434.

Historical Information

The Hebrew Scriptures— or Christian Old Testament— permeate Matthew’s Gospel. Approximately fifty-five references prove close enough in wording for commentators typically to label them quotations, compared to about sixty-five for the other three canonical Gospels put together.”³ The Matthean focus is not on the land of promise, but rather the offspring fulfilled in Jesus himself, “indicating that the people of God, the new Israel, includes both Jews and Gentiles.”⁴ Hence, the reoccurring theme is the fulfillment of the OT law. The words “to fulfill the law and the prophets” throughout the church’s history have become somewhat of a hermeneutical exercise that continues to beg the question of law relevancy in the life of the Christian. “The instructions about the multifarious sacrifices in the service of the Tabernacle or the Temple are recorded in Scriptures as divine commands. We see now that they are to be interpreted as symbolizing the love of God and love of one’s neighbor for ‘on these two commands the whole Law depends, and the prophets’”⁵

It is likely that Matthew’s audience was predominantly Jewish-Christian. Their location, perhaps is Antioch of Syria. For these Christian disciples, controversy is somewhat of a norm since many of their family members are Jews and attached to the local synagogues, of which is suggested that the Matthean audience is not due to the hypothesis of their breaking from these places of worship. D. A. Carson notes, “wounds may still have been raw due to eviction from mainstream Judaism. Thus, Matthew could simultaneously emphasize the uniquely Jewish stages of Christ’s mission (10:5-6; 15:24) ...”⁶

³ G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Saint Augustine., *City of God*, ed. B. Radice (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 1984), 379.

⁶ G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1.

Literary Structure

Considering two verses of Matthew 16:22-23, we find the not so welcoming news of Jesus and his soon departure from the disciples. Given this idea, the rendering of the Greek translation sets the tone and setting to proper interpretation of what is at stake when one considers this bombshell event. Emphasizing these first verses, one is able to consider the context of the following verses of the narrative. Matthew's use of προσλαβόμενος, a participle in its lexical form and rendering of *to take or receive into one's home, with the collateral idea of kindness or to take one unto one* (Acts 17:5, Rev. 18), used mostly in kindness, though is not the case in this instance. Yet, here, Peter takes Jesus aside to rebuke him instead, in disapproval of his recent report. While Peter addresses Jesus as Lord, he treats him as a fallen Lord who must be helped to his feet. He rebukes Jesus, just as Jesus rebuked the wind and sea (8:26) and will rebuke a demon (17:18)—the same word (Greek: epitimao) is used in all three places. Peter takes charge and repudiates, in the strongest possible language, what Jesus has said. The disciple who has so recently deified the Lord (16:16) now defies him.⁷ Matthew's use of the aorist indicative ἤρξατο *began* indicates the time of Peter's action and not a summary of it. "It is the way to describe the action without special interest on the nature of the action."⁸

Given Peter's actions, he crosses a line by challenging Jesus' leadership: "God forbid it, Lord!" The use of the present active infinitive 'ἐ ἄ πτιμ ν' is used to emphasize the weight of which Peter rebukes Jesus. But one should not be surprised that Peter fails to understand the words of his Lord. In Paul's later description of Christ's crucifixion, he stresses that the preaching of the cross is "a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks" (1

⁷Barbara Aland and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece: Greek – English New Testament* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 2012), 52.

⁸A. Chadwick Thornhill, *Greek for Everyone: Introductory Greek for Bible Study and Application* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 78.

Corinthians 1:23). However, "there is power and wisdom at the cross" (1 Corinthians 1:24). The expectation of Peter observing what is at stake will not be achieved until he sees the resurrected Christ. Hence, one emphasizes Jesus' response: "But he turned, and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan!' You are a stumbling block (σκάνδαλον, skandalon) to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men." Once referred to as "rock," Peter is now an *impediment placed in the way* of Jesus— a stumbling block.⁹

Following, verses 24-28 bring into focus the question of genuine discipleship and Peter's failure to understand Christ purpose in coming as the OT prophets wrote. Here singular dative moves 'τῷ Πέτρῳ' to the plural dative 'τοῖς μαθηταῖς' as Jesus addresses all, to include the "12" by the rendering of the word 'τις' 'anyone.'¹⁰ Three clauses comprising three imperatives pronounce the meaning of 'come after me' ὀπίσω μου ἐῖλθε ν, the condition of being Jesus' disciple. One understood this relationship because of this rendering of the Greek language's implications. Here, it is further understood that one must truly repudiate one's interests in total commitment to Christ.

Contextual Analysis

Matthew 16:22-28

22 καὶ προσλαβόμενος αὐτὸν ὁ Πέτρος ἤρξατο ἐπιτιμᾶν αὐτῷ λέγων
ἰλεὺς σοὶ κύριε
οὐ μὴ ἔσται σοὶ τοῦτο.

