Discourse Structure Treatment of the Great Commission
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This paper is in response to the article by Ben Merkle "Why the Great Commission Should be Translated 'Go!' and Not 'As You Go'" found here - https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58485b63440243698143794a/t/5ba91e51104c7b8ee724495 98/1537810001744/STR+Issue+9.2_Merkle.pdf

At the heart of the Christian sense of world evangelism and discipleship is the passage from Matthew 28.19-20 commonly referred to as The Great Commission. The Greek text is -

> πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν·[1]

The crux of this discussion and debate centers on the treatment of the first word, πορευθέντες. All recognize it as the participle form of πορεύομαι[2] having the meanings, go, proceed, travel, move from one place to another. It is when it comes to translating it into English that the disagreement arises. This paper will discuss the translation issue related to the verse and interact with Ben Merkle's paper.[3]

Putting hand to pen, as it were, I feel a bit like Ernest Evans laying his hands to the helm of the USS Johnston in the Battle of Leyte Gulf – a bit of a little destroyer going up against a fleet of Battle Wagons. I have already fired upon one (Waltke-O'Connor's *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*) and am about to fire on another (Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*). In the first engagement I almost came to blows (literally!) with one of O'Connor's disciples/destroyer escorts who took umbrage at my critique of his master's view. But, in that critique I was joined by John Sailhamer so I knew I had good fire support. A similar crituque will be leveled at Wallace and I expect similar return fire! But, old Marine's are not shy about "sailing into harm's way," even when the waters are the seemingly calm seas of settled grammar.

Let me fire the opening round as I make my run. My critique of Waltke-O'Connor (again, which John Sailhamer echoed via phonecon) was leveled in a paper I presented at an Evangelical Theological Society Meeting. That offending round I leveled at the bridge of W-O consisted of noting that they had

> resisted the strong claims of discourse grammarians in part for the theoretical and practical reasons mentioned earlier: most syntax can be and has been described on the basis of the phrase, clause and sentence. Further, it is evident that the grammatical analysis of Hebrew discourse is in its infancy. As an infant, it offers little help for the many problems of grammar which have not been well understood. Most translators, we think it fair to say, fly by the seat of their pants in interpreting the Hebrew conjugations. Hebrew grammarians have only recently come to appreciate morphemes as diverse as the "object marker" את and the enclitic *mem*. No modern grammar, further, has begun to gather together the wealth of individual studies that have been carried out in a more traditional framework; thus it is not surprising that some students know little about the case functions and some commentators make

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egregious errors in their interpretations of prepositions. For our purposes, therefore, we are content to stay with more traditional bases than those of discourse grammar.[4]

Now looms the Wallace into view and they fire the same salvo

> Contrary to the current trend, this work has no chapter on discourse analysis (DA). The rationale for this lacuna is fourfold (1) DA is still in its infant stages of development, . . . (2) DA's methods, as shifting as they are, tend not to start from the ground up (i.e., they do not begin with the word, nor even with the sentence). This by no means invalidates DA; but it does make its approach quite different from that of syntactical investigation. (3) Along these lines, since this is explicitly a work on *syntax* [Wallace emphasis] DA by definition only plays at the perimeter of that tipin and hence is not to be included. (4) Finally, DA is too significant a topic to receive merely a token treatment, appended as it were to the end of a book on grammar. . . . [5]

One of the perenial problems with the analysis of texts is that far too many are with John Lyons who notes that "The sentence is the largest unit of grammatical description. A sentence is a grammatical unit between the constituent parts of which distributional limitations and dependencies can be established, but which can itself be put into no distributional class."[6] Anthony Pyles rightly notes that "Schools of discourse analysis, on the other hand, concern themselves with texts or discourses, that is, coherent combinations of sentences. These approaches (and indeed their name is Legion) all have in common an assumption that linguistic data and structures requiring and inviting description exist above the level of the clause or sentence."[7]

Robert Longacre was most noted for his developed work in discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is distinguished from the more traditional methods of looking at and analyzing a piece of text in that it goes beyond the bounds of the clause and sentence and attempts to view the text within a larger context, that of the whole pericope within a defined genre. It argues that only from that perspective might the use of grammatical forms and their relationship to each other be best understood. Longacre notes that "A piece of text, especially a literary text . . . cannot be understood by myopically inspecting it verse-by-verse without the study of the whole informing the study of the parts".[8] In his dissertation, Ray Clendenen (one of Longacre's students and a liguistic master in his own right) notes that "Discourse typology has been a major emphasis of Longacre, who argues that it is an *essential step* [my emphasis] in any linguistic analysis of a discourse, 'Characteristics of individual discourses can be neither described, predicted, nor analyzed without resort to a classification of discourse types. It is pointless to look in a discourse for a feature which is not characteristic of the type to which that discourse belongs.[9] So determinative of

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[4] Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 55. Interestingly, they lay out a litany of issues that remain unsolved by traditional grammars while admitting to forgoing a grammatical investigation that may solve those issues.

