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# Exodus Allusions in the Midsection of the Gospel of Matthew

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## Abstract

Matthean scholarship is divided as to whether the first recipients of the Gospel considered themselves to be part of early formative Judaism. Within the context of this debate, this study calls for the recognition of multiple exodus allusions in the midsection of the Gospel. These allusions reveal an Evangelist who either anticipated the possible need for withdrawal from hostile host communities or, equally plausibly, affirmed an ongoing separation process.

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## 1. Exodus Allusions and Their Impact

A prominent debate within Matthean scholarship concerns the distance between Matthew and his first readers, often characterised in communal terms, and the wider Jewish community.<sup>1</sup> Many scholars, such as Andrew Overman, Anthony Saldarini, and contributors to a recent volume edited by Anders Runesson and Daniel Gurtner, maintain that Matthew and his readers were Christian Jews, part of a Matthean community embedded within Judaism.<sup>2</sup>

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1. In general, I presume a more open audience for the Gospel rather than a narrowly defined, geographically, and sociologically distinct Matthean community. See Richard Bauckham, 'For Whom Were Gospels Written?' in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); Cedric E. W. Vine, *The Audience of Matthew: An Appraisal of the Local Audience Thesis*, LNTS 496 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014).

2. Overman argues that 'the people of Matthew's community did not understand themselves as "Christians". On the contrary they were Jews.' J. Andrew Overman,

In contrast, other scholars, such as Georg Strecker, Robert Gundry, Ulrich Luz, and Graham Stanton, have argued that Matthew and his readers were Jewish Christians who had distanced themselves in some manner from wider Judaism.<sup>3</sup>

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*Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: A Study of the Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 5. On Matthew's community as a Christian-Jewish community closely aligned with Judaism, see Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 11–26; David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 109–163; Anders Runesson, 'Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations: Matthean Community History as Pharisaic Intragroup Conflict', *JBL* 127.1 (2008): 100, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25610109>; Anders Runesson and Daniel M. Gurtner, ed., *Matthew within Judaism: Israel and the Nations in the First Gospel* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv13qfv9z>; Isaac W. Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE: Reading Matthew and Luke-Acts as Jewish Texts*, WUNT 2/355 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-152840-8>; John Kampen, *Matthew within Sectarian Judaism*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 38–67, <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300245561>. For Konrad, Matthew's community is Jewish-Christian and is to be distinguished from Mark's more pro-Gentile community. Matthias Konrad, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, WUNT 358 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 43–68, <https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-153887-2>.

3. Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus*, FRLANT 82 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 15–35; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, Hermeneia 61A (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 54; Graham N. Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew', in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical and Social-Scientific Approaches*, ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1992); Graham N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 1–19, 146–168; Graham N. Stanton, 'Revisiting Matthew's Communities', in *Society of Biblical Literature 1994 Seminar Papers*, ed. E. H. Lovering (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994). Gundry proposes that Matthew's community was neither 'a Jewish sect bent on reforming Judaism or was a Jewish sect just now in the process of coming out of Judaism'. It had, for Gundry, already made a 'clean break'. Robert H. Gundry, 'A Responsive Evaluation of the Social History of the Matthean Community in Roman Syria', in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, ed. David L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 63. See also Wolfgang Trilling, *Das wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, 3rd ed., SANT 10 (Munich: Kösel, 1964), 41–42; S. van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 7, 166–172; Eduard Schweizer, *Matthäus und seine Gemeinde* (Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1974); Eduard Schweizer, 'Matthew's Church', in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, ed. Graham N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995); John P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church and Morality in the First Gospel* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 12–17; Wesley G. Olmstead, 'A Gospel for a New Nation: Once More, the ἔθνος of Matthew 21.43', in *Jesus, Matthew's Gospel and Early Christianity: Studies in Memory of Graham N. Stanton*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner, Joel Willitts, and Richard A. Burridge (London: Bloomsbury, 2011); Robert K. McIver, *Mainstream or Marginal? The Matthean Community in Early Christianity* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), 77–83, 165–191, 208–230.

Often overlooked in this debate is the impact of the Evangelist's call in Matthew 10:14 to withdraw from host communities that fail to extend hospitality to the followers of Jesus. The proposition of this study is that this call to withdraw is amplified within the midsection of the Gospel, approximately chapters 12 to 17, through an extensive range of complementary intertextual devices intended to evoke the exodus of Israel from Egypt.<sup>4</sup> The significance of this section for our purposes is that it follows the rejection of Jesus's prophetic appeal by the cities of Galilee and his subsequent condemnation of them (cf. 11:20-24).

How we determine the significance of these devices depends upon our own assumptions as readers regarding the referential nature of the Gospel. One scholarly approach, ably represented by Strecker, is to read the Gospel in a historicising manner in which the events recounted in chapters 12 to 17 relate to an unrepeatable past during a real or so-called 'time of Jesus'.<sup>5</sup> The Evangelist recounts the withdrawal from the cities in Galilee, the feeding accounts, and the transfiguration in the manner he does because that is the way events occurred or, for more sceptical readers, the way he wants us to believe they occurred.<sup>6</sup> So, reader, make of the accounts what you will. Other scholars, such as Luz,

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4. Here I heed Luz's warning that this section of the Gospel resists neat categorisation as a discrete narrative unit. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 35. For affirmations of 'New Moses' imagery in the Gospel of Matthew, see Benjamin W. Bacon, 'The "Five Books" of Matthew against the Jews', *ExpTim* 15.8 (1918); Benjamin W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (London: Constable & Company, 1930); Helen Milton, 'Structure of the Prologue to St Matthew's Gospel', *JBL* 81.2 (1962): 178-179, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3264753>; Günther Bornkamm, 'End-Expectation and Church in Matthew', in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, ed. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H. J. Held (London: SCM Press, 1982), 35; Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Michael P. Theophilus, *Jesus as New Moses in Matthew 8-9: Jewish Typology in First Century Greek Literature*, Gorgias studies in philosophy and theology 4 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011). Against Moses typology, see Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 89-92; W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, Brown Judaic Studies 186 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964; repr., Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 25-93, 107.

5. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 191-194; Georg Strecker, 'The Concept of History in Matthew', in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, ed. Graham N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995); Georg Strecker, *The Theology of the New Testament*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Berlin/Louisville: Walter de Gruyter/Westminster John Knox, 2000), 368-371. Cf. Oscar Cullmann, *Peter, Disciple, Apostle, Martyr: A Historical and Theological Study*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1962), 32-33.

6. See Allison's gentle reminder that the evangelists perceived their Gospels to be 'history' and that the vast majority of their readers up until the eighteenth century, in contrast with much of today's academy, have taken them as literal accounts. Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 435-462.

read the text in a more transparent manner, as referring more directly to the ‘time of the church’, a partial reflection to varying degrees of the situation of the author and his readers at the time of the Gospel’s composition.<sup>7</sup>

Most scholars view the Gospel as reflecting in some way both periods. Roland Deines challenges us to consider a third period, that between the ministry of Jesus and the time of the Gospel’s composition. Deines argues concerning the ‘time of Jesus’s life and especially of his ministry’ that ‘if Matthew wrote a βίος of Jesus, we can assume that he wanted to say something about what actually happened in this period’.<sup>8</sup> Understood in this sense, Gospel texts are ‘primarily descriptive and not necessarily prescriptive’ and ‘might intend nothing beyond what they tell’.<sup>9</sup> Deines raises questions we might ask regarding a subsequent period, that between Jesus and the author:

How did the words and deeds of Jesus shape and influence his followers in the time between the end of Jesus’s earthly ministry and their current situation when Matthew was writing? What experiences did they have of his teaching shaping their own lives and religious practices, but also what reactions did they suffer from their compatriots?<sup>10</sup>

Finally, addressing those scholars who date the composition of the Gospel post-70 CE, the impact of the destruction of the Temple must be taken into account in terms of its implications for law-keeping and the maintenance of ritual and moral cleanness.

