

Exploring Psalm 80 as a Source for Matthew 25:31—46

A Thesis Submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the
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by

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Abstract

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The Sheep and the Goats passage, in Matthew 25:31—46, is the climax of Jesus’ fifth great discourse. A tapestry of rich images and titles are woven into this scene of judgment, in which the ‘Son of Man’ is an enthroned shepherd and king who will judge πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, placing the sheep at the preeminent right and the goats in condemnation at the left. Such an eclectic series of images and titles presents an opportunity for exploring the background sources for this passage.

This thesis argues that Psalm 80 (Psalm 79 LXX) is an important source for the composition of Matthew 25:31—46. Psalm 80 provides a religio—political background for understanding the devastation facing Judaism at the hands of the Romans. Viewing Psalm 80 as a source for Matthew 25:31—46 accounts for the diversity of images found in the Sheep and the Goats and provides further insight into the meaning of the passage. This reading of the Sheep and the Goats contends that the story is not focused on world—ending judgment. The text is describing a cataclysmic shift in which God’s vineyard has been taken from Israel and given to the church and the nations.

This research augments the larger corpus of Matthean studies, contributing to the less—prominent research of Psalm 80 as an influential text for multiple passages in the New Testament and other first century literature. Various studies have proposed the prevalence of Psalm 80, through scriptural ‘echoes’ and ‘allusions’ in the New Testament. This research seeks to solidify these hypotheses in favour of Psalm 80 as an important background text for the New Testament Gospels.

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Abbreviations

AC— *Acta Theologica*
ANE— Ancient Near East
AOTC— Abingdon Old Testament Commentary
AUSS— *Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BBR— *Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BECNT— Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BHS— *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
BJRL— *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BR— *Biblical Research*
BSAC— *Bibliotheca Sacra*
BSPADE— *Bible and Spade*
CBC— Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ— *Central Bible Quarterly*
CDT— *Cuadernos De Teologia*
CTSJ— *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal*
DSD— *Dead Sea Discoveries*
DUJ— *Durham University Journal*
EKK— *Evangelisch—Katholischer Kommentar*
GJCT— *Global Journal of Classical Theology*
GTJ— *Grace Theological Journal*
HAR— *Hebrew Annual Review*
HTR— *Harvard Theological Review*
ICC— International Critical Commentary
IEJ— *Israel Exploration Journal*
IJPCS— *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*
IVP— InterVarsity Press
JANES— *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JBL— *Journal of Biblical Literature*
JDT— *Journal of Dispensational Theology*
JETS— *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JGES— *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*
JQR— *Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSJSup— *Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplements*
JSNT— *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT— *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JTS— *Journal of Theological Studies*
MSJ— *Master's Seminary Journal*
NAC— New American Commentary
NICNT— New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT— New International Commentary on the Old Testament

NJT— Nordic Journal of Theology
NT— Novum Testamentum
NTG— Novum Testamentum Graece
NTS— New Testament Studies
SCS— Septuagint Commentary Series
PNTC— Pillar New Testament Commentary
RQ— Restoration Quarterly
RRR— Reformation and Renaissance Review
SBL— Society of Biblical Literature
SJT— Scottish Journal of Theology
STR— Southeastern Theological Review
StTh— Studia Theologica
TB— Tyndale Bulletin
ThStK— Theologische Studien und Kritiken
TOTC— Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
TS— Theological Studies
TSR— Trinity Seminary Review
UBS— United Bible Societies
VC— Vigiliae Christianae
VT— Vetus Testamentum
WBC— Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ— Westminster Theological Journal

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Chapter One

The Sheep and the Goats: Method, History of Research and Date of Text

Purpose of Research

Jesus' fifth and final discourse in the Gospel of Matthew concludes with the Sheep and the Goats in 25:31—46. The Sheep and the Goats is part of the Olivet Discourse which is classically intertwined with the Son of Man vision of Daniel 7. The discourse is commonly referred to as eschatological or apocalyptic, while scholars acknowledge that the fall of the temple in 70 CE is the early the subject of the discourse in chapter 24.¹

Matthew 25:31—46 has been the source of much debate in determining how this scene of judgment correlates to other visions of 'the end'. Additionally, there are several interpretative questions regarding the text's diverse series of images: Who are πάντα τὰ ἔθνη? Why are sheep a symbol of righteousness and goats a symbol of wickedness? When will this judgment take place? Who are τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων? Why are acts of charity toward τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων the criteria for judgment?²

Jesus is also identified by four distinct titles in the Sheep and the Goats, which may lead interpreters to question why these titles and symbols are all used to describe the same figure within a span of 16 verses. While the term Son of Man is universally acknowledged to be drawn from Daniel 7, Jesus is subsequently identified in order as a shepherd (ποιμὴν), King (βασιλεὺς)

¹ D. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 568—569; J. MacArthur, *Matthew 24—28*, MNTC (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 2—9; J. Broadus, *Commentary on Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990), 479; C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 350—352; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 593—594; R. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 476; C. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 562, 584—586; W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 326—327; D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 686—687.

² Greek Texts taken from the *Novum Testamentum Graece* 28.

and Lord (κύριος). What is the source or sources for all of these titles? Are they representative of Davidic Messiahship? Are they all interconnected thematically or are they a Matthean amalgam?

This thesis will propose a new source text behind the Sheep and the Goats, which provides new possibilities for interpreting the passage. It will set forth the hypothesis that Psalm 80 was one of the scriptural sources used to craft the Sheep and the Goats. Arguments will be given that the combination of titles used to describe Jesus, as well as the criteria of judgment, can be explained if Psalm 80 is one of the essential source texts used in the creation of the Sheep and the Goats. Additionally, it will be argued that the purpose of Matthew 25:31—46 was not to describe the end of the space—time continuum, rather it was to build on the theme of judgment against Israel when her temple fell.

To build the case for this thesis effectively, several issues pertaining to the history of the Sheep and the Goats, the history of Psalm 80 as a source text and the reading of Psalm 80 themes in Matthew will all be necessary. Chapter one will introduce the methodology, history of research, and arguments for Matthew's appropriate date of composition. Chapter two will examine matters pertaining to apocalypticism and eschatology in order to determine the proper classification of this Matthew passage. Chapter three will briefly examine the interpretation of Psalm 80 before considering its history of use in both New Testament and non—biblical texts. Chapter four will demonstrate the thirteen points of textual commonality between Psalm 80 and Matthew 25:31—46 and how these common points are used between the texts. Chapter five will provide a commentary on Matthew to further the case for reading echoes of Psalm 80 in Matthew. Chapter six will provide a brief conclusion and summarize the application of this new reading.

Methodology

The work of Dodd is most directly responsible for the rise of scholarly interest in Psalm 80 as an influential text in the New Testament. As Dodd wrote concerning Psalm 80,

There is here no passage expressly quoted in the New Testament, but the figure of the Vine, which is also the Son of Man and the Man of God's right hand, combines ideas which in the New Testament are so organically united in the person of Christ that it is impossible to suppose the parallel accidental.³

Dodd's assessment is accurate in that no scholar who has explicated the use of Psalm 80 in the New Testament has argued for direct quotation.⁴

Without a definitive quotation from Psalm 80 being used by any New Testament author, the methodology for this research will argue for Psalm 80's direct influence by means of a scriptural 'echo'. In his influential work on the letters of Paul, Hays outlines a series of seven tests one may conduct for the purpose of hearing intertextual echoes.⁵ The first test is availability: was the source of the echo available to the author and original readers? The second is volume: is there an explicit repetition or syntactical pattern between the two texts? Third is recurrence: does the author cite or allude to the scriptural passage elsewhere? The fourth test is thematic coherence: how well does the echo fit into the line of argument being developed. Fifth is historical plausibility: could the author have intended the alleged meaning effect? The sixth test is history of interpretation: have others in either the critical or pre—critical era heard the proposed echo? The last test is satisfaction: 'With or without clear confirmation from the other criteria...does the proposed reading make sense?'⁶

³ C. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet & Co, 1953), 101.

⁴ This will be examined at length in chapter three through five.

⁵ R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29.

⁶ R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 29—31.

Availability is an obvious criterion as an author cannot allude to or echo a text that did not exist or was not available. Volume is understandably vague as authorial styles differ, making it difficult to limit every author to one percentage of volume that qualifies as an echo. One author may choose to adapt the echo into their linguistic style more than another. This criterion is subjective to the interpreter, however, considering volume in tandem with recurrence provides additional data to minimise the subjectivity of how much volume is enough to be considered an echo. Recurrence creates a standard that helps distinguish a one—time allusion from an echo. An author may allude to a passage on a single occasion, while passages echoed by an author will occur more than once.

Thematic coherence is the weakest point of Hays' methodology when considering the diverse ways New Testament authors employed Old Testament passages. Paul, for example, uses scripture allegorically as when he compares the Sinai covenant with the slave Hagar, while Galatians are compared to Isaac as children of the promise.⁷ The lineage of Isaac led to the Sinai covenant, but Paul has re—crafted this Old Testament narrative to compare the lineage of Hagar to the Sinai covenant and the Torah, which is the path of bondage. Similarly, Matthew speaks of Jesus fulfilling scripture by coming out of Egypt as described in Hosea 11. This Hosea passage describes the exodus and Israel's impending fate of being subject to Assyria (11:5).

Both Paul and Matthew do more than echo the Old Testament precursor texts in these examples, while taking liberties with the themes. The degree of thematic coherence must be deduced on a case by case basis, but similar to criterion of volume, the measure of coherence is subjective. One may not find Paul's use of Hagar and Isaac thematically coherent, though he

⁷ Galatians 3:21—31.

irrefutably used that narrative to craft his point. Therefore, interpreters are prone to see thematic coherence differently amongst various proposed echoes.

Historical plausibility is important to prevent historical anachronisms, though it can also be imperiled by scholarly presuppositions. Apocalyptic and eschatological literature is subject to a variety of presuppositions that may come into conflict with proposed echoes that do not fit a particular paradigm.⁸ Thus the criterion is agreeable, so long as the historical plausibility is the true issue and not the scholar's bias. History of interpretation is also valuable, though in research such as this, the original scholarly contribution is the proposed echo, which will have no history of interpretation. Therefore, a proposed history of echoes and allusions of the precursor text in other passages may serve to validate the potential echo.

Making sense of the echo will be subject to the same issues as thematic coherence when considering the creative exegesis of New Testament authors. Taking Hays' method as a cohesive whole is valuable for testing echoes while acknowledging potential ambiguities in the criteria. Hays' echo test will be used to help determine the validity of the proposed Psalm 80 echo, though it will not be treated as the only method.

According to Hays, Matthew's use of the Old Testament involves his distinct proof-text 'fulfillment' introduction, which he uses as a rubric on ten occasions.⁹ Three other Old Testament quotations (2:5—6, 3:3, and 13:14—15) bear close affinity to the 'fulfillment' formula, while the words of Jesus in the Gethsemane narrative (26:54, 26:56) also fulfill the prophets, though no specific source quotation is offered. 'Cumulatively, these passages frame

⁸ This will be discussed at length in chapter two and throughout the thesis.

⁹ R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 107. Quotation formulas found in 1:22—23, 2:15, 2:17—18, 4:14—16, 8:17, 12:17—21, 13:35, 21:4—5, 27:9.

Israel's Scripture as a *predictive* text pointing to the events in the life of Jesus'.¹⁰ Half of the significant hermeneutical directives are placed before the baptism, presenting Israel's history as the figurative design pointing to Jesus' life.¹¹ Hays also counts at least sixty explicit Old Testament quotations in Matthew, meaning the fulfillment formula constitutes only one—fifth of the quotations.¹² There are also hundreds of indirect Old Testament allusions in Matthew as he devised a narration that re—narrates the story of Israel.¹³

Hays is correct that many of Matthew's hermeneutical directives occur early in the text. However, there is more to the fulfillment and re—narration than pointing to the life of Jesus. Matthew presents a Jesus who walks the path Israel should have walked, leading to the moment when their Messiah is presented before them, and ultimately rejected. This narrative development will ultimately result in the question: who are God's chosen people?¹⁴

Hays' scholarship provides seminal research into hearing echoes in scripture, which has inspired a variety of literature on the subject since its publication. Arguments will be made in chapter five that Psalm 80 is an echo found in the Sheep and the Goats that passes six of Hays' seven tests. History of interpretation is the only criteria not met, but the original scholarship in this thesis is adding Psalm 80 to that history of interpretation. Hays' contribution on the subject has been invaluable, though it need not be the only standard for proposing scriptural echoes. Hays' work is a valuable resource and one used to shape the argument for Psalm 80's influence

¹⁰ R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 107.

¹¹ R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 108.

¹² R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 109.

¹³ R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 109.

¹⁴ This question is discussed at length in chapters four and five.

on the Sheep and the Goats in this thesis. The echoed use of Psalm 80 is an indirect quotation, which is echoed as part of Matthew's efforts to re—narrate the story of Israel in the life of Jesus.

Matthew's use of Psalm 80 is not presented as a matter of the scriptural fulfillment formula ἵνα πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν as used throughout the narrative.¹⁵ The proposed use of Psalm 80 is not a matter of messianic prophecy being fulfilled but a dialogue between the gospel writer and his scriptures. Such a concept is similar to Watson's assessment of Pauline hermeneutics,

It follows that, for Paul, what a prophet knows or says will differ from what the apostle knows or says. In this acknowledged difference lies the possibility of dialogue between the apostle and the prophet. The prophet is not simply a cipher for the apostle. Prophetic discourse is one thing, apostolic discourse is another, and, if the latter includes interpretation of the former, it does so in a way as to respect its specificity and integrity.¹⁶

A similar principle is being proposed here of a dialogue between Matthew and Psalm 80: it can be viewed as both scriptural and prophetic dialogue. In Matthew 13:35 the author cites Psalm 78 as a prophetic fulfillment of Jesus' activities, declaring Asaph who is the credited author of Psalms 78 and 80, the status of prophet. This citation demonstrates both Matthew's ability to dialogue with the psalmist and the importance that can be granted to a specific psalm.

Contrary to Lunn's method of using verbal correspondences to establish biblical grounds for typology, Psalm 80 does not foreshadow the events of the first century and no typology is to be found.¹⁷ Matthew instead interacts with a text written about the 8th century BCE fall of Israel that had a new meaning in his own day.

Additionally, this methodology qualifies as an echo meeting more rigid criteria than an allusion. For this research an allusion can be defined as a reference to scripture that has a more

¹⁵ See Mt. 1:22, 2:5, 2:17, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 27:9.

¹⁶ F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 2d ed. (New York: T&T Clark Intl, 2016), 20.

¹⁷ N. Lunn, 'Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts: Foundations of a Biblical Type', *JETS* 55:1 (2012): 30.

subordinated role in the shaping of the passage being interacted with. For example, an allusion need not meet any standards of volume, recurrence or thematic coherence. The work of Johnston characterizes allusions by six criteria,

An allusion is a subtle reference by an author or speaker to a statement, theme, or motif from another source... Successful allusions are characterized by six elements. (1) The author must have a literary or cultural tradition from which to derive source material. (2) The audience, or at least a portion of it, must be aware of the source material so that it can recognize the allusion made by the author. (3) The author must 'echo' enough familiar elements from the source material for the audience to pick up on, that is, the allusion must contain a 'signal' that 'points' to the source material. (4) The allusion must 'activate' the source material in a way that creates some kind of rhetorical effect. (5) The alluding text must make a subtle change in meaning or referent from the source material to create some kind of rhetorical effect. (6) The allusion must be subtle enough to surprise an unsuspecting audience—if it is too explicit, it will lose its rhetorical impact (just as a joke falls flat if the punch line is too obvious).¹⁸

Johnston's definition of an allusion is thorough and reasonable, but it characterizes the fine line between echoes and allusions. For the present research, a separation of echoes from allusions will be based upon three key elements. An echo will need to have a larger presence in the book or author's writing than a single passage or story. Several points of common language with the cited source material should be evident to hear the echo of the original passage reverberate in the new text. Lastly, the meaning of the passage using the echo will be significantly shaped by the original text being echoed. In the present case, the meaning of the Sheep and the Goats is inexorably tied to Psalm 80; the two are not exclusive.

For example, Orlund has argued for an allusion between Luke 24:31 and Genesis 3:7 on the grounds of linguistic similarities, narrative parallels, the interpretative influence of Genesis 3 on Luke 24, and the redemptive—historical link.¹⁹ According to his analysis the entire story of

¹⁸ G. Johnston, 'Nahum's Rhetorical Allusions to the Neo—Assyrian Lion Motif', *BSAC* 158:631 (2001): 287—288.

¹⁹ D. Orlund, 'And Their Eyes Were Opened, And They Knew: An Inter—Canonical Note on Luke 24:31', *JETS* 53:4 (2010): 723—726.

the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is shaped by the Genesis 3 narrative in a manner that demonstrates a correspondence between the ‘eye opening’ moments in both narratives.²⁰ Though Orlund’s research will not be critiqued point by point, in the methodology of this thesis Orlund’s work would be qualified as an allusion and not an echo. The basis for this classification is that Genesis 3 has no recurrence in his argument beyond Luke 24, and the verbal linkages are minimal. Should the points he has argued be deemed valid, the present methodology would accurately qualify his work as an allusion, which is in fact what he has argued.

Lunn has proposed an intertextual echo between the narrative of the ark of the covenant and John 19:38—20:18, specifically in 20:11 where he argues the angels sitting on either side of the missing body echoes the cherubim on the two sides of the ark.²¹ Again, without critiquing Lunn’s arguments point by point with regard to the accuracy of his synopsis, his thesis would qualify, at best, as an allusion in the present methodology. The verbal similarities he notes are minimal, the narrative has not been seriously shaped by the ark narrative and the common features he describes are from a broad cross—section of ark stories throughout Exodus.²² Based on the arguments he puts forward the ark narrative does not share many linguistic characteristics, it does not shape the interpretation of John 20 and has no larger impact on the narrative of John beyond chapter 20.

In conclusion, the absence of a direct quotation leaves the possibility of a New Testament author interacting with his scriptures through echoes and allusions. Based the standards being used here, an echo will have an impact on Matthew’s text beyond a single passage, will share

²⁰ D. Orlund, ‘And Their Eyes Were Opened, And They Knew: An Inter—Canonical Note on Luke 24:31’, 725.

²¹ N. Lunn, ‘Jesus, The Ark, And the Day of Atonement: Intertextual Echoes in John 19:38—20:18’, *JETS* 52:4 (2009): 732—733.

²² N. Lunn, ‘Jesus, The Ark, And the Day of Atonement: Intertextual Echoes in John 19:38—20:18’, 732—734.

stronger linguistic traits than an allusion and will be a key element in interpreting the inter—canonical dialogue. Allusions are a subtler recurrence to the New Testament author’s scriptural texts. Psalm 80 transcends the status of allusion; rather it echoes throughout Matthew’s narrative into the Sheep and the Goats.²³

History of Research

The history of research for the Sheep and the Goats that follows will present a diverse sample of opinions and conclusions beginning with a micro—summation of the eighteenth century. There is a copious amount of literature on this subject, thus each author examined has been chosen to represent the diverse views found in the literature and their time period.

*Eighteenth Century Scholarship*²⁴

A common theme that developed in the research consulted from this period is the importance these authors place on synthesizing the Sheep and the Goats with other passages of scripture. For example, Henry and Burkitt quickly dismiss any possibility that charitable works merit salvation in order to retain the integrity of their understanding of salvation through faith.²⁵

Rather, they become signs of faith despite this language being nowhere found in the text. Calmet

²³ This will be discussed in chapter five.

²⁴ Other Eighteenth Century scholars who addressed this topic: W. Jenks, ed., *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Matthew—John* (Brattleboro: Fessenden & Co., 1834) 264—267 contains the observations of 18th century scholar Thomas Scott; J. Bengels, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Ludwigsberg: Drud und Verlag, 1742), 179—181.; I. Brastberger, *Evangelische Zeugnisse der Warhheit* (Stuttgart: Mantler, 1758), 839—856.

²⁵ M. Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1750—1751; W. Burkitt, *Commentary on Matthew 25:31—46* (Accessed from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/wbc/view.cgi?bk=39&ch=25>, published from 1700—1703), verses 31—35. Citations will include verse numbers for ease of viewing as opposed to page numbers.

creates a convoluted four stage structure of judgment based on various passages of scripture, though such a hierarchy of judgment is not found in the text.²⁶

Gray identifies one unique eighteenth century author, English Protestant John Heylyn, who is the only author of the 18th century to interpret πάντα τὰ ἔθνη as non—Christians.²⁷ Comparatively, Heylyn translates ἔθνῶν in 10:5 as ‘Gentiles’ and in 28:19 he translates the same πάντα τὰ ἔθνη as ‘all nations’.²⁸ Identifying individual interpretative elements of the passage has continued since the eighteenth century, but critical engagement of the Sheep and the Goats and the need to establish a systematic theology were essential features of this pre—critical era.

Nineteenth—Century Scholarship²⁹

Porteus equates the Sheep and the Goats with the judgment seat of Christ where all humanity will be ‘divided into two great classes, the wicked and the good, those who are punished, and those who are rewarded.’³⁰ Religious neutrality is not an option as the lukewarm may not reject the gospel, though they care little about it and will not be rewarded kindly.³¹ There are different mansions for the righteous and the wicked with different degrees of punishment and reward. Christ’s examination not only concerns exemption from crimes, but

²⁶ A. Calmet, *Commentaire Litteral Sur Tous Les Livres De L’Ancien Et Du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Chez Pierre Emery, 1715), 549—550.

²⁷ S. Gray, *The Least of My Brothers Matthew 25:31—46: A History of Interpretation* (Atlanta: SBL, 1989), 241.

²⁸ J. Heylyn, *Theological Lectures at Westminster—Abbey with an Interpretation of the Four Gospels* (London: The Strand, 1749), 172, 228.

²⁹ Other works from this period: F. Knecht, *A Practical Commentary on Holy Scripture, Vol. 2* (B. Herdder: St. Louis, 1894), 291—295; J. Lange, *Das Evangelium Nach Matthaus* (Bielerfeld: Berlag von Belhagen, 1857), 361—369; C. Simeon, *Matthew: Horae Homileticae* (Accessed from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/shh/view.cgi?bk=39&ch=25>, 1832); J. Stow, *Thoughts on the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God* (Greenwich: Richardson, 1846), 599—609; J. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* (Accessed from <http://www.christnotes.org/commentary.php?com=drby&b=40&c=25>, Written during 19th century); E. Latch, *A Review of the Holy Bible* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1884), 379—418; T. Whittemore, *Notes and Illustrations of the Parables of the New Testament* (Boston: Whittemore, 1832), 223—263. J. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: Matthew* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1870).

³⁰ B. Porteus, *Lectures on the Gospel of St. Matthew* (London: T. Cadell and W.D. Davies, 1815), 253.

³¹ B. Porteus, *Lectures*, 253—254.

also performance of good actions that are rooted in ‘substantial and genuine Christian virtues...’³²

Porteus shows less concern with interpreting the passage through the lens of salvation by grace theology as his predecessors. Though he acknowledges the Sheep and the Goats is not an exhaustive declaration of the terms of salvation, he emphasises the judgment of works in a way the previously reviewed authors did not. Porteus’ statement that charity is representative of other virtues is well stated without dismissing the value of those works to accommodate the Protestant concern with grace. However, his analysis strangely states that the omission of the blood of Christ results from the crucifixion not yet occurring in the text. While Christ may not have been crucified yet, it is clear the judgment takes place at a time beyond the crucifixion. Whether this was Porteus’ attempt to manifest grace in the passage or to confront what he considered the scandal of not incorporating the blood of Christ in the judgment, it is a curious conclusion.

Clarke writes of the Sheep and the Goats, ‘This must be understood of Christ’s coming at the last day, to judge mankind: though the preceding part of the chapter may be applied also to the destruction of Jerusalem.’³³ Many manuscripts Clarke deems excellent omit the word ‘holy’ in reference to the angels. Clarke welcomes the evidence noting also the possible existence of evil angels with the Son of Man who will take the goats as their prey. The nations gathered represent the entire Gentile world, with the Jews ‘necessarily included, but they were spoken of in a particular manner, in the preceding chapter.’³⁴ Drawing from Virgil’s *Eclogues*, Clarke deduces that sheep and goats were not penned or housed together but may feed in the same

³² B. Porteus, *Lectures*, 254.

³³ A. Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (New York: Waugh & Mason, 1834), 232.

³⁴ A. Clarke, *The New Testament*, 232.

pasture. Though joint feeding was possible, the two groups remained in distinct flocks, and in *Ecologues VII* they were only driven together for a music contest.³⁵

Clarke provides a full and well—structured treatment as to why sheep are holy and goats are not in the Sheep and the Goats. The use of extra—biblical materials to ascertain an understanding of a first century CE perspective on sheep and goats advances the discussion, contrasting with other authors of this period who offer no compelling thoughts on the subject. He is also correct to question the notion of temporary punishment: the common language between the assigned destinies makes it linguistically impossible to claim that one is eternal and one is temporary. One peculiar aspect of Clarke’s writing, that is nowhere hinted at in the passage, is the possibility of evil angels taking goats as their prey. Otherwise his thoughts are balanced and show a focus on the internal structure of the passage.

Keil classifies the Sheep and the Goats as the answer to the disciples’ question about the Son of Man’s return in 24:3.³⁶ The separation of faithful disciples from unfaithful disciples already received significant attention in the parables of 24:36 through 25:30. However, it is not these parables that link the Sheep and the Goats to the description of the judgment, rather it is 24:30f, which announces the parousia of the Son of Man with the developing theme of vigilance in the parables.³⁷ Keil states that the description of the court—setting, ‘depends on the explanation of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.’³⁸ The use of language may only designate those nations who will

³⁵ A. Clarke, *The New Testament*, 232.

³⁶ C. Keil, *Commentary über das Evangelium des Matthäus* (Leipzig: Dorrfling und Franke, 1877), 496.

³⁷ C. Keil, *Commentary über das Evangelium*, 496.

³⁸ C. Keil, *Commentary über das Evangelium*, 496—497. ‘hängt von der Erklärung des πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.’

dwell upon the earth at the return of Christ as he separates the heathen from the believer.³⁹

Following this event would be the judgment of all humanity without exception.

Keil's conclusion that the image of judgment in the Sheep and the Goats is irreconcilable with the larger corpus of New Testament judgment passages avoids the untenable difficulties presented by Calmet in his convoluted picture of judgment. Keil does not appear to consider the potential that the Sheep and the Goats is not intended as an instruction manual for the final judgment but an inter—textual dialogue between authors of different eras. Reading John 3:18 and the Sheep and the Goats with the strictest of literalism creates a tension that only increases when incorporating a passage like Revelation 20 into a systematic theology. However, Keil's unwillingness to dismiss the value of works in the passage, which many authors are prone to do, indicates a positive interpretative direction.

Mansel does not see a contrast in subjects between the previous parables and the Sheep and the Goats due to the presence of Ὅταν δὲ (25:31); rather the previous parables exhort diligence in light of the coming judgment.⁴⁰ 'It is hardly possible to regard this description otherwise than referring to the final coming of Christ to judge the world.'⁴¹ The text shifts at 24:36 from the destruction of Jerusalem to focus exclusively on judgment, with Jerusalem serving as a foreshadowing of world judgment. All nations signify all humanity since a judgment of non—Christians is inconsistent with verse 34, and a judgment of Christians is too narrow for the comprehensive language. Ezekiel 34:17 resembles the imagery of the sheep and the goats but with a variance on applications. Both passages represent God's people as sheep

³⁹ C. Keil, *Commentary über das Evangelium*, 497.

⁴⁰ H. Mansel, F.C. Cook ed., *The Holy Bible According to the Authorized Version A.D. 1611 with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1878), 152.

⁴¹ H. Mansel, *The Holy Bible*, 152.

and Christ as the shepherd. ‘The contrast between sheep and kids probably has no reference to the lascivious nature of the goat, but merely its smaller value in the eye of the shepherd.’⁴²

The preparation of the kingdom in verse 34 from the foundation of the world applies only to the sheep and not the goats, as the predestination of God is never said to be applied to the wicked. The sanctified are called Christ’s brethren and the use of ‘them’ denotes the king pointing to the general body on his right.⁴³ While doubts exist about the meaning of the word αἰώνιον, the two uses of this term apply to life in the same way they apply to death. Lastly, Mansel notes that the language of verse 46 ‘nearly corresponds to the LXX rendering of Daniel Xii 2...’⁴⁴

Mansel recognises the potential issue of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Sheep and the Goats being viewed in the same general timeframe. Since the discourse begins with Jesus talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, an interrupted chronological narrative through the discourse would lead to the conclusion Jesus did not return for judgment when he said he would. Mansel reconciles this difficulty by making 24:36 the point in the text when the narrative shifts away from Jerusalem, though he offers no compelling reason for how this solves the problem. Matthew 24:29—31 uses enough common language with the Sheep and the Goats to conclude both sections of the discourse are describing the same event. If the narrative does not shift away from Jerusalem until 24:36 then the problem of chronology remains intact.

⁴² H. Mansel, *The Holy Bible*, 152.

⁴³ H. Mansel, *The Holy Bible*, 152—153.

⁴⁴ H. Mansel, *The Holy Bible*, 153.

Evaluation

Many commentators from this period continued in the same trend of reconciling this image of judgment with other passages from the New Testament, though the rise of critical scholarship began to question these presuppositions. Authors also continued to focus on the purpose of the image of sheep and goats, which remains constant through the modern era. A difference emerging in the Nineteenth Century was the willingness of authors to explore extra-biblical literature, such as Rabbinic writings and the *Eccologues*, for a deeper understanding of the Sheep and the Goats. Along this same thread, the consistency of scholars appealing to Ezekiel 34 as the main source for the sheep and goat imagery became a common feature of the literature that is still in effect.

Twentieth Century and Twenty First Century Scholarship⁴⁵

This era has produced the most abundant and diverse scholarship on the Sheep and the Goats, including an increasing variety of conservative and critical interpretations. The majority of the authors summarized below represent key dialogue partners in this research that will be interacted with throughout the thesis, particularly in chapter five. To avoid repetition of interaction, there will be a brief summation of several works on the Sheep and the Goats below and critical interaction will be reserved until the ‘Evaluation’ section at the end of the period in question. These key authors will be treated with greater detail later in the research.

⁴⁵ Other consulted works from this century: R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931), 123—124; G. Hebert, ‘The Problem of the Gospel According to Matthew’, *SJT* 14:4 (1961): 403—413; R. Brandle, ‘Jean Chrysostome— L’Importance De Matth. 25:31—46 Pour Son Ethique’, *VC* 31 (1977): 47—52; D. Via, ‘Ethical Responsibility and Human Wholeness in Matthew 25:31—46’, *HTR* 80:1 (1987): 79—100; M. Hutter, ‘Mt. 25:31—46 in der Deutung Manis’, *NT XXXIII*, no. 3 (1991): 276—282; A. Aarde, ‘Jesus’ Mission to All of Israel Emplotted in Matthew’s Story’, *Neotestamentica* 41:2 (2007): 1—20; S. Grindheim, ‘Ignorance is Bliss: Attitudinal Aspects of the Judgment according to Works in Matthew 25:31—46’, *NT* 50 (2008): 313—331; H. Zyl, ‘Discernment as ‘Not Knowing’ and ‘Knowing’: A Perspective from Matthew 25:31—46’, *AT* 17 (2013): 110—131.

Breen identifies the Sheep and the Goats as a parable of judgment in line with previous parables, which exhorted followers to watchfulness leading to the ‘terrible ordeal of judgment.’⁴⁶ The world judge is painted in stark contrast with the humility of his earthly dwelling as he is now seen in glory with all of his angels. The Sheep and the Goats employs figures of speech that are not to be taken literally as the sheep and goats were part of the same flock in ancient Near Eastern culture, but the sheep were considered more valuable. Sheep are emblematic of Christian qualities such as innocence and purity, whereas the goats operate on coarser instincts.⁴⁷

The tradition of this judgment taking place in the valley of Jehoshaphat rests on an erroneous interpretation of Joel 3:12. Joel is intended to be figurative as the name Jehoshaphat means ‘The Lord Judges’, presenting a vivid picture of judgment in symbolic vision.⁴⁸ The judgment cannot be assigned to a specific site as, in the resurrection, human bodies will not be dependent on a place as in mortal life. Similarly, the colloquy between Christ and the judged will be an intellectual event operating on a higher state of being as are all acts of judgment.⁴⁹ The standard of judgment is not merely throwing a large sum of money into a charity as many wicked men do such things. Rather, the action of mercy described comes from a heart made tender and merciful through the power of religion.⁵⁰ ‘The least’ are the poor, unknown and ignorant of the world that men pass by without honour, so the Lord’s words here concerning their treatment must be taken literally.⁵¹

⁴⁶ A. Breen, *A Harmonized Exposition of the Four Gospels* (Rochester: John P. Smith Printing, 1908), 79.

⁴⁷ A. Breen, *A Harmonized Exposition*, 81.

⁴⁸ A. Breen, *A Harmonized Exposition*, 81—82.

⁴⁹ A. Breen, *A Harmonized Exposition*, 82.

⁵⁰ A. Breen, *A Harmonized Exposition*, 83.

⁵¹ A. Breen, *A Harmonized Exposition*, 84.

Luccock's study of the parables of Jesus draws attention to the two—fold division made by the Son of Man in a world of substantial social classifications.⁵² The divisions of Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, rich and poor, are completely bypassed as judgment is based on a person's relationship to Jesus.⁵³ Luccock associates the divine estimate of goodness in the Sheep and the Goats with Isaiah 55:8—9 where Yahweh distinguishes his ways from humanity's ways. His standards of righteousness are in character with his being both Son of God and Son of Man.⁵⁴ The parable does not replace religion with philanthropy, nor is a generous person beyond the need for religion. Religion and conduct are joined as service to humanity is service to God. However, the parable places the highest importance on religion and relationship to Christ.⁵⁵

Box and Slater state that the implication here is a resurrection and judgment that comprises the whole human race and is parallel to Daniel 7:2, the *Similitudes* 51:1 and 4 *Ezra* 7:32.⁵⁶ The imagery of right and left reflects the ancient concept of honour and disgrace, which played an important part in some gnostic literature such as *The Apocalypse of Abraham*. The preparation of the kingdom is a common apocalyptic idea that also emphasises predestination, while acts of kindness reflect the very best of Jewish thought as seen in Isaiah 53:7, Job 22:7 and Ezekiel 18:7.⁵⁷ The actions of the righteous, 'it is to be noticed, are prompted by motives of the widest humanity.'⁵⁸ The unique feature of the Heavenly Son of Man is his combination of

⁵² H. Luccock, *Studies in the Parables of Jesus* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1917), 124.

⁵³ H. Luccock, *Studies in the Parables*, 124.

⁵⁴ H. Luccock, *Studies in the Parables*, 125.

⁵⁵ H. Luccock, *Studies in the Parables*, 129.

⁵⁶ G. Box and W. Slater, *St. Matthew: The Century Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1922), 332.

⁵⁷ G. Box and W. Slater, *St. Matthew: The Century Bible*, 332—333.

⁵⁸ G. Box and W. Slater, *St. Matthew: The Century Bible*, 333.

glorious attributes and human characteristics of love and sympathy with humanity, which establishes the significance of Jesus as a Heavenly Messiah.⁵⁹

Murry also classifies the Sheep and the Goats as a parable, stating it was ‘fitly, the last, for it is the greatest of all.’⁶⁰ The parable blends Jesus’ roles as the Son of God, Messiah, judge and the great lover of humanity into one. As the great judge he judges people ‘by the love they have shown, not to himself, not to his chosen, but to any man. For all men were his brothers.’⁶¹ The Sheep and the Goats dissolves the paradox of Jesus’ destiny as he was true to all on the brink of his sacrifice. With a single act of love, people pass the judgment while the loveless are eternally damned.⁶²

Michaels focuses on two important features of the Sheep and the Goats: the eschatological setting and Jesus’ use of ‘the least of these my brethren.’⁶³ While the eschatological imagery is a continuation of Matthew 24:30f, the latter issue becomes the focus of Michaels’ article. The Sheep and the Goats differentiates two groups of the saved: the least and the sheep.⁶⁴ The key question for Michaels is that if the poor are the general poor of the world, the view he says is held by most, then how are they differentiated from πάντα τὰ ἔθνη? However, if the least are the Christian community, the sheep that inherit the kingdom would be non—Christians who can attain the kingdom of God based on their deeds.

⁵⁹ G. Box and W. Slater, *St. Matthew: The Century Bible*, 333.

⁶⁰ J. Murry, *Jesus: Man of Genius* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1926), 320.

⁶¹ J. Murry, *Jesus: Man of Genius*, 320.

⁶² J. Murry, *Jesus: Man of Genius*, 321.

⁶³ J. Michaels, ‘Apostolic Hardships and Righteous Gentiles: A Study of Matthew 25:31—46’, *JBL* 84:1 (1965): 27.

⁶⁴ J. Michaels, ‘Apostolic’, 27.

There is a clear kinship between the Sheep and the Goats and Matthew 10:40—42 in reference to the ‘little ones’ and their parallel structure at the end of discourses in Matthew.⁶⁵ Both passages associate Jesus with a specific group (little ones or the least) and Matthew 10 also distinguishes two groups of the redeemed (the least/disciples and the one who receives them). Based on these parallels it can be deduced that the least are Jesus’ twelve disciples, while the righteous are those who receive the messengers with love and hospitality. The phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is the same in the Sheep and the Goats as it is in Matthew 24:14 and 28:19, and it appears to presuppose the completion of the world mission.⁶⁶ Those being judged are those to whom the gospel has been proclaimed and have responded with belief and acts of charity. There is no mention of those who have not heard the gospel.⁶⁷

The whole discourse emphasises the need for watchfulness and preparation, and the parable of the faithful and wise servant (Matthew 24:45—51) may have an emphasis on leaders and ministers over congregations.⁶⁸ The parable of the Ten Virgins is purely general, but the parable of the Talents has several features in common with Matthew 24:45—51 as they both specifically address servants. Thus, if these preceding parables are addressed to leaders and their congregations, it would correspond that the Sheep and the Goats is about the responsibility of communities to their leaders. The least would be preachers and teachers while the nations are those who hear the word.⁶⁹ Parallels to these ideas can be found in *2 Clement* 17:3 and 2 Corinthians 11:23—29.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ J. Michaels, ‘Apostolic’, 27—28.

⁶⁶ J. Michaels, ‘Apostolic’, 28.

⁶⁷ J. Michaels, ‘Apostolic’, 29.

⁶⁸ J. Michaels, ‘Apostolic’, 29.

⁶⁹ J. Michaels, ‘Apostolic’, 30.

⁷⁰ J. Michaels, ‘Apostolic’, 33.

Walvoord notes that conservative expositors generally agree the Sheep and the Goats deals with a final judgment but have substantial disagreements on its place in the whole of the prophetic plan.⁷¹ Amillennialists believe the second coming ushers in the eternal state and this judgment is the judgment of all men.⁷² Premillenarians also tend to see this as universal judgment comparable to Revelation 20:11—15 as do historical—critical authors.⁷³ However, there are several important details to consider in establishing a correct exegesis of the passage according to his argument.

Walvoord draws attention to the fact that no mention of resurrection or heaven appears. Further consideration must be given to Ezekiel 20:34—38, where Israel has its own distinct judgment, and the Sheep and the Goats would include Gentiles as opposed to the Jewish nation. A proper interpretation of the passage through strict exegesis concludes that this judgment deals with those Gentiles still on earth after the tribulation awaiting judgment prior to the millennial kingdom.⁷⁴ The term ἔθνη is characteristically used of Gentiles, as distinct from Jews, meaning that Gentiles are judged on the basis of their treatment of the least, which are the Jews, during the period of satanic hatred toward Jews amidst the tribulation.⁷⁵ This explanation erases the interpretative problems of a final judgment, as well as the issue of salvation by works. These acts of kindness towards the Jews are an example of faith producing action that evinces belief in Christ.⁷⁶

⁷¹ J. Walvoord, 'Christ's Olivet Discourse on the End of the Age Part VII: The Judgment of the Nations', *BSAC* 129:516 (1972): 308.

⁷² J. Walvoord, 'Christ's Olivet Discourse', 308.

⁷³ J. Walvoord, 'Christ's Olivet Discourse', 309.

⁷⁴ J. Walvoord, 'Christ's Olivet Discourse', 309.

⁷⁵ J. Walvoord, 'Christ's Olivet Discourse', 312—314.

⁷⁶ J. Walvoord, 'Christ's Olivet Discourse', 314.

Obermuller's article highlights several key features of the Sheep and the Goats, proposing compositional redaction by the evangelist based on Matthew 10:40.⁷⁷ Not only is Matthew the only evangelist that transmits this message, he has also assigned it 'a place evidently conspicuous in the redactional composition of the gospel.'⁷⁸ The Sheep and the Goats is the second time that missionary instructions have been given to the disciples, which is the mission of the church. Matthew 10 instructed the first set of missionary instructions directed to Israel while Matthew 25 instructed the second set to the nation in the Sheep and the Goats. It is difficult to conceive that the similarities between the two passages are accidental; rather they demonstrate redaction on Matthew's part.⁷⁹

Matthew's redactional approach may correspond to the situation of the church in dealing with the historical destiny of Israel, as Jerusalem was destroyed and many Jews were expelled from the land.⁸⁰ The Sheep and the Goats and the whole Olivet Discourse provided necessary comfort to the church as messianic representatives through a benediction to take their testimony to the nations. The passage has been identified as a parable but verse 31 lacks the typical parabolic introduction. It could be *Halacha* on Christian social conduct, but Matthew 25 lacks the precise exhortation of this paradigm.⁸¹ It could be an apocalyptic vision as there are obvious future announcements expressed in the language of contemporary Judaeapocalyptic catastrophe. The sentence issued in verses 40 and 45 is not found in apocalyptic tradition; rather

⁷⁷ R. Obermuller, 'Cuando Te Vimos: Observaciones exegeticas en el Evangelio de Mateo 25:31—46', *CDT* 2:3 (1972): 198.

⁷⁸ R. Obermuller, 'Cuando Te Vimos', 198. 'Un lugar evidentemente conspicuo en la composicion redaccional del evangelio.'

⁷⁹ R. Obermuller, 'Cuando Te Vimos', 199.

⁸⁰ R. Obermuller, 'Cuando Te Vimos', 200.

⁸¹ R. Obermuller, 'Cuando Te Vimos', 201.

the apocalyptic theme appears to have been projected into this specific, post—Passover missional situation of the church.⁸²

Given these various issues, Obermuller is content to identify the Sheep and the Goats as an ‘oracle’.⁸³ Various other classifications have to risk omitting one element of the passage or another to isolate specific elements that fit these other classifications. Jesus’ salvific mission as the Son of Man leads to the completion of the historical process. His role as the shepherd of salvation comprises appropriate social behaviours for entrance in the community. As king, he is the judge of power to evaluate those social, political and economic actions decisively in the process of history. This interpretation accounts for the diverse elements of the passage and focusing the Sheep and the Goats in the prism of a Christian oracle.⁸⁴

In an intriguing article that highlights several of the challenges of the Sheep and the Goats, Mattill proposes an original location for the parable outside the Olivet Discourse. Mattill believes the parable may be regarded as a *midrash* on Matthew 10:40—42, 18:5 and 16:27, but placed in the context of the gentile mission.⁸⁵ ‘All the nations’ means heathens, pagans, Gentiles and possibly non—Christian Jews, and all of these are judged based on their treatment of the Lord’s missionaries.⁸⁶ However, in Matthew chapters 10 and 15 Jesus limits his outreach to the nation of Israel, though Matthew gradually broadened the scope of this mission with the Magi (2:1—12), Galilee of the Gentiles (4:15f), testimony to the Gentiles (10:18,22) healing of

⁸² R. Obermuller, ‘Cuando Te Vimos’, 202.

⁸³ R. Obermuller, ‘Cuando Te Vimos’, 202—203.

⁸⁴ R. Obermuller, ‘Cuando Te Vimos’, 208.

⁸⁵ A. Mattill, ‘Matthew 25:31—46 Relocated’, *Restoration Quarterly* 17 (1974), 107.

⁸⁶ A. Mattill, ‘Matthew 25:31—46’, 107.

Gentiles (8:5—13, 15:21—28), fishes of every kind (13:47), the kingdom given to Gentiles (21:43) and the great commission (28:19f) among many such examples in the gospel.⁸⁷

Mattill inquires how can the parable be viewed as an authentic teaching of Jesus if it is about outreach to the Gentiles? Jesus did not envision a mission to the Gentiles, nor was he a missionary universalist, rather he was an eschatological universalist. Conversely, the ability to craft a parable with this level of sobriety and reserve is difficult to achieve unless one is an accomplished teacher like Jesus. This means the creator of the Sheep and the Goats is in fact Jesus, creating a paradox in the text.⁸⁸ Mattill's proposes redaction and relocation of the parable while accepting the substantial genuineness of the text. The phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is possibly Matthean with the original saying, 'before him will be gathered the house of Israel', which would be consistent with 10:6 and 15:24. By virtue of this change, the parable is given a new subject—the treatment the missionaries receive from Gentiles rather than Jews.⁸⁹

The natural location for this original parable would have been the end of the mission of the twelve found in Matthew 9:35—11:1, where Jesus expressly forbids going among the Gentiles.⁹⁰ Matthew 10 and the Sheep and the Goats have at least thirteen common themes: kingdom, mission, persecution, sheep, parousia, hospitality to disciples expected from the world, hospitality in hunger, hospitality in thirst, hospitality to ill—clad disciples, hospitality to disciples is hospitality to Jesus, hospitality will be rewarded on the day of judgment, inhospitality will be punished on the day of judgment and judgment based on works.⁹¹ Not only are these

⁸⁷ A. Mattill, 'Matthew 25:31—46', 107.

⁸⁸ A. Mattill, 'Matthew 25:31—46', 108.

⁸⁹ A. Mattill, 'Matthew 25:31—46', 109.

⁹⁰ A. Mattill, 'Matthew 25:31—46', 109—110.

⁹¹ A. Mattill, 'Matthew 25:31—46', 113.

thirteen themes found in the discourse and the parable, they cover the whole of both. While this parable immediately followed and expanded 10:40—42 in its original setting, Matthew moved and redacted it to accommodate the changing needs of the church in his day.⁹²

Donahue, examining the abundance of literature, argues that the preoccupation with who comprises ‘nations’ and who are ‘the least of the brethren’ had overshadowed ‘richer dimensions of the passage.’⁹³ Thus Donahue chose to examine matters of genre, literary context and structure in order to explore these disputed questions and challenge contemporary ethics.⁹⁴ Beginning with matters of genre he finds good grounds for calling the Sheep and the Goats a parable despite the reluctance of some commentators. The word parable comes from the Hebrew *mashal*, which comes in a variety of forms such as proverbs (1 Samuel 10:12), riddles (Judges 14:10—14), allegories (Isaiah 5:1—7) and revelatory discourses (*Similitudes* 37—71).⁹⁵

Matthew draws no rigid distinction between a parable and an allegory as he calls the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1—14) a parable, when it is clearly an allegory. Additionally, the texts most like the Sheep and the Goats in form or content are parables, such as those found in *Similitudes*, which present vivid pictures of judgment at the end of history. ‘More accurately, it should be called an ‘apocalyptic parable’ and, while it may function as a parable in its realism and engaging quality, it should be interpreted from the horizon of apocalyptic.’⁹⁶ The characteristics of apocalyptic are scenes of eschatological judgment, reversal of earthly status and the fates of the just and evildoers.⁹⁷

⁹² A. Mattill, ‘Matthew 25:31—46’, 114.

⁹³ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats: A Challenge to Christian Ethics’, *TS* 47 (1986): 8.

⁹⁴ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 8.

⁹⁵ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 9.

⁹⁶ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 10.

⁹⁷ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 10.

In addition to the abundance of predictions and descriptions of judgment, Matthew enhances Markan and Q material with apocalyptic motifs (13:41—42; 19:28a; 25:31).⁹⁸ Matthew offers no unified scenario for final judgment. The angels separate the good and bad in 13:41 and 49, but in 16:27 and 25:31 they are passive witnesses to the judgment while they gather the elect in 24:31. The Twelve sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in 19:28, but in 25:31 the Son of Man judges alone. Additionally, in the Wheat and the Tares the angels gather all evildoers (13:41); in the Parable of the Net the angels separate evil from righteous (13:49); in 16:27 every person will be judged; in 19:25 the tribes of Israel are judged and in 24:30 all the tribes of the earth are judged.⁹⁹

The immediate literary context is the conclusion of Matthew's five great discourses at the end of the 'apocalyptic testament.'¹⁰⁰ Matthew follows Mark's wording closely but alters the discourse away from the destruction of Jerusalem 'to a fully developed instruction on the coming of Jesus and the end of the age.'¹⁰¹ This is achieved by altering the disciples' questions in 24:3 to the signs of when these things take place, and by dramatically expanding the end of the discourse with the parables of the Wise and Faithful Servant (24:45—51), the Ten Maidens (25:1—13), the Talents (25:14—30) and the Sheep and the Goats. Additionally, the Sheep and the Goats has points of contact throughout the gospel which must be considered.

The Sheep and the Goats' primary point of contact is the Great Commission where the historical career of Jesus ends with the promise that he will be with them to the 'end of the

⁹⁸ J. Donahue, 'The "Parable" of the Sheep and the Goats', 10.

⁹⁹ J. Donahue, 'The "Parable" of the Sheep and the Goats', 11.

¹⁰⁰ J. Donahue, 'The "Parable" of the Sheep and the Goats', 11.

¹⁰¹ J. Donahue, 'The "Parable" of the Sheep and the Goats', 11.

age.’¹⁰² While the Sheep and the Goats is a portrait of the close of the age, ‘the Great Commission is a mandate for church life prior to that close.’¹⁰³ The end will only come after the gospel is proclaimed to all nations, making the Great Commission the promise of the end foretold in the Sheep and the Goats. Further, the relationship between these two passages, within the context of Matthew, sheds light on the meaning of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

Ethnos usually means ‘gentile’ in contrast to Jews, but Donahue argues that ‘in certain places the phrase *panta ta ethnē* must embrace all peoples.’¹⁰⁴ In Luke 24:47 the disciples are told to preach εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη and in the book of Acts the church is directed to the Jews and then to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:4—8; 13:47), meaning Luke clearly did not limit *ethnos* to the Gentiles. Paul also spoke of his apostolic mission seeking to bring obedience ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (Romans 1:5). Therefore, when Matthew uses πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in 28:19, in addition to 25:32, this reflects a broad based early Christian tradition of spreading the message to all peoples.¹⁰⁵ The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares and Matthew 24:19 clearly envisions this universality as the disciples are to be hated by all ‘nations.’¹⁰⁶ The Sheep and the Goats also represents the universal application through its use of *ethnos*.

Watson examines the Sheep and the Goats from the perspective of a theology of liberation based on Third World exegetical principles.¹⁰⁷ Watson begins by distinguishing between the differing exegesis of First World religious privatization of public from political

¹⁰² J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 13.

¹⁰³ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 13.

¹⁰⁴ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 14.

¹⁰⁵ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 15.

¹⁰⁶ J. Donahue, ‘The “Parable” of the Sheep and the Goats’, 15.

¹⁰⁷ Watson’s work is drawn heavily from G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, Revised Edition. Trans. C. Inda and J. Eagleson. (New York: Orbis Books, 1988). See pages 112—116.

spheres, in contrast to Third World matters of public significance and institutional oppression.¹⁰⁸ Exegetes have resisted acknowledging the poor and oppressed on a universal scale, opting rather to limit Christ's 'brothers' to the disciples or the Christian community.¹⁰⁹ The use of Christ's brothers in Matthew 12:49 refers to the disciples as does 28:10, while 'brother' is also used to distinguish a member of the Christian community in 18:15 and 23:8. Brother may also be restricted to suffering itinerant preachers such as those found in Matthew 10:40, 42 as well as Romans 8:35, 1 Corinthians 4:11 and 2 Corinthians 11:23—27. Lastly, 'my brothers' is also a reference to the twelve as found in 19:28 where they will sit on 12 thrones judging the tribes of Israel.¹¹⁰

While these verses create some ambiguity about the identity of the brothers in 25:40, all of them exclude universalizing the text. However, 'No one, reading Matthew 25:31—46 in isolation, would suppose that its subject is the treatment of Christian evangelists. Within this text the 'brothers' are characterized only as hungry, thirsty, homeless, naked, sick and imprisoned; nothing is said about their either making disciples...or being disciples.'¹¹¹ While Matthew may have understood the parable in a restricted sense, such an intention is insufficiently stated in the text. Such an imperfectly expressed intention is thus subjected to the entirety of the gospel.

Watson argues that universalizing the text is no different than egalitarian exegesis of the androcentric nature of the narrative. The Son of Man's judgment is a result of treatment toward

¹⁰⁸ F. Watson, 'Liberating the Reader', F. Watson ed., *The Open Text: New Directions for Biblical Studies?* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1993), 59—61.

¹⁰⁹ F. Watson, 'Liberating the Reader', 63—64.

¹¹⁰ F. Watson, 'Liberating the Reader', 64.

¹¹¹ F. Watson, 'Liberating the Reader', 65.

his brothers, yet the term brother does not naturally include sisters any more than son includes daughter or father includes mother. Are then the wrongs done to women not held against the unrighteous or are only acts of charity done to men credited to the righteous?¹¹² The message contained here is a scandalous one that does not limit the scope of the key characters. The righteous are not righteous because they acknowledge Christ, nor are the unrighteous any more righteous based on a confession of faith. Thus, the heathen may act as servants of the anonymous Christ and not as ‘anonymous Christians.’¹¹³ This is consistent with the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount where righteousness is independent of confession (5:6; 7:21—23).¹¹⁴

Weber’s approach to the Sheep and the Goats is to examine the source of sheep and goat imagery utilised by Matthew. One possibility is a background in the Greco—Roman world where goats were ‘symbols of eager, unrestrained, and promiscuous sexuality.’¹¹⁵ Goats were associated with gods of nature and sexuality, such as Pan, Bacchus and Venus, not the high male gods Zeus, Apollo and Poseidon. Many positive qualities were attributed to goats in Greco—Roman literature as valuable commodities to their goatherders (Theocritus *Idylls* 1:25—26; *Eclogues* 3:32—34), prizes in singing contests (*Idylls* 1:4—6), and offerings to gods (*Idylls* 1:4—6).¹¹⁶ Sheep, however, enjoy a certain prestige not attributed to goats in this literature. According to Theocritus sheep are more valuable (*Idylls* 5:23—24), and Artemidorus Daldianus wrote that sheep dreams portended good fortune, while goat dreams bad fortune (*Oneir* 2.12).¹¹⁷

¹¹² F. Watson, ‘Liberating the Reader’, 67.

¹¹³ F. Watson, ‘Liberating the Reader’, 71.

¹¹⁴ F. Watson, ‘Liberating the Reader’, 71.

¹¹⁵ K. Weber, ‘The Image of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:31—46’, *CBQ* 59 (1997): 665.

¹¹⁶ K. Weber, ‘The Image’, 666.

¹¹⁷ K. Weber, ‘The Image’, 666.

Jewish literature from between 200 BCE and 100 BCE provide very few references to sheep or goats. Sheep symbolise Israel in *Similitudes* 83—90 (*The Animal Apocalypse*) and rams symbolise their kings, whether good or evil. Goats do not figure in this section of *Similitudes*.¹¹⁸ However, the Old Testament is the most probable source of clues for Matthew's authorial audience. The Old Testament evidence presents a consistently positive portrait of goats, such as a token of special honour for a guest (Judges 13:15; cf. Luke 15:29), acceptable sacrifice to Yahweh (Numbers 7:12—88) and a gift to an esteemed guest.¹¹⁹ She cites Dalman's study on sheep and goats in which goats receive more shelter at night as they are more vulnerable to the cold.¹²⁰ This fact may influence how authors like Matthew thought of goats, though this does not appear to be a factor in the Sheep and the Goats.

Sheep and goats also appear synonymously as symbols for peaceful prosperity (Isaiah 11:6) and as symbols of God's bounty (Deuteronomy 32:14). The ritual of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:5—22) is a singular negative exception, though the other goat in the ritual is offered to the Lord.¹²¹ Contrary to those who argue Ezekiel 34:17—22 is the source of the sheep and goat imagery, Weber views this is a misreading of the text in modern translations. Ezekiel uses 'between' to indicate moral distinction, regularly placing the positive element first (22:26; 42:20). The proper understanding is the difference between fat sheep and skinny sheep, rams and he-goats, not sheep and goats. Further, no ancient version suggests the judgment is between sheep and goats, and since the LXX terminology is different, the passages

¹¹⁸ K. Weber, 'The Image', 669.

¹¹⁹ K. Weber, 'The Image', 670.

¹²⁰ G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina: Band VI* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1939), 276.

¹²¹ K. Weber, 'The Image', 670.

appear to be unrelated.¹²² Weber concludes that Matthew's expected audience had a basically positive view of goats, which made the absolute condemnation surprising.¹²³

Luz believes the Sheep and the Goats may originate with Jesus himself, though it more feasibly arose from an early Jewish Christian community as seen from the few semitisms, the apocalyptic tone and Jewish parallels.¹²⁴ The reasons for uncertainty surrounding an origin with Jesus include Jesus speaking of God as the king and world judge, while at the same time also deeming God as the 'brother' of human beings, when he is always the Father. The presence of an 'amen' saying coming from God (25:40, 45) is unusual unless Jesus views himself as the Son of Man and world judge. However, in such a case Q 10:16, Mark 9:37 and Matthew 10:42 would also go back to Jesus, which is difficult to substantiate.¹²⁵ Use of 'king' in the passage is problematic as it must be questioned whether Jesus would have applied Davidic messianic and divine titles to himself. The Son of Man sayings in the Sheep and the Goats do not conform well to other Son of Man sayings, leading Luz to believe the best hypothesis is to attribute this unique text to a Jewish Christian disciple.¹²⁶

Luz examines three historical interpretations of the text: The universal interpretation, the classic interpretation, and the exclusive interpretation. In the universal interpretation, all people are judged at the Son of Man's return based on the works of charity shown to the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters. In this view 'the least' represents all of the needy in the world, Christian and non-Christian. The *Unwissenheitsmotiv* is essential to this interpretation as people did not

¹²² K. Weber, 'The Image', 672—673.

¹²³ K. Weber, 'The Image', 673.

¹²⁴ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (18—25)*, EKK (Dusseldorf: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997), 520. The author also consulted U. Luz, *Matthew 21—28 Hermeneia*, trans. J. Crouch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005) for translation assistance.

¹²⁵ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 521.

¹²⁶ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 521.

know they had done good things to Christ, making this an affirmation of the importance to love God and neighbor without concern for confession or belief.¹²⁷ Such an interpretation has been paramount in liberation theology, Jewish—Christian dialogue and Christianity’s relationship to other religions. This is the most widespread and generally accepted interpretation today, though it is not ancient and first became important in the nineteenth century.¹²⁸

The classic interpretation limits the least of the brothers to the Christian community; usually meaning all members of the church with some narrowing the scope further to groups like the apostles or ‘perfect Christians’.¹²⁹ While ‘all the nations’ has commonly been understood universally, some in this camp have limited the scope to mean ‘all Christians’. In the final judgment, the standard by which Christians are judged is their treatment toward the needy and poor Christians, making this a Christian exclusive judgment.¹³⁰

The exclusive interpretation is a product of the eighteenth century where *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* is not ‘all nations’ but ‘all heathens’.¹³¹ In this view only non—Christians appear before the world judge while ‘the least’ are typically all Christians. This reading makes the passage into a comfort for persecuted Christians: knowing they are so important that pagans will be saved or damned based on how they have treated Christ’s followers. This view is a move away from a universal breadth and toward Christian absolutism, which creates a two—stage judgment in the discourse. The church is judged in 24:45—25:30 and non—Christians are judged in the Sheep and the Goats.¹³²

¹²⁷ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 521—522.

¹²⁸ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 522—525.

¹²⁹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 526.

¹³⁰ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 527.

¹³¹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 528—529.

¹³² U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 529.

As for Luz's interpretation an essential key for understanding the Sheep and the Goats is that 'the least' do not appear in the portrayal of judgment, rather they first appear in the judge's speech.¹³³ The least are not actors in the world judgment; they appear to be incorporated into 'all the nations'. Based on the whole of Matthew's Olivet Discourse, this designation should be interpreted universally. Further support for this is seen in the fact that Jesus speaks exclusively to the disciples since 24:3, warning them of their pending judgment beginning in 24:32, and yet no portrayal of judgment involving the church has been presented. If the Sheep and the Goats does not include judgment of the church the parenthesis running from 24:32—25:30 is in vain.¹³⁴ Matthew's Jesus also repays each person (16:27) and makes no distinction between church and world in terms of judgment (13:37—43), rendering this part of the text contradictory. Three previous discourses ended with world judgment that included the church (7:21—27; 13:37—43, 47—50; 18:23—35) making it improbable that the Sheep and the Goats plays by a different set of rules. Finally, both groups address the Son of Man as Lord, which should include the church based on 7:21—22 and 25:11, 20—24.¹³⁵

Luz identifies 'the least' as 'itinerant radicals' or missionaries as the suffering messengers of Jesus experiencing the hardship described by Matthew and seen in Q 10, Mark 6:9, 1 Corinthians 4:11—12 and 2 Corinthians 6:40—45.¹³⁶ Other lowly Christians may be identified in this group of the least according to 18:5, but not in the sense of the universal interpretation where Jesus identifies with all the poorest of people.¹³⁷ All people, including the lowliest, are incorporated into this judgment. Both sides of the judgment reveal that one's

¹³³ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 530.

¹³⁴ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 530—531.

¹³⁵ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 532.

¹³⁶ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 537—538.

¹³⁷ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 539.

relationship to Jesus cannot be separated from their relationship to the members of the church who represent him.¹³⁸ Honouring Jesus means adhering to the love commandment, and all people will be judged according to this single judgment based on that standard of love (5:21—48; 22:34—40 23:23).¹³⁹

Witherington identifies the Sheep and the Goats as a story about final judgment. He writes, ‘A good case can be made that we should not see this as a parable but rather as an apocalyptic prophecy with some parabolic elements.’¹⁴⁰ In *Similitudes* 69:27 the Son of Man is portrayed as the final judge, which is also suggested by Daniel 7. However, in the Sheep and the Goats the judge is shepherd, king and Son of Man all combined, with shepherd, king and judge usually referring to God in the Old Testament.¹⁴¹ Jewish literature also establishes the criteria of judgment of Gentiles on their treatment of Israel as found in *4 Ezra* 7:37, yet in the Sheep and the Goats it is how they ‘view Jesus.’¹⁴²

The Son of Man coming with his angels invokes images of Daniel 7:14 and Zechariah 14:5, while being seated on a throne is demonstrated in *Similitudes* 62:5. Jesus’ followers are ‘the least’ and the Gentiles are judged based on how they treat those followers, not Israel.¹⁴³ A comparison must be drawn here between the Sheep and the Goats and Matthew 18:6—14 where the least among the believers are ‘the little ones’ and the subject is how the advantaged followers of Jesus treat the most disadvantaged followers. Righteousness in the Sheep and the Goats is

¹³⁸ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 540.

