

CONFERENCE SERIES

William Loader, Boris Repschinski, Eric Wong (Eds.)

**Matthew, Paul, and Others:  
Asian Perspectives on  
New Testament Themes**

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**Matthew, Paul, and Others:  
Asian Perspectives on  
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William Loader  
Murdoch University, Western Australia

Boris Repschinski  
Institute of Biblical Studies and Historical Theology, Universität Innsbruck

Eric Wong  
Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

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# Preface

Eric Wong

The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Chair, Asia Pacific Liaison Committee

The Studiorum Novi Testament Societas (SNTS) aims to promote New Testament worldwide, though it first developed in Anglo-European regions after the World War 2 of the last 20th century. After the fall of the Berliner Wall in the early 90's, its members initiated and extended its mission to the Eastern European countries by setting up the first Liaison Committee of its International Initiative Program. Subsequently, the Latin American Caribbean, the African and the Asian Pacific Liaison Committees (APLC) were established.

The APLC continues the mission of SNTS and launched its first conference in Perth, as a pre-conference before the General Meeting of the SNTS in 2013. Thereafter, APLC held conferences in Hong Kong (2014), Manila (2015), Kerala (2016) and Taipei (2018). By means of academic conferences, members of APLC contact and exchange academic ideas with New Testament scholars in the region in the hope of providing mutual encouragement as we undertake our academic work in non-Christian cultural regions. Our hope is also to enable the work of such colleagues to be more widely recognised, also with a view to enabling them to move towards eventually becoming members of SNTS.

It was in Taipei that we were able to implement the idea of publishing papers given at the conference. Thanks to the unfailing efforts of Boris Repschinski and William Loader, along with myself, we are now able to have this first publication of APLC conference papers in electronic form. We acknowledge the hard work of all who have contributed papers for this volume. For financial support, we are grateful to the University of Innsbruck, Austria. Finally, we express our appreciation to Innsbruck University Press for undertaking the task of publishing this volume and providing open access to it.

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We hope that our New Testament colleagues worldwide may learn and appreciate the way in which our Asian Pacific people understand and discuss the New Testament.

# Matthew's Perspective on Roman Political Authority

Boris Repschinski  
Universität Innsbruck, Austria

## Abstract

In recent years, attempts have been made to view the gospel of Matthew through the lens of post-colonial studies as a text of resistance against a supposedly evil Roman empire. This study evaluates the approaches of Matthew Carter, David Sim, and Dorothy Jean Weaver. It judges the approaches of Carter and Sim as unsatisfactory in the light of the way Matthew's gospel keeps a distance between Roman imperial imagery and the image of the kingdom of heavens while at the same time avoiding any notion of an eschatological reckoning with Roman imperial power. While the gospel has little positive to say about Roman authority, it is lumped together with other political entities in a generalizing fashion to establish the kingdom of heavens as a counter sign.

**Keywords:** Roman empire, Gospel of Matthew, kingdom of heavens, political authority, eschatology

One of the striking features of Matthew's gospel is its antagonistic stance towards the religious leaders within Judaism. While this has sometimes been taken to imply an anti-semitic bias of the gospel, the pioneering work of Andrew Overman and Anthony Saldarini has led many scholars to view the conflicts with the religious leadership of Judaism as a feature of an ongoing competition between Pharisees and scribes on the one hand and the Matthean communities on the other hand over leadership within the Jewish communities' search for identity and cohesion in the period after the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.<sup>1</sup> Yet while the Jewish background is hardly disputed as the

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<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary to repeat the various stations in the history of Matthean scholarship. They are well documented (Harrington, 1975; Stanton, 1985, now reprinted in Stanton (2013, p.9-76); see further Repschinski (2000, p.13-61); Sim (2011); Gurtner (2013); Boxall (2014). If today there is a majority consensus on placing

major social backdrop for the Matthean groups recent studies have also queried the gospel's relationship with other early Christian groups or movements.<sup>2</sup> Finally the question of the Roman empire as the inevitable backdrop for any early Christian groups has been brought to bear on the gospel of Matthew. It is this last question on which this paper will try to offer some observations with particular regard to the question of Matthew's stance towards political authority.

It was Andrew Overman who, in modern research, first raised the question of Matthew's stance with regard to Roman imperial power.<sup>3</sup> Occasionally, the christological titles employed by Matthew are connected with imperial imagery or metaphors.<sup>4</sup> With the rise of postcolonial approaches to biblical literature it was Warren Carter who has made the Roman imperial background the center of his Matthean studies and has been pushing this dimension of Matthean studies to a more prominent position. Thus, this study will proceed as follows: In a first section there will be a recapitulation of Carter's approach before moving on to David Sim's radicalization of Carter's ideas and considering a more restrained approach by Dorothy J. Weaver. This will be followed by a second section which develops the thesis of this study, arguing that the gospel's imagery and language reminiscent of imperial institutions and persons indicates a certain unhappiness with the prevalent political powers, but that it does not point to opposition, resistance, or retribution.

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Matthew's gospel in the context of so-called "formative Judaism" there are some notable exceptions as well (Deines, 2004; Schmidt, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. the collection of studies in Repschinski & Sim (2008). Of obvious interest is the relationship between Matthew and Mark (Becker & Runesson, 2011; Becker & Runesson, 2013; Doole, 2013). Beyond that the possibility of a Matthean critique of Pauline theology has been explored, albeit with limited success (Sim, 2002; Theissen, 2011) The paper of Eric Wong in this collection explores such possibilities further. For a critique of Sim see Harrington (2008); Willitts (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Overman (1995); Willitts (2013, p.82).

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Mowery (2002), who argues that the imperial formula θεοῦ υἱός as title for the emperor occurs *verbatim* in Matt 14:33 and 27:54, with 27:43 (θεοῦ εἰμι υἱός) strengthening the case that "at least some members of Matthew's community" (p.109-110) would have recognized a counter-claim to imperial sonship of God. Mowery is able to show that the formula occurred widely and was sometimes amplified by a third word.

# 1 Review of Previous Approaches

## Warren Carter

Warren Carter's list of publications dealing with the gospel of Matthew and the background of the Roman empire are quite numerous.<sup>5</sup> "Few have since advocated an anti-imperial polemic to the extent of Carter and Sim."<sup>6</sup> One of the refrains in his work on Matthew is that Carter is not out to call into question the primarily Jewish horizon which aids our understanding of Matthew's gospel. But, as Carter rightly points out, even this Jewish socio-cultural rootedness of the gospel plays out within the Roman empire generally and within the confines of Antioch<sup>7</sup> as a Roman provincial capital with a strong Roman military presence, particularly during and in the aftermath of the Jewish war. For Carter then, Roman claims to authority were an all-pervading reality that no one in antiquity could escape.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, post-colonial criticism argues that groups under oppressive colonial powers often show their frustrations through a polemic and antagonism towards each other. Consequently, the Matthean rivalry with the groups of Pharisees and scribes is an indication of an underlying hostility towards Roman powers, while hostility against Rome might go some way to explain the sometimes extreme Matthean polemic against fellow Jews. A reduction of the conflict to Jewish groups on merely religious issues would be severely flawed.<sup>9</sup>

Carter's (2011) most expansive treatment of his approach to Matthew is divided into three parts. The first part details the main features of the Roman imperial system and constructing this system around political, socioeconomic,

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<sup>5</sup> After a first contribution at the 1998 SBL meeting (Carter, 1998) Carter published over 20 contributions on the topic. The most substantial publications are: Carter (2000); Carter (2001). He has since expanded to John's gospel as well (Carter, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Gurtner (2013, p.33).

<sup>7</sup> Of course, Antioch as the place of the writing of Matthew is less than certain. Among possible alternative contenders the Galilee hypothesis (Viviano, 1979) has perhaps the strongest following since. Yet good arguments can be brought forward for Antioch, which remains the most popular hypothesis; for a summary see Sim (2016). Carter's arguments, therefore, are viable, yet perhaps should be applied with more caution.

<sup>8</sup> This position is also argued by Richard Horsley in many publications (e.g. Horsley, 2003, esp. pp.15-34): "The impact of western imperial control ... seriously threatened the viability and continuation of the traditional Galilean and Judean (Israelite) way of life" (p.34).

<sup>9</sup> To be fair, Carter's argument (Carter, 2011, p.286) here is flawed, since scholars arguing for an inner-Jewish conflict as the main paradigm for interpreting the gospel would not view the conflict as entirely religious, even if the language is religiously colored. The conflict would be over leadership within a slowly emerging Jewish national identity, sometimes also called formative Judaism.

military, and theological networks. The latter employs a number of religious metaphors which show how deeply the Romans intermingled state and religion. Carter details the conviction that the gods willed Rome to rule and illustrates this with a number of examples of divine approval or election of particular emperors. Antioch was a focal point for this imperial ideology with a governor as representative of the emperor and a large military presence. Carter (2001, p.34-35) summarizes this ideology by asserting that imperial theology works through messages and rituals to present the emperor – and with him his representatives – as the chosen agent of the gods who wish to manifest their rule, presence, will and blessings among humankind.

With this background Carter examines the Matthean presentation of Jesus as an agent of God's salvation. His main thesis is "that the Gospel contests the claims of imperial theology that assert the empire and emperor to represent the gods' sovereignty, will, and blessings on earth. The Gospel's presentation of Jesus challenges imperial claims that the emperor embodies divine sovereignty and presence, and that the emperor, as the agent of the gods, ensures social well-being" (Carter, 2001, p.57). With regard to sovereignty, Carter shows how the Matthean Jesus is the representative of God's perspective and actions. Carter places great emphasis on the fact that the language of βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ constitutes a great threat to the Roman empire<sup>10</sup> since the kings of the earth (Matt 17:25) resist the kingdom of God and are at the beck and call of Satan, the ruler of all the kingdoms on the earth (Matt 4:8-9). In a further step, Carter connects divine sovereignty with the Matthean Jesus' manifesting God's presence on earth.<sup>11</sup> That Jesus as the manifestation of God's presence undermines Roman ideology Carter sees evidenced in the thoroughly evil portrait of the client king Herod in Matthew 2. A third argument highlights Jesus as the agent of God, shown for Carter in the various titles of Jesus as Messiah, king, and Son of God. Finally, Jesus as the manifestation of God's presence is validated in his concern for societal well-being. The first to encounter this concern are the sick and possessed who experience healing. Jesus celebrates victory over demonic forces which Carter often correlates with

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<sup>10</sup> In a sub-argument, Carter points out how the language Matthew employs in describing God often recalls the language of imperial theology describing Jupiter (Carter, 2001, p.63).

<sup>11</sup> Most recently on Jesus manifesting the divine presence see Chung (2017).

Roman power. Whereas Jesus as an agent of God is a healer, "the world under Rome's control is a sick place."<sup>12</sup>

Having laid the groundwork, Carter goes on to apply the general findings to particular texts. The first of these is Matt 1:21 and the claim that Jesus came to save his people from their sins. For Carter this text is a pivotal statement controlling Matthew's entire narrative. Carter interprets the sins as oppressive political, social, and economic structures imposed by the Roman empire. The way Jesus saves from these is by his return in power, bringing about Rome's downfall and God's salvation.<sup>13</sup> Carter sees this evidenced in the corpse attracting eagles in Matt 24:28, which Carter interprets as fallen Roman standards on an eschatological battlefield where Rome is finally vanquished.<sup>14</sup>

Further texts of interest are what Carter calls counternarratives. Such include the quotations of Isaiah in Matt 1:23 and 4:15-16, where Carter views Is 7-9 as texts reflecting on God's imperial power in punishing Assyria. The "Galilee of the Gentiles" is in Carter's reading a term referring to the occupied status of Galilee. The invitation to take Jesus' yoke (Matt 11:28-30) is interpreted in terms of contrast to Rome's power, particularly suggested by the terms of labor, burden, and yoke as forced labor under Roman dominion. Paying the *δίδραχμα* (Matt 17:24-27) is interpreted as a thoroughly Roman tax after the destruction of the temple, since Rome now collected what had been a temple tax. For Carter, the story itself is subversive, because the *δίδραχμα* is provided by a miracle asserting God's sovereignty, "offering those who pay it a new context and perspective, that of God's sovereignty" (Carter, 2001, p.142). Finally, in the confrontation between Jesus and Pilate (Matt 27:11-26), Carter argues that Pilate is not a neutral or weak figure, but an embodiment of the imperial power, manipulating the people and aligning himself with the ruling elite.

For Carter, these texts prove that Rome's power is not only visible in more or less marginal figures within the narrative like soldiers, client kings and rulers, or

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<sup>12</sup> See the comments on Matt 8:28-34 where Carter points out that the demon-possessed pigs who run to their doom in the lake may be an allusion to the *legio X Fretensis* which was briefly stationed in Antioch during the Jewish war and had a boar as part of its ensign (Carter, 2001, p.71). For details of the connection to the *legio Fretensis* see Lau (2007) and Ebner (2013).

<sup>13</sup> Carter (2001, p.75-90) is arguing here against interpretations that see the saving activity of Jesus fulfilled in his death on the cross, as advocated by, e.g., (Davies & Allison, 1988-1997, p.I:210). Their thesis is worked out more thoroughly in Repschinski (2006). Another possibility is offered by Blanton IV (2013), who argues that sin in Matthew means failure to observe Torah which is absolved by Jesus' teaching on Torah. Blanton includes a sometimes apt critique of both Carter and Repschinski. His thesis finds an echo in Runesson (2016, p.55-56).

<sup>14</sup> Carter elaborated on this thesis in a later article (Carter, 2003).

Pontius Pilate. Rome's presence is squarely in the foreground throughout the gospel, informing most of its aspects and classifying it as a document of resistance. The irony, however, is that Matthew employs terms and expressions which are tied to imperial ideology in order to offer an alternative vision of God's sovereignty: "As much as the gospel resists and exposes the injustice of Rome's rule ... it cannot, finally, escape the imperial mindset ... The gospel depicts God's salvation, the triumph of God's empire over all things including Rome, with the language and symbols of imperial rule" (Carter, 2001, p.171). The Gospel trumps the Roman empire with the eschatological empire of God.

There is much to commend Carter's approach. He is very astute in noticing that some details in Matthew's narrative would have been very suggestive to readers of the first century under Roman occupation. And yet, often Carter seems to overstate his case. A first observation concerns his rather sweeping assumption that anyone who is a member of the ruling elite, be it religious or political, is *ipso facto* a representative of Rome's evil influence. For him, all "societal leaders based in Jerusalem including chief priests, scribes, Pharisees Sadducees, and elders"<sup>15</sup> are Rome's provincial allies. Conflict with them is a conflict with Rome. When the Matthean Jesus argues with Pharisees over the Sabbath or with Sadducees over the resurrection, Carter sees this as a political act shaping societal visions and practices in conflict with Rome. As a consequence, there can be no merely religious conflicts in the gospel, since anything Jesus says or does is necessarily subverting Roman authority. Behind this Carter seems to suggest that there cannot be any spiritual act or teaching that isn't at the same time in competition with Rome.

Yet the gospel itself seems much more distant towards Rome than the "hands-on-approach" Carter suggests. Certainly, the kingdoms of the world are at the beck and call of Satan. Yet curiously, Rome is not singled out but just part of a group, and in the episode of the *δίδραγμα*, Matthew talks of "kings of the earth" in the plural. Finally, the warnings against persecution contain the prophecy that the disciples will be brought *ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνας δὲ καὶ βασιλεῖς* (Matt 10:18). Both rulers and kings are in the plural again. *In cumulo* these cases suggest that Matthew is not pursuing a campaign dedicated to the delegitimization of Rome but that his agenda goes a step further: perhaps

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<sup>15</sup> Carter (2011, p.300-301) is a little careless here, since not all of these groups are based in Jerusalem (Stemberger, 1991).

Matthew wishes to comment much more generally on the relationship between the Matthean communities and political or social institutions.

## David Sim

David Sim's first brush with Rome as a topic of the Matthean narrative was an early article in which he already questioned the honesty of the confession of the Roman soldiers under the cross (Sim, 1993). This article did not find much positive resonance in the scholarly world, but he restated and refined his argument under the influence of Warren Carter's research on the relationship between Matthew's gospel and Roman imperial ideology (Sim, 2005). Sim's statement sets out to place Rome within Matthew's dualistic scheme of eschatology. It argues from the temptation pericope that within this scheme Satan and Rome are inextricably linked since Satan can offer Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth (Sim, 2005, p.93). Such connections between worldly powers and Satan can also be found throughout apocalyptic literature; Revelation or the War Scroll are particularly fine examples of eschatological battles pitting God against Satan and his powers. With regard to Matthew, Sim points out that the eschatological signs in Matthew 24 point to a battle scene between the forces of Satan and of the Son of Man. Following Carter, Sim argues for 24:28 as depicting the presence of Roman powers in the form of their eagles. Sim then continues: "Because Jesus returns in the context of a battle ... the evangelist describes his appearance in military terms. Jesus returns from heaven at the head of an angelic army" (p.96). Sim admits that the immediate context does not bear this out entirely, but points to Matt 26:53 where Jesus seemingly has 12 legions of angels at his disposal. For Sim, this eschatological battle between the Son of Man and the Roman forces of Satan bears close affinity with the account in Rev 19. Sim goes on to support this view of Matthew 24 with the last judgment scene of Matt 25:31-46 where "all the nations" will be judged, recalling "all the kingdoms of the earth" (Matt 4:8), indicating that "the Romans are destined to be sent to the eternal fire prepared for Satan and his angels (v.41)" (p.99).

Sim then goes on to illustrate his thesis with the confession of the soldiers under the cross (Matt 27:54). He first notes that the Matthean soldiers are clearly identified as those who had the responsibility of crucifying Jesus. Indeed, their brutality is highlighted in the mocking scene (Matt 27:27-31).

Their confession after the signs of the tearing of the temple curtain, the earthquake splitting the rocks, and the resurrection of the dead repeats the title "Son of God", which is a Roman imperial title.<sup>16</sup> Then Sim goes on to question the scholarly consensus that the confession is, in fact, a true conversion of these Roman soldiers as representatives of a later Gentile mission. First Sim argues that Matthew has a consistent literary strategy in placing some sign of faith before a miracle in order to avoid the impression that a miracle might actually be the source of faith or conversion. Secondly, he argues that the fierce opposition to all things Roman preclude the soldiers expressing true repentance.<sup>17</sup> Instead, the soldiers express their and their imperial master's utter defeat at the death of Jesus. "They stand condemned at the foot of the cross" (p.103). As such, they prefigure the fate of imperial Rome at the eschatological judgment.

Some of the arguments brought forward against Carter hold against Sim as well. It seems an unnecessary narrowing of Matthew's perspective if the last temptation of Satan is read almost exclusively in terms of Roman imperial power. The phrase *πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου* suggests in and of itself already a much wider application through the adjective *πάσας* and reference to the *κόσμος*. Probably Rome is included, but it is certainly not the only power under consideration in this text.

Another point of contention is the question whether Matt 24 is really an eschatological battle depicted in military terms. It seems telling that Sim has to admit that the angels in Matt 24:31 do not really suggest military imagery, but read in tandem with 26:53 they do. However, the point in 26:53 is precisely that Jesus is not willing to call on those legions to do battle for him. Now if Jesus does not use the angels during his arrest, and if the Son of Man does not use them except for the gathering in of the elect, the battle, if indeed there is one, ought to be rather one-sided. Obviously, there are some who persecute the disciples in the endtimes (Matt 24:9), but they are not named and are lumped together with all nations hating the disciples, and with false prophets. Indeed, the advice given in Matt 24 is not to join in the battle against evildoers or persecutors, be they Roman or of some other nation, or even some fallen-away Christians, but to run and hide (Matt 24:16) and wait for the angels of the Son

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<sup>16</sup> Sim (2005, p.101) relies here mainly on Mowery (2002, p.100-105).

<sup>17</sup> This is of course a circular argument. Sim (2005, p.103) writes: "But how realistic is [a conversion] in the light of recent studies that Matthew is vehemently opposed to Roman imperialism and those who enforce it?"

of Man and trust them to find all they are supposed to gather from the ends of the earth.

Sim's view of the final judgment in Matt 25:31-46 fits his interpretation of Matthew 24, but here, too, questions remain. Of course, among all the nations gathered before the king, Romans might feature as well, but they are not singled out. It is a judgment of all nations along the lines of Joel 3:1-12. The image of the gathered nations suggests that all these nations are at first mixed together. The king now proceeds to separate the just from the unjust. If one were, for argument's sake, to entertain the idea that the judgment scene is not about individuals but about Romans as a nation<sup>18</sup> separated from the others, Matthew would give no indication whether they would stand among the just or the unjust. And finally, when Carter and Sim argue so forcefully – and rightly – that the Roman imperial system only worked because of local collaborators, one would have to ask where they would stand if the separation was really along national lines.

But the separation is not along national lines but along the question of the just or unjust behavior of individuals. The text makes this clear when πάντα τὰ ἔθνη are gathered before the throne, yet the shepherd-judge proceeds to separate αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων. While the nations are a neuter noun, Matthew uses for those being separated the masculine form.<sup>19</sup> There is a separation not of nations but of individuals. If this is the case one cannot exclude the possibility of individual Romans among the just. Matthew gives no hint that the Romans in general, or even only representatives of the Roman imperial power, are to be counted wholesale among the goats.

Finally, the claim that the confession of the soldiers is sarcastic needs to be examined. When Sim argues that in Matthew faith always precedes the miracle, this is not quite correct. The miracle in 9:2-8 includes a reference to the faith of the paralytic, but this leads to the forgiveness of sins. The healing miracle itself is explicitly occasioned by the doubts of the Pharisees. Similar observations can

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<sup>18</sup> Sim (2005, p.99) seems to imply this when he writes: "This reference to all the nations recalls the mention of 'all the kingdoms of the world' that come under the influence of Satan in Matthew 4.8. Rome is therefore included in the final judgment before the Son of Man ... the Romans are destined to be sent to the eternal fire prepared for Satan and his angels (v.41)."

<sup>19</sup> See e.g.: Gundry (1994, p.512). He gives grammatical support to an otherwise widely held position (Nolland, 2005, p.1024; France, 2007, p.960). The position seems likely if we take into account that with regard to judgment over Jewish people Matthew distinguishes precisely between just and unjust. While this topic goes beyond the scope of this paper, reference should be made to Runesson (2016, p.207-339), who treats this at length.

be made about the Sabbath healing in 12:9-14. But the parallel to 9:2-8 is even more pertinent because Matthew includes a reaction of the onlooking crowds in 9:8: ἰδόντες ... ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεόν. Matthew now recreates this reaction in 27:54: ἰδόντες ... ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα, λέγοντες· ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος. Thus, Sim's argument from the structure of the confession is unconvincing. It is true that they are Romans. But being Roman is not sufficient to prove bad intent.

Matthew has structured the passage after the death of Jesus quite clearly. In 27:51-53 the events are described in a series of statements beginning with καὶ: the tearing of the temple veil, the earthquake, the opening of the tombs, the raising of the bodies, and finally their leaving the tombs. In 27:54 the series of καὶ comes to an end, while the centurion and his soldiers are introduced with ὁ δέ, indicating what is then made explicit, namely that the centurion and his men are commenting on the preceding events. Their statement is not isolated but closely connected to the preceding events. It is not at all plausible, then, that Matthew intends to describe the events following the death of Jesus accurately while subverting the statement of the soldiers. Sim's argument that the statement of the soldiers is a proleptic judgement scene does not convince.

Instead there are several pieces of evidence indicating that the soldier's confession is indeed meant to be a truthful one. The use of ἀληθῶς introducing the statement of the soldiers can hardly be understood as ironic, as indeed it isn't in Matt 14:33 or 26:73. This is supported by Matthew's addition of ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα, a phrase from the transfiguration account (17:6). There, too, the identity of Jesus as the Son of God was made manifest.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the soldiers are described as τηροῦντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν, a distinct change from Mark's παρεστηκώς. Matthew seems to interpret the guarding of Jesus as generating intense interest among the soldiers.<sup>21</sup> Finally, throughout the passion narrative Psalm 22 figures prominently. This is evident in Matt 27:35 (Ps 22:19), Matt 27:39.41 (Ps 22:7.8), Matt 27:43 (Ps 22:9). Now if Psalm 22 is one of the models along which Matthew offers an interpretation of the death of Jesus, the confession of the soldiers might well be an illustration of the end of the Psalm when "προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιόν σου πᾶσαι αἱ πατριαὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν ...

<sup>20</sup> Nolland (2005, p.1219-1220), points to a number of further similarities between the transfiguration and the crucifixion in Matthew. Thus the phrase here should not be viewed as accidental.

<sup>21</sup> See Liddell, Scott, Jones & McKenzie (1996, *ad locum*), similarly also Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich & Danker (2000, *ad locum*).

προσεκύνησαν πάντες οἱ πόντες τῆς γῆς" (22:28-30 LXX).<sup>22</sup> Such an interpretation places the soldiers alongside the magi (Matt 2:1-12), the Roman centurion (Matt 8:5-13) and the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21-28). The miracle following the sign of faith, if indeed this is a consistent literary strategy in Matthew, would be the resurrection.

With both Carter and Sim one gets the impression that the Roman empire is viewed as generally hostile, and that all Romans therefore are liable to judgment. Yet Roman imperial power and "the Romans" are not necessarily identical. Furthermore, there is extensive evidence to support the notion of sometimes rather friendly relations between Romans and non-Romans including Jews.<sup>23</sup> To claim that "as far as the Gospel is concerned, the world under Rome's control is a sick place" (Carter, 2001, p.71) is a bit of a stretch. This is one of the reasons that makes it worthwhile considering the views of Dorothy J. Weaver.

### Dorothy Jean Weaver

Carter and Sim wrote about Matthew's gospel as a document of resistance against the Roman empire. Dorothy Jean Weaver (2005) takes a rather different and more nuanced approach that serves well to bring some perspective to Carter's and Sim's claims. She looks at the Roman characters as they appear in Matthew's gospel and asks what can be gleaned from the evidence of their appearance in the narrative with respect to Matthew's attitude towards them and, by implication, perhaps about Matthew's attitude to Rome. Methodologically, Weaver chooses a double approach to these characters. She first looks at who Matthew presents, describing their normal activities and roles. In a second step she asks whether the way Matthew presents these figures points to some indications about the attitude the gospel tries to project.<sup>24</sup>

Weaver begins her "lower-level" analysis with the observation that the Roman figures appearing in Matthew's narrative are entirely male and military. Working her way up the command line from simple soldiers over centurions, the governor, and finally the emperor, she can show that the details that

<sup>22</sup> This suggestion has already been made by Gnilka (1986, p.II:478). See also Ziethe (2018, p.346-347).

<sup>23</sup> See Trebilco (1994, p.173-185) and Harland (2003).

<sup>24</sup> Weaver (2005, p.108-109), speaks here of a "lower-level" and "upper-level" portrait, following Muecke (1969, p.19-20). The distinction between lower level and upper level narrative recalls the distinction between story and discourse often used in narrative criticism.

Matthew provides color the soldiers in all their brutality. Part of this brutality is highlighted in the role of the soldiers and their commanders in the passion of Jesus. Weaver rightly points out that the graphic violence of the common soldiers is shared by those commanding them. The centurion is part and parcel of the group executing Jesus, while the governor is the one with the power over life and death and is prepared to use it to condemn an innocent Jesus. finally, Weaver reads the wrathful king in the parable of the wedding banquet as an image of the Roman emperor destroying Jerusalem (p.113). This image of Romans as part of an oppressive force is broken only by the wife of Pilate who is neither male nor military. Yet she appears as someone who obviously has enough authority to interrupt her husband's judicial proceedings with her request on behalf of Jesus. With the exception of Pilate's wife, the Matthean Romans are a portrayal of brutal military might.

Beginning her "upper-level" analysis, Weaver sees this monolithic portrait of the Romans break up to a considerable extent. "Instead, Matthew paints an astonishingly variegated portrait of these characters, mocking some of them ... and offering highest commendation to others" (p.114). The centurion of Matt 8:5-13 is the first of these characters who even astounds Jesus. While his military power is clearly stated, he is agitated and concerned about his *παῖς*.<sup>25</sup> He is just as anxious as all other supplicants coming to Jesus, and he proceeds to an act of submission to Jesus which is honored by Jesus with astonishment, with the healing, and with the highest commendation. Weaver notes that for Matthew's readers, this account would have been just as amazing as it was for Jesus (p.115).

The next person under investigation is Pilate. Basically, Weaver sees in Pilate an authority figure whose true powerlessness is unmasked at the trial of Jesus. Pilate is powerless to get Jesus to talk in his defence (Matt 27:12-14). Pilate places himself at the mercy of the jeering crowds when he seemingly abandons his own trial and offers them any prisoner they want (27:15), repeatedly "abdicating his authority to the wishes of the crowd ... leaving him powerless to adjudicate the trial" (p.116) himself. In the end, having created a riot rather than a just trial (Matt 27:24), Pilate gives in to the wishes of the crowds. And this continues even after the trial and execution when Pilate is forced to hand over a

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<sup>25</sup> The term may denote a child or a slave. The parallel in Luke 7:2-10, the person is called both *παῖς* (7:7) and *δοῦλος* (7:2-3.8). It may be that Matthew wants to emphasize that a centurion with many men under his command cares for a little one.

detachment of soldiers to the Jewish leaders who end up undermining the soldiers' allegiance to the governor (Matt 28:11-15). By the end of the story, Matthew has completely dissembled Pilate's authority and status. The seemingly powerful governor and representative of Rome has lost even the loyalty of his own soldiers. Weaver astutely points out that powerlessness does not constitute innocence (p.116). Despite his own protestations of innocence it is Pilate who hands Jesus over and declares the sentence, and at whose command the body of Jesus is handed over for burial. At the end, there is no absolution of commendation for Pilate. Rather, he serves Matthew's purpose of unmasking the powerlessness of Rome's agent.

Pilate's wife, a dreamer like the Joseph of Matthew 1-2, serves as a counter figure to her husband: a female and non-military figure, she recognizes that Jesus is innocent and acts on this without hesitation. The soldiers under the cross confessing Jesus are surprising figures, too. Weaver asserts the highly ironic twist that those whose purpose is to mock, torture, and crucify Jesus are the ones who at the climactic moment of the story are the ones to "proclaim the true identity of Jesus for all to hear" (p.122). And finally the guards at the tomb are exposed in their venality and corruption as they accept the bribe of the Jewish leaders to spread a lie that after being outmaneuvered by the angel at the at the tomb.<sup>26</sup>

Weaver succeeds admirably in showing that rather than condemning the Romans wholesale as representatives of an evil empire that will go up in flames at the last judgment, there are two levels in Matthew's narrative. Matthew does not shy away from showing what Roman imperial power means: brutality, oppression, ruthless exercise of power. On the other hand, Matthew subverts this view in two ways. He shows the powerlessness of Romans in the face of the confrontation with Jesus and God, yet he shows that even in the midst of such ruthlessness conversion is possible. Matthew reckons that even Romans can become disciples and brothers and sisters in the ἐκκλησία of Jesus. Thus Weaver has shown that "Matthew's overall portrait of the Roman characters within his narrative is 'round' and realistic rather than 'flat' and ideologically driven" (p.126-127).

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<sup>26</sup> Weaver (2005, p.124) does not point this out, but these soldiers are a striking parallel to the way Pilate makes himself subject to the will of the Jewish leaders and crowds.

## Summary

The now decades-long push to see the Gospel of Matthew within the larger social framework of Judaism reconfiguring itself after the destruction of Jerusalem has been a healthy and necessary corrective, although one might argue that some have gone too far in placing the gospel within Judaism.<sup>27</sup> Carter and Sim have drawn attention to another dimension of Matthew's world by asking how this gospel would have been read within the wider context of a culture colored by the everyday experience of life under Roman rule. Yet Carter's and Sim's wholesale claims of an entirely negative attitude towards Rome are certainly overstated. The claim that the world under Rome is a sick place is not nuanced enough to be convincing. This observation also calls into question Carter's claim that Matthew's end-time language reveals a tit-for-tat revenge mechanism which discredits the gospel's eschatology. It is perhaps fair to state that just as the case for Matthew's Jewishness can be overstated, so can the case for Matthew's opposition to Rome.

At this point Weaver's observations become a necessary corrective. Her approach of looking at individual Romans within Matthew's narrative proves that the gospel, far from advocating a wholesale condemnation of Rome, is much more nuanced in presenting Roman characters. When she asserts that Matthew's portrait of the Roman characters "is 'round' and realistic rather than 'flat' and ideologically driven" (p.127) she puts her finger on the weaknesses of Carter and Sim.

If Carter and Sim are right in pointing out the political overtones of Matthew's gospel, and if Weaver is right in her caution against a wholesale condemnation of the Roman empire, then the question arises again: Does Matthew have something to say about Roman power, and if so, what precisely does the gospel want to say?

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<sup>27</sup> Such criticism might be levelled at Blanton IV (2013) who tries to limit salvation to Torah obedience preached by Jesus, or Runesson (2016), who argues for an inclusion of Gentiles into the Matthean community with the obligation to keep Torah and circumcision: "For Matthew, being a disciple takes one form only, and that form is Jewish, a religio-ethnic position..." (p.36). While this is not the place to discuss such claims, it may be permissible to observe that such studies miss the massive christological claims of the Gospel right from the beginning which go way beyond any Jewish messianic categories. There is a major difference between establishing a supposedly perfect obedience to Torah and establishing Jesus as the perfect interpreter and fulfiller of Torah which such approaches ignore (Repschinski, 2014). In the end, the risen Jesus commands his disciples to teach the whole world all that he has commanded them, not what is written or given in the Torah (Matt 28:20).

## 2 Two Ways: Power or Service

A good starting point for an investigation into Matthew's attitude towards Rome is 20:25-26. The passage fits into a series of pericopae dealing with the question of authority. In 19:13 children are brought to Jesus, to the dismay of the disciples. Jesus rebukes his disciples, for the kingdom of the heavens belongs to such children (19:14). From 19:16 onwards, Jesus engages in a discussion about earthly wealth and its usefulness for entering into eternal life (19:17). This eternal life is about accumulating treasure in the heavens (19:21) and seems to be related to entering the kingdom of the heavens (19:23) which is synonymous with the kingdom of God (19:24). The ensuing dialogue with the disciples ends with the saying about the last and the first.

The kingdom of the heavens is then compared to the οἰκοδεσπότης (20:1) who proves so generous to those who work in his vineyard that some workers grumble and develop ὁ ὀφθαλμός ... πονηρός, the evil eye contrasting with the goodness of the householder (ἀγαθός, 20:15). It is this contrast which is capped with another reference to the first and the last, thus holding the parable and the account of the rich young man and the discussion about wealth together. The householder exemplifies the attitude to wealth and money that eludes the rich young man.

Into this context Matthew places the third passion prediction (20:17-19) which describes the fate of the Son of Man as one being handed over to Jewish authorities who will judge him and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified.<sup>28</sup> Yet on the third day he will be raised. Taken together within the context, the passion prediction prophesies what has been stated before: somebody who is considered last in human terms will be first. The dialog with the mother of Zebedee's sons reinforces this notion. She applies what is known about places of honor at a king's table to the kingdom of Jesus. Yet Jesus points out that such a question is really beside the point. Instead, he asks the two disciples whether they can drink the cup he is to drink, obviously a reference to the coming passion of Jesus (cf. 26:39). Furthermore, he points out that even discipleship unto death will not secure places of honor (20:23). Thus,

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<sup>28</sup> There are a number of Matthean redactional changes compared with Mark 1:32-34. Most are relatively minor, concerned with lessening the disciples' fear and clarifying who mocks and flogs and finally crucifies Jesus. The most significant change is the insertion of the parable of the generous vineyard owner between the rich young man and the passion prediction.

the Matthean Jesus separates the usual trappings of honor connected with well-known kingdoms from discipleship and its rewards in a kingdom of Jesus.

The narrative then develops into a summarizing teaching for all disciples. It offers a stark contrast between earthly rulers on the one hand, and the disciples on the other hand: οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν. οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται ἐν ὑμῖν (20:25-26). Matthew may or may not imply an abuse of power by the intensification with *κατά* of both verbs describing the activity of the rulers.<sup>29</sup> Matthew describes the fact that some people exercise power over others, and that this is a seemingly normal but not ideal condition. Such a situation, however, should have no place among the disciples. Matthew uses the future tense ἔσται.

Occasionally, this future tense is interpreted in an imperatival way (Nolland, 2005, p.823). But this is somewhat misleading. While the present tense carries a clearly defined aspect of an action in progress, the verbal aspect in the future tense is much less clearly defined. Morphologically, the future tense is related to the subjunctive.<sup>30</sup> This makes it a curious cross between a tense and a mood. Thus, the future tense may be best viewed as the grammatical expression of an expectation that may or may not lie in the future. More important is that it formulates the way things ought to be.<sup>31</sup> With regard to the passage under consideration, Matthew plays on a contrast between a present and tangible experience dominated by the powerful and an expectation where the powerplays of rulers and great ones have no place in a community of disciples. This contrast is not one between a present and a future state of affairs, rather it is a contrast between how things play out in the present, and how things ought to be from the perspective of the speaker.

<sup>29</sup> See the survey of Clark (1980), who finds no connotations of oppression. In the LXX the findings are somewhat different: κατακυριεύειν is used to translate a variety of terms: כבש (Gen 1:28; Sir 17:4), ירש (Num 21:24; 32:22, 29), דדה (Ps 109:2), or משל (Ps 118:133). Some of these instances suggest violence and injustice, others do not. κατεξουσιάζειν does not occur in the LXX. (Luz, 1985-2002, p.III:163 n.25), leaves open whether injustice and oppression are included.

<sup>30</sup> And they sometimes occur together in the same clause; in Matthew there are four occurrences: 5:25; 7:6; 13:15; 27:64. Perhaps 24:35 should be counted as well.

<sup>31</sup> The imperative sense is not completely disregarded, it merely recedes to a subtext. The future tense is an "enigma" and "rather than temporal values, *the future form grammaticalizes the semantic (meaning) feature of expectation*" (Porter, 1999, p.43, emphasis original). This statement raises significant interpretative issues for the row of future tenses in the passion prediction (5:18-19: παραδοθήσεται ... καὶ κατακρινούσιν ... καὶ παραδώσουσιν ... καὶ ... ἐγερθήσεται). A lengthy discussion of verbal aspects in Greek with a special reference to the future tense in chapter 9 can be found in Porter (1993).

The contrast Matthew creates is also defined by a difference in the personnel involved: On the one hand there are the οἱ ἄρχοντες ... καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι who use their powers to their own ends. But Matthew does not seem to suggest that they are going to go away, or are going to be defeated. Rather, they are the negative foil against which a different reality defined by the ideas of service and slavery will be realized ἐν ὑμῖν. Matthew does not speak of one group replacing the other, he speaks of parallel realities.

This, however, implies that Matthew's Jesus does not expect rulers and the powerful to disappear. He merely suggests that their ways have no place within the community of disciples. One may recall that in another place, Matthew's Jesus speaks of the disciples as a lamp on a stand or the salt of the earth (5:14-16). As the disciples are a counter-sign to the world, so here a community in which service to one another forms the principle of common life is designed as a counter-sign to the powerful.

Matthew describes those subscribing to the ways of the rulers and the powerful in very general terms. The rulers of peoples and the great ones (οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν ... καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι) are mentioned in the plural. While Matthew's earliest readers might have had some idea that the Romans and their system of governance are a glaring example of tyranny, Matthew does not name them explicitly. Instead he uses a plural which abstracts from concrete examples and rather puts the finger on structures that seem endemic to the world regardless of the particular group profiting from them. While Matthew does point to a probably abusive exercise of power and authority he does not seem interested in naming particular culprits. Instead he identifies structures to be avoided by the community.

Furthermore, Matthew does not resolve the contrast between power and service. The gospel does not urge resistance, nor does it envision that the contrast becomes a conflict in which the two sides clash violently. The context of the third passion prediction suggests otherwise: Jesus is handed over to chief priests and scribes who are the powerful in Jerusalem (20:18). His victory consists not of resistance but of submission in the trust that God will raise him on the third day (ἐγερθήσεται, 20:19). For the disciples this process of submission becomes an example on which to model their own submission to one another (20:28).

That such a way of dealing with structures of power may not be obvious to everyone is encapsulated in the disciples' misunderstanding. The Zebedees ask

for seats of honor, the others become angry with them as a rather ironic consequence. But serving and being a slave for one another is the way the Matthean Jesus expects his disciples to "drink the cup" that he drinks in his passion.

In the end, one has the impression that Matthew creates two different worlds altogether. On the one hand, there is the world of the powerful who, in the end, will commit violence to Jesus. While the two sons of Zebedee might find at least part of this world attractive, the Matthean Jesus leads them into another world that is characterized by being *διάκονοι* and even *δοῦλοι* to one another. These worlds exist in parallel, but just as the world of the powerful will not be able to overpower Jesus in the end, so the world of the disciples will not reach out to the powerful. Service remains to one another within the community.

The examples of the children brought to Jesus, the discussion about wealth, and the parable of the generous owner of the vineyard all serve as preparatory illustrations of the more abstract discussion of the difference between the ways of the powerful and the life within the community of disciples. At the same time, they point out that the behavior patterns described with *κατακυριεύειν* and *κατεξουσιάζειν* posit a very real temptation to the disciples as well. Jesus needs to teach them repeatedly that their task is to become *διάκονοι* and *δοῦλοι* as the perfect way to enter into life (see 19:17.21).

### 3 The Choice

So far we have seen that in Matt 20:25-26 Matthew paints a picture of a community of disciples characterized by service to one another which stands in clear distinction to rather generalized rulers and great ones exercising power over others. This generalization in the description of political authority can be found elsewhere in the gospel.

When Matthew's Jesus is tempted by the devil, one of the temptations concerns the power over kingdoms. During the final temptation the devil shows Jesus *πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν* (4:8). The first temptation concerning the bread takes place in the desert, the second concerning the fall takes place at the top of the temple, while the third takes place on a very high mountain. Thus the temptation of the splendor of the kingdoms is marked

as the climax of the story by the steady topographical rise.<sup>32</sup> Worldly power, so Matthew, seems to be the strongest temptation the devil has to offer. The offer also implies that the kingdoms and their splendor are at the beck and call of the devil; this certainly includes the Roman empire. Jesus refuses the offer seemingly because of the condition attached, namely devil worship. Jesus contrasts the demand of the devil with the scriptural command to worship God, and to serve him. Matthew's specific interests in the dialogue between the devil and Jesus are visible at two quite important points.<sup>33</sup>

The request for worship by the devil contains two verbs, one of them in participle form: "πεσὼν προσκυνήσης μοι" (casting yourself down,<sup>34</sup> worship me). In the answer of Jesus, again two verbs are employed: προσκυνήσεις ... λατρεύσεις, this time in parallel as predicates in a future active indicative. The two verbs clearly reflect Deut 6:13; 10:20.<sup>35</sup> It is quite possible that the addition of the participle in the demand of the devil is an attempt to parallel and contrast the demand and the response. We have a rather symmetrical arrangement: πεσὼν προσκυνήσης (devil) and προσκυνήσεις ... λατρεύσεις (Jesus). In the center stands προσκυνέω, but its meaning is explained very differently by the two protagonists. While for the devil it is the submission implied by πεσὼν, for Jesus worship means λατρεύειν.<sup>36</sup> Matthew distinguishes between a devil who commands worship in terms of abject submission, while God commands a worship expressing itself in terms of service. On the side of submission is the

<sup>32</sup> It has become usual to look at Q as the source for the temptation in Matthew; see e.g. Stegemann (1985). Comparison with Luke 4:1-13 reveals how much Matthew has shaped the story to his own purposes, including the ordering of the temptations; for some, this indicates Matthean independence from Q (Wilkins, 1982), who detect a Matthean creation of a scribal dispute modelled on the desert temptations of Israel. While the conclusions may not convince, the Matthean redaction of the passage is extensive.

<sup>33</sup> I assume the original material to be part of Q. However, since I am quite sceptical concerning the possibility of a reliable reconstruction of Q, evidence of a Matthean redaction of Q is, to my mind, hypothetical. What is evident, however, is the striking difference in the scripture quotation of Jesus which, in turn, influences the request of the devil. More confident reconstructions of Q exist (Carruth & Robinson, 1997; Robinson, Hoffmann & Kloppenborg, 2000). The arguments of Petrie (1959), however, are still worth considering.

<sup>34</sup> This translation follows the suggestion of Liddell (1996, *ad locum*), interpreting πεσὼν as a voluntary act. The word is missing from Luke 4:7.

<sup>35</sup> The differences to Deut 6:13 and 10:20 (κύριον τὸν θεόν σου φοβηθήσῃ καὶ αὐτῷ λατρεύσεις καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν κολληθήσῃ καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ὁμῆ) are easily explained. The LXX has four verbs, yet the context of taking an oath is not relevant here. The substitution of προσκυνήσεις for φοβηθήσῃ is most likely a direct result of the demand of the devil.

<sup>36</sup> The verb is demanded by Deut 6:13.20; however, it meshes well with Matt 20:25-26 since its meaning is originally not cultic as suggested by the KJV. Originally it refers to work for hire or slavery (Liddell, 1996, *ad locum*).

devil with all the kingdoms of the world, on the side of service stands Jesus with the authority of scripture, and ultimately God.

It is intriguing that Matthew speaks of kingdoms in general and does not single out the Roman empire specifically, even though such a connection might suggest itself. Rome, after all, did rule the known world at the time, and it did so through a number of client kingdoms and dominions. But in a border province like Syria other kingdoms might have been a constant presence: Parthians, Scythians, perhaps even Ethiopians must have been known empires (Horsley, 2003, p.31-34). But the formulation *πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου* suggests that Matthew is not interested in a statement concerning Rome in particular, but rather in a statement about the way the world is ruled in general. Again, Matthew aims not at a particular instance but at the structures undergirding not just the Roman empire but all kingdoms in general. When Matthew does name kings who exemplify his analysis of worldly power, the gospel mentions Herod the Great (Matt 2) and Herod the Tetrarch (Matt 14) without even alluding to their status as client kings of Rome.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps, then, it is fair to say that Matthew here takes a stand on the powers of the world rather than any particular kingdoms or kings governing it (Nolland, 2005, p.166-167). It is a world that needs the light the disciples can provide (5:14) with the gospel (26:13).

This has at least two consequences. Firstly, such a generalization does not seem to leave room for fine distinctions or grey areas. Matthew paints with a broad brush. All the kingdoms of the world are a symbol for the devil's demands of submission, while scripture, and Jesus relying on it, realize that true worship comes to fruition in service. There is no in between. Secondly, there is a distance between the kingdoms of the world and Jesus, and those who will later be associated with him. Jesus offers an either-or decision to his disciples. There is no room for maneuvering. The only contact between those kingdoms and the disciples will be when the disciples will be dragged before kings because of Jesus (10:18).

## 4 Come In

As Carter has pointed out, the gospels use the kingdom language to provide their readers with an alternative vision that counter-balances the experience of

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<sup>37</sup> On Herod the Great and his role as client king see Richardson (1996); Vermes (2014).

imperial violence. Matthew's case is particularly striking. Reasons for this are that it contains more references to God's kingdom than any of the other NT writings;<sup>38</sup> but beyond this, in 32 instances Matthew shapes the kingdom language by using the phrase "kingdom of the heavens."<sup>39</sup> Matthew is most certainly the early Christian text which makes the most out of a metaphor that was central to the teaching of the historical Jesus.<sup>40</sup>

Matthew's preference for the "kingdom of the heavens" is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is quite clear that Matthew adapts this phrase from the Markan phrase "kingdom of God." A telling example is the rewording of the initial proclamation of the Markan Jesus from ἡγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (Mark 1:15) to ἡγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (Matt 4,17). Furthermore, while Matthew does not avoid the expression "kingdom of God" completely the gospel uses it sparingly and prefers "kingdom of the heavens."<sup>41</sup> Thus Matthew introduces a spatial aspect into the kingdom language that shapes how the gospel can talk about the kingdom and how it can associate or dissociate other parts of the gospels narrated world with the kingdom.<sup>42</sup>

Secondly, Matthew's use of heavens as the qualifier of a kingdom meshes well with another feature of the gospel: Matthew quite consistently calls God the "father in the heavens" (12 times) or "heavenly father" (7 times). The only one in Matthew's gospel who is in heaven is not a king, even if the heavens are home to a kingdom as well. The language is not imperial but familial. It is the disciples who are to realize that God is their father. They can become children

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<sup>38</sup> This becomes even more striking if one takes the relative length of the pertinent NT writings into account. The statistics are well known: There are no less than 103 occurrences of βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ and its variants in the NT. Of these, 50 occur in Matthew, 14 in Mark, and 39 in Luke (Luz, 1985-2002, p.1:37; Du Toit, 2000).

<sup>39</sup> A significant number of scholars have argued that Matthew wanted to avoid naming God out of respect for Jewish traditions. Yet such an argument fails since in Greek, θεός is not really a name for God despite its occasional use in the LXX to translate יהוה. Pamment (1981), has argued that the kingdom of God language refers to the present, while the kingdom of heaven language refers to an imminent future. Gundry (1994, p.43), proposes that the kingdom of the heavens emphasizes the sovereignty of God more than the kingdom of God. While both arguments fail, they do point out that Matthew creates more than mere stylistic variations on a theme, as argued by Davies & Allison (1988-1997, p.1:391-392). A more recent suggestion (Foster, 2002) sees the formulation as part of a larger heavenly language complex trying "to undermine the criticism of the leaders of formative Judaism by impugning their character and their relationship to God" (p.499), and to legitimize the Matthean community as a credible Jewish alternative.

<sup>40</sup> On Jesus' teaching of the kingdom see Meier (1994, p.237-507).

<sup>41</sup> The formulation ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is exclusive to Matthew, while there are merely four certain instances of βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ; Matt 6:33 must remain in doubt because of uncertainty in the manuscript tradition.

<sup>42</sup> Matthew introduces with the phrase a topography for the kingdom absent from other gospels. Topographies in general are enormously important as a tool to create part of the narrated world of a writing; they have become an intensely studied topic in recent years (Bosenius, 2014).

of the father in the heavens (5:45) and ought to be perfect like him (5:48). The relationship is somewhat exclusive. Those who see the good works of the disciples will give praise to the father in heaven, but the Matthean Jesus adds that it is "your father" (5:16), leaving open the possibility that God is also the father of those who see the works of the disciples. Furthermore, the father is one who sees what the disciples do and pray in secret, quite apart from other Jews or Gentiles who practice their piety in public (6:1-16).<sup>43</sup> In times of persecution the relationship becomes so close that the father will speak in defense of the disciples (10:20) and does not wish for even the smallest one to be lost (18:14).

Thirdly, the gospel's use of a spatial qualifier for the kingdom allows for a further development. As we saw before, Matthew puts a distance between the power structures of worldly empires and the demands of service in the community. With regard to the kingdom that distance is reinforced by spatial markers.<sup>44</sup> Matthew reconfigures the kingdom as one in the heavens where there resides a heavenly father who wishes to relate to the disciples. He knows what they need (6:8.32), he is forgiving in the measure the disciples themselves are forgiving (6:14), and he is willing to give good things (7:11). The kingdom of the heavens and the father within it are at a distance from whatever happens in the βασιλείαι τοῦ κόσμου. The realm of the heavens is removed from the realm of the world. The difference between the two is marked by the way the father in the heavens treats the disciples with care and consideration (5:30-31), while the rulers and great ones of the kingdoms of the world lord it over others. Matthew's stark condemnation of the kingdoms of the world in all their splendor is supplemented by a vision of a kingdom in the heavens where a caring father dwells.

The connection between the caring father and the kingdom becomes tangible in the promises offered to the disciples. During the last supper, after the conclusion of the new covenant with the disciples, Jesus prophesies that he will not drink from the fruit of the vine until he can drink it together with the

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<sup>43</sup> Foster (2002, p.491), unwisely contrasts this familial relationship between father and disciples with Jewish authorities only. Matt 6:7 indicates otherwise.

<sup>44</sup> There is some scholarly debate about whether the kingdom as Matthew uses it is to be understood more in terms of a reign of God, present already in this world, or of a realm in a more territorial understanding. Both positions have their strengths (McIver, 2012, p.97-101). I do not think that both meanings should be played against each other. The parables of Matt 13 seem to favor both, with the parable of the sower, or the tares assuming a more territorial aspect, the parables of the mustard seed, of the treasure in the field, and of the pearl favor a kingdom in the sense of a reign. However, Matthew's dominant designation of the kingdom as "in the heavens" certainly reinforces the territorial understanding.

disciples in "my father's kingdom" (26:29). The kingdom of heaven is not just an alternative vision to the kingdoms of the earth, it is a promise to the disciples. This promise is offered in the scene of the last judgment as well: those who are blessed by "my father" will "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (25:34).

A further marker sets the kingdom of the heavens apart: the κόσμος contains a number of kingdoms which are in competition with one another. When the devil puts before Jesus all the kingdoms and their splendor, Matthew reveals this splendor as transitory. When the Son of Man comes, nations will fight against nations, kingdoms against kingdoms (24:7).

Both, the promise of being in the kingdom of the heavens, and the mutual fights of the kingdoms of the world are connected with the eschatological vision of Matthew which has apocalyptic overtones. Yet the question remains whether it is the kingdom of the heavens which does battle against the kingdoms of the world.

## 5 No Final Showdown?

There is a palpable tension between Matthew's peaceful moral vision of non-retaliation and love for enemies (5:38-48) and a divine eschatological vengeance meted out in the parables of judgment.<sup>45</sup> For Barbara Reid, the real question is how to understand the nature of God: "Does God at the end-time set aside compassion and engage in vindictive violence?"<sup>46</sup> Or, to ask more pointedly, does Matthew's gospel project an end-time in which the kingdoms of the world are vanquished by the greater power of the kingdom of the heavens? Or perhaps it is precisely the divine vengeance and the violent end of the world and its powers that legitimizes a non-violent ethics for the present time? Does

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<sup>45</sup> See Reid (2004), who analyzes eight different parables of which four are unique to Matthew's gospel. The four unique ones are the parable of the tares among the wheat (Matt 13:24-30 and its interpretation in 13:36-43), of the dragnet (13:47-50), of the unmerciful servant (18:23-35), and of the final judgment (25:31-46). The other four parables are of the rebellious tenants (21:33-46), of the wedding banquet (22:1-14), of the faithful and unfaithful servants (24:45-51), and of the slaves entrusted with their master's wealth (25:14-30). Reid discusses possible explanations for the violence in the parables, among them traditional material, teaching material for morally not fully developed disciples, or the denial that the persons acting out violent retribution are not representing God. She finally settles for the thesis that in the face of unrepentant evil divine retribution seems acceptable to Matthew.

<sup>46</sup> Reid's (2004, p.253) answer to this question is somewhat less than satisfactory; she claims that the gospel does not resolve this tension and calls on systematic or constructive theology to provide an answer. For a fuller discussion and critique see Neville (2013, p.23-32) or Repschinski (2016).

divine wrath at the end of time give hope to those suffering from violence and reacting with non-violence in the present time?<sup>47</sup> However, there are a number of indications in the gospel that this is not so.

The first point relates to literary genre. The literary setting for these portrayals of divine wrath is that of parables. Parables have the unique ability to present simple images and metaphors or just plain good stories which, on closer examination, reveal themselves to be much less simple to interpret.<sup>48</sup> Thus the image of a father giving his son a snake instead of bread (Matt 7:10) is a simple image, yet at the same time it is strangely disturbing and provocative. Many parables do not intend to describe reality, they overstate it. This seems particularly true for the eschatological parables and the stories they tell. These parables are certainly harsh to the point of being troublesome and offensive to modern sensibilities, but "they are not realistic descriptions of judgment" (Snodgrass, 2008, p.31). They want to provoke a reaction in the hearers that leads them to view their everyday actions with the urgency of an eschatological perspective.<sup>49</sup> They teach about human responsibility. In a sense, the violence in these eschatological parables should be viewed as the literary motivation which is designed to lead readers to accept an ethics of forgiveness, mercy, and good deeds.<sup>50</sup>

A second point relates to the Christology of the eschatological parables. As Ulrich Luz noted, in most of the eschatological parables it is Jesus who figures as the judge. However, this Jesus is well known as the one who as Immanuel will bring forgiveness to his people (1:21-23). One might assume that this Immanuel will reveal himself as a merciless judge at the end-time, but it seems more plausible to assume that the expected harsh judge of the end-time will reveal himself as the Immanuel who speaks of the mercy and forgiveness God is prepared to offer (Luz, 1985-2002, p.III:544-561). The Matthean Jesus who preaches a life of non-retaliation and non-violence (5:38-47) and lives it to the point of his violent death only to be vindicated in the resurrection is the hermeneutical frame for the parables of violent judgment. Jesus and his fate are

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<sup>47</sup> "Disciples can endure non-violently in the meantime because, in the end, God will punish the opponents" (Carter, 2005, p.100). The book of Revelation indicates the possibility that martyrdom is an invitation to participate in and precipitate the divine violence meted out at the end of time (Middleton, 2018).

<sup>48</sup> Classic is the statement of Dodd (1961, p.5): "... arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought ..."

<sup>49</sup> See Zimmermann (2007), who speaks of an "Apellstruktur" of the parables.

<sup>50</sup> "For most parables, what comes at the end is the clinching indicator of intent" (Snodgrass, 2008, p.30). See also Repschinski (2016, p.329-330).

the normative frame for the gospel. It puts the stories of violent endings into perspective (Neville, 2013, p.31).

A third point lends credence to the second. The eschatological discourse in Matt 24 is an interpretive minefield. Problems arise because of the disciples' question in 24:3 which seems to address the destruction of the temple in the first half and the coming of the Son of Man in the second. It is difficult to ascertain where exactly Jesus ends answering the first part, and where he begins addressing the second part.<sup>51</sup> Of particular difficulty is the place of 24:29-31 because Matthew suggests that the appearance of the sign of the Son of Man follows εὐθέως (immediately) after the days of tribulation connected with the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>52</sup> Yet the connections between 24:30 and the verses in which the παρουσία of the Son of Man is expressly noted (24:3.27.37.39) suggest that 24:29-31 is part of the Matthean end-time vision of the coming of the Son of Man, a theory supported by the extensive quotations of and allusions to texts of the Hebrew bible.<sup>53</sup>

The final coming of the Son of Man in Matthew 24 does have some apocalyptic overtones. Cosmic signs signal the collapse of the world, and a loud trumpet will sound, apostasy occurs. These are part of "apocalyptic commonplaces" (Carey, 2016, p.87). Yet notably absent from the παρουσία of the Son of Man are notions of judgment, of judge, or of sentence.<sup>54</sup> Matthew seems to follow a different agenda with the connection of the destruction of the temple and the eschatological appearance of the Son of Man. Obviously, the question of the disciples in 24:3 already connects the two issues. In a further step, Matthew has the signs and persecutions connected with the fall of Jerusalem lead immediately (εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων, 24:29) to the catastrophe of cosmic disintegration heralding the coming of the Son of Man. This catastrophe is comparable to the great flood (24:37-39). The catastrophe may be inevitable, yet it is neither judgment nor a sign of some form of divine end-time vengeance.<sup>55</sup> Even Matthew's version of the Noah reference is muted when compared to Luke 17:26-30. The first obvious

<sup>51</sup> A summary of this discussion and various solutions can be found in Neville (2013, p.32-33).

<sup>52</sup> This suggests that the destruction of the temple and end-time expectations are closely related.

<sup>53</sup> In Matt 24:29: Is 13:10; 34:4; in Matt 24:30 Dan 7:13-14.

<sup>54</sup> Runesson (2016, p.51-52), thinks differently and includes 24:22.31.37-34.45.51 in his list of judgment texts. The last one is the parable of the faithful and faithless servants. The other texts do not speak of judgment at all, since there is no judge, nor is there a sentence.

<sup>55</sup> Against Neville (2013, p.35), who takes up an argument brought by Davies & Allison (1988-1997, p.III:380). Neville points to the Noah reference as evidence for eschatological vengeance.

difference is that Matthew's version lacks the reference to Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and sulphur raining from heaven to destroy all. Secondly, instead of Luke's ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου Matthew uses ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Matthew avoids the suggestion that whatever happens will happen during the days of the Son of Man and that the Son of Man is the one bringing this about. Rather, Matthew emphasizes that at the coming of the Son of Man these things will be revealed. There is no judgment, only revelation.

The coming of the Son of Man as a revelation more than a judgment accounts for another peculiarity of Matthew's eschatological vision: there is no final battle between good and evil. While such a battle is often a feature of apocalyptic eschatology, the focus of interest in such literature lies more on the imagining of the world to come as opposed to a hostile world experienced by the readers or writers of apocalyptic literature (Murphy, 2012, p.9-12). Matthew falls into this latter category. The gospel is not interested in the final struggle, it is interested in the end of time as a point at which the Son of Man will send out his angels to gather his elect at the sound of a trumpet (24:31). While the elect are gathered, the fate of the wicked remains unclear at this point.

This accounts for another Matthean peculiarity of the eschatological discourse. The Son of Man and his sign never touch down on the earth. They come on clouds, with great power and glory (24:30), an image owed to Dan 7:13-14. Yet the Danielic vision includes dominion over all peoples, a topic Matthew does not seem interested in. Instead, the Son of Man who remains in heaven, sends out (ἀποστελεῖ) his angels, in order for them to bring up (ἐπισυνάξουσιν) the elect (Murphy, 2012, p.9-12). The distance between heaven and earth remains even in this eschatological vision.

Matthew 24 uses two phrases which have occasionally been interpreted as signs of battle. The first of these is the τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ (24:30). Such signs can indicate a military standard, and this interpretation has been applied to Matthew as the most plausible interpretation, particularly in connection with the trumpet of 24:31 (Glasson, 1964).<sup>56</sup> Matthew can connect the angelic host with military metaphors (26:53). However, the activity of the angels here is not a battle but a gathering of the elect who have overcome the times of tribulation. The sign of the Son of Man, like the Son of

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<sup>56</sup> Sim (1996, p.104-105), takes this up as the most plausible explanation: "For Matthew, the return of Jesus and his angels will be like the arrival of a mighty, heavenly army." Sim points to 1QM 2:15-4:17 as a close parallel.

Man himself, remains in the heavens and does not descend onto the earth while the angels gather up the elect. The distance Matthew has established between the kingdoms of the earth and the kingdom in the heavens remains.

But beyond this, it seems that the σημεῖον carries different overtones. In Matt 12:38-39 scribes and Pharisees are asking Jesus for a sign, but they are not given one except for the sign of Jonah. However, the sign of Jonah is not a military standard but is interpreted in terms of the resurrection of Jesus. Matt 16:1-4 repeats the demand for a sign and gives a similar answer. In 24:3 the disciples ask Jesus for the sign of his coming, and Jesus answers first with a warning of others producing great signs and wonders (24:24). Finally, Judas betrays Jesus with a sign to those arresting him (26:48). While it is not impossible that Matthew uses different shades of meaning for σημεῖον, it places a strain on Matthew's general use of the word to assume a military significance here. Consequently, the σημεῖον of the Son of Man is probably not a battle motif at all.

A second phrase is interpreted by Carter in terms of an eschatological battle. After the appearance of false prophets and the warning not to believe them, Matthew inserts the saying about eagles gathering around a corpse: ὄπου ἐὰν ᾦ τὸ πτώμα, ἐκεῖ συναχθήσονται οἱ ἀετοί, Matt 24:28. At this point there has been no battle at all, and the sign of the Son of Man has not yet appeared in the narrative. Therefore, a reference to vanquished Romans would not be logical at this point, especially because there is no mention of many dead but only one corpse. Furthermore, there is enough evidence to suggest that eagles and vultures were two animals often confused or exchanged in the literature of antiquity. Particularly in the Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible vultures were replaced by eagles.<sup>57</sup> If one adds to this the thought that Matthew might have relied on sources here,<sup>58</sup> and if one takes the proverbial nature of the saying into account (Ehrhardt, 1953, p.68-72), the idea that the gospel is prophesying the defeat of Roman armies and the end of the Roman empire becomes tenuous at best. It is far more plausible to assume that the coming of the Son of Man is as unmistakable and as inevitable as vultures gathering

<sup>57</sup> See the excellent survey by Speyer (1976), esp. p.439-441 for the general confusion of vultures and eagles in antiquity, and p.454-455 for the list of the substitutions made by the Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>58</sup> The saying occurs in Luke 17:37 with some differences, mostly regarding word order but also the Matthean πτώμα instead of Luke's σῶμα as the gathering place of the birds in question. Matthew's version, therefore, suggests vultures rather than eagles. This is the usual translation, supported by the fact that the Hebrew נשר may refer to eagles and vultures alike (Dohmen, 2001; Bridge, 2003).

around a corpse. This interpretation also affords the connection with the preceding saying of the unmistakable lightning (Luz, 1985-2002, p.III:431-432).

