

Jesus' Mission to All of Israel Emplotted in Matthew's Story

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1. PROLOGUE

Thirteen years ago Graham Stanton¹ argued that in Matthean studies we should abandon concepts such as “true Israel”² and even “new Israel”.³ According to Stanton (1992, 11), Matthew rather speaks of a “new people” (Mt 21:43) – “in effect a ‘third race’ (*tertium genus*) over against both Jews and Gentiles”.⁴ Yet, he is of the opinion that “Matthew wrote his gospel partly in order to strengthen his readers’ resolve to continue to accept Gentiles” (Stanton 1990, 281). From a slightly different perspective, Donald Senior (2001,18) adduced that Matthew’s “ultimate goal was the realization of an ecumenical vision uniting Jewish and Gentile Christians in one community.” Anthony J. Saldarini (1994), however, considered the “Matthean group” as “a fragile minority still thinking of themselves as Jews and still identified with the

¹ Stanton, Graham N. 1992. *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, esp. pp. 10-12. Cf. also Strecker, G [1966] 1971. *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus*. FRLANT 82. 3.Auflage. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, esp. p. 33; Luomanen, Petri 1998. *Entering the Kingdom of Heaven: A Study on the Structure of Matthew's View of Salvation*. WUNT II/101. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, esp. p. 278; Yieh, John Yueh-Han 2004. *One Teacher: Jesus' Teaching Role in Matthew's Gospel Report*. BZNW 124. Berlin: De Gruyter, esp.p. 287.

² See the title of the book of Trilling, W. [1961] 1964. *Das wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*. 2.Auflage. München: Kösel. Cf., e.g., Justin Martyr's *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 11.5; 123; 135.3.

³ See Hummel, R. 1966. *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*. München: Kaiser, esp. pp. 156 note 72, 160f.; Davies, W.D. [1963] 1964. *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, esp. pp. 290. Cf. implication in Justin Martyr's *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 119.3; 138.2.

⁴ Matthew 21: 43 reads: “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation [people / *ethne*] producing the fruits of it.”

Jewish community by others.”⁵ In the same vein, according to Paul Hertig (1998), “Matthew sought to firmly plant Jewish-Christianity in the soil of Judaism for the sake of the Jews while simultaneously exhibiting the universal nature of Jewish Christianity for the sake of the Gentiles.”⁶

Although I agree that the “parting of the ways” between the “Synagogue” and the “Church” was, in Stanton’s words, “the eventual result of mutual incomprehension and suspicion”, I do not think that a question like the “mission to the Gentiles” was a bone of contention for Matthew as it was for Paul or that the appellation “Israel” should be discarded and so easily be substituted by an amorphous entity such as “people”.⁷

My contention is that the “leaders” of the Matthean community tended to neglect and ignore Israelite outcasts and non-Israelites (the “one sheep among the ninety-nine others”; Mt 18:12-14). This state of affairs should largely be ascribed to the split in the post 70 CE *ekklēsia* between “leaders” who followed the author (and Jesus), and those who succumbed to the pressure of Pharisaic scribes.⁸

I use the term “Israelites” or “Israelite” instead of “Jews” or “Jewish”. The latter is an anachronism. The term “Judean” (not “Jew”), a translation of *Ioudaios*, is a regional designation for an inhabitant of Judea (*Ioudaia*), as distinct from, for example, an inhabitant of Galilee (*Galilaios*).⁹ “Insiders”, who supported the post-exilic ideology of the Second Temple (both Judeans and Galileans), referred to themselves as the “people of God” or the “house of

⁵ Saldarini, A. J. 1994. *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*. CSHJ. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Cf. also Saldarini, A.J. 1992. The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict. Pages 23-38. In Levine, L.I. (ed), *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA.

⁶ Hertig, P. 1998. *Matthew's Narrative Use of Galilee in the Multicultural and Missiological Journeys of Jesus*. Mellen Biblical Press Series 46. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, esp. p. 45.

⁷ Despite Mt 4:19 where Peter and Andrew were called “fishers of people / *anthrōpōn*” or Mt 21:43 where God’s kingdom is given to a “people / *ethnē*”.

⁸ Although I am basically in agreement with the following statement of David C. Sim, 1996. *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*. SNTSMS 88. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, esp. p. 198, “Matthew’s community is best seen as a self-conscious sect within a very fluid post-war formative Judaism. It had recently split from the synagogue after a period of bitter dispute and was in the process of defining and legitimating its sectarian nature vis-à-vis the parent body,” I differ with regard to (1) his remark that “this community perceived itself to be universally hated by the gentile nations” (Sim 1996, 203f.), (2) that the group called the “least” in Matthew were “missionaries” whom the author encouraged because they were rejected (Sim 1996, 234), and (3) that these “missionaries” were explicitly depicted over against “missionaries” in the Pauline tradition (Sim 1996, 222-242; see also Sim, D C 2002. Matthew’s anti-Paulinism. *HTS* 58[2], 767-783).

⁹ See Pilch, J.J. 1997. Are there Jews and Christians in the Bible? *HTS* 53(1&2):119-125.

Israel” (e.g., Mt 10:6). From the perspective of Israel, “outsiders” were often stereotyped as “non-Israel”.¹⁰ They were referred to as *goyim* or *ethnoi*, which is often translated as “Gentiles”.¹¹ From an “in-group” perspective, Matthew did not depict the followers of Jesus as “Christians” but as “people” (*anthrōpoi*, e.g. in Mt 4:19; or *ethnos*, e.g. in Mt 21:43) who constituted an *ekklēsia* (in contrast to a *sunagōgē*). Yet, these “people” were still part of the “house of Israel” – now including the “sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 10:36), an expression in Matthew referring to both the Israelite “crowd” (*hoi ochloi / ho ochlos*) and the non-Israelites (*ta ethnē*). According to Saldarini (1994, 33), the expression “crowd” (*ochloi*) and especially the reference to “all the people” (*pas ho laos*) in Matthew 27:25 is a “social and political description of the main body of Israel.”

In my doctoral dissertation on Matthew, written in 1982,¹² I argued that, although the “Israelite crowd” (*hoi ochloi / ho ochlos*) and “the Gentiles” (*ta ethnē*) do not fulfill the same character roles in the Gospel of Matthew, both groups function together as the object of the mission of Jesus and that of the disciples in the post-paschal period.

Yet, the function of the Israelite crowd and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew is related to one of the most difficult exegetical questions in the Gospel of Matthew. This is the problem of the relationship between a *particularistic* “insider” trend (cf. Mt 10:5-6) and a *universalistic* “outsider” trend (cf. Mt 28:19). Some scholars¹³ are of the opinion that there is a

¹⁰ Geographically seen, Galilee and Idumea, which were situated concentrically around Judea, were regarded as regions with a lesser claim to purity than Judea. The reason for this was not only the fact that they were further away from Jerusalem and the temple, but also that they were more populated by “outsiders” – people from “mixed” marriages, that is marriages between Israelites and non-Israelites (*mamzerim*). In spite of this, Idumea and Galilee were still part of the “house of Israel”.