Elsewhere, I have argued at length for the ambiguity of the distinction between the ‘time of Jesus’ and the ‘time of the church’ as well as its supporting literary distinctions of implied author/implied reader and implied reader/real reader.<sup>11</sup> I remain sceptical that objective criteria can be found to distinguish adequately between ‘historicising’ and ‘contemporising’ elements in the text.<sup>12</sup>

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7. Luz states, for example that the ‘disciples of Jesus are transparent for the present situation. Behind them stands Matthew’s community.’ Ulrich Luz, ‘The Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew’, in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, ed. Graham N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 128.

8. Roland Deines, ‘Jesus and the Torah According to the Gospel of Matthew’, in *The Gospel of Matthew in its Historical and Theological Context: Papers from the International Conference in Moscow, September 24 to 28, 2018*, ed. Mikhail Seleznev, William R. G. Loader, and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 307.

9. Deines, ‘Jesus and the Torah’, 310.

10. Deines, ‘Jesus and the Torah’, 308.

11. Vine, *Audience of Matthew*, 10–31.

12. David R. Bauer, *The Gospel of the Son of God: An Introduction to Matthew* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 66–74. Bauer proposes that contemporisation is present in the Gospel’s presentation of the relationship between Israel and the post-Easter

It means that we cannot assume that everything that Matthew describes is necessarily prescriptive for his audience. As such, I would accept with Deines 'the assumption that the Gospel of Matthew wants to portray the life of Jesus first and foremost' while affirming that the Evangelist's selection of events and discursive approach may well reflect to a lesser degree Deines's second and possibly third periods.<sup>13</sup>

We should also note that the descriptive and prescriptive purposes of the text are not mutually exclusive. The Gospel participates in the Graeco-Roman genre of biography and, as such, may reflect a number of purposes, including encomium, exemplification, information, instruction, apology, and polemic.<sup>14</sup> As well as performing a descriptive or informational function, confronting the reader with the 'historical happened-ness' of historical events,<sup>15</sup> the Evangelist also intended his Gospel to create a new reality. The Gospel achieves this through instruction and polemic. This point has recently been made by Adele Reinhartz with respect to the Fourth Gospel.<sup>16</sup> Reinhartz argues that within the Fourth Gospel there is a *rhetoric of affiliation*, motifs that encourage the reader to believe and become part of a new family, and a *rhetoric of disaffiliation*, motifs that encourage distance between followers of Jesus and those who reject Jesus as Messiah. Reinhartz criticises the Johannine community hypothesis for failing to explain why a 'gospel intended for those who have already suffered for their faith' would 'engage in such a pervasive rhetorical campaign to encourage belief in the first place'.<sup>17</sup> Within the Gospel of Matthew we similarly find a

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disciples and in Jesus's instructions to the disciples relating to the period after his departure. This material could equally be read, however, according to a historicisation approach. In the end, Bauer adopts a tentative approach to distinguishing between historicisation and contemporisation: 'we must grant that we do not always share with the original readers the ability to discern with confidence whether a passage falls under the category of historicization or contemporization, since we lack the knowledge of the contemporary situation that the original audience would have brought to their reading of the Gospel of Matthew' (p. 74).

13. Deines, 'Jesus and the Torah', 309.

14. Bauer, *Gospel of the Son of God*, 18. Bauer rightly argues that it is unlikely that the Gospel was written to entertain. Instead, the Gospel emphasises the praiseworthy nature of Jesus, provides information about him, material for didactic purposes, and includes a number of apologetic elements designed to defend Jesus and his followers (pp. 18–19).

15. Bauer, *Gospel of the Son of God*, 39.

16. Adele Reinhartz, *Cast Out of the Covenant: Jews and Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John* (Lanham, MD: Lexington/Fortress, 2018), xxvii.

17. Reinhartz, *Cast Out of the Covenant*, 124.

*rhetoric of affiliation*, as, for example, in the appeal for labourers to join the harvest (Matt 9:37-39).<sup>18</sup>

We also find a *rhetoric of disaffiliation*. A good example of this is Matthew's use of the wilderness motif. Laura Feldt directs our attention to the significance of the Torah-related Matthean wilderness motif for identity formation in the imitative culture of early Christians.<sup>19</sup> Early Christians were, according to Feldt, 'intensely preoccupied with imitation of Jesus ... [and] intent to follow Christ literally – to varying degrees – as well as literarily'.<sup>20</sup> In such a context, the withdrawal of Matthew's Jesus from the cities of Galilee to the wilderness becomes a 'divine model' for his followers.<sup>21</sup> This model of withdrawal would itself have shaped the attitudes of the first readers of the Gospel towards their wider communities (cf. Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 2.14.13).

## 2. Intertextuality

Intertextuality may be defined in its broadest manifestation as a text's relationship to the cultural codes within which it operates, whether they be social, anthropological, or historical.<sup>22</sup> Intertextuality has been defined more narrowly as an author's use of quotation, allusion, and echo to refer to earlier texts or, in our case, the Jewish scriptures by New Testament authors.<sup>23</sup> This more narrow author-focused definition has proved particularly influential in

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18. For discussion, see Cedric E. W. Vine, *Jesus and the Nations: Discipleship and Mission in the Gospel of Matthew* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2022), 5–6.

19. Laura Feldt, 'Ancient Wilderness Mythologies: Space and Religious Identity Formation in the Gospel of Matthew', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 16.1 (2015): 183–186, <https://doi.org/10.1515/arege-2014-0010>.

20. Feldt, 'Ancient Wilderness Mythologies', 183.

21. Feldt, 'Ancient Wilderness Mythologies', 186.

22. Julia Kristeva, *Semiotiké* (Paris: Seuil, 1969); Julia Kristeva, *La Révolution du langage poétique* (Paris: Seuil, 1974); Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970). Here I summarise my more extensive discussion in Cedric E. W. Vine, 'Repatriating the Canaanite Woman in the Gospel of Matthew', *AUSS* 58.1 (2020): 9–16.

23. For definitions of quotation, allusion, and echo, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 20; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 10–13. For further refinement of these definitions, see Margaret Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Reception of the Psalms*, *AGJU* 47 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 9–12, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004332409>; Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 15–24, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004170810.i-344>. See C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1953), 31–60; Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961).

recent New Testament scholarship thanks to Richard Hays's 1989 study *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*.<sup>24</sup> Hays proposed seven tests for determining when a New Testament author intended to evoke an earlier text.<sup>25</sup> These largely author-focused tests include:

1. *Availability*. Were antecedent sources available to the author?
2. *Volume*. Are the number of echoes of sufficient volume as to have been perceivable by an audience?
3. *Recurrence*. Has the vehicle text been used elsewhere by the author?
4. *Thematic Coherence*. Does the allusion fit into the line of argument the author is developing?
5. *Historical Plausibility*. Is the proposed meaning historically plausible?
6. *History of Interpretation*. Did later interpreters pick up on the allusion?
7. *Satisfaction*. Does the proposed interpretation still make sense when tests 1 to 6 prove to be inclusive?

