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**A WORD, SYNTACTICAL, NARRATIVE
AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 8:23-27**

By

Alex Smith

**A THESIS SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY**

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ABSTRACT OF
A WORD, SYNTACTICAL, NARRATIVE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF
MATTHEW 8:23-27

By Alex Smith

This thesis will examine Matthew 8:23-27 (the “Storm on the Sea” pericope) according to the methodology of discourse analysis at the word, syntactical, narrative and contextual level. Discourse analysis, in its broadest definition, studies the interaction between author, text and reader. This analysis is not just a study of the words on the page. Rather, it endeavors to participate fully with the intention and aims of the author as well as the effect of the text on the reader. Thus, it requires studying the text at all levels while also examining how the parts relate to the whole.

At the word level, this thesis will examine the important terms, grammatical constructions and the tense/aspect of the verbs of this pericope. As the aorist is the tense of the story-line verbs in Greek, non-aorist tenses may be of particular importance in highlighting and emphasizing important themes. Additionally, the terms of address κύριος (“Lord”) and ὀλιγόπιστοι (“of little faith”) used by Jesus and the disciples are of definite theological significance. Studying how these terms are used both in this pericope and in Matthew as a whole illuminates the full meaning of these words. A syntactical study examines the sentence structure and how the sentences relate to one another. This analysis will examine how the sentences are connected with one another, the dialog between Jesus and his disciples, and how Jesus is referenced within this pericope.

As Matthew 8:23-27 is a narrative, a comprehensive treatment must include reading this text according to literary principles. Particularly helpful at this point is the Actantial model developed by A. J. Greimas as well as other standard narrative tools. Finally, this study will conclude with an examination of this pericope in its immediate, intermediate and overall context of the Gospel of Matthew. In view here is what function this pericope plays within the overall structure of Matthew's Gospel. This will shed light on the behavior and actions of the participants in this pericope.

Absent from this method is the attempt to clarify difficulties or ambiguities by means of the parallel accounts in Mark and Luke. A central tenet of discourse analysis is to participate with the author in the story he wishes to tell. In this case, this is not accomplished by attempting to clarify Matthew with Mark and Luke. Matthew's voice, and only Matthew's voice, is the object of study. The parallel accounts contained in Mark and Luke will be discussed but only with reference to the following question: "If Matthew's account was not in Scripture, what would be missing"?

Generally, this thesis demonstrates the usefulness of a discourse analysis oriented approach to a text of Scripture. Specifically, the results of this method demonstrate that the ultimate crisis in this pericope is the insufficient faith of the disciples in Jesus. This insufficiency of faith is brought about by an inconsistent and incomplete discipleship caused by an incomplete understanding of Jesus. This theme of insufficient faith is emphasized by the location of this pericope in Matthew's Gospel. The problem of insufficiency of faith in this pericope is a distinctive of Matthew not present in the parallel accounts of either Mark or Luke.

Dedication

To the memory of my Mother

"O woman, great is your faith!" -- Matthew 15:28

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Finally, to the One who calms the sea: May I live not as the ἄνθρωποι who are fearful in the midst of life’s “storms” but as οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ who worship you as the Son of God.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Method

The idea for this thesis was born in a “Gospels” class taken at Covenant Theological Seminary in the spring of 2007. One assignment in this class was a paper comparing and contrasting the “Storm on the Sea” narrative as recounted in Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41 and Luke 8:22-25. These narratives are similar and most would, in the course of their devotional reading or study, not notice the “minor” differences. However, when these narratives are read carefully (preferably in Greek) and placed side by side, these minor difference suddenly become significant. Consider, for example, what the disciples call Jesus in their plea for help: Matthew has κύριος (“Lord”), Mark has διδάσκαλος (“Teacher”), and Luke has ἐπιστάτης (“Master”). These are three different terms with three different meanings.

As the research began for the project, it became apparent that there was only space for a careful examination of one of these pericopes. As such, Matthew’s account will be the source of study for this thesis. This restriction is only a half-truth for the reasons why only Matthew’s account is in view. Not only did the limitations of space confine this thesis to one account, the presuppositions of the author did as well. This presupposition (often repeated by my seminary professors) is that it is necessary to cooperate with the author by letting him tell you the story he wants to tell. This is not accomplished by a synoptic reading of the Gospels. The impulse to harmonize the Gospels to show that there is no real contradiction is admirable, but runs the risk of

creating a “fifth” Gospel. God, in His sovereignty, has given four different accounts of the one Gospel. He did not give us one “summary.” This observation bears directly on method. Matthew’s account of this incident will be examined; not Mark’s and not Luke’s. The parallel accounts contained in Mark and Luke will be discussed but only with reference to the following question: “If Matthew’s account was not in Scripture, what would be missing”? This thesis is not an exercise in Gospel harmonization; it is interested only in participating with Matthew in the story he wants to tell.

What this thesis will do is to examine this pericope (Matthew 8:23-27) at four levels: the word level, the syntactical level, the narrative level and the contextual level. This exegetical treatment is consistent with the discipline of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis, in general terms, “. . . refers to the study and interpretation of both the spoken and written communication of humans.”¹ This discipline examines more than just what is written on the page. Rather, it also takes into consideration the role of author, text, and reader in the communicative act.² It is perhaps best to describe this type of analysis not with a formal definition but with the type of questions it seeks to answer. Such questions would include the following: What is the author trying to say? How does he communicate this by the words, grammar, and sentence structure he uses? How will a cooperative reader respond to the text? How does the surrounding text illuminate the current text in view? A full discourse analysis is beyond both the scope of this thesis and the ability of its author.

¹ Jeffrey T. Reed, “Discourse Analysis as New Testament Hermeneutic: A Retrospective and Prospective Appraisal,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39, no. 2 (June 1996): 224.

² Ibid.

However, this thesis will endeavor to do two things with respect to discourse analysis: 1) Relate the four different “parts” of exegesis (word, syntactical, narrative, and contextual) to the whole text and to 2) Be cognizant of the role of author, text and reader in this act of communication. The four different levels of exegesis will now be discussed in turn.

The “bottom floor” of this discourse analysis method is the study of the tense/aspect of the verbs as well as an examination of important words and terms. How do the verbs advance the storyline or provide background information in this pericope? Does the tense/aspect choice shed light on the actions of the characters or provide detail? As the aorist is the normal tense of the “story-line” verbs,³ non-aorist tenses may therefore be of particular importance. Any grammatical constructions, such as result or purpose clauses, are examined at this level.

Next is the study of particular words. The disciples address Jesus as κύριε (“Lord”) in v. 25 and Jesus addresses his disciples as ὀλιγόπιστοι (“of little faith”) in v. 26. Both terms denote something significant not only about the addressee but also about the one making the address. Further issues included at the word level include the nature of the severity of the storm and the identity of the ἄνθρωποι (“men”) in v. 27.

Next is the syntactical structure of this pericope. At this level, the basic sentence structure of this passage will come under examination. There are three specific areas that a syntactical analysis will be concerned with: the use of conjunctions with respect to the syntactical units that comprise this pericope, the reported speech between Jesus and his

³ Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 191.

disciples, and how Jesus is referenced in this pericope. The point of this analysis is that much of what an author deems is important is “encoded” in the language.

Matthew will show, not tell, the reader what is important by how he has structured his discourse. It is up to the reader to be aware of these general principles of discourse.

The first feature of this syntactical analysis is the careful study of how the sentences in this narrative are connected. How these units are connected will demonstrate the relationship between these units. As will be discussed in chapter two, the connective conjunction καὶ is the “default” or “unmarked” conjunction in the Greek New Testament.⁴ Thus, the use of a “marked” conjunction such as δὲ or τότε may highlight an important development in the narrative.⁵ Next, this analysis will examine the dialog or “reported speech” in this pericope. The dialog in this pericope consists of a plea to Jesus by the disciples, a rebuke by Jesus to the disciples in the form of a question, and a somewhat rhetorical question voiced by the ἄνθρωποι (the disciples?) with regard to the personhood of Jesus. Finally, there are certain discourse analysis rules which govern how characters are referenced within a text. For example, is the person referenced by a 3rd person inflection on the verb or is he referenced by a noun phrase or by a pronoun? This study of “participant identity” will be applied with respect to Jesus and his actions in this narrative.

Narrative analysis refers to the study of the characters, plot, and setting. This analysis examines the tools and artistry Matthew used to construct a story. The tools used here will be the Actantial model developed by A.J. Gremias and the use of this model by such scholars as N.T. Wright and Richard Hays. This model breaks a story

⁴ Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek* (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 71.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

down into its three main “sequences” (initial, topical and final) and provides a “birds-eye” view of the narrative text. Additionally, this study will apply the standard categories of Introduction, Conflict, Crisis, Climax, Resolution and Following Action to this pericope. Such categories will help identify the narrative peak of this pericope. These narrative tools will help clarify the roles of each participant and their relationships as well as develop an appreciation of this pericope as a well-narrated story.

Contextual analysis is concerned with how a narrative “fits” and how it functions in both its immediate and general contexts. This pericope is preceded by the accounts of two would-be disciples (8:18-22) and is followed by the healing of the two-demon possessed men (8:28-34). How is this pericope connected, both structurally and thematically, with these accounts? The answer to this question will help clarify what function this pericope is playing within this section of Matthew’s story. It is also germane to ask how Matthew has structure his story as a whole and where this pericope fits within the entire text. Included in this topic is the question of how the disciples are portrayed. Are they pictured in a negative or positive light? Why do they behave as they do? Contextual analysis includes not only material this is similar in context but also in content. This pericope is the first of two “doublet” stories; that is, stories which are similar.⁶ The second of these stories is Matthew 14:22-33, the episode in which Jesus walks on water. How are these two stories similarly structured and what inference can be made from their similarities? How do the disciples respond this “second time around”?

⁶ Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 175.

Finally, consistent with the presuppositions mentioned above, the other two gospel accounts will be compared to Matthew only to determine what would be missing if Matthew's account were not in the canon. The accounts in Mark and Luke will not be used to "clarify" difficulties in Matthew; they will be used only to examine what Matthew includes that the other two do not.

These four levels of analysis (word, syntactical, narrative, and contextual) are not independent; rather, they overlap to some degree. Indeed, this is an important principle of discourse analysis. The parts relate to the whole and all levels must be kept in view. For example, whether or not the ἄνθρωποι of v. 27 refer to the disciples or others is not just a grammatical question. This term may also be a literary device Matthew employs in order to comment on the actions and character of the disciples. Additionally, what the disciples are communicating when they call Jesus "κύριε," can only be examined in light of how this term is used by Matthew as a whole. However, this four-fold division is helpful in organizing and analyzing this passage. To what extent the observations from each method reinforce one another and whether or not these observations are consistent with Matthew's larger narrative will serve as the chief motivation for this thesis.

Chapter 2: Word and Syntactical Analysis

The task of this chapter is to establish the text with reference to text critical issues and to apply a close analysis of this material at the word and syntactical level.

Specifically, this will consist of the study of verb tenses, particularly with respect to the non-Aorist use of verbs. Second, the terms of address κύριε (v. 25) and ὀλιγόπιστοι (v. 26) will be studied with respect to how Matthew treats these terms elsewhere. Additional topics are the nature of the storm and the identity of the ἄνθρωποι in v. 27. Discourse analysis tools will help examine the individual syntactical units and how they are connected, the reported speech in this pericope, and how Jesus is referenced within this pericope.

2.1 Introductory Matters: Text Critical Issues and Pericope Boundary

There are two minor text critical issues in this pericope, both of which occur in v. 25. The UBS (4th ed.)⁷ and Nestle-Aland (XXVII ed.)⁸ have this verse as, καὶ προσελθόντες ἤγειραν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα. The referent of the participle προσελθόντες (“they having gone”) is the disciples; longer variant readings make this explicit, having either “his disciples having gone” or “his disciples having gone to him.”⁹

⁷ Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1993).

⁸ Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993).

⁹ Roger L. Omanson, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2006), 12.

Variant readings also add the understood “us” after the imperative verb σωσον (“save”).¹⁰ Clearly, these variant readings only make explicit what is implicitly known and provide no substantive change.

Following most of the exegetical treatments of this passage, the limits of this pericope are understood to be v. 23 and v. 27.¹¹ However, v. 18, normally viewed as part of the previous pericope (“The Cost of Following Jesus”)¹² actually provides needed background information. The disciples follow Jesus into the boat (v. 23) because he ordered them to go to the other side (v.18). The importance of this is that the disciples are obedient to Jesus’ command, particularly with regard to the events in v. 19-22. The significance of the disciples “following” Jesus into the boat will be discussed in chapter four.

