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JESUS' FULFILMENT OF THE TORAH AND PROPHETS: INHERITED
WRITING STRATEGIES AND TORAH INTERPRETATION IN MATTHEW'S
GOSPEL

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The thesis is entirely my own work and no portion of it represents work done in collaboration with others. Neither has the dissertation been submitted for any other degree or qualification.

– Steven J. Stiles

Date: 29/10/2018

ABSTRACT

This thesis takes a different approach to the contested topic of Jesus and the Torah in Matthew's Gospel. Rather than asking whether or not Jesus' radical teaching on the Torah (Matt 5:17–48) affirms the validity of the Torah, surpasses it, or if it situates the Matthean community within or outside the bounds of Judaism, this thesis examines the Matthean Jesus' radical teaching as an example of first-century Torah interpretation. Specifically, it examines Second Temple writing strategies used to present interpretations as an authoritative representation of the Torah and compares them with the way Matthew authorises Jesus' teaching on the Torah. This comparison shows that Matthew uses inherited writing strategies to participate in the Second Temple and late first-century Jewish phenomenon of innovating the Torah to meet the needs of a specific context.

Chapter 1 examines the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period, both the contexts that caused it and the logic behind it. Chapter 2 analyses Matthew's Gospel to see if it exhibits a similar context and logic as other Second Temple texts that interpret the Torah. Chapter 3 then uses Hindy Najman's concept of Mosaic Discourse as a lens to observe the writing strategies Matthew uses to present Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount as an authoritative representation of Sinaitic Revelation. Chapter 4 then considers how the genre of biography was used to legitimise a historical figure in a polemical context. Chapter 5 then examines how Matthew similarly used the opportunities of biographical writing to legitimise Jesus as an authority on the Torah in a polemical context and, therefore, authorise his teaching on the Torah as the correct way to follow God's commandments.

LAY SUMMARY

This thesis provides a fresh look at the often debated topic of Jesus and the Torah in Matthew's Gospel. Scholars typically try to determine whether or not Jesus' radical teaching on the Torah (Matt 5:17–48) affirms the validity of the Torah, surpasses it, or if it reveals anything about Matthew and his community's social context with regard to other groups of first-century Jews. This thesis, however, examines Jesus' radical teaching as an example of first-century Torah interpretation. Specifically, it compares writing strategies authors in the Second Temple period used to authorise interpretations of the Torah with the way Matthew authorises Jesus' teaching on the Torah. This comparison shows that Matthew uses inherited writing strategies to participate in the Second Temple and late first-century Jewish phenomenon of interpreting the Torah to meet the needs of a specific context.

Chapter 1 examines the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period, both the contexts that caused it and the reasons authors did it. Chapter 2 analyses Matthew's Gospel to see if it has a similar context and logic as other Second Temple texts that interpret the Torah. Chapter 3 then uses Hindy Najman's concept of Mosaic Discourse as a way to observe the writing strategies Matthew uses to present Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount as an authoritative representation of the revelation Israel received at Sinai. Chapter 4 then considers how the genre of biography was used to legitimise a historical figure in a polemical context. Chapter 5 then examines Matthew's similar use of biography to legitimise Jesus as an authority on the Torah in a polemical context and, as a result, authorise his teaching on the Torah as the correct way to follow God's will.

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We're all in this thing together
Walkin' the line between faith and fear
This life don't last forever
When you cry I taste the salt in your tears
(Old Crow Medicine Show)

-Steven J. Stiles, August 29th, 2017 (Happy Birthday Monica)

INTRODUCTION

To Sh. Vul

The words said by Christ are not important and quotable simply because they were said by Christ. On the contrary, they were said by Christ because they are true and inscribed in the heart of every human being.

Lev Tolstoy¹

March 7, 1910 - Yasnaya Poliana

The letter above is a reply from Leo Tolstoy to a young Samuel Wohl (in Russian, Shmuel Vul), who eventually immigrated from Russia to Cincinnati, Ohio where he grew up to become Rabbi Wohl. Samuel had written to Tolstoy admiring his work, but asking how he, a Jew, could take to heart words that depended so much on Jesus Christ. Tolstoy famously practised Christian Anarchism, a philosophical perspective heavily influenced by Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, and published many of these ideas in books like *The Kingdom of God is within You*.² Although Tolstoy and Samuel found common ground over many of these ideas, the connection with Jesus was a persistent point of tension between Samuel and the author he admired. Tolstoy's letter offered a solution to this dissonance for Samuel, and indeed its effectiveness in doing so is attested by Samuel's careful preservation of the letter for the entirety of his life. Similarly, the tension between Samuel's Jewish identity and his reluctance concerning the teachings of Jesus Christ provides an excellent analogy for prominent aspects of Matthean studies. One of the fundamental issues in Matthean scholarship is the relationship between Matthew's traditional Jewish

1 My gratitude and many thanks to Professor Irwin Weil, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature at Northwestern University, for providing me with a copy and translation of this letter as well as an explanation of its origin. The letter is currently in Rabbi Wohl's archive at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio.

2 Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (Radford, VA: Wilder Publications, 2008). Although Tolstoy bases many of his ideas on Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, the book's title derives from Luke 17:21.

identity and his newfound identity as a follower of Christ, especially as it concerns the Torah.

However, if Samuel Wohl had posed his question for Tolstoy to Matthew himself, the answer he received would have been categorically different. After all, for Matthew, there is no tension between Jesus' teaching and the faith of Israel. In a similar vein, the purpose of the following thesis is to examine the writing strategies that Matthew uses to address and create continuity between the faith of Israel and Jesus' obvious interpretations of Israel's traditions. I will focus specifically on Matthew's effort to create continuity between Israel's Torah and the Matthean Jesus' interpretation of the same.

i. Problem and History of Scholarship

Modern biblical scholarship has spilt considerable ink on Matthew's presentation of Jesus' attitude towards the Torah; however, Jesus' relationship with the Torah continues to be a vexing issue in Matthean scholarship. Indeed, one of the greatest difficulties surrounding this issue is the interpretation of *πληρώω* in Matthew's programmatic statement about the Torah (Matt. 5:17–20).³ Although there is essential agreement that Matthew 5:17 serves a programmatic function in the Gospel, that is, it provides a key to understanding the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah, scholars radically diverge on precisely what is meant by the ambiguous verb *πληρώω*.⁴

3 David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 126–127, expresses the programmatic function of versus 5:17–20 well as he states, “it is important to note the significance of the evangelist's placement of these logia. They appear towards the beginning of the first Matthean discourse, and are the first words of the Matthean Jesus about the Jewish law. This placement is no coincidence. As the initial statements of Jesus on this crucial subject, these logia are intended to serve a programmatic function. They set the standard by which all the other references to the law in the Gospel must be interpreted. In other words, the later references to the law in the Gospel must be read in the light of these programmatic statements.”

4 See the list of scholars who conclude that Matthew believed his followers ought to observe the Torah and the list of scholars who disagree in Matthew Thiessen, “Abolishers of the Law in Early Judaism and Matthew 5,17–20,” *Bib* 93/4 (2012): 543n 2, 3. Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Matthew's Understanding of the Law,” *Int* 46/4 (1992): 368, as well, states, “scholars approach Matthew's understanding of the law with varied and unacceptable biases. The result is a virtual circus of views, some expressing the very opposite of Matthew's intention.” For a summary of the many views on Matthew's understanding of the Torah; see Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Matthew and the Law,”

As a result, scholars have put forth nearly every possible explanation imaginable of how Jesus fulfils the Torah. Every explanation from the interpretation that Jesus fulfils the Torah by legislating a new law that transcends and even annuls parts of the old law,⁵ to the interpretation that Jesus fulfils the Torah by both preserving it entirely and by bringing out its definitive interpretation.⁶

The interpretation of Matthew 5:17 is further complicated by the apparent tension between Jesus' conservative statements of complete Torah observance (cf. Matt 5:18 and 19)⁷ and his surpassing and overthrowing of the commandments in the antitheses (cf. Matt 5:21–48).⁸ Numerous explanations have been offered by scholars to account for this tension. Some of the representative explanations are as follows:

- Matthew was a Gentile, rather than a Jew, so the conservative Palestinian logia in the text belong to a past that is now distant for Matthew and, therefore, they do not override the abrogating elements of his Gentile Christian redaction.⁹

in *Society of Biblical Literature 1988 Seminar Papers*, ed. David J. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 536–554; and Phillip Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew*, SBLStBL 18 (Atlanta, SBL, 2007), 13–14.

- 5 W. D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 33–34.
- 6 Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew*, WBC 33A (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), 1:106.
- 7 Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1963), 138, championed the idea that verses 5:17–19 derive from a conservative Palestinian community that was debating law-free Hellenists. Building on Bultmann's argument, Gerhard Barth believes Matthew probably inherited 5:18 and 5:19 as a unit of conservative logia and then added 5:17 (most likely Matthew's own construction) in order to give his interpretation of the inherited 5:18, see Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, ed. Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth and Heinz Joachim Held, trans. Percy Scott, NTL (London: SCM, 1963), 66–67..
- 8 So Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 135–136, who influentially argued that the prohibitions in 5:21, 27, 33 are "not abolished, but surpassed" and that "in the three other formulations [i.e., 5:31, 38, 43] there is no prohibition, but an instruction (or a concession 5:31) which is not surpassed, but overthrown." It should be noted, however, that scholars do not agree over which antitheses revoke the Torah and which only surpass it. As a case in point, see John P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel: A Redactional Study of Mt. 5:17–48*, AnBib 71 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 135–139. Furthermore, verses 16:11–12 and 23:2–3 have also been seen as points of tension and inconsistency in the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah.
- 9 Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Matthäus*, 3rd ed., FRLANT 82 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971), 16, 34; and Francis W. Beare, *The*

- Matthew simply chose to live with the inherent tension in his sources.¹⁰
- Matthew did try to reconcile the radical position of his primary source (i.e., Mark) with the continuing validity of the Torah, but he did so inconsistently.¹¹
- Matthew deliberately exploited these tensions to appease various divisions within his community.¹²
- Although meaning only to radicalise the commandments, Matthew was “unaware” of the inconsistency he created between 5:18–19 and the antitheses.¹³
- Similarly, Matthew inadvertently contradicts some commands of the Torah in attempt to argue for the correct interpretation over and against the Rabbinate.¹⁴
- Matthew's eschatology and Christology account for the tension created by the Torah's continuing validity and elements of change in the antitheses.¹⁵

All of these explanations, however, have inherent weaknesses, and no single approach accounts satisfactorily for the apparent tensions in the text.¹⁶ Matthew, it seems, wants to preserve the Torah while also modifying it.

Now, advances in the research of Second Temple Judaism during the twentieth century have caused “fundamental changes” in the way in which Matthew's Gospel is interpreted, which in sum help alleviate many of the tensions traditionally

Gospel According to Matthew (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 448.

10 H. Hübner, *Das Gesetz in Der Synoptischen Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 196.

11 M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, The Speaker's Lectures in Biblical Studies 1969–71 (London: SPCK, 1974), 19.

12 Kun-Chun Wong, *Interkulturelle Theologie Und Multikulturelle Gemeinde Im Matthäusevangelium: Zum Verhältnis von Juden- Und Heidenchristen Im Matthäusevangelium*, NTOA 22 (Freiburg, Switzerland; Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 42.

13 Günther Bornkamm, “End-Expectation and Church in Matthew,” in Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, 25.

14 Barth, “Matthew's Understanding of the Law,” 95.

15 R. A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding* (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 267; and Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel*, 63–65.

16 For an analysis and critique of these views, see the reviews in Graham Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, ed. Markus N. A. Bockmuehl and David Lincicum, WUNT 309 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 56–60; and William R. G. Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law: A Study of the Gospels*, WUNT 2/97 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 137–154.

associated with Matthew's programmatic statement and the antitheses.¹⁷ William R. G. Loader notes three changes, in particular, that seem to have shifted the way in which the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah is now interpreted.¹⁸

The first fundamental change concerns the centrality of the temple in Judaism. Previously under-emphasised in discussions of the Torah in Matthean scholarship, the temple's fundamental status in Jewish thought and religion, even after it was destroyed,¹⁹ is now better appreciated. The Torah, therefore, can no longer be discussed as an entity separate from the temple.²⁰ This makes it difficult to maintain an interpretation that sees Jesus confirming the Torah's validity while also abrogating the temple.²¹ Moreover, it renders anachronistic the traditionally common distinction between ritual and moral law.²²

The second change addresses the monolithic view of Judaism set against a change in understanding the relationship between Christianity and (rabbinic) Judaism.²³ As J. Andrew Overman states, “one of the most important insights from the last generation of scholarship on early Christianity and Judaism has been the recognition that both of these terms are anachronistic when applied to the early Roman period.”²⁴ Scholarship formerly viewed these religious systems in terms of a mother-child relationship. Christianity (the child) came from, and even superseded,

17 Ibid., 270–271.

18 Ibid.

19 Matthew's Gospel is a testament to this fact as well (cf. Matt 5:23–24).

20 Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 271. Likewise, E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), 251, states, “Jesus' attitude towards the temple cannot be dissociated from his attitude towards Torah, nor can his attitude towards law be studied without dealing with the traditions on the temple; for *the temple rites were based on the Torah*.” Although speaking specifically about the historical Jesus, Sanders' point is also relevant to the topic of the Matthean Jesus.

21 So Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 271; contra Amy-Jill Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimensions of Matthean Salvation History*. “Go Nowhere among the Gentiles ...” (*Matt 10:5b*), *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* 14 (Lewiston: Mellen, 1988), 100, 168.

22 Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 249. For the explanation that Jesus abolishes the Torah's ceremonial laws while upholding its moral legislation, see Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Matthew—Mark*, in vol. 1 of *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), 43.

23 Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 271.

24 J. Andrew Overman, “Problems with Pluralism in Second Temple Judaism: Matthew, James, and the Didache in Their Jewish-Roman Milieu,” in *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings*, ed. Huub van de Sandt and Jürgen K. Zangenberg, *SBLSymS* 45 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 259.

Judaism (the mother). Alan F. Segal, however, has argued that “fraternal twins” better articulates the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.²⁵ In this model, Christianity and Judaism share a common mother and, therefore, both developed from the womb of Second Temple Judaism along with *numerous* other sectarian groups. Matthew, therefore, is now read as a text that represents a sectarian²⁶ Jewish group, one which shares the thought world of Second Temple Judaism. This suggests that even though the ideas, issues, hopes, and traditions exhibited in Matthew's Gospel are contextualised around Jesus, their origin is best traced and understood in a Second Temple context.²⁷

25 Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 179. Likewise, Daniel Marguerat “L'évangile de Matthieu et le judaïsme: un conflit de frères ennemis,” in *La croisée des chemins revisitée: Quand l'Église et la Synagogue se sont-elles distinguées Actes du colloque de Tours, 18-19 juin 2010*, ed. S. C. Mimouni and B. Pouderon (Paris: Cerf, 2012), 52, states, “Ma thèse est que la rivalité qui se noue entre le judaïsme pharisen et le judéo-christianisme de Matthieu ne met pas aux prises deux entités hétérogènes l'une à l'autre, mais deux frères ennemis.”

26 I am intentionally using the term “sectarian” very broadly in this instance. This complex term has stirred much discussion over its use, especially when applied to ancient communities. It has also attracted much debate in Qumranology. For a helpful overview of the complexities surrounding this term, see Jutta Jokiranta, “Sociological Approaches to Qumran Sectarianism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Timothy H. Lim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 201–226. Anders Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew: The Narrative World of the First Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 90n123, notes, however, that the fact that non-Jews can be considered righteous on account of acting positively towards Jesus' followers (Matt 25:31–46) “speaks against a socio-historical reconstruction in which the Mattheans are described too narrowly as a sect with a salvation-exclusive worldview.”

27 As Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, SP 1 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 1, argues, “the community for which Matthew wrote was largely (though not exclusively) Jewish Christian. For such an audience Matthew could use Jewish rhetoric and themes without explanation.” Although Harrington may be exaggerating about Matthew's audience not needing an explanation, he is right to note that Matthew would use rhetoric and themes that would be intelligible to a first-century Jewish audience. That the author of Matthew is indeed Jewish and informed of the ways of first century Jewish discourse, see Paul Foster, “Why Did Matthew Get the *Shema* Wrong? A Study of Matthew 22:37,” *JBL* 122/2 (2003): 333, who rightly notes, “[Matthew's] redactional reworking of the sources shows a sophisticated editor who attempted to produce greater conformity with existing biblical tradition but also did not wish to deviate from this well-known Jesus saying [i.e., Matt 22:37; cf. Deut 6:5] in too radical a fashion. Surely this is the work of a highly trained Jewish scribe.” Likewise, Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, CSHJ (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 126, states, “[Matthew's] arguments are detailed and sophisticated, showing that he knows the *status quaestionis* in first-century Judaism and is debating with his equals according to the assumptions and norms governing discourse in most of the Jewish community.” For discussion of the commonalities and distinctions between Matthew's scribalism and other forms of Jewish scribalism, see Lawrence M. Wills, “Scribal Methods in Matthew and Mishnah Abot,” in vol. 2 of *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: The Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Thomas R. Hatina, LNTS (London; New

The third fundamental change concerns the possibilities of Torah interpretation during the time when Matthew's Gospel was written.²⁸ The implications for understanding Matthew's interpretation of the Torah are many. This change reflects significantly the discovery of numerous new manuscripts, particularly the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the twentieth century.²⁹ Many of these newly discovered texts evidence a range of possible models for Torah interpretation and offer example after example of augmentations to various commandments of the Torah, significant adaptations to pentateuchal narratives, and even the institutionalisation of commandments that never occur in the Pentateuch in its now canonised form. In light of this variegated material, the Matthean Jesus' activity in the antitheses is no longer viewed as breaking the Torah, but rather as fitting within the possible bounds of Second Temple Judaism and Torah interpretation.³⁰ Jesus' antitheses are even viewed as constituting a fence around the Torah to prevent accidental transgressions.³¹ The tension, therefore, that was seen between Matthew 5:18–19 and the antitheses has become largely a moot issue. Indeed, several texts in the Second Temple period purport to represent the Torah, and at the same time, alter it significantly (e.g. Jubilees, Temple Scroll, Damascus Document; even the Pentateuch itself: Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation alter sections of Exodus).³² Moreover, it

York: T&T Clark, 2008), 183–197.

28 Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 270.

29 Moshe J. Bernstein, "The Contribution of the Qumran Discoveries," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman, JSJSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 221.

30 Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 270.

31 Thomas R. Blanton, "Saved by Obedience: Matthew 1:21 in Light of Jesus' Teaching on the Torah," *JBL* 132/2 (2013): 407; see also Reinhard Neudecker, *Moses Interpreted by the Pharisees and Jesus: Matthew's Antitheses in the Light of Early Rabbinic Literature*, SubBi 44 (Roma: Gregorain and Biblical Press, 2014), 47–48.

32 As Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 197, states, "Second Temple Jewish documents, such as the Book of Jubilees, the Temple Scroll, and the Covenant of Damascus, as well as the early strata of the Mishnah, show that Jewish sects and reform movements disagreed concerning many points of interpretation. They argued over tithing duties, the validity and suspension of oaths and vows, the conditions for divorce, the exact requirements of the Sabbath and the interpretation of purity and dietary laws. Matthew joins in this debate as a serious defender and teacher of his group's understanding of how one should live Judaism according to the teachings of Jesus." Likewise, John P. Meier, *Law and Love*, vol. 4 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 31, states, "various religious groups within Palestinian Judaism around the turn of the era obviously did not

has been demonstrated that Matthew has inherited many of the exegetical techniques concerning Torah interpretation that are found in these texts and actively participates in this Second Temple Jewish practice.³³ This commonality with other Second Temple texts warrants their careful comparison with Matthew. If other Second Temple texts interpret and develop tradition while purporting to give the genuine Torah, it is possible that Matthew felt he could do so also.³⁴ Thus, the Matthean Jesus' departure from older halakah, norms, or traditions of the Torah are now viewed as participating in a larger Second Temple and late first-century Jewish practice rather than viewed as abolishing the Torah.³⁵ We will return to this point below.

Following the above fundamental changes, the majority of scholars now view Matthew's programmatic statement in terms of Jesus fulfilling (πληρώω) the Torah by living according to the Torah and offering an authoritative, albeit a strict or radical,³⁶

think that veneration for the Pentateuch excluded rewriting its stories and laws ... to make them coincide with a group's own beliefs ... or with a group's expectations for a utopian future temple." For various examples and examinations of the way in which these Palestinian groups both venerated and reworked authoritative texts like the Pentateuch, see the essays in Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, STDJ 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2010); and Matthias Henze, ed., *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005). Concerning interpretations within the Pentateuch, see Jeffrey Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah: Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation*, FAT 52 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

- 33 Serge Ruzer, *Mapping the New Testament: Early Christian Writings as a Witness for Jewish Biblical Exegesis*, Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series 13 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 3, 31–32.
- 34 George J. Brooke, "Aspects of Matthew's Use of Scripture in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*, ed. Eric F. Mason et al., vol. 2, JSJSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 823, notes that the rewriting of foundational narratives in Second Temple literature may have given Matthew permission to do his own rewriting of Mark (and Q). Concerning Matthew's motives for rewriting Mark, compare David C. Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark: Did Matthew Intend to Supplement or to Replace His Primary Source?," *NTS* 57/2 (2011): 176–192, who thinks Matthew rewrote intending to replace Mark because he viewed it as a fundamentally flawed document, with J. Andrew Doole, *What Was Mark for Matthew?: An Examination of Matthew's Relationship and Attitude to His Primary Source*, WUNT 2/344 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 174, who suggests Matthew revered Mark.
- 35 Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 25, notes "But this assurance that what [the Matthean Jesus] wants is fulfillment or observance, albeit on his terms, does not preclude changing individual items, precisely in order to have these particulars meet his terms. The *nomos* is an archaeological tell possessing a variety of strata. Ezekiel's departures from Leviticus do not abolish Leviticus. Jesus' soon-to-be pronounced departures from older norms are declared similarly as not intended to signal an abolition of the extant corpus (5:17–19)."
- 36 As Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 260, states, the idea of Jesus radicalising rather than abrogating the law "catches the spirit of the antitheses, whether one isolates two or three or takes them in their present context." He further elaborates, "it is not against the law to be stricter than the law

interpretation for his disciples to follow.³⁷ This, likewise, will be the operative interpretation of “πληρώω” in Matthew 5:17 in this thesis. Thus, rather than abandoning the Torah’s precepts, the Matthean Jesus has a favourable attitude towards the Torah, but, of course, a favourable attitude towards his rendition/interpretation of the Torah.³⁸ Jesus, therefore, in the Sermon on the Mount is portrayed as an authoritative, even Mosaic,³⁹ lawgiver, teaching the fulfilment of the Torah and throughout the rest of the Gospel Jesus is presented as the teacher *par excellence*—the ultimate authority on the Torah, even over the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees (Matt. 7:28-29; 22:46).⁴⁰

Setting Matthew's Gospel within the context of Second Temple Judaism has paid dividends in reconstructing the Gospel's socio-historical milieu and, therefore, has normalised much of the perceived tension in the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah. Mapping the Gospel text onto the Second Temple world, however, has also led to a highly contested debate concerning the Matthean community's sectarian status in regard to the rest of Judaism. Much is at stake for scholars since the position

requires.”

- 37 Martin Vahrenhorst, appealing especially to Rabbinic material, notes that “πληρώω” conveys the idea of fulfilling/doing a requirement or religious obligation. Thus, by using “πληρώω” in Matthew 5:17, Vahrenhorst suggests that the Matthean Jesus is connecting teaching with doing; see Martin Vahrenhorst, *“Ihr sollt überhaupt nicht schwören”: Matthäus im halachischen Diskurs*, WMANT 95 Band (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002), 234–243. Similarly, Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 24–25, states, that “πληρώω” has “the sense of living according to [the Torah]. A paraphrased meaning of the saying at Matt 5:17 as I see it, would be, ‘Do not think that I have come to annul (or abrogate) the extant corpus of Judaism (the *nomos* and prophetic sayings). I have not come to abolish it but to fulfill it.’ That is to say, what he is about to teach (5:21–48) is the correct interpretation for those aspiring to enter the kingdom.” See also Charles E. Carlston and Craig A. Evans, *From Synagogue to Ecclesia: Matthew's Community at the Crossroads* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 99; and Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 177.
- 38 See Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew*, 64; Barth, “Matthew's Understanding of the Law,” 158; Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 124; David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, SNTSMS 88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 190; and J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 78–79.
- 39 For the most comprehensive exposition of Mosaic motifs in Matthew's Gospel, see Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993).
- 40 See Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 177–179; and Donald A. Hagner, “Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?,” *NTS* 49/2 (2003): 202.

one takes “influences the interpretation both of many individual passages and also of the sweep of the whole story.”⁴¹ More importantly, however, this debate warrants our consideration since it has also influenced the topic of Jesus and the Torah in Matthew's Gospel. Within this debate, scholars take numerous positions, many of which differ only at the level of slight nuance,⁴² describing the Matthean community as taking its stand within (*intra muros*) or outside/over against Judaism (*extra muros*; commonly described as a “parting of the ways”).

ii. Matthew and Judaism

Determining Matthew's *Sitz im Leben* is difficult given that knowledge of “Judaism” during the end of the first century C.E. is sparse. Can we assume “formative Judaism”⁴³ had enough cohesion and power, when Matthew's Gospel was written, so that the Matthean community could stand within or outside? Some scholars, aware of this issue, clarify that the parent group of the Matthean community was a localised

41 Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, 123.

42 Anders Runesson, “Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations: Matthean Community History as Pharisaic Intragroup Conflict,” *JBL* 127/1 (2008): 96–97n3, n4, also attests to the abundance of views and their only slight variations. In attempting to categorise the various scholarly views into the *intra* or *extra muros* camps, he actually takes a moment to apologise to scholars that he may be misrepresenting. He rightly notes that the difficulty of accurately categorising the view of many scholars probably stems from their failure to clarify from whose perspective (e.g., the Matthean community's or the parent group's) the Matthean community stands *intra* or *extra muros*. For a similar observation, see Boris Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew: Their Redaction, Form Und [sic] Relevance for the Relationship Between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism*, FRLANT 189 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 346.

43 Jacob Neusner has written extensively on the idea of “formative Judaism,” see, for example, Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973); Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70*, SFSHJ 202–204 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999); Jacob Neusner, *Midrash in Context: Exegesis in Formative Judaism*, BJS 141 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); Jacob Neusner, *Major Trends in Formative Judaism*, BJS 99 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); Jacob Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). However, it should be noted that Phillip Sigal has challenged the long standing presupposition in Matthean scholarship that the Pharisees, with whom Jesus debates in Matthew's narrative, were the predecessors of the later rabbis and, therefore, are associated with later rabbinic Judaism. Rather, Sigal suggests the Pharisees of Matthew's Gospel, and in the greater New Testament, “represent a complex, inchoate mass of pietists and separatists;” see Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 5, for a full discussion on the matter see pages 3–8. Moreover, it should be noted that Sigal's suggestion also further complicates determining Matthew's *Sitz im Leben*, since it makes identifying the Pharisees with a generalised and unified historical group problematic.

force of formative Judaism. In other words, the nascent group of formative Judaism that Matthew's community stands in relation to was another sectarian group that was also vying for control in the local region (wherever it may be that the Matthean community existed)⁴⁴ trying to assimilate other groups into their own.⁴⁵ If this is the case, however, then it still leaves unexplained which larger Jewish parent group this localised form of “formative Judaism” derives from. Anders Runesson has suggested using E. P. Sanders' concept of “common Judaism”⁴⁶ as a reference point for deciphering the Matthean community and its rival sect of formative Judaism's relation with the rest of Judaism.⁴⁷ Runesson, as a result, gives a much more complex and nuanced description of the Matthean community's origins and relationship to Judaism. He suggests that the Gospel of Matthew reflects not only an inner-Jewish parting of ways but an inner-Pharisaic split as he concludes that the Matthean community was formerly part of the Pharisaic association.⁴⁸ This has proved an illuminating study, but it also remains highly speculative.⁴⁹ As Graham N. Stanton rightly notes, both “Judaism” and (what would become) “Christianity” were developing rapidly during the presumed time of Matthew's compilation (i.e. 80–110

44 Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 115, suggests that formative Judaism “was certainly cohesive enough and sufficiently influential in the society of the Matthean community (no matter where we place it) to stand as the parent body with which the evangelist and his group were in dispute.” It seems a bit bold, however, to assume knowledge of every possible place and time that Matthew could have been written. Although Sim could certainly be right, I wish to be more tentative on the issue than he is.

45 See *ibid.*; and Anthony J. Saldarini, “Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23,” *CBQ* 54/4 (1992): 663–664.

46 E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM Philadelphia; Trinity Press International, 1992), 47. For a critique of Sanders' concept of “common Judaism,” see M. Hengel and R. Deines, “E. P. Sanders' 'Common Judaism,' Jesus, and the Pharisees,” *JTS* 46 (1995): 1–70.

47 Runesson, “Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations,” 111–120.

48 *Ibid.*, 132; see also Marguerat “L'évangile de Matthieu et le judaïsme,” 51–64.

49 Donald A. Hagner, “The Sitz Im Leben of the Gospel of Matthew,” in *Treasures New and Old: Recent Contribution to Matthean Studies*, ed. D. R. Bauer and M. A. Powell, SBLSymS 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 27, rightly states that “the reconstruction of the life-situation of an evangelist is necessarily a speculative enterprise. It is a kind of educated guesswork.” Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, 122–123, in a similar vein, warns against an over-confident use of “transparency,” and suggests Matthew's Gospel is not an allegory with a one to one correspondence to persons or events. Matthias Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew*, trans. Kathleen Ess, BMSEC (Waco, TX; Tübingen: Baylor University Press; Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 355, also offers similar caution.

CE).⁵⁰ It, therefore, remains “hazardous to link the origin and setting of the Gospel to any particular historical event within this broad period.”⁵¹ Thus, these complexities of the Jewish-Christian social environment during the final quarter of the first century CE make it difficult to situate the Matthean community *intra* or *extra muros*.

In addition, the difficulty of articulating the Matthean community's relationship with Judaism is further complicated by two additional issues: one historical and the other literary. The historical issue concerns the Gospel's complex early reception history. Matthew's Gospel was not only the most influential and widely used Gospel in the early church, but also used in the most diverse ways.⁵² This diverse use of the Gospel complicates any attempt to identify Matthew's first audience. As for the literary issue, it concerns the Gospel's genre. Stanton rightly notes that Matthew's Gospel is not a Pauline epistle written to a specific Christian community he knew well. Matthew is a βίβλος and, therefore, it serves the primary purpose of telling the story and significance of Jesus of Nazareth. It is, of course, written from a “particular perspective,” but it is not entirely clear to what extent “that perspective is directly related to the views and circumstances of the addresses.”⁵³ Stanton notes that redaction critiques “cheerfully ignore” this point and assume that the Gospel's pericopae are uninterrupted vistas into different facets of the Matthean community's life.⁵⁴

50 W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC 1 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 1:128, note that the last quarter of the first century CE is the majority view of scholars dating Matthew's Gospel, but there have been formidable challenges to this majority view. See, for instance, Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 436, who argues that Matt 22:1–10 is an allusion to Isa 5:24–25, rather than Jerusalem falling to the Romans in 70 CE. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 36–40, however, has offered a substantial critique to Gundry's argument. For a critique of the type of dating arguments made by Sim, however, see John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI; Bletchley: Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 14–17.

51 Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, 106.

52 See Runesson, “Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations,” 95n1.

53 Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, 107–108.

54 *Ibid.*, 108.

Indeed, as Richard A. Burridge explains, Matthew's Gospel is neither a clear glass window with an unimpeded view to the historical Jesus and Matthew's community nor a mirror that reflects only what we as interpreters bring in front of it. Rather, the genre of βίβλος is more like stained glass. Surely, we can see through it, but what we see is indistinct and coloured by the glass. We can see our reflection in stained glass as well, but it will also be obscured and coloured by the glass. What we do have, however, is the picture of Jesus and his life that Matthew set forth with all its selectivity, omissions, and limitations.⁵⁵ We can certainly use, and indeed we should use, Matthew's text in the construction of early Christianity's and Judaism's social histories.⁵⁶ The point here, however, is that in doing so it must be kept in mind that "the results will always lack definition and be coloured by the evangelist's interests and intentions."⁵⁷ Thus, the Gospel's genre, as well as its early reception history, further inhibit and complicate our ability to clearly identify the Matthean community as *intra* or *extra muros*.

Recently, Matthias Konradt has challenged the usefulness of the *muri* metaphor for describing the Matthean community's relationship with Judaism.⁵⁸ In a masterful examination of Matthean ecclesiology and missiology, Konradt argues that Matthew unfolds Jesus' salvific messianic ministry first to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:5–6; 15:24) as the Son of David,⁵⁹ and then expands (not replaces) this ministry to gentiles as the Son of God (Matt 28.18–20).⁶⁰ In Matthew's understanding, Jesus has given the disciples the task of continuing both of these

55 Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 24–27.

56 However, in agreement with Benjamin L. White, "The Eschatological Conversion of 'All the Nations' in Matthew 28.19–20: (Mis)reading Matthew through Paul," *JSNT* 36/4 (2014): 360–361, I am sceptical about discerning "entire histories of communities from within gospel texts." Scepticism, however, does not dismiss the project of historical investigation (as it does not for White either) and Matthew's Gospel, with all its limitations, is still an important text to be incorporated in the historical construction of early Christian and Jewish communities.

57 Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 25.

58 It should be noted, however, that, Konradt does show his cards to some extent. Before mounting a critique of the *muri* metaphor, he does suggest that a first glance at the evidence appears to support the *intra muros* position; see Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 363.

59 See chapter 2 in *ibid.*, 17–88.

60 See chapter 5 in *ibid.*, 265–326.

ministry horizons (i.e. to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and the gentiles) until the end of the age (cf. Matt 10:23; 24:13–14; 28:18–20). Jesus gave Peter τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν (Matt 16:19) and, therefore, he, along with the church (Matt 18:18), replaces Israel's old authorities as the leaders of the people of God. As such, the Matthean community alone is the legitimate trustee of the interpretation of Israel's theological traditions.⁶¹ Consequently, at least from the Matthean community's perspective, the categories of within or outside of Israel are insufficient for describing Matthew's socio-historical reality. Konradt states,

In the Matthean community's self-conception ... this is a claim [i.e. to be the new leaders of Israel and its interpreters of its traditions] made not just within Israel but in the entire inhabited world; it is thus insufficient to conceive of the Church as a special community *within Israel* or theologically only as the already restored portion of *Israel* that will be gathered at the eschaton. The Church is, rather, the community of salvation that comes into existence in the framework of the eschatological gathering or restitution of the people of God, as well as in the framework of the mission to the Gentiles.⁶²

Under this model of the Matthean community's ecclesiological authority and missionary intentions, Konradt finds the *muri* metaphor left wanting for two basic reasons. First, the Matthean community's competition with their Pharisaic opponents shows that the “the location of *intra* and *extra muros* is ultimately a question of (ancient and present-day) perspective.”⁶³ Indeed, it seems unlikely that the Matthean community's opponents would have viewed the nascent Christian group as still being a valid form of Judaism.⁶⁴ This would be all the more the case if the Matthean community indeed welcomed uncircumcised gentiles.⁶⁵ Contrary to the opinions of their rivals, however, the Matthean community would have seen themselves as

61 Ibid., 379.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., 363. For a similar critique, see Hagner, “Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?,” 198–199. Similarly, Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew*, 346.

64 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 363.

65 Ibid. For the argument that the Matthean community did circumcise gentiles who entered their group, see White, “The Eschatological Conversion of 'All the Nations',” 357.

consistent with the faith of Israel, rather than breaking from it.⁶⁶ This is not to negate, however, that something did change for Matthew with the expansion of ministry to every nation after Easter. Therefore, even though Judaism was the context for the life of the Matthean community, their ministry horizons suggests the Mattheans would have perceived themselves as being far more than only a community of salvation *within* Israel.⁶⁷

Matthew's missionary horizon for the gentiles leads Konradt to his second critique of the *muri* metaphor. According to Konradt, insofar as the Matthean community and Judaism's relationship is examined in isolation from the community and the synagogue's embeddedness within the larger social context, the *intra-extra muros* debate is a socio-historically deficient question.⁶⁸ Konradt suggests that this is even more the case if Matthew's Gospel did indeed originate in a complex social milieu like Antioch,⁶⁹ in which the Matthean community understands itself as commissioned to pursue missions to gentiles.⁷⁰ According to Konradt, *muri* as a metaphor for demarcating Judaism from the gentiles loses its “constitutive significance” in such a socio-historical setting. Konradt concludes that it is advisable to stop using the *muri* metaphor or terminology like “inside or outside” to define the Matthean community's relationship with Judaism. He suggests, rather, that we simply conclude the following:

Judaism constitutes the primary context for the life of the Matthean community, and more specifically, the historical situation in which the

66 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 363–364. Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, 116, suggests that in addition to being a “foundation document” for the story and significance of Jesus, Matthew's Gospel is also an apology that contains many “legitimizing answers” for his audience, which defend their distinctive convictions and self-understanding.” For a similar point, see Allison, *The New Moses*, 277–284.

67 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 364–365.

68 *Ibid.*, 364. Wayne Baxter, *Israel's Only Shepherd: Matthew's Shepherd Motif and His Social Setting*, LNTS 457 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 3–8, also criticises the metaphor for being too simplistic.

69 Although Syria and specifically Antioch have impressive support, they still remain only a possibility, or as Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 42, states, “a community in Antioch appears more likely than the alternative.”

70 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 364–365.

Matthean Jesus story is anchored is substantially characterized by the conflict between believers in Christ and the predominately Pharisaic synagogue.⁷¹

Konradt's much needed critique of the *intra-extra muros* debate and analysis of the text has helped pave the way to consider categories that are more precise and sensitive to the complexities of the Matthean community's socio-historical circumstance. Whether or not the metaphor of *muri* should be abandoned altogether as Konradt advises, however, is not a judgement that will be made here. Previous works were also not unaware of the risk of overlooking certain complexities and subtleties of the Matthean community's relationship with Judaism when using a broad term like *intra* or *extra muros*.⁷² The metaphor of *muri* may still be operable in more nuanced discussions of the Matthean community's relationship with Judaism.

Nevertheless, two important observations from the *intra-extra muros* debate, which are important to the Matthean concept of Jesus and the Torah, may be gleaned. The first is that, regardless of the position one takes (i.e., *intra* or *extra*), at the very least this debate confirms Konradt's conclusion, along with many others, that “Judaism constitutes the primary context for the life of the Matthean community.”⁷³

71 Ibid., 365.

72 For instance, Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, 124, traditionally associated as the main proponent of the *extra muros* position, modified his position on account of further study of *Justin's Dialogue with Trypho*, which convinced him “that the relationship of individuals and groups within Matthew's communities to Jewish communities were probably much more varied than [he] had assumed to be the case.” Similarly, but from the *intra muros* perspective, Alan F. Segal, “Matthew's Jewish Voice,” in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, ed. David L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 7, 22, 37, gives a very nuanced account of Matthean community's socio-historical relationship with Judaism using the *muros* paradigm. He considers Matthew's community as left-wing Torah observers in comparison to Christian Pharisaism, but right-wing in comparison to Paul. Moreover, Segal argues that 21:33–45 and 27:15–26 imply a replacement theology, but without demanding complete separation from Judaism. For a similar review of Segal's analysis, see Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 145–146.

73 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 365. It should be noted, however, that Warren Carter has advocated reading Matthew's Gospel primarily in the context of an anti-Roman polemic, rather than in conflict with Judaism. For more on Carter's views, see Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading*, JSNTSup 204 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); and Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001). David C. Sim, “Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of Matthew: Methods, Sources, and Possible Results,” in Sandt and Zangenberg, *Matthew, James, and Didache*, 29, has rightly noted, however, that even though Carter has brought some fresh perspective to an aspect of Matthew's social world that has often been

Hence, Matthew's Gospel is a patently Jewish document, although it should be kept in mind that the concept of “Jewishness” during the early Roman period is itself a complex matter.⁷⁴ To this point I will return below.

The second observation is that the community's social location and *intra-extra muros* debate has been the primary emphasis of recent Matthean scholarship. As a consequence, the discussion of Matthew and the Torah has been *subsumed* under this debate.⁷⁵ The issue of the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah is registered by both sides of the debate as an indicator of the Matthean community's stance in relation to Judaism. On the one hand, continuity between the Matthean Jesus' interpretation of Torah and the possible bounds of Judaism or his struggle with religious leaders over proper interpretation is taken by some scholars to be an indicator that the community behind the text represent a sectarian group *within* the social realm of Judaism (i.e., *intra muros*). On the other hand, some scholars emphasise the deviation in the Matthean Jesus' approach to the Torah from other interpretations in Judaism or the exceeding authority given to Jesus as an interpretor

neglected in scholarship, Carter has a tendency to overemphasise Matthew's Roman setting. For further research on Matthew's Roman context, see the essays in John Kenneth Riches and David C. Sim eds., *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*, JSNTSup 276 (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

74 So Overman, “Problems with Pluralism in Second Temple Judaism,” 259–261.

75 Élian Cuvillier, “Torah Observance and Radicalization in the First Gospel. Matthew and First-Century Judaism: A Contribution to the Debate,” *NTS* 55 (2009): 145, is typical in this regard as he states, “the best place to explore the debate concerning Matthew's identity and that of his community is his interpretation of the law.” Similarly, Cuvillier “Réflexions autour de la fonction de la Loi dans trois textes juifs du premier siècle et dans l'évangile de Matthieu,” in *Studien zu Matthäus und Johannes/Études sur Matthieu et Jean: Festschrift für Jean Zumstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag/Mélanges offerts à Jean Zumstein pour son 65e anniversaire*, ed. A. Dettwiler and U. Poplutz. *ATANT* 97 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2009), 77, cf. 70–77, also states, “Quoi qu'il en soit, il me semble que l'hypothèse d'une ... trouve, sur la question de la Loi, un appui textuel suffisant dans la narration pour faire partie des modèles interprétatifs possibles permettant de rendre compte du cadre historique et de la théologie du premier évangile.” See also Snodgrass, “Matthew's Understanding of the Law,” 368. Similarly, Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 137, observes that even though the literature on Matthew and the Torah is extensive, it is commonly featured as part of a wider study usually pertaining to Matthew's Christology, ethics, or relation to Judaism. This practice is not baseless, however, as the study of Torah in Matthew's Gospel at the exclusion of these other topics can miss important connections. In light of Loader's comments, it seems only natural that the topic of the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah would be subsumed in the *intra-extra muros* debate. Therefore, I am not criticising the scholars of the *intra-extra muros* debate for using the issue of Torah in Matthew's Gospel this way. Rather, I am simply making an observation.

as an indicator that the Matthean community has broken away and stands outside their parent group (i.e., *extra muros*). Take for example J. Andrew Overman, who argues for an *intra muros* position,

These are severe words and potent charges about the law [i.e. 5:20]. In employing such rhetoric and denouncing his legal opponents in such dramatic terms Matthew placed himself squarely within the conflict setting of late-first-century Palestinian society.⁷⁶
and,

The Jewish law emerged as an important and essential issue in the struggle between the Matthean community and the opposition. This alone should tell us much about the setting and provenance of the Gospel, as well as the identity of the Matthean opponents.⁷⁷

Anthony J. Saldarini similarly states,

If the Gospel of Matthew comes from a deviant Jewish group which believes in Jesus but still identifies itself as part of Israel, it, like other Jewish sects and subgroups, should have developed its own interpretation of biblical law, articulating a particular vision of life under God. True to this principle, the gospel contains many interpretations of biblical law and Jewish custom that differ from those of other Jewish groups but fall within the broad boundaries of the Jewish community. Though some commentators have argued that the author supersedes Jewish law with a new Christian law or annuls it in favor of a new spirit of the law, in fact he carefully defends his interpretation of Jewish law and custom by establishing Jesus as the authoritative teacher of the law and by providing arguments to support his views. Matthew's treatment of law fits comfortably within the context of first-century Judaism in Israel. The topics discussed, the positions affirmed and rejected, the sectarian apologetic and polemical stances, the competition for power and recognition, the maintenance of boundaries, and the creation of a world view and group identity are all similar to the agendas of numerous Jewish works found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, the apocalyptic writings, the pseudepigrapha, Josephus, and early layers of the Mishnah. Any attempt to portray Matthew as outside

76 J. Andrew Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis: The Gospel According to Matthew*, New Testament in Context (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 80.

77 Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 89.

the Jewish discussion of how Jews ought to live ignores both Matthew's teaching of law and his presentation of Jesus.⁷⁸

And also David C. Sim,

It will be argued that Matthew's community was in conflict with emergent formative Judaism and, in agreement with the works of Overman and Saldarini, must be viewed as a *within Judaism*. The Christian Jewish orientation of this group is evidenced by its continued observance of the Mosaic law.⁷⁹

In contrast, Paul Foster, arguing for the *extra muros* position, states,

Firstly, it [i.e. the material in 5:17–48] gives a partially abstract statement about the manner in which Matthew sees the law as having some kind of ongoing validity (vv. 17–20). Yet even here, as the reference to the scribes and the Pharisees shows, the evangelist wished to define his position in contradistinction from that of the perceived opponents of the community. Secondly, the antitheses (vv. 21–48) provide concrete examples of how one is to interpret the law. The stress falls upon Jesus' authority to redefine, or even, as it is argued in this study, to overturn certain halakhic stipulations.⁸⁰

So also Roland Deines states,

These verses [i.e. 5:18f; 23:2f, 23] have to carry the weight against the second set of references, which arguably favor a more revolutionary understanding of the Torah in the presence of God's kingdom, which for the majority of Jewish society would fall outside the legitimate halakhic range of discussion.⁸¹

78 Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 124.

79 Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 28.

80 Paul Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission in Matthew's Gospel*, WUNT 177 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 18.

81 Roland Deines, "Not the Law but the Messiah: Law and Righteousness in the Gospel of Matthew —An Ongoing Debate," in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Daniel M. Gunter and John Nolland (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 62.

Likewise, Donald A. Hagner states,

Nevertheless, Sim overstates the matter, in my opinion, when he writes: “The Mosaic law occupies a central place in the Gospel of Matthew.” On the contrary, it is Jesus the Messiah, not the law, that is at the center of Matthew. This is clear throughout the Gospel. The unparalleled authority of Jesus is apparent wherever the meaning of the law is in question. The reaction of those who heard Jesus is revealing: “the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes” (7.28; cf. 13.54; 22.33). The interpretation of the law by Jesus according to Matthew has a new and radical character about it that lifts it to a different level compared with contemporary teachers of the law. Jesus has an incomparable authority, an authority that transcends that of Torah. In the famous antitheses of 5.21–48, as in Jesus' teaching concerning the sabbath or divorce, Jesus is not *disloyal* to the law of Moses. Rather, it is much more a matter of an incomparable, authoritative interpretation of the law that relativizes the law in the presence of the Messiah, who alone can bring it to its definitive interpretation.⁸²

and again,

There is thus an important shift in Matthew that explains the newness of its perspective on the law. To be sure, the law remains significant for these Jewish Christians, but only as it is taken up in the teaching of Jesus. It is hardly the case, however, that Matthew's words in 5.17–20 necessitate the conclusion that his community is to be regarded as a sect of Judaism.⁸³

Petri Luomanen, who takes a nuanced position in the *intra-extra muros* debate,⁸⁴ states,

This new “Jesus cult,” connected with a liberal interpretation of the law, characterizes Matthew's community and distinguishes it from contemporary Jewish groups. Although Jesus' role can be partly traced back to Jewish messianic expectations there is so much new to it that it can be regarded as a

82 Hagner, “Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?,” 202–203.

83 *Ibid.*, 203.

84 Sim, “Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of Matthew,” 28n51, also suggests that Luomanen falls within the category of *extra muros*. He does, however, describe Luomanen as more tentative on the issue than others.

religious innovation. On the axis between sect and cult movements, Matthew's community finds its place closer to the cult end of the axis and can thus be characterized as a *cult movement*.⁸⁵

The emphasis by *intra muros* scholarship on the similarity of the Matthean Jesus' Torah interpretation with Second Temple Judaism and the *extra muros* scholars' emphasis on his deviation is reminiscent of the perceived tension between the conservative programmatic statement (Matt 5:17–20; esp. vv. 18–19) and the radical antitheses (Matt 5:21–48), which preoccupied previous scholarship. Certainly discussion of the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah, despite the fundamental changes mentioned by Loader and despite the numerous proposals put forward, still remains an unsolved and key issue in Matthean studies.⁸⁶ Even though it is widely understood that devotion to (Matt 5:17–20) and simultaneous deviation from the Torah (Matt 5:21–48) was a common phenomenon in Second Temple writings, the manner in which this phenomenon is carried out in Jesus' teaching is still the battleground in which Matthean scholarship debates the topic of Jesus and the Torah in Matthew's Gospel. The underlining issue is the same (devotion to and deviation from the Torah), but the question being asked has changed. The question has shifted from whether or not Matthew still maintained the Torah's validity to deciphering what the Matthean Jesus' devotion to or deviation from the Torah reveals about the Matthean community's relationship with Judaism.⁸⁷

85 Petri Luomanen, "The 'Sociology of Sectarianism' in Matthew: Modeling the Genesis of Early Jewish and Christian Communities," in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity: Essays in Honour of Heikki Räisänen*, ed. Ismo Dunderberg, Kari Syreeni, and Christopher Tuckett, NovTSup 103 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 129–130.

86 As Hagner, "Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?," 203, states, "Everyone [i.e., both sides of the debate] will admit that the Torah is one of the pillars of Judaism and that faithful obedience to the commands of Torah is of central importance to Jewish identity. Similarly it is clear that for Matthew obedience to the law remains important. What is of crucial significance, however, is that it is not the law in itself that is Matthew's concern, but only the law as mediated through the teaching of Jesus."

87 Cuvillier, "Torah Observance and Radicalization in the First Gospel," 147, represents the pursuit of this question well in stating "I will restrict my investigation to the examination of the tensions that can be traced in the narrative between obedience to commandments within the framework of the law and the radicalization suggested by the Matthean Jesus, which shatters that framework."

While the *intra-extra muros* debate has been fruitful,⁸⁸ the discussion of the Matthean Jesus and the Torah has been primarily used to make a sociological claim about the Matthean community. This is certainly a very legitimate enterprise. Several aspects of Matthew's Gospel, not least of which is the vivid competition between Jesus' teaching and that of Israel's leaders as evidenced in the text (e.g., Matt 5:20; 7:28–29; 16:11–12), suggests that the Matthean concept of Jesus and Torah provides important information for socio-historical research. However, as previously discussed, not only is the *muri* debate itself inconclusive,⁸⁹ and possibly insufficient for describing the Matthean community's relationship with Judaism and the world at large,⁹⁰ but the Matthean community's approach to Torah does not *necessarily* clarify the Matthean community's social setting, much less indicate its relationship with Judaism in terms of *intra* and *extra muros*.

As Deines has rightly noted, “the position that the Matthean community is Torah-observant is not restricted to the ‘consensus-group’ [i.e., those who describe the Matthean community as a deviant movement operating *within* the orbit of Judaism] and does not necessarily entail placing Matthew *intra muros*.”⁹¹ A community could socially exist *extra muros* while still adhering to the Torah, albeit adhering to their particular interpretation of the Torah. Moreover, even though halakah was central to first-century Jewish identity,⁹² and, therefore, could potentially help demarcate the Matthean community in the first-century Jewish world, the Matthean community's approach to the Torah was still a “stumbling block” to

88 Deines, “Not the Law but the Messiah,” 55–56, lists several merits of the emerging *intra muros* consensus, but perhaps paramount among them is that they have corrected the lens of Matthew's harsh polemical statements from anti-Semitism to inner-Jewish struggle for influence. See also Repschinski's discussion on the contribution of sociological approaches in Matthean studies; Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew*, 55.

89 So Sim, “Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of Matthew,” 32, who states, “there is little doubt that the most obvious setting of this community is the conflict with formative Judaism, though there is little agreement over the implications that follow from this. The precise relationship between Matthew's Christian group and the religion of Judaism is still to be resolved.”

90 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 363–365.

91 Deines, “Not the Law but the Messiah,” 55n4.

92 Runesson, “Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations,” 132.

formative Judaism's efforts for unity.⁹³ As a result, the Matthean community may have been forced, to some degree, to conform to or leave formative Judaism (whatever manifestation of it). Alternatively, perhaps formative Judaism decided to leave them.⁹⁴ In turn, any of these possibilities allow the Matthean community's reverence for the Torah and radical halakah to fit within a host of wider socio-historical scenarios and therefore cannot serve as a sure foundation for determining the status of *intra* or *extra muros*.

The limitation of drawing on a group's Torah observance for revealing *intra* or *extra muros* is further evidenced by the fact that Matthean scholars from both positions use the same data from the Gospel to make their respective arguments. The examples of scholars listed above attests to this fact. Luomanen rightly notes that the Matthean community's quest for legitimation creates an ambiguous relationship with their parent body. With a tendency towards social separation while also seeking ideological affinity, legitimation can “blur the borderline between new and old.”⁹⁵ Therefore, it is only natural that certain aspects (i.e., those that seek ideological affinity, the “old”) of the Matthean Jesus' approach to the Torah would suggest an *intra muros* position and other aspects (i.e., those that seek social separation, the “new”) would suggest an *extra muros* position. Thus, the same evidence can serve both camps⁹⁶ and the issue of Matthew's devotion to and deviation from the Torah,

93 Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew*, 347.

94 Ibid.

95 Petri Luomanen, *Entering the Kingdom of Heaven: A Study on the Structure of Matthew's View of Salvation*, WUNT 2/101 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 264.

96 This point is epitomised by Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Matthew and the Law,” in *Treasures New and Old: Recent Contributions to Matthean Studies*, ed. David R. Bauer and Mark Allan Powell, SBLSymS 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 126, who attempts a mediating position that avoids an either/or position. He suggests that Matthew puts an emphasis on both Torah and Jesus. Likewise, traditionally strong advocates of the *intra muros* position are forced to make apparent compromises on account of the “newness” (cf. Matt 13:52) in Matthew's Gospel. Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 20, for instance, refers to Matthew's tradition of Judaism as “Jesus-centered Judaism” and Saldarini, “The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict,” in Balch, *Social History of the Matthean Community*, 50, states, “as a consequence of this focus on Jesus as central authority and symbol, Torah becomes subordinate to both Jesus and his interpretation of its provisions, as articulated in a unique way by Matthew.” Saldarini highlights Jesus' exalted status as Son of God and authoritative teacher as “a key change from the majority view of Judaism.” Hagner, “Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?,” 205, rightly sees Overman's terminology as “oxymoronic” and Saldarini's explanation of the Torah's subordination

that is, his combining things *καινὰ* and *παλαιά* (Matt 13:52), continues to perpetuate the debate in Matthean scholarship. To be sure, a stalemate in a debate does not preclude the existence of a correct answer. However, since the available evidence can be used rigorously to fit either description of the Matthean community's relation to Judaism, the correct answer may lie beyond our reach at this point. I am inclined, therefore, to agree with Boris Repschinski,

Yet the closeness of Matthew to the Jewish traditions, and his respect for the Law, does not finally settle the issue of Matthew's place within or without Judaism. It merely shows that Matthew saw his community within the tradition of the Jewish scriptures. For Matthew the scriptures were fulfilled with the appearance of Jesus and the gathering of his community.⁹⁷

Repschinski's observation highlights the need for a new approach to the conversation. Given that need, I wish to explore Matthew's strategy for grafting Jesus' interpretations of the Torah onto the tradition of Jewish Scripture. More specifically, I intend to delineate the Second Temple Jewish writing strategies that Matthew inherited, as well as his particular use and development of them to connect Jesus' interpretation of the Torah with Israel's Scripture. This venture will, I believe, substantially address the issue of the Matthean Jesus' simultaneous devotion to and deviation from the Torah.

Now, although Matthean scholars recognise that it was common for Second Temple texts to alter and update their sacred Torah, these scholars are unlikely to study this phenomenon in and of itself nor do they focus on how it relates to Matthew's interpretation of the Torah. Rather, they typically use it as a point of departure for debating the Matthean community's social location in relation to competing Jewish groups. This thesis, however, will examine the Matthean Jesus' devotion to and deviation from the Torah as participation in the larger phenomenon of Torah interpretation in Second Temple and late first-century Judaism.

to Jesus as problematic for his emphasis on Matthew's continuity with his parent body.
97 Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew*, 344.

Returning to the matter of Tolstoy's letter, we could posit that examining the Matthean Jesus' teachings on the Torah in terms of Torah interpretation will best direct us to the answer Matthew would have given to the young Samuel Wohl. Matthew's opponents may have detected tension between Jesus' teaching and the Torah, just as modern scholars often do, but for Matthew there was no such tension. Indeed, through the use of various inherited writing strategies, Matthew presents his interpretation of the Torah through the teachings of Jesus as an authorised representation of the Torah of Moses given at Sinai. Hence, we will reframe the inquiry in terms of Matthew's use of inherited writing strategies for claiming authority for interpretations of the Torah, all set within the larger phenomenon of Torah interpretation. This process, which does not exclude concerns with the pursuit of the Matthean community's specific relationship with Judaism, will help us to appreciate better the dynamic between the Matthean Jesus' devotion to the Torah in the programmatic statement (Matt 5:17–20) and his “apparent” deviation from the Torah in the antitheses (Matt 5:21–48). Indeed, it should serve to help us to understand Matthew in his own terms as to why the programmatic statement and the antitheses fit together and, furthermore, how they form continuity with Israel's Scriptures.

iii. Research Aims

The larger goal of this thesis is to remove the topic of the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah from the narrow confines of the *intra-extra muros* debate and situate it within the broader phenomenon of Torah interpretation in ancient Judaism and Matthew's participation in that phenomenon. This effort is in keeping with the fact that scholarship has been increasingly situating Matthew within a Second Temple Jewish milieu. In concert with this development, ascertaining the way in which Second Temple texts claimed authority for an interpretation of the Torah or parts of the Torah will shed light on the rhetorical devices and exegetical strategies that Matthew inherited and developed in order to craft an authoritative expression of the Torah through Jesus' teachings.

The fact that numerous texts from the Second Temple period interpreted the Torah and developed Torah tradition raises several tangential questions. Among these: why even change the Torah in the first place? Was the Torah not good enough as it was? By Matthew's time the Pentateuch (although a fluid text) was already considered an established authority.⁹⁸ So why tamper with it? Could Matthew not have simply told his disciples to follow the Torah and leave the matter at that? More importantly, although interpreting the Torah was a common phenomenon in Matthew's context, why does Matthew think his interpretations will be convincing to his audience, embedded as deeply as they are in the thought world of Second Temple Judaism? The answer to these questions will serve as a window into Matthew's understanding of Jesus and the Torah, and ultimately provide a more robust and useful interpretation of the Matthean programmatic statement on the Torah (Matt 5:17–20).

Pursuant to these questions, this thesis will investigate two aspects of Matthew's Torah interpretation. First, it will review both Matthew's framework and reasons for interpreting the Torah, which are deeply rooted in a Second Temple Jewish paradigm. Second, it will examine the writing strategies which Matthew uses to ascribe authority to his interpretations of the Torah in the teachings of Jesus. As such, it will be argued that Matthew not only shares similar reasons for Torah interpretation as do other Second Temple texts, but that he has also inherited and developed many of their writing strategies for presenting a new approach to the Torah.

iv. Methodology

This thesis will employ the historical-critical method along with its common tools and resources. More precisely, compositional criticism (i.e., a combination of redaction and narrative criticism) will be used when evaluating Matthew's Gospel.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Meier, *Law and Love*, 30–31.

⁹⁹ For a helpful explanation of composition criticism, see Blaine Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 16–19.

This strategy follows the assumption that Matthew's Gospel has a coherent (relative to the expectations of first-century writing) message and narrative progression. Further, while this thesis is not designed as a social-scientific study of the Matthean community, many insights will be drawn from the wealth of research in this field to help anchor the analysis of Matthew's text more accurately in its proper historical context.

v. Terminology

a) Interpretation(s) and the Phenomenon of Torah Interpretation

In this thesis I use “interpretation(s)” as an inclusive term to refer broadly to the great variety of ways in which certain authors from the Second Temple period altered, augmented, edited, explained, preserved, or updated either particular commandments of the Torah or even whole portions of the Torah in their given texts. I am not suggesting that these numerous texts from different centuries and geographic locations interpret the Torah using the same methods and techniques. Rather, the general feature of these texts that I mean to capture with the term “interpretation(s)” is simply their interaction with and development of inherited Torah tradition. In terms of this generality (i.e., that each text interacts and develops Torah tradition in some respect) the great body of texts from the Second Temple period that concern the Torah share a level of comparability: they all reverence the Torah while simultaneously contributing to its adaptation and continuation. I refer to this common dynamic of devotion and deviation or, better yet, devotion and development, as the “phenomenon of Torah interpretation.” It is in terms of this phenomenon that we will contextualise the dynamic or apparent “tension” between the Matthean Jesus’ devotion to the entire Torah (Matt 5:17–20) and his subsequent “deviation” (Matt 5:21–48).

Scholars often attribute broadly, as I do here, the terms “interpretation,” “biblical interpretation,” or even “rewritten bible” to a multitude of Second Temple texts. However, there is an inherent limitation to the term “interpretation(s).” Eva

Mroczek rightly notes that exegesis was often not the primary concern of many Second Temple texts that scholars label “biblical interpretation.” In many cases, interpretation is not the concern at all.¹⁰⁰ Mroczek argues that even though many of these texts draw on older sacred writing traditions, and, in our case, writings about the Torah, they were still “intended and received as new literature, perhaps new authoritative Scripture, in their own right.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, these texts that “interpret” the Torah are more than interpretation. To put it simply, they are themselves writings or, more specifically, Torah writings. Therefore, a text like Matthew’s Gospel or Jubilees is not merely providing various interpretations to commandments in the Torah, but is intended by its author to be read as new authoritative writing with commands to follow.

Nevertheless, “interpretation” still has enough semantic room for a contextualised use in this thesis. Moreover, since the term “interpretation” is commonly used in scholarship, I will stick with convention in this thesis rather than re-invent the wheel. However, “interpretation” will be used only with the caveat that it does not exclude the idea that a text may intend to be more than an interpretation and may even intend to be viewed as new additional authoritative Scripture and Torah writing. Chapter 1 will explore more closely how and why authors in the Second Temple period could participate in the act of writing new Torah texts.

b) Writing Strategies

The term “writing strategies” will be used to reference the literary techniques Second Temple authors employ to authenticate their interpretations of the Torah as authoritative representations of the Mosaic Torah and revelation from Sinai. That is, such writing strategies do not refer to the types of interpretations (e.g., adding new laws or qualifying vague laws with commentary) made in Second Temple texts, but the strategies used to present and substantiate these interpretations as genuine and

100 Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 8.

101 *Ibid.*, 8–9.

authoritative representations of the Torah. For example, the Matthean Jesus' extension of the definition of what constitutes adultery is an interpretation of the Torah (Matt 5:27–28), while having God publicly endorse Jesus earlier in the narrative is a writing strategy for authorising his interpretation (Matt 3:17).

Often, an interpretation and a writing strategy are closely related. For instance, the author of Jubilees interprets the Torah by weaving new laws into pentateuchal narratives (cf. Jub. 30:7). In this case, the new law is the interpretation and its placement in the already authoritative pentateuchal narratives is the writing strategy for authorising it. The dynamic between writing strategies and interpretations will be discussed when necessary, but the primary focus of this thesis will be on examining the cause and logic of the phenomenon of Torah interpretation and the writing strategies used to authorise such interpretations of the Torah, rather than the techniques of interpretation *per se*.¹⁰² The exception to this rule is chapter 4, which examines Jesus' interpretation of the Torah in four pericopes. However, even in the examination of Jesus' interpretation in these pericopes, attention is still given to Matthew's authorisation and legitimisation of Jesus' interpretations and the delegitimation of the scribes and Pharisees' interpretations.

c) Torah

Although Matthew wrote in Greek and uses the word νόμος, I predominately use the Hebraism “Torah,” rather than “law,” to reference that which Jesus fulfils and interprets. Torah and law both have the potential to refer to many things in different instances, but in our context “Torah” more clearly refers to the corpus of sacred Scriptures associated with Moses. Matthew's coupling of νόμος with the Prophets in the programmatic statement indicates that Matthew has this collection of writings, what we often call the Pentateuch, in mind (Matt 5:17).

102 The types of interpretations the Matthean Jesus makes in the Sermon on the Mount have been rigorously studied in the many articles and commentaries of Matthean scholarship. However, for a helpful fresh perspective of the hermeneutical techniques used in the antitheses, see Ruzer, *Mapping the New Testament*, 1–34.

vi. Scope

This thesis will set its focus primarily on the Matthean Jesus' interpretations of the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7). To be sure, the Torah is debated and interpreted in other significant settings within Matthew's Gospel, but the importance of the content of the Sermon on the Mount for the discussion of the place of the Torah in Matthew's Gospel is unparalleled. Indeed, the Sermon on the Mount and its surrounding narrative context contain the most debated statements by Jesus as well as themes concerning the Torah in Matthean Scholarship. For instance, the programmatic statement on the Torah, the antitheses, the theme of fulfilment, as well as Matthew's Moses typology are all within this critical section of the Gospel. Matthean scholars have used these topics more than any others as support to argue for one view or the other concerning the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah. As addressed in the above review of scholarship, these topics and the dynamic between the programmatic statement and the antitheses, in particular, are still the primary locations in which scholars analyse and interpret the perceived and/or apparent tension between Matthew's devotion to the Torah and subsequent deviation.

The early and strategic placement of the Sermon on the Mount in the Matthean narrative also adds to its significance in the discussion of the Torah in Matthew's Gospel. The Sermon on the Mount's narrative placement and significance is such that all further statements concerning the Torah in the Gospel should be read in light of it. Therefore, given the critical nature of the Sermon on the Mount in relation to the discussion of the Torah in Matthew's Gospel, this thesis will focus primarily on the Matthean Jesus' interpretations of the Torah in this discourse and the writing strategies that Matthew uses to authorise these interpretations as a genuine expression of the Torah.

vii. Procedures

Chapter 1 of this thesis examines the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period. This analysis will delineate the reasons and motivation for

Torah interpretation and the environment that both caused and allowed for Torah interpretation to occur. This analysis will reveal that the phenomenon of Torah interpretation is one of several ways that Second Temple Jews attempted to commune properly with the divine, particularly as a response to and a transformation of the perpetuating destruction caused by exile. This phenomenon, therefore, is irrevocably connected to Israel's covenant with God and their hopes for restoration. It is within this framework that Torah tradition grew and flourished as a host of new texts both preserved and updated the Torah.

Chapter 2 demonstrates that Matthew's Gospel fits well within the environment and reasoning that both caused and allowed for the phenomenon of Torah interpretation. That is to say, Matthew's Gospel is concerned with and is, in many regards, a response to the destruction Israel has experienced from both the Babylonian exile and the dismantling of the Second Temple by the Romans. Concerning the Babylonian exile, Matthew depicts Jesus' Davidic-messianic ministry as the beginning of God's restoration of Israel from the destruction caused by the exile. As for the destruction of the Second Temple, Matthew depicts the temple as defiled, abandoned by God, and doomed to destruction until the full restoration of all things at the end of the age. The temple's defilement and pronounced destruction, according to Matthew, is a result of the scribes and Pharisees' failure to teach/practice the Torah properly and for shedding innocent blood on the altar. As a solution to the temple's defilement, Matthew shows that God now dwells among the people of Israel in the person Jesus' until the end of the age. Jesus also restores the covenantal relationship between God and his people as well as offering atonement through his death on the cross.

Chapter 2 will also show that the programmatic statement on the Torah is, in part, a response to the accusation that Jesus' teaching abolished the Torah bringing God's wrath upon the temple. Matthew spins the accusation around by depicting Jesus as the one who teaches the proper way to follow the Torah and blames the destruction of the temple on the scribes and Pharisees' Torah malpractice. Given Matthew's similar concern as other Second Temple texts for restoring communion

with God in response to the destruction that Israel has suffered, his interpretations of the Torah can be viewed as part of the larger phenomenon of Torah interpretation rather than a break with or surpassing of the Torah.

Chapter 3 analyses the inherited writing strategies Matthew both uses and develops in order to authorise the Matthean Jesus' interpretations of the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount as an authoritative representation of the Torah. Hindy Najman's concept of Mosaic Discourse and its four features are used as a lens to observe and identify Matthew's writing strategies. A comparison with Second Temple texts that also use the four features of Mosaic Discourse will reveal that Matthew's presentation of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is deeply rooted in a Second Temple paradigm for ascribing authority to interpretations of the Torah.

Chapter 4 leaves the Sermon on the Mount and examines Jesus' interpretation of the Torah in four controversy stories (i.e., Matt 12:1–14; 15:1–20; 19:1–9; 22:34–40). These four pericopes cover a variety of halakic issues throughout Matthew's narrative making them helpful representatives of the Matthean Jesus' interpretation of the Torah. The analyses of these pericopes reveals that Matthew develops his inherited Jesus tradition as a scribe savvy to midrashic interpretive skills and the subtleties of first-century halakic argumentation. Moreover, Matthew demonstrates careful and creative editorial skill to both affirm his inherited Markan Jesus tradition while also tactfully editing his Markan material to avoid any potentially misleading depictions of Jesus and the Torah. The Matthean Jesus' Torah interpretations are in no way intended to abandon or to invalidate the Torah or Matthew's inherited Jesus tradition. Rather, Matthew deepens the connection between Jesus' interpretations and Scripture as well as adds precision and clarification to his inherited Jesus tradition. Finally, Matthew also uses these four controversy stories to continue the legitimisation of Jesus' Torah interpretation and simultaneous de-legitimisation of the scribes and Pharisees' Torah interpretation. Jesus is presented as the supreme authority of Torah interpretation in Matthew's narrative world over against the scribes and Pharisees.

Chapter 5 will examine the genre of ancient Greco-Roman biography and investigate the ways in which its features could effectively contribute to Matthew's authorisation of Jesus' teachings on the Torah. We will particularly note that, although Matthew uses similar writing strategies for authorising interpretations of the Torah as do other Second Temple texts, his genre, a *βίος*, is markedly different to the point of warranting further consideration. Therefore, this chapter will conduct a subject targeted survey of ancient biographical writings. This survey will demonstrate that ancient Greco-Roman biographical writing was commonly used for legitimising or de-legitimising a historical figure in a polemical context. Most relevant for our analysis of Matthew's Gospel will be Philo's use of biography to legitimise Moses in a manner suitable for a hellenistic audience, even those likely critical of the Jewish Torah. It will be demonstrated that, for Philo, the lawgiver Moses and his Torah are irrevocably connected as each authorises the other.

Chapter 6 examines Matthew's use of the legitimising features of the genre of biography to establish Jesus as an authoritative teacher who can proclaim definitive rulings on the Torah. This examination will reveal Matthew to be a participant in the biographical development of Jesus tradition, in which additional and edited biographical material was joined with previous forms of Jesus tradition in order to legitimise Jesus and communicate his significance more fully. Specifically, Matthew's compositional work leading up to the Sermon on the Mount will be examined in order to observe the manner in which Matthew legitimises Jesus before he ascends the mountain to give his teachings on the Torah. This examination will demonstrate that Matthew has creatively arranged biographical material to and from his primary sources in a way that presents Jesus as God's principal representative with the authority to declare definitive rulings on the Torah. Therefore, by first legitimising Jesus, Matthew concurrently legitimises Jesus' teachings on the Torah. Moreover, it will be revealed that Matthew's legitimising biographical writing in the narrative leading up to the Sermon on the Mount is integrated with his use of the four features of Mosaic Discourse. Thus, Matthew creatively uses the opportunities made

available by his genre in collaboration with his inherited Second Temple writing strategies to ascribe authority both to Jesus and to his teaching on the Torah. In this manner then, Matthew participates in the larger phenomenon of Torah interpretation.

With introductory matters now reviewed, we will commence with our examination of Matthew's participation in and contribution to the larger phenomenon of Torah interpretation in Second Temple and late first-century Judaism.

CHAPTER 1: TORAH INTERPRETATION IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

Various religious groups within Palestinian Judaism around the turn of the era obviously did not think that veneration for the Pentateuch excluded rewriting its stories and laws (e.g., in the Book of Jubilees) to make them coincide with a group's own beliefs (e.g., a solar calendar) or with a group's expectations for a utopian future temple (e.g., the Temple Scroll found at Qumran). Whether these examples of the so-called rewritten Bible were meant to replace, stand alongside of, or merely provide the definitive interpretive framework for the five-book Torah of Moses is debated among scholars.¹

Introduction

The sacred scriptures attributed to Moses were not exempt from alteration during the Second Temple period. Matthean scholars, primarily those in the *intra muros* camp, have drawn much attention to this phenomenon as evidence that the Matthean Jesus' radical antitheses situate the Matthean community within the boundaries of Judaism rather than outside. The comparison between the jurisdiction that Matthew and other sectarian groups had over altering the Mosaic Torah is both founded and insightful. However, this chapter will look deeper into this phenomenon of Torah interpretation and consider how different Jewish groups in the Second Temple period were able to innovate the Torah while also revering it. In the quotation above, John P. Meier correctly states that different groups “obviously” did not see a problem with veneration and simultaneous alteration of the Torah, but Meier’s observation is only a mere inference. It does not explain the logic of the phenomenon. To be sure, as with any law code, the Torah is both limited in scope and susceptible to archaism with the passage of time. Interpretation, therefore, becomes necessary to address issues raised by new contexts.² Although this helps partially explain the need for Torah

1 Meier, *Law and Love*, 31.

2 So John J. Collins, *Scriptures and Sectarianism: Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, WUNT 332 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 19-34, “the received laws were ambiguous and elliptic, and so disagreement was inevitable. The increased focus on the Torah as Law in the Hasmonean period had, perhaps, its inevitable outcome in 4QMMT, which posited the conflict of legal interpretation as the primary cause of sectarian division.” Here, Collins provides a helpful overview of when and under what circumstances halakhic interests over the Torah grew. Although Collins is right to point to the efforts to preserve the Torah during the Hasmonean period as the time when the Torah

interpretation, it still leaves much of the phenomenon itself unexplored, especially the theological motives behind it. The Torah's role within the Second Temple Jewish understanding of the economy of divine-human relations must also be considered if we are to understand properly why the Torah was interpreted and updated for future generations rather than disregarded as an archaic law code. This will not only give us better insight into the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period, but it will also help us analyse Matthew's own Torah interpretation through the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

To explore the phenomenon of Torah interpretation more thoroughly, this chapter will draw on the work of Hindy Najman. Two of her concepts, the *survival of divine encounter* and *revelation inflected by destruction*, will be used to create a framework for understanding the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period, a framework in which Matthew participates and contributes. In other words, this chapter will seek to understand better the Second Temple framework which allowed Matthew and others to both reverence the Torah and simultaneously innovate it.

1.1 Texts and Interpretation

At the outset, two fundamental and general premises of the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period will be used to frame the discussion.

The first premise is that the writing and rewriting of texts is a vehicle for interpreting and transforming ideas. The interpretation and transformation of ideas is so innate/intrinsic to writing texts that it happens even at the most basic level of text production. Robert Wisnovsky observes that the work of transmission and even translation of texts in late antiquity was an active and interactive process.³ It involved “a multilateral commerce in texts, commentaries, fresh elaborations, and ideas.

became that which divided sectarian groups, he does not look substantially at the theological reasons behind the desire to preserve and accurately interpret the Torah.

³ Robert Wisnovsky, ed., *Vehicles of Transmission, Translation, and Transformation in Medieval Textual Culture*, *Cursor Mundi* 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 2.

Indeed, transmission *was* transformation, a creative act of reception.”⁴ This was also the case for the Jewish people in the Second Temple period. For the Jewish people the transmission of the Torah did not only serve the simple purpose of manuscript preservation. Rather, they grew, developed, and transformed the Torah through the many forms and methods of transmission, including, but not limited to: writing, rewriting, translation (e.g., into Greek and Aramaic), and interpretation.⁵ Indeed, even the very texts that Second Temple Jews were attempting to preserve through different forms of transmission show evidence of already having “internal interpretation” (i.e., inner-biblical exegesis).⁶ Therefore, writing and transmission of texts always shape and innovate (pre-existing) ideas.

Ideas, however, are not interpreted arbitrarily through the process of writing texts. Rather, transmission incorporates numerous forms of interpretation to ensure that the text is not only physically preserved but that its significance is also preserved for future generations. As Wisnovsky states, a new group or culture—in Wisnovsky's case cultures in late antiquity receiving and transforming the texts of earlier antiquity, but in our case Second Temple Jews transforming the texts from the Persian period and before—could select particular texts, ideas, information, and content from a former time and transform “them into something useful and meaningful to their

4 Ibid.

5 As George J. Brooke, “Biblical Interpretation at Qumran,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 1 Scripture and the Scrolls, The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press), 302, states, “all biblical manuscripts found at Qumran are interpretive in the way in which they physically represent the text and often in other ways too. In addition, the Qumran biblical manuscripts have shown that in many instances the scribes who copied them tried to improve the texts.” For a similar point, see Michael A. Fishbane, “Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra Qumran,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. M. J. Mulder, CRINT 2/1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), 367–368. For an overview of the various aspects of ancient textual transmission of available Jewish texts, see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed., rev. and exp. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

6 So Lawrence H. Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1991), 12. The very Torah which Second Temple Jews interpreted was, of course, itself the compilation and interpretation of older sources. For further discussion, see Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2012); and Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, Baruch J. Schwartz, eds., *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research*, FAT 78 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

particular cultural contexts.”⁷ Ideas, therefore, are not arbitrarily interpreted through texts. Rather, the various modes of transmission allow ideas to be interpreted in a way that addresses the needs of a community.⁸ As another classicist, J. H. D. Scourfield, rightly states,

Textual inheritances, then, had a significant role in the formation of groups, and the incorporation—in many different ways—of those inheritances in contemporary writing was arguably a means both of sustaining group identity and of re-engineering the past to suit the concerns of the present. To put this differently, texts could be at the same time a mechanism for the expression of continuities and an instrument of adaptive change, in pursuit, one might say, of steady state.⁹

In other words, ideas from the past are not only preserved through texts but they are also interpreted so that a community may continue to bring the past into the present in a meaningful way.

