

# Love of enemies in Matthew and Luke-Acts

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**LOVE OF ENEMIES  
IN MATTHEW AND LUKE-ACTS**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the S.T.L. Degree  
from Boston College School of Theology and Ministry (Weston Jesuit)

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## INTRODUCTION

### *i. Thesis and Rationale*

This thesis explores Jesus' commandment to love one's enemies and pursue nonviolence in the historical, literary, and narrative contexts of the Gospel of Matthew and Luke-Acts, respectively. The project seeks to answer the following questions: 1) How is Jesus' teaching interpreted and contextualized in both Gospel accounts? What are the similarities and differences? 2) How would his teaching on "enemy-love" be understood and received in the context of the two distinctive Gospel communities (audiences)? 3) What is the purpose and the rationale behind Jesus' teaching? 4) What examples of Jesus' "love of enemy" ethic can we safely spot in the Gospel texts as both narratives unfold and tell the story of Jesus and the early church? 5) What can we say about the identity and the character of "the enemy" as understood by Luke and Matthew and their audiences? 6) How does Jesus' teaching of enemy-love enhance and fit into the larger and particular purposes of the two Gospels?

The reasons for choosing this particular topic for my STL thesis stem from the fact that to a large extent the questions raised in the thesis statement are important, and of interest to me personally. During my studies I have also come to appreciate more the fact that the answers to questions like "Who is the enemy?" or those related to the meaning and practice of love depend not in a small measure on the unique historical context and theological agenda of each Gospel. Having grown up amidst the Communist regime of Poland and having seen its fall, I have witnessed the power and effectiveness of "enemy-love" and nonviolence in the Solidarity movement and its attempt to resist and fight

against the ideology and practices of one particular oppressive political system, namely communism.

It seems to me that more and more people, even as they struggle with this particular teaching of Jesus, have come to realize that violence, vengeance, and hatred may not in the long run be the best solution to the problem of violence as we strive to build a more peaceful world. If this is true, how are we to understand nonviolence and love of enemies? My goal is to bring together the ideas and the scholarly insights of biblical exegetes and theologians to enlighten my own understanding and that of other people.

*ii. Method: Historical Literary and Narrative*

The method used in this thesis is threefold. First, it is historical as we try to place Jesus' teaching in its social, political and religious context of the Second Temple Judaism. Second, it is literary, since the major part consists of exegesis of Matthean and Lukan versions of enemy-love (*EL*) teaching. In this thesis, we will also try to identify *EL* echoes not only in Matthew's Gospel and Luke-Acts but also in the other New Testament texts, particularly Pauline Epistles as well as early Christian paraenesis.

At the heart of my interest with respect to Jesus' teaching on nonviolence and love of enemies lies a puzzling fact that admonition to love one's enemy is mentioned directly only three times - once in the Gospel of Matthew (5:48) and twice in the Gospel of Luke (6:27, 35). In order to shed more light on how this commandment is understood and practiced, I will try to identify texts, parallels, and parables in Matthew and Luke-Acts and show how these texts may or do exemplify, explain and clarify Jesus' teaching

on the matter of loving one's enemies as the two narratives unfold. To put it another way, one goal of this theses is to discover what texts would jump off the page as "aha texts" – prompting its ideal reader to say, "This is what Jesus, Matthew or Luke mean by loving one's enemy." Important question as one ventures to interpret *EL* through a narrative approach is, "How can we identify such texts? What criteria should guide our judgment and choice? These are the hermeneutical reasons that have lead me to choose the topic, ask the questions, and frame my research.

### *iii. Structure and Content*

I have arranged the argument of this thesis around six chapters, which are preceded by an introduction and conclusion. I have also attached two appendixes. The first one discusses five criteria, which should guide an interpreter as he or she seeks to identify echoes of love of enemies outside the Sermon on the Mount (SM) and the Sermon on the Plain (SP). The second one addresses the issue of the "Jews" in Luke-Acts and of "Hypocrites" in Matthew in the context of the intra-Jewish search for identity after the Jewish War (66-70 C.E.) that lead to the destruction of the Temple.

In chapter 1, I will briefly describe the historical and religious-political context of each Gospel. I will then discuss and explain the meaning of "hate" and "love" in their theological and historical context as well as the identity and the character of the "enemy" in Matthew and Luke-Acts. It will be pointed out that enmity is largely religious, though it may include political as well as social and personal spheres of one's life. Most importantly, the object of controversy and enmity is Jesus himself and his Gospel as preached by his disciples. Chapters 2 and 3 are dedicated to a detailed exegetical analysis

of Matthew 5:45-48 and Luke 6:27-36. I will discuss the context, the structure and the content of Matthew and Luke's interpretation of Jesus' command to love one's enemies. Such an analysis aims to give us an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the commandment to love one's enemy and help us identify echoes of Jesus' teaching that may be understood as examples of such love. I will provide a list of plausible *EL* echoes for Matthew and Luke-Acts at the conclusion of each chapter. In both Matthew and Luke, we will see that *EL* is ultimately an invitation to live one's life, particularly when faced with animosity, in imitation of God who is perfect and merciful. God's love as revealed in Jesus Christ is rooted in freedom and graciousness that goes beyond any kind of reciprocity. In chapter 4, Gospel Sayings Source Q will be briefly discussed since it is a common source for both Matthew and Luke. It will be pointed out that as such *Q* (6:27-36) preserves Jesus' teaching on *EL*. In chapter 5, I will provide a brief summary of similarities and differences between Matthew and Luke and address the function and the purpose of *EL* teaching in each Gospel. I will conclude this chapter with a discussion on woes and divine judgment in relation to God's mercy and love that is all-embracing and includes both friends and enemies. Finally, chapter 6 will discuss echoes of Jesus' teaching on *EL* and the practice of non-violence in the New Testament and in the preaching of the early Church fathers. The thesis will conclude with a summary, which will explore the extent to which the questions raised in the thesis were answered.



## CHAPTER 1

### *Context and Terminology*

#### *1.1. Historical Context in Matthew and Luke-Acts*

Like John 3:16, Jesus' commandment to love one's enemies is probably the most well known passage in the Bible. It is regarded as "the teaching" of the historical Jesus.<sup>1</sup> It is as challenging as it is controversial. For some, it signifies an impossible or, at the very least, an impractical teaching. Others would argue that it is a *sine-qua-non* requirement, if we are to succeed in our efforts of building a peaceful world. Therefore, it has real social, political, religious, ethical, and personal implications today, just as it did in the first century of Christianity. The biggest challenges that any student of the New Testament faces relate to the fact that we are simultaneously navigating through three distinct though not unrelated historical contexts in the Gospels, *i.e.* the teaching of the historical Jesus, the evangelists' actualization of Jesus' Gospel, and the contemporary historical context in which an interpreter lives. For this reason it is important to give a brief overview of the historical context before we move on to discuss terminology such as "love," "hate" and "enemy."

##### *1.1.1. Matthew's Historical Context*

It is commonly agreed among scholars, that Matthew's Gospel was written by an unknown Jewish author for a largely Jewish-Christian community some time between 85 and 90 C.E. This text surfaced approximately twenty years after the outbreak of the Jewish war in 66 C.E., which eventually led to the six-month siege of Jerusalem, and

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<sup>1</sup> Hans D. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 299. The authenticity and historicity of Jesus' commandment to love one's enemies is widely accepted by scholars.

culminated in the destruction of its Temple on Sept. 8, 70 C.E. Politically, socially, and religiously, these were very turbulent times.<sup>2</sup> What exactly the role of emerging Christianity was in the war, and how Christians responded to it, lacks concrete historical evidence. A small number of Christians (1000-2000 in total) might have fled the city.<sup>3</sup> That is not Matthew's primary concern, however. Judaism – with no land, no Temple, and only a Torah – was facing a serious crisis and had to redefine its identity if it were to survive. The process of reconstructing Judaism was anything but smooth leading to persecutions and hardships (Matt. 10:16-31).

Before and after 70 C.E., various Jewish sects were competing with one another for the title of “orthodox Judaism:”<sup>4</sup> the Qumran community, the Sadducees, the Zealots, the Scribes, and the Pharisees. Matthew's Christian community was right in the middle of the debate.<sup>5</sup> Two groups eventually emerged from this struggle and their respective movements came to be known as “Christianity” and “Rabbinic,” or “Formative,” Judaism.<sup>6</sup> After Jews lost the Temple and the land, the question regarding who the authentic interpreter of Jewish Tradition is (*i.e.*, the Torah), became paramount. Matthew, therefore, is very much concerned with presenting Jesus as “the interpreter” of the law and the authentic teacher of righteousness, the very one who knows the mind and the heart of God (Matt. 11:27). The context of Matthew's Sermon is more ecclesiological

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Harrington, *Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007), 10-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 16. Controversy stories of Matt. 23 reflect the tension among various fractions of Judaism after 70 AD.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 17. Whether Matthew's community saw itself as distinct from Judaism at the time the Gospel was written or a sect within Judaism - “Christian Jews” - is disputed among scholars. See: Donald Senior, *Matthew*, (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries, Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 23. Harrington sees Matthew's community as “within the framework of Judaism but in tension with other Jewish groups – especially the early rabbinic movement.”

<sup>6</sup> Harrington, *Matthew*, 16.

rather than political. Even though the tensions among the competing Jewish groups constitute the theological context for the sixth antithesis, there is also an indication that conflicts, tensions, and disagreements regarding the person of Jesus took place within the Matthean community and in the families that constituted this community (10:26-42).<sup>7</sup> For Matthew faithfulness to Torah and Jesus as its only legitimate interpreter shapes the contours of the Gospel.

### *1.1.2. Luke's Historical Context*

The Gospel of Luke was written around the same time - a decade or so later (85-95). Its historical context complex but it is largely Gentile, unlike Matthew's, though with a significant number Jews. The same author, who is unknown, not long after writing the Gospel, wrote a sequel, commonly known as Acts of the Apostles.<sup>8</sup> Paul is arguing for the Jesus' Jewish movement to admit Gentiles, particularly in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 9-11), while Luke is dealing with a largely Gentile community struggling with keeping Jews. This is the source of conflict and controversy. Luke is concerned with how the community to which he wrote is to live in a Roman world after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. He is also committed to preserving the legacy of Paul who was a founder of the communities Luke mentions.<sup>9</sup> Unlike Revelation (96 A.D.), for Luke it is

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 150-152.

<sup>8</sup> C.R. Matthews, "Acts of the Apostles," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by David Noel Freedman, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 15-18.

<sup>9</sup> C.R. Matthews, "Luke the Hellenist," in *Early Christian Voices: in Texts, Traditions, and Symbols: Essays in Honor of François Bovon*, (ed. David H. Warren, Ann Graham Brock, and David W. Pao; Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), 99-105. 106: "Luke is an heir of Pauline Tradition."

possible to be Roman and Christian.<sup>10</sup> In Acts Luke, who is an heir of Pauline tradition, places Paul in the midst of the conflict as an exemplar of faithfulness to the law two generations later or so. It is a rhetorical move and not so much a historical account. Paul preaches salvation to both Jews and Greeks who, for him, are at the center of salvation history (Acts. 20:21). As Helmut Koester writes, “Paul tried to accomplish the impossible, namely, to establish a new Israel on a foundation that could include both Jews and Gentiles.”<sup>11</sup> His mission is to bring peace and harmony to a community that is fractured. Paul reminds his audience that, “God’s love is all-encompassing unlike human power that tends to exclude<sup>12</sup> and divide one nation against the other; Jews against Gentiles or vice versa. As time passed by the conflict between the Jewish followers of Jesus and the Jewish rejection of Jesus (Paul) transformed itself into a conflict between Christians, many of them were Gentiles, and “the Jews.”<sup>13</sup> In the letter to the Romans (11:25-27), “Paul sharply warns his gentile followers against feeling superior to Israel.”<sup>14</sup> For Paul, Jewish election is irrevocable, “as regards the Gospel, they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:28-29).

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<sup>10</sup> Frederick J. Murphy., *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 96: “John feels that Christians misjudged Rome and are too complacent with Greco-Roman society. He wants them to perceive things differently. He is trying to shock them into his perspective: Rome is Satanic and opposed to God and those loyal to him.” Therefore the purpose of the book is quite different than that of Luke-Acts.

<sup>11</sup> Helmut Koester, “Historic Mistakes Haunt the Relationship of Christianity and Judaism,” *Biblical Archeology Review* 21(March-April 1995): 26-27.

<sup>12</sup> James Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword: the Church and the Jews* (Boston: A Mariner Book, 2001), 141.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 140: the author quotes Krister Stendahl, “On Sacred Violence: How to Unmask It and How Not To,” *Dialog* 32 (Fall 1993), 261-264, at 262.

Luke, therefore, deals with conjunctions: gentile and Jew, poor and rich, male and female. He speaks to a multi-faceted church community. The question of unity of Jews and Gentiles is paramount to Luke since the promises of God were made to Israel. He tries to show how salvation history can continue into the future. The purpose is to provide “assurance” with respect to things that have taken place in Jesus Christ (Lk. 1:1) during a formative time for emerging Christianity living in a predominantly Gentile world. Paul, like Jesus in Matthew, is presented as a faithful adherent to the law and the prophets (Lk. 24:44; cf. Acts 28:26-31).<sup>15</sup> For Luke, on one hand the conflict is internal between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians, as Gager points out, who may be tempted to impose Jewish practices on the Gentiles and as a result undermine the mixed identity of the Lukan community.<sup>16</sup> Paul both in his letters and in Acts; both before his conversion and after (Gal 1:13) is a Jew – a Christian Pharisee. The difference is Christ – another Jew. As James Carroll points out, “Indeed, his faith in Jesus was, to him, a way of being more Jewish than ever.”<sup>17</sup> That Jewish identity now meant: Jews and Gentiles. Paul in a way is crucified between Jews and Greeks in his ministry (Acts 20:21; cf. 26:28; Gal. 6:14).

On the other hand, the conflict might have to do with Hellenist - Greek speaking Jews - who have become Christians and non-Christian Hellenist Jews. For Luke who was a Hellenist Jew prior to his conversion, therefore, it is important to connect Paul’s ministry rhetorically to Jerusalem, to create a “bridge” between Hebrews and Christian Hellenists showing Christianity’s foundation in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is strategically important for Luke as the place of the birth of Christianity. Therefore, the conflict

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<sup>15</sup> Matthews, “Acts of the Apostles,” (?).

<sup>16</sup> John Gager, “Where Does Luke’s Anti-Judaism Come from?” in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*. (Ed. by E. Iricinschi and H. M. Zellentin. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 207-211. 210-211.

<sup>17</sup> Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword*, 142.

appears to be both *internal* between Gentile-Christians and Jewish-Christians as well as *external* between Christian Hellenist Jews and Non-Christian Hellenist Jews (Acts. 21:20-22; 28-30).<sup>18</sup> The issue, particularly of external or internal nature of the conflict, continues to be disputed but for the sake of my thesis what is important is that it is a Jewish conflict within Judaism both in Matthew and Luke-Acts as distinct and as unique their historical circumstances are. That Jewish conflict politically and socially takes place under Roman occupation of Judea and Asia Minor. The historical identity of the parties involved in the conflict has not been resolved and categorical conclusions should be avoided, particularly because Jewish identity did not distinguished clearly between Jew and Gentile (God-fearers).<sup>19</sup> That the tensions in Luke-Acts were internal is clear, but whether they were exclusively of internal nature – not external – is not clear.

## *1.2. Terminology: Love, Hate, and Enemy*

### *1.2.1. The Concept of Love*

For a modern reader, it is important to understand that the word love (*ἀγαπάω*) in the context of Jesus' teaching does not ask of us to have "fuzzy feelings" for the enemy. The phenomenon of human love is much more complex. Here, love primarily refers to concrete actions (Lk. 6:27-28 cf. Mt. 5:44; *Did.* 1:3), not merely cordial feelings,<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Matthews, *Luke the Hellenist*, 106-107: That is the position of Barrett whom the author quotes. He disagrees with him however, pointing out, that "for Luke this bridge (between Hebrews and Hellenists) may be important not so much as an attempt to document a historical *détente* between rival fractions in the early church, but as a way to connect his own Christian heritage and that of his "Hellenist" readers back through their most prominent representative to the original witnesses, the apostles, at the foundation of the Church.

<sup>19</sup> See appendix I.

<sup>20</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Matthew: A Commentary*. Vol. 1 (Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 286.

though they should not be too readily excluded either.<sup>21</sup> Love is an attitude grounded in selflessness and a set of behaviors (Rom. 12:9-2; 1Cor. 13:4-8). It moves beyond selfish vengeance and calls for a positive action toward the enemies no matter the circumstances or the results.<sup>22</sup> Greek ἀγαπάω wills the good of the other person without a desire of anything in return.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, it leads to breaking of the circle of violence.<sup>24</sup> The word ἀγαπάω is important to Luke, and he uses it as much as Matthew and Mark combined.<sup>25</sup> It is Paul's favorite word in 1/2 Corinthians. Only Luke uses the word "do good" (ἀγαθοποιεῖν), which was a common term in Hellenistic ethics (Lk. 6:27, 35).<sup>26</sup> The first time Matthew and Luke employ ἀγαπάω is in connection not with a friend but with enemies (ἐχθροί). Rhetorically this certainly comes as a surprise. The first time Luke mentions it outside SP is to highlight the love of a non-Jew (centurion) toward Jews (Lk. 7:5). As the narrative unfolds it will be a quasi-Jew - a Samaritan - who will show mercy toward his enemy on the road to Jericho (cf. Lk. 10:25-37). In his teaching on serving only one master, both Matthew and Luke juxtapose love as an opposite to hate (Matt. 16:13; cf. Lk. 27b-28). Both in Luke and Matthew love is connected primarily to enemy-love vis-a-vis human mutual love and the love of God and oneself. The exception is the fact that Pharisees love the seats of honor (Matt. 11:43).

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<sup>21</sup> Jacqueline Lapsley, "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65 (2003): 350-69. The author argues that love and hate should not be perceived as emotionless actions in ANE and Jewish OT thinking; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 490.

<sup>22</sup> William Davies and Dale Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, Vol. 1 (ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 552.

<sup>23</sup> John P. Meier, *Marginal Jew*. Vol. IV. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 490; William Klassen, *Love of Enemies* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 84: Love denotes in the NT an act of will and self-giving.

<sup>24</sup> Harrington, *Matthew*, 92.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 13x: 6:27, 32, 32, 32, 35; 7:5, 42, 47, 47; 10:27; 11:43; 16:13. Acts 0x; Mk 5x: 10:21; 12:30, 31, 33, 33. Matt. 8x: 5:43, 44, 46, 46; 6:24; 19:19; 22:37, 39; NT 143x.

<sup>26</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 601.

The absence of direct parallels for *EL* in Jewish Tradition and the ancient world at large does not mean that it emerged in a vacuum. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that it has a precedent in Jewish tradition as well as the Greco-Roman philosophical world. To give but one example, in Proverbs 25:21-22, the author urges the reader to feed your enemy if he is hungry – a concrete act of goodness toward the enemy.<sup>27</sup> The idea of treating one’s enemy in a humane way is also found in the ancient Babylonian *Counsels of Wisdom*, written before 700 BCE.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.2.2. *The Concept of Hate*

The commandment to hate one’s enemy is not attested in OT or Rabbinic literature. This very silence itself is striking and for that reason it may function as a condemnation of the wrong interpretation in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>29</sup> The closest parallels can be found in Qumran<sup>30</sup> where members of the community are called to “hate the sons of darkness” (1QS 1.4).<sup>31</sup> However, their hatred is not rooted in ethics but represents an apocalyptic thinking of a sectarian community. Hate for them means to *not*

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 285: The most important biblical examples are Exod 23:4–5 (help for the enemy’s ox or donkey); 1 Samuel 24 (David and Saul in the cave of En-ge-di); Prov. 24:17–18 (do not rejoice when your enemy falls); 25:21–22 (give your enemy bread to eat and water to drink). Early Jewish examples speak of individual concrete ways of behaving toward one’s enemy, for example, of generosity toward people who think differently (*Ep. Arist.* 227) or of peaceableness and forgiveness toward enemies (*T. Gad* 6.3–7; cf. *T. Benj.* 4.2–3); for a detailed analysis of Jewish and Hellenistic texts see, Owczarek, *Sons of the Most High*, 15-64 and Meier, *Marginal Jew IV*, 528-548.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 209: as quoted by the author “Unto your opponents do no evil; Your evildoer recompense with good; Unto your enemy let justice [be done]. Unto your oppressor ... Let him rejoice over you, ... return to him. Let not your heart be induced to do evil.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 303: Allusions to “hate your enemy” appear in Deut. 7.2, Ps. 26:5, Ps 137.

<sup>30</sup> John Collins, “Dead Sea Scrolls” *ABD*, 2:86. The date for the emergence of the Qumran community and the reasons for its disappearance have been debated by scholars. We have 12 copies of the 1QS Document ranging from 100 BC to the Herodian Period (30 BCE -70 AD). It is in this period that one should safely place the Qumran community.

<sup>31</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 304. Matthew, however, is not in polemic with Essenes; Krister Stendahl, “Hate, Non-Retaliatio, and Love (*1QS X*, 18–20 and Rom 12:19–21\*)” in *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962) 343–55: the argument of the paper is that non-retaliation is rooted in hate and not in love as in SP or SP.



*associate* with outsiders and thus it has strong covenantal overtones. The point is that the community is more important than anything else is the point (Lk. 14:26, cf. Mt. 10:37).<sup>32</sup>

Ethically speaking, men of perdition are to be treated with non-violence, leaving vengeance to God, (1QS 10.17-20; cf. Rom. 12:17-21).

I will pay to no man the reward of evil;  
I will pursue him with goodness.  
For judgment of all the living is with God  
and it is He who will render to man his reward...  
my soul will not desire the riches of violence.  
I will not grapple with the man of perdition  
until the Day of Revenge, (1QS 10.17-20).<sup>33</sup>

Hatred takes on different shades of meaning in the Bible. In the context of the *EL* command, it signifies personal aversion and being “inimical.”<sup>34</sup> In other contexts, hate equals placing Christ above all things, even family relations or one’s life (Jn. 12:25). Such attitude is evident in OT writings for which Psalm 139 is the best example: “Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies” (Ps. 139:21-22; cf. 1QS 9:21-22).<sup>35</sup> Hatred is human nature and hating one’s enemies and loving one’s friends was a norm in the ancient world,

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<sup>32</sup> The language of hate and love has various and sometime conflicting functions in the OT and NT. O. Michael, “† μισέω,” *TDNT* 4:683-94. 691-692. The requirement for discipleship in Lk. 14:26 (Mt. 10:37) and Jn. 12:25 is striking: “Hatred of all we are under obligation to love, including our own souls, is the condition of fellowship with Jesus, of working together with Him.” The reference is not to hate in the psychological sense but to disowning, renunciation, and rejection (καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐσυτοῦ), as in the Wisdom literature of the OT. Those who become disciples of Jesus must be committed exclusively to Him; they cannot be bound to anyone or anything else. The term “hate” demands the separation of the disciple, and the warning not to love anyone or anything more is the test.