Matthew's attention is turned toward Jesus' earthly mission— his Father's will and impending death. He is on the road to the cross. Jesus now turns from public proclamation of the kingdom's nearly advancement to the disciples' instruction of his soon sacrifice of death

⁹ John A. Broadus, *Commentary on Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1990), 365.

¹⁰ Barbara Aland and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece: Greek – English New Testament* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 2012), 52.

and departure. The kingdom must come through his death and eventual resurrection. Peter's disapproval now becomes the center of confrontation as one who was once referred to as "rock" now becomes the hindrance to his Lord.

23 ὁ δὲ στραφεὶς εἶπεν τῷ Πέτρῳ ὑπάγε ὀπίσω μου Σατανᾶ
σκάνδαλον εἶ ἐμοῦ,
ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ
ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Peter's rejection of Jesus' enunciation is the antithesis of his previous declaration of Jesus' Messiahship. His rejection of Jesus' forecast of suffering at the hands of the elders of Israel is refused, and now Simon is labeled as "the mouthpiece of Satan" and stumbling block. Jesus' suggestion is that Peter actions reflect the attitude of Satan.

24 τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ
εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν
ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν
καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.

Jesus' words are the obligation that all who follow him must meet.

25 ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι
ἀπολέσει αὐτήν
ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ
ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ
εὕρήσει αὐτήν.

Giving up one's life physically suggests that one must be committed to follow his Lord to martyrdom if necessary—the ultimate gain is a spiritual life in exchange.

26 τί γὰρ ὠφεληθήσεται ἄνθρωπος
ἐὰν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον κερδήσῃ
τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ζημιωθῇ
ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος
ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ

The emphasis of Jesus' words is the result of one whose worldly possessions become the focus of life's journey. All of the material wealth and worldly privilege cannot counteract

for a lost soul damned to hell. Here the reference is condemnation, rendered κατάκριμα (katakrima), (Romans 8:1).

27 μέλλει γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι
ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ
μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ
καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ
κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ.

Jesus' departure will be temporary for he will return to earth to judge both the quick and the dead. His arrival as a boy was in degradation, but his re-appearance will be "in his Father's glory."

28 ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν
ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες τῶν ὧδε ἐστῶτων
οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου
ἕως ἄν ἴδωσιν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον
ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ.

The words of Jesus are the kingdom's advancement through the church's growth. Christian assurance is based on the promises of God. One is not saved on the grounds of one's fruit, but rather on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Application

Given Peter's boldness and rebuke of Jesus Christ, one may focus on the agenda behind the mis-step and impending danger of Peter's failure in looking away from the plan of God to that of his own devices. One is reminded that Jesus' words are never wasted, but because he is God, his will is always at work in the lives of those to whom he is called. For instance, Luke 22:31-32 chronicles another instance where Jesus' examination of Peter's heart proves again what sin can do in spite of one's efforts to overcome temptation. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your

brothers.” One notes that the word “you” used in this context is plural in Greek and denotes that not only Peter is a target for Satan’s desire, but all of the disciples are equally vulnerable. To follow Christ requires more than lip service, but fortitude based in commitment and surrender to the sovereign plan of God. Dallas Willard said, “effort does not equal earning. God initiates and enables, and then we respond in faith by cooperating with the work he desires to do in us. It is all motivated by grace.”¹¹

A reiteration of Jesus words “if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matt 16:23-24) supposes something greater, but possible when one’s faith is centered on the Savior. The rendering of ὀπίσω in the case of John 6:66 is as the state of those who grow recreant to Christ’s teaching and cease to follow him. Such is the case with an unrestrained spirit whose driving force is his own well-being. Such is the case with Peter. *From that time many* (or for this reason), Ἐκ τούτου πολλοὶ ἀπῆλθον τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, abandoned him decisively. Doubtless these *many...disciples* are those who found his earlier discourse intolerable.¹² “What they wanted, he would not give, what he offered, they would not receive. Jerusalem followers who failed to pass the test of unqualified allegiance and perseverance grounded in grace-prompted faith.”¹³ The literal understanding of “Get behind me!” is here combined with the concept of discipleship. A true disciple is one who places himself literally behind and in a position of obedience to follow the master.¹⁴ In comparing the Matthean text with its Marcan counterpart, Gundry observes that “the omission of ‘and seeing his disciples’ again relieves the severity in Mark’s portrayal of Peter; for in Mark the phrase distinguishes Peter from the disciples, i.e., makes him a non-

¹¹ Paul Petit, *Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2008), 47.