¹¹ The term “Christianoi” is a similar example of stereotyping used by Judeans and Romans to refer to Jesus followers in, for example, Syria (see Acts 11:26, which refers to the followers [*mathētai*] of Jesus who were called *christianoī* for the first time [*prōtōs*] in Antioch).

¹² Published in a reworked version in 1994. See Van Aarde, Andries G. 1994. *God-with-us: The Dominant Perspective in Matthew’s Story, and Other Essays*. HTS Supplementum Series 5. Pretoria: Gutenberg Publishers, esp. pp. 80-87.

¹³ E.g. Walker, R. 1967. *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, esp. pp. 114f.; Hare, D.A.R. 1967. *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel according to St. Matthew*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, esp. p. 157; Hare, D.A.R. & Harrington, D.J. 1975. *Make Disciples of All the Gentiles* (Mt 28:19). *CBQ* 37, 359-369; Trilling, W. 1964. *Das wahre Israel*. München: Kösel, esp. p. 95f.; Clark, K.W. 1980. *The Gentile Bias and Other Essays*. Leiden: Brill, esp. p.1. See an overview of opinions from Joachim Jeremias till Amy-Jill Levine in the 1993 “Gregoriana” dissertation of Guido Tisera 1993. *Universalism according to the Gospel of Matthew*. EHS

discontinuity between the "Israelite crowd" as the object of the Jesus-commission and the Gentiles as the object of the disciple-commission on the post-paschal level. According to this view, the Gentiles replaced the Israelite crowd as the object of the mission when the latter, together with their leaders, rejected Jesus at the crucifixion (Mt 27:20-23).¹⁴ My viewpoint links up with what the Matthean scholar from the Netherlands, Wim Weren, said about Matthew 10 and Matthew 28:16-20: "This commission forms the pendant of the mission of Jesus' twelve disciples to the lost sheep of Israel in Matthew 10:6."¹⁵

There is no convincing argument, whether semantic or contextual, that the phrase "all the people" (*panta ta ethnē*) in Matthew 28:19 refers only to non-Israelites. With the expression "all" not only the Gentiles are meant.¹⁶ This meaning is in line with the use of the terms "earth" (*gēs*) and "world" (*kosmos*) in Matthew 5:13 where the followers of Jesus are described as the "light for the world" and the "salt of the earth". The concentration of occurrences of the word *pas* ("all") in Matthew 28:16-20 (vv 18, 19, 20) makes the presence of any connotation of limitation in this "commission pericope" unlikely. One can hardly state that *panta ta ethnē* is subject to limitations. In Matthew 24:14 where it is said that the preaching of the kingdom should take place "in the whole world" (*en holē tē oikoumenē*) we also find a universal orientation.¹⁷

In the same vein, Paul Minear¹⁸ said three decades ago, that in the

XXIII/482, summarized by Andreas Lindemann 2005. Literatur zu den Synoptischen Evangelien 1992-2000 (V): Das Matthäusevangelium (Teil 2). *Theologische Rundschau* 70(3), 338-382, esp. p. 358.

¹⁴ "Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people (*tous ochlous*) to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus ... They all (*pantes*) said: 'Let him be crucified'" (Mt 27:20, 22).

¹⁵ Weren, W. 1979. *De Broeders van de Menezoon: Mt. 25:31-46 als Toegang tot de Eschatologie van Matteüs*. Amsterdam: Ton Bolland, esp. pp. 106ff. My translation from the original Dutch.

¹⁶ See also Paul Hertz 1998. *Matthew's Narrative Use of Galilee in the Multicultural and Missiological Journeys of Jesus*. Mellen Biblical Press Series 46. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, esp. p. 119.

¹⁷ Cf. also the phrase, "the preaching of the gospel in the whole world (*en holō tō kosmō*)" in Matthew 26:13. However, Petri Luomanen (1998, 192) stretches this "universal orientation" too far by interpreting Matthew's address to his readers in 24:14 as demanding mercy to "all the needy in the world" (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Luomanen (1998, 267) sees the separation between the "Synagogue" and the "Church" as already completed when the Gospel of Matthew was written.

¹⁸ Paul S. Minear 1974. *The Disciples and the Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*. *AThR Supplement Series* 111, 28-44, esp. pp. 39f.

Gospel of Matthew there is no abortive ending or replacement of the Israelite crowd as the object of mission. According to him, there are two possibilities. The “crowd” includes non-Israelites during the pre-paschal Jesus-commission or the mission to the “crowd” is the anticipation of the mission to the Gentiles during the post-paschal period.

My own view is that the mission to the “crowd” on the pre-paschal level fulfills the function of a type of *transparency* that relates to the disciple-commission during the post-paschal period. However, there is no reason to argue that the Gentile mission could only have happened after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.¹⁹ I do not see the “crowd” either as a group that includes the Gentiles or as a group that was replaced by the Gentiles.

As far as the first alternative is concerned, a passage such as the one about the “Canaanite mother” in Matthew 15:21-28 is an ample indication that Matthew made a meticulous distinction between the character roles of the Israelite “crowd” (referred to as the “lost sheep of Israel”) and the Gentiles (referred to a “Canaanite woman”).²⁰

As far as the second alternative is concerned, my viewpoint is that the situation to which the Gospel of Matthew would have related – however difficult to construct and however deficient the details – is determined by the premise that the split between the “Synagogue” and the “Church” has not been accomplished yet. On the contrary, there are indications that Matthew

¹⁹ E.g. Schyler Brown 1980. *The Matthean Community and the Gentile Mission. Novum Testamentum* 22, 193-221, esp. pp. 213-216. However, my viewpoint does not imply that the mission to the Gentiles did not intensify in post-paschal time.