2.2 Verb Tense/Aspect

The topic of verbal tense/aspect in New Testament Greek is a complex field. Fortunately, two general principles may serve as a sufficient guide for this analysis:

General Principle 1: The aorist implies “sequential” events, while the imperfect implies “simultaneous” events.¹³

General Principle 2: The aorist denotes the main or “foreground” events, while the imperfect or present denotes “background” events.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ So ESV, NIV and numerous commentaries.

¹² ESV heading.

¹³ Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, 76.

¹⁴ Ibid., 191. C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 22.

Narratives, or more simply “stories,” progress by a succession of events.

Hence, non-aorist verbs (verbs which do not advance the story-line) may be of particular importance. In this pericope, the non-aorist verbs may be classified as belonging to one of two groups; those which provide background information and those which come in the context of speech. The first non-aorist verb to appear in the narrative is the infinitive present passive καλύπτεσθαι (“to cover”) in v. 24. This verb is in a ὥστε + infinitive construction (ὥστε τὸ πλοῖον καλύπτεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων) and denotes a result.¹⁵ The storm was so great that it resulted in the boat being “covered” (that is, being “swamped”) by the waves. Also, the context of this non-aorist verb is consistent with principle two above. This verb does not advance the story-line but provides background information on the severity of the storm.

The next non-aorist verb is the imperfect active ἐκάθευδεν (“he was sleeping”) also in v. 24. Applying principle one above, the reader infers that Jesus’ sleeping was simultaneous with the storm. As this imperfect verb is used to describe an on-going event that happened in the past (with reference to the narrator), this is the progressive use of the imperfect.¹⁶ This verb not only provides an element of foreshadowing but will demonstrate the gulf between the serenity of Jesus on the one hand and the frantic attitudes of his disciples on the other.

Finally, the largest group of non-aorist verbs are those verbs which come in the context of direct speech. In v. 25, Matthew introduces the plea of the disciples with the common marker λέγοντες (“saying”), a present participle. This same word is used again in v. 27 when it introduces the disciples’ amazement at the calming of the sea by Jesus.

¹⁵ Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 610.

¹⁶ Ibid., 543.

As for the verbs that come in the actual dialog between Jesus and his disciples, all but one verb is present tense. This shift from aorist to present has a dramatic effect: suddenly, the reader is placed in the boat and “overhears” the conversation between Jesus and the disciples. This use of the present, particularly with regard to narrative literature, is the historical present.¹⁷ There is one verb which comes in the context of direct speech which is not present tense; it is the aorist imperative σωσον (“save”) in v. 25. What is the significance of an aorist tense in a context where the historical present is normally used? Typically, imperatives from an inferior to a superior normally occur in the aorist.¹⁸ This is the case here as the disciples are requesting an action from their superior. Such inferior-to-superior imperatives are “almost always” aorist.¹⁹ Thus, the tense choice does not appear to be significant.

2.3 Terms of Address

In v. 25, the disciples address Jesus as κύριε, the vocative of κύριος (“Lord”). Jesus addresses his disciples in the very next verse as ὀλιγόπιστοι (“of little faith”). Both terms denote something significant not only about the addressee but also about the one making the address.

The question of how this term is used may be answered straightforwardly. Of the seventeen times the address κύριε is used in relation to Jesus, it is made either by his disciples, those who would be healed of a disease, or would-be followers. Those who are

¹⁷ Ibid., 526.

¹⁸ Ibid., 487.

¹⁹ Ibid., 488.

openly hostile to Jesus, (Scribes, Pharisees, etc.) never address Jesus in this way.²⁰

Twelve of these seventeen occurrences are in a positive light. However, there are five occurrences which are not positive. Examples of this “non-positive” use of κύριος would include the would-be disciple who wishes to follow Jesus after first “burying his father” (vv. 8:21-22) and Peter’s rebuke of Jesus’ teaching that he must die (v. 16:22).

The question of what this term means, or more correctly, what an individual thinks he is saying about Jesus when he uses this term, is a more difficult question. The term κύριος runs the gamut from the equivalent of a respectful “Sir,” to a title for God, in which it translates the tetragrammaton YHWH.²¹ Professor Kingsbury has demonstrated that Matthew’s use κύριος, when on the lips of either disciples or supplicants, is an “acknowledgment of the divine authority with which the Messiah, the Son of God, heals, saves, and teaches.”²² This is not to say that the disciples understood Jesus as divine in the Trinitarian sense. It simply means that the disciples had some understanding of Jesus as possessing divine authority. Pulling together both the meaning of the term κύριος and how it is used in Matthew yields the following conclusion. In Matthew, addressing Jesus as κύριος is a good start and does show some recognition of the power and divine authority of Jesus. However, the “faith” needed to call Jesus κύριος is not necessarily sufficient. There will be those who call Jesus κύριος who will not receive a favorable judgment (7:21-23 and 25:41-46). There are also examples of believers addressing Jesus

²⁰ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 33, 113.

²¹ Barbara Friberg, Timothy Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 16851. See also Kingsbury’s discussion in *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 105.

²² Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 111.

as κύριος who nevertheless, by their actions, demonstrate that they do not have a full and complete faith. This pericope is an example of one such occurrence. The disciples in this episode demonstrate that they have some faith but not sufficient faith in Jesus.

The evidence that this pericope is an example of the non-positive use of κύριος is reinforced by Jesus' address to his disciples: ὀλιγόπιστοι. This term of address is used by Jesus four times in Matthew and is directed either to the disciples as a whole (8:26, 16:8) to Peter (14:31) or to the larger group of believers in which the disciples are a part (6:30). This term is a rebuke not to unbelievers but to believers. The terms κύριος and ὀλιγόπιστοι, when taken together, provide a picture not of the non-existence of faith among the disciples but of insufficient faith.

The terms "sufficient" and "insufficient" with respect to faith will be used frequently in what follows. Their definition is based on the discussion above. A "sufficient" faith is a faith that meets and overcomes the obstacle in its way. It is a faith which pleases Jesus. An "insufficient" faith is a faith which falters at the key moment and incurs the displeasure of Jesus. People may exhibit a sufficient faith at one moment and an insufficient faith the next. The disciples do exactly this in this pericope. It is the contention of this thesis that this distinction between a sufficient and insufficient faith is consistent with a proper reading of this pericope and its context.

2.4 Nature of the Storm and the Identity of the ‘Οἱ Ἄνθρωποι’

The word σεισμὸς when referring to the earth means “a sudden and severe movement of the earth,” or an earthquake.²³ With reference to the sea, it refers to the large waves caused by violent wind.²⁴ Additionally, σεισμὸς is modified by μέγας (“great”). Finally, Matthew provides an additional description by the result clause mentioned earlier: ὥστε τὸ πλοῖον καλύπτεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων. The picture here is that the waves were so great that the boat was hidden from view. This was indeed a severe storm. Given the description of the storm, it is understandable why the disciples awake Jesus with the cry κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα (“Lord, save, we are perishing”). However, Jesus responds in v. 26 with admonishment, evidenced in both his term of his address ὀλιγόπιστοι as well as his rhetorical question τί δειλοί ἐστε (“Why are you afraid?”). Clearly, the disciples’ reaction to the storm was not an appropriate response to Jesus. The reasons why the disciples’ plea was inappropriate will be discussed in chapter five.

A close reader will no doubt question the identity of οἱ ἄνθρωποι (“the men”) in v. 27. Are they the disciples or others? Though the text does not explicitly mention any “non-disciples” in the boat, neither does it necessarily imply that Jesus and his disciples were the only ones in the boat. If there were other men in the boat besides Jesus and his disciples, then the term ἄνθρωποι could refer to those who were not the disciples.

²³ Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 14.87.

²⁴ Ibid., 14.22.

However, it could also refer to the “collective whole” of those in the boat, including both disciple and non-disciples. The three options of the identity of the ἄνθρωποι are summarized below:

Identity of the Οἱ ἄνθρωποι in V. 27.

Men=Disciples ²⁵	Men=Non-Disciples ²⁶	Men=Disciples + Non-Disciples
Only disciples (not necessarily the “Twelve Disciples”) are in the boat.	Both disciples and non-disciples are in the boat.	Both disciples and non-disciples are in the boat.

There is simply not enough information at the word level to answer this question definitively. However, since there are no “non-disciples” explicitly mentioned, it seems best to identify the ἄνθρωποι as the disciples.²⁷ This will be the assumption unless higher level analysis overturns this view.

2.5 Syntactical Analysis: Syntactical Units, Speech, and Participant Identity

2.5.1 Syntactical Units: Now that the basic grammar has been studied, the next step is to see analyze the syntactical units. The term “syntactical unit” refers to a complete thought that is preceded by a conjunction (καί, δέ, or τότε). A sentence may have more than one syntactical unit; thus it is necessary to go beyond the sentence level for this analysis. There are eight basic syntactical units in this passage:

²⁵ For this view see: David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 244. D.A. Carson, *Matthew*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 216. Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books), 222. Daniel M. Doriani, *Matthew*, Reformed expository commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 353.

²⁶ For this view see: Ulrich Luz, *Matthew: a commentary*, trans. Wilhelm C. Linss (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 21. John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 372.

²⁷ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 337.

The Syntactical Units of Matthew 8:23-27

Syntactic Unit	Unit 1 καὶ ἐμβάντι αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον· ἡ ἀκολουθήσαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ.	Unit 2 καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμός· μέγας ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ ὥστε τὸ πλοῖον καλύπτεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων,	Unit 3 αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκάθευδεν.	Unit 4 καὶ προσελθόντες ἤγειραν αὐτὸν ἐγόντες· κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα.
Marked/Unmarked Conjunction	Unmarked	Unmarked	Marked	Unmarked
Conjunction Type ²⁸	Connective	Connective	Contrastive	Connective
Syntactic Construction	Unit 5 καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς τί δειλοὶ ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι	Unit 6 τότε ἐγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τοῖς ἀνέμοις καὶ τῇ θαλάσσῃ	Unit 7 καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη.	Unit 8 οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· ποταπὸς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ θάλασσα αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν;
Marked/Unmarked Conjunction	Unmarked	Marked	Unmarked	Marked
Conjunction Type	Connective	Sequential ²⁹	Connective	Contrastive or Connective

Each unit begins with some type of conjunction or “connector”; either καὶ, δὲ or τότε.

As its name suggests, the connective conjunction (translated as “and”) connects two ideas together.³⁰ The conjunctions καὶ and δὲ may both be used as a connective conjunction.³¹

The contrastive connector (translated as “but”) implies a contrast between two ideas.³²

²⁸ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 670-671.

²⁹ Daniel L. Akin, “A Discourse Analysis of the Temptation,” *Occasional Papers in Translation and Textlinguistics*, no. 1 (1987): 83.

³⁰ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 671.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Again, both καὶ and δὲ may be employed in this manner. Also, καὶ and δὲ may function sequentially in a narrative, linking the story-line verbs. Context determines how καὶ and δὲ function in a sentence. The sequential connector τότε is explicitly sequential and relates two ideas temporally, i.e., “I did this, *then* I did that.”

There is one sequential connector in this pericope, occurring in unit six (v. 26). There is also one clear contrastive conjunction which occurs in unit three (v. 24). The fact that Jesus is sleeping contrasts strongly with the previous unit; one would not expect Jesus to be sleeping during a “great storm.” This leaves one unresolved issue; is the conjunction in unit eight (v. 27) connective or contrastive? At this point, there is not enough information to provide an answer.

In the Greek New Testament, the “default” conjunction is καὶ.³³ The conjunctions δὲ and τότε are “marked” conjunctions³⁴ which signal a “*development in the author’s story or argument.*”³⁵ A subset of this marked use in Matthew is that the conclusion of a narrative is often signaled by a marked conjunction.³⁶ The close reader will be sensitive to these marked conjunctions as they will highlight what the author deems important. In this pericope, there are three such marked conjunctions:

³³ Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek* (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 71.

³⁴ Ibid., 73 fn 1.

³⁵ Ibid., 72. Italics are the author’s.

³⁶ Ibid., 74.