This is also the case for Jewish text transmitters who sought to update their Torah texts to meet the challenges of the Second Temple period (most notably Hellenism and Roman imperialism) while staying faithful to their inherited Sinaitic revelation from Yahweh. Indeed, every manifestation of Judaism, although they do not do so in a unitary or linear way, seeks justification for their religious system by referring back to God's moment of revelation at Sinai.¹⁰ As James Sanders states, the

7 Wisnovsky, *Vehicles of Transmission*, 2.

8 Similarly, Benjamin D. Sommer, *Revelation and Authority: Sinai in Jewish Scripture and Tradition*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 243, states that “any revision of a specific law within a legal tradition is an act of continuity rather than of rupture, for such revisions make it possible for legal tradition to endure.” That ancient Jewish claims to stability were better founded than modern scholars have recognized, see Steven Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Concerning the conservative nature of ancient interpreters and their emphasis on continuity, see Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 185–187.

9 J. H. D. Scourfield and Anna Chahoud, eds., *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change* (Swansea; Oakville, CT: Classical Press of Wales; David Brown, 2007), 6.

10 So Jacob Neusner, “Exile and Return as the History of Judaism,” in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott, JSJSup 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 221. Similarly, Sommer, *Revelation and Authority*, 39, states, “one might view all previous revelations as leading to the event at Sinai and all subsequent ones as echoing it, repeating it, building upon it, or pointing toward its importance; certainly this is the way Jewish tradition has come to regard the

Torah (i.e., the codification of the revelation at Sinai) was the “center of [Second Temple] Judaism's continuing identity and existence as heir of the old pre-exilic traditions, now reviewed and resignified for the new situation.”¹¹ In other words, through the phenomenon of textual transmission, Judaism was able to bring ideas and concepts from its past, re-read and re-signified, with them into the present.¹² This, in effect, also made a way for these ideas to move into the future. Following sections will discuss the particular circumstances that gave rise to Jewish interpretation of their inherited texts in the Second Temple period. For now I wish only to note that ideas about the Torah are interpreted through the writing of texts, which is a creative act of updating a text to meet the needs of the future while maintaining continuity with the past.¹³ This natural process is in the fabric of textual transmission and writing.

Ideas, of course, and ideas about the Torah in particular, can be interpreted through mediums other than texts. For instance, ideas about the Torah can be interpreted through debate, cultural pressure, imaginative thinking, discussion, prayer, (cultic)worship, music, and storytelling to name a few.¹⁴ To be sure, there was often an interactive relationship between texts concerning the Torah and these various other mediums. This, however, raises the second fundamental premise of the phenomenon of Torah interpretation: even though the Torah was interpreted through

Sinai revelation.”

11 James Sanders, “The Exile and Canon Formation,” in Scott, *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, 59.

12 Ibid.

13 See Sommer, *Revelation and Authority*, 97; and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 148, concerning the difference between “continuity” and “unchangingness” and how the former gives a religious tradition authenticity and the latter compromises a tradition's endurance.

14 Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, 13–14, notes that “throughout its history, the development of Judaism has been the result of the subtle interplay of stimuli from within [e.g., the need to interpret a body of sacred scripture, a tendency to study through question and discussion] and from without [e.g., political powers, economics].” Similarly, Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 578, also notes the Torah's dynamic and multifaceted development: “Torah evolved out of a series of ad hoc proclamations, oracular utterances, and commandments, into a more holistic literature and practice that retained some properties of those initial utterances, but also took on a life of its own.” See Brueggemann's discussion on page 598 as well.

a variety of means, only textual evidence is available from Matthew's approximate time. We will certainly consider the external stimuli that may have caused various groups to innovate the Torah this way and that, but ultimately we only have access to the ideas expressed in the extant texts. This is certainly an obvious point, but it helps set our examination of Jesus and the Torah in Matthew's Gospel in a proper framework. In other words, while the question of Jesus and the Torah in Matthew's Gospel is a vast topic, we will only focus on Matthew's participation in the larger phenomenon of written Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period. Understanding Jesus' attitude towards the Torah in Matthew's Gospel, and the interplay between the programmatic statement on the Torah (Matt 5:17–20) and the antitheses (Matt 5:21–48) specifically, will be greatly aided through examining how Second Temple Jewish texts were used to inherit and then innovate ideas in order to address relevant concerns. Ultimately a more rigorous understanding this phenomenon will provide a clearer picture of what Matthew communicates about Jesus and his teachings and interpretations of the Torah.

The way Second Temple texts innovate inherited texts regarding the Torah, however, can appear quite unusual set against our modern notions. This cultural distance can make it difficult to understand what these texts are doing and how what they are doing would be legitimate in their context, especially the way in which they reverence the Torah while simultaneously changing it (devotion and deviation). The long history of contradictory interpretations of Matthew 5:17 attests to the difficulty this phenomenon presents to our modern inclinations. Hindy Najman, however, has offered helpful ways to describe what, how, and why texts in the Second Temple period interpreted their inherited traditions concerning the Torah. Najman's descriptors will be used to frame the context in which Matthew's Torah interpretation participates. That is, these descriptors will help explain the logic and process of the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period and Matthew's participation in said phenomenon. Ultimately, this will help square up some apparent anomalies about what Matthew has to say about Jesus and his fulfilment of the Torah.

1.2 Najman's Second Temple Framework of Torah Interpretation

For the purposes of this chapter, only two of Najman's concepts will be examined and applied: the “survival of divine encounter” and “revelation inflected by destruction.” These two particular and related concepts are integral to explaining how and why inherited texts concerning the Torah were both revered and interpreted in the Second Temple period. In the subsequent chapter, it will be argued that these two concepts underpin Matthew's interpretation of the Torah around the figure of Jesus. In the Second Temple period, the numerous modes of divine encounter *survived* through the process of being inflected by destruction.

1.2a Survival of Divine Encounter

The survival of divine encounter is my shorthand term for Najman's discussion of “how divine encounter survived,” which is found in different places in her scholarship.¹⁵ Najman uses the concept of the survival of divine encounter to rethink the notion that prophecy ended with Judah's exile and subsequent return. To be sure, the exile caused significant rupture to the prophetic office, but, as Najman rightly notes, to suggest that it ceased runs the risk of oversimplification if “prophecy's place within the broader economy of divine-human relations” is not specified.¹⁶ Najman, therefore, prefers the term divine encounter to refer more broadly than just the office of prophecy to the multiple ways that Jews continued to attempt to encounter God, even in the midst of exile's destruction and continuing rupture.¹⁷ Within this broader perspective, the exile was followed not by the cessation of divine encounter but by its proliferation and, therefore, survival. In light of this broadened horizon, Najman shifts the discussion from the narrow question of “when” did prophecy end to the

15 Hindy Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture Within and Beyond the 'Canon',” *JSJ* 43 (2012): 505–507; here Najman states, “to understand how divine encounter survived, how it was reimagined, and how some modes became more or less central, it is essential to grasp not only the diversity of divine phenomena, but also the diversity of their *ends*,” for a similar discussion also see, Hindy Najman, *Losing the Temple and Recovering the Future: An Analysis of 4 Ezra* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6.

16 Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 505–506.

17 *Ibid.*, 506–507.

broader question of “how” divine encounter emerged from the destruction of exile.

As Najman states,

My question is no longer “when did prophecy cease?” but rather “how were the fragments of divine encounter retrieved under the conditions of a devastating destruction and exile that were never overcome”?¹⁸ Ancient texts that express a loss of intimacy with the divine are not merely indicators that something dies and perhaps that something else was born. They are doing the work of returning a culture to its life.¹⁹

Two aspects of the concept of the survival of divine encounter need further unpacking if we are to understand properly its relevance to the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period: 1) the idea that the rupture from the exile's destruction continues even after the return to Jerusalem in the sixth century BCE, that is, its destruction was never fully overcome, and 2) the ways in which the Jews sought to encounter God (i.e., the diversity of divine phenomena) and, therefore, retrieve aspects of divine encounter from their past.

First, the significance of the Babylonian exile for the Jewish people cannot be overstated as its ramifications permeated nearly every sphere of life: political, religious, socio-economic, and civil.²⁰ Nevertheless, it is difficult to define and describe the exile and the extent of its effects because what the exile was

18 As Sanders, “The Exile and Canon Formation,” 59, notes, “Torah, shaped in Exile, that was the core of Judaism's being a mutated form of old Israel and Judah, and the very center of Judaism's continuing identity and existence as heir of the old pre-exilic traditions, now reviewed and resignified for the new situation. Most, if not all, other peoples conquered by Assyria and Babylonia were assimilated to the new dominant cultures and lost their continuity with their past. Not so Judaism. Judaism was able to bring its past with them (re-read and re-signified, of course), hence its identity.”

19 Najman, *Losing the Temple*, 6.

20 As Christopher Levin, “Introduction,” in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christopher Levin, BZAW 404 (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1, states, “if we follow the Old Testament account, the Exile was the most important turning point in Israel's history. It is the watershed dividing the kingdoms of Israel and Judah from the Judaism of the Persian and Hellenistic eras. The significance of this change for the history of the Jewish religion and for the literary history of the Old Testament cannot be overemphasized.” Although the exile had wide spreading consequences, according to Neusner, the amount of Judeans who were actually exiled and then returned (primarily the political class) was small in relation to the rest of the population; see Neusner, “Exile and Return,” 221, 224,.

“historically” and what it came to mean for the Jewish people are not necessarily the same thing.²¹ As Hans Barstad states,

I am ... concerned with what the exile was rather than with what it became in later tradition. Indeed, the problem of what the exile became is also a very legitimate scholarly project, not least because this is mainly the description of the phenomenon which we may find in the Bible itself and, which, consequently, has constituted a part of our common cultural heritage to this very day.²²

Although Najman acknowledges this dichotomy (i.e., the exile of history and the exile of tradition), Najman's interest, opposite of Barstad, is in what the exile and its destruction came to be and mean in tradition.²³ In particular, the effect that/which exile was understood to have had on God's presence amongst Israel/the Jews. The prophetic office was not the only institution ruptured by exile's destruction, the monarchy and temple²⁴ were also greatly affected.²⁵ These institutions were the

21 So, Levin, “Introduction,” 1–2.

22 Hans M. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, FAT 61 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 97.

23 This is not to suggest, however, that the exile of history and the exile of tradition are entirely without correspondence. For a helpful overview and analysis of the interaction between theological and historical research on the exile, see Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 27-73. See also Reinhard G. Kratz, “The Relation between History and Thought: Reflections on the Subtitle of Peter Ackroyd's *Exile and Restoration*,” in *Exile and Restoration Revisited: Essays on the Babylonian and Persian Periods in Memory of Peter R. Ackroyd*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers, Lester L. Grabbe, and Deirdre Fulton, LSTS 73 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 162, who states, “the handling of the exile is not therefore solely a problem of historical reconstruction; it is a matter of attempting to understand an attitude, or more properly a variety of attitudes, taken up towards that historical fact.”

24 This is not to deny that cultic worship or some form of religious activity continued in Jerusalem after the social elites of Judah were exiled into Babylon. The point here is that the First Temple as it was and its connection with Yahweh clearly suffered at least a degree rupture when the temple was destroyed. Concerning the continuation of the cult and religious culture, see Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period: 538–332 BC* (Warminster: Arts & Phillips, 1982), 229; Hans Barstad, “On the History and Archaeology of Judah during the Exilic Period,” *OLP* 19 (1987): 25–36; J. Blenkinsopp, “The Judaeen Priesthood during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods: A Hypothetical Reconstruction,” *CBQ* 60 (1998): 25–43; and J. Blenkinsopp, “The Bible, Archaeology and Politics; or the The Empty Land Revisited,” *JOST* 27 (2002): 169–187. For a review of this topic, see Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 63.

25 Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 507 rightly notes that “all the modes of divine encounter suffered rupture. But there was not straight forward cessation of divine encounter.”

primary curators of divine-human relations in the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judea.²⁶ Yahweh was Israel's king and his reign and kingdom was made manifest in the temple (i.e., his earthly throne room, Pss 11:4; 65:4) and through the Davidic monarchy. The monarchy and the priests with their cultic worship were Yahweh's representatives to the people of Israel and foreign nations (monarchy, Pss 2; 72; 89; 110; priesthood and temple, Num 27:18-21, 31:6; 1 Sam 10:1).²⁷ Therefore, exile's destruction of these institutions came to be perceived by many as the loss or at least severing of divine-human relations. For instance, Ezekiel describes exilic judgement in terms of Yahweh removing his presence from the temple and Israel (Ezek 10:18–19; 11:22–23).²⁸ Indeed, the physical damage caused by the exile was intertwined with psychological and spiritual damage, especially in regard to the destruction of the temple. Since the temple was the throne and dwelling place of Yahweh's presence, its

26 As Neusner, "Exile and Return as the History of Judaism," 235–236, states, "the life of Israel flowed from the altar; what made Israel Israel was the center, the altar and the altar was the center of life, the conduit of life from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven." This was also the case with the Second Temple; as Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 101, notes, for the Jewish people the temple was the focal point of their religion and the only suitable place "for God's home on earth."

27 So Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 610, regarding the Davidic promises in the Psalms and 2 Samuel 7, states, "the purposes of Yahweh have now been entrusted to a human agent. Yahweh's work is to be done by David's family. Yahweh's kingdom takes the form of the house of David.... That is how Yahweh's presence is mediated, in this form, in the world." For further discussion of the monarchy's function as a mediator for Yahweh, see pages 600–621. See also C. C. Caragounis, "Kingdom of God/Heaven," in *DJG*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 418, who states, "with the accession of David to the throne ... the king was understood to reign as Yahweh's representative and be under Yahweh's suzerainty. In other words, the monarchy was viewed as the concrete manifestation of Yahweh's rule." For further discussion of the role priests played between the people of Israel and God, see Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 41–65; and for the role they played between the dynamic of God and a king, see Ada Taggar-Cohen, "Covenant Priesthood: Cross-cultural Legal and Religious Aspects of Biblical and Hittite Priesthood," in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, ed. Mark Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton, AIL 9 (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 11–24.

28 For further discussion of how the absence of Yahweh's presence from the temple is part of his judgement, see Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Klaus Baltzer, and Leonard Jay Greenspoon, trans. Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 252–253. It should be noted, however, that divine-human relations could also be ruptured by the opposite, that is, Yahweh being present, but in judgement (cf. Isa 29:1–4; Zeph 1:7–9; 3:8); so Blanton, "Saved by Obedience," 397.

destruction was in part perceived as an assault on Israel's deity.²⁹ The place to gain refuge in Yahweh's presence was now inaccessible or at least significantly compromised (Pss 46:1, 7, 11; 65:4; 3:4; 61:4; 63:2).³⁰

The monarchy and priesthood did, however, see various levels of post-exilic restoration. For instance, the monarchy with the Hasmoneans and the Herods or the priests with Ezra and the Second Temple. These could have been argued as evidence of restoration from exile (cf. Zech 6:15), but they were not always met with positive reception by the ancient Jewish people.³¹ This is well represented in the mixed reception the Second Temple received in the book of Ezra (Ezra 3:10–14).³² The key

29 Jan Christian Gertz, "Military Threat and the Concept of Exile in the Book of Amos," in Zvi and Levin, *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel*, 11, captures the connection between the destruction of the institutions of monarchy and temple and divine-human relations well in stating, "the Babylonian campaign against Judah in 587 BCE led to a political and social disaster for the Judean kingdom and the Judeans. The monarchy broke down, Jerusalem was destroyed along with its temple, and many areas suffered from a drastic demographic decline. 'This was the obvious disaster. The invisible disaster was considerably more serious.' It struck out against the power of the national deity, Yahweh, and vehemently challenged the self-evidence of the religious symbolic system." Similarly, Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 60, notes that "it appears that the policy of Nebuchadnezzar was to place captured religious implements or statues in the temple of Marduk in the city of Babylon in order to symbolize the capture of the people and the defeat of their gods. In the case of the Jews, a capture of temple vessels served the same purpose." Isaac Kalimi and James D. Purvis, "King Jehoiachin and the Vessels of the Lord's House in Biblical Literature," *CBQ* 56 (1994): 449–457, have argued that the removal of the temple vessels and their subsequent return is a literary trope used by the Chronicler to create a sense of continuity between the First Temple and the Second Temple. Although the Chronicler's intentions seem apparent, this does not mean the temple was never raided of its valued possessions. As Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 61, rightly notes, "references to the symbols of Jewish worship having been taken from the temple are widespread, not only limited to texts influenced by the Chronicler."

30 As Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 660, states, "it is clear that the temple is a safe place, because to be there is to be in the presence of and under the protection of the king." For further discussion of the temple as a place of safety because of Yahweh's presence, see Fredrik Lindström, *Suffering and Sin: Interpretation of Illness in the Individual Complaint Psalms* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1994), 390–413; and Gerhard von Rad, "'Righteousness' and 'Life' in the Cultic Language of the Psalms," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 255–259.

31 The notion of restoration, of course, depends greatly on one's perspective. For instance, priests probably viewed the Second Temple as a clear sign of restoration, while the community that produced the Temple Scroll clearly did not. See Philip Alexander, "The Idea of 'Continuing Exile' in Second Temple Palestinian Judaism" (a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the British New Testament Society, Edinburgh, September 2015), 9–10. Many thanks to Philip Alexander for graciously providing me with a draft of this manuscript.

32 For further discussion of the negative connotations connected with the Second Temple which kept it from reaching the status of the First Temple, see Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 126–127.

observation here is that Israel's traditional modes of divine encounter, not just the office of prophet, were still *perceived* by many as ruptured. Whatever one makes of these occasional bouts of restorative events, many (or most?) Jews did not think that their expectations of full restoration were met. In this sense, exile's destruction was never fully overcome.³³

Another important, but overlooked, example of how exile's destruction was never fully overcome is that the ten northern tribes of Israel were never regathered along with the southern tribes as the prophets had proclaimed (e.g., Isa 11:10–16; Jer 23:5–8; Ezek 37:15–28). As Brant Pitre rightly notes, this hope was not abandoned in the Second Temple period (e.g., Josephus Ant. 11.133; Pss. Sol. 17:16–18, 31–32; Sir 36:10–13).³⁴ Therefore, even though the Babylonian exile had ended, Jews could still perceive of exile's destruction as an enduring force because the rest of Israel had not yet been returned from the Assyrian exile. The full return of Israel, of course, would

33 Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Concept of Restoration in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott, JSJSup 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 220–221, notes that several Dead Sea Scroll documents evidence a concept of restoration that claims to be a return to the past, but in actuality is a vehicle for asserting different versions of an eschatological (messianic) utopia. Under such expectations, the variegated amounts of restoration that were achieved during the Second Temple period, including that which took place during the Persian period, could never have been viewed as complete restoration. Hence, exile, from the perspective of many Second Temple Jews, as Najman suggests, was never fully overcome. Similarly, Michael A. Knibb, “Exile in the Damascus Document,” *JSOT* 25 (1983): 110, notes that in the Damascus Document “we have the same theological pattern that we find in other literature of the period, namely that which sees the condition of exile as lasting beyond the return at the end of the sixth century, and being brought to an end only in the events of a much later period.” James C. VanderKam, “Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature,” in Scott, *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, 94, notes that the idea of exile as a continuing state, even into the future, is common in the apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple period. See as well Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 65. See also R. Carroll, “The Myth of the Empty Land,” in *Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts*, ed. D. Jobling and T. Pippin, Semeia 59 (Atlanta: SBL, 1992), 79–93, who suggests that Jewish history can be seen as a series of exiles. R. J. Coggins, “The Exile: History and Ideology,” *ExpTim* 110 (1999): 389–393, notes that the situation of exile never ceased; and for a similar point, see J. A. Middlemas, “Going Beyond The Myth of the Empty Land: A Reassessment of the Early Persian Period,” in Knoppers, Grabbe, and Fulton, *Exile and Restoration Revisited*, 175. Also, John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 235, notes that a recasting of Israel's hope can be observed in the Second Temple period as both the temple and monarchy “are recast as ultimate eschatological hopes (Messiah and heavenly temple).” The recasting of these hopes indicates a dissatisfaction with the current regime, or at least a desire for something more.

34 Brant Pitre, *Jesus, The Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement*, WUNT 2/204 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 37; see footnote 131 for further examples of regathering of all the tribes of Israel in Second Temple literature.

require a miracle and, therefore, many only envisioned this to take place in eschatological restoration, and even a miraculous national resurrection (cf. Ezek 37).³⁵ However, when many scholars, most notably N.T. Wright,³⁶ discuss the continuing nature or effects of the exile in the Second Temple period, they often ignore the Assyrian exile and argue that the Jews viewed themselves as still experiencing exile because they were subjects to foreign rulers and because Yahweh had not returned to the temple in Zion.³⁷ Such an argument correctly assumes the connection between the persisting consequences of exile's destruction and the hope for restoration, as we discussed above, but it also strips exile of its geographical rootedness. To be sure, exile is interrelated with many concepts such as the kingdom of God, slavery, redemption and restoration, but as Philip Alexander states, "exile certainly foregrounds the centrality of the Land in a way that the other concepts do not."³⁸ It is important to remember, then, that Second Temple Jews continued to think of exile's enduring impact in geographical terms because, even though they may have been brought back into the land, the rest of Israel was still scattered. As we will see in the next chapter, this perspective also holds true for Matthew. Therefore, in terms of both the Assyrian exile's continuation and the often disappointing manifestations of restoration in Judah (i.e., the Second Temple and the various monarchies and messianic revolts), the destruction caused by exile came to be understood by many Second Temple Jews as a continuing force, a devastation that was never fully overcome. Nevertheless, even under these circumstances, divine encounter both survived and proliferated in a plethora of ways during and after the Babylonian deportation.

This leads to the second aspect of the concept of the survival of divine encounter that needs unpacking: the ways in which the Jews sought to encounter God and, therefore, retrieve fragments of divine encounter from their past. In

35 For further discussion, see Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 156–165.

36 N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 268–269.

37 See discussion in Pitre, *Jesus, The Tribulation, and the End of the Exile*, 31–40.

38 Alexander, "The Idea of 'Continuing Exile,'" 2.

consideration of divine encounter's proliferation, rather than cessation, Najman states,

Prophecy was never the only mode in which ancient Israel and ancient Judaism described encounters with God. There were always many varieties of what, in order to leave the matter of “prophetic closure” as open as possible, might be called *divine encounter*. Within the living, covenantal experience, there were ritual, prayer, song and visionary ascent, as well as sacred writing and sacred reading which continued to be composed long after there is any discussion of the office of the prophet.³⁹

Najman, therefore, uses the term “divine encounter” as a way to refer broadly to the variety of ways in which exilic and post-exilic Jews attempted to maintain/continue divine-human relations in the wake of exile's perpetuating rupture. As aforementioned, our concern is specifically the interpretation of texts. Therefore, of the numerous ways in which divine encounter survived, we will only consider what Najman calls “sacred writing,” specifically sacred writing about the Torah, as a means of divine encounter's survival. The interpretation of Torah by Second Temple authors, as we will see, revolves around a concern to continue divine encounter. Before developing this matter further, however, we need to consider the second of Najman's concepts, namely, “revelation inflected by destruction.”

1.2b Revelation Inflected by Destruction

According to Najman, divine encounter flourished “not *in spite* of destruction and exile, but *as a transformation and as an extension of them*.”⁴⁰ In other words, when considering “how” divine encounter survived, it is important to remember that it did so *not* by ignoring the exile's perpetuating rupture. Rather, the way different communities pursued divine encounter was shaped by exile's perpetuating presence. Najman refers to this process as “revelation inflected by destruction”:

39 Najman, “The Vitality of Scripture,” 506.

40 *Ibid.*, 507.

Despite the rupture in the institutions of the prophet, Jewish interpretative communities continue to claim to have access to the divine. . . . I want to identify and name this phenomenon of continued forms of divine encounter even, and especially, in the face of a destruction that was never overcome. I will call this concept *revelation inflected by destruction*. What I mean by naming this concept is the following. A variety of forms of revelation continues in late Second Temple and post-70 CE Judaism, but the fact that the destruction of the First Temple was never fully overcome, coupled with the fact that the exile from the eighth century onward continues to play an important role in the anticipation of hope and redemption (another compromising factor in the way the Second Temple period was described and received), effectively recasts persistent claims about accessing the divine via angelic mediation, dream, symbolic vision, inspired interpretation, and so forth. So although revelation continues, it does so in a manner that is transformed in a variety of ways.⁴¹

Here Najman suggests that not only did exile's damage never fully resolve, but it also “inflected” (or transformed) the Jewish peoples' hope in Yahweh's redemption from exile.⁴² That is, the writings from the Second Temple period commonly reflect an awareness of exile and its continual disruption between the people of Israel and Yahweh's presence (blessed presence to the righteous and judging presence to the wicked), which accompanies full restoration. For instance, inflection from exiles' destruction is clearly evident in Deuteronomy where exile becomes the assumed outcome of the children of Israel's covenant infidelity (Deut 30:1).⁴³ Redemption and restoration, however, are made accessible (i.e., within their reach, on their lips, and in their hearts, Deut 30:11-14) to readers of Deuteronomy by way of an appeal to repent and obey the commandments of the covenant (Deut 30:1-5). The Deuteronomists'

41 Najman, *Losing the Temple*, 6–7.

42 So Levin, “Introduction,” 2, who states, “since the Exile never had a definitive end but gradually merged into the conditions of the world-wide Jewish diaspora, the concept remained very much alive during the era of the second temple. The Jewish community continued to hope ardently for an end to the Exile. This hope determined the ideas about Israel's eschatological future, and has continued to do so down to the present day.”

43 So Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 266, “the first verse sets the context of exile where Israel has been 'driven' by YHWH, where 'all these things,' presumably the curses of chapters 27–28, 29:20–21, have been enacted on Israel.” Concerning the exilic/postexilic dating of Deuteronomy 30, see Christoph Bultmann, “Deuteronomy,” in *The Pentateuch*, ed. John Muddiman and John Barton, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 188–189.

message of hope and restoration to their audience has been inflected by exile's destruction. Even exile itself has been transformed and reimagined as a phase in Yahweh's plan of salvation, rather than as the inevitable end of Israel. The Deuteronomists offer a way to make a future beyond exile possible: a choice between life and good or death and evil (Deut 30:15).⁴⁴

Accounts of revelation from Yahweh certainly continued after the exile through writings like Deuteronomy (or at least Deuteronomy's later layers of redaction), but it was also contextualised around a desire for Yahweh to end exile by restoring his communion with Israel. It was ultimately Yahweh's presence that would bring blessing (Deut 28:1-14; cf. Zech 8:13, 23; T. Dan 5:9-13), though it could also bring judgement (Deut 28:15-68) and his absence could expose his people to curses and destruction (Deut 31:17-18). In general, the goal of the many manifestations of divine encounter in the Second Temple period was ultimately about the restoration and proper maintenance of divine human relations,⁴⁵ but, as texts like Deuteronomy show, these manifestations were inflected by a conception of exile and its continuing destruction.

44 For a similar idea see Daniel's repentant prayer (Dan 9), Jonah's repentant prayer (Jonah 2:2-9), and Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 6:36-40). Concerning the post-exilic dating of the prayer in Daniel 9 and its Deuteronomic theology, see John J. Collins, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 349-350, 359-36.

45 Concerning the different ways ancient Judaism sought to maintain appropriate relations with a powerful, and even frightening, deity; see James L. Kugel, "Some Unanticipated Consequences of the Sinai Revelation: A Religion of Laws," in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. George J. Brooke, Hindy Najman, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, TBN 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1-13. Kugel notes that, on the one hand, the priestly approach was essentially to confine the deity to a temple and personnel with special training. On the other hand, the Deuteronomists only see God's name dwelling in the temple (e.g., 12:11; 114:23; 16:2, 6, 11). In actuality, God dwells in the highest heaven. Therefore, the laws are a way to "serve the Lord" (note the frequent use of *וּלְעֹד אֶת־יְהוָה* in Deuteronomy, e.g., Deut 10:12, cf. 4Q174 5) in order that divine-human relations can be maintained, but at a proper distance. As Kugel states (page 13), "[God] was up there, and we humans were way down here; what connected us was not direct contact but a set of clearly established ground rules—or, one might say, a set of clearly visible electric wires along which the current of divine—human relations was to flow [cf. Deut 4:7]."

1.3 Torah Interpretation, the Survival of Divine Encounter, and Revelation Inflected by Destruction

Survival of divine encounter and revelation inflected by destruction help create an improved framework for contextualising the influx of religious thought, the growth of tradition, and the formation of new revelation during the Second Temple period. As noted, divine encounter thrived during this time, but it was also greatly inflected by perceived perpetuating effects of exile's destruction. We will now turn our attention to a particular type of divine encounter that was inflected by destruction, namely, sacred scripture writing. Specifically, we will consider sacred scripture writing concerning the Torah and how its inflection by destruction relates to its interpretation. Put another way, how does writing about the Torah, in a manifold of genres, fit within an environment where the destruction caused by exile has a lasting effect on the ancient Jewish perception of divine-human relations?

Scholarship concerning Second Temple Judaism has shown that both the cause and persistent consequences of the exile and its subsequent end (leading to eschatological restoration) was widely believed to be linked with obedience/disobedience to the Torah (cf. Deut 28; 2 Kgs 17; 2 Chr 6:36-39; Dan 9:4-19; Ezra 9:6-15; Neh 1:5-11; 9:13-37).⁴⁶ As Christopher Levin states,

46 It should be noted, however, that I am not suggesting that the exile and its connection with Torah obedience is systematically consistent throughout Second Temple literature. As Levin, "Introduction," 10, rightly notes, "the phenomenon of the Exile, which has become a fundamental motif in post-exilic Judaism, eludes a simplified, mono-causal viewpoint such as has occasionally been customary in recent times." Likewise, John Kessler, "Images of Exile: Representations of the 'Exile' and 'Empty Land' in the Sixth to Fourth Century BCE Yehudite Literature," in Zvi and Levin, *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel*, 309–351, notes that theological traditions, including those about the exile and Torah obedience, develop in diverse ways since they "flow through chronological change in a quasi-independent fashion, and demonstrate their own individual responses to the new situations they encounter." Nevertheless, although there is admittedly great diversity between different groups in Second Temple Judaism, Torah obedience is commonly associated with both the cause of exile and restoration from exile. This idea is clearly traced in the Deuteronomistic perspective on Israel's history. John S. Bergsma, "The Persian Period as Penitential Era: The 'Exegetical Logic' of Daniel 9.1–27," in Knoppers, Grabbe, and Fulton, *Exile and Restoration Revisited*, 57, states "[the author of Daniel] admits as much [i.e., that the requisite repentance for restoration has not taken place] in a statement that sounds strongly 'Deuteronomistic': 'As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us, yet we have not entreated the favour of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and giving heed to thy truth' (Dan. 9.13)." See also Knibb, "Exile in the Damascus Document," 110–111, who shows that the connection between the failure to keep God's commandments and the exile are associated

In the Old Testament itself, the Exile constitutes a theological concept, and is hence very much more than the record of what may perhaps have taken place in the sixth century. It counts as punishment for Israel's falling away from its God. This concept is especially developed in the books of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. On the other hand, the Exile is interpreted as the formative phase during which the Jewish community acquired its subsequent form. It is supposed to have been a purgatory (see Hos 2:16-17) which was the presupposition for the new beginning.⁴⁷

“Falling away from its God,” as Levin describes Israel's actions which resulted in the punishment of exile, was conceptualised in the Second Temple period specifically as failing to keep the commandments of the Torah (e.g., Ezek 20:23-4).⁴⁸ As Thomas R. Blanton explains, beginning at least with the Deuteronomic reforms of the seventh century,⁴⁹ words like עון, חטאת, רשע, and ענר, (i.e., words with considerable semantic overlap; cf. Deut 9:27; 19:15; cf. 26:13) came specifically “to denote the failure to follow the divine will as expressed in the Torah.”⁵⁰ That is, “Torah,” referring originally to the law code inscribed in the text of Deuteronomy, a text that explicitly refers to itself as “this law” (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת cf. Deut 1:5; 4:8; 17:18), and eventually to the whole Pentateuch.⁵¹ This notion that failure to keep the Torah equals “sin” continued into the Second Temple period. Blanton states,

in the Damascus Document. Sanders, “The Exile and Canon Formation,” 54–58, notes that the Semitic notions of covenant and corporate identity enabled this kind of Deuteronomic pattern. The link between Torah obedience/disobedience and restoration/judgement continued throughout the Second Temple period, but a democratisation also took place. That is, one could be rewarded/penalised on the basis of their individual obedience/disobedience regardless of the behaviour of the nation of Israel as a whole. For further discussion see Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 97–98.

47 Levin, “Introduction,” 1.

48 Shemaryahu Talmon, “Exile' and 'Restoration' in the Conceptual World of Ancient Judaism,” in Scott, *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, 116.

49 For further discussion of the Deuteronomic reforms, see Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 169–178. Although Deuteronomy's literary process seems to have taken place over a prolonged period that eventuated in its canonical form at the earliest in the fourth century BCE, it is still reasonable to attribute its origins to the “Yahweh alone movement” in seventh-century Judah. See Bultmann, “Deuteronomy,” 187–189.

50 Blanton, “Saved by Obedience,” 400–403.

51 Ibid.; similarly, Kugel, “Some Unanticipated Consequences of the Sinai Revelation,” 3–4, 7–8, and Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 15–16.

Disparate strands of early Jewish literature define 'sin' in legal terms: it entails the failure to adhere to the stipulations of the Torah. This definition persisted from the time of the Deuteronomic reforms in the late 600s B. C. E. until the time of the composition of the Gospel of Matthew near the end of the first century C. E.⁵²

Sin was not only conceptualised in terms of Torah transgression well into the first century, as Blanton explains, but its connection with the judgement of exile and the destruction of the temple also continued.⁵³ This is well attested by the apocalyptic literature in which the destruction of the Second Temple was conceptualised as part of Israel's continual judgement for failing to keep the Torah (e.g., 2 Bar. 1:1-5; 4:1-7; 4 Ezra 7:17-25, 70-74; 9:26-37). The connection between Torah transgression and exile became so much the standard assumption that it even raised the issue of theodicy. The thinking was that even though Israel transgressed the Torah, other nations, which are currently prospering, surely did much worse things than Israel (e.g., 4 Ezra 3:28-36; 5:28-30).⁵⁴ Torah transgression, however, was no longer linked with the exile only, rather it also became the determining factor of who (both individuals and nations)⁵⁵ would receive eschatological judgement or reward (cf. 2 Bar. 45:2; 48:47; 76:5; 4 Ezra 9:37).⁵⁶

To be more precise, for many Second Temple Jews, especially sectarians, restoration from exile's perpetuating effects became intrinsically intertwined with

52 Blanton, "Saved by Obedience," 403.

53 Even Adam is reimagined in the Second Temple period as having the city of Jerusalem taken away from him on account of transgressing "commandments" (2 Bar. 4:3).

54 For further discussion of this kind of questioning of God in the Second Temple period, see Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 92–93, and Matthias Henze, "Apocalypse and Torah in Ancient Judaism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 318. This is not the place, however, to discuss the different solutions Second Temple authors offered to this question. Rather I wish to point out that the logic behind questioning God's judgement towards Israel betrays the assumption that Torah transgression equals exilic judgement.

55 See Henze, "Apocalypse and Torah in Ancient Judaism," 319–320; Sanders, "The Exile and Canon Formation," 54–58; and Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 97–98. Cohen (page 94) notes, however, that sectarian literature is often too vague to establish a clear distinction between national and sectarian salvation.

56 Henze, "Apocalypse and Torah in Ancient Judaism," 322–323. Frederick James Murphy, *The Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch*, SBLDS 78 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 9, notes that 2 Baruch interprets the traditional Deuteronomic pattern of Israel being rewarded with earthly prosperity and longevity by making their blessing eternal life in the coming eschatological world.

eschatological hope.⁵⁷ While failing to keep the Torah (i.e., sinning) was associated with bringing the judgement of exile, repentance through obedience to the Torah became a necessity (amongst other things) if exile was going to end and eschatological restoration to begin (2 Bar. 77:6; 78:7; 84:2; 85:4; cf. Zech 1:1-6).⁵⁸ This concept seems to have its origin in the Deuteronomic pattern of disobedience, judgement, repentance, and return/restoration.⁵⁹ It is clear that as the Torah grew in prominence during the Second Temple period, it did so in terms of Jews trying to restore divine-human relations in the midst of the continuing rupture caused by exile's destruction: disobedience caused the exilic destruction and repentant obedience was linked with restoring Israel eschatologically.

Although obedience/disobedience was associated with causing/exacerbating/perpetuating or ending the exile, distinguishing between those who were following the Torah correctly or those who were transgressing it became a point of debate among Jews during the Second Temple period. As Schiffman states, “because the Torah text itself did not provide full guidance about how to live as a Jew but left

57 Schiffman, “The Concept of Restoration,” 220–221.

58 As David E. Aune and Eric Stewart, “From the Idealized Past to the Imaginary Future: Eschatological Restoration in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature,” in Scott, *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, 177, state, “in both [i.e., 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch], the necessity of obeying the law of God is essential if Judaism is to regain what she has lost.” Concerning this idea in 2 Baruch, see John F. Hobbs, “The Summing Up of History in 2 Baruch,” *JQR* 89/1–2 (1998): 62–63. Obedience and restoration function slightly differently in 4 Ezra. The eschaton cannot be hurried, but one's fate within the eschaton is contingent upon their obedience to the Torah. Similarly, George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 294, states, “as the age moves towards its end ... God's people are called to faith and obedience while they await the glory of the new Zion.”

59 Cf. Deut 28; 2 Kgs 17; 2 Chr 6:36–39; Dan 9:4–19; Ezra 9:6–15; Neh 1:5–11; 9:13–37. Collins, *Daniel*, 349–350, states, “Daniel's prayer [9:3–19] is of a type familiar in post-exilic Jewish literature: compare Ezra 9:6–15; Neh 1:5–11; 9:5–37; Psalm 79; Bar 1:15–3:8; and the *Prayer of Azariah* and the *Words of the Heavenly Luminaries* from Qumran. All these prayers are characterized by a strongly Deuteronomic theology. They all involve a confession of Israel's sin and affirmation of God's justice and appeal for mercy, not because of Israel's merit but for God's own sake.” Concerning these Deuteronomic themes in 2 Kgs 17, see Gwilym H. Jones, *1 Kings 17:1–2 Kings 25:30*, NCB 2 (Grand Rapids, MI; London: Eerdmans; Marshall, Morgan, and Scott Publishing, 1984), 542–543; for 2 Chr 6:36–39, see Ralph W. Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary*, ed. Paul D. Hanson, Hermineia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 97; and for Ezra 9:6–15 and Neh 1:5–11; 9:13–37, see Mark A. Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 53; and H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC 16 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 134, 172, 314–316.

much open to interpretation, supplementary laws had to be developed.”⁶⁰ Therefore, even though all Jewish groups viewed the Torah as authoritative and its adherence obligatory to follow, interpretation of its particular precepts were a disputed matter, often resulting in the formation of “sectarian groups.”⁶¹

Torah interpretation during the Second Temple period was intrinsically related to a desire to be faithful to God in a time of exile, the need for repentance, eschatological hopes, and sectarian debates. Craig A. Evans sums this up helpfully as he states,

Although one encounters differences in detail, a fairly consistent pattern emerges. Many Jews during the intertestamental period believed that the exile perdured. Most obviously, the exile was evident in the dispersion of the Jewish people and in the continuing foreign domination of Israel. Less obviously, the exile was evident in the failure on the part of many Jews to obey the Law. Just exactly what was entailed in obedience to the Law was itself a matter of dispute; and many groups and individuals were eager to make their views known.⁶²

We have now come full circle and we can more clearly discern the intersection between Torah interpretation as a natural occurrence and necessity for a limited and archaic law code and Najman's two concepts. Matthean scholars, especially *intra muros* scholars, are right to note that the Torah was interpreted diversely in the Second Temple period, especially since the Torah is ambiguous and even silent concerning many issues. But these scholars fail to situate this phenomenon within a larger Second Temple Jewish framework of Torah interpretation. To be sure,

60 Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran*, JPS 5755 (Philadelphia; Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 246.

61 Meier, *Law and Love*, 31. However, Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 122-123, notes that even though sectarians often cite legal matters as their reason for separation, the actual cause probably finds its origins in some deep-seated grievances. Regardless, an argument over how to interpret the Torah was the battle ground they chose to state what was of critical importance to their identity and for faithfully following God. In true Deuteronomic thinking, everything hinged on following the Torah. How to follow it was a matter of dispute.

62 Craig A. Evans, “Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the Gospels,” in Scott, *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, 316.

competition between sectarian groups is part of the equation. It is also likely that several of these groups were vying for followers and control. But Torah interpretation cannot be reduced to a mere strategy for outdoing one's intra-Jewish opponents. What lies behind such pursuits of control and influence?

It is here that the larger concepts of the survival of divine encounter and revelation inflected by destruction help set the phenomenon of Torah interpretation and concomitant sectarian debates within a matrix that better represents the hopes and concerns of the Second Temple Jewish psyche. Indeed, the phenomenon's impetus and many sectarians' tacit reasons for adamantly arguing for their variant approach to the Torah lies in a desire to follow faithfully the demands of Yahweh in the midst of perpetuating destruction caused by the exile in order to enter into Yahweh's blessing; be it on a national/individual level or be it an earthly/eschatological blessing. Najman's concepts help explain the theological thought process that accompanies the material causality (i.e., the natural limitation of scope and archaism of the Torah) of the phenomenon of Torah interpretation. This is the undercurrent of Torah interpretation, if you will, the unseen molten currents of magma that shift the plate tectonics of Torah interpretation. This is also the best context for understanding Matthew's own interpretation of the Torah. As will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapter, Matthew reflects many hopes and concerns that are common to innovators of the Torah in the Second Temple period and his own interpretation of the Torah is intrinsically intertwined with these issues. In chapters 3, 4 and 5 we will examine the strategies Matthew uses to authenticate authoritatively an approach to Torah around Jesus of Nazareth and his teachings. But in our next chapter we will consider how Matthew's circumstance for interpretation of the Torah fits within the Second Temple milieu of Torah interpretation, that is, an environment that saw a blossoming of attempts, through a diversity of strategies, to encounter the divine while continually being inflected and transformed by a consciousness of the destruction caused by the exile.⁶³

63 As Neusner, "Exile and Return as the History of Judaism," 224, states, "because the Mosaic Torah's interpretation of the diverse experiences of the Israelites after the destruction of the

Lastly, another important observation relevant for Matthean studies may be drawn from this framework of Torah interpretation in Second Temple Judaism: this framework is not one in which tradition is reaching a point of solidification, but one in which tradition grows. Here I prefer the idea of growth rather than textual instability. Scriptural tradition, of course, during the Second Temple period may not have enjoyed the kind of “stability” it gained during the age of canonisation, but by no means was the interpretation of textual tradition baseless. There was an understanding of the past, albeit one that was constantly being redacted and reimagined according to the views of the group that was writing, and fragments of that past were, as Najman suggests, “retrieved” through the crucible of the exile and adapted for the future. To be sure, on the one hand, there was what we might think of from a modern perspective as instability of textual tradition, but, on the other hand, continuity was also created as new revelation grew out of the fragments of older revelation. Authors participating in Torah interpretation employed numerous strategies to create continuity between fragments from the past and their changed or rather adjusted (inflected) approaches to the Torah. A specific set of strategies that these authors used to create continuity with fragments of the past will be examined in chapter 3. For now, I wish to emphasise that the framework in which Second Temple texts interpreted the Torah was one of growing tradition and revelation.⁶⁴ In this framework, therefore, these many texts that interpret the Torah, elaborately in many instances, can be viewed as a form of divine encounter's survival through the mode of sacred scripture writing, rather than breaking the Mosaic Torah. Indeed, even though the five books of Moses became secure and established as an authority and the Torah

Temple in 586 invoked ... the categories of exile and return, so construction as paradigmatic the experience of only a minority of the families of the Jews ... through the formation of the Pentateuch ... the events from 586 to 450 BCE, became for all time to come the generative and definitive pattern of meaning. Consequently, whether or not the paradigm precipitated dissonance with their actual circumstances, Jews in diverse settings have constructed their worlds, that is, shaped their identification, in accord with that one, generative model. They therefore have perpetually rehearsed that human experience imagined by the original authorship of the Torah in the time of Ezra. That pattern accordingly was not merely preserved and perpetuated; it precipitated and provoked its own replication in age succeeding age.”

64 For a thorough investigation of how Second Temple authors added to, participated in, and continued sacred writing; see Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination*.

par excellence in the Second Temple period, the Mosaic Torah was still fluid and malleable and, therefore, susceptible to addition and growth.⁶⁵ Within this framework, we can interpret the Matthean Jesus' radical interpretations of the Torah, not as breaking or doing away with it, but as contributing to the growth of the malleable Sinaitic revelation codified in the Torah.⁶⁶

1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have sought to understand better the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period in order to create a context for analysing Matthew's participation in it. We have tried to understand how authors in the Second Temple period reverence the Torah as an authority while simultaneously changing it, paradoxical as this may seem to the modern eye. Moreover, since this is an issue that continues to generate debate in Matthean scholarship, we thought it insufficient to note simply that Matthew's reverence and simultaneous interpretation of the Torah is typical in the Second Temple period. We sought to understand the deeper logic and theological rationale behind the phenomenon, rather than simply noting the natural consequences of needing to change a codified law.

The chapter began by examining the phenomenon of Torah interpretation as generally as possible. It was noted that interpretation of ideas, at some level, is an inevitable consequence of transmission, even when those doing the transmission revere the text and seek to preserve it. However, it was noted that this act was never arbitrary. Rather, it was done with the goal of constructing a communal identity through establishing continuity (or just connecting) with the past. These general observations were then applied more specifically in a Second Temple Jewish

65 So Meier, *Law and Love*, 30-32, who notes four factors that suggest the Mosaic Torah was not static, but fluid during the first century C. E. They are as follows: 1) there were different versions of the Torah, including fragments from Qumran, the Samaritan version, and Greek versions commonly referred to as the Septuagint proofs; 2) various groups rewrote pentateuchal stories and laws; 3) the fact that the Torah was limited in scope and therefore required interpretation; and 4) that different groups advocated legal practices that went beyond the Torah.

66 Similarly, Brooke, "Biblical Interpretation at Qumran," 314, states, "the Qumran covenanters thought of themselves as participating in the process of revelation itself."

framework. Here Hindy Najman's two concepts—survival of divine encounter and revelation inflected by destruction—were used to better understand the framework in which Torah interpretation took place. It was noted that during the Second Temple period the Jewish people continued to attempt to encounter the divine in a multitude of ways, but in a manner that was recast and transformed by the perpetuating rupture of exile's destruction. Texts concerning the Torah were part of this larger framework. Therefore, the Torah was not interpreted only to account for new contexts, rather this process was intrinsically intertwined with reconciling the apparent and continuing consequences caused by the exile, and many Second Temple Jews viewed it as playing a critical part in the restoration of divine encounter and eschatological blessings and judgements.

Torah interpretation is seen, within this framework, as a dynamic phenomenon in which traditions concerning the Torah are growing vibrantly. With a fluid and malleable tradition, different groups connect their interpretations of the Torah using various writing strategies. These strategies will be the subject of subsequent chapters. Such an influx of different approaches was, of course, accompanied by debate between various sectarian groups. When considering the connection between Torah observance and eschatological judgement, it becomes all the more clear why debate about Torah interpretation was such a serious matter. As Shaye J. D. Cohen notes, “the cutting edge of ancient Jewish sectarianism was not theology but law.”⁶⁷ We will now examine Matthew's Gospel and see how Torah interpretation is just as serious a matter to Matthew and the message of his Gospel.

67 Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 123.

CHAPTER 2: MATTHEW'S GOSPEL INFLECTED BY DESTRUCTION

Matthew's interpretation of law shows the contours of his reform program for Judaism, a program which sought to neutralize the powerful and ultimately successful program of the early rabbis. Matthew and his competitors sought to meet the needs of the Jewish community for a coherent world view and a concrete way of life responsive to the loss of political autonomy and the Temple as symbolic center. The interpretations of biblical and traditional customs, norms, rules, and laws proposed by Matthew and his opponents sought to give social shape to the community and, more important, to mirror accurately God's will for Israel in a critical and confused time.¹

Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated how the two concepts of survival of divine encounter and revelation inflected by destruction constitute a conceptual framework for understanding the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period. Therein, Torah interpretation through the medium of written texts was but one of many ways Jews sought to encounter the divine in wake of the ongoing destruction and the transformation of Israel's more traditional modes of relating to Yahweh. Moreover, these texts were inflected by destruction in the sense that their message and significance was transformed by it. Now, if Matthew shares similar concerns as other Second Temple and late first-century texts regarding the restoration of divine encounter in the wake of destruction, then we might further assume that Matthew's presentation of Jesus' radical teaching is better articulated as interpreting the Torah for a new context rather than in terms of simply surpassing the Torah. Moreover, if Matthew's Gospel has itself been inflected by exile's continuing destruction then it is likely that he used writing strategies similar to other texts that similarly interpreted the Torah.

This chapter will argue that the destruction Israel has and continues to face matters greatly to Matthew and form the matrix in which he understands the significance of Jesus' Davidic-messianic ministry to Israel. Indeed, as a primary

1 Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 125.

component of his ministry, Jesus' teaching about the Torah plays a significant role in the survival of divine encounter for his audience. Consequently, Matthew's interpretation of the Torah through Jesus' teachings offers his audience a way to faithfully follow God (as an alternative to the way offered by his Pharisaic rivals) in light of the destruction that has come upon Israel. According to Matthew, knowing Jesus and his teachings are the only way to know God the Father (Matt 11:25–30) and practising Jesus' teachings offers refuge from eschatological judgement (Matt 7:24–27).

Matthew's Gospel may not be a treatise or commentary on the Torah, but, by giving great prominence to Jesus' teaching, Matthew reveals his interpretation of significant parts of the Torah.² Matthew even profiles five discourses in his Gospel devoted to Jesus' teachings (i.e., Matt 5:2–7:29; 10:5–11:1; 13:1–53; 18:1–19:1; 24:2–26:1), which, given their catechetical nature, suggests that Matthew's text not only declared Jesus' teaching as the proper way to follow God but also provided examples of that teaching to learn and follow.³

Matthew's depiction of Jesus' teaching ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel is inflected by two major episodes of destruction in Israel's history: the Babylonian deportation (i.e., the exile) and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. With regard to the Babylonian deportation, Matthew depicts Jesus' ministry to Israel as the fulfilment of expectations for restoration developed in the Second Temple period. As for the destruction of the Second Temple, Matthew depicts the temple as defiled, abandoned by God, and doomed to destruction until the time of full restoration. Matthew blames this defilement and imminent destruction of the temple on the scribes and Pharisees for their false Torah instruction that misleads people and their shedding of innocent blood on the altar. This blame both delegitimises the scribes and Pharisees' approach to Torah and, by contrast, legitimises Jesus' interpretation of the Torah as the proper way to follow God.

2 Ibid., 125–126.

3 So Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 44–45.

Matthew's interaction with these two episodes of destruction (i.e., the Babylonian exile and the destitution of the Second Temple) demonstrate his Second Temple Jewish framework for connecting Torah disobedience with divine wrath and Torah obedience with salvation. Within this framework the Matthean Jesus' radical teaching on the Torah can be properly contextualised as an example of the phenomenon of Torah interpretation. Indeed, the Matthean Jesus' radical teaching is not intended to shatter the Second Temple framework by surpassing the Torah; rather, it is meant to reorient this framework concerning Torah obedience/disobedience around Jesus' teaching.

This chapter will begin with an overview of Matthew's attitude towards Israel in order to establish that Matthew is indeed concerned with the destruction Israel has faced. Next, Matthew's incorporation of the Babylonian exile into his story of Jesus will be examined to understand how he views Jesus' ministry as the restoration from this destruction. Finally, we will examine the relationship between Jesus' teaching, particularly the programmatic statement on the Torah, and the defilement and pronounced destruction of the Second Temple.

2.1 Matthew and Israel

Many in Matthean scholarship have maintained the view, or some variation thereof, that Matthew intends the church with its mission to the gentiles to replace both Israel and the mission to Israel (Matt 28:19–20).⁴ This manner of synthesis of Matthew's two mission horizons (compare Matt 10:5–6, 23 and 28:19–20) casts serious doubt on the idea that Matthew is concerned about the destruction Israel has faced and restoring them to their God. In this kind of synthesis, destruction would have inflected Matthew's writing in terms of providing Matthew with grounds for rejection and moving on from Israel, rather than providing Israel a faithful way through the

4 For an overview of scholarly explanations of these two missions, see Élian Cuvillier, "Particularisme et universalisme chez Matthieu: quelques hypothèses à l'épreuve du texte," *Bib* 78/4 (1997): 481–489.

destruction. However, Matthew's emphatic depiction of Jesus' ministry as the Davidic-messianic shepherd to Israel renders this view contradictory at best.

George W. E. Nickelsburg offers a prime example of the contradiction inherent in this view. Nickelsburg acknowledges that Matthew is the most Jewish of all the Gospels and that he presents Jesus as a Davidic Messiah who fulfils God's promises in the Prophets and is sent specifically to Israel. Nevertheless, he then states that, since Jesus was rejected, Israel has been stripped of its status as God's people, being replaced by the church, and the burning of Jerusalem is their punishment for this sin.⁵ Nickelsburg grounds the idea of *all* of Israel being rejected and coming under judgement on a specific interpretation of certain texts (Matt 21:28–22:10; 27:25). These interpretations I disagree with, but, those texts notwithstanding, it appears contradictory on the face of it that Jesus stands as the fulfilment of the promises from Israel's prophets, as Nickelsburg maintains, and at the same time Israel is not his people. Indeed, the very prophecy Jesus fulfils tells us otherwise (Matt 2:6).⁶

Nickelsburg tries to support his position further by suggesting that Matthew does not, as other apocalyptic contemporaries (e.g., 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra), rehearse a lament, raise the issue of theodicy, hope for restoration and reconstruction, or “presume at the very least the continued existence of the Jews as God's people.”⁷ Rather, Nickelsburg insists, Matthew envisions a future with a “new” people⁸ of God and an apocalyptic hope in Jesus' return as the exalted Son of Man.⁹ There are, of course, significant differences between Matthew and other contemporary Jewish works, the prominent difference being Matthew's depiction of Jesus as the one through whom Israel's hope and relationship to God are oriented, but this does not

5 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 304.

6 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:56, state, “to a first-century Jew [Matt 2:6] would have conjured up the eschatological hope for Israel's restoration, the re-establishment of the twelve tribes.”

7 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 304.

8 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 8, notes that Matthew never uses the terms “new Israel” or “true Israel.” It should at least be questioned then if these designations “adequately render Matthew's own perspective.”

9 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 304.

drive the conclusion that Matthew is done with Israel or that he envisions an eschatological future in a non-Jewish way. Many of the conclusions Nickelsburg draws about Matthew's relationship with Judaism are not supported by the text. Jesus does in fact offer a lament for Jerusalem (Matt 23:37–39), he envisions future restoration for Israel (Matt 19:28), and Israel remains a place for his disciples to minister until the end of time (Matt 10:23; hence, they are still God's people).¹⁰ In addition to these notations, it makes no sense to suggest that an eschatology that centres around Jesus as the exalted Son of Man is an indication that Matthew does not hope in a future for Israel. The Son of Man itself is a Second Temple Jewish concept of eschatological hope.¹¹ What could be a more Second Temple Jewish vision of the future than the coming of the Son of Man and the establishment of God's kingdom (cf. Matt 25:31–46)?¹² Matthew thinks it is and understands Jesus' parousia in Second Temple Jewish terms. Indeed, according to Matthew, when the renewal of the age and the enthroning of the Son of Man take place, the *twelve* disciples will sit on thrones and judge the *twelve* tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 11.66).¹³ Thus, Nickelsburg's evidence contradicts his claim. Matthew is still concerned for Israel and its hopes of restoration. Matthew's depiction of Jesus' earthly ministry and eschatological return fully demonstrates this.

10 To be sure, Matthew never depicts a long dialogue with God concerning theodicy and his justification for allowing the temple to be destroyed, but this is partly an issue of genre. Matthew's Gospel has apocalyptic qualities, but it is not an apocalypse like Daniel, 4 Ezra, or 2 Baruch, in which a theodicy argument with God is a common trope. Rather, Matthew's Gospel is a *βίβλος*. Even so, Matthew does not let the issue of the temple's destruction go unaccounted for. He provides a reason why wrath was brought upon it. See section 2.3b below.

11 John J. Collins, "Pre-Christian Jewish Messianism: An Overview," in *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 16–18. For further discussion of the association between Davidic messianic hopes and expectations and the Son of Man, see William Horbury, *Messianism Among Jews and Christians: Biblical and Historical Studies*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 153–182.

12 See Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History*, (London: SPCK, 2010), 199–204, who argues that the "kingdom of God/heaven" in the Synoptic Gospels refers not only to a reign, but, more often than not, to an actual place/realm "and a time yet to come in which God will reign supreme (page 201)." So Matthew may not speak of a new temple specifically but he still envisions a restored kingdom. For further discussion of Matthew's preference of "kingdom of heaven" over the "kingdom of God," see Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

13 John P. Meier, "Jesus, The Twelve and the Restoration of Israel," in Scott, *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, 366.

Matthias Konradt, in his seminal work *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew*, provides an alternative synthesis and demonstrates that the risen Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19–20) does not negate Jesus' Davidic-messianic ministry to the house of Israel (Matt 10:5–6, 23). Rather, these two mission horizons correspond to Matthew's “gradual or phased disclosure of Jesus' identity and significance.”¹⁴ That is to say, these two missions relate to Christology.¹⁵ While some early Christian writings describe Jesus the *Son of David* being adopted as the *Son of God* at his resurrection (e.g., Rom 1:3–4; Acts 2:29–36), Matthew has Jesus the Son of God (Matt 2:15; 3:17) “adopted” into David's family through Joseph the husband of Jesus' mother (Matt 1:16, 18, 20). In this manner, the Son of God enters Israel's history as the Son of David in order to fulfil Israel's hopes and expectations for a Davidic shepherd.¹⁶ As the Son of David, Jesus is sent to Israel *only* and his Davidic ministry is restricted specifically to shepherding the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 2:6; 10:5–6; 15:22).¹⁷ Matthew, however, strategically uses three key narratives (Matt 8:5–13; 28–34; 15:21–28) and two fulfilment quotations (Matt 4:14–16; 12:17–21) to situate “Jesus' ministry to Israel within a universalistic perspective on a secondary level of understanding, thus showing that the fulfillment of the promise of salvation for the nations is bound to the ministry of Israel.”¹⁸ In other words, the salvation that the gentiles are allowed to participate in is a salvation that was made known in Israel¹⁹ and “is connected with the salvific death, resurrection, and exaltation of the *Son of God*.”²⁰ As the risen Son of God with full authority on heaven and earth (Matt 28:18), Jesus is in a position to reach out to the

14 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 14.

15 For further explanation, see *ibid.*, 265–326.

16 For Konradt's examination of Jesus' ministry to Israel, see *ibid.*, 17–88. Here Konradt demonstrates that Matthew gives a Davidic depiction of Jesus' ministry of teaching and healing to Israel and, therefore, reveals his role as Son of David.

17 Those in need of Jesus' Davidic shepherding refer to him as the Son of David (Matt 9:27; 20:30–31; cf. 21:9, 15). Also, in Matthew 15:22 the Canaanite woman, who is in need of mercy, calls Jesus the Son of David. Jesus' initial refusal demonstrates that his healing and shepherding ministry is intended for the children of Israel, who have been without a shepherd.

18 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 309.

19 *Ibid.*, 324.

20 *Ibid.*

gentiles. This sets the mission to the gentiles in a Jewish restoration schema, rather than depicting a break from Jewish hope. Jesus' two mission horizons, therefore, are integrated and linked with Jesus' Christology, rather than pitted one against the other. Moreover, there is precedent for the involvement of gentiles, at some level, in exilic/post-exilic texts that envision Israel's restoration (see section 2.2 below) so there is no *a priori* reason to consider the Matthean mission to the gentiles as a break from an eschatology of Israel's restoration. Rather, the opposite conclusion is the case. Indeed, even though there are two missions in Matthew, ultimately both Israel and the gentiles will be brought before Jesus' eschatological throne. Israel will be judged under the thrones of the twelve disciples in the restored eschatological kingdom (Matt 19:28) and the gentiles will be gathered before and judged by Jesus the Son of Man (Matt 25:31–46).

In this reading, the church is not Israel's replacement, a special community within Israel, or even a restored portion of Israel that will be gathered in the eschaton. Rather, with these two mission horizons, Matthew envisions the church as “the community of salvation that comes into existence in the framework of the eschatological gathering or restitution of the people of God, as well as in the framework of the mission to the Gentiles.”²¹ The extension of salvation to the gentiles, therefore, is within a Jewish eschatological framework, *not* a denial and replacement of that framework.²²

Also, Jesus' harsh statements of judgement do not cancel this eschatological project of restoration as Nickelsburg and others suggest. Konradt shows that texts commonly used to support the view that Jesus rejects Israel wholesale say no such thing (e.g., Matt 21:28–22:10; 27:25). Rather, Matthew is careful *not* to indict Israel as a whole, but only Israel's leadership, the people they have coerced to join them, and the city of Jerusalem (Jerusalem's judgement, however, is not permanent, Matt

21 Ibid., 379.

22 As Konradt, *ibid.*, 365, states, “Judaism constitutes the primary context for the life of the Matthean community.”

23:39).²³ The crowds are still open to persuasion and they remain part of the harvest until the end of time (Matt 10:23).

Read in this manner, Matthew's depiction of Jesus' ministry as the Davidic-messianic shepherd to the lost sheep of the house of Israel is not a bait and switch, or even a foil to move his audience onwards to the real mission intended for the gentiles. Matthew is deeply concerned with the destruction Israel has faced, so much so that he depicts the significance of Jesus' ministry laden in these terms. Now, assuming Matthew's restorative concerns for Israel are both genuine and still in effect, we will consider more precisely how his depiction of Jesus' restorative Davidic-messianic ministry has been inflected by both the exile and the destruction of the Second Temple.

2.2 Jesus' Ministry and his Exilic Restoration of Israel

Joel Kennedy states that “the story of Israel is vitally important for Matthew, and having provided the matrix from which Messiah has arisen, Matthew goes on to tell the story of Jesus in continuity with Israel's story and as the proper conclusion to it.”²⁴ But what was Israel's story and what stage in that story does Matthew understand Jesus to have made his entrance? Moreover, what is his stated purpose in this story? Answering these questions is important for understanding how Matthew's Gospel is inflected by the destruction Israel has faced.

Matthew makes Jesus' mission explicate at the announcement of Jesus' birth: there the Angel of the Lord tells Joseph that Jesus will save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). Matthew also states that, as Jesus' birth fulfils Isaiah 7:14, Jesus embodies God's presence (Ἐμμανουήλ) among his people (Matt 1:23). Matthew thereby contextualises Jesus' birth around Israel's need for salvation from sins and

23 For Konradt's arguments, see *ibid.*, 167–264. For a discussion of Matt 23:39 and Jerusalem's fate, see pages 234–238. Similarly, Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 270–326.

24 Joel Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel: Use of Israel's History in Matthew 1:1–4:11*, WUNT 2/257 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 99–100. See also Patrick J. Hartin, “Ethics in the Letters of James, the Gospel of Matthew, and the Didache: Their Place in Early Christian Literature,” in Sandt and Zangenberg, *Matthew, James, Didache*, 293.

his life mission is depicted as the solution to this need: Jesus will save his people from their sins and, as a manifestation of God's presence, he restores the communion between God and his people. But what are the sins of Jesus' people and how does Jesus save them from their sins?

Thomas R. Blanton has argued that, in consideration of important strands of Second Temple Jewish literature, "sin" should be defined in Matthew's Gospel as transgression of the Torah's stipulations.²⁵ In line with this reasoning, Blanton has demonstrated that Jesus has three modes for saving people from their sins in Matthew's Gospel: 1) salvation through Torah teaching, 2) healing, and 3) his death on the cross.²⁶ Jesus' advocacy of Torah observance is the most substantial and developed mode of salvation in the Gospel and it is strategically placed throughout the narrative.²⁷ Therefore, according to Blanton, Jesus accomplishes the declared mission of salvation from sins in Matt 1:21 "in large part by calling [those who listen to him] to pursue the 'better righteousness' that may be obtained only by those who scrupulously observe the Torah."²⁸ Blanton's synthesis of the modes of salvation in Matthew's Gospel is, of course, open to debate, but he is right to emphasise that Torah instruction is a primary component of Jesus' salvific ministry to Israel. Blanton's assessment aligns well with Matthew's description of the people of Israel as sheep without a shepherd as well as being harassed (ἐσκυλμένοι) and helpless (ἐρριμμένοι; Matt 9:36).²⁹ Israel's past and current leadership has failed the people and contributed to their current duress.³⁰ Jesus, therefore, enters Israel's story at a stage in which the people need a shepherd to save them and heal their wounds, one who can teach them the right way to follow God (Matt 2:6). Consequently, healing and teaching are the primary components of Jesus' Davidic-messianic ministry to the

25 Blanton, "Saved by Obedience," 394. See also Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 54–55.

26 Blanton, "Saved by Obedience," 412.

27 Ibid.; c.f. Matt 5:17–20; 23:1–3; 28:19–20.

28 Ibid., 413.

29 Matt 9:36 appears to be referencing Num 27:17, which concerns leadership in Israel.

30 Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 91.

people of Israel (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 11:1–6; 21:14, 23). Thus, Matthew depicts Jesus' life and ministry, including Jesus' teaching, as an act of God's salvation for Israel.

Matthew, however, also frames Jesus' ministry to Israel and the people's desperate condition within the larger history of Israel. Matthew begins his Gospel with Jesus' genealogy, which concludes with a summary that divides into three epochs, each consisting of fourteen generations (Matt 1:17). The epochs in turn are marked by significant figures or periods within Israel's history (i.e., Abraham, David, and the Babylonian deportation), which indicates that Jesus' genealogy also serves as an account of Israel's history.³¹ With the genealogy's threefold division and explicit reference to the number of fourteen generations, Matthew conveys the idea that Israel's history is not random, but rather that an organised divine plan overlies it and that this plan leads to Jesus the Davidic Messiah (14 = David).³²

Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ ἀπὸ Ἀβραὰμ ἕως Δαυὶδ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ Δαυὶδ ἕως τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες.

Thus, all the generations from Abraham until David were fourteen generations, and from David until the Babylonian deportation were fourteen

31 As Luz, *Matthew*, 1:83, states, “the purpose of the genealogy is not only to legitimate Jesus as the Messiah but at the same time to recall the entire history of the people of God, Israel.” See also Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 25; and Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 30. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 78, refers to the genealogical boundary markers as “the defining periods of Israel's history.”

32 $d + w + d + = 4 + 6 + 4 = 14$. Luz, *Matthew*, 1:85. That Matthew's genealogy is more than a list of names, but an outline of Israel's history and God's divine plan, see Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 65, who notes that “various writers thought of history as a series of eras, with the present as a stage close to the final or new era that God would introduce. Daniel 2 and 7 know four eras plus one. 1 *Enoch* has ten periods (93:1–10; 91:12–17). 2 *Baruch* has twelve eras plus two (2 Bar. 27, 53–74). The use of three groups of fourteen generations emphasizes God's sovereign control over human history. With Jesus, God's new creation begins to dawn.” Therefore, in light of other Second Temple writings that use phases or eras of history that lead to consummation in God's action, it seems appropriate to understand Matthew as evoking a message or making a statement with the phases he listed, rather than simply listing common bench marks in Israel's history. See also Theodore H. Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), 3, who states, “we must rather interpret the genealogy along other lines. It is intended to give us the place of Jesus in world-history, and we shall be on safer ground if we detect in it a flavour of allegory.”

generations, and from the Babylonian deportation until the Messiah were fourteen generations. (Matt 1:17)

Matthew's placement of the Babylonian deportation as the stage before the Messiah is significant to his depiction of Jesus' ministry of saving his people from their sins. Indeed, as discussed above, the people's sins refers to their Torah infidelity (cf. Matt 3:6), which was perceived of by many in the Second Temple period as the cause of exile and its continuing effects (cf. Ezek 10:18–19; 11:22–23).³³ In this light, Second Temple Jewish rationale would drive the conclusion that the people of Israel are in a state of sin in between the periods of exile and God's redemption.³⁴ Thus, by highlighting the Babylonian deportation as one of the watershed moments in Israel's history, and as the stage immediately preceding the Messiah, Matthew situates and frames Jesus' ministry to save his people from their sins as the beginning of God's restoration of Israel from the destruction of exile.

Brant Pitre has demonstrated that connecting the end of exile and Israel's restoration with the coming of a messianic figure is common in (post)exilic and Second Temple writing. There the exile was often viewed as a stage of tribulation preceding a period of great tribulation that was then relieved by God or his agent the Messiah³⁵ restoring Israel (e.g., Isa 11:10–16; Jer 23:5–8; Ezek 37:15–28; 4QpIsa161).³⁶ Matthew articulates his message of Jesus precisely within such a framework. Specifically, exile is noted as a period prior to the coming of the Messiah

33 Blanton, "Saved by Obedience," 397, states, "in Matthew's Jewish milieu, sin was viewed as affecting the proximity between humans and Israel's God: it could either drive away Israel's deity from the people, or it could have the opposite effect of eliciting the presence of that deity in judgement." Note how the people getting baptised by John are confessing their sins in preparation for the Lord, his kingdom, and imminent judgment (Matt 3:1–12). See also Ruenesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 76.

34 As Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:187, state, "although the apocalypses of Judaism contain several different outlines of history, Dan. 9.24–7; 1 En. 93.3–10; 91:12–17; and 2 Bar. 67:1–74 are at one in placing the epoch of the exile immediately before the epoch of redemption. This is significant because Mt. 1.2–17 divides history into periods and places the appearance of Jesus at the end of the exilic era. So the time of the Messiah's birth admirably falls in line with a presumably common eschatological calendar."

35 Often an eschatological deliverer figure who is a priest, prophet, king, or any combination of these.

36 See survey of texts in Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile*, 41–130. See also Collins, "Pre-Christian Jewish Messianism," 1–2, 8–16.

(Matt 1:17), and then Jesus' resurrection and sending of his disciples to all nations sets in motion the great tribulation (Matt 24:21–22) which is alleviated with the renewal of the age, the coming of the Son of Man, and the final judgement (Matt 24–25).

To be sure, the exile is never again mentioned in the Gospel, but that is because Matthew does not tell that part of the story. Rather, he tells the next stage in the story, the stage of Jesus the Messiah and his ministry of salvation through healing, teaching, and the cross. The mention of exile is used to inform the context of Jesus' ministry as well as Matthew's depiction of it. According to Matthew, the context is that of Israel needing a shepherd, salvation from sins, and still awaiting the fulfilment of hopes developed in the post-exilic period.

Matthew's depiction of Jesus' ministry as bringing restoration to Israel will now be examined in order to flesh out the manner in which Matthew's revelation of Jesus and his depiction of Jesus' ministry is inflected by the destruction caused by exile.

2.2a Four Elements of Exilic Hope

The exile and exilic hope correlate with numerous interrelated themes in Second Temple literature (e.g., the kingdom of God, the coming of the Messiah, redemption, tribulation, restoration).³⁷ Similarly, Matthew draws on many of these themes and in so doing more than merely mentions the exile in passing, but uses it to help frame Jesus' Scripture fulfilling ministry. There was never a uniform way of describing restoration from the destruction of exile in exilic/post-exilic literature, but Pitre notes that several “key elements” are frequently incorporated in texts that hope for the end of exile and restoration. He lists four elements:

- i. The coming of a (Davidic) Messiah (i.e., an eschatological deliverer figure who is a priest, prophet, or king, or any combination of these).

³⁷ Alexander, “The Idea of ‘Continuing Exile,’” 1–2.

- ii. The depiction of the return from Exile in terms of a New Exodus.
- iii. The ingathering of both “Israel” and “Judah,” (i.e., all twelve tribes).
- iv. The impact of this restoration on the gentiles (e.g., Isa. 11:10–16; Jer 23:5–8; Ezek 37:15–28).³⁸

Exilic hope and restoration cannot be reduced or confined to these four elements, but they do provide a sufficient lens to identify the topic of exilic restoration in Second Temple texts. These elements will now be examined in Matthew's Gospel in order to determine how Matthew depicts Jesus' ministry of fulfilment in a framework of restoration from the Babylonian exile (Matt 1:17). This process will demonstrate, in part, how Matthew's story of Jesus has been inflected by the exilic destruction Israel never fully recovered from.

i. The coming of a Davidic Messiah

A Davidic Messiah is a key element of hope for the end of exile in Second Temple literature. David or some manifestation of his line (i.e., the Messiah) commonly appears in these texts as an agent in God's restoration of Israel's kingdom and ingathering of the exiled (e.g., Ezek 37:24).³⁹ Matthew also identifies Jesus as the Messiah and connects his coming with the exile (Matt 1:17).⁴⁰ Indeed, Matthew establishes Jesus' messianic status from the outset of the Gospel, like Mark, by assigning the epithet “Messiah” (Χριστός) to Jesus (Matt 1:1).⁴¹ But he also adds the phrase “Son of David,” which “makes clear that Matthew understood the epithet 'Christ' to mean 'Messiah of Israel.’”⁴² Here, from the outset of the Gospel, Matthew makes the important qualification that Jesus is not only the Messiah but he is also in

38 Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile*, 37–38. For a similar list see E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 279–303; see also Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 76.

39 See also, Dan 9:24–7; 1 En. 93:3–10; 91:12–17; and 2 Bar. 67:1–74.

40 So Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:187.

41 Gundry, *Matthew*, 13.

42 Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Messiah as Son of God in the Synoptic Gospels,” in Zetterholm, *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 28.

the line of David.⁴³ Matthew then rehearses Jesus' genealogy, drawing a direct link between David and Jesus, to show that the title “Son of David” is also familial (Matt 1:2–17). The importance of the Davidic qualification for Matthew is re-emphasised by the addition of “Son of David” to his sources in five other passages (Matt 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 21:9, 15).⁴⁴ Additionally, Matthew not only connects Jesus' father Joseph to David in the genealogy (Matt 1:16), but further emphasises Joseph/Jesus' Davidic connection when the Angel of the Lord addresses Joseph as “Son of David” (Matt 1:20). Finally, the royal Davidic aspect of Jesus' christological status is solidified by including the title “king” in reference to David (τὸν βασιλέα) in the genealogy (Matt 1:6). Jesus and David are the only names accompanied by a title in the genealogy (compare Matt 1:1, 16 and 1:6), thus drawing a kingly link between them.⁴⁵

The title Son of David does more than emphasises Jesus' kingly status and lineage. It also makes a critical theological statement regarding exilic hope. It was argued above that Jesus' genealogy also functions as a history of Israel. Far from random, this history follows an overarching divine plan leading to Jesus.⁴⁶ Using David as one of the watershed moments in this history of Israel guides the genealogy through a list of kings eventuating in the Babylonian exile (Matt 1:6–11). This genealogical trajectory conveys two theological points. First, in proper Deuteronomic fashion, the exile is linked with the reign of Judah's kings (e.g., 2 Kgs 17). Additionally, this manoeuvre simultaneously sets up the running theme in the Gospel

43 So Graham Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 65, “the term 'son of David' introduces the single most important point in the whole opening chapter: Jesus the Messiah-Christ comes from David's line.” Similarly, Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 16, “the point is to establish Jesus' authentic descent from “King David” (v. 6), from whose line Nathan promised David that the Messiah would come (2 Sam 7:13–14).” Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:156, note that the shortcomings of the non-Davidic Hasmoneans helped reinforce the idea that the Messiah would need to be in the line of David.

44 Ibid. If Matthew's community, not just Matthew himself, were familiar with Mark's Gospel, then perhaps Mark's infrequent references to David may have been a point of concern for Matthew's first readers.

45 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:174; and Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:11.

46 Luz, *Matthew*, 1:85. See also Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 3.

that the leading class in Israel have failed the people.⁴⁷ Hence, the description of people Jesus meets as “sheep without a shepherd” (Matt 9:36). The second theological point conveyed is that, since David's line led to the exile, David's throne has been vacant.⁴⁸ By connecting Jesus with David genealogically as well as with associated titles, Matthew is depicting Jesus as the one re-establishing David's throne from the ruin of exile.⁴⁹ In making these two points, Matthew is more than merely recounting Jesus' genealogy, he is explaining Jesus' advent and significance in light of exilic-Davidic hope.

ii. The Depiction of the Return from Exile in terms of a New Exodus

The next element in texts that concern exilic hope is the depiction of a return from exile as a “New Exodus,” that is, an entry into the land via the wilderness. The concept of an exodus experience was so foundational to the hope of restoration that it was used not only as a literary motif in post-exilic literature (e.g., Isa 40:3; 48:20–21; 55:12; Ezek 20:33–44; cf. Hos 2:14–15), but some Second Temple Jews also tried to re-enact episodes from Israel's exodus and entry into the land (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.97–99; *J.W.* 2.258–260).⁵⁰ Matthew also depicts restoration from exile in terms of a New Exodus. Like his source Mark (and Q),⁵¹ Matthew uses John the Baptist's preaching of repentance to create the motif of an eschatological desert preparation and return to

47 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 26.

