

# MATTHEW'S DESIGNATION OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS INDIRECTLY ADHERENT DISCIPLES

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to show that women are indirectly adherent disciples. Discipleship is broadly discussed in Matthew's narrative; the twelve are not the only disciples, as other disciples also appear. There are some clues of discipleship outside the twelve. In particular, women's roles are as significant as those of the male disciples. Hence, this article demonstrates that the First Gospel wished to designate these women as indirectly adherent disciples.

## **1. Introduction**

Before starting this study, we need to consider the context of Matthew's community. The social setting of Matthew's community is a mixed state of Israelites and gentiles. It is mainly Israelite background with some gentile members. This means that Matthew's community is a strong Israelite tradition group who follows Jesus with some gentile members who converted to Christianity as well. Indeed, Matthew's community is on its way to a Christian form of Judaism (see Hagner 2003, 193-194).

Around forty years ago, Strecker (1962, 191) argues that the only disciples are the twelve to appear in the Gospel of Matthew. In contrast to the other Gospels, Matthew refers only to a small group of disciples as the twelve, whereas Luke and John refer to a great crowd of disciples. Strecker's view is based on historicizing reading of Matthew's narrative. In fact, the narrator mentions the twelve disciples many times (Matt 10:1; 11:1, 20:17; 26:20). The number of twelve disciples is historically a symbol of salvation as this number corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel from whom they descended. It is also reflected in Matthew's narrative: you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28). Swiss scholar Luz (1995, 115-148; cf. 2005, 574, 577) was the first to regard Matthew's discipleship in this way. His view is that, in the Gospel of Matthew, the twelve are not the only disciples: more

disciples appear because the First evangelist redacted from Mark's sources. The Gospel of Mark mentions the twelve disciples more broadly than the Gospel of Matthew (Luz 1995, 116) meaning that the twelve disciples are already presented in pre-Matthean tradition. Luz's view above is based on the transparency perspective on Matthew's narrative.

This argument still remains an issue for Matthean scholars, especially those who are interested in the narrative approach. Matthew's description of the disciples is normally as 'the twelve', it is a symbolic term, but sometimes as a large undefined group of followers as well (Mattila 1999, 157). For instance, the story in Matt 26:17-20 shows us that the disciples ask Jesus where they should prepare to eat the Passover. Verses 17-19 only mention disciples who ask Jesus and prepare for the celebration of the Passover; however, Jesus arrived at the Passover table with the twelve disciples. The narrator appears to distinguish between the twelve and other disciples (Sheridan 1973, 236-237); which implies that other disciples appeared in Matthew's narrative. Moreover, the narrator does not mention the twelve disciples before Matt 10:1. Probably, the narrator is emphasizing the twelve disciples more than the other followers (Luz 1995, 117).

Discipleship is a very typical way in Matthew to describe group relationships in the community. The Greek term μαθητής is used 73 times; this term is usually used for the twelve disciples and is used only once outside the twelve in the case of a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph (Matt 27:57). If we accept this perspective, referring to someone outside the twelve as a disciple probably shows that unnamed disciples also followed Jesus' religious movement (Mattila 1999, 161; Heil 1991, 26). Hence, the disciples were divided into two groups: "the twelve" and those outside the twelve disciples group.

According to Matthew's narrative, it is likely that some of those outside the twelve disciples are women (who serve and follow Jesus' ministry). However, nobody would describe these women as disciples of Jesus. It is significant that the narrator's description of women's roles is the same as that of the roles of the twelve disciples if we accept that women's roles are also a part of the discipleship of Jesus. What kinds of women's roles are mentioned? The twelve disciples' role is to directly support Jesus' ministry. Moreover, the twelve disciples' role appears to be as "learners" of their teacher Jesus. Probably Matthew intends to designate women as adherent<sup>1</sup> disciples: as indirect support to Jesus' ministry.