<sup>33</sup> Stendahl, “Hate, Non-retaliation and love,” 343: The author also quotes from Josephus who lists among “awesome oaths” Essenes have to take that he will wrong no one; that he will hate always the unjust and fight with the just.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Owczarek, *Sons of the Most High: Love of Enemies in Luke-Acts: Teaching and Practice* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulist Publication Africa, 2005), 135.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. (LXX) Lev. 26:17; Num. 10:34; Deut. 30:7; 2 Sam. 22:18; Esther 9:5; Ps. 17; Dan. 4:19; Sir 25:14.

The world and the flesh not only find the commandment to love one's enemies difficult in practice, they also reject it in theory and prefer to follow other guidelines which seem at least, at a glance, to be more appropriate to human nature: helping friends and harming enemies.<sup>36</sup>

“Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies” was often a sentiment a person in distress would express before God. This is where one starts in distress, but the answer to this introspective question as we see in this psalm is trust and self-abandonment, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (vs. 23-24; cf. Ps. 22). Major commentaries allude to the fact that hating one's enemy in antiquity was a common philosophical concept.

### *1.2.3. The Concept of Enemy*

Betz argues that the question “Who is my enemy?” is as important as was the traditionally debated OT question, “Who is my neighbor?”<sup>37</sup> The “enemy” can certainly connote different things to different people in different times and in different circumstances. An enemy can be a personal foe, a religious rival, a former friend, a political opponent, or a member of one's family. In the Hebrew tradition an enemy is first and foremost a theological concept. Enemy stands in opposition to *Imitatio Dei*.

### ***Satan a mythical arch-enemy of God***

Satan's *modus operandi* is to slander, to accuse falsely<sup>38</sup> - to reject God, to resist his will and his divine plan. He is an apocalyptic figure. In Matthew's Gospel in particular and in Luke (Lk. 22:31-33 cf. 24:1-9), the enemy is anyone who opposes God and his plan as revealed in Jesus and carried on by his disciples. The character of the

<sup>36</sup> Marius Reiser, “Love of Enemies in the Context of Antiquity” (*New Testament Studies* 47, 2001), 392-397. 411. Betz, *Sermon*, 306.

<sup>37</sup> Betz, *The Sermon*, 311-312.

<sup>38</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” *ABD*, 5.985-989, at 985.

enemy is mythically symbolized by the figure of “Satan,” the archetypal enemy prowling behind the Matthean narrative from start to finish. Satan lurks behind the hostility of Jesus’ opponents<sup>39</sup> as he does at the foot of the cross, where those who pass by – *i.e.*, the scribes and the elders – revile Jesus, using Satan’s own words: “If you are the Son of God, save yourself.” (Matt. 4:1-11, 27:40-44).<sup>40</sup> In Luke both leaders and soldiers mock Jesus who is called the Messiah of God (cf. Lk. 4:3,9) – a somewhat unique term in the Gospels,

And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

Jesus prays for them all - both the leaders and soldiers - so will Paul pray both for Jewish leaders who accused him and for Agrippa who sees Paul as innocent and his speech as convincing (Acts 26:1-3). Acts has a less apocalyptic overtone but Satan is still active. Peter places the Holy Spirit over and against Satan in the story of Ananias and Sapphira: “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie....” (Act 5:3 cf. 13:8-11 - magician). In his third account of conversion, Paul before Agrippa describes his mission as being a witness to both Jews and Gentiles to free them from the dominion of Satan to God and receive forgiveness and inheritance through faith (Acts. 26:16-18). Satan even though to a lesser degree, is still present in Luke-Acts as an enemy of divine will. Jesus prays for Peter who

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<sup>39</sup> Donald Senior, *Matthew* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries, Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 60.

<sup>40</sup> “Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” <sup>41</sup> In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, <sup>42</sup> “He saved others; he cannot save himself.” He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup> He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’ ” <sup>44</sup> The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.”

will give into Satan's ruse (Lk. 22:31).<sup>41</sup> Jesus himself is presented as fighting against the power of Satan when he expels a legion of demons (Lk. 8:31).

Matthew and Luke's usage of Satan-symbolism is intentional. The notion of Satan illumines the character of the enemy no matter what his identity may be: political (*e.g.*, Herod), rivaling Jewish sects (*e.g.*, Scribes and Pharisees, who represent Rabbinic Judaism of Matthew's time), a member of one's household, or enemies within the Matthean or Lukan community. The enemy's nature – *i.e.*, the Satan's character - is theological. He is, first, the enemy of God and, if Jesus is "the son of God," he is Jesus' enemy. The battle is not only on a human level but also between the angel of God and Satan.<sup>42</sup> This is the theological context in which salvation history unfolds in the New Testament. Levenson in his book *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* quotes J. Collins as saying:

The single dualism of Light and Darkness is found then on a series of distinct levels – the individual heart, the political and social order, the cosmic level, embracing heaven and earth. The cosmic conflict of the two spirits may be used to express this dualism on any other level. The resolution of the conflict by the intervention of God to aid the sons of Light may also indicate the anticipated resolution of the conflict at any level.

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Luke 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22:3; Acts 13:10; 26:18

<sup>42</sup> Boris Repschinski. *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew: Their Redaction, Form, Relevance for the Relationship Between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism*. FRLANT 189 (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 336-337: At other times, Jesus is accused of demonic possession (16:1-4; 12:38). Matthew intentionally frames his controversy stories in such a way as to present the attacks on Jesus as coterminous with the attacks on Jesus' community (9:2-17), to which he is actively present (1:23; 18:20; 28:19-20) and in which he continues to live (10:40-42).

Levenson then pushes this conclusion even further, proposing a reverse scenario where “human goodness helps defeat the angel of darkness and his terrestrial subjects.”<sup>43</sup> It is in this context that *EL* and discipleship reflect God’s plan of salvation.

### ***Jewish Sects***

Matthew’s language throughout the Gospel is colorful, to say the least, when he talks about his Jewish rivals. To give unequivocal witness to Jesus’ ultimate authority and that of his community, Matthew does not shy from using epithets as harsh as they come, calling Jesus’ opponents evil (9:4; 12:34; 16:4), brood of vipers (3:7; 12:34; 23:33), and hypocrites (6:2, 5, 16; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13-29 [5 times]; 24:51).<sup>44</sup> In Luke-Acts one hears a less “heated language” but debate is still vigorous and intense as seen in Jerusalem where Paul is arrested. It is as violent as can be to the point that Paul’s life is at risk. Romans intentionally, however, are shown in a positive light because they protect Paul and save him (Acts. 21:31-32; 22:22-23 cf. 16:18; 27:21-44).<sup>45</sup>

The harsh language of the Gospel of Matthew as well as Luke’s polemic against “Jews” in Acts may strike lay readers as anti-Semitic, especially the infamous passage in Matthew 27:25.<sup>46</sup> A closer look at the historical context in which Matthew and Luke wrote their Gospels makes it clear that neither Jesus, nor his followers were anti-Jewish.

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<sup>43</sup> Jon Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: the Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 42-43.

<sup>44</sup> Repschinski. *The Controversy Stories*, 324: blind guides (15:14; 23:16, 34), bearing evil or no fruits (3:7-10; 7:19 [ref. Pharisees, also 3:10]; 12:33-34; 21:43), ignorant about the scriptures (12:3; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:29-31). They take counsel against Jesus (12:14; 22:15; 26:3-4; 27:1, 7), tempt him (16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35), accuse him of allegiance with Satan (9:34; 10:25; 12:24), and request a sign while ignoring a sign already given (12:38; 16:1). In the narrative of Matthew’s Gospel, the opponents of Jesus are presented as predictable and, thus, in plain sight, false.

<sup>45</sup> In Acts 16:28 and 27:21-44 Paul saves Roman soldiers as pointed out by Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 268-269, 271 and Robert Tannehill, “The Ethical Teaching in Luke,” in *Acts and Ethics* edited by Thomas E. Phillips (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 115.

<sup>46</sup> “His blood be on us and on our children!” So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.”

Luke actually makes sure that Romans are depicted paradoxically in a “more” positive light when they force Simon of Cyrene to help Jesus carry his cross. In that scene Jewish women weep and Jesus consoles them: “Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children” (Lk. 23:26-27). Probably, the best way to approach the harsh language of Matthew’s narrative and “the Jews” in Luke-Acts is to see their communities as a Jewish Jesus-sect among other Jewish sects, trying to construct its identity and authority in relation to competing factions after the horrific events of 70 C.E. They engage in a debate, not unlike Torah debates, within a family that is called Judaism.<sup>47</sup> They had a right to challenge and criticize their own religion, much like their prophets did in the past. The question is who is a true prophet and who is a false prophet (Acts 20:29-30 cf. 13:6, 17:11, Lk. 6:26). For Luke the hostility is “portrayed as a flaunting of Jewish customs, beliefs, and traditions on the part of those who would bring Gentiles into the membership of a group that ostensibly would represent the people of God.”<sup>48</sup> In Matthew, those “who persecute you” appear to be, from the narrative plot of his account, the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees – all and any competing Jewish sect living in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

### *Empire as an Enemy*

First, one has to acknowledge that it is impossible to try to artificially separate the political and the religious spheres in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world, in which Jesus

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<sup>47</sup> Anthony Saldarini. *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 58-64: Some have suggested that the three parables, which flow from the controversy in the Temple (21:12-17), followed by the cursing of the “Fig Tree (Israel)” (21:18-22), represent a Matthean attempt to assert Jesus’ supremacy over and against other Jewish sects (21:23-27). These parables include “the parable of the two sons” (21:28-32), “the parable of the vineyard” (21:33-45), and “the parable of the wedding feast” (22:1-14).

<sup>48</sup> Matthews, *Acts of the Apostles*, 15: The validity of Jewish law is at stake and those opposed to Luke would be other Jewish Christians who take a more conservative approach of how Christian life should be practices.

preached and Matthew and Luke's communities carried on his mission. One cannot adequately understand religion without politics and vice versa. Even though they are distinct entities, they are interrelated. If that is true, the notions of the *religious enemy* and the *political enemy* may be more closely related than previously thought.<sup>49</sup> W. Carter makes that same point when discussing the nature of the *elite* in the Roman Empire, as depicted in the Gospel of Matthew:

The elite comprises, as is typical in an imperial society, the leadership people, an alliance of Gentiles (kings, governors, Pilate) and Jews (the Jerusalem elite: chief priests, Pharisees and scribes, synagogue authorities, and so forth). While the category embraces both Jews and Gentile, models of imperial societies and Matthean usage prohibit any attempt to subdivide on ethnic grounds. Matthew 10:17-18 holds together violence against disciples from synagogues (flogging ordered by the leaders) with seizure and trails before governors and kings. The passion prediction in 20:18-19 identifies the violent role of both the Jerusalem elite and the Gentiles (=Romans); the former condemn Jesus to death while the latter mock, flog, and crucify him. Consequently, and consistently, the passion narrative features the alliance of Jerusalem and Roman elites in removing Jesus. Such alliances are typical of Rome's imperial strategies and, in relation to interpreting the Gospels, have been too readily overlooked by New Testament scholars.<sup>50</sup>

It is important to remember that political and religious spheres were inherently intertwined especially in Luke-Acts where the community is largely Gentile with a significant Jewish membership. Tensions are in a way unavoidable. First, this in mind guards a reader from a pietistic interpretation that sees the enemy exclusively in religious terms, as if there were not political implications as far as Jesus' and Paul's preaching of the Gospel was concerned. Jesus was perceived as a threat to the socio-political order of the Empire, as he was to the religious one. Secondly, it guards the reader from political

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<sup>49</sup> John Dart, "Up Against Caesar: Jesus and Paul versus Empire," in *C21 Resources*, (Boston College. Fall 2008): 9-10.

<sup>50</sup> Warren Carter. "Construction of Violence and Identities" in *Violence in the New Testament*, edited by Shelly Mathews and W. Leigh Gibson (New York: T&T Clark, 2005) 92.

over-interpretation of Jesus and his mission.<sup>51</sup> For Matthew and Luke, Jesus was the Son of God, not a socio-political revolutionary with a subversive agenda hidden up his sleeve, though it is not unlikely that he might have been perceived as such. To prevent us from seeing him in such a twisted way, Matthew places on the lips of a Roman centurion the most profound profession of faith, “Truly, this was the Son of God,” (Matt. 27:54). In Luke, a Roman centurion praising God (γενόμενον ἐδόξαζεν τὸν θεὸν λέγων) declares Jesus to be innocent, “When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent,” (Lk. 23:47 cf. 2:14).

Furthermore, the fact that the enemy is hidden under the disguise of both the religious and imperial interests of the elite makes “him” even more “devilish.” It is the most difficult enemy to love and resist - worse than a religious or a political enemy acting individually. Jesus struggles with the power of Satan that moves behind and in-between these two spheres simultaneously.<sup>52</sup> He was condemned by the leaders of his own people and crucified by Roman authorities. Both function as enemies in their own right, but not separately. The combination of the two was lethal. Individually, they would not have had

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<sup>51</sup> N.T Wright, Paul and Caesar: A New Reading of Romans. <http://www.ntwrightpage.com>. (Originally published in *A Royal Priesthood: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically*, ed. C. Bartholemew, 2002, Carlisle: Paternoster, 173–193. Reproduced by permission of the author.) “We have moved away quite rapidly in recent years from the old split, which was assumed by and built into the fabric of Western biblical studies, between ‘religion’ and ‘politics’... There is a quantum leap now being made from the old way of reading the Bible, in which certain political ‘implications’ could be drawn here and there from texts which were (of course) about something else, and the occasional concentration on rather isolated texts — one thinks of the ‘Tribute question’ in the synoptic tradition, and of the notorious first paragraph of Romans 13 — as being the only places in the New Testament at least where real ‘political’ issues came to the fore. Now, however, we have all been alerted to the fact that the kingdom of God was itself, and remained, a thoroughly political concept; that Jesus’ death was a thoroughly political event; that the existence and growth of the early church was a matter of community-building, in conflict, often enough, with other communities. There is of course a danger, not always avoided in recent studies, of seeing the New Testament now simply the other way up but still within the Enlightenment paradigm: in other words, of declaring that it’s all ‘politics’ and that to read it as ‘religion’ or ‘theology’ is to domesticate or privatize it”

<sup>52</sup> Carter, “Construction of Violence and Identities,” 98-99.



the power to carry out Satan's deadly plan. Pilate clearly judged Jesus to be innocent (Matt. 27:24-26 cf. Lk. 23:20), and tried to get out of the situation by releasing Barabbas. The chief priest and the elders incited the crowds and, ultimately, asked for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified (Matt. 27:15-23 cf. Lk. 23:1-25). The enemy, therefore, is not solely imperial or solely religious. Both Matthew and Luke are interested in presenting Romans in a positive light in their narrative (cf. John 18). Jesus was caught in a religious and political net.

### ***Family Members***

There is also an indication that Jesus was the cause of disputes and alienation within the families of his community. The prime example of this is Jesus' vivid image of family divisions and the prediction that he came "to bring not peace, but sword," and "set family members against each other so that a person's enemies will be those of one's own household" (Matt. 10:34-42; 10:16-25; cf. Lk. 12:49-53; Mic. 7:6).<sup>53</sup> This is "the cross" that the disciples will have to carry. The challenge and the cost of discipleship are high. One has to put all loyalties and all priorities in proper relation to one's commitment to follow Jesus (Matt. 8:21-22). Nothing is more important - not even one's life (Matt. 10:38). It is very difficult to think of one's family member as an enemy of God but, in Matthew's mind, and Jesus' as well (Matt. 12:46-50; cf. Lk. 8:31), anybody and anything that stand in the way of discipleship is God's enemy. It is not unreasonable to assume that, in the aftermath of 70 C.E., as we observe Jesus' movement slowly becoming a separate or new religion (*i.e.*, church) within Judaism, "conversions to Christianity" would have caused divisions and understandable tensions within families,

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<sup>53</sup> Daniel Harrington, *Matthew*, 150-151: In a parallel passage in Luke, Jesus concludes that the crowds fail to interpret the signs of God's presence in him (Lk. 12:56).

especially in ancient Palestine of Jesus' time, where family bonds and loyalty to one's family were seen as sacrosanct.<sup>54</sup> Even today, we know how difficult, violent, and war-like conversions of this sort can be. They can tear families apart. The temptation to put family relations first, over and above religious convictions, would be very human.

### *Individuals as Enemies of God*

It is clear that individuals in Matthew and Luke-Acts also function as enemies of God's will and God's way. Paul is the prime example in Acts for he persecutes the church and witnesses silently the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-8:3 and 9:1-19). Jesus shows love toward Saul - his enemy - and offers repentance, resulting ultimately in Jesus' election of Paul to be the great missionary to the Gentiles. In Acts Paul is a great missionary to Greeks and particularly to the Jews (Acts 20:21). Another example of an individual who functions as an enemy of God is Peter, particularly in the pre-resurrection context. He fails to understand who Jesus truly is and what his mission entails. He might have expected Jesus to be a David-like figure, who was a military threat to Philistines, the first human called a Satan (1Sam. 29:4).<sup>55</sup> This is not how Jesus understood his mission. Peter will gain a greater insight regarding Jesus' true identity only after the resurrection (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 3:17). Peter is both blessed for his confession (Matt. 16:17), and rebuked a few lines later, for his inability to understand Jesus' true identity and mission (Matt. 16:23). He is given the keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:19), but he struggles with opening the doors of the mystery of that kingdom, as revealed by God in Christ, when he denies Jesus on three occasions (Matt. 26:69). He is called "of little faith" as he sinks in

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 147.

<sup>55</sup> Hamilton, "Satan," *ABD* 5:985-989, at 986. The author writes: "Philistines rulers, observing the presence of David and his supporters in their camp as they prepared for war with Israel, complained that David would in fact become their "adversary" and thus, win the favor of his own king Saul."

the waters “on his way toward Jesus” (Matt. 14:28-31). In Luke as already mentioned Jesus prays for Peter who will deny him (Lk. 22:32). Jesus shows his love even for Judas who greets him with a kiss (Lk. 22:48). Jesus in his own ministry loved even those who were his friends and enemies at the same time (Ps. 31:11).

In conclusion, the history of interpretation of Jesus’ commandment to love one’s enemies, according to Betz, offers a spectrum of possible interpretations as far as the identity of “the enemy” is concerned, ranging from personal enemies, to national adversaries, to heretics of the Church. In the end, one has to admit that an enemy can be anyone who opposes Jesus, his message, or his disciples. Jesus’ followers in such circumstances are supposed to act with love and non-violence. In Acts, they are to imitate Peter and Paul who themselves offer forgiveness and call “the Jews” to repentance (Acts 3:19; 28:23-31). The context for *EL* teaching in Matthew and Luke-Acts has to do with the religious identity of Christian Judaism after the destruction of the Temple. In Jesus’ historical context, however, Lohfink argues that the *EL* command was directed against Zealots and their mission of a violent rebellion against the Roman Empire. According to him, Jesus’ movement prior to the first Jewish rebellion was a non-violent alternative over and against Zealots’ discipleship of violence and revolution.<sup>56</sup> This helps us to keep a broad spectrum when we think about who is the enemy in Matthew and Luke’s distinct narrative contexts.

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<sup>56</sup> Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He was* (trans. by Linda M. Maloney, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012), 79-82 and 194-199.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Exegesis of Matthew (5:43-48)*

In the second chapter we will provide a detailed analysis and exegesis of Matthew's version and interpretation of Jesus' teaching on *EL*. We will look at the context, structure and content of Matthew's exposition of Jesus' revolutionary teaching that challenges God's people to love one's enemies, no matter what their identity is. As we proceed we will point to possible echoes found in his Gospel. They will be listed at the end of the chapter.

#### *2.1.1. Context*

The Matthean sermon emerges out of the infancy narrative and the story of John the Baptist (Matt. 1:1-4:16). It marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee where Jesus preaches repentance and the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 4:17). Not only is Jesus powerful in word, but also as will be seen in the following chapters in Matthew's Gospel, his actions of healing, exorcisms, and miracles also testify to his power and superiority over any one who wishes to claim authority with respect to Torah (Matt. 8:9, 10).<sup>57</sup> The first sermon Jesus delivers is one among five great discourses (Matt. 5-7).<sup>58</sup> Luke's SP is accompanied by Jesus preaching in parables (Lk. 10:25-27; 15). Matthew's Last Sermon is eschatological in nature (Matt. 24-25), while his first sermon is a wisdom instruction on what it means to follow Torah faithfully.

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<sup>57</sup> Betz, *The Sermon*, 211: These statements reflect Matthew's Christology that Jesus taught and spoke with authority that could not be matched by others. See: Matt 7:29; 8:9; 9:6, 8; 10:1; 21:23. His authority originated with him as evidenced by "But I say to you," which has no parallels in rabbinic literature of the time. The sermon on the Mountain (SP) where Jesus delivers it at the foot of the mountain suggests that in both the mountain is the context.

<sup>58</sup> The other four focus on themes such as discipleship (10), the kingdom of heaven (13), community life (18), and eschatology (24-25).

In the context of the six antitheses, love of the enemies is climactic. As one reads them it almost feels like walking up the mountain. Matthew's antitheses need to be read in the context of Jesus' self-identification as the One among many in the past who came "not to abolish the law but to fulfill the law" (Matt. 5:17). Matthew wants to make sure that Jesus is seen in continuity with Judaism and its foundational teaching. His entire life and ministry is set in the context of fulfillment of Torah by way of Matthew's numerous uses of the so-called *fulfillment* quotation (Matt. 1:23 and 27:9-10).<sup>59</sup>

### 2.1.2 Structure (Mt. 5:43-48)

The most basic structure of all six antitheses<sup>60</sup> is "You have heard it was said... but I say to you." Divine passive - "it was said" - equals God.<sup>61</sup> The wrong interpretation, which is not of God, is questioned and dismissed as false. It confirms Jesus, who says, "but I say to you" as true interpreter of God's will and one who came to fulfill Torah (cf. Rom. 3:31). On the level of structure, Matthew places Jesus in his unique fashion at the heart of God's Torah by using "I." For this reason Luz concludes that "no antithesis fulfills the law as clearly without abolishing it."<sup>62</sup> He does not abolish Torah, nor does he give a New Torah. Jesus challenges the false interpretation of Torah. Furthermore, unlike Moses, who received Torah, Jesus gives his teaching on his own authority.<sup>63</sup> Jesus does

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<sup>59</sup> Harrington, *Matthew*, 17.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 90. This structure does not appear in any of the parallel teachings either in Luke or Mark.

<sup>61</sup> Whether it is a divine passive misinterpreted (wrong interpretation) or simply an acknowledgment of a common attitude and practice (human nature) is not clear but plausible.