Marked Conjunctions in Matthew 8:23-27

Syntactical Unit	Use of Marked Conjunction	Theological Rationale
Unit 3 (v. 24): αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκάθευθεν.	Contrastive	Contrast between the storm and Jesus' actions.
Unit 6 (v. 26): τότε ἐγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τοῖς ἀνέμοις καὶ τῇ θαλάσσῃ	Sequence	Jesus rebukes the storm only after first rebuking the disciples.
Unit 8 (v. 27): οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· ποταπὸς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ θάλασσα αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν;	Conclusion	Conclusion of the Story: The "men" are amazed at the power of Jesus.

As mentioned previously, it is not clear how the conjunction δὲ is functioning in Unit 8 (v. 27). However, as a marked conjunction it highlights an important thought. In this case, it signals the conclusion of the pericope. Thus, there is an unresolved issue in syntactical unit eight (v. 27); namely, how the conjunction δὲ functions in this syntactical unit.

2.5.2 Reported Speech: The next element within this syntactical analysis is the examination of the dialog in this pericope. This dialog consists of three exchanges between Jesus and his disciples.

Dialog between Jesus and the Disciples

Disciples' Plea (8:25)	Jesus' Rebuke (8:26a)	The "Men's " Response (8:27)
καὶ προσελθόντες ἤγειραν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα.	καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι;	οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· ποταπὸς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ θάλασσα αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν;

The elements involved in a discourse analysis of “reported speech” differ from that of narrative and need its own principles. There are three such principles which will guide this analysis of the interaction between Jesus and his disciples:

Speech principle 1: When a speech is given in the historical present and follows a conjunction such as *καὶ*, *δὲ* or *τότε* the speeches are “cataphoric,” i.e., “they point forward to one or more significant events that are the result of or follow from the speech.”³⁷

Speech principle 2: “When a final speech does not attain the goal of either of the participants, the speech orienter begins with a reference to the speaker, rather than a verb.”³⁸

The term “speech orienter” is the clause that “introduces the actual speech.”³⁹

Speech principle one highlights the importance of the next event. This happens twice in this pericope. First, the disciples’ plea fits this conjunction + historic present construction and highlights the next event. This next event is Jesus’ rebuke to his disciples; no doubt it is not what the disciples had expected. Thus, this unexpected event by Jesus is marked. Second, Jesus’ reply to his disciples also fits the Conjunction + historic present construction. This places emphasis on the next event, which is the calming of the storm. The close reader will be aware of this building tension and will see the climax of this pericope to be Jesus’ calming of the storm.

The reaction of the *ἄνθρωποι* in v. 27 is the “final speech” of this pericope. The speech orienter here is *οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι* and begins not with a verb but with reference to the speaker, i.e., *οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι*. As such, this final speech meets Speech Principle two.

³⁷ Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek*, 240.

³⁸ Ibid., 222.

³⁹ Ibid., 216.

Hence, the speech by the ἄνθρωποι underscores the fact that the ἄνθρωποι do not understand what has happened. This pericope ends on a note of disconnect. This observation bears on the question of how the conjunction δε functions in syntactical unit eight (v. 27). Since the speech orienter in this syntactical unit begins with a noun and not a verb, this implies that there is a disconnect or a failure of understanding between Jesus and the ἄνθρωποι. This, in turn, implies a contrastive use of the conjunction δε (“but”).

2.5.3 Participant Identity: In the language of discourse analysis, Jesus is a V.I.P. (“very important participant”).⁴⁰ When a V.I.P. is the subject of a sentence, the unmarked or standard treatment is to make no overt reference to the V.I.P. once the V.I.P. is introduced.⁴¹ In New Testament Greek, this means that when Jesus is the subject, only the 3rd person inflection on the verb indicates the subject within a pericope. That is, once Jesus has been introduced within the boundaries of the pericope, he is not normally identified by his name, a noun phrase, or pronoun. When Jesus is referred to in some form (i.e., anything outside the 3rd person inflection on the verb), this is considered a marked reference and highlights “a key speech or action.”⁴² In this pericope, there is one such marked reference occurring in syntactical unit three (v. 24): αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκάθευδεν. The participant marker is the pronoun αὐτὸς. According to the rules of discourse analysis, the expected subject marker (since the subject is Jesus), would be only the 3rd person inflection on the verb ἐκάθευδεν. This is not the case.

⁴⁰ Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek*, 143.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek*, 143.

There are two marked elements in this short unit: the marked connector $\delta\epsilon$ and the marked participant reference $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$. Thus, Jesus' act of sleeping on the boat is marked twice and stands in sharp relief to his disciples.

2.6 Observations

A close discourse and grammatical reading of Matthew 8:23-27 yields the following observations:

- I) The storm was indeed severe. Matthew's word-choice, the accompanying adjective, and the result clause all reinforce this fact.
- II) The imperfect tense of the verb $\epsilon\kappa\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\upsilon\delta\epsilon\nu$ ("he was sleeping") denotes an on-going state of Jesus. The serenity of Jesus contrasts strongly with the actions of his disciples.
- III) The address of " $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\epsilon$ " used by the disciples demonstrates some faith; however, it does not necessarily denote sufficient faith.
- IV) The term " $\omicron\lambda\iota\gamma\acute{o}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\iota$ " is always used in Matthew to refer to believers. This observation reinforces observation III: the disciples had some faith but not sufficient faith.
- V) It is evident that Jesus is unhappy with the disciples' response to the storm. A fuller treatment of this will be given in chapter five.
- VI) Applying the tools of discourse analysis, Matthew marks three significant elements by his use of marked conjunctions:
 - a. Jesus was sleeping (marked by both connector and participant reference)
 - b. Jesus rebukes the storm only after first rebuking his disciples
 - c. The conclusion of the pericope: The "men" were amazed.
- VII) Applying the two speech principles above yields the following conclusions:
 - a. The tension builds to the climax of the pericope, Jesus' calming of the storm.
 - b. The conjunction $\delta\epsilon$ should be taken as a contrastive conjunction.

These observations all highlight the central issue of this pericope: the insufficient faith of the disciples.

Additionally, there are two issues which are raised by this close reading:

1) Why does Matthew refer to the disciples as ἄνθρωποι in v. 27 (if indeed they are the disciples)?

2) Why is Jesus upset at the plea of the disciples?

These questions imply the next level of analysis: how does Matthew treat this pericope in terms of a narrative? It is to this question that this thesis now turns.

Chapter 3: Narrative Analysis

Matthew 8:23-27 is a narrative, or more simply, a story. Matthew does not recount the events in this passage as a newspaper reporter who is interested in “just the facts.” Rather, he constructs his story with art and skill, with well-defined characters and a discernable plot. Neither does Matthew give us the “morale of the story.” Instead, the reader must be sensitive to the literary devices in this narrative. Matthew will show us what he deems important, but we must listen carefully.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the characters, setting and plot of this narrative. The plot is deceptively dense and a superficial reading may obscure what is really happening. A tool that is helpful in slowing down the reader in order to engage in a careful examine of the plot is the Actantial Model of narratives. This model will be employed here. Finally, the observations from this analysis will be examined to see if they confirm or contradict the findings in the previous chapter.

3.1 Characters and Setting

There are two characters in this pericope: Jesus and the disciples who function as a unit.⁴³ Despite the brevity of this narrative, there is sufficient information to label both Jesus and the disciples as “round” characters; that is, characters who exhibit a “variety of traits”⁴⁴ as opposed to “flat” or one-dimensional characters.⁴⁵

⁴³ With the assumption that the ἄνθρωποι are the disciples as discussed in chapter one.

⁴⁴ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 10.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Jesus is pictured as sleeping, as exhibiting power over the storm, and of a stinging rebuke in the form of a rhetorical question. The disciples are able to express both faithlessness in their fear of the storm and trust in Jesus to “save” them at the same time. The “sea” in Matthew’s Gospel is a dangerous place, often eliciting fear in the disciples.⁴⁶

There are two points which need to be made regarding the disciples at this point. First, the term μαθητής (“disciple”) usually, but not always, refers to the “Twelve Disciples.”⁴⁷ It may also be used in a less technical way to denote those who are followers of Jesus.⁴⁸ Joseph of Arimathea was declared to be a disciple (27:57) and Jesus seems to use the term disciple in this general way in Matthew 10:42. Secondly, the full compliment of the “Twelve” has not been reached, with at least Matthew missing at this point (9:9). Paul Feiler makes the additional point that the Twelve are not “commissioned” as apostles until chapter 10.⁴⁹

Though an analysis of the overall setting of this pericope will be examined in chapters four and five, it is important not to lose the forest for sake of the trees. This pericope comes early in Matthew’s Gospel. Indeed, it contains the first significant interaction between Jesus and his disciples.⁵⁰ The disciples do have the basic information. They understand, through the Sermon the Mount (Matthew 5-7), that to follow Jesus is to be like Jesus. They have also seen Jesus’ power over both the natural

⁴⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁷ Terence L. Donaldson, “Guiding Readers—Making Disciples: Matthew,” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Richard Longenecker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 32.

⁴⁸ Paul Frederick Feiler, “The Stilling of the Storm: A Response to Gunther Bornkamm,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 26, no. 4 (December, 1983): 403.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Richard Edwards, *Matthew’s Narrative Portrait of the Disciples* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1997), 28.

and supernatural realm (Matthew 8-9). However, they have yet to be in a situation where their knowledge and faith is tested. In this pericope, it will be.

3.2 Narrative Elements: Events and Plot

3.2.1 *Events*: An “event” is simply the incidents which move the story along.⁵¹

In this pericope the events are these: Jesus and his disciples get into the boat, the storm arises and Jesus sleeps, the disciples wake Jesus and implore his aid, Jesus rebukes his disciples, Jesus calms the storm, the “men” are amazed. Within these events there are two confrontations:

Confrontations in Matthew 8:23-27

Confrontation 1	Confrontation 2
Confrontation between disciples and storm, vv. 24-26.	Confrontation between Jesus and the disciples, vv. 26-27.

These confrontations overlap. Jesus does not calm the storm then rebuke his disciples; rather, he rebukes the disciples first, then (τότε) rebukes the storm. For one terrifying moment the disciples have to deal with a tumultuous storm and a stinging rebuke. This tension does not last as the next event is the calming of the storm. However, the second confrontation is not resolved. Jesus’ question, “Why are you so afraid?” is met with another question voiced by the ἄνθρωποι, “Of what sort is this (one)?” Clearly, the disciples’ response is not an appropriate one. The quality of this response and the behavior of the disciples as a whole might have significance to the question of why Matthew chooses to refer to the disciples as ἄνθρωποι in v. 27.

⁵¹ Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 3.

It is tempting to suppose that Matthew uses the identifier ἄνθρωποι rather than μαθηταὶ as a rhetorical device used to introduce this question; i.e. “the *men* ask ‘What sort of *man* is this?’” However, this works only in the English translation and not in the Greek. In Greek, the relevant part of the question is ποταπός ἐστιν οὗτος. Literally, this is “of what sort is this (one)”⁵² Had Matthew wished to create an ἄνθρωποι/ἄνθρωπος connection he would, presumably, have explicitly used the word ἄνθρωπος. The unresolved question of why Matthew chooses to refer to the disciples as ἄνθρωποι will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.2.2 *Plot*: As a drama, this pericope can be laid out in the following fashion:⁵²

The Drama of Matthew 8:23-27

Introduction (Setting)	Conflict	Crisis and Climax	Resolution	Following Action
Καὶ ἐμβάντι αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ (v. 23).	καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς μέγας ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, ὥστε τὸ πλοῖον καλύπτεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκάθευδεν (v. 24).	Καὶ προσελθόντες ἤγειραν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα. καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι; τότε ἐγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τοῖς ἀνέμοις καὶ τῇ θαλάσῃ. . . (v. 25-26a).	. . . καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη (v. 26b).	οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· ποταπός ἐστιν οὗτος ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ θάλασσα αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν; (v. 27).

