JESUS' MISSION TO ALL OF ISAEL EMPLOTTED IN MATTHEW'S STORY[1]

Andries van Aarde

University of Pretoria

Abstract

The aim of this article is to argue that, although the "crowd" and the "gentiles" do not fulfill the same character roles in the plot of the Gospel of Matthew as narrative, both groups function together as the object of both the mission of Jesus and that of the disciples in the post-paschal period. The article shows that the function of these two groups is related to the exegetical question as to the relationship between a particularistic "insider" trend (cf. Matt 10:5-6) and a universalistic "outsider" trend (cf. Matt 28:19). It argues against the view that there is a discontinuity between the "Israelite crowd" as the object of the Jesus-commission and the gentiles as the object of the disciple-commission on the post-paschal level. The commission reported in both Matt 10 and Matt 28:16-20 alludes to the mission of Jesus' twelve disciples to the "lost sheep of Israel". This commission is emplotted by means of an analogy between two subplots that are integrated by thematic parallels, cross-references, prospect ion and retrospection. The analogy between the two subplots can be understood by means of the "transparency" concept: the pre-Easter narration (level one) can be seen in the story of the post-Easter faith community (level two) and vice versa.

1. Prologue

Thirteen years ago Graham Stanton (Stanton 1992, 10-12; cf. Strecker 1971, 33; Luomanen 1998, 278; Yieh 2004, 287) argued that in Matthean studies we should abandon concepts such as "true Israel"[2] and even "new Israel".[3] According to Stanton (1992, 11), Matthew rather speaks of a "new people"

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2 See the title of the book of W. Trilling (1970), *Das wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 11.5; 123; 135.3.

3 See Hummel 1966, 156 n. 72, 160-161; Davies 1964, 290. Cf. the implication in Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 119.3; 138.2.

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(Matt 21:43)—"in effect a 'third race' (*tertium genus*) over against both Jews and Gentiles".[4] Yet, he is of the opinion that "Matthew wrote his gospel partly in order to strengthen his readers' resolve to continue to accept Gentiles" (Stanton 1990, 281). From a slightly different perspective, Donald Senior (2001, 18) adduced that Matthew's "ultimate goal was the realization of an ecumenical vision uniting Jewish and Gentile Christians in one community." Anthony J. Saldarini (1992, 1994), however, considered the "Matthean group" as "a fragile minority still thinking of themselves as Jews and still identified with the Jewish community by others". Therefore, speaking of the "Matthean community", Saldarini uses the term "Christian-Jewish" rather than "Jewish-Christian". In the same vein, according to Paul Hertig (1998, 45), "Matthew sought to firmly plant Jewish-Christianity in the soil of Judaism for the sake of the Jews while simultaneously exhibiting the universal nature of Jewish Christianity for the sake of the Gentiles."

Although I agree that the "parting of the ways" between the "Synagogue" and the "Church" was, in Stanton's words, "the eventual result of mutual incomprehension and suspicion", I do not think that a question like the "mission to the Gentiles" was a bone of contention for Matthew as it was for Paul or that the appellation "Israel" should be discarded and so easily be substituted by an amorphous entity such as "people".[5]

My contention is that the "leaders" of the Matthean community tended to neglect and ignore Israelite outcasts and non-Israelites (the "one sheep among the ninety-nine others"; Matt 18:12-14).[6] This state of affairs should largely be ascribed to the split in the post 70 C.E. *ekklēsia* between "leaders" who followed the author (and Jesus), and those who succumbed to the pressure of Pharisaic scribes.[7]

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4 Matt 21: 43 reads: "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation [people / *ethnei*] producing the fruits of it."

5 Despite Matt 4:19 where Peter and Andrew were called "fishers of people / *anthrōpōn*" or Matt 21:43 where God's kingdom is given to *a* "people / *ethnē*".

6 My position is quite different than that of Robert H. Gundry, 2005, 115-116. Gundry denies "an intramural debate with post-70 Judaism" and argues that the use of the term "Jews" in Matthew "stresses a qualitative difference." According to Gundry (2005,119), the "little ones" in Matthew "appear not to be marginal Christians, sinning Christians . . . , but Christians suffering the results of persecution and liable to be caused to sin, i.e., to apostatize under persecution, if their fellow professing Christians do not help them as some (goats) are failing to do though others (the sheep) are helping."

7 Although I am basically in agreement with the following statement of David C. Sim 1996, 198, "Matthew's community is best seen as a self-conscious sect within a very fluid post-war formative Judaism. It had recently split from the synagogue after a period of bitter dispute and was in the process of defining and legitimating its sectarian nature vis-à-vis the parent body," I differ with regard to (1) his remark that "this community perceived

I use the term "Israelites" or "Israelite" instead of "Jews" or "Jewish". The latter is an anachronism. The term "Judean" (not "Jew"), a translation of *Ioudaios*, is a regional designation for an inhabitant of Judea (*Ioudaia*), as distinct from, for example, an inhabitant of Galilee (*Galilaios*) (see Pilch 1997). "Insiders", who supported the post-exilic ideology of the Second Temple (both Judeans and Galileans), referred to themselves as the "people of God" or the "house of Israel" (e.g. Matt 10:6). From the perspective of Israel, "outsiders" were often stereotyped as "non-Israel".[8] They were referred to as *goyim* or *ethnoi*, which is often translated as "Gentiles".[9] From an "in-group" perspective, Matthew did not depict the followers of Jesus as "Christians" but as "people" (*anthrōpoi*, e.g. in Matt 4:19; or *ethnos*, e.g. in Matt 21:43) who constituted an *ekklēsia* (in contrast to a *sunagōgē*). Yet, these "people" were still part of the "house of Israel"—now including the "sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 10:36), an expression in Matthew referring to both the Israelite "crowd" (*hoi ochloi* / *ho ochlos*) and the non-Israelites (*ta ethnē*). According to Saldarini (1994, 33), the expression "crowd" (*ochloi*) and especially the reference to "all the people" (*pas ho laos*) in Matt 27:25 is a "social and political description of the main body of Israel."