<sup>62</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 288. There is a disagreement whether this formula has early rabbinic roots.

<sup>63</sup> Since Matthew is at pains to present Jesus as the authoritative teacher of the Torah, the legal questions and arguments of these controversy stories are intentionally accentuated and polished, raised to a higher octave compared to Mark's somewhat casual attitude toward the Law (Matt. 22:34: cf. Mk. 12:28-34). The subject matter of these stories mirror typical Jewish legal questions, some of which include: divorce (19:3-9, 5:31-32), observance of Sabbath (12:2-8; 9-14), purity (9:6-13; 15:1-20; 23:25-26), oaths (5:33-37; 23:16-22), vows (15:4-6), fasting (9:14-17), the

not come to bring a new law as such, but to unveil a false or alleged interpretation of God's will, and Jesus establishes himself as the only person to have authority to do so (Mt. 23:10). For this reason, "SM introduces here a critical difference between what God has in fact said and what the tradition claims that God has said."<sup>64</sup>

The six antitheses address somewhat loosely connected topics, which is characteristic of Wisdom literature. They include, 1) murder and anger, 2) adultery and lust, 3) marriage and divorce, 4) oaths, 5) retaliation and violence, and 6) love of enemies. Betz points out, however, that they are not unrelated.<sup>65</sup> All of them in one way or another have to do with violence and abuse of the Law. The sixth climactic antithesis follows the pattern of previous ones and has basically five parts: inadequate interpretation (43) adequate interpretation (44), reasons (45), explanation (46-47), and concluding command (48).<sup>66</sup> Structurally, there exists a thematic progression as Jesus continues to explain what he meant on the Mountain. "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is Perfect" connected to what follows, *i.e.* "alms, prayer, and fasting" is in fact a call to a greater righteousness (Matt. 6:1-18). It is not specifically on *EL* but on Pharisaic interpretation of the law. It does include *EL*, when Jesus teaches those gathered around him how to pray. He gives an example of Perfect Prayer that is "Our Father." Jesus puts a special emphasis on forgiveness (Matt. 6:9:14; cf. 18:21). The one who gives the command, challenges lesser-righteousness which is practiced before others and not God: Προσέχετε [δὲ] τὴν

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demand for a sign to prove one's authority (12:38-42; 16:1-4); and associating with sinners in table fellowship (9:10-13); see Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories*, 321; Betz, *Sermon*, 209. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 231-232.

<sup>64</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 280.

<sup>65</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 204-205.

<sup>66</sup> Davies and Allison, 548-549; Betz, *Sermon*, 296; Luz, *Sermon 1-7*, 231: "It was said" (ἐρρήθη) in and of itself unveils the false nature of what has been claimed to be a traditional interpretation of Torah.

δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν μὴ ποιεῖν (make your righteousness). In another place Pharisees are described as those who love the seats of honor (Matt. 23:6). One could argue that it is Mount Sinai re-enacted. In Exodus, Moses who comes down from the mountain by himself encounters a problem: the golden calf – money was used by Israelites for the wrong reason to build idols for themselves and by themselves (Exodus 32). Jesus will teach his disciples on a proper use of money and treasure as he continues his sermon. They are to be guided by heavenly things and not earthly desires (Matt. 6:19, 24). Jesus most importantly delivers his sermon on the mountain. While Moses was with God alone on Sinai (Ex. 34:6), Jesus is with his disciples who are the followers of Mosaic law.

### 2.1.3. Content

#### *Inadequate interpretation (vs. 43)*

Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου.

The command to love “your neighbor” (friend)<sup>67</sup> comes explicitly from Leviticus 19:18. In later citations (Matt. 19:19, 22:39), Matthew includes the phrase “as yourself” (ὡς σεαυτόν). It has both a communal and an individual character.<sup>68</sup> The question “Who is my neighbor?” was commonly asked of the Old Testament tradition (cf. Lk. 10:25-37; Mk 12:28-34) and applied in the Holiness Code to a variety of people: the poor, the hired, the handicapped, the slave, the aged, and the stranger – always a fellow Israelite.<sup>69</sup> It was the subject of Torah debates as the New Testament itself attests (Lk 10:29).<sup>70</sup> The

<sup>67</sup> Betz, *The Sermon*, 302: Friend and neighbor are synonymous terms.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 306: The friend was regarded as “another self” or “alter ego”: “your friend who is as your own soul” (Deut 13:6 [LXX: 13:7]).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 302: Both the Decalogue (Exod 20:16, 17 explicitly; 20:10–15 implicitly) and the Holiness Code (Lev. 19:13, 15, 16, 17, 18 explicitly; 19:9–12, 14, 33–36 implicitly) set forth prescriptions for being a good neighbor.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 302.

commandment to hate one's enemy, on the other hand, is not found in the Old Testament.<sup>71</sup> It functions as a rhetorical formulation, confronting a common attitude and practice. From Matthew's perspective, the fault of this interpretation – “you have heard it was said” - is that it is narrow and exclusivist,<sup>72</sup> creating a dualistic ethics of love and hate. Jewish people who always lived in the company with Gentiles are to learn how to live in peace and not at war with them or one another.

*True interpretation (vs. 44)*

ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν· ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκόντων ὑμᾶς

Jesus' proposed teaching about the kind of attitude one should have toward his or her enemy strikes his audience, both then and now, like a thunderbolt. Jesus teaches what is a true “Jewish orthodox theology”<sup>73</sup> - unconditional love for all people, enemies included. Meier rightly describes it as “laconic and disturbing,” an “in your face” sort of saying, which continues to be “disconcerting, shocking, and therefore memorable.”<sup>74</sup> It is, however, not completely out of place in the context of the Hellenistic and Jewish philosophical and religious world. Matthean Jesus qualifies his teaching with one concrete example: “pray for those who persecute you” (*Did.* 1:3. Lk. 23:34, Acts 7:6).<sup>75</sup>

Even though some texts in Matthew indicate that persecution was very severe (Matt.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. 306. “The popular maxim recommending the love of friend and the hatred of foe is not found, to my knowledge, in the Old Testament and rabbinic literature, but reflections of its popular assumption are everywhere. Loving one's friends and hating one's enemies is the usual human behavior, maxim or no maxim.”

<sup>72</sup> Harrington, *Matthew*, 92.

<sup>73</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 309.

<sup>74</sup> Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 531 and 550.

<sup>75</sup> διώκειν (“persecute”) occurs only in 5:10, 11, 12, and 44 of the SM but never in the SP. Luke gives us more elaborate illustrations. He amplifies Matthew's version by adding “do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you (6:27c-28). Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 207. The catchword “persecute,” taken over from vv. 10–11, makes clear that he is especially thinking of the enemies of the church and in this sense summarizes the statements of Q (“hate,” “curse,” “mistreat”).”



10:17-18, 21-22, 23; 23:34),<sup>76</sup> it ought not to be overstated both with respect to Jewish and Gentile enemies.<sup>77</sup> Murphy points out that Jesus was the only one killed and that there was no execution of Christian leaders.<sup>78</sup> Harrington similarly points out that persecution was sporadic and local but real for those who experienced it (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-27) and for that reason in interpreting texts describing familial hostility,<sup>79</sup> for example, one must balance literary rhetorical convention and real experience (cf. Matt. 4:22; 8:21-22).<sup>80</sup>

Praying for or against persecutors (enemies) had been a common Jewish practice when the Gospel of Matthew was written.<sup>81</sup> The author of Psalm 17 begs God to destroy his enemies and “to slay them with their sword” (Ps 17:14). Praying for persecutors in SM, which expresses true righteousness and interpretation of God’s will, takes on a radically different tone. It does not ask that the enemy should die.<sup>82</sup> On the contrary, *EL* is grounded in forgiveness and reconciliation (Matt. 6:9-15). It is anchored in the hope of being preserved from “the evil in us and among us (Heb. 16:19).”<sup>83</sup> It hopes for conversion of the enemy but is not contingent on it. It trusts that God will ultimately

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. John 5:16; 15:20; 1 Thess 2:15; Gal 4:29; Acts 8:1 in H.D. Betz, *Sermon*, 313.

<sup>77</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 288: the author states that, “the catchword “persecute,” taken over from vv. 10–11, makes clear that he is especially thinking of the enemies of the church and in this sense summarizes the statements of Q (“hate,” “curse,” “mistreat”). National enemies are hardly the major concern, although the experiences of the church in the Jewish War in no way exclude such interpretation.”

<sup>78</sup> Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 94-96: in Acts, in particular, Luke is more interested in obstacles raised by Jews against Christianity than in Roman repression of Jesus movement.

<sup>79</sup> Harrington, *Matthew*, 145, n. 21: the division of family is an apocalyptic theme, which may in fact reflect a historical situation of Matthean community. The author cites as further examples, 2 Bar. 70:3; 4 Ezra 5:9; Jub 23:19; 1 Enoch 100:1-2; all these have basis in Micah 7:6.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* 144-148: on the extent of persecution and with respect to verses 23:34 and “your synagogues” as a distinct rival Jewish group who oppose Jesus followers see, 328, n. 34. The hostility has often been described as a polemic with a synagogue across the street.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Ps. 22

<sup>82</sup> For such prayers see Psalms 2.25–27; 12.4; 15.10–12.

<sup>83</sup> Luz, *Matthew*, 322-333.

vindicate those who suffer unjustly (Ps. 22:29-31). In Gethsemane, just before the arrest and the cutting off the ear of the slave, the disciples fail to stay in prayer, in a moment of distress, the way Jesus taught them. In that scene, we may hear an implicit echo of Jesus' sermon. Failure to pray leads to violence.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus warns Peter and the disciples three times to stay and pray in time of distress (Matt. 26:36-46). Furthermore another echo of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness and mercy might be found in the parable about the "Unforgiving Servant" (Matt. 18:23-35). In that parable Jesus magnifies forgiveness: "I do not say to you seven times but seventy times seven."<sup>84</sup> The parable of the "Wicked Servants" also calls the disciples to graciousness and mercy that is rooted in Jesus' teaching (Matt. 21:33-45). As already mentioned above, Lohfink has pointed out that the enemies in the time of Jesus would have been Zealots and not Pharisees. Zealots he argues were also concerned about God's kingdom, faith, discipleship, even if it were to endanger their lives. They ask their members to surrender their property and they lived in the eschatological horizon of God's reign.<sup>85</sup> Their means of achieving their goals was through violence, even against Jews who did not follow their path.<sup>86</sup> The Matthean Jesus is in conflict with Pharisees, who had a liberal agenda as far as applications of the law are concerned as well as messianic expectations (cf. Matt. 22:41, 51-54).<sup>87</sup> After the destruction of the Temple Zealot-like sentiments most likely did not disappear completely, so an anti-Zealot polemic may be somewhere in the background, particularly

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<sup>84</sup> John R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 72-79, 203.

<sup>85</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 80.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 82.

<sup>87</sup> See also Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospel* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 104-105: Pharisees in particular were promoting liberal views of how the law should be practiced. But the polemic is within the context of Judaism.

because Matthew wrote his Gospel sometime around 85 C.E. The point is that the disciples of Jesus are to pray for their persecutors and not fight them. No matter the nature of dispute or the identity of enemy, Jesus promoted non-violent resistance.

*Reason (vs. 45)*

ὅπως γένησθε υἱοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς, ὅτι τὸν ἥλιον αὐτοῦ ἀνατέλλει ἐπὶ πονηροῦς καὶ ἀγαθοῦς καὶ βρέχει ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ἀδίκους.

Now we move to the purpose of Jesus' teaching on the love of enemies, which is to "become sons of (υἱοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς) our Father in heaven" (Mt. 6:9-13). This is a clear allusion to the Beatitudes, where peacemakers are called the children of God who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 5:9-11; 19:14). The image is intrinsically Jewish. The sons of God are those who take the word of God into their hearts, (Prov. 2:1, cf. Jub. 1:24-25).<sup>88</sup> The concept of "the children of God" refers to Israel as well as Jesus' disciples within the context of Matthew's Gospel. The children of God are the little ones (Matt. 19:13-14) and the ones of little faith tossed by the waves and the wind in the storm (Matt. 8:26). One who wants to be a disciple of Christ has to be like a child. After warning Chorazin and Bethsaida with woes (Matt. 11:20-24), Jesus takes a moment to pray in thanksgiving and during his prayer he is revealed as the Son of God par excellence: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27-28). This is a Johannine-like interpolation in Matthew (John 10:30). The point is that Jesus is the child of God to be imitated. His

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<sup>88</sup> Jubilees 1:24-25: "And their souls will cleave to Me and to all My commandments, and they will fulfill My commandments, and I shall be their Father and they will be My children. And they will all be called children of the living God, and every angel and every spirit will know, yea, they will know that these are My children, and that I am their Father in uprightness and righteousness, and that I love them."

disciples are to be like their master (Matt. 10:24; cf. Lk. 6:40).

This verse in addition to its allusion to the universal nature of God's love has overtones of creation theology and is apocalyptic in nature.<sup>89</sup> Jesus explains what kind of God the Father is by his use of images of "sun and rain." We are lifted beyond here and now so, to speak, into a greater cosmic scheme of God's plan of salvation. Jesus invites his followers to enter a new reality, which is called the Kingdom of God /Heaven, (Matt. 6:9, 4:17, 23, 5:19, 25:34).<sup>90</sup> The Matthean phrase "Father in heaven" reveals both the immanence and transcendence of God (Mt. 28:20, cf. 1:23). It is a typical Jewish phrase (cf. Lk. 11:2).<sup>91</sup> The people of Israel are, in the eyes of God, his children (Deut. 14:1). This verse brings us back to the major Old Testament themes - creation, covenant, promise, and fulfillment. It is the proof *par excellence* that Jesus did not come to abolish the law, but to reveal the true nature of God's love that gushes out like rain and sun over all the world's people, not just the people of Israel. God's love was never meant to be limited to one nation or neighbors only.<sup>92</sup> Lohfink argues that from the outset the "neighbor" of the Holiness Code (Lev. 19; cf. Exod. 21:1-23) actually included "enemy as a matter of course."<sup>93</sup> Luz points out that it is not clear here whether God's goodness toward good and evil is a motivation or only becoming God's children.<sup>94</sup> The concluding command, however, in verse 48 - "be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect" - does not exclude that possibility. The images in this verse, Betz argues, make it an epiphany of

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<sup>89</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 287 and Betz, *Sermon*, 316. The author argues that it is a motivation for *EL*.

<sup>90</sup> R. Brown, *Introduction to The New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 240. In Luke "kingdom" is mentioned only once in the whole sermon (6:20).

<sup>91</sup> Harrington, *Matthew*, 95.

<sup>92</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 288: "In addition, God's goodness toward evil *and* good is not actually a motivation for the demand to love specifically the enemies."

<sup>93</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 197-198.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 287.

the will of God and consequently underscore the fact that Jesus' teaching is a right interpretation of Torah.<sup>95</sup> That is not as clear as he may want it to be.

Ultimately Jesus is “the beloved son of the Father” whose faithfulness is to inspire and encourage his followers (Matt. 3:17). He remained faithful to Him throughout his entire ministry: in the desert, (Matt. 4:11), in Gethsemane, (Matt. 22:36-46), during his arrest, (Matt. 22:47-56), and on the cross (Matt. 27:40), where one of the bandits ridicules his vision of the non-violent Kingdom of love. During his baptism, temptations and at the transfiguration he is proclaimed to be the faithful “the son of God,” (Matt. 3:13-17, 4:1-11, 17:1-13). Jesus speaks of love that promotes self-surrender to God and not self-promotion in the eyes of others.<sup>96</sup>

Matthew's usage of images of “sun that rises on the evil and on the good, and rain that falls on the righteous and on the unrighteous” will be echoed in the parable of the “weeds and the wheat” (Matt. 13:36-43). Matthew pictures the church as *corpus mixtum*<sup>97</sup> where good and evil are mixed together. It is a lesson on patience. Whether this parable relates to outsiders or only insiders is not clear. Since the nature of parables is open-ended, such interpretation is plausible and in accord with Jesus' teaching in SM, particularly that *EL* is to extend beyond, “greeting only your brothers and sisters” as seen in the verse that follows. In Matthew a particular attention is given to “tax-collectors,”

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<sup>95</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 316. “Thus this motif is also theophanic in nature.” In the NT see esp. Jas 5:17–18; Acts 14:17; Heb 6:7.

<sup>96</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 356.

<sup>97</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 288: the author states that “It may be that Matthew understood the traditional justification in v. 45b, c for the love of the enemy—God's goodness toward good and evil—in the sense of his idea of the *corpus permixtum*. Both the world and the church are fields in which weeds and wheat grow together (13:36–43; cf. 22:9). Thus God is now gracious toward everyone; it is in the judgment that the sons of God will be revealed;” also Donahue, *The Gospel in Parables*, 67: in Luke the context reflects that of ministry of Jesus where Jesus ministers to the lost including tax collectors while in Matthew the context points out to his community particularly in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. 18:23-35).

sinners, all who are lost in the society (Matt. 9:11, cf. Lk.15).<sup>98</sup> The allegory functions as both encouragement and woe against judging others.<sup>99</sup>

*Explanation (vs. 46-47)*

ἐὰν γὰρ ἀγαπήσητε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, τίνα μισθὸν ἔχετε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ τελῶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν; καὶ ἐὰν ἀσπάσησθε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὑμῶν μόνον, τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ ἔθνικοι τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν;

“If you love those who love you, what credit is it to you?” is a rhetorical question, for even tax collectors live based on the principle of quid-pro-quo. For this reason the logic of enemy-love transcends the idea of mutual love prescribed by the Golden Rule,<sup>100</sup> which, as noble as it may be, does not reflect the true nature of divine love (Lk. 6:32). Reciprocal love, though not bad in and of itself, is not enough to be a child of God. If God’s love depended on our response, we would be in big trouble so to speak. The function of the two examples of mutual love, practiced even by tax collectors and gentiles, seeks to reemphasize the fact that the children of God are called to a greater love and righteousness; greater than the common wisdom and practice of the time. That love is inclusive of all (vs. 45) and “perfect” (vs. 48). As Ricoeur put it, love of enemies has a quality and logic of divine super-abundance.<sup>101</sup>

*Concluding command (vs. 48)*

ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν.

To imitate God is the key concept here as indicated above. Verse 48 may, indeed, be regarded as a summation of all six antitheses and the underlining theme of the entire

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Matt. 17:24-27, 22:15-22 on the issue of temple and Romans taxes.

<sup>99</sup> Donohue, 67-68; Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 199: Jesus was especially concerned for tax collectors who were despised by the society and marginalized.

<sup>100</sup> Paul, Ricoeur “The Golden Rule: Exegetical and Theological Perplexities” in *New Testament Studies* 36, no. 3 (1990).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* 396-397.

sermon.<sup>102</sup> These words bring to mind the foundational OT saying, “You shall be holy for I, the Lord your God, am holy” (Lev 19:2). Holiness and perfection both refer to wholeness: to being who we are meant to be in the eyes of God; not like God *per se*, but God’s children created in his image and likeness (Gen. 1:27). God’s perfection, *i.e.* who God is, is manifested by God’s unconditional love for all the world’s people.<sup>103</sup> Paul experienced personally God’s perfect love – for he was a persecutor (Gal. 1:13, 23), an enemy of God (Rom. 5:10), yet God loved him. For Paul, this experience of God’s love was something he could not deny. That is why for him to imitate Christ and “to live in Him” (Gal. 2:19-20) will become equivalent to “to imitate God.”

Perfection as a goal is found in DSS (4Q174),<sup>104</sup> but otherwise it does not appear to be a common term in Old Testament tradition.<sup>105</sup> In Matthew it has to do with the fullness of life lived both individually and collectively (Gen 3:22). The fact that the final instruction is given in the form of a command underlines its divine origin. Imitation of God was a common theme in the ancient world. Two ancient citations will suffice to further substantiate the point that both gentiles and Jews struggled with how to imitate God - not so much with, whether it should be done in principle (Ben Sirach 18:1-14ff). After all Christianity emerges in the Roman Empire. God gives us Pax Christi while we give ourselves Pax Romana. He gives us heaven we give ourselves the opposite. On a human level *Imitatio Dei* is a yoke that is a burden but in Christ it is easy and light (Mt. 11:30). All people believed in the pursuit of God’s will. The drama of salvation history is

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<sup>102</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 325.

<sup>103</sup> Harrington, *Matthew*, 90: “perfect” (*tam*) refers to wholeness.

<sup>104</sup> According to Vermes’ translation: “This shall be the time of trial to come concerning the house of Judah so as to perfect... (missing text). They shall practice the whole law... Moses. This is the time, which it is written in the book of *Daniel* the Prophet” (4Q174 2.1).

<sup>105</sup> Harrington, *Matthew*, 90. Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 356.

that a good “some” of the people got it right and a good “some” of the people got it wrong. Seneca – a Greek philosopher says that, “If you are imitating the gods, then bestow benefits upon the ungrateful; for the sun rises also upon the wicked and the sea lies open also to pirates,” (*De Beneficiis* 4.26.1).<sup>106</sup> Similarly Zeus is to be imitated in his contempt for enmity by kings and rulers.<sup>107</sup>

Having been tempted in the desert (Matt. 4), Jesus journeys to a mount with his disciples unlike Moses who went by himself, so that they may receive Torah and hear it with their own ears. He delivers a series of blessings. On the mountain he teaches them in an ascending fashion about God’s will. To walk in Jesus’ shoes is not easy, but he calls his followers to rise to the occasion (Rom. 7:14-20). They are blessed in the first sermon and they will be “cursed” and on the edge in the last sermon, which brings Jesus’ teaching to conclusion (Matt. 23-25:31-46). Matthew translates and elaborates on the “Ten Words of Torah” in the “Five Sermons of Jesus,” and a special attention to *EL* is given at the very beginning in the SM. Thus far we have alluded to possible echoes to *EL* in Matthew. Some texts that appear to be relevant as far as allusions to Jesus’ teaching on loving one’s enemy are concerned include but are not limited to,

- b. Shake the Dust of Your Feet (10:14; Lk 9:5; Acts 13:14-52)
- c. Do Not Fear Those Who Kill the Body (10:16-39)
- d. Parable of the Weeds and the Wheat (13:1-30)
- e. Peter the Enemy of God (16:21–23)
- f. The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (18:23-35)

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<sup>106</sup> Cited in Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 177. The citation is according to Loeb edition (3.257). The author also quotes Epictetus a Cynic philosopher (*Diss.* 3.22.54), “...he must needs be flogged like an ass, and while he is being flogged he must love the men who flog him, a though he were the father or brother of them all. (Loeb 2:149). For Cynics, however, overcoming enemy with goodness was motivated by their superiority and the point was to ridicule others.

<sup>107</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 325, “Zeus’s example should be followed by the good king and by everyone. As Dio sees it, divinely inspired friendship stands in stark contrast to hatred, a deep and evil emotion stemming from greed and violence, and usually harbored by weak and fearful natures.”