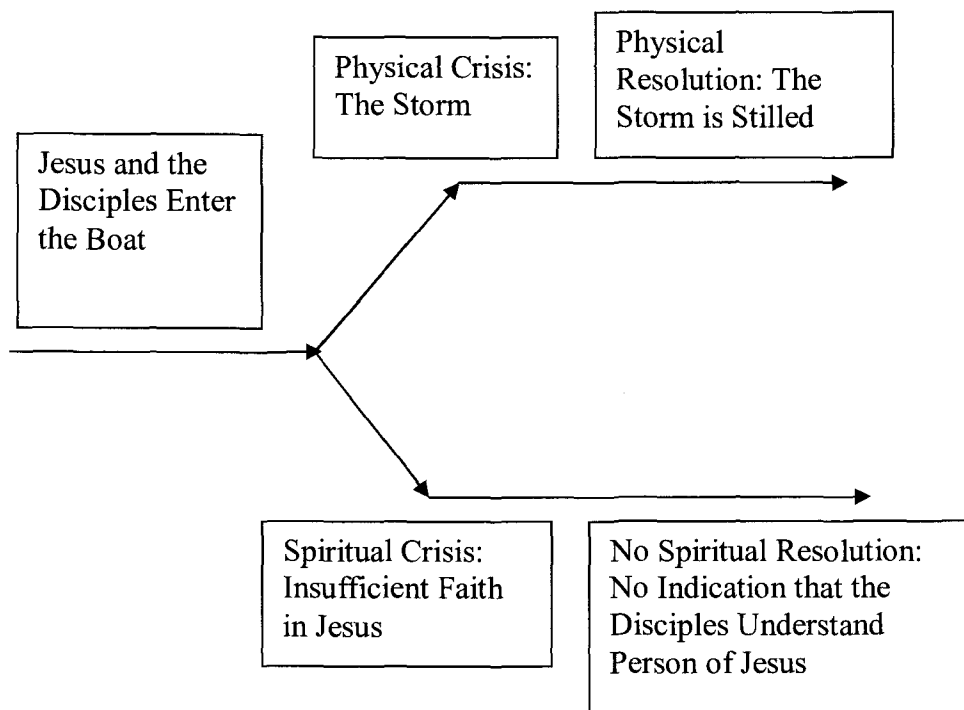
V. 23 introduces both the main characters and the setting and establishes the beginning of the pericope. V. 24 begins with καὶ ἰδοὺ (“and behold”) and signals the conflict.

Vv. 25-26a contain both the crisis and the climax of the drama. Both the spatial and temporal dimensions change at this point.

⁵² Daniel M. Doriani, *Getting the Message* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1996), 65-69.

Spatially, the field of view is confined to the boat. Temporally, the action slows down so that the reader “overhears” the conversation between Jesus and his disciples. These changes have the effect of placing the reader in the boat so that he sees the events as they happen. The narrative peak comes in v. 26a. The disciples have implored Jesus’ aid and are waiting his response: what will Jesus do? Jesus performs two separate actions. First, he rebukes the disciples for the insufficiency of their faith. Secondly, he calms the storm. This order is important and Matthew highlights this by the use of the marked conjunction τότε. Jesus does what the disciples want him to do, but only after rebuking them. The theological point can scarcely be missed. The faith of the disciples should not be dependent on the situation but upon their trust in Jesus. The resolution of the immediate problem occurs in v. 26b. The following action of v. 27 is the bewilderment of the ἄνθρωποι. As discussed in chapter two, v. 18, though not technically part of this pericope, gives important background information. The disciples, as they follow Jesus into the boat, are being obedient to the command that Jesus gave them in v. 18.

This drama is deceptively dense. Even a superficial reading would note that though the disciples are saved from danger, there is hardly a “happy ending” to this narrative. Jesus’ rebuke is not met with repentance by the disciples but by a question. As mentioned in chapter one, this pericope ends with a disconnect between Jesus and his disciples. A superficial reading may wish to alleviate this tension by means of a physical-spiritual dichotomy. The physical conflict between the storm and the disciples is solved. The spiritual conflict between Jesus and the disciples is not. These two story-lines can be seen below:



To demonstrate the insufficiency of the physical-spiritual dichotomy and to show that there is only one story-line requires the use of other narrative tools.

3.3 The Actantial Model

Another way to examine the plot is by the Actantial Model developed by A.J. Greimas. This model provides for a “bird’s-eye” view of a narrative text.⁵³ Richard B. Hays and N.T. Wright provide a helpful summary of this model in *The Faith of Jesus Christ*⁵⁴ and *The New Testament and the People of God*⁵⁵ respectively. Hays’ and Wright’s articulation of this model will be followed here. To begin, the roles of the participants in any narrative text may be defined in the following manner.⁵⁶

⁵³ Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 91.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 90-95.

⁵⁵ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 69-76.

⁵⁶ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 90.

Sender: The one who initiates the action/task.

Agent: The one through whom the action/task is accomplished.

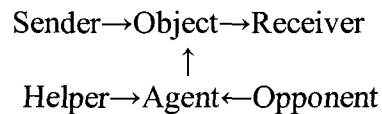
Object: The thing/communication/event that the Sender wants accomplished.

Receiver: The one whom the Sender wants to receive the object.

Opponent: The one who attempts to impede the Subject from carrying out the task.

Helper: The person/force that helps the Subject accomplish the action/task.

The relationships between these roles may be outlined in the following schematic:⁵⁷



In any “sequence” (that is, the diagram above) the Sender sends an Object to a Receiver through the Agent. This Agent is helped in the task by the Helper and impeded in the task by an Opponent. The narrative itself may be broken down into three such sequences.

In the initial sequence, a problem or obstacle is encountered in which the Agent is not able to carry out the commission from the Sender. In the topical sequence, the Agent is able to overcome the problem. Depending on the complexity of the plot, there may be more than one topical sequence.⁵⁸ In the final sequence, the initial mandate is carried out by the Agent.⁵⁹ There are a few additional structural constraints on this model:

- i) The Agent in the initial sequence becomes the Receiver in the topical sentence.
- ii) The Receiver of the topical sentence becomes the Helper in the final sequence.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 91.

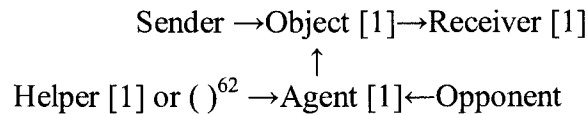
⁵⁸ See Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 74-75 for an example of a plot with multiple topical sequences.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 93.

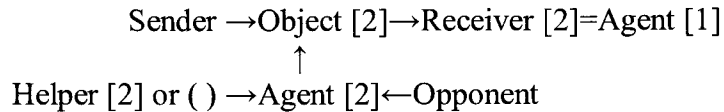
- iii) The final sequence is the same as the initial sequence with one exception. It may be that there is no Helper in the initial sequence. Also, there may be no Helper in the topical sequence. However there must be a Helper in the final sequence.
- iv) The Sender and the Opponent may or may not be the same in the topical sequence as in the initial and final sequence. In this pericope, they are the same and this is assumed in the structure.⁶⁰
- v) In the topical sequence, it is possible that the Receiver and the Opponent are the same entity.⁶¹

These rules yield the following schematic.

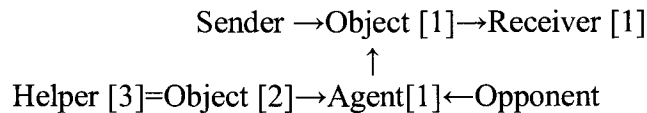
Initial sequence:



Topical Sequence:



Final Sequence:



As an initial try, the sequence may be constructed as follows:

Initial Sequence: Jesus orders his disciples to go over to the other side of the lake;⁶³ they are prevented from doing so by a storm.

⁶⁰ See Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 94 for the rationale for these structural constraints.

⁶¹ See Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 74-45 for an example of this.

⁶² That is, there is no “Helper” in this sequence.

⁶³ This is explicit in v. 18 as discussed in chapter two above.

Topical Sequence: Jesus rebukes the winds and the sea and there is a great calm.

Final Sequence: The disciples and Jesus are able to reach the other side of the lake.

In the initial sequence, Jesus (Sender) orders his disciples (Agent) to cross the lake (Object); however, the disciples cannot overcome the storm (Opponent). In the topical sequence, Jesus becomes the Agent who will overcome the storm. In the final sequence the command of Jesus to cross the lake, frustrated in the initial sequence, is carried out.

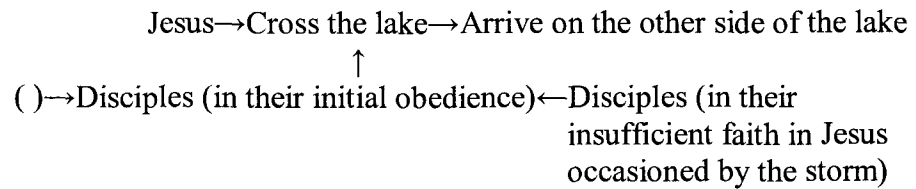
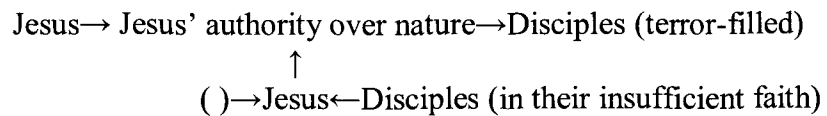
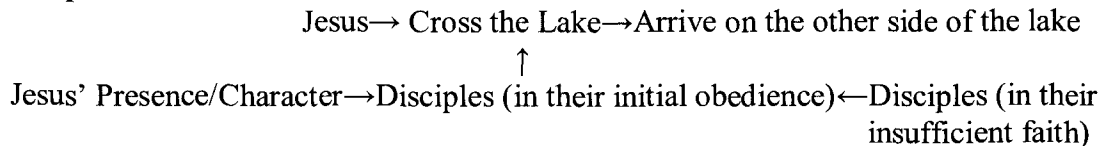
However, this is not consistent with the implication of the Jesus' statement to his disciples. The rebuke implicit in the phrase "you of little faith" demonstrates that it is the disciples' insufficient faith, not the storm, which is the real problem. This fact is reinforced by the fact that Jesus does rebuke the storm but only after first rebuking his disciples. Finally, note that Jesus is awakened not by the storm but by the disciples. However bad the storm was, it was not bad enough on its own to illicit a response by Jesus. With this in mind, a new model must be constructed:

Initial Sequence: Jesus orders his disciples to go over to the other side of the lake; they are prevented from doing so *by the disciples' lack of faith of in Jesus occasioned by the storm.*

Topical Sequence: Jesus overcomes the lack of faith of the disciples through his divine authority.

Final Sequence: The disciples and Jesus are able to reach the other side of the lake.

It is the disciples' insufficiency of faith in Jesus that is the true Opponent. No matter how bad the storm was, their reaction was unjustified as implied by Jesus' rebuke. The actantial schematic looks like this:

Initial Sequence**Topical Sequence****Final Sequence**

The disciples, in their obedience to Jesus' command to cross the lake, are the initial Agents. Yet, these same disciples, in their insufficiency of faith, become their own Opponents. The topical sequence, in accordance with good theology, is "all about Jesus." Jesus sends himself to overcome the Opponent encountered in the topical sequence (the insufficiency of faith of the disciples). It is Jesus' own authority over nature that overcomes this Opponent. The disciples' response implies a further element; their insufficient faith still remains. This shows that, in fact, there are not two divergent story lines but one. There is not a physical/spiritual dichotomy nor are there two separate crises. There is one crisis: the insufficiency of faith in Jesus by the disciples. The storm is the agent through which this crisis appears. The resolution of this crisis occurs when Jesus overcomes the disciples' insufficiency of faith through his divine authority. The disciples do not have the faith necessary to navigate through the storm or to approach Jesus in a more appropriate manner. Jesus overcomes this insufficient faith by calming the sea.

However, the problem of insufficient faith is, in itself, not solved. The drama ends not with a confession of faith or repentance by the disciples but by a question. The disciples, then, are inconsistent in their discipleship. The storm has demonstrated the gulf between the disciples and their master.

3.4 The Use of ἄνθρωποι

So far, this thesis has assumed that the ἄνθρωποι of v. 27 are the disciples. Can a literary analysis provide a rationale for why Matthew uses this term to refer to the disciples? If so, this would give credence to identifying the ἄνθρωποι as the disciples. If not, the assumption will need to be reexamined. One of the findings of the analysis of reported speech in the last chapter highlighted the disconnect between Jesus and his disciples in the last speech exchange. This is consistent with the findings above. This narrative ends with the problem of insufficient faith still intact. With this in mind, a provisional supposition for the use of ἄνθρωποι is as follows. Matthew uses the term ἄνθρωποι as a theological/literary judgment on the disciples. The disciples enter the boat, yet their actions on the boat demonstrate that they are mere “men” who do not know the power of Jesus. They have been reduced from the status of “disciples” to that of “men.” This understanding fits both the discourse and literary methods employed so far and provides a compelling argument for identifying the ἄνθρωποι as the disciples. It is yet to be determined if this stands up to a contextual analysis of this passage.