¹³⁹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 540—542.

¹⁴⁰ B. Witherington, *Matthew* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 465.

¹⁴¹ B. Witherington, *Matthew*, 465.

¹⁴² B. Witherington, *Matthew*, 466.

¹⁴³ B. Witherington, *Matthew*, 466.

associated with righteous deeds as seen in 10:41; 13:43, 49, making treatment of the disadvantaged a theme repeated in various contexts.¹⁴⁴

The Sheep and the Goats is an apocalyptic prophecy with sheep and goats serving as parabolic elements symbolizing different sorts of people, making it ‘clear that neither the author nor the audience looked for a literal fulfillment of these words.’¹⁴⁵ While Jesus envisioned a real second coming and final judgment, the apocalyptic imagery is poetic and parabolic in form. Yet the specifics of that judgment and the timing of the events are not chronicled. Modern expectations and preconceptions often distort the meaning of these prophecies, leading modern commentators to press the text for more meaning than is intended.¹⁴⁶

France calls the Sheep and the Goats ‘an embarrassment especially to Protestant readers because it appears to say that one’s final destiny...depends on acts of philanthropy, a most un—Pauline theology...’¹⁴⁷ Such a simplistic limitation is widely rejected in modern scholarship as the least of Jesus’ brothers are the true disciples of Jesus in Matthew and not humanity in general (10:32—33; 12:46—50; 28:10).¹⁴⁸ However, concluding that the least are the disciples does not mean that the sheep have a positive attitude toward Jesus, as both sheep and goats claim they do not know their actions are directed toward Jesus.¹⁴⁹ While a systematic theologian can devise a way to amalgamate Paul’s theology with Matthew’s, the reality is that Matthew is not writing

¹⁴⁴ B. Witherington, *Matthew*, 467.

¹⁴⁵ B. Witherington, *Matthew*, 468.

¹⁴⁶ B. Witherington, *Matthew*, 468.

¹⁴⁷ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 2007), 957.

¹⁴⁸ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 958.

¹⁴⁹ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 958—959.

systematic theology, rather the Sheep and the Goats is the outworking of the Matthean reward motif for those who live according to God's will (5:12).¹⁵⁰

The final judgment is part of the parousia focus that runs from 24:36 to 25:30, but France sees the setting for this judgment in a heavenly throne room like Daniel 7:9—14. The passage does not indicate that the Son of Man is coming to earth, nor is the 'coming' of verse 31 'more specifically parousia language than it was in 24:30 and in all the other allusions to Daniel 7:13—14...'¹⁵¹ The Sheep and the Goats is also not a parable, rather there is a simile in verse 32 within the judgment scene as opposed to a story—parable.

France draws close attention to the abundance of Old Testament echoes, beginning with the presence of angels drawn from Daniel 7:10 and Zechariah 14:5.¹⁵² The gathering of the nations echoes Joel 3:2, where the judgment is specifically of Gentiles for mistreatment of Israel. Matthew develops the vision motif throughout the text in 7:13—27; 8:11—12; 10:32—33; 13:40—43, 49—50; 16:25—26 and 24:36—25:30. The imagery of sheep, goats and shepherd perhaps draws from Ezekiel 34:17 where God 'judges between different members of his flock.'¹⁵³

Having the Son of Man execute the judgment in the role of the enthroned king, as opposed to God, enhances the Christological nuances of the pericope. Jesus fulfills his promise to acknowledge before God those who acknowledge him (10:32) in the Sheep and the Goats.¹⁵⁴ The sheep will become kings themselves and share in kingly authority with the Lord as promised

¹⁵⁰ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 959.

¹⁵¹ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 960.

¹⁵² R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 960.

¹⁵³ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 961.

¹⁵⁴ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 962.

to the disciples in 19:28.¹⁵⁵ These royal inheritors respond to a list of hardships similar to the short list in Isaiah 58:7, 10, but Christians have no monopoly on these troubles in the Roman Empire. Such acts were perhaps expected as the duty of hospitality to be honoured in ancient Mediterranean society.¹⁵⁶ Conversely, ‘eternal punishment’ appears only here in the gospel and is the destiny of the wicked. Eternal punishment in Matthew does not mean everlasting torment; it instead refers to spiritual annihilation, punishment with eternal consequences. Such destruction does justice to Matthew’s language in the Sheep and the Goats and in 13:42 and 10:28 where the verb ‘to destroy’ appears in conjunction with Hell.¹⁵⁷

Mitch and Sri define this vision of judgment as ‘prophetic’ in contrast to the preceding parables. The events that follow bring to mind Jesus’ words of repaying the deeds of humanity in 16:27.¹⁵⁸ The Old Testament background for the Sheep and the Goats is Proverbs 19:17; Isaiah 58:7, 10; Ezekiel 34:17—22 and Daniel 7:13—14, 12:2, though these references are generally listed and not assigned a specific verse correlation within the text. The image of the shepherd separating sheep and goats is difficult to understand, as ancient Near Eastern herdsmen typically allowed their flocks to graze together and sheep and goats were equally valued. Though the reason for using goats as the wicked is unclear, the sheep representing the saints is unequivocal as they are placed on the right, the common ancient location of the good and honourable (1 Kings 2:19; Psalm 110:1).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 963.

¹⁵⁶ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 963—964.

¹⁵⁷ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 967.

¹⁵⁸ C. Mitch & E. Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew: Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 325.

¹⁵⁹ C. Mitch & E. Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 325.

The ‘least of the brothers’ in 25:40 refers to Christians, perhaps the missionaries who were forced into hardship through evangelizing the world. The reason for this determination is Jesus’ previous description of the disciples in 10:42, 12:49—50, 18:6, and 18:10.¹⁶⁰ All the nations ‘represent all the non—believing Gentiles of the world who are called to account for their treatment of Jesus’ followers.’¹⁶¹ ‘Nations’ in Greek often means Gentiles or pagans in Matthew as demonstrated in 4:15, 6:32, 10:5, and 12:18.¹⁶²

Sins of omission (James 4:17) are the principle crimes of the wicked who are subject to the place of torment depicted in Revelation 20:10 as the ‘pool of fire and sulfur.’ The opportunities to help the lowly were abundant but the decision to deny help was firm and results in banishment from the Lord’s presence. ‘Eternal’ is the most important word in 25:46 signaling two states of the afterlife that are perpetual with unending duration.¹⁶³

Hagner claims that the Sheep and the Goats is a fitting end to the eschatological discourse as it presents a great judgment scene, in connection with the returning Son of Man. The conclusion of the passage requires no further exhortations or logia as it is left to speak for itself.¹⁶⁴ The special M passage has only partial gospel parallels in its opening (Mark 8:38b and Luke 9:26b), its division of good and evil (John 5:29) and the departure of the wicked (Luke 13:27—28).¹⁶⁵

The passage contains extensive repetition for effect and possibly memorization. Though some parabolic elements are present, the future tense form makes this ‘an apocalyptic revelation

¹⁶⁰ C. Mitch & E. Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 326.

¹⁶¹ C. Mitch & E. Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 326.

¹⁶² C. Mitch & E. Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 326.

¹⁶³ C. Mitch & E. Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 328.

¹⁶⁴ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 740.

¹⁶⁵ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 740.

discourse'.¹⁶⁶ Hagner outlines the passage structure as follows: 1. the glorious coming of the Son of Man (verse 31); 2. the great separation (verses 32—33); 3. the reward of the righteous (verses 34—40) subdivided into (a) reward (verse 34), (b) its grounds (verses 35—36), (c) the protest (verses 37—39), the principle (verse 40); 4. the judgment of the wicked (verses 41—45) subdivided into (a) the judgment (verse 41), (b) its grounds (verses 42—43), (c) the protest (verses 44), the principle (verse 45); 5. the final division (verse 46).¹⁶⁷

The Son of Man takes centre stage, reminding the audience of the disciples' initial question regarding Jesus' parousia (24:3). However, the real issue is not the time, but rather the significance of this coming as a moment of judgment. The closest parallel in Matthew appears in 16:27. The enthronement of the Son of Man in Matthew 19:28 is a second close parallel, while the coming Son of Man in 24:30 also involved giving rewards to his disciples.¹⁶⁸ Previous mentions of angels accompanying the Son of Man are found in Matthew 13:41, 16:27 and 24:31, with an Old Testament background in Zechariah 14:5 and LXX Deuteronomy 32:43 and 33:2. While Daniel 7:13—14 is the primary background for the coming Son of Man, the language is close to *1 Enoch* 62:5 and 61:8. Hagner writes, 'This event signals the great judgment scene that follows, in which Jesus as the Son of Man functions as judge— a role restricted to Yahweh in the OT.'¹⁶⁹

The gathering of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη matches the commission of spreading the gospel found in 24:14 and 28:19, while the 'gathering together' probably refers to the same gathering of the righteous (3:12, 13:30) and both the righteous and the wicked (13:47, 22:10). This leads Hagner

¹⁶⁶ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 740.

¹⁶⁷ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 740.

¹⁶⁸ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 741.

¹⁶⁹ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 742.

to conclude that the judgment probably contains gentile nations, Israel, and a *corpus mixtum* of the Christian church.¹⁷⁰ Matthew's great judgment presentation is alluded to in Romans 14:10—12, 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Revelation 20:11—13, involving a separation of the righteous and wicked among the nations. The people of God, i.e. the righteous, are commonly referred to as τὰ πρόβατα (Matthew 10:16, 26:31 Zechariah 13:7, citing Zechariah 13:7), though Matthew also uses sheep in a negative manner to describe those who are lost or stray (9:36, 10:6, 15:24; cf. Ezekiel 34:17 and 34:20).¹⁷¹ Conversely, ἐρίφων is found only twice in the New Testament, the other occurrence being a diminutive form in Luke 15:29.¹⁷²

The use of ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ is commonly used and generally refers to the place of honour.¹⁷³ However, ἐξ ἐωνόμων is not always indicative of disfavour as seen in Matthew 20:21,23. The king is the Son of Man who hands out eschatological blessings and punishment.¹⁷⁴ He is also identified here as judge, which corresponds to the judgment seat of God (Romans 14:10—12) and the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10), which is the same seat. The righteous will inherit the eschatological kingdom in its fullness, which has parallels to inheriting the earth (5:5) and eternal life (19:29) in the gospel.¹⁷⁵

Regarding the six situations of needs, Hagner writes, 'The immediately startling fact (cf. vv 37—39) is that Jesus says he was in such situations of need, and the righteous in each instance met the need'.¹⁷⁶ Of the various possible meanings that have been suggested for τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, Hagner believes this refers to the least in the Christian community,

¹⁷⁰ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 742.

¹⁷¹ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 743.

¹⁷² D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 743.

¹⁷³ Matthew 20:23, 22:44 citing Psalm 110:1, 26:64, Acts 2:33—34, 5:31, 7:55—56, Rom. 8:34

¹⁷⁴ Matthew 16:27, 13:41—43, cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

¹⁷⁵ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 743.

¹⁷⁶ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 743.

not general humanity, as Jesus calls his disciples ‘my brothers’ in 12:48—49 and 28:10. The truest counterpart to ‘one of these least’ is τῶν μικρῶν (18:16, 10, 14) of which ἐλάχιστος is the superlative and refers to the disciples generally.¹⁷⁷ The passage need not be understood as a salvation by works model, for Paul, the champion of grace, emphasises good works (Galatians 6:7—10, 2 Corinthians 5:10). While Matthew stresses the importance good deeds as part of righteousness, these deeds are symbolic of a deeper, spiritual reality.¹⁷⁸

Davies and Allison identify the fourfold repetition of affliction and alleviation as the most prominent structural feature of Matthew 25:31—46. The first speech to those on the right is divided into three sets of two: hungry and thirsty, stranger and naked, sick and a prisoner. The second speech to those on the left follows the basic format of affliction and alleviation, but abbreviation increases as the text progresses.¹⁷⁹

The Sheep and the Goats is reminiscent of previous separation parables (13:24—30, 36—43, 47—50), but it is not a parable, it is a word picture of the last judgment.¹⁸⁰ Dialogue between the judge and the judged is a common convention in several texts, though Davies and Allison draw special attention to the midrash on Psalm 118:17.¹⁸¹ While they acknowledge Bultmann’s suggestion that this teaching did not originate with Jesus, they believe it is feasible for Jesus to have composed twin dialogues about deeds of mercy. Luke 10:25—37 presents a lesson that not doing good is doing evil, while Mark 9:41 proclaims coming divine judgment and exhortation to love the marginalized as oneself, making an origin with Jesus plausible.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 745.

¹⁷⁸ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 746—747.

¹⁷⁹ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 416.

¹⁸⁰ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 418.

¹⁸¹ *I Enoch 63*, Justin’s *Dialogue 76:1*; *I Apology 16* and Midrash on Psalm 118:17.

¹⁸² W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 419—420.

No location is provided for the judgment, but the passage is an exposition of Matthew 24:29—31, while the glorious Son of Man relates Daniel 7:14, a notion found in the *Similitudes*. The image of all the angels coming with the Son of Man is taken from LXX Zechariah 14:53. The enthronement of the Son of Man in 25:31 (τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ) is comparable to ὅταν καθίση ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ from Matthew 19:28. Davies and Allison find it improbable that the Son of Man’s throne is God’s throne as Daniel 7:14, a key source text, identifies multiple thrones, Psalm 110 depicts an enthronement beside God, and Matthew refers to more than one eschatological throne (19:28, 20:21).¹⁸³

Verse 32 presupposes the resurrection of the dead, as can be inferred by comparing LXX Isaiah 66:18, Joel 3:2, 11—12, Zephaniah 3:8, Zechariah 14:2, 4 Ezra 7:37, and Luke 21:36. All of humanity is the preferred identity of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, which corresponds to their reading of ‘the least of these my brethren’ as the needy in general, maintaining a common universalist reading.¹⁸⁴ In a departure from many other scenes of eschatological judgment, there is little suspense involved here, as the judge immediately knows who belongs on the right or left, with no need of scales or books. The shepherd is also a king like Moses and David, taking the reader back earlier in the gospel to 2:2 and 21:5, recalling Jesus’ status as the son of David.¹⁸⁵

The hardships spoken of by the king are not a list of afflictions experienced by missionaries, but rather mundane deeds of mercy. These deeds are not salvific, rather they are the product of a good tree bearing good fruit, having been given a new heart, making righteousness something given during the salvation event.¹⁸⁶ Davies and Allison draw attention

¹⁸³ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 420—421.

¹⁸⁴ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 422.

¹⁸⁵ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 424.

¹⁸⁶ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 427.

to the visitation of prisoners, which is not contained in the standard Jewish lists of good works. Possibly early Christian experience or the memory of John the Baptist has led to the inclusion of prison criterion in the list. The just include the righteous outside of the church, which is consistent with their surprise that they were serving Christ. Davies and Allison support this position by citing *Sanhedrin* 13:2, ‘there must be righteous men among the heathen who have a share in the world to come’.¹⁸⁷

As mentioned previously, they believe ‘the least’ are to be identified as the poor in general, not needy Christians. While ἀδελφός usually refers to Christians, such as in 28:10, the presence of the superlative ἐλάχιστος, as opposed to the comparative form μικρός used of the disciples, and the non—ecclesiological uses of ‘brother’ in Matthew (5:22—24, 7:3—5), cast doubt on identifying the brothers in the sheep and the goats as the disciples. Further, it is improbable that Matthew would believe that all nations would have an opportunity to serve needy Christians. When considering these factors, as well as the reality that the list of unfortunate circumstances is not peculiar to Christians, Davies and Allison conclude the least are the needy in general.¹⁸⁸

While the previous pericopae have focused on being prepared and investing talents, that preparation culminates in 25:31—46 as the parousia arrives. ‘The believer prepares for the Parousia by living the imperative to love one’s neighbours, especially the marginal’.¹⁸⁹ Charity is the true test of faith, even as these actions are mundane and unspectacular. The larger irony of

¹⁸⁷ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 428.

¹⁸⁸ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 429.

¹⁸⁹ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 432.

25:31—46 is found in the background of the passion narrative, whereby those who will condemn Jesus are unaware that he is the king of the world who will ultimately be their judge.¹⁹⁰

Keener identifies the Sheep and the Goats as a parable unique to Matthew, but cautions against rejecting the passage as inauthentic, since neither Matthew nor Luke uses every detail of Mark. Denying that the passage is inauthentic, on the grounds that Jesus could never have planned for the admission of the Gentiles, is to preclude other passages in Matthew (e.g. 8:11—12) that some would consider authentic. The Son of Man's use of amen (25:40,45) is stylistically consistent with Jesus' style, likewise the supposed Matthean parallelism is consistent with a Palestinian milieu that would make sense as originating with Jesus.¹⁹¹ Keener accepts the authenticity of the passage due to its coherence with the authentic Jesus tradition.

The parable contains a high Christology consistent with Matthew's general Christology, yet Jesus' claims to kingship (25:34) conform to his actions (21:7—8) while his claim to be the final judge is found in the Q tradition (7:21—23). Keener also believes this parable probably assumes Jesus' deity on the throne of judgment, though he acknowledges others such as Abel and Enoch have filled that role.¹⁹² Despite these variants in Jewish tradition, the central biblical and Jewish eschatological judge is God himself.¹⁹³ Not only is the role of king nearly always accorded to God in rabbinic parables but coming with all of the angels alludes to Zechariah 14:5 where God is in view.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 433.

¹⁹¹ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 602.

¹⁹² C. Keener, *Matthew*, 602.

¹⁹³ *Sibylline Oracles* 4:183—84; *1 Enoch* 9:4, 60:2, 62:2, 47:3; *Testament of Abraham* 14A.

¹⁹⁴ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 602—603.

God is the chief shepherd in biblical and Jewish tradition, though Moses, David, and others can also be referred to as shepherds. Sheep most commonly stand for the people of God (*I Enoch* 90:32—33; *Pesikta Rabbati* 9:2; 26:2) while the ‘Lord of the sheep’ is the judge (*I Enoch* 90:20) is God himself (*I Enoch* 89:16, 20, 26, 33, 50, 52, 54, 70). The notion of acts of service to the least as vicarious acts of service to Jesus conforms to rabbinic concepts of vicarious service to God (Midrash Tannaim 15:9), both of which are echoes of the Jewish custom of a *shaliah*.¹⁹⁵ Keener observes that even if Jesus is not divine in Matthew, he is the focus of the divine judgment.

Keener writes, ‘In Jewish texts, God judges the nations after raising them from the dead (cf. 4 Ezra 7:37); the judgment among the nations was an ancient Israelite hope (e.g. Micah 4:3, *beyn*, between peoples).’¹⁹⁶ The context of the passage, and the use of Daniel’s Son of Man title indicate that Matthew alludes to the same timeframe as Jesus is returning after the tribulation (Matthew 24:29—30, 25:31; Daniel 7:13—14). The throne of glory, which is most commonly God’s throne, frequently appears in Jewish texts with special significance placed on those addressing the final judgment (1 Enoch 45:3; 47:3; 60:2; 62:2).¹⁹⁷

Nations or Gentiles would be judged by how they treated Israel according to Jewish literature (4 Ezra 7:37), and as elsewhere they are, ‘gathered in Matthew (cf. Matthew 13:40; Isaiah 2:4; Revelation 16:16). Goats were sometimes known to be disobedient while sheep were more valuable and always held in greater quantity.’¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 603.

¹⁹⁶ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 603.

¹⁹⁷ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 603.

¹⁹⁸ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 603—604.

Most ancients were right handed and preferred the right to the left as the left was physically weaker. One Jewish tradition describes the angel on the right of the throne who records good deeds while the one on the left records evil deeds (Testament of Abraham 12A).¹⁹⁹ The vindication of those on the right leaves the wicked left without excuse, as in rabbinic tradition when converts to Judaism among the nations indict the nations on the day of judgment (Pesikta Rabbati 161a).²⁰⁰

Yet this older dispensation of the gentile treatment of Israel hardly fits Jesus' model of his brothers. Neither does the passage indicate entrance into the millennium as eternal destinies are at stake. In Matthew's context, as opposed to Luke, the service to the poor is not the poor in general but receiving the gospel's messengers. The disciples are Jesus' brothers (12:50; 28:10) as well as the least (5:19; 11:11; 18:3—6, 10—14) who should receive hospitality (10:8—13).²⁰¹ The king judges the nations based on their response to the gospel, while the true messengers will only be successful in their preaching by embracing suffering and poverty.²⁰² The majority view of church history has been that Jesus' siblings are the disciples, fitting a function of eschatological discourse to encourage a repressed minority knowing God will vindicate them at the judgment (1 Enoch 62; 103—104; 4 Ezra passim; 2 Baruch 72).²⁰³

Blessing, inheritance, and kingdom relate to the Promised Land concept of the exodus and were components of eschatological hope in Jesus' time (1 Corinthians 6:9—10; Galatians 3:14; 5:21; Ephesians 1:3,14). God had not originally created the fire for the goats, but their

¹⁹⁹ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 604.

²⁰⁰ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 604.

²⁰¹ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 605.

²⁰² C. Keener, *Matthew*, 605—606.

²⁰³ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 606.

failure to embrace the gospel will lead to their horrifying damnation. Yet it is also imperative for disciples of Christ to receive one another, treating fellow servants properly, just as Paul reminds the Corinthians that being reconciled to him is to be reconciled to God himself (2 Corinthians 5:11—7:1).²⁰⁴

Evaluation

This period of scholarship demonstrates new approaches to understanding the Sheep and the Goats through comparisons with non—biblical literature. Apocalyptic writings become a focus of the interpretative issues as comparative themes of judgment and the Son of Man figure in works such as the *Similitudes of Enoch*, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* receive provisional treatment. Scholars develop new definitions and ways of considering eschatology and how the larger Olivet Discourse fits within those eschatological models.²⁰⁵ Critical scholarship also gives rise to the belief that Jesus erroneously predicts the end of the space—time continuum in the Olivet Discourse, leaving the Sheep and the Goats in the realm of unfulfilled prediction of final judgment.²⁰⁶

The writings of this period also moved away from previous attempts to synthesise the Sheep and the Goats with some form of ‘saved by grace’ theology, a caricature of Paul’s vastly more complex theology. Alternatively, Paul’s description of the parousia and the meaning of those events has received heightened analysis and comparison with the Sheep and the Goats in conjunction with the fall of the temple in 70 CE.²⁰⁷ An increase in the developing complexity of

²⁰⁴ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 606.

²⁰⁵ This is the subject of the next chapter and develops throughout the thesis.

²⁰⁶ This is also discussed next chapter and the problems with this theory are treated further in chapters four and five.

²⁰⁷ This is discussed in chapter five.

apocalyptic and eschatological thinking has increased the methods of categorisation surrounding the parousia and what Jesus expected to occur when this event took place.

This research will examine the role of Psalm 80 as an intertextual echo within the Sheep and the Goats and offer a definition as to whether the passage is apocalyptic or eschatological and how to define those terms. The meaning of Psalm 80 in the Sheep and the Goats offers a new perspective in the ongoing dialogue as to how Matthew's Jesus presents the parousia of the Son of Man and its meaning in his time and the present.

Date of Matthew

The date of Matthew is highly debated among scholars and historians, with arguments drawn from internal evidence, external evidence and source criticism. Among the essential data considered are those sayings of Jesus which are said to be period specific, before or after the temple's destruction, patristic evidence and Matthew's literary dependence on Mark. There are two general dating conventions for Matthew: pre—70 CE and post—70 CE. Whether Matthew is pre or post —70 does not affect his ability to draw from Psalm 80, though it could have an impact on how Matthew used his sources and shaped his narrative. Examining the data allows for deeper consideration of the socio—religious context faced by the Matthean community.

Pre—70 View External Evidence

Patristic witness offers data that can point to a pre—70 composition for Matthew. Origen accepted Matthew as the first evangelist to write a gospel, which agrees with Irenaeus and the Muratorian canon. Clement believed the gospels with genealogies were written first, though these points only establish the priority of Matthew as the first gospel.²⁰⁸ Irenaeus dated the

²⁰⁸ R. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1964), 19.

gospel to 65 CE, though he also falsely attributed the founding of the church at Rome to Peter and Paul, which brings suspicion as to the accuracy of the traditions he passed along.²⁰⁹ Matthew is also consistently placed first in ordering of the New Testament as attested by Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, the alternative Western convention that placed the apostolic gospels of Matthew and John first, as well as other variations that always resulted in Matthew listed first.²¹⁰

An important testimony, attributed to Papias by Eusebius, claims that Matthew composed or compiled his gospel in Hebrew, which can be understood in multiple ways. Papias could mean Matthew was an editor of this material, Matthew collected a group of sayings that became the nucleus of his gospel, or Matthew wrote the original version of the gospel in Hebrew (Aramaic) and it was translated later into Greek.²¹¹ Whether Papias understood this to be the gospel proper, or a collection of sayings, this belief that Matthew wrote something in Hebrew, prior to Mark, was widespread in the patristic evidence.²¹²

This patristic evidence gives more support to the Griesbach hypothesis, which is widely rejected today, than it does to a date before or after 70.²¹³ Both Ignatius and the *Didache* use Matthew, which prohibits a date later than 100 CE, but establishing a *terminus ad quem* does not resolve the issue.²¹⁴ Harmonizing Irenaeus' tradition of Matthew being written between 63 and 66 CE with Markan priority requires pushing Mark's date of composition back to the late 50s to

²⁰⁹ R. Lenski, *The Interpretation*, 19; R.T. France, *Matthew*, 88.

²¹⁰ R.T. France, *Matthew Evangelist and Teacher* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 13.

²¹¹ C. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 135.

²¹² C. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 136.

²¹³ R. Stein, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels 2d ed.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 94—97; M. Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* (London: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 81—83; R. Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? 2d ed.* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005), 11; C. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 87.

²¹⁴ R. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1982), 599.

allow adequate time for Mark to gain authority.²¹⁵ However, Markan priority is not compatible with this patristic evidence, leaving scholars to weigh the value of this external patristic evidence in comparison to the internal evidence pointing toward Markan priority. The possibility that the patristic authors gave precedence to Matthew, based on the belief that his gospel was directly written by an apostle of Christ, causes further doubts about the weight given to the patristic evidence.²¹⁶

Another point of datum used for pre—70 external consideration is the Christian accessibility to Hebrew scrolls following the break with the synagogue. The theory contends that after the temple’s destruction, a complete break occurred between Judaism and Christianity, resulting in Christians no longer having access to the synagogue. Hebrew scrolls were housed in the synagogue, and Matthew uses Hebrew scriptures in his gospel, therefore Matthew must have used these scrolls prior to the break with the synagogue in 70.²¹⁷

This argument lacks a secure foundation as there is no conclusive data that Christians in Matthew’s setting had withdrawn from the synagogue.²¹⁸ It has been alleged that the Jewish synagogue liturgy, *Birkath ha—Minim*, established a sharp divide between Nazarenes (Christians) and the synagogue, meaning Christianity could no longer claim to be a reform movement within Judaism. This clause has been attributed to the council of Jamnia, often dated to 70 CE, though a date around 85 or 90 CE is more generally accepted.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ W. Hendriksen, *Matthew: New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 97.

²¹⁶ M. Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem*, 78.

²¹⁷ W. Hendriksen, *Matthew*, 97.

²¹⁸ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005), 16.

²¹⁹ R.T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 86.

The belief in a decisive and streamlined break between Judaism and Christianity, aided by the council of Jamnia, is fraught with problems. What reason is there to believe that the decisions of Jamnia became immediate edict adhered to by all of Judaism? This first generation of post—temple rabbis doubtfully possessed such great power in Palestine that any cursing of schismatics would be immediately accepted.²²⁰ What level of interest did they have in making such an edict?

There is no evidence that Jamneans were establishing a fundamental break between themselves and previous generations.²²¹ There is no evidence that they undertook writing a history of what had transpired prior to their council because continuity existed between the temple and post—temple.²²² Major internal disputes occurred during this period where Shammaites and Hillelites worked to gain an upper hand concerning how they should live under Roman rule.²²³ These internal disputes increase the unlikelihood that the whole of Jamnia stood in unity to banish Jewish Christians from the synagogue, creating a decisive and immediate split that eliminated any possibility of access to the Hebrew scrolls. Jerusalem Christians and Pharisees appear to have co—existed into the 60s as seen in Acts (15:5; 21:20; 23:6) with no reason to believe this immediately changed among all Palestinian synagogues following the temple’s destruction or the council of Jamnia.²²⁴

External patristic evidence should not be ignored, but when compared with the abundance of internal evidence that validates Markan priority, the traditions passed on by these

²²⁰ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 46.

²²¹ J. Neusner, ‘The Pre—70 Pharisees After 70 and After 140’, in J. Neusner and B. Chilton, eds., *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees* (Waco: Baylor Press, 2007), 336.

²²² J. Neusner, ‘Pre—70 Pharisees’, 336.

²²³ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 164.

²²⁴ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 46.

writers comes into serious question. Irenaeus' testimony places Matthew in the early 60s, but the external evidence primarily argues for Matthean priority as opposed to pre—70 composition. The unlikelihood of Matthean priority creates doubt regarding the validity of this patristic tradition, though adherents of the Griesbach Theory will find it more valuable. The Hebrew scrolls argument merits little consideration until corroboration of this decisive synagogue break that eliminated all access to the scrolls is validated.

Pre—70 Internal Evidence

Internal evidence from Matthew places significant focus on the watershed moment of the temple's fall, just as post—70 adherents do. Most scholars date Matthew in the 80s or 90s, but pre—70 adherents may claim these conclusions are based on the destruction of the temple as a single fixed point.²²⁵ While the fall of Jerusalem has a significant place in all three Synoptic Gospels, post—70 adherents claim Matthew contains a striking emphasis on these events. Whereas Mark's account of Jerusalem's destruction is vague, Matthew presents circumstantial knowledge that is commonly thought to signify a composition *vaticinium ex eventu*. Those who argue that the gospel betrays knowledge of Jerusalem's fall may be accused of an unjustifiable anti—supernaturalist presupposition. However, there is acknowledgement that the discourse could reflect Jesus' authentic predictions of the temple's fall that has been coloured by the events of 70.²²⁶

Matthew is said to betray clear knowledge of the destruction in 22:7 with the parable of the Wedding Banquet.²²⁷ There are problems though that have been cited with this *vaticinium ex*

²²⁵ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005), 14.

²²⁶ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 40.

²²⁷ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 14.

eventu reading in Matthew 22. First, Matthew 22:7 is hardly convincing evidence as a Jew writing around the beginning of the war, and familiar with ancient punitive campaigns, could logically foresee this end, assuming this parable refers to the coming of Rome.²²⁸ The description of the king's army destroying the city has been associated with the coming of Caesar's army, though clearly the king represents God. This association is a daring one as it cannot be consistently applied throughout the parable.²²⁹ Further, if the source of the burning city is Isaiah 5:22—25, there is no need to assume the parable is a post—70 rewrite of Rome burning Jerusalem.²³⁰ Ruling out the ability for such a prediction *a priori* or eliminating the potential of an insightful author seeing this end should not be uncritically dismissed.²³¹

Jesus also gives instructions in Matthew about having the right attitude toward temple offerings (5:23—24), oaths and temple ritual (23:16—22). The story of paying the temple tax (17:24—27) also points to a pre—70 composition as it approves paying the tax. It would be odd to find support for this in a post—70 context, as the tax was still required, but the funds were diverted to the worship of Jupiter.²³² Why would Matthew maintain support for these temple rituals in post—70 CE composition, while emphasizing the need to keep Sabbath (24:20)?²³³ Why would an author also antagonize the non—existent Sadducees if the temple had been destroyed? One possibility is these sayings had historical value and served as examples for Matthew's community since the temple still stood at the time of composition.²³⁴

²²⁸ W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 131; R.T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*, 84.

²²⁹ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 599—600.

²³⁰ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 600.

²³¹ R.T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*, 84—85.

²³² R.T. France, *Matthew*, 88.

²³³ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 40.

²³⁴ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 40.

This positive Jewishness of the gospel is said to be a point of difficulty for the post—70 view. While post—70 critics point to anti—Jewish sentiments in the gospel, Matthew takes a surprisingly positive tone towards Jewish scribes in 23:2—3 and 23:23.²³⁵ Contrary to Mark, Matthew offers no explanation for Jewish purification rituals (Matthew 15:2; Mark 7:2—4), which suggests a readership that had yet to forget its roots after severing ties with Judaism.²³⁶

Other dating markers used by pre—70 scholars include the use of ‘rabbi’ or the reference to ‘Zechariah son of Barachiah’. Some interpreters claim that the use of ‘rabbi’ in 23:7—8 reflects post—70 CE verbiage as the term was not used in this way during Jesus’ lifetime. However, information from this era is sparse and Jesus’ life was part of the period in which this word was emerging as an official title. Those who also claim that ‘Zechariah son of Barachiah’ in 23:35 is actually Zechariah son of Baris who was killed during the uprising before the temple’s fall are mistaken. This is probably an interpretative equation of Zechariah 1:1 and the priest named Zechariah that was murdered in the temple courtyard in 2 Chronicles 24:20—22.²³⁷ There are also a propensity of events being reported by Matthew in and around Jerusalem (2:3, 16; 21:10; 27:3—8), which could place the composition near Jerusalem before 70.²³⁸

It is true that some post—70 scholars are subject to accusation that their dating convention is based on an anti—prophetic worldview. However, much of the evidence just discussed also dismisses the historicity of Jesus’ teachings. It is possible that the temple still stood, which is why Jesus antagonizes the Sadducees, addresses proper temple decorum and has a positive Jewish tone. It is also possible these teachings are found in Matthew because they are

²³⁵ R.T. France, *Matthew*, 89.

²³⁶ R.T. France, *Matthew*, 89.

²³⁷ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 14.

²³⁸ W. Hendriksen, *Matthew*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1973), 97.

actual teachings of Jesus. Whether Matthew was composed before or after the temple's fall does not preclude the use of Jesus' historical teachings about Jewish customs. The gospels need not be products of pure redaction to meet community needs, they are also products of what Jesus said and did. Any presupposition that Matthew would not include these teachings if the Jewish—Christian divide had not occurred is as subject to skepticism as are the anti—prophetic adherents.

Pre—70 adherents also question whether Matthew's prophetic discourse betrays knowledge of the events of the Roman—Jewish war. The description in Matthew 24:15—22, specifically verse 21 about the distress of those days never being equalled, lacks precision to the events and outcome of the Jewish war. Matthew lacks reflection on the heightened Jewish nationalism that resulted from this war, further validating the potential of a pre—70 composition.²³⁹ Could an author writing after 70 CE have really described the Roman—Jewish war in such cataclysmic terms? An argument can be made that an author writing from a post—70 vantage point would have softened the language to give the prophecy the precision lacking in Matthew 24.²⁴⁰

A post—70 composition for Matthew also creates an intertextual, theological conflict pertaining to the Gentiles. In the parable of the Wedding Banquet in 22:1—14, Jesus uses 'then' at the start of 22:8—9, which would imply the gentile mission did not begin until after 70. This disagrees with the theology of evangelism in 28:19—20, where Jesus commissions an immediate move toward the Gentiles.²⁴¹ This motif of a divine rejection of the Jewish nation has been used

²³⁹ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 16—17.

²⁴⁰ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 16.

²⁴¹ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 600.

to point toward a later date of composition, yet it appears in the Pauline literature (Romans 9—11). Mathew further states in 10:23 that the mission to Israel must continue until the Son of Man comes, possibly envisioning a final conversion of Israel as Paul did.²⁴²

Another point of consideration is the theological sophistication of Matthew and the possibility that it points to a later date of composition. Matthew is said to have a well—developed Christology and ecclesiastical character, which indicates a date later than 70 CE.²⁴³ There are two problems with this line of argumentation. First, theological sophistication is a matter of opinion, and highly subjective as to what should be considered more ‘primitive’ or ‘sophisticated’. Second, any assumption that pre—70 Christianity was primitive is scholarly presupposition. Does Paul’s pre—70 writing lack Christological and theological sophistication? Christianity can have simultaneous strands of primitive and theological sophistication that were developing at the same time.²⁴⁴

This relates to a final point of consideration, the lack of evidence that Matthew knew the Pauline letters. With a gap of potentially thirty years between Paul and Matthew, it is strange that the two authors have different terminology, theological emphases and unique lists of resurrection appearances.²⁴⁵ Whereas the apostolic fathers consistently betray knowledge of Paul’s writing, Matthew does not. For Matthew to have ignored an author that influential serves as a possible date marker that Matthew is not as far removed from Paul as post—70 scholars allege.

²⁴² R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 601.

²⁴³ R.T. France, *Matthew*, 86—87.

²⁴⁴ R.T. France, *Matthew*, 87.

²⁴⁵ R.T. France, *Matthew*, 89.

Problematic to this line of thought is the belief that Matthew, or any other gospel writer, would have used Paul if his writings were available. The letters of Paul are not conducive as source material for crafting narratives of Jesus' life since they contain little information about Jesus' life and address issues beyond Jesus' time. This line of thinking further assumes that if Paul was available to Matthew, Matthew would have used Paul. While possible that Matthew was written too closely to Paul for use, it also possible Matthew knew Paul and rejected using his writings for any number of reasons. The many possibilities for why one author refused to use another makes this line of argumentation of little value.

The Olivet Discourse is the central focus of this debate with scholars claiming it provides essential proof that Matthew is a post—70 writing. Pre—70 proponents call this conclusion into question on the grounds of anti—supernaturalism and the prophecy being too vague to betray specific knowledge of 70. Certain details in Matthew have often been said to betray the Evangelist's knowledge of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in AD 70 (most notably 22:7 and 23:37–24:20). However, at best, these passages reflect Jesus' predictions of that destruction. If Matthew were writing after 70, he would have been in a position to record details, such as the temple being burned, but fails to do so.²⁴⁶ 'Unless one refuses to believe in the possibility of predictive prophecy (an unjustifiable, anti—supernaturalist presupposition), this argument too collapses.'²⁴⁷

Core to the issue of the date is whether a scholar dismisses any possibility that Jesus predicted the temple's fall, or if the discourse itself represents an authentic prediction from Jesus that has been coloured by the events of 70. 'That Jesus could have predicted the doom of

²⁴⁶ W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Matthew: Vol. I* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 31.

²⁴⁷ C. Blomberg, *Mathew*, NAC, 40.

Jerusalem and its sanctuary is no more inherently improbable than that another Jesus, the son of Ananias, should have done so in the autumn of 62.²⁴⁸ Though it could be argued that the account of Jesus son of Ananias was written by Josephus post—70 and is subject to the same scrutiny, it is reasonable to deduce that Josephus records an authentic tradition.

Josephus also tells of ‘the Egyptian’ (*Antiquities* 20.168—72; *Jewish War* 2.261—65) who led masses to the Mount of Olives, declaring that the walls of Jerusalem would come crashing down and he would become king. This figure was significant enough that he was mentioned in the book of Acts where Paul was mistaken for this enigmatic figure.²⁴⁹ That Jesus and others would see a pending destruction of Jerusalem falls within the prophetic tradition of the temple’s previous decimation by Babylon. There is, therefore, a possibility that even a scholar who adopts an anti—supernaturalist paradigm can acknowledge the potential of Jesus predicting the temple’s destruction. The question that remains is whether the Olivet Discourse evinces knowledge that the writer is, at minimum, conforming a prophecy to the events of the post—70 world.

Matthew is preoccupied with Jerusalem also in the Olivet Discourse as the centre of a corrupt Jewish leadership that no longer existed after 70. A Matthean emendation inserts the Sabbath (24:20) alongside winter as an undesirable time to flee destruction, which lacks purpose if Jerusalem has already fallen.²⁵⁰ There is a further issue with Matthew’s use of εὐθέως (24:29) regarding the celestial sign of the Son of Man’s coming in association with the tribulation of those days. Matthew allows no gap between the tribulation and the parousia, making the Son of

²⁴⁸ J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1976), 16.

²⁴⁹ L. White, *From Jesus to Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 38.

²⁵⁰ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 602—603.

Man's delayed coming more noticeable. This is further exacerbated when acknowledging Matthew's propensity for omitting Mark's use of εὐθύς.²⁵¹

Inserting Sabbath observance into the Markan material is not uncharacteristic of Matthew who has made Torah observance a central issue in his gospel (5:17—19). There is no lack of purpose in this insertion when acknowledging Matthew's emphasis that Jesus is not nullifying Torah. Arguing for a scandalous delay of the parousia in Matthew can be used against pre—70 scholars claiming the discourse is legitimate prophecy as it indicates Jesus was wrong about his own parousia. Conversely, if arguing the discourse is only relaying what Jesus historically said, then the delay of the parousia is no marker of a pre or post—70 composition. This delayed parousia scandal is only applicable if the parousia is the end of the space—time continuum, which is not a given in the current debate.

Pre—70 scholars notice several points in the discourse that they believe indicates Matthew had not seen the temple's end. First, the 'abomination of desolation' at the time of the Roman—Jewish war did not have an immediate connection with end—times events, which makes it unusual that Matthew is not concerned with softening this language to bring it more in line with the actual events.²⁵² As with the previous 'delay of the parousia' issue, this is an unusual argument for validating a prophecy as it seems to indicate the prophecy is mistaken in some regard, which would indicate false prophecy (Deuteronomy 18:22).

Another objection regarding the abomination of desolation is that it cannot refer to the destruction of the sanctuary by Titus as it would have been far too late to take to the hills.²⁵³

²⁵¹ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 603.

²⁵² J. Nolland, *Matthew*, NIGTC, 16.

²⁵³ J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating*, 17.

While this statement is true, Titus destroying the temple is only one of several possibilities that have been suggested in the secondary literature on the subject.²⁵⁴ The fact that the term is mired in opaqueness may well be the best argument for this point as neither Mark nor Matthew connects this Danielic prophecy to a specific event.²⁵⁵

Whereas the original ‘sacrilege’ was the erection of the pagan altar in Jerusalem in 167 BCE, finding a corresponding fulfillment during Jesus’ time is difficult for some scholars.

Nolland has stated,

‘One looks in vain in Josephus’s account of the Jerusalem war for a distinctive event that would stand out clearly as deserving the label “the desolating sacrilege”, and especially for one that marks a sharp divide between a time when people in Judaea were best advised to stay put and a time when they needed to flee at once for their lives (Mt. 24:17—18).’²⁵⁶

Had Matthew intended his readers to understand the abomination as an event lying in the past, he offers no help in clarifying its meaning.²⁵⁷ However, if the reference is so opaque that neither a first century audience nor a future audience would be able to identify it, how can anyone flee when they see this abomination? The desecration of the holy place in some form is the key sign of the pending horror, a sign to be heeded by the reader.²⁵⁸

By attempting to dismiss potential fulfillments in the past through ambiguity, these scholars create a proverbial double—edged sword that brings into question how the abomination could be identified. If none of the first century candidates would qualify, it is difficult to deduce what future iteration would suffice. Likewise, if the abomination were an event from the first

²⁵⁴ See M. Theophilos, *The Abomination of Desolation*, 12—20 for a survey of these views.

²⁵⁵ R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 912.

²⁵⁶ J. Nolland, *Matthew*, NIGTC, 970—971.

²⁵⁷ J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating*, 23.

²⁵⁸ D. Turner, *Matthew BECNT*, 577.

century, either the prophecy was too opaque to be of use to Matthew's readers, or the prediction never came to fruition. A false prophecy does nothing to advance a supernaturalist approach to the text, nor does it guarantee a pre—70 composition. The temple's fall and faithfulness to Jesus' words could be motive enough for inclusion in the text. Of the many valuable criticisms advanced by these scholars, nothing is definitively persuasive in dating Matthew before 70.

Post—70 External Evidence

As previously examined, the external data offers more evidence that the early church believed in Matthean priority than a date pre—70 or post—70. Markan priority has been a fixed point for much of the twentieth century, along with a composition date for Mark of 65 CE.²⁵⁹ Markan priority places the composition of Matthew several years later than Mark as the document needed time to gain authority, be distributed, and become available to Matthew. This suggests the earliest date of composition for Matthew in the early 70s.²⁶⁰ However, if Markan priority is accepted, a date for Mark in the mid—60s is far from conclusive. Irenaeus, Papias and Justin Martyr associate the composition of Mark with the death of Peter, presumably in 64/65 CE.²⁶¹ If this date is accurate, it strains the credibility of Matthew being composed prior to 70. Yet as examined above, these post—apostolic church figures transmitted multiple traditions now widely rejected. This testimony remains speculative, and while it should not be ignored, it cannot serve as a key dating marker.

There is no firm data to establish a date for Matthew's gospel being composed prior to 100 CE. Matthew was quoted by Ignatius in the letter to the Smyrnaeans (1.1), approximately

²⁵⁹ R.T. France, *Matthew NAC* vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 40.

²⁶⁰ L. Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1992), 8—9.

²⁶¹ R. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 13.

dated between 110 and 115 CE, and it was quoted in the *Didache* in the late 90s.²⁶² In this same period the first instance of a Christian claiming authorship for Matthew is the Papias testimony from 120—130 CE.²⁶³ Yet the Papias testimony bears little fruit because the final form of Matthew is not just a collection of sayings and there is no evidence it was written in anything other than Greek.²⁶⁴

Questions also remain as to whether Jesus' earliest followers were truly the authors or capable of composing these documents. The original versions do not bear the associated titles such as 'The Gospel According to Matthew', nor do they claim to be written by eyewitnesses. In the case of Matthew, while someone named Matthew is mentioned in 9:9 the gospel never claims he is the author, rather the author always writes in the third person.²⁶⁵ Matthew also evinces a high—level of education, a rare achievement in the ancient world where illiteracy rates were 90 percent. Jesus' early followers were primarily lower—class peasants who would not have the education to write such documents, nor the Greek background to compose them as Aramaic speakers.²⁶⁶

With a *terminus ad quem* of 100 CE for Matthew's composition, all that can be deduced is a documented surge of reference near the end of the first century. However, an argument can be made that the increased use of Matthew at the end of the century could point to a later date in the century rather than to an earlier one. Why did Matthew gain prominence in the literature of these early second century Christian thinkers? The combination of Matthew being a recent and

²⁶² C. Blomberg, *Matthew NAC*, 40.

²⁶³ B. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 43.

²⁶⁴ B. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic*, 43.

²⁶⁵ B. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic*, 42.

²⁶⁶ B. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic*, 45.

authoritative composition, within 20 years of its being penned, as well as being attributed to a disciple of Christ, may explain the prominence of the book during this period. This is far from conclusive, but neither is the patristic testimony used to place Matthew in the 60s.

Matthew's dependency on Mark allows for examination of the Markan source for any indication of a date for Mark's composition. Papias provides the earliest testimony to Mark in 130 CE, claiming John Mark accurately interpreted Peter's teachings.²⁶⁷ Irenaeus claims that Mark wrote his gospel after the deaths of Peter and Paul, presumably in the mid—60s, a date confirmed by the Anti—Marcionite Prologue.²⁶⁸ Mark uses a number of Latinisms and explains Greek expressions with Latin expressions (12:42; 15:46). It also utilises terms like Syrophoenician, which indicates a Western audience.²⁶⁹ The in—house orientation of Mark aligns well with Roman Christianity; the persecutions in Mark 13 are such as one would see particularly with non—citizens, possibly reflecting a period when both Jews and Christians were subject to persecution.²⁷⁰ The combination of patristic evidence and internal evidence may well point to a Markan composition in the mid to late 60s.²⁷¹

The patristic evidence remains questionable as a dating marker given the objections already discussed pertaining to Matthew. Nevertheless, they do place Mark's composition in the mid—60s, in the Western portion of the empire. Latinisms and the need for explanations offer validity to this Roman hypothesis, while the nature of house churches could well be argued as reflecting a period earlier than the 60s amidst Paul's missionary work. Additional objections

²⁶⁷ M. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 5.

²⁶⁸ J. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 6—7.

²⁶⁹ B. Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: SRC* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 20—21.

²⁷⁰ B. Witherington, *Mark*, 27—31.

²⁷¹ J. Donahue and D. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 44.

could be raised over Mark's knowledge of the Neronian persecution, though statements about Jesus being with wild beasts, promised persecutions, being salted with fire and betrayal to the authorities by family do make a mid—60s setting plausible.²⁷² Further consideration should be given to the amount of time it took the Jesus movement to penetrate Rome itself, possibly around 49 CE when Claudius expelled the Jews over 'Chrestus'.²⁷³ Weighing these many variables, a date for composition between 64 and 70 for the writing of Mark seems most probable.

Post—70 Internal Evidence

For many scholars the destruction of the temple and the historical ramifications of this event are reflected in Matthew and offer the definitive proof that Matthew is a post—70 composition.²⁷⁴ Matthew is a response to the problem that confronted all Judaism (including Christianity): how does one knit together the fragments of the late Second Temple Yahwistic faith, now blown apart in 70 CE by the religious equivalent of a direct meteor hit.²⁷⁵ The gospels reflect a gap of 40—70 years in which the significant and substantial complexity in the writing reveals the 'mutagenic variety and intensity of the social, political, and religious forces bearing down on evolving Christian traditions.'²⁷⁶ Matthew demonstrates an antagonism that is the result of a community engaged in fierce debate with the rabbinic Judaism coming to replace the temple institution that had fallen.²⁷⁷

²⁷² M. Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, CCSS (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 20.

²⁷³ R. Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 30.

²⁷⁴ R. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 1994), 56; P. Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth: King of the Jews* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 18.

²⁷⁵ D. Akenson, *Saint Saul: A Skeleton Key to the Historical Jesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 100.

²⁷⁶ P. Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 19.

²⁷⁷ R. Miller, *The Complete Gospels*, 56.

More than the other synoptics, Matthew engages the Pharisaism that had become dominant after 70, representing the primary opposition of Christians in Syro—Palestine. Matthew’s Jewish worldview is also closest to the rabbinic movement, a post—70 movement that achieved its prominence after the temple fell.²⁷⁸ The use of ‘rabbi’ as a title for Jesus is considered anachronistic by some scholars prior to the period of Jamnia in 85—90 CE. However, this is speculative as rabbi may have functioned as the modern equivalent of ‘sir’ before 70 CE.²⁷⁹ Evidence in Matthew demonstrates that that community had recently been expelled from the synagogue, (5:11) and was competing with the synagogue for true Israel status, which reflects a post—70 world. It is the Pharisees who erect the tombs of the prophets and persecute Christians who follow in the line of those prophets (5:12), meaning that Matthew’s community stands in the direct line from prophets to Jesus.²⁸⁰

Matthew 22:7 is a redactional insertion commonly accepted as an *vaticinium ex eventu* reference to Titus burning Jerusalem in 70 CE.²⁸¹ The king is God who employs a human agent (Caesar) to exercise his judgment as previously done with Assyria, Babylon, and Persia.²⁸² Whether Matthew inserted the verse or Luke removed it, Gundry’s assertion that Isaiah 5 as the source of the parable separates it from Rome is challenged when acknowledging the multivalent nature of these prophetic passages.²⁸³ The Torah declares that God’s judgment will often be synonymous with the arrival of a foreign nation that will bring destruction on Israel (Deuteronomy 28:48). Also, the use of ἐπίμνημι is found only here in the New Testament,

²⁷⁸ R. Gundry, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 42—43

²⁷⁹ M. Theophilus, *The Abomination*, 8.

²⁸⁰ R. Miller, *The Complete Gospels*, 57.

²⁸¹ M. Theophilus, *The Abomination*, 6—7.

²⁸² D. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT, 523.

²⁸³ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 600.

though it is commonly used in the LXX for bringing fire to towns, noticeably for Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE.²⁸⁴ Matthew 22:7 may well offer some support to a post—70 date, though it has been contended this argument is not as critical to the position as others.²⁸⁵

Jesus' contention with the Pharisees is heightened in Matthew, not just in frequency of their appearance but in the battle of synagogue versus church. Matthew's Jesus has established a heightened break with the synagogue, which has now become 'their' synagogue (10:17) and 'your' synagogue (23:34). In contrast with this is 'the church' (18:17) and 'my church' (16:18), which not only stands against the synagogue but now has disciplinary regulations for the community.²⁸⁶ However, Matthew's Jesus can still refer to congregants walking outside of the community boundaries as Gentiles, which indicates Matthew does not see this as Christianity versus Judaism, rather sectarian divide.²⁸⁷

It is indisputable that the use of 'church' precedes 70 as evident from the authentic Pauline letters, but the strong distinction between synagogue and church in Matthew is notable. Jesus' use of church is anachronistic, and the placement in opposition to the synagogue intensifies the anachronism. The fact that Matthew's Jesus can demand Torah obedience and teach in the synagogue on one hand, while criticizing the Pharisees more often than any other gospel and creating a competing gathering on the other, intensifies the Jewish sectarian divide between the groups. The church having its own community regulations and foundation built on

²⁸⁴ J. Nolland, *Matthew*, 587—588.

²⁸⁵ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 43.

²⁸⁶ L. White, *Scripting Jesus: The Gospels in Rewrite* (New York: Harper One, 2010), 314—315.

²⁸⁷ L. White, *Scripting Jesus*, 315.

Peter make Matthew's presentation of the juxtaposition of the church and the synagogue an important piece of information in this debate.

Post—70 bitterness may also account for the Matthean emphasis on the gentile mission, particularly if Matthew was written in Syrian Antioch.²⁸⁸ Gentile proselytes had become a significant part of the empire—wide Jesus movement, placing a potential strain on the inter—church relationship between Jewish and gentile believers. Yet there is also polemic against Jesus' Jewish opponents, which is less developed than John's gospel from the 90s, but still shows significant complexity.²⁸⁹ The collision of these conflicting issues within the Jesus movement are also important data offering insight into what could be a post—70 church.

Evaluation

With no definitive evidence that dates the gospel before or after 70 CE, the total weight of the data can only provide a degree of probability. The argument that Jesus could not have predicted the temple's destruction has little merit for several reasons. While the discourse predicts a time when the temple will be destroyed, which subsequently happened 40 years after Jesus' life, there is a degree of vagueness that is improbable for a completely fabricated prophecy. Details such as who would destroy it, the name of the general or emperor of the time, how long the campaign would last, or specifying the support wall that would remain standing are all missing. Wars, famine and false prophets or messiahs are references to Old Testament ideology and the messianic environment of the first century.

²⁸⁸ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 44.

²⁸⁹ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 44.

The destruction of the first temple had been a subject of tremendous significance to the Old Testament prophets. God declared Babylon an agent of his wrath and Israel's unfaithfulness led to the first temple's fall (Jeremiah 39, 44, 52; Ezekiel 24, 33; Haggai 1; Zechariah 1). Though the prophets consistently warned Judah to turn back from their covenant unfaithfulness, lest they receive the curses God promised (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28), they ignored these messages and the result was catastrophe.

As a first century Jew identifying himself in the line of prophets, living in an era of Imperial domination and political tension, Jesus drawing parallels between Rome and Babylon is plausible. This is further validated when noting that others besides Jesus predict the destruction of the temple in the writings of that time. Jesus adopted a prophetic role in the line of prophets (13:35; 13:57; 21:11) with a message of dire importance to a generation openly rejecting him (11:16; 12:39—45; 16:4; 17:17). It is reasonable to conclude that Jesus possessed the ability to make an historical prediction about the temple, that could later be subjected to redaction as events developed.

The most reliable external evidence indicates that Matthew was in circulation and known by approximately 100 CE. It also offers additional support to a location in the western empire for the origin of Mark, whose style and grammar fits well with a Roman audience. Evangelistic efforts had pushed this messianic Jesus sect to Rome by no later than the 50s CE, creating an opportunity for crafting a narrative conducive to the needs of that community. Though the patristic evidence has at times come into direct conflict with the internal evidence of the gospels, the Roman composition of Mark provides external data to complement the internal data.

Using patristic tradition to date Matthew in the 60s faces the problem of patristic traditions that also place Mark in the mid to late 60s, conflicting with modern conclusions about Markan priority and Matthew's dependence on that text. If one uses patristic testimony to date Matthew in the 60s, the same patristic testimony must be used to date Mark to the mid—60s, creating a difficult scenario in which Matthew and Mark were composed immediately after one another. Additionally, the patristic testimony argues that Matthew was writing before Mark, which is doubtful according to the internal data.

Whether Mark was recording the testimony of Peter or not, this data provides additional support for Mark as a document composed for Roman thinkers in a western empire setting. Matthew appears to be a document designed for a Jewish audience, closer to where the events historically occurred. If these regional conclusions are accurate, Mark's gospel would have needed to come into existence and gain enough credibility to merit replication and travel to different regions of the empire. Then Matthew would need to come into contact with Mark and have adequate time to redact this source material in a significant manner resulting in the creation of his own unique presentation of Jesus. These redactions result not only from additional written material accumulated by Matthew, but also from events that have transpired in the time between the two documents. These many factors raise serious questions as to whether Matthew was a pre—70 composition.

Conflict with the Pharisees by itself brings no resolution as Jesus also had heated conflict with the Sadducees. If Jesus' fight with the Pharisees is attributed exclusively to a post—70 split between church and synagogue, the battle with the Sadducees makes little sense. If the heated battle with the Sadducees is historical, then the battle with the Pharisees should be given

historical merit as well. Why insert the Sadducees in a temple—less world, if the opposition in the text is for a post—70 community? There is nothing implausible about the historical Jesus conflicting with these two groups. It is Matthew’s unique presentation of the Pharisees and the synagogue which is of importance.

Matthew has crafted a narrative tension that does more than put Jesus at odds with the Pharisees, it puts the church and synagogue into conflict. The fact that Matthew’s Jesus speaks of ‘their synagogues’ as a place where the disciples will encounter persecution, at a point in the narrative where Jesus commissions the disciples for an initial mission indicates a significant redaction to the source. Matthew makes this redaction to material found in Mark’s version of the Olivet Discourse, which he has excised from his own version of the Olivet Discourse and placed into Jesus’ second discourse. By placing Olivet material earlier in the narrative, Matthew intensifies the conflict between Jesus’ disciples and the Pharisees, building toward the establishment of a church (16:18) with its own communal rules (18:17). This conflict reaches its climax with the seven—fold ‘woes’ upon the scribes and Pharisees, leading ultimately to Jesus’ public declaration of Jerusalem’s imminent destruction (23:1—39).

Matthew’s Jesus has exacerbated this conflict between synagogue and church by twice declaring Israel to be a house of lost sheep (10:6; 15:24) while opening the doors of the church to non—Israelites (10:5—7; 25:31—46; 28:16—20). While the chief priests and elders plea with Pilate for Jesus’ death, it is Pilate’s non—Israelite wife who receives dreams to have nothing to do with his death. While Pilate washes his hands of innocent blood, Israel declares Jesus’ blood to be on them and their children. Finally, Jesus commissions his disciples to leave the Promised Land in search of non—Israelite converts abroad, abandoning the seat of Pharisical power in

Judaea. It is therefore not just that there is conflict with Pharisees in Matthew, but a level of conflict not found in the Markan source that substantially widens the divide between Jesus and the Pharisees.

The Olivet Discourse in Matthew retains a number of vague and controversial matters of the Markan source, such as the generic nature of famine and the meaning of ‘abomination of desolation’. However, it also anachronistically inserts the *παρουσία* into the discourse, with the disciples asking about a *παρουσία* that has not been previously mentioned. Paul’s use of *παρουσία* prior to 70 CE is a matter of fact, but its placement on Jesus’ lips, found only in Matthew, reflects a concern of Matthew’s community about the meaning of this event. Though Matthew does not answer all of the vague questions of his source, meaning he retains the core history of what Jesus said, he has also significantly altered this prophecy through the addition of substantial material.

Jesus presents the disciples with a prophecy that not only addresses his *παρουσία*, an event Paul associates with the temple (1 Thessalonians 4:13—5:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1—12), but also with a full—scale inclusion of Gentiles in the church (25:31—46; 28:16—20). Though it must be recognised that neither the *παρουσία* nor the Gentiles in the church are subjects that began after 70, Matthew’s need for Jesus to address them in a way unknown to Mark’s Jesus make their presence in the text key data. The rise of rabbinic Judaism following the temple’s destruction comes amidst a national crisis that altered the landscape of Judaea. Meanwhile, Christian evangelists not only declare that Jesus pronounced doom on the temple, they also witness an increasing number of Gentiles as part of those following Jesus, some of whom have suffered death at the hands of Nero. The exceptional level of redaction to the Olivet Discourse

and related passages appear to favour a post—70 church struggling with both their identity and their conflict with the synagogue.

None of the data points provide a definitive answer, but the totality of the evidence indicates that Matthew was composed after 70 CE. When considering the composition date of Mark, the definitive *terminus ante quem* composition date for Matthew determined from external citation, the need for Matthew to redact his source material in a number of ways to create a heightened tension between church and synagogue, and the religio—historical situation that led to these redactions, a date after 70 fits the evidence well. The best evidence for a pre—70 Matthew is external evidence that is speculative and flawed. Arguments about the vagueness of the prophecy are met with the reality that Matthew supplemented that prophecy in a significant manner that indicates a need for such emendations, which also indicates an understanding of the source material on Matthew’s part.

The significance of the temple’s destruction along with the growing number of Gentiles in the Jesus movement are ideal conditions to trigger these amendments. When further considering the frustration, many Jewish Christians may have felt about Gentiles among the believers, after Gentiles had destroyed the temple, makes the need for Matthew’s gospel all the more pertinent. This conclusion is not definitive, but it most accurately considers all of the information available to date.

Chapter Two: Eschatology, Apocalypticism and the Son of Man

Eschatology and Apocalypticism

In order to establish a foundation for the viability of Psalm 80 as a source option for the Sheep and the Goats, it is important to examine the potential genre classifications of the passage. The Sheep and the Goats is the climax of Matthew's Olivet Discourse, which has been the subject of significant genre debate. During the discourse Jesus invokes Old Testament language of the coming Son of Man, heavenly portents, tribulation and a scene of judgment. This passage has been described as both apocalyptic and eschatological, with those terms being used interchangeably at times. These attempts to define the Olivet Discourse by genre are part of a larger debate on locating Jesus himself within the boundaries of an apocalyptic or eschatological teacher.

While attempts have been made to define apocalyptic literature, the genre proves difficult to conform within a single matrix. The Apocalypse Group of the SBL Genres Project suggests that the use of Apocalypse could be defined as,

A genre of revelatory literature within a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.²⁹⁰

This definition is said to apply to sections of several ancient texts including: *1 Enoch*, Daniel, 4 *Ezra*, 2 *Baruch* and Revelation among others.²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ J.J. Collins, 'Toward the Morphology of a Genre', *Semeia* 14 (1979): 9.