In my doctoral dissertation on Matthew (written 1982, published 1994, 80-87) I argued that, although the "Israelite crowd" (*hoi ochloi* / *ho ochlos*) and "the Gentiles" (*ta ethnē*) do not fulfill the same character roles in the Gospel of Matthew, both groups function together as the object of the mission of Jesus and that of the disciples in the post-paschal period.

Yet, the function of the Israelite crowd and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew is related to one of the most difficult exegetical questions in the Gospel of Matthew. This is the problem of the relationship between a *particularistic* "insider" trend (cf. Matt 10:5-6) and a *universalistic*

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itself to be universally hated by the gentile nations" (Sim 1996, 203-4), (2) that the group called the "least" in Matthew were "missionaries" whom the author encouraged because they were rejected (234), and (3) that these "missionaries" were explicitly depicted over against "missionaries" in the Pauline tradition (222-242; see also Sim, 2002).

8 Geographically seen, Galilee and Idumea, which were situated concentrically around Judea, were regarded as regions with a lesser claim to purity than Judea. The reason for this was not only the fact that they were further away form Jerusalem and the temple, but also that they were more populated by "outsiders"—people from "mixed" marriages, that is marriages between Israelites and non-Israelites (*mamzerim*). In spite of this, Idumea and Galilee were still part of the "house of Israel".

9 The term "Christianoi" is a similar example of stereotyping used by Judeans and Romans to refer to Jesus followers in, for example, Syria (see Acts 11:26, which refers to the followers [*mathētai*] of Jesus who were called *christianoi* for the first time [*prōtōs*] in Antioch).

"outsider" trend (cf. Matt 28:19). Some scholars (e.g. Walker 1967, 114f; Hare 1967, 157; Hare & Harrington 1975; Trilling 1964, 95f; Clark 1980, 1)[10] are of the opinion that there is a discontinuity between the "Israelite crowd" as the object of the Jesus-commission and the Gentiles as the object of the disciple-commission on the post-paschal level. According to this view, the Gentiles replaced the Israelite crowd as the object of the mission when the latter, together with their leaders, rejected Jesus at the crucifixion (Matt 27:20-23).[11] My viewpoint links up with what Wim Weren, said about Matthew 10 and Matthew 28:16-20: "This commission forms the pendant of the mission of Jesus' twelve disciples to the lost sheep of Israel in Matthew 10:6" (1979, 106ff, my translation).

There is no convincing argument, whether semantic or contextual, that the phrase "all the people" (*panta ta ethnē*) in Matt 28:19 refers only to non-Israelites. With the expression "all" not only the Gentiles are meant (Hertig 1998, 119). This meaning is in line with the use of the terms "earth" (*gēs*) and "world" (*kosmos*) in Matthew 5:13 where the followers of Jesus are described as the "light for the world" and the "salt of the earth". The concentration of occurrences of the word *pas* ("all") in Matthew 28:16-20 (vv 18, 19, 20) makes the presence of any connotation of limitation in this "commission pericope" unlikely. One can hardly state that *panta ta ethnē* is subject to limitations. In Matt 24:14 where it is said that the preaching of the kingdom should take place "in the whole world" (*en holē tē oikoumenē*) we also find a universal orientation.[12]

In the same vein, Paul Minear (1974, 39f) said three decades ago, that in the Gospel of Matthew there is no abortive ending or replacement of the Israelite crowd as the object of mission. According to him, there are two possibilities. The "crowd" includes non-Israelites during the pre-paschal Jesus-commission or the mission to the "crowd" is the anticipation of the mission to the Gentiles during the post-paschal period.

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10 See also an overview of opinions from Joachim Jeremias till Amy-Jill Levine in the 1993 "Gregoriana" dissertation of Guido Tisera 1993, summarized by Andreas Lindemann 2005, esp. 358.

11 "Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people (*tous ochlous*) to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus . . . They all (*pantes*) said: 'Let him be crucified'" (Matt 27:20, 22).

12 Cf. also the phrase, "the preaching of the gospel in the whole world (*en holō tō kosmō*) . . ." in Matt 26:13. However, Petri Luoamen (1998, 192) stretches this "universal orientation" too far by interpreting Matthew's address to his readers in 24:14 as demanding mercy to "all the needy in the world" (cf. Matt 25:31-46). Luomanen (1998, 267) sees the separation between the "Synagogue" and the "Church" as already completed when the Gospel of Matthew was written.

My own view is that the mission to the "crowd" on the pre-paschal level fulfills the function of a type of *transparency* that relates to the disciple-commission during the post-paschal period. However, there is no reason to argue that the Gentile mission could only have happened after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. .[13] I do not see the "crowd" either as a group that includes the Gentiles or as a group that was replaced by the Gentiles.