3.5 Observations

A close literary analysis of this pericope yields the following observations.

- I) Jesus calms the storm only after first rebuking his disciples.
 - a) This demonstrates that the storm was not the crisis but the agent through which the crisis was manifested. The real crisis was the insufficiency of faith of the disciples in Jesus.
 - b) The importance of this ordering from a literary analysis (i.e., Jesus rebukes the disciples first, then calms the storm) is reinforced by the fact that Matthew uses a marked conjunction at this point (τότε).
- II) In the Actantial model, Jesus is both the Sender of the initial sequence as well as the Sender of the topical sequence. Jesus not only commands or “sends,” he will also ensure what he commands is carried out. In the topical sequence (where the obstacle is overcome) Jesus is the major actor: Jesus sends himself to overcome the Opponent through his authority over nature.
- III) The disciples are both the Subject of the initial sequence as well as the Opponent. The disciples in this drama are their own worst enemy. They are obedient and faithful to a point, yet it is the insufficiency of their faith that is the ultimate crisis.
- IV) From the above, it is clear that obedience and insufficient faith may coexist.
- V) Jesus overcomes the disciples’ insufficiency of faith through his authority over nature. That is, he does not allow this insufficient faith to frustrate his plans. However, this insufficiency of faith in the disciples remains as evidenced by their response to Jesus’ question.

These observations reinforce the word/syntactical analysis in the preceding chapter. Not only do these observations provide a portrait of insufficient faith in this narrative, but also that this problem continues to exist after this episode. There is ultimately no happy ending in this narrative.

There is a literary argument for understanding the ἄνθρωποι to be the disciples. Matthew uses this term as a literary device to comment on the behavior of the disciples

on the boat. By their actions, the disciples have shown themselves to be mere ἄνθρωποι and not mature disciples.

However, the question of why Jesus was upset at the initial plea of the disciples (“Lord, save, we are perishing”) has not been answered using literary methods. Why was this plea met with a rebuke by Jesus? How did the disciples exercise “little faith” by their plea? It is therefore on to a contextual analysis of this chapter for the answer to this question and to either reinforce or critique the findings so far.

Chapter 4: Contextual Analysis

To this point, this thesis has only examined Matthew 8:23-27 internally.

However, as is true with any narrative, episodes are linked not only to what immediately precedes or follows but also to the larger story as a whole. What appears to be odd or unexpected elements when an episode is examined by itself may have an immediate solution when examined in context. Studying this pericope with respect to word, syntactical and literary analysis is necessary but insufficient. Participating with the author is more than just carefully listening to the current episode; it also involves placing the episode in the large setting of the overall story. This is the aim of the next two chapters. This chapter will examine this pericope both in terms of its immediate context as well as its role in the larger context of Matthew's Gospel.

Before beginning this contextual analysis, there are a few broad points to be made regarding discipleship and Christology. Both the Greek-speaking world and Judaism knew of teachers and leaders who amassed followers of their teaching.⁶⁴ The word μαθητής (“disciple”) was a common way to refer to followers of a religious or philosophical teacher or leader.⁶⁵ In the Gospels, both the Pharisees and John the Baptist are mentioned as having disciples (22:15-16 and Mark 2:18).⁶⁶ As is true with the word κύριος, there is nothing explicitly “religious” about being a disciple.

⁶⁴ M.J. Wilkins, “Disciples,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 176.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

However, Jesus is unique in that he is the ultimate Teacher and has exclusive rights on all. Jesus is both “teacher” and Teacher; “lord” and LORD. Likewise, the disciples are no different than other disciples following an “earthly” teacher. However, they also have the high honor and responsibility of being disciples to the one true Master. As will be argued later in this chapter, discipleship and lordship are linked. It is inconsistent discipleship that leads the disciples to ask concerning Jesus ποταπός ἐστιν οὗτος (“Of what sort is this one?”). An incomplete understanding of Jesus leads to an incomplete discipleship.

4.1 Immediate Context

The previous pericope, vv. 18-22, recounts the exchange between a γραμματεὺς (“scribe”) and Jesus and between a μαθητῆς (“disciple”)⁶⁷ and Jesus. This pericope links with the current pericope by the catchword ἀκολουθέω (“follow”)⁶⁸ and also with the concept of Jesus sleeping. The following episode links with the current pericope in that it follows logically from what proceeds: Jesus reaches the other side of the lake. Also, the reaction of πᾶσα ἡ πόλις (“all the city”) to Jesus’ display of power in v. 34 mirrors that of the reaction of the ἄνθρωποι in v. 27.

⁶⁷ Note the discussion in section 3.1 above; this is not necessarily one of the “Twelve.”

⁶⁸ So Jack Dean Kingsbury, “The Verb AKOLOURTHEIN (“To Follow”) as an Index of Matthew’s View of His Community,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97, no. 1 (1978): 62 and Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 220, though neither used the term “catchword.”

Linking Elements between Preceding and Following Pericopes

Previous Episode	Linking elements between previous and current episode	Following Episode	Linking elements between current episode and following episode
The Cost of Following Jesus (8:18-22)	<p>Catchword: Use of ἀκολουθέω in v. 19, v. 22 and v. 23.</p> <p>Concept: Reference to Jesus having no place to “lay his head” in v. 20 with description of him “sleeping” in v. 24.</p>	Healing of two demon possessed men (8:28-34).	<p>Logical: Jesus reaches the other side of the lake.</p> <p>Concept: The reaction of the townsfolk to the healing of the demon-possessed men mirrors that of the reaction of the “men” to Jesus’ calming of the sea.</p>

It seems clear that Matthew uses the word ἀκολουθέω as a catchword. It is repeated twice in the previous pericope, both times in a discipleship context. Additionally, v. 23 pointedly describes the disciples as ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ (“they followed to him”). Interestingly, in the next “sea” narrative beginning in v. 9:1, Matthew describes Jesus getting into the boat with no corresponding mention of the disciples. Indeed, there is no mention of the disciples again until v. 9:10. This suggests that the statement ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ (“his disciples followed to him”) in v. 8:23 is superfluous in content and serves as a literary device to join these two pericopes together “at the seams.”

Understanding ἀκολουθέω as a catchword in this context does not imply that it must function as a technical term used to describe discipleship. Matthew’s use of ἀκολουθέω is not confined to strict discipleship contexts nor is his use of this word unique.⁶⁹ This term is used in connection to the crowds that follow Jesus; i.e., those who

⁶⁹ Feiler, “The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew,” 403. Kingsbury, “The Verb AKOLOURTHEIN (“To Follow”) as an Index of Matthew’s View of His Community,” 57-58.

are at best “curious bystanders.”⁷⁰ To follow Jesus, then, is certainly better than not following him, but it is not enough. The use of this word in connection with the disciples in this context demonstrates this. The disciples follow Jesus into the boat yet their behavior does not distinguish them as true disciples.

However, there is good reason to believe that Matthew did use ἀκολουθέω in a technical sense in this pericope. Professor Jack Dean Kingsbury gives two criteria that must be met in order for ἀκολουθέω to be used in this technical sense. It must be used in the context of “personal commitment” and “cost.”⁷¹ To see how this fits in the present passage, it is necessary to study the previous pericope (8:18-22) mentioned above (the Greek word ἀκολουθέω is inserted for clarity):

18 Now when Jesus saw a great crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. 19 And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow (ἀκολουθήσω) you wherever you go." 20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." 21 Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 22 And Jesus said to him, "Follow (ἀκολουθεῖ) me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."⁷²

It is clear that the use of ἀκολουθέω in this context is used to describe the behavior of a disciple. The twin concepts of “personal commitment” and “cost” are both present. After Jesus has described the commitment needed and the cost of following him, the disciples immediately follow Jesus into the boat. This action of following Jesus into the boat, in and of itself, would not meet the criteria for this technical sense. However, in v. 19 and v. 22 of the immediately preceding pericope, ἀκολουθέω is used in this technical

⁷⁰ Ibid. See also D.A. Carson, *When Jesus Confronts the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 46-47.

⁷¹ Kingsbury, *The Verb AKOLOURTHEIN (“To Follow”) as an Index of Matthew’s View of His Community*, 58.

⁷² ESV.

sense. Therefore, it seems reasonable to believe that Matthew is using it in the technical sense here in 8:23 well.⁷³ The disciples, hearing the high cost of following Jesus twice in succession, nevertheless do follow him into the boat. Matthew is showing the reader that the disciples, at this point in the narrative, are behaving as good disciples.

The observant reader will also note the comparison between Jesus' statement that the "Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" with the description of Jesus sleeping in v. 24. Is it possible that Jesus uses this metaphor because he was tired (as evidenced by his actions on the boat)? The sleeping arrangements of Jesus leave much to be desired, but the quality of that sleep is, apparently, first-rate. The two "sleeping" statements are a second link between this pericope and the preceding one.

Finally, it is difficult to miss the parallelism between the reactions of the ἄνθρωποι and the πᾶσα ἡ πόλις of the following pericope. Both groups are confronted with a miraculous demonstration of Jesus' lordship yet both respond inappropriately. The healing of two-demon possessed men should be cause for celebration and praise. It should not be the reason for the ultimatum that Jesus leave their region.

There is a broad discipleship/lordship theme which span these pericopes. The previous pericope demonstrates the high-cost of following Jesus. This indicates that the disciples, in following Jesus into the boat, are doing so in a technical manner. They are behaving as good disciples. However, once conflict in the form of a storm arrives, they behave inconsistently. This inconsistent discipleship is reinforced in the next pericope, as the disciples are shown to have behaved no better than the townsfolk of the following pericope. Both the ἄνθρωποι (who have been identified as the disciples in the previous

⁷³ Ibid., 62. Kingsbury does note that this is a difficult case.

chapter) and the $\pi\alpha\sigma\alpha$ ἡ πόλις respond inappropriately to a demonstration of Jesus' lordship. It is relevant to ask whether this mixed discipleship/lordship theme appears in the more intermediate context of this pericope.

4.2 Intermediate Context

This pericope falls within the larger unit of Matthew 8-9. These chapters fall between two of the five great “discourses” in Matthew. Of the thirteen pericopes in these two chapters, nine contain miracles. The “miracle” pericopes clearly demonstrate Jesus' lordship, his power over both the supernatural and natural. The “non-miracle” pericopes focus on issues of discipleship:

Non-Miracle Pericopes and Discipleship	
Non-miracle pericopes in Chapters 8-9	Relation to Discipleship
Cost of Following Jesus (8:18-22)	Cost of Discipleship
Jesus Calls Matthew and Dines with “Sinners” (8:9-13)	Identity of Disciples
A Question About Fasting (9:14-17)	Behavior of Disciples
The Harvest is Plentiful, the Laborers Few (9:35-38)	Call to Make Disciples

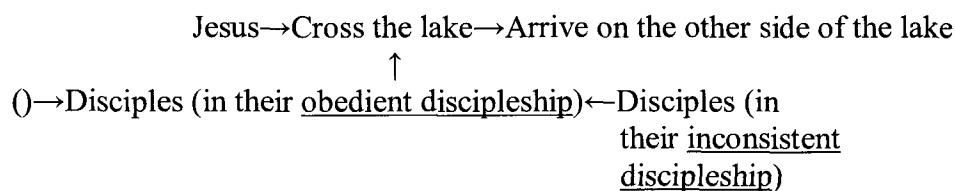
However, lordship and discipleship are linked and cannot be easily separated: *Because* Jesus is Lord, *then* we are to be his disciples. Certain pericopes in these chapters may focus on more than the other, but the division is not watertight. It is best to say that these two chapters are “mixed”⁷⁴ presenting the related ideas of lordship/discipleship.

⁷⁴ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 169.

