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**MATTHEW'S EMMANUEL MESSIAH:
A PARADIGM OF PRESENCE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE**

DAVID DANIEL KUPP

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY
IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS**

**FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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THESIS ABSTRACT

David Daniel Kupp

"Matthew's Emmanuel Messiah: A Paradigm of Presence for God's People"
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The motif of divine presence is a clear phenomenon within the Gospel of Matthew. The modern critical means for assessing the ancient biblical text have multiplied to the point, some claim, of disparity. This study employs both narrative and redaction criticism in an attempt to respond authentically to the structural, historical and theological dimensions of Matthew's Gospel.

This study begins with the presumption of the wholeness and integrity of Matthew's narrative, and assumes the gospel story to have an inherently dramatic structure which invites readers to inhabit imaginatively its narrative world and respond to its call. But since we are concerned with the role of both reader and author, this study also assumes a text with an historical author and context.

The introduction focuses on the meta-critical dilemma facing New Testament students - what is the text and how do ^we read it? - and seeks some balance in terms of Krieger's analogy of the text as both window and mirror. Proposed is a narrative reading of Matthew's presence motif alongside a redaction critical assessment of it.

In Chapter 2 the elements of narrative theory are introduced and relevant terms defined: the structure of narrative, the function of the narrator, points of view. Chapter 3 becomes an exercise in narrative reading, with Matthew's presence motif providing the focus, and the implied reader's interaction with the story being predominant in interpretation. Characters, rhetorical devices, and points of view are discussed, to understand the motif's development throughout the story's progress.

The thrust of Chapter 4 is thereafter to examine divine presence as a dominant motif within Matthew's most important literary context: the Jewish scriptures. Here the primary paradigms of divine presence provided by the Patriarchs, the Sinai experience, and the Davidic-Zion traditions are assessed. Chapter 5 follows with a more detailed examination of the OT "I am with you/God is with us" formula and its μεθ' ὑμῶν/ἡμῶν language, so strongly connected to Matthew's presence motif.

Chapters 6-8 build on these investigations with a closer analysis of the three critical "presence passages" of Mt 1:23, 18:20 and 28:20. The passages and their contexts are probed from a redaction critical perspective, guided by the narrative investigation of Chapter 3, and the background from Chapters 4 and 5.

The three major "presence passages" examined in Chapters 6-8 are also complimented by a number of secondary issues: worship, wisdom, the Spirit and the poor in Matthew, and their relation to Jesus' divine presence. These are discussed in Chapter 9. Chapter 10 summarizes and looks briefly at some implications.

Matthew's presence motif proves to be an important element of the Gospel's rhetorical design, redactional strategy and christology. The presence of Jesus, the Emmanuel Messiah, exhibited in his risen authority, becomes the focus of his people's hopes and experiences in the post-Easter world. What the presence of Yahweh was to his people, Jesus now provides in a new paradigm for his people - his followers, the little ones, the poor and the marginalized, from all nations.

None of the material in this thesis has been previously submitted, in part or in whole, for a degree in the University of Durham or any other university.

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To Ellen Ericson Kupp

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This study, like many others, culminates a long and complex human journey. It names a single author, but behind him stands a stalwart community.

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Also, to the Department of Theology and St. John's College of the University of Durham, Fuller Theological Seminary, Tyndale House and World Vision Canada, for their generosity in grants, scholarships and resources. Without

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Finally I must mention my grandfather, Adolf Bonikowsky, whose life and legends as a pastor in Poland, Siberia, Ukraine and the Saskatchewan prairies sparked in more than one of his 44 grandchildren the desire to serve people, the planet and our Creator.

*David D. Kupp
Mississauga, Ontario
Lent, 1992*

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A PARADIGM OF PRESENCE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In all ages of history, men and women have related memories of moments when they had perceived, with particular intensity, the presence of their gods. The literature of spirituality, be it Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, abounds in stories of divine appearances...

For more than a thousand years, the religion of Israel was dominated by the experience, the memory, or the hope of divine presence.¹

1.1. The Question

On a personal level, true religion can be defined as *the encounter between oneself and one's God*, and on the corporate level as *one's community practising the presence of God*. This study is concerned with the understanding of God's presence with his people which appears in the Gospel of Matthew.²

It has long been the endeavour of students of all faiths to observe, evaluate and codify their religious communities' past encounters with divine presence, through text, liturgy, theological dialogue and community life.³ What sets this study apart from some recent critical analyses within the Christian tradition is its subject matter - a focused investigation of the "presence motif" in Matthew, and its approach - a combination of narrative and redaction criticism: the fresh response of a reader to Matthew's rhetorical design, and the practised assessments of the redaction critic.

¹Terrien, *Presence*, pp.63, 404.

²My choice of the masculine pronoun for God is unfortunate, if it evokes a male image - it is employed throughout this study only for the sake of consistency and convenience.

³Cf. Holmes, *Presence*; Phythian-Adams, *People*.

A number of scholars have made the claim that the Judeo-Christian biblical record as a whole is more accurately characterized as an account of the presence of God, acting in the midst and on behalf of the people of God, rather than the oft-cited theme of covenant.⁴ This is not the place to argue that case, but certainly "divine presence" manifests itself unarguably as a dominant concern in every strand of Hebraic theology as developed by the ancient authors from their complex of cultus and faith. These understandings of Yahweh's divine presence, though continuous in essence, were in focus radically transformed by first generation Christian experiences of Jesus and his resurrection. No longer was divine presence mediated through the cult and temple of Jerusalem, but through a living reality - the person and community of the Messiah.

For most NT authors, divine presence is indeed an issue. The early Christian spiritualization of the Temple is already at work in Stephen's quotation of Isa in Acts 7:49f. In a number of places, Paul pursues in cultic language a concern for divine presence: the church and the believer as the holy temple of God, indwelt by the Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16); access to God's grace through Jesus (Rom 5:1f); as well as the believer as inseparable from God (Rom 8:38f), as a holy sacrifice before God (Rom 12:1), and various places, being *σὺν Χριστῷ* (12x), which frequently captures that note of eternal eschatological fellowship with Christ.⁵

Among the gospel narratives, Jesus' expression of divine presence, pre- and post-resurrection, is understood and interpreted in very different ways. Mark is variously explained as proclaiming the risen Jesus absent until the parousia,⁶ as seeing Jesus divinely present with and active in his church even now,⁷ and as being ambiguous on the point.⁸ Luke's annunciation story uses the symbol and language of the cloud of presence (Lk 1:35; cf. Ex 40:35).⁹ There is no question for Luke that Jesus himself leaves his followers (Lk 24:51; Acts 1:2, 9-11) and remains functional through his name and Spirit. Many disciples in Acts and 1 Cor chose to live radical lives,

⁴Especially Terrien, *Presence*; cf. Clements, *God*.

⁵See also Renwick's concern for divine presence in a less obvious passage, 2 Cor 2:14-3:18, *Paul*, pp.47-156.

⁶So Weeden, *Mark*; cf. Crossan, "Absence", pp.41-55.

⁷Best, *Jesus*, especially Chapter 31.

⁸Ziesler, "Matthew", p.55.

⁹Cf. Terrien, *Presence*, pp.415f.

in expectation of Jesus' imminent return (Acts 2:42ff; 1 Cor 7:26, 36). The fourth evangelist's use of Wisdom and Word personifications in his prologue also evidences some fundamental continuity with Hebraic presence theology. John carefully develops a picture of the risen Christ as the exalted and absent Jesus who remains present and active through his Spirit.¹⁰

Within Hebrews, through Jesus' blood, access to God's holy temple became the operative messianic role (10:19-22).¹¹ In Revelation Jesus and God's presence are eschatologically anticipated to replace the Temple and dwell among people (Rev 21:2f, 22). A number of other texts in Heb, 1 Pet and Rev employ temple and priest language when describing believers' new access to God (Rev 1:5-6; 1 Pet 2:9ff; Heb 4:14-16; 6:19-20; 9:24).

Matthew has a different picture. The author of the First Gospel was one of Christianity's earliest and most distinctive students of divine presence. Matthew exhibits a deliberate interest in this question, particularly as captured by the evangelist's unique christological use of Isaiah's Emmanuel prophecy and pointed emphasis on the special character of the presence of Jesus. Jesus comes as the Emmanuel Messiah - "God with us" (1:23); his presence is the focus of his people's gatherings (18:20); he dies, reappears and commissions them to a powerful, authoritative mission undergirded by his presence (28:16ff). He never leaves, but in fact promises to stay with his followers "to the end of the age" (28:20). He breathes no spirit on them, does not ascend; promises no *παράκλητος*. What does this mean? How is Matthew's story bound up with this image of an Emmanuel Messiah whose presence appears to be so important for his followers?

This particular predilection within the First Gospel I have chosen to call Matthew's *presence motif*. The purpose of this study is thus to examine the story of Matthew and this motif within it, in order to understand better the particular nexus described there between God and the community of his people, especially as facilitated and embodied in Jesus' role as the Emmanuel Messiah.

Certainly the major "presence" texts - 1:23, 18:20 and 28:20 - have been the focus of frequent attempts to situate them individually against a number of theological and literary backdrops. But if they are indicative of

¹⁰See Clements, *God*, pp.138-40; Ziesler, "Matthew"; Terrien, *Presence*, pp.410ff, for discussions and references. Cf. Perrin, *Resurrection*, pp.5ff.

¹¹Cf. further Barclay, *Hebrews*, p.xiii.

a "presence motif", what weight do these passages carry together within the whole story of Matthew? Are there other elements that support this motif? More importantly, rarely has an interpreter sought to assess Matthew's presence motif as an element within the full narrative and redactional fabric of the Gospel.

1.2. The Interpreter

Every encounter with tradition that takes place within historical consciousness involves the experience of the tensions between the text and the present. The hermeneutic task consists of not covering up this tension by attempting a naive assimilation but consciously bringing it out.¹²

A number of assumptions and criteria have guided this investigation. Every interpreter brings a particular *Weltanschauung* to the text. Thomas Kuhn's and others' work on paradigms has rendered somewhat vacuous the presumption that interpretation is neutral, that the text can be divorced from the interpreter's paradigm, and that correct interpretive tools assure objectivity. Critical objectivity remains an important goal, but must be tempered by a clear understanding of the weight and nature of one's presumptions and interpretive goals, so as to make publicly accountable our biblical and theological discourse.¹³

Concerning my own stance, then, I write as an urban Canadian, and as a member of a mainstream, middle-class Christian community in which the biblical texts are assumed to a significant degree to function normatively. In other words, they are employed as a primary source of guidance within the interpretive parameters used by my community in its ongoing attempts to wrestle with contemporary existence as the people of God. My assumption is that rigorous investigation of the biblical text, however 'academic', will be theological from the start,¹⁴ and that open recognition of its connection to a social context and/or faith community makes clear its orientation and biases, and brings greater validity to its application.¹⁵ This stems

¹²Gadamer, *Truth*, p.273 - "Horizonverschmelzung", cf. p.270; see Thiselton, *Horizons*, especially pp.307-10; Crosby, *House*, p.6.

¹³See S. Brown, "Reader Response", p.235; Morgan, *Interpretation*, pp.186-200; cf. Watson's review, pp.298f.

¹⁴Or interpretation will at minimum spring from an ideological and social context, even if it claims to be "theologically disinterested".

¹⁵Some biblical critics have long held that any express theological interest on the part of the interpreter invalidates the critical exercise. But in

directly from my presumption that the gospel texts are stories which are written to engage readers in a process of transformation. Howell has rightly applied to the First Gospel Karris's description of Luke as a "kerygmatic story", which is "meant to preach to the reader in narrative form and to elicit from the reader an act of Christian faith".¹⁶

Methodology must also reflect an attempt to bring the text into dialogue with the immediate world, i.e., I am interested in a "fusion of horizons".¹⁷ Wink's assertion that biblical criticism is often no longer part of a dynamic community, actively involved in the concretization of its critical results in modern life, indicates to some degree the results of academic over-specialization and entrenchment of the discipline within institutions.¹⁸ My own presumption, however, is that by means of a healthy methodological eclecticism, Matthew's narrative and the interpreter, as both reader and critic, can engage in an act of co-creation. Acting as the implied reader, he or she fulfills what is already implicit in the structure and rhetoric of Matthew, and acting as the critic, he or she contextualizes historically these responses, and the combination compels the interpreter to struggle personally and corporately with the issues of Christian discipleship.

The present methodological ferment in gospel studies prods the critic to be increasingly 'self-aware' - the attempt to read the text today often simultaneously involves meta-critical reflection on the assumptions implicit in that reading. These comments in no way certify that the reader of this study will find it to be a model of holistic integration. At the end of research and writing I can merely claim to have been increasingly conscious of such a need at every stage. At the same time, of course, the very exercise undertaken here submits its author to the traditional rites of passage into the guild of biblical critics. As such, a tension exists

his indictment of the historical critical paradigm, Wink insists that the uninvolved objectivity of the interpreter stands in direct antithesis to the very nature of the Bible's subject matter, rendering its ancient mandate for personal and social transformation impotent in the present (*Bible*, pp.2-15).

But the same conflict between the spirit of the biblical text and the "false objectivism" among some literary critical practitioners has also been highlighted; see Polzin, "Criticism", pp.106-11; Fowler, "Who", pp.5-10; Howell, *Story*, pp.30f.

¹⁶Karris, *Luke*, p.8; see Howell, *Story*, p.30.

¹⁷Gadamer, *Truth*, p.273.

¹⁸See also Morgan, *Interpretation*, pp.133f, 204f, 271ff.

between the parameters set by the guild for such an exercise as this and some of the assumptions already noted above.¹⁹

1.3. Text and Method

What is a Gospel? The sea of ink given to this question by even the present generation of NT scholars has been anything but tranquil. In terms of Matthew's Gospel, of the array of introductory issues (authorship, sources, locality, Jewish/Gentile character, etc.) which normally concern the commentator, many remain under debate. It is pertinent to note a few which most directly impact this study.²⁰

Authorship

Without prejudging the identity of the historical author, this study refers to the first evangelist by means of the masculine pronoun, and to the author and text of the First Gospel as "Matthew", for the sake of simplicity. No connection is implied with the apostle of that name mentioned in the Gospel. No assumptions are made about the First Gospel's date or locality.

Sources

Matthew's relationship with Mark is most likely based on Mark's priority. Students of the Gospels are not unanimous on this issue, but it appears by my reading to be the best working hypothesis.²¹ Matthew and Luke also appear to share about two hundred and thirty verses of non-Markan material in common, but the traditional acceptance of a hypothetical Q

¹⁹See Moore, "Criticism", for a tongue-in-cheek, albeit penetrating, critique of the limitations which beset today's guild of biblical critics.

²⁰Recent surveys are available in the introductions of Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*; Stanton, "Origin", covers well the period of discussion 1945-80. See Moore, *Criticism*, for an assessment of more recent methodological issues in gospel studies.

²¹See Allison and Davies' extensive restatement of the issues in favour of the traditional two-source stance, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.97-114.

document used by both authors has not figured largely in this study.²² When text comparisons are made, this study normally assumes generic relations between the Synoptics, independent of a particular priority. The First Gospel in its entirety, not merely those points at which it diverges from its sources, is taken to manifest a consistent redactional and rhetorical perspective. Comparisons are made on the assumption that they can reveal Matthew's distinctiveness even where direct literary dependence or judgements of priority cannot be certain.

The question of Matthew's sources is more complex than the two-source hypothesis allows, and the extent of pre-synoptic oral and written sources is underestimated in some discussions.²³ Matthew's and the other Gospel's relationships to these sources are probably less linear and more interdependent than implied by neat delineations like 'the document Q' or 'Matthew used Mark'.²⁴

Structure

Numerous scholars have tried to unlock the design of Matthew's Gospel by means of a single, comprehensive model of its structure.²⁵ No model, however, has proven adequate for all the variables of the text, or convincing enough to warrant significant acceptance.²⁶ Certain portions of

²²On this issue see E.E. Ellis, "Criticism", pp.36-38; cf. Luz's review of the issue, and statement in favour of a Q source which circulated in various recensions, *Matthäus 1-7*, pp.18-31.

²³E.g. by Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*.

²⁴Various paradigms have been proposed in the attempt to represent more complex synoptic-source relations; see the diagrammatic presentation of Boismard's scheme, *Synopse 2*, p.17; cf. Sanders and Davies, *Gospels*, pp.93-111; J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating*, pp.93-117; France, *Matthew*, pp.34-38.

²⁵See Stanton's analysis, "Origin", pp.1903-6. Bacon's pentateuchal analysis ("Five Books", pp.56-66) has proven more durable than most, and has produced numerous offspring, but it omits too many elements of the text from its scheme. Other analyses are similarly not all-inclusive; cf. Kingsbury's three-fold model (e.g., *Structure*, pp.1-37; followed by Bauer, *Structure*), the chiasmus model (e.g., Green, "Structure", pp.47-59; Di Marco, "Chiasmus", pp.37-58; Combrink, "Macrostructure", pp.1-20), and so-called "triadic structures" (Allison, "Structure"; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.58-72).

²⁶See Neirynck, "Redaction Matthéenne", pp.41-73; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.7; Senior, *Passion*, pp.26f; Stanton, "Origin", p.1905; Gundry, *Matthew*, p.11. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.72, despite their belief that triadic structures permeate the Gospel, in the end follow Gundry's assessment that Matthew is "structurally mixed".

the Gospel are carefully structured by means of various literary devices and markers which signal breaks and narrative movement, but these are internal structures which are subsumed under the more important question of the rhetorical design of the narrative story. In this sense it is the plot *per se* which provides the Gospel with its structure. The formulas and chiasms, repetitions and numeric patterns, geographic and temporal signposts, the narrative-discourse patterns, the summaries - all of these individual narrative techniques *together* create the powerful drama of the story's plot. Structure thus is found in the principle of progressive narrative development.²⁷

Method and Reading

The Gospels can and have been read and used in a wide variety of ways: as canonical validation (or as prophetic denunciation) of ecclesiastical, social and political practices; as sources of historical information about the author, his ideas, his community or the events of Jesus' life; as sources for theological propositions and ethical paradigms; as texts for devotional reading; as liturgical resources for church worship.²⁸

Certainly in being recontextualized in different modern settings the gospel stories perform a variety of actions on readers which supersede the confines of any particular ancient form.²⁹ Most scholars would today agree that Matthew was not penned as a new Mosaic law and pentateuchal code,³⁰ an

²⁷Whether a total structural pattern can thereby be found is doubtful. See Matera, "Plot"; France, *Evangelist*, pp.153f.

²⁸See Tuckett, *Reading*, p.1; cf. Thiselton, "Reader-Response", p.112; Howell, *Story*, p.12.

²⁹See Thiselton's discussion of the multiple functions a text may perform in terms of speech-act theory.

"A narrative, for example, seldom merely narrates. It may also inform, direct, nourish a sense of community solidarity on the basis of corporate memory, produce grief or joy, or constitute an act of celebration." ("Reader-Response", p.108)

³⁰See Kilpatrick's adoption of Bacon's paradigm, *Origins*, pp.107ff, and Davies' caution, *Setting*, p.93; cf. Kingsbury's rejection, *Structure*, pp.5f.

ecclesiastical treatise,³¹ a Hellenistic biography,³² a community rule of discipline,³³ or a liturgical formulary.³⁴ The jury is still out on the question of gospel as an ancient genre and whether it is more unlike than like anything else in first century literature. The Gospels must have been narratives comprehensible to their original addressees and hence not totally *sui generis*, but dependent on existing generic antecedents for their coding.³⁵ Chatman's comment is in order:

No individual work is a perfect specimen of a genre - novel or comic epic or whatever. All works are more or less mixed in generic character.³⁶

I continue to assume that the meaning of the text is related to its form, so for the purposes of this study I first intend to treat Matthew as a narrative text.³⁷ On the question of analysing Matthew in terms of the

³¹A variously adopted presumption of numerous commentators, whether applied in whole (e.g., Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, who assumes that Matthew is writing a fictional literary document of *Bundestheologie* to address the members of his new covenant community), or in part (e.g., Bornkamm, "Bind", discussing Mt 18 as a *Gemeindeordnung*).

³²Contra the direction of Talbert, *Gospel?*, and Schuler, *Genre*; cf. Aune, "Genre". Strecker, *Weg*, and Walker, *Hellsgeschichte*, both also see Matthew writing a life of Jesus; Frankemölle criticizes them for distorting the evangelist's intentions (cf. *Jahwebund*, pp.366-73). But I would agree with Stanton that

the wholly justifiable insistence that the gospels are not biographies has tended to hide the fact that when they are placed alongside comparable ancient writings, they are seen to tell us a surprisingly large amount about the life and character of Jesus. (*Jesus*, p.136)

³³Contra Stendahl, *School*.

³⁴Contra Goulder's development (*Midrash*) of Kilpatrick's suggestion (*Origins*) that Matthew was composed for regular liturgical readings. See Morris, "Gospels", pp.129-56, for a critique of lectionary hypotheses.

³⁵See Petersen, *Criticism*, pp.44f; Combrink, "Structure", pp.65f. For reviews and discussion of the gospel genre, cf. Stanton, "Traditions", pp.191-204; Gundry, "Genre", pp.97-114; Aune, "Genre", pp.9-60; Guelich, "Genre", pp.183-219; Downing, "Analogies", pp.51-66. For discussion of Matthew and the Gospels as Hellenistic biographies see Talbert, *Gospel?*; Shuler, *Genre*; Aune, *NT*. For a case for the uniqueness of the NT Gospels see Kümmel, *Introduction*, p.37.

³⁶*Story*, p.18. This is certainly the case with Matthew, given its strong dependence on Jewish scriptures and concern for the "life of Jesus". It is doubtful that 'Gospel' *per se* can be labeled a literary genre; see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.4f, n.8.

³⁷See Moore, *Criticism*, p.10. My exercise of "narrative criticism" (apparently a coinage of gospel scholars) follows the parameters currently canonized by narrative critics of the Gospels. Although it owes a great debt to New Criticism (see Poland, *Criticism*, pp.65-105), the roots of gospel narrative criticism in the tradition of biblical scholarship make it

literary categories and genre of modern narrative fiction, it is most relevant to note that the First Gospel, although an ancient text, does meet the criteria for a modern narrative and can be assessed inductively as such; it has a story and story-teller, and is a narrative with an artistically arranged plot. Obviously Matthew did not develop his text in terms of "story" and "discourse", plot, narrator, implied reader and characterization, but these modern categories are universal features of the ancient text which the author, deliberately or unknowingly, employed.³⁸

A Narrative Whole

The Gospel is first to be read as a story with integrity and unity, and second as an ancient canonical text requiring socio-literary contextualization for interpretation, although not merely as a reshaped collection of traditional units and pericopes. As Northrop Frye wrote:

The primary understanding of any work of literature has to be based on an assumption of its unity. However mistaken such an assumption may eventually prove to be, nothing can be done unless we start with it as a heuristic principle. Further, every effort³⁹ should be directed toward understanding the whole of what we read.

Such an emphasis upon Matthew's narrative unity is not merely the claim of the self-declared gospel literary critics;⁴⁰ but has been recognized as the essential starting point even by more traditional critics.⁴¹

The primary assumption that Matthew is an integral story has several important implications for interpretation.⁴² It first means an initial reading without dependence upon any particular source theory, especially given the tendency of such theories to one or another form of dissection,

an enterprise distinct from the much broader and more contentious arena of secular literary criticism, despite similar preoccupations (plot, character, point of view, etc); so Moore, pp.xxii, 11f; Rhoads, "Criticism", p.412.

³⁸See Moore, *Criticism*, for an extensive discussion of the applicability of these methods to the Gospels. Cf. Combrink, "Structure", pp.65f; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.8-11.

³⁹"Criticism", p.63; as cited in Moberly, *Mountain*, p.19.

⁴⁰See, e.g., Van Aarde, "God Met Ons", p.29; Anderson, "Stories"; Combrink, "Structure", p.10; Bauer, *Structure*, pp.11ff; Kingsbury, *Story*, p.1f; Howell, *Story*, pp.12, 33; cf. Edwards, *Story*, p.9. For a more extensive list see the discussion in Chapter 2.

⁴¹See, e.g., Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, pp.24ff; Guelich, "Genre", p.219.

⁴²See Howell, *Story*, p.33.

and to prioritization of the narrative's elements in terms of tradition and redaction.

Second, in Robert Tannehill's words, assuming that Matthew is an integral story means that "narrative rhetoric" is involved, for "the story is constructed in order to influence its readers and particular literary techniques are used for this purpose."⁴³ The Gospel projects a narrative world into which the story's events fit, peopled by its characters and defined by a certain set of values. The reader is invited by the narrator to become part of this world through the act of reading.

Third, the assumption of the narrative wholeness of Matthew means that the narrative world it projects is self-defining and closed; "that is, it is conceptualized as a complex structured entity in which partial meanings are dependent upon their relationship to the whole."⁴⁴

Holistic Interpretation: Structural, Historical and Theological

The current state of ferment within gospel studies sees numerous scholars from various points along the methodological spectrum engaged in discussion. Debates have focused on issues like the historical referentiality of the text and the relevance and availability of authorial intent.⁴⁵

⁴³Tannehill, *Luke-Acts* 1, p.4; also Howell, *Story*, p.14.

⁴⁴Howell, *Story*, p.33. The new ICC commentary on Matthew currently in process illustrates the problem. Through a formidable collection of data, secondary references and technical expertise, Davies and Allison are building a voluminous study of the First Gospel which is directed by and large at penetrating *behind* the text to reconstruction of its sources, historical development and socio-literary relations.

One frequently looks in vain amidst this wealth of detail for a discussion which engages the gospel story *in* the text as meaningful and rhetorically whole. This is not to decry the value of the details, but in this case the leaves, branches, roots, origins and orientation of individual trees have largely overwhelmed any sense of the forest. It is against this equation of exegesis with critical dissection that a methodological groundswell continues to build, in favour of the primary significance of the Gospels' integrity.

For more discussion on what a commentary should be, see Kieffer, "Was heißt", pp.212-16; also Moore, *Criticism*, p.17.

⁴⁵S. Brown: "Biblical scholars seem strangely unconcerned about the problem of 'the intentional fallacy'" ("Reader Response", p.236 n.4). For the original term see Wimsatt and Beardsley, *Icon*, pp.3-18, and the discussion in de Molina, *Intention*. Cf. also Hirsch, *Validity*, esp. pp.209-44; and see Polzin, "Criticism", pp.101-3, for several attempts to repudiate structuralists and New Critics in defence of biblical historical criticism.

Yet to what degree is the historical-literary debate a question of one method of interpretation being "right", and the others "wrong"? The gospel texts themselves are not so easily categorized in accordance with strict adherence to a single theory of reading. Biblical texts exhibit three dimensions - the structural, historical and theological - which are to a great extent inseparable and interdependent.⁴⁶ Matthew certainly has a *structural dimension* as exhibited in its narrative form, literary wholeness, rhetorical devices and semantic tendencies, and in its basic functionality as a story. The *historical dimension* of Matthew is found in its reference to past events concerning Jesus, in its historically-contextualized language, in its veiled inclusiveness of the author's temporal setting, and in its reflected participation in the historical process of the transmission of traditions. And as a story concerned with divine messianic intervention among humankind, the gospel text encounters the reader with its *theological dimension* in statements about God, his people and their salvation through his Messiah.

If, then, a text like Matthew consists of these three closely-related dimensions, and if for understanding to occur the hermeneutic task requires some sort of fusion of author's and reader's horizons, then our interpretive approach cannot be uni-dimensional.⁴⁷ Schuyler Brown asserts that historical critics frequently base their interpretations on different hypothetical reconstructions of an author's original intention, context, traditions and audience, with the result that "even those scholars using the same discipline often come to diametrically opposed conclusions".⁴⁸

⁴⁶See Lategan, "Issues", p.5; cf. Howell, *Story*, p.19.

⁴⁷See Thiselton's comments ("Reader-Response", pp.82f). He cites François Bovon's assertion that progress in hermeneutics comes along with the recognition that

diverse ways of access are possible, and that each one reveals an aspect of the landscape. A text does not have a single door nor a single key. (Bovon and Rouiller, *Exegesis*, p.1)

For Thiselton problems arise when we assess a single paradigm as the overarching solution to *all* hermeneutical problems regardless of the kind of text in view or of the particular purpose for which the text is being read.

⁴⁸S. Brown, "Philology", p.297. In a more recent article Brown has attempted to counter the

notion of meaning residing 'in' the text [which] seems to be universally assumed by the exegetical guild,

with the proposal

that meaning exists formally only in human beings. In the case of a human being who is also a reader, meaning is generated by a reader

In Terry Eagleton's paradigm, modern literary theory can be categorized roughly in three stages: 1) "a preoccupation with the author (Romanticism and the nineteenth century)"; 2) "an exclusive concern with the text (New Criticism)"; and 3) "a marked shift of attention to the reader over recent years".⁴⁹ In such a scenario, the traditional historical critical paradigm fits most closely into the first stage. Hence John Barton's observation that the literary concerns of traditional biblical criticism were generally the same as those of secular literary criticism prior to the rise of the New Critical movement, which

was unequivocally committed to the quest for the original author's meaning and intention; to studying texts in their historical context; and to approaching them as vehicles through which ideas were conveyed, rather than as art-objects in their own right.

In terms of literary criticism, then, the biblical scholar has not been so much "out of touch" as "out of date", according to Barton.⁵⁰

A number of gospel critics now constitute what is amounting to a "literary swerve"; they have moved their focus from history and theology to story and rhetoric, in a rather dramatic paradigm shift.⁵¹ Krieger's images of the text as "window" and "mirror" have been used more than once to illustrate this shift.⁵² According to these gospel critics' employment of Krieger's imagery, within the historical critical school the text of Matthew functions as a "window" through which the interpreter can catch glimpses of the Gospel's composition process, bits of the historical Jesus, the historical circumstances of "the Matthean community", and the theological concerns of the first evangelist. To mix metaphors: on this model the

reading a text,
whether from his or her historical, doctrinal or literary interest in the text ("Reader Response", p.232ff).

See similar dissatisfaction with traditional criticism in Petersen, *Criticism*, pp.9-28, and "Criticism", pp.25-50; Vorster, "Paradigm", pp.104-23; Nations, "Criticism", pp.59-71; O.C. Edwards, "Failure", pp.115-34; Barton, *Reading*, Howell, *Story*, pp.19-32.

⁴⁹Eagleton, *Theory*, p.74.

⁵⁰Barton, *Reading*, p.155.

⁵¹Cf. e.g. the work of Petersen, Kingsbury, Culpepper, Rhoads and Michie, Karris, Vorster, Van Aarde, Schuyler Brown, essays in *Neotestamentica* 18 (1984) and *Semela* 31 (1985), Tannehill, Bauer, Howell, and especially the overview of Moore. See further discussion in Chapter 2.

⁵²See Krieger, *Window*, pp.3f; and cf. Petersen, *Criticism*, p.19; Lategan, "Reference", p.92; James Barr, "Bible"; Barton, *Reading*, pp.163ff; Van Aarde, "God Met Ons", p.32; Howell, *Story*, p.24.

Gospel becomes a "tell",⁵³ with layers of theological development to be subjected to stratification, sifting and differentiation on the basis of apparent tensions, breaks and seams in the text. To dig the tell is to uncover meaning; the presumption is that meaning, though asserted as being in the text, is drawn from the far side of the "window", out of the antecedent causes of earlier traditions, texts, practices and cultures.

Having been converted to story, however, the new Gospel narrative critic discovers that the meaning of the text lies on this side of it, between the text of Matthew and its reader. Krieger's image here is of the text as a "mirror". Meaning is the product of the reader's experience of the text as a whole, as he or she responds to the narrator's call to suspend disbelief, take on the role of the implied reader, and enter into the narrative world with its values, norms, conflicts, and events. Meaning arises essentially from the connection of these two worlds through confrontation in the story's mirror, which ultimately alters the reader's beliefs and perceptions of his or her own real world in light of the "better" beliefs and perceptions in the world of the story.⁵⁴

Within Krieger's analogy, then (or at least in some employments of it), old and new gospel critics stand poles apart in their understandings of the 'meaning' of the text. One is a disinterested historian, the other is a participative reader. One interpreter pursues the ghost of authorial intent and "original meaning" in vertical, genetic relationships of words, expressions and pericopes; the other interpreter pursues the organic production of meaning in the face-to-face engagement of the reader with the plot, characters and rhetoric of the story. And when they look at each other, the historical critic sees the mirror approach as a shallow, in fact two-dimensional, interpretive exercise detached from any of its required parameters in the real, historical world. But for the narrative critic, to dissect, disassemble and stratify the text by digging speculatively in the tell is to dismantle the story world of the narrator, and to destroy the possibility of encountering the evangelist's literary creation as a whole mirror.⁵⁵

⁵³The metaphor is used both positively and negatively; cf. Keck, "Method", p.116, n.2.

⁵⁴Cf. Kingsbury, *Story*, p.2.

⁵⁵See the criticisms of Perrin, "Mark", pp.115-24; R. Frye, "Perspective", pp.193-221; and Petersen's comments on the "critical desert" from an era of textually-reductive historical criticism, "Criticism", pp.25ff.

But the perceptions of a methodological chasm, and the polarization of gospel scholars by such an employment of Krieger's window and mirror, seem at places to be the result of misperception and caricature.⁵⁶ For example, many redaction critics continue to refine their practice, using history not for speculative reconstruction but to clarify the social context and historical filters which have shaped a gospel's rhetoric. On the other hand, very little gospel narrative criticism actually involves purely 'a-historical' interpretation of a text removed from its context.

What is at stake here is the question of what it really means to *read* the Gospels. Neither the historical or narrative critical school seems capable of incorporating the experiences of an *actual* reader or listener, either historic or modern.⁵⁷ Whereas the sort of reader constructed by Iser's theory is essentially cerebral, the exercise of reading undertaken by the redaction critic remains equally dispassionate and psychologically distant from the stuff of the Gospels.

But reader-response exegesis of the Gospels has become increasingly congenial of late, not only because *the reader* has been so ascendent, but because some gospel critics have 'rediscovered' through it the freshness of the text as apprehended by a hypothetical *virginal reader*.⁵⁸ For Stephen Moore, the irony is clear: reader-oriented exegetes, in moving away from traditional historical criticism, have by means of a different road moved a significant step closer to the original hermeneutic horizon of the Gospels. In other words, with its concern for the act of reception, reader-response has gone back to the primary *event* of the gospel hearing - its *aural* appropriation in an *oral* reading. Thereby the critic's 'reader' is used to uncover the rhetorical force of the narrative, its left-to-right reception of the verbal string, as a *temporal* experience bound to the text's flow of

⁵⁶See "Revolt" in Petersen, *Criticism*, pp.25-28. Polzin, "Criticism", pp.99-114, juxtaposes the statements of Krentz, *Method*, p.72, with those of Patte, *Exegesis?*, p.10. Cf. Combrink, "Scene", pp.9f; and for an "anti-historicist", almost exclusively synchronic approach to the text, see Ricoeur, *Theory*, in Combrink, "Structure", p.66; and Polzin, p.101.

⁵⁷For extended discussion of the following see Moore, "Doing"; and Morgan, *Interpretation*, Chapter 7.

⁵⁸See Moore's description of the "jaded" redaction critic versus the fresh "virginal" reader's response, "Doing", pp.85f; cf. Moberly, *Mountain*, p.13. Gadamer, *Truth*, p.238: "A hermeneutically trained mind must be, from the start, sensitive to the text's quality of newness"; in Thiselton, *Horizons*, p.305.

words, requiring the reader's active involvement, exploration and anticipation.

Moore claims that the historical critical school, with its predominantly visual, private, silent appropriation of the text, has failed to apprehend the importance of this experience of reading, and encouraged the rigorous objectification of the text as a static, spatial form over against its temporal eventness in reader reception theory. This is a practice magnified by the guild's print culture: the biblical text with its artificial scientific stratification by means of chapters, verses, synopses, concordances and lexica.⁵⁹

But neither approach is without its problems in terms of understanding the reception of the text. The rigorous comparative method of redaction critics functions by means of complete familiarity with and objectification of the text. Yet the presupposition by some literary critics of a first-time hearer, unfamiliar with the unfolding story and wholly dependent upon a sequential reading, denies the traditional nature of our Gospels and their original, mainly Christian audiences who surely knew something of the story.⁶⁰

In essence though, this new breed of critic has begun to reorient the traditional priorities of the scholarly guild. The realization is common that even for the author who sets out to write about the 'real world', the resultant narrative world created does not have a one-on-one correspondence with the 'real world'. Thus the narrative world created by the author has a certain conceptual autonomy, and must itself provide the primary reference for meaningful reading. Questions of historical events and ideational content referred to in the narrative are secondary to the world of "characters, actions, settings, and events which constitute the narrative",⁶¹ and are dependent for their reconstruction on that narrative world.⁶²

⁵⁹See also Staley, *Kiss*, pp.1-5.

⁶⁰Moore has highlighted another irony: narrative criticism of the Gospels has maintained a strong, implicit connection with the authorial intention of traditional criticism. Historical intention of the author has been replaced by literary intention; i.e., the text's rhetorical design (which originates with an author's intentions) produces specifiable effects on the reader. Hence, the text still has a primary, recoverable meaning for many biblical narrative critics. See *Criticism*, pp.12, 35-8, 54.

⁶¹Abrams, *Glossary*, p.143.

⁶²Culpepper, "Story", p.472:

The narrative world of a gospel is not an exact reflection of either the world of Jesus or that of the evangelist. Undoubtedly the

Redressing the Balance

These observations, therefore, do not provide for this study an exclusive, monolithic methodological mandate - to assess the presence motif in Matthew purely as a rhetorical phenomenon. Gospel criticism remains incompatible with an a-historical structuralism which severs the text from any sense of context and absolutizes meaning into the reading experience alone, thereby succumbing to what some have called the "affective fallacy" (reducing the text to the reader's apprehension of it). Given that the structural, historical and theological dimensions of the Matthean narrative are interrelated, the literary critical paradigm employed to investigate Matthew's structural dimension does not invalidate the historical and theological questions which must also be asked of the narrative.

I have no wish to fulfil Eagleton's prognosis, that the attempt to combine critical approaches

is more likely to lead to a nervous breakdown than to a brilliant literary career.⁶³

But I follow along with Petersen who has called for a "bifocal" approach which neither absolutizes the texts merely as windows to their contexts, nor absolutizes the texts as mirrors which reflect the reading event.⁶⁴ The narrative world of the gospel text is both autonomous (story-wise) and historically derivative from first-century Palestine, and the latter connection allows for shared codes and shared experiences which form the basis for communication.⁶⁵ Given the cultural and linguistic gap that exists

narrative worlds of the gospels are related in various ways we have not yet fully understood to both the world of Jesus and the social world of the evangelist. Primarily, though, the narrative world of a gospel is a literary world created by the author.

Cf. Petersen, *Criticism*, p.40; and Kingsbury, "Reader", pp.458f.

⁶³*Theory*, p.198.

⁶⁴*Criticism*, pp.24f; also Howell, *Story*, pp.28f. Krieger denies any false dichotomy between the approaches and wants to see "the mirrors as windows too", *Windows*, pp.3-70; see also Polzin, "Criticism", p.104f, with further references.

Each method makes qualitatively different contributions to the interpretive task, but neither is self-corrective; each needs the other; see Barta, "Characterization". Cf. Keegan's discussion, *Bible; in Bauer, Structure*, p.13.

⁶⁵See Vorster, "Meaning", p.57; and Lategan, "Reference", p.74.

between us and the first-century context, "holistic" reading⁶⁶ first distances, and then reasserts the connection between text and interpreter, while checking an over-easy domestication of the message.⁶⁷

In this study the desire is to place the results of a narrative assessment of divine presence in Matthew alongside the results of a redaction-critical assessment of divine presence in the world of the First Gospel, without violating the premises of either method, and not without due recognition of their differing synchronic/diachronic fields of reference.⁶⁸ The distinction must be drawn between the historical critical exercise in which texts merely become tools for the historian's reconstruction of events and ideas and the one in which historical data are employed to inform our reading of the text.⁶⁹ It is the latter employment which should prove most fruitful for delineating the significance of the presence motif within Matthew's story. The priority given to narrative in this circular relationship of methods is temporal; literary and historical analysis are equal servants in the task of interpretation.

⁶⁶"Holistic" reading: i.e., reading that takes critical account of every dimension of the text: structural, historical and theological.

⁶⁷See Wink, *Bible*, pp.24ff; Vorster, "Paradigm"; cf. Thiselton, "Hermeneutic", pp.315-17; Howell, *Story*, p.29.

⁶⁸Keck, "Method", p.123:

Methods are inherently complementary because a text is both an event in time (thus eliciting inquiry into genetic relationship - diachronic or historical-critical study) and an internally coherent work with a life of its own (thus eliciting inquiry into internal relationships - synchronic, structuralist or literary study).

⁶⁹So Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.5; Thiselton, "Reader-Response", p.100.

1.4. The Present State of Research

Most recent attempts to assess the importance of the question of presence in Matthew are the by-products of larger analyses of the First Gospel. A few scholars have focused specifically on the presence motif, and one or two have approached the question from a literary-rhetorical perspective. Apart from a handful of scholars, a certain consensus exists: current students of Matthew generally agree that the Emmanuel prophecy and Jesus' promises of presence form a redactional and theological/christological theme of notable, if secondary, significance in Matthew. Few, however, have attempted more than perfunctory analysis.

A Growing Consensus

The past few decades have seen a gradual rise in interest in our subject matter. Early this century, for example, in such commentaries as those by Allen, Holtzmann, Klostermann, McNeile, Plummer and Robinson, apart from a few technical and historical comments, the Emmanuel prophecy and Jesus' promises of presence are passed over without mention, and their introductions assess no significance to the motif for the Gospel's theology and christology.

In subsequent decades students of the Gospels have sought to understand and define more carefully the individual creativity of each evangelist's tapestry. Bacon, Bultmann, Schlatter and colleagues appreciated the evangelists as more than skillful editors, and their anticipation of redaction criticism within the evolution in interpretive methods undergirds the subsequently increased focus on the Emmanuel theme. Questions began to appear concerning the prominence of the presence motif within the First Gospel's theology, its origins in the OT and Judaism, and relation to the post-resurrection experiences of the Matthean community.

In an article often cited for its examination of the biblical "God with us" language, W.C. Van Unnik in 1959 offered his characterization of the Emmanuel theme in Matthew, including the important recognition of *inclusio* between 1:23 and 28:20:

The promise to the disciples in Matt.28:20 gets its full force in this perspective: after having set that enormous task (v.19), Jesus who has now all authority comforts his weak followers (cf. 26:56) and assures them of His powerful assistance... That is the surprising declaration

at the moment of departure. Matthew returns at the end to the beginning: Jesus was (1:23) and is "Immanuel" (28:20).⁷⁰

Several pages later, Van Unnik summarizes his assessment of NT references to divine presence this way, displaying his incorporation of the Emmanuel motif into a continuous OT-NT *hellsgeschichtlich* paradigm:

Jesus, the Messiah = Christ = Anointed One with the Spirit, the mediator of the new Covenant, is the IMMANUEL and does His work of salvation; His followers, anointed with the Spirit, form the new Israel and stand in the line of the prophets, heroes and kings of the old Israel, obedient to God's will and assured by His blessing.⁷¹

An initial concern with specific sources and traditions behind Matthew's presence language⁷² broadened to include analysis of conceptual links and theological trajectories.⁷³ The connection between the strand of presence christology in Matthew and the theology of presence in the OT and Judaism has now evoked the recognition that Matthew's emphatic dependence upon the OT includes a deliberate adoption of OT presence themes.⁷⁴

One result has been the widespread recognition that the Emmanuel motif and Jesus' promises of presence are particularly the province of Matthew among the Gospels. Ulrich Luz comments on Mt 1:23:

Anspielungen auf das Mit-uns-Sein Gottes durchziehen das ganze Evangelium (17,17; 18,20; 26,29). Vor allem aber hat Matthäus durch den letzten Vers seines Evangeliums (... 28,20) eine Inklusion

⁷⁰"*Dominus*", p.287; also Bornkamm, *TIM*, p.326, originally published in 1963. On literary inclusion in Matthew cf. Léon-Dufour, "Les Evangiles", pp.164-8; and Fenton, "Inclusion", pp.174-9. See also the comments of Lohmeyer, "Mir ist", pp.42, 46, 49; Trilling, *Israel*, p.21; Malina, "Structure", pp.99-101; Malina, "Structure", p.88; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.583; Soares-Prabhu, "Jesus", p.45. More recently Bauer, *Structure*, pp.124-7, and Howell, *Story*, pp.226-8, have assessed inclusio in Matthew as a significant rhetorical element of the Gospel's structure.

⁷¹Van Unnik's emphasis, "*Dominus*", p.293.

⁷²E.g., cf. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, pp.53ff, 105; cf. Beare, *Matthew*, p.26.

⁷³As evident in the discussions of Klostermann, *Matthäusevangelium*; Michel, "Conclusion", pp.30ff; Lohmeyer, "Mir ist", pp.22ff; Trilling, *Israel*, pp.49-51; Barth, "Law", *TIM*, pp.135-7, 142; Bornkamm, "Lord", *TIM*, pp.301-27, esp.326.

Michel's article (1950), along with Kilpatrick's *Origins* (1946) and Bornkamm's "The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew" (1948), heralded a new focus on the distinctive features of Matthew. Michel's seminal statement, that "Matt.28:18-20 is the key to the understanding of the whole book", brought part of that focus to bear on Jesus' distinctive promises to be with his followers (p.35); cf. Stanton's comments, *Interpretation*, pp.3f; "Origin", pp.1891ff.

⁷⁴See, e.g., Terrien, *Presence*, pp.411ff; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.8ff.

geschaffen, die ein Grundthema markiert: Die Gegenwart des erhöhten Herrn bei seiner Gemeinde erweist ihn als Immanuel, Gott mit uns.⁷⁵

But the agreement that Matthew's presence motif provides a *Grundthema* for the Gospel has not necessarily extended to agreement over the character and significance of that motif for his story as a whole. C.H. Dodd saw in Matthew's references merely a proclamation of Christ's perpetual abiding presence (as figurative).⁷⁶ J.A.T. Robinson refers to Jesus' promise in Mt 28:20 as fully inaugurated eschatology, while Barth, Schweizer and Marxsen want to define Jesus' presence in terms of the ongoing legacy of his commandments and preaching of the law.⁷⁷ For Ziesler, on the other hand, the message of 18:20 and 28:20 stems from a delicate balance of Matthew's very high christology, his understanding of the monarchy of God and a general caution about Spirit language.⁷⁸

G.M. Styler, in assessing the development of Matthean christology over Markan, detected among other things the beginnings of an interest in ontology in the First Gospel, based in part on the material special to Matthew where the presence of Christ with his followers is stressed.⁷⁹ This prompted a rebuttal from David Hill who asserted that this material highlighted Christ's divine *function* among his people, not his ontology, as evident from Matthew's tripartite view of NT time.⁸⁰

More recently, however, Kingsbury has taken the lead with this question. In several places he has attempted to link the presence motif with his reading of the fundamental message of Matthew's story.

The key passages 1:23 and 28:20, which stand in a reciprocal relationship to each other, highlight this message... Strategically located at the beginning and the end of Matthew's story, these two passages 'enclose' it. In combination, they reveal the message of Matthew's story: *In the person of Jesus Messiah, his Son, God has drawn*

⁷⁵ *Matthäus* 1-7, p.105. Cf. France, *Matthew*, p.48: "This highest level of Matthew's Christology is effectively summed up in two verses (1:23; 28:20) which are often regarded as a 'framework' around the Gospel"; cf. pp.79f, 276, 416; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1-7, p.217.

⁷⁶ *Studies*, pp.60-62. See Van Unnik's criticism of Dodd and others for making Jesus' presence merely static, "*Dominus*", pp.273f.

⁷⁷ Robinson, *Jesus*, p.66; Barth, *TIM*, pp.135f; Schweizer, "Law", p.218; and *Matthew*, p.534; Marxsen, *Resurrection*, p.165. Note that Held ascribes less significance to the theme; *TIM*, p.299.

⁷⁸ "Presence".

⁷⁹ Styler, "Stages", pp.404-6. Cf. Gundry, *Matthew*, who finds too much deity in Matthew's presence motif.

⁸⁰ Hill, *Matthew*, pp.64-66.

*near to abide to the end of time with his people, the church, thus inaugurating the eschatological age of salvation.*⁸¹

Kingsbury goes on to find support for his 'Son of God' christology in this reading of Matthew's presence motif and sees defined in it the disciples' relationship with Jesus, as well as the community's social parameters and authority.⁸²

One of Kingsbury's students, David Bauer, has recently taken his tripartite structure for the First Gospel and the feature of *inclusio*, to assert that all the references to the presence of Jesus with his community, in their deliverance, prayer, discipline, suffering and endurance (1:23; 18:20; 26:29), are part of a deliberate structural movement to the climatic declaration of 28:20. The 'with-you/us' theme recurs throughout the Gospel and reaches a point of climax at 28:20.⁸³

Two scholars, however, have pursued Matthew's "with us" language as a primary element of their research. From disparate geographical hemispheres, each has sought to elaborate afresh the purpose and place of the Emmanuel Messiah in Matthew's Gospel.