As far as the first alternative is concerned, a passage such as the one about the "Canaanite mother" in Matt 15:21-28 is an ample indication that Matthew made a meticulous distinction between the character roles of the Israelite "crowd" (referred to as the "lost sheep of Israel") and the Gentiles (referred to a "Canaanite woman").[14]

As far as the second alternative is concerned, my viewpoint is that the situation to which the Gospel of Matthew would have related—however difficult to construct and however deficient the details—is determined by the premise that the split between the "Synagogue" and the "Church" has not been accomplished yet. On the contrary, there are indications that Matthew experienced the separation with disappointment. The schism apparently contributed to the unforgiving and loveless attitude prevailing in the Matthean community towards the "Israelite crowd" and their "future children" (cf. Matt 27:25), who had rejected Jesus. At the same time Matthew stresses the positive role of the Gentiles (Matt 2:1-12; 8:5-13; 15:21-28; 27:1-19; 27:54), because through it he paints the background against which his narrative should be read. As Jesus, in his mission in *Galilee of the Gentiles* (cf. Matt 4:15), cared for the "Israelite crowd"—without excluding the Gentiles—the followers of Jesus should not neglect the "crowd" in the routine of their mission to the Gentiles.

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13 E.g. Schyler Brown 1980, 213-216. However, my viewpoint does not imply that that the mission to the Gentiles did not intensify in post-paschal time.

14 According to Hare 1993, 176-179, the story of the Canaanite woman can be read in three possible ways: (i) It could be legendary and attributed to the Jesus tradition by "Jewish Christians who were opposed to Gentile mission". (ii) It could be considered as "authentic", saying that "charity begins at home" and "if she passes the test, he will accede to her request." (iii) It is a narrative that should be accepted the way it stands in all its "harshness", presenting Jesus as a "Jewish man of his days, chauvinistic toward women and non-Jews." According to Glenna S. Jackson (2001) the Canaanite community was no longer in existence as a people or a tribe during first century C.E. , but the term was used to denote a disgraced people (see also Jackson 2002; 2003. According to Elaine Wainwright (1994, 651) the identity of the mother is "a disability that made her unclean", because the woman is ethnically categorized as a "Canaanite", a term that makes her "an ethnic and religious outsider" to Judeans. She is thus doubly marginalized by "her gender and her race" and economically by "her class".

The "crowd" is depicted by names such "the least" (*hoi elachistoi*), inter alia in Matt 25:40 and 45; "the little ones" (*hoi mikroi*), inter alia in Matt 18:14; sheep (*probaton*), inter alia in Matthew 18:12; and "the children" (*ta paidia / ta tekna*), inter alia in Matt 18:3 and 15:26 respectively (cf. Wilckens 1975, 379f). In Matt 10:36 and 15:26 the group to which these names refer is associated with the "crowd".

The relationship between Jesus (and his disciples) and the "crowd"/ "people" (*hoi ochloi / ho laos*) thus serves in the post-paschal Matthean community as a sort of *transparency* for the relationship between the "leaders" and outcasts. The correlation of the metaphor "sheep" (*probaton*) (in Matt 9:36[15] and 18:12[16]) with the expressions "the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt 10:6) and "the children" (*ta paidia*) (Matt 18:3-5), as well as with "the little ones" (*hoi mikroi*) (Matt 8:6, 10, and 14; cf. also 10:42), supports the transparency idea. Where the perspective of the leaders of Israel with regard to "the crowds" (*hoi ochloi*) on the pre-paschal level is expressed by such phrases as "sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 10:36), there are, by way of contrast, the terms "brothers" (*adelfoi*) (Matt 18:15, 21, 35) and "fellow servants" (*sundouloi*) (Matt 18:28, 31, 33; cf. also 10:24-25), portraying the relationship between the disciples (probably community leaders) and the "children" / "little ones"/"least" on the post-paschal level. The use of these names ("children" / "little ones" / "least") and the metaphor "sheep" depict the care and love of Jesus, as *God-with-us,* for the outcasts. At the same time the use of these names illustrates the neglect of the outcasts by the "leaders". Minear (1974, 32) puts it as follows: "The basic conflict between Jesus and his adversaries issued from this concern of God for . . . [God's] flock."

Where the term "the crowds" occurs in Matthew, the context is coloured by Jesus' loving concern for them.[17] According to Minear (1974, 36f.):

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15 "When he saw the crowds (*tous ochlous*), he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (*hōsei probate mē echonta poimena*)."

16 "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep (*probata*), and one of them has gone astray, does not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?"

17 Paul Minear 1974, 31, refers to John the Baptist's question as to whether Jesus is the Christ (Matt 12:25): "When John asks the messianic question, Jesus' answer is to point to these very 'ochloi', composed of the blind, lame, leprous, deaf and poor (11:1f.). The inclusion of the last adjective, 'the poor', indicates that 'ochloi' was not defined solely by medical terms. Jesus' mission, though inclusive of healing, was not limited to the care of physical disabilities. In Matthew . . . the healing ministry is closely linked to the feeding ministry, and in both cases the motivation is Jesus' concern for the 'ochloi' . . . Every detail in these stories (Matt 14:14; 15:30) has symbolic overtones."

> It is highly significant that Jesus places even the woes against the scribes and the lament over Jerusalem in the context of teachings addressed simultaneously to the crowds and the disciples. By this device Matthew is surely warning the "mathetai" . . . against multiple forms of hypocrisy . . . These who default . . . become hypocrites (an epithet linking them to the Pharisees; cf. 24:51 and 23:1f.) . . . . (T)he fate of the "mathetai" is determined by their treatment of the least of Jesus' brethren, the "ochloi" (cf. 25:31-46).