- g. Tribute to Caesar and to God (22:15-33 cf. Lk. 20:20-26)
- f. The Arrest of Jesus (26:47-56)

## CHAPTER 3

### *Exegesis of Luke (6:27-36)*

In this chapter we shall provide a detailed analysis pointing out both allusion to *EL* and differences between Matthew and Luke's exposition and argumentation in favor of loving one's enemies vis-à-vis reciprocity that seeks to harm one's enemy and love only those who love you. Much like Matthew, Luke's teaching is grounded in the concept of *Imitatio Dei*. We shall place his teaching in its narrative context followed by brief discussion of the structure and analyze the rhetorical argument that Luke puts before us as far as loving one's enemy is concerned. At the end of the chapter we shall list passages, which according to a number of biblical scholars allude to or echo *EL* teaching.

#### *3.1. Context*

In Luke, the Sermon on the Plain (6:20-49) is Jesus' major speech. He is said to have already preached in Galilee (Lk. 4:14-15) and Nazareth where he was rejected (Lk. 4:16-30).<sup>108</sup> For Luke this is "the sermon" and *EL* is "the theme." Following the infancy narrative, baptism (Lk. 3:21-23) and temptations (Lk. 4:1-13) and having just chosen his twelve disciples (6:12, 20), now is the time to instruct them and all gathered around (Lk. 6:17-19) in "the way," (Acts 9:2; 19:9; 19:23; 24:22). The sermon is sandwiched between reports of healing (Acts 6:18-19 and 7:1-10), which testify to the fact that Jesus is powerful both in word and in deed. Jesus and the disciples' healing ministry may be seen as concrete examples of love as well (cf. Good Samaritan, Lk. 10:25-37). Having painted a picture of the reversal of fortunes (Lk. 6:20-26), Jesus exhorts his disciples to love one's enemies right from the start. Luke lays out the thesis and then argues its validity.

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<sup>108</sup> Jesus also engages in debates about fasting (Lk. 5:33-39) and about the Sabbath (Lk. 6:1-10).

### 3.2. Structure

It has been pointed out that Luke's sermon including the teaching on *EL* and practice of non-violence is a well organized and intentionally structured unit. However, the actual division of SP varies from author to author. According to Talbert, Luke's sermon can be divided into three parts based on the introductory formulas (6:20, 27, 39): the first part contains beatitudes and woes (6:20-26); the second part is an instruction on love and judgment (6:27-38); and the third part is a collection of four parables (6:39-49).<sup>109</sup> The teaching on *EL* is contained in verses 27 through 36, though it could possibly be extended to verses 37-38 which speak of not judging others.<sup>110</sup> As he elaborates on his

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<sup>109</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (Revised Edition, Macon, Georgia: Smith & Helwys Publishing, 202), 72: Introductory statements serve as transitions points: 1. 6:20, 2. 6:27, 3. 6:39; Differently, Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke, I-LX*, (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 629: The author sees five parts: exordium (1) (6:20-26); (2) love even your enemies (6:27-36); (3) judge not one another; (4) the role of good deeds (6:43-45); (5) the need to act on these words (with a parable, 6:46-49). François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 231: the author proposes a chiasmic structure:

1. Introduction (v. 27a\*)
2. Love of enemies (vv. 27b-28)
3. Renunciation of resistance (vv. 29-30)
4. The Golden Rule (v. 31)
  5. Comparison with sinners (vv. 32-34)
  6. The peculiar characteristic of Christians (v. 35)
7. The call to compassion (v. 36)
8. Not judging (v. 37ab)
9. Giving (vv. 37c-38b)
10. Measuring (v. 38c)

For others see: Patrick E. Spencer, *Rhetorical Texture and Narrative Trajectories of the Lukan Galilean Ministry Speeches* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 83. Talbert and Bovon's structure, however, seems to make more sense, whether one interprets verses 37-38 as *EL* or mutual love between the members of the community.

<sup>110</sup> Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 240: The teaching on not judging is an extension of love. C. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 77. With respect to delimitation of the text see a helpful discussion in Christopher Owczarek, *Sons of the Most High*, 104-110: The author

thesis about *EL*, Luke does so in such a way that rhetorically strengthens the argument as he proceeds. The logic of *Imitatio Dei*, which lies at the heart of his argument, would make perfect sense to a Hellenistic student even though it might be somewhat shocking. I shall follow the traditional division of the *EL* teaching as contained in verse 27-36. Luke structures his argument with parallel statements (*parallelismus membrorum*),<sup>111</sup>

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|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Theme: Love of Enemies (6:27-28)                        |                             |                 |
| a. Love your enemies                                       | 4 Parallels                 | <i>Inclusio</i> |
| b. Doing good to those who hate you                        |                             |                 |
| c. Blessing those who curse you                            |                             |                 |
| d. Praying for those who mistreat you                      |                             |                 |
| 2. Love as non-retaliation (6:29-30)                       | 4 Parallels                 |                 |
| a. Offering the other cheek                                |                             |                 |
| b. Not withholding one's tunic                             |                             |                 |
| c. Giving to everyone who asks                             |                             |                 |
| d. Not seeking return                                      |                             |                 |
| 3. Summary Statement: The Golden Rule (6:31)               |                             |                 |
| 4. Criticism of the principle of reciprocity (6:32-34)     |                             |                 |
| a. If you love those who love you                          | 3 Rhetorical Questions + EL |                 |
| b. If you do good to those who do good                     |                             |                 |
| c. If you lend expecting repayment + d. <i>EL</i>          |                             |                 |
| 5. Theme: Love your enemies and its rationale (6:35)       |                             | <i>Inclusio</i> |
| 6. Summary Statement: Being merciful (6:36) <sup>112</sup> |                             | <i>Climax</i>   |
| [7. Possibly: On Judging (6:37-38) <sup>113</sup>          |                             |                 |
| a. Do not judge (negative)                                 | 4 Commandments              |                 |
| b. Do not condemn (negative)                               |                             |                 |
| c. Forgive (positive)                                      |                             |                 |
| d. Give (positive)   |                             |                 |
| e. Good Measure]   |                             |                 |

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concludes that verses 37-38 are not about enemy-love; similarly Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 77. The teaching is about how disciples should deal with one another, not with enemies; also Bovon, *Luke 1*, 242: "The call to compassion (7) takes a transitional role, for it lends the command to love one's enemies a conclusion." Differently, Betz, *The Sermon*, 614: the author concludes, "Verses 37-38 introduce traditional paraenesis for which the preceding sections have prepared us. The four parallel maxims, vss. 37-38a, explicate concretely what it means to love the enemy in situations of judging, condemning, setting free, and giving."

<sup>111</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 614.

<sup>112</sup> Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, 76.

<sup>113</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 616: the author sees in the teaching on judging an eschatological overtones echoing verse 35.

### 3.3. *Content*

As indicated above, Luke's interpretation of *EL* as he found it in *Q* is introduced from the very start and it constitutes the theme of the Sermon on the Plain. Luke is the only author who repeats verbatim Jesus' *EL* commandment and he does so for rhetorical purpose (cf. *Dial.* 85-7).<sup>114</sup>

#### *Theme: Love of Enemies and its Meaning (6:27-28)*

27 Ἀλλὰ ὑμῖν λέγω τοῖς ἀκούουσιν· ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν, καλῶς ποιεῖτε τοῖς μισοῦσιν ὑμᾶς, 28 εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς καταρωμένους ὑμᾶς, προσεύχεσθε περὶ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς.

Luke does not shape his teaching as an antithesis, but starts with an emphatic invitation, “but to you who listen,” followed by rhetorically well-structured argument. The audience to which Jesus says, “but to you”<sup>115</sup> would include those who were healed, those who witnessed the healing, as well as the disciples to whom he addressed “blessings and woes” (6:20 cf. Lk. 5:24)<sup>116</sup> - everyone who wants to listen both Jews and Gentiles. Healing and preaching seem to form an intentional pair (cf. 9:1-6; cf. Lk. 22:51; Acts 8:12-14). The entire sermon is sandwiched between two healing accounts (Lk. 6:17-19 and 7:1-10). Interestingly enough, Paul also fits well into this category (audience) for he himself listened, obeyed Jesus (cf. Acts 9:6) and was healed by Ananias (Acts 9:10-

<sup>114</sup> Justin mentions it only once in his *Dialogue with Trypho*.

<sup>115</sup> Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 128: Luke uses the similar phrase for the first time in 5:14, “I say to you, stand up and take up your bed,” which plausibly to connect *EL* with Jesus' healing ministry. It is not clear whether he does so to present Jesus as powerful in word and in deed or whether he wants to make a connection between *EL* and healing itself.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 120: The phrase seems to indicate a change of audience going back to verses 5:17-19 where those gathered around Jesus came to “hear him and to be healed of their diseases.” Hearing is again mentioned after the sermon is finished, “After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people” (7:1); on Jews and Gentiles as audience see 125.

19) who in turn was instructed by Jesus to act lovingly toward the enemy of the church. Ananias listened and expressed his love through healing.<sup>117</sup> He acted upon Jesus' words in obedience.

It is clear that Jesus' teaching has a universal character transcending ethnic and social boundaries without denying them (Gal. 3:28). It includes both Jews and Gentiles as well as rich and poor (cf. Roman Centurion in 7:1-10).<sup>118</sup> For Lukan intended audiences that consisted of both Jews and Gentiles (Samaritans?) and rich and poor, this command would make sense in the context of Luke-Acts, *i.e.* they would be receptive of Jesus' message. To some extent love has worked (Acts 9:31; cf. Lk 8:3), though the blessings and the woes remind us that tensions continued to exist (Lk. 6:20-21 [22] 23-24 cf. Acts 5:1-11). The followers of Jesus lived and preached "in between" the blessings and the woes so to speak. Love of enemies is all-inclusive with respect to both its object and its subject. It is a concrete act and a universal attitude as seen in the examples that Jesus gives in the verses that follow.<sup>119</sup> In light of our interest in narrative implications of the *EL* command, it is worthwhile to point out, that the disciples who are part of the audience will fail to "do what Jesus is saying," *i.e.* act upon the words they hear (Lk. 6:46-49 cf. James 1:22). Judas will betray him (Lk 22:48); Peter who described himself as a sinner (Lk. 5:8; cf. 6:33) will deny him (Lk. 22:54-61); John and James will want to send fire on

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<sup>117</sup> The healing of the son of centurion as mentioned above (see: meaning of love) is the first time that ἀγαπάω is mentioned outside SP. Here it is directed in reverse by centurion toward Jewish nation. Whether Jesus act of healing could be seen as love of those who are traditionally thought as enemies but in fact are not because of their love for Jewish people, is not entirely clear. Centurion may in fact serve as an example of reconciled community as well as an example to the Jews the same way the Good Samaritan is (Lk. 10:25-37).

<sup>118</sup> Owczarek, *Sons of the Most High*, 123: n. 72. The author rightly points out that Luke wants to emphasize the fact that not only Gentiles (God-fearers) are ready to receive the message, but also the fact they serve as examples to Jews (7:9 cf. Good Samaritan 10:25-37 cf. Acts 27:42-43, a centurion saves Paul).

<sup>119</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 194.

Samaritans (Lk. 9:54 cf. Acts 8:4-25); and the anonymous disciple will attack the high priest's slave (Lk. 22:50 cf. Lk. 7:2). Clearly, the command will be broken to the dismay of Jesus (Lk. 9:55 and 22:51). Only after Pentecost, assisted by the Spirit of God, will the disciples be able to practice Jesus' teaching "unhindered" (Acts 5:41-42; cf. Acts 28:31; Rom. 14:13).<sup>120</sup> For the Lukan audience it is a message of encouragement to embrace Jesus' teaching over and over again.

Luke presents Jesus' teaching on *EL* in exactly the same way "Q" and Matthew do: ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν. The only thing Luke does is to expand on the examples of such love. He shows fondness for clustering his teaching in groupings of fours: beatitudes and woes, enemy-love and nonretaliation, judging and condemning.<sup>121</sup> The examples reinforce the commandment and suggest ways it could be practiced. Tannehill points out that these and other examples are not to leave an impression that these are the only ways to practice *EL*. Rather, they are to stimulate one's imagination to relate to enemies in a radically new way in all sorts of situations and in all kinds of ways.<sup>122</sup>

First, to love an enemy means to "do good to those who hate you" (καλῶς ποιεῖτε). Luke interprets Jesus' teaching in a way more suitable, intelligible, and persuasive to his Hellenistic audience. Both καλῶς ποιεῖτε and ἀγαθοποιήτε (v. 33) are familiar terms in Greek ethical discourse describing specific acts of helpfulness in social relations (cf. Acts 4:32-5:11).<sup>123</sup> The object of love is those who "hate you." The cause of hatred is Christological, namely Jesus Christ: "Blessed are you when people hate you,

<sup>120</sup> Here I am indebted to Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 124. Jesus addresses those who are not fully faithful to his teaching. One does not have to be morally perfect to follow Jesus; cf. 2 Cor. 12:10, Rom. 7:15; 8:17-18.

<sup>121</sup> Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1996), 117.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. 117.

<sup>123</sup> Owczarek, *Sons of the Most High*, 134-135, also n. 23 and 24. In addition, καλῶς ποιεῖν belonged also to the vocabulary of LXX.

and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.”<sup>124</sup> The animosity here is likely not physical. The enemies to an implied reader may also connote the Jewish groups who prior to the SP have shown hostility toward Jesus and his disciples (5:27-6:4 cf. 4:16-30).<sup>125</sup> In fact they may even include friends and family members, “You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name” (Lk. 21:16-18). Luke alludes here to a verbal polemic since Jesus continues to encourage them when faced with such hostility, “I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict” (Lk. 21:15; cf. 12:49-59).<sup>126</sup> It is not clear who in the mind of Luke is the enemy. They could include leaders of local synagogues, former patrons, and former friends.<sup>127</sup> One thing is clear: Jesus is the cause of division! (Lk 12:51–53, 14:26–27; cf. Matt. 10:16-39).

Then Jesus proceeds with another two examples of love, which include blessing and praying. Unlike the first one, these two have an explicit religious character. Blessing implies an active not passive action but even more importantly a positive intention (cf. Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12-13; 1 Pet. 4:9; Did. 1:3).<sup>128</sup> The idea of blessing and cursing goes back to Deuteronomistic tradition (Deut. 27:12-26). In the Jewish tradition, God

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid. 135: The parallel between these two verses and the lack of correspondence in Matt. (5:11-12) strengthens such an assumption. See n. 31.

<sup>125</sup> Spencer, *Rhetorical Texture*, 83-84; Jews mentioned in these verses but also others, e.g. former patrons.

<sup>126</sup> Literally “a mouth and wisdom.” In verses 12:49-59 where Jesus speaks about division, he also instructs his disciples to settle with one’s accuser on the way to the court. On the issue of violent language of polemic which was common in the ancient world see Luke T. Johnson, “The New Testament’s Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic Author(s)” in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989) 419-441.

<sup>127</sup> Tannehill, *Luke*, 119.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Jesus-sayings in Polycarp (*Phil.* 2.2). Despite textual variance in form, it is clear that it was a common practice among first Christians. Paul too prays often for his communities (1 Thess. 3:11-13, 5:23-25; 2 Cor. 9:14).



usually blesses his people.<sup>129</sup> Luke may be implicitly indicating that “blessing of the enemy” is rooted in God’s graciousness and benevolence. For the Gentiles cursing would have been associated with a magical form of enmity to which one would respond in kind.<sup>130</sup> Betz similarly points out that “equally improper for Christians would be the infliction of damages by magic. Instead, the Christian-Jewish worship service—in particular, the prayer of intercession—is recommended as the appropriate way to deal with mistreatment.”<sup>131</sup>

Luke as he continues to elaborate on *EL* speaks of praying for those who mistreat or abuse Jesus’ disciples, not persecutors as in Matthew. A rare word in NT ἐπιρράζειν alludes to verbal abuse or slander, not a physical abuse (Q).<sup>132</sup> This prayer as in Matthew is not for the enemy to be destroyed, but for one’s deliverance from the enemy and a prayer on behalf of the enemy (cf. Lk. 9:51-56).<sup>133</sup> The only other time προσεύχομαι is used with περὶ is in Acts (8:15) in the context of the prayer by Peter and John on behalf of the believers in Samaria so they may receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>134</sup> Can this scene be an example of love of enemies – particularly in light of and as a contrast to the initial desire of the disciples to destroy Samaritans after they rejected Jesus? (Lk. 9:55-56; cf. Ps. 17:13-14; 139:19-22).<sup>135</sup> In that scene Simon, after he is rebuked by Peter, is called to

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<sup>129</sup> Owczarek, *The Son’s of the Most High*, 136.

<sup>130</sup> Luz, *Luke 1-7*, 594.

<sup>131</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 594.

<sup>132</sup> Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 137.

<sup>133</sup> Geir Otto Holmås, *Prayer and Vindication in Luke-Acts: The theme of Prayer within the Context of the Legitimizing and Edifying Objective of the Lukan Narrative* (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 40.

<sup>134</sup> Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 137.

<sup>135</sup> As already mentioned a prayer for destruction of the enemies had been common in Jewish Tradition - an expected and predictable reaction. The fact that both Peter and John pray for the Holy Spirit contrasts the negative desire with a positive one. In addition, Phillip’s preaching is accompanied by healing (8:7), as was Jesus’ sermon (6:18 and 7:1-10). Can healing function here as an expression of love vis-à-vis a command to destroy the city?

repentance. His response is “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may happen to me” (Acts 8:13-15). It could be argued that Peter acts in love toward Simon whose “heart was not right before God” (Lk. 8:21). The validity of such interpretation admittedly requires more detailed inquiry and I wish not to force it here uncritically.

A prayer of intercession occurs four times in Luke-Acts in addition to SP; for Peter before his denial and when in prison (Lk. 22:32; Acts 12:5) and for Samaritans and Simon (Acts 8:15, 24). It may also be argued that Paul’s prayer before Agrippa is an intercession as well directed toward both him and “all” (Acts 26:29).<sup>136</sup> We can conclude with some confidence that “love” expressed as “prayer for the enemy” may be echoed implicitly or explicitly seven times in Luke-Acts,

For Peter by Jesus during the Last Supper (Lk. 22:32)  
 For the enemies on the Cross by Jesus (Lk. 23:34)  
 For the enemies by Stephen (Acts 7:60)  
 For Samaritans by Philip, Peter and John (Acts 8:15, 24 cf. Lk. 9:13 Holy Spirit)  
 In prison by Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25ff.)<sup>137</sup>  
 Paul before Agrippa for him and for all (Acts 26:29)  
 “Our Father” (Lk. 11:1-13)

Jesus’ admonition to pray for enemies here is grounded in the character of God who is merciful. Therefore Jesus’ instruction about prayer to his disciples will again draw attention to God’s mercy. Jesus will instruct them about perseverance in prayer with a parable about a friend in need who comes at night and knocks at the door (Lk. 11:1-13) Prayer for an enemy is significant because thematically prayer and discipleship are overshadowed by persecution, rejection and opposition (Lk. 9:23-27; 21:12-19; Acts

<sup>136</sup> Holmås, *Prayer and Vindication*, 124.

<sup>137</sup> Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 76: the author provides these four examples: Lk. 10:29-37, 23:34 and Acts 7:60, 16:27ff as echoes for love/prayer for enemies. Owczarek adds one more, “Our Father” (Lk. 11:1-4) in *The Sons of the Most High*, 214-216.

14:22; 20:17-38).<sup>138</sup> Vindication of God's righteous ones is a consequence of prayer (Ps. 22, 31).

*Four Examples of Nonretaliation (6:29-30)*

29 τῷ τύπτοντί σε ἐπὶ τὴν σιαγόνα παρέχε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵροντός σου τὸ ἱμάτιον καὶ τὸν χιτῶνα μὴ κωλύσης. 30 παντὶ αἰτοῦντί σε δίδου, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵροντος τὰ σὰ μὴ ἀπαίτει.

The four examples mentioned here elaborate in a more specific way on the *EL* practice and non-violence. Johnson points out that the examples Luke gives reveal a sense of progression from attitude (love), to speech (blessing and praying), to action.<sup>139</sup> The first two maxims: “a blow on a cheek” and “giving even one’s undergarment” in the Greco-Roman context would imply loss of honor and shame.<sup>140</sup> The expected response is “an eye for an eye” retaliation. The point is that the disciples are not to follow the ancient rule of reciprocity. Rather, they should “go beyond” what was widely accepted to be a cultural norm (Lk. 6:31-34).<sup>141</sup> When struck on a cheek,<sup>142</sup> they are to respond by giving the other cheek, and when one’s outergarment is taken, they are to give even one’s undergarment, leaving them exposed nude. These are shocking and even absurd demands, particularly in Hellenistic culture.<sup>143</sup> But the shock value has its rhetorical purpose for it

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. 124.

<sup>139</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Luke* (Sacra Pagina, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 109.

<sup>140</sup> Spencer, *Rhetorical Texture*, 84.

<sup>141</sup> Johnson, *Luke*, 109; see Golden Rule (Lev. 19:18); the negative form is found (Tobit 4:14; Hillel in *bTShab* 31a) as well as a positive one in (Pseudo-Isocrates, *Demonicus*, 14; *Nicocles*, 61). Other commentaries provide even a wider documentation.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Matt. 5:39 adds “right cheek” (*Did.* 1.4–5) or possibly Lk. removed it. A blow on a right cheek was particularly offensive. Luke also mentions that it was a right ear (Luke 22:50) and a right hand (Luke 6:6) that Jesus healed, but whether the two events are in any way connected is not clear.

<sup>143</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 595; one of few exceptions was the teaching of stoic philosophers who similarly renounced violence; an example of such teaching is cited in John Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 177: The citation is according to Loeb edition (3.257): Epictetus a Cynic philosopher (*Diss.* 3.22.54), “...he

first challenges a listener to reckon with the demand and creates a pathway for Luke to elaborate further and clarify his thesis.

As Paul himself indicates clearly, Jesus' Gospel and *EL* teaching in particular stood between and challenged both Jewish tradition and Greek wisdom and as such it was relevant and had salvific repercussions for both Jews and Greeks, (1 Cor. 1:21-24 cf. Acts 20:19-21),

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For Paul the cross is the ultimate answer and it reveals the wisdom of God into which we are to be transformed (Romans 12). Anselm prayed after "the ways parted" for such wisdom at the turn of the millennium. We call that period Dark Ages. It is said to have started before the fall of Rome in 476 and lasted into the early Middle Ages. His prayer sums up the message, "Lord I don't seek for understanding in order to have faith; but I seek for faith in order to have understanding." Faith and righteousness are not rooted in wisdom. Rather wisdom is rooted in faith of Jesus, and the disciples' righteousness depends on their faith in Jesus since "all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God (Rom. 3:22-23).