H. Frankemölle: *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi*

Hubert Frankemölle devotes the major portion of his monograph to the question of the christological and theological basis for the community in Matthew. Frankemölle's study of Matthean ecclesiology is redaction-critical in method, an attempt at reconstruction of the specific makeup of the community behind the text of Matthew, especially as revealed through the editorial use of μεθ' ὑμῶν language in 1:23, 18:20 and 28:20.⁸⁴

Frankemölle begins by reiterating previous scholarly observations on the importance and interrelationship of these verses, but expands the μεθ' ὑμῶν/ὑμῶν language into a *Leitidee* for the First Gospel, founded in OT covenant theology. Behind the text of Matthew, Frankemölle identifies a gentile church and presumes a crisis which is countered by the gentile author's sense of *apologia*. The Jewish rejection of Jesus and the

⁸¹Story, pp.41f (Kingsbury's emphasis); cf. *Parables*, pp.28f, 78-81.

⁸²Story, pp. 53-55, 131f, 154ff.

⁸³Cf. Bauer, *Structure*, especially pp.124-7.

⁸⁴*Jahwebund*, pp.7-83.

destruction of the temple have greatly troubled the members of the community: is God faithful to his promises and to his people?

For Frankemölle, Matthew asserts that the covenant people of God have carried on in the community of Jesus' followers, who have replaced Israel, and this is evident by Yahweh's renewal of his covenant through his divine presence with the church. Frankemölle then undertakes a careful examination of the sources and employment of Matthew's μεθ' ἡμῶν/ὕμῶν language, and discovers therein the first evangelist's composition of "covenant theology" (*Bundestheologie*), built in the fashion of the Chronicler and Deuteronomist to explain Yahweh's sovereignty and judgement of his people in history.⁸⁵ The central point is that Yahweh has renewed his covenant by coming to dwell with his people, the church, through the supreme agency of his Emmanuel Messiah, Jesus. Frankemölle stresses the inclusio between Mt 1-2 and Mt 26-28 and builds upon the language of 1:23; 18:20 and 28:20.⁸⁶ This divine presence and the renewal of the covenant bring with them the inherent responsibility of obedience to Yahweh's will, as expressed through his Messiah, by the new covenant people.⁸⁷

Frankemölle's presentation is not without problems, in part due to the schema of salvation history he solicits from Matthew, a schema which consists not in epochs but in categories of prophecy and fulfilment. No one would protest the observation that the distinct horizons of the earthly and exalted Jesus (or the temporal points of view of the plot and narrator) do at points coalesce in Matthew's story, but Frankemölle has completely removed any distinctions.⁸⁸ This thorough dehistoricization of the past does not serve the rhetorical, redactional or theological nuances of the Gospel's horizons.

Ultimately, the service to which Frankemölle puts his examination of Matthew's μεθ' ἡμῶν/ὕμῶν language, namely his assertion of a community in need of assurance regarding God's faithfulness, is not borne out by the story. As Kingsbury points out, based on his use of the OT, Matthew

⁸⁵The speech-narrative pattern in Chronicles and Deuteronomy in particular prepares for the Supper and death of Jesus; see *Jahwebund*, pp.335-42.

⁸⁶See *Jahwebund*, pp.7-80, 321-5.

⁸⁷See *Jahwebund*, pp.273-307.

⁸⁸See Stanton, "Origin", p.1940; Bauer, *Structure*, pp.51f - but Bauer falls victim to this same criticism on occasion, when he seems to blur the distinction between Jesus' teaching and the disciples' (who are commissioned, but never teach in plotted time), and when he dehistoricizes the discourses in order to explain their orientation; see pp.58, 133f.

already assumes to be certain what Frankemölle contends the author is setting out to prove to his community - the faithfulness of God and the ongoing validity of his covenantal promises.⁸⁹

But Frankemölle's work has significant value for this study, despite some of its orientation and conclusions. By arguing that Matthew has shared the same theological perspective as both Deuteronomist and Chronicler, Frankemölle has at least helped to highlight Matthew's indebtedness to the OT, even if he has overdrawn the parallels.⁹⁰ Unanswered questions remain from his work, however, especially concerning the nature of the fundamental continuity between Yahweh's OT and NT people, as extrapolated by Frankemölle from the language of the First Gospel's presence motif. Similarly, Frankemölle's insistent characterization of Matthew as "covenant theology" remains unconvincing, along with the presence motif being subsumed under its umbrella as the expression of Yahweh's covenantal promise. More importantly, Frankemölle has focused on a redactional history and a theological portrait external to the text, leaving many parts of the presence motif within the story essentially unexplored.

A.G. Van Aarde: "God Met Ons"

The second major study of relevance here is the less accessible Afrikaans doctoral dissertation of Andries Gideon Van Aarde, "God Met Ons: Dié Teologiese Perspektief van die Matteusevangelie".⁹¹ He purports from the beginning to have embarked on both a "teologiese" and "metodologiese eksperiment" which has discovered that

the basic theological idea which Matthew imparts to his readers, is the message that *God is with us* by means of the mission of the 'Son of God' (Jesus) and the mission of the 'sons of God' (the disciples).⁹²

As Van Aarde's entire thesis is thereafter given over to his own particular investigation of "God met ons" as "die dominante teologiese perspektief in die vertelling", it does provide the lengthiest among recent analyses of Matthew's Emmanuel motif.

⁸⁹Kingsbury, *Structure*, p.38.

⁹⁰See also Stanton's criticism here, "Origin", p.1940.

⁹¹D.D., University of Pretoria, 1983.

⁹²"En onses insiens is die basiese teologiese idee wat Matteus sy lesers meedeel, die boodskap dat *God met ons* is deur middel van die sending van die 'Seun van God' (Jesus) en die sending van die 'seuns van God' (die dissipels)" (p.6, Van Aarde's emphasis).

As far as his "metodologiese eksperiment" goes, Van Aarde chooses from among several approaches to the Gospels as narrative texts, in order to allow the proper synthesis of "*idee en tegniek*" in the First Gospel to be drawn out (cf. pp.7, 30). He proceeds on the basis of a rather eclectic group of presumptions.

(1) Van Aarde presumes that "meaning" is necessarily genre-bound; the identification of literary genre, in terms of the "holistiese konteks" of Matthew, is critical for unlocking the "idee" of the text.⁹³ He eschews a discussion of Matthew's genre in the context of historical first century categories in favour of a study of the "poëतिक" of the Gospel, in terms of the modern form of narrative text. But at the same time Van Aarde points to the historic activity of Matthew's composition as a deliberate employment of an existing form (Mark's Gospel), hence not *sui generis*, and thus he confuses the separate issues of ancient and modern literary form.

(2) The theology of Matthew must be determined text-immanently within the bounds of the genre "narrative", and not via the presumptions of a historical "Sitz im Leben Ecclesiae" (p.30). Having engaged in an overview of interpretive models applied to Matthew during the past two centuries (pp.13-29), Van Aarde catalogues some of the more recent dissatisfaction with the results of speculative historical critical study.

(3) Matthew is the literary product of a redactor-narrator. The content ("inhoud") of Matthew comes in essence from Mark, and is given new narrative shape. Van Aarde proceeds on the assumption that Matthew (and probably his readers too) knew Mark's Gospel, and retold it for his readers (p.175). Biblical and literary criticism are inseparable, not diametrically opposed. This combination of narrative activity and redactional activity by the evangelist requires an assessment of the relation between the diachronic and synchronic elements of the investigation, with preference granted to the method which is best able to identify Matthew's "idee".

(4) "The result of our investigation brings us to the apprehension that Matthew has created an analogy between pre-Easter and post-Easter 'events' and that he grounds this 'analogy' in the presence of Jesus as *God with us*

⁹³"Die 'idee' (inhoud) van 'n teks word met behulp van genre-ontleding ontsluit" (p.29).

in both 'time-periods'."⁹⁴

Thus Van Aarde's "metodologiese eksperiment" is an attempt by means of an analysis of "narrative point of view" (*vertellersperspektief*) in the First Gospel to uncover the theology of Matthew, while, without confusing the "narrated world" (*vertelde wêreld*) and the "real world" (*werklike wêreld*), simultaneously maintaining an historical-critical foot in the socio-religious context of the Gospel in the second half of the first century CE, and a redaction-critical foot in the world of editorial intentions in Matthew (see pp.29-37).

Such an "eksperiment" is no small challenge. In it Van Aarde attempts to balance the structural and historical dimensions of the text, while remembering the different horizons of text and interpreter. Van Aarde's "metodologiese eksperiment" runs into difficulty, however, at the very point of its strength. He does sometimes confuse that which he wants to avoid confusing - the narrated and real worlds, by attempting to press text and history simultaneously. In the process Van Aarde produces a number of anomalies. It is difficult, for example, to find justification, methodologically or otherwise, for his statement that "Matthew has not, however, created a separate narrator in his narrative; he himself is the narrator."⁹⁵ Such an unwillingness to recognize functional distinctions within the narrative personages of the First Gospel contradicts Van Aarde's methodological stance. Instead of employing narrative and redactional criticism in a dialogical and complementary fashion, Van Aarde has sought a synthesis which obscures on the one hand their fundamental differences and on the other hand their particular contributions to the task of exegesis.

Van Aarde's "teologiese eksperiment" also shows some mixed results. On the positive side he has rightly highlighted two unhappy tendencies in traditional investigations of christological titles (pp.63ff). He points to the arbitrary quality of a gospel christology which is derived merely from its author's use of titles, and protests the "theological oversimplification" inherent in the presumption "that an evangelist has summed up the theological scope of his Gospel in one christological title

⁹⁴"Die resultaat van ons ondersoek sal ons bring by die verskynsel dat Matteus 'n analogie geskep het tussen die voor-pase en die na-pase 'gebeure' en dat hy hierdie 'analogie' grond in die teenwoordigheid van Jesus as *God met ons* op beide 'tydsvlakke'" (p.31, Van Aarde's emphasis).

⁹⁵"Matteus het egter nie in sy vertelling 'n aparte verteller geskep nie; hy is self die verteller" (p.35, cf. p.56).

which like a lens intercepts all the beams in one point of focus."⁹⁶ Van Aarde contends that he is not attempting to make "Emmanuel" the dominant title of the First Gospel; rather, "the *God with us*-theme functions as the foundation of the theology of Matthew's Gospel."⁹⁷

As a corrective to the "dominant-titles" approach of other scholars (see the critique of Kingsbury's 'Son of God' below), Van Aarde takes his cue from N.R. Petersen⁹⁸ and proposes a more functional exploration of titular namings in the text in relation to narrative characterization and point of view. His subsequent discussion, however, of διδάσκαλος, κύριος, υἱὸς Δαυίδ, υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ demonstrates a frustrating mixture of reliance on traditional observations, with only tentative probings of rhetorical point of view (pp.66-81).

But does Van Aarde ultimately achieve his oft-expressed thesis, that the fundamental "idee" communicated by Matthew is the *God with us*-theme, which provides the backbone to the "analogie" he has established between the period of Jesus' pre-Easter mission and the period of the disciples' post-Easter mission? He restates this claim in a number of ways. For example:

Our purpose is to show that the organizing principle which connects the analogous pre-Easter Jesus-mission with the post-Easter disciple-mission in the 'plotted time' of Matthew's Gospel is the *God with us*-theme. In short: the *God with us*-theme is the kernel of the Matthean narrator's *ideological* perspective out of which he has constituted his total narrative ('plot') - *phraseologically, psychologically, temporally and spatially.*⁹⁹

Two problems arise: 1) Despite these repeated statements, Van Aarde never undertakes a full examination of the "God with us" theme as a motif encountered by the reader in the story, or as an expression of the author's own editorial interests. Its dominance as a theological motif is frequently asserted by Van Aarde, but never actually subjected to either a linear

⁹⁶"Tweedens is dit 'n teologiese ooreenvoudiging om te meen dat 'n evangelis die teologiese skopus van sy evangelie saamgevat het in één Christologiese titel wat soos 'n brandglas al die strale in een brandpunt opvang" (p.64).

⁹⁷"Ons betog ook nie dat die *Emmanuel*-benaming as die sentrum van 'n ellips funksioneer waarby al die ander *titels* resessief inskakel nie. In die studie wil ons bewys dat die *God met ons*-tematiek as die begronding van die teologie van die Matteusevangelie funksioneer" (p.64, Van Aarde's emphasis).

⁹⁸See "Point of view", p.111; Van Aarde, pp.65f.

⁹⁹Van Aarde's emphasis, p.119. See similar statements on pp.6, 31, 87, 125, 139, 142, 176.

reading or a redaction critical examination.¹⁰⁰ 2) The "God with us" theme is presented from the beginning as a constituent element of a pre- and post-Easter mission analogy; Van Aarde's thesis is dependent upon whether he can legitimate his proposed analogy.

But in the end it is Van Aarde's "analogie" which does not convince; the parallels and correspondences he evinces between the pre- and post-Easter sequences do not add up to the full compositional portrait he desires. The format of this analogy, once imposed upon the story, begins to constrict interpretation of various narrative elements, rather than to explain them for the reader. The success of such a construction depends on its ready accessibility to the reader, and on the narrator's progressive and consistent building of its elements. Van Aarde, however, relies on a highly developed pre- and post-Easter parallelism between Jesus and the disciples, his ministry and their commissioning, the Jewish crowds and the Christian *μικροί*, etc. There is no question that a powerful relationship of *continuity* exists between the earthly Jesus' mission and the post-Easter community in Matthew's story, but this relationship is also defined by various fundamental elements of *discontinuity* and *transformation*, including the changes in perception of Jesus' presence, and the Jewish-Gentile shift in mission focus.

The imposition of the analogy does not take seriously the narrative of Matthew *per se*, which is first and foremost a story about the earthly and resurrected Jesus, not about the mission of the post-Easter community. Van Aarde's "analogie" begins to appear as another version of the redactional "transparency" between Gospel and community employed by other scholars. Such an analogy does not provide the reader with the proper tool to read the story. Van Aarde essentially proposes a methodological and theological matrix for the Gospel against which he tests a number of prevailing ideas about the text. His rather promising title and thesis statement never materialize in a fresh reading of the text.

1.5. This Study...

Frankemölle, Van Aarde and other commentators thus leave us with several important, unanswered questions. Apart from Van Aarde (and to a

¹⁰⁰ In one of the few places he directly addresses the appropriate texts he depends on Frankemölle: "The expression μεθ' ὑμῶν is the *theologische Leitidee* of Matthew's Gospel"; p.122; cf. Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.7.

lesser degree Kingsbury and Bauer), the dominant concerns of students looking at Matthew's presence motif to date have been external to the story. Most have assumed that the first evangelist is "historicizing" post-Easter experiences or being "transparent" to his community,¹⁰¹ and their assessments of his presence motif have presumed the same. Most have also adopted a particular theological construct of *Heilsgeschichte* as their interpretive paradigm for Matthew and they have thus incorporated their reading of these passages on the presence of God and Jesus into their paradigm.¹⁰² And even in the cases of Frankemölle (a-historical *Bundestheologie*), Kingsbury (Son of God christology), Van Aarde (pre-/post-Easter "analogue") and Bauer (Kingsbury's tripartite structure elaborated), a strong, pre-existing agenda has too often manipulated their comments on presence in Matthew.

What is missing in existing scholarship on Matthew's presence motif is a comprehensive analysis which begins and builds from its employment rhetorically within the entirety of the first evangelist's story, and then connects its narrative significance to appropriate redactional concerns. This study intends to fill that gap, at least to the extent that it builds its foundation first and foremost from the presumption of the wholeness and integrity of Matthew's narrative, presupposing the gospel story to have an inherently dramatic structure in which the presence motif must play a part. But since we are concerned with the role of both reader and author, this study remains concerned with the structural, historical and theological dimensions of the text.

Has the assignment become thereby unbearably complex? Not in the sense that this study must perform a new synthesis of formalist literary technique with traditional biblical criticism. In borrowing eclectically from selected aspects of narrative theory and redaction criticism I take to heart, rather, the words of John Barton, when he argues that "literary competence" is the goal of criticism; an interpreter is literarily competent who knows "what sort of questions it makes sense to ask" of a particular work.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹See especially Luz, "Disciples", for this discussion. See Strecker, *Weg*, pp.45-7, 184ff, for the term "historicizing"; "transparency" is derived from Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*. Cf. Kingsbury, *Jesus Christ*, p.87, and *Structure*, pp.31-7.

¹⁰²See Howell's overview and critique of *Heilsgeschichte* as the major category of interpretation for recent Matthean scholarship, *Story*, pp.55-92.

¹⁰³Barton, *Reading*, pp.16-17; cf. 198-207.

Following this introduction the focal task will thus involve direct assessment of the motif of presence within Matthew's story. The initial method for doing so (narrative criticism) will be discussed more carefully and relevant terms will be defined (Chapter 2), and then the presence motif will be traced through the story with a view to the implied reader's interaction with the text, in particular with the presence motif (Chapter 3). Characters, rhetorical devices, and points of view will be discussed, to help us understand the motif's development throughout the progress of the narrative.

The thrust of Chapter 4 is thereafter to examine divine presence as a dominant motif within Matthew's primary literary context: the Jewish scriptures. Chapter 5 will follow with a more detailed examination of the OT "I am with you" expression and its μεθ' ὑμῶν/ἡμῶν language.

Chapters 6-8 will build on these investigations with a closer analysis of the three critical "presence passages" of Mt 1:23, 18:20 and 28:20. The passages and their contexts will be probed from a redaction critical perspective, guided by the narrative investigation of Chapter 3, and the background of Chapters 4 and 5.

The three major "presence passages" examined in Chapters 6-8 are also complimented by a number of secondary issues; several of these are discussed in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 2. MATTHEW'S NARRATIVE ART

A text has no life of its own. It 'lives' only as an electric wire is alive. Its power originates elsewhere: in a human author. There is another point of comparison: however powerful the author's act of creation, the text lies impotent until it also comes into contact with a human reader.

... those at the receiving end are in control. It is they who decide what to do with the powerful resource they possess -- whether and how to use it. They have all the power in their hands.¹

The aim of this chapter is to investigate briefly the understanding of Matthew as a narrative text, in order to ask how the motif of presence is expressed through its rhetoric. Such an exercise involves swapping a traditional focus on the evangelist's *theology* for a new focus on *story*, and the elements thereof.

2.1. Method and Premises

As Stephen Moore has recently explained, narrative criticism, especially as conceived of and increasingly practised by gospel critics, is above all preoccupied with the evangelist's story, particularly in terms of plot and character. Plot has long been defined as a set of events connected by both temporal succession and causality: "*The king died and then the queen died of grief*" is a plot; "*The king died and then the queen died*" is not.² Our acts of reading are driven by a powerfully innate desire to supply causal links even where they are not explicit (e.g., in the case of "*The king died and then the queen died*" the reader naturally tends to assume that the queen's death had something to do with the king's).³ As Moore notes, this natural desire to impose maximum plot coherence on the events of a narrative is quite evident in gospel studies: witness scholars' enduring

¹Morgan, *Interpretation*, p.269.

²This is E.M. Forster's well-known example from *Aspects*, p.93; as cited by Moore, *Criticism*, p.14.

³So Chatman, *Story*, pp.45f; cf. Moore, *Criticism*, pp.14f.

puzzlement over enigmas such as Mark's naked young man (Mk 14:51f), and the abrupt ending in Mk 16:8.

Within the reading experience, character is inextricably tied to plot: each is produced and defined by the other. Characters especially find their definition through interaction with other characters in the story, while in the Gospels the narrator plays an essential role in supplying information about characters. In Matthew, for example, by the time Jesus utters his first words, the reader has already gained a crucial 'inside' awareness of who he is from the narrator.

But when the redaction critic's preeminent concern with a Gospel's theology is replaced by the narrative critic's preeminent concern with its story, this also entails careful attention to questions of discourse. As a means of explaining in tandem both the 'what' (story) and the 'how' (discourse, or rhetoric) of narrative, Seymour Chatman's two-storey model of narrative communication has proven a functional paradigm for numerous gospel critics.⁴ Coming out of structuralist studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, his synthesis in *Story and Discourse* of various Continental and Anglo-American textual concerns has provided for critics a helpful means of mapping intelligibly the interrelationships of the Gospels' various narrative elements.⁵

⁴It was the SBL Markan Seminar, begun in the 1970s, where narrative criticism found its primary forum from which to sprout into a full-fledged discipline within gospel studies, at least insofar as it affected the North American scene, and academic pockets such as Sheffield University: so speculates Moore, *Criticism*, pp.7f. Rhoads, "Criticism", surveyed the resultant spate of literary work on Mark in the 1970s; cf. Petersen, "Point of View"; Tannehill, "Disciples"; and "Mark", pp.57-95; Kermode, *Genesis*. See also Vorster, "Mark", pp.46-61; Dewey, *Public Debate*, and "Point of View", pp.97-106; Boomersshine and Bartholemew, "Mark 16:8", pp.213-23; Boomersshine, "Mark 16:8", pp.225-39; Fowler, *Loaves*; Kingsbury, *Christology*.

Rhoads and Michie, *Mark*, and Culpepper, *Anatomy*, have become touchstones within the area, not only in their employment of Chatman's paradigm, but in the parameters which they established for the field of gospel narrative criticism. Cf. Achtemeier, *Mark*; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts 1*; Kingsbury, *Story*; Staley, *Kiss*; Howell, *Story*. See also the employment of Chatman in the published theses of Kingsbury's students: Bauer, *Structure*; Weaver, *Discourse*.

Cf. similar adaptations in Petersen, *Criticism*; Rhoads, "Criticism"; Combrink, "Structure", pp.61-90; Anderson, "Over Again"; R.A. Edwards, *Story*; Matera, "Plot", pp.233-53. R.M. Frye, "Perspective", and Perrin, "Evangelist", also proved influential early in the 1970s, with their calls for the application of literary critical paradigms to the Gospels.

⁵See Selden, *Guide*, for an overview of the literary critical field. Cf. Eagleton, *Theory*, for a more idiosyncratic condensation and critique of the roots and development of modern literary theory; cf. also Detweiler,

Narrative Structure: Rhetoric and Story

Within Chatman's model, narrative is a two-storey structure,⁶ divided between "story" and "discourse" (or "rhetoric", as preferably renamed by Rhoads and Michie). "Story" is the *content*, or the *what* of narrative; "rhetoric" is the *expression*, or the *way* of narrative. "Story" consists in the content or chain of *events* (actions, happenings) and *existents* (characters, settings), hence the "plot" as discussed above. Objects and actions in the real world are represented within the narrative medium through the filter of the author's cultural codes. "Rhetoric" is the means or medium (*manifestation*) whereby the content is communicated, as well as the autonomous discourse elements (*structure*) which narratives share in any medium.⁷

When some of the terminology here is decoded, Chatman has given us a model which carefully integrates the form (rhetoric) and content (story) of a narrative into functionally interrelated parts of a whole.

Rhetoric: narrative's discourse

Theorists of narrative communication commonly presume a teller (or sending party), a story and an audience (or receiving party).⁸ Three personages are normally distinguished within the sending party: the *real author*, *implied author* and *narrator*, and three in the receiving party: the *real reader*, *implied reader* and *narratee*.⁹ Critics have long found it helpful to distinguish, for example, between the author and narrator in a text. These further delineations are not merely extrapolations of a theory

"Criticism". See Moore's contextualization of Chatman in *Criticism*, pp.43ff. Moore's monograph provides the most comprehensive overview of current literary critical study of the Gospels.

⁶For the characteristic properties of structures: wholeness, transformation, and self-regulation; see Piaget, *Structuralism*; and Chatman, *Story*, pp.20ff.

⁷See Chatman's full explanation; *Story*, pp.22-24. His diagram, p.26, though not reproduced here, provides a basic visualization of the theory. Cf. Culpepper's version of the diagram, which, given its application to a Gospel, is more apropos in some respects; *Anatomy*.

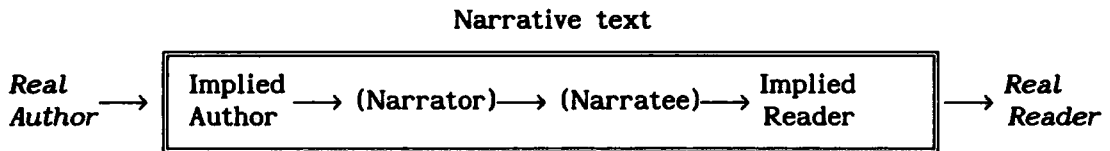
⁸See Scholes and Kellogg, *Narrative*, p.240.

⁹These have been extensively treated elsewhere, and will only be briefly outlined here; see the discussion and references in Booth, *Fiction*, pp.70-76; Chatman, *Story*, pp.28, 147-51; cf. Rhoads, "Criticism", pp.420-22.

gone to seed; they highlight distinctive roles within narrative communication. In narrative the real author and reader only communicate with each other through their implied counterparts:

only implied authors and audiences are immanent to the work, constructs of the narrative-transaction-as-text.¹⁰

RHETORIC: A DIAGRAM OF NARRATIVE'S DISCOURSE¹¹



In the process of text creation, authors generate a rhetorical version of themselves within the narrative. Through a series of decisions about plot, characterization, rhetorical devices, the role of the narrator, and so on, the author creates a complex 'second self' which corresponds to the sum of his or her choices in constructing the narrative. The reader infers this image of the author in the process of reading and responding to the rhetoric of the text.

In a crude sense, this rhetorical reality can be demonstrated in the first-time meeting between a modern reader and his or her favorite author in the flesh. Not uncommon is the reader's surprise that the implied author whom they had inferred from the text is a partial representation of, or even profoundly different from, the real author encountered in person.¹² In terms of the First Gospel, the author incorporated traditions, story elements and rhetorical nuances which probably do not fully represent or agree with his actual person, as a result of any number of secondary and external influences. He, as the *real author*, in this way added to the sum of rhetorical decisions which equals the *implied author*. The implied author or "second self" of the evangelist, then, is discerned in Matthew by the reader

¹⁰Chatman, *Story*, p.31.

¹¹Adapted from Chatman, *Story*, p.151. Moore, *Criticism*, p.46: this "diagram has subtly yet considerably shaped the way New Testament literary critics today conceive of the gospel text".

¹²Certainly a scene not unknown at annual SNTS and SBL gatherings, when for the first time real readers meet real authors unlike their implied versions.

as "a selecting, structuring, and presiding intelligence"¹³ which communicates not directly, but as the creating person who is implied by the totality of a given work when it is offered to the world.¹⁴

In most cases, and certainly in the gospel texts, the implied author invents a *narrator* who acts as the voice of the story. There is possible an entire hierarchy of "degrees of narratorhood",¹⁵ and even though the narrator in Matthew is not a character in the narrative ("undramatized") and shares the implied author's point of view, it is important to distinguish the two.¹⁶ In the case of Matthew we relate as readers to the narrator, our guide, as a person, hence this study employs a personal pronoun. That the masculine is used is only convenient; the Matthean narrator could be male or female.¹⁷

Just as real authors generate their implied image in the text, they also create a corresponding image of the reader. This *implied reader*¹⁸ is an imaginary reader with the ideal responses presupposed or implied by the narrative; it is a role projected by the implied author which the real reader is intended to assume. Once the real reader enters into this "fictional contract", thereby becoming the implied reader, she or he appropriately interprets, anticipates and doubts, becomes amazed and angry, experiences suspense and sympathizes with characters in accordance with the ideal of this role.¹⁹

¹³Moore, *Criticism*, p.46. "The author's generation of this textual second self is a profoundly rhetorical act (e.g., Luke 1:1-4)."

¹⁴Booth, *Understanding*, p.269. See Booth's five-fold typology of authors, pp.268ff, and cf. *Fiction*, pp.70-76, 151. Using Booth's example of works by Henry Fielding, Chatman notes that the notion of implied author is most clear when one compares different narratives written by the same real author, each of which presupposes a different implied author (*Story*, p.148). Not widely tested in the NT, this is a principle of narrative structure which provides fruit when applied to Luke-Acts (see Tannehill, *Luke-Acts* 2), the Johannine literature (see Staley, *Kiss*), or even the letters of Paul. Petersen, *Paul*, has provided one examination of the narratology of letters, inviting broader application to the Pauline corpus.

¹⁵See the full discussion and further references in Chatman, *Story*, chap.5.

For more on the distinction between implied author and narrator, see Bal, "Mice", pp.202-10; and Staley, *Kiss*, pp.27ff.

¹⁷Cf. Anderson, "Over Again", pp.43f; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.17.

¹⁸See the term as first coined by Iser, *Reader*.

¹⁹See Chatman, *Story*, pp.28, 149f; cf. Lanser, *Act*, p.116; Rhoads and Michie, *Mark*, p.137. There are three dimensions to reading: cognitive, affective and pragmatic. For biblical scholarship to become holistic all three must be jointly exercised, but such sits uncomfortably with the current practice of essentially cerebral reading. See Moore, *Criticism*, pp.95-98.

Understanding what the real reader must do to read a text, and the degree to which the implied reader is textually immanent or transcendent, has become a major preoccupation within that particular extension of narrative criticism called reader-response criticism.²⁰ Chatman and Booth work with an implied reader who remains essentially internal to the text, a creation of the author.²¹ Iser's reader, however, has a foot inside and outside of the text, neither wholly ideal (wholly manipulated by the text) nor wholly actual (wholly free to interpret individually), but part creation of the text and part real individual with a viewpoint from outside the narrative world.²²

Those narrative critical gospel studies which employ a reader orientation have chosen, by and large, the "reader-in-the-text", or intratextual reader, of Chatman.²³ It is important, however, not to absolutize either implied author or implied reader as completely encoded inhabitants of the text. The 'reading' process (aural, oral and visual) is much more dynamic, with implied personages to some degree both a textual structure, and partly created by the structured act of reading. Bernard Lategan captures the balance:

Author and reader stand in a 'chiasmic' relationship to one another: the implied reader is a construct of the real author, and the implied author is a construct of the real reader. The first is necessary to prepare the expected response to the text, the latter is a text-guided image in order to get a grip on this intended response.²⁴

The third personage of the receiving party, the *narratee*, when present

²⁰During its rapid ascendancy and hey-day the reader has managed to collect a plethora of labels, including Intended, Implied, Encoded, Composite, Informed, Authorial, Hypothetical, Historical, Model, Mock, Ideal and Flesh-and-Blood. Cf. Booth, *Fiction*, pp.122f, 274, 284, 302-4; Chatman, *Story*, pp.27, 28, 41f, 149-51; Moore, *Criticism*, pp.71f.

For overviews of reader-response criticism see Mailloux, *Conventions*, pp.19-65; Suleiman, "Varieties"; Tompkins, "Introduction". For its applications in NT criticism, see Fowler, "Who"; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.205-27; McKnight, *Bible*; and *Postmodern*; Lategan, "Issues"; Lategan and Vorster, *Text*, pp.67ff; Brown, "Reader Response"; Moore, pp.71-107.

²¹See e.g., Booth, *Fiction*, p.138; *Understanding*, pp.100-106; Chatman, *Story*, pp.149-51.

²²Iser, *Reader*, p.284; *Act*, pp.27-38. See Fowler's discussion, "Who", pp.43f, and his comments on Stanley Fish's attempt to encompass both the positions of Chatman/Booth and Iser within his critical reach.

²³See Moore's bibliography; *Criticism*, p.72 n.3. Cf. Anderson, "Over Again", pp.34-36.

²⁴"Reference", p.73; contra Anderson's wholly encoded implied author. Cf. the comments of Howell, *Story*, pp.163f.

in the text is the narrator's counterpart as the one to whom he addresses his remarks.²⁵ In Luke-Acts, for example, the narrator's immediate addressee is identified as Theophilus. In Matthew, however, a clear distinction between narratee and implied reader is not essential.²⁶

Story: the Narrative's Content

Within Chatman's terms, narrative rhetoric, the *discourse*, communicates the narrative content, the *story*, by means of narrative "statements".²⁷ As the building blocks of narrative these can be either "process" or "stasis" statements, i.e., "according to whether someone did something or something happened [DO or HAPPEN model]; or whether something simply existed in the story" [IS model]. In this manner *story* encompasses "events" and "existents", the former comprising the "plot" of the story (as discussed above) in a temporal and causal arrangement of "actions" and "happenings", in which the latter, as "characters" and "settings" perform as agents or exist as patients. "Events" carry the dimension of story-time, and have a priority of importance according to their necessity within the plot; if logically necessary they are designated "kernels", if ancillary, "satellites". "Existents" carry the dimension of story-space, and the objects in story-space are "characters" (more than simply the people of the story, but defined in terms of identity and a "paradigm of traits")²⁸ and "settings" (defining space, time and social conditions).²⁹ As the story vehicle, plot thus functions to emphasize or de-emphasize certain story events, to interpret some and to leave others to inference, to comment or to remain silent, to focus on this or that aspect of an event or character.

²⁵See Chatman, *Story*, pp.151f, 253-62.

²⁶See Kingsbury, *Story*, p.38; Edwards, *Story*, p.10; Anderson, "Over Again", pp.37f; cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.205-27.

²⁷See Chatman, *Story*, pp.31ff, for development of the following.

²⁸See Chatman, *Story*, pp.108, 126f; cf. Kingsbury, *Story*, p.10.

²⁹See E.M. Forster's seminal discussion of many of the above elements, especially the distinctions between "round" and "flat", and "dynamic" and "static" characters (*Aspects*, pp.108-118) and between story and plot, and fable and *su jet* (p.130); cf. Scholes and Kellogg, *Narrative*, pp.204-6.

2.2. Narrator and "Point of View"

The narrator is one of the most important rhetorical elements in the discourse of the First Gospel, serving not just as the voice of the implied author, but as the storyteller, a powerful guiding presence for the reader of the text, filtering, selecting and evaluating every element of the narrative world, its characters and events.³⁰ "Point of view" for literary critics designates the fluid, variable relationship between tale, teller and audience, in the telling and receiving of the tale.

From the range of possible levels of narration and types of narrators³¹ Matthew evinces a narrator who is not a character in the story ("undramatized"). He speaks in the third person, as if an observer; is not temporally or spatially limited in telling the story ("omnipresent"), but is apparently present as an invisible observer at every scene. He is able to discuss the thoughts and feelings of the characters, and to offer explanatory asides and interpretations to the reader ("omniscient"). He displays a consistent ideological point of view, in agreement with the implied author, when narrating the story ("reliable").³²

Immediately as we enter the story world of Matthew we encounter the Matthean narrator, who introduces the main character Jesus, details his genealogy, and begins the story of his birth, providing explanations and translations of names and terms, and placing each character and event into perspective. Very quickly, through "self-conscious" intrusions into the narrative flow of Matthew, the narrator presents himself as a reliable and authoritative reporter and guide to the significance and meaning of the life

³⁰"At one moment the narrator may speak in his or her own voice (e.g., Matthew 1:22; Mark 13:14; Luke 1:1-4; John 2:21) to shape the reader's interpretation of the story; at another he or she may cede these explanatory functions to a reliable speaker within the story: an angel, Jesus, a heavenly voice, or even a Gentile soldier (Matthew 27:54 = Mark 15:34) or a demon (e.g., Mark 1:24; 3:11; 5:7). Or again he or she may nuance his or her phrasing so as to covertly stamp his or her own view of what is being told upon the telling (e.g., when the gospel narrator refers to Jesus as 'the Lord')." Moore, *Criticism*, p.26.

See fuller discussions of these options in Booth, *Fiction*, pp.149-63; Chatman, *Story*, pp.146-162; Uspensky, *Poetics*, pp.8-100; Lanser, *Act*, pp.85-225; cf. also Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.18-20; Moore, *Criticism*, pp.25f. Cf. the application to Matthew by Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.31-57; Howell, *Story*, pp.161-203.

³²For Booth's term "unreliable narrator" see Chatman, *Story*, pp.148f. For its relevance to Matthew, see Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.31ff.

of Jesus, and as readers we are drawn into his arena to take our places as the implied readers in his audience.³³

Despite the narrator's critical function, however, only recently have students of the First Gospel given much space to the role of the narrator in Matthew.³⁴ As part of his own critical movement from gospel theology to story, Kingsbury has summarized briefly the Matthean narrator's role in terms of Chatman's theory and Uspensky's categories,³⁵ with reference to Janice Anderson.³⁶ Similarly, Combrink depends on Chatman's theoretical base and Anderson's SBL paper for a few brief comments on narrator and point of view in Matthew.³⁷ More extensive discussion is found in a number of recent Ph.D. theses. In assessing the role of the narrator and the reader's position prior to the missionary discourse (Mt 9:35ff) Dorothy Weaver relies predominantly on the terms provided by Susan Lancer in *The Narrative Act*, although Lancer herself builds essentially on the foundation provided by Uspensky.³⁸ Most recently David Howell's *Inclusive Story* has somewhat filled the gap with a more sustained commentary on the Matthean narrator.³⁹ Richard Edwards' *Matthew's Story of Jesus* provides in my judgement the best complete, sequential reading of Matthew to date which focuses on the narrator-reader transaction, but given the popular orientation of the book

³³Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.16-18.

³⁴For example, Davies and Allison (*Matthew 1-7*, pp.72-96) include in 25 pages of detailed examination of "Literary Characteristics" only one brief reference to the implied author. The narrator's role is not addressed.

³⁵*Story*, pp.31-7. Kingsbury is content most often to designate both narrator and implied author in the First Gospel as "Matthew", but at points preserves the distinction. Note Booth's warning ("Distance", p.65):

One of the most frequent reading faults comes from a naive identification of such [undramatized] narrators with the authors who create them. But in fact there is always a distinction, even though the author himself may not have been aware of it as he wrote.

Similarly, Sternberg, *Modes*, p.256:

the omniscient narrator is as much a creation of the author's as are dramatized narrators that are obviously distant from him.

(in Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.16f).

³⁶Anderson, "Point of View" - unavailable 1983 SBL paper, more recently incorporated into "Over Again"; cf. pp.42-89.

³⁷"Structure", pp.72f.

³⁸See Weaver, "Discourse", pp.40-95.

³⁹Cf. further the Ph.D. dissertations of Powell (unavailable to me) and Witherup. Van Aarde, "God Met Ons", depends on existing discussions for his narrator but synthesizes a "redactor-narrator". Bauer's 1985 dissertation (now published as *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*) purports to be a "literary critical" investigation, but without comment on the narrator.

he otherwise provides only the briefest of discussions of the narrator and point of view in his introduction. Consequently, although the categories provided by Booth, Uspensky, Chatman and Lanser are widely referred to by gospel critics, their application to Matthew's narrator receives extended commentary only in Anderson, Kingsbury, Weaver and Howell.

Similar comments can be made about "point of view", that rhetorical activity where an author attempts from within a social system of assumptions, beliefs and values to impose a story-world upon a reader (or listener) by means of narration.⁴⁰ This critical area for Matthean interpretation also only recently received attention; Anderson's ("Over Again"), Weaver's and Howell's analyses are the most comprehensive to date.⁴¹ Chatman is careful to point out both the importance of "point of view" and the difficulty of defining and distinguishing it from the concept of narrator's voice.⁴² In narrative texts the implied author, narrator, and characters can have one or more kinds of point of view, with a literal, figurative or transferred sense. Point of view, or perspective, and the *expression* of it, do not have to be found in the same person. For example, in "When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" (Mt 2:10), the perceptual point of view is that of the magi, but the voice is that of the narrator. In this case the point of view is *in the story* (it is that of the magi), whereas its expression is the province of the narrative voice and is outside the story *in the discourse*.

In the case of Matthew these complications give rise to conflict within the narrative when it is clear that the narrator is operating under a clearly different ideological point of view than that of the characters, e.g., the Jewish leaders, whereas an alignment of the points of view of the narrator and characters, e.g., in the most obvious case between the narrator and Jesus, produces a sympathetic characterization. Matthew is no different from most other narratives: it is the narrator's intention that the reader assume his point of view.⁴³

⁴⁰Moore, *Criticism*, p.26.

⁴¹Some of the best-known discussions of point of view include Booth, *Fiction*; Genette, *Discourse*, chaps 4 and 5; Lanser, *Act*; Uspensky, *Poetics*. See other adaptations within gospel studies by Petersen, "Point of View"; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.13-50; Rhoads and Michie, *Mark*, pp.35-44; Moore, *Criticism*, pp.25-40. Cf. van Aarde, "Mt 22:1-14".

⁴²See *Story*, pp.151-8.

⁴³For Uspensky the most common failure to achieve this purpose is where the reader and author are culturally distant from one another (*Poetics*, p.125).

Point of view most basically refers to the position of the narrator in relation to the characters. The narrator assumes certain positions in time and space in relation to the characters, and these may vary with the events of the story. The narrator assumes certain values in relation to the characters, by which he chooses, arranges and assesses events for narration. From this perspective the narrator chooses whether to reveal feelings, motivations and thoughts of the characters. Point of view is thus one of the most important formal devices of narrative construction.

There are five basic characters or character groups in Matthew: Jesus, the disciples, the crowds, an assortment of Gentiles, and the Jewish leaders.⁴⁴ As an element of narrative characterization, corporate personality is utilized in Matthew to a notable degree - this in contrast to many other narrative forms.

Few individuals other than the protagonist are developed as characters with significance for the plot, and they more often function as representatives of a character group, e.g., Peter as the prototypical disciple; the Roman centurion (8:5-13) and Canaanite woman (15:21-28) as adding to the prototype of faith.⁴⁵ The narrator guides the implied reader's understanding through his own position in relation to these characters and by arranging and contrasting episodes of interaction of the four character groups with the protagonist, thus revealing the nature and ideological disposition of each. The position of the Matthean narrator *vis à vis* the characters becomes more visible when one delineates the different categories of point of view using the five "planes" denominated by Boris Uspensky: the psychological, phraseological, spatial, temporal and ideological point of view.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Anderson ("Over Again", p.93) and Kingsbury ("Son of David", pp.599f) identify another major character group as the supplicants, but the narrator treats them as either individual minor characters or as another element of the needy crowds (cf. e.g. Mt 8:1f; 4:23, 9:2, 12, 20f, 32f, 35f); so too Minear, "Disciples", pp.28ff. Minear is wrong, however, to include the Gentiles in the crowds; for the narrator their identity as a distinct character group is important for the crisis over who constitutes the people of God; cf. Anderson, p.93 n.1.

⁴⁵See Anderson, "Over Again", pp.97f.

⁴⁶See Uspensky, *Poetics*; cf. Chatman, *Story*, pp.215ff; Lancer, *Act*. Uspensky would protest any overly-rigid application of his categories, given his insistence that their delimitation is somewhat arbitrary (see pp.6f). He discusses at length possible interrelations and combinations of various points of view in a text (pp.101ff).

See Anderson's application of these categories to Matthew ("Over

2.3. Psychological Point of View: Omniscient

The psychological plane is a rather complex aspect of point of view, encompassing just what sort of distance or affinity the narrator maintains to each event and character.⁴⁷ Matthew's narrator shows the ability to penetrate the surface of his characters; in this respect he proceeds on the psychological plane as "omniscient".⁴⁸ He interprets, explains and reconstructs events after the fact; he narrates the emotions, motivations and sensory experiences of his characters; he provides glimpses inside their minds and thoughts. As an example of the former ability, the Matthean narrator knows from 1:1 (cf. 1:17, 18) that Jesus is ὁ χριστός, even though in the story Joseph first learns of Jesus' messianic role at 1:21ff, and no character actually applies the title to Jesus until 16:16. The narrator often makes the implied reader privy to an inward thought or feeling which is not apparent even to the characters within the story. The effect of this sort of omniscient stance of the narrator is to bring the implied reader quickly into his confidence and establish a positive "personal" relationship - a solid trust between narrator and implied reader based on this mutually shared, privileged viewpoint, which shapes the implied reader's response to and assessment of the characters.

Regarding the protagonist Jesus, the narrator's psychological point of view is frequently aligned with his, evident in both "simple" and "complex" inside views of Jesus, and in the fact that his portrayal of Jesus is far more detailed than any other character or group. The narrator often provides the implied reader with a privileged inside view of Jesus' emotions and perceptions:

3:16 he saw the Spirit of God descending
4:2 and afterward he was hungry
8:10 he marveled (at the centurion's faith)

Again", pp.53-89), and Kingsbury's discussion (*Story*, pp.33-7). Cf. Weaver, "Discourse", pp.67-95, and especially Howell's recent elaborations in *Story*, pp.166-203. Cf. also Uspensky's categories in Petersen, "Point of View"; Rhoads and Michie, *Mark*, pp.35-44; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.20-34; also Petersen, *Paul*, esp. pp.10-14.

⁴⁷See a complete explanation in Uspensky, *Poetics*, pp.81-97. Cf. Lanser, *Act*, pp.202-214.

⁴⁸See Anderson, "Over Again", pp.79-87; Howell, *Story*, p.175. Kingsbury appears to confuse the theological and narratological use of the terms "omniscience" and "omnipresence", *Story*, p.32; also Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.34f.

- 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them,
because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep...
14:14 he saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them
20:34 And feeling deep compassion Jesus touched their eyes
21:18 as he was returning to the city, he was hungry
26:37-44 he began to be sorrowful and troubled... he prayed...

But the narrator also provides *complex* inside views of Jesus, in other words, *the narrator* shares *his* omniscient ability with Jesus. Jesus displays inside views of other characters in the story, he knows (γινώσκω, οἶδα, ὁράω) their thoughts or activities. Within Matthew only the narrator and Jesus display this ability.⁴⁹

- 9:2 when Jesus saw [the stretcher-bearers'] faith
9:4 Jesus, knowing [the scribes'] thoughts
9:22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "...your faith"
12:15 Jesus, aware of [the Pharisees' plans], withdrew
12:25 Knowing [the Pharisees'] thoughts, he said to them...
16:8 But Jesus, knowing [the disciples' discussion]...
22:18 But Jesus, knowing their evil intention...
26:10 But Jesus, aware of [the disciples' indignation]...

The narrator also provides inside views into other characters in the story. The disciples provide a major character group which the narrator most often treats as a single entity, so that his inside views apply to them as a whole. Apart from their hunger in 12:1, and their indignation at James and John (20:24) and the woman with the ointment (26:8), it is notable that all the rest of the feelings expressed represent responses of the disciples to Jesus himself.

- 8:27 and the men marveled [at the calmed storm]
12:1 his disciples were hungry
14:26 the disciples ... were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear
16:12 then they understood
17:13 then the disciples understood
17:23 and they were greatly distressed
19:25 they were greatly astonished
20:24 they were indignant at the two brothers
21:20 when the disciples saw it they marveled
26:8 they were indignant
26:22 and they were very sorrowful
28:17 but they doubted

⁴⁹One exception might be the narrator's complex inside view of Pilate in 27:18; here Pilate's inside perception of the Jewish leaders' envy is aligned with the narrator's point of view. Cf. also Mt 3:13; 4:1; 14:31; 16:17; 17:25 for several implied cases of simple and complex insight. See further discussion of the psychological point of view in Matthew in Anderson, "Over Again", pp.79-87; Kingsbury, *Story*, pp.36f; Van Aarde, "God Met Ons", pp.57-60.

The narrator does occasionally give us inside views of individual disciples, but as noted above, Peter in particular appears to function as the representative of the character group of the disciples.

Peter:

14:30 he was afraid, and beginning to sink...

26:75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus ... he went out and wept bitterly

Peter, James and John:

17:6 they fell on their faces and were filled with awe

From his first introduction, however, the narrator consistently informs the implied reader as to Judas' character and function in the plot:

10:4 Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him

26:16 from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him

26:25 Judas, who betrayed him

27:3 When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces...

Another major character group, the Jewish leaders, are also treated in the narration *en masse* as regards the paradigm of traits attached to them. Seldom does the narrator worry about precise religious and political differentiation among them,⁵⁰ being concerned centrally with their role as antagonists united in hostility to Jesus.⁵¹ Thus the narrator's inside and surface views of them consistently reveal that hostility.

2:3f [Herod] was troubled, and all Jerusalem... the chief priests and scribes

7:29 Jesus... had authority, and not as their scribes

9:3 some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming"

12:10 and [the Pharisees] asked him ... so that they might accuse him

16:1 And the Pharisees and Sadducees came ... to test him

19:3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking...

⁵⁰In 2:4 the chief priests and scribes are together; in 3:7 it is the Pharisees and Sadducees. From then until Mt 23 the narrator and Jesus most often refer to the Jewish leaders as the scribes and/or the Pharisees, while the chief priests and the elders are the dominant titles in the passion narrative, although with some admixture of scribes and Pharisees.

⁵¹Numerous commentators have noted the historical discontinuity here; see van Tilborg, *Leaders*, pp.1-7; Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, pp.11-33. But this is a good example of the suspension of disbelief required of readers entering their implied role in the Gospel. For more on the Jewish leaders' characterization in Matthew see Kingsbury, "Conflict", and *Story*, pp.17-24; Howell, *Story*, pp.236-43. See Anderson, "Over Again", pp.119-77, for an analysis of verbal repetition (epithets, descriptions by reliable characters, Jesus' passion predictions, actions and words, double stories, legal challenges) in the characterization of the Jewish leaders as Jesus' opponents.

- 21:15 the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children... they were indignant
- 21:45 the chief priests and the Pharisees... perceived that he was speaking about them
- 21:46 they feared the multitudes
- 22:22 When [the Pharisees' disciples and the Herodians] heard it, they marveled
- 22:34f But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, to test him.
- 22:46 And no one [of the Pharisees] was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did any one dare to ask him any more questions
- 26:59f Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus, that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward⁵²

Similarly, Jesus' and the Baptist's assessments of the Jewish leaders voice the same consistent point of view and reinforce for the implied reader their alignment with the narrator (e.g., 3:7-10; 12:39; 15:3, 14; 19:8; 23:2ff). In terms of their acceptance or rejection on the narrator's evaluative scale, the Jewish leaders and Jesus end up as polar opposites: the former fail to do God's will; Jesus is fully obedient.

The narrator's inside observations of the third major character group, οἱ ὄχλοι, reveal them as consistently more amenable to persuasion, and impressed by Jesus' authority.