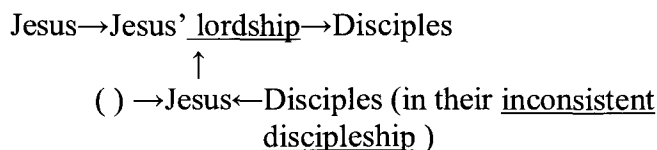
The current pericope is a good example of this mixed lordship/discipleship idea.⁷⁵

The disciples follow Jesus into the boat (“good” discipleship); Jesus calms the storm (lordship), the ἄνθρωποι respond inappropriately to Jesus’ lordship (“inconsistent” discipleship). Revisiting the Actantial model using the lordship/discipleship (or master/disciple) language demonstrates the mixed character of this pericope clearly:

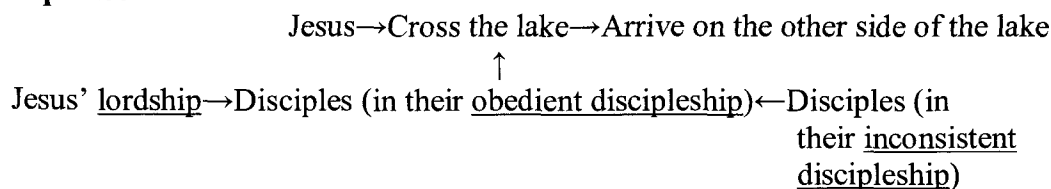
Initial Sequence



Topical Sequence



Final Sequence



The disciples begin this pericope functioning as obedient disciples. Yet, at the crucial point, they behave as inconsistent disciples. Jesus does not allow their inconsistent discipleship to frustrate his plan and overcomes inconsistent discipleship (with respect to insufficient faith) with his lordship over creation.

⁷⁵ Contra Carson: “The point of the account is not so much focused on the nature of discipleship as on the person of Christ. . .” (Carson, *When Jesus Confronts the World*, 47). A better analysis is that of Turner, “The interplay of Christology and discipleship is especially apparent in 8:25, where the disciples call Jesus “Lord” in the face of imminent death but evidently do not clearly grasp the authority their Lord possesses” (Turner, *Matthew*, 245). It is not *either/or* discipleship/lordship it is *both/and*.

There is an additional feature of these chapters that the close reader will observe. Only in this pericope does Jesus give a chiding or negative response to those who approach him for healing or salvation. The following is a representative sample which shows the contrast between Jesus' response to the plea of his disciples with the plea of other supplicants in Matthew 8-9.

Supplicant's Plea and Jesus' Response in Matthew 8-9

Supplicant's Plea	Leper: "Lord, if you will you can make me clean." (8:2b)	Centurion: "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly." (8:6)	Disciples: "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." (8:25b)	Woman: "If I only touch his garment, I will be made well." (9:21b)	Blind Men: "Have mercy on us, Son of David." (9:27b)
Jesus' Response (Positive or Negative)	Positive: "I will; be clean." (8:3b)	Very Positive: "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith." (8:10b)	Negative: "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" (8:26b)	Positive: "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." (9:22b)	Positive: "According to your faith be it done to you." (9:29b) ⁷⁶

Of particular interest is that of all of the pericopes except for the first, Jesus explicitly provides a comment on the faith of the recipient. Only the disciples are chided for "little" faith. There are two important points to be made with respect to this observation. First, those who receive a positive statement from Jesus are Gentile, are ritually unclean, or are those who are simply tragic figures. Those who have had the privilege of living with Jesus are the one who demonstrate "little" faith. This demonstrates a third theme in these chapters beyond the lordship/discipleship issue. Namely, it is the principle that those

⁷⁶ ESV.

who are on the outside understand Jesus, while those who are closest to him do not. It is one who is most “outside,” a Roman centurion, who receives the highest commendation from Jesus while it is Jesus’ own disciples who receive the worst.

Now it is time to examine the unresolved question of why Jesus was unhappy with the initial plea of his disciples to save them. There are several such pleas in these chapters and that all of them (except this one) receive a positive statement from Jesus. Can a conclusion be drawn as to why the disciples’ plea was not satisfactory? Explicitly, there appears to be no significant difference between the disciples’ plea and the other pleas. Other supplicants take the initiative of approaching Jesus with a need, therefore the disciples’ action of waking Jesus should not be considered “poor” discipleship. Neither should the imperative tense of the verb “save” reflect negatively, as the blind men address Jesus with an imperative as well; ἐλέησον (“have mercy”) in 9:27. The only difference between the disciples’ unsatisfactory plea and the other pleas is the presence of fear in the disciples. This is not explicit in the disciples’ plea but is drawn only from Jesus’ following statement: Τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι. The conclusion is this: the form of the disciples’ plea is consistent with the other positive pleas in this section. However, unlike the other pleas, there is an element of fear in the disciples. It is this element that makes the disciples’ plea unsatisfactory to Jesus.

The mixed discipleship/lordship theme is not only present in the immediate context of this pericope (vv. 8:18-8:34), it is also present in the more intermediate context of chapters 8-9. Does this theme extend through larger sections of Matthew Gospel? Most scholars understand Matthew as containing five great discourses. However, the boundaries of these discourses and their importance to the overall structure of Matthew

are debated questions.⁷⁷ The first discourse in Matthew is chapters 5-7, “The Sermon on the Mount.” Here, Jesus teaches on the ideal of what a disciples’ life should look like. The second discourse is chapter 10, the “Missionary” discourse. Jesus sends his disciples off into their preaching/healing ministry to make disciples. He invests them with the authority to cast out unclean spirits and to heal because he has ultimate authority (10:1). As discussed above, the intermediate context of the present pericope, chapters 8-9, are concerned with Jesus’ actions with regard to the theme of discipleship/lordship. Once again, the mixed discipleship/lordship theme is present in this larger context. The general flow of this section of Matthew may be summarized as below:

Jesus’ teaching on the nature of discipleship (Sermon on the Mount, chaps. 5-7)→

Jesus’ actions concerning discipleship/lordship (chaps. 8-9)→

Jesus’ commissions the Apostles to make disciples based upon his authority as Lord (Missionary Discourse, chap. 10).

Beyond this, is there any other structure present in chapters 8-9? One initially attractive proposal connects an element of the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) with an element in these chapters.⁷⁸ However, many of these elements are tenuous at best in their connection. In this scheme, the teaching on prayer (6:5-6) would connect with the current pericope. Given Jesus’ implicit rebuke to his disciples, it is difficult to see how the cry of “Save us, Lord; we are perishing” fits with the ideal of 6:5-6. For the purposes of this thesis, it is enough to see these chapters as demonstrating the broad principle of

⁷⁷ See Craig Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 37 for a helpful discussion of the structure of Matthew and the five discourses. As will be clear below, this thesis follows a three-fold “literary” structure as opposed to making the five discourses structural markers.

⁷⁸ D.D. Moiser, “The Structure of Matthew 8-9: A Suggestion,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 76 (1985): 117-118.

lordship/discipleship annunciated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The question now is why this theme of lordship/discipleship plays such a prominent role in this part of the Matthew's Gospel. The answer to this question is connected with the structure of Matthew as a whole.

4.3 Overall Context

A study of the overall structure of the Gospel of Matthew and its associated themes is well beyond the limits of this thesis. The task here is to ascertain a basic outline of Matthew at its broadest level and to see if this basic structure answers the question above. Namely, why does the discipleship/lordship theme play such an important role at this point in Matthew's Gospel.

In the most general sense, all stories have three parts: a beginning, middle and end. Prof. Terence Donaldson briefly summarizes the function of each part in the following way:⁷⁹

- I) Beginning: "Establish some lack" and/or "to introduce a protagonist. . ."
- II) Middle: "Consists of a number of stages through which that action moves forward, with the goal becoming clarified or complicated, with various obstacles or opponents encountered, with various accomplishments achieved or setbacks experienced. . ."
- III) End: "The story reaches its resolution in the establishment of a new state of equilibrium."

If the Gospel of Matthew is indeed a "story," and if the above is a true assessment of the basic structure of a story, then Matthew's Gospel should follow this three-fold outline.

⁷⁹ The following descriptions are all from Terence L. Donaldson, "Guiding Readers—Making Disciples: Matthew," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Richard L. Longenecker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 33.

Such a three-fold outline in the Gospel of Matthew has indeed been detected by some scholars.

Professor Kingsbury argues that phrase “Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς . . .” (From that time on Jesus began . . .) marks the broadest outline of Matthew’s gospel.⁸⁰ This phrase occurs twice, thus breaking Matthew into three separate sections. Kingsbury sees the following structure:⁸¹

- I) The Person of Jesus Messiah (1:1-4:16)
- II) The Proclamation of Jesus Messiah (4:17-16:20)
- III) The Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Messiah (16:21-28:20).

Combining the insights of Donaldson and Kingsbury, the basic structure of the Gospel of Matthew takes the following shape:

- I) Beginning: The Person of Jesus the Messiah/King (1:1-4:16).
- II) Middle: The Proclamation of Jesus the Messiah/King through His Kingdom Ministry of Teaching and Healing (4:17-16:20).
- III) End: The Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah/King which Establishes the New Covenant (16:21-28:20).

The relationship between Donaldson’s general structure for a story and Kingsbury’s specific structure of Matthew may be made more explicit. The important terms and concepts in Donaldson’s definitions fit well when used to broadly summarize Matthew’s story:

⁸⁰ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 8 ff.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

The Story of Matthew: Beginning, Middle and End

General Structure of a Story (Based on Donaldson). ⁸²	Specific Structure in Matthew (Based on Kingsbury). ⁸³
Beginning: Introduce a <u>protagonist</u> .	The introduction or “personhood” of the <u>protagonist</u> : Jesus the Messiah/King.
Middle: “Consists of a number of stages through which that action moves forward, with the <u>goal</u> becoming clarified or complicated, with various <u>obstacles</u> or <u>opponents</u> encountered, with various accomplishments achieved or <u>setbacks</u> experienced . . .” ⁸⁴	Jesus’ kingdom mission of teaching/healing which demonstrate His <u>goals</u> . He often encounters <u>opponents</u> and <u>obstacles</u> from the religious elite as well as <u>setbacks</u> from His followers.
End: “The story reaches its <u>resolution</u> in the establishment of a new state of <u>equilibrium</u> .” ⁸⁵	Matthew moves to a <u>resolution</u> in which Jesus is vindicated through His resurrection. Jesus accomplishes his kingdom mission and his resurrection establishes the <u>equilibrium</u> of the “New Covenant.”

Clearly, Jesus is the protagonist of any Gospel account. Matthew begins by introducing Jesus, his lineage, birth, and background. Once Jesus passes his introductory “test” by Satan, he is ready to begin his ministry (4:1-11). The “Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς . . .” in 4:17 signals the middle of the story, as Jesus’ healing/teaching ministry begins. The reader learns more about the goals and aims of Jesus in this section. This is often done through Jesus’ encounters with the religious elite and the failures and successes of his followers. Matthew transitions to the end of his story in 16:21, (the second “Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς . . .”) where the reader learns of the ultimate fate of Jesus. The ending, concluding with the resurrection of Jesus, establishes the New Covenant in which sin has been atoned for and which breaks down the wall between Jew and Gentile.

⁸² Donaldson, “Guiding Readers—Making Disciples: Matthew,” 33.

⁸³ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 8 ff.

⁸⁴ Donaldson, “Guiding Readers—Making Disciples: Matthew,” 33.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

The current pericope then, is in the first part of the “middle” section of Matthew’s story: “The Proclamation of Jesus the Messiah/King through His Kingdom Ministry of Teaching and Healing.” Jesus begins his ministry as well as provides initial demonstrations of his lordship. There is still confusion over exactly who he is and what he is doing, even among his disciples. This “proclamation” not only includes the revelation of who Jesus is, but also what is expected of his followers. The very nature of this proclamation centers on this lordship/discipleship theme; people are called to be his disciples because he is Lord. It is little wonder, then, that lordship and discipleship are so present in the immediate context of this pericope. It is simply “where we are in the story.”

4.4 Observations

As discussed in the introduction, no exegetical analysis of a passage is complete without considering both its immediate and overall context. The following summarizes the observations made from this contextual analysis.

- I. Matthew 8:23-27 is linked to its preceding and following pericopes by several elements. These elements reinforce one another to express the broad theme of discipleship/lordship.
- II. One of this connecting elements in these pericopes is the catchword ἀκολουθέω. It is best to see ἀκολουθέω not only as a catchword but also as functioning in its technical, discipleship sense. When the disciples “follow” Jesus into the boat they are functioning as good disciples. This contrasts to their later behavior when the disciples are indistinguishable from the behavior of the πᾶσα ἡ πόλις in the following pericope.
- II. The more intermediate context of this pericope, chapters 8-9, presents a mixed discipleship/lordship theme. This theme is also present in the larger context of these chapters, Matthew 5-10.
- III. Following Prof. Kingsbury’s structure of Matthew, this pericope fall into the middle section of Matthew. Using the insights of Kingsbury and Donaldson, this section of Matthew may be described as “The Proclamation of Jesus the Messiah through His Ministry of Teaching and Healing.”