The most important point, however, is not to take these commands too literally. As Betz points out a "blow on the face" or "on the ear" was used in antiquity as a

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must (needs) be flogged like an ass, and while he is being flogged he must love the men who flog him, as though he were the father or brother of them all. (Loeb 2:149).

*proverbial* expression of hostility and powerlessness (cf. 2 Cor. 11:20).<sup>144</sup> Likewise giving the other cheek and not withholding even one's undergarment is a *proverbial* statement. Here the violence is met with a gift, which in and of itself is an expression of mercy (cf. Lk 11:5-13). Paul himself follows the example of Jesus when struck on his mouth<sup>145</sup> in the presence of the high priest (Acts 23:2-5 cf. Lk. 22:62-64). Though, even there the allusion is not as clear as may seem at the first sight.

The commands to give and not to withhold are further explained and elaborated on in verse 31, which speaks of giving your possessions to all and when they are taken (stolen), expecting nothing in return. The traditional approach would be to expect retaliation when one's possession is stolen but the Christian response is not in kind but in mercy; when mistreated they are to pray. *EL* and mercy are selfless gifts. They are to be offered to "all" (παντι, v. 30) friend and enemy. Many commentators see in the last two maxims reference to the ethics of giving and receiving and sharing of one's possessions with the needy (cf. v. 34)<sup>146</sup> and table fellowship.<sup>147</sup> All these themes are immensely important to Luke and his social agenda of a preferential option for the poor. Jesus' teaching here certainly mirrors divine mercy and his own mission as articulated in his programmatic speech in Nazareth (Lk. 4:6-30). A helpful survey of interpretations is offered by Owczarek.<sup>148</sup> God's mercy includes both friend and enemy and is to be practiced in a variety of ways. Even though we may not call "the poor" explicitly "our

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid. 596.

<sup>145</sup> In that scene Paul pleads ignorance for speaking evil against the High Priest. Haenchen points out that Luke sets Paul up as one faithful to the law; see Haenchen, *The Acts*, 624-625.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. The principle there is concretely applied to giving a loan without seeking interest: και εαν δανισητε παρ' ων ελπίζετε λαβεϊν. ποια υμιν χάρις [έστιν]; The reader knows what the answer to this rhetorical question is, or should know.

<sup>147</sup> Spencer, *Rhetorical Texture*, 85-86.

<sup>148</sup> Owczarek, *Sons of the Most High*, 143-152.

enemies,” more often than not the poor appear as a threat to the social status of the rich and the security that wealth creates for those who are more fortunate.

The command δίδου (v.30a) is repeated again in the context of reward: δίδοτε, καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν· (v.38a, cf. Acts 20:35).<sup>149</sup> Paul concludes his speech to the Ephesians in Miletus with that same principle of giving rather than receiving: μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν (Acts 20:35). He emphasizes that it is “more blessed” to give than to receive. These are the last words he will speak to Ephesian elders as he continues his journey to Rome via Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 9:51 and Acts 19:21) where he will face hostility (Acts 21:15-22:35). As many commentators have pointed out Paul’s journey is a clear parallel to Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. At the very start of his journey, Jesus addresses the scholar of the law who seeks eternal life (Lk. 10:25). Jesus’ responds to him with a parable about *EL* - the story about the Good Samaritan. In Jerusalem Paul refuses to retaliate. He is depicted as innocent and continues to make his case before the Jews and the Roman authorities before he is transferred to Caesarea (Acts 21:37-23:23). Arguably the first words that Peter speaks in Jerusalem (Acts 3:17-19), where he calls the Jews to repent for they sinned out of ignorance, mirror and create an *inclusio* with the last words that Paul speaks in Rome calling the Jews to “turn and be healed” (Acts 28:26-28). In both cases a call to repentance and ignorance or blindness of the Jews are put side by side (cf. Lk. 23:34). This can be argued presuming that the offer of repentance is an expression of love.

In its historical context *EL* seeks to unveil the absurdity of violence and enmity and to point out ultimately its self-destructive power, be it social, religious or political.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> This may indicate that *EL* command extends to verses 37-38.

<sup>150</sup> Bovon, *Luke 1*, 240.

*EL* expressed as renunciation of violent resistance is not accidental since the opposite was a common attitude toward an enemy practiced unsuccessfully by the Zealots. In the turbulent times of the Jewish revolt, *EL* and non-violence shaped a “Christian” response or more precisely alternative Jewish response to such attitudes as we have indicated already.<sup>151</sup> Lohfink points out that these are not instructions to be used mechanically but creatively as we continue to imagine and build a culture of love toward all - enemies and friends included. They had a historical context that led to the destruction of the Temple, but in the contexts of Luke and Matthew what is at stake is Christian integrity and identity. These statements (parts) are to be read in view of the basis (whole), *i.e.* God’s will for the people who are called to imitate his unbounded graciousness.<sup>152</sup> The teaching here aims first and foremost at character formation and not simply at commending a particular action. It is not a blue-print to be implemented universally. It is Jesus-spirituality. God is in the principle, the devil is in the detail so to speak, both then and now. Lohfink argues, as we pointed out when discussing the identity of the enemy, that Jesus’ teaching on non-violence as an expression of love in its concrete historical situation of Israel in which Jesus lived and preached was directed against Zealots and anyone like-minded. Luke plausibly does not want his disciples to be confused with rebels against Rome after the first Jewish revolt either.<sup>153</sup>

Rhetorically Luke provides a powerful argument. In and through its paradoxical nature and apparent absurdity he forces a reader to think and re-think his or her attitudes

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 238 and 240: the author also sees Luke as an alternative to Zealots, as does Lohfink who argues that in Jesus own ministry the teaching on *EL* was directed against Zealots see 79-82 and 192-199.

<sup>152</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 195-194: failure to keep a proper perspective has resulted in his words in a “parade of false interpretations” of SM and SP.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

toward enemies. Historically, it is a persuasive argument. The Temple was destroyed (70 C.E.) and Bar Kokhba is yet to come (132–136 C.E.). Violence breeds only violence. It is important to remember that Jesus' teaching on non-violence and mercy has far-reaching consequences and embraces all spheres of human existence and relationships: political, religious, social, ecclesial and familial.

*Summary Statement: The Golden Rule (6:31)*

31 Καὶ καθὼς θέλετε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς ὁμοίως.

The Golden Rule reflects a common attitude in both the Jewish and the Greco-Roman world. It is grounded in covenantal mutuality, which Paul Riceour calls a logic of equivalence.<sup>154</sup> Here it functions as an example in the progression of Luke's argument leading to the conclusion in verse 36 in which a child of God is to mirror God's mercy. The Golden Rule continues to hold validity as seen in verse 37-38: "do not judge and you will not be judged and do not condemn and you will not be condemned, forgive and you will be forgiven, give and it will be given to you" (cf. woes and beatitudes, Lk. 6:20-26). In that sense the logic of Luke's argument is comprehensible. Mutuality is not abandoned but lifted to a divine level that seeks to treat others the way God treats us. *EL* may indeed hope that the enemy responds in kind but that is not its motivation. This seems to be the underlying meaning behind the examples that follow, the repetition of the *EL* command, and the conclusion (Lk. 6:36).

*Criticism of the Principle of Reciprocity (6:32-34)*

32 καὶ εἰ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστίν; καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας αὐτοὺς ἀγαπῶσιν. 33 καὶ[γὰρ] ἐὰν ἀγαθοποιῆτε τοὺς ἀγαθοποιῶντας ὑμᾶς, ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστίν; καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν. 34 καὶ

<sup>154</sup> Paul, Riceour "The Golden Rule," The basic point of his argument is that the Golden Rule is not abolished; also Bovon, *Luke 1-9*, 240-241.



ἐὰν δανίσητε παρ' ὧν ἐλπίζετε λαβεῖν, ποία ὑμῖν χάρις [ἐστίν]; καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἁμαρτωλοῖς δανίζουσιν ἵνα ἀπολάβωσιν τὰ ἴσα.

Betz points out that the commentary on the Golden Rule is constructed of three rhetorical questions followed by answers: even sinners love sinners. The rhetoric and logic mirror a Hellenistic discussion on benevolence (χάρις cf. 6:33).<sup>155</sup> This is the word used of Mary in the infancy narrative ( Lk. 1:28 χαῖρε; cf. Magnificat 1:47-55) who for Luke is a disciple par excellence; a model to be imitated, and a blessed one for all ages (Lk. 1:48b; μακαριοῦσίν). In the *Magnificat*, Mary speaks of God who is merciful, forshadowing SP (Lk 1:54). All this attests to overarching themes that run through the Gospel and Acts. Discipleship and χάρις go together. Some interpreters translate the word as credit or benefit (reward). In the beatitudes, however, when Jesus speaks of a reward given to those who are reviled and hated (Lk. 6:23), he uses a different word, μισθὸς πολὺς. In that same verse he uses a verbal form of χάρις in imperative (χάρητε): Rejoice! Joy and suffering are connected intimately (cf. 1 Pet. 4:13; Rom. 5:3-4; Phil. 2:1-4). Luke uses the word χάρις both as grace of God and as human favor or gratitude. Joy in Luke-Acts is a proper response to Jesus, his message and the preaching of the apostles (cf. Lk 1:14). The meaning is open ended on purpose. It may allude to the fact that the reward is both here and beyond here. Lohfink argues that Luke speaks here about “beauty and grace” that comes from living in imitation of God’s graciousness.<sup>156</sup> His understanding makes sense on an existential level, for love has a potential to create beauty in contrast to hatred that always creates horror and nothing else. The disciples have to choose whom they wish to imitate - sinners or God; to seek merely human reward or God’s χάρις which

<sup>155</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 600.

<sup>156</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 196; also Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 161-163.

will have effect here and in the age to come. The rhetorical questions are meant to facilitate that choice. It is a matter of choosing Jesus who is God's chosen son at the transfiguration (Lk. 9:35). This is the one the disciples are to choose and to whom they are to remain faithful.

*Theme: Love Your Enemies and Its Rationale (6:35)*

35 πλὴν ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ ἀγαθοποιεῖτε καὶ δανίζετε μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες· καὶ ἔσται ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς, καὶ ἔσεσθε υἱοὶ ὑψίστου, ὅτι αὐτὸς χρηστός ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηροὺς.

Luke repeats the teaching on enemy-love. Two examples are given: a positive “do good” and a negative one – “do not expect anything in return.” The reward (μισθὸς πολὺς cf. 6:23b) will be that the disciples will be true children of God. The choice of μισθὸς πολὺς both here and in the exhortation to rejoice when reviled (Lk. 6:23) connects what was said at the beginning of the sermon with *EL* teaching. The basic meaning is to pay for work done well.<sup>157</sup> Because the reward is great, it alludes to God's generosity and limitless grace. It is greater than human simple μισθὸς.

The language of rewards possibly alludes to an apocalyptic and eschatological thinking that sees God as a judge who punishes sinners and rewards those who are faithful to his commands. Sinners are explicitly mentioned in verse 32. However, the fact that God's love extends to ungrateful ἀχαρίστους (cf. v. 33 χάρις and v. 23 χάριτε)<sup>158</sup> would indicate that even sinners will be met with mercy in the end as well as along the way (cf. Acts 9). Others have argued that the promise of a reward follows a more logical sequence referring to becoming God's children. The third possibility is to read the promise of a reward in the context of the end of the SP (Lk. 6:43-49). There Jesus speaks not only

<sup>157</sup> Owczarek, *Sons of the Most High*, 181.

<sup>158</sup> All three words are lexically connected.

about listening to his word but also doing what he has commanded in order to produce good fruits – great reward here and now.<sup>159</sup> All three interpretations complement each other. Neither apocalyptic thought nor Lukan theology make a clear distinction between present and future (cf. Lk. 23:43). The kingdom of God is here but not yet (Mk. 1:15). In Luke-Acts even more so since there we have a realized eschatology.

The Most High as the name for God - a superlative form - was common in Hellenistic Judaism and Greek religions in which context Luke's community was growing. It emphasises divine transcendence and omnipotence.<sup>160</sup> God is greatest; Jesus is greater than Jonah (Lk. 11:32); and we are not so great if we imitate one another especially when faced with hostility. We are called to be like God and “unlike” us so that we may reflect God's image and live in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:27-29). The Most High as an epithet for God has already been introduced during the Annunciation: οὗτος ἔσται μέγας καὶ υἱὸς ὑψίστου κληθήσεται (1:32). Luke clearly associates God's name with Jesus' divine sonship and the disciples are called to be the children in the likeness of Jesus who is speaking to them: καὶ ἔσεσθε υἱοὶ ὑψίστου – the sons of the Most High. Zechariah explicitly speaks of God overcoming the enemies of God's people through mercy (Lk. 1:71). And he calls Jesus, Mary's child, the prophet of the Most High as well: Καὶ σὺ δέ, παιδίον, προφήτης ὑψίστου κληθήσῃ (Lk. 1:76).

*Summary Statement: Being Merciful (6:36)*

36 Γίνεσθε οἰκτίρμονες καθὼς [καὶ] ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν οἰκτίρμων ἐστίν.

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<sup>159</sup> Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 181-185: There he discusses all possible interpretations. Interpreters who favor less eschatological interpretation point out the fact that Luke is not interested in eschatology but in witnessing to the Gospel here and now.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 185. It appears only three times in LXX: Esther 8:12; Ps. 81:6 and Sir 4:10.

Even though Luke's version differs from Matthean motivation - a more Jewish perfection (τέλειοι)<sup>161</sup> to mercy (οἰκτίρμονες) - the point is basically the same. *EL* is what God's will is all about. *Imitatio Dei* is connected to a Greek doctrine of virtues in Luke. For Matthew it has to do with one's faithfulness to Torah.<sup>162</sup> The word for mercy used here is rare, appearing only in James (3:11). It brings to mind feelings that a father would have for his child (cf. Lk. 15; cf. Is. 49:15).<sup>163</sup> Fatherly love provides security and protection especially when a child goes astray. It is not selfish as seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son. It takes initiative (cf. Lk. 15:1-7).<sup>164</sup> For this reason, the Parable of "the Father and the Two Sons," (Lk. 15:11-32) might have been intended by Luke to function as an illustration of Jesus' teaching that we find in SP.

The structure of verse 36 where an imperative connected by καθὼς [καὶ] precedes the motivation (God's mercy) reminds a reader that human actions are meant to mirror divine action, "God who loves the wicked and the ungrateful" of the previous verse is to be imitated. As Donahue points out, in Hellenistic education and rhetoric, teaching by example occupied a central place (*paideia*) and it was connected with pursuit of virtue and wholeness of life, which we call nowadays "virtue ethics." For this reason, disciples

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<sup>161</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 289: In Matthew, the concept has more to do with obedience to God's will in a way Noah or Abraham was obedient to God. It was a common term in DSS (4QS174 2.1). In Matthew it has to do with righteousness. *Didache*, which is rooted in the Jewish "two ways tradition," also uses the term (6:2). Perfection or perfect way has to do fundamentally with faithfulness to Torah, which is Matthew's overarching argument.

<sup>162</sup> Donahue, *The Gospel in Parables*, 207: an instruction in values that inform one's way of life.

<sup>163</sup> Bovon, *Luke 1*, 241: makes reference to Lk. 15:1-3. Tax collectors come to Jesus to listen to him; also Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 198: makes a reference to (Lk. 7:34; 18:11). Jesus association with tax collectors is an example of loving one's enemy.

<sup>164</sup> Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 190; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 242.

have to teach by example and bear good fruits as Jesus did (Lk. 23:34 Jesus; Acts. 5:17-19 Peter; 7:59-16 Stephen; 26:29 Paul).<sup>165</sup>

According to the traditional interpretation of *EL* teaching in SP, a call to imitate God's mercy concludes Jesus' teaching on *EL*. It also functions as a transition to a teaching on how a community should act with one another, *i.e.* not condemning or judging each other but forgiving. Verses that follow carry on the theme of mercy, which continues to serve as a foundational principle for both *EL* and love of one another. We have already indicated that Betz has challenged the interpretation that seeks to end Jesus teaching on *EL* with verse 36. He sees what follows (vs. 37-38) as a further set of *EL* examples. Both Bovon's chiastic structure which includes disputed verses and Talbert's division of the unit based on three introductory statements which divide the sermon of the mountain into three sections, structurally support Betz's argument. From the content, however, it is not clear whether Luke is continuing to argue for *EL* here or not. Were we to find texts in Luke-Acts that echo the teaching in verses 37-38, provided that they are directed toward the enemy and not a friend, we would be able to further substantiate Betz's argument that seeks to extend *EL* teaching to Jesus' admonition about not judging and not to condemning found in verses 37-38. The relevant passages could possibly include,

Jesus	Shake the dust (Lk. 9:1-6 and 10:1-12)
Samaritans' rejection	No Condemnation (Lk. 9:51-55)
Jesus and Stephen's prayer	Forgiveness (Lk 23:49; Acts 7:34-8:3) <sup>166</sup>
Peter preaches in Jerusalem	Repentance (Acts 5:17:19; no condemnation)
Jesus calls Paul	Commission (Acts. 9:7-5; no condemnation)
Ananias' healing of Paul	No condemnation (Act. 9:13-17)

<sup>165</sup> Holmås, *Prayer and Vindication*, 124: reference to Paul; 110: reference to Peter. In both cases, he argues that these are examples of enemy love.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. (Lk. 11:1-4): "Our Father."

In this study we are not able to examine the extent to which the above mentioned passages may function as possible “echoes” of Jesus’ teaching on *EL*. We can only afford to gather and present scholarly insights that may lead us to consider these texts as examples of Jesus’ teaching on loving one’s enemies. Such reading in many cases is not mandatory. The passages that many authors have put forth as possible *EL* echoes in Luke-Acts include but are not limited to,

- a. Zaccheaus (19:11-10)
- b. Good Samaritan (10:29-37)
- c. Centurion and Cornelius (Lk. 7:1-10; Acts 10).
- d. Jesus and Stephen: Last Words (Luke 23:49; Acts 7:34-8:3)
- e. The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15)
- f. Jesus and Peter’s denial (Lk. 22:31-34)
- g. Jesus and Judas Iscariot (Lk. 22:14-23; 47-53)
- h. Jesus Heals the Slave of the High Priest (Luke 22:47-53; cf. 9:10-19 – Ananias).
- i. Paul the Persecutor of the Church (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 22:3-4)
- j. Peter offers forgiveness in Jerusalem (Acts 3:15)
- k. Paul’s farewell speech at Miletus (Acts 20:16-38)
- l. Paul prays for Agrippa and all (Acts 26:1-29)
- m. Paul saves the life of his Jailer (Acts 16:15-10)
- n. Paul preaches in Rome (*Epilogue* Acts 28:19-30)
- o. Our Father (Lk. 11:1-4; cf. Matt. 6:9-13)
- p. Paul saves soldiers on the ship to Rome (Acts 27:3-43)
- r. Peter offers repentance to Simon (Acts 8:13-15)
- s. Paul shakes the dust of his feet (Acts 13:52)

## CHAPTER 4

### *Sayings Gospel Q*<sup>167</sup>

Luke's Gospel and Acts are a literary masterpiece for which the evangelist has drawn inspiration from a broad range of Jewish scriptural sources and traditions. The primary source for his Gospel narrative was Mark (Mk). The second source, almost exclusively made up of the sayings of Jesus, is known as "Sayings Gospel Q,"<sup>168</sup> written plausibly in Greek, or simply (Q) - the initial letter of the German word, *Quelle* for source.<sup>169</sup> Finally, the source where Luke's literary artistry and theology shines forth most is referred to as (L), signifying the material unique to him. Matthew used the same two sources as Luke (Q and Mk), and similarly to Luke, he applied them to his own historical situation and theological agenda. The material not found in Mk or Q is special tradition (M) of Matthew's own author.<sup>170</sup> One important example of his creative editorial work is his SM which is extensively longer than SP, (Mt. 5:1-7:29 vs. Lk. 6:20-49)

Matthew included almost everything we find in Luke, and almost nothing of the two sermons is found in Mark.<sup>171</sup> These are not present in Mk. There seem to be no narratives - most surprisingly no "Passion Narrative" in Q. Possible exceptions might

<sup>167</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 63-65: The two document hypothesis dates from the early nineteenth century and 'maintains the priority of the Greek text of Mark over both Matthew and Luke.

<sup>168</sup> John Kloppenborg, *Q, The Earliest Gospel: An Introduction to the Original Stories and Sayings of Jesus* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 57-61: The author discusses the Greek version, authorship, and concludes that Q is more than merely a source but a Gospel, that is a proclamation of the Kingdom equal to that of other gospels (Mt. Lk. Mk. and Thom.) as well as Paul's proclamation of the good news, (Q 7:22).

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-55: Luke as also been regarded by scholars as a more conservative editor of Q reflecting more closely Q's original wording.

<sup>170</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 80: The additional sources of Matthew and Luke might have been either written or oral.

<sup>171</sup> Owczarek, *Sons of the Most High*, 116-117.

include the Temptations of Jesus (Q 4:1-13) and the ministry of John the Baptist (Q 3:9, 16-17).<sup>172</sup> Reconstructions of Q in their own right differ from author to author. Since the Q hypothesis<sup>173</sup> is important, we propose the most popular reconstruction. The version of *EL* in Q, according to Kloppenborg might have looked something like this:

*Q 6:27-28, 35c-d Love Your Enemies*

Love your enemies and pray for those persecuting you, so that you may become sons of your Father, for he raises his sun on bad and good and rains on the just and unjust,

*Q 6:29-30 Renouncing One's Own Rights*

The one who slaps you on the cheek, offer him the other as well; and to the person wanting to take you to the court and get your shirt, turn over to him the coat as well. And to the one who conscripts you for one mile, go with him a second. To one who asks of you, give; and from the one who borrows, do not ask back what is yours.

*Q 6:31 The Golden Rule*

And the way you want people to treat you, that is how you treat them.

*Q 6:32, 34 Impartial Love*

If you love those loving you, what reward do you have? Do not even tax collectors do the same? And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what reward do you have? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

*Q 6:36 Being Full of Pity Like Your Father*

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 80-87: The author discusses the extent of Q, absence of narratives, particularly that of Passion of Jesus.

<sup>173</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 300: The author is more skeptical as far as reconstruction of a single Q text is concerned based on the complexity and speculative nature of the process, which leads him to conclude, "consequently, in regard to Q, I abstain from reconstructing one Q-sermon, from which the SM and the SP passages derived, but I assume that there were two versions of "Q," each with a different version of the Sermon;" Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 73. He is not convinced by the argument, claiming that it fails to "account for word-for-word phrasing of the Q passages of Matthew and Luke.

<sup>174</sup> Kloppenborg, *Q The Earliest Gospel*, 126-127. There he actually lists them in nice order and explains the rationale behind it in a greater detail.