²⁰ According to Hare, D.R.A. 1993. *Matthew*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, esp. pp. 176-179, the story of the Canaanite woman can be read in three possible ways: (i) It could be legendary and attributed to the Jesus tradition by “Jewish Christians who were opposed to Gentile mission”. (ii) It could be considered as “authentic”, saying that “charity begins at home” and “if she passes the test, he will accede to her request.” (iii) It is a narrative that should be accepted the way it stands in all its “harshness”, presenting Jesus as a “Jewish man of his days, chauvinistic toward women and non-Jews.” According to Glenna S. Jackson (2001. *“Have mercy on me”: The Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28*. The Copenhagen International Seminar Series. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press) the Canaanite community was no longer in existence as a people or a tribe during first century CE, but the term was used to denote a disgraced people (see also Jackson, G.S. 2002. Are the “nations” present in Matthew? *HTS* 56[4], 935-948; 2003. *Enemies of Israel: Ruth and the Canaanite Woman. HTS* 59[3], 779-792. According to Elaine Wainwright (1994. *The Gospel of Matthew*, in Schlusser Fiorenza E. (ed.), *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Pages 635-677. London: SCM, esp. p. 651), the identity of the mother is “a disability that made her unclean”, because the woman is ethnically categorized as a “Canaanite”, a term that makes her “an ethnic and religious outsider” to Judeans. She is thus doubly marginalized by “her gender and her race” and economically by “her class”.

experienced the separation with disappointment. The schism apparently contributed to the unforgiving and loveless attitude prevailing in the Matthean community towards the "Israelite crowd" and their "future children" (cf. Mt 27:25), who had rejected Jesus. At the same time Matthew stresses the positive role of the Gentiles (Mt 2:1-12; 8:5-13; 15:21-28; 27:1-19; 27:54), because through it he paints the background against which his narrative should be read. As Jesus, in his mission in *Galilee of the Gentiles* (cf. Mt 4:15), cared for the "Israelite crowd" – without excluding the Gentiles – the followers of Jesus should not neglect the "crowd" in the routine of their mission to the Gentiles.

The "crowd" is depicted by names such "the least" (*hoi elachistoî*), inter alia in Matthew 25:40 and 45; "the little ones" (*hoi mikroi*), inter alia in Matthew 18:14; sheep (*probaton*), inter alia in Matthew 18:12; and "the children" (*ta paidia / ta tekna*), inter alia in Matthew 18:3 and Matthew 15:26 respectively.²¹ In Matthew 10:36 and 15:26 the group to which these names refer is associated with the "crowd".

The relationship between Jesus (and his disciples) and the "crowd" / "people" (*hoi ochloi / ho laos*) thus serves in the post-paschal Matthean community as a sort of *transparency* for the relationship between the "leaders" and outcasts. The correlation of the metaphor "sheep" (*probaton*) (in Matthew 9:36²² and 18:12²³) with the expressions "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10:6) and "the children" (*ta paidia*) (Mt 18:3-5), as well as with "the little ones" (*hoi mikroi*) (Mt 8:6, 10, and 14; cf. also 10:42), supports the transparency idea. Where the perspective of the leaders of Israel with regard to "the crowds" (*hoi ochloi*) on the pre-paschal level is expressed by such phrases as "sheep without a shepherd" (Mt 10:36), there are, by way of contrast, the terms "brothers" (*adelphoi*) (Mt 18:15, 21, 35) and "fellow servants" (*sundouloi*) (Mt 18:28, 31, 33; cf. also 10:24-25), portraying the relationship between the disciples (probably community leaders) and the "children" / "little

²¹ Cf. Ulrich Wilckens 1975. Gottes geringste Brüder – zu Mt. 25:31-46, esp. p. 379f. In Wilckens, U. (Hrsg.), *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für W.G. Kümmel*, pp. 363-383. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

²² "When he saw the crowds (*tous ochlous*), he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (*hōsei probate mē echonta poimena*)."

ones”/”least” on the post-paschal level. The use of these names (“children” / ”little ones” / ”least”) and the metaphor “sheep” depict the care and love of Jesus, as *God-with-us*, for the outcasts. At the same time the use of these names illustrates the neglect of the outcasts by the “leaders”. Minear (1974, 32) puts it as follows: “The basic conflict between Jesus and his adversaries issued from this concern of God for ...[God’s] flock.”

Where the term “the crowds” occurs in Matthew, the context is colored by Jesus’ loving concern for them.²⁴ According to Minear (1974, 36f.):

It is highly significant that Jesus places even the woes against the scribes and the lament over Jerusalem in the context of teachings addressed simultaneously to the crowds and the disciples. By this device Matthew is surely warning the “mathetai” ... against multiple forms of hypocrisy ... These who default ... become hypocrites (an epithet linking them to the Pharisees; cf. 24:51 and 23:1f.)... (T)he fate of the “mathetai” is determined by their treatment of the least of Jesus’ brethren, the ”ochloi” (cf. 25:31-46).

The proper relationship between Jesus and the outcasts is reflected in the names *adelfoi* and “fellow servants” (cf., inter alia Mt 12:46-50; 18:15-20, 21-35; 24:49; 25:40). When, with regard to the above-mentioned relationships, the disciples do not comply with expectations, they are depicted by a name such as “wicked servant” (*doulos ponēros* (inter alia in Mt 18:32; 25:36). In contrast with the perspective from which the leaders of Israel (as shepherds) are depicted with regard to outcasts (as sheep), namely that of loveless disregard, the disciples are called upon to “continue” Jesus’ *God-with-us*

²³ “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep (*probata*), and one of them has gone astray, does not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?”

²⁴ Paul Minear 1974. *The Disciples and the Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 31, refers to John the Baptist’s question as to whether Jesus is the Christ (Mt 12:25): “When John asks the messianic question, Jesus’ answer is to point to these very ‘ochloi’, composed of the blind, lame, leprous, deaf and poor (11:1f.). The inclusion of the last adjective, ‘the poor’, indicates that ‘ochloi’ was not defined solely by medical terms. Jesus’ mission, though inclusive of healing, was not limited to the care of physical disabilities. In Matthew ... the healing ministry is closely linked to the feeding ministry, and in both cases the motivation is Jesus’ concern for the ‘ochloi’ ... Every detail in these stories (Mt 14:14; 15:30) has symbolic overtones.”

mission. Minear (1974, 31) refers as follows to this “continuing” mission: “[J]esus' instructions of the ‘mathetai’ in the field of healing and feeding are designed to qualify them to take over his own work vis-à-vis these ‘ochloi’ after his death ... They are those chosen and trained as successors to Jesus in his role as exorcist, healer, prophet and teacher.”

2. Matthew's Setting

In light of the above-mentioned prolegomena, I read the Gospel of Matthew as a product of scribal activity within the context of the revitalization of villages after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. It originated from the area of northern Galilee and southern Syria after 70 CE (*Galilāia tōn ethnōn* – Mt 4:15). In this setting there was conflict between the “scribe” (*grammateus*),²⁵ who (from the time of Papias²⁶) was called “Matthew”, and other village scribes. Both “Matthew” and these other scribes were in the process of establishing the first phase of a Pharisaic rabbinate.²⁷

These village communities struggled to come to terms with the loss of both the temple and Jerusalem. Since the city of God no longer existed they had to find God's presence in the environment of villages in northern Galilee and southern Syria.²⁸ Amid Roman exploitation, scribes were engaged in village restoration. Conflict existed between two sets of scribes: the Jesus followers, who acknowledged him as messiah and other Israelites who upheld the traditional view of the messiah. The conflict centered on the interpretation

²⁵ The author implicitly refers to himself as a scribe (“grammateus”) who became a disciple of the kingdom of heaven (Mt 13:52) (cf. also Senior's, D.P. 2001. Directions in Matthean Studies, pp. 5-21. In *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson*. Edited by D.E. Aune. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, esp. p 18 note 27).