The proper relationship between Jesus and the outcasts is reflected in the names *adelfoi* and "fellow servants" (cf., inter alia Matt 12:46-50; 18:15-20, 21-35; 24:49; 25:40). When, with regard to the above-mentioned relationships, the disciples do not comply with expectations, they are depicted by a name such as "wicked servant" (*doulos ponēros* (inter alia in Matt 18:32; 25:36). In contrast with the perspective from which the leaders of Israel (as shepherds) are depicted with regard to outcasts (as sheep), namely that of loveless disregard, the disciples are called upon to "continue" Jesus' *God-with-us* mission. Minear (1974, 31) refers as follows to this "continuing" mission: "[J]esus' instructions of the 'mathetai' in the field of healing and feeding are designed to qualify them to take over his own work vis-à-vis these 'ochloi' after his death . . . . They are those chosen and trained as successors to Jesus in his role as exorcist, healer, prophet and teacher."

2. Matthew's Setting

In light of the above-mentioned prolegomena, I read the Gospel of Matthew as a product of scribal activity within the context of the revitalization of villages after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. It originated from the area of northern Galilee and southern Syria after 70 C.E. (*Galilaia tōn ethnōn*—Matt 4:15). In this setting there was conflict between the "scribe" (*grammateus*),[18] who (from the time of Papias[19]) was called "Matthew", and other village scribes. Both "Matthew" and these other scribes were in the process of establishing the first phase of a Pharisaic rabbinate.[20]

These village communities struggled to come to terms with the loss of both the temple and Jerusalem. Since the city of God no longer existed they had to find God's presence in the environment of villages in northern

18 The author implicitly refers to himself as a scribe ("grammateus") who became a disciple of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 13:52) (cf. also Senior 2001, 18 n.27).

19 See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* III.3.16).

20 See also Schlatter 1963. Schlatter is of the opinion that Matthew was probably an "ethical rigorist" and a representative of the earliest "Christian rabbinate".

Galilee and southern Syria.[21] Amid Roman exploitation, scribes were engaged in village restoration. Conflict existed between two sets of scribes: the Jesus followers, who acknowledged him as messiah and other Israelites who upheld the traditional view of the messiah. The conflict centered on the interpretation of the Torah: Jesus as the "second Moses" who fulfilled the Torah or the traditional Mosaic view as it was regulated by the temple cult. Scribes in the synagogues had a problem with Jesus being regarded as the healing Son of David. They could not concede that he was Israel's "new" Moses. They did not understand that Jesus could "replace the temple" while discarding purity regulations, as demonstrated for example by his act of healing performed on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-32).

The Matthean Jesus' exposure of the power of the Roman Empire (and that of the Temple authorities) does not mean that Gentiles are excluded from God's inclusive *basileia* or that the marginalized now included were only Israelite peasants. The "lost sheep of the house of Israel" pertain to both Israelites and non-Israelites and include people such as:

- the economically poor who are without family support (such as those referred to in Matt 19:21),
- the socially homeless (such as a "partriarchless" woman divorced by her husband in Matt 19:9 and the children without parents mentioned in Matt 19:13-15),
- and ethnic outcasts (such as the Canaanite mother in Matt 15:21-28 and the Roman centurion in Matt 8:5-13 and Matt 27:54).

Seen from the perspective of Israel as a convenantal family, the above group were marginalized and those were the kind of people who could be among the crowds that followed Jesus "from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from across the Jordan" (Matt 4:23). They were those who were granted God's goodness because of God's righteousness, the "last who became the first" (Matt 20:1-15).

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21 The Jesus movement in Galilee and the work of early post-70 C.E. rabbis, called by Richard Horsley (1996, 181-184) the "earlier scribes and sages", can be seen as a "revitalization of village communities". After the temple was destroyed, the Pharisaic scribes and sages reorganized themselves in places such as Jamnia (in Judea), Galilee and Syria. There, in the households of the villages, they tried to duplicate the old value systems of the temple, especially regulations concerning hierarchy in society and the purity ideology of the temple. A similar activity of revitalizing village communities was found among the Jesus groups. The value system they implemented was based on Jesus' alternative understanding of the Torah.

Matthew's account of the intercalculated story of the daughter of the aristocratic official[22] and the hemorrhaging woman in Matt 9:18-26 is "paradigmatic" of the exclusivity of the "old" Israel and the inclusivity of the Matthean community as the "new" Israel. Matthew changes Mark 5:21-42 because his emphasis is not on Jesus' critique against the Torah but on the concretization of God's righteousness as proclaimed in the "law and prophets" (cf. Matt 5:17-20). However, the "scope of the story" should not be interpreted as Jesus' reluctance to criticize the woman whose "faith is mixed with all kinds of mistakes and errors" (as Luz 2001, 42 n.20] assents with Calvin). Indeed, the "healing that the woman experiences is transparent of much more, viz., salvation as every Christian experiences it in life with God (cf. 8:25-26). This story is paradigmatic, therefore of healthy people also" (Luz 2001, 42).[23] Elaine Wainwright (1991, 91) explains it as follows: "The story of the woman of faith stands, therefore, within the narrative of Matt 8 and 9 as an example. Her marginality points to Jesus' healing of those who are most marginal in society, and his restoring of her to new life is a manifestation of the liberating and inclusive nature of the *basileia*. Restoration to life is highlighted by the threefold use of *sōzō* in 9:20-22."[24]

3. Matthew's Jesus—Savior of All

Matthew presented his writing as a story that re-tells the "history" (*biblos*)[25] of how God sent Joshua from Egypt as Moses' successor to save Israel. It narrates a "history" of how God "heals" Israel through Jesus, God's son. Jesus is Israel's Davidic Messiah. As messiah Jesus healed *all* of Israel. This message was communicated in a context of opposing scribes, who defamed Jesus as someone who annulled the Torah. Opposition to Jesus came in the form of the Israelite elite, but only insofar as their collaboration with Rome was concerned. Jesus, as "king" (*basileus*), stood in opposition to the emperor—the contrast between them being the manner in which Jesus saved (expressed by the word *sōzō*) as opposed to how the emperor acted as

22 Not a ruler of a synagogue as in Mark (see Ulrich Luz 2001, 42 n.20).

23 The intercalculation of the stories of the raising of the official's daughter from death and the hemorrhaging woman "draw(s) attention to the boundaries placed upon women because of their gender, which excluded them from the religious and social life of the community" (Wainwright 1991, 212).

