

WOE TO YOU, HYPOCRITES!
LAW AND LEADERS IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

BY
GREG ALAN CAMP

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ABBREVIATIONS

AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library
BSac	Bibliotheca Sacra
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CurTM	Currents in Theology and Mission
ExpTim	Expository Times
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IBS	Irish Biblical Studies
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JRH	Journal of Religious History
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NTS	New Testament Studies
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PRS	Perspectives in Religious Studies

ResQ	Restoration Quarterly
RevQ	Revue de Qumran
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

SUMMARY OF THESIS

This thesis seeks to move beyond the impasse in Matthean scholarship that posits the reason for conflict in Matthew 23 with the authorial community. A framework is developed that allows the possibility that the gospel was received and understood by a widespread, general audience that itself was not necessarily embroiled in conflict.

Multiple complementary methods are used to analyze how an ancient audience might expect conflict and work through its development in the narrative. Analysis of comparative biographical literature and of Old Testament references and allusions shows that readers could expect in literature the type and intensity of conflict exhibited in Matthew 23. The gospel's internal narrative development provides unity to the conflict episodes in Matthew 9-23. It also offers rationale for the escalation of conflict for which Matthew 23 is the summary.

Chapter One: The Shape of the Discussion surveys representative works including redaction, social scientific, socio-historical, narrative and genre critics, to understand the options for studying conflict in Matthew. Reader-response oriented genre criticism provides language for framing reader expectations. Chapter Two: Expecting Conflict examines expectations that can be associated with Matthew's use of the Old Testament and by comparison with ancient biographies. Chapter Three: The Conflict Builds works systematically through each of the points of contact between Jesus and the leaders of Israel in chapters 9-22 organized by three topics: legal interpretation, the identity and authority of Jesus, and the character of the leaders. Chapter Four: Woe to You takes up the task of examining Matthew 23. The analysis of Matthew 23 identifies three components in the summary of conflict: Jesus presented as the model for his audience, Jesus' final denunciation of the leaders, and the presentation of Jesus as God's

representative. The multi-methodological approach used in this study of Matthew 23 suggests a narrative that invites the reader to rethink how one knows and understands God. The study thereby provides an alternative to the assumption that conflict reflects the immediate experience of a narrowly conceived authorial community.

INTRODUCTION

Each synoptic gospel involves conflict leading to the death of Jesus. Some of the instances of conflict are the same, but the ways that they are interwoven with didactic and legal material and that climactic moment vary with each gospel. Matthew's account, chapter 23 in particular, stands out for its heightened legal emphasis and the strong, unrelenting polemic against the leaders of Israel.¹ There are two broad options to understand the presence and function of conflict in Matthew. The first is that conflict and polemic reflect the context of the original audience, most often depicted as a localized community. Redaction, socio-historical and social-scientific analyses of Matthew are employed to this end. The second option, represented by narrative criticism, analyzes conflict as a function of plot development within the narrative. Proponents of each option have often been at odds with one another about the determinative role of text and social context for understanding the conflict.

The thesis of this study is that conflict, polemics and legal arguments in Matthew's biography of Jesus are structured coherently and consistently within the

¹ "Leaders of Israel" will be the preferred title for the group encompassing scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, lawyers, priests and elders. This is derived from the use in Mt 2:6 of ἡγεμόσιν in reference to the domains of both Judah and "my people Israel". The use in this verse is one part of Matthew's framework for indicating the leadership role of Jesus. Throughout the gospel Jesus' leadership is contrasted with that of other leaders of Israel. In 15:14, 23:16, 24, ὀδηγοί, "guides" or "leaders" is used. This title is preferred over "Jewish leaders" that was used by Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1972). It is certainly more manageable than using all the names for the individual groups and is broader than singling out any one group, such as Pharisees or scribes, no matter how prominent their role. "Religious leaders" introduces a potential bias that prematurely limits the role of Jesus and these leaders to matters of a "religious" nature without adequate delimitation of what is included or excluded from that category. Tilborg demonstrated that Matthew used the various groups interchangeably. Cf. Ellis Rivkin, "Scribes, Pharisees, Lawyers, Hypocrites: A Study in Synonymy," *HUCA* 49 (1978): 135-42; Mark Allan Powell, "The Religious Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Literary-Critical Study," Ph. D. Diss. (Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1988), 36-39, esp. notes 84-85.

narrative and exhibit characteristics that would make the narrative comprehensible to a broad audience who share similar literary presuppositions. This thesis challenges the assumption that conflict in the gospel is only or primarily intended for and understood by a localized audience engaged in conflict mirrored by the text. The thesis affirms narrative criticism's working assumption of the unity of the narrative. The thesis also recognizes that narratives are bound up with genre, which is by nature a construct of compared literature in social-historical contexts. In order to support this thesis I will examine the expectation of conflict, the development of conflict in the interaction between Jesus and the leaders of Israel, and the summary of issues as found in Mt 23. The expectation of conflict naturally derives from Jesus' death on the cross. However, the expectation of conflict is strengthened by Matthew's use of the Old Testament and from a comparison with other ancient biographies. Conflict develops with the leaders of Israel in Matthew's gospel through the form of legal disputes, at least through chapter 23. Mt 23 summarizes Jesus' conflicts with Israel's leaders. The focus on the law throughout the gospel serves to show that 1) Israel's leaders are unfit spokesmen for God, 2) Jesus rightly interprets and fulfills the law in his life and actions, and thereby 3) Jesus is the model for his disciples who are to learn from Jesus' words and deeds what it means to do the will of God. Mt 23 brings these elements together by 1) condemning Israel's leaders for their actions including not understanding the law of God, 2) affirming law and its connection to the teachings and actions of Jesus, and 3) calling Jesus' disciples to follow the one *καθηγητής*, the Christ rather than the teachings of Israel's leaders. Mt 23 contributes to an understanding of *how* Jesus is the Christ, rather than merely the fact *that* he is the Christ. Mt 23 is therefore part of the didactic element of Matthew's gospel.

Jesus never really talks to the disciples about the law outside of Mt 5-7 and 23. Rather, they turn conversations between Jesus and others about the law into questions of clarification or of following: see 15:15f; 16:5-12; 17:24-27; 19:10-12; 19:23-30. The disciples are otherwise remarkably absent from the legal disputes. Teachers who reject Jesus do not understand the law, thereby fail to understand God's will and therefore need to be supplanted as teachers. Jesus can say "do as they say" because what they *say* is scripture; his prohibition is against performing the demands of scripture the way they interpret and perform them. He disavows teachers because they do not embody the right understanding of the law. Matthew shows that Jesus affirms and embodies the law. It becomes coterminous with him. The law is affirmed; its teachers are turned out.

Righteousness and Law are not about realism or nominalism, stringency or leniency, but about patterning oneself after God's actions. Conflict about proper interpretation and adherence to the law ought to be expected because it concerns rightly representing God. If the law is based upon the narrative of God's saving activity in the world,² then Matthew indicates that the law must now be understood through Jesus' life, teachings and obedience unto death. This is how God is now acting in the world, as signified by the name "Emmanuel" (Mt 1:23). There is not a problem with the law in Matthew, but with those who interpret, teach and live out the demands of the law in a way contrary to that of Jesus. The question of the conflicts is whether the leaders or Jesus rightly pattern God's actions as the basis of right relations with God and with humans.

Comprehending conflict that is encountered in a narrative involves at least three major components. First, the reader brings expectations of conflict from the course of

² For example, see the way that the Decalogue is predicated upon the act of deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 20:2). This connection is also made in Ex. 22:21 and 23:9.

life and from reading other narratives. Expectations of conflict that might arise from comparison to other literature, comparisons signaled by the text, will be discussed in order to demonstrate how they shape the encounter with Mt 23. Second, the development of conflict within a given narrative builds from one episode to the next, though not always in rigid linearity. Mt 23 builds upon and summarizes previous episodes. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the development of conflict from the previous episodes and to show how Mt 23 brings several pieces into sharp relief. Third, any given episode in a narrative, while being linked to prior and following episodes, also has its own internal coherence. Mt 23 will be examined for its own internal coherence. These three steps correspond to the chapters two through four.

Chapter one surveys options for studying conflict in Matthew. Representative figures are drawn from those who have paid close attention to the conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel. Redaction criticism and social scientific criticism are treated first as two approaches that view social context as determinative for understanding the text. Narrative criticism comes next as an approach that views narrative strategies in the text as determinative. Genre criticism is used as an approach that on the one hand explicitly recognizes the value of social context in the form of comparative literature and related issues and on the other hand acknowledges the internal structure of a text. The chapter concludes with my proposal for how genre and narrative criticisms may be used in the analysis of Matthew.

Chapter two examines reading expectations that are associated with Matthew's use of the Old Testament and with a genre that includes similar biographies. The first part will examine the scripture Matthew cites and how this contributes to the expected confrontation between Jesus and the leaders of Israel. The second part will take up the

comparison to other biographies given some of the features that emerge from the first half of the chapter.

Chapter three works systematically through each of the points of contact between Jesus and the leaders of Israel in Mt 9-22. It is organized by three topics in the conflicts. First, the passages concerning legal interpretation are investigated. Second, passages concerning the identity and authority of Jesus are taken up. The third topic is the character of the leaders. These three categories overlap at many points and attention will be brought to this. An examination of Mt 5-7 would soon overwhelm this dissertation and thus is omitted from the discussion. However, an examination would show that the Sermon on the Mount does not undo the present thesis; rather, the two complement one another.

Chapter four takes up the task of examining Mt 23. The analysis will target three areas: (vv. 2-12) instruction to the audience about behavioral expectations that develops from a contrast between the leaders and those who are to follow Jesus, (vv. 13-36) Jesus' final denunciation of the leaders in the woe statements that is based on Jesus' previous critique of the leaders' legal interpretation and their character, and (vv. 37-39) the lament for those who reject Jesus as God's representative. It will be demonstrated that in these three areas Mt 23 summarizes the conflicts between Jesus and the leaders in a coherent narrative.

CHAPTER ONE: SHAPE OF THE DISCUSSION

There are four related types of study of the gospel of Matthew as it pertains to Mt 23. First, there are studies of Mt 23 in whole or part. The studies by Garland¹ and Newport² stand out as the only monographs on the subject to date that examine the whole of Mt 23. There are numerous articles on various verses of Mt 23³ but none succeed in offering a coherent framework for the chapter. Second, there are analyses of the leaders in Matthew, studies in which van Tilborg,⁴ Kingsbury⁵ and Powell⁶ are the prominent figures. Hultgren's study of the leaders draws from across the gospels.⁷ Third, there have been examinations of Jesus' and Matthew's attitude toward law.⁸ These studies coincide with wider reappraisals of Christianity's relationship to Judaism in the first century and a growing appreciation for the role law played in Jewish life and

¹ David E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1979).

² Kenneth G.C. Newport, *The Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, JSNT Supplement Series, 117 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

³ See Chapter Four below.

⁴ Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*.

⁵ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict Between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Literary-Critical Study," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 57-73; D. A. Carson, "The Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Reappraisal," *JETS* 25 (1982): 161-74.

⁶ Powell, "Religious Leaders."

⁷ Arland J. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries: The Form and Function of Conflict Stories in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979).

⁸ Three examples are John P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel*, *Analecta Biblica*, 71 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976); Joel Olaf Rustad, "Matthew's Attitude Toward Law in Matthew 19:16-22," Ph. D. Diss. (Chicago:

thought. Although my goal involves understanding legal conflict between Jesus and the leaders in Mt 23, the focus is related to determining why legal conflicts are used in describing the life of Jesus. Fourth, there are studies that address the presence of conflict in Matthew.

The following review of literature will use methodology to categorize the scholarship because each method shares among its representatives common claims about the relationship of text, context and purpose. This will enable a bridge to be built between studies of conflict, leaders and law. In this manner the ground will be set for the methodological approach taken in the following chapters. I will examine representatives of redaction, social scientific, narrative and genre criticisms.

This dissertation argues that if we begin with the hypothesis of a broad audience, then there is need for a different way to account for the conflict in Matthew than by locating it in the immediate experience of the authorial audience. Three facets of conflict narratives are related: context, structure, and purpose or intention. The simple communication model of Author-Text-Reader involves a social dimension for reading conventions and raises the question: how are general and specific social conditions brought into account in understanding a narrative? Drawing from the premise that texts arise from real historical contexts, reconstructing the context of the reader is crucial to the process of understanding the text, but does not dictate the choice between a localized and a broad audience. While they are very distinct methodologies, redaction criticism and social-scientific criticism share the premise that the text is to some degree

Concordia School, 1976); Stephen Westerholm, *Jesus and Scribal Authority*, Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 10 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1978).

transparent to the social context of either Jesus or the authorial audience.⁹ As these methods have been utilized in the study of Matthew, the reconstructed context has been determinative for the understanding of conflict in the text. The reconstructed context has been more localized than general, with the assumption of a specific localized authorial audience. Narrative criticism has been concerned with how conflict is structured in the narrative. The emphasis on understanding the unity of the whole text before reconstructing the context was a move in reaction to the tendency by redaction critics to dissect the text in the search for clues about the context resulting in multiple contexts and a fragmented narrative. Narrative critics working on Matthew have developed unified constructions of the narrative but have not come back to the issue of reconstructing the historical context with its accompanying assumptions about audience capacity to understand the narrative in the reconstructed manner. Genre criticism combines interest in the social world and in the internal dimensions of the text. As a field concerned with comparative reading of texts it is necessarily historical. As a field concerned with texts it shares with narrative criticism literary concerns. Purpose is related to how a narrative is told within an historical context. Most attempts to reconstruct the context have seen a polemical purpose in the conflicts in Matthew that are related to the conflicts of the authorial audience. Narrative critics have pointed to the place of conflict in the plot and character development within the text, but have not

⁹ Richard Bauckham notes “All the historical specificity for which historical critics long is transferred from the historical Jesus to the evangelist’s community”; Richard Bauckham, “For Whom Were Gospels Written?,” in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 20. See in the same volume Francis Watson’s “Toward a Literal Reading of the Gospels” in which he provides an analysis and critique of the genesis of this tendency.

articulated an alternative to the polemical purpose proposed by redaction critics. The following survey will show that genre criticism and narrative criticism can be combined to support the thesis that the purpose of conflict in Matthew is understood differently if we posit a broad rather than localized audience.

A. Source and Redaction: Matthew's community through the text

In Graham Stanton's plea to return to redaction criticism as a tried and true method rejuvenated when complemented by other methods, he clearly articulates the three pillars of the method.¹⁰ The first pillar is source criticism: the process of comparative reading with the other gospels to reconstruct the redactional history of a gospel. The second pillar is "the conviction that the modifications the evangelist makes to his sources reflect his own distinctive theological emphases."¹¹ The third pillar, the one particularly pertinent for our study, is "the conviction that the modifications made by the evangelist to his sources reflect the needs and circumstances of his readers or listeners."¹² The first two pillars concern literature, while the third concerns social settings. As literature, Matthew is read both comparatively and for internal unity. The first two pillars stand in dialectic to the third as social settings are used to check the literary constructs just as the literary constructs give rise to the social constructs. This circularity is broken at points by the introduction of other historical elements that are incorporated.

¹⁰ Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People: Studies in Matthew*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 23-53.

¹¹ Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, 41.

¹² Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, 45.

Redaction criticism has a long history and many representatives.¹³ In order to focus the vast array of options we again turn to a framework provided by Stanton.¹⁴ The framework draws from the issue of transparency by which we mean the degree to which the characters and events in the narrative represent a different reality in the world of the audience. Location in time and identification of groups are the two key criteria for Stanton, while geographical place holds a lesser position of importance. Within this

¹³ Ernst Haenchen, "Matthäus 23," *ZTK* 48 (1951): 38-63, and Wilhelm Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen der Redaktion von Matthäus 23," in *Orientierung an Jesus: zur Theologie der Synoptiker: für Josef Schmid*, ed. Paul Hoffmann, Norbert Brox and Wilhelm Pesch (Freiburg: Herder, 1973), 286-99, are two significant German representatives of the discipline who have articles devoted to Matthew 23. Haenchen argues through his analysis of the redaction of the "Woe" sayings in Mt 23 that the earliest stages of the "Woe" sayings were indeed harsh. However, they were spoken within an intramural conflict that also allowed room for scribes and Pharisees to react positively to Jesus as in Mark and Luke. The subsequent split and growing animosity between church and synagogue led the church to reinterpret these words as being against Judaism as a whole. Matthew's community became unable to perform self-critical reflection as animosity created a split between "us" and "them" and projected negative values on "them". This community readily identified all hypocrisy, defined as saying one thing and doing another, with Judaism. Haenchen argues for the recovery of Jesus' original acceptance of the devout and earnest Pharisee. The main problem with the Pharisees was that they could not understand how Jesus would go to those less religiously rigorous than they were. They were not hypocritical, they just did not agree with the scope of Jesus' mission. Matthew's redaction obscures this and creates a terrible problem that needs to be rejected now.

Pesch rejects such a drastic split and animosity between Jews and Christians as the genesis of the gospel account. He argues that 23:8-12 indicates an ongoing redaction process by a church that has certainly developed a strong sense of self-criticism without the lingering desire to vilify the Jews. That animosity is a past event. Mt 23 is directed at those who will not take up the way of Jesus, including those within the church.

Both articles identify layers of redaction and posit very different historical reconstructions. They both assume a more congenial intramural setting for the original words. Haenchen posits an early date, soon after a post-70 schism, for the final redaction. Pesch pushes the date out further to a time when the intensity of the schism has dissipated. As shown in the following discussion, these are representative of common positions.

¹⁴ Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, 113-45.

framework he identifies four categories.¹⁵ The first category is the “traditional” view. This view considers that the narrative reflects accurately the people and events of history and that Matthew wrote before A.D. 70. Views two through four treat the narrative as being shaped to mirror the needs and concerns of the audience in a post-resurrection setting. The second view holds that Matthew wrote after A.D. 70, used Mark as a source, and considered his community as part of Judaism, i.e., *intra muros*. The third view is that Matthew writes in the wake of a painful separation from Judaism. The audience is therefore most likely composed of Jewish Christians coming to terms with the separation from other non-Christian Jews, i.e., they are *extra muros*. Various options exist for the date and reasons for separation. The fourth view is that Matthew is a Gentile writing for a Gentile audience when the separation from Judaism is no longer a major concern. An addition to the basic features of Stanton’s framework of time and group identification should be made to account for our interest in purpose. A visual diagram to aid in mapping the possibilities would need to include an axis for each of the following: chronology, group identity, and purpose. The primary chronological question concerns the relationship of the destruction of the temple to Matthew's gospel. The question of group identity lies along a spectrum of the possible variations of *intra muros* and *extra muros* including Jewish Christians, non-Christian Jews, and Gentile Christians and perhaps multiple groups addressed simultaneously. Purpose can include encomium,

¹⁵ Stanton provides an excellent survey of these categories; Graham N. Stanton, "The Origin and Purpose of Matthew's Gospel: Matthean Scholarship from 1945 to 1980," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 25.3, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 1889-951. Hagner provides a more recent survey; Donald A. Hagner, "The *Sitz Im Leben* of the Gospel of Matthew," in *Treasures New and Old: Contributions to Matthean Studies*, ed. David R. Bauer and Mark Allan Powell (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 27-68.

eulogy, exemplary action, informative, entertainment, preservation of memory, didactic/pedagogic, apologetic, polemic, evangelistic, doctrinal, and apocalyptic.¹⁶ A sampling of six positions will be presented, drawn from those whose works most closely approximate our focus on Mt 23 rather than trying to supply examples of all possible variations. Sjef van Tilborg claims that a specific reconstruction of the Matthean audience is not possible but does offer a general social location. David Garland opts for at least a limited reconstruction seeing Matthew as primarily a pedagogical tool for Matthew's own church. Donald Hagner posits a mixed group with mixed sub-genre. Graham Stanton articulates the possibility of, and need for, a more thorough reconstruction. He is selected because he continues to carry the flag for redaction criticism and has written numerous works pertinent to our focus. He also articulates the possibilities and pitfalls of his own work well. He suggests the generic options of both external and internal polemics. Kenneth Newport argues for a mixed audience, one that it is linked to Matthew's pre-70 sources and another that is connected with Matthew's post-70 redaction. The first audience is carrying on an *intra muros* debate about the right interpretation of law while the second audience is *extra muros* and concerned about the rejection of Israel as experienced in the eschatological judgment and destruction of the temple. Ulrich Luz recognizes Matthew's use of sources, but posits a unified narrative that points to a Jewish-Christian group that is just in the process of separating from non-Christian Jews and moving toward Gentile Christian influence.¹⁷

¹⁶ Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, SNTS Monograph Series, 70 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992), 149-51, 185-88, 214-16.

¹⁷ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), see esp. 33-99.

The events surrounding the destruction of the temple are not as determinative for his position as it is for Stanton and Newport. The process of ascertaining the nature and characteristics of the community varies with these six scholars but, in general, it involves isolating passages that bear the distinct Matthean imprint from the redaction process. The more passages and themes that are involved, the more complicated the analysis.

The frequently cited monograph by van Tilborg is one of the early works to use Mt 23 prominently in the attempt to situate Matthew's gospel. He begins by declaring that Matthew homogenizes all the representatives of Israel's leaders and that the individual groups are not meant for historical information.¹⁸ Passages with the leaders are drawn together and organized under the epithets of ὑποκριταί and πονηροί. He also examines how the leaders interact with both the disciples and the crowds.

The epithets show how completely the leaders have rejected Jesus and in turn how they are rejected by Jesus. This relays to the audience that the leaders of Israel have been rejected. Judaism is no longer a "serious competitor."¹⁹ The fall of Jerusalem is final proof of their rejection by God. In discussing the disciples, he states that the disciples show a positive response to Jesus in contrast to the leaders' negative response. He does not conclude, however, that the audience should imitate one rather than the other. Rather, they are used to point to the centrality of Jesus.²⁰ He does not identify the disciples with the audience, but rather claims that the crowds are the appropriate role

¹⁸ Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 1.

¹⁹ Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 171.

²⁰ Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 99, 170.

model for the audience. The crowds give Jesus a mixed response in the gospel which van Tilborg takes as a positive sign to the community.

Mt does not wish to call up a history that is past for the purpose of writing a 'Life of Jesus' which is supposed to deal with the contrast that has existed between the Jewish people and its leaders, but on the basis of his actual experiences, Mt believes that also during Jesus' life *οἱ ὄχλοι* did indeed accept Jesus. Jesus' message hardly meets with any resistance in Mt's own time and therefore he can tell his readers that they have a choice: they can do as the Pharisees and the scribes did and see in Jesus a man who is possessed, or they can do as the crowds do and profess that Jesus is the Son of David and thus be healed by him of their own blindness. Mt uses *οἱ ὄχλοι* so often because he sees that such a great number of people have actually accepted Jesus and his message. In his opinion this fact has become an argument to persuade others to a similar experience.²¹

This reconstruction is very general and only requires distance from a viable form of Judaism and the supposition that there are those who need a push to accept Jesus.²²

The crowds in the text show Matthew's contemporary "crowds" how to respond to Jesus. There is acknowledgment that the generic designation of the Gospel is "Life of...", as seen in the quotation above. Tilborg does not develop the implications of genre except to point to the potential for modeling or mirroring behavior for a contemporary audience. This aspect is used as a means to use the text to see through the transparency to Matthew's situation. He sees the purpose as heavily slanted toward evangelistic propaganda. Conflict is retold in order to convince non-Christians that they, like the crowds, should accept Jesus.

Tilborg completes this evaluation with the only narrative episode considered being that of the passion week. He does not offer a systematic development of the gospel narrative as a whole. Rather, his study is organized by groups: leaders, disciples

²¹ Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 160.

²² Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 171.

and crowds. The examination of the leaders is organized by key terms that are used about them: ὑποκριταί, πονηροὶ and φονεῖς. Many of his conclusions about the disciples and crowds are simply unsupportable and ignore significant evidence.²³ He resorts piecemeal to redaction criticism to explain a passage, especially comments about the crowds. He also errs in identifying the leaders with all Israel. This is unsupportable in the text and reveals his reliance on mirror reading to make sense of the presence of conflict in the narrative.

David Garland provides one of the only two monographs devoted to Mt 23. After describing the composition and structure of Mt 23 he proceeds in a systematic manner through the chapter. Garland modifies his redaction approach by Thompson's "vertical analysis".²⁴ He begins with a warning about too hastily drawing conclusions about the context. His own assessment is offered in light of the shape of the whole chapter. Any reconstruction must take into account the contradictions of 23:1-2, 23 that offer backhanded affirmation of the leaders, and 19:3-9 and 16:5-12, among others, that strongly condemn their practices and teachings. In saying this he is challenging the assumption that Mt 23 represents polemic.²⁵ His analysis points to a dual purpose for Mt 23. First, it is an apology to a Christian audience about their own success and the failure

²³ Tilborg concludes that the disciples are good and the leaders are bad. This ignores the instances in which Jesus challenges the disciples in their evaluation of greatness as in chapters 18-20. His view of the crowds is equally rosy. "Much more clearly than in the use of any other term the texts with οἱ ὄχλοι show how very positive and unprejudiced Mt was in the way he faced the world. Very typical are those texts in which οἱ ὄχλοι are directly confronted with the Jewish leaders: Mt 7, 28; 9, 8; 12, 23; 21, 9.11.46; 22, 33; 27, 20"; Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 142.

²⁴ Garland, *Intention*, 23. He cites the work of William G. Thompson, *Matthew's Advice to a Divided Community*, *Analecta Biblica*, 44 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 12. This form of analysis has affinity to later narrative criticism.

and destruction of the leadership represented by the temple. This apology points to the deuteronomic judgment for sin based on the fact that the leadership rejected God's Jewish Messiah.²⁶ The strength of the attack on the leaders is because they were shepherds of God's people and judged unconditionally, not because they represented specific Jewish leaders opposing Matthew's community. The second purpose of Mt 23 is pedagogical. Matthew uses the theologically shaped history of God's judgment of his own leaders in order to warn his own community that they are not immune from the same fate if they act as the leaders did. Mt 23:8-12 is an indication of this quality.

Garland's work is careful and systematic. It is characteristic of his redaction-critical approach that there is a need to explain the features of conflict in terms of how it reflects the situation of the audience. Garland's reconstructions may be characterized as more theological than socio-historical.

Donald Hagner enumerates a number of key passages and socio-historical issues that are repeatedly used to establish the identity of the Matthean audience and the purpose of the writing. More items can be added from other studies, but eventually nearly all of Matthew would be in the list.

1. the cursing of "heretics", or *birkath ha-minim*, from Yavneh
2. sayings indicating the kingdom is being transferred to a new people
3. interest in *panta ta ethne*
4. alleged cessation of mission to Jews
5. stress on Law
6. fulfillment of prophecy
7. exclusivistic and particularistic sayings
8. putting Pharisees and Sadducees together without regard for historical accuracy
9. Zechariah 9:9 in 21:1-9
10. positive note about Pharisees in 23:2

²⁵ Garland, *Intention*, 210.

²⁶ Garland, *Intention*, 210-13.

11. avoidance of offence in paying temple tax in 17:24ff
12. view of Law (5:17ff)
13. failure to explain Jewish customs as Mark does
14. untranslated Hebrew vocabulary
15. omission of wife divorcing husband in parallel to Mk 10:12
16. addition of exception clause to divorce in 5:32 and 19:9
17. derogatory reference to Gentiles in 6:17; 18:17

The attraction of Hagner's study is the attempt to get beyond the impasse created by trying to locate an audience for whom all elements would make sense. He posits a dual audience, but a single apologetic purpose, in which Matthew is struggling to defend Jewish Christianity to Jews on one hand and to realize unity with Gentiles on the other.²⁷ Matthew is an apologetic document in that it shows levels of agreement with Judaism but yet also points out where Judaism is superseded. Mt 23 points to an apologetic internal to the community that holds that the new community formed around Jesus is the true interpreter of Torah.²⁸ Matthew is attempting to hold the tension between the old and the new, between a Jewish heritage and the reality of a growing Gentile Christianity. McKnight offers another example of this basic thesis when Matthew is seen as a loyal critic of his own people in light of their spiritual heritage.²⁹ McKnight draws more heavily than Hagner on Old Testament parallels for the loyal prophetic critic.

Graham N. Stanton has pursued the nature of Matthew's community for over two decades using a redaction-critical methodology. He has been an ardent supporter of

²⁷ Hagner, "*Sitz Im Leben*," 50.

²⁸ Hagner, "*Sitz Im Leben*," 56.

²⁹ Scot McKnight, "A Loyal Critic: Matthew's Polemic with Judaism in Theological Perspective," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 55-79.

the position that Matthew's gospel represents a polemical debate between the church and the synagogue. His 1977 study of the relationship of Fifth Ezra and Matthew draws on the use of the term *ethnos* in Mt 21:43.³⁰ He argues that a serious rupture between church and synagogue led Matthew to view Israel as replaced by the church, the final separation brought about partly by the events of 70AD. Mt 25:31-46 is the result of a redactional shift that reflects the reality that the church was not the dominant partner in the conflict and was looking for future vindication.

Whereas it was originally an exhortation to all to show loving concern for all men and women in need, it became an assurance to Matthew's anxious readers that the nations would ultimately be judged on the basis of their treatment of Christians.³¹

Stanton notes a multiplicity of genres operating in the pericopae of Matthew. The pervasive polemic is broken by this apocalyptic section and functions as consolation. It is not surprising to find polemic and consolation knit together. Stanton argues that

Jewish and Christian writers turned to apocalyptic in periods of historical crisis and trauma. Apocalyptic regularly functions as consolation for groups which perceive themselves to be under duress [sic]. Apocalyptic language is also often used to reinforce attitudes of group solidarity amongst minority groups at odds with society at large; clear lines are drawn between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. This is the social setting of the passages from 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and I Enoch quoted above. It is also the social setting of the book of Revelation, which announces judgement and doom for the powerful and complacent, and in so doing provides hope of ultimate vindication for the powerless and oppressed people of God. Matt 25.31-46 comes from a similar social setting and was intended to function similarly for the first recipient of the gospel.³²

³⁰ Graham N. Stanton, "5 Ezra and Matthean Christianity," *JTS* 28 (1977): 67-83. This work is also found in Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 256-77.

³¹ Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, 221. This chapter was first delivered as a paper in 1981.

³² Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, 228-29.

The thesis of “The Gospel of Matthew and Judaism”, originally published in 1984³³, is that Matthew strengthens the anti-Jewish polemic in his use of apocalyptic material. This “beleaguered sect” is experiencing real present threats by Jews who continue to reject Jesus and the church. Matthew’s community is also at odds with a Gentile world. The increased use of apocalyptic themes, relative to Mark, indicates the need to return the attack of outsiders (polemic) and to increase group solidarity (consolation and self-definition). The gospel also offers an apology internal to the community by means of telling the life of Jesus, rather than by means of a letter, which offers an explanation of why the Jews continue to reject Jesus. Matthew 23 reflects the complexity of polemic, apology and consolation.³⁴ The leaders of Israel are condemned, reflecting the polemic and basis for the apology for why Jews continue to oppose the church, but are offered hope in the final lines of the chapter. Mt 23:8-12 supports group self-definition over against the opposition. In Stanton’s invaluable survey of Matthean scholarship, he indicates his leaning toward the view that Matthew’s community is *extra-muros* from Judaism, but still defining itself against Judaism.

The evangelist is probably not attacking real Jewish opponents: he is not engaged in direct polemic, but his gospel can be seen in a very broad sense as an apology. It is not *tout court* the Christian answer to Judaism, but in many passages the evangelist writes with more than half an eye on known Jewish objections to Christian teaching. Contemporary Judaism is not simply ignored or

³³ Graham N. Stanton, "The Gospel of Matthew and Judaism," *BJRL* 66 (1984): 264-84. It is cited here in Stanton, *Gospel for a New People*, 146-68 because the minor editing indicates Stanton’s comfort with the thesis.

³⁴ Graham N. Stanton, "Aspects of Early Christian-Jewish Polemic and Apologetic," *NTS* 31 (1985): 377-92. This paper was originally delivered as a Main Paper at the 39th General Meeting of *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* in Basel in the year following the presentation of “The Gospel of Matthew and Judaism”. It appears in Stanton, *Gospel for a New People*, 232-55.

set at a historical or theological distance: the evangelist develops a subtle dialectic and stresses equally strongly both continuity and discontinuity.³⁵

Stanton's subsequent work continues to develop evidence for this view.³⁶

However, as Stanton provides an overview of his own work he appears to deconstruct the third pillar of redaction criticism,³⁷ calling into question much of his own work. He critiques the reliance on transparency, agrees with narrative criticism's focus on the gospel as a whole, and calls for work on the genre of the gospel.

Matthew is writing a gospel, not a letter. The literary genre chosen by Matthew indicates to his readers or listeners the expectations they should have. The evangelist's primary aim is to set out the story of Jesus. That he does so from a particular perspective is undeniable. What is less clear is the extent to which that perspective is *directly* related to the views and circumstances of the addressees. How do we know which parts of Matthew are intended to challenge or change the views of the readers or listeners? In the New Testament letters it is difficult enough to make this distinction; the genre Matthew has chosen makes this doubly difficult.³⁸

³⁵ Stanton, "Origin," 1921.

³⁶ Stanton used Mt 24:20 to argue that Matthew's community had completely cut its ties with Judaism in Graham N. Stanton, "'Pray That Your Flight.' Mt 24:20," *JSNT* 37, no. 1 (1989): 17-30. This is also reflected in 10:23 and 23:34. In a paper delivered in 1990, Stanton used sociological analysis to argue that both Matthew and the Damascus Document stem from sectarian communities in sharp conflict with parent bodies from which they had recently separated; Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, 85-107. The documents serve as foundations for a new community. The genre is therefore predominantly internally apologetic. He pursues this same line concluding that Matthew is not written in reaction to the *birkath ha-minim*; Stanton; *A Gospel for A New People*, 113-45.

³⁷ See note 12. The third pillar is "the conviction that the modifications made by the evangelist to his sources reflect the needs and circumstances of his readers or listeners".

³⁸ Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, 45.

In spite of this, he holds fast to the validity of redaction criticism. The concept of specific communities still holds sway even if community becomes a loosely affiliated group of communities geographically spread out.

A gospel is not a letter. Since letters do not always provide a clear window onto the social circumstances of the recipients, we must be even more careful with the gospels. The examples of Paul, the author of I Peter, and of Ignatius raise two further points which must be considered. Perhaps Matthew did not have first hand information about the circumstances of *all* the Christian communities for which he wrote. Perhaps, like the author of I Peter, the evangelist wrote for a loose network of communities over a wide geographical area. If this suggestion is plausible, an important corollary follows: Matthew's gospel should not be expected to provide us with *detailed* information about the social setting of the first recipients. I am convinced that Matthew's choice of literary genre and the evidence of the text of the gospel itself point in this direction... We should stop supposing that the gospel reflects the evangelist's close relationship with one group of Christians in one house church in one particular urban geographical location... Surely Matthew's carefully crafted, very full account of the *bios* of Jesus was not written for such a small group of people; surely we should envisage a loosely linked set of communities over a wide geographical area.³⁹

Thus, the horizon of the gospel is relatively more open than in earlier redaction work that saw a more restricted horizon. It is not clear whether Stanton is ready to yield on studying the audience by reading them through the text. By supplementing redaction criticism with social-scientific tools, Stanton continues to try to describe the general characteristics of Matthew's audience. However, he closes the article by saying

We do not know as much about Matthew's communities as we would like, but we know enough about the evangelist's purposes and the 'horizon of expectation' of the initial recipients to enable us to read the text sensitively.⁴⁰

In the next section we will question what happens when the genre of biography draws the horizon more broadly with a general audience.

³⁹ Graham N. Stanton, "Revisiting Matthew's Communities," in *SBL 1994 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1994), 11-12.

⁴⁰ Stanton, "Revisiting," 22.

Newport's monograph,⁴¹ based on his dissertation, offers a significant re-examination of the assumptions and conclusions drawn from source critical analyses of Mt 23. The work follows a relatively simple format. First, he re-examines dominant compositional theories including Goulder,⁴² Tevis,⁴³ Boismard,⁴⁴ and two and four document hypotheses. The critiques offered in each case are the real strength of the study. Second, Newport formulates an alternative *Sitz im Leben* for Mt 23 that divides the chapter into two components representing a pre-70 *intra muros* source (vv. 2-31) and a post-70 *extra muros* redaction (vv. 32-39). Third, he reviews elements in vv. 2-31 to determine the degree to which a pre-70 date can be established and maintained. He concludes that all major features of vv. 2-31 can be sustained credibly within a pre-70 *Sitz im Leben*. Fourth, he offers an exegesis of Mt 23 demonstrating the unity within vv. 2-31 and vv. 32-39, respectively, and the differences between the two sections. The arguments for the *Sitz im Leben* and the exegesis are connected to other portions of the gospel, notably the Sermon on the Mount in Mt 5-7.

The premise of Newport's study is stated in the following way:

Gospel redaction criticism, and indeed redaction criticism as a whole, is based upon one fundamental assumption: that it is possible to distinguish between original source and later redaction.⁴⁵

⁴¹ See note 2.

⁴² Michael Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, (London: SPCK, 1974).

⁴³ Dennis G. Tevis, *An Analysis of Words and Phrases Characteristic of the Gospel of Matthew*, (PhD thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1983).

⁴⁴ P. Benoit and M.E. Boismard, *Synopse des Quatre Evangiles en Français* (2 vol.; Paris: Cerf, 1972).

⁴⁵ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 15.

His argument then rests on two factors: the ability to discern the unity of a passage within the flow of the larger narrative, and to provide a plausible reconstruction of the setting in time and historical sequence of the textual units. Hence, Newport must argue for sources and *Sitz im Leben*. The history of source and redaction criticisms testifies to the ability to create numerous reconstructions within these assumptions of both the sources and *Sitz im Leben*. A study falters if the ability to discern discrete units is undermined, if the *Sitz im Leben* is too indeterminate, or if the unity of the entire text can be maintained. Audience apprehension of a text need not be explained, however, by reference to the authorial process of creating the text. I will argue in the subsequent chapters that an audience can make sense of a text without knowledge of the author's use of sources and if the audience belongs to a different *Sitz im Leben* than the author. Newport argues from the outset for the unity of 23:2-31 by linking it to his proposed *Sitz im Leben*.

Close examination of Matthew 23 suggests that the chapter is made up of two principal parts, with the division coming at 22.32. Verses 2-31, it is suggested, are source material, vv. 32-39 redaction. This view seems to account for the substantial unity of the first part of the chapter and the distinct shift in tone from an attack upon the 'scribes and Pharisees' found in vv. 2-31 to a criticism of the Jewish nation as a whole in the latter part of the discourse. Similarly the apparently different *Sitz im Leben* of the first part of the chapter from that of the latter is also explicable on the basis of this hypothesis.⁴⁶

Newport offers a critique of Goulder's compositional theory that is based on word analysis.⁴⁷ Goulder uses the analysis to conclude that Mt 23 is a Matthean composition, a conclusion rejected by Newport. The importance of Newport's critique is

⁴⁶ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 25.

⁴⁷ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 19-40.

that he is able to argue for the unity of vv. 2-31 and its linkage to Mt 5-7, but to posit it as a non-Matthean source. This sets up the argument that

. . . the *Sitz im Leben* of Mt. 23.2-31 is that of an *intra muros* debate between one group of Jews (scribes and Pharisees) and another (nascent Christianity). The kind of debate that we see going on there is primarily one of correct halakhah. The author believes that the scribes and Pharisees are authoritative teachers and should be obeyed. He thinks that the altar sanctifies the gift. He knows that the Pharisees love the best seats in *the* synagogue and the best seats at the suppers. Everything suggests a first-hand day-to-day acquaintance with and acceptance of the practices of Judaism. Matthew is not such an author.⁴⁸

Newport then draws from a word and phrase analysis conducted by Tevis to contend that “words and phrases which can be positively identified as Matthew’s own tend to be clustered in vv. 32-39, whereas vv. 2-31 seems relatively devoid of such phrases.”⁴⁹ This affirms for Newport the argument by Tevis that vv. 32-39 is a redactional addition onto the unit of vv. 2-31 by an “eschatological redactor”.⁵⁰ Boismard and the documentary hypotheses are rejected for being unnecessarily unwieldy, for lack of tangible evidence, for lack of appropriate parallels, and inability to account for the internal unity of the chapter.⁵¹ Newport's conclusion that there is internal unity with only a single division between vv. 2-31 and vv. 32-39 is certainly an improvement on previous scholarship.

There are two objections against Newport's position. First, statistical word analysis can point to word usage clusters but it is hardly a sound basis, as an isolated explanation, for textual unity. The connection of words and phrases to larger semantic units needs to be judiciously examined within the framework of narrative construction.

⁴⁸ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 40.

⁴⁹ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 47.

⁵⁰ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 41.

⁵¹ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 47-55.

Second, the unity of a passage, in this case vv. 2-39, may be elusive when looking too closely but may become clearer when viewed in a larger framework, particularly as a summary passage that incorporates various themes developed elsewhere in the narrative.

Newport adopts a familiar dichotomy between Jesus and Matthew in order to explain the differences between source and redactional material. There is continuity between Jesus and the early pre-70 Christian community that provided the source material of vv. 2-31 that reflects an *intra muros* Jewish debate not about the "efficacy or correctness of the Jewish way of life in general, but the form that way of life should take in individual cases".⁵² This *Sitz im Leben* presumably comes prior to the emergence of a separate Christian identity.

In this study it is argued that Mt. 23.2-31 stems from a Jewish-Christian milieu in which the traditional 'pillars' of Judaism, namely the law, the temple, the synagogue and the leadership, were still held in high regard. Furthermore, vv. 2-31 form a complete unit, having a high degree of internal unity. This entire section is most at home when seen in the context of pre-70 Judaism.⁵³

The split between Jesus' and Matthew's attitudes toward scribes and Pharisees, the Jewish nation, law, temple, and synagogue finds convenient explanation in an historical sequence punctuated by a cataclysmic event ripe with theological implications. Newport is clearly uncomfortable with Matthew while maintaining a more positive view of Jesus.

Matthew's harsh castigation of the Jewish nation is surely indefensible, though it is somewhat understandable. Despite the apparent contradiction, Matthew was, it seems, both a Jew and anti-Jewish. Religious polemics often bring forth tirades of abuse and arouse the bitterest of feelings. Religious ties are often stronger than racial or family ones, and Matthew is by no means alone in rejecting family and race in favour of religion.⁵⁴

⁵² Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 77.

⁵³ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 68.

⁵⁴ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 68.

This sociological understanding of polemics, developed largely in Matthean studies by Saldarini (see following section) provides a necessary missing link for Newport to understand how Matthew the Jew could be impacted so dramatically by the destruction of the temple so as to redact a work so evidently anti-Jewish. There are, therefore, two sets of conflict represented in Mt 23: an *intra muros* conflict between Jesus and his contemporaries about the application of the law in specific instances, as reflected in vv. 2-31, and an *extra muros* conflict between Matthew's Christian community as it separates itself from post-70 Judaism, as reflected in vv. 32-39.

Newport exhibits more concern with establishing the pre-70 *Sitz im Leben* of vv. 2-31 than with the *Sitz im Leben* of vv. 32-39. His arguments for the pre-70 setting are provided in the examination of fourteen key terms. The conclusion he reaches for a pre-70 setting is certainly plausible, but is not the only defensible position from his presentation of the material. Newport concludes that "not one reference to a practice, custom or religious title found in Matthew 23 requires that the passage be set in a post-70 *Sitz im Leben*".⁵⁵ Newport in fact demonstrates only that vv. 2-31 could plausibly be pre-70, not that it must be.

More positively, it appears that numerous individual sayings within ch. 23 (such as the reference to the temple and the altar) quite clearly presuppose a pre-70 *Sitz im Leben*, and many of them betray an accurate knowledge of the workings of Judaism.⁵⁶

Newport fails to establish why vv. 2-31 could not be post-70 which is the logical requirement needed to establish the case more firmly. The assumption appears to be that Matthew's post-70 bias would not allow him to compose vv. 2-31. Yet, this position

⁵⁵ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 116.

⁵⁶ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 116.

does not take into account Newport's own claim that Matthew is a disaffected Jew who was deeply touched by the destruction of the temple. This hardly sounds like the reaction of a Jew who has only a casual acquaintance with the workings and importance of temple, law, and leadership in Palestine. Newport's position, initially as appealing as it is simple, begins to appear to rest on questionable assumptions. It is not clear what his basis is for deciding what might clearly presuppose an "accurate knowledge of the workings of Judaism". The criteria are not provided for determining the plausible geographical or cultural extent of any given piece of information. Could a Jew in Rome who has traveled to Jerusalem write with this level of accuracy to a Roman audience or could only a Jew living in or near Jerusalem know it? Would a Roman or any other audience require the same information to decode the narrative?

The arguments for an *extra muros* polemic in vv. 32-39 are also weak. The controversy accounts in 12:1-50 cited as being "probably designed to underline Israel's guilt"⁵⁷ are clearly against scribes and Pharisees not Israel, a key distinction that Newport fails to recognize. Likewise, Mt 13:53-58 does not explain "how the Jews took offence at Jesus"⁵⁸ but how his hometown did. Newport identifies Jerusalem with all Israel in the birth narrative and in 23:37-39, yet the context is more evidently about leaders such as Herod, temple officials and scribes and Pharisees. This critical distinction between leaders and Israel will be discussed in more detail below as it concerns 23:32-39.

⁵⁷ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew* 23, 65.

⁵⁸ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew* 23, 65.

If we shift perspective from compilation and redaction to how an audience might encounter the text, Newport implies that Matthew would be recognized as an unskillful editor who is unable to neatly hide the forced integration of two types of conflict.

To be sure, the evangelist has partly covered his tracks by giving Mt. 23.2-31 a different setting and by adding an appendix to it, but the material refuses to come wholly into line with his theological purpose and religious standpoint, and, in the last analysis, Mt. 23.2-31 cannot be fitted convincingly into the Matthean scheme. The *Sitz im Leben* of Mt. 23 is not that of the evangelist himself.

Matthew, however, was no fool and while he sometimes seems to have felt obliged to include material that would have suited his purposes better to leave out (Mt. 10.23), in Matthew 23 he manages to pull off a partial transformation of the material to suit his own purposes. This he does by adding his appendix (Mt. 23.32-39) and by placing the material carefully in the context of his material about the Jewish rejection of the Messiah found in Matthew 21 and 22.⁵⁹

Newport apparently believes Matthew to be an unconvincing editor obliged to include material contrary to his editorial plan but who amazingly yields a partial adaptation.

Newport wants to have it both ways and one must wonder whether Matthew's original audience(s) would have noted all the supposed disparities.

While I remain unconvinced of the premises and implications of Newport's construction of the sources and *Sitz im Leben* of Mt 23, he does offer on those premises valuable critiques of other scholarship and a simpler solution to the challenges of Mt 23. He offers one way to make sense of the conflict in Mt 23 but does so by creating a divide between Jesus and Matthew. Theologically this means that the reader must decide whether Jesus or Matthew carries the authoritative voice, or to state it from an audience-oriented perspective, whether Matthew is an unreliable narrator of the life of Jesus. The conflict in Matthew's account becomes a conflict for the reader.

⁵⁹ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 68.

Ulrich Luz takes a decidedly different approach from that of Newport. Luz understands that Matthew drew from Mark and Q as sources but utilized them with considerably more sophistication than Newport allows.

The more important question is not *what* sources the evangelist used but *how* he used them. The analysis of the structure has demonstrated that the evangelist was not a "free" author but *willingly* let himself be influenced to a large extent by his main source, Mark. The analysis of the individual texts will show that Matthew knows the Gospel of Mark well, that he anticipates future material in his redaction, and that he reuses in other places sayings from omitted verses of Mark. It is as if the evangelist, despite his considerable condensations, wanted to use as much of the text of Mark as possible!⁶⁰

Luz paints a picture of an author very deeply immersed in his community and aware of other writings about Jesus. Matthew takes these sources and crafts them into a new document and thereby sharpens their teaching into something more useful to his community. Luz sees the Matthew's narrative as constructed from sources, but redacted into a coherent narrative for his audience. One of the distinguishing features of Luz's understanding of the redaction process is its radical historicity. The evangelist does not edit source material playfully with the intent to produce an artistic, but detached work. The genesis of the project is a real historical community with particular needs.

This attempt to place the Gospel of Matthew into the history of Jewish Christianity naturally is a hypothesis. It is based on the assumption that behind the origin of the Gospel of Matthew there is not simply some kind of "literary-critical operation" but that an author who is obligated to his community works with its own normative traditions and contemplates them anew in the light of the Gospel of Mark.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 73.

⁶¹ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 86.

The commitment to the unity of the narrative drives Luz to consider a historical location where the tensions and apparent contradictions of the text might be resolved. He suggests a point at which there is both *extra muros* and *intra muros* conflict.