For Hays, these seven tests define in broad terms the concerns later readers of the New Testament must address when determining an intertextual relationship between Text A and Text B. These tests have been criticised, however, for promoting an approach to intertextuality that is highly speculative. Paul Foster, for example, compared four applications of Hays's tests and found

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24. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. Cf. Craig A. Evans and W. Richard Stegner, ed., *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, JSNTSup 104 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); Maarten J. J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), 14–20; Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually*, JSNTSup 282 (London: T&T Clark, 2005); Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*; Jeannine K. Brown, 'Genesis in Matthew's Gospel', in *Genesis in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012); R. Michael Fox, ed., *Reverberations of the Exodus in Scripture* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2014); Susan E. Docherty, "'Do You Understand What You are Reading?'" (Acts 8.30): Current Trends and Future Perspectives in the Study of the Use of the Old Testament in the New', *JSNT* 38.1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X15595942>; Craig A. Evans, 'Why Did the New Testament Writers Appeal to the Old Testament?', *JSNT* 38.1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X15595931>; David H. Allen and Steve Smith, ed., *Methodology in the Use of the Old Testament in the New: Context and Criteria*, LNTS 579 (London: T&T Clark, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567678065>.

25. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 29–32. For further refinement, see Michael P. Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected-Prophet Motif in Matthean Redaction*, JSNTSup 68 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 163–165; John Strazicich, *Joel's Use of Scripture and Scripture's Use of Joel: Appropriation and Resignification in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 26–27, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004150799.i-444>; Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 18–20.



that they resulted in a wide variety of interpretations.<sup>26</sup> He concludes that they appear ‘to lack any control to exclude various implausible intertextual proposals’.<sup>27</sup> He recommends that at a minimum ‘the source text and the text in which the tradition is redeployed should share some significant or extensive verbal parallels, if it is to be claimed that one can identify a case where an author is demonstrably alluding to a tradition from the Jewish scriptures’.<sup>28</sup>

The recommendation that Foster proposes to strengthen Hays’s tests is somewhat addressed in a similar but more focused set of tests proposed by Dale C. Allison in his 1993 monograph *The New Moses*. He identified six devices used by the Evangelist to evoke Jewish scripture traditions:<sup>29</sup>

1. Explicit statements in which ‘an author can circumvent ambiguity by straightforward comparison, as in John 3:14 (“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up”)
2. Inexplicit citation or borrowing whereby texts are ‘dug up and transplanted without acknowledgement’.
3. Similar circumstances, by which ‘An event may be intended to recall another circumstantially like it’.
4. Key words or phrases common to both texts.
5. Similar narrative structure (e.g. the structural similarities between the calling of the four disciples in Mark 1:16-20 and Elijah’s calling of Elisha in 1 Kgs 19:19-21).
6. Similar word order, syllabic sequence, and poetic resonance.

Devices 1 and 2 are easily recognised. In the absence of these two devices, a proposed allusion can only be established where a combination of devices 3 to 6 are present. In addition, where it can be shown that a text’s proposed subtext belonged to a tradition of which the author was aware, the probability of an allusion is greatly enhanced. Davies and Allison list seven quotations of, or direct allusions to, the text of Exodus in the Gospel.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the importance of this tradition is established early in the Gospel. In Matthew 2:15, the Evangelist

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26. Paul Foster, ‘Echoes without Resonance: Critiquing Certain Aspects of Recent Scholarly Trends in the Study of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament’, *JSNT* 38.1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X15595941>.

27. Foster, ‘Echoes’, 109.

28. Foster, ‘Echoes’, 109.

29. Allison, *New Moses*, 19–20.

30. Exod 3:6/Matt 22:32; Exod 20:12/Matt 15:4a; Exod 20:13-16/Matt 19:18-19; Exod 21:14/Matt 26:3-4; Exod 21:16/Matt 15:4b; Exod 23:20/Matt 11:10b; Exod 24:8/Matt 26:28. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew: Commentary on Matthew 8–18*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 34–40. See also, Drew Longacre, ‘Exodus in the Second Temple Period’, in *Exodus*

cites Hosea 11:1 ('out of Egypt I have called my son'<sup>31</sup>), an inexplicit citation alluding to the Hebrew exodus from Egypt. After his baptism, Jesus counters Satan in the wilderness with three inexplicit citations from Deuteronomy, a further signal to the reader of the importance of the wider exodus-conquest narrative for understanding the theology of the Gospel.<sup>32</sup>

This study proposes that the Evangelist employs a large number of intertextual devices of the nature identified by Allison in the midsection of the Gospel to convey to readers cognisant of exodus traditions that Jesus's withdrawal from the cities of Galilee represents a new exodus, not from Egypt, but, dramatically, from the cities and villages of Galilee.<sup>33</sup> Scholars have often been reticent to acknowledge exodus allusions in this section of the Gospel. W. D. Davies, sceptical of any 'Mosaism' in the Gospel, rejects in particular any exodus allusions in this section of the Gospel except in the transfiguration account.<sup>34</sup> Another example of such reticence is A. D. A. Moses, who limits his consideration of exodus allusions in the Gospel to the infancy, baptism, and temptation narratives (Matt 1:18-2:23; 3:13-17), the Sermon on the Mount (5-7), the transfiguration (17:1-13), Last Supper (26:17-29), and the farewell discourse (28:16-20).<sup>35</sup> Other scholars, such as Deines, accept the presence of Mosaic allusions but argue that Jesus is presented as more than Moses, in the same way that he is more than Jonah (12:41) and Solomon (12:42).<sup>36</sup>

Our purpose is not to advocate for the exclusivity of exodus allusions in the midsection of the Gospel. It is clear that the Evangelist frequently interweaves scriptural quotations as well as allusions from multiple Jewish scripture intertexts.<sup>37</sup> To argue for exodus allusions is not to dismiss other intertextual relationships. Nor is it to deny factual or sequence differences between

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in the New Testament, ed. Seth M. Ehorn (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567702791.ch-001>.

31. Unless otherwise indicated, translations of biblical texts (apart from LXX) are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

32. Cf. Deut 8:3/Matt 4:4; Deut 6:16/Matt 4:7; Deut 6:13/Matt 4:10.

33. See Blaine Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel*, JSNTSup 79 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 54-60.

34. Davies, *Setting*, 25-93 (on the transfiguration, 50-56).

35. A. D. A. Moses, *Matthew's Transfiguration Story and Jewish-Christian Controversy*, JSNTSup 122 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 161-207. So too Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 89-90.

36. Deines, 'Jesus and the Torah', 316.

37. For example, In Matt 2:6, the Evangelist interweaves Mic 5:1-3 and 2 Sam 5:2. For other examples, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 187.

intertexts. Instead, we will limit our purview to identifying the devices used in the midsection of the Gospel to the exodus and compatible motifs, devices which, evidenced by their extensive nature, reveal an author foregrounding disaffiliation through the motifs of separation and withdrawal.

### 3. Intertextual Allusions to the Exodus

We will start by focusing on those accounts in the midsection of the Gospel which may be deemed to contain the strongest allusions to the exodus from Egypt – the feedings of the 5,000 and 4,000, and the transfiguration account.

#### 3.1 The Feedings of the 5,000 and 4,000 (Matt 14:13-21; 15:29-39)

Many scholars have noted the use of the device of similar circumstances in the feeding of the 5,000 in relation to the feeding miracle of Elisha in 2 Kings 4:42-44.<sup>38</sup> Fewer scholars, however, have followed the author of the Fourth Gospel or Eusebius in comparing the multiplication miracle(s) with the provision of manna under Moses (John 6:31-32,49; Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 3.2; cf. Jerome's description of the boy who provides the loaves as signifying Moses, *Comm. Matt.* 2.14.16).<sup>39</sup> There is, in fact, a reticence on the part of many Matthean scholars

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38. Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1988), 7; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 482; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, Hermeneia 61B (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 311; Eric Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*, JSNTSup 231 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 382, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567691552>; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 590-591. Jerome (*Comm. Matt.* 15:32) associates the feeding of Elijah in 1 Kgs 19:7 with Matt 15:32.