¹² D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 303.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1982), 338.

disciple at this point (he had left the position of a disciple behind Jesus in order to take Jesus aside and rebuke him).”¹⁵

To join Jesus in the Father’s house is to recognize the Father’s faith in the Son— his willing to do the Father’s will. This significance is the exclusivity of Jesus as the way, truth, and the life. Though not popular in this age, one must conclude from the Jews’ rejection of Jesus that it is the same in their culture. Jesus’ discourse in John 17 brings about the tension that ensued when Jesus and the disciples appear in public— “I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of world any more than I am of the world” (John 17:14). The portrait of Peter that is pictured in Matthew 16:22 is the antithesis of the apostle who declares: “Salvation is found in no one else...for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Jesus’ rebuke of Peter is one’s observation of “God’s will be done.” “Jesus no longer focuses on the way he himself must go; he focuses rather on the way the disciples must go.”¹⁶

Conclusion

“The pious mind must ascend still higher, namely, whither Christ call his disciples when he says, that every one of them must ‘take up his cross’ (Matthew 16:24). Those whom the Lord has chosen and honored with his intercourse must prepare for a hard, laborious, troubled life, a life full of many and various kinds of evil; it being the will of our heavenly Father...”¹⁷ These timely words are a reflection of what the cause and desire of the Father’s yoke upon his workmanship. Though this is shared relationship between his elect and himself, the responsibility of those who seek his will can rest assured that his Spirit grants the

¹⁵ R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, 338.

¹⁶ D. A. Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1980), 35.

¹⁷ John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book III, Chapter 8, 1* (Philadelphia, PA: Nicklin and Howe, 1816), 250.

sufficiency life's challenges. Matthew 16:22-28 is both a lesson in humility, but it is also a lesson of cross-bearing and self-denial. Those who trust in the flesh cannot please God. To do so is to “indulge a stupid and empty confidence in the flesh, and then trusting to wax proud against the Lord himself; as if our own faculties were sufficient without his grace.”¹⁸

Block Diagram – Matthew 16:22-28

22 καὶ προσλαβόμενος αὐτὸν ὁ Πέτρος ἤρξατο ἐπιτιμᾶν αὐτῷ λέγων
ἰλεὺς σοι κύριε
οὐ μὴ ἔσται σοι τοῦτο.

23 ὁ δὲ στραφεὶς εἶπεν τῷ Πέτρῳ ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου Σατανᾶ
σκάνδαλον εἶ ἐμοῦ,
ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ
ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

24 τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ
εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν
ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν
καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι.

25 ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλη τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι
ἀπολέσει αὐτήν
ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ
ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ
εὕρησει αὐτήν.

26 τί γὰρ ὠφεληθήσεται ἄνθρωπος
ἐὰν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον κερδήσῃ
τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ζημιωθῇ
ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος
ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ

27 μέλλει γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι
ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ
μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ
καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ
κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ.

28 ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν
ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες τῶν ὧδε ἐστῶτων
οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου
ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον

¹⁸ John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book III, Chapter 8, I, 1.*

ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ.

Syntax Analysis – Matthew 16:22-28

- 22 ἐπιτιμαν: causal/present active infinitive
εἰλέως: predicate/adjective, nominative, singular, masculine
κύριε: direct address/vocative, singular, masculine
- 23 σατανα: direct address/vocative, singular, masculine
οὐ φρονεῖς: progressive action (in progress)/present, active, indicative, singular, 2nd person
- 24 ἀραρνησάσθω: command to start action/aorist, middle, imperative, singular, 3rd person,
ακολουθεῖτω: command to start habitual action (to be carried out)/present, active, imperative, singular, 3rd person
- 25 ἀρολέση: purpose or result/aorist, active, subjunctive, singular, 3rd person,
- 26 ὠφελήθησεται: summary of future event occurring/future, passive, indicative, singular, 3rd person
- 27 του πατρὸς: source genitive/genitive, masculine, singular
- 28 οὐ μὴ γεύσωνται: emphatic negation/aorist, middle, plural, subjunctive, 3rd person

Bibliography

- Aland, Barbara and Aland, Kurt., *Novum Testamentum Graece: Greek – English New Testament*, Deutsche Biblelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 2012.
- Augustine, Saint., *City of God*, ed. B. Radice, New York, NY: Penguin Press, 1984.
- Beale G. K. and Carson, D. A., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Broadus, John., *Commentary on Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1990.
- Calvin, John. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book III, Chapter 8, 1*, Philadelphia, PA: Nicklin and Howe, 1816.
- Carson, D. A., *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1980
- Carson, D. A., *The Gospel According to John*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Gundry, R. H., *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1982.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J., L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles. *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009.
- Petit, Paul., *Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2008.
- Schreiner, Thomas, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.
- Thornhill, A. Chadwick., *Greek for Everyone: Introductory Greek for Bible Study and Application*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016.