48 The Maccabean kingdom is never mentioned, nor the Herodians, as far as Matthew is concerned David's line has yet to be fulfilled. As Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:156, state, “by the time of Jesus, the dominate, although not exclusive, Jewish expectation—no doubt reinforced by the shortcomings of the non-Davidic Hasmonians—was that the messianic king would be a son of David.”

49 *Ibid.*; David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NCB (Grand Rapids, MI; London: Eerdmans; Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1972), 75.

50 Evans, “Aspects of Exile and Restoration,” 300–305.

51 For further discussion of a New Exodus theme in Mark, see Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000). Matthew probably also drew from Q 3:2b–17. Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:286, note that “on the two-source theory some degree of Markan/Q overlap [in Matthew 3:1–12] must be postulated.”

the land in anticipation of the kingdom of heaven which is ushered in with Jesus' ministry.⁵²

Matthew attributes John's preaching to the fulfilment of Isaiah 40:3. In the context of Isaiah, this text is a message of comfort to exiles in Babylon, letting them know that "the highway is even now being prepared for Yahweh, who will soon return to the Land with his people."⁵³ Matthew reworks the context of the passage, now ascribing John the Baptist as the one who prepares the way and Jesus the Messiah as the one coming rather than Yahweh, but the exodus connotations have not been lost.⁵⁴ The placement of John in the wilderness (ἐρημος) certainly "suggests that the biblical prophets' promise of a new exodus was about to take place in Jesus."⁵⁵ Mark makes the connection between John the Baptist and the exodus a little more vivid by attaching a composite citation of Exodus 23:20 and Malachi 3:1 to Isaiah 40:30 (Mark 1:2–3). Matthew removes this composite citation from John the Baptist's opening scene, but this deletion does not indicate any desire to remove exodus connotations from John the Baptist. In fact, Matthew reaffirms John's role in the New Exodus by attributing the same composite citation to him later in the Gospel (Matt 11:10).⁵⁶ This strategy suggests Matthew was aware of the New Exodus motif present in his Markan source, but that he found Isaiah 40:3 sufficient on its own to establish the motif of a return from exile in a New Exodus fashion.⁵⁷

Although Matthew has inherited and implemented a New Exodus motif from Mark, he initiated the theme earlier in his own narrative. The element of a New Exodus first appears in the infancy stories in which many events in Jesus' life correspond to Moses' birth and life. These parallels will be examined more

52 So *ibid.*, 1:291, John's desert abode is indicative of "his eschatological orientation, for a return to the desert was widely anticipated as one of the end-time events. As happened in ancient times, so at the culmination a period in the wilderness would precede the redemption: and there would be a second entry in to the land."

53 *Ibid.*, 293.

54 *Ibid.*

55 Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 116.

56 Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 51.

57 Matthew also may have removed it from the Baptist's introduction scene because he wanted to correct Mark's attribution of the composite citation to Isaiah.

thoroughly in the next chapter, for now sufficed it to say that Matthew attributes Joseph's departure with his family from hiding in Egypt as the fulfilment of Hosea's prophecy concerning Israel's exodus (cf. Matt 2:15; Hos 11:1).⁵⁸ Here, Matthew understands the story of Jesus' infancy in terms of an exodus type experience similar to Israel's. As Markus Bockmuehl states, "the identification of Jesus with Israel is obvious, and clearly the implication is that Jesus' life and work constitute a new exodus, a new redemption for the people of God."⁵⁹ By weaving Moses and exodus motifs into Jesus' infancy stories, Matthew anticipates and further establishes the New Exodus theme in his Markan source (Matt 3:1–4).⁶⁰

Matthew also continues the exodus motif in his narrative after the John the Baptist episode. Subsequent to his baptism, Jesus faces temptation in the wilderness (4:1–2) and then ascends a mountain to give instructions to crowds of Israelites (Matt 5–7). These pericopes will be examined more thoroughly in chapters 3 and 6, but for now it should be noted that these events in Jesus' life correspond to Israel's exodus experiences: the crossing of the Red Sea, the forty years in the desert, and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Matthew, like other texts exhibiting hope for restoration from exile, clearly develops the motif of a New Exodus. More specifically, after connecting the Babylonian deportation with Jesus the Messiah (Matt 1:17), Matthew depicts Jesus' early life and early ministry in terms of a New Exodus. Matthew intends to show that Jesus' life and ministry begin God's restoration of Israel from the rupture caused by exile.

58 It is difficult to know how much context Matthew hopes to evoke from Hosea or if he is simply using it as a proof-text. Either way, it is worth noting that Matthew is drawing from a section of Hosea that discusses extensively the Assyrian exile and also a charge against Judah (Hos 11–12). For further discussion, see Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:263–264.

59 Markus Bockmuehl, *This Jesus: Martyr, Lord, Messiah* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 35.

60 This observation concerns themes in the Gospel, it is not a denial that there is an apparent break between chapters 1–2 and 3–4 that coincides with a change in sources. However, the use of a New Exodus motif appears to be one way in which Matthew thematically ties his sources together. Concerning the relationship between chapters 1–2 and 3–4, compare Luz, *Matthew*, 1:134, with Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:287.

iii. The Ingathering of all Twelve Tribes

The element of the ingathering of the twelve tribes of Israel may be first anticipated in Jesus' genealogy. While listing the patriarchs of Israel, Matthew naturally transitions from Jacob to Judah, since Judah is David's tribe, but he also makes mention of Judah's brothers (i.e., the rest of the tribes of Israel; Matt 1:2). This has been considered by some “to suggest the motif of the restitution of the twelve tribes.”⁶¹ That Matthew has shaped Jesus' genealogy to communicate a divine plan (Matt 1:17) gives some credence to this claim.⁶² Nevertheless, it remains difficult to infer so much from such a brief reference as “and his brothers” (καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ).⁶³

Elsewhere in the narrative, however, Matthew associates Jesus' ministry to Israel more explicitly with the motif of the ingathering and restoration of all the tribes of Israel. This motif can be observed most clearly in the way Jesus both gathers and attracts great crowds of Israelites in order to heal and teach them (Matt 4:23–25).

After Matthew has developed Jesus' identity as the Davidic Messiah and Son of God who has lived through several Moses/exodus experiences (Matt 1:1–4:11), Jesus begins his ministry to shepherd God's “people Israel” (i.e., to be their Davidic king, cf. Matt 2:6) in Galilee (Matt 4:17). Before Jesus begins his proclamation, however, Matthew mentions that Jesus leaves Nazareth to live in Capernaum by the sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matt 4:13; cf. Mark 1:21). Matthew attributes this small biographical detail to the fulfilment of Isaiah 9:1–2. As such, Jesus' entry into this territory is a great light to those waiting in *χωρὰ καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου* (Matt 4:14–16).

61 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 25.

62 Also, David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 17–18.

63 Luz, *Matthew*, 1:83. As Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 75, states, the mention of Judah's brothers may simply imply “that of the several possible ancestors of the royal line Judah alone was chosen.”

In some instances the metaphor of death could be used in Scripture to refer to the exile.⁶⁴ Indeed, Isaiah 9:1–2 is a proclamation to specific regions that faced Assyrian deportation (2 Kgs 15:29; 1 Chr 5:26) and which Tiglath-pileser III turned into Assyrian provinces (Zebulun and Naphtali = Galilee; the way of the sea = Dor [South of Mount Carmel]; and beyond the Jordan = Gilead). As discussed in chapter 1, Second Temple Jews maintained the hope that God would restore all of Israel, even the northern tribes. Given Matthew’s use of Isaiah 9:1–2, it appears that Matthew understands Jesus’ ministry activity in northern Palestine as part of God’s restoration and gathering of the northern tribes of Israel. Indeed, Isaiah’s oracle proclaims salvation for the northern tribes from a new born son in the Davidic dynasty (Isa 9:6–7). Since Matthew views Jesus as the fulfilment of the Davidic king promised in Isaiah (Matt 1:22–23/Isa 7:14) he also attributes the proclamation of hope to Israel’s northern tribes in Isaiah 9:1–2 to Jesus’ Davidic ministry in Galilee. Thus, by mentioning the territory in which Capernaum resides (i.e., Zebulun and Naphtali) Matthew is depicting Jesus’ return to Galilee as part of God’s promise to deliver the northern tribes (Matt 4:13).

The motif of the ingathering of Israel is further developed with Jesus’ recruitment of disciples and the task he assigns them with. The first thing Jesus’ does once he begins proclaiming the coming of the kingdom in the north (Matt 4:17) is to gather his first disciples, whom he promises to make fishers of men (Matt 4:19). As Jesus gathers (Matt 3:12; cf. 23:37) so his disciples are to gather. Specifically, these disciples are sent to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 10:5–6). This ministry eventually opens up to the gentiles after Jesus’ resurrection (Matt 28:19–20), but the mission of reaching all Israel will remain operative until the kingdom is fully ushered in with the coming of the Son of Man (Matt 10:23).⁶⁵ The disciples’ eventual sum of twelve is not a coincidence either (Matt 10:1). Jesus recruits them not only to help him gather the men of Israel (Matt 4:19), but also to judge Israel’s twelve tribes

64 Concerning the use of death as metaphor for exile in Scripture, see Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 154-155. Perhaps something comparable is intended in Matt 4:16.

65 Hartin, “Ethics in the Letters of James, the Gospel of Matthew, and the Didache,” 293–294.

in the restored kingdom of which he proclaims (Matt 19:28; cf. T. Jud. 25:1–2; T. Benj. 10:7).⁶⁶

Not only does Jesus purpose to gather the northern tribes, he works to gather Judah as well. After his ministry in “all” of northern Galilee (ὅλη τῆ Γαλιλαία; Matt 4:23), which meets frequent rejection (Matt 11:20–24), Jesus tries to gather Jerusalem in the south as a hen gathers her brood (Matt 21:1–17; 23:37–38). Indeed, in order to fulfil his role as the Davidic-messianic shepherd of Israel (Matt 2:6), Jesus must first gather his flock (cf. Ezek 34:11–16; Jer 23:3).

Matthew also depicts Jesus' ministry of healing and teaching as the restoration of Israel's twelve tribes, this given the manner in which he describes the locations from which people come to hear him. At the start of his ministry, Jesus travels throughout all of Galilee teaching and healing. News of him is heard in “all” of Syria (ὅλην τὴν Συρίαν), that is, the areas adjacent to Galilee,⁶⁷ which in turn, brings scores of downtrodden people to him (Matt 4:23–24). Large crowds eventually amass, deriving from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from across the Jordan (Matt 4:25). This list conveys more than geography. It makes a theological point concerning Jesus, the crowds, and the restoration of Israel.

Matthew replaces Mark's mention of Idumea, Tyre, and Sidon (Mark 3:7–8) with the Decapolis. This might appear odd at first glance since the Decapolis had a primarily gentile population similar to Tyre and Sidon. Idumea, on the other hand, was conquered and “Judaised” by John Hyrcanus (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.257–258) and would seemingly be a better fit for Matthew's Jewish context.⁶⁸ However, Matthew has purposely listed regions that sketch the contours of where the twelve tribes of Israel originally settled, at least from the perspective of Israel's Scriptures.⁶⁹

66 Ibid., 294. Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:56, state, “19.28 envisages the twelve disciples entering 'into God's kingly power by themselves becoming rulers.' Israel has a future.” Again, as Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 199–204, argues, this is an actual kingdom and place.

67 So Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 43–44, “‘Syria’ ... must have meant not the Roman province, ... but, to a Jew, the areas adjacent to Galilee.” See also Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:80.

68 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 50–51.

69 Ibid., 51; see also Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 185.

After all, it is the “land of Israel” (γῆν Ἰσραήλ)⁷⁰ which Joseph is commanded to enter after he and his family fled to Egypt (Matt 2:20). Therefore, even with its gentile connotations, the Decapolis suited Matthew's needs since it covers the area of the northern transjordan tribes.⁷¹ The modern reader might associate the Decapolis with gentiles, but Matthew was thinking in terms of historic tribal boundaries. Matthew considers those in the crowds who came from the Decapolis, as Israelites.⁷² This is made clear at the end of the Sermon on the Mount when the crowds (i.e., the people who gathered around Jesus from the regions Matthew listed) are said to be amazed that Jesus teaches with authority unlike “*their* scribes” (οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν, cf. Matt 7:28–29). In consideration of the fact that Matthew has Jesus pass through an exodus experience and then gather people from the regions of Israel's twelve tribes through his disciples, who in turn will judge the twelve tribes in the restored kingdom from twelve thrones (Matt 19:28), and he ascends a mountain right before teaching them about the Torah (Matt 5:1–2, 17–20), I am inclined to agree with Konradt's suggestion that Matthew's list of regions from which the crowds came “likely alludes to the motif of the restitution of Israel.”⁷³

Although I have previously argued against a replacement theology in Matthew, Jesus' comments following the centurion's display of great faith warrants specific attention (Matt 8:10–12). Many commentators have taken Jesus' comments, that many will come from east and west to the eschatological patriarchal banquet while those born to the kingdom will be thrown out, to support a replacement theology pursuant to the inclusion of gentiles at the expense of Israelites (Matt 8:11–

70 Joel Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel*, 152, states, “Jesus' return to the land of Israel in verse 21 is a completion of the movements that recapitulate Israel's literal geographic movements in the exodus, having been taken to Egypt and now returning to the land of Israel.”

71 Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 73, “almost all them [i.e., the cities of the Decapolis] are on the eastern side of the Jordan.”

72 Konradt, *Israel, Church and the Gentiles*, 51–52; Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 107–108; and Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 44. Konradt (page 51n193) notes, however, that Matthew gives a different perspective of the Decapolis in versus 8:28–34.

73 Konradt, *Israel, Church and the Gentiles*, 51. See also P. Fiedler, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), 104.

12).⁷⁴ Konradt notes, however, that Matthew has not contradicted the intra-Jewish contrast that Matt 8:11–12 carries in its Q context. Rather, Matthew gives a new accent to this tradition by setting it in the context of Jesus' interaction with the centurion.⁷⁵ This logion which originally referenced the ingathering of Israel now also anticipates an influx of Gentiles as the centurion's faith anticipates Jesus' mission being expanded to the gentiles (Matt 28:19–20).⁷⁶ Matthew draws on a theme inherent in his tradition (i.e., the inclusion of gentiles at Yahweh's eschatological banquet in Isa 25:6-8) and joins the ranks of other Jewish literature that connects the gathering of Israel with the influx of gentiles (e.g., T. Benj. 9:2; Tob 13:5, 13; 14:5–6; and Zech 8:23).⁷⁷ As argued in the opening of this chapter, the inclusions of gentiles does not indicate a break from Jewish eschatological hope, rather it fits within the possibilities of depictions of Israel's restoration. Nevertheless, whether those who come from east or west are gentiles or Diaspora Jews, Allison argues that “the saying assumes that the eschatological scenario will involve throngs streaming to a central location. Within a Jewish context, that location can only be the land of Israel and its capital, Jerusalem.”⁷⁸ This sensitivity to ingathering reaffirms once again, that Matthew understands the ministry of Jesus in terms of gathering Israel around Jerusalem. Matthew's list of geographical regions, mentioned above, give the four directions circling around Jerusalem: Galilee (NW), the Decapolis (NE), Judea (SW), and the Transjordan (SE).⁷⁹

74 E.g., Luz, *Matthew*, 2:9, 11; Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:205–6; and Keener, 268–270. A similar claim is sometimes made with Jesus' parable of the vineyard (Matt 21:33–44). However, as Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 176–193, rightly argues, the parable concerns removal of Israel's leadership, not the replacement of “Israel” (i.e., the vineyard) with the gentile church (cf. Matt 21:45–46). See also Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 878–879.

75 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 204–205.

76 *Ibid.*, 205; and Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 357.

77 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 205. Konradt (pages 205–206n201) also notes several texts in which the nations bring Israelites to Jerusalem as gifts (e.g., Isa 14:2; 49:22; 60:4; 66:12, 18–20; Pss. Sol. 17:31).

78 Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 186.

79 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:420; Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 50; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 44; and Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:81. Concerning the omission of Samaria (cf. Matt 10:5), see Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 185n57.

iv. The Impact of this Restoration on the Gentiles

The fourth element in texts concerning exilic hope is the impact Israel's restoration from exile will have on the gentiles. Although there are some notoriously critical statements about gentiles in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 5:47; 6:7; 18:17), Jesus' salvific ministry to the sheep of Israel eventually opens up to include baptising gentiles and teaching them Jesus' commandments (Matt 28:19–20). Indeed, there will be a place for gentiles (as sheep)⁸⁰ in the Son of Man's eschatological kingdom if they receive and treat Jesus' disciples well (Matt 25:31–46).

Furthermore, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, the extension of Jesus' salvific ministry to the gentiles through his disciples not only concludes Matthew's presentation of Jesus' life and teaching but it is also anticipated at critical junctures throughout the narrative. In addition to adding four "gentile" women who became significant members of God's people into Jesus' genealogy,⁸¹ Matthew

80 The shepherd and sheep metaphor in Matt 25:31–46 used to describe the relationship between Jesus and obedient gentiles appears to recall the metaphor regarding Jesus and Israel (Matt 2:6; 9:36; 10:6; 15:24). Calling the gentiles sheep, therefore, is a significant honor and it demonstrates their true inclusion into God's people.

81 The genealogy's pattern (i.e., x begot y) is altered in order to mention four mothers: Tamar (Matt 1:3); Rahab (Matt 1:5); Ruth (Matt 1:5); and the wife of Uriah (i.e., Bathsheba; Matt 1:6). Each of these women are gentiles who were brought into God's divine plan for Israel. Specifically, they were members of nations that were Israel's historic enemies (i.e., Canaanites; Moabites; and Hittites). Tradition does not specify if Bathsheba is a Hebrew or not, but her name seems to suggest she was. However, Matthew does not mention her by name, but refers to her as the wife of Uriah, to whom tradition clearly identifies as a Hittite (2 Sam 11:3, 6, 17; 21; 24; 12:9, 10; 1 Kgs 15:5). It is possible that Matthew only refers to her as the wife of Uriah for the sake of replicating his source (2 Sam 11:26; 12:15), but Matthew may have mentioned Uriah just as well to associate Bathsheba as closely as he could with the Hittites. In this manner Bathsheba could be depicted as a member of one of Israel's historic enemies just as the other three women in the genealogy; see Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 69. That Matthew thinks in categories of Israel's historic enemies is confirmed by the fashion in which he calls the woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon a *γυνὴ Χαναναία* (Matt 15:21–22). Mark naturally refers to her as a Syro-Phoenician Greek woman (Mark 7:26). Matthew, however, conceives the world in terms of historic Israel (Matt 2:21; 4:12–17; 25). Therefore, the woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon is not a Greek in Matthew's historical-Israel lens, but a Canaanite; so Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 150; Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 165; Gundry, *Matthew*, 310; and Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 631–632. It is likely then that Matthew thinks of Bathsheba as a Hittite and that the women in the genealogy give precedence for Matthew's incorporation of gentiles into God's people. It is possible, however, that the mention of these gentile women may simply serve the function of an apology for Mary's apparent irregular union with Joseph, rather than an anticipation of the mission to the gentiles; see Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 2nd ed., ABRL 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 73–74. Either way, caution must be used when trying to infer such

accents Jesus' Davidic ministry to Israel with three narratives (Matt 8:5–13; 28–34; 15:21–28) and two fulfilment quotations (Matt 4:14–16; 12:17–21). These texts cast a universalistic perspective on Jesus' restricted ministry to Israel while also connecting the gentile mission to Jesus' salvific work in Israel (cf. Matt 10:16–18).⁸² Therefore, in light of these texts, even though Jesus' final commission has led scholars to argue such varying explanations as that the mission to the gentiles has replaced the mission to Israel, to the explanation that the Matthean community only talks about a mission to the gentiles, but does not actually practice it,⁸³ it is clear that Matthew, like other Second Temple texts, integrates gentile involvement in exilic and eschatological restoration.

2.2b Summary of Key Elements

Pitre's four elements of hope for restoration from exilic destruction in Second Temple texts are all creatively integrated throughout Matthew's narrative of the life, ministry, and significance of Jesus. The reference to the exile (Matt 1:17) is not merely a one-off statement at the beginning of the Gospel. Rather, it is part of the cradle from which Matthew's story of Jesus emerges. That is to say, Matthew understands Jesus' life, ministry, and Christology in congruency with Israel's history and as necessarily responding to the destruction Israel has endured. As Matthew sketches that story, exile is the stage/phase preceding Jesus (Matt 1:17). It is only natural that Matthew uses the same key elements to tell the story of Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel that other texts exhibiting exilic hope use. These four elements help communicate to a Jewish audience that Jesus' ministry is the fulfilment of eschatological expectations or at least the initiator of eschatological restoration. Matthew, in his own creative way, is participating in the larger Second Temple project of restoring divine encounter, which, in turn, is inflected by the destruction of exile. Indeed, the Messiah who comes after the Babylonian Deportation (Matt 1:17)

specific meaning from a genealogy.

82 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 309, 324.

83 Cuvillier, "Particularisme et universalisme chez Matthieu," 481–489.

is a manifestation of God's presence (Matt 1:23). In other words, Matthew is bringing the hopes and promises found in Israel's Scriptures, and elaborated throughout the Second Temple period, forward through Jesus for his generation. We will now consider how Matthew's story about Jesus is inflected by the destruction of the Second Temple and how this relates to his teaching on the Torah.

2.3 The Defilement of the Temple and Matthew's Solution in Jesus

In addition to contextualising Jesus' Davidic-messianic ministry in light of the Babylonian deportation, Matthew's presentation of Jesus' Davidic-messianic ministry is also inflected by the destruction of the Second Temple. Runesson's recent discussion of the importance of the temple's defilement in Matthew's Gospel warrants attention since it helpfully illuminates the present examination of how Matthew's Gospel is inflected by the destruction of the temple. Runesson not only emphasises the importance of the temple's defilement in the Matthean narrative but also suggests that the defilement of the temple and Jesus' solution to the problem is the primary hermeneutical concern of Matthew's Gospel.⁸⁴

Runesson argues that even though Jerusalem and the temple remain the City of God and the Holy Place in Matthew's narrative world, they will exist in a state of defilement until their restoration at the end of the age.⁸⁵ To be sure, the temple cult is operative at the beginning of the narrative (cf., Matt 5:23–24; 8:1–4). However, by chapter 23, the temple is pronounced defiled, abandoned by God's presence (cf. Matt 23:38–39),⁸⁶ and destined for destruction on account of the scribes and Pharisees' failure to practice and properly teach the Torah and their concomitant murders of

84 Anders Runesson, "City of God or Home of Traitors and Killers?: Jerusalem according to Matthew" in *The Urban World and the First Christians*, ed. Steve Walton, Paul R. Trebilco, and David W. J. Gill (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 225–227.

85 Ibid., 224–226. Akiva Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah: Redefining Identity and Ethos in the Shadow of the Second Temple's Destruction* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 301, notes that the Matthean Jesus speaks of the "renewal of all things" (Matt 19:28), which means that a hope for the restoration of the temple is not ruled out in Matthew's eschatology.

86 Ibid., 289–290, 294, notes that Matthew 23:28–29 anticipates the exit of God's presence from the temple when Jesus walks out of the temple.

innocent blood on the altar (Matt 23:1–39; 24:1–2).⁸⁷ The defilement of the temple by the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew’s narrative, as well as the destruction of the temple in Matthew’s socio-historical reality, causes serious complications for a covenantal relationship with God.⁸⁸ Runesson states,

The Mosaic law ... contains within it the means of atonement (the temple cult), and all of it is embraced by a covenant between God and Israel. If the temple, the space where heaven meets earth, and thus the place where atonement can be achieved, is destroyed, the covenant breaks down, since the law cannot make its doers righteous/acceptable to God without the means of atonement ... since to be righteous means to follow the law *and* atone for trespasses.⁸⁹

If the scribes and Pharisees, through their false teaching/practice of the Torah and murder of the innocent, have broken the covenant and defiled the temple, then how can God’s covenantal communion with Israel continue? How can God continue to provide instruction and atonement for his people? Or, to put it another way, how can divine encounter survive this defilement and destruction that is soon to befall the temple?

Matthew’s solution to reestablishing the covenant and atonement, as Runesson notes, is through Jesus. First, Jesus, in contrast to the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:17–20), gives the proper interpretation of the Torah. This is important since divine judgment and adhering to God’s covenant in Matthew’s Gospel, and more broadly in Second Temple Judaism, is based on obedience (Matt 5:17–20; 7:21–27; 13:40–43; 22:11–14; 23:23–36; 25:14–30).⁹⁰ Next, Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross both provides atonement (ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν) and restores the covenant (note that Jesus’ blood is the blood of the covenant, “τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης;” Matt

87 Runesson, “City of God or Home of Traitors and Killers,” 226–227; and Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew*, 243–244, see especially 243n91. Similarly, Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 275.

88 Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 300–301, notes that even though Matthew’s Gospel refers to the temple as if it still exists, the Gospel still shows clear signs of awareness that it was destroyed.

89 Runesson, “City of God or Home of Traitors and Killers,” 227.

90 Runesson, “City of God or Home of Traitors and Killers,” 228.

26:28).⁹¹ However, even though Jesus restores the covenant, there is still the issue of sacred space. That is, where physically and geographically does God's presence reside in the land of Israel if the temple is abandoned and doomed to destruction, as is the case in Matthew's narrative, or destroyed, as is the case for Matthew's historical audience?⁹² Runesson notes that the resurrected Messiah creates a new and mobile sacred space.⁹³ He states,

The divine presence in this case is represented by the risen Messiah himself, who appears among members in a way analogous to the Shekinah, the presence of the divine glory (Matt 18:20). The reason for [the Matthean Jesus'] absolute insistence on moral purity is, then, that it enables the presence of the divine in the midst of the assembly of the people. The *ἐκκλησία* is conceptualized as sacred "space," and becomes detached from geographical locations in a manner resembling the situation during the desert wandering before the First Temple period. God is, so to speak, "tenting" among his people.⁹⁴

Thus, for Matthew, even the location of God's presence amidst his people is also inflected by the temple's defilement and predicted destruction. God's presence is now found in the person of Jesus who resides with his disciples and with those to whom they minister (Matt 28:19–20). Jesus also teaches the proper interpretation of the Torah, renews the covenant, and even offers atonement with his blood. This inclusion of an entity in the cult other than God is an unparalleled development in Second Temple and late first-century Judaism.⁹⁵ Runesson's description of Matthew's

91 Ibid. As Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 531, states, "Matthew ensured that the community of Israel and the nations that gathered around Yeshua would continue to find the locus of Israel's cult in him."

92 Concerning association of the temple with God's presence, see Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 287.

93 Runesson, "City of God or Home of Traitors and Killers," 229, 231. Similarly, Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 289–290.

94 Runesson, "City of God or Home of Traitors and Killers," 231. It is noteworthy that in Matthew's Gospel Jesus never leaves or ascends to heaven. Rather, Jesus remains with his disciples and states that he will be with them until the end of the age (Matt 28:20; cf. Matt 1:23).

95 Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 519, states, "We have no other witness of Second Temple Judaisms in which an entity—whether man or angel—other than the God of the patriarchs, is incorporated into the cult. That Jesus is now included in the binitarian cult of the Matthean Pharisees signals a new form of Judean religion."

theological concerns for atonement in the face of temple's defilement and predicted destruction shows that Matthew's revelation of Jesus has been inflected by the destruction of the temple at many levels. Matthew's story of Jesus responds to many issues that would arise from the temple's defilement and subsequent destruction.

Runesson has also rightly emphasised that the issue of proper Torah interpretation and obedience is linked with the problem of the temple's defilement and pronounced destruction. Torah obedience and the problem of the temple's defilement are linked in at least two ways. First, the temple was defiled and received God's condemnation on account of both the scribes and Pharisees' false Torah obedience/instruction and their slaughter of the innocent on the altar (Matt 23:1–39). Secondly, part of Matthew's solution to restoring divine encounter between God and Israel in the wake of a defiled temple is to have Jesus teach the proper way to follow and fulfil the Torah. In other words, the issue of proper Torah interpretation and obedience, an issue so prevalent throughout Matthew's Gospel, is interconnected with the problem of the temple's defilement and abandonment by God.⁹⁶ This feature of Matthew's Gospel is in step with the review of the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in chapter 1. Indeed, chapter 1 showed that the continuing destruction caused by the exile, sectarian debates, and the hope for full restoration were all linked with the issue of properly interpreting and following the Torah.

We will now probe the Matthean Jesus' programmatic statement on the Torah to show that his refutation of the accusation that he came to abolish the Torah is linked with the serious issue of blame over the temple's destruction in Matthew's socio-historical context. Indeed, as will be shown, blame for the temple's destruction is in part why Matthew devotes so much effort to demonstrating that Jesus fulfils the Torah over against the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees.

96 Similarly, Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew*, 244, states, "the two main parts of Matthew's story, Jesus' teaching and his (sacrificial) death, are both provoked by the Pharisees. Jesus' teaching, on the one hand, is done to counteract primarily the teaching of the Pharisees, who mislead the people and condemn the innocent (e.g., 5:20; 9:36; 12:7; 15:3; 12–14; 23:15). Jesus's self-sacrifice, on the other hand, is made because of the fall of the temple, which was caused by the Pharisees and scribes associated with them."

2.4 The Programmatic Statement and the Destruction of the Temple

As stated above, the defilement and pronounced destruction of the Second Temple is intertwined with one of the major facets of Jesus' ministry, namely, his teaching. The destruction of the Second Temple was understood by different Jewish groups as a manifestation of divine wrath for disobeying the Torah in some manner just as were the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.⁹⁷ Attaching the blame for the temple's destruction on a group or individual was a very powerful way to de-legitimise that group or individual and their teaching about the Torah and other claims to authority. I will argue that Matthew is responding to similar criticism raised against Jesus and the Matthean community. In response, Matthew tactically spins this criticism back around on Jesus' main opponents in the Gospel, the scribes and Pharisees. While Matthew depicts Jesus' teaching as the fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets and as an integral part of his restorative Davidic-messianic ministry to Israel,⁹⁸ he dismisses the scribes and Pharisees' teaching and connects it with judgement and the destruction of the temple. Matthew's programmatic statement on the Torah will be examined in this context to see how Matthew achieves this rhetorical maneuver.

2.4a (κατα)λύω in Jewish Literature

The verb *πληρόω* receives the lion's share of attention in scholarly discussions of Matthew's programmatic statement on the Torah. Matthew Thiessen notes, however, that Matthew's threefold occurrence of *λύω* and *καταλύω* (*πληρόω*'s counterpart)⁹⁹ “suggests that their meanings are of central importance for understanding Matthew's concerns in this passage.”¹⁰⁰ Yet, scholars rarely try to understand Matthew's use of these verbs in light of their usage in other Jewish texts. Thiessen, by contrast, notes that there are clusters of *καταλύω* and *λύω* in Jewish literature that recount the

97 Cf. 2 Bar. 15:1–6; 19:1–4; 3 Bar. 16; 4 Ezra 3:12–27, and Apoc. Ab. 27; for further discussion, see Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 280–303.

98 Concerning the connection between the Matthean Jesus' role of teacher and Davidic-Christology, see Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 177–179.

99 *καταλύω* twice in 5:17 and *λύω* once in 5:19.

100 Matthew Thiessen, “Abolishers of the Law,” 544.

Antiochan persecution surrounding the temple and destruction of the temple in 70 CE.¹⁰¹ Thiessen suggests that this lucuna of *καταλύω* and *λύω* in Jewish literature is informative for interpreting the Matthean Jesus' programmatic statement. These occurrences, therefore, will now be reviewed briefly before considering the programmatic statement on the Torah and Matthew's use of *καταλύω* and *λύω*.

In regard to the Antiochan persecution, the author of 2 Maccabees views the Jewish people's victory over Antiochus Epiphanes as the restoring of laws that were about to be abolished (*καταλύεσθαι*; 2 Macc 2:22). Later in the book it is revealed that Jason, the brother of the high priest Onias, who tried to win Antiochus' favour by building a gymnasium and making Jerusalem's inhabitants citizens of Antioch, is the culprit of this abolishing (*καταλύων*; 2 Macc 4:9–11). Thus, the author of 2 Maccabees understands Jason's reforms as “the abolishment of lawful living and the neglect of the temple cult.”¹⁰² Therefore, in proper Deuteronomic thinking of disobedience resulting in judgement, the author of 2 Maccabees links the “severe state of affairs” (*χαλεπή περίστασις*), that is, the Antiochus persecution, with the abolishment of the law (2 Macc 4:16–17). 2 Maccabees makes plain that “to act profanely towards the divine laws is not a small matter” (*ἀσεβεῖν γὰρ εἰς τοὺς θεῖους νόμους οὐ ῥάδιον*; 2 Ma 4:17).¹⁰³

4 Maccabees, which most likely used 2 Maccabees as its main source,¹⁰⁴ not only picks up the connection between the abolishing of the law and the Antiochan persecution established in 2 Maccabees but also further emphasises it.¹⁰⁵ Antiochus abolishes (*καταλύω*) the high priest Onias and unlawfully appoints Jason as high priest (4 Macc 4:15–16). Jason pays homage to Anitochus by changing many aspects

101 Ibid. Thiessen (page 544n9) notes that “outside of these two clusters, (*κατα*)λύω is used another eighteen times in Jewish literature in relation to the law, almost all of which deal with laws such as Sabbath, circumcision, dietary laws, and temple service.”

102 Ibid., 545.

103 Ibid.

104 David A. DeSilva, *4 Maccabees: Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Sinaiticus*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Richard S. Hess, and John Jarick, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2006), xxx, notes that “a comparison of the movement of both books ... leads almost inevitably to this conclusion.”

105 Thiessen, “Abolishers of the Law,” 545–546.

of Jewish culture in Jerusalem. The most significant change is building a gymnasium to replace the abolished (*καταλύσαι*) temple service (4 Macc 4:20). The author of 4 Maccabees, in agreement with 2 Maccabees, views Jason's acts of abolishment as the cause of divine justice in the form of the Antiochan persecution (4 Macc 4:21).

The author of 4 Maccabees explains, however, that Antiochus failed to abolish (*καταλύσαι*) the observance of the law because the Jews abolished (*καταλυόμενας*) his decrees and punishments (4 Macc 4:24).¹⁰⁶ As a prime example, a priest named Eleazer is forced by Antiochus to eat pork, but refuses and states that eating pork, even under threat of life, is to abolish (*καταλύσαι*) his ancestral law (4 Macc 5:33; cf. 5:19–21). The author of 4 Maccabees states that since Eleazer did not abolish the holiness that he spoke gravely about (*τὴν ἁγιαστίαν σεμνολογήσας οὐ κατέλυσας*), he became an example that encouraged other Jews' devotion to the law (4 Macc 7:9). In a turn of irony, the Jews abolish Antiochus and his schemes rather than the law: they abolish his tyranny (*κατέλυσαν/κατελύσαμεν*; 4 Macc 8:15; 11:24); the fear of tortures (*καταλύοντες*; 4 Macc 14:8); his violence (*καταλύσασα*; 4 Macc 17:2); and Antiochus himself (*κατάλυσίς*; 4 Macc 11:25).¹⁰⁷

Josephus also links the abolishment of Jewish law with the events of Antiochus' persecution.¹⁰⁸ For instance, those who supported Antiochus' reforms eventually admit that they abolished their ancestral customs (*πάτριον αὐτῶν καταλύσαντας*) and accepted Antiochus' commands (*Ant.* 12.364). Likewise, when Josephus describes Herod's appointment of Aristobulus III to high priest as unlawful, he states that Antiochus was the first to abolish this law (*ἔλυσε τὸν νόμον*) when he replaced Jesus with Onias (*Ant.* 15.41). In addition to these occurrences, Josephus says Antiochus pressured the Jews to abolish (*καταλύσαντας*) their ancestral customs

106 Ibid., 546.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., 547. Thiessen (page 547n11) rightly notes that Josephus is dependent on 1 Maccabees, which also draws a connection between the abolishment of the law and the Antiochan persecution. However, (*κατα*)λύω or *κατάλυσίς* is never used in 1 Maccabees. Therefore, Josephus' use of (*κατα*)λύω/*κατάλυσίς* likely comes from himself. This further supports the idea that (*κατα*)λύω was commonly associated with Torah obedience and temple destruction in the first century.

by leaving their infants uncircumcised and by sacrificing swine on the altar (*J.W.* 1.34).¹⁰⁹ Josephus, along with the authors of 2 and 4 Maccabees, understands these abolishments of the law to be the source of divine punishment, which came in the form of the Antiochan persecution (*Ant.* 12.240–256; 362–366). In light of these many occurrences of (κατα)λύω, Thiessen concludes,

It is unlikely that this cluster of occurrences is a coincidence; instead, it appears that there existed a common tradition linking the Antiochan persecution to a prior law abolishment by Jews and that one of the preferred words for describing their behaviour was (κατα)λύω.¹¹⁰

It is not only unlikely that this diction is a coincidence but using (κατα)λύω in this way also appears to have been well known. The texts examined above total in twelve occurrences of καταλύω, λύω, and κατάλυσις by three authors in four accounts of the Antiochan persecution (i.e., *Antiquities*, *War*, 2 and 4 Maccabees). Moreover, they represent writings from Judea between 124 and 63 BCE (i.e., 2 Maccabees)¹¹¹ and Jewish diaspora writings from the latter half of the first century CE (i.e., Josephus' *Antiquities* and *War*; and 4 Maccabees?).¹¹² The use of (κατα)λύω to describe the connection between Torah observance and Antiochus' persecution as a form of divine wrath covers a relatively widespread geographical and chronological *sitz im Leben*.¹¹³ Matthew's Gospel fits in this milieu as well. Furthermore, in each of these accounts of the Antiochan persecution it is a Jewish group that participates in the abolishment

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 So Van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*, JSJSup 57 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 50–56; and Lee I. Levine, *Judaism & Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 79; for the argument that 2 Maccabees has a diaspora providence, see Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 16–17. It should be noted, however, that even if 2 Maccabees represents diaspora Jews rather than Palestinian, it still represents a ca. first century BCE use of καταλύω.

112 As DeSilva, *4 Maccabees*, xiv–xx, notes, it is difficult to determine the providence and date of 4 Maccabees. However, from what little evidence that can be gathered, it seems as though it was written around the turn of the second century for Jews living in Asia Minor and Syrian Antioch, who were well accustomed to Greek culture.

113 Thiessen, “Abolishers of the Law,” 548.

of the law through the Hellenisation of their Jewish brethren.¹¹⁴ The Matthean community, with their mission to the gentiles¹¹⁵ and apparent dependence on the Roman/Hellenistic Gospel of Mark with its potentially more liberal view of the Torah, were fit for such an inner Jewish criticism.

A similar pattern of occurrences of *καταλύω*, *λύω*, and *κατάλυσις* cluster around Josephus' account of the Zealots and the destruction of the Second Temple during the Jewish Revolt. In a pre-revolt speech, Agrippa warns those in favour of the rebellion that, even though they wish to fight in order to preserve their ancestral customs, they will have to fight on the Sabbath because observing the Sabbath will surely lead to defeat as it did against Pompey. If they choose to fight on the Sabbath, however, then they will abolish (*καταλύσαι*) the very laws that they are intending to preserve and no longer be in a position to invoke the aid of their deity (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.391–393). Having established this logic before the revolt, Josephus, through the duration of his account of the revolt, identifies the “ways in which the Zealots were guilty of this law abolishment and therefore caused the destruction of both the city and the Temple.”¹¹⁶ Josephus specifically makes this connection between the actions of the Zealots and divine wrath “by the numerous occurrences of *καταλύω*, *λύω*, and *κατάλυσις* and referring specifically to the actions of the Zealots among the divided populace of Jerusalem during the war.”¹¹⁷

Josephus describes the Zealot's choice of a high priest by lot as an abrogation (*κατάλυσις*; *J.W.* 4.154) and the laments by several priests reaffirms this action as an abolition (*κατάλυσις*; *J.W.* 4.157). Also, John of Gischala tells the Zealots that they have abolished (*καταλύσεως*) the laws and courts of the people (*J.W.* 4.223). In trying to get the support of the Idumaeans, Jesus the high priest calls the Zealots tyrants

114 Ibid. See discussion in Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 93, concerning the common practice during the Second Temple period of Jewish groups blaming other Jewish groups, rather than gentiles, for the various evils that befell Israel.

115 Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 229, notes that the Pharisees would have accused Matthew's community of disobedience to traditions due to their table fellowship with gentiles.

116 Thiessen, “Abolishers of the Law,” 549.

117 Ibid. However, by my count, in this case Josephus uses *καταλύω*, *κατάλυσις*, and *συγκαταλύσαι*, but not *λύω*.

who have abolished (*καταλύσαντας*) their tribunals and trampled their laws (*J.W. 4.258*).¹¹⁸ Accordingly, a Zealot admits that both the Idumaeans and Zealots are guilty of abolishing (*καταλύουσι*) the institutions of their fathers (*J.W. 4.348*). Finally, by leaving the dead to putrefy out in the sun, Josephus states that the Zealots “covenanted to annul (*συγκαταλῦσαι*) the laws of nature along with those of their country (*J.W. 4.381–382*).”¹¹⁹ Therefore, according to Josephus, the Zealots, although adamant about upholding the Torah, are in fact the enemies who abolish the Torah, rather than the Romans.¹²⁰ As Josephus states,

It is the Romans who may well be found to have been the upholders of our laws, while the laws' enemies, that is, the Zealots, were within the walls (*J.W. 4.184*).¹²¹

These occurrences of *καταλύω* and *κατάλυσις* demonstrate that Josephus viewed the Zealots as lawless, but ultimately it is the Zealots' occupation and pollution of the temple that Josephus sees as the direct cause of Jerusalem and the temple's destruction.¹²² Josephus writes, regarding the Zealots' occupation of the temple,

They would surely have proceeded to greater heights, had aught greater than the sanctuary remained for them to abolish (*καταλῦσαι; J.W. 4.171*).

and again,

Every human ordinance was trampled under foot, every dictate of religion ridiculed by these men, who scoffed at the oracles of the prophets as imposters' fables, ... by the transgression of which the Zealots brought upon

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid., 550.

120 Steve Mason, *A History of the Jewish War: A.D. 66–74* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 24, states that “Josephus makes it a theme that the Judaeen God used the Romans to purge his temple, a feat they could not have accomplished otherwise.” That is, the gentile Romans are not the cause of the temple's destruction. They are merely God's instrument for issuing divine judgement.

121 Translations of Josephus are taken from the Loeb Classical Library.

122 Thiessen, “Abolishers of the Law,” 550.

their country the fulfilment of the prophecies directed against it. For there was an ancient saying of inspired men that the city would be taken and the sanctuary burnt to the ground by right of war, whensoever it should be visited by sedition and native hands should be first to defile God's sacred precincts (*J.W.* 4.388).¹²³

It is apparent that Josephus sees the Zealots' abolishing activity as the reason why the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed.¹²⁴ Josephus not only supports this claim by appealing to oracles and prophets, but by also providing a framework for this logic with Agrippa's pre-revolt speech (*J.W.* 2.391–393). That Josephus uses *καταλύω* and *κατάλυσις* “exclusively for the Zealots' actions during the revolt demonstrates that it is the transgressions of the Zealots in particular which are blamed” for the destruction.¹²⁵ This allows Josephus to walk a fine line of keeping allegiance with the Romans while also refraining from condemning all of his fellow Jews.¹²⁶ To Josephus there are distinguishable groups among the Jews.¹²⁷ He pins the blame on a particular group, namely, the Zealots, who have already been defeated by Romans and have certainly dropped in popularity since 70 CE and are vulnerable to criticism.

Chapter 1 of this thesis showed that it was common in exilic/post-exilic times to associate Torah obedience/disobedience with the destruction of exile. As we have just seen, it also became common in the centuries before and after the common era to associate Torah obedience/disobedience with two formative events in Second Temple history: 1) the Antiochus persecution; and 2) the destruction of the Second Temple in

123 Josephus notes that some Jewish people entered the holy places “with hands yet hot from the blood of their countrymen” (*J.W.* 4.183).

124 See also Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.*, trans. David Smith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 183–186.

125 Thiessen, “Abolishers of the Law,” 551.

126 In the preface to *Wars*, Josephus notes that previous accounts of the war between the Jews and the Romans were written either out of a humour of flattery to the Romans, or of hatred to the Jews. He, on the other hand, offers only the truth (*J.W.* 1.1–3). This captures well the divide of Roman and Jew that Josephus stands between. As Hengel, *The Zealots*, 185, states, “Josephus employed these sharp attacks in an attempt to oppose the view that the Zealots were guided in their struggle against Rome by zeal for the law and the sanctuary. In his opinion, the very opposite was true. The Zealots and their followers had committed inexpressible outrages against God and his commandment and had desecrated the sanctuary in such a way that God had eventually to destroy it. The Romans, on the other hand, had done everything possible to purify it and preserve it.”

127 Cf. Josephus, *J.W.* 2.119–66; *Ant.* 13.171–73; 18.12–20.

70 CE. Second Temple Jews would use texts to comprehend and make sense of these various bouts of destruction and persecution. Obedience/disobedience to the Torah, in Deuteronomic fashion, remained a way to comprehend the reason for God's wrath and their inability to fully overcome the destruction. For these last two events, the Antiochus persecution surrounding the temple and the destruction of the Second Temple, (κατα)λύω became a choice word to accuse an individual or some group of bringing judgement on Israel and specifically on the temple. In this context, the temple was either defiled to the point of needing rededication (the festival of lights and the Antiochus persecution) or completely destroyed (70 CE), because of their failure to observe the Torah.

Having considered Thiessen's observations regarding (κατα)λύω in Jewish literature from a similar milieu as Matthew, we will now examine the three-fold use of (κατα)λύω in the Matthean Jesus' programmatic statement on the Torah (Matt 5:17–20).

2.4b (κατα)λύω in Matthew's Programmatic Statement

Teaching is a major component of the Matthean Jesus' Christology and Davidic ministry to Israel (cf. Matt 4:23; 9:35; 11:1–6; 13:53–58), but the first time that Jesus says anything about the Torah specifically and its relationship to his ministry is in the programmatic statement.¹²⁸ It is telling that he begins with a defensive statement. Jesus begins by refuting the “presupposed opinion” (Μὴ νομίσητε)¹²⁹ that he came to abolish (καταλῦσαι) the Torah and prophets. But where did this opinion come from? This refutation appears to come out of nowhere as nothing up to this point in the Gospel would suggest that Jesus intends to abolish the Torah.

In consideration of Thiessen's analysis of (κατα)λύω in Jewish literature, and assuming a post-70 CE date for Matthew's Gospel, we can posit that this accusation of abolishment (καταλῦσαι) likely came from the Matthean community's Pharisaic

128 Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 126–127.

129 So Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:104, who states, “‘do not think that I came,’ presupposes the existence of the opinion that is denied.”

opponents. If the Matthean community indeed still had a mission to Israel (cf. Matt 10:23) and were competing with some form of a Pharisaic parent body for influence,¹³⁰ then it seems likely that their competitors voiced the accusation that Jesus was an abolisher of the Torah in order to associate Jesus with the calamity Jerusalem suffered at the hands of Rome. This accusation would not only delegitimise Jesus, but also the Matthean community and their missionary efforts.¹³¹

As noted in the thesis introduction, *πληρώω* carries the idea of fulfilling or doing a requirement or religious obligation to its fullest. In the case of Matthew 5:17, it has to do with being completely obedient to the Torah and teaching it properly. Thus, pairing *καταλύω* with *πληρώω* in the programmatic statement would give *καταλύω* something of the opposite meaning. That is, not adhering to or being completely disobedient in regard to the Torah. However, as the review of *καταλύω* in Jewish literature revealed, *καταλύω* is even more severe than disobedience. It carries the idea of nullifying and “signifying the drastic act of annulment of the totality.”¹³² In other words, the Matthean Jesus is not merely refuting the claim that he does not follow the Torah, but more severely that his the actions annul the entire Torah and Prophets.¹³³

A Jewish group or sect could easily use the accusation of *καταλύω* to link their halakic opponents with blame for bringing God’s wrath on the temple. Indeed, disobedience to the Torah was understood to cause God to bring curses upon the land of Israel (cf. Deut 28:15–68). Thus, to accuse someone or some group of *καταλύω* in regard to the Torah was *not* simply to claim that they did a poor job of following the Torah, but that their annulment of the Torah would bring with it the consequences of God’s wrath upon the land of Israel.

130 So Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 126.

131 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:484, state, “no doubt the charge was levelled against both Jesus and his post-Easter followers.”

132 Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 24.

133 See Carlston and Evans, *From Synagogue to Ecclesia*, 121.

As shown above, this accusation of *καταλύω* and its connection to God's wrath on the land, and specifically the temple, was used by different Jewish authors from various periods of time (i.e., Josephus and the authors of the different books of Maccabees). Moreover, the repeated use of this accusation in Jewish literature suggests that it was effective rhetorically and that it was received as a serious charge. This same kind of argument was even used against one of Matthew's contemporaries who also followed Jesus. In the book of Acts, false witnesses are used to convict Stephen in a trial. Stephen is falsely accused of speaking out against the temple and Torah in tandem (Acts 6:13). In specific, the false witnesses say Stephen spoke about Jesus claiming to abolish (*καταλύσει*) the temple and to alter the customs given by Moses (Acts 6:14).¹³⁴

In sum, as the Second Temple and late first-century literature shows, the accusation of *καταλύω* is associated with blaming an individual or group with bringing God's wrath upon the temple for failing to adhere to and annulling the Torah. Therefore, if Matthew's Gospel truly evidences a sectarian struggle in post-temple Judaism, as so many scholars argue, then it seems reasonable that behind the Matthean Jesus' defense against the opinion (*Μὴ νομίσητε*) that he came to *καταλύσαι* the Torah is the Matthean community's Pharisaic opponents' attempt to blame the Matthean community for bringing God's wrath on the temple because of their Jesus-taught Torah practice. This accusation would discredit the Matthean community's founding figure (i.e., Jesus) and any effort the community makes to create disciples that are to do all that Jesus instructed them to do (cf. Matt 28:19–20). There could be no greater accusation and form of discrediting in a world where people sought leadership for how to be obedient to God in wake of the temple's destruction.

134 Note that the author of John's Gospel clarifies/qualifies the tradition that Jesus said he would destroy (*λύσατε*) the temple and rebuild it in three days by stating that he was speaking about his body. Therefore, it is not until after Jesus' resurrection that they understood what he was saying (John 2:19–22). Concerning Christian texts responding to Jesus and the destruction of the Second Temple, see Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 382.

In light of the seriousness of the charge of *καταλύω*, Matthew uses the programmatic statement to address head-on¹³⁵ the accusation that he and his community follow the teachings of an abolisher of the Torah and, therefore, one who brought divine wrath upon Jerusalem and the temple.¹³⁶ The Matthean Jesus states emphatically¹³⁷ that he did not come to *καταλῦσαι* the Torah and prophets (i.e., act in a manner that annuls the totality of God’s precepts) but to *πληρῶσαι* (i.e., do and teach proper Torah observance; Matt 5:17). He then assures the lasting validity of every aspect of the Torah (Matt 5:18), warns teachers not to annul (*λύσῃ*) even the least significant of the commandments (Matt 5:19), and requires that his audience is obedient to the Torah at a higher level than the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:20). Finally, the Matthean Jesus follows these statements of his fulfilment and protection of the entire Torah with the six antitheses, which demonstrate and prove that he fulfils the Torah. Matthew takes the accusation of *καταλύω* very seriously and makes sure that it is refuted with the very first thing Jesus says about the Torah.

That the “presupposed opinion” of abolishment in Matthew 5:17 concerns blame for the destruction of the temple is further supported by Matthew’s careful use and redaction of the occurrences of *καταλύω* in his inherited Markan source (cf. Matt 24:2 // Mark 13:2; Matt 26:61 // Mark 14:58; Matt 27:40 // 15:29). Jesus is ultimately

135 By “head-on” I do not necessarily mean Matthew was trying to convince his opponents. Rather, he was addressing the issue “head-on” for the sake of his group members or those interested in joining. As Foster, *Community, Law and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel*, 164, states, “Matthew continues this defence [from 5:17–20], which in all likelihood has the pastoral function of consolidating the beliefs of group members rather than convincing adversaries, by presenting the examples contained in the antitheses.”

136 Thiessen, “*Abolishers of the Law*,” 554. The accusation that Christians did not follow the Torah was a polemic that continued into the patristic era; for further discussion see Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 237–246. I reject Deines’, “Not the Law but the Messiah,” 73–74, suggestion that Matt 5:17 is responding to the potential questions raised by assigning righteousness to people, through the Beatitudes, without mentioning the Torah (Matt 5:6, 10) or assigning them a position comparable with prophets (i.e., salt and light; Matt 5:11–16). Are the Beatitudes in conflict with the values of the Torah or the Prophets? Could Matthew have really felt anxiety over the Beatitudes being perceived as slighting the Torah?

137 Jesus states twice in a row that he did not come to “*καταλῦσαι*” the Torah (Matt 5:17). The double denial gives the greatest emphasis to the fact that Jesus does not abolish the Torah; see Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:104–105. This points to the seriousness of the charge of “*καταλύω*” in Second Temple and late first-century Judaism.

sentenced to death on the accusation that he claimed he has the ability to destroy (καταλύσαι; the same infinitive form as in Matt 5:17) the temple (Matt 26:61; 27:40; cf. 24:2) and that he is the Son of God (Matt 26:63–66).¹³⁸ However, Matthew's redaction of Jesus' trial reveals his sensitivity to the association of Jesus with the temple's destruction as well as the seriousness of an accusation connected with καταλύω.

In Matthew's depiction of the trial, the Sanhedrin never attempts an honest trail, but tries to find false witness against Jesus from the start (Matt 26:59; vv.2–5; cf. Acts 6:13).¹³⁹ Ironically, seeking false witness now makes the Sanhedrin collectively abolishers of the Torah; not Jesus (cf. Exod 20:16; Deut 5:20).¹⁴⁰ However, Matthew has already established in verses 22:15–40 that there is no other way to bring a charge against Jesus, especially with regard to the Torah.¹⁴¹ Therefore, while in Mark the Sanhedrin fails “because of the false witness,” in Matthew, as indicated by the genitive absolute (πολλῶν προσελθόντων ψευδομαρτύρων), the Sanhedrin fails “despite the false witnesses.”¹⁴² The issue at hand for the Sanhedrin in Matthew's Gospel is finding a false testimony that is grave enough to sentence Jesus to death, rather than finding true testimony (cf. Matt 28:11–15). As Gundry notes,

[The genitive absolute πολλῶν προσελθόντων ψευδομαρτύρων] has made the falsity of the testimony something in spite of which the authorities did not find what they wanted rather than a reason for their failing to find what they wanted (so Mark with γάρ). According to Matthew false testimony is what they wanted. “And testimonies were not in agreement” [i.e., Mark 14:56b] also disappears, because in Matthew the Sanhedrin does not face the problem of discovering true testimony, but the problem of finding false testimony serious enough to excuse putting Jesus to death.

138 The two issues appear to go together (cf. Matt 27:40).

139 Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 383, states that from Matthew's perspective the trial is a “sham.”

140 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:523–524.

141 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 144.

142 So *ibid.*, “the genitive absolute πολλῶν προσελθόντων ψευδομαρτύρων in v. 60a is to be read as concessive.” See also Gundry, *Matthew*, 541–542.

In 26:60b, however, Matthew does not specifically state that the final two witnesses, who accuse Jesus of claiming the ability to destroy the temple, are false. As a result, scholars question if Matthew, opposite Mark 15:57, is suggesting that this testimony is true. Most scholars conclude that it is a true testimony.¹⁴³ After all, the pentateuchal requirements of two agreeing witnesses is met (compare Matt 26:60b with Deut 17:6; 19:15). This would mean, however, that Jesus is indeed an “abolisher” of the temple or at least boasts about doing it. This conclusion seems strange when considering the pains Matthew took to disassociate Jesus with *καταλύω* in the programmatic statement (Matt 5:17–20). Contrary to the majority of scholars Konradt makes three observations that suggest Matthew has a more nuanced opinion about the last two witnesses' accusation against Jesus.

First, Jesus never says the statement the witnesses ascribe to him in verse 26:61. This in itself flags the statement as false. Moreover, even though Matthew has dropped Mark's *ἔψευδομαρτύρου* (Mark 14:57), *προσελθόντες* in verse 26:60a “closely connects the appearance of the final two witnesses with the preceding genitive absolute.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, just using *εἶπαν*, rather than writing *ἔψευδομαρτύρου* again is a stylistic move by Matthew “in order to avoid a stylistically bothersome repetition following *ἐζήτουν ψευδομαρτυρίαν* (v. 59) and *ψευδομαρτύρων* (v. 60).”¹⁴⁵ Matthew has already made it abundantly clear that these witnesses are a product of the search for a weighty false witness.

Second, even though Jesus never says the statement in verse 26:61, “one can at least find points of reference for the logion in Jesus' ministry.”¹⁴⁶ Jesus never negates the temple (cult) out right, but he does offer some critiques.¹⁴⁷ Jesus

143 See Gundry, *Matthew*, 542; Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:525; Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:798; and, more tentatively, R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 1 (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 383; but, in contrast, Talbert, *Matthew*, 295, states, “Matthew has no such saying attributed to Jesus. Hence, he regards this as false testimony.”

144 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 144.

145 *Ibid.*, 144–145.

146 *Ibid.*, 145.

147 *Ibid.*

subordinates the temple to his authority or the kingdom's authority (Matt 12:5–7), critiques the way the temple is run (Matt 21:12–13), states that Jerusalem's temple (οἶκος ὑμῶν) will be left desolate (Matt 23:38), and that not one stone will be left upon another for they will be καταλυθήσεται (Matt 24:2). This last statement is presumably said privately to the disciples, but Jesus' statement that the temple would be left desolate (Matt 23:38) was said publicly in the temple.¹⁴⁸ In light of these observations “the connection between Jesus and the destruction of the temple, as it is articulated in 26:61, is not plucked out of thin air.”¹⁴⁹ This adds sensitivity to the issue and is probably one of the reasons why Matthew is adamant about removing the connection between Jesus' teaching on the Torah and abolishment in Matthew 5:17–20. The temple does fall under judgement and is condemned to be destroyed, but the Matthean Jesus, pins the blame on Pharisees and their scribes. Responsibility for the temple's destruction is a live issue in Matthew's Gospel.

Third, and finally, Konradt rightly notes that, while Mark 14:58 concerns Jesus' “intention” to destroy the temple (ἐγὼ καταλύσω), Matthew 26:61 concerns Jesus' “ability” to destroy the temple (δύναμαι καταλύσαι).¹⁵⁰ The issue is not replacing the temple with one made without human hands (Mark 14:58), “but rather with the capability to *restore* it in three days.”¹⁵¹ Underlying a claim of ability is a claim to one's authority or claim to an authoritative status such as Messiah or Son of God. When Jesus during his trial provides no answer to the accusation that he can destroy and rebuild the temple, the high priest then raises this underlying issue of authoritative status. He demands that Jesus state whether or not he is the Messiah the Son of God (Matt 26:62–63). The claim to be able to destroy and rebuild the temple and being the Son of God are bound by the logical connection that one's ability proves one's authority.¹⁵²

148 Jesus enters the temple in Matt 21:23 and does not leave until 24:1.

149 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 145.

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid.

152 Konradt, *ibid.*, 146, notes that, when Jesus first entered the temple, that is, when he cleansed it (Matt 21:12–13), he began healing the sick, which caused the children to proclaim his messianic status as the Son of David (Matt 21:14–15). This in turn caused the chief priests and scribes to

The connection between the authoritative claim of being the Son of God and the ability, in this case, to destroy and rebuild the temple in three days is illuminated further when they are once again coupled in the mocking of Jesus on the cross. Passers-by taunt Jesus saying that if he claimed such an incredible ability as destroying and rebuilding the temple in three days and if he is truly God's Son¹⁵³ then he should certainly have the ability to save himself by coming down from the cross (Matt 27:39–40).¹⁵⁴ The scribes, chief priests, and elders also join in the mockery of Jesus' authoritative status as Son of God and his ability to act authoritatively in the current circumstance. They state that since he saved others he should be able to save himself and that if he is God's Son he should simply have God rescue him (Matt 27:42–43). The connection between authoritative status and ability is punctuated by these leaders' jest that they will believe in Jesus, that is, to confirm and accept his authoritative status, if he saves himself (Matt 27:42). That is, saving himself would demonstrate the ability of one having authority.¹⁵⁵ Here, the full menace and the complete falsity of the accusation against Jesus comes to bear. Jesus is accused of the inability to do something that he has the ability to do, but it is not something that he said he would do. This accusation allows his mockers to make a deduction that is built on a false premise: if Jesus can destroy the temple as he “claimed,” then he could get off this cross, but he cannot get off the cross so he must not be able to the destroy and rebuild the temple, nor is he the Son of God. This type of mockery would

intervene in a hostile fashion. “Already in the context of Jesus' temple-critical activity, then, his messianic authority—here articulated in the title Son of David—is at issue, and the composition of Matt 21:23–22:46, as we have seen, continues this very aspect.” In other words, Jesus’ “ability” to do something, in this case heal, causes some to recognise his authority (i.e., the children) and others to question it (i.e., the scribes and chief priests). In either case, Jesus' ability to do something is connected with his authoritative title as the Davidic Messiah.

153 Matthew has added εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ to his Markan source in order to re-emphasise the connection between Jesus' claims to authoritative status and ability established in Matt 26:61–63.

He also adds it to the mockery uttered by the elders, chief priests, and scribes (Matt 27:43).

154 As Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1197, states, “the main thing is the contrast between Jesus' grandiose claims to power and the sorry state in which he now is.”

155 Similar logic plays out earlier in the Gospel during Jesus' interaction with the paralysed man (Matt 9:2–8). Jesus is accused of blasphemy for claiming to forgive the paralysed man's sin (Matt 9:2–3). Jesus, therefore, heals the man to demonstrate his authority as the Son of Man (Matt 9:4–7). As a result, the crowds, understanding the connection between ability and authority, interpret the healing as God giving Jesus this authority (Matt 9:8).

be less poignant from Matthew's perspective if Jesus really said he could destroy the temple.

In light of these observations, Konradt's conclusion concerning the last two witnesses' accusation is convincing,

These pieces of evidence, taken together, suggest a nuanced answer to the question of whether 26:61 presents false testimony. There is an element of truth in the statement: Jesus is critical of the temple as it stands under the leadership of the Jerusalem authorities, has proclaimed its destruction, and in fact possesses the authority ascribed to him. It is nevertheless false testimony in that Jesus has not said *he* will destroy the temple, much less “bragged” of the ability to do so. “Showy” miracles are not his thing [cf. 12:38–42; 16:1–4].¹⁵⁶

Matthew has done careful editorial work to distance Jesus from the accusation that he “will” destroy the temple¹⁵⁷ and to falsify any claim that Jesus caused the temple to be “abolished” (*καταλύω*). More importantly, however, Matthew has accomplished this without compromising Jesus' authority: Jesus never says whether or not he *can* destroy and rebuild the temple in three days, but he does confirm that he is the Son of God¹⁵⁸ and that he will take his place as the Son of Man seated next to the Almighty (Matt 26:63–64). Jesus is in no way an abolisher in Matthew's Gospel, he is a “fulfiller” (*πληρόω*). His teaching meets every challenge concerning the Torah (Matt 22:15–40), and all accusations that he “abolishes” are either openly denied (*Μὴ νομίσητε*; cf. Matthew 5:17), come from a false source (Matt 26:60–61), or are on the lips of slanderers (Matt 27:39–40).

In light of Matthew's careful handling of *καταλύω* throughout his Gospel, especially with its significance in contexts concerning the temple's destruction, and the use of (*κατα*)λύω in Second Temple literature, it is reasonable to conclude that Matthew, in the programmatic statement (Matt 5:17–20), is refuting the claim that

156 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 146.

157 As Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 379, states, “Matthew softens Mark 14:58.”

158 So Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:528, “Matthean usage encourages one to think the words [i.e., *σὺ εἶπας* in v26:64] positive.”

Jesus' teachings (and the practices of the Matthean community) have abolished the Torah and subsequently brought divine wrath upon the temple and Jerusalem. This is also substantiated by the fact that Matthew not only deflects this charge from Jesus, but also spins the blame of the temple's destruction around on the scribes and Pharisees.¹⁵⁹ Insults thrown reveal the attacks one received. That is to say, whatever the Matthean Jesus charges the scribes and Pharisees with may indicate the similar types of insults Matthew or his community have been subjected to. Thus, throughout the entirety of his Gospel, Matthew systematically de-legitimises the scribes and Pharisees culminating in the assertion that they are guilty for the defilement of temple and that they have ensured its impending destruction because they mislead the people of Israel with improper Torah interpretation and shed innocent blood on the altar (Matt 23:1–39).¹⁶⁰

The Pharisees along with the scribes are Jesus' primary opponents in Matthew's Gospel. While Jesus never specifically calls them “abolishers” of the Torah, he does offer numerous criticisms that characterises their approach to the Torah as both unformed by Scripture (Matt 9:13; 12:3, 5; 19:4; cf. 21:16 and 22:31) and amounting to lawlessness (*ἀνομίας*, Matt 23:28 cf. 24:10–12). The Matthean Jesus' most acute criticism of the scribes and Pharisees follows the defence of his own authority and teaching in temple against Israel's ruling class (Matt 22:15–40). Meeting every challenge, Jesus then goes on the offensive and publicly criticises the integrity and practices of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23:1–39). Even though in the public domain the scribes and Pharisees have a place of authority (i.e., the Seat of Moses; Matt 23:2) and appear outwardly to adhere to the Torah, they are not to be

159 As Saldarini, “Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23,” 666, states, “against the program of emerging rabbinic Judaism the author of Matthew sought to establish and legitimate his form of Christian Judaism by a two-pronged attack, a detailed and lengthy exposition of his outlook and way of life, and a denigration of his opponents' type of Jewish thought and practice.” Also, Saldarini (page 667) states, “the final product, chap. 23 with its seven woes, its mocking of Jewish practices, and its exaggerated accusations against the authorities, is an attempt to delegitimize them in the eyes of the whole Jewish community.”

160 Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 243–244, see also 11, 317–326. See also David M. Moffitt, “Righteous Bloodshed, Matthew's Passion Narrative, and the Temple's Destruction: Lamentations as a Matthean Intertext,” *JBL* 125/2 (2006): 319–320.

imitated since they do not do what they claim to do (Matt 23:3). Jesus systematically challenges and thereby compromises various aspects of their religious system and reveals to all that they fail to adhere to the Torah because they are blind guides who neglect the most important aspects of the Torah (Matt 23:16–17, 19, 23–24; cf. 15:14). The scribes and Pharisees, not Jesus,¹⁶¹ are the ones whose teaching misleads people, even straight to hell (Matt 23:15). Jesus does not call the scribes and Pharisees abolishers specifically, but he does sarcastically command them to *πληρώσατε* (i.e., the counterpart to *καταλύω* in the programmatic statement; cf. Matt 5:17) the measure of their fathers (Matt 23:32). This kind of fulfilment is not the positive fulfilment of scripture that Matthew so often attributes to Jesus. Rather, it is the murder of God's prophets (Matt 23:31). As Saldarini notes,

“Fulfill” is used often by Matthew to describe Jesus' relation to the Bible and Jewish history and to legitimate his views and standing on the basis of the Bible. Here he uses the same word to reject the legitimacy of the Jewish leaders.¹⁶²

Jesus goes on to predict that the scribes and Pharisees will be guilty for the killing and persecution of Jesus' followers (Matt 23:34). As a result, this generation, that is, the Pharisees and other leaders of Israel,¹⁶³ will be guilty for all the righteous blood that has been spilt from the murders they committed between the temple and altar (Matt 23:35–36). The mention of (innocent/righteous) blood connects the Pharisees guilt with the guilt of Jesus' death (Matt 27:25).¹⁶⁴ Matthew is tactfully associating the scribes and Pharisees as closely as possible with defilement of the temple and the

161 After Jesus' crucifixion, the Pharisees warn Pilate to guard Jesus' grave for three days. They call Jesus a deceiver (*ὁ πλάνοσ*) and state that his disciples might steal his body to prove the resurrection. This, the Pharisees suggests, would be an even greater deception (*πλάνη*) than his first deception (presumably the deception of claiming to be the Son of God and his ministry in general, cf. Matt 27:62–66). This presumably reflects de-legitimising claims against Matthew's community by Matthew's opponents.

162 Saldarini, “Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23,” 678.

163 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 226–244.

164 *Ibid.*, 233–239; Saldarini, “Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23,” 677–678; and, Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 79n89.

holy altar, which they apparently already disregard through their poor practice of oath taking (Matt 23:16–22). Again, defilement of the temple is exactly the thing Josephus and the authors of 2 and 4 Maccabees saw as resulting in divine wrath on the temple.

Jesus' critique of the scribes and Pharisees has progressed from accusing them of failing to properly follow the Torah to accusing them of defiling the temple with the blood of God's righteous.¹⁶⁵ The Matthean Jesus then brings his criticism against the scribes and Pharisees to its logical conclusion with a lament over Jerusalem and the temple (Matt 23:37–39). Here Jesus laments Jerusalem as a city that kills prophets and stones messengers, which are two of the four groups (messengers, prophets, wise men, and scribes) the scribes and Pharisees are credited with killing (compare Matt 23:34 and 23:37). Jesus then states that Jerusalem's "house" (ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν i.e., the temple) is left desolate, which, as verses 24:1–2 suggests, is most likely a reference to the coming destruction in 70 CE.¹⁶⁶ The placement of the Jerusalem lament at the end of the Jesus' criticisms uttered against the scribes and Pharisees, along with the repetition of the persecution of prophets and messengers, pins the responsibility of the temple's destruction on the scribes and Pharisees and the rest of Israel's leaders (cf. Matt 22:2–7, which precedes the Jerusalem lament). Konradt states,

The seamless connection of the saying against Jerusalem in 23:37–39 with the discourse of woes against the *scribes and Pharisees* and, above all, the phrase ἔλθῃ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς πᾶν αἷμα δίκαιον ... (formed by Matthew in 23:35 as a parallel to 27:25), in turn confirm the interpretation of 27:25 [that] ... Matthew reads the destruction of Jerusalem as a judgment upon the opponents of Jesus, upon the murderers of prophets, as well as upon those who let themselves be

165 Again, Josephus notes that some Jewish people entered the holy places "with hands yet hot from the blood of their countrymen" (*J.W.* 4.183). The connection with inappropriate blood and defilement of the temple is analogous.

166 As Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:322, state, "scholars have debated whether 'your house' refers to the temple, to Jerusalem, or to 'the house of Israel.' In view of 21:13 ('my house') and 24:1–2, one thinks first of the temple, which is no longer God's house but, ironically, 'your house.' But we must add that Jewish texts—such as Ezra and 2 Baruch—do not always distinguish between the temple and the capital. Quite often the one implies the other and there are indiscriminate transitions from temple to city or *vice versa*, so that one may often speak of their identification."

seduced by these men into opposition against Jesus (27:20), but not as a judgment upon Israel in general. The actual driving forces here are the authorities. As in the case of Jerusalem, they carry away into ruin those whom they have seduced [cf. 23:15]. The seamless connection of the saying against Jerusalem in 23:37–39 with the preceding woes reflects this association.¹⁶⁷

From John the Baptist's condemnation (Matt 3:7–12) to Jesus' numerous conflicts over the authority to heal and interpret the Torah (e.g., Matt 9:2–8; 12:1–14; 15:1–11; 19:3–9; 22:15–46), Matthew has systematically de-legitimised the different leaders of Israel, but most of all the scribes and Pharisees. He uses the critiques against the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23:1–36) and the coming destruction of Jerusalem (Matt 23:37–39) to also de-legitimise his opponents.¹⁶⁸ This fits well with our analysis of the threefold occurrence of *καταλύω* and *λύω* in Matthew's programmatic statement (Matt 5:17–20). Behind the arguments over the authority of an approach to the Torah is the issue of the temple's destruction. Matthew carefully refutes the claim that Jesus was an “abolisher” and—tacitly—the cause of the temple's destruction, and slings the same accusation back at the leaders of Israel, particularly the scribes and Pharisees. Their teaching is hypocrisy, false, and should be avoided.¹⁶⁹ The ultimate proof of these accusations, according to Matthew, is the scribes and Pharisees' association with the defilement and coming destruction of the temple. While the association with the temple's impending destruction is the culmination of Matthew's critique against the scribes and Pharisees, he has already indicted their teaching within his programmatic statement on the Torah. With the same stroke of the hand, Matthew repels the accusation that Jesus is an abolisher and depicts the scribes and Pharisees as inadequate teachers of the Torah. Jesus' teaching is the “fulfilment” and preservation of the Torah and Prophets (Matt 5:17–18), those who do and teach these commandments are great in the kingdom (Matt 5:19b), those who break these

167 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 233.

168 Ibid., 165, presuming, of course, that “the way Matthew has shaped his narrative reflects an actual conflict between the community and the synagogue dominated by Pharisees.” In support of this view, see Saldarini, “Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23,” 662.

169 Jesus tells his disciples to be on guard against the leaven (i.e., teaching) of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 16:5–12).

commandments are least in the kingdom (Matt 5:19a), and those who stoop to the standard of the scribes and Pharisees' righteousness will not even be allowed to enter (Matt 5:20, cf. 23:13).¹⁷⁰

Matthew's account of Jesus' Davidic-messianic ministry has been greatly inflected by the destruction of the Second Temple. His interpretations of the Torah around the person of Jesus and his ministry of fulfilment do not only provide a lasting context for the practice of Torah (Matt 5:18–19) but also serve as a response to scribal and Pharisaic rivals. Blame for the Second Temple's destruction is an important element for substantiating one approach to the Torah over another. The scribes and Pharisees, *according to Matthew*, are guilty for all unjust killings in the temple and ultimately Jesus' crucifixion. God's disapproval of their actions is proven by the defilement and subsequent destruction of the Second Temple. The scribes and Pharisees' teaching is something to avoid (Matt 16:11–12), but, in contrast, Jesus' teaching produces the righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 5:20). Having reviewed how Matthew removes the blame for the temple's destruction from Jesus' teaching, we are now in a position to examine the writing strategies he uses to positively affirm Jesus' Torah interpretation as the fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter it was argued that Matthew is concerned with the destruction that Israel has encountered and continues to face. This includes the destruction caused by the Babylonian exile all the way to the destruction of the Second Temple. Such ongoing destruction is the lens through which Matthew views the ministry of Jesus of

170 Evans rightly notes that, for Matthew, “δικαιοσύνη” functions as a sectarian indicator. Indeed, by distinguishing the righteousness that Jesus demands from the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, Matthew is creating separation from his parent social group. As the analyses above shows, Matthew is not merely creating sectarian separation, but is also legitimising Jesus and de-legitimising his primary narrative opponents. See Evan’s full discussion in Craig A. Evans, “Fulfilling the Law and Seeking Righteousness in Matthew and in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Jesus, Matthew's Gospel and Early Christianity: Studies in Memory of Graham N. Stanton*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner, Joel Willitts, and Richard A. Burridge, LNTS (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 111–112.

Nazareth. Matthew depicts Jesus' ministry of healing and teaching as the Davidic Messiah shepherding his sheep and the fulfilment of Israel's hopes for restoration from the destruction suffered from exile. This depiction was evidenced by the presence of four key elements in Matthew's Gospel that are common to other Jewish texts that hope for an end of exile. Moreover, in light of these elements, the Matthean community's mission to the gentiles is demonstrably an extension of this restorative ministry, rather than a break from it. In this sense, Matthew's revelation of the story of Jesus' Davidic-messianic ministry to Israel has been inflected by the destruction of the exile.

The destruction of the Second Temple is also incorporated into Matthew's message about Jesus and his ministry of fulfilment. Teaching, along with healing, is a primary component of Jesus' restorative ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew, however, defends against the accusation that Jesus' teaching is the “abolishment” of the Torah and Prophets. We saw that this accusation, articulated with the use of *(κατα)λύω*, was used to place blame for the temple's destruction on an individual or group. Matthew, therefore, depicts Jesus as fulfilling and preserving the Torah through events in his life and his teaching. The scribes and Pharisees, on the other hand, are depicted as perpetuating faulty teaching about the Torah and are ultimately responsible for the defilement and impending destruction of the temple. Although the temple is defiled, abandoned by God, and doomed to destruction, Jesus restores divine encounter by being a manifestation of God's presence (Matt 1:23), restoring the covenant (Matt 26:28a), offering atonement (Matt 26:28b), and teaching the way that leads to life (Matt 7:13–14). The scribes and Pharisees, on the other hand, teach the way that leads to hell (Matt 23:15, 33). Matthew's depiction of Jesus as a teacher and fulfiller of the Torah, therefore, is truly inflected by the defilement and pronounced destruction of the temple.

Returning to the question raised at the beginning of this chapter, we have observed that Matthew does indeed share similar concerns as other Second Temple Jews seeking to restore divine encounter and offer an avenue to faithful communion

with God in wake of the destruction that has come upon Israel. Therefore, if Matthew's approach to divine encounter through Jesus is invested in Israel's story, even inflected by the destruction Israel has faced (both in the distant past, i.e., the exile, and the recent past, i.e., the destruction of the Second Temple), then we can assume that he will seek to root his interpretations of the Torah in Scripture using similar writing strategies for interpreting the Torah as other Second Temple texts.

Thus, the following chapter will examine the writing strategies Matthew uses to participate in Mosaic Discourse. Participation in Mosaic Discourse serves as a means for Matthew to substantiate Jesus' fulfilment of the Torah as an authoritative representation and extension of the revelation received at Sinai, rather than breaching it.