Thus, the appearance of the Son of Man is not a final confrontation with the Roman empire. It is the separation of the elect from the kingdoms of the world which do battle against each other in the face of the real power coming from the heavens in order to gather the elect. The kingdoms of the world do not need to be defeated, they simply do not matter anymore. They consume themselves in conflict, while the elect are taken up into the heavens, where there is the true kingdom and the father within it. The Son of Man is not the judge of the kingdoms of the earth, he is not the executor of divine vengeance. He is the savior of the elect who delivers them from cosmic disasters, from wars and famines, from the persecution, which serve only to announce his imminent arrival. And when the Son of Man finally does become judge and king (25:31-46), his judgment is one based on works of mercy.

## 6 Conclusions

Matthew's gospel certainly knows of the hardships that go hand in hand with the forces of occupation. There can be little doubt that Matthew has no sympathy for Rome and its representatives. Certainly, political power is associated with the devil who offers it as a temptation to Jesus. But for Matthew, such an attitude towards the political realities of the time are part of a far larger conflict which goes beyond the Roman empire. Matthew does not envision the disciples of Jesus as people who are submitting happily to political authorities, as Paul might suggest (Rom 13:1-7). The gospel does not take the Roman empire as a given, as Luke might have done. Again, the gospel does not envision a group of enduring disciples waiting for God to take up arms in their defense, as Revelation expects.<sup>59</sup> While Rome might be the concrete and tangible oppressor for the Matthean communities, the vision of the end-times uses much broader strokes in depicting not a final victory over Rome but an eschatological passing of heaven and earth (Matt 25:35).

Matthew depicts a separation between disciples and political power structures. The disciples are to behave differently from kings and great ones, their community is the countersign to any kingdom or empire. They are to

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<sup>59</sup> For Paul see Stanley (2011), otherwise Pilgrim (1999).

embody a reality which is rooted in heaven rather than in the world. They pray for the coming of a kingdom not ruled by a king but by a merciful father. They strive to become as perfect as their heavenly father, and they do so by exercising non-violence and non-retaliation. They live in the hope that the kingdom of the heavens will come at the end of time when they are gathered up into the heavens by the Son of Man. In the meantime, however, they live by standards of non-violence and non-retaliation which signal their adherence to the kingdom of the heavens while at the same time resisting the values of the kingdoms of the world.

Matthew offers a scathing judgment on political power structures as associated with the devil. But the gospel does not preach violent resistance, nor does it offer some violent, divine retribution at the end of time on behalf of the suffering disciples. What Matthew does offer is the prospect of a heavenly kingdom brought about at the end of time by the Son of Man, the same Son of Man who undergoes suffering, violence, and death on the cross himself. Yet this is not the end of the story: the end of the story is that the suffering and crucified Son of Man is given all power in heaven and on earth (28:18).

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# The Appropriation of Isa 6:9-10 to the Parables of Jesus: Implications for the Synoptic Problem

Jonathan Lo  
Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

In all three Synoptic Gospels, the meaning and significance of the Parable of the Sower is closely linked to a reference to a passage of Hebrew scripture attributed to the prophet Isaiah. The quotation, Isa 6:9-10, is taken from a dialogue from the story of Isaiah's commissioning<sup>1</sup> to become a prophet. After Isaiah accepts his divine mission and consents to being sent, God gives him a perplexing message for the people of Judah:

“Go and say to this people: ‘Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.’ Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.” (Isa 6:9-10)<sup>2</sup>

The reference to Isaiah is directly linked to Jesus's teaching in parables in general, and the Parable of the Sower in particular.<sup>3</sup> This connection can be clearly seen by observing the placement of the quotation and by noting the contextual markers relating the Isaianic quote to Jesus' parables. The quotation of Isaiah is located within an ABA' chiasmic structure, (France, 2002: 193) sandwiched between Jesus's public narration of the Parable of the Sower and his private interpretation of the parable for his disciples.<sup>4</sup> It appears in a

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<sup>1</sup> It is debated whether this is a straight forward call/commissioning narrative or a story that telescopes the destruction of Judah.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, direct quotations from the Bible in this essay are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>3</sup> Luke makes the connection of Isaiah 6 to the Parable of the Sower explicit.

<sup>4</sup> The “Parable of the Soils” also appears in the Nag Hammadi Coptic Text, *Gospel of Thomas*, but there it stands in isolation, without the allegorical interpretation or the *crux interpretum*. Some have suggested that Thomas

paragraph that provides the *crux interpretum*, the “key to understanding this parable” (Snodgrass, 2008: 157), and perhaps, the reason why Jesus teaches in parables at all:<sup>5</sup>

- A. Jesus tells the Parable of the Sower Publicly (Matt 13:1-9; Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:5-8)
- B. *The Isaianic Quotation/ Crux Interpretum* (Matt 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10)
- A’. Jesus interprets the Parable of the Sower in Private (Matt 13:18-23; Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15)

The quotation of Isa 6:9-10 is introduced with a brief explanation of how it relates to Jesus teaching in parables. Mark’s version (Mark 4:11-12) is somewhat furtive; Jesus tells his disciples that while they have been given the mystery of God’s kingdom (τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ), everything is in parables (ἐν παραβολαῖς) to those on the outside *in order that* (ἵνα) “although seeing, they might see but not perceive...” Luke’s version of the Isaianic quotation is much more concise. Whereas Mark follows Isaiah’s tripartite structured: “Seeing, you will see but never see...” (Mark 4:12/Isa 6:9 [LXX]), Luke condenses the phrase into a doublet: “seeing, they will not see...” (Luke 8:10) Luke also omits the part of the quotation about the possibility of turning and being forgiven. In Matthew (Matt 13:10-17), the logical connection between the Isaianic quotation and Jesus speaking parables is made even more explicit. Matthew’s Jesus says: “For this reason I speak to them in parables, *because* (ὅτι) “seeing they do not see...” (Matt 13:13) After following Mark in quoting a bit of Isa 6:9-10, Matthew asserts even more forcefully that the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled among those who reject Jesus’ teaching, and proceeds to recite a fuller and more precise quotation of Isa 6:9-10.<sup>6</sup>

Variations like these offer a valuable opportunity to study the Synoptic Gospels’ literary relationships with each other, and in particular, the citational patterns of each evangelist and what they reveal about the authors’ literary

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contains the most primitive form of the parable, with the addition of the interpretation as a secondary layer of tradition (Horman, 1979; Lane, 1974: 156; Snodgrass, 2008: 151).

<sup>5</sup> Arida (1994: 211); (Snodgrass, 2008: 171); Cf. Mark 4:10-12; Matt 13:10-17; Luke 8:9-10.

<sup>6</sup> Hultgren (2000: 462-463).

intentions and habits. The different ways in which the evangelists appropriated the Isaianic text also enables us to see how they might have understood and applied that text to serve their own literary purposes within their respective theological frameworks. There are numerous publications on the use of Isa 6:9-10 in Matthew, Mark, and Luke within the area of intertextual studies—but this paper will attempt to steer the conversation in a different direction, towards the area of compositional theory. As interesting as this pericope is for studying the use of the Hebrew scriptures in the New Testament, it also provides many insights for enhancing our knowledge regarding the Synoptic Problem. In the words of David Wenham, who attempted a similar project on the interpretation of the Parable of the Sower, “Would a different solution to the Synoptic Problem make better sense of the text?”<sup>7</sup>

The fact that there is an obvious interrelationship between Matthew, Mark, and Luke in this passage, and that a clear reference to a known Hebrew scripture can be ascertained, provides a good foundation for asking further probing questions about the gospels and the nature of their composition. In this paper, I will begin with a discussion of why Markan priority still makes the best sense of the literary relationships in this pericope. I will then discuss the potential source material of the Isaiah quotation and survey the differences between the MT, LXX, and Targumic versions of the text. Next, I will survey the differences between the Synoptic Gospels in their use of Isa 6:9-10 and discuss the factors and motivations that may account for the variation. I will review the original context of Isa 6:9-10 and give an account of how each evangelist is appropriating Isaiah within their own narratives about the Parable of the Sower. Finally, I will discuss the implications such an investigation yields for the Synoptic Problem by testing three leading hypotheses within Markan Priority (the Two Document Hypothesis, the Farrer Hypothesis, and the Matthew Conflator Hypothesis) to see whether such citational patterns can be used to challenge or give traction to competing theories of authorship and composition.

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<sup>7</sup> Wenham’s (1974: 299) conclusion from investigating the Synoptic interpretations of the Parable of the Sower passages is that there was a pre-Markan source that all three evangelists knew, and that Mark is dependent on GMatthew (!), and that GLuke is dependent on Mark and Matthew (Wenham, 1974: 318–319; Wenham, 1972).

## 1 Introductory Issues

In each of the gospels, the Isaiah quotation is a crucial part of Jesus's response to a question posed by his disciples. The striking similarities between the three versions of the story lead to the suggestion that there is some sort of literary dependence present.<sup>8</sup> The same details, wording, and sequence of events can be found in each gospel: 1) the disciples ask Jesus a question about the parable/parables; 2) Jesus responds by telling them that they are privileged to be given knowledge about the mystery of the Kingdom of God, and 3) the scripture of Isa 6:9-10 holds the answer to why Jesus speaks in parables. The three versions also show a high degree of correspondence in terms of both vocabulary and sequence. For example, in terms of vocabulary, the words “parable” (παραβολή), “give” (δίδωμι), “mystery” (μυστήριον), and “kingdom” (βασιλεία) appear in all three gospels. In each gospel version, the disciples ask Jesus a question, to which he responds in the same way, followed by a quotation of Isa 6:9-10. The gospels resemble one another to high degree, but what is the literary relationship between the three gospels?

### Markan Priority?

There are several factors that favour the Markan Priority hypothesis, and many interpreters of the Parable of the Sower take this view.<sup>9</sup> While the Matthean version is the lengthiest, this is because it includes an additional verse that is located elsewhere in Mark and the addition of some double tradition material.<sup>10</sup> Upon closer analysis, it is Mark's version that contains the most detail—Matthew and Luke are likely to be edited and abbreviated accounts that improve and condense Mark's language and remove extraneous information (Nolland, 1989: 377; Snodgrass, 2008: 152) For example, Mark mentions that it was not only the Twelve who ask Jesus a question, but also those “who were around

<sup>8</sup> Pace Linnemann (1992: 155–176)

<sup>9</sup> (Dungan, 1999: 340–341; Fitzmyer, 1985; Hultgren, 2000: 183) Pace (Farmer, 1964: 200; Wenham, 1972: 8)

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Matt 13:12 // Mark 4:25: “For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.” Double Tradition material: Matt 13:16–17 // Luke 10:24: “But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.”

him.”<sup>11</sup> Matthew and Luke do not make such a distinction and simply refer to both as one group, the disciples. Similarly, Mark describes Jesus speaking parables “to those who are outside [the group]” (τοῖς ἔξω), whereas Luke refers to them as “to the rest” (τοῖς λοιποῖς), while Matthew simply has “to those people” (ἐκείνοις). Comparing Luke’s version to Mark’s, it can be seen that the Luke has condensed Mark’s language by using fewer words, adding the infinitive γινῶναι but omitting the phrase τὰ πάντα γίνεται.

Mark (17 Words)	Luke (14 Words)
ὕμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω ἐν παραβολαῖς <b>τὰ πάντα γίνεται</b>	ὕμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς

Figure 1: Luke's Version is Shorter than Mark's Version

Another example is that while Mark says that the disciples are given the mystery of the kingdom, both Matthew and Luke insert the infinitive “to know” (γινῶναι), making it the direct object of the verb δέδοται. The disciples are granted “knowledge” about the mystery of the kingdom, rather than being granted the mystery itself. This change makes better sense of the sentence’s meaning and improves its clarity.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, while the word “mystery” (μυστήριον) is in the singular in Mark, it is pluralized by both Matthew and Luke (μυστήρια). This subtle change also improves the grammar of Mark, because “mystery,” in context, corresponds to parables, which is in the plural. This change achieves agreement in number between the two subjects of comparisons.

<sup>11</sup> Marcus observes that the phrase “those round him” should certainly be assumed to include the Twelve (Marcus, 1986: 74).

<sup>12</sup> See also Marcus (1986: 86, n. 39)

Mark 4:11	Matt 13:11-13	Luke 8:10
“To you has been given the <b>mystery</b> of the kingdom...” (Singular)	“To you it has been given to know <b>the mysteries</b> of the kingdom...” (Plural)	“To you it has been given to know <b>the mysteries</b> of the kingdom...” (Plural)
“To them everything is in <b>parables</b> ...” (Plural)	“The reason I speak to them in <b>parables</b> is...” (Plural)	“But to others I speak in <b>parables</b> ...” (Plural)

Figure 2: Agreement of Number Between “Mysteries and Parables” in Matthew and Luke

Moreover, Mark’s Greek is a bit clumsy with regard to the disciples’ question and as a result it is unclear as to what exactly they were asking—this is something both Matthew and Luke attempt to improve. Mark uses the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, imperfect tense form of the verb ἐρωτάω with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun αὐτὸν functioning as the direct object, and the accusative case of τὰς παραβολὰς functioning as an accusative of respect or reference: (Wallace, 1996: 203) “The Twelve and those with Jesus were asking him *concerning* the parables.” It is noteworthy that “the parables” (τὰς παραβολὰς) is pluralized, because it means that the disciples were not necessarily asking Jesus about the meaning of the Parable of the Sower (singular); their question was a broader one about the parables in general (France, 2002: 193; 2007: 510) Matthew clarifies the disciples’ question by turning it into a question directly about the reason Jesus spoke in parables: “Why do you speak to them in parables?” (διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς;) Luke, on the other hand, who sees that Jesus will proceed to interpret the Parable of the Sower for his disciples in the following verses, changes the disciples’ question into one about the meaning of the Parable of the Sower:<sup>13</sup> “His disciples were asking him what [the meaning of] this parable might be.” (Ἐπηρώτων δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τίς αὕτη εἴη ἡ παραβολή.) In any case, the fact that Mark’s version is the most ambiguous suggests that it is the most primitive form of the question upon which Matthew’s and Luke’s versions both depend.

<sup>13</sup> Note that “parable” in Luke 8:9 is singular, as opposed to the pluralized form in Mark 4 and Matt 13. (Marshall, 1978: 321)

In addition to the above, Matthew and Luke appear to be dependent on Mark's text rather than quoting Isaiah directly. This can be determined on the basis of the language and sequence of ideas that appear in the quotation. When Mark's quotation is compared to the LXX version of Isa 6:9-10, some striking resemblances in terms of vocabulary and content can be observed. For example, the distinction between βλέπω as "seeing" and ὁράω as "perceiving" is maintained, as is the parallel between ἀκούω (hearing) and συνίημι (understanding). Isaiah's Hebrew and idiomatic use of an infinitive absolute with a verb form of the same root (שָׁמַעַ שְׁמַעַ) gives emphasis to the verbal meaning "שמע" ("you will surely hear") (Marshall, 1978: 322) This pattern is preserved in the LXX rendering of the Hebrew (Ἀκοῆ ἰκούσετε, βλέποντες βλέψετε) and also appears in Mark's quotation when describing both the hearing (ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν) and the seeing (βλέποντες βλέπωσιν). However, Mark also adapts and modifies Isaiah in some significant ways, and these adaptations are also found in Matthew and Luke.

### The Source Materials

In context, the words of Isaiah depict God preventing repentance so that a total destruction can come upon Judah in judgement for her rebellion and unfaithfulness.<sup>14</sup> The overall story serves to accentuate Judah's guilt and to provide a justification for God's punishment in the shape of Judah's eventual downfall. The "Commissioning of Isaiah" is a tragic story, because had the people of Judah listened to Isaiah and repented, they might have been spared the coming disaster. However, due to their dullness of mind and failure to perceive the obvious, they will be unable to heed Isaiah's warnings and are fully deserving of the coming judgment.<sup>15</sup> The crux of the story of Isaiah's commission is that Judah is guilty of rebellion against God and her idolatry has rendered her unable to understand and respond appropriately to God's message of salvation. Isaiah's prophetic task is a complicated one—he is to preach the message of God's salvation as well as the people's need for repentance even though he knows they will not be receptive to his preaching. Mark adapts and

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Isa 10:10-11; 31:7; 42:8; 44:9, 17; 45:16, 20; 46:1; 48:5; 57:13; 66:3 (Oswalt, 1986: 187–188).

<sup>15</sup> Isa 6 comes on the heels of Isa 1-5, where themes of hardening and impending judgment have already repeatedly surfaced. (Snodgrass, 2008: 159; Watts, 2017: 73–74)

condenses Isa 6:9-10 in several notable ways, but it is helpful to first look at the structure and content of the hypothetical source materials. Although Mark's language is similar to the LXX, it is also possible that he relies on a Greek text that was closer to the Hebrew or Targumic versions of Isaiah, or he produced his own translation (Lane, 1974: 158) For comparison, the MT, LXX, and Targum to Isa 6:9-10 are listed and compared below—each comprises two primary thought units surrounding the actions “Go and say...” and “Make dull...”.<sup>16</sup>

	Isa 6:9-10 (MT)	Isa 6:9-10 (Targums)	Isa 6:9-10 (LXX)
<b>Unit 1</b>	Go and say to this people: Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.'	Go and say to this people who indeed hears, but does not understand, and who indeed sees, but does not know.	Go and say to this people: In listening you will listen and never comprehend; and looking you will look and never understand.
<b>Unit 2</b>	Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed."	Make the mind of this people stupid, and make his ears heavy, and stop up his eyes lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their minds, and repent and it be forgiven them.	For the mind of this people is dull, and their ears are hard of hearing and they shut their eyes lest they might see with their eyes and hear with their eyes and understand with their minds and turn and I will heal them.

Figure 3: Comparing the MT, LXX, and Targumic Versions of Isa 6:9-10

Several important observations can be made. First, the passage begins with God commissioning Isaiah to speak to “this people,” and in the MT and LXX versions, the message he is to deliver. In the Targum to Isaiah, the message Isaiah is to speak is not mentioned; the hearing/seeing motif is a description of the people. Second, the Hebrew and Aramaic versions of Isa 6:9-10 also have a slightly different emphasis compared to the LXX. In the Hebrew and Aramaic, the prophet Isaiah has a role in hardening the people's hearts; his preaching will

<sup>16</sup> In addition to the MT, LXX, and Targumic versions, Isa 6:9-10 can also be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) and the Peshitta with minor variations.

make the people's minds even more dull as judgement against them (J. D. W. Watts, 2005: 109) In the LXX, this element is softened and downplayed; the prophet merely testifies to the people's rebellious condition that prevents repentance rather than causing it.<sup>17</sup> Third, a chiasmic pattern can be observed within the second thought unit in all three versions, in which mind, ear, and eye are in parallel to each other:

- A. Make the **mind** of this people dull
- B. Stop their **ears**
- C. Shut their **eyes**
- SO THAT
- C'. so they may not look with their **eyes**
- B'. And listen with their **ears**
- A'. And comprehend with their **minds**

Fourth, in both the MT and the LXX versions, second person verbs are used in the first section, while both second person and third person verbs are used in the second section. This is because the first section contains the message that Isaiah is to deliver to the people in direct speech format: "Go and say to this people: "(You) Keep listening, but do not comprehend; (You) keep looking, but do not understand..." The second section continues with God's command to Isaiah to "make their hearts dull" as well as commentary *about* the people, and thus third person verbs are used. "Make minds of the people are dull... lest *they* do not look with their eyes or hear with their ears, etc." In the Targum to Isaiah, Isaiah's direct speech is removed and articulated with the third person verb, so that both sections use third person verbs: "Go and say to this people, *who* surely hears but do not understand..."

Finally, the second section concludes with a startling revelation—had the people repented and heeded Isaiah's warnings, they might have been healed from their idolatrous condition and spared the coming disaster. The Targum to Isaiah understands "healing" to be a metaphor for forgiveness and renders the Aramaic translation as such. The language of blindness and deafness connotes the Isaianic theme of idolatry by evoking an image of an idol that is fashioned

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<sup>17</sup> (France, 2002: 200; Hagner, 2000: 374).

in human likeness (e.g. possessing sensory organs like the eyes, ears, and mouth) but lacks the ability to see, hear, and speak.<sup>18</sup> Those who engage in idolatry are described as resembling idols because even though they have eyes and ears, they do not really see or hear; they fail to acknowledge God (e.g. Isa 1:1-3) and they do not understand him (e.g. Isa 6:10; 44:18)—they are devoid of spiritual insight (Marcus, 1986: 104) For this reason, God’s eschatological deliverance of Judah is described in terms of a healing of the sensory organs and a restoration of the ability to sense, to perceive, to understand.<sup>19</sup> The description of a people whose “eyes are shut” and whose “minds do not comprehend” in Isa 6:9-10 also appears in Isa 44:18 in connection to those who make idols and who worship them:

“All who make idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit; their witnesses neither see nor know. And so they will be put to shame. Who would fashion a god or cast an image that can do no good? Look, all its devotees shall be put to shame; the artisans too are merely human... *They do not know, nor do they comprehend; for their eyes are shut, so that they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand*” (Isa 44:9-11, 18).

Isa 44:18	Isa 6:10
They do not know, nor do they comprehend; for <i>their eyes are shut, so that they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand.</i>	Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and <i>shut their eyes, so that they may not look</i> with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and <i>comprehend with their minds</i> , and turn and be healed

Figure 4: Blindness and Deafness as the Language of Idolatry in Isaiah

The motif of a lack of perception and understanding is clearly associated with the lack of spiritual insight as a result of idolatry—even the similarity of language used to describe idolatry is striking:

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Isa 42:18-19; 43:8; 56:10. This theme can also be found in several other Hebrew scriptures, e.g. Ps. 115:3-8; 135:15-18; Jer 5:20-29; Ezek 12:1-6.

<sup>19</sup> For example, Isaiah 35:5 speaks of the day when “eyes of the blind being opened” and the “ears of the deaf unstopped.” See also Isa 29:18; 43:8. See also (Arida, 1994: 217)

Judah's eventual downfall is not because of God's indifference nor Isaiah's incompetence. The responsibility for the impending disaster falls squarely upon the shoulders of the idolatrous who reject God's message, which was intended to call them to repentance and salvation—but will now result in judgment. Rikki Watts asserts that: "In sum, Isa. 6:9–13 is Yahweh's judicial response, effected through the parabolic proclamation of his prophet, to an idolatrous Judah, whose protestations of faithfulness are belied by the leaders' rejection of Yahweh's instruction." (Watts, 2007: 152) Some scholars see Deut 29:2-4 as the inspiration behind the language of seeing and hearing in Isaiah: (Watts, 2007: 172)

Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear. (Deut 29:24)

Deut 29 is a pivotal moment within Israel's Exodus story. After Israel has witnessed God's mighty deeds with their own eyes, will they now choose covenant faithfulness to the word of God's commandment? How will Israel respond to God's mighty deliverance? According to deutero-Isaiah, in the same way that some chose not to respond to God's call to faithfulness in the first Exodus, there are those who will fail to respond to God in the New Exodus (Arida, 1994: 217; Marcus, 1999: 508) Hence, Isa 6, a text which recalls God's call to Israel to be faithful during the first Exodus, became a "classic text" in Judaism for describing Israel's hardness of heart, inspiring other Hebrew prophets to describe the nation's rebelliousness and unfaithfulness using similar terms (Evans, 1989; Snodgrass, 1994: 40–41) It is perhaps not surprising that the Synoptic evangelists also used this passage to describe opposition to Jesus's teaching in the New Testament.<sup>20</sup> The fact that they were quoting Isa 6:9-10 and not Jeremiah nor Ezekiel can be ascertained through a comparison of the quoted texts with the original. Instead, the gospel quotations contain many formal, lexical, and grammatical similarities with the Isaianic text, with Matthew going

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<sup>20</sup> The connection of Isa 6:9-10 to the "hardness of heart" motif appears to be a common one. It is also used to refer to the disciples hardened hearts (Mark 8:18), the Jews' rejection of Jesus (John 12:39-40) and of Paul (Acts 28:26-27) (Evans, 1989; Hagner, 2000: 734; Osborne, 2010: 510–511).

as far to identify the quotation as “the prophecies spoken by the Isaiah” (ἡ προφητεία Ἰσαΐου ἢ λέγουσα) in Matt 13:14.

## 2 The Synoptic Use of Isa 6:9-10

### Mark’s Use of Isaiah

In light of the above, although Mark shares some common vocabulary with the LXX of Isaiah, his quotation of Isaiah resembles more the sense of the MT and Targumic versions, where the speech of the prophet plays a more prominent role in confounding the listener. Mark’s use of Isaiah is periphrastic; (Snodgrass, 2008: 153; Watts, 2017: 72) he condenses and adapts the Isaianic text in several distinctive ways to incorporate it into Jesus’s saying, so that when we see these features in Matthew and Luke, we know they are using Mark’s quotation rather than directly quoting Isaiah (Watts, 2007: 151)

MT	LXX	Targums	GMark
Go and say to this people: <b>Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.</b> Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, <b>so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears,</b> and comprehend with their minds, and <b>turn and be healed.</b>	Go and say to this people: <b>In listening you will listen and never comprehend; and looking you will look and never understand.</b> For the mind of this people is dull, and their ears are hard of hearing and they shut their eyes <b>lest they might see with their eyes and hear with their eyes and understand with their minds and turn and I will heal them.</b>	Go and say to this people who <b>indeed hears, but does not understand, and who indeed sees, but does not know.</b> Make the mind of this people stupid, and make his ears heavy, and stop up his eyes <b>lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears,</b> and understand with their minds, and <b>repent and it be forgiven them.</b>	[for those on the outside everything is in parables in order that...]  <b>They may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.</b>

Figure 5: Mark’s Use of Isa 6:9-10

What Mark does is to transpose Isaiah's "going and saying to this people" with Jesus speaking to the crowds in parables. He then quotes the second half of Isa 6:10 while using the language of verse 9 to describe the actions "seeing" and "hearing." Mark takes the language of the direct speech Isaiah is to deliver to the people in verse 9 ("hearing, you will hear but not understand...seeing you will see but not perceive...") and inserts it into the last clause of verse 10, changing both the person of the verbs (second to third) and the chronological order (putting "seeing" before "hearing"). (Marcus, 1986: 76)

Markan scholar Rikki Watts has suggested that the order of seeing before hearing might reflect Mark's interest in "sight" in relation to Jesus' healing miracles; (Watts, 2007: 151) however, the dominant metaphor in Mark 4 is not "sight" but "hearing."<sup>21</sup> The transposition might have taken place simply because it is the order that appears in verse 10. Originally, the second colon mentions the mind, ears, and eyes with this poetic arrangement: mind -> ears -> eyes -> eyes -> ears -> mind. Mark ignores the chiasmic structure and begins his quotation with "eyes" at the last part of the sentence and omits the minds being made dull.

Isaiah: **mind -> ears -> eyes -> eyes -> ears -> mind**

Mark: **mind -> ears -> eyes -> eyes -> ears -> mind**



\*but uses the ear/eye pairing from verse 9

Another, more likely, possibility is that Mark also has in mind other passages that contain this motif, such as Jer 5:21 and Ezek 12:2, which have "seeing" before "hearing."<sup>22</sup> For example, in Mark 8:18, when Jesus asks the disciples if they have eyes but "fail to see," and if they have ears but "fail to hear," Mark is

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Mark 4:9, 12, 15–16, 18, 20, 23–24, 33 (Swartley, 1994: 53; France 2002: 184; Green 1997: 322–323; Snodgrass, 2008: 152).

<sup>22</sup> According to Snodgrass, both Jer 5:21 and Ezek 12:2 are borrowing from the language of Isa 6. (Snodgrass, 2008: 153–154)

more clearly drawing upon the language of Jeremiah and Ezek rather than Isaiah, although all of these texts are related thematically.<sup>23</sup>

Mark condenses Isaiah's text and applies what was said about those who failed to understand Isaiah's message to those who do not now listen to Jesus. Mark applies the prophetic irony of Isaiah's commission to the ministry of Jesus, in that his apparent failure was foretold.<sup>24</sup> The logic of the Isaiah passage is that the prophet's speech will *further* harden a rebellious people's hearts, eliminating any possibility of repentance and forgiveness until the decreed judgment is unleashed (Watts, 2007: 152). The passage is both tragic and ironic, because it underscores the pitiful condition of a recalcitrant people who choose to be obstinate to the very end, despite repeated warnings that should be simple to understand. Mark associates Jesus's teaching in parables to Isaiah's divinely commissioned message. Due to the people's hardened hearts, Jesus's teaching, which should have been the means to their salvation, will now become unintelligible to them, ensuring their eventual and deserved destruction. In the same way that the people in Isaiah's day ignored the prophet's message at their own peril, those who do not heed Jesus's message will meet a similar fate.<sup>25</sup> In terms of narrative sequence, the Parable of the Sower, to which the Isaiah quotation is appended, proceeds from the Beelzebul controversy (Mark 3:22-35), an event that prompts Jesus to begin teaching in parables.<sup>26</sup> The Jewish scribes from Jerusalem "see" Jesus cast out demons but fail to "perceive" that he does this on behalf of God; the story concludes with Jesus announcing that they are guilty of an eternal sin and will not be "forgiven." (Lane, 1974: 157; Watts, 1997: 194-210)

Prophetic warnings like the one found in Mark 4 occur throughout the gospel, and they usually appear alongside quotations of Hebrew Scripture. In Mark's prologue, the gospel is presented through the lens of God's salvation as portrayed in Isa 40 as well as God's judgment as described in Mal 3. In the story of Jesus causing a disturbance on the Temple premises, Jesus alludes to

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<sup>23</sup> Other texts that make use of this motif, such as John 12:39-40 and Acts of Thomas 1:82, also have "seeing" before "hearing."

<sup>24</sup> Hurtado (1983; Jones, 1995: 299; Dodd, 1961: 4; France, 2002: 201)

<sup>25</sup> Snodgrass emphasizes the function of Jesus's parables as "prophetic instruments," the language of the OT prophets in contexts of judgment and indictment (Snodgrass, 2008: 159).

<sup>26</sup> See also Bailey (1998: 172).

Jeremiah's warnings against the Temple when he calls it a "den of thieves." Likewise, the parable of the vineyard in Mark 12 is a devastating condemnation against the present ruling Jewish authorities, further reinforcing Mark's intention to make one's response to Jesus the determining factor of whether one is included within God's kingdom and plan of salvation. Despite the ability of the parables to further confound those who are rebellious towards God, Mark's Jesus repeatedly invites his listeners to "hear" ("let those who have ears, hear!" Cf. Mark 4:9, 4:15–16, 18, 20, 23–24, 33). The controlling metaphor in the Parable of the Sower has to do with hearing; the action of the various types of soils receiving the sown seed is an image for hearing the word of God. Mark's Jesus is also portrayed as performing miracles that include the healing of the deaf (Cf. Mark 7:32, 37; 9:25). In light of this data, the perplexing quotation of Isa 6, used in connection with the Parable of the Sower, has two major functions that are crucial to Mark's overarching themes and emphases (Beavis, 1989) First, it is a sobering condemnation against those, especially the Jewish religious authorities, who reject Jesus and his proclamation of the kingdom of God (Dodd, 1961: 146) Just like their ancestors who were also rebellious towards God and unable to understand Isaiah's message, now too are they standing against God and unable to understand Jesus's teaching. On the other hand, the promise of healing and forgiveness remains for those who are receptive to Jesus; there was a remnant in Isaiah's day who escaped God's wrath and the same hope remains for those in Jesus's day who "have ears to hear" (Snodgrass, 2008: 160).

### Luke's Use of Isaiah

As suggested earlier, Luke seems to be dependent on Mark's quotation rather than quoting Isa 6:9-10 directly. This can be seen by the language and sequence of actions in Luke 8:10, which resembles that of GMark rather than Isaiah. Like GMark, "seeing" precedes "hearing," and the verbs are altered from 2<sup>nd</sup> person to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. Luke's version is also a truncated version of GMark that omits the second section; there is no mention of turning or being healed or forgiven. However, Craig Blomberg cautions against mistaking "stylistic redaction" for

“theological redaction.”<sup>27</sup> For example, although it appears that Luke has omitted GMark’s “lest they should turn and be forgiven,” he may just have moved this idea to the following section, in the interpretation to the Parable of the Sower that follows (Marshall, 1978: 321) In Luke 8:12, the ones “along the path” are those who hear the “word of God” but have it removed from their hearts by the devil—their fate is that they will not “believe and be saved.” Luke also abbreviates GMark’s “seeing, they might see and not perceive” to “seeing they might not see” and “hearing, they might hear and not understand” to “hearing they might not understand” removing the Semitic idiomatic use of repetition for emphasis (Guelich, 1989: 210) The result is a condensed and simplified version of GMark that does not appear to acknowledge the source of the Isaianic text nor understand its fuller meaning. (Hultgren, 2000: 464) On the surface, the barely discernible Isaianic quotation in Luke simply implies that Jesus speaks in parables in order to confound those on the outside without further explanation.<sup>28</sup> However, over against Mark and Matthew, Arland Hultgren notes that there are no clear “outsiders” or “those” to whom Jesus speaks parables in Luke—only the disciples and “the rest” (τοῖς λοιποῖς) (Hultgren, 2000: 464) But here, too, Blomberg’s warning against confusing stylistic changes for theological ones is also pertinent. In the Acts of the Apostles, a work considered by most scholars to be written by the same author as the Gospel of Luke, (Green, 1997: 6–11) the rejection of Paul by the Jews in Rome is also depicted in terms of Isa 6:9-10 (Garland, 2011: 344) In Acts 28:25-27, Luke identifies the Jews who reject Paul with those who reject the prophet Isaiah, and he produces the entire text of Isa 6:9-10 (LXX version) verbatim:

So they disagreed with each other; and as they were leaving, Paul made one further statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah, ‘Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their

<sup>27</sup> Blomberg cautions against mistaking “theological redaction” for “stylistic redaction” (Blomberg, 1990: 122–123).

<sup>28</sup> Nolland refers to Luke’s citation of Isaiah as “brief to the point of being almost cryptic,” and considers it to be more primitive than the Markan or Matthean parallels (Nolland, 1989: 380).

ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them.’ (Acts 28:25-27)

This suggests that Luke may have been aware of the Isa 6 text but decided to abbreviate Mark’s text, for reasons of expediency, or the content he omitted did not fit into his immediate literary concerns (Hultgren, 2000: 464; See also Marshall, 1978: 321) Remarkably, a comparison with other Lukan passages that are dependent on Mark shows a similar pattern. In Mark 1:2, Mark mentions the prophet Isaiah but includes a composite quotation of both Isa 40:3 and Mal 3:1. Luke acknowledges Mark’s reference to Isaiah and but omits the quotation of Mal 3:1, although it appears in a later pericope about John the Baptist in Luke 7:27. In the pericope where Jesus forbids divorce except in the case of adultery in Mark, it is accompanied with a reference to Gen 1:27; Matthew (Matt 19:4-5) includes this reference but it is absent in Luke’s account (Luke 16:18). Luke also abbreviates Mark’s quotation of Ps 118:22-23 (Mark 12:10-11) at the end of the Parable of the Vineyard in Luke 20—by contrast, Matthew follows GMark and has the full text. There are many unique Lukan passages in which the Hebrew Scriptures is quoted, but it appears that either Luke did not always understand or agree with Mark’s selection and interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, or he simply omitted them out of expediency and stylistic purposes (Blomberg, 1990: 106–107).

### Matthew’s Use of Isaiah

Like Luke, Matthew follows Mark’s quotation initially, so that “seeing” precedes “hearing,” but omits the second half of the quotation that mentions turning and forgiveness. However, unlike Luke, Matthew is cognizant of the fact that the quotation is from Isaiah, because after abbreviating Mark’s quotation, he explicitly identifies the source as being from Isaiah, and introduces a lengthy quotation of Isa 6:9-10 that is nearly identical to the version found in the LXX (Matt 13:14-15) (Osborne, 2010: 510) Throughout his gospel, Matthew tends to identify Mark’s usage of the Hebrew Scriptures and quoting that text more precisely. For example, when Mark mentions the “desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be...” in the Olivet discourse (Mark 13:14), Matthew recognizes this to be a reference to Daniel and mentions him by name (Matt 24:15). In Mark 1:2 when Mark mentions the prophet Isaiah but proceeds to give a composite citation that includes a text from Malachi,

Matthew likewise recognizes that the quoted text is not from Isaiah and removes the prophet's name. In Mark 13:26, where it says that they will see the Son of Man "coming in clouds," Matthew's version has "coming on the clouds of heaven" (ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), following more closely the wording of the LXX.

Where he does follow Mark's quotation of Isa 6:9-10, Matthew makes some notable changes to Mark's text. First, although he abbreviates Mark's "seeing, they might see and not perceive" and "hearing, they might hear and not understand" doublet the same way Luke does, the verb συνίουσιν (they do not understand) is taken out of the clause and made to stand on its own, with the result that in Matthew's version there are three independent verbs instead of two: they do not hear, they do not see, they do not understand. It is not difficult to see why Matthew might have adapted Mark's text this way. The tripartite pattern follows the section in Isa 6:10, where "understanding," "hearing," and "seeing" are listed separately. In other words, Matthew recognizes that Mark is quoting the second section of Isa 6:9-10 and not the first (where συνίουσιν belongs to the hearing clause) and attempts to insert συνίουσιν as an independent verb to mirror Isaiah's text more closely. Klyne Snodgrass has proposed that the addition of συνίουσιν may have been to draw attention to a "understanding with the heart," which is more than merely hearing and corresponds to Matthew's interest in the significance of Jesus's teaching.<sup>29</sup> He writes: "Whereas Mark asks, 'Do you really hear Jesus' message?' Matthew asks, 'Do you really understand with your heart?'" (Snodgrass, 2008: 152).

Matthew also changes Mark's ἵνα that introduces the quotation with a ὅτι so that all the subjunctive mood verbs are also changed to the indicative mood. This is a change that alters the function of the Isaianic quotation. In Mark, the ἵνα conjunction means that Jesus tells parables in order to confound those who reject his message.<sup>30</sup> In Matthew, the ὅτι conjunction denotes that Jesus tells parables *because* the people do not hear or see or understand, emphasizing their existing rebellious nature (Hultgren, 2000: 462) The people's hardness of heart *prior* to the prophet's preaching is already implied in the Hebrew and Aramaic

<sup>29</sup> (Hultgren, 2000: 463; Snodgrass, 2008: 173).

<sup>30</sup> According to Joachim Jeremias, ἵνα does not denote purpose but is a formula for introducing a quotation. Even if this is the case, Matthew has altered the conjunction to remove any ambiguity (Jeremias, 1963: 17). See also Lane (1974: 159).

versions of Isaiah, but the LXX and the Peshitta make this point explicitly (Watts, 2007: 152) In this regard, Matthew adapts Mark’s quotation in light of the LXX’s interpretation of Isa 6:9-10, which clarifies the reasons for God’s judgment upon Judah (Blomberg, 1990: 115) This is confirmed by the verses that follow, where Matthew unmistakably quotes from a Septuagintal form of Isa 6:9-10.<sup>31</sup>

Matthew 13:13	Mark 4:12	Isa 6:9-10
1) βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν και 2) ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ 3) συνίουσιν	1) βλέποντες βλέπωσιν και μη ἴδωσιν 2) και ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν και μη συνιώσιν	1) Ἀκοῆ ἀκούσετε και οὐ μη συνήτε και 2) βλέποντες βλέψετε και οὐ μη ἴδητε <hr/> 1) ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς και 2) τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν 3) τῇ καρδίᾳ συνώσιν

Figure 6: Matthew’s Reliance on Mark Versus Isaiah

As in the LXX, Matthew’s emphasis is on the deplorable condition of the people to whom the prophetic announcement is directed, rather than the agency of the prophet (Arida, 1994: 219; Hagner, 2000: 375) In Matt 13:14, Matthew’s

Isa 6:9-10 (LXX)	Matt 13:14-15
9 ... Ἀκοῆ ἀκούσετε και οὐ μη συνήτε και βλέποντες βλέψετε και οὐ μη ἴδητε. 10 ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, και τοῖς ὠσὶν αὐτῶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν και τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς και τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν και τῇ καρδίᾳ συνώσιν και ἐπιστρέψωσιν και ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.	14 ...ἀκοῆ ἀκούσετε και οὐ μη συνήτε, και βλέποντες βλέψετε και οὐ μη ἴδητε.15 ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, και τοῖς ὠσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν και τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς και τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν και τῇ καρδίᾳ συνώσιν και ἐπιστρέψωσιν και ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

Figure 7: Matthew’s Almost Verbatim Quotation of Isa 6:9-10 (LXX)

<sup>31</sup> Matthew’s quotation of Isa 6:10 omits the possessive pronoun αὐτῶν from “their ears.” The rest of the quotation is reproduced verbatim. LXX text taken from Rahlfs (2007).

Jesus says that those who reject his message now are fulfilling the words that Isaiah spoke about the recalcitrant Jews long ago. While this is the only occurrence of the verb ἀναπληρόω (“I completely fulfil”), the cognate verb πληρόω (“I fulfil”) is used a total of 16 times in Matthew, often in the context of fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets (ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται), the scriptures (αἱ γραφαί), or the sayings of the prophets (τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ...).<sup>32</sup> Matthew’s understanding of fulfilment has a typological function that goes beyond a simple prophecy-fulfilment schema, towards seeing how the Scriptures correspond to situations in his own time (Blomberg, 2007: 48) Klyne Snodgrass understands typology as “correspondence in history” and describes it thus: “Climactic events in Israel’s history become the paradigms by which new events are explained”(Snodgrass, 1994: 38). In the same way that the people of Judah failed to heed Isaiah’s message and fell under God’s judgement, those who reject Jesus’s message are in danger of meeting the same fate.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, just as there remained a remnant in Isaiah’s day, “a stump” that survives God’s judgment; so now can there be a people who remain faithful to God.

## Summary

In summary, at the point where the three Synoptic parallels converge concerning Isa 6:9-10, GMark contains the most detailed quotation, followed by GMatthew and then GLuke. Mark’s version contains details from both Isa 6:9 and 6:10, while Matthew’s and Luke’s quotations are limited to Isa 6:9 only. All three gospels reverses the order of the clauses “seeing” and “hearing” found in Isaiah (France, 2007: 512; Nolland, 2005: 535) All three adaptations of the Isaiah text change the person and mood of the verbs in order to appropriate the prophecy into their respective narratives. Mark and Luke both use the conjunction ἵνα to introduce the quotation, which emphasizes Jesus’s agency in hardening the people’s hearts, whereas Matthew uses ὅτι, which underscores the fact that the people’s hearts are already hardened, and the reason for God’s judgment. It is likely that both ideas of God’s agency in judgment and the people’s culpability are already present in the Hebrew scriptures as

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<sup>32</sup> Law & Prophets: Matt 5:17; Scriptures: Matt 26:54, 56; Prophetic sayings: Matt 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 3:15; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9.

<sup>33</sup> (France, 1971: 68).

demonstrated by the MT,<sup>34</sup> but the wording in the LXX and Peshitta are altered so as to highlight the people's stubbornness and downplay God's agency (Pao & Schnabel, 2007: 306).

Mark adapts Isaiah's text freely, omitting certain segments and combining other sections with creativity. Mark omits the beginning part of Isa 6:10a and details about the people's heart becoming dull. Although it looks like Mark has inverted Isaiah's "hearing" and "seeing," it is more likely that he follows the order of Isa 6:10b, which has the sequence: "seeing," "hearing," "understanding," "turning," and "being healed."<sup>35</sup> While Mark's wording is similar to that of the LXX, his quotation aligns more closely with the MT version that emphasizes God's agency in hardening hearts and the Targum that interprets "healing" to mean "forgiveness." Luke's quotation resembles Mark's text more than it does Isaiah's. Luke follows GMark's order of "seeing" before "hearing" but condenses Mark's/Isaiah's triplet structure into a doublet (Marshall, 1978: 322) Matthew's quotation attempts to edit Mark's jumbled Isaiah quotation by changing the grammar to preserve the "seeing," "hearing," and "understanding" triplet, before giving up and identifying the source and providing his own precise quotation of Isaiah from the LXX (See also France, 2007: 515) It is noteworthy that Matthew also takes the approach of the LXX towards the text by emphasizing the people's obduracy and downplaying God's agency in hardening the people's hearts.<sup>36</sup>

### 3 Implications of Citational Patterns for Synoptic Studies

These parallel passages provide a lens for observing the citational patterns of the Synoptic evangelists as a way to gain insight into their scribal behaviour and how they handle and adapt source materials. Synoptic scholars such as Robert Derrenbacker, Jr., for example, employ the study of scribal practices to evaluate

<sup>34</sup> Isaiah chs. 1-5 is God's uncompromising condemnation of Judah's unfaithfulness; Ch. 6 is God's judicial response to Judah's idolatry (Arida, 1994: 217).

<sup>35</sup> But see also the usual order of "seeing" before "hearing" in texts such as Deut 29:4; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2; Mark 12:39; Mark 18:8; *Acts of Thomas* 1:82.

<sup>36</sup> Observe also the pervasive theme of God hardening Pharaoh's heart in the Exodus, esp. Ex 4:21; 7:3, 13-14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12, 34-10:1; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17 (Drury, 1985: 41-42).

and enrich hypotheses of source and redaction.<sup>37</sup> These studies take into account the conventions and limitations of contemporary scribal activity, and depend on the assumption that the evangelists have a consistent literary style and method of adapting material (Garrow, 2016: 219) The study of citational patterns in the Synoptics with regard to the Hebrew Scriptures can be applied to this area of study by confirming the consistency of Synoptic scribal behaviour of the evangelists and the lending support to theories about scribal limitations and conventions.

The triple tradition text under study provides some useful insights for the study of the Synoptic Problem, because the text of Isa 6:9-10 gives us with one extra data point with which to triangulate our position. For example, these parallel texts provide a clear picture in favour of Markan Priority. If Matthew's gospel was composed first, then he would have included two separate quotations of Isa 6:9-10, one paraphrase that is in parallel with Mark and Luke, which transposes "seeing" with "hearing," and a fuller, more precise quotation. And then Mark would have had to omit Matthew's identification of Isaiah, as well as the fuller and more precise quotation in favour of the shorter paraphrase, which he then attempts to expand, albeit it imprecisely, while ignoring the full text of Isaiah that was already before him! Also, if Matthew was composed first, then Mark and Luke purposely changed Matthew's intention to draw attention to the obduracy of the people with the more obscure interpretation of Jesus speaking in parables *in order to* confound his listeners. In general, it is far more likely for the shorter and more difficult reading to be the original text, the one on which later versions attempt to expand and clarify.

Likewise, Luke would have had to omit Matthew's fuller quotation of Isaiah and choose the shorter version, the one that is more obscure and the order of which is mixed up (Garrow, 2016: 216) The data shows that, more likely, Matthew was attempting to improve upon Mark's quotation by aligning it closer to the Isaiah text, and then providing the actual text by way of elaboration. By the same logic, it is unlikely that Luke was written before Mark, because throughout this pericope Luke's language and grammatical expression is superior to Mark's. Luke mentions that the disciples are given "to know" the mysteries of the kingdom of God (Luke 8:10), this is a clarification of what

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<sup>37</sup> (Derrenbacker 2011., 435–458; Derrenbacker, 2005).

Mark says; it is much more difficult to think of why Mark would have omitted “to know” if Luke was original. A glance at the context of Luke 8:9-10 reveals that Luke’s language is terse compared to Mark’s; he tends to minimize Mark’s words in general, even outside of the Isaiah quotation. It makes better sense that it is Luke who uses GMark as a template after abbreviating GMark and improving upon his grammar and language (E.g. Farmer, 1964: 96) As mentioned earlier, even though GLuke contains many references to the Hebrew Scriptures, Luke tends to downplay Mark’s use of the Old Testament, abbreviating some of them and omitting others.

Mark’s understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures can be observed through his citational practices in this passage. Mark exhibits a loose and periphrastic style of citation that does not seek to preserve the grammar, structure, nor order of the source text. He also freely adapts the source text to fit his own literary agenda. Be that as it may, Mark’s seemingly haphazard mashup of Isaiah reveals a profound understanding of the theological context of Isa 6 that may not have been fully apparent to his Synoptic editors.<sup>38</sup> While Mark has vocabulary in common with the LXX version of Isa 6, his quotation aligns more closely with the MT and Targumic versions that emphasize God’s agency in hardening the people’s hearts. Mark’s allusion to the original sense of Isa 6 is significant because it is not merely a description of a dull and obstinate people using Isaianic language—it is an ironic declaration of judgment.

Isaiah’s announcement in the MT is a divine pronouncement of judgment against rebellious Judah; Mark clearly understands Jesus’s teaching to have a similar function. The Parable of the Sower gives various reasons for why someone might reject the “word” (Mark 4:13-20). Some reject it due to the trouble or persecution accepting it brings. Others are led astray because of “the cares of the world, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things.” Still others do not receive the word at all due to demonic influences. The irony is thick—the scribes from Jerusalem certify Jesus casts out demons by the power of Beelzebul, but Jesus says that their inability to understand him is because of Satan’s work in their lives. Jesus’ speaking in parables will function as judgment against those who see but do not see, who hear but do not hear. For those who have ears to hear, i.e. his disciples, more understanding will be given,

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<sup>38</sup> Luke alters the disciples’ question to link Isaiah 6 to specifically to the Parable of the Sower, rather than to all of Jesus’ parables.

but for those who refuse to listen, i.e. his enemies, even what understanding they have will be taken away (Bailey, 1998: 188; Watts, 2017: 78).

The comparison of the Synoptic use of Isa 6:9-10 appears to support Markan Priority, but what about the relationship between the other two gospels, Matthew and Luke? Under the umbrella of Markan Priority, three dominant theories have been proposed to explain the literary relationships between Matthew and Luke in relation to Mark: 1) The Two Document Hypothesis, 2) The Farrer Hypothesis, and 2) The Matthew Conflator Hypothesis. The Two Document Hypothesis is a variation on B. H. Streeter's Four Source Hypothesis, which proposes that Matthew and Luke are both dependent on Mark and Q but independent of each other. The Farrer Hypothesis and the Matthew Conflator Hypothesis are theories that do not require the postulation of a hypothetical documentary source such as Q. According to the Farrer Hypothesis, Mark was written first, Matthew second, and Luke, writing last, made use of both Mark and Matthew. The Matthew Conflator Hypothesis maintains that Matthew was written last, and conflated Mark and Luke with is other sources to compose his gospel. Each of these theories solve some problems while introducing others, and it is not the aim of this essay to decide which one is correct. I will also not be able to introduce or fully describe each theory. Instead, I will apply the observations of the current study on citational patterns to each of these theories as an experiment to see if anyone one theory makes the best sense of this particular data set of evidence, specifically with regard to Matthew's relationship with Luke. I will begin with the Two Document Hypothesis, followed by the Farrer Hypothesis, and conclude with the Matthew Conflator Hypothesis.

## The Two Document Hypothesis

The present study of citational patterns poses difficulties for the Two Document Hypothesis because of the "minor agreements" that exist between Matthew and Luke over against Mark.<sup>39</sup> For example, Matthew's knowledge of both Luke

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<sup>39</sup> E.g. The Healing of the Woman with a Haemorrhage [Matt 9:20 // Mark 5:27 // Luke 8:44], The Healing of the Paralytic [Matt 9:7-8 // Mark 2:12 // Luke 5:25-26], The Trial of Jesus [Matt 26:67-68 // Mark 14:65 // Luke 22:63-65] (Farmer, 1964: 94-177; Garrow, 2016: 222; Hultgren, 2000: 463; Marcus, 1986: 76; Snodgrass, 2008:

and Mark would account for why neither Matthew and Luke distinguish the Twelve from the rest of the disciples, why both omit Jesus and his disciples were alone, why both pluralize the word “mystery” and include the infinitive “to know,” and why both omit the final colon of Isa 6:10 that mentions repentance and healing. In the interpretation of the parable, both Matthew and Luke contain the detail about the seed sown in the listener’s “heart.” (Wenham, 1974: 310) (Matt 13:9 / Luke 8:12) During the actual quotation of Isa 6:9, Matthew and Luke resemble each other more than they do Mark.

Mark 13:10	Matt 13:13	Luke 8:10	Isa 6:9
ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν, καὶ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνιώσιν	ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν	ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες μὴ συνιώσιν.	Ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε·

Figure 8: Matthew and Luke over against Mark with reference to Isaiah

John Nolland, following Matthean scholar Ulrich Luz, has proposed that Luke and Matthew were relying on a separate common source, a pre-Markan text that contains these details,<sup>40</sup> and others have suggested that these minor agreements could be the result of coincidental editing,<sup>41</sup> but the cumulative evidence suggests that more likely other factors are at play. What if, as the Farrer and Matthew Conflator hypotheses suggest, Matthew or Luke did make use of the other?

150; Wenham, 1972: 27) These minor agreements can also be found in the Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower (Wenham, 1974: 310).

<sup>40</sup> Nolland admits that “[t]here are definite indications that Luke has utilized here another source along with Mark 4:10–12. These indications concentrate especially in v 10a where Matthew and Luke agree against Mark with ὁ δὲ εἶπεν, “he said,” the position of δέδοται, “has been given,” the addition of γινῶναι, “to know,” the plural τὰ μυστήρια, “the mysteries.” The use of βλέπωσιν, “they may [not] see,” in v 10b (cf. Matthew’s βλέπουσιν, “they do [not] see”) probably indicates that the second source also alluded to Isa 6:9 (most likely in a brief form like the present v 10b [cf Matt 13:13]). It is not possible to delineate further the scope of the second source or any context for it...” However, what if they are not dependent upon another source, but each other? (Nolland, 1998: 377–379, xxxi). See also Marcus (1986: 84–85; Snodgrass, 2008: 151; Wenham, 1974: 305)

<sup>41</sup> As Streeter proposed (Streeter, 1924: 295–331).

## The Farrer Hypothesis

The Farrer Hypothesis, introduced by Austin Farrer in 1955 (also now known as the Farrer-Gould-Goodacre Hypothesis),<sup>42</sup> proposes that Matthew was dependent on Mark, and Luke was dependent on both Matthew *and* Mark (See also McNicol, Dungan, & Peabody, 1996) David Wenham’s study of the Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower contends that the similarities between Luke and Matthew in that passage is “eminently compatible with the view that Luke knew and was influenced by the Matthean tradition, even when he diverges from it.”(Wenham, 1974: 312) Luke is an editor of Mark’s work—he removes unnecessary content (e.g. the condensing of “seeing, they might see but not perceive” to “seeing the might not see”) but will also add details to improve Mark’s clarity, either grammatically or semantically, when needed (e.g. the pluralization of “mystery,” the addition of “to know”).<sup>43</sup> If Luke was composed last and dependent on Matthew, it may be difficult to explain why Luke would knowingly disregard Matthew’s acknowledgement of Mark’s dependence on Isaiah and Matthew’s attempt to supplement Mark’s text with a more precise quotation. However, Luke also has a habit of truncating or removing Mark’s quotations of the Hebrew Scriptures that he does not believe to be essential or relevant to the context, and the quotation of Isaiah is a good example of this.<sup>44</sup> The fact that Luke uses Isa 6:9-10 again in its fuller LXX form in Acts 28:26-27 suggests that perhaps Luke was aware of the LXX’s understanding of the passage but decided to go with Mark’s version instead. The result of Luke’s editing is a more compact version of Mark’s text that has greater clarity and reflects Luke’s own literary concerns. Against Mark’s contention that Jesus’s opponents will never be forgiven, Luke’s gospel contains a programmatic plan of salvation, (Blomberg, 1990: 107; McNicol et al., 1996: 39) of which “forgiveness” is an important cornerstone.

However, there are factors that also undermine the theory of Lukan dependence on Matthew, rather than the other way around. First, In regard to

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<sup>42</sup> (Farrer, 1955: 55–88). In Farrer’s analysis, Luke is also dependent on Matthew, although he advocates the Griesbach hypothesis (2 Gospel hypothesis) and contends that Matthew was written first and Mark last (Farmer, 1964: 200–201).

<sup>43</sup> Horman (1979: 343).

<sup>44</sup> Luke’s “characteristic” omission of the OT proof text is also noted in McNicol et al. (1996: 34, 124)

the so-called “minor agreements” mentioned above—if they are to be taken to be evidence of conflation, that is, a third author combining elements of the previous two, then this would not be characteristic observed elsewhere in Luke’s writing. According to the Farrer hypothesis, Luke tends to separate, or “unpick” his sources rather than conflating them together. Second, Matthew’s text also includes a bit of double tradition material often ascribed to “Q.” After the lengthy Isaianic quotation, Matthew contrasts the recalcitrant people who do not listen with the disciples, whose eyes do see and whose ears do hear. (Matt 13:16-17) The disciples are blessed because “prophets and righteous people” have longed to see and hear what they can now see and hear, presumably the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven, as inaugurated by the figure of Jesus (See Lane, 1974: 158) This same passage can be found in Luke 10:23-24, with the exception that instead of “righteous people,” Luke has “kings” (βασιλεῖς) who longed to see what the disciples see. Instead of inserting this pericope within the *crux interpretum* of the Parable of the Sower, Luke places it after a passage in which Jesus thanks God for revealing himself through the Son. (Luke 10:21-22) According to the Farrer hypothesis, Luke would have intentionally displaced this paragraph into a different context, despite the correspondence of “seeing” and “hearing” with the Isaianic quotation in the Matthean arrangement. Furthermore, the strong emphasis on the privileged status of the disciples is a recurring theme in this passage—it is difficult to understand why Luke would have omitted this relevant passage. These observations suggest that perhaps another theory might provide a better explanation of the literary phenomena (Garrow, 2016: 222).

## The Matthew Conflator Hypothesis

The curious similarities between Matthew and Luke over against Mark that may also lend support to the “Matthew Conflator Hypothesis” (MCH),<sup>45</sup> a theory that reconsiders the possibility that Matthew might have been written last, and was dependent on Luke as well as Mark (Garrow, 2016: 222) According to the MCH, Matthew is written last among the Synoptics and is often motivated to

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<sup>45</sup> This view of Markan Priority/Matthean Posteriority was first proposed by Christian Gottlob Wilke in 1838: “Wilke thought that Matthew and Luke copied Mark, but that Matthew also copied Luke...” (Farmer 1964, 34 n. 54).

conflate related material from different sources, and even when he follows Mark he supplements it with material from Luke if he is able. Alan Garrow summarizes the implications of the MCH as such: “there are substantial obstacles to Luke’s use of Matthew; Matthew’s use of Luke is indeed an ‘obvious’ explanation for the Double Tradition; and the phenomenon of Alternative Primitivity does suggest the presence of an additional source or sources, ‘Q,’ used by both Luke and Matthew.”<sup>46</sup> In my view, the controversial MCH makes better sense of the observations in these passages than the 2 Document or Farer hypotheses under the traditional Markan Priority umbrella of compositional theories. One of the main reasons, in my view, is that Matthew’s version of the parallel passage is the lengthiest and the most complete. It makes more sense to me to see Matthew as the “last word” on the passage: rearranging Mark, supplying missing bibliographic information, providing a fuller quotation, etc., than for Luke to be a condenser of Matthew that omits important details.

Matthew’s scribal activity with regard to the pericopae surrounding the Parable of the Sower can be best described as a creative and interpretive conflation of materials to which he must have had ready access, perhaps by way of codices, giving traction to theories like the MCH. Compared to Luke, Matthew is more prone to deviate from Mark’s original meaning. Matthew does not follow Mark’s sequence too closely, instead he tries to make sense of Mark’s text by re-arranging it. He takes Mark 4:24-25,<sup>47</sup> the passage about “to those who have more will be given,” which appears after Jesus’s explanation of the Parable Sower in Mark and he places it within Jesus’s explanation for speaking in parables in his gospel (Matt 13:12) (Nolland, 2005: 534) In contrast, Luke follows Mark’s sequence much more closely and that passage is found in the same location as it is in Mark. Matthew’s access to some version of the LXX is also evident. He corrects Mark in favour of the LXX’s sense of Isa 6:9-10 and is able to reproduce a lengthy and precise quotation of Isa 6:9-10 that contains 47 Greek words. This type of scribal activity, going back and forth between Mark, Luke, the LXX, and perhaps other sources, is best undertaken

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<sup>46</sup> (Garrow, 2016: 226). Cf. Matt 11:10 / Luke 7:27.

<sup>47</sup> “Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.”

with the use of codices rather than scrolls, which were more cumbersome and demanded the scribe to work with one source at a time. These findings support the theory that Matthew was written later rather than earlier, at a time when codices were in use.

## Conclusion

After comparing the three Synoptic adaptations of Isa 6:9-10, I conclude that the data supports Markan Priority but undermines the Two Document Hypothesis insofar as Matthew and Luke were independently composed. As far as whether Matthew or Luke had the “final say” on this passage, the evidence can be used to support both the Farrer Hypothesis or the Matthew Conflator Hypothesis. The direction of influence can go either way. Either Luke was a redactor who condensed Mark’s text while inserting Matthean influences, or Matthew was a conflator who enriched Mark’s text with help from Luke. Given Matthew’s stylized structure and arrangement of the “Double Tradition” traditionally regarded as Q outside this passage, I would lean towards Matthew as the final author because it makes more sense for Matthew to amplify the existing tradition with an identification of the Isaiah context, rather than for Luke to intentionally remove Matthew’s contributions while retaining Mark’s jumbled quotation. Furthermore, in light of Luke’s tendency elsewhere to separate, rather than conflate, his sources, it is more likely for Matthew to be the conflator. Finally, the “Q” material in Matthew’s text is also more fitting to the context than its location in Luke, perhaps pointing to the fact that Matthew was the final redactor and not Luke. However, within the limited scope of this particular passage, both options are possible.

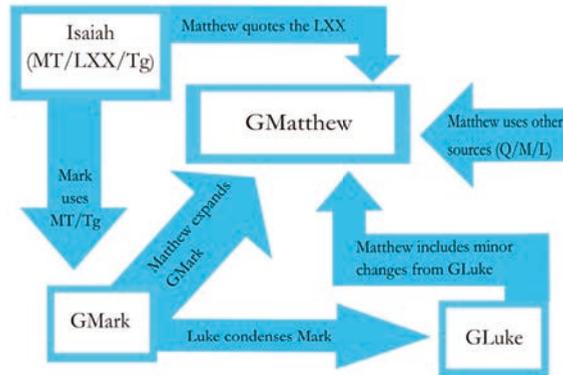


Figure 9: A Proposal with Matthew as the Final Redactor

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# Ἄνομια in Matthew: An Exegetical Analysis of its Meaning<sup>1</sup>

Masashi Sawamura  
Hiroshima Jogakuin University, Japan

## Abstract

Ἄνομια is an important keyword in the Gospel according to Matthew. A majority of scholars have claimed that Ἄνομια indicates the existence of an antinomian sub-group within the Matthean community, based on Matthew's harsh polemic against his opponents. Other scholars have asserted that Ἄνομια does not connote any specific teaching or attitude against the law, for there is no evidence that Matthew had ever confronted a threat from an antinomian group. Each of these arguments has some legitimacy, so that here we find an exegetical difficulty concerning the target of Ἄνομια in Matthew. This study attempts to solve this apparent contradiction through exegetical analysis of the usage of Ἄνομια in Matthew to show that his use of this term deeply reflects the Matthean polemical strategy and the purpose of writing his Gospel.

In the discussion about the polemic in Matthew's Gospel, the term Ἄνομια has often been treated as the clue to identify the background of Matthew. However, it is not clear from the context itself to whom Matthew is attributing Ἄνομια, and attempts have been made to identify the subject of the term.

This study attempts to examine this term in Matthew to find consistency in its usage and further try to clarify the meaning of this term in the aim of identifying the intention of Matthew in the polemic.

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## 1 Ἄνομία in the Septuagint

Ἄνομία is found 243 times in 230 verses in the LXX and the majority of the uses can be found within Psalms (80 times in 77 verses). The second largest number of instances is 49 times in 45 verses in Ezekiel and the third is 24 times in 23 verses in Isaiah.