[5] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996),xv.

[6] John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linquistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 172-73 as quoted in Anthony Pyles, "Sam(p)son's Advent: A Comparative Discourse Analysis of Judges 13 In Hebrew and Greek", 173, in Stanley E. Porter, Gregory P. Fewster ad Christopher D. Land, editors, *Modeling Biblical Language: Selected Papers from the McMaster Divinity College Linquistics Circle* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

[7] Ibid.

[8] Robert E. Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence*. 2nd ed. (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), xii.

[9] Longacre, following Pike, speaks of tagmemes and syntagmemes; the tagememe being a constituent element of the higher syntagmeme. He represents it like this: $\Sigma = \{T_1 \ldots T_n\}, T_f: (\Sigma)$. Robert Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse*, 2nd ed. (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 274.

detail is the general design of a discourse type that the linguist who ignores discourse typology can only come to grief"".[10]

To cut to the chase of Longacre's position and theory, he begins part 2 of his *Joseph* with a note toward the doing of Hebrew grammar: "Traditionally, within a grammar of a given language all the uses of each tense/aspect or mode of a language are listed and described en bloque in the same section of the grammar". He presents "a challenge to this time-honored way of describing the functions of the verb forms of a verb system within a language" by positing that "(*a*) every language has a system of discourse types (e.g., narrative, predictive, hortatory, procedural, expository, and others); (*b*) each discourse type has its own characteristic constellation of verb forms that figure in that type; (*c*) the uses of a given tense/aspect/mood form are most surely and concretely described in relation to a given discourse type". [11]

Longacre goes on to note that, ". . . variation in a text is not random but motivated. In brief, where the author has a choice in regard to a lexical item or a grammatical construction, his particular choice is motivated by pragmatic concerns or discourse structure." To put it succinctly, the biblical writers knew what they were doing and what they did they did with purpose and on purpose. Our lesson is to take the text seriously from linguistic, literary, and theological positions and to glean as much as we can from what the author intended to convey and how he intended for it to be used.[12]

With the above in mind I begin my approach to Matthew 28.19-20. I am convinced that much more will be gained from an investigation of how a specific author dealt with a particular situation grammatically rather than a broad look at a multiplicity of authors and their use of a langue for a particular issue. I believe that this is even more important when dealing with a situation as we find in Matthew. Most readers and investigators have noted that there is a strong semitic strain in the grammar we find in Matthew and most show no surprise at this. We have before us an author who from all accounts is Jewish and whose world more than likely was immersed in the semitic languages of Hebrew and Aramaic and who found himself writing in Greek.[13] In that vein we are dealing with texts written by a Jew in Greek, much like a contemporary Jewish writer of the period, Flavius Josephus; the Jewish historian who wrote for a Roman audience in the Greek language. There are cross cultural linguistic considerations that have to be acknowledged and observed.

Due to time and space and the above consideration, I will limit this work to Matthew. I will look at the Ressurection Narrative (chapter 28) and how Matthew handled the text; make observations within that pericope, and then see if Matthew had similar usages in the rest of his gospel.

My thesis is that Matthew is producing a Greek text heavily influenced by the discourse structure of Hebrew narrative. I will be using Longacre's cline model of Hebrew Narrative discourse and evaluate my thesis with Matthew's text in chapter 28.

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[10] E. Ray Clendenen,. "The Interpretation of Biblical Hebrew Hortatory Texts: A Textlinguistic Approach to the Book of Malachi" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Arlington, 1989), 45.

[11] Robert E. Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence*, 2nd ed. (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 57.

[12] Longacre, *Joseph*, xv.

[13] I must apologize at this point as I am operating off of memory and at somewhat of a handicap. Once upon a time I was the head librarian of a rather large seminary library with absolute and perenial access to more than 300,000 items and any number of minions whom I could send to retrieve what I needed and a fair number of them with which to discuss what I had found to augment the paper I was writing. So, when I plea "memory" what I have stated is the reason. At the same time, if challenged I will endeavor to roust up a friendly minion and retrieve what is needed to correct or defend my position.

Before going into too much detail, I do need to note that when I read a narrative text like Matthew I tend to think of plays or movies which are usually presented as Acts and Scenes within the Act. I have done so here. I see the Ressurection Narrative as an act and the smaller constituent pericopes as Scenes within that Act. It helps me evaluate and understand the text.