²⁶ See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.3.16).

²⁷ See also Schlatter, A. [1933] 1963. *Der Evangelist Matthäus: Seine Spärche, sein Ziel, seine Selbständigkeit*. 6. Auflage. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer. Schlatter is of the opinion that Matthew was probably an “ethical rigorist” and a representative of the earliest “Christian rabbinate”.

²⁸ The Jesus movement in Galilee and the work of early post-70 CE rabbis, called by Richard Horsley 1996. *Archeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis*. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, esp. pp. 181-184, the “earlier scribes and sages”, can be seen as a “revitalization of village communities”. After the temple was destroyed, the Pharisaic scribes and sages reorganized themselves in places such as Jamnia (in Judea), Galilee and Syria. There, in the households of the villages, they tried to duplicate the old value systems of the temple, especially regulations concerning hierarchy in society and the purity ideology of the temple. A similar activity of revitalizing village communities was found among the Jesus groups. The value system they implemented was based on Jesus' alternative understanding of the Torah.

of the Torah: Jesus as the “second Moses” who fulfilled the Torah or the traditional Mosaic view as it was regulated by the temple cult. Scribes in the synagogues had a problem with Jesus being regarded as the healing Son of David. They could not concede that he was Israel’s “new” Moses. They did not understand that Jesus could “replace the temple” while discarding purity regulations, as demonstrated for example by his act of healing performed on the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-32).

The Matthean Jesus’ exposure of the power of the Roman Empire (and that of the Temple authorities) leaders of Israel does not mean that Gentiles are excluded from God’s inclusive *basileia* or that the marginalized now included were only Israelite peasants. The “lost sheep of the house of Israel” pertain to both Israelites and non-Israelites and include people such as:

- the economically poor who are without family support (such as those referred to in Mt 19:21),
- the socially homeless (such as a “patriarchless” woman divorced by her husband in Mt 19:9 and the children without parents mentioned in Mt 19:13-15),
- and ethnic outcasts (such as the Canaanite mother in Mt 15:21-28 and the Roman centurion in Mt 8:5-13 and Mt 27:54).

Seen from the perspective of Israel as a covenantal family, the above group were marginalized and those were the kind of people who could be among the crowds that followed Jesus “from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from across the Jordan” (Mt 4:23). They were those who were granted God’s goodness because of God’s righteousness, the “last who became the first” (Mt 20:1-15).

Matthew’s account of the intercalated story of the daughter of the aristocratic official²⁹ and the hemorrhaging woman in Matthew 9:18-26 is “paradigmatic” of the exclusivity of the “old” Israel and the inclusivity of the Matthean community as the “new” Israel. Matthew changes Mark 5:21-42

²⁹ Not a ruler of a synagogue as in Mark (see Ulrich Luz [1989] 2001. *Matthew 8-20*. Translated by J.E.Crouch and edited by H. Koester. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, esp. p. 42 note 20).

because his emphasis is not on Jesus' critique against the Torah but on the concretization of God's righteousness as proclaimed in the "law and prophets" (cf. Mt 5:17-20). However, the "scope of the story" should not be interpreted as Jesus' reluctance to criticize the woman whose "faith is mixed with all kinds of mistakes and errors" (as Luz 2001, 42 note 20] assents with Calvin). Indeed, the "healing that the woman experiences is transparent of much more, viz., salvation as every Christian experiences it in life with God (cf. 8:25-26). This story is paradigmatic, therefore of healthy people also" (Luz 2001, 42).³⁰ Elaine Wainwright (1991, 91) explains it as follows: "The story of the woman of faith stands, therefore, within the narrative of Matt 8 and 9 as an example. Her marginality points to Jesus' healing of those who are most marginal in society, and his restoring of her to new life is a manifestation of the liberating and inclusive nature of the *basileia*. Restoration to life is highlighted by the threefold use of *sōzō* in 9:20-22."³¹

3. Matthew's Jesus – Savior of All

Matthew presented his writing as a story that re-tells the "history" (*biblos*)³² of how God sent Joshua from Egypt as Moses' successor to save Israel. It narrates a "history" of how God "heals" Israel through Jesus, God's son. Jesus is Israel's Davidic Messiah. As messiah Jesus healed *all* of Israel. This message was communicated in a context of opposing scribes, who defamed Jesus as someone who annulled the Torah. Opposition to Jesus came in the form of the Israelite elite, but only insofar as their collaboration with Rome was concerned. Jesus, as "king" (*basileus*), stood in opposition to the emperor – the contrast between them being the manner in which Jesus saved (expressed by the word *sōzō*) as opposed to how the emperor acted as "savior" (*sōtēr*). Jesus' approach was that of a shepherd caring for his sheep,

³⁰ The intercalation of the stories of the raising of the official's daughter from death and the hemorrhaging woman "draw(s) attention to the boundaries placed upon women because of their gender, which excluded them from the religious and social life of the community" (Wainwright, E. 1991. *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*. BZNTW 60. Berlin: De Gruyter, esp. p. 212).

³¹ However, these stories are "much more than examples of faith". According to Wainwright (1991, 214) they are "stories of a woman and a young girl oppressed by religious, social and human boundaries and of Jesus as the one who reaches out across these boundaries offering new expectations for life and wholeness ..."

whereas the emperor exploited the people from whom he demanded loyalty and had no mercy (*eleos / dikaiosunē*). Jesus announced the “empire of God” (the *basileia* of God), which opposed the Roman Empire.³³

The opening verses of a narrative determine the development of its plot.³⁴ According to Warren Carter (2001,76), Matthew 1:21c, “And you shall name him Jesus (*lēsoun*), because it will be he who will save (*sōsei*) God’s people [= the people of Israel] (*ton laon autou*) from their sins (*hamartiōn*)”, has such primacy.³⁵ The angel’s announcement to the child’s father forms the vocational beginning of the *history* of the main character Jesus, described as *biblos geneseōs lēsou Christou huiou David huiou Abraam* – Mt 1:1]. The texture of this *history* (*biblos*) is composed of:

- the new *genesis* (*genesis*) which began with the birth of Jesus as the “rebirth” of Israel, the *child/children of Abraham* (*huios / tekna tō Abraam*) which includes those previously excluded from the Jerusalem temple (see Mt 3:7-10);
- the *messiah* (*Christos*), the “popular” *son of David*, coming from humble Bethlehem and not from imperial Jerusalem (see Mt 2:1-6);
- the savior *Joshua* (*lēsous*) who causes the meek to inherit the land (Mt 5:5; 4:12-17; 23-25), revealed in Jerusalem as the victorious, cosmic savior-king, the Son of man (Mt 1:17; 28:18), and announced by the chosen, living and dead, as God-with-us (Mt 27:51-54; 28:20; 1:23).