CHAPTER 3: MOSAIC DISCOURSE

It is clear that the Torah mediated by Moses at Mount Sinai is not fixed, closed, and settled at the termination of Moses' work. The Torah as mediation includes an open-ended dynamic and an ongoing vitality that goes beyond Moses, albeit with the enduring authority of Moses.¹

The Gospel of Matthew is noted for its sophisticated and extensive use of Scripture, especially its theory of the fulfillment of Scripture expressed in the dozen formula quotations. In addition to explicit quotations, the narrative is undergirded by a web of allusions to the Bible and its characters and events. Biblical figures, roles, and events that were culturally familiar to Matthew's readers are mobilized in the background, language, and style of the narrative and give it a familiar sound and cultural legitimacy.²

Introduction

The previous chapters pursued a broad look at the phenomenon of interpreting the Torah through written texts in the Second Temple period and then investigated how Matthew's Gospel fit within the framework of this phenomenon. It was shown that the interpretation of Torah is part of the larger project of restoring divine encounter in the midst of the perpetuating destruction caused by the exile. Matthew's text exhibits a keen awareness of this destruction, including the destruction of the Second Temple, and forms his message of Jesus and his ministry in light of it. Matthew depicts Jesus' ministry of teaching and healing to the lost sheep of the House of Israel as the fulfillment of Israel's exilic hopes and expectations. It was also observed that the teaching component of Jesus' ministry, especially in the programmatic statement, addresses the charge that Jesus abolishes (*καταλύω*) the Torah and is responsible for the destruction of the temple. In response, Matthew deflects this accusation onto the leaders of Israel with special attention given to the scribes and Pharisees. This chapter will now examine how Matthew affirms Jesus' teaching on the Torah as God's divine will. Although Jesus makes several halakhic claims about pentateuchal laws and other traditions throughout Matthew's Gospel, we will restrict our

1 Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 583.

2 Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 182.

discussion to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount since its programmatic function affects the analysis of all other halakhic statements in the Gospel.³ It is here that Matthew frames the programmatic statement (Matt 5:17–20) and antitheses (Matt 5:21–48) with several writing strategies that depict Jesus and his teaching as the authoritative expression of the Torah. Furthermore, it will be argued that these writing strategies weave Jesus' teaching on the Torah into the vitality of Mosaic and Sinaitic authority and tradition.

Echoes of Moses have long since been detected in Matthew's Gospel.⁴ The meaning, significance, and presence of Moses in Matthew's Gospel, however, persisted as a topic of debate for modern scholarship.⁵ This debate has substantially subsided⁶ as a result of Dale Allison's treatment of Matthew's Moses typology in his formative work *The New Moses*.⁷ Allison, through the analysis of intertextual allusions, persuasively argues for the existence of a “new Moses” typology within Matthew's Gospel. The working pre-supposition, now commonly held, is that Matthew is indeed evoking the figure of Moses when Jesus ascends the mountain to speak about the Torah and Prophets in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1–7:12).⁸

3 Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 126–127.

4 As early as the nineteenth century Holtzman wrote about both the parallels between Herod and Pharaoh and the parallels between Jesus and Moses in Matthew's Gospel; see H. J. Holtzman, *Lehrbuch Der Historisch-Kritischen Einleitung in Das Neue Testament*, 3rd ed. (Freiburg im Breslau: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1892), 397.

5 For scholars who down-play the existence of a New Moses typology in Matthew's Gospel, see Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (London: SPCK, 1976); Roger Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul: A Comparison of Ethical Perspectives*, SNTSMS 48 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Terence L. Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain: A Study in Matthean Theology*, JSNTSup 8 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990). For scholars who emphasise a Moses typology, see B. W. Bacon, *The Sermon on the Mount: Its Literary Structure and Didactic Purpose* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1902); W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, BJS 186 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989); and M. D. Goulder, *Type and History in Acts* (London: SPCK, 1964), 2–6.

6 The meaning of Moses' role in Matthew is still pondered, but whether or not there is in fact a Moses typology in Matthew's Gospel is no longer debated.

7 Allison, *The New Moses*.

8 For example, see Charles H. Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Decision Making in Matthew 5–7* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 14–15; Loader, *Jesus' Attitude Towards the Law*, 162; Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission in Matthew's Gospel*, 95; Burrige, *Imitating Jesus*, 190; Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 236; Barth, “Matthew's Understanding of the Law,” 158; and Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew*, 64–65.

Allison's analysis remains a watershed in Matthean studies, but in the following chapter I will build on his work by arguing that Matthew's Moses typology is only a piece to a larger writing strategy. To be specific, Matthew's typology is one component of his participation in Mosaic Discourse. Mosaic Discourse is a concept developed by Hindy Najman that refers to way authors in the exilic and post-exilic periods updated and augmented the figure of Moses and the Torah to meet the needs of their particular circumstances. Mosaic Discourse has certain features that its participants used as strategies to present their texts as authoritative expressions of Moses and the Torah in order to facilitate the continuation of Sinaitic revelation. In other words, by suggesting that Matthew "participates" in Mosaic Discourse I mean to say that he exhibits several of the same writing strategies that other texts use as well to substantiate a new presentation of Torah as an authoritative representation of the Sinaitic revelation given to Moses. These features will provide criteria to observe how Matthew inherited and developed the features of Mosaic Discourse in order to characterise Jesus and his teachings concerning Torah. This also provides a way to view Matthew as a participant and contributor in the ongoing use and transformation of the figure of Moses and his authority in Jewish tradition.

This chapter will proceed in four steps. First, Hindy Najman's concept of Mosaic Discourse will be reviewed. Second, the features of Mosaic Discourse will be examined in a select few texts from the Second Temple period. Third, we will examine Matthew's innovation of the four features of Mosaic Discourse. Fourth and finally, the implications of Jesus' relationship to the figure of Moses will be considered.

3.1 Mosaic Discourse Defined

Building on Michel Foucault's famous work "What is an Author,"⁹ Najman has developed the concept of viewing certain post-exilic and Second Temple texts that

9 Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?", in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 101–120.

evoke the figure of Moses as part of a discourse tied to a founder.¹⁰ Najman calls this process Mosaic Discourse. It creates a perspective that garners greater sensitivity and awareness to the ways in which these ancient texts used the function of authorship and the figure of Moses to claim authority. The alternative is often the subjection of these texts to modern notions of authorship and authority, which inevitably ends in viewing these “Mosaic” texts as pseudonymous forgeries.¹¹ Foucault reminds us, however, that “author function does not affect all discourses in a universal way.”¹² Rather, author function is socially and culturally nuanced.¹³

This can be observed in the way literary texts—that is, narratives, stories, epics, and so forth—were evaluated prior to and after the Enlightenment. Literary texts formerly achieved recognition and acceptance without the identity of authorship. Ancientness, whether real or imagined, accounted for their status, thus rendering anonymity a moot issue.¹⁴ With the Enlightenment, however, the reverse was true. Literary texts, only required the author function to be accepted.¹⁵ Foucault states,

We now ask of each poetic or fictional text: From where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances, or beginning with what design? The meaning ascribed to it and the status or value accorded it depend on the manner in which we answer these questions. *And if a text should be discovered in a state of anonymity*—whether as consequence of an accident or

10 Najman also examines the development of Mosaic Discourse into rabbinic literature; see Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJSup 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 108–137. While this is a fascinating examination, the focus of this thesis will be on the development of Mosaic Discourse in the Second Temple period.

11 For further discussion of the moral implications that are concomitant with terminology like “rewritten bible” and “pseudepigraphy,” see *ibid.*, 4–8. Similarly, Sommer, *Revelation and Authority*, 243, notes that most scholars of religion describe the process of interpretation in the Bible and in rabbinic literature as rhetoric that seeks to conceal and camouflage the real history of laws that are being interpreted. Sommer suggests that this type of vernacular “could create a misimpression.” Sommer, in particular, has in mind Bernard M. Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 48.

12 Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 109.

13 So Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 6, states, “we have good reason to worry that biblical studies remain captive to an Enlightenment prejudice that should not be accepted without critical examination.”

14 Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 109.

15 *Ibid.*

the author's explicit wish—the game becomes one of rediscovering the author.¹⁶

This intolerance for anonymity emerges frequently in the pursuits of modern biblical scholarship. This comment, however, is not a jab at the discipline, for it has and continues to yield a vast and invaluable harvest of information. However, disregarding anonymity and pulling back the pseudonymous curtain to find the “true author” of these ancient Mosaic texts runs the risk of missing what these texts have to say, on their own terms, about themselves and the way author function worked in their context. Observing these texts' own conception of author function can greatly inform our understanding of the development and use of the figure of Moses in Second Temple Judaism. In turn, awareness of author function can expand our understanding of Matthew's Moses typology.

This raises an important question. Can it be demonstrated that there was a different concept of authorship operative when texts attributed to Moses were written?¹⁷ Such a demonstration would not only render some modern concepts anachronistic but it would also warrant using this newly rediscovered concept. What is required then, “is a reconstruction of the concepts operative at the time of the text's production and/or reception.”¹⁸

As an example of such a reconstruction, Najman examines the way the role of Moses functioned and developed in concepts of authorship and authority during the exilic and post-exilic periods.¹⁹ Specifically, she examines later Second Temple texts that participate in Mosaic Discourse. This discourse, she suggests, originates with the composition of Deuteronomy.²⁰ In Deuteronomy we find the expansion of Moses' role from earlier traditions, which is then continued in later biblical and para-biblical texts. There are two primary dimensions of Mosaic Discourse, they are as follows:

16 Ibid., 109–110, italics are mine.

17 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 10.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

- I. The authoritative law comes to be called the Torah or the Torah of Moses, and the list of laws under that heading is subject to expansion and augmentation.
- II. The figure of Moses becomes increasingly central and Moses himself is idealised in various ways linked to various notions of authority: for example, as prophet, as lawgiver, as divine amanuensis, as king and as divine man.²¹

Mosaic Discourse, therefore, observes “the connection between the Deuteronomic elaboration of the Torah and the figure of Moses, and the further elaboration of those dimensions of Mosaic authority in later Second Temple literature.”²² Moreover, as the originator of Mosaic Discourse, Deuteronomy serves as a model for subsequent texts that practiced pseudonymous attribution and rewriting.²³ This, however, raises a further question: “what is the alternative to seeing this long-term expansion of Moses’ role—this long history of pseudonymous attribution and rewriting—as a history of fraud and tampering?”²⁴ Najman suggests that one of Foucault’s examples of author function serves as a helpful modern analogy for comprehending the author function in Mosaic Discourse.²⁵ Foucault describes a type of author function that is more than an author of a text, but a “founder of discursivity.” Appealing to the modern examples of Freud and Marx, Foucault suggests “they are unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts.”²⁶ Theses are “discourses that are inextricably linked to their founders.”²⁷ When people proclaim “Back to Marx!” or “Back to Freud!,” they are in a sense claiming “to represent the *authentic* doctrine of Marx or Freud,” although they may express it in different words.²⁸

In modern times, people who claim to return to a founder’s discourse will author books under their own name. This, however, was not the case in ancient

21 Ibid., 10–11.

22 Ibid., 11–12.

23 Ibid., 12.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 113–114.

27 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 12.

28 Ibid.

cultures. In order to connect one's writing to a discourse it was necessary to ascribe one's text to a founder.²⁹ This idea of a discourse tied to a founder gives us in a modern context a helpful way to conceive of how the figure of Moses and the Mosaic Torah developed in Second Temple Judaism.³⁰ This concept provides a way to view the developments and reworking of older tradition, by the various participants in the discourse, as updating, interpreting, developing, and innovating in a way that “claims to be an authentic expression of the law already accepted as authoritatively Mosaic.”³¹ Najman states,

When what we might call a “new” law—perhaps even what we might regard as a significant “amendment” of older law—is characterized as the Law of Moses, this is not to imply that it is to be found within the actual words of an historical individual called Moses. It is rather to say that the implementation of the law in question would enable Israel to return to the authentic teaching associated with the prophetic status of Moses.³²

This is one way in which fragments of divine encounter associated with Moses were retrieved by those experiencing exile's rupture. Mosaic Discourse gave different groups the possibilities and rules to update the Torah for their particular context without abandoning the authentic teaching of Moses. Two points of clarification, however, need mentioning:

- I. To say that a number of texts, written over a long period of time, are members of a single Mosaic Discourse, is not merely to say that they exhibit intertextuality. It is also that these texts employ four features specific to the discourse.³³
- II. These features are not invariant and timeless. Rather, the strategies for employing them vary considerably and develop over time, in a way that

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., 13.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., 15–16.

leaves open the possibility of significant innovation. Thus, to be a participant in Mosaic Discourse, a text must either incorporate all four features or compensate appropriately for any missing feature.³⁴

These four features provide us with criteria to observe seemingly disparate texts that evoke the figure of Moses as part of a larger whole. The four features of Mosaic Discourse are as follows:

- I. By reworking and expanding older traditions through interpretation, a new text claims for itself the authority that already attaches to those traditions.
- II. The new text ascribes to itself the status of Torah. It may portray itself as having either a heavenly or an earthly origin, but in any event as an authentic expression of the Torah of Moses.
- III. The new text is said to be a re-presentation of the revelation at Sinai. There is repeated emphasis on gaining access to revelation through a re-creation of the Sinai experience. This strategy emphasizes the presentness of the Sinai event, even in the face of destruction and exile.
- IV. The new text is said to be associated with, or produced by, the founding figure, Moses. This claim serves to authorize the new interpretations as divine revelation or dictation and as prophecy or inspired interpretation. The new text can then be seen as an extension of earlier ancestral discourse.³⁵

These four features will now be observed in the originating text of Mosaic Discourse, Deuteronomy, as well as two texts commonly referenced as “rewritten” bible: Jubilees and the Temple Scroll.³⁶ These texts will display the development of Mosaic

³⁴ Ibid., 16.

³⁵ Ibid., 16–17.

³⁶ Collins, *Scriptures and Sectarianism*, 45, suggests that Jubilees can be described as Mosaic Discourse “insofar as [it] claims to transmit revelation given to Moses on Mt. Sinai,” but he insists that it must be described as such in a qualified sense. Moses is not the speaker in Jubilees or the direct source of authority. Rather, he is a mediator, a transcriber of heavenly revelation. Therefore, Jubilees may more properly be described as angelic discourse or mediated divine discourse.

Discourse prior to Matthew's Gospel and as a result we will be able to observe the manner in which Matthew, with his typology and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, participates in Mosaic Discourse in order to cast his interpretations of the Torah as an extension of an earlier ancestral discourse.

3.2 Examples of Mosaic Discourse

3.2a Feature 1: Reworking and Expanding Older Traditions

Deuteronomy

A cursory comparison between Deuteronomy and earlier traditions quickly reveals that the Deuteronomists reworked numerous laws in their sources and in many cases connected them more thoroughly to the private and national life of its audience.³⁷ A prime example is the reworking of the Covenant Code (i.e. Exod 20:22–23:33; and Deut 12–26).³⁸ Perhaps the most apparent augmentation is the restriction of location

Likewise, concerning the Temple Scroll, Collins, *ibid.*, 48, states that it “is only ‘Mosaic discourse’ insofar as its content resembles the discourse of Moses in Deuteronomy.” According to Collins, it is “divine discourse.” Although these qualifications are important to make, they do not compromise the idea of a Mosaic discourse. The idea behind Mosaic Discourse is to observe the different ways Mosaic authority, at some level, was employed by different authors to validate their interpretations of the Torah. This does not mean that a text requires direct discourse from Moses. Rather, the concept of Mosaic Discourse provides a lens to observe how Moses and his Sinaitic setting are used to put Mosaic connotations on a text for the sake of authenticating it, whether as the main strategy for authenticating an interpretation of the Torah (e.g., Deuteronomy) or as a contributing factor for authenticating an interpretation of the Torah (e.g., Jubilees and the Temple Scroll). Indeed, even Lawrence H. Schiffman, who, distinguishes between “divine pseudepigraphon” and “Moses pseudepigraphon,” concedes that as the author/redactor of the Temple Scroll converted Deuteronomistic material into direct revelation they did so “possibly with Moses as a mouth piece;” see Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Temple Scroll and the Halakhic Pseudepigrapha of the Second Temple Period,” in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 January, 1997*, ed. Esther G. Chazon and Michael E. Stone, STDJ 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 131. In other words, Mosaic authority and a Mosaic setting is still an important strategy even for authorising a law text that presents God’s direct speech. As we will see, Matthew does not have direct Mosaic Discourse as such, but uses Mosaic connotations to authenticate his interpretations of the Torah in Jesus’ teaching on the Torah.

³⁷ See, G. I. Davies, “Introduction to the Pentateuch,” in Muddiman and Barton, *The Pentateuch*, 38–40; and Bultmann, “Deuteronomy,” 189–190.

for cultic practices. Compare Exodus 20:24 with Deuteronomy 12:13-14 (cf. Deut 12:5–6).

<p>24 מזבח אדמה תעשה־לי וזבחת עליו את־עלתיך ואת־שלמיך את־צאנך ואת־בקרך בכל־המקום אשר אזכיר את־שמי אבוא אליך וברכתיך:</p>	<p>You need make for me only an altar of earth and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your offerings of well-being, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you. (Exod 20:24)</p>
<p>13 השמר לך פן־תעלה עלתיך בכל־מקום אשר תראה: 14 כי אם־במקום אשר־יבחר יהוה באחד שבטיך שם תעלה עלתיך ושם תעשה כל אשר אנכי מצוה:</p>	<p>Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place you happen to see. But only at the place that the LORD will choose in one of your tribes—there you shall offer your burnt offerings and there you shall do everything I command you. (Deut 12:13–14)</p>

There is an ongoing debate between Najman, on the one hand, and Jeffrey Stackert and Bernard Levinson, on the other, concerning whether the Deuteronomists intended to supplement or replace earlier traditions.³⁹ While there are several nuances to these

38 This legal corpus is commonly called the “Covenant Code” on the basis, of Exod 24:7; see Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 273.

39 See Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 149–150, and Levinson, *Legal Revision*, 167; and Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, 211–225, for their arguments against Najman. Levinson and Stackert’s primary critique is that Najman is subjecting a “postbiblical” view on the intention of these texts, especially Deuteronomy. They argue that Deuteronomy not only reworks its literary sources but also dominates them. Accordingly, the Deuteronomists intended to walk a fine line: to those unfamiliar with the Covenant Code in Exodus, Deuteronomy simply subverts its sources and displays itself as the primary source of Sinaitic revelation, while, to those familiar with Exodus, Deuteronomy’s association with Exodus would be a point of validity. In this case, the eventual grouping of Deuteronomy and Exodus into the same Pentateuch went against the very intention of the Deuteronomists. Deuteronomy only looks like it was meant to supplement Exodus because later scribes eventually used these texts in this way. For a further discussion and a review of the

arguments, the debate itself does not compromise the concept of Deuteronomy initiating a discourse tied to Moses. It is at least clear that the Deuteronomic authors viewed their sources as prestigious, especially on account of their connection to Moses and Sinai, since they tried to build the authority of their new text on the authority of the older text. Benjamin D. Sommer notes,

[Biblical scribes] limited their innovations to changes within the legal system. Consequently, it is problematic to speak of radical subversion of prior authorities. The root and trunk of E's law code is not subverted by the D authors or the rabbis after them. Those sages confine themselves to reorienting the branches, pruning some leaves, and grafting a new stalk here or there. The tree remains in place, strengthened rather than uprooted, still available to those who hold fast to it and support it.⁴⁰

Jubilees

Jubilees exhibits the first feature of Mosaic Discourse by reworking and expanding older traditions from Genesis and Exodus. *Jubilees* interprets pentateuchal material in two ways. First, laws that occur elsewhere in the Pentateuch are woven into narratives that require further explanation. For example, *Jubilees* uses the episode of Reuben and Jacob's concubine Bilhah to explicitly prohibit sexual relations with the wife of one's father. Compare *Jubilees* 33:8–10 with Genesis 35:22.⁴¹

⁸Jacob was very angry at Reuben because he had lain with Bilhah [cf. Jub. 33:1–7], since he had uncovered the covering of his father. ⁹Jacob did not approach her again because Reuben had defiled her. As for any man who uncovers the covering of his father—his act is indeed very bad and it is indeed despicable before the Lord. ¹⁰For this reason it is written and ordained on the heavenly tablets that a man is not to lie with his father's wife and that he is not to uncover the covering of his father because it is impure. They are certainly to die together—the man who lies with his father's wife and the woman, too—because they have done something impure on the earth. (Jub. 33:8–10)⁴²

debate, see Collins, *Scriptures and Sectarianism*, 35–40.

40 Sommer, *Revelation and Authority*, 244. See also Michael Segal, “Between Bible and Rewritten Bible,” in Henze, *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, 11–12.

41 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 65.

22 ויהי בשכן ישראל בארץ ההוא וילך ראובן וישכב את-בלהה פילגש אביו וישמע ישראל	While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard of it. (Gen 35:22)
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As for Jubilees' second type of augmentation, laws that never occur in the Pentateuch are woven into pentateuchal narratives. For instance, Jubilees prohibits intermarriage on pain of death (Jub. 30:7; cf. 25:1–10; cf. Deut 7):⁴³

If there is a man in Israel who wishes to give his daughter or his sister to any foreigner, he is to die. (Jub. 30:7)⁴⁴

In contrast to the debate surrounding Deuteronomy's intentions, Jubilees' revisions of older traditions quite evidently function as interpretation and supplements rather than replacement. As VanderKam notes, the Pentateuch was already an established authority (albeit still a fluid text) when Jubilees was written and any attempt to replace it would be a dubious enterprise.⁴⁵ Jubilees even acknowledges the Pentateuch's existence (Jub. 6:22).⁴⁶

For I have written (this) in *the book of the first law* in which I wrote for you that you should celebrate it at each of its times one day in a year. (Jub. 6:22)⁴⁷

Temple Scroll

The Temple Scroll also expounds and expands biblical texts, but, unlike a commentary, it never indicates that it is doing so. It simply presents a considerable

42 James C. VanderKam, trans., *The Book of Jubilees*, CSCO 511, *Scriptores Aethiopici*, Tomus 88 (Lovanii: In Aedibus E. Peeters, 1989), 221.

43 Ibid.

44 See VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 511:193. All quotations of Jubilees will be taken from VanderKam's translation.

45 James C. VanderKam, 'Moses Trumping Moses: Making the Book of Jubilees,' in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, ed. Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller, STDJ 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 27–28.

46 Cf. Jub. 30:12.

47 VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 511:40. Italics are my addition.

amount of extra material as if it were given at Sinai.⁴⁸ For an example, numerous regulations for the monarchy are prescribed directly by God in 11Q19 56:12–59. These regulations are clear expansions and augmentations to Deuteronomy 17:14–20. The way the Temple Scroll reworks material also serves a practical purpose. In the Pentateuch, several related laws are often scattered throughout the five books. The Temple Scroll helpfully categorises and codifies various commands according to subject.⁴⁹

Again, it is difficult to know from our modern perspective if the Temple Scroll intended to stand alone or act as supplementation. Schiffman notes, however, that the Temple Scroll fails to mention several important laws (e.g., adultery and murder) in the traditions it rewrites.⁵⁰ This makes it unlikely that the Temple Scroll was intended to stand alone as an independent piece.⁵¹

3.2b Feature 2: Self-Ascribed Status of Torah

Deuteronomy

Concerning the second feature of Mosaic Discourse, Deuteronomy not only refers to itself as “Torah,” but it is also the only book in the Pentateuch to do so.⁵² Torah (תורה) is typically used elsewhere in the Pentateuch to characterise a law or collection of laws that feature or share a common subject matter. Used in this

48 Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll: The Hidden Law of the Dead Sea Sect* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), 64. Dwight D. Swanson, *The Temple Scroll and the Bible: The Methodology of 11QT* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 9–10, lists several helpful ways of categorising the compositional techniques the Temple Scroll uses when interacting with biblical texts. However, he rightly notes that there is not a fixed text in which the Temple Scroll was interacting. Moreover, one must take into account that the Temple Scroll could be interacting with a number of different (fluid) texts: the Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and the other various texts used in Qumran.

49 Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 73. Yadin’s assertion, however, that the Temple Scroll’s grouping may have influenced Josephus’ own categorising of the pentateuchal laws cannot be maintained.

50 Lawrence Schiffman, “The Theology of the Temple Scroll,” *JQR* 85 (1994): 110.

51 Schiffman, “The Temple Scroll and the Halakhic Pseudepigrapha of the Second Temple Period,” 121–131.

52 See Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 30; and Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 8.

manner, a Torah is “a conceptual unity.”⁵³ Deuteronomy, however, groups together instructions that lack conceptual unity as well as continuity of content and designates them as Torah (e.g., Deut 1:5; 4:44). To accommodate for the lack of unity in these grouped sections of disparate instructions the Deuteronomists use a deictic element, in this case the demonstrative, when referring to them as Torah (את־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת). As a linguistic device, a deictic element is often used when a conceptual designation is not available.⁵⁴ By using Torah with the deictic element, the Deuteronomists create a sense of unity and thereby designate literary boundaries for a group of seemingly unrelated laws. The Deuteronomists also uses the deictic element to tie these designated units of instruction together into larger groups, which in turn creates a sense of literary continuity throughout Deuteronomy resulting in the designation of the entire text as Torah.

Indeed, Deuteronomy is structured around four speeches or sets of instructions by Moses (Deut 1:1–4:43; 4:44–28:68; 29:1–30:20; 31:1–34:12). Speeches 1–3, which primarily concern the commandments and instructions of the covenantal Torah, are bracketed by the use of דְּבָרִים with the deictic element (Deut 1:1; 31:1). Deuteronomy 1:1 initiates Moses speaking “these words” (אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים) of the covenant and Torah and Deuteronomy 31:1 marks the completion of “these words” (אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה; LXX: πάντα τοὺς λόγους τούτους). Following the completion of “these words” Moses writes down “this Torah” (את־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת), which is to be read to all of Israel every seventh year (Deut 31: 9, 11). Thus, “these words,” that is, speeches 1–3 in Deuteronomy, are now designated as “this Torah.” The designation of “these words” as “this Torah” is made even more explicit when Moses finishes writing them down. The Deuteronomists state that Moses finished writing the “words of this Torah” (אֵת־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת) in a book (Deut 31:24, cf.

53 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 29.

54 Ibid., 30. See also Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O' Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 306, 312, who discuss the specifying function of a demonstrative as a deictic particle. Similarly, C. L. Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 104; and Joshua Blau, *Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew: An Introduction* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 176.

Scroll's final section is primarily reworked Deuteronomic material, so the deictic element's frequency is not a surprise.⁶¹ See for example 11QT 56:20–21.⁶²

20	והיה בשבתו על כסא ממלכתו וכתבו	And when he is sitting upon the throne of his kingdom, then they shall write
21	לֹא אֶת הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל סֵפֶר מִלְפְּנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים	for him this Torah in a book in the presence of the priests.

In addition to its self-ascription as Torah, the Temple Scroll also mimics Deuteronomy with its prohibition against altering the law commanded “today” (cf. Deut 12:32; 11QT 54:5–7):⁶³

5	כֹּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר	All the things which
6	אֲנוּכִי מִצֹּו(כ)ה הַיּוֹם תִּשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת לֹא תוֹסִיף עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא	I order you today you shall take care to do; you shall not add to them, and you shall not
7	תִּגְרַע מֵהֶם	subtract from them. (11Q19 54:5–7; cf. Deut 12:32).

Deuteronomy 17:18, but it is lacking in Temple Scroll 56:20–21 and 57:1. He suggests that (תורה) is therefore probably referring to the Temple Scroll (esp. “the Torah of the King’s authority,” cf. columns 57–59) and not the whole Pentateuch.

61 Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 261, states that the author of the *Temple Scroll* has “added his own Deuteronomic paraphrase at the end.” Columns 51–56 draw primarily from Deuteronomy 12–17 (while supplementing and harmonising with Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers), columns 57–59 (known as the Law of the King) expand Deuteronomy 17:14–20, and columns 60–66 closely follow Deuteronomy 18–22.

62 All texts and translations of the Temple Scroll are taken from James H. Charlesworth, ed., “Temple Scroll and Related Documents,” vol. 7 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations* (Tübingen; Louisville: Mohr Siebeck; Westminster John Knox Press, 2011).

63 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 52.

3.2c Feature 3: The Re-Presentation of Sinai

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy uses the third feature of Mosaic Discourse by having Moses' re-give the Sinai Covenant on the plains of Moab. Even though Moses' audience was not present at Sinai, Moses reassures them that the covenant is between Yahweh and those present before him, not their ancestors who were at the Sinai event.⁶⁴

לא את־אבותינו כרת יהוה את־הברית הזאת כי אתנו אנחנו אלה פה היום כלנו חיים:	3 Not with our ancestors did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. (Deut 5:3)
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Here Deuteronomy orients its exposition of Torah in a Sinaitic format. This allows Deuteronomy's audience to join in the Sinai covenant as their ancestors did. This gave Deuteronomy's audience a way to faithfully return to the covenant made at Sinai. Moreover, as made clear in Deuteronomy 30:1–5, commitment to the covenant made at Sinai was the key to getting out of exile.

Jubilees

Jubilees incorporates the third feature of Mosaic discourse by situating its opening context in Exodus 24, Moses' first forty-day stay on Sinai.

During the first year of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, in the third month—on the sixteenth of the month—the Lord said to Moses: “Come up to me on the mountain. I will give you the two stone tablets of the law and the commandments which I have written so that you may teach them.” (Jub. 1:1) ⁶⁵

64 Ibid., 32.

65 VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 511:1.

<p>12 ויאמר יהוה אל-משה עלה אלי ההרה והיה-שמ ואתנה לך את-לחת האבן והתורה והמצוה אשר כתבתי להורתם:</p>	<p>The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the Mountain, stay there, and let me give you the stone tablets with the law and commandment I have written down for their instruction.” (Exod 24:12)</p>
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Jubilees exceeds Deuteronomy’s re-presentation of Sinai on the plains of Moab by presenting itself as the actual Sinai event. Jubilees, however, takes an even bigger step as it gives a new orientation of Sinai itself. As Jubilees’ interpretations of biblical narratives suggest, some laws given at Sinai actually originated from the spontaneous actions of biblical characters in Genesis and Exodus. For instance, Abraham initiated the Feast of Booths after Isaac’s birth and circumcision. The commands at Sinai are then based on Abraham’s actions (Jub. 16:20–31).⁶⁶ Sinai itself, therefore, is actually a re-presentation of older laws established long ago.⁶⁷

Temple Scroll

The Temple Scroll, like Jubilees, also places the audience on Mount Sinai. As VanderKam states, “the Temple Scroll’s fragmentary beginning contains some words that recall the second covenant made on Mount Sinai” in Exodus 34.⁶⁸ Compare 11QT C2:1–7 and Exodus 34:11–13:

<p>1 אַנְי עוֹשׁ]ה</p>	[... I a]m about to d[o ...]
<p>2 [את הא]מורי</p>	[...]the A[morites ...]
<p>3 הגרגש]י ואת הפ]רזי</p>	[... Girgashit]es and the Pe[rizzites ...]
<p>4 הש]מר לכה פן תכרות בר]ית</p>	[... Gu]ard yourselves, lest you cut a cov[enant ...]

66 Jacques van Ruiten, *Abraham in the Book of Jubilees: The Rewriting of Genesis 11:26–25:10 in the Book of Jubilees 11:14–23:8*, JSJSup 161 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 193.

67 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 57; and Michael Segal, “Book of Jubilees,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 844.

68 VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, (Grand Rapids, MI; London: Eerdmans; SPCK, 1994), 59.

5 [בא אליהם פן יהיו למו]קש	to [...] are entering, lest they be a tr[ap ...]
6 מזבחון]תיהמה תתוצון ומציבות]יהמה	[...]their [altar]s you shall tear down and [their] megaliths[...]
7 אשריה]מה תכרותון ואת פסילי אל]והיהמה	[...]their [cultic poles] you shall cut down and the statutes of [their] go[ds...] (11QT C2:1–7)

11 שמר־לך את אשר אנכי מצוך היום הנני גרש מפניך את־האמרי והכנעני והחתי והפרזי והחוי והיבوسی:	11Observe what I command you today. See, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ¹² Take care not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you are going, or it will become a snare among you. ¹³ You shall tear down their altars, break their pillars, and cut down their sacred poles. (Exod 34:11–13)
12 השמר לך פן־תכרת ברית ליושב הארץ אשר אתה בא עליה פן־יהוה למוקש בקרבך:	
13 כי את־מזבחתם תתצון ואת־מצבתם תשברון ואת־אשריו תכרתון:	

The Temple Scroll, however, places the audience in a more direct vantage point to Yahweh's revelation.⁶⁹ Indeed, Yahweh speaks in the first person to the audience looking through Moses vantage point (11QT 51:6–7):

6 ולוא יטמאו בהמה אשר	And they shall not make themselves impure by (those) things (about) which
7 אני מגיד לכה בהר הזה ולוא יטמאו	I am relating to you on this mountain, and they shall not be impure. (11QT 51:6–7)

In contrast to Exodus, the audience does not hear a story about Moses in the third person going up and down Mount Sinai. Rather, the reference to “this mountain” (בהר הזה) sets the audience’s feet on the holy ground upon which Moses and Yahweh met.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 56.

3.2d Feature 4: Pseudonymous Attribution to Moses

Deuteronomy

The fourth feature of Mosaic discourse associates a new law text with the founding figure Moses. In Deuteronomy, Moses is the central figure. It is very unlikely, however, that Deuteronomy contains an accurate historical account of Moses' words and actions since Deuteronomy appears to be compiled over a long period of time long after the events it describes.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, this uncertainty need not insinuate forgery as a modern perspective might view it. Rather, as P. D. Miller suggests, this ascription to Moses infers the seriousness by which this writing was intended to be received.⁷¹ The more important the figure of Moses becomes the more important that which he says and does becomes.⁷² The elaboration of Moses' words and deeds correlates with the level of significance a text bears. Therefore, Deuteronomy does not only attribute its content to Moses, it also increases Moses' role from earlier Sinai traditions. In Deuteronomy, it is Moses alone who receives the revelation and then expounds it to the people (Deut 1:5).⁷³ The elevation of Moses' status is further supported by Deuteronomy's conclusion, which depicts him as the ultimate prophet (Deut 34:10–12):⁷⁴

ולא־יקם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה אשר ידעו
יהוה פנים אל־פנים: ¹⁰

Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the

70 Patrick D. Miller Jr., “‘Moses My Servant’: The Deuteronomic Portrait of Moses,” *Int* 41/3 (1987): 250.

71 *Ibid.*

72 This will become an important point to our analysis of Philo's and Matthew's respective depictions of Moses and Jesus. See chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

73 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 38–39. As Richard Elliott Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah: With A New English Translation* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2001), 559, states, “Moses is eloquent. And that is ironic and instructive when we turn back to Moses' first meeting with God, at the burning bush. There he tries to escape from the assignment to go speak to the Pharaoh by saying, ‘I'm not a man of words’ (Exod 4:10)! Now he has become a man of words. It is interesting, remarkable, ironic, and inspiring to see Moses' development through all that has happened in forty years into a man of words. More than any other human in the Bible, Moses grows and changes in the course of his life.”

74 *Ibid.*, 37.

לכל-האתות והמופתים אשר שלחו יהוה
 לעשות בארץ מצרים לפרעה ולכל-עבדיו
 ולכל-ארצו:
 ולכל היד החזקה ולכל המורא הגדול אשר
 עשה משה לעיני כל-ישראל:

LORD knew face to face. ¹¹He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders that the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, ¹²and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel (Deut 34:10–12).

Jubilees

Moses plays an important role in *Jubilees* as well, but his role is transformed into that of an amanuensis. The angel of the presence dictates the revelation from God, inscribed on the heavenly tablets, and Moses writes down the content (Jub. 1:26–29; cf. 2:1).⁷⁵

²⁶Now you [Moses] write all these words which I will tell you on this mountain ...
²⁷Then he said to an angel of the presence: “<<*Dictate*>> to Moses (starting) from the beginning of the creation until the time when my temple is built among them throughout the ages of eternity” (Jub. 1:26–7).⁷⁶

Moses is not the author of this new rendition of Torah, rather he is the scribe, albeit a faithful one, that records the heavenly dictated laws.⁷⁷ *Jubilees* even emphasises Moses’ scribal function by briefly mentioning that he learned to write from his father (Jub. 47:9).⁷⁸ Thus, for the author of *Jubilees*, Moses is important in as much as he is an appropriate and authoritative transmitter of the revelation given by the angel of the

75 Some passage appear to say the angel of presence wrote down the commands rather than Moses. Therefore, some scholars see this as evidence that *Jubilees* exhibits multiple levels of composition. James C. VanderKam has disputed this claim proposing that Greek translations of the Hebrew original chose Greek words that failed to distinguish between the non-causative form of *katav* (i.e., *qal*) and the causative form (i.e., *hiphil*). In other words, in Hebrew, these passages originally said that the angel “caused” the recipient (i.e., Moses) to write, not that he, the angel, wrote. See James C. VanderKam, “The Putative Author of The Book of *Jubilees*,” *JSS* 26/2 (1981): 216.

76 VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 511:6.

77 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 65.

78 *Ibid.*, 67.

presence. Moses' already authoritative status, and historical-traditional association with Sinai, made him the perfect candidate for this role.⁷⁹

Temple Scroll

Differing from Jubilees and Deuteronomy, the Temple Scroll lacks extensive Moses narratives. Moses never speaks and his name never occurs in the text. The Temple Scroll's compiler consistently omits Moses' name from the biblical passages it quotes.⁸⁰ However, with the use of a second personal singular pronoun, Yahweh's first person speech comes directly to the audience through Moses' vantage point. Therefore, Moses surfaces, but only in two implicit instances where the second person pronoun is used in contexts where Moses is the recipient (i.e. 11Q19 44:5 and 51:6–7).⁸¹

<p>וכול ימין שער לוי ושמאלו לבני אהרון אחיכה תח[לק]</p>	<p>And everything right of the gate of Levi and to its left you shall app[ortion] for the sons of Aaron, your brother. (11Q19 44:5)</p>
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79 Ibid.

80 Michael Owen Wise, *A Critical Study of the Temple Scroll from Qumran Cave 11*, SAOC 49 (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1990), 1.

81 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 68. John C. Reeves, "The Meaning of Moreh sedeq in Light of 11Q Torah," *RevQ* 13 (1988): 287–298, argues that by invoking the Mosaic mantle the Teacher of Righteousness implicitly assumes the role of a "second Moses." The authorial relationship between the Temple Scroll and Qumran sectarian writings and the Teacher of Righteousness cannot be known with the certainty Reeves assumes; cf. Andrew Gross, "Temple Scroll (11QTemple)," in Collins and Harlow, *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, 1293. However, Reeves is correct to note that the author, whether the Teacher of Righteousness or someone else, is implicitly invoking Mosaic authority for his writing. Furthermore, the Temple Scroll, as we have it, is incomplete. Therefore it is possible that it originally contained more references to Moses than the two mentioned above. Especially in the beginning since column 2 of 11QT^a (i.e., the first column of the existing manuscript) contains material from Exodus 34:10b–16 and Deut 7:5. See also Swanson, *The Temple Scroll and the Bible*, 6. However, with the current evidence available this can only be left to pondering. For a possible explanation of the status of 11QT^a, see L. H. Schiffman, "The Unfinished Scroll: A Reconsideration of the End of the Temple Scroll," in *DSD* 15 (2008): 78, who argues that the Temple Scroll, as we have it, appears to be an unfinished scroll. That is, either "an unfinished copy, from a more complete *Vorlage*, or an unfinished composition, representing at this point in the text an earlier or less complete version than that of 5Q524." Concerning the latest possible reconstructions of the Temple Scroll's opening, see Bernard M. Levinson, "Refining the Reconstruction of Col. 2 of the Temple Scroll (11QT^a): The Turn to Digital Mapping and Historical Syntax," *DSD* 23 (2016): 1–26.

Moses, of course, is the brother of Aaron, and, therefore, this text's implicit recipient. The same phenomenon takes place in 11QT 51:6–7. Thus, even though the content of the Temple Scroll is best described as divine discourse (so Collins and Schiffman),⁸² the direct divine discourse nevertheless passes through a Mosaic vantage point.⁸³ As the implicit recipient, Moses provides the proper channel for Yahweh's direct divine revelation to enter the earthly realm and to be codified. The authority of the Temple Scroll's content is based in the fact that it is (presented as) revelation from God, but the author of the Temple Scroll *verifies* that its content is divine revelation by passing it through Moses in a Sinaitic context. Therefore, while divine discourse may be the best comprehensive designation of the Temple Scroll, the content of the text is still tied to the authority of Moses, even if only implicitly.

Summary

There is a discernible transformation in the figure of Moses in these texts. Even with the initial expansion of Moses' role in Deuteronomy, the figure of Moses becomes increasingly subordinate to the Torah of Moses. Moses' authority as the one through whom Sinaitic revelation was presented became axiomatic, at least for the authors and audiences of these texts. Little explanation of Moses' qualifications was needed, save for Jubilees' mention of his writing abilities. His presence, even if only implied as in the Temple Scroll, was what counted. The figure of Moses came to serve a specific a role when re-presenting Sinai. I will return to this point later, but, having reviewed the features of Mosaic Discourse in these texts, we will now examine Matthew's Gospel.

82 Collins, *Scriptures and Sectarianism*, 45; and, Schiffman, "The Temple Scroll and the Halakhic Pseudepigrapha of the Second Temple Period," 131.

83 Michael Owen Wise, Martin G. Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2005), 619, state, "either the author is writing in the name of Moses or he imagines himself a new Moses, even down to the detail of where revelation occurs."

3.3 Matthew and Mosaic Discourse

Other texts participating Mosaic Discourse return their audience to Moses' instruction at Sinai as a way to assure Torah fidelity and to move forward from exile's rupture (cf. Deut 30). For Matthew, however, Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises and God's very presence (Ἐμμανουήλ; Matt 1:23). Jesus, therefore, is Matthew's answer to Israel's state of sin and exile (Matt 1:17, 21). Jesus' teaching is now the exhorted path to follow (Matt 7:24–27). Matthew, therefore, uses the features of Mosaic Discourse to fuse Moses and Jesus together. As a result, the fragments of divine encounter traditionally associated with Moses are retrieved and transformed in Jesus so that a future beyond exile in the consummation of God's kingdom will be possible. In other words, through the use of Mosaic Discourse, Matthew is able repeat Sinai with Jesus and contextualise Jesus' instructions in a way that his audience would find familiar and comprehensible. In light of this context, Matthew's use of the four features of Mosaic Discourse will now be examined.

3.3a Feature 1: Reworking and Expanding Older Traditions

Matthew's Gospel features several sections that contain commentary and debate about the Torah and ancestral traditions (e.g., Matt 12:1–14; 15:1–20; 19:3–12; 22:15–46), but perhaps the most apparent interpretations of pentateuchal laws in Matthew are found in the antitheses (Matt 5:21–48).⁸⁴ These antitheses are closely related to the programmatic statement on the Torah and Prophets⁸⁵ and comprise a major section of the Sermon on the Mount. They are the content of Jesus' fulfilment of the Torah: halakhic rulings and commands given from a mountain that the disciples are to teach all nations (Matt 28:19–20). The antitheses present interpretations and directions never found in the Pentateuch such as the restriction of

84 Ruzer, *Mapping the New Testament*, states, “while instances of Jesus' separate treatment of some of the issues involved in Matthew 5 are attested elsewhere in the Gospels, their thematic combination within a unifying exegetical framework stands out as the trademark of the compiler (editor) of the Sermon on the Mount.”

85 Luz, *Matthew*, 1:224, states, “Jesus' sovereign 'I say to you' connects vv. 17–20 to the antitheses.” See also Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 182, who states that the antitheses “provide concrete examples of the 'greater righteousness' of 5:20.”

divorce only to cases of sexual immorality (Matt 5:31–32) or the complete prohibition of oaths (Matt 5:33–37).⁸⁶ The antitheses also provide expansive commentary and application to these interpretive halakhic rulings. For instance, after instructing his disciples not to resist an evil doer rather than giving an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth, Jesus gives specific instructions for responding to a strike on the cheek, a stolen coat, forced labor, a beggar, and a borrower (Matt 5:38–42). Like other texts that participate in Mosaic Discourse, Matthew’s Gospel reworks and expands older traditions.

In addition to the interpretations of the Torah found in the antitheses, the block of narrative preceding the Sermon on the Mount (i.e., Matt 1–4) contains several “fulfilment quotations” that associate sacred texts with Jesus’ life (Matt 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23; 3:3; 4:14). Matthew is even willing to change the wording of a cited text in order to make it suit his rhetorical purposes.⁸⁷ The fulfilment citations in the first section of Matthew’s Gospel do not involve Torah commands *per se*, but they do demonstrate that Matthew is willing to rework and expand sacred texts around his Jesus narrative. In addition, there has been some debate regarding whether or not the fulfilment quotations are much different in text-form from the Scripture citations in the antitheses.⁸⁸ Regardless of the distinction one makes between the fulfilment citations and the antitheses, they are all examples of interpreting the message and meaning of older sacred scriptures around the life and ministry of Jesus.

Before proceeding to the next feature of Mosaic Discourse, it is important first to address the long standing debate concerning the antitheses’ augmentations and the Torah’s permanence. Scholarship’s current trend is to see these augmentations not

86 John P. Meier, “The Historical Jesus and Oaths: A Response to Donald A. Hagner and Jonathan Klawans,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 6/1 (2008): 55, notes that Ben Sira and Philo come close to a blanket prohibition of oaths, but only the Matthean Jesus, and James (Jas 5:12), administer a wholesale prohibition. In fact, they even reject the subterfuges that Philo prescribes (i.e., swearing by heaven and earth).

87 Meier, “The Historical Jesus and Oaths,” 51–52, notes that Micah 5:1 (5:2 in some English versions) is quoted in Matthew 2:6 and changed from saying Bethlehem is “too small” (MT: צעיר and LXX: ὀλιγοστός) to “by no means small” (οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη).

88 For a survey of this discussion, see George J. Brooke, “Aspects of Matthew’s Use of Scripture,” 827–833.

as a doing away with the Torah, but as giving an authoritative, albeit radical, interpretation.⁸⁹ This view, however, could be compromised depending on who or whose instruction Jesus is comparing his teaching with in the antitheses.⁹⁰ The analysis of the antitheses is compounded by several issues, but perhaps the primary issue is determining whom or what Jesus references in the antitheses.

Six times Jesus gives examples of something that the crowds have “heard” (ἤκούσατε) was “said” (ἐρρέθη) to the ancients. The six examples are from the Torah, but the antecedent to ἐρρέθη is less clear. Elsewhere in Matthew’s Gospel ἐρρέθη is associated with utterances either by God, God through a prophet, or just a prophet.⁹¹ This leads some commentators, such as Davies and Allison, to conclude that Jesus is contrasting his teaching with the Torah given at Sinai, rather than the teaching of other Jewish leaders.⁹² However, they do not regard this contrast as a contradiction but as a transcendence.⁹³ The softer particle δέ, rather than the strong ἀλλά, can also mean “and yet” or “and,” which signals continuation (e.g., Matt 6:29; 8:10–11; 12:5–6). Davies and Allison suggest, therefore, that the antitheses be translated, “you have heard that it was said to the men of old ... but I (in addition) say to you”⁹⁴ What we have in the antitheses then is not an interpretation or extension of the Torah, nor a polemic against other interpretations, but demands that surpass the Torah and address things the Torah does not. It also does so without contradicting the Torah.⁹⁵

There are many strengths to this view, especially in its correction of older views that saw Jesus as overthrowing aspects of the Torah in the antitheses. However,

89 Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude Towards the Law*, 270–271. Alternatively, Benno Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and his World of Thought*, SNTSMS 41 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 83, thinks Matthew is building a hedge around the Torah rather than radicalising it. See also Blanton, “Saved by Obedience,” 407.

90 Even though δέ is weaker than ἀλλά (cf. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 181) a comparison at some level is still being made in the antitheses.

91 Matt 1:22; 2:17, 23; 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 24:15; 22:31.

92 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:506–509; Luz, *Matthew*, 1:231; Gundry, *Matthew*, 83–84.

93 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:507, note that divorce and oaths are not commanded in the Torah, the legislation is provisional. Therefore, the third and fourth antitheses do not overthrow the commandments of the Torah.

94 Ibid.

95 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:508.

this view also reduces the Torah to a mere “point of departure.”⁹⁶ The Torah is transcended and left behind rather than fulfilled and made anew for Matthew's audience. By suggesting that Jesus is not doing interpretation Davies and Allison inadvertently remove his teaching from the Torah. To be sure, on a theological level, Davies and Allison are correct in saying that Jesus is doing more than interpretation for his followers in the antitheses. Indeed, Jesus' halakhic rulings on the Torah are based on his authority (ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω; Matt 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44),⁹⁷ which derives from God the Father (Matt 11:25–30; 28:18–20). That is, as the Son of God, in whom God instructs people to listen (Matt 3:17; 17:5), and as a manifestation of God's presence (Matt 1:23), Jesus essentially speaks direct divine revelation in the antitheses.⁹⁸ In this way, Jesus' antitheses are similar to the Temple Scroll's presentation of revelation. Nevertheless, on a technical level the antitheses are indeed full of interpretation.

Ruzer has shown that the antitheses are full of inherited technical and structural characteristics of exegetic discourse.⁹⁹ Given these findings, Ruzer suggests Davies and Allison's claim that Jesus does not *interpret* in the antitheses should be revised.¹⁰⁰ Inherited exegetical discourse in the antitheses indicates that the compiler of Matthew 5 intended his polemics “not against the Torah but against certain contemporaneous exegetical tendencies.”¹⁰¹ These tendencies include: “opinions that do not recognize in the Decalogue commandments additional meanings *vis-à-vis* the parallels outside the Decalogue, or refer to hard-core transgressions only or, just the opposite, ascribe too broad a meaning to the difficult 'עֲרוֹת דְּבַר' from Deuteronomy 24:1.”¹⁰² That the antitheses exhibit a polemic against other exegetical tendencies is further supported by the fact that several of the antitheses do not simply quote the

96 Ibid., “so the Torah supplies [Jesus] with a point of departure, it does no more than this.”

97 Ibid.

98 Foster, *Community, Law and Mission in Matthew's Gospel*, 142, notes that Jesus is portrayed not only as a supreme interpreter but as the ultimate source of authority for what constitutes divine will.

99 Ruzer, *Mapping the New Testament*, 11–34.

100 Ibid., 33.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

Torah, but often paraphrase various laws and even include added material (e.g., Matt 5:21b; 43c).¹⁰³ Indeed, even though Davies and Allison are right to note that the most probable referent of ἐρρέθη is the speech of God,¹⁰⁴ the Matthean Jesus uses the qualifier ἠκούσατε, which indicates that he is making a comparison with what the crowds have “heard” God said to the ancients, not necessarily what God said. In this case, τοῖς ἀρχαίοις (Matt 5:21, 33) can be seen as a reference to a lacking “chain of exegetical tradition” that Jesus fulfils with his interpretation.¹⁰⁵ Ruzer supports this with Berndt Schaller's suggestion that “ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίος ... ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν” is analogous to the rabbinic phrase “לומר ... שומע אני” (I have heard and understood ... but the teaching/text instructs otherwise).¹⁰⁶ To what extent this rabbinic expression informs Jesus' antithetical phrase is open to debate. Nevertheless, Ruzer is correct in finding inherited exegetical discourse (not necessarily inherited opinions about certain laws) in the antitheses.¹⁰⁷

Konradt, along with other scholars, not only argues, in agreement with Ruzer, that the antitheses present interpretive polemics against other exegetical approaches to the Torah, but that they are specifically directed at the interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees.¹⁰⁸ In this case, when the Matthean Jesus refers to what the crowds

103 See Konradt, “The Love Command in Matthew, James, and the Didache,” in van de Sandt and Zangenberg, *Matthew, James, and Didache*, 272.

104 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:506–507.

105 Ruzer, *Mapping the New Testament*, 33.

106 Ibid., and Berndt Schaller, “The Function and Character of the Antitheses in Matt 5:21–48 in Light of Rabbinical Exegetic Dispute,” in *The Sermon on the Mount and Its Jewish Setting*, ed. H. J. Becker and S. Ruzer, CahRB 60 (Paris: Gabalda, 2005), 70–88.

107 Ruzer, *Mapping the New Testament*, 32, states, “it should be emphasized again that what is observed here is not necessarily an inherited *opinion* on the issues under discussion (the period was one of a great fluidity and variety of opinions!) but inherited technical or structural characteristics of exegetic discourse.”

108 Matthias Konradt, “Die vollkommene Erfüllung der Tora und der Konflikt mit den Pharisäern im Matthäusevangelium,” in *Das Gesetz im frühen Judentum und im Neuen Testament*, ed. Dieter Sänger and Matthias Konradt, NTOA/SUNT 57 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 134–141. See also Christopher Burchard, “Versuch, das Thema der Bergpredigt zu finden,” in *Studien zur Theologie, Sprache und Umwelt des Neuen Testaments*, ed. Dieter Sänger, WUNT 107 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 40–44; Christian Dietzfelbinger, “Die Antithesen der Bergpredigt im Verständnis des Matthäus,” *ZNW* 70 (1979): 3; Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, “Das Liebesgebot Jesu als Tora und als Evangelium: Zur Feindesliebe und zur christlichen und jüdischen Auslegung der Bergpredigt,” in *Vom Urchristentum zu Jesus*, ed. Hubert Frankemölle et al. (Freiburg: Herder, 1989), 213–18; Hartin, “Ethics in the Letter of James, the Gospel of

have “heard” (ἤκούσατε), he is quoting the Torah as it is insufficiently interpreted by the scribes and Pharisees.¹⁰⁹ This “distorted” interpretation of the Torah produces a righteousness that is insufficient for entering the kingdom of Heaven (Matt 5:20).¹¹⁰ This understanding of the antitheses is supported not only by the reference to the scribes and Pharisees' insufficient righteousness just before the antitheses (Matt 5:20) but also by the comparison Jesus makes between the proper way to perform acts of righteousness and the performance of righteousness by the ὑποκριταὶ (i.e., the scribes and Pharisees; Matt 6:1–18).¹¹¹ In other words, the antitheses are sandwiched between polemics against the scribes and Pharisees. This also fits our observations in the previous chapter concerning how the scribes and Pharisees are the foil to Jesus' teachings on the Torah and are the ones whose teaching is linked with the destruction of the temple.¹¹²

If Konradt and others are correct in suggesting that the antitheses are directed against the interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees, then many of the previous exegetical difficulties surrounding the antitheses are alleviated. For one, it is not necessary to appeal to the softer quality of δέ over against ἀλλά to protect from an interpretation in which Jesus' words are directed against God's word at Sinai. In Konradt's approach Jesus is indeed making a comparison in the antitheses, but with the scribes and Pharisees not Sinai. Neither is it necessary to reduce Sinai to an authority that has been usurped,¹¹³ that is “superfluous,”¹¹⁴ or that is only a point of

Matthew, and the Didache,” in van de Sandt and Zangenberg, *Matthew, James, and Didache*, 294; J. Daryl Charles, “Garnishing with the 'Greater Righteousness': The Disciple's Relationship to the Law (Matthew 5:17–20),” *BBR* 12 (2002): 8; Neudecker, *Moses Interpreted by the Pharisees and Jesus*, 13, 39; and Evans, “Fulfilling the Law and Seeking Righteousness,” 103, 106.

109 Konradt, “The Love Command in Matthew, James, and the Didache,” 272.

110 Ibid.

111 In Matthew 6:1–18 Jesus never specifically references the scribes and Pharisees. Rather he refers to the “ὑποκριταὶ” (Matt 6:2, 5, 16). In chapter 23 Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees “ὑποκριταὶ” seven times on account of their religious practices (Matt 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29). It seems reasonable, therefore, to assume that the references to “ὑποκριταὶ” in 6:1–18 are references to the scribes and Pharisees.

112 See chapter 2.3b.

113 Luz, *Matthew*, 1:231.

114 Deines, “Not the Law but the Messiah,” 64, “[the antitheses] do not abrogate the Torah of Moses, but they make it in a way superfluous. Whenever Jesus' followers live according to what is demanded of them, the regulations of the Torah are no longer needed.”

departure.¹¹⁵ Rather, in this approach Jesus speaks on *behalf* of Sinai as a new manifestation of Sinaitic revelation. In other words, Jesus corrects what people “heard” (ἤκούσατε) the scribes and Pharisees claim God said (ἐρρέθη) by contrasting it with what he as a representation of Sinaitic revelation has to say directly to them.¹¹⁶ The crowds previously had to rely on what they heard God allegedly said, but now they get to be told directly and in person what God's will is by one who has authority to say so. This analysis also fits well with the three other writing strategies of Mosaic Discourse yet to be examined, which together contextualise Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount as a manifestation of Sinaitic revelation.

Before moving to the next feature of Mosaic Discourse, Repschinski has presented an approach to the antitheses that demands some attention. Although his approach to the antitheses is similar to the one sketched above in important ways, it contradicts it in others.

The primary difference is that Repschinski does not think the antitheses are directed against the interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees, but that a comparison is being made with the Torah itself.¹¹⁷ Repschinski notes that Matthew 5:27, 31, and 38 are “nicht als eine Auslegungstradition erkennbar.”¹¹⁸ Moreover, he suggests that the contrast between ἤκούσατε and λέγω is simply a contrast between past (i.e., Sinai) and present (i.e., the Sermon on the Mount), rather than a contrast between what Jesus' audience heard God say through the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees and what Jesus says about God's revelation.¹¹⁹ Thus, Repschinski suggests that the antitheses are “eigentlich unzutreffend benannt.”¹²⁰ Rather, according to Repschinski, the antitheses demonstrate that the Torah is the foundation or starting point of the

115 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:508.

116 Similarly, Hartin, “Ethics in the Letter of James, the Gospel of Matthew, and the Didache,” 294.

117 Boris Repschinski, “Die bessere Gerechtigkeit: Gesetz, Nachfolge und Ethik im Matthäusevangelium,” *ZKT* 136 (2014): 429–430. Incidentally, Repschinski (page 429n32) regrets to admit that he used to hold the opposite view; see Boris Repschinski, *Nicht aufzulösen, sondern zu erfüllen: Das jüdische Gesetz in den synoptischen Jesuserzählungen*, FB 120 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2009), 91–94.

118 Repschinski, “Die bessere Gerechtigkeit,” 429–430.

119 *Ibid.*, 430.

120 *Ibid.*, 433.

Matthean Jesus' ethics and teaching.¹²¹ That is, Jesus' teachings arise out of the Torah, which creates continuity between Torah piety and discipleship in Jesus.¹²² However, Jesus' teaching in the antitheses is not only grounded in the Torah, which requires a stricter observance, but it also strives to imitate the perfect heavenly Father (Matt 5:48; cf. 19:21). Therefore, the second half of each of the antitheses leads to demands that deviate from the Torah and that address new circumstances relevant for discipleship in Jesus.¹²³ The purpose of the antitheses then is to show at once that Jesus' teaching is rooted in the Torah and that Jesus "setzt die alte Offenbarung fort" by opening up the "implications" (*Implikationen*) and "possibilities" (*Möglichkeiten*) of the Torah given to the ancient Israelites.¹²⁴

Repschinski does not see the Matthean Jesus giving an interpretation of the Torah that enters a discussion with the interpretation of his scribal and Pharisaic contemporaries nor does he see Jesus functioning as a New Moses.¹²⁵ Rather, Jesus is giving revelation to the disciples just as God gave revelation to the children of Israel.¹²⁶

There are some points of contention between Repschinski's reading of the antitheses and the reading advocated in this thesis, but the final conclusions are not incompatible. First, while Repschinski is correct that ἐρρέθη refers to the speech of God, the Matthean Jesus' audience still "heard" (ἠκούσατε) about what God said through teachers of some sort. These teachers through whom Jesus' audience "heard" (ἠκούσατε) what God "said" (ἐρρέθη) are presumably scribes, as well as Pharisees, since at the end of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus' audience is amazed that Jesus "διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν" (Matt 7:29). In

121 Ibid., 440.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid., 424, 433; similarly in 430–431, Repschinski states, "Die Fallbeispiele nun nehmen ihren Ausgangspunkt in der Tora und widersprechen ihr nicht. Aber sie gehen sehr viel weiter als die Tora, um zu illustrieren, welche Art von Gerechtigkeit der matthäische Jesus von seinen Jüngern verlangt."

124 Ibid., 440.

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

other words, the crowds have “heard” (ἤκούσατε) the scribes teach or interpret to them what God “said” (ἐρρέθη) to their ancestors at Sinai (cf. Matt 23:2). More to the point, however, Matthew’s comment about the crowds’ reaction suggests that the crowds were naturally comparing Jesus to their scribes as they listened to Jesus teach. To be sure, the crowds’ reaction does not necessarily mean Jesus himself was contrasting his teaching with the scribes and Pharisees in the antitheses. However, the fact that the antitheses are bookended by two comparisons between the righteousness that Jesus demands and the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees seems to suggest that Jesus is contrasting his interpretation with the scribes and Pharisees’ interpretation in the antitheses (Matt 5:20; 6:1–16).¹²⁷ Moreover, throughout the rest of the Gospel Jesus’ interpretation of the Torah is explicitly contrasted with the scribes and Pharisees’ Torah interpretation as they debate several prominent first-century halakic issues (e.g., Matt 12:1–14; 15:1–20; 19:1–9). In addition, Jesus gives a long criticism against the scribes and Pharisees’ interpretation and practice of the Torah near the end of the Gospel (Matt 23:1–39). If Jesus’ interpretation of the Torah is often presented in the context of a comparison with the scribes and Pharisees’ interpretation, it seems reasonable to assume that ἤκούσατε refers to what Jesus’ audience heard the scribes and Pharisees say what God said.

Nevertheless, Repschinski also notes that Matthew 5:27, 31, and 38 seem more like direct quotations rather than a recognisable interpretative tradition.¹²⁸ This may suggest that Jesus is applying his interpretation directly to the Torah rather than in contrast to the scribes and Pharisees’ interpretation.¹²⁹ Indeed, Repschinski states

127 In the first comparison Jesus states that the righteousness (ἡ δικαιοσύνη) he demands is higher than that of the scribes and Pharisees. In fact, the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees does not even warrant entry into the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:20). In the second comparison, which follows the antitheses, Jesus contrasts the proper way to perform acts of righteousness (τὴν δικαιοσύνην) with the scribes and Pharisees’ acts of righteousness (Matt 6:1–16; this is assuming that “ὑποκριταὶ” refers to the scribes and Pharisees). The concept of “ἡ δικαιοσύνη” in Matthew’s Gospel is linked with proper observance of and obedience to the Torah; see Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew*, 84–100. Thus, Matthew 5:20 and 6:1–16 are comparing Jesus’ approach to Torah obedience against the scribes and Pharisees’ approach to Torah obedience.

128 Repschinski, “Die bessere Gerechtigkeit,” 429–430.

129 Ibid., 430.

that Matthew 5:17–20 indicates that Jesus is not dealing with an interpretive tradition in the antitheses, but with the charge that he abolishes the Torah.¹³⁰ Hence, the focus is on the Torah, not an interpretive tradition. However, teaching the fulfilment of the Torah and making a contrast with an existing interpretative tradition, especially the tradition of an opponent, are not mutually exclusive activities. Indeed, these two activities certainly go together when a halakic opponent is the one making the accusation that Jesus abolished the Torah.

Still, what to make of Repschinski's claim that Matthew 5:27, 31, and 38 do not display a recognisable interpretative tradition? To begin, whereas this may be the case for Matthew 5:27, 31, and 38, Matthew 5:21, 33, and 43, can be conceived more readily as interpretive tradition since they are composites and paraphrases of Scripture.¹³¹ Nevertheless, if Matthew 5:27, 31, and 38 are strictly a reference to Scripture and not an interpretive tradition then the default assumption is that Matthew 5:21, 33, and 43 are intended merely to be Scriptural citations as well.

Neudecker, however, has argued that the antitheses are indeed making a contrast with the interpretive tradition of scribal and Pharisaic opponents and has carefully reconstructed the interpretative positions of Jesus' opponents.¹³² Neudecker admits that Matthew does not spell out the scribes and Pharisees' interpretation in great detail, but Matthew "limits himself to abbreviation and mere hints, which makes it necessary to look for fuller background information."¹³³ Neudecker states that this type of abbreviation is common to "students of technical rabbinic writings."¹³⁴ Neudecker's work is thorough and persuasive at several levels, but it is still merely hypothesising what Matthew's text may be implying. I do not wish to sidestep the issue, but there are reasonable arguments for both Repschinski's and

130 Ibid., 429.

131 For instance, Konradt, "Love Commandment in Matthew, James, and the Didache," 273, suggests that Matthew 5:43c is an example of the Pharisees' false interpretation of the Torah.

132 See Neudecker's reconstructions of the scribes and Pharisees' interpretive traditions in Neudecker, *Moses Interpreted by the Pharisees and Jesus*, 52, 62–64, 83, 100, 109–110, 127–128.

133 Ibid., 129, cf. Pages 39–41 for the explanation to his approach of reconstructing the interpretative tradition of Jesus' opponents in the antitheses.

134 Ibid., 47.

Neudecker's positions. Much depends on what one sees or does not see in the antitheses. I for one see Jesus making a contrast with the interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees.

Repschinski's claim that the Matthean Jesus is continuing Sinaitic revelation for his audience does not hang on the issue of whether in the antitheses Jesus is making a contrast with the interpretation of his opponents or if Jesus is simply making reference to the Torah. In either scenario the Matthean Jesus can still open up the "implications" (*Implikationen*) and "possibilities" (*Möglichkeiten*) of the Torah given to the ancient Israelites.¹³⁵ The only difference is that in one scenario Jesus does so in contrast to the teachings of his opponents. Moreover, I am in full agreement with Repschinski that in the antitheses Matthew is rooting Jesus' teachings and ethics about the kingdom of heaven in the Torah. Indeed, this thesis is investigating the writing strategies Matthew uses to connect Jesus' interpretations of the Torah with the Scriptures and traditions of Israel. Whether the Matthean Jesus is making a contrast to the interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees or not, he is still reworking and expanding older commandments and traditions in the antitheses to frame Torah obedience in terms of righteousness of/needed for the kingdom of heaven.¹³⁶ On this point, I believe Repschinski and I are of an accord.

I do not think, however, that it is necessary to deny that Matthew is depicting Jesus as a type of Mosaic teacher or even lawgiver.¹³⁷ Repschinski is correct that in many ways Jesus is functioning in God's role in the Sinai analogy. However,

135 Repschinski, "Die bessere Gerechtigkeit," 440.

136 Ibid., 424. I am not ultimately certain why Repschinski makes this claim. He seems to make it a bit abruptly at the end of his article. Perhaps Repschinski is trying to emphasise that the Matthean Jesus' teaching is rooted in the Torah rather than being a *new* law given by a new Moses? This replacement approach to Matthew's Moses typology, which was suggested by B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930), is rejected in this thesis. Rather, the Moses typology and Sinaitic setting of the Sermon on the Mount, as Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew*, 64, states, "triggers the understanding that here, on this mountain, the *right interpretation* of the law of Sinai was given." Nevertheless, Repschinski may also deny that Jesus functions as Moses because he views Jesus as playing more the role of God in the Sinai analogy rather than Moses. Indeed, Repschinski, "Die bessere Gerechtigkeit," 440, states, "Wie Gott auf dem Sinai zu Moses und den Israeliten sprach, so spricht der Sohn Gottes auf dem Berg der Seligpreisungen zu den Jüngern und setzt die alte Offenbarung fort."

137 Ibid.

typologies and imagery are neither always precise nor one dimensional. For instance, as will be shown in chapter 6, Matthew conflates comparisons of Jesus with Moses' fasting on Mount Sinai (Exod 24:18; 34:28; Deut 9:9) and the testing of the children of Israel in the wilderness (Deut 8:2; cf. Matt 4:1–11; cf. 2:15). Just as the Matthean Jesus can be compared to both the children of Israel and Moses, so he can be compared to Moses while also giving revelation directly just like God at Mount Sinai. Indeed, while Jesus gives direct revelation on the mountain in Galilee just as God did at Mount Sinai, he also sits down to discuss the Torah after fasting for forty days and nights just as Moses fasted for forty days and nights before receiving the tablets of the Torah (cf. Matt 4:1–12; 5:1–3; Deut 9:9–11).¹³⁸

Ultimately, much depends on what someone intends by comparing the Matthean Jesus with Moses or even calling him a new Moses. The possibility of a Moses typology in Matthew's Gospel and its implications in regard to the connection between Jesus' teachings and the Torah will be examined more thoroughly below.¹³⁹ For now, it needs simply to be mentioned that any Mosaic parallels Matthew may be making with Jesus only serve to root his teachings and interpretations in the authority of Sinaitic revelation and as a continuation of Sinaitic revelation. A continuation and opening of Sinaitic revelation is precisely what Repschinski argues is taking place in the antitheses.¹⁴⁰ Thus, despite our points of disagreement, here as well we are of an accord. Matthew, therefore, like other participants in Mosaic Discourse, is adding to Torah interpretation and the development of Torah tradition by expanding and opening up the "implications" (*Implikationen*) and "possibilities" (*Möglichkeiten*) of older Torah traditions. Matthew does this chiefly with the antitheses.¹⁴¹

138 For further discussion, see sections 3.3c, 3.3d, and 6.3vi of this thesis.

139 See chapter 3.4 of this thesis.

140 Repschinski, "Die bessere Gerechtigkeit," 440.

141 Ibid.

3.3b Feature 2: Self-Ascribed Status of Torah

Matthew, unlike Deuteronomy, never uses the deictic particle to refer to his entire text as the “Torah.”¹⁴² In the Sermon on the Mount, however, Jesus refers to his teaching as the fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets (τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας; Matt 5:17). Additionally, he ends the sermon’s main teaching section with the “golden rule” (Matt 7:12). Using the demonstrative, he declares “this” command to be the Torah and Prophets (οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται). The repetition of the doublet “Torah and Prophets” suggests that 5:17 and 7:12 form an *inclusio*.¹⁴³ The golden rule, therefore, functions not only as a summary of the Torah and Prophets but also as a summary of Jesus’ teachings. Thus, the *inclusio* associates Jesus’ teaching with the deictic of 7:12 and constitutes his teaching as the Torah. Therefore, even though Matthew does not use the deictic particle to self-ascribe his entire Gospel as “Torah,” he does use it to ascribe Jesus’ interpretations and teaching as “Torah.”

The notion that Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount constitutes Torah is also reinforced by another characteristic found in other texts participating in Mosaic Discourse, namely, the Deuteronomic warning against changing the Torah. Deuteronomy and the Temple Scroll both prohibit the alteration of their respective revelatory laws (cf. Deut 12:32; 11QT 54:5–7). Likewise, prior to uttering his commandments, Jesus affirms the Torah’s unchanging and lasting nature in 5:18¹⁴⁴

142 B. W. Bacon famously suggested that Matthew’s five discourses were intended to be a Torah of some sort. This idea has been a point of debate, but George J. Brooke suggests that it should remain as an option. For his rationale, see Brooke, “Aspects of Matthew’s Use of Scripture in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 822–823. Regardless of what one thinks of Bacon’s proposition, Matthew still never describes his entire text as “Torah.”

143 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 328–329; and Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:685.

144 John P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew’s Gospel*, 63–64, has argued that Matthew’s redactional addition of 5:18d reinterpreted the eschatological event of 18:b+c to mean Jesus’ life, which culminates in his death and resurrection. Thus, the binding force of the Mosaic Law has lost its binding force with the passing of one age to the next, signified by Jesus’ resurrection. Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel*, 159, however, has rightly questioned whether Matthew exhibits as developed and rigid a salvation history framework as Meier. Indeed, Matthew describes eschatological fulfilment and the arrival of the kingdom of heaven prior to Jesus’ death and resurrection (cf. Matt. 3:2; 4:11–17; 12:28).

and prohibits the breaking of even the least of “these,” again the deictic, “commandments” (τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων) in 5:19.

There is some debate concerning the identity of “these commandments.” Are they referring to Jesus’ antitheses (Matt 5:21–48)¹⁴⁵ or the Mosaic Torah?¹⁴⁶ Elsewhere in Matthew’s Gospel the noun ἐντολή always refers to commandments of the Torah (Matt 15:3; 19:17; 22:36, 40). Moreover, “least” (ἐλαχίστων) harkens back to the minutiae mentioned in 5:18 (ἰῶτα ἐν ἡ μία κεραία) and “loose” (λύω) recalls abolish (καταλύω) in 5:17. Thus, it is clear that the phrase “these commandments” refers to the Torah.¹⁴⁷

A certain subtlety, however, is missed when restricting “these commandments” to either Jesus’ commands or the Torah. The inner logic of Mosaic Discourse suggests that a text wants its presentation of Sinaitic revelation, that is, its interpretation of the Torah, to be associated and amalgamated with the texts that are already viewed as authoritative. Likewise, when Jesus speaks authoritatively about the Torah his commands become synonymous with the Torah’s commands. Donald A. Hagner notes that “these commandments” in 5:19 clearly refer to the Torah’s commands, but as expounded by Jesus.¹⁴⁸ This is reinforced in the Gospel’s conclusion when Jesus instructs his disciples to teach new disciples everything he *commanded* them (πάντα ὅσα ἐνετείλαμην ὑμῖν; Matt 28:20). I am not suggesting that “commandments” no longer refer to the Torah since Jesus uses the verb ἐντέλλω.¹⁴⁹ Rather, since Matthew has made Jesus the Torah’s fulfilment, the Torah no longer stands on its own. Adhering to Torah means adhering to Jesus’ fulfilling interpretation (cf. Matt 12:1–14; 19:3–9; 22:34–40). The prohibition against breaking the least of these commandments is not binding for the Torah in general, but the Torah as interpreted and commanded by Jesus.

145 Robert J. Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*, SNTSMS 28 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 223.

146 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:496.

147 Ibid.

148 Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:108.

149 Contra Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*, 223.

Additionally, Matthew also groups all of Jesus' teaching into a conceptual unity with the deictic element in a manner reminiscent of Deuteronomy. Matthew structures his Gospel around five discourses of Jesus' teaching (Matt 5:1–7:28; 10:1–11:1; 13:1–53; 18:19:1; 24:1–26:1). The discourses conclude with some variation of the formula “and it came to be that when Jesus finished these words” (καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους)¹⁵⁰ in order to mark each section as a complete whole and to transition back into the Gospel's narrative. The final discourse, however, adds “all” to the formula (πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους; Matt 26:1). This suggests that Jesus has not only finished his discourse on the Mount of Olives but all of his teaching. The addition of πάντας to this phrase appears to have been influenced by the Greek version of Deuteronomy 31:1 (Καὶ συνετέλεσεν Μωυσῆς λαλῶν πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους).¹⁵¹ Therefore, just as “all these words” (Deut 31:1) of Moses become the written book of Deuteronomy (Deut 31:24), so all that Jesus said—that is, all the words of his discourses—become the codified contents of Matthew's Gospel. Thus, at the end of the Gospel Jesus can refer to “all that he commanded” (πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην) as a collective whole for the disciples to teach others (Matt 28:20).¹⁵² The antecedent of “all that he commanded” is surely “all these words” (Matt 26:1) that make up his five discourses. Even though the five discourses cover a variety of topics, the deictic element in the concluding formula unifies them as Jesus' words that can be referred to as all that he commanded his disciples.

150 Cf. Matt 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1. Matt 11:1 says Jesus finished “instructing” (διατάσσειν) his disciples, rather than “these words” (τοὺς λόγους τούτους), and Matt 13:53 says Jesus finished “these parables” (τὰς παραβολὰς ταύτας). This break from the formula appears to be a result of the specific topic of these two discourses (cf. Matt 10:5; 13:3).

151 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:437. As Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 660–661, states, “the Septuagint and Qumran texts have ‘And Moses finished speaking all these things’—reading Hebrew ויכל (finished) rather than ויעל (went), reversing the last two letters. This makes better sense. It also adds wordplay on his finishing (יכל) in v. 1 and his saying ‘I’m not able (אויכל) to go out and come in anymore’ in v. 2.”

152 This phrase itself is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 12:14.

3.3c Feature 3: The Re-Presentation of Sinai

Matthew employs the third feature of Mosaic Discourse, the re-presentation of Sinaitic revelation, by having Jesus ascend a mountain to give commands about the Torah (Matt 5:1–2). Matthew, however, does not name the mountain. This leaves some ambiguity regarding whether this is a Sinai motif since mountains were commonly used as a place for divine revelation in the traditions of numerous ancient cultures.¹⁵³ Davies and Allison, however, give three observations that suggest Jesus' mountain ascension is Mosaic, and, therefore, Sinaitic.

1. Firstly, Matthew writes that Jesus “went up a mountain.” The combination ἀναβαίνω + εἰς τὸ ὄρος is used in the “LXX” twenty-four times; eighteen of which occur in the Pentateuch. The vast majority refer to Moses making it likely that Matthew uses ἀναβαίνω + εἰς τὸ ὄρος to evoke Moses imagery.¹⁵⁴

2. Secondly, Deut 9:9 reads:

9 בעלתי ההרה לקחת לוחת האבנים לוחת הברית אשר-כרת יהוה עמכם ואשב בהר ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה לחם לא אכלתי ומים לא שתיתי:	When I went up the mountain to receive the tables of stone, the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, I “remained” on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water. (Deut 9:9)
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In Matthew 4:2, Jesus also fasts for forty days and forty nights. Perhaps more important, however, is that the verb translated above as “remains” (ואשב) can also mean “dwell” or “sit.” Hence, Jesus' sitting on the mountain to teach at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount could have been a reference to Moses' sitting on Sinai. Rabbinic tradition likewise gives credence to the ambiguity of ואשב and suggests that

153 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:423.