IV. Following Kingsbury's division of Matthew, it becomes clear why the mixed theme of discipleship/lordship is so heavy in the context of Matthew 8:23-27. This is simply where we are in Matthew's grand narrative.

VI. Examining the disciples' plea with respect to the plea of the other supplicants in Matthew 8-9 yields the following conclusion on why the disciples' plea was inappropriate to Jesus. There is an element of "fear" in the disciples that is not present in the other supplicants. This presence of fear cannot be drawn from the plea of the disciples themselves; rather, it is found in Jesus' response to the disciples: "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?"

VII. Another observation may be made from the "miracle" pericope of chapters 8-9. Those who are the most "outside" show the most faith and receive commendation from Jesus, while the ones most "inside" (the disciples) receive the only negative comment.

All of the unanswered questions generated by a close reading of this pericope have been answered, at least provisionally. The remaining question of why Jesus considered the disciples' plea as inappropriate was answered in point VI above. There is an element of fear present in the disciples not present in the other supplicants of this passage. This demonstrates the complexity of the behavior of the disciples; they function inconsistently within a span of a few verses. Can examining the behavior of the disciples to this point in Matthew's Gospel help in explaining their incomplete discipleship? This contextual analysis of the disciples is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Portrait of the Disciples and Matthew's Distinctive Elements

The last chapter focused on the contextual analysis of Matthew 8:23-27 both in terms of its immediate context as well as its setting in Matthew's Gospel as a whole. Contextual analysis also demonstrated the inconsistency of the disciples. What can account for such a change in the behavior of the disciples over such a few verses? The answer to this question involves an analysis of how the disciples have behaved up to this point in Matthew's Gospel. Is their inconsistent behavior in this pericope consistent with how they have acted to this point? The disciples have had prior experience with Jesus before this incident. As such, a contextual analysis of the disciples and their behavior to this point in Matthew can shed light on their behavior in this pericope. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an examination of Matthew's distinctive elements. This will answer the question, posed in the introduction, of what would be missing if Matthew's account of the storm on the sea was not included in Scripture.

5.1 Portrait of Disciples in Matthew's Gospel

A discussion of the immediate context and overall structure of Matthew leads to a discussion of how the disciples are treated, both in this pericope as well as overall. Before this pericope, there are three distinct episodes which provide information on the disciples. This analysis will focus on two questions regarding the disciples:

- 1) Their identity (Who are they?)
- 2) Their quality (How "good" are they at being disciples?)

From the beginning of Matthew until 8:23-27, there are three episodes in which the disciples appear. For the purposes of this analysis, an “episode” is a pericope that contains the active interaction of the disciples. There is also one large teaching/healing section (5:3-8:22) in which the disciples are passive observers to both the teachings of Jesus and his healings. However, the material in this teaching/healing section is relevant to understanding the disciples’ actions later.

Episode 1 (4:18-22): Jesus calls two pairs of brothers, all fishermen, to follow him. The identity of these followers is not well-known. Their names and occupations are given, but no indication is given of their thinking or of their personality. As Richard Edwards notes, these two pairs of brothers are not even called “disciples” at this point.⁸⁶ Though the identity of these followers is vague, they are certainly pictured in a positive light. Matthew deliberately highlights their obedience. Simon and Andrew εὐθέως (“immediately”) follow Jesus, leaving their nets behind (4:20). James and John do one better, by not only leaving their boat behind but their father as well (4:22).

Episode 2 (5:1-2): In the preamble to the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew first uses the term μαθητής (disciple). Yet, he does not say who they are. They could only be the four fishermen. Alternatively, this term could also include some of the crowd who were also following Jesus.⁸⁷ This fact should be balanced by the principle, earlier stated, that “following” is not an exclusively discipleship activity in Matthew. The structure of Matthew 5:1-2 is ambiguous: Jesus sees the crowd, yet it is his disciples who come to him. Jesus then begins to teach “them.”

⁸⁶ Richard A. Edwards, “Uncertain Faith: Matthew’s Portrait of the Disciples,” in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 53.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

It is not clear if the “them” is the disciples, the crowds, or both. This ambiguity of where the crowds stop and the disciples begin may very well be intentional on Matthew’s part.⁸⁸

Teaching/Healing Section (5:3-8:22): Though there is only one reference to the disciples in these twenty-two verses, what happens in this section is crucial to a proper reading of 8:23-27. This section contains the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) and Jesus’ healing actions beginning in Matthew 8:1. In this section Jesus cleanses a leper, heals the centurion’s servant, heals Peter’s mother-in-law and other sick and casts out demons. Finally, Jesus gives a lesson in the cost of discipleship. The disciples have been passive observers to all of this.⁸⁹ They have seen Jesus’ demonstration of his lordship over both the natural and supernatural realm as well as have received teaching on the nature of discipleship.

Episode 3 (8:23-27): The disciples speak for the first time in the current pericope. This provides insight into their character as a group. The disciples are fearful and do not fully understand who Jesus is. Additionally, Jesus’ term for this disciples, ὀλιγόπιστοι, adds to the picture. The personality of the disciples becomes clearer in this episode. However, they are pictured as being inconsistent. The background material in 5:3-8:22, when brought to bear on this pericope, provides for a nuanced view of the disciples. The Jesus sleeping in the boat was the same Jesus who had performed several miracles before their eyes. This Jesus was also the one who made clear, in no uncertain terms, the high-cost of discipleship. The disciples have a partial, rather than a complete, understanding of Jesus’ teaching and of his lordship. They are obedient in following

⁸⁸ Edwards, “Uncertain Faith,” 53.

⁸⁹ Richard A. Edwards, “*Matthew’s Narrative Portrait of the Disciples*” (Harrisburg, PA; Trinity Press, 1997), 31.

Jesus into the boat, yet they seem unprepared for the danger that follows. They express confidence in Jesus to save them, yet they do this in fear. Once Jesus does what they wish (calm the storm), they act surprised at his power. As Matthew's story unfolds, the disciples become more definite and more distinct. However, their quality as disciples is inconsistent and incomplete.

Identity and Quality of the Disciples in Matthew 1-8

	Episode 1 (4:18-22)	Episode 2 (5:1-2)	Episode 3 (8:23-27)
Identity	Vague (one-dimensional "followers")	Less vague (called disciples)	Definite (speak and demonstrate personality)
Quality	Positive (obedient)	Positive (obedient)	Inconsistent

This pattern of increasing "definiteness" is consistent with the structure of Matthew as whole. In 8:28-9:36, the disciples are passive bystanders to more acts and teachings of Jesus. Matthew is called in 9:9, where he is grouped with "many tax collectors and sinners" (v. 9:10). Matthew's calling and obedience mirrors that of Peter and Andrew and James and John in 4:18-22. The next significant episode begins in 9:37 where Jesus commissions the disciples. As noted previously, the disciples are called Apostles for the first time in Matthew's gospel in 10:2. The incomplete group of one-dimensional followers in 4:18-22 have now become the full complement of the Twelve Apostles in 10:1-4.

However, the inconsistent and incomplete nature of the quality of the disciples is also evident in Matthew's gospel. Peter, who often stands in as the representative for the Apostles,⁹⁰ correctly deduces Jesus' identity in 16:16. However, in 17:14-20, the disciples are incapable of driving a demon from an epileptic. This failure brings strong

⁹⁰ Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 92.

words from Jesus: “O faithless and twisted generation. . .” (17:17). The Apostles, even after correctly judging the person of Jesus, still struggle with faith.

5.2 Doublets: Matthew 8:23-27 and Matthew 14:22-33

Two stories which are similar in content and contain significant “verbal repetition” are called “doublets.”⁹¹ One such doublet is this pericope with 14:22-32; the “Jesus walks on water” pericope. The content is similar. Both cases involve fearful disciples on the sea, a plea to Jesus to save them, and Jesus’ actions of salvation and a rebuke for “little faith.” Additionally, these stories share seventeen words in common.⁹² Some of the more striking similarities and contrast of these stories are presented below:

The Doublet Stories of Matthew 8:23-27 and 14:22-33

	Disciples’ (or Peter’s) Plea	Jesus’ Saving Action	Jesus’ Rebuke to Disciples (or Peter)	Ambiguous Characters	Response of Ambiguous Characters
8:23-27	κύριε, σῶσον	Calming the storm	τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι	ἄνθρωποι	Ποταπός ἐστὶν οὗτος
14:22-33	κύριε, σῶσόν με	Taking hold of Peter	ὀλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας	οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ	ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ

The plea of the disciples (or Peter) and Jesus’ rebuke are similar. In both cases there is enough faith to recognize the lordship of Jesus. Yet, this is not a faith sufficient to overcome the immediate crisis. Jesus performs a “saving” action in both pericopes though the action itself is different. The saving action of the second story involves not calming the storm but Jesus “taking hold” of Peter. Jesus also uses the term ὀλιγόπιστοι in both cases, with the allowance of the second person singular use for Peter. Rather than the adjective δειλοί (translated as “so afraid”) the verb διστάζω (“doubt”) is used in the

⁹¹ Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 175.

⁹² Ibid., 176.

second story. However, both words denote the state of insufficient faith. What is particularly interesting is that Matthew has once again introduced ambiguity in the last verse of the pericope. The ἄνθρωποι of 8:27 is matched by the οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ (“those in the boat”) in 14:33. Why has Matthew done a similar thing twice?

This thesis has argued that the ἄνθρωποι of 8:27 are the disciples. It has also argued that Matthew uses this term to comment on the insufficiency of faith by the disciples in Jesus. Given the similarities between these two doublet stories, the assumption is that the identity of the ἄνθρωποι is the same as the identity of the οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ. Thus, the assumption is that the οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ are the disciples.

However, there is a difficulty with this identification. The proposed rationale for why Matthew uses the term ἄνθρωποι is that the disciples were functioning as mere men and not as disciples. In 14:33, Matthew again uses a term for the disciples. Yet, Matthew uses this term at the point in the story where the disciples are behaving like good disciples. The οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ both worship Jesus and declare him to be the “Son of God.” By the above logic, Matthew should call the disciples μαθητής in 14:33 since they are behaving like proper disciples. Since this is not the case, there must be another reason why Matthew uses a different term than μαθητής to describe the disciples.

In the discussion of Episode two (5:1-2), it was pointed out that Matthew is ambiguous on where the crowd stops and the disciples begin. The effect of this is that the reader is invited to become a disciple. The offer is open to anyone who would follow Jesus. It is the contention of this thesis that Matthew is doing this in these two doublet stories. Matthew uses the terms ἄνθρωποι and οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ not to comment on the faith or lack thereof, but as a device to engage the reader. It is not just the disciples who

are responding to Jesus, it is the audience. The close reader, when confronted with both stories is required to ask: When faced with Jesus' display of lordship, will I respond as the "men" who do not understand Jesus, or will I respond as "those in the boat" who do?

5.3 The Doublet Stories within Matthew's Gospel

In the second of these doublet stories, there is still fear and little faith. However, it is the response of the disciples, discussed above, that differentiate these two stories. When confronted with the lordship of Jesus, the disciples respond appropriately, they worship him as the Son of God. The act of marveling has been replaced with worship and the question of "Who is this one" has been replaced with the statement "Truly, you are the Son of God!"⁹³ However, this is not the whole story. In Matthew 8:28-34, Jesus performs an act of healing on two-demon possessed men. The response of those in the city is not one of gratitude. Rather, they beg Jesus to leave. In the following pericope of the second of these doublet stories (14:34-36), Jesus arrives at Gennesaret. Here the "men of that place" take the initiative and bring to Jesus those who were sick (14:35). This stands in stark contrast to the behavior of the townsfolk in the earlier pericope. Not only do the disciples understand this "time around," non-disciples do as well.

Reaction of Disciples and Non-Disciples in the Doublet Stories

Pericopes	Reaction of Disciples to Jesus' Lordship (Actions on the Sea)	Reaction of Non-Disciples to Jesus' Lordship (Acts of Healing)
8:23-27, 8:28-34	Poor. "Who is this one?"	Poor. Ask Jesus to leave their region
14:22-33, 14:34-36	Positive. "Truly you are the Son of God!"	Positive. They take the initiative in bringing those who need healing to Jesus

⁹³ David Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel* (Decatur, GA: Almond Press, 1988), 94-95 and Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 177.