In the LXX, ἄνομία corresponds to 30 different Hebrew words. Within this variety, four Hebrew words are most frequently translated as ἄνομία:

- יָצַח- the most frequent and found 63 times throughout OT, including 24 times in Psalms, the most frequent occurrence.
- הִתְעַבַּב- 25 times in Ezekiel along with only one instance in Jeremiah.
- יָצַח- 23 times in Psalms along with once each in Job and Isaiah.
- עָשָׂה- 19 times: nine in Isaiah, seven in Psalms and three in Job.

As this observation shows, ἄνομία does not have any established equivalent or consistent corresponding term in Hebrew. And those Hebrew words translated by ἄνομία have broader implications, including various kinds of iniquity, evil, wickedness and disobedience.

In addition, some translations seem to be equivalent to each other. For example, The combination of ἄνομία /יָצַח and ἁμαρτία /הִתְעַבַּב can be found in Neh 9:2; Ps 31:1, 5; 37:4-5; 37:19; 50:4, 5, 7, 11; 58:4; 84:3; 108:14; Job 10:6; 13:23; Isa 6:7; 43:25; 44:22; 59:12; Jer 5:25; 16:18. These contexts show that those words are close to each other in implication. In Exod 34:7, 9; Lev 16:21; Num 14:18, ἄνομία corresponds to יָצַח and occurs with transgression (ἄδικία /עָשָׂה) and sin (ἁμαρτία /הִתְעַבַּב) in parallelism. In addition, in Num 14:18, יָצַח, which is translated as ἄνομία, also corresponds to ἁμαρτία, which is often translated from הִתְעַבַּב, in the later part of the same verse. Furthermore, הִתְעַבַּב itself is translated as ἄνομία in Isa. 58:1; Lam 4:6; Ezek 18:21; 33:10.

Throughout the OT, wickedness and iniquity refers to disobedience to God and implies any failure in observance of God's Torah. However, clear reference to failure to observe Torah is not major among those instances of ἄνομία in the LXX.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> On the clear reference to Torah or God's commandment, see Exod 34:7, 9 (oath of God in giving of the Ten Commandments); Lev 16:21 (the context refers to the ritual for covenantal atonement); Lev 19:29; 20:14; 22:16; 26:43 (fornication and other misconduct against the law); Deut 31:29 (prophecy of Moses that the Israelites will act corruptly and turn aside from the Law after his death); 2Sam 22:24 (related to the reference to God's statutes in v23); Ps 17:24 (violation of God's statutes in v23); Ps 73:20 (treachery against the covenant); Ps 118:3, 133,

This observation indicates that lawlessness as disobedience to Torah is not a major meaning of ἀνομία in the LXX and in its correspondent Hebrew words.<sup>3</sup> However, it is clear from usage in the NT that this does not mean that ἀνομία had lost any implied reference to failure to observe Torah.

## 2 Ἀνομία in New Testament

In NT, occurrences of ἀνομία are relatively few with the OT. It occurs only 13 times, including four times in Matthew and four times in Pauline letters (Rom 4:7; 6:19 x2; 2Co 6:14).

In Pauline usage, Rom 4:7 is the quotation from Psa 31:1 LXX. Although there is no clear reference to Torah observance in Psa 31:1, it seems that here Paul understands ἀνομία as the lack of it because he argues in this context about righteousness apart from works of the law. And Rom 6:19 talks about ἀνομία as iniquity in the context of contrasting righteousness and the works of the law. These instances show that Paul understands ἀνομία as discordance with the law, even though he argues that this problem should be solved not by the works of the law but by grace.

Contrary to Paul, Matthew argues that lawlessness *is* the problem. While this word appears only four times (7:23; 13:41; 23:28; 24:12), every instance is found in a polemical context and reveals a trace of Matthew's highly redactional composition. This indicates that Matthew is greatly concerned about the issue of ἀνομία.

## 3 A Clear and Present Crisis: The Existence of an Antinomian Sub-Group in the Matthean Community

Among the scholarly attempts to find the meaning of the term ἀνομία in Matthew, Gerhard Barth (1963) argued that Matthew's polemic concerning

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150 (opposition to God's instruction and the law); Ezek 11:18, 20 (ritual impurity and corruption against God's statutes); Ezek 16:2, 36, 43, 47, 51, 58 (idolatry); Ezek 43:8 (idolatry); Ezek 44:6-7 (impairment of the Temple and corruption of the covenant). In addition, one can include Ps 54:4, 10, 11 (enemy's violation of God's covenant, cf. v21) and Ps 102:3, 10, 12 (iniquities and transgressions as treachery against covenant and commandments, cf. v18).

<sup>3</sup> Dodd (1935, p. 80) points that this tendency of LXX to reduce various Hebrew ethical vocabulary into few words shows growing legalism in Hellenistic Judaism as the background of LXX.

ἀνομία has two fronts. Criticizing the Pharisees, Matthew asserts the correctness of his interpretation of the law. At the same time, he defends the validity of Jewish law in its entirety against those who insisted that Christ had abolished the law, accusing them of ἀνομία. Referring to Matthew 5:17ff., Barth argued that Matthew's opponents insisted that the law and the teachings of the prophets were no longer valid. He argued that the alteration in Matthew 11:13<sup>4</sup> from Q supports this supposition. He examined the possibility that those opposed to Matthew's view were Paulinists, then concluded that they could not be because the Matthean debate does not contrast good works with faith as does the epistle of James (especially Jam 2:14-26). He further argued that those antinomians must be Hellenistic Christians because it was unthinkable for any group in Judaism or Jewish Christianity to deny the validity of the law, although he concedes that no other details of this group can be determined. Barth further contended that we may not find anything more than that Matthew's ideological opponents insisted that the validity of the law ended with the coming of the Christ.

Ulrich Luz also admitted that nothing could be said precisely about this group except that "they simply did not live up to the strict standards of Matthew's interpretation of God's will –that they were, in other words, 'imperfect'" (Luz, 2007, p. 377). However, he also contended that "the intensive Matthean redaction is understandable only if the struggle with false prophets is an actual problem in his community" (Luz, 2007, p. 376). And "doers of lawlessness" in 13:41 refers to "all who do not hold fast to the biblical law that has its apex in the love commandment" (Luz, 2001, p. 269) and his church is involved in a dramatic and critical situation to confront them (Luz, 2005, p. 193-194).

### Expanding Laxity in Christianity

James E. Davison (1985) disputed Barth's implicit assumption that Matthew uses ἀνομία with special reference to antinomian opponents. Through a semantic examination of the usage of ἀνομία in LXX, Jewish literature, and Matthew, Davison concluded that ἀνομία in Matthew does not support any antinomian interpretation of this term. In LXX, ἀνομία is employed as a

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 16:16 argues that the validity of the prophets and the law lasted until the time of John. Matthew alters the phrase to say that all the law and the prophets had been prophesied by the time of John and seems to uphold the validity of Torah.

translation for twenty-four different Hebrew terms that connote various kinds of bad conduct. On the other hand, ἀνομία is used interchangeably with a number of other terms which means evil actions which violate God's will. While ἀνομία indeed refers to various evil deeds including violation of God's law, it does not mean exactly antinomianism. He contends that if we want to find a connection between ἀνομία and antinomianism in Matthew, we must find evidence of such use that goes beyond the general usage of ἀνομία. For Matthew 7:21-23, Davison argued that the point of accusation concerns a certain laxness in their lifestyle that prevents believers from bearing any good fruits. He contended that there is no positive evidence of opponents who embrace antinomian doctrine (Davison, 1985, p. 629). In Matthew 13:41, Davison noted that the usage accords with its general meaning in LXX and Jewish literature, that is, a "very general, nonspecific sense for those who act contrary to God's will" (Davison, 1985, p.630). In his discussion of Matthew 24:10-12, he again concludes that ἀνομία does not refer to any specific sins or false teachings. False prophets are indeed false teachers, but we are not able to discern the details of their teaching from Matthew, which does not describe them specifically. False prophets are seen as "one of a number of ways in which *anomia* is multiplied upon the earth" (Davison, 1985, p. 633). In examining Matthew 23:28, Davison leaves only brief comments concerning this issue, because it is apparent that the opponents in this context are Pharisees. They are "doers of ἀνομία" in contrast to righteousness, but should not be considered antinomians. As the conclusion of his whole argument, Davison contended that the target of ἀνομία in Matthew is the problem of "laxity in the moral life of believers" (Davison, 1985, p. 634) and the Matthean usage of ἀνομία in accusations against Matthew's opponents has its root in his strong concern for God's law (*nomos*).

### A Phantom Menace: Ἀνομία as a Future Threat

David C. Sim (2010) considers ἀνομία in his argument about the polemical nature of Matthew's Gospel, focusing on the four distinct opponents of Matthew's polemics (the scribes and Pharisees, false Christians, the Roman Empire, and the Gentiles). He correctly suggested that the harsh polemic in Matthew reflects proximity to these opponents rather than distance from them, because the precise purpose of such polemic is to repel one's opponents. He suggested that the harsh polemic against the scribes and Pharisees reflects Matthew's competition with them for legitimacy of his own authority in the

development of Judaism. In contrast to the physical proximity of the scribes and Pharisees, the other ἀνομία (such as false Christians) had no direct contact with Matthew, Sim argued. He reasoned that the lack of detail about ἀνομία workers was due to their being a potential future threat but not a current problem. He argued that the ἀνομία in Matthew 7:23 and 13:43 are law-free Christians still not in direct contact with the Matthean community. Thus, the polemic of Matthew was created at the ideological level and “not occasioned by the physical proximity of these false Christians” (Sim, 2010, p. 503). Instead, he argued, their proximity is purely ideological. Despite their ideological proximity, there was a definite difference between Matthew and them in their observance of the Torah. Matthew accuses law liberal Christians as being ἀνομία along with the scribes and the Pharisees because their Torah practice fails to follow the definitive interpretation of Jesus.

#### 4 The Other Clear and Present Crisis: The Double Criteria of Torah Observance

Anders Runesson (2016) refused to identify ἀνομία with “antinomian Christians.” Instead he suggested that the problem of ἀνομία relates to judgment on Jews who “have a covenant relationship with the God of Israel” (Runesson, 2016, p. 27). He investigated the theme of divine wrath and judgment on the narrative level of the Matthean story and argued that the divine judgment in Matthew “should be analyzed separately with regard to Jews and non-Jews” (Runesson, 2016, p. 27). Because the law is a covenant obligation for Jews, non-Jews are not a focus of ἀνομία discussions.<sup>5</sup> Thus, ἀνομία is not only “failure to act in a manner that conforms to the stipulation of the Torah” (Blanton, 2013) but also a failure to follow Jesus through Torah practice following Jesus’ interpretation motivated by love for God and neighbor (Runesson, 2016, p. 77). Runesson argued that the distinct harshness of the polemic is not motivated by the immediate threat of Matthew’s opponents, but is rooted in severe threats of judgement in the prophetic literature and shaped by

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<sup>5</sup> Runesson (2016) also discussed Matthew’s notion of “the possible salvation of the outsider, *as outsider*, under certain circumstances (25:31-46)” (p. 442). He treated the issue of outsiders in detail in pp. 343-392 and pp. 393-428.

eschatological expectation of imminent divine judgment (Runesson, 2016, p. 27 and p. 442).

## 5 Contradiction in Matthean Polemic

Hence, we have considered four important directions for the interpretation of the ἀνομία in Matthew. Because each direction outlined above has its own legitimate basis, an apparent contradiction emerges.

The lack of detailed descriptions of ἀνομία seems to attest to the absence of physical proximity or even the existence of ἀνομία-practicing opponents. However, Matthew's intensive redaction of those texts concerning ἀνομία focuses on harsh polemic against ἀνομία. The harshness of Matthean polemic suggests that Matthew was involved in an immediate struggle with them.

Runesson attempted to account for both the urgent mood of the polemic and the failure to identify the opponents on the basis of imminent expectation of divine judgment. His analysis is convincing, especially when we reconsider of the nature of the Matthean Gospel as "a specific eschatologically-oriented variant of Second-Temple Judaism" (Runesson, 2016, p. 442). However, we also need to examine how Matthew evaluated other Christian movements and teachings. In particular, Matthew's articulation of Markan texts seems to hint at criticism of Mark's Torah-free text.<sup>6</sup>

To resolve the apparent conflict found in the Matthean text and to supplement Runesson's argument, this study hereafter attempts an exegetical analysis of the usage of ἀνομία in Matthew.

### Matt 7:21-23: practitioners of ἀνομία calling on the Lord in the end days

This passage is a part of the conclusion of the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7), which has a parallel in Luke 13:25-27. In the Lukan version, both the appeal and the denial are set in a parable of Jesus and the claim of people for acceptance is based on the intimate relationship between them and the housekeeper. In the Matthean version, their cause is based on the fact that they

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<sup>6</sup> For anti-Paulinism in Matthew, see Sim (2008) and Sim (2014); Wong (2012) also finds anti-Paulinism in Matthew; Park (2015) suggests that Matthew opposes the dominant Christian theology of his time, yet acknowledges it as "Pauline." For parallels between Paul and Mark, see Marcus (2000) and Telford (1999). Svartvik (2008) argues that Matthew intended to remake, to re-judaize Mark, the Pauline Gospel.

did prophesy, cast out demons and did many powerful deeds (δύναμις) “in your name” (τῷ σῷ ὀνόματι). They are not condemned for performing these activities because they represent the fulfillment of apostolic commission (cf. Matthew 10:8) (Hagner, 1993, p. 188). Nor are they criticized for performing these activities in the name of Jesus without his permission (cf. Luke 9:4-50). The context rather suggests an interpretation in which their activities are condemned for diverging from “the will of my father in heaven” (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς).

Because Matthew 7:21 refers back to 5:20 (“unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”), ἀνομία here could be understood to mean lawlessness through the failure to fulfill the demands of God’s law (thus, a lack of righteousness).

7:21ff. also relates to 7:24, which states “everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them” (πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ἀκούει μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτούς), where “these words” refer to Jesus’s entire Sermon on the Mount. Thus, following “the will of my Father in heaven” (v21) entails observance of every single teaching given by Jesus in that sermon. No matter how remarkable the activities of the condemned, they are unacceptable if not in accordance with the teachings of Jesus.

Thus, the problem is how one can be in accordance with the teaching of Jesus and the will of God? The criticism against the scribes and the Pharisees in Matthew 23 reveals that this is a matter of inner motive.

### Matt 23:27-28: Scribes and Pharisees as guilty of ἀνομία

This statement is a part of the strong condemnation of the scribes and the Pharisees in Matthew 23:1-36. This pericope consists of seven woes; the present statement is the sixth. This accusation has its origin in Mark 12:36, and the fact that some phrases have parallels in Luke 11:37-54 and 20:45-47 shows that these verses have their source in Q. Nevertheless, it is Matthew who redacted those materials into a strong criticism of the scribes and the Pharisees within the well-crafted structure of seven-fold woes. Out of all of these, the present accusation is unique to Matthew. Although inheriting the clear inside/outside contrast from Q, its abundance of characteristically Matthean terms confirms that the text has undergone intense redaction by Matthew. The scribes and the Pharisees are the clear targets of ἀνομία here. They are listed as bad examples to

be overcome in Matthew 5:20. Even though they should be experts in God’s law, like the subjects of other ἄνομία passages, they fail to achieve righteousness by practicing it perfectly. However, the exact content of ἄνομία here is still unclear. The seven woes are a list of various activities, but the problem is not the activities, for the scribes and the Pharisees indeed observe the commandments in God’s law. Nevertheless, Matthew accuses them of not practicing the commandments that they teach (Matthew 23:3). Certainly, they do practice various activities concerning the God’s law, but from Matthew’s perspective, they do not really practice it. Thus, their activities themselves do not comprise ἄνομία, but their motives run counter to God’s will, making them practitioners of ἄνομία. They only practice to be seen by others (23:5), but the problem here is not outward (ἐξωθεν) but inward (ἔσωθεν). Both their practice and lack of practice reveal their inner drive toward ἄνομία (23:8). Thus, Matthew criticizes their failure of proper motivation. Perfect practice of God’s law demands both outward practice and inner motive. Matthew points out that this inner motive shall be called *love* (Runesson, 2016, p. 76-78).

#### Matt 24:9-14: ἄνομία in end days

This passage is a part of the series of apocalyptic prophecies in chapter 24. Together with its parallel in Luke 21:7-19, it is derived from Mark 13:3-13. Matthew has already used the source in Matt 10:17-22, and at this time, he makes more crafted and greater redaction on it.<sup>7</sup>

Matt 24:12, which refers to ἄνομία, is unique to Matthew.<sup>8</sup> Though the details of ἄνομία are neither illustrated nor presented, it is clear here that increased ἄνομία results in the love of many growing cold. As this love is the essence of the law for Matthew, ἄνομία behaviors cool the love of many. As previously noted, ἄνομία refers to imperfection in observation of the law. It weakens the love that can be realized through perfect observation of the law. Thus, ἄνομία is an obstacle to the practice of love, which is equal to perfect observance of the law. Thus, ἄνομία is the opposite of the practice of love.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, repetition of the combination of ἀλλήλων and verbs, repetition of παραδίδωμι and μισέω in v9 and 10, repetition of τέλος in v13-14, and repetition of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in v9 and 14.

<sup>8</sup> Luz (2005, p.183) asserts on the ground of the context that v10-12 come from Matthew and are not based on a source. In any case, ἄνομία is introduced here by Matthean intentional redaction.

In 24:14, Matthew omits “first” (πρῶτος) from Mark 13:10 and moves this sentence to the end of the passage to serve as the conclusion of the present pericope. Here we find Matthew’s intention to make a connection with the mission to all nations at the end of the world. The mission to all nations has already commenced around him and will bring about the end of this world (Luz, 2005, pp. 194-195). For Matthew, a sense of urgency surrounds the present situation, since the mission to all nations has already started. Thus, in 24:14, Matthew emphasizes that this apocalyptic situation, the progress of the mission to all nations, relates to ἀνομία, which cools the love of many, namely, weakens inner motive to follow Jesus by fully observing the law.

### Matt 13:41-42: The practitioners of ἀνομία as the tares in the field

Matthew weaves the parable of the tares (13:24-30) and its interpretation (13:36-43) into two Markan parables (the parable of the sower [Matt 13:1-23; from Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15 par] and the parable of the mustard seed [Matt 13:31-33; from Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-21 par]). It is probable that Matthew based the parable and its interpretation on tradition (Luz, 2001, p. 253 and pp. 267-268). Matt 13:36-43 also forms a bridge from the former sequence of parables to two additional parables unique to Matthew (13:44-50; 51-52). Thus, the whole framework of chapter 13 is created by Matthew.

The parable of the tares and its interpretation show that in the field, which means the whole world, there so far exist wheat and tares, which means “the children of the kingdom” and “the children of the evil one.” However, they will be separated during the harvest, meaning at the end of the world. Matthew repeats the phrase of v42 ([They] “will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”) in v50 again; this parallels the rejection of bad trees (7:19). Matthew often uses the phrase “wailing and gnashing of teeth” combined with the motif of casting out to indicate judgment at the end of the world (Matt 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).

In the present pericope, the practitioners of ἀνομία are viewed as parallel to “the tares,” “the children of the evil one” (v38) and “all those who stumble” (v41), and opposed to “the children of the kingdom” (v38) and “the righteous” (pl., v43). Though here again the exact nature of ἀνομία is neither illustrated nor

presented<sup>9</sup>, Matthew uses apocalyptic expressions to emphasize harsh judgment against them at the end of the world.

“From his kingdom” (ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ) in v41 suggests that judgment may be passed on the church as a mixed community that embraces ἀνομία: the tares and the children of evil, together with the righteous and the children of the kingdom (Luz, 2005, p. 193). However, this interpretation is inconsistent with Matthew’s assertion that “the field is the world” (Matt 13:38). This apparent inconsistency can be resolved by considering the “mixed community” to be the whole world (spread with Christian mission) rather than a certain church community.<sup>10</sup> This interpretation suggests that Matthew critically views the Christian mission for all nations as serving to gather not only the righteous but also the practitioners of ἀνομία.<sup>11</sup> Matthew expresses concern about this situation as an apocalyptic crisis as the end time comes near (Matt 24:11-14).

Thus, through interpretation of the relevant pericopes, we have found the following:

1) ἀνομία means the failure to observe God’s law perfectly according to the teachings of Jesus.

2) ἀνομία connotes not only the outward practice of the law, but also an insufficiency of internal motivation to observe it perfectly. Thus, ἀνομία leads to an apocalyptic situation in which the love of many grows cold.

3) Those who practice ἀνομία will be judged harshly in the end time.

4) Judgment will be passed not only on the church community but the whole world as a mixed community as a result of the mission to all nations.

5) Matthew is critical of the growing mission to all nations which brings about not only righteousness but also ἀνομία.

Thus, Matthew criticizes the failure of the mission to all nations to cultivate perfect observance of God’s law, not only in outer practice but inner motivation. This problem exists not only within the Matthean movement (or community) but in every place touched by the mission to all nations. As Matthew aims his

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<sup>9</sup> Luz (2001, p. 269) suggested, based on the contexts of Matthew 7 and 24, that they lack loving observance of the law.

<sup>10</sup> Luz admits the possibility of such a situation, though he contends that the future is still unknown for Matthew himself. “It is a long way from Matthew’s small minority community to the *corpus permixtum* of the reformers. One may argue that the reformers’ theological solution is consistent. When the national church, that in its place can scarcely be distinguished from the world, has taken the place of the minority church, then it *must* be -even in Matthew’s sense- a *corpus permixtum*” (Luz, 2001, p. 272).

<sup>11</sup> Wong (2012, pp. 116-119) suggests that the sower of the tares implies a reference to the apostle Paul.

accusation not only at his own movement (community) but the whole world, his criticism bears a tone of urgency and harshness, but does not focus on the details of instances or practitioners of ἀνομία.

Though the mission to all nations is an inevitable reality, Matthew attempts to shift its direction toward Torah-observance, insisting that without teaching followers to “obey everything that I have commanded you” (28:20), the mission would be ἀνομία.

## 6 Conclusion

The fact that Matthew employs ἀνομία in the context of apocalyptic judgement reflects his urgent belief the end of the world was coming.

ἀνομία concerns the observance of the law, not only through outer practice but also through inner motivation. Following Jesus with perfect observance of the law through *love* is the only way to meet the conditions of righteousness. The Pharisees and scribes lack sufficient inner motive to revere Jesus, while non-Torah-observant Christians fail through lack of practice.

Matthew’s Gospel is set in the context of the emergence of the Pharisees and the spread of the mission to all nations without devout observance of Torah. Matthew intends to steer the direction of the mission toward the observation of the Torah in accordance with Jesus’ instructions.

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# Matthew's Implicit Criticism of Paul

Eric K. C. Wong  
Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

## 1 Introduction

The relationship between Paul and Matthew has received relatively little attention among scholars. Indeed H. J. Holtzmann tried to promote the thesis that Matthew (5:19) criticizes Paul more than a century ago, but received little support. The core difficulty for approaching the problem is that there is no explicit vestige or mention of Paul in the First Gospel. However, one cannot deny the relevance of the macro picture of Early Christianity, roughly as follows:

1. Spatially, both of them are located in the Mediterranean region, even probably in the same big city of Antioch of Syria.
2. Historically, both of them are Christians with Jewish heritages.
3. Chronologically, Matthew's composition is after Paul's.
4. Theologically, both of them are church leaders of Christianity with very similar concerns (the relationship of human beings with God and with fellow peoples, etc.)

Alone these few considerations suffice to warrant a deeper investigation into their relationship, even though there are no explicit vestiges. It is also unconvincing to say that Matthew has completely no connection with Paul. Yet, how shall one approach the issue of Matthew's relationship with Paul? One of the major weaknesses of Holtzmann's thesis is that there is little textual evident supporting it, even though scholars generally agree that both of them have contradictory attitudes on the Jewish Law. Both texts of Matthew and Paul (7 undisputed Letters) give much attention to the Law. Closer examination shows that Matthew values it and demands Jesus' followers observe it strictly; while Paul deprecates it in his famous teaching of justification. In Paul, it is 'faith', but not 'law / works of law', that brings salvation to a person (Gal 2:16); whereas Matthew advocates that one maintains behavioral righteousness.

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Nevertheless, both maintain that the Law is valid forever (Matt 5:18) or is holy (Rom 7:12). This paper does not aim at solving all the difficulties in approaching the relationship of Matthew with Paul. Instead we will collect, thematise and analyze 3 common concerns of both Matthew and Paul (Law, Gospel and Mission), in the hope that these themes could provide a stronger evidential base for further investigation and discussion.

## 2 Previous Interpretation (Matt 5:19 – The Jewish Law)

Our following discussion on the Jewish Law may at the same time serve as a brief literature survey showing previous efforts of scholars on the relationship of Matthew and Paul.

In the Tübingen School in the 19th century Ferdinand C. Baur (1792-1860) locates the Gospel of Matthew to the Jewish Christian party of Peter, which had often aroused tension and conflict with the Gentle Christian party of Paul (Baur, 1847). His follower Karl R. Köstlin (1819-1894) is probably the first to allude to a polemic in Matt 5:19 against a liberal teacher of the law. This teacher relaxes commandments of the law. Karl R. Köstlin regards it as invective against Paul (Köstlin, 1853). But many rejected this view, among them Hermann F. von Soden, who found no convincing hints from the terminology used and nor of Pauline theology in the Gospel of Matthew.

Following the Tübingen School, Heinrich J. Holtzmann (1832-1910) advocates the thesis that Paul or his followers are to be identified as the ones who relax the smallest commandment. For Matthew, Paul and his followers belong to the opponents, who are regarded as the antinomists (ἀνομία). Therefore, Matthew is opposed to Paul and his theology (Holtzmann, 1897; Pfeleiderer, 1890). This interpretation of Matt 5:19 is often found (Weiß, 1917; Montefiore, 1858; Manson, 1949; Brandon, 1951).

Many works in the late 20th century are however skeptical of the identification of the one who is ‘least in the kingdom of heaven’ as Paul and /or his followers. For example, W. D. Davies (1911-2001) maintains that such an interpretation is exaggerated, on the basis of the following three arguments: (1) the immediate context before Matt 5:19 does not show any anti-Pauline tendency. (2) The fact that Paul calls himself the ‘least’ of the apostles is only superficially related to the ‘least’ in the kingdom of heaven. (3) The 3 texts (Matt 15:15; 18:21; 19:27), where Matthew inserts Peter from his special

source, does not indicate any polemic against Paul. So Davies concludes that 'the SM (Sermon on the Mount) could not be interpreted as a reaction against Paulinism' (Davies, 1964).

The issue appears in another form. There are 2 following positions, both starting from the fact that there is clear polemic in some texts in the Gospel of Matthew. Either they argue these polemical texts do not relate to Paul, or they reflect a view which is not that of the Evangelist Matthew and he uses them as mere tradition.

At three points the Gospel of Matthew attacks Christians who do ἀνομία (lawlessness) as a phenomenon of the end time (7:23; 13:41; 24:12). Matthew is being unmistakably polemical. The crucial problem is who are these who practice ἀνομία and how are they to be identified. Gerhard Barth explores who those who practice ἀνομία might be: the first possibility is that they are Christians living in a Jewish milieu, but Barth prefers the second possibility, namely that they are Christians living in a hellenistic milieu. Matthew is arguing against them, whom James also targets, because though these people speak of 'faith', they understand 'faith' differently from Matthew (Barth, 1968). Barth's position is in fact similar to that of Gerhard Kittel, who claimed that this fits no other historical figure in the first and second century except Paul. A figure depicted as having the motto, 'faith without works', is just like Paul. However, Barth himself rejects the move to identify Paul or Paulinists as the doers of ἀνομία in the Gospel of Matthew. Instead, he argues for 'hellenistic liberals', as those against whom Matthew polemizes (Barth, 1968; Kittel, 1942). His position of not affirming Paul as the doer of ἀνομία is difficult to understand; and he leaves us with the problem of identifying who is meant by 'hellenistic liberals'!

In contrast to Barth, Andreas Lindemann accepts the thesis that Paul was the one once identified as the person in Matt 5:19, but believes that this polemic does not come from the Evangelist Matthew himself, but belongs rather to pre-Matthean tradition (Lindemann, 1979). Accordingly in his estimation, neither Matthew nor Mark is influenced by Pauline theology, even though they have possibly suppressed and omitted Pauline elements. Besides, one should not expect that the Evangelists inherited non-synoptic traditions in their Gospels. Lindemann discusses in detail 3 texts as 'hints for a possible controversial connection with Paul: Matt 5:17-19; 7:22-23 and 13:24-28 (Lindemann, 1979). He accepts only 5:19 as having a polemic relation to Paul and believes that

Matthew has inherited and used this tradition without making it his own. Accordingly, the Gospel of Matthew is not anti-Pauline, but un-Pauline. Lindemann rejects a common consensus that Paul and his tradition were known in Syria, a place where the highly probable setting for the Gospel of Matthew (Lindemann, 1979). There is of course a consensus that Syria is the place of origin for Matthew's gospel, even though we do not know the exact time of origin. And it is also generally accepted that Pauline tradition was widespread in Syria at the time when Matthew was written (Luz, 1985; Davies & Allison, 1988). Lindemann represents the moderate, skeptical approach characteristic of good contemporary exegetes. Paul and Matthew seem accordingly to have little to do with each other.

Nevertheless, in the last few decades, there are 4 works with different perspectives in discussing the relationship of Paul with Matthew: R. Mohrlang's (1984) textual comparison, Thomas L. Brodie's (2004) intertextual analysis, David C. Sim's (1998, 2002, 2008, 2009) rather comprehensive anti-Paulinistic interpretation of Matthew, and Gerhard Theissen's (2005, 2010) attempt at uncovering anti-Paulinistic polemic in all the 5 big speeches of Matthew. We shall briefly see how their works contribute to the issue of the relationship of Paul and Matthew.

R. Mohrlang limits his investigation on a text to text comparison between Paul and Matthew. He compares synchronically and statically the structures of ethics of both Matthew and Paul, but does not look into the dynamic interaction between them. On the issue of Law, he concludes that 'Matthew's viewpoint is closer to that of traditional Judaism, while Paul represents a more radical break with it.' (Mohrlang, 1984; Goulder, 1974). The comparison on the relation between 'indicative' and 'imperative' is in the same vein: 'While Matthew emphasizes the imperative, Paul focuses rather on the indicative from which the imperative derives' (Mohrlang, 1984). Mohrlang discusses further some social, polemical, motivational, psychological, Christological, etc., interpretative factors, which may explain the reason that Paul and Matthew are so different (Mohrlang, 1984). His positive contribution lies in the synchronically and factual (text to text) comparison between Paul and Matthew. Unclear remains, whether he understands the First Gospel as an answer to Paul, and whether or how Matthew reacts on Paul and answers to Paul, and which social reality stands behind the compared texts (of Paul and Matthew).

Methodologically Thomas L. Brodie's work focuses on intertextuality. He regards the Gospel of Matthew as a revision of Pauline theology and especially the Letter to the Romans. He discovers in both texts so many common words, themes and structures, that he has only one explanation for it: The Evangelist Matthew possesses a copy of Romans and uses it as source (Brodie, 2004). This fits the observation that 'where Mt is most distinctive (from Mark), the connections (with Romans) are strong' (Brodie, 2004). The work of the Evangelist Matthew exists in a 'reworking Paul's theology' (Brodie, 2004). The use of Romans is seen especially in Matt 1:1 – 17:20. Accordingly, both Matthew and Paul express that Jesus is a descendant of David (Matt 1:3; Rom 1:1-3). The Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer (and the whole teaching on almsgiving, prayer and fasting in chapter 6) is influenced by Romans 10, which is possibly an original thesis. Their relation is seen, on the one side, in the threefold repetition of 'in your heart' in Rom 10:6-9, on another side, also in the threefold repetition of 'in secret' (Matt 6:4, 6, 18). One may perhaps say: one discovers the relationship, which Brodie understands between Matthew and Romans, only with some exegetical postulations.

David C. Sim presents publications on the relationship between Paul and Matthew, which are highly convincing. In method he combines intertextuality-research, factual comparison and historical work. He renews the thesis of 'Matthew's anti-Paulinism' (Sim, 1998). He argues for there being evidence of anti-Pauline tendency not only in Matt 5:19, but also in the polemic against 'wrong teacher' in Matt 7:21-23, in the Great Commandment at the end of the Gospel, (Sim, 2008) in the Understanding of the Law, (Sim, 2009a) and in the Messianic confession of Peter: (Sim, 2009b) in response to which Jesus praises Peter with a blessing in Matt 16:17 because his knowledge (Jesus is the son of the living God) does not come from 'flesh and blood', but from God's revelation. Such a revelation corresponds strikingly to the narrative of Damascus experiences of Paul in Gal 1:15-16, according to which God revealed his 'son' to Paul, though without mentioning reference to 'flesh and blood'. Sim regards therefore that Matthew's depiction of Peter's Messiah-confession might be described as standing in opposition to Paul's calling to apostle. For Sim, the relation between Matt 16:17-18a, on the one side, Gal 1:12, 16-17 and 1 Cor 10:4 on the other side, are a test case for the intertextual relation of the Matthean Gospel to the Pauline Letters. We may say, Sim is the first who has submitted such a full anti-Paulinistic interpretation in the Gospel of Matthew.

Nevertheless, the majority of exegetes still remain skeptically opposed to it. Some emphasize the basic agreement between Matthew and Paul, others understand Matthew as a necessary complementary addition, while most regard the Gospel of Matthew as neither pro- or anti-Paulinistic, but as un-Paulinistic (Sim, 2002).

Recently, Gerd Theissen has developed the thesis that within its horizon of narrative time the Gospel of Matthew looks to the time after Jesus' death in its depiction of his teachings, and in this way addresses the contemporary (Theißen, 2005, 2007, 2010). He discovers a hidden anti-Pauline polemic in each of the 5 blocks of teachings. Thus in the programmatic introduction of the Sermon on the Mount, Paul is inserted as a kind of opposite figure. He is the teacher of the Law who dissolves the commandments (Matt 5:19). In the Mission Instruction, the 'provision-teaching' is changed by Matthew, so that missionaries are forbidden not only to bring money, but also to acquire any wealth (Matt 10:9). This applies to any types of missionary, including Paul and Barnabas. They both make money for their missionary trips by means of working. In the Teaching of the Parables, Paul is indirectly attacked under the figure of the 'enemy'. His preaching sows weeds among the good wheat (Matt 13:25). In the Teaching on the Community, any person who gives cause for annoyance to the little ones (σκανδαλίση), is implicitly pointing to a person, like Paul. This person with his message of 'annoyance of the cross' did not only cause offense, but he wanted to arouse it (Matt 18:6). In contrast, Peter is held up as a counter-model against this person (like Paul); for he deliberately gave up arousing offence (Matt 17:24-27). In the Woes to the Pharisees and Eschatological Discourses, Paul is indirectly attacked as the Pharisee who traverses land and sea to make a single proselyte, and then make this proselyte 'a child of hell' (Matt 23:15). The Gospel of Matthew contrasts 'this gospel of the kingdom' in the Eschatological discourses (Matt 24:14) with the one which Paul sought to spread over the world. Not the Pauline gospel, but the 'Gospel' of Matthew should be spread over the world.

It has to be emphasized, however, that the abovementioned authors, who see an anti-Pauline polemic in the First Gospel, are exceptions. In many works, this issue, as outlined above, is not discussed at all. This applies even to works whose focus is on conflict in early Christianity. For example, Walter Bauer (1877-1960) does not at all deal with the relationship of Paul and the Synoptics (Bauer, 1934). Similarly, Gerd Lüdemann does not discuss the Gospel of

Matthew in his work on the history of anti-Paulinism (Lüdemann, 1980). C. K. Barrett investigates the influence of Paul in the early Christianity, but also neglects the features relating to Matthew (Barrett, 2003; Jervell, 1984; Goulder, 1994), although he is aware of this gap. He states nevertheless, that 'a full discussion (of the positive Pauline legend) would seek traces of it elsewhere, e.g., in the gospels' (Barrett, 1973-74).

Handbooks and commentaries are indicators of the awareness of the problem in the New Testament academia. We can note that James Dunn: *Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (2003), which deals with the Influence History of Paul from 2<sup>nd</sup> century to the contemporary age, gives no attention to Paul's relationship to the canonical Gospels (Dunn, 2003). In the same vein, general presentations of Paul contain few indications of any relationship between Paul and the gospels (Sampley, 2016; Schnelle, 2003; Riches & Sim, 2005). Among commentaries on Matthew, the two major commentaries, those of Ulrich Luz and W. D. Davies / Dale C. Allison, offer no treatment of Matthew's relationship to Paul (Luz, 1985; Davies & Allison, 1988).

Nevertheless, although people pay little attention to the relationship of Matthew to Paul, there are often comments which indicate acceptance of the notion that a polemic against Paul is present in Matt 5:19. Thus while Rudolf Bultmann regards Paulinism as a whole as having had no influence on the redaction of the Synoptic Gospels (Bultmann, 1958), he nevertheless sees a jibe against Paul in Matt 5:19 (Bultmann, 1958; Klostermann, 1971). H. D. Betz gives the issue no weight (Betz, 1995). However, he is convinced of polemic in 5:19, although he ascribes it to a pre-Matthean source (Betz, 1982, 1992, 1995). For C. Heubült, this source expresses Matthean theology (Heubült, 1980). This concession of an anti-Pauline meaning at least in Matt 5:19 opens the door for a more comprehensive interpretation. Because Matt 5:19 is the closing comment in the programmatic statement at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, it must be given weight and be understood as targeting a specific teaching and the person advocating it. If the Evangelist Matthew provides his programmatic statement about Jesus' proclamation with an anti-Pauline jibe, then this is so to say: the Evangelist is aware of the opposition of his picture of Jesus and his theology to another (probably Pauline) teaching. Further, this means we should consider it likely that such an opposition lies hidden in the background also elsewhere in the Gospel.

After a century long history of academic interpretation of the New Testament, the interpreters have still not yet reached a position which provides a convincing picture of the relationship between Matthew and Paul. There are, as the discussion above has outlined, many reasons for this. Exegesis of both Paul and Matthew is always demanding and sometimes confusing, requiring a high degree of specialization on the part of exegetes in dealing with all the details. The reason why a satisfactory explanation of the relationship has not been reached firstly lies in the fact that there is little commonality between the Gospel of Matthew and Paul's writings. For instance a central word, like δικαιοσύνη, which is common to both authors, is used by each with almost opposite meaning. And again, Paul writes letters in reflective and polemical style, whereas Matthew narrates a story with the aid of many anecdotes and references to human behavior.

In the following, we shall suggest two more points of contact: 'gospel' and 'mission', besides the afore-mentioned subject of the Jewish Law. This will at the same time serve as a brief literature review.

### 3 Gospel

- τὸ εὐαγγέλιον περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (Rom 1:1-7. 16f)
- τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 14:14)

The terminology, gospel (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον), constitutes the main theme and focus of the whole New Testament. It is also one of the most important theological concepts of both Paul (Rom 1:16f; Gal 1:6-9) and the canonical Gospels, as per se its use as their titles of the first 4 books of the NT (Marcus, 2002; Stuhlmacher, 1968). However, this word is not used first by the New Testament. The word itself derives from its Greco-Roman context, but at the same time has been enriched by the Jewish heritage. The Hebrew root רבשׁא verb in Pi'el form means 'to proclaim good news' (1 Kings 1:42; Jer 20:15; in LXX as εὐαγγελίζειν) (Stuhlmacher, 1968). At the time of the Roman Empire, the word τὰ εὐαγγέλια (in plural form) is used in announcement of important political events, such as the birth of an heir to the Emperor and his accession to the throne. For example, the inscription (VGT, 259; 9 BCE) refers to the birthday of Augustus as a gospel (good news) for the people of the Roman Empire (Stuhlmacher, 1968). Josephus records εὐαγγέλια in the context of Roman

emperor worship and uses it to refer to the elevation of Vespasian to emperor (Jewish War 4: 618, 656) (Schnelle, 1998).

Among early Christians, Paul and Matthew are not the first ones to borrow this word εὐαγγέλιον to describe Jesus Christ in the NT. Paul expresses clearly to the Corinthians: the εὐαγγέλιον they learned from him was something that Paul himself had received (from Christians before him) in 1Cor 15:1-3. Such a pre-Pauline tradition about the word and content of the εὐαγγέλιον is also reflected in Rom 1:3-4 and 1Thess 1:9-10 with the absolute use of the term recorded in 1 Thess 1:5; 1 Cor 15:1. Paul probably learned it from Jewish-Hellenistic Christians, and further developed it. The evangelist Matthew's predecessor, Mark, of a later generation (at least one to few decades after Paul) could hardly be regarded as the first one to borrow use of the word εὐαγγέλιον in the NT, though Mark is probably the first one to expand the given content of the εὐαγγέλιον with the life (words and deeds) of a person, Jesus. He thus creates a new genre, which is later called εὐαγγέλιον as according to the wording of the beginning of his book (Taylor, 1952; Strecker, 1975, 1979; Ferdinand, 2002; Cranfield, 1975a; Wilckens, 1978; Burrige, 1992). Matthew, following the 2 source-theory, adopts and expands the Gospel of Mark.

In the following, we will try, as far as possible, to discern the earliest development of the Christian concept of the εὐαγγέλιον. The Pauline letters were the first written and preserved documents for us. We will begin with a brief stretch of how Paul takes over the εὐαγγέλιον and further develops it.

### Paul's Understanding of the εὐαγγέλιον

According to his earliest written letter preserved for us, Paul preaches the gospel to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:5) with four main themes: (1) God raised Jesus from death; (2) Jesus rescues us from the wrath (of God) that is coming; (3) Christians wait for this son of God coming back from heaven; (4) as a result they turned from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess 1:9-10). From these themes, we may identify the contents of the gospel preached here. First, a narrative of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; second, the basic meaning of the resurrection so that Christians can be saved and rescued from God's coming wrath; third, Christians hope for Jesus Christ's second coming; and fourth, an ethical dimension so that Christians should respond or behave according to their

belief, which is to turn from idols. So, Paul's gospel consists of an historical event, which has its significance for human beings in terms of hope and ethics.

However, a closer look into Paul's letters will show that there are at least two places which reflect how the earliest Christians described the content of the gospel prior to Paul, and are different from what Paul depicts as the content in 1 Thessalonians (Suh, 2003).

1) The Pre-Pauline Fundamental Content of the Gospel (1Cor 15:3b-5; Rom 1:3-4)

In 1Cor 15:1, Paul leaves us a hint about the primitive content of the gospel (in absolute use, i.e., without 'God' as its predicate) among the earliest Christians prior to his own conversion to Jesus Christ. He explicitly tells the Corinthians that the gospel he has preached to them is what he himself has received and learned (Stanton, 2003). This gospel concentrates on the Easter event as foretold by the Scriptures: Christ is said to have died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day; and he appeared to Cephas and the twelve (1Cor 15:3b-5). Whether such a kerygma, perhaps the earliest εὐαγγέλιον, contained further appearances, reflected by use of the Greek conjunction ἔπειτα / εἶτα, is debatable, but the definitive length of this εὐαγγέλιον is not our immediate concern here. Nevertheless, if what Paul cites does not end in verse 8, then 1 Cor 15:12 identifies a clear conflict with the content of this earliest gospel when Paul turns to the question of the Corinthians, who were querying that there is any resurrection.

Here in the gospel Paul has received the immediate meaning of Jesus' death for the sins of humanity is expressed, but the significance of the other details of the Easter event is not articulated. If one thinks conceptually about 'Jesus' death for our sins', one has to admit that its purpose is already included in the expression in 1Thess 1:10: 'Jesus rescues us from the wrath (of God) that is coming'. The purpose of being forgiven of sins is understood as a means to escape or to be rescued from God's wrath and to have a good relationship with God. In 1 Cor 15:3b-5 we note that the core of the gospel that Paul has received and learned is more primitive than that presented in 1 Thess 1:5, 9-10, in which a wider spectrum of meanings of the gospel can be seen.

In Rom 1:3-4, Paul quotes, if not recites verbatim, another of the earliest understandings of the εὐαγγέλιον or an already existing confessional formula. The gospel is indeed the gospel of God (θεοῦ) about his son Jesus Christ (περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ). The Roman Christians being addressed probably share the

understanding of the dual sonship of Jesus Christ: he was descended from David according to the flesh and designated son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness. The key words in this statement of dual identity are not Paul's usual vocabulary (e.g., ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, κατὰ ἀγιωσύνης πνεῦμα), and scholars generally agree that they are pre-Pauline (Cranfield, 1975a, 1975b; Lohse, 2003; Cullmann, 1949; Bultmann, 1958). Apart from the dual identity of sonship of Jesus Christ, the content of this gospel includes the Easter event that God has raised Jesus Christ from death. We may observe that as in 1 Cor 15:3-5 and 1 Thess 1:5, 9-10 there is no interpretation of the significance of the Easter event. The emphasis on the Davidic line, the Jewish royal family, is not just to highlight the humanity of Christ, but it also intends to legitimize him as the Messiah. This understanding of Jesus as the Christ is especially meaningful to Christians with Jewish origin and heritage. The designation of Jesus as the son of God is a confession that Jesus was raised from the dead, and an assertion that he has universal significance for human beings.

### Paul's Development of the Eschatological Kingship

There is still an unsettled issue in relation to the earliest content of the gospel in Rom 1:3-4 concerning the Messiahship of Jesus. According to the Jewish tradition, it is a necessary but not sufficient condition that the Messiah should be a Davidic descendent. The Christ in the Jewish sense is indeed a political and military leader. The earthly Jesus obviously did not fulfill the role of this leadership. By confessing Jesus as Christ/Messiah, the earliest Christians have to deal with the dilemma, whether Jesus is legitimately called the Messiah. This is indeed a major distinction between Christian Jews and other Jews, namely whether to confess Jesus as Messiah or not. As far as we know, this remains an issue in the time of the Gospel of John, whose purpose of writing is to affirm that Jesus is the Messiah (Joh 20:30-31). For the earliest Christians, Jesus had already died and could no longer be any political and military leader of their nation in their living world.

Paul, one of the earliest Christian preachers, is probably the first one who deals with the dilemma, whether Jesus is legitimately called the Messiah because he was not a king on earth at all. While defending the resurrection of Christ, Paul incorporates the eschatological kingship of Jesus Christ into the understanding of the gospel about him (1Cor 15:24-26). Although Jesus died, he

will rule in the near future (Collins, 1999), which is echoed in the synoptic gospels' treatment of the 'delay of the Parousia'. As mentioned earlier, the core content of this earliest gospel consists mainly of Jesus' death, resurrection and appearances (1Cor 15: 3-5). Having answered the question posed to him by the Corinthians, Paul comes to reinforce the fact that Christ is now raised from the dead (15:20). First, he uses the symbol of 'first fruit' to articulate the meaning of Jesus Christ's resurrection for believing Christians, who will in turn follow Jesus and be raised from the dead in the end of time as well. In describing the resurrection of Christians when Jesus Christ will come again to gather the dead and living in his first written letter, Paul employs the conjunction ἔπειτα to organize the order of the procedure: the dead in Christ will rise first; then (ἔπειτα) those who are alive will be caught up ... (1 Thess 4:16-17). In 1 Cor 15:6-7, Paul uses the same ἔπειτα to enlarge the group of witnesses of Jesus' appearance after resurrection. Reusing the same literary device, Paul uses the Greek conjunction ἔπειτα / εἶτα in 1Cor 15:23-24 to develop the kingship of the resurrected Christ (15:24-26). There is again a neat order: Christ the first fruit, then (ἔπειτα) at his coming those belonging to him - then (εἶτα) comes the end (15:23f). Christ will rule (kingship) after destroying all enemies (including the last one, death). The issue or dilemma of Christ's kingship is now no longer a historical one, but an eschatological and transcendent one (enemies of the kingly Christ includes the mystical figure, death). So Jesus is made king: Having been resurrected from the dead, Jesus Christ must rule (βασιλεύειν) and will give the kingdom (βασιλείαν) to God at the end (1 Cor 15:24-25). However, this gospel, albeit with kingship, is not identical with the gospels' τα εὐαγγέλια in the secular Roman sense (usually in plural form) or a means to challenge and threaten the existing political authority and power. Consequently, Paul's gospel would have a better chance to survive in the external world of political power; and at the same time the earliest Christians could continue to claim that their Christian belief had its roots from the Jewish tradition.

(3) We have discussed Paul's understanding of the gospel above and we may summarize these observations: it is reasonable to assume that Paul does know the life of the earthly Jesus, although there are indeed just a few of Jesus' sayings cited in Paul's letters. Paul certainly intends to talk more about Christ, as he says, 'from now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way' (2 Cor 5:16, NRSV). Therefore, the prepositional

phrase, *περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ* (about his son, i.e. Jesus Christ, in Rom 1:3a) qualifying the 'gospel of God' (v. 1b), does not point to the details of the life of the earthly Jesus, but it aims at 'receiving grace from him' (Rom 1:5a). In other words, Paul concentrates his teachings not on the historical details of the life of earthly Jesus, but on the meaning of the Jesus Christ through whom God channels his grace to all human beings of the world. Therefore, the significance of his death (cross) and resurrection for all human beings is the essence of Paul's gospel of God. The main content of Paul's gospel of God embraces issues which existed before Paul: the significance of Jesus Christ for human beings and his kingship. The subject of this gospel, which is to be preached, is Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16f). Paul's own missionary task concerning the gospel (*εἰς εὐαγγέλιον*, v.1) is to proclaim it especially to the Gentiles.

### Mark's and Matthew's Understanding of the *εὐαγγέλιον*

The above discussion shows that Paul's understanding of the *εὐαγγέλιον* about Jesus Christ concentrates on the significance of the Easter event for Christians (e.g. 1 Thess 1:5, 9-10). If the dual sonship of Jesus Christ as the fundamental Christian belief is present in the pre-Pauline formula (Rom 1: 3f), we may say that Paul mainly develops and formulates his theology based on the aspect of the divine sonship, *κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης*, much more than that of his earthly humanity, *κατὰ σάρκα* (Rom 1:3f). While developing the meaning of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection in contrast to the historical accounts of the gospels, Paul also theologizes the concept of the kingship of the Messiah in the context of his eschatology (1 Corinthians 15).

Before we discuss Matthew's concept of the *εὐαγγέλιον*, we have to take a look into how and what Mark has done prior to Matthew.

### *Mark's Strategic Use of the Term εὐαγγέλιον*

Here, we shall simply discuss Mark's understanding of *εὐαγγέλιον* in its literary context, because our focus is on Matthew not on a detailed discussion of Mark.

From a literary perspective, Mark incorporates the passion narrative (direct allusion to Paul's *theologia crucis*), the human side (*κατὰ σάρκα*) of Jesus and some of Jesus' teachings and deeds (indirectly alluded to in Paul) into his gospel. Mark's way of developing and presenting the gospel (that which Jesus Christ preaches), concentrates on the other concept of the gospel: the biography

(vital words and deeds) of Jesus Christ; and this form of presentation thus evolves into new genre (different from Paul's). However, the Gospel of Mark is not to be seen as a contradiction of Paul's gospel (Marcus, 2000). They have different emphases: Mark on the historical accounts while Paul on the conceptual, spiritual meaning. They are indeed complementary to each other. Without Paul's success at transforming the role of Jesus' kingship into the eschatological context as the background for Mark, Mark's narrative up to the empty tomb and the fear of the two women would have remained a purely past historical event, and the kingly role of Jesus would also have remained 'buried' together with his death (Reimarus, 1778)!

From the above considerations we may say that Mark knows the dual sonship of Jesus Christ, the core of the earliest Christians εὐαγγέλιον, if not directly identical to its two fundamental formulas which Paul preserves for us (1 Cor 15:3-4; Rom 1:3-4). Mark develops and formulates the gospel κατὰ σάρκα in a different direction from what Paul has understood and done with κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης. Furthermore, Mark does not forsake, but eludes to Paul's theological concept of the εὐαγγέλιον, that is, the gospel for all human beings. This is supported by the two following considerations: (1) At the literary level, the genitive construction, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, constituting the first words to the Second Gospel and part of its title, allows a double understanding of the εὐαγγέλιον, that is, the gospel about Jesus Christ (Paul) and the gospel that Jesus preaches (Mark). Mark's opening phrase alludes to the gospel, employing Paul's fundamental vocabulary, with the predicate as an objective genitive, while at the same time, legitimates Mark's own new genre of the gospel with the predicate as a subjective genitive. (2) On the theological level, Mark constructs the Second Gospel with an emphatic focus on the concept of the passion or *theologia crucis*, which is the direction of Paul's understanding of the meaning of the gospel about Jesus Christ. Moreover, Mark shares the gospel with the Gentile/universal mission, the very conviction of Paul, who devotes all his life after conversion as a missionary to all the world. While Paul understands and transforms Jesus' kingship into an eschatological concept, Mark now presents it in narrative form linked to some concrete events of the earthly Jesus.

## *Matthew*

Matthew understands τὸ εὐαγγέλιον differently from Mark, whose εὐαγγέλιον Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ could have a fluid meaning.

Matthew confines and diminishes its meaning. Three times he brings the genitive predicate τῆς βασιλείας to τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ‘the gospel of the kingdom’, rather than the objective genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as in Mark 1:1, and also in Paul (see above). In Matthew, Jesus is the subject not the object and he is the one preaching the gospel, who sets forth the good news of the kingdom of God through his preaching, healing and teaching. Mark’s twofold perception of Jesus’ relation to the gospel (as subject and object) does not appear in Matthew at all.

### *Jesus Christ as the subject who preaches the Gospel*

Matthew has three times placed the predicate τῆς βασιλείας right after τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14). In 4:23 and 9:35, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας is in fact a specific formulation of Matthew’s, bracketing the ministry of Jesus Christ, both his words (chapter 5-7, or the Sermon on the Mount) and his deeds (chapter 8-9, or cycle of miracles). The exemplary illustration of Jesus’ ministry in chapter 5-9 is framed by two summaries, which both feature the use of διδάσκων, κηρύσσων and θεραπεύων (Matt 4:23 and 9:35). The subjective role of Jesus is crystal clear (cf. 4:17): Jesus himself is preaching the gospel of the kingdom. One then could hardly regard Jesus as the object of this gospel being preached here.

The Matthean formula ‘τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας’ occurs the third time in Matt 24:14 (// Mark 13:10), where Mark uses τὸ εὐαγγέλιον absolutely, whereas Matthew has the genitive predicate τῆς βασιλείας. Both contexts are exactly the same with close parallels. In this eschatological context of Matt 24:14 (//Mark 13:10), the gospel of the kingdom is said to be preached to all nations first, and then the end will come.

In order to understand Matthew’s use of the gospel (Matt 24:14), we shall examine it further at the readers’ and story level in comparison with its parallel in Mark 13:10, and the use of the cognate verb form εὐαγγελίζω, which Matthew uses once to denote the ministry of the same Jesus Christ.

(i) In the context of Mark 13:10, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is used absolutely without any qualifier.

One could thus imagine that from the time of Easter to the composition of the Gospel of Mark, Christian preachers, like Paul, have already been preaching the gospel about Jesus Christ. This understanding of the gospel is silently and subtly assumed between Easter and Mark. This εὐαγγέλιον in Mark 13:10 could also be understood as having the same meaning as τὸ εὐγγέλιον Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Mark 1:1 (as objective genitive) by Mark's first, intended readers. However, this does not apply to Matthew.

But Matt 24:14 applies also to the Gentiles! And its content is 'the gospel of the kingdom'. The specific Matthean formulation τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας has already been defined in content as Jesus' words and deeds in Matt 4:23 and 9:35. The predicate τῆς βασιλείας to the εὐαγγέλιον in the Matthean context does not permit us to think of it as the 'gospel about Jesus Christ', for the genitive predicate Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is omitted (Hagner, 1995).

(ii) The objective genitive understanding of the gospel (about Jesus Christ) in Matt 24:14 is also very unlikely at the narrative level. Jesus Christ himself, as noted above, is the one who preaches the gospel in the Gospels. The cognate verb εὐαγγελίζω, which occurs only once in the Gospel of Matthew (11:5), confirms our interpretation. In Jesus' answer to the question of John the Baptist sent through his disciples (Matt 11:4-6), we find six parallel phrases each with a plural noun and a verb in the third person plural relating to the blind, the lame, the lepers, the deaf, the dead and the poor. All these people are satisfied because of the deeds of Jesus Christ, which John's disciples have witnessed (heard and seen). This Matthean verb εὐαγγελίζω, which connects directly with all those in need (physically, but not spiritually), and so cannot have meant anything else apart from Jesus' deeds, which is a preaching of the gospel, indicating that Jesus is the subject, the one preaching and performing that gospel.

Furthermore, this Matthean understanding of the gospel is reinforced by the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο placed in front of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον in 24:14 (also in 26:13). The syntactic use of τοῦτο twice to qualify 'gospel' is indeed unexpected and thus signifies Matthew's deliberate addition because his source in Mark 13:10 and 14:9 does not have this τοῦτο. Martin Dibelius correctly observes that τοῦτο should not be seen as accidental and later commentators see it as undeniable as a literary observation and support his viewpoint (Dibelius, 1933; Schniewind, 1937; Davies & Allison, 1988; Luz, 2002a, 2002b). Davies & Allison further suspect that the addition of the τοῦτο in Matthew serves as a

mark to distinguish this “true proclamation” from that of the false prophets (Davies & Allison, 1988).

Obviously, Matthew wants to stress this gospel of his, and not any others. He could even have the false gospel, preached by false prophets (cf. Matt 7:21-23) in his mind. Inevitably, one thinks of Paul's polemic tone, the ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, which his opponents, the conservative law-observant Jewish Christians, preached (Gal 1:6) (Sim, 1998, 2008). It shows that the content of the εὐαγγέλιον could be greatly argued over or even quarreled about and also preached quite differently in the beginning of early Christianity. (The singular use of ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον in Gal 1:6 could imply a specific form or content of a gospel that Paul is arguing against.)

From the standpoint of Matthew, there are probably more gospels being preached which do not correspond to τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας with Jesus Christ as the one doing the preaching as he so programmatically emphasizes in 4:23 and 9:35. Matthew could have been thinking of the gospel of Paul, or of the gospel as depicted by Mark, perhaps even of the gospel which Paul argued against and regarded as ‘another gospel’. That ‘another gospel’ differs from Paul's, Mark's and Matthew's gospels by insisting on ritual demand, like circumcision, which are not even mentioned once in Mark and Matthew.

Prior to Matthew, there were at least two kinds of gospels: Paul's gospel about Jesus Christ and the gospel that Paul identifies as another gospel. Now, Matthew is defining the εὐαγγέλιον by τοῦτο and τῆς βασιλείας, in which Jesus is the subject preaching the gospel, whereas in Paul's gospel Jesus is the object being preached.

In contrast to the 3 previous occurrences in Matthew, the predicate τῆς βασιλείας does not appear in the last appearance of the noun τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (26:13). However, the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο there adequately shows that τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον bears the same meaning as the previous three occurrences from a linguistic point of view. Therefore, the omission of the predicate τῆς βασιλείας should not be seen as indicating a shift from the subjective genitive understanding of Jesus Christ's gospel. We conclude that the word τοῦτο is deliberately placed in front of the phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας in Matt 24:14 (cf. 26:13). If the qualifiers, τοῦτο and τῆς βασιλείας, in Matthew receive enough attention, one could hardly deny the contrast between the Matthean subjective genitive understanding of τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας (Jesus

Christ preaches) and Paul's objective genitive understanding of the gospel (Jesus Christ is being preached).

## 4 Mission

Paul is the greatest missionary in early Christianity. He labors for and establishes many Christian communities in the Mediterranean region (Acts of the Apostles). His prominence extends, beyond these communities, as far as his opponents among the Jewish Christians. His writings have been famous, widespread and influential since his day. The positive Pauline legend is, in his time, well developed and reflected in some deutero-Pauline epistles, for instance, Ephesians, Acts, the Pastorals and 1 Clement (Barrett, 1974). Some of the deutero-Pauline epistles are even forgeries. The Acts of the Apostles regards him even as a hero (Fitzmyer, 1981)!

With the above evidence about mission fields, we would like to draw attention to the common consensus that Matthew is regarded as written in Syria, and even probably in its major city Antioch. This is to say, one can hardly think of the scenario that Matthew did not come across or know of Paul. Apart from this probability, we shall further illustrate some more small hints relating to the concept of mission, which may bring us near to the possible relationship between Paul and Matthew.

### Mission Field

Matthew describes and interprets allegorically the situation of the mission field in the parable of the weeds among the wheat: 'a man (v.24) sows good seeds in the field', which is interpreted as 'the sons of the kingdom in the harvest time' (v.37). Contrastingly, the bad seeds among the wheat in the same mission field that the enemy 'ὁ ἐχθρός' (v.25) sows later become 'the sons of evil in the end time' (v.38). The man and the enemy are interpreted as the Son of Man (v.37) and the devil (v.39) respectively. Hence, the parable unfolds before us different groups of people growing together in a mission field and this could probably refer to a mixed Christian community in the world of the Gospel (Wong, 1992).

In view of the agricultural parables of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew chapter 13, one can easily figure out in the Parable of the Sower (13:3-23) that one sower sows the seeds (word of the kingdom) onto the soil (different

audience) while the unfruitful and fruitful soils symbolize different responses of the audience to the message. In the parable of the weeds among wheat (13:24-30; 36-43), we note that there is more than one sower (preacher). Actively working in the field / world are: the Son of Man (the man) and the Evil One (enemy 'ἐχθρός').

The seed stands for the message, and sometimes also for the people who hear it. Different seeds (weeds and wheat) sowed symbolize different messages delivered to the audience by different preachers. That is to say, besides the messages of the Son of Man, there exist some other messages in the mission field. Matthew does not make it clear from where these other messages come. However, we know that besides the royal use of the terminology εὐαγγέλιον in the ancient world of the Roman Empire (see above), there were different gospels, or different messages preached among Christians prior to the composition of the Matthean Gospel. And Matthew (24:14) emphasizes that his own gospel of the kingdom of God is to be preached all over the world. It seems, therefore, reasonable to assume that the enemy is someone, whom we may call a missionary, or a figure, behind which there are different missionaries. This enemy preaches a gospel, which differs from the gospel that Matthew preaches.

The Epistle of Peter to James (2:3-4) in the Pseudo-Clementine Literature probably identifies the hostile man as Paul (Coxe, 1995; Rehm, 1953). Peter writes:

For some from among the Gentiles have rejected my legal preaching, attaching themselves to certain lawless and trifling preaching of the man who is my enemy (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐχθρός, 'the enemy man' literally). And these things some have attempted while I am still alive, to transform my words by certain various interpretations, in order to the dissolution of the law; as though I also myself were of such a mind, but did not freely proclaim it, which God forbid (Coxe, Roberts & Donaldson, 1995)!

Could Paul be one of the active missionaries in the region of the Gospel of Matthew, who sowed weeds, in the eyes of Matthew, among the wheat? Was he so strongly disputed in early Christianity? Many opinions deny that Paul is this 'hostile man' because the enemy is later identified as Satan in the allegory (Matt 13:39) (Holtzmann, 1897). One can hardly imagine that the figure of Paul would be demonized in early Christianity.

Yet, such an identification, on the one hand, is not absolutely necessary to put Paul in this position. For Paul and his teaching could also be the bad seeds, which Satan has sown, in the view of his (Paul's) Christian opponents. Satan in the allegory of the parable (Mt 13:36-43) stands opposite to the angel, who has 'sown' good people. Satan may also sow bad people. On the other hand, the demonization of opponents in early Christianity is not uncommon. In fact, Paul himself does so when he polemicizes against his Christian opponents, probably with Jewish background:

"For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their end will match their deeds." (2 Cor 11:13-15; NRSV)

The opponents are indeed here only the ministers of Satan, but not Satan himself. But it is only a small step to the assertion that Satan transforms himself as these ministers. Such an interpretation above would be inconsistent with Matt 5:19, where Paul accordingly will be given the lowest place in the kingdom of heaven. This inconsistency could, however, disappear if one freely interprets this text as meaning that those who teach the setting aside of the Law are de facto to be excluded from it. However taking into account the wider picture, inconsistency is not uncommon in the early Christian writings. Perhaps Paul's message is just one of the common seeds which the Devil has spread. But his communities grow like the weeds among the wheat.

Paul's work was pioneering a new chapter in the Jesus movement, embracing and allowing all Gentiles to inherit and share in God's promise, which was originally reserved solely for the Jewish ancestors. In his metaphor, Paul describes himself as one of the co-workers of God and through the other co-workers, God makes things grow: 'I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered ... but only God gave the growth' (1Cor 3:6f).