154 *Ibid.*, 1:423–424.

sometimes it refers to Moses sitting or standing on Sinai (compare Deut 9:9, 10:10 and *b. Meg.* 21a; *b. Soto* 49a). Matthew, of course, was written prior to the codification of this rabbinic material but it may be reminiscent of an exegetical tradition that Matthew inherited.¹⁵⁵

3. Thirdly, building on the presuppositions that Matthew 1–2 parallels Jesus' childhood with Moses' life and that a new exodus takes place in chapters 3–4, Davies and Allison question whether it is a coincidence that Jesus then ascends a mountain to speak about the Torah.¹⁵⁶

In consideration of these observations, Matthew's unnamed mountain becomes less ambiguous. After all, Deuteronomy already modelled that one did not need to be in the Sinai desert to re-present Sinaitic revelation (Deut 1:5).¹⁵⁷

3.3d Feature 4: Pseudonymous Attribution to Moses

The fourth feature of Mosaic Discourse is a text's association with or production by the figure Moses. This allows a text's interpretation of the Torah to be viewed as an extension of earlier ancestral discourse.¹⁵⁸ Matthew, however, lacks the figure of Moses. Moses cannot be associated with or produce Matthew's interpretations of the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew, therefore, uses a typology to connect Jesus with Moses and associate his teaching with the authority of the ancestral past.

The boundaries of a typology are difficult to define. What is and is not considered Mosaic can greatly depend on one's definition of an intertextual citation,

155 *Ibid.*, 1:424.

156 *Ibid.*, 1:424.

157 So J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, ApOTC 5 (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2002), 232. Similarly, James C. VanderKam has demonstrated that the Qumran community structured themselves after the Israelites encamped at Mount Sinai. He also notes that the book of Acts depicts the early church in a similar manner; see James C. VanderKam, "Sinai Revisited," in Henze, *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, 44–60.

158 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 17.

reference, or allusion.¹⁵⁹ Even though Allison has convincingly established that Matthew employs a Moses typology in his work *The New Moses*, there will always be a debate over which texts are actually a part of the typology. Allison himself raised some cynicism concerning whether he read more Mosaic typology into the text than what the text actually warranted.¹⁶⁰ The purpose here, however, is not to argue the extent of Matthew's typology. Rather, it is to observe how Matthew compensates for the lack of a significant feature (i.e., the figure of Moses) that other texts use when purporting to re-present Sinaitic revelation. Matthew compensates for this lacking feature by the means of a Mosaic typology. This allows Matthew to have Jesus emulate Moses' role and, therefore, allow Mosaic Discourse, i.e., a faithful rendition of God's will given at Sinai, to continue for Matthew's audience as they follow the teachings of Jesus. However, given the precarious nature of typologies, I will limit the evidence to the typological features that are more apparent and commonly agreed upon by scholars. This evidence can be broken into three sections: 1) parallels in Matthew 1–2 between Jesus' birth and Moses' first forty years; 2) events in Jesus' early ministry in Matthew 2–3 parallel Moses and the children of Israel's exodus and wilderness experience; and 3) the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 re-presents the giving of the Torah at Sinai.

1) The typology's first section contains several obvious parallels. Just as pharaoh slaughtered the Hebrew male infants, so Herod killed the males under the age of two in Bethlehem (Matt 2:16; Exod 1:22). Similarly, pharaoh sought to kill Moses just as Herod sought Jesus (Matt 2:13; Exod 2:15) and, as a result, both Jesus and Moses either flee from or to Egypt (Matt 2:13–15; Exod 2:15). Moreover, both Jesus and Moses also return from whence they fled after the death of their respective pursuers (Matt 2:19–23; Exod 2:23; 4:19–20).¹⁶¹

159 For further discussion, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29–32; and Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 8–9.

160 Dale C. Allison, *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 16.

161 Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 113.

There are further possible parallels if traditions outside the Pentateuch are considered. For example, the presentation of Jesus' name is comparable to Josephus' explanation of how Moses was named (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.9.6).¹⁶² Jesus' birth is announced by an angel in a dream and it is predicted that he will save his people (Matt 1:21). So also, in the *Liber antitquitatum biblicarum*, Moses' birth is announced by a heavenly being in a dream to Miriam and the heavenly being says that God will save his people through Moses (L.A.B. 9:10).¹⁶³

2) The typology's second section contains parallels between Jesus and both Moses and the children of Israel's exodus experiences. In Jesus' first adult appearance in the narrative he is baptised by John the Baptist (Matt 3:16). Following his baptism, he is led by the Spirit into the wilderness where, after fasting for forty days and forty nights, he is tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1–11). Again, it is debatable how extensive Matthew intended this Moses typology to be, but each of these aspects of Jesus' life correspond to Moses and the children of Israel's exodus experiences. After being delivered from slavery in Egypt, God leads Moses and the children of Israel through the Red Sea (Exod 14). Christian tradition associates the Red Sea experience with baptism (cf. 1 Cor 10:1–2). Thus, there is possible correspondence between the Red Sea baptism and Jesus' Jordan River baptism. After baptism, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, which corresponds to Yahweh, as a pillar of fire or a cloud of smoke, going before the children of Israel into the wilderness for a time of testing (Matt 4:1–2; Deut 1:32–33; 8:2, 16; Exod 16:4).¹⁶⁴ Finally, the children of Israel's wilderness experience lasts forty years and Jesus' wilderness experience has a duration of forty days and forty nights (Matt 4:2; Deut 8:2).¹⁶⁵

3) The wilderness experience then leads into the typology's third section, namely, Jesus' mountain ascension. This, of course, corresponds to Mount Sinai and

162 Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 77.

163 Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount*, 14.

164 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:355.

165 *Ibid.*, 1:427; see also Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 228–229.

the giving of the Torah. This was already reviewed above and for now needs no further exploration.

Upon examining Matthew's Mosaic typology it is evidently not a coincidence that the Matthean Jesus ascends a mountain after this sequence of events. Matthew is indeed seconding Sinai, but Moses is not there, and Jesus stands in his place. Therefore, through the use of typology Matthew is able to compensate for the fourth feature of Mosaic Discourse.

3.4 Jesus and Moses' Role

I hope to have shown that Matthew exhibits similar features as other texts using Mosaic Discourse to present and authenticate interpretations of the Torah. Furthermore, Matthew clearly uses a Mosaic typology to compensate for the fourth feature of Mosaic Discourse. What is not so clear, however, is determining the implications of the typology. Is the typology a form of supersessionism? Is Matthew making a negative statement about Moses: is he not needed, is he obsolete? Allison, in *The New Moses*, has argued that Matthew maintains a positive view of Moses. Mosaic association endowed Matthew's Christology with authority and rooted his teachings about Torah in antiquity.¹⁶⁶ This conclusion is also supported by the inner logic of Mosaic Discourse, which suggests that a text would want to be grafted into the authority of an older tradition. Like other authors before him, Matthew uses Mosaic Discourse to enter into and associate with a founder's discourse as an act of reverence.

There remains, however, one further problem. Even if tying into a founder's discourse was an act of reverence, if the founder is no longer in the text then this naturally suggests that he is being superseded by the one standing in for him. Earlier works using Mosaic Discourse did not have this problem because they hid behind the guise of Moses. Texts like Deuteronomy or Jubilees, for example, may have “superseded,” it could be argued, someone else's depiction of Moses, but they at least

166 Allison, *The New Moses*, 271–290.

superseded older depictions of the figure of Moses with another depiction of Moses. Therefore, it is always the figure of Moses that is transformed and expanded even if an older version of Moses and Mosaic Torah is being “superseded.” But in Matthew's case he sets the figure of Jesus in Moses' place in the discourse. Thus, the figure of Jesus is transformed and expanded, but not Moses. Is this not supersessionism? I suggest that another aspect of the notion of author function can help with this question and will give us greater sensitivity to nuances of Matthew's rhetorical strategies.

Author function can change not only from culture to culture, as Foucault noted, but it can also change within a discourse tied to a single founder. For example, Friedrich Nietzsche demonstrated that at the earliest discernible stage, Homer was conceptualised in terms of a founder of a genre. The notion of his personality was not articulated. Numerous writings in the genre of heroic epic were then produced and attributed to Homer. It was not until the period of Alexandrian grammarians that a thorough conception of Homer's personality was conceived. With the formulation of Homer's personality numerous books with pseudonymous attribution to Homer were discredited.¹⁶⁷

Mosaic Discourse saw a similar transformation of the figure of Moses, but in the reverse. In earlier Mosaic traditions Moses was a personality. For instance, in traditions preceding Deuteronomy, Moses' personality and character is emphasised. He is a defender of his kinsfolk (Exod 2:11–12), he has fears and insecurities (Exod 3:11; 4:1; 5:22), he is a miracle-worker (Exod 14:21–22), and so on. As Mosaic Discourse continued in the Second Temple period Moses' personality was not

167 See Nietzsche's inaugural address delivered at the University of Basel, Friedrich Nietzsche, “Homer and Classical Philology,” in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche: The First Complete and Authorised English Translation*, vol. 6, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. J. M. Kennedy (Edinburgh; London: T. N. Foulis, 1909), 152–155. James I. Porter, *Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 63n105, rightly notes that Nietzsche's discussion of Homer anticipates and influences Foucault's ideas about author function. See also Hindy Najman, “Configuring the Text in Biblical Studies,” in Eric F. Mason et al., *A Teacher for All Generations*, 10–11. For more on the Greek interest in individual authors and its effects on Second Temple Judaism and its writings, see Sanders, “The Exile and Canon Formation,” 56–58; and Jan Gorak, *The Making of the Modern Canon* (London: Athlone, 1991), 9–41.

emphasised as much as his role as lawgiver. Starting with Deuteronomy, Moses' role as expounder of the Torah is emphasised (Deut 1:5; 12:28, 32). As the Second Temple period progressed Moses' role became the most important aspect of the author function in the discourse. The exception was Philo's *Life of Moses*, but this is because Moses' credibility was not axiomatic for his audience (i.e., Philo had to demonstrate Moses' virtuous personality to legitimise him for a skeptical Hellenistic readership).¹⁶⁸ Moreover, Philo was writing in an Alexandrian context, which, as we noted with Homer, put much effort into recovering an author's personality. In texts like *Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll* (texts of a Palestinian origin where Moses' authority is axiomatic), Moses is there primarily to serve as the agent through whom divine revelation is transmitted.¹⁶⁹ His role as lawgiver is what matters.¹⁷⁰ Authors seeking to ratify a new presentation of Torah needed the content of their documents to be given by an authoritative lawgiver. Moses was the obvious choice because he had served that role at Sinai. The authors of these texts, therefore, emulated Moses. They put their writings under the guise of Moses because if the text was under their name then they could be viewed as trying to imitate Moses by acting as a lawgiver. Imitation of Moses could be seen as challenging his well-established role.¹⁷¹ Ironically, they could be charged as fraudulent by not using pseudonymous attribution to Moses. Matthew, being devoted to Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises and salvation history, needed to reorient a new approach to Torah, but through Jesus. Matthew, therefore, through a typology, has Jesus emulate Moses so as not to imitate and challenge Moses but to inherit his role as lawgiver.¹⁷² Matthew has Jesus quite literally inherit Moses' role. As demonstrated above, Jesus is born in

168 See chapter 4.2 of this thesis.

169 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 68, observes the progressive subordination of the figure of Moses to the Torah of Moses in *Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll*.

170 Najman, "Configuring the Text in Biblical Studies," 18.

171 *Ibid.*

172 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:297, also recognise that the connection between Jesus and Moses in Matthew's Gospel concerns Moses' role as a lawgiver. They state, "Moses is above everything else the law-giver, the mediator of the divine Torah. That is his glory and that is his office. But it is a glory and an office he shares with another. For Jesus the Messiah is also the law-giver, the mediator of divine revelation It is this fact ... which is the real key to Matthew's interest in Moses."

similar circumstances as Moses. He even shares Moses' wilderness experience before giving the Torah. The effect of Matthew's typology, if a campy analogy is permitted, is to have Jesus graduate from the University of Moses. The various aspects of the typology justify and render Jesus as a qualified Sinaitic lawgiver like Moses.

Matthew is not a supersessionist. Rather, he uses Jesus to fulfil and, therefore, pick up Moses' role which has been compromised by the destruction of the temple and the malpractice of the Pharisees trying to function in that role (Matt 23:2–3). In this sense Matthew is able to connect his audience with Moses by bringing his role forward in the person of Jesus.¹⁷³ Even though Rome added to exile's rupture by decimating the temple, Matthew's audience can connect and restore, through Jesus, various roles and functions from Israel's history that were of great importance to them. The role of lawgiver and expounder of the law, which Moses had held so long, was only one. Indeed, Jesus also continued the important roles of Davidic Messiah (Matt 1:1), (rejected-)prophet (Matt 13:57; cf. 23:37; 5:11–12), the apocalyptic Son of Man (Matt 25:31–46), divine presence (Matt 1:23; 3:16–17; 28:20), and so forth. Matthew used Jesus to enter into Israel's various historic discourses in order to

173 The Maskil taking on Moses' role as an intercessor gives precedent in Second Temple Judaism for a community leader re-enacting at least one of Moses' role for the sake of a community. Judith H. Newman, "Embodied Techniques: The Communal Formation of the Maskil's Self," *DSD* 22 (2015): 266, has argued that the Maskil's posture and language during communal worship "served also as a site of memory—a visual, embodied location for recalling the work of Moses—a cultural history of submissive and intercessory behaviour on the part of the leader—transferred to the leader of the Yahad." Jesus' actions and the language and setting of the Sermon Mount likewise serve as a visual and embodied (in the narrative world) location to recall Moses' work, but as a lawgiver at Sinai. By inserting Jesus into Moses' role, Matthew gives his audience genuine Sinaitic revelation in the Sermon on the Mount. See also Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," 158, and Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 64–65. Similarly, some scholars believe that the Teacher of Righteousness inhabited Moses' role as a lawgiver to the Qumran community. As Jacob Cherian states, "the Righteous Teacher has rightly been compared to Moses. His role in the community, like Moses, was to bring the Torah to the 'House of Judah.' Like the covenant that was delivered through Moses, the Qumranites were now given 'a new covenant' (1QpHab 2.3); understandably the Righteous Teacher is thereby considered a 'second Moses' for the community;" see Jacob Cherian, "The Moses at Qumran: The מורה הצדק as the Nursing-Father of the יחד," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins (Waco; TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 358. See also Michael Owen Wise, "The Temple Scroll and the Teacher of Righteousness," in *Mogilany 1989: Papers on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Offered in Memory of Jean Carmignac, Part II: The Teacher of Righteousness. Literary Studies*, ed. Z. J. Kapera (Krakow: Enigma, 1991), 121–147.

transform them and make them accessible in the present so that they could continue into the future. In this sense, Jesus is Matthew's ultimate source for the survival of divine encounter. Or to use Matthew's terminology, Jesus comes to fulfil the Torah and Prophets (Matt 5:17).

3.5 References to Moses in Matthew's Gospel

Before concluding this chapter, it is important to consider how texts that reference Moses in Matthew's Gospel may affect or relate to Matthew's participation in Mosaic Discourse, especially through his Moses typology. Moses' name is mentioned explicitly seven times in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 8:4; 17:3, 4; 19:7, 8; 22:24; 23:2). These seven occurrences either affirm the continuing authority and validity of Moses and his Torah or demonstrate Jesus' positive connection to the ancient lawgiver, but they never compromise Jesus' Mosaic association developed in the first section of narrative in Matthew's Gospel. Thus, these references to Moses *compliment* Matthew's Moses typology.

I choose the word "compliment" carefully. I do not maintain that the references to Moses are further examples of Matthew's Moses typology. As will be explored fully in chapter 6, Matthew only develops a full Mosaic typology in the narrative material leading up to the Sermon on the Mount (i.e., Matt 1:18–5:2).¹⁷⁴ There the Moses typology serves the specific function of contextualising the Sermon on the Mount as a genuine extension of Sinaitic revelation given by an authoritative representative of the Torah. Much of Matthew's narrative material in this section, whether inherited or his own special material, lends itself to Exodus and Mosaic coloring.¹⁷⁵ Conversely, other than Matthew 23:2, the references to Moses in Matthew's Gospel are inherited from Mark and are not from contexts intrinsically connected to the life of Moses or the Exodus experience.

¹⁷⁴ See also the above section 3.3d.

¹⁷⁵ Concerning Matthew's arrangement and redaction of the narrative material leading up to the Sermon on the Mount, see chapter 6.3.

There is a possible exception, however, with the mountain of transfiguration (Matt 17:1–8 // Mark 9:2–8). The mountain setting, along with the manifestation of God in a cloud and the presence of Moses and Elijah, drapes this apocalyptic scene with Sinai motifs. Matthew indeed capitalises on these motifs and even makes them more prominent. Thus, it appears that Matthew, more so than Mark, emphasises the connection between Jesus and Moses in the transfiguration pericope. Therefore, Matthew seems to use the mountain of transfiguration to draw another parallel between Jesus and Moses on Sinai. Nevertheless, Matthew likely uses the already inherent Sinai features of the pericope merely as an opportunity to emphasise a theme in his Gospel, rather than to create another link in a consistent chain of parallels and allusions to Moses.

To be sure, it is possible that Matthew may make further allusions to Moses in Jesus' ministry. Allison, for example, has attempted to flesh out any such allusions.¹⁷⁶ Although Allison's examination of allusions to Moses throughout Matthew's Gospel is thought provoking, I am unconvinced that a robust Moses typology is operative in the Gospel after the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁷⁷ However, a lack of a Moses typology in the remainder of the Gospel does not invalidate the existence of the typology in the first portion of the Gospel. Saldarini has shown that Matthew connects Jesus with a multitude of figures and roles from Israel's Scriptures.¹⁷⁸ These Scriptural motifs are of different proportions, used in various sections of the Gospel, and accomplish a variety of things for Matthew in regard to his message about the significance and meaning of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, I maintain that Matthew does implore a Moses typology, but that it is only developed robustly in the first portion of narrative in his Gospel (i.e., Matt 1:18–5:2) and that it serves the purpose of preparing Matthew's audience for Jesus' first major discourse (i.e., the Sermon on the Mount; Matt 5–7). With this qualification established, we will now examine the explicit references to

176 See Allison, *The New Moses*. Likewise, Talbert, *Matthew*, 183–184, suggests that the feeding of the five thousand is part of the Moses typology (Matt 14:13–21). Like Allison, Talbert suggests that the Moses typology is found throughout the whole Gospel.

177 Again, Allison appears to have some skepticism about some possible allusions to Moses as well; see Allison, *The Historical Christ*, 16.

178 Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 182–186.

Moses in Matthew's Gospel and consider how they affirm and compliment Matthew's Moses typology.

i. Matt 8:1–4

The first reference to Moses immediately follows Jesus' return from his mountaintop sermon (Matt 5–7). After culminating the Moses typology with a grand teaching on the Torah and Prophets (i.e., the Sermon on the Mount) and demonstrating his teaching authority over against the scribes' authority (cf. Matt 7:28–29), Jesus affirms his loyalty to Moses and the Torah with his deeds (Matt 8:1–4).¹⁷⁹ As Jesus descends down the mountain, a leper worships him and asks to be healed if Jesus is willing (Matt 8:1–2). Jesus is willing and heals him accordingly (Matt 8:3). However, Jesus gives two additional instructions. First the healed leper should not tell anybody about the healing and, second, he should present himself to the priest and offer the gift which Moses commanded (ὁ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς) concerning the cleansing of a leper (Matt 8:4; cf. Lev 14:1–32).

The content of the leper pericope and its placement in the narrative compliment the Mosaic typology and Jesus' declared fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets in the Sermon on the Mount. In Mark, the healing of the leper is the last miracle in a group of three (Mark 1:40–45). Mark precedes the healing of the leper with an exorcism in a synagogue on the Sabbath (Mark 1.21–28) and the healing of Peter's mother-in-law from a fever (Mark 1:29–31). Matthew omits the Sabbath exorcism from his Gospel¹⁸⁰ and moves the healing of Peter's mother-in-law a little further down the narrative to create an opportunity for a fulfilment quotation (Matt 8:14–17). Thus, Matthew has moved narrative material in order to place the leper pericope with its reference to Moses' command right after the Sermon on the Mount. On account of Matthew's selection and placement of the leper pericope, it appears that Matthew is trying to continue and affirm the central theme of the Sermon on the

179 Ibid., 177; Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 94; Talbert, *Matthew*, 112–113; and Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:199.

180 He does, however, keep the crowd's response of astonishment at Jesus' teaching (Matt 7:28–29 // Mark 1:27).

Mount; namely, that Jesus fulfils (i.e., observes and teaches) the Torah and prophets.¹⁸¹

However, it is important not to assume too much from observing Matthew's redaction of Mark. It is very possible Mark's Sabbath exorcism was omitted simply because it deals with the issue of healing on the Sabbath, which Matthew does not want to address until chapter 12.¹⁸² The exorcism's Sabbath context may also give the impression that the following miracles in Mark's Gospel, including the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, took place during the Sabbath (cf. Mark 1:29–31, 32–34). In other words, it may be the leper pericope's distance from the topic of the Sabbath that made Matthew place it after the Sermon on the Mount, rather than its content involving a commandment of Moses.

Nevertheless, these two possible reasons for Matthew's narrative placement of the leper pericope are not mutually exclusive. Matthew could have placed the leper pericope immediately after the Sermon on the Mount both for its disassociation with the Sabbath and for its content dealing with Jesus affirming the Torah of Moses. Indeed, Matthew's redaction seems to suggest that he capitalised on the Torah content of the leper pericope in order to demonstrate further Jesus' fulfilment and affirmation of the Torah expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. For one, the opening description of Jesus descending the mountain, like his ascension in Matt 5:1, is reminiscent of Moses going up and down Mount Sinai (cf. Exod 19:14; 32:1, 15; 34:29).¹⁸³ This description puts a further Mosaic/Sinaitic stamp on Jesus as an authority over all things Torah. Matthew also removes Mark's mention of Jesus' anger and the leper's disregard for Jesus' command to remain silent (cf. Mark 1:43, 45). The effect of this redaction, as Loader states, "is to reserve the focus for Jesus' healing power and for

181 Gundry, *Matthew*, 138, states, "Matthew wants a healing that shows Jesus' fulfilling the law immediately after the Sermon on the Mount, which carries that theme. Therefore, the story of the leper comes first."

182 Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 187–188. Concerning Matthew's narrative progression and buildup to the Sabbath controversies; see chapter 4.1.

183 So Gundry, *Matthew*, 138. Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:198, suggests an imitation of Moses' descent from Mount Sinai in Matthew 8:1 is possible.

his exhortation that the man fulfil the Law's commands."¹⁸⁴ Thus, the content, placement, and redaction of the leper pericope compliments the notion that Jesus is God's agent of Sinaitic revelation who demonstrates that the Torah of Moses is to be followed at every level (Matt 5:18–19). In other words, Jesus' ministry of miracles and healings (i.e., Matt 8–9) does not overturn a framework of obedience to the commands of Moses' Torah (Matt 5–7).

ii. Matt 17:1–8

In our next text Moses is not merely evoked in order to validate a command, but is physically present. Jesus ascends a mountain with Peter, James, and John and is then transfigured into a shining form before the disciples' very eyes (Matt 17:1–2). At that moment, Moses and Elijah also appear and converse with Jesus (Matt 17:3). After Peter offers to make tabernacles for Jesus and these two heroes of Israel's past, God speaks from a shining cloud proclaiming Jesus to be his beloved Son (Matt 17:5; cf. Matt 3:17) and that Peter and the disciples should listen to him (*ἀκούετε*; Matt 17:5). In response, the disciples fall to the ground in fear until Jesus encourages them to get up (Matt 17:7). The disciples then see that the cloud, Elijah, and Moses are gone (Matt 17:7–8). Only Jesus remains.

As the pursuing discussion of Elijah indicates (Matt 17:9–13), the episode of Jesus' transfiguration is inherently apocalyptic and eschatological.¹⁸⁵ In this way, Matthew has maintained the primary context of the pericope in its Markan form (cf. Mark 9.2–8). Indeed, Jesus' clothes are reminiscent of the Ancient of Days in Daniel's apocalyptic vision (Dan 7:9) and the pairing of Elijah and Moses recalls strands of Jewish tradition that associated these two figures with the eschaton.¹⁸⁶ Thus, this pericope is primarily intended to point to the coming of the kingdom, to show Jesus' true glorified form that will be revealed at the end of the age, and to emphasise God's approval of Jesus as his Son.

184 Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 188.

185 Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 221.

186 Talbert, *Matthew*, 208; and Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 184.

However, two aspects of Matthew's redaction indicate that he emphasises Moses' presence on the mountain a little more than Mark. First, concerning the description of Jesus' transformation, Matthew adds that Jesus' face shone like the sun (Matt 17:2).¹⁸⁷ This description is similar to Moses' face after he received the Torah on Sinai (Exod 34:29–30). Next, Matthew also switches the order of the appearance of Moses and Elijah. Mark lists Elijah before Moses, but Matthew mentions Moses first (Matt 17:3 // Mark 9:4).¹⁸⁸ Much has been made about this reversal, even that Matthew intends it to represent a combination of the Torah (Moses) and Prophets (Elijah).¹⁸⁹ A representation of the Torah and Prophets with the appearance of Moses and Elijah is possible, but it seems to force the text a little too much.¹⁹⁰ However, the reversal of Moses and Elijah, when considered with the added description of Jesus' face shining like the sun, seems to suggest that Matthew is trying to strengthen the connection between Jesus and Moses in his inherited pericope. That is, while Matthew has maintained the primary apocalyptic/eschatological context of his Markan source, he has added a stronger Mosaic emphasis to the text. But what does this Mosaic emphasis accomplish?

It is difficult to determine the intention of Matthew's redactional activity. As mentioned above, I am skeptical that the emphasised connection between Moses and Jesus on the mount of transfiguration is part of a continuous sequence of typological parallels. Rather, it appears Jesus is receiving an endorsement by association with Moses. That is, the connection between Jesus and Moses, in this context, seems to be less about Jesus re-living important moments in Moses' life, as in Matthew 1–4, and more about placing Jesus among the ranks of Israel's heroes and apocalyptic figures on the mountain of revelation. Moreover, Jesus' connection with Moses, emphasises the endorsement of Jesus, in particular, as the instructor of God's people. As Loader

187 Matthew also drops Mark's comment about laundry (Mark 9:3).

188 Mark also described Moses as a companion of Elijah, stating that Moses was "with" Elijah. In addition to reversing Mark's order, Matthew also swaps out "with" for "and." See Gundry, *Matthew*, 343.

189 Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:493; and Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 221, both entertain the idea.

190 See also Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 165.

states, in the transfiguration pericope, Matthew presents “Jesus as one who stands above all in succession to Moses in his role as giver of the law.”¹⁹¹ If Loader is correct, then when God tells the disciples to listen to Jesus, this carries the primary meaning that they should listen to his teaching concerning the Torah (Matt 17:5; cf. Matt 28:19–20).¹⁹²

While, as Loader suggests, the concept of Moses’ approval and succession appear to be present in the pericope, ultimately Jesus is raised to a status higher than both Moses and Elijah. Indeed, Peter addresses Jesus with the divine name (Matt 17:4; *ῥαββί* in Mark 9:5) and, after God gives his endorsement of Jesus as his Son (Matt 17:5), Jesus is the only one remaining with the disciples (Matt 17:8). The disciples proceed to worship Jesus, an act of reverence they did not afford even to Moses or Elijah. Jesus alone is God’s ultimate representative.

As Jesus is the last one standing on the mountain, it is clear that, having been approved by Elijah, Moses, and God, Jesus is now the authority of all things concerning God’s will (cf. Matt 11:25–30). Thus, in this text Jesus does not prove his connection with Moses by instructing someone to follow a Mosaic command, but by being approved by the actual Moses and by being endorsed by God in the presence of Moses.

iii. Matt 19:1–9

In our next text, Moses is again evoked with reference to following a commandment, just as he was in the episode involving Jesus and the leper (cf. Matt 8:1–4). This time, however, the concern is not simply to follow a commandment, but the proper application of a commandment (Matt 19:1–9).

Upon his final entry into Judea, Jesus is met by Pharisees questioning him about legal grounds for divorce (Matt 19:1–3). There will be a thorough examination of this text in chapter 4.3. For now, it need only be mentioned that, while the

191 Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law*, 222. Similarly, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 701–702.

192 Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law*, 222. “*ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ*” in Matthew 17:5 may also be an allusion to the prophet like Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15.

Pharisees appeal to Moses' command (*ἐνετείλατο*) to give a certificate of divorce in response to Jesus' views about the union between men and women, Jesus *explains* that Moses permitted (*ἐπέτρεψεν*) divorce on account of their hard hearts (Matt 19:7–9). In other words, Jesus shows himself to be the true representative of Moses' teachings and Torah, rather than the Judean Pharisees. Moreover, it is the Pharisees' hard hearts (*τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν*) that forced Moses to even make an allowance for divorce (Matt 19:8). Thus, this text not only shows that Jesus adheres to Moses' teaching, but also that Jesus is the custodian of the proper interpretation and application of Moses' teachings. The Judean Pharisees, on the other hand, are failed interpreters of Moses' teaching.

iv. Matt 22:23–33

Jesus' debate with the Sadducees over marriage and the resurrection offers a similar picture of Jesus' relation to Moses' Torah as did his debate with the Pharisees over divorce. This pericope takes place the day after Jesus enters Jerusalem as a Davidic king and clears the temple (Matt 21:1–17). Jesus has returned to the temple and is in a series of debates with Jerusalem's various religious leaders over who has authority to teach (Matt 21:23). Jesus has been winning the arguments and now the Sadducees challenge him concerning the resurrection and its compatibility with Moses' marriage laws (Matt 22:23).

Just as the Pharisees in Matthew 19:7 appealed to Moses and the Torah to discredit Jesus' view on marriage and divorce, so the Sadducees also appeal to Moses and the Torah to discredit Jesus' belief in the resurrection (Matt 22:24). The Sadducees note that Moses instructs a man to marry his brother's widow if his brother dies childless (cf. Deut 25:5–6). In light of this command, the Sadducees ask Jesus whose wife the lady would be in the resurrection if this process of remarriage was repeated seven times (Matt 22:25–28). The Sadducees are trying to get Jesus to either compromise his belief in the resurrection on behalf of preserving Moses' authority or compromise Moses' command on behalf of the resurrection. In both

cases, the Sadducees would win the argument. However, Jesus informs the Sadducees that they are mistaken for two reasons: 1) they do not know the Scriptures; and 2) they do not know the power of God (Matt 22:29). Jesus' statement, of course, delegitimises the Sadducees' status as interpreters of Moses and the Torah.

Jesus begins his demonstration of the Sadducees' ignorance by first explaining to them that there will be no marriage in the resurrection, people will be like heavenly angels (Matt 22:30; cf. 1 Cor 15:42–44). The non-existence of marriage bonds in the resurrection does not break Moses' command or go against it. Rather, it makes the command not applicable to the situation. Thus, Jesus does not infringe on Moses' commandment, but shows its jurisdiction. Next, Jesus demonstrates the Sadducees' ignorance by asking them rhetorically if they have not read what God said to them (ὁμῖν; Matt 22:31). Jesus quotes God's statement to Moses that he is the God of the patriarchs and then states to the Sadducees that God is the God of the living, not the dead (Matt 22:32; cf. Exod 3:6). The Matthean Jesus' use of Exodus 3:6 accomplishes several things. It not only credits living power to God but it is also a reference from the Torah. Thus, as the Sadducees came to Jesus with a Mosaic Scripture, so Jesus uses another text from Moses in response. However, the Matthean Jesus adds authoritative weight to his text by emphasising that God himself said it.¹⁹³ Moses may have written it down, but God carries more authority than Moses. Finally, the Matthean Jesus states that God said this statement to the Sadducees (ὁμῖν). This implies that the Sadducees missed this statement from God because they have failed to read properly (ἀνέγνωτε).¹⁹⁴ Thus, this pericope shows once again, just as in Jesus' debate over divorce, that Israel's current leaders and teachers misunderstand and misrepresent Moses, while Jesus is Moses' true and authoritative interpreter.

193 Gundry, *Matthew*, 446. Note also that Matthew drops Mark's mention that the quote comes from the book of Moses (Matt 22:31 // Mark 12:26). This keeps the focus on God as the source of the statement.

194 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 906, notes that Matthew personalises this address to the Sadducees.

v. *Matt 23:2*

The final reference to Moses is a notoriously debated text in its own right and, at a quick glance, can seem to potentially compromise Jesus' Mosaic status. After successfully defeating the various teachers and leaders of Israel in debate, Jesus begins a chapter long onslaught of accusations against the credibility of the scribes and Pharisees' teaching, practices, and personal character (Matt 23:1–39). This aggressive character attack serves to de-legitimise Jesus' primary opponents in Matthew's Gospel (i.e., the scribes and Pharisees). The scribes and Pharisees are presented as failed teachers of the Torah and their corrupt teaching, along with their defilement of the altar through murder, is responsible for the coming judgment on the temple (see Chapter 2.3b). However, at the start of this onslaught of accusations Jesus gives the notoriously confounding statement that the scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves on the seat of Moses (Matt 23:2). Is the Matthean Jesus suggesting that the scribes and Pharisees are the rightful representatives of Moses? Even more so than himself? The other Moses texts, examined above, along with the constant de-legitimation of the scribes and Pharisees throughout the Gospel (e.g., Matt 5:20; 12:5–7; 15:12–14; 16:1–12; 19:8), and the blunt criticisms that follows this statement about Moses' seat (i.e., Matt 23:3–36) give a resounding no to these questions. However, Jesus' acknowledgement of the scribes and Pharisees' place of authority has perplexed many scholars. If Matthew is so antagonistic towards the scribes and Pharisees and is set on discrediting their teaching, why would he even admit to their position of authority, especially in regard to Jesus' disciples (and presumably Matthew's readers)?

Many solutions have been set forward, many of which assume conflicting redactional layers within the text.¹⁹⁵ However, consideration of Matthew's socio-historical setting and narrative provide a helpful context and explanation for Jesus'

195 For a critique of this solution, see Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 47–48. For an overview of different solutions to Matthew 23:2–3; see Mark Allan Powell, "Do and Keep What Moses Says (23:2–7)," *JBL* 114/3 (1995): 419–435; and Wolfgang Reinbold, "Das Matthäusevangelium, die Pharisäer und die Tora," *BZ* 50 (2006): 51–73.

acknowledgment of the scribes and Pharisees' place on the seat of Moses. Akiva Cohen notes that this logion,

Is best understood as an expression of the emotional pain of separation experienced by the Matthean community. Because of the Mattheans' Pharisaic identity they were unable to deny that the Sages of the Pharisaic association were (still) the authoritative interpreters of Torah. However, in order to undermine that authority – which they understood as rightfully belonging to Yeshua ben David, and thus to their own community scribes (cf. Matt 23:34) – they first needed to acknowledge those whom they believed held that authority in order to make their claim to be its legitimate heirs.¹⁹⁶

In other words, the acknowledgment of the socio-historical reality, that the scribes and Pharisees had a place of authority to teach Torah (i.e., seat of Moses), is intended to discredit the scribes and Pharisees' current claim as Mosaic representatives. As the anti-scribal/Pharisaic agenda within the narrative and the character onslaught that follows suggests, even though the scribes and Pharisees may currently hold a position of teaching, they are themselves illegitimate and failed representatives of Moses. Thus, this logion (i.e., Matthew 23:2) does not compromise Matthew's Moses/Jesus typology developed in the first section of the Gospel. If anything, this logion develops the scribes and Pharisees as foil Moses representatives in contrast to Jesus the true representative of Moses.

Having reviewed the texts in Matthew's Gospel in which Moses is evoked or is even present, it is clear that none of them compromise Matthew's Moses typology established in the first portion of the Gospel (Matt 1–7). Rather, these texts show that Jesus adheres to the Torah of Moses (Matt 8:1–4), Jesus is the authoritative interpreter of the Torah of Moses (Matt 19:1–9; 22:23–33), Moses gives his approval of Jesus (Matt 17:1–8), and that the scribes and Pharisees are illegitimate representatives of Moses (Matt 23:2).

196 Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 537. For a very similar point, see Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 47–48; and Powell, "Do and Keep What Moses Says," 435. See also Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew*, 77–78n86.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has turned the focus from analysing the logic and reasoning behind the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in Second Temple Judaism to analysing the writing strategies and techniques used to authenticate interpretations of the Torah as a genuine representation of God's will and the revelation given at Sinai. Hindy Najman's concept of Mosaic Discourse was used as a lens to observe and discern the how certain texts in the Second Temple period attempted to connect their interpretations of the Torah with the founding lawgiver Moses and the revelation he received at Sinai. Najman identifies four features that all participants in Mosaic Discourse exhibit or otherwise compensate for. 1) The first feature is that a new text claims the authority of older traditions by attaching itself to them by reworking and expanding them. 2) The second feature is that the new text ascribes to itself the status of Torah. 3) The third feature is that the new text re-presents the revelation at Sinai by the re-creation of the Sinai experience. 4) The fourth and final feature is that the new text is said to be associated with or produced by the founding figure Moses.

These features were then observed in Deuteronomy, Jubilees, and the Temple Scroll in order to see the variety of ways the features of Mosaic Discourse could be used and to see how the figure of Moses developed in the centuries prior to Matthew. Deuteronomy, which Najman identifies as the originator of Mosaic Discourse, was taken to set precedent for and to influence the way the authors of Jubilees and the Temple Scroll connected their texts with Moses and Sinai.

The four features of Mosaic Discourse were then examined in Matthew's Gospel, focusing on Jesus' inaugural Sermon on the Mount. It was observed that Matthew's famous programmatic statement on the Torah, antitheses, and Moses typology were all key components of Matthew's creative use of the four features of Mosaic Discourse. Concerning the first feature of Mosaic Discourse, the Matthean Jesus' teachings attached to the authority of the Torah and Prophets by reworking and expanding both prophecies and commandments in antitheses and in the fulfilment quotations. Jesus' life and teachings are presented as the fulfilment of these authoritative and sacred texts. Matthew used the second feature by framing Jesus'

teachings within an inclusio of “the Torah and Prophets” (Matt 5:17; 7:12). In doing so, the Matthean Jesus’ teaching is ascribed the status of Torah and Prophets, and even more, their fulfilment. Matthew even used the Deuteronomic warning against changing any aspect of the commandments in order to establish the definitive nature of Jesus’ rulings on the Torah. The third and fourth features of Mosaic Discourse work closely together in Matthew’s Gospel. Matthew depicts Jesus ascending a mountain before crowds gathered from all over Israel to give his teachings on the Torah and Prophets. This setting creates a Sinaitic motif and context for Jesus’ teaching on the Torah and Prophets, thus using the third feature of Mosaic Discourse. Deuteronomy already demonstrated with its setting in Moab that one did not have to be in the desert of Sinai to replicate the Sinai experience. Moreover, Jesus’ mountain ascension comes at the pinnacle of Matthew’s Moses and exodus typology. Jesus’ birth, infancy, and early career are all marked with parallels to Moses’ life and the children of Israel’s exodus experience. This typology not only supports the Sinaitic context of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, but it connects Jesus’ teaching activity with Moses’ role as the transmitter of Sinai revelation and the Torah. In this way, Matthew is able to compensate for the fourth feature of Mosaic Discourse. Since Matthew’s interpretations to the Torah are set in the life and teachings of Jesus, Matthew is not able to claim that Moses produced his interpretations. However, by creating a typological connection between Jesus and Moses, Matthew is able to depict Jesus as a Mosaic teacher. That is, he stands in Moses’ role as the expounder of the Torah to gathered Israel (cf. Deut 1:5; Matt 5:1–2). Therefore, Jesus’ rulings on the Torah are associated with Moses in as much as Jesus is a God approved representative of Moses (Matt 17:1–5). Taken together, these four features of Mosaic Discourse associate Jesus’ life and teaching with the Scriptures of Israel’s esteemed past and authorise Jesus’ interpretive halakhic rulings, i.e., the antitheses, as a genuine expression of the revelation Moses received at Sinai. In contrast to the scribes and Pharisees’ Torah observance, which results in exclusion from the kingdom and wrath (Matt 5:20; 23:27–39), Jesus’ teaching is the fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets and

results in righteousness fit for life and the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:20; 7:13–14). Thus, it restores divine encounter.

Having considered Matthew's participation in Mosaic Discourse and his use of the four features to authorise his interpretations of the Torah in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, we will now consider Matthew's genre and how it contributes to his writing strategies for interpreting the Torah.

CHAPTER 4: JESUS' TORAH INTERPRETATION IN THE CONTROVERSY STORIES

Introduction

The following chapter will examine further examples, in addition to the antitheses, of Jesus' teaching on and interpretation of the Torah in Matthew's Gospel. Four pericopes will be examined: the Sabbath controversies (Matt 12:1–14); the hand washing controversy (Matt 15:1–20); the divorce controversy (Matt 19:1–9); and the greatest commandment controversy (Matt 22:34–40). These four pericopes are part of a larger group of texts commonly referred to as "controversy stories." These are not the only four controversy stories that involve Jesus' halakic teaching, but they are selected as representatives of Jesus' interpretation of the Torah since they span a large range of Matthew's narrative and cover a variety of halakic issues.¹

On account of the literary nature of controversy stories, it should be kept in mind that these pericopes do not merely provide examples of the Matthean Jesus' approach to the Torah but they also serve to legitimise Jesus' Torah interpretation while simultaneously de-legitimising the scribes and Pharisees' Torah interpretation. This is similar to the programmatic statement and the antitheses analysed in the previous two chapters. With one statement Jesus both affirms the Torah's fulfilment in his kingdom of heaven ethic and also declares the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees as insufficient for kingdom entry (Matt 5:17–20). This continuous struggle over correct Torah interpretation with the scribes and Pharisees is the crucible in which Matthew's Jesus interprets the Torah in a manner that meets the standard of the kingdom of heaven. For Matthew, inherited Jesus tradition concerning the Torah is malleable enough for further expression, clarification, and development. Matthew participates in the phenomenon of Torah interpretation through his Jesus tradition in order to work out how Jesus' teaching and the Torah are to continue for his audience. This activity of updating Jesus' halakic tendencies and rulings is best observed in the

1 For a comprehensive analysis of the Matthean controversy stories, see Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew*, 62–349.

controversy stories. The following chapter will examine the four controversy stories listed above in narrative order and summarise the findings.

4.1 The Sabbath Controversies: Matt 12:1–14

4.1.a Narrative Context

Matthew places the two Sabbath controversies in the narrative section following Jesus' second major discourse (Matt 10).² Jesus proclaimed his kingdom to Israel (Matt 5–7), demonstrated his authority over illness and nature (Matt 8–9), and sent his disciples to share the news throughout all the land (Matt 10). Alongside the expansion of Jesus' teaching and works, however, is the theme of growing opposition. Jesus' behaviour and miracles raises suspicion and objection in chapters 8 and 9 (Matt 8:34; 9:3, 11, 34; cf. 11:16–19), he foretells fatal opposition to his disciples in chapter 10 (Matt 10:16–38), and in chapter 11 he denounces various cities that failed to receive him and his message of the kingdom (Matt 11:20–24). Dividing lines are being drawn in Matthew's narrative world between those who receive Jesus and those who reject him. It is here that the two Sabbath controversies enter the narrative and turn the situation between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees from one of resistance and objection to personal hostility. Up to this point the scribes and Pharisees have only objected to Jesus among themselves (Matt 9:3), to Jesus' disciples (Matt 9:11), and to the crowds (Matt 9:34). However, in the Sabbath controversies the scribes and Pharisees speak directly to Jesus, accusing his disciples of breaking the Sabbath, and then try to trick Jesus into breaking the Sabbath. The Pharisees' failure to prosecute the disciples or cause Jesus to break the Sabbath results in their plotting to kill Jesus (Matt 12:14). It is significant that the controversies turn hostile over a Sabbath debate. These are the first controversies explicitly concerning the Torah. As shown in chapter 1 of this thesis, the growth of

2 The Sabbath controversies are technically two pericopes. However, Matthew's narrative construction bids them be read as two related incidents on the same day. See the following analysis below for further explanation.

Torah tradition in Second Temple Judaism often took place in the context of competing views or debate. The same is true for Matthew. The growth and expansion of his Jesus Torah tradition is placed in a hostile debate with the scribes and Pharisees.

4.1.b Analysis of the First Sabbath Controversy: Matt 12:1–8

Jesus may proclaim the double love command to be the greatest (Matt 22:38–40), but the Sabbath commandment receives the lion’s share of attention in Second Temple Judaism. This ever important commandment spawned endless debate on account of its notoriously vague restriction of “מלאכה” (Exod 20:8–11; Deut 5:12–15). Interpreting and practicing this commandment correctly, however, could be the difference between blessing or cursing for God’s people, a particular group, or even an individual.³ Thus, it is to be expected that Matthew would include this topic to legitimise Jesus’ teaching on the Torah and de-legitimise the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees.

Matt 12:1 // Mark 2:23

The redacted phrase “in that time” (Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ) connects the Sabbath controversies with the previous narrative section.⁴ Jesus has just stated that the Father of heaven and earth has hidden “these things” (ταῦτα) from the wise and educated (Matt 11:25).⁵ It is difficult to identify a precise antecedent for “ταῦτα,” but it clearly informs the listener of Matthew’s Gospel that the wise and educated are misinformed when it comes to the things of Jesus’ teaching and the kingdom of heaven.⁶ Thus,

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- 3 So Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 176, “Matthew, more than Luke or Mark, takes the question with utter seriousness. These were actual issues confronting and dividing second-temple communities.” Although I agree with Overman concerning the seriousness in which Matthew approaches Sabbath interpretation, I am not certain we are in a position to judge if Mark and Luke approached the Sabbath less seriously.
 - 4 Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 171; Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 1:327.
 - 5 Carlston and Evans, *From Synagogue to Ecclesia*, 159, suggest that Jesus’ Christological statements about his “easy yoke” and rest for weary souls (Matt 11:29–30) are also in view during the Sabbath controversies.
 - 6 Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 163, suggests that “ταῦτα” is “best understood as a reference to the kingdom of God.” Luz is probably correct with this assertion. However, it might be better to think of it as referring more broadly to the things of the kingdom of heaven. That is, all the things that are a part

before the Pharisees even challenge and accuse Jesus about the Sabbath, but Jesus has already written them off as uninformed.

The controversy begins with Jesus and his disciples walking through a grain field on the Sabbath and the disciples, not Jesus, pick and eat grain. Matthew omits “made a way” (ὁδὸν ποιεῖν) from Mark. Perhaps it is distracting from the main halakic issue at hand (i.e., mercy for the hungry on the Sabbath). “ὁδὸν ποιεῖν” could possibly be construed as doing work,⁷ and Matthew is only concerned with justifying the disciples’ act of picking grain on the Sabbath. While Deuteronomy 23:25 permits gleaning by hand in a neighbour’s grain field, it makes no such allowance on the Sabbath. Matthew, however, adds to his Markan source that the disciples were “hungry” (ἐπείνασαν). It is on this point that the Matthean Jesus’ builds his halakic argument.

Matt 12:2 // Mark 2:24

Seeing the disciples glean the grain field, the Pharisees accuse⁸ them of doing what is not lawful/permissible (ἔξεσθιν) on the Sabbath. Here, for the first time in the narrative, they make their objection directly to Jesus. He is responsible for the actions of his followers. First-century Sabbath interpretation is diverse, but mentioning the detail about the disciples’ hunger shows Matthew concedes that the Pharisees’ accusation that the disciples are working has some merit.⁹ Indeed, the Matthean Jesus’ following response implies this as well. However, Jesus will argue that there are certain circumstances for work and types of work that are permissible on the Sabbath, of which, his disciples’ grain picking is one. Jesus never abolishes or disregards the Torah, rather, like many Second Temple authors, he develops and

of the kingdom and especially the revelation Jesus has recently shared about himself and the kingdom, see Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:276–277. I would suggest that this would even include Jesus’ teaching about the Torah. Indeed, Jesus then goes on to speak about his “yoke” and “learning” from him (Matt 11:28–30).

7 Ibid., 306n11, note that “ὁδὸν ποιεῖν” could be translated “to make a road.”

8 Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 1:327, notes that “Matthew changes the question of Mark (and Luke), ‘Why are they doing on the sabbath what is unlawful?’ into a declarative statement with an added ποιεῖν, thus giving it more force.”

9 Gleaning could arguably qualify as working, see Ibid., 328–329; Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 353.

grows Torah tradition by explaining and declaring what constitutes permissible work on the Sabbath.

Matt 12:3 // Mark 2:25

Jesus responds by asking the Pharisees if they have not “read” (ἀνέγνωτε) what king David did when he and his companions were hungry. This question not only opens the door for a midrashic argument but it also de-legitimises the Pharisees since surely they have “read” (ἀνέγνωτε) the stories of David (i.e., 1 Sam 21:1–7). The comparison is obvious: King David with his hungry men and King Jesus with his hungry disciples. Matthew curiously omits “χρείαν ἔσχευ” from Mark, maybe to keep the focus directly on hunger. Moreover, David was not really in need in this situation.

Matt 12:4 // Mark 2:26

Matthew has some obvious, but important, redaction of Mark’s description of the Davidic episode from 1 Sam 21:1–7. For starters, Matthew omits Abiathar since he was not the priest.¹⁰ More significant to his argument, however, is Matthew’s insertion and placement of “οὐδὲ τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ” immediately after “οὐκ ἐξὸν ἦν φαγεῖν” instead after “εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν.”¹¹ This arrangement better emphasises that it is not permissible for David’s *men* to eat the bread of presence. This focus on David’s men keeps the debate centered on the disciples’ action. Matthew’s addition of “μόνοις” also emphasises the clear infringement committed by David’s men.¹² This implies that, if David’s men were given a pass for a clear-cut violation, Jesus’ disciples should be eligible for a pass for an action that is more debatable.

Thus far Matthew’s inherited argument from Mark does not yet directly address the Sabbath. David did not take the bread of presence on the Sabbath. Nevertheless, the episode from the life of David accomplishes at least two things for Matthew. First, it demonstrates that exceptions or allowances concerning the Torah can be made for those in need of food. Second, the episode’s setting, the house of

10 The priest was Ahimelech, Abiathar’s father.

11 “εἰ μὴ τοὺς ἱερεῖς, καὶ ἔδωκεν καὶ τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ οὖσιν” in Mark 2:26.

12 Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 1:328, notes that the final placement of “μόνοις” makes it emphatic.

God (τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ), functions as a natural springboard into an explicit example of an exception to the Sabbath.

Matt 12:5–7

Matthew 12:5–7 is not in Mark. Matthew adds this part of the argument. Just as Jubilees uses earlier biblical narratives, especially from the patriarchs, to substantiate a law elsewhere in the Torah or even an added law, so Matthew further supports his Jesus' tradition by using biblical examples (i.e., Num 28:9–10; Hos 6:6).

The mention of priests and the house of God in the David episode create a natural segue to Numbers 28:9–10.¹³ Here the priests are instructed by God to give additional offerings in the temple on the Sabbath, thus breaking the Sabbath by doing work. Nevertheless, there is no charge brought against them, they are innocent (ἀναίτιοί). This example accomplishes several things for the Matthean Jesus. First, it adds another layer of de-legitimation to the Pharisees as Jesus rhetorically asks again if they have not read (ἀνέγνωτε). This time, however, he asks if they have not read in the “Torah” (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ), the very thing they are appealing to in their accusation against Jesus' disciples. Second, using an example from the Torah gives much more weight to Jesus' argument than the David story alone. Finally, the example concerns priests and the temple, which makes the argument weightier still. Indeed, God makes an exception for an infringement on the Sabbath law even inside the sacred temple, his very house.

Matthew 12:6 completes his halakic development with a *qal wahomer* argument.¹⁴ Jesus declares that something greater (μείζον) than the temple is at hand. “μείζον” is neuter and, therefore, may refer to the kingdom of heaven rather than Jesus himself.¹⁵ However, a king and kingdom are inseparable and so a distinction

13 Similarly, Anthony J. Saldarini, “Matthew,” in *Eerdman's Commentary on the Bible*, eds. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2003), 1028. The temple, of course, did not exist during David's time, but “house of God” in verse 4 makes a clear connection with the temple in verse 5.

14 Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 1:329.

15 Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 72, see especially n69. Note that Jesus goes around preaching that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt 4:17). *Contra* Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 181–183, Jesus is not saying mercy is greater than the temple.

between Jesus and the kingdom is possibly beside the point. Either way, Jesus states that, as great as the temple is, certain provisions are made in order to continue the worship of God on the Sabbath. Similarly, certain exceptions on the Sabbath are allowed in the kingdom of heaven granted it provides for those in need.¹⁶

Matthew 12:7 wraps up the argument concerning Numbers 28:9–10 with a quote from Hosea 6:6. The point is not that God no longer wants sacrifices (cf. Matt 5:23–24). Rather, if God makes exceptions to the Sabbath for sacrifices (Num 28:9–10), the thing he does not desire, how much more will he make exceptions to the Sabbath for mercy, the thing he does desire.

Hosea 6:6 accomplishes several things for the Matthean Jesus. Once again, it furthers the de-legitimisation of the Pharisees. Jesus had previously told them to go and learn the meaning of the passage, but they evidently failed to comply (Matt 9:13). Referencing this passage also harks back to the issue of caring for the needy (Matt 9:12), whom Matthew suggests includes the hungry disciples (*ἐπείωσαν*). Indeed, Jesus says that the Pharisees would not have judged the innocent (*ἀναιτίους*; i.e., the disciples) had they learned the meaning of Hosea 6:6. “*ἀναιτίους*” is the description of the priests performing the less important task of making sacrifices on the Sabbath and yet the Pharisees condemn those with whom they should be showing mercy (i.e., the disciples working in the kingdom). Finally, appealing to Hosea 6:6 continues the theme of Jesus’ fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets in the programmatic statement (Matt 5:17). The Prophets stand on an elevated level with the Torah and the Matthean Jesus uses them to help explain and give expression to the Torah.

Matt 12:8 // Mark 2:28

Matthew 12:8 concludes the first Sabbath controversy with Jesus grounding his claims in his authority as the Son of Man. As the Son of Man Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. This appeal to authority does not negate or trivialise the midrashic and

16 The immanent presence of the kingdom appears to justify exceptions to certain rules (cf. Matt 8:21–22; 9:14–15).

halakic arguments raised to justify the disciples' actions, rather it further substantiates them. The Matthean Jesus has engaged in first-century halakah concerning what is permissible on the Sabbath, but, on account of his special status as the Son of Man, he declares his ruling to be the correct approach to the Sabbath. This is similar to the antitheses, which display interpretation of the Torah, but are prefaced by Jesus' authoritative "ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν." Like a judge dropping a gavel after the ruling of a court, Jesus puts his authoritative approval on his argument about the Sabbath.¹⁷

It is noteworthy that Matthew has dropped Mark 2:27. This verse by no means abrogates the Sabbath commandment, but it may open up more "possible" interpretations of the Sabbath and give more authority to man than Matthew may be comfortable with.¹⁸ Thus, as we will continue to see, Matthew commonly curtails or removes certain Markan phrases that may be "potentially" hazardous to his approach to the Torah. Again, Matthew is not only adding to the growth of first-century Torah interpretation but also the growth of Jesus Torah interpretation.

4.1.c Analysis of the Second Sabbath Controversy: Matt 12:9–14

The second Sabbath controversy ups the ante of hostility. Reconciliation is no longer an option at its conclusion. Rather, the Pharisees plan to kill him (ἀπολέσωσιν). In the midst of this amplifying hostility, however, is another example of Jesus' teaching and interpretation of the Torah.

Matt 12:9–10 // Mark 3:1–2

After defending his disciples and declaring that acts of mercy are desired on the Sabbath, Jesus enters the Pharisees' synagogue (τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτῶν). "Καὶ μεταβάς

17 Carlston and Evans, *From Synagogue to Ecclesia*, 161–162, suggest that Jesus subordinates the Sabbath to his Christology. This is true in so much as Jesus subordinates the Sabbath to his interpretation and practice of the commandment. In other words, Jesus subordinates the Sabbath to his "teaching" in order that the Sabbath may be properly up held. He does not than subordinate the Sabbath for the sake of not being obligated to follow the commandment. Carlston and Evans, however, suggest that "Matthew might implicitly set aside the Sabbath-commandment as a whole." I disagree with this reading and suggest that Jesus' declaration of Lordship over the Sabbath merely substantiates the halakic ruling on the Sabbath that he just developed (Matt 12:1–8).

18 *Ibid.*, 161. Also, although he may overstate the case, see Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 177.

ἐκεῖθεν” seems to suggest that Jesus enters their synagogue directly from the debate in Matthew 12:1–8. Thus, the tension from the previous Sabbath debate carries over (the Pharisees have not spoken since Jesus responded to their first question) as Jesus enters hostile territory.¹⁹

Upon entering the Pharisees’ synagogue, Jesus encounters a man with a shriveled hand. The Pharisees inquire if it is permissible (ἔξεστιν) to heal on the Sabbath.²⁰ Several things of this situation are noteworthy. First, the Pharisees’ question is not only directed at Jesus but it also concerns his actions. As noted above, until the first Sabbath debate the Pharisees had never raised objection directly to Jesus, only among themselves or to other people. Moreover, they always expressed their disagreement in the public square. Although they finally addressed Jesus directly in the first Sabbath controversy, their objection concerned Jesus’ disciples. Now, however, they challenge Jesus over his own actions and in their place of authority (τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτῶν). Second, Matthew makes the Pharisees more incriminating than does Mark. In Mark the Pharisees do not ask Jesus a question, they simply watch to see if Jesus will heal on the Sabbath in order to bring charges against him. In Matthew the Pharisees ask Jesus if it is permissible to heal on the Sabbath not for the sake of honest debate, but to bring charges against him (κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ). They are insincere and devious interlocutors. The fraudulent nature of the Pharisees’ question and circumstances further intensifies the hostility of the situation. Finally, “ἔξεστιν” suggests that the Pharisees are continuing the conversation from the previous Sabbath debate (Matt 12:2). Jesus declared that it is permissible to do acts of mercy to those in need on the Sabbath. The Pharisees plan to challenge that ruling by making Jesus put it to practice and then accuse him for his actions. They are attempting to fight fire with fire, that is, to hold Jesus to his teaching. However, they are playing unfairly since they already disregard his

19 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 486; Saldarini, “Matthew,” in Dunn and Rogerson, 1028, states, “this conflict is sharper because the Pharisees confront Jesus in ‘their synagogue.’”

20 Concerning the use of medicine on the Sabbath in rabbinic material, see Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 357.

argument for practicing acts of mercy on the Sabbath.²¹ This, however, provides the Matthean Jesus an opportunity to justify further doing acts of mercy on the Sabbath and to declare what kind of work can be done on the Sabbath.

Matt 12:11–12 // Mark 3:4

Once again Mathew adds halakic material to his inherited Jesus tradition in order to expand on Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath. Matthew uses what seems to be the parable of the lost sheep (Matt 18:10–14; cf. Q 15:4–5a, 7) and spins it into a *qal wahomer* argument. This argument replaces Mark 3:4, in which Jesus asks the Pharisees, rhetorically, if it is “ἐξεσθιν” to do good or evil and save or kill on the Sabbath. The Markan Jesus' question is too open ended for Matthew's context.²² Jesus needs to provide a definitive ruling to the Pharisees' question, rather than the implied answer to the Markan Jesus' rhetorical question. After all, Jesus' very actions are in question here. The sheep argument gives support and justification for his Sabbath practices. Moreover, the sheep argument more clearly signifies doing work (κρατήσῃ; ἐγερῆ) than the vague good/evil and save/kill of the Markan Jesus' rhetorical question. There can be no question that Jesus views saving the sheep and healing the man's hand as forms of work.

The logic of the sheep argument is straight forward. Everybody, if they had only one sheep and it fell in a pit on the Sabbath, would grab and lift their sheep out of the pit.²³ If this is true for a sheep, then how much more so for a man since he is of greater value than a sheep. Helping a man in need is *de facto* good, and since helping a man in need on the Sabbath is lawful, per the logic of the sheep argument, Jesus declares that it is permissible (ἐξεσθιν) to do *good* on the Sabbath (ὥστε ἐξεσθιν τοῖς σάββασιν καλῶς ποιεῖν). Thus, Jesus has clarified, if not redrawn, the restrictions of the Sabbath command: the Sabbath is to be kept holy, but this does not exclude doing good, especially showing mercy to those in need. Jesus does not abolish the Torah,

21 Hagner, *Mathew 1–13*, 1:333, notes that “from [the Pharisees'] point of view, a man who had had a withered hand for some time could surely have waited one day more to be healed.”

22 Saldarini, “Matthew,” Dunn and Rogerson, 1028.

23 Nevertheless, not “every” interpreter of the Torah would agree with Jesus on this point (cf. CD 11:13–14).

rather he uses other scriptures, examples from life, and the immediate needs of those encountering the mission work of the kingdom of heaven to interpret the Torah and its restriction of “מלאכה” on the Sabbath.

Matt 12:13–14 // Mark 3:5–6

Jesus’ argument permits him to do good on the Sabbath and, therefore, heal the man with the withered hand. Although Jesus heals the man without the Pharisees vocalising an objection to his face, the Pharisees go outside and plot to kill him.²⁴ It is significant that the Pharisees go outside. The synagogue is the place of their authority or at least influence.²⁵ It is in the synagogue that the Pharisees declare what is and is not lawful to do during the Sabbath. Jesus, however, has won a victory on the Pharisees’ turf. He is now the one declaring what is and is not lawful on the Sabbath within the synagogue. The Pharisees are forced outside their own synagogue.

Davies and Allison rightly note “that Jewish tradition had long recognized that exceptional circumstances sometimes allowed the non-observance of the Torah.”²⁶ Halakic debate, therefore, was never about “if” an exception could be made, but rather, “what” constitutes a legitimate exception.²⁷ This, however, misses the mark by just a bit. While the Matthean Jesus certainly points out exceptions to the rule in the Sabbath controversies, his main purpose is to declare what *should be done* on the Sabbath, namely, good. Indeed, the priests offering sacrifices on the Sabbath are not just exceptions to the Torah, but part of the Torah. Likewise, Jesus declares

24 Mark states that the Pharisees conspire against Jesus with the Herodians. Matthew presumably excludes the Herodians in order to keep the focus on the Pharisees as Jesus’ main opponent, see Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 180.

25 Technically the scribes were the leaders of the synagogues while the Pharisees never had an official position, see Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Were the Pharisees and Rabbis the Leaders of Communal Prayer and Torah Study in the First Century? The Evidence of the New Testament, Josephus, and the Early Church Fathers,” in *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress*, ed. Howard C. Kee and Lynn H. Cohick (Harrisburgh: Trinity Press, 1999), 89–105. However, Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 250–251, notes that in Matthew’s narrative world some synagogues are part of the Pharisaic association. These synagogues would be under the influence and authority of the Pharisees. Matthew may intend this synagogue, in which Jesus heals the man’s withered hand, to be viewed as part of the Pharisaic association or at least that its scribes are greatly influenced by the Pharisees.

26 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:307.

27 Ibid.

that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath and that God desires his people to practice mercy on the Sabbath.

4.2 The Hand Washing Controversy: Matt 15:1–20

4.2.a Narrative Context

The pericope concerning the tradition of washing hands prior to eating is not part of an obvious narrative build up like the two Sabbath controversies. Other than dividing Jesus' two feedings of great multitudes,²⁸ this controversy over hand washing arises somewhat abruptly. Nevertheless, it is not out of line with the major themes, concerns, and issues in the Gospel. In particular, it continues the debate between Jesus and Pharisees (i.e., his primary opponents) and further legitimises Jesus' teaching on the Torah over-against their teaching.

4.2.b Analysis of the Hand Washing Controversy: Matthew 15:1–20

Matt 15:1–2 // Mark 7:1–5

The pericope begins with some redaction that seems to indicate Matthew's concern to make his account more accurate than Mark's for a Torah-abiding audience and to further emphasis the Pharisees' hostility towards Jesus and his disciples.

First, concerning the increase in hostility, when Mark introduces Jesus' opponents, only the scribes derive from Jerusalem. The Pharisees are presumably locals of the Galilee region. Matthew, however, places “ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων” before both the Pharisees and scribes indicating both groups were sent from Jerusalem. Jerusalem's leadership is always in contention with Jesus (cf. Matt 2:3).²⁹ Moreover, Jerusalem has not been mentioned for 10 chapters (Matt 5:35). Its placement here

28 Note that the present pericope emphasises the Pharisees' false teaching (Matt 15:12–14) which is also mentioned at the end of the second feeding story (Matt 16:11–12). Perhaps Matthew intends these sections to inform each other.

29 For a review of the various leadership groups in Jerusalem and their negative relation with Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, see Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 217–231.

intensifies the hostility of the situation while simultaneously pointing towards the passion narrative, the end of Jesus' controversy with Jerusalem's leadership.³⁰

As for Matthew's concerns for accuracy, he removes Mark's long explanation of the Jewish practice of hand washing before meals (Mark 7:3–4).³¹ This removal not only avoids Mark's hyperbole (πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι)³² but also assumes an audience informed about hand washing traditions.³³ Moreover, Mark's hand washing explanation also complicates the issue at hand and work's against Matthew's halakic strategy. Matthew's ultimate concern, as is evident throughout the pericope, is to dispute the tradition of hand washing before a meal. Mark, in his explanation of hand washing, notes that the Jews practice many traditions about washing (Mark 7:4). This opens a can of worms for Matthew, he does not want to out-right disregard all traditions about washing and certainly does not want to disregard pentateuchal laws about washing (cf. Matt 23:26). Regardless of what Matthew thinks about the Pharisees' traditions, hand washing is closely associated with many laws in the Torah. In many ways this hand washing tradition is the application of the priestly holiness code into daily life.³⁴ Matthew, like a surgeon, has to carefully remove the Pharisees' closely associated tradition from the Torah that he wishes to preserve.

Finally, it should be noted that Mark refers to the hand washing as a “tradition of the elders” (Mark 7:3). This works against the subtlety of Matthew's argument. In Matthew's version of the controversy the Pharisees are the only ones to call the practice of hand washing a “tradition of the elders.” Neither Matthew as the narrator nor Jesus within the narrative ever afford the Pharisaic practice of hand washing such stature.

30 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:519; see also Hagner, *Mathew 14–28*, 2:430.

31 It is possible, of course, that Matthew's copy(ies) of Mark did not have verses 7:3–4.

32 Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 229. Similarly, Isaac W. Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE: Reading Matthew and Luke-Acts as Jewish Texts*, WUNT 2/355 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 266. Nevertheless, Oliver (pages 261–263) notes that the practice of hand washing appears to have been wide spread in the first century, especially in Palestine.

33 Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 226.

34 Hagner, *Mathew 14–28*, 2:430.

Having adjusted Mark's introduction, Matthew has the scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus why (διὰ τῆ) his disciples transgress the traditions of the elders by neglecting to wash their hands prior to eating. In Mark's account the scribes and Pharisees inquire after having seen the disciples eat without washing. Matthew, on the other hand, has the scribes and Pharisees ask unprovoked and not having seen the disciples do so. This paints the scribes and Pharisees as more hostile and aggressive. Along this line, Matthew changes the Pharisees' accusation of the disciples from Mark's "οὐ περιπατοῦσιν ... κατὰ" to the more severe "παραβαίνουσιν." This adds to the intensity of the accusation.³⁵ In addition, even though the Matthean Jesus discredits the Pharisaic tradition of hand washing in terms of its ability to prevent defilement, it seems Matthew still wants to avoid any direct evidence of the disciples eating without first washing their hands.

Concerning the argument more specifically, the scribes and Pharisees look to place the disciples under the sanction of the "tradition of the elders." The concept of "elders" anchors their tradition in a well-established source of authority (cf. *m. Abot.* 1:1).³⁶ This is very similar to the logic of Mosaic Discourse. Anchoring a new interpretation, presentation, or application of the Torah to Moses affords authority to that given manifestation of the Torah. Claiming their tradition comes from the "elders," the scribes and Pharisees imbue the hand washing custom with a significant source of authority. This makes the disciples' implied actions more severe.

Matt 15:3 // Mark 7:6a, 8–9

Jesus, using the same phrase as the scribes and Pharisees (διὰ τῆ), asks his interlocutors why they transgress the commandment of God for the sake of their tradition. In this instance, Jesus is not referring to their tradition of hand washing, which surely does not transgress the Torah, but their tradition of vowing to God

35 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 609–610.

36 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:520. It is difficult to determine a clear antecedent for "the elders" to which these traditions belong. "The elders" could be the current elders in Jerusalem (Matt 16:21; 26:3–6) or generations of old that passed down laws now received and cared for by the Pharisees. Either way, the Pharisees' association with scribes and Jerusalem (Matt 15:1) connects the traditions with the authority of the "administrative leaders of Jerusalem." See Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 221–222, 254n117.

assistance that could be given to others, such as one's parents (*Corban*; cf. Mark 7:11).³⁷ This type of argumentation works like a poker match. Every combination of cards (i.e., a hand) has a designated value. However, cards of higher value combined together create a hand worth more than other card combinations. Jesus not only raises a higher hand but also discredits the scribes and Pharisees' hand. The scribes and Pharisees appeal to “παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων,” but Jesus appeals to “ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ.” Jesus' combination of authority is infinitely more authoritative than that of the scribes and Pharisees'. A commandment is greater than a tradition and God is greater than the elders. However, Jesus has made the disparity between the two sources of authority even greater by referring to the Pharisees' tradition as “your tradition” rather than a “tradition of the elders.”³⁸

Matt 15:4–6 // Mark 7:10–13

Jesus then elaborates how it is that the scribes and Pharisees transgress the more important Torah with their less important traditions. Jesus states that the “Pharisees” tradition of offering to God what would have been given to one's mother and father over-rides the commandment to honor mother and father (Exod 20:12). Jesus has moved away from the specific issue of the hand washing tradition, but he will return to it momentarily. His first move in the argument is to note that while his disciples may break a tradition (whether it is a binding tradition or not Jesus will soon address), the Pharisees commit a graver wrong by transgressing a commandment, one of the ten commandments no less. In other words, the Pharisees have no right to point the accusatory finger at Jesus' disciples.

Matthew also has some redaction that further incriminates the scribes and Pharisees. In verse 4 Matthew replaces Mark's “Moses said” with “God said.” Even though Moses is a figure of significant authority, God is of a supremely higher

37 Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 330, notes that “with hand washing it is not immediately evident why one thereby transgresses God's commandment. For this reason Matthew brings another, more evident example, viz., the vows for the temple that are fulfilled at the expense of the parents whom one according to the fourth commandment must honor.”

38 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 615–616; see also Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 267.

status.³⁹ Moreover, referring to a commandment of God, rather than a commandment of Moses, matches better with Jesus' statement in verse 3 (ἐντολήν τοῦ θεοῦ). This creates the greatest contrast possible: God says to honor mother and father and "you" (i.e. the scribes and Pharisees, not even the elders) say a contradictory tradition. In other words, Jesus pits the Pharisees against God himself.⁴⁰ This is almost the converse of the antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount. Instead of Jesus' word against his opponent's teaching ("you have heard, but I say"), it is the Pharisees' word against God's. Indeed, it is noteworthy that Matthew's cleaning up of Mark 7:12 with "οὐ μὴ τιμήσει" aligns well with the commandment cited in verse 4a.⁴¹ The effect is to make it sound as if the scribes and Pharisees are not only transgressing God's commandment but are even *commanding* the opposite of God's commandment.⁴² Thus, Jesus concludes that the scribes and Pharisees make void the word (τὸν λόγον)⁴³ of God on account of their tradition. Once again, Jesus does not say "tradition of the elders," but simply "your tradition."

Matt 15:7–9 // Mark 7:6b–7

Jesus now uses scripture from the Prophet Isaiah (Isa 29:13) to complete his repudiation of the scribes and Pharisees and their traditions. Mark has Jesus utter this quote as his initial reply to the Pharisees' accusation against the disciples, rather than jumping right into the discussion of vows like Matthew. Matthew's arrangement, however, helps his argument build better as it allows this quote from Isaiah to function as the climax of Jesus' accusation against his opponents.⁴⁴ This is another case of Jesus appealing to the Prophets when discussing the Torah. Here, however, he uses the Prophets to de-legitimise his opponents' praxis and teaching rather than to

39 Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 2:431.

40 Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 229.

41 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:524; Gundry, *Matthew*, 304.

42 See Gundry, *Matthew*, 304, for a fuller description of Matthew's redactive maneuver. Similarly, see Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 431; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 230.

43 "Word of God" (τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) in verse 6 is probably an equivalent with "commandment" (τὴν ἐντολήν τοῦ θεοῦ) in verse 3 and only used here because it was already in Mark.

44 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:525; Gundry, *Matthew*, 305.

affirm his own teaching (cf. Matt 9:13; 12:3–4, 7). Indeed, this Scripture provides Jesus with an authoritative source (i.e., God through the prophet Isaiah) to complete his rebuke of the Pharisees’ enterprise of traditions. The citation plays right into Jesus’ argument. The idea that the scribes and Pharisees are only giving lip-service to God with their traditions while maintaining distant hearts anticipates a distinction between inner purity and outer purity (cf. Matt 15:11). This distinction will be important for Jesus’ argument about hand washing.⁴⁵

The citation from Isaiah also makes a distinction between “doctrines” and “teachings of men.” This completes Jesus’ discrediting of the Pharisees’ traditions. Their traditions are qualitatively distinct from and less important than God’s commandments.⁴⁶ Moreover, the Pharisees’ traditions, according to this reading of Isaiah, even cause a distant heart from God. The traditions have the Pharisees’ opposite desired effect. They go against God’s Torah, rather than help uphold and apply the Torah.

Matt 15:10–11 // Mark 7:14–15

Having discredited the scribes and Pharisees and their traditions, Jesus then addresses the crowds specifically about the tradition of hand washing. Jesus states that things that come out the mouth, rather than go into the mouth, defile a person. This statement’s implications for the tradition of hand washing are many. However, for the moment, Jesus gives no further comment or elaboration. With that being said, Matthew makes a noteworthy and careful redactional move. In Mark’s version, Jesus states that nothing outside a person (οὐδέν ἐστιν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) has the ability to defile by going into them. Matthew’s version is not as broad. He specifies and clarifies that it is not the things going into the “mouth” (στόμα) that defile a person.⁴⁷ Jesus will soon further elaborate.

45 This also anticipates Jesus’ onslaught of critiques against the scribes and Pharisees just prior to his passion (Matt 23:25–28).

46 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 619.

47 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:527.

Matt 15:12–14 // Mark 7:17

These next three verses are primarily redaction. They pull away from the main issue of hand washing, only for a moment, to further de-legitimise the scribes and Pharisees.⁴⁸ Jesus' calls them blind guides and plants not planted by his heavenly Father, but whom the Father will one day up root. In addition to anticipating further critiques (Matt 13:24–30; 37–43; Matt 23:15, 24), these verses render the scribes and Pharisees' teaching, especially concerning hand washing, misguided and ultimately unbinding.

Matt 15:15–16 // Mark 7:17–18

Once again the discussion returns to the issue of hand washing as Peter asks for an explanation of Jesus' "parable" in verse 11. That is, the statement concerning things that defile.

Matt 15:17–18 // Mark 7:18–20

Jesus now explains the saying from verse 11 stating that things that go into the mouth simply "pass" (χωρεῖ) through and end up in the latrine. In other words, they do not become a part of the person. It is noteworthy that Matthew has abbreviated Mark's "πᾶν τὸ ἐξωθεν" to "πᾶν" and removed "οὐ δύναται αὐτὸν κοινῶσαι." This phrase seems too broad and absolute for Matthew. Matthew wants to keep the focus on hand washing, not necessarily dietary restrictions and their ability to defile. This is supported by the fact that Matthew excludes Mark's "καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα" (cleansing all foods; cf. Mark 7:19).⁴⁹ Similarly, Saldarini notes that Matthew "does not say here, in contrast to Mark 7:18–19, that whatever goes into a person cannot render him unclean. He says only that it passes through and is gone, leaving the meaning of the saying gnomic and vague."⁵⁰ Matthew can then attribute this vague

48 Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 83.

49 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 625. However, it should be noted that Mark is not necessarily abrogating the Torah in Mark 7:19. For a reading against the idea that the Markan is abrogating the Torah in 7:19, see Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, "Markus-Evangelium," *RAC* 24 (2010): 173–207; and Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 103–128. While one does not need to read Mark as an abrogator of the Torah, it still seems clear that some of Mark's statements are not precise enough for Matthew's polemical context.

50 Saldarini, "Matthew," in Dunn and Rogerson, 1035.

statement specifically to food eaten without hand washing, which is what he does in the final verse of the pericope (i.e., Matt 15:20).

As for things coming out of the mouth, Jesus states that they come from the heart. Therefore, unlike the things that pass into the latrine (in this case food eaten with unwashed hands), these things from the heart are part of a person and, therefore, these things (*καὶ κεῖνα*)⁵¹ defile a person.

Matt 15:19–20 // Mark 7:21–23

As evidence for his statement about what does defile, Jesus gives a list of seven vices that come from the heart. Following this list, Jesus concludes, as in Mark, by reiterating to his disciples that these things defile a person. However, Matthew adds the short, but critical, final statement that eating with unwashed hands does not defile a person. This statement returns to the initial issued raised by the scribes and Pharisees at the start of the pericope.⁵² It also *clarifies* that the Matthean Jesus' claim about defilement in verse 11 compares (the Pharisaic tradition of) hand washing verse moral acts, *not* hand washing and all dietary restrictions verse moral acts.⁵³ The Matthean Jesus maintains that all the commandments must be upheld, both light and weighty (Matt 23:23). However, he also needs to discredit the Pharisees' tradition of hand washing, which is very closely associated with many purity laws in the Torah. Therefore, through careful redaction of his Markan source, Matthew dismantles the hand washing tradition without also rendering a slue of purity and dietary laws inoperative, to which Mark's account is susceptible. Matthew is a careful and tactful author and halakic debater. He preserves the primary argument of his Markan source (i.e., the rejection of the Pharisees' hand washing tradition), but in a way that better protects the Torah.