One is faced with the difficulty of the reconstruction of a single Q text particularly in the case of the teaching on retaliation. Kloppenborg argues that it is Luke who preserves the original Q version (Lk. 6:27-28, 32-35), and not Matthew who divides retaliation and teaching on loving one's enemies into two separate antitheses (Mt. 5:39-40, 42 and 44-48). Those in favor of Lukan redaction follow an argument that it is a more logical arrangement,<sup>175</sup> while those who see Matthew as responsible for splitting the original Q teaching into his last two antitheses argue that a more difficult Lukan reading is more likely to be original.<sup>176</sup> The third option concludes that neither preserve the original form of the tradition, but that both teachings were present in Q.<sup>177</sup> Common to Matthew, Luke and Q is the motivation for enemy love that is "Imitation of God," a sentiment found in both Jewish, (Lev. 19:1-2; Sir. 4:20) and Hellenistic literature, (Seneca's *De Beneficiis* 4.26.1).<sup>178</sup> Matthew also seems to have moved the Golden Rule to provide a summary for his teaching in SM (Q 6:31; Mt. 7:12).

The genre of the *EL* saying in Q, even if there were to exist in more than one version, is sapiential. Theologically and socially Q exhibits an apocalyptic and eschatological outlook. Kloppenborg sees the former as a later development, a claim, which has been contested by others.<sup>179</sup> A mixture of sapiential and apocalyptic genres can be found in other texts of the time, particularly in the DSS (1QS 10.17-20) and

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<sup>175</sup> Harry T. Fledderman, *Q Reconstruction and Commentary* (Dudley, Ma: Peeters, 2005), 283-284.

<sup>176</sup> Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 174.

<sup>177</sup> David A. Catchpole, *The Quest for Q* (Edinburg, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1993), 23.

<sup>178</sup> Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 177; for more OT, Rabbinic and Hellenistic parallels see Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 289.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 322: Apocalyptic themes are spread through the text and an inclusion of Q with John the Baptist (3:7-9, 16-17) and the last judgment (22:28, 30).

Romans (12:17-21), as well as Matthean parables.<sup>180</sup> The combination of macarisms and woes in the Lukan beatitudes and the reversal<sup>181</sup> of fortunes is apocalyptic (Q 6:20-22; cf. Lk 6:20-26; Mt. 5:1-12 and 24-25). Jesus' ethical instruction radically reverses and challenges a common attitude toward enemies. Apocalyptic language is a common language, particularly in an emerging minority that finds itself in conflict with the larger group of which it is a part. This is precisely the story of the birth of Jesus' movement, which for centuries has been known as Christianity.<sup>182</sup>

What we can say with some confidence is that Matthew and Luke are not the only Gospels that mention Jesus' commandment to love one's enemies. It appears that both authors have shared a common Q source that contained, at the very least, the phrase "love your enemy," (Matt. 5:44b and Lk 6:35b).<sup>183</sup> Agreement between SM and SP allows us to easily reconstruct at least: ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ (Mt) / περί (Lk) τῶν διωκόντων (Mt) / ἐπηρεαζόντων (Lk) ὑμᾶς; though plausibly more than that as presented above. *EL* was a central theme of that document(s). To what degree one can reconstruct the community behind this text continues to be disputed. However, no text / proclamation exists in vacuum. Q may allow us at least hypothetically to identify another – (Judean) source(s) - whether oral or written - for *EL* teaching, which circulated in and among the earliest followers of Jesus (40-70 C.E).<sup>184</sup> They experienced some form

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<sup>180</sup> Donahue, *The Gospel in Parables*, 200-211.

<sup>181</sup> Q has many reversal saying spread evenly throughout its text: Q 3:8; Q 4:5-8; Q 6:20-23; Q 6:27-28; Q 6:32-34; Q 7:9; Q 7:22; Q 12:2-3; Q 13:30; Q 13:18-19; Q 13:20-21; Q 14:11; Q 14:16-18; Q 14:26; Q 16:18; Q 17:33).

<sup>182</sup> Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*, 251: Q is a product of an early apocalyptic community.

<sup>183</sup> William Klassen, "Love: New Testament and Early Jewish Literature" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman, 4:381-396 (New York: Doubleday 1992), 387.

<sup>184</sup> Simon Joseph, "Love Your Enemies: The Adamic Wisdom of Q 6:27-28, 35c-d," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* Vol. 43. 1. 29-42. 29.

of persecution mostly verbal.<sup>185</sup> From the perspective of Q in the midst of conflict one is to respond non-violently and with love. The nature and scope of persecution most definitely did not reflect that of Acts where Luke depicts Paul as spreading havoc among Christians (Acts 7:34-8:3). Murphy nicely summarizes the theological ethos and ethical pathos of Q community,

Since Q contains so much community instruction, it affords a glimpse into what this apocalyptic community was like. The community lived strictly – trying to follow ethical demands that called for non-resistance to hostility and oppression, leaving judgment up to the Son of Man, being aware of a cosmic struggle with Satan, expecting imminent judgment with heaven and hell on the other side of it, accepting poverty and being completely dependent on God, being conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst whose role was to support them in their eschatological trials, loving their enemies, practicing mercy, doing intense missionary work, proclaiming the secrets imparted to them by Jesus, acknowledging the Son of Man, and so on.<sup>186</sup>

The Q hypothesis supports the fact that the *EL* command was at the heart of “Christian” kerygma – “eine urchristliche Didache” - and that it plausibly could have had its ultimate source in the teaching of historical Jesus.<sup>187</sup> This can be acknowledged with some certainty; a certainty as great as the fact that much of the research on “the Sayings Gospel Q” will continue to be a matter of a lively debate; a debate that has resulted in an avalanche of publications in the last half of the century, which proves how complex the history behind the text is. In theory all issues are disputed while the underlying principle has remained the same, namely: “love one another” even your enemies. Q explicitly

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<sup>185</sup> Christopher M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity* (Edinburg, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1996), 296-322: the author concludes that persecution was not systematic or physical, rather is involved non-responsiveness, apathy, and verbal insult, 305.

<sup>186</sup> Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 251: the author also surveys in the most extensive way apocalyptic underpinnings of all the NT writings.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* 32 and 36: the author points out that a reconstruction of historical Jesus should not be confused with a reconstruction of Q; see also Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 177.

echoes what was believed to be Jesus' own teaching and, in turn, it is echoed in Matthew and Luke.

## CHAPTER 5

### *General Observations*

In this short chapter we shall first summarize differences and similarities between the Lukan and Matthean versions of *EL* teaching and suggest how they fit into and function in the larger context of the two Gospels. It has been argued that Jesus' teaching on loving one's enemies is an important interpretative tool that should guide interpreters as they explore the depth of Gospel teachings on a variety of topics which may not be explicitly related to *EL*. As has been pointed out at the core, Matthew and Luke are of one mind and of one heart.

#### *5.1 Similarities and Differences*

Fitzmyer has provided a helpful review of similarities and differences between SP and SM.<sup>188</sup> He points out that the two agree on the *subject matter*, and their differences are related primarily to Matthew and Luke's editorial work of the Sayings Gospel Q. However, the redactional work by each individual author is more than stylistic and linguistic. It is heavily influenced by their own theological and rhetorical agendas, which reflect the mixed identities of their communities. Luke who was a Hellenist Christian preached to a Gentile (God-fearers) community with significant Jewish (Hellenist) membership. Matthew's community conversely consisted of Jews mixed with significant numbers of Gentiles. The fact that Jesus' message received equal reception between Jews and God-fearing Gentiles attests to its universal nature.

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<sup>188</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 628-629; also Owczarek, *The Sons of the Most High*, 156-120: for linguistic similarities and differences.

Structural differences are rooted in a similar context. Matthew has structured his argument in such a way as to present Jesus as the authoritative interpreter of Torah and Wisdom teacher. Luke, however, organized his argument logically in a chiastic and progressive way, which advances and strengthens his argument as he proceeds. He uses parallel structure (usually four maxims) with *EL inclusio* and *climax* as well as summary statements. He presents arguments in such a way as to instruct, educate and persuade his Hellenistic audience to imitate the virtue of God’s mercy and to conform their lives to “the Most High,” a divine title common among Diaspora Jews.<sup>189</sup> His method is to teach by example. Matthew, on the other hand, is concerned more with greater righteousness and faithfulness to the Father in heaven and Torah. He chooses perfection as the divine attribute to be imitated. Imitation of God was a common term to all religious traditions. Perfection is a more appropriate term in Jewish tradition, particularly DSS.

Both Matthew and Luke are at pains to present Jesus as the “Suffering Messiah” and the Son of God who comes to “fulfill not to abolish the law” (Matt. 5:17; and *fulfillment quotations*) and whose life, death and resurrection were necessary,<sup>190</sup> so that the prophets and the law might be fulfilled (Lk: 4:16-21; 24:26-27; Acts 28:23-31). Discipleship of loving one’s enemy has to do with witnessing to Jesus (Acts 1:1) and heeding the call to righteousness (Matt. 5:20). Both Matthew and Luke give their own unique interpretation of Jesus’ teaching on *EL*. They do so in order to suit their own historical circumstances and make the most persuasive case for Jesus and his Gospel.

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<sup>189</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 610.

<sup>190</sup> Luke 24:16: δεῖ – key word in terms of God’s plan and its paradoxical nature where rejection is met with grace. In the Emmaus encounter with the disciples, Jesus explains the necessity of all that took place with regard to him (Lk. 24:13-35).

## 5.2. *Purpose and Functions*

The function of Jesus' teaching to love one's enemies, as I see it, has at least seven dimensions that reflect Matthew and Luke's major themes. First, Christologically, Matthew succeeds in proving Jesus to be the authoritative interpreter of the Torah in continuity with the tradition of Israel. Similarly, Luke argues persuasively that Jesus is the revelation of God's will that seeks to show mercy toward all people. Second, ethically "love of enemies" calls for greater love in imitation of God, which is the cornerstone of Jesus' moral teaching and reflects God's mercy that is to be imitated and practiced. Third, existentially love breaks the self-perpetuating circle of violence, which in Luke and Matthew has to do first and foremost with verbal and theological controversy regarding Jesus. Fourth, pastorally, loving one's enemies is how members of Matthew and Luke's communities are to treat one another and more importantly, how they should treat other Jewish groups when they encounter enmity or hostility from them. Fifth, eschatologically, following God's wisdom will make them true children of God, "perfect" just as God is, in the present age and in the age to come. Sixth, strategically, "love of enemies" lays a theological foundation for Matthew's missionary agenda to preach the Gospel of Jesus to all nations (2:1-12; 28:19-20). For Luke, the extent to which he is able to convince his audience of the basic irony of salvation history, his goal that they may know the certainty of the reports he collected about Jesus, is accomplished (Lk. 1:1; cf. Acts 1:1). The great irony of God's plan is that he accomplishes his plan through the very rejection of his plan, of his Messiah, and of his apostles.<sup>191</sup> Love of enemies is the motivation for Peter and Paul in their missionary work that reaches to the

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<sup>191</sup> William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 137.

Jews who have not accepted Jesus and his Gospel or may waiver in their faith. Finally, theologically the kingdom of heaven, of which Jesus preached and for which Jesus prayed, is manifested by “love of enemies.” Jesus, himself, actualized the kingdom, by his words and example, when he reached out to sinners and the outcast, even at the cost of his own, violent death. In Acts Paul and Peter follow the example of Jesus preaching the message of repentance. This repentance is meant to lead both Jews and Greeks to believe in Jesus, his death and resurrection and his Gospel.

### *5.3. Woes and Enemy-Love: Theological Context*

Many contemporary readers are puzzled by the apparent tension that exists between *EL* teaching and the apocalyptic texts that allude to God’s wrath, vengeance, and in particular divine punishments and rewards. There is no clear solution as to what to do with such texts but one that seems most evident is to try to understand them in their theological context of the Second Temple Judaism. One example of such texts is found in both Matthew and Luke where Jesus warns citizens of Capernaum (Lk. 10:1-16).

Donahue points out that the ethical teaching in Matthew in particular and in the NT at large is eschatological and apocalyptic. For Luke, eschatology is subdued though not abandoned (cf. Lk. 6:20-26; 10:11-16; 16:14-31; 22:31). He is more preoccupied with *semeron* than with *eschaton*. His Gospel does not have vivid images of final judgment and the parables he wrote aim at showing the way for the disciples.<sup>192</sup> This is not the case in Matthew’s Gospel in which Jesus speaks about the final judgment where goats and sheep are separated and get their punishment and reward (Matt. 25). The best way to understand these and similar texts is through the Jewish perspective that believed that

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<sup>192</sup> Donahue, *The Gospel in Parables*, 200-205.



justice ultimately belongs to God and we are to do justice in God's manner. If God's children fail to do it, there will be teeth grinding, fire, and brimstone not in heaven but on earth (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; Lk. 13:28).<sup>193</sup> Whether justice can be achieved here on earth or "in this generation" is a question that humanly is difficult to answer. The answer ultimately lies in God and his vision for the world. Peace and love of enemy do not guarantee that there will be justice nor do they automatically bear fruit of justice. Peace can only create opportunity for true justice of God to be achieved. This creates a certain unrest that may tempt us to pursue violent ways to assure justice particularly in times of distress. However, our ways are not the ways of God who knows our hearts better than we know ourselves (Ps. 139:23-24). Ultimately, God will do what we may not be able to accomplish fully but in the meantime we are challenged to be patient and loving toward every enemy and friend (Matt. 13:24-30; Lk. 8:9-15 cf. 1 Cor. 13:4).

Divine judgment always tempers justice with God's mercy. As the parable of the unmerciful servant reminds us, mercy and love are God's will (Matt. 18:23-35). They are to be imitated by Jesus' disciples.<sup>194</sup> God deals justly with his sinful people as Isaiah the prophet reminds us, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you" (Is. 49:15; cf. Is. 14:1-14, 42:16; Gen. 8:20-22; Deut. 3:1-6; Ps. 77:5, 20; Heb. 13:5). God is merciful, "slow to anger and rich in kindness" (Exod. 34:6 cf. Ps. 103:8; 145:8). God's last word in Acts is "and I would heal them," (Acts 28:26-28). In Matthew, Jesus promises his disciples, "I will be with you always" (Matt. 28:27).

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<sup>193</sup> N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, The Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, (Harper: New York: 2008), 182-183.

<sup>194</sup> Donohue, *The Gospel in Parable*, 79.

Furthermore, passages that speak of warning and punishments call God's people to remember history as summarized most succinctly by Boadt, "God always acts with us rightly and Israel must act rightly. 'Forgetting' negates the meaning of history and establishes evil practices because they seem helpful or useful for our present desires."<sup>195</sup>

In Luke and Matthew's Gospels, Capernaum is on trial and Jesus makes it clear (Lk 11:29–32 par.) Jesus is greater than Jonah who was called to preach repentance as well. In Jonah, mercy is the last word: "Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know *the difference* between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?" (Jonah 4:11). A similar divine sentiment is found in the epilogue in Rome: "...that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn" (Acts 28:27-28). This message is a message of mercy and not rejection (John 6:37; 10:10, 28). Woes, punishments and rewards are rooted in divine compassion, which was revealed when God entered the world in Jesus Christ. Both Matthew and Luke describe the circumstances of Jesus' birth. In Luke, joy and mercy are major themes and they will appear in SP.

In Luke-Acts that intervention took place in the infancy narrative, which is situated during the census ordered by Emperor Augustus (Lk. 2:1-7). Jesus is conceived through the Holy Spirit and will usher the beginning of the new age (Lk. 1:34-35). Mary in her Magnificat anticipates with joy what God is to accomplish through Jesus: "AND

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<sup>195</sup> Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* (revised and updated by Richard Clifford and Daniel Harrington; New York: Paulist Press, 2012), 478: the author summarizes the relation between OT justice and mercy in light of Imitation of God theology.

HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM”

(Lk. 1:50). In a similar way, Zachariah<sup>196</sup>

Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people... Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, By the forgiveness of their sins, Because of the tender mercy of our God, TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace. (Lk. 1:68, 71-72, 77, 79)

Luke-Acts begins with joy and as the story unfolds, it is filled with tension and rejection of Jesus. In the Rome in Acts we see Paul waiting in hope and anticipation. Therefore the disciples are called to “rejoice” in the midst of beatitudes and the woes, particularly when they are reviled (Lk. 6:22-23 cf. 16:19-31). Ultimately God will bring about justice through mercy and the disciples are to act upon it now in this generation. The reversal of fortunes is not God’s last word - mercy is!

In Matthew in a similar way God intervenes when, Mary is found with a child through the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18). Jesus’ birth, unlike the Lukan account, is surrounded by tensions and violence, which results in the Holy Family’s escape to Egypt (Matt. 2). The infancy narrative in Matthew is structured by five divine interventions<sup>197</sup> (Joseph and Magi), five prophetic formulas regarding Jesus’ birth<sup>198</sup> and five sermons.<sup>199</sup> SM has six antitheses and the climactic one about loving one’s enemies. Matthew, in more painful detail than other Gospels, narrates the rivalry among the Jewish sects of

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<sup>196</sup> Tannehill, *Luke*, 60: enemies of God, which could be either Jews or Gentiles. The narrator knows that political liberation did not happen and regards it as a tragedy. What is more important is that God will accomplish his plan in Jesus not through violence but through mercy.

<sup>197</sup> For Joseph’s dreams (1:20; 2:13, 19-20, 22), and Magi (2:12).

<sup>198</sup> Virginal conception (1:22-23); birthplace (2:5-6), flight to Egypt (2:15), massacre of innocents (2:17-18); and on Nazareth (2:23).

<sup>199</sup> SM (5-7); missionary discourse (10-11), parables (13) discipleship (18-19); and eschatological discourse (23)

post-war Judaism. It is in this larger context that one has to place the apocalyptic language found in Matthew and to lesser degree in Luke as well as the controversy stories in Matthew and Luke-Acts. It is important for a NT reader to keep parts of the Gospel deeply rooted in the whole of the Gospel, especially the language of judgment and woes. A careful reading of Matthew's Gospel challenges us to remember that the Gospel ends on "the mountain" - exactly where it began (Matt. 5:1 cf. 28:16). There, Jesus promises that he would remain with his disciples forever, particularly amidst the struggles they may face (Matt. 1:23; cf. Isa. 7:14). They are commissioned to go and preach the gospel to all the nations and they are to practice what they preach: love friends and enemies (Matt. 5:45-48), as they carry on Jesus' mission. In our human struggle to imitate God, Matthew ends with: "God is with us."

## CHAPTER 6

### *Enemy-Love Echoes in the New Testament and Early Christianity*

Even though Jesus' command to love one's enemies (*EL*) is not mentioned directly in the New Testament canon except by Matthew and Luke, it is present there in principle and in spirit. As we have seen, where "love" is mentioned it is directed toward both "enemies and friends." Jesus' command "to love one's enemy" lacks formal correspondence because its biblical function was first and foremost to be practiced. Jesus' disciples continued to preach his Gospel of all-embracing love. It was regarded as an authentic teaching of Jesus and arguably *EL* and the practice of non-violence<sup>200</sup> were at the heart of discipleship in the early Christianity (2 Clement 13-14).<sup>201</sup> For this reason the Sermon on the Mount has often been called a Christian manifesto of the kingdom.<sup>202</sup> Below we list a few prominent examples in the New Testament and the early Church fathers where *EL* is echoed either explicitly or implicitly.

#### *6.1 New Testament Evidence*

The most important text with respect to *EL* is found in Paul's letter to Romans (12:9-21), in which the Apostle to the Gentiles explicitly admonishes the church in Rome

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<sup>200</sup> The relationship between non-violence and enemy-love is somewhat disputed. Meier, J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Law and Love*, 529, 549: the author argues that these are two separate teachings not related to one another. Similarly, Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis: 'Love Your Enemies' and the Doctrine of Non-Violence" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 54: 3-31: He questions whether Jesus taught non-violence at all. Others have seen non-violence and enemy-love as two sides of the same coin - non-violence being an expression of the love of enemy: see Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 282; Walter Wink, "Counter-response to Richard Horsley," in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation* (ed. W. M. Swartley; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 133-36; Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2003). In Luke, the first example of enemy-love is turning the other cheek, (6:29). Bovon, *Luke*, 232. Love of enemies in the early *oral tradition* was associated with non-violence.

<sup>201</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 290; and Betz, *Sermon*, 591.

<sup>202</sup> Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 256.

to practice non-retaliation and love their enemies<sup>203</sup> - both the opponents of the Gospel in general or of Paul's ministry of preaching Christ in particular (Rom. 1:1-7).<sup>204</sup>

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup> love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” <sup>20</sup> No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.<sup>205</sup> (Romans 12:9-10, 12-14, 17-21)

Paul explicitly echoes Proverbs (25:21, cf. Romans 9:20) so as to ground his exhortation in Jewish tradition, as do Matthew and Luke. Clearly, *EL* in Paul's view is cloaked with apocalyptic expectations where God ultimately judges and avenges the enemies of his chosen people (v. 19; cf. 1QS 10:17-18; 2 Enoch 1:1-4).<sup>206</sup> For Paul love in general and *EL* in particular is not merely a matter of ethics but of identity; the body of

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<sup>203</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 246-248.

<sup>204</sup> John Piper, “Love Your Enemies”: *Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Early Christian Paraenesis: A History of the Tradition and Interpretation of Its Uses* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991): the author provides detail analysis of some of the texts mentioned here; see also Gordon Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); Gordon Zerbe, “Paul's Ethics of Non-Retaliation and Peace” in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation* (edited by W. M. Swartley; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 177–222.

<sup>205</sup> Unless otherwise indicated all quotations are taken from *Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. 1989.

<sup>206</sup> Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*, 307-354: Paul and Apocalypticism is carefully discussed. On Romans see in particular 341: For Paul non-violence is urgent because he expects the end and God's vengeance to come soon: “The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet.” (Rom. 16:20ff).

Christ is to love as Jesus did.<sup>207</sup> His letters are pastoral, aiming to form and build up a community (1 Cor. 13).<sup>208</sup> Paul's language in his letter to Corinthians is captivating and his rhetoric is at its best. It has been pointed out that Paul may also be implicitly speaking about *EL* in his First Letter to the Corinthians, showing himself as an example: "What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness? (1Cor. 4:21).<sup>209</sup> In another place, Paul explicitly addresses non-retaliation where he encourages his community in Thessalonica to live in peace with one another and "all" (1 Thess. 5:15-21, cf. 3:12). His exhortation is directed to all indicating that this is not merely a matter loving of "one another,"

See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

"Doing good" has to do with prayer, thanksgiving and *living* in the Spirit. Jesus is the Embodiment of the Spirit (cf. Lk 23:16). The fact that such prayer is to be a "thanksgiving" suggests a communal character where the disciples pray not so much individually but as a community. This prayer includes those inside, but should not exclude too easily those outside since Paul's audiences lived in the major metropolitan cities with a heavy population. A similar connection between the spirit and love can be found in Galatians. Paul uses the common literary convention of the "Two Ways." He tells his divided community to abandon the works and desires of the flesh such as enmities (ἔχθραι), anger, quarrels and factions and to bear fruits of the spirit, which

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<sup>207</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 201.