Thus it is our hypothesis that the Gospel of Matthew comes from a situation in which the Jewish-Christian community stood at a turning point. Already the Sayings Source with its heightened proclamation of judgment on Israel demonstrated that the proclamation of Jesus in Israel had reached a crisis. The destruction of Jerusalem in the Jewish War was experienced by the community as the judgment of God on Israel. In this situation the community decided to carry its proclamation of Jesus to the Gentiles. This decision most likely was controversial in the community. Matthew elected himself its advocate. In my view, one of his most important concerns is to defend in his community the decision for the Gentile mission.⁶²

We can see in this statement that a breach between Jewish groups has reached a crisis point. This is reflected to some degree in Jesus' controversies with the leaders of Israel. The common ground of adherence to law is affirmed while the interpretation of the law is a more serious point of departure. There is also tension within the group about the mission to the Gentiles and the grounding of ethical behavior.⁶³ Internal conflicts are stimulated to some degree by the growing separation with the larger Jewish community and the common theological, social and ethical basis that they had shared. Matthew's community is being forced to rethink its life from the premise of Jesus life and teachings.

Redaction criticism focuses attention on the changes made as based on a reconstructed relationship between the gospels. The task involves constructing a plausible historical context out of the greatest number of variations. Hagner represents the type of conclusion that sees a complex setting for a complex set of variations. Even

⁶² Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 84.

⁶³ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 89-90.

this assumes a specific social context. Stanton moves toward the position that amassing more items to be taken into account does not replace the need for understanding the shape of the gospel as a whole narrative written in a genre that resists socio-historical reconstruction. The fragmenting tendencies of redaction criticism, the problem of reconstructing communities and the problems of transparency drive some scholars to embrace narrative criticism.⁶⁴ However, the question of purpose, which Stanton states should be a result of examining the narrative as a whole, has not been fully developed except by Luz. There are several implications for our study of Mt 23. The search for community will need to be replaced with a notion of a more general audience. The function of Mt 23 will need to be discerned within the larger framework of the gospel narrative, rather than in any list of redactional problems. The presence of polemic is not in itself sufficient to establish the overall purpose of the gospel, whether it is polemical, apologetic or something other.

B. Social-Scientific Models

Socio-historical criticism and social scientific criticism operate under the premise that

...the NT texts are records of dynamic interchange among persons who lived in specific communities at particular times and places. Theological reflection was certainly part of that ancient social interchange, and should be attended to: "sociological study" of the NT texts is not necessarily antitheological. But those who engage in such study contend that the "meaning" of theological (and nontheological) statements in the NT can only be recovered when they are seen

⁶⁴ These problems are particularly the target of attack in the essays by Stephen C. Barton, "Can We Identify the Gospel Audiences?," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 173-94, and Francis Watson, "Toward a Literal Reading of the Gospels," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 195-217.

to function within specific cultural and linguistic contexts. Patterns of belief influenced patterns of life *and vice versa*; only when viewed as part of a dialectical process can either be fully understood.⁶⁵

In order to understand a text, such as the Gospel of Matthew, it is necessary to reconstruct the social context as precisely as possible. This involves both general social conditions as well as the social history of the community for whom the writing is intended.⁶⁶

There are a number of sociological approaches ranging from macro-sociological analysis to archaeology to reconstructions derived from literature of the period. We are concerned with those studies addressing the presence of conflict in Matthew. Of particular interest is how the conflict is explained and how this shapes the proposed purpose of the Gospel of Matthew. The socio-historical approach taken by Asher Finkel examines Matthean legal conflict, setting it in relation to an analysis of Pharisaic legal concerns reconstructed from other sources.⁶⁷ Saldarini⁶⁸ and Overman⁶⁹ use a social

⁶⁵ Susan R. Garrett, "Sociology of Early Christianity," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 89-90.

⁶⁶ David L. Balch, "The Greek Topos *Περί νόμων* and Matthew 5:17, 19 and 16:19," in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, ed. David E. Balch (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 84.

⁶⁷ Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth: A Study of Their Background, Their Halachic and Midrashic Teachings, The Similarities and Differences* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1964). This is Finkel's published dissertation. He was a panelist in the session on Mt 23 at the 1997 SBL Conference in San Francisco where he was still forcefully espousing the position taken in his thesis.

⁶⁸ Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1988); Anthony J. Saldarini, "The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict," in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, ed. David E. Balch (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 38-61; Anthony J. Saldarini, "Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 659-80; Anthony Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish-Christian Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994).

scientific approach that advances a model of deviance and labeling. This model seeks to explain how the Gospel of Matthew functions in the conflict in which the Matthean community is involved.

Asher Finkel proposes that it is possible to accept, and perhaps agree with, Jesus' criticisms of the Pharisees. His approach defends both Jesus and the Pharisees by drawing attention to the differences within the Pharisaic tradition. He does not claim that the first part of the first century was a low point for Pharisaic legal rigidity. Rather, he highlights the long tradition of the pairs of Rabbinical authorities that represented different strands of legal tradition. He is able to avoid the clash between Christianity and Rabbinical Judaism generated by Mt 23, though this does not resolve all conflict, by redefining the opponents of Jesus. They are Shammaites rather than Hillelites.⁷⁰ Hillelites were "close in spirit to that of the teacher of Nazareth" in "their humbleness, restraint, clear argumentative reasoning and liberal stand."⁷¹ Since later Rabbinical tradition is grounded on the traditions of Hillel rather than Shammai, and given that Jesus commended and approved the Hillelites, Christianity and Rabbinical Judaism can both agree with the assessment of Mt 23. The conflicts depicted in Matthew are fully recognizable as historically accurate to the life and times of Jesus. Genre and purpose are not a concern for Finkel.

⁶⁹ J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); J. Andrew Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis: The Gospel According to Matthew* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1996).

⁷⁰ Finkel, *Pharisees*, 134. See esp. pp. 136f for his treatment of Mt 23 and Pharisaic Shammaites.

⁷¹ Finkel, *Pharisees*.

Like Finkel, J. Neusner, along with others, has been instrumental in developing a picture of first century Judaism that was anything but monolithic. The Dead Sea Scrolls, New Testament writings, Josephus' writings, pseudepigraphical works and Rabbinical writings have been assessed in such a manner that the rich variety of 1st century Judaism is becoming evident. Sociological models of deviance and labeling have found fruitful ground in this cauldron of religious and political turmoil.⁷² The works by Saldarini and Overman form a broad analysis of conflict using a model of deviance and legitimation. Saldarini's major work on the opponents of Jesus utilizes a functionalist sociological framework of social classes in an agrarian empire. He augments this by literary analyses to assess the activities of the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees.⁷³ The usefulness of this approach is the description of these groups in the class of social retainers.⁷⁴ As social retainers, they were in a position to ally themselves with powerful groups and "to promote their own programs for Judaism."⁷⁵ Saldarini goes on to claim that the "opposition of the scribes and Pharisees to Jesus is reasonable and expected, for they and the Jesus movement were leading forces trying to shape Jewish life and piety and trying to defend Jewish society from the many non-Jewish political and social

⁷² For two examples see Sean Freyne, "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew's and John's Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus," in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Jews, Christians and Others in Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico: Scholars, 1985), 117-43; Bruce Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1988).

⁷³ Saldarini, *Pharisees*.

⁷⁴ Saldarini defines the "Retainer Class" as "those who served the needs of the ruler and Governing Class, including soldiers, bureaucratic government officials, educators, religious leaders. They shared the life of the governing class to some extent, but had no independent base of power or wealth"; Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 313.

⁷⁵ Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 172.

pressures which surrounded it."⁷⁶ Jesus, and the later Matthean community, represent a challenge to the legitimacy of this group to determine the nature and direction of Judaism. However, we might wish to question whether Jesus and "the Jesus movement" were "trying to defend Jewish society" from non-Jewish realities. Nevertheless, Saldarini's analysis forces us to consider the relative power, roles and interests of these groups in terms that extend beyond theological categories. In order to more fully comprehend the conflict in and around the Gospel of Matthew the process of conflict needed to be understood.

Factions operate to create legitimation and power by defining and labeling deviant behavior. What is at stake in the process is the very nature of a given society, as Saldarini notes:

The struggle to define and sanction some behaviors and their attendant attitudes as deviant is always political in the broad sense and involves a power struggle for control of society. Competing political interest groups promote particular modes of living; they symbolize society in coherent ways and condemn others who are different. Far from being a subjective, foolish debate about preferences, these conflicts concern the basic shape of society, the relationships that will hold the society together, and the symbolic universe that makes sense out of the flux of life.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 173.

⁷⁷ Saldarini, "Gospel of Matthew," 39. Attention should also be drawn to the chapter in the same volume by L. Michael White, "Crisis Management and Boundary Maintenance: The Social Location of the Matthean Community," in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, ed. David E. Balch (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 211-47. Saldarini consolidates his arguments in his later work that is particularly helpful in articulating how he constructs the Matthean community, the opposition and Matthew's view of the law: Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish-Christian Community*.

Overman develops for the Gospel of Matthew these models of deviance and labeling in light of an unstable, fragmented and factionalized society.⁷⁸ He argues that the accounts of conflict in Matthew, while they may reflect the reality of Jesus in conflict with leaders of his time, are transparent views into the world of Matthew and his community.⁷⁹ Saldarini claims that the Matthean portrait of the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees was less distinct than Mark's.⁸⁰ Overman challenges this assessment and sees a clearer view of the post-70 context in Matthew's heightened use of the Pharisees.⁸¹ He traces the nature of pre-70 fragmented and factionalized Judaism and posits that the retainer group including the Pharisees was a dominant force in defining post-70 Judaism. The destruction of the temple coupled with the disintegration of the legitimate power structure that accompanied it led to a period of crisis where factions struggled more fervently to bring stability and coherence to Judaism. This involved developing

⁷⁸ Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*.

⁷⁹ Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 124; note the comment, "The disciples are 'transparent'; that is to say, in the portrait of the disciples one views the life and situation of the Matthean community and the plight of the community members." Earlier in the book he argued that the gospel as a whole reflects the conditions of Matthew's post-70 community. In his later commentary Overman states, "Matthew's Gospel quite transparently seeks to address a range of issues that have emerged in the life of this Jesus-centered Jewish community in the years following the first revolt and the destruction of the temple"; Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 19. Saldarini moderates this notion of transparency by stating that it is only an indirect reflection and that the use of earlier traditions also shapes the narrative, in Saldarini, "Gospel of Matthew," 40. In this he is clearly swayed by redaction criticism.

⁸⁰ Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 145.

⁸¹ This position is present, but not fully stated, in Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*. A more pointed statement comes in Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, when he writes on pages 13-14, "But for Matthew this leadership coalition had sharper contours, had a much greater presence, and was decidedly bad. Marcan Pharisees, in this respect, are a pale reflection of later Matthean Pharisees, who were real threats and were in charge."

new social institutions, laying claim to common beliefs and traditions, and establishing the legitimacy of the group's authority and ability to lead. Law and its interpretation became, for both Matthew and the rivals to his community, a critical point of contention. Overman shows how Matthew reflects the normal struggles in this context. Mt 23 is the culmination of the attack on Matthean opponents. "It is here, more than anywhere else in his Gospel, that Matthew exposes the sectarian nature and stance of his community over against the dominant parent group in his setting, the Jewish leadership referred to as the scribes and the Pharisees."⁸² This is to be expected in the process of legitimizing one's own group while delegitimizing the opponent. Mt 23 is not merely a description of the points of disagreement between the two groups. Drawing from Garland, Overman claims that it has been redacted to serve a pedagogical function within Matthew's own group. It brings together issues of law and leadership by showing how the dominant Pharisaic group exemplifies inappropriate, if not deadly, leadership. The process of legitimation not only establishes the appropriate structure of society and right actions within it, but also does so with examples of contrasting behavior. Each group attempts to show the other as deviant.⁸³ The harsh language is not surprising; it is exactly what is to be expected. Overman, focusing on polemics, fails to develop the notion that Mt 23 is pedagogical. It is enough to point out that the language need not embarrass modern readers because it was the normal part of labeling between factions. The value for the modern reader lies the ability to see analogous situations and to enter in the struggle to define identity, direction and leadership. Overman assumes that Mt 23 develops in a polemical context; it shares in those same polemics.

⁸² Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 142.

In a later article applying this model to Mt 23,⁸⁴ Saldarini also demonstrates how this sociological model for legitimation provides one way of reconstructing the tensions between Matthew's community and other brands of Judaism in close proximity. The harsh language that vilifies the opponent, while shocking to our ears, is a normal part of group separation. Matthew's method is to advance his own position while attacking his opponents. In the process of separation Matthew must be careful not to undermine the basis of his own group while attempting to undercut the opponent. This involves attacking the integrity of the opposition leaders without drawing into question the system in which they operate, in this case "the fundamental legitimacy of Israel, its laws and its community structure."⁸⁵ Matthew shifts the center from Torah to Jesus, modifies the notion of the will of God from a temple-oriented cultic life to the kingdom of heaven, and rejects the leaders of Israel, identified particularly with the scribes and Pharisees, with their interpretations of scripture.⁸⁶ The denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees in Mt 23 is a thinly veiled attack on the opponents of Matthew's community.

Gundry responds to Saldarini in a way appropriate to both Saldarini and Overman. "We are too fixated on the relation of Matthew's community to Judaism."⁸⁷ While Gundry does not establish a sound base of criticism, he does question for whom the "polemics" are intended. "The more troublesome sociological problem of Matthew's

⁸³ Saldarini, "Gospel of Matthew," 54.

⁸⁴ Saldarini, "Delegitimation".

⁸⁵ Saldarini, "Delegitimation," 666.

⁸⁶ Saldarini, "Delegitimation," 668.

⁸⁷ Robert H. Gundry, "The Matthean Community in Roman Syria," in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, ed. David E. Balch (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 66.

community does not have to do with the relation of a Christian Judaism to the rest of Judaism, but with relations inside Matthew's community between tares and wheat, bad fish and good, true disciples and false."⁸⁸ Overman and Saldarini have so focused on relations external to the Matthean community that those features of the text that speak to internal conflict are overshadowed or transformed into perspectives on extramural issues, even if that extramural debate is occurring in an intra-Jewish conflict.⁸⁹ The point implicitly raised by Gundry is whether polemical conflict narratives can be used in biographies for different purposes. We shall return to this question at a later point.

Finkel's solution to the bitter taste of the strong polemics is to argue that the real opponents, Pharisaic Shammaites, quickly disappeared from the scene. The model of deviance and labeling used by Saldarini and Overman removes the primary conflict away from Jesus and onto Matthew's community, seeing this as a normal process of social sifting and stabilization after massive upheaval. The important lesson to be learned is how conflict, and its retelling, functions. Mt 23 is useful in that it shows how one group in the Christian tradition tried to handle its social identity crisis.

These approaches provide models for addressing, explaining and incorporating conflict in a study of Matthew without trying to soften its harshness. They also demonstrate a way to incorporate socio-historical information and social scientific insights. The development of concrete social settings helps visualize the nature of the conflict. The purpose of writing the Gospel becomes more vivid. However, the

⁸⁸ Gundry, "Matthean Community," 66.

⁸⁹ The similar observation is made by David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 3-5. He argues that the division is between law-observant and law-free Christians. This pits Paul against Matthew.

assumptions about social location raise a question about relevance to later readers. Finkel's approach makes the conflict a moot point and little more than an item of historical interest. Saldarini and Overman see the Gospel as a reflection of a context other than what is being overtly depicted. Developing relevance beyond the very specific situation of the first audience can do little beyond pointing to the Gospel and the process of its creation as exemplary for groups in like situations. This also assumes that in order to decode the Gospel properly, it is necessary for the audience to have knowledge of the specific socio-historical reality from which it emerged. For example, a Christian living in relative peace in another part of the empire would be lacking fundamental clues to make sense of the whole and to know the purpose of the document. An assumption about the text is that it fairly accurately depicts the situation of the Matthean community.⁹⁰ A serious objection to this process concerns whether the model accurately depicts what is being portrayed in the Gospel of Matthew, and particularly Mt 23, or whether Mt 23 has elements that make it a useful illustration of a model but that do not reflect the actual situation of Matthew. The question of the relationship between text and context has been a special focus of redaction criticism to which we turn next. Do these sociological models sufficiently take into account the biography

⁹⁰ As noted above, Saldarini cautions about how transparent the picture is when one factors in earlier redactional traditions. Kingsbury makes this point more strenuously; Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Conclusion: An Analysis of a Conversation," in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, ed. David E. Balch (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 259-69. He repeats his call, made elsewhere, for a more sustained reading of larger parts of and even the whole text. There have been sufficient candidates staking out positions for the relative amount of material remaining from stage of redaction. This question directly relates to how one is able to fix two features: the context of the Matthean community and the nature of the final form of the text. For a more detailed summary of these positions see Stanton, "Origin," 1911-21. Stanton's other related works will be discussed below.

genre? Analysis of conflict has a tendency to focus on elements of narrative and plot and plays down the didactic elements that so dominate the Gospel of Matthew. How do form and content inform one another in order to make better sense of the presence of the kind of conflict and teachings present in this particular biography of Jesus?

C. Narrative Criticism: Conflict in the Text

Narrative Criticism moves the analysis of conflict within the limits of the text. Rather than using conflict in the text to search for a corresponding conflict external to the text, narrative criticism aims to explore the manner in which conflict functions to further the plot. Stanton's third pillar of redaction criticism⁹¹ that the needs or circumstances of the audience guides the redaction process is bracketed if not directly rejected.⁹² Mark Allan Powell notes four areas that experience the same transition: first, redactor becomes narrator; second, community becomes implied reader; third, compositional structure becomes plot; fourth, people become characters.⁹³ Treating the narrative as a unified whole, characters and plot are developed, arranged and intertwined in such a manner that the message between implied author and implied reader is embedded into the text itself. The foundation of narrative criticism is by now well

⁹¹ See notes 12 and 37.

⁹² As noted above, Kingsbury responds to sociological reconstruction in Balch's work. He argues that using the principle of transparency or a model or typology to reconstruct social context is risky. While rejecting the reconstructions offered at the Dallas conference, he shows interest in reconstructions based on a thorough reading of the text as a unified narrative.

⁹³ Mark Allan Powell, "Toward a Narrative-Critical Understanding of Matthew," in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical and Social-Scientific Approaches*, ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997), 9-15.

established. We will touch on three works that have contributed to our study of conflict in Matthew, that of Jack Dean Kingsbury, Mark Allan Powell, and Warren Carter.

Kingsbury's *Matthew as Story* brought narrative criticism to Matthean studies.⁹⁴ Significant advancements included the focus on the plot of Matthew as a unified whole, and the development of the four major character sets of Jesus, disciples, religious leaders and crowds. Kingsbury demonstrates that the conflict in Matthew could be described meaningfully within the confines of the text without recourse to redaction critics' social and historical reconstructions.

Kingsbury notes that the plot consists of a series of events arranged to elicit a desired response from the reader and that conflict is central to the plot of Matthew.⁹⁵ Plot development entails the setting, broad outline and initiation of conflict (Mt 1:1-4:16), the eruption and intensification of conflict with the reader made aware of the irreconcilable hostility (Mt 4:17-16:20), and the resolution of conflict (Mt 16:21-28:20). "To signal the beginning of each new part, Matthew employs a formula, or stereotyped phrase: 'From that time on Jesus began to preach [to show his disciples] . . . ' (4:17; 16:21)."⁹⁶ Conflict in Matthew lies primarily between Jesus and the religious leaders. Disciples and crowds are more marginal to the plot of Matthew.⁹⁷ While the disciples are protagonists with Jesus, conflict arises between the disciples and Jesus, particularly in the third section, as a means to intensify the reader's awareness of Jesus' path through

⁹⁴ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

⁹⁵ Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 3.

⁹⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 40.

⁹⁷ Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 129.

the conflict with the religious leaders. This path is reflected for them in his evaluative point of view on discipleship.

In the second edition of *Matthew as Story*, published two years after the first edition, Kingsbury adds a chapter tracing features of the story-line of the religious leaders and a chapter on the great speeches. Graham Stanton has rightly observed that narrative criticism's focus on narrative has obscured the reality that the most significant feature of Matthew is its didactic material. In contrast to earlier assessment that Matthew consisted of five great discourses strung together by a weak narrative string, Kingsbury argues that the speeches must "be appropriately situated within the story's plot."⁹⁸ Within the plot structure "the great speeches of Jesus have as their chief purpose to bring the life of the disciple, or the implied reader, into conformity with the shape of Jesus' own life..."⁹⁹ This illustrates how narrative criticism takes all features of the text and seeks to make it understandable within the confines of the text. Given the focus on story and plot, it is understandable how narrative critics have not focused on explicating the didactic sections.¹⁰⁰

Mark Allan Powell, a former student of Kingsbury, has provided work focused on the religious leaders in Matthew.¹⁰¹ Building on Kingsbury's tripartite plot structure, he shows how an evaluative point of view in a conflict is achieved through characterization. He states that the "development of conflict implies opposition between

⁹⁸ Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 113.

⁹⁹ Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 113.

¹⁰⁰ An exception is the published dissertation completed under Kingsbury by Dorothy J. Weaver, *Matthew's Missionary Discourse: A Literary Critical Analysis*, JSNT Supplement Series, 38 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

¹⁰¹ Powell, "Religious Leaders."

characters, which may be expressed in terms of divergent points of view or incompatible traits."¹⁰² Powell adds four levels of narration to the distinction between showing and telling. These include the ideological, phraseological, psychological, and spatial-temporal planes. The dissertation meticulously works through all references to Pharisees, Sadducees, chief priests, elders, and scribes using the framework of the four levels of narration.

Powell provides a small opening for those interested in reconstruction of the reader's world. In a brief comment about resolution of conflict in a narrative, he notes that conflict may remain unresolved in the narrative.

Matthew's "story world" encompasses all of time from creation to the Parousia and therefore includes the world of the reader. Conflict that is not resolved in the story is more likely to impinge on the reader, although the narrative may resolve such conflict proleptically, in a manner that predicts and anticipates the eventual resolution.¹⁰³

Clearly, however, Powell's concern is within the confines of the text. The strength of his work is the way in which it demonstrates how conflict emerges in the intertwined plot lines of each character group. In a later work, he refines the definition of plot in Matthew.¹⁰⁴ Powell offers a critique of plot as 1) 'narrative flow',¹⁰⁵ 2) 'narrative logic'¹⁰⁶, by which he means causal relations between episodes, and 3) 'conflict'. He reformulates

¹⁰² Powell, "Religious Leaders," 32.

¹⁰³ Powell, "Religious Leaders," 33.

¹⁰⁴ Mark Allan Powell, "The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel," *NTS* 38 (1992): 187-204.

¹⁰⁵ This is Powell's summary of R. Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

¹⁰⁶ This is his summary of F. Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 233-53.

these elements to argue that Matthew's plot involves a main plot and two subplots.¹⁰⁷

The main plot is God's plan to save his people from their sins by means of the cross and Satan's challenge to this plan. One subplot entails the religious leaders' opposition to Jesus and the other entails the disciples in allegiance with Jesus. Ironically, neither group understands God's plan, with the result that the religious leaders are the means by which Jesus goes to the cross, and the disciples fail to see the cross as the means of God's action in the world. The main plot is resolved in the telling of the gospel, but the subplots continue beyond the cross as the religious leaders continue to oppose the word of the resurrection and as the disciples struggle with faith and doubt. The four levels of characterization reveal that the religious leaders "have a distinctive point of view and specific traits that are consistent throughout the narrative."¹⁰⁸ They are characterized as hypocrites and as evil ones whose evaluative point of view is never aligned with God. They stand not only as a threat to Jesus but as a means by which Jesus is characterized as the one who presents God's evaluative point of view. Conflict between the religious leaders and the disciples is unresolved in the story as is the eschatological threat of judgment of Jesus upon the religious leaders. This is left for the reader to resolve or to witness God's resolution.

¹⁰⁷ This formulation allows flexibility in understanding the development of plot that does not require strict causal development from episode to episode. David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, JSNT Supplement Series, 31 (Sheffield: Almond, 1988), argues that attempts to structure Matthew's gospel have not accounted for repetition as a major structural element. He includes repetition of comparison, repetition of contrast, repetition of particularization and climax, and climax with *inclusio*. Repetition as a structural element complements Powell's description of intertwined plot and subplots.

¹⁰⁸ Powell, "Religious Leaders," 176.

Powell's framework shows *how* Matthew's narrative is consistent in its development of the conflict between Jesus and his opponents and how this subplot is subordinated to the main plot. While there is unresolved conflict that may impinge upon the reader, it is not necessarily the genesis of the narrative, but an outgrowth of it. That is to say, it may facilitate conflict as much as or more than it is a response to conflict in Matthew's community. However, the focus on *how* the narrative works is not supplemented with a discussion of the *why* of the communicative process. Powell's work stresses that in the narrative the conflicts center on Jesus' authority. Does the narrative seek to establish Jesus as authoritative? If the narrative is meant to shape thinking about Jesus, what is the reader to do with the Jesus presented?

David B. Howell's dissertation takes up the issue of how emplotment corresponds with the development of an implied reader who understands Jesus as exemplary for discipleship.¹⁰⁹ He states that by "examining the relationships between Matthew's narrative world and his plotted story, we should be able to clarify how later readers (traditionally discussed in terms of Matthean church members) can be included in his story of Jesus."¹¹⁰ Time relations, particularly prolepses, are used not only to

¹⁰⁹ David B. Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel*, JSNT Supplement Series, 42 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

¹¹⁰ Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 98. It is clear that Howell sees a discussion of readers as needing to arise from the text. He states "One problem which appeared in the salvation history interpretations we examined for the purposes of understanding the inclusive nature of Matthew, was that they were unable to describe the way the experiences of Matthew's church were inscribed in the narrative. Within the history of ideas approach which the salvation history interpretations represented, the readers of the Gospel were not so much included in Matthew's story of Jesus as they were included in a theological construct that was external to the narrative. In this way, the meaning or significance of the Gospel were extracted and isolated from the narrative sequence of

enhance the movement of the narrative, but also to point beyond the narrative to include the reader.¹¹¹ Two related themes are promise/fulfillment¹¹² and acceptance/rejection.¹¹³ These help point the reader to Jesus as the one whom they must decide whether to accept or reject as model.¹¹⁴ In addition, the narrator, method of narration and point of view are developed to place an emphasis on Jesus' speech, "which is also a medium for the implied author's value system, so Jesus addresses the implied reader together with the characters. The implied reader stands with Jesus and the narrator, and receives the call to evaluate events and characters as they evaluate them."¹¹⁵ The implied reader cannot be identified with the disciples but transcends them.

The portrait of the disciples is not uniformly positive, however, and the conflicting behavior of the disciples frustrates the readers' ability to construct a consistent pattern. On the one hand, the ambivalence of the disciples in their obedience and following Jesus leads the implied reader to judge the disciples' behavior negatively when they fail to live up to Jesus' standards. On the other hand, the parallels between Jesus and his disciples in Matthew drive the implied reader to look to Jesus and his behavior rather than to the disciples to learn what it means to live a life obedient to God. Jesus becomes a model of righteousness.¹¹⁶

Similarly, the religious leaders do not represent the opponents of a real reader, but a character group being evaluated for their response to Jesus. They form a negative

the story, rather than being seen as interrelated with the events within the narrative" (p. 94).

¹¹¹ Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 159.

¹¹² Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 111-12.

¹¹³ Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 113.

¹¹⁴ Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 103, 159-60.

¹¹⁵ Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 203.

¹¹⁶ Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 247.

example of how to respond to Jesus. Similarly, Jesus' righteousness is shaped in juxtaposition with the religious leaders, particularly in Mt 23, as each represents a way to understand the will of God. Howell also suggests that the irony used of the religious leaders, similar to the manner described above in the discussion of Powell's plot and subplots, forges a bond between the implied reader and the author's vision of truth, and leads the reader "to reject the system of values they espouse."¹¹⁷

Howell recognizes that since Matthew's gospel is a narrative of Jesus' life and ministry there may be several options for understanding its purpose. It is in the shape and content of the narrative that the reader comes to recognize that the primary purpose of the gospel is the presentation of Jesus as model.¹¹⁸

Warren Carter's *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* is an introductory work for students that combines redaction, narrative and genre criticisms with interest in "the effect this gospel has on the identity and lifestyle of its audience."¹¹⁹ In order to posit a purpose for the gospel narrative Carter does not return primarily to the reconstructed social environments of redaction criticism, but to expectations as formed by an understanding of genre. Narrative criticism's framework for *how* a story is constructed is wedded to genre criticism's description of an audience's expectation of the *why*.

The audience thus expects a biography to present the figure's teaching and life as a possible model for its own living. The paradigmatic actions and words of the hero legitimate or discredit important cultural or community values and practices. In reading Matthew's gospel, the authorial audience expects to find

¹¹⁷ Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 242.

¹¹⁸ Howell, *Inclusive Story*, 254.

¹¹⁹ Warren Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), xii.

legitimation for its identity and way of life, its past and future in relation to Jesus. Frequently it experiences Jesus' words and actions exemplifying and commending values which are contrary to conventional social values.¹²⁰

Carter, maintaining narrative criticism's treatment of characters, keeps the religious leaders as characters within the narrative and reduces them to "how not to respond to Jesus."¹²¹ The purpose of the conflicts is to provide the reader with examples of right and wrong ways to respond to the central figure of the biography. In a brief note on Mt 23, he states that the condemnation of the religious leaders functions as a warning to the authorial audience that a similar fate awaits them if they act in the same manner. This is not as satisfactory as the more nuanced conclusions of Howell, and Carter subsequently refines his views on the purpose of Matthew's gospel.¹²² This view will be taken up in the following discussion of genre criticism.

D. Genre Criticism

Genre criticism is less developed than the other critical approaches reviewed thus far. There are fewer scholars who have directly addressed the question of the genre of Matthew or of the unique purpose of Matthew within the generic category of "life of Jesus". This is not to say that few presuppose either genre or purpose. The majority of the writing on genre in the latter half of the 20th century has come from the pens of

¹²⁰ Carter, *Matthew*, 48.

¹²¹ Carter, *Matthew*, 229. This position is reiterated in the essay by David R. Bauer, "The Major Characters of Matthew's Story: Their Function and Significance," in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical and Social-Scientific Approaches*, ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997), 36. In addition he states that the religious leaders "show with clarity and forcefulness the majesty, righteousness and authority of Jesus."

¹²² Warren Carter, "Community Definition and Matthew's Gospel," in *SBL 1997 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997), 637-63.

structuralists. Formal structural elements of texts incorporate traits in common between pieces of literature. This is the core of the recognition of genre.

Richard Burridge's *What are the Gospels?*¹²³ is the most detailed recent review in English of the genre of the gospels.¹²⁴ He draws heavily from the works of Todorov,¹²⁵ Fowler,¹²⁶ Doty,¹²⁷ Hirsch,¹²⁸ and Culler.¹²⁹ Others also address more focused issues of the gospels' genre and genre in ancient literature.¹³⁰ Burridge's conclusions will

¹²³ See note 14.

¹²⁴ A succinct survey of key issues is also available in Klaus Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen Im Neuen Testament," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* vol.2 25.2, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 1031-432, esp. 1231-44.

¹²⁵ Tzvetán Todorov, *Introduction à la Littérature Fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970). ET: *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to Literary Genre* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975).

¹²⁶ Alistair Fowler, "The Life and Death of Literary Forms," in *New Directions in Literary History*, ed. Ralph Cohen (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 77-94.

¹²⁷ William G. Doty, "The Concept of Genre in Literary Analysis," in *SBL Proceedings 1972: Book of Seminar Papers for 108th Annual Meeting*, ed. Lane C. McGaughey (Cambridge, MA: SBL, 1972), 413-48.

¹²⁸ E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University, 1967).

¹²⁹ Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

¹³⁰ Richard A. Burridge, "About People, by People, for People: Gospel Genre and Audiences," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 113-46. Other selected works on the genre of the gospels include the following. Philip S. Alexander, "Rabbinic Biography and the Biography of Jesus: A Survey of the Evidence," in *Synoptic Studies*, ed. C.M. Tuckett (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 19-50; David E. Aune, "The Problem of the Genre of the Gospels: A Critique of C.H. Talbert's *What is a Gospel?*" in *Gospel Perspectives II: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, ed. R.T France and D. Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 9-60; David E. Aune, "The Gospels as Hellenistic Biography," *Mosaic* 20, no. 1 (1987): 1-10; David E. Aune, editor, *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, SBL Sources

be reviewed here followed by suggestions for the impact of genre analysis on our study of Mt 23. Given that Burrige is primarily concerned with the genre of the gospels as a group, we will need to ask how articulation of genre advances the study of Matthew as separate from the other gospels.

The questions of genre and purpose raise the issue of how texts, or specific passages, draw upon conventions to help facilitate how they are to be received by the audience. Burrige describes genre in the following manner:

Genre forms a kind of “contract” or agreement, often unspoken or unwritten, or even unconscious, between an author and a reader, by which the author sets out to write according to a whole set of expectations and conventions and we agree to read or interpret the work using the same conventions, giving us an initial idea of what we might expect to find.¹³¹

for Biblical Study (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1988), 17-76; Arthur J. Baird, "Genre Analysis as a Method of Historical Criticism," in *SBL Proceedings 1972: Book of Seminar Papers for 108th Annual Meeting, Vol.II*, ed. Lane C. McGaughey (Cambridge, MA: SBL, 1972), 385-411; Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983); Albricht Dihle, "Die Evangelien und die Griechische Biographie," in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien*, vol. 28 of *WUNT*, ed. P. Stuhlmacher (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983); Robert Guelich, "The Gospel Genre," in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982*, ed. Peter Stuhlmacher (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 183-219; Robert H. Gundry, "Recent Investigations Into the Literary Genre 'Gospel,'" in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, ed. R.N. Longenecker and M.C Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 97-114; Moses Hadas and Morton Smith, *Heroes and Gods: Spiritual Biographies in Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1965); Philip L. Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels: The Biographical Character of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); Charles H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel?: The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); Charles H. Talbert, "Once Again: Gospel Genre," *Semeia* 43 (1988): 53-73; C.W Votaw, *The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies in the Graeco-Roman World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970). This last book is a reprint of his 1915 work.

¹³¹ Burrige, "About People," 114; also see Burrige's treatment of this topic in Burrige, *What Are the Gospels?* 32-54 where he spells out his adaptation of modern structuralist approaches to genre.

This description of genre posits a role for both author and reader. An author may have the intent and skill to utilize standard conventions and thereby to fit a particular writing within recognized systems of classification, e.g., tragedy, comedy, history. Overt systems of labeling signal authorial intent and facilitate the reader's understanding of the author's intent to use a specific generic category, e.g., *bios* for an ancient biography. Conventions, such as labels, standard topics and plot development, facilitate both construction of genre and communication. The role of the reader in constructing genre is easily overlooked when the focus narrows too much on the role of the author. A reader develops an understanding of genre both from formal classification systems and from sifting through and comparing the works that come within her/his purview. Genre is not limited to forms that have been articulated and accepted in standardized terms, such as the ancient forms of tragedy and comedy. A reader need not know or fully understand a classification system used explicitly or implicitly by the author; meaning nevertheless is negotiated in the reading process. Genre is a set of expectations that facilitates, but does not dictate, the reading experience for the reader. We can say that misunderstanding happens, if by that we mean that the reader does not link with the authorial intent. However, misunderstanding so construed does not negate the understanding constructed by the reader. One value of the category of genre, seen from the perspective of the reader rather than the author, is the recognition of readers' expectations.

Genre implies a framework for construing the internal integrity of the text, for understanding cultural codes, and for working out meaning within a variety of possible reading strategies. Latent within this understanding of genre are two tendencies: the impulse to reconstruct the general and specific socio-historical worlds that give rise to reading conventions and expectations, and the desire to know the structure and content

of the text. As I have shown above, redaction criticism has involved a certain degree of circularity by reading a text, positing a social context, then using that context to establish the set of expectations for reading the text. Some level of circularity may be inevitable when reconstructing expectations of ancient audiences, even if we are careful to limit ourselves to probabilities. I propose a similar process, but with literature rather than with non-literary socio-historical context. Similarities between the gospels and ancient biographies have been recognized by many over the past century. A set of expectations develops from this comparative reading that is then applied to reading the gospel according to Matthew. Iterations of this practice confirm, adjust, or confound the resulting constructs. I will argue that there is a reasonable probability that the process that a modern reader goes through has a correlated activity among ancient readers even though there is not a record of explicit comparison of the gospels with biographies in the earliest years of the church. This comparative process can, and should, be repeated as a heuristic exercise with various types of literature in order to see how the expectations and the reading experience change, since without more direct evidence we cannot know what a real first century reader would have expected and experienced when reading this gospel.

Formal elements do not guarantee a particular meaning or purpose. Form and content must be assessed together to that end. Genre should not be used prescriptively to determine the meaning or purpose of a text without engaging the text. One of the values of considering genre as an important element in the reading process is to provide a pool of literature for comparative analysis. This broadens the pool of material to be considered beyond the gospels. This broader pool increases the probability that elements in the specific text under scrutiny will come to light by the comparison.

Burridge provides a formidable argument for biography as the genre of the gospels. He does so largely along formal lines drawn from a structuralist framework adapted to the comparison of Graeco-Roman biographies. Central to his definition of genre is the idea that genre is an implicit contract between author and reader involving numerous literary, cultural and historical conventions. The contract comes in the form of expectations that may have significant flexibility in the actual presence of content and formal elements. Genre is a reality then that derives from the comparison of various works with one another. This process of comparison yields a set of "family resemblances" greater than any single feature. One feature alone does not define the genre.

The temptation to think of genre as defined by *one* particular feature, or even a couple, should be avoided because any one feature can appear in a number of different sorts of works. Therefore, one should look for many features; it is the combination of them which constitutes the genre.¹³²

Burridge examines opening features, the subject, external and internal features.¹³³ Opening features include the title, opening words, and the prologue or preface. The subject of the narrative is assessed through the verbs' subjects. External features include mode of representation, metre, size or length, the structure or sequence, scale, use of literary units, sources and methods of characterization. Internal features include setting, topics, style, tone, mood, attitude, values and quality of characterization. Burridge cautiously takes up the issue of intention or purpose. He rightly warns that purpose is not determinative for genre, but that a given genre may be used for a variety of purposes, even within a single writing. We shall review these purposes below.

¹³² Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* esp. 42.

¹³³ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* esp. 109-27.

There has not been a sustained rejoinder to Burrige's thesis. However, he does have critics. One significant challenge comes from Mark Edwards in the conclusion of a collection of essays that stretches beyond the limits of biography into other works that have biographical elements but that might be classified in other genres.¹³⁴ The crux of Edwards' critique concerns whether one should follow a modern or an ancient definition of genre and how that classification is derived. He notes that the term "genre" does not have an equivalent in Latin and as such carries too much freight from modern conceptions of the relationships between literary works.¹³⁵ It is difficult to find a solid definition of biography in Edwards' collection of essays, but it is clear that the controlling body of material stems from the more erudite interests of the second century and beyond. He stops short of stating, but strongly implies, that the generic label should be applied only to those works carrying the label of *bios*.¹³⁶ Edwards enumerates three fallacies that he believes Burrige is in danger of committing by having a broader definition based on multiple elements that form a family resemblance: first, imposing "the expectation on the genre while pretending that the genre has defined the expressions"; second, not every specimen of a genre has the elements to meet readers' expectations; and third, speaking of readers' expectations about the content of a work without a "disclosure of these contents at an early stage of reading".¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Mark J. Edwards, "Epilogue: Biography and Biographic," in *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, ed. Mark J. Edwards and Simon Swain (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 227-234.

¹³⁵ Edwards, "Epilogue," 228.

¹³⁶ Edwards, "Epilogue," 229.

¹³⁷ Edwards, "Epilogue," 228-229.

Edwards makes a serious point, but not one that is sufficient to discredit the approach taken by Burridge. The difference between Edwards and Burridge is not between ancient and modern definitions, as he claims, but is based on how we think ancient comparisons and expectations were established. Edwards places emphasis on an ancient body of literature that the "author (or at least the editorial tradition) recommends to us by that name".¹³⁸ Stuart notes that earlier scholarship has already discovered the related difficulty of attributing biographical character solely on the grounds of the title.¹³⁹ Edwards' reliance on this nominal approach keeps him from acknowledging Burridge's implicit claim that ancient readers would have been forming expectations of the emerging genre even before it became more solidly recognized by the label *bios*.

Burridge begins with a broader sense of how reader expectations are set and met. This would be the case for the individual reader as one progressed through a specific text, but would also hold true for the longer historical processes in which genres coalesce into more distinct forms. Genre is a negotiated reality, a heuristic device when used for reconstructing a past tradition. This allows us to acknowledge that even when ancients had relatively fixed prescriptions for some literary forms, biography not included, they frequently did not follow their own rules. Labels, such as *bios*, should not restrict consideration of other works that lack the label. Expectations may be elicited by other factors beside labels. Burridge argues this by using opening features, the subject, external and internal features to define the generic family resemblance.

¹³⁸ Edwards, "Epilogue," 230.

¹³⁹ Duane R. Stuart, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography* (Berkeley: University of California, 1928), 134.

Edwards curiously states that the title and opening lines of many works are relatively useless when we discuss reader expectations; however, he argues that the opposite is true in late antiquity as the title *bios* becomes more frequent and therefore a more reliable guide.¹⁴⁰ This demonstrates his bias that later works determine how we understand earlier stages of the genre's development and does not undermine the usefulness of Burrige's model for the earlier stages. Edwards states that beyond the title four characteristics emerge from an analysis of works in late antiquity that bear the title of *bios*: it pertains to the life of a single individual, the narrative moves chronologically from birth to death, judgment purports to be impartial, and the primary intention is to inform rather than to judge.¹⁴¹ These identifying marks are narrower, but not fundamentally at odds with those offered by Burrige, except in their limited scope. Edwards fails to articulate why we might not call a work a *bios* when these characteristics are found but where the title *bios* is missing. Even in the absence of a prescriptive classification system for a given piece of writing, as perhaps indicated by a title or opening lines, it still would have been compared with other works based on the similarity of other characteristics and would have been approached with some expectations. Again, he has not undermined Burrige's position.

The collection of essays that contains Edwards' essay acknowledges a biographical mode of writing that appears in works that are not biographies. This adjectival use of the term "biographical" is what Burrige refers to as "mode" that includes motifs and styles.¹⁴² This biographical mode is also a comparative category.

¹⁴⁰ Edwards, "Epilogue," 229-30.

¹⁴¹ Edwards, "Epilogue," 230.

¹⁴² Burrige, *What Are the Gospels?* 41-42.

The appearance that the authors in Edwards' collection have avoided the question of genre is partially illusory. Pelling's compelling articulation of bio-structuring makes interest in personal material the distinguishing feature of biography within the larger category of bio-structured writings.¹⁴³ This stance affirms family resemblance features as the basis for generic comparison and thereby affirms Burridge's approach.

Alexander makes the erudite interests of the second century a controlling factor when she begins her comparison of Acts with the biographical work of Diogenes Laertius. She reconstructs the biographical source antecedents of this collection of lives. This would appear to be a solid approach because it only reconstructs the influences on later biographical writings when those sources are made explicit in the text.

It is clear from this comparison that, while Luke and Diogenes Laertius share a certain number of narrative concerns, they differ considerably in their manner of expression. One response to this is to stress the catholicity of the genre, as do both Talbert and Burridge in different ways; but this is to lessen the usefulness of the genre-description as a distinctive, and has the effect of blurring precisely those details of presentation which constitute the individuality of one kind of story-telling over against another. If we are to use the category of intellectual biography in any way to assist our understanding and appreciation of the narrative of Acts, it is worth persisting with the comparison; *but it is clear that we must move behind Diogenes himself to the hellenistic biographical tradition on which he drew* (italics added).¹⁴⁴

The reconstruction of sources permits a closer comparison between those writings and Acts. The antecedents appear to be more collections of many lives rather than works on

¹⁴³ Christopher Pelling, "Biographical History? Cassius Dio on the Early Principate," in *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, ed. Mark J. Edwards and Simon Swain (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 127.

¹⁴⁴ Loveday C. A. Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," in *Ancient Literary Setting*, vol. 1 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, ed. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 31.

single lives; Alexander makes this observation in a discussion of the motives for writing biographies.

Even among the biographers who can more properly be assigned to the Peripatetic school, with its interest in the moral qualities associated with the philosophic life, much of the material of which we have evidence seems to be compilatory and comparative rather than individual.¹⁴⁵

The impulse behind the biographical tradition in both its early and late forms, therefore, seems to be erudite tidbits of information about individuals. Biography is essentially the collection and topical arrangement of fragmentary pieces of information that come in the shape of "sequences and catalogues, floating anecdotes and sayings, a name attached to a teacher, a name or an anecdote attached to a doctrine or discovery, archival collections of letters or wills."¹⁴⁶ Lives that come in a narrative form similar to biblical material are not what lies behind the collection of Diogenes Laertius. The importance of this insight is that it shows specific historical antecedents of a particular kind of writing known as *bioi*, and this tradition does not reveal members that reflect the structure and character of the gospels. A similar point seems to lie behind Edwards' argument against Burridge.

Momigliano's description of the rise, refinement and intensification of antiquarian research and erudition is a caution about drawing the boundaries of biography too tightly around "interest in the personal", a factor that heightened through time and may not be the best trait to use as the defining characteristic of all

¹⁴⁵ Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," 52.

¹⁴⁶ Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," 53.

biographies.¹⁴⁷ Momigliano¹⁴⁸ and Stuart trace the development of biography in the opposite chronological direction than that taken by Alexander. They trace a broader body of literature that they claim leads to the later more distinct biographical tradition. Alexander begins with the later tradition, at least in the case of Diogenes Laertius, and reconstructs known antecedents. We should expect different definitions and historical reconstructions given these two approaches. Alexander's approach is on more solid empirical ground in retracing the antecedents of Diogenes Laertius and similar material because she begins with the reference documents cited in the work itself. Momigliano's and Stuart's approaches to tracing the development of biography draw attention to material that is diverse, resembling and stretching the boundaries of encomia and history, but that has the common trait of being about the life of an individual. Some of this material leads directly into the later tradition of *bioi* and other material does not. From the perspective of a reader comparing the material in a given era, the end result of erudite biographical works would not be nearly as obvious as it is when starting at the later point looking backward. They begin with a number of works that they recognize as crossing generic boundaries and posit developments chronologically forward arguing for the increasing drive to erudition in the biographical tradition. Burridge follows the model of Momigliano and Stuart allowing a set of family resemblances to determine the comparison and thus the genre, whereas Edwards seems to follow that of Alexander in using the later labeled biographical tradition to define the genre. Edwards and Burridge have two different agendas about the use of the noun "biography" governed by different

¹⁴⁷ Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, Sather Classical Lectures, 54 (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 54-79

rules. It is not my purpose here to attempt to resolve the tensions inherent in their debate, but rather to draw from each well of insight.

The concept of a reader's expectations as always being in the process of construction makes Burrige's approach suitable for the work that I wish to do. However, the distinction that Edwards highlights between the gospels and later biographies is well taken. Interest in very personal elements of Jesus' life may be found in later apocryphal gospels, but is largely absent from the canonical gospels. I accept the set of formal elements that Burrige uses to set the family resemblance without ignoring the point made by Edwards that the label *bios* is largely associated with late antiquity; nonetheless, I will use the terms "biography" and *bios* interchangeably to refer to the family resemblance.

Talbert has rightly pointed out that Burrige's study does little to advance the question of sub-generic differences of the four gospels.¹⁴⁹ Burrige identifies the sub-genre of the gospels as most closely associated with philosophical biographies. The options he identifies for biographical sub-genres are "political *bioi*, literary *bioi*, *bioi* of philosophers, and so forth."¹⁵⁰ These sub-genres stem from the relationship of biographies with the related genres of moral philosophy, history, political beliefs, story and novel, encomium, and religious or philosophical teaching. Below the level of sub-genre, he identifies the gospels as "Life of Jesus".¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, Expanded (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1993).

¹⁴⁹ Charles H. Talbert, review of *What Are the Gospels?*, by Richard A. Burrige, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993): 714-715.

¹⁵⁰ Burrige, *What Are the Gospels?* 247.

¹⁵¹ Burrige, *What Are the Gospels?* 247.