24 However, these stories are "much more than examples of faith". According to Wainwright (1991, 214) they are "stories of a woman and a young girl oppressed by religious, social and human boundaries and of Jesus as the one who reaches out across these boundaries offering new expectations for life and wholeness . . . "

25 Mark (1:1) refers to his "story" as *archē tou euangeliou Iēsou Christou*, Luke (1:1) as *diēgēsis*, and Matthew (1:1) as *biblos*.

"savior" (*sōtēr*). Jesus' approach was that of a shepherd caring for his sheep, whereas the emperor exploited the people from whom he demanded loyalty and had no mercy (*eleos / dikaiosunē*). Jesus announced the "empire of God" (the *basileia* of God), which opposed the Roman Empire.[26]

The opening verses of a narrative determine the development of its plot (Perry 1979-1980, 35-64, 311-364; Powell 1992, 195-199. According to Warren Carter (2001, 76), Matt 1:21c, "And you shall name him Jesus (*Iēsoun*), because it will be he who will save (*sōsei*) God's people [= the people of Israel] (*ton laon autou*) from their sins (*hamartiōn*)", has such primacy.[27] The angel's announcement to the child's father forms the vocational beginning of the *history* of the main character Jesus, described as *biblos geneseōs Iēsou Christou huiou David huiou Abraam*—Matt 1:1]. The texture of this *history* (*biblos*) is composed of:

- the new *genesis* (*genesis*) which began with the birth of Jesus as the "rebirth" of Israel, the *child/children of Abraham* (*huios / tekna tō Abraam*) which includes those previously excluded from the Jerusalem temple (see Matt 3:7-10);
- the *messiah* (*Christos*), the "popular" *son of David,* coming from humble Bethlehem and not from imperial Jerusalem (see Matt 2:1-6);
- the savior *Joshua* (*Iēsous*) who causes the meek to inherit the land (Matt 5:5; 4:12-17; 23-25), revealed in Jerusalem as the victorious, cosmic savior-king, the Son of man (Matt 1:17; 28:18), and announced by the chosen, living and dead, as God-with-us (Matt 27:51-54; 28:20; 1:23).

Matthew followed Mark's naming of Jesus as the *Davidic Messiah* and the royal *Son of God* to a large extent, but adapted it to suit his own intention and situation (Kingsbury 1981, 65). In the beginning of the plot Matthew portrays Jesus as the *Messiah*, the *Son of David*, the *Son of Abraham* (Matt 1:1). The title *Son of God* is however not mentioned at the beginning but, given its importance, it appears at a later stage when, at the baptism of Jesus, it is placed in the mouth of God (Matt 3:17).

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26 See Patterson 1998, 60-64; Carter 2001, 60-64; Horsley 2003, 13-14. In three chapters in Matthew's gospel the instruments of Rome, the client kings Herod the Great (Matt 2) and his son Herod Antipas (Matt 14), and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate (Matt 27), dominate the scene (Carter 2001, 76-77), but Matthew's vision is that God is greater than the power of Rome. God also punished the leaders of Israel as allies of Rome, ironically by using Rome as an instrument to destruct Jerusalem (Matt 22:7).

27 This opening verse "shapes its audience's expectations, understandings, and questions throughout the whole work" (Carter 2001, 76).

In Matthew, *Jesus as the Davidic Messiah*, has a peculiar connotation because "God's salvation" is attached to the name "Jesus". *Jesus as the Davidic Messiah* heals and helps people who are of no account in Israel (the outcasts, such as the sick, crippled, women, non-Israelites, and children) and they are the ones who, in turn, acknowledge Jesus and believe in him as the *Son of David.*

For Matthew, "Jesus" is not a common appellation. In Mark people such as Bartimaeus and the two men possessed by evil spirits called him "Jesus" (Mark 1:24, 5:7; 10:47), but this is not the case in Matthew (Matt 8:29; 20:30). In Matthew, by acknowledging *Jesus as the Davidic Messiah*, the two men healed of their blindness *see* what God's salvation is all about (Matt 20:30), while the Gadarene demoniacs publicly announce that God heals Israel through Jesus, *God's son* (Matt 8:29).[28]

The nations came to this realization at Jesus' death when God revealed him as the cosmic "Son of Man" (Matt 26:64) and the Roman centurion called him, and not the Emperor "God's son" (Matt 27:54). This acknowledgement follows the signals that the "old cultic order" has come to an end and that a "new dispensation" has dawned (Mt 27:45-53)—an anticipation of the plot's open-end when the disciples are commissioned to include the *panta ta ethnē* into Israel (Matt 28:16-20).