The discourse that Longacre in his *Joseph* first evaluates is the narrative. It is one of the most abundant (if not the most abundant) genres in the confines of the Hebrew Bible and thus warrants the closest attention. Moreover it is consistent enough to serve as an introduction to the concept. Regarding the verb forms and the discourse type in which they are found, Longacre points out that "one or more privileged forms constitute the mainline or backbone of each type, while other forms can be shown to encode progressive degrees of departure from the mainline." For narrative discourse "the *waw*-consecutive imperfect is seen to be mainline in that it is punctiliar and sequential in function; the perfect is found to be (as a whole) a non-punctiliar and non-sequential kind of past tense in narrative; the imperfect and participles are, respectively, implicitly and explicitly durative in the framework of the story; *hāyâ* clauses and verbless clauses represent static elements toward the bottom of the scheme; and negated clauses rank lowest." Developing this further Longacre notes that "A chain of (necessarily verb-initial) clauses that contain preterites [*wayiqqtols*] is the backbone of any Old Testament story; all other clause types contribute various kinds of supportive, descriptive, and depictive materials. In the cases of clauses that begin with a noun (and therefore cannot contain a verb in the preterite), such background material serves to introduce or highlight something about the noun in question, whether it refers to a participant or to a prop in the story. Clauses that begin with a non-preterite (perfect) verb portray secondary actions; for example, actions what are in some sense subsidiary to the main action, which is described by a following preterite. On occasion, a verb in the perfect (whether or not [the clause] begins with a noun) is repetition or paraphrase of some action already reported as a preterite on the storyline."[14]

His cline/depiction of what is going on looks like this:[15]

Verb Rank in Narrative Discourse	
Band Levels	Hebrew Clausal Elements
Band 1: Storyline	1. *wayyiqtol*: primary[a]
Band 2: Secondary	2.1. *qatal* initial (without *w-*) 2.2. Noun + *qatal* (with noun in focus)
Band 3: Background Activities	3.1. הִנֵּה + participle 3.2. Participle 3.3. Noun + participle
Band 4: Setting	4.1. *wayyiqtol* of היה , 'be' 4.2. *qatal* of היה, 'be' 4.3. Nominal clause (verbless) 4.4. Existential clause with יֵשׁ
Band 5: Irrealis	5. Negation of verb clause: irrealis (any band)[b]

[14] Longacre, *Joseph*, 57.
[15] Ibid., 79.

Using this as a framework I have evaluated the text of Matthew 28 below. I have provided my own translation and I have treated different Greek Finite Verb forms as one. This is the testing of thesis and I anticipate modifications and refinements to come. The numbers in the row above each act correspond to Longacre's Cline levels.

For many passages there may be recognizable linguistic episode markers in conjunction with literary features such as continuity or changes in time, space, action, or participants.[16] Stephen Levinsohn, in discussing coherence and discontinuities within a text in order to determine boundaries beyond the purely linguistic evaluation, provides the following table. He remarks that, "In narrative, then, the speaker typically begins a new thematic grouping when there is significant discontinuity in at least one of these four dimensions. Within a thematic grouping, there is usually continuity along all four dimensions. One can think of a new thematic grouping resulting when the speaker leaves one section of the mental representation and moves on to, or perhaps creates, another."[17]

Dimension	Continuity	Discontinuity
Time	Events separated by at most only small forward gaps	Large forward gaps or events out of order
Space	Same place or (for motion) continuous change	Discrete changes of place
Action	All material of the same type: event, non-event, reported conversation, etc.	Change from one type of material to another
Participants	Same cast and usually same general roles vis-à-vis one another	Discrete changes of cast or change in relative roles.

The recognition of markers both linguistic and literary will materially aid the exegete in recognizing and identifying boundaries for distinctive sections at several levels. Blokland asks the question, "to what extent it is possible to segment Biblical Hebrew narrative text on some basis of text syntactical data and thereby to provide some sort of check on segmentations based solely or primarily on subject matter?"[18] He then notes that, "there is agreement that only an approach that integrates syntax, semantics, and pragmatics can make any claim to comprehensiveness."[19] Within the text of Matthew several levels of segmentation may be observed. This study is limited to chapter 28 and so I looked at what segmentation may be observed. On the analogy of a play I have divided it into a single act – The Ressurection Narrative and then that Act into six scenes. Each of these levels contain a level of continuity within the four points (time, space, action, participants) that serves to separate one from another in a hierarchical fashion. In this way there is an integration of the linguistic and the literary tools being brought to bear to determine the author's intended meaning of his text. So too here, though I have not evaluated the whole of Matthew I can see chapter 28 as a single Act with six scenes. I think that, referencing Longacre, you have to go at least this level (call it what you will) to understand how each of the grammatical elements are being employed. In other words, many times how a particular grammatical form is

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[16] Longacre, *Joseph*, 25.

