

# Matthew 28:18–20 — Deeper Dive

## 1) Immediate Literary Setting (28:16–20)

- “The mountain” in Galilee (v.16) recalls Matthew’s mountain moments (5:1; 17:1; cf. 4:8 temptation). In Matthew, mountains signal revelation and royal identity.
- **Worship and hesitation** (v.17): some *proskyneō* (worship), yet “some doubted” (*edistasan*). Matthew’s realism: mission launches from a mixed community of awe and uncertainty. (Blomberg: this heightens the sufficiency of Jesus’ authority/presence over the disciples’ lack.)

## 2) Structure of 28:18–20

1. **Claim (v.18)** – The King’s authority.
2. **Commission (v.19a–b)** – Make disciples of all nations through going, baptizing, teaching.
3. **Curriculum (v.20a)** – Teach *to obey* everything Jesus commanded.
4. **Companionship (v.20b)** – “I am with you always.”

This neatly corresponds to Matthew’s broader arc: Immanuel presence (1:23) → authoritative Torah-giver (5–7) → crucified and risen Son of Man (26–28) → universal Lord who remains present (28:20).

## 3) Text & Translation Notes (key Greek features)

### v.18

- **ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς**
  - **ἐδόθη** (*edothē*, aorist **divine passive**): “has been given.” Agent implied = the Father. Echoes **Daniel 7:14 LXX** language of dominion “being given” to the Human One. (Wright/McKnight: enthronement after suffering; the royal vindication of the Son of Man.)
  - **πᾶσα ἐξουσία**: *exousia* is not mere *dynamis* (raw power) but **rightful jurisdiction**; the King’s legitimate authority.
  - **ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς**: a **merism** (“heaven and earth”) = comprehensive scope (cf. Gen 1:1). (Beale: true Adamic rule restored—see Ps 8; Gen 1:26–28; Jesus as last Adam exercises the vocation humanity forfeited.)

**Theological notes:**

- **N. T. Wright:** the Danielic “Son of Man” now publicly enthroned; resurrection = royal inauguration.
- **C. J. H. Wright:** God’s mission through Israel to bless the nations reaches its telos in the crucified-risen King who now sends a people.

## v.19

- **πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη**
  - **μαθητεύσατε** (aorist imperative) is the **main verb**: “make disciples.”
  - **πορευθέντες** (“going”) is a participle; syntactically it can function as **attendant circumstance** with an imperative sense (“Go and make...”), yet retains Matthew’s “as you go” missional posture (life-on-the-way).
  - **πάντα τὰ ἔθνη**: “all the nations” (Gentiles included). Matthew’s inclusio: Gentile magi at the start (2:1–12) → mission to the nations at the end (28:19). Isaiahic missional horizon (Isa 2; 49) is in view.
- **βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα**
  - **βαπτίζοντες** (present ptcp.): ongoing baptizing accompanies disciple-making.
  - **εἰς τὸ ὄνομα** (singular “Name”) **τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος**: classic Trinitarian cadence. (Bird: the singular *onoma* underscores unity of the Three in the one divine Name; allegiance is covenantal and relational.)
  - Baptism here functions as **public allegiance** to the King and incorporation into the Triune community (Bates: allegiance orientation; Beale: ecclesial “temple” people formed by the Name).
- **διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα...**
  - **διδάσκοντες** (present ptcp.) + **τηρεῖν** (“to keep/guard/obey”): teaching aims at **obedience**, not mere cognition. (Gorman: cruciform pedagogy—formation into the self-giving way of Jesus.)

## v.20

- **καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας**
  - **ἰδοὺ** grabs attention: “Look!” / “Behold!”
  - **ἐγὼ... εἰμι**: emphatic “I—I **am**—with you.” (Immanuel inclusio: 1:23 → 28:20.)
  - **πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας**: idiom “all the days,” i.e., **every kind of day** (ordinary and crisis days alike).
  - **ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος**: “until the consummation of the age.” Presence lasts through the Church’s mission until eschatological completion.
  - (Eph 1:20–23) fills the picture: Christ, exalted above all powers, **fills all things**—so His presence/authority coincide.

## 4) Narrative-Theological Context in Matthew

- **Kingship motif:** From the genealogy (royal line), to magi worship, to the Sermon's royal Torah, to Passion enthronement irony (27:29), Matthew climaxes in **explicit coronation** (28:18).
- **Temple motif:** With the veil torn (27:51), presence is no longer site-bound. (Beale: the **mobile temple** reality—Christ and, by union, His people—extends God's presence to the nations; cf. 18:20; 28:20.)
- **Immanuel motif:** "God with us" (1:23) → "I am with you always" (28:20). Presence bookends and underwrites mission.