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1 My use of the term adherent relates to the way that the disciples are adherent to their master's teaching and thought. In the Gospel, Jesus was supported by the twelve disciples

Four streams of research form the foundation of this study of the role of women as indirect adherent disciples in Matthew's narrative. Firstly, let us look at the meaning of "disciples" in the ancient world. Some terms such as "learner", "adherent" and "institutional pupil" are used in the early classical period (Wilkins 1988, 11-15). This tells us that Matthew specifies one of the roles of the disciples as "adherent." Secondly I will look at the meaning of "to follow" and how it can be accepted by the disciples in Matthew's narrative. By examination of the narrator's designation of the term ἀκολουθέω (to follow) we can see the narrator's intention that some of those who followed him would become disciples. This means that the twelve are called disciples by Jesus. However, the role of ἀκολουθέω (to follow) is not officially assigned to the disciples by Jesus, although, "to follow" implies the role of disciple. Can the way that some women follow be defined in terms of discipleship? Thirdly, I will consider whether the role of women is really very different from that of the male disciples. This argument will consider whether Matthew's depiction of women is not as disciples, even though, their significant roles are comparable to those of their male counterparts. It therefore regards the significance of the role of women as indirectly adherent disciples within their social status.

## 2. The Different Uses of μαθητής (Disciple)

The term μαθητής (disciple) was classically used to describe the "learner", "philosopher" or "teacher" in the NT world. This term has spread widely both in the early Jewish and Hellenistic societies. The Jewish institution of discipleship is not very different to the style of early Christian discipleship. In the ancient world, the meaning of "disciple" can be divided into three parts: "learner", "adherent" and "institutional pupil" (Wilkins 1988, 11-15). A "learner" is the classical usage, but an "institutional pupil" and an "adherent" are in technical usage in the written literature of Greece in the classical period. A "learner" is usually used to describe a person engaged in learning from a master who already has a high standard of skill or knowledge in a specific area. A "learner" is in general usage in the classical period.

The technical usage of μαθητής has a different meaning to the general one of "a learner." Firstly, according to Rengstorf (1967, 418), μαθητής was also used by students of the Sophists in a specialized-technical manner.

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and those outside the twelve disciples group (generally from the crowd) as adherent disciples.

Secondly, the usage of μαθητής (adherent) was beyond the level of most students' knowledge as was the concept of an institutional pupil. μαθητής was also used to denote an adherent and was representative of a particular culture and custom in the early classical period (Wilkins 1988, 13).

I have already discussed how μαθητής has three different usages in the ancient social world. All these usages imply the master-disciple relationship. The master-disciple relationship is the most common metaphor for group relationships in the NT world. Specifically, the disciples and Jesus are good examples of this master-disciple group relationship in the Four Gospels. The disciples follow Jesus and believe in him and receive some teaching of the Kingdom of God. Matthew's portrayal of the ministry of Jesus and his disciples is less geographically diverse than that of Mark and Luke. Probably, Matthew wished to emphasize more strongly that Jesus and his disciple's movement was more localizing and settling (Kingsbury 1978, 65). This view implies that Matthew's focus of Jesus and his disciple's ministry is teaching and instruction of their community. Moreover, they committed to continue Jesus' ministry of teaching and make disciples of all nations after his death (Matt 28:18-20). The narrator presented Jesus' teaching and education in Matthew's narrative. Does the relationship of master-disciples as the term "disciples for Jesus" followed in Matthew's narrative indicate some kind of teaching or schooling?

The narrator does not provide any evidence that Jesus and his disciples established anything like a Greco-Roman formal institutional school (Saldarini 1994, 95). We can be sure that Jesus was not called teacher, master, or rabbi by the disciples. The titles of teacher, master, and rabbi are limited to Jesus and are only used by those outside of his group of disciples. The title "teacher" is found in Matthew's narrative, used by the Jewish leaders (Matt 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 17:24; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 26) (van Aarde 1994, 54-55), because they are opponents of Jesus. Jesus also refers to himself as teacher, but only in relation to those who were outsiders to his disciples' understanding of Jesus. This implies that Matthew's intention in designating the relationship between Jesus and the disciples is much more than merely that of teacher and student. The title "master" is never used to refer to Jesus.