<sup>208</sup> Richard Hays, *The Conversation of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), xv.

<sup>209</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 201.

include, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control,” (Gal. 5:19-25, cf. Col. 3:12-13, Matt. 7:14; Lk. 6:37-42).<sup>210</sup> All these are practical examples and they have to do with different attitudes that form one’s character. Paul in another place gives a similar list in his most famous treatise on love found in First Corinthians (13:1-13), elaborating in greater detail on what he said before in person. There Paul describes that love is patient, kind, selfless and not rejoicing over evil but in truth. At the heart of love as understood by Paul is the fact that it does not seek its own advantage and edification,<sup>211</sup> but that of others, (cf. Matt. 5: 46-47; Lk 6:32-34; cf. Phil. 2:1-4). It is self-less, unlike our human inclination. For Paul love of friends and enemies is transformed explicitly into *Imitation of Christ*. Most importantly, for Paul, like for Matthew (5:17; 7:12; 19:19; 22:7-40) and Luke (10:25-28),<sup>212</sup> love and plausibly *EL* is also the fulfillment of the law: “Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law,” (Rom. 13:8-10). “Torah” particularly in a largely Jewish community in Matthew is at the heart of Jesus argument. Other often-cited texts on *EL* include:

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| Rom. (5:7-8, 10): | Christ died for us sinners is a proof of God’s love for us. Christ reconciled with us while we were his enemies. |
| 1 Pt. (3:8-9):    | “Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing.”                    |
| 1 Cor. (4:12b-13) | “when reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly.”                           |

Above mentioned echoes in the mind of many scholars breathe with the spirit of *EL* while not quoting it explicitly. Admittedly, the weight of the interpretation lies in the

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<sup>210</sup> John Ferguson, *The Politics of Love: The New Testament and Non-Violent Revolution* (Cambridge, Ma: James Clarke, 1977), 13.

<sup>211</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 158-160.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Mk. 12:28-31; Gal 5:14; OT roots found in Deut. 6:4-5 and Lev. 19:18.



eye of the beholder with respect to passages quoted above. It is impossible to state categorically that Paul knew Jesus' commandment to love one's enemies but it is plausible to think that he did.<sup>213</sup>

Finally, the Gospel of John, which is the last Gospel to be written, never mentions the *EL* commandment either - somewhat surprisingly, one may argue. Jesus speaks there of the new commandment to "love one another" (John 13:34), and "love"<sup>214</sup> is the major theme in John's narrative (John 3:16). Jesus comes to reveal God's will, sets the example and he is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). If John knew of the commandment, why not mention it? Some scholars have contended that the phrase "one another" does not include outside enemies toward whom John appears to be rather hostile (15:18-64).<sup>215</sup> John, however, presents Samaritans who were actual enemies of Jews in a positive light and receptive of the Gospel (Jn. 4).<sup>216</sup> It has been argued that loving "one another" is not directed toward those outside or those excluded with whom John's

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<sup>213</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 202. The author comes close to saying that Paul actually might have known of Jesus' teaching on enemy-love: "Paul knows that to be a 'steward' of divine 'mysteries' (1 Cor. 4:1) of God who loved enemies in the cross (Rom. 5:6-8) and of the Lord who taught enemy love in his ministry on earth (Matthew 5; Luke 6), requires no less love;" see also William Klassen, "Love," *ABD*, 4.381-396, at 393; for a contrary opinion see Betz, *Sermon*, 299. "The command "Love your enemies!" is not known to the apostle Paul, not even in the sayings composition Rom 12:9-21; Meier, *the Marginal Jew: Law and Love*, 549-550: Paul does not ground his exhortation on non-retaliation in Romans 12 on *EL* since both in the wisdom of the Jewish and Hellenistic world non-retaliation is common.

<sup>214</sup> Love is preached in John's Gospel in and against the world that hates the disciples (Jn. 15:18; Matt. 10:22; Lk. 21:17).

<sup>215</sup> William Klassen, "Love" *ABD* 4:381-396, at 390; see also, David Rensberger, "Love of One Another and Love of Enemies in the Gospel of John" in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament* (ed. Willard M. Swartley; Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1992), 304-310; these authors conclude that John's depiction of love is not inclusive of outsiders and insiders but commended exclusively for the members of the community.

<sup>216</sup> Rensberger, "Love of One Another," 308; cf. Good Samaritan (10:29-37).

community is to avoid contact. Their mutual love was a protective and self-sustaining shield against enemies. It could possibly be a stimulus to join their community.<sup>217</sup>

A similar argument has been proposed for John's Epistles and Revelation (Rev. 2:4, 19; 1 John 2:9-10).<sup>218</sup> Some authors point out that Revelation is addressed exclusively to the community divided within and experiencing internal hatred,<sup>219</sup> and not to enemies outside. It is clear that Revelation promotes non-violence, (Rev. 13:10) and non-participation,<sup>220</sup> as do Matthew, Luke and Paul. Even though neither John<sup>221</sup> in his epistles and John's Gospel, nor Revelation, mentioned *EL* explicitly, they also do not reject it either explicitly or implicitly. Klassen has rightly pointed out that *EL* and loving one another are not in conflict with each other – they nurture and nourish each other.<sup>222</sup> An enemy does not have to be an outsider as seen clearly in Psalm 31:11, “Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances.” The prime example of this is Jesus' vivid image of family divisions and the prediction that he came “to bring not peace, but sword,” and “set family members against each other so that a person's enemies will be those of one's own household,” (Matt. 10:34-42; 10:16-25; cf. Lk. 12:53, 21:16-17; Mic. 7:6).<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 310. The author concludes that the “The Johannine commandment to love one another is *not* a commandment to love one's enemies.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. 1 Jn. 2:5, 3:14, 4:7-21, 5:2.

<sup>219</sup> PHEME PERKINS, “Apocalyptic Sectarianism and Love Commands: The Johannine Epistles and Revelation” in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament* (ed. Willard M. Swartley; Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1992), 293-295; see also Klassen, “Love,” *ABD*, 4:381-396, at 390.

<sup>220</sup> Harrington, *Jesus and Virtue Ethics*, 116.

<sup>221</sup> It is presumed by majority of scholars that John's epistles and John's Gospel as well as Revelation has been written not by the same author, traditionally know as John the beloved disciple of Jesus (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20).

<sup>222</sup> Klassen, “Love Your Enemies: Some Reflection on the Current Status of Research,” in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament* (ed. Willard M. Swartley; Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1992), 1-31. 17.

<sup>223</sup> Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 150-151.

Furthermore, the nature and the extent of Gospel audiences continue to be disputed. The purely internal nature of New Testament audiences has been questioned in the last decade in Biblical scholarship. Burridge argues, “the Gospels are for all Christians – and even beyond the church for all those who want to know about Jesus of Nazareth.”<sup>224</sup> This is particularly significant for Luke who portrays Jesus as speaking to “you” that listen (Lk. 6:27). In Matthew’s *Epilogue* Jesus sends his disciples to preach the Gospel implicitly including *EL* to all and thus making disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded (Matt. 28:19-20). In John, Jesus enters the world of darkness as the light that is to shine for all who believe and receive him so that they may become the children of God (John 1:6-12).

In conclusion, whether mentioned explicitly or implicitly, Jesus’ teaching on *EL* and non-violence is certainly heard outside of Matthew and Luke. *EL* hovers behind texts mentioned above even though it is absent in form – “exact iteration.”<sup>225</sup>

### 6.2 Early Christian Paraenesis

Early Christian tradition has built a library of *EL* echoes. Major commentaries like Betz and Luz list examples we quote below as do other sources listed in the bibliography. As Luz rightly points out, in the Early Church it was taken for granted that

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<sup>224</sup> Richard Burridge, “Gospel Genre and Audiences” in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking Gospel Audiences* (ed. by R. Bauckham; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998). 113-145. 145 and on Gospels as *bios* see 125-337 where the author states, “thus comparing Gospels with other ancient biographies allows us to see a variety of social functions directed at wider audiences than the ‘community hypothesis’ usually suggests;” for the most recent discussion on the topic see Edward W. Klink III, ed., *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*, (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 160: Blomberg, the editor summarizes and proposes a *via media* position that locates Gospels audiences between Gospel for all Christians and Gospels for specific communities.

<sup>225</sup> Meier, *Marginal Jew*, Vol. IV, 531: ‘By exact iteration’ I mean that no parallel, however close in thought or spirit, uses the terse, stark juxtaposition of the ever-popular direct imperative “love” with the impossible object ‘enemy.’”

*EL* is to be practiced and that it is practicable.<sup>226</sup> Prior to Constantine *EL* and non-violence was a central ethical ideal.<sup>227</sup> Jesus taught *EL*. Paul did as mentioned above. In the *Gospel Sayings Q* it is a major theme whether it is oral or written tradition.

*Didache* (110 C.E) most clearly echoes what one find in the SM/SP: “Bless those, who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you. For what grace do you expect if you only love those who love you? Do not even the nations do that? As for you, love those who hate you, and you will not have any enemy” (*Did.* 1:3). In its oral form, *The Teaching of the Apostles* may be contemporaneous to Matthew and Luke.<sup>228</sup> *Didache* more importantly may allow us to hear *EL* echoes in Jesus’ teaching on “almsgiving, fasting, and prayer” in Matthew (6:1-18), particularly Jesus’ prayer instruction on forgiveness.<sup>229</sup> As Jesus continues with his sermon he warns Jewish leaders not to follow a “hypocritical way,” – and a lesser righteousness.

Similarly Justin Martyr in his *I Apology* (155-157 C.E) admonishes his addressees quoting Jesus’ *EL* commandment:

“He taught thus: “If ye love them that love you, what new thing do ye? For even fornicators do this. But I say unto you, Pray for your enemies, and love them that hate you, and bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.” (*I Apol.* 15:9; cf. 13:3; *Dial.* 35:8; 96:3; 133:6).<sup>230</sup>

<sup>226</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 285, 290.

<sup>227</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 285; Wink, “The Love of Enemy,” 113.

<sup>228</sup> Kurt Niederwimmer, Harold W. Attridge, *The Didache* (Hermeneia: Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 52-53: “In general, one can say that the sources, that is, the predidachistic traditions, should probably be located in the first century C.E., most likely toward the end of the century.”

<sup>229</sup> It seems unlikely that fasting in Matthew alludes to *EL* but it is important to point out that fasting in the book of Jonah is a sign of repentance (Jonah 3:5) and reconciliation between God and his people. At the word of Jonah, not only the people Nineveh repented by also all the animals.

<sup>230</sup> Helmut Koester, *From Jesus to the Gospels: Interpreting the New Testament in its Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 88: “Pray for your enemies” is also found in one of the Oxyrhynchus papyri with sayings of Jesus (1224) and in the *Syriac Didascalia* (108:4).

In that same document, which he wrote in defense of Christianity to Antonius Pius (*1 Apol.* 1:1), Justin quotes Isaiah (2:4) evoking the image of “swords turned into plowshares,” when he speaks of Christians as peacemakers and not war-wagers. *EL* is mentioned only once in dialogue with Trypho: “Jesus commanded to love even [our] enemies, as was predicted by Isaiah in many passages” (*Dial.* 85:7).<sup>231</sup> Justin alludes to Isaiah whom Trypho, a Jew, would be familiar with. Other examples can be found in Polycarp of Smyrna (66-155 C.E) who summons his audience “to pray for king, and for persecutors, those who hate you, and the enemies of the cross, so that they may be perfect” (*Phil.* 12:3). No matter how much one may think that violence can be justified, one is wrong in the eyes of Athenagoras (133-190 C.E) who writes to Marcus Aurelius arguing that one cannot take the life of another even justly. Justification of violence has been disputed as long as human beings exist.<sup>232</sup> What is certain is that the closer one is to violence, the more difficult it is to practice, especially when innocent victims are involved. For this reason it has been regarded by many then and now as a utopian vision for the world. However, as Lohfink argues rightly in my opinion, “Jesus’ teaching is more radical than a utopia. It knows more about human beings,”<sup>233</sup> than we know ourselves. If God’s kingdom is to be done, we have to let go of our kingdoms that we build for ourselves; we have to stop creating God in our image and begin to live in God’s image, creating the world God envisioned in the beginning.

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<sup>231</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-dialoguetrypho.html>

<sup>232</sup> Ferguson, *The Politics of Love*, 58: “An Embassy about the Christians,” (35); to the contrary Hedrick, Pamela, “The Good Samaritan, Cornelius, and the Just Use of Force,” in *Acts and Ethics*, edited by Thomas Phillips (Sheffield Pres: New York, 2005), 134; She argues comprehensively against it in favor of justifying violence and her conclusion is the case in Rwanda, where 800,000 people were killed. She concludes that she wonders if Cornelius who knew “what it means to be an outsider,” would ignore their cry and stand idle.

<sup>233</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 157: on the theory of utopia.

In *2 Clement* (140 C.E), the anonymous author of this homily points out that *EL* makes pagans marvel: “if ye love your enemies and them which hate you - whenever they hear these words, they marvel at the surpassing measure of their goodness; but when they see, that not only do we not love those who hate, but that we love not even those who love, they laugh us to scorn, and the name is blasphemed” (2Clem. 8:5).<sup>234</sup>

It is also clear that following the way of Christ’s love was a challenge from the outset. The first attempt to soften the difficult teaching on *EL* comes from Origen (185-254 C.E).<sup>235</sup> Even as he defends Christian non-violence in his writing against Celsus – a Platonic philosopher (*Contra Cel.* 3, 7; 5, 33; 8, 70), he contends that it is enough “not to hate one’s enemy.” Jerome similarly makes a qualitative distinction between loving one’s enemy and loving one’s friends. One does not love an enemy the way one loves one’s family.<sup>236</sup> Neither of the two authors rejected it per se. In addition to above-mentioned examples, there exist a variety of texts that speak unequivocally of Christian pacifism, non-retaliation and enemy-love.<sup>237</sup>

In conclusion, Apostolic Fathers, like Paul, were not interested in quoting texts literally (την λέξις), but drew their inspiration from the sense (τον νοον) of the scriptures.<sup>238</sup> Love is not a principle to be contemplated but a command that has to be

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<sup>234</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/2clement-roberts.html>

<sup>235</sup> Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 320: the author gives a helpful summary how the *EL* teaching of Jesus has been softened over the centuries.

<sup>236</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 290-91: it is with Origen and Tertullian where seeds for Augustine’s just war theory are planted.

<sup>237</sup> Robert Daly, “The Early Christian Tradition on Peace and Conflict Resolution” in *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Biblical Perspectives on Peace and Its Social Function* (ed. Anthony J. Tambasco; New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 134-253. 150.

<sup>238</sup> Eric Osborn, “Love of Enemies and Recapitulation,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 54 (2000): 12-31, at 15.

practiced.<sup>239</sup> Before the writing of the Gospels and as the texts of canonical gospels were becoming more and more authoritative, Christian piety in its earlier periods was pastoral and practical as it shaped the wording of Jesus' teaching according to its needs. The exact wording of Matthew and Luke appears for the first time in the above quoted homily of 2 *Clement* (13:4) - around 140 C.E.<sup>240</sup>

Even though historically it is difficult to prove due to lack of actual evidence, the Gospel of all-embracing love was preached and practiced even though it must have been challenging at times. Before the ways parted Christian Jews and Non-Christian Jews lived in relative peace. One such example is found in the present day prison near Megiddo (North Israel). The earliest prayer hall was excavated there, in which soldiers attended Christian worship around 230 A.D. The inscription honoring the donors for a mosaic reads,

“Gaianus, also called Porphyrius, centurion, our brother, has made the pavement at his own expense as an act of liberality. Brutius carried out the work.”<sup>241</sup>

This is an act of generosity similar to that in Luke (cf. 7:1-10). Clearly it was a place of worship as attested by another inscription to the donor of the altar, who is a woman,

“The God-loving Akeptous has offered the table to God Jesus Christ as a memorial.”<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 194-195: the author discusses the universal character of *EL* command vis-à-vis its concrete manifestation.

<sup>240</sup> Koester, *From Jesus to the Gospels*, 88: cf. Justin Martyr in his *1 Apology* (155-157 C.E) and Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* (180 C.E) where he literarily speaks of enemy-love quoting Matthew's and Luke's concrete examples, (4.13:3).

<sup>241</sup> Vassilios Tzaferis, “Inscribed ‘To God Jesus Christ’ Early Christian Prayer Hall Found in Megiddo Prison,” *BAR* an online version, <http://www.bib-arch.org/online-exclusives/oldest-church-02.asp>: “This is a clear indication that the Christians who worshiped in this prayer hall were Roman soldiers. The donor of the prayer hall was a Roman officer, a centurion. That there was a community of congregants is indicated by use of the term “our brother.”

Roman soldiers and wealthy woman were indeed attracted to Jesus Jewish movement even prior to Constantine (313 CE). It is also certain that the “fish” was an important symbol of faith for early Christians. Its Greek acronym means: Jesus Christ the Son of God and Savior (ICHTHUS).

In conclusion, both NT and early Church fathers echo and carry on Jesus’ command to love one’s enemies. More importantly, *EL* is not a marginal teaching, but to the contrary, it is ethically a fundamental principle that shapes the identity and the mission of the emerging Christianity together with other virtues of mercy, peace, and reconciliation. Furthermore, it seeks to inform the way the followers of Christ are to treat one another and all others who are not part of their community, particularly when they oppose, reject and persecute them. The reasons for such hostility have to do with Jesus, his Gospel, and Jewish religious practice.

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid.



## CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this study, we have pointed out that Jesus' teaching on *EL* in Matthew and Luke-Acts is of paramount importance and as such it has ethical, political, social and personal implications today as it did when Jesus first uttered his famous command and when Matthew and Luke-Acts were written. *EL* aimed at building up a community and forming its individual and communal character. Christians were asked to love their enemies not only when faced with hostility (Lk. 10:25-37; Acts 27:27-42;). The story of the Good Samaritan urges Christians to be benevolent and kind toward enemies even when they are not directly hostile toward them (Acts 26:1-29).<sup>243</sup>

We have seen that both Matthew and Luke interpret Jesus' teaching in their own unique historical and theological contexts. But no matter what the context is, Christians are called to show love both toward Jews and Gentiles, brothers and sisters, and anyone who may show hostility toward them, accuse them unjustly or reject them and the Gospel they preach. In Matthew, Jesus delivers his sermon as a true interpreter of Torah amidst intra-Jewish conflict. In Luke-Acts, both Jesus and Peter and Paul are facing a conflict that involves Non-Christian Hellenist Jews and Christian Hellenist Jews as well as Gentiles (God-fearers).

The general motivation and rationale in Matthew and Luke are the same. Christians are called to follow God's super-abundant graciousness that reveals God's own mercy and perfection. The goal is to bear fruit of righteousness and mercy for all people. Jesus' teaching is universal but its practical applications will vary from one place

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<sup>243</sup> In this passage Paul recalls his persecution of the church, his conversion, his arrest and attempt to kill him. Paul is presented as innocent both by Festus and Agrippa (Acts 26:31-32). There he prays for all who would listen to him (Acts 29).

to another and *EL* will have to be creatively applied in one's unique historical situations. Loving one's enemy has far-reaching consequences that have to do with religious, social, political and personal dimensions of human existence. The function of *EL* in the multi-layered purposes of Matthew and Luke's narratives is not of little significance since both narratives are filled with controversy and conflict. It is precisely amidst these struggles – religious, social, and political - that loving one's enemies has to be situated and practiced.

We have also tried to identify a number of *EL* echoes in Matthew and Luke-Acts. It has not been feasible to provide an extended exegetical analysis of these echoes in this study. However, as we alluded above, many authors have alluded to the same echoes of *EL* particularly in Luke-Acts but also in Matthew. The extent to which *EL* can illumine the texts we have proposed will have to be investigated in greater detail, and in fact has been by scholars who have promoted a narrative approach to the Gospels. In the appendix we have listed a number of criteria that should help to explore these echoes and their validity. In the chapter on "Qualifications," I have tried to explore the historical complexity of the world behind the text and have pointed out that *EL* has as its context a Jewish struggle that had to do with how Jews should relate to their God and to the Gentile majority of the human race after the destruction of the temple. We have pointed out that the identity of the Jews and the nature of the conflict – whether internal or external or both - continue to be disputed. We have also seen that Jesus' memorable and unique call to live one's life, loving one's enemies and friends was present prior to Matthew and Luke, in Sayings Gospel Q as well as in the first three centuries of the common era.

The method and approach employed in this study sought to be as inclusive as the limited scope of this thesis allowed us to be. I have tried to combine historical, literary

and narrative approaches that have also sought to identify *EL* echoes outside of the two Gospel accounts as well (the canonical approach). It exposed the fluidity and creativity with which Jesus' command to love one's enemies was carried on in preaching and in practice.

## APPENDIXES

### *1. Narrative Interpretation*

Considering that *EL* is an important theme in Matthew and Luke, our goal has been to find echoes of Jesus' teaching in the two Gospel accounts as well as Acts of the Apostles. The method employed for this task has been commonly known as narrative criticism. Many scholars have shown how certain themes run through the four Gospels, e.g. restoration theology and prayer in Luke-Acts, or wisdom of God in Matthew. It advocates continuous reading of a narrative in such a way that a reader is asked to draw connections between one part and another. For this reason as interpreters embark on a narrative search for echoes, they need to equip themselves with tools (criteria) that will assure that they choose texts responsibly. Richard Hays provides some helpful suggestions to discern the validity of allusions and echoes.

He points out that identifying allusions is not a strictly scientific endeavor aimed to achieve a conclusive proof, but an "aesthetic" judgment practiced by a skilled interpreter within a community. He also points out that texts are always part of a literary and historical continuum of other texts, particularly the Old Testament. They exist within a reading community that may interpret them differently or even distort their message.<sup>244</sup> It is a community, then and now, with its history, culture and politics that shape the meaning of a text. Because recognizing echoes in a narrative is an art, there exists a degree of playfulness, freedom and openness to see "where echoes and allusions will lead a reader."<sup>245</sup> Connecting texts is natural to human beings. For this reason narrative and reader-response approaches perceive texts as alive and not as limited to author's intent or

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<sup>244</sup> Hays, *The Conversion*, 30.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

historical context.<sup>246</sup> Freedom is allowed because allusions are initially obscure and their efficiency depends partly on their obscurity.<sup>247</sup> Hays makes it clear at the same time that judgments about allusions are not arbitrary.<sup>248</sup> As he proposes a set of criteria to guide an interpreter in his or her attempt to discover allusions in the text, he admits that in the end they yield “only greater or lesser degree of probability about any particular reading, especially where echoes are concerned.”<sup>249</sup> Furthermore, an important factor with respect to *EL* allusions in Matthew and Luke-Acts has to do with a hermeneutic of indeterminacy, which as Tannehill points out, may allow a reader to see in a particular text an allusion to *EL*, but such reading is only a “possible” one. It should not be seen as mandatory.<sup>250</sup> We have selected five out of seven criteria Hays lists and they include: volume, recurrence, coherence, historical plausibility and satisfaction.