- 7:28f crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes
- 9:8 When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men
- 9:33 the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel"
- 12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?"
- 13:54 ...coming to his own country he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished
- 13:57 And they took offence at him
- 15:30-32 And great crowds came to him,... and he healed them, so that the throng wondered... and [Jesus] said, "I have compassion on them"
- 21:46 they held him to be a prophet
- 22:33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching

⁵²Anderson ("Over Again", p.84) includes here a number of references (12:14; 21:25b-26; 22:15; 26:4-5; 27:1; 27:17; 28:12) which are difficult to classify as "inside psychological views" - they rank more as observations due to the narrator's omnipresent spatial point of view.

A number of the minor characters in the story are also subjected to the omniscient psychological point of view of the narrator. Each in some way contributes to the negative or positive set of characterization traits compiled progressively throughout the story for the implied reader.

Joseph:

1:19f being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream (cf. also 2:13f; 2:22)

Herod the Great:

2:3 Herod ... was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him

2:16 Then Herod... was extremely angry

Herod the tetrarch:

14:5f And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people

14:9 And the king was sorry, but because of oaths and his guests...

Magi:

2:10 they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy

2:12 being warned in a dream

Woman:

9:20f ...a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years
...she said to herself

Young man:

19:22 he went away sorrowful

Pilate:

27:14 But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly

27:18 For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him

27:24 So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing

Centurion and others:

27:54 they were filled with awe...

The two Mary's:

28:8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy

Jerusalem:

2:3 Herod... was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him

21:10 he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred

As already noted, the result of the narrator sharing his omniscient stance is that he gains a reliable and authoritative posture before the implied reader.⁵³ Right from his introductory comments in 1:1, the narrator draws the implied reader into his confidence as they share together from the beginning more knowledge about Jesus than any of the characters in the

⁵³ Abrams, *Glossary*, p.134: "ordinarily, all the omniscient narrator's reports and judgements are to be taken as authoritative" (in Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.17 n.8).

story. The narrator continuously supplements and reinforces this confidence by successively sharing inside views of the principal character groups and some minor characters. Already a trend is visible in that, for example, the implied reader's attitudes to Jesus are developing in a completely positive direction through the narrator's sympathetic inside views, whereas the narrator's inside views of the Jewish leaders have thus far only provided a negative characterization. In particular, because of the narrator's complex inside views of Jesus, the alignment of their points of view is already apparent, each confirming the reliability of the other's omniscience. On the psychological plane, then, the implied reader has an overwhelming advantage over characters in the story. He or she never has to face the problem of misunderstanding Jesus, as do, for example, Jesus' own disciples.

The speeches of Jesus provide a third kind of psychological point of view. In alignment with the narrator, Jesus himself performs almost as a dramatized narrator. Such sympathetic inside views are critical for the narrator's control and reduction of the distance between Jesus and the implied reader.⁵⁴

As Culpepper has observed in relation to the Fourth Gospel, however, the Matthean narrator is also not interested in profoundly penetrating observation of individual psyches, nor does he indulge in supramundane comments. He does not discuss, for example, what spurred Judas to betrayal, the undergirding motivation for the constant antagonism of the Jewish leaders, what was at the heart of the disciples' doubt, or the content of Jesus' thoughts and aspirations. This is all to his benefit, for his omniscience, as a combination of temporal retrospection and inside views, retains a degree of verisimilitude for the implied reader.⁵⁵

The omniscience of the Matthean narrator's point of view, then, remains an effective rhetorical device: disclosures which aid characterization within the story and which propel the story's progress and guide the implied reader's outlook at vital points.

⁵⁴Cf. Anderson, "Over Again", pp.82; on "distance" see Booth, *Fiction*, pp.155ff, 245ff.

⁵⁵Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.21-6; and see Uspensky, *Poetics*, pp.98f, for a discussion of the problems of authorial knowledge.

2.4. Spatial Point of View: Centripetal, Omnipresent

Regarded in Uspensky's scheme as a different "plane" for the expression of point of view,⁵⁶ the Matthean narrator's *spatial* point of view - his position in relation to the narrative world of characters and events in Matthew, is again most closely aligned with Jesus. He also exhibits at points unlimited spatial accessibility to other characters, private councils, mountain tops, houses, boats or courtrooms, as an observer in two places at once, and able to jump from one remote scene to another with no sense of limitation.

The narrator accompanies Jesus like a movie camera, hovering over every episode almost invariably from the time of his baptism to his death, even when no other characters are present or aware of the episode (e.g., 4:1-11; 14:23; 26:39, 42, 44). Their lack of consistent spatial alignment in the infancy narratives and after Jesus' death provides a strong indicator of the literary frame of the narrative.⁵⁷ Otherwise, although the narrator's spatial alignment with Jesus is briefly broken at numerous points in the narrative,⁵⁸ only on three occasions is the break significant (14:1-12; 26:69-75; 27:3-10). Each of these departures by the narrator, whether to observe another conversation or to narrate a sub-plot removed from the action of Jesus, still serves to support his protagonist role.

That the narrator and implied reader follow so constantly as observers of Jesus inspires an even closer ideological alignment between the three. Jesus proves to be a

great centripetal force at work drawing all the other characters into his presence.⁵⁹

The narrator's particular use of προσ- compounds and other verbs, including

⁵⁶ *Poetics*, pp.58-65.

⁵⁷ So Anderson, "Over Again", pp.77-79; cf. Uspensky, *Poetics*, pp.137-51, for the creation of a text's frame through the shift between internal and external authorial positions.

⁵⁸ Cf. 2:1-10, 12, 13ff; 3:1ff; 8:33; 9:26, 31; 11:2; 12:14; 14:1-12; 21:6f, 10f, 25f; 22:15; 26:3-5, 14-16, 58, 69-75; 27:3-10, 51-53, 57f, 62-65; 28:1-8, 11-15; cf. 8:13b; 15:28b.

⁵⁹ Weaver, *Discourse*, p.46.

προσέρχομαι,⁶⁰ προσκυνέω,⁶¹ προσφέρω,⁶² and ἀκολουθέω,⁶³ to highlight Jesus as the constant spatial focus is ample demonstration of this centripetal force of his persona in the narrative world. That Jesus is so dominantly at centre stage highlights numerous questions for the implied reader regarding the narrative implications of Jesus' Emmanuel nature.

The narrator's "omnipresence"⁶⁴ also manifests itself clearly. Within the birth narrative the Matthean narrator is able to speak from the omnipresent vantage point of concomitantly disparate locations. He is present in the various settings of the events centred around Joseph. In the story of the magi (2:1-12) the narrator moves easily between the travelling magi and Herod, describing their independent and mutual activities, and he accompanies Joseph, Mary and Jesus on their subsequent journeys between Bethlehem, Egypt, Judea and Galilee (2:13-23).

At the outset of his spatial alignment with Jesus, at his baptism, the narrator proves to be privy to the apparently private vision (εἶδεν) of the opened heavens and the descending dove (3:16f). He is also present with Jesus in his solitary fasting when no other character in the story is, and during his testing overhears the dialogue with the tempter, and accompanies them from wilderness, to temple top, to mountain peak without difficulty (4:1-11).

For the sake of the narrative's progression the narrator is not only present when Jesus prays alone in the hills (14:23) and in Gethsemane (26:39ff); he is also with the disciples in the boat (14:22ff), and with Jesus before Caiaphas while observing Peter in the courtyard (26:57ff). He

⁶⁰Only twice in Matthew is Jesus the subject of προσέρχομαι (17:6f; 28:18). Of 52 occurrences of the verb, 36 assume movement towards Jesus (4:3, 11; 5:1; 8:2, 5, 19, 25; 9:14, 18, 20, 28; 13:10, 36; 14:15; 15:1, 12, 23, 30; 16:1; 17:14, 19; 18:1, 21; 19:3, 16; 20:20; 21:14, 23; 22:23; 24:1, 3; 26:7, 17, 49, 50; 28:9).

⁶¹In 2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9 and 17, Jesus is the object of active worship.

⁶²Cf. 2:11; 4:24; 8:16; 9:2, 32; 12:22; 14:35; 19:13; 22:19.

⁶³Disciples following Jesus: 4:20, 22; 8:19, 22, 23; 9:9; 10:38; 16:24; 19:21, 27, 28; 26:58; 27:55. Crowds and supplicants following Jesus: 4:25; 8:1, 10; 9:27; 12:15; 14:13; 19:2; 20:29, 34; 21:9; cf. 9:19. Cf. Kingsbury, "Akolouthēin", who focuses on the theological significance of the verb within the Gospel.

⁶⁴See the term in Chatman, *Story*, p.212: although it is difficult at points to distinguish between the narrator's omniscience and omnipresence, it is not necessary for the two to operate simultaneously or have a logical connection; see pp.103, 212f.

frequently observes the private plottings of the Jewish leaders against Jesus;⁶⁵ he is with Judas the betrayer in his private dealings;⁶⁶ he is often present at incidents where the presence of another character in the story would be impossible or inappropriate.⁶⁷

A close relationship of the psychological and spatial planes of point of view, then, becomes quite apparent, but the distinction must also be noted. Whereas the narrator's omniscience is measured, plausible, and maintains the narrative's verisimilitude, the narrator's omnipresence stretches these bounds; his ability to be present where no historical person could be and to report conversations which no one could overhear does minimize the narrative's verisimilitude. But it also increases correspondingly the reader's reliance upon the narrator as authoritative and able to supply everything relevant for the story.⁶⁸ The narrator plays an almost "god-like" role, having a supratextual nature which allows him to act as an immediate, nonstationary (though ideologically aligned) observer of Jesus, who can also slip into the role of omniscient interpreter.⁶⁹

But from a spatial point of view, Jesus remains the focus; the story's events move consistently towards him. Even as the narrator's spotlight follows him across the stage he is the centripetal force for the character groups throughout who move in and out of eyesight.

⁶⁵12:14 But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him
 21:25 And they argued with one another, "If we say..."
 22:15 Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how to entangle him
 26:3ff Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest... Caiaphas, and took counsel
 27:1f When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus
 27:20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus
 27:63-66 the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate
 28:11-15 the soldiers... chief priests... assembled with the elders

⁶⁶26:14; 26:48; 27:3-5.

⁶⁷8:13; 11:2; 14:1, 28; 17:1ff; 19:3; 27:27ff.

⁶⁸So Culpepper, *Anatomy*, pp.26f, in respect to the Fourth Gospel. Unlike John, however, where the narrator occasionally slips into the first person plural (Jn 1:14, 16; 21:24; cf. 3:11), the Matthean narrator maintains consistently his ambivalent spatial distance.

⁶⁹Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.26, notes that the deliberate employment of a "god-like" omniscient narrator in scripture is less a threat to verisimilitude than in modern fiction; contra Sternberg, *Modes*, p.295.

2.5. Temporal Point of View: Synchronic and Retrospective⁷⁰

The narrator in Matthew tells the story from two temporal perspectives: (1) temporal contemporaneity with Jesus, i.e., he controls the pace of the narrative NOW of the story, and (2) retrospective past tense narrative, i.e., he speaks consciously from the narrative NOW of his time, fully aware of the relationship between the time the narrating takes place and the time at which the story events take place.⁷¹

Within the story NOW the narrator proceeds in essentially chronological fashion, using the activities of Jesus to count time at a pace which varies from 'summary' (e.g., 1:1-17; 4:23) to 'real-time' dialogue (e.g., the five major discourses), coupled with concrete detail narration (e.g., 3:4).⁷² The narrator sometimes deliberately anticipates events for the implied reader prior to their happening (anterior narration), and at other times he narrates events as they occur (simultaneous narration). Most often the narrator's temporal stance is to recount events from the past (subsequent narration).

Temporal retrospectivity in Matthew is narration at story time which is informed by the evaluative perspective of post-story time. In Matthew this second horizon, the temporal perspective of the implied author, particularly reveals itself in narrative and discourse statements directed to the implied reader:

24:15 "let the reader understand"
 27:8 that field has been called the Field of Blood *to this day*
 27:53 coming out of the tombs after his resurrection
 28:15 this story has been spread among the Jews *to this day*

Here the narrator knows what the characters cannot know and connects the implied reader explicitly to his own time, looking back from a post-resurrection time future to that of the story world.⁷³

⁷⁰Uspensky combines the spatial and temporal planes under a single heading on space and time, *Poetics*, pp.57-80; on time see pp.65ff.

⁷¹See Chatman, *Story*, p.63, for categories. Luz and Lampe, "Diskussionsüberblick", p.424, and Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, p.58, discuss these two temporal horizons as an "inclusive story"; Howell has adapted the term as the focus of his so-named volume, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*.

⁷²Apart from temporal gaps (e.g., between 2:23 and 3:1); frequent brief narrative explanations, interpretive comments and OT citations, the narrator more explicitly disrupts the chronological sequence of the story at 14:3-12 and in 27:52f.

⁷³See Uspensky, *Poetics*, p.67.

Here too, memory and OT scripture intertwine to provoke retrospective interpretation within the narration of the story NOW, "so that the story the narrator tells is set in a perspective no 'on the scene' reporter would have".⁷⁴ This temporal stance of the Matthean narrator is an important indicator of the implied author's approach to history: he is not interested in a merely descriptive chronicle of Jesus, for the real significance of Jesus comes only through the vantage point of retrospective interpretation. OT scripture, particularly in the Matthean narrator's own formula citations,⁷⁵ has a critical role in providing a properly interpreted story of Jesus through carefully chosen guideposts for the reader: "All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet..." This temporally retrospective point of view thus allows for synthesis of Jesus' traditions, interpretation by means of scripture, a post-Easter awareness of his presence, and a general post-Easter appreciation of the glory of the risen Jesus which reflects back through the whole narrative, all the while maintaining the verisimilitude of the story's own temporality. The effect of this temporal coalescence is such that Jesus' exalted status is evident to the implied reader from Mt 1:1 where the narrator introduces the story with an immediate, unapologetic reference to the protagonist as Ἰησοῦς Χριστός υἱὸς Δαυὶδ υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Moore, *Criticism*, p.48, discussing Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.29.

⁷⁵ Cf. 1:22-23a; 2:5b-6; 2:15; 2:17f; 2:23b; 3:3; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:14f; 13:35; 21:4f; 26:56; 27:9f.

⁷⁶ Note that the narrator's retrospective stance does not mean *confusion* of the pre-Easter and post-Easter Jesus in Matthew; the chronological plot sequence remains essentially intact. I am emphasizing rather, the double temporal perspective of the narrative; it is conducted from both Jesus' point of view and the narrator's (see Uspensky, *Poetics*, pp.66ff, for multiple temporal positions). In the statements above (Mt 24:15; 27:8, 53; 28:15) the narrator is fully aware of the distinction between his time and the narrative time (but Mt 10's dual horizons remain troublesome).

The dual temporal perspectives in Matthew have often been explained historically and theologically; cf. e.g., the discussion in Bornkamm, *TIM*, p.34; Ziesler, "Presence (1)", pp.59f; Carson, "Ambiguities". Cf. Lemcio, *Past*, pp.49-73, who emphasizes Matthew's sensitivity to the historical distinctives between the pre- and post-resurrection narratives, but builds his case too narrowly on terminological grounds; he overlooks the evaluative stance of the narrator.

Frankemölle, *Jahwebund* (as noted above), does not maintain Matthew's temporal distinctions, but insists that linear time is collapsed in Matthew into the present of his own community. His historical focus is defined "mit dem Schema atl Verheißung - ntl Erfüllung." (p.377) Jesus has turned history into the verb πληροῦν: "Dieses Wort bezeichnet in kürzester und prägnantester Weise die theologische Grundidee des Mt." (p.388)

However, temporal *synchronicity* is as important as retrospectivity for the narrator; the implied reader is often invited to place him/herself in synchronic relation to the action of the story, and to become a witness to it. Frequently the narrator's past tense shifts to the historical present⁷⁷ and briefly and vividly aligns the temporal positions of the narrator, characters and implied reader (λέγει, 46x, has Jesus as subject 43x; λέγουσιν, 14x, has subject speaking to Jesus 13x).⁷⁸ Over and again the implied reader is invited in this temporal shift to listen to and observe Jesus directly by aligning temporally with the characters in the story. Similarly the implied reader finds him- or herself situated contemporaneously with Jesus for the duration of his main discourses, where there are no narrative interruptions to reintroduce a past tense perspective. Likewise when Jesus reiterates ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν this contemporaneity is further augmented as the implied reader is brought directly into his presence among the story audience.⁷⁹

Finally, by means of direct speech and temporal references in the commissioning of 28:16-20, the story closes with the temporal and spatial convergence of the narrator, implied reader, Jesus and the eleven disciples: "and look, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Here the implied author seeks, by aligning all four parties on the planes of time and space, a final alignment on the ideological plane, so that the commission and promise of Jesus' presence ultimately translate into an intersection of the story world and the post-resurrection world of the implied reader.

2.6. Phraseological Point of View

Points of view in a story are sifted and categorized by the explicit speech patterns of the narrator and characters. Such is the case with the narrator and Jesus in Matthew, the former by commentary, framing,

⁷⁷At least eighty times; see Hawkins, *Horae*, pp.144-49; cf. Anderson's revision of Hawkins' list, "Over Again", pp.65, 71-73. Kingsbury's language (e.g. his references to aorist verbs as "past time") is unclear and redundant on this point (*Story*, p.36). Cf. Schenk, "Präsens", pp.464-75.

⁷⁸Anderson ("Over Again", p.65) notes that Jesus and the narrator are the only ones in the Gospel to use the historical present, probably because only Jesus and the narrator ever narrate (Anderson, p.66, notes the possible exception of the Sadducees narrating their story in 22:23-28; I would add the Baptist in 3:7-12). Cf. Howell, *Story*, pp.169-75.

⁷⁹See Mt 5:18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44, 6:2, 5, 16, 25, 29; 8:10, 11, etc. See Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.48f.

phraseology and terminology, titles and interpretive quotations, and the latter by assessing and subordinating other characters' points of view within his own speech. And these same phraseological phenomena demonstrate the individual points of view of given characters and the characteristic style of speech which identifies each speaker. As Uspensky notes, the implied author

may be using the points of view of various characters in the work, each of whom stands in a different relationship to the character who is being named.⁸⁰

The relative speech patterns of the narrator and characters give the most obvious and tangible evidence of their particular ideological alignment, and are the entry level for the implied reader's understanding of the various voices in the text.⁸¹

In the case of the Matthean narrator, his frequent dependence upon formulaic phrases provides ample room for the support of his ideological stance with a particular phraseological point of view. The narrative is punctuated by his own retrospective fulfilment formulas and citations, his closing formulas for the five speeches,⁸² his summaries of Jesus' ministry,⁸³ and his formulas signifying temporal breaks.⁸⁴ Added to these features, the narrator's patterns of dependence upon and interpretation of OT texts also reveal his full alignment with the evaluative perspective of Jewish scripture - being none other than the Word of God itself. This assumption is integral to his OT prophecy/NT fulfilment scheme as the paradigm for understanding the history of divine presence and salvation culminating in

⁸⁰*Poetics*, p.26. Some helpful observations have already been made on christological titles, e.g. the consistency with which Judas, opponents and strangers use Διδάσκαλε and Παββί when addressing Jesus, over against the consistent use of Κύριε by disciples and followers. See Bornkamm, "End-expectation", pp.41f, for the initial observations; see Lemcio, *Past*, pp.60-62, for some recent (though unconvincing) criticism. Much work remains to be done, however, on the relation of speech patterns to ideological points of view in Matthew. Cf. Malina and Neyrey, *Names*, pp.35-38, for the force of positive and negative labelling.

⁸¹See Anderson, "Over Again", who sets out to demonstrate through an analysis of verbal repetition in Matthew the convergence of phraseological and ideological points of view, and the narrator's use of phraseology to guide the implied reader into alignment with his (and Jesus') point of view.

⁸²7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1.

⁸³4:23; 9:35; cf. 11:1.

⁸⁴"From that time on" (4:17; 16:21; 22:46); "from that day" (26:16); "from that moment" (26:64); cf. "then he began" (11:20).

Jesus, and adds immensely to the reliability of the narrator's speech acts.⁸⁵

One of the more obvious phraseological devices of the narrator, parallelism - verbal, syntactical and material - also undergirds most strongly his skilfulness as a storyteller.⁸⁶ Similarly, the narrator's ideological control of the text is apparent in his positive and negative characterizations. The vocabulary applied to Jesus' activity, for example, includes ἀφίημι + ἁμαρτία,⁸⁷ διδάσκω,⁸⁸ ἐλεέω,⁸⁹ ἐξουσία,⁹⁰ θεραπεύω,⁹¹ ἰάομαι,⁹² καθαρίζω,⁹³ κηρύσσω,⁹⁴ πληρώω,⁹⁵ σφάζω,⁹⁶ whereas the activity of Jesus' opponents is described in terms of ἀναιρέω,⁹⁷ ἀπόλλυμι,⁹⁸ ἐνθυμέομαι + πονηρός,⁹⁹ ζητέω,¹⁰⁰ θυμόομαι + λίσσιν,¹⁰¹ πειράζω,¹⁰² ταράσσω,¹⁰³ and in each case is directed against Jesus.

According to Dorothy Weaver's calculations, of the 269 verses from 1:1-9:34, only 38 contain the voices of characters other than Jesus or the narrator, and only 8 (3%) of these verses contain nothing from either.¹⁰⁴

⁸⁵ Cf. Hartman, "Exegesis", p.134; Kingsbury, *Story*, p.35; Howell, *Story*, pp.168f.

⁸⁶ See the list in Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.37f; cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.37-41; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.88-96.

⁸⁷ 9:2, 5, 6.

⁸⁸ 4:23; 5:2; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 21:23; 22:16; 26:55.

⁸⁹ 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30, 31.

⁹⁰ 7:29; 9:6, 8; 21:23-27; 28:18.

⁹¹ 4:23, 24; 8:7,16; 9:35; 12:15, 22; 14:14; 15:30; 17:18; 19:1; 21:14.

⁹² 8:8, 13; 13:15; 15:28.

⁹³ 8:2, 3; cf. 11:5.

⁹⁴ 4:17, 23; 9:35; 11:1.

⁹⁵ 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56.

⁹⁶ 1:21; 8:25; 9:21f; 14:30; 18:11; 27:40, 42.

⁹⁷ 2:16.

⁹⁸ 2:13; 12:14; 27:20.

⁹⁹ 9:4.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. 2:20: οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν; 21:46: ζητοῦντες αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι; 26:16: ἐζήτει ...παραδοῖ; 26:59: ἐζήτουν ψευδομαρτυρίαν.

¹⁰¹ 2:16.

¹⁰² 4:1, 3; 16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35.

¹⁰³ 2:3.

¹⁰⁴ Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.69f.

Obviously the dominance of the narrator's own voice and his use of the direct speeches of Jesus is of great importance in establishing the implied reader's perception of these two voices as the most significant in the text. Moreover, there is clear convergence between them on the phraseological plane, in their common use of terms (δικαίος, δικαιοσύνη), in the narrator's reinterpretations of Jesus (cf. 16:12; 17:13; 21:45) and in their common assessment of the Jewish leaders and synagogues.¹⁰⁵ That they are frequently aligned on the psychological, spatial and temporal planes makes their phraseological convergence all the more powerful, and points towards the full alignment ideologically.

2.7. Ideological Point of View

Ideological point of view is most fundamental to text and yet the most complex and difficult to retrieve. Assessment of the psychological, spatial, temporal and phraseological expressions of the narrator's point of view points consistently to an underlying system of values and ideology by which he operates. If the surface compositional structure is readily traceable in these first four aspects of point of view, analysis of the ideological relies to a certain degree on "intuitive understanding".¹⁰⁶ Within any story, at the level of deep compositional structure we find a view of the world by which the implied author has shaped the composition. This may mean a single dominating point of view or multiple evaluative views. The implied author, the narrator and each of the characters are possible vehicles of an ideological point of view.

In Matthew it is the narrator who introduces a single, dominating point of view whereby he effectively evaluates each of the characters, character groups and events of the story, and thus influences the implied reader to view them positively or negatively through the lens of his ideological perspective. The Matthean narrator controls all aspects of omniscient, omnipresent, retrospective and verbal evaluation, evaluation which from the

¹⁰⁵Cf. Howell, *Story*, pp.192f.

¹⁰⁶Uspensky, *Poetics*, p.8; see pp.8-16. Both Weaver and Kingsbury prefer "evaluative" to "ideological", Weaver claiming the former to be "more 'neutral' terminology" ("Discourse", p.68 n.85). No text or point of view in a text can be considered simply "evaluative" in a merely "neutral" sense. The recognition that all texts are rhetorical to some degree is also a recognition of the connection between text and ideology; see e.g., Eagleton, *Criticism, and Theory*.

prologue on is vindicated and proven consistent in the plot and characterizations. Hence his ideological perspective comes to the implied reader as entirely reliable, and in full alignment with the implied author.¹⁰⁷

In Matthew the narrator's evaluation of the ideological conformity of his characters fits into three categories: (1) acceptance of Jesus' mission and message (ideologically aligned), (2) rejection of Jesus (ideologically opposed), and (3) wavering obedience to Jesus (ideologically variable).¹⁰⁸ In other words, he has only one standard of judgement: full conformity and obedience to the will of God as defined by alignment with (ἀκολουθεῖν) Jesus; "doing the will of the Father", "thinking the things of God".¹⁰⁹ As the narrator guides the implied reader through the story his assessments of all the characters according to his dominant point of view also have direct implications for their social affiliations within the narrative world: those aligned ideologically with the narrator are "inside" Jesus' select inner circle; those opposed are "outside". In other words, those who prove to be ideologically aligned with the narrator are those who experience the salvation and presence of Jesus, while those who prove to be ideologically opposite to the narrator are excoriated and judged by Jesus, e.g., in Mt 23.

The narrator stands in complete ideological alignment with his protagonist, Jesus.¹¹⁰ He communicates to the implied reader explicitly and implicitly that Jesus is the authoritative and reliable representative of God's presence and salvation. Each of the character groups in Matthew - Jewish leaders, disciples, crowds, and Gentiles - is assessed through its interaction with and response to Jesus. The character group of the Jewish

¹⁰⁷Cf. Chatman, *Story*, pp.148ff; Kingsbury, *Story*, p.31. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.32, notes that "reliability" here is a question of literary analysis, whereas the "truth" and "historical accuracy" of the narrative are the province of believers and historians, respectively.

¹⁰⁸Kingsbury reduces the possibilities to "true" and "untrue": "No effort is made in Matthew to carve out room for grey areas" (*Story*, p.34; echoed by Weaver, *Discourse*, p.87). But the narrator is careful to depict at points the ambivalence of the disciples and the crowds in Matthew, and these must constitute ideological points of view in transition; cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.33. The characterization of Peter in the juxtaposed incidents of Mt 16:16-20 and 16:21-23 is a prime example.

¹⁰⁹Cf. e.g. 3:8; 4:10; 5:17-20; 5:48; 6:24, 33; 7:21; 12:50; 15:3ff; 16:23; 26:39ff; 28:20.

¹¹⁰Cf. Petersen, "Point of View", pp.107f; Anderson, "Over Again", pp.57-68; Howell, *Story*, pp.190ff. Anderson elaborates the various ways - character reliability, favourable inside views, joint verbal repetition - in which Jesus' viewpoint becomes identified with that of the narrator.

leaders stands implacably opposed to Jesus as the antagonists in an ever-tightening spiral of conflict with him. The disciples function as Jesus' inner circle of adherents whose primary alignment is to him, but who vacillate along a variable learning curve. The crowds are assessed positively for the most part, but follow Jesus without full apprehension of him; the narrator depicts them as subject to the authority of Jesus and impressed by his teaching, but also malleable in the hands of the Jewish leaders. The momentary evaluation of other characters, e.g., notable Gentiles, on the other hand, is often singularly positive. These different character groups in Matthew are juxtaposed by the narrator's contrasting arrangement of episodes, so that the implied reader can evaluate and compare various ideological viewpoints through their interaction with Jesus, and Jesus with them.

In summary, the narrator's ideological point of view, in aligning with Jesus', finds expression in the basic theme of acceptance and rejection of Jesus, his mission and message. Obedience to or rejection of him provides the criterion by which characters and events are evaluated. Notably, the OT fulfilment citations have an important rhetorical function in the text - they are not 'asides' from the evangelist, outside of the story.¹¹¹ They are essential in establishing the reliability and authority of the narrator and Jesus. The narrator operates on the assumption that in appealing to prophecies external to his Gospel's narrative world he is bringing to his narrative the plausibility and independent authority of the Word of God which only reinforces his truth claims about Jesus.¹¹² All told, these rhetorical devices are the characteristics of narrative fiction, thus making Matthew a carefully integrated narrative with a single narrator.¹¹³

¹¹¹There have been numerous discussions of the citations, most concerned with origin, form and theological intent. Cf. Stanton, "Origin", pp.1930-34, and Van Segbroeck, "Les citations", pp.107-30, for surveys.

¹¹²See Howell, *Story*, pp.185f. See Hartman, "Exegesis", pp.131-52, and Kingsbury, "Jesus", pp.5ff, for more on rhetorical function.

¹¹³Also Petersen in relation to Mark, "Point of View", p.115; cf. Moore, *Criticism*, pp.28f.

CHAPTER 3. READING MATTHEW'S STORY OF PRESENCE

The adoption of the narrative critical paradigm demands a change in reading strategy. For some critics, the centre of authority shifts from the author or text towards the reader, in recognition that the reader participates with the storyteller and tale in producing meaning from the narrative world.¹ The following reading adheres basically to the sequential flow of Matthew's narrative, and focuses on plot elements like anticipation/fulfillment and acceptance/rejection. The limitations of this study have precluded the luxury of a sustained, moment-by-moment story of reading which incorporates the many details of the narrative. Our agenda here is to highlight those significant features which illuminate Matthew's presence motif.

This study is concerned less with a reader-response analysis than with story and rhetoric. Insofar as the reader's experience is integral to the construction of the story world and meaning, reference will be made to the implied reader's participation and responses. In Iser's words, the implied reader

incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process.²

Or, as Howell words it, the implied reader is "both textual structure to be realized and structured act of realization".³ In other words, the implied reader as *textual structure* already inhabits the narrative text as the audience which "embodies all the predispositions necessary for the literary work to exercise its effect".⁴ In this sense the implied reader hears the entire Gospel from first to last word, receives every textual strategy and

¹Cf. Brown, "Reader Response", pp.232-7. But Kingsbury's transition (*Story*) to the narrative critical paradigm at points takes the form of an apparent defence of his theories of Matthean structure and christology as developed elsewhere.

²*Reader*, p.xii.

³*Story*, p.210.

⁴Iser, *Act*, pp.33f.

rhetorical device and plays fully the role that Matthew first sought when he wrote the Gospel and thought of an audience. As realized textual structure, then, the implied reader would appear definable and even somewhat 'ideal', but as *structured act* the implied reader does not simply perform the score automatically as encoded.

The implied reader is also the stance readers take when they read, and the actions they perform in processing the textual structures.⁵

My reading does not ignore the reconstructed 'first reading', with the importance of its sequential flow and effects upon the virginal reader discovering an unknown text,⁶ but focuses more on the retelling of the Gospel in light of its plotted movement and rhetorical devices; this combined with commentary on the interrelationship of its parts.⁷

As Stephen Moore has elaborated, the narrative critical gospel exercise I have undertaken here amounts in many ways to a second story of reading superimposed on the first story of Matthew's Gospel.⁸ I intend to complicate further this two-storey reading structure by adding a basement - some limited dialogue with other scholars will continue in the footnotes. The following subdivisions of Matthew's text obviously reflect the agenda of this study, but are not proposed as rigid structural boundaries.

3.1. Mt 1-2. Narrative Introduction: Jesus' Origins and Mission

Mt 1-2 sets the tone, priorities and orientation for the whole of the First Gospel; from the perspective of the implied reader entering the story, these important first perceptions provide an indelible education as to correct interpretive techniques and expectations of reading competence.⁹

⁵Howell, *Story*, p.211.

⁶So Kelber, *Story*; especially R.A. Edwards, *Story*, p.10. See Moore, *Criticism*, p.84; cf. Bassler, "Parable", p.172; Fowler, *Loaves*, pp.140f; Rhoads and Michie, *Mark*, p.137; Petersen, "Reader", pp.40ff.

⁷Hence, closer to Tannehill's reader in his *Luke-Acts*.

⁸Hence, "narrative commentary", as Moore has labelled this increasingly common form of gospel narrative criticism (*Criticism*, p.23). The focus has shifted from a traditional verse by verse analysis of propositional content, to an explication of the reader's journey through the primary narrative, by means of a commentator's second plotted narrative - almost a form of targumic rewriting.

⁹See Sternberg, *Modes*, pp.93f, on this "primacy-recency" effect. "Few things are more essential to appreciating a story than understanding the manner in which the narrator begins" (Matera, "Prologue", p.3); see Edwards, *Story*, p.10. Cf. the remarks on the importance of the gospel prologues in

Within the first two chapters of Matthew the narrator establishes the setting, point of view, primary conflicts and foundational elements of his plot, characterization and relationship to the implied reader. Not infrequently these opening chapters of the Gospel have been discussed in terms of their formal, traditional and historical discontinuity with the "Markan" core of Matthew.¹⁰ But Mt 1-2 is indispensable for a proper reading of the gospel plot; the whole cannot be understood apart from this opening story of Jesus' beginnings (1:1).¹¹

Here with a sweeping genealogical summary, the narrator takes the implied reader from the foundations of Yahweh's people in their first patriarch Abraham to the Messiah's early childhood 3x14 generations later; he incorporates all of Israel's history. His choice of settings is no less expansive, covering much of ancient Israel's known world, including "the East", Canaan, Egypt, Judea and Galilee. And he exhibits a consistent mythology within the standard two-level cosmology: God, who is no other than the transcendent Yahweh of Israel (see ἄγγελος κυρίου, cf. 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19; 28:2), is continually active in that world on behalf of his people. They have a special relationship to this present and intrusive God who demonstrates an immanent, saving will on their behalf within their history.

As he establishes the setting and plot, and introduces his main character, the narrator exercises fully his omniscient, omnipresent and retrospective point of view; he is not only inclusive and global in portraying the context and circumstances of Jesus' early life, but also careful and focused in his portrait of the Messiah's beginnings, using Mt 1-2 as the arena for the systematic establishment of his ideological point of view.

Mt 1-2 contains minimal dialogue; it is characterized by the narrator's intrusive and direct communication to the implied reader. Much of the narration in Mt 1-2 is information communicated solely to the implied reader only for his or her benefit, information which the characters in the story

Gibbs, "Prologues", pp.154-88; Seitz, "Prologues", pp.262f; Brown, *Birth*, pp.37f, 48-50, 239-243.

¹⁰Cf. e.g. Brown, *Birth*, pp.26ff; Schweizer, *Matthew*, pp.22ff; Luz, *Matthäus* 1-7, pp.94ff; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1-7, pp.149ff.

¹¹Βίβλος γενέσεως in 1:1 has been variously translated and applied as the title for the genealogy alone, for the infancy narratives of Mt 1-2, for the prologue of 1:1-4:16, and for the entire Gospel; cf. the summaries of the arguments in Kingsbury, *Structure*, pp.9-11; Brown, *Birth*, pp.66f; Bauer, *Structure*, pp.73-77; and Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1-7, pp.149-155.

may not be aware of and which, as an otherwise wide spectrum of disparate events and existents, is accessible as a coherent whole only through the narrator's point of view.¹²

A number of features support Mt 1-2 as the Gospel's opening narrative frame.¹³ The narration is from a viewpoint external to Jesus, without

¹²This relationship between narrator and implied reader is maintained throughout the story with regular authoritative commentary (see the various forms of commentary listed by Booth, *Fiction*, chap.7; Chatman, *Story*, p.228). The narrator's OT formula citations, summaries and speech closing formulas are distinct elements of this direct commentary; also included are the narrator's numerous translations, cultural notes, and personal and etymological labels. Cf. e.g., 1:1, 21, 23a; 3:3; 4:18; 10:2-4; 13:34, 58; 16:12; 17:13; 22:23; 24:15; 26:25, 48; 27:3, 8, 15f, 33, 46; 28:15; see Anderson, "Over Again", pp.45-47. At some points the narrator's explanations seem to presume that the implied reader is not competent in the cultural and linguistic codes used (e.g., 1:21, 23; 22:23; 27:15, 33, 46), but in other places no explanation is given (e.g., 5:22; 6:24; 10:25; 27:6). A higher, rather than lower, degree of shared codes is probably assumed; especially if the explanations are seen instead as part of Matthew's rhetorical strategy of repetition and redundancy. At minimum, Matthew's dependence on and use of the OT and its rhetorical effectiveness to persuade presuppose that the implied reader has knowledge of the Jewish scriptures.

¹³The boundaries of the prologue are a major element in the wider disagreement about the structure of Matthew. The arguments in favour of the sort of tripartite division of Matthew asserted by Kingsbury (1:1-4:16; 4:17-16:20; 16:21-28:20) have found recent support in the extended defence provided by one of his students, David Bauer, in *Structure*. According to this theory the infancy, baptism and temptation episodes comprise a unified whole demarcated by the ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο of 4:17 (see Kingsbury, *Structure*, pp.1-39; Bauer, pp.73-84).

Kingsbury's work builds on the outline of Krentz ("Prologue", pp.409-14); cf. Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, pp.1, 64, 264; and has been adopted by others (see the list in Bauer, p.153 n.37). Against Kingsbury the thematic and literary unity of Mt 1-2 *per se* must be asserted, especially the striking manner in which the narrator's shift in spatial, temporal and phraseological point of view demarcates Mt 1-2 and 27:51-28:20 as a distinctive narrative frame for the story (see below).

In the plot sequence of the story Mt 3:1-4:11 functions as the preparation for Jesus' public ministry (so too Edwards, *Story*, pp.15-18), so a more plausible view of the opening structure of Matthew treats Mt 1-2 and 3:1-4:11 as two discrete, though interrelated, sections which lead into the compositional and literary unity of the Sermon in Mt 5-7, introduced by the narrator's first summary notes on the Galilean mission in 4:12-25. 4:17 does signal a transition, but the narrative as a whole does not *suddenly pivot* here the way Kingsbury and Bauer claim. Mt 4:12-22 altogether functions as the *transitional narrative* which places Jesus in Capernaum and initiates his Galilean mission, with the ἀπὸ τότε of 4:17 referring to the temporal events of 4:12: after Jesus heard of John's arrest he withdrew to Capernaum and there began to proclaim his message. Cf. Matera, "Plot", pp.233-53; Neirynck, "Apo Tote Ērxato", pp.21-59; who argue similarly for 4:12ff as the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

Ultimately this aspect of Bauer's extended defence of his mentor's

spatial alignment between Jesus and the narrator. Jesus never speaks. No character is introduced into the birth story until Jesus has been situated temporally and ideologically in 1:1-17. Prior to John's appearance and Jesus' baptism the narrator views Jesus from the external perspective of each subordinate character, establishing ideological alignments and antagonists. Thereafter the narrator shifts to an internal viewpoint aligned spatially with Jesus, which is maintained until his death, whereupon the narrator's viewpoint again becomes external (27:51). Mt 1-2 and 27:51-28:20 thus form the Gospel's narrative frame, on the basis of the narrator's external-internal shift in viewpoint. The shift between Mt 1-2 and 3ff constitutes a shift from telling to showing; a shift from the narrator's own characterization of Jesus by means of a series of subordinate characters and episodes in Mt 1-2 to Jesus' own self-characterization in his words and activities in Mt 3ff.¹⁴

Thus, in functioning as the story's narrative frame, Mt 1-2 also introduces the critical elements in the narrator's ideological education of the implied reader.

God's Past Presence with his People

The narrator's first concern is to identify Jesus - "Christ, son of David, son of Abraham" (1:1) - as connected with a people; Jesus both

thesis fails to convince. Recently Luz has decided that Mt 1:1-4:22 is the proper "Präludium" to the Gospel (*Matthäus 1-7*, pp.25, 85, 168ff); while Davies and Allison find "Kingsbury's tripartite outline too precariously based" (*Matthew 1-7*, p.61), and want to emphasize the division between 2:23 and 3:1 (p.287). Cf. Nolan who treats Mt 1-2 as a unity, but then refers to 1:1-4:17a as a unit; *Son*, pp.98-103. The tripartite Kingsbury scheme has yet to counter properly further criticisms in Neirynck, "Le rédaction", pp.56-8; Meier, *Vision*, p.56 n.21; Meye Thompson, "Structure", pp.195-238; Hill, "Figure", pp.42-4; and Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.61ff, 287, 386f. Particularly vulnerable is the tripartite scheme's inability to incorporate acceptably the five-fold speech and formula pattern of the First Gospel, a weakness which Bauer admits (pp.44f) but never satisfactorily addresses (see pp.129-134). See Via's attempt to deal with the tripartite and five-fold patterns simultaneously ("Structure", pp.199-215).

¹⁴Cf. Matera, "Prologue", p.5. This further differentiates between Mt 1-2 and 3ff, contrary to Kingsbury's tripartite division, which dissolves the infancy, baptism and temptation narratives into a single unit. The failure to recognize this internal-external distinction is also evident in Bauer's restatement of Kingsbury: "In 1.1-4.16 Matthew presents the person of Jesus *directly* to the reader" (*Structure*, p.78, my emphasis). Bauer discounts any distinction between these chapters without reference to the role of the narrator (pp.83f).

culminates and disrupts the long line of Yahweh's people. His 3x14 genealogy is a "perfect" and "perfective" scheme which demonstrates for the implied reader that Yahweh has been active within the history of his people since its founding member, Abraham. This line of Yahweh's people has been "telic" in design, finding its end in ὁ χριστός.

The significance of this identification of Jesus is not fully explained to the implied reader within the genealogy.¹⁵ Two other features, however, alert the implied reader to view the patriarchal listing as representing more than merely a male enterprise within ethnic Israel: (1) The genealogy's patrilineal pattern is interrupted by the inclusion of four female names,¹⁶ a foreshadow of the important role women will play in Jesus' inner circle. (2) The ἐγέννησεν sequence is broken at the end when Joseph is called τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας instead of Jesus' father, and the phrase Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς seems to introduce a tension with the narrator's sonship labels in 1:1. But the implied reader finds no explanation in the genealogy and can only anticipate it in what follows.

The narrator, however, has already made clear that the genealogy is not merely a means of tracing and legitimizing his protagonist's ancestry. The carefully ordered listing of the generations of Israel, the emphasis on David and Abraham, and the specific references to the Babylonian exile (1:11, 12, 17) also constitute the narrator's assessment that Yahweh has been actively present in every period of Israel's history; the divine blueprint even incorporated the era of the μετοικεσία. In language (βίβλος γενέσεως, 1:1) and style the genealogy can even evoke for the reader a

¹⁵ See below on 28:18-20.

¹⁶ Commentators have pointed to these inclusions as having (1) soteriological significance, i.e., they are sinners and foreshadow Jesus' messianic role; (2) ethnic significance, i.e., they are Gentiles and foreshadow the Gospel's final universalism; cf. e.g. Plummer, *Matthew*, p.3; Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p.5; Johnson, *Genealogies*, pp.154f; Brown, *Birth*, p.74; or (3) paradoxical theological significance, i.e., their critical role in the genealogy is a combination of irregular circumstances and divine intervention, and they foreshadow and explain Mary's role. See Brown, pp.72-74, and Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, pp.20-34, for fuller summaries of these interpretations.

See Anderson, "Gender", pp.9f, on the gender bias of Mt 1-2. Note also that Schaberg, although aligning herself with the direction of the third interpretation above, disagrees with its normal extrapolation. The four women lead the reader to expect a fifth story of a woman

who becomes a social misfit in some way; is wronged or thwarted; who is party to a sexual act that places her in great danger; and whose story has an outcome that repairs the social fabric and ensures the birth of a child who is legitimate or legitimated. (p.33)

parallel with the story of creation, and align God's presence in the beginning of heaven and earth with his presence in the new beginning with Jesus.¹⁷ But while the genealogy contextualizes the Messiah Jesus within the continuum of Yahweh's past involvement with his people, its broken pattern warns of a shift in the traditional order of divine involvement in Israel.

God's Immediate Presence with his People

The narrator moves to the contemporary stage of his narrative world and introduces the characters within the events of Jesus' birth and infancy in Mt 1:18-2:23. It is notable that *every character and event* of these episodes is in some way subject to the extraordinary presence of Yahweh, including the minor characters: Mary, Joseph, the magi, Herod, the people of Jerusalem, and the chief priests and scribes. Divine presence has a direct and perceptible impact on each character's life, through the media of the Holy Spirit, angelic voices, dreams, celestial messages and the voice of the prophets. The narrator resolves the tensions of the disrupted genealogy in a chain of divine interventions on behalf of the one who is called Χριστός: Jesus is mysteriously conceived through the Spirit; Joseph drops his plans for divorce and takes up paternal responsibility for Mary's child; the magi are guided to the site of the child and ultimately outwit Herod's schemes; and Joseph undertakes a series of divinely-guided journeys whereby the infant Messiah's life is miraculously spared.

These heightened phenomena of God's presence in the now of the story are presented to the implied reader as a new era of divine immanence. This is the message of the narrator's OT fulfilment citations, five of which he has concentrated in Mt 1:18-2:23:¹⁸ with Jesus the age of prophecy has become the age of fulfilment. These citations repeatedly enhance for the implied reader the reliability of the narrator, for with each citation an explicit element of continuity and fulfilment between the OT and Jesus is highlighted, the plan and presence of God is emphasized, and the word of God itself endorses the narrator's direct commentary. Through the sheer consistency of his verbal repetition the narrator's observations to the implied reader gain repeated confirmation.

¹⁷See Crosby, *House*, pp.82-5.

¹⁸Mt 1:22f; 2:5f, 15, 17f, 23.

The opening frame of the story, then, presents Jesus to the implied reader as Yahweh's Messiah of both continuity and transformation, and the narrator introduces his person and mission against the backdrop of Yahweh's active presence with his people past and present.

God's Presence in the Event of Jesus' Birth

Through the emphatic use of Spirit language (ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου, 1:18; γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου, 1:20) the narrator represents the conception of Jesus as an important moment of divine immanence on behalf of Yahweh's people. The narrator is little concerned with the details of conception and birth *per se*; for the narrator the origin of the Messiah Jesus is nothing less than a creative act of Yahweh's Spirit.¹⁹ For the implied reader Jesus' continuity with and disruption of his lineage find unexpected explanation: Joseph's obedience (1:24f) assures Jesus' descent from Israel's great leaders and confirmed the narrator's sonship titles (1:1);²⁰ the extraordinary involvement of the Spirit confirmed the narrator's use of the messianic title (1:1, 16, 17, 18) and explains the genealogical hitch.

Yahweh's presence thus surrounds and permeates the narrator's description of Jesus' origins and explains Mary's place in Jesus' genealogical culmination of Israel's past. The narrator's primary interest has been theocentric - the unequivocal establishment of Yahweh as "first cause" - from the beginning the God of Israel is active and sovereign in the life of his chosen Messiah.²¹ Thus the narration of 1:18ff is another full and immediate exercise of the narrator's omniscient point of view on the implied reader's behalf, and this inside information, and confirmation of some of the narrator's previous claims, enhances his reliability for the implied reader.

¹⁹ Commentators generally find no hint of the Spirit acting as Mary's male sexual partner; e.g., see Waetjen, "Genealogy", pp.220-25; Brown, *Birth*, pp.124f, 137; Anderson, "Gender", p.10.

²⁰ Cf. Stendahl "Quis?", pp.60f; Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p.25; Brown, *Birth*, pp.133ff.

²¹ This is not directly a denial of Schaberg's illegitimacy hypothesis, but it must be noted that the narrator is not addressing overtly the historical issue of calumny concerning Jesus' origins. Only when Jesus' illegitimacy is a problem in the reader's actual world does Matthew's story become a means of addressing the issue.

God's Presence in the Person and Mission of Jesus

The first OT fulfilment quotation in Mt 1:22f interrupts the story as an obvious interjection by the narrator. He uses the prophecy to interpret for the implied reader the presence and purpose of Yahweh in these events, not only through the prediction of Mary's virginal conception of the Messiah, but to presage his future recognition as Ἐμμανουήλ.²² The birth of Jesus is presented as conspicuously continuous with the OT and with divine design, but also as an unprecedented instance of Yahweh's agency for and among his people: fulfilment is now.²³ Within the sequence of events in Mt 1-2 divine presence past and present is explained not as direct, but as mediated, encounters with the God of Israel. The narrator thus assumes a basic dialectic between divine immanence and transcendence; the constant counterpoint to this sequence of God's immediate, yet mediated, activities is the assumption of his otherness - nowhere does the implied reader find God directly accessible as a character in the plot.

For the implied reader the question of Jesus' origins in Mt 1 remains one of functional and relational significance.²⁴ This the narrator asserts authoritatively through the voices of Yahweh's angel (1:21) and prophetic voice (1:22f). These parallel explanations of his name and mission are thus divinely given. As "Jesus", "he will save his people from their sins", and as "Emmanuel", he will be seen as "God with us". *These are the narrator's programmatic statements* for Jesus; he is the new divinely ordained mediate agent between τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ and their God. Hence the narrator asserts nothing less than that divine salvation and presence is the focal point and *raison d'être* for Jesus' own existence, and he puts his own reliability on

²²Cf. Edwards, *Story*, p.13.