The title "rabbi" is sometimes used as a respectful title given to teachers of the Law, the Pharisees and also to any teacher in the NT. It is used just three times (Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45) in Mark's narrative and five times (John 1:38, 49; 4:31; 9:2; 11:8) in the Gospel of John. According to the Gospel of Mark, Peter twice calls Jesus "Rabbi." Although it does not appear to be a special name only used by the disciples, they also call Jesus

“rabbi” in the Fourth Gospel. However, the usage of rabbi is somewhat different in Matthew’s narrative and is found four times. In Matt 23:7-8 it is used twice; it is Matthew’s intention to avoid using “rabbi.” It is used twice by Judas Iscariot in connection with his betrayal of Jesus (Matt 26:25, 49). Only Judas Iscariot uses “rabbi” to call Jesus; it is not used at all by the other disciples in Matthew’s narrative (France 1985, 367). Why does Judas Iscariot call Jesus “rabbi” rather than “Lord”? Judas’ addressing of Jesus is as a teacher in Israelite tradition; he does not think that Jesus has authority as a teacher in the Kingdom of heaven.

In Matthew, the twelve disciples call Jesus “Lord.” (Matt 14:28; 16:22; 17:4, 21; 26:22) and some followers also use “Lord” (Matt 8:21, 25; 9:22; 15:22, 25, 27; 17:15; 20:30, 31).<sup>2</sup> Jesus himself twice uses “Lord” (Matt 12:1; 21:3). The twelve disciples call Jesus “Lord” five times. It is used four times by Peter and at least once by some of the twelve disciples (Matt 26:22). According to Matthew’s narrative, Peter was the role model and hero of the Matthean community due to his walking on water (Matt 14:28-31), his confession of Jesus as the Son of the living God and the question over paying the temple tax (Matt 17:24-27) (Shin & Van Aarde 2005, 1353). Peter is the proponent character in Matthew’s narrative. He, as well as the other disciples calls Jesus “Lord”. This indicates that the relationship between Jesus and the disciples is more than merely that of teacher and student. According to the tradition of Judaism, teacher and student are so important, but Jesus is more than teacher. Disciples are converts who are in the process of discipleship. Moreover, there has been some discussion that some followers outside of the twelve disciples also called Jesus “Lord” (Anderson 2001, 40). There is no difference between the attitude of “to follow” and the twelve disciples calling Jesus “Lord.” *Kyrios* is generally used in contexts which indicate a deeper and more religious meaning, to recognize Jesus’ authority and his exalted status. Therefore, this is a special form of addressing Jesus used by his disciples (France 1985, 148; Carter 1994, 199-200).

Here, it would be worth considering Matthew’s diction of “Lord” and “Rabbi.” We have seen above that, among the disciples, the title of “Rabbi” is only used by Judas. This is because he only sees Jesus as a teacher of the Law. However, the twelve disciples and other followers believe that Jesus is more than just a teacher (Kingsbury 1978, 60). Discipleship demands a strong personal attachment to Jesus (Ryan 1985, 57). This faith is at the centre of the relationship between Jesus and the disciples (the twelve).

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2 Κύριος is used in Matthew 80 times.

Hence, they were fully attached to Jesus by faith and it seems as though their lives expired along with him. Saldarini (1994, 96) is quite right in saying that Matthew comes from the Second temple Jewish tradition background, but the usage of the relationship of master-disciple does not stem from this but follows Greek usage. At the time of the Hellenistic era, a disciple was an adherent of a teacher's movement or a way of life. The form of early Christian discipleship is as Jesus with his disciples adhering to their teacher and teacher's particular way of life (Saldarini 1994, 95-96; Mattila 1999, 155). Hence, the role of Jesus in the relationship between him and the twelve disciples (and other followers) is not as teacher, but as adherent.

### **3. Other Disciples in Matthew's Narrative**

Current scholars consider that the basic qualities of discipleship are the calling, following, serving, and destiny with the Lord, which involves suffering (Kingsbury 1978, 56-73; Anderson 2001, 41-42; Ryan 1985, 56-57). The First evangelist's in the First Gospel's intentional usage of "to calling" is defined as 'discipleship of Jesus' (Matt 4:21). Nobody disagrees with this view, although, these other qualities of discipleship are still debated by some scholars. Here I will examine some of the general elements which make up discipleship in Matthew's narrative, especially women's behaviour as disciples of Jesus.