²⁹¹ J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 5.

Attempting to define these texts within a genre grouping raises the question as to whether such a genre is in fact historical or ahistorical. The Apocalyptic Group acknowledges that ‘apocalyptic’ is a modern designation and that the use of *apokalypsis* within the manuscripts is not standard, providing an unreliable way of defining texts within the genre.²⁹² These efforts to define apocalyptic as a genre operate partially on a prototypical view where the presence of a distinct schema allows for the establishment framework.²⁹³ Within these texts is there a *Gestalt* structure or a series of common elements which can be used to define each document as part of this genre? How many common elements must these different texts have in order to be considered the same genre?

Hanson is correct that the challenge of defining apocalypticism is rooted in it not being a static system, rather a dynamic movement.²⁹⁴ He attempts to resolve the conflict by defining ‘apocalypse’ as a literary genre and apocalyptic eschatology as a religious perspective on viewing divine plans as they relate to mundane realities.²⁹⁵ Apocalypticism then emerges as a community or movement from an apocalyptic ideology.²⁹⁶ The structure Hanson suggests thoughtfully distinguishes unique aspects of both literature and community movement. Unfortunately, the names he uses are too easy to interchange with one another. Another issue to confront within this paradigm is whether the genre, the movement or ideology is dealing with matters of the space—time continuum coming to a halt, or if larger considerations are in question.

²⁹² J.J. Collins, ‘Toward the Morphology’, 2.

²⁹³ C. Newsom, ‘Spying Out the Land: A Report from Genealogy’, in R. Troxel, K. Friebel, D. Magary, eds., *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 443.

²⁹⁴ P.D. Hanson, ‘Apocalypticism’ *IDBSup* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 29.

²⁹⁵ P.D. Hanson, ‘Apocalypticism’, 29.

²⁹⁶ P.D. Hanson, ‘Apocalypticism’, 30.

The suggestion has been made that even if a text does not fall within the apocalyptic genre, the common elements of apocalyptic writing in a non—apocalyptic text brings the latter under the wider umbrella of apocalyptic literature.²⁹⁷ Likewise, it is suggested that a text can be read apocalyptically if it contains elements of apocalyptic literature but is not itself part of the genre.²⁹⁸ This notion of an apocalyptic reading entails viewing the text with an eye toward imminent eschatological judgment.²⁹⁹ The presupposition here is that apocalyptic literature is focused predominately on the end of the world, which will subject elements of apocalyptic literature in non—apocalyptic texts to a similar world—ending view.³⁰⁰

Examination of the apocalyptic texts reveals that the book of Daniel is a pivotal source emulated by several of these texts in their own compositions. The use of Daniel to meet the religio—historical needs of later generations makes it an essential text for understanding the core components of what defines apocalyptic. The Sheep and the Goats, as well as its larger Olivet Discourse context, incorporates key elements from Daniel with special emphasis on the Son of Man. The Danielic elements in the Sheep and the Goats, as well as other language in the passage, led to the designation of the Olivet Discourse as the ‘little apocalypse’ in the 19th century.³⁰¹ Addressing the classification of the Olivet Discourse is essential both for ascertaining the meaning of the passage and for the argument that Psalm 80 may have been a natural text to appeal to in crafting the Sheep and the Goats. Determining how much the Olivet Discourse has

²⁹⁷ M. Novak, ‘*The Odes of Solomon as Apocalyptic Literature*’, *VG* 66 (2012): 531—532.

²⁹⁸ K. Vandergriff, ‘*Διαθήκη Καινή: New Covenant as Jewish Apocalypticism in Hebrews 8*’, *CBQ* 79:1 (2017): 100—101.

²⁹⁹ K. Vandergriff, ‘*New Covenant*’, 103.

³⁰⁰ This will be further discussed below.

³⁰¹ G. Beasley—Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days: The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1993), 1—31.

in common with texts designated apocalyptic is important for deducing the intended scope of the Sheep and the Goats.

Daniel

Several of the texts classified as apocalypses draw from Daniel's visions as a primary source. The presence of common elements between texts results in part from textual borrowing, which could lend credence to the prototypical theory. Daniel is widely acknowledged to be a product of the second century BCE. Though the book is attributed to a 6th century BCE figure, the presence of foreign loan words, Daniel's location in the *Ketuvim* as opposed to the *Nevi'im*, and the belief that the author betrays a knowledge of the events surrounding the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes are commonly cited as the reasons for this dating.³⁰² Attempts to date Daniel to the sixth century BCE are in the minority, with those scholars focusing on internal evidence and rejecting that Daniel's prophecies are *vaticinium ex eventu*.³⁰³

Second century BCE arguments for Daniel's composition best fit the evidence for its date, meaning Daniel is pseudepigraphically attributed to a figure of the Babylonian exile four hundred years prior. Though the narrative and its visions are placed in the distant past, the

³⁰² Among the scholars arguing for a 2nd century BCE composition: G.R. Driver, *The Aramaic of the Book of Daniel*, JBL 45:12 (1926): 110—119. F.M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), 43; S.R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1900), xlvii—lxxvi; R. Hammer, *The Book of Daniel*, CBCE (New York, Cambridge Press, 1976), 4—8; W. Nelson, *Daniel: Understanding the Bible Commentary Series*, Kindle Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), Location 409—521; D. Gowan, *Daniel*, AOTC Kindle Edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), Location 266—434.

³⁰³ B. Waltke, 'The Date of the Book of Daniel,' *BSAC* 133:532 (1976): 320—329; E. Yamauchi, 'Hermeneutical Issues in the Book of Daniel,' *JETS* 23:1 (1980): 14—21; C. Ray, 'The Date and Authorship of the Book of Daniel,' *JDT* 11:4 (2007): 44—53; T. Longman & R. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 373—375; K. Kitchen, 'The Aramaic of Daniel', Wiseman, ed. *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (1965): 31—79; D. Wiseman, 'Some Historical Problem in the Book of Daniel', D. Wiseman, ed., *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*. (London: Tyndale Press, 1965), 9—18; S. Miller, *Daniel* (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 57; W. Shea, 'Darius the Mede: An Update', *AUSS* 20:3 (1982), 229—247; C. Ray, 'The Date and Authorship of the Book of Daniel', *JDT* 11:34 (2007), 44—53; G. Hasel, 'New Light on the Book of Daniel from the Dead Sea Scrolls', *BSPADE* 24:2 (2011), 44—47.

visions confront a dire situation facing Judaism in the second century BCE. Interpreting Daniel through the prism of second century BCE events could be deemed the Antiochus View, or the belief that the dream of Daniel 2 and the vision of Daniel 7 both focus on the crisis Jews faced from Antiochus IV.

The Antiochus View maintains the four empires represented by Daniel's four beasts are Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece, which gives birth to Syria.³⁰⁴ The division of Greece following Alexander's death is represented by the horns on the fourth beast's head, the little horn being Antiochus IV, the Jewish oppressor of the second century BCE.³⁰⁵ Daniel 11:2 describes four Persian kings that correspond to the four headed third beast and describe Persia's first four kings. Following in 11:3—39 are the details of Alexander to Antiochus Epiphanes. Verses 40—43 describe the destruction of the fourth beast, which is the destruction of Greece at the hands of Rome. Therefore, 'the time of the end' is Greece's destruction.³⁰⁶

The description of the fourth empire as an invincible force (2:40, 7:7) separated into periods of strength and division fits the rise and fall of Greece well. Under Alexander, Greece controlled an empire the size of which even Rome never achieved. The horns of the fourth beast also align well with the kings of the Syrian part of the Greek empire from Seleucus Nicator to Antiochus Epiphanes.³⁰⁷ However, it is also possible that the author intended the ten horns to be

³⁰⁴ Scholars who would affirm this view: Kvanvig, 'Struktur und Geschichte in Dan. 7,1—14'; Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel*; J.J. Collins, *Daniel 7 Hermeneia Commentary*.

³⁰⁵ T. Longman, *Daniel*, NIV AC (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1999), 189; E. Heaton, *Daniel: The Kingdom of the World and the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM Press, 1964), 73; W. Nelson, *Daniel*, UBCS (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), Kindle Location 4198; R. Gurney, 'The Four Kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7', *Themelios* 2:2 (1977), 39.

³⁰⁶ R. Gurney, 'The Four Kingdoms', 39—40.

³⁰⁷ R. Gurney, 'The Four Kingdoms', 44.

the first ten Macedonian kings of Asia beginning with Alexander and ending with Antiochus IV.³⁰⁸

Suffering and redemption are central themes of the book, which addresses multiple tragedies faced by the kingdom of Judah. The text is set during the Babylonian Exile when Judah loses its land and monarchial power structure. The vision of chapter 7 portrays additional upheavals in the power structure of the world with empires rising and falling before Yahweh decisively intervenes. What form this intervention takes is dependent on how one views the purpose of Daniel.

Longman sees Daniel 7 as biblical apocalypse ultimately expecting a violent end to history but radiating with joy as God ends the corruption of the world.³⁰⁹ Willis describes the vision as a construct of divine ideological rule and the divine prerogative of the Most High developing in an absolute and invisible way in imperial history.³¹⁰ Kwon believes Daniel is written as a form of political subversion in which the author refuses to abandon national ideals in his subservient position as a vehicle toward promoting communal good.³¹¹ Cook describes Daniel as revealing demonic power that incorporates itself into earthly structures. The wisdom of Daniel is discerning the times of both history's end and the many events that will occur prior to that end.³¹² Collins describes Daniel's visions as an imaginative construct shaped by mythic paradigms in which historical events are guided by higher powers. 'A concomitant belief is the idea that the course of history is predetermined and that it's end is assured'.³¹³

³⁰⁸ H. Ginsberg, 'The Composition of the Book of Daniel', *VT* 4:3 (1954), 268—269.

³⁰⁹ T. Longman, *Daniel*, 177.

³¹⁰ A.C. Willis, *Dissonance and the Drama of Divine Sovereignty in the Book of Daniel* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 78—79.

³¹¹ J. Kwon, 'Redeeming the National Ideal: Revisiting E.L. Doctorow's "The Book of Daniel" and its Political Implications', *SN* 46:1 (2014): 95—96.

³¹² S. Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 137—138.

³¹³ J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 142.

Daniel's visions present a multi-layered scheme of events concerning the Jewish identity in the midst of Antiochus' persecution. Setting the conflict against the backdrop of the exile creates a historical dialectic between the past and the present that frames the persecution of the second century BCE within the crisis of the 6th century BCE. The little horn of Daniel 7, Antiochus Epiphanes, poses a threat to the Jewish national conscience by outlawing Torah observance in 167 BCE.³¹⁴ The edict to build altars, worship idols, sacrifice unclean animals and leave their sons uncircumcised led many Jews to forsake the Torah, and put those who would not adhere to the edict at odds with the Gentiles.³¹⁵

Daniel 9 recognises that rebellion against God led to their exilic crisis, and that God can reverse the fortunes of the nation. Confronting the horrors of Antiochus' persecution with the exile offers encouragement to Israel's national identity and stokes the fires of political subversion. Both the incidents of the furnace in Daniel 3 and the lion's den of Daniel 6 offer precedent for faithful Jews to defy imperial edict that runs afoul of their religious conscience. Such faithfulness may not result in deliverance for every individual (2 Maccabees 7), but ultimately Yahweh will respond in faithfulness to vanquish the little horn. As the exile came to an end, so too will Antiochus Epiphanes.

Daniel's vision of the four beasts and the Son of Man did not remain bound up exclusively within events of the second century BCE. Several books that have been classified as 'apocalyptic' reuse the Daniel 7 vision to confront religio-political circumstances of later generations. Daniel is described as a mystic experiencing the glory of a heavenly world, which

³¹⁴ A.C. Willis, *Dissonance*, 67.

³¹⁵ 1 Maccabees 1.

becomes a pattern later emulated by other authors.³¹⁶ His visions also present the reality of a world in which empires are represented by beasts and angelic entities battle on behalf of specific kingdoms. The beasts of Daniel 7 and/or the Son of Man have important roles in the *Similitudes of Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and Revelation. The later chapters of Daniel or the whole document were written to confront matters of the second century BCE, but the book continued to later interpreters who used those visions to confront their own specific set of circumstances.³¹⁷

As the Son of Man is the central figure of the Sheep and the Goats, and the Olivet Discourse shares other common features of these apocalyptic texts, they will be briefly examined to understand the evolutionary process undergone by Daniel's vision over approximately three hundred years. This examination will demonstrate how Daniel's writing became a pivotal source for confronting new religio—historical circumstances that occurred after the second century BCE. Three of the texts: *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and Revelation, use Daniel 7 as a means of confronting the temple's destruction at the hands of Rome. The present thesis argues that Matthew's Jesus makes use of Daniel 7 to confront the Roman crisis in the Sheep and the Goats. Understanding these religio—political factors, and the evolutionary development of Daniel, will give further insight into the natural fit of Psalm 80 and its Son of Man figure for the Sheep and the Goats alongside Daniel 7.

The Similitudes of Enoch

Daniel's visionary socio—political writing became a key source for several other texts that re—appropriated his vision to meet the needs of their own time. The *Similitudes of Enoch*

³¹⁶ M. Oeming, 'The Significance of the Old Testament in Twentieth Century Systematic Theology', in M. Saebo, ed., *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament III/2: From Modernism to Post—Modernism* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 190.

³¹⁷ C.R. Seitz, 'Prophecy in the Nineteenth Century Reception', in M. Saebo, ed., *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament III/1: From Modernism to Post—Modernism* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 190.

constitute chapters 37—71 of *1 Enoch*, a document composed in numerous periods by different authors.³¹⁸ The Parthian/Mede allusion in 56:5 may place the date of the *Similitudes* after 168 BCE and before the arrival of Pompey in 64 BCE.³¹⁹ Others suggest a slightly later date between circa 40 BCE and the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.³²⁰ It is probable that the *Similitudes* pre—date *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and the biblical gospels, making it a pseudepigraphical text addressing a post—Seleucid persecution, pre—fall of Jerusalem world.³²¹

The *Similitudes* are dependent upon the vision of Daniel 7, focusing on Daniel’s Son of Man who removes kings that oppress the righteous from their thrones and shine as a light to the Gentiles.³²² The antediluvian figure Enoch is the protagonist of the *Similitudes* who is given three visions/similitudes that are predominately concerned with vindicating the righteous in a climactic moment of judgment against the wicked oppressors.³²³ Contrary to what will be seen in *4 Ezra*, the *Similitudes* do not rewrite Daniel’s four—beast schema, the emphasis is instead on the Son of Man and his identity.

The first parable sets the stage for the judgment theme by contrasting the congregation of the righteous with sinners being driven from the earth (38:1). In these days of wrath and

³¹⁸ E. Isaac, ‘1 Enoch’, J. Charlesworth, Ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 1* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 6—7.

³¹⁹ G. Ladd, ‘The Kingdom of God in the Jewish Apocalyptic Literature Part 3’, *BSAC* 109:436 (1952): 330.

³²⁰ G. Nickelsburg & J. Vanderkam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 6; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 221; E. Isaac, ‘1 Enoch’, 7; L. Walck, ‘The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch and the Gospels and the Gospels’ in G. Boccaccini, *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 300; T. Erho, ‘Historical—Allusional Dating and the Similitudes of Enoch’, *JBL* 130:3 (2011): 493—511.

³²¹ J. Lumpkin, *The Books of Enoch* 2d. ed. (Blountsville: Fifth Estate, 2011), 9; D. Hare, *The Son of Man Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 176—178; J. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 133; R. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (Digital Edition: Global Grey, 2013), location 134; A. Baum, ‘Revelatory Experience and Pseudepigraphical Attribution in Early Jewish Apocalypses’, *BBR* 21:1 (2011): 74.

³²² *1 Enoch* 46—48.

³²³ G. Nickelsburg & J. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation*, 3; G. Ladd, ‘Part 4: The Kingdom of God in 1 Enoch’, *BSAC* 110, no. 437 (1953): 38.

upheaval, Enoch is taken into heaven where he sees the heavenly multitude from Daniel 7:10 (40:1). Enoch witnesses the glorious resting place of the sun and moon, and sees the stars and lightning, which the angel tells him represent the holy ones that dwell upon the earth (41:3—43:4).

It is in the second parable that Enoch encounters the Head of Days (Ancient of Days) and the Danielic Son of Man whose role in the pending judgment becomes clear. The Son of Man will overturn the kings and kingdoms of the earth who do not honour God, but worship idols and who persecute the faithful (46:1—8). The work of the Son of Man culminates in the restoration of the earth, the restoration of those who are in Sheol and the salvation of the righteous. The Son of Man will sit upon the throne of God and he will counsel the world in wisdom (51:1—3). Not only will the lawless be punished, but the fallen angelic beings led by Azazel shall be thrown into the abyss (54:1—6). Angels will stir up the kings of the world who will attack the chosen, but the city of the righteous will stand firm, leading these kings to turn upon one another (56:5—8). These themes of judgment, war, catastrophe and restoration ultimately culminate in the revelation that Enoch is in fact the Son of Man born for righteousness (71:14).

As with Daniel, the *Similitudes* are pseudepigraphical, involve mediating angels to interpret the visionary symbols, describe war against God's righteous and the vindication of the righteous against the wicked nations and rulers (46:3—4; 60:6; 62:3). God will strike back against the wicked nations that have oppressed his chosen and establish the heavenly Son of Man on his own throne. God's judgment will prevail for his people and bring about the restoration of the earth (61:1—13).

Unlike *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, the *Similitudes* are not preoccupied with the recent destruction of the temple. If the general timeframe of composition is accurate, the predominant social upheaval of the period would be Rome taking control of Jerusalem during the power struggle between supporters of Aristobulus and Hyrcanus. This opened the door to Pompey's intervention on behalf of Hyrcanus in 63 BCE, eventually leading to Rome's conquest in 37 BCE.³²⁴ The Idumean Herod was appointed king and began restoring the temple, but there were no signs of impending destruction at the hands of Rome or any other power. Whatever the catalyst for the book, the desire to see the Enochic Son of Man enthroned in heaven to restore Israel's covenantal fortunes is evident.

Central to the present study, Daniel's Son of Man is the key figure in both the Sheep and the Goats and the *Similitudes*. Unlike Daniel and the *Similitudes*, the Olivet Discourse is not a pseudepigraphical text as it does not claim to be written by Jesus, neither was Jesus a figure of the distant past in Matthew. The disciples do not journey into the heavenly realm and there are no angelic mediators explaining a complex scheme of symbols since there is not otherworld needing explanation. Despite being deemed a 'Little Apocalypse', the Olivet Discourse is interconnected with the whole of Matthew's gospel, continuing with the same developing themes of the narrative with no apparent shift in genre or focus. The thematic interconnectivity of the Olivet Discourse will be treated fully in chapter five, but at the present it can be deduced that while Daniel 7 is a link between the *Similitudes* and Matthew, there are significant differences between the texts as well.

³²⁴ M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 52—53.

4 Ezra

The book of *4 Ezra* follows the format of Daniel, pseudepigraphically claiming to be a vision given to the biblical figure Ezra 30 years after the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by Babylon. The book is a composition of the first century CE addressing the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of Rome, approximately 300 years after Daniel.³²⁵ Additionally, as Daniel receives interpretation of his visions through angelic beings, the first three units of *4 Ezra* (3:1—5:19; 5:20—6:34; 6:35—9:25) consist of dialogues between Ezra and an angel.³²⁶

Ezra spends much of the third chapter reminding God of his covenant with Israel as a people distinct from the nations, before turning to the problem of Rome's militant success. The author is perplexed as to why God has allowed Rome to destroy Zion, having observed the wickedness of Zion's oppressors (3:28—32). Uriel serves as the angelic mediator who challenges Ezra's ability to understand events on a divine scale (4:1—12) in a manner reminiscent of Job chapters 38—41. Ezra is confronted with the reality that evil sown in Adam's heart has borne ungodly fruit, but a harvest is coming in which good and evil will both be harvested and separated (4:26—32). This naturally leads Ezra to question when this harvest will come, which is answered by the angel Jeremiel, who tells him that the full measure of the harvest must grow to complete proportions before the reaping can commence (4:33—4:43).

In the face of national crisis, *4 Ezra* is concerned not only with the devastation of Israel's defeat, but why God would allow a wicked nation like Rome to prevail against his covenant people. The author is not content to accept the tragedy as he also desires Rome to face the just

³²⁵ B. Metzger, 'The Fourth Book of Ezra', J. Charlesworth, Ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 1* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 517; M. Stone, *A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 10; J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 242.

³²⁶ J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 246.

penalty for its own sins. Appealing to the Babylonian typology of the book, *4 Ezra* uses the prophetic language of destruction found in Isaiah 13, which describes the coming destruction of Babylon. Ezra is told that the darkening of the sun and moon shall occur, terror will seize the earth, and the ruling power that Ezra sees shall be left desolate (5:1—3). Rome will be judged for her actions in concert with the four—empire model from Daniel 7, which *4 Ezra* reinterprets to make Rome into the fourth terrifying beast.

The fifth vision in the book presents an eagle with twelve wings and three heads who is confronted by a creature like a lion from the forest who destroys the eagle (11—12). Ezra seeks an explanation from God who tells him the eagle is the fourth kingdom of Daniel’s chapter 7 vision, identifying the source of the vision (12:10—11). In the sixth vision a man comes from the sea, flying in the clouds, which causes a multitude from the four directions of the earth to make war against him. After vanquishing his enemies and calling a new peaceable multitude to himself, God again explains the vision, identifying the man from the sea as his son who vanquishes the ungodly multitude and restores the 10 tribes of Israel dispersed by Assyria (13).

By reimagining Daniel’s imperial schema, *4 Ezra* is able to confront the impending fate of both Israel and Rome, just as Daniel did with the Seleucid crisis. The new description of the fourth beast as a three—headed eagle conforms to Rome’s use of the eagle as its symbol, found on its imperial standards.³²⁷ The Ancient of Days would vanquish Daniel’s fourth beast for persecuting the people of God (Daniel 7:11f), thus *4 Ezra* envisions God punishing Rome through his Messiah (*4 Ezra* 12:10—34).³²⁸ This approach to theodicy assures the reader that

³²⁷ M. Stone, *Fourth Ezra, Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 348.

³²⁸ B. Metzger, ‘The Fourth Book of Ezra’, 517.

Israel has not been usurped, Jupiter has not prevailed over Yahweh and the covenant of the righteous remains intact.

The second fall of Jerusalem is not without problems in the original Danielic vision as the author imagined the fourth beast's destruction would pave the way for an everlasting kingdom (Daniel 7:11—14). In what would have been the ultimate display of God's everlasting kingdom arriving on earth, Israel did not defeat Rome in a triumphant battle led by the Messiah. For *4 Ezra* this means that the Messiah is yet to come. The Son of Man has yet to take his throne, requiring a vision to exposit on Israel's newest setback.

In the present attempt to compare the Olivet Discourse in Matthew with *4 Ezra*, both authors appealed to Daniel 7 for their understanding of Jerusalem's fall, but their results are strikingly different. Whereas *4 Ezra* believes the Messiah is to come and redeem, Matthew argues the Messiah has already come, leading to the question: How can Jesus of Nazareth have been the Messiah if Rome was victorious? This important question will be answered below in detail, but other apocalyptic texts must be discussed before Matthew's answer to the problem of Rome's victory can be elucidated and the discourse defined by genre.

2 Baruch

The text *2 Baruch* has much in common with *4 Ezra*, being another document written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE while using the 586 BCE destruction by Babylon as the setting for the tragedy. It is possible that *2 Baruch* is textually dependent on *4 Ezra*, showing an advanced level of theological development, with both texts capturing the *Zeitgeist* of their

time.³²⁹ While Ezra was a post—exilic figure, Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch experienced the destruction and exile placing the setting of this book around the 586 BCE destruction.

God calls Baruch as a witness to the sins of the two remaining tribes of Israel, claiming their sins are greater than those of the ten tribes led into captivity (1:2). The author sets the stage early for Israel losing the Roman—Jewish war as a result of covenant infidelity (Deuteronomy 28:49f). Baruch is instructed to warn Jeremiah and the other faithful Israelites living in Jerusalem to flee from the city as their works and prayers are a support to Jerusalem (2:1f). While the Lord assures Baruch that the city and people are only delivered up for a certain period of time, he also declares that the loss of the temple does not affect the eternal reality of Paradise or the heavenly temple (4:1—6). God is adamant that Rome is not defeating Israel, rather they are temporary judges over the nation (5:2—4).

The destruction of Jerusalem occurs in conjunction with Baruch witnessing heavenly beings carrying torches, removing the implements of worship from the Holy of Holies, the veil leading into the Holy of Holies and the priestly vestments (6:4—8). At the command from a heavenly voice, the angels at the four corners of the city break the corners of the wall for the Chaldeans to enter and destroy Zion (8:1—5). Baruch is dismayed that God would allow the nations to destroy Jerusalem, but God informs him that his judgment is impartial, and that the nation will be judged for their unrighteous actions against the earth (13:1—12).

Baruch is told that a time of great tribulation is coming, one filled with violence, rape, war and the presence of demonic beings (27:1—15). The Lord decrees that when violence erupts

³²⁹ A Klijn, '2 Baruch', in J. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 617; M. Henze, '4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: The *Status Quaestionis*', in M. Henze & G. Boccaccini Eds., *Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch: Reconstruction After the Fall* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 4; T. Novick, 'Between First—Century Apocalyptic and Seventh—Century Liturgy: On 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and Qillir', *JSJ* 44 (2013): 356—357.

on the earth, he will only protect the Promised Land as the Messiah begins to be revealed (29:1—3). When the Messiah is revealed, the dead will rise: the righteous rise to a life of joy and the wicked will waste away (30:1—5). It is in the wake of tragedy that Baruch implores the people to return to the Torah as the Mighty One will surely protect them when creation is shaken, if they are faithful (32:1—3).

A vision of particular importance begins in chapter 36 where Baruch sits weeping amidst the ruins of the temple. Baruch falls asleep and has a vision of a forest surrounded by high mountains when suddenly a vine arises with a running fountain beneath the vine (36:1—3). The fountain submerges and then uproots the entire forest. It overthrows the surrounding mountains, leaving only one great cedar (36:4—6). The vine then confronts the cedar as being from the forest of wickedness, having brought nothing but evil through its many years (36:7). While the cedar is burnt the vine grows and fills the land with everlasting flowers, and then Baruch awakens (37:1).

Baruch asks the Lord to interpret the vision, and God explains that the kingdom which destroyed Zion will itself be destroyed and subjected to a second kingdom, which will also be destroyed. It is followed by a third before the fourth mighty kingdom arises (39:3—5). This fourth kingdom will rule like the forest, but many times over, with many people soiling themselves by running into the kingdom (39:5—6). However, the fourth kingdom shall meet its end when the fountain and vine, the Messiah, uproot the forest (39:7). As for the last great cedar, it is the last ruler of that dreadful fourth kingdom that will be reproved by the Messiah before he kills the cedar (40:1—2). The Messiah will then reign until the world of corruption has come to an end (40:3).

Following the pattern seen with the *Similitudes* and *4 Ezra*; *2 Baruch* uses Daniel 7 as an allegory for the political upheaval of his time. The author has conflated the roles of the first beast and the fourth beast, using the Roman desecration of the temple in association with Babylon, while also predicting the doom of Rome as the fourth beast at the hands of the Messiah. Rome's victory can only mean that the Messiah has yet to come. However, when he does Rome will meet a disastrous end as recompense for the horror it has brought on Israel and the sin it has brought to the earth.

The relationship of Israel to its destroyers is a matter of some difficulty in *2 Baruch* as Rome's imperial reign was firmly established at the time of writing. Does the author's belief that Rome will meet its end at the hands of the Messiah necessitate taking up the sword against the fourth beast? Rather than looking for the decline of Rome, Baruch implores the people to enjoy themselves in the midst of their sufferings and prepare their souls for the coming reward. This passivity towards vengeance seems to endorse Israel's patience and Torah faithfulness in preparation for the Messiah's arrival.³³⁰ Further validation for this conclusion can be found in 13:3 and 86:1—2 where Baruch is assured that his testimony will continue on when the people assemble, despite the absence of the temple.³³¹ The choice of Baruch as the protagonist is of importance as Baruch did not live to see Israel's return from exile.

Matthew's Olivet Discourse differs from *2 Baruch* in several ways, pertaining to both genre and substance. As with the *Similitudes* and *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* relays a vision of heaven and earth through a figure from the distant past, which Matthew does not. Both texts make Daniel 7 a central portion of how they understand the events of 70 CE, but with differing emphases.

³³⁰ F. Murphy, '2 Baruch and the Romans', *JBL* 104:4 (1985): 663—664.

³³¹ M. Whitters, 'Baruch as Ezra in 2 Baruch', *JBL* 132:3 (2013): 577.

Whereas *2 Baruch* declares that judgment will come on Rome for trampling Jerusalem, Matthew makes no such claim. On the contrary, when the Sheep and the Goats is interpreted in chapter five of this thesis, it becomes evident that Matthew's Jesus did not envision any act of vengeance by God on these gentile perpetrators.

An important image found in *2 Baruch* 36—40 is significant for the examination of Psalm 80. The vision of the vine rebuking the cedar, which is the Messiah rebuking Rome, is not found in Daniel 7. When the Messiah—vine arrives and defeats the fourth beast, the last ruler is bound and taken to Zion where he is vanquished by the Messiah. Then the Messiah will protect God's people in God's chosen place, which is the Promised Land presumably (40:1—2). The correlation of the vine and the Promised Land is also an important theme in Psalm 80:8—9 where the vine is taken from Egypt and the nations are cleared out for the vine to be planted.³³²

Psalm 80 may well have been a natural text for the author of *2 Baruch* to use as both Psalm 80 and Daniel 7 speak of the 'Son of Man'. The Son of Man in Psalm 80 is not a heavenly figure as he is in Daniel 7, but he is a kingly figure. Psalm 80 will be fully treated in the next chapter, but for the present discussion the Messiah—vine of *2 Baruch* has at least some level of earthly rule, as does the Psalm 80 Son of Man. Baruch's connection from vine and kingly Son of Man in Psalm 80 to Messiah—vine in his own vision, which comes after the four world empires that are superseded by Daniel's Son of Man, unites the Psalm and Daniel in *Baruch*.³³³

The significance of this potential relationship will be further developed in the next chapter, but for the present discussion there is the importance of recognizing that Psalm 80 and

³³² L. Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 279.

³³³ A. Streett, *The Vine and the Son of Man: Eschatological Interpretation of Psalm 80 in Early Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 151—152.

Daniel 7 have a proposed relationship within the apocalyptic text of *2 Baruch*, just as the current thesis proposes the same two texts have a relationship in Matthew 25:31—46. While Daniel 7 may be categorised as apocalyptic writing, Psalm 80 is not, but it does not prevent a possible eschatological interpretation of the psalm in *2 Baruch*.³³⁴ If a non—apocalyptic text like Psalm 80 can be interpreted eschatologically, then it is also possible that Daniel 7 could be interpreted in a non—eschatological manner.

Revelation

The Revelation to John is a post—temple Christian apocalypse containing passages that share common language with the Olivet Discourse. Those who read Revelation as a book describing the end of the space—time continuum may see the similar descriptions between certain passages and deduce the Olivet Discourse is also describing the end of the world. Comparing Revelation to Matthew’s Olivet Discourse provides insight into how different Christian authors addressed the Roman—Jewish war and the coming Son of Man.

Revelation sits apart from *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* as the only apocalypse of the three that was written after the Roman—Jewish war promoting Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. While *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* set their stories hundreds of years before the events they are writing about, Revelation is set in the author’s present circumstance, facing prison for his preaching and testimony of Jesus Christ. The apocalypse is sent to seven historical churches of Asia Minor in the first century CE.

John’s Revelation was written after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE for several reasons. The rise of the persecution of Christians for failure to worship the imperial cult is

³³⁴ A. Streett, *The Vine and the Son of Man: Eschatological Interpretation of Psalm 80 in Early Judaism*, 151.

alluded to several times in Revelation.³³⁵ The earliest definitive evidence for Christians being legally required to worship the emperor come in 113 CE in a letter written by Pliny to Emperor Trajan.³³⁶ While the Neronic persecution may account for John's writing to encourage the churches of Asia Minor, this can be seen as problematic since there is no evidence that Rome was persecuting Christians in Asia Minor in the 60s CE. However, the letters of Paul and Acts both claim that Christians were persecuted in various locations around the empire, though not by the emperor himself. The descriptions of persecution in the letters are of the synagogue of Satan (2:9; 3:9), the devil casting Christians into prison (2:10) and Satan's throne (2:13). Such persecutions are occurring simultaneously in the spiritual and earthly realms, but nothing definitively Roman is described in the letters.

Both Irenaeus and Eusebius placed Revelation during the reign of Domitian at the end of the first century, during a persecution that deemed him to be Nero's successor.³³⁷ The emphasis on persecution by the synagogue may have been intensified by Palestinian Jews who migrated to Asia Minor after the temple's destruction, maintaining their distrust of Christianity from the time prior to their move.³³⁸ However, this conclusion is tenuous at best considering there was no single moment that created the split between Palestinian Jews and Christianity that led to complete persecution of Christians by Palestinian Jews.

The prospect of Revelation as a pre—70 CE document addressing the Roman—Jewish war and the Neronian persecution has been postulated, though it remains a minority position.³³⁹

³³⁵ See Revelation 13:4—8, 15—16; 14:9—11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4

³³⁶ G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 5. Scripture reference from note 30 also provided by Beale.

³³⁷ C. Keener, *Revelation: NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 35—36.

³³⁸ C. Keener, *Revelation*, 37.

³³⁹ S. Gundry and C. Pate, 'Introduction', in S. Gundry & C. Pate, eds., *Four Views on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 14.

Revelation was written in the last decade of the first century CE, rejecting participation in the imperial cult and to explain why Jerusalem was destroyed.³⁴⁰ Revelation stands apart from *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* in its belief that Rome had successfully defeated the Jews protecting Jerusalem, after the Messiah had arrived. *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* were composed in the aftermath of tragedy with the hope that the Son of Man would eventually come to restore Israel's losses.

Revelation confronts the potential paradox of how the Messiah, who is also the Son of Man in Revelation, could have arrived while the fourth beast continues to reign on earth. The Son of Man in Revelation will be further addressed below as this section will briefly focus on the sixth seal. Revelation 6:12—17 contains several similarities to Matthew 24:29—31 in describing judgment upon the earth. Disruption of the heavenly bodies is a feature of several apocalyptic books (*1 Enoch* 80:4—7; *Sibylline Oracles* 3:801—802; *4 Ezra* 5:405), though the language is taken from Old Testament prophecy (Joel 2; Isaiah 13, 34).³⁴¹

The judgment of the sixth seal comes in response to the martyrs slain for the word of God asking the Lord how long he will wait before avenging their blood. Revelation 6:13—14a describes the stars of heaven falling to the earth and heaven splitting like a scroll. The influence for this description is Isaiah 34, which describes God bringing judgment on Edom on Zion's behalf.³⁴² Isaiah 13 and 34 portray the pending destruction of gentile nations by Yahweh for their treatment of Israel. Revelation brings prophetic judgment language into a church context, providing a response to the oppressed Jesus movement.

³⁴⁰ L. White, *From Jesus to Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 282—288.

³⁴¹ L. Morris, *Revelation*, TNTC (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1987), 110.

³⁴² G.K. Beale, *Revelation*, NIGTC, 396.

Tension between the church and the empire is present as the beast from the sea, possibly representing Rome, stands in contrast to the eternal Son of Man.³⁴³ Nero may well be the antithesis figure to Christ described in John's 666, though larger issues pertaining to the imperial cult are evident in the form of blasphemous names on the beast's heads.³⁴⁴ Those who prefer a strictly futurist interpretation of the book will bypass Rome altogether to a future empire, though the possibility of a returned Nero or one like him is not beyond the scope of interpretation.³⁴⁵

Passages like Isaiah 13, 34 and Joel 2 are not descriptions of the end of the space—time continuum, but this does not prevent Cook from writing, 'Far from some preliminary judgment, this can only represent history's end'.³⁴⁶ Cook's surety reflects much of the treatment the Olivet Discourse and the Sheep and the Goats has received. Old Testament judgment language used in apocalyptic literature becomes end of the world language by virtue of the apocalyptic genre. These conclusions then carry forward into the Olivet Discourse, which also gets categorised as apocalyptic writing because it contains 'apocalyptic' language.

The Olivet Discourse does not contain 'apocalyptic' language, it contains prophetic language that was later used by apocalyptic writers. The next section will address the terms apocalyptic and eschatological to establish a working definition for the present research. Matthew and Revelation may draw from common sources, but this does not guarantee they are using those sources in the same manner. Revelation is a visionary book describing an

³⁴³ A.Y. Collins, 'The Book of Revelation' in J.J. Collins, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism: Volume 1* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 396—397.

³⁴⁴ A.Y. Collins, 'The book of Revelation', 394—398; S. Scherrer, 'Signs and Wonders in the Imperial Cult: A New Look at a Roman Religious Institution in the Light of Revelation 13:13—14', *JBL* 103:4 (1984): 599.

³⁴⁵ D. Turner, 'The Doctrine of the Future in John's Writings', in J.J. Collins, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism: Volume 1* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 215—216; F. Gumerlock, 'Nero Antichrist: Patristic Evidence for the Use of Nero's Naming in Calculating the Number of the Beast (Revelation 13:18)', *WTJ* 68 (2006): 354—356.

³⁴⁶ S. Cook, *Apocalyptic Literature*, 204.

otherworldly vision taking place partially in heaven. The Olivet Discourse is a teaching of Jesus to his disciples describing coming events surrounding the destruction of the temple. Preterists may understand Revelation to also address the events of 70 CE, yet the setting and development of Matthew and Revelation are different.

Having briefly examined these apocalyptic texts, attention shall now be turned to the classification of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew. How should the discourse be defined? Is it an apocalypse, or is there another way to define the discourse that is more conducive to its scope? What is the meaning of the Sheep and the Goats, and how would a reading that includes Psalm 80 in the background of the text present a context to its intended historical significance?

Defining the Apocalyptic and the Eschatological

There are parallels between Matthew's Olivet Discourse/the Sheep and the Goats, and the three Apocalyptic texts analysed above. The *Similitudes*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and Revelation all turn to Daniel 7 for answers to the religio—political upheavals of their time, as does Jesus in Matthew. Of the four comparative texts, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, Revelation and Matthew all address the crisis of the Roman—Jewish war and the meaning of that war for Israel's future.

Several important differences also become evident in the comparison of these texts for the determination of the classification of the Sheep and the Goats. Matthew's Olivet Discourse is a teaching discourse of Jesus connected with the other four discourses of his gospel narrative. None of the disciples are being brought into a visionary world of beasts and talking vines, nor does any angelic being mediate the understanding of these visions. On the contrary, much of what Jesus tells the disciples is relayed as fulfillment of trajectories from the Old Testament for which Jesus offers no explanation.

The ‘apocalyptic’ portion of the discourse begins after Jesus publicly laments Jerusalem declaring ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος. This statement leads the disciples to point out the beautiful stones of the temple as they are leaving Jerusalem, only to have Jesus state Οὐ βλέπετε ταῦτα πάντα; ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῆ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ καταλυθήσεται (24:2). With their curiosity peaked the disciples ask Jesus Εἰπέ ἡμῖν πότε ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος; (24:3). The disciples seek clarification of Jesus’ statements, which he gives them in the discourse without any otherworldly entity offering interpretation. In other words, no angel explains a vision because this is not a vision. It is Jesus explaining the Daniel 7 vision of the past within the confines of his prediction of the coming crisis. Such an approach to the text is markedly different than what is seen in the apocalyptic *Similitudes*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, *Revelation* and *Daniel*.

As the discourse progresses, Jesus tells the disciples that when they see τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιήλ τοῦ προφήτου standing in the holy place, they should flee to the mountains. Jesus offers no explanation for this abomination, it is the explanation, one which he expects the disciples to understand as a clear sign that it is time to flee Jerusalem. Rather than giving a vision that he or an angel then explains, Jesus speaks as a prophet relaying imminent catastrophe, explaining that Daniel’s abomination is about to occur. The ‘apocalyptic’ language is the explanation because it is imminent.

The disciples ask a two—fold question with two interrogative markers of ‘when’ and ‘what sign’ will happen to know ‘these things’, the temple’s destruction, are occurring.³⁴⁷ On many occasions during this discourse, Jesus uses the second person plural ‘you’ in reference to the disciples asking the questions, the expectation being that some of them will encounter parts

³⁴⁷ R.T France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 894.

or all of these events.³⁴⁸ Jesus raises the stakes of his declaration by saying οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται (24:34)

Both the imminence that Jesus attaches to the coming of these events, and the association of this discourse with apocalypticism and the ‘end of the world’ have led to conclusions that Jesus either falsely predicted the end or expected his audience to understand radical shifts in time from their present to the distant future, back to their present and back to the distant future. Both paradigms have been put forward and both are problematic based on the available information.

Allison’s presentation of Jesus as a ‘millenarian prophet’ accurately summarizes the notion of Jesus’ failed prophetic worldview:

So Jesus becomes the visionary, like Daniel. As he watches, thrones are set. He beholds the queen of the South rising from the dead. He sees those who repented at the proclamation of Jonah condemning those who have not repented at the proclamation of one greater than Jonah. Nothing will be hidden. Whatever is covered up will be uncovered. Jesus’ generation, however, passed away. They all tasted death. And it is not the kingdom of God that has come but the scoffers who ask, “Where is the promise of his coming? For all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” Jesus the millenarian prophet, like all millenarian prophets, was wrong: reality has taken no notice of his imagination.³⁴⁹

The fact that the historical Jesus spoke of the coming ‘Son of Man’ is independently attested in Mark (8:38; 13:26; 14:62), Q material (Luke 17:24,26—27/Matthew 24:27,37—39; Luke 12:8—9/Matthew 10:32—33), L material (Luke 21:34—36), and M material (Matthew 13:40—43).³⁵⁰ The Son of Man is also directly tied to judgment (Matthew 25:31—46). In the failed prophet model this means that the Son of Man would come soon, bring about his kingdom on

³⁴⁸ See 24:4, 6, 9, 15, 20, 23, 25, 26, 32, 33, 34, 42, 44, 47; 25:13.

³⁴⁹ D. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 218.

³⁵⁰ B. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 144—145.

earth, and create a new world without war, sin, hatred, or death.³⁵¹ However, this conclusion assumes that Jesus' use of language found in apocalyptic literature should also be deemed apocalyptic. It also assumes that the premise of Jesus' teachings was an imminent end of the space—time continuum, a thesis that is problematic.

Wright has presented a strong case for examining apocalyptic writing as a genre that is not focused on the end of the space—time continuum. It is an examination of Israel's oppression and future after disaster.³⁵² In the previous examination of the *Similitudes*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and Revelation, the visions are not driven by the hope that the world will end, they are operating under the belief that God will restore Israel and vanquish their enemies. The description of the Son of Man, the lion, or the vine, victorious in battle over an earthly foe, and reestablishing the Promised Land offers hope for a present world reality. Why is there the need for an earthly battle and convening of the people at Zion if God was to immediately end the world and begin eternity?

Wright has been accused of attempting to domesticate the radical and cosmic expectations of ancient apocalyptic groups, creating an apocalypticism where God acts decisively to continue a mundane world.³⁵³ Such a critique misrepresents the position by claiming that God acting in a history changing event, that does not end the space—time continuum, simply perpetuates a 'mundane' world. The portrayals and writings of Christ's apostles dispute such a notion that life after the resurrection was merely 'mundane' because the world did not come to an immediate end.

³⁵¹ B. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic*, 161.

³⁵² N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 282.

³⁵³ S. Cook, *Apocalyptic Literature*, 40.

There is legitimacy in considering what language is metaphorical versus literal; a central problem in confronting the apocalyptic genre. Should the various cosmic phenomena such as the darkening of the sun and moon, meteorites and other activity within creation be read with a stringent literal understanding, or can they be understood as the movement of Yahweh and the cosmic significance of his actions?³⁵⁴ Allison doubts the validity of a non—literal reading of heavenly portents, suspecting the poetry of passages such as Isaiah 13 is in fact quite literal.³⁵⁵ Yet a reading of Isaiah 13, and its prediction of doom upon Babylon at the hands of Medes, speaks directly to the language of cosmic upheaval within the confines of socio—political upheaval in history.

Isaiah’s oracle speaks of the coming day of the Lord to make the land desolate and destroy sinners from its midst (13:9), the darkening of the sun and moon (13:10) and the punishment of the world for its iniquity (13:11), all in describing the Median overthrow of Babylon, not the end of the world. Though it is possible that the prophet was simply mistaken about what he imagined to be the end of the world, it seems unusual that such a prophecy would not only be adopted as authentic scripture, but also continue to influence other authors centuries after its failure was apparent.

Further, if it could be determined that the author of a text, such as the *Similitudes*, believed the world was heading toward imminent destruction, this does not require Jesus had a similar belief. Allison remarks that had Wright lived in the time of Noah, he would commend the righteous herald for his metaphor, while fatally failing to check the weather.³⁵⁶ The irony of this statement being that as literal as flood waters might be, the world did not end after this act of

³⁵⁴ N.T. Wright, *New Testament*, 285.

³⁵⁵ D. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 160.

³⁵⁶ D. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 160 n.240.

judgment. This non—world ending act of judgment is also what Jesus compares the παρουσία of the Son of Man to in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:36—39).

Complicating this debate is the use of the word ‘eschatology’ to describe the Olivet Discourse and other sayings of Jesus, making the Sheep and the Goats an ‘eschatological’ teaching.³⁵⁷ If the Olivet Discourse is a ‘little apocalypse’ is it also eschatological in nature? If Jesus presents an eschatological teaching, does that also make him an apocalyptic prophet? Various attempts have been made to distinguish the apocalyptic from the eschatological, with varying degrees of success.

Collins argues for two basic types of early Christian apocalypses that focus on the mode in which the vision is received. Type I involves the primary mode of revelation through vision or audition, while Type II is revelation through an otherworldly journey.³⁵⁸ These types contain various sub—categories based on variation in the eschatological content.³⁵⁹ Revelation is an example of a Type I apocalypse featuring cosmic or political eschatology, with an expectation of cosmic destruction and renewal.³⁶⁰

An interesting feature of Collins’ divisions is the mutual use of apocalypticism and eschatology, where the form of eschatology dictates the genre type of the apocalypse. Eschatology is ill—defined, however, creating questions as to what eschatology means. Is eschatology the end of the world, the end of epoch or something else? Are eschatology and

³⁵⁷ D. Wenham, *Gospel Perspectives: The Rediscovery of Jesus’ Eschatological Discourse* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1984), 1.

³⁵⁸ A. Y. Collins, ‘The Early Christian Apocalypses’, *Semeia* 14 (1979): 60—61.

³⁵⁹ A. Y. Collins, ‘The Early Christian Apocalypses’, 60—61.

³⁶⁰ A. Y. Collins, ‘The Early Christian Apocalypses’, 63.

apocalypticism inseparable? Does apocalypticism require some form of eschatology or can the two exist apart from one—another?

Miller's attempt to distinguish eschatology from apocalypticism begins by defining eschatology as 'a set of beliefs about the end of the world'.³⁶¹ However, he then adds that this can be the destruction of the physical world, or transforming the natural world into a miraculous, disease free existence. It can also mean social, political, and religious movements, though the historical Jesus focused on the culmination of history.³⁶² Apocalypticism then is a sub—category of eschatology which envisions the end of history coming soon, meaning all apocalypticism is eschatological, but not all eschatology is apocalyptic.³⁶³ This would appear to mean that any book deemed apocalyptic by genre would then be a book about the end of the world, which greatly generalizes the diverse nature of apocalyptic texts.

A similar effort was undertaken by Crossan who uses the word eschatology to describe various degrees of world negation, with apocalyptic referring to an imminent end of the world as found in the coming Son of Man teachings from the gospels.³⁶⁴ This effort by Crossan attempts to prevent slipping from apocalyptic to eschatological yet leaves room for confusion. If Jesus is an apocalyptic prophet are his teachings part of the apocalyptic genre? Are all of his prophecies exclusively apocalyptic or can an apocalyptic prophet also present eschatological prophecy?

World—Ending Eschatology and Cataclysmic Eschatology

Apocalyptic will be used to define a genre of literature from this point forward, a type of writing that features various criteria. Books such as Daniel, the *Similitudes*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*

³⁶¹ R. Miller, 'Introduction', in R. Miller, ed., *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2001), 5.

³⁶² R. Miller, 'Introduction', 5—6.

³⁶³ R. Miller, 'Introduction', 6.

³⁶⁴ J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 238.

and Revelation can all be categorised as part of the apocalyptic genre in this model. Common trends can be observed in these texts, though not all of the criteria are fulfilled by every text. These texts focus on encountering otherworldly realms, beings and the use of visionary symbols to describe events taking place in either heaven or on earth. Explanations of the vision often comes from angelic beings or God himself. At times the person receiving the vision is a great hero of the distant past, though this is not exclusively the case as seen with Revelation. Defining apocalyptic as a genre does not determine whether the book is or is not focused on the 'end of the world'. It is the primary style of the book, following certain patterns that recur from text to text.

By this definition the Olivet Discourse is not apocalyptic, because the discourse does not occur in a book that follows the core characteristics seen in the previous texts. Matthew is part of the gospel genre that has a literary relationship with other texts such as Mark, John, the Gospel of Peter and others. The Olivet Discourse will not be referred to as a 'little apocalypse' because apocalypse is being used to describe a genre. Some of the language in the Olivet Discourse may be found in books accepted as apocalyptic, but it is a discourse found in a gospel and will be treated within the genre of gospel.

Eschatology then will be used to define various kinds of sayings or teachings found in various genres, including apocalypses, gospel, and epistles among others. As *eschaton* means 'end', eschatological sayings will denote some kind of end, but not necessarily the end of the world. Apocalyptic literature has been associated with the 'end of the world', but Daniel does not explicitly talk about the end of the world, and in *I Enoch* it is only briefly mentioned.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ J.J. Collins, *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 34.

Further, the contention that apocalyptic texts are not focused on the end of the space—time continuum, makes it even more critical to distinguish apocalypse from eschatology, and to determine what is ending.³⁶⁶

Eschaton may mean end, but there are many things that can come to an end, including: the world, empires, societies and covenants, to name a few. In order to establish more specific definitions, eschatology will be divided into two sub—categories to provide a more precise framework for the central tenants of this thesis. World—ending eschatology will be used to designate the views held by scholars such as Schweitzer, Ehrman, and Allison. In this example the Olivet Discourse is a world—ending eschatological discourse, predicting the end of the space—time continuum and the arrival of a new utopian earth under God’s rule.

Cataclysmic eschatology will be used to distinguish events or sayings which describe a major shift in human history, not resulting in the end of the space—time continuum. The destruction of Israel by Assyria, Babylon, or Rome, could all be described as cataclysmic eschatology as all involved significant historical events that brought an end to an important period in Israel’s history, or a radical shift in thinking, but not the end of the world. The catastrophic results of the Roman—Jewish War, with its mass casualties and the obliteration of the temple, was cataclysmically significant but the world did not end, making it cataclysmic eschatology.

An apocalyptic book may be primarily focused upon world—ending eschatology or cataclysmic eschatology, and it can contain elements of both which must be distinguished. A particular saying of Jesus may be interpreted as world—ending eschatology or cataclysmic eschatology, but not simultaneously both. For example, if a scholar determines that the coming

³⁶⁶ N.T. Wright, *New Testament*, 284—285.

Son of Man in Matthew 24:29—31 is a teaching about the end of the world, such an event is cataclysmic, but will be classified as world—ending eschatology to maintain a clear separation.

With these definitions established it will be argued that Matthew 25:31—46, along with the rest of the Matthean Olivet Discourse is cataclysmic eschatology. The discourse is not an explanation of end times events, the coming Son of Man is not a separate event from the fall of Jerusalem, nor is the judgment scene of the Sheep and the Goats divorced from the setting of Jerusalem's destruction. Establishing this direction for the remainder of the research is paramount for understanding why Psalm 80 would be a natural source for the Sheep and the Goats. Before moving to the next chapter, brief discussion will be given to the Son of Man figure who appears in apocalyptic literature, passages believed to be either world—ending eschatology or cataclysmic eschatology and who appears in Psalm 80.

The Son of Man

The term Son of Man must be discussed as a variation of it is present in both Daniel 7 and Psalm 80, the two proposed sources that have been amalgamated in the Sheep and the Goats. The reason for this amalgamation shall be discussed in a later chapter, but the phrase Son of Man is used in apocalyptic literature and the gospels, with many interpretative possibilities for understanding how these authors employ the term.

Daniel's Son of Man

Vermes work on the meaning of the Aramaic Son of Man (בֶּר אֱנוּשׁ) challenges many scholarly presuppositions concerning how it was used by Jesus. Four results are concluded from the use of Son of Man in Aramaic examples: it is an expression for 'man' in general, it is an

indefinite pronoun, it is a circumlocution for ‘I’ and it is not titular.³⁶⁷ Vermes emphasizes the fourth point stating, ‘The fourth conclusion stresses that in none of the passages scrutinized, not in even the Jewish messianic exegesis of Daniel 7, does the expression *bar enash* figure as a title.’³⁶⁸

Casey’s research affirms the generic use of *בַּר אֱנָשׁ*, leading to the time of Jesus, who used the term idiomatically.³⁶⁹ He bases the idiomatic use of *בַּר אֱנָשׁ* in Jesus’ time on the long—term stability of the Aramaic language.³⁷⁰ These conclusions have come under scrutiny based on the absence of the singular emphatic form of *בַּר אֱנָשׁ* in Middle Aramaic texts.³⁷¹ Analysis of the Onkelos, Jonathan and other Aramaic corpora demonstrates that the singular use of *בַּר אֱנָשׁ* is not a common way of referring to ‘a man’.³⁷²

The philological arguments concerning *בַּר אֱנָשׁ* are largely centred around Daniel 7 and the use of Daniel’s vision by later authors. Variations of Daniel’s *בַּר אֱנָשׁ* appear in the *Similitudes*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and the New Testament. Alleged homogeneity between the Aramaic *בַּר אֱנָשׁ* and the Greek *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* has been criticized based on surveys of Middle Aramaic, but the need for criticism extends beyond philological surveys.³⁷³

Son of Man is demonstrably circumlocutional in many of the Aramaic uses catalogued by Vermes and Casey, but the evolution of the Daniel 7 vision in later documents demonstrates there is no singular Son of Man concept. Vermes stance against the titular Son of Man carries

³⁶⁷ G. Vermes, ‘The “Son of Man” Debate’, *JSNT* 1:1 (1978), 20.

³⁶⁸ G. Vermes, ‘The “Son of Man” Debate’, 20.

³⁶⁹ M. Casey, *The Solution to the ‘Son of Man’ Problem*, (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 59.

³⁷⁰ M. Casey, *The Solution*, 59.

³⁷¹ D. Shepherd, ‘Re—Solving the Son of Man “Problem” in Aramaic’, in L.W. Hurtado & P.L. Owen, eds., *Who is this Son of Man?* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 50.

³⁷² D. Shepherd, ‘Re—Solving’, 59.

³⁷³ A. Lukaszewski, ‘Issues Concerning the Aramaic Behind *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*: A Critical Review of Scholarship’, in L.W. Hurtado & P.L. Owen, eds., *Who is this Son of Man?* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 21.

forward into later apocalyptic literature. He argues that *I Enoch* presents the Son of Man as an equivalent to the Messiah, awaiting his predestined birth, further confirming messianic connotations in Daniel 7, but still without any discernible titular meaning.³⁷⁴ Vermes work on the Son of Man is seminal, but his conclusion of the perpetually atitular Son of Man faces difficulty considering the evolutionary stature and development of this figure.

Jewish messianic exegesis of Daniel 7 reveals various imaginative Son of Man figures that could be described as titular or holding some form of office.³⁷⁵ This is not to say that a unified concept of the Son of Man existed in the first century CE, nor is there a singular titular use from the period.³⁷⁶ On the contrary, examining the Son of Man presentations demonstrates a variety of social and theological constructs designed to confront various historical situations and religious perspectives.

The New Testament ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is a strange verbal construct.³⁷⁷ This Greek construct with two definite articles is unknown outside of the New Testament and the literature that depends on the New Testament.³⁷⁸ The indefinite form with no articles is known only in the LXX from the pre—Christian period, where 93 of the 108 uses are in Ezekiel in which God addresses the prophet.³⁷⁹ Yet this strange phrase appears in the gospels 82 times as a self—designation for Jesus in all cases excepting John 12:34.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁴ G. Vermes, *Jesus*, 175.

³⁷⁵ This will be discussed further in the next section.

³⁷⁶ D. L. Bock, 'The Use of Daniel 7 in Jesus' Trial, with Implications for his Self—Understanding', in L.W. Hurtado & P.L. Owen, eds., *Who is this Son of Man?* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 89.

³⁷⁷ J. Fitzmyer, 'Another View of the "Son of Man" Debate', *JSNT* 4 (1979): 65.

³⁷⁸ M. Müller, *The Expression 'Son of Man' and the Development of Christology* (London: Routledge, 2014), 2.

³⁷⁹ M. Müller, *The Expression*, 2.

³⁸⁰ D. L. Bock, 'The Use of Daniel 7 in Jesus', 90.

The Greek ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is not an idiomatic expression, which has led to the belief that it is a mistranslation of a Semitic idiom.³⁸¹ The constant use of the phrase by Jesus in the New Testament demonstrates significantly more than a generic designation for ‘that man’.³⁸² Several of Jesus’ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου uses are directly borrowed from the Daniel 7 vision of בַּר אֲנָשׁ or indicate a formal role befitting of a title.³⁸³ Crossan writes, ‘Daniel 7:13 precedes the titular Son of Man, the titular Son of Man does not precede Daniel 7:13’.³⁸⁴ Crossan is accurate, though the Son of Man transcends matters of idiomatic versus titular use. This figure is a highly complex and evolutionary concept from text to text.

Questions surrounding the meaning of Son of Man are central in the many interpretations of the Daniel 7 בַּר אֲנָשׁ. Casey contends the Daniel 7 בַּר אֲנָשׁ originally presents the saint of the Most High, the Jewish people, in contrast to four earthly kingdoms identified through Syrian tradition as Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece.³⁸⁵ Vermes likewise determines the Son of Man to be a symbol for collective Israel and their coming triumph.³⁸⁶

Daniel’s Son of Man is a corporate symbol according to the vision’s interpretation (7:22). Later apocalyptic and New Testament writings were not restricted to the book’s explanation and developed their own understandings of the figure. Deciphering a king from a corporate symbol for Israel is a possibility considering two specific kings can be inferred from the beasts. The first beast of the vision is Babylon, whose description is an homage to Nebuchadnezzar’s humiliation

³⁸¹ A.Y. Collins, ‘The Origin of the Designation of Jesus as “Son of Man”’, *HDS* 80:4 (1987): 394.

³⁸² J. Fitzmyer, ‘Another View of the “Son of Man” Debate’, 65. The development of this thesis demonstrates Jesus’ Son of Man is not limited to an idiomatic expression.

³⁸³ Matthew 9:6, 10:23, 12:8, 13:41, 16:27—28, 19:28, 24:27, 24:30, 24:37, 24:39, 24:44, 25:31, 26:64.

³⁸⁴ J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*, 241.

³⁸⁵ M. Casey, *The Solution*, 83.

³⁸⁶ G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: William Collins, 1973), 169—170.

and restoration in Daniel 4:28—33. Antiochus IV is also a king associated with a beast in the vision, making two royal connections discernible.

A royal or messianic reading emanates from the corporate model, though it is a mistake to insist that later messianic interpretations require a messianic figure in the original vision. For example, Shepherd insists that a king and kingdoms are inseparable in Daniel 7, drawing attention to verse 17 where the beasts symbolise kings and not kingdoms.³⁸⁷ Shepherd uses this approach to insist that Daniel originally imagined the Son of Man as a messianic figure. He claims the lack of explanation of this Messiah in the interpretation is a result of Daniel's expectation that the readers would make the obvious connection.³⁸⁸

Verse 17 does refer to four kings, though Shepherd ignores the association of the beasts to kingdoms in verse 23. There is also no indication that each beast reflects a single king, rather verse 24 identifies a series of kings in association with the fourth beast. He does not recognise any possibility that the ruling authority of corporate Israel is Yahweh and not an earthly king. The assumption is that later authors using the text messianically means it was originally messianic, which is a faulty assumption.

The corporate interpretation of the passage is not the only option, that has been proposed. Daniel emphasizes angelic beings, chaotic bestial powers and heavenly powers, supporting the possibility that the Son of Man is an angel.³⁸⁹ Chapters 10—12 describe an angelic battle taking place behind the scenes of the Hellenistic age conflict. Michael is Israel's patron, who with assistance from Gabriel, battles the angelic princes of Greece and Persia.³⁹⁰ Gabriel is described

³⁸⁷ M. Shepherd, 'Daniel 7:13 and the New Testament Son of Man', *WTJ* 68 (2006): 100.

³⁸⁸ M. Shepherd, 'Daniel 7:13', 101.

³⁸⁹ J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 62.

³⁹⁰ J.J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 62.

as one who ‘looked like a man’ in Daniel 8:15, which is similar to one like a Son of Man, making him a possible candidate for this angelic being.³⁹¹ While an objection could be raised that the Son of Man is identified as the corporate ‘saints of the Most High’, an individual representing a community is not unheard of in the Old Testament as seen in the Suffering Servant oracle of Isaiah 53.³⁹²

Angelic beings play an important role in Daniel, but this angelic view faces several difficulties. The Son of Man’s enthronement represents the saints of the Most High receiving the kingdom, but no explanation is given as to how an angel coming to the Ancient of Days delivers Israel. If the Son of Man is an angel, does this mean that the beasts from the sea are some form of demonic entity? The description of the first beast shares common features with Nebuchadnezzar’s humility from Daniel 4:28—37, connecting the first beast to a king, not an otherworldly being. Daniel 8 describes the battle of the Medo—Persians against the Greeks, where the two—horned ram are the kings of the Medes and Persians while the he—goat is the king of Greece (8:20—21). Chapter 11 also describes a battle between king of the north and south, demonstrating a consistent preoccupation with royal figures.

Gabriel is identified in 8:16 while Michael is identified in 10:13, but no specific identification is made to this visionary Son of Man. The beasts are not beasts, they are symbols, which is what the Son of Man is in the vision. Daniel’s Son of Man does not appear to be an angel when considering his juxtaposition to the symbolic beasts, the association of earthly kings to the various visions of Daniel, the corporate interpretation of the Son of Man and the lack of any specific descriptor identifying the Son of Man as Gabriel or Michael

³⁹¹ Z. Zevit, ‘The Exegetical Implication of Daniel VIII 1, IX 21’, *VT* 28:4 (1978), 489—90.