²³What is clear for Matthew is that Jesus is the turning point of history. Whether that means a two or three-stage *Heilsgeschichte* is unclear; see Howell's overview of existing two and three-fold schemes and their weaknesses, *Story*, pp.55-92. The presence motif does not conform to either scheme, but the inclusio of 1:23 and 28:20 bridges the arrival of Jesus' Emmanuel presence to his continuous risen presence after the narrative.

²⁴Some commentators are quick to employ later terminology here such as "incarnation" and "pre-existence"; cf. e.g. Carson, "Matthew", pp.73ff; Gundry, *Matthew*, pp.24f; note Bruner's correlation of the present text and later issues of Christian interpretation, *Christbook*, pp.20-35. But the narrator's own parameters for the story must first be observed.

the line by predicting that in Jesus' role as rescuer and reconciler, the presence of Yahweh will be evident with them.

How is the implied reader to view the double naming and explanation of the Messiah as Ἰησοῦς and Ἐμμανουήλ? Does Mt 1:21-23 go beyond claiming that Jesus represents *the hope and sign* that Yahweh is present with his people,²⁵ to the *identification* of Jesus as "God with us" himself?²⁶ Again the answer: *in relation to the implied reader*, at this point in his narrative the narrator leaves that question open, in order to allow the characterization of Jesus throughout the story to supply the answer.²⁷

The juxtaposition of the two names "Jesus" and "Emmanuel" provides for the implied reader a close parallel:

1:21 τέξεται δὲ υἱόν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν

1:23 τέξεται υἱόν καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ

Both names are reliably uttered (the angel and scripture) and both will be applied to the Messiah child in the future. In meaning and significance they are thus presented as inextricably interdependent. Any possible conflict in the bestowal of two different names is clarified by the angel's καλέσεις of v.21 and the narrator's καλέσουσιν of v.23. With the former verb Yahweh's angel instructs Joseph to name the child "Jesus" in an act asserting his paternity and Jesus' legitimate place in his genealogy; with the latter verb the narrator announces that in fulfilment of the prophet's words a group will in the future call Jesus "Emmanuel", recognizing in his salvation that "God is with us".

In 1:24f the narrator indicates that Joseph follows through on the angel's instructions. "Jesus" becomes the child's personal name and role identification,²⁸ and already the anticipated καλέσεις of v.21 is fulfilled. The narrator's characterization of Joseph as δίκαιος (1:19) is confirmed and extended in the first employment of the plot device of acceptance/

²⁵See e.g. Bonnard, *Matthieu*.

²⁶See Fenton, "Divinity", p.81; Carson, "Matthew", pp.80f.

²⁷Barta supports a similar conclusion: "It will take the entire Gospel of Matthew to say who Jesus is as Savior-Messiah and "God with us" ("Characterization", p.10).

²⁸Contra Bauer, *Structure*, p.126, 'Jesus' is not "to be the child's personal name, whereas 'Emmanuel' will be the description of his role." Rather, as indicated by their individual explanations in 1:21 and 23, 'Jesus' and 'Emmanuel' are equally important, complimentary role identifiers.

rejection.²⁹ "Emmanuel" remains unbestowed, an attribution which the narrator asserts will in the future be applied publicly to Jesus in response to his saving ministry. In looking about for the subject of καλέσουσιν the implied reader logically assumes τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ of 1:21, i.e., those whom Jesus saves from their sins will perceive in him and with them the presence of God, and ascribe to him the name "*Emmanuel* - God with us".³⁰ In this sense, then, Jesus *embodies* the divine mission to save his people: "For he *himself* will save his people from their sins" (αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν) - Jesus himself, as the ultimately personal mode of Yahweh's presence, is the means of his people's rescue.

The Crises of Sin, Divine Absence and the Identity of God's People

The opening narrative frame of the story is made complete, however, only by the narrator's explanation of the world of crisis and conflict into which the implied reader plunges in Mt 1:18-2:23.³¹ Apart from the apparently domestic crisis of pregnancy which challenged Mary and Joseph in 1:18-25, the narrator introduces a crisis of much more fundamental proportions, a crisis of sin and divine absence among God's people, broached initially in the characterizations of the Messiah's mission and persona as "Jesus" and "Emmanuel" in 1:21 and 23. On the one hand, ὁ λαὸς αὐτοῦ are described in terms of αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αὐτῶν and thus their need for someone σώζειν them. Furthermore, the narrator's anticipation of their future recognition of this Ἐμμανουήλ Messiah as μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός implies the current lack of any such perception on their part; the crisis of sin has

²⁹Cf. Howell, *Story*, pp.116f. On the vulnerability of Mary's situation see Barta, "Characterization", pp.5-7. Joseph was on the brink of rejecting Mary and the Messiah child; Joseph's acceptance thus provides the first contribution to the implied author's paradigm of the true follower, polar opposite to the Jerusalem rejection of Mt 2. Only Jesus is called δίκαιος elsewhere in Matthew (27:19).

³⁰Frankemölle draws a further connection between the subject of καλέσουσιν and πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in 28:19 (see *Jahwebund*, pp.16-19) but for the implied reader this is a connection which may arise even earlier in the story; see below.

³¹Unfortunately, too many sentimental Christmas pageants may have rendered the infancy narratives impotent and innocuous for many contemporary readers. The reader, however, who enters fully into the implied role provided for him or her by the narrator, cannot help but encounter the intense fear, conflict and struggle at the heart of the story.

invoked a crisis of blindness to divine presence. Hence the implied reader is introduced in the opening narrative frame to a correspondence between salvation and divine presence on the one hand, and sin and divine absence on the other.

The apprehension of this crisis among "his people", and its incumbent correlation between sin and divine presence departed is part of a strategic plot arrangement, in that it precedes the episodes of fierce conflict in Mt 2: involving Herod, Jerusalem and the magi, the flight to Egypt and the massacre of the infants, and the return from Egypt. Here the narrator establishes two essential patterns which prove normative for the story: the pattern of proper response to Jesus (acceptance, worship and obedience to God, already initiated by Joseph, and now modeled by the magi), and the pattern of rejection, as characterized by Jesus' opponents. The magi are paradigmatic of acceptance of Jesus: they are responsive to the divine sign and Yahweh's call, are reliable witnesses to the person of Jesus (2:2), and share the point of view of the narrator and of the angel (hence of God); they persistently seek Jesus (2:1f,9); they rejoice when they find him (2:10), worship him (2:2,11), and offer him their costly gifts (2:11).

Herod, the chief priests and scribes, and "all of Jerusalem", however, are paradigmatic of rejection, and the reader is given the sense of collusion (πάσα Ἱεροσόλυμα μετ' αὐτοῦ, 2:3), so that Herod's character functions representatively for all of them. Herod misunderstands Jesus' mission as king, and he feels threatened and deeply troubled (2:3); he deceives the magi and seeks to entrap Jesus (2:7f) and ultimately to kill him (2:16). Equally powerful is the contrast between the magi as gentile outsiders, and Jerusalem and Herod, who represent for the narrator the core of Israel; this insider-outsider model the narrator stands on its head.³² All three episodes in Mt 2 thus initiate and exemplify the central conflict of the Gospel. Herod, the chief priests, scribes and all of Jerusalem run full face into the messianic fulfilment of prophecy which strikes at their very existence and inspires their anxious collaboration and Herod's tragic

³²Cf. Bauer, *Structure*, pp.66, 82f. Bauer attributes Herod's misunderstanding at least in part to his inability to appreciate Jesus' kingship in terms of his self-sacrifice and the cross. But this is not a legitimate expectation of Herod's character in Mt 2 in terms of a linear reading; the implied reader is not told of any sacrificial element of Jesus' kingship until 20:28; 26:28; 27:37.

slaughter of the infants.³³

In this way too, the die is cast in 2:3ff in terms of the protagonist/antagonist characterization fundamental to the story. Jesus is contrasted to Herod and the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem in terms of his fulfilment of God's will: he is Yahweh's chosen, divinely-born Emmanuel Messiah, but they refuse him. Their rejection only further highlights Jesus as the archetypal divine son Israel; he alone is worthy of the description ὁ υἱός μου (2:15), which is applied to him in direct contrast to the leaders in Jerusalem who so far prove completely unworthy to be sons of David and Abraham and the leaders of Yahweh's people. The magi provoke a contrast between themselves and Herod and the Jewish leaders in terms of their response to the presence of God: the magi are exemplary seekers of the Emmanuel Messiah; the leaders reject Yahweh's agent of presence and salvation.

But the narrator also introduces a further element of crisis (and profound irony) to the story. The anticipated condition of "his people" needing Jesus' Emmanuel agency for salvation from their sins (1:21-23) is certainly fulfilled in Mt 2. But the thorough rejection by Herod, Jerusalem and its leaders in Mt 2 provokes a more foundational question: if Jerusalem has already rejected Jesus, what then is his relationship to τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ of 1:21? Who are they? To this point in the narrative the implied reader has been led to assume that "the people" of Jesus are the natural descendants of those listed in 1:1-17. Jesus, son of David and Abraham, has come to save his fellow descendants, the people of Israel, the children of Abraham and David, from their sins. Herod's response in Mt 2, however, along with πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα and πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ, casts some confusion on the issue. Their rejection of Jesus, and the magi's acceptance, already anticipates some sort of redefinition of τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ.³⁴ As Jesus' fellow descendants, the rulers and inhabitants of

³³Contra Shuler, *Genre*, p.105, who presents Mt 1-9 as a "paradigm of discipleship" given that "there is no direct conflict during this period." Several commentators emphasize Herod's attempt to kill Jesus as an example of rejection; cf. e.g. Fenton, *Matthew*, p.44; Green, *Matthew*, pp.56f; Barta, "Characterization", p.5. Brown (*Birth*, pp.182f) has highlighted the correspondence between the characters of Mt 2 and those at Jesus' trial and crucifixion: the secular ruler of Jerusalem, "all the chief priests and elders of the people" (27:1), and "all the people" who accept responsibility for Jesus' blood (27:25).

³⁴Many commentators attempt to establish in Mt 1:21 a definition for ὁ λαός which is static throughout the Gospel, referring either to ethnic Israel (e.g. Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, p.105), or to Matthew's new ἐκκλησία of Jews and Gentiles (so most commentators, e.g. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*,

Jerusalem should have exemplified the people of God, Jesus' people.

Mt 1-2 thus provides for the implied reader the dialectic by which the story is to be read. In Mt 1 the implied reader meets the people of Yahweh, past and present, and the Messiah whom God has chosen to resolve their crisis of sin. In Mt 2 the implied reader meets the first respondents to Jesus. Those who lead "his people", the ethnic insiders, reject him, and the outsiders seek and worship him. This first dialectic of presentation-response, with the contrast between acceptance and rejection foreshadows the struggle within the story as a whole, the crisis of identity: *Who will constitute the people of God? Who will be saved and come to call Jesus "Emmanuel"?*³⁵ *How will the deadly antipathy between Jesus and his Jerusalem opponents be resolved?*

These added crises contain bitter-sweet elements of irony. Those whom the implied reader first believes Jesus has come to save, immediately deny their Messiah. Paradoxically, in order to find ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, the magi require help from the scholars of scripture gathered by Herod, but these Jewish leaders, in correctly reading the texts and guiding the magi to the Messiah-king in Bethlehem, cannot understand it and refuse themselves to worship the one to whom they point, the one who fulfils their own scriptures. The magi, in their search for "the one born king of the Jews" apparently perceive Jesus' kingship in relation to Jerusalem, but Jerusalem's reaction ironically casts even their perception into doubt, and Jesus' ultimate entry into the city as the humble king (21:1-10) bears out this irony. Furthermore, in Mt 2 Jerusalem, the holy city of David, its leaders and king, provide the story's initial paradigm of rejection, spurning the son of David whom Yahweh has provided for their own salvation. Those who are guardians of the holy city have barred from it and from "his people" the one whom they should be calling "God with us".

p.210). The fundamental narrative tension over this very question is thereby often missed. By the end of Mt 2 the identity of ὁ λαός has become an open question needing a full reading of the story for its resolution. The answer is not provided until the key references at the end of the story (cf. 27:25; 28:16-20) and any retrojection of this answer dissolves prematurely one of the Gospel's central crises. Similarly with the heilsgeschichtlich transformation of the term in Frankemölle's reading, *Jahwebund*, pp.193, 218; also Trilling, *Israel*, p.61, who sees Mt 1:21 as the one exception to the rule that ὁ λαός nowhere in the NT relates to the Christian community.

³⁵ Edwards, *Story*, p.15, appears to overlook this wider role for Mt 1-2.

In the deepest irony, only the implied reader has been told of the Messiah child's future identification as Emmanuel; for the implied reader, then, it is the true Israelite, the divinely-chosen "God-with-us" Messiah who is driven from Jerusalem, the home of the Jewish leaders and the keepers of the sacred traditions, and from Judah, to Egypt. Upon his return from protective exile (2:19-23) he is once again rejected there and can only find a home in Galilee. Each step of the way he requires Yahweh's miraculous protection and intervention against the very ones who should have sought his salvation and recognized in him the divine agency of messianic presence. How much of this initial conflict foreshadows and anticipates for the implied reader Jesus' subsequent relativizing of Jerusalem's assumptions of divine presence and sacred space? The parameters of the community in Mt 1:21-23 - a people in sin and without divine presence who come to find salvation in Yahweh's Emmanuel Messiah - already exclude the leaders and king of the city of Jerusalem, the mountain of God's presence.

At the end of Mt 2 only the implied reader stands on par with the narrator, fully informed from his retrospective, omniscient and omnipresent point of view. The narrator has proven to be fully aligned ideologically with Jesus. The implied reader has entered a narrative world ordered to a significant degree by various manifestations of the presence of God. His presence is apparent in the historical, theocentric orientation of the prologue, and it has found a new manifestation in the Messiah of his people. Only the implied reader has been told that divine presence also provides a critical defining characteristic of "the people" who will be constituted by God's salvation through Jesus: they will know him as "God with us". These explanations of Jesus' person and mission, and his initial conflicts with Jerusalem, are provided as gospel-wide characterizations and plot devices for the implied reader.

3.2. Mt 3:1-4:11: The Preparation for Jesus' Mission

Mt 1-2 and 3:1-4:11 are two discrete sections; the first constitutes the narrator's introductory frame to the Gospel, and the second concerns Jesus' adult preparation for active mission.³⁶ John the Baptist is an integral part of the preparation for Jesus' mission, and is also introduced

³⁶Contra Kingsbury, *Structure*, p.13, δὲ in 3:1 is disjunctive, not connective; the temporal ellipsis and thematic shift in the narrative is too significant a break. See Hill, "Figure", p.43; cf. Howell, *Story*, p.120.

as the fulfilment of prophetic anticipation (3:3). John's proclamation, his encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees and his baptism of Jesus reinforce and develop further three central themes already introduced in Mt 1-2.

(1) John highlights in his proclamation the theme of a special advent of God's presence and Kingdom. In "the coming One" Israel will confront the final eschatological era. John explains his own call for repentance as the necessary preparation of the community for the coming rule and judgement of God (3:2, 10-12), which he associates with ὁ ἐρχόμενος,³⁷ who "ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν" (3:11). The extent to which John recognizes Jesus as the Emmanuel Messiah is not made clear to the implied reader, but John's reaction to him (3:14) is consistent with his words about him (3:11f). Jesus is described as Yahweh's agent of purification, for his baptism is not merely a water symbol like John's, but is characterized by Spirit and fire, by the gathering of grain and the burning of chaff (3:11f). The narrator himself also substantiates John's proclamation with a citation from Isa 40:3, so that the implied reader quickly observes an ideological alignment of John with the narrator, and with Jesus and ἡ ὁδὸς κυρίου (3:3):

the character of John is introduced in order to *establish the identity and character of Jesus* and to foreshadow the fate of Jesus (and secondarily of the disciples). Although important distinctions are made between John and Jesus (3:11, 14; 11:10-11, etc.), the overwhelming impression created is that of a parallel between John and Jesus.³⁸

(2) The confrontation between John and the Jewish leaders in 3:7-10 exhibits the same programmatic acceptance/rejection contrast already demonstrated in the responses of the magi and Jerusalem to Jesus. The initial negative characterization of Israel's political and religious leaders in Mt 2 is now amplified in the case of the Pharisees and Sadducees: "γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν" is John's indictment (3:7).³⁹ John scorns their attempt at repentance as lacking "worthy" or "good fruit" (3:8-10),⁴⁰ and denounces their dependence upon their status as Abraham's progeny

³⁷ Here the plot device of anticipation (of "the coming one") is answered already in 3:15: an internal prolepsis. See Howell, *Story*, p.123.

³⁸ Anderson, "Over Again," p.103 (Anderson's emphasis); see pp.237-42 for the Johannine sub-plot of Matthew.

³⁹ Note Jesus' repetition of the epithet in 12:34 and 23:33, the latter with a question.

⁴⁰ A recurrent theme in the story, cf. 7:16-20; 12:33-35.

(3:9).⁴¹ From John's scathing denunciation and the narrator's specific notation of his proximity to Jerusalem emerges a general ideological alignment of the representatives of the Jerusalem establishment in both Mt 2 and 3. The narrator remains little interested in differentiating between the various cultic, political and religious leadership factions; as a whole they are repudiating the Emmanuel Messiah. With strong images of eschatological harvestry (3:12) the Baptist reinforces the acceptance/rejection theme and adds to the growing crisis of the identity of God's people. A clear distinction is introduced, however, between the Jewish leaders and the crowds, refining somewhat the "all Jerusalem" of Mt 2:3. John's success with the crowds in his ministry anticipates Jesus' and contributes to their parallel characterization.

(3) The theocentric focus elaborated so frequently by the narrator in Mt 1-2 moves explicitly into the story world in the baptism of Jesus, both in the divine rationale which Jesus himself emphasizes (πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην, 3:15) and in the heavenly utterance which provides the first explicit ratification within the story world of the narrator's citation (ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου) in 2:15. To this point in the story the implied reader has depended almost solely on the narrator for the task of christological definition and theocentric orientation. It is the narrator who has introduced Jesus to the implied reader as son of Abraham, son of David and the Christ (1:1,16f). It is the narrator who has explained Jesus as the culmination of Israel's genealogical history (1:17). It is the narrator who has first explained Jesus' conception in terms of the Spirit's activity (1:18), and interpreted for the implied reader the meaning of his mission and persona as "Emmanuel" (1:23). It is the narrator who has discerned in the flight to Egypt the activity of God's true son Israel (2:15), and called him the "Nazarene" (2:23). Apart from the narrator, then, the characters within the literary frame of Mt 1-2 have made only limited additions to this theo/christological portrait. An angel provides the other major contribution of the prologue with the name "Jesus" and the crucial explanation of its significance (1:20f). The only other comments come from the magi who identify Jesus as "king of the Jews" and worthy of worship (2:2), while the citation produced by the chief priests and scribes describes him as "ἡγούμενος, ὅστις ποιμανεῖ" (2:6). That the Baptist supplies the story's first major assessment of Jesus from a (human)

⁴¹Cf. 8:10-12.

character also points to the shift from the literary frame of the text to its body proper.

The voice from heaven is a significant intrusion into the story.⁴² In this divine utterance the narrator's portrait of his main character is given the heavenly seal of approval, and his ideological alignment with Jesus is fully verified for the implied reader and those present within the story setting. Jesus privately (εἶδεν, v.16), and the implied reader narratively, also receive visual verification, in seeing the Spirit descend upon him, of the narrator's earlier Emmanuel citation, that he is the one whom his people will recognize as "God with us".⁴³ In this way the privileged position of the narrator and implied reader is heightened; the visual sign is distinguished from the divine proclamation, wherein the relational question is openly declared: Jesus *is* the beloved son of whom God approves.

The temptation story of 4:1-11 brings to focus another dimension of the conflict central to the plot of Matthew, this time through a clash between the tempter, ὁ διάβολος, and Jesus. The confrontation concerns

⁴²One of only two such instances where Yahweh is given such direct representation; cf. Jesus' transfiguration, 17:5.

⁴³The degree to which the incidents in 3:16f are evident to the crowds of 3:5ff, or to anyone else, is not specified. Kingsbury's division of Mt 3 between a public scene of John baptizing and a temporally-independent (τότε, v.13) private scene with Jesus and John is too artificial (*Structure*, pp.13f); the narrator gives no clear indication that this shift removes the crowds. While the singular form of εἶδεν (v.16) implies Jesus alone as the recipient of the vision, the third person form of the proclamation (οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός μου, v.17) implies an audience. No audience response is noted, however, (cf. Beare, *Matthew*, p.100; Kingsbury, p.14; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.330).

Opinions are thus divided between the entire scene being a private affair only (so France, *Matthew*, p.95), a small group affair (e.g. Kingsbury, p.14: the vision to Jesus only, the proclamation to Jesus and John; Davies and Allison, p.330: "at least two people, Jesus and John") and the proclamation being public, even if the vision is apparently private (see Allen, *Matthew*, p.29; Klostermann, *Matthäusevangelium*, p.25; Lagrange, *Matthieu*, pp.55f; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, pp.30f; Hill, *Matthew*, pp.96f; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p.56; Kee, "Messiah", p.349; Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, p.156; Patte, *Matthew*, p.51).

Understanding the narrator's role, however, helps clarify the story and its reception. The narrator's omniscience and omnipresence bring to the implied reader both the vision and the proclamation, and with the narrator's repeated emphasis: καὶ ἰδοὺ! (vv.16, 17). This is a remark direct from the narrator to the implied reader, marking out retrospectively the significance of the vision and proclamation (even if no public reaction is noted), and emphasizing its alignment with the narrator's ideological point of view.

Jesus' sonship as divinely declared at the baptism, cast through several Deuteronomic citations as a representative repetition of Israel's experience in the wilderness.⁴⁴ Jesus is both tested by God (again the action is part of the divine plan, 4:1) and tempted by the devil.⁴⁵ The encounter, with both parties quoting Scripture, consists of the challenges of hunger, submissive obedience, and idolatry, moving spatially from desert to temple pinnacle to mountaintop. The narrator has already in 2:13-15 identified Jesus in Exodus language as God's true son Israel, and here the connection is reiterated and broadened, although without explicit parallels, for the implied reader.⁴⁶

This three-fold testing and temptation, then, with its cosmic proportions, functions to confirm Yahweh's public proclamation of 3:17, and corroborates the narrator's own assessment in 2:15: Jesus, now by virtue of his conscious subordination to the word (3:4), the will (3:7) and the worship and service (3:10) of Yahweh, is worthy of recognition as Yahweh's true son Israel, called out of Egypt. Hence the theocentric orientation of Jesus is established, his messianic persona dramatically heightened, and the ideological alignment of Jesus, narrator and implied reader again enhanced. The implied reader has been given a private audience to the most arduous of personal testings, and in witnessing Jesus' final preparation for ministry has received complete attestation of his full qualification as God's chosen Emmanuel Messiah. From now on he is recognized by the implied reader as possessing a unique filial relationship with God, and as being qualified to act as God's agent in the salvation of his people.

⁴⁴The implied author appears to assume at least this degree of shared cultural code on the part of the implied reader. Cf. Tertullian, *De bapt.* 20; Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.92; Kingsbury, *Story*, pp.55-57; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.352f.

⁴⁵Gundry, *Matthew*, p.55; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.366.

⁴⁶Gerhardsson, *Testing*, speculates that, based on rabbinic interpretation in *m.Ber.* 9:5 and *Sipre Deut* on 6:5, we have in Mt 4:1-11 an haggadic exposition of the *Shema'* by a converted rabbi, with correspondences between "your whole heart, soul and strength" and the three temptations. Whether or not his historical context is correct, Gerhardsson's interpretation is attractive, as is his discovery of other allusions to the *Shema'* in Mt 6:1 and 13:1-23, at least in so far as he identifies substantial ties between Matthew and the Deuteronomistic corpus and emphasizes the theocentric concentration of the implied author; cf. Schweizer, *Gemeinde*, p.19. Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, pp.162ff, expresses some caution about the story's wider paraenetic interpretation.

3.3. Mt 4:12-18:35: The Galilean Presence of Jesus

When John is arrested Jesus withdraws and takes up residence in Capernaum (4:13). The narrator's fulfilment citation (vv.14-16), with its reference to Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν as ὁ λαὸς in darkness on whom a great light has dawned, once again highlights Jesus' mission to save and the question of the identity of ὁ λαὸς αὐτοῦ (1:21), as well as the significance of Galilee as a narrative setting. Through the information supplied by the narrator in 2:22f; 3:13 and 4:12-16, the implied reader is aware that (1) Galilee has become Jesus' home in fulfilment of divine revelation in dream and scripture; (2) that Galilee represents for Jesus a place of safety from opponents; (3) that Galilee provides the focus for Jesus' presence and mission wherein he represents a "light" to those in darkness; and (4) that Galilee has a special connection to the Gentiles.

Above all, it is narratively significant that almost every geographical move of Jesus to this point in the story has resulted from the conflicting ideological point of view of his opponents in Jerusalem. In this manner Galilee, as a focus for Jesus' ministry, is set over against Jerusalem as the focus of opposition to Yahweh's Messiah. Yahweh's Emmanuel Messiah, even prior to public ministry was not welcome in Jerusalem or Judea, but only in Egypt, and now he finds his abode in Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν, continuing the theme that the Messiah of Yahweh's presence has no home in Yahweh's holy city.⁴⁷

That 4:17 does not begin the second section of a tripartite division of Matthew has been argued earlier; here it is sufficient to note that 4:17 comes in the middle of and reiterates the story's temporal (ἀπὸ τότε) and thematic transition to Jesus' Galilean mission, and thus a transition from confusion about, toward redefinition of, God's people.

The narrator's summary of Jesus' proclamation in 4:17 is identical to his summary of the Baptist's proclamation in 3:2: "Μετανοεῖτε, ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν."⁴⁸ Apart from again indicating the alignment of the

⁴⁷This narrative emphasis and antithesis is overlooked by Davies, *Land*, pp.211-43; Freyne, *Galilee*, pp.360-4; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.379f, who underrate the Galilee references by concentrating on their apologetic function for the geographical details of Jesus' ministry.

⁴⁸These illustrative summaries are important expository guideposts for the reader's understanding of the plot direction; see Sternberg's discussion, *Modes*, pp.24ff. Cf. Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p.65; Theissen, *Miracles*, p.205; Howell, *Story*, pp.130f.

Baptist's and Jesus' points of view phraseologically and ideologically,⁴⁹ the identical proclamations also re-emphasize the eschatological significance of the era which Jesus has introduced in his role as Emmanuel Messiah, and the rhetorical theme of acceptance and rejection.⁵⁰ In a further summary (4:23) the narrator characterizes Jesus' Galilean ministry as a mission of teaching (διδάσκω), proclamation (κηρύσσω) and healing (θεραπεύω).

From the beginning of his Galilean mission the definition of "his people" is top priority for Jesus. His presence and proclamation, according to the narrator, has immediate and powerful effect. He begins by calling four disciples (4:18-22), and with their immediate obedience the narrator initiates their characterization very positively and begins to clarify the identity of "his people": those who answer Jesus' call to follow in his presence. In 4:18-22 and 23-25 the narrator juxtaposes two distinct kinds of adherents: observers (οἱ ὄχλοι) who follow after Jesus as a charismatic figure, and followers (οἱ μαθηταί), those who are on their way to recognizing Jesus as the "God with us" Messiah, and in renouncing everything, meet the narrator's and Jesus' criteria for discipleship.⁵¹ These constitute an outer and inner group around Jesus. It is to the inner group that the Kingdom is explained in the Sermon of Mt 5-7.

There is nothing overtly retrospective about the characterization of the crowds and disciples; the implied reader is not directed by the narrative discourse to identify them with particular character groups

⁴⁹See Anderson's discussion of verbal repetition associated with the Baptist in Matthew as an important means for the narrator to establish rhetorical parallels between the characters and missions of Jesus and John, "Over Again", pp.98-108. A high proportion of the words spoken by John in 3:1-12 are repeated later in the narrative by Jesus; cf. e.g. 3:2 = 4:17; cf. 10:17; 3:7 = 12:34 = 23:33; 3:8, 10 = 7:16-20 = 12:33-35; 3:10b = 7:19; 3:10 = 13:42a, 50; 3:12 = 13:30. Cf. Meier's analysis of the same features from a redactional and theological viewpoint, "John", pp.383-405.

⁵⁰"Wo das Evangelium Jesu vom Himmelreich verkündet wird (4,17), werden menschen in radikalen Gehorsam gerufen." (Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, p.176).

⁵¹See the recurring call of Jesus to leave home, family and possessions: Mt 8:21; 9:9; 10:35ff; 19:27. Contra Gundry (*Matthew*, p.66), Matthew does not use "the crowds" and "his disciples" interchangeably."

outside the narrative world.⁵² Οἱ ὄχλοι - essentially the Jewish masses⁵³ - are presented in a basically positive, if ambivalent, light. Their dilemma is not their own doing. According to the narrator's repeated inside view, when Jesus

saw the crowds, he had compassion (ἐσπλαγγνίσθη) for them, because they were harassed (ἐσκυλμένοι) and helpless (ἐρριμένοι), like sheep without a shepherd. (9:36; cf. 10:5f; 14:14; 15:24, 32)

It is notable that when Jesus restricts both his mission and the disciples' to Israel he characterizes the nation specifically as τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ (10:6; 15:24). The phrase both implicates the Jewish leaders as failed guides, in line with Jesus' specific accusations of the same elsewhere,⁵⁴ and again highlights a crisis undergirding the story - the crowds are the Jewish masses in search of redefinition. The crowds function then as the territory over which the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders rages. If they heed Jesus' call and proclamation, they can join the inner circle of disciples and thus constitute the saved community of "his people". The Jewish leaders are condemned as implacably opposed to Jesus' proclamation and presence, but the crowds are open and receptive, often amazed at Jesus (e.g. 9:8; 12:23; 15:31; 22:23), and persistently following him and treating him as a charismatic leader (e.g. 4:25; 8:1,18; 11:7; 12:46; 15:30; 17:14; 19:2). They are not classed as true followers of

⁵²Scholars have often made this equation with groups outside the narrative world, e.g., the disciples with the evangelist's audience and the Jewish leaders of the story with Matthew's Jewish rivals. Minear, *Matthew*, pp.10-12, adjusts this equation somewhat by seeing the disciples, crowds and opponents as representing the ministers, laity and Pharisaic synagogue leaders, respectively, in Matthew's world; cf. Minear, "Disciples", pp.28-44. But an identification of the crowds with the church is made difficult by their involvement with Jesus' arrest (26:47, 55) and death (27:20, 24).

But Howell has rightly cautioned against moving "too easily or directly from text to life-setting in the evangelist's community". The Gospels are not "allegories" or "cryptograms" directed to the evangelist's contemporaries (*Story*, p.206). So also Malbon, "Disciples", p.123, on Mark; Johnson, "Lukan Community", p.93, on Luke.

Baird has forwarded audience criticism in the Gospels substantially, but when he proposes the Twelve, the "crowd" of disciples, the "opponent crowd", and the opponents as Jesus' audience groups (with further subcategories), he can draw very little support from Matthew for the middle two (*Criticism*, pp.32-53).

⁵³See e.g. 7:29 where the narrator, when discussing the reaction of οἱ ὄχλοι to Jesus' teaching, refers to οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν; cf. Trilling, *Israel*, pp.130-38; Kingsbury, *Parables*, p.25; Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.114.

⁵⁴23:2-7, 13-15, 16, 24, 26.

Jesus, for they are subject to the persuasions of the Jewish leaders (26:47; 27:20) and their perceptions of Jesus are less complete (13:10-17; 14:5; 16:14; 21:11, 26, 46), but a key to their narrative characterization is his own attitude: he has great compassion for the crowds while he denounces their leaders.⁵⁵

The relationship of the Emmanuel Messiah to the two character groups of disciples and crowds is displayed in the narrator's treatment of them in 5:1f as two distinct concentric circles around Jesus. Having called his first four disciples, Jesus has established the nucleus of his new eschatological community. In 5:1 Jesus reacts to the ὄχλοι πολλοὶ generated by his teaching, proclamation and healing throughout Galilee by ascending the mountain for an ostensibly private session with his disciples. The Sermon constitutes his messianic interpretation of the Torah, delivered as his guide to the radical character and requirements of membership in this inner gathering. The text of 5:1-2 is unambiguous: it is *his disciples* who come to him (προσῆλθαι) after he sat upon the mountain, and it is to them (ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς) that he directs his teaching. The implied reader is left in no doubt that the principal addressee group of the Sermon is the inner circle, the disciples, even though the crowds remain ubiquitously present as potential members of the inner circle (cf. 7:28f).⁵⁶

The impact of the Sermon as a whole on the implied reader is five-fold. (1) It reinforces Jesus' theocentric origins and orientation - he has an extramundane perspective on the world, interpreting life and applying the Torah with first-hand divine authority. (2) It reinforces Jesus' fundamental alignment with "the law and the prophets" and enhances the rhetorical anticipation - fulfilment motif.⁵⁷ (3) It presents a portrait of the praxis of δικαιοσύνη, one which exceeds that of the Pharisees and

⁵⁵See further van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp.142-65; Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.114f; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.419f.

⁵⁶See Edwards, *Story*, p.19. The reference in 7:28 to the crowds' amazement also facilitates the narrator's contrast of Jesus' authority with the lack among "their scribes" (7:29). The reference to the crowds at the end of the Sermon should not be pushed forward as if it prefaced the Sermon, as do many commentators (although Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, p.197, recognizes a distinction and priority in audiences: "Die Bergpredigt hat also zwei gleichsam konzentrische Hörerkreise, Jünger und Volk"); see also Stanton, "Matthew's Sermon", p.188. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.425, see Matthew as unconcerned with specific audience identification here.

⁵⁷Cf. Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.114: "Matthew presents the Sermon not just as a teaching collection but as part of an event of eschatological fulfilment." Cf. Guelich, *Sermon*, pp.25ff.

Sadducees (5:20) and is a vital code for this new eschatological community. The emphasis on "doing" maintains the importance of the acceptance - rejection motif even in the Sermon.⁵⁸ (4) It stands in continuity with Jesus' primary message in 4:17 and with the basic thrust of John's message in 3:7-12, and builds further the implied reader's reception of Jesus' teaching and character as authoritative and reliable. (5) Within the Sermon, and in each of his discourses, Jesus shares with the narrator the critical role of mouthpiece for the implied author's point of view. Furthermore, the mode of discourse aligns Jesus and narrator, and makes contemporaneous narrator, characters and implied reader, so that Jesus addresses the implied reader directly.

Scholarship has been and remains divided on whether the Sermon evokes an image of Moses on Sinai; in this respect the Sermon provides an excellent example of a polyvalent text - one which evokes a multiplicity of valid responses by actual readers, given the individual contextual circumstances of each narrative transmission.⁵⁹ For the implied reader, however, Jesus' mode and content of discourse here is not directed towards a consistent or even apparent portrayal of him as a second Moses.⁶⁰ In his most extensive references to ὁ νόμος Jesus deliberately transcends and subsumes within his character any possible Mosaic categories (cf. e.g., 5:17-20, 21f, 27f, 31f, 33f, 38f, 43f).

Parallels between the Sermon and Sinai (Ex 19ff) are available to readers familiar with both texts, including Jesus as (the new) Moses, their sitting posture,⁶¹ the similar topography, the special preparation of the participants for the mountaintop encounter,⁶² and the interest in both stories in defining God's people by means of authoritative legal utterances

⁵⁸Cf. Betz, "Sermon", p.289; Howell, *Story*, p.131.

⁵⁹See Wittig, "Polyvalent Reading", pp.169-84.

⁶⁰Contra Bacon, *Studies*, pp.165-86; Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p.76; Gundry, *Matthew*, p.66; Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, pp.197f; but Davies, *Sermon*, p.99, and Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.423, are over-cautious.

⁶¹The usual posture for studying and teaching the Torah; cf. Mt 23:2, and note the references to Moses sitting on Mount Sinai in Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.112 n.33.

⁶²E.g., in Exodus the people are made ready through purifying (MT: *וַיִּטְבֹּק*; LXX: ἀγνίζω), washing (MT: *וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ*; LXX: πλύνω) and warnings against proximity to the mountain (19:10-15), while in Matthew the disciples arrive at the mountain having repented (μετανοέω, 4:17), obeyed a summons to follow (4:19), and left behind their livelihoods (εὐθέως ἀφέντες, 4:20, 22).

by their divinely appointed leaders.⁶³ There is little question that this mountaintop experience of the Sermon represents a formative encounter with God's authoritative spokesperson for this newly-gathered community of followers, and that this has similarities to the paradigmatic significance of Sinai, but the parallels are not drawn for the implied reader.

Having come down from the mountain (8:1) Jesus continues his Galilean mission with the performance of a series of mighty works and continued calls to obedience in Mt 8-9,⁶⁴ so that the identical summaries in 4:23 and 9:35 (teaching, proclamation and healing) form an *inclusio*, or bracket around the very chapters (5-9) which narrate these activities.⁶⁵ Those ministered to are often the socially marginalized in the Jewish world - lepers, demoniacs, gentiles, women. He also calls a tax-collector to follow him, and the picture of "his people" begins to clarify, for in his amazement at the gentile centurion he told his followers:

"Truly I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness" (8:10b-21a).

In 9:35-11:1 Jesus takes another step towards the formation of "his people" by formally calling the Twelve and sending them out on a mission modeled on his own proclamation and healing (but not teaching). The narrator's identification of Judas Iscariot as "the one who betrayed him" (10:4) is a note to the implied reader about Jesus' coming rejection. As he begins his second discourse, Jesus' instructions in 10:5ff prepare the disciples for acceptance and rejection of their own mission, building on his reference to persecution in 5:10-12. The objects of their ministry are "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (10:6) - again the marginalized come to the fore as candidates for "his people". Hence the focus of the disciples'

⁶³Unlike Sinai, however, where divine presence is encountered in theophany and reflected in Moses, the new community in Matthew encounters a different agency of divine presence in God's chosen son, the "God with us" Messiah who teaches with astounding personal, not merely delegated or reflected, authority (7:28).

⁶⁴See the significance of these miracle stories as enhanced personal encounters between Jesus and others, in Kingsbury, "Matthew 8-9", pp.570ff. Cf. Held, *TIM*, p.241, for the argument that these stories are formulaic accounts shaped by the narrator around a single basic structure.

⁶⁵On this bracket cf. Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p.125; Held, *TIM*, p.246; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.111; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p.233; Beare, *Matthew*, p.237; in Weaver, "Discourse", p.120. Weaver wants 9:35 to function as an introduction to 9:35-11:1 as well. S. Brown, "Mission", p.77, see 9:35-11:1 as an *inclusio* for the mission discourse.

mission is found in their foreshadowed solidarity with Jesus both in ministry and suffering.⁶⁶

At 11:1 the implied reader is left with a tension between the disciples having been "sent out" under elaborate instructions and no indication that they have gone. A similar tension exists between their restriction of mission to Israel (10:5f) and their anticipated mission to the Gentiles (10:18ff). Either the narrator's story at this point lacks coherence, or the fulfilment of the sending out lies in the future - the narrator's dominant use of anticipation supports the latter conclusion on the part of the implied reader. Given that their ministry is to parallel Jesus', it may be that the disciples require a more complete understanding of his model and its implications.⁶⁷

Whether or not the author intends for his reader to think that the journey took place immediately, took place later in Jesus' ministry, or could only occur after the resurrection and commission (Matthew 28:18-20) the expectation and visualization of a missionary tour has been created in the mind of the reader apart from any narration of it.⁶⁸

Jesus has ostensibly met only with remarkable success to this point in his ministry. From a spatial point of view he has been established as the centripetal focus of the story, drawing all other characters "toward" him. But the motif of conflict and rejection which the narrator introduced in the infancy stories and the ministry of the Baptist, and which was alluded to in the Sermon, in preliminary skirmishes in Mt 9 over forgiveness of sins, table fellowship and authority, in Judas' description and in the mission discourse, now in Mt 11-12 swells to direct confrontation concerning interpretation of the Torah, and open repudiation of Jesus' persona and mission.⁶⁹ Having just warned the disciples of persecution (10:16-23), Jesus himself now meets the first opposition to his adult mission. In 11:16-19 he accuses "this generation" of petulant childishness in its reactions to the Baptist and himself. Signalling a new phase in his own proclamation, in 11:20-24 he "began to denounce"⁷⁰ the cities where his ministry met with no

⁶⁶See S. Brown, "Mission", p.77.

⁶⁷Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.127f; see her overview of approaches to Mt 10, pp.13-24.

⁶⁸Magness, *Sense*, p.67; in Weaver, *Discourse*, p.213.

⁶⁹See Kingsbury, *Story*, pp.118-22.

⁷⁰See Excursus: "Then Jesus began..."

repentance.⁷¹ The Sabbath controversies and the demand for a sign in Mt 12 evoke open and public opposition from the Jewish leaders, while the apparent alienation of even his family members (ἐξω ἐστήκασιν, 12:47; cf. 10:21) from his true mission brings Jesus to a declaration about true kin. This requires the implied reader, in light of 10:21 and the knowledge of Jesus' relationship to God as Father, to redefine the identity of even parents and siblings in light of "his people".⁷²

Mt 11-12 is thus a watershed in the Galilean mission, and in the First Gospel.⁷³ The central conflict of the Gospel, between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, has finally blown into full and public antagonism within the narrative world itself.⁷⁴ In 11:20 Jesus begins openly to acknowledge and decry this opposition. The corollary of declared political or religious opposition, of course, is more carefully defined political and religious boundaries, and by means of Jesus' declarations the narrator has further reinforced the contrast between the disciples and the opponents of Jesus. Mt 1:21-23 again comes to mind. The Emmanuel Messiah has undertaken his commission "to save his people from their sins", and his proclamation and presence have initiated a process of polarization within Israel between those who abandon everything to gather and follow him, and those who reject his Kingdom proclamation, unable to perceive his divine authority and calling.

Hence in 11:25-30 the implied reader meets a statement of startling clarity, concerning the Father, the Son, and the followers of Jesus. In vv.25f the implied reader overhears Jesus' direct praise (ἐξομολογοῦμαι) of the Father (πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς), in v.27 listens to a declaration of Jesus' self-perception, and in vv.28-30 hears his invitation: μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ. "His people" are now given the further identifying mark of νήπιοι (v.25) and of οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι who respond to his offer of ἀνάπαυσις (v.28). Jesus declares himself to be the sole arbiter in this process of the gathering of God's people, and to be alone in his complete interdependence with his Father (v.27).

⁷¹See Tannehill, *Sword*, pp.122-8, for the rhetorical provocation of the reader's imagination with this saying.

⁷²See Edwards, *Story*, p.46.

⁷³Cf. Luz, *Matthäus 1-7*, pp.19, 25, who identifies Mt 11 as marking a structural transition for the Gospel.

⁷⁴Cf. Lategan, "Matthew 11-12", pp.115-29.

These self-claims are theocentric in nature - everything takes place in accord with the will of the Father (11:25f; cf. 12:50). The Son himself chooses who stands in this inner circle (11:27), and thus who constitutes the people of God; the σοφοί and συνετοί (Jewish leaders) have already been excluded. The narration has built to this point in the story. The conflict and dual crisis presented by the narrator in 1:21-23 and 2:1ff has now grown in Mt 11-12 to dominate the life and mission of the adult Jesus: in his activity as the Emmanuel Messiah come to save his people, he has been forced by rejection and opposition to define the insiders and outsiders on new terms. Yet these new grounds are not without continuity with the old; Jesus' theocentricity is one way in which the narrator maintains the link between Israel and "his people". But "his people" are now gaining significant christocentric definition as well (11:28-30). Thus Mt 11:25-30, in a context of newly evoked open enmity, stands as both a reaffirmation of Yahweh's presence, and as a further revelation of Jesus' exclusive expression of his presence. The decision of the Pharisees in 12:14 to destroy Jesus has made their repudiation of and conflict with him irreversible.

The differentiation by Jesus between those on the outside and those in the inner circle of his presence is subsequently drawn in continuously sharper terms by the narrator. In the two halves of his third major discourse in Mt 13, Jesus turns away from the crowds by means of incomprehensible parabolic address (13:1-33), while reserving his explanations for the inner circle of disciples (13:36-52), who *do* understand (v.51).⁷⁵ The selection process for members of God's people is under divine control.⁷⁶ The inner circle's privileged sight and hearing is emphasized even further in Jesus' beatitude of 13:16f, exceeding even what the prophets and righteous were allowed to know.

Somewhere within the story's temporal sequence between 11:2 and 14:1f John the Baptist has been beheaded by Herod the tetrarch. The narrator has reserved the story for this momentary flashback in order to explain Jesus' withdrawal (ἀναχωρέω, 14:13; cf. his identical reaction to John's arrest in 4:12)⁷⁷ from possible political confrontation. The implied reader is

⁷⁵See Howell further for the careful merging of Jesus' and the narrator's point of view through intermingled discourse and commentary and rapid shifts in audience; *Story*, pp.193-98.

⁷⁶Edwards, *Story*, p.47.

⁷⁷Cf. also 14:5; 17:12; 21:26, 46. See Anderson, "Over Again", pp.106f.

reminded of the alignment of Jesus and John, and is notified of the extension of political opposition from King Herod of the infancy narratives to his successor in Galilee: the rejection from every level of Jewish leadership continues. The many parallels established between Jesus and John must be seen by the implied reader as foreshadowing a similar fate for Jesus. Ironically, Herod's mistaken identification of Jesus as John *redivivus* correctly anticipates Jesus' own resurrection.

In the account of Jesus walking on the water (14:22-32) a number of features have paradigmatic significance in the narrator's retelling. Most important for our purposes is the play on the significance of Jesus' absence from and presence with the disciples. The narrator specifically notes the departure of the disciples even before Jesus dismisses the crowd. The narrator then links the report of Jesus' ascent alone onto the mountain to pray, with the report of the disciples' struggles out on the lake. Hence a correlation between Jesus' separation and the disciples' inability to reach the other side - Jesus' physical absence precipitates a crisis amongst his innermost group of followers. The corollary, of course, is the notable correlation between Jesus' restored presence and the calming of the sea, the disciples' reaction of worship (προσκυνέω) and confession - Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ (14:33), and the successful crossing to the other side (14:34).

Peter's own attempt to walk on the water has a similar impact on the implied reader.⁷⁸ It is coupled with the inability of the disciples to recognize Jesus as he comes to them on the water. The narrator is continuing to build his composite picture of the disciples for the implied reader, now using terminological links between this story and the stilling of the storm in 8:23-27. The disciples' cry then - Κύριε, σῶσον (8:25) - is now echoed by Peter: Κύριε, σῶσόν με (14:30). Jesus described the disciples then as ὀλιγόπιστοι (8:26; cf. 6:30); he now addresses Peter: Ὀλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας; (14:31).

From this low point of fear and doubt the disciples move to a high point with their confession of Jesus as "Son of God". Jesus has thus far only been referred to five times in this way, by the narrator in his formula citation in 2:15 (τὸν υἱόν μου), by the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism (ὁ υἱός μου, 3:17), twice by the devil in his temptations (Εἰ υἱός εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:3, 6), and by the two Gadarene demoniacs (υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ, 8:29). Jesus has

⁷⁸For the narrator's character development of Peter as spokesperson and leading disciple see Anderson, "Over Again", pp.108-19.

referred to himself as "the son" when speaking of his interdependence with the Father in 11:27, but here in 14:33 the confession "Son of God" is for the first time that of his followers. Thus the implied reader, who has been aware of this identity since the accounts of Jesus' origins in Mt 1-2, and the baptismal voice in 3:17, has seen the absence, presence and salvation of Jesus in the incident on the lake produce this advanced recognition in the disciples, whose understanding of Jesus, if flawed, continues to progress. It is not evident, however, that the disciples are ready to take up their commission of Mt 10. They have yet to comprehend fully the nature of his mission and presence, and their delegated authority from him.

The overwhelmingly positive response of the crowds in 14:35f is juxtaposed with the resumption of the Pharisees' and scribes' opposition in 15:1-9. The narrator makes the significant notation that these Jewish leaders are ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων (15:1) and picks up the original motif of Jerusalem's rejection of the Emmanuel Messiah first introduced in 2:1ff.

The disciples express apparent concern that the Jerusalem Pharisees have been offended by Jesus' words (15:12), the implication being that they hold these Jewish leaders in some esteem. Jesus replies with two parabolic images. The first refers to his weeds parable in 13:24-30 - what the Father has not planted will be uprooted - and indicates that these Jerusalem leaders stand outside Yahweh's plan. The second portrays the chaos of the blind leading the blind, with the first of several harsh critiques of their ability as guides of Israel (cf. 23:2-7, 13-15, 16, 24, 26). Between these two images Jesus instructs the disciples: ἄφετε αὐτούς (15:14). The effect of such direct admonition and images only drives further the wedge between these increasingly disparate groups in Matthew.

The narrator carefully notes in 15:21 that Jesus "went away from there and withdrew" into the non-Jewish territory of Tyre and Sidon. This movement is again in geographical opposition to Jerusalem and has the appearance of a retreat from the Pharisees and scribes who came from the holy city to the south. In this context Jesus rebuffs the needs and then praises the faith of the Canaanite woman, telling his disciples that he has been sent only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel", as in his restriction on their mission in 10:5f (cf. 10:23). Jesus may be reminding the disciples that his retreat to gentile territory is only for strategic avoidance of a conflict, not part of his mission agenda.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Cf. Edwards, *Story*, p.56.