Also important for our study are biographical *topoi*, or standard subject material, that are used to structure the work. *Topoi* common to biographies are ancestry, birth, boyhood and education, deeds, virtues, death and consequences. These may be set out chronologically or topically. Again, these are not determinative for meaning, but are conventions for structuring biographies. The absence of personal features may explain the absence of a topical arrangement for the gospel as a whole since this format was commonly used to present personal features. I will be using those topics that reflect a chronological arrangement since they most nearly fit Matthew's chronological pattern: ancestry, birth, education, deeds, and death. Arrangement of *topoi* is flexible in biography being suited to the subject and occasion to highlight the subject's *ethos*. There are expectations of what is to be found in each *topos*, whichever ones are used. Shuler draws attention to Marrou's outline of Theon's detailed set of *topoi* for encomia.¹⁵² This is a useful example of how a topically, rather than chronologically, arranged biography might appear, even granted that this is an outline for an encomium. Biographies and encomia are similar, though not identical, in that they address the circumstances and achievements listed below as a means to illustrate a person's character and virtue. The topics are the same, but the intentions are not necessarily so. An encomium is meant to praise, eulogize, or to offer an exemplar to emulate, whereas a biography may do this or inform, entertain, teach, or perhaps criticize.

I. Exterior Excellences

(a) Noble birth

(b) Environment

1. Native city

2. Fellow citizens

3. Excellence of the city's political regime

¹⁵² Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels*, 55-56.

- 4. Parents and family
- (c) Personal advantages
 - 1. Education
 - 2. Friends
 - 3. Fame
 - 4. Public Service
 - 5. Wealth
 - 6. Children, number and beauty of
 - 7. Happy death
- II. Bodily Excellences
 - 1. Health
 - 2. Strength
 - 3. Beauty
 - 4. Bubbly vitality and capacity for deep feeling
- III. Spiritual Excellences
 - (a) Virtues
 - 1. Wisdom
 - 2. Temperance
 - 3. Courage
 - 4. Justice
 - 5. Piety
 - 6. Nobility
 - 7. Sense of greatness
 - (b) Resultant Actions
 - (A) As to their objectives
 - 1. Altruistic and disinterested
 - 2. Good, not utilitarian
 - 3. In the public interest
 - 4. Braving tasks and dangers
 - (B) As to their circumstances
 - 1. Timely
 - 2. Original
 - 3. Performed alone
 - 4. More than anyone else?
 - 5. Few to help them
 - 6. Old head on young shoulders?
 - 7. Against all odds
 - 8. At great cost to himself
 - 9. Prompt and efficient

Other ancient rhetoricians concur with items on this list (Cic. *De Invent.* I.34-35, II.159-165, II.176; *ad Her.* III.10; Arist. *Rhet.* I.IX). A cursory examination of the list above reveals that Matthew incorporates few of these encomiastic elements.

The emphasis on generic qualities facilitates the discussion of Mt 23 by heightening awareness of common structural elements and enlarging the pool of comparative literature from which to develop reading expectations and to address the issue of purpose. Burridge's description of purpose in genre shifts the focus from the search for a single narrow purpose determined prescriptively to several broad purposes that may exist simultaneously for a text.

Although we must be cautious in the reconstruction of an author's intention(s) and not make this as determinative for genre as Shuler and Dihle did, nonetheless, the purpose of the author is essential to any concept of genre as a set of expectations or contract between the author and the reader or audience. The author may choose his genre specifically to suit his purpose; some genres have a single purpose, such as the intent to praise in encomium. The purpose may be expressed explicitly in a preface or prologue; however, textual analysis is still necessary, since the author's expressed desires and purposes are not always a reliable guide to his actual practice. In other genres, however, it may be the case that there is no one purpose which is essential to the nature of the genre and its examples. Often, the author may have a number of different purposes, some applying to various members of his envisaged audience, while others reflect his purely literary concerns. However, we may expect that there will be a similarity of purposes between similar works of the same genre.¹⁵³

Burridge considers seven purposes for biographies.¹⁵⁴ First, *encomiastic* intends to praise the subject. Second, *exemplary* intends to provide an example for others to emulate. The third and fourth purposes, *informative* and *entertaining*, are explained by their titles. Fifth, *to preserve memory* suggests a subset of encomiastic or informative writing. Sixth, *didactic* intends to instruct about the subject and/or his teachings. This is related to the informative purpose but entails a more intentional relationship between author, reader and subject. Finally, Burridge combines *apologetic* and *polemic* as

¹⁵³ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* 125-26.

¹⁵⁴ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* 149-52, 214-17.

purposes set within conflict. Apologetic defends, affirms and corrects opinions about the subject. Polemic attacks the opposition.

Purpose can be thought of as the intersection of text and social context. A text provided for a very specific social context will not require the same degree of coding in order for the purpose to be conveyed between author and audience. Study of the biographical genre does not yield a highly specified context. On the contrary, only general expectations can be provided. The essays edited by Richard Bauckham in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* argue that the biography genre, particularly as found in the gospels, is grounded in an understanding that the audience is broad and general. The gospels were written with the expectation that they would be disseminated far beyond any initial audience. This is a serious consideration when considering the role of the strongly polemical statements in Mt 23 and challenges the redaction-critical assumptions about an authorial audience. Bauckham's and Thompson's opening chapters argue that the search for distinct communities to which the gospels were written is unnecessary and presents a false view of the early Christian community as "a self-contained, self-sufficient, introverted group, having little contact with other Christian communities and little sense of participation in a worldwide Christian movement".¹⁵⁵ On the contrary they were "a network of communities with constant, close communication among themselves."¹⁵⁶ Loveday Alexander examines

¹⁵⁵ Richard Bauckham, "For Whom Were Gospels Written?" in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 31; Michael B. Thompson, "The Holy Internet: Communication Between Churches in the First Christian Generation," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 49-70.

¹⁵⁶ Bauckham, "For Whom Were Gospels Written?" 31.

book production and circulation and builds the case that the gospels show the marks of books designed for broad circulation.¹⁵⁷ The evidence and arguments presented in these articles point to a general, non-specified audience, or perhaps to a host of intersecting networks.

In light of this caution about a general audience, let us briefly consider representative options for the purpose of Matthew. McKnight views Matthew as apology and polemic meant to defend and legitimate Jesus in an internal Jewish debate.¹⁵⁸ McKnight presents Jesus as a "loyal critic" who can be viewed as an agent of prophetic polemics since the conflict does not go well in convincing the opposition. The audience in this case may be geographically widespread, but more focused and well-versed in the issues of the debate.

Shuler and Carter are proponents of an encomiastic purpose, though both use it as a mixed category. Shuler concludes that in the laudatory biography

Matthew either consciously or unconsciously appropriated a ubiquitous literary type sufficiently flexible to carry out his designs of faith and emulation and to project his kerygmatic assertions within the cult (church) to be used for worship and didactic functions.¹⁵⁹

Carter has done more than others writing recently on Matthew to develop a framework that lends itself to the more general nature of the audience. He shows how, as an encomiastic biography, Matthew enables the function of community definition and

¹⁵⁷ Loveday C. A. Alexander, "Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 71-112.

¹⁵⁸ See note 29 above.

¹⁵⁹ Shuler, *Genre for the Gospels*, 109.

building.¹⁶⁰ He draws parallels from encomia of people and cities to show how Matthew develops the same topoi of “origin, accomplishments and especially governance, and deeds and virtues”.¹⁶¹ Interestingly he argues that the gospel is not only an encomium praising Jesus as the founder, but that it is also an encomium of the community. In the former it serves to shape the community. In the latter, it serves to develop and strengthen community identity. The gospel

...presents and affirms the particular identity of Matthew’s community of disciples of Jesus. It provides a vision, direction and guidelines for how it is to live in its difficult circumstances as a marginal community. It offers broad instructions to be reinterpreted for and imitated in particular circumstances. It strengthens identity and encourages perseverance in a lifestyle of following Jesus the crucified and risen one.¹⁶²

This is a community that is reminded of Jesus’ origin amidst the larger purposes of God and therefore it is reminded of its own place in God’s purposes. In Jesus’ teaching on governance, the focus is not on hierarchical structure but on continuing God’s saving activity. Likewise, in his deeds they are reminded that the church must continue to experience God’s righteousness, love and mercy, and discipline in their communal life. Carter states that the community is marginalized, thereby implying that community definition is an act for a fairly specific community. He does not indicate whether the community is being prodded or applauded.

¹⁶⁰ Carter, "Community Definition".

¹⁶¹ Carter, "Community Definition," 654.

¹⁶² Carter, "Community Definition," 654.

In her works on Luke,¹⁶³ Paul,¹⁶⁴ schools¹⁶⁵ and in the essay in *A Gospel for All Christians*, Loveday Alexander argues that early Christianity, and therefore the gospels, would be well understood against the background of hellenistic schools, though how closely we may move this parallel to the time of the New Testament is unclear.¹⁶⁶ If hellenistic schools are appropriate comparisons for the church of the New Testament, then this stimulates consideration of didactic, encomiastic, and polemic uses of a gospel.

These representative figures illustrate the wide divergence of opinion about the purpose of Matthew. If the relationship between the author and reader within a specific social context is a key factor in determining and understanding purpose, then it would seem difficult to determine the purpose for a text that does not overtly state its purpose and appears to be written to a broad and general audience. Purpose will largely remain indeterminate because of the multiple options that can be constructed from the text. A safe approach is to use the text to argue for the validity of a constructed purpose without negating the possibility of other alternatives.

¹⁶³ Loveday C. A. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1*, SNTS Monograph Series, 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993).

¹⁶⁴ Loveday C. A. Alexander, "Paul and the Hellenistic Schools: The Evidence of Galen," in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 60-83.

¹⁶⁵ Loveday C. A. Alexander, "Schools, Hellenistic," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), V:1005-1011.

¹⁶⁶ The philosophical dialogues between Jews and pagans in the works of Galen, Celsus, Numenius, Porphyry, Julian, Syrianus and Proclus point to the perception of Jews as a philosophical school. John G. Gager, "Judaism as Seen by Outsiders," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986), 110.

E. Summary

This review of selected scholarship began with the search for an adequate framework to understand the presence of conflict in Matthew's account of the life of Jesus Christ, particularly as expressed in Mt 23. Redaction and sociological approaches locate the conflict in various places in the world behind the text. Either Jesus' context is determinative for the conflict or, as is most often seen to be the case, the audience's context is determinative. Few would suggest that the author's context is determinative and yet have that context different from that of the audience. Models of social interaction are used, as is detailed attention to redactional changes. Redaction critics are right in calling for attention to the details of the text, but an adequate framework within the text is needed to explain the perceived differences in supposedly redacted material. Sociological models can be useful for "clarifying the contours of the various groups, communities, and societies portrayed within the text."¹⁶⁷ However, the theory of transparency generally reigns and the logic tends to be circular. The results are largely misleading.

Narrative criticism locates the conflict within the world of the text as a function of plot, showing the dynamics of conflict and how it is the force behind plot development. However, Powell and Howell indicate that unresolved conflicts may point beyond the text. It remains to be argued whether unresolved conflicts in the text necessitate the claim that they find their origin in the specific condition of the authorial audience. Another plausible option is that they stem from general tensions in following Jesus that remain unresolved and one should not expect otherwise. Plot and

¹⁶⁷ Barton, "Gospel Audiences," 178.

characterization are key for narrative criticism, but didactic components are less integral. Narrative criticism advances an understanding of how conflict works, but does not explain why one would write a narrative in this particular way. There is a need to focus more fully on the content of the didactic portions that are so striking in Matthew in order to show how content and structure are integrated.¹⁶⁸ The didactic sections, including the brief encounters between Jesus and his opponents, provide rationale for the conflict.

Genre criticism uses both form and content to begin working toward how and why conflict is present. Major *topoi* do not negate the presence of plot and subplot but may shape the way an ancient audience perceived the movement of the narrative. Multiple purposes are recognized within a text, but that does not mean there cannot be a dominant purpose. The understanding that a biography would have a general audience means that purpose needs to be carefully encoded in the text and that audiences do and will use texts for purposes other than those intended. If we follow Bauckham's argument that the gospels were expected to circulate widely, it is assumed that the audience would include followers, opponents and interested onlookers.

F. Proposed Approach

This section provides an overview of the methodological approaches used in this work. Subsequent chapters will develop more specific details as they become appropriate to the subject matter. An integrative approach is needed that highlights the formation and resolution of expectations of conflict that a general audience might

¹⁶⁸ On this score I agree heartily with Stanton, *Gospel for a New People*, 71. The lengthy didactic sections should not be minimized into a side feature of the subplots.

reasonably be expected to have had as they encountered Matthew's "Life of Jesus". Analysis will be conducted within the frameworks of genre and narrative criticisms. Chapter two develops how features of the text that form expectations of conflict point to other texts and thus encourage comparative literary analysis. This stems from Matthew's use of the Old Testament and from the use of the biographical form. Chapter three shows how conflict is shaped and developed within the narrative using techniques plausibly recognized by a broadly conceived first century audience.

It is important to recognize at the outset that the process of selecting pertinent elements for "expectations" is guided by the focus on how readers are prepared for Mt 23. This manner of examining expectations differs from socio-historical and social-scientific methods that have focused on authorial concerns addressed to specific audiences. With a specific audience the specific context is more likely to set the reader's expectations. Those readers external to the localized issues will lack interpretive clues. The shift then from a specific, localized audience to a general, widespread audience means that genre, specific topics, and forms must be encoded in the text to guide readers. As with narrative criticism, synoptic concerns are minimized because they are author-centered and assume that readers are also making sense of the text by a close comparative reading of at least two texts. This does not rule out a role for redaction criticism's comparative approach. However, it is a tool for checking the results of an examination of a unified narrative.

Genre and narrative criticisms are useful tools, but neither one alone affords a comprehensive framework to understand how a general audience might expect and encounter conflict in Matthew. The identification of Matthew's gospel as *bios* helps us acknowledge that a general ancient audience would expect and recognize characteristic

features of the text and of conflict in the text by means of comparison with other *bioi*. Genre criticism provides the broadest set of lenses to approach the text. It is limited, however, in helping us understand how an audience works through a narrative. This is particularly evident when we note its limitations in deciphering differences between the synoptic gospels. Narrative criticism is a complementary method that operates within the broader parameters of genre criticism. It is able to explore the contours of specific narratives and signal similarities and differences between texts, such as the synoptic gospels. Narrative criticism, for example, can demonstrate how plot development and characterization intersect with standard ancient *topoi* while also highlighting features unique to a text, such as Matthew's use of the Old Testament. Narrative criticism also demands that we take into account the linear development of the narrative and to treat it as a whole unit of meaning. Narrative criticism is limited by its focus on narration, plot development and characterization. It does not provide adequate means to analyze the shape of specific speeches within the narrative. Rhetorical criticism offers one means to examine both longer speeches, such as Mt 5-7 and 23, and shorter sections of direct discourse. It is at the level of direct speech that a rationale for conflict is made explicit. I am arguing, therefore, that these three critical methods are required to enable us to reach a fuller understanding of the ways an ancient audience might expect and decode the conflict found in Mt 23.

Expectations about the shape and content of the text are formed by external factors, primarily through generic resemblance. As the reader encounters this particular writing the specific forms and thoughts in the text shape those expectations.

Expectations about conflict are formed and confirmed by the shape of the narrative, including plot, characterization and speeches. Expectations about conflict in Matthew

are also shaped by the use of specific Old Testament quotations and allusions and by the presence of legal disputes.

The first and broadest level of analysis of conflict involves recognition of generic elements. Expectations are formed externally to the text by the choice of biographical genre with its focus on a main character usually developed by standard *topoi*. Expectations are formed early in the text by the reference to Jesus as the Christ, portrayed in Mt 1-2 as one in the line of the kings of Israel in conflict with the current king. This might lead the reader to expect a biography of a ruler with features from Greek political biographies, but also certainly with overtones from Israelite history. Perhaps the closest biographical parallels in the Hebrew canon are those of Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel, though Samuel, Kings and Chronicles are also bio-structured.¹⁶⁹ The expectations that arise from familiarity with the Old Testament and history of Israel concern the extent to which that material is utilized and the way it shapes the story of Jesus. As the narrative proceeds, the activities of calling and teaching disciples, and contesting with opponents might draw on presuppositions about a biography of a philosopher. The next chapter takes up the task of showing that the life of Jesus develops in relation to these two related sets of expectations. The first expectation in the life of Jesus concerns long-standing issues about the leadership of Israel. The second is that the shape of the narrative and the presence of conflict also find parallels in ancient political and philosophical biographies. However, before turning to that task, I will make observations about how genre, narrative development, and rhetoric work together to shape and confirm expectations during the reading of Matthew's gospel.

¹⁶⁹ Momigliano, in *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 16-17, draws attention to these texts as he traces developments of Jewish historiography.

Generic expectations are shaped and confirmed within the text by the prologue, by the setting of the narrative, by the way *topoi* are developed through the plot and subplots, by reference to God's actions in line with the Old Testament, by speeches and their congruence with the plot, and by the conclusion. Mt 23 is not an abrupt intrusion into the text, but an anticipated summary of conflict, even as it prepares for conflict to reach its apex on the cross. Genre presents a set of formal expectations that are sorted out in the telling of the narrative.

The second level of analysis of conflict involves narrative development. The narrative also sets and sorts through expectations by means of plot and character development. The following abbreviated description of plot and subplots is derived from Powell.¹⁷⁰ With the additional element of a subplot involving the crowds I am in fundamental agreement with his construction of the plot of Matthew. I will suggest, however, that articulation of plot needs to take into account the development of standard *topoi*. The main plot is God's plan to save his people from their sins by means of the cross and Satan's challenge to this plan. This plot is initiated early when after the placement of Jesus in a line of royal ancestry the birth account records (1:21) that his name indicates that he is one who "will save his people from their sins". Immediately following (1:23) is an Old Testament citation formula indicating that Jesus is indeed "Emmanuel, which means God with us". The expectation is clearly set that in Jesus God is acting to save his people. Conflict with Herod as tyrant (2:1-23) sets the stage for his deeds as the royal savior enacting God's will. Those who interpret scripture (2:4-6; 3:1-

¹⁷⁰ Mark Allan Powell, "The Religious Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Literary-Critical Study," Ph. D. Diss. (Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1988); Mark Allan Powell, "The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel," *NTS* 38 (1992): 187-204.

10) are in conflict with God insofar as God subverts their expectations. At the opening stages of the narrative they are in close proximity to the tyrant, but not necessarily in league with him against the Christ. The temptation account (4:1-11) shapes the expectation about what type of story is being narrated. The definitive statement at the baptism by the Father that Jesus is the beloved son (3:17) makes it unlikely that the temptations are intended to provide further support that Jesus is the Christ. Matthew begins with the assumption that Jesus is the Christ and does not dwell beyond this point on additional proofs for this belief. The first two temptations begin with the challenge “if you are the son of God”. Both the challenge and Jesus’ response point to the path that Jesus must take as son of God. The main plot then involves establishing and following the right path that Jesus must take as son of God in the face of opposition. This provides the framework for the three subplots. One subplot entails the religious leaders’ opposition to Jesus, another the disciples’ allegiance to Jesus and their misunderstanding of his way, the third concerns Jesus’ ministry to and ultimate rejection by the crowds. Ironically, no group understands God’s plan so that the religious leaders are the means by which Jesus goes to the cross, the disciples fail to see the cross as the means of God’s action in the world, and the crowds enjoy Jesus’ healing but send him to the cross. These subplots feed into the main plot in many ways that concern our study of conflict. The sins of the people, from which Jesus was sent to save them, will include his rejection by all groups. God’s activity in the world assumes it will entail conflict with God’s own people. As we examine conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel we should expect Jesus to address the fact that they do not understand God’s actions in the world. It is not necessary to repeat here Powell’s more thorough work on plot and characterization. This way of viewing the relation of subplots to the main plot has the

implication that it is not necessary to look outside the text for an explanation of the presence of conflict. Conflict is present as a means to express more fully the character and meaning of the subject of the biography. Narrative criticism complements genre criticism.

Genre studies supplement narrative criticism's analysis of plot by drawing attention to the use of standard *topoi* in shaping the narrative. Matthew clearly tells the life of Jesus from ancestry to death using the framework of ancestry (1:1-17), birth and early childhood (1:18-2:11), deeds and virtues (3:1-26:75), and death (27:1-28:20). There is some flexibility in this structure that does not seriously alter the analysis to follow. The account of Jesus' baptism (3:1-17) could be the conclusion to the birth and "childhood" *topoi* because it concludes with the affirmation of Jesus as divine son. Likewise, the temptations might be seen as a form of education, but one in which we see only testing and Jesus' prior learning from scripture. This "test" indicates that he is ready for ministry and provides the transition to the deeds section of his life. These *topoi* will be returned to later when we begin to examine specific passages of Jesus' interaction with the leaders of Israel.

Besides genre and narrative analysis, we shall need to draw on a third level of analysis, viz. rhetorical analysis, in order to understand how conflict is articulated in the direct discourse that occurs between Jesus and his opponents. The presence of lengthy speeches in Matthew is one the marks of difference between this gospel and those of Mark and Luke and draws attention to the importance of the teaching of the major figure.¹⁷¹ The speeches overcome the chance elements in the subject's life. The

¹⁷¹ Alexander approvingly cites Plutarch's opinion, from the *Lives*, that a subject's words are better reflections of their character than are their actions. "The

importance of this insight for our study is the way it highlights the fact that Jesus does not go to the cross by chance. Rather, the speeches make it clear that the cross is THE necessary act, not only historically but also theologically.¹⁷² They also support the presentation of Jesus as a great teacher who knows and does the will of God. It should be expected that the speeches are not a minor element dealing with the development of a single subplot, but their congruence with the main plot draws attention to the way Jesus interacts with all groups. The great discourses have unique features in Matthew when compared to the other gospels. The discourses are addressed to the disciples and to the crowds and play a didactic role for those character groups and draw together teaching and plot summary. What follows is a simplified summary of these speeches in order to point to the broad expectations addressed. Crowds and disciples are present at the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) in which they are told to exceed the righteousness of the current normative group (5:17-20). Righteousness is defined, by means of examples, as love for God that does not confuse it with attention received from other humans (6:1-2, 5, 7) and as love of others that crosses all boundaries (5:23-25, 38-42, 43-38). The disciples are addressed in the Mission Discourse (10). The disciples are instructed not to expect treatment different from that which their master receives (10:24-25). The crowds

reason for this is that ‘their actions, for the most part, have an admixture of chance, whereas pronouncements and unpremeditated utterances (ἀποφάσεις καὶ ἀναφώνησεις) which appear alongside their actions and sufferings and chances afford an opportunity to observe, as so many mirrors, the workings of the mind of each man’ (172 d).” She demonstrates, however, that anecdotes are used, more often than are speeches, in biographies in order to convey this appropriately. Loveday C. A. Alexander, "Anecdote and Chria in the Ancient Biographical Tradition," Unpublished paper presented at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting (Orlando, November 1998).

¹⁷² Alexander states that “the *bios* or lifestyle of a teacher is just as important as his verbal teachings – which gives the ancient philosophical biography its underlying seriousness.” Alexander, "Anecdote," 13.

are addressed in a series of parables (13), but the disciples are also active participants. While the parables make several points, major among them is the notion that there are those who hear and witness God's kingdom, but that they fail to perceive or to act appropriately (13:10-16). This is confirmed by the following episode where Jesus' hometown only sees the boy who grew up among them thereby failing to recognize God's activity in him (13:54-58). The so-called Discipline Discourse (18) takes up the disciples' questions about greatness in the kingdom (18:1). Jesus responds that greatness is in serving and looking out for the other even at a cost to oneself. The Eschatological Discourse (24-25), which follows Mt 23 and therefore no longer builds any expectations for that passage, is a response to the disciples' query about the close of the age (24:3). Through a series of statements and examples Jesus guides their attention away from the question of timing to a concern for appropriate action in light of not knowing the timing. These discourses emphasize the need for righteousness beyond the current norm, a costly reality that their master models for them and expects of them, and that others fail to perceive and act upon. The discourses are therefore a significant part of the development of conflict in the narrative even though they will not be treated in this thesis.

In addition to these large discourses and the many narrative episodes with the crowds, Jesus addresses the leaders of Israel in a series of ad hoc legal battles. Plot development combines with the discourses to sharpen awareness that these skirmishes between opposing spokesmen for God are critical for an understanding of how God acts in the world. Chapter two shows how broad expectations are formed for this conflict by Matthew's use of the Old Testament and by comparative reading of ancient biographies. Chapter three will further develop these interactions as they lead to and are summarized

in Mt 23. A central challenge is how to analyze these contests. There are several places to turn to develop a set of lenses, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, Rabbinic legal texts, and the Graeco-Roman legal environment. The beginning of chapter three will take up this methodological concern. The broad framework of expectations developed in chapter two leads to narrative and rhetorical analysis in chapter three of the specific shape of the conflict. It will then be possible in chapter four to move to the analysis of Mt 23.

CHAPTER TWO: EXPECTING CONFLICT

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that an expectation of conflict stems from a comparative reading of ancient biographies and from Matthew's use of Old Testament quotations and allusions. The first part of the chapter will argue that conflict is to be expected both at the surface discourse level and at the paradigmatic story level in ancient biographies. The second part of the chapter demonstrates how Matthew's use of the Old Testament fits those same expectations and further informs them.

I offer three broad proposals for expecting conflict. First, it is a reasonable literary expectation that conflict will occur in Matthew's biography of Jesus. Second, the shape and dynamics of the conflict are grounded in a fundamental paradigm that envelops the main character and his antagonists. Third, the paradigm is made intelligible by means of the specific reasons given at the surface discourse level of the narrative.

Expectations of conflict in Matthew's life of Jesus are shaped by complementary paradigms drawn from the biographical tradition and from Matthew's use of the Old Testament. Expectations also stem from previous knowledge of the subject's life but since this is beyond what we can ascertain about a general audience, it will not be treated here. A brief discussion is in order about the relationship of discourse to story, or paradigm.

Seymour Chatman popularized the distinction between story and discourse.¹ Chatman describes story as events with characters, and discourse as the manner in which that story is expressed. His approach falls within the theoretical framework of structuralism and is part of the development of narrative criticism. Other narratologists have made the same distinction between story and discourse. Gerard Genette draws a distinction between a discourse and the events that a discourse recounts.² He defines *story* as "the signified or narrative content" and *narrative* as "the signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself".³ Culler writes,

...I shall call 'story' - a sequence of actions or events conceived as independent of their manifestation in discourse - and what I shall call 'discourse,' the discursive presentation or narration of events.⁴

Culler argues that the story results from the reordering of the discourse into a cause-effect sequence. This sequence is most frequently chronological. The story only exists as a reconstruction in the mind of the reader as the reader re-orders the events from their narrated sequence into a chronological or cause-effect sequence. A chronologically re-ordered story is a distinction perhaps more useful in the study of modern literature or ancient Greek literature than in biblical material. However, the notion of story has value

¹ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 15-42.

² Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 25-27.

³ Mieke Bal draws the same distinction but uses the terms *fabula* and *story* for *story* and *narrative*, respectively; Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 3-10. Cf. chapter four in Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983); Mark Allen Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 23-50.

for our purposes. It is a recreation in the mind of the reader, but it may be linked to people and events known to the reader. For example, the four discourses about Jesus that we know as the gospels each have underlying stories. The reader may also approach them with an extra-textual awareness of Jesus that is its own story. Story is therefore both a reconstruction from a given discourse, and also a chain of events that stands outside and alongside the discourse. Influential people and events in history have become paradigms for discourse stories. Examples include the way that we may look for a Christ-figure in modern literature or the way that Socrates was "the prototype of the philosophic martyr".⁵

Expectations arise in the reading process when the unfolding discourse is compared to other known stories. If the discourse is related to a known story that includes conflict, then the current narrative should also be expected to contain conflict. An example from modern literature is the mystery genre. Mysteries involve, in a very simplified manner, a problem needing to be resolved. Obstacles and clues are encountered in the attempt to solve the mystery. The surface level of the narrative changes with each new mystery, but once the reader recognizes the mystery genre then the reader expects certain patterns to emerge. Expectations are not the same as prescriptions. Each discourse is unique, and stories can be altered. In this chapter I argue that paradigms that contain conflict can be discerned in ancient biographies and inform the reader's expectations of Matthew's biography of Jesus. Likewise, Matthew's use of

⁴ Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 169-70.

⁵ Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 26. Loveday Alexander suggests the usefulness of the model of Socrates in her work on Acts; Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," see esp. 49-63.

the Old Testament relies upon paradigms (or typologies) that also include conflict as an inherent feature. It can be assumed that since the four gospels narrate the life of the same figure, the narrated conflict ought to have similarities. However, the emphasis, extent, and manner of developing that conflict are unique with each writer.

Part One: Ancient Biography

Part One addresses two points of a comparative reading of ancient biographies. First, general observations are made about conflict at the discourse level of political and philosophical biographies. Second, recognition of the story level is developed from changes wrought in the Imperial Age. The conclusion to Part One points out implications for Matthew's gospel.

A. Political and Philosophical Biography

Classifying biographies has been almost as difficult as defining the genre.⁶ Talbert classifies biographies according to social function. Type A provides the reader a pattern to copy. Type B aims to dispel a false image and to provide a true one. Type C intends to discredit a given teacher by exposé. Type D indicates where the 'living voice' was located after the death of the founder. This includes lists of succession. Type E validates and/or provides the hermeneutical key to the subject's teachings and actions.

⁶ Friedrich Leo, *Die Griechisch-Römische Biographie nach ihrer Litterarischen Form* (Leipzig, 1901); Albrecht Dihle, *Studien zur Griechischen Biographie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956); Duane R. Stuart, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography* (Berkeley: University of California, 1928); Talbert, *What is a Gospel?*; Charles H. Talbert, "Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propaganda in Mediterranean Antiquity," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* vol.2 16.2, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 1619-51; Charles H. Talbert, "Biography, Ancient," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), I: 745-749.

This typology works better with philosophical rather than political biographies. Talbert finds no lives of rulers in Type D and only offers Philo's *Life of Moses* under Type E. The reason seems quite clear. Types D and E concern teachings and their authoritative voice. Types A, B, and C can be used with any person of whom one would form an opinion for or against. Eliminating the last two types, the classification system boils down to variations of polemic and encomium. Their subject primarily distinguishes political and philosophical biographies from one another.⁷ Rulers are distinguished in politics and military affairs. Philosophers are distinguished for their intellect.⁸ Alexander comments that the bulk of political biography dates from the Roman period and notes the argument of Geiger⁹ that political biography did not exist before Cornelius Nepos.¹⁰ It is not my intent here to offer a different classification, but rather only to draw attention to the fact that others have noted differences between the two types.

⁷ "It is well known that Friedrich Leo pointed to the Peripatos as the originator of two veins of biography. One, according to Leo, was an erudite-antiquarian vein, classified and ordered by according to topics and disregarding chronological data: that type was generally preferred for artists and scholars. The other, he claimed, was an ethical-political vein, with biographical narration in chronological order: this was preferred for political men whose virtue was manifest in their actions, since it was precisely these actions which were considered to demonstrate their virtue"; Barbara Scardigli, editor, *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 7.

⁸ Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," 34.

⁹ J. Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography*, *Historia Einzelschriften*, 47 (Wiesbaden/Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1985).

¹⁰ Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," 35, note 8. Scardigli disagrees with Geiger that Nepos invented political biography. The disagreement is based on Geiger's definition of what constitutes political biography; Scardigli, *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, 18.

The division of biographies into political and philosophical¹¹ allows us to examine the discourse level for similarities and differences concerning the presence of conflict in each type. The intent of the following description is to provide a clearer picture of the *dynamics* of conflict and not the *purposes* for the presence of conflict in biography. The following samples are drawn from the biographies that Burrige uses to build the case that the gospels are biographies. This sample provides a broad spectrum of early and later Graeco-Roman *bioi*.

An empirical description of conflict in political biography shows that it centers on the acquisition, use and maintenance of power. The subject can be seen as a threat to those in power. Philo expands the biblical account of Moses killing the taskmaster.¹² He provides a conversation between Pharaoh and his advisors about the growing threat from Moses.

When the king heard of this action he was very indignant, thinking it an intolerable thing, not for one man to be dead, or for another to have killed him, whether justly or unjustly, but for his grandson not to agree with him, and not to look upon his friends or his enemies as his own, but to hate persons whom the king loved, and to love persons whom the king looked upon as outcasts, and to pity those whom he regarded with unchangeable and implacable aversion.

But when the Egyptian authorities had once got an opportunity of attacking the young man, having already reason for looking upon him with suspicion (for they well knew that he would hereafter bear them ill-will for their evil practices, and would revenge himself on them when he had an opportunity) they poured in, at all times and from all quarters, thousands and thousands of calumnies into the willing ears of his grandfather, so that they even implanted in his mind an apprehension that Moses was plotting to deprive him of his kingdom, saying to him: "He will strip you of your crown. He has no humble designs or notions. He is continually seeking to busy himself in what does not

¹¹ Alexander uses the term "intellectual" as an umbrella term for biographies concerning philosophers, poets, dramatists, and doctors.

¹² The account of Moses' life is not primarily a political narrative and Moses is portrayed in a variety of roles including king, priest, and prophet. He is an interesting example of a figure who moves from politics to philosophy, particularly as it pertains to law.

concern him, and to acquire some additional power. He is eager for the kingdom before his time. He caresses some people; he threatens others; he kills others without a trial; he hates all those who are best affected towards you. Why do you delay? Why do you not cut short all his designs and machinations? Delay on the part of those against whom they are plotting is of the greatest advantage to those who wish to attack them."¹³

In like manner Tacitus describes Domitian as feeling threatened by Agricola's military successes.

This series of achievements, though magnified by no boastfulness of language in Agricola's despatches, Domitian greeted, as his manner was, with affected pleasure and secret disquiet; in his heart was the consciousness that his recent counterfeit triumph over the Germans was a laughing-stock: he had in fact purchased, in the way of trade, persons whose clothes and coiffure could be adapted to the guise of prisoners. ... Besides, while to everything else he could be blind, the qualities of a good general were Imperial qualities: harassed with these anxieties, and wholly absorbed in his secret - a symptom that murderous schemes were afoot - he decided that it was best for the present carefully to treasure up his hatred until the first burst of popularity and the applause of the army should die down; for Agricola was still master of Britain.¹⁴

Suetonius notes that Julius Caesar was believed to be part of the party that opposed Sulla.¹⁵

Since many political figures began their careers in the military it is not surprising to find tales of their military campaigns and exploits. Their prowess in battle is often worked into the narrative of their succession to political power. Succession involves co-

¹³ Philo *Life of Moses* tr. C.D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993) 1.45-46. The Loeb edition translates μέγα τοῖς ἐπιθεμένοις αἱ τῶν ἐπιβουλευομένων ἀναβολαί as, "the aggressor is greatly served by delay on the part of his proposed victim." This reflects the basic problem between the attacker and the victim, but it smooths out the sentence construction. Yonge's translation reflects deferential language by recognizing the presence of the plural. The subterfuge that is being relayed to the Pharaoh is also better captured by Yonge.

¹⁴ Tacitus *Agricola* trans. Maurice Hutton, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958) 39.

¹⁵ Suetonius. *Divus Iulius*. 1.2

conspirators and co-aspirants to the throne as well as the opposition to the one on the throne. Evagoras is depicted as a threat to the consolidation of power by the one who committed tyrannicide.¹⁶ Agesilaus suffers a similar fate. His struggle is shown as beginning at birth.¹⁷ Atticus is caught between his refusal to oppose Antony and his friendship with Brutus and Cicero.¹⁸ Suetonius includes tales of conspiracy associated with the succession of the Caesars, including political and legal maneuvering, poisoning and other intrigues: Julius Caesar, Tiberius, Gaius Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Titus, and Domitian.¹⁹ Rulers work to fend off would-be successors once they are in power.

Rulers create conflict from policy and military decisions, and from abuses of power. Occasionally the conflict results from a well intended, but ill received, action. Evagoras' decision to join forces against the Lacedaemonians in support of Athens and all Hellas places him in disfavor with the king of Persia.²⁰ Similar fates follow Agesilaus' military decisions,²¹ and Moses' opposition to Pharaoh.²² His own people oppose the leader in both cases. Suetonius records many abuses of power and subsequent opposition as the Caesars attempt to consolidate power to themselves.

¹⁶ Isocrates *Evagoras* 24-28.

¹⁷ Xenophon *Agesilaus*. 1.5. in *Scripta Minora*. tr. E.C. Marchant. Loeb Classical Library. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

¹⁸ Cornelius Nepos *Atticus* 9.7-10.6.

¹⁹ Suetonius. *Ius*. 9-30; *Tiberius* 11.2-3; *Gaius Caligula* 2-10; *Divus Claudius* 1.1-6; *Nero* 3-6; *Galba* 3, 9-11; *Otho*. 4-7; *Divus Titus* 5; *Domitian* 2.

²⁰ Isoc. *Evagoras* 57-58.

²¹ Xen. *Agesilaus*. 2.23.

²² Philo *Life of Moses* 1.90.

Conflicts also arise within the family. This may involve succession, as with Agesilaus and most of Suetonius' emperors, but it also entails acts of revenge and abuse of power that intimidate and control. Suetonius paints a portrait of the emperors that uses the gossipy elements of family strife to highlight instability and fearfulness of those closest to power.²³ In Suetonius' work we can clearly see the way family conflict merges with conflict over about ruling. Succession for the emperors entails a significant dose of family intrigue. The greatest threats are posed from within the family.

Conflicts in political biography center on the issue of power, its acquisition, use and maintenance. The chief danger to one's power is not incompetence or chance, but attempts to supplant. Put another way, an ancient audience familiar with political biography would expect that conflict would be present and that it would arise around the acquisition, use and maintenance of power. Subjects of a political biography who are not in power would attempt to gain control. Characters who are in control would attempt to fend off those who would succeed them.

Philosophical biography also includes conflict, but of a different type. If the previous description of political biography is correct, then conflict can be said to be chronological, that is it concerns a progression in and out of power. Opposition comes from virtually any quarter. In philosophical biography the chronological aspect in conflict is not as pronounced as is the identity of the opponents and the content of the

²³ "Although, like Plutarch, Suetonius was interested in portraying ideal traits that statesmen should possess, he used biography as a vehicle to criticize as well as to extol. He did not refrain from constructing rather scurrilous profiles of those emperors who exemplified the dark side of his political ideal and thus evaluated the emperors on the basis of two models, one of virtue and one of vice"; Cox, *Biography*, 13.

teaching.²⁴ Philosophers face conflict from their disciples, other schools, tyrants and other civil officials. A few examples will be sufficient to illustrate the point.

Throughout Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Socrates banters with, cajoles and prods his partners in philosophical discourses. These are often his disciples, but he also dialogues with his accusers. During the course of one of these conversations the lives of two disciples, Critias and Alcibiades, are used to demonstrate how Socrates had led others astray. Socrates argues in return that the teacher should not be judged by the lives of students who did not follow their teacher's path.²⁵ This raises the level of animosity between Socrates and his former disciples. Socrates insults Critias for his obstinacy and Critias helps craft laws limiting Socrates' freedom of speech. Other philosophers attack Socrates either by trying to directly discredit him or by enticing his students away from him.

It is due to him that a conversation he had with Antiphon the Sophist should not go unrecorded. Antiphon came to Socrates with the intention of drawing his companions away from him, and spoke thus in their presence.²⁶

The second and third examples are provided in Lucian's praise of the intellectual prowess of Demonax and in his denigration of Peregrinus.

Above all, he made war on those who cultivate philosophy in the spirit of vainglory and not in the spirit of truth.²⁷

²⁴ I am not trying to covertly reintroduce Leo's classification of biographies into Suetonian and Plutarchian types. The point rather is that the lives of philosophers tend to be narrated non-teleologically as far as conflict is concerned. In contrast to this, even in political biographies that are not arranged chronologically we find that conflict occurs in the rise and fall from power. Lives of philosophers are apt to have conflict at any point in the narrative.

²⁵ Xenophon *Memorabilia*. 1.2.30-39

²⁶ Xenophon *Memorabilia*, tr. E.C. Marchant, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979) 1.6.1.

Demonax experiences more serious opposition when his activities take him into the political arena.

Hence all Athens, high and low, [*lit.* 'the whole demos and those in authority', (οἱ ἐν τέλει)] admired him enormously and always viewed him as a superior being. Yet in office he ran counter to public opinion [*lit.* 'to the many', (τοῖς πολλοῖς)] and won from the masses quite as much hatred as his prototype²⁸ by his freedom of speech and action. He too had his Anytus and his Meletus who combined against him [*lit.* 'and certain Anytuses and Meletuses combined against him'] and brought the same charges that their predecessors brought against Socrates ...²⁹

Lucian includes numerous direct discourse examples of the teachings of Demonax. The anecdotes are directed more at the general populace than at a closer set of disciples.

Lucian's *Passing of Peregrinus* is a mocking narration of the self-imposed death of the Cynic Peregrinus. It is a contrast to his work about Demonax, which along with Xenophon's *Memorabilia* are defenses of a philosopher. One of Lucian's means to cast a bad light on Peregrinus is to narrate how Peregrinus courts danger from the political establishment when he uses his philosophy as a means to cheat followers. The civil authorities assess philosophers by the benefits or harm that they cause to the civil order. Implied in Lucian's criticism is that a true philosophy would benefit society. Conflict with civil authorities is one way to raise that issue. Most of the writing about Peregrinus builds the case that he acts only in self-interest to gain fame. The vain seeking for attention wears thin as shown when the crowds, the cynic's "students", grow tired of

²⁷ Lucian *Demonax*, tr. H.M. Harmon, Loeb Classical Library, vol 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979) 48.

²⁸ This follows the conjectural emendation τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ, which according to Harmon's note is not in the manuscript; but some reference to Socrates must be implied by the reference to Anytus and Meletus (cf. κἀκείνου) in the next clause.

²⁹ Lucian *Demonax* 11.

Peregrinus' antics and nearly stone him. He slanders a benefactor who provides water for the thirsty group during the Olympic games. He mocks the group for their inability to endure without the water while at games that celebrate endurance. Lucian ironically notes that Peregrinus also takes of the water while haranguing the crowd. Peregrinus reverses his position by the next games, praises the benefactor, and defends his prior actions.³⁰ In his search for lasting fame and approval he eventually hits upon the idea of a self-imposed death by fire. His hope is that the crowd will plead with him not to carry through with the plan once they realize his commitment. Conflict arises when they do the opposite and force him to follow through with the plan.

Philostratus' *Apollonius of Tyana* is our final example. This narrative is an excellent example of conflict with other philosophers and with tyrants. Apollonius has his philosophy, and his dedication to it, challenged by other philosophers. The following passage concerns his rejection of marriage as part of his philosophy.

And yet there are those who accuse him falsely of an addiction to venery, alleging that because of a disappointment in love he exiled himself for a year among the Scythians, the facts being that he never once visited Scythia nor was ever carried away by such passions. Not even Euphrates ever accused the sage of venery, though he traduced him otherwise and composed lying treatises against him, as we shall shew when we come to speak of him below. And his quarrel was that the latter rallied him for doing anything for money and tried to wean him of his love of filthy lucre and of huckstering his wisdom.³¹

Apollonius travels to Egypt where he defends the sages of India in a debate.³² A breach with Euphrates becomes the cause for a discussion with Thespesion about the deception

³⁰ Lucian *The Passing of Peregrinus* 19-20.

³¹ Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* tr. F.C. Conybeare, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) 1.13.

³² Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 6.7-12.

of Euphrates, generated to some degree by greed, and the effect it has on Thespesion's ability to reason rightly.³³ Philostratus also tells about the conflicts with Nero and Domitian. Nero's contempt of philosophers is attributed to the suspicion that they are addicted to magic and practiced the art of divination.³⁴ Apollonius' former student Euphrates accuses him before Nero and Vespasian in a series of private and public encounters.³⁵ Euphrates later brings charges of rebellion against Apollonius before Domitian.³⁶ His skill allows him to get the better of Domitian and he is freed in the end.

It is not necessary to extend the list of examples in order to see that conflict in philosophical biography would be expected to include opposition from disciples, other philosophers, and tyrants and other civil officials. Conflict does not entail the attempt to supplant the philosopher from power, but to critique his teachings and influence. Philosophers are charged with being deceitful, misguided, irritating, or a bad model. Philosophers critique and are critiqued. Rulers supplant and are supplanted. This conclusion does not mean that every ruler and philosopher would have conflict as part of their biography or that each conflict followed a rigid pattern. However, there is sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that ancient audiences familiar with biographies of rulers and philosophers would reasonably expect the types of conflict presented above.

³³ Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 6.13.

³⁴ Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.35.

³⁵ Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.35-5.39.

³⁶ Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 9

B. Changes in the Imperial Age

Momigliano proposes that there was a "new atmosphere" in the Imperial age that was reflected in biographies.

The writers of biographies created a meaningful relation between the living and the dead. The wise man, the martyr, and the saint became central subjects of biography in addition to the king, the writer, and the philosopher.³⁷

Momigliano does not cite a reason for the change, but points to the result of a "meaningful relation between the living and the dead".

Talbert notes that there was a change in the types of philosophical biographies from 200 BC on.

Although the boundaries are not exact, it is fair to say that in general terms the Lives of individual philosophers dominated from 350-200 BC and collections of biographies of philosophers dominated from 200 BC to the beginning of our era. In our era, there was a renewed interest in both individual Lives and collections in the 3rd and 4th centuries.³⁸

Talbert suggests that the increase in collected Lives was in answer to two main questions that faced philosophical schools after the death of the master.³⁹ The questions were "which is the true philosophy, and who represents the true tradition from the founder?" Diogenes Laertius' collection of lives is fashioned into a "pedigree or

³⁷ Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, 104.

³⁸ Charles H. Talbert and Perry L. Stepp, "Succession in Mediterranean Antiquity, Part 1: The Lukan Milieu," in *SBL 1998 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), 158.

³⁹ Talbert, "Biographies of Philosophers," 1645. Brent suggests a larger cultural defense when he states: "Diogenes regards his succession lists as establishing the coherence of Hellenistic civilization in terms of a common philosophical culture"; Allen Brent, "Diogenes Laertius and the Apostolic Succession," *JEH* 44, no. 3 (July 1993): 374.

genealogical table".⁴⁰ One of the advantages of this design is the ability to compare various schools and the different masters within a school. However, Talbert does not indicate why this was more of a concern after 200 BC than it was in the prior decades and centuries.

Gruen identifies social elements that contributed to the change from republic to empire that bear on the changed attitude noted by Momigliano. In a chapter on the Greek view of Roman expansion in the second century BC, Gruen argues that Roman policies and practices were so erratic that Greeks had a difficult time assessing and articulating the emerging paradigm of the state.⁴¹

For the Hellenes, Roman behavior must have been past understanding, having periods of inaction punctuated by bursts of massive intrusion rendered it incomprehensible. The western power presented no coherent image and generated no consistent Greek reaction. Her passivity encouraged independence, her wavering and ambivalence caused frustration, her pronouncements created confusion, her invasions brought despair. To reckon Greece as divided into pro- and anti-Roman factions is a gross oversimplification. Rather, there was a mixture of awe and hostility, of indifference and anxiety, of gratitude and dissatisfaction, of lengthy unconcern and sudden ire. Rome was a sovereign who shunned steady rule, who exercised authority sparingly but devastatingly, who spoke like a Hellenistic state and acted -- rarely but capriciously -- like a barbarian.⁴²

The confusion concerned the nature of the state. However, insofar as biographies of political and philosophical figures also reflect a view of the larger community, they too were to be caught up in this general change. Imperial rule would eventually become more consistent militarily and administratively, but the new paradigm would need to

⁴⁰ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1925), xviii.

⁴¹ Erich S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California, 1984), 356.

⁴² Gruen, *Hellenistic World*, 337.

find its way into biographies of those who embodied either the new ideals or reactions to them.⁴³ Still speaking about the republican period Gruen comments,

They sought to find pattern where there was none, to detect principle in unprincipled action, to reduce apparently capricious behavior to intelligible system, whether in favorable or in harsh light. But the diverse and inconsistent solutions show continued uncertainty in Hellas. After all this time the Roman image was still indistinct.⁴⁴

Gruen argues that the civil war that led to the imperial age wrought its own changes apart from the change from republic to empire.⁴⁵ He argues that the civil war caused the downfall of the republic and not vice versa. Apart from the issue of causality,⁴⁶ he notes that the sheer scale of the civil war, involving factions throughout the empire, caused a new awareness of the changing face of national and world politics. Marks of the new order included the scale of conflict, the inability of social, political and legal conventions to handle the new world order, and hyper legalism/conventionalism.⁴⁷ This latter point reflects the reality that key figures resorted to their knowledge of "how the world was supposed to work," pushing harder to ensure the survival of the world as they believed it should be. Implicit in Gruen's assessment is the notion that extreme

⁴³ Gruen, *Hellenistic World*, 351.

⁴⁴ Gruen, *Hellenistic World*, 343.

⁴⁵ Erich S. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974).

⁴⁶ Gruen dismisses as causes excessive violence, moral decline, a narrow ruling class draining power and wealth to themselves, general social upheaval, individualism, and the inability of the republic to govern the extensive territorial holdings. Each of these had been present in positive and negative forms before and after the imperial age. The scale of some of the elements is unique.