According to Carter (2001, 76) "Matthean soteriology asserts God's sovereignty over the cosmos by ending all evil. . . ." It is specifically the word *sōzō* that denotes "healing" in this comprehensive sense. The word is already found at the beginning of Matthew's story (1:21c) where the name Jesus is linked to Jesus' vocation as the savior who will save (*sōsei*) the people of Israel from their sins. Common images from the Greco-Roman world[29] shed light on Matthew's understanding of Jesus' birth as the

28 And then only after this knowledge has been revealed to them by God. For example, after Peter's confession, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!" (Mt 16:16), is added: ". . . flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven!" (Matt 16:17) (cf. Kingsbury 1981, 72).

29 Matt 1:21c prophesies the greatness of this newborn king similar to the formulation of the presentation of the birth announcements of the Persian savior-king Cyrus by Herodotus (*Hist.* 1.107-8) and Alexander the Great, the divine hero of the Greeks, by Cicero (*Div.* 1.23.47). In a Greco-Roman context such proclamations complied with directives from the *progymnasmata* for writing an encomium (see Neyrey 1998, 90-105). For example, Hermogenes (*Rhetores Graeci* II.14.8-15.5) instructs his students to begin with the subject's origin and birth. According to Hermogenes, the writer should describe "what marvelous things befell at birth, as dreams or signs or the like." Quintilian (*Inst.* 3.7.10-18) teaches that what happened prior to the birth should also be noted, such as prophecies "foretelling future greatness". This can be seen in, for example, the memorable statements regarding the birth and future of the emperors Vespasian and Titus, which were made by Suetonius (*Vesp.* 5; *Tit.* 2). Similarly Plutarch (*Rom.* 2.4) referred to Romulus, the

inauguration of God's salvation of Israel (Luz 1985, 102, 106). The primary intertextual analogies come from the references to the miraculous birth of Moses in Josephus (*Ant.* 2.205-206, 210-211, 215-216) and Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 9:1-10).[30]

It is not only the later Rabbinic tradition (*m.Meg.* 14.2)[31] that relates Moses' birth to God's *salvation* of Israel, but Josephus, during the second half of the first century (probably 93-94 C.E. in Rome) also does so.[32] Both Matthew's "vocational verse" (Matt 1:21c) and his "epilogue" (Matt 28:19-20) were modeled after among others the common Moses tradition (Meeks 1970) found in, for example, Josephus' words in the *Antiquitates*: "he shall deliver the Hebrew nation" (cf. Jos., *A.J.* 2.210 with Matt 1:21c) and "he will be honored until the end of time by all nations (including [the 'new'] Israel)" (cf. Jos., *A.J.* 2.211 with Matt 28:19-20).[33]

The expression to "deliver (=save) Israel" in "normative" Rabbinic tradition (e.g., *m.Meg.* 14.2), was commonly used in first century Palestinian circles. Matthew's vocational verse with regard to Jesus echoes the same tradition. In the Rabbinic tradition (*m.Meg.* 14.2) Miriam's reference to her mother Jochebed who will give birth to the future savior (Moses)[34] alludes to the word "Joshua" in Num 13:17 (cf. Jastrow 1975, 601). The verbal stem of this word is *jasha*^{c}. The hif'il of this word is used as a substantive

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"founder" of the "eternal city Rome" (see Rand 1943), and Suetonius (*Aug.* 94; *Tib.* 14) to the first two Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius, saviors of the whole world (see Taylor 1981). These figures were destined by the gods for political and imperial rule (cf. Klauck 2000, 289-302).

30 See Bloch 1955; 1978; Crossan 1968; 1986; 2003. According to René Bloch 1978, 67, "Jesus, acknowledged as Messiah, was considered a second Moses, and it was natural for the evangelist constantly to refer to the traditions concerning Moses' birth in order to formulate those relating to the birth of Jesus" (cf. Allison 1993).

31 *m.Meg.* 14.2 refers to Miriam's words in Num 13:17 (Jastrow 1975, 601).

32 "This child, whose birth has filled the Egyptians with such dread that they have condemned to destruction all the offspring of the Israelites, shall indeed be yours; he shall escape those who are watching to destroy him, and, reared in a marvelous way, *he shall deliver the Hebrew race* from their bondage in Egypt, and be remembered, so long as the universe shall endure, not by Hebrews alone but even by alien nations" (Jos., *A.J.* 2.210-211; my emphasis; translation from LCL.

33 Jane Schaberg (1982, 45) has convincingly argued that the triadic formula in Matt 28:16-20 in all probability represents an "allusion to the Septuagint of Daniel 7:14." Just as Josephus (*A.J.* 4.326) interpreted Moses' "final departure" in terms of Dan 7, Matthew respectively ended and began the story of Jesus and the disciples with a "throne-theophany commission" (Schaberg 1982, 189) by means of his editorial adaptation of a tradition (cf. also Van Aarde 1998; Davies & Allison 2004,. 682ff.; Luomanen 1998, 194-260).

34 "My mother shall bear a son [Moses] *who will* deliver Israel" (*m.Meg.* 14.2—see Jastrow 1975, 601).

participle, *moshiah*, in a number of OT texts.[35] The substantive participle means "helper" (=savior) in these cases (Köhler & Baumgartner 1994-2000). This meaning of *moshia* recalls the name of *Moses* and is a play on words (paronomasia) on the participle *messiah / mašiah*. Messiah became the *technicus terminus* for the anointed son of David (or David's son) as the king over all Israel (2 Sam 5:1-3).