51 "*καὶ κεῖνα*" is used for emphasis, see BDAG, 500.

52 Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 334.

53 Similarly, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 628.

4.3 The Controversy over Divorce: Matt 19:1–9

4.3.a Narrative Context

The third Torah pericope concerns the proper interpretation and application of divorce as prescribed in Deuteronomy 24:1–4. Jesus gave a pithy, but striking, declaration concerning divorce in the antitheses (Matt 5:31–32), but now he finally further explains his claim.⁵⁴ Matthew’s double discussion of divorce suggests his great interest in and concern for the topic.⁵⁵ Matthew’s significant and thoughtful redaction of Mark’s account of the divorce pericope indicates his concern for the topic as well.

The divorce pericope follows Jesus’ fourth major discourse (Matt 18) and continues a series of discussions about the values and workings of the kingdom of heaven. Indeed, while the divorce pericope is in the form of a controversy story, it leads into a private discussion with the disciples about the standards of marriage and celibacy in the kingdom of heaven. Thus, Matthew includes this pericope not only to show Jesus’ authority over the Pharisees’ and their teaching, but to once again show the kingdom standard for such an important issue as marriage and divorce.

Concerning narrative progression, Jesus leaves Galilee for the last time and has just entered Judea, the home turf of his opponents (cf. Matt 15:1).⁵⁶ His confrontation with Israel’s leadership, especially, the Pharisees is about to come to a head.⁵⁷ It is fitting then that Jesus is challenged about divorce almost immediately upon entering Judea. Jesus and the Pharisees have now had multiple halakic debates. Jesus always controls and dominates the debate. However, the Pharisees produce their most complex argument yet. Brief as it may be, the Pharisees engage in a back and forth debate with Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus still prevails and offers yet another

54 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:6.

55 Saldarini, “Matthew,” in Dunn and Rogerson, 1042.

56 Concerning Jerusalem as the home turf of Jesus’ opponents, see footnote 29 above.

57 Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 277, states, “There is a dramatic shift in scene and the tension is heightened as Jesus heads south at the start of chapter 19. What has been ministry, teaching, and ongoing tension with local authorities seems to have escalated to a point of no return. Jesus is now starting to head south, into Judea, to Jerusalem, and to his death.”

interpretation that de-legitimises the Pharisees' and their interpretation of the Torah, all while upholding the Torah and raising it to a standard suitable for the kingdom of heaven.

4.3.b Analysis of the Divorce Controversy: Matt 19:1–9

Matt 19:3 // Mark 10:2

The controversy, like the previous ones over the Sabbath and hand washing, is initiated by Jesus' opponents. Pharisees test (πειράζοντες) Jesus asking him if it is lawful (ἔξεστί) for a man⁵⁸ to divorce his wife for any reason (τὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν). Several things are at play in this question and Matthew makes an adjustment to Mark's account that is crucial to the precision of the argument.

In Mark's account the Pharisees ask if divorce, as a whole, is lawful. Matthew, however, adds the the qualifying phrase “τὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν.” Thus, the issue at hand is not whether or not divorce is lawful, for the Torah makes provisions for divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1–4, but what are the grounds for divorce. This is a much more accurate first-century halakic question. However, similar to the question over what constitutes “work” in the Sabbath commandment, “ערוות דבר” (“nakedness matter”), the reason for divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1, also leaves room for varied interpretations.⁵⁹ Therefore, when the Pharisees ask if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason, they are asking for Jesus' interpretation of “ערוות דבר.”⁶⁰ Thus, a set of first-century halakic assumptions already come attached to the Pharisees' question.

58 Matthew replaces Mark's “ἀνδρὶ” with “ἀνθρώπῳ,” probably to make a better connection between the Pharisees' question and Jesus' declaration about divorce in which he uses “ἄνθρωπος” (Matt 19:6).

59 Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 280; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 275; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 768–769.

60 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:9; Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 463.

Matt 19:4–6 // Mark 10:3a, 6–9

Jesus responds to the Pharisees' question by making the claim that man should not separate what God has put together. He bases this claim on a halakic argument from two Scripture citations concerning the creation and union of men and women (Gen 1:27; 2:24). Although also a part of Moses' Pentateuch, these Scriptures narrate a time before Moses (i.e., pre-Torah) gave the provision of divorce on account of "ערוֹת דבר." The chronology of these Scriptures will be an important component to the Matthean Jesus' argument.

Jesus begins the development of his halakic ruling on divorce with his previous critique of the Pharisees, asking the Pharisees if they have not read (οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε). The Pharisees are supposed to be well-read authorities on the Scriptures. Thus, the rhetoric of the critique de-legitimises the Pharisees' primary claim to authority and ability.

The first scripture Jesus cites to support his ruling on divorce (i.e., that man should not separate what God has joined together) is Genesis 1:27. With this verse Jesus explains that from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) the Creator (ὁ κτίσας) made male and female. Mark states that they (i.e., this first male and female) were made male and female from the beginning of creation (κτίσεως). The switch from creation to Creator is important to Matthew's argument. Jesus' ruling in verse 6 pits the authority of man to separate man and woman versus the authority of God to join them. Referencing God as the Creator of man and woman marks his authority over his interactions with them, including joining them together in marriage. Indeed, as Jesus' second Scripture citation indicates, he believes that Genesis 1:27, although primarily about the creation of man and woman, has implications for the union of man and woman and God's participation in it.⁶¹

Accordingly, Jesus uses this Genesis 1:27 to lead into Genesis 2:24, another Scripture from the creation account, but this one is specifically about the union of

61 The Qumran Community also used this verse to articulate the proper form of marriage (CD 4:21). However, they were concerned with both polygamy and divorce. See, Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 489n24.

male and female. Jesus introduces Genesis 2:24 with “καὶ εἶπεν.” This makes “the Creator” from verse 4 the speaker.⁶² This gives even greater weight to the cited scripture and presents it as a ruling directly from God the Creator’s mouth.

Genesis 2:24 already has an introductory “for this reason” that allows it to connect nicely with Genesis 1:27, which Jesus just cited (i.e., Gen 1:27).⁶³ Thus, together, the two Scriptures state that because the Creator made them man and woman so they are also to be joined. God is both the creator and the unifier. It is on these premises, drawn from and supported by Scripture, that Jesus makes his halakic proclamation that man should not separate, *via* divorce, what God has joined. Indeed, the union of man and woman and Jesus’ proclamation concerning their union are grounded in Scripture, the foundations of creation, and the authority of God, the Creator himself. Jesus has established fundamental truths about marriage before addressing lawful grounds for divorce.

Matt 19:7 // Mark 10:3b–4

The Pharisees offer a counter argument to Jesus by appealing to Moses’ command from Deuteronomy 24:1 to give a woman a certificate of divorce and to divorce her on the basis of “ערוֹת דבר.” This brings the discussion back to the Pharisees’ original question about the lawfulness of divorce for “τὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν” (cf. Matt 19:3). They want to know what “ערוֹת דבר” could cause Moses to command divorce. It should be noted that only the Pharisees say Moses “commanded” (ἐνετείλατο) the actions of divorce. Matthew is careful not to have Jesus say this. In Mark, on the other hand, Jesus says it twice (Mark 10:3, 5).

The Pharisees’ question shows that they learned to improve in their debate with Jesus. Jesus criticised the Pharisees asking “οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε.” In response they appeal to the Torah showing that they do read and perhaps Jesus missed something.

62 So, Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:11; Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 465, Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 2:548; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 771; *contra* Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 489n27; Gundry, *Matthew*, 378.

63 Genesis 2:23 is Adam’s statement about God having created Eve from his own body. Therefore, Genesis 1:27 is not entirely unrelated to Genesis 2:24. The connection of the two scriptures is rhetorically functional.

Moreover, they reference Moses by name, which gives greater authority to their question. Nevertheless, while the Pharisees demonstrate that they *read* the Torah, Jesus' next response reveals that they do not know how to *interpret* the Torah.⁶⁴

Matt 19:8 // Mark 10:5

Jesus responds to their counter-argument by explaining that Moses allowed (*ἔπετρεψεν*) them to divorce their wives on account of their hard-heartedness. Jesus adds the qualifier, however, that this is not how things were from the beginning (*ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*). There are three key features to the rhetoric of Jesus' response. First, "*ἔπετρεψεν*" makes Deuteronomy 24:1–4 a later "allowance" rather than a command. In Mark, it is Jesus who calls Moses' divorce instructions a command, while the Pharisees call it an allowance (*ἔπετρεψεν*; cf. Mark 10:3–5).⁶⁵ This does not remove the authority and validity of Deuteronomy 24:1–4, but it does make the claim more acceptable to say that an allowance does not align with God's original intention in creation, rather than a command. This avoids any direct contradiction to Deuteronomy 24:1–4 "since what is 'commanded' or forbidden there is only a man's remarriage with his ex-wife who in the meantime has been divorced again. Divorce is merely presupposed."⁶⁶ Second, "your hard-heartedness" makes the Pharisees personally responsible for the allowance given long ago by Moses.⁶⁷ This delegitimises the Pharisees as the ones causing God to make a change to his original intentions for the union of men and women. Finally, Matthew's second insertion of the qualifier "*ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*" uses the argument of chronology. This not only sets up a system of priority (i.e., marriage union is older and preferred over divorce, which

64 Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 253.

65 Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 490.

66 *Ibid.*

67 The Matthean Jesus may be speaking more broadly about the children of Israel's hard-heartedness, see Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 2:548, or even the generation under the exile, see Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 774. Nevertheless, Matthew gives great attention in his Gospel to judging Israel's leadership, especially for misleading and taking advantage of their sheep. It seems fitting then that "your hard-heartedness" is directed specifically at the Pharisees and their Torah interpretation and practice.

was added later)⁶⁸ but it also connects back to Jesus' first argument from the Genesis creation account (Matt 19:4–6). With these features of rhetoric, Jesus is able to promote God's original intention for the union of men and women, uphold and explain the reasoning of Deuteronomy 24:1–4, all while de-legitimising the Pharisees yet again. Having done so, Jesus is finally in a position to address the Pharisees' original question about a lawful reason for a man to divorce his wife.

Matt 19:9 // Mark 10:10–12

Jesus introduces his final saying on divorce with his “λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν” phrase he used in the antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount. Just as with the antitheses, Jesus follows a statement about the Pharisees' interpretation of a law with his ruling on the matter.⁶⁹ In this case, while Moses gave allowance for divorce on account of the Pharisees' hard-hearts, Jesus qualifies this allowance by declaring that divorcing and then re-marrying another woman is adultery unless the divorce was on account of sexual immorality (μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ). Thus, Jesus gives his answer to the Pharisees' original question concerning if there is any lawful reason (τὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν) for divorce. The single reason for divorce is sexual immorality (πορνεία), otherwise it is wrong and even adultery if followed by remarriage. Adultery usually means having sexual relations with another man's wife. Jesus expands the definition of adultery, however, to include simply marriage to another woman, married or not.⁷⁰ This not only expands the definition of adultery but also raises the ethical demands for Torah observance to fit the standards of the kingdom of heaven.

Unfortunately, even though Jesus has provided much important information concerning marriage and divorce, “πορνεία” is nearly as vague as “ערוֹת דבר” in Deuteronomy 24:1. Bockmuehl, however, has convincingly shown that rabbinic and liturgical material from antiquity apply the prohibition in Deuteronomy 24:1–4 to

68 Similarly, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 774, notes that the permission given by Moses is made second best to God's original intention.

69 This is assuming “ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις” in the antitheses refers to the teaching of Jesus' opponents. See chapter 3.3a.

70 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:16.

cases of impurity caused by adultery.⁷¹ More significant to Matthew's Gospel, Bockmuehl notes that 1QapGen20.15 attests to pre-rabbinic evidence of this exegetical tradition (cf. Philo *Abr.* 98; *Jub.* 33.7–8).⁷² Thus, Bockmuehl states that the logic/halakah of Deuteronomy 24:1–4 was as such, “*any sexual interference* with an existing marriage bond produces a state of impurity, which precludes a resumption of that marriage.”⁷³ Under this halakic tradition, if a man remains with his wife after she becomes unclean from an affair and has sex with her, he would also become impure and break Deuteronomy 24:4.⁷⁴ This is most likely a primary reason why Matthew redacted Mark's divorce pericope to discuss if there is “τὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν” for lawful divorce.

If someone from the Matthean community was trying to adhere to Jesus' complete restriction of divorce as it is found in Mark 10:11–12 and their wife had an affair, they would be forced to break Deuteronomy 24:1–4 as understood by some in first-century Judaism. Moreover, other people could accuse this person on breaking the Torah. Matthew, therefore, develops this exception clause (i.e., *μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ*), not so much to find a reason for divorce, but to provide a way to avoid being trapped/forced into impurity and breaking Deuteronomy 24:1–4.

As an aside, it is intriguing that the specific concern in Deuteronomy 24:1–4 is to not bring guilt on the land. As argued in the first three chapters of this thesis, concern for bringing restoration or judgment on the land was an underlying influence for the development of Torah tradition. Moreover, it was argued that behind Jesus' programmatic statement on the Torah (i.e., Matt 5:17–20) lay the accusation that he and his followers' malpractice of the Torah brought God's judgment on the temple. Matthew's sensitivity to such an accusation is perhaps part of the reason why

71 Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 19.

72 *Ibid.*, 20; see also Saldarini, “Matthew,” in Dunn and Rogerson, 1042.

73 Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches*, 20. Italics my emphasis. Similarly, William Loader, *Sexuality and the Jesus Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2005), 114.

74 Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches*, 20. Moreover, Matthew's apparent approval of Joseph's actions towards Mary (*δίκαιος ὢν*) suggests that he subscribed to something like this interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1–4 (cf. Matt 1:18–21).

Matthew is careful to create from his Markan source a lawful way out of an impure bond with a woman who committed sexual immorality.

Once again Matthew's Jesus has not disregarded the Torah with his radical interpretation and teaching. Rather, he uses Scripture combined with his own authority, to interpret the Torah at the standards of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus' following discussion with his disciples about celibacy shows just how high and serious the standards of the kingdom are (Matt 19:10 – 12).

4.4 The Greatest Commandment Controversy (Double Love Command): Matt 22:34–40

4.4.a Narrative Context

The final controversy story to examine is Jesus' debate with the Pharisee law-expert concerning the greatest commandment (Matt 22:34–40). Here Jesus proclaims the combination of the command to love God and the command to love one's neighbour as the greatest commandment, commonly referred to as the double love command. While the divorce pericope took place upon Jesus' entry into Judea, the controversy over the greatest commandment takes place in the very heart of Judea—the Jerusalem temple. Jesus has entered the city as the awaited Davidic-Messiah (Matt 21:1–11), cleared the temple (Matt 21:12–17), and began teaching in the temple the following day (Matt 21:23–27). This causes outrage from the priests and religious leaders (Matt 21:23). From this a long series of debates ensues over everything from Jesus' authority to teach to the duration of marriage bonds in the resurrection (Matt 21:23–22.46). One by one Jesus prevails over each of Israel's leaders in debate. The debate concerning the greatest commandment is the last of these challenges and traps raised by Jesus' opponents. In this final debate Jesus is once again challenged by his primary rivals over Torah interpretation, the Pharisees. Jesus' ongoing debate with the Pharisees is now coming to a close over the most important question concerning the Torah: which of its commandments is greatest.

4.4.b Analysis of the Greatest Commandment Controversy: Matt 22:34–40

Matt 22:34–35 // Mark 12:28a

Although the discussion of the greatest commandment is not necessarily polemical, its setting is. Moreover, Matthew once again intentionally increases the sense of hostility with redaction. In Mark, the scribe who questions Jesus about the greatest commandment approaches Jesus out of admiration and curiosity. He saw that Jesus answered the Sadducees well in debate and, therefore, asks which commandment is first of all the commandments in the Torah. In Matthew, however, a curious scribe does not present Jesus the question about the greatest commandment. Rather, the Pharisees gather together (*συνήχθησαν*) concerning Jesus after they hear that he silenced (lit. muzzled, *ἐφίμωσεν*) the Sadducees. This is the description of re-grouping and making a strategy to defeat an opponent. Jesus has just shut down a major competitive faction among Jewish leadership (i.e., the Sadducees), now is the Pharisees' chance to gain dominance. This is the climax of their debate with Jesus, they need to bring an expert with the ultimate question concerning the Torah. An expert of the Torah (*νομικὸς*) arises from ranks to test (*πειράζων*) Jesus. This is no curious enquirer, but a chosen challenger intending to test Jesus' fidelity to the Torah and to displace him.⁷⁵ Thus, "Matthew," according to Overman, "has made this pericope into a conflict story."⁷⁶

Matt 22:36 // Mark 12:28b

The expert in the Torah asks Jesus (in direct speech; "*διδάσκαλε*")⁷⁷ perhaps the most essential question about the Torah, which is the *greatest* (*μεγάλη*) commandment in the Torah (*ἐν τῷ νόμῳ*). Although "*μεγάλη*" lacks an article, it has one in Jesus'

75 Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 223. Matthias Konradt, "The Love Command in Matthew, James, and the Didache," in Sandt and Zangenberg, 277, argues that the expert in the Torah is trying to get Jesus to emphasize mercy towards men (Lev 19:18) as the greatest commandment in order to accuse Jesus of giving highest honor to men rather than God. With this reading the expert's question is in fact inherently polemical. However, while this is a plausible reading, especially with Jesus' emphasis on interpreting the Torah in a manner that allows for helping those in need (Matt 12:1–14), it is difficult to assume so specific a sub-text with certainty.

76 Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 84.

77 Luke 10:25 also uses direct speech.

response to the law expert (Matt 22:38; “ἡ μεγάλη”). The article in verse 38, therefore, clarifies that “μεγάλη” in verse 36 is intended to be a positive for superlative.⁷⁸ Rather than “greatest,” the scribe in Mark asks which commandment is first of all (ποία ἐστὶν ἐντολὴ πρώτη πάντων; Mark 12:28). Matthew will use the designation “πρώτη” as well, but he uses it later when explaining that there are two greatest commandments (Matt 22:38–39).

“Μεγάλη” and “πρώτη” are in many ways synonymous. The more significant difference between the questions asked in Matthew and Mark’s accounts is Matthew’s addition of “ἐν τῷ νόμῳ.” This emphasis on the greatest commandment “in the Torah” is important to the nuance and purpose of the Matthew’s presentation of the double love command. As we will see, Mark intends to use the superlative nature of the double love command to draw a comparison with other commandments, especially commandments concerning cultic practice. Matthew, on the other hand, intends to show that the superlative nature of the double love command shows the purpose or goal of the other commandments “in the Torah.” Mark is by no means abrogating the cultic laws, but he is emphasising the distance, in terms of importance (περισσότερον; Mark 12:33), between commandments (μείζων τούτων ἄλλη ἐντολὴ οὐκ ἔστιν).⁷⁹ Matthew, on the other hand, emphasises the dependency and cohesion (κρέματα) of all the Torah and Prophets to the great double love command. Making the question at hand concern “ἐν τῷ νόμῳ” rather than “πρώτη πάντων” helps Matthew achieve this emphasis by keeping the focus on the Torah as a whole from

78 F. Blass and A. Dbrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 127. Concerning the article in positive for superlative, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 298.

79 That Mark is not abrogating the cultic laws, see Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 576. Likewise, Kengo Akiyama, *The Love of Neighbour in Ancient Judaism: The Reception of Leviticus 19:18 in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, the Book of Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament*, *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 177, states “the rhetorical force of the statement that the Double Love Command is much more than all the offerings would be diminished, unless both interlocutors took for granted the significance of cultic sacrifices.”

the beginning of the debate. Indeed, Kengo Akiyama argues that “ἐν τῷ νόμῳ” “makes explicit that the question [in the Matthean version] concerns the proper interpretation of the law.”⁸⁰ A concern for proper interpretation of the Torah fits well with what we have observed in the Matthean controversy stories thus far.

Matt 22:37–39 // Mark 12:29–31

Jesus’ response, as noted above, is not polemical. He does not call the Torah expert a blind guide or ask him if he has never read the scriptures before.⁸¹ Rather, Jesus answers directly with what might be expected, namely, the greatest commandment is the great Shema’s imperative to love God (Deut 6:5). In doing so, Jesus agrees with the Jewish consensus (*Let. Aris.* 132; *Ps.-Phoc.* 8; Philo, *Decal.* 65; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.190).⁸² Interestingly, Mark includes the first part of the Shema (i.e., the statement of God’s oneness; Deut 6:4) as well as four components of the one’s being in which to love God with (i.e., heart, soul, mind, and strength). Matthew, however, removes Deuteronomy 6:4 and “strength” (ἰσχύος) from his answer, mostly likely to keep with the three-fold structure of the LXX.⁸³

After reciting Deuteronomy 6:5, Jesus declares that this (αὐτή) is the greatest and first commandment. The “καί” connecting “ἡ μεγάλη” and “πρώτη” is likely exegetical. Thus “ἡ μεγάλη” and “πρώτη” are probably to a large degree synonymous.⁸⁴ “πρώτη” helps complete the meaning of “ἡ μεγάλη” by explaining that there is a series of greatest commandments. This helps make a smooth and coherent transition into verse 39, which introduces the second (δευτέρα) of the greatest commandments.

Jesus introduces the second commandment (i.e., Lev 19:18) by stating that it is “like” (ὁμοία) the first commandment.⁸⁵ BDAG lists a special sense of “ὁμοιος” that

80 Ibid., 187.

81 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:240.

82 Konradt, “The Love Command in Matthew,” 277.

83 For further discussion, see Foster, “Why Did Matthew Get the Shema Wrong?,” 313–321, 331–332.

84 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:243.

85 “ὁμοία” could be purely redactional or from a special source. Either way, Matthew appears to like the word. See Gundry, *Matthew*, 449.

means “equally great or important,” “as powerful as,” or “equal to.” BDAG includes “ὁμοία” in Matthew 22:39 as an example of this special sense (cf. Gen 2:20; Rev 13:4; 18:18; *Josephus Ant.* 8.364).⁸⁶ In other words, the Matthean Jesus is stating that the second commandment is “like” (ὁμοία) the first commandment in that it “is of equal importance with the first.”⁸⁷ In short, it is also the greatest commandment. Therefore, the designation “πρώτη” and “δευτέρα” are primarily numerical indicating the sequence of a series.⁸⁸ It is best to avoid reading too much into the numbers, especially in terms of pitting the two commandments against one another in regards to their importance.⁸⁹ Matthew is trying to join the two together and, if anything, elevate the second commandment up with the first, not make it subservient.

Following this elevating introduction, Jesus recites Leviticus 19:18 as the second of the two greatest commandments. This is the third citation of Leviticus 19:18 in Matthew’s Gospel, which suggests that it is critical to his interpretation of the Torah (Matt 5:43; 19:19; 22:39). Space does not permit a full analysis of Matthew’s use of Leviticus 19:18, however, it should be noted that Matthew associates it closely with the socio-ethical commandments of the Decalogue (Matt 19:18–19).⁹⁰ On account of its coupling with Deut 6:5 within this pericope, Leviticus may very well function as or represent a summary of the second half of the Decalogue.⁹¹ Together, then, the two greatest commandments (i.e., the double love command) potentially are intended to summarise the Decalogue: Deuteronomy 6:5 summarising Exodus 20:1–11 and Leviticus 19:18 summarising Exodus 20:12–17 (cf. Philo Decal. 19–20, 50–51, 106–110, 124).⁹² This seems probable and, although

86 BDAG, 706.

87 Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 83. On the other hand, Hillel’s famous second middah, *gezerah shawah*, states that two commandments with at least one term in common should be put together and complete one another. The two great commandments both speak about loving and, therefore, Jesus may also be saying the second is like the first in that it also speaks of loving. For more on this point, see Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:244.

88 *Ibid.*, 3:243; Gundry, *Matthew*, 449; BDAG, 220;

89 Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 83n79.

90 For an overview and analysis of Matthew’s use of Leviticus 19:18, see Akiyama, *The Love of Neighbour in Ancient Judaism*, 179–185.

91 Konradt, “The Love Command in Matthew,” 274.

it is not necessary to prove, it does work well with Jesus' conclusion that the entire Torah and Prophets hang on these two greatest commandments.

Matt 22:40 // Mark 12:31–34

Having answered with Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 as the two greatest commandments in the Torah (i.e., the double love command), Jesus concludes by declaring that the whole Torah and Prophets hang (*κρέματα*) on these two commandments. This is the fourth time Jesus has grouped together the Torah and Prophets during his teaching (Matt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40). This once again affirms Jesus' positive and authoritative relationship towards the Torah and Prophets, which Matthew took pains to establish with Jesus' first statement in the Gospel about the Torah (Matt 5:17-20). Moreover, other than Jesus' final critique of the scribes and Pharisees' approach to the Torah in the subsequent chapter (Matt 23), verse 22:40 is Jesus' final teaching on the Torah. It is fitting then to finish where he started, connecting his teaching with the entirety of the Torah and the Prophets (Matt 5:17; 22:40).

While this concluding phrase clearly fits with the theme of Jesus fulfilling the Torah and Prophets, what is meant by "*κρέματα*" is not as clear. The passive form of "*κρεμάννυμι*," in the figurative sense, means "to depend upon."⁹³ The Hebrew (*תלה* or *תלא*) and Aramaic (*תלא*) equivalents are often used in rabbinic literature in a comparable way to Matthew 22:40 (cf. *b. Ber.* 63a).⁹⁴ Donaldson explains, "in each case [that '*תלה*' or '*תלא*' was used in this manner] a relationship is posited between some aspect of the Torah (oral or written) and a verse of the written Torah, in which

92 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:245. Similarly, Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 2:648, speaks of the double love command covering all vertical (i.e., towards God) and horizontal (i.e., towards one's neighbour) commandments.

93 BDAG, 566.

94 Terrence L. Donaldson, "The Law that Hangs (Matthew 22:40): Rabbinic Formulation and Matthean Social World," *CBQ* 57/4 (1995): 689. Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 84, notes that "while it is true that *תלה* is widely used in Rabbinic Hebrew, it is not a purely technical term for the derivation of a statement from a biblical passage. It is rather in a figurative sense a general expression with the meaning 'to (make something) depend on an overarching principle' or 'to be connected (with an overarching principle).'"

the former is said to ‘hang’ or depend on the latter.”⁹⁵ According to Donaldson, “the operating assumption was that the more detailed regulations could be *derived* from the general statements,”⁹⁶ which was a “rabbinic tendency to search for brief passages of Scripture that would sum up the whole Torah.”⁹⁷ Donaldson suggests that Matthew probably depends on this rabbinic formulation,⁹⁸ but that he uses it quite differently.⁹⁹ The rabbis, he suggests, use it as a taxonomic and pedagogical device to help students learn the Torah, while Matthew, on the other hand, uses it in a hermeneutical role.¹⁰⁰ Donaldson makes this distinction because he thinks that Jesus’ disciples cannot derive the Torah from the double love commandment since Jesus’ interpretation of the Torah is not straight forward. In fact, Donaldson even believes Jesus abrogates the Torah at times.¹⁰¹ Although I disagree with Donaldson that Jesus at times abrogates the Torah, his suggestion that Matthew is intending communicate the hermeneutical function of double love command with “κρέματα” is certainly a viable reading. Indeed, as Kengo Akiyama states,

The imagery of scriptures “hanging” on the Double Love Command is meant to capture its primacy in the matter of Law (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ), which is a theme that frames the entire exchange between Jesus and the Pharisee. Thus, unlike Mark where the love of God and neighbour is spoken of as a greater than any other commands (with a specific reference to cultic sacrifice), the Matthean version names the Double Love Command as the hermeneutical key through which the Law and Prophets are to be interpreted.¹⁰²

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid., 692.

97 Ibid., 691.

98 However, it is notoriously difficult to prove or even assume the existence of any given rabbinic tradition in the first-century.

99 Donaldson, “The Law that Hangs,” 690–691.

100 Ibid., 692–693.

101 Ibid., 693.

102 Akiyama, *The Love of Neighbour in Ancient Judaism*, 188–189. Similarly, Konradt, “The Love Command in Matthew,” 278; also Harrington, *Matthew*, 316; and Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 2:648. See Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 85, who notes that the derivative relationship between the two great love commandments and other minor commandments in Matthew’s Gospel is not entirely clear. Indeed, it appears that they relate in a generally loose and imprecise manner.

Davies and Allison, however, suggest an alternative to the idea that “κρέματα” indicates a hermeneutical key. They suggest that “κρέματα” simply means that the double love command is “the most basic or important demand of the law.”¹⁰³ That is, “the suspension of the law and prophets on the commandments to love simply means that all the imperatives are to be performed for the sake of God and neighbour.”¹⁰⁴ Reading “κρέματα” as indicating a hermeneutical key or simply indicating the two most fundamental commandments of the Torah are both viable interpretations of Matthew 22:40. Moreover, both fit within an interpretation of the Gospel that sees Jesus upholding the Torah.¹⁰⁵ I fail to see a reason to be dogmatic about either position. Nevertheless, the “hermeneutical key” interpretation may better represent Jesus’ halakic tendencies reviewed in this chapter. In each of his controversies over the proper interpretation of the Torah, Jesus gives examples and reasons for why he practices the Torah the way he does. It makes sense then that Jesus, in this pericope, is explaining how the double love command is a hermeneutical key for his approach to the entire Torah and Prophets. Indeed, the Matthean Jesus seems fond of using a handful of commandments (Matt 5:21–48) or even one commandment (Matt 7:12) to help understand and represent the entire Torah and Prophets.

Before concluding, it should be noted that Matthew completely removes Mark’s conclusion to the greatest commandment pericope (Mark 12:32–34). As noted above, Mark’s conclusion draws a comparison between commandments rather than, as in Matthew, explaining their connection within the Torah. In addition to this obvious conflict with Matthew’s message concerning the double love command, Mark’s conclusion causes two further potential problems for Matthew. First, it ruins the hostile setting that Matthew created for his account of the greatest commandment controversy. Indeed, in Mark, Jesus and the scribe praise each other’s input in the

103 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 3:246.

104 Ibid.; this does not mean the converse, however, that the entire Torah is reduced to the double love commandment; *pace* Roland Deines, *Die Gerechtigkeit der Tora im Reich des Messias: Mt 5,13–20 als Schlüsseltext der mattäischen Theologie*, WUNT 177 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 400; also against Deines, see Konradt, “The Love Command in Matthew,” 277–278.

105 Similarly, Gundry, *Matthew*, 450.

discussion.¹⁰⁶ Second, as stated above, even though Mark does not intend to abrogate the cultic commandments of the Torah, the comparison the scribe makes (and Jesus approves of) between the double love command and cultic commandments could potentially be read in a manner that denigrates the cultic commandments. As we saw in the previous controversy stories, Matthew is very careful to protect the observance of all commandments. Matthew is no different here. Mark's conclusion is not only unrelated to Matthew's but it is also potentially hazardous in Matthew's *Sitz im Leben*.

4.5 Conclusion

The four Torah controversy stories examined above provide examples of Jesus debating the proper interpretation and application of the Torah with the scribes and Pharisees, his primary opponents in the Matthean narrative. Showing the difference between Jesus' halakah and his opponents' is at the heart of these contentious pericopes.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Overman states, "Matthean conflict stories always perform the dual purposes of further explicating the distinctive Matthean *halacha*, or legal interpretation, while at the same time attempting to discredit the views of his opponents, the so-called Pharisees."¹⁰⁸ These dual purposes were observed throughout our analysis.

A close reading of Matthew's redaction in these controversy pericopes shows that Matthew made the Pharisees, especially from Jerusalem, Jesus' primary opponents. Sometimes Matthew removes an additional opponent in order to keep the focus on the Pharisees (e.g., the removal of the Herodians; cf. Matt 12:14).¹⁰⁹ Other times he depicts Pharisaic interlocutors aisling from Jerusalem in order to anticipate

106 The removal of a response from Jesus' interlocutor may also imply that Jesus has silenced the Pharisees just as he did the Sadducees (Matt 22:34). As Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 254, states, "it seems that what is communicated by this silence is that the Pharisees agree with Jesus on this principle [i.e., the hanging of the Torah and Prophets on the double love command], but if they acknowledge this, they will not be able to defend their other halakhic interpretations forwarded in the Gospel, which according to Matthew, contradict the very principle of this double command to love both God and neighbor."

107 Carlston and Evans, *From Synagogue to Ecclesia*, 130–132.

108 Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 278.

109 Matthew may also have been saving the Herodians until the string of debates in Jerusalem (cf. Matt 22:16).

the city's hostility towards Jesus (Matt 15:1). Matthew will even change one of Jesus' charitable interlocutors into a hostile Pharisee (Matt 22:34–35). Along these lines Matthew often indicates that the Pharisees are trying to test/trap (πειράζω) Jesus (e.g. Matt 22:35). Thus, the Pharisees are not only Jesus' primary opponents, but they are also depicted as insincere and hostile. This is all part of Matthew's strategy for delegitimising Jesus' opponents. Again, as discussed in chapter 2, even in the programmatic statement on the Torah, Jesus' first statement in the Gospel about the Torah, Matthew affirms Jesus' connection to the Torah and simultaneously discredits the scribes and Pharisees' connection to the Torah (Matt 5:17–20). Behind the rhetoric of the phrases fulfil and abolish in the programmatic statement is a response to the accusation that Jesus' Torah malpractice is responsible for the destruction of the Second Temple. Matthew spins this accusation back on the scribes and Pharisees and blames them for defiling the temple both with their corrupt interpretation of the Torah and their participation in the killing of the innocent on the altar in the temple (Matt 23).¹¹⁰ The conflict stories, therefore, also contribute to this end. Indeed, this is why Matthew inserts references to the scribes and Pharisees as blind guides (Matt 15:13–14), repeatedly mentions their lack of Scripture knowledge (“οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε;” Matt 12:3, 5; 19:4), and even depicts them as commanding things contrary to God's Torah (Matt 15:5–6).

The controversy stories, of course, also serve the purpose of affirming and explicating Jesus' halakah. Several significant and consistent aspects of the Matthean halakah are observed in these pericopes. First, the Matthean Jesus commonly uses passages of Scripture to support his rulings on the Torah or to develop premises that lead to his rulings. Moreover, Jesus does so in a midrashic way. That is, he finds different elements in a passage of Scripture that can lead into the discussion of another text that may offer more insight into the previous text or simply offer more support for whichever ruling he is making. Matthew is so skilled in midrashic interpretation that he can use Scripture that is already in his Markan source, but that

110 See Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 239–245, especially 243n91.

is not entirely convincing for the point he is making, and lead it into a more relevant text. This is best displayed in the first Sabbath controversy. There Jesus moves from the David story (1 Sam 21:1–7), inherited from his Markan source (Mark 2:25–26), to the issue of priests breaking the Torah by doing additional Sabbath sacrifices in the temple (Num 28:9–10). The inherited David story is not directly relevant to the issue of Sabbath, but it does take place in the “house of God” and involves priests. These narrative elements (i.e., “God’s house/the temple” and “priests”) create a midrashic link to Numbers 28:9–10, which, unlike the David story, does involve the Sabbath. Thus, through midrash, Matthew preserves the initial argument in his Markan source while also developing a more robust Sabbath argument.

Another aspect of Matthean halakah explicated in the controversy stories is Matthew’s careful redaction of Mark for the sake of making more defensible halakic positions. Matthew also does this to protect the Torah from a ruling in his Markan source that could potentially infringe on some commandments or render certain commandments unimportant. This is not to say that Mark was antinomian or abrogated the Torah. However, he clearly has some positions that were too imprecise or broad-sweeping and at least “potentially” problematic for Matthew and his context.¹¹¹ Matthew, however, is a careful and thoughtful redactor. He preserves the fundamental elements of his Markan source while also reinforcing and clarifying them. As an aside, this shows that Jesus tradition was still malleable enough for Matthew to update and use in order to engage in first-century halakah. In this manner, Matthew is similar to other participants in Mosaic Discourse who clearly felt that the revelation at Sinai was malleable enough to give supplemental revelation.¹¹²

111 Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 33, states “I do detect a mutual concern on the part of Matthew and Luke to eliminate certain misunderstandings the wording of the Markan gospel could generate concerning the abrogation of Torah observance (even if it was not Mark’s intent to insinuate such interpretations). In other words, in their appropriation of the gospel of Mark, Matthew and Luke rewrite and modify some of the Markan materials in order to clarify that the Torah has not been cancelled.”

112 For a very similar point, see Brooke, “Aspects of Matthew’s Use of Scripture in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 823.

Finally, the central role of Jesus as an interpreter and authoritative teacher on the Torah is a primary aspect of Matthean halakah observed in the controversy stories. Regardless of how many Scripture verses are cited for support or the several invocations of authoritative figures (e.g., God, Moses, David), the halakic debates always conclude with Jesus *himself* making a declarative ruling on the given halakic issue. For Matthew, even though Jesus does explain much of the reasoning behind his positions, it is Jesus' own Christological authority that makes his halakic declarations the final word and binding.¹¹³ It is this aspect of Matthean halakah that we will now examine more closely in the final two chapters of this thesis. That is, how does Matthew depict Jesus, especially in regards to his use of the genre of ancient Greco-Roman biography, as an authority on the Torah. This depiction of Jesus and use of the genre of biography also correlate with Matthew's participation in Mosaic Discourse. Indeed, the genre of biography and the key features of Mosaic Discourse are critical to Matthew's strategy for weaving Jesus' teaching and interpretations of the Torah into the grand story of the coming of the Messiah and his eschatological kingdom.

113 As Daniel Marguerat, "'Pas un iota ne passera de la loi...' (Mt 5,18). La loi dans l'évangile de Matthieu," in *La loi dans l'un et l'autre Testament*, ed. C. Focant, LD 168 (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 166, states "de bout en bout, la Loi est pensée à partir de la christologie."

CHAPTER 5: BIOGRAPHY AND LEGITIMISING THE LAW-GIVER

Equally important for the uniqueness of biography as a genre was its propagandistic, often polemical, mood.¹

Since many βίοι were used by philosophical groups or schools for teaching about their beliefs and founder, as well as for attack and defence in debate with other groups, and some of their generic features are also found in the gospels, we can begin interpreting them with the expectation that we will find didactic, apologetic and polemical purposes and material here also.²

Introduction

There is an important difference between the text in which Matthew presents interpretations to the Torah and the several texts examined in chapter 3 that also participate in Mosaic Discourse. This difference concerns genre. Saldarini rightly notes,

The author of Matthew wrote a narrative about Jesus the Son of God and Messiah, not an instructive discussion of the law like the Mishnah or a commentary on Scripture like the midrashim. However, in his narrative on Jesus, he gave great prominence to Jesus' teachings and connected them with Jesus' life and with earlier narratives, laws, stories, and instructions found in the Bible. Thus through Jesus' teachings, the author of Matthew reveals his interpretation of many parts of Scripture, including Jewish law and its practice in his day.³

In other words, Matthew's Torah interpretations are embedded in and intertwined with a narrated account of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. This was seen in the controversy stories examined in chapter 4.

The last two chapters of this thesis will consider the types of opportunities Matthew's genre afford him in authorising his interpretation of the Torah. That is,

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- 1 Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man*, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 5 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 15–16.
 - 2 Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, 2nd ed., Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Dove Booksellers, 2004), 248.
 - 3 Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 125–126.

what features of his genre played a role in Matthew's strategy for authorising interpretations of the Torah around the person and teachings of Jesus? Moreover, these last two chapters will seek to understand how these features of the genre intersect with the writing strategies of Mosaic Discourse. In order to answer these questions fully it is first necessary to investigate key features of Matthew's genre and then note how other authors similarly used these features for their rhetorical purposes. Identifying Matthew's genre, however, is not a clear-cut process.

Debate about the genre of the canonical Gospels, particularly whether they are βίος or not, has long persisted. The opinion that the genre of the Gospels is indeed ancient Greco-Roman biography, however, has gained the upper hand consequent to studies by Richard A. Burridge and Dirk Frickenschmidt.⁴ Their respective studies are illuminating and substantially demonstrate that each Gospel shares many significant genre features with other ancient Greco-Roman biographies. Their findings have persuaded many and possibly caused a “consensus.”⁵ Nevertheless,

4 Dirk Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium als Biographie: Die vier Evangelien im Rahmen antiker Erzählkunst*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 22 (Tübingen: Francke, 1997); and, Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels?*

5 Steve Walton, “What Are the Gospels? Richard Burridge’s Impact on Scholarly Understanding of the Genre of the Gospels,” *CBR* 14/1 (2015): 82, speaks of Burridge as turning around “a scholarly consensus.” See pages 86–89 for Walton’s discussion of the impact and influence Burridge’s work on the Gospel’s genre has caused in scholarship. See Walton’s discussion in pages 89–90 concerning scholars who have resisted Burridge’s conclusions. See, Burridge, *What are the Gospels?*, 78–99, 252–305, for his own discussion of the implications and reception of his conclusions about the genre of the Gospels. In support of categorising the Gospels’ genre as biography, Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 192, states, “the gospels are now widely considered to be a sub-set of the broad ancient literary genre βίος, biographies. Even if the evangelists were largely ignorant of the tradition of Greek and Roman βίος, that is how the gospels were received and listened to in the first decades after their composition.” Concerning Matthew as a βίος, Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 136, calls Matthew’s Gospel “a messianic biography as a community-forming literature.” Scot McKnight, “Matthew as ‘Gospel,’” in *Jesus, Matthew’s Gospel and Early Christianity: Studies in Memory of Graham N. Stanton*, ed. D. M. Gunter, J. Willitts, and R. A. Burridge, LNTS 435 (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 61, 67, in addition to calling Burridge’s view of the Gospels’ genre the “now established conclusions,” he states that the Matthew, as a biography, is “a *gospelling βίος about Jesus, who is Messiah and Lord and Saviour.*” See also, Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 5–6; Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 6; and Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary 22 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 46–47. See Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 19, for a more varied reception of Matthew as an ancient Greco-Roman biography.

although I agree with the “consensus” that the Gospels are best understood as a form of biography, Tomas Hägg notes that works like Burridge’s and Frickenschmidt’s do not prove that the Gospels are biographies. Hägg maintains, rightly in my opinion, that declaring the Gospels’ genre ancient βίος “remains a matter of definition, no more and no less.”⁶ That is, while there is important scholarly discussion about which texts constitute a biography, a predecessor to biography, or fit better in a related genre like encomium or historiography, the decision of which texts are classified as in or out of the genre ultimately depends on a particular scholar’s definition of biography and its features.⁷

Despite this limitation in the task of categorising the Gospels’ genre, Hägg notes that the works of Burridge and Frickenschmidt are still valuable studies of the Gospels “as literature in context.”⁸ That is, Burridge and Frickenschmidt show the Gospels are not especially deviant when compared with other Greco-Roman biographies.⁹ After all the genre of biography itself is not closed and its characteristics are manifold.¹⁰ This allows for a variety of mutations within and from the genre, including biographical accounts like the Gospels. Indeed, well before Burridge and Frickenschmidt’s important studies, Patricia Cox, in response to scholarly efforts to find the Gospel’s “literary niche” in the newly postulated genre

6 Tomas Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 155. See, Arnold Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography: Four Lectures by Arnaldo Momigliano* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 11, who states, “it is not for a historian of biography to decide what biography should be, though he may have his preferences.” See, Richard A. Burridge, “The Art of Biography in Antiquity: A Review,” *JSNT* 37/4 (2015): 477–478, for a response to Hägg’s critique of his efforts at classifying the Gospels. Moreover, Burridge gives a critique of Hägg’s lack of discussion of genre theory and how it creates inconsistencies in his book. Personally, I am an advocate of genre theory and I subscribe to the hypothesis that the Gospel’s genre is ancient Greco-Roman biography.

7 See, Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 154, for further discussion of this task in light of Burridge’s work. Hägg (p. xi) is not optimistic about this task as he states, “the more I have worked with these texts [i.e., ancient Greco-Roman biographies], the less I can see the point in drawing borders where the authors themselves so obviously moved over mapless terrain.”

8 *Ibid.*, 152.

9 *Ibid.*, 155.

10 *Ibid.* See also, Christopher Pelling, “Was There an Ancient Genre of ‘Autobiography’? Or, Did Augustus know what He was Doing?,” in *The Lost Memoirs of Augustus and the Development of Roman Autobiography*, ed. Christopher Smith and Anton Powell (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 41, who states, “what we can trace of biography does not suggest a ‘standard mould’, but rather a considerable variation of form and texture.”

“aretalogy,” demonstrated that the historical development of Greco-Roman biography is a “more suitable framework” to analyse biographical accounts of a “holy man” or a “divine sage.”¹¹ “It gives,” Cox states, “a definite lineage for biography writing, and when later biographies are evaluated in the light of this lineage, the continuity in form, content, and function that the tradition fostered makes them more easily understood.”¹² To what extent the Gospel writers were aware of other biographies and felt influenced or constrained to the general tropes of the genre remains open for debate.¹³ Nevertheless, the Gospels can be read as ancient biographies and the historical development of Greco-Roman biography illuminates this task. This moves the discussion of the Gospels and ancient biography in a more fruitful direction. Rather than comparing the Gospels with ancient biography simply for classificatory purposes, which has previously dominated the discussion,¹⁴ we will consider the art and nature of the genre of ancient Greco-Roman biography and how certain aspects and tendencies of the genre may well have been useful for Matthew to authenticate his interpretations of the Torah around the teachings of Jesus.

More specifically, this chapter will argue that the genre of biography, since it narrates a life,¹⁵ naturally provides authors with an effective vehicle for refuting

11 Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity*, 4. Her focus, of course, is on the development of biographies and biographical accounts of a “holy man” in Late Antiquity, but the Gospels are an important and foundational part of this development.

12 Ibid.

13 After all, Greco-Roman biographies, including the Gospels, drew from a variety of sources and models (e.g., historiographical and novelistic literature) not just other biographies. The Gospels in particular had Israel's Scriptures with its biographical accounts of patriarchs and prophets as well as older source material on the life and teachings of Jesus. In many cases these sources were probably a greater inspiration for the Gospel writers than Greco-Roman biographies. For more on this point, see, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 19; Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 155; and, Lars Hartman, “Some Reflections on the Problem of the Literary Genre of the Gospels,” in *Text-Centered New Testament Studies*, ed. David Hellholm, WUNT 103 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 3–23; and Marius Reiser, *Sprache und literarische Formen des Neuen Testaments: Eine Einführung*, UTB 2197 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001). Moreover, as Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, 36–37, notes, Persian writing had a great influence on Greek biography. Therefore, some of the similarities between Greek biographies and Jewish writing could potentially find their roots in Persian influence rather than Greek influence.

14 As noted by Sean Freyne, “Mark's Gospel and Ancient Biography,” in *The Limits of Ancient Biography*, ed. B. C. McGing and Judith Mossman (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006), 63–75.

15 That biographies are primarily narrative in form; see Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 4.

polemics and misconceptions about the subject of the biography. This is not necessarily the only purpose of the genre or even the primary purpose, but it was commonly used for this reason throughout the development of the genre and was presumably effective in this regard. The polemical advantages available in the genre of biography were, I will argue in the next and final chapter, also used by Matthew to legitimise Jesus and, by consequence, his teaching on the Torah. In this manner, the genre of biography was a most useful medium for Matthew to substantiate his interpretations of the Torah around the person and teachings of Jesus.

The current chapter then, will survey briefly the means by which the genre of biography lent itself to polemical circumstances and how authors used it either to legitimise or de-legitimise historical figures. Following this survey we will examine Philo's two volume *Life of Moses*. Philo's *Life of Moses* provides an example of an author in a Second Temple Jewish milieu using the genre of biography to legitimise a lawgiver (i.e., Moses) and his law in a polemical situation. Surveying Philo's *Life of Moses* from this angle will provide an excellent frame of reference to analyse Matthew's use of biography to substantiate his interpretations of the Torah around the person of Jesus in the following and final chapter of this thesis. Before commencing a survey of ancient biographies, however, a brief comment on terminology is in order. Given the highly contested question of which ancient texts officially fit within the genre of biography, I will on occasion use the term "biographical writing" to refer to texts that narrate significant portions of a historical figure's life but that may not otherwise fit some scholars' narrow definition of biography.

5.1 Polemical Possibilities of the Genre of Ancient βίος

5.1a The Explanatory Nature of Biographical Writing

Origins of the genre of βίος are cloudy and most ancient biographies (both Greek and Latin) have been lost to history.¹⁶ To render matters more complex, the genre shares

¹⁶ See, Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, for an attempt at tracing the history and development of the genre.

many commonalities with other genres, especially historiography and encomium. Consequently, it can be challenging to define the genre and to identify the fundamental purpose and function of the genre. That being said, however, there are certain things we can observe and confidently assert about the genre of biography and biographical writing more generally. In particular, we can observe the way biographies could be used for polemics.¹⁷ However, before we consider the use of biographies in polemics, it is useful first to consider the more fundamental observation that ancient biographies are by nature explanatory literature. That is, biographers gather biographical details of a historical figure and narrate them in order to explain and clarify the deeds, values, and status of said historical figure.¹⁸ To understand better this facet of the genre of ancient Greco-Roman biography, we begin with a look at two of Plutarch's famous statements about biography. First, in *Alexander* Plutarch states,

It is the life of Alexander the king, and of Caesar, who overthrew Pompey, that I am writing in this book, and the multitude of the deeds to be treated is so great that I shall make no other preface than to entreat my readers, in case I do not tell of all the famous actions of these men [i.e., Alexander and Caesar], nor even speak exhaustively at all in each particular case, but in epitome for the most part not to complain. For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or greatest armaments, or sieges of cities. (*Alex.* 1.1–3).¹⁹

And in *Nicias*,

17 Another significant aspect of ancient biographies is their use as models for imitation in ancient Greco-Roman education. Philosophical schools, in particular, often used biographies as examples for students to imitate and learn from. Burrige has explored this aspect of biography and its use in the Gospels. See, Burrige, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics*, for further discussion.

18 Ultimately, I wish to analyse how Matthew uses these facets of the genre of biography to substantiate his interpretations of the Torah around the person of Jesus, and more specifically how he uses it to participate in Mosaic Discourse.

19 All quotations of Greco-Roman writings are from the Loeb Classical Library unless noted otherwise.

I have run over briefly, and with no unnecessary detail [from the historical works of Thucydides and Philistus], in order to escape the reputation of utter carelessness and sloth; but those details which have escaped most writers, and which others have mentioned casually, or which are found no ancient votive offerings or in public decrees, these I have tried to collect, not massing together useless material of research, but handing on such as furthers the appreciation of character and temperament (*Nic.* 1.5).

The former text is often quoted out of context (verse 1 and most of verse 2 are usually omitted), to argue for a distinction between the genre of biography and the genre of historiography. *Alex.* 1.1–2 makes abundantly clear, however, that Plutarch is not drawing a line between biography and historiography, but explaining to his audience why he is being so selective with the details he includes in the biography.²⁰ Between Alexander and Julius Caesar the deeds are too many to treat exhaustively; summary is a necessity. However, in excusing himself, Plutarch makes, for our purposes, a helpful statement about the nature of biography. Biography is concerned primarily with biographical details that reveal the character of the subject. That is, chronicling is not the end goal of recording life details in a biography. Rather, there is an inherent agenda to including some biographical details over others and arranging them in a particular manner: to present material that will give insight into the subject of the biography. Hägg's description of a biography concurs: "the individual is in focus, and the Life [i.e., the βίος] is the mode to convey its essence in an articulated form."²¹ The latter of the two texts quoted above (i.e., *Nic.* 1.5) adds another element. Plutarch not only chooses details that reveal character but he also shares details that are neglected or altogether unknown. Biographies, then, at least in these cases, are a medium for presenting biographical details (both known and unknown to the general public) to explain and clarify the character of a historical figure. In short, biographies are by nature explanatory of a person's life and character.

An example will help demonstrate this point. Consider Isocrates' encomium *Evagoras* (written circa mid-fourth century BCE). Although it is not technically a

20 Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 268–270.

21 *Ibid.*, 20.

biography, it is recognised as an important predecessor to the genre: it is the first life of a historical person that supplies numerous biographical *topoi* that are ordered chronologically along with authorial commentary and includes a proem and an epilogue.²² In many ways, these features of *Evagoras* set the standard for how biographers would go about narrating a life. Of particular interest to our thoughts about the explanatory nature of biographies is the distinction Isocrates makes between prose and poetry.²³ This distinction, as we will see, is important to Isocrates because it is integral for assuring that *true* details of Evagoras' life are made known.

Isocrates begins his encomium of Evagoras with a discussion of method. He claims to make a twofold innovation in the genre by 1) writing about a contemporary figure to an audience that would know the figure, and 2) in the medium of prose rather than poetry.²⁴ Encomia were traditionally written in poetry and about gods or heroes of the past. One thinks of Pindar (522–443 BCE) as the standard for this kind of encomium. Isocrates claims that this traditional method of encomium writing is afforded certain advantages, not only by writing about someone from the past, to which no one who knew the person is alive to verify facts, but also by the devices of poetry. Poetry can use embellished language, and even newly created phrases,²⁵ to represent mythical acts of gods and men conversing together (*Evag.* 8). It can also use rhythm and harmony to compensate for a deficiency in content and style (*Evag.* 10).²⁶ This skews public opinion to view these poems more favourably than they deserve (*Evag.* 11). Prose writing, on the other hand, is without these luxuries. Rather, it must use common words and only ideas that bear upon the actual facts (μόνον καὶ τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων τοῖς περὶ αὐτὰς τὰς πράξεις ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι χρῆσθαι, *Evag.* 10). Although this makes encomium writing in prose more difficult, Isocrates accepts the challenge (*Evag.* 11). By writing an encomium about a contemporary

22 Ibid., 34.

23 K. J. Dover, *The Evolution of Greek Prose Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 96, suggests this is “the earliest explicit contrast between poetic and prosaic language.”

24 Aristotle presumably disagreed since he implicitly ascribes this honour to an encomium of Thessalian Hippolochus (*Rhet.* 1368a17).

25 Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.*, 1457b.

26 Cf. Plato, *Resp.* 601b.

(i.e., the recently deceased Evagoras) and in pros, Isocrates is trying to ensure that he is recording the facts of Evagoras' life, not embellished and fanciful stories. Isocrates' desire to use prose to report the straightforward facts about Evagoras stems not only from his belief that poetic embellishments are not needed (as we will see, Isocrates thinks Evagoras' actual deeds and virtues can match the poetically embellished attributes of heroes past) but also from his desire to give Nicocles, Evagoras' son, an account of his father's deeds for him and others to emulate (*Evag.* 76–77). That is, if Nicocles (and other aspiring kings and princes) is to emulate Evagoras, then he needs to be informed of the facts rather than embellished poetry.

Let us now look at some texts to see how Isocrates fleshes out this point. First, in the proem, Isocrates offers the following comment,

Now other writers should have praised those who in their own time had proved themselves good men, to the end that those who have the ability to glorify the deeds of their contemporaries, by speaking in the presence of those who knew the facts might have employed the truth concerning them, and also that the younger generation might with greater emulation have striven for virtue (*Evag.* 5).

No specific author is mentioned, but, in context, it is clearly in reference to poets that eulogise men of old rather than a worthy contemporary. At this point, Isocrates has not yet criticised the poetic devices of embellished language and meter/rhythm. That is soon to follow (cf. *Evag.* 8–10). Rather, the critique here concerns when and to whom an encomium is written, not how. This is the first time Isocrates expresses explicit concern for writing in a way that ensures the truth about a life is recorded. An encomium should be written about a contemporary so that there will be people available who can verify what is written.²⁷ Again, ultimately the concern for accurate information is for the sake of informing the younger generation of virtues to emulate: “and also that the younger generation might with greater emulation have striven for virtue (*Evag.* 77).”

²⁷ Isocrates furthers this point in verses 6–7.

Further down, Isocrates begins the narration of Evagoras's birth and childhood, two parts of a life that would become staples of Greco-Roman biography, with the following disclaimer,

I prefer to say nothing of the portents, the oracles, the visions appearing in dreams, from which the impression might be gained that [Evagoras] was of superhuman birth, not because I disbelieve the reports, but that I may make it clear to all that I am so far from resorting to invention in speaking of his deeds that even of those matters which are in fact true I dismiss such as are known only to the few and of which not all the citizens are cognizant. And I shall begin my account of him with the generally acknowledged facts (*Evag.* 21).

Here we see both critiques of former encomium at play. First, Isocrates strips the account of Evagoras' birth of any extravagant acts (e.g., oracles and dreams). This is the kind of embellished writing common to poets. Second, while Isocrates does not discredit these stories about Evagoras, he suggests that this information is esoteric and wishes to recount only the aspects that are known more widely. Thus, we have a reference to both of Isocrates' innovations to encomium: writing in straightforward prose, and writing things that can be verified by people who know. In the following text, we again see a distinction made between truth and poetic embellishment,

Consequently, if the number of those who wished to praise [Evagoras] had equalled those who lauded the heroes at Troy, he would have gained far greater renown than they. For whom shall we find of the men of that age—if we disregard the fabulous tales and look at the truth—who has accomplished such feats or has brought about changes so great in political affairs (*Evag.* 66)?

Here Isocrates suggests that Evagoras deserves greater renown than even Greece's greatest heroes (i.e., those in the Trojan War written about by Homer). When one strips away the poetic embellishments of these heroes' deeds and looks only at the truth then their accomplishments are less than Evagoras'. With the help of all of

Greece these heroes took only Troy. Evagoras, with only his one city, took on all of Asia. Isocrates makes another similar comparison,

In view of these facts, if any of the poets have used extravagant expressions in characterizing any man of the past, asserting that he was a god among men, or a mortal divinity, all praise of that kind would be especially in harmony with the noble qualities of Evagoras (*Evag.* 72).

In this instance, Isocrates inverts the point made in the previous text. In the previous text Evagoras was greater than the heroes of the past when stripped of their poetically embellished qualities. In the present text, the extravagant descriptions of heroes past are suitable descriptions for Evagoras' actual deeds.

These texts show Isocrates' continual self-reflection concerning the way prose writing informs his audience of Evagoras' true deeds, while poetry obscures the truth. This self-reflection on method is the earliest known of its kind in a biographical writing.²⁸ According to Hägg, this is important for the history of biographies because, by devoting so much space to self-reflection, Isocrates offers more than a record of virtues for Nicocles to emulate; he also provides instructions for future authors who want to celebrate contemporary heroes using prose.²⁹ The purpose of teaching this way of writing, as we saw, is to show how to provide an audience with the true details of a life. Therefore, Isocrates' *Evagoras* is early precedent in the craft of biographical writing for explicitly describing the task as inherently about explaining the true biographical details of a figure to an audience that would benefit from knowing.

I should clarify that I am not claiming Isocrates (despite his claims about prose writing), or any author recording biographical details, records actual facts. I offer no judgement concerning the correspondence between accounts of biographical

28 Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 33, notes that, although meta-statements later become a common feature in biographies (especially in introductions and conclusions), "few match Isocrates in explicitness and insistence (at least in proportion to the small compass of the whole work, ca. twenty printed pages)."

29 *Ibid.*, 34.

details and reality. That is a different issue.³⁰ The point here is that, regardless of whether or not Isocrates knows he is writing fact or fiction, the rhetorical thrust of his argument is that his innovation to the genre of encomium is inherently about communicating true details of a life. Simply put, Isocrates is purporting to explain accurately the character of Evagoras.

5.1b Examples of Biographical Writing and Polemics

The reasons for explaining someone's character in a biography were not always instructional like Isocrates' *Evagoras*. In many cases the reasons were as superfluous as satisfying the curiosity of socially elite readership interested in the lives of famous people.³¹ However, as biography was a platform to share more details and facts about a given subject's life and, therefore, explain something unknown about the subject, they were a natural fit for polemical purposes and were commonly used in this way.³² That is, the very nature of biographies (i.e., narrating the words and deeds of a life) lent the genre to be used as an effective vehicle for refuting claims made about the subject of the biography or correcting public (mis)understanding about its subject.³³

30 Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, 56–57, notes that, as a practicality, biographers used fiction to fill gaps since readership probably desired more information than was available. See also, Anton-Hermann Chroust, *Aristotle. New Light on His Life and on Some of His Lost Works I: Some Novel Interpretations of the Man and His Life* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 3, who states that biographies were “fact and fiction, history and anecdote, truth and gossip, praise and slander.” Concerning the historicity of the Gospel accounts, see, Allison, *Constructing Jesus*.

31 Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, 95.

32 Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity*, 15–16.

33 As, *ibid.*, 16, states, “the conclusion that many of these biographies were written to sway, perhaps even create, opinion about certain political philosophical principles is unavoidable.” See also, Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, 71–72, 99–100, concerning the polemical nature of biographies and how they were used as weapons between philosophical schools in Greece or to keep the morality of emperors in check during the time of the Roman empire. A. S. Osley, “Greek Biography before Plutarch,” in *Greece and Rome* 15/43 (1946): 20, argues that prior to Plutarch the genre of biography could be subdivided into five categories based on dominant “elements.” The first two elements are: 1) the encomiastic element (an uncritical and positive account of a person's life); and 2) the political element (a critical and even unfair account of a person's life). Charles H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel?: The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1978), 94–96, similarly subdivided didactic biographies into five functional categories of which types 2 and 3 are particularly important to our concerns. Type 2 are biographies that seek to replace a false image of a teacher and/or provide a true representation to be followed and type 3 biographies discredit a given teacher through exposure. Talbert's categorisation of biographies into sub-genre's according to their function has not prevailed without

Biographies could be used to correct a misunderstanding either in a positive way (i.e., to legitimise a subject) or in a negative way (i.e., to de-legitimise a subject).

Polemical legitimisation and de-legitimisation are so natural to biographical writing that it even comes through in *Evagoras*, a seemingly benign virtue manual for princes. A close reading is not required to notice Isocrates lacks an account of Evagoras' death. Aristotle, on the other hand, informs us that Evagoras was murdered by a eunuch seeking revenge because Evagoras' son (Nicocles?) took away his wife (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1311b). It seems reasonable to suspect compensation for the quality of Evagoras' death in Isocrates' encomium. As we saw in the texts examined above, Isocrates attempts to bring down the stature of past heroes, attributing much of their greatness to the hyperbole of poetry, and asserts Evagoras deserves equal, if not more, praise. This smacks of covering for Evagoras' non-heroic death. In fact, a *laudatio* of Evagoras' good fortunes stands where we would expect a description of his death (*Evag.* 70–72).³⁴ As we can see, even if not the main purpose of a literary work, narrating a life provides a prime opportunity and effective vehicle to explain, clarify, legitimise, or de-legitimise the words, deeds, or characteristics of a historical (or mythological) figure. We will now consider two examples of biographical writing used for polemics written around the time of Matthew's Gospel. The first example legitimises the subject of the biography and the second example de-legitimises the subject of the biography.

Tacitus' Agricola

The first example is Cornelius Tacitus' narration (*narraturo mihi uitam defuncti hominis; Agr.* 1.4) of his late father-in-law Julius Agricola's life (ca. 98 CE, a rough

necessary critiques. See, D. E. Aune, "Greco-Roman Biography," in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, ed. D. E. Aune (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 107–126, esp. 109; and, J.M. Smith, "Genre, Sub-Genre and Questions of Audience: A Proposed Typology for Greco-Roman Biography," *JGRChJ* 4 (2007): 200. However, Talbert's emphasis that biographies were indeed used to change the perception of someone either in a positive or negative manner is still a valid observation.

³⁴ Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 38.

contemporary with Matthew's Gospel).³⁵ Tacitus, like other biographers, provides a selection of biographical details that place his subject in the best possible light (specifically, to honour Agricola, *liber honori Agricolae soceri mei destinatus*; *Agr.* 3.3; cf. 46.2). Tacitus accomplishes this chiefly by contrasting Agricola's virtues with the dark backdrop of Domitian's reign (*Agr.* 1.4–2.3; 3.2; 39–45) as well as with those who lived immorally during that time.³⁶ Although the reforms of Nerva and Trajan were already bringing about a "blessed age" (*statim beatissimi saeculi ortu*; *Agr.* 3.1; cf. 44.5) when Tacitus wrote *Agricola*, the times were still marred from the *principate's* (especially Domitian's) corruption.³⁷ The corruption of the times (*tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora*)³⁸ is evidenced by the fact that Tacitus has to seek permission when writing about another person, even if they are deceased, unless his reasons for writing are invective (*Agr.* 1.4).³⁹ Former generations, on the other hand, wrote biographies and autobiographies without partisanship or self-seeking (*sine gratia aut ambitione*).⁴⁰

Setting Agricola against the dark backdrop of Domitian's Roman empire is an effective way to make both Agricola shine and to de-legitimise Domitian.⁴¹ A similar strategy was observed in Matthew's controversy stories. The legitimisation of Jesus' Torah interpretation was set against the scribes and Pharisees' corrupt and false

35 Tacitus mentions the emperor Trajan in his proem (*Agr.* 3.1), which suggests that Tacitus wrote this biography in 98 CE (i.e., the start of Trajan's reign) or a little after. Agricola died in 93 CE.

36 A. J. Woodman, ed., with contributions from C. S. Kraus, *Tacitus: Agricola*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 8; see also, B.C. McGing, "Synkrisis in Tacitus' Agricola," *Hermathena* 132 (1982): 15, who notes that Tacitus' comparisons are usually subtle and implied and states further that, "in fact, 'contrast' is often a more accurate term: where Agricola himself is part of a *synkrisis*, Tacitus mostly does not 'compare' him with men of similar virtue and achievement, but rather 'contrasts' him with his inferiors."

37 As Woodman and Kraus, *Tacitus: Agricola*, 5, state, Tacitus gives "fierce criticism" of Domitian in *Agricola*.

38 Correspondingly, Tacitus also calls it a time of slavery (*Agr.* 2.3, 3.3).

39 Tacitus' claim suggests, as I have been arguing, that biographies could be written to de-legitimise someone.

40 So Tacitus claims. Consequently, I have been arguing the opposite for the last several pages of this thesis.

41 Aristotle (*Ars Rhetorica*, 1368a 19–26), discusses *auxesis* (i.e., exaggeration, amplification) as a way to bring praise to someone. One strategy for achieving *auxesis* is to compare the subject of a work favourably with others. Such a comparison can also be made against ordinary or people of lesser stature since superiority was thought to indicate virtue. See, McGing, "Synkrisis in Tacitus' Agricola," 15, for further discussion.

interpretation of the Torah. Consequently, this strategy also raises a serious issue for Tacitus, noted by A. J. Woodman,

If Domitian's reign had been as detestable as depicted by [Tacitus] here and by Pliny in his letters and *Panegyricus*, which adopts exactly the same contrast, there arose in retrospect the question of guilt by association: what of those numerous men whose careers had not only prospered during Domitian's reign but had been actively promoted by the *princeps* himself?⁴²

Tacitus was one of those numerous men. All his advancements in government were either under Domitian or acquired with Domitian's support. The same can be said for Agricola and the two emperors (i.e., Nerva and Trajan) Tacitus praises for commencing a blessed age.⁴³ It is commonplace in Agricolan scholarship, therefore, to assert that Tacitus wrote *Agricola* not only to honour his father-in-law but also to present a defence of his own career under Domitian.⁴⁴ The use of first-person plurals (e.g., *dedimus*, *nos*, *perdidissemus*, *nostra*; *Agr.* 2.3; *nostri*, *sumus*, *uenimus*; *Agr.* 3.2) suggests that Tacitus' audience includes other senators.⁴⁵ These are the type of people (i.e., political leaders) Tacitus would need either to justify his success to or also make justification for their collective behaviour under Domitian. Tacitus' defence strategy then is to depict Domitian as so corrupt and oppressive that Tacitus and other magistrates would be understood as being left with no option but to conform (cf. *Agr.* 45.1–2). However, Tacitus uses Agricola's life as proof that those who had to conform did not necessarily partake in the corruption. Tacitus states,

42 Woodman and Kraus, *Tacitus: Agricola*, 8.

43 Nerva and Trajan were both consuls under Domitian: Nerva in 90 CE and Trajan in 91 CE.

44 Woodman and Kraus, *Tacitus: Agricola*, 8; see also, Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 214; and Michael P. Rewa, *Reborn as Meaning: Panegyric Biography from Isocrates to Walton* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983), 38.

45 Woodman and Kraus, *Tacitus: Agricola*, 8, 80–81.

Let those whose way it is to admire only what is forbidden [*quibus moris est illicita mirari*]⁴⁶ learn from him [i.e., Agricola] that great men can live even under bad rulers [*principibus*; i.e., emperors] (*Agr.* 42.4).

In regard to Tacitus' statement, Hägg notes, "we have, then, a biographer who not only wants to enhance his father-in-law's reputation, but also by depicting the latter as an honourable servant of tyrants implicitly justifies his own behaviour in similar circumstance."⁴⁷ This is a double legitimisation of the biographer and the biography's subject and a simultaneous de-legitimisation of Domitian.⁴⁸ The primary way in which Tacitus contrasts Agricola's greatness with bad rulers is by emphasising his virtue of *moderatio*.⁴⁹ Classen notes that *moderatio* was a term traditionally used for describing the quality of conducting public business by politicians and others in power.⁵⁰ This makes the virtue all the more relevant for a contrast with bad rulers. Indeed, later in the text cited above, Tacitus notes that a combination of *obsequiumque* and *modestiam*, if used with *industria* and *vigor*, is the key to achieving fame under bad rulers. We will consider *moderatio* briefly since it features significantly in the biography and relates to Tacitus' views of Roman governance.

Tacitus singles out Agricola's quality of *moderatio* early in his military career when he is given command of the twentieth legion. The legion's loyalty was unstable and Agricola's predecessor was unable to control them. Agricola, therefore, was appointed both to succeed and to punish his predecessor. Tacitus notes, however, that,

By his singular self control (*moderatione*) he preferred to make it appear that he had found the men loyal instead of making them so (*Agr.* 7.3).

46 Ibid., 302, note that "here *illicita* means 'not approved by the Emperor rather than contrary to the constitution.'" This further emphasises that the emperor's rulings are causing the corruption of the times.

47 Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 214.

48 See, Dylan Sailor, *Writing and Empire in Tacitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 103–118, who argues that Tacitus is rehabilitating Agricola.

49 C. J. Classen, "Tacitus-Historian Between Republic and Principate," *Mnemosyne* 41/1–2 (1988): 95. See also, Woodman and Kraus, *Tacitus: Agricola*, 10, who state, "*obsequium* and *modestia* aptly summarise the guiding principles of A.'s life."

50 Classen, "Tacitus-Historian Between Republic and Principate," 99.

Agricola's actions in a position of leadership are guided by his *moderatio*. His circumstances grant him the ability to exercise a large amount of authority (i.e., punitive measures).⁵¹ However, he finds the changing of the guard with clemency to be sufficient for the situation.⁵²

Agricola's *moderatio* is showcased further by contrasting his restraint from extremes with the extreme actions of those around him. For instance, at the beginning of his military career, Agricola, under the supervision of Suetonius Paulinus, a *diligenti ac moderato duci* (a careful and judicious officer),⁵³

was neither casual, after the manner of young men who turn soldiering into self-indulgence, nor yet indolent. He did not trade upon his tribune's commission and his inexperience to get pleasures and furloughs (*Agr.* 5.1).

Agricola's moderation is here demonstrated by what he did not do in contrast to the actions of the other young military men. With his behaviour set against the behaviour of others (*nec ... licenter, more iuvenum ...*; *Agr.* 5.1), Agricola's moderation looks more impressive.⁵⁴ This is Tacitus' most common strategy for distinguishing Agricola. Sometimes Tacitus simply adds a brief negative (e.g., *temperavit Agricola vim suam ardoremque compescuit, ne incresceret*, *Agr.* 8.1) or he gives a negative form of expression (e.g., *Agr.* 18.6; cf. 7.3; 19.3) to explicitly deny Agricola did one thing or another.⁵⁵ Most often, however, Tacitus states "what Agricola did not do so as to stress his moderate action or attitude and to make it stand out more clearly against the common failures or extremes" (e.g., *Agr.* 8.3; 18.6; 19.2, 3; 20.1; 22.4;

51 This command was given by a Roman ruler. This, then, is an example of using *moderatio* to do great things under bad leadership.

52 So, R. M. Ogilvie and Sir Ian Richmond, *Cornelii Taciti: De Vita Agricolae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 156: "the prospect of an efficient commander determined to restore discipline was sufficient to bring the troops back to their loyalty. On his arrival, therefore, Agricola was not obliged to adopt punitive measures but could exercise a clemency that was unusual in such a situation."

53 While men can be great even under bad rulers, they apparently can also learn good qualities, like *moderatio*, under good rulers.

54 Classen, "Tacitus-Historian Between Republic and Principate," 96.

55 *Ibid.*, 96–97.

40.3).⁵⁶ Finally, in the greatest contrast of characters, Agricola's *moderatio* quells Domitian's extremely negative qualities. Tacitus states,

It is a principle of human nature to hate those whom you have injured: nevertheless Domitian though by nature of violent temper and unrelenting in proportion to his secretiveness, was pacified by the moderation [*moderatione*] and discretion of Agricola, in whom was no truculence, no fatuous parade of independence, to invite renown and ruin (*Agr.* 42.3).

This contrast at the end of the biography makes clear that Agricola did not ride on the coattails of Domitian nor that his submission and moderate behaviour to Domitian's rule meant he endorsed the corrupt emperor. On the contrary, Tacitus depicts Agricola's *moderatio* as an appropriate means, considering the circumstances, to confront the bad ruler. Tacitus has used biographical details to explain that there is more to his father-in-law's modest behaviour, and implicitly his own, during Domitian's reign than meets the eye. This is a prime instance of using biography to explain and legitimise a life and to clarify certain behaviours that may have been misconstrued. Tacitus has achieved this principally by contrasting his subject's virtues, most notably *moderatio*, against the backdrop of a corrupt age in Roman history.

Suetonius' Life of Nero

Our second example of a biography used for polemics is Suetonius' *Life of Nero* from his most famous work the *Lives of the Caesars* (ca. 120/1 CE, some forty years after Matthew's Gospel).⁵⁷ Suetonius' *Life of Nero* is a prime example of sharing biographical details to de-legitimise the subject of a biography. Suetonius, as a secretary under Hadrian, had access to many sources and compiled them in a scholarly manner. Sources are often cited verbatim, facts are often listed plainly, and

⁵⁶ Ibid., 96.

⁵⁷ Suetonius appears to have been banned from Hadrian's court around 122 CE. He presumably finished his account of Nero's life before his banishment since he seems to have access to a lot of sources.

biographical details are organised and categorised in topics or rubrics (as they are sometimes called).⁵⁸ The effect of this plain and straightforward writing is for Suetonius to present himself as an unbiased presenter of facts who invites the readers to make their own judgement about the biography's subject.⁵⁹ This, however, is not the case in his *Life of Nero*. Suetonius uncharacteristically leaves the audience no questions about the quality of emperor Nero.⁶⁰ Nero is depicted and explicitly declared by Suetonius to be a wicked emperor. We will briefly consider how Suetonius uses biographical details to depict Nero as a depraved emperor and then briefly consider why he may have felt the need to aggressively de-legitimise an emperor who died roughly fifty years prior.

One strategy Suetonius uses to de-legitimise Nero is to invert a trope usually used to legitimise the subject of a biography to achieve the opposite effect. This strategy is most evident in Nero's genealogy. Genealogies are commonly used at the beginning of biographies to establish the pedigree of the subject, often times tracing their stock back to the heroes and gods of their culture. Exquisite ancestry infers that the subject of the biography shares the good qualities of their genetic stock (e.g., Suetonius, *Aug.* 1–3). At the outset of Nero's genealogy Suetonius states that, even though Nero has some good ancestry, he degenerated from their virtues and instead reproduced their vices as if he inherited them (*Nero* 1.2). The qualities evoked in the anecdotes attributed to Nero's ancestors manifest in his life as well. For instance, one of his ancestors tries to poison himself but then cowardly backs out just as Nero does at the end of his life (compare *Nero* 2.3 and 43.2; 48.1; 49.2–3). Nero's grandfather is depicted as an extravagant spender who put on gladiator shows that were so inhuman that Augustus had to detain him (*Nero* 4). Extravagance is a quality that Nero will take up and even admire (cf. *Nero* 30.1) about his ancestors (*Nero* 30.1–32.4). Nero's

58 Donna W. Hurley, *Suetonius: The Caesars, Translated, with Introductions and Notes* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), xvii, xx.

59 See, *Ibid.*, xxiv; and Ronald Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (London: Routledge, 1999), 153.

60 K. R. Bradley, *Suetonius' Life of Nero: An Historical Commentary*, Collection Latomus 157 (Brussels: Latomus, Revue d'Études Latines, 1978), 243; and, Tamsyn Barton, "The *inventio* of Nero: Suetonius," in *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History, and Representation*, ed. Jaś Elsner and Jamie Masters (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 55.

father is declared outright to be of bad nature in the genealogy (*Nero* 5.1, *detestabilem*), a declaration hardly needed after Suetonius describes his murderous actions and incestuous relationships (*Nero* 5.1–2). Murder nearly becomes a hobby for Nero by the end of the biography (*Nero* 33.1–2; 34.5–37.1) and incest ending in murder is the eventual outcome of his relationship with his mother (*Nero* 28.2; 34.1–2).⁶¹ As these examples show, Suetonius uses the trope of listing ancestors to establish Nero’s bad qualities from the start of the biography.