39. David F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, trans. George Eliot, 4th ed. (1860; repr., London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1902), 517; François Quiévreux, 'Le récit de la Multiplication des pains dans le quatrième évangile', *RevScRel* 41 (1967), <https://doi.org/10.3406/rscir.1967.2467>; Frederick W. Danker, 'Matthew: A Patriot's Gospel', in *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and W. Richard Stegner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 96; Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 306, 328; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 404; Feldt, 'Ancient Wilderness Mythologies', 176; Jeannine K. Brown, 'Exodus in Matthew's Gospel', in *Exodus in the New Testament*, ed. Seth M. Ehorn (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2022), 38-39, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567702791.ch-002>. I accept the 4,000 as Jewish on the basis that Jews were more likely to praise 'the God of Israel' (τὸν θεὸν Ἰσραήλ; Matt. 15:31) than Gentiles. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 563-564; William R. G. Loader, *Jesus' Attitude to the Law: A Study of the Gospels*, WUNT 2/97 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 212; J. R. C. Cousland, 'The Feeding of the Four Thousand Gentiles in Matthew? Matthew 15:29-39 as a Test Case', *NovT* 41 (1999), <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853699323281883>.

to accept the presence of New Exodus motifs in these feeding accounts, instead preferring to highlight Lord's Supper and messianic banquet imagery.<sup>40</sup>

Davies, in *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (1989), proposed a number of reasons for rejecting Mosaic imagery in these accounts, reasons later taken up and expanded in his commentary with Allison (1991):

1. The Evangelist refers only to a 'lonely place' (Matt 14:13) rather than 'the desert'.
2. There is no intimation in the exodus account that any leftovers were gathered up whereas in the Gospel care is taken to gather all the leftover fragments.
3. Matthew has rejected Mark 6:34 with its echo of Numbers 27:17, an allusion to a shepherd figure who may indicate a possible New Moses (Matt 9:36).
4. They reject symbolic interpretations suggesting, for example, that the five fish represent the five books of Moses and the twelve baskets the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>41</sup>

Here we would certainly concur with the final argument of Davies and Allison relating to symbolism. However, the difference between 'lonely place' (εἰς ἔρημον τόπον; so too Mark 6:32) and 'desert' (ὁ ἔρημος) is one of degree and should not be overstated.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the collection of leftovers and the omission of Mark 6:34 do not negate other significant parallels between the two accounts. Such differences were certainly of insufficient magnitude to dissuade the Fourth Evangelist, as conceded by Davies in *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, from including such differences in his Gospel. The same may be said of later patristic interpreters who, with minimal or no justification, felt it quite legitimate to observe manna allusions in the multiplication miracles (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 49; Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 3.2; Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Luke* 48).<sup>43</sup>

Interestingly, Allison, in his monograph *The New Moses*, somewhat reverses the sceptical position adopted in his commentary with Davies and instead

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40. Pierre Bonnard, *L'évangile selon saint Matthieu* (Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1963), 218–222; Davies, *Setting*, 48–49; Eve, *Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*, 382; Nolland, *Matthew*, 592.

41. Davies, *Setting*, 48–49; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 482–483.

42. See, for example, Brown, 'Exodus in Matthew's Gospel', 39.

43. Davies, *Setting*, 49; Allison, *New Moses*, 238. Whether patristic interpreters read John into Matthew is difficult to know in that, as Ulrich Luz states, the 'history of interpretation [...] almost never limited itself to one biblical version of the text but always saw the gospel texts together and then lifted from their fullness those interpretations that especially corresponded to the interpreter's own situation and church tradition.' Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 313.

presents important arguments in favour of manna allusions in the Matthean multiplication accounts.<sup>44</sup> First, he affirms the presence of allusions to Moses traditions in Mark's account in 6:30-44 while acknowledging that some of these traditions have been downplayed by Matthew. These allusions include:

1. The understanding that manna was a type of bread (Deut 8:3; Neh 9:15) and Jesus multiplied bread.
2. The description of the people sitting in groups (Mark 6:40), reminiscent of the division of the Hebrews into 'thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens' in Exodus 18:21.
3. The description of Jesus multiplying loaves *and* fish, possibly evoking traditions such as *Sifre Num.* 95 that the Israelites ate fish in the wilderness.<sup>45</sup>
4. Similar circumstances, in that Jesus and the disciples crossed the sea to a wilderness place and the hungry were then fed, the Hebrews crossed a sea, entered a wilderness, and were then fed.
5. Similar time settings – Jesus fed the crowds late in the evening (Mark 6:35), at the same time when the manna fell (Num 11:9).
6. Shared narrative structure – Mark includes two feeding stories, possibly evoking the two accounts in the Pentateuch of the miracle of the manna (see Exod 16 and Num 11).<sup>46</sup>

Second, Allison draws the reader's attention to Matthew 14:21 and 15:38: 'And those who ate were about five thousand men [Those who had eaten were four thousand men], besides women and children' (χωρίς γυναικῶν καὶ παιδίων).<sup>47</sup> Allison notes that the phrase 'besides women and children' is absent from Mark 6:44 and evokes the description in Exodus 12:37 of the number of those in the wilderness: 'about six hundred thousand men on foot *besides children*' (לְבַד מִטָּף). Allison understands the Hebrew to mean 'besides women and children', which is how Philo took the phrase in *Vit. Mos.* 1:147.<sup>48</sup> Allison suggests that in adding these words, the Evangelist is deliberately alluding to the manner in which the people in the wilderness were numbered.<sup>49</sup> Allison is not the first to associate those fed by Jesus with the Hebrews in the wilderness. Origen raised the possibility that the five thousand of Matthew

44. Allison, *New Moses*, 238–242.

45. Jeannine Brown suggests a parallel between the five loaves and two fish (Matt. 14:17) and the manna and quail (Exod 16:13-14).

46. Allison, *New Moses*, 239.

47. Note παιδίων (παιδίων D) καὶ γυναικῶν in D and Θ in Matt 14:21.

48. Cf. γυναιξὶν ἅμα καὶ τέκνοις, Josephus, *Ant.* 2:317

49. Allison, *New Moses*, 240. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 574.

14:21 corresponds to the men of twenty years old numbered in Numbers 1:3 (*Comm. Matt.* 11.3; cf. *Greg. Naz., Or. Bas* 43.35).

The final reason Allison cites in favour of exodus allusions in the multiplication narratives are the shared terminology and circumstances in the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount and the feeding of the four thousand:<sup>50</sup>

<i>Matt 4:23ff.</i>	<i>Matt 15:29ff.</i>
ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, <i>Matt 5:1</i>	ἀναβάς εἰς τὸ ὄρος, <i>Matt 15:29</i>
καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ, <i>Matt 5:1</i>	ἐκάθητο ἐκεῖ, <i>Matt 15:29</i>
ὄχλοι πολλοί, <i>Matt 4:25</i> , gathered for the following episode	ὄχλοι πολλοί, <i>Matt 15:30</i> , gathered for the following episode
καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς, <sup>51</sup> <i>Matt 4:24</i>	καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς, <i>Matt 15:30</i>
the distinction between the disciples (μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ) and the crowd, <i>Matt 5:1</i>	the distinction between the disciples (μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ) and the crowd, <i>Matt 15:32</i>

Allison's argument is that Jesus is clearly presented in the Sermon on the Mount as a New Moses figure. Parallels in the feeding of the four thousand to the Sermon on the Mount would suggest, in the words of Allison, that 'Matthew designed the introduction to the second multiplication story to recall a scene with strong Mosaic associations'.<sup>52</sup> His motive? Allison proposes that the Evangelist, as did John and Eusebius, viewed the multiplication narrative as corresponding in some sense to the manna episode.