*Volume:* This criterion seeks to establish how “loud” the echo is and how insistent.<sup>251</sup> This can be accomplished by identifying structural and thematic correspondence between texts.<sup>252</sup> An example of this can be James and John’s desire to destroy the Samaritan town vis-à-vis the prayer on behalf of Samaritans and Simon by Peter and John in Acts (Lk 9:51-56; cf. Acts 8:4-24). Allusions may also be hidden

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<sup>246</sup> Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 172-176: the author discusses “authoritorial intention,” historical context and the benefit of reader-response / narrative criticism. The point is that the two can be complementary of each other enhancing a contemporary dialogue and communication with the ancient text. Both intended reader and present reader are important partners when interpreting the text.

<sup>247</sup> Hays, *The Conversion*, 33.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>250</sup> Robert Tannehill, *The Shape of Luke’s Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2005), 280: the author also points out that indeterminacy means that, “Different interpreters will demand different kinds and degrees of evidence in reaching conclusions. Consequently, different interpreters will come to different conclusions, resulting in somewhat different readings of the text. The text allows this.”

<sup>251</sup> Hays, *The Conversion*, 36.

<sup>252</sup> Spencer, *Rhetorical Texture*, 20: the author alludes to Talbert’s work on intratextual parallels with respect to Luke-Acts, which focused on structural and thematic correspondence.

behind images, and catchwords that clearly bring us back to or foreshadow Jesus' sermon. One example is the image of "good and evil" and the parable of the "weed and the wheat" (Matt. 5:45b; cf. 13:1-30).

*Recurrence:* How often does the author allude to *EL*? The fact that Luke mentions the *EL* command twice indicates that it is an important theme in his sermon. The question here is, "how often does the Gospel allude" to *EL* and practice of non-violence? It is important to take into consideration such literary conventions as irony and paradox as well, which are seen in the parable about a Good Samaritan where an enemy functions as an *EL* example (cf. Lk. 7:1-10). The purpose of irony and parables is to stimulate a reader's mind and invite him to wrestle with Jesus' *EL* teaching as played out by the characters in the story.<sup>253</sup>

*Thematic Coherence:* With respect to this criterion the main question an interpreter needs to ask is, how well does the alleged echo fit together with the point the pericope is making? The allusion to *EL* is substantiated to a greater degree if the general theme of a chosen text corresponds to the theme of the sermon, for example: mercy, forgiveness, *Imitatio Dei*, prayer, and if it further illuminates the pericope where one sees an *EL* allusion.

*Historical Plausibility:* The question here has to do with the author's intention and the audience's perception. Did Matthew or Luke intend the alleged meaning we see in any proposed allusion and could his first century readers have understood it that way? This criterion asks the reader to situate the proposed text in a historical context. Can the two centurions of Luke-Acts (Lk 7:5 and Acts 10:2) be models of reconciliation with

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<sup>253</sup> Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable*, 5; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 137: the function of the irony is to invite readers to share the author's views and ideology.

enemies if we consider the historical setting of 70 C.E. and Jewish Revolution against Rome?<sup>254</sup> Another example is Jesus' teaching and attitude toward paying taxes (Matt. 22:15-22, par.). The function of the polemical language in the Jewish and Hellenistic world needs to be taken into account as well. It is also important to locate texts in their proper theological context in history, e.g. eschatological and apocalyptic worldview vis-à-vis *EL* ethics.

*History of Interpretation:* This criterion is concerned with the subsequent history of interpretation. The primary question one needs to ask is, "Have other readers in the tradition heard the same echoes that we think we hear?" Equally, history of interpretation may alert us to echoes that we might have missed initially. The strength of this criterion lies in the fact that the more interpreters with the same insight, the firmer the ground to support a proposed allusion. This, however, should not constrain us from proposing new and fresh interpretations as long as they are solidly supported by responsible scholarly research and argumentation.

*Satisfaction:* This last criterion is similar to *thematic coherence* for it seeks to establish the degree to which echoes illuminate the text and fit into the larger theme of the chosen pericope. It investigates the way in which echoes enhance or clarify the text before us. Conversely, it seeks to evaluate the way the text expands and enlarges our understanding of the putative echo. The test of satisfaction is met when we find ourselves saying, "That is what love of enemies is all about!" It seems to me that the greatest value of this criterion lies in relation to the other criteria, since if they are not met, satisfaction

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<sup>254</sup> Tannehill, "Do Ethics of Acts Include the Ethical Teaching in Luke?" in *Acts and Ethics* (ed. Thomas E. Phillips; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 108-122. 116: this is precisely the way the author frames the question. He does, however, acknowledge in the end that such interpretation is not mandatory.

will not be achieved either. Satisfaction is never arbitrary. Rather it is both scientific and aesthetic. It is achieved in and through a skilful and persuasive study.

## 2. *Qualifications: the “Jews” and “Hypocrites” and their Identity*

We have alluded to a number of passages that could plausibly be interpreted as applications of *EL* even though it is not possible to elaborate on them in detail in this study. Much research has been done on the topic of *EL* in the last sixty years. Most authors continue to focus largely on historical criticism and literary analysis. As they do so, they point to a number of passages listed above that could exemplify Jesus’ teaching on loving one’s enemy. They have alluded to echoes based on linguistic and thematic correspondence between texts; either a word is repeated or the scene clearly alludes to the theme of *EL*. With exception of a few attempts to advance an interpretative approach to *EL*, above all by Tannehill, to my knowledge there exists only one monograph by Owczarek - *The Sons of the Most High* - that treats the subject in a more extended and comprehensive manner. But even there the author focuses only on Luke-Acts. He dedicates 195 pages to historical and literary analysis and other related questions. He devotes approximately 45 pages to Luke and 26 pages to Acts to discuss examples of *EL*. He gives 6 examples in Luke of which Judas, Peter’s denial, and “Our Father” are given as additional examples to what one finds elsewhere. In Acts he provides five examples in addition to the common one – Stephan’s prayer. Four are less traditional and include, Paul’s conversion and healing by Ananias; Paul saving the jailer; and Paul helping those who wish to kill him (Acts 27:14-44). Tannehill has made reference to a few new and fresh allusions including, a centurion’s love for the Jewish nation and the healing of his



slave (Lk. 7:5) and Cornelius' conversion (Acts 10:2). Both passages, he argues, epitomize a reconciled community that practices Jesus' teaching by loving and acting lovingly toward those who in the Lukan historical context of the first Jewish War could have been considered enemies. He points to another allusion where Paul refuses to accuse Jews before the Emperor (Acts. 28:19, Rome; cf. 25:11) even though the Jewish leaders attacked him first.<sup>255</sup> His conclusion is insightful,

Apart from the dying prayer of Stephen, there is little in Acts scenes to remind the reader of Jesus' teaching about love of enemy. This teaching is not explicitly cited. Because of the importance of love of enemies in Jesus' teaching, the reader of Acts may interpret scenes in Acts as application of this teaching, but the connection is not so strongly marked in the text that this interpretation is mandatory.<sup>256</sup>

I would like to respond to his statement with three points. First, in some ways it is easier to identify echoes of *EL* in Luke-Acts than it is in Matthew, because Luke's Hellenistic method of "teaching by example" lends itself to such interpretation by its very nature. He wants to give us examples. Paul gives himself as an example to Corinthians, (1 Cor. 11:1, Acts 20:17-34 and cf. Romans 16:17-20). In Acts he is an example of *EL* toward the Jews because he does not judge or accuse them (Acts 28:23-31; cf. Luke 6:27 and Rom. 14:13; Acts 28:19). Second, by nature echoes are allusive and obscure. In some cases, allusions are more explicit and in other cases less so.

Finally, and most importantly, Tannehill's hesitation is explicitly rooted in the fact that the identity of the "Jews" continues to be disputed.<sup>257</sup> Gager's article on the anti-Jewish language in Luke-Acts reflects the current and popular perception among mainline NT scholarship today. He argues that the anti-Jewish language, particularly in

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 114-116.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 116.

Luke-Acts reflects an internal conflict between “Jewish Christians” and “Gentile Christians.” In Matthew it is a polemic among Jewish Christians and other Jewish sects of his time. There, it appears that the conflict is more external and not merely internal in nature. It strikes me that a distinction between *internal* and *external* conflict is helpful but one does not have to exclude the other. In a way any labels that we use today are somewhat anachronistic with respect to Judaism and Christianity before and after the destruction of the Temple. Such terms as Christian Jews and Gentile Jews are important but are not found in New Testament.

Josephus points out that there is great variety among Jews<sup>258</sup> - sects with varied opinions and ideas as to what it means to be Israel, God’s chosen people: Essenes, Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians, Zealots and Sicarii, God-fearers and Jesus’ disciples among others.<sup>259</sup> Some Christians are bound closer to one group others to another both in practice and theology blurring the differences to some degree.<sup>260</sup> They are all “Jews” in one family but they have distinct religious and even ethnic identity - God-fearing and God-loving Gentiles (Acts 10:2, 22; 12:17, 13:16, 17:10-13). It was understandable that confusion would arise. Some ideas would be acceptable, while others were not (cf. 19:13-

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<sup>258</sup> Evidence for Sicarii: Ant. 18.4-25; BJ 2.254-57, 425; 4.400-5, 516; 7.253-end; Ant. 20.186-208; evidence for Zealots: BJ 2.651; 4.160-61, 302-10, 490, 514-58; 5.3-7, 101-3, 250, 358, 528; 6.92, 148; 7.268; evidence for Pharisees: BJ 1.110-14, 571; 2.119, 162-66, 411; Ant. 13.171-72, 288-98, 401-15, 423; 15.3, 370, 17.41-46; 18.4, 11-23; Vita 10-12, 21, 191, 197-98; evidence for Sadducees: BJ 2.119, 164-66; Ant. 13.171-73, 293-98; 18.11-17; 20.199; Vita 10-11.

<sup>259</sup> Cf. Judas the Galilean in Acts 5:27; and more enthusiastic than violent “Egyptian” in Acts 21:38.

<sup>260</sup> Michael Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel: Israel’s Re-Gathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish Literature and Luke-Acts* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006): The author discusses first of all a variety of approaches to a theology of restoration and how enemies are to be treated. The issues are complex and clear lines and distinctions are not always possible.

20; magic vs. cursing).<sup>261</sup> Boyarin who has spent much time studying Second Temple Judaism intentionally blurs distinctions. The image of Jews and Christians as brothers in one family is helpful, even though the precise identity of “the Jews” or different Jewish factions behind NT texts continues to be disputed. Jack Miles in his *Foreword* to Daniel Boyarin’s book “The Jewish Gospels,” summarizes his argument well,

Daniel Boyarin sees Judaism and Christianity as being like Josh and Ben, not that either sports or music are at issue. At issue, rather, is the question - always consequential but perhaps never more so than after the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 AD – of how Jews should relate to their God and to the Gentile majority of the human race. Before the destruction of the Temple, there were various contending schools of thought about this core question. After the catastrophic destruction, the two schools that survived were Rabbinical and Christian. Theologically they had their differences, but they were both Jewish. As surely as Josh and Ben are brothers in the family. Their differences were, as we say, all in the family, and they remained all in the family not just for a decades but, as Boyarin boldly asserts, for the first few centuries of the common era. It took that long for gradually escalating mutual polemics to overcome an underlying sense of fraternity on either side and to create two reciprocally settled identities where before there had been just one identity, albeit unsettled.<sup>262</sup>

Boyarin’s point is well taken and it reflects most recent scholarship that sees Jewish identity as filled with tension for a much more extended time than originally thought. To be a Jew was to agree to disagree. Some Jewish sects thought one way while other Jews thought another way. In all cases, the true Israel’s chosen identity was at

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<sup>261</sup> Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospel*, 22-24: boundaries between Jews and Christians were not so clear either. In different Gospels, there are traits that bind different Gospels to different groups; traits that bind Matthew to one stream, John to another, and Luke, who is considered by in the past, the “least Jewish Gospel” to another, even God-fearers were considered part of the family; see also Hershel Edelheit, Abraham J. Edelheit, *History of Zionism: A Handbook and Dictionary*, p.3, citing Solomon Zeitlin, *The Jews. Race, Nation, or Religion?* (Philadelphia: Dropsie College Press, 1936): “Judaism classically draws no distinction in its laws between religious and ostensibly non-religious life; Jewish religious tradition does not distinguish clearly between religious, national, racial, or ethnic identities. *Halakha* guides not only religious practices and beliefs, but numerous aspects of day-to-day life. *Halakha* is often translated as “Jewish Law”, although a more literal translation might be “the path” or “the way of walking.”

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, xi-xii.

stake. Even then, movements are more than memberships. They reflect attitudes and modes of thinking that can permeate more than one group. It might be more beneficial to see “the Jews” in Luke-Acts as one of the “two brothers” in the Parable of “Two Sons.” (Acts 15:11:32). Paul is now the older brother who preached the Gospel of repentance and the Lukan community is the younger brother a generation or two later. Paul is for Luke a “new Stephen a great Hellenist Christian leader” whose aims to ground Luke’s Gospel in the faith of the apostle.<sup>263</sup> Paul prior to his call was the enemy of the way.<sup>264</sup> Paul like the “Father” in parable goes in and out from house to house (Acts. 20:20). He is like a Good Shepherd (Lk 15:1-7). His mission for Luke is focused entirely on reconciliation between Jews and Greeks so that the community of believers may continue to grow as was the case with Peter (Acts 1:15, 2:41; 4:4, 21:20 cf. Matt. 10:29). In his farewell speech he warns the elders that wolves will come in among them from within and without,<sup>265</sup>

I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to you and teaching you publicly and *from house to house*,<sup>21</sup> as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus. (Acts 20:20-21)

Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after I have gone, *savage wolves will come in among you*, not sparing the flock.<sup>30</sup> *Some even from your own group* will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. (Acts 9 29-30)

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<sup>263</sup> Matthews, *Luke the Hellenist*, 107: I am following the author’s argument.

<sup>264</sup> Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible*, 308: some prefer the term call or commissioning because Paul did not see himself as converting to another religion. But he certainly saw himself as an enemy of Christ and his disciples.

<sup>265</sup> Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostle*, 593: the wolves are the heretics who pervert the message of Paul.

Luke echoes Paul's mission prior to his call on the road to Damascus: "Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison," (Acts 8:3). In Miletus, he recalls that he has gone from house to house testifying to both Jews and Greeks. Paul calls and commissions Ephesian elders, the way Jesus called and commissioned him (Acts 9:4; 22:1-14). He gives himself as an example to encourage them to be good and faithful leaders. His sermon concludes with a wisdom saying which brings us back to the SP: "In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35). Here in Miletus Luke paints a scene of commissioning and encouragement: "And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). The entire scene finishes with communal prayer as they lead Paul off to board the ship for Jerusalem first and ultimately for Rome. In his letter to the Romans, Paul too encourages his brothers and sisters, "Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another," (Rom. 14:13 cf. Acts 28:38). Paul imitates the Father who spoke to the older Son, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found," (Lk. 15:31). Paul's mission in Luke is to the lost. For Jews it has always been "we and them," but always brothers together in one family, albeit a little unsettled. In Luke-Acts Paul stands in between "two brothers" in tension: Gentiles ("Greeks") and (Hellenist) Christian Jews (Acts 11:19-26). Paul is certainly not against Roman

authorities and more importantly, not against his Jewish opponents. It is most explicitly stated when he defends himself and prays for all before Agrippa, (Acts 26:28-29),

I know that you believe.”<sup>28</sup> Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian (Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι)?” Paul replied, “Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today (οὐ μόνον σὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντα τοὺς ἀκούοντάς μου σήμερον) might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

Paul prays here in chains for all and “today” refers to his entire mission and ministry.<sup>266</sup> He may be alluding to the High Priest Ananias, who accused him before Felix at Caesarea to be a ringleader from the sect of the Nazarenes. There, however Paul pleads ignorance not knowing that he was a High Priest, which indicates that Luke is presenting him as faithful to the law<sup>267</sup> in opposition to Ananias who accuses Paul of creating trouble,

I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness.<sup>5</sup> We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.<sup>6</sup> He even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him.<sup>8</sup> By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him concerning everything of which we accuse him.” (Acts 24:3-8 cf. 21:28)

#### *Paul before the Council*

While Paul was looking intently at the council he said, “Brothers, up to this day I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God.”<sup>2</sup> Then the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near him to strike him on the mouth.<sup>3</sup> At this Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting there to judge me according to the law, and yet in violation of the law you order me to be struck?”<sup>4</sup> Those standing nearby said, “Do you dare to insult God’s high priest?”<sup>5</sup> And Paul said, “I did not realize, brothers, that he was high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a leader of your people.’ (Acts. 23:1-5)

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 689-690: “all my present listeners.”

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 638: Luke takes the opportunity to present Paul as an example of obedience to the Law.

Paul's response is prayer when faced with accusations in imitation of Christ to or with whom he is chained. He sees all Jews and Gentiles (God-fearers) as Children of Israel (cf. Acts 10). Peter in his sermon in Jerusalem calls his listeners to repentance like the rulers of Israel. There he calls them friends (Acts 2:22-24; 3:17-21),

“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

*Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico (Acts 3:17-21 cf. Lk 23:34)*<sup>268</sup>

But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you,<sup>15</sup> and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.<sup>16</sup> And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

<sup>17</sup>“And now, *friends*, I know that you acted in *ignorance*, as did also your rulers.<sup>18</sup> In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer.<sup>19</sup> *Repent* therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,<sup>20</sup> so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus,<sup>21</sup> who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets.

Peter first lays the case against them as he recounts events of the crucifixion and resurrection. Then he calls them to repentance knowing that they acted out of ignorance (cf. Lk 23:39-43). Similarly, when Paul strikes the high priest, he pleads ignorance (Acts 23:1-5). When Peter preaches in Jerusalem, it appears that the resurrection of Jesus is an

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<sup>268</sup> Holmås, *Prayer and Vindication*, 126: “That for which Jesus prayed on the cross, Peter proclaimed in Acts (3:19).” There he was preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem, as did Paul - in Rome; n. 126; to further substantiate such argument he quotes Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*.

issue at stake; the issues that divided Jews varied and affected political and religious spheres as well as messianic expectations.

Ben and Josh, it could be argued, are the Jews. In Acts, “Peter and Paul” are Ben and “the Jews” are Josh. Such distinction is quite applicable to Matthew as well. For this reason Boyarin proposes another set of terms, Christian Jews and Non-Christian Jews.

Boyarin extends Gager’s thesis and blurs the distinctions between internal and external.

McKnight has drawn a similar conclusion, with respect to Matthew’s polemic with Judaism,

Rhetorically potent language is used through the ancient world to erect, fortify, and maintain the boundaries that *distinguish* one religious community from another or to *separate within* the same religious community, the obedient from disobedient.<sup>269</sup>

For this reason the distinction between *internal* and *external* may not be a clear either-or but both-and with respect to religious and ethnic identities. In Matthew’s case it is a polemic against other Jewish sects, particularly the liberal agenda of the Pharisees.<sup>270</sup>

It is also likely and plausible that some members of Luke-Acts would consider Roman centurions to be their enemies considering the fact that the Temple was destroyed and the future of Judaism was uncertain. Luke-Acts is a story of Christian Jews and Non-

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<sup>269</sup> Scot McKnight, "A Loyal Critic: Matthew's Polemic with Judaism in Theological Perspective," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, (ed. C. Evans and D. Hagner; Minneapolis: Fortress 1993), 55-79, 55: It is important to notice that the polemical language is directed not only “outside” but also “inside” toward those who are in the community; as far as polemical language in the Jewish and Greco-Roman world is concerned see, Johnson, Luke T. "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic Author(s)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989): 419-41.

<sup>270</sup> There were basically three movements competing in Matthean context, apocalyptic, Pharisaic and Matthew’s Christian community; Y. Gillihan, "Paul the Pharisee," unpublished article; Jörg Frey, “Paul’s Jewish Identity,” *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. J. Frey et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 285-321; J. Taylor, "Why did Paul Persecute the Church?" *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. G. Stanton and G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 99-120; Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible*, 309: initially, Paul would have been anti-Jesus’ disciples because of the difference with respect to law but soon he received visions that let him to believe that Jesus was the Messiah.



Christian Jews in conflict but there is no question that all are Jews and both are in the family.<sup>271</sup> Boyarin concludes his argument with a bold but insightful statement arguing that Jesus interpreted and was deeply rooted in the OT Narrative. It is that narrative that Paul was initially opposed to but joined soon after. Some decades later the Gospels appropriated Jesus' teaching to their own unique circumstances.<sup>272</sup> The way it might be most appropriate to approach "the Jews" and the "Hypocrites" in the Gospels was best summarized by a contemporary Jew, Hershel Jonah Matt who writes,

Jews and Christians – our situations are somewhat different; our roles and tasks are somewhat different; our styles and modes are somewhat different. But we are covenanted to and by the same God of Israel; our essential teachings are markedly similar; our goals, identical. And the one whose second coming Christians await and whose - first coming – we, Jews await – when he comes – will surely turn out to have the same face for us all.<sup>273</sup>

Hershel Matt's prophetic insight invites us to see Jews (Non-Christian Jews) and Christians (Jews and Gentiles) as brothers and sisters covenanted to the same God. He challenges us to allow differences to exist, particularly with respect to messianic hopes and expectations. His interpretive sensitivity in a post-Shoah milieu is priceless. Even though the exact identity of the "Jews" may continue to elude historians, Hershel Matt opens the door for us to see the conflicts and disputes in Matthew and Luke-Acts as nothing more or less but a desire to be a people of God in ever-changing circumstances of

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<sup>271</sup> Boyarin's thesis is also supported by the fact that in Ancient Judaism identity was always familial and in Jewish thinking it embraces more than the actual family but also extended family. It extends in time and not just space. Abraham lives after he dies in his sons. Jews always lived in relation to others. Di Vito, Robert A. "Old Testament Anthropology and the Construction of Personal Identity"(Catholic Biblical Quarterly 61, 1999): 217–38.

<sup>272</sup> Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels*, 157-160: Boyarin admits that most NT scholars view Gospels as *ex eventu* responses to the resurrection of Jesus.

<sup>273</sup> Quoted by John R. Donahue, "Joined by Word and Covenant: Reflections on a Recent Vatican Document on Jewish Christian Relations," Msgr. George A. Denzer Lecture, Immaculate Conception Seminary Huntington, Long Island, March 16, 2003: unpublished and cited with permission of the author.

salvation history. As we enter the complex and multi-faceted world behind New Testament texts, we are invited to explore and speculate as well as to learn from the past. The grounding principle to guide us is God's mercy and love for friends and enemies.

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