Different from Paul, Matthew does not present the missionaries and preachers as God's co-worker in the parable of the weeds among the wheat and its allegorical interpretation (Mt 13:24-30, 36-43). At the same time, for those servants who take on passive roles in nurturing the growth of the seeds, we cannot simply regard them as co-workers in Paul's vocabulary. However, it is possible to infer that the servants may have assisted their master, who has helped the message grow among the audience in the mission field, yet they do

not sow through preaching. The master, the only one who sows the seeds and who is identified as the Son of Man, forbids them from weeding the field (Matt 13:29). He permits the coexistence of weeds and wheat. Eventually he himself will send his reapers (angels) to separate the sons of evil or sons of the kingdom at harvest. The parable of the weeds among the wheat and its interpretation show that Matthew is aware of the situation, in which there are different groups or different audiences in the Christian community. As one can hardly know a human heart or the essence of a person, he demands his Christian community to be tolerant towards different ones (cf. Matt 7:1-5). Above all, the authority of judgment belongs solely to God. Thus we may conclude from the parable that Matthew presents the reality of a mixed community; and he wants to enhance a communal life of different groups in this Christian community.

### Instructions to Missionaries

Matthew shares the ideal of Paul's world mission by giving two sending commissions. The first one limits its target exclusively to the Jews, in which Jesus sends his own disciples (Mt 10:5b-6). The second commission at the very end of the Gospel in 28:18-20 calls for a worldwide mission to all nations / Gentiles (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) (Wong, 1992). The risen Lord gives his last words and discharges his eleven disciples (not twelve, excluding Judas) directly to make disciples (but not to preach the gospel about Jesus Christ) all over the world: going out (πορευθέντες) to reach the target audience, baptizing (βαπτίζοντες) them when they accept the good news, and teaching (διδάσκοντες) the newly converted Christians to observe what the earthly Jesus has taught in the world. The ultimate aim of their tasks is to make disciples (μαθητεύσατε) of all nations. This μαθητεύσατε is the only full verb (imperative) in this great commandment. The other three are participles (going, baptizing and teaching) depending on the main verb. In other words, all nations become the target audience and people should not just hear the gospel about Jesus Christ (genitivus objectivus), but should also be taught to know and to be able to keep all Jesus' teachings, as written in the First Gospel (Strecker, 1966).

Matthew's Jesus demands that those who want to follow him leave their families and possessions, and even abandon their family responsibilities by leaving the dead to bury their own dead (Mt 8:22). In this vein, Jesus' coming does not intend to bring peace, but a sword on the earth, which could perhaps

break a family (Matt 10:34-39). Jesus himself is an itinerant charismatic with a radical life-style, whose relationship with his own family is also under tension (Mark 3:31-35) (Theissen, 1992).

Paul himself also knows this kind of life-style, but he does not follow it (1 Cor 9:3-12)! We know that Paul is also an itinerant charismatic traveling around preaching the gospel about Jesus Christ and for this he labors and suffers (1 Cor 4: 9-13; 2 Cor 11:16-28). He is probably a Roman citizen with a good education. Despite his background, he stigmatizes himself as slavish, uneducated and useless (Barton, 2003; Hock, 1980). Paul works for his own living (1 Cor 9:6) and only occasionally receives financial support from his churches (2 Cor 11:8-9; Phil 4:15-16). As he possesses the skill of tentmaking, which allows him to enjoy the freedom of mobility, he can earn his own living apart from his missionary career (which is voluntary!). Other itinerant preachers, who were once farmers or fishermen, cannot live this way because their living is bound up with the land and sea or lake (Theissen, 1992a, 1992b). Barnabas and Paul admit that this is their way of serving the Lord and are proud of their situation (1 Cor 9:6). However, their way of life per se, especially acquiring their own living (a form of wealth), violates the specific Matthean instruction of Jesus, the renunciation of acquiring wealth and of receiving food from the mission.

Matthew argues against this life-style of Paul as an itinerant charismatic. From the Q logion, we learn that Jesus, while sending his disciples, demands his disciples to give up their property: 'carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road' (Luke 10:4 // Matt 10:10a). The rationale behind this renunciation of earning money for a living is the Lord's instruction 'for the laborer deserves his food' (Luke 10:7b; Matt 10:10b). Such a radical saying is probably preserved for us by the itinerant charismatics, who follow Jesus' exemplary radical form of life exactly. Matthew changes the word 'purse' in Luke to three similar words denoting wealth, 'gold, silver, copper'. This change suggests to us that the Christian community behind the Gospel of Matthew is living in a big and wealthy ancient city. Matthew also adds an extra verb 'κτάομαι' (to acquire). Consequently, the demand of carrying no wealth in Luke is now altered into a prohibition against acquiring wealth by the itinerant preachers in Matt 10:9 (Davies & Allison, 1991).

Obviously, Matthew does not accept itinerant charismatics who acquire their living during their mission. Paul and Barnabas are the two obvious deviants, who are precisely proud of this form of itinerant charismatic lifestyle.

### Jewish missionaries in Matthew

In the polemic against the Pharisees and scribes, Matthew accuses them of hypocrisy and curses them with seven woes (Matthew 23). In the second of the seven woes, the Pharisees and scribes are said to be, on the one hand, so enthusiastic as to traverse sea and land (Luz, 1997) to make a single proselyte, and, on the other hand, likely to they make him twice as much a child of hell as themselves (23:15). They are here described as a kind of Jewish missionary.

Although there might be few examples of being included into Jewish community (proselytes), the Jews understood themselves as God's chosen people, separated from all other peoples, the Gentiles. Judaism in the time of Jesus or Matthew was not keen on missionary work. Indeed, it is a common consensus that there is insufficient evidence to prove that Judaism was 'a proselytizing religion' at that time (Luz, 1997; McKnight, 1991; opposition to this view (Gnilka, 1988; Feldman, 1993).

The content of this logion does not seem to be characteristic of Jesus (Luz, 1997; Davies & Allison, 1997). There are two main considerations focusing either on the 'proselyte' or the 'Pharisee missionary' which can be considered if we want to identify the situation envisaged in Matt 23:15 in the history of Judaism and early Christianity:

1. The first consideration focuses on the 'proselyte'. They are either converted to Judaism in general or converted to Pharisaism in particular. For the former, one would think of some exceptional Gentiles, who converted to Judaism. The singular form of the word 'proselyte' suggests that the text could be pointing to a famous individual conversion, such as King Izates or Flavius Clemens (Jos Ant 20:40-42) (Davies & Allison, 1997; Luz, 1997).

For the latter case of converting to Pharisaism in particular, we have to understand that the Pharisees formed a special group before 70 CE. Yet, they 'were not a uniform, far less monolithic, party'. They were interested in keeping the law and in developing a distinctive halakhic (a Hebrew word meaning 'walk') interpretation of Torah, the traditions of their fathers, the so-called oral

law. They are intent on determining how individuals should ‘act’ in particular situations according to rules and rulings derived from the written Torah (Dunn, 2003). Therefore, the ‘proselytes’ in this case were clearly Jews (not Gentiles), who converted their lifestyle to this Pharisaic group. With this understanding, this logion against the Pharisees could even be traced back to the earthly Jesus himself (McKnight, 1991; Feldman, 1993; Jeremias, 1958).

2. The second consideration extends our attention from the ‘proselyte’ to the converter or Pharisaic missionary. In this case, we will locate the logion in the inner Christian situation in the post Easter period, or more precisely in the time of the Matthean community. After the Roman invasion of Jerusalem in 70 CE, the Pharisees and scribes became representatives of the Jewish leaders of emergent Rabbinic Judaism.

There is more to the logion in Matt 23:15 than its superficial literary meaning relating to Jewish missionaries. Again there are also two figurative possibilities: (1) In order to differentiate itself from Judaism, the Matthean community could here be representing, through counter-examples, the kind of teaching that the church should not give (Davies, & Allison, 2004). Matt 23:15 could be a warning against these examples in Judaism; but at the same it could refer to figures within Christianity. In this vein, we have to be reminded that there were also Pharisees among the Christian circle. According to Act 15:5, Christian Pharisees intruded into the situation in Antioch and insisted that Gentile Christians had to receive circumcision and to keep the law, as the proselytes do. Without being full proselytes, Gentile Christians could not really be saved (Luz, 1997). This opinion is similar to that of Paul’s Law-observant opponents in Galatians, who also demanded that Gentile Christians become proselytes. The second figurative possibility: (2) We may also think of the most famous Christian Pharisee, Paul himself, as being criticized in Matt 23:15.

From Luke’s report and Paul’s own testimony in his letters, we know that Paul was a Pharisee who traversed sea and land to undertake mission and bear witness to Jesus Christ, so that Gentiles might be included in the promise of God to the Jewish forefathers, and become part of the new chosen people of God. Paul is scourged in the Jewish synagogue, which is an internal disciplinary punishment applied to the Jews in the synagogue. He informs us that he has received five times at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one (2 Cor 11:24).

Could this latter possibility of this brilliant figure, who was once a troublemaker in Judaism, be excluded from this group of Pharisees missionaries in the Matthean redaction (23:15)? Or is it probable that Matthew has Paul in mind when writing his polemic against the sea-traversing missionaries? Could we think of any great Jewish and/or Christian missionaries other than Paul who traversed sea and land, were involved in struggling and suffering, in order to win a person for one's own sake? Is it inconceivable that Paul's opponents refused his mission because they saw Paul's teaching, which could lead to disobedience of the Law in the Christian communities, as a work of hell?

## 5 Conclusion

### Law

The idea that Matthew could relate to Paul is not new. In the 19th century, there was already a thesis suggested by Holtzmann regarding the one who will be the least in the kingdom of heaven, in contrast to the Jewish religious leaders who cannot enter it (Matt 5:19-20). The identification of Paul or his followers as the least in the kingdom was heavily criticized subsequently and gradually disappeared. It seemed hard to substantiate the thesis with further hard evidence, even though some scholars last century tried hard to approach the relationship of Matthew and Paul in this light.

### Mission

No doubt Paul was the greatest missionary in early Christianity. One can imagine that Christians of one or more generations post Paul's era (like Matthew) must have somehow come across Paul, either via his legacy, theology or even personally through direct contacts. However, though NT documents were generally written after Paul, there is no explicit reference to Paul at all outside of Pauline literature, except once in 2 Pet 3:15-16, which criticizes Paul's teaching as hard to understand. We do not have any obvious hints about whether Matthew himself was also a missionary. Yet, we may see a contrast here: Paul devotes his life to mission in the Mediterranean region; whereas Matthew writes about the mission field making three key observations:

- a) While Matthew sees the whole world as the missionary field, in the parable of the weeds among the wheat he indicates that there are other seed/message/gospels in the missionary field which are sown by the enemy, who is identified as a figure who is engaged in activities similar to those of Paul's mission.
- b) Matthew also criticizes the kind of missionary lifestyle which was characterized especially by meeting one's needs by acquiring resources by working for one's own living, a practice of which Paul is proud.
- c) Matthew further criticizes the Pharisaic missionary traveling sea and land, of which Paul was perhaps the most famous example.

## Gospel

Matthew's emphasis on 'this gospel of the kingdom' implicates that he is aware of the fluid meaning arising from the title of Mark 1:1. He does not agree with Paul's understanding of the gospel with the objective genitive meaning, but defines his own gospel in a manner, in which Jesus Christ as the subject preaches the kingdom. The very content of the gospel should not be merely the meaning of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection (as Paul thought), but focus much more on Jesus' teachings, instruction, and commandments.

It must be granted that there is a core difficulty here, namely that the name Paul is never mentioned in the First Gospel and that there is no explicit text which can serve as direct evidence in Matthew for criticism of Paul. Thus one cannot reach firm conclusions about whether Matthew was responding to or criticizing Paul. On the other hand, after analyzing and comparing all these small and indirect hints in relation to Paul and Matthew, can we really say that all these concerns of Matthew (law, mission, gospel) were without some point and had no target in mind? Or may we be allowed to suggest that all these texts of Matthew at least be regarded as indicating a tendency, pointing to a kind of person(s), who has characteristics which we can identify in Paul?

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# Dialectic of ἀλήθεια and ἐλευθερία in Galatians

Eugene Eung-Chun Park  
San Francisco Theological Seminary, USA

## Abstract

This article investigates the dialectic between the concept of seeing the Form (εἶδος) of Eros (ἔρωος), which is equivalent to knowing the truth (ἀλήθεια), and the metaphoric expression of liberation (λύσις) in Plato's Dialogues. Then it argues that the close connection between ἀλήθεια and ἐλευθερία in Galatians reflects a similar philosophical principle as that of Plato. This recognition is exegetically applied to Galatians to formulate a new interpretive pattern of the distinction between the constant and the variables in Paul's soteriology.

**Keywords:** truth, freedom, covenantal nomism, Galatians, salvation

One of the significant conceptual frameworks of Galatians is the dynamic interplay of the two closely related concepts, ἀλήθεια and ἐλευθερία. Neither ἀλήθεια nor ἐλευθερία has traditionally been regarded as a key term in Paul's theology. These terms do not indeed appear in the Pauline corpus as frequently as the other better known theological terms such as δικαιοσύνη or πίστις.<sup>1</sup> However, in Galatians, if not elsewhere, Paul uses these terms ἀλήθεια and ἐλευθερία in key strategic places to the effect that they function as a set of significant conceptual words that gives a unique character to the theological outlook of the epistle, even though the relationship between the two is only implicitly suggested rather than explicitly stated.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the seven undisputed letters of Paul, ἀλήθεια appears 19 times (Rom 1.18, 25, 2.8, 20, 3.7, 9.1, 15.8; 1 Cor 5.8, 13.6; 2 Cor 4.2, 6.7, 7.14, 11.10, 12.6, 13.8; Gal 2.5, 14, 5.7; Phil 1.18), and ἐλευθερία appears 6 times (Rom 8.21; 1 Cor 10.29; 2 Cor 3.17; Gal 2.4, 5.1, 13).

<sup>2</sup> The significance of the word *freedom* in Galatians has been recognized by a number of scholars. For example, Longenecker (1990, p. 51) says freedom is a major theme of Galatians. Dunn (1993, p. 98). Here in the concluding part of the section on Paul's "own theology" (64–100), Dunn says, "The word which Paul chooses to round off the main section of his argument is significant – freedom! It was the word he had chosen earlier to

## 1 ἀλήθεια and ἐλευθερία in Plato's *Dialogues*

In order to explicate a potentially meaningful range of connotations and denotations of these two words ἀλήθεια and ἐλευθερία in Galatians I will provide here a brief discussion of the interplay between these two concepts in some of the widely known and highly influential Dialogues of Plato. In the so-called Myth of Er in the last book of *The Republic*, Plato describes a post-mortem journey of the souls. After the heavenly rewards and underworldly punishments meted out by the divine judgment, each of the souls gathered there chooses the kind of life in their next cycle of transmigration (μετεμψύχωσις). Then, after passing beneath the Throne of Necessity (ὕπὸ τὸν τῆς ἀνάγκης ἰέναι θρόνον), the souls are taken to a place called the Meadow of Oblivion (τὸ τῆς Λήθης πεδῖον), in which they are encamped by the River of Forgetfulness (παρὰ τὸν Ἀμέλητα ποταμόν). There they are required to drink of the water from the river. As they drink, they forget (ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι) everything they have known in their previous cycle of incarnation as well as what they have seen during their post-mortem journey (Plato, *The Republic*, 621a). Then, in the next cycle of the metempsychosis, the soul is incarnated into the form of life it has chosen for itself with this *forgetfulness* (λήθη). However, the knowledge is not completely forgotten but it is recoverable through reminiscence/recollection (ἀνάμνησις). In fact, according to the Platonic Socrates in *The Meno*, all we inquire and learn is entirely reminiscence/recollection (τὸ γὰρ ζητεῖν ἄρα καὶ τὸ μανθάνειν ἀνάμνησις ὅλον ἐστίν, Plato, *The Meno*, 81d). This is why in Greek vocabulary the noun truth (ἀλήθεια) is a compound word consisting of the α-στερητικόν (α-privativum) and the stem of λήθη (forgetfulness). That is, truth (ἀλήθεια) is a matter of re-gaining the knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) by negating/undoing (α-) the forgetfulness (λήθη) through recollection (ἀνάμνησις). In *The Phaedo*, Plato develops this theory of recollection further and he has his main character Socrates say that in order to know anything correctly one must be released from oneself (i.e. one's body) and that one must contemplate the objects through (the eye of) the soul itself (εἰ μέλλομέν ποτε καθαρῶς τι εἶσεσθαι, ἀπαλλακτέον αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ θεατέον αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα, Plato, *The Phaedo*, 66d–e).

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summarize the truth of the gospel as experienced by the Galatians (2.4–5).” Witherington III (1998, p. 137), “the freedom which we have in Jesus Christ. This phrase in some ways could be said to be the theme of this entire act of persuasion.”

In the Platonic epistemology, which is intimated in *The Phaedo*, the object of the true knowledge is the Form (εἶδος) of the being itself (αὐτὴ ἢ οὐσία), such as αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον (equality itself; absolute equality) or αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν (beauty itself/absolute beauty), which always remains the same (ὡσαύτως αἰεὶ ἔχει κατὰ ταῦτα), rather than individual manifestations of it (σκιαί), which keep changing (Plato, *The Phaedo*, 78d). The differences between these two types of existence as two different domains of epistemology are further elaborated in *The Timaeus*. In the introductory part of the dialogue, Timaeus asks a question that is foundational to Plato's philosophical system, τί τὸ ὄν αἰεὶ γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον καὶ τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν δὲ οὐδέποτε (What is that which *is* always and has no beginning? And what is that which always comes into being and never *is*?), Plato, *The Timaeus*, 27d–28a). This fundamental distinction between τὸ ὄν (what *is*) and τὸ γιγνόμενον (what *comes into being*) seems to have been influenced by Heraclitus, who is quoted to have said, “πάντα ῥεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει (Everything flows and nothing remains),” as Plato himself has his main speaker Socrates make a reference to the Heraclitean doctrine of flux in *The Cratylus*.<sup>3</sup> According to Aristotle, this distinction between τὸ ὄν and τὸ γιγνόμενον and, more importantly, the idea that true knowledge is possible only for the former are maintained throughout the entire Platonic system.<sup>4</sup>

In the famous speech of Socrates that refers to the instructions by Diotima of Mantinea in *The Symposium*, Plato describes the process of a philosopher's intellectual journey in pursuit of the true knowledge of Eros through the analogy of climbing up a ladder from the bottom to the top rung.<sup>5</sup> When the philosopher has reached the top rung of the ladder, he will suddenly “see” (κατόψεται) the vision of something marvelous, which is beautiful in nature (τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *The Cratylus*, 402a, λέγει πού Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῆ ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης (Heraclitus says that all things move and nothing remains the same, and analogizing all existing things to the flow of a river, he says that you cannot step twice into the same stream; translation mine).

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 987a, ἐκ νέου τε γὰρ συνήθης γενόμενος πρῶτον Κρατύλῳ καὶ ταῖς Ἡρακλειτείαις δόξαις, ὡς ἀπάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἰεὶ ῥέοντων καὶ ἐπιστήμης περὶ αὐτῶν οὐκ οὐσίας, ταῦτα μὲν καὶ ὕστερον οὕτως ὑπέλαβεν (In his youth Plato first became acquainted with Cratylus and the Heraclitean doctrines—that all the sensible things always flow and that there is no real knowledge of them—and he still held these doctrines in the same manner later in his life). Scholars have noted that in the later *Dialogues* of Plato there are implicit criticisms and minor modifications of this doctrine, but the majority scholarly opinion is that in the course of the entire system of Plato's *Dialogues* this distinction is upheld in spite of a few passages that show a certain degree of discrepancies. For this aspect of Plato's thoughts see Bolton (1975, pp. 66–95).

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *The Symposium*, 201d – 212c (The analogy of the ladder is in 210a–212b.)

φύσιν καλόν).<sup>6</sup> Then, when the philosopher, through this vision, comes to know the true essence of the beauty itself (καὶ γνῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἔστι καλόν), he ultimately becomes friends with the deities (θεοφιλῆς γενέσθαι) and achieves the status of being immortal (ἀθάνατος, Plato, *The Symposium*, 212a–b). These last remarks by Diotima, which are elliptical and highly symbolic, imply that the philosopher standing on the top rung of the ladder would then be liberated from the ongoing cycles of regeneration as a mortal being (μετεμψύχωσις).<sup>7</sup>

This critical link between *knowing the truth* and *being liberated* is even more clearly articulated in the Allegory of the Cave in the seventh book of *The Republic* (Plato, *The Republic*, 514a–517a). In this parabolic illustration for his theory of the Form, Plato depicts the education of the philosopher as a process of *liberation* (λύσις) by knowing the truth.<sup>8</sup> The state of being chained with fetters on the neck and the legs (ἐν δεσμοῖς καὶ τὰ σκέλη καὶ τοὺς ἀγκύνας) of the prisoners in the cave symbolizes the servile status of a person in ignorance. Liberation (λύσις) begins to happen as one of them is released from the fetters and is led to face the light from the fire behind for the first time and then dragged up to start an ascent (ἀνάβασις) to the opening of the cave, until he is able to see the heavenly bodies, especially, the sun itself: τελευταῖον δὴ οἶμαι τὸν ἥλιον, οὐκ ἐν ὕδασι οὐδ’ ἐν ἀλλοτρίᾳ ἔδρᾳ φαντάσματα αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸν καθ’ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ χώρᾳ δύναιτ’ ἂν κατιδεῖν καὶ θεάσασθαι οἷός ἐστιν (Finally, I think, he is able to see the sun itself and contemplates what it really is, not by reflections in waters or apparitions of it in another setting, but in and of itself in its own place, Plato, *The Republic*, 516b). This depiction of seeing the sun itself in *The Republic* is remarkably similar to the language of “knowing the truth” in *The Phaedo* and *The Timaeus*, which is mentioned earlier in this

<sup>6</sup> Plato, *The Symposium*, 210e. The verb used in this passage is *κατόψομαι*. In *The Gorgias*, 523e, a different verb *θεωρέω* is used to express the notion of “*αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν θεωροῦντα* (seeing the soul itself through the soul itself)” This verb *θεωρέω* is a more typical term for Plato for the notion of contemplating the Form to gain the true knowledge of something. See Nightingale, (2009, pp. 3–4).

<sup>7</sup> The meaning of these highly symbolic and metaphorical expressions remains permanently ambiguous primarily because Plato himself does not elaborate on it. In this article I opt for the more mythical interpretation that takes the literal meaning of Plato’s vocabulary seriously. In contrast, a more existential interpretation is given by Lear (2006, pp. 96–123), especially, 119–120. See also Adluri (2014, pp. 3–32). Here Adluri discusses the notion of salvation in the *Republic* focusing on the language of the enlightened soul passing through the River of Forgetfulness without drinking the water and thus maintaining the true knowledge that it gained by gazing at the Form.

<sup>8</sup> Stalley (1998, pp. 145–158). See especially 147.

section.<sup>9</sup> From these observations one can draw a firm conclusion that in the theory of the Form and in the epistemological process in Plato's *Dialogues* there is a strong connection between truth (ἀλήθεια) and freedom (ἐλευθερία) and that true knowledge is especially of τὸ ὄν (what *is*), not τὸ γιγνόμενον (what comes into being/what changes). In other words, it is the knowledge of the truth of what always remains the same (the constant) that gives its possessor freedom from the servile status of ignorance caused by what keeps changing (the variables).

## 2 ἀλήθεια and ἐλευθερία in Galatians

Paul uses the word ἀλήθεια three times in Galatians (2.5, 14, 5.7). In the first two cases the word ἀλήθεια is qualified by τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. The whole phrase ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου refers to the content of the gospel that Paul preached.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the qualifier τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is best construed as an objective genitive. The third occurrence of ἀλήθεια in Gal 5.7 is an unqualified use, but it also presupposes the same conceptual link with τὸ εὐαγγέλιον as the first two, as the following verse (5.8) indicates through the phrase ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς, which resonates with the same expression ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς in Gal 1.6.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the word ἀλήθεια as it is used in Galatians has a specific connotation of the *truth of the gospel* which Paul originally preached to the churches in Galatia and which he is trying to defend in the current epistolary situation in Galatians.<sup>12</sup>

The first appearance of ἀλήθεια in Gal 2.5 is in the context of Paul's report on his experience at the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem and as such it belongs

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Woolf (2009, pp. 9–39). In this article Woolf argues that there is a distinction in the *Republic* between philosophical truth and non-philosophical truth and that only the former is considered worthy of possession in itself. It goes without saying that the philosophical truth is the truth about the Form that a philosopher comes to know.

<sup>10</sup> Lührmann (1992, p. 39), “‘Truth’ here is more than simple correctness or truthfulness. It is a question of the content of the gospel, which Paul comprehends in the antithesis of law and faith.” The second half of Lührmann's statement is debatable, but the first half is certainly right.

<sup>11</sup> Betz (1979, pp. 264–65).

<sup>12</sup> Martyn (1997, p. 198). Based on this specificity of the term “truth” defined by the word “gospel”, Martyn argues that Paul here is not concerned to offer a philosophical discourse on truth. It is true that Paul is not making a generic statement on truth in this passage, but that does not necessarily make Paul's line of thought any less philosophical in a broad sense of the word.

to the *Narratio* section of the epistle (1.12–2.14), if one follows the Aristotelian rhetorical scheme applied to Galatians.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it takes a particular implication from the episode it talks about at that point of the narrative. That is, the truth of the gospel in this context has to do with the issue of the requirement of circumcision for Gentile believers.<sup>14</sup> According to Paul in verses 3 and 5, by not letting Titus be circumcised, Paul and Barnabas managed not to submit to the “false brothers” even for a moment so that the truth of the gospel might remain with the Gentile believers in Galatia.<sup>15</sup> Here circumcision represents the boundary marker *par excellence* that distinguishes the Jews from the rest of the humanity as the chosen people of God.

The second occurrence of ἀλήθεια in Gal 2.14, which still belongs to the *Narratio* section of the epistle, is part of Paul’s recollections on the Antioch Incident. According to what Paul alleges in this highly polemical passage, Peter came to the Church of Antioch and he freely ate with the Gentile members of the church, but when certain individuals from James came, he withdrew from the common table and separated himself (ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν) from the Gentile believers, because he was afraid of the circumcision party (Gal 2.11). In Paul’s opinion, by doing this Peter stood condemned (κατεγνωσμένος) and the rest of the Jewish believers including even Barnabas joined Peter in his hypocrisy (ὑπόκρισις). Paul then saw that they were not acting correctly toward the truth of the gospel (πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου), so he confronted Peter in front of all, accusing him of forcing the Gentile believers to follow Jewish customs, while Peter himself being a Jew was living like a Gentile (2.14).

Since circumcision itself is not an issue at the Antioch Incident, the phrase τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις ἰουδαΐζειν in 2.14 does not mean to compel them to be circumcised. It rather means to force the Gentile members of the church to honor the Jewish scruples about the Purity Law concerning table fellowship.<sup>16</sup> If

<sup>13</sup> Betz (1979, p. 16) categorizes Galatians as a judicial speech, while Kennedy (1984, p. 145) says Galatians is best viewed as deliberative rhetoric.

<sup>14</sup> Matera (2007, p. 75), “The truth of the gospel is that God has provided a way of salvation for Gentile believers that does not require circumcision.”; Longenecker (1990, p. 53) says the truth of the gospel in this passage refers to the true gospel proclaimed by Paul as opposed to the false gospel advocated by the Judaizers.

<sup>15</sup> There are textual variants for οἷς οὐδὲ in v 5. But the variant readings are not well attested. I accept the current text of Nestle-Aland 28<sup>th</sup> that keeps οἷς οὐδὲ.

<sup>16</sup> Matera (2007, p. 86); Dunn (2002, pp. 199–234). Recognizing the inherent ambiguity of the term ἰουδαΐζειν and its broad spectrum of possible meanings, Dunn says, “(It) denotes rather the range of possible degrees of assimilation to Jewish customs . . .” (220)

that is the case, Paul judges, Peter's behavior of separating himself (ἀφορίζεν ἑαυτὸν) from table fellowship, which obviously had the effect of forcing the Gentile believers to comply with the Jewish Kosher law, directly contradicted the truth of the gospel (ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) in that it re-introduced one of the boundary markers, the Purity Law in this case, which in Paul's opinion had been made unbinding with the coming of Jesus Christ. In Paul's view, the truth of the gospel includes the new idea that there is no longer separation (ἀφορίζειν) between Jews and Gentiles, and Paul judges that Peter has failed to live up to this truth.

To sum up, these two occurrences of the “truth of the gospel (ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου)”, one with the issue of the circumcision law (Gal 2.5) and the other with the purity law (2.14), are closely linked with each other through a common thread, that is, the abolishment of salvifically meaningful separation between Jews and Gentiles, which has obliterated the necessity of observing the laws of conventional boundary markers such as the circumcision or the purity law on the part of the Gentile members of the community.

This truth of the gospel is well articulated in the *Propositio* section of the epistle in Gal 2.15–21.<sup>17</sup> Especially in verses 15–16, Paul puts forward a thesis statement (θέσις/πρόθεσις) of the entire argument of this epistle. As the opening phrase Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι in verse 15 unambiguously demonstrates, this thesis statement does not purport to represent a universal or a generic theological premise but a specifically Jewish-Christian theology articulated both in Jewish and in “Christian” terms, even though it has the potential to evolve into a more general theological doctrine in the future.<sup>18</sup> Formulated as a condensed theological premise, this thesis statement assumes a more complex theological foundation in Jewish thought that has to do with salvation, broadly defined.<sup>19</sup> For such a foundational theological discourse there may have been a set of common technical vocabulary but most probably not a consensus about the content of or the ways to salvation among various groups of people within the umbrella category of Second Temple Judaism. Therefore, it is natural to

<sup>17</sup> Betz (1979, pp. 18–19); Witherington (1998, pp. 34–35).

<sup>18</sup> Here I am using the term “Christian” not in the anachronistic sense of Christian religion but as a reference to the particular ways of defining self-identity among the members of the various communities within the so-called Jesus Movement.

<sup>19</sup> Betz (1979, p. 115). Betz says that the *propositio* is composed of a great deal of doctrinal “abbreviations” and that these abbreviations are difficult to translate.

expect inherent ambiguities and a high degree of polyvalence from such a condensed theological thesis, which in current New Testament scholarship has resulted in the absence of scholarly consensus in the exegesis of this part of the epistle.

In verse 16 Paul uses ἄνθρωπος as a non-discriminatory reference to a human being, which is in and of itself a statement implying that there is no longer salvifically meaningful separation between Jews and Gentiles. This leads to a soteriological implication that in order to be saved Gentiles no longer have to become Jews by conversion, which is primarily, if not exclusively, symbolized by circumcision. In my exegetical observation, this aspect of the *Propositio* in Galatians is the most relevant content of the truth of the gospel as Paul conceives of it.

The two notorious cases of *crux interpretum* in Gal 2.16, i.e. ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, have been intensely discussed in recent Pauline scholarship and a thorough engagement of the debate lies beyond the scope of this article.<sup>20</sup> The question whether the phrase πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should be construed as an objective genitive or a subjective genitive does not really affect the content of the truth of the gospel in this particular context. That is, whether through the faith we have in Jesus Christ or through the faith/faithfulness that Jesus has, God has provided in Christ a new way to being put right (δικαιοῦται) apart from works of law.

On the other hand, Paul's categorical denial of the salvific efficacy of the works of law (ἔργα νόμου) in this verse has a claim to be part of the truth of the gospel in Paul's argument. The critical issue of the debate is whether the denotation of the phrase ἔργα νόμου is a certain aspect of or a particular set of commandments in the Torah or the entire Torah itself. The former was proposed by Origen and Jerome, who interpreted ἔργα νόμου as ceremonial laws, especially, the circumcision and the Sabbath.<sup>21</sup> But the Reformation and its legacy have tended to regard ἔργα νόμου as meaning the Torah itself, which in

<sup>20</sup> Hays (2002), especially, the first appendix by Dunn and the second by Hays; For the latest discussion on these issues, see Owen (2007, pp. 553–577) and Hooker (2016, pp. 46–62).

<sup>21</sup> Scheck (2008, pp. 48–49), “One should know that the works which Paul repudiates and frequently criticizes are not the works of righteousness, which are commanded in the law, but those in which they boast who keep the law according to the flesh; that is, *the circumcision of the flesh, the sacrificial rituals, the observance of Sabbaths and new moon festivals.*”; Scheck (2010, pp. 114), “I should ask about what is at hand: whether it was *works of the law, observance of the Sabbath, the superstition of circumcision and new moons* that gave you the Holy Spirit that you received?”

their opinion is based on works.<sup>22</sup> Against this generic antinomian interpretation, James Dunn argues that ἔργα νόμου refers to a set of laws such as circumcision and food laws that functioned as identity markers for Jews after the Maccabean revolt for their ethnocentric soteriology.<sup>23</sup> The fact that Paul introduces this phrase ἔργα νόμου for the first time here in Gal 2.16 after he addressed the truth of the gospel twice, i.e. first, in conjunction with the circumcision (2.5) and secondly with the purity law (2.14), makes it plausible that with ἔργα νόμου Paul here is not just talking about the Tora in general but about a specific set of laws represented by the circumcision and the purity law, which Dunn calls identity markers for Jews. Plus, the linguistic parallel that Dunn points out between the Greek phrase ἔργα νόμου and its Hebrew equivalent מקצת מעשי התורה (some works of the Torah) found in 4QMMT to support his argument in this regard should be taken seriously. The similarities between the two at the basic lexical level are striking and unmistakable. A certain degree of intertextuality must have existed between the two. Therefore, in agreement with Dunn's interpretation of ἔργα νόμου, I take Paul's denial of the salvific efficacy of ἔργα νόμου not as an explicit antinomian stance against the Torah *per se* but as a rejection of the ethnocentric soteriology based on certain laws in the Torah that emphasize the separation of the Jews from Gentiles. Such an ethnocentric soteriology would naturally have imposed circumcision as an entry requirement on the Gentile believers, which is exactly what Paul is fighting against in Galatians. By declaring that Gentile believers are justified without having to become Jews by circumcision, Paul here lays out a core content for the truth of the gospel as he understands it. It is this *truth* (ἀλήθεια) of the gospel that guarantees *freedom* (ἐλευθερία) for Paul and the Gentile members of his communities, more specifically, freedom from the obligation of the ceremonial laws, especially the circumcision law, that force Gentiles to become who they are not.

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<sup>22</sup> This position is summarized and defended in Westerholm (2004, pp. 300–321).

<sup>23</sup> Dunn (1998, pp. 354–59); idem (2005, pp. 213–226).

### 3 Paul's Inner Logic of the Truth that engenders Freedom

At this point a question concerning the line of thought in Paul's theological argument is in order. That is, on what basis could Paul make such a *truth* claim and an ensuing declaration of *freedom*? There seems to exist a significant leap of logic between what Paul saw in his experience of the revelation and what he articulates as theological truth in Galatians. In other words, it is one thing for Paul to come to believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that God has called him to preach the gospel among the Gentiles (Gal 1.16) but it is quite another for him to say that in Christ there is no salvifically meaningful distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Gal 2.5, 3.28). What is Paul's inner theological reasoning that would have convinced him of the soundness of his newest theological statement about truth and freedom, which has already caused serious objection from the Jewish Christian sectors in his time and which would eventually be rejected by most Jews during and after the rabbinic period?<sup>24</sup>

My suggestion is that the *truth* of the gospel which Paul lays out in Galatians, i.e. the premise that circumcision is no longer required of the Gentile believers because in Christ God has obliterated the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, ultimately relies on the more fundamental soteriological *truth* that it is solely by God's grace (χάρις) that a human being could be justified before God. Paul uses this word χάρις in key strategic places in Galatians. First of all it appears at the beginning (1:3) and at the end (6:18) to form a rhetorical *inclusio* bracketing the whole epistle.<sup>25</sup> It is true that the word χάρις does not appear in the *Thesis* statement *per se* (2.15–16), but it is used at the end of the *Propositio* section (2.21) as a reference to the very foundation of Paul's thesis. Also in Gal 1.6 and 2.9, the same word is used in a heavily soteriological sense. This concept of justification by the grace of God will be more explicitly stated later in Rom 3.24 (δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι). The point is that whether explicitly stated or not, the notion that salvation is only by the grace of God is always assumed in the soteriological discourse in Judaism.

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<sup>24</sup> The critical difference between Paul and the rabbis on the issue of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is articulated by Boyarin in terms of two diametrically opposed and yet closely paralleled hermeneutical systems for reading the scriptures in Judaism. See Boyarin (1997, pp. 232–36).

<sup>25</sup> Barclay (2015, p.331) says, "Bracketing his letter in this way, Paul situates its contexts within a movement of grace from God (and Christ) to the Galatians."

Having thus recognized the *truth* that the grace of God is the sole foundation for salvation, Paul begins to recognize the absolute *freedom* that God exercises in terms of providing new ways to dispense the salvific grace to human beings. The newness of what God has done in Christ is already hinted at in Gal 2.15–16 and 3.23–27. What is only implicit in these passages in Galatians will be more explicitly stated later in Rom 3.21–22. Paul’s choice of word in the phrase *vvv̄i δὲ* in Rom 3.21 indicates that he certainly understands his current soteriology as an articulation of something radically new that God is doing in Christ *over and beyond* the conventionally understood means of salvation, which is expressed by *χωρὶς νόμου*. The underlying principle is that even though the means of justification and salvation may vary, the grace of God as the only foundation of salvation remains the same.

It has been recently recognized that this grace-based soteriology is part of the common denominator of Jewish soteriology, of which Pauline soteriology is a part. In my observation the notion of Covenantal Nomism, which E. P. Sanders first proposed in 1977,<sup>26</sup> has successfully weathered various criticisms over the past few decades. I believe it has by now been established as a very viable conceptual category of a common pattern of Jewish soteriology during the Second Temple period. Even though Paul may have significantly altered the content of the Covenantal Nomism *per se* as a common soteriological concept in the Judaism of his time,<sup>27</sup> what still remains nonetheless in all Jewish soteriologies including the Pauline rendition of it is the grace of God as the sole foundation of salvation.<sup>28</sup> In other words, in Jewish and Jewish-Christian soteriological discourses the grace of God is the *constant* and all the different means of justification, whether through the Torah or apart from it, whether by our faith in Jesus Christ or by the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ, are the *variables*. Once this is recognized, then one could see the absolute *freedom* of God in dispensing God’s saving grace to human beings in different phases of the salvation history. Such absolute freedom of God seems to have become, for the line of Paul’s thoughts in Galatians, the underlying source for the *freedom*

<sup>26</sup> For the definition of Covenantal Nomism, see Sanders (1977, p. 75, 236, & 422).

<sup>27</sup> Sanders (1977, pp. 513–14).

<sup>28</sup> See Sanders (2009, pp. 23–55). Here Sanders argues that covenantal nomism is an underlying principle in Judaism and therefore it may not be stated explicitly in every Jewish text. He also points out that reward and punishment in Jewish literature should be understood in a larger context, i.e. “that of the love of God who reaches out to people and who will save those whom he punishes.”

that he talks about in Gal 2.4 in conjunction with the *truth* of the gospel. That is, only those who know this particular aspect of the *truth* of the gospel can have the *freedom* within the scope of the new way the grace of God is being dispensed.

This close correlation between *truth* and *freedom* in Galatians is not in correspondence with a generic nature of the dialectic between knowing truth and having freedom as a universally desired human condition, if there is such a thing, but it is a highly particular cause-and-effect phenomenon with a particular content, as is the case with the Platonic notion of the link between knowing/contemplating the truth and being liberated in *The Symposium* and in *The Republic*, which is discussed earlier in Section I of this article. Also, unlike the Platonic concept of truth, which is secured by rigorous philosophical pursuits and by recollection (ἀνάμνησις) of the prior innate knowledge, Paul's understanding of truth is based on the truth by *revelation* (ἀποκάλυψις) both for what we called earlier in this article the *constant*, i.e. the grace of God as the sole foundation of salvation, which Paul takes from the scriptures and from the common soteriological premise in his Jewish tradition, and the *variables*, i.e. the various means of justification that leads to salvation, which he has come to realize through his own private revelation (Gal 1.16). At the same time, in spite of this significant difference, there is a fundamental similarity between the notion of truth in the Platonic corpus and that in the Pauline Epistles. That is, both in the *Dialogues* of Plato and on the Epistles of Paul, the truth that has the liberating power is fundamentally the truth about what remains the same, i.e. the truth about the constant as opposed to the variables. In Plato's case it is *what is* (τὸ ὄν) as the ultimate Form; in Paul's case it is the grace (χάρις) of God as the sole foundation of salvation. This *truth* of the gospel lets Paul and the Gentile members of the Galatian churches recognize the absolute *freedom* of God to provide new ways of justification for human beings on the one hand and the *freedom* given to the Gentiles not to be bound by the works of law on the other.

## 4 Conclusion and Implications

I have made an exegetical observation that the close link between the *truth* of the gospel and the ensuing *freedom* that Paul talks about in Galatians has to be taken as a logical outcome from his train of thought in soteriology, in which the grace of God is regarded as the sole foundation for human salvation (the

*constant*), whereas the multiple concrete terms of justification such as the commandments of the Torah as the old covenant and the faith/faithfulness in/of Jesus as the terms of the new covenant are manifestations of the different ways of dispensing God's grace (the *variables*). When one knows this *truth*, one has the *freedom* from any form of bondage that contradicts the truth. The bondage takes the form of the circumcision law and the food laws in Galatians. *Mutatis mutandis*, the bondage could be applied to any other terms that might limit the absolute freedom of God in choosing the way God's grace is to be dispensed. This theologically significant potential is not fully developed in any concrete terms in Galatians. Rather it is only intimated in highly suggestive terms.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, looking further toward a later time in Paul's life, one can see a possibility that Paul is actually thinking exactly in these terms in Romans, as he expresses his intense wishes for the salvation of Israel in chapters 9 to 11, especially in 11.26, in which Paul declares all Israel will be saved (καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται).

This highly loaded sentence in Rom 11.26 has been interpreted from two very different perspectives in recent New Testament scholarship. One is to read Paul's statement here as a reference to a massive last minute conversion of all the Jews to the belief in Christ, which is believed as the only way for all the Jews to be saved.<sup>30</sup> Another more recent view tends to interpret it as Paul's hope and conviction that all Israel will ultimately be saved on the basis of the covenantal faithfulness of God, which safeguards the continuing validity of the original Covenant.<sup>31</sup> If the latter interpretation is correct, as I think it is, the distinction between the grace of God as the *constant* and the multiple means of

<sup>29</sup> For this reason, such a meaning is construed only when one allows room for ambiguities inherent in any condensed theological discourse, especially in Pauline epistles. In that regard I thoroughly agree with Hays (2002, p. 227), in which he says that Paul's language in Galatians is highly allusive and that it is less univocal and more 'poetic' than the Western theological tradition has usually supposed.

<sup>30</sup> For example, Witherington III (2004, p. 275), "We must remember that Paul has been discussing non-Christian Jews. He already knew of many saved Jewish Christians and it is hardly likely he has them in view here. Rather, he says this 'all Israel' group will be saved after the full number of Gentiles has come in. Therefore, he is talking about a *mass conversion of non-Christian Jews at the end of salvation history*." (Italics mine); Wright (2013, pp. 1231–1252). Wright argues that in Romans 11.26 Paul is envisioning the "saveability of Jews within the *continuing* purpose of God". (Italics his) By this Wright means that the unbelieving Jews will continue to be open to grace and to be received back to belief in the Messiah and thus they will be saved, not necessarily, however, at the last phase of the salvation history.

<sup>31</sup> Stendahl (1995, pp. 33–44); Dunn (1988, pp. 681–683); Gager (2000, pp. 128–142); Spencer (2006, pp. 113–138); Nanos (2012, pp. 3–21); Reasoner (2014, pp. 388–404).

justification as the *variables* should indeed be regarded as the logical foundation for the newly formulated soteriological vision of Paul for the entire Israel in Rom 9–11, which I believe is clearly influenced by his reflections on the *truth* and the *freedom* in Galatians. A thorough treatment of such a topic concerning Rom 9–11 would be an important follow-up on the observations I have made in this article and it would certainly require another study at the level of monograph rather than an article. This line of inquiry will do justice to the complexities of Paul's theology of salvation against the pitfalls of reducing it to a few slogans, which oftentimes fails to honor the rich reservoir of meanings in theological discourse.

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# Gerd Theissen's Rich-Poor Notion Revisited: A Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 11:17-22

Sin Pan Ho  
Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong

## Abstract

This article argues that Paul's rhetorical purpose of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11:17-34 is his ongoing anti-idol rhetoric in 1 Cor 10. It explains well the phenomenon stated in 1 Cor 11:17-22 that early comers ate all the food and did not show concern for the needs of latecomers. The generally accepted notion of rich-poor disparity does not hold, for the despised latecomers were probably composed both of rich and poor, not the poor alone. Paul continues to expound his brief teachings in 10:20-21 and articulate them in constructive terms in 1 Cor 11:17-34. As a result, Paul's rhetorical purpose in 1 Cor. 11:17-34 is primarily about the transformation of worship attitudes of the first readers who were formerly idol-worshippers. As a result, this reading renders Paul's teachings in 1 Cor 11—14 more consistent and united.

**Keywords:** 1 Cor 11:17-34; divisions; Lord's Supper; Rich-poor; Gerd Theissen; cultic meals

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is a witness to early Christian gathering. It is probably the earliest witness to Christian gathering in the first century Roman Corinth. Corinthians met regularly together outside working hours and this involved eating together. The meeting time was in the evening. Hence Paul called this gathering the Lord's *Supper* (*δεῖπνον* in 11:20). It refers to the main meal of a

day that people gathered together to eat towards evening in antiquity.<sup>1</sup> The problem Paul addressed here was divisions (σχίσματα, 11:18) taking place during the supper in the Corinthian evening gathering. The reasons why there were divisions in eating is a critical question for identifying the rhetorical purpose of Paul in 1 Cor 11:17-34, and consequently the teachings of Paul about the Lord's Supper.

## 1 Rich-Poor Disparity? Text and Contexts Revisited

Since the proposal of Gerd Theissen (1982), the notion of economic disparity between rich and poor, or unequal social status, has been generally accepted by NT scholars as the explanation for the divisions in the gathering of Lord's Supper in the Corinthian church.<sup>2</sup> The central irregularity underlying the divisions of the Corinthian church which Paul rebuked was negligence of the poor by the wealthy members. Although there may be some slightly different deviating reconstructions of the Lord's Supper in Roman Corinth, Theissen's classical rich-poor notion (1982, 160) is still representative:

Some wealthier Christians have made the meal itself possible through their generosity, providing bread and wine for all. What was distributed is declared by means of the words of institution to be the Lord's and given to the congregation. Thus, in conjunction with this common meal there could take place a private meal because the starting point of the Lord's Supper was not regulated, and up to this starting point (that is, until the words of institution) what had been brought and provided was private property. More importantly, this distinction was possible because the wealthier Christians ate other food in addition to the bread and wine, and the words of institution made no provision for sharing this with the fellowship.

Theissen's interpretation of divisions in the Lord's Supper is mainly grounded on his reconstruction of the socio-economic context in Roman Corinth

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<sup>1</sup> Justin the Martyr also witnessed that Christian gatherings met regularly at night: "Or do you also condemn our customs and morals? This is what I say, lest you, too, believe that we eat human flesh and that after our banquets we extinguish the lights and indulge in unbridled sensuality" (*Dial.* 10; English translation from Slusser, 2003, p. 18).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Meeks, 1983, pp. 67-69; Mitchell, 1991, pp. 156-157; Martin, 1995, pp. 73-76; Hays, 1997, pp. 195-197; DeSilva, 2000, p. 75; Garland, 2003, pp. 542-544; McRae, 2011; Alikin, 2010, p. 105; Finney, 2012, pp. 171-176; Fee, 2014, pp. 601-603; Fuad, 2019, pp. 207b.

in Paul's time. Thus, the central irregularity of the Lord's Supper is about the social tensions between the rich and poor (Theissen, 1982, p. 164). Paul's resolution was social integration: "Paul moves the sacrament to the centre to achieve a greater social integration" (Theissen, 1982, p. 167). He urges the wealthy Christians to realize a community of love through the gracious sharing of material food and concern for the poor.

In terms of the text, the only textual evidence which supports the rich-poor notion is 11:22: the rich (those who have) did not show concern for the poor (τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας those who have not), and this socio-economic disparity resulted in the divisions of the Lord's Supper depicted in 1 Cor 11:17-22. Wayne Meeks's interpretation (1983, 68) best represents and summarizes this rich-poor reading based on the text 11:22 alone:

The last phrase, *hoi mē echontes*, could be read quite concretely as continuing the *oikias ouk echete* of the preceding question; that is, those who have houses are blamed for humiliating those who do not. More likely, the phrase is to be taken absolutely, "the have-nots," that is, the poor. Either way, this verse makes it clear that the basic division is between the (relatively) rich and the (relatively) poor.

### Rhetorical Analysis of the Text against Rich-poor Reading

Through delving into the rhetorical analysis of the text 1 Cor 11:17-34, this rich-poor reading, however, may now be found wanting. The main reason is that the group identity of the last phrase τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας in verse 22 does not designate ONLY the poor who have nothing to eat in their ordinary lives.

Verse 22 should not be read in isolation from the surrounding literary context. There are two occurrences of γὰρ at the beginning of verse 21 and verse 22. They indicate that verse 22 continues to explain Paul's judgment in v.20: "When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper." Paul describes the phenomenon of their gathering before or during the Lord's Supper in verse 21. Then Paul raises four rhetorical questions in verse 22 in which answers are already implicit. The subject 'you' in verse 22 refers to the 'you' stated in verse 20 as well as the two groups (hungry and drunk group) in verse 21. Thus, "those who have not...τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας" refers to the hungry group that is antithetical to the two clauses "those who have food to eat and drink (21)" and "when you gather together"(20). In other words, the phrase τοὺς μὴ

ἔχοντες at the final rhetorical question of verse 22 does not mean “those who have not their own homes to eat.” It should mean simply “those who have nothing to eat *when you gather together*.”

Paul’s concluding remark further confirms that the hungry group, or “those who have not τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντες”, does not refer to a poor group who have nothing to eat in their ordinarily lives: “If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home εἴ τις πεινᾷ, ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω.” Paul assumes that the hungry group could have their supper at their own homes. Therefore, the only textual evidence of rich-poor notion on verse 22 is deemed unwarranted.

In all, the phrase τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντες in v.22 does not mean in isolation as “those who are have nots”, taking it simply as poor people who have nothing to eat; it means “those who have nothing to eat in the gathering of the Lord’s Supper.”

## 2 Social-Economic Contexts Against Rich-poor Reading

Now I delve into the social contexts to identify who these hungry group members were. Were they regarded primarily as poor people in the city of Roman Corinth, as the rich-poor notion suggests? The rich-poor notion assumes that “those who have nothing to eat when you gather together” were confined mainly to the poor. The poor, due to working obligation, came late to the gathering. Or the rich could bring their food with abundance to the gathering place to eat, while “those who have nothing to eat when you gather together”, i.e. the poor, could only bring food with scarcity to the meeting place.<sup>3</sup>

### Latecomers could be Rich People

Through my study of working activities of ordinary people in Roman Corinth in antiquity, this assumption that equates latecomers with the poor, however, does not hold. Latecomers who had nothing to eat in the gathering were not confined only to the poor. They could probably be poor AND rich people.

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<sup>3</sup> These two possible scenarios depend on the translation of the verb προλαμβάνει in v.21. Some emphasize the prefix προ- and so translate it as “take beforehand”. Then it means they eat their own meals before the Lord’s Supper. Others take from the reference of this verb in Gal 6:1, the only other instance this verb exists in Pauline letters, or from some inscriptions, that this verb does not connote any temporal sense, simply means “take”. Then the sentence refers to the readers eating their own meals brought to the gathering during the Lord’s Supper. These two possibilities, however, do not alter the arguments in this paper.

Economic activities of Roman Corinth mainly focused on commerce, trade, manufacturing and services. After the Roman Empire founded this city in 44 B.C., Corinth was developed as a prosperous entrepôt centre between the Eastern and Western part of the Roman Empire. Roman Corinth was, first of all, a commercial centre in the Mediterranean world. Being well-known for her location as a knot connecting East and West through sea-routes with two harbours Kenchreai and Lechaion, and South and North through the land, many goods were being imported and exported through Roman Corinth. Strabo witnessed this phenomenon in the first century of Corinth in his travel notes:

Corinth is called 'wealthy' because of its commerce. It is located on the Isthmos and is master of two harbors, one to Asia, the other near to Italia, making the interchange of cargo easy between places so far apart. It was desirable to the merchants both from Italia and Asia to avoid the sail around Maleai, and to land their cargo at Corinth, and to dispose of it. (Strabo 8.6.20; English translation from Roller, 2014, 374)

There were large scale trade activities in the eastern sea-port, Kenchreai and the western one, Lechaion. It implies that one significant economic activity that Corinthians participated in was with trade or transit goods of this entrepôt, like Hong Kong people in modern times. There were great emporia situated in these two harbours. They fostered numerous economic activities and so various opportunities were available for Corinthians to make a living related to trade in both the countryside and town.

David K. Pettegrew (2014, 140) has remarked on the most common types of work of Corinthians: As such, Kenchreai and Lechaion created the economic space for business for a wide range of individuals linked to trade: wholesaler dealers, financiers, ship owners, traders, landowners, middle men, retailers, craft specialist, sailors and rowers, and many others.

If the first readers were engaged in trade or the transit of goods of this entrepôt, they were not able to determine the time when they could be off work. It was because their off-working hours depended on the time when the goods were delivered to their place. These people involved in trade business might constitute the hungry group who came late to the Lord's Supper, or they did not have time to make their meal at home but went directly to the evening Christian gathering right after their work. However, this group of people could be wholesale dealers, ship owners or craft specialists who were wealthy as well as

those unskilled workers, sailors or rowers who were not rich. They were not necessarily poor people.

Besides a commercial centre, Roman Corinth was well-known for her service economy. Municipal services were prevalent in this city, for she was the provincial capital of Achaëa. Those who worked in municipal services were Roman citizens. For the majority of freedmen who were not Roman citizens, they were probably involved in tourism, which was another significant economic activity of the service sector. The empire-wide event, the Isthmian Games, took place in Roman Corinth once every two years. It indicated that the service industry related to tourism such as accommodation, bathing, entertainment, restaurants and handicraft shops flourished in this city.

Like commerce and trading activities, it was difficult for people involved in the service economy to control their own working time. Corinthian Christians in service sectors were not able to leave their working place whenever they decided to. It was also highly probable for them that they might come late to the Christian gathering. They could be poor workers or slaves who worked at those shops. However, they could also be the Roman citizens working in municipal services, owners of business shops, inns, or restaurants, for instance, where the time of leaving the working place depended on the customers' departure or the availability of one's hired workers. Those shops were often run by a whole household, with slaves included. This household business was not classified as poor people living at the subsistence level, and they were also not free to come to the gathering on time. Then they arrived late and found nothing to eat, or they could not manage to go home first to bring their home-made food but had to rush to the meeting place immediately. In any case, there were many possibilities for the freedman participating in trading and service sectors to join in "the hungry group" during the gathering.

### Early Comers could be Poor People

On the other hand, those who came early could also be the jobless or people available to be hired--waiting in the agora or sea-port for temporary jobs on a daily basis. These poor groups could come early to consume all the food offered by the host of the gathering place, or they could go home first to bring food to the gathering place to eat, for they had ample leisure time. Instead, if they could prepare their meals at home in advance, even poor people could have abundant

material food to fill their stomach. It is because the Mediterranean diet could be obtained and made by most of the peasants in the city. The main components of the Mediterranean diet in antiquity were the triad: cereals, vines and olives. They were all available in urban cities, especially in the city with abundant goods like Roman Corinth. In particular, cereals were ubiquitous for poor people. Although poor people might not be able to purchase meat, they could obtain dry legumes like broad beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas as “the poor man’s meat” (Garnsey, 1999, pp. 13-15). In sum, though the quality of the food may be low, the poor (if they had time to do it at home in advance) could make a meal that filled up their stomach.

Thus, when the first readers listened to Paul’s rhetorical question in v.22: “Or do you despise the church of God, and shame those who have nothing,” the first readers would probably identify the group being shamed simply as those *late comers composed by both rich and poor*.

### House Structure Against Rich-poor Reading

One piece of archaeological evidence often cited as support for the “rich-poor” notion is the interior house design found in antiquity. The historical setting of house gathering in 1 Cor 11: 17-34 has been explained on the basis of the structure of a villa found in Anaploga near Corinth. The interior design of Anaploga villa was divided into the triclinium, atrium and peristylum. As the dining room (triclinium) was not spacious, the host might follow the social norms to arrange the social superiors to dine comfortably in the dining room, while the majority of lower classes stood and had their meals in the atrium or peristylum. As those who were in the dining room had access to the food first, the majority of Christ-followers standing outside might not have food to eat. This archaeological setting of house design has been taken as further support of the picture of social inequality taking place during the love feast before or during the Lord’s Supper (Murphy-O’Connor, 1983, pp. 153-161). This house scenario was also key evidence cited to support the notion of competition for honour from members of different social status (Chester, 2003, pp. 249-252; Fuad, 2019, pp. 206-207).

However, the recent archaeological study of houses in antiquity has shown that this villa was not a standard model of homes of ordinary people in the first century. David Horrell (2004, p. 354) points out that the mosaic pictures found

in this villa did not exist until the third century CE. This discovery throws doubt on the plausibility of Murphy-O'Connor's reconstruction of the house scenario of the Lord's Supper in the first century CE. This villa was unusually luxurious compared with houses commonly found in archaeological sites of 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman Corinth. Therefore, I concur with Horrell's (2004, pp. 356, 359) modest summary of his evaluation on Murphy-O'Connor's house division scenario:

None of this renders Murphy-O'Connor's imaginative scenario impossible, of course, but there is a further reason to question its plausibility, related to his depiction of the findings as concerning 'a typical house'....They are thus unlikely to be 'typical', at least insofar as typical is taken to refer to the kind of dwellings in which the majority of the population might have lived....It is at the very least uncertain whether any of the Corinthian Christians, and their 'host' Gaius in particular, would likely have owned a large, sumptuous villa.

Without this clear picture of the interior division of space for Corinthian church gathering in 1 Cor 11: 17-34, the rich-poor notion or the contention of competition for honour lacks the very base for the further arguments about the misbehaviour of Corinthians in the Lord's Supper.<sup>4</sup>

Besides the uncertainty of the house setting of this early Christian gathering, the notion of competition for honour seems to be at odds with Paul's rhetoric in the text. From a critical rhetorical analysis of the text itself, Paul did not blame the host *per se*. Paul's main thrust was to rebuke and correct the misbehaviours of the whole group in their participation in the Lord's Supper. No matter where it took place, the early comers, not the host, did not care about the latecomers and consumed all the food, either the food offered by the host or their food prepared in advance and brought to the gathering. They were not considerate towards the needs of latecomers and so left the latecomers to become a hungry group in which both rich and poor members or members of high and lower status were included. This divisive act was what Paul sought to correct, and the behaviour Paul expected from them after correction is this: "So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνεργόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε."<sup>5</sup> From the rhetorical

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<sup>4</sup> Recent historical studies of early Christian gatherings point towards the possibility that they gathered not in homes but in public places. For instance, they might meet in taverns (Weissenrieder, 2012, pp. 70-73) or in the garden (Balch, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> For other convincing arguments against the notion of "rich-poor division", see Meggitt (1998, pp. 118-122).

analysis of the text itself, it is difficult to imagine a competition of honourable seats or positions took place during the meal.

In all, the problem that made attendants hungry was not the scarcity of food nor the competition for honour among the members. It is not about the conflict between the rich and poor in terms of unequal material wealth or social status from different social class. After all, Paul's resolution in his ensuing teachings about the Lord's Supper does not address any of these problems, as Lanuwabang Jamir (2016, p. 130) aptly observes: "If those stratifications were the reason for the conflict, Paul does not correct the inequities; in 11:33–34, he simply advises them to eat at their homes."

I contend that the habitus of the first readers of pagan association idol worship meals, both practices and perceptions, resulted in their division and confusion during the Lord's Supper. The former idol worship mentality was probably another "old leaven" (1 Cor 5: 6-8) Paul urge them to clean out, some old habits or perceptions that both rich and the poor had held for years as idol-worshippers before they believed in Christ. Paul has persuaded them to flee from idol meals throughout 1 Corinthians 8-10. Here, Paul continues to correct them over some of their idolatrous habits which resulted from past (or even present) participation in idol meals.

### 3 Getting Rid of Idol Meals' Old Habitus

At the beginning about this issue of division in the Lord's Supper in 11:19, Paul assumes that this division is necessary for the first readers, so that those who are approved may be distinguished among them. Stephen Chester (2003, p. 247) has aptly pointed out this overlooked problem in the interpretation of the Lord's Supper:

Theissen's straightforward division between the rich and the poor assigns to the poor an essentially passive role, and to the rich an unworthy one. Thus, from Paul's perspective, the rich have been discredited, but which group have been revealed (φανερόω) by their actions as genuine?

The ongoing issue about genuine faith in Christ reasonably refers to idol meals just mentioned before in 1 Cor 8-10. Paul deems the question about attending idol meals as a test of the genuine faith in one God one Lord (8:6) of the first readers as distinct from those who were still confused (Ho, 2015, pp. 154-169). In particular, Paul contrasts table of the demons with the Lord's in 1

Cor 10:19-22 to remind them of the sole allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ entailed in their participation in the Lord's Supper (Ho, 2015, pp. 201-202).

This rhetoric of either-or pattern exists again in 1 Cor 11:19. Paul deems the nature of the division primarily as a test of genuine faith in the Lord. The term "division" in 11:19 is not *σχίσματα* in 11:18, which means merely group division. Rather, the term is *αἰρέσεις*: "a division or group based upon different doctrinal opinions and/or loyalties and hence by implication in certain contexts an unjustified party or group" (L&N, 1, 129). It is usually translated as heresy, denoting a group of deviant insiders who go astray from the beliefs of the speaker (e.g. Acts 24:5, 14; Gal 5:20; 2Pe 2:1).

Paul's ongoing teaching about the Lord's Supper in the ensuing context (11:23-25) confirms this understanding. His constructive teachings on the Lord's Supper are NOT primarily the rhetoric of mutual love or social integration per se. Paul does not even mention any word related to "loving your brothers" or "loving your neighbours". Paul places the teaching of love in two chapters later concerning the way of utilizing spiritual gifts, but terminologies or phrases about brotherly love are not present here after Paul's rebuking their divisions in the Lord's supper. The key verbs that define acts of love in 1 Cor 13:4-8 are almost all absent in Paul's teachings about the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, there are numerous literary parallels between 10:16 and 11:23-25, as rightly observed by Jonathan Schwiebert (2008, p. 32) and systematically delineated by Chelcent Fuad (2019, p. 211):

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<sup>6</sup> The only exceptional parallel is the verb *πιστεύω* in 13:7 and 11:18. But this verb 'believe' is so common throughout 1 Corinthians (9 times). In 11:18 it refers to what Paul believes about the problems of the divisions taking place in the Lord's Supper in 11:18 and not about Paul's teachings on that issue.

**Table 1.** Parallels between 1 Cor 11:23–25 and 1 Cor 10:16.

1 Corinthians 11:23–25	1 Corinthians 10:16
<p><sup>23</sup> ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν <b>ἄρτον</b></p> <p><sup>24</sup> καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν· τοῦτό <b>μού</b> ἐστὶν τὸ <b>σῶμα</b> τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.</p> <p><sup>25</sup> ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ <b>ποτήριον</b> μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων· τοῦτο τὸ <b>ποτήριον</b> ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν <b>τῷ ἔμφῳ αἵματι</b>· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.</p>	<p>Τὸ <b>ποτήριον</b> τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν <b>τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ</b>; τὸν <b>ἄρτον</b> ὃν <b>κλῶμεν</b>, οὐχὶ κοινωνία <b>τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ</b> ἐστίν;</p>
<p><sup>23</sup> the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took <b>bread</b>,</p> <p><sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he <b>broke</b> it, and said, 'This is <b>my body</b> which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'</p> <p><sup>25</sup> In the same way also (he took) the <b>cup</b>, after supper, saying, 'This <b>cup</b> is the new covenant in <b>my blood</b>. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'</p>	<p>The <b>cup</b> of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in <b>the blood of Christ</b>? The <b>bread</b> that we <b>break</b>, is it not a participation in the <b>body of Christ</b>?</p>

From his constructive teachings of the Lord's Supper after 11:22, it is plausible that in addressing these divisions Paul was continuing his anti-idol polemic in 1 Cor 10 to rebuke some false beliefs of his first readers in the Lord's Supper.