[17] Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek*. (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 3.

[18] A. F. den Exter Blokland, *In Search of Text Syntax*. (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1995), 1.

[19] Blokland, 4.

used in one place depends on what is going on elsewhere at the very least within the Scene and more than likely within the Act that this scene is found in.

	Structure of The Resurrection Act in Matthew 28			
	Color Coding for Verb Forms Imperative Participle Infinitive Finite			
	Scene One: The Marys come to the grave			
	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5	
1	Ὀψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων ἦλθεν Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Μαρία θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον.		after the sabbath the dawning of the first of the week came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary to look at the grave	
	Scene Two: Earthquake and the reaction of the guards			
	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5	
2	καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας· ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ.		and behold, there had been a great earthquake for an angel of the lord descending from heaven and coming rolled away the stone and sat upon it.	
3	ἦν δὲ ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπὴ καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιών.		as lightning was his appearance and his clothing, white as snow	
4	ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθησαν οἱ τηροῦντες καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροί.		from the fear of him shook the guards and became as dead ones	
	Scene Three: The Marys and the Angel			
	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5	
5	Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν ταῖς γυναιξίν· μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς, οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε.		but Answering the angel spoke to the women do not fear you all for know that Jesus, the crucified one you seek	
6	οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν· δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο.		he is not here for he is risen! just as he said Come! See the place where he was laid	
7	καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι εἴπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἰδοὺ προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε· ἰδοὺ εἶπον ὑμῖν.		and quickly as you are leaving tell the disciples of him that he is risen from the dead and behold he will go ahead of you in Galilee there you see him behold, I have told you	
8	Καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ταχὺ ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου μετὰ φόβου καὶ χαρᾶς μεγάλης ἔδραμον ἀπαγγεῖλαι τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ.		and going quickly from the tomb with fear and great rejoicing they ran to tell his disciples	

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	Scene Four: The Marys and Jesus		
	1 2 3 4 5		**1 2 3 4 5**
9	καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς λέγων· χαίρετε. αἱ δὲ προσελθοῦσαι ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ.		and behold Jesus greeted them saying Rejoice! and coming they took ahold of his feet and worshipped him
10	τότε λέγει αὐταῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· μὴ φοβεῖσθε.[20] ὑπάγετε ἀπαγγείλατε τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου ἵνα ἀπέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, κἀκεῖ με ὄψονται.		Then Jesus said to them Do not fear! Leave Take word to my brothers so that they depart to Galilee there they will meet me
	Scene Five: Aside Account of The Guards and the Chief Priests		
	1 2 3 4 5		**1 2 3 4 5**
11	Πορευομένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδού τινες τῆς κουστωδίας ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα.		As they were leaving behold, some of the guards coming into the city to report to the chief priest all that had happened
12	καὶ συναχθέντες μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων συμβούλιόν τε λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἱκανὰ ἔδωκαν τοῖς στρατιώταις		and coming together with the elders of the council about takaing enough silver they gave to the guards
13	λέγοντες· εἴπατε ὅτι οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ἐλθόντες ἔκλεψαν αὐτὸν ἡμῶν κοιμωμένων.		saying say that the disciples of him coming in the night stole him while you were sleeping
14	καὶ ἐὰν ἀκουσθῇ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος, ἡμεῖς πείσομεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους ποιήσομεν.		and if this is heard by the governor we will persuade him and you will have freedom from care
15	οἱ δὲ λαβόντες τὰ ἀργύρια ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν. καὶ διεφημίσθη ὁ λόγος οὗτος παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας.		they, taking the silver they did as they had been instructed and this word/account spread among Jews until this day
	Scene Six: The Great Commision		
	1 2 3 4 5		**1 2 3 4 5**
16	Οἱ δὲ ἕνδεκα μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς,		But the eleven disciples proceeded into the Galilee, into the mountain which Jesus had designated to them
17	καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν,		And seeing Him, they worshiped but some doubted.

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[20] Here is Jesus giving a double imperative! He is telling the women to depart because they would not have left otherwise! (Who would?!) But in the commission it is expected that the disciples would leave.

	οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν.	
18	καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.	And coming Jesus spoke to them, saying, given to Me is all authority in heaven and on earth.
19	πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,	as you all are leaving, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20	διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.	teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and behold I am with you I am all of the days until the consumation of the ages

Now, what do I observe?

As a scene in a play you have a background setting, then things going on in the backgroud – essentially one step closer to the main action, then action secondary to the main action, and then, of course, the main action. Longacre laid that out by noting the use of verb forms in the Hebrew text. Again, part of my thesis is that Matthew, being a Jew, and Hebrew being his literary language, is perhaps using Greek words in Hebrew discourse structure. To that end I am evaluating the text of his Gospel using Longacre's cline for the Hebrew langauge as an experiment.

In a Narrative Discourse or portion of text, a scene's background is depicted with verbless (nominal) clauses or clauses whose main verb is a "be" verb (היה in Hebrew, εἰμί in Greek).

Those I have indented to level 4. As we find characters moving in and out of a scene Longace notes the use of participles. So too with any background activities – activities just forward of the setting. These are shown at level 3. Moving closer to the mainline action may be secondary actions shown at level 2 and then there is the main action shown at level 1. If you keep in mind a stage with the various levels depicting distances away from the backdrop and closeness to the audience then this should be more clear.[21]

Within a narrative text there may be found speech acts – someone talking to someone else. And these can come in a variety of their own Discourse types. Longacre has produced cline tables also for Instructional Discourse and Hortatory Discourse. The former involves telling someone how to do something and the later shows how one exhorts a person to an activity. The later's main line verb form is a subjunctive, with the Imperative being the highest level. If we see an Imperative in a speech act then that is our hint that we are dealing with Hortatory Discourse. Unlike Narrative Discourse, the participles in a piece of Hortatory text Longacre finds relegated to the Setting level, level 4.

So, what do we find in each Scene of this Act?

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[21] To this end I wrote and presented a paper to show how I came to more clearly understand Longacre's depiction of what was happening in the texts - https://conanlibrarian.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/popeye-the-sailor-teaches-discourse-analysis.pdf.

	Scene One: The Marys come to the grave	
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
1	Ὀψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων ἦλθεν Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Μαρία θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον.	after the sabbath the dawning of the first of the week came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary to look at the grave

In this scene, the setting is the day of the week, "after the sabbath" which is also the "dawning of the first of the week"[22] Dawning is a participle (-ing words in English) and lends a movement quality to the depiction of the day. The main action is shown by a finite verb "came" that bring the Mary's to the scene. Again, Matthew had a grammtical choice of verb forms to use and he chose the finite form to main line the action of the women as they came to the grave.

	Scene Two: Earthquake and the reaction of the guards	
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2	καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας· ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ.	and behold, there had been a great earthquake for an angel of the lord descending from heaven and coming rolled away the stone and sat upon it.
3	ἦν δὲ ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπὴ καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιών.	as lightning was his appearance and his clothing, white as snow
4	ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθησαν οἱ τηροῦντες καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροί.	from the fear of him shook the guards and became as dead ones

The next scene depicts the setting that the women are walking onto. The backround/setting is the fact that there had been (be verb – level 4) an earthquake which had been because of the background activity (participles – level 3) of the angel descending from heaven and coming to the grave. When you see a participle, visualize the movement it is depicting. The main action on the part of the angel was to roll away the stone and to sit upon it. The background of the angel was his appearance which brought about fear on the part of the guards so that they shook (mainline verb – level one) and became (be verb – level 4 – they are now part of the setting) as dead ones.

	Scene Three: The Marys and the Angel	
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5	Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν ταῖς γυναιξίν· μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς, οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε.	but Answering the angel spoke to the women do not fear you all for know that Jesus, the crucified one you seek
6	οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν·	he is not here for he is risen! just as he said Come!

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[22] The word "sabbath" is used to denote the particular day and the week.