³⁹² J. Muilenberg, ‘The Son of Man in Daniel and the Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch’, *JBL* 79:3 (1960): 199—204.

The setting of thrones surrounding the Ancient of Days leads also to interpreting the Son of Man as a divine being. Later pseudepigraphical and New Testament authors moved away from interpreting the Son of Man as a corporate symbol for Israel, creating various interpretative possibilities.³⁹³ Contrasting the Son of Man with the Ancient Days may indicate the presence of two divine beings, a younger and an older, with the younger taking his throne next to the older.³⁹⁴ This viceroy relationship uses clouds in association with the Son of Man to indicate a theophany, whereby the aging god El bestows authority on the younger Yahweh.³⁹⁵

This viceroy theory is derived by reading Daniel 7 through the interpretative lens of Daniel's Son of Man emerging from non—Israelite pre—written myths. Scholars have historically posited several theories about the Son of Man being borrowed from the myths of other regions.³⁹⁶ Some have argued that Babylonian literature was the primary influence for Daniel's visionary writing.³⁹⁷ Assyrian writings have also been posited as a potential source for Daniel.³⁹⁸ Others have suggested stories of the primeval man of Iran influenced the background for Daniel 7.³⁹⁹

Boyarin has opted to interpret the Son of Man as a redacted Ugaritic myth pertaining to El and Baal. Canaanite myths contain stories Baal and Yam battling each other for authority,

³⁹³ J. Morgenstern, 'The "Son of Man" of Daniel 7:13f: A New Interpretation', *JBL* 80:1 (1961), 65.

³⁹⁴ D. Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: Perseus Distribution, 2012), 43.

³⁹⁵ D. Boyarin, *Jewish Gospels*, 47—51.

³⁹⁶ See J. Egger *Influences and Traditions Underlying the Vision of Daniel 7:2—1* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 3—84; for excellent detailed background on these proposed influences.

³⁹⁷ See H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895), 324—332; N. Schmidt, 'The Son of Man in the Book of Daniel', *JBL* 19:1 (1900), 22—28.

³⁹⁸ See H. Kvanvig, 'An Akkadian Vision as Background for Daniel 7?', *StTh* 35:1 (1981), 85—88; H. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man* (Neukirchen—Vluyn: Verlag, 1988), 390—391; A. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the ANE: With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream—Book* (Philadelphia: Am. Philosophical Soc., 1956), 186.

³⁹⁹ See W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther & Reichard, 1903), 347—348; C. Kraeling, *Anthropos and Son of Man: A Study in the Religious Syncretism of the Hellenistic Orient* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 86—88.

while the supreme god El is gloriously enthroned.⁴⁰⁰ The elder god to younger god theory is derived by interpreting Daniel 7 as a primitive strand of Israel's religion, influenced by Canaanite mythology.⁴⁰¹ Despite the history of the mythical re—write view, nothing in the vision or interpretation gives validity to two deity theory.

There is no indication that the Son of Man is a deity or that Daniel at any point imagines multiples deities over Israel. The thrones of the vision appear to represent some form of divine court sitting in judgment. Whether the Son of Man takes a throne a throne is speculative, not specific to the vision, but receiving a throne is not commensurate with divinity. Where the angelic view faces obstacles tying Gabriel to the symbolic vision, this viceroy theory is not supported by the larger text. No plurality of Israelite deities is evident in Daniel. The only reason to accept this view is the belief that it is to be read alongside a story like El and Baal or some form of primitive Israelite thinking that made its way into the second century BCE.

This brief survey of the Daniel 7 Son of Man serves to place the evolutionary understanding of Son of Man in later literature into context. While it appears that the Son of Man was originally intended as a symbol of corporate Israel, limiting the potential readings of this apocalyptic passage to a single interpretation is tenuous when considering its diverse uses in the centuries following. These developmental uses also strain the credibility that Son of Man never became a titular term in Aramaic or Greek. The Matthean Son of Man will now be placed into a comparative analysis with the Son of Man found in apocalyptic passages. These comparisons will help determine if the Matthean Son of Man is the same as the Son of Man from other apocalyptic writings, who is widely argued to be a world—ending eschatological figure.

⁴⁰⁰ C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* 2d ed., (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 1—3.

⁴⁰¹ D. Boyarin, *Jewish Gospels*, 45—46.

The Son of Man Beyond Daniel

Jesus' Son of Man sayings in the Olivet Discourse are derived from Daniel 7, though much like other appearances of the Son of Man in post—Daniel literature, there are setting and contextual changes for this Son of Man. In Jesus' explanation of the parable of the Weeds, the Son of Man is the sower of good seed in the world, whose enemy is the devil (13:36—39). The Son of Man will send *his* angels at the close of the age to remove all causes of lawlessness, but the righteous will shine in the kingdom of their Father. (13:40—43). The Son of Man will sit on a glorious throne, in this case with the twelve disciples sitting on thrones beside him (19:28).

Elements of Daniel are present, such as thrones, angelic beings and the concept of judgment in association with the books being opened in a court setting (Daniel 7:10). Neither the Ancient of Days nor the beasts are mentioned in Matthew. Whereas the Ancient of Days judges and slays the fourth beast, Jesus tells the disciples they will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. The Son of Man is also an individual in Jesus' vision. He has angels like the Ancient of Days and is in fact Jesus himself. Jesus as the Son of Man even has the power to forgive sins on earth (9:6) and is Lord of the Sabbath (12:8).

However, Jesus' Son of Man is not only a heavenly entity bearing great authority, he is also an earthly figure subject to ridicule and homelessness. This same Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (9:6), is mocked as a glutton and drunkard (11:19), is blasphemed (12:32) and is also subject to a death from which he will rise again (12:40). These Son of Man sayings have nothing in common with Daniel's Son of Man. They portray an earthly figure subject to injustice, yet it is also the same Jesus.

Jesus' transcendent identity as Daniel's Son of Man is not divorced from his earthly Son of Man identity. It is the vulnerability of the transcendent Son of Man, who is both the Messiah

(16:16—17) and bound for suffering (12:40; 16:21; 17:12; 17:22), that will ultimately lead to the regeneration of the earth (19:28).⁴⁰² That Jesus equated Son of Man with the Messiah in Matthew does not provide a definitive answer to the Son of Man figure as there is no singular definition of Messiah prior to or contemporary with Jesus.⁴⁰³ Jesus as Son of Man is a king, but he is a king who does not occupy an earthly throne and who does not come conquering by the sword.⁴⁰⁴ Daniel's Son of Man may have served as an image for the people of Israel, and perhaps a larger contingency from the nations who worship the Ancient of Day, but that vision is not the limit that Matthew's Jesus places on the phrase. Such a multi—layered Son of Man challenges attempts to limit the nature and scope of the figure to a simple definition.

The layers of Son of Man evolution, combined with the layers of Son of Man sayings in Matthew, forces the question as to whether this Son of Man Jesus is speaking of is a world—ending eschatological figure. Those who limit Jesus' vision to that of failed world—ending prophet see this as a natural conclusion. Jesus expected God to break forth with a heavenly rule on this planet with a physical kingdom and a utopian model of life.⁴⁰⁵ Along these lines Jesus claimed that a temporal nearness of the Son of Man to end the world was present in 10:23 as part of an eschatological enthusiasm that simply could not be contained by this failed world ending prophet.⁴⁰⁶

Wright asks the essential question about Jesus after it became clear the world had not come to a crashing halt, 'Why then did people go on talking about Jesus of Nazareth, except as a remarkable but tragic memory?'⁴⁰⁷ Jesus of Nazareth had come preaching the kingdom of God

⁴⁰² S. Cook, *Apocalyptic Literature*, 161.

⁴⁰³ E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 242.

⁴⁰⁴ E.P. Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 242.

⁴⁰⁵ B. Ehrman, *Apocalyptic Prophet*, 143.

⁴⁰⁶ D. Allison, *Millenarian*, 149—150.

⁴⁰⁷ N.T. Wright, *Victory of God*,

and the Son of Man's arrival, only to be crucified by the Romans. Forty years after his death Christians in Rome had been brutally murdered by Nero, Rome had descended upon the Promised Land and obliterated the temple with no sign of Jesus physically descending to the earth. In this model of world—ending eschatological failure Jesus was clearly wrong yet continued to be the source of first century Christian faith. Even if one accepted the resurrection as fact, how would that counter the avalanche of problems created by Jesus' failed prediction? Where is the hope in trusting the folly of a prophetic figure whose legacy was ultimately failure?

As shown in chapter one, Matthew was the product of a post—70 world, at a time when the author knew Jesus had not physically returned to end the space—time continuum. At a minimum why not redact the material in his gospel presentation to eliminate the clear embarrassment of Jesus' failed prediction? On the contrary, Jesus' Matthew 10:23 saying about the coming Son of Man, a special M saying, only magnifies Jesus' failure as a post—70 CE document. Yet if arguing for a pre—70 CE composition, the problem remains as to why Matthew and his synoptic counterparts were adopted as part of the scripture of a movement founded on failure, whereby they had enthusiastically recorded the failure of Jesus' world—ending eschatological perspective.

Examining the various depictions of the Son of Man in the apocalyptic literature is not a study in the end of the world, it is a study in the hope of changing religio—political climates and the vindication of distinct people groups. Daniel's first readers found a vision of hope that Antiochus IV would be vanquished and the Son of Man/saints of the Most High would receive a kingdom. Even if an interpreter reduces the social ecstasy of triumphing over a despot like

Antiochus IV to some form of brush with world—ending eschatological chaos, there is hope for change and restoration that goes beyond the end of the space—time continuum.⁴⁰⁸

The Son of Man in the *Similitudes* is found sixteen times where he commonly serves as a judge on behalf of the elect against the ruling class of the day (62—63).⁴⁰⁹ He is also a hidden figure revealed to the elect who will destroy sinners and serve as a leader to Israel in a Deutero—Isaiah manner, though he will not be a suffering servant.⁴¹⁰ The *Similitudes* are not written to counter the defeat of 70 CE, but they do offer hope to Israel that they will be fed and clothed as the Son of Man defeats the earthly rulers and restores Israel from their downcast position (62). Enoch’s visions lead into the coming deluge (65), which is an act of judgment but also a new beginning for the righteous, not the end of the earth.

4 Ezra acknowledges that its vision of the eagle and the man from the sea is a reinterpretation of Daniel 7, one that sees Israel victorious over its earthly enemies through the agency of the Messiah.⁴¹¹ The lost tribes of Israel will find their way back to the epicentre of Israel’s promised hope in a messianic age, where divine initiative directly influences the outcome of human events with earthly significance associated to these actions.⁴¹² After war with the multitude from many nations, the messianic Son of Man will continue to defend the restored Israel from outside threats to the Promised Land. Rather than a utopian world of perfection, this calls to mind the protections God offers Israel for their faithfulness in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. *4 Ezra* also states that the Messiah’s reign will last four hundred years before

⁴⁰⁸ S. Cook, *Apocalyptic Literature*, 154.

⁴⁰⁹ J. VanderKam, ‘Messianism and Apocalypticism’ in J.J. Collins, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism: Volume 1* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 206—207.

⁴¹⁰ J. VanderKam, ‘Messianism’, 207.

⁴¹¹ K. Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 160.

⁴¹² K. Hogan, *Theologies*, 160.

he dies, indicating that his arrival does not signal the end of the space—time continuum, rather a restoration of Israel’s fortunes before the resurrection (*4 Ezra* 7:26—33).⁴¹³

2 Baruch follows a similar trajectory where a series of twelve calamities leads to the revelation of the Anointed One in congruence with the emergence of the mythical Behemoth and Leviathan who shall nourish those left after the calamities (26:1—29:5). The Messiah returns in glory, and those who are asleep arise with him, knowing the end times have arrived (30:1—5). However, the Messiah does not arrive in such a way that all things merely end. He will also confront Rome, destroy their last ruler, and have a reign that lasts until world corruption has ended (39:1—8). This messianic Son of Man figure, as with *4 Ezra*, has a role in not only shedding the blood of Israel’s oppressors, but establishing a kingdom for Israel that will lead to the end of worldly corruption (40:1—4). Whitters writes, ‘The clearest presentation of this scenario is found in the second apocalypse, where it is predicted that the Messiah lives and reigns in this age and not the Age to Come (40:3)’.⁴¹⁴

Torah is an important theme in both *2 Baruch* (15:5—6; 41:3; 44:7; 46:3—5; 48:22—24; 85:1—5) and *4 Ezra* (4:22—34; 9:28—37; 14:19—47). The people have thrown off the Torah while the righteous seek it. Torah ultimately distinguishes Jews from Gentiles.⁴¹⁵ This call to Torah obedience as a response to Rome’s victory further validates the theme of Israel’s restoration as a future hope not bound up with world—ending eschatology predominately, but rather with a cataclysmic eschatology. Such a view does not eliminate the possibility of a

⁴¹³ L. Grabbe, ‘4 Ezra and 2 Baruch in Social and Historical Perspective’, in M. Henze & G. Boccaccini, *Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch: Reconstruction After the Fall* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 224.

⁴¹⁴ M. Whitters, *The Epistle of Second Baruch: A Study in Form and Message* (London: Sheffield, 2003), 51.

⁴¹⁵ L. Grabbe, ‘4 Ezra and 2 Baruch’, 223.

world—ending eschatology in these documents, but it does challenge the presupposition that the Son of Man’s arrival is exclusively associated with world—ending eschatology.

Contrary to the hopes of Jewish pseudepigraphical writing, New Testament books such as Matthew and Revelation are confronting Jerusalem’s destruction as an event that is a post—messianic event, a paradoxical concept within *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, or a reading of Daniel that equates the fourth beast with Rome. Jesus as the Son of Man in Matthew and Revelation is the conqueror of sin having secured victory for the church, establishing the hope of the nations even as Jerusalem has been left in ruins by the fourth beast that was to be slain.

Such differences between Jewish authors of the same approximate period highlights the multiplicity of views and various definitions of the Son of Man or Messiah in Jewish thought of the first century. This diversity of thought is all the more noticeable when recognizing Daniel 7 as the common source between the texts, and all four authors are responding to the same crisis that has devastated their religio—political world. While Matthew is not an apocalypse, it shares a theological foundation with the apocalyptic book Revelation in that both believe the messianic Son of Man had come, and Jerusalem still fell to Rome.

In Revelation, Jesus is the heavenly Son of Man who is beginning and end (1:8), who was dead and is now alive (1:18) and brings an important message to the churches of Asia Minor (chs.2—3). This Son of Man also reaps the earth (14:14—16) and returns later as the Word of God wherein he will battle with Revelation’s version of the fourth beast (19:11—21). There are also sixteen references to the temple in the book, though not of a restored earthly temple connected with a restored Israel. Revelation emphasises a heavenly temple (3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15,17; 15:5—8; 16:1,17), and in the heavenly Jerusalem, no temple at all (21:22).

Revelation 11:1—14 refers to the outer court of the temple being given over the Gentiles for forty—two months of trampling, with two prophetic witnesses preaching in the city where ‘their Lord was crucified’ (11:8). This reference to Jerusalem is intensified by the allegorical reference to it as Sodom and Egypt (11:8) before a great earthquake kills seven thousand people in the city (11:13). In contrast to the temple given over for destruction, the temple in heaven is opened, remaining permanently intact (11:19).

It is possible that the author meant the temple to be a symbol for Israel rather than an image of the recently destroyed temple, as Sodom could function as a prophetic title for Jerusalem’s pending destruction (Isaiah 1:9—10; Jeremiah 23:14; Lamentations 4:6).⁴¹⁶ A spiritualized reading of the passage may conclude that the temple being trampled is the church, having become the new Israel of God, and the pejorative reference to Jerusalem in 11:8 represents the earthly city or world.⁴¹⁷ Such a reading does not lessen the profound implications as Israel has been replaced, and the painful image of their recent temple tragedy serves as a metaphor for a new people of God who will be redeemed.

The Son of Man in Revelation writes letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor warning them of tribulation and offering encouragement for the persecution that awaits. Both the letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia make reference to those that call themselves Jews but are not. Rather they are a συναγωγή τοῦ Σατανᾶ (2:9; 3:9). Such language is a departure from *4 Ezra* or *2 Baruch* where Israel faces rebuke for corporate sin, but to associate the synagogue with Satan is shocking. While it is possible that the author of Revelation envisions the beast’s destruction

⁴¹⁶ C. Keener, *Revelation*, 294—295.

⁴¹⁷ L. Morris, *Revelation*, 140—146.

by the Word of God as the physical obliteration of Rome, retribution is on behalf of the persecuted saints (13:7—10) and those who are witnesses of Jesus (17:6).

Revelation presents the closest image of the Son of Man to Jesus' Son of Man in Matthew, though the two are not identical. Chapter five will present a new reading of the Sheep and the Goats that envisions a cataclysmic eschatological shift where Israel has lost its place as the chosen people of God. Judgment of the Gentiles will in no way be dependent on how the Gentiles have treated the nation of Israel. Unlike Revelation, where the possibility remains of God judging Rome for their treatment of the saints and witnesses, Matthew demonstrates no such concern. Daniel's beasts have no explicit role in the Son of Man presentation of Matthew, rather Israel is the subject of the Son of Man's fury.

The proposed use of Psalm 80 as a mutual source text alongside Daniel 7 provides both an explanation as to the language of the Sheep and the Goats, and it also offers an explanation as to the dire fate awaiting Israel. The fact that the Son of Man is a figure found also in Psalm 80 is not a coincidence when acknowledging the proposed relationship between the psalm and Daniel 7. To understand the possibility of Psalm 80 as an influential text in Matthew and background text for Matthew 25:31—46, this thesis will now turn its attention to Psalm 80. By understanding its interpretation and the evolutionary use of this Psalm in the New Testament, 2 *Baruch*, and other texts from Matthew's period, the reason for its inclusion in crafting the Sheep and the Goats can be seen as both plausible and natural.

Chapter Three

Psalm 80: Interpretation and Use as a Source

To understand the possibility of Psalm 80 as a source text for Matthew 25:31—46, this chapter will succinctly examine Psalm 80's interpretation and historical development. The psalm's textual evolution from Hebrew to Greek demonstrates a progressive reflection on Israel's exilic misfortunes, and a yearning for deliverance that never came. Primarily, this chapter will examine Psalm 80's use through the first century in the New Testament and non—Biblical texts. Psalm 80 and Daniel are used together as sources in passages other than the Sheep and the Goats. The secondary literature for these proposed relationships will be evaluated to determine the validity of Psalm 80 as a source in the primary literature.

A brief comment is needed on the verse numbers of the Psalm and its numeration in the LXX to help avoid confusion. In the Hebrew text the prescript identifying the psalm as an Asaphite composition is the first verse, but English translations commonly use 'Give ear, O Shepherd' as the first verse. The Hebrew text will be used as the standard verse layout, and with the exception of a direct quote in which the author is following the English translation numerology, all numerations will follow that pattern. Additionally, Psalm 80 in the Hebrew Psalter is Psalm 79 in the LXX, due to the LXX combining Psalms 9 and 10 from the Hebrew Psalter into a single psalm. All references in the treatment of the psalm in the LXX will be to the LXX numbering.

Psalm 80's Original Setting

Psalm 80 was written in response to a national crisis, a catastrophic event that forever altered Israel's national identity. Gunkel defines the Psalm as a 'Lament of the Nation', a complaint on

behalf of the people confronting a time of great difficulty seeking God to take away their plague.⁴¹⁸ However, there is a question as to which catastrophe is being lamented. There are two general beliefs concerning the circumstances of this lament that will be briefly discussed for interpretative purposes. The two primary views are regionally associated to the period after the division of the monarchy in 922 BCE. The first theory is that an Israelite author hoping for Israel's deliverance from Assyria wrote the Psalm in the decade between 732 BCE to 722 BCE. Second, a Judahite author is pleading for deliverance from Babylon that would commonly be dated to the late 6th century BCE.

Israel Theory

Several features of the psalm may indicate an Israelite origin amidst the disastrous conflict with Assyria. Goulder places the psalm in the historical period of the 720s BCE, 'which we have found to be the probable background of the other Asaph psalms.'⁴¹⁹ Psalm 80 contains the prescript notation לְמִנְצֵחַ אֶל־שְׁשֻׁנִים עֲדוּת לְאֶסְרָה מִזְמוֹר, evidently a well-known tune known as 'Lilies, a Covenant'.⁴²⁰ Psalm 79 LXX changes the notation of the lilies to 'Εἰς τὸ τέλος, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλοιωθησομένων, μαρτύριον τῷ Ασαφ, ψαλμὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου'.⁴²¹ The theme of the psalm is loss and the yearning for restoration, which by the time of the LXX had become associated with Israel's destruction by Assyria. Judah now had an enemy province instead of a sister kingdom.⁴²²

⁴¹⁸ H. Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985), 117. For an English synopsis see H. Gunkel's, *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction*, trans. T. Horner, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967).

⁴¹⁹ M. Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch* (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 137.

⁴²⁰ W. L. Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 74.

⁴²¹ F. Delitzsch, *Biblischer Kommentar Über die Psalmen* (Leipzig: Dorffling und Franke, 1894), 534.

⁴²² D. Kidner, *Psalms 73—150*, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 288.

Ephraim and Manasseh are northern territories that suggest a northern location for Psalm 80 as they are the two half—tribes of Joseph.⁴²³ Specific references to Benjamin, who only partially remained with the house of David, along with Ephraim and Manasseh, form a Joseph triad that had strong northern kingdom affiliations.⁴²⁴ The plea for God’s might before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh implies the situation of 732 BCE to 722 BCE as Gilead and Galilee have been annexed by Tiglath—Pileser, forming an Assyrian province.⁴²⁵ The psalmist may be envisioning Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh as the three sons of Rachel and the three tribes that immediately went behind the ark.⁴²⁶

The author could have been a Judaeen familiar with the recent events of Israel’s destruction, or an Israelite living in the decade of 732—722 BCE, prior to the conquest.⁴²⁷ The pleads for mercy on Israel’s behalf may indicate a rescue from Assyria before it is too late, while also praying the same fate will not come upon Judah.⁴²⁸ Israel exhausted its resources battling with Damascus Aram before submitting to Assyria in Hezekiah’s sixth year. Visitations by Assyrian kings such as Tiglath—pileser and Shalmaneser weighed heavily on Israel and created concern for Judah, should their northern barrier fall.⁴²⁹ It is possible the reference to being assaulted by the $\tau\tau$ in verse 14 was a symbol for Assyria, though such a proposal is speculative.⁴³⁰ Ultimately the best evidence is found in the LXX with the inclusion of $\psi\alpha\lambda\mu\omicron\varsigma$ $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\text{\AA}\sigma\sigma\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon$ and the Assyrian connotation with the loss of the ten tribes in the North.

⁴²³ W. L. Holladay, *The Psalms*, 27.

⁴²⁴ F. Delitzsch, *Biblischer Kommentar*, 534—535.

⁴²⁵ M. Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 137.

⁴²⁶ C. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 392—393.

⁴²⁷ W. VanGemeren, ‘Psalms’, *Expositors’ Bible Commentary* Vol. 5, Ed. Frank Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 523—524.

⁴²⁸ W. VanGemeren, ‘Psalms’, 523—524.

⁴²⁹ F. Delitzsch, *Biblischer Kommentar*, 535.

⁴³⁰ F. Delitzsch, *Biblischer Kommentar*, 534.

Judah Theory

The reference to the vine being brought out of Egypt indicates both Israel and Judah to proponents of this view as the vine is the whole nation of Israel.⁴³¹ The question which follows the third strophe about the vine's fences being broken down, and the burning of the vine in verses 15—16, paint a portrait of the whole nation and the fears surrounding exile and the loss of everything achieved under David.⁴³²

The description in verse 2 of enthronement upon the cherubim may have originated as an Ephraimite tradition at Shiloh, but it later became associated with Jerusalem as the ark was located in the temple.⁴³³ Jeremiah's use of 'fed' and 'drink' (Jeremiah 9:14 and 23:15) are paralleled in the psalm, as is the dominant shepherd theme (Jeremiah 2:8; 3:15; 10:21; 12:10; 17:16; 22:22; 23:1—4; 25:34—36; 31:10; 33:12; 43:12; 49:19; 50:6; 51:23).⁴³⁴ An origin in the time of Josiah and Jeremiah is a possibility, though an Asaphite scribe may have reworked an older psalm to meet the needs of a post—exilic Israel.⁴³⁵ The psalmist's use of the exodus may serve as a metaphor for the hope of deliverance from Babylon, yearning for a return from the exile and a restored Zion, as seen in Psalm 85 and Psalm 87.⁴³⁶

Pre—Divided Monarchy Theory

Heinemann has suggested a unique date for Psalm 80 to avoid any potential difficulties caused by what he believes to be incompatible and confusing information for regional

⁴³¹ M. Buttenwieser, *The Psalms* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), 234. Other scholars who support the whole Israel view are: C. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907); W. Scroggie, *The Psalms* (Old Tappen: Fleming H. Revell, 1965); C. Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy: The Prediction of the Fulfillment of Redemption through the Messiah* (New York: Scribners, 1886).

⁴³² M. Buttenwieser, *The Psalms*, 234.

⁴³³ M. Tate, *Psalms 51—100*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 311.

⁴³⁴ M. Tate, *Psalms 51—100*, 311.

⁴³⁵ M. Tate, *Psalms 51—100*, 312—313.

⁴³⁶ J. Grant, 'Determining the Indeterminate: Issues in Interpreting Psalms', *STR* 1:1 (2010): 13.

affiliation.⁴³⁷ He rejects the Israel theory because he claims a northerner viewing Israel's destruction as the whole vine is implausible. Likewise, including Benjamin with the north is problematic as they stayed loyal to king Rehoboam in 1 Kings 12:21.⁴³⁸ Heinemann also dismisses the Judah theory as Jerusalem and Judah are not mentioned, prominence is given to tribes of Israel and all of Israel being called Joseph is inexplicable in a Babylonian exilic context.⁴³⁹

Heinemann argues for a composition during the time of Saul to avoid regional difficulties. His basis for this opinion is that it explains why Benjamin is prominent in Psalm 80, and the phrase *אִישׁ יְמִינִי* is used of Saul in 1 Samuel 9:1 and 21:7.⁴⁴⁰ Ravasi is right to say that this date would make Psalm 80 one of the most archaic psalms in the Hebrew Psalter.⁴⁴¹ In addition to being archaic, this view faces several difficulties. Heinemann acknowledges that northern Israel tribes are featured in the psalm, but the inclusion of Benjamin does not require a Judahite reading when understanding those tribes are associated to Joseph. He further casts doubt on the Judah theory because Judah is not mentioned by name, though Saul's tribe Benjamin is not singularly distinguished either. It is also unclear which supposed period of Saul's reign is the subject of this dire lament.

Evaluation

The internal evidence of the psalm indicates a composition in Israel as a response to the Assyrian crisis. While Benjamin was associated with Judah, this does not require a Judahite

⁴³⁷ H. Heinemann, 'The Date of Psalm 80', *JQR* 40 (1949): 297.

⁴³⁸ H. Heinemann, 'The Date of Psalm 80', 298—299.

⁴³⁹ H. Heinemann, 'The Date of Psalm 80', 297—298.

⁴⁴⁰ H. Heinemann, 'The Date of Psalm 80', 299.

⁴⁴¹ G. Ravasi, *Il libro dei Salmi: Volume II* (Bologna: San Paolo Edizione, 1996), 675.

reading as the emphasis is on the Joseph triad, which is predominantly northern. The Saul theory attempts to by—pass any perceived regional difficulties with the images by suggesting a time period nowhere hinted at in the text or its later LXX version.

Objections to this regional composition on the grounds that the vine can only refer to the whole nation are wanting for several reasons. Following the 10th century BCE division of the monarchy, Israel established its own centres of worship and kingship, a divisive split that creates room for both kingdoms to view themselves as the true vine. Even if the Israelite psalmist viewed the divided kingdoms as one people, this still does not prevent him from reminding God that this vine, his people, are in danger. It is possible a Judahite author was beseeching the restoration of the sister kingdom in the wake of the Assyrian destruction, which still makes the fall of Israel the subject. Likewise, the psalm may have started as an Israel psalm that was later redacted by a Judahite author, but this cannot be ascertained with any certainty. The emphasis on predominately northern Joseph tribes, the Assyrian reference in the LXX version and the description of catastrophe befitting the destruction of 722 BCE indicate an Israel psalm of lament.

Structure of Psalm 80

Psalm 80 is the fourth song upon the *שׁוֹשַׁנִּים* or lilies, the previous being Psalms 45, 60, 69. There is a threefold refrain of ‘return to us O God’ (verses 4, 8, 20), where verses 1—3 are an opening address, 4—7 is a lamentation over national woe and 8—19 is a repeated complaint concerning the nation represented by the allegory of the vine.⁴⁴² Structurally the psalm lacks a consistent rhythm, making the structure challenging to define. It has been suggested that there are four

⁴⁴² C. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David* Vol. 1 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 387.

strophes each marked by a refrain, where the third strophe is a double strophe containing a double refrain. The first strophe in this model would consist of verses 1—3 with verse 4 as the refrain. The second strophe is verses 5—7 with verse 8 as the refrain. The third strophe is verses 9—14 with verses 15—16 as the refrain. Lastly, verses 17—19 are the fourth strophe with verse 20 as the refrain.⁴⁴³

Another model divides the psalm into five sections: an introductory line and opening prayer in 1—4, a lament in 5—8, a reflection on the glorious past in 9—12, a contrast between past and present in 13—17 and a final plea for restoration in 18—20.⁴⁴⁴ There is also the possibility of a three section framework, first featuring a lament sequence pleading for rescue from crisis (2—3), accusation and description of the crisis (5—14) and petition for aid with the promise of praise (15—19).⁴⁴⁵ The beginning of all three sections features a vocative address to God and is interlinked thematically: the shepherd of verse 2 is contrasted with verse 6 and verses 15—17 look back to the metaphor of the vine in verses 9—14.⁴⁴⁶

The uneven structure and partial refrain of verse 15 leads to a potential A—B—A structure: A is verses 2—8 forming the introduction invoking the indifferent shepherd; B is verses 9—17 as the song of the vineyard; A is 18—20 is an invocation to God and promise of fidelity.⁴⁴⁷ Introduction A has two strophes in verses 2—4 appealing to God on the ark, with the refrain of verse 4, and the second strophe of verses 5—8 featuring God’s dramatic silence in the midst of national tragedy and the second refrain in verse 8.⁴⁴⁸ B is the song of the vineyard in

⁴⁴³ C. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 229—231.

⁴⁴⁴ M. Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 137—145.

⁴⁴⁵ F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51—100*, 455.

⁴⁴⁶ F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51—100*, 455.

⁴⁴⁷ G. Ravasi, *Il libro*, 678—679.

⁴⁴⁸ G. Ravasi, *Il libro*, 678.

verses 9—17 also featuring two strophes. The first strophe of B is verses 9—12 that tell the story of the vine’s past splendor, while the second strophe of verses 13—17 describes the vine’s bitter present, with 15—17 serving as a refrain. Lastly, the second A is a brief conclusion in verses 18—20, which invoke God to act under the promise of fidelity, with verse 20 as the final refrain.⁴⁴⁹

The three—fold repetition of the refrain stands in structurally significant places, giving the psalm three natural sections, each ending with a refrain. Verse 1 is the prescript, verses 2—3 are the initial petition to God, with the refrain of verse 4 ending the first section. The second section begins in verse 5 by petitioning Yahweh, God of hosts to turn away his anger and remove the curses he has brought upon Israel. Section two ends with the refrain of verse 8 in which ‘O Elohim’ is now ‘O Elohim of hosts’, aligning with the beginning of section two which addresses ‘Yahweh, God of hosts’. Section three, the largest section, reminds God of his past work in driving out the Gentiles to establish Israel (verses 9—14), asking the God of hosts to restore the vine and promise covenantal fidelity if he does (verses 15—19). Section three is concluded with the final refrain that uses ‘Yahweh God of hosts’, completing the three—fold amplification of God in each refrain from ‘O God’ (verse 4), to ‘O God of hosts’ (verse 8) and finally ‘Yahweh God of hosts’ (verse 20).

Interpretation of Psalm 80

Understanding the psalm’s meaning and imagery helps paint a portrait as to why first century CE authors were drawn to this lament in confronting the realities of the first century. Thematically the psalm addresses tragedy, while implementing a unique combination of images such as:

⁴⁴⁹ G. Ravasi, *Il libro*, 678—679.

enthronement on the cherubim, wild beasts, vine, Gentiles and Son of Man. Israel's ongoing efforts to regain the prominence they possessed under David and Solomon weighed heavily on their national identity. The first century CE devastation at the hands of Rome, and the development of the Danielic Son of Man, made Psalm 80 a prime candidate for use in the wake of the temple's destruction.

Israel is faced with a national crisis and indisputably needs God to act against foreign invaders to save the vineyard.⁴⁵⁰ The catastrophe Israel faces transcends standard notions of encountering an enemy. The psalmist blames God for Israel's catastrophic condition as God has been angry with the prayers of his people (verse 5), placed Israel in contention with their neighbors (verse 7) and has not come to deliver them as their walls are broken down and the enemy is devouring them (verses 13—14). Assyria's advancement on Israel resulted in cataclysmic horror for the northern kingdom as 27,290 captives were forcefully dispersed.⁴⁵¹ Psalm 80 is the last desperate cry of a kingdom before their extinction as the psalmist pleads with Yahweh that Israel will remain faithful to him if he will only return (verses 19—20).

A multi—psalm compositional scheme may be at work across several Asaphite psalms following the format: corporate complaints, God's answer and personal complaint.⁴⁵² In this theory Psalms 79 and 80 present the corporate complaint to God, which God responds to in Psalm 81 and 82.⁴⁵³ There are indeed elements of response in which God says that he would respond if Israel would listen (81:9) and quickly subdue their enemies (81:15). Nevertheless,

⁴⁵⁰ S.E. Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries: Volume One* (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 5; G. Ravasi, *Il libro*, 675.

⁴⁵¹ S. Lyman, 'The Lost Tribes of Israel as a Problem in History and Sociology', *IJPCS* 12:1 (1998): 8.

⁴⁵² E. Zenger, 'Zur redaktionsgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der Korachpsalmen', in K. Seybold & E. Zenger, eds., *Neue Wege Der Psalmenforschung* (Freiburg: Heder, 1994), 189.

⁴⁵³ E. Zenger, 'Zur redaktionsgeschichtlichen', 189.

Israel continues to walk about in darkness, and they have been called gods they shall die like mortals (82:6—8). Lastly, the psalmist again complains that God's enemies hate him and have conspired against his people (83:3—4). Several people groups including Edom, Philistia and Assyria, among others, have united in this conspiracy against Israel and the psalmist implores God to dispose of them as he did Midian (83:6—10).

The multi—psalm scheme has merit, though it is unclear whether these psalms were written as a unit or share common themes and authorship while being written as individual works. Their placement in the Hebrew Psalter evinces a block of common thought that is intentionally placed together, and whether written together or not provides mutual edification of reading, without sacrificing the meaning of the individual psalms themselves. They demonstrate a range of emotions and responses indicative of a nation facing destruction. Yahweh is not acting in the manner the psalmist wants him to as bestial nations thrive while Israel, the chosen, suffers at the hands of these anti—Yahwists. God is also clear that the lack of response is based on Israel's failure, not his own. The hope of restoration is bound up in Israel's fidelity, though in Psalm 80 there is little focus on repentance. The psalmist is more interested in God's response, promising that Israel will be faithful if Yahweh acts on their behalf (80:19—20).

The Son of Man and the vine have become central elements of the interpretative analysis as they were the elements most used by later authors. Understanding the psalmist's Son of Man in contrast to the Danielic use is important. The two are not identical, but they would later be amalgamated in Matthew. Who or what is the Psalm 80 Son of Man, and is what is that Son of Man's relationship to the vine? Deciphering the meaning of the images presents a window into

the way later authors saw and used the psalm to meet the changing religio—political climate of the first century CE.

The מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל of Psalm 80 has been interpreted as both an individual and corporate figure in conjunction with the vine. The first possibility is the מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל refers to the king of Israel and its kingship, with the vine representing Israel. ‘The vine is the defining image of Psalm 80 with a full nine verses devoted to it, but it is also the most richly textured, leading to a great deal of ambiguous imagery.’⁴⁵⁴ Plants are a common image in the Old Testament for God’s people (Isaiah 5:1—7, Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 17) where shoots and branches are symbols for royal or representative figures (Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:1—8, Ezekiel 19:11). Additionally, flourishing vines and plants can represent the restoration of Israel’s fortunes (Hosea 14:5—9).

Comparison to other psalms has been used to validate the possibility of this kingship view. Rowe concludes that Psalm 110:1 is used to describe the king of Israel sitting at Yahweh’s right hand, an obvious parallel if individuals are being described in both passages.⁴⁵⁵ Psalm 110 is a royal psalm featuring divine decrees that are suitable for inaugurating a king’s rule.⁴⁵⁶ The right is a metaphor for both a place of honour and the routing of the king’s enemies by Yahweh.⁴⁵⁷ However, Psalm 110 is also a difficult psalm to interpret, containing textual conundrums.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁴ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 26.

⁴⁵⁵ R. Rowe, ‘Is Daniel’s “Son of Man” Messianic?’, 81.

⁴⁵⁶ W. Brown, ed, *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 209, 329; S.E. Gillingham, *Psalms*, 5.

⁴⁵⁷ W.D. Tucker, ‘The Role of the Foe in Book 5: Reflections on the Final Composition of the Psalter’, in N.L. deClaisse—Walford, ed., *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 187.

⁴⁵⁸ W. Brown, ‘A Royal Performance: Critical Notes on Psalm 110:3a—b’, *JBL* 117:1 (1998): 93.

The oracle appears to speak of a coronation in Jerusalem, and a revelation from Yahweh delivered to David by Nathan as seen in 2 Samuel 7:8—11.⁴⁵⁹ Verse 4 refers to the person on Yahweh's right being forever a priest in the order of Melchizedek. The reference to Melchizedek could be reference to the enigmatic figure of Genesis 14, or it could be a misunderstanding to indicate 'my king is legitimate', not the figure of Genesis.⁴⁶⁰ By the time of the New Testament, the author of Hebrews understood the Melchizedek reference as the man from Genesis, demonstrating Jesus' superior priesthood over the Levitical priests.⁴⁶¹ This establishes a correlation for Hebrews that Jesus is priest and king.

An objection is raised that Psalm 110:2b features הָרַג , which is more commonly used of exercising authority in a labor supervisory role than a kingly rule.⁴⁶² Wilson argues this is an homage to Genesis 1:26 and 28, with reference to Yahweh in Psalm 110:4a putting the focus on God, not on the Davidic king.⁴⁶³ A sudden reversal takes place in the passage as the one commissioned is a priest, meaning an enduring priesthood is replacing an eternal kingship.⁴⁶⁴ Thus the Davidic descendant is a Melchizedek priest eternally proclaiming Yahweh's righteous kingship.⁴⁶⁵ Wilson's theory rests on unsure footing as an appeal to Melchizedek makes more sense in relationship to the earthly monarch than it does the heavenly king. Psalm 110 is a royal psalm emphasising the establishment of the king, making the correlation to the Genesis figure of an earthly king more suitable for interpretation than God's heavenly kingship.

⁴⁵⁹ W. Holladay, *The Psalms*, 23.

⁴⁶⁰ W. Holladay, *The Psalms*, 24.

⁴⁶¹ H. Attridge, 'The Psalms in Hebrews', in S. Moyise & M. Menken, eds., in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 197—198.

⁴⁶² G.H. Wilson, 'King, Messiah, and the Reign of God: Revisiting the Royal Psalms and the Shape of the Psalter', in P.D. Miller & P.W. Flint, eds., *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 399.

⁴⁶³ G.H. Wilson, 'King, Messiah', 399.

⁴⁶⁴ G.H. Wilson, 'King, Messiah', 399—400.

⁴⁶⁵ G.H. Wilson, 'King, Messiah', 400.

The person on the right hand in Psalm 110 is a participant in Yahweh's universal kingship, sitting on his throne while Yahweh fights for him.⁴⁶⁶ Assyrian king Esarhaddon is said to have placed his son Assurbanipal on his right in language similar to Psalm 110.⁴⁶⁷ If Psalm 110 is a reinterpretation of Psalm 2, then the son has moved to Yahweh's right hand, magnifying his royal role in Psalm 110.⁴⁶⁸ It is further suggested that the image is not static but dynamic, with the possibility that God moves to the right of the king in verse 5, though the likelihood is this interplay reflects the king's participation in Yahweh's power.⁴⁶⁹ Psalm 2:6—9 highlights the important role of the king in pre—exilic tradition, making it possible that Psalm 110 is a post—exilic divine speech remembering a pre—exilic tradition now suspended.⁴⁷⁰ Psalm 110 is a royal enthronement psalm, but whether it was a Davidic coronation psalm is uncertain.⁴⁷¹

Likewise Psalm 20:6 (19:7 LXX) states, Now I know the Lord saves his anointed. He will answer from his holy heaven, in the saving power of his right hand. The anointed one is presumably the king being saved by God's right hand.⁴⁷² Israel's king is a military figure responsible for protecting Zion, thus the psalmist prays for God's power with the king as he goes to war.⁴⁷³ Psalm 89:14 also speaks of Yahweh's throne and 89:13 his right hand, which combined with Psalm 110:1 makes the connection of מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל as Israel's king even stronger.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁶ R. Watts, 'The Psalms in Mark's Gospel', in S. Moyise & M. Menken, eds., in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 36.

⁴⁶⁷ J. Hilber, 'Psalm CX in Light of Assyrian Prophecies', *VT* 53 (2003): 357.

⁴⁶⁸ R. Watts, 'The Lord's House and David's House: The Psalms and Mark's Perspective on Jesus', *BI* 15 (2007): 317—318.

⁴⁶⁹ A. Cordes, 'Spricht Ps 109 LXX Von Einem Messias Oder Nicht?' in M.A. Knibb, ed., *The Septuagint and Messianism* (Leuven: University Press), 255—256.

⁴⁷⁰ H. Spieckermann, 'Rede Gottes und Wort Gottes in den Psalmen', in K. Seybold & E. Zenger, eds., *Neue Wege Der Psalmenforschung* (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1994), 157—158.

⁴⁷¹ W. Holladay, 24.

⁴⁷² Z. Zevit, 'The Common Origin of the Aramaicized Prayer to Horus and of Psalm 20', *JAOS* 110:2 (1990): 225.

⁴⁷³ W. Brown, ed., *Handbook of the Psalms*, 330.

⁴⁷⁴ R. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" Messianic?', 81.

These psalms share the common notion that the king is at Yahweh's right, which is the pre-
eminent position of God's might and authority.

Based on analysis of Psalm 80, and comparative psalms, there are five key points to be
noticed about the king: 1. The king is called מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל , 2. He is closely associated with Israel, 3. He
is associated with his people's tribulation, 4. He is called מֶלֶךְ־יְהוָה in connection with Yahweh's
kingship, 5. The connection with Psalm 110:1 implies the enthronement of מֶלֶךְ־יְהוָה .⁴⁷⁵

The extending branches and shoots of the vine in verse 12 are a reference to the borders
of the Promised Land from Deuteronomy 11:24 obtained by David and kept by Solomon.
Genesis 49 contains a prophecy concerning Judah and the arrival of David's kingship, a
prophecy that features a vine, wine and grapes (Genesis 49:11—12), language close enough to
Psalm 80 that bears consideration in identifying the Son of Man with Davidic kingship.⁴⁷⁶

A Davidic king is not the only possibility for the מֶלֶךְ־יְהוָה of Psalm 80 as both divine and
corporate possibilities remain. Yahweh is possibly the enthroned king, and his role as the
shepherd is a common descriptor for kings in the ancient Near East.⁴⁷⁷ The Lord is described as
the king of Israel in passages such as 1 Samuel 8 and Isaiah 33:22. God is also the shepherd of
Israel in passages such as Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34, making this another possible identification.
However, the psalm appears to make a distinction between Yahweh and the Son of Man/man of
at his right.

⁴⁷⁵ R. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" Messianic?', 82.

⁴⁷⁶ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 36.

⁴⁷⁷ R. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" Messianic?' in H. Rowdon, ed. *Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology Presented to Donald Guthrie* (Downers Grove: Inter—Varsity Press, 1982), 80.

There are also corporate possibilities for identifying the Son of Man beyond Israel's human or divine king. First, the man of the right hand is Benjamin from verse 2, possibly in the hope that Benjamin would rally from Judah to the aid of his brothers.⁴⁷⁸ The second option is that the man of the right hand is Israel, an alternative picture for describing the vine. This view is influenced by verse 15 where the גֵּזֶר is made strong by God for himself. If כִּנְיָהּ , found only here in the Hebrew text, means stock, planted by God's right hand', גֵּזֶר would refer to 'the vine' or Israel, which would determine the similar clause in verse 17.⁴⁷⁹ Exodus imagery and the conquest of the Promised Land are apparent in verse 9, possibly giving the Son of Man as Israel connection more validity. After recounting the exodus and the vine's demise, verse 15 can be seen as a plea for a new exodus, with the hope that Israel will be strengthened and resettled after the fall.⁴⁸⁰ Further, verse 19 calls for God to 'revive' the nation as a whole, not just the king, in language that invokes what can be thought of as an eschatological resurrection.⁴⁸¹

Evaluation

Royal motifs are present in the text as the psalmist seeks a restoration of Israel's fortunes that alludes to the blessings and curses found in Deuteronomy 28. With the looming destruction of their nation pending at Assyria's hands, the author pleads with God to vanquish their enemies as he did in the past and as he promised in the covenant (Deuteronomy 28:7). The shoot is an allusion to the might and power Israel had under David, and the מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל is Israel's king, whose restored fortunes represent the people's fortunes, which is comparable to the terms used in Daniel 7.

⁴⁷⁸ R. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" Messianic?', 80.

⁴⁷⁹ R. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" Messianic?', 80.

⁴⁸⁰ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 27.

⁴⁸¹ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 41—42.

This kingship reading of the Son of Man leads to the possibility that the psalm is also messianic. If the Son of Man is the same מֶלֶךְ-יְהוָה from Psalm 8, the ideal man, while the ‘man at the right hand’ is the conquering king of Psalm 110, the terms combine as a reference to a messianic head set to bring about their restoration.⁴⁸² However, this view of the Messiah is not of a redeemer or saviour, rather he is the head of a redeemed people.⁴⁸³ Such a messianic reading is enhanced when examining the messianic evolution that the psalm underwent in its LXX transformation. Further, the psalm would be used in various texts of the first century CE that offers further insight into why Psalm 80 was a natural source for Matthew 25:31—46. Within Psalm 80 itself, the man of the right is the king of Israel who is too weak to address the situation facing his people and needs God’s strengthening.⁴⁸⁴

The Messianic and Eschatological Development of Psalm 80

Following its composition in Israel, Psalm 80 underwent messianic development during its translation in the LXX. The psalm was used further in various biblical and non—biblical texts, providing insight into how interpreters before and after the life of Jesus applied the psalm in their historical situation. The remainder of this chapter will examine the translation of the psalm into Greek, and its use in the Dead Sea Scrolls, *2 Baruch*, the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, *4 Ezra* and the New Testament. Analysis of this history demonstrates Psalm 80 was an important text variously used by multiple authors. This consistent use during the period leading up to and after the composition of Matthew provides external attestation that Psalm 80 is an important text appealed to for the Sheep and the Goats.

⁴⁸² C. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 232.

⁴⁸³ C. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 232.

⁴⁸⁴ W. Brown, Ed, *Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, 439—440.

*Psalm 79 (80) in the LXX*⁴⁸⁵

Psalm 79 LXX demonstrates an evolutionary messianism in the process of its translation. As Streett writes, ‘The translation of the Psalter into Greek in the second century bce (*sic*) is an important witness to the development of Jewish messianic and eschatological interpretations of Psalm 80.’⁴⁸⁶ The messianic and eschatological evolution of Psalm 80 can be traced through its translation in the LXX, and its use by authors in the first century CE.

Verses 16 and 18 of Psalm 79 LXX have received scholarly attention because of the presence of υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in both verses.⁴⁸⁷ In verse 16 ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου is the translation of the Hebrew עַל־בֶּן while the same Greek rendering is used in verse 18 of the Hebrew עַל־בֶּן־אָדָם. Why υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is used in two verses to render different Hebrew expressions can be explained in multiple ways. McNeil has proposed on the basis of the LXX, Peshitta and three manuscripts of the Vulgate that there was a Hebrew *Vorlage* that read עַל־בֶּן־אָדָם in both verses.⁴⁸⁸ Additionally, the Psalm 80 Targum translates verse 16 as ועל מלכא משיחא, which may offer support for a Hebrew text that contained בֶּן־אָדָם in verse 16 that was translated ‘King Messiah’.

This *Vorlage* theory encounters serious difficulties as an explanation for the messianic evolution. First, the inclusion of עַל־בֶּן in verse 16 is said to be a *parablepsis* from verse 18 where the scribe saw מִיָּנֶה in both texts and inserted בֶּן־אָדָם into verse 16, creating the *Vorlage* that led a

⁴⁸⁵ Other authors on these questions include: M. Knibb, ‘The Septuagint and Messianism: Problems and Issues’, M. Knibb ed., *The Septuagint and Messianism* (Leuven: University Press, 2006), 1—19; C. Cox, ‘Schaper’s Eschatology Meets Kraus’s Theology of the Psalms’, R. Hiebert, C. Cox & P. Gentry eds., *The Old Greek Psalter: Studies in Honor of Albert Pietersma* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 289—311; D. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997): 19—20. M. Heiser, ‘The Role of the Septuagint in the Transmission of the Scriptures’, *BSPADE* 23:1 (2010): 11—14.

⁴⁸⁶ A. Streett, *The Vine and the Son of Man: Eschatological Interpretation of Psalm 80 in Early Judaism*, 116.

⁴⁸⁷ All LXX references taken from A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* unless otherwise noted.

⁴⁸⁸ B. McNeil, ‘The Son of Man and the Messiah: A Footnote’, *NTS* 26 (1979/80): 419—420.

Greek translator using υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in both verses.⁴⁸⁹ However, in the Targum מלכא משיחא is found only in verse 16 where מְלִיכָא־בְרִי־אֱדָמ is supposedly present in both verses 16 and 18 of this *Vorlage*. Why then did the translator avoid using מלכא משיחא in verse 18? Verse 18 of the Targum reads עַל בְּרַךְ נִשְׁחַלְלָהּ לְךָ, which seems unusual if just two lines before the same translator interpreted ‘Son of Man’ as ‘King Messiah’

The lack of manuscript evidence to support such a *Vorlage* theory, the multiple scribal mistakes required to make the theory work and the inconsistent Targum translation strains the credibility of the overall hypothesis. A simpler possibility is that Psalm 79 LXX was subject to interpretative translation without the need of an alternate *Vorlage*. This is an issue widely discussed in LXX studies and Psalm 79 has been incorporated into the literature surrounding the effects of messianic hope on the translation of the LXX.

Psalm 79 LXX, as well as the whole of the Greek Psalter, was not a purely academic translation, nor was it devoid of evolution through the process of transmission. The Greek Psalter may be partly or entirely based on a Hebrew text that preceded the finished literary product.⁴⁹⁰ While there is a substantial amount of similarity between the Masoretic Text and the critically reconstructed Greek Psalter of the LXX, the Greek text is a text with a historical and theological setting of its own.⁴⁹¹ The meaning of both the Hebrew and Greek versions of the psalm are valuable for understanding how a first century CE may have incorporated them into a later historical situation. It may likewise demonstrate how authors reimagined Psalm 79 LXX in a manner similar to the LXX translators themselves.

⁴⁸⁹ B. McNeil, ‘The Son of Man’, 419—420.

⁴⁹⁰ J. Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1995), 13.

⁴⁹¹ J. Schaper, *Eschatology*, 14—15.

The use of υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου of verses 16 and 18 may reflect a desire to harmonise the text by aligning the verses and adding solemnity to the phrase.⁴⁹² This may explain why the Targum used מלכא משיחא in verse 16; it was a way of intentionally making Messiah and Son of Man synonymous. Similarly, the Aramaic Daniel 7:13 בְּרִי אֲנִיִּשׁ was rendered in the LXX as υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, meaning the Psalm 79 LXX translator may have been influenced by Daniel 7:13 LXX, demonstrating a relationship between these texts pre—New Testament.⁴⁹³ However, this is doubtful considering the date of Daniel’s composition in the second century BCE and the date of the Psalter’s translation in the second century BCE.

Psalm 79 LXX may have undergone a degree of messianisation, but the production phenomena need not directly relate to the reception history of the text. Psalm 79 LXX may play a role contrary to its original design, or it could undergo a reimagining by a later author using the text in an echo or allusion. As previously mentioned, there is no singular definition of messianism from this period, so defining when a passage has been messianised is open to a broad spectrum of interpretation. There exists a larger possibility that a degree of monarchial admiration for the successful Persian and Greek expansions played a role in the use of υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου in passages like Psalm 79 LXX.⁴⁹⁴ Philo presents Moses as a king, and Josephus interprets high—priestly succession as part of an envisioned Israelite kingship in the Pentateuch.⁴⁹⁵ Kingship and messiahship are not exclusive terms, meaning the way Psalm 79 LXX is used by later authors could be indicative of their interpretation or reimagining of υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου.

⁴⁹² J. Schaper, *Eschatology*, 98.

⁴⁹³ J. Schaper, *Eschatology*, 98—99.

⁴⁹⁴ W. Horbury, ‘Monarchy and Messianism in the Greek Pentateuch’, M. Knibb ed., *The Septagint and Messianism* (Leuven: University Press, 2006), 80—81.

⁴⁹⁵ W. Horbury, ‘Monarchy and Messianism’, 84—88.

The υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου of Psalm 79 LXX is a royal motif and the translator used υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου in connection with the king at Yahweh's right hand. While the king in Psalm 80 and 79 LXX is not a direct association to the Messiah, a royal messianic reading of the passage appears in first century interpretations both within and outside of the New Testament. Therefore, a survey of the various uses of Psalm 79 LXX leading up to the time of the New Testament and after will demonstrate several reasons why Psalm 79 is a valid as a source text for Matthew 25:31—46.

*Psalm 80 in the Dead Sea Scrolls*⁴⁹⁶

Psalm 80 had no significant place in the Dead Sea Scrolls community discovered to date, nor has a copy of the psalm been discovered.⁴⁹⁷ Psalms were a significant part of the Dead Sea Scrolls as evinced by the fragments of forty psalm scrolls discovered in the caves, which is more than any other biblical book.⁴⁹⁸ There were an additional three partial commentaries on the Psalms, apocryphal additions and hymns mimicking the Psalms.⁴⁹⁹ Given the abundance of Psalm information it becomes clear Psalm 80 was not a significant text at Qumran. There have been some attempts to link allusions in the scrolls to Psalm 80 where the image of planting or growth is present.

One particular *Hodayot*, 1QH 16, has been linked to Psalm 80 with a potential allusion to the vine. 1QH 16 is a Hymn of Thanksgiving in which the author thanks God for protecting his people who are described as a נצר and שריש.⁵⁰⁰ Elwolde writes, 'Although the two passages share the use of botanical imagery, connected with the planting of a tree or vine and its subsequent

⁴⁹⁶ For additional pertinent literature see: P. Tiller, 'The 'Eternal Planting' in the Dead Sea Scrolls', *DSD* 4 (1997): 312—335; S. Holm—Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran* (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1960), 165.

⁴⁹⁷ See M. Abegg, P. Flint & E. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 534—535.

⁴⁹⁸ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 129.

⁴⁹⁹ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 129.

⁵⁰⁰ F. Martinez & E. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition Vol. 1* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 180—181. This text is used in this research for both the original text of the DSS and comparative translation.

growth and function, the expression כָּל־עֲבָרֵי דָרֶךְ is the only one to appear in identical form in both texts.⁵⁰¹ The phrase כָּל־עֲבָרֵי דָרֶךְ is found in Psalm 89:42, Lamentations 1:12 and 2:15, where in both psalms the context speaks of despoiling Israel, while in the Lamentations passages it refers to the enemies who deride Zion. However, in 1QH 16 the author appears to have a more positive example in mind where animals of the forest are seeking shade.⁵⁰²

The possible allusion is found in line 8 of 1QH 16 where ירעו כול [חי]ת יער echoes 80:14 וְזִיז עֲדֵי יִרְעֶנָּה, but there is a noticeable absence of עוֹף in Psalm 80, where it serves as an important image in the hymn. Both passages use botanical planting imagery, as well as the growth of the plant/shoot, but the texts only share the one line. However, the one possible direct phrase from Psalm 80:16 appears in Psalm 89:42, Lamentations 1:12 and Lamentations 2:15.⁵⁰³ The fact that no copy of Psalm 80 has been discovered in the scrolls further challenges the theory, though it is not conclusive. A possible Psalm 80 allusion is speculative, though the possibility remains for both the allusion and the possible appropriation of the imagery in a new setting.

Planting is an explicit metaphor in the *Hodayot* literature, and 1QH 16 serves as an example of ‘pleasant planting’.⁵⁰⁴ As Brooke writes, ‘The planting demands an allegorical interpretation in relation to the community for which the poet presents himself as part of’.⁵⁰⁵ Pleasant planting of the vine that takes deep root and experiences growth is a central theme in Psalm 80:7—13, with the caveat that the once beautiful vine has been broken down. Unlike Psalm 80, the author of 1QH 16 appears to be writing from a vantage point in which the plant is in no imminent danger. Since

⁵⁰¹ J. Elwolde, ‘The *Hodayot*’s Use of the Psalter: Text—critical Contributions (Book 3: Pss 73—89)’, *DSD* 17 (2010): 167.

⁵⁰² J. Elwolde, ‘The *Hodayot*’s Use of the Psalter’, 168.

⁵⁰³ J. Elwolde, ‘The *Hodayot*’s Use of the Psalter’, 168.

⁵⁰⁴ G. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and The New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 240.

⁵⁰⁵ G. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and The New Testament*, 240.

Psalm 80 is a lament and 1QH 16 is a thanksgiving hymn there will be key differences. If Psalm 80 was part of the hymn's inspiration, it demonstrates a progression from tragedy to triumph

Another potential allusion to Psalm 80 in the Dead Sea Scrolls is found in 4Q302, an 'Admonitory Parable'.⁵⁰⁶ 4Q302 consists of three fragments and four columns that address the same themes of planting and nurturing. Nitzan writes, 'Hence, instead of the tree's growth and multiplication (ii 7—8), its branches were cut off (ii 9) and it was ravaged by boars (iii 6), as described in Psalm 80:14.'⁵⁰⁷ This Qumran text uses tree (עץ) as opposed to vine (גפן), but both retain the use of branch (קציר).⁵⁰⁸

Additionally, Psalm 80:14 reads יִכְרֹסְמִנָּה קִזִּיר while 4Q302 fragment 2 column III reads [וויכסמוהו... חזו]ירים, two images of the boar eating the vine or tree, and in the case of the Qumran text, this boar devours Israel in punishment as it does in Psalm 80. 'Although there is no explicit statement in the extant parable concerning the specific reason for abandoning the tree (namely, Israel's guilt), this may be surmised both from the historical survey of the former part and from the following section dealing with the decree of God.'⁵⁰⁹ In the subsequent section Israel's guilt is defined as the violation of their covenant with God (Fragment. 3 cols. ii—iii). 4Q302 contains a variety of possible allusions drawn from Leviticus 26:25, Ezekiel 39:25, Jeremiah 6:19, Isaiah 66:3, Micah 6:20, Ezekiel 18:2, 20:32, Malachi 2:17, 3:14 and Habakkuk 1:12—13.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁶ F. Martinez & E. Tigchelaar, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition Vol. 1*, 666.

⁵⁰⁷ B. Nitzan, 'Post Biblical *Rib* Pattern Admonitions in 4Q302/302a and 4Q381 69, 76—77', M. Stone & E. Chazon eds., *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 169.

⁵⁰⁸ B. Nitzan, 'Post Biblical *Rib*', 169.

⁵⁰⁹ B. Nitzan, 'Post Biblical *Rib*', 169.

⁵¹⁰ B. Nitzan, 'Post Biblical *Rib*', 170.

Evaluation

The data from the Dead Sea Scrolls does not present strong evidence for Psalm 80 as a significant text in the Qumran community. If Psalm 80 is ever discovered among the scrolls it may bolster the plausibility of these allusions, but the planting imagery is so vague that it cannot be determined with any decisiveness that Psalm 80 or other texts are the inspiration for these Dead Sea Scrolls' passages. What is valuable for the present study is the importance of growth imagery, whether pertaining to a vine, shoot or another agricultural image, as seen in Psalm 80. While the presence of Psalm 80 is quite minimal in the Dead Sea Scrolls, several other texts evince a strong connection with the psalm that provide foundational evidence for its importance in the period Matthew was being written.

Psalm 80 in 2 Baruch

Contrary to the Dead Sea Scrolls, *2 Baruch* is an important text in the study of Psalm 80 and in this thesis for several reasons. In support of the argument that Matthew 25:31—46 combines Psalm 80/79 LXX and Daniel 7 to create the Sheep and the Goats, *2 Baruch* also uses these two texts in its visionary themes. Both *2 Baruch* and Matthew are written in the aftermath of the temple's destruction as a response to national crisis and appeal to Psalm 80. Further, *2 Baruch* incorporates a royal and messianic interpretation of Psalm 80, in a manner similar to what is being proposed in the present work. Ravasi rightfully contends that Psalm 80's vineyard imagery attracted allegorical messianic interpretations, such as found in *2 Baruch*.⁵¹¹

2 Baruch maintains a theme of imminent expectation that is found several times in the book (20:1f, 6; 23:7; 48:39; 54:17; 82:2; 83:1; cf. 48:32).⁵¹² Bauckham writes, 'The events of AD 70

⁵¹¹ G. Ravasi, *Il libro*, 674.