I do not argue that Paul's teachings about the Lord's Supper exclude all possibilities of practising mutual love. Rather, it is undeniable that Paul's choice of words primarily focuses on the correct understanding and beliefs in the Lord's Supper, NOT mutual love or social integration per se.

Besides the formal literary parallels of 1 Cor 11:23-25 and 10:16, the identity of the "heresy" group in 11:19 may emerge according to the contents of constructive teachings about the Lord's Supper on and after 11:23. Paul utilises Jesus' sayings in the Last Supper narrative in Jerusalem to teach Corinthians (former idol-worshippers) about some of the attitudes he sees in the evening Christian gathering in Roman Corinth. Paul focuses on the Lord's Supper as a proclamation of the Lord's death (11:26), not the ways how Christian community members should treat each other. Paul conveyed this conviction through the participatory act of Lord's supper. If Paul's main teachings about the Lord's Supper is about conviction, it is reasonable to regard the faults related to the divisions/heresy as relating to some wrong convictions or values.

These false convictions have led them to despise the whole church of God and shame those who have nothing to eat in the gathering.

Paul's citation in 11:25 of Jesus' sayings in the Last Supper in Jerusalem further points out the long Jewish tradition of parallels between the covenant-abiding faithfulness of God's people and abandonment of idolatrous practices. Scholars have generally accepted that Jesus' sayings in 11:25 echo or at least allude to Exod 24:8 or Jer 31:31 (Collins, 1999, p. 433; Garland, 2003, p. 547; Fitzmyer, 2008, p. 443; Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, p. 552; Fee, 2014, p. 614). The literary context of Jeremiah recalls the monotheistic confession that the people of God should be faithful to Yahweh: I will be their God, and they will be my people (Jer 31.33). The preceding context of Exod 24, in particular, Exod 23:23-24, presents the serious warnings that they should not worship the gods of the inhabitants of Canaan and they should destroy all their gods. The echoes of Jewish Scripture of Jesus' sayings in the Last Supper continue to remind them of the apostasy of the first generation Israelites in the wilderness, to which Paul has explicitly appealed in 1 Cor 10:1-22. This implies that the false values that resulted in their divisions/heresies may also be related to some habits or worldviews from their former idol worship practice, even though they were now participating in the cultic meals of Jesus Christ.

If Paul preaches anti-idol rhetoric in his instructions to male worship leaders (men praying and prophesying in the gathering) by commanding them not to cover their head in 11:1-16, this motif continues in his instructions of the Lord's Supper as well as the beginning of his discussion about utilizing spiritual gifts in worship gathering (12:1-3). While the former addresses worship leaders, telling them that they should get rid of their old mindset of priests in pagan worship, the latter addresses the whole congregation. Paul instructs them to cleanse from themselves their old mentality of receiving blessing gifts from gods and embody their new faith in Christ in the way they participate in the cultic meal with the Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>7</sup> For the reasons for reckoning the instructions of unveiling men's head in praying and making prophecy as anti-idol polemic, see 何善斌, 2018, pp. 153-177; Finney, 2010, pp. 36-38; Gill, 1990; Oster, 1988, p. 496.

## 4 Conclusion

Gerd Theissen's notion of rich-poor disparity had been taken for granted as the explanation of the divisions which had taken place in the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11. Following Theissen's socio-historical approach by taking into consideration Roman Corinth's economic activities as an entrepôt, and its role as a civil administration centre and tourist centre for the empire-wide Isthmian games, I come to a different conclusion. The latecomers could be rich (e.g. shop owners, merchants) or poor (e.g. slaves, transport workers) who were not free to control their working hours. The early comers who could manage to go home first and then come to the gatherings could be rich or also poor (e.g. jobless). Through a rhetorical analysis of 1 Cor 11:17-34 (mainly vv.17-22), I have argued that their old behaviour associated with idol meals is the major irregularity which Paul targets to rebuke and correct in his teachings about the Lord's Supper. Paul continues to combat against old habitus, both practices and perceptions associated with idol worship, in his teachings of head covering in 11:1-16 (to worship leaders), the Lord's Supper in 11:17-34 (to the worshipping congregation), and this is probably also the case in his teaching of spiritual gifts in 1 Cor 12-14 (cf. 12:2-3). He continues to make a case for the new mentality and theology of worship which is to characterise Christ-followers who confess one God (the Father) one Lord (Jesus Christ) in 8:6.

Paul's teachings of worship in 1 Cor 11-14 echo his metaphor of old heaven in 1 Cor 5:7: "Cleanse out the old leaven so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed." Paul applies this command to the distinctive mindset of Christian worship in the participation of the cultic meals with Jesus Christ.

This paper commends further socio-religious study and comparison of the concept and practice of cultic meals in the Mediterranean world and worship of Christ-followers depicted in 1 Cor 11-14. The investigation of the meanings of cultic meals in the idol worship ritual in antiquity may enable us to learn more about the nuanced difference in mentality between idol worship and God-worship of Christ-followers. As a result, it may bring new insights to Paul's teachings of the Lord's Supper, and consequently his theology of worship throughout 1 Cor 11-14.

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# Revisiting the Carmen Christi: Paul's Perspective on Humiliation and Exaltation in Philippians 3:7-11

Rachael Tan  
Taiwan Baptist Christian Seminary, Taiwan

## **Abstract**

Philippians 2:5-11 is one of the key passages in Paul's letter to the Philippians. A proper interpretation of this important *carmen Christi* (hymn of Christ) will unpack the kind of attitude that Jesus adopts. It is common to pit the two main streams of interpretation (kerygmatic and ethical) against each other. I argue that this is a false dichotomy since a doctrinal exposition does not cancel out its ethical implications, and Pauline ethics is often grounded in theological foundations. Paul integrates both theology and ethics in the letter. The only possible way for believers to live in harmony with each other in the Lord is to have the mind of Christ in dogma and praxis. Jesus Christ is the ultimate pattern to which we are being conformed in the way we think, feel, decide, and act (cf. Phil 3:10).

**Keywords:** Carmen Christi, Hymn of Christ, humiliation, exaltation, *phroneō*, *conformatio Christi*, conformity to Christ, Christocentric ethics, kerygmatic interpretation, ethical interpretation, *imitatio Christi*, Philippians

Philippians 2:5-11 is one of the most important yet one of the most difficult passages in Philippians to interpret. It is also “one of the most exalted, most beloved, and most discussed and debated passages in the Pauline corpus” (Fee, 1995, p. 192). Most of the research centers around the literary form, background, source, and authorship of the hymn. Although these issues are

significant and have been adequately investigated but lacking any consensus, I will not dwell on them in this paper.

In revisiting the Carmen Christi (Christ-hymn), I will focus on two aspects to bring out a fresh reading of the hymn. First, I will demonstrate that φρονεῶ (phroneō) in Philippians 2:5 is a significant word carefully chosen by Paul to highlight the importance of cultivating a Christ-centered thinking in his urgent call for unity in his letter to the Philippians. It is often neglected yet it is the missing link in understanding Paul's perspective on humiliation and exaltation and in the interpretation of the carmen Christi. Second, Paul's narrative in Philippians 3:7-11 serves as a good parallel passage for comparison with Christ's story in Philippians 2:5-11. It offers a closer look at Paul's perspective on humiliation and exaltation. This essay is divided into five sections: (1) Theme of unity in Philippians; (2) Significance of phroneō; (3) Paul's perspective on humiliation and exaltation; (4) Interpretation of the carmen Christi; and (5) conclusion.

## 1 Theme of Unity in Philippians

Philippians is one of the seven universally accepted epistles of Paul and even “deserves to be ranked with the Hauptbriefe” (Hawthorne, 1983). This distinctly personal letter of the apostle to the first church he founded in Europe in response to the Macedonian call (Acts 16) reveals a close bond between him and the believers. He openly expresses his longing for them (Phil 1:7-8) and commends them for their “partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil 1:5 NIV). He writes this letter to thank them for the gift they sent through Epaphroditus and he appreciates their support throughout his ministry (Phil 4:10-20). The warm relationship and repeated stress on rejoicing have led many readers to picture the Philippian church as a perfect community devoid of any problems. However, various passages in the letter provide hints that the church is experiencing internal strife arising from envy, conceit, selfish ambition (Phil 2:1-4). Paul urges them to be united, which is only possible if they conform to Christ in his humility and selflessness (2:5-11). He also pleads with Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony with one another (4:2). In his exhortations to unity, Paul carefully employs the word φρονεῶ to highlight the importance of cultivating a Christ-centered thinking, feeling, and attitude that will foster the spirit of unity.

## 2 Significance of φρονέω

Paul's use of φρονέω in Philippians is remarkable in both frequency and significance. In terms of frequency it occurs ten times in the epistle out of the twenty-six occurrences in the NT. In terms of significance it appears in key passages which suggests that Paul has carefully and deliberately chosen the word to unpack the main thrust of this letter (Fee, 1995; Fowl, 2005; O'Brien, 1991). The verb is an important and distinct Pauline term related to the central theme of Philippians (Hawthorne, 1983; O'Brien, 1991; Fowl, 2005).

Despite its importance in the letter, φρονέω is not given enough attention. Silva observes that "this peculiarity has often been mentioned by commentators but seldom developed" and a thorough treatment only appears in the important monograph of Jozef Heriban (Silva, 2005, p. 21; see Heriban, 1983). Heriban in his review of O'Brien's commentary laments that the latter has not allotted more space and attention to this important term (Heriban, 1994). Most of the commentators will mention their observation of the high frequency of φρονέω in their introduction and briefly comment that this term is important to the letter, but fail to elucidate why it is important and how it affects our understanding of Paul's message in the letter. Some commentators will simply introduce the various meanings of the word only once in the commentary (either in 1:7 when it occurs for the first time, or when it occurs in a Christologically significant passage like 2:1-11) and fail to mention it thereafter. The significance of φρονέω is often neglected and overshadowed by discussion of the nature, source, and interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11, eclipsed by well-loved verses and favorite themes of joy, unity, and humility, and surpassed by debates on the provenance and literary integrity of the letter and the identity of Paul's opponents in Philippians 3.

If φρονέω is not given due attention in the Greek text, then it is even more difficult for English readers to see its importance in the letter. The translation of the term into English presents many challenges. The biggest problem related to translation is that φρονέω has a vast semantic range which cannot be fully captured by any single English word. It is so easy for English readers to miss it because it necessitates more than one rendering in different contexts (Silva, 2005). It is a difficult word to translate because it not only consists of attitude and feeling, but also thoughts and opinion about someone or something (Hawthorne, 1983; Fowl, 2005; Godet, 1977). φρονέω is not only infused with a

wide range of meaning, but its collocation with other words affects its meaning. For instance, φρονέω ὑπέρ or ἐπί in Philippians 1:7; 4:10 connotes thoughtful thinking and action (The theological dictionary of the New Testament [TDNT], 1974). A survey of the major English translations of the ten occurrences in Philippians will reveal that none of them rendered the verb consistently by its primary meaning (i.e., to think) throughout the letter.

The verb φρονέω belongs to the word group that is derived from the feminine noun φρήν. The noun refers to the diaphragm in the anatomical sense (usually in plural form φρένες), and refers figuratively to the heart or soul as the seat of emotions and passions, the mind as seat of mental faculties and forethought, and will or purpose (The Brill dictionary of ancient Greek, 2015; TDNT, 1974; Etymological dictionary of Greek [EDNT], 2010; A Greek-English lexicon [LSJM], 1996; Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament based on semantic domains [GELNTSD], 1989). φρονέω, a common verb in Homer, has a wide semantic range and retains most of the root meanings of φρήν, but the physical sense is lost over time (TDNT, 1974). The primary meaning of φρονέω is to think or reflect. This basic meaning comprises at least six overlapping ideas: (1) “think, form/hold an opinion, judge” (1 Cor 13:11; Acts 28:22; Rom 12:3a); (2) “think or feel in a certain way about someone” (Phil 1:7); (3) “think of someone in the sense be concerned about him” (Phil 4:10a); (4) “think the same thing, i.e., be in agreement, live in harmony” (Phil 2:2a; 4:2; 2 Cor 13:11; Rom 12:16; 15:5); (5) “think nothing different” or “not take a different view” (Gal 5:10) or “think of or regard something differently” (Phil 3:15); and (6) “be proud” (Rom 11:20 φρονέω with ὑψηλὰ) (A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature [BDAG], 2000, p. 1065). It carries with it an element of commitment with intentionality (The Brill dictionary of ancient Greek, 2015). The verb also refers to cultivating an attitude that involves careful thinking and planning (Reed, 1997; BDAG, 2000; GELNTSD, 1989). φρονέω involves not only the mind, but also the will and emotions, and also affects one’s attitude (New international dictionary of New Testament theology and exegesis [NIDNTTE], 2014). Ernst Käsemann (1980) is on-target when he says that it “denotes the direction not merely of thought but of total existence, which on the Semitic view is always oriented consciously or unconsciously to a goal” (p. 219).

Other cognates are the nouns φρόνησις and φρόνημα, adjective φρόνιμος, and adverb φρόνιμως. The nouns φρόνησις and φρόνημα are both post-Homeric

with the former pertaining to insight, understanding, reason, cleverness, and practical intelligence and the latter to one's frame of mind, disposition, and temperament (which could be either positive or negative), but the difference between the two nouns is not significant (NIDNTTE, 2014). The adjective φρόνιμος describes someone who is wise, sensible, prudent, and insightful while the adverb φρόνιμως describes an action done wisely, prudently, or shrewdly (EDNT, 1993).

### 3 Synonyms of φρονέω

Paul has several Greek words to choose from and he could have used any the following verbs that also mean “think.” The verb νοέω, which means to think or consider something carefully, may be considered a close synonym of φρονέω. But unlike φρονέω, it does not have the dynamic sense that involves the will, emotions, and attitude (GELNTSD, 1989). Another synonym is λογίζομαι which means to think of something more logically and systematically (GELNTSD, 1989). Another possible option is the verb ἡγέομαι which usually involves a mental process of regarding or considering something (BDAG, 2000). Two more verbs that emphasize the intellectual process of thinking thoroughly or reasoning carefully are διαλογίζομαι and ἀναλογίζομαι (GELNTSD, 1989; BDAG, 2000). The verbs οἶμαι, νομίζω, δοκέω, and ὑπολαμβάνω belong to the same semantic domain and may be rendered as “to think,” but with a degree of uncertainty (GELNTSD, 1989).

Paul could have chosen any of these synonymous terms, but there are two aspects of the lexical meaning of φρονέω that are lacking in them. Only φρονέω encompasses the mind, will, emotions, and attitude and thus it is more comprehensive in its scope. Only φρονέω expresses focus, intention, and commitment. We may then say that Paul has chosen this word carefully to articulate the seriousness of the issue of unity and the intensity of effort that the believers should invest in order to ensure that harmony is achieved.

### 4 φρονέω in the NT

φρονέω is rare in the NT with only twenty-six occurrences. It appears most frequently in Pauline passages and only three times in other NT passages. Even the related terms in the word group are also rare (φρόνησις only twice in Luke

1:17 and Eph 1:8; φρόνημα only four times which all occurs in Rom 8; φρόνιμος only once in Luke 16:8). Only the adjective (φρόνιμος 14 times) is more frequent.

The verb appears ten times in seven verses in the short letter of Philippians (1:7; 2:2 [twice], 5; 3:15 [twice], 19; 4:2, 10 [twice]). The other sixteen occurrences appear thirteen times in other Pauline letters (Rom 8:5; 11:20; 12:3 [twice], 16 [twice]; 14:6 [twice]; 15:5; 1 Cor 13:11; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:10; Col 3:2) and only three in non-Pauline literature (Matt 16:23; Mark 8:33; Acts 28:22). Interestingly, φρόνημα always occurs in tandem with φρονέω in four occurrences (Rom 8:6 [twice], 7, 27) in the NT (TDNT, 1974). The φρονέω in Romans 8:5 carries the sense of focus and intent. Those who are according to the flesh focus on the things of the flesh, whereas those who are according to the Spirit, focus on the things of the Spirit (cf. “set their minds” in NIV, NRSV, NASB, and ESV). The verb is coupled with the adjective ὑψηλός and negated by μή in Rom 11:20, whereby the apostle is admonishing the Roman believers not to be conceited or arrogant (literally “to think high”) in light of Israel’s judgment because of unbelief. In Rom 12:3 the infinitive form φρονεῖν is used twice and juxtaposed with the compounded infinitives ὑπερφρονεῖν and σωφρονεῖν. Similarly, it is a warning against thinking too highly of oneself and a call to regard oneself with sober judgment. The participial form of the verb is used twice in Romans 12:16, but yielding a slightly different meaning due to their collocation. In the first part of the verse τὸ αὐτὸ φρονοῦντες gives emphasis to unity or literally “to think the same thing” (cf. “be of the same mind” in NASB; “live in harmony” in NRSV, NIV, and ESV). The second part of the verse μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες is similar to Romans 11:20 with the article and the plural form of the adjective and negated by μή, which also warns against pride (TDNT, 1974). The infinitive form is used with τὸ αὐτό in Rom 15:5 and 2 Corinthians 13:11 to exhort the believers toward concord and harmony as in Rom 12:16a (TDNT, 1974). In 1 Corinthians 13:11 the imperfect ἐφρόνουσιν may be classified as stative customary imperfect as rendered by NASB: “I used to . . . think,” and connotes the basic meaning of “think” (Wallace, 548). Paul uses the future tense of the verb in Galatians 5:10 to speak of his certainty that the Galatian Christians will not adopt other views contrary to the gospel message that the apostle has proclaimed to them (TDNT, 1974). The apostle commands the Colossian believers to set their minds (imperative φρονεῖτε in Col 3:2) on things above, and not on earthly things (TDNT, 1974).

φρονέω is used in three non-Pauline passages in the NT. The verb is used in the usual sense in Acts 28:22 when the Jewish leaders in Rome asked Paul for his view or opinion (EDNT, 1993; TDNT, 1974). In Matthew 16:23 and Mark 8:33 Jesus severely rebuked Peter for setting his mind on human concerns, rather than the things of God.

## 5 Synthesis

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that a wide array of meanings is attached to φρονέω. These meanings are vastly different from the concept of thinking in English, which is simply an intellectual activity or mental process. The Greek verb refers “neither to ‘thinking’ in general, nor ‘reasoning’ as such, nor is it used for a specific act or thought,” Fee clarifies, “rather, it has to do with having or developing a certain ‘mindset’ including attitudes and dispositions” (Fee, 1995, p. 89). It usually occurs within a theological context such as when Jesus confronts Peter that his mindset is not godly but human (NIDNTTE, 2014, p. 619). There is no middle ground, one sets one’s mind either on God or on the things against God. The harsh rebuke to Peter that was aimed at Satan highlights this point sharply (EDNT, 1993). Thinking does not occur in a vacuum and Silva is right in saying that it can never be neutral (NIDNTTE, 2014). In Romans 8:5, it is clear that thinking can either be swayed by the desires of the flesh or it can be guided by the Spirit (NIDNTTE, 2014). In Colossians 3:2 Paul exhorts believers to set their mind on things above, rather than on earthly things (also Phil 3:19). These contrasts—godly and human, fleshly and spiritual, heavenly and earthly—reveal that the meaning of the word can be expanded to connote making choices and even of taking sides (BDAG, 2000; NIDNTTE, 2014). Thus it is proper to say that we should be intentional in directing the course of our thoughts and allow the Spirit to shape how we view and evaluate things. Cultivating a right mindset is foundational to living a life that honors God and edifies the church.

Hence, it is a challenge to translate φρονέω in a more holistic way as Paul intended his readers to understand it—not the slavish kind of thinking that focuses only on the intellectual, dogmatic, rational, or theoretical, but he wants them to adopt the right attitude of mind with renewed thinking and genuine concern as seen in Christ (2:5-11). Paul knows that the Philippian problem of disunity cannot be resolved by dictating to the believers a certain kind of

behavior. Rather he is persuading them to have the right φρονέω that will directly affect how they act and behave towards each other and resolve their problem. He also warns them that the wrong kind of φρονέω that is focused on earthly things will make them enemies of the cross (3:18-19).

## 6 Paul's Perspective on Humiliation and Exaltation

Paul's narrative in Philippians 3:7-11 serves as a good parallel passage for comparison with Christ's story in Philippians 2:5-11. It offers a closer look at Paul's perspective on humiliation and exaltation. The former exhibits a high degree of correspondence with the latter through verbal links and thematic association. First, verbal connection is evident in the use of four terms in both passages: ἡγέομαι (2:6; 3:7-8), μορφή (2:7; cf. συμμορφίζομαι in 3:10), εὐρίσκω (2:7; 3:9), and κύριος (2:11; 3:8) (Silva, 2005). Kurz (1985) also identifies ἡγέομαι in 3:7-8 as a significant link to 2:6. Fee (1995) considers the link between "being conformed" and "death" in Philippians 3:10 as "the strongest kind of linguistic ties" between the narratives of Christ and Paul (p. 333).

Second, thematic correspondence is evidenced by Paul's decision to renounce all his Jewish privileges to know Christ and be conformed to the pattern of his death which serves as an analogy to the self-emptying act of Christ (Pollard, 1966; Byrnes, 2003; Silva, 2005; Hansen, 2009; Brown, 1998, p. 29; DeSilva, 1994; Garland, 1985). Christ did not consider (aorist ἤγησατο 2:6) his equality with God as something to be taken advantage of, so Paul has considered (perfect ἤγημαι 3:7) whatever things (ἅτινα 3:7) were gain to him previously as loss hereafter because of Christ. Jesus emptied himself, so Paul also considers (present ἡγοῦμαι 3:8) everything (πάντα) as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus. Being found in appearance as a human being (aorist passive participle εὑρεθείς 2:7), Jesus humbled himself. Similarly, Paul relinquishes everything precious to him so that he will be found in him (aorist passive subjunctive εὑρεθῶ 3:9) (Hansen, 2009). Like Jesus who takes the form (μορφὴν 2:7) of a slave, Paul is being conformed (present passive participle συμμορφιζόμενος 3:10) to his death by experiencing the power of his resurrection and sharing in his sufferings. He also acknowledges Christ Jesus, the one whom every tongue should confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός in 2:11) as "Christ Jesus my Lord" (Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου

μου 3:8). Like Christ whom God has exalted, Paul looks forward to being raised from the dead (Pollard, 1966). One other important thematic connection that is rarely noticed is Paul asserts he wants to know Christ (infinitive γνῶναι in 3:10) and extols the surpassing value of knowing Christ (genitive noun γνώσεως in 3:8). Both knowledge terms are intricately related to the mind of Christ in the Christ-hymn. Koperski (1996) makes this well-suited connection:

An important function of the knowledge of Christ terminology is the subjective perception which is able to recognize that the crucified Christ is now the exalted Lord of glory, and further, on the basis of that act of discernment, to trust that this Christ is savior of those who acknowledge him as Lord. This ability to perceive correctly despite outward appearances, which has come to Paul with the knowledge of Christ, is something which Christ had already (cf. 2:6), when, being in the form of God, he did not hesitate to voluntarily empty himself and take the form of a slave (pp. 290-291).

There are some scholars who suggest that Paul is echoing Philippians 2:5-11 when he penned the profoundly personal yet highly Christological words in Philippians 3:7-11. Unfortunately, most of them do not go beyond alluding to these links and examine the relationship further. In the introductory chapter of his Philippians commentary, Silva (2005) observes that the astonishing frequency of φρονέω in the letter points to its significance and also hints that it is associated with other related terms like ἡγέομαι (2:3, 6; 3:8), σκοπέω (2:4; 3:17), and λογίζομαι (3:13; 4:8). He laments that this distinct feature has often been hinted at by commentators but has not been developed except for the monograph of Josef Heriban (1983). Nevertheless, Silva himself fails to elaborate how φρονέω is specifically related to ἡγέομαι in Philippians 3:7-8 and its impact on how Paul reckons his gains and losses.

Despite the overflow of secondary literature and intense scrutiny of each of these two passages, there is very little in-depth study of their relationship. Kurz (1985) explains that this apparent neglect is because of critical methods which treats these two chapters as fragments from different letters and Philippians 2:6-11 is often treated as an isolated hymn. Hence, many fail to notice the parallelism. Kurz (1985) advocates a strong parallelism between the second and third chapters of Philippians. Most scholars usually do not mention or discuss these two passages together.

Although Paul did not use φρονέω in Philippians 3:7-11, he employs the verb ἡγέομαι which corresponds to the verb in Philippians 2:6, and also belongs to

the same semantic domain as φρονέω (GELNTSD, 1989). The word ἡγέομαι means “think, consider, regard” (BDAG, 2000, p.434). It was not a subjective decision based on erratic moods or impulsive choice; rather it is an objective and cautious assessment after carefully weighing all available options. We should not think that the things he mentioned in Philippians 3:5-6 are unattractive and unimportant to him so that it would have been easy for him to count them as loss. On the contrary, they are things he held dear and worked hard for. He exclaims, “I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers” (Gal 1:14 NIV). Paul also does not demean his Jewish heritage, nor are they considered evil in themselves. The primary focus here is Paul’s perspective towards these things (“I have come to consider”), and not a negative evaluation of his race, culture, and legacy (Fee, 1999). By using the perfect tense (ἡγήμην) in tandem with ἄτινα (3:7), he is expressing an action in the past with ongoing effects in the present. He intensifies this decision by using the present tense (ἡγέομαι) and escalating it to encompass everything (πάντα in 3:8).

After declaring the surpassing value of knowing Christ in verse 8, Paul clearly states his desire is to know Christ by using the genitive articular infinitive (τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν) in verse 10, which serves as a purpose clause that parallels the twofold ἵνα clause in verses 8-9 (Silva, 2005; O’Brien, 1991). He articulates his Christocentric goals in three different expressions that reveal his single-minded focus and unadulterated passion for Christ: to gain Christ, be found in him, and know him. Tannehill (1967) comments, “Each of these phrases expresses the purpose for which Paul renounced all things, and basically they contain the same idea” (p. 118). Hansen (2009) points out that “by restating his goals in these different ways, Paul keeps the focus completely on Christ and emphasizes that his relationship with Christ totally eclipses everything else in his life” (p. 242).

The aorist active infinitive γινῶναι comes from the verb γινώσκω which means to know or be acquainted with (GELNTSD, 1989). Paul’s use of the active voice reveals the intensity with which he actively seeks to know Christ. He explains that he wants to know him, not just about him. Witherington (2011) defines this kind of knowing as “understanding through experiencing” (p. 205). He wants to know the person depicted in Philippians 2:5-11, his divinity and humanity (preexistence, incarnation, exaltation), his excellent qualities (humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice), his mindset (how he thinks, feels,

chooses, decides, evaluates), his humiliation and exaltation. Paul further elaborates with an exegetical καί that he also wants to know the power of his resurrection and fellowship of his sufferings.

The infinitive (τοῦ γινῶναι) governs three accusative objects (αὐτόν, δύναμιν, and κοινωνίαν), but they should not be considered as three separate goals (Silva, 2005). The first καί preceding τὴν δύναμιν is exegetical, which expounds or provides content to what it means to know Christ: “so that I may know him, that is, the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings” (Fee, 1995, p. 328, emphasis original; Silva, 2005, Tannehill, 1967). Hawthorne and Martin (2004) further explain the exegetical καί:

“It serves to link the words that follow together with αὐτόν, ‘him,’ in such a way as to define and more fully explain what is meant by αὐτόν, ‘him’ . . . It is not that Paul is saying ‘I want to know him and the power of his resurrection,’ as though ‘him’ and ‘power’ were equally worthy objects of his knowing. Rather, he is saying ‘I want to know him in the power of his resurrection’ . . . Paul is not content merely to know Christ as a figure of history (κατὰ σάρκα, ‘according to the flesh’) but he desires to know him personally as the resurrected ever-living Lord of his life (κατὰ πνεῦμα, ‘according to the Spirit’)” (p. 197, emphasis original).

The last two accusative objects (δύναμιν and κοινωνίαν) are joined by a common article (τὴν) which shows that both the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings are interwoven as complementary aspects of knowing Christ (Tannehill, 1967; Hansen, 2009). It is worth noting that in the noun phrases that come after the exegetical καί, the accusative nouns δύναμιν (power) and κοινωνίαν (fellowship) are the grammatical objects of the infinitive (τοῦ γινῶναι), not the genitive nouns ἀναστάσεως (resurrection) and παθημάτων (sufferings) as most interpreters have wrongly emphasized (O’Brien, 1991).

The feminine noun δύναμις is generally translated as “power” and refers to the ability or capability to perform a certain activity or to go through some experiences (GELNTSD, 1989; BDAG, 2000). The genitive ἀναστάσεως (resurrection) qualifies the specific power Paul is referring to. It may be interpreted as a genitive of source, i.e., the power springing forth from his resurrection, which does not refer to the power that raised Christ from the dead or the power that will raise believers in the last day (O’Brien, 1991). It refers instead to the power that the risen Lord possesses and executes which is

constantly active and available to the believer (Meyer, 1885; O'Brien, 1991). It is equally important to stress that the ultimate source of this all-encompassing and life-giving power is God the Father, with its knowledge arising from faith, and is the “transforming force that vitalizes Christian life and molds the suffering of the Christian to the pattern which is Christ” (Fitzmyer, 1970, p. 420). In light of Philippians 2:9-11 wherein God is the primary actor who exalted Christ above all else, this retracing of the source of the power of resurrection to him is indeed appropriate (Hansen, 2009).

The noun *κοινωνία* is a common Pauline expression in his letters. It is commonly translated “fellowship,” but the Greek term includes a wider range of meaning signifying a close relationship, such as association, communion, contribution, partnership, participation, and sharing (BDAG, 2000; LSJM, 1996). In this verse, *κοινωνία* is best taken as partnership, participation, fellowship, or sharing (Hansen, 2009). The objective genitive *παθημάτων* specifies the object of Paul’s participation, i.e., he wants to share in the sufferings of Christ (Seesemann, 1933; Koperski, 1996). The plural “sufferings” do not refer to Christ’s passion on the cross leading to his once-for-all sacrificial death for our redemption, which are usually expressed through words like cross, death, and blood in Pauline letters (O’Brien, 1991). Rather these sufferings refer to various kinds of adversities and afflictions that Christians experience in their union with Christ, both external and internal struggles (Hansen, 2009). Paul speaks of his being in chains for Christ and for the sake of the gospel, his struggles in the past and at present, and also sufferings of the Philippian believers (1:7, 13, 14, 17, 30). In another letter, he lists specific outward sufferings and inward struggles (2 Cor 11:12-29). Paul does not relish in the sufferings in and of themselves, but he delights in the deeper fellowship and communion with Christ through them. He has adequately expressed his perspective on sufferings when he exclaims that to suffer for Christ is a gift from God: “For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well” (1:29 NRSV; emphasis added).

“It is impossible to know the power of his resurrection without participation in his sufferings.” It is equally true that one cannot participate in his sufferings unless one experiences the power of the resurrection, because it is only by knowing the latter that one can have the encouragement and tenacity to endure the former (O’Brien, 1991; Hansen, 2009). “Without the power inherent in

Christ's resurrection, present suffering (even for Christ's sake) is meaningless" (Fee, 1995, p. 330). This may well explain the reason why resurrection is mentioned first before suffering, which is an inversion of the usual sequence of events, but the conjoining of both words with a single article means that the reordering may not be consequential (Michael, 1927). It is fascinating that Paul combines power of the resurrection and fellowship of sufferings here, just as humiliation and exaltation are weaved together in the Christ-hymn. He wants to know Christ deeply and fully that he embraces both his victory and pain. This kind of knowledge is not superficial, but intimate, personal, and experiential (Fee, 1995; Hansen, 2009). Paul here expresses his intense desire to know Christ deeply and fully that it requires the response of his entire being, just as the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus in verse 8 brings about a radical change in his perspective and attitude (O'Brien, 1991).

What does Paul mean that he wants to be conformed to Christ's death (συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ)? The participial form *συμμορφιζόμενος* only occurs in this verse in the NT, but its cognate noun *μορφή* appears twice in the carmen Christi (2:6, 7) which shows "how Paul is intentionally identifying his experience with the narrative of Christ" (Hansen, 2009, p. 246, emphasis added). Paul could have chosen another word like *συσχηματίζομαι* (cf. Rom 12:2), but his deliberate use of *συμμορφίζομαι* implies his intention to look back to the Christ hymn. Bockmuehl comments, "There is a reasonable likelihood that the apostle may be deliberately raising the issue of the 'form' of Christ's death to indicate that his own former motivation of pride has given way to one of Christ-like humility" (Bockmuehl, 1997, p. 216). The word comes from the verb *συμμορφίζω* which means to be like something by taking the same form (BDAG, 2000). The present tense signifies that it is a continuous, ongoing process that precludes the possibility of reading it as a baptismal allusion (Koperski, 1996). The medio-passive form *συμμορφιζόμενος* combined with a dative is best taken in its passive sense, i.e., Paul is being conformed to Christ's death (BDAG, 2000; O'Brien, 1991; Hansen, 2009). The cognate adjective *σύμμορφον* in verse 21 depicts Christ as the "who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory" (NASB). The same adjective is used in Romans 8:29 and speaks of God as the one who conforms those whom he has chosen to be conformed to the image of his Son: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren"

(RSV). Here we see a clear picture of divine empowerment and human participation working hand in hand to bring about our conformity to Christ (Koperski, 1996). Paul actively seeks to gain Christ and to know him (active forms κερδήσω and γινῶναι), yet he also willingly submits to God and let him do his work in his life, so that he may be found in Christ and be continually conformed to him (passive forms εὐρεθῶ and συμμορφιζόμενος).

This participial phrase may be construed as an adverbial participle of means that elaborates the preceding noun phrase (κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ) to explain that the way to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings is "by becoming like him in his death" (NRSV). It may also function as a result participle, i.e., sharing in Christ's sufferings brings about conformation to his death (Hansen, 2009). It is best to take the participial phrase as modifying the entire verse: "It is not in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings as such that Paul is conformed to Christ's death; rather, it is by participating in those sufferings . . . and as strengthened to do so in the power of his resurrection that he is continually being conformed to Christ's death" (O'Brien, 1991, p. 407, emphasis original). Byrnes's proposal to consider the phrase a result participle that summarizes the outcome of the whole process is also convincing. Byrnes (2003) elucidates as follows:

We already have a ἵνα clause describing the purpose of Paul's reevaluation and renunciation of all things, and an infinitive clause explanatory of the consequences, namely, the knowledge of Christ in his resurrection and sufferings. The participial phrase seems to be added to clarify the result of the whole process. In other words, Paul, by the evaluation of all things as loss and the subsequent forfeiture of all things for the sake of knowing Christ both in the power of his resurrection and in participation in his sufferings, is being conformed to the pattern of Christ's own death on the cross (p. 228).

It is also important to note that the participle συμμορφιζόμενος is dependent on the articular infinitive τοῦ γινῶναι and depicts how knowledge is gained (Bockmuehl, 1997). Hence, Paul is also continually conformed to Christ, by knowing his mindset and perspective on humiliation and exaltation. It is certainly appropriate to specify that conformation should not be limited to Christ's death only, but it extends to every sphere of the Christian life, which is primarily characterized by Christ's death (Fee, 1995).

I submit that it is best to interpret "being conformed to his death" as an ongoing inward transformation akin to Christ's death. I have come to this

conclusion based on the following points of convergence: (1) This participial phrase modifies not just the immediate preceding noun phrase, but relates to the entire verse, i.e., conformity to Christ is not only in sharing in his sufferings, but also in experiencing the power of the resurrection and in coming to know Christ more fully and deeply (O'Brien, 1991); (2) Paul's focus in this passage is not so much on the physical events of Christ's sufferings, death, and resurrection, but more on his desire to know Christ more deeply by experiencing the power and fellowship of sharing in these events (O'Brien, 1991); (3) The present tense of the participle shows this is a continual process of being conformed to Christ in every area of the believer's life, and not just towards the end of his life when he is facing death (Hansen, 2009); (4) The passive voice of the participle may be construed as a divine passive whereby God is at work to bring about spiritual transformation and daily renewal to conform his people to his Son (O'Brien, 1991); (5) The nature of the conformation does not necessarily have to be exactly like that of Christ's death, but rather akin to his death in terms of his perspective on humiliation and exaltation as vividly portrayed in the carmen Christi; and (6) Paul's recounting of his personal experience which is in close parallel to the narrative of Christ in the hymn is not intended as an exclusive apostolic enterprise of martyrdom, but an encouragement for all believers to participate and experience (O'Brien, 1991).

## 7 Interpretation of the Christ-Hymn

In this section I will first revisit the hymn and take a closer look at the mind of Christ, his humiliation and exaltation. I will then offer an alternative reading of the carmen Christi by expounding on Christocentric ethics and highlighting the theme of conformity to Christ.

### Revisiting the Carmen Christi

The main verb in the passage is the imperative  $\phi\rho\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon$  in Philippians 2:5 (the next verb is only encountered again in 2:9) and reveals the mind of Christ. How this imperative is understood is crucial to the interpretation of the verse and the hymn that follows.  $\text{Τοῦτο } \phi\rho\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon$  is variously translated as "this think" or "have this mindset." I agree with Fee that the force of the imperative verb should be clearly carried out by focusing on the action, instead of the noun

that is implied in the verb (Fee, 1995). He cautions that to emphasize on the implied noun by translating the first two words as “have this mindset” or “have this frame of mind” is misleading because this hypothetical noun will be assumed as the antecedent of the relative pronoun ὃ that comes after (Fee, 1995). Grammatically τοῦτο is the object of the main verb φρονεῖτε and the antecedent of the relative pronoun ὃ (Fee, 1995).

The first part of the verse ends with ἐν ὑμῖν which could be translated as “in you” (individually) or “among yourselves” (relationally). If the former, then the plural ὑμῖν refers to individual members in the congregation in a distributive sense, i.e., within you or in each of you (Hellerman, 2015). If the latter, then the plural ὑμῖν refers to a collective sense, i.e., among you in relation to each other (Silva, 2005; O’Brien, 1991; Hellerman, 2015). As mentioned above the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο refers back to the attitudes that Paul is exhorting the Philippian believers to think of in 2:1-4, then the relational emphasis is more appropriate when we consider Paul’s emphasis on how they relate to one other (Hellerman, 2015). The prepositional phrase is also more commonly used in Pauline paraenesis to articulate what he wants the believing community to put into practice (Fee, 1995). Needless to say, the corporate appeal implies an individual response (Fee, 1995). As Silva points out, it is more common to use ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, instead of ἐν ὑμῖν, when describing someone who is thinking to or within himself (Silva, 2005).

The relative clause that begins with ὃ καὶ has the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο as its antecedent, which in turn is referring to the attitudes of humility and being like-minded in vv. 2-4 (Fee, 1995). Hence, it makes more sense to take καὶ as the adverb “also” (ὃ καὶ is parallel to τοῦτο), instead of as an intensive “even” or “indeed” (O’Brien, 1991).

Now we come to the verb that needs to be supplied in the second part of the verse. According to traditional interpretation, which is also called the ethical interpretation, the verb ἦν is usually supplied in the relative clause in combination with the “within you” (individual sense) in the first part of the verse (Silva, 2005). This view interprets Christ as the ethical pattern that Christians should imitate, with the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ understood in an individual sense, i.e., Christ’s inward attitude of humility and self-sacrifice (Silva, 2005; O’Brien, 1991). Thus the verse is translated as: “Think this within you which also was in Christ Jesus” (Morgan, 1998, p. 56, emphasis original).

The rival interpretation (kerygmatic view) advocated by Käsemann and others supplies the verb φρονεῖτε in the relative clause and takes the ἐν ὑμῖν in a relational sense (Silva, 2005). Käsemann understands the verse as an introduction to the hymn and that “the Philippians are admonished to conduct themselves toward one another as is fitting within the realm of Christ” (Käsemann, 1968). Moreover, the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is taken as the typical formula of ἐν Χριστῷ which is common in Paul’s letters, referring to our union with Christ (Silva, 2005). Thus the verse is translated as: Think this among you that which you also think in your union with Christ (Moule, 1970). Hansen explains that this rendering underscores the parallelism in both clauses by using the same verb φρονέω and same reference to our union with Christ as a corporate body (Hansen, 2009). Proponents of this interpretation believe that the hymn is intended as a kerygmatic proclamation of the Christ event and not as ethical example to be imitated (Hansen, 2009). “By placing the proclamation of Christ in the hymn after moral exhortation,” he elucidates, “Paul is pointing to the power of transformation. Christian behavior is motivated and empowered by salvation in Christ, not by the example of Christ” (Käsemann, 1968).

A slight variation of this is C. F. Moule’s expansion of the verse: τοῦτο τὸ φρόνημα φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ which he renders thus: “Adopt towards one another, in your mutual relations, the same attitude which was found in Christ Jesus” (Moule, 1970, p. 265). It is intended as a corrective to the inferior reading φρονεῖσθω (present passive imperative) adopted by the Authorized Version and rendered as “Let this mind be in you” (KJV). Moule takes ἐν ὑμῖν as a reference to interpersonal relationships among believers in contrast to the Authorized Version which takes the prepositional phrase to mean “within each of you” or “in your hearts” (Moule, 1970, p. 265). However, he adopts the second part of the said version “which was also in Christ Jesus” because he considers it a false assumption that ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ should always refer to Pauline formula of incorporation in Christ (Moule, 1970). The other false assumption Moule is unmasking is that unless both prepositional phrases (ἐν ὑμῖν and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) are taken to mean the same thing, then believers could be suspected of maintaining two separate attitudes—one regarding their relationship with each other and another pertaining to their being union with Christ (Moule, 1970). He perceives the two relationships as “one and inseparable” and that “the contrast is not between two spheres of existence but

between an already given condition, on the one hand, and the implementing of it, on the other” (Moule, 1970). He cites 4:2 as a close parallel to prove his point—Paul is urging Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony with each other “as being in the Lord” (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ), and not “as they are harmonious in the Lord” (Moule, 1970, p. 266). Although Paul’s “in Christ” expressions are well-known in his other letters, it does not make sense here contextually. If 2:5 is a transitional to the following hymn, as previously noted, then the supposed reference to our union with Christ should correspond to the relative pronoun in the following verse. But the relative pronoun ὃς in 2:6 refers to Christ and describes his mindset of humility and self-sacrifice.

Christ’s mindset, introduced in v. 5, is further explained in the next three verses as the mindset of Christ as God (v. 6) and as a man (vv. 7-8) (Fee, 1995). These verses spell out the humiliation of Christ in two main clauses, joined by καὶ, with a similar threefold structure: (1) each clause is introduced by a participial phrase that describes how Christ existed as God (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων) and as man (σχήματι εὑρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος); (2) followed by the main clause specifying what Christ did (ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν and ἐταπεινώσεν ἑαυτὸν); and (3) followed by a modal participle that modifies the key verb and reveals how the action was carried out (μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν which is further clarified by another participial phrase ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος, and γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου which is clarified by the noun phrase θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ) (Fee, 1995). Christ, who is equal with God, manifested his humiliation by becoming a man, but more than that, he also took the form of a servant and experienced the most humiliating death and endured the most excruciating pain. By employing a remarkable “not ... but” contrast (cf. vv. 2-4 for similar contrast), Paul presents two ways of thinking or mindset, one that is selfish, and the alternative is selfless (Fee, 1995).

The second part of the hymn is introduced by διὸ καὶ and reveals significant shifts in themes and emphasis. Whereas the first part focuses on Christ, God the Father is the key player and subject of the main verbs in the second part (Brown, 1998; Fee, 1995; Hansen, 2009; O’Brien, 1991). Whereas humiliation is the primary motif in the first section, exaltation is the key theme in the latter section. Despite the distinction between the two parts, the emphatic inferential conjunction διὸ with the conjunction καὶ provide a clear link with the previous verses, mark an inference based on what was stated in those verses, and signal

the transition from the theme of Christ's humiliation to an exaltation motif (Brown, 1998; O'Brien, 1991).

### Christocentric Ethics

I believe that the best way to interpret the passage is to integrate both kerygmatic and ethical interpretation. It is not helpful to pit one against the other and miss a key point when one argument is emphasized at the expense of the other. Unfortunately, a great part of the ongoing debate is beset by false dichotomies and inundated with biases. We should be careful not to make a "superficial antithesis between Heilsgeschichte and ethics" (Strimple, 1979, p. 255). Hooker (1975) exclaims, "It is only the dogma that the Jesus of History and the Christ of faith belong in separate compartments that leads to the belief that the appeal to Christian character appropriate to those who are in Christ is not linked to the pattern as seen in Jesus himself" (p. 154). Paul's theology always springs forth in ethical implications, and his ethical injunctions are always grounded in firm theology. Hawthorne and Martin (2004) underscore this important point:

Hence, although this hymn (1) is unquestionably a Christological gem unparalleled in the NT, (2) may be considered soteriological, or better, kerygmatic, in character (yet with parenetic enforcement brought out in 2:12 as a call to obedience; there is no dichotomy between the two, . . . , and (3) may have been originally composed for christological or soteriological reasons, Paul's motive in using it here is not theological but ethical. Yet this disjunction may be granted to be chimerical since Paul's ethics are always theological ethics; i.e., the call is to act because God in Christ has acted in the first place. . . . Paul's objective is not to give instruction in doctrine but to reinforce instruction (parenesis) in Christian living. And he does this by appealing to the event of Christ (p. 106, emphasis original).

A more comprehensive understanding of the passage will emerge if we base our theological understanding on sound exegesis and avoid, as much as possible, any preconceived way of defining the hymn. For lack of a better term, I will use "Christocentric ethics" to refer to Pauline ethics that is firmly grounded on a strong Christology. This does not mean that ethics is more central nor less important than Christology. I could have used "ethical

Christology” interchangeably but the second label might create unnecessary confusion.

In summary, Christocentric ethics is seeking to strike a balance between theology and ethics. The key to solving the false dichotomy is to focus on Christ as the unifying factor of both theology and ethics.

### Conformity to Christ

It is more helpful to speak of conformity to Christ, instead of issuing a call for an imitation of Christ’s example (O’Brien, 1991; Gorman, 2009). For Paul Christian ethics is far more than mere imitation of Christ’s example, it is rather a conformity to the true essence of life in Christ (Hooker, 1975). Seifrid (2000) captures this overarching theme of the letter succinctly: “Paul’s purpose throughout is to set forth believing life as conformation to Christ in both humiliation and exaltation” (pp. 88-89, emphasis added). We are not called to imitate specific actions in the hymn, but rather to cultivate the mindset of Christ which will then affect our choices, decisions, attitudes, behavior, and relationships (Fee, 1995).

Christ’s way of thinking is clearly demonstrated by his humility and selfless service in the historical events of incarnation and crucifixion in 2:6-8 (Keener, 2016). Paul appeals to the believers to adopt this mindset to rally them to aim for unity by regarding (ἡγούμενοι) others better than oneself in the spirit of humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη) in the same way that Christ did not regard (ἡγήσατο) his equality with God as something to take advantage of, but instead he humbled himself (ἔταπείνωσεν) (Keener, 2016). We also need to emphasize that Christ has done so willingly—he emptied and humbled himself (2:7, 8). The reflexive pronoun ἑαυτὸν signifies the voluntary nature and deliberateness of the decision made, not out of compulsion, but motivated by love and selflessness (Martin, 1997). This needs to be stressed because when we simply imitate Christ or follow his example, we may do so in order to fulfill certain expectations or obligations. But when we have the mind of Christ, we actively engage in looking at things and evaluating them through his perspective.

The lack of attention to φρονεῖτε in Philippians 2:5 is the missing link in understanding and interpreting the hymn which led scholars to postulate the false dichotomy that it is either kerygmatic or ethical interpretation. In contrast *conformatio Christi* is far broader than the narrow and limited concept of

imitatio Christi and more comprehensive than virtue ethics. I argue that the former is both active and passive, which is a paradox in itself. It is active in the sense that Paul calls for the believers to actively seek to think (present active imperative φρονεῖτε) in conformity to mind of Christ. We also see Christ willingly and voluntarily lay down his life and pour himself out. Kierkegaard is on target when he exclaims that there is only one Christ and no one can do exactly as he did. His work of redemption and salvation is unique and extraordinary which only he can accomplish at his own initiative. We cannot imitate his incarnation, crucifixion, or exaltation, but we can cultivate his mindset of readiness and willingness to suffer humiliation in service to others. It is passive in the sense that Paul did not actively seek out suffering for himself, unlike the martyrs, nor did he exhort the Philippians to do so. Unlike Christ humiliation and suffering essentially come to us, not what we create or avidly pursue, which spells out our essential distinction from him as Kierkegaard noted. Jesus' obedience and exaltation are unique in nature that the obedience in Philippians 2:6-8 cannot be simply replicated (Hurtado, 1984). Therefore, it is proper to say that the passage is not urging strict imitatio Christi, but rather conformatio Christi, whereby believers not just imitate Christ's action, but conform to his pattern of thinking, acting, and serving (Dahl, 1976).

## 8 Conclusion

Conformity to Christ is a recurring process of renewal and reshaping that affects even the way we think and make decisions. This brings us to an important point in my thesis. Paul's conformity to Christ is reflected in how he regards his assets and liabilities. He did not say that all things are garbage in and of themselves, but that he counts them as such (Witherington, 2011). The verb ἡγέομαι involves "considered reflection," careful process of evaluation, and weighing of options, and Paul narrates his own story "in a way parallel to how he has described the Son's heavenly decision-making about all the good things he could have taken advantage of" (Witherington, 202). Not only is the same verb (ἡγέομαι) used in both the stories of Christ and Paul, but it is also closely linked to the φρονεῖτε in Philippians 2:5. It is because of this transformation in Paul's thinking and decision-making, so he is able to rejoice and encourage others to rejoice while he is languishing in jail. His Christ-centered and gospel-focused perspective transcends the dire circumstances of his imprisonment so he

can confidently declare that “what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel” (1:12 NIV). This transformed perspective also fuels Paul’s desire to know Christ and enables him to embrace both the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of sufferings, which expresses Paul’s aspiration “to know the whole Christ” (Byrnes, 2003, p. 243). “Paul wants to know Christ in every aspect of his life, death, and resurrection. He desires knowledge by experience and participation. He desires a relationship that is total and all-encompassing” (Byrnes, 2003, p. 243). Fee (1995) summarizes Paul’s transformation succinctly:

. . . Christ’s resurrection guaranteed his own, that he could throw himself into the present with a kind of holy abandon, full of rejoicing and thanksgiving; and that not because he enjoyed suffering, but because Christ’s resurrection had given him a unique perspective on present suffering . . . as well as an empowering presence whereby the suffering was transformed into intimate fellowship with Christ himself (p. 331, emphasis added).

God is indeed at work and continues to work. He is active and alive in our lives, and we are his workmanship. This element of total dependence on God to do his work in us is the missing piece in the concept of imitatio which focuses more on our human efforts to imitate Christ and be like him. This is in a sense the shallow ethical idealism against which Käsemann is protesting wherein God and the drama of salvation are missing from the picture. But Paul has a robust soteriology that incorporates both the kerygmatic and ethical aspects of justification, sanctification, and glorification—God’s active work of redemption (“righteousness from God through faith in Christ” 3:9) and regeneration (“We are God’s handiwork, created us in Christ Jesus to do good works” Eph 2:10 NIV) that lays the foundation which enables us to will and to work for his good pleasure (2:12), to share in his sufferings (3:10; Rom 8:17) as we are sustained by the power of the resurrection (3:10), so we may share in his glory (Rom 8:17) and be conformed to his glorious body (3:21). Our ethical response, then, is grounded on dogmatic truths.

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# When Academic Debate Meets Translation Decisions: The English Translations of *Pistis Christou* as an Example

Chun Li  
Bethel Bible Seminary, Hong Kong

The *Pistis Christou* Debate is still one of the most discussed problem in New Testament studies. The heated debate about whether to translate the term *Pistis Christou* as subjective genitive or objective genitive has been going on among scholars for over a century. The current debate can be traced back to Johannes Hauffleiter's paper in 1891, or even earlier (Schliesser, 2015). It is said that "new publications continue to flood the market" (Easter, 2010, 33-37).

While the *Pistis Christou* debate is going on, new English translations of the Bible have appeared in the past 20 years. Biblical scholars and theologians could continue to engage in the debate while translators of the new versions would have to decide which position was to be reflected in their new translation. The current paper aims at looking at the *Pistis Christou* debate and exploring how new translations incorporate the discussions as so far provided by scholars.

## 1 The *Pistis Christou* Debate

The *Pistis Christou* debate refers to the discussion about whether to interpret *pistis Christou* as an objective genitive or a subjective genitive. Usually, the former will be translated as "faith in Christ" and the latter as "faithfulness of Christ". Easter (2010, p.33) called the former the 'anthropological' reading and the latter the 'christological' reading. The arguments of both sides can be categorized as lexical, grammatical and theological (Hunn, 2010).

## Lexical Issues

In early discussion of the issue involved, Gabriel Hebert and T. F. Torrance tended to import the meaning of the word from Greek or Hebrew tradition. This approach has been refuted by James Barr. Recently, there were attempts to import meanings such as obedience, righteousness, “*fidei commissum*” into the word *pistis*. However, these approaches also did not receive wide acceptance. (Hunn, 2010, p. 17-18)

Most common translations of *pistis Christou* would render *pistis* as either “faith” or “faithfulness”. While the objective genitive camp would agree on translating *pistis* as “faith”, the subjective camp could translate *pistis* as either “faith” or “faithfulness”. However, most of the discussion for the subjective genitive position would argue for translating the term as “faithfulness” rather than “faith”. Scholars also tried to investigate how *pistis* was used in the Septuagint and Jewish Hellenistic Greek. Some even tried to derive the meaning of *pistis* from its cognate *pisteuw*. As informative as this kind of research could be, its value for determining the meaning of *pistis Christou* is questionable. (Hunn, 19-20)

## Grammatical Issues

Most of the discussion about the *pistis Christou* debate fell into the grammatical category. There were discussions about the presence or absence of the definite article before *pistis* as a pointer towards the meaning of *pistis*. It has been argued that when *pistis* has a definite article, it is subjective, but if it does not have an article, then it should be read as objective. However, most scholars recently would reject the approach of determining the meaning of *pistis* just by the absence or presence of the definite article. (Easter, 2010, p.34)

Another direction for discussion was along the syntactical path. George Howard examined Paul’s use of the word *pistis* with genitive of person or personal pronouns other than *Christou*, and found that 24 times the genitive was subjective rather than objective. The legitimacy of reading these usages into the phrase *pistis Christou* has been challenged. The highest count in the literature should not substitute the importance of the context for determining the meaning of a phrase.

The common argument for the Christological camp is the redundancy created by the anthropological reading in Rom 3:22. It is said that the objective reading would render the following part of the sentence (to all who believe) redundant. However, the alleged redundancy in the repetition can be viewed as intentional and reflect Paul's emphasis on the role of believers' faith in Christ.

Another way to look at the issue is to explore the usage of *pistis en Christō*. The use of the preposition *en* is not a Pauline idiom and therefore he resorts to *pistis Christou*. Other scholars looked into the phrase *ek pisteōs* and hoped to find out the meaning of *pistis Christou* from the various phrases mentioned above. The results of these comparisons have been inconclusive, and scholars would point out that these grammatical discussions can hardly be the only reasons for adopting either objective or subjective understanding of the phrase. Indeed, the "larger reading of Paul's theology" should be the determining factor in choosing the interpretation (Easter, 2010, p. 44).

## Theological Issues

Herbert pointed out that the objective reading of *pistis Christou* is too weak an argument in Romans to counteract the Jewish view of justification. The Christological reading would be more adequate. The subjective reading would help to emphasize the role of Christ in contrast to the Jewish view. But van Daalen is reasonable to say that when someone has faith in another person, the other person has the quality that can be relied. This is also an adequate argument against Jewish interpretation. (Hunn, 2010, p. 27)

Since *pistis Christou* is often contrasted with "works of law", the theological meaning of these two phrases are compared. The anthropological side argues that since works of law refers to human actions, *pistis Christou* as its counterpart should also be read from an anthropological perspective. For the Christological camp, since works of the law refers to human actions, the contrasting *pistis Christou* should be read as God's action. (Easter, 2010, p. 27)

When Benjamin Schliesser (2015, p. 89) reviewed the history of interpretation, he found that their theological commitment has always been a key factor in determining the interpreters' position:

"Historical hindsight also opens the eyes to the correlation of theological commitment and exegetical conclusions. To be sure, one should beware of simplistic and premature classifications, but is it by accident that the rationalist

Jesus Christ of Paulus and Schulthel is understood as a moral-religious model, as a prime example of a desirable 'sincerity of conviction' ? That the mystical-speculative Jesus Christ of Benecke is characterized by his 'unceasing faithful agency', which restores the relationship between the estranged human nature and God? That the Dutch reformed Jesus Christ of Berlage underlines the total dependence of human beings on God in that Christ alone is the origin, cause, and author of our faith in God? Finally, that in the 'dialectical' Jesus Christ of Barth God's faithfulness became a (historical) event, a movement from heaven to earth, which brings back all that has been lost to the world and to humanity due to their distance from God?"

It is not surprising that the theological commitment has its place in scholars' discussion. The position taken by a scholar may be determined by the academic investigation, but it is also very possible that the theological commitment has a place too. For the review of translations, the theological positions and the denominational standing should also be considered.

## 2 The Translations Used for Comparison

There have been many new English translations of the Bible in the past two decades. The current paper reviews two categories of translations. The first category is the that of most popular or preferred translations including the King James (KJV) and its modernized version the New King James Version (NKJV), the New International Version(NIV) and the English Standard Version (ESV). The King James Version is still the esteemed and preferred English version in USA. The next most preferred or popular versions have been NIV and ESV. (Silliman, 2015) The top three versions used in the last five years have been KJV, NIV and ESV in Barna Group survey in USA. (<http://www.barna.com>)

Another category comprises those which have been published within the past 20 years. Theses relatively new versions include: New Living Translation (NLT), World English Bible (WEB), The Message((MSG), New English Translation(NET), and Common English Bible(CEB). Those in this category are not only recently-released translations, but also representing a new form of versions in different perspectives. For example, NLT is based on the dynamic equivalence rationale and seeks to convey the thoughts behind the text. This can be seen as representing thought-for-thought translation. The WEB is a free updating of the American Standard Version which is also a public domain

version. This means the copyright has been waived and it is free for all to use. The Message is the translation by Eugene Peterson. The NET is a translation done by scholars tailored to be used online. The CEB aimed at producing a new translation for all English readers at a comfortable level. These versions are chosen to illustrate how the translation of *Pistis Christou* can be manifested in different versions.

### Translations of *Pistis Christou*

	KJV (1611)	NIV (1978)	NKJ (1982)	WEB (2000)	ESV (2001)	MSG (2002)	NET (2005)	CEB (2011)	NLT (2015)
Rom 3:22	faith of Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	Faith in Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	Jesus-setting-things-right	Faithfulness of Jesus Christ	faithfulness of Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ
Rom 3:26	believeth in Jesus	faith in Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus	Faith in Jesus	faith in Jesus	to live in his rightness	Jesus' faithfulness	Faith in Jesus as righteous	they believe in Jesus
Gal 2:16	faith of Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	Faith in Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	Personal faith in Jesus Christ	Faithfulness of Jesus Christ	Faithfulness of Jesus Christ	we have believed in Christ Jesus
Gal 2:20	the faith of the Son of God	faith in the Son of God	faith in the Son of God	Faith in the Son of God	faith in the Son of God	faith in the Son of God	Faithfulness of the son of God	The faithfulness of God's Son	trusting in the Son of God
Gal 3:22	faith of Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	Faith in Jesus Christ	faith in Jesus Christ	(faith for God to complete his promise)	Faithfulness of Jesus Christ	Faithfulness of Jesus Christ	believing in Jesus Christ
Phil 3:9	faith of Christ	faith in[a] Christ Or <i>through the faithfulness of</i>	faith in Christ	Faith in Christ	faith in Christ	trusting Christ	Christ's faithfulness	Faithfulness of Christ	faith in Christ. <sup>[a]</sup> Or <i>through the faithfulness of Christ</i>
(Eph 3:12)	faith of him	Faith in him	Faith in him	Faith in him	Faith in him	trust in him	Christ's faithfulness	Faith in him Or <i>through his faithfulness</i>	Faith in him

NET (<https://netbible.org>) has the following study notes and translation notes after Rom 3.22, the translation notes also appear in Gal 2:16 and Phil 3:9:

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sn ExSyn 116, which notes that the grammar is not decisive, nevertheless suggests that “the faith/faithfulness of Christ is not a denial of faith in Christ as a Pauline concept (for the idea is expressed in many of the same contexts, only with the verb πιστεύω rather than the noun), but implies that the object of faith is a worthy object, for he himself is faithful.” Though Paul elsewhere teaches justification by faith, this presupposes that the object of our faith is reliable and worthy of such faith.

tn Or “faith in Christ.” A decision is difficult here. Though traditionally translated “faith in Jesus Christ,” an increasing number of NT scholars are arguing that πίστις Χριστοῦ (*pistis Christou*) and similar phrases in Paul (here and in v. 26; Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph 3:12; Phil 3:9) involve a subjective genitive and mean “Christ’s faith” or “Christ’s faithfulness” (cf., e.g., G. Howard, “The ‘Faith of Christ,’” *ExpTim* 85 [1974]: 212-15; R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* [SBLDS]; Morna D. Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *NTS* 35 [1989]: 321-42). Noteworthy among the arguments for the subjective genitive view is that when πίστις takes a personal genitive it is almost never an objective genitive (cf. Matt 9:2, 22, 29; Mark 2:5; 5:34; 10:52; Luke 5:20; 7:50; 8:25, 48; 17:19; 18:42; 22:32; Rom 1:8; 12; 3:3; 4:5, 12, 16; 1 Cor 2:5; 15:14, 17; 2 Cor 10:15; Phil 2:17; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thess 1:8; 3:2, 5, 10; 2 Thess 1:3; Titus 1:1; Phlm 6; 1 Pet 1:9, 21; 2 Pet 1:5). On the other hand, the objective genitive view has its adherents: A. Hultgren, “The *Pistis Christou* Formulations in Paul,” *NovT* 22 (1980): 248-63; J. D. G. Dunn, “Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1991, 730-44. Most commentaries on Romans and Galatians usually side with the objective view.”

### 3 Observations from Comparing the *pistis Christou* Translations

#### The “Re-emergence” of the Subjective Genitive Translation

It should be noted that the KJV adopted “faith of Christ” as the translation of *pistis Christou* in the selected passage except in Rom 3:26. After KJV, the NIV, NKJ and ESV all rendered similar terms as “faith in Christ” in all the selected verses. As we have mentioned before, the KJV, NIV and ESV were the most popular versions. ESV came from a family of translations derived from RSV (similar translations include NRSV, NASB, etc.) These widely used translations

all adopted the objective genitive interpretation of the term *pistis Christou*. It looks as if all have agreed on the objective use of it in all important passages and the KJV seems to be obsolete in its translation of the term.

Among the “relatively new” translations, the WEB followed the NIV and ESV to translate the genitive in as objective. NLT also translated the genitive in most of the verses as objective. The only subjective translation is in its footnote on Philippians 3:9 that says “faith in Christ” could be translated as “through the faithfulness of Christ”.

MSG has tried to translate some of the verses as subjective and others as objective. For the MSG, “Jesus-setting-things-right” (Rom 3:22), “to live in his rightness” (Rom 3:26), “faith for God to complete his promise” (Gal 3:22) are renderings that convey the subjective sense in one way or another.

For the NET and CEB, all the verses surveyed in this research are translated in subjective sense. The only exception is Ephesians 3:12 as translated by CEB, which although translated as “faith in him” in the main text, also has a footnote stating that Ephesians 3:12 may also be translated “through his faithfulness”. It can be said that NET and CEB are two translations that adopted the subjective interpretation.

The subjective sense translations were not uncommon in earlier translations, for example, the Wycliffe Bible (1382), the Darby translation (1890) and the Tyndale New Testament (1526) also translate Romans 3:26 as an objective genitive. The last one is a translation that the KJV translators relied on. In general, we can see that the KJV preference for the subjective sense has been rectified in the twentieth century’s translations, resulting in the unanimous translation in the objective sense in NKJ, NIV, and ESV. These translations also represent the somewhat more popular versions among American readers (Zylstra, 2014).