Firstly, I will look at "to follow." The verb 'to follow' can be defined as; 1) to move behind someone in the same direction, 2) to accompany someone, and, 3) to follow someone as a disciple, which is the literal definition. In ancient Greek, it also includes following in an intellectual or religious sense. The purpose of this section is, to analyze Matthew's use of ἀκολουθέω.

The verb ἀκολουθέω (to follow) occurs more than 25 times in Matthew's narrative (Morgenthaler 1958, 70; Kingsbury 1978, 56). It is used by three different groups: the twelve disciples, disciples outside of the twelve, and the crowd. It is used by Jesus to call the twelve disciples to follow. For instance, Jesus gets into the boat and his disciples follow him (Matt 8:23), according to "The Calling of Matthew" (Matt 9:9). All these verses indicate that the twelve disciples followed Jesus' and his ministry unconditionally. However, the narrator does not formally designate "to follow" with the twelve disciples. For instance, in Matt 4:20, when Jesus calls four men (Peter, Andrew, James and John), they leave everything they had behind to follow him (Mattila 1999, 171). Moreover, Matt 19:27-29 mentions that Peter asks Jesus, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will

there be for us?" Peter also states that his decision is to follow as a disciple. Without doubt, the usage of "to follow" clearly implies accompaniment in the extended sense of discipleship (Kingsbury 1978, 58).

According to Kingsbury (1978, 61), "to follow" does not always indicate discipleship. Matt 4:25; 8:1; 20:29, 21:9 portray the crowd as following Jesus as does the story of the healing of the sick among the crowd in 12:15; 14:13-14. These verses and 19:2 do not imply discipleship; in all of these passages, which are just relating Jesus' ministry, discipleship is not associated with the disciples of Jesus, but rather to his whole public ministry, although, in Matt 5:1 it is not easy to distinguish the crowd from the disciples. The crowd in Matthew's narrative are Israelites, along with their Israelite leader. Hence, due to the disciples being followers of Jesus along with the crowd, they became implacable enemies of the followers of the Israelite authorities. In fact, the function of the crowd is to help the Israelite leaders with the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt 27:20-24) in the passion narrative. What can be concluded here is that the term "disciples" has a restricted usage and does not extend to all who follow Jesus (Thiemann 1973, 182).

We have seen two variations of "to follow" in the above discussion. Here, I will consider another group of followers in order to associate discipleship with "to follow" taking as examples the "blind man" (Matt 20:29-34), and the "women and Joseph" (Matt 27:55-57).

The account of the two blind men outside Jericho to whom Jesus gives sight "followed him" (Matt 20:34). In the discussion of this passage, according to Filson (1960, 219), "followed him" does not presuppose they were disciples of Jesus. The two blind men walked behind Jesus as Jesus made His way to Jerusalem (cf. Matt 21:1-11). It is difficult to accept these two blind men are not disciples of Jesus. Of course, the meaning of "to follow" is sometimes used to refer to anyone who followed someone in the same direction without any relationship. However, it is possible that these minor characters are a kind of disciple of Jesus. In discussing the decision of "the two blind men" (Matt.20:34) "to follow Jesus" outside of the Jericho story, it is insisted that this expression indicates that the two men accompanied Jesus as his disciples (Fenton 1963, 73, 128; Trilling 1969, 53-4; Hill 1972, 105, 161-162). According to Gundry (1982, 406), the deletion of "on the road" indicates that the two blind men joined the group of disciples and doesn't refer to the journey towards Jerusalem. This conclusion may be correct in this context; although a large crowd followed Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, the crowd's lack of compassion was evident. This means that the crowd was an exclusive group who saw Jesus' healing

power. The lack of compassionate people in the crowd is evident by the number who would leave the march as it progressed towards Jerusalem, following Jesus. By contrast, two blind men shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Their cry is demanding salvation so Jesus stops and heals them. Hence, they are now included in the group of Jesus’ followers (Patte 1987, 285).