	δεῦτε
	ἴδετε τὸν τόπον
	   ὅπου ἔκειτο.
		See the place
		   where he was laid

7	καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι
	εἴπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ
	   ὅτι ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν,
	   καὶ ἰδοὺ
	   προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν,
	     ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε·
	     ἰδοὺ
	   εἶπον ὑμῖν.
		and quickly as you are leaving
		tell the disciples of him
		   that he is risen from the dead
		   and behold
		   he will go ahead of you in Galilee
		     there you see him
		     behold,
		   I have told you

8	Καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ταχὺ
	     ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου
	     μετὰ φόβου καὶ χαρᾶς μεγάλης
	ἔδραμον
	   ἀπαγγεῖλαι τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ.
		and going quickly
		     from the tomb
		     with fear and great rejoicing
		they ran
		   to tell his disciples

Scene three is the encounter of the women and the angel. Matthew depicts the angel beginning the dialogue by answering (participle – level 3) them and spoke (mainline – level 2 [verb fronted by a noun]) to them. Next we have the first instance of Hortatory Discourse (HD) in this Act. He commands them not to fear (imperative – first level in HD). This is followed by a series of finite verbs explaining to them why they should not fear – he is risen! This is followed by another command; to come, see the place where he was laid (two imperatives – level 1 in HD). Next he gives them instructions for when they will be leaving. It is important to understand what is going on with the word πορεύομαι – go. Here Matthew presents it as a participle, level 4/setting in Hortatory Discourse. Why? First note that later it is given as an imperative; so why a participle here? Remember that an author "writes what he does on purpose for a purpose." In the instance of πορεύομαι in this verse it is depicting an *expected* activity – it is expected that the women would leave the grave; they are not going to remain there for a variety of reasons – it is a grave, and the one they expected to find dead is not there and is in fact alive! So, they did not have to be commanded to go! They were going to be going. And this is important for what we see later. The main line action is not that they were going, it is that they ran!

	Scene Four: The Marys and Jesus	
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

9	καὶ ἰδοὺ
	   Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς λέγων·
	χαίρετε.
	   αἱ δὲ προσελθοῦσαι
	ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας
	καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ.
		and behold
		   Jesus greeted them saying
		Rejoice!
		   and coming
		they took ahold of his feet
		and worshipped him

10	τότε λέγει αὐταῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς·
	μὴ φοβεῖσθε·
	ὑπάγετε
	ἀπαγγείλατε τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου
	   ἵνα ἀπέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν,
	   κἀκεῖ με ὄψονται.
		Then Jesus said to them
		Do not fear!
		Leave
		Take word to my brothers
		   so that they depart to Galilee
		   there they will meet me

This next scene is the encounter of the women with Jesus. Jesus greeted them (fronted main line verb – level 2 in ND). Then we see the women coming (participle – level 3 in ND) and they take hold of his feet and worship him (main line verb – level 1 ND). This is followed when Jesus spoke to them (mainline verb – level 1 ND) and he gave them a series of commands – do not fear, leave, take word (imperatives – level 1 HD). Notice that the women are not expected to leave or go – Jesus does not use a participle; the women, like you or me, would stay there holding his feet worshipping him until forever! He had to command them to leave! Keep this in mind.

	Scene Five: Aside Account of The Guards and the Chief Priests	
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11	Πορευομένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδού τινες τῆς κουστωδίας ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα.	As they were leaving behold, some of the guards coming into the city they reported to the chief priest all that had happened
12	καὶ συναχθέντες μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων συμβούλιόν τε λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἱκανὰ ἔδωκαν τοῖς στρατιώταις	and coming together with the elders of the council about taking enough silver they gave to the guards
13	λέγοντες. εἴπατε ὅτι οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ἐλθόντες ἔκλεψαν αὐτὸν ἡμῶν κοιμωμένων.	saying say that the disciples of him coming in the night stole him while you were sleeping
14	καὶ ἐὰν ἀκουσθῇ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος, ἡμεῖς πείσομεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους ποιήσομεν.	and if this is heard by the governor we will persuade him and you will have freedom from care
15	οἱ δὲ λαβόντες τὰ ἀργύρια ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν. καὶ διεφημίσθη ὁ λόγος οὗτος παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας.	they, taking the silver they did as they had been instructed and this word/account spread among Jews until this day

Next we have a new scene that is a bit of an aside and an explanation. Matthew uses a participle form of πορεύομαι depicting the women as they leave the scene – they are in the background exiting. Next he backgrounds the guards coming into the city (participle – level 3 ND) where they reported (main line verb – level 1 ND) to the chief priests. Next, he backgrounds the chief priests coming together (participle – level 3 ND) with the elders about taking (participle – level 3 ND) enough silver to give to the guards. They gave (main line verb – level 1 ND) to the guards, saying (participle – level 3 ND) to them a command – say (imperative – level 1 HD) that the his disciples coming (backgrounded - participle – level 3 ND) stole him while they were sleeping (backgrounded - participle – level 3 ND). The scene ends with a series of mainline verbs stating that they did as they were instructed.