However, as the discussion about *pistis Christou* became heated in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the subjective sense translation re-emerged as the “new trend” in translations. The MSG partially adopted the subjective sense and the NET and CEB were total supporters of the subjective interpretation.

## The Use of Footnotes

As for the use of footnote to indicate possible translations other than the one in the main text, we have seen that not many translations include reference to

alternative interpretations. After all, it is rare for a word to have both meanings at the same time. Hays pointed out that this would extend the problem of the meaning of *pistis* to include both meanings, so that *pistis* would include all other meanings and become unintelligible. Silva also pointed out that the context would make the meaning of the word clear (Hunn, 2010, p. 19).

We have found the most extensive footnotes in the NET bible, which is only possible given its design to be read on the internet. The elaborate discussion of scholars' debates and positions would be too copious for printed translations. The decision to explain a translation decision with regards to current scholarly discussion will also soon make the translations obsolete if the scholars' debate changes its course over time. However, for the NET Bible, this is made possible since its intention is to offer a translation online with footnotes available to all.

### Translations in Different texts

It should be noted that nearly all translations adopted one interpretation across the different texts. Although context is said to be the most important factor in determining the meaning of the phrase, nearly all translations except the MSG adopt only one interpretation.

For scholars, the decision to adopt either the objective or the subjective approach not only involves the lexical and grammatical analysis as we have reviewed, it is also determined by (or is determining) the theological position of the scholar or translator. This factor should also be discussed alongside with the patronage factor as presented below.

### The Patronage Influence

It should be noted that the relatively new translations that adopted the objective readings are those with linkage to translations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The ESV is a revision of the Revised Standard Version (RSV, 1971) (Stec, 2004, p, 421). The WEB is a free updated revision of the American Standard Version (ASV), although it is in public domain. The volunteers rely on ASV (1901). The NLT is an updated version of the New Living Bible. It seems that the base texts for revisions have influence over the translations. All the above revisions adhere to the base text in choosing the objective interpretation. It is understandable that to adopt a different, if not contrasting, view to the base text would need a strong

reason. The yet-to-be-settled debate of *pistis Christou* is not a solid ground for these versions to deviate from the objective interpretation of their base texts.

When we look into the translations that adopt the subjective interpretation, they are less dependent upon previous translations and can adopt the “new” subjective interpretation.

The CEB Bible is a new translation funded by the Church Resources Development Corp, which is a distinct corporation formed by the United Methodist Publishing House in Nashville, Tennessee. The committee is said to meet periodically and consists of denominational publishers from the Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian Church, Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church (Dart, 2011).

NET Bible is also a new effort to provide a translation for readers through the internet. It is translated by 26 scholars but it welcomes comments and feedback from readers through the internet. This version aims at providing a translation for the public to use which minimizes the concern about copyright fees and infringements.

The Message is a one-man translation done by Eugene Peterson without clinging to any denomination. The nature of this translation makes it possible for less systematic treatment in the choice in translation. And it is understandable that the translator is free to choose whatever he thinks to be suitable to fit in the context of the text. There is no obligation to adhere to any denomination or theological camp. No doubt it is the only translation that adopts both the objective and subjective readings and applies different translations in different verses.

## 4 Conclusions

The *pistis Christou* debate is still a lively discussion point among Biblical scholars. The current paper has reviewed the main arguments of the debate and traced English translations’ adaptation of the positions. The KJV adopted the subjective genitive position but is not followed by the major translations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is found that the translations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century usually adopt the objective genitive interpretation as it was the widely accepted position in that era. The relatively new translations began to adopt the subjective interpretation. It should be noted that the translations that embrace the subjective interpretation

are less connected to previous translations and have more freedom to choose the Christological approach.

Nearly all the translations adopt one position and apply it consistently, with the only exception of the MSG. This is reasonable as we have seen that choosing one position over another is not merely a grammatical consideration. The theological commitment does matter when it comes to this important phrase in Pauline theology. The MSG as a one-man translation can have more room to maneuver between different positions and can give more consideration to the context of each verse.

The NET bible illustrates how the internet can change the face of Bible translation. The detailed footnotes explaining the objective and subjective genitive differences and the scholars' discussion are only feasible with the internet platform. The instant updated nature and the ability to include much more information than the printed version make the notes of the NET bible outstanding. The difference between a commentary and a translation becomes blurred when the translation can include these kinds of notes.

It is exciting to realize how scholar debate can change the text of the Bible through new translations. The discussion among scholars is not only a murmur within the ivory tower, but a driving force for clearer and more accurate translations of the Holy texts used by the church. With the use of the internet, more translation projects can be done in shorter time with more people involved, providing more information and rationales for the translation than it used to be. This survey is just a beginning of the exploration of how scholar investigation can become the driving force for new renderings in Bible translations. More studies need to be done to explore further development and impact of the scholarly discussion on the translation decisions in the future.

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# The Passage From Death To Life: Paul's Notion Of Death With Christ In Romans 6

Teresa Kuo-Yu Tsui  
National Chengchi University, Taiwan

## **Abstract**

Paul in Romans speaks of a kind of death as the result of sin, which is also identified as spiritual death or the death of the soul. It is existence under sin, a state of lostness, a form of death despite biological vitality. Such existence is characterized by “living in the flesh” (7:5), as well as passions and immorality spoken of in Rom 1:18-32 and Rom 6-8. The remedy for spiritual death as existence in sin is the salvific death of Christ, which brings about “death to sin” (6:2, 10). It is by participation in the death of Christ that believers can be freed from sin (6:7), understood by Paul as a power (6:6, 7, 12) and an evil indwelling ruler (7:17, 20), which compels one to do the evil that one does not want to do (7:19). Nowhere else in the NT is the death of Christ presented as a death to sin except in Rom 6, where Paul also speaks of believers' participation in the death of Christ (i.e., death with Christ) with various expressions: being baptized into his death (v. 3); being buried with him by baptism into death (v. 4); being united with the likeness of his death (v. 5); our old self being crucified with him (v. 6); having died with Christ (v. 8), whose death is a death to sin (v. 10). Believers' death with Christ as their death to sin, mediated by baptism (6:3), is significant in that it has overcome the dominion of sin (6:14), destroy the body of sin (6:6), free oneself from sin (6:7), and lead to a new life in Christ (6:4). This paper attempts to elucidate that “death with Christ” is indeed believers' passage from death to life, i.e., from spiritual death as existence in sin to spiritual life as being “dead to sin and alive to God” (6:11).

## 1 Introduction

The motif of Christ's death and the association of the Christian with this death are both prominent in Rom 6. Paul uses various expressions in Rom 6 to convey the notion of death with Christ: being baptized into his death (v. 3); being buried with him by baptism into death (v. 4); being united with the likeness of his death (v. 5); our old self being crucified with him (v. 6); having died with Christ (v. 8), whose death is a death to sin (v. 10). In describing the notion of death with Christ, Paul implies that Christ's death is salvific (Penna, 1996, p. 129). This is confirmed by the fact that Paul makes use of these expressions to articulate his thesis in v. 2: "we have died to sin." As a whole, Paul in Rom 6 suggests that in dying with Christ, believers have died to sin. As unfolded in the context of Rom 6, believers' death with Christ (or participation in Christ's death) brings about their own death to sin precisely because Christ's death itself is a death to sin (v. 10). As Moo points out, nowhere else in the NT is Christ's death presented as a death to sin (Moo, 1982, p. 219). The notion of death with Christ as death to sin in Rom 6 is unique in the NT.

That believers have died to sin means their existence in sin has been done away with. For Paul, existence in sin is a state of lostness, an ongoing death despite biological vitality. Death is referred to by Paul not only as physical death but also a manner of existence marked by sin, a way of "living" that is actually a form of death (De Boer, 1988, p. 75; Bultmann, 1967, p. 863; Grossouw, 1952, p. 32). In line with Paul, when commenting on Rom 6, Origen speaks of existence in sin as a kind of "spiritual death" or "the death of the soul," i.e., "that death in which the soul is separated from God by means of sin" (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans Book 6-10*). Origen specifies the death that sin confers is "the death of the soul," in which the soul is separated from God. This kind of death has more gravity than the death that separates the body from the soul. In Rom 7:7-25 Paul continues to describe the plight of existence in sin as an extreme form of immorality, resembling a type of moral-psychological death which can be identified as "the death of the soul" (Wasserman, 2008, pp. 7-8). Aside from Rom 7:7-25, Paul in Romans also characterizes "spiritual death" or "the death of the soul" as the result of sin in Rom 1:18-32 and in chapters 6 and 8, where sin is depicted as a threatening counterruler associated with the passions and the flesh.

The remedy for believers to overcome spiritual death as existence in sin is their death with Christ, which Paul elaborates in Rom 6. In other words, believers' death with Christ is their passage from death (i.e., existence in sin) to life (i.e., new life unto God). In this paper, I will first explore the double references of death as well as Paul's logic of the passage from death to life in Rom 6. Second, I will demonstrate how Paul explicates "death with Christ" in Rom 6, especially with regard to vv. 6-7. Third, how Christ's death is conceived of in Rom 6 will also be examined.

## 2 Paul's Logic of the Passage from Death to Life in Rom 6

As stated above, existence in sin is nothing other than a form of death despite biological vitality, which is also identified as spiritual death. There can be discerned two kinds of spiritual death: negative and positive. Spiritual death as existence in sin is negative in contrast to another kind of spiritual death, i.e., death to sin, which is positive. Origen has distinguished two kinds of spiritual death in the context of Rom 6: (1) the death that comes through sin, which is also called the separation of the soul from God or the death of the soul; (2) a praiseworthy kind of death, namely, "that by which someone dies to sin and is buried together with Christ, through which correction comes to the soul and eternal life is attained;" "this is the kind of death that is given by God to confer life" (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans Book 6-10*). A contemporary commentator Templeton (1988) also noted such a double reference in Paul's use of death in Rom 6: (1) to a way of life that should be given up, and (2) to the giving up of that way of life. The condition of existence in sin as a kind of death should be replaced by the real life through giving up of the previous way of life. And this giving up of the previous way of life is undergone through death with Christ. This double reference in Paul's use of death in Rom 6 is also commented by Ashton: death is used to characterize life under sin since life as such is no proper life; it is dull, purposeless and empty. Death only takes on a positive meaning by negating the negation, that is, death to sin, since death to sin is death to death, and is therefore life (Ashton, 2000, p. 132).

To be free from existence in sin as a form of death, one has to die with Christ, whose salvific death has done away with sin's dominion. This is made clear in Rom 6:6-7. In v. 6 it is said that our old self was crucified and the body of sin destroyed, which signifies that sin's dominion has been annihilated in

Christ's salvific death. The particle γάρ links v. 7 to v. 6, affirming that the one who died—the one who died with Christ or participated in Christ's salvific death—has been freed from sin. The existence in sin or the old way, characterized in v. 6, is in contrast with the new life in Christ. The one who has been freed from sin (v. 7) is transposed to the new life in Christ.

As has been demonstrated, the gnomic quality of vv. 5,8 suggests that living with Christ ensues as a result of dying with Christ (Tsui, 2009). In other words, the gnomic future in vv. 5,8 renders dying with Christ and subsequently living with Christ as the logic of “the passage from death to life” in Rom 6. V. 4 also demonstrates such a logic: our new life unto God flows as a consequence of our sharing in Christ's death. The conjunction ἵνα in v. 4 introduces the purpose of our sharing in Christ's death, symbolized by the language of our burial with Christ into death. The purpose of our sharing in Christ's death is our walking in newness of life, which is ensured by the very fact that Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. As Jewett indicates, ὡσπερ ... οὕτως is a correlative syntax, drawing “a parallel between the divine passive of Christ's being raised (ἠγέρθη) and the behavior of believers, which makes it clear that the latter no less than the former is a matter of divine causation” (Jewett, 2007, p. 399). ὡσπερ ... οὕτως thus signals that the power that raised Christ from the dead will also transpose us into the new life in Christ (Cranfield, 1975, p. 304; Käsemann, 1980, p. 166; Wilckens, 1987, p. 12).

Besides, the logic of the passage from death to life is also reflected in v. 8 εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ, which conveys the believers' dying with Christ and subsequently living with Christ. As Grundmann points out, “Rom 6:8 links dying with Christ indissolubly to Christ's death by putting [Christ's death] in a conditional clause and then stating [life with Christ] as a deduction from it” (Grundmann, 1971, p. 785). In a similar vein, Jewett indicates that “the apodosis draws the logical inference from the protasis of dying with Christ” (Jewett, 2007, p. 406). Moreover, Paul in v. 13 characterizes the believers as “those who have been brought from death to life” (ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας). The phrase ἐκ νεκρῶν in v. 13 refers to the state from which the believers must be saved, that is, a state of lostness, a former sinful existence, a state of death, which is replaced by life (Wedderburn, 1987, p. 45). ζῶντας should be interpreted in view of v. 11, referring to the state of “being alive to God” of the believers in this present life (Moo, 1996, p. 386). With v. 13 Paul urges the believers to present themselves to God as ἐκ νεκρῶν

ζῶντας, that is, as the living people brought out of their sinful past in which they were the dead.

Paul's logic of the passage from death to life indeed stands out in Rom 6. Paul envisions that believers undergo the passage from death to life, that is, they leave behind the sinful existence that is equal to death, and subsequently enter the new life in Christ as a life to God. For believers, this passage of transformation from death to life is undergone through death with Christ or participation in Christ's death. As Ashton points out, Christ's death is "instrumental in the transformation of the Christian" (Ashton, 2000, p. 137). Christ's death is a death to sin (v. 10), and adherence to his death deprives sin of any power over human being (Schlier, 1977, p. 199; Wilckens, 1987, p. 19). In next section, we will further examine the meaning of death with Christ as death to sin with regard to Rom 6:6-7.

### 3 Believers' Death with Christ as Death to Sin (Rom 6:6-7)

Paul in Rom 6 relates the historical-soteriological fact of Christ's death to believers. First, he states his main thesis that believers have died to sin in v. 2. He then shows a death has occurred on the part of believers in vv. 3-5, which is their death with Christ. From v. 6 onwards, he takes up the point that such a death is a death to sin and develops it fully in vv. 10-14. Thus, in Rom 6 believers' death with Christ has its reference to death to sin. Most commentators (Bornkamm, 1969, p. 75; Lamarche, 1980, p. 37; Wilckens, 1987, p. 18; Dunn, 1988, p. 305; Penna, 1996, p. 125) consider Rom 6:1-14 as a pericope, in which vv. 6-7 are taken to be the development concerning the fact of the death of Christ, and vv. 9-10 the development concerning the fact of the resurrection of Christ. It can thus be said that in vv. 6-7 Paul explains the effect of believers' "death with Christ," which I will explicate respectively as follows.

#### a. Our Old Self Crucified, the Body of Sin Destroyed (Rom 6:6)

Two phrases in Rom 6:6 require further explanations. First, in v. 6a ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος, translated as "our old self," is taken to mean "Adam individualized and represented in us" (Barrett, 1975, p. 125), "the legacy of Adam that all persons share" (Cousar, 1990, p. 72), "existence in the old aeon, dominated by the baleful influence of Adam" (Byrne, 1996, p. 191). This "old person" under the dominion of the flesh—the power that keeps people away from the gospel and God—was crucified (Penna, 2007, p. 35).

Second, in v. 6b the ἵνα clause is parallel to the preceding clause, so τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας is best interpreted as further defining ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος. Just as ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος denotes “the obsolete human in generic sense” (Jewett, 2007, p. 402) or “our old humanity” (Käsemann, 1980, p. 169), so also τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας refers to the human existence that stands in the generic sense under the rule of sin and death (Käsemann, 1980, p. 161; Dunn, 1988, p. 320; Jewett, 2007, p. 403). Both designate the humanity as a whole in the old existence, dominated by sin. As Tannehill observes, “these phrases do not refer to the ‘old man’ and ‘body’ of each individual, but to a collective entity which is destroyed in the death of Christ” (Tannehill, 1967, p. 24). Both ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος and τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας represent the old dominion where sin and death reigned. This old dominion was broken by the obedient death of the eschatological Adam. The death of Christ accomplished a change in which the cosmic power of Adamic humanity was dethroned (Tannehill, 1967, p. 30; Cousar, 1990, p. 72).

The choice of the word συσταυρόομαι makes v. 6 a unique verse in Romans, where Paul recalls the idea of cross. Paul does not speak of Christ’s death in a narrative way as a historical event or morally as in Mk 8:34. Rather, Christ’s death in Paul’s view is a participatory event: the co-crucifixion of the Christians consists in participation in the crucifixion of Christ as sharing in the soteriological effect of the crucifixion (cf. Col 2:14) (Penna, 2007, p. 35).

The co-crucifixion of the old self unfolds at two moments in the final clause introduced by ἵνα, expressing the finality. The elimination of the body of sin is the purpose of the co-crucifixion with Christ. The word καταργέω “to abolish, to wipe out, to bring to an end to,” is typical of Paul (cf. Rom 3:3,31; 4:14, where this verb is applied with respect to the fidelity of God and the promise of Abraham). With καταργέω, it is said as strongly as possible that the old existence, with the body tied to sin, is radically destroyed (Agersnap, 1999, p. 322). The infinitive construction in this final clause, which can be translated in English as a gerund: “for the purpose of our no longer being enslaved to sin” (Jewett, 2007, p. 404), further explicates the purpose of the co-crucifixion with Christ. The verb δουλεῖν indicates either a qualitative status (to be slaves) or active comportment conformed to this status (to live as a slave). As Penna notes, while in vv. 6-11 the former is connoted, the latter fits vv. 12-14 (Penna, 2007, p. 36).

b. The One Who Died Has Been Freed from Sin (Rom 6:7)

The particle γάρ in v. 7 indicates the connection with what precedes: v. 7 summarizes v. 6 with a maxim. Despite the attempts to identify Christ as ὁ ἀποθανών (Kearns, 1963; Scroggs, 1963), it is unlikely that Christ is the subject of v. 7 (Ziesler, 1972, p. 200; Cranfield, 1975, p. 310; Wilckens, 1987, p. 17; Stuhlmacher, 1989, p. 86; Penna, 1996, p. 129). As Schreiner (1998) indicates, “the context does not prepare us for a switch of subject from the believer in v. 6 to Christ in v. 7” (p. 319). Since vv. 3-4 the believers are said to die with Christ in baptism, v. 6 speaks of the believers’ crucifixion with Christ, and v. 8 says “if we have died with Christ,” the subject of v. 7 cannot, exceptionally, refer to Christ. Thus, ὁ ἀποθανών refers to the one who died in the way just described in the preceding verses. Klaar (1968) reminds us that the aorist ὁ ἀποθανών is different from ὁ νεκρός, referring to the one who has accepted death. He paraphrases Rom 6:7 as follows: “Denn der das...Sterben auf sich nahm—perfektiv erledigt ist der Rechtsanspruch der Sündenmacht an ihm (auf weiteren Sklavendienst)” (Klaar, 1968, p. 134). The death that the one died is not a physical death but a death with Christ, a death metaphorically undergone (Morris, 1988, p. 253; Fitzmyer, 1993, p. 436; Penna, 2007, p. 37). In Cranfield’s words, ὁ ἀποθανών refers to “the man, who has died with Christ in God’s gracious decision with regard to him, that is, who has died that death in God’s sight to which his baptism points back and of which it is the sign and seal” (Cranfield, 1975, p. 311). Anyone who has died this way δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

As commentators point out, the rabbinic saying “once a man dies he is free from all obligations to fulfill the law” (cf. Shab. 30a, 151b) seems to echo in the background (Sanday and Headlam, 1899, p. 159; Michel, 1978, p. 131). If Paul does try to consciously echo with the rabbinic statement, v. 7 can mean that “even physical death gives quittance from sin’ (either because we are no longer in a condition in which it is possible to sin; or because death is the penalty of sin, and having paid the penalty we are exempt from any further claim against us)” (Kirk, 1947, p. 201). However, there is no certitude that Paul is consciously echoing the rabbinic statement. Moreover, there is certainly a major difference between the rabbinic statement and Paul’s: here Paul speaks of the death with Christ, not the physical death at the end of natural life, as made plain by v. 8a (Ziesler, 1989, p. 161). Also, judging from Paul’s use of the word δεδικαίωται with its specific theological sense, it is unlikely that Paul in v. 7 is simply repeating a rabbinic commonplace (Scroggs, 1963, p. 106; Cranfield, 1975, p.

310; Käsemann, 1980, p. 170; Morris, 1988, p. 253). Moreover, the formulation in v. 7 affirms liberation not from the commandment but from sin. As Penna observes, even though Paul might have presupposed the Hebrew saying, v. 7 belongs to an original way of thinking. It is the context that gives the meaning to the verse (Penna, 2007, p. 37).

The detachment of v. 7 from the rabbinic saying as well as the specific theological sense of δεδικαίωται in Paul lead commentators to construe δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας in v. 7 as “has been justified from sin,” rather than “has been freed from sin” (Scroggs, 1963, p. 105; Cranefield, 1975, p. 311; Fitzmyer, 1993, p. 437; Morris, 1988, p. 253). But these two senses do not necessarily oppose to each other as the following two reasons will show. First, as Penna observes, in Rom 6:7 Paul uses ἀπό in conjunction with the verb δικαίω rather than the usual preposition ἐξ (Rom 3:20,26,30; 4:2; 5:1; Gal 2:16; 3:8,24) or ἐν (Rom 3:4; 5:9; 1 Cor 4:4; 6:11; Gal 2:17; 3:11; 5:4). It is to emphasize the distancing, liberating disconnection (Penna, 2007, p. 37). As such, the verb δικαίω has a distinct significance apart from that which is habitual in Paul. In other words, apart from what Paul usually means with this verb, here Paul uses it with the sense of liberation from sin (Klaar, 1968, p. 134). Second, the more theological interpretation of the word δικαιοῦμαι “to be set right, to be made righteous” is in fact not apart from the sense “to be freed from.” As Jewett indicates, when it is placed in the framework that the death with Christ frees people from enslavement of sin, δικαιοῦμαι can be understood as being set free from the power of sin and thus being set right before God (Jewett, 2007, p. 405). In Ziesler’s words, v. 7 can mean “he who has died (with Christ) is justified from sin”—he is acquitted because the old self no longer exists and the verdict of being guilty cannot thus be passed. His interpretation combines the idea of “freedom from sin”, as well as the notion of “being acquitted forensically and restored to the right relationship” (Ziesler, 1983, p. 200). Schreiner also notes that “righteousness necessarily involves freedom from the power of sin” (Schreiner, 1998, p. 319).

The idea here still goes beyond the justification/righteousness that is merely forensic. According to Penna, the perfect tense δεδικαίωται expresses a radical innovation, transformation into a new situation, which derives from definitive liberation from sin (Penna, 2007, p. 37). Ziesler also sees this idea of justification intertwined with the notion of transferring from sin to a radical new situation. As Ziesler rightly observes, Paul’s expression here is “so condensed

as almost to be a mixing of metaphors” (Ziesler, 1989, p. 161). Paul’s language of justification here is entwined with the language of transferring: to be set right before God means at the same time to be transferred from not being God’s people in a state of guilt and powerlessness to being His people. “Those who have died with Christ are justified: nothing further is required of them. At the same time, to be justified and to die with Christ is to be released from one dominion and to enter another. It is to be released from sin and to enter the power of God in Christ” (Ziesler, 1989, p. 161). As such, v. 7 not only confirms v. 6 concerning the new freedom to resist the bondage of sin, but also expands v. 6 with the affirmation that such a new freedom comes from the fact that God has justified us from sin (Cranefield, 1975, p. 311; Morris, 1988, p. 253).

To summarize, believers’ death with Christ that has already happened (which Paul stated in vv. 3-5) unfolds in vv. 6-7 as their death to sin: the old self crucified, the body of sin destroyed, so that they might no longer be enslaved to sin. And the one who died such death has been freed/justified from sin. Believers’ death with Christ derives its significance from the soteriological meaning of Christ’s death. It is thus important to reflect on how Paul conceives of the meaning of Christ’s death with regard to Rom 6.

## 4 The Meaning of Christ’s Death in Rom 6

As Dunn points out, the death of Jesus has two-fold significance in Paul’s understanding: (1) Jesus died as a representative human in total identity with humans in their sinful flesh and fallenness so as to deal with sin in the flesh; (2) Jesus’ death is a sacrifice for sin and signifies atonement (Dunn, 1974). Since Paul refers to Christ’s death profusely in Rom 6, commentators speculate whether the notion of atonement is entailed therein. This is reflected in some commentators’ interpretation of v. 7, which I will now examine closely.

### a. Is the Notion of Atonement Involved in Rom 6 (esp. 6:7; cf. 6:2, 10)?

Some commentators (Sanday and Headlam, 1899; Grundmann, 1971; Morris, 1988) construe v. 7 to mean that the believer has been incorporated into Christ’s atoning death and thus has been justified. As Scroggs indicates, “The believer participates in the death of the Righteous One and thus appropriates for himself the atonement for others which such a death achieves” (Scroggs, 1963, p. 108). Indeed, Rom 6:7 (cf. 1 Pet 4:1) can suggest the sense that “death pays all debts” in view of the NT thought concerning the death of Christ as paying the law its

dues, or serving the full sentence. The maximum fine to sin is one's life; you cannot pay more than your life. Once you have parted with your life, you are quit. Hence Sanday and Headlam formulate their interpretation of Rom 6:7: "a dead man has his quittance from any claim that Sin can make against him" ((Sanday and Headlam, 1899, p. 159). As such, it echoes the rabbinic saying and implies that the believer, incorporated into Christ's atoning death, has served the ultimate sentence of death. And once the debt to sin is fully discharged, one is free from sin.

As Moule (1970) reminds us, though Rom 6:7 does not contain the dative construction, it has relevance to the expression "dying to sin" in Rom 6:2,10 (cf. "dying to the law" in Rom 7:4,6; Gal 2:19). All three verses concern the relation with regard to sin. Consequently the notion of atonement can apply to Rom 6:2,10, where the dative is then taken as the dative of obligation, which renders "dying to sin" as "meeting the penalties or sanctions for sin by the extreme cost of death" (p. 371). Such an interpretation can also stand in Rom 6 and 7.

However, in view of the context of Rom 7:1-6, Moule points out that it is more likely to construe the dative in Rom 6:2,10 as the dative of relation or reference. The dative of relation in the phrases "dying to sin" or "dying to the law" expresses the resulting condition of such death: non-existence so far as sin or law is concerned. The marital analogy (Rom 7:2-3) addresses our relation with the law, expressed by the dative, is "not that the demands of the law have been met with a costly death, but that we have been placed where the law no longer operates" (Moule, 1970, p. 372). In other words, so far as the law is concerned, or with reference to the law, our relation with the law has been annihilated, just as a woman's relation with her husband is legally annulled by death. This dative of relation can well be applied to the context of Rom 6, where Paul speaks of sin as a slave-master, to which we are to be freed from when the body of sin is destroyed through our death with Christ. It is more likely that in v. 7 δεδικαίωται means "has been vindicated against" rather than "acquitted in respect of (by payment of the dues)" (Moule, 1970, p. 374). In fact, Moule arrives at an interpretation that is similar to that of Ziesler and Schreiner as presented in the preceding section of this paper (II.b).

Admittedly, the possibility of an allusion to the clearing of the debt in Rom 6:7 cannot be totally ruled out. Rom 6:7 can thus mean "once you have died, you are vindicated against sin," to the extent that "there is no longer anything left for sin to get a grip of" (Moule, 1970, p. 374). The theological idea that the

dative of obligation points to is indeed present in the NT. However, as Moule observes, it is not legitimate to read it into Rom 6:7 nor to press beyond this dative of relation to a dative of obligation (Moule, 1970, p. 375). Ultimately Moule is in favor of the dative of relation or reference since he does not think that Paul entertains the notion of atonement in Rom 6:7.

Moule's conclusion is most likely to be right. Cousar's observation (1990) confirms it. As he rightly points out, the meaning of Christ's death in Rom 6 is depicted as a participatory event (we died with Christ) rather than a vicarious substitution (Jesus in place of us). There is a change in soteriological categories in Romans (from substitution to participation), which appropriately parallels the change in the concepts of sin (from trespasses to ruling power). As can be observed in Romans, Paul speaks of Christ's salvific death as atonement for trespasses (Rom 3:22-25; 4:24-25; 5:6-9); only in chapter 6 does Paul shift to the language of participation in speaking of believers' death with Christ. These changes are also confirmed by the presence of the language of transference (i.e., the movement from one allegiance to another) in the context of Rom 6: the transference from the dominion of sin to that of God; the one who died is freed from sin and is exhorted to live to God and serve righteousness. Moreover, this soteriological idea of a change of allegiance is also present in Rom 7:1-6. Paul uses an analogy to explain how death breaks the loyalty to one party and establishes it with another. The transference lies in the believers' participation in the crucified body of Christ, which brings freedom from the oppression of the law and a liberating service for the one who was raised from the dead (7:6) (Cousar, 1990, p. 74). As the major thrust in Rom 6 and 7, the language of transference renders the dative as the dative of relation rather than the dative of obligation. The dative of relation in related verses in turn suggests that the notion of atonement is unlikely in play in Rom 6.

#### b. Christ's Death as a Participatory Event

In Romans, we witness a shift in Paul's understanding of Christ's death from substitution to participation, paralleled by the change in the concepts of sin: sin as trespasses atoned for by Christ's death (substitution) and sin as a power to be released from through death with Christ (participation). Paul does not entertain the idea of atonement in Rom 6, but instead he focuses on the notion of participation: through their death with Christ, believers died to the power of sin or to the old aeon, which results in their belonging to God; they are transferred from the dominion of sin to the lordship of Christ. As Sanders affirms, "[t]he

transfer takes place by *participation* in Christ's death" (Sanders, 1977, p. 468, *Italics his*).

Indeed, Paul's understanding of Christ's death is that of "salvation through participation": "Christ shared all our experience, sin alone excepted, including death, in order that we, by virtue of our solidarity with him, might share his life" (Whiteley, 1964, p. 130). Christ as a representative human died "the death of the disobedient, of sinners" (Rom 5:6,8; 2 Cor 5:21) so that in his death we might share his overcoming of sin. Elsewhere Paul also expresses the same idea of participation. The most prominent case is 2 Cor 5:14: "one has died for all; therefore all have died." Here Christ's death "for all" is not primarily expiatory with the result that "all have had their sins expiated;" rather, "all have died." It is the category of participation that plays the prime role here. As Bassler observes, Paul's conclusion that "therefore all died" makes most sense if a mystical or participatory element is assumed in Paul's logic (Bassler, 2007, p. 42). Penna also recognizes that "there is an indispensable objective dimension to that death, at least in the sense that all without exception have come to participate in the sphere of influence of Christ's death as eschatological manifestation of God's saving power" (Penna, 1996, p. 133). In other words, 2 Cor 5:14, where there is an abrupt shift from "one died" to "therefore all died," should be explained on the basis of the view that in Christ Christians die with Christ to the power of sin, not simply that Christians have their trespasses atoned for (Tannehill, 1967, p. 66; Sanders, 1977, p. 465). Paul deepened "the idea of Christ's death as cleansing former trespasses so that it became the means by which one *participated* in Christ's death to the *power* of sin...it is clear that he did so, and that herein lies the heart of his soteriology and Christology" (Sanders, 1977, p. 453, *Italics his*).

It can thus be said that in Rom 6 the purpose of Christ's death is not so much as a means of expiation as a change of lordship: "that he might become Lord and thus save those who belong to him and are 'in' him" (Sanders, 1977, p. 465). As Ziesler also indicates, "Dying *with* Christ is the way to become *in* Christ, for the first concerns transfer from the old dominion, and the second concerns the consequent existence under the new power, Christ" (Ziesler, 1983, p. 97, *Italics his*). In guaranteeing such a new belonging to the lordship of Christ, the notion of participation has made the meaning of Christ's death in Rom 6 telling.

## 5 Conclusion

The notion of death with Christ in Rom 6 indeed reveals the significance of Christ's death in Paul's thought. Departing from the early church's traditional view of Christ's death as atoning for sins, Paul in Rom 6 articulates the notion of participation in Christ's death. Believers' death with Christ brings about their own death to sin: the old self crucified, the body of sin destroyed, and freedom from sin. The spiritual death that is existence in sin may be overcome, and they may pass from death to life, i.e., from sinful existence as "death" to "life" as new life unto God.

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# 1 Peter as a Pseudonymous Letter: On its Historical Background

Manabu Tsuji  
Hiroshima University, Japan

## 1 Introduction

*The First Letter of Peter* (hereafter: 1 Peter or 1 Pet) represents itself as a circular letter from the apostle Peter to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1).

While there are still advocates of authenticity, the letter is widely seen as pseudonymous (as will be described later, this view is correct). However, if this is the case, we need to ask why the author created such a letter setting like 1:1.

To begin, why is “Peter” selected to be the author? This fundamental question is important given that 1 Peter has much in common with the Pauline and pseudo-Pauline letters. If the author of 1 Peter has knowledge of the Pauline letters and wrote his letter under their influence, why did the author borrow the name of Peter rather than Paul?

Other matters that need questioned are why the letter uses the odd expression “from Babylon to the chosen exiles of Diaspora in Pontus, Galatians, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,” and whether this origin and destination are actual or fictional. In the following sections, I will take up these questions concerning the history of the formation of 1 Peter.

## 2 Preliminary Consideration: Question of Authorship

As mentioned above, the majority of exegetes regard the name “Peter” as a pseudonym. The main reasons for this view, asserted since the 19th century, are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) Why did Peter need to write to churches that he was not familiar with? Peter devoted himself to missionary work mainly with the Jews of Palestine, as the agreement of the Apostolic Council shows (see Gal 2:9). In addition, the contents of 1 Peter were too general to be an answer to the specific questions sent from these churches to Peter.
- 2) The letter is addressed not to Jewish Christians but to Christians in pagan lands, and the recipients are those who converted from paganism (1:8, 12; 2:10, 12; 4:3). But Peter understands himself as the apostle for the circumcised, sc. Jews (cf. Gal 2:8).
- 3) The letter reflects the circumstances under which Christianity has already spread not only in Asia Minor but throughout the Roman Empire by the missionaries (1:12; cf. also Eph 4:11; 2 Tim 4:5), who were exposed to objections and persecution (5:9). This indicates that it was written (or at least set) after Peter’s lifetime.
- 4) The author does not argue about the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, which was quite important to Peter (Gal 2:12, 13; Acts 10:9ff.).
- 5) The author is familiar with the text of the Old Testament—such literacy cannot be expected from Peter, a Galilean fisher. Besides, its interpretation and comments are very similar to those of Paul; also typical Pauline expressions and terms appear in the letter.

In addition to these points listed by Cludius, the following facts are frequently pointed out as indications of pseudepigraphy: (6) the fact that the author calls

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<sup>1</sup> Cludius (1808, pp. 296–303) is considered to be the first one who threw doubt on the authenticity of 1 Peter (cf. Schnelle, 2002, p. 479 note 83). The following points (1) to (5) are mentioned by Cludius. The work of J. S. Semler, who is an advocate of pseudonymity before Cludius was referred to by Brox (1989, pp. 43–47) is *Paraphrasis in epistolam I. Petri cum Latine translationis varietate et multis notis* (Halle, 1783). (Brox does not give the name of this book.) Semler lists passages in 1 Peter, where the author appears to depend on the Pauline letters.

himself “fellow elder” (συμπρεσβύτερος) in 5:1<sup>2</sup> and (7) the fact that the author refers to Rome (5:13) as “Babylon.”<sup>3</sup>

These arguments raise sufficient doubt about the authenticity of this letter. The connection between Peter and the churches in the destination areas is unknown; and if Gentile Christians are the intended readers, Peter cannot be the author of this letter, not only because he must have been exclusively involved in the mission with the Jewish people (cf. Gal 2:9) but also because we have no evidence of Christianity taking root in the destination areas during Peter’s lifetime, let alone by his mission. However, given the fact that we are short of historical information both about Christianity in this era and about Peter’s theology and language ability, each of the arguments (1) to (5) is by itself not decisive against the letter’s authenticity.<sup>4</sup> (However, the echo of the Pauline expressions is to be discussed below.)

On the other hand, (6) is a fairly important argument against the genuineness of 1 Peter, because it is hard to imagine that the historical Peter himself would have called himself “elder.”<sup>5</sup> (7) is also a strong argument against the authenticity because the use of “Babylon” to refer to Rome appears only in the literature after 70 AD (4 Ezra 3:1f., 28, 31; syrBar 67:7f.; Sib III 300–302; V 137–161; Rev 14:8; 16:19; 18:2, 10, 21).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Brox (1989, p. 228): “He gives up partly his Petrine (sc. apostolic) fiction”; Feldmeier (2005, p. 155): “Möglicherweise fällt hier der reale Verfasser aus seiner Fiktion, der Apostel zu sein, heraus und spricht als das, was er ist, als christlicher Presbyter.”

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Hunzinger (1965, pp. 67–77), and Doering (2009, p. 646 note 9).

<sup>4</sup> Doering (2009, p. 646 note 9) also says that “no single argument can be considered compelling” and the judgment can be made only “by the cumulative weight of arguments.”

<sup>5</sup> Pace Elliott (2000, p. 817) and Doering (2009, pp. 652–656), who both interpret this expression as emphasizing the responsibility that Peter shares with “elders” in the church communities. Elliott thinks this designation possible because Papias calls the apostles, including Peter, “elders” (Eusebius, *HE*, 3.39.4). According to Campbell (1993, p. 519), this title “did not exclude members of the Twelve, since it was never the title of an office separate from that of apostle.”

<sup>6</sup> Jobs (2005, p. 14) argues that it was always possible after 63 B.C., namely after Rome put Palestine under control, that Rome would be referred to as “Babylon.” Notably, there are no currently accessible examples of the use of Babylon in place of Rome before 70 A.D. Also unconvincing is Thiede’s explanation (Thiede, 1986, pp. 532–538) that it is possible for Peter to use this metaphor because the Jewish Diaspora in Rome during his time must have compared Rome to Babylon in awareness of Mic 4:10, and this comparison was also known to non-Jews. But the first reason is nothing more than imagination. And the Gentile Christian who received this letter would not understand this metaphor unless they knew that Peter actually sent this letter from Rome.

These observations, therefore, make it highly probable that 1 Peter is pseudonymous. But, in my view, the decisive evidence for this conclusion is that 1 Peter is strongly influenced by the Pauline and pseudo-Pauline letters as it is only explicable under the premise that the author wrote this letter in a post-Pauline environment.

### 3 1 Peter and Pauline Christianity

#### 3.1 Connection with the Pauline Tradition

It has been pointed out that 1 Peter is very close to Pauline Christianity. H. -M. Schenke and K. M. Fischer assert that this letter is obviously under the influence of the Pauline tradition such that the sender's name must have been "Paul" and was only mistakenly replaced with "Peter" in the process of text tradition.<sup>7</sup>

1 Peter is said to have had close contact with the Pauline tradition, as demonstrated by the following points:<sup>8</sup>

- 1) The form of the opening section closely resembles that of the Pauline letters, sharing the same names of sender and addressees (1:1–2a) followed by the same greeting "grace and peace to you" (1:2b) and thanksgiving (1:3ff.). Especially noteworthy is a verbal agreement between 1:3a and 2 Cor 1:3a (εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). This indicates that the author of 1 Peter consciously imitated the letter formula of Paul.<sup>9</sup>
- 2) Silvanus (5:12) and Mark (5:13) are both co-workers of Paul (for Silvanus, cf. 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Cor 1:19; 2 Thess 1:1; Acts 15:22, 27, 32, 40; 16:19–25, 29; 17:4, 10, 14f.; 18:5. For Mark, Phlm 24; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13, 15:37, 39), while their contacts with Peter are unknown anywhere else.<sup>10</sup>
- 3) The key concepts and expressions of Pauline theology, e.g., "grace" (χάρις: 1:2, 10, 13; 2:19–20; 4:10; 5:10, 12), "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη: 2:24;

<sup>7</sup> Schenke and Fischer, 1978, pp. 200–203. They suppose that the original text read not Π/ETP/ΟΣ but Π/ΑΥΛ/ΟΣ (ibid., p. 203).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Schnelle (2013, p. 488) and Horrell (2008, pp. 36–38).

<sup>9</sup> "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is a characteristic expression of Paul. Cf. also 2 Cor 11:31.

<sup>10</sup> Papias says that Mark was a translator of Peter (Eusebius, *HE* 3.39.15); however, this may be a tradition created from 1 Peter. It was not known before Papias (Schenke and Fischer, 1978, p. 200).

- 3:14), “revelation” (ἀποκάλυψις: 1:7, 13; 4:13), “Freedom” (ἐλευθερία: 2:16; cf. Gal 5:13), “call” (καλεῖν) into salvation (1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10), and “chosen” (1:1; 2:9), dominate the theology of 1 Peter. Paul’s characteristic use of the phrase “in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ) is found only in 1 Pet 3:16; 5:10, 14 in non-Pauline documents of the New Testament.
- 4) There are many points of contact between the hortatory materials of 1 Peter and Pauline paraenesis, among which the agreement between 2:13–17 and Rom 13:1–7 (exhortation to obey the rulers) stands out as being quite remarkable.
  - 5) In addition, 1 Peter shares striking similarities to phrases and concepts in the Pauline letters. For example, 1 Pet 2:4–8 corresponds to Rom 9:32–33 on a verbal level. The phrase in 3:18 “that he might bring us to God” (ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσάγῃ τῷ θεῷ) is also found in Eph 2:18 (see also Eph 3:12; Rom 5:2).<sup>11</sup>

1 Peter certainly does not reflect all the key statements of Pauline theology such as “justification by faith” (cf. Rom 3:28; Gal 3:16), but this is more or less also true of the Deutero-Pauline letters. Even though the distinct Paulinism is missing, the influence of the Pauline theology exists unquestionably.

Exegetes who affirm the close relation between 1 Peter and Paul used to assume a direct literary dependence,<sup>12</sup> whereas in recent years one can see a strong tendency to explain the connection rather in terms of the indirect, traditional influence of the Pauline language. This latter view is based upon the observation that the differences in language and theology between the two are too large to signify a direct dependence.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Barnett (1941, pp. 51–69) lists the following passages as certainly (= A) or probably (=B) depending upon Pauline letters given in the bracket: 1 Pet 1:1 (Eph 1:1, B); 1:2 (Rom 8:29 et al., A); 1:3 (Eph 1:3–20, A); 1:12 (Eph 3:5, B); 1:14–15 (Rom 12:2, B; Eph 2:2–3, B); 2:13–17 (Rom 13:1–7, B); 3:18 (Rom 5:6, B); 4:7–11 (Rom 13:11, 12; 12:3, 6, 9, 13, A); 4:13–14 (Rom 8:17–18, B); 5:1 (Rom 8:7–18, B).

<sup>12</sup> According to Herzer (1998, p. 5), J. D. Michaelis already espoused this view (Michaelis, 1777, p. 1168): “The author of 1 Peter seems to have read the Pauline epistle to Rome shortly before writing.” Although Herzer mentions only the 3rd edition (1777), Michaelis had already stated this in the 2nd edition (Michaelis, 1766, p. 1625). (The 1st edition [1750] was not accessible.) Jülicher and Fascher (1931, p. 196): “a pale copy of Pauline works.” Furthermore, Holtzmann (1892, pp. 313–315): “1 Peter has a collection of Pauline epistles before his eyes”; Barnett (1941, p. 68): “traces of acquaintance [are] clearest for Romans, Ephesians, Galatians, and II Corinthians, but with the likelihood of acquaintance with several other letters of the corpus.” Shimada (1998b, p. 100 note 2) gives a lengthy list of the scholars who are of this view. On the history of research, cf. also Herzer (1998, pp. 2–11).

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Vahrenhorst (2016, p. 46), Horrell (2008, p. 38) and Schrage (1985, p. 60–61). Lindemann (1979, p. 257)

### 3.2 Negative Evaluation: Kazuhito Shimada & Jens Herzer

On the other hand, by emphasizing the differences, some scholars tend to deny the relationship between Peter and the Pauline Christianity.

Kazuhito Shimada, a Japanese specialist on 1 Peter, analyzes the passages that are said to be directly dependent on Romans and Ephesians and declares that “a direct literary dependence of 1 Peter on Romans cannot be demonstrated.”<sup>14</sup> Shimada states that this also holds true for Ephesians.<sup>15</sup> In coming to this conclusion, Shimada demands a quite rigid reproduction of the preceding text as evidence of a direct literary dependence. According to him, the following points should be proven.

- 1) A passage should be quoted explicitly and extensively (and the author and writings, from which he allegedly quotes, should be identified, if possible).
- 2) From a context-analytical point of view, both the original and the reproduced passages or phrases should be exactly the same, or at least very similar.
- 3) The phrases (if possible, with the same word order) or words should be identical, or be replaced with paronyms of similar meaning.
- 4) The concepts represented should be the same or very close.

Only on the basis of *cumulative* evidence of the kinds listed above, can one rightfully surmise a direct literary dependence.<sup>16</sup>

Jens Herzer, who accepts Shimada’s criteria, reaches the same conclusion, denying the direct dependence of 1 Peter on Pauline or deutero-Pauline letters and finding instead that one can talk about the influence of Pauline tradition only in an extremely restricted way.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.3 Flaws in Shimada’s Arguments

Shimada's criteria are, however, unrealistic in that he over-prioritizes verbal congruence (i to iii) and through his strange presupposition that those who quote a text should understand it exactly in the same way as its original author did (iv).

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states that direct literary suggestions can be regarded as likely, but not be proven, because Pauline usage is presupposed, whereas his understanding is not present.

<sup>14</sup> Shimada, 1998b, p. 163.

<sup>15</sup> Shimada, 1998a, pp. 95–97.

<sup>16</sup> Shimada, 1998b, pp. 105–106. Italics by Shimada.

<sup>17</sup> Herzer, 1998, pp. 257–261.

Quite misleading is Shimada's premise that the existence of verbatim conformity is indispensable for proving a direct literary dependence, because, as Annette Merz says: "By restricting to cases where three or four words are matched, other intertextual associations such as imitation of structure (e.g.[,] argument form, typology) or sarcastic dissimulation [Verfremdungen] etc. are excluded."<sup>18</sup> Even a "quotation" is not always verbatim as quotations often contain modifications.<sup>19</sup> Shimada misses this point and thus overlooks a variety of connections between texts. However, this is certainly the point emphasized through a concept of "Intertextuality," which has come to be referred to repeatedly in recent years. In addition to quotations, "Intertextuality" includes phenomena like parody, hints, gestures, gathering poems (cento), imitation, plagiarism, collage, montage, and adaptation of old poems.<sup>20</sup>

As criterion for proving literary dependence, Shimada also requires that the concepts represented in the original and reproduced text are the same (iv). However, in cases of parody or caricature, it would be impossible to expect to identify the exact concept. For example, when the author of James says that "faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:26), he doubtlessly keeps Paul's Letter to the Romans (chapters 3–4) in mind. But the notion of "works" (ἔργα) in James 2 is not identical with Paul's "works of the Law" (ἔργα νόμου), as the lack of "Law" clearly shows. The reader often understands the text differently from the author. Again, Shimada's restrictions on this matter are too narrow.

Therefore, when considering the relationship between 1 Peter and the Pauline letters, it is faulty to apply such strict criteria as Shimada does. The differences between the texts, as pointed out by Shimada (and Herzer), should—of course—be taken into consideration. However, such differences should not be perceived as necessarily excluding a literary connection, as is clear from the viewpoint of

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<sup>18</sup> Merz, 2004, p. 99. [...] is an explanatory addition by Tsuji.

<sup>19</sup> Walker (1985, p. 10): "An author may, for whatever reason, simply prefer a vocabulary more compatible with his/her own style, situation, or purpose, or she/he may also be using another source or sources whose vocabulary is viewed as more suitable." Friedman (1991, p. 155): "Writers seldom duplicate their influential precursor(s); rather, they often work within a certain framework established by other writers or generic conventions, but vary aspects of it in significant ways. The interesting question for the critic has been how the successor(s) adapted, assimilated, revised, transformed, altered, reshaped, or revised the precursor(s)." Aelius Theon (1st Century A.D.) advises in his *Progymnasmata* ("preliminary exercises") to learn how to recite not "by the same words" but also "by other words" (Chrie, 101.8–9).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Tsuchida (2000, pp. 58–59).

Intertextuality. In the following (2.4 and 2.5), we revisit the points mentioned in 2.1, examining them in further detail.

### 3.4 1 Peter and the Pauline Letters

#### 3.4.1 Dependence on Pauline language

In its opening, 1 Peter strongly echoes the Pauline letters; for instance, the sender's self-identification "Peter, the Apostle of Jesus Christ" (Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is very close to that of 2 Cor 1:1 (Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ; see also 1 Cor 1:1 and Rom 1:1). Moreover, "foreknowledge of God" (πρόγνωσις; see προγινώσκω in Rom 8:29; 11:2), "sanctification by the Spirit" (ἁγιασμός; this word appears almost only in the Pauline letters, and the identical expression ἁγιασμός πνεύματος is seen in 2 Thess 2:13),<sup>21</sup> and "obedience" (ὕπακοή; 1:2, 14, 22) are words found exclusively in the Pauline letters and 1 Peter. Furthermore, the dependence on the Pauline letters is obvious in the first doxology at the end of the greeting (v. 3): "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" (εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, RSV). This is an exact replica of the greeting in 2 Cor 1:3, not only verbally, but also contextually. Thus, there is no doubt that this opening section follows 2 Corinthians (cf. also Rom 1:6; 2 Cor 11:31. This phrase is also seen in Eph 1:3, i.e., a pseudo-Pauline letter whose author must have imitated the Pauline style).

Another passage that obviously illustrates dependence on Paul is 1 Pet 2:6–8. In v. 6a the author quotes Isa 28:16;<sup>22</sup> though the sentence "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone" (ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον) differs from the text of Septuagint (ἐγὼ ἐμβαλῶ εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιών λίθον), it corresponds verbally with Rom 9:33, where Paul cites the same LXX passage.<sup>23</sup> V. 7 is a quotation from LXX Ps 117:22,

<sup>21</sup> Rom 6:19, 22; 1 Cor 1:30; 1 Thess 4:3, 4; 1 Tim 2:15. Cf. also Heb 12:14.

<sup>22</sup> This is obviously not a citation from the Hebrew text, because the next passage "the one who believes in him will not be put to shame" (v. 6b) is in accordance with LXX, but differs from the Hebrew text ("one who believes will not be in haste").

<sup>23</sup> The expression "cornerstone chosen and precious" (ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον) is also cited from Isa 28:16 LXX. The author of 1 Peter probably added it, which Paul in Rom 9:33 did not refer to, by citing Isaiah text directly. The variant reading ἐκλεκτὸν ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον (B C 49 1243 *pc* sa<sup>ms</sup> bo), which was accepted as original until Nestle<sup>25</sup>, is to be regarded as a secondary correction in accordance with LXX. The author of 1 Peter probably altered the word order so that the "cornerstone" can be read clearly as apposition to the "stone."

while v. 8 “stone of disturbance and rock of stumbling” (λίθος προσκόμματος και πέτρα σκανδάλου) again corresponds verbatim with Rom 9:33. The latter goes back to Isa 8:14 (ὡς λίθου προσκόμματι ... πέτρας πτώματι), but differs from LXX in the Greek word for “stumbling.” The author of 1 Peter, therefore, evidently referred to Rom 9:33. This passage offers definitive evidence of literary dependence on the Pauline letter(s).<sup>24</sup>

1 Peter contains additional expressions that strongly suggest the author’s knowledge of Pauline letters. The compound “willingly acceptable” (εὐπρόσδεκτος, 2:5) is rarely found outside the New Testament (NT),<sup>25</sup> while in the NT only Paul and 1 Pet use it (Rom 15:16, 31; 2 Cor 6:2; 8:12). Of these passages, Rom 15:16 speaks of the offering in the priestly service, which is “willingly acceptable” to God, i.e., the very same context as 1 Pet 2:5. The obscure expression “a people *for possession*” (λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, 2:9) makes sense when read in the context that Paul uses it in the sense of reaching to the possession *of salvation*: “God has destined us for possession of salvation (εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας) through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:9).<sup>26</sup> Εἰς περιποίησιν is used also in the Deutero-Pauline letters in a similar religious meaning (2 Thess 2:14; Eph 1:14; also Heb 10:39), indicating that it was widely recognized as a characteristic Pauline expression.

These observations lead to the conclusion that the author of 1 Peter is familiar with the Pauline letters, particularly Romans. He probably knows 2 Corinthians as well, for he uses the same introduction, and, in 5:12, spells the name of his co-worker “Silvanus” as in 2 Cor 1:19 (cf. also 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1), not “Silas” as in Acts. In addition, the existence of Pauline expressions such as “εἰς περιποίησιν” (2:9/1 Thess 5:9) suggests that the author has access to several Pauline letters, perhaps in a form of *Corpus Paulinum*, i.e., a compilation of the Pauline letters.

<sup>24</sup> So also, e.g., Tagawa (2015, p. 283).

<sup>25</sup> E.g., Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft*, 2.801C; Porphyry, *To Marcella*, 24. Liddell/Scott/Jones, s.v. gives only a few examples.

<sup>26</sup> Before the NT, this word was found only in LXX 2 Chr 14:13(12); Mal 3:17; Plato, *Definitions* 415c.

### 3.4.2 Common Hortatory Material

In 2:13–17, the author urges obedience to authority. Though this passage strongly resembles Rom 13:1–7, exegetes tend to attribute it to a common oral tradition rather than direct dependence on Rom 13.<sup>27</sup>

However, there are also many verbal agreements between these passages. 1 Pet 2:13: “Be subject to [...] the king as governor” (ὕποτάγητε [...] βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι) is almost identical with Rom 13:1: “Let every one be subject to the governing authorities” (ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποταστέσθω). It is also worth noting that these phrases are both placed at the beginning of the paragraph. The remark in 1 Pet 2:14 that governors are sent for “retaliation” (ἐκδίκησις) against wrongdoers overlaps with what Paul in Rom 13:4 states: “the one who is in authority is a servant of God and retaliator (ἔκδικος) against the wrongdoer.”<sup>28</sup> Besides, the expressions in v. 14f., such as “wrongdoer” (κακοποιός), “one who does good” (ἀγαθοποιός) and “doing good” (ἀγαθοποιέω) find their correspondents in Rom 13:3, although the use of compound words is a characteristic of 1 Peter.<sup>29</sup> Also the end of the paragraph clearly corresponds to that of Rom 13:1–7: The phrase “honor *all people*” (πάντας τιμήσατε) is quite similar to the beginning of Rom 13:7: “Pay duties *to all*” (ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς). And the closing imperative “Fear God, honor the king” (τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε, τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε) is probably a modification of a somewhat ambiguous expression of Paul: “Fear to whom the fear is due, honor to whom the honor is due” (τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν).<sup>30</sup> In this way, close connections between 1 Pet 2:13–17 and Rom 13:1–7 can be seen

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Wilckens (1974, pp. 211–213).

<sup>28</sup> The author of 1 Peter says that governors are sent by the king (sc. emperor). However, the king is a part of the “human *creature*” (ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσις, NRSV: “human institution”), i.e., what is created by God (2:13). Thus, it is God’s will that the governors do their duty.

<sup>29</sup> ἀγαθοποιέω is used also in Lk 6:9, 33, 35; 3 John 11. But ἀγαθοποιός is a *hapax legomenon* in the NT; κακοποιός appears only in 1 Peter in the NT (2:12, 14: 4:15).

<sup>30</sup> In addition, the admonition to “love the brotherhood” (τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε) can be seen as influenced by Rom 13:8 (“to love one another”). If this is the case, the author of 1 Peter owes all the verbs in v. 17 (“love,” “fear” and “honor”) to Rom 13:7–8.

throughout the paragraph on both a wording level and a structure level. This makes it impossible to deny the direct relationship between these texts.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, both passages share a similar context—as Rom 13:1ff. is to be read as a practical application of the preceding admonition: “Do not repay anyone evil for evil but also take thought for what is honorable (προνοούμενοι καλά) in the sight of all” (12:17, NRSV). Similarly, the author of 1 Peter talks about obedience to authority (2:13–17) right after the admonition to “conduct yourselves honorably (τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ... ἔχοντες καλῆν) among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds” (1 Pet 2:12, NRSV). It is hardly possible to explain this agreement as coincidence of similar traditions.

The list of vices in 4:3 also reveals an acquaintance with Rom 13. The vices such as “licentiousness” (ἀσέλγεια), “desire” (ἐπιθυμία), and “revel” (κῶμος) all appear in Rom 13:13f., and “drunkenness” (οἰνοφλυγία) is equal to “drunkenness” (μέθη) in Rom 13:13. (“Carousing” [πότος] in 4:3 is a hapax legomenon in the NT, yet almost synonymous with κῶμος in Rom 13:13.)<sup>32</sup>

### 3.5 1 Peter as a “Pauline” Letter

As stated above, the author of 1 Peter is acquainted with the letters of Paul and affected not only by his language but also by his moral teachings, e.g., obedience to the rulers and the list of vices.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, important concepts of the Pauline theology such as “grace” (χάρις), “righteousness” (δικαιοσύνη), as well as “freedom” (ἐλευθερία) appear in 1 Peter,<sup>34</sup> and the expression “in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ), known as a characteristic Pauline term, is seen only in 1 Peter (3:16;

<sup>31</sup> It gives further support for the hypothesis of literary dependence that none of the above mentioned correspondence appears between Rom 13:1–7 and 1 Tim 2:1–3/Tit 3:1–2, where the same theme of obedience to the authority appears. In my view, both 1 Tim 2:1–3 and Tit 3:1–2 presuppose Rom 13:1–7. Cf. Tsuji (2008, pp. 99–110).

<sup>32</sup> As Tagawa (2015, p. 318) points out, it belongs to the Pauline characteristics to refer to “idolatry” (εἰδωλολατρία, 1 Pet 4:3) in the context of the list of vices. Cf. Gal 5:20; Col 3:5.

<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, so-called “household codes” (German: Haustafeln) in 1 Pet 2:18–3:17 have a lot in common with those found in Deutero-Pauline letters (Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:22–6:9; 1 Tim 6:1–2; Tit 2:9–10); this suggests not just a common oral tradition, but an intertextual relationship between 1 Peter and (a part of) Deutero-Pauline letters, though we do not go into the details of the discussion here.

<sup>34</sup> χάρις: 1:2, 10, 13; 2:19, 20; 4:10; 5:10, 12. δικαιοσύνη: 2:24; 3:14. ἐλευθερία: 2:16.

5:10, 14) outside of the Pauline corpus.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, there is no doubt that 1 Peter is under the influence of Pauline Christianity.

It is true that the author of 1 Peter does not develop some important elements of Pauline theology such as the teachings on justification or on the Law. However, this holds also true for the Deutero-Pauline letters, i.e., in other imitations of Pauline letter,<sup>36</sup> the authors of Colossians and 2 Thessalonians do not even mention “righteousness” and neither do Ephesians or the Pastoral Letters speak of “God’s righteousness” as Paul repeatedly does. The typical Pauline term of “justification by faith” is found only in Tit 3:5–7; though even there one can discern big differences from Paul—the keyword “faith” does not appear and “righteousness” is treated like a virtue practiced by humans. Remarks on the Law and its precepts can be found in Col 2:16–17, 21–23, and Eph 2:11–15, but they are far from the theological argument that Paul developed in Gal 3.

Between the Deutero-Pauline letters and 1 Peter there are striking similarities in that they inherit ethics from Paul rather than his theology. The so-called “household codes” (see note 33) are derived from Paul’s conservative suggestions found in 1 Cor 7:21f. and 14:34f., while the admonition of obedience to the ruler (Rom 13:1–7; 1 Pet 2:13–17, see above) was inherited also by the Pastoral Letters (1 Tim 2:1–3; Tit 3:1f.).<sup>37</sup>

Thus, between the Deutero-Pauline letters and 1 Peter, there are no significant differences in terms of influence of Pauline Christianity. Except for the author’s name “Peter,” 1 Peter can thus be included in the “Deutero-Pauline” letters. The question remains, however, why did the author borrow the name “Peter” rather than “Paul?”

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Schnelle (2013, p. 488).

<sup>36</sup> See also Schnelle (2013, p. 488).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Tsuji (2008, pp. 99–110).

## 4 The Setting for 1 Peter

### 4.1 Addressee of the Letter

The destinations of 1 Peter are “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1:1). The names<sup>38</sup> listed here have a feature in common--they are the places where Paul either did not visit for his missionary activity or could not achieve success (Galatia).

Pontus is mentioned in Acts 2:9. The crowd who witnessed the Pentecost event included Jews of the Diaspora from Pontus. In addition, Priscilla and Aquila, the couple who once acted together with Paul, were from Pontus (Acts 18:2). However, nowhere is it written that they became Christian in Pontus; it is a much greater possibility that they were introduced to Christianity in Rome. Acts 2:9 does not offer evidence that Christianity had been already spread in Pontus, much less by Paul.

In Galatia, Paul conducted missionary work, but it is unlikely that he achieved the positive results that he desired. His letter to Galatians testifies that the Galatian communities were leaning towards Christianity brought there later by other missionaries and away from the Gospel preached by Paul (Gal 1:6–9). They must have felt displeased with this letter, which denounces them with a discriminating tone (cf. 3:1: “You foolish Galatians!”). Galatian communities would not have donated any contributions to the Jerusalem church that Paul collected (cf. 2 Cor 8–9).<sup>39</sup> It is interesting in this regard that, in 2 Timothy, a Crescens is said to have left Paul and gone to Galatia (2 Tim 4:10). This is of course a fiction, but even the existence of a description of a person who left Paul and went to Galatia probably suggests that Galatia was outside the sphere of Pauline Christianity when the Pastoral Letters were written (probably at the beginning of the 2nd century).

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<sup>38</sup> It has been discussed, whether they designate Roman provinces or simply geographical names. However, the latter is more probable because the author treats Bithynia and Pontus as separate areas, though they were united from the 1st century BC through the 7th century AD as a Roman province. It is nothing but pure speculation that the author misunderstood the Roman provinces because of insufficient knowledge about the geography of Asia Minor (*pape Brox*, 1989, p. 26).

<sup>39</sup> This is also inferred from the fact that Paul does not refer to the Galatians in his report of the donation (Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 9:2–4). If Paul could have repaired the relations with the Galatians, he would have written about that, as is the case with the Corinthians (cf. 2 Cor).

Also Cappadocia is mentioned in Acts 2:9, but this cannot be evidence of penetration of Christianity there. Nor is the relationship of Cappadocia and Paul indicated anywhere in the NT.

Among the places enumerated in 1:1, Asia seems to have the closest relation with Paul. Paul tried to go there on the way to his second missionary journey, but was, for some reason, unsuccessful (Acts 16:6). After that, he stayed in Ephesus for a short time on the way to Jerusalem (18:18–21). Although he seems to have preached the gospel on that occasion (v. 19f.),<sup>40</sup> it was not until his third missionary journey that he fully developed his activity there (19:1–20). During his two-year stay (19:10), a number of people in Ephesus would surely have been affected by Paul; however, “all those living in Asia” (v. 10) is doubtlessly Luke’s exaggeration.<sup>41</sup> Even in Ephesus, “non-Pauline” schools of Christianity had been founded before Paul (cf. Acts 18:24–19:3; see also Rev 2:1–7). That “Paul has persuaded and drawn away a considerable number of people” in Asia (Acts 19:26) is also an overstatement by Luke. In other words, Paul’s activities in Asia were virtually restricted to Ephesus (and perhaps its surroundings?). Moreover, it is highly conceivable that non-Pauline groups of Christianity were spreading in other parts of Asia in parallel with the Pauline mission. Such circumstances may be reflected in the fact that Acts 16:6 states that the Holy Spirit hindered Paul from entering Asia.

As for Bithynia, Acts also offers an interesting account: Paul and Timothy attempted to go down there from Mysia, but the “Spirit of Jesus” did not allow them (16:7). What this expression means is unknown, but, in any case, Paul could not enter and carry out his missionary plan there.

Therefore, none of the places enumerated in 1 Pet 1:1 has a close connection to Paul. In other words, this letter was addressed to the Christians living in the regions that did not belong within the sphere of Pauline Christianity. In my view, this is the very reason why the author chose the name “Peter” instead of “Paul” as a pseudonym. The real author could not attribute this letter to Paul, because it was addressed to those who were not converted through the Pauline mission. In order to convey the message of Pauline Christianity to those Christian in the “non-Pauline” regions, the author attributed this letter to Peter, the central figure of the earliest Christianity.