## 5) Intertextual Notes

- **Daniel 7:13–14** — **Authority "given"** to the Human One; universal dominion. Matthew's **edothē** purposefully resonates with Daniel's gifting of sovereignty (Wright/McKnight).
- **Genesis 1:26–28 / Psalm 8** — Humanity's vocation to rule creation; Jesus as the **true image/last Adam** exercises faithful dominion (Beale; Bird). Baptism marks renewed-humanity allegiance under the last Adam.
- **Isaiah 2; 42; 49; 52** — The nations streaming to God's light; Servant mission to the ends of the earth. Matthew's Gospel repeatedly whispers Isaiah (e.g., 1:23; 3:3; 4:15–16).
- **Exodus 3:12; Joshua 1:9** — "I will be **with** you." The commission formula (authority + presence) is classically biblical. Jesus stands here as **YHWH-with-us**, commissioning a new Joshua-like people.
- **Matthew 11:27** — "All things have been **handed over** to me by my Father" (παρεδόθη). The Son's unique revelatory authority anticipates 28:18's universal **exousia**.
- **Ephesians 1:20–23** — The enthroned Christ fills His body; mission flows from His cosmic reign (Gorman's participation theme: we act **in/with** the crucified-risen Lord).

## 6) Discipleship as Allegiance, Formation, and Presence

- **Allegiance (Bates):** "Make disciples" = summon embodied loyalty to the reigning Jesus. Baptism is an oath-of-allegiance sign; teaching pursues a lived pledge of obedience.
- **Formation (Gorman):** "Teach **to obey**" = form people into cruciform love (Matthean ethics across chs. 5–7; 18). Discipleship is imitation more than mere information.
- **Presence (Wright / Beale):** Mission isn't dragging God into new places but **discovering the reigning Christ** and extending His presence as a temple people in the Spirit.

## 7) Missional Trajectory

- **From Galilee to the nations:** "Galilee of the Gentiles" (4:15) becomes the launchpad for **πάντα τὰ ἔθνη**. Matthew's "great commission" anticipates Acts' centrifugal movement but grounds it in **Christ's kingship** and **perpetual presence**, not in zeal or technique.

- **Church as teaching-and-baptizing community:** A people whose worship (28:17) issues in catechesis (**teach to obey**) and covenantal belonging (baptism into the Name).
- **Temple-expansion:** Where the Church goes, the presence goes (18:20; 28:20)—this is the *missio Dei* through a cruciform people (C.J.H. Wright; Gorman).

## 8) Debated/Seminal Linguistic Points (brief)

- **Attendant Circumstance?** *Poreuthentes* + imperative *matheteusate*: most agree “Go and make disciples,” yet the “as you go” nuance guards against reducing mission to special trips only; it **normalizes mission** in everyday vocation.
- **Trinitarian formula:** The singular **onoma** with three coordinated Persons is one of Matthew’s clearest triune moments (Bird). The church’s mission is irreducibly **Trinitarian**—from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit.
- **“Teach to obey”** vs “teach what I commanded”: Matthew’s **τηρεῖν** insists on praxis. (McKnight: kingdom is a people under a King’s will—ethic and obedience central, not optional.)

## 9) Study Prompts

1. **Track “authority” (*exousia*)** in Matthew: 7:29; 9:6, 8; 10:1; 21:23–27; 28:18. How does the theme move from teaching to healing to commissioning?
2. **Compare Daniel 7 + Psalm 8 + Genesis 1** with 28:18. How does Jesus fulfill Adamic vocation and royal Son of Man enthronement?
3. **Read 11:27 with 28:18.** What does the Father-to-Son transfer (“handed over/given”) imply about revelation and rule?
4. **Baptism & allegiance:** How do Rom 6; Gal 3:27; 1 Pet 3:21 complement Matthew’s covenantal/allegiance framing?
5. **Immanuel thread:** 1:23 → 18:20 → 28:20. How does “presence” reshape our understanding of mission from pressure to participation?

## One-Sentence Summary

In Matthew 28:18–20 the **Danielic Son of Man**, vindicated by resurrection, publicly claims the **Father-given authority** over heaven and earth, summons **embodied allegiance** from all nations through baptism and cruciform formation, and guarantees success not by technique but by His **unceasing Immanuel presence**—the temple-King expanding His reign through a people who teach the world to **obey** Him.