In terms of similar circumstances, both the exodus and the Gospel multiplication accounts also include a large multitude being fed through divine intervention after leaving communities under divine judgement (i.e. Egypt and the cities of Galilee).<sup>53</sup> It is at this more fundamental level that we can affirm – without discounting strong intertextual links to 2 Kings 4:42-44, the Lord's Supper, or the messianic banquet – extensive resonances in the multiplication accounts to the exodus.<sup>54</sup>

50. Allison, *New Moses*, 241–242. For the combining of Sinai and Zion traditions in this passage, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 567.

51. Δ πάντα ἐθεράπευσεν.

52. Allison, *New Moses*, 242.

53. Why two multiplication narratives? Here I hesitate to suggest an answer except by drawing attention to the possibility that they represent a doublet, possibly reflecting the two multiplication miracles of Exod 16 and Num 11. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 564–565.

54. So too, R. Alan Culpepper, *Matthew: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2021), 278–280, 298–301. Culpepper notes that in 'both feedings in every Gospel

### 3.2 The Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-21)

The account of the transfiguration is generally recognised, despite notable differences, to include numerous intertextual devices evoking the giving of the law in Exodus 24 and 34.<sup>55</sup> Such devices were frequently noted by patristic interpreters, the most recognised being their similar narrative structures (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 56.3, 6; Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 3.2). In Exodus 24:12-28, God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai, where he gave to him the law. In 25–31, Moses received instructions from Yahweh on the sanctuary, priesthood, feasts, and the Sabbath. At the bottom of the mountain a parallel but subversive system of worship was established by Aaron, focusing on a golden calf:

<i>Top of the mountain</i>	<i>Bottom of the mountain</i>
Festivals (Exod 23:1-17)	Aaron declares a festival (Exod 32:5)
Altar (Exod 27:1-8)	Aaron builds an altar (Exod 32:5)
Meat, flour, wine offerings of well-being (Exod 29:26-28)	Sacrifice of well-being offering (Exod 32:6) People eat and drink (Exod 32:6)
Burnt offerings (Exod 29:38-46)	Burnt offerings (Exod 32:6)
Instructions for craftsmen (Exod 31:1-11)	Aaron crafts a gold calf (Exod 32:2-4)

In the Gospel we find a similar contrast between Jesus and his three disciples at the top of the mountain and a ‘faithless and perverse generation’ at the bottom of the mountain that understands neither mercy nor faith, two of the weightier matters of the law (Matt 17:14-21; 23:23). The intertextual allusions extend, however, well beyond similar narrative structures.<sup>56</sup>

In terms of common words or phrases, Moses is invited by Yahweh to go up ‘into the mountain’, εἰς τὸ ὄρος, which he does with the assistance of his

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account there is a sea crossing, which probably signals the exodus motif of crossing the sea and bread in the wilderness’ (p. 301).

55. Eugeniusz Dabrowski, *La transfiguration de Jésus*, Scripta Pontificii Instituti Bibliici 85 (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1939), 137–145; A. Feuillet, ‘Les perspectives propres à chaque évangéliste dans les récits de la transfiguration’, *Bib* 39.3 (1958): 292–299; Heinrich Baltensweiler, *Die Verklärung Jesu; Historisches Ereignis und synoptische Berichte* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1959), 108–111; Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 2, 93; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 685–693; Allison, *New Moses*, 243–248; Moses, *Matthew’s Transfiguration Story*, 42–44; Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 395–396; Feldt, ‘Ancient Wilderness Mythologies’, 172–173. On differences, see Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, rev. ed., vol. 1 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 259–261; Moses, *Matthew’s Transfiguration Story*, 44–45.

56. Luke has made these parallels even more explicit through his insertion of ἕξοδος in Luke 9:31.

helper, Ἰησοῦς (LXX Exod 24:12-15). Jesus likewise sets out εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλόν, ‘up a high mountain’, with his three closest disciples, Peter, James, and John (Matt 17:1; cf. Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu in Exod 24:9). In Exodus, the glory of Yahweh settled on the mountain and a cloud (ἡ νεφέλη) covered it for six days (ἕξ ἡμέρας, LXX Exod 24:16). Matthew’s time setting of ‘six days later’ (μεθ’ ἡμέρας ἕξ, Matt 17:1) evokes the six days of Exodus.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, a paradoxical νεφέλη φωτεινή ‘bright cloud’, likely an allusion to the Shekinah of Exodus, descends upon the mountain (17:5).<sup>58</sup> On the seventh day, Yahweh called to Moses out of the cloud (ἐκ μέσου τῆς νεφέλης, LXX Exod 24:16). In Matthew, a voice calls out ‘from the cloud’ (ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης, Matt 17:5). In Exodus, Yahweh instructs Moses at the top of the mountain (Exod 25:1–31:18). In Matthew, the heavenly voice instructs the disciples to listen to his Son (Matt 17:5), confirmation that the association of Jesus with Moses is not that of equals.<sup>59</sup> In both accounts a response of fear is noted (ἐφοβήθησαν, LXX Exod 34:30; ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα, Matt 17:6).

With regards to similar circumstances, in MT Exodus 34:29 the skin of the face of Moses is described as shining because he had been talking with God (אִתּוֹ עוֹר פָּנָיו בִּדְבָרֵי אֱתֵי). In the LXX, this is expanded somewhat: ‘the appearance of the skin of his face was glorified’ (δεδόξασται ἡ ὄψις τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ). Matthew follows neither but clearly alludes to the shining face of Moses when he states in Matthew 17:2 that ‘[Jesus’s] face shone like the sun’ (ἐλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος).<sup>60</sup> And, finally, it goes without saying, Moses and Joshua (LXX: ‘Jesus’) are present in both accounts.

#### 4. Compatible Motifs and Intertextual Allusions

We may affirm in relation to the accounts considered so far an extensive number of intertextual devices alluding to the exodus account. These allusions

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57. Baltensweiler, *Die Verklärung*, 47; Culpepper, *Matthew*, 324. Against, Bonnard, *Matthieu*, 254. Bonnard sees an allusion to the six days which separate the day of atonement from the festival of booths (cf. Lev 23:27,34). For Riesenfeld, the transfiguration represents the enthronement of the Messiah. Harald Riesenfeld, *Jésus transfiguré: L'arrière-plan du récit évangélique de la transfiguration de Notre-Seigneur*, ASNU 16 (Lund: Gleerup, 1944).

58. Davies, *Setting*, 52; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 686; Culpepper, *Matthew*, 325.

59. Deines, ‘Jesus and the Torah’, 317. Cf. Luke’s reference to the ‘exodus’ in Luke 9:31.

60. Davies, *Setting*, 51–52; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 685; Culpepper, *Matthew*, 325.



may be attributed variously to the symbolic nature of the acts performed by the historical Jesus, later interpretation on the part of the Evangelist and/or others, as well as to traditions and sources used in the composition of the Gospel. The importance of these allusions is underlined when we consider Jeannine Brown's recent metaleptic analysis of Exodus and Matthew, an approach which assumes that a New Testament author cites or alludes 'to (a brief part of) another text for the purpose of evoking its backstory'.<sup>61</sup> This assumption permits Brown to focus on common 'major thematic movements' that include '(1) Moses, Israel, and Jesus; (2) Exodus Redemption; (3) Wilderness and Torah; and (4) Tabernacle and Presence'.<sup>62</sup> Exodus allusions in the Gospel invite the reader to expand his or her search for more general common themes.