⁵¹² R. Bauckham, 'The Delay of the Parousia', *TB* 31:1 (1980): 15.

have not dampened but inflamed the expectation of redemption, but it is clear that the delay, while Israel is humiliated and the Gentile's triumph, is an agonizing problem...'⁵¹³ How and when should Israel expect deliverance from their humiliation at the hands of the Gentiles becomes the central focus for Baruch in this post-war literature. Like Paul's statement in 2 Thessalonians 2:4—7, 2 *Baruch* 40 also envisions a spiritual oppressor, in the same vein as the Johanne antichrist, who will arise only to be vanquished by the coming Messiah.⁵¹⁴

2 *Baruch* 36—40 has become a focus in the reception of Psalm 80 because of its use of vine imagery. Drawing upon the image of the four beasts in Daniel 7, the Messiah in 2 *Baruch* and 4 *Ezra* rebukes and destroys Rome, reinterpreted as the fourth beast.⁵¹⁵ In 2 *Baruch*, the destruction of the fourth kingdom's army is followed by a vision of the vine destroying the remnants of the fourth kingdom in chapters 37—39. The image of Baruch's vine has several characteristics in common with Psalm 80:15—18.⁵¹⁶

In Baruch's vision, Rome as the fourth beast is a mighty forest confronted by a vine that produces a flood that uproots the forest, demolishing its strongholds, which allows the vine to grow where the forest had been. The 2 *Baruch* vision amalgamates Psalm 80 with Daniel 7, portraying the fulfillment of Daniel's and simultaneously the psalmist's prayer. Whereas the psalmist presented Israel as the vine planted by God after the Gentiles had been cast out of the land, 2 *Baruch* imagines a replanting of the vine through the agency of the Messiah.

The interpretation of Baruch's vision describes the forest as the fourth kingdom of Daniel (39:3—5) that will fall before the might of the Anointed One who is like the fountain and vine

⁵¹³ R. Bauckham, 'The Delay of the Parousia', 15.

⁵¹⁴ J. Scott, 'Paul and Late-Jewish Eschatology: A Case Study, 1 Thessalonians 4:13—18 II Thessalonians 2:1—12', *JETS* 15:3 (1972): 140—141.

⁵¹⁵ W. Horbury, 'Antichrist Among Jews and Gentiles', M. Goodman ed., *Jews in a Graeco—Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 119.

⁵¹⁶ W. Horbury, 'Antichrist Among Jews and Gentiles', 120.

(39:7). This is evidence not only for a first century CE author joining Psalm 80 and Daniel 7 in a visionary context, but the author interprets both biblical passages as being fulfilled by a promised Messiah who carries out the duty of a king that will have an extended reign over the earth (40:1—4). Other authors have acknowledged the possibility of allusions/echoes to Psalm 80 in the Baruch vision, though much of their attention has focused on other possible candidates for the vine.

Bauckham's analysis of *2 Baruch* 36—40 allows for the possibility of Psalm 80 as the source for the vine image:

This vision is a prophecy of the way in which the fourth kingdom (2 Bar. 39:5), i.e. the Roman empire, will be destroyed and succeeded by the rule of the Messiah. The Roman empire is symbolized by a large forest surrounded by high mountains (40:2); the Messiah and his kingdom are symbolized by a vine and a fountain (40:3; 39:7).⁵¹⁷

The fountain that comes destroys everything except a cedar representing the last Roman emperor, which is brought to the vine that represents the Messiah, who condemns and destroys the cedar.⁵¹⁸

Bauckham's article does not focus on Psalm 80, rather it is concerned with the messianic images of the 'shoot' and 'branch' from Isaiah 11:1, who is an extension of the 'Mighty One' from Isaiah 10:34. However, he draws attention to comparisons between the 'shoot' and 'branch' compared to that of the 'vine', writing 'The messianic shoot...has been interpreted as a vine, perhaps under the influence of Psalm 80, but more probably by association with Ezekiel 17:6—8...'⁵¹⁹

Wright also suggests Psalm 80 was responsible for some of the imagery in *2 Baruch*. *Baruch's* vision of the vine and the fountain is clearly drawn from biblical imagery, and echoes

⁵¹⁷ R. Bauckham, 'The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34 in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 2 Baruch and the Preaching of John the Baptist', *DSD* 2:2 (1995): 207.

⁵¹⁸ R. Bauckham, 'The Messianic Interpretation', 207.

⁵¹⁹ R. Bauckham, 'The Messianic Interpretation', 209.

the previous vision and prayers pertaining to Israel's plight and redemption.⁵²⁰ As post-war literature, *2 Baruch* writes about Israel's oppression and future hope, echoing earlier biblical prophecies that address the socio-religious situation.⁵²¹ Wright attributes the presence of the vine and cedar in *2 Baruch* to Psalm 80:8—19; Isaiah 5:1—7, and Ezekiel 17:1—24.⁵²²

Lied also focused on the use of vegetation imagery in *2 Baruch*, determining that Israel is often seen as a plant, most commonly a vine, with plant imagery specifically pertaining to Israel's Land.⁵²³ Among the plant images used in *2 Baruch* is Psalm 80:8—9, which contains the image of the driving out of the nations for the planting of the vine. Second, Exodus 15:17 refers to the planting of Israel on Zion, though not specifically as a vine. Third, Jeremiah 1:10 utilises this imagery for the uprooting of foreign empires as a consequence for abusing Israel.⁵²⁴ Lied also writes,

Above all, though, the image of the luxuriant, thriving plant of Israel serves as a sign of God's care for his people. As long as Israel lives according to the regulation of the covenant, the plant will remain rooted in the Land. However, if the plant turns wicked, the plant will be rejected by God and uprooted from its soil.⁵²⁵

The theme of Psalm 80 leaves post-70 authors questioning the wicked actions of the vine that led to the temple's destruction.

Chapter 35 set the stage for the vine/Messiah and the fountain/messianic army to destroy the wicked forest and to kill the cedar/last wicked ruler. 'This apocalypse applies the imagery of uprooting to describe how the Messiah and his followers finally destroy the world's impiety

⁵²⁰ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 282.

⁵²¹ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 282.

⁵²² N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 282. Note 7.

⁵²³ L. Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* JSJSup 129 (Leiden: Brill, 2008),

⁵²⁴ L. Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel*, 279.

⁵²⁵ L. Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel*, 279.

(36:4).⁵²⁶ However, a new element added into the vine of Psalm 80 is the vine's transformation into a valley of unfading flowers. Fading flowers are a fact of life (Job 14:1) but unfading flowers are everlasting in contrast to the mortal wicked forest that will be uprooted. Thus *2 Baruch* turns a common biblical metaphor upside down as Israel will no longer be subject to uprooting when it is ultimately redeemed.⁵²⁷

Lied's assessment concerning the unfading flowers is noteworthy because of the unique difference between *2 Baruch* and Matthew. The next chapter will detail the argument for Psalm 80's presence in Matthew 25:31—46. While it will be made evident that Matthew also believes in an everlasting kingdom, his vision of that kingdom is significantly different than Baruch's. The nature and makeup of the vine, and for that matter the land itself, take on new meaning in the advent of the Christ's arrival and the temple's destruction.

Streett also argues that Psalm 80 is the key text in *2 Baruch* for three reasons. First, Psalm 80 offers a simpler explanation for the association of the Messiah with the vine rather than Isaiah 10:34—11:5.⁵²⁸ Second, the vine in Psalm 80 serves as a symbol for the Davidic kingdom and verse 18 is closely associated with the Messiah, which is a natural progression if Psalm 80 is a key source text.⁵²⁹ Third, Psalm 80 accounts for more features of *2 Baruch* than Bauckham's postulation of several passages from Isaiah (10:34, 2:12—14, 40:4) to explain the image of cedars and mountains opposed to the vine. However, Psalm 80 alone can account for the image of lowering the forest and mountains in *2 Baruch* 36:5 and 37:1.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁶ L. Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel*, 280.

⁵²⁷ L. Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel*, 281.

⁵²⁸ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 151.

⁵²⁹ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 151—152.

⁵³⁰ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 152.

Evaluation

Psalm 80 is the likeliest candidate to have influenced the Vine Vision of *2 Baruch*. This is important for several reasons. The temple's fall created a religio—political crisis for Judaism in the first century. As writers of the period turned to the scriptures for their understanding of the crisis, both Daniel 7 and Psalm 80 offered important resources for confronting the tragedy at the hands of Daniel's fourth beast. The fact that these authors would appeal to Psalm 80 is unsurprising, as it addresses loss at the hands of the wild beasts that symbolise the Gentiles in the psalmist's mind. These expectant Jewish authors not only identified the messianic connections between Daniel 7 and Psalm 80, they also implemented them into their writing, imagining that God would answer the psalmist's cry in an affirmative manner. Such an affirmative expectation differentiates *Matthew* from *2 Baruch*.

2 Baruch also demonstrates another author of the first century CE who combines the imagery in Daniel 7 with the imagery in Psalm 80. The four kingdom Danielic model is present in chapter 39 in conjunction with the vine who is the Messiah. The author of *2 Baruch* unites the passages making the Messiah the vine who uproots Daniel's fourth beast. Presenting the vine as the Messiah responsible for the fourth beast's demise establishes the Messiah as a representative of Israel the vine, indicative of a corporate representation. As later authors re—imagined Daniel's Son of Man to be an individual and not the corporate representation of Israel, *2 Baruch* implements a similar ideology.

The vine is now the king and Messiah, drawing from the 'shoot' imagery of Psalm 80:12, who is taking the role of the Son of Man in usurping the fourth beast. Considering further the royal connotations of the Son of Man in Psalm 80, alongside the later royal interpretation of the Son of Man from Daniel, there is evidence that *2 Baruch* has woven the two Son of Man figures

together. It is being contended here that Matthew 25:31—46 demonstrates a similar unity between these same two passages as a means of addressing Israel’s devastation. Here is another author from the period who sees a relationship between the texts, though the outcomes are starkly different.

Psalm 80 in the Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum

The *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* is an extensive retelling of the Hebrew Bible from Adam to the death of Saul that often paraphrases the biblical text as well as quotes it.⁵³¹ The document was falsely attributed to Philo in antiquity due to its being transmitted with genuine Philonic writings.⁵³² While the text has only survived in Latin, it was a translation from Greek and may even have originated in Hebrew. Evidence of this is found in Hebraic links in the narrative and the lack of Greek particles, arguably rendering the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* monotonous with weak literary style.⁵³³

A specific date for the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* is a more challenging question, though the first century CE is firmly fixed in the scholarship. Murphy writes, ‘Few doubt that the *Biblical Antiquities* was written in the first century C.E.’⁵³⁴ However, debate does surround a more definitive date for the text’s completion. The author arguably betrays his knowledge of Titus destroying Jerusalem in 70 CE, making the text post—temple literature. This has been deduced from a speech of God to Moses in XIX.7 where the temple will be placed into the hands of enemies on the 17th of Tammuz,

I will show thee the place wherein the people shall serve me 850 (MSS 740) years, and thereafter it shall be delivered into the hands of the enemies, and they shall destroy it, and strangers shall compass it about; and it shall be on that day like as it was in the day when I

⁵³¹ F. Murphy, *Pseudo—Philo: Rewriting the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3.

⁵³² M. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (London: The MacMillan Company, 1917), 27.

⁵³³ M. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 28—29.

⁵³⁴ F. Murphy, *Pseudo—Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 6.

broke the tables of the covenant which I made with thee in Horeb: and when they sinned, that which was written thereon vanished away. Now that day was the 17th day of the 4th month.⁵³⁵

The problem with the speech is that according to Jeremiah 52:6 and 2 Kings 25:3, the temple was destroyed on the 9th of Tammuz. Traditionally, the 17th of Tammuz is the date in which Moses broke the Tablets of the Law, and according the Talmud, the Romans destroyed the second temple on the same day.⁵³⁶

Murphy remains unconvinced of the post 70 date as he is sceptical that the reference in XIX.7 is to the 70 CE destruction.⁵³⁷ It is possible that XIX.7 indicates the first temple's destruction or the desecrations of Jerusalem by either Antiochus IV or Pompey. *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* are post-war documents that show a strong preoccupation with the destruction of Jerusalem, something he believes is missing in the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*. 'It seems unimaginable that Pseudo-Philo could have written such a long work without that disaster leaving a more recognizable mark. This tips the balance of evidence, sparse as it is, to a pre-70 C.E. date.'⁵³⁸ While there is a possible allusion to Titus in XIX.7 it is possible that the author witnessed the temple's last years, which may explain why the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* has appreciation for the temple and its service.⁵³⁹

Contrary to Cohn and James, Fisk believes the 740-year span from *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* XIX.7 is more reasonably a reference to the first temple's demise, the profanation of Antiochus IV, or Pompey.⁵⁴⁰ The lack of direct reference to the temple's fall, contrary to both 4

⁵³⁵ M. James, *The Biblical Antiquities*, 29—30.

⁵³⁶ M. James, *The Biblical Antiquities*, 30.

⁵³⁷ F. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 6.

⁵³⁸ F. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 6.

⁵³⁹ C. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996), 154.

⁵⁴⁰ B. Fisk, *Do You Not Remember? Scripture, Story and Exegesis in the Rewritten Bible of Pseudo-Philo* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 34.

Ezra and *2 Baruch*, in addition to the emphasis on resisting oppressors in *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* X.3, appears to support a pre—70 date. Further, Fisk argues that Israel’s covenant is associated more with people than place, probably because the author sensed the imminent threat of loss.⁵⁴¹ There is also the free attitude toward the biblical text, which Fisk claims reflects a pre—70 context though he does not detail why this is the case. Lastly, there are specific remarks about the temple, such as *usque in hodiernum diem* (even to this day) in XXII:8 that may imply the system of sacrifice was still active, meaning the temple still existed.⁵⁴²

Evidence for a pre or post—70 date of the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* is not conclusive. As a retelling of the biblical narrative, the lack of overt reference to 70 CE could be a product of the author’s attempt to portray an authentic historicity in his pseudo format. The author of *2 Baruch* used Babylon as a metaphor for Rome while maintaining a 6th century BCE guise. The use of ‘even to this day’ is far from a convincing argument as the author had no reason to betray his metaphorical style. The emphasis on covenant people and not covenant place could attest to the loss of Jerusalem and any semblance of control they had in the Promised Land. Perhaps the author establishes an apologetic for his people’s place as God’s chosen nation amidst tragedy. Lastly, the ‘free attitude’ toward scripture assumes that immediately following the temple’s fall, exegesis underwent a fundamental and almost instant change. Paul demonstrates remarkable creativity with his exegesis in a pre—70 context, just as the author of *2 Baruch* did after 70.

Nothing conclusive comes from the information available, but a date in which the author knows the fate of the temple is probable. Considering the information offered by Hayward, the references to a major event in the temple and the lack of any compelling arguments to push the

⁵⁴¹ B. Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 35.

⁵⁴² B. Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 35

date of composition earlier, a post—70 composition is most plausible. Such a dating is also consistent with the other texts that use a setting from their past to address their present. The value of the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* is not dependent on the document being pre or post—70, though it reasonably was another document written in the wake of Israel’s national crisis.

Vine imagery was an important symbol of Israel in first century Palestine. King Herod appears to have had a significant influence on this trend through the adornment of the temple with a golden vine that was mentioned by both Josephus and the Mishnah. This vine became a symbol for the people during the revolt of 66—70.⁵⁴³ Jewish coins of the 66—70 CE revolt present images of the vine leaf. Later, mosaic floors in the synagogue would feature the image of the vine. However, the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* truly captures the significance of the vine imagery that ‘uses the vine as a symbol of Israel no less than seven times’.⁵⁴⁴

Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum XII.8—9 utilises the *vineam* image repeatedly as the author implores God to remain faithful to and nourish his vine, a cosmic vine extending from God’s throne to the abyss.⁵⁴⁵ The author beseeches God, ‘Si ergo non misertus fueris vine tue, Omnia Domine in vano facta sunt...’⁵⁴⁶ The same theme of not letting God’s work be in vain is repeated shortly below, ‘et non fiat in vanum labor tuus.’⁵⁴⁷ The vine is in danger and the author beseeches God’s rescue to prevent the vine from being destroyed, lest God’s work be in vain. Hayward writes, ‘The vine is clearly Israel, planted by God and described in language which derives ultimately from

⁵⁴³ C. Hayward, ‘The Vine and Its Products as Theological Symbols in First Century Palestinian Judaism’, *DUJ* 51 (1990): 9. See Josephus War V. 210—211 and Antiquities XV.395 and *Middoth* 3:8.

⁵⁴⁴ C. Hayward, ‘The Vine and Its Products’, 9.

⁵⁴⁵ C. Hayward, ‘The Vine and Its Products’, 11. The Latin text being used is from H. Jacobsen, *A Commentary on Pseudo—Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum with Latin and English Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1—88.

⁵⁴⁶ *LAB* XII.9. ‘Therefore, if you do not have mercy on your vine Almighty Lord, all things are done in vain.’

⁵⁴⁷ *LAB* XII.9. ‘Do not let your labor be in vain’.

Psalm 80:9ff.⁵⁴⁸ Without the vine God will have no one to glorify Him, which in first century Jewish belief coincides with the ‘belief that the world was created for the sake of Israel.’⁵⁴⁹

In addition to XII.8—9, Hayward draws attention to the people’s prayer in the days of Jephthah that is heavily dependent on Psalm 80.⁵⁵⁰ Once again the author uses the vine image, this time clearly depending on Psalm 80. The text of XII.7 reads,

Intende Domine in populum quem elgisti, et non corrumpas vineam quam plantavit dextera tua, ut sit coram te in hereditae haec gens, quam habuisti ab initio et quam pretulisti semper, et pro qua fecisti habitabilia et induxisti in terram quam iurasti ei.⁵⁵¹

The vine planted at God’s right is taken from Psalm 80:15—16 which reads, וְכִנְיָה אֲשֶׁר־נָטַעַה יְמִינֶךָ וְעַל־בֵּן אִמְצָתָה לְךָ, אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת שׁוּב־נָא הִבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם וּרְאֵה וּפְקֹד גְּפוֹן זֹאת. The literary dependence appears to be direct as does the overall theme of turning to God and appealing to his past favour as a reason to redeem His people in a time when destruction is a likely possibility.

Fisk allows for the possibility of Psalm 80 as an important source for the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, though he places emphasis on other vine passages as well. ‘Vine imagery is a favourite of Pseudo—Philo (cf. 18.10; 23:12; 28.4; 30.4; 39.7), evidently drawing from biblical texts like Jeremiah 2:21; Psalm 80:8—16; Isaiah 5.1—7.’⁵⁵² The vine imagery in *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* XII is believed to be drawn from Isaiah 5 in Fisk’s model, though Psalm 80:8—19 serves as a secondary cross reference.⁵⁵³ ‘In *LAB* XII, Moses employs similar

⁵⁴⁸ C. Hayward, ‘The Vine and Its Products’, 11.

⁵⁴⁹ C. Hayward, ‘The Vine and Its Products’, 11.

⁵⁵⁰ C. Hayward, ‘The Vine and Its Products’, 12.

⁵⁵¹ ‘Attend Lord to your chosen people, and do not destroy the vine planted at your right, that is before you the nation which is a heritage, that you have had from the beginning, and always more than preferred, and for whose sake you made the habitable places ‘

⁵⁵² B. Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 160, note 76.

⁵⁵³ B. Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 176, note 121.

language to explain why Israel should expect mercy from God. Pseudo—Philo’s argument here is thus similar to Psalm 80:8—19.⁵⁵⁴

Evaluation

As a first century document, the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* touches on several important themes that would have been fitting for address concerning the tragedy of 70 CE. Set within the context of Moses arguing with God about whether to destroy Israel for the golden calf incident of Exodus 2, Moses pleads with God not to uproot the planted vineyard, which he also says God has burned (XII.8).⁵⁵⁵ Considering that the vineyard had not been planted at this point in the Exodus narrative, the author seems to be using the past as a metaphor for the present circumstances.

It is the association of the vine to the Exodus in the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* that makes the Psalm 80 connection more evident. As the psalmist reminded Yahweh of the removal of the vine from Egypt (80:9), so Moses reminds God that Israel is a vine recently removed from Egypt. Chapter XII also mentions the shoot of the vine and the seat of the most high, all of which can be taken directly from Psalm 80, making it a candidate for use by Pseudo—Philo. The author’s many references to the vine may not all come directly from Psalm 80, but there appears to be direct use of Psalm 80 in at least some of the book.

The author of *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* expresses a dire concern for the possibility that God will plant another vineyard in Israel’s place, leading Moses to question whether that new vine will trust God because of his destroying Israel (XII.9).⁵⁵⁶ It may be coincidence that the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* rewrote the scriptures in a manner that would be meaningful for a post—

⁵⁵⁴ B. Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 322, note 13.

⁵⁵⁵ M. James, *The Biblical Antiquities*, 112.

⁵⁵⁶ M. James, *The Biblical Antiquities*, 113.

70 CE Jewish audience, though it seems more probable that the author intended the connection. Pseudo—Philo appears to be another document written after the temple’s destruction that addresses the horrors of the Jewish nation. Uncertainty over the vine’s future was a tangible reality to the books earliest readers, or as the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* says itself, ‘Who knoweth whether God will be reconciled unto his inheritance, that he destroy not the planting of his vineyard?’ (XXX.4).⁵⁵⁷

Both *2 Baruch* and the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* used Psalm 80 in exegetically creative ways to address a national crisis. Psalm 80 was itself a response to a national crisis that ended in disastrous fashion. As Psalm 79 LXX clearly states, the plea to God was in response to Assyria, a response that did not come as Assyria successfully destroyed and exiled Israel. *2 Baruch* connects the destruction of the temple with the loss of the ten tribes by Assyria early in the book, claiming the remaining two tribes have done even worse than those which were lost (1:2). The Lord declares that the people will be scattered among the nations, a clever use of the Babylonian exile to indicate that either Rome had launched a new exile or possibly that they had never truly returned from exile, at least spiritually.

The author of *4 Ezra* also connects the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 to the ten lost tribes, but in the belief that they would be restored upon the revelation of the Danielic Son of Man (13:25—40). Though *4 Ezra* does not feature Psalm 80 as a central text, the connections by various authors of the first century CE between the vine, the Son of Man, and the lost tribes with the events of 70 CE further enhances the possibility that the same has occurred in Matthew 25:31—46.

⁵⁵⁷ M. James, *The Biblical Antiquities*, 170.

The vine is associated iconographically to the temple through the hanging of a golden vine above the gate at the first part of the building, featuring grape clusters as tall as a man.⁵⁵⁸ The size and craftsmanship of the golden vine was so marvelous that Josephus claims that it amazed viewers.⁵⁵⁹ Psalm 80 contained themes that both correlated to the religio—political situation of 70 CE and visually connected to the temple. As messianic exegesis progressed, and authors began interpreting their kingship hopes in figures like the Son of Man, Psalm 80 became an appealing text to meet the needs of a society in disarray.

While the authors just discussed maintain a hope for messianic deliverance, the authors of the New Testament had seen the arrival of the Messiah. It has been argued that Psalm 80 was a pivotal text in several New Testament books, though the direction those authors will take the interpretation of the psalm is naturally quite different. Because the hope is not in an eventual Messiah that will deliver the people, but a Messiah that has come and the nation fell, an entirely new set of exegetical principles emerges as in the New Testament. This chapter will conclude by examining Psalm 80 in New Testament passages other than Matthew 25:31—46.⁵⁶⁰

Psalm 80 in the New Testament

Psalm 80 has been acknowledged by several scholars as an important text for the New Testament, though it has not gained the notoriety of other psalms more prominently featured in those documents. A survey of how psalms are used in the New Testament never mentions Psalm 80 in connection with any of the New Testament books.⁵⁶¹ To further the case for Psalm 80's influence

⁵⁵⁸ Josephus, *Wars* 5:210.

⁵⁵⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.395.

⁵⁶⁰ The main argument for the Sheep and the Goats being dependent on Psalm 80 is the subject of the next chapter.

⁵⁶¹ S. Moyise & M. Menken, eds., *The Psalms in the New Testament*. None of the authors in this survey make reference to Psalm 80, though it provides excellent information regarding Psalm usage.

on Matthew 25:31—46, other proposed Psalm 80 appearances will be analysed in the New Testament to deduce both their validity and how the psalm is utilised.

Dodd discusses the importance of psalms for the imagery of the New Testament, acknowledging the use of Psalms 22, 34 and 118 as psalms with well—established use in the New Testament, along with three additional Psalms: 41, 42/43 and 80.⁵⁶² Psalm 80 is an appeal to the divine Shepherd of Israel, who is a familiar figure in the Gospels, during a time of distress and mockery. Dodd acknowledges that Psalm 80 is never directly quoted, but the language of the vine, the Son of Man, and the man of God's right hand is so unified in the New Testament presentation of Christ that any notion of coincidental parallel to Psalm 80 is impossible. The presence of the man at God's right hand from Psalm 80:17 in association with the divinely strengthened Son of Man is the scriptural justification for fusing these characters in Mark 14:62.⁵⁶³ Psalm 80 was linked to the Johannine concept of the vine and its branches, though it entered the Christian liturgy prior to the fourth gospel.⁵⁶⁴

The work of Dodd was important in the study of Psalm 80, though it was far from a detailed assessment of how the psalm was used. Several authors have offered support to these views and advanced the level of investigation of this psalm as an important New Testament source. While there is no specific quotation of the psalm to be found in the New Testament, which has contributed to the minimal treatment it has received, its apparent influence on several passages in the New Testament has received increased attention, with several possible candidates for writings influenced by this psalm.

⁵⁶² C. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 100—101.

⁵⁶³ C. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 101—102.

⁵⁶⁴ C. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 114.

Mark 14:62⁵⁶⁵

Gelston addresses Mark's understanding of the Son of Man, which was a term virtually synonymous with 'Messiah' but not as dangerous as Messiah for Jesus' movement.⁵⁶⁶ The two terms are connected in Mark 8:29 where Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ, leading Jesus to immediately speak of the suffering of the Son of Man. Gelston suggests the missing link that connected Son of Man and Messiah was Psalm 80:17, but then he writes, 'There is no allusion to this verse in the New Testament, and that is why no more significance is claimed for it than that of a sidelight!'⁵⁶⁷ Immediately after this statement, Gelston curiously writes, 'But there is no reason to suppose that this Psalm may have been in Jesus' mind as He considered His own place in the purpose of God...'⁵⁶⁸

Analysis of Psalm 80 to Daniel 7 offers an initial comparison that may look striking, but in reality, the similarities are less significant. The beasts of Daniel 7 are visionary, while the 'beasts' or boar of Psalm 80 is a metaphor for the nations. The Son of Man in the Old Testament is used in a non—technical way, but later interpreters understood its use in Psalm 80:17 for the king as the Messiah. This move, 'paved the way for the later interpretation of Daniel 7:13 in messianic terms alike by Jesus and by the Jews. The absence of any specific allusion to Psalm 80.17 in the NT places its significance clearly as a sidelight...'⁵⁶⁹

Gelston's article is peculiar: he puts forward Psalm 80 as a link between Messiah and Son of Man, while also minimizing its effect as a link. His treatment of the Son of Man is generic, offering little substance to a complex debate about the evolution of messianic thought in terms like

⁵⁶⁵ For additional pertinent literature see: B. Witherington III, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 261; M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (London: T & T Clark, 1995), 169—170;

⁵⁶⁶ A. Gelston, 'A Sidelight on the 'Son of Man'', *SJT* 22:2 (1969): 191.

⁵⁶⁷ A. Gelston, 'A Sidelight', 191.

⁵⁶⁸ A. Gelston, 'A Sidelight', 191.

⁵⁶⁹ A. Gelston, 'A Sidelight', 196.

the Son of Man. Whatever he means by sidelight, an undeveloped idea is how Psalm 80 supposedly forms the bridge between the Son of Man and the Messiah but was not on Jesus' mind. Does this mean it was on the evangelist's mind? Arguably the presence of Psalm 80 as a bridging text between two pivotal New Testament texts would merit some significance beyond a sidelight, whatever that may be. The theory that Psalm 80 bridges Son of Man and Messiah has value as other texts from the period saw a similar connection. However, by failing to develop this theme, the article fails to make what could have been a valuable contribution.

Rowe addresses Dodd's Psalm 80 hypothesis by stating מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל in 80:17 is the king of Israel who 'is so closely associated with Israel...it is hard to detect when the psalmist moves from speaking of Israel in general, as 'the vine', to the king...'⁵⁷⁰ The Son of Man in Daniel 7 is suffering alongside the saints of the Most High, similar to the Son of Man in Psalm 80 suffering Israel's tribulation prior to his exaltation. Rowe therefore believes it more feasible that the suffering Son of Man figure, who is also the king in the Jerusalem temple, is an image from the psalms and not Isaiah 53.⁵⁷¹ Comparison with Psalm 80:17 and 110:1 further validates the concept of the Son of Man in a kingly role, as the two figures from these Psalms at the right hand of God are kingly messianic figures and the Son of Man is a parallel to the king in Psalm 80.⁵⁷²

Rowe's analysis follows Dodd with an emphasis on Psalm 80 deserving of a deeper treatment. The comparison to Psalm 110:1 is an important deduction for two reasons. First, Rowe is correct that an exegete could see the parallel themes between the two psalms, particularly an exegete seeking an answer to their kingship questions. Second, Psalm 110 was quoted in the New

⁵⁷⁰ R. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" Messianic', *Christ the Lord: Studies Presented to Donald Guthrie* (Leicester: Inter—Varsity Press, 1982), 82.

⁵⁷¹ R. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" Messianic', 93—94.

⁵⁷² R. Rowe, 'Is Daniel's "Son of Man" Messianic', 95.

Testament by several authors including Matthew. Among the psalm quotations in Matthew, Psalm 110:1 is a marked quotation in 22:44, and an unmarked quotation in 26:64, both of which he imports from his Markan source.⁵⁷³ Considering the common themes that an interpreter could find between Psalms 80 and 110, this is an additional reason to consider the possibility of the influence of Psalm 80 in Matthew and the New Testament.

While Rowe does not explicitly say that Psalm 80 is an important text for the development of the suffering Messiah, he hints at the possibility. This is feasible, though it also viable for an exegete to see common themes or connections between passages that develop a national hope from suffering to triumph. The Psalm 80 Son of Man need not be a figure of suffering for an author like Matthew to see connections between the suffering servant, the suffering nation and the hope of a triumphant king. In the case of Jesus, the triumphant king is victorious through suffering, making these various readings a potentiality. Reading passages like Isaiah 53 and Psalms 110 and 80 side by side creates many exegetical possibilities for a writer confronting Israel's suffering of the first century CE.

McWhirter argues that either Psalm 80:17 or Psalm 8:4—6 could serve as a bridge between Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 toward a Messianic interpretation. Similar to Gelston, McWhirter argues that the Son of Man at God's right in Psalm 80:17 can serve as the common denominator between the Daniel 7:3 Son of Man and the Messiah at God's right in Psalm 110:1.⁵⁷⁴ In her treatment she clarifies her stance by stating, 'There is no direct evidence for messianic exegesis of Daniel 7:13 in light of Psalm 110:1 by way of Psalm 2, Psalm 80, or Psalm 8. Indeed, Psalm 80:17

⁵⁷³ M. Menken, 'The Psalms in Matthew Gospel', in S. Moyise & M. Menken, *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 62.

⁵⁷⁴ J. McWhirter, 'Messianic Exegesis in Mark's Passion Narrative', G. Oyven & T. Shepherds, eds., *Trial and Death of Jesus: Essays on the Passion Narrative in Mark* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 93.

is never cited in the New Testament.⁵⁷⁵ Son of Man is significant for Mark, possibly because he exercised messianic exegesis of Daniel 7:13 through Psalm 8:6 or Psalm 80:17 and Psalm 110:1 in light of Psalm 89.⁵⁷⁶

McWhirter is far more successful in her treatment of the issue than Gelston by providing more clarity to her view. She acknowledges the potential for messianic exegesis on Mark's behalf with Psalm 80 serving a potential bridge text, while acknowledging the psalm is never quoted in the New Testament. Her short treatment of the passage failed to develop the possible relationship between Psalms 80 and Psalm 110. The possibility for an influential psalm like 110 may have opened up the possibility for an exegete to use the lesser known Psalm 80 as a connection to Daniel 7. Likewise, McWhirter does not explore the notion that Psalm 80 could be more than a bridge, which she apparently dismisses by virtue of the lack of direct quotation. Despite the lack of quotation, a possibility remains Psalm 80 to be more than a connection point.

Streett also argues for a suffering servant view of Psalm 80, 'Mark may be interpreting Psalm 80 as a prediction of the tribulation and vindication of the Messiah as a representative of Israel.'⁵⁷⁷ Streett imagines Israel suffering vicariously through their Messiah, who takes the role of a suffering servant in their place. He believes that the need for the Son of Man at the right hand to be strengthened is indicative of a suffering king. This is a possibility due to the ambiguous connection between the vine that represents the people and figure of verses 16 and 18, meaning the man on the right could be Israel or a leader. Mark may see the story of his own persecuted Messiah as the representative of Israel who was strengthened and raised from the dead (80:19). When it comes to Mark 14:62, Streett considers Psalm 80 as more prominent in the text than Psalm

⁵⁷⁵ J. McWhirter, 'Messianic Exegesis', 93.

⁵⁷⁶ J. McWhirter, 'Messianic Exegesis', 93.

⁵⁷⁷ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 187.

110.⁵⁷⁸ Mark 14:62 is actually a triple allusion to Daniel 7, Psalm 80 and Psalm 110, with Psalm 80 possibly playing a more prominent role than Psalm 110.⁵⁷⁹

Street accords a significant amount of prominence to Psalm 80, which could mean Psalm 110 would be unnecessary in his methodology. If Psalm 80 is the more prominent text, it would be plausible to completely erase Psalm 110 by attributing the imagery of sitting to Daniel 7 where the Son of Man presumably takes his throne next to the Ancient of Days. The location of prominence at the right could be drawn from Psalm 80 while the throne of kingship represents the Son of Man taking his throne in Daniel 7. The same argument could be made against Psalm 80 as Daniel 7 and Psalm 110 could account for the dual imagery. Psalm 110 is the more common choice for the enthronement language, which was granted a prophetic status by the early church depicting the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.⁵⁸⁰ Streett's thesis does have significant merit, and there is no reason why there cannot be a triple allusion present, though his argument is not expected to sway the predominant view that Psalm 110 is the allusion.

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

While Mark 14:62 has been the focus of interest for Psalm 80's presence in Mark, other scholars have found a correlation with Mark 12:1—12 and its synoptic parallels. Black's examination of Old Testament passages used for New Testament Christology provides a brief summation of the subject matter. Black's examples include Psalm 2:1 in Acts 4:25f, Psalm 2:7 in Acts 13:33, Isaiah 52:13 in John 3:14, and 12:32 and Isaiah 53:12 in Mark 9:31.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁸ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 189.

⁵⁷⁹ A. Streett, *The Vine*, 189—190.

⁵⁸⁰ A. Rose, 'Psaumes Et Évangiles', in R. De Langue, ed., *Le Psautier: Ses origines. Ses problèmes littéraires. Son Influence* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1962), 311.

⁵⁸¹ M. Black, 'The Christological use of the Old Testament in the New Testament', *NTS* 18:1 (1971): 3—5.

Psalm 118:22 (the rejected stone) may be the backdrop for the Wicked Tenants since it is quoted at the end of the passage. One argument proposes a form of word—play between the use of בֶּן־אֶבֶן in Psalm 118:22 and בֶּן as an explanation for the ‘son’ image of the text. Black suggests that a parallel could exist in Psalm 80:14 where Israel, as the son and Branch, is also the Son of Man whom Yahweh cultivates.⁵⁸² The desolated vineyard of Psalm 80 may serve as more important imagery for the background of Mark 12:1—12 than Isaiah 5. The likelihood of the dependence on Psalm 80 increases for Black when considering Isaiah 5 describes a doomed vineyard, whereas Psalm 80:14 is a plea for deliverance with a potential for hope not found in Isaiah 5. He further writes, ‘It is not surprising to find ‘the son’ here rendered in the Targum as ‘the king Messiah’’.⁵⁸³

Black presents a well—argued case concerning Psalm 80. The comparison of Psalm 80 to explain the ‘son’ imagery of Mark 12:1—2, as opposed to word—play in Isaiah 5, is a more appealing proposal than deducing word—play from Hebrew in the Greek text. A point Black does not argue is the nature of the hope of Psalm 80 in Mark 12. The vineyard workers are headed for permanent desolation as the vineyard will be given to new tenants. Psalm 80 is a prayer of hope for Israel, whereas the giving away of the vineyard holds little hope for Israel’s future, though it is a source of great hope for the new tenants. Black stops short of extrapolating the idea of Psalm 80 being reinterpreted as the hope of the new tenants, including the very Gentiles described as a boar in Psalm 80.

Wright follows Black in arguing that Psalm 80 has a direct influence on Mark 12:1—12 while expanding on themes his predecessor omits. ‘As in some other parables, Jesus was taking a well—known biblical theme, in this case from Isaiah 5.1—7 and Psalm 80, and developing it

⁵⁸² M. Black, ‘The Christological use of the Old Testament’, 12.

⁵⁸³ M. Black, ‘The Christological use of the Old Testament’, 13, note 3.

further.⁵⁸⁴ For Wright, the retelling of the story serves as a basis for what had been done by Jesus through ‘cleansing’ the temple, which was actually prophetic denunciation and ‘divine demolition.’⁵⁸⁵ The master rejecting the workers foretells Rome’s destruction of Jerusalem, corresponding to Jesus’ actions in clearing out the temple as a symbol of judgment.⁵⁸⁶ Wright also concurs with Black that Psalm 80 is drawn into Mark 12:1—12 by virtue of both the vineyard and the royal imagery from the Targum.⁵⁸⁷

Wright draws out the theme retelling Psalm 80 in light of Jerusalem’s demise that would strengthen Black’s argument. As Psalm 80 confronts the painful reality of defeat by enemies, Jesus’ use of it in parable could serve as a reminder to Israel of the covenant infidelity that led to its destruction by Assyria. Israel is once again charged with the same infidelity that caused catastrophe in 722 BCE, yet this time Judah faces this reality. Wright’s argument is strengthened by the possibility that Jesus used Psalm 80 to draw out a theme that Israel’s occupation the vineyard is coming to a close, as is currently being contended. The next two chapters would further elucidate the theory that the use of Psalm 80 is emphasises the coming of the man at God’s right, and the fact that Judah and Benjamin have been dispersed like ten lost tribes of the psalm.

Gelston writes, ‘But the Lord’s interest in the imagery of the vine and the vineyard (Mark 12.1—12, John 15.1—16) suggest that Psalm 80 as a whole may have been important in His own mind...’⁵⁸⁸ However, he offers nothing more substantial in his analysis of the potential influence of Psalm 80 on Mark 12, which does little to enhance the Psalm 80 theory. Hultgren mentions Psalm 80:8—13 as vineyard imagery that was used in the Old Testament and rabbinic literature to

⁵⁸⁴ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 498.

⁵⁸⁵ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 498.

⁵⁸⁶ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 498.

⁵⁸⁷ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 498.

⁵⁸⁸ A. Gelston, ‘Sidelight’, 196.

symbolise Israel.⁵⁸⁹ Like Gelston he provides no support for this hypothesis in his analysis of the text, adding little more to the discussion beyond acknowledging Psalm 80 may well have played an important role in the ‘Wicked Tenants’.

Streett offers a fuller treatment of the subject, arguing that Mark 12:1—12 may be dependent on Psalm 80:16b—17b for the murder of the vineyard owner’s son in the parable, while Psalm 80:17c was the basis for the destruction of the tenants.⁵⁹⁰ There is even a possibility of direct dependence from the sequence of Psalm 80 on Mark 12 in five stages. First, the establishment of the vineyard occurs in Psalm 80:9—12 and Mark 12:1. Second, the culprits of the various passages commit misdeeds in Psalm 80:13—14 and Mark 12:1—5. Third is the murder of the vineyard owner’s son in Psalm 80:16b—17b and Mark 12:6—8. Fourth, the culprits are destroyed in Psalm 80:17c and Mark 12:19. Finally, the son encounters a reversal in Psalm 80:18—19 where resurrection of the son is pleaded in similar fashion to the exaltation of the stone/son in Mark 12:10—11.⁵⁹¹

If Streett is correct this parable uses a psalm pleading for deliverance to explain that God is evicting the tenants making the plea. The author of Psalm 80 pleads for Israel’s restoration, but the parable only promises to bring in new tenants, which will include the very Gentiles cast out to plant the vineyard. If the son of Psalm 80 is the Davidic king, this ironic theme continues, as the son’s restoration is inexorably tied together with Israel in the psalm. However, in the Wicked Tenants, the son is restored and continues but Israel is destroyed, meaning the fates of the two remain interlocked. The psalmist had hoped the king’s strengthening would be Israel’s restoration, which was not how Jesus applied Psalm 80 in his teaching.

⁵⁸⁹ A. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2000), 357, no 4.

⁵⁹⁰ Streett, *The Vine*, 204.

⁵⁹¹ Streett, *The Vine*, 205.

Christians of the first century declared the Messiah had come, and forty years later an enormous number of his people were killed and the temple destroyed by Gentiles. Jesus himself, in rebuking his own generation and pronouncing doom on them, could also use Psalm 80 to craft unique teachings of judgment steeped in this sense of irony to explain Israel's destruction at the advent of the Messiah. The proposed use of Psalm 80 in Matthew 25:31—46 follows a similar reasoning as will be seen in the next two chapters.

John 15:1—8⁵⁹²

The use of vineyard imagery in John 15 has garnered attention from scholars who see a possible influence of Psalm 80 in the passage. Schweizer argues for a suggestive use of the Johannine Son of Man tradition in John 1:51, where the Son of Man takes the place of the patriarch Jacob and influences how 'son' in John 15 was understood by the author of John.⁵⁹³ Jacob's God—given name Israel represents the whole nation, which underlies the angelic ladder image. Schweizer believes the inclusion of 'son' in Psalm 80 was a scribal error, which led to the mistaken association of the 'son' and the 'vine'.⁵⁹⁴ This error carried forward into John 15:1 where the vine and son are united.⁵⁹⁵

Dodd affirms Schweizer's view that Psalm 80 underlies John 15, though Dodd does not postulate scribal error as a reason for associating the vine and the Son of Man. Speaking of the dominance of the vine figure in John 15, a transition takes place in the allegory which speaks of the vine and its relationship to its branches.⁵⁹⁶ Vine imagery is frequently found in the Old

⁵⁹² For additional pertinent literature see: M. Wagner, 'Der Menschensohn des 80 Psalms', *TSK* 104 (1932): 88—89; D. Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1989), 200; A. Kostenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 450.

⁵⁹³ E. Schweizer, 'The Son of Man', *JBL* 79 (1960): 126.

⁵⁹⁴ E. Schweizer, 'The Son of Man', 126.

⁵⁹⁵ E. Schweizer, 'The Son of Man', 126.

⁵⁹⁶ C. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 411.

Testament for Israel, especially in Psalm 80 where the vine grew great branches.⁵⁹⁷ ‘In the LXX rendering it is even clearer than in the Hebrew that the Vine and the Son of Man are equivalent concepts (cf. verse 18), both standing for the people of God, exposed to death and destruction but saved by the hand of God, who raises them to life again...’⁵⁹⁸

Neither Schweizer nor Dodd develops their ideas with any depth, but their brief comparisons are sound, and the language between Psalm 80 and John 15 share much in common. Dodd’s appeal to the LXX demonstrates the shared verbal and thematic characteristics including the use of ἄμπελος and κλῆμα, while additionally sharing themes of cultivating the vine and caring for the growth of its branches. Jesus’ reference to the branches in John 15 adds much credibility to this theory: the branches are significant to Psalm 80 and this is one New Testament passage with a fitting context that advances the importance of branches.

Barrett shares this view as the vine is a most prized plant and ‘represents the most privileged among nations and men.’⁵⁹⁹ This accords with the use of the vine is used in the Old Testament as seen in passages such Isaiah 5:1—7, Jeremiah 12:10—17, Ezekiel 15:1—8, and Psalm 80.9—16.⁶⁰⁰ Barrett notes the common theme in these passages of the favouritism of the pure and danger for the degenerate of Israel. The connection of Jesus, as opposed to Israel, with the vine is drawn together from Psalm 80, where the vine and the Son of Man occur together.⁶⁰¹

If Barrett’s theory that Psalm 80 was important for uniting the vine and the Son of Man is accurate, this is another example of Psalm 80 having a direct influence on Jesus’ thinking and teaching. In fact, since the Son of Man is such a monumental aspect of Jesus’ preaching, any text

⁵⁹⁷ C. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 411.

⁵⁹⁸ C. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 411.

⁵⁹⁹ C. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2d. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 472.

⁶⁰⁰ C. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 472.

⁶⁰¹ C. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 472.

that directly influenced that thinking is a significant text. It could further be argued, if Barrett is correct, that other Son of Man sayings were influenced by Psalm 80.

Beasley—Murray pursues the issue similarly to Barrett by analyzing the same set of Old Testament vine passages (Hosea 10:1—2, Isaiah 5:1—7, Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 15:1—5, and Psalm 80:8—18) that are used as a common image for Israel.⁶⁰² He does, however, provide additional argumentation, specifically that every instance of Israel being compared to a vine or vineyard in the Old Testament occurs in the context of the nation coming under judgment for corruption.⁶⁰³ The overall point is different in the parable of the Wicked Tenants, but even here the representation is the same: Jesus is the true Vine and Israel has failed its calling.⁶⁰⁴ The Lord is a representative who rises in union with that new people, a theme that may find its precedent in Psalm 80:14—18 in the parallels of the man at the right and the raising of the Son of Man.⁶⁰⁵

Beasley—Murray provides an important insight that unifies judgment with the vine. Whereas Barrett views the vine as the privileged, Beasley—Murray compares it to those under judgment. Barrett is correct in the sense that Israel did have a place of privilege as God's people, yet when they are compared to a vineyard or vine they are under judgment, giving the vine ominous connotations in the Old Testament. Beasley—Murray provides important albeit brief treatment of the subject that highlights the ominous nature of vineyard imagery in the Old Testament. Key in his assessment is the fact that Jesus is the true vine that will never be subject to destruction again following his resurrection. Thus, it would seem that Israel no longer has the special status as God's vine. This was limited to only the Son of Man.

⁶⁰² G. Beasley—Murray, *John*, WBC 2d. ed. Vol. 36 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 272.

⁶⁰³ G. Beasley—Murray, *John*, 272.

⁶⁰⁴ G. Beasley—Murray, *John*, 272.

⁶⁰⁵ G. Beasley—Murray, *John*, 272.

Whitacre basically describes John 15 as an allegory since all of the elements have significance.⁶⁰⁶ ‘The image of the vine, and the closely associated term *vineyard*, were commonly used throughout the Mediterranean world...Most significant for our passage is their frequent use in the Old Testament and in Judaism to symbolise Israel...’⁶⁰⁷ Whitacre mentions the presence of the golden vine on the temple mentioned by Josephus, and the vine’s representation of Israel on coins during the revolt of 66—70 CE. The vine served as a symbol for Israel in this time, thus when Jesus calls himself the true vine, he is calling himself the true Israel. Jesus as the true Israel develops the theme in John 8 where Jesus breaks with the temple and forms a renewed people in John 9.⁶⁰⁸

Whitacre further explains that Jesus as the true vine is not a rejection of Judaism, rather the fulfillment of Judaism in the Messiah. No longer is God affiliated with a particular nation, rather a particular man who is associated with Jew and gentile. Likewise, the Promised Land is found spiritually in Jesus as the true vine, eliminating the existence of a specific divine territory.⁶⁰⁹ While this corporate significance is used throughout the Gospels in Jesus’ use of Son of Man, it is significant that the vine and the Son of Man are identified together in Psalm 80:14b—16.

Whitacre’s synopsis of the vine issue in John 15 is a clear and thoughtful development of Psalm 80 in New Testament thinking. Perhaps the one issue to query is if the shift to seeing Jesus as the new Israel is in fact, to some degree, a rejection of Judaism. If Judaism is inextricably tied to Israel, it is difficult not to see some level of rejection involved in this transition from corporate to individual. Whitacre may be avoiding that conclusion on the grounds that it may sound anti—

⁶⁰⁶ R. Whitacre, *John*, IVP Academic Commentary (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1999), 371.

⁶⁰⁷ R. Whitacre, *John*, 371.

⁶⁰⁸ R. Whitacre, *John*, 372.

⁶⁰⁹ R. Whitacre, *John*, 372.

Semitic. However, such a conclusion need not be anti—Semitic if understanding that all Israelites are not condemned, rather they do not have a special privileged place in Jesus' kingdom over the Gentiles.

Evaluation

Two principle conclusions from this chapter provide support for the proposed theory of Psalm 80's influence on Matthew 25:31—46. First, there is a solid foundation for the possibility of Psalm 80 as an influential text for Jesus and the gospel writers. The progression of the psalm from its original composition, through the LXX, Dead Sea Scrolls, post 70 literature of the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* and *2 Baruch* demonstrates a variety of uses for this text in diverse contexts. Since this literature represents various communities in different times and locations that all support some use of Psalm 80, its potential as a first century source text is firmly established.

Second, additional weight is added when recognizing the numerous ways Psalm 80 appears to have influenced the New Testament. That fact that there are three different passages that may contain some level of influence from Psalm 80, is not a coincidence. Many scholars have argued for influence from Psalm 80, whether through vine imagery, 'son' imagery or Son of Man imagery. By embracing the possibility that this unheralded psalm influenced Jesus and/or the gospel writers more commonly realised, a new door opens for better understanding of some essential themes in the New Testament. Attention will now turn to the Sheep and the Goats in order to postulate why there is a relationship between Matthew 25:31—46 and Psalm 80

Chapter Four

The Textual Relationship of Psalm 80 and Matthew 25:31—46

This chapter will detail the linguistic relationship between Psalm 80 and Matthew 25:31—46 to demonstrate the many points of textual commonality that exist between the passages. Zechariah 14, Ezekiel 34 and the *Similitudes of Enoch* are all proposed sources behind the Sheep and Goats. These three texts are briefly examined before detailing the textual relationship with Psalm 80. Brief exposition on the combination of terms in the Sheep and the Goats follows the thirteen—point comparison between Matthew 25:31—46 and Psalm 80.

Other Source Candidates for Matthew 25:31—46

Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 34 are two Old Testament passages that potentially influenced this teaching of Jesus, and the *Similitudes of Enoch* is a pseudepigraphical text that supposedly shaped the Sheep and the Goats. The three texts are discussed in that order to examine the linguistic relationships before turning to Psalm 80.

Zechariah 14

Zechariah 14 is commonly cited as a background source text alluded to or echoed in Matthew 25:31—46 in secondary literature.⁶¹⁰ There are two key points between the passages that could be indicative of textual borrowing. The first is found in Zechariah 14:2 where God says, *καὶ ἐπισυνάξω πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπὶ Ἱερουσαλημ εἰς πόλεμον*, comparable to Matthew 25:32 where it says of the Son of Man, *καὶ συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*. Second, Zechariah 14:5 reads, *καὶ ἤξει κύριος ὁ θεός μου καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ*, where Matthew

⁶¹⁰ J. Nolland, *Matthew*, NIGTC, 1024; R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 960; D. Turner, *Matthew*, ECNT, 608; R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 511; D. Hagner, *Matthew*, WBC, 742; C. Keener, *Matthew*, 603; W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 420; R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 511.

25:31 reads Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ.

Part of the allure of the Zechariah 14 theory is the location of the Olivet Discourse—the Mount of Olives—which plays a key role in Zechariah’s prophecy. In the Zechariah prophecy God declares, καὶ στήσονται οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν τὸ κατέναντι Ἱερουσαλὴμ. Mark has a more clearly defined relationship to this Zechariah passage as his version of the discourse reads, Καὶ καθημένου αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν κατέναντι τοῦ ἱεροῦ (Mark 13:3). Matthew has eliminated part of the verbal allusion to Zechariah 14 where his text reads, Καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους τῶν Ἐλαιῶν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ (24:3) while maintaining the setting from his Markan source.

The day of the Lord is coming upon the Gentiles where Yahweh brings the Gentiles to Jerusalem to wage war against them (14:2).⁶¹¹ Yahweh returns to fight by Israel’s side and vanquish the Gentiles to restore Israel’s fortunes and establish his kingship over the earth.⁶¹² There is an intimate relationship in this prophecy between the coming of Yahweh, the future hope of a restored kingship and the reestablishment of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.⁶¹³ Mark may well have had the Jewish revolt of 66—73 in mind when he appealed to Zechariah 14 in setting the stage for the Olivet Discourse.⁶¹⁴ Yet Matthew removes the allusion of Mark 13:3 to Zechariah 14, eliminating the most direct textual allusion.

⁶¹¹ M. Boda, *The Book of Zechariah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 441.

⁶¹² Compare Zechariah 14:3 with Deuteronomy 28:7; G. Goswell, ‘The Eschatology of Malachi after Zechariah 14’, *JBL* 132:3 (2013): 634.

⁶¹³ A. Petterson, *Behold Your King: The Hope for the House of David in the Book of Zechariah* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 244.

⁶¹⁴ J. Marcus, ‘No More Zealots in the House of the Lord’, *NT* 55 (2013): 24.

Problematic to the Zechariah 14 theory is the promise that God will lead the fight against the Gentiles on Israel's behalf. Matthew depicts no future in which Yahweh comes to the defense of Israel by melting the flesh off of the Gentiles where they stand.⁶¹⁵ On the contrary, Matthew's Jesus envisions a future antithetical to the picture of Israelite victory in Zechariah 14. It is possible that Matthew is retelling the story of Zechariah 14 through a new paradigm, but the decisive nature of Israel's victory strains the connection. However, Psalm 80 portrays catastrophe and the yearning for deliverance amidst catastrophe, which never comes.

Both Zechariah and Matthew picture a judgment and destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Gentiles, but the future of Israel takes notably different directions from this point. Zechariah envisions Yahweh coming to battle by Israel's side to vanquish the Gentiles, with Judah playing a key role in winning the war (14:14).⁶¹⁶ Matthew portrays a scene in which the Gentiles are gathered for judgment based on their treatment of 'the least of my brothers'.⁶¹⁷ Zechariah envisions a powerful future for Jerusalem where Gentiles will do pilgrimage to worship at the temple or face reprisals. Matthew offers no indication of a future where the temple will be the centre of worship. On the contrary, Jesus' last command to the disciples is to leave the Promised Land to preach to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

Matthew does not present a vision of Gentiles being brought under the sovereignty of an earthly Jewish kingdom, though they will be under the authority of a heavenly Jewish king. There is also no expectation in Matthew that the Romans will have their flesh melted off of their bones for what has occurred in Israel. Matthew's Jesus presents a future devoid of privilege for

⁶¹⁵ To be discussed further below.

⁶¹⁶ M. Boda, *Zechariah*, 453—454.

⁶¹⁷ Will be discussed in chapter five.

Israel, as God can bring descendants of Abraham from even the stones. The synagogue stands in contrast to the church and the lost sheep of the house of Israel give way to sheep found amongst the Gentiles.

As for the common verbiage between the two passages, it should first be acknowledged that there are many more verbal parallels between Psalm 79 LXX and Matthew 25:31—46 than can be claimed in Zechariah 14 LXX. Secondly, Matthew's use of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη can be accounted for from its appearance in Daniel 7:14 LXX, and Daniel is universally accepted as a source for Jesus and Matthew. The use of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is accounted for in the Old Greek of Daniel 7 that has several parallels in Matthew's gospel.⁶¹⁸

One interesting comparison is Matthew's καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, which corresponds to Zechariah's καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ. Though the verbiage is not identical, the association of οἱ ἅγιοι as οἱ ἄγγελοι is well within typical interpretative boundaries. However, Daniel 7 also includes both the concept of an angelic court (7:10) and 'holy ones' or 'saints' (7:18; 7:22) in the vision. In 7:18 the text says, παραλήψονται τὴν βασιλείαν ἅγιοι ὑψίστου, while in 7:22 text states, ἐδόθη καὶ τὸ βασίλειον κατέσχον οἱ ἅγιοι. The 'holy ones' in Daniel are those who inherit the kingdom of God, directly associated in the interpretation as being represented by the Son of Man. Therefore, the Zechariah 14 verbiage is similar, but the likeliest source of that verbiage in Matthew 25:31—46 is not Zechariah, rather it is Mark.

Mark 13:27 describes the coming Son of Man with the description καὶ τότε ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ ἐπισυνάξει τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς. Matthew has redacted the Markan material to read καὶ ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ μετὰ σάλπιγγος μεγάλης (Matthew 24:31), partially

⁶¹⁸ H.D. Zacharias, 'Old Greek Daniel 7:13—14 and Matthew's Son of Man', *BBR* 21:1 (2011): 463—464.

conflating the roles of God and Son of Man. This redactional perspective is consistently maintained when reading 25:31, ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ. The angels now belong to the Son of Man, and those angels accompany him in this scene of judgment.

After considering the contrary visions of Israel’s future between Matthew 25:31—46 and Zechariah 14, comparing the amount of common verbiage between these passages and acknowledging the language Matthew could directly borrow from his established sources, Psalm 80 has a stronger case as a source than Zechariah 14. Thematically the psalm fits better with the situation facing Israel in a post—70 world, blends more naturally with Daniel 7 and leads the reader of Matthew’s time to consider what happens when the Gentiles ‘win’. Though Zechariah 14 is widely accepted as part of the background for the Sheep and Goats, it is not the most probable choice as a source.

Ezekiel 34

Ezekiel 34 has been the subject of attention for scholarly interpretation of Matthew 25:31—46, particularly as it relates to the role of shepherds, sheep and the division of the livestock in 34:17, 20.⁶¹⁹ Heil goes so far to say that Ezekiel 34 contains all of the semantics needed to fully appreciate the Matthean shepherd metaphor.⁶²⁰ The Ezekiel prophecy indicts Israel’s failed leaders who have neglected Israel in order to tend to their own needs. ‘Shepherd’ is a common designation for kings in the ancient Near East, and the parallels between Ezekiel 34

⁶¹⁹D. Hagner, *Matthew*, WBC, 743; W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 423; R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 512; J. Nolland, *Matthew NIGTC*, 1025; R.T. France, *Matthew NICNT*, 961; C. Bomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 376.

⁶²⁰J.P. Heil, ‘Ezekiel 34 and the Narrative Strategy of the Shepherd and Sheep Metaphor in Matthew’, *CBQ* 55:4 (1993): Accessed from EBSCO HTML Version, which contains no pagination.

and Jeremiah 23:1—2 may bring the last major kings of Judah to mind.⁶²¹ Both the kings of Judah and broader leadership are possible options for this indictment. The promise of a new Davidic king highlights the failure of Israel's royalty, though a broader core of leadership beyond just a single sitting monarch is intended.⁶²² Judgment is looming for the leaders/shepherds who are to be usurped by the royal Davidic shepherd.⁶²³

Judgment on the leaders of Israel is the beginning of Ezekiel's restoration oracles in chapters 34—38 as the prophet challenges the cynicism of the exiles, reminding them of the irrevocable covenant.⁶²⁴ Ezekiel 34 is an oracle of encouragement in which God will shepherd Israel back into the Promised Land and establish the throne of David, which may be messianic, though it directly appeals to kingship.⁶²⁵

As a potential source text Ezekiel 34 has some intriguing parallels with the Sheep and the Goats. Ezekiel 34 is an indictment against the shepherds of Israel for their treatment of the sheep under their charge.⁶²⁶ The shepherd/sheep metaphor runs through the entirety of the passage, serving as a more significant image than seen in Matthew 25:31—46. The leaders of Israel have failed the people in several respects: They have fed themselves but not the sheep; they have not sought the stray sheep; they have not aided the sick sheep, they have not defended the sheep and they have tried to devour the sheep. In light of these many failures, God will intervene on behalf

⁶²¹ L.C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20—48*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 161.

⁶²² K.P. Darr, 'The Book of Ezekiel', in *The New Interpreter's Bible: Volume VI* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 1463.

⁶²³ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory God*, 645.

⁶²⁴ D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25—48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 270—271.

⁶²⁵ R. Alexander, 'Ezekiel', in G. Gaebelien, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Volume 6* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 913—914.

⁶²⁶ W. Baxter, 'Healing and the "Son of David": Matthew's Warrant', *NT* 48:1 (2006): 42.

of the sheep, taking over the shepherding roles and eventually placing a Davidic shepherd over them.⁶²⁷

Most of the attention has been paid to the process of separation in Ezekiel 34:17, Ἴδου ἐγὼ διακρινῶ ἀνὰ μέσον προβάτου καὶ προβάτου, κριῶν καὶ τράγων in comparison to Matthew 25:32, καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων, ὥσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων.⁶²⁸ Both passages contain common themes of separating of livestock and a royal shepherd, though Ezekiel 34 does not depict the Davidic shepherd as divine, contrasting with the royal shepherd in Matthew 25. The shepherds have clothed themselves (τὰ ἔρια περιβάλλεσθε); they have not cared for the weak (τὸ ἡσθενηκὸς οὐκ ἐνισχύσατε) and they have not fed the sheep (τὰ πρόβατά μου οὐ βόσκατε).⁶²⁹ Similarly, the criteria of judgment in Matthew 25:31—46 requires that πάντα τὰ ἔθνη clothe the Son of Man (γυμνὸς καὶ περιβάλετέ με), care for him in sickness (ἡσθένησα καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με) and feed him in hunger (ἡσθένησα καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με).⁶³⁰ While the passages share these common themes, there are notable differences as well.

Ezekiel claims the shepherds are condemned for their treatment of the sheep of Israel, while the sheep in Matthew as πάντα τὰ ἔθνη being judged on their treatment of the Son of Man, vicariously through ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων.⁶³¹ Ezekiel 34 envisions a return from exile in which Israel is pulled from the grip of the Gentiles and returned to their home in Israel, a peaceful home (34:13). However, the Sheep and the Goats envisions a positive future for obedient Gentiles, one unconcerned with Israel’s return from exile. There is also the

⁶²⁷ J. Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary Based on Iezekiel in Codex Vaticanus*, SCS (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 468.

⁶²⁸ D. Hagner, *Matthew*, WBC, 743; W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 423; R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 512; J. Nolland, *Matthew*, NIGTC, 1025; R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 961; C. Bomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 376.

⁶²⁹ See Ezekiel 34:3 for clothing, 34:4 about caring for the weak, and 34:3 for feeding.

⁶³⁰ See Matthew 25:36 for clothing and caring for the sick, and 25:35 for feeding.

⁶³¹ The meaning of ‘the least’ will be addressed in detail below.

mutual use of ‘Son of Man’ in the two passages, though the two are completely different.

Ezekiel is the ‘son of man’ or ‘mortal’ in contrast to God, whereas in Matthew Jesus is the divine ‘Son of Man’, the shepherd—king.