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<sup>40</sup> See e.g., Witherington, 1998, p. 558.

<sup>41</sup> Witherington (1998, p. 576): “somewhat hyperbolically.”

## 4.2 Silvanus and Mark (5:12f.)

1 Peter refers to Silvanus and Mark (5:12f.), who play very important roles for this letter. By connecting them with Peter, the author reveals why a letter from Peter shows influence of Pauline language and ideas as these two were known to be former co-workers of Paul.

The letter claims to have been “written through Silvanus” (διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ... ἔγραψα, 5:12). This same expression appears in Acts 15:23, where the apostles and the elders are said to have “written (sc. the Apostolic Decree) through their (= Judas and Silas in v. 22) hand” (γράφαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν), meaning that these two did not actually write the letter, but merely delivered it. Therefore, many exegetes regard Silvanus not as amanuensis (nor translator) of the letter, but as carrier.<sup>42</sup>

This interpretation finds support in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, in which he uses the same expression for his letter's bearer (IgnRom 10:1; IgnPhld 11:2; IgnSm 12:1. Cf. also Polyc 14:1).<sup>43</sup> Moreover, here Silvanus is not referred to as co-sender of the letter as is the case in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, nor is he sending his regard through Peter as Mark does (1 Pet 5:13).<sup>44</sup> Thus, it appears appropriate to see Silvanus as carrier of this letter.<sup>45</sup> “I consider” (ὡς λογίζομαι), a Pauline expression for emphasizing his judgment (2 Cor 11:5; further Rom 3:28; 8:18; Phil 3:13), is then to be taken as a stamp of approval for the one who delivers this letter.

Silvanus held an important position in the Church of Jerusalem. He conveyed the Apostolic Decree to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:22; in Acts, he is called “Silas”<sup>46</sup>). After staying in Antioch, he accompanied Paul's second

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Spicq (1966, pp. 177–179); Vahrenhorst (2016, p. 200); Seethaler (1986, p.65); Elliott (2000, pp. 872–875); Achtemeier (1996, p. 350).

<sup>43</sup> See Schoedel, 1985, p. 191. Elliott (2000, p. 872) gives attestations from papyrus letters.

<sup>44</sup> Spicq, 1966, p. 178.

<sup>45</sup> Goppelt (1978, p. 347) opposes this conclusion based on the following observations: (1) It is inconsistent with the account that Peter wrote this letter through Silvanus “in brief” (δι’ ὀλιγῶν); (2) one carrier could hardly deliver the letter by himself to all the recipients scattered in wide area of Asia; and (3) this expression can in fact also mean a writer (a letter of Bishop Dionysius of Corinth [late 2nd cent.], in Eusebius, *HE* 4.23.11). However, the expression “wrote in brief” probably refers to the content of the letter and actually means it is a short letter (to 1); it was not impossible for the carrier to actually make the rounds to the recipient locations (to 2); and the example of Dionysius can be an exception because the context makes it clear that it refers to the writer (to 3).

<sup>46</sup> As stated below, he is consistently called “Silvanus” in the Pauline letters. Ergo, the author of 1 Peter quite probably knew his name through them.

missionary journey (Acts 15:40; see also 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Cor 1:19). However, after that he seems to have left Paul, for he is not mentioned in Paul's subsequent letters.

The author of 1 Peter makes good use of this lack of information about him. As one of the original members of the Church of Jerusalem, Silvanus must have been acquainted with Peter. As a travelling companion of Paul (and co-sender of his letters), he was probably highly proficient in Greek and able to communicate easily with the churches named in 1:1 (at least the reader could suppose he was). The very Pauline content of the letter, as stated above, can be ascribed to Silvanus, who would have then related it to Peter. It must have been easy for the author to create the fiction that he later accompanied Peter, since his activities after Paul's second mission journey were unknown.

The same is true for Mark who is mentioned alongside Silvanus (5:13). He must be identical with John Mark who appears in Acts. If this is the case, then he is from the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). The expression "my son" (ὁ υἱός μου: 1 Pet 5:13) reflects a close relationship between them, perhaps via baptism by Peter,<sup>47</sup> rather than a teacher-student relationship.<sup>48</sup>

Mark once participated in Paul's missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but later split up with him (13:13). However, according to Phlm 24, he seems to have joined Paul again. Accordingly, he seems to have stayed in Rome for a certain period.<sup>49</sup> Our passage goes back to the traditionally accepted belief that Mark was an interpreter (ἑρμηνευτής) and close follower of Peter (Eusebius, *HE* 3.39.15). Thus, there is no doubt that he too is mentioned here as another connecting person between Paul and Peter. In this way, the author implicitly explains the Pauline influence by slipping these names into the letter as those who seem to have brought the Pauline language and ideas to Peter.

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<sup>47</sup> See Vahrenhorst, 2016, p. 202. In similar cases, Paul says "my child" (μου/ἐμοῦ τέκνον: 1 Cor 4:17; Phlm 10. Cf. also 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1; Tit 1:4); this expression appears to be kept in mind of the author of 1 Pet, though he uses τέκνον instead of υἱός, which does not make a significant difference in this case (*pace* Achtemeier, 1996, p. 355).

<sup>48</sup> This relationship is assumed, e.g., by Feldmeier (2005, p. 171).

<sup>49</sup> The Letter to Philemon was certainly written in Rome. Cf. Schnelle (2013, p. 174).

## 5 1 Peter as Christian “Diaspora Letter”

1 Peter represents itself as a circular letter sent from a leading figure of Christianity to the churches in the northern part of Asia Minor.

The letter follows the Jewish tradition of a “Diaspora letter,” which is addressed to communities in Diaspora from Jerusalem as the center of Judaism.<sup>50</sup> The author modifies, however, this letter tradition by describing his letter as being sent from “Babylon” (1 Pet 5:13) sc. land of the Exile, to believers in Diaspora. The name “Babylon” is clearly associated with “Diaspora” at the beginning of the letter (1:1) and forms an “inclusio.”<sup>51</sup>

Here “Babylon” does not mean the ancient capital of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Matt 1:11, 12, 17[bis]; Acts 7:43). As in the Apocalypse of John (14:8; 16:19; 18:2, 10, 21), this name functions as a metaphor for Rome, superimposing the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Army (70 AD) on the Babylonian Exile. The recipients of the letter could reasonably assume that Peter, who was formerly a representative of the Church of Jerusalem was familiar with this metaphor, which was well known through the Jewish apocalyptic literature (see 1(7) above).

1 Peter thus pretends to be a Diaspora letter that Peter in “Babylon,” sc. in the Roman Captivity,<sup>52</sup> addressed to the Christians dispersed in northern Asia Minor, namely, a “letter from Diaspora to Diaspora.” This letter tradition was inherited from early Judaism to Christianity and found its successors also in James and 1 Clement. 1 Clement, in particular, is very similar to 1 Peter in that it was sent from Rome to another place of dispersion. Moreover, in 1 Clement as well as in 1 Peter, Rome is presented as a place of Diaspora (cf. 1 Clem insc.: “the church of God that sojourns [παρουκέω] in Rome”),<sup>53</sup> as well as the new center of Christianity in place of the destroyed Jerusalem. Another similarity in the letters is their expression of the dispersion using the verb *παρουκέω* (“sojourn;” cf. 1 Pet 1:17; 2:11).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> On the “Diaspora letter,” cf. Taatz (1991) and Tsuji (1997, pp. 5–50).

<sup>51</sup> Doering, 2012, p. 444.

<sup>52</sup> According to the early Christian tradition, Peter was martyred in Rome. Cf. 1 Clem 5:4.

<sup>53</sup> Diaspora letters written in other places than Jerusalem/Judea are also found in early Jewish literature: Baruch, parJer 7:24–34 (letter from Jeremiah to Baruch), 4Q389 = 4QApocJer C<sup>d</sup> (from Jeremiah in Egypt to the Captives in Babylon, cf. *DJD* XXX 219–223). See Doering (2012, p. 432) and Horrell (2008, pp. 8–9).

<sup>54</sup> The relationship between 1 Peter and James/1 Clement requires further consideration. Many exegetes deny the direct literary dependence between 1 Peter and James and explain the similar expressions seen in them as deriving

This setting, however, should be treated as fictional rather than historical information on the letter. Similarly, the Petrine authorship and “Babylon” sc. Rome as the place of origin belong to a literary fiction, calling into question the Roman origin of 1 Peter. The latter possibility cannot be wholly excluded, but if that were the case, it would be difficult to explain why the real author enumerates the addressed communities instead of describing his addressees in more general way, as is seen in James, Jude, and 2 Peter. In my view, the real place of origin was likely in Asia Minor, though not necessarily in one of the areas named in 1:1.<sup>55</sup>

## 6 Purpose of 1 Peter

### 6.1 Theme of the Epistle

As mentioned above, the author of 1 Peter was under the influence of Pauline Christianity and was, therefore, familiar enough with the Pauline letters, at least Romans (probably as part of *Corpus Paulinum*), that he could copy its wordings. For what purpose, then, did the author write a Diaspora letter attributed to Peter? In order to answer this question, we have to look back first on the subject of 1 Peter.

The basic subject of the whole letter is enduring trials and sufferings. The terms concerning this theme appear throughout the letter: “trial” (πειρασμός: 1:6; 4:12), “suffer” (πάσχω: 2:19–21, 23; 3:14, 17, 18; 4:1[bis], 15, 19; 5:10; λυπέω: 1:6), “suffering” (πάθημα: 1:11; 4:13; 5:1, 9), as well as “endure” (ὑποφέρω: 2:19; ὑπομένω: 2:20 [bis]). The author exhorts his readers to endure the sufferings they are facing because of their Christian faith (4:12–16), to accept them rather as grace from God (2:19f.), not to be conformed to desires they had before conversion (1:14; 2:11; 4:1–6), and to continue the good way of life

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from a common oral tradition. But Schmidt (2013, pp. 308–309) argues for the literary dependence of 1 Peter on James. As for 1 Clement, cf. e.g. Elliott (2000, pp. 138–140), who advocates for its literary dependence on 1 Peter. However, the dependence of opposite direction is to be assumed if 1 Peter was written later than 1 Clement, which is possible.

<sup>55</sup> Schnelle (2013, pp. 480–481) also prefers Asia Minor to Rome because the letter was first known in the east (Pol 1:3; 2:1–2; 5:3; 7:2; 8:1–2; 10:2; Pap 2:17). According to Brox (1989, pp. 42–43), the place of origin is to be expected in Asia Minor, e.g., Antioch or Smyrna. The Pauline character of this letter, in my view, may point to a place under influence of the Pauline Christianity.

among the Gentiles as holy ones obeying the Holy who called them (1:13–16; 2:9f.).

## 6.2 Letter of Exhortation from Peter to the Diaspora Communities

As stated above, 1 Peter follows the tradition of the Jewish Diaspora letters, sharing a parallel content particularly to those sent from a person of prophetic authority to the Diaspora (Jer 29:11–23; EpJer; syrBar 78–86 [Letter of Baruch]). The Diaspora Letters, for example, exhorted the readers to abstain from the Gentile lifestyle and keep their Jewish faith. For instance, the letter of Jeremiah in Jer 29:1–23, which seems to have originally been an independent letter and later incorporated into the Book of Jeremiah,<sup>56</sup> instructs Judeans in Babylon Captivity to obey the words of the Lord and stand firm in the midst of Gentiles. The same is true for the apocryphal Letter of Jeremiah and the Letter of Baruch.

1 Peter is a “Christian version” of this letter tradition. It is a letter of exhortation from Peter, an authority of the earliest Christianity, to the “Diaspora” communities in the northern Asia Minor.<sup>57</sup>

For this “Christian version,” the author makes a modification to the concept of “Diaspora.” The addressees are “Diaspora,” however, not in the sense of the dispersed from Jerusalem (as in the case of the Jewish Diaspora and Jas 1:1) but rather as the exiles in this world (1:1, 17; 2:11). They are dispersed from Heaven, where the inheritance is kept for them (1:4). This idea is seen also in Hebrews (11:13), though instead of the word “Diaspora,” it simply uses “sojourner” (παρεπίδημος).

## 6.3 Petrine Letter of Pauline Exhortation

This letter of Peter is, however, strongly influenced by Pauline language and ethics, as confirmed above in 2.4 and 2.5. The same is true for the main themes of the letter, namely suffering and endurance. The author gives exhortations according to what he learned from the Pauline letters.

The author understands the sufferings of a Christian in association with those of Christ (1 Pet 2:21–25; 4:1), which is seen already in the Pauline letters (cf. 2 Cor 1:5: “the sufferings of Christ overflow into us”). That he learned this idea

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<sup>56</sup> Taatz, 1991, p. 47.

<sup>57</sup> Perhaps he knows this letter-type through James. Cf. note 54 above.

from Paul can be proved by the keywords of Pauline theology used in his instructions.

The author offers a reason to obey the ruler of this world: “(You should do right) as free men, but not as those who have freedom as pretext of evil, but as servants of God” (2:16). This is the only passage in 1 Peter where “freedom” appears. The contrast of “freedom” and “servant of God” is strongly reminiscent of Rom 6:22: “Now that you were made free from sin (ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας), and became a servant for God (δουλωθέντες δὲ τῷ θεῷ)” (see also Gal 5:1, 13; 2 Cor 3:17).<sup>58</sup> Thus, here, the author urges his readers to follow secular rulers “for the Lord (= God)” (2:13) and bases his argument on this passage of Romans.

Other expressions that reflect Romans appear in the context of 2:16. As a paradigm of enduring unjust treatments by harsh masters, the author refers to the Passion of Christ (2:21–24). In v. 24 he speaks of a contrast of sin/righteousness: “So that we, away from sins, live in righteousness,” which obviously goes back to Romans (5:17, 21; 6:12f., 16–23; 8:10). Considering that he mentions not only the contrast of “sin/righteousness” but also “death/life,”<sup>59</sup> the dependence on Romans 5–8 is beyond doubt.

In order to encourage the Christians—in the midst of various trials (1:6)—to keep on proving the faith in their life, the author thus presents the Passion of Christ as a paradigm, advising them to follow “his steps” (2:21). For this purpose, he incorporates the notions and wordings of the Pauline letters with which he is familiar.

<sup>58</sup> See also Brox (1989, p. 122).

<sup>59</sup> The author says in 1 Pet 2:24 not “die to sin” (ἀποθνήσκω τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ) as in Rom 6:2 but rather “be away from sins” (ταῖς ἁμαρτίας ἀπογίνομαι). He probably replaced the baptismal image in Rom 6 with the expression that better suits the ethical admonition. Here the verb ἀπογίνομαι is accompanied not by a genitive of separation (which should be normally expected; cf. Blass, Debrunner and Rehkopf, 1990, §180) but by a dative of reference (as in Rom 6:2; cf. *ibid.*, §197). This implies that the author of 1 Peter simply replaced “die” (ἀποθνήσκω) of Rom 6:2 with “be away” (ἀπογίνομαι). Cf. Osborne (1983, pp. 400–401). Achtemeier (1996, pp. 202–203) discounts the direct influence of Rom 6 because of the differences of wording (ἀπογίνομαι/ἀποθνήσκω) and of the notion (lack of reference to Christ’s resurrection); as for the difference of wording, see above. Concerning the possibility that one refers to a source text without verbal quotation, cf. above on the error of Shimada and Herzer. Here the author of 1 Peter undoubtedly depends on Rom 6; thus, also correctly Beare (1970, p. 150).

## 7 Concluding Remarks

1 Peter was thus written as a “Petrine letter with Pauline content.” The author, who probably belonged to a Pauline school in early Christianity, arranged a circular letter addressed to church communities in the northern part of Asia Minor in order to encourage them to maintain their Christian faith despite the trials and sufferings they were facing as religious minority. The influence of Pauline notions and wordings can be found throughout the letter. In terms of its content, it should have been appropriately written as a (pseudo-) Pauline letter.

However, in my view, the author could not attribute this letter to Paul, because it is addressed to the areas where the Pauline mission had not (yet) achieved success. Therefore, he chose as its sender Peter, the central figure of the earliest Christianity, and composed a Christian Diaspora letter sent from Peter in Rome (as Babylon) to Diaspora communities.

As for the place of origin of the letter, it is more appropriate to think of Asia Minor rather than Rome (see above 3.3). The date of composition is almost impossible to determine. As the “trials” and “suffering,” which are repeatedly mentioned in the letter, seem to reflect everyday hostility and antipathy by ordinary people against Christian believers rather than a specific persecution, e.g., by Domitian (81–96 AD)<sup>60</sup> or by Trajan (98–117 AD),<sup>61</sup> these factors cannot help specifying the date.<sup>62</sup> As the letter of Polycarp of Smyrna (ca. between 110 and 130 AD?) seems to be dependent on 1 Peter,<sup>63</sup> the latter can probably be seen as written before the former. Judging from the fact that the author was familiar with a collection of Pauline letters (*Corpus Paulinum*), which seems to have been formed gradually in the second half of 1st century, 1 Peter is probably not to be dated too early (perhaps, the beginning of the second century AD?).

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<sup>60</sup> In recent research, it is strongly doubted that Christians would have suffered systematic persecution under the reign of Domitian; cf. Reichert (2013, pp. 283–286). Scholars also tend to deny the traditional view that Domitian demanded the use of title “Lord and God” for himself; see Eck (1997, p. 749).

<sup>61</sup> On the letters between Pliny the Younger and Trajan, cf. Reichert (2013, pp. 286–291).

<sup>62</sup> Vahrenhorst (2013, p. 75).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Vahrenhorst (2016, pp. 47–50).

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# Honor and Authority Redefined in Luke 22:24-30

Yang Yan  
Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou

## Abstract

NT usage of εὐεργέτης is restricted to Luke 22:25 and scholars usually employ the interpretation of “benefactor” to understand Luke 22:24-30. However, the verbal, conceptual or structural evidence is far from enough to support such interpretation. Instead, the whole episode focuses on the idea of the greatest. With the kings and benefactors as conventional models in political and civil sphere respectively, the Lukan Jesus renounces recognition of the greatest on the basis of superior status and exercise of authority. By the sharp contrast between the reclining and serving in the banquet setting, Jesus proposes a totally new definition of the greatest. That is, the lower status and humble or even humiliating service (loyalty to Jesus) are the markers of the greatest and conditions to be the greatest. The greatest do have honor and authority, but both of them are hidden on earth and will be manifest in future in heaven.

**Keywords:** benefactor, honor, authority, servanthood, greatness

## 1 Introduction

NT usage of εὐεργέτης is restricted to Luke 22:25, although its cognate forms such as the noun εὐεργεσία and verb εὐεργετέω occur a few times in New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Scholars usually employ “benefactor” interpretation to understand Luke 22:24-30. Generally, there are mainly two trends in interpretations on Luke 22:24-30:<sup>2</sup> The Lukan Jesus proposed the main criteria for a true benefactor or an ideal king, with himself as the benefactor par excellence on the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. εὐεργεσία in Acts 4:9, 1Ti 6:2; εὐεργετέω in Acts 10:38.

<sup>2</sup> There are also disputes over the sources of this episode, whether it is from Mark, Matthew or Q or Luke’s special source. Since this issue is not significant for our discussion here, we will not address it in this paper.

one hand and on the other hand Herod or Gentile kings as a bad model (Danker, 1988; Seo, 2015; Nelson, 1994; Marshall, 2009);<sup>3</sup> or the Lukan Jesus criticized both inequality and reciprocity of the Roman benefaction or patron-client system (Deissmann, 1927; Ahn, 2006). Considering the immediate context (Luke 22:24 and 22:26-30), we propose that the focus of this episode is neither the benefactor model nor the patron-client system but the overturning of the honor-authority as markers of the greatest in Roman society (Nelson, 1994).<sup>4</sup> Benefactors as the social model of the greatest are renounced because of their pursuit of honor from their recipients and because of their exercise of authority. Jesus redefines the honor and authority of true greatness, which is given though hidden in the present age but will be manifested in the future age.

## 2 The Conventional Idea about the Greatest (v 25)

The whole episode is evoked by the dispute among the disciples about which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. As stated by Nelson, the issue here is not who wants to be greatest (Markan version), or is greatest, but who seems to be the greatest (δοκεῖ) (Nelson, 1994). In other words, the dispute is about the conventional definition of the greatest. Jesus cites the normal opinion on it in v 25. Jesus said: “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors’.”(NAS). Most scholars claim that these two sentences/titles refer to the same group of people, that is, “king” is a synonym for “benefactor” (Seo, 2015; Marshall, 2009; Nelson, 1994).<sup>5</sup> It is true that Augustus is willing to be called benefactor (Nicols, 1990), and Vespasian was hailed as “Benefactor and Savior” by the crowd (Josephus, *J.W.* 7.4.1), at

<sup>3</sup> Seo (2015) argues that the pagan kings are not eligible to be called true benefactors, since true benefaction is service-oriented. Although the opinion proposed by Nelson (1994) that Jesus is the model of a leader and demonstrates the relationship between service and leadership is different to some extent, the key point is similar, that is, Jesus sets an example.

<sup>4</sup> Nelson (1994) notices the authority theme but relates the authority (v 25b) to the leadership and then argues that leadership and discipleship are concepts central to this episode. Nelson examines mostly every word in detail, but does not demonstrate his theme (leadership and discipleship) fully and explain how the authority extends to leadership.

<sup>5</sup> Seo (2015) argues that first-century people would have thought of the emperor in association with the title “benefactor” when they listened to/heard Jesus’ teaching in Luke 22:25. Marshall (2009) proposes that “them” in οἱ ἐξουσιάζοντες αὐτῶν ἐδεργέται καλοῦνται refers to the kings, that is, benefactors are those in authority above the kings. This opinion receives little support.

the same time, that kings usually have the authority. However, considering the following two factors, we propose that these two titles in Luke 22:25 are not tautological but refer to two different groups of people, with overlapping in some cases. Firstly, from the perspective of the sentence structure, “οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν.” (Matthew 20:25) and “οἱ ἄρχοντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι αὐτῶν κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν.” (Mark 10:42) are synthetic parallelism, with basic nominative masculine plural + present indicative active 3<sup>rd</sup> personal plural, while Luke 22:25 does not have such strong synthetic parallelism, and therefore is not bound to refer to one group of people.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, both subjects in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark are the ruling or governing power. However, in Luke 22:25, εὐεργέτης does not fall into the same scope of ἄρχοντες, δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν or μεγάλοι. Βασιλεῖς and εὐεργέται fall into the political and civil realm respectively. Benefaction, as a voluntary and reciprocal relationship between the people of the unequal status, prevailed in the Eastern Roman particularly (Eilers, 2002; Saller, 1982; de Silva, 2000; Danker, 1982).<sup>7</sup> The concept of εὐεργέτης was much broader than that of βασιλεῖς. Although Augustus was viewed as the greatest and best benefactor during the principate (Danker, 1982, No. 31,32,39), and tyrants would like to call themselves the benefactors (Danker, 1982, pp. 42-44), “benefactor” is not confined to the official post of a ruler, but applied widely in society. Therefore, the Lukan Jesus probably listed representatives in the political and civil sphere respectively to illustrate the normal understanding of the greatest, which he negates.

We turn to two examples. It is normal that the kings both are and are regarded as the greatest in their territories. As stated in v 25a, it is the ruling power that entitles kings to be considered the greatest. In other words, kings’ greatness is presented and grounded in their exercise of the lordship. The life of Pompey, the famous general and consul of the Roman Republic, demonstrates

<sup>6</sup> Whether Luke and Mark shared a similar tradition, or Luke depended on Mark, or Luke derived from Matthew will not be discussed here, since we focus on the intention of Luke.

<sup>7</sup> Several scholars debate the difference between patronage and benefaction. Marshall (2009) argues that the western Roman Empire preferred the title *πάτριον*. Joubert (2000) and Marshall (2009) distinguish patronage from benefaction, while Crook (2012) holds them more closely together. Similarly, scholars apply the concepts of patronage or benefaction to the interpretation of Luke 22:24-30. We will not discuss the difference between the Hellenistic system of benefaction and Roman patrociniūm, and their relevance to Luke 22:24-30 here since both systems imply an between the concerned parties.

this point. Pompey was initiated called Magnus (the Great) by his loyal troops in Africa (82-81 BCE), and he assumed the cognomen Magnus after 81 (Plutarch, Pompey, 13; Pliny, *NH* 7.97; Southern, 2002; Seager, 2002).<sup>8</sup>

Differently, the benefactor is usually not the greatest in the community or, to be more precise, his greatness is not like the greatness of the kings whose ruling power dominates every aspect of life in the ancient world. The epigraphs honoring the benefactors show the diversity of who were considered benefactors: physicians, fighters, flamen, priest, officials of various ranks (Danker, 1982, No. 1-3, 6, 11-12, 15-18, 20-21). How is being benefactors relevant to being the greatest? Taken as meaning “competition for the honor” (Marshall, 2009, p. 303), φιλονεικία in v24 indicates that the issue of being the greatest is about honor-shame in the ancient world. Honor could be gained or lost (Esler, 1995, p. 185). The critique from Aristotle of benefactors as lovers of honor (*Rhet.* 1361a43-1361b3) verifies that benefactors pursued honor (van Wees, 1998). The benefactor seeks to be recognized publicly in various ways, such as the incised name on stone, the awarding of a gold crown, or the gift of a permanent seat of honor in the theater.<sup>9</sup> Honor is usually one’s claim of one’s own worth, pride, but also the acknowledgement and recognition of the validity of that claim by society (Pitt-Rivers, 1977, p. 1). Just like δοκεῖ, the passive voice καλοῦνται implies the benefactor’s pursuit to be recognized by the recipients/subordinates.<sup>10</sup> What is more, like κυριεύουσιν (“exercise dominance over them”), ἐξουσιάζοντες means “exercise authority over them”. Authority is regarded as the explicit capacity to direct others’ behaviors (Hoebel, 1985, p. 222). According to the inscriptions listed by Danker, the benefactors alleviate the tax burdens, forgive the debts, distribute money or hold a medical profession

<sup>8</sup> During that time, Pompey began to taste kingly power which does not seem to have been challenged.

<sup>9</sup> From thousands of inscriptions, we see no challenge to the honor-seeking of the benefactors. The ancient writers seldom doubted this pursuit. For example, Gnaeus Arrius Cornelius Proculus wrote to the Lycian League: “Generous people are deserving of honor.” (Danker, 1982, No. 19.8.29.11-14). What concerned them most was whether the benefactors showed enough generosity worthy of their titles (Dio Chrysostom, Oratio 46, 31, 44; Seneca, de Beneficiis I.xv.6), or the beneficiaries expressed appropriate gratitude (Dio Chrysostom, Oratio 40.7-8; Seneca, de Beneficiis I.iv.4-5, I.x.4). However, these discussions refer only to the decline in the giving of appropriate honor or exaltation of oneself associated with the arrogance of power, but none of them refers to a behavior or ways of benefitting others without receiving or seeking honor (Seneca, de Beneficiis I.xv.2; Danker, 1982, No. 43).

<sup>10</sup> καλοῦνται could be either passive voice or middle voice, but all instances of the middle-passive forms of καλέω in Luke-Acts connected to personal nouns are passive (Nelson, 1994, p. 153).

(Danker, 1982, No. 1, 2, 4, 31.). No matter which benefaction is given, the benefactors enjoy the prestige and accordingly, the recipients are obligated to do certain things in return. The influence of the benefactors brings an implicit power into play (compared with the explicit power of governance) and so is associated with authority. The honor and authority or power over the recipients in a particular realm makes them look like the greatest (Joubert, 2002).<sup>11</sup>

In a word, with two examples in the political and civil realm, vv 24-25 reflect the typical thinking in the Mediterranean world about what it means to be the greatest: the greatest are those who enjoy and acquire honor, and who have mastery over or exercise dominant power over the others.

### 3 The Correction of the Traditional Idea of the Greatest (vv 26-27)

Lull (1986) states that v 26a is to be interpreted as “but you are not [called] thus [namely, benefactors]”. It is partly right. Ὑμεῖς and ἐν ὑμῖν indicate that the audience of Jesus’ discourse are the disciples. Since there is no relevant connection between the disciples and kings with regard to status, the prohibition being applied to them is not about being kings but about being benefactors. We shall argue that Jesus does not renounce the appellation (καλοῦνται) but rather the pursuit of honor and understanding of the greatest from the perspective of the dominant power.

Compared with Matthew 20.26b-27 and Mark 10.43b-45, Luke 22.26b has two different points. Firstly, the former two use the subjunctive mood to exhort those who wish to be great and first. With strict parallelism, they claim what behavior determines who is the greatest. In the Lukan version, however, Jesus uses the imperative mood. That is, Jesus admits the greater status of some disciples and thus portrays the possession of greatness positively. In other words, Jesus does not intend to eliminate them. But the emphasis is on how the greatest among disciples should be (Schürmann, 1957; Lull, 1986; Moxnes, 1991).

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<sup>11</sup> It is well known that the key characteristic of benefaction is “generosity and gratitude”, with the benefactor showing generosity, and the recipients in turn expressing gratitude by various actions. The reason why v 25b does not mention “generosity and gratitude” is probably because it is independent of the issues of greatness.

Secondly, in the Matthean and Marcan version, Jesus contrasts “great” with “servant”, and “first” with “slave”. Differently, Lukan Jesus contrasts “greater” with “younger”, and “the one governing” with “the one serving”.<sup>12</sup> The contrast between the greater and the younger also appears in Luke 9:46-48 (the greater Vs the little child). The youngest in the ancient world was usually regarded as the lowest, having the lowest position in society. For example, in the ancient Near East, the children/youngest were usually held in very low regard (1QM7.3; Gundry, 1982; Jeremias, 1963; Hendricksen, 1978; Morris, 1988.). At the same time, the youngest are away from authority. In Roman society, Roman *cursus honorum* regulates age qualification, that is, the young elites may be too young to be appointed as public officials. For example, when Scipio Africanus or Augustus thrust into the public’s eye for the first time, they were regarded as unspectacular since they are quite young. Similarly, the servant (δῖακονος) was seen as inferior and of low esteem. Although the benefactor usually offers generous/philanthropic service such as building public temples, theaters, aqueducts, forums, sponsoring the shows, spectacles and distributing bread or money (*Res Gestae Divi Augustus* 15-23; Danker, 1982, No. 8.), or meeting the various needs of people, such as physical healing, the right to hold property, security, citizenship and so on (Danker, 1982, No. 1-5,9,11,12,16,21,23,28), none of these services, which are full of honor, compares with the lowliness of the servanthood in v 26b.<sup>13</sup> Though few benefactors pursue modesty or decline aggrandizement, none of them seeks lowliness (Danker, 1982, No. 19,43.). Besides, “the one governing” with its foil “the one serving” indicates the element of authority in the idea of the greatest.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> As Bovon (2012) observes, although μείζων and νεότερος are comparative, they are understood in the sense of better or younger than others, and so are usually translated greatest of all and youngest of all (Nolland, 1989-1993, p. 1064; Fitzmyer, 1981-1985, p. 1416).

<sup>13</sup> Seo (2015) argues that the Lukan Jesus emphasizes service as the basis of a true benefactor’s greatness. However, service-oriented benefaction proposed by Seo is no different from altruistic general benefaction, which is claimed by certain Roman writers such as Dio Chrysostom (Oratio 4.65-66) or Cicero (Officiis, 1.44) or Seneca (Beneficiis, 4.7.1). And there is no textual evidence (in vv 24-30) to support the notion of general benefaction.

<sup>14</sup> Some scholars propose that the term ἡγούμενος refers to church leaders, and διακονῶν to church officers. For example, Nelson (1994) simply asserts that the misunderstanding of the nature of the authority in v 24 is to be replaced by a new and unconventional model of leadership, or that it is all about ruling as referring to church leadership. However, this correlation does not fit the immediate context and does not help us understand the episode as a whole. We tend to treat the terms as a general reference to those who have ruling powers and who serve humbly (Evans, 1990; Goulder, 1989; Loisy, 1924; Ernst, 1977; Horn, 1983). Some scholars relate the

This contrast relates the greatness to the powerless servant, which is demonstrated more clearly in the following verse (v 27) (see more as below).

In summary of v 26, Jesus cuts the normal relevance of high status, authority for understandings of greatness. The Lukan Jesus renounces the motive behind the dispute (the pursuit of honor) and claims not to view the greatest as the one with honor and authority (Marshall, 2009; Nock, 1972; Plummer, 1901; Winter, 1988).

V 27 is unique to the Gospel of Luke, in which Jesus restates the dispute in v 24, with *τίς γὰρ μείζων* echoing *τίς αὐτῶν δοκεῖ εἶναι μείζων*. It affirms again that the whole episode is about the understanding of the greatest. In v 27, Jesus takes the meal occasion to illustrate how he understands what it means to be the greatest. The practice of reclining (*ἀνακείμενος*, v 27) is virtually universal throughout the Greco-Roman as a marker for the formal banquet of significance (Smith, 2012; Roller, 2006). Especially the banquet, as distinct from a dinner, is a common occasion to convey one's status and a place to indicate hierarchical power in Roman society (Dunbabin, 1998; Daniel-Hughes, 2012).<sup>15</sup> The status and power are negotiated through dining postures. The hierarchical principle is: the body that moves or takes action in response to others is inferior, while the stationary body that does not need respond to others' need is superior (cf. Luke 17.7-10). Accordingly, the reclining posture, which is originally aristocratic and then imitated by the lower social groups, is fundamentally a mark of superior status (Suetonius, *Poet. fr.* 11, 28-29; Roller, 2006; McRae, 2011; Klinghardt, 2012; Kloppenborg, 2016).<sup>16</sup> Other postures are intentionally indicate lower status. For example, the servants, normally the slaves, are usually on their feet, either being busy with various tasks or awaiting orders from the diners (Seneca,

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service here to Jesus' service such as footwashing, suffering, and crucifixion. However, there is no indication of this here before the correlation proposed by Jesus himself in v 27 (J. Bailey, 1963; Plummer, 1901; Nelson, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Wealthy members who funded banquets used them as vehicles to recognize, honor and confirm publicly hierarchical status in association, which is usually called benefaction. That is why Neyrey (1991) claims that the meal as a ceremony functioned to confirm roles and statuses within the chief institutions of a given group. Similar conditions also applied in patron-client relationship. Since the text does not indicate any specific relationship and the emphasis here is not benefactor-recipient or patron-client relationship but the contrast between different postures, we see no need to pursue what specific relationships might have been in mind here.

<sup>16</sup> Reclining on the foremost couch or the least important couches is determined according to status. Similar norms, emphasizing seating arrangements (cf. Luke 14:7-11; 22:14; Mt. 22.10-11; 26.7), also applied in the first-century Jewish world (Philo, *Cont.* 67).

*Ep.* 47.3; Roller, 2006). In other words, the dining postures are corporeal acts marked with symbolic power. To lie down to eat and drink other than to stand or sit or move to serve is a sign of power, privilege and prestige (Daniel-Hughes, 2012; Roller, 2006; Dunbabin, 2010; Donahue, 2015).<sup>17</sup>

With the οὐχὶ in the rhetorical question of v 27b, the Lukan Jesus expresses the conventional understanding of the great. That is, reclining at the table, with honor and power, is usually regarded as the greatest.<sup>18</sup> With the pronoun ἐγὼ, Jesus gives a contrary stance. Ὁ διακονῶν in v 27c echoes directly the reference to those serving at the table in v 27a. And more importantly, it may refer to the profound service in the work of salvation (suffering, crucifixion) which is full of humiliation (cf. Mark 10:45b, Passover context, see the following discussion about the disciples' service in v 28).<sup>19</sup> Jesus is undoubtedly the greatest among the disciples but chooses to live humbly and even in shame. By serving the disciples, Jesus gives up high status as well as the exercise of power in public eyes. With himself as the model, Jesus substitutes lower and humble appearance for the traditional idea of the greatest.

In a word, given the repetitive expression of “among disciples”, such as ἐν αὐτοῖς (v 24), ἐν ὑμῖν (v 26) and ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν (v 27), the focus of the whole episode is disciples, neither beneficence, servanthood nor the patron-client system.<sup>20</sup> Vv 26-27 follow the dispute in v 24 tightly. With the youngest and servant as the greatest, Jesus renounces the conventional equation of greatness with having honor and authority. And then using the occasion of the meal, the conventional context for demonstrating such understandings of greatness, he offers himself as a contrasting model, namely as a lowly and powerless servant.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Status is a reflection of one's power.

<sup>18</sup> Roman writers wrote satires to transgress barriers and boundaries between diners and slaves (cf. Lucian, *Dialogues of the Courtesans*; Petronius, *Satyricon*), however, none of them swaps these two.

<sup>19</sup> Its location in the passion narrative and the impending passion of Jesus implies an interpretation of Jesus' death as service (Nelson, 1994).

<sup>20</sup> These viewpoints are: the Lukan Jesus challenges conventional asymmetrical patron-client relationships and articulates a new model of relationship among people. Or the Lukan Jesus proposes a “servant-benefactor” model. Marshall (2009) argues that the conferment of a kingdom is one of beneficence that benefactors may bestow upon a subordinate. It might be right in general, but shall not be applied here.

<sup>21</sup> Ahn (2006) points to Jesus' death as an example of an alternative way of exercising authority without fully elaborating.

## 4 The Hidden Honor and Authority (vv 28-30)

Vv 28-30 are not traditionally considered part of vv 24-27 (Schürmann, 1957; Marshall, 2009). In order to support the connection between vv 28-30 and the preceding verses, several scholars point to verbal, conceptual and structural evidence. For example, Lull notes the syntactical construction (ἐγὼ δὲ, εἶμι, ὑμεῖς δε ἔστε) and the central issue of greatness which combines leadership and servanthood (Lull, 1986; Danker, 1982; Nelson, 1994). They are partly right but neglect the double meanings of v 28. The alternation between ἐγὼ/ὑμῶν in v 27c and ὑμεῖς/ἐμοῦ in v 28 shows that both Jesus and his disciples exercise the servanthood.<sup>22</sup> The literal meaning of διαμέω is “remain”, “accompany” or “stand by”, which is one of the typical characteristics of servanthood (cf. Luke 12.35-43) (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Neyrey, 1991; Crook, 2012; Crook, 2004).<sup>23</sup> The meaning of “to remain loyalty” (cf. Sirach 12.15; 22.23; 27.4; Marshall, 2009) is probably derived from the literal meaning above (Mott, 1971).<sup>24</sup> The presence of the disciples with Jesus in his trials/suffering illustrates that service is not only related to the low status but even includes humiliation under the cross. The Lukan καὶ, at the beginning of v 29 indicates that in response to the service of the disciples Jesus will confer kingship on them (BAGD, “καὶ”, 392; Nelson, 1994). In other words, the promises in vv 29-30 are to be offered in return for the apostles’ loyalty in v 28.<sup>25</sup>

The logical connection between the conferral of kingship (v 29) and the privilege of disciples (v 30), or between the banquet at Jesus’ table (v 30a) and judging the twelve tribes (v 30b) is highly debated in scholarship.<sup>26</sup> No matter

<sup>22</sup> Garland (2012) claims that the statement in v 28 is more hortatory than declarative. However, considering the hard time the disciples were having in being with Jesus, it is not totally hortatory.

<sup>23</sup> Although loyalty is also the expression of clients given to the patron, or beneficiaries to the benefactor, and loyalty to a patron or benefactor results (ideally) in benefactions being bestowed, the patron-client relationship or benefaction between Jesus and disciples is not main concern of this episode.

<sup>24</sup> Nelson (1994) argues that such loyalty shows the perseverance in an ethical discipleship. However, there is little evidence to support the theme of discipleship in this episode.

<sup>25</sup> Nelson (1994) and Garland (2012) hold a similar opinion.

<sup>26</sup> Several scholars discuss καθὼς, ἵνα and the relationship between the action of Jesus and of the Father, such as whether it is a comparative or consecutive connection. For example, Lagrange (1948) and Nelson (1994) regard the Father’s conferral as the ground of Jesus’ action. Leaney (1958) views the table as the forerunner or type of the table at the Messianic Banquet which is to inaugurate the kingdom. Nelson (1994) proposed that placing v 30a after v 29 would correct an inflated idea of the apostle’s authority. Besides, several scholars (eg. Schneider, 1977) focus on the conferral of the kingdom or the messianic banquet in itself such as in the eschatological age

which solution is proposed, it usually could not cover the explanations of the two connections at the same time. It is much more reasonable to understand it from the perspectives of the dining imagery and honor-authority theme. For v 29 and v 30, both “βασιλείαν” in v 29 and “καθήσεσθε ... κρίνοντες” in v 30 are the exercise of authority. *Διατίθημι* occurs twice and indicates that the authority of the disciples is subordinate and given from above. And the causal relationship (καί, v 27) shows that the authority of the disciples does not derive from themselves (Danker, 1987; Malina, 1988).<sup>28</sup> What is more, the present tense of *διατίθεμαι* implies that such authority is given to the disciples during Jesus’ speech, but the subjunctive mood (ἔσθητε, πίνητε) and future tense (καθήσεσθε) show that this authority, while hidden in this age will be fulfilled in the coming age.<sup>29</sup> As for v 30a and 30b, table and throne are as close to each other as are honor and power (cf. Rev 3:20-31; Isa 65:11-14). For example, the Hellenistic monarchs of the later fourth century BCE were interested in displaying royal status and generosity especially through luxurious banquets (Athenaeus, *Sophists at Dinner* 7.321c-d; Donahue, 2004). No wonder the Lukan Jesus uses the banquet motif (v 27) and kingdom/judgement (v 29) motif respectively and then combined them together in v 30. “Ἐσθητε καὶ πίνητε ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης μου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου in v 30a echoes the dining imagery in v 27. The contrast between serving on earth and being served (being a diner) in heaven implies that being served in heaven, which is much more honorable than being served on earth, is based upon the servanthood on earth. Καθήσεσθε ἐπὶ θρόνων τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς κρίνοντες τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ in 30b remind us of the power in v 25. As an ultimate and eternal authority, the privilege and power of this authority surpass greatly any secular authority in Greco-Roman society.

In all, vv 28-30 continue the topic of honor-authority. It is not the misuse of authority,<sup>30</sup> but the understanding of honor-authority itself that Jesus clarifies.

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or the church era, which has nothing to do with the dispute of the greatest. Hence we will not discuss them here.

<sup>27</sup> Bovon (2012) claims that the service will grant disciples access to the kingdom. However, it is not only the access to kingdom, but also judging the twelve tribes of Israel, that is, the authority to rule and judge, that is conferred on them. By comparison, more radically, Nelson (1994) proposes the conferral of the kingship to the disciples, the privilege of the disciples, is of course totally different from that of Jesus. *κἀγὼ* is applied to the conferral behavior from up to down.

<sup>28</sup> In v 29, it seems that the Twelve were brokers as “delegate benefactors”, and Jesus is a broker through whom God acts as a benefactor-patron. Since it is not the focus of this article, we will not elaborate this further.

<sup>29</sup> Nelson (1994) noticed this difference in tense, but he does not elaborate it.

<sup>30</sup> Some scholars see behind vv 25-27 a problem involving the misuse of authority in the Lukan community (Horn,

Vv 28-30 proposes real honor and authority. The greatest among the disciples do own some kind of honor and authority. However, instead of the manifested honor and authority in the present age, the honor and authority of the greatest are hidden in the present age and will be exercised in the future (eschatological banquet and judgment). Other than being something to be pursued, the honor and authority are given by the divine lord as the return for the service (loyalty). That is, the humble and humiliate service of the disciples makes them greatest, gaining the honor of being served and the authority of exercising judgment in heaven.

## 5 Conclusion

v 24		dispute
v 25-26	A	negative example (conventional)+positive example (uncustomary)
v 27-28	B	key thesis: apparent honor and authority
v 29-30	A'	negative example (conventional)+positive example (uncustomary)
	B'	key thesis: hidden honor and authority

The alternating of the personal pronouns “you” and “I” (v 26 “you” and v 27 “I”, then v 28 “you”, v 29 “I” and v 30 “you”) affirms that the key point here is not to replace the Roman emperor with Jesus as the greatest and best benefactor (Seo, 2015; Danker, 1998),<sup>31</sup> or criticize the tyrants and their tyranny (Danker, 1982), but general guidance about what it means to be the greatest for his disciples to follow. When certain scholars propose authority or power as the main topic on the basis of something other than the benefactor model or the patron-client system, they deviate from the focus of the dispute on the greatest.<sup>32</sup> Besides, they neglect several sub-themes proposed by scholars which

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1983; Schweizer, 1984; Talbert, 1982).

<sup>31</sup> Some scholars claim that Luke heightens Jesus’ authority in comparison with that of the emperor. However, since the title “benefactor” is not restricted to the emperor and Jesus does not mention his own authority in the immediate context, the comparison between Jesus’ authority and emperor’s is not in focus here.

<sup>32</sup> For example, Nelson (1994) demonstrates leadership and discipleship, while it is apparent that the leadership (authority) is not applied to all disciples. Thus discipleship shall not be the focus here (Marshall, 2009; Lull, 1986).

have nothing to do with the main topic they propose, such as the symbolism of Jesus' death and resurrection in vv 24-30 or the hope in vv 28-30.

The Lukan Jesus uses kings and benefactors as conventional examples of the greatest in political and civil realm respectively and draws attention to typical thinking in the Mediterranean world about the greatest: the greatest are those who enjoy and acquire honor, and who master or exercise dominant power over the others. The Lukan Jesus replaces this understanding one with a model which sees the youngest and the one serving, usually acknowledged as of low status and powerlessness, thus undermining the notion of greatness as reflecting superior status and dominating authority. With the banquet motif, Jesus takes the reclining diner and servant in the banquet setting as negative and positive examples respectively, to give a stern correction of the apostles' misguided understanding of honor and authority. In contrast to kings and benefactors, the disciples are to enjoy honor and exercise authority from the position of a servant. Therefore, honor is not to be pursued or given by the subjects/recipients, and authority is not derived from themselves but endowed by God. What is more, this honor and authority are hidden in this age and does not manifest until in the heavenly kingdom. To conclude, Lukan Jesus calls for a radical and drastic departure from the honor-authority model of greatness in Roman society and gives a new definition: the greatest are those of low status who give humble service (not the honorable and authoritative) on earth; their honor and authority are bestowed from God (not from the subordinates or themselves) and will be manifested in the age to come (not in this age).

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# Adam in the Beginning and Jesus at the End: The Intertextual Construction of ‘Adam-Christ Typology’ in the Lucan Narrative

David Chengxin Li  
South China Normal University, Guangzhou, China

This paper is a study of the intertextual relationship between the Gospel of Luke and Genesis, focuses on a close reading of the crucial narrative in Luke 3:48-4:13 and 23:32-43, and suggests that the author of Luke-Acts (hereafter referred to as Luke) characterizes Jesus as the eschaton Second Adam by constructing the intertextual relationship between relevant narratives of Luke and the ‘Lost Paradise’ story in Genesis (ch. 2-3). Concretely speaking, utilizing the concept of ‘Son of God’, ‘kingdom’, ‘Paradise’ and the theme of temptation, the evangelist relates the identity and works of Jesus to Adam and the universal disaster brought about by him (and Eve) in a remedial sense. This intertextuality leads to a unique understanding of Jesus’ pivotal role in divine history and of the origin of this role in Genesis.

The earliest Christian theological speculation of the relationship between Jesus and Adam was in Paul’s Letter to Romans (5:12-21) and the First Letter to Corinthians (15:20-28, 45-49) in the classic form of ‘Adam-Christ typology’. Thus there are two versions of ‘Adam-Christ typology’ with different focuses and languages in different contexts in Paul’s undisputed letters. Despite this typology’s significant influence on later theological speculations, it has always been taken as mere special discourse strategy for concrete contexts or even as a rhetoric tool for exhortation. The author of this paper, however, agrees with the interpretations proposed by R. B. Hays (2002/1983, 2004), N. T. Wright (1991, 1992, 2013), B. Witherington III (1994), J. D. G. Dunn (1998) and E. Adams (2002). They accept the insights of the ‘new-perspective’ and have made the further proposition that Paul’s thought world was actually built on the basis of a salvation narrative which embraces the whole history from the beginning of

creation to the End, and that his references to Genesis and the construction of ‘Adam-Christ typology’ in two letters represented the framework which connects the beginning (humans lost Paradise and being under the power of Sin & Death), the axis (Jesus fixed Adam’s mistake and restored Paradise), and the End (humans sharing the benefit of Jesus’ restoration) in a comprehensive divine history. In this perspective Adam-Jesus relationship has a realistic meaning for Paul.

The evangelist Luke had been considered as Paul’s loyal companion in church tradition. But since the rise of historical critical study of the New Testament in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the academic consensus has tended to suggest that the author of Luke-Acts was not the doctor ‘Luke’ mentioned in Philemon 1:23-25 and that the evangelist might be much younger and even that he did not have personal contact with Paul. The obvious theological ‘generation gap’ between Luke-Acts and undisputed Pauline letters has been allegedly exposed (W. W. Gasque, 1989, pp. 24-26, 32-38, 62-64, 75-86; P. Vielhauer, 1963/1951; R. Bultmann, 2007/1951-1953)<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, reception history studies in the new century have strongly emphasized the multi-dimension character of the so-called ‘Pauline tradition’, that is, that the plural Pauline traditions are not only represented by the written words in undisputed letters, but also included such elements as personality, oral preaching and organizational rules made by Paul himself. Reviving the message and image of Paul for their own historical and pastoral contexts in various critical ways, Luke and the authors of deutero-Pauline letters, together with the later authors of apocryphal Acts of Paul, should also be considered as inheritors and interpreters of Pauline traditions (F. Bovon, 2009; D. Marguerat, 2012)<sup>2</sup>. We can even propose that the framework

<sup>1</sup> Early German scholars, Ferdinand C. Baur, Karl Schrader, and Eduard Zeller, had already supposed that there were two images of Paul in the New Testament canon, the one Paul represented in his own letters, the other represented by the author of Acts. In the mid 20th century, Philipp Vielhauer, for the first time and systematically, discussed the theological differences in thought between Luke-Acts and Pauline letters on natural theology, Christology, theology of Law, and eschatology, and established an interpretive scholarly ‘tradition’ based on the sharp confrontation between two authors. An additional foundation for Vielhauer’s interpretation was Rudolf Bultmann’s classic reconstruction of the historical development of the Christian thought at the end of the first century. He thought that Luke ‘historicized’ the Pauline ‘imminent End’ eschatology to satisfy the need of the emerging universal Church.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Marguerat, further expanding and refining a supposition made by François Bovon, suggested that there were three main forms of reception of Pauline tradition in history: documentary form, biographical form, and the didactic form. The documentary form y was mainly the Christian actions of collecting and editing the Pauline letters scattered across the local churches; the biographical form was represented by the compositions of Acts

of salvation narrative should be seen as the crucial feature of Pauline heritage, and that Luke could adapt this divine narrative to his historiography project about the life of Peter, Paul, Mary and Jesus Christ. To detect the hints of ‘Adam-Christ typology’ in Lucan narrative intertextually could contribute to further understanding of Lucan theology and its connection with Pauline theology.

The author of this paper tries to argue that Luke referred to the ‘Lost Paradise’ story of Genesis in his narrative to set the background of Jesus’ earthly works, passion, and resurrection as the decisive triumph for reversing Adam’s disobedience and transgression. More specifically, Luke emphasizes Jesus’ fundamental identities as ‘Son of God’ and the ‘Lord’ of the kingdom of God, and these two identities correspond to Adam’s identities as the first Son of God and the ex-lord of the Paradise. Secondly, Luke constructs the narrative of the temptations in the wilderness to imply that Jesus’ successful resistance against Satan’s temptations concerned life, power and bodily desire, which were exactly what Adam (with Eve) were confronted with and failed to resist. The temptations in the wilderness were Jesus’ opening battle against Satan, and he went on purging the power of Satan through challenging the social injustice brought about by sinful power relationships. Finally, the unique ‘Paradise dialogue’ in the passion narrative reveals the eschatological significance of the ‘kingdom of God’ and the whole earthly career of Jesus as ‘Second Adam’, who has regained the lost Paradise for human beings, and made possible the promise of the resurrection and eternal blessing life at the End.

## 1 Jesus the other Son of God

Luke does not mention the name ‘Adam’ directly with the exception of the last sentence in the ‘Genealogy’ (Luke 3:23-38)<sup>3</sup>, and therefore we must firstly clarify the significance of this genealogy, especially the ‘son of God’ phrase in

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and later Apocryphal biographies of Paul; and finally the didactic form was represented by the far-reaching influence of Pauline theology and rhetoric in teaching reflected in later deutero-Pauline letters and the Apostolic Fathers. The later reception of the Pauline tradition was no longer controlled or directed by Paul himself or his close circle, with the result that the ‘products’ of the reception were full of tension between what reflected continuity and what reflected variance.

<sup>3</sup> Besides Luke and the undisputed Pauline letters, ‘Adam’ appears in New Testament Canon three more times: 1 Timothy 2:13, 14, and Judas 1:14.

3:38, and then reveal the special significance of this title in the Lucan narrative as a whole and its intrinsic relation to the ‘Second Adam’ identity of Jesus. In this section, therefore, the ‘Son of God’ title will be interpreted in relation to three aspects: firstly, Lucan redaction of the source (Mark); secondly, the close relation between the ‘Son of God’ and ‘Lord’ title, and finally the supernatural revelation of the ‘Son of God’ identity of Jesus.

At the very beginning of Mark, the title ‘Son of God’ is emphasized and presented as the one of chief titles of Jesus: “ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ” (Mark 1:1)<sup>4</sup>. Although uses of ‘Son of God’ in both Luke and Matthew are chiefly inherited from Mark, Luke focuses more on this title than Matthew, who rather tends to emphasize Jesus’ identity as ‘King’ (ὁ βασιλεὺς) i (Matthew 2:2). This royal identity is the core of a series of units in his infancy narrative, including Magi’s gifts, the massacre of the infants, and the holy family fleeing to Egypt. On the other hand, having a totally different infancy narrative, Luke arranges the angel as the supernatural revealer of Jesus’ first identity: the unborn child is ‘the Son of the Most High (υἱὸς ὑψίστου)’ (Luke 1:32) and again ‘he will be called Son of God (υἱὸς θεοῦ)’ (Luke 1:35). Thus the title ‘Son of God’ is the first title Jesus received in Lucan infancy narrative, even more significant, it seems, than ‘Christ’ (cf. Luke 2:11).

The ‘Son of God’ title in Luke is closely related also to the title, ‘Lord’, playing the role of further revealing Jesus’ special relationship with God the ‘Father’. Focusing on firstly on the three phrases with ‘Lord’ word in Luke 1:38, 43, and 45, people should notice that the word, ‘Lord,’ in the first and third phrases refers to God, but the middle one refers to the fetus Jesus in Mary’s womb. All three sentences are about Mary and her child’s identity and destiny, and all three ‘Lord’ words not only interact with each other in the same Marian motif, but also highlight the identity of the central figure Jesus as sharing God’s lordly glory, and consequently Jesus can be properly addressed as ‘my Lord’ by the spiritually inspired Elizabeth even before he was born. The same

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<sup>4</sup> This opening sentence of Mark has a crucial textual critical problem: whether the ‘υἱοῦ θεοῦ’ belongs to the original text? While the shorter reading without ‘υἱοῦ θεοῦ’ is reserved by minority manuscripts represented by Codex Sinaiticus, the majority manuscripts reserve the longer reading with ‘υἱοῦ θεοῦ’, including Codex Vaticanus. Bruce M. Metzger (1994) supposed that the shorter reading was caused by scribal confusion of genitive ‘Christ’ (XY) with ‘God’ (ΘY) in form of *nomina sacra*. The opposite opinion is held by Bart D. Ehrman (1993), who pointed out that the shorter reading was not a scribal confusion, but an earlier reading of an earlier textual tradition. Whether the shorter reading is the original one or not in Mark, it does not influence our interpretation of Luke and his emphasis of Jesus’ Son of God identity.

‘God-Jesus-God’ pattern of the ‘Lord’ textual references reappears in three sentences of the birth narrative, Luke 2:9, 11, and 15. God sent his angel to declare to the humble shepherds the good news of the birth of the Lord Jesus, and they recognized that this is the good news from the Lord God. It is also noteworthy that the Lord title in Luke 2:11 is in the deliberately constructed climactic relationship alongside two other titles: Saviour and Messiah. In this textual relationship, the ‘Messiah’ specifies that Jesus was not one of many saviours claimed by the powerful in the time such as the *imperator* Augustus, but the unique one whose title was attributed to God by Mary (cf. Luke 1:47), and also the one who was ‘promised to our ancestors’ (cf. Luke 1:55) for all the people (cf. Luke 2:10).

The above two textual interactions with ‘A-B-A’ pattern of interacting ‘Lord’ words and the climactic ‘Saviour-Messiah-Lord’ arrangement could make further reference to each other in close reading of infancy narrative as a whole, implying the identity of Jesus as Son of God. Therefore the narrative setting and its detail implications reveal that Jesus’ holy Sonship is the foundation for understanding his Lordship: he is the Lord because he is the Son of God who came down to earth through miraculous conception, and his identity as the Messiah depends on this eminent Lordship. This very important point gets the further confirmation in the later narrative unit, ‘the parable of the wicked tenants’ (Luke 20:9-18).

In the common synoptic tradition, the earliest version of ‘The parable of the wicked tenants’ is in Mark 12:1-12, and Matthew (21:33-46) and Luke respectively made different redactions for their own purposes. First of all, the evil tenants, in Markan version, killed the beloved son and some of servants sent before, and Matthew follows this arrangement, but Luke makes it different: the evil tenants killed only the beloved son. This Lucan redaction highlights the unique identity of the son as the rightful inheritor of the vineyard, and this identity is the precise reason why he gets killed. Since the ‘beloved son’ could be reasonably identified with Jesus himself and his being killed points to his future crucifixion, then Luke must emphasize that Jesus as Son of God would be the inheritor of God the Father’s title and ‘property’, and so be the Lord and specifically the Lord of the ‘vineyard’, that is, the Kingdom of God. On the eve of his being arrested, Jesus, and only in the Lucan narrative, thus confirmed that he had already inherited the Kingdom from God:

I confer on you just as my Father has conferred on me (καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου) a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom (ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου).....' (Luke 22:29-30a).

Differing from the parallel sayings in Matthew, the Lukan version does not just communicate an eschatological expectation, but also reveals that Jesus had already been the Lord of the Kingdom of God that had been brought down on earth by himself, and that he was capable of sharing this reality of kingdom with his followers.

To sum up, by the subtle arrangements of textual interactions within specific narrative units and the redaction of the traditional synoptic parable, Luke closely relates the Sonship of Jesus with his Lordship, and the Kingdom of God is, at the same time, the Kingdom of His beloved Son Jesus (cf. Luke 14:15, 24, 22:16). Jesus is considered as the co-Lord of the Kingdom of God and the sharer of ultimate Lordship, mainly because he is the rightful heir from the beginning of his earthly life who was to be killed according to the plan of salvation. In this paradoxical way, Jesus shares the Kingdom with his followers. In this perspective, Jesus' 'Son of God' identity becomes the ultimate foundation of other titles such as 'Christ/ Messiah', 'son of David', 'prophet' and 'teacher/ rabbi'<sup>5</sup>. Finally Luke addresses Jesus as Lord with God is not for the purpose of manifesting the divinity of Jesus, but to reveal Jesus' special authority as 'Son of God', the heir of God's Kingdom, and consequently the co-Lord of that Kingdom. This p is perhaps the real reason that John the Baptist did not preach the 'the Kingdom of God' in Lukan narrative, rather than Conzelmann's explanation (1969/1954 pp. 24-27, 102).

The third and the final crucial point about the special nature of the 'Son of God' title is that Luke prudently limits his references to this title. We should

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<sup>5</sup> Paul also attached great importance to Jesus' titles, 'Son of God' and 'Lord' and their relation to Jesus' passion and resurrection, and accordingly he also adopted earlier christological traditions in his letters, such as in Romans 1:3-4 and Philippians 2:6-11. See M. Hengel (1986/1975, pp. 57-58). These two critical passages reveals that Paul might connect 'Son of God' with 'the Lord' on the basis of Jesus' resurrection and his heavenly glory, and this, of course, does not presuppose that Jesus became Son of God and the Lord after his resurrection and ascension in Paul's mind, but just confirms Paul's post-Easter perspective about Jesus and his reign. See Romans 5:10, 8:3, 29, 32; 1 Corinthians 1:9, 15:28; 2 Corinthians 1:19; Galatians 1:16, 2:20, 4:4-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10. On the other hand, Luke clearly confirms that Jesus inherited the Kingdom of God even before his birth, and brought it into the world through his powerful preaching, so that 'Son of God' and 'the Lord' are naturally and closely connected with each other in the ongoing gospel narrative, which Luke presents from a pre-Easter perspective.

notice that ‘Son of God’ never appears in the mouth of a normal human being with the exception of 22:70 (we will discuss this below). This phenomenon is unique to Luke. For instance, whereas in Matthew 14:33 (par. Mark 6:45-52) people who saw Jesus walking on the water ‘worshiped him saying “Truly you are the son of God!”’, Luke makes no such addition to this story. Again Peter confessed that Jesus is ‘Messiah and the son of the living God’ in Matthew 16:16, whereas in the Lucan version only ‘Messiah’ is mentioned (Luke 9:20). In passion narrative of Matthew, ‘son of God’ appears in the mouths of the people mocking and of the Roman centurion (Matthew 27:40, 53, 44, par. Mark 15:39), whereas it is not mentioned in Lucan passion narrative at all. Respectively, the important fact of Jesus being ‘Son of God’ is expressed in the Lucan narrative through the revelatory ‘voice’ from the ‘cloud’ (Luke 3:22) and from ‘heaven’ (9:35), and in the mouth of superhuman characters such as angels (1:32, 35), Satan (4:3, 9), demons (4:41, 8:28), and Jesus himself (Luke 2:49; Acts 1:4, 7). Luke is likely emphasizing that Jesus as Son of God is not a simple fact that can be easily and directly picked up or recognized by this-worldly human wisdom and experiences. Even Mary and the disciples’ close personal contact with Jesus is not sufficient for their understanding before they witness his resurrection and ascension (e.g. Luke 2:50-51, 9:45). Supernatural revelation by God and his angels, and the reluctant recognition by otherworldly being such as Satan and demons are the preconditions for perceiving Jesus as the special Son of God. For Luke, this is a transcendent message that is too subversive for normal human cognition. The episode of ‘boy Jesus in the Temple’ (Luke 2:41-52) is the crucial and distinct presentation of this subversiveness of Jesus’ identity as Son of God. In this narrative unit, when Mary found Jesus in the temple sitting among religious teachers, she asked: ‘Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father (ὁ πατήρ σου) and I have been searching for you (ἐζητοῦμέν σε) in great anxiety.’ Jesus, however, answered: ‘Why were you searching for me (τί ὄτι ἐζητεῖτέ με)? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house (ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου)?’ (Luke 2:48--49) Jesus’ response not only makes his parents confused, but also seriously challenges the readers (Fitzmyer, 1981, pp. 443-444)<sup>6</sup>. In this conversation, we should notice that Jesus

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to notice that this is the first phrase said by Jesus in the whole narrative, and also the first self-revealing statement concerning his particular identity, and that its subversiveness characterizes his actions and speeches. In fact, the key words ‘ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου’ can express three levels of meaning in the context: (a) in God’s Temple where; (b) to join the work of the God, that is his saving plan; (c) in the midst of people who

in fact made a tit-for-tat response to his mother. Firstly he replaced ‘your father’ in Mary’s question with ‘my Father’ to refer to his Sonship with God, and the Temple as the location for conversation also implies the presence of God. Secondly, Jesus directly challenged Mary’s ‘search’ (ζητέω) and this exact verb has the meaning of ‘understanding’ in the cognitive dimension. In this sense, Jesus pointed out that the way by which his parents understand or ‘search’ for their ‘child’ is partial or even totally wrong, and they should have come to the Temple directly, but not have been wandering around Jerusalem for three days. This distinctive opening story implants in the narrative the recurrent theme of Jesus’ subversion of common human cognition and experiences by his mysterious identity, critical message, challenging actions, and even his death. After the crucifixion, the angel gently criticized those women who saw the empty tomb, echoing the response made by boy Jesus: ‘Why do you look for (τί ζητεῖτε···) the living among the dead?’ (Luke 24:5) And after the ascension of Jesus, the angels again challenge the disciples in similar manner: ‘Why do you stand looking up towards (τί ἐστήκατε ἐμβλέποντες···) the heaven?’ (Acts 1:11). So these ‘Why do you···’ questions in crucial scenes of the narrative are serious challenges to the audience, reminding people to self-scrutinize the manner in which they understand Jesus carefully and continuously and to correct their misunderstanding.