But something fundamental is also increasingly communicated to the implied reader, who has been reminded by the narrator since the first signs of crisis over the identity of "his people" in Mt 1-2, and at several points subsequently (especially with the centurion in 8:5-13), that Israelite ethnicity may be an insufficient criterion for the community of Yahweh's people; Jesus himself may be anticipating and justifying the extension of his mission.⁸⁰ A tension thus exists with 10:5f and 15:24 where Jesus has given notice that he is still defining "his people", despite all opposition and rejection, in the terms of the genealogy of Mt 1, as the children of Abraham and David. His words of judgement and anger are directed at the *leaders* of his people; "the lost sheep of the house of Israel", i.e., leaderless Israel, remain his focus.

One possible answer is that in the two feeding stories (14:13-21; 15:32-9) the disciples remain unready to take up their Mt 10 commission, evident in their attitude to the crowds ("Send them away!"; 14:15; 15:23) in contrast to Jesus' compassion (14:14, 16; 15:32; cf. 9:36). More too is revealed of their dependence on his physical presence for any sense of ability and authority. Their incredulity in each case at the task of feeding (14:17; 15:33) is only overcome by Jesus. Only when he blesses and breaks their meagre rations (14:17-19; 15:34-36) are they enabled to pass out the food to everyone's satisfaction (14:19f; 15:36f). Their act of power in distributing parallels Jesus' (he gave the loaves to the disciples, and they gave to the crowds) and depends fully on their proximity to Jesus' presence and on his direct agency, similar to Peter in the intervening water-walking story. Thus far the disciples have acted only in the context of Jesus' ministry; they never address the crowds, only Jesus.

Mt 16:5-12 is a positive step in the narrator's characterization of the disciples' development. The theme once again is the disciples' lack of comprehension, this time regarding Jesus' warning about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus again addresses them as ὀλιγόπιστοι (16:8) and by a series of questions returns to his warning about the religious leaders. The incident ends with the narrator's note to the implied reader: τότε συνῆκαν (16:12), a conclusion about the disciples which functions in three ways to advance substantially the implied reader's image of this inner group: (1) According to the narrator the disciples have progressed positively in their understanding and development. This is supported

⁸⁰See Anderson, "Stories", pp.78ff; Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.132ff.

terminologically: 16:8 is the fourth and last time the disciples are addressed as ὀλιγόπιστοι.⁸¹ (2) The implied reader shares a deeper wariness of the Jewish leaders, convinced of their increasing perversity. (3) The implied reader and disciples are drawn through Jesus' questions inside the parabolic nature of his teaching and encouraged to look for its deeper meaning.⁸²

It is important that the question of the Son of man's identity which Jesus then poses to the disciples is thus raised in the context of their growing understanding. Having reported the various responses of those outside the inner circle, Peter speaks for the disciples: Σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος (16:16). Twice now, in close conjunction, the disciples have recognized Jesus' true identity as Son of God (cf. 14:33), and in each case Peter seems to function as the character group's key spokesperson.⁸³ To this point, however, not one character in the narrative world of Matthew has recognized Jesus by the title ὁ χριστός; the title has only appeared in the narrator's own ascriptions in Mt 1-2 and in the single narrative reference in 11:2, and occurs now for the first time in the mouth of a character.⁸⁴ This identification of both Jesus' messianic persona and his divine origins within the story world reinforces what the implied reader has known since 1:1, and underscores again the retrospective point of view employed by the narrator on the implied reader's behalf. As a new element in the disciples' confession it emphasizes for the implied reader a momentous step in their improving perception.

This confession invokes a closer alignment between the disciples in Mt 16 and "his people" in 1:21, the ones Jesus has come to save, who will call him "Emmanuel". Jesus' theocentric response to Peter's words (16:17-20) highlights this alignment when he blesses⁸⁵ Peter as the "Rock". The narrator already appends this label in 4:18, leaving it unexplained (and

⁸¹Cf. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31. The disciples will suffer another setback in 17:14-21 and Jesus will attribute ὀλιγοπιστία to them (17:20), but he no longer characterizes them personally as οἱ ὀλιγόπιστοι.

⁸²Cf. Edwards, *Story*, p.59.

⁸³Cf. 14:26-28; 15:12-15; 16:13-16, 21-22; 18:21; 19:25-27.

⁸⁴16:21 remains the only positive confession of Jesus as ὁ χριστός by a character within the story. It anticipates ironically the anti-confession of the high priest's question in 26:63. Otherwise it occurs as an anarthrous vocative - Χριστέ - on the lips of his mocking persecutors, and he is referred to by Pilate as τὸν λεγόμενον χριστόν (27:17, 22).

⁸⁵Μακάριος εἶ, 16:17; cf. 5:3-12; 11:6; 13:16.

contra-indicated in 14:28-31) until 16:18. Jesus credits Peter's confession to a prophetic insight revealed by "my Father who is in heaven", language directly expressive of the heavenly Father's revelation to babes so highly praised by Jesus in 11:25f. In 16:18f the implied author uses Jesus as a mouthpiece to project a series of incidents beyond the temporal boundaries of the story: Jesus declares ταύτη ἡ πέτρα to be the foundation upon which he will build his ἐκκλησία, describing its construction in the cosmic language of the eschatological conflict into which his life and ministry have been thrust (cf. 4:1-11). He also promises to Peter the authority and responsibility of binding and loosing. He speaks with divine authority, reminiscent of his blessings and ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω declarations in the Sermon of Mt 5-7, and evoking the Father-Son intimacy asserted in 11:25-30.

The images of "building my ἐκκλησία", the "keys", and "binding and loosing" are new. It is no accident that they coincide with new exhibitions of growing cohesion and comprehension on the part of the disciples, and with Peter's confession of Jesus as ὁ χριστός, Son of God. The disciples are no longer called ὀλιγόπιστοι and the ἀσύνετοι, but because of Peter's confession are anticipated as the foundation of Jesus' own saved and confessing ἐκκλησία, with new authority and responsibilities in the forefront of the cosmic battle for the formation of this new community.

Peter's confession reinforces the dual "Jesus-Emmanuel" designations of 1:21-23 and highlights the implied author's deliberate rhetorical redundancy in using this initial presentation to organize the implied reader's understanding of the story and protagonist. In confessing Jesus as ὁ χριστός and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, Peter is beginning to comprehend these key explanations of Jesus' messianic mission ("he will save his people from their sins") and persona ("God with us"). Peter is closer to seeing Jesus as the active and saving presence of Yahweh. This Christ/Son of God confession is so powerful and unprecedented that Jesus forbids them to tell anyone (16:20). A threshold has been crossed with this confession whereby Jesus now anticipates building τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ (1:21) into "μου ἡ ἐκκλησία" (16:17). The disciples will at some point be transformed from his inner circle of followers into the nucleus of this community of Jesus.

That these events of 16:13-20 do form a critical juncture in the plot is further confirmed by the narrator's carefully composed transition phrase in 16:21. Its parallel, in 4:17 (cf. 11:20), stands within the transitional sequence of 4:12-22 which moved the implied reader from Jesus' preparation to his mission proper in Galilee. Here the narrator signals a shift in

Jesus' training of his disciples, a new preparatory stage for the "building" (οἰκοδομέω) of his "community" (ἐκκλησία). The implied reader has known previously that Jesus' opponents are plotting his death (12:14), but there is some question as to whether the disciples have really understood (or been present at) Jesus' repeated reference to and explanation of the sign of Jonah (12:40; 16:4). The narrator now explains that "from that time", i.e. after Peter's climactic confession and Jesus' announcement of his coming community in 16:13-20, Jesus began to describe explicitly to the disciples his coming suffering and death in Jerusalem at the hands of the Jewish leaders, and his resurrection.

This is the first in a series of passion resurrection predictions (16:21; 17:22-23a; 20:18f;⁸⁶ cf. 10:38; 12:40; 20:28) and passion predictions (17:12; 26:2; 26:45) which are delivered to the disciples in private, and are therefore known only by them, the narrator and the implied reader. These predictions heighten the ongoing "suspense of anticipation" by which the implied reader views the story, as each prediction repeats the previous and gradually reveals more details. The predictions are ideologically aligned with the narrator and often provide the occasion to teach the disciples the true path of humility and suffering. "The disciples model the wrong responses and Jesus authoritatively indicates the proper ones."⁸⁷

Peter's rebuke (16:22) evidences the still limited perception of his confession in v.16 (cf. 14:28), for he finds it impossible that the living God's own Messiah could be subjected to such maltreatment. Jesus' startling response (16:23) is not so much an indictment of Peter's character, as a further harsh notice of the cosmic arena in which the members of the ἐκκλησία will soon operate. Jesus' direct rebuke of Satan recalls his earlier resistance to testing (cf. 4:10) and begs the question of Peter's own inspiration: he spoke prophetically in 16:16, but here his utterance is anti-prophetic.

Similarly, on the mountain of transfiguration, Peter responds to the fearful enhancement of Jesus' appearance by offering to build three booths. The narrator's report of God's voice leaves the implied reader in no doubt

⁸⁶See the formal pattern identified between these three by W.G. Thompson, *Advice*, pp.94f. Cf. Anderson's criticisms, "Over Again", pp.227-29.

⁸⁷Anderson, "Over Again", p.227. For a fuller commentary see pp.215-37. Through repeated misunderstanding of the predictions by the disciples, the implied reader is prepared for their ultimate abandonment of Jesus, Peter's betrayal and their restoration in Galilee.

that Peter has again spoken presumptuously. God's own declaration of his Son here parallels his utterance at Jesus' baptism, but this time he adds the sharp rebuke: "Listen to him!" (17:5), i.e., Peter does not listen.⁸⁸

The significance of the transfiguration becomes clear during the descent from the mountain (17:9-13). In v.9 Jesus "commands" (ἐντέλλομαι)⁸⁹ them not to tell anyone about "the vision" (τὸ ὄραμα) until the Son of man has been raised from the dead. This vision comes, significantly, *after* the confession of 16:16 and after Jesus has identified his ἐκκλησία as those who will perceive by divine revelation God's salvation and divine presence in him, and be obedient to his mission. The transfiguration thus functions to reinforce, once again by heavenly vision and voice (cf. 3:16f), for the disciples and the implied reader Jesus' stature as God's Emmanuel Messiah and Son, while Jesus' order in v.9 makes clear that his transfiguration will make sense only in the post-resurrection context. It is important that Peter does not protest Jesus' reference to his death again; rather a discussion ensues about Elijah, which concludes with the narrator's comment: "Then the disciples understood..." (συνῆκαν, 17:13; cf. 16:12). Thus the characterization of the disciples continues to improve. That Jesus does not differentiate here between the political establishment (*Herod* actually killed John, 14:1-12) and the religious establishment (17:12), affirms the narrator's first blanket characterization of Jesus' opposition as both political and religious in Mt 2:1-12.

Jesus' frustration at the inability of the other nine disciples left on their own to heal the epileptic boy (17:14-21) points out a second presence/absence dilemma similar to that in the feeding stories and with Peter's water-walking. Once again the implied reader is shown a notable correlation between the physical absence of Jesus and the incapacity of the disciples, and a correlation between his restored presence and the success of their efforts. Jesus' exasperation is with the very assumption of that correlation, and its misapprehension of the Emmanuel aspect of his messianic mission: "How long am I to be with you?" (μεθ' ὑμῶν, cf. 1:23; 28:20) "How long am I to be patient with you?" (17:17) That the disciples still depend on Jesus' *physical* presence inspires Jesus' characterization of them as

⁸⁸See further links between this event and the baptism; Przybylski, "Mt.3:13-4:11", pp.227ff; Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.152.

⁸⁹Matthew: 5x; elsewhere only for divine commands (4:6; 15:4; 19:7), and in the final commission for the commands of Jesus (28:20).

γενεὰ ἄπιστος καὶ διεστραμμένη (17:17),⁹⁰ and points out their ὀλιγοπιστία (17:20). Jesus again uses the mustard seed phenomenon (cf. 13:31f) to assert that with a little faith nothing will be impossible for the disciples (regardless of Jesus' physical absence or presence).

This attempt by the disciples to heal the epileptic boy constitutes their first independent step of ministry, in line with their Mt 10 commissioning. Their failure again points out their inability yet to undertake the task. Jesus' exasperated "How long am I to be with you?" underlines his dilemma as their leader and teacher: When would they learn the correlation between his mission, Emmanuel persona and their faith? When would they understand that being μεθ' ὑμῶν in a messianic sense superseded the requirement for his physical presence? Only when their faith grew to encompass this deeper sense of his messianic "withness" would they be ready to carry out their mission, detached from Jesus' immediate presence. This episode of ὀλιγοπιστία seems only reinforced by their intense distress at Jesus' repeated prediction of suffering, death and resurrection in 17:22f; they cannot yet see its messianic significance.

The discourse on the community in 18:1-35 is introduced by the disciples' question about their relative status in the "Kingdom of heaven", a key element in John's, Jesus' and the disciples' (future) proclamations,⁹¹ and the phrase which recalls Jesus' teaching in the Sermon, his parables of Mt 13, and most recently his statement about the keys in 16:19. In 18:2-4 he rejects the apparent over-confidence of the disciples: the humble social status of a child is required even for *entrance* into the Kingdom of heaven. In 18:5ff the emphasis turns to "the little ones" (οἱ μικροί),⁹² those who have already become childlike, humble disciples, and to the question of their reception by others. The μικροί have a special status in the world; to receive one of them is to receive Jesus himself.

Here the implied author uses Jesus' words to establish for the implied reader a critical principle in understanding Jesus' presence among his people. There is a special identification between the μικροί and Jesus; to

⁹⁰Previously Jesus condemned "this generation", his contemporaries in general (11:16-19), and elsewhere the Jewish leaders seeking a sign ("perverse and evil generation": 12:38-45; 16:4; also 23:29-36; cf. 24:34). But here it is the disciples who are faithless, and Jesus is frustrated with how typical they are of their unbelieving contemporaries. Cf. France, *Matthew*, pp.212f, 266; contra Kingsbury, *Story*, p.131.

⁹¹Cf. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7.

⁹²Cf. 10:42; 18:6, 10, 14.

welcome them is to welcome Jesus, and this intimate equivalence is based on nothing less than the Father's constant favour and vigilance for them (18:10, 14). The woes of 18:7-9 are a condemnation for those who would trip up and persecute these followers. The setting is expanded with cosmic, eschatological terminology, and illustrated by the lost sheep parable in 18:12f. To treat the μικροί contemptuously is to treat Jesus contemptuously, and God, who is in control, is vitally interested in every one of the μικροί.

The issue raised in 18:15-20 is initially more pragmatic: how to deal with an offence among the brothers. One must begin with humility and settle the issue quietly. If the offender's refusals are adamant the authority of the ἐκκλησία is invoked, first through the witness of a few, then in excommunication by the whole ἐκκλησία. The agreement of two or three in the community substantiates the Father's will; this agreement validates the exercise of binding and loosing, first promised to Peter in Mt 16, and now the authority and responsibility of the community. The emphasis on the unity of heaven and earth, and the intimacy of Father and Son, recalls the statements in 11:25-27, here with the μικροί being drawn into the relationship. The narrator began with a child ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν (18:2); now Jesus himself declares that he is ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν whenever they gather in his name (18:20).

Jesus outlines in 18:20 a more advanced understanding of what it means for him to be "with" his disciples, advocating a presence which moves beyond the limitations of physical proximity, and thus answering the dilemma of impotence, fear and little faith among his disciples raised previously in situations of his physical absence (14:22-33; 17:14-21). This presence will require the physical proximity of only two or three of the μικροί, who have gathered in Jesus' name. Such a gathering is not part of the plotted story, but is anticipated as a regular occurrence outside of story time.

Συνάγω has already been frequently employed by the narrator for the assembly or gathering of people,⁹³ with the purposes of these assemblies often strongly polarized in line with the narrator's point of view. Whenever the various elements of the Jewish leadership "gather together"

⁹³2:4; 3:12; 12:30; 13:2, 30; and see further in the story: 22:10, 34, 41; 25:32, 35, 38, 43; 26:3, 57; 27:17, 27, 62; 28:12.

(συνάγω) in Matthew, the assembly (called by Herod, to test Jesus, to plot against him) is sinister and opposes the will of God and his Messiah.⁹⁴

Added to this negative characterization by the narrator of their acts of assembly is the negative characterization by both the narrator and Jesus of their regular place of assembly, the συναγωγή. The συναγωγή in Matthew has already been identified for the implied reader as a present arena for Jesus' teaching and healing (4:23; 9:35; 12:9ff; 13:54), as a place of opposition (12:9ff), as a stage for the religious exercises of the hypocrites (6:2, 5; 23:6), and as a future arena for floggings (10:17; 23:34). The implied reader never perceives the συναγωγή *per se* as merely a neutral venue for assembly; six times συναγωγή is characterized in third party terms as the συναγωγή/αἱ αὐτῶν, i.e. as *someone else's* gathering place.⁹⁵ And every other occurrence of συναγωγή depicts it as the locus of the Jewish leadership's hypocrisy. In the end the implied reader, finding the narrator reliable in every other area, begins to view *their/your synagogues* with some suspicion, as belonging within the realm of Jesus' opponents, and providing no venue or support for the gathering of "his people". This becomes especially clear in Jesus' words in 23:34 where the antecedent for συναγωγαῖς ὑμῶν is the scribes and Pharisees, whom Jesus is fiercely challenging.⁹⁶ "Gathering", *per se*, is not the issue, i.e., συναγωγή itself could have designated gatherings of either character group in the story. The rhetorical distinction made is between *their/your* gatherings or synagogues, and *ours*, (which becomes known in Matthew as Jesus' ἐκκλησίᾱ).

Therefore, whenever Jesus or his disciples gather (συνάγω) it is in favour of the Kingdom and aligns with the narrator's point of view and the divine will.⁹⁷ This marked polarity between the acts and places of assembly by Jesus and the acts and places of assembly by the Jewish leaders is further enhanced in a number of cases by use of συνάγω in the language of eschatological judgement; here "gathering" refers metaphorically to the separation of the disciples and opponents (wheat and chaff, wheat and weeds,

⁹⁴Cf. 2:4; 22:34, 41; 26:3; 26:57; 27:17, 62; 28:12.

⁹⁵By the narrator: 4:23; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54; by Jesus: 10:17; 23:34 (here ταῖς συναγωγαῖς ὑμῶν, in Jesus' direct attack).

⁹⁶Using Uspensky's terminology, Anderson ("Over Again", p.61) sees ἡ συναγωγή as an example of where the narrator has "contaminated" Jesus' speech in the alignment of the narrator and protagonist against the opponents.

⁹⁷3:12; 12:30; 18:20; cf. 13:2; 25:35, 38, 43.

good and bad fish) for eternal blessing or fire.⁹⁸ Uttered in a context of hot polemical debate with the religious establishment, after a conflict in the synagogue with the Pharisees where the implied reader has learned of their plot to destroy him (12:9-14), Jesus' saying in 12:30 is paradigmatic in its expression of this polarity associated with the activity of συνάγω in Matthew:

ὁ μὴ ὦν μετ' ἐμοῦ κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐστίν, καὶ
ὁ μὴ συνάγων μετ' ἐμοῦ σκοπίζει

In context this saying incorporates not just the antithesis of "gathering for the Kingdom" versus "scattering against it", but includes a dual contrast between:

gathering/being with (in the presence of) Jesus, and
scattering/being with (in the presence of) Beelzebul

In 12:30 Jesus' restricted inner circle of followers gains careful definition again by means of the critical principle of being "with" him (μετ' ἐμοῦ). The privilege of being "with" Jesus continues to gather significance. It means far more than being those most privy to his physical person. The fact that his messianic mission and persona as God's presence have been combined so clearly since 1:21-23 has evolved into a "withness" for the disciples which requires obedience to and solidarity with Jesus' mission to perform God's will in suffering and death. Being "with" him increasingly calls for complete alignment with him, spatially and ideologically.

But this critical principle of "withness" has gained its explicit antithesis in 12:30, and has application to 18:20. "To gather in Jesus' name" in 18:20 provokes for the implied reader not only a picture of a small assembly of disciples evoking the authoritative, non-physical presence of Jesus, but it also raises the spectre of its antithesis - the Jewish religious establishment assembled *against* the authoritative presence of Jesus, viz. a polarity of communities in Matthew's narrative world between μου ἡ ἐκκλησία⁹⁹ and αἱ συναγωγαὶ αὐτῶν. That the gathering in 18:20 is εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα¹⁰⁰ drives the wedge only further. The purpose, orientation and authority of this community is found in the name of Jesus; his persona of divine presence delimits and defines the parameters of its every act of

⁹⁸Cf. 3:12; 13:30, 47; 22:10; 25:32.

⁹⁹Note the emphatic word order in 16:18.

¹⁰⁰Note also the emphasis provided by the possessive adjective ἐμὸν.

assembly, and excludes those who would gather for a contrary purpose and under another authority.

Much within Mt 18 is applicable within both the story and narrative NOW. The implied author is providing information at both levels, with the implied reader the obvious recipient of the references to the extratextual ἐκκλησία and its experiences and events which remain unplotted and hence do not fit the picture painted of Jesus' ministry in Matthew's story world. Thus Jesus' promise in 18:19-20 is in historical terms anachronistic and the question of discipline in Mt 18 presupposes a community life with parameters and shared experiences more defined than any within the story. This anticipated form of Jesus' presence - independent of his physical proximity to the community, and this new orientation - in his name, will relativize the spatial and temporal restrictions on the assembly of "his people" in his presence. Where is Jesus? - he will be "there" (ἐκεῖ), wherever and whenever the μικροί gather in his name. That Jesus' presence in their midst will be no less efficacious than has been his physical proximity with the disciples is apparent from their authority by agreement to bind and loose with heavenly sanction. With this declaration the implied reader can anticipate the means and possibility of personally experiencing and participating in this community marked by the presence of Jesus.

3.4. Mt 19:1-27:50: The Jerusalem Presence of Jesus

In Mt 19:1 the narrator closes the speech of Mt 18 using his typical formula for marking the end of Jesus' major discourses. He also gives notice of Jesus' departure from Galilee into Judea, a move first anticipated in 16:21 and now part of a persistent series of geographical signposts which mark the way to Jerusalem with a progressively mounting tension.¹⁰¹ This move is not merely a change of location; Jesus is deliberately reversing his lifelong flight and returning to the land of his birth, to the scene of Herod's original bloody campaign against him, and to the source of his constant opposition from the Jewish leaders. He now enters the final phase of his story, the anticipated conflict which the implied reader knows will test utterly Jesus' and the narrator's claims about his mission and person as divinely ordained, and will prove or discredit entirely Jesus' vision for discipleship and an ἐκκλησία gathered around his authoritative presence.

¹⁰¹Cf. 16:21; 17:22, 24; 19:1; 20:17, 29; 21:1, 10, 12, 17, 18, 23; 24:1, 3.

On the final approach to Jerusalem Jesus anticipates with greater specificity again and, for the final time, his suffering ahead (20:17-19) and finds another opportunity to emphasize the "first last, last first" theme in answer to the request for privileged places in the Kingdom from the mother of James and John. This, and the ensuing indignation from the other ten, reveals the disciples' ongoing mixed characterization, and their incomplete comprehension regarding what is to come: the "cup" which he will drink (20:22f) and the service - "to give his life as a ransom for many" (20:28) - which he will render, and its implications for their own mission and suffering. Outside Jericho the repeated cries of the blind men - "Son of David!" (20:30f) and Jesus' reaction, not only recall the narrator's initial ascription in 1:1 and the other healing situations when the title has been used (9:27; 12:23; 15:22) and when Jesus has been stirred by deep compassion (9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34), but also remind the implied reader that Jesus is on his way to the holy city of David. The perception in the blind men's response stands in ironic contrast to the "blindness" of the Jewish leaders.¹⁰²

Jesus' approach to Jerusalem on the back of an ass and a colt, according to the narrator's abbreviated citation of Zechariah's prophecy, is the approach of a "humble king" (βασιλεύς...πραῦς, 21:5) to Zion. His humble stature here recalls his earlier beatitude (5:5) and his self-description (11:29), and his humbly royal entry into this "city of the great King" (5:35) now models for the disciples his stated requirement that they too attain the social status of μικροί to enter the Kingdom of heaven (18:1ff). Jesus' foreknowledge of and planning for the event reconfirm both the narrator's assessment and his own continuous alignment throughout the story with Yahweh's plan in scripture. Jesus, son of "David the king" (1:6), and labelled "King of the Jews" by the magi (2:2), is clearly juxtaposed here with the only other two characters in the story called "king": Herod (Mt 2:1, 3, 9), and Herod the tetrarch who beheaded the Baptist (14:9).¹⁰³ The crowds' acclamation and the narrator's citation corroborate for the first time the assertion of the magi. This triumphant entry into Jerusalem reverses his fearful flight to Egypt years ago, as an infant who was perceived as the usurper king, away from the very city toward

¹⁰²The crowd's rebuke of the blind men (20:31) may be a subtle intimation of a shift toward their rejection of Jesus at his trial; so Howell, *Story*, p.149.

¹⁰³Cf. βασιλεύς elsewhere in 2:2; 5:35; 10:18; 11:8; 17:25; 22:7, 11, 13; 25:34, 40; 27:11, 29, 37, 42.

which he now rides as humble king. It also foreshadows Jerusalem's coming misperceptions of Jesus' political kingship in his trial and crucifixion, a style of kingship never claimed by Jesus (Mt 27).

As at his birth, once again Jesus' presence stirs "the whole city" (πᾶσα ἡ πόλις, 21:10; cf. 2:3), though people now identify him as "the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee" (21:11). This apparent contradiction with their "son of David" acclamation finds explanation in Jesus' prophetic activity and words in clearing out the Temple; both his introduction - "γέγραπται" - and citation from Jeremiah emphasize his subjection to the Father (21:12f). The implied reader and all characters concerned are suddenly and violently aware of the importance to Jesus of the Temple's sanctity as Yahweh's place of presence. "Ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται," he quotes. The symbolism of Jesus' "cleansing" of the Temple reaches as far back as Mt 1, for if it was as son of David, humble king, that he rightfully entered the royal city, it is as the "God with us" Messiah that he now symbolically destroys the Temple and foreshadows its demise and replacement. The Temple proper is no longer relevant in the coming eschatological Zion, which will gather around him.

Jesus responds to his Temple opponents' challenges with a series of parables which highlight the Jewish leaders' history of rejection, both within and outside of the temporal bounds of the plotted story, and his conclusions are emphatic: the tax collectors and prostitutes, who *díd* believe John the Baptist and repent, will get into the Kingdom before the religious leaders (21:31f), from whom the Kingdom will be taken away and given to a nation producing its fruits (21:43). The implied reader is drawn back to the picture of the withered fig tree (21:18-22); Jesus has now notified his antagonists that their fruitless condition spells not only their personal judgement, but the transfer of the Kingdom of God to another people (ἀρθήσεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ δοθήσεται ἔθνει...). The redefinition of "his people"¹⁰⁴ - the building of his ἐκκλησία - excludes the Jewish leaders.

As the conflict deepens, Jesus confronts the "chief priests and Pharisees" with the parable of the marriage feast (22:1-14) in which he addresses both the story and narrative NOW. The implied reader is bound to look outside the plotted story for correspondences to Jesus' difficult and

¹⁰⁴ Here spoken of in terms of ἔθνος; cf. Stanton, "Judaism", pp.269f; Trilling, *Israel*, p.65; Howell, *Story*, p.151; for various interpretations.

powerful pictures of the murdered servants and son (21:35-9) and the burned city (22:7). This reiterated motif of replacement and judgement is not lost on the Pharisees, who angrily conspire to entangle Jesus (22:15).

Several more confrontations conclude with the narrator's summary in Mt 22:46. Jesus has the final word, and his opponents are left speechless, their public humiliation heavily implicit in the narrator's statement that "no one dared ask him anything anymore from that day" (ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας). With this summary, then, the story reaches another transition, from the period of attempts by members of the religio-political establishment to challenge and defeat Jesus in the public forum, to the behind-the-scenes exercise of political power against him to destroy him.

Jesus launches a final attack against the scribes and Pharisees in the woes of Mt 23, addressed to the disciples and crowds, still in the Temple, with no mention of his enemies in the audience.¹⁰⁵ The damning portrait builds from his commentary on their leadership style (vv.2-12) through to a series of woes which employ the cry Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, labelling the scribes and Pharisees ὑποκριταί¹⁰⁶ with various forms of blindness (τυφλός).¹⁰⁷ These are interspersed with illustrations. The scribes and Pharisees are duplicitous; preaching and practice, word and deed, advice and fruit do not align in their lives. The language of condemnation in Mt 23 recalls the Baptist's demand for fruit worthy of repentance (3:8) and the characteristics vilified by Jesus in the Sermon (5:20; 6:1-18); their arrogance also contradicts his teachings on the ἐκκλησία (18:5-9) and his own humble approach to the holy city (20:26-28).

The rhetorical effect of this long, uninterrupted speech on the implied reader is to substantiate the reliability of Jesus' previous condemnations of hypocrisy in the religio-political establishment of Israel, and to reinforce further the narrator's contrast between the activities of hypocrisy observable in the συναγωγαί of Jesus' opponents and the humility and service required in the messianic mission and ἐκκλησία of Jesus. The opponents of Jesus have become the antitypes of the true followers of Jesus.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ But note the shift to second person address in 23:13.

¹⁰⁶ 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29.

¹⁰⁷ 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Edwards, *Story*, p.79.



The final woe includes a reference to Jesus sending προφήτας καὶ σοφοὺς καὶ γραμματεῖς to the scribes and Pharisees, whom they will persecute and kill (23:34).¹⁰⁹ The tension between ἀποστέλλω here and ἀπέστειλεν in 10:5 reinforces the implied reader's anticipation of the unfulfilled Mt 10 mission as a future event outside the plotted story's temporal parameters. The Mt 23:34f description corresponds to the disciples' commission in Mt 10 and Jesus' warnings of persecution there; the implied reader identifies these two sendings by Jesus and their similar fates, but also reads of the opponents' sentence to hell (γέεννα, 23:33).

But Jerusalem also comes in for condemnation in 23:37-39; as already noted in Mt 2, 15 and 19, the city is paradigmatic of the opposition which met Yahweh's Emmanuel Messiah from the first news of his birth. Now Jesus cries out in first person address to Zion, with the same intensity, compassion, authority and Father-Son intimacy of 11:25-30. But Jerusalem has sealed its own fate by rejecting the envoys, and now the Messiah, of Yahweh. In turn it is now rejected by Yahweh's Emmanuel Messiah, and here again Jesus is the voice for the implied author's point of view. His words regarding Jerusalem operate on two levels, within the story and within the narrative space shared by narrator and implied reader, where they are perfectly intelligible. Jerusalem will not see him again until it takes up the same cry/confession voiced by his followers in Mt 21:9: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (23:39). This phrase ἀπ' ἄρτι delivers with it a temporal reference of apparent eschatological significance, as will become clear to the implied reader when it also appears in 26:29, 64. The implied reader is left wondering whether Jerusalem's utterance points to its future recognition of Jesus only as final judge, or welcoming him as its Messiah king.¹¹⁰

The Withdrawal of Presence

Jesus' extended discourse in 24:4-25:46 is significant for its setting and narrative preface, elaborating the movement of Jesus from the Jerusalem Temple. Jesus, following his lament over Jerusalem's rejection, swears that he will be absent from the holy city of divine presence (λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, οὐ

¹⁰⁹ See Garland, *Matthew 23*, pp.173ff, for the disciples as the object of ἀποστέλλω here.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Benoit, *Matthieu*, p.144; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.344; Hill, *Matthew*, p.316.

μή με ἴδετε, 23:39). The narrator follows with the report of Jesus' physical departure from the Temple and his prediction of its total destruction. For the implied reader this departure culminates a sequence of story elements concerning Jerusalem, beginning as early as the episodes of Mt 2 and the Baptist's rejection of the repentance of the Jerusalem leaders in Mt 3, and combining with Jesus' own assertion: λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μετῴζον ἔστιν ἥδε (12:6), the burning of the city in the wedding feast parable (22:7), the desolation of the "house" of Jerusalem (23:38), and the repeated indictment of the city for the murders of those sent. With Jesus' withdrawal the picture of the religious establishment's repudiation of the saviour, and its rejection by Yahweh, is complete - the Emmanuel Messiah leaves emphatically and the holy city awaits destruction. The story has come full circle back to Jerusalem's arrogant repudiation of the "God with us" Messiah in Mt 2, a repudiation which has brought divine judgement upon itself and fulfilled Jesus' prediction of destruction in 23:38. For the implied reader Jesus' departure from the Temple represents Jerusalem's and Israel's loss of his agency of Yahweh's presence and, given the narrator's and Jesus' alignment in 1:23 and 18:20, the loss of the presence of God.¹¹¹

According to the narrator the disciples do realize something of the eschatological significance of Jesus' departure from the Temple, and his prediction of its destruction.¹¹² This and the connection they make between "the sign of your coming" and "the close of the age" (24:3) marks a milestone in their own perception, here regarding the relation of Jesus' ministry to Jerusalem.¹¹³ Mt 24:1ff also signals the end of Jesus' public ministry. In his last great discourse Jesus speaks privately of the end only to those within his inner circle. From a spatial point of view the story's focus on the centripetal power of Jesus' presence remains the same, but the audience scope, once broadened successively to all characters and

¹¹¹Cf. Garland, *Matthew 23*, pp.26ff, 200ff; Burnett, *Testament*, pp.130ff, 164ff. They argue similarly, but from a redactional perspective, with reference to Matthew's deliberate sequence of woes, laments over Jerusalem and Jesus' withdrawal, especially given the intervening "Widow's Mite" story in Mk 12:41-44 and Lk 21:1-4. Burnett, p.122, also argues that the relation of ἱερόν in 24:1 to οἶκος in 23:38 makes Jesus' act of leaving the Temple equivalent to his departure from the whole nation. Cf. also Hare, *Persecution*, pp.148f.

¹¹²See Bornkamm, "End-Expectation", pp.15-51, for a seminal assessment of the paraenetic value of Matthew's eschatology within his community.

¹¹³Cf. Edwards, *Story*, p.81.

character groups (cf. 4:18-22; 4:23f, 25f; 9:3ff), now has successively narrowed as the story climaxes (cf. 22:46; 23:1; 24:3).¹¹⁴

Following various signs preceding the end - false messiahs and sufferings (24:4-14) - the details of the close of this age are narrated (24:15-31), including the desolating sacrilege (with a direct comment by the narrator: "Let the reader understand", 24:15),¹¹⁵ tribulations and cosmic signs. The remainder of Jesus' speech about the end is composed primarily of parables and parabolic sayings which supply admonitions and warnings, anticipating and predicting events beyond the plotted story.

Much of the imagery, especially in the last parable (25:31-46), concerns the final eschatological division of Jesus' respondents (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) into the sheep - inheritors of the Kingdom, and goats - consigned to eternal punishment. The major criteria undergirding this judgement derive from the μικροί principle of Mt 18. Jesus' first-last inversion of Kingdom status there is repeated; now the μικροί are identified as εἰς τούτων (τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου) τῶν ἐλαχίστων (25:40, 45). Again the "witness" of his earthly messianic presence gains further application as full protection of the 'little people' within his post-resurrection ἐκκλησία. For the disciples and implied reader the story functions as an encouraging proleptic vindication by God of Jesus' mission, and of his claim to intimate, efficacious presence with the littlest members of his community; their obedience and treatment by others will prove to have eternal implications.

Following Jesus' last major discourse the narrative's movement toward the final conflict quickens notably and Jesus anticipates the decisive event imminently. In the Passover celebration the elements of bread and wine, in the context of eating together, are given symbolic significance. Participation in a common cup points toward his covenant of blood "which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (26:28), an elaboration of

¹¹⁴Cf. Kingsbury, *Story*, p.84.

¹¹⁵Cf. Petersen on Mk 13:14: "At least one of the functions (metalinguistic) of the parenthetical 'let the reader understand' (13:14) is to call attention to the coded reference to the Temple. But another function may well be to call attention to events of which the reader (addressee) is aware, thereby linking the time of Mark's writer to these events!" (*Criticism*, p.72).

Matthew's narrator is similarly asking the implied reader to step outside story time and recognize the significance of the story for events within the past or present of their common temporal horizon, but with Matthew's greatly heightened emphasis on Jerusalem's fate delivered by the sequence of Mt 23:34ff.

the angel's first explanation of "Jesus" in 1:21: "He will save his people from their sins". Here the implied reader sees the material shape to one of the fundamental questions of the opening narrative frame: *how will Jesus bring salvation to his people?*

But the language of both Jesus and the narrator heightens the symbolism of the meal and subsequent events for the presence motif as well. Nine times in Mt 26 Jesus' exclusive association with his inner circle of disciples is emphasized by means of μετά + genitive.¹¹⁶ That Jesus plans for a Passover "with" his disciples, that he celebrates it "with" them, that he anticipates a future celebration "with" them in his Father's Kingdom, that he shares his Gethsemane experiences "with" them and seeks their support, that they are "with" him at his arrest, and that Peter is accused of being "with" him - these words of Jesus and the narrator point beyond mere accompaniment at the story level. In the supper celebration Jesus' "withness" gains further definition beyond his earthly person and physical presence. These tangible symbols provide the post-resurrection ἐκκλησία another means of experiencing his presence with them. And the implied reader is drawn into a critical sequence of story events where being "with" Jesus, to be in his presence, means personal companionship, obedience, and full participation and acceptance of his mission - in other words, full ideological alignment with his person, teaching and suffering.

And herein lies the story tension - even as the implied author is defining these criteria for "withness", the disciples continue to miss the mark and appear unfit for their ministry. They accompany Jesus but abandon him; they obey him but fall away; they worship him but have doubts. Jesus' request in 26:38, μέινετε ... μετ' ἐμοῦ, contrasts directly with their *en masse* departure in 26:56; they have misunderstood the nature of his mission and person. The measure of true discipleship here is to remain in Jesus' presence; even Peter's attempt ends in humiliation, although his repentance anticipates renewed discipleship in Jesus' presence. It is the implied

¹¹⁶26:18, 20, 29, 36, 38, 40, 51, 69, 71. Debates continue over how transparent these references might be to the experiences of the post-Easter church; see, e.g., Kingsbury's assertions in *Structure*, pp.30ff; *Story*, pp.105f. Howell (*Story*, pp.230ff) disagrees with the theological edifice he claims Kingsbury has built on a small redactional foundation regarding Matthew's use of μετά, drawing on Frankemölle's *Jahwebund*.

Some of Howell's criticism is justified, but he also has missed the larger point that Matthew's presence motif does not exist by means of the redactional assessment of one preposition. Mt 26 remains one supportive element to be added to the whole analysis.

reader who remains the beneficiary of all the commentary, OT fulfilment citations, the words of Jesus, the faltering examples of the disciples. Only the implied reader has been privy to every plotted event in the story. The disciples have missed the narrator's opening exposition, numerous events, and Jesus' own struggles in baptism, temptation and Gethsemane. The implied author, then, is not seeking a simplistic identification between implied reader and disciples; from his or her privileged position the implied reader has been more "with" Jesus than any of his followers. Only the implied reader understands, is able to evaluate all characters according to the implied author's criteria, and goes "with" Jesus (narratively and ideologically) to the end.

For the implied reader, the disciples' thrice-repeated inability to remain "with" Jesus contrasts sharply with his stamina in staying with his Father's will, a final threefold "testing" of the theocentricity of the Son which culminates in his announcement that "the hour" and "the betrayer" are "at hand" (26:45f).

ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ἡ ὥρα ...
ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ὁ παραδιδούς με

The verb ἤγγικεν has already occurred in the three summary pronouncements of the Kingdom's proclamation by John the Baptist, Jesus and the disciples (3:2; 4:17; 10:7):

ἤγγικεν (γὰρ) ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν

and has been used to report Jesus' approach to Jerusalem (21:1) and the coming of the harvest time in the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (21:34). Each use of the verb, then, is interconnected with the anticipation of the Kingdom, and points the implied reader to Jesus' final conflict as central to its arrival.

From 26:57 till his risen appearance, Jesus moves from the role of "actor" to become silent object of the action, experiencing the suffering foreshadowed by the narrator (10:4; cf. 4:12; 11:2; 14:1-13), which he himself had been predicting (10:38f; 16:21; 17:9, 12, 21f; 20:18f; 26:2, 20-25), and which he had warned his disciples to expect.¹¹⁷

Jesus' circumlocutory affirmation in 26:64, his only words before the high priest's council, of the high priest's "Are you the Christ, the Son of God?" parallels the confessions in 14:33 and 16:16, and God's own declarations in 3:17 and 17:5. The difference in response, however,

¹¹⁷See Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.145-47, on Jesus' role reversal.

reflects the central contrast of the story: earlier the realization invoked worship from his followers and heavenly voices expressing divine paternal pleasure; now among his opponents it inspires condemnation for blasphemy, physical abuse and mockery.

The narrator loads the response of the council with heavy irony, for they mock their own religious traditions and Scriptures by taunting Jesus to prophesy (26:68), even as the implied reader knows of his accurate predictions. Ironically, the false accusation of Jesus' claim to destroy the Temple (26:61f) is framed as an unwitting assertion of his power, even as he has chosen to remain powerless for the sake of scripture's fulfilment (26:52ff). For the post-70 CE reader there is the added irony of the allusions to the Temple's fate, while Jesus' powerless death itself fulfils the anticipated destruction and false accusation (cf. 22:6f; 27:40). Irony, so strong in the infancy narrative, is dominant in the passion story, forming thematic *inclusio* between the two passages in several places. In Mt 2 the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, despite knowing the scriptural connections with the baby Messiah, cannot respond with worship and acceptance, a rejection which clearly anticipates the Jewish leaders' rejection in Mt 26ff. Judas, integral to the plot, seeks an opportunity (εὐκαιρίαν, 26:16) to destroy Jesus, even as the implied reader hears Jesus seeking the same καιρός (26:18); Judas is caught unawares in the fulfilment of God's will, as with characters throughout Jesus' infancy. In Mt 2 Herod tried to kill Jesus and in Mt 27 Jerusalem succeeds.¹¹⁸

Irony is for insiders, in this case for implied readers, and it strengthens the bond between implied reader and author.¹¹⁹ As a weapon, irony has victims, in this case the Jewish leaders. In the process the implied reader rejects the surface meaning of the texts to discern more deeply the implied author's meaning, all the while rejecting the value system of the Jewish leaders, who do not recognize the deeper meaning of their own words and actions.

Behind the trial scene before Pilate stands the concerted pressure of the Jewish leaders to have Jesus condemned, for Pilate remains, in the narrator's omniscient depiction, a victim of circumstances: he marvels

¹¹⁸See more elaboration of the irony and *inclusio* here in Lohr, "Techniques", pp.410ff, 427ff; Senior, *Passion*, pp.18-23; Nolan, *Son*, pp.104ff; Brown, *Birth*, p.183; Kingsbury, *Story*, pp.48f, Patte, *Matthew*, pp.373ff.

¹¹⁹See Duke, *Irony*, especially pp.29-42, for a discussion of irony's functions; cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.180.

greatly at Jesus (27:14); he offers Jesus or Barabbas for release (27:17); he perceives the base motivation of the Jewish leaders (27:18); and he receives his wife's dream revelation¹²⁰ of Jesus as a "righteous man" (27:19). This juxtaposed with the narrator's note that the people had been persuaded by the chief priests and elders to call for Jesus' destruction (27:20), and Pilate washing his hands as an assertion of innocence (27:24), reinforces the implied reader's favourable view of Pilate and suspicion of the Jewish leaders. 27:25 represents a critical moment when Jesus loses the loyalty of οἱ ὄχλοι (27:15, 20, 24) and they and their children take responsibility for his blood. Even this final abandonment, however, is blunted by the culpability of the Jewish leaders who have persuaded οἱ ὄχλοι to destroy Jesus (27:10), and who stand unable to answer Pilate's final question: "What evil has he done?" (27:23)¹²¹

Throughout the crucifixion and the subsequent mockeries and taunts of the soldiers, passers-by, Jewish leaders and robbers, the implied reader stands with the narrator and the silent Jesus in full awareness of his true status, and fully cognizant of the tragic irony of his indictment as "king" and of the ironic derision of his role as son of God and Emmanuel Messiah, even as that role is being fulfilled in dying (cf. 16:24f; 26:28).

3.5. Mt 27:51-28:20. Narrative Close: The Risen Presence of Jesus

Several arguments were advanced above for seeing 27:51-28:20 as the closing narrative frame of the story. The death of a protagonist forms a natural termination in itself, at which point in our story the narrator's spatial alignment makes a significant shift away from Jesus, to an external point of view. The narrator's concern becomes the impact of Jesus' death, on the cosmic level, through various signs and miraculous events (27:51-54), which on the human level effect the soldiers' confession. For a significant portion of the closing frame (27:55f, 61; 28:1-11a) the narrator aligns himself spatially with the faithful women followers who did not abandon Jesus, and with the Jewish leaders, to observe their final machinations

¹²⁰κατ' ὅναρ; cf. 1:20; 2:12, 13, 19. For the force of this verbal repetition see Anderson, "Over Again", pp.209-15; Lohr, "Techniques", p.413. Cf. the redactional analysis of Brown, *Birth*, pp.105-19.

¹²¹The narrator may also preserve a favourable disposition towards the crowds with the implication of openness on the part of the people (λαός) to the news of the resurrection in 27:64.

(27:62-66; 28:11-15). Only in 28:9f and 28:17-20 are the narrator and implied reader spatially reunited with Jesus.

This conclusion to the story (27:51-28:20) is a careful summary and thorough evocation of its beginnings (Mt 1-2). Numerous correspondences reinforce these opening and closing passages as the story's narrative frame:¹²²

1:23	μεθ' ὑμῶν ὁ θεός	28:20	ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι
1:1ff	the four women, the magi	28:19	πάντα τὰ ἔθνη
1:5ff	special role of women	27:55ff	special role of women
1:24ff	God commands, directs	28:16,20	Jesus directs, commands
1:24ff	faithful obedience	27:55ff	faithful obedience
2:2,8,11	ὁράω + προσκυνέω	28:17	ὁράω + προσκυνέω
1:20ff	ἄγγελος κυρίου	28:2ff	ἄγγελος κυρίου
2:22	εἰς Γαλιλαίαν	27:55; 28:7,10,16	εἰς Γαλιλαίαν
2:3ff	Jerusalem rejection	27:62ff; 28:11ff	Jerusalem rejection
1:20,23; 2:1,9,13,19	ἰδοὺ	27:51; 28:2,7,9,11,20	ἰδοὺ
1:18ff	Lord, Holy Spirit, Son	27:54ff	Father, Son, Holy Spirit
2:10	χαρά μεγάλη	28:8	χαρά μεγάλη

The exceptional faithfulness of Jesus' closest women followers, the two Mary's, has been emphasized in their presence at the crucifixion, and at his burial, and is now reiterated in their return to the tomb. In contrast to the disciples' mass abdication, their steadfastness now recollects the narrator's careful delineation of the four women of the genealogy and Mary in Mt 1, and the implied reader is coaxed to ponder the special role of these women disciples in Jesus' ἐκκλησία. It is these faithful members of the community who first receive the angel's announcement, are shown the empty tomb, and are commissioned to take the resurrection message to the other disciples, along with the instructions to meet with Jesus in Galilee. "Joy" (χαρά) is a somewhat rare commodity amidst the often bitter conflicts of this story,¹²³ but here, in great measure and mixed with φόβος, it describes the women as they raced from the empty tomb with the news. The women are also the first followers to see the risen Jesus; neither he nor the resurrection *per se* is described, but their immediate reaction is prostrate worship. The disciples have been mentioned twice, by the angel and Jesus, and are kept deliberately in the implied reader's foreground by

¹²²These parallels are often used to support chiasmic approaches to Matthew's structure; cf. Lohr, "Techniques"; Combrink, "Structure"; Fenton, "Inclusio"; Gaechter, *Kunst*; Schieber, "Konzentrik". But see Meye Thompson's criticism, "Structure". Cf. the lists in Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.321-25; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.60.

¹²³Twice in the plotted story, in an inclusio of Jesus' birth (2:10) and resurrection (28:8), characters react with χαρά μεγάλη. Every other occurrence in the story is parabolic; cf. 13:20, 44; 25:21, 23.

the narrator, whose movement of the events points at every turn to the directing hand of the Father.¹²⁴

The narrator interrupts this sequence of resurrection encounters in order to provide one final look at Jesus' opponents (28:11-15). Their characterization and repudiation of the Emmanuel Messiah remains consistent to the end. The reaction of the chief priests and elders to the guards' report of the events at the tomb (and the narrator implies that they receive a full account, *ἅπαντα τὰ γινόμενα*, 28:11) is deception and bribery. Significantly, the narrator portrays them as on the defensive, needing to concoct a story to *deny* the resurrection - symbolizing a defeat in and of itself.

The narrator's final statement on the religious establishment is directed to the implied reader: "this story is still told among the Jews to this day" (28:15). *Ἰουδαῖος* is a term used within a narrowly defined context in the story, occurring otherwise only in the phrase *βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων* as applied to Jesus by the magi (2:2), Pilate (27:11) and the Roman soldiers (27:29, 37), in each case used by Gentiles to describe the Jews. In other words *Ἰουδαῖος* thus far has been a term of discrimination, used by one distinct group - the Gentiles, to designate another distinct ethnic group. Furthermore, every time the term arises it does so at the heart of an extreme conflict between Jesus and his opponents, implying specifically the Jerusalem religious and political establishment. But in 28:15 the narrator himself takes up the term, as a final reinforcement of the story's great polarization between the protagonist and his antagonists, and between their respective communities. Of equal importance, however, with *μέχρι τῆς σήμερον [ἡμέρας]* the narrator projects the two-community distinction outside of story time, to emphasize that the polarity of communities exists in perpetuity. The implied reader is given the narrator's interpretive key (point of view) by which to look at the post-story world and explain the contemporary division between the *ἐκκλησία* of Jesus and the group represented by *Ἰουδαῖοι*.