The Ezekiel passage is preoccupied with the leadership of the nation and the oppression those leaders have brought on Israel.⁶³² Yahweh’s shepherds have failed Israel; thus he deposes the shepherds to give Israel a new Davidic shepherd and a bright future.⁶³³ Part of the appeal to Ezekiel 34 is the indictment of Israel’s leaders, presumably echoed in Matthew 21:33—45 where Jesus declares kingdom of God is being taken from those leaders.⁶³⁴ Problematic to this view is Matthew 21:33—45 does not indict Israel’s leaders, it is an indictment of Israel. The leaders do not lose control of the vineyard, Israel loses the vineyard.⁶³⁵

Ezekiel 34 shares more in common with Matthew 25:31—46 than Zechariah 14 in terms of verbiage, but functionally it shares several of the same problems encountered in Zechariah. Ezekiel envisions a glorious return from exile that is nowhere found in Matthew. Neither does the Sheep and the Goats present an indictment against Israel’s failed leadership, nor does Israel have a place of prominence in the Matthean passage. The division of the livestock is the most intriguing connection between the passages, though it is appropriated in different ways. Ezekiel’s preoccupation with the sheep/shepherd metaphor is not shared in Matthew 25:31—46, where it is a brief simile, comparable to Psalm 80. Additionally, the language of feeding and care can also be accounted for in Psalm 80.

⁶³² J. Olley, *Ezekiel*, 468.

⁶³³ K. Wong, *The Idea of Retribution in the Book of Ezekiel* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 226.

⁶³⁴ W. Baxter, ‘Healing’, 43.

⁶³⁵ To be discussed in the next chapter.

Both Ezekiel 34 and Zechariah 14 have common language with the Sheep and the Goats, but they both prophesy a glorious future for Israel not found in Matthew. Contrary to this, Psalm 80 has a strikingly different tone than either passage as a psalm of Israel concerning Assyria. The psalmist beseeches God as shepherd to deliver Israel from the Gentiles, a delivery which would not come. Yahweh would not stop Assyria from destroying the north, as Israel's unfaithfulness led to its doom. Matthew sees a new significance in this psalm, which invokes Yahweh's place on his sanctuary throne, as Israel has yet again been destroyed, indicative of the completion of the house of Israel's displacement.

This notion of the psalmist beseeching God in a prayer that goes unanswered as Assyria continued its advancement makes the psalm a more viable option than either Ezekiel 34 and Zechariah 14. When the glorious hoped—for future does not come, the answer can be found in the past when Israel was met with destruction. The sense of totality that can then be drawn when envisioning the two events side by side makes Psalm 80 more compelling. The Jews would return from Babylonian exile, but the Israelites remain lost at the hands of Assyria. The Sheep and the Goats brings the reader into the difficult situation of seeing Israel's shepherd no longer tending to Israel as his sheep, rather πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. The sheep are also not being judged on how they have treated Israel, another departure from Zechariah and Ezekiel.

Psalm 80 is a reminder of the worst—case scenario: the ten tribes of Israel losing their heritage as God's people. This form of tragedy echoes deeply in Matthew where Israel as a lost house is met with portents of doom, and another people group receives control of Yahweh's magnificent vineyard. These important themes, in addition to the several linguistic agreements between Psalm 80 and Matthew 25:31—46, make a compelling case for Psalm 80 as a primary

source over Ezekiel 34 and Zechariah 14. When further consideration is given to the way in which Psalm 80 fits well in many respects with Daniel 7, it makes the case for the psalm even stronger.

A further advantage to Psalm 80 in Matthew 25:31—46 is the echo of themes from the psalm found in the narrative leading up to and after the Olivet Discourse. The presence of the vineyard, and the Son of Man at the right hand of power are pivotal sections in Matthew that thematically connect with Psalm 80 in a way they do not with either Zechariah 14 or Ezekiel 34. These advantages offer further credibility to the Psalm 80 proposal to be detailed below.⁶³⁶

Similitudes of Enoch 62

Another line of thinking argues that the Sheep and the Goats demonstrates a familiarity with the *Similitudes of Enoch 62*. Ladd writes, ‘The unique feature of this book is the means by which the kingdom comes: by the agency of a heavenly Son of Man, who is also called the Elect One. The two names or expressions are used quite interchangeably.’⁶³⁷ The Son of Man’s presence as an agent of final judgment in the *Similitudes* has been contrasted with the Sheep and the Goats as several scholars see comparable descriptions between the two texts.

Catchpole examines redactional patterns in Matthew based on comparative readings of Mark and Q with an emphasis on the Son of Man’s enthronement. He determines that the Son of Man in Matthew 25:31 ‘shows every sign of being non—Matthean and pre—Matthean.’⁶³⁸ Having reached this conclusion Catchpole turns his attention to finding a pre—Matthean

⁶³⁶ This is detailed in the next chapter.

⁶³⁷ G. Ladd, ‘Part 4: The Kingdom of God in 1 Enoch’, 38.

⁶³⁸ D. Catchpole, ‘The Poor on Earth and the Son of Man in Heaven: A Re—appraisal of Matthew XXV 31—46’, *BJRL* 61:2 (1979): 387.

enthroned Son of Man figure. He concludes that the Son of Man in the Sheep and the Goats is ‘highly reminiscent’ of the *Similitudes* 62—63.⁶³⁹ Among the parallels, Catchpole identifies between the Sheep and the Goats and the *Similitudes* are the Son of Man being enthroned in glory, the judgment assembly being divided into two groups with one being the ‘righteous’, eternal separation or eternal life and both texts maintaining God as the ultimate judge. He tries to draw parallels to some pre—existent tradition while ignoring the obvious conclusion that the book of Daniel is the common text.

Daniel 7 is the uncontested common denominator between the texts, as themes from Daniel are evident in the *Similitudes* 52:6, 54:6, 58:2—3, 60:2—6, and the tradition in the canonical gospels. Catchpole draws attention to the response of those being judged in Matthew that say *πότε σε εἶδομεν* on four occasions. He claims their inability to recognise the Son of Man indicates he is not an earthly figure, rather an exclusively heavenly figure.⁶⁴⁰ ‘This means that Matthew and the *Similitudes* incorporate in identical fashion the Daniel vii scheme in which the “one like a son of man” is an exclusively heavenly figure belonging, as it were, on the upper level of the apocalyptic double—decker framework.’⁶⁴¹

Catchpole validates this view by claiming that Matthew’s Son of Man is an earthly figure, while the non—Matthean Son of Man is the heavenly figure.⁶⁴² However, the Sheep and the Goats is M material as part of Matthew’s larger narrative that presents Jesus as both an earthly and a heavenly figure. Matthew’s Jesus promises his disciples thrones that they will sit on while helping him judge the twelve tribes of Israel (19:28), then also describing the Son of

⁶³⁹ D. Catchpole, ‘The Poor on Earth’, 379.

⁶⁴⁰ D. Catchpole, ‘The Poor on Earth’, 381.

⁶⁴¹ D. Catchpole, ‘The Poor on Earth’, 381.

⁶⁴² D. Catchpole, ‘The Poor on Earth’, 385.

Man's coming humiliation and death (20:18—19). To call Matthew's Jesus an exclusively earthly figure is not true to the fullness of his narrative. Matthew's heavenly Son of Man is the same figure found in 24:30 and 26:64, both sections coming from his Markan source (Mark 13:26 and 14:62). Further, the failure to recognise Jesus during the judgment is not due to their inability to identify the heavenly Son of Man, it is because actions done to the least are vicariously done to Jesus, who is no longer an earthly figure. The *Similitudes* and Matthew do not use Daniel 7 in the exact same manner.

Davila argues for a broad spectrum of connection between the *Similitudes*, *4 Ezra*, the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* and Revelation, though he is unsure if the *Similitudes* influenced these texts or if it was the other way around. He claims that the Sheep and the Goats is dependent on the *Similitudes* because the Son of Man is on a throne of glory making eternal judgment in the presence of the angels, which Davila says is, 'a complex of ideas found elsewhere only in the *Similitudes*'.⁶⁴³ He qualifies this statement with an addendum that 'the parallels are conceptual and involve no verbal quotations and could be debated'.⁶⁴⁴ Davila continues his assessment by acknowledging that the *Similitudes*' lack of interest in Torah observance, the temple cult, Jewish ethnic identity and the internal eschatology is difficult to reconcile with Christianity.⁶⁴⁵

Davila's conclusion appears to be based exclusively on the Son of Man's glorious enthronement, which he postulates can only come from Matthew using the *Similitudes*. This singular common thread strains the credibility of dependence, particularly considering Davila's

⁶⁴³ J. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or other?* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 133.

⁶⁴⁴ J. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, 133.

⁶⁴⁵ J. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, 133—134.

acknowledgment that the texts do not share common eschatology, nor does the *Similitudes* engage in matters of national identity or focus on the law.⁶⁴⁶ Davila also fails to recognise the potential of Daniel 7 as the common text by which both the *Similitudes* and Matthew come to see the Son of Man as a gloriously enthroned being.

An ancient or modern reader may conclude that Daniel's Son of Man receives a throne for a variety of reasons. First, there are 'thrones' present when the Ancient of Days arrives for the judgment (Daniel 7:9). Second, it has been demonstrated that the Son of Man represents the kingdom of God, but the figure underwent various exegetical developments in texts such as Matthew, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*. An interpreter from the first century CE who had messianised Daniel 7 may conclude one of the thrones was for the Messiah. Kings sit on thrones, thus a throne next to the Ancient of Days is a natural place for the Jewish king in such a reading.⁶⁴⁷

Beyond this possible common reading, there is the Old Greek version of Daniel 7:13 that translates the Aramaic *καὶ ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν παρῆν*, rather than the Theodotion text that reads *καὶ ἕως τοῦ παλαιοῦ τῶν ἡμερῶν ἔφθασεν*. The difference between the Son of Man being *ὡς* the Ancient of Days and *ἕως* the Ancient of Days is substantial as the Old Greek version merges the two figures together.⁶⁴⁸ There is an overall lack of common material between Matthew and the *Similitudes*, while Daniel 7 is an established common variable between the texts that can readily explain the familiar material between the texts.

Hare writes, 'There is nothing in the verse (62:1) or its context that suggests the improbable notion that those being judged are being asked to recognize those that have injured

⁶⁴⁶ Both of these elements are important to Matthew and will be addressed below.

⁶⁴⁷ M. Shepherd, 'Daniel 7:13', 100.

⁶⁴⁸ H. Zacharias, 'Old Greek Daniel 7:13—14 and Matthew's Son of Man', *BBR* 21:4 (2011): 453—454.

the person of the heavenly judge.⁶⁴⁹ Matthew 25:31 could at no point have referred to an exclusively heavenly figure, nor is there adequate information to postulate a pre—Matthean/non—Matthean understanding of the Son of Man in Matthew.⁶⁵⁰ The Son of Man in the Sheep and the Goats does not suddenly become a different Son of Man than the one Matthew has written about through the entirety of his gospel. Matthew’s Son of Man is not an exclusively heavenly figure; he is a multi—dimensional being that is both poor earthly Messiah and exalted judge. Similarities between the texts reflect their independent use of Daniel 7, not Matthew’s dependence on the *Similitudes*.

Classifying Matthew 25:31—46

Before examining the meaning of the intertextual relationship just described, clarification is needed on whether the Sheep and the Goats is a parable. The Greek *parabole* and its Hebrew and Aramaic counterparts (*mashal/mathla*) were broad terms in the first century CE used in a variety of pictorial sayings and stories.⁶⁵¹ A *mashal* can include proverbs, riddles, anecdotes, fables and allegories among its many uses.⁶⁵² Young describes the Jesus of the synoptic gospels as one who uses word pictures like miniature plays to illustrate reality through instructive comparison.⁶⁵³ Daily life and ordinariness are transformed by a surprising twist where the physical world allows a glimpse into the spiritual.⁶⁵⁴

D. Hare, *The Son of Man Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 176. Hare makes these comments specifically about the work of Nickelsburg and Catchpole, both of whom establish the core arguments that have formed the foundation for the SE dependence theory.

⁶⁵⁰D. Hare, *The Son of Man Tradition*, 178.

⁶⁵¹D. Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1989), 12.

⁶⁵²B. Young, *The Parables* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 3.

⁶⁵³B. Young, *The Parables*, 3—4.

⁶⁵⁴B. Young, *The Parables*, 4.

The Sheep and the Goats may qualify as a parable in the broadest sense of the word because it contains the simile of a shepherd separating sheep and goats. Yet Hultgren states, ‘The unit is not truly a parable. It is actually an apocalyptic discourse with a parabolic element in 25:32b—33 – the simile of a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats.’⁶⁵⁵ Matthew 25:31—46 is not an apocalyptic discourse as defined in chapter two. The passage is describing a cataclysmic eschatological event, but that does not make it a parable.

Blomberg rejects the use of parable for the Sheep and the Goats stating that the presence of a simile in verse 32, and the metaphor of sheep and goats, are the only two reasons this passage has been classified as a parable.⁶⁵⁶ Jesus tells the disciples in Matthew 18 to treat an obstinate brother who refuses to repent for wronging another [ὡσπερ] as a gentile or a tax—collector in the same comparative manner found in 25:32, yet scholars do not deem Matthew 18:15—20 parabolic. Throughout the gospel, Jesus’ parables consistently tell stories of various lengths that contain a spiritual truth and often use a phrase like ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, though not exclusively.⁶⁵⁷ This formula is found in 25:1 with the parable of the ten virgins, though it is absent from the parable of the talents in 25:14—30. Both represent clear examples of classic parabolic storytelling and both occur directly before the Sheep and the Goats.

Matthew 25:31—46 does not contain any form of parabolic introduction, nor does the ‘parabolic element’ tell any kind of story. The coming Son of Man is part of the direct narrative of the Olivet Discourse, not a comparison to the kingdom; it is the event in question. Jesus does

⁶⁵⁵ A. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 310.

⁶⁵⁶ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 375.

⁶⁵⁷ Matthew 13:24, 31, 44, 45, 47 are examples of this parabolic introduction.

not tell a story that he then relates back to the coming Son of Man as he did in Matthew 13 with the tares and wheat. This passage is not a parable in the way Jesus commonly tells parables. A more accurate description of the Sheep and the Goats is a ‘prophetic oracle’ that describes the new covenant for Israel, the Gentiles and the disciples, by telling a story through scripture.

Matthew 25:31—46 amalgamates Psalm 80 and Daniel 7 to demonstrate the long—term result of Israel’s infidelity after rejecting the messianic Son of Man. The Sheep and the Goats is the conclusion of a discourse about the end of Israel’s covenant with God, not one about the end of the space—time continuum. Jerusalem’s destruction is the sign of the Son of Man’s enthronement and the validation of the vineyard’s new tenants. This is a new vision of the world for a community living in the wake of the Son of Man’s victory that involved a cataclysmic eschatological event, which altered the landscape of Yahweh’s kingdom.

Literary Influence of Psalm 79 LXX on the Imagery of Matthew 25:31—46

‘Over one—third of the 360 Old Testament quotations in the New Testament comes from the psalms.’⁶⁵⁸ Christian communities embraced the psalms with as prophetic with Royal Psalms and Laments Psalms both readily contributing to Jesus’ story.⁶⁵⁹ Matthew frequently appeals to the psalms as a source of citations and allusions. Menken acknowledges fifteen psalm quotations in Matthew; seven borrowed from Mark, four from Q and three special M.⁶⁶⁰ The seven psalm quotations imported from Mark are: Psalms 118:25—26; 118:22—23; 110:1; 22:19; 22:2. The four Q quotations are: Psalms 91:11—12; 6:9; 104:12; 118:26. The three Matthean psalm quotes are: 78:2; 62:13; 22:9.⁶⁶¹ *Novum Testamentum* 28 documents potential allusions in addition to

⁶⁵⁸ S.E. Gillingham, *The Psalms through the Centuries: Volume One* (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 14.

⁶⁵⁹ C. Evans, ‘Praise and Prophecy in the Psalter and in the New Testament’, in P.W. Flint & P.D. Miller, eds., *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 551.

⁶⁶⁰ M. Menken, ‘The Psalms’, 62.

⁶⁶¹ M. Menken, ‘The Psalms’, 62.

direct citations. Contrary to Menken, the *Novum Testamentum* lists thirteen citations as they exclude Psalm 103:12 LXX as a quotation in Matthew 13:32, as well as Psalm 110:1 quoted in Matthew 26:64.⁶⁶² In addition to the quotations, there are approximately seventy allusions to different psalms according to the *Novum Testamentum* committee.

Matthew's use of the psalms is both didactic and prophetic as he cites Psalm 78:2 as a fulfillment of prophecy in Matthew 13:34.⁶⁶³ Jesus delivers parables to the crowd leading to the prophetic fulfillment citation in 13:34, a quote from a psalm of Asaph, before explaining the parable of the 'Wheat and the Tares'. The explanation for the Wheat and the Tares has several parallels to the Sheep and the Goats, and the whole of the Olivet Discourse. Both passages address the Son of Man and his angels (25:31), the burning fire (25:41), the end of the age (24:3) and lawlessness (24:12). The Wheat and the Tares, its explanation and the Sheep and the Goats are unique Matthean passages, as is Matthew's citation of Psalm 78 as a prophetic utterance. Psalms 78 and 80 are both psalms of Asaph, which stands to reason that if Matthew incorporates an Asaphite psalm into the Wheat and the Tares, he may have incorporated another Asaphite psalm into the sister passage, the Sheep and the Goats.

Matthew 25:31—46 is a complex picture of judgment that uses a variety of titles and images to describe a moment when the coming Son of Man will engage in a process of separating the obedient from the disobedient. A significant factor contributing to the complexity of the Sheep and the Goats is the combination of titles describing Jesus, the images used to describe the faithful and the unfaithful and the criteria of judgment. There are several key questions to consider when engaging the Sheep and the Goats: Why is Jesus described as *ὁ υἱὸς*

⁶⁶² All citation and allusion information taken from martin analysis of the NA 28.

⁶⁶³S.E. Gillingham, *The Psalms*, 17.

τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ὁ ποιμὴν, ὁ βασιλεὺς and κύριος all in the same passage? What is the intended meaning of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη and why are they subjected to this distinct standard of judgment? Why are the faithful called πρόβατα being placed at the right and the unfaithful called ἐρίφων being placed on the left?

Psalm 80, or more specifically Psalm 79 LXX bears a strong linguistic resemblance to the Sheep and the Goats that can be used to explain the unique collection of terms and images present in this Matthean story. Scholarly assessments of the Sheep and the Goats frequently ignore the collection of titles used of Jesus in the passage, or they comment on the imagery without giving significant treatment to the possibility of a primary source behind the titles.

Several scholars focus their efforts on forcing the Sheep and the Goats into a systematic eschatology, ignoring the unique collection of titles and images present. Broadus, for example writes, ‘The reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, with which this great discourse began, has now passed out of sight, and we think only of the final coming of Christ.’⁶⁶⁴ Broadus uses a dismissive approach towards Jerusalem’s fall as a means of making the Sheep and the Goats another world—ending eschatological judgment passage with little consideration given to the titles and images present. Hendriksen devotes his coverage to arguments surrounding the necessity of a final judgment for survivors on earth at the second coming, and Jesus’ public vindication to the world.⁶⁶⁵ Hendriksen then moves from book to book in the Bible to conform the Sheep and the Goats to a systematic scheme of why this passage addresses the judgment of the angels and the nature of the sins of the wicked as sins of neglect (which means they are sins

⁶⁶⁴ J. Broadus, *Matthew*, 507.

⁶⁶⁵ W. Hendriksen, *Matthew*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1973), 887.

of unbelief towards the Son of Man).⁶⁶⁶ Without specifically stating it, his view on the criteria of judgment is a clear effort to conform the Sheep and the Goats to his understanding of Pauline thought. While he cites verses from all over the Bible, he never gives strong consideration to the purpose of these titles and images.

Turner identifies the Sheep and the Goats as a parable and adopts the view that this is the final judgment of all humanity, but ‘the least’ are Christians in general or Christian missionaries.⁶⁶⁷ True faith of the individuals is tested by their help for fellow believers, while those who demonstrate no such hospitality are not true followers. Turner is quick to address the notion that believers are surprised by the positive verdict, stating that they are rather surprised that they helped the sovereign Lord when they helped the needy, which can also be used to eliminate a possible conflict with his understanding of Pauline salvation through faith.⁶⁶⁸ His writing maintains a stronger inter—textual analysis, but it offers essentially no consideration of the images present, beyond simply labeling the Sheep and the Goats a parable.

In contrast to Turner, Blomberg denies the parable label, limiting the presence of shepherd to a simile and sheep and goats to metaphor.⁶⁶⁹ He further attributes the metaphor to Ezekiel 34:17—19 as a typical expression of Palestinian life with sheep’s wool being more valuable than goat’s wool. Blomberg then refers to Jesus as the king and Son of Man without setting out any commentary on the two titles and moving on to the identity of ‘the least of the brothers’.⁶⁷⁰ Though Blomberg analyses the Sheep and the Goats more within the confines of

⁶⁶⁶ W. Hendriksen *Matthew*, 889—891.

⁶⁶⁷ D. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 605.

⁶⁶⁸ D. Turner, *Matthew*, 605.

⁶⁶⁹ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NACC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 375.

⁶⁷⁰ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 377.

Matthew, he does not devote space to a thorough analysis of the images, opting instead to brush over the Son of Man and king titles.

The combination of king with the figure of the coming Son of Man is unusual; Luz acknowledges this surprising combination yet omits consideration of how it came about.⁶⁷¹ By amalgamating Daniel 7 and Psalm 80, a coming royal Son of Man emerges in the Sheep and the Goats. Matthew does not quote Psalm 79 LXX in the Sheep and the Goats, rather he echoes the psalm in this passage and others throughout Matthew. Echoes are required to meet standards of volume, recurrence or thematic coherence in the narrative. What follows are arguments for the influence of Psalm 79 LXX on the Sheep and the Goats as an echo with repeated influence in the narrative. This echoing accords with the established methodological standards, indicating the presence of a scriptural echo in the Sheep and the Goats.

Textual Relationship

A comparative analysis of Matthew 25:31—46 and Psalm 79 LXX reveals that there are no fewer than thirteen verbal points between the passages. The common points will be presented first, with the rest of the chapter discussing the thematic similarities found between Matthew's narrative and Psalm 79 LXX. The comparisons will follow the structural order of the Sheep and the Goats, tracing corresponding elements from Psalm 79 LXX through the progression of Matthew 25:31—46.

The first common point is found in 25:31 where the stage for the judgment is set with the coming of the Son of Man: Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ. There are two corresponding verses in Psalm 79:16 and 18, which form a parallelism in the psalm. In 79:16 the

⁶⁷¹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 534.

text says καὶ κατάρτισαι αὐτήν, ἣν ἐφύτευσεν ἡ δεξιὰ σου, καὶ ἐπὶ υἷὸν ἀνθρώπου, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ. The psalmist beseeches God’s favour on the Son of Man, the king of Israel, as the fate of Israel and the Son of Man are interconnected in the psalm. The parallel verse then reads: γενηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ’ ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἷὸν ἀνθρώπου. This parallelism establishes a connection between the Son of Man at God’s right, and the psalmist’s desire to see Israel once again in the place of honour at the right.

| Psalm 79 LXX | Matthew 25:31-46 |
|--|--|
| <p>16 καὶ κατάρτισαι αὐτήν, ἣν ἐφύτευσεν ἡ δεξιὰ σου, καὶ ἐπὶ <u>υἷὸν ἀνθρώπου</u>, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ.</p> <p>18 γενηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ’ ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ <u>υἷὸν ἀνθρώπου</u>, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ.</p> | <p>31 Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ <u>ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου</u> ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ.</p> |

The second common motif also appears in Matthew 25:31 after the Son of Man comes in glory with all his angels. The Son of Man is described in glorious, royal language, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ. The psalmist in 79:2 beseeches God as ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν χερουβιν. The throne is a direct reference to God sitting on the cherubim in the sanctuary of the temple (1 Kings 6:23—28). Jesus may have also thought of the Ark of the Covenant and the ‘mercy seat’ (τῶν κλιτῶν τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου) described in Exodus 25:10—22 when using this psalm.⁶⁷² God as the shepherd and the exalted Son of Man both occupy a glorious and heavenly throne.

⁶⁷² The fact that the ark was associated with the temple was not lost on Matthew as will be discussed in the commentary after the linguistic relationship is fully explained.

Psalm 79 LXX

2 Ὁ ποιμαίνων τὸν Ἰσραὴλ, πρόσχευς, ὁ ὀδηγῶν ὡσεὶ πρόβατα τὸν Ἰωσηφ, ὃ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν γερούβιν, ἐμφάνηθι.

Matthew 25:31-46

31 Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ.

Third, in Matthew 25:32 following the Son of Man sitting on his throne, his first action is as follows: καὶ συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. For the psalmist, following the initial invocation to God for help, he transitions in verse 9 to recalling God's work in bringing Israel out of Egypt. Psalm 79:9 states, ἄμπελον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετήρας, ἐξέβαλες ἔθνη καὶ κατεφύτευσας αὐτήν. Whereas the psalmist recounts to God that he cast out the ἔθνος to plant the vineyard, the inverse occurs in the Sheep and the Goats where Jesus gathers the ἔθνος before him. This too is connected to a larger theological motif discussed below.

Psalm 79 LXX

9 ἄμπελον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετήρας, ἐξέβαλες ἔθνη καὶ κατεφύτευσας αὐτήν

Matthew 25:31-46

32 καὶ συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων

The fourth and fifth points also occur in 25:32 following the moment when the Son of Man gathers the ἔθνος before him. Once the ἔθνος are gathered the Son of Man commences with a process of separation: καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, ὡσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων. The text compares Jesus to a shepherd separating the ἔθνος into two groups, whereby the sheep will receive pre—eminence. Turning to Psalm 79:2 the psalmist initially seeks God's attention by writing, Ὁ ποιμαίνων τὸν Ἰσραὴλ, πρόσχευς, ὁ ὀδηγῶν ὡσεὶ πρόβατα

τὸν Ἰωσηφ. The psalmist identifies God as the shepherd of Israel who leads his people Israel who are his sheep.⁶⁷³

| Psalm 79 LXX | Matthew 25:31-46 |
|---|--|
| <p>2 Ὁ ποιμαίνων τὸν Ἰσραηλ, πρόσχευς, ὁ ὀδηγῶν ὡσεὶ πρόβατα τὸν Ἰωσηφ, ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν χειρουβιν, ἐμφάνηθι.</p> | <p>32 ὥσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων</p> |

A sixth point is that the Son of Man συναχθήσονται ἐμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, whereas in Psalm 79 God ἐξέβαλες ἔθνη for the vineyard to ὀδοποίησας ἐμπροσθεν αὐτῆς καὶ κατεφύτευσας τὰς ρίζας αὐτῆς. For both passages being ἐμπροσθεν, whether clearing room for the vine or being gathered for judgment, does not equal a state of approval. A way was cleared for the vine, but its planting at the right indicates God’s favour. Being gathered before the Son of Man in Matthew does not signify merit: only those who placed at the right have God’s favour.

| Psalm 79 LXX | Matthew 25:31-46 |
|--|--|
| <p>10 ὀδοποίησας <u>ἐμπροσθεν αὐτῆς</u> καὶ κατεφύτευσας τὰς ρίζας αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπλήσθη ἡ γῆ.</p> | <p>32 καὶ συναχθήσονται <u>ἐμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ</u> πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων</p> |

Seventh, the two texts agree on a position of pre—eminence at the right hand of authority. Following the separation of sheep and goats the gospel declares in 25:33, καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων. Further, the king addresses those on the right in 25:34, τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ. There is a two—fold

⁶⁷³ This significance of God as the shepherd in the psalm in comparison with Jesus as the shepherd in Matthew will be further discussed in the commentary below.

correspondence to the ‘right’ as a position of favour in Psalm 79. Returning to the parallel statements of 79:16 and 18 the psalmist writes in 79:16, καὶ κατάρτισαι αὐτήν, ἣν ἐφύτευσεν ἡ δεξιά σου, followed in 79:18, γενηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ’ ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου.

| Psalm 79 LXX | Matthew 25:31-46 |
|---|--|
| 16 καὶ κατάρτισαι αὐτήν, ἣν ἐφύτευσεν ἡ δεξιά σου, καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου | 33 καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων. |
| 18 γενηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ’ ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου | 34 τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ |

These statements express two aspects of the same request. The psalmist asks God to re—plant the destroyed vineyard at his right, the vineyard being Israel, the sheep he has led as a shepherd. Subsequently, the psalmist beseeches God to strengthen the Son of Man at his right, who is the king of Israel, which in turn will strengthen Israel ensuring their place at the right. The transition of the Son of Man to the divine position as the one who places people at his right maintains the consistent redactional pattern in Matthew.⁶⁷⁴

An eighth common feature is found in Matthew 25:34 where the text reads, τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ. This titular shift of calling the Son of Man ‘king’ retains the theme discussed previously in the chapter on Psalm 80. Psalm 79:18 LXX reads γενηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ’ ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου. This man at the right, the Son of Man is the king of Israel. Matthew maintains the psalmist’s correlation of the Son of Man as king, though, as will be demonstrated below, the evangelist has a much larger kingdom in mind.

⁶⁷⁴Discussed further below.

Psalm 79 LXX

18 γενηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ' ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου

Matthew 25:31-46

34 τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ

The ninth and tenth shared features appear in the blessings of Matthew 25:35 and the corresponding curses of 25:42. Addressing the standards of judgment 25:35 states, ἐπείνασα γὰρ καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με. Addressing the hunger and thirst of Jesus' brethren— 'the least' along with meeting other needs forms the basis for which the Son of Man's determination of whether one is a sheep or a goat. An intriguing parallel thought appears in 79:6, where the psalmist reminds God of the calamity that God has brought on Israel, using hunger and thirst to describe the vineyard's hardship of famine and drought. The verse reads, ψωμίεις ἡμᾶς ἄρτον δακρύων καὶ ποτιεῖς ἡμᾶς ἐν δάκρυσιν ἐν μέτρῳ. The psalmist invokes covenantal language of blessing and cursing as found in passages such as Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

Psalm 79 LXX

6 ψωμίεις ἡμᾶς ἄρτον δακρύων καὶ ποτιεῖς ἡμᾶς ἐν δάκρυσιν ἐν μέτρῳ;

Matthew 25:31-46

35 ἐπείνασα γὰρ καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με

42 ἐπείνασα γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με

The eleventh intersecting point also occurs in the blessings and curses, where Jesus commends the righteous because he was ἡσθένησα καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με, rebuking the cursed because ἀσθενής καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με. This corresponds to Psalm 79:15 LXX where it reads, ἐπίσκεψαι τὴν ἄμπελον ταύτην in the hopes of God responding to the vineyard. These common connections between the psalmist’s request of God on behalf of the vineyard relates to the Son of Man’s criteria and links to a new vision of the vineyard.⁶⁷⁵

| Psalm 79 LXX | Matthew 25:31-46 |
|--|---|
| <p>15 ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον δὴ, ἐπίβλεψον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἰδὲ καὶ ἐπίσκεψαι τὴν ἄμπελον ταύτην</p> | <p>36 γυμνὸς καὶ περιεβάλετέ με, ἡσθένησα καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με</p> <p>43 ξένος ἤμην καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνὸς καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἀσθενής καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με.</p> |

A twelfth commonality arises in the corresponding verses of Matthew 25:37 and 25:44, where the blessed and the cursed address the Son of Man pertaining to his judgment. After presenting his verdict the text says, τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν... followed by a recitation of the Son of Man’s standards of judgment. The same is maintained for those at the left, τότε ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε... who ask the same questions as the blessed.

A point of interest receiving further treatment in the commentary of this chapter below is the nature of the Son of Man in Matthew also Lord, king and shepherd, an amalgamation of titles and honours previously used of either God or his king in various Old Testament passages that are redefined in this first—century CE exegesis.

⁶⁷⁵ To be discussed later in the chapter.

Psalm 79 LXX

5 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἕως πότε ὀργίζῃ ἐπὶ τὴν προσευχὴν τοῦ δούλου σου

8 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, καὶ σωθησόμεθα

20 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, καὶ σωθησόμεθα.

Matthew 25:31-46

37 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες,

Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν, ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν;

44 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες,

Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ἕξενον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐ διηκονήσαμεν σοι;

The thirteenth and final common linguistic point is found in Matthew 25:41 near the climax of the passage when the goats learn of their fate. Jesus says to those on the left, Πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ [οἱ] κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἠτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ. As Psalm 79 comes to an end, the psalmist reiterates the desperate condition of God's vineyard in 79:17, ἐμπεπυρισμένη πυρὶ καὶ ἀνεσκαμμένη, ἀπὸ ἐπιτιμήσεως τοῦ προσώπου σου ἀπολοῦνται. Whereas the vineyard is burnt by fire and in a state of destruction, the cursed are on a course for eternal fire of destruction in the scene of judgment.

Psalm 79 LXX

17 ἐμπεπυρισμένη πυρὶ καὶ ἀνεσκαμμένη, ἀπὸ ἐπιτιμήσεως τοῦ προσώπου σου ἀπολοῦνται.

Matthew 25:31-46

41 Τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ ἐωνύμων, Πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ [οἱ] κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἠτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ.

To offer another view of the many parallels between the two passages, the following image is a colour—coded comparison of the two showing all of the linguistic parallels found between them. The red brackets identify the passages invoking kingly image in the psalm and the king from Matthew.

| Psalm 79 LXX | Matthew 25:31-46 |
|--|--|
| 1 Εἰς τὸ τέλος, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλοιωθησομένων, μαρτύριον τῷ Ἀσασ, φυλμός ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου. | 31 Ὅταν δὲ ἔρθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ. |
| 2 Ὁ ποιμαίνει τὸν Ἰσραὴλ, πρόσχευς, ὁ ὀδηγῶν ἀσὰι πρόβατα τὸν Ἰσασφ, ἐκωθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν γειτροπέδων, ἐμφάνηθη. | 32 καὶ ἀποκριθήσονται κατακλιθὲν αὐτῷ λέγοντα ταῦτά τινες, ὡσπερ ὁ ποιῶν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἔριφων. |
| 3 Ἐκλυτὸν Ἐφραϊμ καὶ Βενιαμὴν καὶ Μανασσὴν ἐξέγειρον τὴν δυναστείαν σου καὶ ἔλθε εἰς τὸ σῶσαι ἡμᾶς. | 33 καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἔριφους ἐξ ἐναντίων. |
| 4 ὁ θεός, ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, καὶ σωθисόμεθα. | 34 τότε ἔρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, Δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. |
| 5 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἕως πότε ὀργίσει ἐπὶ τὴν προσευχὴν τοῦ δοῦλου σου, | 35 ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔφαθ' ὁ κύριος καὶ ἐδοκίμασε με, ἐκείνησιν καὶ ἐποιοῦσά με, ξένος ἦμην καὶ συνηγάγετέ με, |
| 6 ἡμιμαίε, ἡμιμαίε, ἄρτον δακρύων καὶ κωτιεὶς ἡμῶν ἐν δάκρυσιν ἐν μέτρῳ; | 36 γυμνὸς καὶ περιβώλετέ με, ἠσθένησα καὶ κατακλίθηκα ἐν φυλακῇ ἡμῶν καὶ ἤρθασα πρὸς με. |
| 7 ἔβου ἡμᾶς εἰς ἀντιλογία τῶν γειτόσων ἡμῶν, καὶ οἱ ἐχθροὶ ἡμῶν ἐμυκτήρισαν ἡμᾶς. | 37 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτοῖς οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πενήτην καὶ ἐσθιέντα, ἢ ἐκείνησιν καὶ ἐποιοῦσά με; |
| 8 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, καὶ σωθисόμεθα. διάναλμα. | 38 πότε δὲ σε εἶδομεν ξένον καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιβώλομεν; |
| 9 ἄμπελον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετήρας, ἐκείνησιν καὶ καταφύτευσας αὐτήν, | 39 πότε δὲ σε εἶδομεν ἀσθενούντα ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ ἤρθομεν πρὸς σε; |
| 10 ὀδοποιήσας ἐκείνησιν καὶ καταφύτευσας τὰς βίβλας αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπλήσθη ἡ γῆ. | 40 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔρεᖄ αὐτοῖς, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἕρ' ὅσον ἐποίησατε ἐν ταύταις τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐσθίστων, ἔμοι ἐποίησατε. |
| 11 ἐκάλυψεν ὄρη ἡ σκιά αὐτῆς καὶ αἱ ἀναενδροάδες αὐτῆς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ θεοῦ, | 41 Τότε ἔρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ ἐναντίων, Πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ [οἱ] κατηγορούμενοι εἰς τὸ ἔσθαι, τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ δεσπότῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ. |
| 12 ἐξέτεινεν τὰ κλίματα αὐτῆς ἕως θαλάσσης καὶ ἕως ποταμοῦ τὰς παραουάδας αὐτῆς. | 42 ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔφαθ' ὁ κύριος καὶ ἐδοκίμασε με, ἐκείνησιν καὶ οὐκ ἐποιοῦσά με. |
| 13 ἵνα τί καθέυδες τὸν φραγμὸν αὐτῆς καὶ τρυγῶσιν αὐτὴν πάντες οἱ παραπορευόμενοι τὴν ὁδόν; | 43 ξένος ἦμην καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνὸς καὶ οὐ περιβώλετέ με, ἀσθενῆς καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐκείνησιν καὶ ἐποιοῦσά με. |
| 14 ἔλυμνητο αὐτὴν σὺς ἐκ δρυμοῦ, καὶ μονὸς ἀγριος κατενεμήσατο αὐτήν. | 44 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πενήτην ἢ ἐκείνησιν ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐσθιόντων ἡμῶν; |
| 15 ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον δὴ, ἐπίβλεψον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἴδε καὶ ἐκείνησιν καὶ ἐποιοῦσά με. | 45 τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγων, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἕρ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποίησατε ἐν ταύταις τῶν ἐσθίστων, οὐδὲ ἔμοι ἐποίησατε. |
| 16 καὶ κατάρτυας αὐτήν, ἣν ἐκείνησιν καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεσαυτῶ. | 46 καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. |
| 17 ἐκείνησιν καὶ ἀνεσκαμμένη, ἀπὸ ἐπιτιμήσεως τοῦ προσώπου σου ἀπολοῦνται. | |
| 18 γενηθήτω ἡμῶν ὡς τῶν ἐσθίστων καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεσαυτῶ, | |
| 19 καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστῶμεν ἀπὸ σου, ζῶσσεῖς ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐπικαλῶσόμεθα. | |
| 20 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, καὶ σωθисόμεθα. | |

Comparing the amount of common grammatical material between these two passages with accepted citations and allusion in Matthew offers merit to this proposed relationship. Matthew 13:34 is acknowledged as a quote from Psalm 78:2 where ἀνοίξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὸ στόμα μου is identical between Matthew and his Psalm 77:2 LXX counterpart. The second line in Matthew, ἐρεύξομαι κεκρυμμένα ἀπὸ καταβολῆς compares less favorably to the LXX φθέγγομαι προβλήματα ἀπ' ἀρχῆς and possibly reflects a closer translation to the Hebrew of Psalm 78:2

which reads מְנַקֵּי מַיִם הַיְדֵי הַפְּבַיִם. Psalm 110:1 is acknowledged as a citation in Matthew 26:64 on the basis of καθήμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν. These three words are enough for Menken to qualify this as a quotation, though the *Novum Testamentum* 28 has given it allusion status.⁶⁷⁶ Matthew 16:27 includes the phrase καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ, a citation from Psalm 61:13 LXX τὸ ἔλεος, ὅτι σὺ ἀποδώσεις ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. Matthew has possibly reworked the phrase, if he is consciously making the quotation.⁶⁷⁷ Comparatively the text of Psalm 79 LXX has much in common with Matthew 25:31-46.

While the written parallels demonstrate many common features between the passages, several thematically significant developments in the Sheep and the Goats also arise if Psalm 80 is a source behind the Matthean passage. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to commentary addressing the implications of the religio—political situation addressed in Matthew. The last chapter will present a new reading of the larger context of Matthew within the paradigm being proposed.

The Titles of Christ

The Sheep and the Goats contains four titles for Christ: ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ὁ ποιμὴν, ὁ βασιλεὺς and κύριος. All four titles appear in Psalm 79 LXX, three of them directly and one by inference. The Son of Man has taken a place of enthronement in the Sheep and the Goats that was occupied by the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7 and Yahweh the shepherd in Psalm 80. The Son of Man represents the kingdom of God inherited by the saints of the Most High in Daniel 7, though the above discussion has shown that figure underwent diverse forms of transformation in later texts. Psalm 79 LXX naturally understands the Son of Man as a royal figure.

⁶⁷⁶ M. Menken, 'The Psalms', 75-76.

⁶⁷⁷ M. Menken, 'The Psalms', 69.

The Ancient of Days is enthroned in Daniel 7 upon a glorious throne with a mass of attendants in his royal court (verses 9—10) when the Son of Man enters the Ancient of Day's presence (verses 13—14). That scenario changes in the Sheep and the Goats, where the Son of Man is enthroned in the seat of judgment, having become a messianic figure similar to *4 Ezra* or *2 Baruch*. The Matthean Son of Man in the Sheep and the Goats is divine and one explanation for this transformation is that Matthew combines the contents of Psalm 79 LXX with the vision of Daniel 7. Previous functions fulfilled by the Ancient of Days are now the role of the Son of Man. This is not to say the two beings are one and the same, rather Jesus as the Son of Man is a divine being, distinct from his Father, but divine and acting with the authority of Yahweh.

God is the ποιμαίνων τὸν Ἰσραὴλ in the psalm, whereas the Son of Man in Matthew is ὁ ποιμὴν of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, who have been gathered before the Son of Man. This is an intriguing development, as the Gentiles had been 'cast out' to make room for the vineyard Israel, and yet there is no specific mention of Israel in the Sheep and the Goats. God's enthronement ἐπὶ τῶν χερουβὶν in 79:2 alludes to the inner sanctuary of the temple (1 Kings 8:6—11). Scripture rarely depicts Yahweh simultaneously as both shepherd and enthroned; an exception to this is Psalm 80.

This Matthean Son of Man is enthroned on a seat of judgment with 'his angels', not God's angels. Davidic kingship was described as an office where an enthroned shepherd could be told by God, Σὺ ποιμανεῖς τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραὴλ and the elders χρίουσιν τὸν Δαυὶδ εἰς βασιλεία ἐπὶ πάντα Ἰσραὴλ (2 Kings 5:2—3 LXX). Both Daniel 7 and Psalm 80 depict their unique Son of Man figures as distinct from God who is enthroned. However, in Matthew the shepherd, the Son of Man is king upon his throne who has both responsibilities and status not

found individually in either Daniel 7 or Psalm 80. If the texts are seen as an amalgamation in Matthew, this explains not only the reason for the enthronement of the Son of Man as shepherd—king, but it also demonstrates consistency with the Son of Man is newly imagined in Matthew’s gospel.

Matthew makes four references to the shepherd role in his narrative. The first is a prophecy cited by the chief priests for the coming Messiah in Matthew 2:6.⁶⁷⁸ Second, Jesus expresses compassion for the people whom he likens to sheep without a shepherd in 9:36.⁶⁷⁹ The third is the Sheep and the Goats passage, and the fourth is the striking of the shepherd quotation in Matthew 26:31.⁶⁸⁰ The interpretation of these various Old Testament shepherd passages shows a penchant for portraying Jesus as the shepherd of the Hebrew Scriptures. The fact that the Son of Man comes ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ is significant as the use of δόξα is most commonly reserved for God in the Old Testament, and angels are always God’s angels.⁶⁸¹ Such a description further demonstrates how the Matthean Son of Man figure shares qualities of Yahweh found in the Old Testament.

Both the righteous and damned will address the shepherd—king as κύριος in Matthew, a title used in LXX 79:8 and 20 as part of the refrain κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς. The use of κύριος is common in both the LXX and Greek New Testament, yet now the Son of Man shepherd—king is also called κύριος, a title typically reserved for God in the Old

⁶⁷⁸ Taken from Micah 5.

⁶⁷⁹Cf. Jeremiah 10:21, 50:6; Ezekiel 34:5; and Zechariah 10:2 as a few of the prophetic passages with a similar theme.

⁶⁸⁰ Taken from Zechariah 13:7.

⁶⁸¹ Glory scriptures: Exodus 16:7, 24:16, 29:43; Leviticus 9:6; Numbers 14:10, 16:19; Deuteronomy 5:24; 1 Kings 8:11; 1 Chronicles 16:24; 2 Chronicles 5:4; Psalms 19:1, 24:8; Isaiah 6:3; Jeremiah 14:21 as examples. God’s angels’ scriptures: Genesis 24:7, 28:12, 31:11; Exodus 23:20; 2 Samuel 14:20, 24:16; 1 Kings 19:5; 1 Chronicles 21:15; Job.4:18; Psalm 91:11.

Testament. Also noteworthy is the use of κύριος in Matthew in this section of the passage that has a rhythmic quality where the righteous and unrighteous are being addressed and respond in kind to the Son of Man.

This vocative address to the ‘Lord’ is found three times in the psalm in 79:5, 8 and 20. Two of the three appearances of κύριε (verses 8 and 20) are an identical refrain, as part of the three—fold refrain in the psalm. The refrain is uneven as verse 4 is the first refrain, but it does not use κύριε. Rather, the first use of κύριε in verse 5 is the psalmist asking God how long he will be angry with the prayers of his servants. Verses 8 and 20 are an appeal to the Lord to return and save his people. Read as prayer and response, the two—fold use of κύριε represents the parallel response of the people to the Lord when he comes to save them. Matthew 25:37 reads, τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε. Similar, in verse 44 one reads τότε ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν. While this response is not exactly a refrain in Matthew, it has similar quality to the two—fold κύριε refrain of Psalm 79 LXX.

Matthew’s ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is both the suffering Messiah and cosmic judge that holds the title βασιλεὺς. The psalmist intends for his Son of Man to be understood as a Davidic king, ‘Der Mann zur Rechten Gottes ist in Ps 18, 36; 20, 7 der König...’⁶⁸² In the Old Testament the designation ‘Son of Man’ is used in various ways without an inherent royal connotation, though in Psalm 80 the Son of Man is the Davidic king.⁶⁸³ The vine represents Israel and the man on the right is the Davidic king when compared with Psalms 110:1 and 20:6.⁶⁸⁴ The

⁶⁸² F. Hossfeld & E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51—100*, 464.

⁶⁸³ F. Hossfeld & E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51—100*, 465.

⁶⁸⁴ A. Gelston, ‘A Sidelight’, 194. Discussed in the previous chapter.

translation of ‘King Messiah’ in the psalm’s Targum at minimum demonstrates both a kingly and messianic reading that developed in the centuries following the psalm’s composition..⁶⁸⁵ Even if the Targum only reached its final form in the 3rd or 4th century CE, there are clear reasons to believe Son of Man is the king of Israel.⁶⁸⁶

The Psalm 79 LXX textual dependence theory explains why the Lord is the enthroned Son of Man shepherd—king in the Sheep and the Goats. Matthew elucidates the psalm’s royal Son of Man, combining it with the figure of the heavenly Son of Man from Daniel, reinterpreted as a cosmic and messianic figure. This presentation of Jesus as both an earthly and cosmic king manifests in the development of Matthew’s narrative as Jesus is the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2), the King of all nations and the divine shepherd of judgment.

Further, as the psalmist beseeches God to ἐρύττευσεν ἡ δεξιὰ σου, καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, a transformation has occurred in Matthew where the Son of Man now has the authority to place the favoured ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ. The theme of the Son of Man as king moving to the role of judge continues as he possesses the authority to save or condemn those who treated him, the man of God’s right hand, with proper dignity, vicariously through their treatment of the least. The psalm entreats God to strengthen the man at his right, which will assist in restoring Israel’s fortunes and put them in a place of honor at the right. Matthew presents a response to this prayer by demonstrating the Son of Man in a position of strength, now with the ability to move his favoured to the right.

⁶⁸⁵ A. Gelston, ‘A Sidelight’, 193.

⁶⁸⁶ D. Hill, ‘Son of Man’ in Psalm 80 V. 17’, *NT* 15:4 (1973): 265.

Evans rightly notes that the Psalter takes on special significance when Jesus enters Jerusalem, a reality Jesus foreshadows in 5:35, a citation of Psalm 48:2, where Jerusalem is the ‘city of the great king’.⁶⁸⁷ Examining the list of citations and allusions from the *Novum Testamentum* 28 validates Evans view. Thirteen psalm quotations are designated in Matthew, with nine of them occurring after the entrance into Jerusalem. An additional sixteen allusions are recognized by their committee, demonstrating a high concentration on the Psalter during the passion narrative. Matthew’s development of key themes involving the vineyard and kingship are both central elements of Psalm 80 that unfold during the last week of Jesus’ life where the Psalter is being copiously used. Matthew uses Psalm 79 (78 LXX) in Matthew 13 citing Asaph as a prophet. Now he returns to that section of the Psalter in order to address true kingship in the context of his community.

The role of Jesus as the ‘son of David’ appears more often in Matthew than any other book of the New Testament.⁶⁸⁸ Jesus is called son of David in Matthew 1:1, 9:27, 15:22, 20:30—31, 21:9 and 21:15. Matthew 9:27 and 20:30—31 rework Mark 10:46—52 where the story of Bartimaeus has been redacted and told twice in the narrative, creating an emphasis on the son of David. A similar redaction takes place in Matthew 15:22 where the evangelist has reworked the material from Mark 7:24—30 to include the phrase κύριε υἱὸς Δαυίδ. The same is true of 21:9 and 21:15 where the crowd shouts Ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυίδ, a departure from Mark 11:10 where the crowd shouts Εὐλογημένη ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαυίδ.

⁶⁸⁷ C. Evans, ‘Praise and Prophecy’, 554.

⁶⁸⁸ R.T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist & Teacher* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 284.

Though Matthew develops this theme more than any other New Testament writer, Jesus singles out υἱὸς Δαυίδ in all three Synoptic Gospels for its inadequacy.⁶⁸⁹ Why does Jesus question the validity of the son of David in Matthew 22:41—46? There is nothing in the text to conclude that Jesus and Matthew disagree about his being the son of David, rather it appears that the messianic vision is larger than only υἱὸς Δαυίδ.⁶⁹⁰ Jesus as the son of David is also the son of God, who holds a role of greater significance than an earthly king. This theme has been developing from the beginning of the gospel in the genealogy (1:18—25), foretold in scripture (2:15), revealed by God (3:17, 17:5), tested by the devil (4:3, 6), taught to the disciples (11:25—27) and confessed by Peter (16:16).⁶⁹¹ Considering the importance of Davidic themes in Matthew, Psalm 80 presents an appealing candidate for use in the text, particularly in the wake of a national tragedy.

National Crisis and Covenant

A symmetry exists between the passages that can be understood as prayer to Yahweh and response. Psalm 79 LXX is a plea to Yahweh, the shepherd of Israel to come for his people and deliver them. The psalm comes to an end with the desire to see the Son of Man, the king of Israel, come for his people Israel. Matthew 25:31—46 demonstrates a dynamic inter—textual response to the psalmist’s prayer when the Son of Man comes. Examining the two passages as plea and response shows the psalmist conclude his prayer by asking for the King of Israel to come, and Matthew showing his arrival and the result.

⁶⁸⁹ R.T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist & Teacher*, 285.

⁶⁹⁰ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 916.

⁶⁹¹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 288.

Psalm 79 LXX

Matthew 25:31-46

¹ Εἰς τὸ τέλος, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλοιωθησομένων, μαρτύριον τῷ Ἀσασ, φαιμὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου.
² Ὁ ποιμαίνων τὸν Ἰσραὴλ, πρόσχευς, ὁ δόξων ὡσεὶ πρόβατα τὸν Ἰσραὴλ, ἔκαθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν κερουβὶν, ἐμφάνηθι.
³ Ἐκείνη Ἐφραΐμ, καὶ Βενουμὰν καὶ Μανασσῆ ἐξέγειρον τὴν δυναστείαν σου καὶ ἔβη εἰς τὸ σῶσασ ἡμᾶς.
⁴ ὁ θεὸς, ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, καὶ σωθησόμεθα.
⁵ Ἐκείνη ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἕως ποῦτε ὀργίξῃ ἐπὶ τὴν προσευχὴν τοῦ δούλου σου,
⁶ ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς ἔρπον δακρῦρον καὶ ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς ἐν δάκρυσιν ἐν μέτροι;
⁷ ἔβου ἡμᾶς εἰς ἀντύλογίαν τοῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν, καὶ οἱ ἔχθροί ἡμῶν ἐμικτήρισαν ἡμᾶς.
⁸ Ἐκείνη ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, καὶ σωθησόμεθα, διάναλμα.
⁹ ἄμπελον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετήρας, ἡλιθίους ἔβου καὶ κατεφύτευσας αὐτήν,
¹⁰ ὀδοπούσης καὶ κατεφύτευσας τὰς ῥίζας αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπλήσθη ἡ γῆ.
¹¹ ἐκάλυψεν ὄρη ἡ σκιὰ αὐτῆς καὶ αἱ ἀναδενδράδες αὐτῆς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ θεοῦ,
¹² ἐξέτενεν τὰ κλήματα αὐτῆς ἕως θαλάσσης καὶ ἕως ποταμοῦ τὰς παραφουάδας αὐτῆς.
¹³ ἕνα εἶ καθεὺς τὸν φραγμὸν αὐτῆς καὶ τραγῶσεν αὐτήν πάντες οἱ παραπορευόμενοι τὴν ὁδόν;
¹⁴ ἐλυμῆνато αὐτήν σὺς ἐκ ἄρουμοῦ, καὶ μονὸς ἄγριος κατενεμῆσατο αὐτήν.
¹⁵ ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον δὴ, ἐπίβλενον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἰδέ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς ταύτην
¹⁶ καὶ κατάρτυσαι αὐτήν, ἣν ἐκαταίωσας ἐπὶ τὸν ἕβρον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἕβρον ἀνθρώπου, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ.
¹⁷ ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς καὶ ἀνεσκαμμένη, ἀπὸ ἐπιτιμήσεως τοῦ προσώπου σου ἀπολοῦνται.
¹⁸ γενηθήτω ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἕβρον ἀνθρώπου, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ,
¹⁹ καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστῶμεν ἀπὸ σοῦ, ζωῶσεις ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐπικαλοσόμεθα.
²⁰ Ἐκείνη ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, καὶ σωθησόμεθα.

31 Ὃταν δὲ βῆθι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἀγγελοὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνον δόξης αὐτοῦ.
 32 καὶ ἀνακρίθησονται πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀφοριεῖ αὐτοὺς εἰς ἄλληλων, ὥστε ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφοριεῖ τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐριφῶν.
 33 καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ἐριφῶνα ἐξ ἐναντίου αὐτοῦ.
 34 τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, Δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.
 35 ἐπένοσα γὰρ καὶ ἐσκατῶ με φρονεῖν καὶ ἐπιστοιῶ με, ἕνως ἤμην καὶ συνηγέγετέ με,
 36 γυμνὸς καὶ περιβώλετέ με, ἠσθένησα καὶ ἐσκατῶ με, ἐν φυλακῇ ἤμην καὶ ἔγλυσετέ με.
 37 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν κενθῶνα καὶ ἐσκατῶ με;
 38 πότε δὲ σε εἶδομεν ἕνως καὶ συνηγέγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιβώλομεν;
 39 πότε δὲ σε εἶδομεν ἠσθενῶντα ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ ἔγλυστομεν πρὸς σε;
 40 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐρεῖ αὐτοῖς, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποίησατε ἐν τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τὴν ἐλαχίστην, ἔμοι ἐποίησατε.
 41 Τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ ἐναντίου αὐτοῦ, Πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ [οἱ] κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ ἔσχατον, τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ.
 42 καὶ οὐκ ἐσκατῶ με φρονεῖν καὶ ἐπιστοιῶ με, ἕνως ἤμην καὶ συνηγέγετέ με, γυμνὸς καὶ οὐκ ἐσκατῶ με, ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐσκατῶ με.
 43 ἕνως ἤμην καὶ οὐκ ἐσκατῶ με φρονεῖν καὶ ἐπιστοιῶ με, ἕνως ἤμην καὶ οὐκ ἐσκατῶ με, ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐσκατῶ με.
 44 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν κενθῶνα ἢ ἐσκατῶ με ἢ ἕνως ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἠσθενῶντα ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐσκατῶ με;
 45 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτοῖς λέγοντες, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποίησατε ἐν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδέ ἐμοὶ ἐποίησατε.
 46 καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

Psalm 80 is a psalm of national distress in which Israel is confronted with several crises.⁶⁹² The LXX version addresses the Assyrian tragedy and numerous curses Israel faces when God has turned away from them. Israel is hungry, thirsty and placed in opposition to their neighbors, while their enemies taunt them (verses 6—7). The walls are broken down and all who walk by pluck the vineyard as the boar from the forest has brought destruction (verses 13—14). Israel is facing covenantal curses which the psalmist is imploring God to remove from the nation.

Curses for covenantal infidelity are detailed in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. The psalmist acknowledges Israel’s hunger and thirst as promised in Leviticus 26:19—20, 22, 26 and

⁶⁹² S.E. Gillingham, *Psalms*, 5.

Deuteronomy 28:16—17, 20, 23—24, 38—39, 42, 51. God further promises to bring enemies against Israel in Leviticus 26:17, 25, 32—33 and Deuteronomy 28:25, 30—33, 48—53, 57 for their continued disobedience. Where the psalmist appeals to the covenantal curses to explain Israel's plight, Matthew's Jesus follows the psalmist in these curses.

The Son of Man's criteria of judgment requires the nations gathered before his throne to treat 'the least' in a manner commensurate with blessing. Jesus is the Son of Man of Daniel 7 and Psalm 80 that exercises the authority of Yahweh. As the enthroned shepherd—king, Jesus is in the position to place the nations in the blessed right or on the cursed left. They will be placed in those positions based on whether they are a blessing or a curse to 'the least'.

Psalm 79 LXX describes the curses afflicting Israel as hunger, thirst and being persecuted by their enemies leaving their nation vulnerable. Matthew's Jesus presents six criteria of judgment which includes the least being *πεινῶντα, διψῶντα, ξένον, γυμνὸν, ἀσθενῆ, ἐν φυλακῇ* and whether the nations respond to those needs determines their position on the left or right. Examining the curses for Israel's infidelity demonstrates that when 'the nations' come upon Israel it results in nakedness (Deuteronomy 28:48), sickness (Leviticus 26:16; Deuteronomy 28:59—61) and becoming a stranger in a foreign land (Leviticus 26:35, 38; Deuteronomy 28:32, 36, 63—65).

The psalmist asks Yahweh to come and reverse Israel's curses by strengthening the Son of Man at his right. Matthew's Jesus presents his vision of the Son of Man in the authoritative position of judgment held by Yahweh and the Ancient of Days in Psalm 80 and Daniel 7. Where the psalmist asks Yahweh for favourable judgment against the nations to reverse their curses, the

Son of Man responds by putting those who bless ‘the least’ on the right, and those who curse them on the left.

Several prophetic oracles proclaim judgment against various nations for mistreating Israel in a manner indicative of cursing.⁶⁹³ Turning to the Sheep and the Goats, the Lord responds to those being judged in a positive or negative manner based on whether they treat ‘the least’ in a way that reflects blessing or cursing. The Levitical and Deuteronomistic description of blessings and curses manifest through the provision or lack of provision from the land and Israel’s ability or lack thereof to defend their land. In other words, the agency of Yahweh in blessing and cursing his people comes through natural provision of the land and the people around his chosen.

What then happens when the chosen no longer have a single land of their own? If they are commissioned to bring a message to the nations around them, they will be subject to differing treatment by the people they are in the midst of in a method indicative of blessing or cursing. The psalmist wants God to judge the Gentiles harshly for acting as agents of cursing toward Israel. Matthew’s response scene reveals the judgment of Yahweh whereby the Son of Man’s standard is one of treating ‘the least’ with covenantal blessing or cursing. However, something strange is taking place in this scene of judgment as the Son of Man is not making a distinction between Israelite and gentile. He is not placing Israel on his right, nor is he ‘casting out’ the Gentiles to establish Israel.

Where the psalmist imagines the enthroned shepherd in power before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh, Matthew presents an enthroned shepherd in glory before all the nations. God has responded to the psalmist’s desire for the shepherd to act and for the Son of Man to come. The

⁶⁹³ Isaiah 13—23; Jeremiah 46—51; Ezekiel 25—32; Nahum 1—3; Obadiah.

problem is Israel's response to the Son of Man when he arrives. Four times the psalmist requests that God return to them (verses 4, 8, 15, 20), promising the Lord that Israel will not turn away. What happens when the shepherd comes, when Yahweh acts and Israel does not turn back to God? The Sheep and Goats provides the answer for when the sheep do not turn back when the Son of Man comes for them.

The Problem with the Sheep

Why are the sheep an image of righteousness in Matthew 25:31—46 and the goats representative of unrighteousness? Matthew's gospel features sheep more than any other Synoptic Gospel in 7:15, 9:36, 10:6, 10:16, 12:11—12, 15:24, 18:12, 25:32—33 and 26:21. Nine of the uses are comparative or parabolic, one is a quotation from scripture (26:31) and two are direct references to Israel, where Jesus describes them as τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ (10:6, 15:24). These last two instances are of interest for this study because they associate Israel with 'lost sheep'. Jesus' statements concerning the lost sheep come to a climax in the Sheep and the Goats when he turns to themes from Psalm 80 to address the future of those sheep.

Matthew 15:21—28 reworks Mark 7:24—30 with a pair of noticeable redactions. Whereas Mark says ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἦν Ἑλληνίς, Συροφονίκισσα τῷ γένει, Matthew simply describes her as a γυνὴ Χαναναία. Jesus responds to her plea to heal her daughter in Mark by saying, οὐ γάρ ἐστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ τοῖς κυναρίοις βαλεῖν. In Matthew, Jesus qualifies his comments by saying Οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ. Jesus telling a gentile woman that he has been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel builds on an earlier discourse in the gospel.