³² Mark (1:1) refers to his “story” as *archē tou euangeliou lēsou Christou*, Luke (1:1) as *diēgēsis*, and Matthew (1:1) as *biblos*.

³³ See Patterson, S.J. 1998. *The God of Jesus: The Historical Jesus & the Search for Meaning*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, esp. pp. 60-64; Carter, W. 2001. *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, esp. pp. 60-64; Horsley, R 2003. *Jesus and the Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, esp. pp. 13-14. In three chapters in Matthew’s gospel the instruments of Rome, the client kings Herod the Great (Mt 2) and his son Herod Antipas (Mt 14), and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate (Mt 27), dominate the scene (Carter 2001, 76-77), but Matthew’s vision is that God is greater than the power of Rome. God also punished the leaders of Israel as allies of Rome, ironically by using Rome as an instrument to destruct Jerusalem (Mt 22:7).

³⁴ Perry, M. 1979-1980. *Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates its Meaning*. *Poetics Today* 1:35-64, 311-364; Powell, M.A. 1992. *The Plot and Subplots of Matthew’s Gospel*. *NTS* 38:187-204, esp. pp. 195-199.

³⁵ This opening verse “shapes its audience’s expectations, understandings, and questions throughout the whole work” (Carter 2001,76).

Matthew followed Mark's naming of Jesus as the *Davidic Messiah* and the royal *Son of God* to a large extent, but adapted it to suit his own intention and situation.³⁶ In the beginning of the plot Matthew portrays Jesus as the *Messiah*, the *Son of David*, the *Son of Abraham* (Mt 1:1). The title *Son of God* is however not mentioned at the beginning but, given its importance, it appears at a later stage when, at the baptism of Jesus, it is placed in the mouth of God (Mt 3:17).

In Matthew, *Jesus as the Davidic Messiah*, has a peculiar connotation because "God's salvation" is attached to the name "Jesus". *Jesus as the Davidic Messiah* heals and helps people who are of no account in Israel (the outcasts, such as the sick, crippled, women, non-Israelites, and children) and they are the ones who, in turn, acknowledge Jesus and believe in him as the *Son of David*.

For Matthew, "Jesus" is not a common appellation. In Mark people such as Bartimaeus and the two men possessed by evil spirits called him "Jesus" (Mk 1:24, 5:7; 10:47), but this is not the case in Matthew (Mt 8:29; 20:30). In Matthew, by acknowledging *Jesus as the Davidic Messiah*, the two men healed of their blindness see what God's salvation is all about (Mt 20:30), while the Gadarene demoniacs publicly announce that God heals Israel through Jesus, *God's son* (Mt 8:29).³⁷

The nations came to this realization at Jesus' death when God revealed him as the cosmic "Son of Man" (Mt 26:64) and the Roman centurion called him, and not the Emperor "God's son" (Mt 27:54). This acknowledgement follows the signals that the "old cultic order" has come to an end and that a "new dispensation" has dawned (Mt 27:45-53) – an anticipation of the plot's open-end when the disciples are commissioned to include the *panta ta ethnē* into Israel (Mt 28:16-20).

According to Carter (2001,76) "Matthean soteriology asserts God's sovereignty over the cosmos by ending all evil...." It is specifically the word *sōzō* that denotes "healing" in this comprehensive sense. The word is already

³⁶ Kingsbury, J D 1981. *Jesus Christ in Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, esp. p. 65.
then only after this knowledge has been revealed to them by God. For example, after Peter's confession, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!" (Mt 16:16), is added: "...flesh

found at the beginning of Matthew's story (1:21c) where the name Jesus is linked to Jesus' vocation as the savior who will save (*sōsei*) the people of Israel from their sins. Common images from the Greco-Roman world³⁸ shed light on Matthew's understanding of Jesus' birth as the inauguration of God's salvation of Israel.³⁹ The primary intertextual analogies come from the references to the miraculous birth of Moses in Josephus (*Ant.* 2.205-206, 210-211, 215-216) and Pseudo-Philo (L.A.B. 9:1-10).⁴⁰

It is not only the later Rabbinic tradition (*Meg.* 14.2)⁴¹ that relates Moses' birth to God's *salvation* of Israel, but Josephus, during the second half

and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven!" (Mt 16:17) (cf. Kingsbury 1981, 72).

³⁸ Matthew 1:21c prophesies the greatness of this newborn king similar to the formulation of the presentation of the birth announcements of the Persian savior-king Cyrus by Herodotus (*Hist.* 1.107-8) and Alexander the Great, the divine hero of the Greeks, by Cicero (*Div.* 1.23.47). In a Greco-Roman context such proclamations complied with directives from the *progymnasmata* for writing an encomium (see Neyrey, J.H. 1998. *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*. Louisville, KY: Westminster, esp. pp. 90-105). For example, Hermogenes (*Rhetores Graeci* II.14.8-15.5) instructs his students to begin with the subject's origin and birth. According to Hermogenes, the writer should describe "what marvelous things befell at birth, as dreams or signs or the like." Quintilian (*Inst.* 3.7.10-18) teaches that what happened prior to the birth should also be noted, such as prophecies "foretelling future greatness". This can be seen in, for example, the memorable statements regarding the birth and future of the emperors Vespasian and Titus, which were made by Suetonius (*Vesp.* 5; *Tit.* 2). Similarly Plutarch (*Rom.* 2.4) referred to Romulus, the "founder" of the "eternal city Rome" (see Rand, E.K. 1943. *The Building of Eternal Rome*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press), and Suetonius (*Aug.* 94; *Tib.* 14) to the first two Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius, saviors of the whole world (see Taylor, L.R. [1931] 1981. *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*. Reprinted. Chico, CA: Scholars Press). These figures were destined by the gods for political and imperial rule (cf. Klauck, H.-J. [1995/1996] 2000. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*. Translated by B. McNeil. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, esp. Pp 289-302).

³⁹ See Ulrich Luz 1985. *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus, 1. Teilband: Mt 1-7*. EKK 1/1. Zürich: Benziger Verlag, esp. pp. 102, 106.