In Matthew the messiah's *redeeming* activity consists of *healing* (Duling 1978; 1992). In Ps 118:25 an example of wordplay between *moshia* (=Moses) and *messiah* (=son of David) is found in the expression *hoshiah na* (in Greek: *hōsianna*)(Dalman 1905, 249).It is evident from Matthew's report on Jesus' "kingly" entry into Jerusalem as "son of David", as Israel's *healing / saving messiah* (Matt 21:14), that he was aware of such wordplay. In Matthew 21:9 the evangelist cites among others Ps 118:25: "Hosanna to the Son of David" (*hōsanna tō huiō David*). In view of this wordplay, Matthew's "missiology" consists of defending the "history" that "Joshua" (*Iēsous*) is the messiah whom God commissioned as the "new Moses" to save (*sōzo*) Israel from their sins. What such healing implies becomes clear in light of the "structure" of Matthew's "history".

4. Matthew's Mission Emplotted

The way in which Matthew arranged the material from the sources and added his own also discloses the structure of Matthew's *biblos*. The Markan tradition served as the framework (Bauer 1988, 23-24) to which was added material from Q (Davies & Allision 1997, 97-127). The five discourses of Jesus[36] mostly contain material from Q. Since B.W. Bacon's (1930) epoch-making study of the "five books" of Matthew against the "Jews" this fivefold division[37] has been regarded as a particular characteristic of the

35 Judg 6:36; 1 Sam 10:19; 11:13; 14:39; Zech 8:7; Ps 7:11; 17:7.

36 Matt 4:23-7:29; 9:36-11:1; 13:1-52; 18:1-19:1; 23:1-25:46.

37 Bacon 1980, 41-51 saw this fivefold division as a Pentateuch motif from which he derived a "New Moses" Christology. Davies 1966, 15, 23, on the basis of Bacon's view, developed the theory that the author of Matthew's gospel was a converted rabbi, a Christian legalist who offered a systematic presentation of Jesus' "commandments" in five collections, according to the pattern of the Mosaic Pentateuch, as an apology for antinomianism. A development of the Pentateuch analogy is also found among Matthean scholars such as Stendahl 1969, 24f; Kline 1975 (cf. Senior 1976, 673) interprets the five Jesus-discourses in analogy to Moses' valedictory speeches in Deuteronomic theology, with the "covenant" as their central theme. This fivefold structure has been criticized for its oversight of the discourses in Mt 11 and 23, for its failure to explain the infancy and passion narratives integrally with the total composition, and its inability to indicate any convincing similarities between the content and structure of the Pentateuch and Matthew

concentric chiastic composition[38] of Matthew's gospel.[39] Both the disciples[40] and the Israelite crowds[41] are present at the beginning of each speech by Jesus (Keegan 1982, 428f). These five speeches are directed at the disciples and have particular relevance to the relationship between the disciples and the Jewish crowd (van Aarde 1994, 21-34).

The five speeches[42] should therefore be seen in relation to the narrative discourses[43] that appear alongside and between them. Matthew's story builds on the alteration of *narrative* and *dialogue*.[44] This combination creates the analogy between Jesus' commission and that of the disciples. The one discourse links up with the following speech in an associative manner, which continues the spiral to the following narrative discourse and results in the integration of the Jesus commission with that of the disciples. The way in which the alteration of *narrative* and *dialogue* serves the development of the plot of Matthew's story can be demonstrated by focusing on the connectedness between the Sermon on the Mount and the narration of the commissioning of the twelve disciples as Jesus' co-healers. Matt 1:1-4:22 functions as the beginning of this "narrated events". In this narrative discourse Matthew offers initial information with regard to the rest of the narrated events that are consummated in the *middle* (Matt 4:23-25:46) and which come to a close in the *conclusion* (Matt 26:1-28:20).

(e.g. Hill 1979, 140). However, the presence of these five Jesus discourses cannot be reasoned away.

38 This concentric chiastic structure is based on a different Matthean formula than the one used by Kingsbury. Although Kingsbury (1975a, 7-25) also takes Jesus' five discourses into account, he divides the Gospel into three main parts (1973 cf. Howell 1990, 81-85).

39 Cf. Combrink 1983. Although there are different possibilities for structuring Matthew's gospel (see, e.g., Davies & Allison 1997, 58-72), the structure of Lohr (1961) is, according to me, he most convincing. Lohr uses the five speeches in Matthew as point of departure and uncovers a concentric chiastic structure in light of the formula in Matt 7:28-29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1: "And when Jesus finished these sayings . . . ." These five speeches do not represent "breaks" in the composition but should be seen in relation to the narrative discourses that follow and intersperse (see, among others, Barr 1976).

40 Matt 5:1; 9:37; 10:1; 13:10; 18:1; 23:1.

41 Matt 4:23-51b; 9:35ff; 13:2f; 18:2; 23:1.

42 Matt 4:23-7:29; 9:36-11:1; 13:1-52; 18:1-19:1; 23:1-25:46.

43 Matt 1:1-4:22; 8:1-9:35; 11:2-12:50; 13:53-17:27; 19:2-22:46; 26:1-28:20.

44 Willi Marxsen (1959, 64) had noticed that the "narrative discourses" were chiefly "historizing" redaction by Mark and that the post-Easter situation of Matthew and his community was being reflected in the five Jesus speeches (*Redenkomplexen*) (cf. Schniewind 1968, 8).