Jesus immediately responds to the two blind men with compassionate healing. They join the group of Jesus’ disciples, becoming models of discipleship (Carter 1994, 198-199; Keener 1997, 311). In fact, the difference between the crowd and the two blind men is that the crowd never give any sign they have converted their faith. Therefore, the blind men were disciples of Jesus, they converted their faith and followed him.

The Bible defines two significant members of Jesus disciples as the many women following him from Galilee, and Joseph of Arimathea (Matt 27:55-57). Here, I will only look at why there is an implication that the women followers were disciples and also consider Joseph who is a disciple of Jesus although not among the twelve.

Many women were at the cross in the passion narrative, watching from a distance having followed Jesus from Galilee. The word ἠκολούθησαν “followed” implies that many women accompanied Jesus in his ministry from the beginning. In other words, they were long-standing members of Jesus’ public ministry (France 1985, 402). According to the Gospel of Luke 8:1-3, it was the group of women who had looked after the group of disciples with their own possessions. Therefore, these women followers were disciples of Jesus but did not have the same status as the male disciples, who were some of main characters in Matthew’s narrative (Patte 1987, 391). We need to consider why the narrator mentions only three women’s names: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons (Matt 27:56). The usage of the term πολλαί not only indicates two or three, but has the same usage as “for many (πολλοί) are invited, but few are chosen” (Matt 22:14) (Verbrugge 2000, 1074-1075). It is also worth noting that the narrator did not provide any women’s names in the narrative. Two of the women’s names above have been carefully omitted and only mentioned with their children’s names. Although, it is assumed that many unnamed women followed Jesus’ ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem, their roles were probably as female disciples of Jesus.

Joseph of Arimathea is also a disciple of Jesus despite the fact he is not one of the twelve. According to the other Gospels: in Mark 12:34, Joseph is a member of the Sanhedrin; in Luke 23:51-52, he is a good and upright man,



who is not opposed to Jesus as a member of the Sanhedrin; in John 19:38, he is in fact a secret disciple. The Fourth Gospel tells us that the role of Joseph is significant in the narrative. He is called a secret disciple and his behaviour shows him to be a real disciple of Jesus. Joseph's story indicates that Jesus' disciples were not only the twelve.

The verb *διηκονέω* (serves) indicates that women's roles constitute discipleship in Matthew's narrative. The women's "to serve" behaviour of Peter's mother-in-law and the women at the cross suggests that women are true disciples. The behaviour of these women suggests they are involved in Jesus public ministry. According to Wainwright (1991, 85), "the woman serves" refers to woman's service at table. The goal of women following Jesus from the Galilee to Jerusalem was to serve him and his male disciples' at table. In fact, they left everything, followed and served Jesus and his disciples. The issue highlighted here is why these women were not called disciples. Their role was not very different from that of the male disciples. Mattila (1999, 176) states that the word "disciple" does not go far enough in explaining the discipleship of Jesus: another word is needed. Mattila's focus is on the fact that the description of male and female discipleship/fellowship is not the same in the narrative of Matthew. Male followers are called to be disciples; female followers are called to serve. It is very possible that women were not allowed into public places in ancient times. The Gospel of Matthew's narrative world is an embodied androcentrism situation. Moreover, women were not counted in public society in the time of Jesus' religious movement. For instance, the narrator reports five thousand (four thousand) men counted, but women and children were not counted in the feeding stories (Matt 14:21; 15:38). This may explain why women were not counted among the disciples.

One other basic quality of discipleship is destiny with the Lord which includes suffering (see Wilkins 1992, 146). When Jesus calls disciples for his ministry, they have to share in his destiny. He who wants to become a true disciple, to be one of the true disciples must "deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24). The pericope of this verse clearly talks about destiny with Jesus. Jesus predicts his own fate of death and suffering on the cross in Jerusalem (Matt 16:21-28) (France 1985, 260). Jesus explains to his disciples how he will suffer, as "all men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matt 10:22). This verse indicates that the disciples will face persecution and strong opposition. Jesus expects his disciples to overcome suffering with the help of Jewish cultural tradition. Even the disciple's families hated the disciples just on account of Jesus' name. The opinion of family members is

paramount in Jewish tradition (see Keener 1997, 207-208). This appears to be a big issue for anyone who wants to follow Jesus and presents difficulties for anyone wishing to become a disciple of Jesus. Hence, the disciple's life of suffering and destiny is good evidence of discipleship. Such is the destiny of a disciples' life, the women from Galilee were attending, watching from a distance the fate of Jesus on the cross (27:55) (Mattila 1999, 157). By contrast, most male disciples ran away after Jesus was arrested (Matt 26:56). Therefore, according to the disciples' perspective of destiny, the women's roles were as disciples of Jesus.