⁴⁰ See Bloch, R. 1954. Quelques aspects de la figure de Moïse dans la tradition rabbinique. *Cahiers Sioniens* 8:210-285. Reprinted 1955 in *Moïse, l'homme de l'Alliance*. Pages 93-167. Edited by H. Cazelles. Special edition of *Cahiers Sioniens*, nos. 2-4 of 1954. Tournai: Desclée; [1955] 1978. Note méthodologique pour l'étude de la littérature rabbinique. *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 43:194-227. Reprinted 1978 as Methodological Note for the Study of Rabbinic Literature. Pages 51-75. In *Approaches to Ancient Judaism, 1: Theory and Practice*. Edited by W.S. Green and translated by W.S. Green & W.J. Sullivan. Brown Judaic Studies 1. Missoula: Scholars Press for Brown University; Crossan, J.D. 1968. Structure and Theology of Mt. 1.18-2.23. *Cahiers de Joséphologie* 16:119-135; 1986. From Moses to Jesus: Parallel Themes. *Bible Review* 2(2):18-27; 1996. *Who is Jesus? Answers to your Questions about the Historical Jesus*. New York: Harper Collins; 2003. Virgin Mother or Bastard Child? *HTS* 59(3). According to René Bloch (1978,67), "Jesus, acknowledged as Messiah, was considered a second Moses, and it was natural for the evangelist constantly to refer to the traditions concerning Moses' birth in order to formulate those relating to the birth of Jesus" (cf. Allison, D.C., Jr. 1993. *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress).

⁴¹ *Meg.* 14.2 refers to Miriam's words in Num 13:17 (Jastrow. M. 1975. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi*. New York: The Judaica Press, esp. p. 601).

of the first century (probably 93-94 CE in Rome) also does so.⁴² Both Matthew's "vocational verse" (Mt 1:21c) and his "epilogue" (Mt 28:19-20) were modeled after among others the common Moses tradition⁴³ found in, for example, Josephus' words in the *Antiquitates*: "he shall deliver the Hebrew nation" (cf. Jos., *Ant.* 2.210 with Mt 1:21c) and "he will be honored until the end of time by all nations (including [the 'new'] Israel)" (cf. Jos., *Ant.* 2.211 with Mt 28:19-20).⁴⁴

The expression to "deliver (=save) Israel" in "normative" Rabbinic tradition (e.g., *Meg.* 14.2), was commonly used in first century Palestinian circles. Matthew's vocational verse with regard to Jesus echoes the same tradition. In the Rabbinic tradition (*Meg.* 14.2) Miriam's reference to her mother Jochebed who will give birth to the future savior (Moses)⁴⁵ alludes to the word "Joshua" in Num 13:17.⁴⁶ The verbal stem of this word is *jasha*^c. The *hif'il* of this word is used as a substantive participle, *moshiah*, in a number of Old Testament texts.⁴⁷ The substantive participle means "helper" (=savior) in these cases.⁴⁸ This meaning of *moshia* recalls the name of *Moses* and is a

⁴² "This child, whose birth has filled the Egyptians with such dread that they have condemned to destruction all the offspring of the Israelites, shall indeed be yours; he shall escape those who are watching to destroy him, and, reared in a marvelous way, *he shall deliver the Hebrew race* from their bondage in Egypt, and be remembered, so long as the universe shall endure, not by Hebrews alone but even by alien nations" (Jos., *Ant.* 2.210-211; my emphasis; translation from Crossan [2002], taken from Thackeray, H. St. *et al.* 1926-1965. *Josephus*. 10 volumes. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁴³ See, e.g., Meeks, W.A. 1970. Moses as God and King. Pages 354-371. In *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*. Edited by J. Neusner. Leiden: Brill, esp. pp. 354-371.

⁴⁴ Jane Schaberg (1982. *The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*. SBLDS 61. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, esp. p. 45) convincingly argued that the triadic formula in Matthew 28:16-20 in all probability represents an "allusion to the Septuagint of Daniel 7:14." Just as Josephus (*Ant.* 4.326) interpreted Moses' "final departure" in terms of Daniel 7, Matthew respectively ended and began the story of Jesus and the disciples with a "throne-theophany commission" (Schaberg 1982, 189) by means of his editorial adaptation of a tradition (cf. also Van Aarde, A.G. 1998. Matthew 27:45-53 and the turning of the tide in Israel's history. *BTB* 28[1], 16-26; Davies, W.D. & Allison, D.C. [1997] 2004. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Volume III. A Continuum Imprint. London: T&T Clark, esp. pp. 682ff.; Luomanen, P. 1998. *Entering the Kingdom of Heaven: A Study on the Structure of Matthew's View of Salvation*. WUNT II/101. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, esp. pp. 194-260).

⁴⁵ "My mother shall bear a son [Moses] *who will deliver Israel*" (*Meg.* 14.2 – see Jastrow 1975. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi*. New York: The Judaica Press, esp. p. 601).

⁴⁶ Cf. Jastrow 1975, 601.

⁴⁷ Judg 6:36; 1 Sam 10:19; 11:13; 14:39; Zech 8:7; Ps 7:11; 17:7.

⁴⁸ See Köhler, L. and W. Baumgartner 1994-2000. *The Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated by M.E.J. Richardson. CD-ROM edition. The Logos Library System. Leiden: Brill.

play on words (paronomasia) on the participle *messiah* / *mašiah*. Messiah became the *technicus terminus* for the anointed son of David (or David's son) as the king over all Israel (2 Sam 5:1-3).

In Matthew the messiah's *redeeming* activity consists of *healing*.⁴⁹ In Psalm 118:25 an example of wordplay between *moshia* (=Moses) and *messiah* (=son of David) is found in the expression *hoshiah na* (in Greek: *hōsianna*).⁵⁰ It is evident from Matthew's report on Jesus' "kingly" entry into Jerusalem as "son of David", as Israel's *healing / saving messiah* (Mt 21:14), that he was aware of such wordplay. In Matthew 21:9 the evangelist cites among others Psalm 118:25: "Hosanna to the Son of David" (*hōsanna tō huiō David*). In view of this wordplay, Matthew's "missiology" consists of defending the "history" that "Joshua" (*Iēsous*) is the messiah whom God commissioned as the "new Moses" to save (*sōzo*) Israel from their sins. What such healing implies becomes clear in light of the "structure" of Matthew's "history".

4. Matthew's Mission Emplotted

The way in which Matthew arranged the material from the sources and added his own also discloses the structure of Matthew's *biblos*. The Markan tradition served as the framework⁵¹ to which was added material from Q.⁵² The five discourses of Jesus⁵³ mostly contain material from Q. Since B.W. Bacon's (1930) epoch-making study of the "five books" of Matthew against the "Jews" this fivefold division⁵⁴ has been regarded as a particular characteristic of the

⁴⁹ See Duling, D.C. 1978. The Therapeutic Son of David: An element in Matthew's Christological Apologetic. *NTS* 24:392-410; 1992. Matthew's plurisignificant "Son of David" in Social Science Perspective: Kinship, Kingship, Magic, and Miracle. *BTB* 22:99-116.