	Scene Six: The Great Commision	
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
16	Οἱ δὲ ἔνδεκα μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν	But the eleven disciples proceeded

	εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς,	into the Galilee, into the mountain which Jesus had designated to them
17	καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν.	And seeing Him, they worshiped but some doubted.
18	καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.	And coming Jesus spoke to them, saying, given to Me is all authority in heaven and on earth.
19	πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,	as you all are going, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20	διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.	teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and behold I am with you I am all of the days until the consumation of the ages

Now we come to the crux of the discussion and disagreement – the text of the Great Commission. I have it as Scene 6. It begins with the account that the disciples proceeded (fronted main line verb – level 2 ND) to Galilee as Jesus had designated. Then Matthew introduces the encounter between the disciples and Jesus with a participle – seeing him (backgrounded - participle – level 3 ND) to set up the main line verbs to describe the meeting – they worshipped him (main line verb – level 1 ND) but some doubted (fronted main line verb – level 2 ND). Next we have Jesus coming (backgrounded - participle – level 3 ND) to them and he spoke (fronted main line verb – level 2 ND) to them saying (common Hebrew structure – mainline speech verb followed by participle of speaking)[23], that "given to me (main line verb – level 1 ND) is all authority in heaven and on earth." Next he gives them the Great Commission and he introduces it with a participle – going (backgrounded - participle – level 3 ND). Now, here we come to the argument. Is this to be taken as an imperative because the next verb form is an imperative or can we find a clue in other parts of chapter 28? We notice that in the previous scenes "going" was shown as an expected activity; it was expected that folks would not stay where they were but would be going or leaving that particular place. The women had to be commanded by Jesus to leave because he knew that otherwise they would not. But here, is it expected that the disciples were going to remain on that mountain so that they had to be commanded to go or is it expected that once they were done there they would naturely leave and walk off the mountain to whatever place they would be going at that time? The evidence points to them being expected by Jesus to leave from there and so he did not need to make it a command; they were going anyway. It is not to be taken as an imperative because he did not intend it to be. The rest of the text demonstrates that. This is the value and great importance of Discourse Analysis, or more simply, looking at the whole

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[23] Cynthia Miller, *The Representation of Speech In Biblical Hebrew Narrative.* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003).

context – not just the close by words found only in the clause or verse. To exeget correctly you have to look at the whole picture and see what is going on and how the author is using the verb forms and syntactical structures he has at his disposal.

To put it bluntly, translating the participle form of πορεύομαι as an imperative violates the demonstratable usage the Matthew puts the narrative participles to. But, there have been objections to this view, the most recent being the paper I am interacting with. To save time I will not deal with all of its objections but enough to make the point, primarily from Matthew.

Merkle argues mainly from Wallace's *Greek Beyond the Basics* and notes that in that work and in this instance the Greek participle should be approached as a Participle of Attendant Circumstances. Wallace notes that in determining how it is to be translated "it is important to argue from *sense* rather than from translation. In order to see more clearly what the sense of a participle will be, we need to apply the following criterion: If a participle makes good sense when treated as an adverbial participle, we should not seek to treat it as attendant circumstance."[24] To make the point the first verse he cites is from Matthew 2.13. Wallace argues that "There is really only one good possibility for ἐγερθείς as an adverbial participle–temporal. (The others, as you can think through them for yourself, make little sense.)"[25] Notice that the argument is made that the governing criteria is not grammar but whether or not "it makes sense" in a translation (which, I think can well be argued, depends on the language!). Here is the verse he cites as his first example:

1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου <mark>φαίνεται</mark> κατ᾽ ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσὴφ <mark>λέγων</mark>·	behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph saying,
<mark>ἐγερθεὶς</mark>	when you are getting up,
<mark>παράλαβε</mark> τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ	take the child and his mother,
καὶ <mark>φεῦγε</mark> εἰς Αἴγυπτον	and flee to Egypt,
καὶ <mark>ἴσθι</mark> ἐκεῖ ἕως ἂν <mark>εἴπω</mark> σοι·	and remain there until I tell you,
<mark>μέλλει</mark> γὰρ Ἡρῴδης <mark>ζητεῖν</mark> τὸ παιδίον	for Herod will come to search for the child,
τοῦ <mark>ἀπολέσαι</mark> αὐτό.	to destroy him.

For Wallace and Merkle it "makes sense" to treat the participle of ἐγείρομαι as an imperative because it is followed by an imperative. They are ignoring the fact that what is presented is a narrative text with an embedded hortatory text. Looking at the previous scene in this Magi Act, we see that the magi came at night because "they saw the star as it stood over where the child was." We can also note that the angel came to Joseph in a dream. Though one can have day dreams I think it safe to take it that this dream came as he slept after the magi had departed that night. With that in mind then his getting up is expected – there is no sense that he intended to sleep in; he was naturally going to be getting up, dream or no dream. In that case it doesn't make sense (take note) to think that the angel had to order him to get up.