⁴⁷ Gruen, *Last Generation*, 507.

conventionalism marks the struggle of an old order against the new and that it will at some point need to develop new forms. New wine needs new wineskins.

Moses Hadas provides a reason for the new atmosphere in his discussion of aretalogies as a "spiritual chaos and searching".⁴⁸ Working with Lucian he states,

...we sense widespread yearnings for certainty and salvation in a world where all landmarks had disappeared, when men felt helpless and alone and unsheltered. Charlatans and imposters to exploit men's longings there must have been in abundance ...⁴⁹

Suetonius includes rather unflattering and non-heroic qualities in his *Lives of the Caesars* even though he attempts to remain politically neutral. These two representatives from different environments of the empire, the Greek eastern part of the empire and the Roman senatorial class, each signal forms of social deterioration and transformation. Ideals of what it meant to participate as a member of Roman society continued to change from the republican to imperial periods. Suetonius' work, as well as that of his older contemporary Tacitus, represent a general disenchantment with emperors and the moves toward their deification by the end of the first and beginning of the second century.⁵⁰ Tacitus wrestles with the ideal of senatorial freedom and

⁴⁸ Moses Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion* (New York: Columbia University, 1959), 172.

⁴⁹ Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, 175.

⁵⁰ Pollini describes the process of assimilation to the divine in statuary and numismatics; J. Pollini, "Men or God: Divine Assimilation and Imitation in the Late Republic and Early Principate," in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Mark Toher (Berkeley: University of California, 1990). Cf. P. Herz, "Bibliographie zum Römischen Kaiserkult (1955-1975)," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* vol.2 16.2, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978).

responsibility under the principate.⁵¹ Biography was one means to keep emperors "within the bounds of mortality"⁵² while simultaneously promoting a view of how to live within the real constraints of the autocracy. Plutarch's method of juxtaposing a Greek and Roman in parallel *Lives* was a sign of the international and cosmopolitan era, i.e., it reflected an awareness of paradigms that stem from different cultural settings.⁵³

⁵¹ Ronald H. Martin, *Tacitus*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); Ronald Mellor, *Tacitus*, New York: Routledge, 1993); Ronald Syme, *Tacitus*, 2 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).

⁵² Momigliano, *Greek Biography*, 100.

⁵³ Cf. S. C. R. Swain, "Hellenic Culture and the Heroes of Plutarch," *JHS* 100 (1990): 126-45. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf made the following observation about Plutarch's ability to cross cultural lines: "We can see how the two peoples were already mixing in this period, how Romans had contact on an equal basis, continuously or transiently, with prominent Greeks. In this group Plutarch is the most distinguished example on the Greek side; he has learnt enough Latin to be able to use Latin historical sources, and has accumulated detailed knowledge about Roman cults and customs, and made this knowledge available to his fellow Greeks. In this way his *Lives* serve the new direction of government taken by Trajan, which then intensified to such an extent under Hadrian as to prefer Greeks over Romans, quite in contrast to the style of the Flavian regime"; U. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Plutarch as Biographer," in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. Barbara Scardigli (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 57. See also p. 58. Scardigli noted that the parallel format derives from a philosophical model. "The principle of comparison is another feature which surely derives from the Peripatos. Antitheses are already visible in Aristotle's own examples, and they later developed further, especially in the collection of *Bioi* of individuals of a particular class -- persons of philosophical or historical importance. The comparative principle is taken over by Plutarch and is seen in many ways in his biographies: for instance, in several places where he points to rivalry or friendship between two protagonists, as well as in the *praefationes* and the *synkriseis*."

Plutarch goes beyond Peripatetic theory, for the Peripatos could not yet conceive of comparison between a Greek and a foreign figure: a barbarian could not have counted as an equal partner"; Scardigli, *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, 10-11. Other articles reprinted in the volume by Scardigli that bear on this question include the following: Donald A. Russell, "On Reading Plutarch's *Lives*," *Greece and Rome* 13 (1966): 139-54; J. Geiger, "Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*: The Choice of Heroes," *Hermes* 109 (1981): 85-104; C. B. R. Pelling, "Plutarch in Roman Politics," in *Past Perspectives: Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing*, ed. I. S. Moxon, J. Smart and A. Woodman (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986), 159-87. Russell made the case that the parallel lives provided exemplars for Greeks moving into imperial office. See also Donald A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London: Duckworth, 1973), 109. McMullen argued that it became

The challenge went beyond the question of loyalty or critique of a particular ruler. The challenge was to locate a paradigm for life in a model citizen or hero.

Their ultimate models were the genuine philosophers of the hellenistic age, Cynics and Stoics and Epicureans, who centered their efforts upon improving the spiritual welfare of men and whose teachings therefore inevitably took on a homiletic tinge. In the case of Epicurus in particular the personality of the founder became an object of special reverence. Not only were his writings cherished as a kind of scripture but for centuries his birthday was solemnly celebrated and his portrait displayed and even carried about. The attitude of convinced Epicureans towards their founder approached that of a religious communion to its first prophet.⁵⁴

The difficult task was to find the appropriate model to imitate. Hadas notes that the Greeks had several models from their history.

Perhaps the Greek usage of heroizing the distinguished dead is a factor; Sophocles' tragedies often turn on the death of a hero because they are in effect demonstrations that he merited heroization. But the obvious paradigm for the meaningful death of a holy man is the death of Socrates, as idealized by Plato.⁵⁵

Cox agrees with this assessment when she states that Plato's *Apology* and Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, both in honor of Socrates, "contained elements that became standard features of later biographical portraits."⁵⁶ She states,

In contrast to history, these apologies present an intermingling of fantasy and historical reality with the intent of capturing the ideals suggested by the actual life. The reader is confronted with a conflict between earthly and supramundane

unacceptable for a man of nobility to delve too deeply into any one philosophy. Rather, an eclectic use of many schools in the service of becoming a better citizen prevailed that blurred the lines between schools; Ramsay McMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire* (New York: Routledge, 1966), 47. Cf. Momigliano, *Greek Biography*, 97-99.

⁵⁴ Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, 172.

⁵⁵ Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, 177. Momigliano notes that the Peripatetics wrote extensively about Socrates as a formative model to the school; Momigliano, *Greek Biography*, 96.

⁵⁶ Cox, *Biography*, 7.

truth, a tension that later biographers will exploit for the benefit of their own philosophical visions.⁵⁷

Cox's study in later biographical development points to the trajectory beginning to take shape in the early imperial period. The church seized upon biography as a means to present the ideal Christian life, particularly in the form of lives of saints and martyrs.

Swain takes a different track by drawing upon larger social changes.

In the legal and social domains distinctions between individuals were being drawn ever more tightly in the period this book is concerned with. There was an increasing obsession with differentiation by rank and status dependent upon the superperson of the emperor. We observe too new approaches to the development of personal morality in the form of self-evaluation through comparison with others. This was common to pagans and Christians. 'The eyes of your fellow-ascetics', as the *Life of Antony* puts it, are on you even when you are alone. The disciplinary regard of the Christian Church and the Christian State required closer knowledge of an individual who was now viewed as a likely failure more often than a potential model. These new social, religious, and political factors (in the widest sense) pushed the individual into prominence and established biographical representation as a key structural feature of the literature of martyrologists, intellectuals, historians, hagiographers, and theologians.⁵⁸

McMullen argues that the life of a philosopher became the means by which a new vision of human communities could be promoted in contrast to imperial rule. This means that the aristocracy could use the *bios* of a philosopher to challenge the emperor to adhere to a more ancient and noble manner of life.⁵⁹ The moral courage of the philosopher who even faced death bravely stood in stark contrast to the lives of the emperors. "How better demonstrate the tyrant's depravity than by provoking torture and

⁵⁷ Cox, *Biography*, 7.

⁵⁸ Simon Swain, "Biography and Biographic in the Literature of the Roman Empire," in *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, ed. Mark J. Edwards and Simon Swain (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 36-37.

⁵⁹ McMullen, *Enemies*, 53-54.

death?"⁶⁰ McMullen notes that Plutarch's *Lives* include "many good tyrant-killing tales," that became a way to warn a younger generation of politicians that they need to pursue an alternative to imperial excesses.⁶¹

Alexander points to the same conclusions that beneath the surface differences of philosophical biography basic "stories" or templates are at work. This gave the gospels and Acts the more serious tone than the gossipy and erudite philosophical biographies. Her work focuses on the usefulness of the Socratic paradigm for Acts, but the main idea is useful in the discussion of audience expectations in Matthew. The paradigm of Socrates includes eight components:⁶²

- 1) The divine call
- 2) The mission
- 3) The daimonion
- 4) Tribulations
- 5) Persecution
- 6) Trial
- 7) Prison
- 8) Death

The Socratic paradigm as outlined by Alexander has obvious similarities to the life of Christ. The pattern works well as a narrative template for the gospel account. The concern about the nature of the conflict with the leaders of Israel is a sub-point in the larger paradigm. However, the Socratic paradigm is insufficient by itself to account for the way Matthew shapes the conflicts between Jesus and his opponents. For this a model

⁶⁰ McMullen, *Enemies*, 78.

⁶¹ McMullen, *Enemies*, 71.

⁶² Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," 58-63. Fitzgerald notes how Diogenes Laertius assimilated his biography of Aristotle to the Socratic model. This is most notable in Aristotle's death; John Fitzgerald, "The Ancient Lives of Aristotle and the Modern Debate About the Genre of the Gospels," *ResQ* 36, no. 4 (1994): 209-21.

of the state, or of the role of the philosopher within the state, is needed. The paradigm of the philosopher in conflict with civil authorities offered the reader the opportunity to contemplate the nature of the individual's place in the changing world order. Socrates became one such paradigmatic figure because he critiqued the spokespersons for the civil establishment. They killed him on the premise that he upset the existing order.

Allison writes that typology is part of the rhetorical and biographical traditions of *sygkrisis* [*sic*], i.e., comparison.⁶³ This involves comparing two or more individuals or characteristics. However, it is also by means of comparison with the type that the reader is guided in her or his own life by the model presented. One of the primary purposes of typology was to “create a series of hermeneutical events in a community of readers, events which together add up to a typological conclusion: this person is like that person because their two stories have so much in common.”⁶⁴ This means that the hermeneutical community reading the biography of a figure who critiques the state and dies as a consequence is being asked to conform to that model. They are to become a people who bear the same marks.

A notable difference between the gospels and most ancient biographies is the presence of the divine. Philosophical biography has the philosopher living consistently with the espoused philosophical principles, even if this means the threat or reality of death. The model figure in Jewish and Christian literature is likely to be portrayed as being somehow connected to the divine order. The presence of the divine adds a more serious tone to the comparison being made in the gospels. A single key character,

⁶³ Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 12.

⁶⁴ Allison, *New Moses*, 7.

usually the king or prophet is the channel for divine activities on behalf of the community. The community formed around the reading of the biography is not merely an alternative community, but the community ordered by divine principles.

C. Adaptation to Matthew

Matthew combines the diachronic aspect of power conflict in political biography (rise and fall from power) with the more synchronic aspect of conflict about the subject's teaching in philosophical biography (subject matter). The struggle for power is evident at the beginning and end of the gospel (1-4, 26-28). Controversy over the character and teachings of Jesus and his opponents is evident in the middle of the gospel (5-25). This middle section gives specific shape to the reasons for the opposition to Jesus. The opponents team with the powers of the tyrant to suppress Jesus' activities. The gospel begins with Herod's fear that Jesus will supplant him (Mt 2:3, 12, 13, 16). The trial of Jesus includes the charge "King of the Jews" (Mt. 27:11, 29, 42). Pilate fails to see the basis of the charge and does not perceive a problem with Jesus (Mt. 27:15-26). Matthew narrates that Pilate knew the charges were developed from jealousy (Mt. 27:18). The conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel in the middle of the gospel takes shape in a similar way to a philosophical contest. Did the leaders respond to Jesus this way out of a "political" fear that Jesus was attempting to supplant them, or was it a "philosophical" critique that the leaders would not accept? The narrative contains a mixture of both elements. John the Baptist's condemnation of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt. 3: 7-10) helps to set the tone. He attacks their presupposition: "Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'" (Mt 3:9). He also indicates the level of conflict: "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.

Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Mt. 3:10).

Matthew shows signs of a conflict model that mixes the key elements of supplanting and critiquing that emerged from our look at political and philosophical biography. Jesus is both king and philosopher. Matthew's use of Old Testament quotations and allusions provides clues about how the template is modified and adapted. The goal is to show that Matthew's audience(s) bring expectations shaped by ancient biographical traditions and by a biblical tradition encoded in the text by quotations and allusions. This will be examined in Part Two of this chapter. The question that is raised in Chapter Three is *how* the conflicts at the discourse level between Jesus and his opponents bridge the gap in the reader's comprehension between the surface conflicts and underlying paradigms.

Part Two: Old Testament

A. Introduction

Part One argued that it is reasonable that an ancient audience well versed in ancient biography would be primed to expect both a kind of pattern exemplified in the Socratic paradigm and conflict found at the discourse level of biographies. These expectations would be brought to, reshaped or confirmed in reading of Matthew. The same process is true of expectations drawn from familiarity with the Old Testament. Narratives of individuals in the Old Testament are not limited to rulers, but also include tales of other individuals, e.g., prophets (Elijah), queens (Esther), "ordinary" women (Ruth), envoys (Nehemiah), and those in exile (Daniel). A significant part of the Old Testament, including these narratives of individuals, concerns the narrative of the nation of Israel's interaction with God. This is a rich and diverse literature. Old Testament citations and allusions in Matthew guide the reader to the appropriate parts of the Old Testament for the story that he wants to use to frame his narrative. Citations and allusions are moved to a new literary context in Matthew's gospel and carry with them echoes of their Old Testament literary and theological context.

There are several ways that the two contexts relate. First, the cited material can be divorced from its original literary context when used in the new setting. The source material amply cited in the broader biographical tradition does not appear to draw upon the original literary context or the citation. Second, the Matthean context can dictate the meaning of the citation by the way it is integrated into the narrative, thereby dissolving the connections to the original setting. Third, the original context, in either history or literature, may be determinative thereby forcing Matthew to adjust the narrative to meet

the demands of the citation. Fourth, the citation establishes a resonance between the Old Testament literary context and the Matthean literary context. This latter option is more likely for Matthew in the fulfillment formulae because of the intentional and directive character of the formulae. Jesus' life is to be understood as a fulfillment of prior events and writings. At minimum Matthew is calling the reader to hear this narrative in light of the prior story. This practice is not unique to Matthew. Chester notes a similar tendency in apocryphal works and texts from Qumran. The following observation holds true for the Temple Scroll, 1 Maccabees, and Tobit, and could be extended beyond:

It is precisely because the community sees itself as living in the last days, and itself as the only true remnant of Israel and inheritor of the covenant, that it can interpret Scripture, and above all the prophetic utterances of Scripture, as being fulfilled in this very community, and as applying directly to it and to the age in which it finds itself living. It is this perspective that allows it to hold that the true meaning and hidden secrets of Scripture are now finally and uniquely made known to it through direct revelation and inspired interpretation. Given that this is the overriding perspective for the community's understanding of itself and of Scripture, it is perhaps not so surprising that the community can produce (or at any rate preserve) so remarkable a document as the Temple Scroll, purporting to be the direct revealed words of God himself.⁶⁵

Boyarin makes the same case, but more pointedly.

There is a tension between the meaning(s) of the quoted text in its 'original' context and in its present context. What is so striking (and so strange) about midrash is its claim that the new context is implied by the old one, that the new meanings (Oral Torah) revealed by recontextualizing pieces of the authoritative text are a legitimate interpretation of the Written Torah itself, and indeed given with its very revelation.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Andrew Chester, "Citing the Old Testament," in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), 149-50.

⁶⁶ Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 23.

It is certainly reasonable to expect that Matthew's fulfillment citations, if not also other allusions, require the reader to consider the original context as a means to understand the Matthean narrative.

The resonance between old and new contexts shapes expectations. Part Two shows what these expectations are and that they are complementary to the expectations delineated in Part One. As in the previous section, elements from the discourse level point to an underlying story that gives shape to the conflict in Matthew.

Matthew frequently cites or alludes to passages in the Old Testament.⁶⁷ A paradigm for understanding these citations and allusions will be offered following a survey of the paradigms of other scholars. The story level then will be developed with special attention given to the role of material suggesting parallels to political and philosophical biographies.

There have been numerous other works devoted to Matthew's use of Old Testament citations and allusions.⁶⁸ Hagner states,

⁶⁷ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 34-57 provides a useful chart that also includes comparison with Mark and Luke and whether the LXX or Hebrew text seems to be involved.

⁶⁸ E.g., O. Lamar Cope, *Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven*, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series, 5 (Washington, D.C.: Cath Bib Assoc Amer, 1976); C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952); R. T. France, "The Formula Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication," *NTS* 27 (1980): 233-51; R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 166-241; Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel: With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, Supplements to the Novum Testamentum, 18 (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1967); Donald A. Hagner, "The Old Testament in the New Testament," in *Interpreting the Word of God*, ed. S. J. Schultz and M. A. Inch (Chicago: Moody, 1976), 78-104; Donald A. Hagner, "When the Time Had Fully Come," in *Dreams, Visions and Oracles*, ed. C. E. Amerding and W. W. Gasque (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 89-99; L. Hartman, "Scriptural Exegesis in the Gospel of St. Matthew and the Problem of

Matthew contains well over sixty explicit quotations from the OT (not counting a great number of allusions), more than twice as many as any other Gospel. The heavy dependence on the OT reflects Matthew's interest in the gospel of the kingdom as the fulfillment of the OT expectation. Of particular interest in this regard are the so-called fulfillment quotations, one of the most distinctive features of Matthew.⁶⁹

Formula quotations, "this was done to fulfill . . .," overtly signal their dependence on an Old Testament passage. However, by their nature allusions are difficult to define too tightly. Gundry requires that "recognizable thought-connection exist between the OT and NT passages."⁷⁰ Allison uses six categories of quotation and allusion in his

Communication," in *L'Évangile Selon Matthieu*, ed. M. Didier (Gembloux: Duculot, 1972), 131-52; Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); D. J. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983); Brian M. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God: The Christology of Matthew 1-2 in the Setting of the Gospel*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*, 23 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979); W. Rothfuchs, *Die Erfüllungszitate des Matthäus-Evangeliums: Eine biblisch-theologische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969); George M. Soares Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew*, *Analecta Biblica*, 63 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976); Graham N. Stanton, "Matthew," in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. M. G. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), 205-19; Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, 2d ed (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968); G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit. Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966). The bibliography to Gundry's dissertation includes a list of books and a list of articles and periodical literature prior to 1967 on quotations of the OT used in the NT.

⁶⁹ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, 33a (Dallas: Word, 1993), liv. Davies and Allison treat the topic of Matthew's use of the OT under the heading of authorship. "To state the obvious, Christians had long before Matthew's time been intensely interested in scriptural proof texts and prophecies. Matthew's constant appeal to the OT is therefore nothing extraordinary. Clark, who makes this observation, backs it up by referring to Westcott and Hort, who list 123 quotations and allusions for Matthew -- but also 109 for Luke and 133 for Acts; and Clark affirms that, in addition to the scriptural references drawn from Mark, Matthew uses about forty quotations, Luke about fifty"; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol. 1, 29. However, their conclusion two pages later (31), after reviewing how Matthew uses the OT, is that "Matthew, obviously, knew and treasured the OT in a way Luke apparently did not."

⁷⁰ Gundry, *Use of the OT*, 5.

development of the Moses typology in Matthew: explicit statements, inexplicit borrowing, reminiscent circumstances, key words or phrases, structural imitation, and resonant syllabic and/or word patterns.⁷¹ All except reminiscent circumstances and structural imitation can be found in some form to correspond to Gundry's work. The limitations that Allison uses are also sixfold.⁷² First, only texts older than the text being studied can provide material for a typology or allusions. Second, probability increases when a text can be shown to fall into a tradition that was important for the author. Third, a combination of his first six rules will lend more credibility to the typology. Fourth, the type should be prominent and draw on what is common. Fifth, credibility is enhanced if the typology can be demonstrated in numerous texts. Sixth, unusual imagery and motifs are more likely to indicate an allusion.

Several models for treating Old Testament citations are provided below. A model adapted to our concern for expecting conflict is then presented. Finally, a brief demonstration will show how the model impacts a reading of the opening chapters of Matthew.

B. Models for the Use of the Old Testament in Matthew

There are four broad approaches taken in the study of the use of the Old Testament in Matthew. First, Stendahl, Strecker, and Gundry⁷³ examine the text-type

⁷¹ Allison, *New Moses*, 19-20.

⁷² Allison, *New Moses*, 21-23. Richard B. Hays uses similar criteria: 1) availability, 2) volume, 3) recurrence, 4) thematic coherence, 5) historical plausibility, 6) history of interpretation, and 7) satisfaction; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989), 29-32.

⁷³ Stendahl, *School of St. Matthew*; Strecker, *Der Weg*; Gundry, *Use of the OT*.

within the methodological frameworks of source and redaction criticism. These efforts center on determining the relationship between the context of the original source and the new context in Matthew and the Matthean community. Second, Prabhu, Cope, and Stanton⁷⁴ use redaction criticism without a strong emphasis on text-type. These three have the same concern as the first group to show how and to what degree Matthew's redaction of his source material reflect the realities of his own community. The results of the next two approaches are more productive for our study. Third, Gundry,⁷⁵ Nolan, and Allison,⁷⁶ focus their results on developing aspects of a Christological typology. Fourth, Albright and Mann, and Senior⁷⁷ point toward a narrative typology.

Gundry develops a classification system from Matthean quotations and another from the allusions, each with five points.⁷⁸ The quotations are classified as pertaining to A) the Royal Messiah, B) the Isaianic Servant, C) the Danielic Son of Man, D) the Shepherd, and E) Yahweh. The Royal Messiah finds support in the regal aspects of Jesus' birth, entry into the royal city, and the designations of power, such as Lord and being seated on God's right hand (1:23; 2:6; 2:23; 3:17; 4:15f; 21:5; 22:34; 22:44; 26:64). The Isaianic Servant is the lowly one who is despised, who endures suffering

⁷⁴ Soares Prabhu, *Formula Quotations*; Cope, *Matthew*; Stanton, "Matthew."

⁷⁵ Methodological concerns cross the four categories. Redaction criticism has been the primary approach used to analyze Old Testament citations in Matthew. Gundry's work is situated in two categories because he forms a Christological typology as a result of his text-type analysis that is unique from others who use that approach.

⁷⁶ Nolan, *Royal Son*; Allison, *New Moses*.

⁷⁷ William F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, The Anchor Bible, 26 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971); Donald Senior, *Matthew*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998).

⁷⁸ Gundry, *Use of the OT*, 205-15.

and condemnation, but who brings life (3:17; 8:17; 11:5; 12:18-21; 20:28; 26:67; 27:57). The Danielic Son of Man is related to the royal images as one coming on the clouds and the one given authority (24:30; 26:64; 28:18). The Shepherd of Israel is one smitten, yet who will smite his enemies (26:31; 21:44; 24:30). Yahweh is the one who demands allegiance and repentance, who will judge and purge the stumbling blocks, but who will also turn to save and heal the people (1:21; 3:3f; 10:32; 11:5; 11:10; 11:28; 11:29; 13:41; 16:27; 24:31; 25:31; 26:15; 27:9f).

The allusions are classified into Jesus as A) greater than Moses, B) the greater Son of David, C) representative prophet, D) representative Israelite, and E) representative righteous sufferer. The Moses typology comes from the departure and return to Egypt, shining on the mountain and establishing a covenant (2:13; 2:20f; 17:2; 26:28). The David typology stems from receiving worship and tribute, exhibiting wisdom, and antithetically by acts in the temple (2:1f; 2:11; 12:42; 21:14). The prophet typology arises from his burial for three days, feeding the people and confronting the people (12:40; 13:13-15; 13:35; 14:16; 17:15). The Israelite typology takes a different shape from the others. Israel's history of covenant, testing, apostasy and judgment is altered in Jesus' faithfulness (2:11; 2:15; 2:18; 4:4, 7, 10). The righteous sufferer accepts rejection and is ultimately vindicated by God (21:9, 42; 23:39; 26:38; 27:34, 48; 27:35; 27:39; 27:43; 27:46; 28:10).

Nolan's study attempts to synthesize the titles for Jesus in Matthew's Gospel into a royal, Davidic theology. The Old Testament resonances he identifies in Matthew 1-2 include patriarchal, Mosaic and Davidic elements. The core of the patriarchal allusion is the dream sequence announcing the birth of the son. Mosaic elements include the confrontation with Pharaoh, trials in the wilderness, and the Balaam incident that

brought a blessing from a foreign magus while a king was attempting to destroy Israel.

Davidic elements abound in Mt. 2.

Bethlehem again sees the genesis of lowly David. The unblessed monarch in Jerusalem, and the Judaeen establishment, try to eliminate the heir to the throne of David. The Isaian Emmanuel Child and his queen mother are rescued through the fidelity of a son of David. Finally, primacy passes from royal Jerusalem to persecuted Bethlehem and Galilee of the Gentiles (note 4:15), after the pagans have submitted to the Son of David.⁷⁹

Nolan uses the second half of his study to demonstrate how the royal typology is integrated into the entire Gospel. He concludes by returning to Mt. 1-2 in order to summarize the key royal qualities. Mt. 1:1-17 establishes that Jesus is the *true king* descending not only from Abraham, but also from David. He states that the "Abrahamic covenant is absorbed into the covenant sonship of David."⁸⁰ In 1:18-25 Jesus is the *great king* who fulfills prophecy and whose mission is to save his people and to be Emmanuel, "God with us". In 2:1-12 Jesus is the *universal king* receiving homage from the world represented by the magi. Jesus is the *exiled king* in 2:13-15. Nolan finds closer allusions with David than to Moses and the Israelites. Jesus is the *king attacked* in 2:16-18. Nolan avoids the comparison with the killing of infants in the Exodus account and instead opts to follow the royal disasters in the reigns of Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah, who are all omitted from the genealogical table at 1:9. These three kings reminded Matthew that "the lethal internecine struggles of Judah's former rulers of the house of David, and their hostility to the Idumeans, strike the chord to the bass note of Herod's murders."⁸¹ Finally, Jesus is the *king thriving* in 2:19-23. This overly ingenious

⁷⁹ Nolan, *Royal Son*, 47.

⁸⁰ Nolan, *Royal Son*, 204.

⁸¹ Nolan, *Royal Son*, 211.

interpretation stems from the connections Nolan made about the rejected branch that would unexpectedly flourish.

Allison builds the case that there is a more thorough development of a Moses typology in Matthew that has not always been as obvious to modern interpreters. He recognizes that the number of allusions is densest in Mt 1-7 but that the similarities also extend to the macro scale of the shape of the gospel. He tentatively suggests that the following pattern emerges:

<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Pentateuch</u>	
1-2	Exod. 1:1-2:10	infancy narrative
3:13-17	Exod. 14:10-31	crossing of water
4:1-11	Exod. 16:1-17:7	wilderness temptation
5-7	Exod. 19:1-23:33	mountain of lawgiving
11:25-30	Exod. 33:1-23	reciprocal knowledge of God
17:1-9	Exod. 34:29-35	transfiguration
28:16-20	Deut. 31:7-9	commissioning of successor
	Josh. 1:1-9 ⁸²	

Interestingly Nolan and Allison use many of the same passages to present their respective cases. The similarities of great characters are to be expected. There are many parallels between the life of Moses and the life of David. Nolan tends to reach into royal history too quickly when a parallel to David's life is not readily available. Likewise, the Mosaic typology has difficulties with the theme of royalty. Neither typology can be complete in itself. Indeed Matthew's use of Old Testament quotations and allusions does not draw from the life of any one individual. Gundry's multifaceted typology is in a better position to "hear" the multiple echoes created by the use of Old Testament texts.

⁸² Allison, *New Moses*, 268.

The narrative typology can be found in scholarship masked behind the language of salvation history.⁸³ Albright and Mann claim that Matthew's use of the Old Testament called the covenant people to relive its Old Testament experience.⁸⁴ Rather than fixing on a single person, or even the qualities and characteristics of several people, this typology draws from the "plot" of Israel's interactions with Yahweh. The stories of Israel, from the Abrahamic covenant to the exile, form a larger background than one figure can supply.⁸⁵ Albright and Mann draw attention to the fact that the Matthean prologue (1-2) emphasizes the key figure of a ruler but also that chapters 3-7 call to mind Israel's testing in the wilderness and the presentation of the law at Sinai. These national stories are being drawn together in this one figure of Jesus who "comes to fulfill" the historical paradigm in a way that Israel had not been able to. Jesus is seen to fit the narrative of a group rather than just that of an individual. This stresses that history of the nation is connected with this significant individual.

Donald Senior follows a similar line of thought when he claims that "Matthew orients the reader to the story of Jesus" using fulfillment quotations with greater frequency in the beginning of the gospel than in later chapters.⁸⁶ The passages combine with other elements to "assure Matthew's readers of Jesus' roots in Israel's sacred past

⁸³ Cf. France, *Matthew*, 198-201.

⁸⁴ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, lv-lvii.

⁸⁵ Swartley stresses the exodus and conquest traditions as well as temple and kingship traditions. He reads Mt 1-2 primarily against the backdrop of an exodus pattern; Willard M. Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994).

⁸⁶ Senior, *Matthew*, 27.

and provide guidance for the future."⁸⁷ The critical experiences from that past are exile, exodus and displacement.⁸⁸ Senior summarizes the effect when the formula quotations and historical paradigms are combined with the narrative of Jesus in Mt. 1-2.

From the first moments of his life, this Son of David and Immanuel is deeply entwined with the history and profound experiences of God's people: threatened by a despot, driven into exile, called by God out of Egypt into the land of Israel, and returned from exile yet still experiencing displacement and danger.⁸⁹

The life of Jesus parallels the history of the nation of Israel. The key elements of exile and return are complemented with the anticipated appearance of the Messiah. Senior does not articulate why a royal figure is necessary to Matthew's utilization of the exile-return paradigm.⁹⁰ This is a shortcoming common to previous approaches. It has not been made clear why a royal figure was necessary to fulfill the challenge of covenant faithfulness. This question, however, runs the danger of taking us beyond the scope of the present study. My purpose is not to explain the Gospel by means of typologies or even to assess the (in)adequacies of earlier proposals. Rather, my purpose is to demonstrate that expectations of conflict are reasonably anticipated from Matthew's use of the Old Testament. In the following section I propose a paradigm that allows the expectation of conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel.

⁸⁷ Senior, *Matthew*, 27.

⁸⁸ Senior, *Matthew*, 35.

⁸⁹ Senior, *Matthew*, 51.

⁹⁰ Cf. the Sin-Exile-Redemption pattern used by Stanton in his discussion of Mt. 23:39; Stanton, "Aspects," 247-51.

C. Proposed Model for the Use of the Old Testament in Matthew

The reason for pursuing the Matthean typology is well stated by Allison. While he refers to the typology between Jesus and Moses, the point is also valid about other typologies.

Its purpose is to intimate not that there was, happily, some vague or coincidental connection between Moses, the first deliverer, and Jesus, the messianic deliverer, but rather that the histories of those two men were, in the mysterious providence of a consistent God, and according to the principle that the last things are as the first, strikingly similar even down to details.⁹¹

Allison recognizes that typology “is no more the trunk of Matthew’s Christology than it is only a distal twig. It is somewhere in between: I should liken it to a main branch.”⁹² In the conclusion he points out that the typology serves several functions in Matthew. First, “the evangelist was determined to put the new wine into old wineskins.”⁹³ The comparison of the old and the new vindicates the new. Second, it provides a means to appropriate history by claiming the fulfillment of that history. Third, it aids group identity, largely because it connects the group to a history shared with others. Fulfillment allows for the legitimation of the group. Fourth, typology provides a valuable tool for apologetics and polemics. These four reasons can be summarized in the following manner. Typologies assist the reader to make connections between a shared understanding of history and the current situation. In Matthew, older familiar patterns are repeated and given new importance as patterns of inappropriate behavior are sundered and new models based on the old are initiated. There is continuity and

⁹¹ Allison, *New Moses*, 7.

⁹² Allison, *New Moses*, 268.

⁹³ Allison, *New Moses*, 273.

discontinuity. Older patterns were useful because they were familiar and because group identity had been shaped by them. But the paradigms also included recognition that there was room for change and improvement.

I propose that a model that combines the Christological and narrative approaches is appropriate for our purposes and can be derived with integrity from the text. The typology should be one that enables one not only to anticipate the presence of conflict, but also to provide a narrative framework for understanding the dynamics of that conflict.

Moses, David, and Jeremiah are proposed, by Allison, Nolan, and Knowles respectively, as significant types for understanding the way Matthew structures the life of Jesus. This is not surprising since these figures have numerous traits in common. However, none is fully adequate.⁹⁴ I propose, as a heuristic tool, that the history of Israel's covenant relationship is a paradigm that is able to make sense of "fulfillment" language and to incorporate types like Moses, David, and Jeremiah.⁹⁵ While it may appear to make more sense to settle for a typology drawn from a single individual to examine the life of another individual, there are two significant reasons to use the covenant typology as our primary framework. First, it is better able to account for a greater number of features of the text. Second, the typologies of individuals can be

⁹⁴ Cf. France, *Matthew*, 188-89.

⁹⁵ Lindars notes that Matthew may have collected the infancy traditions in order to show the connection between the history of Israel and the life of Jesus, but the more obvious reasons include fulfillment of prophecy and use as mere biographical notes of interest; Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 260-61. This explanation is hardly adequate to explain the use of the Old Testament in Mt 1-2 since it does not take into account how the formulae are woven into the larger narrative fabric. Cf. France, *Matthew*, 167-69.

subsumed under the broader covenant typology of the nation. Moses, David, and Jeremiah each make contributions to the larger narrative of God's interaction with Israel. Matthew's use of the Old Testament points out that the story of Jesus is to be viewed as more than simply a parallel to any one of those individuals. The covenant typology also allows us to project how an ancient reader might have expected from Matthew's use of the Old Testament that conflict would arise and what shape it might take.

The paradigm includes both narrative and characters. The narrative pattern includes covenant,⁹⁶ instruction, testing, failure, and punishment.⁹⁷ Testing and failure occur not only in the wilderness, but also in royal history as kings are judged by their fidelity to the law. Punishment falls upon the exodus generation and upon the two kingdoms as they are sent into exile. Two figures that play a major role in this national history are the king and the prophet.⁹⁸ Gundry's five-fold classification can be reduced to three categories: ruler, prophet and sufferer. This reduction cuts across some of

⁹⁶ The prologue (1:1) identifies Jesus as son of Abraham. John the Baptist attacks the Pharisees and Sadducees in 3:8 and their reliance upon the Abrahamic covenant. At least in general terms this covenant lies at the base of Matthew's understanding of history. The covenant at Sinai is more pronounced, as Allison's work on Moses in Matthew shows. Cf. France, *Matthew*, 168-69.

⁹⁷ E. Earle Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity: Canon and Interpretation in the Light of Modern Research*, WUNT, 54 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 105-09, esp. note 113.

⁹⁸ Goppelt points to the typological development of Jesus as prophet alongside the Davidic royal figure and the Son of man. He recognizes that it is in the preaching, confrontation, and passion accounts that Jesus best fits this type. Particularly significant OT passages include Dt. 18:15; 19:15; Jonah 3:4-9, Jer. 2:1-4; 7:1-11; 26:1ff; 29:13; 31:31; 35:15ff; 42:1; 56:7. The prophet typology is triggered after the strong initial emphasis on the royal figure in Mt 1-2. Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: Die Typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981), 70-96.

Gundry's categories. Royal Messiah, Danielic Son of Man, Shepherd, Yahweh and Son of David fall into the category of ruler. The ruler is one who receives power, honor and tribute, acts on God's behalf, provides for the welfare of the people and helps ensure covenant loyalty. The connection between the royal figure and the national paradigm is found in the sequence of instruction-testing-failure. This sequence frames the heart of covenant loyalty. Once in the land the people replace God as king (1 Sam 8) with a human king. The task of covenant loyalty remains. The king is given the charge of keeping the law (Dt. 17:14-20). Prophets appear on the scene largely, though not solely, as critics of the royal establishment's record of adhering to the law. They remind the king of the covenant and announce the monarchy's failure to lead the nation in covenant loyalty. The prophet is one who exposes the sins of the people and calls the people back to covenant loyalty. The prophet and ruler are both intended to be servants who, even though they die for the cause of their God, are vindicated for their fidelity to the covenant. Expectations for the monarchy after the exile vary. Some of the post-exilic prophets show signs that a new leader is expected to lead the people in fidelity to the covenant. Often that leader is God, without human royal counterpart (e.g., Isa. 40-41, 44:6ff; Ezek. 40-45). This new leader occasionally is seen confronting current leadership (e.g., Zech. 11:4-17; Ezra 5; Neh. 4-6). Prophets continue the task of confronting the people and their leaders (e.g., Haggai, Malachi).

The expectation of conflict derived from this paradigm begins with the genealogy and is activated by reference to Abraham, David and the exile. The reference to his task as one who "will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21) indicates that Matthew sees the problems of Israel continuing to his day. However, the name "Immanuel" signifies a new era in this history by indicating God's presence. The Old

Testament echo is one of hope amid political and military turmoil and despair.

Expectations of leadership conflict are stimulated by the conflict between Herod and the infant Jesus. This is marked by the visit of the Magi, Jesus as the new ruler of Israel from Bethlehem,⁹⁹ the flight to and from Egypt, the death of the infants,¹⁰⁰ and Galilee as the region of God's activity outside Jerusalem as the center of power.¹⁰¹ The fulfillment formulae are dominant in connection with Jesus' birth. His birth is taking place in the midst of tensions over the arrival of the Christ.¹⁰² The crisis over royal leadership immediately places the reader within the narrative framework at a point

⁹⁹ Mt 2:6 emphasizes the coming ruler of Israel, rather than drawing attention to Bethlehem or the fulfillment of prophecy. The idea of ruling or governing occurs in three terms in this citation.

¹⁰⁰ The citation from Jer. 31:15 signals the throes at the change of the age. While Rachel weeps for her children, God announces a period of renewal (Jer. 31:16-17). The Matthean use of this passage goes beyond a biographical note of interest or a simple fulfillment of prophecy. The larger passage in Jeremiah reinforces the irony of the attempt to kill Jesus by slaughtering the infants. This child is the means by which God begins to bring the people back from destruction. God's actions encounter conflict from the ruler of Israel. Cf. France, *Matthew*, 208; France, "Formula Quotations," 244-46.

¹⁰¹ The chief priests and scribes are unwittingly drawn into leadership conflict because they know the scriptures about the birth of the expected Christ, but fail to recognize God's presence in this child. Their conflict with Jesus builds throughout the gospel. It is worth repeating that I am not assessing how fairly or accurately Matthew treats the historical opponents of Jesus. Rather the expectation of conflict stems from Matthew's literary strategy that may have met with either acceptance or surprise by 1st century audiences.

¹⁰² This is different from the position reflected in Knowles' study that "the underlying purpose of the formula quotations seems to be to show that the basic elements of Jesus' origin, identity, ministry – and even his betrayal – were already providentially set out in the inspired text and so conform to the 'divinely ordained plan for the Messiah'"; Michael Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected Prophet Motif in Matthaean Redaction*, JSNT Supplement Series, 68 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 27. I am drawing attention to the way the quotations serve the narrative by introducing resonance with OT passages rather than emphasizing a pre-ordained plan along which Jesus' life travels. Knowles' position turns the gospel into a text whose purpose is to say "See, I told you so."

where the king of Israel, Herod, is an obstacle to covenant fidelity. Since the formulae depict Jesus as the anticipated royal figure, opposition to him by the leadership of Israel sets the expectation of further conflict until one side of the opposition is removed. The baptism and testings (Mt 3:1-4:11) have marks of the wilderness experience that included testing, failure and punishments.¹⁰³ John the Baptist clearly takes on the prophetic role in demanding covenant loyalty. Jesus is one who takes the right paths that Israel did not. Jesus also is the new representative Israel who faithfully endures the testing.¹⁰⁴ He is the model of faithfulness for the people. Jesus is introduced as a royal figure in Mt 1-2. He is faithful Israel in 3-4. The emphasis on Law (Mt. 5-7) recalls Israel's relation to the Law at Sinai and recalls the prophetic appeal to uphold law as means to covenant loyalty. Jesus acts as a prophet throughout Mt 5-25 confronting the leaders of the people about their covenant fidelity. Jesus is both king and prophet. Matthew sets initial expectations of conflict in a royal vein and gradually shifts to conflict of a prophetic nature in the main body of the narrative. The expectation of conflict with Israel's leaders is in line with the paradigm of Israel's history that includes rulers and prophets in conflict with one another.

¹⁰³ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, lv; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 1, 344-45, 351-74; D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 109; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 61-63. Moo notes the allusion to Isa. 42:1 and the death of the *ebed Yahweh*. He shows the connection from baptism to passion, but does not evaluate other possible allusions because his concern is for the use of Isaianic servant songs, Zechariah 9-14, laments psalms and sacrificial imagery in the passion account; Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion*, 116. France draws a close connection between testings and the exodus tradition. "The repeated challenge 'If you are the Son of God', in the context of privation in the wilderness, might itself suggest the same exodus motif as was evoked by the use of Hosea 11:1. But this is put beyond doubt by the three-fold quotation of texts from Deuteronomy 6-8, a passage which focuses throughout on that episode and the lessons it contained for Israel's filial obedience"; France, *Matthew*, 208.

D. Summary

In this chapter I have argued that comparative biographies and the Old Testament provide complementary paradigms that shape expectations of conflict in Matthew. The Old Testament provides a paradigm based on the covenant with God. The covenant relationship frames expectations about rulers and prophets. Conflict with these two groups parallels the models in the biographical tradition of rulers and philosophers. Matthew presents Jesus as both ruler and prophet. The significance of conflict is heightened in the biblical paradigm due to the tradition that God is truly the ruler above all others. God's reign makes relative all claims of authority. However, it also means that those who claim to guide Israel implicitly, if not explicitly, claim to represent God. Matthew's claim that Jesus is "God with us" means that Jesus ultimately meets with lethal resistance by others who claim to represent God. As prophet (and philosopher) Jesus is expected to explicate his views and to point out the failures of other groups to maintain covenant loyalty.

The discourse level and the story level are complementary. This is true for a story level derived from biographies and from Matthew's use of the Old Testament. The narrative process guides the reader to an understanding that Jesus is the model for godly living that stands in conformity with the Old Testament story. In the life of the individual (Socratic paradigm) we see the life of the group (Old Testament story). The expectation of conflict is part of both stories and is revealed through the discourse level of the text. Chapter Three examines substantive differences and how the conflict builds

¹⁰⁴ Cf. France, *Matthew*, 209.

between Jesus and the leaders of Israel at the discourse level in a manner that makes the story level more explicit.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CONFLICT BUILDS

A. Introduction

Purpose

I argued in chapter two that reasonable and meaningful expectations of conflict are derived from comparative biographies and from Matthew's use of the Old Testament. This argument draws on genre criticism's assumption that an audience's reading of any given text involves comparisons with other texts. The expectations of conflict drawn from this comparative activity are fairly broad and are either confirmed or denied in reading the text at hand. There are some conflict patterns more closely associated with political figures and other patterns more closely associated with philosophers. Political figures are involved in the acquisition and maintenance of power. Philosophical figures are involved in a variety of issues that occasionally bring them into conflict about appropriate social order. Philosophers struggle with various opponents including former students, other philosophical positions, and civil authorities. The audience is cued early in Matthew's narrative, partially through the use of the Old Testament, to expect a mixture of these two paradigms. It is necessary to show in this chapter how these expectations are developed in Matthew's narrative in such a way as to be comprehensible to a general audience.

Conflict associated with the paradigm of a political figure, presented in the previous chapter, finds expression in the episodes between Jesus and the leaders of Israel.¹ Implicit references to Jesus as ruler can be found after the birth *topos* in the

¹ See note 1 in the Introduction. This chapter discusses the leaders primarily as a homogeneous group as presented by Matthew. It stimulates the thought that an audience that knew the various groups were being lumped together indiscriminately might

charge that Jesus cast out demons by the prince of demons (9:34; 12:24-37), and in Jesus' claim to be Lord of the Sabbath (12:2-8). In close narrative proximity is the question voiced by the crowd about whether Jesus is the Son of David (12:23).

Interestingly, by this point in the narrative tensions have already risen to the point where the scheme to destroy Jesus is initiated (12:14). Yet, direct references to the Davidic royal lineage are connected to the conflict later as brackets to the temple episode (21:15-16; 22:42-45). This episode occurs at significant narrative distance from that earlier point at which irrevocable differences were established. The paradigm of political conflict is, therefore, in itself insufficient to account for the level of animosity between Jesus and his opponents. The model of prophet or philosopher is more useful to understand the conflict in Mt 4-23.² This leads us to examine the manner in which each participant is praised or vilified and to develop an understanding of the topics that separate them.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how conflict builds in the episodes between Jesus and the leaders of Israel up until Mt 23 and forms a coherent and consistent pattern that supports the argument that Mt 23 is a unified passage understandable to a broad audience in terms of the narrative development. The dynamics and topics of each episode will be examined. The goal is to construct a summary of these elements that can be compared to Mt 23. Analytical tools appropriate

quickly notice that the main distinction lay between Jesus and all who did not accept the authority of Jesus. On the development of characters by the reader see John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992).

² Johnson convincingly argues that the "slander of the NT is typical of that found among rival claimants to a philosophical tradition and is found as widely among Jews as among other Hellenists"; Luke Timothy Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," *JBL* 108, no. 3 (1989): 429.

to this goal are necessary. A brief description of the nature of the material guides the selection. First, the episodes are situated within a biography. This means that the choice should be made with thought given to the way biography shapes the episodes, in contrast with philosophical discourses and other forms of writing. Second, the biographical narrative treats the episodes as ad hoc conflicts during the course of Jesus' preaching, teaching and other activities. The conflicts are not school scenes, extended philosophical discourses, nor official legal proceedings; but they do incorporate direct speech rather than indirect speech. Third, the conflicts are linked to the plot line that takes Jesus to the cross. This is different from philosophical biographies that use more indirect speech, use conflict to develop character traits and are not as much in service of a plot. Fourth, scripture and its interpretation play a prominent role in the conflicts. In summary, an analytical tool is needed that can operate within the ad hoc nature of conflict that incorporates direct speech in biographical narrative, that facilitates our understanding of the dynamics of conflict within the plot and that acknowledges the use of scripture as a key component of conflict. Genre criticism sets broad expectations but is too blunt an instrument to help with the small units of direct speech. Narrative criticism focuses on analysis of plot and character and does not provide an adequate tool to work with direct speech. We will be at a loss to understand the depth and complexity of the conflict if we ignore the speeches of the characters. The rhetorical traditions do offer a means to analyze direct speech and are complementary to genre and narrative analyses.

Methodology

The syllogism, or rather its truncated rhetorical form in the enthymeme, is an analytical tool that yields valuable results for understanding conflict in Matthew. Forms

of the syllogism are found both in the biographical use of the chreia and in Rabbinic halakhic material.³ George Kennedy describes logical argumentation in the Sermon on the Mount, particularly noting the use of the enthymeme.⁴ William Kurz argues for the use of enthymeme in Luke-Acts.⁵ Mary Ann Tolbert demonstrates the full syllogistic forms that can be derived from enthymemes in Mark.⁶ Richard Vinson charts what he believes to be all the enthymemes found in the synoptic gospels.⁷

Aristotle's The Art of Rhetoric⁸ and the Ad Herennium⁹ describe well known rhetorical features of public oratory. Aristotle claims that an orator who wishes to persuade an audience employs as logical proofs "either examples or enthymemes and nothing else."¹⁰ Logical argumentation, and hence these standard rhetorical devices, are

³ Jeffrey Walker argues that the enthymeme was also a fundamental component of "lyric" and as such would be even more pervasive than others recognize; Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 154-84.

⁴ George Alexander Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984), 39-63.

⁵ William Kurz, S.J., "Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke-Acts," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 171-95.

⁶ Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 248-57.

⁷ Richard B. Vinson, "A Comparative Study of the Use of Enthymemes in the Synoptic Gospels," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A Kennedy*, ed. Duane F. Watson (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 119-41. For a different treatment of enthymemes see Vernon K. Robbins, "Enthymemic Texture in the Gospel of Thomas," in *SBL 1998 Seminar Papers: Part One* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), 343-66.

⁸ Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. J. H. Freese, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1926).

⁹ *Ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1954).