⁵⁰ See Dalman, G. 1905. *Grammatik der judisch-palestinischen Aramaisch: Nach den Idiomen des palästinischen Talmuds des Onkeltargum und Prophetentargum und des jerusalemischen Targume. Aramaische Dialektproben*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, esp. p. 249.

⁵¹ See Bauer, D. 1988. *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. JSNTSS 31. Sheffield: JSOT Press, esp. pp. 23-24.

⁵² See Davies, W.D. and Allison D.C. [1988] 1997. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I-VII*. Latest impression. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, esp. pp. 97-127.

⁵³ Mt 4:23-7:29; 9:36-11:1; 13:1-52; 18:1-19:1; 23:1-25:46.

⁵⁴ Bacon, B.W. [1930] 1980. Die "Fünf Bücher" des Matthäus gegen die Juden, übersetzt von W. Wissmann, in Lange, J. (Hrsg.), *Das Matthäus-Evangelium*, 41-51. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. Bacon saw this fivefold division as a Pentateuch motif from which he derived a "New Moses" Christology. Davies, W.D. [1963] 1966. *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, esp. pp. 15 and 23, on

concentric chiastic composition⁵⁵ of Matthew's gospel.⁵⁶ Both the disciples⁵⁷ and the Israelite crowds⁵⁸ are present at the beginning of each speech by Jesus.⁵⁹ These five speeches are directed at the disciples and have particular relevance to the relationship between the disciples and the Jewish crowd.⁶⁰

The five speeches⁶¹ should therefore be seen in relation to the narrative discourses⁶² that appear alongside and between them. Matthew's story builds on the alteration of *narrative* and *dialogue*.⁶³ This combination

the basis of Bacon's view, developed the theory that the author of Matthew's gospel was a converted rabbi, a Christian legalist who offered a systematic presentation of Jesus' "commandments" in five collections, according to the pattern of the Mosaic Pentateuch, as an apology for antinomianism. A development of the Pentateuch analogy is also found among Matthean scholars such as K. Stendahl 1969. *The School of St. Matthew and its Use of the Old Testament*. 2nd edition. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, esp. pp 24f. M.G. Kline 1975. *The Old Testament Origins of the Gospel Genre*. *WThJ* 38:1-27 (cf. D.P. Senior 1976. *The Ministry of Continuity: Matthew's Gospel and the Interpretation of History*. *BiTod* 82:670-676, esp. p. 673) interprets the five Jesus-discourses in analogy to Moses' valedictory speeches in Deuteronomic theology, with the "covenant" as their central theme. This fivefold structure has been criticized for its oversight of the discourses in Mt 11 and 23, for its failure to explain the infancy and passion narratives integrally with the total composition, and its inability to indicate any convincing similarities between the content and structure of the Pentateuch and Matthew (e.g., D. Hill 1979. *Some Trends in Matthean Studies*. *Irish Biblical Studies* 1:139-149, esp. p. 140). However, the presence of these five Jesus discourses cannot be reasoned away.

⁵⁵ This concentric chiastic structure is based on a different Matthean formula than the one used by Kingsbury. Although J.D. Kingsbury (1975a. *The Title "Son of God" in Matthew's Gospel*. *BTB* 5:3-31, esp. pp. 36ff., 161ff.; 1975b. *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*. Philadelphia: Fortress, esp. pp 7-25) also takes Jesus' five discourses into account, he divides the Gospel into three main parts (J.D. Kingsbury 1973. *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel and his Concept of Salvation-history*. *CBQ* 35:451-474; cf. D.B. Howell 1990. *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel*. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 42. Sheffield: JSOT Press, esp. pp. 81-85).

⁵⁶ Cf. H.J.B. Combrink. *The Macrostructure in the Gospel of Matthew*. *Neotest* 16:1-20; 1983. *The Structure of the Gospel of Matthew as Narrative*. *TynBul* 34:61-90. Although there are different possibilities for structuring Matthew's gospel (see, e.g., Davies and Allison 1997, 58-72), the structure of C.A. Lohr (1961. *Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew*. *CBQ* 23:403-435) is, according to me, the most convincing. Lohr uses the five speeches in Matthew as point of departure and uncovers a concentric chiastic structure in light of the formula in Matt 7:28-29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1: "And when Jesus finished these sayings" These five speeches do not represent "breaks" in the composition but should be seen in relation to the narrative discourses that follow and intersperse (see, among others, D.L. Barr 1976. *The Drama of Matthew's Gospel: A Reconsideration of its Structure and Purpose*. *ThD* 24:349-359).

⁵⁷ Mt 5:1; 9:37; 10:1; 13:10; 18:1; 23:1.

⁵⁸ Mt 4:23-51b; 9:35ff.; 13:2f; 18:2; 23:1.

⁵⁹ Cf. T.J. Keegan 1982. *Introductory Formulae for Matthean Discourse*. *CBQ* 44:415-430, esp. pp. 428f.

⁶⁰ Cf. A.G. Van Aarde 1994. *God-with-us: The Dominant Perspective in Matthew's Story, and Other Essays*. HTS Supplementum Series 5. Pretoria: Gutenberg Publishers, esp. pp.21-34.

⁶¹ Mt 4:23-7:29; 9:36-11:1; 13:1-52; 18:1-19:1; 23:1-25:46.

⁶² Mt 1:1-4:22; 8:1-9:35; 11:2-12:50; 13:53-17:27; 19:2-22:46; 26:1-28:20.

⁶³ Willi Marxsen (1959. *Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums*. 2.Auflage. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, esp. p.64) had noticed that the "narrative discourses" were chiefly "historizing" redaction by Mark and that the post-Easter situation of Matthew and his community was being reflected in the five Jesus speeches

creates the analogy between Jesus' commission and that of the disciples. The one discourse links up with the following speech in an associative manner, which continues the spiral to the following narrative discourse and results in the integration of the Jesus commission with that of the disciples. The way in which the alteration of *narrative* and *dialogue* serves the development of the plot of Matthew's story can be demonstrated by focusing on the connectedness between the Sermon on the Mount and the narration of the commissioning of the twelve disciples as Jesus' co-healers. Matthew 1:1-4:22 functions as the beginning of this "narrated events". In this narrative discourse Matthew offers initial information with regard to the rest of the narrated events that are consummated in the *middle* (Mt 4:23-25:46) and which come to a close in the *conclusion* (Mt 26:1-28:20).