In this context, we now turn to other passages in the central section of the Gospel which, while not directly related to the Hebrew exodus from Egypt, may be deemed as relating to or at least as being compatible with the wider exodus story and/or the subsequent conquest of Canaan. Our discussion will follow the order of passages as found in the Gospel.

#### 4.1 Mosaic Invitation to Rest from Burdens (Matt 11:25-30)

Juxtaposed against Jesus's prophetic reproaches of the cities of Galilee in Matthew 11:20-24 is his prayer in 11:25-30 in which he combines allusions to wisdom with allusions, signalled through the devices of similar wording and circumstances, to the prayer of Moses following the incident of the golden calf (Exod 33:12-14).<sup>63</sup> First, there is expressed in Jesus's prayer the notion of reciprocal knowledge between the Son and the Father: 'All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son (οὐδείς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν υἱόν) except the Father, and no one knows the Father (οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις ἐπιγινώσκειν) except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him' (11:27). For Davies and Allison, this reciprocal knowledge evokes the relationship between Yahweh and Moses:<sup>64</sup>

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61. Brown, 'Exodus in Matthew's Gospel', 32.

62. Brown, 'Exodus in Matthew's Gospel', 31.

63. On wisdom imagery in Matt 11:25-30, see Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 2.11.25; Ambrose, *Fid. Grat.* 5.8.99; Augustine, *Trin.* 7.2.3-3; *Virginit.* 35; Hilary of Poitiers, *Trin.* 2.10; Celia Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11:25-30*, JSNTSup 18 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987); Keener, *Matthew*, 345-348; Culpepper, *Matthew*, 225-226. For arguments against the presence of wisdom allusions, see J. Laansma, 'I Will Give You Rest': *The Rest Motif in the New Testament with Special Reference to Mt 11 and Heb 3-4*, WUNT 2/98 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 159-208.

64. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 283-284. See also, Laansma, 'I Will Give You Rest', 177-180; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 163-164; Nolland, *Matthew*, 472.

Moses said to the LORD, ‘See, you have said to me, “Bring up this people”; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, “I know you by name (MT: **בְּשֵׁם יְיָ אֱדַעְתָּ**; LXX: Οἶδά σε παρὰ πάντας), and you have also found favour in my sight.” Now if I have found favour in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you (MT: **וְאֵדַעְתָּ**; LXX: γνωστῶς ἴδω σε) and find favour in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.’ He said, ‘My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest (MT: **לָךְ אֶתְנַחֵם**; LXX: καταπαύσω σε).’ (Exod 33:12-14)

The knowledge between the Son and the Father is mutual and exclusive, as between Moses and Yahweh (cf. Justin, *1 Apol.* 63; Orig., *Princ.* 2.4.3). Second, the subject–object sequence in Exodus 33:12-13 (Yahweh knows Moses; Moses knows Yahweh) is reflected in a parallel subject–object sequence in Matthew 11:27 (the Father knows the Son; the Son knows the Father).<sup>65</sup> Third, Yahweh’s affirmation of his knowledge of Moses is immediately followed in Exodus 33:14 with a promise to provide rest (LXX: καταπαύσω σε; cf. the rest provided by Moses in Josephus, *Ant.* 3:61).<sup>66</sup> Similarly, as noted by R. Alan Culpepper, the description of the mutual knowledge of the Son and the Father in Matthew 11:27 is followed with a promise to give rest (κάγὼ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς, 11:28).<sup>67</sup> This rest is to be given to those who are ‘weary and are carrying heavy burdens’ (οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι), a conceptual equivalent to ‘the burdens of the Egyptians’ from which the Hebrew slaves were redeemed (MT: **סְבִלַת מִצְרַיִם**; LXX: τῆς δυναστείας τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, Exod. 6:6, cf. v. 7).<sup>68</sup> Finally, the Evangelist presents Jesus’s self-description in Matthew 11:29 in these terms: πραῦς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ ‘I am gentle and humble in heart’, wording potentially used to evoke the Jewish perception of Moses as ‘very meek’ (πραῦς σφόδρα, LXX Num. 12:3).<sup>69</sup> Without discounting the presence of allusions to wisdom, these instances of common vocabulary and similar circumstances evoke Yahweh’s affirmation of Moses following the golden calf incident.

65. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 286.

66. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 285–286. Rest is typically associated with the Sabbath in Exodus (cf. 16:23; 23:12; 31:15; 34:21; 35:2).

67. Culpepper, *Matthew*, 226. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 287–288. On the literary structure of Matt 11:28–30, see A. R. Motte, ‘La structure du logion de Matthieu 11.28–30’, *RB* 88 (1981).

68. Laansma argues that the weariness results from the ‘heavy burdens’ of Pharisaic Halakah. Laansma, ‘*I Will Give You Rest*’, 239–244.

69. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 291. On Moses’s meekness, see Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.279; Sir 45:4; *Avot R. Nat.* 1:7; 4:16; Ign. *Eph.* 10. For Stanton, Jesus is the meek and humble Servant of God rather than Sophia (cf. Sir 51), Stanton, *New People*, 340–342, 364–377.

#### 4.2 Flight from Danger (Matt 14:13)

Rainer Metzner has argued for the importance of the ἀναχωρέω motif ('depart', 'withdraw', 'return') in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>70</sup> He proposes that while Matthew has adopted the term from Mark, he has, through repetition, developed it into a principle motif of his Gospel.<sup>71</sup> In Matthew 12:1 to 16:20, Jesus repeatedly withdraws in the face of hostility from the Jewish leaders.<sup>72</sup> He withdraws when he becomes aware of the conspiracy of the Pharisees to destroy him (ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκεῖθεν, 12:15). He withdraws again when he hears of the execution of John the Baptist (ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκεῖθεν, 14:13). Finally, he withdraws to the region of Tyre and Sidon after a sharp halakhic dispute with the Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem (ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὰ μέρη Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος, 15:21). Readers have long noticed the significance of this *rhetoric of disaffiliation*. John Chrysostom implores his audience to see Jesus on every occasion 'departing', both when John was arrested and slain, and when the authorities heard that Jesus was making more disciples (*Hom. Matt.* 49:1).

The term ἀναχωρέω occurs once in the LXX exodus account and is used to describe the reaction of Moses upon hearing that Pharaoh was seeking to kill him: 'Moses withdrew from the presence of Pharaoh' (ἀνεχώρησεν δὲ Μωσῆς ἀπὸ προσώπου Φαραω, LXX Exod. 2:15). The Hebrew equivalent connotes not an orderly withdrawal, but rather a hasty flight from peril (וַיִּבָּרַח מִשָּׂה מִפְּנֵי פַרְעֹה) – Exod 2:15). The strongest allusion to LXX Exodus 2:15 is in Matthew 14:13, both in terms of shared 'withdrawal' terminology and similar circumstances. Just as Moses withdrew from Pharaoh's threats in Egypt to the relative seclusion of 'the land of Midian' (Exod 2:15), so Jesus withdraws

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70. Rainer Metzner, 'Der Rückzug Jesu im Matthäusevangelium: Ein literarisches Déjà-vu-Erlebnis', *ZNW* 94, no. 3–4 (2003), <https://doi.org/10.1515/zntw.2003.012>. Cf. BDAG, p. 75.