With the Jesus speeches, such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:3-7:27),[45] the narrator supplies keys to interpret both the preceding and the following narrative discourses. The first narrative discourse relates that Jesus was born as *God-with-us*, and that he begins his mission of saving all of Israel. The theme of his mission and the *dramatis personae*, as well as the expectations that readers can have with regard to their later behavior and attitudes, are announced: Jesus' mission as *God-with-us* serves the purpose of "forgiveness of sin" for the Israelite crowds and for the non-Israelites. This mission is fulfilled in accordance with the will of the Father in heaven, because in the Moses typology (Matt 2:13-23) Jesus is introduced as the obedient Son of God (3:13-4:11) who came "to fulfill all righteousness" (3:15). He is opposed by Satan (4:1-11) and the Israelite authorities that seek his death (2:1-18). He is supported by the disciples who are called to be "fishers of people" (4:18-22). This Jesus commission is a continuation of that of the prophets (1:17) which in turn finds continuation in that of the disciples (4:18-22).

The contents of God's salvation being taught to the disciples mainly relate to their behavior vis- à vis the Israelite crowds. The relationship between the disciples and the crowds should reflect a behavior and disposition that differs from that of the Roman, Herodian, and Israelite authorities. Matt 4:23-5:2 provides the setting for the Sermon on the Mount.[46] The outline in Matt 4:23,[47] repeated in Matt 9:35[48] to complete the circle of *dialogue* and *narrative*, forms the backdrop against which the discourse is acted out, namely Jesus' mission to all of Israel. This mission comprises the proclamation of the "gospel of the kingdom"—and the "good tidings" of a savior who cares for the "little ones", who called them a

45 The Sermon on the Mount serves the purpose of interpreting the preceding narrative discourse and preparing the following Jesus speech (Matt 8:1-9:35). Jesus adopted a sitting position, as a "scribal teacher" would (cf. Yieh 2004), to teach the will of the heavenly Father; the disciples encircled him and formed the addressees of his teaching; seated in a wider circle around them were the Israelite crowds, to whom the Sermon on the Mount essentially applied (Matt 5:2).

46 The actual discourse of Jesus begins in Matt 5:3.

47 "And he went about all Galilee, teaching (*didaskōn*) in their synagogues and preaching (*kērussōn*) the gospel of the kingdom and healing (*therapeuōn*) every disease and every infirmity among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick. . . " (Matt 4:23f).

48 "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching (*didaskōn*) in their synagogues and preaching (*kērussōn*) the gospel of the kingdom, and healing (*therapeuōn*) every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them. . . " (Matt 9:35f).

"family"[49] by resocializing them into God's "imperial household" through empowering healing.[50] This was a subversive act that offended village elders, outraged Pharisees and Herodians, and anticipated Jesus' critique of chief priests and elders in Jerusalem by exposing their manipulative ploys and misuse of hierarchical power.

Matt 5:20 summarizes the theme of the Sermon on the Mount (Jeremias 1972, 23): "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." The command for surpassing righteousness implies that like Jesus, the disciples have to radically obey the will of the Father in heaven, which is accomplished through *doing* it (see Mat5:16; 6:10; 7:21). The command concludes with the so-called "golden rule" (Mat7:12): "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." This saying is concretized in the subsequent narrative about Jesus' *healing* commission as the Davidic Messiah (8:1-9:35). This discourse in turn functions as a "transparency" for the next Jesus speech, dealing with the disciples' commission (9:36-11:1) in which the followers of Jesus become "partners of Jesus" (Vledder 1997, 233) and act as *healed healers*.

5. Resumé

There is an analogy between two "narrative lines" as subplots in the Gospel. The one is the (pre-Easter) Jesus commission and the other the (post-Easter) disciples' commission. These two narrative sequences do not function in isolation. They are integrated by thematic parallels,[51] cross-references,[52] prospect ion[53] and retrospection.[54] The analogy between the two subplots can be understood by means of the "transparency" concept: the pre-Easter narration (level one) can be seen in the story of the post-Easter faith community (level two)[55] and vice versa.

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49 See Matt 23:8b-9: ". . . you all belong to the same family . . . don't call anyone on earth 'father,' since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven" (Miller 1994).

50 "God is addressed as Father-King. . . " (see van Tilborg 1986, 123). See the combination of household ("Father in heaven"), imperial ("your kingdom"), and soteriological ("absolution") terms in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9b, 10a, 12a).

51 Cf. Mt 4:23; 9:35 with 10:6ff.

52 Cf. Mt 16:19 with 18:18; 23:13.

53 Cf. Mt 5:12 with 23:34ff.

54 Cf. Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39 with 16:9ff.

55 According to Hertig 1998, the "first horizon" and the "second horizon" respectively.

Matthew contains a level of narration, grounded in tradition and embodying an historical perspective on the past—though seen through faith and hence idealized. But there is also a second level that makes this past narrative relevant to the present needs of Matthew's community. Though neither level of discourse is ever totally absent, in some contexts one level may take precedence over the other, and the Gospel will slip imperceptibly from one to the other.

The shift (*Wende der Zeit*) between these two narrative sequences takes place at Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. The death of Jesus (Mat27:51ff.) causes the veil to tear that signals the end of the old cultic order. The divine judgment causes an earthquake and the resurrection of the dead. These are apocalyptic signs. The earthquake marks the beginning of the end and the rearrangement of the world. The death of Jesus is the beginning of the new aeon, a change which that encompasses the whole cosmos. The dead coming out of their graves is a dramatic anticipation of Jesus' resurrection. It announces the destruction of the old and the dawning of the new time. However, this *Wende der Zeit* does not have the "salvation-historical" consequence that the story of Israel is replaced by the story of the so-called eschatological church. The "history" of Jesus and the "history" of the church" are included in Israel's history (van Aarde 1998).

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andries.vanaarde@up.ac.za