With the Jesus speeches, such as the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:3-7:27),⁶⁴ the narrator supplies keys to interpret both the preceding and the following narrative discourses. The first narrative discourse relates that Jesus was born as *God-with-us*, and that he begins his mission of saving all of Israel. The theme of his mission and the *dramatis personae*, as well as the expectations that readers can have with regard to their later behavior and attitudes, are announced: Jesus' mission as *God-with-us* serves the purpose of "forgiveness of sin" for the Israelite crowds and for the non-Israelites. This mission is fulfilled in accordance with the will of the Father in heaven, because in the Moses typology (Mt 2:13-23) Jesus is introduced as the obedient Son of God (Mt 3:13-4:11) who came "to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt 3:15). He is opposed by Satan (Mt 4:1-11) and the Israelite authorities that seek his death (Mt 2:1-18). He is supported by the disciples who are called to be "fishers of people" (Mt 4:18-22). This Jesus commission is a continuation of that of the prophets (Mt 1:17) which in turn finds continuation in that of the disciples (Mt 4:18-22).

(*Redenkomplexen*) (cf. J. Schniewind 1968. *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*. NTD. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, esp. p. 8).

⁶⁴ The Sermon on the Mount serves the purpose of interpreting the preceding narrative discourse and preparing the following Jesus speech (Mt 8:1-9:35). Jesus adopted a sitting position, as a "scribal teacher" would (cf. Yieh, J.Y-H. 2004. *One Teacher: Jesus' Teaching Role in Matthew's Gospel Report*. BZNW 124. Berlin: De Gruyter), to teach the will of the heavenly Father; the disciples encircled him and formed the addressees of his teaching; seated in a wider circle around them were the Israelite crowds, to whom the Sermon on the Mount essentially applied (Mt 5:2).

The contents of God's salvation being taught to the disciples mainly relate to their behavior vis-à-vis the Israelite crowds. The relationship between the disciples and the crowds should reflect a behavior and disposition that differs from that of the Roman, Herodian, and Israelite authorities. Matthew 4:23-5:2 provides the setting for the Sermon on the Mount.⁶⁵ The outline in Matthew 4:23,⁶⁶ repeated in Matthew 9:35⁶⁷ to complete the circle of *dialogue* and *narrative*, forms the backdrop against which the discourse is acted out, namely Jesus' mission to all of Israel. This mission comprises the proclamation of the "gospel of the kingdom" – and the "good tidings" of a savior who cares for the "little ones", who called them a "family"⁶⁸ by resocializing them into God's "imperial household" through empowering healing.⁶⁹ This was a subversive act that offended village elders, outraged Pharisees and Herodians, and anticipated Jesus' critique of chief priests and elders in Jerusalem by exposing their manipulative ploys and misuse of hierarchical power.

Matthew 5:20 summarizes the theme of the Sermon on the Mount:⁷⁰ "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." The command for surpassing righteousness implies that like Jesus, the disciples have to radically obey the will of the Father in heaven, which is accomplished through *doing* it (see Mt 5:16; 6:10; 7:21). The command concludes with the so-called "golden rule" (Mt 7:12): "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the

⁶⁵ The actual discourse of Jesus begins in Mt 5:3.

⁶⁶ "And he went about all Galilee, teaching (*didaskōn*) in their synagogues and preaching (*kērussōn*) the gospel of the kingdom and healing (*therapeuōn*) every disease and every infirmity among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick..." (Mt 4:23f.).

⁶⁷ "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching (*didaskōn*) in their synagogues and preaching (*kērussōn*) the gospel of the kingdom, and healing (*therapeuōn*) every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them..." (Mt 9:35f.).

⁶⁸ See Mt 23:8b-9: "...you all belong to the same family ...don't call anyone on earth 'father,' since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven" (Miller, R.J. ed. [1992] 1994. *The Complete Gospels*. Annotated Scholars Version. Revised and expanded edition. Sonoma: Polebridge).

⁶⁹ "God is addressed as Father-King..." (see Sief van Tilborg 1986. *The Sermon on the Mount as an Ideological Intervention: A Reconstruction*. Assen: Van Gorcum, esp.p. 123). See the combination of household ("Father in heaven"), imperial ("your kingdom"), and soteriological ("absolution") terms in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9b, 10a, 12a).

⁷⁰ See J. Jeremias [1961] 1972. *The Sermon on the Mount*. Translated by N. Perrin. Biblical Series 2. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, esp. p. 23.

Prophets.” This saying is concretized in the subsequent narrative about Jesus’ *healing* commission as the Davidic Messiah (Mt 8:1-9:35). This discourse in turn functions as a “transparency” for the next Jesus speech, dealing with the disciples’ commission (Mt 9:36-11:1) in which the followers of Jesus become “partners of Jesus”⁷¹ and act as *healed healers*.

5. Resumé

There is an analogy between two “narrative lines” as subplots in the Gospel. The one is the (pre-Easter) Jesus commission and the other the (post-Easter) disciples’ commission. These two narrative sequences do not function in isolation. They are integrated by thematic parallels,⁷² cross-references,⁷³ prospect ion⁷⁴ and retrospection.⁷⁵ The analogy between the two subplots can be understood by means of the “transparency” concept: the pre-Easter narration (level one) can be seen in the story of the post-Easter faith community (level two)⁷⁶ and vice versa.

Matthew contains a level of narration, grounded in tradition and embodying an historical perspective on the past – though seen through faith and hence idealized. But there is also a second level that makes this past narrative relevant to the present needs of Matthew’s community. Though neither level of discourse is ever totally absent, in some contexts one level may take precedence over the other, and the Gospel will slip imperceptibly from one to the other.

The shift (*Wende der Zeit*) between these two narrative sequences takes place at Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. The death of Jesus (Mt 27:51ff.) causes the veil to tear that signals the end of the old cultic order. The divine judgment causes an earthquake and the resurrection of the dead. These are apocalyptic signs. The earthquake marks the beginning of the end

⁷¹ Vledder, E.-J. 1997. *Conflict in the Miracle Stories: A Socio-exegetical Study of Matthew 8 and 9*. JSNT Supplement Series 152. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, esp. p. 233.

⁷² Cf. Mt 4:23; 9:35 with 10:6ff.

⁷³ Cf. Mt 16:19 with 18:18; 23:13.

⁷⁴ Cf. Mt 5:12 with 23:34ff.

⁷⁵ Cf. Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39 with 16:9ff.

⁷⁶ According to Paul Hertig 1998. *Matthew’s Narrative Use of Galilee in the Multicultural and Missiological Journeys of Jesus*. Mellen Biblical Press Series 46. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, the “first horizon” and the “second horizon” respectively.

and the rearrangement of the world. The death of Jesus is the beginning of the new aeon, a change which that encompasses the whole cosmos. The dead coming out of their graves is a dramatic anticipation of Jesus' resurrection. It announces the destruction of the old and the dawning of the new time. However, this *Wende der Zeit* does not have the "salvation-historical" consequence that the story of Israel is replaced by the story of the so-called eschatological church. The "history" of Jesus and the "history" of the church" are included in Israel's history.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ See Van Aarde, A.G. 1998. Matthew 27:45-53 and the turning of the tide in Israel's history. *BTB* 28(1), 16-26.