71. A warning conveyed through a dream enables the magi to avoid Herod and withdraw safely to their own country (ἀνεχώρησαν εἰς τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν, Matt 2:12; cf. 12:13). Joseph, similarly warned in a dream, withdraws to safety in Egypt (ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, 2:14) and then, after the death of Herod and the rise of Archelaus, he withdraws with his family to Galilee (ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὰ μέρη τῆς Γαλιλαίας, 2:22). Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee by withdrawing (ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, 4:12) in response to the hostility directed toward John the Baptist.

For first-century readers well versed in Old Testament and Second Temple traditions, the withdrawal motif may well have evoked accounts of the retreat of devoted men in the face of hostility. Examples Metzner cites include Moses (ἀνεχώρησεν, LXX Exod 2:15), Joshua (ἀνεχώρησεν, LXX Josh 8:14), David (ἀνεχώρησεν, LXX 1 Kgs 19:10), Tobit (ἀνεχώρησα, Tobit 1:19), and Judas Maccabaeus (ἀναχωρήσας, 2 Macc 5:27). Metzner, 'Der Rückzug Jesu', 261, n. 12.

72. Metzner, 'Der Rückzug Jesu', 262.

from his hometown in Matthew 14:13 to a 'deserted place by himself' following the execution of John the Baptist.<sup>73</sup> In both accounts, withdrawal is followed by compassionate action, with Jesus caring for a hungry multitude (14:14-21) and Moses intervening to provide water for the flocks of Jethro (Exod 2:16-22).

#### 4.3 Jesus Walks on Water (Matt 14:22-33)

Günther Bornkamm famously argued in relation to Matthew 14:22-33 that the boat represents 'the little ship of the Church' (so too, Augustine, *Serm.* 75.3.4) and the sea 'becomes a symbol of the distress involved in discipleship of Jesus as a whole'.<sup>74</sup> Matthean scholarship has largely shifted away from such openly transparent readings towards a greater recognition of intertextual imagery employed by the Evangelist. Scholarship is split, however, as to the extent and nature of exodus allusions in this account. Luz adopts a minimalist position in relation to such a possibility:

Our text is not about a *passage* through the water. Texts about the passage through the Sea of Reeds (Exodus 14; cf. Joshua 3-4; 2 Kgs 2:7-8; Isa 43:2-3, 16-17, etc.) are not direct parallels. Nor is the text about walking in the depths of the primal ocean (Job 38:16; Sir 24:5, etc.); it is about walking on the water. For such an event there are few Old Testament but many extra-biblical analogies.<sup>75</sup>

Contrast this position with Davies and Allison, who get around this objection by noting that in the retelling of the Red Sea crossing in Psalm 77:19 ('Your way was through the sea, your path, through the mighty waters; yet your footprints were unseen'), Yahweh 'prepared the way for the Israelites to pass through the Sea of Reeds' in a manner similar to Jesus 'crossing the sea so that his disciples may in turn cross safely'.<sup>76</sup> While few scholars have observed the similar

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73. Funk argues that 'deserted place' means 'the country in contrast to the town'. Robert W. Funk, 'The Wilderness', *JBL* 78 (1959): 12, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3264966>. See also, Vine, *Jesus and the Nations*, 38-39.

74. Bornkamm, 'The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew', 55, 56. For a similar emphasis, see Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 330-311. Origen (*Comm. Matt.* 11:5,6) understands the boat to be the constraints of Jesus required to encourage us to deal with the wind and waves of temptations.

75. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 319. See also Bonnard, *Matthieu*, 221-223; Nolland, *Matthew*, 595-603; Jorg Christian Salzmann, 'Exegesis of Matt 14:22-33 by Means of Historical Approaches: Significance and Limitations of a Method', in *Listening to the Word of God: Exegetical Approaches*, ed. Achim Behrens and Jorg Christian Salzmann (Göttingen: Ruprecht, 2016), 62.

76. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 504.

narrative structures proposed by Davies and Allison, it is nevertheless worth drawing our attention to those verbal or conceptual similarities observed by a number of scholars to various events in the exodus account.<sup>77</sup> Some of these are more speculative than others.

First, Jesus went up a mountain alone to be with his Father (ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος κατ' ἰδίαν, Matt 14:23), a detail which Culpepper observes may have 'Mosaic overtones' to Moses ascending Mount Sinai alone with Yahweh (cf. ἀνάβηθι πρὸς με εἰς τὸ ὄρος, LXX Exod. 34:1-9).<sup>78</sup> Jesus went up the mountain to pray, just as Moses prayed on Mount Sinai (Exod 32:30-41; Matt 14:23). Jesus walked on the water towards the disciples during the fourth watch (τετάρτη δὲ φυλακῆ τῆς νυκτός, Matt 14:25), around the time of dawn, a similar time to when Yahweh threw the army of Pharaoh into panic in the Red Sea (cf. ἐγενήθη δὲ ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ τῆ ἑωθινῇ, LXX Exod 14:24).<sup>79</sup> In the account of the crossing of the Red Sea and the related Song of Moses, we find references to the sea, the wind, the waves, and the water (e.g. τὴν θάλασσαν ἐν ἀνέμῳ [...] τὸ ὕδωρ, LXX Exod 14:21; τὰ κύματα, 15:8), all natural phenomena present in the account of Jesus walking on water (τῶν κυμάτων [...] ὁ ἄνεμος, Matt 14:24, θάλασσαν, 14:25; τὰ ὕδατα, 14:28). Many scholars do not see here an allusion specific to the exodus but rather an allusion to Old Testament epiphanies in general, one of which was, of course, the crossing of the Red Sea.<sup>80</sup> Finally, when the disciples cry out in fear upon seeing Jesus, he responds by affirming 'I am' (Matt 14:27), a declaration taken by Davies and Allison to be 'a formula of revelation intended to recall the mysterious, divine "I am" of the OT', whether in LXX Exodus 3:14 (Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν) or LXX Isaiah 41:4; 43:10; 47:8,10.<sup>81</sup>

77. See, for example, Brown, 'Exodus in Matthew's Gospel', 38.

78. Culpepper, *Matthew*, 281-282. So too Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 297. Davies and Allison note that ἀνέβη + εἰς τὸ ὄρος is a phrase with Mosaic overtones (see on 5:2), and it occurs elsewhere in the New Testament in passages where Jesus is the counterpart of Moses (e.g. Luke 9:28; John 6:3,15). Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 502.

79. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 504; Culpepper, *Matthew*, 282. Gundry explains Matthew's omission of Mark's note that Jesus intended to 'pass them by': 'In Mark παρελθεῖν means "pass before" in the sense of a theophany, as in the LXX of Exod 33:19, 22; 3 Kgdms 19:11; Job 9:11 (with v. 8). For Matthew, however, the verb always means "pass away", even in 8:28, where he inserted it for getting away from the region of the demoniacs (see also 5:18 [bis]; 24:34, 35 [bis]; 26:39, 42).' Gundry, *Matthew*, 298.

80. Beare, *Matthew*, 332; Gundry, *Matthew*, 298-301; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 319-320; Nolland, *Matthew*, 600-603; Keener, *Matthew*, 406.

81. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 506. So too Gundry, *Matthew*, 299; Brown, 'Exodus in Matthew's Gospel', 38.