Finally, I will consider the word "apostle" in Matthew's narrative. According to Luz (1995, 126-127), the narrator of Matthew avoids the word "apostle." This word is very important in Luke and Acts as they are the historical accounts of the witness of Jesus' ministry (cf. Acts 6:2; 9:1, 10, 26; 11:26; 16:1; Luke 6:13, 17, 20; 19:37, 39; 24:9). I agree with Luz's view that the narrator probably considers other followers as I have already discussed above. Therefore, the Gospel of Matthew contains not only the twelve disciples, but also some other disciples as significant women roles appear in the storyline as well. In the next section I will look at women's roles as indirect adherent disciples and also look at their social status.

#### **4. Women's Roles as Indirectly Adherent Disciples of Jesus within their Social Status**

In Matthew and Mark there are similar presentations of the twelve disciples as distinct from a large group. However, the result of the above analysis is that the twelve disciples are not the only disciples in the Matthew's narrative. Here, I will look at the function of being outside the twelve, especially the women's roles as disciples in Matthew's narrative within their social status.

The narrator's strategy of the twelve disciples is presented at an official place in the storyline. The disciples are explicitly called by Jesus to follow his public ministry and leave everything behind in their personal life (Matt 4:18-22; 9:9). They are called officially and the twelve disciples' names also appear in the narrative (Matt 10:2-4). They are companions of Jesus' ministry. They have also been given a special instruction from Jesus for the mission of preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. Finally, they are committed by Jesus to carry out their mission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19).

Some aspects of Matthew's portrayal of the disciples are more positive than Mark's disciples. The disciples in Mark do not understand Jesus'

teaching and have a lack of faith (cf. Mark 6:52; 8:19), however, in Matthew's narrative, they do understand Jesus but with little faith (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). These contrasts indicate that Matthew's intention in portraying the disciples is more official than Mark's narrative; it is probable that the twelve disciples have an official position in the structure of the narrative. However, women appear unofficially and the designation of male disciples in Matthew's narrative is not a big issue. Of course, in Matthew there is a female presence in Jesus' following, but the women's position is not on the same level as that of the male disciples in the public ministry, they are not even called disciples by Jesus. Nevertheless, these women are model disciples (Love 1994, 57). It seems that by definition male disciples directly support Jesus, although, female disciples are indirectly adherent to Jesus' public ministry.

Let us look at women in indirectly adherent roles in Matthew's narrative. Firstly, the case of Peter's mother-in-law's serving is indirectly adherent to Jesus and his ministry (Matt 8:14-15). This healing case is somewhat different from other healing stories of Jesus. This is the only time that Matthew tells us of Jesus' healing without any form of request. Usually people require Jesus to heal them or bring him to heal them (Morris 1992, 97). There is good evidence that it is the narrator's intention to demonstrate that Peter's mother-in-law is a special woman in Jesus' eyes.

This implies that Jesus may know her very well as if she were a member of his public ministry having the function of a disciple. There is no doubt that Peter's mother-in-law served the meal at the table for Jesus and the male disciples (Wainwright 1991, 85). Once again, the name of the woman does not appear: she is simply referred to as the mother-in-law of Peter. Her identification is simply in the patriarchal familial structure of being in Jesus' public ministry group. Her serving at the table makes her appear to be a disciple of Jesus although she is indirectly supporting Jesus' ministry within her social status.