Another strategy Suetonius uses to de-legitimise Nero is to mention bad omens at significant points in Nero’s life. Signs, dreams, or miraculous events sometimes accompany the birth or announcement of the birth of the subject of a biography to indicate that their life is special.⁶² Nero’s birth, on the other hand, is marked with bad omens and statements by his father and Gaius Caesar declaring Nero’s detestable nature and the folly in which his life will end (*Nero* 6.1). Bad omens are also in abundance the day Nero becomes emperor (*Nero* 8.1) and continue to appear during his reign (*Nero* 36.1–2). Finally, Suetonius begins his famous narration of Nero’s death with a series of predictions by astrologers (*Nero* 40.2) and escalates the imminence of his death with bad dreams (which are associated with the anniversary of the murder of his mother and wife; *Nero* 46.1, 3; cf. 40.4) and earthquakes and lightning (*Nero* 48.2–3). With the mention of bad omens throughout the narrative, Suetonius leaves room for only one conclusion: Nero’s life was a cursed one from the outset.

Suetonius’ writing method of categorising biographical details in rubrics is also used to de-legitimise Nero. About a third of the way through the biography, after

61 Sources attest to different versions of the rumour that Nero had an incestuous relationship with his mother in antiquity. Cassius Dio was unsure if anything incestuous at all took place between Nero and his mother, Tacitus and Cluvrius Rufus believed that Agrippina initiated the flirting, and Fabius Rusticus believed Nero started it. Suetonius naturally agrees with Fabius Rusticus’ version since it puts Nero in the worst light. See, Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 86–88, for further discussion of this rumour.

62 For instance, Matthew’s Jesus and Philo’s Moses are both announced in a dream. Jesus’ birth is accompanied by a star and magi. Evagoras apparently, as we saw, had such things happen but Isocrates did not want to mention them so that people did not think it was a myth (Isocrates, *Evag.* 21).

having rehearsed some of Nero's decent deeds, Suetonius informs the audience that he has purposely listed these deeds in order to separate them from Nero's bad deeds,

I have brought together these acts of his, some of which are beyond criticism, while others are even deserving no slight praise, to separate them from his shameful and criminal deeds, of which I shall proceed now to give an account (*Nero* 19.3).

The pursuing recitation of shameful deeds (*Nero* 20–39; about eighteen pages in an English edition) is three times the length of commendable deeds (*Nero* 9–19; about six pages).⁶³ Suetonius offers an onslaught of extravagant (e.g., *Nero* 30.1–2), murderous (e.g., *Nero* 33.1–37.2), sexually deviant (e.g., *Nero* 27.1–29), and ludicrous (*Nero* 28.1) behaviour by Nero. The culmination of these shameful deeds essentially overwhelm and cancel out the commendable deeds. One may ponder why Suetonius even took the time to mention Nero's commendable deeds simply to negate their worth. We will re-visit this question at the end of our discussion of Suetonius' *Life of Nero*.

Suetonius concludes this barrage of shameful deeds with an account of Nero's dishonourable death (*Nero* 40–49). In his final moments, Nero displays cowardice about dying by backing out of killing himself or hesitating (*Nero* 47.3; 48.1; 49.2). Nero's behaviour is so unbecoming in this fateful moment that even he acknowledges it (*Nero* 49.3). To receive any sympathy Nero is reduced to commanding his companion Sporus to lament for him (*Nero* 49.3) and Epaphroditus has to aid him in inserting a dagger into his throat (*Nero* 49.4). The final stroke of insult comes with a centurion who, arriving just a moment before Nero dies, pretends to attend to Nero's wounds (*Nero* 49.4). Nero in his last breath mistakes the centurion's actions as genuine (*Nero* 49.4). Even though Nero commits suicide, an honourable course of action for Roman heroes, Suetonius makes sure his audience knows that Nero

63 Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 222.

committed suicide as a dishonourable buffoon. Hägg puts it succinctly, “Nero fails not only as an emperor, but as a Roman.”⁶⁴

We have seen that Suetonius uses biographical details to de-legitimise Nero thoroughly. However, why does he do this? Nero was long since dead. Biographies, as stated above, are not always used for polemics, but the explicit denunciation of Nero seems to compensate for something. We ultimately do not know why Suetonius was bent on depicting Nero as such a heinous character, but we can gather some clues from Suetonius himself. Even though Nero is remembered today as a bad emperor, Susan A. Curry notes that his legacy was not uncomplicated.⁶⁵ Suetonius attests to this. He ends his biography by mentioning that long after Nero’s death people still brought flowers to his tomb, made statues of him, upheld some of his edicts, and even attacked some of Nero’s enemies on his behalf (*Nero* 57.1–2). The Parthians, in particular, continued to honour Nero and went to great lengths to make sure that honour continued to be paid to his memory (*Nero* 57.2). It seems, then, that Suetonius’ depiction of Nero did not represent everybody. Clearly there were still competing opinions regarding Nero’s legacy.

The idea of an emperor (or *princeps*) was controversial from its start and, despite Augustus’ best efforts, was never a natural fit with Rome’s historic structure of government (i.e., a senate). An emperor’s role, as Donna W. Hurley notes, was undefined.⁶⁶ Suetonius, therefore, by making a collection of biographies of formative emperors that could be compared and contrasted with one another, created a measuring stick for analysing future emperors (perhaps even Hadrian under whom Suetonius worked). If Nero was to function as Suetonius’ worst example of an emperor, that is, the lowest mark on the measuring stick, he needed to discredit any alternative opinions that might undercut his depiction of Nero. What better way to discredit alternative opinions than to address them directly. The commendable deeds of chapters 9–19 are rendered insignificant by the pursuing list of shameful deeds and

64 *Ibid.*, 238.

65 Susan A. Curry, “Nero Quadripes: Animalizing the Emperor in Suetonius’ Nero,” *Arethusa* 47/2 (2014): 225–226.

66 Hurley, *Suetonius: The Caesars*, xvi.

the description of a dishonourable death. As for the closing mention of those who continue to honour Nero after his death, Suetonius' audience is left with no other option than to dismiss these efforts as misguided. History has not smiled favourably on Nero's legacy for many reasons, but Suetonius' biography certainly played a part in de-legitimising any redeeming qualities Nero's legacy may have carried.

Summary

Tacitus' *Agricola* and Suetonius' *Life of Nero* both display how the genre of biography could be used in a polemical situation to either legitimise or de-legitimise a historical figure. Again, since biographies by nature explain someone's character, they were a natural medium for sharing favourable or unfavourable details of a historical figure's life in order either to legitimise or de-legitimise said historical figure. Biographers claimed to share personal stories, cite authoritative sources, and presumably used imagination to depict the subject of their biography in a manner that contradicted and refuted other claims about their subject. Hägg calls this the scholarly apparatus for the rhetoric of biography, "eyewitnesses, written sources, the weighing of evidence, a declared will to find out the truth about a character, and open or hidden polemics against earlier representations of the same figure."⁶⁷ With kings, philosophers, and emperors as common subjects of the biographies, much was at stake for the parties invested and the way they depicted these figures. We will now examine Philo's *Life of Moses* to see how biography could be used in a polemical situation concerning the Torah, a polemical situation much closer to home for Matthew.

5.2 Philo's Legitimation of Moses and his Torah

Having surveyed how biographers legitimised and de-legitimised their subjects we will now analyse how Philo uses the genre of biography to affirm Moses' status as the supreme lawgiver above the lawgivers of every other culture. This, in effect, affirms

⁶⁷ Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 93.

the law of the Jews (i.e., the Torah given by Moses) as the ultimate law above the laws of every other culture. Moreover, Philo legitimises Moses and his Torah in a way that would be meaningful for Hellenistic intellectuals. Thus, Philo uses his biography of Moses to inform gentiles (presumably those in Alexandria) of the superior status of the customs of Judaism and also to persuade his audience to conform to them.

5.2a The Polemical Context of Philo's *Life of Moses*

Philo (ca. 20 BCE to 50 CE) was an intellectual and political leader of the Jewish community in Alexandria (cf. *In Flacc.* and *Legat.*), the largest community of Jews in his day outside of Palestine.⁶⁸ His family, especially his brother Alexander and nephews Marcus and Tiberius (an apostate, cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 20.100), were also highly involved in the politics of Jewish and Roman relations. In his own understanding, however, Philo views his involvement in public politics as an unwanted chaotic interruption to his blissful pursuit of the intellectual life (*Spec.* 3.1–4). The cause of this interruption provides an important insight into Philo's reason for writing a two volume biography of Moses and its polemical context in which it was written. Philo states that as he was enjoying the ascension of the intellectual life, envy (*φθόνος*) that hates everything good, ambushed and dragged him into public politics (*Spec.* 3.3). What lies behind this vague reference to envy? We are given a big hint. Philo clarifies that dealing with envy in politics does not fully engulf him in darkness. Rather, he is given light in his soul by wisdom (*Spec.* 3.6). With pockets of reprise from the darkness, Philo states that he endeavours to study each commandment of Moses and to explain the commandments to those who do not understand them (*Spec.* 3.6). Here, studying and explaining the Torah of Moses to those who do not understand is intrinsically connected to dealing with the envy that has plunged Philo into politics. The envy that hates all that is good, therefore, is

68 David M. Scholer, "Foreword: An Introduction to Philo Judaeus of Alexandria," in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, New Updated ed., trans. C.D. Yonge (Peabody; MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), xi–xii.

presumably political envy against Jewish customs and the Torah of Moses (i.e., that which is good). Indeed, in his *Life of Moses*, Philo states that envy is one of the main reasons why many do not truly understand Moses and his laws (*Mos.* 1.2, 4 [Βασκανίαν]; cf. 2.27).

We have, therefore, in Philo's own narrative of his professional career, the declaration that his life mission is to explain Moses' Torah to those who do not understand it. Indeed, David M. Scholer notes that explaining Moses' writings “permeates most of Philo's literary output.”⁶⁹ Philo's polemical context, therefore, is making known and correcting misunderstandings about Moses and his Torah in the Hellenistic world. Previously, it was observed that the concern to explain and make known was inherent to the fabric of Greco-Roman biography. It is no surprise then to find that Philo, a man steeped in Hellenistic intellectual tradition, turns to a biography as a medium to explain Moses the legislator of the Torah to the many who do not truly understand him (*Mos.* 1.2). Moreover, Philo explains that in his biography he will use both the sacred Scriptures that Moses left and also information he has learned from the elders of the Jewish people (*Mos.* 1.4).⁷⁰ The combination of these two sources makes his biography of Moses more accurate than others (*Mos.* 1.4). Reminiscent of Isocrates' *Evagoras*, we have a biographer opening his treatise with an explanation of how his biography will explain the actual truth about a historical figure.

Biographers, as shown above, sometimes endeavoured to explain a historical figure in order to legitimise them or to de-legitimise them in a polemical situation. Philo explicitly states that he is not only trying inform those ignorant of Moses but that ignorance of him persists because Greek historians have actually deemed Moses as being not worthy of memory (*Mos.* 1.2). Philo's statement in part reflects the historical reality. Louis H. Feldman notes that while Moses was the only figure in

69 *Ibid.*, xii.

70 Louis H. Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses in the Context of Ancient Judaism, Christianity and Judaisms in Antiquity Series 15* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 27–29, suggests that the things Philo heard from his elders are in reference to rabbinic oral law.

Jewish tradition that the gentile world knew well, his reception was mixed.⁷¹ Some gentile intellectuals, however, most notably Apion, who led an anti-Jewish delegation in Alexandria, wrote revisionist histories of Moses specifically in order to delegitimise him (cf. Josephus, *Ap.* 2.10–27).⁷² Philo, therefore, uses a biography not only to inform the ignorant about Moses but also to refute and correct false depictions of him (*Mos.* 1.4). In fact, Philo acknowledges that there are false ideas about Moses in the opening sentence of the biography: “I purpose to write the life of Moses, whom some describe as the legislator of the Jews, others as the interpreter of the Holy Laws (*Mos.* 1.1).” Thus, Philo, like other Greco-Roman authors, uses a biography to legitimise a historical figure.

This legitimisation is actually twofold. As noted above, Philo is concerned with making the commandments of Moses known to those who do not understand them (*Spec.* 3.6). His legitimisation of Moses, by way of biography, consequently also legitimises the law so closely associated with him (*Hypoth.* 6.9).⁷³ Indeed, Philo notes that Moses is a beautiful and God-like work for people to imitate (*Mos.* 1.158) and that if a leader lives rightly then his people will imitate him (*Mos.* 1.161). Philo then more explicitly states that Moses is not only his nation's lawgiver but is himself a living embodiment of the law (ἐγίνετο νόμος ἔμψυχός; *Mos.* 1.162; 2.4, 48). In other words, as Moses' supreme character is a God-like law to imitate so his written legislation will be just as good.⁷⁴ His character legitimises his legislative work. Moses' legislative work also returns the favour and legitimises him (*Mos.* 2.45). In fact, Philo ascribes four abilities to Moses (i.e., philosopher-king, lawgiver, high priest, and prophet) that work together to help him give a perfect law above all other laws (*Mos.* 1.334, 2.1–6; *Dec.* 18–19). Thus, the legitimisation of Moses and his life,

71 See, *ibid.*, 1–7, for a survey of opinions of non-Jewish authors about Moses.

72 *Ibid.*, 1, 359.

73 Similarly, *ibid.*, 89, states, “in line with his aim to present an apologetic work defending Moses—and no less the Pentateuch, so intimately connected with his name—against his pagan detractors, Philo makes every effort to demonstrate that the Pentateuch is rational.”

74 W. Richardson, “The Philonic Patriarchs as Νόμος Ἐμψυχός,” in *Papers Presented to the Second International Conference on Patristic Studies*, ed. Kurt Aland and Frank L. Cross, *StPatr* 1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 520, notes that being the incarnation of the Torah would make Moses best suited for writing it out for others and for being an example of how to live it out.

through the medium of biography, is intrinsically tied to the legitimisation of the Torah (hence, the Law of Moses).⁷⁵ Philo himself acknowledges that this is the natural order of things: first analyse the lawgiver whose life was an unwritten law then proceed to analyse his written laws (*Decal.* 1; cf. *Virt.* 51–52).

Having established that Philo uses the medium of biography to inform the ignorant and misinformed of the truth about Moses and his law, we will now analyse the manner in which Philo accomplishes this. However, it is important to determine who Philo's audience is, if we want to understand how he intends to inform them.⁷⁶ Philo's intended audience and actual audience are probably not equivalent, but distinguishing between the two is beyond historical reach. That being said, it seems the overall thrust of the *Life of Moses* is intended for a non-Jewish audience. There are some aspects of the biography, such as the strong emphasis against idol worship in the telling of the golden calf incident (*Mos.* 2.161–173; 270–274), that may have Jews who assimilated into Egyptian cults (e.g., Philo's nephew Tiberius) in mind.⁷⁷ By and large, however, taking Philo at face value, he states in the opening of the biography that he is writing to inform those who should not remain ignorant of Moses' full character (*Mos.* 1.1). Those ignorant of Moses' full character are obviously gentiles, the non-Jewish citizens of Alexandria. Moreover, those who ought not to remain ignorant are certainly people of higher social class, who make decisions in public politics that affect the lives of the Jews who live by Moses' sacred writings. Philo's *Life of Moses*, then, is a presentation of Jewish thought and customs to those who may be interested.⁷⁸ This makes good sense of the long digression in the biography concerning the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek (*Mos.* 2.25–44),

75 The connection between the law and the lawgiver is similarly made by Josephus (*A.J.* 1.18).

76 Philo likely had different audiences for his different treatises. As, Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 11, states, “we can see from the contradictory views that [Philo] expresses in other essays about such figures as Joseph and Jethro, not all the treatises were addressed to the same audience. Some of Philo's works, however, are more intelligible when it is recognized that they were directed also or even primarily toward Gentiles, though admittedly it is usually impossible to determine whether Philo is interested in converting Gentiles or in merely explaining the Bible.”

77 *Ibid.*, 208.

78 Erwin R. Goodenough, “Philo's Exposition of the Law and His *De Vita Mosis*,” *HTR* 26 (1933): 109–125.

which concludes with a call for gentiles to convert to Judaism (*Mos.* 2.44).⁷⁹ Philo's audience, therefore, is non-Jewish (Alexandrian) intellectuals. Naturally then, Philo legitimises Moses as the supreme lawgiver in a manner that would appeal to Hellenistic intellectuals. We will now analyse how Philo shares biographical details about Moses to accomplish this.

5.2b Qualifiers, Alterations, and Omissions of the Sources

In observing the way Philo provides biographical details to legitimise Moses for an intellectual Hellenistic audience, it is also informative to note what Philo does not include about Moses, or perhaps more precisely, what he edits from older traditions about Moses. Ironically, the writings attributed to Moses, one of Philo's declared sources and a memorial of Moses' wisdom, actually contains some less than desirable details that could potentially de-legitimise Moses from a Hellenistic point of view. For instance, although Moses is Israel's premier prophet and performer of miracles (cf. Deut 34:10–12), Israel's Scriptures are clear that God is the source of Moses' abilities and the source of the Torah. Moses is clearly an agent through whom the main character (i.e., God) works. Nevertheless, Philo does his best to show that Moses is more than an agent, that he plays an active role in the creation of the Torah (*Mos.* 1.1; 2.10, 47–49, 188; *Hypoth.* 9; *Decal.* 18). More incriminating, however, is that the characters in Israel's Scriptures, with a few exceptions (e.g., Joseph and Daniel), are presented with flaws. Moses, although a pillar of the Jewish faith, is no exception to this rule. He displays fears, anxiety, fails to circumcise his son, and even commits murder. These qualities were not becoming of an ideal leader in the Hellenistic world and were certainly inappropriate for the genre of biography, which presented past heroes in the best light possible.⁸⁰ Therefore, even though Moses and the Pentateuch are the very things Philo is trying to legitimise, he, like all Greco-Roman biographers, qualifies some of the content, makes alterations, and even omits

79 So, Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 14–15.

80 Biographers also depicted people poorly, but, as we saw, only if they were trying to de-legitimise someone.

certain sections in order to tailor Moses' life in the best Hellenistic light possible.⁸¹ Philo's editorial activity of his biblical source is too expansive to exhaust in this chapter.⁸² Therefore, we will focus on some significant examples.

One of the most potentially de-legitimising features of Moses' life found in the Pentateuch is his murder of an Egyptian (Exod 2:11–12), a particularly sensitive issue for an audience in Alexandria. Moses, when observing his people in slavery, sees an Egyptian striking a Hebrew (Exod 2:11). Moses kills the Egyptian when no one is looking and hides his body (Exod 2:12). The next day Moses tries to break up a fight between two Hebrews and one of them questions Moses' right to get involved since he is not ruler (ῤ; ἀρχοντα) and judge (ῤψ; δικαστήν) over them (Exod 2:13–14). The same man asks Moses if he is going to kill him like he killed the Egyptian (Exod 2:14). Moses becomes afraid because he realises that his murder is public knowledge (Exod 2:14). Moses then flees Egypt as Pharaoh tries to kill him (Exod 2:15). The Bible clearly alludes to the Egyptians' extreme cruelty towards the Hebrews (Exod 1:8–20) and the participle (מכה; τύπτοντά) implies that the Egyptian was continually hitting the Hebrew, but Moses' handling of the situation is not becoming of a lawgiver who legislates against murder (Exod 20:13), much less a philosopher-king (the very depiction, as we will see, Philo ascribes to Moses, cf. *Mos.* 2.2). It can very well come across as rash behaviour and anti-authoritarian. The statement by the quarrelling Hebrew makes it clear that Moses is not exhibiting the characteristics of a ruler or judge (Exod 2:14).⁸³ The fact that Moses hides the body also implies that Moses realises his behaviour is unacceptable (Exod 2.12). Philo,

81 Philo, of course, claims the opposite, namely, that Moses' laws have never been altered even in the process of translation (*Mos.* 2.34, 38).

82 See, Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 361–371, for a survey of Philo's significant interpretations to the biblical text.

83 The author of Exodus clearly intends some irony and foreshadowing here as Moses is the man that God will use to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt (Exod 3:10) and who will act as judge (ῤψ) over them (Exod 18:13, 24–26). Nevertheless, Philo's audience, who may have some familiarity with the Greek translation of Exodus, may not afford the same charity to the character development of Moses as a Jewish audience would. This statement by the quarrelling Hebrew, therefore, is problematic for Philo.

therefore, takes this brief biblical account and adds details that justify Moses' actions, even making them pious.

In the biblical account we are simply told that an Egyptian is hitting a Hebrew. We do not know if this was the first time this Egyptian beat this Hebrew, if the Hebrew instigated the quarrel, or if the Egyptian was beyond his jurisdiction. Philo, however, explains that the Egyptian overseers were excessively brutal towards the Hebrew slaves, to the point that their actions were equal with wild beasts (*Mos.* 1.43). Moreover, this excessive behaviour happened after Moses first tried to persuade the overseers to use moderation (*μετριάζειν*) when dealing with the Hebrews (*Mos.* 1.40).⁸⁴ Philo then explains that the Egyptian that Moses killed was one of these sub-human overseers and, in fact, the most violent (i.e., the most inhuman) of them (*Mos.* 1.44). Moses, therefore, according to Philo, killed the Egyptian actually thinking it a pious action since killing one would save many (*Mos.* 1.44). Although the Egyptians are depicted in Exodus as being excessively violent towards the Hebrews by trying to kill their male infants, it does not say the Egyptian Moses murdered was trying to kill the Hebrew. Philo has filled in the picture for us.⁸⁵ Moses is now seen as being forced to kill someone who is less than human for the good of the oppressed.⁸⁶ The reasonableness of Moses' action is further supported by the Pharaoh's reaction. Philo states that the Pharaoh (i.e., Moses' grandfather, cf. *Mos.* 1.33) did not find it wrong for a man to kill another, justly or unjustly, rather he was upset that Moses killed one of his workers (*Mos.* 1.45). Moreover, as opposed to simply stating that Pharaoh tried to kill Moses, Philo states that the Pharaoh only turned against Moses after countless Egyptian officials levelled an onslaught of arguments that Moses was planning to deprive Pharaoh of his kingdom (*Mos.* 1.46). The obvious slanderous source of these arguments de-legitimises the claims. Philo

84 We saw in Tacitus' *Agricola* that *moderatio* was a quality of good political leaders. Moreover, Tacitus held it as the key virtue for succeeding in the difficult circumstance of being under bad rulers. Philo depicts Moses in such a situation. Moses' moderation, therefore, maybe seen as a very virtuous action to Philo's non-Jewish audience.

85 So, Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 53–54.

86 Cf. *Leg.* 3.37–39; and *Fug.* 148, for Philo's allegorical explanation and justification of Moses' actions.

has depicted Moses in the right. The following incident with the quarrelling Hebrews, however, could tarnish Philo's spin on Moses' murder of the Egyptian overseer. He, therefore, omits it from the biography. We have, then, qualifications about Moses' actions (i.e., that they were pious), alterations and added material (i.e., the Egyptian is a sub-human who is vicious to the Hebrews), and omissions (i.e., the quarrelling Hebrews) to the Biblical text in order to depict Moses as a just man acting wisely in a tough situation.

The turning point in Moses' life is his encounter with Yahweh in the burning bush (Exod 3:1–4:17). However, even though this event is a must in a biography of Moses, there are some aspects of it that could damage the portrait of Moses for a Greco-Roman readership. Therefore, as with the incident of Moses killing the Egyptian, Philo adds some qualifiers, alterations, and omissions to his telling of the burning bush.

To begin, Philo gives a long allegorical explanation of the burning bush itself (*Mos.* 1.67–70). Allegory is rare in the *Life of Moses*, which tries to be more historical in order to make Moses' life seem more credible, but it is necessary with regard to the burning bush.⁸⁷ There is no obvious reason why God appears in a burning bush and this could seem all the more strange to a gentile audience unfamiliar with Jewish tradition. Philo, therefore, takes a moment to explain that the bush represents the oppressed Hebrews, the fire the oppressors, and the fact that the bush is not consumed by the flame is a sign that the oppressed will not be destroyed (*Mos.* 1.67). Moreover, Philo, by calling the burning bush a god-like (*θεοειδέστατον*) image, anticipates any criticisms and disbelief that Moses saw God in a burning bush (*Mos.* 1.66). Indeed, Philo states that one could imagine that it was the actual image of God, but he reassures the audience that it was in fact only an angel (*Mos.* 1.66).⁸⁸

In Exodus, Moses' interactions with the burning bush are not those of a courageous and exalted leader like the heroes of Greco-Roman tradition. He has to

87 Concerning the scarcity of allegory in *Life of Moses*, see, Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 25–26. Feldman, *ibid.*, 361, describes book one of the *Life of Moses* as “a factual history, Plutarchian in style.”

88 See, also, *ibid.*, 77.

remove his footwear and hide his face before approaching the bush (Exod 3:5–6). Moses himself questions his status as a leader (“who am I?” Exod 3:11) and is doubtful that the Israelites will believe him (Exod 4:1). Even worse, he enrages God by asking him to send someone else (Exod 4:13). Philo, therefore, omits the reference to Moses hiding his face. Rather, Moses speaks to the bush face to face (so to speak) from the start (*Mos.* 1.71–73).⁸⁹ As for Moses' self-deprecating question (i.e., “who am I”), it is also omitted. Philo skips ahead and makes Moses' first question to God a combination of Exodus 3:13 and 4:1 (*Mos.* 1.74; cf. vv75–76). Rather than Moses expressing doubt about the Israelites believing him, Philo makes the Hebrews out to be the ones who are weak in their natural abilities and, therefore, distrustful (*Mos.* 1.74–76). Indeed, Philo notes that Moses was not ignorant of the Hebrews' natural inclination to distrust (*Mos.* 1:74) and, therefore, asks God to tell him his name so that he may inform them who sent him. God not only tells Moses his name, but states that if the Hebrews continue to doubt, on account of their natural distrustful imposition, then God will give him three signs (i.e., staff-snake; white hand; and blood water) that will convince them (*Mos.* 1.77–81). Philo's point is that Moses is not doubting himself, but is doubting the Hebrews, whom he knows to be flawed in this regard.⁹⁰

Moses' request for God to send someone else (Exod 4:13), is spun to be something God admires rather than something that angers him (*Mos.* 1.84). In Exodus Moses pleads with God stating that he is slow of speech and even after God gives him reassurance Moses still asks God to send someone else (Exod 4:10–13; cf., 6:12). Lacking eloquence would certainly invalidate a national leader in the eyes of a Greco-Roman audience.⁹¹ Enraged that Moses has rejected his offer to help, God tells him that his brother Aaron will speak on his behalf (Exod 4:14–16). In Philo, Moses' issues with speech and reasons for declining the task God has given him are a result of modesty and being in shock from actually hearing God (*Mos.* 1.83).⁹² Having

89 So, *ibid.*, 76.

90 Similarly, *ibid.*, 79.

91 *Ibid.*, 81.

92 For more of Philo's explanations for Moses' issues with speech, see, *Det.* 38; *Sacr.* 12; *Her.* 4.

already declined God's offer out of modesty, God approves of Moses' attitude but then also offers to help him speak (*Mos.* 1.84). Moreover, Philo makes Aaron play more of a supporting role as an interpreter than he does in Exodus so that Moses' status is not reduced (compare Exod 4:14–17 and *Mos.* 1.84, 86).⁹³

Finally, the burning bush episode raises two more concerns for Philo: Moses fearfully flees from the staff that turns into a snake (Exod 4:3) and his hand gets diseased with leprosy (Exod 4:6–7). Concerning the staff-snake, Philo adds the important details that it is the most authoritative (*ἡγεμονικώτατον*) and immensely great (*ὑπερμεγέθης*) fully grown snake (*Mos.* 1.77).⁹⁴ Moses' reaction is now justified. Moreover, Philo then states that God inspired Moses with courage causing him to pick up the snake (*Mos.* 1.78). Moses is now seen as courageous rather than cowardly. Concerning the leprous hand, God instructs Moses to place his hand in the fold of his cloak and to remove it (Exod 4:6). When he does the author of Exodus states that Moses' hand was diseased (leprous)⁹⁵ and that it looked white as snow (Exod 4:6). His hand returns to normal after he places it back in and out of his cloak (Exod 4:7). Philo, like Josephus (*A.J.* 2.273) and Ezekiel the tragedian (*ap. Eus. PE* 9.28.11), omits the reference to leprosy and simply states that the hand became white like snow (*Mos.* 1.79). Philo, as well as Josephus and Ezekiel, seems to omit the reference to leprosy in response to anti-Jewish revisions of the Exodus in which the Egyptians expelled the Hebrews because they had leprosy (e.g., Manetho's version of the Exodus; cf. *ap. Josephus, AP.* 1.233).⁹⁶ Philo, therefore, is careful not to mention leprosy at all.

There are numerous additional examples of interpretations like these in Philo's *Life of Moses*. Suffice it for now, we can see from the examples above that

93 *Ibid.*, 83.

94 *Ibid.*, 79.

95 The Hebrew word for leprosy (צרעת) could be used for many diseases. However, the reference to Moses' hand turning white as snow (שלג) emphasises that Moses contracted the skin disease leprosy (cf. Num 12:10; 2 Kgs 5.27). Nevertheless, the precise meaning is unknown. The rendering of צרעת as λέπρα in Greek translations, however, would have made it clear to a Hellenistic audience that Moses' hand was leprous.

96 Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 79–80.

Philo is careful in how he shares the details of Moses' life, especially the details from the Pentateuch, a book from a very different culture than Alexandria. Philo's goal is to shape his sources in a way that will legitimise Moses as a lawgiver and leader in a Hellenistic context. In this way, Philo is doing more than writing a biography of Moses, but is also interpreting his Jewish traditions in a manner that will make them more credible in his culture. Having considered how Philo edited potentially incriminating material about Moses, we will now consider how Philo adds biographical details and builds on the more positive aspects of Moses tradition in order to legitimise him and his Torah in an Alexandrian setting.

5.2c Moses' Childhood and Four *Abilities*

We will consider two ways in particular that Philo legitimises Moses as the ultimate lawgiver in a Hellenistic context. The first is Philo's account of Moses' upbringing and the second is the four abilities he attributes to Moses (i.e., philosopher-king, lawgiver, high priest, and prophet). Together these two aspects of Philo's depiction of Moses play a significant role in legitimising him as the ultimate lawgiver and the Torah as the supreme law code by Hellenistic standards.

Moses' Childhood

Feldman notes that Philo most extensively changes the biblical narrative during Moses' education. Feldman's suggests this may be the case because education meant a great deal to Philo (cf. *Spec.* 3.1–4).⁹⁷ Feldman's suggestion seems right, but it may also be assumed that Moses' education diverges the most from the biblical narrative because this is the part of the narrative with the most potential to insert additional material. Much less is usually known about someone's upbringing than their adult public career. This scarcity of knowledge regarding a person's upbringing allowed great latitude for ingenuity by biographers. In the open canvas of a figure's upbringing biographers could introduce themes and qualities that play a significant

97 *Ibid.*, 363.

role in the biography. In the biblical account, after Moses is named by Pharaoh's daughter, the narrative immediately jumps to Moses as an adult (Exod 2:11). Philo, therefore, like other biographers, capitalises on this massive gap in Moses' life and uses it to attribute to Moses the ideal education of Hellenistic royalty. To be specific, Moses' upbringing is that of a philosopher-king from Plato's *Republic*. It should be noted, however, that, even though a character's upbringing had great potential for ingenuity, biographers still placed the upbringing in a logical context. For instance, Philo describes for Moses an education and upbringing that takes place in the courts of Egypt (*Mos.* 1.8), which is where the reader of Exodus would assume Moses was raised. We will now analyse Philo's account of Moses' upbringing to see how it legitimises him as a supreme lawgiver.

Philo begins his account of Moses' life where it is necessary to begin (Ἀρξομαι δ' ἀφ' οὐπὲρ ἀναγκαῖον ἄρξασθαι): discussing his upbringing and heritage (*Mos.* 1.5). A good birth was very important for establishing prestige in Hellenistic culture.⁹⁸ Philo begins, therefore, by stating that Moses was born a Chaldean (Χαλδαῖος), raised and educated in Egypt, and that his people migrated on account of a famine that effected Babylon and the surrounding areas (*Mos.* 1.5). Philo uses Chaldean interchangeably with Hebrew in the *Life of Moses*.⁹⁹ The princess's recognition of Moses as a Hebrew (Ἑβραίων) baby makes this clear (*Mos.* 1.15). Chaldean, however, was a preferable designation for Moses on account of its connection with Mesopotamian culture. In Hellenistic thought, the more ancient the better. Being Chaldean, therefore, carries more clout than being Hebrew. Notice that Philo does not name the specific place from whence his people migrated. Instead, he references Babylon and the surrounding areas. This also associates Moses, and the Jews in general, with the more ancient culture of Mesopotamia. Philo, therefore, depicts Moses as coming from a very ancient stock. Chaldean association also speaks to Moses' education. Philo later states that Moses is educated in Chaldean astronomy

98 *Ibid.*, 35.

99 See, Peder Borgen; Kåre Fuglseth; and Roald Skarsten, eds., *The Philo Index* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

(*Mos.* 1.23), a skill highly valued by the Greeks and part of the curriculum for Plato's philosopher-king (*Resp.* 7.52 E–530 C.).¹⁰⁰ Additionally, while the Scriptures merely state that a man from the tribe of Levi married a woman from the tribe of Levi (*Exod* 2:1), Philo states that Moses' parents are the best of their generation of these ancient people and that Moses is a perfect seven generations from their nation's founder (*Mos.* 1.7; cf. *Mut.* 117). Philo also switches the etymology of Moses' name from Hebrew (drawing out; cf. *Exod* 2:10) to an Egyptian etymology (water, *mos*; *Mos.* 1:17). This not only protects against the objection that a princess of Egypt would give Moses a Hebrew name but also associates Moses more closely with the ancient and revered culture of Egypt.

Plato thought the ideal ruler, as far as possible, should be handsome (Plato, *Resp.* 7.535A).¹⁰¹ In Exodus, Moses' mother sees that he is good (טוב; *Exod* 2:2). Philo builds on this idea and states that Moses' parents see that he is exceptionally beautiful causing them to disregard Pharaoh's edict (*Mos.* 1.9). In Exodus, the princess of Egypt takes Moses in because she feels sorry for him (*Exod* 2:6). In Philo, she not only has pity on Moses but is also drawn in by his appearance (*Mos.* 1.15).¹⁰² Jethro also recognises Moses' appearance (*Mos.* 1.59; cf. 2.70). Thus, Moses is beautiful not only to Hebrew parents but to gentiles as well. Philo is able to use the biblical tradition that Moses was טוב to meet Plato's criteria of good appearance for a philosopher-king.

Jonathan Cohen notes that in Exodus Moses' deliverance from Pharaoh's edict is an end in and of itself. In Philo's account, however, it is used to explain how Moses received an education and upbringing in the style of Hellenistic royalty (*Mos.* 1.8, 20).¹⁰³ Feldman concurs and notes that Meander of Laodicea states that

100 Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 36.

101 *Ibid.*, 56.

102 In *Mos.* 1.19 the princess adopts Moses, which brings him into close proximity to being a true heir to Egypt's throne. Nicolaus, likewise, tried to draw as close a connection as possible between Octavian and Caesar in order to legitimise August as the true inheritor of the title Caesar.

Moreover, in Matthew's Gospel Jesus' status as the Son of David is affirmed by Joseph, who is a Son of David (*Matt* 1:20), accepting Mary and her baby Jesus into his family.

103 Jonathan Cohen, *The Origins and Evolution of the Moses Nativity Story* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 44–45.

identifying if someone was raised in a palace and brought up in a royal setting from the beginning is a topic for encomium (Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν 2.371.17–372.2).

Moreover, Meander states that encomium should discuss someone's “love of learning, his quickness, his enthusiasm for study, his easy grasp of what was taught him.”¹⁰⁴ This is a perfect description of Moses' upbringing in Philo.

Moses, Philo tells us, was always advanced for his age. He even weaned earlier than most infants (*Mos.* 1.18). After he is officially adopted by the princess of Egypt (*Mos.* 1.19) he is deemed worthy of a royal education (*Mos.* 1.20). Although a child, he is not satisfied with toys and games, rather, he seeks things that benefit the mind (τὴν ψυχὴν; *Mos.* 1.20). Teachers from all over Egypt, the surrounding areas, and even Greece come to teach Moses (*Mos.* 1.21). However, Moses *quickly* (ἐν οὐ μακρῷ χρόνῳ) surpasses their teaching to the point of being able to anticipate their lessons (*Mos.* 1.21). Thus, he recollects what he already knows rather than learning from their lessons (*Mos.* 1.21). Hellenistic readership cannot claim that their philosophy is superior to Moses since they are the ones who taught him. Philo gets to have his cake and eat it too. He can claim that Moses received a Greek education, but he can also say that Moses' knowledge is independent of the Greeks. Philo states that Moses continued without these teachers and found new roads to knowledge (*Mos.* 1.221–22).

Following his time with these teachers, Philo states that Moses learned arithmetic, geometry, rhythms, harmony, metrical theory, and the whole subject of music (*Mos.* 1.23).¹⁰⁵ Feldman notes that Plato prescribes these subjects, in this same order, for the higher education of his philosopher-king (*Resp.* 7.521 C–531C).¹⁰⁶ Philo was obviously a fan of Plato (cf. *Prob.* 13), but he is doing more than giving homage to his favourite writer. He is demonstrating that Moses has the greatest educational training a Hellenistic audience could imagine. Indeed, he learns the

104 Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 47.

105 The ability to sing becomes useful later; Moses can lead singing (*Mos.* 1.180; 2.256), which he learned when he was younger and in one mind (*Mos.* 2.257).

106 Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 51.

whole encyclopedia of Greek learning, writing from Assyrians, astronomy from Chaldeans, and mathematics from Egyptians (*Mos.* 1.23–24). These are old people groups and subjects in which they all excel. Hence, Moses receives premier training from the best sources. Moreover, he masters these topics and learns the strengths and weaknesses of both (*Mos.* 1.24). Therefore, he is able to avoid taking a biased stance on a topic so that he can pursue the truth (*Mos.* 1.24). Thus, Philo depicts Moses as having an education, from the beginning, fit for a philosopher-king. Moreover, he pursues education enthusiastically (rather than toys and games) and learns quickly (*Mos.* 1.21) just as Meander of Laodicea noted.

Moses not only receives a royal education, but he also puts his learning into action. Philo describes adolescent Moses as having outstanding self-control and restraint in regard to his passions, both material and physical (*Mos.* 1.25–31).¹⁰⁷ Philo notes that Moses does not give into youthful passions like most young people his age (*Mos.* 1.25).¹⁰⁸ Moses' speech and actions work in unison (*Mos.* 1.29).

Philo has taken the gap in the biblical account of Moses' life and depicted Moses as having an education fit for a philosopher-king. He has used the opportunities offered by the genre of biography to legitimise Moses as someone who was trained from his youth to create a magisterial law. However, it is important to note that, even with this heavy emphasis on gentile learning, Philo still holds the customs of the Jews in high regard. Philo concludes Moses' upbringing by noting that, even though Moses' upbringing brought him to the pinnacle of fortune, Moses remained zealous and invested in the education of his people and he still honoured his biological parents (*Mos.* 1.32–33). If someone with Moses' education and intellect was still interested in the traditions of the Hebrews then this would signal to gentile readers that there may be much more to the ways of the Hebrews than they had thought.

107 In *Mos.* 1.25–1.31 Philo speaks of Moses' self-control, which anticipates Moses' slaying of the Egyptian.

108 This is reminiscent of Nicolaus' description of the young Octavian (*Nicolaus, Aug.* 36).

Moses' Four Abilities

The primary way Philo legitimises Moses as the greatest of all lawgivers is by ascribing to him four faculties or abilities (*δυνάμειων*, cf. *Mos.* 2.7) that work in unison so that he can legislate the perfect law. These faculties are king, lawgiver, high priest, and prophet. Philo tells his audience that the purpose of the first volume of the *Life of Moses* was to make known (*μεμήγνυται*)¹⁰⁹ Moses' deeds while invested with kingly power (*Mos.* 1.334). The second volume, however, is to give an account of his performance as a lawgiver, high priest, and prophet (*Mos.* 2.1–3; cf. *Mos.* 1.334). Philo emphasises that Moses' upbringing, time in Egypt, and time invested with kingly power are closely connected with his offices of lawgiver, high priest, and prophet (*Mos.* 1.334; *Mos.* 2.1). In other words, Philo is explaining the strategy for the format of his two volume biography of Moses. Just as Isocrates' *Evagoras* began with an account of the king's life and deeds and concluded with a list of his virtues, Philo suggests that Moses' deeds as a king and his performance of the offices of lawgiver, high priest, and prophet need to be considered together if the extent of Moses' greatness is to be comprehended.

The combination of these four offices is the crux of Philo's argument for Moses' legitimised status, especially to a gentile audience. In reference to the highly revered Plato (*Resp.* 5.473D),¹¹⁰ Philo states that it has been argued that for a city to progress and advance a king needs to cultivate philosophy or, alternatively, philosophers need to exercise kingly power (*Mos.* 2.2). Philo's intellectual Hellenistic audience would surely give credence to this argument since Plato held great prestige in the Hellenistic world. Philo, however, states that Moses not only displayed both of these qualities (i.e., being a king and philosopher) to an exceedingly high degree, but that he simultaneously displayed three other qualities of lawgiving, high priest work, and prophecy (*Mos.* 2.2–3). With the combination of these offices Moses one-ups (or, more precisely, three-ups) Plato's ideal philosopher-king. Indeed, according to Philo, each office builds on the others and fulfils any limitations each might have (*Mos.*

109 Once again we can see that explaining and clarifying is part and parcel to the genre of biography.

110 Cf. Philo, *Prob.* 13.

2.7). The roles of king and lawgiver work very closely together. A king commands and prohibits just as a law does (*Mos.* 2.4). Therefore, a king is a living law and a law is a just king (*Mos.* 2.4). But kings and laws also need to instruct concerning divine matters so that they may properly lead their people in service to God (*Mos.* 2.5). Therefore, the office of high priest is necessary in order to achieve perfect divine service (*Mos.* 2.5). Yet, kings, lawgivers, and high priests are mortals and some things of the divine are beyond their ability to know (*Mos.* 2.6). Prophecy, however, through God's providence, can discover what the mind and mere reasoning cannot (*Mos.* 2.6). When these four faculties work together they imitate the virgin Graces (τὰς παρθένους Χάριτας) which cannot be separated from the unchangeable law of nature (νόμος φύσεως; *Mos.* 2.7). In other words, by displaying these four abilities Moses imitates the perfect law of the created order. There can be no greater lawgiver than Moses and no greater law than the law of Moses. Indeed, Moses' law is the written form of the law of nature (*Mos.* 2.52), which is unalterable even in the process of translation (*Mos.* 2.34, 38).

By attributing these four abilities to Moses, Philo has presented the case that Moses is the greatest lawgiver who also has the ability to comprehend things through prophecy that are beyond the grasp of a philosopher-king left to the devices of mere reason. In using his four abilities together, Moses is able to imitate the unchangeable law of nature. Accordingly, his laws are a written form of this unchangeable law of nature. Philo, therefore, through the medium of biography, legitimises a hero of Jewish tradition and his ancient Semitic law as the premier Hellenistic lawgiver and law.¹¹¹ This demonstrates to a gentile audience that Moses' Torah, as a written manifestation of the law of nature, offered a way to follow the theoretical concept of the law of nature.

111 See, Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses*, 237–258, for a survey of how Philo associates Plato's four (or five if you include piety, cf. Plato, *Protagoras* 349B) cardinal virtues (i.e., wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice) to Moses' role as lawgiver (cf. *Mos.* 1.154; 2.9, 66).

5.2d Biographical Writing and Mosaic Discourse

Before concluding this chapter it is important to comment on how the legitimising opportunities of Greco-Roman biographical writing effects the development and transformation of the figure of Moses in Mosaic Discourse. This will also inform our analysis of Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus with biographical writing.

It was noted in the previous chapter that one of the dimensions of Mosaic Discourse is the increase of the centrality of Moses' role with regard to legislation of the Torah and the idealisation of Moses and its connection with his authority.¹¹² Najman, in her analysis of the four features of Mosaic Discourse in Philo, argues that this dimension of Mosaic Discourse is significantly different in Philo than in Jubilees and the Temple Scroll. The figure of Moses is subordinate to the law of Moses in the Temple Scroll and Jubilees, but "Philo subordinates the Law of Moses to the figure of Moses, so that the written law may express the life of a sage."¹¹³ That is, Philo, in contrast to Jubilees and the Temple Scroll, greatly increases the centrality of Moses and greatly idealises him. This increase in Moses' role and idealisation as a lawgiver was also observed in our analysis of Philo's biographical legitimisation of Moses. It is, however, beyond our reach to determine if this development is an inevitable by-product of legitimising a historical figure in a polemical context through biographical writing. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume at the very least that this aspect of the genre of biography contributed to this development.

Again, as we observed in Deuteronomy, the more important and significant Moses becomes, the more important that which he says and does (the words of his Toah) becomes. Unlike Jubilees and the Temple Scroll, Philo was writing to an audience that did not take Moses' authority for granted. Philo needed to demonstrate Moses' significance, in a hellenistic-philosophical manner, in order to show why his law was important even to the inhabitants of Alexandria. By adding relevant biographical details Philo naturally elevated the figure of Moses and significantly developed his character, even to the point that his Torah, as Najman states, is

112 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 10–11.

113 *Ibid.*, 106–107.

subordinate to him. Again, subordination in this sense does not indicate the denigration of the Torah's value. Rather, the opposite is true. The Torah is legitimised when it is connected to a legitimised lawgiver. The legitimising abilities of biographical writing, therefore, allow for significant development of one of the two dimensions of Mosaic Discourse (i.e., the increase in role and idealisation of Moses) identified by Najman.

In the next chapter we will see that Matthew, in addressing his own polemical situation concerning Jesus and the Torah, uses biographical writing to legitimise Jesus as an authority who can give definitive halakhic rulings on the Torah. This legitimisation of Jesus' status also concomitantly legitimises Jesus' teaching and rulings on the Torah, many of which that were observed in the controversy stories. In as much as the Torah (and Prophets) is fulfilled in Jesus' life and teachings, the Torah is subordinate to Jesus just as it is subordinate to Philo's depiction of Moses. In Philo, the Torah expresses the life of his sage Moses. Similarly, in Matthew the Torah expresses the life and teachings of Jesus (cf. Matt 5:17; 28:20). Matthew's audience is then reassured that they have the proper and definitive approach to the Torah in Jesus' teachings and rulings as opposed to the teachings of the scribes or Pharisees. We now turn to the following and final chapter of this thesis to examine how Matthew adds, edits, and arranges biographical details in order to legitimise Jesus as an authority on the Torah and, therefore, legitimise his interpretation of and rulings on the Torah.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter sought to investigate a particular aspect of Greco-Roman biographical writing; namely, how it was used to legitimise and de-legitimise a historical figure. We noted that as biographical writing—with its collection and presentation of biographical details—was by nature an explanatory type of writing, it was also a natural fit for legitimising or de-legitimising someone in a polemical context. Although legitimisation and de-legitimation are not necessarily the primary purposes of a biography, biographies were commonly used for such reasons.

Moreover, biographies were presumably effective for legitimising and de-legitimising (otherwise they probably would not have been used) in a variety of cultural circumstances. The chapter concluded with an analysis of Philo's use of biography to legitimise Moses as the supreme lawgiver in a philosophical Hellenistic context. This example is particularly relevant to our investigation of how Matthew authorises his interpretations of the Torah through the teachings of Jesus. Philo is not only an example of a Second Temple Jew using biography but he also uses biography to legitimise his own interpretation and presentation of the Torah. Indeed, by legitimising Moses as a supreme lawgiver he also, by way of association, legitimised Moses' Torah in a Hellenistic setting.

The following and final chapter will now consider how Matthew uses the medium of biography as a way to legitimise his lawgiver Jesus, and concomitantly his teachings on the Torah. As will be made clear, Matthew adds biographical details to his primary sources and edits them in a manner that legitimises Jesus as Israel's ultimate authority on the Torah. Moreover, this addition of biographical details and editorial work also intersects with the writing strategies of Mosaic Discourse that, as demonstrated in chapter 3, authorise Jesus' halakhic rulings in the Sermon on the Mount as a representation of Sinitic revelation.

CHAPTER 6: MATTHEW, BIOGRAPHICAL WRITING, AND LEGITIMISATION

From the genealogy and birth narrative, in which Jesus is identified as a descendant of David, as Son of God and as “God with us,” to his final appearances as a risen apocalyptic figure, in which he instructs the disciples to teach others to obey him and promises to be with them until the end, Jesus is presented as a divinely warranted teacher who is messianic ruler and eschatological judge.¹

Introduction

This chapter continues and concludes the examination of how Matthew’s genre contributes to the authorisation of Matthew’s interpretation of the Torah in Jesus’ teachings. Although Matthew participates in the phenomenon of Torah interpretation and exhibits inherited writings strategies for doing so (i.e., the four features of Mosaic Discourse), the genre in which he interprets the Torah is markedly different from the other texts analysed in chapter 3 that participate in Mosaic Discourse. Matthew’s interpretations of the Torah are embedded in a narration of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.² That is, a biography. We, therefore, will consider what opportunities the genre of biography and its literary features provide Matthew for authorising his interpretations of the Torah.

The previous chapter surveyed Greco-Roman biographies from a variety of contexts and observed that, since Greco-Roman biographies narrate a life, they are an effective vehicle for explaining misunderstandings, things unknown to the public, or things the public may wonder about the subject of the biography. This feature of Greco-Roman biographies made them well suited to address polemical issues surrounding the subject, especially concerning their political actions or teachings. By adding new biographical information, often attributed to reliable sources, and by editing or omitting previous sources, both written and oral, a biographer could legitimise or de-legitimise the subject of the biography in regard to the relevant

1 Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 178.

2 As *ibid.*, states, “the teachings of Jesus and the person of the teacher are inseparable in the narrative.”

polemical context. In an example closer to Matthew's concerns pursuant to legitimising a lawgiver and his laws, it was observed that Philo used a biography to legitimise Moses as a supreme philosopher-king to a potentially skeptical gentile audience. Philo both added to and edited his source material in order to craft a presentation of Moses revealing him to be the ideal lawgiver in a Hellenistic context. Philo's strategy was to use a biography to legitimise the figure of Moses as an ideal lawgiver in order to simultaneously legitimise Moses' Torah for a gentile audience. In turn, legitimising the lawgiver legitimises the laws.

This chapter will now argue that Matthew has a similar strategy for refuting the claim that Jesus abolishes the Torah (*Μὴ νομίσητε*; Matt 5:17). That is, by using biographical writing to legitimise Jesus, Matthew, like Philo in regard to Moses and his Torah, also legitimises Jesus' teachings of the Torah. Depicting Jesus as the fulfilment of the Torah discredits any accusation that he abolishes the Torah. The legitimisation of Jesus, then, is also part of Matthew's strategy for authorising his Torah interpretations in the antitheses and throughout the Gospel.

This chapter will focus primarily on the biographical material leading up to the Matthean Jesus' programmatic statement on the Torah and his interpretations of the Torah in the antitheses (Matt 1:1–5:2). The reasoning for these parameters is threefold. First, the programmatic statement is a controlling verse. Its location in the Gospel and its theme of fulfilment and preservation of the Torah suggests that all further statements in Matthew's Gospel by Jesus concerning the Torah should be viewed in light of it.³ Therefore, the narrative material leading up to this statement is particularly relevant since it is the place in which Matthew first develops and legitimises the character of Jesus as having the authority to speak this grand statement concerning the Torah. Secondly, as noted in the previous chapter, since a person's birth and upbringing is commonly the part of a life that is least known to the public, it has the greatest potential for creative assertion. The narrative material prior to Jesus' programmatic statement includes both the story of Jesus' birth and the

3 Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 126–127.

beginning of his public career. These first four chapters, then, are crucial to Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus as an authority figure who can give halakhic rulings on the Torah. Third and finally, as we saw in chapter 3, this section of the Gospel is where the greatest parallels between Jesus and Moses abound. Thus, we can here observe most readily how Matthew's Moses typology is intertwined with his strategies for legitimising Jesus through biographical writing.

The proceeding chapter will begin with a brief review of Matthew's polemical context concerning Jesus and the Torah. This will provide context for understanding why and how Matthew needs to legitimise Jesus as an authority on the Torah. Next, the source history and development of biographical Jesus tradition will be reviewed. This will provide context for Matthew's participation in a trend that saw an increase in the addition of biographical details to sources about Jesus in order to better explain his significance. After this, the material leading up to Jesus' inaugural teaching on the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount will be analysed, section by section, to see how Matthew added biographical material to his primary sources and made editorial adjustments to his sources in a manner that legitimise Jesus as an authority on the Torah. The results will then be summarised.

The examination of the biographical narrative leading up to the Sermon on the Mount will show that Matthew has carefully crafted Jesus' early life and early career to present him as an ultimate authority from God who can give rulings on the Torah in a way that is meaningful in a first century Jewish context. The implications Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus has for the status of the Torah in Matthew's Gospel will be discussed as well. It will be shown that Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus integrates Jesus' teachings with the Torah resulting in the further substantiation of the Torah's authority and continuing validity.

6.1 Matthew's Polemical Context

Chapter 2 of this thesis demonstrated that a fierce polemic over blame for the destruction of the temple stands behind the Matthean Jesus' programmatic statement

on the Torah and Prophets (Matt 5:17). (κατα)λύω was used by Second Temple Jews to blame someone's or some group's (often a rival) malpractice of the Torah for God's wrath upon the temple and Jerusalem. Matthew, therefore, makes doubly (Μὴ νομίσητε ... καταλύσαι; οὐκ ... καταλύσαι) clear with the very first thing Jesus says about the Torah that he is in no way an abolisher (Matt 5:17). Rather, Jesus is a fulfiller (πληρῶσαι). By Jesus' own word (ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν), he proclaims that the Torah will remain intact to the smallest detail for the duration of the age (5:18). Moreover, those that do indeed loose (λύση) even the least commandments will be least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:19). Thus, the Matthean Jesus' programmatic statement not only serves to establish Jesus' authoritative status as the fulfiller of the Torah and Prophets but it also serves to discredit and refute the charge that his teachings abolish the Torah and Prophets and brought wrath upon the temple.

Furthermore, the Matthean Jesus' programmatic statement simultaneously delegitimatises the righteousness produced by the Torah observance of scribes and Pharisees' (the Matthean Jesus' primary rivals; Matt 5:20). Rather than giving commands that make one great in the kingdom of heaven and fulfilling the Torah and Prophets, the scribes and Pharisees's teaching leads to hell (Matt 23:15, 33) and fulfils (πλῶσατε) the murder of the prophets in the middle of the temple and altar (Matt 23:29–36). Thus, Matthew flips the accusation. It is in fact the scribes and Pharisees who defiled the temple and brought wrath upon the temple and Jerusalem (Matt 23:36–39). Therefore, one of the primary polemical issues in Matthew's Gospel, is between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees over proper teaching of the Torah and its connection to the destruction of the temple. In light of this polemical context, it is imperative for Matthew to depict Jesus as an authority who can teach the things of the kingdom of heaven, including the Torah and Prophets, over against the scribes and the Pharisees. Matthew does precisely this throughout his Gospel, but the foundation of this theme (i.e., Jesus as an authoritative teacher over against the deficient teachers represented by the scribes and Pharisees) is laid out in Jesus'

formative Sermon on the Mount and programmatic statement on the Torah and Prophets (Matt 5–7, cf. 5:20; 6:2, 5, 16; 7:28–29).

This chapter will consider how Matthew has added and arranged biographical material prior to the Sermon on the Mount in order to depict Jesus as one who is authorised to speak with such authority concerning the kingdom and the Torah. Before considering the narrative material leading up to Jesus' sermon and programmatic statement on the Torah, however, the development of biographical writing about Jesus and Matthew's place in this tradition will be reviewed. This review will provide a context for observing how Matthew has used biographical writing to shape his depiction of Jesus as an ultimate authoritative teacher of the Torah over against the scribes and Pharisees.

6.2 Source History and the Development of Jesus Biographical Writing

A broad look at the source history of Gospel writing reveals Matthew's participation in the general increase of narrative writing and the addition of biographical details in order to explain better and legitimise Jesus' identity and significance. This is not to deny that latter Gospels could simply be a list of sayings (e.g., The Gospel of Thomas).⁴ Rather, it is to note that Matthew and Luke display a clear increase of biographical development to their sources just as later Gospels (e.g., the Infancy Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of James) added more details of Jesus' upbringing (a subject of great interest to ancient biographers) to Matthew's and Luke's accounts of Jesus' early life. This accords well with our observations about the nature of Greco-Roman biographical writing in the previous chapter. When a certain aspect or accusations of a historical figure's character and actions needed to be addressed, a biographer would include relevant biographical details accordingly. This was especially useful in polemical circumstances. The source history of Matthew and the

4 For the case that The Gospel of Thomas is dependent on the Synoptics and, therefore, chronologically later, see Simon Gathercole, *The Composition of the Gospel of Thomas: Original Language and Influences*, SNTSMS 151 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012).

closely related Gospel of Luke, possibly even the Gospel of John,⁵ show a similar pattern. That is, Matthew further filled the narrative of Jesus' life with more relevant—to Matthew's concerns—biographical details in order to legitimise Jesus' status. This chapter will specifically investigate how Matthew has added biographical details to legitimise Jesus as an authoritative figure who can give rulings on the Torah that constitute superior righteousness than that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Before going any further, it should be noted that the source history of Matthew that I am using as a working hypothesis assumes Markan priority and Q (i.e., Two Source Theory, 2ST). However, much of this description of the biographical development of the Jesus tradition and Matthew's participation in it still holds true for any view of Markan priority. In the Farrer and Matthew Posteriority hypotheses, Matthew and Luke still add many biographical details to Mark in order to legitimise Jesus in their respective ways. Nevertheless, despite the various strengths of these hypotheses, 2ST offers a more probable account of the data.⁶

Moreover, when we consider that Matthew and Luke liked to add biographical details to Mark, both the Farrer and Matthew Posteriority hypotheses appear all the more peculiar given that Luke did not use any of Matthew's narrative of Jesus' early life nor Matthew any of Luke's. The two accounts certainly have their respective emphases, but one would think Matthew or Luke would naturally incorporate some of the other's account. The following description of Matthew's source history and development of biographical writing, on the other hand, is completely compromised under the Griesbach hypothesis. In this case, Mark would have pursued the opposite of what I am arguing, namely, omitting a large amount of biographical details from Matthew and Luke (including the birth accounts!) in order

5 The question of John's dependence or knowledge of the Synoptics, in particular Mark, is an age old debate in biblical scholarship. If John indeed knew Mark then this would indicate a clear expansion of biographical details by John in order to explain the significance of Jesus. However, even if John did not know Mark, he still shows clear signs of using biographical writing as a vehicle to explain misunderstandings about Jesus. For instance, note John's explanatory editorial comments: John 2:21–22; 12:16; 20:9.

6 For an analysis and critique of Farrer and Matthew Posteriority hypotheses in comparison with 2ST, see Paul Foster, "Is it Possible to Dispense with Q?," *NovT* 45/4 (2003): 313–337.

to explain the significance of Jesus. The Griesbach hypothesis, of course, is not impossible, but we are on safer ground to move forward with Markan priority and with 2ST in particular.⁷

With that being said, it is important to clarify, that although 2ST functions as a working hypothesis in this chapter, it is precisely that, a hypothesis. Although an advocate of Q, Allison offers a sobering reminder that we cannot know Q to be a fact, its exact contents (assuming it existed),⁸ or that Kloppenborg's three layers of Q (i.e., Q¹, Q², and Q³) represent the reality of its development.⁹ Q¹, for instance, may be several independent clusters rather than a coherent document.¹⁰ With heed given to Allison's reminder, the analysis of the source history of Matthew's biographical writing begins with consideration of Q and its three redactional layers as an admittedly theoretical exercise. Although theoretical, it is worth consideration not only because it is a credible and viable account of the evidence in biblical scholarship but because it also serves heuristic purposes. Indeed, a general construction of Q without the three layer hypothesis already models for Matthew and Luke a document that places basic legitimising biographical details of a speaker (i.e., Q 3:0–4:16) before said speaker's authoritative sayings (i.e., Q 6:20). However, the three layers hypothesis offers a possible look at the development of this legitimising strategy (i.e.,

7 For the arguments of Markan priority, see John S. Kloppenborg, *Q, The Earliest Gospel: An Introduction to the Original Stories and Sayings of Jesus* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 5–12. The classic arguments for Markan priority are found in, B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, and Dates*, rev. ed. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1930), 149–332. Streeter's arguments, however, are not without their problems. Although Davies and Allison ultimately agree with Streeter's conclusion of Markan priority, see Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:98–106, for a critical analysis of Streeter's arguments.

8 For instance, some of the material that is ascribed to Q may actually have come from other sources, oral tradition, or independent sayings. Moreover, Matthew and Luke could very well have had different versions of Q and maybe they each had multiple versions of Q themselves. Compounding this issue still further, is that which scholars sometimes ascribe to M and L (i.e., special Matthean or Lukan material) may have come from their personal versions of Q.

9 Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 119–120. For a sizable list of informed criticisms of Kloppenborg's theory of Q, see page 119n405.

10 James D. G. Dunn, "All that Glitters is not Gold': In Quest of the Right Key to Unlock the Way to the Historical Jesus," in *Der historische Jesus: Tendenzen und Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Forschung*, ed. Jens Schröter and Ralph Brucker; BZNW 114 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 136–38; and Christopher M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 69–74.

legitimising biographical material before sayings).¹¹ That is, the three layers of the Q hypothesis can show more fully the trend of moving from a mere collection of sayings to the development of embedding the sayings in biographical material and Matthew's participation in this trend. Moreover, it can suggest how this trend helped authors legitimise both the person of Jesus and his sayings in their respective writings about Jesus.

Matthew's source Q, is a document that in form stands somewhere between a collection of Jesus' sayings without a narrative structure (e.g., the Gospel of Thomas) and a full Jesus narrative with sayings and deeds (e.g., the Synoptics).¹² That is, it is primarily a sayings document, but with some rudimentary narrative features (e.g., other characters and references to geographical locations).¹³ In Q's earliest stages (i.e., Q¹), however, it lacked its more prominent narrative elements and was composed entirely of clusters of sayings. It was closer to the Gospel of Thomas in form at this stage. A document that only contains sayings assumes or takes for granted the authority of the speaker. This means that a document of sayings is probably intended for an audience that is already in the circle of those who subscribe to the authority of the speaker.¹⁴ Therefore, there is less need to legitimise the speaker. Hence, the document is fit for instructing the audience rather than explaining the speaker's identity or legitimising the speaker.¹⁵ By the final stages of Q (i.e., Q³), however, there is a clear shift towards legitimising the speaker of the sayings. This is done by adding more narrative type material from the speaker's life, especially prior to the sayings. In specific, the sayings of Jesus in Q³ are preceded by three narrative events that legitimise Jesus before he starts speaking:

11 For a description of Q's three layers, see John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections*, SAC (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 317–328.

12 Foster, "Is it Possible to Dispense with Q?," 323.

13 Although, as Kloppenborg, *Q, The Earliest Gospel*, 65, notes, Q is by no means a continuous narrative.

14 Note the esoteric nature of the Gospel of Thomas. It is not a message to evangelise the larger public, rather it is a more inclusive secretive message that is only for those who can interpret it (Gos. Thom. 1).

15 Kloppenborg, *Q, The Earliest Gospel*, 97, notes that the centre of Q's teaching is the attitude that reflects God's reign rather than Jesus' identity.

- 1) John's ministry and proclamation of Jesus' superior status (Q 3:2b–17).
- 2) Jesus' baptism resulting in the descending of the Spirit and receiving adoration from God as his Son (Q 3:21b–22).
- 3) Jesus' victory in halakhic debate over the Devil in the wilderness (Q 4:1–4, 9–12, 5–8, 13).

The effect of placing these narrative elements prior to Jesus' sayings is the legitimatisation of Jesus and the authorisation of his subsequent teaching.¹⁶ Matthew, of course, has a very similar approach. He uses this same format before the Sermon on the Mount, and the programmatic statement on the Torah, but adds considerable more biographical details that legitimise Jesus as an ultimate authority who can give halakhic rulings on the Torah. We can see then that Q and possibly its development through three stages has already set Jesus tradition on a path¹⁷ of couching Jesus' teachings in a narrative and adding more biographical details to legitimise his status as a teacher of things concerning the Torah, wisdom, and God's kingdom.¹⁸ Indeed, Kloppenborg notes that collections of sayings develop naturally and easily in the direction of biographies. Accordingly, since Kloppenborg considers the Gospels biographies, he suggests that Q is an important stage in the formation of the Gospels.¹⁹

16 Similarly, John S. Kloppenborg, “The Formation of Q and Antique Instructional Genres,” *JBL* 105/3 (1986): 459–460, states, “the function of such biographical exordiums should be seen in the context of the basic requirements of the genre for legitimation. These ordeal or testing stories demonstrate in the sage the presence of some of the basic sapiential virtues: self-control, equanimous acceptance of trying circumstances, and patient endurance of suffering.”

17 This is not to assume, however, that this path was inevitable or that the Gospels were on a set trajectory. The array of different kinds of Gospels in the following centuries suggests otherwise. When I speak of a “path,” I am looking retrospectively at the path of development that Matthew and his sources took, not the path they were inevitably tied to.

18 Similarly, Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 161, states, “the fact that in Q the temptation story seems to have been placed between John the Baptist's prediction of Jesus' mission and the beginning of Jesus' preaching career indicates that the compiler—or last redactor—had some kind of biographical concept at the back of his mind (which the compiler of Thomas never displayed). Intratextual legitimation of the message of the sayings is on its way. Passages of this kind (cf. also miracle stories in Q/Lk. 7.1–10 and 11.14) serve to justify the current shift in terminology from *Logienquelle* or 'Synoptic Saying Source' to 'Sayings Gospel'—Q is shown to be heading towards a narrative account of Jesus and his message. But it is very far from presenting a whole life: birth and childhood as well as passion, death, and resurrection are still missing.”

19 Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 327.

Mark (i.e., Matthew and Luke's other primary source), contrary to Q, is a continuous narrative with the purpose of explaining Jesus' identity and significance (cf. Mark 1:1 and 15:39). In this sense, Mark is much more similar to Matthew and Luke in purpose when compared to Q. Nevertheless, although a much fuller account of Jesus' life than Q, Mark lacks several components that were important for Matthew's message about Jesus' identity and his legitimisation. Paramount among these, Mark has minimal content of Jesus' teaching even though he says that Jesus went around teaching (Mark 1:38–39). Moreover, some of the instances in which Mark does record Jesus' teaching are problematic for Matthew's position regarding the Torah (e.g., Matt 12:1–8/Mark 2:23–28; and Matt 15:1–20/Mark 7:1–13). Whether Matthew had Q before Mark or vice versa cannot be known, but it is clear that he, and Luke, saw that the two documents could complement each other. Mark lacked extensive teaching content and Q lacked extensive narrative. By combining Q with Mark, Matthew greatly increased the legitimisation (legitimation relevant to Matthew's theological concerns, not necessarily Q's) of the speaker of Q's sayings. Q's sayings would now be backed by a more robust depiction of Jesus and a fuller description of his public career. Kari Syreeni similarly notes that Matthew's strategy is to fuse Mark and Q to “produce a 'double' gospel with the complete story of Jesus and the whole of Jesus' authoritative teaching.”²⁰

Nevertheless, even though it appears that Matthew's strategy was to fuse Mark and Q in order to give more narrative content to Q's sayings, it is significant to note that the biographical details in Mark were not sufficient for Matthew. Matthew not only edited much of his Markan source, but he supplied relevant biographical details to Mark in addition to Q's teachings and temptation account. Most notably, he added a genealogy, birth and infancy narratives, and two resurrection appearances. The former two additions are particularly important for Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus' sayings in the Sermon on the Mount since they begin the narrative prior to the

20 Kari Syreeni, *The Making of the Sermon on the Mount: A Procedural Analysis of Matthew's Redactorial Activity. Part I: Methodology & Compositional Analysis* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1987), 113.

sermon. Thus, Matthew is continuing the strategy of adding more biographical details to his sources (like the stages of Q) in order to substantiate the person of Jesus and his teachings. It is no coincidence that Luke, independently of Matthew, adds similar types of biographical details (e.g., birth and upbringing narratives, a genealogy) to Mark and Q. Chapter 4 of this thesis demonstrated that biographers would add relevant biographical details to the narratives of their subjects in order to legitimise them especially in response to polemical accusations. Moreover, genealogies, birth and upbringing narratives were staples of biographical legitimation. That Matthew and Luke do this independently of each other shows all the more that this was a common strategy and even suggests that they had some level of awareness of it.

A comparison between Luke and Matthew, however, can lead some to the opinion that Luke is a more developed biography than Matthew. In addition to having a prologue (a common feature in ancient biographies) to frame the message and approach of his work (Luke 1:1–4),²¹ Luke's birth narrative is also more expansive than Matthew's. Moreover, Luke even includes an episode from Jesus' childhood (Luke 2:41–52). Here Jesus is seen displaying wisdom exceeding the norm for his age (Luke 2:47, 52). This is not only a common strategy for legitimation in Greco-Roman biographies (e.g., Philo's young Moses or Nicolaus' young Octavian), but it also helps develop Jesus' character. In Matthew's birth narrative, even though we certainly learn many things about Jesus' significance, his personal character is not on display. Rather, Joseph's character as a righteous and obedient man comes to the fore (Matt 1:19, 24–25; 2:14–15, 21–22). Moreover, there is no pericope of Jesus' childhood to help fill the gap in time from infancy to adulthood as in Luke. Rather, Matthew connects his early biographical material of Jesus to his Q and Markan sources with the abrupt Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις (Matt 3:1), which can be judged as

21 Here we see a type of claim that is reminiscent of what we saw in the Greco-Roman biographies examined in the previous chapter. Luke acknowledges that other accounts of Jesus' deeds exist, but he states that he is writing an account for Theophilus since he has access to people who saw these things happen. In this way, he can assure Theophilus that he can know the truth (*ἀσφάλειαν*) of what he has been taught. In other words, similar to Isocrates and Philo, Luke opens his account of Jesus' life with a reference to his writing method and sources and how they ensure a more accurate account of the subject of the biography.

creating “the false impression of simultaneity.”²² For these reasons Matthew is sometimes viewed as less of a biographical effort than Luke. Hägg, for instance, states,

Matthew does take a step towards a “Life of Jesus,” but only half-heartedly. The simple explanation may be ... that at this early stage there was not yet much source material about the early life of Jesus available, even of a purely legendary kind; and Matthew seems to have been more of a conservative redactor, adherent to tradition, than a creative author.²³

Misgivings are in order for the claim that Matthew only takes a step towards a biography “half-heartedly.” First, Burridge rightly notes that Hägg states that his “heart” is not in classificatory issues or genre theory.²⁴ It is strange, therefore, that Hägg should digress and suddenly make a judgement about an ancient author's efforts towards constructing something that qualifies as a biography.²⁵ To make this claim about Matthew would require identifying what constitutes a “true” or “complete” biography and then comparing Matthew to it. That would be using genre theory and entering the contested task of declaring a canon of true biographies. Hägg openly retracts from this task.²⁶ More importantly, such a statement places the focus on Matthew's deficiencies. The purpose here is not to evaluate Matthew's place among the developers of the genre of biography, but to see how Matthew uses aspects of the genre (whether he does so well or not is beside the point) to legitimise Jesus as the ultimate authority on the Torah and his teaching as the ultimate interpretation. It is, therefore, more useful to focus on the biographical details Matthew did include in order to accomplish this legitimisation. After all, Luke and Matthew are not trying to present the same depiction of Jesus. They have their specific agendas and concerns.

22 Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, 168.

23 *Ibid.*, 168.

24 See Burridge, “The Art of Biography in Antiquity,” 475, 477; and Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, xi.

25 In Hägg's defence, *ibid.*, he states that he does “address generic questions quite often; but then it is mostly because I think such a discussion is apt to bring out the characteristics of a certain composition, or because 'genre expectation' (a most valid issue) is at stake.” At the same time, however, he also states that he has “no specific agenda in this respect.”

26 Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, xi, 155.

Pitting them against each other to note which is a better representation of a biography steers the attention away from the important ways in which they each use biographical writing to communicate the significance of Jesus.

Hägg is right to note that Matthew was a conservative redactor and that this fact, along with the possibility of a lack of source material, may account for why Matthew does not include any details from Jesus' life between his infancy and adult career. But, as we will see in a moment, Matthew has added and edited precisely the biographical details that he needs prior to the Sermon on the Mount to depict Jesus as the ultimate authoritative teacher, one who can teach about the kingdom of heaven and the Torah's place within it. Therefore, despite Matthew's "apparent" deficiencies as a biographer or "half-hearted effort," he has clearly used aspects and features of the genre of biography to legitimise Jesus, the subject of his biography, and his teachings about the Torah. In this manner, he has continued the path laid by Q and used similarly by other writers in the Jesus tradition. Having considered the source history of Matthew's biographical development of Jesus tradition we will now examine the content of the biographical material that Matthew added to his sources in order to see how he used them to explain better and legitimise Jesus' identity and significance as one with authority to give rulings on the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount.

6.3 Matthew's Added Biographical Details and the Legitimation of Jesus

Before analysing the biographical material leading up to the Sermon on the Mount, it is valuable to offer more specificity regarding the type of legitimisation of Jesus that we are looking for. That is, what aspects of Matthew's presentation of Jesus are relevant to his status as one who can speak authoritatively about the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount? The presentation of Jesus as a teacher is an obvious place to start.

Matthew distinctly organises his narration of Jesus' life around five discourses in which Jesus teaches about the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:1–7:28; 10:1–11:1; 13:1–53; 18:19:1; 24:1–26:1). This macro structure alone emphasises the importance

of Jesus' role as a teacher and the content of his teaching in Matthew's Gospel.²⁷ Indeed, Jesus not only self identifies as his disciples' sole teacher (*διδάσκαλος*, Matt 23:8; 10:24–25; 26:18; cf. *καθηγηταί* in 23:10) but Matthew also mentions that Jesus was teaching when he summarises Jesus' ministry activity (Matt 4:23; 11:1; cf. 22:16). It is true that, with the exception of his few self-references, Jesus is only called *διδάσκαλος* by people outside of his devoted followers.²⁸ But the fact that teacher is the default title for Jesus by characters who are not aware of his status as the Davidic Messiah and Son of God demonstrates all the more that Matthew depicts Jesus interacting with the people of Israel as a teacher. The Gospel even concludes with Jesus telling his disciples to carry on his teachings by teaching what he commanded them (i.e., the content of the five discourses) to the nations (Matt 28:20). From beginning to end then, the Gospel of Matthew emphasises Jesus' role as a teacher and the content of his teaching as important components of the significance of Jesus and his ministry. Moreover, teaching is a point of legitimisation for Jesus and de-legitimisation for Jesus' primary opponents, namely, the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus' teaching astonishes the crowds (Matt 7:28; 22:33) and he is seen teaching with authority in contrast to the scribes, who, along with the Pharisees, merely teach human precepts (Matt 7:29; 15:9; cf. 16:6, 12). In addition, Jesus bests the whole gambit of Israel's teachers in a series of halakhic debates throughout the Gospel (e.g., Matt 9:9–13; 12:1–14; 15:1–20; 22:1–45). As the antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount and the many halakhic debates between Jesus and other teachers reveal, the Torah and proper interpretation and practice is a major component of Jesus' role as teacher and the content of his teaching. Therefore, the legitimisation of Jesus as an authoritative teacher legitimises his teachings on the Torah (i.e., Matthew's Torah interpretations).

27 John Yueh-Han Yieh, "One Teacher: Jesus' Teaching Role in Matthew's Gospel" (PhD diss., The Graduate School of Yale University, 2003), 25.

28 Jesus is called *διδάσκαλος* by a scribe (Matt 8:19), Pharisees speaking to Jesus' disciples (Matt 9:11), scribes and Pharisees together (Matt 12:38), collectors of the temple tax (Matt 17:24), a rich man (Matt 19:16), disciples of the Pharisees and Herodians (Matt 22:16), Sadducees (Matt 22:24), and a Pharisee lawyer (Matt 22:36). Jesus identifies himself as a *διδάσκαλος* to an outsider (Matt 26:18).

The emerging question, then, is how does Matthew present Jesus as an authoritative teacher? Matthew accomplishes this principally by connecting Jesus' role as a teacher with his authoritative status as the Davidic Messiah and Son of God. Matthean scholarship has not always fully appreciated the connection between Jesus' high christological status and his interpretation of the Torah. Saldarini, however, notes that the "separation of Christology from law ... is not Matthew's position."²⁹ Rather, as Saldarini states,

Though Matthew stresses Jesus' *titles* as Son of God, Son of Man, and Messiah, the *role* of teacher is neither subordinate nor discontinuous with these titles. Those who believe in Jesus understand that his teaching, his life's work, implies and articulates his God-given power and authority both in life and in the future kingdom when God will rule directly.³⁰

Saldarini rightly notes that Jesus' role as teacher and his authority to give rulings on the Torah is intertwined with his christological status and titles. Indeed, John Yueh-Han Yieh, in an extensive study of Jesus' teaching role in Matthew, has shown that Jesus teaches in his roles as the Messiah and the Son of God.³¹ Konradt, similarly, has demonstrated that teaching is a special part of Jesus' Davidic-messianic shepherding ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.³² In other words, according to Matthew, Jesus' authority to teach and to make halakhic rulings is founded on his status as the Son of God (cf. Matt 11: 25–30; 17:5) and is also enacted in his role as the Davidic Messiah. The connection between Jesus' christological titles and his teaching is lost on Israel's ruling and teaching class.³³ While they are willing to acknowledge Jesus as a teacher,³⁴ they reject his claim to be the Messiah and Son of God as blasphemy (Matt 26:63–65).

29 Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 290n52.

30 *Ibid.*, 179.

31 Yieh, "One Teacher: Jesus' Teaching Role in Matthew's Gospel," 289–295.

32 Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 31–48.