In Matthew 10, just after Jesus has appointed the twelve (10:1—4), he commissions them for a missionary endeavor related to the Olivet Discourse. Beginning in 10:5 Jesus gives the disciples strict instructions Εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθητε καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθητε· πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ. Both instances contrast the lost sheep of the house of Israel with Gentiles, a theme that will develop in dramatic fashion throughout Matthew. The discourse that follows is a significant redaction of Mark 6:7—13, transforming a few lines into the second major discourse of Matthew. Jesus appoints the twelve disciples and sends them to preach the kingdom. Jesus specifically forbids going to the ἐθνῶν, allowing only preaching to Israel, adding a comparison to the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah in 10:15.⁶⁹⁴

Matthew 10:17—22 is in interesting addition: Matthew takes Mark 13:9—13 from Mark's Olivet Discourse and moves it back into Jesus' second great discourse. In many respects this inclusion is peculiar, as Jesus appears to send his disciples on a relatively short preaching mission within Israel, yet he warns them of the severest levels of persecution from that lost house of Israel and trials before Gentiles, whom they were strictly told to avoid. These instructions seem valid within the context of their Markan source but anachronistic in Jesus' second Matthean discourse. Further complicating the issue is verse 23, ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ τελέσητε τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Senior addressed the issue by saying the instruction not to go among the Gentiles seems archaic at first: it was meant only for the disciples and not Matthew's community.⁶⁹⁵ The same can be said of the declaration in verse 23 that they will not finish their preaching before the Son

⁶⁹⁴ A similar statement to Jesus says appears in Matthew 11:24 and shared with Luke 10:12.

⁶⁹⁵ D. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 117.

of Man comes, yet the Mark 13 material expands the scope of the instructions to Matthew's community.⁶⁹⁶ Senior believes the dual streams of Israel and the nations converge here with examples of Israel's lost sheep found in Jesus' miracles of the leper (8:1—4), Matthew the tax collector (9:9—13) and the hemorrhaging woman (9:20—22). Likewise, the miracles to the Gentiles as seen in the centurion's servant (8:5—13) and the Canaanite woman's daughter (15:21—28) take a short step beyond the boundaries of Israel. Senior concludes that despite the commission of the twelve, they are never described as leaving in contrast to Mark 6:12f, thus the mission will wait until the conclusion of the gospel.⁶⁹⁷

Gentiles are a peripheral factor in Matthew that will gain tremendous significance by the end when the disciples' mission is opened to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. While the narrative does not specifically mention the disciples' departure, the problem with simply viewing this commission as a post—resurrection ideology is its direct opposition to Matthew 28:16—20. Why would Matthew present Jesus as giving his disciples a commission to preach exclusively to Israel, that was superseded by a later commission to preach to the Gentiles, before the previous commission had even taken place in its post—resurrection context?

Kingsbury more accurately assesses Matthew's intent as the mission is meant to foretell the persecution that Israel will inflict upon the disciples, foreshadowing the repudiation that Jesus himself is about to endure (11:2—16:20).⁶⁹⁸ Kingsbury believes the reason for omitting the reference to the departure or return lies in the disciples' obligation to continue their missionary work to Israel until the parousia.⁶⁹⁹ Matthew is thus intentionally creating an

⁶⁹⁶ D. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 117.

⁶⁹⁷ D. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 118.

⁶⁹⁸ J. Kingsbury *Matthew as Story* 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 71.

⁶⁹⁹ J. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 71.

unresolved conflict as a narrative device to reflect the tension faced by the Matthean community.⁷⁰⁰

There may be some truth to Kingsbury's belief that an underlying conflict is behind the tension in the text. Matthew is not as overt as Mark, but it indicates that Jesus and the disciples parted ways in 11:1, Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς διατάσσων τοῖς δώδεκα μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, μετέβη ἐκεῖθεν τοῦ διδάσκειν καὶ κηρύσσειν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν αὐτῶν. There is a sense of tension developed here in forbidding the disciples to go to the Gentiles on one hand, then proclaiming that they will not complete their journey before the Son of Man comes on the other. Jesus foretells the pending rejection of the disciples by Israel, but in a manner different than Kingsbury suggests.

A storm on the horizon between Jesus and the house of Israel will result in a covenantal break between the messianic Son of Man and the lost sheep. Throughout the gospel the sheep are vulnerable (9:36, 10:16) and lost (10:6, 15:24, 18:12) with their shepherd desperately seeking to restore them. Jesus' mission, with brief exceptions of gentile healings, is exclusively a desperate mission to Israel. The antithesis of Ἰσραήλ in Matthew 10 is ἔθνῶν, with no indication that the ἔθνῶν are to be included among the sheep. By the time Jesus tells the oracle of the Sheep and the Goats, it is πάντα τὰ ἔθνη who stand before the Son of Man and are numbered among the sheep.

Matthew features ἔθνη in 6:32, 10:5, 12:21, 20:19, 20:25, 21:43, 24:7, 24:9, 24:14, 25:32 and 28:19. In his treatment of the Sheep and the Goats, Luz states that ἔθνη typically designates

⁷⁰⁰ J. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 71.

non—Israelites and non—Christian Gentiles.⁷⁰¹ He further argues that 24:30f uses ἔθνη as ‘all tribes’ seeing the Son of Man arrive, but 24:9 and 24:14 use ἔθνη as non—Christian peoples.⁷⁰²

France adds that the gathering of the nations echoes Joel 3:1—12 Hebrew (LXX 4:1—12), but its judgment is specifically of Gentiles for their treatment of Israel, while no such restriction is found in the Sheep and the Goats.⁷⁰³

A review of the usage of ἔθνη as used in Matthew demonstrates that every occurrence of ἔθνη prior to chapter 24 can be definitively categorised as people who are non—Israelites. In 6:32 Jesus tells his Jewish audience not to worry about what they eat, drink or wear as πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπιζητοῦσιν, a comparison between the audience and the ἔθνη, which should be translated as Gentiles. The same is evident in the Matthew 12:21 quote from Isaiah where it says of God’s beloved καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν. This is another instance where Gentiles is the best translation. While speaking of his coming death, Jesus says the Son of Man will be handed τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εἰς τὸ ἐμπαῖξαι καὶ μαστιγῶσαι καὶ σταυρῶσαι. Gentiles is again entirely appropriate considering the clear role the Romans play in Jesus’ death.

Matthew 21:43 then claims the tenants of the vineyard will be evicted, and the kingdom shall be given to ἔθνει who will bear fruit. This leads to the pivotal moment in Matthew when the fate of Israel is decided in a dramatic picture of judgment. Themes from Psalm 80 echo throughout the narrative, building toward the time when Jesus will respond to the psalmist’s plea for deliverance from the Gentiles. The next chapter will provide a commentary on Matthew that

⁷⁰¹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 531.

⁷⁰² U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 531.

⁷⁰³ R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 961.

outlines the echoing themes of Psalm 80 in the narrative, building to the climactic scene of judgment, and explaining what the passage means in light of this new reading.

Chapter Five: A New Vineyard and New Sheep

The Road to Destruction

The deteriorating relationship between Jesus and the lost sheep of the house of Israel leads to the Olivet Discourse where the fate of Israel and its temple emerge. While the turmoil between Jesus and Israel has been building, the growing relationship with his twelve disciples has been forging a new path for his vineyard to spread. Themes from Psalm 80 echo through the narrative at key points leading to the Sheep and the Goats where Israel's fate is determined.

This Wicked Generation

Jesus undertakes a journey early in the gospel that retraces Israel's voyage into Egypt, returning then to the Promised Land to await the time of his ministry. An echo of Psalm 80 may well be seen in this narrative device, ἄμπελον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετήρας (Psalm 79:9 LXX). From early in his ministry Jesus establishes a distinction between the perceived righteousness of his day, and the righteousness of his kingdom: λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν (Matthew 5:20). Yet Israel as a nation seems to face a dismal future from early in the gospel, as Jesus can say of a centurion, a symbol of Rome's military might

Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, παρ' οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὔρον. λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἤξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν, οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐκβληθήσονται εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων. (Matthew 8:10—12)

The commission of the disciples to go the lost sheep of the house of Israel carries with it the reality that they will not have gone through all of the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. What will prevent the advancement of Jesus' kingdom to Israel before the coming Son

of Man? The answer is Israel's unfaithfulness where many sons of the kingdom will be cast into darkness, for they are truly lost sheep.

From the time of the missionary commission to Israel in chapter 10 onward, Jesus repeatedly condemns γενεὰν ταύτην for their fickle and adulterous nature.⁷⁰⁴ Jesus' generation is like a man who has had an unclean spirit leave his body, only to bring back seven worse spirits (12:43—45). Israel has grown faithless and perverse (17:17), but, as will be made clear, the vineyard of God taken from Egypt is not at the mercy of Israel's obedience. Other authors of the first century CE held out hope amidst the crisis of 70 CE, not just for Jerusalem's fortunes to be restored, but for the restoration of the ten tribes lost to Assyria.⁷⁰⁵ However, Jesus moves in another direction, as he tells his disciples,

Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὑμεῖς οἱ ἀκολουθήσαντές μοι ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ, ὅταν καθίσῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ, καθήσεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐπὶ δώδεκα θρόνους κρίνοντες τὰς δώδεκα φυλὰς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ. (19:28)

Rather than a triumphant return of the ten tribes, Jesus places the disciples in a position of pre—eminence for the judgment of lost tribes and the whole of Israel.

In 20:1—16 Jesus tells the first of three vineyard parables. This one is placed before entering Jerusalem, while the other two will come during the final week of his life. Jesus tells his disciples the story of a man who owns a vineyard and hires workers for the vineyard. During the course of a long day, the vineyard owner hires laborers to work for a denarius. While some start early, others come late, but at the end of the day all receive the same wages. Those who worked throughout the day are incensed by the vineyard owner giving those who worked only an hour the same denarius as those who toiled under the hot sun.

⁷⁰⁴ Matthew 11:16; 12:39—45; 16:4; 17:17

⁷⁰⁵ 2 *Baruch* 83—87; 4 *Ezra* 13

Those who labored longer complain that the owner of the vineyard made the late arrivals ἴσους to them. However, the complaints do not move the owner, who makes it clear that he has the right to do with this vineyard what he chooses and hire who he chooses. Jesus finishes the parable by saying Οὕτως ἔσονται οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι. The conflict between Jesus and Israel is about to reach a climax where new workers will be hired for the vineyard.

The Fig Tree (21:18—22)

Cursing the fig tree is a key moment in the narrative where Matthew establishes a transition toward a redefined people of God. Though there is debate as to exactly who or what is symbolised by cursing the fig tree, the result is pending disaster for Israel. Wright discusses the fig tree from the context of Mark, which Matthew has partially maintained in his gospel.

Mark, as is well known, ‘sandwiched’ the Temple action between the cursing of the fig tree and the discovery of its having withered up. He thus clearly intended his readers to get the point (though countless readers have missed it anyway, and some, despite it, have enlisted him as an advocate of ‘cleansing’ rather than ‘destruction’): what Jesus is doing in the Temple is cognate with what he is doing to the fig tree. He has come seeking fruit, and, finding none, he is announcing the Temple’s doom...The word about the mountain being cast into the sea also belongs exactly here...It is a very specific word of judgment: the Temple mountain is, figuratively speaking, to be taken up and cast into the sea.⁷⁰⁶

Matthew creates a new ‘sandwich’ or A—B—A structure, as he eliminates the discovery of the withered fig tree and makes the cursing and withering a single event. Jesus ‘cleanses’ the temple (A), curses and withers the fig tree (B), then returns to the temple for conflict (A). Rather than the fig tree serving as the ‘bread’ of the structure, it is now the ‘meat’ with Jesus engaging in temple conflict as the ‘bread’.

⁷⁰⁶ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 421—422.

Moulton maintains this rejection theme, though he cautiously emphasises the rejection as rejection of Israel's leadership and not the nation.⁷⁰⁷ Moulton argues that the only group Matthew presents as opposing Jesus is the Jewish leadership. Not only have the authorities opposed his ministry, they have also allowed the improprieties in the temple that both necessitated cleansing and proved their negligence in Israel's spiritual life.⁷⁰⁸ The curse is a shift in the tenor of God's work toward his people where the door of repentance that was open to the leaders has been shut and judgment called down.⁷⁰⁹ Luz however disagrees with Moulton, denouncing the possibility that the curse is intended only for Israel's leaders. The judgment is about all Israel, which is the church's historical interpretation, but Luz qualifies this by stating that judgment remains open and indefinite.⁷¹⁰

Against Moulton and his view, Luz and Wright's arguments prove more compelling: this is judgment upon all of Israel. Jesus repeatedly rebukes and condemns the γενεά in Matthew as one that is wicked and faithless who will face terrifying judgment. Jesus is not cleansing the temple, he engages in a prophetic sign act of its pending destruction (24:1—2). What merit is there for cleansing a corrupt structure that is shortly destined for destruction? Further, if the Lord has cleansed the temple, why would it need destruction? No cleansing has occurred, only a pronouncement of judgment that has been building from early in the book.

Hendriksen writes, 'Jesus punished degradation of religion and insisted on reverence...He rebuked fraud...demanded honesty...He frowned upon indifference toward those

⁷⁰⁷ M. Moulton, 'Jesus' Goal For the Temple and Tree: A Thematic Revisit of Matt 21:12—22', *JETS* 41:4 (1998): 563.

⁷⁰⁸ M. Moulton, 'Jesus' Goal', 565.

⁷⁰⁹ M. Moulton, 'Jesus' Goal', 567.

⁷¹⁰ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium Nach Matthaues*, 202.

who desired to worship God in spirit and truth, and by declaring that the temple must be a house of prayer *for all peoples* (Mark 11:17) gave his endorsement to the wonderful cause of Christian Missions.⁷¹¹ This event is hardly only a stand against fraud or an endorsement of missions as Hendriksen does not reckon with the reality of Jesus' judgment upon the temple in chapter 24. Rather than a stand against fraud, why not more directly call it a stand against the temple?

Gundry maintains this same cleansing theme, despite his observation that Matthew has heightened the tone of the accusation against Jerusalem by changing Mark's 'It is written' to 'Is it not written' in 21:13.⁷¹² He further states that Matthew's omission of *πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* found in Mark 11:17 probably takes place because Gentiles are to become disciples and should be dissuaded from making pilgrimages to the temple.⁷¹³ Again, why intensify the judgment or dissuade pilgrims from visiting the newly cleansed temple only to pronounce destruction on it in chapter 24?

Crossan and Borg write of the fig tree and temple, 'The tree was "shut down" for lack of the fruit Jesus demanded—and so also was the temple. In the case of the temple, it is not a cleansing, but a symbolic destruction, and the fig tree's fate emphasizes that meaning.'⁷¹⁴ Senior affirms this position, writing, 'As a zealous prophet Jesus purifies the temple, which, in Matthew's perspective, is a sign of its eventual destruction.'⁷¹⁵ Wright also states that Jesus' actions in the temple are symbolic, whereby Jesus declares his royal authority over the temple and pronounces judgment upon it as being in opposition to the true king.⁷¹⁶ Albright and Mann

⁷¹¹ W. Hendriksen, *Matthew*, NTC, 770—771.

⁷¹² R. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, 412.

⁷¹³ R. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, 412—413.

⁷¹⁴ M. Borg & J. Crossan, *The Last Week* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 48—49.

⁷¹⁵ D. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 152—153.

⁷¹⁶ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 490—495.

validate this view, and though they still call the incident a cleansing, they determine that Jesus enacts a prophetic parable and his reference to the ‘robbers den’ from Jeremiah 7:11 indicates a judgment against the temple in the same way that Jeremiah predicted its destruction.⁷¹⁷

Blomberg believes Jesus may still hold out hope for repentance in the Jewish system, but given his pending death and rejection the actions in the temple are a dramatization of God’s judgment on the temple and the nation.⁷¹⁸

Judgment is coming, and the miniature destruction that Jesus enacts will have catastrophic effects on Israel. In Psalm 80 a plea is made for God to care for his vineyard, to protect it from the ravaging boar that is the Gentiles. The psalmist declares to God, γενηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ’ ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστῶμεν ἀπὸ σοῦ. God responds to the psalmist’s plea by strengthening the man at his right, the king of Israel, but Israel again turns away from their Lord. What then happens when God does place his hand upon the Son of Man, and Israel turns away?

The Parable of the Two Sons (21:28—32)

Matthew uses this Special M parable to build on the vineyard theme, the clash with the authorities and the judgment motif. This parable directly follows the chief priests and elders questioning Jesus about his authority to take such actions in the temple. As the story goes, one son agrees to work in his father’s vineyard, but does not go. The other son refuses to go but repents and chooses to go. The son who does not work in the vineyard is the disobedient son that Jesus compares to the authorities questioning him, the supposed spiritual leaders of Israel.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁷ W. Albright & C. Mann, *Matthew* (Garden City: Double Day, 1971), 255.

⁷¹⁸ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 315.

⁷¹⁹ W. Richards, ‘Another Look at the Parable of the Two Sons’, *BR* 23 (1978): 12.

The theme of all Israel versus Israel's leadership features in the debate surrounding this parable. Blomberg writes,

Commentators often find predictions here of the replacement of Jews with Gentiles in God's plan of salvation, but no such distinction appears in the text. Jesus does not reject Israel as a whole, only the current leadership, which has rejected him. The contrast is not between Jews and Gentiles but rather between those who reject and those who accept Jesus. To date almost everyone in both categories is Jewish, though it will become clear that the two sons, two kinds of tenants, and two groups of guests in these three parables represent any person of any ethnic background who either follows Jesus in discipleship or despise him.⁷²⁰

Turner makes a similar assessment, appealing to the larger theme of the three consecutive parables. The son who ultimately did work is specifically linked to tax—collectors and harlots while the unfaithful son is linked to the Jewish leaders. Hence this parable and the subsequent parable should only be considered judgment on the leaders and not the nation.⁷²¹

While Jesus speaks directly to the chief priests and the elders of the people in the parable, the narrative records a growing conflict with Israel. On multiple occasions the leadership of Israel demands a sign from Jesus only to have the Lord condemn the entire generation. In 12:38—45 the scribes and Pharisees demand a sign only to have Jesus condemn the entire generation for its adultery four times in the passage (12:39, 41, 42, 45). He goes so far as to say the Ninevites and the Queen of the South will condemn the generation (12:41). The correlation should not be lost that the Queen of the South was a leader of her people, and according to Jonah, the king of Nineveh published a proclamation of repentance which turned away God's anger (Jonah 3:6—10).

⁷²⁰ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NACC, 320—321.

⁷²¹ D. Turner, 'Matthew 21:43 and the Future of Israel', *BSAC* 150:633 (2002): 51.

Similar to chapter twelve, Jesus also condemns the generation because the Pharisees and Sadducees are seeking a sign in 16:1—4. He then immediately follows this condemnation with a warning to the disciples not to be corrupted by those leaders, in the way leaven corrupts the batch of dough (16:5—12). Jesus also rebukes the generation in 17:14—23 when the disciples are unable to drive a demon out of a boy. This time no leaders are mentioned, only a general ὄχλος with no mention of scribes or Pharisees.

Lastly, and most pointedly, Jesus launches a diatribe against the scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23 where he declares that all the bloodletting of the righteous who have ever been sent to Israel will be visited upon his own generation (23:34—36). Jesus then laments all of Jerusalem, accuses Jerusalem of killing the prophets and declares that despite his longing to gather her like a hen to chicks, her house is left desolate.

What does Jesus mean with his use of γενεὰν ταύτην? A γενεά can refer to a race as possibly seen in Luke 16:8, but more commonly in the New Testament it refers to the sum total of those living at a certain time.⁷²² Matthew begins the gospel by presenting Jesus' genealogy, which divides into three sections of fourteen generations (1:17). Matthew defines one γενεά as the time span from a father to a son. Each period of fourteen generations ends in a significant moment: David's kingship (1:6), the Babylonian exile (1:11) and the arrival of the Messiah (1:16). The genealogy defines Matthew's use of γενεά and foreshadows the significance of Jesus' arrival as a moment that will dramatically affect those living at that time, such as the arrival of David and the Babylonian exile.

⁷²² F. Danker & W. Bauer, *A Greek—English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 191—192.

Jesus uses γενεά several times in a manner indicative of an event his contemporaries will witness. The two—fold sign of Jonah in 12:39 and 16:4 both describe the evil generation demanding a sign, which Jesus provides in the resurrection. The sign of Jonah manifests to Jesus' contemporaries who respond by paying the soldiers guarding the tomb to lie about the event (28:11—15). Further, Jesus compares his generation to the Ninevites and the Queen of the South who respond to Jonah and Solomon in their contemporary settings (12:41—42). Jesus declares that judgment is coming on his γενεά, which he correlates to the pending desolation of the temple (23:35—37).

Jesus' use of γενεά consistently fits the notion that he employs the term to reference his contemporaries. The difficulty in accepting this definition is the presence of ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη in 24:34 with possible implications of preterism versus futurism.⁷²³ Attempts to separate Jesus' condemnation of his generation from the parousia are central to these concerns and influence how interpreters deduce its meaning.⁷²⁴ The 'generation' Jesus refers to is judgment coming upon his contemporaries that will have long—term meaning for the nation of Israel.

Two main points of emphasis emerge here. First, corrupt leadership in Israel constantly led to a corrupt or broken Israel according to scripture.⁷²⁵ Secondly, while the Two Sons may be an immediate condemnation of Israel's leadership, the people of Israel as a whole will pay the price for the coming judgment at the hands of Rome. Jesus does not lament the leadership of Jerusalem; he laments all of Jerusalem. Jesus does not condemn the leadership of the generation; he condemns the whole generation. When Rome obliterated Jerusalem in 66 CE —70 CE, all

⁷²³ L. DeBruyn, 'Preterism and "This Generation"', *BSAC* 167 (2010): 180—181.

⁷²⁴ N. Nelson, "'This Generation' in Matthew 24:34: A Literary Critical Perspective', *JETS* 38:3 (1996): 372.

⁷²⁵ See Isaiah 1:23, 3:4—12; Jeremiah 23:1—4, 49—51; Ezekiel 34:1—8 for a few examples. Additionally, 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles consistently cover this theme.

Israel living in Judaea suffered. The Two Sons may speak directly to the leadership, but that leadership's leaven has corrupted the whole batch, leading Jesus to pronounce a curse that Jerusalem will not bear fruit again. God has returned to Israel and placed his Son of Man at the right, and yet again Israel has turned away.

The fact that this Special M parable immediately precedes 'the Wicked Tenants' is also significant in the discussion of Psalm 80 as a potential echo in Matthew's narrative. As discussed in chapter three, a valid case for Psalm 80 as a background text for the Wicked Tenants has been made by numerous scholars. The incorporation of another vineyard parable, one that has distinctly Matthean qualities, lends to the credence of the psalm echoing in Matthew's gospel, rather than simply serving as a one-time allusion in the Sheep and the Goats. In addition to sharing themes with the Sheep and the Goats, the parable also addresses the common matters of Israel's and the gentile's relationships to God's vineyard from Psalm 80. By placing this parable directly before the Wicked Tenants, it intensifies the potential influence of Psalm 80 in this section of Matthew's narrative.

The Wicked Tenants (21:33—41)

This parable is subject to much of the same debate pertaining to condemnation of leadership or the entirety of Israel. Kittle writes, 'The parable of the vineyard presents a wider aspect of the nation's response to the King.'⁷²⁶ He further believes that the husbandmen of the vineyard are Israel's leaders who have betrayed their nation, leading to the kingdom being removed from that generation. However, he qualifies his statements by saying it will be given back to a later generation of Jews.⁷²⁷

⁷²⁶ D. Kittle, 'Matthew: Messiah's Instructions and Rejection', *CBQ* 14, no 4 (1971): 28.

⁷²⁷ D. Kittle, 'Matthew: Messiah's Instructions and Rejection', 28.

Senior believes a more definitive change within God's kingdom is apparent as the vineyard is a traditional symbol for Israel, and Jesus suffered along the lines of previously rejected prophets.⁷²⁸ The parable names the consequences of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 and the reality that if Israel fails to respond, the Gentiles will respond. Thus the development appears in verse 43, where the kingdom will be taken away and given to another ἔθνη.⁷²⁹ France provides a similar analysis, though he makes clear the Jerusalem leadership should be identified as the current tenants.⁷³⁰ However, the inclusion of handing the kingdom over to another ἔθνη indicates a more radical transition than a simple leadership regime change.⁷³¹ This is further validated by the withering fig tree that symbolises the destruction of the temple and not its reorganization.⁷³²

In support of this approach, Luz draws attention to Matthew 8:12, where one finds οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐκβληθήσονται εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον. The 'sons of the kingdom' are the people of Israel and not just its leaders, and 21:43 does not say the leaders will be replaced with better leaders. There will be a new ἔθνη.⁷³³ Despite generally positive reception from the crowd, the Jewish leaders succeed in winning the people to their side (27:25). The loss of the kingdom proclaimed to these wicked leaders will have consequences for the entire nation.⁷³⁴ This theme is only further supported in the last narrative to be examined here: The parable of the Marriage Feast.

⁷²⁸ D. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 154.

⁷²⁹ D. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 154.

⁷³⁰ R. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 810.

⁷³¹ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 810.

⁷³² R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 810.

⁷³³ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 225.

⁷³⁴ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 226.

Whether or not Psalm 80 is the accepted background for these parables, a case can be made that at minimum, these common themes increase the plausibility of Matthew's familiarity with Psalm 80. Israel as a vineyard is not a frequent motif in the Old Testament, and while the secondary literature mostly appeals to Isaiah 5, Psalm 80 is just as viable a candidate. This vineyard development in the passion narrative, in conjunction with the issue of who controls the vineyard, leads to the conclusion that Psalm 80 is not merely alluded to in the Sheep and the Goats, it echoes in Matthew. The themes of Psalm 80 concerning kingship, Gentiles, Israel, sheep and judgment are pervasive in the gospel.

The Parable of the Marriage Feast (22:1—14)

Jesus' third and final consecutive parable describes a king throwing a feast for his son, but those who were invited to attend had no interest. In 22:7 the text reads ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ὠργίσθη καὶ πέμψας τὰ στρατεύματα αὐτοῦ ἀπόλεσεν τοὺς φονεῖς ἐκείνους καὶ τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν ἐνέπρησεν. Comments will be focused on 22:7 as this is the key verse of the parable in this research.

Turner continues to defend his presupposition that the whole nation of Israel is not in scope by insisting that the reader must interpret all three parables together, and since the Two Sons is about Israel's leaders, the others must be as well.⁷³⁵ However, when faced with addressing the Wedding Feast, he is forced to acknowledge that the parable does not single out leaders as do the previous two parables, but claims the leaders were more blameworthy for rejecting Jesus as evinced by 21:46. He addresses this difficulty by denying that ethnicity plays a role in this part of the gospel; rather the responsive guests are a Jewish remnant and not

⁷³⁵ D. Turner, 'Matthew 21:43', 51.

Gentiles.⁷³⁶ Turner does not even appear to leave open the possibility of a future kingdom made up of Jewish and gentile believers as Steffen does.⁷³⁷

Blomberg accepts the reality of the situation that regardless of whether leadership has been singled out at various points in the gospel, God now executes judgment on ‘wicked Israel’.⁷³⁸ However, he stops short of connecting 22:7 fully with the events of 70, writing ‘the Roman invasion of Jerusalem may be a partial fulfillment of the principles enunciated here, even if Jesus had Judgment Day more prominently in mind.’⁷³⁹

Sapaugh leaves no such distinction when he writes, ‘This verse seems to be a clear reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.’⁷⁴⁰ Bigalke also affirms this view, saying 22:7 hints at the destruction of Jerusalem and the invited general masses are the Gentiles.⁷⁴¹ Nolland shies away from saying 22:7 betrays knowledge of 70 CE to protect his view that Matthew was written before 70.⁷⁴² Luz directly states that verse 7 is strange and only makes sense if prompted by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70.⁷⁴³

The Olivet Discourse (23—25)

Many scholars limit the scope of the fifth Matthean discourse strictly to chapter 24 and 25, treating chapter 23 as part of a previous pericope, while others include chapter 23 as part of the fifth discourse.⁷⁴⁴ One reason cited for separating chapter 23 from the fifth discourse is the

⁷³⁶ D. Turner, ‘Matthew 21:43’, 59.

⁷³⁷ D. Steffen, ‘The Messianic Banquet and the Eschatology of Matthew’s Gospel’, *GJCT* 5:2 (2006): 8.

⁷³⁸ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 327.

⁷³⁹ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 328.

⁷⁴⁰ G. Sapaugh, ‘A Call to the Wedding Celebration: An Exposition of Matthew 22:1—14’, *JGES* 5:1 (1992): 21.

⁷⁴¹ R. Bigalke, ‘The Olivet Discourse: A Resolution of Time’, *CTSJ* 9:1 (2003): 114.

⁷⁴² J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 887 & 16.

⁷⁴³ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 242.

⁷⁴⁴ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 654; R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* NICNT, 857; L. Morris, *Matthew*, 594; D. Senior, *Matthew*, 157.

change of audience that occurs, with the monologue being temporarily broken with a shift of location (24:1—2).⁷⁴⁵ This shift in setting is said to end Jesus' last public discourse, then establishing a new, private discourse.⁷⁴⁶ However, Matthew utilises a similar technique in the third discourse of chapter 13, where Jesus transitions from the crowd to the disciples in both 13:10 and 13:36, in addition to Matthew's own fulfillment insertion in 13:34f. As chapter 13 is treated as one discourse despite these movements and changing settings, chapter 23 should not be separated solely based on a change of venue. Rather, the shift in setting utilises the same method as the parabolic discourse of 13, where Jesus offers public declaration and private exposition to his followers.

The discourse can be thought of as segmented in matters of public and private teaching, but the subject of Jesus' discourse has not changed and should not be divided from the focus of Jesus' message.⁷⁴⁷ By omitting the story of the widow's mite from Mark, Matthew welds the woes upon the scribes and Pharisees to the sermon on the parousia. This welding is further validated by the pending destruction of the 'house' (23:38—39) and the predicted fall of the temple (24:1—2).⁷⁴⁸ Inclusion of the 23rd chapter in the discourse also aligns with the parallelism between the final discourse and the first discourse.⁷⁴⁹ Examination of the whole gospel reveals a structured symmetry through parallelism that makes the Sermon on the Mount and the Olivet Discourse related discourses. There is a connection between the blessings and

⁷⁴⁵ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 291.

⁷⁴⁶ J. Broadus, *Matthew*, 479.

⁷⁴⁷ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 535.

⁷⁴⁸ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 474.

⁷⁴⁹ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 535.

mandates of entering the kingdom, as opposed to the woes and pending judgment of the coming kingdom.⁷⁵⁰

Jesus takes a seated position at the beginning of the first discourse (5:1) as a Mosaic figure on the mountain delivering a new ethic. Contrasting this is chapter 23 where Jesus takes up the discourse by referencing Moses' seat and acknowledging it as a seat of authority. Following the change of venue in chapter 24, Jesus once again takes up the seated position on the mountain (24:3), which signals the shift to private instruction as seen in Matthew 13.⁷⁵¹

In Matthew 5, Jesus begins by describing those who are blessed by God before presenting his ethic of the Kingdom of Heaven. An essential feature of that standard is that the righteousness of those hearing his message must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20), and any practice of external piety as done by the hypocrites (6:2, 6:5, 6:16) voids reward from God. In chapter 23, Jesus begins the final discourse by issuing a seven—fold series of woes upon the scribe and Pharisees as hypocrites bound for destruction. One may be reminded of God's promise in Leviticus 26 to bring curses seven—fold upon Israel for infidelity.⁷⁵² Amidst these woes are persecutions for the disciples at the hands of Israel (23:29—36) as previously foretold in the Sermon on the Mount (5:11—12).⁷⁵³ In 7:15f Jesus warns against false prophets as he does in 24:11, invoking the imagery of the fig tree in both 7:16 and 24:32.

The intensifying, bitter conflict that begins this final discourse has been described as 'the unloveliest chapter in the Gospel with its string of woes...'⁷⁵⁴ The multiplying woes culminate

⁷⁵⁰ C. Lohr, 'Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew', *CBQ* 23:4 (1961): 427; J. Hood, "Matthew 23—25: The Extent of Jesus' Fifth Discourse", *JBL* 128:3 (2009): 540.

⁷⁵¹ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 453.

⁷⁵² Leviticus 26:18, 26:24, 26:28.

⁷⁵³ J. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 5.

⁷⁵⁴ B. Viviano, 'Social World and Community Leadership: The Case of Matthew 23.1—12, 34', *JSNT* 39, 1990: 3.

in verses 35—39 where the ‘righteous blood’ of the past is being ‘poured out’ upon ‘this generation’, followed by Jesus’ condemnation that Jerusalem’s house shall be left desolate. Matthew has brought the narrative to the moment where the outreach to the lost sheep has failed and now the house is left cursed. Despite the effort to separate 23:38 from 10:6, the common themes and development logically connect the two sayings with the understanding that the mission to the house of Israel has returned void and Israel is found wanting.⁷⁵⁵ The destruction of the house is a symbol for the divine judgment upon Israel.⁷⁵⁶

Amidst these many parallels, one of particular importance is the mutual use of the ‘house’ and its developing theme in Matthew. Jesus concludes the first sermon by comparing those who have not listened to his words to those who have built a house on sand that will fall when a storm comes (7:26f). At the conclusion of the woes Jesus laments Jerusalem and declares that her house is desolate (23:37f) just before pronouncing public doom on the temple (24:1f). Jesus’ use of οἶκος in Matthew develops systematically to create a heightened tension between Jesus and Israel, resulting in the prophetic declaration of doom.

The parable of the Two Houses is Q material where the οἰκία can only stand if built on a good foundation: one stands and the other falls. In 10:6 and 15:24, Jesus makes reference to τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ. Both verses are Special M material inserted into passages found in Mark. Both passages also place the lost sheep of the house Israel in contrast to Gentiles: ordering the disciples not to go to the Gentiles and the healing of a Canaanite woman.

⁷⁵⁵ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC, 951

⁷⁵⁶ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 382.

The οἶκος Jesus refers to in 23:38 is the temple, with larger implications for the fate of the nation at stake.⁷⁵⁷ Jewish texts did not always distinguish between the temple and the capital (Ezra, 2 *Baruch*) with indiscriminate transitions between the two.⁷⁵⁸ Jesus' use of 'your house' and not 'God's house' invokes imagery of Ezekiel 9—11 where God's glory departs the temple and Jerusalem, and takes up residence on the Mount of Olives.⁷⁵⁹ A clue to the scope of Jesus' intent is the use of the Q material in 23:37—39, which quotes Psalm 118.

Shortly before the Olivet Discourse, Jesus cites Psalm 118:22—23 as the rejected cornerstone following the parable of the 'Wicked Tenants'. Both the parable and the psalm quotation are found in the Markan original, but Matthew makes an important emendation to the text by inserting διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἀρθήσεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ δοθήσεται ἔθνει ποιοῦντι τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς (21:43). This special M verse is of importance in Matthew who places emphasis on Jesus' use of ἔθνη.

Jesus' previous statements concerning τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ are thematically developing late in the gospel as the future of this lost house comes into focus. The disciples are told in a prior special M verse Εἰς ὁδὸν ἔθνων μὴ ἀπέλθητε (10:5), rather they must focus on τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ (10:6). Jesus declares in the temple that God shall give the kingdom to another ἔθνει, shortly before condemning the 'desolate house' and declaring the temple's destruction. At the conclusion of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus will have the ἔθνη (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) before him, judging them positively or negatively based on their actions. Finally, Jesus commissions the disciples to go to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, leaving the Promised Land

⁷⁵⁷ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 558—59; W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 321-323

⁷⁵⁸ W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 322.

⁷⁵⁹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 382.

behind (28:19—20). All of these references to ἔθνη appear only in Matthew and offer a narrative context in which the kingdom is being pulled from Israel as the exclusive ἔθνος of God.

Israel is a lost house who has not responded to the gospel, leading Jesus to send his disciples to other nations. The temple, the centre of Israel's religious distinction, is destined for destruction while God is recruiting kingdom participants from the nations, who have consistently been a foil to Israel in the narrative. This house theme ties directly to the parable of the Two Houses from the Sermon on the Mount, leading to the difficult conclusion that Israel has not built its house on a strong foundation: they have not heeded Jesus' words, and that house is about to fall.

Jesus' first discourse aligns with his last as an indictment against the whole Israelite nation. There will be no blessings of the kingdom of heaven for Israel as a nation, only woes. The house shall fall and the kingdom be given to another nation. Understanding this relationship between the discourses and their connections is paramount for understanding how the Sheep and the Goats should be read. It also offers insight into the manner in which Psalm 80 formulates an ideal backdrop for the Sheep and the Goats.

Following the polemic, Jesus publicly declares the temple's destruction again (24:1—2) before the shift to a private setting with his disciples on the Mount of Olives. Jesus continues the discourse with private instructions similar to the private conversations, within the discourse, in Matthew 13:10 and 13:36. The reader of Matthew is confronted with a textual intrusion in verse 3 when the disciples ask, *πότε ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος*; Matthew has redacted Mark 13:4 where originally four disciples asked, *πότε ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον ὅταν μέλλῃ ταῦτα συντελεῖσθαι πάντα*; The intrusion of the *παρουσία* is

noticeable, whether or not the reader has knowledge of Mark for there has been no mention at all of anything called the παρουσία to this point in Matthew's gospel. Yet here the disciples speak of this event as if Jesus has mentioned it before. Though Jesus did discuss the συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος in 13:39, the παρουσία is referenced only in the Olivet Discourse (24:3, 27, 37, 39) and appears to be intentionally foreign to the narrative in order to draw attention to its use.⁷⁶⁰

Jesus' polemic against the scribes and Pharisees, and the subsequent condemnation of Jerusalem and its temple, occasion the disciples' questions about the παρουσία and the end of the age. France claims that Matthew intentionally expands the question to make it clear that the discourse concerns both the temple and also the παρουσία, which is a separate event.⁷⁶¹

This view is based on France's faulty assumption that παρουσία is a technical term for Jesus' world—ending eschatological return, making τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον an entirely separate event from the παρουσία.⁷⁶² There is no clear distinction in the discourse. Jesus describes the ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 24:27, then immediately after that tribulation (24:29) is τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (24:30), which France falsely claims is a separate event.⁷⁶³

Jesus' declaration about the temple is a prophecy aimed at the events of 70 CE, while it is also claimed to be a world—ending eschatological discourse.⁷⁶⁴ Difficulty emerges in determining when Jesus shifts from discussing the events of the Roman—Jewish war into the world-ending eschatological portion of the discourse. Where the Olivet Discourse has

⁷⁶⁰ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC, 961.

⁷⁶¹ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 895.

⁷⁶² R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 395—396.

⁷⁶³ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 924. Discussed further below.

⁷⁶⁴ W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 326; D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 688—689.

commonly been viewed as shifting from the first century to the end of the world, the present reading accepts the entire discourse as a declaration of cataclysmic eschatology.

The discourse begins with woes upon the scribes and Pharisees, which transitions into a prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Thus, questions remain: if the discourse is in fact world—ending eschatology, when does the shift from 70 CE to the end occur?⁷⁶⁵

Matthew's incorporation of *παρουσία* into the text does not necessitate the definition of the discourse as world—ending eschatology. As Wright has stated concerning this discourse,

But why should we think—except for reasons of ecclesiastical and scholarly tradition—that *parousia* means 'the second coming', and/or the downward travel on a cloud of Jesus and/or the 'son of man'? *Parousia* means 'presence' as opposed to *apousia*, 'absence'; hence it denotes the 'arrival' of someone not at the moment present; and it is especially used in relation to the visit 'of a royal or official personage'.⁷⁶⁶

Wright challenges the 'second coming' conclusion by drawing attention to how the passage clearly begins with the destruction of Jerusalem. He argues further that the rest of the passage does not then move away from the events of 70, rather the passage is invested with 'theological significance'.⁷⁶⁷ This does not reduce the language of Olivet to simple metaphor, rather it presents a scene of judgment occurring at the hands of Rome that carries the theological significance of Jesus' vindication to the generation that rejected him.⁷⁶⁸ He then writes, 'I suppose, why the obvious way of reading the chapter has been ignored for so long must be the fact that in a good deal of Christian theology the fall of Jerusalem has had no theological significance.'⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁵ G. Beasley—Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*, 32—79; covers the history of this theory's development.

⁷⁶⁶ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 341.

⁷⁶⁷ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 342.

⁷⁶⁸ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 342—33.

⁷⁶⁹ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 343.

Much of the merit surrounding Wright's observations depends on the reader's understanding of the questions asked by the disciples. Luz believes Jesus answers neither of the disciples' questions initially, nor is there any particular interest in the temple since it had already fallen by the time of Matthew's composition.⁷⁷⁰ Jesus does, according to Luz, turn his sights to the end of the world, in verse 15 when speaking of the 'abomination of desolation', but there is no distinct delineation.⁷⁷¹ France sees two distinct questions about the destruction of the temple and the end of the world, with a sharp contrast in 24:36 that shifts away from the temple and to the παρουσία.⁷⁷² Nolland also concludes there is a two—fold scheme in the questions, though he says the παρουσία is a deliberate anachronism as the disciples had not yet understood Jesus would die and be taken, thus any divide in time leading to a 'second coming' could not have been envisioned by the disciples.⁷⁷³

An examination of the Sheep and the Goats and the Olivet Discourse reveals significant merit for understanding the temple and the παρουσία as intertwining events, similar to Wright's assessment. Jesus does not initially dismiss the questions as Luz claims, nor is there a clear delineation in 24:36 as France suggests. There is no noticeable delineation between the temple and the παρουσία that is clearly defined. Nolland's insight into the παρουσία question as an anachronism is accurate, but it also increases the confusion surrounding a lack of delineation between the temple and the παρουσία.

If this gospel was written after the fall of 70 CE, which is probable, why intertwine the παρουσία into the text at all if the world did not end? Keener suggests that when Jesus did not

⁷⁷⁰ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 419—420.

⁷⁷¹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 425—426.

⁷⁷² R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 899.

⁷⁷³ J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC, 961.

return following the temple's destruction, it fueled disillusionment among the Christian community.⁷⁷⁴ However, where is this disillusionment to be found in the primary literature of the era? Returning to a point made by Wright in chapter two, why did Jesus not become a tragic afterthought? Despite such a spectacularly failed prediction, no crisis appears to have overtaken the Christian community. While it is possible that the discourse shifts back and forth between 70 CE and an end yet to come, perhaps the end of the world is not the focus of the teaching.

The Abomination of Desolation

The ambiguous phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως comes from Daniel where it appears three times (9:27; 11:31; 12:11) originally connected to the crisis of 167 BCE.⁷⁷⁵ Jesus clearly uses this term in reference to an event after 30 CE, but the cryptic nature of the phrase has led to a variety of interpretations historically. Among the many proposed options for τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως are a heathen desecration of the temple awaiting a future restoration, a pagan idol, some form of profanation by Caligula, the Roman army, the actions of the Zealots leading up to 70 CE and the antichrist.⁷⁷⁶

An antichrist reading of τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως would signal a shift in time from the desecration of 70 CE to a period still to come. There is, however, nothing in the text to indicate a shifting chronology from Jesus' present to the distant future. Part of the appeal to such a reading is due to 2 Thessalonians 2:3—4, where ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας will claim divinity by going εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός.⁷⁷⁷ If in fact these are

⁷⁷⁴ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 564.

⁷⁷⁵ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 345; C. Keener, *Matthew*, 574; D. Hagner, *Matthew*, 700.

⁷⁷⁶ M. Theophilos, *The Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24.15* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 12—19.

⁷⁷⁷ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 346.

related temple traditions then limiting the meaning of these events described by Paul to world—ending matters is problematic.

Paul addresses the *παρουσία* and describes significant events that will take place in the temple while the temple still stood in Jerusalem. There is no indication from Paul's writing that he imagines the temple of his time being destroyed, ignores that destruction and looks forward to some point in the future when there will be yet another temple, at which time that temple will be desecrated. If one eliminates the need to force all discussion of the *παρουσία* to the end of the space—time continuum, Paul's comments have a logical association to the events of 70 CE.⁷⁷⁸ When considering the ominous connotations of *τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως* with the temple during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and Jesus' declaration of the temple's destruction, there is little reason to look beyond the events of 70 CE for an understanding.

Josephus describes the priestly bloodshed in the temple that resulted from zealot in—fighting as having defiled the temple.⁷⁷⁹ The tradition that Antiochus IV erected a statue of Zeus in the temple has been compared with Caligula's efforts to set up his own image in the temple in 40 CE as a possible meaning of the statement. However, Matthew redacts his Markan source in ways that provide insight toward his understanding of *τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως*.

The rich imagery of 24:15—28 carries with it prophetic undertones of Roman imperial presence marching on Jerusalem to destroy them. Jesus warns the twelve disciples that when they see the *τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως* they are to flee into the mountains. Similar examples of people being warned to flee from a city doomed for destruction or to take refuge in the

⁷⁷⁸ N.T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 56.

⁷⁷⁹ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 576.

mountains are found in Genesis 19:17, Ezekiel 7:15—16 and Zechariah 14:2—5.⁷⁸⁰ Matthew 24:21—22 contains a hyperbolic style of language consistent with the wrath of God being poured out on a nation:

ἔσται γὰρ τότε θλίψις μεγάλη οἷα οὐ γέγονεν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς κόσμου ἕως τοῦ νῦν οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ γένηται. καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐκολοβώθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη πᾶσα σὰρξ· διὰ δὲ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς κολοβωθήσονται αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι.

A similar description is found in Isaiah 13:9—11 where the day of the Lord is coming on Babylon in the 6th century BCE:

ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἡμέρα κυρίου ἀνίατος ἔρχεται θυμοῦ καὶ ὀργῆς θεῖναι τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην ἔρημον καὶ τοὺς ἁμαρτωλοὺς ἀπολέσαι ἐξ αὐτῆς. οἱ γὰρ ἀστέρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ὁ Ὠρίων καὶ πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸ φῶς οὐ δώσουσιν, καὶ σκοτισθήσεται τοῦ ἡλίου ἀνατέλλοντος, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φῶς αὐτῆς. καὶ ἐντελοῦμαι τῇ οἰκουμένη ὅλη κακὰ καὶ τοῖς ἀσεβέσιν τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἀπολωῶ ὕβριν ἀνόμων καὶ ὕβριν ὑπερηφάνων ταπεινώσω.

The day of the Lord comes upon Israel in similar manner to what the author of Psalm 80 describes in his plea with God to restore favour to the vineyard, while acknowledging Israel’s infidelity.

Theophilus contends τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως would have been understood as the Roman army destroying the temple.⁷⁸¹ The gathering of οἱ ἄετοί in 24:28 is a reference to the Romans as part of the larger imperial symbolism of 24:27—31.⁷⁸² Contrary to those who would say ἄετοί represents vultures eating carrion, ancient writers such as Aristotle, Pliny the Elder and Aelianus make a clear distinction between vultures and eagles. Likewise, the LXX version of Job distinguishes between the hawk (ἰέραξ, 39:26), the eagle (ἄετός, 39:27a) and the vulture

⁷⁸⁰ M. Theophilus, *The Abomination*, 126.

⁷⁸¹ M. Theophilus, *The Abomination*, 20—21.

⁷⁸² W. Carter, ‘Are There Imperial Texts in the Class? Intertextual Eagles and Matthean Eschatology as “Lights Out” Time for Imperial Rome (Matthew 24:27—31)’, *JBL*122:3 (2003): 468.

(γὺψ, 39:27b).⁷⁸³ Josephus further describes the approach of Titus upon Jerusalem with the army carrying ensigns containing the eagle and trumpets: περὶ τὸν αἰετὸν αἰ σημαῖαι, καὶ ἔμπροσθεν οἱ σαλπικταὶ τῶν σημαιῶν.⁷⁸⁴

The assumption that conjoining πτώμα with ἀετός means vultures are feasting on corpses is also unsubstantiated for several reasons. ‘The twenty—eight uses of ἀετός and the twenty— one uses of πτώμα in the LXX do not appear in the same chapter, let alone the same verse.’⁷⁸⁵ Further, despite the assumption that vultures are devouring carcasses, no verb describes consumption of anything, nor is there any indication that the birds eat the bodies. Only three of the twenty—eight references to ἀετός in the LXX describe eating (Proverbs 24:22; 30:17; Habakkuk 1:8), and none of those three verses describes eagles eating corpses.⁷⁸⁶

The arrival of Rome to bring war as the Danielic τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως is further validated by Jesus’ statement in 23:38, ἰδοὺ ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος. The coming eagle bringing desolation is language found in Deuteronomy 28:49 when God promises to curse Israel for their infidelity: ἐπάξει κύριος ἐπὶ σὲ ἔθνος μακρόθεν ἀπ’ ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς ὡσεὶ ὄρμημα ἀετοῦ, ἔθνος, ὃ οὐκ ἀκούση τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ. Jesus’ warning to take flight is accompanied by a warning not to be drawn in by false Christ and false prophets: ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ ἀστραπή ἐξέρχεται ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ φαίνεται ἕως δυσμῶν, οὕτως ἔσται ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (24:27). There is an expectation here that a campaign of destruction is underway that will take

⁷⁸³ W. Carter, ‘Are There Imperial Texts in the Class?’, 469.

⁷⁸⁴ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 5.48. Greek text from: www.biblical.ie/page.php?fl=josephus/War/JWG5#02.

⁷⁸⁵ W. Carter, ‘Are There Imperial Texts in the Class?’, 470.

⁷⁸⁶ W. Carter, ‘Are There Imperial Texts in the Class?’, 471.

enough time for false christs and false prophets to make deceptive claims. Jesus makes it clear, however, that the παρουσία will be obvious.

The Problem of the Parousia

Having warned of τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως and the gathering of οἱ ἄετοί, Jesus continues the discourse by saying:

Εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων
ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται,
καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς,
καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες πεσοῦνται ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,
καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται.
καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ τότε κόψονται
πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν
τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς· καὶ ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ μετὰ
σάλπιγγος μεγάλης, καὶ ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων
ἀπ’ ἄκρων οὐρανῶν ἕως [τῶν] ἄκρων αὐτῶν. (Matthew 24:29—31)

This is the moment of the coming Son of Man, another possibility for the point in the text where a world—ending eschatological time shift occurs, taking the reader to the end of the space—time continuum.⁷⁸⁷ More specifically to Matthew’s text, τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ shall be manifest.

The coming of the Son of Man takes place εὐθέως after the tribulation described in the abomination incident. Explanations for the dramatic shift in time and the use of εὐθέως vary. One option suggests that 24:15—28 also concerns the distant future, making the παρουσία an event that does occur εὐθέως after that tribulation.⁷⁸⁸ Another option views εὐθέως as linking the tribulation of 70 CE with the final tribulation, without the necessity of a chronological

⁷⁸⁷ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 585-587; D Hagner, *Matthew*, WBC, 713-716; M. Nolland, *Matthew*, NIGTC, 982-983; C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 361-363.

⁷⁸⁸ W.D. Davies and D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 357.

εὐθέως.⁷⁸⁹ There is also a contention that the tribulation of verses 15—28 has a double meaning for both 70 CE and the end of the world, or to separate τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ from the actual coming with the use of τότε twice.⁷⁹⁰ Additionally, it can be argued that Jesus had immediately expected the physical arrival of the Son of Man from Matthew 10:23 and that he was mistaken.⁷⁹¹

Contrary to these various suggestions is the possibility that Jesus was not speaking of the end of the world, nor was he mistaken about this prophecy. As described in the previous section, the image of the heavenly portents, such as the darkening of the sun, are found in passages such as Isaiah 13 and Joel 2 to describe the coming of God’s wrath, not the end of the space—time continuum. Yet the παρουσία of Jesus has become so intertwined with a world—ending reading of Paul’s letters that the Olivet Discourse is assumed to follow the same trajectory.

Paul’s Parousia

Paul has been described as an apocalyptic pastor whose Thessalonian congregation is waiting for the end to come at any moment, while his Corinthian congregation dismissed the importance of the resurrection.⁷⁹² There are two problems with defining the παρουσία in Matthew through the writings of Paul. First is the assumption that Paul was preaching a world—ending παρουσία. Second is the assumption that Matthew and Paul are using παρουσία in the exact same manner.

Eschatological and apocalyptic thinking has unnecessarily limited the meaning of παρουσία to an end of the world model. While the word means ‘presence’, it was used in

⁷⁸⁹ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 583.

⁷⁹⁰ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, 712.

⁷⁹¹ D. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 149.

⁷⁹² S. Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, 178.

various ways in the ancient world. Within the Hellenistic world it denoted the presence of a deity, such as during the time of a sacrifice in the cult of Hermes.⁷⁹³ Additionally, the word was used in describing the royal presence of such figures as Germanicus, Ptolemy Philometor and Cleopatra.⁷⁹⁴ These comparative concepts of the royal and divine presence can be found in examples of Israel's enemies facing defeat at the hands of Yahweh (Isaiah 19:1—2, 30:27; Habakkuk 3.3—15).⁷⁹⁵ Therefore, to limit Matthew or Paul to using the παρουσία exclusively within world—ending terms fails to acknowledge possibilities for meaning that are within the broader scope of its definition.

Paul clarifies to the Thessalonian church what the παρουσία means for those who have already died. He emphasises to the Thessalonians that those who are alive will not precede those who have died in Christ. Just as Jesus died and rose, so also ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ (1 Thessalonians 4:14). Paul continues:

Τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας· ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ, καταβήσεται ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον, ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀρπαγησόμεθα ἐν νεφέλαις εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἀέρα· καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα. Ὡστε παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις. (1 Thessalonians 4:15—18)

Paul refers to the same event in 1 Corinthians 15:23—28 when he writes:

ἕκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῷ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν ἄχρι οὗ θῆῃ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος· **πάντα γὰρ ὑπέταξεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.** ὅταν δὲ εἴπῃ ὅτι πάντα ὑποτέτακται, δῆλον

⁷⁹³ M. Theophilus, *The Abomination*, 103.

⁷⁹⁴ M. Theophilus, *The Abomination*, 102.

⁷⁹⁵ M. Theophilus, *The Abomination*, 103.

ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα. ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῇ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

Both passages describe the hope believers have in Christ that through his death and resurrection that they too will rise and be led into the presence of God. Their world—ending connotations are more difficult to ascertain.

Paul's vision of the *παρουσία* involves the dead in Christ rising to be with Christ first, then those are alive will be caught up into the 'clouds' to meet them. Paul's *παρουσία* description in 1 Thessalonians 4 has some similarities with Matthew 24:29—31, such as the trumpets and clouds, but significant differences are also present.⁷⁹⁶ Matthew does not describe Jesus descending from heaven, nor is there a resurrection of the dead in the Olivet Discourse. On the contrary, Matthew describes the resurrection of the saints who have fallen asleep at the time of the crucifixion:

καὶ τὰ μνημεῖα ἀνεόχθησαν καὶ πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθησαν, καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς. (27:52—53)

The language between the two authors has some similarity, but Paul is describing events surrounding the *παρουσία* while Matthew is talking about the crucifixion. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul claims that Jesus will rise as the first fruits, then those in Christ will rise at the *παρουσία*.

Part of this mystery is the change in a blink of an eye where presumably those still alive at the *παρουσία* will instantly have a spiritual body.⁷⁹⁷ Paul is apparently unaware of the resurrection tradition from Matthew 27, otherwise it would have served his arguments in both 1

⁷⁹⁶ D.M. Martin, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 148.

⁷⁹⁷ F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 312.

Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians to mention that several sleeping saints had risen from the dead already.

Paul's παρουσία is not limited to matters of death and resurrection as the temple also plays a role in the unfolding of these events. He describes the events of the παρουσία in connection with the day of the Lord that would come like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:1—3). Turning to 2 Thessalonians 2:1—12, which was discussed briefly above in connection with the 'Abomination of Desolation', Paul further clarifies the events of the παρουσία. He writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:3—4:

μή τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον. ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει ἀποδεικνύοντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός

Though the παρουσία will come like a thief in the night, the man of lawlessness must first be revealed through his actions in the temple.

Here the apocalyptic imagination can conjure images of the antichrist who will come during the great tribulation at the end of time and defile the temple by taking his place on God's throne in the Holy of Holies.⁷⁹⁸ The difficulty with this view is that the temple still stood in Paul's day with no imminent earthly reason to believe it would be defiled. Paul's statement in 1 Thessalonians was part of the tradition Paul referred to as the 'word of the Lord' in 1 Thessalonians 5:15, and probably relates to Jesus' temple prediction. Paul nowhere describes any expectation that the temple of his day will be destroyed, followed by the construction of another temple and then that temple will be defiled by the ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας.

⁷⁹⁸ S. Cook, *Apocalyptic*, 186; T. Lahaye, *Revelation Unveiled* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 218—219; W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 346.

Paul does use ναός metaphorically in 1 Corinthians 3:16—17 and 1 Corinthians 6:19, but the wording in 2 Thessalonians 2 makes it improbable he is imagining a metaphorical temple.⁷⁹⁹ Both Jesus and ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας will have a παρουσία, the latter being ἡ παρουσία κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν ψεύδους (2 Thessalonians 2:9). These events correlate to ἡ ἀποστασία, which is not defined by Paul, but the word had both religious and political connotations at this time. To commit ἀποστασία is to move away or abandon a position and was used by Josephus to describe the Jewish revolt against Rome.⁸⁰⁰ The LXX features several uses of ἀποστασία as rebellion (Joshua 22:22; 2 Chronicles 29:19, 33:19; Jeremiah 2:19).⁸⁰¹

These differing strands of Paul's παρουσία are difficult to synthesise into a complete picture as they are devoid of a narrative context. Paul was expecting events in the temple to take place, some form of resurrection for which Christ was the prototype, rebellion and ultimately comfort regarding eternal life for those in Christ. Additionally, the Lord would descend while believers would be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air. Why does the Lord need to descend from heaven and gather up believers to meet him in the clouds? Read with an eye toward literalism this is a bizarre image of Jesus meeting newly resurrected Christians in the sky before coming to judge the earth. Paul is alluding to the imperial imagery of royal visitation, where believers shall be gathered into his heavenly presence as the day of the Lord descends on earth in judgment.⁸⁰² The imperial imagery is bolstered by Paul writing of the παρουσία of ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας as τῆ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ. An ἐπιφανείᾳ invoked divine and

⁷⁹⁹ C.A. Wanamker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 246.

⁸⁰⁰ D.M. Martin, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 232—233.

⁸⁰¹ C.A. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, NIGTC, 244.

⁸⁰² B. Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1998), 144.

royal imagery, such as a coin struck by Hadrian that read ‘epiphany of Augustus’, or perhaps a reminder of Antiochus Epiphanes.⁸⁰³ The closest parallel to Matthew’s description of the παρουσία is found in this temple passage.

Matthew’s Jesus describes no ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, though he says διὰ τὸ πληθυνθῆναι τὴν ἀνομίαν ψυγήσεται ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν πολλῶν (Matthew 24:12). Further, Matthew’s τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως is neuter, though as previously discussed the Roman imperial connotations are evident in a manner like the ἐπιφανεία Paul describes. Matthew and Paul have enough parallels to believe they are, at least in part, working from a similar tradition, though they are not identical.

Wright argues that Paul is familiar with the tradition of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, which in part contributes to his grief concerning his fellow Jews (Romans 9—11).⁸⁰⁴ The events concerning the day of the Lord described in 2 Thessalonians are distinct from the παρουσία described in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, and certainly different from the reordering of the universe in Romans 8.⁸⁰⁵ Wright may be correct, but the distinction is not evident in Paul’s letters, as he moves from the παρουσία to the ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου over the course of one long Greek sentence.

The apostasy and the events in the temple are described as coming first, and following Wright’s analysis, the Thessalonians would have noticed if time had ended regardless of whether they received a letter about the situation or not.⁸⁰⁶ More pressing is whether Paul expected the

⁸⁰³ B. Witherington, *Paul Quest*, 145—146.

⁸⁰⁴ N.T. Wright, *Paul*, 56.

⁸⁰⁵ N.T. Wright, *Paul*, 56.

⁸⁰⁶ N.T. Wright, *Paul*, 56.

παρουσία, the events of the temple and the recreation of Romans all to coincide? Without more information to draw from this is uncertain, though the mutual use of παρουσία for Christ and ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας in conjunction with the day of the Lord make it feasible. Would Paul have understood the events of 70 to be the same thing he spoke of in 2 Thessalonians? Probably, though it may not have met the total expectation of what he imagined. Josephus describes the scene of Titus walking into the temple with his commanders, taking in the architecture before the structure is burned to the ground.⁸⁰⁷ It is improbable for Paul to have dismissed this event completely from his description in 2 Thessalonians, opting rather for another event down the road featuring the antichrist.

Contrary to Paul, Matthew provides a full narrative description where his development can be traced from start to finish. Matthew offers no evidence of a resurrection from the dead in the παρουσία, the only such event is found during the crucifixion. The discourse clearly begins with the judgment on Israel, directly quotes Daniel 7 to emphasise the fulfillment of the vision and provides no internal reason to believe the discourse is leaping forward and backward in time. Paul and Matthew probably draw from a common tradition, but whether they have identical explanations and understandings is inconclusive. It therefore makes little sense to interpret Matthew through the primer of what it is believed Paul meant in fragments of his theology when Matthew provides a complete narrative framework.

Matthew and Paul may have been in complete agreement about the παρουσία or had strong differences. Differences seem evident, which is not problematic unless one insists the two must be saying the same thing. Paul's version of the παρουσία is an important testimony of early

⁸⁰⁷ Josephus, *Wars* 6.260.

Christianity, but it is not the authoritative lens for the interpretation of Matthew's discourse. Matthew tells a complete story, and his story of the παρουσία does not concern the end of the world: it is the end of the age of Judaism. Whether Paul shared this view does not concern Matthew, who wrote several years after Paul from a different vantage point. Matthew may be at complete odds with Paul, but this cannot be fully ascertained from the available data. Therefore, having briefly consulted Paul, Matthew will be interpreted through his narrative, based on the internal data of his gospel.

The Coming Son of Man and the Parousia

Jesus' pronouncement of doom on the temple carries the motif of a visitation of Yahweh in wrath upon Israel. Divorcing τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον from the events described in Jerusalem is not warranted by the text. Matthew is describing the path of the Messiah through Daniel 7, where Jesus takes his throne by the Ancient of Days in heaven. Matthew develops this theme by redacting Mark 13:26 to include καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υιοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ (24:30). The sign has been variously imagined as a cross, some form of light, or a cosmic ensign signaling the great eschatological battle that will end the world when the Son of Man tears through the clouds to earth.⁸⁰⁸ However, the language provides for understanding the sign not in the sky, but rather as the temple's destruction, which validates the Son of Man's enthronement in heaven. In this retelling of Daniel 7, the Son of Man is not coming to earth, he is accepting his kingdom in heaven from the Ancient of Days.⁸⁰⁹ Jesus' prophecy about the temple's fall is the sign that validates his claims that he is the Son of Man.

⁸⁰⁸ W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 359.

⁸⁰⁹ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 361.