The story of the disciples ends where it began, on a mountain, in Galilee, where Jesus first introduced a nucleus of them to the precepts of the Kingdom. The implied reader has thus confronted six significant mountains in Matthew (4:8; 5:1 and 8:1; 15:29; 17:1 and 9; 24:3; 28:16), in a pattern which reveals a linked chain of rhetorically significant peaks.

¹²⁴Edwards, *Story*, p.93.

In each case ὄρος is the setting for a momentous event in Jesus' ministry, and each of the first five ὄρος settings has anticipated in some fashion the final ὄρος, the mountain of commissioning in 28:16-20.¹²⁵ As already noted the humble, obedient Son on the mountain of temptation (4:8) forms an *inclusio* with the vindicated, risen Son of the final mountain. The mountain in 5:1ff also corresponds fundamentally with the final mountain, for on the former Jesus gathers his disciples for the first time and explains to them the Kingdom values of the community which he is calling into being. On the latter mountain he commissions them, among other things, to make this teaching the basis of their mission (28:20).

But as important as this topography is, the narrator also uses geography to stress the obedience of the disciples (28:16). For all their ups and downs, progress, set-backs and ultimate abandonment of Jesus, the narrator reports that

ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς. This obedience, then, is the antepenultimate step in their restoration as his inner circle, as "his people". The implied reader has been prepared for this moment by a series of anticipatory comments directing the disciples back to Galilee for reunion with the risen Jesus (26:31f; 28:5-7; 28:10).¹²⁶ Jesus' instructions to the women are to be given τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου (28:10), which already assumes their restoration (cf. 12:46-50; 18:15-17, 20, 21, 35; 23:8; 25:40). For the implied reader this rising expectation highlights the significance of the story's final spatial alignment of disciples and Jesus in 28:16-20. Galilee signifies the renewal of their discipleship, and Jesus' post-resurrection ability to summon their obedience anticipates more than a reunion there: "Go quickly" (28:7) points ahead to urgent business.

The penultimate step in restoration comes when the eleven first see Jesus. Their reaction to his risen person is like the women's in 28:9 - προσεκύνησαν (28:17), and recalls their response to Jesus in the boat in 14:33. Astonishingly, however, the narrator notes the admixture of doubt with their worship, also recalling Peter's doubt when sinking in the water (14:31). Even in this final act of worship, the disciples, or some of them, are uncertain, so that the narrator's mixed characterization of their faith

¹²⁵Donaldson, *Mountain*, reaches this conclusion primarily on the basis of his analysis of ὄρος as a theological-historical symbol in Matthew, but the same conclusion is true of ὄρος as a rhetorical device, supported by verbal repetition (contra Donaldson, p.195; cf. Anderson, "Over Again").

¹²⁶See Petersen, *Criticism*, pp.76f.

persists to the end, despite the fact that they are confronted by the risen Jesus. In effect it provides a fully human portrait of the Eleven and of discipleship for the implied reader.

Jesus' final words (28:18b-20) are prefaced by the narrator's note "and Jesus approached them" (προσέρχομαι, 28:18a) - a move rarely made by the protagonist, and here one of reassurance for the benefit of the disciples, in their doubtful worship.¹²⁷ To begin with, (1) Jesus asserts that he has been given universal authority, and (2) he reasserts the source of this authority as the Father - ἐδόθη. Both themes connect with his declaration in 11:25-30, but point to the resurrection as the complete, theocentric vindication of his sonship and messiahship.

Jesus then focuses on the disciples, commanding them with "all" authority to make disciples of "all" nations, a commission to be carried out through the activities of baptizing and teaching. Here comes to full fruition the story's implicit and increasingly anticipated inclusion of the Gentiles in Jesus' mission, a motif which now proves a solid strand of the story since Jesus' origins, encompassing the magi and a steady stream of encounters by Jesus with the faithful from outside Israel.¹²⁸ Since baptism has not been mentioned since Mt 3 and the triadic ὄνομα formula has no precedent within the story, the implied reader is implicitly encouraged to seek their significance based on whatever information his or her contemporary community can supply.¹²⁹

Πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην gathers together Jesus' entire teaching within the story and places it before the disciples and implied reader, with the final challenge to accept and obey in the story. Jesus' own obedience as Son is recalled and vindicated. Teaching is for the first time made a

¹²⁷ Only one other place (Mt 17:7), does the transfigured Jesus approach (προσέρχομαι) his disciples, there prostrate again, and in need of reassurance.

¹²⁸ Cf. Mt 2:1ff; 3:9; 4:15f; 8:11; 10:18; 12:18, 21; 21:43; 24:14; 25:32. Fenton, *Matthew*, p.37; Malina, "Matt. xxviii.16-20", p.100; Gundry, *Matthew*, p.13; and many commentators see in "son of Abraham" (1:1) at least an anticipation of the Gospel's final universalism.

But narratively Matthew does not support a correspondence between Abraham and the Gentiles for the implied reader. That the reader already shares these cultural codes can be argued historically, but whenever Abraham is mentioned within Matthew he is the original patriarch of Israel; the Pharisees and Sadducees feel secure in their lineage from him; cf. 1:1, 2, 17; 3:9 (2x); 8:11; 22:32. Cf. Johnson, *Genealogies*, p.225, who sees "son of Abraham" supporting Davidic messiahship.

¹²⁹ Edwards, *Story*, p.94.

responsibility of the disciples, but it clearly derives from Jesus' own teaching, so that the Eleven are called to pass on what Jesus taught them.

Jesus' final declaration is in the first person voice of Yahweh's Emmanuel: "Look, I am with you always, right to the end of the age." The implied reader is presented with Jesus' personal assertion of the narrator's third person citation of Isa 7:14 in Mt 1:23, and of his translation of Emmanuel as "God with us". That the risen Jesus can undertake such a powerful first person statement of divine presence finds its basis in the divine bestowal of universal authority in 28:18. But he does not *give* this authority to the disciples. Their mission therefore depends fully on his immediate presence for its fulfilment. Hence the lessons of the water-walking, feeding the crowds and the attempted healing remain valid: they cannot always depend on the physical presence of the pre-resurrection Messiah to pull them from the water, break the bread or succeed their failed healing attempts. But theirs will be a derived commission; the disciples will always draw their authority and empowerment from Jesus' own universal, post-resurrection authority.

That he designates the Eleven, and the new community drawn from πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, as the locus of his presence, in full alignment with his declaration of presence in 18:20, also finalizes the redefinition of "his people". And that the risen Jesus is able to utter his own promise - ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι - of divine presence answers fully the question as to how his covenant of blood, crucifixion, death and resurrection are able to bring salvation to "his people": resurrection is not merely demonstrative of God's authority and a vindication of his Messiah, but empowers Jesus to promise unreservedly his perpetual, efficacious presence with his disciples in their long-unfulfilled commission of Mt 10, now become universal. In the resurrection the mission and person of the Emmanuel Messiah have become the powerful presence of the risen Jesus promised to the people of his ἐκκλησία.

The crisis of the identification of "his people", initiated by Jerusalem's repudiation of the Emmanuel infant in Mt 2, and exacerbated by the opponents of Jesus throughout the story, has dramatically escalated through various statements by Jesus disassociating "his people" from the leaders of ethnic Israel, to its culmination here in the community of disciples to be drawn from all nations. The implied reader finds that the Galilean commission of Mt 10 issued by the earthly Jesus, unfulfilled, is now overtaken by the universal commission issued by the risen Jesus. This shift away from an Israel-only focus creates something of a conundrum for

the reader. The utter opposition of Israel's leaders, and the basic complicity of the crowds at his crucifixion makes some sense of the shift, but does not remove the tension completely.¹³⁰

That Jesus takes on the language of Yahweh's presence and applies it directly to his disciples - ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι - is not only the ultimate step in their restoration as his inner circle, but also a statement of the community's boundaries and exclusivity. When Jesus notified the Pharisees that "something greater than the Temple is here" (12:6), tried to restore the Temple as his Father's house, then declared the "house" of Jerusalem "desolate", withdrew from the Temple and predicted its total destruction (23:38-24:2), he relativized any possibility of Israel's religious establishment claiming divine presence as a function *ex officio* of the holy city. For the implied reader his departure from the Temple is his departure as the personal expression of Yahweh's true presence, the persona identified as "Emmanuel". Already in 18:20 the implied reader saw that the ἐκκλησία's activity of gathering in Jesus' name provided sufficient locus for divine authority and his presence, without reference to Jerusalem, its religious authority or sacred space, and independent of Jesus' physical proximity; now, in 28:20 Jesus unequivocally himself declares his presence to be the presence of Yahweh. For the implied reader, who has seen the polarity of communities growing ever more intense within the story, the corollary of such a declaration is obvious: the presence of Jesus with his people spells the absence of Yahweh among those who have repudiated his presence. The shift of "his people" from Israel's leadership is a shift in God's presence, both in terms of its new definition in the risen Jesus, and in terms of its new recipients - his ἐκκλησία from πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

Finally, that Jesus declares his presence in perpetuity brings both an eschatological perspective to his promise and deals decisively with any problem of his physical absence from the community. For the implied reader

¹³⁰Weaver, *Discourse*, p.151, finds in 28:18-20 the complete resolution of the unfulfilled Mt 10 commissioning, but she dissolves too easily the narrative tension between the commanded exclusivity of Mt 10:5f and the universality of Mt 28:19. The latter does not simply subsume the former, especially since Weaver even claims that the earlier commission in Mt 10 now becomes part of the whole body of Jesus' teaching which must be passed on. Here the temporal and eschatological assumptions implicit in passages like 10:23, and the continuing mixed characterization of the disciples, cannot be ignored. They are rather part of a larger narrative tension concerning the definition of "his people". In the end the implied reader is left with something of a puzzle, one on which critics have yet to find agreement.

this is critical. In 18:20 the narrator provided the means by which the implied reader could engage contemporaneously with the community gathering in Jesus' name and presence, and here he reinforces that means by relativizing the temporal bounds on Jesus' presence, now to be with them *πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος*. Thus in 28:16-20 the implied reader is brought into unique temporal, psychological and ideological alignment with the narrator, Jesus and the Eleven.¹³¹ The implied reader shares the same temporal location as the disciples receiving the commission - between the resurrection and the parousia. For the implied reader then, Matthew's final commissioning is a beginning as well as an ending, and Jesus' promise of presence is just as fully applicable to the implied reader as to the disciples. Similarly, Jesus' commissioning of the disciples becomes a command to the implied reader to accept his mission and mandate as the risen Emmanuel Messiah.

The story ends at this dramatic juncture, with the implied reader drawn into the commission and *ἐκκλησία* of Jesus, and called to obey his on-going, powerful presence. But does the story really end with all conflict between characters and points of view synthesized, cancelled or harmonized? I think not - three major characters and character groups remain intact at the end: Jesus, the Jewish leaders and the disciples, while the crowds and Gentiles combine to become the new universal field for the commission. In terms of Jesus' overriding purpose as first defined in Mt 1:21-23, his opponents remain effective and belligerent (28:11-15), the disciples remain complex in character and commitment (28:17), and Jesus has been elevated, more completely than ever, to Yahweh's agent of salvation and divine presence (28:18-20). The fundamental conflicts and characterizations carry over into the post-narrative world. Jesus' post-resurrection authority and presence thus does not overwhelm others - it remains an invitation to obedience, empowerment, community and a promise. It depends on the story's deepest ironies: the nature of God's presence, the means of God's salvation (crucified Messiah), the first-last inversion (*μικροί* are the greatest in the Kingdom), the reign of the humble king, the role of women; and these promise to remain the ironies and tensions of the reader's post-narrative world.

The sense with which Matthew concludes - open-ended dialogue, rather than external narrative closure; forward references to the unnarrated future

¹³¹Cf. Anderson, "Over Again", pp.70, 155.

(Jesus' promised presence), rather than his narrated departure; universal, temporally unbounded and unplotted commission, awaiting fulfilment - connects actual readers to their own present. There the texts' structures, story, point of view and unresolved tensions guide their completion of the story within their own experiences.¹³²

The inclusio of Matthew's presence motif encompasses the entire Gospel with the convergence of the narrator's first declaration of the divine presence and Jesus' final promise of it, to both disciples and readers. So addressed at the end of the narrated story, the implied reader is called to radical obedience at the beginning of the unnarrated story - the story of the ἐκκλησία of Jesus between the resurrection and the parousia, the unnarrated story of the risen Jesus' presence with his disciples as they begin to carry out his universal commission.

¹³²Cf. Howell, *Story*, p.225ff; Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.152f. Contra Matera's focus on worship and confidence, "Plot", p.242; and contra Magness's missing ending of Matthew, *Sense*, pp.81f.

CHAPTER 4. PARADIGMS OF PRESENCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Matthew's repeated turning to Jewish scripture highlights the OT as a critical touchstone for his account of Jesus. An investigation of OT divine presence should therefore help to clarify its influence on the formation of the presence motif within the First Gospel. The discussion of divine presence in the OT and recent commentary is potentially vast. It is important to outline some parameters for the relatively brief engagement of the issue here.

1) In reflection of their importance in OT narrative, I am engaging with three basic models of divine presence provided by the patriarchal, Sinaitic and Davidic streams of theology. This chapter will outline some of the essential distinctives and convergences of divine presence in these traditions.

2) I am not elaborating these models in dependence on an existing source theory. Although many critics hold that the basic insights of pentateuchal criticism remain intact in the midst of recent criticism, more important is the question of how the OT models of presence may have appeared to a first century CE Matthew.

4.1. Literature and Current Discussion

Talking about "OT presence theology" touches on two larger, related discussions: the centre of OT theology, often ascribed to covenant, and the nature and relationship of the Mosaic/Sinaitic tradition and the Davidic/Zionistic tradition of Jerusalem.

On the first account it is important to acknowledge that some debate exists as to whether the great stress placed on covenant as the major ideological category and form of socio-religious organization for early Israel is warranted.¹ Samuel Terrien's answer, for example, is

¹E.g., Nicholson, *God*, has revived the argument for covenant as relatively late.

unequivocally negative: he finds little evidence that "covenant consciousness constituted the determinative trait of Israel's religion", or that "the covenant motif provides an adequate principle for the organic presentation of Israel's faith and cultus... The motif of presence is primary, and that of covenant is secondary."²

On the second account, contemporary scholarship has commonly juxtaposed the Mosaic and Davidic covenant traditions. The Mosaic tradition is often portrayed as historical and particularistic in nature, with a God who intervenes decisively on behalf of his people, above all in the Exodus; the Davidic as cosmic in orientation and built upon Zion mythology. The Mosaic covenant is conditional on obedience; the Davidic sees covenant as unconditional promise - Israel's election is inviolable and bound up with the Davidic dynasty established on Jerusalem's secure mountain. For the Mosaic circle God is one who manifests himself periodically and retreats, while for the Davidic circle God's presence in the Temple is constant; thus the personal, historical divine presence of Sinai *versus* the cultic, royal, divine presence of Zion.

Such an identification of these streams of tradition is a clear benefit to the OT reader; whether the streams are best interpreted in terms of this "conflict model" is less clear. The Sinai-Zion relationship is complex; each theological stream exhibits accommodation to the various socio-political realities of its day, i.e., "the Mosaic tradition tends to be a movement of protest ... the Davidic tradition tends to be a movement of consolidation".³

This debate has been seen as excessively polarized. Among others, J.D. Levenson and B.C. Ollenburger have criticized such delineation of the Mosaic and Jerusalem streams as an artificial opposition of their tendencies.⁴ Ollenburger's careful investigation of Zion symbolism has highlighted a consistent and pervasive concern for justice, along with a powerful and trenchant critique of royal perversions of justice. The apparent conflict

²*Presence*, p.3. Cf. Clements, *God*, p.1. See criticisms of Clements in Haran, "Presence", pp.251ff, and of Terrien in Frizzell, *God*, e.g., p.34.

³Brueggemann, "Trajectories", p.162, with references to OT sociological analyses; and cf. "Promise", p.47; "Crisis", p.86. In "Trajectories" Brueggemann applies to these two OT traditions Robinson and Koester's trajectory model (see *Trajectories*); also Steck, "Streams", pp.183-214.

⁴Levenson, *Sinai*, pp.187-217; Ollenburger, *Zion*, pp.152-55.

between the Sinai and Jerusalem traditions should not be overstated so as to obscure their mutual claim to shared Israelite patterns of thought.⁵

There is little argument that the motif of divine presence permeates thoroughly every aspect of the literary traditions of ancient Israel's several stages of existence - patriarchal tribe, amphyctyony, united and divided monarchy, and dispersed, exiled and repatriated nation. And in terms of origins, there is substantial agreement that whatever the specific relationships involved in Israel's assimilation of divine presence motifs from its ANE neighbours, any similarity in form has been subsumed by substantial changes in function within Israel.⁶

One natural tendency of scholarship has been to investigate divine presence along source-critical lines, arguing, for example, "that the Elohist (E) presents a more transcendent God than the Yahwist (J), that the Priestly writer (P) stresses that transcendence more than the other two" and that apart from D, "nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible are two characteristics of immanence and transcendence so happily combined".⁷

G.H. Davies was somewhat pessimistic about the attempt to define presence theology by source, however.

The material of the presence theme is so complex, and the media of the manifestation so varied, that attempts to trace various stages in the development of the doctrine have not been successful.⁸

Numerous articles and monographs are available from this century which take up some aspect of God's OT presence, including *panim*, *kabod*, *shem*, *Shekinah*, the Ark, the Tent of Meeting, and others.⁹ Analysis of theophany naturally includes assessment of the presence phenomena related to OT divine appearances.¹⁰

⁵Ollenburger, *Zion*, pp.59-66; see his criticism of Brueggemann, pp.154f. See Levenson's extended discussion of Sinai and Zion's "manifold relationships", *Sinai*, especially pp.209-17.

⁶E.g., see Pritchard, *ANET*, pp.449f, for statements of divine presence in Egyptian and Akkadian oracles. See Mann, *Presence*, pp.2ff, 17, 30-105, 236f, for references and a survey of scholarship. See Buber, *Kingship*, pp.99-107, for his kingly "leader-god" behind early Yahwism; cf. Cross, *Myth*, pp.94-7, 100ff, 138ff, 163-9; Mendenhall, *Generation*, pp.32ff.

⁷Maly, "Heavens", pp.24f, 29. Cf. Clements, *God*.

⁸"Presence", *IDB* 3, p.875a.

⁹Terrien, *Presence*, cannot easily be superseded as a bibliography for material prior to 1978; cf. also Brueggemann, "Presence"; Childs, *Exodus*; Durham, *Exodus*; more recently, Levenson, *Sinai*; Ollenburger, *Zion*.

¹⁰See especially Kuntz, *Self-Revelation*; Jeremias, *Theophanie*.

A number of scholars have focused more specifically on OT divine presence within the parameters of a particular agenda, e.g., select OT presence motifs and ANE correspondent forms; presence as encounter with the divine word; presence as the experience of God's salvation; presence as divine intervention; a dialectical reappraisal of OT and modern divine presence.¹¹

A few authors have concerned themselves with the broader development of the OT theology of God's presence. R.E. Clements' *God and Temple* undertakes a comprehensive description of the evolution of presence theology in ancient Israel. He is a primary advocate of the "conflict model", as applied to Presence theology, working from the premise that the covenantal relationship of Sinai between Yahweh and Israel stands in contradiction to the Jerusalem ideology of the Temple as God's dwelling place.¹²

The most significant attempt to examine the full trajectory of ancient Israel's theology of presence is Samuel Terrien's *Elusive Presence*. Published almost concomitantly was Walter Brueggemann's "The Crisis and Promise of Presence in Israel". Although essentially independent in their arguments, both assessments are mutually compatible. Both pursue the issue in terms of the tension between the present and absent God - Terrien by examining in turn all the major Jewish and Christian biblical accounts of divine-human encounter for evidence of the self-concealing and self-revealing God, and Brueggemann by concentrating on divine presence and absence in the motif of "face" in Ex 33:12-23 and subsequently drawing connections with a number of NT texts.¹³ Both also subscribe to the conflict model when juxtaposing Sinai and Jerusalem traditions, describing the resulting theological disparity in terms of ear/eye, north/south, knowing/seeing, historic/cultic dichotomies.

¹¹See, respectively, Mann, *Presence*; McCarthy, "Presence", pp.12ff; J.A. Sanders, "Mysterium", pp.105ff; de Vaux, "Presence", pp.5ff; Fackenheim, *Presence*, pp.9-13.

¹²Especially pp.79-99. See other commentary on the Sinaitic-Davidic clash in Clements, *Abraham*, pp.54, 68; Nicholson, *Deuteronomy*, p.93; Mendenhall, *Generation*, p.87; Brueggemann, "Crisis", p.86; Bright, *History*, p.227. See Haran's criticism of Clements in "Presence", pp.251-67; also Levenson, *Sinai*, pp.209-17.

¹³The starting point for several studies has been the dialectic of divine accessibility and freedom; cf. Phythian-Adams, *Presence*; Brueggemann, *IDBSup*, pp.680-3; Murphy-O'Connor, "Presence", p.54; Levine, "Presence", p.71. Most rightly recognize OT divine presence as a much more salvation-historical than metaphysical question; cf. Murray, "Presence", p.23, and Moberly, *Mountain*, p.62.

But the beginning point for any such study must be the recognition that the issue of divine presence has important socio-anthropological implications. The enterprise of religious life stems, at least in major part, from the common individual and corporate desire for the presence of God within the human community. Religious activity (prayer, cultic ceremony, pilgrimage) is thus often regularized within the context of the recurring human motivation to be close to God. Sites of special numinous experience or theophany are therefore designated holy, structures are built to provide for residence and/or worship of the deities in proximity to the community, and cults are developed and maintained to facilitate the ongoing need to approach the divine being, and to perpetuate the pattern of encounter. This religious activity is frequently ordered and checked by reference to a body of traditions which incorporate the community's important cultic and historical texts.¹⁴

4.2. Divine Presence and the Patriarchs

The biblical concern with divine presence and absence is found as early as the original couple in the Garden, where God could be found "walking ... in the cool of the day", a divine presence from which the couple fled (Gen 3:8). This primeval background set the stage for the stories of Israel's patriarchs.

In the midst of the ongoing debate over the original nature of patriarchal religion, R.W.L. Moberly has recently advanced in *The Old Testament of the Old Testament* what could be a major clarification. Moberly has asserted that the patriarchs lived in a "dispensation" distinct from that of Israel and Mosaic Yahwism, given the Gen 12-50 depiction of their religious ethos and practices, and the use of the divine name in those traditions and in Ex 3 and 6. These traditions are in fact consistent in the name 'Yahweh' first being revealed to Moses; the textual evidence shows that the Yahwist was retelling the patriarchal traditions from within the context of Mosaic Yahwism, and not using a name known to the patriarchs. The patriarchal traditions are to Mosaic Yahwism as the OT is to the NT - the classical Christian appropriation of the OT as authoritative scripture through the theological exercise of typology, and the categories of promise and fulfilment, is in fact preceded by the identical appropriation of the

¹⁴See Levine's helpful analogy of the human-divine relationship, "Presence", pp.71f.

patriarchal traditions as authoritative by the Yahwistic storytellers and editors.

Thus, keeping in mind Moberly's thesis that Gen 12-50 is about a religion before Israel's meeting with Yahweh, we can look briefly at the general characteristics of patriarchal presence theology.¹⁵ The narratives of Gen 12-50 present the patriarchs as ancestral heroes whose intense moments of encounter with God are foundational to Israel's understanding of divine self-disclosure. At heart the narratives contain a collection of encounter stories, explained as divine utterances and theophanies which, with a minimum of visual features and reference to accompanying natural wonders, describe succinctly an exclusive divine-human dialogue between patriarch and God.¹⁶ The divine promise of presence "I am with you", along with the concomitant narrative/human observation "God was/is with him/you", figures strongly into the patriarchal traditions of God's presence in theophany and divine utterance.¹⁷ A sense of intimate communion between clan deity and clan father dominates these short instants of visitation.¹⁸

It is the very immediacy and personal directness of these experiences, afforded to the individual clan father, which remain clearly attested despite the later Yahwistic overlay. Although the theophanic sites are often hallowed by the patriarchs with the erection of altars, these cultic platforms are sacred places on the way, which do not enshrine the moment of God's presence for perpetuity.¹⁹ The sanctuary of the moment may include a

¹⁵To ask which elements in Gen 12-50 display the unique traits of this pre-Yahweh religion is a large problem. Identifying the Yahwist sections is only a rough beginning, everything else is questionable. See Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, pp.107f.

¹⁶Cf. Gen 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1ff; 16:7ff; 17:1ff; 18:1ff; 20:6f; 21:12f; 22:1ff; 25:23; 26:2ff, 24; 28:12ff; 31:3, 11ff, 24; 32:1f, 24ff; 35:1, 9ff; 46:2ff. See Kuntz's discussion of theophany, *Self-Revelation*; Jörg Jeremias, *Theophanie*, neglects to treat specifically the patriarchal narratives. Terrien, *Presence*, pp.68-72, prefers "epiphanic visitations" to "theophanies", as God is not actually seen and visual phenomena are subordinate to divine pronouncement.

¹⁷Cf. Gen 21:20, 22; 26:3, 24, 28; 28:15, 20; 31:3, 5, 13; 35:3; 39:2, 3, 21, 23; 48:21; and see Chapter 5 below.

¹⁸Cf. Vriezen, *Outline*, p.313; Terrien, *Presence*, p.71, n.55.

¹⁹Abraham builds altars at Shechem (Gen 12:7), on a mountain between Bethel and Ai (Gen 12:8; 13:3f) and by the oaks of Mamre at Hebron (Gen 13:18; 18:1), is blessed at Salem by Melchizedek (Gen 14:17-24), and plants a tamarisk tree at Beersheba (Gen 21:33). Isaac is said to have built an altar at Beersheba (Gen 26:25, 33) and Jacob at Mahanaim (Gen 32:2, 7f), Peniel (Gen 32:30), Shechem (Gen 33:20) and Bethel (Gen 35:7; 28:10-22).

mountain, stream, tree or stone as part of the sacredness of the place. Divine presence is not a constant linked with definite places²⁰ but with definite persons.²¹

This corresponds well with the social conditions which the traditions attach to the proto-Israelite clans.²² The semi-nomadic²³ status and social organization of the clan centred not on established places but on personal relationships, on family and clan ties, with protection, sustenance and direction of the clan dependent upon proper maintenance of these intra-community bonds. Within this context God's presence is pre-political; he is essentially peaceful.²⁴ This stands in sharp contrast to the God of the judges, who is a God of war and assists in the battles of his people.

The notion of cult as integrated within patriarchal family structures has little to do with the large-scale, independent cult of established religion. Common worship of the clan god focused on the primary relationship between clan leader and clan god. It was the father of the household who functioned as spiritual, social and physical leader of the clan. Abraham in particular undertook the priestly function, imparted blessing and offered the sacrifices. Above all, the presence of God was explicitly linked to him: he received directly the word of God, without mediation.

The character of divine presence thus matched closely the character of the patriarchal clan: God is the one who protects, saves, helps, brings success, and accompanies. His presence is naturally correspondent to the clan's constant existence in insecurity: a wandering group without power or means to wage war, subject to nature and famine. Living under constant

²⁰Later aetiological legitimation of localized worship at certain sites through the medium of "founding" stories may be at play. Cf. the discussion and references in Cross, "Yahweh", pp.225-59, and *Myth*, chap.1; Clements, *God*, pp.12-14; Haran, "Religion", pp.30-55; Bright, *History*, pp.99f.

²¹The religion of the patriarchs is defined as personal even in the conflicting hypotheses of both Alt, "God", pp.3ff; and May, "Idea", pp.113-28, and "God", pp.155-8, 199f; cf. in Clements, *God*, pp.14-16.

²²See the elaborations of Clement, *God*, pp.11-16; Terrien, *Presence*, pp.63-93. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, pp.105-113, for some of the points incorporated here.

²³"Semi-nomadic" is used advisedly, bearing in mind the historical issues currently under debate; cf. e.g., Gottwald, *Tribes*, pp.448-59; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, pp.74-9.

²⁴Although, with a tradition such as the Abraham-Melchizedek encounter in Gen 14:17-20, we must retreat to tradition history - the story looks like a later justification of Jerusalem's king.

threat explains the complete absence of divine commandments, admonitions, punishments and judgements; the insecurity of patriarchal life is met by the God whose presence is integral to clan life, especially in his promises to be "with" his people.²⁵

The socio-political ramifications of semi-nomadic clan leadership disappear in early Israel, and the original relationship of clan god to clan father is dropped as the *modus operandi* for divine presence, but Israelite religion has never lost sight of the original *ברית* concluded between God and Abraham in Gen 15 and 17. Whether it can be called a "covenant" in the Sinai sense is doubtful,²⁶ but Israel subsequently developed Abraham's experience of divine immediacy into the foundation of its religious identity as God's people.

4.3. The Three Encounters: Divine Presence and Sinai

Sinai is the great symbol of Israel's social, political and religious birth, the mountain at which the slaves become free, at which Pharaoh's sort of mastery is replaced by that of Yahweh,²⁷ at which social and economic subservience is overcome by a newly federated nationhood.²⁸ Most important for our considerations, Sinai functions as a primary symbol, as a paradigm, for Israel's corporate perception and sense of Yahweh's presence among them, and of his will in Torah.²⁹

²⁵Promises of endless posterity and possessing the land do not correspond to the patriarchal period and are probably later; cf. Gen 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:4f; 18:18; 22:17; 26:24; 28:14; 32:12; 35:11; 46:3. See von Rad, *Theology* 1, pp.168-73.

²⁶*ברית* in Gen 15:7-21 is an "assurance" or "promise"; Gen 17 (P) may be an exilic address to Israel; see Westermann, *Promises*, pp.159f.

²⁷Note the explicit apposition of Yahweh's mastery and Pharaoh's in Ex 5:2, and the play on *עבד* in 1:13f (5x); 2:23 (2x); 3:12; 4:23; 5:15, etc.

²⁸See Levenson, *Sinai*, p.23; also Mendenhall's and Gottwald's readings of the Israelites as oppressed peoples in revolt against their tyrannical city-kings. Cf. Brueggemann's application in "Trajectories".

²⁹For a definition of "symbol" which applies to these OT traditions, see Ollenburger, *Zion*, pp.19-22.

Historians are unable to say much about the historical Sinai in terms of event, location, or relation to Horeb. Cf. Hyatt, *Exodus*, pp.203-7; Driver, *Exodus*, pp.177ff; Noth, *Exodus*, pp.31f; Bright, *History*, pp.124f; Clifford, *Mountains*, pp.121f; Clements, *God*, pp.20f; Terrien, *Presence*, pp.106f; Levenson, *Sinai*, pp.15-23.

Sinai becomes the prime pattern for all the relations of God's people - to God, within the community, and to the world; no dimension of life is left untouched - social, political, economic or religious. "Israel could not imagine that any truth or commandment from God could have been absent from Sinai".³⁰ It is no exaggeration to see Sinai as the birthplace of the people of Yahweh, where he delivers their *raison d'être* as his community through encounter with his Presence, agreement in covenant and reception of Torah.

The present Sinai narrative is both the literary account of that theophany and its repetition in Israel's later cultic life.³¹ Thus a wide variety of special symbols and expressions of divine presence, drawn diachronically from numerous points in Israel's history and synchronically from the Mosaic and Davidic circles, meet us in the text of Exodus. Most prominent are the repeated theophanies with their accompaniment of fire and cloud (Ex 3, 19-24, 33-34) - these are the three foundational encounters between God and his people, which contain Israel's recounting and celebration of the three most important encounter stories of divine presence.

Within the same motif the author also employs and develops the divinely uttered formula of presence ("I will be with you"; 3:12; cf. 10:10; 18:19), the revelation of the divine character and name at Moses' commissioning (Ex 3:14; cf. 6:2f), the guiding entities of cloud, fire and אֲנִי, Yahweh as warrior and liberating presence in his ten mighty acts and liberation from Egypt, the ark/tabernacle shrine traditions, the קְבוֹרָה of Yahweh, the challenge of the golden calf to divine presence, the divine אֱלֹהִים and the tent of meeting. Moses' exclusive role as intercessor and mediator of Yahweh's presence is emphasized. For some, Exodus thus becomes 'the book of divine presence':

It is possible to epitomize the entire story of Exodus in the movement of the fiery manifestation of the divine presence... The book thus recounts the stages in the descent of the divine presence to take up³² its abode for the first time among one of the peoples of the earth.

³⁰Levenson, *Sinai*, p.19.

³¹See Clements', *God*, pp.20-27; Cross, *Myth*, pp.163-9. For summaries of Exodus' complex tradition history see Childs, *Exodus*, and "Responsibility", pp.432-49; Knight, *Exodus*, pp.x-xvi; Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.15-43.

³²Greenberg, *Exodus*, pp.16f; in Mann, *Presence*, p.233. Also G.H. Davies, *Exodus*, pp.18-21, 47-52; Durham, *Exodus*, p.260; see Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.45, 62, in reference to Ex 32-34.

That which most sets apart divine presence at Sinai from the patriarchal accounts, however, is *holiness*. Holiness is fundamental to the appearance of God at Sinai. It is central to understanding presence, election, covenant and Torah. ~~שֶׁ~~ is never used in patriarchal religion to describe God, where sacred-profane language has yet to develop, but in Mosaic Yahwism holiness defines the nature of God and his Sinai connection to his people. From the outset (Ex 3:5) holiness is the key ingredient to encountering God as Yahweh "with" us.

4.3.1. Ex 3: The First Encounter

In the composite narrative of Ex 2:23-7:7 God responds to his people's slavery in Egypt and commissions Moses as the agent of his salvation, and in two explicit statements about his name in Ex 3:13-15 and 6:2-3 God reveals to Moses a new way of being known: as "Yahweh". Many of the concerns raised in the passage cannot be dealt with here, but it is worth noting this Sinai experience for (1) the nature of divine presence, (2) its foreshadowing of the initial community experience of divine presence at Sinai in Ex 19-24, and the renewal in Ex 32-34, and (3) its divine legitimation of Moses as the archetypal agent of God's will.³³

The burning bush (3:2f) does not function simply as a beacon to get Moses' attention, but is a theophanic fire, a clear symbol of divine theophanic presence (cf. 19:18; Deut 4:11ff),³⁴ whose holiness has made "holy" the ground upon which Moses has stumbled, here for the first time in Israel's story designated ~~הַרְּשִׁיבָה~~ (3:1b).³⁵

³³Cf. Judg 6; Jer 1. See Noth, *Traditions*, pp.30, 36; but note Coats, *Moses*. For studies of this theophany-call sequence see references in Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, pp.97-100; Durham, *Exodus*, p.29. I am indebted at numerous points to Moberly, *OT*, pp.5ff.

³⁴See Ex 19, Ps 18; cf. Jeremias, *Theophanie*, pp.156-66; Kuntz, *Self-Revelation*, pp.138-47. In Dt 33:16 God is identified as "the one dwelling (~~שָׁכֵן~~) in the bush"; see Levenson, *Sinai*, pp.20ff. Cf. Hyatt, *Exodus*, p.71; Knight, *Exodus*, pp.18-20; Durham, *Exodus*, pp.30f.

³⁵"The mountain of God" is probably not perceived by the author to have already been a long-sacred site, with a pre-history of divine manifestations (e.g., Driver, *Exodus*, pp.18f). In context the narrative depicts the new beginning of the Yahwistic concept of God's mountain well-known to the story-teller; see Moberly, *OT*, pp.8ff. Cf. discussions in G.H. Davies, *Exodus*, pp.19-22; Durham, *Exodus*, p.30; Buber, *Moses*, pp.39-42; Clements, *God*, pp.19f; Knight, *Exodus*, p.128.

Though the writer tells his story from within the perspective of Mosaic Yahwism and uses the name Yahweh throughout the story (cf. 3:2, 4a, 7), God initially identifies himself to Moses as "the God of your father(s)" (v.6a), a clear bridge to Israel's patriarchal history; apparently Moses does not yet know God as Yahweh. Moses reacts fearfully as one who has blundered unknowingly into holy presence - "he was afraid to look at אֱלֹהִים". The God who has attracted and compelled him to come near now demands a holy distance. With this tension, the narrative prefigures the same tug-of-war between a people attracted and a people running fearfully for cover in the Sinai theophany of Ex 19-24. Already, then, the dialectic of divine holy presence figures in the text: encountering a God whose holiness is transcendent but whose compassionate, salvific engagement seeks personal encounter.

Etymology and tradition history have often guided interpretation of the core of the Ex 3 theophany, the divine self-explanation of vv.14f.³⁶ More important for us are the contextual links made in the text between the divine name and divine presence, communicated in terms of God's active concern and agenda for Israel's deliverance through Moses. Here Moses' exceptional role as Israel's mediator cannot be overestimated - within the Bible only in Ex 3:14f; 33:19; 34:5-7, 14 does God speak about the divine name, and in each case Moses is the sole recipient of God's words.³⁷

In 3:11 the sequence of objections by Moses - "Who am I (מִי אֲנִי)... that I... that I..." is answered in 3:12 by God in the divine declaration "I am with you" (אֲנִי עִמָּךְ)³⁸ and by his emphatic "I have sent you forth" (אֲנִי שְׁלָחְךָ). This first query-response sequence is followed by a second in 3:13-15, but of a fundamentally distinctive nature. Moses now questions who God is with the voice of his people: "What is his name?" (מִי הוּא) This is neither a question of personal inadequacy (cf. 3:11; 4:1, 10), nor merely a concern for formal identity, given that God has already been clearly identified in terms understandable to Moses and Israel in 3:6. This is a query of a singular, paradigmatic, theological-historical nature: how is Israel to know the name of God? It rises from repeated references in

³⁶See Cross, "Yahweh", pp.225-59; de Vaux, "Revelation", pp.48-75; Brownlee, "Name", pp.39-46; Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh*; Childs, *Exodus*; Schmidt, *Exodus*; Durham, *Exodus*; for discussions and bibliographies.

³⁷See Moberly, *OT*, pp.15f.

³⁸Durham's translation, "The point is, I AM with you", emphasizes אֲנִי along the lines of 3:14b: "I AM has sent me to you"; cf. *Exodus*, pp.28, 33.

the narrative context of Ex 1-3 to the pain and oppression of Israel in Egypt, and is thus a doubt-filled objection from the oppressed to a presuming Deliverer: "If you are our God, what do you intend to do?" "Who are you to make such promises to us?" "What can you do?"³⁹

The divine response in vv.14f is thus to be understood in these terms and read in context with the previous narrative of Ex 1-3 and with the subsequent dialogue of promise, protest and proof. Moses' agency and mediation of God's revelation are specifically linked; three times in 3:13-15 the designation for God precedes **שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם**. The request for God's Name, i.e. his specific, revealed intentions as embodied in his character and claim to credibility, elicits the divinely uttered *Idem per Idem* formula **אֲנִי אֶשֶׁר אֲנִי** of v.14a,⁴⁰ the bold assertion of "I-amness", almost as a divine name, in v.14b, and the divine name **יְהוָה** in v.15.

Thus the context of Moses' commissioning is that of Yahweh's saving presence and his choice to become Israel's historical Deliverer; in this sense the declaration of 3:14 becomes: "I in my saving Presence shall be where I shall be", or "I am and shall be present however I shall be present". This Yahweh is to be known by his "I am/will be-ness", i.e. this Yahweh is the God who was present with the patriarchs and will be present with the Israelites, dynamically and actively present even in the midst of their slavery, and he is about to prove his salvific presence through an array of extraordinary deeds culminating in their deliverance (cf. 3:6f, 13, 15, 19-22).

Affirming this understanding of Yahweh as "the present God" is the repeated, divinely-uttered "I am with"/**אֲנִי עִמָּךְ** declarations in context with the "I am"/**אֲנִי הֵנִי** declarations of Ex 3:14.

3:12 I will be with you	כִּי-אֲנִי עִמָּךְ
3:14a I am that I am	אֲנִי אֶשֶׁר אֲנִי
3:14b "I am" has sent me to you	אֲנִי שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם
4:12 I will be with your mouth	וְאֲנִי אֲנִי עִם-פִּיךָ
4:15 I will be with your mouth	וְאֲנִי אֲנִי עִם-פִּיךָ

These divine assertions of Yahweh's immediate "withness" are drawn from the early Israelite faith assertion that God "goes with" the clan patriarch,

³⁹Cf. Buber, *Moses*, pp.48-55; Durham, *Exodus*, pp.37f.

⁴⁰Cf. Ex 4:13; 16:23; 33:19; 1 Sam 23:13; 2 Sam 15:20; 2 Ki 8:1; Ezek 12:25. The *idem per idem* construction does have an intentional ambiguity about it; cf. 33:19 where the presence of God with his people is also at issue; cf. Vriezen, "*Ehje*", pp.498-512; Childs, *Exodus*, p.69.

i.e., "with" his people. Thus the promise to accompany Moses is made continuous with his forefathers' experiences of God, but now based upon the new revelation of his divine character and Name.

If Ex 3 is a new beginning in Israel's story, with Moses' foundational encounter with God, the disclosure of his name, and the foundational Yahweh-Sinai-holiness-Moses-prophecy-Israel nexus,⁴¹ then Ex 6:2f is similarly paradigmatic. The opposition, disappointment and apparent absence and failure of God to deliver his people in Ex 4-5 bring Moses back to Yahweh with a lament (5:22f). 6:2f functions as part of the divine reaffirmation - "I am Yahweh" - repeated throughout 6:2-8, and predicated upon God's recitation of reasons from the past to trust him.⁴²

Here in Ex 3-6 begins a polarity internal to Sinai presence theology - the dialectic between Yahweh's holiness, and freedom to choose his own place, manner and object of presence, and Yahweh's choice to commit himself as present, personal God in a binding relationship to his people, through Moses, manifesting himself in their midst as the divine Deliverer, Sustainer and Protector, who promises the gift of the land.⁴³ Sinai presence, therefore, is not surprising in its continuity with the past, but its discontinuity is also clear - God's name is Yahweh, and his servant is Moses.

⁴¹See Moberly, *OT*, p.25.

⁴²"I am Yahweh" may be language familiar within Israel's worship, and its connection here with Moses and the Exodus may encourage the reader to see Moses as archetypal priest as well as archetypal prophet; see Moberly, *OT*, pp.30f; cf. Zimmerli, "Yahweh", pp.1-28.

⁴³See Brueggemann, *IDBSup*, p.680; Childs, *Exodus*, p.115.

4.3.2. Ex 19-24: The Second Encounter

The theophany of Ex 19ff constitutes the central act of Yahweh's covenant with Israel. Ex 19:1-3a introduces what has been considered the oldest Sinai/Horeb narrative sequence.⁴⁴ On the basis of that earliest tradition in Ex 19-24 and 32-34,⁴⁵ this narrative sequence brings to the fore the advent of Yahweh's presence in Israel. Having finally arrived at the mountain, Moses and Israel encounter the theophany of Yahweh's presence and agree jointly on the covenant. The tradition continues with Israel's apostasy and Yahweh's judgement, and culminates with the renewal of the covenant and qualified return of Yahweh's presence.

Ex 19:1-15: Covenant and Preparation

Yahweh's initial address to Moses **וַיִּדְבָּר** is a poetic summary of covenant theology (19:3b-6), couched in the careful language and phrasing of what many have taken to be the insertion of a standard covenant renewal liturgy.⁴⁶ These verses function as the summary expression of the Sinai relationship, echoing to some degree the basic elements of ANE suzerain-vassal treaties.⁴⁷

Yahweh reminds Israel in succinct summary (v.4) of three demonstrations of his saving presence which "you yourselves have seen": (1) "what I did to the Egyptians"; (2) "I lifted you on eagle's wings";⁴⁸ and (3) I "brought you to myself". These are the mighty signs and deeds which constitute Yahweh's "proofs of presence", a motif important to the Mosaic traditions,⁴⁹ as Yahweh cements together the Hebrew society as his people.

⁴⁴For tradition and source-critical issues in Ex 19ff see Childs, *Exodus*, pp.344-64; on Ex 32-34, pp.557ff. Cf. Terrien's separation of "northern" from "southern" material; *Presence*, pp.106-60.

⁴⁵Durham suggests Ex 19:1-3a, 10-19a; 20:1-21; 24:1-18; 32:1-34:35 (*Exodus*, p.258).

⁴⁶Cf. Clements, *God*, pp.20ff; Childs, *Exodus*, pp.366-8. Its original form probably also has a very early date; see references and arguments in Levenson, *Sinai*, p.24; cf. also Buber, *Moses*, pp.101f.

⁴⁷Cf. the seminal treatments of Mendenhall, *Law*; Baltzer, *Covenant*. The secondary literature is vast; see the summary in McCarthy, *Covenant*.

⁴⁸Note Buber's discussion of the metaphor; *Moses*, pp.102f.

⁴⁹Cf. Ex 3:19f; 4:30f; 7:1-12:13, 29-36; 14:5-20; 17:1-7; see Durham, *Exodus*, pp.59f, 192-8, 262.

In v.5 Israel is presented the choice of becoming Yahweh's covenant people. To say yes means the creation of a new community (vv.5b-6) which will be (1) Yahweh's most special treasure and unique masterpiece in the whole earth, (2) his own kingdom of priests and (3) his holy people. The affirmative response of "all the people" (v.8; cf. 24:3, 7) to the covenant means undertaking a ministry of God's presence to the world as a priestly kingdom of faith and servanthood rather than through the *Realpolitik* of rulership; this requires corporate commitment to public holiness in the terms of the covenant. The religious and social order which characterizes the covenant community will stand diametrically opposed to the hierarchy of the Egyptian dynasty and Canaanite city-state.⁵⁰

With Moses divinely authenticated as their necessary mediator (v.9)⁵¹ the people must prepare to meet God (19:10-15). The concern is for holiness, a cultic purity which sets aside the external acts of normal everyday life for the sake of concentration on the numinous, and a careful, temporary dedication of all to the sacred. With the descent of God's presence to Sinai, the mountain will become dangerously holy to anyone who comes in contact with it.⁵²

Ex 19:16-25: The Coming of Presence

The narrator struggles for an adequate metaphor to describe the coming of Yahweh's presence. Through the great, crashing storm pierces the sound of the ram's horn.⁵³ The people tremble fearfully, not at the horn's persistent and growing blast (19:13, 16, 19), but at its announcement that the Presence is arriving - at its signal Moses immediately leads the people forward "to encounter (~~the~~ ^{the} God" (v.17).⁵⁴ With the people positioned behind the designated boundaries (vv.12, 17, 23) the phenomena which accompany the descent of Yahweh's presence intensify even further (vv.18f).

⁵⁰See the discussions in Buber, *Moses*, pp.103f; Levenson, *Sinai*, pp.30f; Durham, *Exodus*, pp.262f.

⁵¹Two patterns of tradition may stand behind the Mosaic office. In the first he is divinely legitimated; in the second he mediates at the request of the people (20:18ff). See this tension in Dt 5:4-5; cf. Childs, *Exodus*, pp.350-60; Coats, *Moses*, pp.27-36; Durham, *Exodus*, p.264.

⁵²Cf. 2 Sam 6:6f; 1 Chr 13:9f.

⁵³Cf. Lev 25:9; 2 Sam 6:15; 1 Chr 15:28; 2 Chr 15:14; Ps 47:5[6]; Isa 27:13.

⁵⁴Durham's translation, *Exodus*, pp.266, 271.

Thunder, lightning, heavy cloud, fire and thick smoke threaten to drown the human senses, driven by the ever-growing sound of the ram's horn.

The material concerning boundaries and holiness (vv.20-25) gives pause to this dramatic scene. Levenson discerns here two contrasting movements. The first entails the intersection of God and of Israel in their meeting at Sinai/Horeb, and in Moses' representation of Israel at the mountaintop. The second opposing movement, however, entails a barrier of holiness between God and Israel, expressed as boundaries and liturgical sanctity to protect the people; only Moses - here the archetypal high priest - may break through the mysterious cloud. This tension, noted above in Ex 3 and evident elsewhere in Ex 19-24 and 32-34, may have an historical explanation as a less than successful melding of diverse traditions, but more importantly its function in the social and religious world of Israel's worship warrants consideration. God's presence invites and repels; attracts and threatens. At times the people retreat fearfully from the mountain, at other times they must be repeatedly warned against breaching the boundaries and desecrating the mountain. Thus again (cf. Ex 3) the Mosaic traditions establish and reinforce the dialectic of the coming and mysterious Presence, at once knowable and "other", in a tension of immanence and transcendence.⁵⁵

The two contrasting movements which Levenson discerns should be seen in light of the text's interest in reinforcing Moses' position as leader and divine mouthpiece, and also in light of the need for the entire community to experience this advent of Presence, and thus to be incorporated fully in their role as covenant partner. The contrasting models of presence here - the invitation and preparation to meet with Yahweh over against his strict instructions to remain distant and let only Moses ascend the mountain, serve to augment the implicit model of social, political and religious relationships. In its characterizations, barriers, levels of access and mysterious Presence, Sinai/Horeb is the archetypal holy place, to which corresponds the patterns of the Jerusalem Temple.

⁵⁵See Brueggemann, "Presence", *IDBSup*, pp.680-3, "Crisis", pp.72f, n.4. Cf. Rudolf Otto's well-known explorations of this dual aspect of "the holy" as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* in *Idea*.