These proposed verbal and conceptual similarities do not represent a systematic attempt on the part of the Evangelist to evoke one particular episode of the exodus. At best, we may affirm the presence of imagery compatible with a number of exodus accounts.

#### 4.4 The Canaanite Woman (Matt 15:21-28)

We now turn to a compatible motif as against a direct allusion to the book of Exodus. In Matthew 15:22, Matthew changes Mark's 'Gentile, of Syrophenician origin' Ἑλληνίς, Συροφοινίκισσα τῷ γένει (Mark 7:26) into a 'Canaanite woman' γυνή Χαναναία. This shift in ethnic identity marker from Gentile to Canaanite may best be explained as a deliberate strategy on the part of the Evangelist to evoke Canaan (MT: כְּנָעַן; LXX: Χανάαν), a geographic territory which, according to Genesis 10:19, included not just Judea, but also Tyre and Sidon, Gaza, and Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>82</sup> The term 'Canaan' and its cognates are consistently used in later biblical and extra-biblical sources to evoke the early history of Israel (Abraham's journey to Canaan, Jdt 5:9-10; a land of depravity, Sus 56; the story of Joseph, Acts 7:11; the conquest narrative/entry into the promised land, 13:19; cf. Bar 3:22). Matthew's evocation of Canaan need not, therefore, relate to the exodus account.

Nevertheless, we may affirm that Matthew's deliberate introduction of an archaising term evoking, in the words of Culpepper, 'the historical context of Israel and Canaan' is at least compatible with the exodus narrative.<sup>83</sup> In the Song of Moses, the inhabitants of Canaan are listed along with those of Philistia, Edom, and Moab as responding with fear and trembling to the deliverance of Israel from the chariots and army of Pharaoh (Exod 15:15). In Leviticus 25:38, Canaan is the counterpoint to Egypt (cf. 18:3), the entrance into Canaan being the purpose for God's bringing Israel out of the land of Egypt (MT: וְלָתֵת לְכֶם אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן).<sup>84</sup>

82. Nadav Na'aman, *Canaan in the Second Millennium B.C.E.* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 29, 110, <https://doi.org/10.1515/97815175065687>; Culpepper, *Matthew*, 295. Cf. In the LXX, the land of Canaan is referred to as Phoenicia on two accounts, both in relation to the conquest narrative (εἰς μέρος τῆς Φοινίκης, Exod 16:35; οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς Φοινίκης, Josh 5:1). On the basis of Matt 15:22, Kilpatrick argued for a Phoenician origin of the Gospel. George D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), 133.

83. Culpepper, *Matthew*, 295. Cf. Vine, 'Repatriating the Canaanite Woman'.

84. The more important stated purpose being for Yahweh to be Israel's God (Lev 25:38).

#### 4.5 Faithless and Perverse Generation (Matt 17:17)

Our final example relates not to the book of Exodus but rather to how the exodus generation was remembered in other Jewish biblical texts. Evald Lövestam has drawn our attention to Jewish traditions relating to particularly wicked and sinful generations such as the generation of Enoch, a generation particularly associated with idol worship (e.g. Gen 4:26 according to Tg. Neof.), and the generations of the flood, the tower of Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the exodus (e.g. *J.W.* 5.566).<sup>85</sup> Such generations (Heb: דִּוּר) are excluded from the world to come as a result of their wicked and sinful state. The Matthean Jesus's frequent references to 'this generation' (e.g. Matt 11:16; 12:41,42; 23:36; 24:34) would suggest that the Evangelist associated the generation Jesus encountered with earlier perverse generations, including that of the exodus.<sup>86</sup> Upon descending the mount of transfiguration, Jesus encounters a 'faithless and perverse generation' (γενεὰ ἄπιστος καὶ διεστραμμένη, Matt 17:17), wording that evokes the Deuteronomic characterisation of the exodus generation as a γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ διεστραμμένη 'crooked and perverse generation' (LXX Deut 32:5).<sup>87</sup>

### 5. Implications

This study has detailed a range of intertextual devices that scholars have taken to evoke the Hebrew exodus from Egypt in the feeding and transfiguration accounts (Matt 14:13-21; 15:29-39; 17:1-21). The metaleptic effect of these allusions is to invite the reader of the Gospel to seek further parallels to the exodus. As such, we identified a number of motifs compatible with the broader exodus-conquest narrative (flight from danger, Canaanite woman, faithless and perverse generation), as well as less certain exodus allusions in Jesus's invitation to rest from one's burdens (11:25-30) and the account of his walking on water (14:22-33). Recognition is to be given, however, to the presence of allusions to other Jewish scripture intertexts. These include, most notably,

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85. Evald Lövestam, *Jesus and 'This Generation': A New Testament Study*, ConBNT 25 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995). Cf. *m. Sanh.* 10:3.

86. Johannes A. E. van Dodewaard, 'La force évocatrice de la citation: mise en lumière en prenant pour base l'Évangile de S Matthieu', *Bib* 36.4 (1955): 490; Gnlika, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 2, 42.

87. Culpepper, *Matthew*, 331. For negative portrayals of the exodus generation, see Num 32:13; Deut 32:20; Pss 78:7-8; 95:10. Cf. 'evil and adulterous generation' γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς, Matt 16:4. D omits καὶ μοιχαλὶς.

allusions to Elisha in the multiplication narratives and Elijah-related imagery in the transfiguration account.<sup>88</sup> We now turn to implications.

Firstly, if we accept that these allusions and motifs reveal an intentional strategy to evoke the exodus, then we may conclude a willingness on the part of the Evangelist to reframe the exodus narrative around the personhood of Jesus and the experience of his followers, albeit, assuming Markan priority, using extant traditions in the process. The Evangelist's willingness to consider Jesus and his followers in these terms indicates the significance he ascribed to their experience, as an exodus-evoking event. This reframing alone had the potential for creating tension with those who appropriated the exodus story differently.

Secondly, the phenomenological experience of these exodus allusions would have varied depending upon the first readers' differing levels of familiarity with Jewish scripture traditions.<sup>89</sup> Those readers unfamiliar with such traditions would likely have experienced the Gospel accounts as primarily a retelling of events as they occurred. If we assume with much recent Matthean scholarship that the majority of the Gospel's first readers were Jewish followers of Jesus, then these allusions would likely have challenged them to be willing, where necessary, to break social ties that had turned hostile in the knowledge that they, like the Hebrews who left Egypt with Moses, might be called to endure their own wilderness sojourn (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 49.4).<sup>90</sup> Alternatively, for Jewish followers of Jesus who had already distanced themselves from hostile sections of their community, this rhetoric would have affirmed their experience. Withdrawal from host communities should not be equated, however, with a break from Judaism more generally. The Gospel never calls for a break from Judaism but rather withdrawal from localised instances of hostility, usually restricted to a particular village or city (Matt 10:11-15; 11:20-24; cf. 24:15-21). The Gospel includes both a call for the followers of Jesus to remain within welcoming communities as well as a call to leave unwelcoming communities (10:11-15). We must therefore remain cautious about positing a uniform impact of the exodus allusions we have discussed.

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88. Cf. D. Gerald Bostock, 'Jesus as the New Elisha', *ExpTim* 92.2 (1980), <https://doi.org/10.1177/001452468009200203>; Feuillet, 'Les perspectives propres à chaque évangéliste dans les récits de la transfiguration', 293; Beare, *Matthew*, 363.

89. On the general readership of Graeco-Roman *bioi*, see Bauer, *Gospel of the Son of God*, 21.

90. Cf. the call in Heb 13:13 to 'go to [Jesus] outside the city'.



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