Wallace argues that in the next part of that scene the participle depends again on the following verb, which in this case is a finite verb form (aorist indicative). But, he again misses the use

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[24] Wallace, 640 2b.
[25] Wallace, 641.

of the participle in a narrative discourse. As mentioned above, the participle indicates something that was expected; in this case that he would get up. Wallace tries to make the case that he got up immediately because he then left "by night." He ignores the fact that many folks rise during the night time, I did as a child to feed and water horses, and so Joseph's "rising," even in the night, does not get turned into an imperative because of "the night" or its proximity to an imperative. For me, it "makes more sense" to recognize Matthew's usage of the participle as a participle in narrative passages showing background activities without having to resort to artificially converting it to an imperative just so that it "makes sense" to someone making a translation that suits their tastes. The goal is to find out what the author is doing with the grammar he is employing to better make a translation that reflects more of what he is saying and what makes sense in that rather than what "makes sense" for us in our language. But, presenting as I have, I very much thinks that it makes sense, makes more sense trying to understand what is going on in the original language than trying to change a form of a word as some are trying to do.[26]

One more verse for an example. In Matthew 10 we find the narrative of the listing of "the twelve" and their instructions in discipleship. In verse seven we find a similar construction as we find in 28.19 – a participle preceding an imperative.

πορευόμενοι δὲ	when you are going
κηρύσσετε	preach!
λέγοντες	saying
ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.	that come close is the kingdom of heaven

Wallace does not comment on this but the Merkle says that the present participle is used to "convey a temporal function" even though it goes just before an imperative![27]

As shown, Matthew's use of the participle reflects well Longacre's theory on the discourse structure of Hebrew discourse. In that theory the participle shows background activities; things going on in the background of the scene in which it is employed. This is shown with the word for *go*, as, in many instances it reflects characters coming into or exiting the scene in an anticipated manner. There is no need to artificially (and, I would argue, illegitimately) change the grammatical function of a word just because it "doesn't make sense" to the translator. Better that the translator more accurately determine how the author is using a very specific word structure and then find the sensical translation that matches the original intent of that author.

Unfortunately in this case an illegitimate grammatical translation has produced catch phrases and slogans that remove the original intent and focus of the passage from the very clear, primary, imperatival focus to "make disciples" to the backgrounded activity of "while you are going" making it rather the very wrong imperatival Go! One of the major problems of this is by so tying one to the other, the only ones who should be "making disciples" are those who "go." The original structure, however, is set up in such a way that "as you go where ever my Father and your Father sees fits to have you going" then "make disciples." There is a much broader and inclusive mandate to make disciples in the original text than in the many illegitmate translations. When we look at Luke and Acts, in Luke 24.47 we find that Jesus notes that "forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem" and that they are to "stay in the city until you are clothed with power from one high." In Acts he tells them that "you shall

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[26] This has been a perenial issue in Hebrew grammars concerning the "waw-conversive." Hence my critique of Waltke-O'Connor.

[27] Merkle, 27.

receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." A dervative of this is to notice the participles afterward – "make discisple" involves both "baptizing" (water for some, Spirit – John vs. Jesus baptism, perhaps both) and "teaching." The question that should be and, to my knowledge, is never asked, "how did The One making the mandate to make disciples Himself make disciples?" He discipled his disciples for THREE YEARS! Now, if someone among us thinks that they have figured out how to do it better than HE did then . . .

In way too many circles people think that they have "discipled" when they have given someone a tract or cajoled them into the "sinners prayer." I very much disagree with the 5 minute (usually less) encounter from the radio, tv, or doorstep whose main goal is the sinner's prayer. That is not it and that is not how HE did it. They completely ignore TEACHING. This kind of teaching is more to be found in the Sunday School classes (at the very least) around tables with books open and questions flying, and not from the pulpit. Dialogue, not monologue for Discipleship. In my thinking, the main thing the pastor should be doing is teaching those who will be teaching those who will be "going" into the world; read workplaces etc. That, I would argue, is the biblical model.

Our lesson from Longacre et al and the text is to look beyond the close syntax of the clause or verse and note the larger pericope that the text and its incumbent verb and word structures are used. Doing so, and learning how people use their language to convey particular discourses or genres to better and more accurately arrive at what the author intended, which, as I argue here, yields a much more accurate and encompassing translation of the Great Commission.