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.2.8.

part of judicial and deliberative rhetoric, i.e., they have to do with past or future events and actions. One should expect to find in judicial rhetoric discussions of the nature of the law and past events, and the identity and character of both the defendant and the accusers.¹¹ This is the case with conflicts in Matthew.¹²

Examples are inductive and draw from specific instances. Enthymemes are deductive and draw from the general or universal. Aristotle highlights the enthymeme over the example and displays his penchant for dialectical and deductive reasoning to ground both truth and opinion.¹³ Preference for deductive reasoning from universals

¹¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.10.1-2.15.33.

¹² Philip H. Kern reminds us that the writings of the New Testament are not speeches and that they do not conform to the expectations of high literature; Philip H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle*, SNTS Monograph Series, 101 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998). As such one must be cautious when using rhetorical handbooks for analysis of New Testament texts. On the other hand, the speeches in Matthew, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, are depicted as public orations and as such are different than the epistolary form analyzed by Kern.

¹³ George Kennedy remarks concerning Aristotle's *The Art of Rhetoric* that "[t]he choice of proof by examples rather than by enthymeme is partly a matter of style (1356b18-27), but we are told later that proof by example is more suitable to deliberative than to judicial oratory, since we must predict the future on the basis of our knowledge of the past (1368a29-31)." He later adds that, "Aristotle says that he favors using enthymemes where possible, and then adding an example as a kind of witness to the point. If the speaker puts examples first, he needs a number of them to establish their general implication (1394a9-16). But the orator might say, 'Dionysius should not be given a bodyguard, for one who seeks a bodyguard seeks tyranny. If you don't believe me, look at the example of Pisistratus.' Here a general observation, which could have been established by induction, is stated by an enthymeme, its premises being regarded as generally accepted, and then a specific example is added to clinch the point. In a passage in the *Prior Analytics* (2.23.68b30-69a19) Aristotle recognizes that proof from example can take syllogistic form, and elsewhere in the *Rhetoric* (2.25.1402b14) he makes example one of the kinds of premises on which enthymemes are built." George Alexander Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1980), 70.

may be indicative of the culture of his day¹⁴ or was a necessity imposed by the rhetorical situation. The purpose of enthymemes is to persuade and therefore they should be brief. They may be based on generally accepted knowledge¹⁵, i.e. probabilities, because the purpose is to persuade (belief) and not to establish a branch of science (knowledge). The major premise of the syllogism is based on generally accepted knowledge or belief. Reconstructing the full syllogism that stands behind the enthymeme reveals generally accepted knowledge. The minor premise¹⁶ is another probability that when placed

¹⁴ "Once learned, the application of argument from probability was extensive. The technique was developed by Aristotle into a complete system of rhetorical demonstration through the use of the two formal devices of enthymeme and example. It achieved persuasion with a minimum of effort on the part of the orator and had about it two characteristics which appealed to the Greeks, verbal agility and seeming dependence upon a law of nature that given certain facts predictable results follow. This was a comforting thought in a world long ruled by arbitrary powers and now just beginning to find justice in the authority of Zeus, to predict the regular occurrence of astronomical phenomena, and to observe a pattern in social and political history. Furthermore, in practice probability appeared safer than witnesses who were only too easily corrupted, for probabilities could not be bought." George Alexander Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1963), 32.

¹⁵ "Deductive scientific proof takes the form of the syllogism: 'all men are mortal (major premise); Socrates is a man (minor premise); therefore, Socrates is mortal (conclusion).' Deductive rhetorical proof takes the same form, but is called by Aristotle an enthymeme, an argument based on what is true for the most part: 'good men do not commit murder; Socrates is a good man; therefore, Socrates did not commit murder.' This is probably true, and the premises are probably good reasons why Socrates would have been innocent of a charge of murder; but there are individual circumstances when both premises, though generally true, might not justify the conclusion. The argument would then have formal validity, but would still be false. Brutus and Cassius, for example, were good men too." Kennedy, *Art of Persuasion*, 97.

¹⁶ Vinson, in "A Comparative Study of the Use of Enthymemes in the Synoptic Gospels," inappropriately treats every clause with a γάρ or ὅτι as a minor premise of an enthymeme. He offers no reconstructions to support his definition. He briefly describes an enthymeme as a syllogism with one term suppressed, but does not describe the characteristics of a syllogism. A vague notion of causality seems to be the basis for his notion of syllogism.

alongside the major premise produces something different¹⁷, i.e. the conclusion. The major premise may be a universal and the minor premise a particular.¹⁸

The enthymeme is a major component of the chreia. The SBL Pronouncement Group has been instrumental in demonstrating this feature.¹⁹ The chreia is a unit of

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.2.9.

¹⁸ "But since few of the propositions of the rhetorical syllogism are necessary, for most of the things which we judge and examine can be other than they are, human actions, which are the subject of our deliberation and examination, being all of such a character and, generally speaking, none of them necessary; since, further, facts which only generally happen or are merely possible can only be demonstrated by other facts of the same kind, and necessary facts by necessary propositions (and that this is so is clear from the *Analytics*), it is evident that the materials from which enthymemes are derived will be sometimes necessary, but for the most part only generally true; and these materials being probabilities and signs, it follows that these two elements must correspond to these two kinds of propositions, each to each. For that which is probable is that which generally happens, not however unreservedly, as some define it, but that which is concerned with things that may be other than they are, being so related to that in regard to which it is probable as the universal to the particular. As to signs, some are related as the particular to the universal, others as the universal to the particular." Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.2.14-16.

¹⁹ John E. Alsup, "Toward a Pronouncement Story Typology in Plutarch's *Moralia*," in *SBL 1978 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1978), 1-10; Øivind Andersen and Vernon K. Robbins, "Paradigms in Homer, Pindar, the Tragedians, and the New Testament," *Semeia* 64 (1994): 3-31; Alan J. Avery-Peck, "Classifying Early Rabbinic Pronouncement Stories," in *SBL 1983 Seminar Papers*, ed. Kent Harold Richards (Chico: Scholars, 1983), 223-44; Alan J. Avery-Peck, "Rhetorical Argumentation in Early Rabbinic Pronouncement Stories," *Semeia* 64 (1994): 49-71; Willi Braun, "Argumentation and the Problem of Authority: Synoptic Rhetoric of Pronouncement in Cultural Context," in *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*, vol. 146 of *JSNT Supplement Series*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Earl Breech, "Stimulus-Response and Declaratory: Pronouncement Stories in Philostratus," in *SBL 1987 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1977), 257-71; James R. Butts, "The Chreia in the Synoptic Gospels," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 16, no. 4 (1986): 132-38; Miriam Dean-Otting and Vernon K. Robbins, "Biblical Sources for Pronouncement Stories in the Gospels," *Semeia* 64 (1994): 95-115; Ronald F. Hock, "Comments on the Article of Vernon K. Robbins," *Semeia* 29 (1983): 97-101; Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric, Volume I: The Progymnasmata*, Text and Translations 27, Greco-Roman Religion Series 9 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986); Burton L. Mack, "Decoding the Scripture: Philo and the Rules of Rhetoric," in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of*

writing in school exercises that contains “a brief statement or action with pointedness

Samuel Sandmel, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn, Earle Hilgert and Burton L. Mack (Chico: Scholars, 1984), 81-116; Burton L. Mack, "Persuasive Pronouncements: An Evaluation of Recent Studies on the Chreia," *Semeia* 64 (1994): 283-87; Burton L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1989); Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); Paula J. Nassen, "Typology of Pronouncement Stories in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*," in *SBL 1977 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1977), 273-78; Paula J. Nassen, "The Pronouncement Story in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*: A New Classification," in *SBL 1978 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1978), 11-19; Rod Parrott, "Conflict and Rhetoric in Mark 2:23-28," *Semeia* 64 (1994): 117-37; Charles J. Reedy, "Rhetorical Concerns and Argumentative Techniques in Matthean Pronouncement Stories," in *SBL 1983 Seminar Papers*, ed. Kent Harold Richards (Chico: Scholars, 1983), 219-22; Vernon K. Robbins, "Pronouncement Stories in Plutarch's *Lives of Alexander and Julius Caesar*," in *SBL 1978 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1978), 21-38; Vernon K. Robbins, "Pronouncement Stories and Jesus' Blessing of the Children: A Rhetorical Approach," *Semeia* 29 (1983): 42-74; Vernon K. Robbins, "A Rhetorical Typology for Classifying and Analyzing Pronouncement Stories," in *SBL 1984 Seminar Papers*, ed. Kent Harold Richards (Chico: Scholars, 1984), 93-122; Vernon K. Robbins, "The Chreia," in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*, vol. 21 of *SBL Sources for Biblical Study*, ed. David E. Aune (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); Vernon K. Robbins, "Pronouncement Stories from a Rhetorical Perspective," *Forum* 4 (1988): 3-32; Vernon K. Robbins, "Introduction: Using Rhetorical Discussions of the Chreia to Interpret Pronouncement Stories," *Semeia* 64 (1994): vii-xvii; Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Robbins, "Enthymemic Texture."; Richard P. Saller, "The Use of Pronouncement Stories in Suetonius' *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*," in *SBL 1982 Seminar Papers*, ed. Kent Harold Richards (Chico: Scholars, 1982), 459-66; William D. Stroker, "The Pronouncement Story in Early Christian Apocryphal Literature," in *SBL 1978 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1978), 39-46; Robert C. Tannehill, "Synoptic Pronouncement Stories: Form and Function," in *SBL 1980 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Chico: Scholars, 1980), 51-56; Robert C. Tannehill, "Tension in Synoptic Sayings and Stories," *Interpretation* 34 (1980): 138-50; Robert C. Tannehill, "Attitudinal Shift in Synoptic Pronouncement Stories," in *Orientation by Disorientation: Studies in Literary Criticism and Biblical Literary Criticism. Presented in Honor of William A. Beardslee*, ed. Richard A. Spencer (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1980), 183-97; Robert C. Tannehill, editor, *Pronouncement Stories*, *Semeia* (Chico: Scholars, 1981); Robert C. Tannehill, "Response to John Dominic Crossan and Vernon K. Robbins," *Semeia* 29 (1983): 103-07; James C. VanderKam, "Typological Analysis of Intertestamental Pronouncement Stories," in *SBL 1977 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1977), 279-84.

attributed to some specific person or something analogous to a person”²⁰ used to develop the ability to structure material according to common types of argumentation, such as sayings, cause, converse, analogy, example and the testimony of the ancients. Robbins defines a chreia discourse as that which "concerns speech and/or action attributed to a specific person."²¹ The individual conflict episodes can be identified as chreiai. Chreiai had numerous functions,²² forms,²³ and manners of presentation.²⁴ However, the logic or argumentative texture is the focus of attention here.

²⁰ Theon, "Progymnasmata," in Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric, Volume I: The Progymnasmata*, Text and Translations 27, Greco-Roman Religion Series 9 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986), 201.16-18.

²¹ Robbins, "Introduction," xiv.

²² Alexander, drawing from Quintilian, Theon, Plutarch, Seneca, Xenophon, and Philodemus, suggests eight functions for chreiai. First, as *grammatike* they were school exercises in practicing declensions. Second, as *ergasia* they were rhetorical exercises in composition and dialectic including recitation, inflexion, comment, and objection, expansion and elaboration (cf. Robbins, "Chreia," 16-21; Robbins, "Introduction," xi-xiv; Theon, *Progymnasmata*, 210.3-6). Third, as *biopheleia* they are a useful means of compressing "a great deal of truth into very few words" and are thereby valuable for their moral function. Fourth, as *gnomic* they are compact wisdom. Fifth, as *ethologia* they provide a narrative presentation of a key point. This includes *typoi* (types), *egregia facta* (nobles deeds), and *bios* (lifestyle). Sixth, as witticisms the chreiai have little or no moral function, but are intended to amuse and entertain. Seventh and eighth, chreiai are used in polemic and refutation. Alexander, "Anecdote," 10-15. Robbins focuses on the moral function of attributed, as opposed to unattributed, chreiai when he states, "the attribution of a saying or act to a particular person displays aspects of life, thought, and action in a mode which integrates attitudes, values, and concepts with personal, social, and cultural realities. The people featured in chreiai become authoritative media of positive and negative truths about life. The 'authorities' transmit social, cultural, religious, and philosophical heritage into later historical epochs"; Robbins, "Chreia," 4. He also offers a classification system guided by deliberative, juridical and epideictic rhetoric noting the following functions: Display stories, Thesis stories, Exhortation stories, Defense stories, Praise stories, and Censure stories; Robbins, "Rhetorical Typology," 95.

²³ Robbins classifies chreiai into sayings and actions. Sayings chreiai are further divided into statement and response types. The statement type may or may not include a description of the specific situation that prompts the saying. The response type falls into four characteristic groups. First, a question is raised that may be answered with a simple yes or no. Second, a question is raised that requires additional information. Third, a

Argumentative texture appears when interpreters use rhetorical resources of analysis in the context of repetitive-progressive, opening-middle-closing and narrational texture. One of the most obvious forms of argumentative texture is logical or syllogistic reasoning, which produces what Kenneth Burke called logical progressive form (1931: 124; cf. Robbins 1984: 9-12). Logical reasoning regularly occurs in contexts where narrators attribute speech or action to specific people; thus discussions of the rhetorical chreia provide special insights for this kind of analysis (Hock and O'Neil 1986; Robbins 1983, 1985a, 1985b, 1988a, 1988b, 1993a; Mack and Robbins 1989; Mack 1990: 25-92). One of the most characteristic aspects of logical argumentation is the function of unstated premises in the discourse. Identifying and articulating these premises reveals aspects of the argumentative texture in its social and cultural environment that the narrator may never state.²⁵

The chreia presents arguments in both expanded and elaborated form.²⁶ However, regardless of the length, the logical form of the argument is syllogistic. The logic is designed to support or refute the question or assertion that initiated the chreia. Reconstruction of the fundamental syllogisms in each chreia enables us to build composite pictures of presuppositions held in common (at least insofar as Matthew depicts them as being held common) and issues dividing Jesus and his opponents in Matthew.

The use of the chreia does not limit study to Greco-Roman literature. There is evidence that the same analysis can be done with Jewish *halakha*, particularly in the form of exegetical midrash, as it is found in various literary and social environments,

question is raised that yields to an answer plus an explanation or advice. Fourth, a remark, not a question, is made that prompts a response; Robbins, "Chreia," 4-13.

²⁴ These include the maxim, manner of an explanation, witticism, syllogism, enthymeme, example, manner of a wish, symbolic manner, figurative manner, with a double entendre, with a change of subject, and any combination of the above; Hock and O'Neil, *Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, 88-93; Robbins, "Chreia," 13-16.

²⁵ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 58-59.

²⁶ The difference is the degree to which the chreia approximates the complete argument that includes: encomium/praise, thesis, rationale, converse, analogy, example, citation of authority, and exhortation; Parrott, "Conflict," 125.

e.g., the Dead Sea Scrolls, Mishnah, Talmud.²⁷ Legal analysis is suggested because several texts in Matthew dealing with scripture involve the question of how authoritative texts are interpreted and whether Jesus' actions stand within acceptable behavior. For instance, Jesus' practice of eating with tax collectors (9:10-13) implies the question of how purity laws are interpreted. Similarly, failure to observe the practice of hand washing leads to the criticism that he breaks a legal tradition (15:2-9). Interpretation of appropriate activities for the Sabbath appears in 12:2-8, 10-12. Divorce (19:4-9) and taxation (22:16-22) can be added to this list. Analysis of comparative legal material sheds light on positions taken on issues²⁸ and perhaps the means by which the

²⁷ The following are useful introductions to the development of Jewish Law: N. S. Hecht, et al., editors, *An Introduction to the History and Sources of Jewish Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 1-196; Peter Richardson and Stephen Westerholm, editors, *Law in Religious Communities in the Roman Period: The Debate Over Torah and Nomos in Post-Biblical Judaism and Early Christianity*, Studies in Christianity and Judaism (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University, 1991); Shmuel Safrai, "Halakha," in *The Literature of the Sages, First Part: Oral Torah, Halakha, Mishna, Tosefta, Talmud, External Tractates*, ed. Shmuel Safrai, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum Ad Novum Testamentum* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 121-210; Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ: Volume II*, Revised English, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar and Matthew Black (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 314-80.

²⁸ The Damascus Document has been presented as a parallel to Matthew; Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, 85-107. He cited it as a close comparison with Matthew as a foundational document for a marginalized group separated from a larger parent group. The Damascus Document includes both narrative and halakhic material. The narrative material is framed against "those who despise God" (CD I. 13, 16) and assumes that their own party is one that knows God because of the Teacher of Righteousness. Despite the apparent social parallels in Stanton's reconstruction, the halakhic material offers little in the way of providing a model for understanding how the legal conflicts work since the halakhic material is simply stated and not set within the narrative material. Other useful studies on the Damascus Document include the following: Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Document: An Interpretation of the "Damascus Document,"* JSOT Supplement Series, 25 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982); J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea* (London: SCM, 1959); Elisha Qimron, "Davies 'The Damascus Document,'" *JQR* 77, no. 1 (1986): 84-85; "Notes on the 4Q Zadokite Fragment on Skin Disease," *JJS* 42 (1991): 256-59; "הבנינים in the Damascus Covenant 15:1-2," *JQR* 81 (1990): 115-18; Lawrence H.

conclusions were derived from the authoritative text of scripture. A list of Rabbinical halakhic and aggadic interpretive principles is provided by Lieberman. In laying the foundation for understanding Talmudic rules of interpretation, Lieberman notes three tasks. The first task he labels hermeneutical/linguistic. This involves explaining *realia* in the text by means of 1) simpler Hebrew or Aramaic terms, 2) occurrences in other biblical passages where the meaning was more obvious, and 3) general knowledge, other languages, and customary usage. The second task involves reconciling apparent contradictions in the text, especially contradictions concerning legal issues. This task is based on the belief that the Bible is a whole and should be internally consistent. The third task involves extending laws into new situations. Lieberman notes three examples of the process of extension. The first example is the seven rules of Hillel:²⁹

1. Inference *a minore ad majus*
2. Inference by analogy (Gezerah Shawah)
3. Constructing a family on the basis of one passage
4. Constructing a family based on two Biblical passages
5. The General and the Particular, the Particular and the General
6. Exposition by means of a similar passage
7. Deduction from the context.

Schiffman, "The Law of Vows and Oaths (Num 30, 3-16) in the Zadokite Fragments and the Temple Scroll," *RevQ* 15 (1991): 199-214; Ben Zion Wacholder, "Rules of Testimony in Qumranic Jurisprudence: CD 9 and 11Q Torah 64," *JJS* 40 (1989): 163-74.

Continuing work on the Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly on 4QMMT, the halakhic text, offers another area for comparison. However, the concerns are significantly different given 4QMMT's concern with temple issues. 4QMMT does not rise to the same level of conflict as in Matthew and is apparently more of a letter than a narrative. It is questionable whether the audience's of Matthew's gospel would be familiar with many documents from Qumran, let alone a letter of such narrow interest. John Kampen and Moshe J. Bernstein, editors, *Reading 4QMMT: New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996); Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony, and the Penal Code*, Brown Judaic Studies, 33 (Chico: Scholars, 1983).

²⁹ Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theo Sem Amer, 1949), 53-54

The second example is Judah Hadassi's thirteen norms, for which Lieberman also assesses the link with Hermogenes' rules of interpretation:³⁰

a. Arguments: ἐπιχειρήματα

1. τόπος place
2. χρόνος time
3. τρόπος way (manner)
4. πρόσωπον person
5. αἰτία cause
6. πρᾶγμα fact

b. Executions, exercises: ἐργασίαι

1. ἀπό παραβολῆς from a parable or illustration
2. ἀπό παράδειγματος from an example
3. ἀπό μικρότερου from something smaller
4. ἀπό μείζονος from something bigger
5. ἀπό ἴσου from something equal
6. ἀπό ἐναντίου from something opposite

The third example is the practice of comparison (*synkrisis* [*sic*]), or analogy.³¹

For an example of the use of these interpretive rules in an examination of Matthew Sigal offers useful discussion of the following interpretive rules in an examination of Matthew: *gezerah shavah* (analogy of words), *hekish* (analogy), *syncrisis* (comparison), *kal vehomer* (greater and lesser), *kalal uperat* (general and particular), and the practice of making one part of the Torah inoperative by other Torah.³² He notes the tendency toward leniency where options existed between two alternative halakot. Pertinent rules included *koolah and humrah* (light and heavy = permissive and stringent) and *lifnat meshurat hadin* (beyond the boundaries of the law). On page 76 he comments on the use of this rule in Mt 23:16-22. Sigal's analysis is

³⁰ Lieberman, *Hellenism is Jewish Palestine*, 55-58.

³¹ Lieberman, *Hellenism is Jewish Palestine*, 59-62.

³² Phillip Sigal, *The Halakah of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), esp. 62ff.

helpful because comparisons in modern scholarship are more prevalent at the level of content than at the level of form. Content comparisons will be made in the discussion that follows, but the issue of logical form takes priority here.

Daube reflects on the marks of similarity between Greco-Roman rhetoric and Rabbinic halakha when he examined the following legislative and narrative forms that bear on the study of Matthew: 1) "ye have heard it said - but I say to you", 2) principle and cases, 3) precept and example, 4) public retort and private explanation, 5) Socratic interrogation, 6) a fourfold question scheme, and 7) the tripartite form of revolutionary action - protest - silencing of remonstrants.³³ His analyses are important because they moved beyond interpretive rules even though, as Lieberman points out, interpretive rules were more stringent for legal issues than for other issues in both Jewish and Graeco-Roman circles. He notes that a Rabbi who maintained that a certain law could be deduced from Scripture had to demonstrate that the words of the Bible really imply the ruling in question, although it does not state it explicitly. Apparent contradictions in the Bible had to be reconciled by more or less plausible, and not fanciful, means. New laws could be derived from Scripture by comparison with something more important, with something less important and something equal.³⁴ Daube demonstrates that the

³³ David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, The Jewish People: History, Religion, Literature (New York: Arno, 1973), 55-89, 141-74. Specifics about each form will be discussed as they are encountered in the chapter. See also Brigitte Kern-Ulmer, "Discourse in Midrash: Textual Strategy and the Use of Personal Pronouns in Halakhic Midrash," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: New Series*, vol. 13, ed. Jacob Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars, 1998).

³⁴ Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 58. He draws attention to parallel activity in the larger Graeco-Roman milieu. His assessment is that the tasks of the *rhetor* and the *grammatikos* are similar and in many cases the same. Similar tools were used in treating narratives, aggadah, dreams and oracles. Lieberman notes only a sample of interpretive rules including Examples, Mashal, i.e. parable or allegory or symbol, Paronomasia, Amphiboly, i.e. playing with homonymous root, Gematria, i.e. computation of the

gospel narratives reflect the stricter expectations for halakhic versus haggadic discussions even as the forms are adjusted to meet narrative goals. He states,

It was of the essence in the Rabbinic system that any detailed rule, any *halakha*, must rest, directly or indirectly, on an actual precept promulgated in Scripture. It must rest on it directly or indirectly: that is to say, there was no need for a *halakha* to be laid down in so many words, so long as it could be derived from some precept by means of the recognized norms of hermeneutics. . . . Historical data belonged to the province of *haggadha*. They might serve to inculcate moral lessons, general religious truths, wisdom; they might also serve to illustrate and corroborate a *halakha*. But they could not form its primary source.³⁵

Biblical precept is at the root of halakha, but this does not explain the varied narrative forms in which halakha is found. Daube notes in his discussion of "ye have heard it said - but I say to you",

There are striking differences between the Rabbinic form and the Matthean. If our method is correct, they must reflect the differences in setting; or in other words, any deviations in Matthew from the Rabbinic model must be explicable by his changed premises and objects. This is indeed the case. Matthew has adapted an academic form to his peculiar legislative purposes.³⁶

Halakha is subsumed within narrative in order to advance and elucidate the growing conflict in Matthew. Halakha advances Matthew's narrative agenda by clarifying key similarities and differences between the antagonists. Reconstruction of the halakhic arguments is important for our understanding of how conflict builds.

numerical value of letters, Substitution of letters, Notaricon, i.e. the interpretation of every single letter as the abbreviation of a series of words which includes acrostic, anagram, and breaking words apart; Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 63-82. Daube also contributes to the discussion of the relationship between Jewish and Graeco-Roman interpretive practices; David Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," *HUCA* 22 (1949): 239-64.

³⁵ Daube, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 68-69; cf. Schürer, *History*, 340.

³⁶ Daube, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 57.

Legal issues, however, do not account for all the points of conflict between Jesus and his opponents in Matthew. Some conflicts are about the character of the participants in the dispute.³⁷ However, the narrative forms described by Daube contain a common element. Just as halakha is derived from an accepted precept, so too the narrative forms utilize accepted premises as the fundamental building blocks. The conclusion drawn from those premises is what separates parties in the conflict, whether halakhic or otherwise. Daube's first three narrative forms explicitly draw the premises from scripture. The next three forms involve questions that attempt to force the respondent to reveal basic premises. The seventh form takes the revolutionary action as a premise of the conflict from which the opponents are drawing the conclusion that the action is wrong. The seven forms can be reformulated as chreiai. The implication is that Rabbinic halakha can have a parallel form to the Greco-Roman chreia. The process of logical deduction that is attributed to halakhic study finds an analogue in the narrative forms. Deductive reasoning is one thread linking Greco-Roman and Rabbinic material.³⁸

³⁷ Gundry notes that Matthew's treatment of scripture follows the targumistic practices by which he means that scripture is used to show Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy; Gundry, *Use of the OT*, 205-15. This is a useful insight for examining the fulfillment texts, but those rules are not helpful for how scripture is used in the conflict episodes.

³⁸ The following works draw connections between Jewish and Greco-Roman rhetorical forms: Alan J. Avery-Peck, "Classifying Early Rabbinic Pronouncement Stories." In *SBL 1983 Seminar Papers*, edited by Kent Harold Richards, 223-44. Chico: Scholars, 1983; "Rhetorical Analysis of Early Rabbinic Pronouncement Stories," *Hebrew Annual Review* 13 (1991): 1-23; "Rhetorical Argumentation."; Robert Berchman, "Rabbinic Syllogistic: The Case of Mishnah-Tosefta Tohorot," in *Studies in Judaism and Its Greco-Roman Context*, vol. V of *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, ed. William Scott Green (Atlanta: Scholars, 1985); Jack N. Lightstone, "Form as Meaning in Halakhic Midrash," *Semeia* 27 (1983): 23-35; Lou H. Silberman, "Schoolboys and Storytellers: Some Comments on Aphorisms and *chriae*," *Semeia* 29 (1983): 109-15; Rivka Ulmer, "The Advancement of Arguments in Exegetical Midrash Compared to That of the Greek ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 28 (1997): 48-91; Brigitte Kern-Ulmer, "Discourse in Midrash: Textual Strategy and the Use of Personal

Reconstruction of deductive logic in the form of the syllogism or enthymeme is certainly not the only means of analysis, but it does serve the current purposes when used cautiously as a heuristic device. The primary benefits of this type of reconstruction are that it yields assumptions held in common, points of divergence, and key topics that form the basis of conflict. Comparing these reconstructed elements in the conflicts in Mt 8-22 with Mt 23 will show the coherence and consistency of Jesus' conflicts with the leaders throughout Mt 8-23. It will also demonstrate that this consistency could be evident to a broad audience in the first century.

The remainder of the chapter reconstructs the enthymemes in each conflict chreia. In the reconstructions that follow terms that are suppressed in the argument are enclosed in parentheses. Scripture is indicated where it seems probable and appropriate. Scripture is italicized. The examples of syllogisms, enthymemes, and maxims given by Aristotle are not always the mathematically clean forms of reasoning that are associated with syllogisms in modern logic textbooks. The following reconstructions place priority on locating possible suppressed premises. Reconstruction of the opponents' view as an enthymeme works from the observation that their statements are either the minor premise or the conclusion. The statement acts as the conclusion when the narrated action of the chreia acts as the minor premise, as in 9:2-8. This procedure is justified because the action elicits the response and can thereby be held in a cause-effect relationship. The suppressed major premise is derived by conjecture from the minor premise and the conclusion. In the event that only a question is posited, as in 9:11-13 and 12:10-12, it is not possible to reconstruct a position.

Pronouns in Halakhic Midrash," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: New Series*, vol. 13, ed. Jacob Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars, 1998).

The reconstructions are based on Matthew's presentation of people, events and issues. I am not claiming that the literary reconstructions accurately depict the positions of reconstructed historical groups. That task would require additional comparative analysis that goes beyond the scope of this present study. The limitation within the Matthean text allows the use of Matthew's narrative comments as well as the direct discourse in the development of the syllogisms.

B. Reconstructing Enthymemes

The interactions to be examined involve situations in which Jesus is arguing with the leaders of Israel. This will exclude three instances where the leaders are a part of the discussion but the situation does not represent direct interaction between Jesus and the leaders. These three include John the Baptist's comments to the Pharisees and Sadducees in 3:7-12, Jesus' comments to the crowds directly and indirectly about the leaders (e.g. 5:17-20; 15:10-20), and the complex speech in chapter 23 which is the subject of the next chapter. The main part of this chapter will be an examination of topics and enthymemes. The full syllogistic format of each argument will be reconstructed in order to demonstrate how the suppressed premises provide significant clues as to the nature of the argument.

The conflicts between Jesus and the leaders can be divided into three topics:³⁹ Law/Scripture, Jesus' authority and identity, the leaders' character. These topics

³⁹The definition of "topic" varies within Aristotle's writing. Content matter such as law, war, and wisdom are called "special topics" in *Rhetoric* 1.4 and 1.9 as well as in the *Ad Herennium*. Aristotle remarks, "I mean by dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms those which are concerned with what we call 'topics,' which may be applied alike to Law, Physics, Politics, and many other sciences that differ in kind, such as the topic of the more or less, which will furnish syllogisms and enthymemes equally well for Law, Physics, or any other science whatever, although these subjects differ in kind. Specific

frequently overlap. A question that originally focuses on the law may be answered with an argument about scripture and/or about the character of either Jesus or the leaders. A question concerning the identity of the Christ involves a discussion of scripture. The following table represents the distribution of topics.

	Interpretation of Law	Identity and Authority of Jesus	Character of Leaders
9:2-8	X	X	
9:10-13	X		X
9:34		X	
12:1-8	X	X	X
12:10-13	X		
12:24-37		X	X
12:38-45		X	X
15:2-9	X		X
16:2-4		X	X
19:3-9	X		
21:15-16		X	
21:23-26		X	
21:28-32			X
21:33-41			X
21:42-43		X	X
22:1-14		X	X
22:16-22	X	X	
22:24-33	X		
22:36-40	X		
22:41-45		X	

Scripture as Topic

Matthew shows Jesus engaging in confrontations that involve scripture. The individual topics covered include sabbath, marriage and divorce, paying taxes and so forth. Four occasions are prefaced with the question "is it lawful" (12:10-13; 19:3-9; 22:15-22) or the statement "it is not lawful" (12:1-8). Another involves the question

topics on the other hand are derived from propositions which are peculiar to each species or genus of things..." (1.2.21). 'Common topics' apply more generally across subjects and are formal means of argumentation (*Rhetoric* 2.22.13-2.23.30 and *Topica*). The three topics listed here are more akin to special topics.

"Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" (15:2-9). The question, "Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (9:10-13) invites an interpretation of scripture as does the question about levirate marriage (22:24-33). Jesus' estimation of the greatest law is requested in 22:36-40. The topics are not developed systematically nor linked in a comprehensive framework. They arise, rather, during the course of Jesus' activities or as tests of his teaching. However, one element that binds them together is the charge, made explicit or implied in the structure of the response, that the opponents do not interpret scripture appropriately. The common problem is said to be that they do not understand the greater principles of scripture and thereby that they do not appropriately integrate their other concerns within these greater principles. In the discussion that follows this is the point that I wish to highlight and will not attempt to cover all aspects of the individual issues.

9:2-8. Reconstructing syllogisms that concerned the law shows the degree to which law and scripture is assumed as a basis for sure knowledge of God. The first conflict between Jesus and the leaders in 9:2-8 concerns both the law and the identity of Jesus. The context is the healing of a paralytic.

²καὶ ἰδοὺ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παραλυτικὸν ἐπὶ κλίνης βεβλημένον. καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν εἶπεν τῷ παραλυτικῷ· θάρσει, τέκνον, ἀφίενται σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. ³καὶ ἰδοὺ τινες τῶν γραμματέων εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· οὗτος βλασφημεῖ. ⁴καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν· ἵνατί ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρὰ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν; ⁵τί γάρ ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν· ἀφίενται σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν· ἔγειρε καὶ περιπάτει; ⁶ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας- τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· ἐγερθεὶς ἄρον σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου. ⁷καὶ ἐγερθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκόν αὐτοῦ. ⁸ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν τὸν δόντα ἐξουσίαν τοιαύτην τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. (9:2-8)⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The Greek NT texts are from Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, *The Greek New Testament*, (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart) 1983. The four variants in this passage do not materially

The leaders' statement can be turned into an enthymeme. Matthew uses a term related to enthymeme, ἐνθυμήσεις, to indicate their thoughts. This term can indicate general "thoughts" but also can indicate the awareness that the simple statement, "He blasphemes," carries hidden premises that need to be addressed. In this first enthymeme the underlying scripture appears to be the third commandment of the decalogue (Ex. 20:7).

(Major: Only God can forgive sins)

Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Minor: Jesus claims to forgive sins

Conclusion: "This man (Jesus) blasphemes" (i.e. claims God's authority)⁴¹

Jesus responds by refuting not their assertion about God, but their false conclusion that he himself does not have divine authority. Jesus' response relies upon an "easier-harder", or *qal wahomer*, argument.⁴² The issue remains whether Jesus has divine authority. The answer to this issue is the response to the charge of blasphemy. Luz misses this point when he claims that Matthew's audience has already accepted the premise of Jesus'

impact the following reconstruction. In v. 4 ἰδὼν is more appropriate with τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν than the variant εἰδὼς and *perhaps* emphasizes Jesus' awareness as a teacher. The reading ἐφοβήθησαν instead of ἐθαύμασαν rightly captures the dramatic recognition of authority .

⁴¹ Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 233. Matthew eliminates Mk 2:7b "Who is able to forgive sins but God alone?" that makes the connection explicit but this in no way changes the meaning in Matthew.

⁴² Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 103; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 164; Hagner (*Matthew 1-13*, 233) and Senior (*Matthew*, 104) assume that Jesus' statement and action is manifestation of divine activity breaking into the human realm. While this may be part of the function of the passage, it does not address the presence of the comparison between "easier and harder". It is not merely the case that the unseen divine realm is harder to grasp than empirical realities. Rather, the opposite is true. Healing is harder than forgiving because the former is verifiable. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, The International Critical Commentary, 2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 92.

authority and therefore would focus on the negative image of the scribes and the authority of the church to forgive sins. He derives this latter point from the statement that the crowds responded to the fact that God had given the authority to forgive sins to humans.⁴³ He takes the plural τοῖς ἀνθρώποις to indicate that authority has been given to many humans (i.e. the church) rather than the more obvious notion that they are reacting to the fact that God has given authority to forgive to any human, namely Jesus. The description of the crowd's response in fact serves to emphasize that blasphemy is the point of the conflict in the narrative because Jesus is claiming to have authority from God that is not recognized by the scribes. If Jesus has divine authority in one activity then he is cleared of the charge.

(Major: Only God has authority to heal)
Minor: Jesus heals the paralytic
Conclusion: Jesus has God's authority

The narrator supplies the conclusion in the description of the crowd's response in 9:8. God had given "such authority to humans". This chreia is not a casual issue of law, but drives at the heart of the key issue about how a human can act with divine authority in an arena that is viewed as being reserved for God.⁴⁴

9:10-13. The conflict in 9:10-13 involves social and religious demarcation.

⁴³ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, tr. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 27-29.

⁴⁴ Sanders argues that Jesus has done little to be offensive and certainly has done nothing that others would not be expected to do as well. He stated that presumption to speak for God did not amount to blasphemy, though it might be blasphemy to forgive one who has not confessed and made restitution. In reconstructing the historical Jesus, Sanders was not able to account for the validity of the form of the story in Matthew which is clearly about authority as evidenced in the narrative comment in 9:8. E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies*, (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990), 57-67; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 206-07, 273-74. See also the discussion below concerning table fellowship with sinners.

¹⁰καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐλθόντες συνανέκειντο τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ. ¹¹καὶ ἰδόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· διὰ τί μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίει ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν; ¹²ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας εἶπεν· οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ' οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες. ¹³πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε τί ἐστίν· ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν· οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς. (9:10-13)⁴⁵

The Pharisees appear to be concerned about the propriety of Jesus' associations at meals. Jesus' response is complex. His metaphor affirms that the social intercourse is appropriate because as a doctor works with the ill, so Jesus works with sinners. The sinners likely are those who the Pharisees believe have rejected the Pharisees' definition of appropriate religious behavior.⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that Matthew does not make a connection with either handwashing or food issues. Matthew keeps each of those issues separate. Jesus here attacks the implied judgment that this association with

⁴⁵ The reading ἐσθίει ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν sharpens the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees whereas the variant ἐσθίετε καὶ πίνετε, which may be an assimilation to Lk 5:30, widens the conflict to include the disciples who were also present and engaged in the same activity. The variant addition of εἰς μετάνοιαν to the end of 9:13 appears to be a scribal clarification of Jesus' ministry that refers back to 3:11.

⁴⁶ For a list of alternatives see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 102. Sanders argues that "sinners" is a term used by a group of those considered to be completely cut off from Israel. I agree with Sanders that this chreia does not concern purity but inclusion, Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 174-211. However, criticism is warranted of his position that attributes the cause of Jesus' actions to covenantal nomism; Allison, "Jesus and the Covenant: A Response to E P Sanders," *JSNT* 29 (1987) 72; James D. G. Dunn, "Jesus and Factionalism in Early Judaism: How Serious Was the Factionalism of Late Second Temple Judaism?" in *Hillel and Jesus: Comparisons of Two Major Religious Leaders*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Loren L. Johns (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 156-75. Luz makes the observation that a physician would likely be considered unclean even while he brings healing and by the use of this analogy Jesus counters the concern about purity in light of the greater possibility of healing sinners; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 33-35. The only specific reason given by Matthew is grounded in the citation of Hosea 6:6. Jesus eats with sinners and calls them, but beyond this there is no mention of acceptance or process of inclusion into either Israel or Jesus' group. The episode is framed by the contrast between their question and Jesus' response about knowing scripture.

sinners is inappropriate. Jesus' response is in the form of a maxim that forms the major premise. The conclusion is that the table fellowship is justifiable.

Major: Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick
(Minor: The righteous are well and sinners are sick)
Conclusion: Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners

The addition of a scripture quotation,⁴⁷ "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6), to Jesus' response forces a comparison between two demands of law.⁴⁸ It also alters the logic of the passage.⁴⁹ This may be reconstructed in the following manner.⁵⁰

Major: *I desire mercy and not sacrifice* (Hos. 6:6)
(Minor: I came to do what God desires)
(Conclusion/Major: I came to do [acts of] mercy
(Minor: Calling sinners [who like the sick have need] is an [act of] mercy)
Conclusion: I call [eat with] tax collectors and sinners and not the righteous

Jesus forces the comparison between two means of doing the will of God. "Go and learn what this means" does not mean that they misunderstand scripture, only that they have

⁴⁷ "But the Matthean version does not proceed in the manner of a rhetorical elaboration. Rather, the story is an expanded chreia containing an enlargement of the response (Theon, Hock and O'Neil:101). A type of argumentation available for elaboration, namely a citation of an ancient authority (Hermogenes, Mack and O'Neil: 176-77), has been embedded in the middle of Jesus' response, expanding the argument internally rather than appending an additional argument for a particular part of the chreia in the manner of an elaboration"; Dean-Otting and Robbins, "Biblical Sources," 97.

⁴⁸ Dean-Otting and Robbins, "Biblical Sources," 97-98.

⁴⁹ "An additional dynamic arises from the statement that introduces the quotation: 'Go and learn what this means.' This statement functions like the exhortation Hermogenes recommends at the end of an elaboration of a chreia (Mack and O'Neil: 176-177). Thus, the addition of the biblical quotation makes Jesus' response in the Matthean version begin with a thesis chreia and end with an exhortation, like the beginning of an elaboration without the intervening arguments and without the encomium at the outset. This form might be quite natural for an expanded chreia. The opening remark would function like the statement of the chreia and one or more additional statements would form an exhortative conclusion supported by a rationale that summarizes the meaning of the initial statement"; Dean-Otting and Robbins, "Biblical Sources," 98.

not synthesized it appropriately. His hierarchy of appropriate actions leads him into, rather than away from, table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners. The way to treat sinners is by showing mercy rather than by excluding contact with them whether for reasons of purity⁵¹ or their rejection of the Pharisaical position on laws. There is an ironic use of Hosea 6:6 because the reason for dissociating with sinners was to make one avoid impurity that would separate one from the ability to make sacrifices. The Pharisees' understanding of how to maintain the sacrificial aspect of the law, and thereby one's relationship with God, is challenged by another aspect of the law that demands mercy with the possibility of impurity that would temporarily prohibit sacrifice.

15: 2-9. The Pharisees seem to fully expect Jesus and the disciples to adhere to the traditions of the elders.⁵² This reflects their impression that he stands in a tradition very similar to their own. The similar question about dining protocol in 9:10-13 was asked to the disciples about Jesus. Here the question is asked to Jesus about the disciples.

²διὰ τί οἱ μαθηταί σου παραβαίνουσιν τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων; οὐ γὰρ νίπτονται τὰς χεῖρας [αὐτῶν] ὅταν ἄρτον ἐσθίωσιν. ³ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· διὰ τί καὶ ὑμεῖς παραβαίνετε τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ὑμῶν; ⁴ὁ γὰρ θεὸς εἶπεν· τίμα τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα, καὶ ὁ κακολογῶν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα θανάτῳ τελευτάτῳ. ⁵ὑμεῖς δὲ λέγετε· ὅς ἂν εἴπη τῷ πατρὶ ἢ τῇ μητρὶ· δῶρον ὃ ἐὰν ἐξ ἐμοῦ ὠφελῆθῃς, ⁶οὐ μὴ τιμήσει τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἠκυρώσατε τὸν λόγον

⁵⁰ Adapted from Dean-Otting and Robbins, "Biblical Sources," 99.

⁵¹ For a discussion of purity see Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 131-308.

⁵² A valuable comparison between Jesus and Hillel on the use of tradition and scripture can be found in the essays by C. Safrai, "Sayings and Legends in the Hillel Tradition," S. Safrai, "The Sayings of Hillel: Their Transmission and Reinterpretation," and D. R. Schwartz, "Hillel and Scripture: From Authority to Exegesis," in James H. Charlesworth and Loren L. Johns, editors, *Hillel and Jesus: Comparative Studies of Two Major Religious Leaders* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 306-62.

τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ὑμῶν. Ἱποκριταί, καλῶς ἐπροφήτευσεν
περὶ ὑμῶν Ἡσαΐας λέγων· ὁ λαὸς οὗτος τοῖς χείλεσιν με τιμᾷ. ἡ δὲ
καρδία αὐτῶν πόρρω ἀπέχει ἀπ' ἐμοῦ· ὀφθαλμοὶ δὲ σέβονται με
διδάσκοντες διδασκαλίας ἐντάλματα ἀνθρώπων. (15:2-9)⁵³

The struggle is between two competing charges of transgression. The Pharisees charge Jesus with transgressing the tradition of the elders (handwashing) and Jesus returns the charge that they make void the commands of God ("Honor father and mother") by those same traditions (Corban). The question put forth by the Pharisees and scribes can be fashioned into an enthymeme because a conclusion of wrongdoing is encased within the question.

(Major: The tradition of the elders dictates handwashing for meals)

Minor: Your disciples do not wash their hands when they eat

Conclusion: Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders

The response by Jesus involves using scripture against a tradition that in all likelihood developed from a reading of scripture.⁵⁴ Note that Jesus does not answer the question of why the disciples do not wash. He rejects the premise based on tradition because their use of the tradition yields conclusions that are in opposition to scripture.⁵⁵ By disposing

⁵³ Two variant readings in this passage struggle with the form of the commandment. The first adds σου to each parent to smooth the reading and clarify what is implied. The second adds ἡ μητέρα αὐτοῦ to the end of v.5 to balance it with the earlier part of the sentence. The variants τὸν νόμον and τὴν ἐντολήν in v. 6 would support the focus on law, but the text is well attested and the variants can be explained more readily as alterations.

⁵⁴Ex 29:4; 19:10-15; 30:18-21; Lev 8:6; 12-16; 16. See Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 39-41, 184-236.

⁵⁵ Kern-Ulmer analyzes the process of juxtaposing interpretative traditions in the form of a dialogue in halakhic midrash. One result of the dialogue is a better grasp of the primary theological principles (not interpretive rules) that guide the selection of scripture used to interpret other scriptures. The viewpoints may be expressed by named or anonymous persons. Matthew's chreiai are not parallel in the sense that there is no exegetical dialogue. Jesus' position is revealed in response to a statement or question made by others. Matthew is not carefully weighing numerous options in a public forum; rather, Jesus' responses are pronouncements that may or may not have been convincing

of the basis for the question and the accusation, he need not provide an answer. Rather than simply dismissing the charge, Jesus counters with the accusation against their use of the traditions of the elders. This moves the discussion slightly away from scripture and perhaps from even the question of the traditions of the elders. A characterization of the opposition's use of tradition is placed center stage. Jesus' charge is reconstructed as follows:

Major: *Honor father and mother, and He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die.*

Minor: (tradition) You say: If anyone tells father or mother, 'What you would have gained from me is given to God, he need not honor his father.'

Conclusion: You transgress the commandment of God for the sake of tradition. So, for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God.

Jesus shows that their use of tradition has enabled them to nullify scripture. The argument concerns contradictions.⁵⁶ According to Matthew, if the scribes and Pharisees claim to be interpreters of the law, then their own tradition should not contradict scripture. In contrast he quotes scripture against them (Ex 20:12; 21:17; Dt 5:16; Lev 20:9). The conclusion involves a repetition that emphasizes the serious nature of the conflict. They have not only transgressed the commands of God; they have also voided the word of God. Their law has superseded God's law. Their traditions, when not properly framed by more fundamental principles, are misleading. This charge is repeated in the citation of Isaiah 29:13. They are no different from those who led the people astray in the days before the exile.⁵⁷

in an actual Rabbinic debate. Kern-Ulmer, "Discourse in Midrash," 13. Cf. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 377-80; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 516-26; Senior, *Matthew*, 175-76;

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.23.23.

⁵⁷ Cf. Dean-Otting and Robbins, "Biblical Sources," 111-14.

12:1-8. Sabbath observance is the focus of the two conflicts in 12:1-8 and 12:10-

13.⁵⁸

Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἐπορεύθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοῖς σάββασι διὰ τῶν σπορίμων· οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπέινασαν καὶ ἤρξαντο τίλλειν στάχους καὶ ἐσθίειν. ²οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἰδόντες εἶπαν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ οἱ μαθηταὶ σου ποιοῦσιν ὃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ποιεῖν ἐν σαββάτῳ. ³ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε ἐπέινασεν καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ, ⁴πῶς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως ἔφαγον, ὃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἦν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν οὐδὲ τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν μόνοις; ⁵ἢ οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι τοῖς σάββασι οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τὸ σάββατον βεβηλοῦσιν καὶ ἀναίτιοι εἰσιν; ⁶λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζον ἐστὶν ὧδε. ⁷εἰ δὲ ἐγνώκετε τί ἐστὶν· ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, οὐκ ἂν κατεδικάσατε τοὺς ἀναίτιους. ⁸κύριος γὰρ ἐστὶν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. (12:1-8)⁵⁹

The chreia has the following structure in Jesus' response: arguments from example, analogy, comparison, and contrary with explicit wording from written authority, and a concluding rationale.⁶⁰ The logic of the leaders' accusation is reconstructed in the following way.

(Major: *Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy*)

Minor: disciples plucked grain and ate it

Conclusion: your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath

The leaders have equated the form of activity being engaged in by the disciples as being a transgression of the Sabbath law. Their definition of holiness included injunctions

⁵⁸ Cf. Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 6-23.

⁵⁹ The verb ἔφαγον in v.4 indicates that David and his men ate the bread, whereas in the variant ἔφαγεν limits the action to David. The rest of the sentence appears to indicate that all ate. The misunderstanding is likely about the narrative rather than a legal point since the sentence clarifies that the act was illegal for both David and his men. The plural form also points out that David led his men into the illegal act which is noteworthy in this context because the Pharisees draw attention to the disciples' illegal act. Their use of the term "disciples" implies an equal condemnation of the teacher who leads or allows his followers to commit illegal acts.