Secondly, a woman anoints Jesus (Matt 26:6-13): this pericope shows us the opposition between the disciples and an unknown woman; John 12:3 tells us that the woman is Mary. A woman comes to Jesus with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume which she pours on his head (Matt 26:7). The price of the perfume is more than three hundred denarii. One silver denarius was a man's wage for a full day working in the fields. It is possible that the perfume price could be one year's income for a woman (Mattila 1999, 162). The disciples are not impressed by the woman's action. Their focus is in terms of money but the woman's attitude shows no concern for any price or money. According to Patte (1987, 357), this opposition shows that the

disciples' position is aligned with that of the Israelite leaders, and the woman's position is more like Jesus'. Here, I will look at the behaviour of the women and the official disciples. Jesus says the meaning of pouring perfume is to prepare for his burial. According to the OT, kings are anointed (cf. 2 Kgdms 9:6). Hence, in the woman's mind Jesus may be a King. It is a widely held belief that the meaning of "Messiah" is "anointed one." Therefore, her action appears to be a symbolic expression that her conviction to Jesus was as a real Messiah (Morris 1992, 647). The woman has done a good thing for Jesus. This good action will be reported wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world. "Gospel" is an important word here. It involves Jesus' death, and the three dark days and rising up. "This gospel of the kingdom" is mentioned in Matt 24:14 by the narrator with his explication (Gundry 1982, 522). The narrator has once again explained the gospel through the woman's behaviour. However, the narrator describes the chosen disciples as still not understanding what Jesus has told them about his crucifixion.

This story shows us that the woman's role is significant without supplanting the disciples. This uncertain woman succeeds where the disciples fail (Anderson 2001, 41). Her actions honour her and put the disciples to shame. The woman was not actually a disciple of Jesus; however, her behaviour is better than that of the male disciples. This indicates that the narrator's designation of the woman's role is in terms of indirect adherence to Jesus' ministry and preparation for burial.

Thirdly, another significant role of women is demonstrated by the empty tomb of Jesus. We have already seen in the above section that the women presented themselves at the cross. All of Jesus' male disciples had run away before arriving at the cross in Matthew's narrative. The official disciples (the twelve) were also not present in Matthew's empty tomb narrative (Matt 28:1-10). The narrator mentions only two women: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who look in the tomb (Matt 28:1). They see there many things: an earthquake, and an angel of Lord coming down from heaven rolling away the stone (Matt 28:2-3) (Osiek 2001, 208).

Here, there are two significant things to consider. Firstly, the twelve disciples' mission of support to their Master's journey is interrupted and the women disciples take up the mission (see Mattila 1999, 169). Jesus is arrested at the garden of Gethsemane, where all the disciples desert him and flee (Matt 26:56). The official (actual) disciples as the twelve include Judas who betrays Jesus and Peter who denies him three times (Patte 1987, 392). However, Jesus is not completely abandoned by his followers from Galilee. The twelve disciple role and the women's role are exchanged in the passion

narrative. The twelve disciples' role is to be in front of the women on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem. The women's role is as prominent in the passion narrative as the role of the twelve disciples is on the way to Jerusalem. Patte (1987, 392) correctly deduces that Jesus predicts the disciples will become anonymous and invisible. By contrast, the women are ideal disciples and go on to serve Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem within the passion and the resurrection narratives.

We now realize that it was the narrator's intention to highlight the role of women prominently in the passion narrative. Although women are mentioned in these passion narrative verses; they have no significant role during Jesus' passion (Mattila 1999, 166). Women are just watching in silence from a distance. Why were these women silent?