33 Although Matt 22:16 is correct, it is most likely ironic since Matthew just mentioned that the Pharisees' intentions were not genuine (Matt 22:15).

34 Cf. Matt 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 22:16, 24, 36.

A brief survey will show how Matthew has connected Jesus' role as a teacher with his authoritative status as the Son of God and Davidic Messiah. To begin, Jesus starts teaching only after God publicly declares him to be his Son (Matt 3:17) and after Jesus proves his status as the Son of God (εἰ υἱὸς τοῦ εἰ θεοῦ; Matt 4:3, 5) by overcoming the Devil in debate concerning the proper way to follow God's commands (Matt 4:1–11). Thus, his legitimisation as the Son of God establishes his authority before he teaches. It is also as God's Son that Jesus is given special and privileged knowledge that he can bestow on others (Matt 11:25–30) and it is as his beloved Son that God orders Peter, James, and John to *listen* (ἀκούετε) to Jesus (Matt 17:5). That is, listen to his teaching. Finally, it is in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that Jesus instructs his disciples to baptise new disciples and to teach (διδάσκοντες) them all that he commanded (Matt 28:19–20). By the direct link to God the Father's authority, it is Jesus' status as Son of God that gives him the greatest authority as a teacher of the kingdom and all that it concerns including the Torah. However, even though Jesus' status as the Son of God gives him his greatest legitimisation as a teacher, Matthew does not make Jesus' status as the Davidic Messiah and Son of God mutually exclusive in regard to teaching. Rather, Matthew uses his redaction to connect Jesus' status as the Son of David and the Messiah with teaching as well.

Following Jesus' second discourse, in which he instructs his disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven and to heal illnesses (Matt 10:7–8), Jesus goes onto teach and preach (Matt 11:1). Context suggests that Jesus is teaching and preaching about the kingdom of heaven, even though Matthew does not specify in this particular verse (compare Matt 11:1 with 4:23; 9:35; 10:7–8; 11:4–6). In the following verses John the Baptist hears about the works of the Messiah (τοῦ Χριστοῦ) and has his disciples ask Jesus if he is the one who is to come (ὁ ἐρχόμενος, another term for the Messiah; 11:2-3).³⁵ Here Matthew has added 11:1, which says Jesus was teaching, and τοῦ Χριστοῦ (11:2) to Q 7:18–19, 22–23. Hence, Matthew, through his

35 BDAG, 394.

redaction, associates Jesus' status as Messiah with his teaching and preaching. Davies and Allison also note this connection,

“The deeds of the Christ” ... is a key phrase. Being defined in 11.4 as what has been heard and seen, and being described in 11.5 as healing and preaching, it refers back not only to the miracle chapters, 8–9, but also to the sermon on the mount, 5–7, interpreting both Jesus' authoritative words and his mighty deeds as messianic (τοῦ Χριστοῦ).³⁶

Matthew also associates Jesus' status as the Son of David (i.e., another messianic title) with teaching. In his triumphal entry, Jesus enters Jerusalem proclaimed by the people as the Son of David (Matt 20:30–31; 21:9, 15; cf. 4–5). The insertion of τῷ υἱῷ Δαυίδ in 21:9 and 15 is redactional and emphasises Matthew's efforts to focus on Jesus' Davidic status in this section. Jesus' first action as the newly arrived Son of David is to clear the temple and he justifies his actions and the people's declaration of him as David's son with Scripture (Matt 21:13–16). The following day Jesus returns to the temple and begins teaching (διδάσκοντι, Matt 21:23). This causes the chief priests and elders of Israel to question the source of Jesus' authority to teach in the temple (Matt 21:23). In response Jesus asks them about the source of John's baptism, whether it was from man or heaven (Matt 21:24–25). Because they refuse to acknowledge that John's baptism was from heaven Jesus refuses to tell the chief priests and elders the source of his authority to teach in the temple (Matt 21:25–27). The chief priests and elders remain wilfully ignorant about the source of Jesus' authority to teach in the temple, but Matthew has made clear to his audience that Jesus is teaching in the temple as the Davidic Messiah (Matt 21:1–17) and that the source of his authority comes from God in heaven in the same manner as John's baptism. Jesus then proves his authority to teach, including to teach on the subject of the kingdom (Matt 21:43) and the Torah (Matt 22:34–40), by winning a series of debates with the leadership of Israel (Matt 22). Although Jesus concludes these debates by alluding to the fact that the Messiah has an origin greater than Davidic

36 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:240.

lineage (Matt 22:41–45), Jesus' activities in the temple make clear that teaching is a function of Jesus' status as the Son of David.³⁷ In consideration of the manner in which Matthew associates teaching and preaching with Jesus' Davidic-messianic titles, it is clear that Jesus' Davidic-messianic status makes a contribution to the legitimisation of Jesus as an authoritative teacher on the Torah.

To return to the question asked above, what type of legitimisation of Jesus as an authority on the Torah are we looking for in the added biographical details leading up the Sermon on the Mount? Our primary concern is with the way Matthew develops Jesus' christological titles since his role as a teacher is grounded in the authority of these titles. In particular, our concern is with the way in which Matthew develops and connects these christological titles with Jesus' fulfilment of Scripture, his ability to argue using Scripture, Moses or Exodus/Sinaitic motifs, eschatological judge motifs, and other issues such as righteousness. When Matthew's development and depiction of Jesus' christological status in the first four chapters are read as a whole it is clear that Jesus is no mere teacher as he sits down on the mountain (Matt 5:2). Rather, Jesus is God the Father's representative who has the authority to utter the programmatic statement on the Torah and the antitheses (Matt 5:17–48). Thus, in similar fashion as Q, but done more thoroughly, Matthew legitimises the speaker prior to the sayings in order to legitimise them. Davies and Allison remark similarly,

Before Jesus speaks a word, before he utters his commands, the reader has been informed—by OT prophecy, by John the Baptist, by God, and by the devil—who Jesus is: the Messiah, the Son of David, and the Son of God; he is the fulfiller of prophecies, the bearer of the Spirit, and the healer *par excellence*. This Jesus, therefore, by virtue of his identity, must speak with authority and make sovereign demands (cf. 7.29). So the obligation to obey the commands of MT 5–7 is grounded in Christology, in the person of Jesus; and Matthew has set up his gospel so that one may first confess Jesus' unique status and then recognize the obligation of his commandments.³⁸

37 It is worth noting that David is evoked in a conflict concerning the Torah as well as Jesus' status as the Son of David (Matt 12:3–4, 22–28). Moreover, Jesus is called Son of David directly following a conflict concerning eating without washing hands (Matt 15:22).

38 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:426. Similarly, Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount*, 14, notes that “by reading Matthew 1:1–5:2

Analysing Jesus' teaching authority in the Sermon on the Mount in light of previous narrative material (i.e., Matt 1–4) assumes that Matthew's Gospel can be read as a continuous whole. To be sure, Matthew compiled sources that were not originally products of the same author or theological agendas and the abrupt transition from chapter 2 to 3 draws attention to the differences in his sources (more on this transition below). This does not mean, however, that in their new context Matthew's sources cannot work together to present a coherent depiction of Jesus that meet Matthew's agenda and concerns. I am not alone in thinking this. Runesson, for example, accepts the premise “that Matthew's Gospel can be read as a highly structured and coherent text that makes (ancient) narrative and theological sense.”³⁹ Under this premise Runesson assumes there is a narrative progression to Matthew's Gospel and he uses composition criticism to analyse it.⁴⁰ Composition criticism not only takes account of an author's redaction but also considers how the narrative progresses and how the author's redaction affects the unfolding of the narrative. A similar approach is taken in this chapter as the narrative progression leading up to the Sermon on the Mount and the depiction of Jesus as an authority from God is considered.

The rationale for viewing the authority and status of Jesus' role as a teacher in the Sermon on the Mount in light of the way Matthew depicts Jesus in the first four chapters is also found in the Gospel's structure. John Yueh-Han Yieh notes that while imposing “a distinctive pattern in Matthew's composition,” the five discourses “are also 'integrated into the flow' of neighbouring narratives ... by virtue of formula remarks, similar materials, and similar contexts.”⁴¹ The five discourses, Yieh states,

consecutively the auditors have a sense of who is speaking in the Sermon. He is son of Abraham, son of David (1:1–17), one conceived by the Spirit (1:18, 20), Saviour (1:21), Immanuel (1:23), King of the Jews (2:2), Messiah (2:4), fulfiller of all righteousness (3:15), God's beloved Son (3:17), God's victorious Son (4:1–11), a preacher of repentance (4:17), a gatherer of disciples (4:18–22, 23–25), a healer (4:23–24), and a teacher of disciples (5:1–2). This mountain of praise would prepare the auditors to hear the Sermon as the words of a dominant authority figure.”

39 Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 19–20.

40 *Ibid.*, 19.

41 Yieh, “One Teacher: Jesus' Teaching Role in Matthew's Gospel,” 26, building on and quoting David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, JSNTSup 31 (Sheffield: Almond, 1989), 129–132.

“are interlocked with their neighbouring narratives by a thread of common themes overflowing from one genre to the other to move the narration forward.” The obvious example from the first section of narrative and Jesus' first discourse is the theme of the fulfilment of Scripture.⁴² In light of this interplay between sections of narrative and discourse, Charles H. Talbert notes that “the narratives are subservient to the discourses, in the sense that they prepare the audience for the discourses.”⁴³ In agreement with Talbert, the narrative material leading up to the Sermon on the Mount will be analysed with the assumption that it prepares the audience's understanding of Jesus' significance and authority and the content of his teaching when he teaches from on top of the mountain. As will be shown, Matthew has added and edited biographical details that legitimise Jesus as God's ultimate authority who can teach about the kingdom of heaven and dictate how the Torah is to be treated and practiced in that kingdom.⁴⁴ That is, Matthew first legitimises the teacher (Matt 1–4) in order to legitimise the authority of his teachings (Matt 5–7).

The material Matthew added to his sources and placed prior to the Sermon on the Mount in order to legitimise Jesus as an authoritative teacher of the kingdom of heaven and all that concerns it, including the Torah, will now be examined. Some of this material was addressed briefly in earlier chapters of this thesis, but it will be examined here with the aim of observing how Matthew is compiling and editing biographical material into his sources for the sake of legitimising Jesus to speak authoritatively in the Sermon on the Mount. The material will be divided by the logical breaks in the Gospel (i.e., Matt 1:1–17; 1:18–25; 2:1–12; 2:13–23; 3:1–17; 4:1–11; 4:12–25) and examined individually in sequence. The results will then be summarised. It will be clear that Matthew has carefully added biographical details to his primary sources of Q and Mark in a way that prepares his audience to see Jesus, when he ascends the mountain to teach, as having God given authority that is based in his christological status (i.e., primarily as the Son of God and the Davidic

42 Ibid.

43 Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount*, 17.

44 Yieh, “One Teacher: Jesus' Teaching Role in Matthew's Gospel,” 31, also notes that Jesus' role as a supreme teacher of God's will begins to develop in Matthew's first section of narrative.

Messiah) and his teachings to be a new form of Sinaitic revelation. In regard to this later point, Matthew has not only used biographical writing as a useful medium for legitimising a historical figure in a polemical circumstance but also to participate in Mosaic Discourse.

i. Jesus' Genealogy, Matthew 1:1–17

Matthew begins his Gospel with a staple for legitimising a subject in biographical writing; a genealogy. The more prestigious the people in the subject's genealogy the greater the status of the subject of the biography. The converse of this principle is true for de-legitimising someone in a biography. For instance, Suetonius used an incriminating genealogy in the beginning of the *Life of Nero* to foreshadow Nero's depraved character and life failures. To achieve the strongest legitimising effect from a genealogy biographers would draw a genealogical link to the oldest founders (even a founding deity) of the subject's people group (e.g., Isocrates, *Evag.* 13–20). Matthew does precisely this. The opening statement of the Gospel and the ensuing genealogy not only identify Jesus as the Messiah (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) but also as the Son of David, Israel's greatest hero, and the Son of Abraham, Israel's founding patriarch (Matt 1:1–17). The use of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ indicates that Matthew likely redacted Mark's opening statement (compare Matt 1:1; Mark 1:1).⁴⁵ Thus, Matthew is taking Mark's opening declaration of Jesus' identity (i.e., the Messiah) and is giving a fuller account of the Messiah's biographical heritage: he is the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham.⁴⁶

It is intriguing that Matthew has not retained Mark's υἱοῦ θεοῦ, especially since Son of God is an important theme in Matthew's Gospel and ultimately Jesus' controlling title in which his other titles are informed (Matt 3:17; 17:5; 22:41–46). Some ancient witnesses of Mark are without υἱοῦ θεοῦ so it is possible that Matthew

45 Q may also have an opening verse prior to the introduction of John the Baptist that uses Ἰησοῦ (Q 3:0). Therefore, Matthew may be redacting this verse or both this verse and Mark's opening verse.

46 Similarly, Philo states that Moses is a perfect seven generations from their nation's founder (*Mos.* 1.7; cf. *Mut.* 117).

used a version of Mark similar in this regard. A better explanation for the lack of υἱοῦ θεοῦ, however, is found in the structure of Matthew's Gospel and the way he unveils Jesus' significance. Matthew's double use of γένεσις (Matt 1:1, 18) is particularly revealing in this regard. In viewing Matthew as adding biographical details to his sources we can discern that 1:1–17 is intended to be a record of Jesus' ethnic heritage. Matthew clearly calls it as much: Βίβλος γενέσεως (cf. Gen 2:4; 5:1 LXX). Here Matthew shows that Joseph, the husband of Jesus' mother, is a direct descendant of King David, a common qualification in Second Temple Judaism for the Messiah (e.g., 4Q285 Frag. 5; cf. Isa 10:34–11:1), and he is accordingly a descendant of Abraham, a common qualification in Second Temple Judaism for being part of God's people (Jub. 12:24; 13:3; 4 Ezra 3:13–15).⁴⁷ Moreover, this record of Jesus' genealogy has a message of eschatological messianic fulfilment. Abraham, David, the Babylonian deportation, and the Messiah are all fourteen generations apart, which happens to have the numerical value of David's name (1:17).⁴⁸ In other words, the purpose of 1:1–17 is to establish Jesus' genealogical qualifications, especially his association with David, to be the Messiah of Israel's eschatological hopes. Jesus' status as Son of God is not the focus here so Matthew has removed it from the opening line. However, in the very next section (i.e., Matt 1:18–25) Matthew explains the particulars of how Jesus' γένεσις (Matthew's second use of γένεσις) came to be (ἡ γένεσις οὕτως ἦν, 1:18). Here Matthew reaffirms Jesus' Davidic lineage (Matt 1:20), but reveals that, although Jesus is born into a Davidic family, his γένεσις came to be through an act of God's Spirit (Matt 1:18, 20). Thus, Jesus is God's Son by supernatural origin. This title is affirmed by God himself as the narrative of Jesus' life unfolds (3:17; 17:5; cf. 12:18).⁴⁹ Matthew's removal of Mark's υἱοῦ θεοῦ from the opening statement, therefore, is part of his strategy for legitimising Jesus with

47 However, being a mere descendant of Abraham does not automatically qualify someone for entry into the kingdom of heaven in Matthew's Gospel. They must repent and bear good fruit, which is done by following Jesus' teaching (Matt 3:7–10; 7:15–27).

48 See, Gundry, *Matthew*, 19.

49 Since as the Messiah Jesus is the Son of David, the Son of David then is the Son of God (Matt 22:41–46).

biographical writing. Davidic lineage was clearly an important aspect of Jesus' significance that Matthew needed to explain⁵⁰ and that which Mark and Q were lacking.⁵¹ However, since Matthew also ascribed to Mark's primary message that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 1:1; 15:39) he needed to explain the relationship between the two titles. He therefore adds a genealogy, a common biographical tool, to the beginning of his sources in order to establish Jesus' Davidic heritage. Then he uses his infancy narrative, more added biographical details, to explain the relation between Jesus' Davidic line (Son of David, Βίβλος γενέσεως) and his supernatural origin (Son of God, ἡ γένεσις οὕτως ἦν).

The addition of biographical details by way of a genealogy legitimises Jesus as David's heir (υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ), the anticipated Messiah of Israel's eschatological hopes. Noted in the section above, Jesus' role and authority as a teacher is integrated with his status as the Davidic Messiah. Therefore, along with all the first century Jewish hopes and expectations that accompany the notion of a Davidic Messiah, the genealogy also lays the foundation for what will be a primary component of Jesus' status as an authoritative teacher in Matthew's Gospel. Moreover, in the following birth and infancy narratives Jesus' Davidic status, which Matthew develops explicitly, is interwoven with Jesus' Mosaic status, which Matthew develops implicitly. That is, Matthew depicts his Davidic Messiah in a Mosaic fashion.⁵² Although the Mosaic theme is absent from the genealogy, the two themes of Davidic and Mosaic status

50 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:156, note that "of all the NT writers, Matthew lays the most stress on the Davidic ancestry of Jesus. This probably reflects an ongoing dialogue with the synagogue."

51 Matthew adds "Son of David" to his sources five other times in his Gospel (Matt 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 21:9, 15).

52 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:194–195, detect three stages in the birth and infancy stories. The first stage contains the Mosaic characteristics and the second stage contains the Davidic characteristics. Therefore, technically Matthew depicts his Mosaic-type deliverer in a Davidic fashion. However, in Matthew's current form, with Jesus' Davidic status being explicit and his Mosaic status being implicit, it is more fitting to say that Matthew depicts his Davidic Messiah in a Mosaic fashion. This is how the audience would understand it.

soon work together to legitimise Jesus as an authoritative figure and the fulfilment of Israel's eschatological hopes.⁵³

ii. *The Birth of Jesus, Matthew 1:18–25*

Following the record of Jesus' Davidic-messianic lineage (Βίβλος γενέσεως), Matthew adds more biographical details to his primary sources that explain how Jesus' origin came about (ἡ γένεσις οὕτως ἦν) and how it was a special redemptive act of God (Matt 1:18–25). Several aspects of this added biographical material contribute to Jesus' legitimisation as an authority who can give rulings on the Torah. Matthew shows that, in addition to being in the Davidic line,⁵⁴ Jesus' conception is from the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20–21, cf. 18). This fulfils Scripture concerning the birth of a Davidic king (Isaiah 7:14) and identifies Jesus in some capacity as a manifestation of God's presence (Matt 1:22–23). We have then an explanation of what God will publicly declare at Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:17; cf. 16:16; 26:63): Jesus the Davidic Messiah is also the Son of God. As mentioned above, Jesus' status as the Son of God is ultimately the basis of his authority to give commands and to teach about the Torah (Matt 4:3, 5; 11:25–30; 17:5; 28:19–20). Therefore, these added biographical details about Jesus' origins not only reaffirm and explain the claim in Matthew's sources (i.e., Q and Mark) that Jesus is the Son of God⁵⁵ but they also explain the origin of

53 That different themes and depictions of Jesus interact and inform one another in Matthew's Gospel, see Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew*, 1–2; who states concerning the theme of heaven and Earth, “a literary work of such high caliber as Matthew can develop and maintain many important themes simultaneously. ... Yet no single theme can be said to encompass all the intentions, purposes, and nuances found in the First Gospel. ... Yet, like each of the many themes in Matthew, [the theme of heaven and Earth] does not stand alone, but interacts with and informs the rest of the theology of the book.” Similarly, Allison, *The New Moses*, 3, states, “works of literature are inevitably constituted by a complexity of meanings.” See also R. T. France, “The Formula Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 249–51.

54 Matthew re-emphasises Jesus' Davidic lineage in the story of his birth by having Joseph called υἱὸς Δαυίδ (Matt 1:20; cf. 1:25). As Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 22, states, “it is the acknowledgment of a child by the father that officially makes the child his son (often cited is *Mishna Baba Batra* 8:6: ‘If a man said, “This is my son,” he may be believed’). Jesus, born of the virgin Mary, is thereby grafted into the Davidic line through Joseph’s juridical recognition of him as his own son.”

55 Cf. Mark 1:1, 11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:61–62; 15:39; and, Q 3:21b–22; 4:1–4, 9–12, 5–8, 13; 10:22.

Jesus' authority over all matters, including his teaching on the Torah, in Matthew's Gospel.

The account of Jesus' origin not only explains how Jesus is the Son of David and the Son of God but it also gives an explanation of his mission. Jesus is to save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). Blanton has demonstrated that Jesus has three modes for saving people from their sins in Matthew's Gospel: salvation through Torah teaching, healing, and his death on the cross.⁵⁶ By a verse count Blanton argues that salvation by Torah teaching is by far the most prominent and developed mode in Matthew's Gospel.⁵⁷ Therefore, Blanton suggests that Jesus accomplishes the declared mission of salvation in Matt 1:21 "in large part by calling [those who listen to him] to pursue the 'better righteousness' that may be obtained only by those who scrupulously observe the Torah."⁵⁸ That Jesus is to save his people from their sins in large part through Torah teaching is an inference from reading the whole of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew 1:21 on its own, therefore, is not necessarily a direct statement about Jesus' status as an authoritative teacher. However, by introducing the concept that Jesus' people need saving from their sins, 1:21 anticipates Jesus' ministry activity which is primarily teaching, preaching, and healing. Matthew 1:21, therefore, at least prepares the audience for Jesus' role as a messianic teacher.

There are two other aspects of the biographical details in Matthew 1:18-25 that contribute to the legitimisation of Jesus' as an authority on the Torah, rather than an abolisher. First, Matthew states that the story of Jesus' miraculous origin is the fulfilment (*πληρωθῆναι*) of Scripture (Matt 1:22–23). Viewing aspects of Jesus' life as the fulfilment of Scripture is a common theme in Matthew, especially in the material leading up to the Sermon on the Mount. Highlighting Jesus' life as the fulfilment of the Scriptures is clearly meant to support, at least in part, Jesus' programmatic statement in which he states he has come to fulfil the Torah and Prophets (Matt 5:17). Thus, Matthew has inserted into this biographical material the theme of fulfilment,

56 Blanton, *Saved by Obedience*, 412.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*, 413.

which in turn creates a positive relationship between Jesus and his ministry and the Torah.

Secondly, Matthew calls Joseph righteous (*δίκαιος*, Matt 1:19). In Second Temple Judaism *δίκαιος* most commonly means someone is righteous for following the Torah (cf. Luke 1:6).⁵⁹ Likewise, in Matthew's Gospel *δίκαιος* is a designation for people (before, during, and after Jesus' ministry) and it based on obedience to the Torah or, for gentiles, by acting positively towards Jesus' followers.⁶⁰ Jesus is the Son of David through his association with Joseph (cf. Matt 1:1, 16, 20) so it is reasonable to assume that Joseph's attribute of being righteous (i.e., an observer of the Torah) sheds light on Jesus' character. It is the running logic of ancient Greco-Roman biographies that the subject carries the qualities and status of his ancestors; hence, the importance of genealogies at the beginning of biographies. Moreover, during his trial and execution, Jesus himself is called *τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ* by Pilate's wife (found only in Matthew; Matt 27:19). Prior to the statement by Pilate's wife, Jesus pairs the prophets and the righteous (*τῶν δικαίων*) together as a group murdered by the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23:29, 35; cf. 13:17). Pilate's wife's description of Jesus as *δίκαιος* and the fact that his father Joseph was *δίκαιος*, therefore, qualify Jesus as a member of this group of prophets and righteous people whom the scribes and Pharisees, according to Matthew, have murdered. Moreover, Jesus' accusation that the scribes and Pharisees are murderers of prophets and righteous people commences the climax of his de-legitimation of the scribes and Pharisees' role as teachers and practitioners of the Torah. That is, the rhetorical thrust of the statement is that the scribes and Pharisees are not righteous and do not observe the Torah properly; rather, they kill those (including Jesus) who do follow the Torah and Prophets correctly. Indeed, in the preceding verse Jesus states that on the outside the scribes and Pharisees appear *δίκαιοι* to others, but, in fact, inside they are full of hypocrisy and *lawlessness* (*ὑποκρίσεως καὶ ἀνομίας*; Matt 23:28). It is no coincidence, then, especially when

59 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:202.

60 Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 87–90.

considering Matthew's polemical context regarding the Torah (cf. Matt 5:17), that Matthew describes Joseph as *δίκαιος* in regard to his conduct towards Mary.⁶¹ Matthew is able to show that the man speaking the Sermon on the Mount comes from a righteous, Torah-observant family.

In addition to developing the themes of Jesus' status as the Son of God, the fulfiller of Scripture, and one who is righteous, Matthew also begins his Moses typology in 1:18–25. Despite Isocrates' strategy to only mention verifiable facts about one's birth (Isocrates, *Evag.* 21), dreams and signs were common tropes in ancient Greco-Roman biographical descriptions of a birth. Similarly, Matthew has Joseph learn about Jesus' origin and significance from the Angel of the Lord in a dream (Matt 1:20–21). Matthew, however, uses the trope of dreams not only to emphasise the special nature of Jesus' birth but also to draw association between Jesus and Moses, Israel's great lawgiver. The L.A.B. (i.e., pseudo-Philo) and Josephus both reference dreams about the birth of Moses that significantly resemble the announcement of Jesus' birth in Joseph's dream. Josephus states that when Amram, Moses' noble and pious father, was vexed about his wife's pregnancy because of Pharaoh's decree, God appeared to him in a dream and told him not to despair (Ant. 2.210–16). Likewise, an Angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him not to fear when he was worrying about marrying Mary on account of her pregnancy (Matt 1:18–21). In the L.A.B., the Spirit of God falls upon Miriam, and a man appears to her in dream and tells her that her soon to be brother will save God's people (L.A.B. 9.10).⁶² In Matthew, Joseph is told in a dream that Jesus will save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). In isolation these comparisons are not overwhelming even though scholars have affirmed their correlation.⁶³

61 I am assuming *δίκαιος ὧν* is redactional. However, my argument does not rest on it being redactional. What an author leaves in their source can often be as revealing as what they omit. *δίκαιος ὧν* may have been in Matthew's source and he kept it in because it helped his case that Jesus was a fulfiller of the Torah, not an abolisher. It may have also influenced him to use *δίκαιος* elsewhere in his Gospel.

62 Although not in a dream, Josephus states that Amram receives a prophecy that Moses will deliver the Hebrew nation (Ant. 2.216).

63 For example, see Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount*, 14, and Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:192.

However, when taken in consideration with the other comparisons Matthew makes between Jesus and Moses in the following sections of his Gospel, it becomes clear that Matthew is depicting Joseph's dream in a way that evokes the association of Jesus with Moses. In 1:18–25, then, Matthew is assembling a tapestry of biographical details that legitimise Jesus as an authority who can give definitive rulings on the Torah: Jesus is conceived by God's Spirit (i.e., the Son of God), he is associated with the line of David, the righteous Joseph, the fulfilment of Scripture, and the announcement of his birth is comparable with the birth of Israel's great lawgiver Moses.

iii. Herod and the Magi, Matthew 2:1–12

Following the announcement and birth of Jesus, Matthew changes scenes to the royal courts of Jerusalem. He tells the story of magi from the east visiting king Herod in search of Jesus the new born king of the Jews, the one whose star they saw (Matt 2:1–2). Herod, who is distressed by the news, hatches a scheme to have the magi find Jesus and then report his location (Matt 2:3–9), but after the magi find Jesus, they are warned of this plan in a dream and depart (Matt 2:10–12).

In addition to introducing Herod who will play an important part in Matthew's Moses typology,⁶⁴ this section furthers Jesus' legitimisation as the Davidic Messiah (Matt 2:5–6), which is one of the primary titles under which Jesus' functions as a teacher. Matthew further reinforces Jesus' status as the Davidic Messiah in this section in two ways. First, the birthplace of the Messiah is confirmed by Scripture to be Bethlehem, which is the city of David (Matt 2:4–6; cf. 1 Sam 16:1–13). Second, a star marks Jesus' birth and ascension as the king of the Jews (Matt 2:2). Numbers

64 *Ibid.*, 1:192–193, note that there is a possible parallel to the Mosaic tradition in Matthew 2:4. Josephus (*Ant.* 2.205, 234) states that sacred scribes (ἱερογραμματεῖς) inform Pharaoh about the coming deliverer. In Matthew 2:4 Herod learns about the place of the Messiah's birth from chief priests (ἀρχιερεῖς) and scribes (γραμματεῖς). Taken alone, this parallel is a stretch. However, prior to the episode with magi and in the following sections Matthew creates many obvious parallels between Moses and Jesus. Therefore, it is conceivable that Matthew 2:4 is contributing to Matthew's Moses typology and, therefore, the legitimisation of Jesus as a Mosaic authority on the Torah.

24:17 speaks of a star coming out of Jacob and a sceptre rising out of Israel. Different groups in Second Temple Judaism attributed Numbers 24:17 to a prediction of a levitical/priestly Messiah.⁶⁵ Early Christians apparently attributed Numbers 24:17 to the Davidic Messiah (T. Jud. 24.1).⁶⁶ It would appear then that Matthew is evoking messianic expectations by having a star mark the birth of the king of the Jews. Herod seems to have interpreted the star's appearance this way (Matt 2:3–4). Together, these features of the episode involving the magi further Jesus' legitimisation as the Davidic Messiah.

In addition to further establishing Jesus' status as the Davidic Messiah, the account of the magi also incorporates some techniques that are found in other Greco-Roman biographies for legitimising a hero in general. Two techniques in specific warrant review. First, magi and astrologers were commonly used in Greco-Roman historiography. They were believed to have the ability to recognise heavenly bodies that marked the end of one ruler's reign and the start of another's.⁶⁷ Suetonius used this trope to legitimise Augustus and Tiberius in the respective biographies of each emperor (Suetonius, *Aug.* 94; *Tib.* 14.2). Second, in a manner similar to what we observed in Tacitus' *Agricola*, Matthew uses the technique of contrast between characters to legitimise Jesus as Israel's Messiah. Matthew implicitly sets up Herod as a false king of the Jews, which, in turn, further asserts Jesus' status as the true king of the Jews (interchangeable with messiah in this context; compare Matt 2:2 and 2:4). Herod is identified as the king by Matthew, but with the arrival of the magi and the appearance of the star it is clear that Herod's time has come to an end. Herod's terror (*ἐταράχθη*) over the magi's interpretation of the star's appearance suggests he is aware of the implications of the star for his reign (Matt 2:3). Herod's deceptive plan to find Jesus, which turns hostile (cf. Matt 2:13), confirms and further displays the illegitimacy of Herod's kingship. Matthew also uses Bethlehem and Jerusalem to further the contrast between Herod and Jesus as the false and true king, respectively.

65 Note that in the LXX “a scepter” is changed to “a man” in Numbers 24:17.

66 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:234.

67 For further discussion, see *ibid.*, 1:227–232.

Although Jerusalem is Israel's royal city (Matt 5:35) it joins Herod in being terrified over the news of Jesus' kingship (Matt 2:3). Thus, while the magi initially go to Jerusalem to find the king of the Jews, which is where someone would naturally expect to find him, they are redirected to look in Bethlehem. Scripture affirms neighbouring Bethlehem as the place from which Israel's ruler will be derived (Matt 2:4–6).⁶⁸ Therefore, it is not in Jerusalem where the magi find and worship the king of the Jews; rather, they find the king of the Jews in Bethlehem. There the magi rejoice greatly, offer gifts, and worship Jesus the true king of the Jews (Matt 2:9–11). Thus, in the account of the Magi, Matthew continues Jesus' legitimisation as the Messiah by adding biographical details and using tropes and techniques (i.e., magi and contrast) that find some commonality in other Greco-Roman biographies.

iv. Egypt: There and Back Again, Matthew 2:13–23

With the exit of the magi, 2:13–23 continues several themes started in the account of Jesus' birth (Matt 1:18–25) that are critical for Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus as one with authority to teach about the kingdom of heaven and to give rulings on the Torah. At least three of Matthew's legitimising themes are developed here: Jesus' status as God's Son, his fulfilment of Scripture, and his association with Moses through a typology. Each will be considered in turn.

In 2:13 Matthew reveals the full intent of Herod's scheme with the magi; he wants to find Jesus in order to destroy him. Joseph is given this information by the Angel of the Lord who once again appears to Joseph in a dream. The Angel of the Lord also instructs Joseph to take Jesus and his mother down to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath and Joseph does so until Herod dies (Matt 2:13–15). Matthew then explains that while Joseph and his family were down in Egypt Herod realised that the magi had deceived him (Matt 2:16). Since the magi did not inform Herod of Jesus' location he decides to kill all the children in Bethlehem that were born around the

68 Note that Matthew adds *οὐδαμῶς* before *ἐλαχίστη* (LXX: *ὀλιγοστός*) to his quotation of Micah. It is clear that Matthew is concerned about legitimising Bethlehem, which supports the idea that Matthew is intending a contrast between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

time the magi visited (Matt 2:16). After Herod dies the Angel of the Lord instructs Joseph to take his family to the land of Israel (Matt 2:19). Joseph follows the instructions, but he settles in Nazareth to stay clear of Herod's son Archelaus in Judea (Matt 2:22–23). The parallels with Moses' life are strong:

- 1) When Moses was born Pharaoh tried to kill all the Hebrew male babies just as Herod killed the infants of Bethlehem (Exod 1:15-22; Matt 2:16-18).
- 2) Jewish tradition suggests that Pharaoh had the Hebrew babies killed because he learned about the birth of a deliverer who would free the children of Israel (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.205–9; Tg. Ps.-J. On Exod 1:15). Herod likewise kills the male infants because he has learned about the birth of the king of the Jews (Matt 2:2, 16–18).
- 3) Divine providence protected Moses when he was an infant (Exod 2:1–10; Philo, *Mos.* 1.12; Josephus, *Ant.* 2.217–27) and when he was a young man he was forced to leave his home because Pharaoh sought to kill him (Exod 2:15). Jesus is also protected by divine providence by the Angel of the Lord and he has to leave the country of his birth because Herod is after him (Matt 2:13–14).
- 4) God commands Moses after the death of Pharaoh to return to Egypt, the place of his birth (Exod 4:19). The Angel of the Lord commands Joseph to return to Israel where Jesus was born (Matt 2:19–20). In both cases Joseph and Moses are commanded to return because the ones seeking Jesus and Moses are dead:

τεθνήκασιν γὰρ **πάντες** οἱ ζητοῦντές σου τὴν ψυχὴν (Exod 4:19)
 τεθνήκασιν γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου (Matt 2:19–20)⁶⁹

- 5) After receiving the command to leave Moses takes his wife and sons and returns to Egypt (Exod 4:20). Joseph also, after receiving the command to leave, takes his wife and son and returns to Israel (Matt 2:21).⁷⁰

These parallels were briefly discussed in chapter 3 and they were viewed as a piece of Matthew's larger strategy of associating Jesus' teaching on the Torah with the authority found in Mosaic Discourse. The consideration here is how Matthew adds

69 Note that even though only Herod is trying to kill Jesus the antecedent is plural. The retention of the plural suggests Matthew's dependence on Exodus.

70 These parallels are observed in Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:192–193.

biographical details to his sources to legitimise the person of Jesus, which then consequently legitimises his teaching. We can see that these two strategies (i.e., Mosaic Discourse and adding legitimising biographical details) are not unrelated for Matthew, but rather intertwined. Biographical writing, as we will continue to observe, offered Matthew certain creative opportunities to depict Jesus in a Mosaic fashion.

In the middle of developing a Moses typology Matthew also continues to develop the legitimisation of Jesus as the Son of God. In between the movement of Jesus from Israel to Egypt and back to Israel (a key component of the Moses typology), Matthew inserts a fulfilment quotation from Hosea 11:1. In its original context Hosea 11:1 refers to Israel as God's son whom he brought out of slavery in Egypt. Matthew, however, attributes it to Jesus as the Son whom God delivered from Herod (Matt 2:15). Thus, Matthew is fleshing out the meaning of Jesus' status as the Son of God. Indeed, while the Son of God is a concept Matthew inherited from Q and Mark (probably from oral traditions as well), Matthew is adding to the concept by depicting the Son of God as going through an exodus-type experience. As we will see, Matthew will continue this theme. Matthew's reason for doing so is because, as argued in chapter 3, he is seconding Sinai with Jesus' life and teaching. This gives greater legitimisation to Jesus as an authority on the Torah. In Matthew's depiction of the of Son of God, the Son of God brings Sinaitic revelation.

Finally, 2:13–23 continues the legitimisation of Jesus as the fulfilment of Scripture. Again, this concept is critical to Jesus' programmatic statement on the Torah, in which he claims to fulfil the Torah and Prophets. There are three fulfilment quotations in this section: Matt 2:15/Hos 11:1; Matt 2:17–18/Jer 31:15; and Matt 2:23/?. Matthew 2:15 (Hos 11:1) and Matthew 2:23 are both related specifically to the person of Jesus. That is, these fulfilments of Scripture affirm something about Jesus (i.e., he is God's Son and a Nazarene). Matthew 2:17–18 (i.e., Jer 31:15), however, is fulfilled by the actions of Herod. Nevertheless, Herod's actions are still in response to the arrival and kingship of Jesus. Therefore, Matthew 2:17–18, if nothing else, adds to the Scriptural and divine depiction of the events of Jesus' life. Matthew

continues to build Jesus' legitimisation as the fulfilment of Scripture and he intertwines this theme with Jesus' status as the Son of God and within his Moses typology.

v. John's Baptism, Matthew 3:1–17

In Matthew 3:1–17 Jesus is now an adult and we arrive at the point where Matthew's added biographical material meets his primary sources Mark and Q. Davies and Allison note that with the changing of sources the christological themes in chapters 1 and 2 (i.e., Son of Abraham, Son of David, the Messiah of OT prophecy, and one like Moses) “noticeably recede into the background.”⁷¹ Moreover, they suggest that Matthew must have seen chapters 1–2 and 3–4 as two separate sections that he placed side by side, but that “no close seam has been sewn, no continuity of theme emphasized.”⁷² Davies and Allison are correct to recognise important distinctives between the two sections of chapters 1–2 and 3–4. Such differences are to be expected when independent sources are fused together. Nevertheless, they overstate the case. Matthew makes a couple of editorial moves in chapters 3–4 that may not create a seam between chapters 1–2 and 3–4, but that, at the very least, hinge the two sections together.

First, Matthew inserts a statement by Jesus that John must baptise him in order to fulfil (πληρῶσαι) all righteousness. This editorial move harkens back to Jesus' fulfilment of Scripture in chapters 1–2. Moreover, it introduces the theme of righteousness and Jesus' ability to obtain a complete level of righteousness. The theme of fulfilment and righteousness are both important to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and specifically his programmatic statement on the Torah (Matt 5:17–20).⁷³ Jesus claims to “fulfil” the Torah and Prophets and that his

71 Ibid., 287.

72 Ibid.

73 Similarly, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 154, states, “the language of fulfilment here [i.e., Matt 3:15] is likely intended to pick up on its use with the formula quotations. Matt. 5:17 ('to fulfil ... [the Prophets]') may serve in part to confirm this connection by providing a bridge between the form in 3:15, with its use of the active infinitive verb form and with no specific reference to Scripture, and the passive forms with clear reference to the Prophets which characterise the

interpretation of the Torah produces a righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:20). Thus, even though it is brief, 3:15 creates an important point of connection between the fulfilment quotations in chapters 1–2, the public acts of Jesus' adult life, and ultimately his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.⁷⁴

Matthew's second editorial move is the insertion of another fulfilment quotation in 4:14–17 in response to Jesus' movement from Nazareth to Capernaum. This continues the theme in chapter 2 of marking Jesus' geographical movements (Bethlehem to Egypt to Judea to Nazareth) with quotations from Scripture (Matt 2:4–6 [this quotation lacks *πληρώω*], 15, 23). Matthew is using his quotations of Scripture to tie together chapters 1–2 and 3–4. He is not merely setting the two sections next to each other.

In addition to these editorial moves, Matthew does in fact also make a christologically thematic connection between chapters 1–2 and 3–4. The connection is made through Jesus' status as the Son of God, which is critical to chapters 3–4. God's Spirit rests on Jesus during his baptism and there God publicly declares Jesus to be his beloved Son (Matt 3:17). Immediately following this declaration Jesus is led by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil in the wilderness (Matt 4:1). There the Devil questions Jesus' status as the Son of God (Matt 4:3, 5), but Jesus prevails over him (Matt 4:11). Thus, Jesus' status as the Son of God is Matthew's primary christological concern in chapters 3–4. But this is not the first time this theme has come up in Matthew's Gospel. Rather, it is merely the first time God publicly declares it and that it becomes Jesus' over-arching status of identity. Twice in the account of Jesus' birth Matthew explains that Jesus' conception is of the Holy Spirit (Matt 2:18, 20). The presence of the Spirit functions as an important marker of Jesus' status as the Son of God (Matt 3:16; 4:1). Jesus' divine conception in chapter 1, then, reinforces and anticipates Jesus' status as the Son of God in chapters 3–4. Moreover, in 2:15 Jesus is explicitly called God's Son in a fulfilment quotation (a clear instance

formula quotations.”

74 Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount*, 18, states, “the Matthean narrative depicts Jesus as fulfilling all righteousness before he teaches his disciples about righteousness.”

of Matthew's editorial hand). Together, Jesus' conception by the Spirit and the fulfilment quotation in 2:15 firmly establish the christological theme of Jesus as the Son of God in the middle of a source that is primarily concerned with Jesus' status as the Davidic Messiah. That is, Jesus' status as the Son of God is intertwined with his status as the Davidic Messiah. Thus, in terms of Christology, Matthew has created significant points of contact between chapters 1–2, which focus on Jesus' status as the Davidic Messiah, and chapters 3–4, which focus on Jesus' status as the Son of God.

Finally, the fulfilment quotation of 2:15 that calls Jesus God's Son, is inserted in the heart of Matthew's Moses/exodus typology (Matt 2:13–21). This typology continues with Jesus the Son of God being baptised (possible Reed Sea parallel) by John (an Elijah figure),⁷⁵ fasting for forty days and forty nights (a Moses reference; cf. Deut 9:9), and being tempted in the wilderness (a reference to Israel's exodus experience; cf. Deut 8:2–3).⁷⁶ Thus, Davies and Allison are correct that the christological theme of Jesus as the one like Moses “noticeably recedes to the background,” but it only does so for 15 or 17 verses.⁷⁷ The theme picks right back up and helps create a Sinaitic flavour to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

In the final analysis, much of what can be said about the relationship between chapters 1–2 and 3–4 comes down to what one is looking for. Are there significant differences between the two sections? Certainly. Is the transition of 3:1 (*Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις*) abrupt? Absolutely. Is the gap in time a deficient display of biographical art (so Hägg)? Yes, by some standards. Nevertheless, from the perspective of observing how Matthew has added necessary biographical details to his sources in order to legitimise Jesus as an authority not only in the Sermon on the Mount but throughout his whole Gospel, it is clear that Matthew's editorial hand continues important legitimising themes from chapters 1–2 into chapters 3–4. Thus, regardless of how abrupt the transition between chapters 1–2 and chapter 3–4 may be, as far as legitimising Jesus, Matthew joins the material coherently and

75 Compare 2 Kgs 1:8 and Matt 3:4; cf. 11:10; 17:9–13.

76 See chapter 3.3c and 3.3d of this thesis for a further explanation of Matthew's Moses typology.

77 Depending on whether or not Jesus' baptism is included as a reference to the Reed Sea crossing.

consistently. With that being said, the review of Matthew 3:1–17 can continue. Since many of the legitimising qualities of the material were already discussed in the review of chapters 1–2 and 3–4's relationship, I will focus on just one significant legitimising detail.

Matthew 3:1–17 sees a concentration of important details for the Jesus' legitimisation as an authority figure who can speak on the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount. In addition to fulfilling all righteousness⁷⁸ with baptism (Matt 3:15) and being publicly declared God's Son (Matt 3:17), John the Baptist presents Jesus as the eschatological manifestation of the Lord who has the authority to declare who produces fruit worthy of repentance and who does not (Matt 3:1–11). With this authority Jesus determines who enters the granary (the kingdom) and who burns in the fire (the outer darkness). The use of fruit as a metaphor for good works or proof of repentance is a reoccurring trope in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 3:10; 7:16–20; 12:33–37), as is Jesus' function as an eschatological judge who determines which people are good/righteous and fit for entry into the kingdom and which people are bad/evil and fit for punishment (cf. Matt 3:12; cf. 7:24v27; 13:47–50; 25:31–46). The question then is what constitutes these good works that qualify someone as righteous and grants them entrance into the kingdom? In the current context (i.e., Matt 3:1–11) John the Baptist is exhorting people from Judea to repent since the kingdom of heaven that they should want to enter is at hand (Matt 3:2, 8). Good works for Second Temple Jews could be nothing other than following the Torah. As the Gospel progresses and Jesus teaches the things of the kingdom of heaven, following the Torah to produce good works has to be done by following the Torah the way Jesus teaches it (cf. Matt 5:17–48). These good works also come to include the way people treat Jesus' brothers (i.e., disciples or followers) who are an extension of himself (Matt 25:31–46). Therefore, here in 3:1–11 Matthew begins the theme of depicting Jesus as the ultimate authority on what constitutes righteous deeds. Such

78 Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation*, 92, notes that, in Matthew's Gospel, righteousness represents God's demands on humans, which refers to following the Torah.

legitimation lays the foundation for Jesus' authoritative “you have heard it was said, but I say to you” statements regarding the Torah (Matt 5:21–48).

In addition to legitimising Jesus as the judge over right and wrong in this section, Matthew also de-legitimatises Jesus' opponents, in this case Sadducees and Pharisees. With an insertion into his source Q (Q 3:7–9), Matthew has the Sadducees and Pharisees attend the baptism of John. Since John's baptism concerns repentance and the confession of sins this implies that the Sadducees and Pharisees came for this very reason. Thus, they are marked as needing repentance from their first appearance in the Gospel and, therefore, are not trust worthy teachers of the Torah. John's label for the Sadducees and Pharisees as a “brood of vipers” (γεννήματα ἔχιδνῶν) confirms their evil nature and status set for judgment (Matt 3:7; cf. 12:33–37; 23:33). Even though John the Baptist instructs the Pharisees and Sadducees to produce fruit worthy of repentance (Matt 3:8), Matthew's audience knows from the beginning that the Sadducees and Pharisees do not produce fruit worthy of repentance for the coming kingdom of heaven. Jesus reaffirms this in his programmatic statement on the Torah (Matt 5:20).

vi. The Wilderness Temptation, 4:1–11

In Mark (Matthew's main source for a narrative structure) Jesus is immediately led by the Spirit into the wilderness after his baptism for forty days to be tempted by Satan (Mark 1:12–13). Then, after the arrest of John the Baptist, Jesus begins his public ministry (Mark 1:14–15) by calling disciples (Mark 1:16–20). Matthew clearly approves of this sequence of events, but he inserts Q's account of the temptation into Mark's version⁷⁹ in order to demonstrate that Jesus is an authority on the Torah before he starts his ministry and speaks in the Sermon on the Mount. Indeed, Jesus is depicted winning a halakhic argument against none other than the Devil. Q, on the other hand, although it follows a similar pattern as Mark (baptism-temptation), lacks Jesus' gathering of his disciples (Mark 1:14–20) and summary statements of Jesus'

⁷⁹ Matthew 4:11 appears to retain a redacted version of Mark 1:13.

ministry and his attraction of crowds (Mark 1:39; 3:7–12) before the start of Jesus' sayings. Matthew needs this content to create an audience for Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt 4:18–25), rather than just *τοὺς μαθητὰς* (Q 6:20). Therefore, Mark and Q complement each other well in this regard. Together the two sources legitimise Jesus as a halakhic authority and provide an audience from all over Israel for the Sermon on the Mount. We will now consider how, with a simple stroke of his editorial hand, Matthew uses the temptation pericope to legitimise Jesus as an emulator of Moses who speaks with the authority of Sinaitic revelation to the large crowds he attracted with his ministry.

Q's temptation account already presents Jesus in “a haggadic tale spun largely out of Deut 6–8 and akin to rabbinic disputations.”⁸⁰ Jesus passes the test that the children of Israel took forty years⁸¹ to learn:

Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his *son* (MT: אֶת־בְּנוֹ; LXX: τὸν υἱόν) so the LORD your God disciplines you. Therefore keep the commandments of the LORD your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him (Deut 8:2–6).

Jesus was also led into the wilderness by the Spirit, he was tempted, he was there forty days (forty days could symbolise forty years in Scripture; cf. Num 14:34; Ezek 4:5–6), and he became hungry (Q 4:1–2). However, from the start of his temptation Jesus already understands that man shall not live by bread alone (Q 4:4/Deut 8:3). Moreover, he already keeps God's commandments; he does not test God (Q

80 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:353, are referring to Matthew's rendition in this quote, but Matthew's is so similar to Q that the same can be said of Q's temptation account.

81 Cf. Exod 16:35; Num 14:33; Deut 2:7; 8:2, 4; 29:5–6; Josh 5:6; Neh 9:21; Ps 95:10–11; Amos 2:10; Acts 7:36.

4:12/Deut 6:16) and he serves him only (Q 4:8/Deut 6:13). Thus, while God had to discipline Israel as man disciplines a son, Jesus proves to be the obedient Son of God from the start (Q 4:3, 9). Q's depiction of Jesus as the Son of God who can quote the Torah in debate fits perfectly with Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus as the one who fulfils the Torah and Prophets, both in his teaching (e.g., Matt 5:17–48) and in the events of his life (e.g., Matt 1:22–23; 2:15; 4:14–16). Moreover, it ties in well with Matthew's exodus motif. During the infancy narrative Matthew attributes Hosea 11:1 to Jesus when he leaves Egypt (Matt 2:15). That is, like Israel, Jesus is brought out of Egypt (Matt 2:15), he passes through water (Matt 3:16–17), is brought through a time of testing in the wilderness (Matt 4:1–11), and then ascends a mountain with Israelites gathered around him so that he may discuss the Torah (Matt 4:23–7:12).⁸² This provides a Sinaitic context for Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and, therefore, fuses it with the authority of Israel's ancient revelatory event.

Matthew, however, has an added element in his exodus motif. Jesus not only plays Israel's role as God's delivered and tested son, but he also emulates Moses in this motif. That is, the exodus motif and the Moses typology are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are closely related. Indeed, Matthew inserts the quotation of Hosea 11:1, in which Jesus is God's delivered Son, right in the heart of his infancy Moses typology (Matt 2:13–21). Moreover, in the Sinaitic context of the Sermon on the Mount it is Jesus who ascends the mountain like Moses. Therefore, Matthew makes a slight but significant editorial adjustment to Q's temptation pericope that synchronises it with his Moses typology. To Q's *ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα*, Matthew adds *καὶ νύκτας τεσσαράκοντα* (Matt 4:2/Q 4:2; cf. Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2). Davies and Allison note that this editorial move was “no doubt primarily prompted by Exod 34:28 and Deut 9:9, where we read that Moses ate nothing for forty days and forty nights.”⁸³ In both Exodus 34:28 and Deuteronomy 9:9 Moses' fasting goes hand in

82 For a similar point, see Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 228–229.

83 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:358. For more references to Moses' forty days and forty nights, see Exod 24:18; Deut 9:11, 25; 10:10. cf. 1 Kgs 19:8.

hand with receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai. Considering Matthew's exodus motif and Moses typology in the opening sections of his Gospel it seems reasonable to assume that Matthew intends to create a correlation between Jesus' and Moses' experiences. As Moses fasted forty days and forty nights on the mountain before receiving the Torah that he gave to Israel so Jesus fasts forty days and forty nights not long before he ascends a mountain to give instruction regarding the Torah to a gathered group of Israelites.

Matthew inserts Q's temptation story into Mark's narrative in order to add to Jesus' legitimisation as an authority on the Torah. Q's rendition also fits well with Matthew's exodus motif. Matthew also makes a simple editorial adjustment (*καὶ νύκτας τεσσαεράκοντα*) that aligns the temptation account with his Moses typology. Thus, Matthew has masterfully weaved together many themes over the first four chapters of his Gospel. Jesus as the Son of David, the proven Son of God, the fulfilment of Scripture, the fulfiller of righteousness, and emulator of Moses is now ready to begin his ministry by gathering together Israelites in order to teach them the ways of the kingdom of heaven and the fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets. Jesus has been aptly legitimised for such a task.

vii. The Beginning of Jesus' Public Career, 4:12–25

The preparatory legitimisation of Jesus is over.⁸⁴ Jesus' public ministry of proclaiming the kingdom of heaven now begins. Through some editorial work Matthew uses versus 4:12–25 to depict the response to the initial efforts of Jesus' ministry as an ingathering of the tribes of Israel (Matt 4:23–25). It culminates with Jesus ascending a mountain to teach them about the kingdom of heaven, including his rulings on the Torah and Prophets (Matt 5:17–7:12). In this way Jesus' teaching is depicted as Sinai revisited. Thus, Jesus' teaching carries the highest level of authority

84 Matthew, of course, continues to reveal important and legitimising aspects of Jesus' significance throughout the Gospel (e.g., Matt 8:27; 11:25–30; 16:16; 17:5; 22:41–46; 28:16–20). The point here, however, is to note that Matthew has clearly arranged the material before Jesus begins his ministry in such a way as to present him as an authoritative figure fit to preform the ministry of the kingdom of heaven.

for a first century Jewish audience. The theme of the ingathering of Israel was already examined in Chapter 2.2a of this thesis. Therefore, it will only be briefly reviewed here as the final section leading to the Sermon on the Mount is examined.

In agreement with Mark's Gospel, Jesus hears about the arrest of John the Baptist and goes to Galilee to begin proclaiming the kingdom (Matt 4:12–17/Mark 1:14–15). Before Jesus begins his proclamation, however, Matthew mentions that Jesus leaves Nazareth to live in Capernaum by the sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matt 4:13; cf. Mark 1:21). This specification allows for Matthew to insert a fulfilment quotation of Isaiah 9:1–2 (Matt 4:14–16). Isaiah 9:1–2 refers to regions that faced Assyrian deportation (2 Kgs 15:29; 1 Chr 5:26) and that Tiglath-pileser III turned into Assyrian providences.⁸⁵ Isaiah's oracle announces salvation to these regions by way of a new born son in the Davidic dynasty (Isa 9:6–7). Since Matthew sees Jesus as the fulfilment of the Davidic king promised in Isaiah (Matt 1:22–23/Isa 7:14) he also attributes the proclamation of hope to Israel's northern tribes in Isaiah 9:1–2 to Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Thus, by mentioning the territory in which Capernaum resides (i.e., Zebulun and Naphtali) Matthew is signalling that Jesus' return to Galilee is part of God's promise to deliver the northern tribes.

Following the fulfilment quotation of Isaiah 9:1–2 Jesus begins his proclamation of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 4:17). The first thing he does is to tell two fishermen brothers (i.e., Simon and Andrew) to come with him and that he will make them fishers of men (Matt 4:18–20). In other words, Jesus intends to use them to help him gather people. Jesus then gathers two more fishermen brothers (James and John; Matt 4:21–22). With a small group of helpers Jesus then continuously goes around (περιῆγεν) “all of Galilee” (ὅλη τῆ Γαλιλαία) teaching and preaching the good news of the kingdom in synagogues and healing the sick people (Matt 4:23). Matthew has already depicted Jesus as the Davidic Messiah and the Son of God. Who better to teach and preach the message of the kingdom? As the fulfilment

85 Zebulun and Naphtali = Galilee; the way of the sea = Dor (South of Mount Carmel); and beyond the Jordan = Gilead.

quotation of Isaiah 9:1–2 indicates (Matt 4:14–17), Davidic hope and Jesus' message of the kingdom go hand in hand.

News of Jesus' ministry activities in all of Galilee is then heard in “all of Syria” (ὅλην τὴν Συρίαν), which means all the adjacent areas of Galilee (Matt 4:24).⁸⁶ The news attracts numerous downtrodden people and large crowds come from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem and Judea, and beyond the Jordan (Matt 4:24–25). Matthew has altered Mark's list of geographical locations, replacing Idumea, Tyre, and Sidon with the Decapolis (Mark 3:7–8). In doing so Matthew lists regions that fit the contours of the twelve tribes of Israel's original settlement according to Israel's Scriptures.⁸⁷ Again, in Matthew's narrative world Jesus is in the “land of Israel” (γῆν Ἰσραήλ; Matt 2:20). Thus, Matthew depicts the crowds that follow Jesus as deriving from all around the land of Israel. Jesus has Israel before him, so to speak, and seeing the great multitude Jesus ascends a mountain like Moses,⁸⁸ sits down,⁸⁹ and teaches them (Matt 5:1–2). Matthew depicts Jesus' first major discourse as Sinai revisited. Like Moses to the children of Israel at Sinai, Jesus' teaches the gathered Israelites from a mountain about his rulings on the Torah and the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus' programmatic statement on the Torah, therefore, comes at the culmination of Matthew's careful thematic development and legitimisation of Jesus in the first sections of his Gospel. Jesus is perfectly qualified to speak about the Torah and the kingdom of heaven in general.

Like Q before him, Matthew precedes Jesus' sayings with biographical content that legitimises him as an authoritative speaker. Matthew, however, has gone far beyond Q's efforts by masterfully crafting a depiction of Jesus that sets him as a supreme authority from God that can teach about the Torah and give definitive rulings. Jesus is the Davidic Messiah, with a righteous genetic stock going all the

86 Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 43–44.

87 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 185.

88 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 1:423, note that “in the LXX, ἀναβαίνω + εἰς τὸ ὄρος occurs twenty-four times, and of these, fully eighteen belong to the Pentateuch, and most refer to Moses.”

89 Jesus sitting down to teach is another possible Moses parallel. See *ibid.*, 1:424, concerning the rabbinic tradition that Moses sat down when he received the Torah.

way back to Abraham, the fulfilment of Scripture, the fulfiller of all righteousness, the eschatological judge of righteous and evil works, and the Son of God who lives through Israel's exodus experience and gathers the children of Israel together to give them the kingdom of heaven's ruling on the Torah and Prophets.

6.4 The Legitimation of Jesus and the Status of the Torah

The above review of the biographical details Matthew added, edited, and arranged to his sources of Jesus tradition evidenced a significant legitimisation of Jesus as God's ultimate representative, even eschatological judge, for what constitutes divine will. Placing this legitimising biographical material prior to the Sermon on the Mount further legitimises Jesus' teachings, including his striking programmatic statement and concomitant antitheses, as authoritative and in line with (or as the fulfilment of) Israel's Scriptures. As observed in Deuteronomy and the development of Mosaic Discourse in previous chapters in this thesis, the more important the figure of Moses becomes the more important that which he says and does becomes. This same principle is not only true in Mosaic Discourse but also in Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus. That is, the greater the level of significance Matthew ascribes to the person of Jesus, the more important Jesus' words and deeds become.

The legitimisation of Jesus, however, raises the question of the Torah's status in relation to the person of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. The vast array of descriptions of Jesus' attitude towards the Torah in Matthean scholarship and the significance of Matthew's Christology to the discussion bid us turn this stone over once more.

Thus, is Jesus so greatly legitimised that the Torah is subsumed by the person of Jesus and his words and deeds, perhaps even to the point of becoming superfluous?⁹⁰ As Cuvillier states, "the First Gospel's referent has been displaced: the pillar which sustains Matthew's theology—and therefore his religious identity—is no longer primarily the law and obedience to its commandments, but the Messiah and

90 As Deines, "Not the Law but the Messiah," 64, states, "[the antitheses] do not abrogate the Torah of Moses, but they make it in a way superfluous. Whenever Jesus' followers live according to what is demanded of them, the regulations of the Torah are no longer needed."

his teaching.”⁹¹ I would agree with Cuvillier in so far as Jesus takes center stage in Matthew’s Gospel, but I believe the potential dichotomy he creates between Jesus’ teaching, on the one hand, and obedience to the Torah’s commandments, on the other, is foreign to Matthew’s theology and presentation of Jesus’ attitude towards the Torah. I maintain that a better articulation of the relationship between the central figure of Jesus with his teachings and the Torah can be found.

It was observed in the previous chapter that “Philo subordinates the Law of Moses to the figure of Moses, so that the written law may express the life of a sage.”⁹² We attributed this subordination, at least in part, to the natural result or influence of using a biography to legitimise a figure in a polemical context. Perhaps a similar result is also produced by Matthew’s use of biography to legitimise Jesus; his (Mosaic) legislator. That is, for Matthew, the Torah is subordinate to Jesus in the sense that it expresses his life. Burrige also notes this effect of biography:

In concentrating the reader’s attention upon the person of Jesus through writing a biography, the early Christian gospel writers were asserting something which was never said of a rabbi—that he was center stage as the embodiment, or even replacement of Torah, a unique individual revealing God in his deeds and words, life, death and resurrection.”⁹³

Burrige is correct that biographical writing placed Jesus center stage significantly in all the Gospels, but, at least for Matthew’s depiction of Jesus, the embodiment of the Torah rather than its replacement describes better the relationship between the person of Jesus and his teachings and the Torah.⁹⁴ Indeed, the whole point of describing Jesus’ connection to the Torah and Prophets in terms of fulfilment (*πληρῶν*) is to join together and fuse Israel’s Torah and Scriptures and Jesus’ interpretations and radical

91 Cuvillier, “Torah Observance and Radicalization in the First Gospel,” 159. Similarly, Cuvillier, “Réflexions autour de la fonction de la Loi,” 77, states, “pour Matthieu, le centre de gravité a basculé: on est passé d’une religion de l’obéissance à la Torah à une religion de la foi au Messie qui conduit à une nouvelle compréhension de la théodicée.”

92 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 106–107.

93 Burrige, *What are the Gospels?*, 339–340.

94 Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on ... Matthew*, 2:296, note that Matt 11:25–30 presents Jesus as “embodying in his own person Torah and Wisdom.”

teaching. Jesus fulfills the Torah and Prophets in his teachings (Matt 5:17–48), his practice (Matt 3:15), and in the events of his life (e.g., Matt 1:22–23; 2:15; 4:14–16). Thus, the legitimisation of Jesus through biographical writing does indeed subordinate the Torah to the person of Jesus, but in the same way the Torah was subordinated to Philo’s depiction of Moses. That is, so that the Torah may express the life, practice, and teachings of the sage, who in this case is Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of God, and all that we saw Matthew depict Jesus as in the material leading up to the Sermon on the Mount. By embodying the Torah, as Burrige describes it, the Torah can be followed by observing all that Jesus commanded (Matt 28:20). The two entities, Jesus’ teachings and the Torah, are one and the same.⁹⁵ Just as Deuteronomy could group disparate laws and instructions under the title “this Torah” or “these words” (e.g., Deut 1:5; 31:1; i.e., the second feature of Mosaic Discourse) so Jesus’ variety of teachings, including specific rulings on commandments in the Torah, can be described as “these words” (Matt 7:28) or “all that I commanded you” (Matt 28:20).

To return to the legitimising strategy of biographical writing examined in this chapter: the greater significance of the person the greater the significance is given to what they say. Matthew legitimises Jesus’ status supremely, therefore, when Jesus declares that the Torah is to remain intact he substantiates, confirms, and adds to the Torah’s authoritative status and lasting value (Matt 5:18).⁹⁶ The legitimisation of Jesus and his teachings, therefore, raise up the importance of the Torah and bring it

95 Repschinski, “Die bessere Gerechtigkeit,” 440–441, is on the mark in stating, “Damit ist die mattäische Ethik jedoch nicht nur an das Gesetz, sondern auch an die Person Jesu gebunden. Die bessere Gerechtigkeit fordert nicht nur Gesetzestreue, sondern auch Jüngerschaft.”

96 Similarly, Daniel Marguerat, “L’avenir de la loi: Matthieu à l’épreuve de Paul.” *Etudes théologiques et religieuses* 57 (1982): 369, argues that the Torah is subordinate to Jesus’ Christological authority. However, this subordination does not denigrate the Torah. Rather, Jesus’ authority gives authority to the Torah and Jesus’ teachings provide the proper way to obey the Torah. As Marguerat states, “Le passage déjà cité de 5/17–19 ne statue pas la soumission du Nazaréen à la Torah, mais au contraire l’autorité de Jésus sur la Loi. Ce n’est plus en vertu de son autorité intrinsèque que la Torah est appelée à régir le comportement des croyants (position juive/judéo-chrétienne); son pouvoir dans la communauté lui est attribué par le Christ.”

into its proper focus and place within Jesus' ministry and God's kingdom, rather than pull the focus away.⁹⁷

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter concluded the examination of the effect and contributions Matthew's genre had on his interpretation of the Torah around the person and teachings of Jesus. It was shown that Matthew, like other ancient writers using the genre of biography, tapped some of the opportunities and possibilities of biographical writing to legitimise Jesus in a manner relevant to his polemical concerns. Matthew faced head-on the accusation that Jesus' teaching abolished the Torah and was responsible for the destruction of the temple (Matt 5:17). Matthew not only refutes this accusation with Jesus' first statement concerning his ministry and the Torah (Matt 5:17–20) but Matthew also adds, edits, and arranges biographical material to his sources in order to legitimise Jesus as God's supreme representative of his divine will and teacher to Israel. This legitimises Jesus' teachings on the Torah as God approved and, in fact, the farthest thing from an abolishment of the Torah.

Matthew's legitimisation of Jesus as one who could speak authoritatively on the Torah was done primarily by adding and editing material to his sources that developed Jesus' Christology (i.e., his status as the Davidic Messiah and the Son of God), the theme of Jesus' fulfilment of Israel's Scriptures, and Mosaic and exodus motifs. These three aspects of Matthew's depiction of Jesus, in particular, are intertwined with Jesus' role as a teacher to Israel. Together, they present Jesus as an authoritative teacher from God able to give definitive halakhic rulings on the Torah.

Furthermore, it was noted as significant that Matthew so greatly developed these aspects of Jesus prior to the Sermon on the Mount. A similar strategy for legitimising a set of teachings was found in the (hypothetical) development of Matthew's source Q: adding significance to a speaker prior to the speaker's sayings in order to augment the sayings with gravitas. This strategy, as we saw in chapter 4,

97 *Contra* Deines, "Not the Law but the Messiah," 64; and Cuvillier, "Torah Observance and Radicalization in the First Gospel," 159.

was used in Philo's biography of Moses. Philo first legitimised Moses, his lawgiver, with a biography (i.e., a genre naturally fit for legitimising) before discussing his laws (Philo, *Decal.* 1; *Hypoth.* 6.9; *Virt.* 51–52). In light of this strategy, Matthew's biographical development and legitimisation of Jesus was seen as effectually legitimising and authorising Jesus' interpretations of the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:17–48). Thus, the genre of biography and its usefulness for legitimising a historical figure contributes to Matthew's writing strategies for authorising his interpretations to the Torah in Jesus' teachings. Moreover, as the Mosaic and exodus motifs were an integral component of Matthew's biographical legitimisation of Jesus' status in the narrative progression up to the Sermon on the Mount, we can reasonably conclude that Matthew uses and develops the writing strategies of Mosaic Discourse and the writing strategies of biographical writing together to authorise his interpretations of the Torah.

CONCLUSION

i. Review of Thesis

The purpose of this thesis was to more fully measure the topic of Jesus and the Torah in Matthew's Gospel. Given the limitations of using the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah as an indication of the Matthean community's social position as *intra* or *extra muros*, this thesis instead examined Jesus' radical teaching in the Sermon on the Mount as participation in the Second Temple and late first-century phenomenon of Torah interpretation. Primary attention was given to Matthew's use and development of inherited writing strategies for claiming authority for Jesus as a teacher of the Torah and his interpretations of the Torah as an extension of Sinaitic revelation. This premise was pursued over the five chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 1 explored the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period. It was demonstrated that Torah interpretation was deeply rooted in the attempts of exilic/Second Temple Jews to restore communion with God in response to the continuing effects caused by the destruction of the Babylonian exile. Torah interpretation, therefore, progressed with the intent of not only updating the Torah to serve a new generation but also to bring restoration to Israel. Therefore, within this framework the flourishing of Torah interpretation and Torah tradition is best understood as the growth or extension of older traditions as opposed to a breaking or rupturing of older forms of the Torah. Furthermore, within this framework the Torah and its interpretation became increasingly critical to sectarian debates and especially for determining who would gain entry into eschatological restoration as well as who would receive judgment.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that Matthew exhibited a similar conceptual framework as other Second Temple literature concerning the relationship between the Torah and the destruction Israel encountered. Concerning the destruction caused by the exile, Matthew contextualises Jesus' Davidic-messianic teaching ministry as God's initial restoration of Israel from the Babylonian deportation. As for the

destruction of the Second Temple, Matthew depicts the temple as defiled, abandoned by God, and proclaimed one day to be destroyed. Matthew attributes the scribes and Pharisees' false Torah instruction and murder of the innocent on the altar as the reasons why God brings this wrath on the temple. The person of Jesus is now the new dwelling place of God as well as the one who restores the covenant and offers atonement.

It was also shown in chapter 2 that Jesus' programmatic statement was deeply rooted in a sectarian debate over blame for the Second Temple's destruction. Indeed, Matthew took great pains to remove Jesus from the accusation that his radical teaching abolishes the Torah, while at the same time he attributed the defilement and eventual destruction of the temple to the scribes and Pharisees' malpractice of the Torah and shedding of innocent blood on the altar. Thus, Matthew, as with other texts that interpret the Torah, integrates Torah obedience/disobedience with eschatological restoration and divine wrath. Given this shared framework with other Second Temple texts, it was reasonably assumed that Matthew would also use similar writing strategies as other Second Temple texts for authorising his interpretations of the Torah as an extension of Israel's sacred Scriptures.

Chapter 3 examined the inherited writing strategies Matthew used and developed to authorise Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount as an authoritative representation of the Torah. Hindy Najman's concept of Mosaic Discourse, along with its four features, specifically, was used as a lens to observe Matthew's strategies for imbuing Jesus' teachings with Mosaic and Sinaitic authority. Matthew exhibited the first feature by reworking and interpreting pentateuchal instructions in the antitheses. For the second feature Matthew set Jesus' antitheses and instructions concerning the practice of righteousness within an *inclusio* that designated his teaching as the Torah and Prophets. As for the third feature, Matthew inserted exodus motifs in the surrounding narrative context of Jesus' sermon and also depicted Jesus ascending a mountain to teach gathered crowds of Israelites. Matthew achieved the fourth feature through the use of a Moses typology. In doing so, Matthew placed Jesus within Moses' historic role, thus repeating the Sinai event in

his narrative for his audience. Together, Matthew's creative use of the features of Mosaic Discourse frame Jesus' programmatic statement and Torah interpretations within and as an extension of Israel's sacred Scriptures.

Chapter 4 analysed Jesus' interpretation of the Torah in four controversy stories (i.e., Matt 12:1–14; 15:1–20; 19:1–9; 22:34–40), covering a variety of halakic issues throughout Matthew's narrative. The analyses of these pericopes showed that Matthew developed his inherited tradition of Jesus interpreting the Torah in debate against his opponents with careful and creative midrashic halakah. It was demonstrated that the Matthean Jesus' Torah interpretations in no way abandoned or overruled the Torah or even his inherited Jesus tradition. Instead, the Matthean Jesus' interpretations of the Torah either reaffirmed Scripture or were themselves reaffirmed by Scripture. As for his inherited Jesus tradition, Matthew nuanced it in such a way as to meet his present halakic concerns while not forsaking the general halakic thrust of the inherited material. Finally, it was also noted in this chapter that Matthew uses these four controversy stories to continue the legitimisation of Jesus' Torah interpretation and the de-legitimisation of the scribes and Pharisees' Torah interpretation. Just as in the programmatic statement (cf. Matt 5:17–20), Jesus is the fulfiler of the Torah and Prophets in the controversy stories, while the scribes and Pharisees offer interpretations that fail to meet the standards of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus alone was presented as the supreme authority of the Torah and its interpretation.

Chapter 5 considered the manner in which Matthew's genre, a βίος, may have contributed to his authorisation of Jesus' interpretations of the Torah. Indeed, although it was observed that Matthew uses similar writing strategies for authorising interpretations of the Torah as do other Second Temple texts, his genre was markedly different to the point of warranting further consideration. Therefore, through a survey of biographical writings, it was demonstrated that ancient Greco-Roman biographical writing was commonly used for legitimising or de-legitimising a historical figure in a polemical context. Most relevant for our analysis of Matthew's Gospel was Philo's use of biography to legitimise Moses in a manner suitable for a hellenistic audience,

even those likely critical of the Jewish Torah. It was demonstrated that the legitimisation of Moses concomitantly legitimised his Torah. In other words, the lawgiver and the law were irrevocably connected and each authorised the other.

Chapter 6 examined Matthew's use of biographical writing to legitimise Jesus in the narrative material leading up to the Sermon on the Mount, this in order to also legitimise and add authority to his teaching. In this manner Matthew used a strategy similar to Philo's: legitimise the lawgiver in order to legitimise his laws. Matthew primarily achieved this legitimisation by adding and editing biographical material to his sources and weaving together Jesus' christological titles, the theme of the fulfilment of Scripture, as well as Mosaic/exodus motifs (i.e., features of Mosaic Discourse). This process not only legitimised Jesus as an authoritative teacher, but it did so in a manner that connected him with Israel's Scriptures—a source of authority most relevant to first-century Jews. Thus, in effect, when Jesus ascends the mountain to teach crowds of gathered Israelites he does so as God's authoritative Son who inhabits Moses' role and further has the authority to give definitive halakhic rulings that fulfil the Torah. Therefore, in addition to his use of the four features of Mosaic Discourse, Matthew also uses the legitimising opportunities of his genre to participate in the phenomenon of Torah interpretation.

ii. Some Concluding Observations

a) Matthew fits well within the context and concerns of other texts that innovate the Torah during the Second Temple period and the late first-century. He shows a keen awareness of the destruction Israel has faced, both past and present, and he orients his depiction of Jesus' ministry and teaching in conjunction with it.

b) Matthew has inherited and developed writing strategies from the Second Temple period used for authenticating interpretations of the Torah. Specifically, Matthew creatively uses the four features of Mosaic Discourse. Matthew uses these writing strategies to ascribe Scriptural and Sinaitic authority to Jesus' teachings on the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount. In so doing, Matthew presents Jesus' radical teachings

as both rooted in Israel's Scriptures and as an extension of Moses' authority. Given Matthew's use of inherited writing strategies as well as his use of exegetical techniques (so Ruzer, 2007), Matthew's Gospel provides an example of the development of the phenomenon of Torah interpretation in first-century Judaism.

c) Matthew, along with Philo, has contributed to the development and use of ancient biography in a Jewish milieu. Matthew and Philo both demonstrate the use of biography as a medium to innovate the Torah and to legitimise a lawgiver. Although rabbinic Judaism did not continue this use of biography (so Burrige, 2004), Matthew and Philo both demonstrated that it was a possibility and, therefore, they offer important examples of Torah interpretation in ancient Judaism.

d) The genre of biography, or biographical writing more generally, has the potential to subordinate the Torah to the figure who presents it. Matthew and Philo subordinated the Torah to the figure of Jesus and Moses, respectively, thereby allowing the Torah to express the life of the sage. This subordination is by no means a denigration of the Torah, rather it demonstrates the Torah's continuing importance by connecting it with a figure of great importance (i.e., Jesus or Moses).

iii. Possible Avenues for Further Research

a) Since Matthew's Torah interpretation is supported with Second Temple writing strategies, Matthew provides a bridge between Torah writing and discourse in the Second Temple period and the late first-century. Similarly, Matthew's Gospel may create some helpful points of contact between first-century Judaism and rabbinic Judaism. Matthew's use of inherited writing strategies, in particular, may point to some useful avenues to explore areas of both continuity and discontinuity, especially concerning the use of Sinai motifs. However, given the gap in time between Matthew and rabbinic writings, discretion should be used.

b) This thesis provided fresh discussion concerning the development of Moses traditions in both the Second Temple period and in Matthew's Gospel. This effort may open the door for new comparisons between Matthew's use and development of Moses traditions and other New Testament writers' use and development of the figure of Moses. For instance, this thesis demonstrated that Matthew's Moses typology attached Jesus' authority to Moses' rather than subverting the figure of Moses. Perhaps this perspective may shed light on the book of Hebrews' comparisons between Jesus and Moses.

c) Although the debate concerning the categorisation of the Gospels' genre remains important and certainly warrants further consideration, scholars are beginning to move the discussion beyond this stage to consider the implications the genre has on the interpretation of the Gospels. Burrige's *Imitating Jesus* is a step in the right direction. Hopefully the discussion in this thesis of Matthew's use of the legitimising potentials of biography can initiate new strategies for researching the relationship between the genre of Greco-Roman biography and the interpretation of the Gospels. Perhaps discussions of the implications of the Gospel's genre could extend to the research field of reception history as well. Indeed, for both good and ill, Matthew's writing strategy of legitimising Jesus and de-legitimising the scribes and Pharisees has played a significant role in the Gospel's reception and use.

iv. Conclusion

Matthew's Gospel clearly exhibits the use and development of inherited writing strategies from the Second Temple period. These strategies, along with the creative use of biographical writing, graft the person of Jesus and his interpretations of the Torah into the tradition of Israel's Scriptures and the authority of Moses. The Matthean Jesus' radical teaching, therefore, does not shatter the framework of Israel's obedience to God by following the Torah nor does it surpass it. Instead it interprets the Torah to express the standard of righteousness fit for the kingdom of heaven. To use Matthew's preferred terminology, the person of Jesus and his teaching fulfil the

Torah and the Prophets (Matt 5:17). In this manner, Matthew participates in and contributes to the larger phenomenon of Torah interpretation in the Second Temple period and its development into the late first-century.

Returning then, a final time to ponder the young Samuel Wohl's question to Tolstoy addressed at the start of this thesis; I believe Matthew could well have answered Samuel saying,

The words said by Christ are not important simply because they are true and inscribed in the heart of every human being. It is because of who Christ is that his words are important, quotable, and that a son of Israel like yourself should listen to them. And who is this Christ, you ask? Let me tell you, I will start from the beginning ... “Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. ...”

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