Ex 20-24: Yahweh's Ten Words and the Covenant

This is not the place for an examination of the Decalogue and its elaboration in Ex 20-23,⁵⁶ but several factors regarding the structure and placement of these traditions build directly into the theme of God's presence coming in the covenant ceremony. First, the commandments and the Book of the Covenant must be interpreted in the context which Exodus gives them; they are narratively integral to Israel's theophany experience at Sinai.⁵⁷

Secondly, the dominant motif of presence in Ex 19 is echoed in the divine self-assertion in 20:2: "I am Yahweh" (אֲנִי יְהוָה).⁵⁸ As in 3:13-15 and 6:2f, Yahweh here declares to Israel his authority, who he is and the dynamic "I am-ness" of his presence. The addition of אֲנִי reminds Israel who they are, and what they have become in relationship to the God who makes himself present to them in exodus deliverance and in this Sinai encounter.

Thirdly, "You are not to have other gods in my presence" (עַל-פָּנָי, v.3). This initial command establishes the preeminent condition for covenant relationship with Yahweh and his presence with them. The second commandment is an elaboration of the first - the prohibition against the shaping of deity images (v.4) stands in striking contrast to the manner in which Yahweh has come to Israel to deliver these words. In the midst of all the terrifying phenomena on the mountain, Yahweh remains the unseen God, and he demands that no one represent divine presence in concrete form. The One who is אֲנִי must be worshipped on his own terms, and not by means of secondary representation.

The making of the covenant in Ex 24 brings to a climax the approach of Yahweh's presence which began in Ex 19, by presenting a picture of gradual ascents, from the people, to the elders, to Moses alone with God on the mountain. This again reinforces Moses' and Sinai's role as crucial archetypes of high priest and Temple. In the final realization of his role as intermediary he now returns and reports to the people, who respond positively in a great, unanimous concord (vv.3, 7; cf. 19:8). The covenant

⁵⁶Cf. Levenson's discussion of the significance of law for covenant theology, *Sinai*, pp.42ff.

⁵⁷So Durham, *Exodus*, pp.278ff; Childs, *Exodus*, p.372; contra McNeile, *Exodus*, pp.lvi-lxiv; Hyatt, *Exodus*, pp.196f, 217.

⁵⁸See the studies referred to in Durham, *Exodus*, pp.283f.

is then solemnized in a ceremony of law recitation and blood, with Moses mediating between God and the people (vv.4-8).

Moses is then joined by the seventy elders of Israel (cf. Ex 18:21ff; Num 11:16ff) further up the mountain for a remarkable experience of divine presence - they "saw" the God of Israel⁵⁹ at his invitation and ate a meal in his presence (vv.1f, 9-11).⁶⁰ What they see is not described in concrete terms but as something heavenly and glorious (cf. Isa 6:1), viewed from the prone position of worship and limited to the rich pavement upon which his Presence comes.⁶¹ Moses finally climbs even higher to receive the stone law tablets, entering into the very cloud concealing the mountain. It is the "ideal end" to this narrative sequence; at Sinai God's presence has come, the covenant has been sealed and the covenant community is born.

4.3.3. Ex 32-34: The Third Encounter - Apostasy and Renewal

The central theme of Ex 32-34 is the threat of disobedience to the continuing existence of Yahweh's people, and the centrality of his presence for the survival of their covenant.⁶² Thrown into jeopardy by its monstrous sin with the golden calf (32:1-6), Israel's identity as Yahweh's special covenant community is challenged by a sequence of angry utterances from Moses and Yahweh (32:7-35) which climaxes in banishment by Yahweh from the mountain of Presence, to an undecided fate, and the horrific declaration of his absence - Yahweh will no longer go "in your midst" (אֲנִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה בְּרִצְוֹנְךָ, 33:3, 5). Moses' pleadings on his own and the people's behalf by means of the tent (33:7-11) are met by Yahweh's qualified accessions and his restoration

⁵⁹Note the shift from אֱלֹהֵי (v.10) to אֱלֹהִים (v.11), and the history of reinterpretation and periphrasis of this language in the LXX and rabbis; see Nicholson, *God*, pp.127f.

⁶⁰Whether this common meal is an ancient ratification of the covenant is a somewhat contentious subject; for the discussion see Nicholson, *God*, pp.121-33. In favour, see Buber, *Moses*, p.115; Hyatt, *Exodus*, pp.257f, Childs, *Exodus*, p.507; and many others (cf. Gen 26:30; 31:46, 54; Ex 18:12; Dt 27:7). Against, see G.H. Davies, *Exodus*, p.193; and Nicholson. Durham, *Exodus*, p.345, attempts a middle way.

⁶¹This "vision" should not be interpreted without reference to God's denial of direct sight of his אֱלֹהִים in 33:20.

⁶²For discussions of the complex tradition-history of Ex 32-34 see Noth, *Exodus*, pp.243-6; Beyerlin, *Origins*; Childs, *Exodus*, pp.557-62, 584-6, 604-10; Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.38-43, 116ff; Durham, *Exodus*, pp.416-18; Nicholson, *God*, pp.134-50.

"with" them (33:12-17). The tension of the narrative slowly unwinds with Yahweh's renewed revelation of himself to Moses (33:18-34:9), the recommitment of the community as Yahweh's covenant people (34:10-28) and the restoration of Moses' authority (34:29-35).

Several important highlights stand out.

1) The calf functions as more than an illegitimate symbol of Moses' representative and intermediary role, and as more than an idolatrous adoption of the common ANE bull image. The calf represents the attempt to worship Yahweh himself, in terms which he has strictly forbidden.⁶³ The absence of Moses has been perceived by the people as the absence of access to divine presence; the golden calf is for the people both a replacement for Moses and a tangible representation of God's presence.

2) Ex 33 contains some of the OT's most careful and intricate theological analysis of the problem of divine presence. It functions as the bridge between the disobedience of Ex 32 and the renewal of Ex 34. The entire tenor of Yahweh's relationship to Israel has changed.⁶⁴ As in 32:7, he disassociates himself from them, not addressing his people directly, but Moses:

"Go! Ascend from this place, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt." (33:1)

The command to leave is tantamount to the primeval expulsion from the Garden (Gen 3:14-24) or Cain's banishment from his family and the soil (Gen 4:10-16). Israel's apostasy amounts to a rejection of Yahweh's presence and covenant, and they can no longer remain at his holy mountain.⁶⁵

But removal of divine presence from Israel is two-fold. First, the people are commanded to leave Sinai/Horeb, and, secondly, Yahweh can no longer go "in their midst" (33:3, 5). The promised ~~angel~~ who will lead them (33:2, also 32:34) is not, therefore, identical with the helpful guide and close equivalent of Yahweh's presence who was promised in 23:20-24, nor does

⁶³Cf. Durham, *Exodus*, pp.421f. Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.46f, finds the calf functioning in numerous ways parallel to the ark and tabernacle.

⁶⁴Cf. Brueggemann, "Crisis", pp.48f. Clements, *et al.*, consider 33:1-6 to be the first of four separate narratives which originally answered the question: How could the people leave Sinai without departing from God? How could the God of Sinai be present with them in the future? (*Exodus*, pp.210ff). Cf. von Rad, *Theology 1*, pp.288: "from now on Israel's relationship to Jahweh is to some extent a mediated one."

⁶⁵So Davies, *Exodus*, pp.237f; Durham, *Exodus*, pp.436f; but cf. Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.60f.

it indicate merely a technical distancing of Presence from the camp.⁶⁶ This is clear from 33:12 where the **אֶלֹהִים** is not mentioned, but the issue under consideration is whether or not God himself will accompany the people (cf. Isa 63:9). **אֶלֹהִים** in 32:34 and 33:2 thus seems a more impersonal messenger of guidance, or at best a mode of presence distinct from and less than Yahweh's personal accompaniment and shrine presence "in your midst" (**בְּקִרְבְּךָ**). Whether this implies that Yahweh has repudiated his instructions for the construction of the Ark and Tabernacle as his symbols of presence is difficult to determine, but probable.⁶⁷ On the narrative level Ex 25-31 is presumed in 33:1-6, and the actual construction of the Ark and Tabernacle in Ex 35ff likewise presumes the restoration of Presence and covenant in Ex 33f. The description of Yahweh's presence through the shrine (**וַיֵּשְׁבֵהוּ בְּתוֹכָם**, 25:8; cf. 29:45f; also Num 14:42, 44) does not exactly correspond with his withdrawal from "among" the people (**בְּקִרְבְּךָ**, 33:3, 5), but the attempt to delineate "cultic" from "accompanying" presence is not well-supported in the texts. Neither would it seem a likely dichotomy for ancient Jews.⁶⁸

The people's reaction of total grief in 33:4 and 6 seems to correspond with this interpretation: the threat is of expulsion from the mountain and the withdrawal of divine presence. Just as the holy presence on the mountain would destroy those who burst through the boundaries, so the holy presence of Yahweh "with" and "among" them in the shrine would now destroy those who have voided the conditions for that presence. In Yahweh's absence there will be no covenant, ark, tabernacle, altar or cloud of glory.⁶⁹ Only the people's apparent remorse and Yahweh's postponed judgement in v.5 ("I will decide what to do with you") leave open any hope for Moses' subsequent intercession in 33:12ff.

3) The meeting tent tradition (33:7-11) demonstrates the exalted position of Moses in terms of the presence motif.⁷⁰ The dominant image is provided in v.11:

⁶⁶Contra Childs, *Exodus*, p.588. Cf. Coats, "Opposition", pp.100f; Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.61f; Durham, *Exodus*, pp.436f.

⁶⁷Cassuto, *Exodus*, p.426, and Durham, *Exodus*, p.437, interpret **בְּקִרְבְּךָ** in terms of the accompanying Tabernacle: Yahweh now disallows its construction; cf. Moberly's explanation, *Mountain*, pp.61-3.

⁶⁸Contra, e.g., Reindl, *Angesicht*, pp.224f, who can see nothing cultic in Ex 33:14f; and von Rad, *Theology* 1, pp.234-41. See criticisms in Clements, *God*, pp.37, 63f, 118; cf. Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.33f.

⁶⁹So Durham, *Exodus*, p.437.

⁷⁰See Mann, *Presence*, pp.144f.

So Yahweh would speak to Moses face to face (פָּנֵי-יְהוָה לְפָנָיו), just as a man speaks to his friend.

This passage is often juxtaposed with 33:20:

But (Yahweh) said, "You cannot see my face (פָּנֵי), for a person shall not see me and live."

The LXX and Targums apparently recognized a possible contradiction and thus translated פָּנֵי with other words to avoid the difficulty, and many modern critics have argued that here two incompatible views of human access to God have been drawn from different traditions.⁷¹ But that these two passages now stand so close in the present text also points to an awareness on the part of the author of the tensions regarding human access to divine presence. This juxtaposition evidences not so much a contradiction, as it reiterates the dialectic already highlighted earlier; here in the symbol of פָּנֵי is another aspect of the tension between God's immanent presence and transcendent holiness.

The use of the פָּנֵי motif as a metaphor for the presence of God has been well-researched and its appearance here in Ex 33 has provided for much discussion.⁷² Moberly has emphasized the position of the meeting tent "outside the camp" (v.7, twice) and "far off from the camp" (v.7) as consistent with the theme of judgement and the refusal of Yahweh to remain in the central shrine in the middle of camp. This meeting tent is depicted as a temporary shrine used on intermittent occasions. This would be consistent with its role as a substitute for the tent in the middle of the camp, pending Yahweh's restoration of his presence and the renewal of the covenant. The sense of passing time in vv.7-11 can be interpreted as consistent with a continuation of Moses' office of mediation, which has become necessary in view of Yahweh's pending decision over Israel's fate (v.5).

4) Ex 33:12-17 is the account of Moses' urgent quest to "know", and his insistent intercession for the restoration of God's presence "with" (עִמּוֹ, 2x) him and the people. This unit divides into the two exchanges of vv.12-14 and 15-17, each containing a request from Moses and response from

⁷¹See the discussion and references in Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.65f.

⁷²See the bibliographies in Terrien, *Presence*, p.159 n.78; and Brueggemann, "Crisis". Cf. A.R. Johnson, "Aspects", pp.155-9; Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.63ff; Eichrodt, *Theology 2*, pp.35-9. See Reindl, *Angesicht*, pp.56-69, for the use of *pany yhw* in Ex 33, and pp.219-225 for comments on "Angesicht Gottes bei Aussagen über die Gegenwart Gottes".

Yahweh, featuring the motif of knowing (יָדָע, 6x) and the formula "find favour in my/your eyes" (5x). In v.12 Moses wants "to know" whom, or perhaps what,⁷³ Yahweh is sending "with" him; the אִתּוֹ of 32:34 and 33:2 is insufficient. Now as in Ex 3, Moses wants tangible assurance of Yahweh's own accompanying presence.

"My presence will go (אֲנִי אֶלֶךְ) and I will give you rest" (33:14). Yahweh promises his presence but in terms which require trust on Moses' part, without the benefit of "knowing" and receiving any guarantees of presence. אֲנִי has no preposition or pronoun to indicate the position (ahead of, in the midst of)⁷⁴ or means of accompaniment, and Moses therefore continues to press for another concession, that Yahweh will go "with us" (אִתָּנוּ, v.16). 33:15f constitutes Moses' summary thesis of divine presence: the essence of being Israel, Yahweh's distinctive priestly kingdom and holy nation, is his presence.

And he said to him,

"If your presence will not go with me, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people? *Is it not in your going with us*, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from all other people on the face of the earth?"

Durham notes that the theological insight of the narrative at this point has universal application.

No people, no matter how religious they are and for whatever reasons, can be a people of God without the Presence of God. Moses has posed the ultimate either/or: Yahweh's decision to withdraw his presence from Israel is the decision of Israel's fate. Without Yahweh's presence, in the dark and chaotic umbra of his Absence, Israel will cease to exist.⁷⁵

So Yahweh concedes in 33:17. The *raison d'être* of the covenant community is rediscovered in the pluriform presence of God. He will go "before" (לְפָנַי) them as divine guide, "with" (עִמָּם) them as the God who delivers, accompanies and empowers, and "in their midst" (בְּתוֹכָם, בְּקִרְבָּם) by means of the shrine.

5) Moses' request to see Yahweh's glory (33:18, כְּבוֹד) and Yahweh's reply with the affirmation of his presence (33:19-23) continues to echo the original sequence of doubt and reassurance in Ex 3:11ff. Yahweh returns to

⁷³ אֲנִי אֶלֶךְ - אֲנִי אֶלֶךְ in v.12 could be a request for restoration of the shrine of Presence; see Moberly, *Mountain*, p.69.

⁷⁴ But cf. LXX: αὐτὸς προπορεύσεται σου.

⁷⁵ *Exodus*, p.448.

⁷⁶ Cf. Ex 16:7; 24:16; 40:34f; Nu 14:10. Note the apparent equation of כְּבוֹד (33:18, 22) and כְּבוֹד (33:20, 23), both in context synonymous with a full vision of Yahweh himself; cf. Moberly's discussion and references, *Mountain*, pp.76ff; Childs, *Exodus*, p.593.

the mountain in theophany once again (34:5-7), and with this revelation begin also the preparations, many of them parallel to Ex 19, for the renewal of the broken covenant relationship. Here, unlike the previous public theophany, there is no emphasis on visual phenomena; the theophany is private, an intimate revelation to Moses, to be mediated to the people.

As he promised to Moses (33:19) Yahweh proclaims again his name:

וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה יְהוָה / וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה (34:5, 6),

the second time a deliberate repetition in confessional form, followed by a list of five self-pronouncements describing how Yahweh is Yahweh.⁷⁷ With Ex 3:14-15 and 6:2-3, Ex 34:6f functions as one of the major statements about God by God in the whole OT. Subsequent Jewish tradition made much of it, as in the thirteen attributes of God.⁷⁸ The confession of divine nature in 34:6 is clearly reflected throughout the OT⁷⁹ and alluded to in other places.⁸⁰ Whether of cultic origin and liturgical use,⁸¹ or a narrative developed in context and borrowed for cultic usage⁸² these verses certainly constitute an ancient confession of faith about Yahweh and his relationship to "his people". In the context of Israel's apostasy and Yahweh's judgement, his self-description here is an appropriate recital of his compassion (cf. 32:14), long-suffering (cf. 33:12ff), slowness to anger (cf. 14:11f) and unchanging love. Moses' prostrate response to this divine exegesis of God's character is a final attempt to secure the full restoration of Presence בְּקִרְבִּי (34:9), but with a difference - here he links the restoration of Presence with Yahweh's forgiveness.

When Yahweh and Israel renew their covenant relationship in 34:10-28 repeated emphasis is placed upon both the active presence of Yahweh visible through his awesome work "with" (עִמּוֹ, v.10) his people, and upon his presence (בְּיָמֵינוּ, vv.20, 23, 24) among them. The central concern of the story of Moses' glowing face is the character of Yahweh's ongoing presence with Moses and the covenant community. The glowing skin of his face is at once the sign of Yahweh's favour and of his re-established position in the midst of

⁷⁷ On balance it appears that Yahweh is the subject of וַיִּקְרָא in 34:5, 6; see Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.85f; Durham, *Exodus*, pp.453f; for Moses as subject see Childs' review, *Exodus*, pp.603, 611f.

⁷⁸ See Childs, *Exodus*, p.598.

⁷⁹ Nu 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Nah 1:3; Jonah 4:2.

⁸⁰ E.g., Ex 20:5.

⁸¹ See Beyerlin, *Origins*, pp.137f; Hyatt, *Exodus*, pp.322f.

⁸² See Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.128-31.

the people, and a sign of Moses' own authority arising from his special communion with Yahweh.⁸³ Moses has become the exclusive human channel for Israel's encounters with its God.

4.4. The Tabernacle in Exodus

In the midst of the Priestly instructions in Ex 25-31 and 35-40 are found a number of programmatic statements regarding God's presence and a sanctuary, e.g., in 25:8:

"Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst"
וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְאֶשְׁכְּנֵהוּ בְּחֵלוֹם;

The idea of God's presence here is not given abstract definition; rather, the narrative explicates it in connection with some visible symbol (e.g., Num 5:3; 10:35f, 2 Sam 7:6). In Ex 19ff the permanent nature of God's relationship with Israel requires some permanent symbol of his presence among Israel - hence, the ark and tabernacle (Ex 25-27).⁸⁴

Once constructed, the tabernacle is filled with Yahweh's קְבוֹר and the cloud of Presence accompanies Israel above the tabernacle during travels. Within the narrative purposes of Exodus, then, the tabernacle is continuous with Sinai; its role is, in a sense, to be a portable Sinai, providing symbolic sanctuary for the presence of Yahweh. This is explicit in Yahweh's command of 25:8 (cf. 29:45f). שָׁכַן is here distinguished from יָשַׁב, the usual Hebrew word for inhabiting a place, and applies to the God who dwells continually in this portable shrine, filling the place with his קְבוֹר, as symbolized by the cloud.⁸⁵ In this way he fulfills his covenant pledge to be Israel's God, and takes up his abode in their midst, meets them (Ex 25:22; 29:42f; 30:6, 36) and goes with them (cf. Lev 26:12f).⁸⁶

In the reshaping of Sinaitic presence theology, Yahweh's presence (קְבוֹר) has been transferred from the mountain (24:16f) to the tabernacle (40:34), so that the Sinai presence now accompanies Israel in the midst of the people. Hence the presumption that Ex 32-34 presupposes Yahweh's accompaniment of Israel in a shrine. This also involves the editorial

⁸³ See Haran, "Face", pp.159-73; Propp, "Face", pp.375-86.

⁸⁴ So Moberly, *Mountain*, p.45, cf. Brueggemann, "Crisis", p.58.

⁸⁵ Cf. Cross, *Myth*, pp.299, 323f.

⁸⁶ See the various understandings of the ark in the traditions, Childs, *Exodus*, pp.537ff; von Rad, *Theology* 1, pp.236-39; see Clements, *God*, pp.28-35, regarding the relation of the ark and cherubim to divine presence.

transfer of Yahweh's and Moses' meeting place from the tent door (33:8-10), to the tabernacle door (29:42), to the place between the cherubim (Ex 25:22; 30:6; cf. 34:34; Lev 16:2), while the shrine has moved from outside the camp to its centre. This represents Moses' full incorporation into the cult; his office as mediator moves from prophetic communication to regularized cultic conversation.

Summary

There are several implications worth noting regarding the Exodus paradigm of presence.

1) The *raison d'être* for God's people arises wholly from the assumption of Yahweh's will to liberate and make this people into his community, dwell among them, and promise them land. Within the Sinai narrative, presence is the *modus operandi* on the covenantal trajectory which moves God's people from slavery, through election and encounter, to full engagement and relationship with Yahweh. The three encounters above provide Israel with its founding paradigms.

2) Fundamental to Sinai presence and the covenant between Yahweh and his people is the understanding of his "holiness", a major shift from patriarchal presence theology. Sinai brought new understandings of obedience and transgression, sin and judgement, the sacred and profane. Yahweh is holy; his presence, election, covenant and Torah are holy. Israel is formed as a separate people with a distinct relationship to a holy God, the distinction lying "*in your going with us*" (Ex 33:16).

3) After Ex 32-34 the relationship is a mediated one. God's presence is experienced secondarily by his people, through Moses and the prophetic/cultic offices, the angel of presence and symbols. The hierarchical pattern of mediation at Sinai/Horeb reflects the religio-political bounds of later Israel, and its depiction of holiness is incorporated into the structure and cult leadership of the Temple. Here presence provides a form of socio-political organization and coherence to the covenant community.

4) In the Sinai narrative the author is working with a number of important modes of divine presence, including (1) theophany and its accompanying phenomena, (2) divine guiding and accompanying presence "before" the people in the elements of cloud, fire, ~~7872~~ or warrior persona, (3) Yahweh "in the midst" of the people through the shrine, (4) Yahweh's presence in the "I am with you" formula, the divine assertion central to the

earliest traditions of Israelite religion, and to Moses' commissioning and Yahweh's self-revelation (Ex 3:12-15).

But these are not separate streams which can be divided between distinct theologies of manifestation (theophany) and dwelling presence (tabernacle). The Sinai narrative sequence is very much interested in communicating the plethora and paradox of Yahweh's presence, as an expression of the dialectic of divine freedom and immediate manifestation.

5) Yahweh's presence, as his holy mode of covenantal "withness", is violable by his people. Presence and covenant have come by the gracious initiative of God, and can be spurned through disobedience. Chapters 32-34 of Exodus "insist that a formulation of Yahweh's presence in Israel may not be a cultic liturgical resolution which is immune to historical threat."⁸⁷

4.5. The Davidic/Jerusalem Traditions of Presence

"Royal Zion theology" arises essentially from Nathan's oracle (2 Sam 7:8-17), "David's" psalm (2 Sam 23:1-7), Solomon's prayer (1 Ki 8:46-53) and Yahweh's response (1 Ki 9:2-9), and several other psalms (e.g., Pss 46, 48, 76, 89, 132).⁸⁸ At heart this theology claimed that Yahweh had

- 1) chosen Jerusalem as the place for his special presence and as the chief city of his people,
- 2) appointed the Davidic dynasty to rule in perpetuity from Jerusalem,
- 3) established the Jerusalem Temple as central to the cult,
- 4) identified for the Davidic ruler an intermediary role between him and his people, and
- 5) declared Jerusalem secure against the threat of natural and supernatural forces.⁸⁹

Chief among these is the first claim, the belief that Yahweh dwells among his people in Jerusalem.

⁸⁷Brueggemann, "Crisis", p.48.

⁸⁸See the more detailed delineation of passages and motifs in Ollenburger, *Zion*, pp.15-19.

⁸⁹See Miller and Hayes, *History*, pp.203f. Levenson, "Temple", has highlighted the note of conditionality that is attached to God's presence in the Temple, e.g., in 1 Ki 6:11-13; 2 Sam 7:14-16; Ps 89:20-38. It is the obedience of God's covenant people which evokes his presence; their disobedience renders uninhabitable and devoid his Temple. But the Hebrew Bible also espouses the other extreme - the inviolability of Zion, as well as the Temple as a sanctuary only for the just.

The entire ideology of the Jerusalem temple centred in the belief that, as his chosen dwelling-place, Yahweh's presence was to be found in it, and that from there he revealed his will and poured out his blessing upon his people.⁹⁰

Yahweh's Jerusalem presence is most prominent in his representation as king.⁹¹ A number of Psalms portray Jerusalem as a cosmic mountain from which Yahweh himself actually reigned over all his created order, and thus protected his special city against all enemies (Ps 46, 48, 76). Hence the special covenant relationship between Yahweh and the Davidic rulers (2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:19-37), complete with some references to the king as "the son of God" (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7). As Yahweh's representative, the king mediated divine oracles and blessings and brought justice and life to the people (2 Sam 23:2-4; Ps 72).

One of the stable strands of presence theology linking Sinai and Jerusalem can be found in the re-enactment of the Sinai/Horeb theophany in the covenant celebration, as it was adapted and reformulated throughout the evolution of Israel's religion, as the central rallying point for its faith and cult.⁹² Furthermore, from Sinai, through the "settlement"⁹³ period, and into the period of the monarchy, the ark and some form of cultic tent shrine maintained their significance as tangible symbols of the indwelling divine presence of Yahweh "among" his people.

To identify these two elements - the Sinai manifestation, and the tangible symbols of dwelling Presence - as continuing on into the Davidic stream begs questions from those scholars who see in theophanic and cultic presence two theologies which are "completely different".⁹⁴ Such a distinction may be argued historically, but, as noted above, it finds little

⁹⁰Clements, *God*, p.76.

⁹¹See, e.g., Ollenburger, *Zion*, pp.23ff.

⁹²Cf. examples from Deut 33:2, 26; Judg 5:4f; Ps 68:8-11 [7-10], 18 [17]; Hab 3:3f. For the many unsolved traditio-historical questions see the discussions and references in Clements, *God*, pp.26, 63; Moberly, *Mountain*, pp.116ff.

⁹³A word used advisedly, given scholarly skepticism regarding historical reconstruction of Israel's early formation based on the Gen-Josh narratives, as noted earlier; see Brueggemann's discussion of Gottwald and Mendenhall, "Trajectories", pp.161ff; cf. Miller and Hayes, *History*, pp.58ff.

⁹⁴Von Rad, *Theology* 1, p.237; he pushes this distinction further (with Andrae) to identify "dwelling temples" and "theophany temples" as separate structures. This too is disputable; see Clements, *God*, p.63 n.4.

direct support in Jewish scriptures.⁹⁵ The texts are no stranger to what may appear to the critic as an inherent paradox; to assess "temporary" divine visitation and "permanent" divine cultic indwelling as conflicting and from different sources, undervalues what is preferably seen as rhetorical and theological paradox. That profound tension is captured well in Solomon's long prayer of dedication (1 Ki 8:22-53). "But will God indeed dwell on earth?" he asks pointedly, safeguarding Yahweh's transcendence, even while recognizing the localization of divine presence in the edifice through his name.⁹⁶

The discontinuity between the Sinai and Jerusalem complexes of traditions has frequently received attention in geographic terms - Sinai survived in the north, and Zion in the south.⁹⁷ Chronological, political and theological discontinuity have also been discussed. On the narrative level contrasts are also apparent. The time of the monarchy in Israel signals a new era of economic resources and political power which provide breathing space, not simply to subsist as in the patriarchal era, but to evolve politically, socially and economically as a regional power. Israel is no longer merely a marginal, minority community preoccupied with its own survival, but the regional focus of authority, with incumbent powers and concerns.

The shift in the theological paradigm from Sinai to Zion corresponds with this shift in Israel's socio-political mode of existence. Israel no longer seeks a revolution in its historical circumstances; its liberation paradigm from the Exodus is not an appropriate pattern for the circumstances of a nation state. Maintenance of the *status quo* is now paramount, for that corresponds with the maintenance of the covenant community.

Brueggemann's statement, that the Mosaic covenant was "radically concerned for *justice*", and the Davidic covenant "more concerned for *order*",⁹⁸ is helpful here, if perhaps overly dichotomized. But the dominant perception of Presence does move, from Yahweh as accompanying Protector and miraculous Liberator, to Yahweh as majestic Presence, whose dwelling in Zion upholds his people in political, social and economic, as well as religious

⁹⁵See, e.g., Ps 11:4. See Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien* II, p.61; de Vaux, "Arche", pp.69f; in Clements, *God*, p.63; cf. Levenson, *Sinai*, pp.138f.

⁹⁶Cf. Deut 4:7; Ps 145:18.

⁹⁷See Nicholson, *Deuteronomy*, p.58, for bibliography on northern theology; cf. Levenson, *Sinai*, pp.188-90.

⁹⁸"Crisis", p.86.

terms. This does not discount the ongoing importance of the Sinai paradigm even in Jerusalem, but adds the remarkable complexities of statehood, monarchy and religious establishment to the picture. The Exodus model of Presence is now subject to the political and social realities of Jerusalem.⁹⁹

When it was actually introduced, Solomon's temple did not represent a radical departure from previous practice, given the already long history of the Tent shrine and other cultic centres and sanctuaries.¹⁰⁰ And since Israel's worship already combined an emphasis on Yahweh's coming in theophany with the idea of his dwelling among them, making Solomon's structure not just a "dwelling-temple" but also the place where Yahweh manifested himself, the establishment of the Temple at Jerusalem may have had stronger political and cultic, than theological, impact.¹⁰¹

The Temple was the permanent dwelling-place of Yahweh, but in a mode of Presence not intended to become static and fixed, given its active manifestation within the cult. Physically, Yahweh's house in Jerusalem was to be a copy of his heavenly dwelling, and was not meant to tie him to an earthly dwelling or to contain a tangible representation of his image. Jerusalem's mountain thus represented the nexus of heaven and earth, where Israel could speak simultaneously of Yahweh dwelling in heaven and of his presence on Mount Zion.¹⁰² In numerous ways, through its symbolic features, structure and cultic practices and festivals,¹⁰³ the Jerusalem Temple explained Yahweh's active presence in his created order and functioned as a spiritual and symbolic microcosm of the macrocosm; containing within itself the tension of the earthly and heavenly, the immanent and transcendent.

⁹⁹The contemporary parallels are revealing, as to who employs the Jerusalem paradigm (e.g., much recent North American and European Christianity) and who the Sinai (e.g., the Exodus orientation of numerous Latin American theologies of liberation; cf. Segundo, *Liberation*, pp.110-24; Kirk, *Liberation*, pp.95-103; Ollenburger, *Zion*, p.234; Croatto, *Exodus*).

¹⁰⁰Cf. Kraus, *Worship*, pp.134-178, for consideration of Shechem, Bethel, Gilgal, early cultic centres on Mount Tabor, Beersheba and Mizpah, as well as Shiloh.

¹⁰¹For extended discussions see Clements, *God*, pp.64ff; Terrien, *Presence*, pp.186ff.

¹⁰²Cf. Ps 11:4; 14:2, 7; 20:3, 7 [2, 6]; 76:3, 9 [2, 8]; 80:2, 15 [1, 14].

¹⁰³Especially the Feast of Tabernacles, the autumn festival, which presupposes Yahweh's presence as the heavenly king in the sanctuary; see Pss 46, 48, 76, 96f.

4.6. Presence Without the Temple

After most of four centuries under Davidic kings, the destruction of the Temple and sacred city, and the exile of the monarch, proved a watershed in Judean life. The prophets and Deuteronomists seemed vindicated in having seen Yahweh's requirement of faithfulness as key to their survival.¹⁰⁴ This was the lens through which understanding now came (in fact, for the loss of both temples): Yahweh had not been overthrown but in fact had destroyed their nation and Temple because of the people's apostasy.¹⁰⁵ Both the exile and the later events of 70 CE continued the decentralization of Jewish religion, underway for years with the growing diaspora population. Little is known of the practice of Yahwism in exile or diaspora, except, for example, for Jews at Elephantine in Egypt who possessed their own temple where sacrifice was offered.¹⁰⁶

But in terms of his presence Yahweh was not perceived to have abandoned his people, and to this day the Temple has remained critical (cf. Ezek 11:16, 22f; 37:26-8). As Levenson has observed:

A central paradox of Jewish spirituality lies in the fact that so much of it centers upon an institution that was destroyed almost two millennia ago, the Jerusalem Temple.¹⁰⁷

One explanation for this is found in the argument that intimacy with Yahweh (Israel's spiritual fulfilment), is made available in what the tabernacle (whether Tent or Temple) signifies.¹⁰⁸ Here the goal of the exodus, rather than settlement in the land, becomes divine presence in Israel's midst; the *telos* of Israel's Heilsgeschichte climaxes in the Tent, the vehicle of endless rendezvous with Yahweh (Ex 29:42b-46).¹⁰⁹ Through its worship patterns and sacrificial apparatus, ultimately established atop Zion, the

¹⁰⁴Cf. Isa 2:2f; 31:4f and Jer 3:17; 7:1-15 for different views on the guaranteed protection of Zion. But see the judgement theme also in Ps Sol 2:2-5, 8:11-15.

¹⁰⁵Contrast another view in Jer 44:17f.

¹⁰⁶See Trebilco, *Communities*, for a recent look at Jewish communities in Asia Minor.

¹⁰⁷Levenson, "Temple", p.32.

¹⁰⁸See the parallelism between "Temple" and "tent" in Ps 26:8; 27:4f; 74:2,7f.

¹⁰⁹Hence Levenson's discussion of "the settlement tradition" and "the Sinai tradition" (mostly P) as two climactic movements which "define two poles not only of the Torah but of biblical spirituality in general, and perhaps of the Jewish world view itself"; "Temple", pp.34ff.

Temple (existent or not) functions as the earthly antitype to the heavenly archetype, combining in supreme paradox God's withness and otherness.

Whatever the traditio-historical conundrums, the Pentateuch's concern for the tent-shrine may present to the reader a dialectic between the portable shrine and the Jerusalem Temple, with a judgement on the latter, i.e., asserting an image of God as "a delicate tabernacling presence, on the move with his people", rather than God as "a king enthroned in his massive stone palace".¹¹⁰

The spiritual focus given the Temple and Yahweh's presence within Israel's religious vocabulary, even after the disappearance of its literal referent, seems natural. Zion became a cosmic institution, with thematic parallels between the Temple and creation, "rest" in the land and the Sabbath. And in the triumphant eschatological refounding of the Temple the renewal of the world is anticipated. Central to these eschatological hopes was the promise of the fulness of the divine presence on earth.¹¹¹ When the post-exilic rebuilding of the Temple brought no such miraculous return, the promise of God's presence in the midst of Israel was relegated to the eschatological realm. Strongly reflected in Rabbinic literature is the doctrine that since its first rebuilding the Temple lacked, among other things, the Shekinah and the holy spirit.¹¹²

It was the synagogue which became the principal successor to the first and second Temples, a temporary measure. The traditional liturgy, still voiced three times daily, anticipates the reconstruction of the Temple and its sacrificial system.

Find favour, O Lord our God, in your people Israel and in their prayer, and restore the Temple service to the innermost chamber of your House. May you accept Israel's burnt offerings and prayer with love and grace, and may the service of your people Israel be ever pleasing to you. May our eyes see your return to Zion in mercy. Blessed are you, O Lord, who restores your presence to Zion!¹¹³

Although sacrifice was meanwhile replaced by prayer and sacred study,¹¹³ the Temple remained the focus of and conduit for diaspora prayers to God, with

¹¹⁰Levenson, "Temple", p.33.

¹¹¹See Hag 1:8; 2:7; Zech 2:10f[14f]; 8:3; cf. 1:16; Mal 3:1; Jub 1:27f; 1 Enoch 90:29ff. Cf. Joel's re-assertion, without interpretation, of God's presence in the Temple; 2:27; 3:16f[4:16f]. See the fourth vision of 4 Ezra for a vision of Zion's eschatological restoration (4 Ezra 9:26-10:59); see further Stone, "Reactions", p.263.

¹¹²See for references Clements, *God*, p.126.

¹¹³Cf. Ps 141:2.

the hope of the divine presence in a perfect Temple on Zion transferred to the realm of heaven.¹¹⁴

Within this post-exilic stress on divine transcendence, the sense of God's nearness to his people gained by necessity a diversity of expression other than through Temple rites.¹¹⁵ They were able to experience God's presence apart from the Temple, in their homes and communities, through regular Sabbath worship and sacred study, in which land, Temple and Yahweh's sovereignty have retained their significance, as cosmic symbols and archetypes.¹¹⁶ Neusner concludes that the primary concern of the Pharisees was that "the Temple should be everywhere, even in the home and hearth".¹¹⁷ Such a standard called Israelites to a purity appropriate to the Temple even within their own homes. "The extension of the Temple purity rules to the household might be seen as an expression of extreme piety. As [God's] presence is everywhere, so we should always behave as if we were in the Temple, that is, in his presence."¹¹⁸ Hence Renwick asserts that among Pharisees of the first century CE, the overarching concern was with "finding, establishing and maintaining the presence of God in their midst."¹¹⁹ This encouraged deeper emphasis on Yahweh's heavenly nature, as reflected strongly in Matthew's "the Kingdom of heaven" and "heavenly Father". Post-exilic Judaism also saw a rise in the correspondent doctrines of the

¹¹⁴See the doctrine of a heavenly Temple and Jerusalem developed in some Jewish circles, e.g., Asc.Isa.7:10; Wisd.Sol.9:8; Apoc.Bar.4:2-6; Test.Levi 3:4. Cf. Test.Dan.5:12f; Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22; Rev 3:12; 21:1-22:5.

¹¹⁵See Clements, *God*, pp.130ff.

¹¹⁶The sectarians of Qumran did not spiritualize divine presence. They held closely to the Torah's cultic prescriptions, but rejected the authority of the high priests, and transferred the symbolism of the Temple to themselves, called their community "a sanctuary" and "the holy of holies"; see 1 QS 5:5ff; 8:4ff; 9:3ff; 11:8; CD 3:18-4:10; 4QFlor 1:1-7; 4QpIsa frag 1; 1QpHab 12:1-4. Sanders has further noted the intensity with which community members seem to have felt that they had entered into God's presence with their initiation into the sect, and continued in God's presence forever. This sectarian consciousness of the immanence of God is the grounds for their very strict ritual purity (*Paul*, pp.314f).

¹¹⁷Neusner, *Politics*, p.152; cf. p.83; see further in Renwick, *Paul*, p.21.

¹¹⁸Neusner, *Purity*, p.69.

¹¹⁹*Paul*, p.43.

Name, Word, Wisdom, Spirit, Shekinah and intermediary angelic beings, as a means of asserting God's proximate presence.¹²⁰

Despite the Temple desecration he faced, a later Psalmist cry to God concerned a greater fear - that God himself might leave them:

"Do not move away from us, O God...

While your name lives among us, we shall receive mercy,
and the gentile will not overcome us.

For you are our protection
and we will call to you, and you will hear us." PsSol 7:1,6f¹²¹

Thus post-Temple divine transcendence did not mean divine absence from the human arena. Israel remained convinced of God's sovereignty and presence with his people (cf. Ps 139:7f). Even as the Temple became a symbol of hope and loyalty, God's presence became greater than any building, and he was "with" his people apart from any cultic edifice (Hag 1:13). This spiritualization of God's presence also gained personal expression; his presence was as close as the humble hearts of his people who sought him.¹²² There is little question that in the literature and experience of Judaism in Matthew's day, the presence of God was a commonplace issue.

Matthew's interests in God's presence as an issue for the story of Jesus are more pointed however. He does exhibit his inheritance of the Mosaic paradigm of Sinai, but he connected most strongly to the "with you" language of OT divine presence, which we shall consider in Chapter 5.

¹²⁰ See further on Shekinah in Chapter 7, and on Wisdom and Matthew in Chapter 9. See Dunn's assessment of Jewish intermediaries in relation to the Christian doctrine of incarnation, *Christology*, pp.129ff.

¹²¹ Wright, *OTP* 2, p.658.

¹²² Isa 57:15; 66:2; see Clements, *God*, pp.132ff.

CHAPTER 5. "I AM WITH YOU": THE OT TRADITION OF THE FORMULA

The primary terminological connection between Matthew's presence motif and OT divine presence is his use of μετά language. This chapter investigates the most obvious counterpart to Matthew's μεθ' ὑμῶν/ἡμῶν language: that OT body of references which speaks of God's presence in terms of the assertion and promise: "I am/he will be with you". This primary connection, although asserted in the works of Frankemölle, Kingsbury and others, has not been examined closely within the context of Matthean studies.

This divine OT "I am with you" might be seen as the Hebrew counterpart to the common assertion found throughout Greek literature of all eras that one's activities are successful "with God" (σὺν θεῷ/θεοῖς), but Grundmann asserts that the Greek expression developed without direct relation to the Hebrew formula.¹ Even within other texts of the ANE there is little if any evidence of an "I am with you"-type religious expression.² H.D. Preuß can find only two Egyptian texts, and possibly two proper names, which offer any real parallel to the language and idea of the Hebrew formula, the presence of a deity with a person, and this scarcity of occurrence stands in stark contrast to its frequency in the OT.³ The "with you/us" expression, then, is essentially a phenomenon of the Hebrew Bible, a frequent and powerful phrase which asserts, promises or solicits divine presence within a particular sphere of human activity and historical event. From the outset the expression evidences itself as an element of faith essentially peculiar to the people of Yahweh, strongly established at the most basic bedrock stratum as a fundamental component of Israelite piety.⁴

¹See Grundmann, "σύν-μετά", pp.773ff.

²E.g., a search through Pritchard, *ANET*, especially pp.3-155, 365-452, 573-86, reveals little of relevance.

³See Preuß's evidence in "Ich", pp.161-71. Cf. a later rewritten and corrected form of this article in *TWAT*, ET in *TDOT* 1, pp.449-63; see p.451.

⁴See Preuß, "'eth; 'im", p.451; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.73f.

Among recent studies, those of W.C. van Unnik, W. Grundmann, H.D. Preuß, M. Görg and H. Frankemölle are most notably concerned with this *Redeform*.⁵ The earlier study of van Unnik's is foundational; as part of an investigation into the origins of the liturgical formula "Dominus Vobiscum", he undertook to compile all the relevant LXX occurrences topically according to the particular aspect of divine presence and help portrayed in each formula. Grundmann is essentially dependent upon van Unnik, but adds a brief overview based on the formula's individual and plural recipients.

Preuß incorporates van Unnik's work at several places, but implicitly rejects his approach to the OT corpus in favour of a more traditionsgehistorisch analysis. Preuß's categorization of the formula is according to the speaker (divine or human) and verbal aspect (promise or declaration), and he proposes a somewhat problematic trajectory of the formula from its origins through subsequent development. Görg's interests are more with the formula's importance *vis à vis* the wider context of Israel's encounter with God. In the process he studies the formula in categories of divine speech, human speech and dialogue.⁶

More recently, H. Frankemölle, with dependence upon Preuß and R. Killian,⁷ has collected the fruits of the above endeavours and applied them to his assertion of μεθ' ὑμῶν as a theological *Leitidee* for Matthew's Gospel, an assertion hampered by his categorical application of *Bundestheologie* to the First Gospel.⁸

Each of the foregoing studies are at points disparate and tendentious. Van Unnik elevates the Spirit in relation to the formula, concluding that "the man to whom this 'the Lord is with you' is said becomes a pneumatic".⁹ In numerous places, however, van Unnik has misread the Spirit and the formula as mutually dependent instead of merely proximate.¹⁰ On the other

⁵Van Unnik, "Dominus", pp.270-305; Grundmann, "σύν-μετά", pp.766-97; especially p.775; Preuß, "Ich", pp.139-73 (see p.139 for earlier literature); Görg, "Ich", pp.214-40; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.72-9. Cf. also Trilling, *Israel*, pp.40-3.

⁶"Ich", especially pp.222-38, often reiterating Preuß.

⁷See Killian, *Verheißung*, pp.54-94.

⁸*Jahwebund*, especially pp.72-9. Frankemölle favours Preuß's approach: "Die Einseitigkeiten und Oberflächlichkeiten von Grundmann und v.Unnik beseitigt in einer eindringlichen Studie H.D. Preuß" (p.72).

⁹"Dominus", p.286; followed by Grundmann, "σύν-μετά", p.775 n.55.

¹⁰Here van Unnik may be too strongly influenced by the formula's later Christian liturgical context, the motivation for his investigation.

hand, Preuß connects too many of the formulas to an understanding of history as God's presence in *Weg* and *Wanderung*,¹¹ and others have overemphasized the formula's origin in the tradition of holy wars, the cult or the Davidic covenant.¹²

Thus, my intention in reworking some aspects of this OT material is to reassess it apart from these agendas, and more within the framework of this study. For example, the first century reader (i.e., Matthew) was hardly concerned with understanding the "I am with you" formula in line with current source theories, or with distinguishing between the theological interests of the Deuteronomist and Chronicler. As a result, much of Preuß's work does not assist Matthean interpretation.

The Jewish scriptures, in a variety of wordings and circumstances, contain at least 114 occurrences of the formula between the MT and LXX, promising or asserting that God is with an individual, a group, or the nation Israel.¹³

5.1. The Hebrew Text (MT)

The MT shows at least 104 uses of the formula, counting individually each member of any double occurrence, e.g., "as I was with Moses, so I will be with you",¹⁴ as well as each member of 'parallel' occurrences between

¹¹See "Ich", pp.157f, and further comments below.

¹²See Frankemölle's discussion, *Jahwebund*, pp.73f.

¹³Gen 21:20, 22; 26:3, 24, 28; 28:15, 20; 31:3, 5, 13; 35:3; 39:2, 3, 21, 23; 48:21; Ex 3:12; 10:10; 18:19; Num 14:42, 43; 23:21; Deut 1:42; 2:7; 20:1; 31:23; (32:12); Josh 1:5, 9, 17; 3:7; 6:27; 7:12; 14:12; 22:31; Judg 1:19, 22; 2:18; 6:12, 13, 16; Ru 2:4; 1 Sam 3:19; 10:7; 16:18; 17:37; 18:12, 14, 28; 20:13; (28:16); 2 Sam 5:10; 7:3, 9; 14:17; 1 Ki 1:37; 8:57; 11:38; 2 Ki 18:7; 1 Chr 11:9; 17:2, 8; 22:11, 16, 18; 28:20; 2 Chr 1:1; 13:12; 15:2, 9; 17:3; 19:11; 20:17; 25:7; 32:7, 8; 35:21; 36:23; Ez 1:3; 1 Esd 1:25; 2:3; Esth 6:13; Job 29:5; Ps 23[22]:4; 46[45]:7(8), 11(12); 91[90]:15; Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10; 41:10; 43:2, 5; 58:11; Jer 1:8, 17, 19; 15:20; 20:11; 42[49]:11; 46[26]:28; Amos 5:14; Hag 1:13; 2:4; Zech 8:23; 10:5; Jud 5:17; 13:11; 3 Macc 6:15.

This number includes both MT and LXX, even when only one provides the formula. 1 Chr 9:20; Jer 30:11; Ez 34:30 are textually doubtful.

Van Unnik lists only the LXX references, and he omits several. Preuß, "Ich", p.152 n.50, counts about 93 MT references, evaluating as one occurrence parallel or double references, e.g., in Ps 46, and between Sam-Kings and Chronicles. Preuß misses several other MT references, ignores those which only occur in the LXX and includes several which are not genuine examples of the formula (see below).

¹⁴Josh 1:5; see also Josh 1:17; 1 Sam 20:13; 1 Ki 1:37; 8:57.

Sam-Kings and Chronicles. In the extant texts the Hebrew expression is essentially standardized, with its constituent elements showing limited divergence.

The Subject: God

The subject of the formula is always divine. At least 27x that subject is "I", the formula being a first person divine utterance: "I was/am/will be with you".¹⁵ Within the context of these "I am" formulas יהוה is clearly predominant, appearing in context with the formula at least 18x, and in combination with צבאות or אלהים another 5x.

Only once does the formula in the MT refer to God in the second person - "You are with me" (Ps 23:4), as in prayer or liturgical utterance.¹⁶

Otherwise the formula's divine subject in the MT is in the third person, either in human speech (e.g., "Yahweh will be with you"), or narration (e.g., "Yahweh was with him"). Here too יהוה is used most prolifically, either alone (36x),¹⁷ with אלהים (13x),¹⁸ or in combination with צבאות (5x).¹⁹ אלהים is the sole subject only 12x of the total 104 MT

¹⁵ Gen 26:3, 24; 28:15; 31:3; Ex 3:12; Dt 1:42; 31:23; Josh 1:5 (2x); 3:7 (2x); 7:12; Judg 6:16 (but cf. LXX); 2 Sam 7:9; 1 Ki 11:38; 1 Chr 17:8; Ps 91(90):15; Isa 41:10; 43:2, 5; Jer 1:8, 19; 15:20; 42(49):11; 46(26):28; Hag 1:13; 2:4. Preuß includes here only those formulas which occur "als Verheißung und Zusage durch Gott" (p.141), and he consequently excludes several past and present tense occurrences in Dt 1:42; 2 Sam 7:9; 1 Chr 17:8, and overlooks Josh 1:5 and Ps 91:15. As well, several of his references do not truly fit this first category: Josh 1:9; Judg 6:12; Mic 6:8; Zech 10:5.

¹⁶ Cf. 3 Macc 6:15: μεθ' ἡμῶν εἰ, κύριε.

¹⁷ Gen 26:28; 39:2, 3, 21, 23; Ex 10:10; Nu 14:42, 43; Josh 6:27; 14:12; 22:31; Judg 1:19, 22; 2:18; 6:12, 13; Ru 2:4; 1 Sam 3:19; 16:18; 17:37; 18:12, 14, 28; 20:13; 2 Sam 7:3; 1 Ki 1:37; 2 Ki 18:7; 1 Chr 22:11, 16; 2 Chr 15:2; 17:3; 19:11; 20:17; 25:7; Jer 20:11; Zech 10:5; cf. 1 Sam 28:16. Cf. also 1 Sam 20:13; 1 Ki 1:37.