Matthew's Gospel was written with the customs and practices of Israelite tradition (Longstaff 2001, 198). According to Wainwright (1991, 144; Mattila 1991, 167; Wire 1991, 103), men carry out the significant tasks and spread the divine message in the patriarchally structured society. It is true that the Matthean community is a typical agrarian society in the first century world. An agrarian society distinguishes those who belong to the elite class and those who have little or no access to any authority. In the case of Matthew's community, there also exists a huge divide within a set of hierarchical positions (see Shin 2004, 130; Vledder 1997, 98). There is much evidence of Matthew's patriarchal stance, such as the fact that the story of Jesus' birth centres on Joseph and that the Jewish leaders and the twelve disciples as a power group are male (Anderson 2001, 29). Therefore, in my opinion, Matthew's phraseology is very important for the understanding of women's status. Women are presented in Matthew's narrative in the cautious and traditional perspective of Judaism (Shin 2004, 157). Moreover, according to Mattila (1991, 167), of the women that are mentioned in Matthew's narrative, most of their names do not appear, for example, Peter's mother-in-law and the ruler's daughter (see section 3 above). The women have a significant role, but it is not brought to light in terms of the dynamics of the patriarchal society in Matthew's narrative. Matthew places some of these women at the cross and the empty tomb among the inner group of disciples. Why have they been virtually invisible for the entire length of the Gospel until this point? It is as if these women's roles are as indirectly adherent disciples.

Secondly, the two women: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb in Matthew's resurrection narrative (Matt 28:1). They are also sat opposite the tomb of Jesus (Matt 27:61). These women meet the angel of the Lord who rolls back the stone and sits on it (Matt 28:2). The angel of the

Lord sends these women to be the disciples of Jesus. According to Mattila (1999, 170; cf. Heil 1991, 99-102), this is the women's final role of their mission. The role of women is as mediators in the reconciliation of the disciples with Jesus. Therefore, the pericope of Matt 28:1-10 tell us two things about the significant roles of women. Firstly, that these women are witnesses at the tomb. Also, women are not the only witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. The guards are in the company of the women as well. However, the guard reports to the chief priests that Jesus is resurrected. Meanwhile, the guards receive money from the Israelite leader to falsify what they have witnessed (Matt 28:11-15). Hence, women are the only witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. We are drawn to consider women's ability to witness in the traditional Mediterranean world and particularly in Judaism. According to Osiek (2001, 216), for a woman to serve as a witness is not incompatible with Mishnaic law within Judaism. She analyses two cases which disqualify women from serving as witnesses. The first case is any which necessitates bringing an accusation against another, although, this is not exempted where it is required to bear witness when necessary. The second case is when women could testify in matters of credibility in certain cases when men are not present. However, these two cases do not apply to the witness of Jesus' resurrection. As I discussed, the women are not the only witnesses of the resurrection, it was also witnessed by the guards.

In fact, the witness of Jesus' resurrection should be by the twelve disciples. Ricci (1994, 26) says that the narrator is unable to mention the witness of the male disciples because they flee. By contrast, the women actually witness it. The actual disciples, who are directly adherents, run away after Jesus is arrested; women as indirectly adherent disciples actually witness Jesus' death, burial, and empty tomb. They appear silent but their action is indirectly adherents to Jesus' ministry. Moreover, the women who are followers in Jesus' group are not mentioned until the true meaning of discipleship can be understood by the community. This means that the women's role in the passion narrative is revealed through the central roles of discipleship (Malbon 1983, 41-48).

Secondly, women hand over their mission to the eleven disciples (see Mattila 1999: 157-158). The women receive a message from an angel and deliver it to the eleven disciples. Once again, the role of the twelve disciples inflates their position and puts the role of women in an inferior position. Jesus calls to the eleven disciples at the mountain in Galilee (Matt 28:16) and women are not mentioned again.

The result is that the twelve disciple roles are as directly adherent disciples, but women's roles as indirectly adherent disciples, although,

women's roles are no less significant than those of the twelve disciples. Therefore, I agree with Schottroff's (1995, 85) view that women are symbolically excluded in the world of Matthew's narrative.

## 5. Conclusion

In this study I have discussed one aspect of the role of women in the world of Matthew's narrative. The twelve disciples are not the only disciples in the Gospel of Matthew. Some of the followers of Jesus seem to have more important roles than those of the twelve disciples, although, they are not actually called disciples. Women's roles are particularly significant in the narrative strategy but they are called only to serve or to follow. Moreover, the roles of the disciples are not only "learners or pupils at school." The functions of discipleship are adherent to the way of life of their master in Matthew's narrative. Therefore, I have demonstrated that these women's roles are as indirectly adherent disciples and that the twelve disciples' function is as directly adherent disciples. The social status of women at the time does not allow these women to be disciples of Jesus.

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