⁶⁰ Dean-Otting and Robbins, "Biblical Sources," 103. Cf. Parrott, "Conflict."

against different forms of work on the Sabbath.⁶¹ In reply to this, Jesus brings an example from biblical history (1Sam 21:1-6) and an analogy from cultic law (Lev 24:5-9; Num 28:9-10). It is noteworthy that he does not deny the need to keep the Sabbath holy, but that he redefines the holy activity by other scripture.⁶² The concerns are over legitimate exceptions to the Sabbath halakha and the related issue of "casuistic interpretation of God's word and will."⁶³ Jesus does not, in fact, rely solely on arguments about the Sabbath.⁶⁴ The arguments from example and analogy argue from precedent and are linked by the commonality of "bread" and the fact that a rule is broken for the sake of hunger.⁶⁵ There are two ways to reconstruct the enthymemes. The first develops the exception from scripture. The second makes a point about Jesus' identity. Both are implied in the text.

(Major: Laws can be waived for human needs)⁶⁶
Minor: Scriptural examples about David and priests
 (Conclusion: The disciples' action is lawful)

⁶¹ Schürer, *History*, 467-75.

⁶² Aristotle, *Topica*, trans. E. S. Forster, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1960), 1.15.

⁶³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 307.

⁶⁴ Cf. Senior, *Matthew*, 136. Davies and Allison point out that Matthew's argument does not have Jesus involved in "halachic minutiae" that would stand the test of intense Rabbinic debate even though the debate shows familiarity with the basic form of debate. Rather, the focus is on the "central ethos of the mother-tradition". Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 308; Daube, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 68-69.

⁶⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 308, 310-11. Luz observes that halakha cannot be grounded on an haggadic example as would be case if the example of David were used alone. The interpretive principle from the analogy is coupled with the conclusion from scripture that there is something that supersedes temple obligations; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 181-82.

⁶⁶ Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 310-13. Sigal argues that the *kal vehomer* is not a relationship between Jesus and cult but between cultic law and the

Major: *Scriptural example about the priests in Sabbath work*

Minor: Something greater than the temple is here

(Conclusion: The disciples' action is lawful on Sabbath)

The minor premise uses the proposition that something greater is present.⁶⁷ The implication is that if the first action is true, then so is the same action if the second actant is greater. The arguments from scripture both rely on exceptions to rules. The example of David provides a case where hunger took precedent over cultic rules. Jesus does not argue whether David's actions were justifiable; it is assumed.

So why does their [the priests'] action justify the disciples'? First, the priests prove that Scripture allows at least one exception to the general sabbath rule. Secondly, since the violation of the sabbath is done for the sake of the temple, this shows that the temple service takes precedence over sabbath observance; if then there is something which is greater than the temple (as 12:6 asserts), it follows that it too may take precedence over observing the sabbath.⁶⁸

Jesus challenges the priority given to Sabbath observance. However, he does not deny the need for either Sabbath or temple regulations. The addition of the quotation from Hosea 6:6 identifies the element "greater than" the temple. The neuter *μείζον* supports that it is mercy.⁶⁹ The disciples are hungry, but are not necessarily in a life-threatening

command to love others, the latter being more important. While I agree that the love command is that which is "greater than", Sigal too quickly dismisses the christological part of the passage. The love command is greater than the cult, but the question remains as to who decides when it is appropriate to set aside the one for the other. The final line, "For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath" establishes Jesus as the one who decides. If David was able to use the love command to set aside cultic norms, then the Son of Man, Jesus, can certainly do so as well. Sigal, *Halakah of Jesus*, 64.

⁶⁷ Aristotle considers "the more and the less" (*μᾶλλον καὶ ἧττον*) as a formal topic. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.23.4-5.

⁶⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 314.

⁶⁹ I am in agreement with Davies and Allison who come to this same conclusion. However, they add that Jesus was the greater law. They did not clarify how mercy and Jesus were both the "greater than" element; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 315. I am opposed to Senior's conclusion that "it surely refers to Jesus and, by extension, to

situation. Even so, mercy in the form of allowing them to pluck and eat on the Sabbath is to take precedence over Sabbath restrictions. The final line, v. 8, will be treated below since it concerns Jesus' identity.

12:10-13. The second Sabbath conflict is found in the following passage, 12:10-13. Whereas the first Sabbath conflict started with a statement by the leaders about the nature of the Sabbath, this second conflict begins with a question.

¹⁰καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος χεῖρα ἔχων ξηράν. καὶ ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· εἰ ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν θεραπεῦσαι; ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ. ¹¹ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τίς ἔσται ἐξ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἔξει πρόβατον ἓν καὶ ἐὰν ἐμπέσῃ τοῦτο τοῖς σάββασιν εἰς βόθυνον, οὐχὶ κρατήσῃ αὐτὸ καὶ ἐγερεῖ; ¹²πόσῳ οὖν διαφέρει ἄνθρωπος προβάτου. ὥστε ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν καλῶς ποιεῖν. (12:10-12)

The sole intention is to entrap. The question is about the law; the response implicates the leaders.⁷⁰ The logic of the leaders' question is the same as the previous statement about the Sabbath, except that healing has replaced plucking and eating. The question about whether it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath does not have a straightforward answer in biblical material.⁷¹ This provides an opportunity for Jesus to demonstrate his skills at halakhic debate; but his response is relatively simple. Jesus' question, "What one of

the reign of God he embodies and the community of disciples who act in his name"; Senior, *Matthew*, 137. Hagner also claims that the "greater than" refers to Jesus and the "special time" that he represented; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 329-30. The position that the "greater than" refers to Jesus reads v.8 rather than vs.7 as the answer to the charge of breaking the Sabbath. In contrast the Son of Man as lord of the Sabbath is the one who places mercy as the value higher than other Sabbath restrictions. The framework of Matthew's chreia shows that the Son of Man operates by scriptural principle and does not devalue Sabbath observance. At this point in Matthew's narrative Jesus is not being described as the one "greater than" David. Jesus is not being compared to David any more than he is to the priests. The comparison is based on their actions.

⁷⁰This is a form of the topic of turning upon the opponent what has been said against oneself. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.23.7.

⁷¹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 316-22.

you...?" assumes the precedent of his opponents' actions. Davies and Allison suggest that Prov. 12:10 and Deut. 22:4 perhaps provide scriptural rationale for the rescue of the animal. If this is the case, then Jesus is not merely relying on their actions, but points out their own interpretation of scripture in their treatment of animals. The logic of Jesus' pronouncement is based on the "greater than" statement.

Major: Humans are of more value (greater) than sheep

Minor: What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?

Conclusion: So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath

Their actions are not universal propositions, yet the premise relies upon the belief that their actions are appropriate and justifiable. The use of a "greater than" premise again in this enthymeme reinforces the implied charge that the leaders are bad teachers because they allow for the rescue of an animal while not allowing for healing a human on the Sabbath. The implication is that they allow the lesser while neglecting the greater. The final lines of the passage contrast Jesus' healing with the Pharisees' plot to destroy him. The cause of their animosity is not specified. It could be because Jesus, according to their definition, breaks the Sabbath⁷² or that he points out their own inconsistent interpretation of the law.

19:3-9. The question of divorce is raised in 19:3-9. Two questions are asked in an attempt to test Jesus' interpretation of scripture. It is difficult to determine with what the opposition might be attempting to trap him.

⁴ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ὅτι ὁ κτίσας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς; ⁵καὶ εἶπεν· ἔνεκα τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ κολληθήσεται τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. ⁶ὥστε οὐκέτι εἰσὶν δύο ἀλλὰ σὰρξ μία. ὁ οὖν ὁ θεὸς συνέζευξεν ἄνθρωπος μὴ χωριζέτω. ⁷λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· τί οὖν

⁷² Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 322; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 225-26; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 332-34.

Μωϋσῆς ἐνετείλατο δοῦναι βιβλίον ἀποστασίου καὶ ἀπολύσαι [αὐτήν];
⁸λέγει αὐτοῖς ὅτι Μωϋσῆς πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν ἐπέτρεψεν
ὑμῖν ἀπολύσαι τὰς γυναῖκας ὑμῶν, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς δὲ οὐ γέγονεν οὕτως.
⁹λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι ὃς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ
γαμήσῃ ἄλλην μοιχᾶται. (19:3-9)⁷³

The structure of the passage is as follows:

Narrative introduction

Pharisees' Question:

Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?

Counter-question using authoritative citation:

Have you not read that the one who made them from the beginning
made them male and female?

Proposition using authoritative citation:

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined
to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

So they are no longer two but one flesh.

What therefore God has joined together, let no one separate.

Pharisees' counter-question from authoritative citation:

Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce,
and to put her away?

Rationale that dismisses the Mosaic law:

Moses, because of your hardness of heart, allowed you to divorce
your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

Conclusion/Restatement of proposition:

And I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual
immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.⁷⁴

The counter question, "Have you not read ...?" acts as the premise for the response.

Jesus resorts to the creation account to address the question concerning divorce. The

Pharisees point out an explicit allowance for divorce, though the wording turns it into a

command.⁷⁵ Jesus summarily dismisses it on the basis that the allowance was made for a

less than honorable reason and implies that divorce was never commanded, only

⁷³ The most significant variants in this passage come in 15:9 concerning Jesus' conclusion about divorce, remarriage and the exception clause. The variants appear to assimilate to 5:32. Even as important as the variants are, they do not materially impact the main point that Jesus makes about a hierarchy of legal principles.

⁷⁴ Adapted from Dean-Otting and Robbins, "Biblical Sources," 106.

permitted. Once again he affirms a hierarchy of principles within scripture.⁷⁶ In this case an explicit citation is overridden by a more basic principle. The stiff injunction in verse 9 functions to drive home the point that their option leads to adultery. Rather than reading scripture for what is allowable, Jesus points out what they should desire.⁷⁷ Jesus stops short of the claim that divorce is not allowable, but asserts only that it leads to sin.

22:15-22. A different clash of laws is presented in 22:15-22.⁷⁸ While there are obvious political implications for the question and response about paying tribute, it is likely that at root the question centered on the first commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me."⁷⁹

¹⁶καὶ ἀποστέλλουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτῶν μετὰ τῶν Ἡρωδιανῶν λέγοντες· διδάσκαλε, οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς εἶ καὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ διδάσκεις καὶ οὐ μέλει σοι περὶ οὐδενός. οὐ γὰρ βλέπεις εἰς πρόσωπον ἀνθρώπων, ¹⁷εἶπέ οὖν ἡμῖν τί σοι δοκεῖ· ἔξεστιν δοῦναι κῆνσον Καίσαρι ἢ οὐ; ¹⁸γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πονηρίαν αὐτῶν εἶπεν·

⁷⁵ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 490.

⁷⁶ Gundry notes that the Pharisees appeal to Deuteronomy to qualify Genesis while Jesus did the reverse; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 379-80. Sanders rightly concluded that "we do see here the view that the Mosaic dispensation is not adequate. The prohibition shows that Jesus expected there to be a better order"; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 260.

⁷⁷ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, The International Critical Commentary, 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 13-15.

⁷⁸ Daube draws a parallel with the a Talmudic tradition of posing four consecutive questions in the order of (1) points of law (*hokhma* or *halakha*) as in 22:15-22, (2) 'vulgarity' (*boruth*) designed to ridicule a belief held by the opponent as in 22:23-33, (3) fundamental principles (*derekh 'eres*) by which one lives as in 22:34-40, and (4) contradictions between scriptural passages (*haggadah*) as in 22:41-46. Daube, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 158-69.

⁷⁹ Derrett argues that the conflict is best seen through the lens of Eccl. 8:2. His conclusion was that Jesus believed that payment of taxes to Caesar amounted to loyalty to God. J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Render to Caesar...", in *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 313-38.

τί με πειράζετε, ὑποκριταί; ¹⁹ἐπιδείξατε μοι τὸ νόμισμα τοῦ κήνσου. οἱ δὲ προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δηνάριον. ²⁰καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τίνος ἡ εἰκὼν αὕτη καὶ ἡ ἐπιγραφή; ²¹λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· Καίσαρος. τότε λέγει αὐτοῖς· ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ. ²²καὶ ἀκούσαντες ἐθαύμασαν, καὶ ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἀπῆλθαν. (22:16-22)

Jesus' enigmatic juxtaposition of two enthymemes leaves in question how fidelity to God and the other powers of the world is to be worked out.⁸⁰ The hostility of the leaders is masked in the first enthymeme but recognized by Jesus (v. 18).⁸¹ Ironically, their statement is illustrative of how Matthew has consistently portrayed Jesus in contrast to the leaders.

Major: (One who is true, teaches the way of God and cares for no one, does not regard the position of persons)

Minor: You do not regard the position of persons

Conclusion: You are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and care for no one.

The flattery that the Pharisees' disciples and Herodians offer Jesus indicates what they want him to do. They want him to have to choose between God and Caesar.

The Herodians were supporters of Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, and had come to Jerusalem from the territories ruled by Antipas (Galilee and Perea) to celebrate the Passover. Since Antipas held his power under Roman authority, the Herodians naturally favored payment of the tax to Rome. Though paying, the Pharisees shared the common Jewish resentment of the tax. Therefore the Pharisees and the Herodians personify the two horns of a dilemma: (1) if Jesus favors paying the tax, the Pharisees can destroy his popularity; (2) if Jesus

⁸⁰ Bruce concludes that rendering to Caesar could in no way limit the liberty of any Israelite and the priority is to make sure one is rendering due honor to God; F. F. Bruce, "Render to Caesar," in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. Ernst Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1984), 262. David Owen-Ball argues that while on the surface Jesus is proclaiming that paying tribute is sanctioned, the primacy of rendering to God overshadows the other responsibility; David T. Owen-Ball, "Rabbinic Rhetoric and the Tribute Passage," *NovT* 35 (1993): 1-14.

⁸¹ Mark Allan Powell, "Direct and Indirect Phraseology in the Gospel of Matthew," in *SBL 1991 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1991), 405-17.

opposes paying the tax, the Herodians can haul him to the Roman authorities under the charge of seditious teaching (cf. *Pesah*. 112b).⁸²

Jesus' reply recognizes the dilemma. A "greater than" comparison may be implied between Caesar and God, but Jesus is able to avoid the direct confrontation by stipulating that each requires a different form of honor. Coins belong to Caesar and humans belong to God.

Major: (Things that bear images belong to the one imaged)

Minor: A coin has the image of Caesar

Conclusion: Coins belong to Caesar

Major: (Things that bear images belong to the one imaged)

Minor: (Humans bear the image of God)

Conclusion: Humans belong to God⁸³

The text states the conclusion as "render to ..." which is in keeping with the question about whether taxes ought to be paid. If coins belong to Caesar, then one should render them when the tax is requested. As we have seen in previous episodes, Matthew shows Jesus addressing a more fundamental principle than the one that initiated the confrontation.⁸⁴ The question that is not answered is how to decide between competing claims of allegiance. It appears in this text that both claims of allegiance can be met simultaneously even while holding that allegiance to God is the "greater".⁸⁵

⁸² Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 442; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 272-73. This perhaps claims more than is known about the Herodians even though Gundry's comments fit the situation; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 212-13.

⁸³This reconstruction is adapted from Tolbert, *Sowing*, 251.

⁸⁴ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, 33b (Dallas: Word, 1995), 637.

⁸⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 216-17.

22:24-33. The point of the question posed by the Sadducees in 22:24-33 is to try to ridicule a teaching of Jesus. Even though scripture is only cited once, the Pentateuch is certainly central to the conflict.⁸⁶ The question hinges on the application of the levirate law of marriage.

Law: If a man dies, having no children, his brother must marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.

This is followed by the example and their subsequent query.

Example: Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh. After them all, the woman died.

Question: In the resurrection, therefore, to which of the seven will she be wife?

The enthymeme which might stand behind this example looks like the following.

(Major: A wife is defined by who "had" her)
Minor: All seven brothers had her
(Conclusion: She is wife of all seven brothers)

The implication is that marriage is defined in part by marriage, by intercourse, and in part by having children. Presumably, the question would have an easy solution if one of the brothers had been able to produce offspring. The levirate law makes the child the heir of the first husband. The problem lies in the fact that they have now all married her and failed to produce a legitimate heir. Jesus avoids the difficult legal question of defining marriage and responds by challenging their concept of life in heaven and the place of marriage in heaven. The definition of marriage does not need refinement because it does not exist in heaven.

(Major: A wife is one who marries)
Minor: In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage,

⁸⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 221-22.

but they are like angels in heaven
(Conclusion: She is not the wife of any in the resurrection)

Jesus takes the opportunity to correct the Sadducees' disbelief about resurrection by using scripture. Jesus' statement concludes with the major premise. The minor premise is an authoritative citation of scripture based on a consideration of the citation's context. The conclusion is left unspoken but draws together the narrator's comment that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection (v. 23) with Jesus' assessment that they do not know the power of God (v. 29).

Major: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Minor: God: *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*
(Conclusion: The dead are alive)

Jesus refutes their underlying assumption about the resurrection by a citation from the Pentateuch (Ex. 3:6), i.e., the portion of scripture they accepted as authoritative.⁸⁷

22:36-40. Finally, Jesus is asked about the most basic character of the law in 22:36-40.

³⁶διδάσκαλε, ποία ἐντολὴ μεγάλη ἐν τῷ νόμῳ; ³⁷ὁ δὲ ἔφη αὐτῷ· ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου· ³⁸αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μεγάλη καὶ πρώτη ἐντολή. ³⁹δευτέρα δὲ ὁμοία αὐτῇ· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν. ⁴⁰ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυσὶν ἐντολαῖς ὅλος ὁ νόμος κρέμαται καὶ οἱ προφῆται. (22:36-40)

His response does not appear to be an enthymeme of a discernible form. Jesus states the goal of the whole law.

Matthew's line harks back to 7:12b, and what he wrote there regarding the golden rule as being 'the law and the prophets' holds here too: the double commandment to love is not a principle from which all of the law's commands can be deduced, nor does it replace the Torah, nor is it the hermeneutical key to interpreting the law or for determining the validity or importance of different commandments. Rather, it is simply the most basic or important demand of the

⁸⁷ Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 444-47; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 637-43.

law, a demand that in no way replaces Torah but instead states its true end. Love the Lord your God and love your neighbour: all the rest is commentary. Matthew's text, in other words, postulates that the Torah is in harmony with itself: its twin commandments to love God and neighbour are at one with its other commandments; and the suspension of the law and prophets on the commandments to love simply means that all imperatives are to be performed for the sake of God and neighbour.⁸⁸

This summary of the law is appropriate given the way Matthew has presented Jesus' use and view of law. Most of the passages treated in this section have dealt with these two poles of the law. The metaphor of "two poles" does not imply that they are separate from one another. On the contrary, they are presented as intertwined. Jesus states, in agreement with what can be constructed of his opponents' position, that love of God is indeed the chief command. Jesus' opponents have erred by unlinking the love of God from the love of neighbor as if there were a way to practice holiness and to show devotion to God without having to take the impact on "the neighbor" into account. Healing on the Sabbath is not only acceptable but also desirable. Eating with sinners is preferable to maintaining social separation for the sake of cultic purity. A tradition that keeps one from financially supporting parents is inappropriate. The uses of scripture to divorce a spouse or to incite rebellion are inappropriate. In short, devotion to God that hurts rather than healing human relationships opposes the will of God. It is important to note that the summary of the law in these two commandments comes near the end of chapter 22 and the end of Jesus' dealings about the law. This passage summarizes the fundamental principles operating in all the passages examined in this section.

In each of the conflicts cited above, scripture was the central topic. Scripture is used elsewhere, as will be seen below, but it is used in the service of other topics. The

⁸⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 246.

two main features of these conflicts have been 1) the nature of the scriptural witness to a topic and 2) the inadequacy of the leaders as interpreters of scripture. Matthew depicts the reason that the leaders are inadequate in the use of lesser principles, rather than the "greater" ones, to guide their interpretations.

There appears to be little in the conflicts about scripture that would warrant the level of animosity exhibited by 12: 14: "And the Pharisees went out together and took counsel against him about how they could destroy him." An ancient reader might view these conflicts about interpretation of scripture as little more than philosophical debates. However, the conflicts also share the character of OT prophetic proclamations that accused God's people of abusing components of the covenant. Examples include Jeremiah's bouts with Pashur (Jer 20:1-6), priests and prophets (Jer 26), Hananiah (Jer 28), Shemaiah (Jer 29), and Azariah (Jer 43:2), and Amos' confrontation with Amaziah (Amos 7:10-17). It was necessary for the prophet to claim God's authority for the pronouncements offered. We ought not to underestimate the animosity that arose from competing factions that laid claim to God's authority. The serious nature of the conflicts would be heightened if the factions took seriously the commands in Dt 13:1-18 (esp. vv. 1-5) and 18:15-22 (esp. v. 20) to put the false prophet to death. However, our purpose here is not to ascertain whether the conflicts discussed above were severe enough to be the cause of Jesus' death. Sanders argued that they were not.⁸⁹ The next two topics seek to note features of conflict that involve justifying the character and authority of the proponent and slandering the opposition

⁸⁹ For a summary statement see Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 293.

Identity and Authority of Jesus as Topic

The first conflict between Jesus and the leaders in 9:2-8, as we have seen above, concerned Jesus' authority to forgive sins. A central issue concerned Jesus' claim on divine authority. The episodes will be treated in the order found in the text. Jesus' identity and authority as the topic of conflict is largely concentrated in the events at the temple in the last week in chapters 21-22.

12:2-8. The latter part of 12:2-8 restates the rebuttal against the charge of breaking Sabbath laws. In this second enthymeme it is important to remember that Jesus incorporated the premise that the something greater was present. I argued above that the "greater" thing was mercy.⁹⁰ However, we still need to account for the final statement about the Son of man as Lord of the Sabbath. In this enthymeme, the major premise draws from the previous conclusion that breaking portions of the law, in this case the Sabbath, was justified by the greater demand of the law for mercy.

Scripture shows that one commandment can outweigh another (cf. 12.5-6); and to this Jesus adds that the command to keep the sabbath, although it is worthy of observance, is subordinate to a greater law, which is his own person. That is, if Jesus' eschatological purposes come into conflict with sabbath law or custom, then sabbath law or custom will fare the worse.⁹¹

The minor premise is created in Jesus' final statement. The Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath because he is the one who is in charge of determining what constitutes a legitimate exception to the Sabbath law, in this case mercy. The conclusion Matthew states is that the leaders have charged Jesus and the disciples falsely because they did not recognize Jesus' authority to determine that the incident required mercy over sabbath observance. Matthew does not include Mark's statement in 2:27, "The sabbath was made

⁹⁰ See note 69 above.

for man, not man for the sabbath." This additional line would shift Matthew's focus on Jesus' authority to the question of whether sabbath observance had continuing value.⁹² Implicit in the conflict is the argument that Jesus has greater authority to interpret scripture than his opponents.

9:34; 12:24-37. Another conflict centering on the identity of Jesus occurs in 9:34. There is not a true interaction. The leaders merely comment on Jesus' action without any response from Jesus. The statement by the leaders can be turned into the following enthymeme.

(Major: One who casts out demons needs the authority of the prince of demons)

Minor: Jesus casts out demons

Conclusion: Jesus casts out demons by the prince of demons

The same argument is picked up in 12:24-37. In this second instance, the charge of being in league with Beelzebul is linked to the crowd's question of the identity of Jesus, namely whether he is the Son of David.

²²Τότε προσηνέχθη αὐτῷ δαιμονιζόμενος τυφλὸς καὶ κωφός, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτόν, ὥστε τὸν κωφὸν λαλεῖν καὶ βλέπειν. ²³καὶ ἐξίσταντο πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι καὶ ἔλεγον· μήτι οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ; ²⁴οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες εἶπον· οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβούλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων. ²⁵εἰδὼς δὲ τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πᾶσα βασιλεία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς ἐρημοῦται καὶ πᾶσα πόλις ἢ οἰκία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται. ²⁶καὶ εἰ ὁ σατανᾶς τὸν σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλει, ἐφ' ἑαυτόν ἐμερίσθη· πῶς οὖν σταθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ; ²⁷καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ κριταὶ ἔσονται ὑμῶν. ²⁸εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. ²⁹ἢ πῶς δύναται τις εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ἀρπάσαι, εἰ μὴ πρῶτον δήσῃ τὸν ἰσχυρόν; καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ διαρπάσει. ³⁰ὁ μὴ ὦν μετ' ἐμοῦ κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ μὴ συνάγων μετ' ἐμοῦ σκορπίζει. ³¹Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, πᾶσα ἁμαρτία καὶ βλασφημία ἀφεθήσεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἡ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται. ³²καὶ ὃς ἐάν

⁹¹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 315.

⁹² Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 315.

εἶπη λόγον κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ· ὅς δ' ἂν εἶπη κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ οὔτε ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι. (12:22-32)

The argumentation in this passage is more complex than any other passage. It is helpful in this case to show the structure of the larger pericope. The crowds question whether Jesus could be the Son of David in response to the healing of a blind and dumb demoniac (12:23). The Pharisees respond by ascribing the power to Beelzebul rather than to the Son of David (12:24). The question of identity and authority is not always raised when Jesus heals although it appears in 9:3 when he forgives and heals, and in the passage cited above when he casts out a demon. Jesus' response is a statement demonstrating the absurdity of the Pharisees' answer because it also implicates them with being in league with Beelzebul. The following enthymemes are derived from the questions posed by Jesus in order to demonstrate the logic of 12:25-29.

Major: (Anything divided cannot stand)

Minor: You charge that Satan's kingdom divides itself

Conclusion: Satan's kingdom will not stand

Jesus then turns the table on them. He notes that both they and their "sons" cast out demons. If Jesus' action is from Beelzebul, then so are their actions. Jesus then raises the other possibility that he casts out demons by the power of the Spirit of God.

Major: The Spirit of God casts out demons and represents the Kingdom of God

Minor: I cast out demons

Conclusion: The Kingdom of God has come upon you (in my ministry)

The dilemma posed for the leaders is that if Jesus is God's agent, then they must be either for or against him (12:30). Jesus claims the same power that they have. He is forcing them to acknowledge, at a minimum, that he has the same authority as they do. The cost of opposition is great (12:31-32). Sin and blasphemy, even words against the Son of Man, can be forgiven. False attribution and rejection of the work of the Spirit

will not be forgiven. Verses 31 and 32 are parallel with the slight change of “sin and blasphemy” to “a word against the Son of Man” as the forgivable act.

31a Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men

31b A word against the Spirit will not be forgiven

32a A word against the Son of man will be forgiven

32b A word against the Holy spirit will not be forgiven⁹³

The lengthy but sharp exchange pointedly makes the case about the serious nature of the question of Jesus' identity. Opposition to Jesus is opposition to God. Matthew is not indicating that exorcism in itself is a sign of the kingdom. Rather, the passage is about authority. The passage hinges on the Pharisees' attribution of authority to Beelzebul. This affords Jesus the opportunity to challenge the Pharisees' rejection of him.

The threat of judgment is given in 12:33-37. Jesus uses the metaphor of fruit-bearing trees to set the opposites of doing either good or evil.

³³ Ἡ ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον καλὸν καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ καλόν, ἢ ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον σαπρὸν καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ σαπρὸν· ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ καρποῦ τὸ δένδρον γινώσκεται. ³⁴ γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, πῶς δύνασθε ἀγαθὰ λαλεῖν πονηροὶ ὄντες; ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς καρδίας τὸ στόμα λαλεῖ. ³⁵ ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ ἐκβάλλει ἀγαθὰ, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ θησαυροῦ ἐκβάλλει πονηρά. ³⁶ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶν ῥῆμα ἀργὸν ὃ λαλήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρα κρίσεως· ³⁷ ἐκ γὰρ τῶν λόγων σου δικαιωθήσῃ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν λόγων σου καταδικασθήσῃ. (12:33-37)

A tree can be either good or bad producing fruit of the same kind. The fruit determines the type of tree. This reflects the common belief that external actions are the true marks of a person's character. Jesus completes the analogy by indicating that the speaker's words are the fruit of their heart (12:34-35). The reality of judgment is leveled in 12:36-37. Their own words in 12:24, aligning Jesus with Beelzebul, have condemned them.

⁹³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 345.

In chapters 21-22, the conflict between Jesus and the leaders is intensified. Jesus enters the city as a king, but then takes on the role of a prophet and "declares divine disfavour".⁹⁴ One group after another, in rapid succession, comes before Jesus seeking to test him. Many of these encounters focus on the identity of Jesus and the character of the leaders. The few questions concerning scriptures have already been treated above.

21:15-16. The first and last conflicts in chapters 21-22, which take place in Jerusalem at the temple, concern the identification of Jesus as the Son of David.⁹⁵

¹⁵ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς τὰ θαυμάσια ἃ ἐποίησεν καὶ τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς κράζοντας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ λέγοντας· ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυὶδ, ἠγανάκτησαν ¹⁶καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· ἀκούεις τί οὗτοι λέγουσιν; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς· ναί. οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε ὅτι ἐκ στόματος νηπίων καὶ θηλαζόντων κατηρτίσω αἶνον; (21:15-16)

The leaders react negatively to the proclamation by the crowds and the children that Jesus is the Son of David. Jesus, on the other hand, acknowledges the appropriateness of the appellation.

Major: *Out of mouths of babes and sucklings you have brought perfect praise*

Minor: They are saying, Hosanna to the Son of David

Conclusion: This is perfect praise (i.e. justified action)

21:23-27. The leaders directly question the basis of Jesus' authority in 21:23-27.

In this instance, instead of answering directly, he silences his opponents by demanding that they first answer a question that they wish to avoid.⁹⁶

²³Καὶ ἐλθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν προσήλθον αὐτῷ διδάσκοντι οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ λέγοντες· ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς; καὶ τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην; ²⁴ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἐρωτήσω ὑμᾶς καγὼ λόγον ἓνα, ὃν ἐὰν εἴπητε μοι καγὼ ὑμῖν ἐρῶ ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιῶ· ²⁵τὸ βάπτισμα τὸ

⁹⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 134.

⁹⁵ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 608.

⁹⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 156-63.

Ἰωάννου πόθεν ἦν; ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἢ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων; οἱ δὲ διελογίζοντο ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λέγοντες· εἴπερ εἴπωμεν· ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, ἐρεῖ ἡμῖν· διὰ τί οὖν οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ; ²⁶εἴπερ δὲ εἴπωμεν· ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, φοβούμεθα τὸν ὄχλον, πάντες γὰρ ὡς προφήτην ἔχουσιν τὸν Ἰωάννην. ²⁷καὶ ἀποκριθέντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἶπαν· οὐκ οἶδαμεν. ἔφη αὐτοῖς καὶ αὐτός· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιῶ. (21:23-27)

Jesus uses the either/or question that would make the leaders commit themselves to acknowledging the true basis of power and at the same time revealing their inappropriate response to John the Baptist and to Jesus. This follows the form of Socratic interrogation.⁹⁷ The sequence begins with 1) a hostile question by an outsider (21:23b); 2) a reply is given in the form of a counter-question that is sufficient to defeat the questioner (21:24-25a); 3) the answer to the counter-question is given (21:25b-27a); and finally 4) the refutation of the original question is given by a refusal to provide an answer (21:27b). Their only possible response, short of self-condemnation, is silence. The dilemma is straightforward. One premise is that true authority is to be believed and acted on.

(Major: Authority from heaven is to be believed and followed)
Minor: John the Baptist is authority from heaven
Conclusion: John the Baptist is to be believed and followed

The problem is that they did not believe or follow John the Baptist and therefore would be condemned if they acknowledged his authority. Another premise is that the crowd is to be feared if they are countered.

(Major: People are to be feared if countered)
Minor: People believe John the Baptist is from God
but we believe John the Baptist is from man
Conclusion: We fear countering the crowd's belief about John the Baptist

⁹⁷ Daube, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 151-57.

These two premises pit the authority of heaven against the fear of the crowd. If the chief priests and elders side with the people, then they are condemned for not following John the Baptist. If they deny John the Baptist's authority, then they fear the repercussions from the crowd. They choose to state "We don't know" because of the need for public indecision, thereby allowing Jesus to refuse their attempt to check his credentials.⁹⁸ As well as any conflict, this episode demonstrates how the question of Jesus' identity is connected with the character of the leaders as those who reject Jesus. From this point on, Jesus is more proactive in attacking the leaders.

21:42-43. Jesus posits the following argument about his identity as he concludes a parable about his opponents (21:33-39). Jesus' identity and authority is connected with their action against him (21:42-43). Matthew uses Psalm 118:22-23 (*The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes*) as the major premise that substantiates God's vindication of Jesus as the cornerstone even though Jesus' opponents reject him.⁹⁹ The minor premise is their rejection of Jesus. The conclusion, by implication, is that the building, i.e., the kingdom, will be given to those who accept the cornerstone. Verse 45 indicates that the leaders react not so much to the proclamation of his identity, but to the charge that they stand in opposition to God.

22:41-45. The last direct conflict occurs in 22:41-45. Once again, it concerns the identity of Jesus as the Son of David.

⁴¹Συνηγμένων δὲ τῶν Φαρισαίων ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ⁴²λέγων· τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ περὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ; τίνος υἱὸς ἐστίν; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· τοῦ

⁹⁸ Carson, *Matthew*, 448.

⁹⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 184-86; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 622-24; Carson, *Matthew*, 453.

Δαυίδ. ⁴³λέγει αὐτοῖς· πῶς οὖν Δαυὶδ ἐν πνεύματι καλεῖ αὐτὸν κύριον λέγων·
⁴⁴εἶπεν κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου· κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν σου; (22:41-45)

In the first instance at the temple when Jesus is called Son of David in 21:15-16 Jesus let the words stand without qualification. This time, however, Jesus rejects their notion of the Christ as Son of David that relied on lineage. Jesus asks them two questions (42a-b) which they answer (42c). He then uses their answer to ask two more questions (43-45) which they can not answer.¹⁰⁰

(Major: Fathers do not call their sons 'Lord')

Minor: David said, *The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies under your feet*

Conclusion: Christ is not David's son

The major premise is that fathers simply do not call their sons Lord because the father would be Lord until his death. Jesus establishes a quandary based on cultural assumptions of status and honor. Unlike earlier encounters, in this one Jesus does not take the opportunity to identify himself. Matthew shows Jesus using the complexity of scripture to establish the identity of the Christ as something more than merely the historical-genealogical son of David.¹⁰¹ This question offensively posed by Jesus closes off the series of confrontations.

The arguments concerning the authority and identity of Jesus focus on the interrelated issues of his actions (ability to give signs, heal), his ability to teach, and his relationship to the expectations about the Christ as Son of David. Matthew portrays Jesus as one who has divine authority. His opponents reject this.

¹⁰⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 249-56.

¹⁰¹ Carson, *Matthew*, 466-69.

Character of Leaders as Topic

Matthew's characterization of the leaders has been touched upon throughout this chapter. It remains here to examine the remaining arguments about their character. The leaders are consistently presented as being more concerned about their traditional interpretations of scripture which focus too narrowly and neglect the more basic components of God's laws (e.g. 9:11-13 'desire mercy'; 12:2-8 'desire mercy'; 12:10-12 'treating man as greater than sheep'). In 15:2-9, they are even charged with making void the word of God and teaching false doctrine. In 12:24-27, they wrongly attribute Jesus' activity to the activity of Beelzebul. They are unable to discern God's actions. Jesus accuses the Sadducees of denying the power of God (22:24-33). They are accused of outright rejecting God in 21:42-43.

12:38-45. The remaining conflicts demonstrate that Jesus rejects the leaders and their way of thinking and living. Our earlier discussion of elements of chapter 12 showed how failure to recognize Jesus as God's agent led to Jesus' condemnation of the leaders. Conflict of this nature is abundant in chapter 12. In 12:38-45, Jesus compares and contrasts the leaders to notorious groups from the past.

³⁸Τότε ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ τινες τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων λέγοντες· διδάσκαλε, θέλομεν ἀπὸ σοῦ σημεῖον ἰδεῖν. ³⁹ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ, καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ τοῦ προφήτου. ⁴⁰ὡςπερ γὰρ ἦν Ἰωνᾶς ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας, οὕτως ἔσται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας. ⁴¹ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτήν, ὅτι μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἰωνᾶ ὧδε. ⁴²Βασίλισσα νότου ἐγερθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτήν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Σολομῶνος ὧδε. ⁴³Ὅταν δὲ τὸ ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα ἐξέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, διέρχεται δι' ἀνύδρων τόπων ζητοῦν ἀνάπαυσιν καὶ οὐχ εὕρισκει. ⁴⁴τότε λέγει· εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου ἐπιστρέψω ὅθεν ἐξῆλθον· καὶ ἐλθὼν εὕρισκει σχολάζοντα σεσαρωμένον καὶ κεκοσμημένον. ⁴⁵τότε πορεύεται καὶ παραλαμβάνει μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ ἑπτὰ ἕτερα πνεύματα πονηρότερα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ εἰσελθόντα

κατοικεῖ ἐκεῖ· καὶ γίνεται τὰ ἔσχατα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκείνου χείρονα τῶν πρώτων. οὕτως ἔσται καὶ τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ πονηρᾷ. (12:38-45)

Major: An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign
but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah.

Minor: You seek a sign

(Conclusion: You are an evil generation)

Since the conclusion is that they are an evil generation, then they will receive the sign of Jonah. This sign is explained in 12:40, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." In this instance, it is safe to assume that the leaders would dispute both the major premise and the conclusion. Jesus turns their request for a sign into a teaching about himself (i.e., the Son of Man will be in tomb as long as Jonah was in the fish). The more central issue is that he turns their request into an opportunity to contrast their hardness of heart with the repentance and seeking of outsiders. The remaining arguments concern their impending judgment based on the 'greater than' comparison.

Major: Something greater than Jonah is here

Minor: Nineveh repented when Jonah preached

(Conclusion: How great will be your judgment for not repenting at my preaching)

Major: Something greater than Solomon is here

Minor: Queen of the South came to hear Solomon's wisdom

(Conclusion: How great will be your judgment for not heeding my wisdom)

The example that is given in 12:43-45 follows neatly from the preceding and concerns one who apparently has been prepared to receive wisdom. The unclean spirit has departed from a man who has then put the house, i.e., his life, in order by cleaning it and setting everything straight. The orderliness of the house belies its emptiness, the fact that no one, presumably not even God, lives there. The orderliness and absence of a

proper occupant makes the house an inviting abode for even more evil spirits. Jesus ridicules and condemns the leaders as being this man.¹⁰²

16:1-4. Signs are again the subject of 16:1-4. The leaders are able to read simple physical signs, but are unable to interpret more meaningful signs of God's activity.

Καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ Σαδδουκαῖοι πειράζοντες ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν σημεῖον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπιδείξαι αὐτοῖς. ²ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· [ὀψίας γενομένης λέγετε· εὐδία, πυρράζει γὰρ ὁ οὐρανός· ³καὶ πρῶί· σήμερον χειμών, πυρράζει γὰρ στυγνάζων ὁ οὐρανός. τὸ μὲν πρόσωπον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ γινώσκετε διακρίνειν, τὰ δὲ σημεῖα τῶν καιρῶν οὐ δύνασθε·] ⁴γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ, καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ. καὶ καταλιπὼν αὐτοὺς ἀπῆλθεν. (16:1-4).¹⁰³

Davies and Allison offer the following outline of the passage.¹⁰⁴

- I. The Pharisees come, tempt Jesus, and question him (1)
- II. The Response of Jesus (2-4b)
 - A. On reading the weather (2b-3a)
 - 1. You can predict fair weather (2b)
 - 2. You can predict foul weather (3a)
 - B. On signs of the times (3b-c)
 - 1. You can interpret the sky (3b)
 - 2. You cannot interpret the signs of the times (3c)
 - C. On this generation and its fate (4a-b)
 - 1. It seeks a sign (4a)
 - 2. None save that of Jonah will be given it (4b)

¹⁰² Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 246-47; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 356-57; Senior, *Matthew*, 144; *contra* Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 359-60.

¹⁰³ Metzger writes concerning 2b-3: "The external evidence for the absence of these words is impressive, including \aleph B f^{13} 157 *al* syr^{c,s} cop^{sa, bo mss} arm Origen and according to Jerome, most manuscripts known to him (though he included the passage in the Vulgate). The question is how one ought to interpret this evidence. Most scholars regard the passage as a later insertion from a source similar to Lk 12.54-56, or from the Lukan passage itself, with an adjustment concerning the particular signs of the weather. On the other hand, it can be argued (as Scrivener and Lagrange do) that the words were omitted by copyists in climates (e.g. Egypt) where red sky in the morning does not announce rain." Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Corrected ed (Stuttgart: UBS, 1971), 41.

¹⁰⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 2, 577.

Jesus notes their ability to read signs, but their inability to read the truly important signs. Matthew has constructed the narrative to reveal that the leaders had in fact witnessed Jesus' activities. Matthew does not make explicit whether the leaders are present at the feeding of the four thousand in the previous passage. However, the reader is presented with the irony of the feeding with the request for a new sign. The leaders refused to accept Jesus' acts as signs of God's activity, e.g., 9:34 and 12:24-37. Jesus states in 16:4 that the sign of Jonah will be that the Son of man will be in the earth the same duration as Jonah was in the fish. This is a repetition of 12:40. The reader is able to recognize this as a reference to the tomb, but it would be cryptic to the leaders during the course of the conversation.

21:28-32. The final three conflicts involve the use of the example, in the form of parables, to illustrate the failure of the leaders to accept Jesus and their impending rejection by God. The parable of two sons in 21:28-32 follows the question about Jesus' authority that Jesus answers by posing a question they do not want to answer. The parable describes a father who asks both of his sons to go work in the vineyard. The first declines, but then goes, whereas the second agrees to go but does not. The question that Jesus asks concerns knowing and doing the will of the father. Jesus' audience, presumably the chief priests and Pharisees as indicated in 21:45, agrees with the appropriateness of the first son's actions. Jesus uses their answer to accuse them of being like the second son. The reason is drawn from their response to John the Baptist. Matthew characterizes them as those who claim to follow God, but who do not really follow because they do not heed John the Baptist's call to repent. They fail to accept both Jesus' and John's authority. They are contrasted to undesirable groups who by their lifestyle show that they, like the first son, say "I will not" to God but who do eventually

repent and accept God. The contrast with the unclean is a stinging rebuke. Jesus challenges their view of who is in right relationship with God and the basis for that relationship.

21:33-41. The parable of the vineyard in 21:33-41 pictures the rejection of the leaders for their rejection of Jesus. He tells a parable of a vineyard (21:33-39) that is reminiscent of Isaiah 5. In this case it is not the vineyard but the tenants who refuse to yield the fruit of the vineyard to the owner. They kill the servants and the heir in order to be able to inherit the vineyard. Surprisingly, they seem to take no account of the owner. Jesus gets the leaders to condemn themselves in their answer to his question of what the owner ought to do (21:40-41). At that point he mocks them by asking, “Have you never read?” and quotes Ps 118:22 about the stone rejected being made into the chief cornerstone. The nature of the expected Christ is that he will be rejected, apparently because of wrong expectations. Repeating the punishment that they have stipulated, he pointedly condemns them (21:43) for being at odds with God by rejecting him. He challenges their claim to rights on the kingdom of God. Even if the son is killed, the real danger comes from the Lord of the vineyard.

22:1-14. This subversion of their beliefs is repeated in 22:1-14. The parable of the marriage feast is similar to the parable of the vineyard. The first part of the parable (22:2-7) involves a marriage feast to which the invited guests are refusing to go now that the feast is prepared. The guests demonstrate self-interest as well as contempt for the king. New guests are invited from all quarters (22:8-10). A guest who is found to be without appropriate wedding garments receives an extreme punishment in 22:11-13. If the question is thought to emphasize “How did you get in?” coupled with 22:14 “Many are called but few are chosen”, then the reader might be led to question the means by

which one is invited to the feast. The parable makes it clear that the king has invited all who would come. The stress in the question is on “without a wedding garment”. This is repeated in both verses 12 and 13. Attendance at the marriage feast without appropriate garments signifies contempt for the host by not recognizing the occasion or the joy that it should bring. The guest apparently wants to eat at the table without acknowledging the reason for the feast. This interpretation places the parable in line with the preceding ones. The leaders have had the nerve to show up at the king’s feast without acknowledging the son. The parables are consistent in framing the opposition of the leaders to God’s purpose as present in the son, Jesus.

C. Summary

Reconstructing the full syllogistic form of the enthymemes in the conflicts between Jesus and the leaders helps us to understand more fully the nature of the conflicts. Jesus consistently uses scripture as a basis for argumentation. He challenges his opponents' knowledge and understanding of scripture. He confronts them about his identity and about their own authority and character. He consistently displaces their privileged position and reveals the shallow foundation upon which they have built. The following is a summary of the major premises of each of the topics.

Regarding Scripture as topic, the leaders argue that one must be careful in what is claimed in God’s name. Laws are a way to maintain holiness with God but may result in separation from other humans, including eating practices, ritual washing, and limiting activities on the Sabbath (9:10-13; 12:1-8; 12:10-13; 15:2-9). These leaders of Israel are very devoted to God and are serious about maintaining distance from anything that might endanger breaking the law. On the other hand, Jesus rejects the boundaries that

are meant to promote holiness to God if they divide humans. He accuses them of not knowing how to appropriately prioritize the competing demands of scripture. The greater requirement of the law, for Jesus, is mercy that seeks the good of the other (9:10-13; 12:1-8; 12:10-13; 22:36-40). The minor premises show Jesus challenging the leaders' theological and social boundaries and using them as opportunities to redefine the will of God. He affirms that God can heal and that people do need a physician (9:2-8; 9:10-13; 12:10-13). Becoming involved with humans who are “sick” is an act of mercy that defines righteousness. It is important to maintain right relations with humans, including parents and spouse, and not to let devotion to God separate one from this duty (15:2-9; 19:4-9). God claims ultimate allegiance over human life and calls all to repentance (22:16-22). God is greater than death, whether that is physical death or death associated with impurity. God's power to overcome death means that the resurrection redefines relationships (22:24-33).

Regarding Jesus as topic, Jesus affirms that he is the Son of Man who has authority to prioritize and adjudicate the demands of scripture. He has the power of God to bind up the prince of demons and bring the Kingdom of God (9:34; 12:24-37). Children offer right praise of him, but the leaders do not recognize him as Lord (21:15-16, 23-27). He is the one rejected by the leaders, but used by God as the chief cornerstone of the kingdom (21:42-43; 22:42-45).

Regarding the Leaders as topic, their concern is largely with the law. Jesus charges them with failing to prioritize rightly the competing demands of scripture. Their interpretations lead them to emphasize devotion to God defined in ways that may come at a price to other humans. Their interpretations may lead them to separate from others in certain spheres of activity. They raise some questions of law that do not arise from

the immediate narrative context, e.g., paying taxes (22:15-22), levirate law (22:24-33), but mostly question Jesus about the legality of his actions. Their single-minded attempt to entrap Jesus leads them to claim that he is in league with Beelzebul for doing things they themselves do. Despite the form of religiosity that separates them from humans to show devotion to God, they are more afraid of people than of God (21:23-27). They seek signs of Jesus' authenticity, but will not believe him (12:38-45; 16:1-4). Jesus claims that they cannot interpret the signs already presented by God. God is rejecting them for rejecting Jesus.

In short, Matthew structures the conflicts in a manner congruent with philosophical conflicts. Philosophical conflicts involve self-vindication, vilification of the opposition, and identification of topics over which the two sides demonstrate their fundamental disagreements (see pp. 97ff.). Philosophers are sometimes perceived to be a threat to the civil order, which brings them into conflict with civil authorities. This is the case with Socrates and with the examples of Demonax (see p. 99) and Apollonius (see p. 101) given above. Matthew builds the conflicts through the topics of scripture, Jesus and the leaders. The final episode concerning the Son of David in 22:41-46 makes a slight move toward establishing the conflict as a political conflict. However, the move is not thorough. The central tension concerns the question of who is the legitimate authority to represent God and to interpret God's word. Matthew portrays Jesus as that authority in contrast to the leaders of Israel who refuse to accept Jesus. He is the one with divine authority who understands and models appropriate behavior. He is the one who properly interprets and acts out the demands of scripture. The conflicts emphasize Jesus' positive qualities by the contrast with the leaders. The leaders are unwilling to

repent and do acts that show a rightly ordered understanding of God's will. Matthew paints opposition to God through their opposition to Jesus.¹⁰⁵

It is not clear whether there is a guiding principle behind the order of the conflicts in Matthew. Issues concerning the proper interpretation of scripture tend to be early in the gospel, thereby setting the foundation for more intense accusations. The questions concerning identity of Jesus and the rejection of the leaders are significantly intensified as Jesus enters Jerusalem. Virtually the only activity in Jerusalem takes place on the temple grounds and amounts to a rejection of the leaders who exercise and debate authority there. The decision to try to arrest and kill Jesus comes early in the narrative at 12:14. All three major topics have been covered by 12:14. All subsequent activity is hostile and reinforces the major topics. Mt 23 offers a summary of these conflicts.