Both of these pericopes are in the second section of the three part structure of Matthew as developed by the analysis of Kingsbury and Donaldson.⁹⁴

- I) Beginning: The Person of Jesus the Messiah/King (1:1-4:16).
- II) Middle: The Proclamation of Jesus the Messiah/King through His Kingdom Ministry of Teaching and Healing (4:17-16:20).
- III) End: The Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah/King which Establishes the New Covenant (16:21-28:20).

As the behavior of the main characters in this pericope indicates, there is movement within this section. The story is moving forward; it is not circular but headed in a positive direction not only for those who are “inside” (the disciples) but those who are “outside” (men of Gennesaret) as well. Thus, the “Proclamation of Jesus Christ” is having success, and with that success, Matthew moves his story into the third act.

5.4 Matthew’s Distinctive Elements

Consistent with the presuppositions discussed in Chapter one, the accounts in Mark and Luke of this episode will be examined only to highlight Matthew’s distinctive voice. As a reference, all three gospel accounts are laid out to highlight their similarities and differences:

⁹⁴ See Section 4.3 above for a discussion of the development of this three-fold structure of Matthew from Kingsbury and Donaldson.

The Synoptic Accounts of the “Storm on the Sea” Pericope

Gospel	Introduction (Setting/ Characters)	Conflict	Crisis and Climax	Resolution	Following Action
Mat. 8:23-27	And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. (v. 23).	And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. (v. 24)	And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea... (vv 25-26)	. . .and there was a great calm. (v. 26)	And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?” (v. 27)
Mark 4:35-41	On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. (vv. 35-36)	And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (v.37-38a)	And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace, Be still!” (v38b-39a)	And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. (v. 39b)	He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?” (vv. 40-41)
Luke 8:22-25	One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake. So they set out and as they sailed he fell asleep. (22-23a)	And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger (v. 23b)	And they went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves... (v. 24a-b)	...and they ceased, and there was a calm. (v. 24c)	He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?” (v.25) ⁹⁵

⁹⁵ ESV.

The goal here is not to catalog every detail that Matthew includes that are absent in the other accounts. Instead, the aim is to provide a focused answer to the question, “What would be missing if Matthew’s account were not in the Canon”?

I) Only Matthew uses the term ἀκολουθέω (“follow”) to describe the disciples’ action of “following” Jesus into the boat. This thesis argued in chapter four that ἀκολουθέω should be used in the technical discipleship sense. In the beginning of this pericope, Matthew pictures the disciples in a more positive light than the other two accounts.

II) Matthew portrays the disciples to be in somewhat less danger by the storm than in Mark and Luke. The idea that the boat was filling with water (ὥστε ἤδη γεμίζεσθαι τὸ πλοῖον, Mark 4:37b and συνεπληροῦντο, Luke 8:23b) is not present in Matthew. Thus, in Matthew’s story, the situation is not as extreme, though it is still dire.

III) The disciples address Jesus as κύριος as opposed to διδάσκαλος (“Teacher”) as in Mark in 4: 38 or ἐπιστάτης (“Master”) as in Luke 8:23. This thesis, following Professor Kingsbury, has argued for a “divine” understanding of Jesus when κύριος is used. This sense is absent in the titles used above by Mark and Luke. The disciples also explicitly command that Jesus save them in Matthew. Though this is certainly implied in Mark and Luke, it is not as clear as in Matthew. The use of the term κύριος on the lips of the disciples along with their explicit command that Jesus save them gives a more positive picture of the disciples than in Mark and Luke.

IV) The most important difference of all is the ordering of the events of the rebuke of the disciples to the rebuke of the storm as seen below. In Matthew, Jesus rebukes the disciples first then calms the storm. However, in Mark and Luke Jesus calms the storm first, and then rebukes his disciples.

Events in Matthew

Disciples' Plea→**Jesus' Admonishment**→**Command to Storm**→Disciples' Astonishment

Events in Mark/Luke

Disciples' Plea→**Command to Storm**→**Jesus' Admonishment**→Disciples' Astonishment

Matthew is aware of this important difference, as he has highlighted this ordering by use of the mark conjunction τότε. Thus, Matthew teaches, in a way that the others do not, that it was more important for Jesus to address the primary problem of insufficient faith than to calm the secondary problem of the storm.

V) Finally, Matthew seems to “soften” the rebuke of Jesus to the disciples. Rather than ὀλιγόπιστοι, Mark and Luke place harsher statements on the lips of Jesus. In Mark 4:40, Jesus’ response to the fearful disciples is τί δειλοί ἐστε; οὐπω ἔχετε πίστιν (“Why are you so afraid, have you still no faith?”). In Luke 8:25, it is ποῦ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν (“Where is your faith?”). It is better for Jesus to call you “little faith” than have him question both whether you have faith (Mark) and where your faith is (Luke).

Examining these five differences provides a broad three point summary of Matthew’s distinctive voice with reference to this pericope:

- I) Matthew consistently portrays the disciples in a more positive light than Mark and Luke. They “follow” Jesus into the boat, address him as κύριος, and express an explicit trust that he can save them.
- II) Matthew’s difference in the ordering of events highlights the need for the disciples to trust in Jesus regardless of the situation.
- III) Matthew appears to “soften” the severity of the storm (i.e., no mention of the boat “filling” with water) as well as the rebuke of Jesus to the disciples.

What would be missing if Matthew's account were not in the Canon? The answer is as follows: How quickly those who are pictured as good "followers" of Jesus can demonstrate insufficient faith in Jesus under difficult conditions. Also missing would be the importance of Jesus rebuking the problem of insufficient faith before solving the crisis which manifested that insufficient faith.

Observations

The disciples act inconsistently in this narrative. Yet, their inconsistency is consistent with how they have behaved to this point in Matthew's Gospel. The following points summarize the observations made from a contextual analysis of the disciples and a study of Matthew's distinctive elements.

- I) In Chapters 1-8, the disciples become more definite in their character as a group, yet their quality is inconsistent. This theme of inconsistent discipleship on behalf of the disciples runs through Matthew's Gospel as a whole.
- II) Though these disciples are plagued with inconsistency there is nevertheless a positive progression. In the second of these doublet stories, the disciples respond appropriately to Jesus' demonstration of his lordship. Not only this, but the men of Gennesaret in the following pericope recognize the lordship of Jesus. This is opposed to the townsfolk of Matthew 8:28-34.
- III) Point II suggests that the story is, in fact, going somewhere. With this success, Matthew begins to bring the "middle" part of his Gospel to a close.
- IV) Comparing the behavior of the οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ of 14:33 with that of the ἄνθρωποι in 8:27 forces a revision as to why Matthew uses the term ἄνθρωποι. The new conclusion as to why Matthew uses the term ἄνθρωποι is not to comment on the insufficient faith of the disciples, but as a device used to put the reader in the story. The reader, when reading both doublet stories, is forced to ask whether he will behave (negatively) like the ἄνθρωποι or positively like the οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ when faced with Jesus' lordship.
- V) If Matthew's account were not in the Canon, readers would miss the emphasis on how quickly those who began as good followers can lose sight of their faith in Jesus under difficult conditions. Also, missing would be the importance of a full and sufficient faith in Jesus over and against the conditions which would threaten that faith.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis has intended to provide an exegetical treatment of Matthew 8:23-27 along the lines of discourse analysis principles. As mentioned in the introduction, discourse analysis is a large field and more tools from this discipline, no doubt, could be brought to bear on this passage. However, examining this pericope at the word, syntactical, narrative and contextual levels reveals the major points and thrusts of this passage.

The crisis in this pericope is the insufficient faith of the disciples in Jesus. The issue is insufficient faith, not lack of faith. The insufficiency of the disciples' faith is a distinctive of Matthew. Mark and Luke, with their own stories to tell, set the problem as lack of faith (Mark 4:40) and a misplaced faith Luke (8:25). Three factors explicitly demonstrate this. First, the term of address Jesus uses “ὀλιγόπιστοι” (8:26) implies some faith. Second, the disciples call Jesus κύριος (8:25) which demonstrates that they had some understanding of the “divine authority”⁹⁶ of Jesus. Third, the disciples entreat Jesus to “save” them (8:25), expressing faith in his power over nature. The application of the Actantial model to this pericope demonstrates that it is this insufficient faith, not the storm, which is the crisis. The storm is the means through which this crisis is manifested. A syntactical analysis reinforces this finding. Matthew uses the marked connector τότε (8:26) to highlight the fact that Jesus calms the storm only after rebuking the disciples for their “little faith.”

⁹⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 111.

The problem with the disciples' plea for Jesus to save them is that it is done out of a spirit of fear. The disciples' plea is similar in both form and content to the other pleas of the supplicants in Matthew 8-9. However, there is an element of fear in the disciples not evident in the other supplicants. That the disciples were afraid cannot be seen from their plea; rather, it is evidenced by Jesus' response to their plea: τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι ("Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?").

The disciples begin this pericope functioning as good disciples; however, they end as inconsistent disciples. Matthew uses the word ἀκολουθέω in v. 8:23 in a technical discipleship sense. This understanding of ἀκολουθέω is governed by how this word is employed in the previous pericope. In vv. 18-22, ἀκολουθέω is used in a technical discipleship sense in the exchange between Jesus and two would-be followers. The disciples, upon hearing the high cost of discipleship, "ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ" ("followed to him") into the boat. Clearly, the disciples are behaving as good disciples. However, by the end of the pericope, the disciples are not behaving as well. Not only do they have an insufficient faith in Jesus, they also respond inappropriately to Jesus' display of lordship. The disciples act no better than the unbelieving townsfolk in the following pericope who also respond inappropriately to Jesus' display of power.

The disciples are not like their master, either in terms of the standard teacher-disciple relationship of the day or in terms of Christian discipleship. The disciples, intellectually speaking, should "know" what it is to be like Jesus. This information is embodied in the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) to which they were present. They have also seen Jesus' display of his lordship in the miracles of chapters 8-9. However, in their fear of the storm and their response to Jesus' calming of the sea, they demonstrate that they do

not fully understand what they have seen and heard. The disciples, at this point in Matthew's story, are not like their master. A grammatical observation highlights this difference. The tense of the verb ἐκάθευδεν ("he was sleeping") is imperfect and describes Jesus' actions concurrent with the on-set of the storm. While the disciples panic, Jesus sleeps.

In the overall structure of Matthew, this pericope, as well as its doublet, occur in the "middle" portion of the story: "The Proclamation of Jesus Christ." Following Donaldson's and Kingsbury's general structure of a story in general and in Matthew in particular, it is in this section of a story where goals, success and setbacks occur. In short, this is where most of the action is. This pericope demonstrates the inconsistent nature of the disciples to this point in Matthew's story. However, in the second doublet story, the disciples respond to Jesus' display of lordship with worship and praise. Not only this, but the men of Gennesaret respond appropriately to Jesus as well. Thus, Matthew's story is progressing. Not only disciples but also non-disciples understand more about the person and kingdom mission of Jesus.

Matthew uses the term ἄνθρωποι in 8:27 to refer to the disciples. Comparing the use of ἄνθρωποι with the use of οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ in v. 33 of the doublet story yields the following conclusion to why Matthew uses these terms to refer to the disciples. It is done as a device to place the reader in the story. The reader is forced to ask whether he will respond as the "little-faithed" men of 8:27 or if he will respond as the οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ who worship Jesus. This observation validates, to some degree, the use of discourse analysis methods. It is not just what Matthew wrote but also how he wishes the reader to respond to it that is important. This conclusion as to the rationale for why Matthew uses

these two terms for the disciples takes seriously the reader's role in this particular act of communication.

Matthew portrays the disciples in a more positive light than both Mark and Luke. This makes their subsequent inconsistency more striking. Thus, if this account were not in the Canon, the reader would miss the emphasis of how quickly those who begin as good followers can demonstrate insufficient faith in Jesus under difficult conditions.

On a more general level, this thesis has demonstrated the need for a close reading at all levels of discourse. Verb tense, grammatical constructions and other syntactical features cannot be isolated from understanding the text as a whole. In this case, this text must be understood as a narrative with all the appropriate dramatic features.

Understanding this text as a "story" does not mean undermining the authority of Scripture. Rather, it simply means cooperating with the art and artistry used by the author under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Further, this text cannot be separated from its context. Matthew has crafted his Gospel as a narrative and what comes before or after highlights and clarifies the events in this pericope. The conclusion is this: this pericope should be read the way Matthew wrote it: as a story. Reading this pericope with respect to its word, syntactical, narrative and contextual structure ensures a proper understanding of this passage.

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