The mourning of *πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς* is language consistent with the visitation of Yahweh in wrath as evident from Isaiah 13:9, 11:

ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἡμέρα κυρίου ἀνίατος ἔρχεται θυμοῦ καὶ ὀργῆς θεῖναι τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην ἔρημον καὶ τοὺς ἁμαρτωλοὺς ἀπολέσαι ἐξ αὐτῆς... καὶ ἔσονται οἱ καταλελειμμένοι ἔντιμοι μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ χρυσίον τὸ ἄπυρον, καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος μᾶλλον ἔντιμος ἔσται ἢ ὁ λίθος ὁ ἐκ Σουφίρ.

The tribes will not mourn because Jesus is floating through the sky to the earth, they will mourn because their nation has been ravaged by the swooping eagle that is Rome. Israel's defeat is evidence that Yahweh, seated upon the cherubim, did not act on their behalf.

Matthew's switch from the second personal plural *ἴδητε* to the disciples throughout the discourse to the third person plural *ὄψονται* for the coming Son of Man is not indicative of two separate time frames. When Jesus stands before the Sanhedrin in 26:64 he declares:

ἀπ' ἄρτι ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
καθήμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τῆς δυνάμεως
καὶ ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

Jesus directly tells his accusers that from now, they will that he is enthroned in heaven and his prophetic message was valid. His death and resurrection will lead to his heavenly enthronement, which will result in the temple's destruction. Matthew makes it clear in 27:62—66 that the same Sanhedrin who engineered Jesus' death understood he had preached his own resurrection. This narrative development creates a distinction between those who will mourn at the coming judgment and those who will be validated for their loyalty to the heavenly Son of Man.

The sound of the trumpet has an intriguing double meaning here, neither of which bears association with the end of the world. First, the trumpet is an indication of pending destruction and wrath in conjunction with war (Isaiah 18:3; Jeremiah 4:5—19; Ezekiel 7:14; Joel 2:1).

Josephus described the coming of Titus and the Romans with ensigns bearing the symbol of the eagle and the blowing of trumpets.⁸¹⁰ Second, the blowing of the trumpets reflects a call for the tribes of Israel lost to Assyria to return and worship at Zion (Isaiah 27:13).⁸¹¹

France's conclusions regarding τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον and his παρουσία are most unusual. While τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον is commonly the point where scholars shift the timeline to the end of the world, he accepts the Daniel 7 heavenly enthronement reading as related to the events that will come upon Jesus' γενεά. However, France then divorces the παρουσία from the use of υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον, claiming they are two distinct events, where the παρουσία is world—ending eschatology.⁸¹²

The logic behind this argument is that the words ἐρχόμενον and παρουσία are used to differentiate two separate events.⁸¹³ The problem for France comes in 25:31—46: he deems this story as the final judgment at the παρουσία, yet ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου rather than παρουσία is used in the passage. If the coming and the παρουσία are decisively separate events, surely Matthew could have used παρουσία in the passage. France attempts to avoid this paradox by saying the focus on the παρουσία from 24:36 to 25:30 associate the Sheep and the Goats with the παρουσία. However, his own method will not permit such a reading.

The παρουσία is mentioned in 24:3, 24:27, 24:37 and 24:39 with the latter two described as ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Variations of Jesus' 'coming' are found in 24:30, 24:42, 24:44, 24:46, 24:50 and 25:31. The υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου comes in 24:30, 44 and 25:31, while ὁ

⁸¹⁰ Josephus, *Wars* 5.48.

⁸¹¹ More will be said about this shortly.

⁸¹² R. T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 923—924.

⁸¹³ R. T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 923—924.

κύριος is coming in 24:42, 46 and 50. These two concepts of ἐρχόμενον and παρουσία are so interwoven that France's separation of them has no merit. Breaking his own method to make 25:31—46 fit his παρουσία model shows the failure of his hypothesis. Additionally, France interprets the ingathering of 24:31 at τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον as the call to return to God in worship borrowed from passages such as Deuteronomy 30 and Isaiah 27.⁸¹⁴ Yet the ἔλθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and the ingathering of the nations suddenly becomes world—ending eschatology.⁸¹⁵

Forcing these two passages into two separate events is unnecessary and unwarranted in the text. The ingathering of 24:31 concerns the ἐκλεκτοὺς, while πάντα τὰ ἔθνη are described in 25:31. If the ἐκλεκτοὺς are those who have accepted the terms of the new covenant and responded to the missionary journey, then they must be numbered among πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. France described the Son of Man's coming in relationship to Daniel 7 with great accuracy, but he fails decisively in his attempt to turn the παρουσία into end of the world language. Moving into a παρουσία passage like 24:36—41, there is evidence Jesus did not change course, as he is still talking about the coming judgment on Jerusalem.

'Left Behind'

There is also the matter of those being 'taken' in the hour of judgment in Matthew 24:40—41. Some imagine these verses as describing a 'Left Behind' rapture event.⁸¹⁶ However, it is an understatement to say that such a view 'rests on an uncertain foundation.'⁸¹⁷ One

⁸¹⁴ R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 927.

⁸¹⁵ R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 961

⁸¹⁶ D. Hagner, *Matthew 14—28*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1995), 720; J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 2005; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 614; U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 450—451; W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 383.

⁸¹⁷ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 941.

obstacle with a ‘rapture’ view is whether being ‘taken’ is a positive or negative event in Matthew. A wholistic reading of Matthew’s narrative indicates that those who are taken are taken in judgment, not as deliverance from tribulation. France states,

We are not told where or why they are ‘taken,’ and the similar sayings in vv. 17—18 about people caught out in the course of daily life by the Roman advance presupposed a situation of threat rather than of rescue; to be ‘taken’ in such circumstances would be a negative experience...⁸¹⁸

Blomberg affirms the negative nature of being taken as verses 40—41 parallel verse 39 where the flood ‘swept away’ those being judged, not those being delivered from judgment.⁸¹⁹

In the parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (13:24—30) and its explanation (13:36—43), Jesus teaches that ὁ δὲ θερισμὸς συντέλεια αἰῶνός ἐστιν (13:39), which corresponds to the disciples’ question about συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος in 24:3. The meaning of the parable is explained that the lawless and wicked are those taken by the angels to judgment while the righteous remain in the kingdom of God.⁸²⁰ Of further importance in the parable is that both the wheat and weeds are gathered together (13:30) to meet separate fates. While Matthew 24:31 speaks of the elect being gathered, 24:40—41 speaks of the wicked being gathered.⁸²¹ Jesus further validates the negativity of being taken in 24:39 when he warns οὐκ ἔγνωσαν shall be swept away in judgment. This explains his exhortation to γρηγορεῖτε (24:42) for the coming thief, lest the disciples be caught unaware and swept away.

⁸¹⁸ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 941.

⁸¹⁹ C. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 366.

⁸²⁰ B. Merkle, ‘Who Will Be Left Behind? Rethinking the Meaning of Matthew 24:40—41 and Luke 17:34—35’, *WTJ* 72 (2010): 173.

⁸²¹ B. Merkle, ‘Who Will Be Left Behind?’, 176.

Merkle has argued that this imagery of being taken to judgment can be found in the Old Testament amongst the prophets who spoke of destruction coming upon Israel and Judah. An example appears in Isaiah 4:2—4, which is part of an oracle about the coming destruction upon Judah and their exile, where God promises *δοξάσαι τὸ καταλειφθὲν τοῦ Ἰσραηλ*. Only after the filth of the nation is taken away (Isaiah 3:1—3) do those who are left behind become the righteous remnant of God’s people. A similar scene is found in Jeremiah 6:11—12 where God promises to ‘seize’ (*συλλαμβάνω*) the young, old and married in an act of judgment upon Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon. Likewise, in Zephaniah 3:11—12 God states, *τότε περιελῶ ἀπὸ σοῦ τὰ φαυλίσματα τῆς ὑβρεώς σου... καὶ ὑπολείψομαι ἐν σοὶ λαὸν πραῦν καὶ ταπεινόν*.⁸²²

The preponderance of prophetic language used in Matthew 24, as well as the judgment theme, further validate these comparisons. Merkle fails to draw out some of the additional common themes in Matthew. For instance, in Jeremiah 6:11—12 there is a pairing of groups together, the *νήπια* and the *νεανίσκων*, the *ἄνθρωπος* and the *γυνή*, when the hand of the Lord is stretched out upon *ἀγροὶ καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες*. These are not identical to Matthew 24, but the pairing of types of people and the agricultural settings are common. Likewise, in Zephaniah 3:11—12 God looks to leave a righteous remnant of *πραῦν καὶ ταπεινόν* after promising, *διότι ἐν πυρὶ ζήλους μου καταναλωθήσεται πᾶσα ἡ γῆ*. This oracle has much in common with Matthew 5:5, *μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν*.

The verb *παραλαμβάνω* is used positively in Matthew 2:13, 14, 20, 21.⁸²³ However, to argue that those who went into the ark were ‘taken’ and those left behind perished is a

⁸²² B. Merkle, ‘Who Will Be Left Behind?’, 170—171.

⁸²³ W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 383.

misunderstanding of Jesus in 24:38—39.⁸²⁴ They who are left behind are swept away in the judgment as they did not know the cataclysm was coming. Noah and his family did know it was coming, hence the reason for build and entering the ark. The verb παραλαμβάνω is also used negatively in Matthew 27:27, Τότε οἱ στρατιῶται τοῦ ἡγεμόνος παραλαμβάντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον συνήγαγον ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ὅλην τὴν σπεῖραν.⁸²⁵ In addition to Merkle’s deduction, the use of both παραλαμβάντες and συνήγαγον in 27:27 follows the current line of argumentation that the Olivet Discourse envisions Roman imperial presence in the use of the verb συνάγω in 27:27 for the Roman soldiers and for the gathering of the eagles in 24:28.

A comprehensive reading of Matthew affirms Merkle’s thesis that the ‘left behind’ verses of Matthew 24 are not a rapture, they are verses speaking of the arrival of Rome upon Jerusalem. Those who fail to heed Jesus’ command to flee the mountains (24:16) will be left to face judgment similar to that previously brought on Israel and Judaea for covenantal infidelity. Considering also the fact that the Olivet Discourse was occasioned by confrontations with both the Pharisees and Sadducees, the words of John the Baptist to those two groups from the beginning of Matthew have an ominous echo in Matthew 24, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς (3:7). Those who do not adhere to Jesus’ words and fail to flee shall face the coming wrath.

Jesus presents the disciples with signs, exhorts them to diligently watch and be prepared for events to happen in ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη. He also tells the disciples that only the Father knows τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ ὥρας (24:36). Despite Jesus having just spoken of the events happening in this generation, many writers use this line to emphasize the complete unknowability of the

⁸²⁴ W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 383.

⁸²⁵ B. Merkle, ‘Who Will Be Left Behind?’, 175.

παρουσία as it relates to world—ending eschatology. Matthew’s Jesus is said to be discouraging attempts to calculate when the end will come.⁸²⁶ Another approach is to say Jesus is preventing undue expectation or exploitation of those suffering to avoid predicting signs of the end.⁸²⁷ Ignorance of the παρουσία is said to be the predominant theme in the next several pericopes running to Matthew 25:13.⁸²⁸

Matthew’s Jesus has already told the disciples that judgment is coming on Israel, and the author’s audience knows Jerusalem fell. When God warned Noah that the flood was coming and to prepare, it came in his lifetime. Jesus has told the disciples about imminent judgment on the generation and gives the disciples direct instructions to ‘watch’ (24:42; 25:13) and be ready because the Son of Man is coming unexpectedly (24:44; 25:13). Keener claims that to watch does not mean to look for or immediately anticipate the event, rather it is the language of a night watchman.⁸²⁹ What sense does it make to watch for an event that cannot imminently occur?

Not knowing the day or the hour in a discourse that is warning of imminent judgment and the need to watch for it hardly speaks to a lack of imminent expectation. Jesus does not say that no one knows the millennia, alluding to some distant παρουσία. On the contrary, the expectation of an imminent event that will come upon the generation with life and death consequences necessitates watching. The dual significance of Israel’s tragic loss of life, and the covenantal implications of Jerusalem’s destruction are profound and can come any moment upon the people of that era.

⁸²⁶ W.D. Davies & D. Allison, *Saint Matthew: Vol III*, ICC, 378.

⁸²⁷ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 590.

⁸²⁸ D. Hagner, *Matthew*, WBC, 716.

⁸²⁹ C. Keener, *Matthew*, 592.

The potential for seeing the text from a first—century perspective as God’s wrath poured out on Israel via Rome gives new insight and possibilities for understanding the scene of judgment found in the Sheep and the Goats. Having previously detailed the argument that Psalm 80 (79 LXX) was a key source behind the Sheep and the Goats, the reason why Matthew used it as a source text will now be discussed. Within the paradigm of a Roman invasion perspective, the use of Psalm 80 as backdrop to the Sheep and the Goats creates new possibilities for understanding the passage as a teaching of cataclysmic eschatological judgment revealing a new order in God’s kingdom. Since the Son of Man’s παρουσία from 24:29—31 appears to be the same event described in the Sheep and the Goats, comments on those verses will be offered below as well.

Judgment upon Israel

The destruction of 70 is in mind as is the doom of Israel, which Jesus has been preaching in true prophetic fashion.⁸³⁰ The books of Kings, Chronicles and the prophets are full of poor leadership that did not excuse Israel from culpability. On the contrary, Israel’s national decline operated in conjunction with its series of ungodly kings and poor shepherds. *2 Baruch* addresses a similar point where the ten tribes of Israel were carried into captivity because their kings forced them to sin.⁸³¹

This complex development is paramount to understanding the importance of the Son of Man standing before πάντα τὰ ἔθνη and placing the ἔθνη at his right and designating them as sheep. Should it not be Israel and the nations standing before the Son of Man with Israel taking

⁸³⁰ See Jeremiah 3:1—5, 4:1—31, 21:1—14; Ezekiel 4:1—17, 7:1—27, 11:1—25 as a few examples of this type of preaching.

⁸³¹*2 Baruch* 1:2—3.

the honorary place on the right as sheep and the nations as goats? No such distinction is made as it is just ἔθνη before the Son of Man.

Matthew uses Psalm 79 LXX to address the role of the Messiah in the aftermath of national tragedy. Missionary efforts had advanced the Jesus movement around the empire, leading to a variety of gentile converts. Where *4 Ezra* 13 or *2 Baruch* 35—40 imagine the vindication of Israel and the defeat of Rome, Matthew presents a scene of judgment where the Gentiles are rewarded for their treatment of the least of Jesus' brethren. Matthew delivers the message that when the Son of Man at the right hand came, Israel did not return to Yahweh as the psalmist claimed they would. Therefore, the vineyard is given to another people.

Matthew takes the psalmist's reminder of how God cast out the ἔθνη to plant the ἀμπελών and redacted it to meet the needs of his messianic argument. God cast out the Gentiles in order to plant the vineyard, and now he casts Israel out of the vineyard and gives it to those Gentiles. This scene of judgment is shocking as the contrast is not of Israel and gentile, rather all who assemble before God are the Gentiles and only the Gentiles receive the place of God's favour. Israel is not mentioned by name in this gathering, as if to indicate their distinction from the Gentiles has been lost.

The σῦς and the ἔριφος

The use of ἔριφος in contrast to πρόβατα is an interesting juxtaposition of images considering the ἔριφος are being condemned. In Psalm 80 Israel is associated with πρόβατα while the gentile Assyrians, who have won victory over Israel, are described as σῦς ἐκ δρυμοῦ who have come to the vineyard and καὶ μονιὸς ἄγριος κατενεμήσατο αὐτήν (79:14). Psalm 79 LXX renders the Hebrew רִיפָּי as σῦς, a Greek word found only here in the LXX. The word

ἔριφος is likewise unusual in the New Testament, appearing three times, twice in the Sheep and the Goats and once in Luke 15:29.

Why did Matthew's Jesus not use σῶς in the Sheep and the Goats if he is using Psalm 79 LXX? Philo uses σῶς several times in his writings in a manner that is pejorative or unclean. There are two references to σῶς in 'On Husbandry'. The first is On Husbandry 144, which compares the lifestyle of sophists to the σῶς because they live a disorderly life driven by base desires.⁸³² In the next line Philo clarifies the analogy by acknowledging that σῶς is an unclean animal, dividing the hoof and not splitting the cud.⁸³³

Two more references to σῶς are found in 'On Dreams' where he compares the σῶς and the lion to ravenous and savage beasts, probably intending σῶς to be understood as 'wild boar'.⁸³⁴ Two lines later Philo compares treacherous men with σῶς (boars), serpents and asps.⁸³⁵ He also contrasts domesticated animal herds living near cities to wild animals, like σῶς and lions who stay away from cities for fear of men.⁸³⁶ Philo also uses σῶς along with τράγος, another word for goat, twice in 'The Special Laws'. First, he says men who marry barren women for sexual pleasure are like σῶς or τράγος.⁸³⁷ He makes a second such analogy later in Special Laws, again saying men who have no desire to produce children are like σῶς or τράγος

⁸³² All Philo references use: P. Borgen, K. Fuglseth & R. Skarsten, *The Works of Philo Greek Text* (Bellingham: Logos, 2005). All references also consult C.D, Yonge, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995).

⁸³³ On Husbandry 145.

⁸³⁴ On Dreams 2.87.

⁸³⁵ On Dreams 2.89.

⁸³⁶ On Providence 2.57.

⁸³⁷ The Special Laws 3.36.

only desiring pleasure.⁸³⁸ These examples demonstrate a negative connotation to σῶς as wild, unclean and unfit for a flock.

Contrary to σῶς, a survey of the Old Testament and LXX demonstrates a positive outlook toward goats and ἔριφος. Weber accurately summarizes the nature of ἔριφος writing, ‘In this case, one would anticipate that the sociohistorical connotations of goats would be basically positive for the Gospel’s authorial audience.’⁸³⁹ Goats in the Old Testament were used for a token of honour for a guest (Judges 13:15) and acceptable sacrifice (Numbers 7:12—88).⁸⁴⁰ The LXX ἔριφος were used as sacrifice (Leviticus 1:10), payment (Genesis 38:17), honourarium (1 Samuel 16:20) and food (Amos 6:4).⁸⁴¹ The word ἔριφος is used in Luke 15:29, where the elder son complains that his father never gave him an ἔριφος to celebrate, while throwing an elaborate party for the prodigal son. In other words, there is nothing inherently evil about ἔριφος in Israelite society or scripture.

Matthew goes to considerable narrative lengths to develop the theme that while Israel alone was once πρόβατα in contrast to ἔθνη, now the ἔθνη are πρόβατα. Philo describes a σῶς as unfit fit to be a part of a domesticated flock as they are wild and ravenous like lions. Matthew’s Jesus is transforming the image of Gentiles as wild and unfit to be in the shepherd’s flock by removing the pejorative bestial stigma from their description. This intensifies the paradigm shift as πάντα τὰ ἔθνη are now sheep in the king of Israel’s flock, and they are no longer described as θηρία ἀνέβαινον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης or σῶς ἐκ δρυμοῦ as they were in Daniel 7 and Psalm 80.

⁸³⁸ The Special Laws 3.113.

⁸³⁹ K. Weber, ‘The Image of Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25:31—46’, *CBQ* 59 (1997): 659.

⁸⁴⁰ K. Weber, ‘The Image of Sheep’, 670.

⁸⁴¹ E. Pond, ‘Who are the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:31—46’, *BSAC* 159:635 (2002): 291.

The Son of Man's flock has been reconstructed and it encompasses the whole world, not just Israel. Rather than painting those on the left as the unclean σῦς ἐκ δρυμοῦ, they are now a clean animal and are part of the shepherd's flock. Separating the two sides is no longer a matter of clean and unclean, it is a matter of response to the obligation of being part of the universal flock. The domesticated animals that will stand for judgment based on their treatment of τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων (25:40, 45), not Israel. By redefining how the ἔθνη are viewed, Matthew transitions them from bestial enemies of God, placing them on an equal field with his people, with equal opportunity for participating in God's covenant. The shepherd is not protecting his helpless righteous sheep Israel from the wicked Gentiles, the Gentiles are part of his flock. The entire scene reminds the audience of Matthew 7:21: Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι, Κύριε κύριε, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Action and not ethnicity are the new standard in the Son of Man's kingdom.

The implications of this meaning for Israel are profound on various levels. Luz's assessment that judgment is on all Israel and no good future exists for an Israel that rejects Jesus, not even at the Son of Man's coming, is difficult to disagree with.⁸⁴² By the first century CE many Jews had come to interpret the fourth beast as Rome.⁸⁴³ In the Olivet Discourse the fourth beast appears to win as the Messiah judges Israel and does not deliver them from Rome. Understanding the vineyard of Psalm 80 and how that vineyard is used in Matthew's narrative, one can conclude that the kingdom of Judah has met the same fate as Israel. The twelve tribes of Israel are now completely lost to exile as the vineyard is granted to other nations.

⁸⁴² U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 385.

⁸⁴³ Discussed previously.

Zyl writes of this transition, ‘In Matthew 23, Jesus announces the end of Judaism (cf. v.38).’⁸⁴⁴ More accurately, Jesus revokes any distinct privilege once granted to Israel, as all nations are subject to new criteria of judgment. Any individual Israelite may join the membership of the Son of Man’s kingdom along with any other individual from any other ἔθνη on earth. There have been efforts to limit the scope of this judgment to just Gentiles.⁸⁴⁵ However, support for including Israel within the scope of the ἔθνη in this scene of judgment has been widely accepted.⁸⁴⁶

Jesus explains the parable of the Wheat and the Weeds to the disciples back in chapter 13, telling them the removal of stumbling blocks and the harvest would be τῆ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος. The disciples asked Jesus about the συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος in conjunction with his παρουσία in 24:3. Jesus commissions the disciples to take the gospel to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, confirming he will be with them until the συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. Finally, in the judgment of 25:31—46 the Son of Man harvests πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in response to their treatment of the least. What then is τῆ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος?

As previously discussed, Jesus commissioned the disciples for a preaching mission to Israel that they would not complete before the Son of Man comes (10:23). The reason they

⁸⁴⁴ H. Zyl, ‘Discernment as ‘Not Knowing’ and ‘Knowing’: A Perspective from Matthew 25:31—46’, *AT* 17 (2013): 116.

⁸⁴⁵ R. Thomas, ‘Jesus’ View of Eternal Punishment’, *MSJ* 9:2 (1998): 149—153; S. Brown, ‘Faith, the Poor and the Gentiles: A Traditional—Historical Reflection on Matthew 25:31—46’, *TJT* 6:2 (1990): 174; B. Witherington, *Matthew* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 466; E. Pond, ‘Who are ‘the Least’ of Jesus’ Brothers in Matthew 25:40?’, *BSAC* 159:636 (2002): 439.

⁸⁴⁶ See D. Via, ‘Ethical Responsibility and Human Wholeness in Matthew 25:31—46’, *HTR* 80 (1987): 91; A. Aarde, ‘Jesus’ Mission to All of Israel Emplotted in Matthew’s Story’, *Neotestamentica* 41:2 (2007): 419; A. Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen: A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21—25* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 244; A. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 312—314; R.T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, 960; D. Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove: IVP 1989), 90; U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 530; J. Nolland, *Matthew*, NIGTC, 1024—1025.

would not complete their journey to all the cities of Israel is because their rejection by Israel would result in the sending of the disciples to the Gentiles. These various threads develop a picture of Israel's rejection of the Messiah, leading to their judgment and a new role for the Gentiles. Based on this proposed reading of Matthew, τῆ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος is not the end of the space—time continuum, it is the end of Israel's unique relationship with Yahweh.

The age of Israel as the people of God has closed, paving the way for all nations to share in the blessings brought by the Son of Man. The new harvest is the recruitment of all the nations of the world, while also acknowledging Israel has faced judgment for her infidelity. Looking back to Psalm 79 LXX, the author begins addressing the devastation of his people by writing Εἰς τὸ τέλος, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλοιωθησομένων. Perhaps this notion that the end had brought change in the Son of Man's kingdom is not lost on Matthew.

When read in this manner, the Olivet Discourse does not require a shifting chronology from the first century CE to the end of the space—time continuum. Jesus' claim that οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται makes sense when understood that he never left the subject of Israel's judgment and the new paradigm of his kingdom. His repeated statements about the wickedness of his generation and the outpouring of wrath they were to face point to this moment, where he describes that wrath and the fact that his generation will witness it all.

The Criteria of Judgment and the Least

Pre—critical scholarly efforts focused on avoiding a ‘salvation by works’ theology in Matthew 25:31—46 that would conflict with their understanding of Pauline theology.⁸⁴⁷ Grindheim amply summarizes this by writing, ‘Many studies have concluded that Matthew’s soteriology stands at the opposite end of the spectrum as compared to the apostle Paul.’⁸⁴⁸ Such efforts are needless if understood that the Sheep and the Goats is not a passage about world—ending eschatological judgment. On the contrary, Jesus does not make a point about the steps to salvation or the end of the space—time continuum. Rather, the teaching is about understanding the New Covenant and the nature of God’s people in the Son of Man’s kingdom.

Who are those Jesus calls τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων and why is treatment of them the new standard? Wright makes a compelling argument for the influence of Deuteronomy 27—34 on the structure of Matthew’s Gospel. He draws attention to the blessings of Matthew 5:3—11 and the curses of Matthew 23:13—33 as having a correlation to the blessings and curses found in Deuteronomy 27—30.⁸⁴⁹ In the speech Moses stresses that the commandments given are not too difficult; his speech ends at Deuteronomy 30:15—20, and then Deuteronomy 31—34 contain Moses final blessing.⁸⁵⁰ Wright states,

Matthew, I suggest, had the entire scene in mind as he arranged his material into its eventual form...Israel has indeed fallen into the curse of exile because of her sins, and

⁸⁴⁷ See M. Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1751; W. Burkitt, *Commentary on Matthew 25:31—46* (Accessed from <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/wbc/view.cgi?bk=39&ch=25>, published from 1700—1703), v. 31. Citations will include verse numbers for ease of viewing as opposed to page numbers.; B. Porteus, *Lectures on the Gospel of St. Matthew* (London: T. Cadell and W.D. Davies, 1815), 258; A. Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (New York: Waugh & Mason, 1834), 234; J. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: Matthew* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1870), 342—343; R. Mounce, *Matthew: A Good News Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 243 are among a few examples discussed in Chapter One.

⁸⁴⁸ S. Grindheim, ‘Ignorance Is Bliss: Attitudinal Aspects of the Judgment According to Works in Matthew 25:31—46’, *NT 50* (2008): 313—314.

⁸⁴⁹ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament*, 387.

⁸⁵⁰ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament*, 387—388.

now the story of Abraham's people is to be brought back on course by a new exodus, by the renewal of the covenant. As a result, Israel is again faced with a choice. Life or death, curse or blessing; the house on the rock or the sand; the wise or the foolish maidens; the sheep or the goats.⁸⁵¹

Wright's proposal works in tandem with this thesis as the principles of his argument align with the view of Psalm 80 as a key source in the Sheep and the Goats.

With Psalm 80 as the background text, the themes of the vineyard spreading its branches, and the psalmist asking God to favourably respond to his people are prominent. Asaph had beseeched God for Israel's victory, which did not come as Assyria permanently obliterated Israel. Matthew may well adopt this idea and transpose it onto the historical situation of the Roman—Jewish war as a statement of the destruction of both Israel in the past and Judah in Matthew's present.

Wazana writes, 'Psalm 80 portrays Israel as a cosmic vine, devastated by its enemies. Following a description of the glorious past (vv.9—12) the poet complains about the current dismal situation (13—14) ...'⁸⁵² Hossfeld and Zenger add that verses 6—7 intensify the lament with an accusatory tone toward Yahweh, who has not protected the flock from misery, suffering and death.⁸⁵³ They state further that since the psalm blames Yahweh himself for Israel's situation, there is an expectation that the crisis will end with repentance.⁸⁵⁴

When Matthew's Jesus reshapes these themes in the Sheep and the Goats, the concept of covenant and paradigm shift was not lost on him in the crafting his defense of the post—temple,

⁸⁵¹ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament*, 388.

⁸⁵² N. Wazana, 'Anzu and Ziz: Great Mythical Birds in Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Rabbinic Traditions', *JANES* 31 (2008): 117.

⁸⁵³ F. Hossfeld & E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51—100* (Stuttgart: Finken & Bumiller, 2000), 462.

⁸⁵⁴ F. Hossfeld & E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51—100*, 464.

pro—gentile messianic kingdom.⁸⁵⁵ The possibility of taking up Psalm 80 would offer an easier transition into these themes of judgment. Of further importance for this thesis is how the Sheep and the Goats uses these very concepts for its criteria of judgment.

Wright states, ‘And, if my suggestion is correct, Matthew has woven this covenantal choice into the very structure of the gospel, portraying it as the choice set before his contemporaries by Jesus, and thereby himself setting the choice before the church of his own day.’⁸⁵⁶ As discussed last chapter, the criteria of judgment in the Sheep and the Goats resemble these very concepts of blessings and curses from the Torah that were taken up by many prophets, the narratives of the Tanakh and the author of Psalm 80.

The Sheep and the Goats is not about the end of the space—time continuum; it is cataclysmic eschatology that demonstrates how a new people of God have been put in charge of the vineyard. It is the πάντα τὰ ἔθνη who are held to this standard, a critical interpretative point. Deuteronomy 28:64 LXX reads καὶ διασπερεῖ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἀπ’ ἄκρου τῆς γῆς ἕως ἄκρου τῆς γῆς. In Psalm 79:9 LXX the psalmist reminds God that he ἐξέβαλες ἔθνη to plant the vineyard and in Daniel 7:14 LXX the Son of Man receives his kingdom καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς κατὰ γένη καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῷ λατρεύουσα.

The ἔθνη were once destined for curses and enemies of God’s people, but the Son of Man’s kingdom will incorporate them into the fold. In the Sheep and the Goats it is now πάντα τὰ ἔθνη who will be judged based on criteria that speak to covenantal standards. The standard placed on the ἔθνη is to treat τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων in a blessed manner.

⁸⁵⁵ Whether the historical Jesus presented this teaching or not will be discussed in the conclusion.

⁸⁵⁶ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament*, 388.

The ἔθνη are not inherently the enemy of God's people, rather they are called to be a blessing to God's afflicted people and in turn become God's people. When Jesus dies the veil of the temple is torn (Matthew 27:51) after he has announced its destruction in chapters 23—24. This action signals the departure of God from the temple and into the larger world that the Son of Man now possesses in his kingship. No longer is Jerusalem a centralized location of worship as becomes clear in Matthew 28:19 when the Lord sends his disciples out of the Promised Land into πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. By sending the disciples out of the Promised Land, an important theme from Psalm 80 comes to the surface. The new tenants of the vineyard will send its branches out and its shoots to the river and fill the earth with the branches of the vine through the new missionary endeavors of the disciples (Psalm 80:10).

The kingdom has come to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη and they will be judged according to whether they treat 'the least' in a manner of covenantal blessing or curse. In the Son of Man's kingdom, there is no longer a distinction between Israel and πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, as they are all subject to the new covenant, and judgment is based on their reaction to that covenant. True to this thesis, Matthew's use of Psalm 80 shows a dramatic shift in the Son of Man's kingdom.

This proposed understanding of Matthew means that the crisis of 70 CE was avoidable if Israel had been faithful to the covenant. The place of Israel in the Messiah's vineyard could have been different. No argument is being made that the Gentiles would have been completely excluded from the kingdom if Israel had responded, but the dynamics of Israel's role in spreading the gospel would have been disparate from how the events unfolded. Matthew's Jesus views the defiance of Israel toward his message as a breach of their obligation to the living God. However, rejecting the Messiah is a rupture in the covenant beyond anything that has previously

occurred. The results for Israel are dire as the role they were supposed to play in Yahweh's cosmic scheme is irrevocably altered. Now it is Jesus' small group of Jewish disciples who are the centre of this church movement where the Gentiles take on the role of tending to the vineyard.

What does Jesus mean when he speaks of sending the angels to συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη? The same event is described earlier in 24:31 when Jesus says ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων ἀπ' ἄκρων οὐρανῶν ἕως [τῶν] ἄκρων αὐτῶν. Jesus lamented Jerusalem saying ποσάκις ἠθέλησα ἐπισυναγαγεῖν τὰ τέκνα σου, which now will not happen as the Son of Man will gather his children from all nations in the new covenant.

This image is a reminder of Israel's lost tribes and the hope they would return from their dispersion to worship at Zion:

καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ σαλπιούσιν τῇ σάλπιγγι τῇ μεγάλῃ, καὶ ἦξουσιν οἱ ἀπολόμενοι ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων καὶ οἱ ἀπολόμενοι ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ κυρίῳ ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιον ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ. (Isaiah 27:13)

Isaiah imagines a time when the lost tribes will begin a pilgrimage to Jerusalem that would then allow the nation to worship together again. This scenario has changed in the new model where the sending out of the angels to the nations corresponds with sending the disciples to the nations. Actions in the Son of Man's heavenly kingdom are mirrored on earth as πάντα τὰ ἔθνη are now called to worship. The key differences being that there is no longer a temple and Matthew 25:31—46 does not portray πάντα τὰ ἔθνη being gathered to Jerusalem. The nations are now called to worship the Son of Man on his heavenly throne, and their eternal destiny depends on

their reaction to the vineyard workers spreading the vines. This ingathering is the call of the nations to worship as opposed to the lost tribes of Israel.

Similar themes are found in *4 Ezra* 13, *2 Baruch* 78 and Revelation 7, which address the hope that the tribes of Israel exiled by Assyria will be restored. The gathering being spoken of is not angels flying all human beings to a geographical location. It is an image of the covenantal people of God living in the confines of the new vineyard, which is the whole world. Where *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* or Revelation describe the gathering of lost tribes, Jesus speaks of gathering the elect, who are the nations. Such a statement is a dire critique of Israel, whose hopes for their gathering from among the nations are shattered as the Son of Man gathers the nations instead, according no place of privilege for Israel.

Who then are τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων?⁸⁵⁷ Luz identifies three interpretations: the universal interpretation, the classic interpretation, and the exclusive interpretation. In the universal interpretation τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων are all the poor and needy of the world.⁸⁵⁸ In the classic interpretation τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων are the members of the Christian community and πάντα τὰ ἔθνη was understood universally while the role of non—Christians in this scene of judgment was unclear.⁸⁵⁹ The exclusive interpretation sees τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων as members of the Christian community and πάντα τὰ ἔθνη as ‘all pagans’, whereby the pagans will be saved or lost depending on their treatment of Christians.⁸⁶⁰ Luz himself determines that the least are *Wanderradikalen*.⁸⁶¹

⁸⁵⁷ S. Gray, *The Least of My Brothers Matthew 25:31—46 A History of Interpretation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) provides a thorough history of interpretation on the subject and was discussed in chapter one.

⁸⁵⁸ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 521.

⁸⁵⁹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 526.

⁸⁶⁰ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 529.

⁸⁶¹ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 539.

Analysis of Matthew's gospel demonstrates that the least are the twelve disciples who have replaced the twelve tribes of Israel. There are several reasons to draw this conclusion. There is a kinship between Matthew 25:31—46 and Matthew 10:40—42, where Jesus equates receiving a disciple with receiving him.⁸⁶² The disciples are told they will spread the gospel to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη earlier in the discourse at 24:14, then at 28:16—20 he specifically commands the eleven remaining disciples to preach to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.⁸⁶³ Following Cope, the phrase ἐν τῶν μικρῶν τούτων (Matthew 18:14) 'unmistakably refers to the disciples in spite of the redundant pronoun.'⁸⁶⁴ When further considering the comparison between 10:42 and the direct connection to the Sheep and the Goats, τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων are not part of the judgment, making a strong case for 'the least' being the disciples.⁸⁶⁵

On three different occasions in Matthew's gospel, Jesus uses ἀδελφοὶ while addressing a crowd, yet in each case a distinction is made that the disciples are present (5:47, 12:46—49, 23:8). Considering the line drawn by Jesus in 12:46—49 that his true ἀδελφοὶ are those who do his father's will, interpreting ἀδελφοὶ to mean simply Jews is not practical. The disciples are his brothers, and throughout the gospel the distinction of μαθητής is usually a reference to the twelve, though it is not entirely discernible in every case when μαθητής may incorporate a larger group.⁸⁶⁶ The private setting of the Olivet Discourse is limited to the twelve (24:3), and the twelve are commissioned to preach in 10:40—42 where the correlation occurs that service done

⁸⁶² J. Michaels, 'Apostolic Hardships and Righteous Gentiles', *JBL* 84:1 (1965): 27

⁸⁶³ J. Michaels, 'Apostolic Hardships and Righteous Gentiles', 28.

⁸⁶⁴ L. Cope, 'Matthew XXV:31—46 'The Sheep and the Goats' Reinterpreted', *NT* 11 (1969): 39.

⁸⁶⁵ L. Cope, 'Matthew XXV:31—46 'The Sheep and the Goats' Reinterpreted', 39.

⁸⁶⁶ 5:1, 8:23, 9:10, 9:19, 9:37, 10:1, 10:24, 11:1, 12:1, 12:49, 13:36, 14:15, 15:2, 15:12, 15:23, 15:32, 16:5, 16:21, 17:6, 17:19, 18:1, 19:23, 20:17, 21:20, 23:1, 24:1, 26:1, 26:8, 26:17, 26:20, 26:40, 28:7, 28:16.

to them is service to Christ. Lastly, the eleven are specifically commissioned to go to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (28:16), making the case stronger that it is how πάντα τὰ ἔθνη respond to the eleven.

Israel's covenantal status has been lost, replaced by new workers who will faithfully tend to the vineyard. The author of Psalm 80 beseeched God to overthrow the ἔθνη as he had once before and restore Israel from the covenantal curses being inflicted upon them. However, the vineyard has been taken from Israel and given to another ἔθνη (Matthew 21:43) for which the twelve disciples are to serve as the foundation. When Jesus tells the twelve καθήσεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐπὶ δώδεκα θρόνους κρίνοντες τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ (Matthew 19:28), he describes this shift in position as a change of authority. Israel will stand judgment with everyone else based on how they treat the disciples.

God will tend to his vineyard as Psalm 80 prays for, but it will not be the vineyard imagined by the psalmist. In a discourse that speaks about the historical situation of 70 CE and Rome's utter disregard for Israel during that campaign, this is a painful and shocking situation. Jesus dismisses the concept of punitive action against Rome for the temple, referring to the period as simply ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος rising against one another. The fourth beast is not slain. God does not cast the ἔθνη out on behalf of his vine, rather πάντα τὰ ἔθνη have every opportunity to be part of the approved fold on the basis of their treatment of Jesus' disciples, not their treatment of Israel. Just as important is the reality that Israel as part of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη will also be judged for how they have treated Jesus' disciples, removing any distinct privilege in the criteria of their judgment compared to the rest of the ἔθνη. This reading of the Sheep and the Goats presents a sobering portrait of Matthew's view of his people and the situation of their day.

Scholars have struggled to fit the Sheep and the Goats into a systematic theology because it lacks key elements such as resurrection, a millennial period and any clearly discernible final conflict between good and evil. Further difficulties for systemization of the Sheep and the Goats arise in the Olivet Discourse clearly beginning with references to the Roman—Jewish war, the παρουσία occurring Εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων, and the statement in 24:34 that οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται.

A Tale of Two Judges

The Sheep and the Goats, as well as the Olivet Discourse as a whole, is not about world—ending eschatology. This portrait of judgment is intended to be read in tandem with the doom pronounced on the temple, just as the παρουσία is tied to the temple and not about the end of the space—time continuum. Matthew is not apocalyptic literature, but his common themes with apocalyptic writings have led to the Olivet Discourse being viewed in a restricted manner as a little apocalypse, with various creative exegetes finding ways of shifting the timeframe of the book back and forth to prevent any notion of scandal that Jesus was a failed millenarian prophet. While some sections of apocalyptic literature may deal with world—ending eschatology, it more prominently deals with the hope of restoration, regained fortune and status that comes when Yahweh acts.

The reading presented here of Psalm 80 in Matthew and its meaning does not eliminate the possibility of God’s recreation of the earth, nor does it deny any possibility of a second coming of Christ. This research intends to show the possibility that those are not the concerns of Matthew’s Olivet Discourse and the Sheep and the Goats. Matthew 25:31—46 is not a passage dedicated to the end of the world and final judgment, rather it is a description of the standard for

Jesus' kingdom and the call to all nations, not Israel alone, to inherit the blessings of the Son of Man.

When the psalmist asks God to come he is asking for God to act on behalf of Israel in judgment against the Gentiles, not to physically descend from the cosmos. The coming of the Son of Man is his coming to a heavenly throne and acting on behalf of his people in this position of authority. However, his actions are on behalf of his disciples as he will vindicate them in victory, not Israel. The disciples are marginalized and oppressed, and God will call the nations to account for the world has treated them. God will send forth the trumpet call of worship and summon the nations to his throne, which is not in Jerusalem, it is heaven.

Jesus stands before Pontius Pilate in the last hours of his life on earth, having been handed over to the prefect by the chief priests and elders. Here he is, the Son of Man whom the psalmist begged God to send, with a crowd of Israelites shouting 'crucify him'. Matthew intends to paint a paradoxical portrait with this scene where the Roman prefect washes his hands of Jesus' death (27:24) while the crowd shouts that Jesus' blood will be on them and their children (27:25). This scene is difficult to read as Matthew reveals an Israel more willing to put their own Messiah to death than the reigning Roman prefect. Matthew's reader already knows the end is coming for Israel, but this knowledge does little to nullify the painful reality of how truly lost Israel has become.

Matthew's description of Jesus' sentencing abounds with irony read next to the Sheep and the Goats. Pilate takes his seat in judgment with the crowd gathered before him to decide whether the infamous Barabbas or Jesus should be freed (27:15—19). This is now the second time in the gospel the ἀρχιερεῖς have gathered before a Roman appointed authority, the first in

2:4 when Herod tried to kill the infant Jesus. No dream will save Jesus this time as Pilate's wife warns the prefect to have nothing to do with the righteous Jesus (27:19), but this will not inspire Pilate to intervene for Jesus. He will be crucified as the 'king of the Jews' with a man at his right and a man at his left (27:37—38).

Following the resurrection, Jesus meets the disciples on a designated mountain to send them out of the Promised Land and spread the vine to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. In contrast to Acts 1:4 where Jesus issues the command for his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until the appointed time, Matthew's Jesus meets his disciples in Galilee. Quoting Isaiah 9, Matthew describes Galilee as Galilee of the Gentiles (Matthew 4:15). It is here in Galilee of the Gentiles where the disciples will begin their new role in bringing the vine to the Gentiles (28:16—20).

The Sheep and the Goats is a powerful critique of Judaism in a time when the Messiah had come and disaster struck his people Israel. By combining Daniel 7 and Psalm 80, a cataclysmic eschatological shift has taken place whereby Israel is no longer privileged and πάντα τὰ ἔθνη now had equal footing with Israel. Those who act in a manner befitting of covenantal blessing toward the disciples receive life; those who act in a manner of cursing receive punishment. The Messiah came, but the fourth beast was not slain, rather Israel faced destruction. God did not cast out the nations to re—establish Israel as his vineyard, instead he fired Israel as his workers and put new tenants in charge of his affairs. The Son of Man then orders his new twelve, the disciples, to leave the holy land and bring πάντα τὰ ἔθνη into the new kingdom, effectively spreading the vines of his new vineyard that will bear fruit. The Promised Land is no longer promised as the vineyard's location has expanded to the whole earth, allowing the Son of Man to be a blessing to all nations. In this manner God fulfills promises to David and

Abraham, bringing Matthew's audience back to the first line of the gospel: Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.

Contrary to the many writers that view Matthew 25:31—46 as the end, the passage is both an end and a beginning. The Son of Man's journey has placed him on a heavenly throne where he is the shepherd—king of the world. All the nations of the world will be held accountable for their treatment of the disciples and the church, not the destruction of Israel. Daniel 7 and Psalm 80 reflect different aspects of the Son of Man's kingship in Matthew. The shepherd—king is on his throne with authority over all the nations, but as in the days of the Assyrian boar ravaging Israel, so now Judah faces permanent destruction. Yahweh will not come on behalf of Israel to save them from Rome, and the empire will not be punished for their treatment of Judah. All people and all nations will be held to one standard on how they respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The War That Changed the World

When Josephus describes the Roman—Jewish war, he does so in language that vividly portrays horror and atrocities experienced by the Jews of his day. Near the end of the siege against Jerusalem, mounds of carcasses filled the city producing a dreadful stench that saturated the air as soldiers within the city marched over the corpses of their fellow citizens.⁸⁶⁷ Three years of war were coming to a dreadful end for those within Jerusalem’s walls. Titus was on the verge of successfully finishing what his father Vespasian had started in 66 CE. The smoke that billowed up from the city at the height of the siege was not the pleasing aroma of sacrifices offered to Yahweh on the altar at his temple, it was the temple itself burning to the ground.

The temple’s destruction was a moment of darkness for Judaism felt both in Judaea and around the empire. Goodman writes, ‘It would be hard to overestimate the impact of this cataclysmic event on all Jews, wherever they lived.’⁸⁶⁸ In modern vernacular this war and its aftermath has been described as, ‘the near—East’s equivalent of a nuclear blast – the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in the Roman—Jewish war of 66—73 CE – changed forever the way people who worship Yahweh think and act.’⁸⁶⁹ Yet even with such a catastrophic conclusion, the narratives from Philo and Josephus do not paint a portrait of inevitable war or destruction in the sixty years leading up to the beginning of the conflict.⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁷ F. Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Greek text accessed through www.perseus.tufts.edu. Consulted text: W. Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 6.1.1—3.

⁸⁶⁸ M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 424.

⁸⁶⁹ D. Akenson, *Saint Saul*, 8.

⁸⁷⁰ M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 390—395.

The declaration of war against Rome began with the temple in 66 CE when a priest named Eleazar persuaded the priestly cadre to cease the ritual of offering sacrifice to God for the Roman emperor.⁸⁷¹ Following this declaration of displeasure with Nero, violence erupted in Caesarea between Jews and Greeks over a perceived defilement near a Jewish holy place.⁸⁷² This tension led Jewish zealots to take the temple mount forcefully, and a large group of Jewish loyalists rallied to defend them.⁸⁷³ Nero, not far removed from his local persecution of Christians in Rome, chose Vespasian as his instrument of destruction allocating an astounding 60,000 troops for the task, which is more than Rome deployed for the invasion of Britain in 43 CE.⁸⁷⁴ By the end of the campaign Vespasian had become emperor, Titus had obliterated Jerusalem and burnt its temple to the ground leaving tens of thousands of rotting, brutally executed corpses within the city.⁸⁷⁵

Examining the horrors of this war makes it possible to imagine how deeply it affected both the Jewish and Christian conscience of the time. Carroll writes, ‘The Roman attack on Jerusalem...culminating in the destruction of the Temple, occurred just as the followers of Jesus were coming into their own as a coherent movement.’⁸⁷⁶ Yet as Christianity was coming into its own, the events of 70 presented Judaism with its own devastating reality as the temple burnt to the ground. ‘There could not be clearer evidence of the withdrawal of divine favour.’⁸⁷⁷

Jewish—Christians of the period, to which Matthew belonged, were faced with the painful reality of a national catastrophe while simultaneously preaching the victory of the

⁸⁷¹ M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 403.

⁸⁷² J. Carroll, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2011), 82—83.

⁸⁷³ J. Carroll, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, 83.

⁸⁷⁴ M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 405.

⁸⁷⁵ J. Carroll, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, 84.

⁸⁷⁶ J. Carroll, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, 81.

⁸⁷⁷ M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 424.

Messiah on the cross. How could the anguish of their people living in a post—temple world be reconciled with the arrival of their king and the full—scale inclusion of Gentiles into that kingdom? While Jewish—Christians in Matthew’s community proclaimed the victory of Jesus and preached the gospel to the Gentiles, Jews in Judaea were burying the bodies of their neighbors left by gentile invaders. To put it another way, ‘In effect, the great exile had begun again.’⁸⁷⁸

Rethinking the Sheep and the Goats

Chapter one’s history of research demonstrates difficulties interpreters encounter with the Sheep and the Goats. Matthew 25:31—46 never mentions the resurrection of the dead or any type of earthly recreation. Jesus does not describe a utopian kingdom on earth, and he does not return to vanquish his antithesis the antichrist. Jesus offers no hope for a re—established Jewish kingdom in the Promised Land, and the lost tribes of Israel do not return from exile. The Sheep and the Goats creates many challenges for interpreters attempting to fit the passage into world ending eschatological models.

The Sheep and the Goats retells Psalm 80 and Daniel 7 to demonstrate the new covenantal standards of Jesus’ messianic kingdom. Jesus combines the two texts to explain that the Son of Man from Daniel and Psalm 80 had arrived, but Israel had not been victorious. Rome was not defeated by the Messiah and the exile of the scattered tribes did not end. How could this be if Jesus was the Messiah? Israel’s failure to honour the Messiah and their covenant led to their destruction once again. However, Jesus offers no hope for an earthly Davidic king because he is the eternal Davidic king and cosmic Son of Man enthroned in heaven.

⁸⁷⁸ J. Carroll, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, 87.

Jesus begins chapter 24 by describing the day of the Lord's coming on Jerusalem. The progression of the discourse offers little reason to look away from the events of 70 CE. Jesus never directly indicates significant changes in timeframe, rather he constantly warns of the need to watch. The layering of the coming Son of Man and the parousia of the Son Man make separating these events implausible. Likewise, there is no merit in separating the coming Son of Man in verses 24:29—31 from the coming in 25:31—46. Jesus' claim that all of these events would take place in this generation means the wicked generation he rejected would see the fulfillment.

It is also fruitless to limit Jesus to the role of a failed millenarian prophet. The Jesus movement did not wither and die when it became clear he had so spectacularly failed in his prediction. Matthew was probably writing after 70 CE and shows no concern of scandal in recording the coming Son of Man prophecy. He even redacts Mark to expand that prophetic declaration significantly.

Psalm 80 as a background text for the Sheep and the Goats has linguistic merit and opens up new possibilities for interpreting the passage. The thirteen common points between Psalm 80 and Matthew 25:31—46 explain the unusual combination of titles for Jesus, and Psalm 80 contains an important vine theme echoed in Matthew's narrative. Psalm 80 calls for God to act on Israel's behalf and judge the Gentiles for their treatment of Israel. The Sheep and the Goats retells the story of the Son of Man's kingdom to explain that the new covenant looks different. Gentiles will not be judged on how they have treated Israel, they will be judged based on their response to the message of the disciples. The Promised Land will not be restored and God will not summon the lost tribes scattered by Assyria back to worship at the temple. God strengthened

the Son of Man at his right, but the workers of the vineyard did not return as the psalmist had promised.

The Son of Man calls the whole world to worship, not just Israel. The psalmist asked God to tend to the vine, but God placed new workers in the vine that exclude Israel's preeminence. Reading Matthew 25:31—46 as a retelling of Old Testament themes makes the passage an ongoing call to response. King Jesus is summoning the lost from all over the world to his cosmic throne, to respond to the message of his new vineyard workers. Eternal life and death are bound up in the response to the message of the twelve disciples. God has restored the vine taken from Egypt and transformed it into a vine that will not be destroyed again. The new vine is the cosmic vine of an eternal kingdom that is beyond destruction by any earthly enemy.

God calls the world, not just Israel, to return in worship. The cosmic king spread his vine to all nations, calling all to respond in this new paradigm. The Sheep and the Goats describes the new ongoing standard of this covenant, not a one—time act of judgment. God will bless those who treat the Son of Man well through his disciples and the church they started. God will curse those who treat the Son of Man poorly through his disciples and the church they started. God's elect is the church who now care for the vine, completing the story of Israel. Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham, has become a blessing to all of the nations with the gospel as the standard of blessing and cursing, not how the Gentiles treat Israel.

Israel and the Promise

This bleak conclusion for Israel will undoubtedly be unsatisfactory to those who claim Israel remains God's chosen people. Romans 9—11 reflects the challenge Paul faces when attempting to explain the difficult relationship between Israel and the church. Paul turns to Isaiah 59 to help

the Romans understand their role as branches abnormally grafted onto the olive tree after expressing his heartache for his nation. He writes in 11:26 οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται. There are multiple ways to understand this statement and the future Paul imagines for Israel.

One possibility is that Jesus will return for a future period of national conversion of Israel where promises and blessings are again poured out on the nation as they respond to the message of Christ.⁸⁷⁹ The remnant of Israel which Paul is part of (11:1—5) may now include Gentiles who are part of Israel, though they are not a new Israel and are unnaturally grafted in as those who cannot be Jewish.⁸⁸⁰ Paul may be imagining a reverse Jewish expectation in which the pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Jerusalem no longer underscores Israel's triumph. On the contrary, Israel's rejection of the Messiah leads to the inclusion of the Gentiles, who will stir the Jews to jealousy and they will return to their Messiah.⁸⁸¹

On the contrary Paul never details a return to the promised land, the rebuilding of the temple or any form of millennial kingdom in which all of Israel's promises are fulfilled.⁸⁸² Paul's letter to the Romans is filled with the tension of his understanding that Yahweh is the God of the whole world, though the Gentiles receive God's blessing through Israel's Messiah.⁸⁸³ Block discusses the Deuteronomistic notion that there are two Israels in the past, one physical and one spiritual, in which Moses envisions a day when the two are coterminous.⁸⁸⁴ This lends

⁸⁷⁹ J.M. Boice, *Romans Volume 3: God and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1993), 1376—77.

⁸⁸⁰ F.J. Matera, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 278.

⁸⁸¹ J. Dunn, *Romans 9—16*, WBC, (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 682.

⁸⁸² K. Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 183.

⁸⁸³ J. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 45.

⁸⁸⁴ D.I. Block, 'The Doctrine of the Future and Moses: "All Israel Shall be Saved"', in J. Bingham & G. Kreider, eds., *Eschatology: Biblical, Historical, and Practical Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016), 126—127.

to the possibility that Paul envisions some form of spiritual rebirth of Israel without a physical kingdom.

An in—depth analysis of Paul’s views on Israel is beyond the scope of this research, but it is clear from his letters that righteousness comes through Jesus Christ alone (Romans 3—5). Paul writes Romans a decade or more before Jerusalem is razed by the legions of Rome. Returning to Paul’s *παρουσία*, it is difficult to ascertain whether the events of 70 CE would have met his expectations. The same difficulty is present by dismissing Paul’s description of the events in the temple from the Roman—Jewish war, leaping forward to a time in the distant future nowhere indicated in his writings. His point of view may have been different if he had lived to see the war, though one can only speculate.

Paul and Matthew are not the same and the degree of similarity between these two understandings of Israel’s future is a difficult question. If Matthew believed in a millennial kingdom, a mass conversion of Jews into the kingdom of God or a hopeful vision of Israel’s future, he betrays no such belief in his gospel. Paul seems to offer some sense of hope for Israel, without detailing what the hope entails. A more promising outlook for Israel has continued into the present in matters both political and religious.

Matthew’s gospel is not bound to modern readings or political trends any more than he was to presenting a positive future for Israel. Matthew’s Jesus does not relish Israel’s unfaithfulness, he mourns it and laments his people. God’s covenant with Israel was always dependent on fidelity (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28, 30), and God is the owner of the vineyard. God’s decision to open the messianic covenant to all the nations is one that does not damn every Israelite, nor does it give any Israelite a place of honour. All shall be judged on their response to

the message of the gospel. Psalm 80 appeals to God to return to his vineyard. God does this through the work of Jesus the messianic Son of Man, only to find the vineyard workers were not interested. The disciples began the process of stretching the vines throughout the world to bring more sheep into the fold. Many will respond to that message, and many will not, but the standard for all is Christ, his disciples, and his church. It is no longer Israel according to Matthew's vision of Jesus' mission.

The Historical Jesus

The Sheep and the Goats stands as a response to crisis in an era when other Jewish authors were also composing their response to national devastation. In a quest for answers, Psalm 80 provided a vision for the direction of the vine, with new tenants who will be faithful to the vine owner. The question remains: Is Matthew 25:31—46 a teaching of the historical Jesus? At a minimum the core of the passage is rooted in the teachings of Jesus. His condemnation of Israel for rejecting his message, his prediction of doom on the temple and his penchant for word pictures demonstrate a consistency with what is seen throughout the primary literature.

Additionally, by considering Psalm 80 as a background text in this teaching, and in other New Testament passages, there is a consistency of themes and concepts from other gospels that increase the plausibility of the core teaching going back to Jesus. The passage is found only in Matthew, where Matthew's 'characteristic diction and parallelistic style appears everywhere in the passage.'⁸⁸⁵ A degree of stylistic conformity is expected, but the passage does contain prominent themes that develop intricately throughout Matthew. Luz concludes the text either

⁸⁸⁵ R. Gundry, *Matthew*, 419.

originates with Jesus himself or an early Jewish Christian author.⁸⁸⁶ The core teachings concerning Israel, rejection and proselytizing originated with Jesus. The fact that a Jewish Christian author like Matthew has reworked the original teaching to meet the needs of the post—70 CE crisis and more prominently address the inclusion of the Gentiles is also probable.

Sanders accurately identifies the theme of proper ethical treatment of others in the Sheep and the Goats as thematically intrinsic to Matthew and found in passages such as 5:23f and 7:21—7:23.⁸⁸⁷ The independently attested presence of Son of Man sayings throughout the canonical and non—canonical gospels make it reasonable that the historical Jesus spoke of the Son of Man. While Sanders believes the author of Matthew has taken this Son of Man theme and worked it into an entirely new scene of judgment, it is probable that the core teaching has been coloured to meet the needs of the Christian community after 70 CE.⁸⁸⁸ The combination of unique Matthean language and established themes of Israel’s judgment are central themes of Jesus’ teaching that has undergone some level of redaction.

Application for Today

The goal of this research has been to draw attention to Psalm 80 within the Sheep and the Goats and the larger scope of New Testament studies. The hope is that this line of argumentation will create new possibilities of understanding and research for both Psalm 80 in the New Testament and the Sheep and the Goats. There are a variety of applications that can emerge from this research about one’s understanding of eschatology, apocalyptic literature, the meaning of Jerusalem’s fall in 70 CE and the role of Israel according to New Testament authors. Questions

⁸⁸⁶ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 521.

⁸⁸⁷ E. Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 202.

⁸⁸⁸ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium*, 517.

about how Israel fits in the kingdom of God remain ever pertinent in the Christian world and in political affairs.

Support for Israel as God's chosen people remains a major topic in the politics of the United States. The New York Post recently ran a story in which polls suggest 80% of Evangelicals in the United States believe the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was fulfilling Biblical prophecy about Christ's return. Additionally, 60% of those polled believe God's promises in Genesis 12 demand their support for the modern state of Israel as Yahweh has promised to re—establish the kingdom of Israel.⁸⁸⁹ Recently the Mikdash Educational Centre in Israel produced a coin commemorating the move of the United States embassy into Jerusalem. The coin features the faces of Cyrus the Great and Donald Trump side by side, with the inscription: 'And He charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem'.

In January of 2018, Newsweek interviewed evangelicals who believe Donald Trump is God's agent for triggering events that will lead to the rapture and the revelation of the antichrist.⁸⁹⁰ These modern trends demonstrate the need for furthering the discussion of eschatology and its place in Jesus' message. The hope for this look into Matthew's use of Psalm 80 in the Sheep and the Goats is to offer another voice in the dialogue of how New Testament authors used the Old Testament and what it says about Jesus' message for his time and for today.

⁸⁸⁹ P. Bump, 'Half of Evangelicals Support Israel because they Believe it is Important for Fulfilling End—Times Prophecy', *Washington Post* (Accessed from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/05/14/half-of-evangelicals-support-israel-because-they-believe-it-is-important-for-fulfilling-end-times-prophecy/?utm_term=.431d5b806fcf), May 2018.

⁸⁹⁰ C. Maza, 'Trump Will Start the End of the World Claim Evangelicals who Support Him', *Newsweek* (Accessed from: <http://www.newsweek.com/trump-will-bring-about-end-world-evangelicals-end-times-779643>), January 2018.

Another pressing question that emerges from this type of research is whether the modern Christian preoccupation with world—ending eschatology affects the exegesis of biblical material. Significant amounts of literature have been produced over the past fifty years on apocalypticism, ranging from popular mainstream Christian authors like Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye to critical scholarship by Bart Ehrman and Dale Allison. The writings of these authors range from belief in an imminent rapture and return of Jesus to portraying him as a failed prophet of his own time who preached a world about to end. This broad spectrum of views commonly focuses on the teachings of Jesus as inherently rooted in world—ending eschatology, which probably reflects modern concerns more than ancient.

The Roman—Jewish war was a cataclysmic eschatological conflict with dire national ramifications for the Jews of Jesus' era. The events of that bloody conflict were sufficient in themselves for Jesus and/or Matthew to evoke the prophetic language of judgment and destruction to describe those horrors. Considering also the number of scholars who date the gospels to a post—temple year of composition, it begs the question of why early Christians would portray Jesus predicting the end of the world in association to a war that had clearly not led to the world ending. Even if Jesus had in fact predicted the end of the world, why put a failed prediction in writing when it became clear that 70 CE was not the last year of human existence on earth?

Likewise, the proposal of shifting chronology in the Olivet Discourse, back and forth between 70 CE and an undetermined period in the end, is unconvincing. Would Matthew's early audience have detected subtle textual hints leading them to view portions of that discourse as being far beyond their time, while understanding the rest as being indicative of contemporary

national tragedy? While some modern writers are scandalized by the notion of the Roman—Jewish war meriting such world—changing language, those who lived through the war may have had a different view. Though only a few written records concerning the war are extant, these accounts and reactions paint a portrait of catastrophic death and loss.

Looking at the Olivet Discourse and the Sheep and the Goats through the prism of Jesus' generation, without an emphasis on failed predictions or the end of the space—time continuum, opens new possibilities for exegesis. By recognizing potential religio—political material in the gospels, readers can deepen their understanding of the early Christian dialogue with scripture, which was also in dialogue with Jewish history. The success and failure of the past became indicative for understanding Israel's relationship with their God. With the inclusion of Gentiles into the church, the need for a scriptural dialogue became more imperative than ever. The expectations of the Messiah versus the reality of the Messiah left Jesus' early followers with a need to engage the scriptures to understand God's kingdom in this new paradigm.

Ultimately, plausible new readings of New Testament texts can provide new insights into the origins and emergence of Christian communities, faith, and scripture. The rich imagination, creativity and exegesis of the New Testament authors provide a deepening understanding of how the Jesus movement matured and evolved into the largest religion on the planet. A more detailed understanding of their potential use of passages like Psalm 80 in the construction of the gospels and epistles leads to further comprehension of the way Jesus shaped their worldview and the way world events shaped the New Testament's view of Jesus.

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