¹⁰⁵ This conclusion is also arrived at by Boris Repschinski, "Taking on the Elite: The Matthean Controversy Stories," in *SBL 1999 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 1-23.

CHAPTER FOUR:

WOE TO YOU

A. Introduction

The thesis of this study is that conflict, polemics and legal arguments in Matthew's biography of Jesus are structured coherently and consistently within the narrative and exhibit characteristics that would make the narrative comprehensible to a broad audience who share similar literary presuppositions. The development of this thesis has followed the three stages outlined in the proposed approach (see pp. 79ff.) that works from the belief that any specific part of a text, such as Mt 23, is understood by an audience by comparison to other literary works, by the development of the preceding narrative, and by the structure and content of the passage under consideration. This does not negate the assumption of source criticism that sources may reflect specific contexts. It does question whether the form of the text under consideration is as fragmented as is sometimes suggested and whether it is necessary to posit a specific audience in order to make sense of it. In order to support this thesis I have examined the expectation of conflict (ch. 2), and the development of conflict in the interaction between Jesus and the leaders of Israel (ch.3). Paradigms of conflict drawn from comparative biographies and molded by Matthew's use of the Old Testament point out that a general audience could expect the presence and broad features of conflict articulated in chapter two without recourse to the assumption of a specific audience. Likewise, the narrative develops in a coherent and consistent pattern such that it would be understandable to a general audience that is not itself enmeshed in similar conflict. In

this chapter I will show how Mt 23 is a coherent unit that provides a consistent summary of the issues found in the earlier narrative.

The analysis of the conflicts in the chapter three revealed that Matthew developed the following features of the conflicts. 1) Scripture was a key issue. Jesus charges his opponents with improperly prioritizing the demands of scripture. 2) Jesus' opponents are portrayed as unfit leaders of Israel because they fail to interpret scripture correctly and because they reject Jesus who does so correctly. They are also unfit leaders of Israel because they reject Jesus. 3) Jesus is the one who rightly prioritizes the demands of scripture and who is the true teacher and exemplar for enacting the law. Mt 23 brings these elements together by 1) condemning Israel's leaders for their actions (vv.2-7, 13-15, 27-36), particularly for not understanding the law of God (vv. 16-26), 2) affirming Jesus as the one with God's authority who is opposed by the leaders of Israel (vv. 37-39), and 3) calling the audience to live like Christ rather than like Israel's leaders (vv. 8-12). The argument in chapter two was that the verbal crescendo in Mt 23 is consistent with the escalation of conflict in Mt 8-12. Those prior episodes are necessary to establish the rationale for the polemic in Mt 23. It is true that Luke spreads elements found in Mt 23 throughout his gospel and it is scarcely present in Mark. However, the development of conflict in the narrative, with the more dominant presence of speeches and stronger emphasis on Law in Matthew, makes a speech against the upholders of the law come as little surprise. This chapter acts as a summary of the verbal confrontations with Jesus' opponents, as a transition to the eschatological discourse and as a point of contact between the subplots of the disciples and the leaders of Israel.

Powell's analysis of Matthew's plot includes a main plot that encompasses several subplots.¹ These subplots have come together in a number of passages concerning the law, including 15:1-20; 16:1-12; and 19:3-12. The disciples do not always understand Jesus when he challenges his opponents' understanding of the law. Jesus challenges the tradition of washing hands in 15:1-9 and then explains to the crowds (15:10-11) about the workings of the digestive tract. This explanation serves as the basis for declaring his more pressing concern with what comes out of the heart of a person rather than with the purity of items that may enter the body. The disciples point out that the leaders are offended, to which Jesus retorts with a comment about their fate (15:13-14). Peter then asks for clarification about Jesus' teaching (15:15). The request for a sign in 16:1-4 is followed up in 16:5-12 with an episode where the disciples come to the realization that Jesus is warning them about the teaching of the leaders. The disciples express amazement at implications of Jesus' interpretation of divorce in 19:3-9. Their comment in 19:10 is less an insight of a good student gleaned from the teacher than a statement of incredulity at the teaching. Jesus takes the moment to stress the implication of doing what he teaches. Jesus' passion prediction (16:21-28) meets with similar opposition from Peter. These passages are sufficient to remind ourselves that the disciples have their own troubles coming to terms with Jesus' teaching. The subplots of both the leaders and the disciples occasionally intertwine and both groups find themselves in some degree of opposition with Jesus' teaching. Mt 23 brings these two subplots together as Jesus concludes his denunciation of the leaders and uses them as negative examples for teaching the crowds and disciples (23:2-12).

¹ See page 54f. above.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how Mt 23 pulls together the issues from the conflict accounts earlier in the narrative to form a coherent and consistent unit that would be understandable to a broad audience based on comparative readings of *bioi*, Matthew's use of the Old Testament, and on the development of conflict to this point in the narrative. An exegesis of Mt 23 will follow a brief presentation of the outline of Mt 23 as I see it structured.

B. Outline of Matthew 23

The focus on the "great discourses" of Matthew (5-7, 10, 13, 18, and 24-25) has tended to overshadow the way that the discourse in Mt 23 serves to summarize the events in the temple in 21-22 even more than it introduces the eschatological discourse with the disciples in 24-25. This chapter will work sequentially with this discourse in three sections. The first part analyzes 23:1-12. This is a set of instructions addressed to the crowds and disciples. The most evident feature is the use of comparison to carry forth the instruction. The second section examines 23:13-36, which addresses the leaders within the speech to the crowds and disciples. The third section looks at the lament over Jerusalem (23:37-39).

A few comments about the outline offered below are in order before proceeding. Grams's outline of Mt 21-23 develops Mt 23 as the conclusion, or *peroratio* of that longer section.² The chief difficulty with this nomenclature is that Mt 21-23 does not properly form a single speech. Grams's use of rhetorical classification is misleading and

² Rollin Grams, "The Temple Conflict Scene: A Rhetorical Analysis of Matthew 21-23," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*, ed. Duane Watson, JSNT Supplement Series (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 41-65. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 257-58 note 2; Carson, *Matthew*, 469-70; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 653-54; *pace* Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 453.

forced. I agree that Mt 23 summarizes the activities of Mt 21-22, but it also summarizes those of other passages. As a summary of a set of arguments made throughout Matthew, it is functionally the equivalent of the peroration in a speech. Quintilian offers an apt description of the peroration.

There are two kinds of peroration, for it may deal either with facts or with the emotional aspect of the case. The repetition and grouping of the facts, which the Greeks call ἀνακεφαλαίωσις and some of our own writers call the enumeration, serves both to refresh the memory of the judge and to place the whole case before his eyes, and, even although the facts may have made little impression on him in detail, their cumulative effect is considerable.³

The basic charge against the leaders, that they do not prioritize the demands of scripture appropriately, is repeated in Mt 23. This charge appears prominently in the emotionally charged "woe" sayings. Mt 23 does not, however, merely repeat specific disputes from earlier in the gospel. New narrative content is used to recapitulate previous themes. The following outline is my understanding of the structure and unity of the chapter.

1. Instruction (1-12)
 - A. Transition and audience indicator (1)
 - B. Characterization of scribes and Pharisees (2-7)
 - Reason: their position (2)
 - Command (3a)
 - Reason: preach but not practice (3b)
 - 1st Example: bind and lay but not assist (4)
 - 2nd Example: deeds to be seen (5-7)
 1. phylacteries and fringes
 2. places of honor
 3. salutations and titles
 - C. Contrast command (8-12)
 - Command: not "rabbis" (8a)
 - Reason (8b)
 - Command: not "father" (9a)
 - Reason (9b)
 - Command: not "tutors" (10a)
 - Reason (10b)

³ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1920), 6.1.1.

Characterization of disciples (11-12)

1. greatest to be servant (standard) (11)
2. one who exalts self will be humbled (reversal) (12a)
3. one who humbles self will be exalted (reversal) (12b)

2. Woes (13-36)

A. First woe (13)

Woe (13a)

Reason: shut Kingdom against men (13b)

1. selves
2. others

B. Second woe (15)

Woe (15a)

Reason (15b)

1. you proselytize, but cannot get into heaven
2. make proselytes twice as bad (zeal, Gehenna)

C. Third woe (16-22)

Woe (16a)

Reason (16b-22)

Characterization (16b)

1. swear by temple: not binding
2. swear by gold in temple: binding

Contrast question: which is greater (17)

Characterization (18)

1. swear by altar: not binding
2. swear by gift on altar: binding

Contrast question: which is greater (19)

Summary position (20-22)

1. swear by altar: it and all on it (it & lesser)
2. swear by temple: it and he in it (it & lesser)
3. swear by heaven: throne of God and God (it & greater)

D. Fourth woe (23-24)

Woe (23a)

Reason (23b)

1. you do this: lighter
2. you neglect this: weightier

Characterization: hyperbole (24)

E. Fifth woe (25-26)

Woe (25a)

Reason (25a)

1. you do this: lighter
2. you neglect this: weightier

Right Action (26)

F. Sixth woe (27-28)

Woe (27a)

Reason: simile (27b)

Explication of simile (28)

G. Seventh woe (29-36)

Woe (29a)

Reason (29b-31)

1. action: you build tombs, adorn monuments
2. speech: you say, "If we..."
3. implication: self-incrimination

Command: Fill up (32)

Rhetorical question (33)

Description of fulfillment (34-35)

1. how it will happen (34)
2. result of their actions (35)

Affirmation of events to come (36)

3. Lament (37-39)

Lament (37a)

Reason (37b)

Jesus' intentions (37c)

Statement of "new" condition (38)

Reason (39)

C. Matthew 23

1. Instruction: 23:1-12

(1) Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples (2) saying, "On the seat of Moses sit the scribes and Pharisees⁴. (3) Therefore, everything that they say to you, do and keep,⁵ but do not do according to their deeds; for they say but do not do. (4) They bind heavy [and hard to bear]⁶ burdens, and lay them

⁴ The Greek word order preserved here places the emphasis on the "the seat of Moses" rather than on the ones who sit on the seat. This provides the basis for the "therefore" in v. 3. The word order in v. 3 places emphasis on "all they say to you" which is connected to "the seat of Moses" as I will argue below.

⁵ There are numerous variants for ὑμῖν ποιήσατε καὶ τηρεῖτε. Some witnesses insert the infinitive τηρεῖν (W 0107 0138 *f*³ TR q sy^{p,h}) or ποιεῖν (Γ 700 *pc*) after ὑμῖν. These additions are attempts to clarify ὅσα ἐὰν εἴπωσιν. The shorter reading used here is well attested (ℵ B D L Z Θ *f*¹ 892 *pc* lat sy^{s,c} co). Some witnesses make both verbs present tense and keep the order ποιεῖτε καὶ τηρεῖτε (D *f*¹ 700 *pc* co) or change the order τηρεῖτε καὶ ποιεῖτε (W 0107 0138 *f*³ TR lat sy^{p,h}). In one case we find ἀκούετε καὶ ποιεῖτε (sy^c) which emphasizes the act of hearing or listening. We also find by itself either ποιήσατε (ℵ* [Γ] *pc* sy^{s?}) or τηρεῖτε (Φ *pc*).

⁶ Most witnesses include καὶ δυσβάστακα (B D^(*) W Θ 0107 0138 *f*³ TR lat sy^h sa (mae)) though it is omitted in some (L *f*¹ 892 *pc* it sy^{s,c,p} bo). The omission is favored by Metzger because "if they were present originally, no good reason can account for their absence from such a wide variety of witnesses" and their presence can be explained as an interpolation from Lk 11:46; Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 60; cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 271 note 39. Hagner noted that the "omission can be caused by homoioteleuton, i.e., the skipping of the eye from the καί to the καί following the adjective"; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 656-57 note e.

on the shoulders of people but they⁷ are unwilling to move⁸ them with their finger. (5) All their deeds they do in order to be seen by people; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels,⁹ (6) and they love the place of honor¹⁰ at the feasts and the seats of honor in the synagogues (7) and the greetings in the marketplaces and to be called by people 'Rabbi'.¹¹

(8) But you shall not be called¹² 'Rabbi' for one is your teacher,¹³ and all of you are brothers. (9) And you shall not call 'Father' one of you upon the earth,¹⁴ for one is your father in heaven. (10) Neither be called 'Tutors,' because your tutor is one, the Christ. (11) Whoever is greatest among you shall be your

⁷ αὐτοί, "themselves" is omitted by many witnesses (W Θ 0107^{vid} 0138 *f*^{1,13} TR lat sy^h). The addition (ℵ B D L 33 892 1010 *pc sy*^{(s,c)p} co) can be explained as an assimilation to Luke (so Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 272 note 45.) but the omission is not easily explained.

⁸ "κινῆσαι = 'to (re)move' (not 'to adjust'), as in LXX Prov 17.13; Rev 2.5; and 6.14; so the sense is: they are unwilling to lift a finger to remove them (see below). Obviously few things are easier than moving a finger; so not to do even that is to do nothing"; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 272.

⁹ The addition τῶν ἱματίων αὐτῶν "of their garments" (L W 0107 0138 *f*¹³ TR it sy bo) may be an assimilation to 9:20, but the omission (ℵ B D Θ *f*¹ *pc lat sa mae*) is not readily explained.

¹⁰ The plural is attested (ℵ² L *f*¹ 33 892 *pc lat sy co*).

¹¹ ῥαββί, ῥαββί is attested (D W 0107 *f*¹³ TR sy^{s,c,h}) but so is the single use of ῥαββι (ℵ B L Δ Θ 0138 *f*¹ 892 1241 *al lat sy^p co*). The longer form "is probably the result of heightening by copyists," Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 60. The shorter form mirrors v. 8.

¹² The passive is altered to the active imperative μηδένα καλέσητε (Θ *g*¹ (sy^{s,c})) to assimilate it to v. 9. The passive is used in vv. 8 and 10 for being called 'Rabbi' and 'Teacher' but the active imperative is used in v. 9 for calling another 'Father'.

¹³ διδάσκαλος (ℵ¹ B 33 892* *al*) is the more difficult reading, though not as well attested, because καθηγητής (ℵ^{*,2} D L Θ 0107 0138 *f*^{1,13} TR) assimilates to v. 10. The addition of ὁ χριστός (K Γ Δ 0138 28 700 892^c 1010 1241 1424 TR sy^{c,h**}) is also an assimilation to v. 10.

¹⁴ ὑμίν is attested (D Q *pc lat sy*^{s,c,p} sa bo). However, the better reading is ὑμῶν. It may qualify πατέρα "call no one on earth your father" or be a partitive genitive "call no one of you on earth your father." The former invites a more universal application of the prohibition; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 276.

servant. (12) Whoever exalts themselves¹⁵ will be humbled and whoever humbles themselves will be exalted.

Verses 1-12 are the address to the crowds and disciples in which Jesus contrasts the actions of the leaders (vv. 2-7) to the desired path for those who would follow God appropriately (vv. 8-12). Grams argues that the unit consists of a repetitive pattern of three: three reasons for the command not to do as the leaders, three examples and three contrasting enthymemes.¹⁶ This search for a numerically consistent pattern misses an important distinction that v. 3a is a command and prohibition concerning the negative example of the leaders and vv. 8-12 has a set of commands set in a more positive vein.

A. Transition and Audience Indicator

Chapter 22 concludes "And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions." The public debates between Jesus and the leaders end at 22:46 so the use of "then" in 23:1 marks a shift within the temporal sequence. The audience of chapter 23 is noted by the narrator as "the crowds and Jesus' disciples". The discourse makes sense within Matthew's narrative world as addressed to the crowds and disciples. The audience is narrowed to the disciples in 24:1-2, and there is a change in location as they leave the temple. It is not necessary to posit the external implied audiences as developed by redaction studies.¹⁷ I have argued in the previous chapters that it is reasonable for the audience(s) to expect a summary of the

¹⁵ The two instances of ἐαυτόν in this verse are literally "himself". The singular is rendered as a plural here to capture the non-gender specific implication of the sentence.

¹⁶ Grams, "Temple Conflict," 53-54. Davies and Allison use a two-part schema but sub-divide the passage differently from what is offered here, Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 264.

¹⁷ See the discussion of these audiences in chapter one above.

conflicts between Jesus and his opponents. It is not necessary to require that the passage reflect the immediate context of Matthew's audience(s).

There is an apparent contradiction between the stated audience of Jesus' speech in v. 1 and the second person addressees in vv. 2-39. The scribes and Pharisees are characterized for the audience in vv. 2-7. The speaker (Jesus) talks about a third party (scribes and Pharisees) to the audience (crowds and disciples). Jesus uses the second person plural "you" in vv. 8-12 to address the disciples and crowds. Jesus addresses in vv.13-35 the scribes and Pharisees in the second person plural, but they are not indicated as being part of the audience in v.1. This raises the issue of whether Jesus was addressing the scribes and Pharisees or the crowds and disciples. It would be premature to claim that this marks a point of transparency to the implied reader. Narratively, it is a second person address to an absent third party (scribes and Pharisees) in a discourse to a present second party (disciples and crowds). While the "woes" are addressed to the scribes and Pharisees, they are for the listening benefit of the crowds and disciples. Verses 37-39 appear to continue the use of a second person address about a third person but shift from the scribes and Pharisees to a personified Jerusalem.

B. Characterization of scribes and Pharisees

In verses 2-7, Jesus offers a summary characterization of the scribes and Pharisees that is congruous with the conflict episodes throughout the gospel. He no longer engages them directly in conflict but describes for the audience what the leaders are like from his perspective. As pointed out in chapter one, this characterization has had unfortunate effects in the history of interpretation when it has been used as data to reconstruct an historical-critical picture of the leaders. At the moment we are not involved in that task but wish to determine the possible function of such a

characterization in this discourse and in the plot(s) of Matthew. Among all the leaders mentioned in Matthew only the scribes and Pharisees are mentioned here. They represent the dominant groups that contested with Jesus in the conflict episodes.¹⁸

The structure of these verses is as follows. Note that the command is imbedded between two reason statements.

- Reason: their position (2)
- Command (3a)
- Reason: say but not do (3b)
- 1st Example: bind and lay but not assist (4)
- 2nd Example: deeds to be seen (5-7)
 - 1. phylacteries and fringes
 - 2. places of honor
 - 3. salutations and titles

Jesus' speech opens with the rationale for the command that follows. The identification of the scribes and Pharisees with the chair of Moses is undoubtedly intended to affirm a position of authority. Davies and Allison note four alternatives for understanding the reference to the "seat of Moses".¹⁹ First, stone benches in synagogues have been identified as the seat of Moses. Newport describes chairs found in synagogues from the 4th and 5th centuries that were designed and presumably placed for persons of high status within the synagogue.²⁰ He also cites 15th century evidence of a chair with holes drilled in it to hold scrolls. Both of these are extremely late artifacts and neither one can

¹⁸ "Some of the scribes" 9:2-8, "Pharisees" 9:10-13; 9:34; 12:1-8; 12:10-13; 12:24-37; 19:4-9; 22:42-45, "some scribes and Pharisees" 12:38-45, "Pharisees and scribes" 15:2-9, "Pharisees and Sadducees" 16:2-4, "their (Pharisees) disciples and Herodians" 22:16-22, "chief priests and Pharisees" 22:1-14, "Pharisees, Sadducees and a lawyer" 22:36-40, "Sadducees" 22:24-33, "chief priests and scribes" 21:15-16, and "chief priest and elders of the people" 21:23-26, 28-32, 33-43.

¹⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 268.

²⁰ Kenneth G.C. Newport, "A Note on the 'Seat of Moses,'" *AUSS* 28 (1990): 57; cf. Schürer, *History*, 442, n. 67.

be tied to a "chair of Moses". The second possibility is that the "seat of Moses" may be a metaphor for teaching authority and signals the ones who run the "school of Moses".²¹ Third, Roth identifies the seat with a receptacle for Torah scrolls.²² Fourth, Viviano connects "the seat of Moses" with a polemic against scribes and Pharisees at Jabneh/Jamnia.²³ He relies on a reconstruction of the socio-historical setting of Matthew in order to make this identification.²⁴ Both Newport and Viviano rely on knowledge of the world external to the text that cannot be adequately demonstrated. Davies and Allison claim that it is impossible to decide between the four options. The phrase "seat of Moses" may rely on special knowledge no longer available to the modern reader but it seems highly probable that it is a reference connected to the Torah. This flows from the nature of the conflicts examined in the previous chapter. I am in agreement with the last part of Gundry's observation that "sitting on someone's throne means replacing a former king (see the OT passim). Sitting in Moses' seat means rehearsing the Mosaic law."²⁵ It is not clear that the "seat of Moses" derives from royal usage. However, if the

²¹ I. Renov, "The Seat of Moses," *IEJ* 5 (1955): 262-67; cf. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 559.

²² C. Roth, "The "Chair of Moses" and Its Survivals," *PEQ* 81 (1949): 100-01.

²³ Benedict T. Viviano, "Social World and Community Leadership: The Case of Matthew 23:8-12, 34," *JSNT* 39 (1990): 3-21.

²⁴ Viviano describes five aspects of the Matthean community similar to the reconstructions delineated in chapter 1. His explanation is more closely connected to this passage about the "seat of Moses": 1) they are in serious conflict with some of the heirs of the Pharisees due to being banished from their synagogues, but the Matthean community still accepts the OT as authoritative; 2) there is a reserve toward Pauline Christianity which is Gentile and Torah free; 3) they are interested in transferring some authority of Christ to the church; 4) they dread the formation of an elite caste of church leaders; and, 5) they have a utopian longing for the promise of Isaiah 54:13 for all to be taught by YHWH.

²⁵ Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 454.

characterization from the previous chapter is correct, then the scribes and Pharisees, or at least some of them, currently occupy a position responsible for reading scripture to the public. This position may have entailed interpreting the scriptures for contemporary application.

The verb ἐκάθισαν, which I have translated as "they sit", is problematic because of the tense. It raises questions about how and when the chair was occupied. Just as importantly, it involves a question about whether Jesus is acknowledging an authority that he then dismantles. The following note from Davies and Allison is instructive.

The aorist, 'they sat', muddies matters further. Did the scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat only in the past? So Allen, p. 244. But this contradicts the present tenses in v. 3. Viviano (v) proposes a reference to Jamnia: 'they took their seat and still sit'. Compare McNeile, p. 329: 'it may look back over the period during which, by common consent, the Scribes had constituted themselves Moses' successors'. Others have thought the act of sitting presumptuous: 'they have seated themselves'. More common is the suggestion, to which we are inclined, that we have here a Semitism: the Semitic stative perfect can express a general truth.²⁶

Black cites the following examples of the Semitic stative perfect that correspond to aorist, perfect and present tenses and that refer to present states or general truths:

ἐπεκάλεσαν (Mt 10:25), ἐδίστασας (Mt 14:31), ὡμοιώθη (Mt 13:24; 18:23; 22:2), ἐβάπτισα (Mk 1:8), εὐδόκησα (Mk 1:11), ἤρατε (Lk 11:52), ἠγαλλίασε (Lk 1:46), ἠγάπησε (Lk 7:47), ἀγρὸν ἠγόρασα, γυναῖκα ἔγημα (Lk 14:18, 20), and ἀπέθανεν (Jn 11:14).²⁷ It is precisely by virtue of the leaders' current authority to "say" that the commands to "do and keep" have any force. The forcefulness of the statement is mitigated if the aorist indicates a reality already in the past with no current implication.

²⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 268-69.

²⁷ Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), 128-9.

As a consequence of their position Jesus uses the imperative to direct the disciples and crowds, "everything that they say to you, do and keep ..." This command seems to be at odds with the thrust of Jesus' consistently expressed opinion in the conflicts that the scribes and Pharisees do not teach in accordance with the greater intent of scripture. The central question concerns the nature of the concession to their authority. The simplest explanation is that the authority they have, and continue to hold, is derived from reading scripture, not from any other source of power.²⁸ Jesus strongly affirms the authority of scripture as was shown in chapter three. Jesus acknowledges the authority and power of the religious leaders but does not agree with them. They, like him, read, interpret and act out the commands of scripture, thus making them true opponents when they understand and act upon scripture differently from the way he does. Their interpretation and implementation of scripture stands as the chief paradigm for the people (see 5:17-20) and thus creates an obstacle for those seeking to know scripture in any different manner. The acknowledgment of their authority is necessary for the antithesis that is to follow between the leaders and Jesus' audience.

There are three imperatives in verse 3: "do" (ποιήσατε), "keep" (τηρεῖτε), "do not do" (μὴ ποιεῖτε). The commands are relatively simple: "everything that they say to you, do and keep". The prohibition is equally simple: "do not do according to their deeds". The main difficulty with these verses is identifying the nature of what the scribes and Pharisees "say" and what their "deeds" are. Powell articulates the options and provides new direction to this difficult problem. He identifies the dominant interpretation of the problem as the division between words and deeds. The leaders say

²⁸ Mark Allan Powell, "Do and Keep What Moses Says (Matthew 23:2-7)," *JBL* 114, no. 3 (1995): 419-35. This is the 10th option listed by Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 269-70, esp. note 28. See note 30 below.

one thing but do another. This is the basis of our modern understanding of hypocrisy.

However, Powell counters that this finds no support in Matthew.

In the world that produced Matthew's Gospel, teaching was never considered to be an activity that could be identified with speaking as opposed to doing. This world made no clear distinction between theory and praxis. The rabbis (including Jesus) taught their interpretations of Moses not merely by articulating their understanding of the law verbally but, above all, by living in ways that modeled this understanding. Thus, in Matthew's Gospel Jesus contests the interpretations of the law offered by the scribes and Pharisees not simply by arguing with them, but primarily by doing things (such as healing on the sabbath) that challenge their interpretation of Moses and endorse his own. In short, identification of "speaking" with teaching and "doing" with life-style in this passage violates not only the literary context of Matthew's narrative but also the dynamics of the social milieu in which this Gospel was produced.²⁹

The first sentence in this quotation ignores the evidence of just such a split between word and deed in the ancient world. This evidence is treated below. However, Powell's interpretation otherwise makes the best sense out of Matthew's picture of the leaders as developed in the conflicts. Powell identifies 10 alternatives to solve this problem.³⁰

First, the authority of the leaders is past tense, "used to sit". If the phrase refers to an authority that existed in the past but is no longer true, then this makes no sense in light of the command to do what they say. Second, the leaders have usurped authority by seating themselves. If they do not have a right to the position why would Jesus support them? Third, the passage is hyperbole used only to raise caution against the interpretations of the leaders. Fourth, it is a concessive statement recognizing their authority but not endorsing them. If this is true, then the contradiction in commands remains. Fifth, it is a rhetorical ploy to heighten the sense of the leaders' culpability. This option would make the command to do what they say ironical if not contradictory.

²⁹ Powell, "Do and Keep," 423-24.

³⁰ Powell, "Do and Keep," 424-29.

Sixth, the words are part of salvation history and only meant for the past. This may work out for the later church, but makes little sense in the text. Seventh and related to the previous option, the words are meant only as an emergency measure until the leaders no longer occupy the place of authority. Eighth, the application of the command is limited to the law of Moses and not beyond. Ninth, the words affirm a "partial or token allegiance to Judaism". This issue in the passage is not allegiance to Judaism, but obedience to the scribes and Pharisees. Tenth, they serve a pedagogical function warning the leaders of the church about their own actions, but have no meaning within the passage. Many of these interpretations reach outside the text to layers of redaction and history in order to work around the difficulties, but in so doing introduce new complexities and contradictions with other parts of Matthew's Gospel. Powell offers a simpler explanation that is more consistent with the whole Gospel.

Powell begins with the argument that the leaders controlled access to scripture because their function was to read it publicly. This fits with the command to do "everything that say to you" (πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν εἴπωσιν ὑμῖν). The disciples and the crowd are commanded to remain faithful to scripture that is being "spoken" to them.³¹ This is consistent throughout the Gospel. The challenge is with the subsequent prohibition. They are to do what is told to them, but not what is shown them in the works (ἔργα) of the teachers. The contrast appears to be between what they say and what they do. The type of activity indirectly being condemned in the prohibition to the audience, is a form of "doing". This should not be translated as "for they preach but do

³¹ This squares with Jesus' intensification of the law in 5:17-48. The law is still in force, ἰὼτα ἐν ἧ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. The difficulty in Mt 5, as in the controversy accounts, is with the way the scribes and Pharisees have developed the demands of the law, i.e., their "righteousness".

not practice" (RSV), "they do not practice what they teach"³² or "they say one thing and do another"³³ because it introduces the notion that the leaders are living an inconsistent life. Powell's argument is that "doing" is not claiming to do one thing while knowingly doing something inconsistent with the verbal statements. This would seem to be the case from the reason clause in v. 3b, "for they say but do not do". Yet, the picture developed in Matthew to this point has been that they are the paradigm of consistency, and pushing others to be so as well. Rather, Matthew portrays them as those who read the scriptures and then model in word and deed that which is contrary to scripture. This is consistent with the way that they consistently quote scripture to Jesus while he challenges their understanding of scripture. They do not understand the words they proclaim. The audience is exhorted to listen to scripture but to act upon it in a different manner that varies from the pattern established by the leaders. Therefore, what they "say", i.e. scripture, is correct and must be obeyed. However, their deeds, which include both interpretation and action, are not to be followed. Verses 8-12 stress the way that the paradigm for the disciples and crowds is based on God's action in Christ.

The scribes and Pharisees are labeled "hypocrites" in vv. 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, and 29. This vocative accentuation returns the readers' attention to 23:2-7 and assists in framing the staccato introduction to each of the woe statements. The term has come to carry a sharply negative tone in modern ears. It is useful, therefore, to reflect on its use in other ancient writings as well as here in Matthew 23. The issue is whether the term carries the weight of slander as we know it or to what degree it might remain in the domain of its technical meaning. Even as slander, there is the need to examine the

³² Senior, *Matthew*, 257.

³³ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 656.

content of the slur, unless we are to assume that all derogatory names are held and used interchangeably.

Rhoads notes four types of hypocrisy that would indicate a slanderous tone: 1) when inner motives contradict outer actions (6:18); 2) when inner attitudes are opposite of outward appearance of righteousness (5:21-22); 3) when one acts morally some times and not other times (23:29-31); and 4) when one relates to God one way and to others in another way (5:23-24).³⁴ This is not an unusual set of categories to use for the term, but it is not without problems. The two occurrences cited in Mt 5 are not connected with that term. The inner/outer dichotomy between motives and actions is possible in 6:18 but perhaps is better framed as the appropriate private and public displays of loyalty to God. Rhoads introduces a sense of pretense by separating motive and action that is hard to maintain. The hypocrites are fasting, but the text is silent about why they fast. They disfigure their faces during the fast in order to be seen by humans, but it does not indicate that the motive is purely for self-glorification. It is possible to argue that the hypocrites display loyalty to God by fasting and simultaneously display their righteousness to others. Verses 17-18 make it clear that the problem is that fasting is a form of righteousness intended only for God and should be done in private not public. It is difficult to discern from Rhoads' example of 23:29-31 how the hypocrites are acting morally at one time and not at another. The charge is that they believe that they are acting righteously by honoring the prophets, while Jesus claims that they are going to kill more prophets. The legitimacy of those current day prophets is, of course, a central point of conflict in the narrative. Hence, Rhoads' categories are put in serious doubt.

³⁴ D. Rhoads, "The Gospel of Matthew. The Two Ways: Hypocrisy or Righteousness," *CurTM* 19, no. 6 (1992): 456-57.

Batey notes that 13 of 17 occurrences of this term in the New Testament are in Matthew. They are all in sayings of Jesus, and they are generally tied to the lack of integrity between motives and actions.³⁵ He is in agreement with Rhoads to this degree. Batey argues that the root of the split behind motives and actions lies in the technical aspect of the term ὑποκριτής which denotes a stage actor.³⁶ He claims that Jesus would have had familiarity with the term as used for professional actors from the theaters built during and after the time of Herod the Great. Particularly noteworthy is the theater at Sepphoris near Nazareth.

Since this term plays an important role in the interpretation of Mt 23, it is important that we take time to assess how well our modern use matches with uses in ancient writers. A search of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae database limited to 8th century BCE to 1st century CE yields the following results for ὑποκριτ... and ὑποκρισ.... Forms of ὑποκριτ... occur 230 times in 56 authors. There are 191 instances if we exclude the New Testament and early church authors. There are four significant occurrences in which ὑποκριτ... clearly takes on the character of slander; otherwise it appears as a technical term for an actor or some factor related to acting, such as delivery. Forms of ὑποκρισ... appear 147 times in 42 authors. There are 134 instances if we exclude the New Testament and early church authors. There are occurrences in over half a dozen authors that indicate slanderous intent, such as pretense. The overwhelming majority of instances are, therefore, as technical terms

³⁵ Richard A. Batey, "Jesus and the Theatre," *NTS* 30, no. 4 (1984): 563.

³⁶ Batey, "Jesus and the Theatre," 563. He argues that Jesus would have had familiarity with the term as used for professional actors from the theaters built during and after Herod the Great's life. Particularly noteworthy is the theater at Sepphoris near Nazareth.

meaning actor, actors, acting, ability to perform, vocal art, and delivery. The technical meaning is found as both verb and noun.

The occurrences in contexts that might be considered slanderous are the minority but important nonetheless because they show that slander was an aspect of usage prior to and during the time of Jesus and Matthew. There are no extant parallels to Jesus' use of the term in confrontational dialogues but other types of parallels are to be found. The earliest occurrence is in Pythagoras (*Astrological Fragments* 11.2.124.9) where ὑποκριτάς shows up in a list of undesirable characteristics alongside ψεύστας, κακοτρόπους, κλέπτας, ῥέμβους, κακοφρονητάς, λαθροπονήρους, and εὐλαβοσχημάτους. Hermias⁴⁵ uses the term in a way that is instructive for our understanding of Matthew.

Ἄκούσατ', ὦ Στώακες, ἔμποροι λήρου, λόγων ὑποκριτῆρες, οἱ μόνοι πάντα τὰν τοῖς πίναξι, πρὶν τι τῷ σοφῷ δοῦναι, αὐτοὶ καταρροφεῖτε, κᾶθ' ἀλίσκεσθε ἐναντία πρήσσοντες οἷς τραγωδεῖτε.

The criticism falls on the Stoics who speak too quickly before wisdom is heard and then are found to act contrary to their words. The Stoics apparently claim that they are not attracted physically to women, but still end up preferring boys. This foolhardiness wrongs Eros because it makes Eros distrusted by the pretty boys. The god is put in bad light due to the ill-considered words of the Stoics. Philo, in *QGen* 4.69.1-8, provides a passage with remarkable similarities to Mt 23:3.

Τὸ δὲ πάντα ἀλήθευσον ἀφιλοσόφου καὶ ἰδιώτου παράγγελμα. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὁ τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίος εὐωδεῖ μηδὲν παραδεχόμενος ψεῦδος εἰκὸς ἦν ἐπὶ παντὶ πρὸς πάντας ἀληθεύειν. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὑπόκρισις ὡς ἐν θεάτρῳ δυναστεύει καὶ τὸ ψεῦδος παραπέτασμα τῆς ἀληθείας ἐστί, τεχνῆς δεῖ τῷ σοφῷ πολυτρόπου,

⁴⁵ Hermias, "Fragmentum," *Collectanea Alexandrina*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 237.

καθ' ἣν ὠφελήσει, μιμούμενος τοὺς ὑποκριτὰς οἱ ἄλλα λέγοντες ἕτερα δρῶσι ὅπως διασώσωσιν οὓς δύνανται.⁴⁶

The qualification of hypocrisy with "of an evil kind" implies a hypocrisy of a virtuous kind. A wise man who acts to save some by not telling the truth may benefit from λέγοντες ἕτερα δρῶσιν ὅπως διασώσωσιν οὓς δύνανται like the τοὺς ὑποκριτὰς. This passage indicates that some hypocrites are associated with a dissonance between word and deed with an intent to benefit themselves and who act with an air of authority. Note that the context is about truth-telling and Philo is making a provision for lying for the sake of virtue. His condemnation falls not on those who lie, but on those who do not seek the benefit of others. Plutarch, likewise, recognizes the split between word and deed, but here the demarcation is clearly pretentiousness. Plutarch observes, (*The Education of Children* 13b), in the context of educating a child, that a father must protect the child from those pretenders of friendship, ὑποκριταὶ φιλίας who use speech to ingratiate themselves while committing acts contrary to the benefit of the child. It is the father's responsibility to recognize reality in deeds that is masked by words.

The instances of ὑποκρισι... are equally enlightening. Two of five occurrences in Polybius' *History* indicate intention of deception. One passage presumes a split between deed, as expressed in both speech and action, and underlying attitude (35.2.13.2). In this case speech and action are juxtaposed to attitude as in Rhoads' inner/outer split rather than speech and action being juxtaposed to one another. The other case (38.9.7.1) centers on the interpretation of Roman actions as whether they intended friendship or

⁴⁶ Philo, *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, Loeb Classical Library, Supplement II. (Cambridge: Harvard, 1953), 219-220. QGen 4.69.

hostility to the Achaeans. Diodorus notes the same problem of pretended loyalty versus real loyalty (*Library of History* 38/39.13.1.4). Appearances and intentions are at the heart of the matter. The *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* contrasts ὑποκρίσεως with ἀληθείας in a list of contrasts, indicating a negative evaluation of the term (12.6.5). Philo's fifteen occurrences are all negatively charged with the idea of deception and dissimulation in both speech and action. There is one significant example, however, in which hypocrisy may not mask intention as much as it does truth. Philo condemns those who, in his opinion, worship insincerely with public acts and words becoming spectacles, or actors, for the viewing audience (*On the Unchangeableness of God* 103.4). Philo does not impute deceptive motives but condemns acts of "superstition" that are not aligned with true worship of the immutable deity. The issue is the nature of true acts, not the intention behind them. Josephus recognizes various qualities of hypocrisy as pretense, including deception (*Antiquities of the Jews* 1.211, *Wars of the Jews* 1.628), appearance vs. truth (*Antiquities of the Jews* 13.220; 16.217), gaining advantage (*Antiquities of the Jews* 15.204), and conflict over interpretation of overtly pious acts (*Wars of the Jews* 1.630). The occurrences in Appian are dominated by pretense for the sake of benefiting oneself.

In summary, as a pejorative term, the various forms of "hypocrisy" simply indicate a type of deception, but the nature of the deception is more complex and varied. Speech may be contrasted with deeds. Speech and deeds are contrasted with intentions. All three are contrasted with "truth", especially as it concerns right reflection of the nature of the deity. It is linked with authority, power and the inordinate desire for self-benefit over the needs of others. The link between the technical aspects of actors and acting with deception is not hard to make. Hoheisel offers a more detailed history of the

development of the term.³⁹ The term finds its origins with the actors who brought the words of a poet to life. It may even have originally referred to the poets who played the main roles themselves.⁴⁰ Poets eventually used professional actors and their art often included the use of a mask. However, it is not certain the presence of a mask yielded the impression of one who was hiding something. Rather, by the time of Aristotle, we see the denigration of the actor who has greater influence than the poet does because delivery and the ability to stir the emotions have become more prominent than the words themselves.⁴¹ The task of the ὑποκριτής is to portray the truly real, even while "deceiving" the audience through the role.⁴² The deception is part of the tacit agreement between actors and audience. The Sophists are criticized because they pretend to be presenting reality while providing a false picture.⁴³ The term is later applied in a derogatory manner to actors who simply play any role that is given them, perhaps even several in the course of a play.⁴⁴ Actors are also described as misrepresenting the poet's intentions and drawing too much attention to themselves rather than to the greater

³⁹ Karl Hoheisel, "Schauspielerei und Heuchelei in Antiken Beurteilungen," in *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions*, vol. 65 of *Studies in the History of Religions*, ed. Hans G. Kippenberg and Guy G. Stroumsa (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1995). See also Jonathan A. Draper, "Christian Self-Definition Against the "Hypocrites" in *Didache* 8," in *SBL 1992 Seminar Papers*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr. (Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 362-77.

⁴⁰ Hoheisel, "Schauspielerei," 177-78; Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.1.3.

⁴¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.1.4-6.

⁴² Hoheisel, "Schauspielerei," 181.

⁴³ Hoheisel, "Schauspielerei," 181.

⁴⁴ Hoheisel, "Schauspielerei," 182-3.

purpose for their role (e.g., Plutarch *An seni* 797.D.9; *Praecepta* 806.A.4; Epictetus *Ench.* 17.1.1).

Rhoads and Batey represent positions that clearly offer solutions that are too simplistic to the problem of interpreting "hypocrites" in Mt 23. The literary context and development of the dispute between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees must be carefully considered in order to situate judiciously Matthew's use of the term in the range of extra-biblical meanings. We must be wary of modern impositions that quickly limit the range of meaning to intention vs. action or speech vs. deed in which the "hypocrite" is consciously and intentionally deceiving others for self-gain.

Barr examines the previously held belief that ὑποκριτής could not have a 'Greek meaning' because Palestine had no contact with Greek theater.⁴⁵ He argues that others who claim that the term must derive from the Hebrew term for sinner, a breaker of the law, a godless person, are mistaken and that the broader range that includes intentional deception had entered Palestinian usage at least by the Maccabean period.

But this argument was mistaken. The sense of pretended and self-assumed virtue, simulation and deceit, 'hypocrisy' in the traditional sense, clearly became present in Palestinian Jewish life in the later centuries before Christ.⁴⁶

It is not necessary to think of the term in association with the stage because it had found its way into the language beyond that limited sphere.

I have suggested that ὑποκριτής of the Gospels is not really 'derived' out of the Greek sense as an 'actor', a sense that had little or no foothold in Jewish culture. But on the other hand, it turned out coincidentally that a hypocrite *was* very like an actor. He was one who played a role, acted a part, a role that the prevailing

⁴⁵ James Barr, "The Hebrew/Aramaic Background of 'Hypocrisy,'" in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, ed. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White, JSOT Supplement Series (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 307-26.

⁴⁶ Barr, "The Hebrew/Aramaic Background of 'Hypocrisy,'" 319.

religion required people, or some people, to play. It is not surprising therefore that the similarity to the ὑποκριτής of the Greek stage has interested readers of all kinds, even if there is no direct historical or derivational connection.⁴⁷

Barr's comment perhaps rests on a fundamental distinction between Greek and Palestinian Jewish cultures that is increasingly difficult to maintain but it is not surprising that he would conclude that the term finds similar meaning in both contexts.⁴⁸ A key factor for him is how we think of one term being 'derived' from another or from a specific social institution or practice. This point aside, he comes to the same conclusion presented above. Hypocrisy is not necessarily intentionally doing evil, nor saying one thing and doing another.

Hypocrisy isn't pretending to be good, it is self-righteousness. But what is self-righteousness other than a more complex expression for pretending to be good, or at least a lot better than one actually is? Self-righteousness is a central ingredient in the traditional understanding of what hypocrisy is. It seems that those who wish to understand it as a more general impiety or godlessness are driven back in the end to reaffirming what they had begun by seeking to limit or eliminate.⁴⁹

If we use the image of a ὑποκριτής as an actor to assess the scribes and Pharisees, then we could say they do not understand the script they are reading, i.e., scripture. They ruin the play because they do not know how to properly bring the words to life; yet, they strongly believe that they are doing exactly as prescribed. This is the essence of being self-righteous. This captures the meaning as described by both Hoheisel and Barr and fits with the understanding of vv. 2-3 provided by Powell. This still allows for

⁴⁷ Barr, "The Hebrew/Aramaic Background of 'Hypocrisy'," 320.

⁴⁸ The re-evaluation of this relationship is strikingly represented in Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁴⁹ Barr, "The Hebrew/Aramaic Background of 'Hypocrisy'," 321.

"hypocrite" to be used as slander against one's opponents and to indicate a wide range of criticism as Johnson has shown.

As so often in Hellenistic rhetoric, these charges became standardized and formed a *topos*, that is, a standard treatment of the subject. Certain things were conventionally said of all opponents. Their teaching was self-contradictory, or trivial, or it led to bad morals. Their behavior could be criticized in several ways. Either they preached but did not practice (in which case they were hypocrites), or they lived as they taught and their corrupt lives showed how bad their doctrine was (like the Epicureans). Certain standard categories of vice were automatically attributed to any opponent. They were all lovers of pleasure, lovers of money, and lovers of glory.⁵⁰

Johnson's description of the charge of not practicing what was preached must be modified by the foregoing discussion concerning the nature of what the scribes and Pharisees said. In the context of a school polemic,⁵¹ scripture provides the philosophy that the scribes and Pharisees "say" but do not appropriately interpret or enact.

Powell fails to follow through on the final step in rethinking the leaders' actions. He assumes that they act out of self-interest or self-glorification.⁵² The two examples that are offered in vv. 4-7 do not necessitate that interpretation. Nowhere else in Matthew do we see the leaders acting for any other reason than zeal for scripture (one possible exception is implied in the divorce clause in chapter 5). If the problem is only that they enact scripture in a self-interested manner, then Jesus would need to counter

⁵⁰ Johnson, "Anti-Jewish Slander," 432.

⁵¹ "The main thing such slander signified, therefore, was that someone *was* an opponent. This did not detract from its seriousness. Just because commitments were taken seriously so could others systematically be slandered. The slander was not affected by the facts. A particular Platonist may be a good person, but that does not affect the way Platonists as such are to be described. The purpose of the polemic is not so much the rebuttal of the opponent as the edification of one's own school. Polemic was primarily for internal consumption." Johnson, "Anti-Jewish Slander," 433. Cf. Steve Mason, "Pharisaic Dominance Before 70 CE and the Gospels' Hypocrisy Charge (Matt 23:2-3)," *HTR* 83, no. 4 (1990): 363-81, esp. 381.

⁵² Powell, "Do and Keep," 432.

this attitude, but leave intact their understanding of scripture. This is to claim that their character is bad, but their prioritization of scripture is otherwise acceptable. I argued in chapter 3 that there is a more substantial problem involved, one that indicates just the opposite reality. The two examples in vv. 4-7 are in keeping with the argument that claimed that the leaders were zealous for scripture but that their devotion to God did not include a balance with love for others. In fact, their zeal for God could lead to neglect and harm of others.

The first example in v. 4 points this out. They bind and lay heavy burdens on others but do not raise even a finger to help with the load. The leaders are portrayed as being willing to go to the effort of getting baggage ready and even going to the trouble of loading it on others, but once it is in place they are unwilling to help move the load. Nowhere is it indicated that they are unwilling to carry the same baggage. The confrontation over hand washing in 15:1-9, and Jesus' denunciation of their tithing practices in 23:23, assumes that the leaders are engaged in difficult practices and desire that others act accordingly. Their devotion to God does not take into account the impact that that devotion may bring to relations with others. Jesus' criticism is not that the "heavy burdens" are even bad. Contrary to Harrington, I argue that this example does not necessarily offer a critique to the difficulty of the "Pharisaic/rabbinic application of priestly purity laws to everyday life and to their stress on tithing and Sabbath observance."⁵³ It is the leaders' unwillingness to lighten or help carry the load that is the target of criticism.⁵⁴ There is no reason to impute hard-heartedness to them. Filson takes

⁵³ Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991), 320.

⁵⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 271-72.

the point too far in claiming that they have the capacity for sympathy and compassion but do not act with grateful willing obedience.⁵⁵ This is more psychologically interior than the text can support. They appear to assume, as 15:1-9 demonstrates, that everyone needs to be as committed to obedience to the law as they are and in the same manner as them. Fenton is certainly incorrect in thinking that the critique is because the scribes and Pharisees have nothing constructive to offer those who have broken the law.⁵⁶ The issue is not about the onerous nature of the law, but about assisting others in carrying it.

The second example implies that the leaders find satisfaction by parading in public and receiving public accolades. This has been seen as a sign that they are glory seekers who prize human opinion over God's.⁵⁷ Matthew never indicates that the leaders act in any fashion that they believe is contrary to proper devotion to God. There are two options for why they love to be seen. First, they seek vainglorious adulation for their own benefit. Second, they do great public displays, e.g., broaden the phylacteries and lengthen their fringes, in order to set an example of devotion.⁵⁸ It is not necessary to assume that they are merely for show, but that they also carry significance in the manner that devotion is practiced. They are the epitome of the ones who love God and they need to set a public example for others to follow. The public displays are a mechanism to

⁵⁵ Floyd V. Filson, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960), 243.