We now turn to the only scene in which ‘Son of God’ appeared in the mouth of human being, that is the short conversation between the Jewish authority and the arrested Jesus (Luke 22:66-70). Luke made significant redactional changes to the original version he inherited from Mark 14:55-60. The most impressive one is the deletion the false accusations made by false witnesses. The effect is that the scene is no longer depicted as an interrogation, but rather as a dialogue about the problem of Jesus’ identity (J. A. Fitzmyer, 1981, p. 1461). The two questions by the chief priests are: ‘If you are the Messiah’ and ‘are you then the Son of God?’ To understand deeper meaning of these words, we need to go back to the opening section of Luke’s narrative. When Jesus drove out demons from men, the demons cried out ‘You are the Son of God!’ Luke makes the additional comment: ‘because they knew that he was the Messiah.’ (Luke 4:41) This is the first time that ‘Son of God’ is connected with ‘Messiah’ directly in the narrative and shows that Jesus’ true identity is not incomprehensible for evil

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belong to God. All three levels of meaning refer to the close relation of Jesus and his ‘Father’.

superhuman beings. On the eve of crucifixion Luke has arranged to have this ‘Messiah-Son of God’ connection reappearing in the mouths of the hostile priests in a clearly negative and sneering sense, because they took for granted that Jesus was just another Messianic-pretender. In another words, the priests gave expression to exactly the same truth as the evil demons had done, but at the same time denied it immediately. This contradiction indicates the subversiveness of Jesus’ Son of God identity again. The final response of Jesus to the question of the priests is not a simple ‘I am’, but ‘You say that I am (ὁμοῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι).’ (Luke 22:70) This response points out subtly that even if these most learned religious leaders found out the truth through the dialogue, they cannot accept it and were even further away from the truth than the demons were.

To summarize this section, it has shown that Luke takes Jesus’ ‘Son of God’ title very seriously in his unique narrative. Taking Jesus’ divine Sonship as the most critical indicator of his identity, making it the foundation of other titles such as ‘Messiah’, ‘Lord’, ‘Saviour’, and finally emphasizing its cognitive subversiveness and transcendence as far as human beings were concerned, Luke differentiates Jesus from any other prophet or angel sent by God before and makes him the marker of the new age. He has a very special existence with an unprecedented relationship with God, has undeniable authority, and also has a special position in God’s salvation plan expressed with a paradox. The paradoxical and mysterious characteristics of Jesus’ identity might echo Paul’s words about the cross of Jesus which is ‘a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles’ (1 Corinthians 1:23). It seems that Luke transformed the single turning point of the crucifixion, that is Paul’s sole focus, into a biographical narrative encompassing Jesus’ whole earthly career from birth to ascension. This Lucan transformation was not only according to the synoptic traditions and reflecting his historiography interest, but was also for the purpose of developing further the Pauline ‘Adam-Christ typology’. The following section will expound how Luke made intertextual references to the Adam story of Genesis in the opening and closing scenes of the Gospel.

## 2 The Two Sons of God

The large narrative unit of ‘Baptism--Genealogy--Temptation’ (Luke 3:21-4:13) is the second opening section after the infancy narrative in the Gospel of Luke, and here Luke presents his own version of ‘Adam-Christ typology’ in a more or less subtle way. The implication behind the unique and strange order of these three sub-units is the focus of our discussion. Among them, Jesus’ genealogy (Luke 3:23-38), which addresses Adam as the ‘son of God’ directly, is the starting point for our interpretation.

### 2.1 Genealogy (Luke 3:23-38)

Luke emphasizes Jesus’ special relationship with God, but the infancy narrative also presents Jesus as a normal Jewish baby born under the Law and as the offspring of the royal bloodline of David (Luke 1:27, 69, 2:4). The obvious tension between the two identities, Son of God and Seed of David, is generated by this twofold focus. A similar problem exists also in Matthew’s genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17), where the virginal conception of Jesus makes the relationship between Jesus and the Davidic royal line unreal, and the author of Matthew inserts Mary into the genealogy and specifically points out that Jesus ‘ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη’ (Matthew 1:16) to blur the Jesus-Joseph relationship. Furthermore, a series of texts indicate that contemporary people who considered Jesus as the Davidic Messiah were totally wrong (Matthew 1:1, 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30-31, 21:9, especially 22:41-46). This tension over Jesus’ identity was present already in earlier synoptic tradition (Mark 10:47-48, 11:10, 12:35-37, cf. Luke 18:35-43, 20:41-44; Acts 2:25-36). We will show that Luke not only inherits the negative aspect of this idea to point out who Jesus is not, but also the positive to point out who Jesus really is<sup>7</sup>.

At the beginning of the genealogy, Luke inserts ‘ὡς ἐνομίζετο’ to describe the Jesus-Joseph relationship, in order to point out more directly that the father-and-son relationship is an illusion. This is the first hint given by Luke to remind people not to interpret the genealogy superficially. Then what is the function of the Lucan genealogy’s enumerating so many names? The key to answer this question is the coverage of the genealogy with its unique ending words: ‘τοῦ

<sup>7</sup> Some of the ideas reflected in the following interpretation draw upon are the insightful article by Craig A. Evans (1995).

Ἀδὰμ τοῦ θεοῦ' (Luke 3:38). Different from the genealogy of Matthew, the Lucan genealogy is not just in reverse order, but also covers the whole human lineage from Jesus to the first human, and even astonishingly includes God. This is the second hint for interpreting the genealogy. Following the logic of the genealogy, 'τοῦ Ἀδὰμ τοῦ θεοῦ' does not just mean 'Adam was from the God' or 'Adam was made by the God', but also means 'Adam the son of the God'. J. Jeremias (1985a) proposed that the key point of the Lucan genealogy is to construct the direct relationship between Jesus and Adam, because they were both special sons of the God. In our view M. D. Johnson (1988) mistakenly criticized Jeremias' interpretation imposing the Pauline 'Adam-Christ' thought on the Lucan text, and supposed that the focal point of the genealogy is just to emphasize Jesus as the 'Son of God'. In doing so Johnson made a distinction between the genitive 'God' and the genitive of other names, especially 'Adam', and thereby missed one of the important clues for interpreting the genealogy. The genitive 'God' cannot be separated from the main body of the genealogy. It modifies 'Adam', showing that Adam was the very son of the God and that Jesus is another one. The implication of this reading is that both Jesus and Adam, on the one hand, have a closer relationship with God than any other human; and, on the other hand, that both, Jesus and Adam, came into the world in a very special manner: Adam was made by God's hand directly, and Jesus was born by a virgin chosen by God mysteriously. In the other words, though Adam and Jesus are indeed human, they are not from any natural human bloodline. Adam, however, was the beginning of the whole human lineage, and now Jesus was about to create a new human lineage by bringing into the old world a new reality. In this perspective, Jesus, it seems, is like Adam's brother, not rather than his progeny.

We may push the interpretation of this link between Adam and Jesus as sons of God further by noting its implication, namely that what Jesus as Son of God enjoys is what Adam once enjoyed, or rather, the privileges which Jesus has are drawn from that of the other son of God, Adam, including sonship with God, the status of being heir of the property, and the lordship over this property. In the canonical Genesis, the making of Adam was the climax of the creation, and he was appointed as the steward of the created world with the special authority to name everything (Genesis 1:28, 2:7-15). All in all, Adam was the former lord of God's kingdom, Paradise. But after failing to resist the temptation of Satan (serpent) and violating God's commandment, Adam lost his privileges. This

was the origin of the sad human situation of being far away from God and under the dominion of Satan.

If this is a sound suggestion for the function of the genealogy, it may provide a framework for understanding the basic meaning of ‘salvation’ brought by Jesus the second Son of God in the Lucan thought world. Jesus’ main mission is to fix the mistakes made by Adam (and Eve also). This is in order to retake Paradise, regaining the privileges and glory of the human being, and finally subverting the power of Satan, thus bringing renewal to the world, and rebuilding God’s kingdom. And most importantly, the follower of Jesus the Lord will be the beneficiaries of Jesus’ success. Examining the above suggestion will be the basic concern of the following interpretations of the other two narrative sub-units and the ‘Baptism--Genealogy--Temptation’ unit as a whole.

## 2.2 The Spirit in Jesus’ Baptism

We must now consider such the question of why the genealogy is inserted between the two subunits ‘Baptism’ and ‘Temptation’. In the Gospel of Matthew, the genealogy is put on the beginning of the narrative, having no close relation with the ‘Baptism’ and ‘Temptation’ (Matthew 3:13-4:11). In this Matthew follows the arrangement in Mark 1:9-13. Luke however does not do so because he wants to highlight something by having the genealogy dominate the interpretation of the whole unit.

If the significance of the genealogy is based on the identity of Jesus as the son of God and the intertextual reference to the Adam story, then Jesus’ baptism and temptation must be relevant for this perspective. First, the climax of the baptism scene is the divine voiced from heaven which declared: ‘You are my beloved son (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός)·····’ (Luke 3:22); and later in the wilderness the devil said to Jesus twice ‘If you are the Son of God (εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ)·····’ (Luke 4:3, 9) in the challenging words of the first and last temptation, showing that the three temptations are actually directed at Jesus as Son of God. Thus Jesus’ identity as ‘Son of God’ is the common theme of all three sub-units and connect Jesus’ birth and infancy narrative with the stories of his public ministry in Galilee. In this narrative arrangement, the genealogy referring to the first Adam is surrounded by the other two sub-units and

becomes the core for making sense of them, the ‘Paradise Lost’ story in Genesis is the logical intertextual interpretive lens through which to read them.

In the baptism scene, the actions of the Holy Spirit are related to the dominating ‘Son of God’ theme. In the earlier story of ‘Annunciation’, the angel’s key message is ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you (πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ), and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, therefore the one to be born will be called holy and Son of God (διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ).’ (Luke 1:35) This unique revelation not only showed the essence of the Spirit (πνεῦμα) as the active power of God, but also closely connected the quality of Jesus’ identity as Son of God with this Spirit in a generative sense. This connection is re-narrated vividly in the baptism scene, in which the solemn pronouncement and the acting Spirit came upon Jesus at the same time. Therefore the virginal conception and baptism both point to the extraordinary physical ‘creation’ of the Son of God, Jesus. As shown in the genealogy that Jesus and Adam both have superhuman origin, we can suggest that the Jesus’ birth or being named as Son of God is cross-referenced to the creation of the man in Genesis (Genesis 2:7) deliberately by Luke, because the Spirit also played an important life-bestowing role there. Genesis 2:7 reads: ‘……and (God) breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being.’ The word ‘πνοή’ has the same origin with ‘πνεῦμα’, that is the verb ‘πνέω’, means ‘blow’ or ‘breath’. These two nouns were applied in Christian literature as early as the end of 1<sup>st</sup> century and early 2<sup>nd</sup> century in exchangeable manner referring to the Holy Spirit specifically and the power of God in general<sup>8</sup>. Although not in exact the same wording, the noun ‘πνεῦμα’ may guide the readers to think about the similar word ‘πνοή’ and the parallel scenes in narrative of Genesis.

But in contrast to the more or less passive ‘πνοή’, ‘πνεῦμα’ in the Lucan narrative is a more active and more public personalized characteristic. This characteristic of Spirit is specifically shown in Jesus’ baptism scene, where the whole narrative in needs to be considered. For first of all, in contrast to Mark 1:10, the Spirit’s coming down is objectified and presented in a more public manner through deleting the ‘εἶδεν’ which implies the subjective viewpoint of Jesus. The whole scene, including heavenly sound and the interaction between Jesus and the Spirit, is presented as a public event, not Jesus’ private

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<sup>8</sup> BDAG, p. 838. Also see *I Clement* 21:9, 57:3.

experience. Secondly, Luke visualizes the Spirit further by adding ‘in bodily form’ (σωματικῶ εἶδει) before the original ‘like a dove’ (Luke 3:22, par. Mark 1:10), thus redactionally transforming the metaphoric expression into an objective description and making the scene more open to visual imagination. Finally, the objectification and visualization of the Spirit made by Luke’s redaction lays open the path for the Spirit’s further personalized interactions with other human characters in the later narrative. Whereas the Spirit effects people such as Zechariah, Elisabeth, Simeon, and John through indirect ‘inspiration’ or their being filled with the Spirit (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 2:25-27), after Luke 4:1 and especially in the volume of the Acts of Apostles, the Spirit more and more acted as an angelic character, interacting with people directly, whom people can seek to deceive and reject (Acts 5:3, 7:51) and having dialogue with people without mediation (Acts 8:29, 10:19, 11:12, 13:2, 16:6), and even being considered to be the co-witness with the apostles for Jesus’ exaltation (Acts 5:32). We can say that the Spirit is characterized as a loyal companion to Jesus or his followers, and a helpful assistant, just as Eve was a helper to Adam.

To sum up this section, the ‘Baptism-Genealogy-Temptation’ unit in general is constructed with the aim to emphasize the identity of Jesus as Son of God corresponding to the first son of God, Adam. Based on the interpretation above, further clarification of the narrative logic of the order of this unit is possible. First of all, Jesus’ being baptized by the Spirit is objectified as a public event open to witness, implying that this implies that Jesus’ identity as another Son of God beyond Adam is not a secret, the guidance of angelic and the Spirit’s revelation being a reliable source. Secondly, the genealogy is put after the baptism to explain the ‘Beloved Son’ pronouncement and show that Jesus was the second Son of God after the first one Adam, thus referring back to the creation and the narrative of ‘Paradise Lost’ in Genesis. Finally, Jesus’ confrontation with Satan in the wilderness was the second face to face confrontation between a Son of God and Satan. Jesus’ unprecedented victory in the wilderness made him the only human being who got rid of the power of Satan. This was the foundation for his preaching, healing and bringing the new reality of God’s kingdom into the world for salvation. In other words, Jesus was not only characterized as the second Adam, but also achieved what Adam failed to do, that is, to resist attacks from the Devil, and therefore he became the only channel for human salvation and the restoration of Paradise. The following

section will examine the specific intertextual correspondences between ‘Temptation in the wilderness’ and ‘Paradise Lost’.

### 2.3 Temptations in the wilderness

The key for the narrative logic of the ‘Temptation in the wilderness’ is the order of three temptations. Given that there are two versions of the temptation narrative in Matthew and Luke with the almost same content in different order, we cannot decide which one is the original from Q and may assume that two evangelists ordered the temptations according to their own purposes. We will show that Lucan order is according to the Second Adam (Son of God) theme.

Because of the obvious citation of Deuteronomy 6:13, 16, 8:3 in this narrative unit, some scholars suggested that Jesus’ ‘temptation in the wilderness’, in both versions, in Matthew and Luke, refers to the 40 years’ wandering in the wilderness of the people of Israel and that Jesus’ success critically reversed the repeated failure of Israel (J. A. Fitzmyer, 1981, pp. 509-510; L. T. Johnson, 1991, p. 76). The unsatisfactory aspect of this interpretation is that it isolates the temptation scene from the narratives before and after, and ignores the connections between them. R. E. Brown (1961) thought the temptations narrative is the dramatization of Jesus’ private experiences. On the other hand, J. Jeremias (1985a) focused on the connection of the temptation scene and the genealogy and proposed that the three temptations as a whole, no matter in what order, refer to the ‘Paradise Lost’ story figuratively. Jeremias’s opinion is insightful, but without substantial justification.

In the concise ‘Paradise Lost’ story in Genesis 3:1-6, it is the evil serpent who began the dialogue: ‘Did God say, you should not eat from any tree in the garden?’ Eve replied: ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, you shall not eat of the fruit……nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’ Then the serpent said: ‘You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ Listening to this, Eve ‘saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that it was to be desired to make one wise’. She ate the fruit and Adam did the same.

Although the serpent seems to converse with Eve alone, the words ‘with her’ (μετ’ αὐτῆς) in Genesis 3:6b LXX may imply Adam’s presence at that moment, and the decision to transgress the command was not made by Eve alone,

because Adam should also have remembered God's command (cf. Genesis 2:16--17). Thus Adam and Eve were confronted with three temptations in different ways. (a) Firstly, the serpent's first question led Eve to mention God's command and especially death as the serious consequence of transgression, but the serpent totally denied the truth of this consequence and implied that God was a liar, in order to alienate the human from God. (b) Secondly, serpent stirred up the greed and lust of human hearts by pointing out benefits of eating the fruit, as becoming wise and 'knowing good and evil' like God, and also by implying that the command made by God was due to his fear and jealousy. (c) The final aspect of the temptation was not provided by the serpent directly but was the consequence of denying the death penalty and believing in the fruit's benefits, and that 'the tree was good for food.....it was a delight to the eyes' (Genesis 3:6a), namely the the desire of human fleshly appetite. Looking closely, these three temptations have a particular order based on the seriousness of each of them. The first one, the concern about death and the human-God relationship is the deadliest. The second one is about possessing godly wisdom and power, and this might deny the absolute domination of God in an intellectual sense. The final temptation about the fleshly desire is on the lowest level. Therefore the seriousness of the three temptations in Genesis is gradually diminishing, concerning life, power and bodily desire respectively.

Turning to Jesus' temptations in wilderness in the light of the observations above, it is clear that the devil continued tempting the Son of God Jesus in the same ways: life, power and bodily desire, but in exactly the reverse order in the Lucan version: bodily desire, power and life. When Jesus finished fasting in the wilderness and felt hungry, the devil's temptation began. He firstly encouraged Jesus to satisfy his fleshly appetite. Jesus, of course, can easily turn stones into bread according to the later story of the 'Five Loaves and Two Fishes', but the purpose of the devil is to encourage Jesus to use his power to satisfy his own will instead of God's will and plan and to sow the seed of disobedience. When the first attack failed, devil lured Jesus to rebel against God openly and to be under the authority of devil for the reward of 'kingdoms of the world' and their 'glory and authority' and so to gain power for himself. We should notice that devil did not call Jesus 'Son of God' in this second attack, because he wanted Jesus to abandon his godly Sonship, and to be the 'son of the devil'. As the serpent lured Adam and Eve to transgress the only command of God to destroy his absolute authority, the devil here pushed Jesus to transgress the 'the greatest

commandment', that is, to be obedient to the one God wholeheartedly (Deuteronomy 6:13, 10:20; Luke 10:25--28). When both attacks totally failed, the devil launched his final attack by advising Jesus to test God with his own earthly life. This challenge was, in fact, a lethal strategy intending to alienate Jesus from God because it posed a question to Jesus: 'Was God reliable, or worthy of trust? You should confirm it by a test!' As by denying God's command, the serpent had told Adam and Eve that the God was a liar and he envied of human being, the devil confronted Jesus similarly here. Furthermore, testing with one's life could also cause Jesus to fear death and make him hesitate to risk his life in preaching and challenging the authorities. The fear of following his destiny is an important element in the common synoptic scene of 'Prayer on the Mount of Olives' (Luke 22:39--46, cf. Mark 14:32--42, Matthew 26:36--46), which reveals that Jesus was indeed once troubled by this kind of fear at that critical moment. Unlike Adam, Jesus refused to put God to the test and confirmed his absolute faith in God without any doubt.

Accordingly, Jesus faced the same evil attacks with the same strategy that Adam and Eve once confronted. The evangelist set the order of temptations in this specific way to emphasize the connection between the 'Paradise Lost' story in Genesis and his narrative of Jesus' temptations, in order to show that the second Son of God Jesus succeeded in repelling devil in the same war in which the first son of God Adam failed. Although 'πειρασμός' and its verb form 'πειράζω' do not appear in the LXX Genesis, Luke inherits this vocabulary from Mark and puts the Genesis 'Paradise Lost' story into the matrix of the meaning of the theme of 'temptation' through the intertextual connection demonstrated above. This 'temptation' theme is further developed in the narratives of the Gospel and Acts, Jesus' success in this first confrontation is a prelude to a series of battles, in which Jesus and his followers are on one side, power of Satan and his supernatural and earthly dominion are in the opposite camp. So although we cannot say that Jesus had gained the final victory in the wilderness, he had brought new reality of God's kingdom down to earth, and the monopoly of evil power over human beings had already been broken, and the fate of Satan and his kingdom had also been determined.

### 3 Temptations, Sin, and the Power of Satan

After the temptations in the wilderness, Jesus began his public life. Luke summarized the first phase of Jesus' activities in region of Galilee (Luke 4:16-9:50) with one sentence (Luke 4:14-15). The key words of this sentence, 'Jesus filled with the power of the Spirit' (ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος), together with 4:1 'πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου', indicate Jesus' being empowered by the Holy Spirit. This state may be the mark of his identity as Son of God and explains the origin of the force or power Jesus had in the battles of the wilderness temptation and his resistance against further temptations in his ministry.

Beyond deception and luring, 'temptation' appears in Lucan narrative also in the form of offending and persecution. We should notice that this second aspect of the meaning of 'πειρασμός' has its roots in the LXX, expressing 'testing', 'refutation', 'offending' and 'doubt', and the object of these actions usually is God<sup>9</sup>. The author of Luke-Acts uses both categories of meaning of 'πειρασμός' (and verb 'πειράζω') flexibly in his construction of the temptation theme in the ongoing narrative, in which Jesus and his followers, as Adam were, were tempted by the devil to test God, or were threatened fiercely by enemies to persuade them to abandon their preaching<sup>10</sup>. All in all, testing or temptation expresses a hostile relation in general, and specifically in Luke-Acts as a whole, they actually manifest a cosmic structure of relationships in which human beings, Satan and God are in a battle against each other, being each being the enemy of the other. The builder of this structure is Satan with the help of the first human couple in Paradise. This cosmic relationship structure dominates

<sup>9</sup> In Exodus 17:2, 7 'why do you test the Lord (τί πειράζετε κύριον).....because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord (τὸ πειράζειν κύριον)', saying that the people of Israel complained about God's arrangement and did not trust God's guidance. In Numbers 14:22, God pointed out that 'they have tested me these ten times (ἐπειράσαν με τοῦτο δέκατον) and have not obey my voice'. 'Test' or 'tempt' here obviously means violate God's rules. One of the best examples is Psalm 78:18, 41, 56 'They tested God in their heart.....they tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel.....they tested the Most High God, and rebelled against him, they did not observe his decrees (ἐπειράσαν καὶ παρεπίκραναν τὸν θεὸν τὸν ὑψίστον καὶ τὰ μαρτύρια αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐφύλαξαντο).' 'Test' is placed side by side with 'rebel' and 'not observe'. Another similar example is Malachi 3:15, where 'test' even means 'doing evil things' and 'greed'.

<sup>10</sup> The most horrible event about testing God is the sudden death of Ananias and his wife Sapphira who 'lied to the Holy Spirit' (Acts 5:3). Peter criticized them: 'How it is that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test (πειράσαι τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου)?' (Acts 5:9).

fundamentally the life setting of humans on earth. The human 'war' against God is also extended to the various fields of personal relationships, interactions among people being dominated by indifference, deception (testing), hostility, envy, and even social oppression in a macro-dimension. As has long been recognized by interpreters, Luke-Acts is concerned about the unjust social power relationships in Roman and Jewish societies in political and economic terms, especially the disparity between the rich and the poor, and between the political authorities and the powerless. It seems reasonable that the evangelist considered the unrighteous social power relationship as the visible symptom of the invisible cosmic war, because Jesus' social criticism not only against human evil, but at the same time also against the power of Satan diffused in the world, and Jesus' ethical teaching are always accompanied by his exorcisms and miraculous healings. Therefore we should not think about the topics in the Gospel such as power of Satan, sin and the forgiveness of sin in the narrow sense of spirituality and morality, but in a sense of social power structure and the deeper cosmic struggle between Satan and God.

Based on the above interpretation, we may observe in what manner our evangelist reshapes the classic Pauline statement that 'sin came into the world through one man' (Romans 5:12-21), and why the forgiveness of sin is considered as the main dimension of salvation. If the meaning of 'sin' in Lucan narrative could be grasped from the perspective of unjust social relationship and its Satanic origin, we must answer the following questions: Why do the offended or the oppressed ones also share the responsibility for sin? Why must they also be forgiven by Jesus? And what is the exact meaning of forgiveness?

We should bear a harsh observation of reality in mind, namely that everyone, no matter if he or she in the position of oppressor or oppressed, is a participator in a concrete social power relationship, and, morally speaking, everyone has a share in the unrighteousness (or righteousness) of this social structure, more or less. On the one hand, the oppressors struggle to keep themselves in this powerful position of advantage by various means; on the other hand, the oppressed may feel satisfied with or be used to their weak, powerless, and exploited positions without any attempts to resist, and may even agree with the ideologies of the exploiters. We can easily find that Adam and Eve got themselves trapped by the devil out of their own ignorance and greed, and brought about the unrighteous relationship structure on earth. They are the victims, but at the same time they are the co-builders of this system, and shared

responsibility and are guilty in this sense. ‘Sin’ is not an abstract ethical concept, but the everyday running of this unrighteous social system. Under its power, people tend to treat each other in the same way in which Satan treated Adam and Eve. Then ‘sin’ is like a force field controlling everything being put under its influence, even including the whole human race. In this perspective, forgiveness of sin brought by the ‘second Adam’ Jesus is the series of actions to destroy this sinful structure or system made by Adam (and Eve), rescue the human race from this evil world, and finally even transform the world by the new order, that is the ‘Kingdom of God’. Examples from the Gospel may shed light on this interpretation of ‘Sin’ and salvation.

In the story of ‘Healing a Paralytic’ (Luke 5:17--26), Jesus ‘saw their faith’ (ἰδὼν τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν) and declared to the paralytic ‘your sins are forgiven for you’ (ἄνθρωπε, ἀφέωνται σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι σου) (Luke 5:20), and then the man was healed. This visible ‘faith’ is the paralytic’s and his friends’ positive response to Jesus’ preaching, so that they even opened the roof of the house to seek healing. What they wanted to get rid of was not only the physical disability, but also the social marginalization and disadvantaged social-economic position brought about because of this bodily handicap. The appearance of Jesus and his preaching provided the opportunity to improve the situation and he was no longer satisfied with the existing reality. The paralytic’s sin was forgiven in this sense, and the new reality with the new order was presented visibly among the people. Jesus’ action of preaching, forgiving and healing was obviously subversive, and annoyed the scribes who represented the authority in communities. We can find the similar scene in Luke 7:36--50. The woman considered by Jesus as ‘sinful’ was guilty not because of the reason (not so clear in the text) imposed by the Pharisees and inhabitants of the town, but because of her cooperative attitude towards stigmatization and discrimination. But she caught the opportunity to meet Jesus and totally trust in him for giving her power to achieve a renewal of life. Jesus specifically pointed out that ‘your faith has saved you’ (ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε) (Luke 7:50). The same declaration also appears in other stories, such as ‘Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman’ (Luke 8:48), ‘Cleansing the Lepers’ (Luke 17:19), and ‘Healing the Blind Beggar’ (Luke 18:42). We can suppose that ‘faith’ in the mouth of Jesus in these scenes is the positive attitude to Jesus’ preaching followed by actual practices to break free from the Satanic shackles. Forgiveness of sins was Jesus’

authoritative action to challenge the social relation structure through enlightening people's spirits and changing people's oppressed life setting.

Therefore Jesus was waging a war against Satan's power and went toward the triumph step by step. H. Conzelmann (1969/1954, pp. 16, 156, 180) suggested in his classic monograph that Jesus' public preaching career in Luke has a very special characteristic, namely that Satan or the devil was absent in this period, and this is a 'Satan-free period' with marked out by Luke 4:13 and 22:3, and that the disciples of Jesus were protected from Satanic attack during this period. S. Brown (1969, pp. 5-11), however, pointed out that Jesus and his follower were always faced with the hostility from the earthly evil system, and especially the testing imposed by Jewish authorities, and that therefore a 'Satan-free period', is meaningless in the Lucan narrative. The author of this paper agrees with Brown, because Jesus clearly said that exorcism is the combat operation against 'the kingdom of Satan' with the power of God's Kingdom (Luke 11:14-23). Jesus also corrected the disciples' optimism by pointing out that 'I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves' (Luke 10:3), in the other words, being a disciple of Jesus is a risky career. The hostility from the Jewish authorities is described by Luke as 'testing', for example, Luke 10:25 which records that 'a lawyer stood up to test him (Jesus)' (ἐκπειράζων αὐτόν), and 11:6 writes of the actions of 'others to test him (πειράζοντες), kept demanding from him a sign from heaven'. On his last night on earth, Jesus said to the disciples: 'you are those who have stood by me in my temptations (ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου)' (Luke 22:28), and he also predicted that 'Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat' (22:31). This prophecy was fulfilled immediately after Jesus' ascension, when the followers of Jesus continued to be persecuted by authorities, and be tested from inside, as narrated in Acts. Faced with the disputes and the danger of schism, Peter questioned the believers who 'came down from Judah' critically: 'why are you now putting God to the temptation (νῦν οὖν τί πειράζετε τὸν θεὸν.....)?' (Acts 15:10). Finally, we should also notice that the Lucan version of Lord's Prayer which ends with 'do not bring us to the temptation (καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν)', also fits the general theme of temptation, and perhaps emphasizes it intentionally.

To sum up this section. In the narrative world of Luke-Acts, Satan's temptation or testing of the 'Second Adam' Jesus and his followers is one of the most important themes and key clues. Sin could be understood in the sense of being an unrighteous power relation structure which dominates the human

social world, that is the visible kingdom of Satan. This evil system is rooted in the invisible disturbed cosmic relation structure brought by Satan's successful temptation in Paradise and Adam's failure. The forgiveness of sin is a series of subversive actions against the evil system accompanied by preaching, exorcism, and healing. Jesus' authority for these actions is based on his special identity of the second Son of God, and also based on his unprecedented overcoming of Satan's temptations in the wilderness with the power of the Spirit.

## 4 Paradise and the Kingdom of God

Crucifixion followed by the resurrection is the climax of the narrative in all four Gospels. It implies the turning point of the general salvation narrative. In this critical scene of the crucifixion, Luke refers to Jesus' identity as 'Son of God' or specifically speaking, to the 'second Adam' theme again through intertextual references to one of the key words of Genesis 2-3, 'Paradise', and this 'Paradise' reference concerns the human situation at the after-life and the eschaton. Our focus is the unique dialogue of Jesus with one of the criminals beside him. The criminal recognized Jesus' innocence, and then he said to Jesus: 'Please remember me when you come into your kingdom (μνήσθητί μου ὅταν ἔλθῃς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν σου).' Jesus answered: 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise (σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ).' (Luke 23:39-43)

This mysterious dialogue has caused debates among scholars. M. Dibelius (1971/1919, p. 203) contended that the ideological context of this dialogue was the Jewish idea about martyrs receiving a reward from God immediately after their death. But it is hard to say that Luke saw Jesus and the criminal as martyrs of the normal kind. R. Bultmann (1963/1921, pp. 309-310) suggested that this dialogue is on the track of the 'splitting' theme of Lucan Gospel, that is, when faced with Jesus' preaching, people split into two camps, some accepted the good news, the others not. Thus there were differences of opinion between the two criminals. This interpretation, however, left the words 'Paradise' and 'kingdom' unexplained. Fitzmyer (1981, pp. 1508-1509) proposed that Jesus' answer implied he would give the righteous criminal more than he required, that this criminal was even considered by Luke as a Christian, because this promise echoed the after-life idea presented in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Philippians 1:22-23, that Christians would be with the Lord Jesus immediately after their

death. Fitzmyer's proposal makes sense, especially in noting the possible thought contact between Luke and Paul, but the phrase 'ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ' seems to mean more.

We can start with the request of the righteous criminal. On one hand, the concrete request implies that the criminal had a specific idea about after-life, and that his request was based on this idea, his own situation, and his understanding of Jesus. Luke might assume that his readers would know about this idea. On the other hand, Jesus' answer was a correction to the criminal's idea through replacing 'kingdom' (βασιλεία) with 'Paradise' (παράδεισος), and was also a revelation of the truth of after-life or eschaton.

Some interpretative questions we must consider first: why did the righteous criminal request such a thing of Jesus? In mentioning that Jesus would enter his 'kingdom', did he believe that Jesus would be a king at future? What we can be sure of is that the criminal thought Jesus was innocent, and that the political accusation imposed on Jesus was false, and that Jesus was not a Messiah pretender, and had not wanted to be king in the normal sense. Although we have no any direct evidence concerning the ground why the criminal was condemned, his conclusion about Jesus' innocence may have been made by comparing Jesus with himself, and he, together with the other one, may have been members of the rebellion movement seeking to subvert Roman rule. This guess is reasonable because crucifixion was normally the punishment for treason or rebellion in the Roman world, and the description of Barabbas as the man 'had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city and for murder' (Luke 23:18-19, cf. Mark 15:7) may be a further clue. It is very possible that it had been arranged that Barabbas and the other two criminals were to be crucified together before the Passover, since they were belonged to the same movement that had earlier instigated turmoil in Jerusalem and they were the leaders, but Jesus now took the place of Barabbas when they were crucified. If this suggestion can be accepted, the righteous criminal would have been agreeing with Pilate that Jesus was not a rebel like others and that it was unjust to crucify him even according to the Roman law. On the other hand, the righteous criminal might have heard that Jesus was indeed preaching a kingdom and this kingdom was so real that it was threatening to Jewish and Roman authorities, and have come to believe that this preaching among the people might have been more pleasing to God than his failed attempt at rebellion, so that Jesus would receive the reward from God for this preaching after being unjustly executed, and so

might finally share the reward with him in the afterlife, so that this is what ‘remember me’ means.

Therefore the request of the criminal was based on his vague but positive understanding of Jesus, and on the idea that righteous people will receive a reward from God immediately after their death. The presentation of the similar idea can be found in the famous Lucan parable ‘The Rich Man and Lazarus’ (Luke 16:19-31). As Jesus always composed his parables according to his audience’s agricultural life contexts in a sophisticated way, this parable may reflect some vulgar beliefs among the Jewish people about judgement by God immediately after death, which would reverse their fate in this life. The parable implies that Lazarus who was enjoying his reward of comfortable peace has the right or is able to share his reward with other people who cannot get the reward by themselves. The criminal on the cross was dying and anxious about his fate in the afterlife, and he considered Jesus would be in the position of Lazarus and be able to help him.

Jesus no doubt appreciated the positive attitude and the humble request of the criminal, and did not deny his defective belief directly, but gently revealed to him the more precious reward and profound prospect, that is of being with him (and God) in Paradise forever (J. Jeremias, 1985b; D. M. May, 1997). The key word ‘Paradise’, which appears in Jesus’ mouth in this critical moment, again links Jesus’ primary identity as Son of God and second Adam and saving action to the Genesis story of ‘Paradise Lost’, to show that Jesus’ saving action now decisively regains Paradise for human beings. This conversation on the cross can also be considered as the final saving action of the earthly Jesus, for the criminal was accepted by the Lord of Paradise and his sin was forgiven by this Lord just as with the paralytic and the so-called ‘sinful woman’ in the earlier stories. If this interpretation is acceptable, a further implication about the relation between ‘Paradise’ and the traditional concept ‘Kingdom of God’ can be clarified: on one hand, the ‘Kingdom’ is the concept emphasizing the reality of absolute authority of God from a top-down perspective; on the other hand, ‘Paradise’ manifests the future perfect human existence status under the just rule of God from the bottom-up human being perspective. Thus the two concepts refer to the same eschatological reality from different perspectives. Replacing the ‘kingdom’ with ‘paradise’, Luke does not deny the concept Kingdom of God, but replaces the earthly or political-military kingdom with a more powerful Kingdom which had already been present but would be finally

realized in the eschatological ‘Paradise’ ruled by God and his beloved Son, Jesus<sup>11</sup>.

## 5 Conclusion

To summarize our exploration. We began with the special nature of the ‘Son of God’ title of Jesus and its relationship to the Kingdom of God concept. The subversiveness of Jesus’ Sonship, more or less implies Luke’s intent to define ‘Son of God’ beyond what was present in the synoptic tradition, by subtly presented it in a new way in the unit, ‘Baptism--Genealogy--Temptation’. By referring to the other Son of God, Adam, and his losing Paradise, Luke theologically defines Jesus’ fundamental mission of Jesus as the second Son of God. If Adam was the origin of human beings, then the second ‘Adam’, Jesus, would create a new lineage of human beings, that would be a second creation. In this narrative framework, ‘sin’ is defined as the consequence of the Satanic temptations and disobedient actions of a man which brought the hostility into the human-to-human and human-to-God relationships on the earth, and is the root of social reality dominated by unrighteous power relations. Accordingly, Jesus’ successful resistance to Satanic temptations and his totally obedience to death was the powerful sign of liberation of humans from the dominance of evil power. He also brought liberating and renewing order (the Kingdom) into the human social world through preaching, challenging, healing, and forgiving. Finally, his ‘paradise saying’ on the cross reiterates the ‘regaining Paradise’ theme directly, and points to the cosmic and eschatological dimension of the Kingdom of God.

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<sup>11</sup> There might be another possible source of Lucan idea of ‘regaining Paradise’ and Jesus as Second Adam beyond the influence of Pauline heritage, namely, ‘The Life of Adam and Eve’ narrative traditions of Jewish origin. This narrative tradition in general told the story about why and how did Satan deceived Adam and Eve, and how they were expelled from Paradise and lived a hard life with heavy labour and terrible diseases, but finally repented of their sin before death and were buried back in Paradise with the God’s promise of future resurrection and eternal life. This ‘returning to Paradise’ narrative pattern with obvious eschatological meaning must have been familiar to some early Christians, perhaps including our evangelist. This narrative tradition might play an important role in the process of Lucan reconstruction of Pauline ‘Adam-Christ typology’. Paul might also know some features of this narrative tradition, see: 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, 13-15, and 12:2. For some important studies on eschatological dimension of this narrative tradition, see: W. Zentler-Cizewski (2004), R. M. Jensen (2004), L. R. Lanzillotta (2007), B. Murdoch (2009).

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# Competing Spiritualities: Reflections on John 6 in Global Perspective

William Loader  
Murdoch University, Western Australia

Within the landscape of the fourth gospel one of the favourite stopping points for biblical geologists is John 6. It sits somewhat awkwardly as a block between the preceding and following chapters, leading some to propose reordering and others more persuasively to as added in the gospel's final stages (Beutler, 2013, pp. 61, 205). In addition, within John 6 there appear to be layers of tradition, inviting the adventure of speculation about how each arose and how the layers are interconnected (e.g. Fortna, 1970; Anderson, 2010; Theobald, 209, pp. 425-426; and see the discussion in Beutler, 2013, pp. 206-207). While acknowledging the legitimacy of pursuing such goals, though with caution and more humility than is sometimes shown, I shall seek in this paper instead to revisit the contours with which it now presents us, in order to examine what it conveys in its diversity when read as a whole. In particular I shall explore how the spirituality of the fourth gospel comes to expression here, set in contrast with competing spiritualities. By spirituality I mean how the author portrays what it means to engage in a relationship with God. That is a question of history, but also one which remains current in our world today, and so I will also add comments about what we might learn from the competing spiritualities of John 6 for our addressing the question: how one engages in a relation to God in our contemporary cultural contexts.

I use the term "spiritualities" because as I shall seek to demonstrate there are various spiritualities or models of how one understands engaging with God in John 6. I shall begin with the more positive, that is, the spiritualities which the author seems determined to affirm, before then turning to those the author appears to reject or at least seriously qualify.

The most central image expressing spirituality in John 6 is that of Jesus as the bread of life. Bread is understood not as a luxury extra, but as a necessity for life in the same way that in John 4, with which our chapter is connected through

6:35, the image of water is used not as something to satisfy supplementary indulgence but as a basic necessity. Thus, the imagery indicates a claim that what Jesus is and offers in his person is not a religious extra to enhance one's relationship with God but is fundamental to it. To relate to Jesus is in this sense to relate to God. This also makes sense of the fact that we find similar images drawn from the basic necessities of life also applied to Jesus, such as light and life and in a spatial, directional sense: way. One may add: vine, where the assumption is that one needs a vine to produce grapes and wine, also understood as staple to the normal diet of the time, rather than as a luxury extra. Many of Jesus' "I am" sayings use such imagery to have him make the claim, that he and he alone is the source of human spirituality.

The claim not just to bring but also to *be* bread, light, life, way, and vine, is extraordinary. It raises, in turn, the question of spirituality: how then does one engage with and receive this bread and light and life? The answer in the fourth gospel is simple: one believes. That belief entails acceptance that Jesus is bread and light and life, but more than a cognitive response of assent to his claims. It also includes a personal response of choosing to enter a relationship which entails loyalty and commitment and, in that process, opening oneself to receive the benefits of what the images convey: the necessities of life, usually expressed as eternal life.

Eternal life does entail a future aspect, which includes assurance of a place with Jesus, the Son, in the Father's house, and avoidance of the condemnation which future judgement would bring, so certainly including forgiveness of sins. It also includes a present aspect of being included, accepted, in a relationship with the Son and the Father and with others in a community whose relationships are governed by mutual love. That present benefit includes therefore both a sense of belonging as well as a level of mutual care which in the circumstances of most people of the time would also mean, of course, help for survival in face of the ever-present threat of poverty, an aspect frequently overlooked by interpreters in contexts not faced with such needs, as I have argued elsewhere (Loader, 2016). In its projections forward to the time of the church, the gospel also depicts such benefit in association with the giving of the Spirit, with or in whom Jesus and the Father come to dwell in the believer, and so consolidate the relationship of love which bears fruit benefitting the believer and expands that generosity of offering life's basic necessities also to others in mission beyond the community.

The meaning of the imagery of bread and life and light, but also water, is spelled out in terms of a relationship through the Son with the Father, which, because of its nature as a relationship of love, generates benefits in the present and promises them for the future for those who continue in that relationship, to use another image, who continue to abide in the Son. The foundation for this spirituality or way of engaging with God is profoundly christological. It is primarily in his person as bread and light and life that the good news is found, more than anything which he said or did. Indeed, it is one of the key features of the gospel that the author uses traditional sayings and anecdotes about Jesus, some with parallels in the other gospels, and perhaps indirectly dependent on them, in order to convey the same message over and over again, that he is the bread and light and life. While not entirely losing a sense of sequence and history of events, and sometimes incidentally preserving useful historical information not present elsewhere, most recently convincingly reassessed by Frey (2018, pp. 59-142), the gospel primarily presents Jesus in his person as the source of life, as the one who came from the Father to offer bread and light and life to the world.

The place where this most obviously comes through is in the prologue, which thus sets the tone and provides the key for understanding the rest of the gospel. For the one later depicted as offering the water of life, as being bread and light and life, is here depicted as the Logos, the Word. And already here we find the imagery of light and life and the explicit identification of the Word as Jesus Christ, the Word enfleshed, bearing the divine glory of the divine Son, full of light and truth. In the rest of chapter one we find motifs associated with the Jewish hope for a Messiah, Lamb, Son of God, but these are now fulfilled in the one who in his person is the good news (Loader, 2017, pp. 436-442). Such motifs are now integrated within a pattern or structure of thought which primarily portrays the good news as the person of Jesus himself and the possibility of engaging in relationship with him to receive the benefits of the bread and light and life he is and brings. This coheres with the image of John 6 according to which Jesus claims that he is the bread of life come down from heaven, sent from the Father.

Associated with the images of bread, but also light and life, are the words, “I am” (for a fuller discussion see Loader, 2017, pp. 347-354; Thompson, 2015, pp. 156-60; Theobald, 2009, pp. 463-466). These have evoked for readers the reference to “I am”, “I am that I am”, to Moses as God’s name at the burning

bush, and to uses in 2<sup>nd</sup> Isaiah as a self-designation of God, raising the question whether Jesus is claiming the divine name for himself in these instances. In 6:35 Jesus declares “I am the bread of life”, which is picked up in the objection by “the Jews”: “He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven’” (6:41), where one would expect an accusation of blasphemy should “I am” be understood as claiming the divine name for himself. It is clear that in the exchange the objection does not hear it this way and nor apparently does the author, but instead the focus is on the claim to have come down from heaven: “How now is he saying, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (6:42), set in contrast to what they know, namely that he is Joseph’s son and they know his parents. (6:42). When 6:48 has Jesus repeat the claim, the same applies. It is not a claim to the divine name. The anecdote about Jesus walking on the water has Jesus respond to the disciples’ fears with the words, “I am/it is I. Do not be afraid”, almost identical to the way his response is given in the parallel story in Mark: (“Be of good courage. I am/it is I. Do not be afraid” (6:50). Neither in Mark nor in John does *Ego eimi* appear to be understood as an allusion to the divine name, where one would expect a significant response to Jesus’ statement. In both versions it is best heard simply as saying: “It is I” or more colloquially: “It’s me” (Thompson, 2015, p. 143).

This is but one of the contours we find on the landscape of John 6, but it is the primary one. We remain a little longer pondering its significance and, in this regard, seek to supplement our understanding by looking beyond this landscape to similar but related terrain.

I begin with 1 John where we read: “God is light”, as well as “God is love”. There is no contradiction between Jesus’ claiming “I am the light” and the author of 1 John declaring, “God is light”, but the fact that this occurs does draw our attention again to the nature of Jesus’ claim. The best commentary is probably to be found in the opening of the prologue which declares: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God”. In effect the christology of the fourth gospel has become so heightened that somewhat paradoxically Jesus disappears, as it were, into the life of God or, put another way, for all intents and purposes, Jesus is God. That is however by no means a simple equation, for despite this oneness the author differentiates the Son and the Father, subordinates the Son to the Father and never the other way around, and depicts movement which entails distance in time and space, the Son coming from the Father and returning to the Father. The later doctrines of the

Trinity would seek to resolve such paradoxical language. In John it is nevertheless clear that Jesus is reduced, or one might say more appropriately enhanced, to become *de facto* a presentation of God. Jesus is bread and light and life not independent of God, but because God is bread and light and life. Jesus is in that sense an extension of God. John's christology is fundamentally therefore theological and that is the foundation of Johannine spirituality: a relationship with God.

If we look in other direction seeking similar terrain, we see looming large on the horizon a constellation of the same imagery of water, bread, light and life, associated with God's Wisdom. In fact, there is a direct continuity between this terrain and what is said in the prologue of the Logos, such that one could easily replace Logos by Wisdom. It is clear that the author of the fourth gospel is claiming that what was said of Wisdom is not only true of Jesus, but that Jesus *is* Wisdom, the Word, and *only* Jesus is Wisdom and Word. Some of the closest parallels are found in the Parables of Enoch where we read that Wisdom came and was rejected (1 En 42:1-2), just as the Word came to his own and they rejected him (1:11). But the more positive depiction in Ben Sira is equally relevant, that Wisdom came to Israel and was positively received (Sir 24:1-12). A major difference however from Ben Sira (and also Baruch) is that both identify Wisdom with Torah, as God's word to Israel (Sir 24:23; Bar 4:1). Wisdom/Torah is bread and water and light and life (Sir 24:19-22). The author of the fourth gospel knows that tradition but does not embrace it. Instead it declares that God's gift of Torah through Moses (1:16-17), not identified as Wisdom, preceded and foreshadowed the greater gift destined to replace it, namely Jesus, identified as Logos as light and truth, and so by implication as God's wisdom. The difference between Torah and Jesus as the Logos (and Wisdom) comes to expression in John 6 which draws upon the imagery of Torah as manna and has Jesus declare: "Moses did not give you bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. The bread of God is the one who came down from heaven and giving life to the world" (6:32-33). "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life" (5:39-40).

Even though there is a clear distinction between Torah and Jesus the Word, to which we return below in discussing continuity and discontinuity, the link between the two has implications for understanding the spirituality of the fourth

gospel because the structure of the spirituality which both presume is similar. According to the former, one receives bread and light and life by living in a relationship with God governed by God's word, Torah, which includes belonging to a community of others who share that relationship. Similarly, according to the latter one receives bread and light and life by living in a relationship with God governed by God's Word, Jesus, which includes belonging to a community of others who share that relationship. The relationship with God is fundamental for both spiritualities. Its mediation or governance is different. But the governance or control which determines the latter is expressed in who Jesus is and so ultimately in who God is. In both spiritualities the foundation is therefore theological, with the latter having its focus less on commandments and rituals and more on some primary values, such as love and its implications, though always interpreted according to the ethical principles embodied in Torah. It is historically incorrect to depict the former as a spirituality of keeping rules and commandments. These have a subordinate role to enable the relationship to be sustained which also has its basis in divine generosity. In that sense there is a continuity of spirituality, but a difference over the extent to which the ritual provisions, in particular, are to be upheld, but informing both is a theology according to which God in love offers an ongoing relationship.

In this sense the spirituality implied in the claim that Jesus is the bread of life, the key image in John 6, is very Jewish in structure: ongoing engagement in relation to God as the source of life and appropriating the blessings of shared community. While at one level such claims made of Jesus appear extraordinary and for many alienating in their exclusiveness ("no one comes to the Father except through me" 14:6), the fact that they are primarily theological and ultimately are about who God is, paradoxically, makes them more accessible and universal than some of the claims found elsewhere in the gospels. For John's good news, expressed through the existential imagery of water, bread, light and life, speaks a language universally understood across human cultures, and so can be translated globally into diverse settings. Its simplification of the complex Jesus tradition into a claim that ultimately there is a God who seeks relationship based on love and promises a community of life and hope to address human existential longing renders it accessible to all. It can also provide a template or measure for identifying the same spirituality elsewhere, wherever it may occur, including in diverse religious traditions of humanity. It has, in that

sense global relevance and is a key resource for interreligious and intercultural dialogue. While John has Jesus express this exclusively: “I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me”, one could also find ground for going beyond John to argue: Jesus’ understanding of God as the God who seeks relationship is the way, the truth, and the life, and so the only way to relate authentically to God. Light does not wear labels and we may recognise the light we have seen in Jesus wherever it shines, a truly global perspective.

While this universal dimension appears to me to be a corollary of John’s christology and theology as represented in the core image of John 6 of Jesus as the bread of life, it is a spirituality alongside others in John 6 which also deserve our attention. This is evident in the change in surface structure of the text when we move into 6:51-58. Here the language of faith takes on a new form in the imagery of eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking his blood. This goes beyond the nature of faith discussed thus far and is directly related to an expansion of the horizon from looking to Jesus’ coming as the bread of life and his ministry to looking at his death and its consequences. The imagery of bread used in the discourse since 6:30 necessarily implies eating, as the imagery of water implies drinking, and thus far such eating and drinking has been equated with assent to Jesus’ claim to be the bread of life and engagement in relationship with him through joining his community of faith.

Some see the more specific comments of eating his flesh and drinking his blood in 6:51-58 as simply further elaboration of such faith (Menken, 1997, 185-88). There are some indications, however, that it must mean more than that (see the discussion in Loader, 2017, pp. 169-171). These include that the change coincides with the introduction of a reference to Jesus’ death in 6:51: “I am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he shall live forever, and the bread which I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world”. There is also a change in tense. He had spoken of being that bread in the present. Now he speaks of giving it in the future, from the perspective of his earthly ministry, so related to his death and the time following his death. In addition, the previous statement about giving bread in the future is found in 6:27, which refers to “the food (βρῶσιν) which remains forever, which the Son of Man will give you. For God has set his seal on him”. The title, “Son of Man” reappears in 6:51-58, where he speaks of eating the flesh of the Son of Man (6:53) and we find another reference to “food” (βρῶσις) (6:54), echoing 6:27. In addition a more striking verb is used of eating: τρώγω (54, 56, 58). Aside from

3:13 where Son of Man refers to Jesus' descent alongside his ascent, all other uses of this title appear in contexts related to the climax of Jesus' ministry, namely his death, exaltation and return to the Father (Loader, 2017, pp. 213-280). That is clearly its context here and fits the allusion to his death with which this section begins. This part of the landscape appears designed to shock and confront, part of the author's rhetorical interplay with his sympathetic hearers, who know that this has nothing to do with cannibalism or the like.

The allusions to eating his flesh and drinking his blood are best understood as allusions to the eucharist (Beutler, 2013, pp. 225-26; Thompson, 2015, p. 154; Frey, 2013A, p. 406; Frey, 2013C, p. 576.). Supporting this conclusion is the likelihood that the author would hardly have been unaware of eucharistic tradition, especially if he has some awareness of the other gospels or at least Mark (Mackay, 2014, pp. 237-256), even though he does not bring an account of Jesus' last meal on the night when he was arrested. At this point on the landscape of John 6 we have therefore a reflection of the spiritual practice of the Johannine community, which included as a core element the appropriation by faith of Jesus the bread of life through consuming the elements of bread and wine, representing Jesus' body and blood, but essentially representing who he was and is as the bread of life, and so ultimately, opening oneself to God

One might want to add that there is an additional benefit here flowing from an understanding of his death as vicarious (Knöppler, 1994, pp. 94-95, 202; Frey, 2013B, p. 531). This may be present, not least since it is an aspect of the eucharistic traditions we know from Mark and Paul and their parallels. This should not however be seen as now offering something not already given in the person of Jesus as the bread of life during his ministry. On the other hand, nor is there warrant in the light of his being the bread of life to exclude an allusion to his death as vicarious (cf. Forestell, 1974, p. 76; see discussion in Theobald, 2009, p. 478). It was possible to hold both perspectives together, such as we find in the other gospels which can depict Jesus (and already John the Baptist) as offering forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4; 2:5, 10 par.; Luke 1:77; 3:3; 7:47) while also alluding to his death as vicarious (Mark 10:45 par.; 14:25 par.). As in Judaism, an inclusive stance could hold together the notions of martyrs' deaths as vicarious with belief that forgiveness is accessible through prayer and other practices. The one does not need to exclude the other. An inclusive approach to the eucharist, following the Johannine pattern, would mean that there need be no contradiction between affirming eucharistic practice alongside proffering the

more universally accessible gospel of good news of life in relationship with God.

If we turn in the other direction, we see that the landscape of John 6 has folds familiar from what will have been the past of the community. The miracle with which the chapter begins echoes the feeding miracle performed by Elisha when it tells of the lad who brought the loaves and fish (2 Kgs 4:42-43). It also echoes the miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness with manna, a parallel referred to directly in the discourse which follows. Similarly, the walking on water at least alludes to the miracles of overcoming the dangers of the deep, such as the parting of the waters in the escape from Egypt. The implications of such typologies are clear: the God who makes himself known in Jesus is the God of Israel of old. This is both a claim to authority and a claim to continuity. We may rightly assume that for the hearers of John 6 it mattered for their spirituality that the one who came to them as bread, light and life, was not offering a new religion in contradiction or discontinuity with the old, but was truly the one sent from the God who had acted to save his people in the past.

In Mark's version of the feeding of the 5000 the numerical symbolism serves to celebrate the gospel coming to Israel, alluded to in the twelve baskets matching the twelve tribes and probably alluded to also in the number five, matching the five books of Moses, in the five loaves and the five thousand. Its story reinforces the link by referring to the people as like sheep without a shepherd, a tradition description of Israel, and, having them divided into troops of hundreds and fifties like Israel in the wilderness. It then has the feeding of the 4000 represent the gospel coming to Gentiles, locating it in Gentile territory and using the numerical symbolism of seven to represent the universal, in seven loaves and seven baskets left over (on Mark see Loader, 1997, pp. 65-85). John's version may retain a symbolic allusion to Israel in the numbers, but it is not explicit and not used as Mark uses it to address the issue of inclusion of both Israel and Gentiles as recipients of the good news.

While John 6 underlines continuity by typology, underlining that the God who acted then is acting in Jesus, the continuity is a modified continuity. The discourse plays on the allusion to manna in the wilderness in order to make a clear distinction within the theological continuity between the past and the present in a way that goes beyond mere continuity to a claim of superiority. The miracle of manna foreshadowed the coming of the true bread. That miracle is not denied let alone disparaged, but it remained at the level of an earthly

material event belonging to the world below, whereas the coming of the true bread from heaven, from above, is something new. The author goes beyond, however, simply contrasting the past act of God in giving the manna at an earthly level and the coming of the heavenly gift. He also expands that contrast to include the symbolic use of the manna to represent God's gift of Torah (Theobald, 2009, p. 462; Deut 8:2-3; Wisd 16:26 Philo *Mut.* 253-263). Accordingly, Moses did not give bread from heaven, which means by implication Torah is not bread from heaven. Only Jesus, the Logos, is bread from heaven. This is a contrast found already in 1:16-17, where a distinction is made between two gifts of God, the second replacing the first, Christ the true bread replacing Torah (see Loader 2017, pp. 443-52). The contrast is subtle and does not disparage Torah, but redefines it as both foreshadowing at an earthly level and predicting what was to come and so what would replace it.

In terms of spirituality this means that a relationship with God is now to be based not on the covenantal nomism of living by Torah, but on faith in and loyalty to Jesus. To do the works of God is not to follow the prescriptions of Torah, but to believe in the one whom God sent (6:26-29). The theological continuity with the God of Israel who acted in the past is thus qualified on the basis that God acted then at one level, that of the flesh, also good and God's creation, but has now acted at another superior level, that of the spirit. To recognise this is to know that faith in God must now be on the basis of embracing the gift of bread, light and life in the Son whom the Father has sent, and so no longer to continue to relate to God as before on the basis of Torah. The author here and elsewhere makes every effort to avoid any sense that the old is bad or blameworthy. On the contrary to attend to it now from the perspective of the new is to recognise that it foreshadowed and predicted the new which was to replace it. This includes its predictions of a Messiah, Son of God, king of Israel, which the author sees have been fulfilled in Christ, understood now within its more developed christological understanding of Jesus as the Word, the Son sent by the Father from above.

The subtle sense of continuity and discontinuity with Israel's faith has also some similarity with the way the author in John 6 treats the Jesus tradition itself. Thus, nothing suggests that the author seeks to deny the miracle of the feeding of the 5000, but there is nevertheless a clear sense that there are appropriate and inappropriate responses to that event. That event, as the author's depiction of Jesus' discourse shows, symbolises at the earthly level below, the level of the

flesh, a reality on the spiritual level above, namely that Jesus is the bread of life. To appreciate it only at the earthly level is like appreciating God's acts in Israel's past, with which it is in continuity as God's action, and God's gift of Torah, at that level. That is to fail to see what it points to at the spiritual level, Jesus as the true bread. The account of the feeding of the 5000 in John 6 makes this critical perspective clear when it mentions those who follow Jesus because of the miracles (6:2) and especially when in response to seeing the miracle they acclaimed him "truly the prophet who is to come into the world" and want to make him king (6:14-15). Jesus walks away from such spirituality, for such faith is inappropriate, not because it acclaims the miracle and acclaims Jesus as prophet and king (Messiah), but because it fails to see that he is so much more than that. Theirs is a response still at the earthly level. John 6 later has Jesus summarily dismisses this kind of response as concerned only with food and drink (6:26) and elsewhere depicts it similarly as failing to see Jesus for who he really is.

Earlier in the gospel it had depicted Nicodemus as remaining at that level where because of Jesus' miracles Nicodemus acknowledges that Jesus has come from God and is rebuffed with the need to be born from above to be able to see the higher reality (3:1-3). Nicodemus reflects the approach of those depicted in the previous verses who indeed believe in his name, language used of becoming a believer, because of the miracles, but in whom Jesus refused to believe because he knew what was in people (2:23-25). The miracles are described as signs, σημεῖα, a term whose range of meaning can include being something which points beyond itself but could also simply mean wonder in the sense of an event on the basis of which one may claim authority or influence. In typical Johannine use of double meaning, the author wants people to understand σημεῖα in the former sense, not simply the latter.

John 6 brings critical reflection to bear on both the faith of Israel and, significantly, on the faith of Jesus' followers, disqualifying both if they remain at the earthy level and fail to see the heavenly, the spiritual, which was to see and respond to Jesus as the source of life. It rejects these competing spiritualities and at least invites our consideration in our own day of spiritualities which remain at the level of alleged miracles, signs and wonders, as a basis for recruiting religious followers.

A sense of differentiation is found not only in the opening sections of John 6 and its discourse, but also in the concluding sections, from 6:60 onwards. Here,

again, we have to do with followers of Jesus, but this time they are the dissenters. The term used, that they grumble, links them with those unbelieving fellow Jewish opponents who resist Jesus' assertions in 6:41. These erstwhile followers take offence at Jesus' words. It is not immediately clear what of Jesus' claims caused offence. Given what immediately precedes in 6:51-58, it could have been the notion of eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood as a shocking image. Jesus' response in 6:62 however suggests that it has to do with his claim to have come from above: "What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where he was before?" (Theobald, 2009, p. 490). It might refer to both his coming and the way he depicts that his gift will be received, through eating and drinking (Beasley-Murray, 1999, p. 96). The words, "What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where he was before?" imply, however, that this, his ascent, would cause greater offence). Why? It might refer to shamefulness of crucifixion which at least was the first stage in Jesus' ascent to the Father where he was before (Zumstein, 2016, p. 278). The next statement, "The spirit gives life; the flesh is of no profit", frames the offence within the contrast of flesh and spirit, below and above. This makes it likely that the suggested offence for such believers would be the claim that Jesus comes from and goes back to the heavenly world (Schnackenburg, 1977, pp. 103-107).

It would seem then that the followers of Jesus depicted here are similar to those depicted in 6:14-15, though they need not be the same. They have in common with the grumbling opponents that they are offended by Jesus' claim to have come from above and are apparently remaining in their faith at the level of wanting to hail him, perhaps as those in 6:14-15, as prophet and messiah, but are unwilling to go along with the much higher claims that Jesus is the Word, the Son who has come from the Father. It is probably significant that the encounter takes place, as John emphasises, in the synagogue in Capernaum (6:59). They respond to Jesus at the level of the flesh and fail to hear Jesus' words and receive them as lifegiving. Whereas in 6:14-15 Jesus took his leave of such followers, here these followers take leave of Jesus (6:66) and in effect cease to be followers. By contrast Simon Peter as spokesperson for the twelve reaffirms their faith in Jesus' words as lifegiving and in him as "holy one of God" (6:69), in an exchange which recalls and may be rewriting Mark 8:27-30, where Mark has Peter hail him as "the Christ". The choice of "holy one of God" may be because "the Christ" was too close to what the dissenters were willing to

confess (see also Mackay, 2004, p. 275). Confessing Jesus as the Christ is central for John, but only in a much more elevated sense.

The chapter concludes with reference to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, as the one who would betray Jesus (6:70-71). Of others who reject Jesus the author has Jesus provide a rationalising explanation along the lines that only those whom the Father has given to the Son (6:37, 65) and whom the Father draws to the Son (6:44), who are thus “taught of God” an allusion to Isa 54:13 (6:45), respond positively and that Jesus had foreknowledge of this. The apparent determinism sits paradoxically beside statements which assume the freedom of those hearing Jesus to believe or not to do so, typical of the use of such rationalisations elsewhere, such as in the sectarian documents found at Qumran (cf. also 3:19-21).

At one level the depiction of the good news in John 6 is particularist and divisive. While it has arguably an integrated spirituality, this is articulated in a manner that excludes. It excludes a spirituality of following Jesus primarily because of his signs and wonders. It excludes a spirituality than can see Jesus only at an earthly level. It excludes a spirituality which remains committed to the Torah of the Jews as the way to life. There is also a level of exclusion in its affirming a spirituality for which celebration of the eucharist appears central. On the other hand, it affirms a spirituality based on understanding of Jesus as making God known, not in the sense of explanation, but as presence and encounter. As a result, to respond to Jesus is in effect to respond to God. Jesus and so God is thus portrayed as the source of life, depicted in the existential imagery of water, bread, light and life.

While at one level the high claims about Jesus cause great offence and division, at another level they paradoxically bring Jesus so far into the being of God, as to have him disappear, as it were, into the life of God, or at least to be merged into deity, so that to respond to him is in effect to respond to God. This is why in 1 John images of light and life and thus transferred directly to God. While the actions and words of Jesus and not least his death remain significant, the good news he offers is not so much himself nor what he has done, but the God whose person is the good news as the source of light and life and bread and water. In contrast then to the many aspects of exclusion found in John 6, at its heart is a spirituality of universal dimensions: a call to enter into a relationship with the God to whom Jesus points, who is light and life and bread. Those needs are arguably universal as is the answer to which this good news points. The God

of Jesus is the God who offers bread and light and life in whatever guise, language, culture or religion, including within the rich cultural traditions of East Asia, even where Jesus as particular bearer and embodiment of that reality may not be known.

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