⁵⁶ J.C. Fenton, *Saint Matthew*, The Pelican New Testament Commentaries, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), 366.

⁵⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 272-74; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 660; Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 266. Sanders accepts that this is the meaning of the criticism but attributes it to the church rather than to Jesus; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 276-81.

⁵⁸ Schürer, *History*, 479-81.

reaffirm their authority in interpreting the law.⁵⁹ In order to be an effective leader one's deeds need to be seen by humans. The three instances of public attention in 23:5-7 include clothing, places of honor, and salutations and titles. This argument may be seen as an attempt to exonerate the leaders. I have no difficulty believing that some or even large groups of leaders acted for vainglory or that Matthew uses slander to characterize Jesus' opponents as vainglorious. However, my concern is to develop a picture that is consistent with what we find elsewhere in Matthew. Jesus criticizes those who practice their acts of piety to anyone except God. The deeds that are to "so shine that all may see" are those connected to laws about living with one another (5:21-48), whereas doing righteousness to God is to be done in secret (6:1 ff). Matthew does not leave any room for humans to show one another how to love God, except to love one another. This criticism is turned into positive instruction in the next set of verses.

C. Contrast Command

Jesus provides positive instruction in vv. 8-12 to the disciples and crowds that builds on the contrast with the leaders. The instruction has two main facets. First, it sets a behavioral standard for his addressees, the disciples and crowds. Second, the instruction establishes that there is only one model or teacher for that behavior. In the first instance the disciples are contrasted with the leaders and in the second instance Jesus is.

The behavioral standard includes the injunction that the disciples and crowds not allow themselves to be called by such honorific titles as Rabbi, Father or Tutors.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 322.

⁶⁰ R. S. Barbour, "Uncomfortable Words. VIII: Status and Titles," *ExpTim* 82, no. 5 (1971): 137-42; J. D. S. Cohen, "Epigraphical Rabbis," *JQR* 72 (1981): 1-17; J.

Fenton rightly notes that the contrast involves the love of salutary recognition of superiority in the law versus the humble service to one another of brethren under only one teacher.⁶¹ Jesus gives a prohibition regarding each title, which are illustrative rather than comprehensive. He also includes the positive standard that they are to be servants of one another. The structure is as follows:

- 8a command: not "Rabbi"
- 8b reason
- 9a command: not "Father"
- 9b reason
- 10a command: not "Tutors"
- 10b reason
- 11-12 characterization of audience
 - 11 standard: greatest to be servant
 - 12a reversal: one who exalts self will be humbled
 - 12b reversal: one who humbles self will be exalted

The first and third prohibitions are in the aorist subjunctive passive and carry the notion of not allowing oneself to be called by a particular title. This involves both activity, "not allowing," and passivity, "being called." The hearers are not to allow themselves to fall into the same trap as the scribes and Pharisees (v. 7). The second prohibition is an aorist subjunctive in the active voice. It is directed against initiating an improper relationship rather than being the recipient of someone else's initiation.

Duncan M. Derrett, "Mt 23:8-10: A Midrash on Is 54,13 and Jer 31,33-34," *Biblica* 62 (1981): 372-86; J. Donaldson, "The Title Rabbi in the Gospels," *JQR* 63 (1972): 287-91; R. C. Fuller, "Call None Your Father on Earth," *Scripture* 5 (1952): 103-04; Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 321, 323; J. R. Michaels, "Christian Prophecy and Matthew 23:8-12: A Test Exegesis," in *SBL 1976 Seminar Papers* (Missoula: Scholars, 1976), 305-10; W. S. Reilly, "Titles in Mt 23,8-12," *CBQ* 1 (1939): 249-50; H. Shanks, "Is the Title 'Rabbi' Anachronistic in the Gospels," *JQR* 53 (1963): 337-45; H. Shanks, "Origins of the Title Rabbi," *JQR* 59 (1968): 152-57; J. T. Townsend, "Matthew XXIII.9," *JTS* 12 (1961): 56-59; B. W. Winter, "The Messiah as Tutor: The Meaning of *kathegetes* in Matthew 23:10," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42 (1991): 151-57.

⁶¹ Fenton, *Saint Matthew*, 367.

The rationale stems from Jesus' perception of who the disciples and crowds are, or should be.

- 8b for one is your teacher, but all of you are brothers
- 9b for one is your father in heaven
- 10b for one is your tutor, the Christ

The parallelism is broken in the first reason statement.⁶² Many have noted what appears to be a move from a hierarchical to an egalitarian community definition in v. 8b. This is picked up again in vv. 11-12 but is absent in 9b and 10b.⁶³ There is, however, little elsewhere in Matthew that points to organizational structure. What appears here is a concern for serving others as opposed to any sense of self-service. Hierarchical and egalitarian organizational structures may be either self-serving or other-serving.

Jesus characterizes the audience, in vv. 11-12, perhaps not as they are, but as they should be. The contrast drawn with the scribes and Pharisees emphasizes service for others. Humility is a part of service, but humility is not being contrasted with pride.⁶⁴

⁶² "The breaks in the pattern are: (a) the emphatic use of the pronoun at the beginning of v. 8, used for rhetorical effect (directness) and to show a shift from the preceding; (b) in vv. 8 and 10 the word 'one' is arranged chiastically; (c) the forbidden title stands in the first position in v. 9; (d) also in v. 9 there is a shift from passive to active voice in the imperative; (e) a shift in the form of the title occurs in v. 8 from 'Rabbi' to 'teacher'; (f) the forbidden title occurs in the plural in v. 10." Viviano, "Social World," 8.

⁶³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 275-80; Derrett, "Mt 23:8-10: A Midrash on Is 54,13 and Jer 31,33-34."; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 660-62; Edgar Krentz, "Community and Character: Matthew's Vision of the Church," in *SBL 1987 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1987), 565-73; Viviano, "Social World". Gundry suggests that while ἀδελφοί may signify an egalitarian community that does not allow titular distinction within the community, it also provides the transition to the term "father" in the next prohibition. The second prohibition therefore builds upon the familial terminology and commands the "brothers" not to call anyone outside the group "father". Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 457-59.

⁶⁴ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 661.

The point here is not to deny that the Christian community has teachers but rather to put up a barrier against the elevation of some above others and the pride that so naturally accompanies such differentiation.

The major failure of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew is that they do not serve others. The important feature of the contrast is that Jesus is calling them into service for one another as the mark of greatness. "Whoever is greatest among you shall be your servant" is not a statement of reversal of the current greatness of the audience. Rather, as in Mt 18 where Jesus uses a series of statements and parables to address the question of who is the greatest, here Jesus makes a programmatic statement about greatness and follows it up with two statements that highlight the reversals that will come from it. The translation could be worded "whoever will be greatest among you will be your servant." The first statement of reversal shows what will happen if greatness is striven after. The second statement shows the unexpected reversal for those who will indeed humble themselves. The point made in this characterization goes beyond the reversals and strikes at the heart of how the audience is to know and show that they are God's people: they are to serve one another. Patte is near the mark when he claims that the leaders have a false view of authority, but misses when he states that they strive to maintain authority for themselves and to make sure that others acknowledge it.⁶⁵ The issue is not that they have or want authority, but how it is gained: by loving and serving one another. This is the heart of the contrast.

The second facet of the instruction in vv. 8-12 is that there is in fact only one teacher.⁶⁶ The christological significance is that the Christ is their teacher. This has

⁶⁵ Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 322-323.

⁶⁶ This perspective is argued in Samuel Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher. Didactic Authority and Transmission in Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism and the*

emerged in previous teachings to the disciples. In the mission discourse of Mt 10 Jesus warns them not to expect anything other than what their teacher received (10:24-25).⁶⁷ The question about greatness that arises in Mt 18 yields teaching about service. James and John are subsequently rebuked for wanting positions of greatness and are told that they will need to drink the cup of their master. The master is not one who rules over but who teaches and provides the proper example.

In 23:9b the contrast is drawn between heaven and earth, clearly between the human and the divine. The word order in v. 10b is slightly altered from v.8b and v. 9b but a parallel meaning emerges. In all three reasons (one is your teacher, one is your father, one is your tutor), it is implied that these titles separate people and are only to be applied to the divine.⁶⁸ There is no need for others to lead the disciples and crowds because God is teacher (διδάσκαλος), father (πατήρ), and teacher/tutor (καθηγητής).

Concerning the final term, Winter concluded,

The term should therefore be regarded as a 'functional' one, describing a relationship with a student without in any way defining the level, or nature, of the education in which private instruction was given. This accords well with its occurrence in Matthew 23:10. In verse 8 the relationship between Jesus, the Messiah, and his disciples brooks no intermediary Christian rabbis or schools. He is the διδάσκαλος, and they are all brothers - presumably from one generation to the next. This highly personalized relationship is even further

Matthean Community, Coniectanea Biblica, New Testament Series 24 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994).

⁶⁷ Mt 10:24-25 uses διδάσκαλος "teacher" and κύριος "lord".

⁶⁸ Byrskog draws from the earlier work of Becker when he points out that the threefold formula is reminiscent of the Shema (Num 15:37-41; Dt 6:4-9; 11:13-21). "The pattern of three in 23:8-10 could also anticipate the threefold formula in 28:19. If Becker has not overstated his case, the Shema^c carries a christological dimension. The adherence to Jesus as the only teacher relates to the confession of the one and only God." Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher*, 300. Cf. Daube, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 247-50.

defined in terms of a student to his καθηγητής, where Jesus, the Messiah, alone is to be *the* tutor.⁶⁹

The term καθηγητής signals familiarity with educational categories. This resonates with philosophical biographies that draw attention to the relationship of student and teacher. Socrates, Demonax, and Apollonius each struggle with students who failed to learn their master's ways sufficiently. These students turned to follow other teachers. This course of action eventually brought them into conflict with their former teacher. These conflicts emphasize that it is not tenable to have more than one teacher. This means that, for Matthew, a new community is formed around the Teacher, the Father, the Christ, i.e., "the one".⁷⁰ Any honorific distinction is to be made between God and people, not between people groups, i.e., not between the students. Jesus emphasizes his own role and undercuts the authority of the scribes and Pharisees.

In vv. 2-12 the scribes and Pharisees are contrasted with Jesus' ideal for his community. They are, in one sense, a foil for Jesus' teaching that true authority and knowledge derive from God and are for service in the community. The authority and knowledge of the scribes and Pharisees are shown to be at odds with God's intentions. Their failure to practice service toward others leads to the woes in verses 13-31. The

⁶⁹ Winter, "The Messiah as Tutor: The Meaning of *kathegetes* in Matthew 23:10," 157. Cf. Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher*, 287-90; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 278-79; C. Spicq, "Une Allusion Au Docteur de Justice dans Matthieu XXIII, 10?" *Revue Biblique* 66 (1959): 391-96.

⁷⁰ Derrett, "Mt 23:8-10: A Midrash on Is 54,13 and Jer 31,33-34.,"; Barbour, "Uncomfortable Words," 139. Barbour claims that the issue here is not about titles but about the tradition of the fathers to which scribes and Pharisees appealed. "If so, it would not be a matter of titles officially claimed, so much as the authority to give the true interpretation of the Law. In the new family of those gathered around Jesus, the *υπηγοι* to whom the secrets of the Father's will are revealed, no traditional authority is needed or possible. He who can say 'Abba' to the Father needs no tradition of the fathers."

scribes and Pharisees are, in another sense, not merely foils but represent a real threat to the teaching of Jesus. This conflict is further developed in the woes (13-31), the command (32-36), and the lament (37-39). It will climax as they kill him. Contrast is used in vv. 2-12 to enhance a "not that, but this" pattern for teaching. Jesus' instructions for his audience are made clearer by the contrast with the model of the scribes and Pharisees. This means, in part, that the passage need not be seen as reflecting the situation of a specific audience, but rather is linked back to the life and death of Jesus and to the clarification of his teaching by means of this contrast.

Other interpretive options have failed to highlight the pedagogical style that Matthew uses to establish the fundamental difference in positions between Jesus and the leaders. The method of *synkrisis* is used by Matthew in the earlier narrative and is here used by Jesus. Matthew shows that Jesus can acknowledge the leaders in one aspect while denying their legitimacy in others. Jesus can undercut their system of actions without suggesting that they are morally repugnant. The most critical point that Matthew is showing is that their interpretive approach to scripture does not reflect God's authorized teachers, but that Jesus' approach does.

2. Woes: 23:13-36

(13) But⁷¹ woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven against people; for you yourselves do not enter nor do you allow those who are trying to enter to go in.⁷²

⁷¹ The $\delta\epsilon$ is omitted in some manuscripts (\aleph^* K W Γ Δ 0104 0107 0133 0138 28 565 700 1241 1424 *pm fh sy^{c.p.h} sa^{ms} bo^{pl}*). It provides an appropriate contrast between the instructions in vv. 8-12 and this section of woes.

⁷² The only significant textual variation in this section is the omission of verse 14. Metzger makes the following observation about that text. "That ver. 14 is an interpolation derived from the parallel in Mk 12.40 or Lk 20.47 is clear (a) from its absence in the earliest and best authorities of the Alexandrian, the Western, and the Caesarean types of text, and (b) from the fact that the witnesses which include the

(15) Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you cross the sea and land to make one proselyte, and when it happens⁷³ you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

(16) Woe to you blind guides who say, "Whoever should swear by the temple, it is nothing; but, whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound." (17) Fools and blind people, for which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctified⁷⁴ the gold? (18) And, "Whoever should swear by the altar, it is nothing; but, whoever swears by the gift upon it is bound." (19) Blind people, which is greater, the gift or the altar that made the gift holy? (20) Therefore, the one who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything upon it. (21) And the one who swears by the temple swears by it and the one who dwells in it. (22) And, the one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by the one who sits on it.

(23) Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy and faith. These you ought to have done and not neglected those. (24) Blind guides, the ones straining out a gnat but swallowing a camel.

(25) Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you clean the outside of the cup and plate, but inside they are full of plunder⁷⁵ and lack of control.⁷⁶ (26) Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup so that the outside may also be clean.

(27) Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like whitewashed tombs that outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly they are full of the bones of the dead and all uncleanness. (28) And you likewise outwardly appear righteous to people, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

(29) Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the graves of the righteous. (30) And you say,

passage have it in different places, either after ver. 13 (so the Textus Receptus) or before ver. 13." Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 60.

⁷³ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 664.

⁷⁴ The past tense is found in older MSS (ⲛ B D Z 892) and the present participle is found in later MSS (C L W Θ 0133 0138 f^{1.13} TR co).

⁷⁵ The term ἀρπαγῆς can refer to either the character of greediness or to the object that has been plundered. The two terms ἀρπαγῆς and ἀκρασίας are undoubtedly complementary and can refer both to what is taken and to the lack of self-control that leads to it being plundered.

⁷⁶ "A few MSS (C K Γ sy^p) have ἀδικίας, 'unrighteousness'; W (sy^h) has ἀκρασίας ἀδικίας, 'unrighteous self-indulgence'; S lat sy⁸ co have ἀκαθαρσίας, 'uncleanness'; and M has πλεονεξίας, 'covetousness.' The MS evidence favoring ἀκρασίας, 'self-indulgence,' is extremely strong by comparison." Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 664.

"If we had lived in the days of our fathers we would not have been sharers with them in the blood of the prophets." (31) Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of the ones who murdered the prophets. (32) Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. (33) Serpents, brood of vipers, how shall you escape the judgment of Gehenna? (34) On account of this I send to you prophets and wisemen and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town (35) in order that upon you may come all the righteous blood being shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zecharias son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. (36) Truly I say to you, all of this will come upon this generation.

The woe sayings function as a device to summarize the complaints against the opponents.⁷⁷ They also heighten the emotional appeal to the audience to turn from the alternative that the opponents represent. Woes are a fundamental part of the figure of the prophet (Amos 5:18-20; 6:1-7; Isaiah 5:8-10, 11-14, 18-19, 20, 21, 22-24; 10:1-3; 28:1-4; 29:1-4, 15; 30:1-3; 31:1-4; Micah 2:1-4).⁷⁸ The sayings do not merely list the charges as developed earlier in the narrative. They are colorful means to express critical issues that Jesus has with the scribes and Pharisees. This section is composed of seven woe sayings. Garland disagrees that the seventh woe should be treated as the same as the other six for two reasons. First, he claims that it does not share the same clear ending, but he does not describe what would indicate a clear ending.⁷⁹ Second, he claims that, unlike the other six, it has a "tortuous logic."⁸⁰ It is true that it ends with a command (vv. 32-36), but this is an appropriate way to conclude the indictment against the leaders as will be shown below.

⁷⁷ For a summary list see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 307-08.

⁷⁸ Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 327.

⁷⁹ Garland, *Intention*, 166.

⁸⁰ Garland, *Intention*, 163.

Each of the woes begins with the formula: woe + titles. The titles all refer to the scribes and Pharisees. The third woe addresses them in a more derogatory manner than the others. The repetitive charge of hypocrisy in these woes needs to be informed by the discussion of verses 2-7.⁸¹ The charge of hypocrisy in the first woe stems from the contrast between the duties as agents of God and the charge that they keep everyone away from God, including themselves. The danger is as much in what hypocrites do to others as what they avoid doing. They are not merely harmless fools.

A. First Woe (13)

The reason for the first woe is that the scribes and Pharisees are said to shut the kingdom of heaven so that no one may enter, neither themselves nor those who are truly trying to enter. This seems to contrast strongly with 16:13-20 when Jesus puts the keys of the kingdom into the hands of Peter⁸² and 18:18-20 where he instructs the disciples to bind and loose. The woe does not blame the leaders for a system of righteousness that was too rigorous for any to maintain. Jesus implies that their understanding of righteousness is wrong. They do not follow the right path and consequently they lead all others astray as well. This fits well with the interpretation offered in the previous chapter that they wrongly prioritize scripture. This means that they create an inappropriate system of keeping the law. Those who follow them must be wrong as well.

⁸¹ See page 203ff.

⁸² Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 665. These references to "keys" may play off one another. Peter is handed the keys to the kingdom after he proclaims Jesus the Christ. The scribes and Pharisees shut up the kingdom because they do not believe that Jesus is the Christ.

B. Second Woe (15)

Concrete actions behind the charge of hypocrisy in the first woe are not provided. The second woe is marginally more explicit. The leaders go far and wide to make even one proselyte, yet make converts twice as much the children of hell as the leaders are. It should be clear that proselytizing itself is not the problem. Rather, the "system" into which they are being brought is said to be the problem.⁸³ The leaders are leading people astray by bringing them to their notions of religious duty.⁸⁴ The irony of this woe is heightened by the previous woe in which Jesus portrays the leaders as being locked out of the kingdom of heaven yet here are making more proselytes to be like themselves. The phrase "twice the sons of hell" could refer to the bad predicament of the proselyte who has a teacher who cannot get into the kingdom either. It could also be a reference to proselytes who become even more zealous ("twice as much") than their teachers.⁸⁵ This should not be ruled out, but it must be connected with the idea that their stance, not their zeal, is the problem.

C. Third Woe (16-22)

The third woe attacks the shift of true religious duty to improper spheres. This woe is significantly longer than the first two. The titles change from "scribes and

⁸³ Part of the problem is that the proselytes of the scribes and Pharisees would likewise reject Jesus as Christ. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 287. They also indicate that προσήλυτος refers to a full convert who would be expected to follow the law (p. 288).

⁸⁴ John Nolland, "Proselytism or Politics in Horace Satires 1, 4, 138-143?," *Vigiliae Christianae* 33, no. 4 (1979): 347-55; Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 228-35; Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ: Volume III.1*, Revised English, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar and Matthew Black (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 150-76.

⁸⁵ Hans Scharen, "Gehenna in the Synoptics," *BSac* 149 (1992): 465.

Pharisees" to "blind and fools." The image of the blind one who cannot see what is being done, even though they are supposed to be leading others, makes good sense from the previous woes. Blindness is also important in this woe since the basic charge concerns the ability to judge which are the weightier matters in God's reckoning. The structure of the passage is as follows:

- 16a woe
- 16b-22 reason
- 16b characterization
 - 1. swear by temple: not binding
 - 2. swear by gold in temple: binding
- 17 contrast question: which is greater
- 18 characterization
 - 1. swear by altar: not binding
 - 2. swear by gift on altar: binding
- 19 contrast question: which is greater
- 20-22 summary position
 - 1. swear by altar: it and all on it (it & lesser)
 - 2. swear by temple: it and the one in it (it & lesser)
 - 3. swear by heaven: throne of God and God (it & greater)

The leaders are accused of favoring the less important items over the more critical items. This is accented by the repetition of the question, "which is greater?" Sigal makes the observation that the principle of *lifnim meshurat hadin* entails going beyond the boundary of the law. He argues that the use of this principle lies behind 5:33-37 concerning oaths as may be the case here.⁸⁶ Deeds may certainly exceed the law if doing the law would be less righteous. Gundry notes, in contrast to Sigal, that the practice of swearing by the less important object does not exceed the law, but carefully circumvents swearing by that over which one has no control.

Behind the Pharisaical scribal teaching on oaths lies the rationale that a creditor cannot place a lien on the Temple or the altar. The Temple and the altar provide no surety, therefore, and make oaths taken in their name meaningless. But a

⁸⁶ Sigal, *Halakah of Jesus*, 74-77.

creditor might well claim the gold dedicated by his debtor to the Temple or the gift offered by his debtor on the altar. Jesus' charging the scribes and the Pharisees with hypocrisy in making these distinctions has nothing to do with approval or disapproval of oaths as such. In other words, the charge of hypocrisy in oaths does not contradict the total prohibition of oaths in 5:33-37.⁸⁷

Here Jesus indicates the inherent problem in swearing oaths, i.e., they involve shifting responsibility to another and the exceptions that were allowed were deceiving.⁸⁸ The two characterizations in v. 16b and v. 18 are summarized and put in proper perspective in vv. 20-22. The accusation initially seems to make a contrast between parts of the cultus that are more binding than God is. However, the process of swearing at all ultimately implicates God in matters that are human responsibility. He points out that when one offers an oath it is ultimately based on God as the one who binds the oath.⁸⁹ Shifting one's own responsibility to gold, the altar, the temple, God, or any other thing or person is not more, but less righteous. This coincides with the teaching on oaths in 5:33-37. One who commits to an action is bound by one's self and by God.

D. Fourth Woe (23-24)

The fourth woe continues the theme of "weightier matters." The scribes and Pharisees are condemned not because they meticulously tithe very small food products,⁹⁰ but because they ignore important issues of justice, mercy and faith.⁹¹ Jesus

⁸⁷ Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 463. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 289-93. They are rightly more cautious than Gundry about whether "the gold" refers to a gift made or to holy utensils. See also the helpful overview in Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 51-57, as well as Bruce Chilton, "Forgiving at and Swearing by the Temple," *Forum* 7 (1991): 45-50; Daniel R. Schwartz, "Viewing the Holy Utensils (P. Ox. V, 840)," *NTS* 32 (1986): 153-59.

⁸⁸ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 669.

⁸⁹ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 670.

⁹⁰ See Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 43-48.

acknowledges that their tithing practice is acceptable, but that alongside it in the proverbial balance was a heavier and therefore more important object. This recalls Matthew's use of Hosea 6:6 discussed in the previous chapter and perhaps relies on Micah 6:8.⁹² Jesus portrays them as viewing the scales being weighted in the opposite direction. The charge of blindness is appropriate to the image of judging the relative weight of items on scales. This woe is the clearest contrast between acts zealously done to show devotion to God that are done without any thought given to the more significant acts that ought to be done to humans. Jesus continues the rebuke with a hyperbole. He likens their focus on the finer details to the detriment of the bigger issues as being like one who is straining to keep out a little gnat⁹³ while gulping down an entire camel without notice.

E. Fifth Woe (25-26)

At first glance the fifth woe might appear to hinge on an interpretation of purity laws.⁹⁴ Maccoby argues that purity rites played little or no part in this woe.⁹⁵ Rather, the reference is to the act of physically washing dishes that was done by immersing vessels into the water in order to get the inside clean. If the inside of a cup was cleaned in this

⁹¹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 293-96.

⁹² See p. 155ff.

⁹³ On the importance of straining impure insects from wine see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 295-96; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 464; Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 199-205.

⁹⁴ Schürer, *History*, 475-78.

⁹⁵ Maccoby faults Neusner for wanting to find Mishnaic purity concerns in cases where it is not warranted. "Washing" need not refer to the manner in which objects are made pure and how purity is transmitted, i.e., from the inside out or the outside in, Hyam Maccoby, "The Washing of Cups," *JSNT* 14 (1982): 3-15.

manner, the outside would naturally be cleaned as well. Maccoby goes too far when he suggests that the practice has no references to purity, especially since the issues between Jesus and the opponents in Matthew are all related to law. Sanders, in a discussion of handwashing, argues that a concern with cups was related to fly-impurity.

The hands may have touched a dead insect, and if there is liquid on the outside of the cup, the impurity would be mediated to the cup via the liquid. The Hillelites were not worried about the outside of the cup, but the Shammaites were. It may follow that they would have washed the outside of the cups before using them. We should note that, if a fly fell into a cup and died, the cup should be broken (if earthenware) or washed (if of wood; Lev. 11:32f). Some were worried about conveying impurity to an otherwise pure cup.⁹⁶

One need not draw too tight a distinction between washing for purity and for cleansing purposes. The point either way is that the inside is being ignored. Neusner made this point central when he argued that Jesus' position reflects a Hillelite stance in contrast to the Shammaite position that held that the purity of either the inner or outer part of a vessel had no effect on the other part.⁹⁷ Jesus makes the connection between the cups and who the leaders are. The purity debate is used to illustrate a moral matter, as Neusner observed.⁹⁸ The cups are full of robbery and lack of control, both human actions. The cup becomes a figure for the leaders.⁹⁹ This indicates that they do not

⁹⁶ Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 39. Davies and Allison disagree with Neusner's argument that the passage concerns purity on the grounds that it ignores the metaphorical use of the cup and because the tradition-history offered "is without compelling support". Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 298.

⁹⁷ Jacob Neusner, "'First Cleanse the Inside': The 'Halakhic' Background of a Controversy-Saying," *NTS* 22 (1976): 493-94.

⁹⁸ Neusner, "'First Cleanse the Inside'," 494. Neusner argues that while the debate concerned inner and outer parts of a vessel the law was really about people and their moral character.

⁹⁹ Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 466. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 298.

appropriately focus on transforming relations with others. The logic of this woe is similar to the fourth woe. The scribes and Pharisees neglect weightier issues. In this case the weightier issues are those that are internal. Impurity within the cup would also make the contents impure. If Jesus is only referring to cleanness then the point is also that they ignore that which is passing on contamination. They favor external purity (ritual or otherwise) more than internal purity. Woes 3-5 all share the common theme of judging that which is weightier.

F. Sixth Woe (27-28)

The sixth and seventh woes use the image of tombs and continue the contrast between what is inside and outside. The sixth woe is framed as a simile. The scribes and Pharisees are likened to a tomb that has been polished¹⁰⁰ or painted¹⁰¹ on the outside but has nothing but decay and death on the inside. Hypocrisy is not here tied to a contrast between the inner psychological life and outer ethical life of the leaders. Rather, their inability to rightly judge their own state has made them become that which they strenuously avoid: impure. They think that their actions are showing honor, but they fail to take into account the fact that the system they espouse is impure by God's standard (as articulated by Jesus). This change to a simile marks the continuing shifts throughout the woes to become more and more pointed about who they are. They are "actors" who

¹⁰⁰ Samuel Tobias Lachs, "On Matthew 23:27-28," *HTR* 68, no. 3 (1975): 385-88.

¹⁰¹ Garland, *Intention*, 157. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 300-02; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 466-67. Davies notes that tombs were whitewashed "not to increase their beauty but to warn people of the danger." Margaret Davies, *Matthew* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 161. This explanation does not fit well with the accusation that the tombs are made beautiful, not that they are marked with warning signs.

do not know the mind of the author and therefore essentially have the power of the script, i.e., the law, stripped from them. They are lawless hypocrites.

G. Seventh Woe (29-36)

The seventh and final woe represents a critical development in this discourse. Jesus began the woes with references to proselytizing that was ineffective because the leaders themselves were not on track. The middle woes clarified that the problem concerned an inability to make proper judgments about the law and God's will. The seventh woe then builds on these and begins to set the stage for the leaders' attack on Jesus in the subsequent trial and crucifixion.

The reason for the woe is set up with a statement of the leaders' actions honoring the prophets and the righteous.¹⁰² Jesus then supplies a hypothetical speech for the scribes and Pharisees that amounts to a justification of their righteousness by contrasting themselves with their forefathers. But, Jesus uses this justification to show how simply being the sons of murderers incriminates them rather than affording them justification.¹⁰³ The logic is not tortuous. Jesus initially relies on the identification of their fathers' (i.e., ancestors') actions rather than on the actions of the scribes and Pharisees. But Jesus' complaint is with the opponents at hand in the scribes and Pharisees. He has argued that their actions do not substantiate a claim of righteousness. The seventh woe makes sense at the end of the woes. The scribes and Pharisees "admit" that their ancestors killed the prophets, but that they would not act as their ancestors had. The admission is that they

¹⁰² David Hill, "Dikaioi as a Quasi-Technical Term," *NTS* 11 (1965): 296-302.

¹⁰³J. Duncan Derrett offers an interesting conjecture on a reconstruction of an Aramaic word play on "build and "sons"; J. Duncan M. Derrett, "You Build the Tombs of the Prophets (Lk. 11:47-51, Mt. 23:29-31)," in *Studia Evangelica IV*, ed. Frank M. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 187-93.

are the descendants of people who committed such acts and are thereby implicated in their acts. Jesus uses the logic that children follow in the footsteps of their parents.¹⁰⁴

Jesus concludes the woe by demanding that they prove their true character as he sees it: they are a murderous group who rejects God's chosen ones. In this command Jesus is forcing the subplot against him along its path. This is not the first prolepsis about Jesus' demise (10: 16-25; 16:21-23; 17:12, 22-23; 20: 17-19). In each case the events that are foretold are to be done at the hands of people who are not being addressed, i.e., Jesus tells the disciples that the leaders will kill him. He does not directly tell this to the leaders. The command in v. 32 serves to fix firmly for the disciples and crowds the nature of the opposition to Jesus. The structure of this section of the woe passage is as follows:

- 32 Command: Fill up
- 33 Rhetorical question: Inescapability of judgment and the initiating action
- 34-35 Description of fulfillment
 - 34 how it will happen
 - 35 result of their actions
- 36 Affirmation of events to come

The command to "fill up, then, the measure of your fathers" is balanced in v. 36 with "all of this will come upon this generation". Contrary to Harrington, the command to fill up the measure of the fathers does not imply a measure or quota of evil that must be completed before the end arrives.¹⁰⁵ Jesus has already claimed that they are really no different from their fathers, therefore, he is demanding that for once their actions must coincide with their nature as murderers of God's righteous ones. The command derives from the woe statement. What will come upon them is not merely judgment, but also

¹⁰⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 303-07.

¹⁰⁵ Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 328.

that they "fill up" who they are as sons of their murderous fathers. This means that they are to take on the likeness or qualities of the parent.¹⁰⁶ They too are to kill a prophet sent from God.

The opponents are charged with manifesting the same negative attitude toward God's messengers as was exhibited by those who killed the prophets of earlier generations. The legendary tradition that Israel had always persecuted its prophets was well established in first-century Judaism (see comments on 21:33-46). In rejecting Jesus and his disciples, the opponents are continuing the tradition. They "fill up the measure," that is, complete the number of acts of rebellion that will bring upon them God's final judgment.¹⁰⁷

The leaders have a role to play from which they cannot escape and Jesus is forcing them towards it. The two systems of speaking for God must clash and someone will necessarily die. Winkle argued that this section should be viewed in light of Jeremiah 7 and 26 that also concern the murder of prophets and judgment against the temple.¹⁰⁸

This corresponds with the expectations of conflicts for prophets. The identification of Abel and Zechariah is unclear except that they somehow both represent innocent blood that was shed and that is now being called into account.¹⁰⁹ While the specifics elude the modern reader it is plain that Jesus is drawing a parallel between the activities of the fathers and the activities of the sons. I would argue against Newport that there is little in vv. 32-36 to support its separation from the woe statements by positing an

¹⁰⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 315; Davies, *Matthew*, 162; Robert J. Miller, "The Rejection of the Prophets in Q," *JBL* 107, no. 2 (1988): 225-40.

¹⁰⁷ Hare, *Matthew*, 270-71.

¹⁰⁸ Ross E. Winkle, "The Jeremiah Model for Jesus in the Temple," *AUSS* 24, no. 2 (1986): 155-72.

¹⁰⁹ Davies, *Matthew*, 163; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 316-19; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 470-72; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 674-78; Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 328-29; J. M. Ross, "Which Zachariah?" *IBS* 9 (1987): 70-73.

eschatological redactor.¹¹⁰ The escalating conflict between two ideological camps, if it becomes threatening enough, may lead one group to raise the specter of civil disruption because of the opponent's teaching. The reference to murder does not need to be seen as reflecting the circumstances of the audience. It reflects, on the contrary, the reality that tensions may rise to the level that one party attempts to kill the other. This is affirmed in both comparative biographies and in Old Testament references to the prophets. The prophets were killed for opposing the teachings of other prophets. Each side purported to be speaking as God's mouthpiece. There is a logical connection between the murderous activities of the fathers who persecuted and killed the prophets to those sons who will persecute prophets, wise men and scribes. The addition of wise men and scribes does not necessitate a church context. Crucifixion need not refer to Jesus' death, though Matthew's audience should certainly hear that too. "Kill" and "crucify" refer to acts they commit directly and others done in complicity with Roman authorities. They are unable to escape responsibility for being a murderous generation in either case. The statement in vs. 34, "on account of this I send ...", likewise does not necessitate the division Newport posits. Jesus condemns his opponents and claims that they will not escape judgment, in part because they do have witnesses sent to them and upon whom they will demonstrate their true character as a murderous generation. Jesus' conflict with them involves the question of who speaks for God and surely would include the responsibility to send additional messengers to make his point. The audience can, therefore, make connections either with Jesus' day or to their own if they are experiencing persecution as an ongoing reality.

¹¹⁰ See discussion on p. 33 ff.

Verse 36 is Jesus' affirmation that the events will affect the lives of the current generation. "This generation" makes most sense in reference to the scribes and Pharisees who will assist in putting Jesus to death and later in persecuting the disciples. The end is imminent. Gundry argues that the pronouncement is non-chronological in that it also covers all the "unbelieving and perverted" in Israel's history.¹¹¹ It is, however, not necessary to go beyond Jesus' contemporaries for a suitable audience.¹¹² The phrase "this generation" also appears in 12:38-45 where Jesus claims that others will rise up against "this generation" with judgment and condemnation. The scribes and Pharisees are clearly the referent in that instance. The occurrence here in 23:36 is parallel since the antecedents to "this will come" are the statements in 23:32-35 that they are to fill up the measure of their fathers, that they cannot escape being sentenced to hell and that they will kill and persecute God's messengers. Jesus reinforces that they are the generation who instead of being justified by their rejection of their fathers' ways (23:30) are judged by continuing on the same path. This sense of judgment is found earlier in 12:22-32, 33-37, 38-45; 21:28-32, 33-41; 22:1-14.

The woe sayings summarize the key points of Jesus' opposition to the leaders without enumerating each issue from earlier passages. The following chart is from Davies and Allison.¹¹³

	<i>Matthew 23</i>	<i>Matthew 1-22</i>
Woes upon contemporaries	vv. 13, 15, etc.	11.21; 18.17 (<i>bis</i>)
Condemnation of Pharisaic hypocrisy	vv. 13, 15, 25-8	15.7; 22.18

¹¹¹ Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 472.

¹¹² Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 319.

¹¹³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 307-08.

Failure of scribes and Pharisees to enter the kingdom	v. 13	5.20
The Pharisees as blind guides	vv. 16, 24	15.14
Refutation of Pharisaic halakha	vv. 16-22	15.1-11; 16.5-12
To swear by one thing is to swear by another	vv. 16-22	5.33-7
The Pharisees neglect the more important and heed the less important	vv. 23-4	12.1-8; 15.1-20
The Pharisees are deficient in mercy	v. 23	9.10-13; 12.1-8
Condemnation of discrepancy between outward appearance and impure inward state	vv. 27-8	6.1-18
The Pharisees are a 'brood of vipers' destined for hell	v. 33	3.7
The scribes are murderers	vv. 31-33	16.21; 20.18

Woes 1-4 correspond to my previous analysis of Scripture as Topic in chapter three. The first two woes indict the leaders for the wrong way of understanding the law and then leading others astray as well. The third, fourth and fifth woe sayings pick up specific exemplary issues of the law, oaths, tithing and washing, respectively. In each of these three woe sayings the contrast is made between their cultic norm that fails to recognize the priority of relations to humans as the means to right relations with God. Jesus affirms tithing specifically, but only when it is maintained within the larger priorities of scripture that holds the priority of human relations. Woes 5-7 correspond to Leaders as Topic in chapter three. The fifth saying introduces the split between appearances and

reality, i.e., the outward and the inward, that is then transformed in the sixth woe saying to be about the leaders as impure tombs. The external appearance belies the corruption that is the reality. The seventh woe saying uses this image of the tombs to note that the leaders perform honorific actions that implicate them in actions against God's true spokesmen. Jesus concludes the sayings with the command that they do the same as their fathers and kill God's present spokespeople, chief of whom is Jesus. The opposition between Jesus and the leaders is fundamental and irreconcilable. The woe sayings reflect the issues as drawn up in the previous chapter. They are about the law, the opponents and Jesus.

In vv. 34-35 Jesus even goes so far as to provide the opportunity for the leaders to play their role. The notion of role-playing is all the more convincing when we remember that Jesus is talking to the scribes and Pharisees in their absence but in the presence of another audience. This is not, nor has it ever been, a true dialogue complete with opportunities for rebuttal. Jesus, as speaker, is in charge of all the action and characters in the discourse. In v. 34 he describes how they will fulfill their role. In v. 35 he describes the result of their actions back upon themselves. It is as if he is the poet determining how the actors (ὑποκριταί) are to act out God's will. Jesus is the center of the drama. For others to know God they must understand how God is revealed in Jesus as the true model, or true teacher, beset upon by other false teachers. Jesus directs the action against himself in order to draw out the character of the opponents who are to kill him. His own death is a key feature that makes known God's will (10: 16-25; 16:21-23; 17:12, 22-23; 20: 17-19). I argued in chapter two that this is part of what Matthew's audience would expect from conflict.

3. Lament: 23:37-39

(37) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one killing the prophets and stoning the ones who being sent to you. How often I would have gathered your children as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not. (38) Behold, your house is forsaken to you and deserted. (39) For I say to you, you will not see me from now on until you say, "Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord."

The lament that closes this discourse reveals Jesus' intention for Jerusalem and its people. The strong characterization of the leaders as opposing God's will and the command to fulfill their role combine to make it appear that Jesus is painting them as opponents without hope of redemption. The lament demonstrates Jesus' concern for God's city and God's people. The character of God, demonstrated in the scriptural narratives of God's actions, is the constant call to God's people who have been unfaithful and have opposed God. Jesus takes up this same voice in the lament over Jerusalem.

The structure of the unit is as follows:

- 37a lament
- 37b reason for lament
- 37c Jesus' intentions
- 38 statement of "new" condition
- 39 reason

The reason for the lament is that "they", represented by Jerusalem, are killing God's messengers. Both the scribes and Pharisees and the city of Jerusalem kill God's messengers. Jesus is equating the leaders and the city.¹¹⁴ This is a clear reference back to the command in verses 32-36. It is also another foreshadowing of his death by the hands of Jerusalem's leaders. But why the shift from scribes and Pharisees to Jerusalem? Is there no hope for the scribes and Pharisees, so much so that when lament cannot even be for them but for Jerusalem? Does the problem go beyond merely the scribes and

¹¹⁴ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 680. Hagner extends this to the whole of the Jewish nation over which Jerusalem is the capital.

Pharisees and encompass all those of God's people who reject Jesus as God's chosen one? The lament also seems to extend mercy to any who would accept God's chosen one. We should be cautious about the tendency toward this universalizing interpretation, even though it may be a solid theological position, since it has not been established previously in the narrative. The lament and the offer of mercy are given in the context of a narrower conflict with the leaders. The hope for the people is localized in Jerusalem much the same way that Isaiah focuses his critique and hope through the image of Jerusalem (e.g., Is. 4:2-6; 5:3; 28:16; 30:19; 34:8; 35:10). Jerusalem is more than a symbol for the nation, or perhaps it is better to say "less". Jerusalem is associated with the leaders of the nation from the birth of Jesus, to the time spent on the temple mount, until his trials and death.¹¹⁵ The fate of the nation lies with the leaders as is apparent when they stir up the crowds against Jesus (27:20). The lament over Jerusalem is a lament for the leadership that has not accepted the one sent by the Lord, but who themselves continue to act as if they represent God because their authority is based on their concern for the word of God. They have forfeited their authority, according to Matthew, through their lack of faithfulness to the weightier obligations of the law, i.e., mercy and justice, and by rejecting the one sent by God.¹¹⁶

Jesus' intentions are uncovered with the image of a hen that would care for its brood by gathering them under her wings. Jesus reveals that his intention is not judgment but acceptance and consolation. However, the brood will not accept the invitation. In terms of pathos this undergirds the audience's and readers' acceptance of

¹¹⁵ H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew: In the Revised Standard Version*, New Clarendon Bible, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 187.

¹¹⁶ Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 189.

Jesus' condemnation of the leaders since the leaders have brought tragedy upon themselves despite the goodwill of the protagonist.

A dramatic new condition is proclaimed in v. 38. Their "house" is now forsaken and deserted. The "house" may refer to the nation, to their hopes of Davidic lineage, to the temple, or to the scribes' and Pharisees' way of understanding God's will.¹¹⁷ After the end of the discourse as he and the disciples leave the temple area, Jesus announces that the temple will be thrown down. The destruction of the temple, the city and to some extent the people as they have come to know themselves is not necessarily being announced in v. 38. Newport wrongly stresses that forsaken and deserted mean destruction.¹¹⁸ Those terms simply indicate that God is no longer present in the temple; it is an empty shell. Those who continue to minister there are serving no end. This passage is not *prima facie* evidence of a post-70 date for Matthew. Jesus has consistently critiqued the priority of the temple system over other forms of righteousness. It is not inconceivable to hear him declare God's departure from that system before the destruction of the physical building. The people who pattern their lives after the leaders of Israel who represent the temple system are no longer a special people unto God. Reading "your house" as the house of David harks back to II Samuel 7. This passage contains the statements that God did not desire a house from David but, rather, that God would build David a house, i.e., a lineage. If "house" refers to the hope to be a nation under the political leadership of Davidic kingship, then Jesus could be saying that their hope for an earthly kingdom is without basis. The fact that Matthew

¹¹⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol 3, 322-23; Hare, *Matthew*, 272; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 680-81; Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 329.

¹¹⁸ Newport, *Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, 153-154.

has couched the gospel in terms of a Davidic lineage for Jesus should not go unnoticed. The lament may indicate that now that God has forsaken and deserted the temple it will not be long until the temple itself is destroyed, as in Ezekiel's vision of God leaving the temple (Ezekiel 10:18-22; 11:22-25). So too, Jesus leaves the temple not to return. He, not the temple, embodies the reality that "God is with us". By rejecting Jesus, the leaders continue to prove themselves as heirs of their fathers; they are "this generation" that brings destruction upon itself and the nation. Matthew holds that God's plan for the world beyond Israel continues in the new condition Jesus represents.

The reason for abandonment is that the leaders must come to God who will not return to them until they turn to him. Verse 39 is a challenge for the leaders to repent. Allison makes four pertinent observations regarding the conditional nature of this verse: first, the final redemption as contingent is well attested in Jewish sources; second, ἕως can indicate a contingent state in which the realization of the apodosis is dependent on the realization of the protasis and is not just a temporal sequence; third, the structure of v. 39 argues for a conditional interpretation; and fourth, the conditional avoids the pitfalls of the alternatives of unqualified judgment or joy.¹¹⁹ The people are responsible for their decision to hear and respond to Jesus.

The lament over Jerusalem is not primarily about the judgment of the people. The main thrust is that Jesus takes on the persona of God who calls the wayward people back. Mt 23 summarizes the conflict with Israel's leaders who are unfit spokesmen for

¹¹⁹ Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Matt. 23:39 = Luke 13:35b as a Conditional Prophecy," *JSNT* 18 (1983): 39.

God because they do not understand the will of God either in the law or in the person and teaching of Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Scholarship on Mt 23 has struggled with the polemical language of the text. Drawing from works in rhetoric, narrative and genre studies I have attempted to articulate a coherent framework for understanding Mt 23 that assumes a general audience who are given codes within the text to decipher the language of conflict. The thesis of this study is that conflict, polemics and legal arguments in Matthew's biography of Jesus are structured coherently and consistently within the narrative and exhibit characteristics that would make the narrative comprehensible to a broad audience who share similar literary presuppositions. A view has been presented that demonstrates continuity and consistency from pre-understanding to development of conflict to the major summary statement in Mt 23. The passage does not require special localized knowledge of conflict to provide clues to its parts. Conflict has been used to separate two ways of interpreting scripture and thereby the will of God. Conflict allows for the critical points of similarity and difference to be sharply defined. Jesus is characterized, in part, in contrast to his opponents. The picture of Jesus emerges in the framework of a biography, which by its nature presents his character and not merely his teaching. He is the teacher and model of that teaching.

Chapter two developed two areas of comparative reading that provided a set of expectations about how to read the gospel of Matthew. The use of scriptural quotations and allusions provides the expectation that Jesus is the Christ, God's chosen agent, who is set in opposition to God's current spokespeople who have proven unfit. The opposition to Jesus reveals the greater conflict between the leaders and God. This is drawn in particularly strong relief in Mt 22. A selection from the larger biographical tradition was used to demonstrate the expectation of conflict in biographies. Insofar as

the gospels are biography there is an expectation for conflict. Matthew develops the conflict largely in the form of direct speech. Narrative intrusion is minimal except in the birth and death *topoi*. Conflict is shown more than told. In contrast, the biographical tradition largely uses narrated events and statements by the narrator to indicate conflict. Matthew develops the conflict by means of ad hoc legal sorties. These are the means by which the audience understands the nature and reasons for the conflict. So, while the expectation of conflict was set both by scripture and the biographical tradition, analysis of the legal conflicts was needed to advance our study.

In chapter three I examined the conflicts as they took shape in disputes about law, the character of the opposition, and the nature and character of Jesus. Law was the common ground on all three fronts. The enthymeme was used to reconstruct the stated and implied legal arguments of both parties. Jesus argued that his opponents' understanding of law did not reveal the will of God; rather, it obscured it. However, Jesus argued that his teaching and life did properly reveal God. Not only was he the proper interpreter of law, but he embodied it. In order to properly understand the will of God (=law, = scripture) one needs to follow the master who fulfills the demands of scripture.

The expectation and substance of conflict came together in Mt 23. Jesus argues that he is the one true master and guide for those who would be his followers in vv. 2-12. He summarizes his opposition to Israel's leaders in vv. 13-16. He personifies God calling his people to faithfulness in vv. 37-39. This plea extends beyond the leaders to embrace any who might have wanted to follow the leaders' path. He pulls them to law and to himself.

In chapter one I suggested that the search for an audience was also a search for purpose. The turn toward narrative criticism helped understand the dynamics and development of conflict in the text, but runs the risk of forgetting the question of purpose. The multi-disciplinary approach used in this dissertation to analyze Mt 23 suggests that Matthew is a deliberative narrative inviting the reader to rethink how he/she knows and understands God. Matthew presents the most advantageous way of understanding God as following the life of Christ in his teaching and actions. The path represented by the leaders is disadvantageous and puts the adherent in opposition with God. The path to the cross, as the ultimate service of humanity, is ironically the only way to proceed.

Matthew presents Jesus' teachings and deeds as the correct interpretation and embodiment of the equal demands of the law to love God and to love neighbor. Does the use of the biographical format indicate that Matthew believes that Jesus "fulfills" the law in his life and therefore by imitating Jesus one fulfills the law? Does the gospel of Matthew present law transformed partially by biography? Further study is needed on the other sub-plot lines and discourses to determine the answers to these questions; but that is the trajectory of this current study. The lives of the philosophers also point in this direction. If it is found to be true here as well, then we could strengthen the assertion that Matthew wrote a *bios* of Jesus for a broad audience to present Jesus as the appropriate model for understanding and living out the requirements of law, even going so far as to claim that imitating Jesus is fulfilling the law. The implication is that biography becomes the way to interpret and embody law. Those who want to know how to live truly must pattern themselves after the teacher who knows and lives the "highest truth".

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