¹⁸ Nu 23:21; Dt 2:7; 20:1; Josh 1:9, 17; 2 Sam 14:17; 1 Ki 8:57; 1 Chr 22:18; 28:20; 2 Chr 1:1; 15:9; 32:7f; 36:23. Cf. also Josh 1:17; 1 Ki 8:57.

¹⁹ 1 Chr 11:9; Ps 46:8, 12; Amos 5:14. In 2 Sam 5:10 all three names are used: "Yahweh Elohím Sabaoth was with him."

occurrences.²⁰ **אִתּוֹ** appears once as the subject in Job 29:5.²¹ **אִתּוֹ** appears notably few times as the subject (Gen 35:3; Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10).²²

The Preposition: "with"

In about three of four instances the preposition **עִם** is employed. In the remainder of cases **אִתּוֹ** (or its variants **אִתּוֹ** and **אִתּוֹ** with sufformatives)²³ is used, apart from Nu 14:42; Dt 1:42 and Josh 22:31 where the preformative **-בְּ** is found.²⁴ Lexically, **עִם** and **אִתּוֹ** are synonymous, with very little if any difference in emphasis. According to BDB, **אִתּוֹ** has more the sense of close proximity, while **עִם** means "with" in respect to more personal relations.²⁵ However, Preuß finds that

the OT reflects no essential difference in the meanings or uses of **עִם** and **אִתּוֹ** either as to the historical periods when they occur or as to the genres in which they appear. The only thing that is clear is that in both the secular and theological realms, in later texts **אִתּוֹ** is used less and less and **עִם** is used more and more.²⁶

Any variation in the Hebrew formula's meaning depends not on the preposition used, but on the setting and activity in context, whether Yahweh being "with" his people, or "with" someone, means being "with", "beside", "alongside", "fighting for", "by", "near", "in the midst", "among", "in the company of", "with the help of" or "in association with".

Stylistic preference appears dominant in the choice of preposition. The patriarchal narratives mix **עִם** and **אִתּוֹ** while the Chronicler (19x), along with his sources in Sam-Kings (15x), is completely consistent in using only **עִם**. Jeremiah, Amos and Haggai use only **אִתּוֹ** (9x), but Zechariah **עִם** (2x).

²⁰ Gen 21:20, 22; 28:20; 31:5; 48:21; Ex 18:19; 1 Sam 10:7; 1 Chr 17:2; 2 Chr 13:12; 35:21; Ezra 1:3; Zech 8:23.

²¹ Missing in the LXX.

²² Cf. Dt 32:12: "Yahweh alone led him, and there was no foreign **אִתּוֹ** with him."

²³ Cf. Josh 14:12; Jer 20:11.

²⁴ Cf. 1 Sam 28:16 where Samuel tells Saul: "Yahweh has departed *from* you" (MT: **יָצָא מִלְּךָ**; LXX: ἀπὸ σοῦ).

²⁵ See BDB, p.85.

²⁶ "eth; 'im", p.449.

The Recipients

The formula is invariably personal, e.g., it makes no connection between God's presence and a locality.²⁷ A full range of personal pronouns appears as the indirect object within the formula: "I am with you/him/them"; "Yahweh is with me/you/him/us/them", as well as proper names. In the great majority of cases Yahweh is said to be with a particular individual, as opposed to with a group or the whole people of Israel.²⁸ The range of individuals who are recipients of the formula is not extensive - twenty-one central figures (never a woman) from among God's people: Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Caleb, "the judge", Gideon, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Jeroboam, Hezekiah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Mordecai, Job and Jeremiah, and one outsider, Neco.

There is some debate as to whether these individuals, when addressed by the promise of the formula, are to be understood as isolated personae,²⁹ or as 'corporate' figures representing the clan, tribe and people.³⁰ Neither is the case absolutely. Apart from obvious instances where Israel, Jacob, Joseph, *et al.*, are addressed in the singular and the backdrop of the clan is clearly understood, a deliberate ambiguity is communicated at points.³¹ Both realities are held together in the text: the leaders of God's people are often seen as representative personalities, but they also remain individuals with special and paradigmatic relationships with Yahweh.

²⁷ So van Unnik, "Dominus", p.284; ; Preuß, "Ich", pp.140f, 157; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.75.

²⁸ The occurrence of plural recipients does not come until the very end of the patriarchal narratives, in Gen 48:21, also Ex 10:10; Num 14:42f; 23:21; Deut 1:42; 2:7; 20:1; (32:12); Josh 7:12; 22:31; Judg 1:22; 6:13; Ruth 2:4; 1 Ki 8:57; 1 Chr 22:18; 2 Chr 13:12; 15:2; 19:11; 20:17; 25:7; 32:7f; Ps 46(45):8, 12; Isa 8:8, 10; 41:10; 43:2, 5; 58:11; Jer 42(49):11; 46(26):28; Amos 5:14; Hag 1:13; 2:4; Zech 8:23; 10:5; cf. Jud 5:17; 13:11; 3 Macc 6:15.

33 of these 38 references can be considered addressing the nation of Israel (or Judah) as a whole. Van Unnik's list of references, p.302 n.52, is incomplete, but see his comments, p.284.

²⁹ See van Unnik, "Dominus", pp.284f; and Grundmann, "σύν-μετά", p.775, who relies on van Unnik for the comment that the formula "is first a promise to the individual and only later to the covenant people in its totality, as in Dt and Dt.Is."

³⁰ So Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.76; see further references there.

³¹ Cf. Gen 26:3, 24; 28:15; 48:21; Judg 6:12f; 2 Sam 5:10; etc. This ambiguity could explain the switch in consecutive formulas in Judg 6:12f between singular and plural pronouns: "with you (singular)... with us."

It is not the case that the formula is an 'in-house' privilege only for Israelites. One 'outsider', Neco, pharaoh of Egypt,³² is also unequivocally described as having God "with" him in precisely the same terms as apply to God's people. Cyrus, king of Persia, also invokes the formula in blessing the returning exiles. In both cases one might even understand Neco and Cyrus not merely as isolated individuals, but as representing their nation or armed host.³³

The Verb 'to be'

The formula is found almost as often without, as with, the verb יהי. Some ambiguity is found where the combination of a verbless formula and undefined context make differentiation between possible verbal aspects difficult, especially a definite future ("Yahweh will be with you") and a jussive ("Yahweh be with you").³⁴ However, the majority of the formula's verbless occurrences can be translated as present tense.

The jussive is employed several times - "Yahweh be (יְהִי; יִהְיֶה) with you",³⁵ but more often the use of the imperfect (or converted perfect) implies the certainty of an outright future declaration - "Yahweh will be with you".³⁶ In several notable cases the double occurrence of the formula calls boldly on the experience of God's presence in the past as the basis for a promise of the same presence in the future: "as I was with Moses, so I

³²The formula is also found earlier in the mouth of another Pharaoh, in Ex 10:10:

And he said to [Moses and Aaron], "Yahweh be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind."

This can hardly be a true invocation of the formula. In their Exodus commentaries Childs, Hyatt and McNeile consider it a sarcastic expression in the Pharaoh's mouth. Childs wants to translate it: "God help you, as if I would ever let you and your little ones go!" Cassuto notes the intended irony - not much later Pharaoh does let them go and Yahweh is "with" them.

³³See 2 Chr 35:21; 36:23; Ezra 1:3; cf. LXX 2 Esd 1:25; 2:3. When the Persian king blesses those Israelites who desire repatriation he takes both divine names into his invocation in 2 Chr 36:23: "Yahweh God be with him".

³⁴E.g., Josh 14:12; Ruth 2:4; 2 Chr 20:17; 36:23; Ps 46:8, 12; Isa 8:8, 10; 43:2.

³⁵Cf., e.g. Ex 10:10; 18:19; 1 Sam 20:13; 2 Sam 14:17; 1 Ki 8:57; 1 Chr 22:11, 16; 2 Chr 19:11; Ezra 1:3; Amos 5:14; see also 1 Ki 1:37, which probably should read יהי ... יהי.

³⁶E.g., Gen 26:3; 28:20; 31:3; 48:21; Ex 3:12; Nu 14:43; Deut 31:23; Josh 1:5; 3:7; Judg 6:16; 1 Ki 11:38; but see Josh 1:17.

will be with you" (Josh 1:5). Here the perfect and imperfect of יהיה juxtapose dramatically the past and future presence of God: יהיה ... יהיה³⁷ or יהיה ... יהיה.³⁸

5.2. The LXX Text

The developments which the LXX text brings to the various Hebrew forms of the formula are at points significant, particularly the tendency toward greater formalization.

Additions and Omissions

The LXX has several additional occurrences of the formula not found in the MT³⁹ and lacks two which the MT includes.⁴⁰ The 'omissions' may point to the translators' dependence on different Hebrew traditions or to some interpretive work on their part.

The LXX 'additions' do not bear obvious dittographic characteristics; it would appear that the translators have made the interpretive decision to augment the text in four cases. The sense of the text is not substantially altered, but supplemented, by the addition of what the LXX recognizes and further formalizes throughout the Jewish scriptures as a formulaic expression of God's presence.

The first additional LXX formula, καὶ ἔσομαι μετὰ σοῦ, at the end of Gen 31:13, is identical to the LXX formula in 31:3. Hence the command and promise of v.13 reflect much more closely the same command and promise from God in v.3.

The formula added to the end of Esth 6:13 - ὅτι θεὸς ζῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ - serves to define Mordecai's good prospect of success over Haman. This is typical of the other LXX additions to Esther which attempt to bring to the scroll the religious elements 'missing' from the MT, such as references to יהוה, or אלהים.

³⁷See Josh 1:5; 3:7.

³⁸See 1 Sam 20:13; cf. also 1 Ki 1:37; 8:57.

³⁹Gen 31:13; Esth 6:13; Isa 58:11; Jer 1:17. To these may be added the five occurrences of the formula found in the additional books of the LXX: 1 Esd 1:25; 2:3; Jud 5:17; 13:11; 3 Macc 6:15.

⁴⁰1 Sam 18:12; Job 29:5.

The wording of the additional LXX formula in Isa 58:11 - ἔσται ὁ θεός σου μετὰ σοῦ - is unlike the wording of the other formula occurrences in Deut-Isa, all three of which are divine "I am" promises: μετὰ σοῦ εἰμι. The "I am" formula (ὅτι μετὰ σοῦ ἐγὼ εἰμι τοῦ ἐξαίρεσθαί σε) added to the prophet's calling in Jer 1:17 is sandwiched between identical "I am" formulas in vv.8 and 19, and functions to reiterate God's frequent promise (5x) to be with Jeremiah and empower him in his divine commission.

The Subject: God

יהוה, אלהים, אל and אלהים are most often translated by the appropriate κύριος, θεός or παντοκράτωρ. This is not a principle unerringly adhered to, but in themselves the nine exceptions neither detract nor contribute to the LXX's formalization of the expression.⁴¹ It is difficult to say whether the exceptions indicate freedom in translation or differing textual traditions. The transmission of divine names is simply not certain everywhere.⁴² Although within these exceptions κύριος comes out ahead, there is no visible pattern in these nine instances of divine names being altered within the formula.⁴³ The LXX formula thus gives greater dominance to κύριος, but both κύριος and θεός appear singly and together in some cases without specific differentiation.

The Preposition: "with"

The LXX has further simplified the Hebrew formula by translating אִתִּי, אִתְּךָ and אִתּוֹ only as μετὰ plus the genitive.⁴⁴ Μετὰ with the genitive at this late point in classical Greek appears to have superseded σύν in use.⁴⁵ At the time of the LXX there seems to be no significant distinction in meaning

⁴¹Cf. the MT and LXX texts of Gen 28:20; Deut 31:23; Judg 6:16; 2 Sam 5:10; 1 Chr 22:18; 2 Chr 13:12; 36:23; Ps 46(45):8, 12.

⁴²See Eissfeldt, *OT*, p.182.

⁴³Cf. Gen 28:20; Deut 31:23; Judg 6:16; 2 Sam 5:10; 1 Chr 22:18; 2 Chr 13:12; 36:23; Ps 46(45):8, 12.

⁴⁴Nu 14:43 is the single exception among over 100 examples.

⁴⁵See examples in Liddell and Scott 2, pp.1108f and 1690f. For further information on LXX usage of σύν and μετὰ see Johannesson, *Präpositionen*, pp.202-12.

between μετά and σύν, particularly when translating אִנִּי and אֲנִי.⁴⁶ Thus, although the LXX overall uses μετά with the genitive much more frequently than σύν, the fact that the LXX has so consistently rendered Hebrew אִנִּי and אֲנִי in this particular formula as μετά is representative of deliberate LXX intensification of the formulaic character of the expression.

The Verb 'to be'

While the LXX retains some of the MT's verbless formulas, it does add the verb to a significant number.⁴⁷ Here an interpretive tendency is apparent in at least three features: 1) the insertion of the future verb into formulas previously verbless and by context probably jussive or at least ambiguous, 2) the rendering of the Hebrew jussive with the definite Greek future, so that אֲנִי becomes ἔσται and 3) the translation of possibly ambiguous Hebrew imperfects with the certainty of Greek futures.⁴⁸ Van Unnik finds this trend significant in so far as "the certainty existing already in the Hebrew text is underlined and strengthened in the LXX."⁴⁹

5.3. The Character, Variations and Conditions of Presence

It would be easy to impose an anachronistic understanding on the OT "with you" formula, given its familiar counterparts in many modern Christian liturgies.⁵⁰ Hence the need to elucidate what sort, or sorts, of 'divine presence' are communicated by the formula.

The Formula in Theophany and Prophecy

The OT formula derives from divine "I am" utterances in theophany and divine prophetic speech; these undergird the subsequent narrative

⁴⁶E.g., LXX verbal σύν- compounds employ μετά; see Gen 14:24; 18:26, 23; Ex 33:16; Num 22:35; cf. Grundmann, "σύν-μετά", p.768.

⁴⁷See Gen 26:24; 39:23; Judg 1:22; 2 Chr 25:7; 36:23; Ps 23(22):4; 91(90):15; Isa 41:10; 43:2,5; Jer 1:8, 19; 15:20; 42(49):11; 46(26):28; Hag 1:13; 2:4; Zech 8:23; although cf. 1 Chr 22:16.

⁴⁸Cf. Gen 48:21; Ex 18:19; 1 Sam 17:37; 20:13; 2 Sam 14:17; 1 Chr 22:11; 2 Chr 19:11; 36:23; Ezra 1:3 (but note ἔστω in the parallel text of 1 Esd 2:3); Amos 5:14.

⁴⁹"Dominus", p.283.

⁵⁰See van Unnik's discussion, "Dominus", pp.270ff.

observations and third person utterances of the formula.⁵¹ This is certainly characteristic of the Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Joshua stories where Yahweh's own "I am" promise of presence provides the backbone for the added observations of others that God is or will be "with" them.⁵² Yahweh's "I am with you" is at the core of Israel's deliverance and restructuring in Dt-Isa, is constantly reiterated as Jeremiah's empowerment for his difficult commission, and is at the heart of Yahweh's rallying cry to Judah during the Temple's reconstruction in Haggai.

Divine Presence and Absence

Unlike the modern liturgical greeting, the OT formula finds both positive and negative expression. The results are correspondingly good or devastating; e.g., if in battle "Yahweh is with us", victory is ours, but if he is not "with" us, that means our defeat. In several places the formula is unequivocally negative in stating that God is not with Israel; his presence has become absence with dire consequences.⁵³

Divine "withness" brings divine benefits; divine absence brings divine judgement. When God is said to be "with" someone the positive results are unmistakable. Success, victory and prosperity appear, and the most concrete of results materialize: safe travel, battles won, fame, multiplied herds, alleviation of Angst, protection and help in distress. Conversely, for Israel, Saul, Josiah, Job, the enemies of God's people, and others who found themselves on the opposite side of the 'equation' of divine presence, the results of this negative reality of divine absence consumed them.

Not one clear formula citation exists in which divine "withness" means judgement, punishment or defeat for its recipients. Jer 20:11 may at first seem to contradict that statement, but upon closer analysis it appears that even here, when Jeremiah is lamenting his position in life as divine mouthpiece, his exclamation - "Yahweh is with me" - in the midst of his

⁵¹See the theophanic setting in Gen 26:3, 24; 28:15; 31:13; Ex 3:12; Judg 6:12f, 16; and prophetic speech in 2 Sam 7:9; 1 Ki 11:38; 1 Chr 17:8; Isa 41:10; 43:2, 5; Jer 1:8, 17, 19; 15:20; 42:11; 46:28; Hag 1:13; 2:4.

⁵²See further analysis by Görg, "Ich", pp.222-8.

⁵³See Num 14:42f; Deut 1:42; Josh 7:12; 2 Chr 25:7; cf. 1 Sam 18:12; 28:16; 2 Chr 15:2.

groaning, is a positive expression of divine protection, so necessary for his miserable job.⁵⁴

The Formula in Israel's Cult and History

The "with you" formula occurs rarely as an element of worship or with a connection to a liturgical setting. There are, for example, no references in Leviticus or Ezekiel. יהוה זכא'וה עמנו in Ps 46:8, 12 and עמנו אל in Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10 may have found their way at some point into the Temple cult as liturgical cries or confessions of faith.⁵⁵ As Frankemölle points out, this is too small a literary base on which to posit wider cultic origins and connections for the formula.⁵⁶

Many of the things to which we might assume the OT presence formula should be attached - tent of meeting, ark, Temple, sacrifice and worship - play little visible part in the "with you" formula's employment. The list of references reveals only seven occurrences in the Writings, with one in Job, four in the Psalter, one each in the Megilloth of Ruth and Esther, and none in Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations or Daniel. The prophets show nineteen uses, with fourteen of those split between Isaiah and Jeremiah.

The formula, rather, is a phenomenon of the narrative and discourse materials of the historical books; it thrives in the historical sections of the Pentateuch, in Joshua and Judges, in the books of the kings and in the work of the Chronicler. Not a single formula occurs in what is generally recognized as P material.⁵⁷ This concentration emphasizes most sharply the concrete and active nature of the formula; it is not a philosophical assessment of divine ontology and omnipresence, but the promise, assertion

⁵⁴Cf. also Jer 46[26]:28, Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10.

⁵⁵Cf. also Ps 23:4. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, p.293, thinks this use of עמנו may indicate a well-known formula; citing Vischer's reference to 2 Sam 23:5 (*Immanuel-Botschaft*, p.22) where David speaks of his house being secure עמנו. Vischer calls עמנו אל a choral shout in the liturgy of the royal Zion festival.

Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien* 2, p.306 n.1, and Cometh, p.111, also assumes that עמנו אל was an ancient cultic cry; cf. Hammershaimb, "Sign", pp.124-42, especially pp.135f; Watts, *Isaiah*, p.100; see further in Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.73.

⁵⁶*Jahwebund*, p.73.

⁵⁷See Eissfeldt's delineation, *OT*, pp.188f, 204ff.

and declaration of Yahweh's distinctly personal company, activity and empowerment in particular events of independent and corporate human experience.

Divine Presence and the Condition of Obedience

A number of texts are explicit concerning the requirement of obedience for the favour of God's presence, activity and company. For example:

1 Ki 11:38: "And if you will hearken to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, *I will be with you*, and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you."

2 Chr 17:3: The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father; he did not seek the Baals.

See also Josh 7:12; 1 Ki 8:57f; 2 Ki 18:7; 2 Chr 15:2; 19:11; 25:7; Ps 91(90):15; Amos 5:14.

Several provisos must be added, however. This condition of obedience cannot be defined exclusively in terms of covenant community membership, given the examples mentioned earlier of those 'outsiders' to whom the divine presence of the formula applies.⁵⁸ Neither, then, can the condition of obedience be portrayed as an invariable contingency, so that each time the formula is uttered, in whatever form or context, we can assume the obedience of its recipient(s).

The Formula as Salutation

For some scholars the formulas in Judg 6:12 and Ruth 2:4 have the appearance of a greeting. These two texts are normally assessed as post-exilic, and Preuß speculates that the greeting form may be one of the final steps in the formula's trajectory of development.⁵⁹

But the formula in Judg 6:12 quickly exceeds the narrow format of a greeting:

And the angel of Yahweh appeared to him and said to him,
"Yahweh is with you, you mighty man of valour."

Gideon's incredulous reply - "What do you mean: 'Yahweh is with us'?" in

⁵⁸Contra Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.77.

⁵⁹"Ich", p.157, and "'eth; 'lm", p.457; cf. van Unnik, "Dominus", pp.272ff, 281.

v.13 demonstrates the concrete terms and broader arena commonly evoked by the formula's utterance. "Yahweh is with you" required a correspondingly positive reality in his (and his people's) well-being; he refused to accept the angel's "with you" formula merely as a salutation.

The 'greeting' to the reapers by Boaz is suspect on similar and different grounds.

Ruth 2:4: And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem; and he said to the reapers, "Yahweh be with you!" And they answered, "Yahweh bless you."

If this **יְהוָה עִמָּךְ** was a common greeting, it is simply not attested elsewhere;⁶⁰ the greeting which was commonly attested was that of "Peace", a fact which the Syriac ms. underlines by exchanging the Hebrew formula for "Peace be with you".⁶¹ It must be remembered that within the highly artistic novelle form of Ruth we see at least four possible greeting styles, including Naomi being greeted by her own name (1:19), our formula uttered by Boaz to his reapers, their reply (2:4), and Boaz's greeting to his kinsman: "Turn aside, friend; sit down here" (4:1). Ruth 2:4 is the single OT instance where the "with you" formula might function primarily as a greeting, but only on a broader level. As Boaz's blessing upon his reapers, it performs narratively as an all-important and intentional window into the quality of Boaz's character, portraying him as pious and faithful, and thus the man to fulfil properly his levirate responsibilities.

⁶⁰Contra Dalman, *Arbelt*, p.43; cf. Gray, *Joshua*, p.413.

⁶¹See van Unnik, "Dominus", pp.272ff.

5.4. The Setting

One helpful approach to understanding better the formula's various applications to the events and faith of Israel is to gather the references into groups according to dominant contextual characteristics. This has already been done in part by van Unnik and Preuß, but the former's categories tend to confuse factors internal and external to the formula, without differentiating between the message, setting and conditions of the formula, while the latter seems overdependent on source analysis.

At least five categories are distinguishable within the formula's narrative contexts:

- 1) peace and prosperity,
- 2) travel,
- 3) war,
- 4) liberation and deliverance, and
- 5) divine commission.

These are not proposed as mutually exclusive.

Peace and Prosperity

In the largest single category of references the divine presence of the "with you" formula is seen in concrete correlation to the social, political and economic success of its recipients. With the patriarchs this could mean sustenance and survival through enlarged herds, the promise of land and many children and extra-community respect. For Joshua this meant the spread of his fame and reputation. For rulers such as Joseph, Saul, David, Solomon and their successors, this could mean growing fame, enthronement, political peace and the amassing of wealth.

Gen 26:3f "Sojourn in this land, and *I will be with you*, and will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands ... I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven."

Gen 39:23 The keeper of the prison paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because *Yahweh was with him*; and whatever he did, Yahweh made it prosper.

2 Sam 5:10 And David became greater and greater, for *Yahweh, the God of hosts, was with him*.

Zech 8:23 Thus says Yahweh of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that *God is with you*."⁶²

⁶²See also Gen 21:20, 22; 26:24, 28; 28:20; 31:5; 39:2f, 21; Deut 2:7; Josh 6:27; Judg 6:12f; 1 Sam 3:19; 16:18; 18:12, 14, 28; (cf. 28:16); 2 Sam 7:3;

The Travels of Israel

A solid core of formula references are employed within language of "the way", where Yahweh is present as the accompanying, protecting and guiding God. Here the formula is found as a concrete element in the earliest patriarchal narratives, specifically the Isaac stories, and this primitive application was broadened in the time of Moses, the Judges, and right into post-exilic theology with reformulation in terms of "the way" of Yahweh; "the way" of the community.⁶³ Within this group of "with you" formula sayings, God is the accompanying divine escort in the migrations of the clan, the Exodus tribe, the Israelite invaders and the returning exiles. This way of talking about God's presence "with" his people "in the way" has marked indelibly the language of Jewish scriptures, and its descriptions of God's activities among his people as shepherd, leader, protector and guarantor of safe passage. Thus the formula was a cornerstone in providing the assurance that God would accompany his people in their travels, from the migration traditions of Israel's earliest forefathers through to the *Wanderung Theologie* of the post-exilic writers.

Gen 26:3 "Sojourn in this land, and *I will be with you*, and will bless you"

28:15 "Behold, *I am with you* and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land"

Deut 2:7 "For Yahweh your God ... knows your going through this great wilderness; these forty years *Yahweh your God has been with you*; you have lacked nothing."

Josh 1:9 "... *for Yahweh your God is with you* wherever you go."

2 Sam 7:9 "And *I have been with you* wherever you went."⁶⁴

As strong as this strand of accompanying presence in the formula is, it does not bear the weight which Preuß wants it to. His attempt to raise the *Wanderung* motif to defining status for the *Mitsein Jahwes* contradicts his own recognition of the wide complexity of the texts' historical and literary situations, many of which do not fit within the bounds of this one category.

1 Ki 8:57; 11:38; 2 Ki 18:7; 1 Chr 11:9; 17:2, 8; 22:11, 16, 18; 28:20; 2 Chr 1:1; Esth 6:13; Job 29:5; Isa 58:11.

⁶³See Preuß, "Ich", pp.141-5, 154ff.

⁶⁴See also Gen 26:24; 28:20; 31:3, 13; 35:3; Ex 3:12; Num 14:42f; Deut 1:42; 20:4; 31:23; Josh 1:9,17; 3:7; 2 Chr 36:23; Ezra 1:3; 1 Esd 1:25.

His oft-repeated "Die Geschichte ist Weg mit Jahwe"⁶⁵ is an over-generalization of the evidence.

The Wars of Israel

In a number of passages the formula is explicitly localized in the tradition of holy wars.⁶⁶ God's promise to be with Israel in this context is essentially his promise of victory in battle, while his declaration of absence spells defeat.

Nu 14:42f "Do not go up lest you be struck down before your enemies, *for Yahweh is not among you*. For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned back from following Yahweh, *Yahweh will not be with you*."

Judg 6:16 And Yahweh said to [Gideon], "*But I will be with you*, and you shall smite the Midianites as one man."

2 Chr 20:17 "You will not need to fight in this battle; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of Yahweh on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem. Fear not, and be not dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, and *Yahweh will be with you*."⁶⁷

The formula's manipulation is notable in the chronicler's claim of God's presence for Judah in the North-South wars with Israel. More notable are the benefits of God's presence extended beyond his people to, in fact, Judah's opposition:

2 Chr 35:21 [Neco king of Egypt to Josiah king of Judah]: "Cease opposing *God who is with me*, lest he destroy you."

Liberation and Deliverance

The saying can also carry a liberation motif, where "I am with you" means divine rescue and help for God's people. This theme, which originates in the Exodus liberation narratives, is maintained in a special way as divine presence recurring in Israel's subsequent story of salvation history. Explicit reference is often made back to the Exodus as the paradigm for

⁶⁵Cf. "Ich", pp.157, 159, 171, 172.

⁶⁶Some postulate holy wars as the original *raison d'être* for the formula of *Mitsein Jahwe*; this over-applies the evidence; see Wolff, *Frieden*, pp.41ff; von Rad, *Theologie 2*, p.180. Cf. Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.73f.

⁶⁷See also Deut 1:42; 20:4; Josh 14:12; Judg 1:19,22; 1 Sam 17:37; 2 Chr 13:12; 25:7; 32:7f.

Yahweh's ongoing deliverance of his people, personally and corporately. For the exiles this meant freedom and restoration.

Ex 3:12 He said, "*But I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain.*"

Nu 23:21bf "*Yahweh their God is with them, and the shout of a king is among them. God brings them out of Egypt*"

Deut 20:1 "*For Yahweh your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.*"

Ps 91(90):15 "*When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honour him.*"⁶⁸

The use of the "with you" utterance in Jeremiah (1:8, 17, 19; 15:20; 20:11; 42[49]:11; 46[26]:28) should in particular be noted, for in every instance the formula communicates God's deliverance, and apart from 20:11, is always his first person "I am" assertion. Almost invariably the saying has been employed with an infinitive "to deliver" (אֲנִי אֶחְיֶה אִתְּךָ/μετὰ σοῦ ἐγὼ εἶμι τοῦ ἐξαιρεῖσθαί σε) or "to save" (אֲנִי אֶחְיֶה אִתְּךָ/μετὰ σοῦ εἶμι τοῦ σῶζειν σε), resulting in a powerful series of God's personal testimonials of his presence with Jeremiah, to liberate him and empower his mission.

Divine Commission

In a number of notable instances, the "with you" formula appears as a distinct element within the commissioning of Israel's patriarchs and prophets.⁶⁹ Almost invariably the formula functions here as a promise of God's divine empowerment, reassurance and protection in the immediate context of commissioning. God is personally present as divine catalyst, providing physical and spiritual enablement; he releases anxiety and quells

⁶⁸See also Josh 22:31; Judg 2:18; 1 Sam 17:37; 2 Chr 36:23; Ezra 1:3; 1 Esd 2:3; Isa 8:8, 10; 41:10; 43:5; 58:11; Amos 5:14; Zech 8:23; 10:5; Judith 5:17; 13:11; 3 Macc 6:15.

⁶⁹Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.67, claims that our formula, or an equivalent, occurs 19 times in 27 examples of his Hebrew Bible commissioning *Gattung*, as the "Reassurance" component. Ten of Hubbard's references are the actual "with you" formula.

the fears of the recipients ("Do not be afraid!")⁷⁰ regarding the apparent insurmountability of their calling.

Ex 3:11f: But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" He said, "*But I will be with you ...*"

Deut 31:23: Yahweh commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore to give them; *I will be with you.*"

Hag 2:4f: "Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says Yahweh; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says Yahweh; work, *for I am with you*, says Yahweh of hosts, according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit abides among you; fear not."

The three appearances of the formula in Judg 6:12-16 are a good reminder that the foregoing categories are not mutually exclusive. There, within a single context, the formula functions as the shorthand reference to God's presence with Gideon and his people in peace and prosperity, Exodus deliverance, empowerment for commission and military victory.

5.5. The Historical Continuum of God's People

As noted above, the "with you" presence formula is primarily defined by its historical contingencies, as a narrative, after-the-fact description of God's presence and intervention in a wide variety of his people's life situations. This "narrative-heilsgeschichtlich" character gives to the long string of "I am/he is with you's" a common and continuous theme, more relevant and significant than classification by text traditions or theological Tendenz.

This continuity of narrative and heilsgeschichtlich context is clearly evidenced in the six explicit 'double' formulas⁷¹ which build a present or future tense declaration or promise of presence upon the recollection of its occurrence in the past, e.g.:

Josh 1:5 "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you".⁷²

The "with you" formula is employed to affirm the historical continuity of

⁷⁰"Do not be afraid!" appears with the formula in the commissioning pericopes listed above, as well as with the formula in Deut 20:1; 1 Chr 28:20; 2 Chr 20:17; 32:8; Isa 41:10; 43:5; Jer 42:11; 46:28; Hag 2:4f; cf. also Gen 21:17; Deut 31:8; 1 Sam 4:20; and Lk 1:28ff.

⁷¹Cf. 'implicit' double uses of the presence formula in Judg 6:13; 1 Sam 18:12.

⁷²See also Josh 1:17; 3:7; 1 Sam 20:13; 1 Ki 1:37.

Yahweh's presence with his people: אֲנִי־יְהוָה ... אֲנִי־יְהוָה / ὡς περ ἦμην μετὰ Μωϋσῆ ἔσομαι καὶ μετὰ σοῦ. At the heart of this continuous application of the formula is the fundamental belief in Yahweh's presence with his people as the constantly recurring reason for their salvation in history.

Whatever the tradition-critical questions, it all begins on the narrative level with the primitive family traditions⁷³ where God gives safe-conduct in travel, accompanies and protects the clan, and brings the blessing of progeny, success and safe haven within the direct relationship between patriarch and god, without mediation of priest or cult.

The "with you" formula, as the divine promise to Moses - אֲנִי־יְהוָה עִמָּךְ (Ex 3:12), subsequently gains new definition in the context of God's self-explanation as "Yahweh" (אֲנִי־יְהוָה אֲנִי־יְהוָה ... יְהוָה, Ex 3:14f) in Moses' commissioning.⁷⁴ Here the dimension of divine liberation becomes dominant in the formula's application to the Exodus and Conquest, to Yahweh's presence "with" his people in war, as they encounter and invoke hostility from others in their travels.

The historical setting for the formula changed again within the period of the kings; David is recipient of the "with you" formula ten times in Sam-Kings, with three parallels in 1 Chr.⁷⁵ The formula retained the concreteness of the old categories of divine company, protection and deliverance on the journey and in war, but peace and prosperity for the nomadic clan now becomes peace and prosperity for the kingdom,⁷⁶ and the vocabulary is adapted to meet Israel's domesticated social circumstances.⁷⁷ Here the narrative continuity of the formula is emphasized in dynastic

⁷³For Preuß the primitive *Mitsein Jahwes* originated in the clan of Isaac as the accompanying escort in travels; "Ich", p.153; cf. Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.74.

⁷⁴In a number of cases the אֲנִי־יְהוָה of Ex 3:12 occurs with אִמָּךְ or אִמָּךְ, e.g.: Gen 26:3; 31:3; Ex 3:12; Deut 31:23; Josh 1:5; 3:7; Judg 6:16; 1 Sam 17:37; 2 Sam 7:9; Zech 10:3; see Preuß, "Ich", pp.158f.

⁷⁵Preuß and Frankemölle both note the tendency of Vischer and others to overcharacterize אִמָּךְ as the key concept of the Davidic covenant, and the Davidic era as central. See the discussion and references in Preuß, "Ich", p.156; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.74.

⁷⁶"Hier ist die ursprünglich konkrete Geleitzsusage nun zur mehr allgemeinen Beistandsformel geworden", Preuß, "Ich", p.156.

⁷⁷The social conditions and "with you" formula occurrences in the Joseph stories match more closely those of the Davidic kingdom than those of the patriarchal narratives.

terms, for God is to be "with" David as he was "with" Saul, "with" Solomon as "with" David, and "with" Israel as "with" Israel's forefathers.⁷⁸

Post-exilic prophecies and the Chronicles bring a stylized return to the language and terms of presence used in the earliest occurrences of the formula. Ten times in his idealized history the Chronicler attaches the formula to battles, in Judah's favour, and 'the war of Yahweh' is elevated to an artificially high status. Among the prophets, the formula's place in the Exodus liberation is renewed in Dt-Isa with the prophetic restoration of the nation, and the application of the formula by the Chronicler to Israel's journey home reinforces further the continuity of the formula and the reinterpreted concreteness of its language of presence.

5.6. Implications

In what sense, then, does the formula assert that God is "with" his people? Despite frequent reception within theophany or prophetic utterance, the recipient's experience of the divine "withness" elicited by the formula is almost invariably connected to narrative events, past, present or future. Within the referential world of the formula, then, God's presence is not 'divine phenomena', 'theophania' or pure religious experience, but his people's retrospective interpretation or prospective anticipation of divine favour within their historical reality.

Hence the "with you" formula captures no particular physical or sensory manifestation of God each time the formula is utilized, which might define the "withness" of this divine presence. The breadth of reference within the Jewish narratives points rather to a whole range of exceptional experiences - cognitive, emotional, physical and spiritual, with internal and external ramifications for the individual or community.⁷⁹ It can never be simply reduced to a general principle of God's "spiritual" presence with his people, but neither does it exclude God's "withness" in cultic presence.⁸⁰

⁷⁸1 Sam 20:13; 1 Ki 1:37; 8:57.

⁷⁹Cf. van Unnik, "Dominus", pp.276, 284; Grundmann, "σύν-μετά", p.775; Preuß, "Ich", pp.154f, and "eth; 'lm", pp.456-8; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.74f.

⁸⁰Van Unnik's, Grundmann's, Preuß's, Frankemölle's and Trilling's distinctions between dynamic ("with you") and static (cultic) presence are too theologically artificial for the Jewish scriptures, and over-dependent on terminological assessment. Each uses the distinction to support a particular theological bias, i.e., the centrality of Spirit, Way or covenant in the formula.

Though linguistically and contextually distinct, the "with you" formula is not an airtight category which excludes the practice and symbols of cultic divine presence. For example, the formulas in Nu 14:42f are linked to 14:44, where the ark and the person of Moses both define God's presence. The **אִתְּךָ/עִמָּךְ** language of the formula shows affinities to other expressions where God is said to be "among" or "in the midst of his people" (**בְּתוֹךְ/בְּקִרְבּוֹ**). As noted earlier, the **בְּקִרְבּוֹ** language of Ex 33:3, 5; 34:9f relates to the presence of God among his people by means of the ark/tabernacle. This disallows making rigid distinctions between Yahweh's cultic and non-cultic presence on terminological grounds. "Cultic" and "non-cultic" become artificial at this point.⁸¹

God's presence in the "with you" formula is therefore not isolated, but is clearly the dominant linguistic expression within a spectrum of OT language on divine presence which spans God "with", "among", "in the midst of", and "before" his people, and encompasses his:

1) intimate/cultic/holy presence - Yahweh's holy presence through his shrine, among his people, and on Zion (most apparent in **בְּתוֹךְ/בְּקִרְבּוֹ/בְּיָמֵינוּ** language; e.g., Ex 33:18ff; Deut 5:24ff);

2) intimate/personal/salvific presence (especially apparent in the "with you" formula);

3) less intimate presence - e.g., the cloud, fire and angel represent Yahweh's more general guidance of his people (e.g., Ex 13:21f; 32:34; 33:2).

In this sense the "with you" formula is the people's declaration of faith in God's will to save them - hence its primary narrative-heilsgeschichtlich character. The perception of God's presence provided within the formula is thus normally *the encoding of faith in text* by

⁸¹See **בְּקִרְבּוֹ**: Ex 8:22(18); 17:7; 23:21; 33:3, 5; 34:9, 10; Nu 11:1, 3, 20; 14:14, 42, 44; Deut 1:42; 6:15; 7:21; 23:14(15); 31:17; Josh 3:5, 10; Judg 10:16; Ps 46:5(6); 48:9(10); Isa 12:6; 63:11; Jer 14:9; Ezek 36:27; Hos 11:9; Joel 2:27; Mic 3:11; Zeph 3:5, 15, 17; cf. Josh 24:23; Ps 74:4.
See **בְּתוֹךְ**: Ex 25:8; 29:45, 46; Lev 15:31; 26:11, 12; Nu 5:3; 16:3;

35:34; Josh 22:31; 1 Ki 6:13; Ezek 11:23; 37:26-28; 39:7; 43:7, 9; Hag 2:5; Zech 2:5(9), 10(14); 11(15); 8:3, 8; cf. Gen 35:2.

Cf. other related expressions: Gen 17:4 ("Behold, my covenant is with you", cf. 17:19, 21); 24:7 ("Yahweh, the God of heaven... will send his angel before you"); 46:4 ("I will go down with you to Egypt"); cf. also Gen 15:1; 48:15; Ex 4:12,15 ("I will be with your mouth"). The formula must be placed alongside other reassurances used in commissionings, such as "Do not be afraid" (Gen 15:1; 26:24; 46:4; Josh 1:9; Judg 6:23; Jer 1:8ff; Ezek 2:6 [3x]; 1 Chr 22:13) and "Be strong and courageous" (Deut 31:23; Josh 1:6, 9; 1 Chr 22:13; cf. Hag 2:4).

community members. In observing that his "withness" is apparent to outsiders Jewish writers have given it the status of a definitive credo for Yahweh's people.⁸² Within the Jewish canon these recollections function as legitimizations of Israel's success *vis à vis* other nations, and even as prophecies of future restoration of the people within God's favour.⁸³

But God's presence remains effective within the temporal parameters of the events and circumstances in context. This is highlighted, e.g., in the case of King Saul, when God's presence is explicitly withdrawn:

1 Sam 18:12: Saul was afraid of David, because Yahweh was with him but had departed from Saul.⁸⁴

In no instance of the OT formula's occurrence do we find the divine reassurance: "I will be with you forever", "till the end of the age". In the OT formula God is present, rather, for the purpose of the moment.

In several cases obedience is a condition for God "being with" his people, so that the formula does not fit neatly into the normal covenant relationship, where obedience to the law is not necessarily prior to the covenant.⁸⁵ The formula fits the wider picture of God acting as free agent, outside of any agreement, on the conditions and within the timeframe and circumstances of his own choosing. Notable here is the formula's absence from those texts which are connected with the Sinai covenant.⁸⁶

This independence of covenantal elements and freedom to cross the covenant community boundaries is demonstrated in Neco of Egypt. On the way to battle at Carchemish he warns King Josiah of Judah - "Stop interfering with God who is with me", but to no avail.⁸⁷ Thus the presence of God with Neco, in his utterance of the promise formula, becomes a fatal judgement upon Josiah, the royal head of the covenant community itself, who defied that efficacious and dynamic presence of Yahweh's power with another.⁸⁸

⁸²See Josh 22:31; 2 Chr 35:21; Ps 23(22):4; 46(45):7(8),11(12); 1 Esd 1:25; Jud 13:11. Cf. Josh 3:7; 22:31; 1 Sam 3:19f; 16:18; 18:28; 2 Chr 15:9.

⁸³See especially Esth 6:13 (LXX); Zech 8:23.

⁸⁴Cf. Gen 28:20; Nu 14:42f; Dt 1:42; 2:7; Josh 7:12; 14:12; 1 Sam 28:16; 2 Sam 7:15; 1 Chr 22:1; 2 Chr 19:11; 25:7; Job 29:5 (MT only); Ps 91(90):15.

⁸⁵Contra Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.74, who incorrectly assumes that the covenant is always presupposed in the formula.

⁸⁶So Preuß, "Ich", p.155. An equivalent formula is also missing from the oft-compared Hittite treaty texts.

⁸⁷2 Chr 35:21. Neco's words are reiterated and reinforced in 1 Esd 1:25: "The Lord is with me, the Lord is with me driving me on."

⁸⁸Given Josiah's highly praised role otherwise (2 Ki 23:25), his death by

In summary, the OT "with you" presence saying is a foundational element of Israelite faith. Whether originating in patriarchal traditions, or out of the sagas of the Exodus and Conquest, the result was an early and thorough Hebrew stereotyping of the expression which, though recast in the period of the kings into a more general formula of support, never lost its original concrete vocabulary and application to God's people, even in prophetic oracle. The LXX translators recognized and emphasized the centrality of the Hebrew formula and further formalized its terms.

Ultimately, then, the formula is not just a verbal assertion of divine sovereignty and the ability of Yahweh to act specially in Israel's history, but is a statement of faith in the God who directly reveals and promises his own personal presence ("I am with you"), in the God whose presence can be personally claimed ("Yahweh is with me"), and in the God whose dynamic presence is fundamental to Israel's historical continuum as his community, and thus invoked for the future ("Yahweh was with Israel" - "Yahweh will be with us").

5.7. The Formula in Post-biblical Judaism

The Hebrew Bible provides the bulk of the "with you" sayings of Yahweh's presence. Only in a few extant texts from Palestinian and diaspora Judaism is the formula given further application and development.

Post-Biblical Jewish Writings of Semitic Origin⁸⁹

Judith employs the formula in two clear instances within its quasi-fictional narrative.⁹⁰ Achior the Ammonite tries to explain (5:5-21) to Holophernes, Nebuchadnezzar's general, that the Jewish resistance is based upon their faithfulness in the invincible strength of their God, declaring, "God is with them" (5:17). The formula is also a triumphant cry from the lips of Judith as she returns to the city with the head of

Neco left an inexplicable dilemma for the Deuteronomist; see de Vaux, "Presence", p.10; Frost, "Death", pp.369-82.

⁸⁹See these categorizations of Jewish texts by language in Schürer 3.1., p.v.

⁹⁰See Nickelsburg, *Literature*, pp.105-9; Schürer, 3.1, pp.216ff, Eissfeldt, *OT*, pp.586f, for discussion and references regarding dating and the real episode lying at the origin of the Judith story.

Holophernes, "God is with us!" (13:11) So the story of Judith, most likely from the time of Judas Maccabeus, does extend the OT practice of employing the formula within narrative contexts especially concerned with God's activity on his people's behalf, here seen in his protection and deliverance of the lowly, oppressed, weak, forlorn and helpless (9:11).

Within its free midrashic elaboration of Gen 1-Ex 12, the book of Jubilees⁹¹ re-employs few of the 18 "with you" presence formulas found in the MT. 24:22 contains a straightforward citation of the formula from Gen 26:24. God is more often spoken of as 'dwelling' with his people.⁹² But more importantly, Jubilees connects covenant with presence, covenant providing the means for God to be with his people. This is true in the case of Abraham (13:9), and is part of the eschatological hope of God's Zion presence with his people (Jub 9:27f).

The War Rule of the Qumran community uses the presence formula in a dramatization of the final spiritual conflict, in the context of military conquest and victory. 1 QM 12:8f contains the confession:

For Adonai is holy, and *the King of glory is with us*, along with the holy beings. Warrior angels are in our muster, and He that is Mighty in War is in our throng. The army of His spirits *marches with us*.

Great attention is paid to the necessity of ritual purity in order for the divine host to be present,⁹³ in line with the transfer to itself of Temple symbolism, seeing the community as the sanctuary and "holy of holies" (1 QS 5:5ff; 8:4ff; 9:3ff, etc.).

Within *Midrash Rabbah*, the formula is often reinvested with new meaning or a less direct interpretation (*vls-à-vls* YHWH). For example, in *Gen.Rab.*28:15 the rabbis disagree over what sort of protection the "with you" saying covers. In *Gen.Rab.*31:5 *'immadi* is read as *'amudi*, "my pillar, support". In *Ex.Rab.*3:12 comes the observation that the presence formula is "an expression used only to one who is afraid". Furthermore, in observing his obvious success, Joseph's Egyptian master suspected him of witchcraft, "until he saw the *Shechinah* standing over him" (*Gen.Rab.*39:3).⁹⁴

Van Unnik notes that Targum Onkelos emphasizes divine 'help', replacing

⁹¹Probably second century BCE. See Schürer 3.1, pp.310ff; cf. Eissfeldt, *OT*, p.608; Nickelsburg, *Literature*, pp.78f.

⁹²Cf., e.g., Jub 1:6, 18, 26; 18:15f; 19:5; 25:21.

⁹³See 1 QM 7:3-7; cf. Schürer 3.1, p.400.

⁹⁴Cf. van Unnik, "Dominus", pp.280, 301 nn.40ff.

"the Lord is with you" with "the Memra of the Lord is to your help" (bs'dkh).⁹⁵

Post-Biblical Jewish Writings of Greek Origin

In the romantic fiction of 3 Macc the writer employs his legendary reminiscences with a narrowly Jewish and strongly anti-Gentile bias.⁹⁶ But his employment of the divine presence formula in 6:15 is essentially a reiteration of the saying couched within an OT context, rather than an application of the formula to Yahweh's salvific activity amongst his people in the Egyptian diaspora setting.

Philo turns his attention to at least sixteen of the OT texts which contain the "with you" formula. But only seven or eight times does he appear to acknowledge the formula, and then most often within his unique paraphrastic interpretation. For example, in *Migr* 30 Philo states in reference to Gen 26:3 that:

the fountain from which the good things are poured forth is the companionship of the bountiful God. He shows this to be so when to set His seal upon the flow of His kindness, He says, ἔσομαι μετὰ σοῦ.⁹⁷

Philo defines Moses in Ex 3:12 as a prophet seeking to know the cause of successful achievement:

He found that it was the presence of the only God with him" (ὁ θεοῦ μονοῦ σύνοδος; *Fuga* 140).⁹⁸

Josephus encounters a good number of our texts in his reconstruction of Jewish history in *Antiquities*, but more often than not does not directly engage the "with you" formula in these OT passages.⁹⁹ In a few places Josephus does exhibit some recognition of the theological importance of the formula, but he mollifies the "I am with you" boldness of the saying.

For example, Abimilech's use of the formula when describing Isaac's success in Gen 26:28 becomes:

⁹⁵"Dominus", pp.280, referring to Dalman, *Handwörterbuch*.

⁹⁶See Schürer 3.1, pp.537ff; Nickelsburg, *Literature*, pp.169, 171. Note the apparent relationship between 3 Macc and Josephus' legends, *cont.Ap.* 2, 5 (50-55).

⁹⁷Cf. similarly *Som* 1, 179 (Gen 28:15); *Det* 4 (Gen 31:5); *Som* 1, 227f (Gen 31:13).

⁹⁸Cf. also *Post* 80 (Gen 39:2); *Agr* 78 (Deut 20:1); also *Migr* 62f.

⁹⁹Thus Josephus makes no explicit mention of the formula when commenting, for example, on Gen 21:20, 22 (*Ant* 1, 219); Gen 28:15, 20 (*Ant* 1, 280-3); Gen 31:3, 5, 13 (*Ant* 1, 309ff); 1 Sam 3:19 (*Ant* 5, 351).

for seeing that God was with Isaac and *showered such favours upon him*, he cast him off" (*Ant* 1.260).

God "being with" Jacob and Joseph is reinterpreted by Josephus as "providence" or "providential care" (προνοία; *Ant* 2.8, 61) and in the case of Moses (Ex 3:12) as God "promising Himself to assist him"; *Ant* 2.272).¹⁰⁰

Josephus' tendency at times to soften the formula's straightforwardness is most apparent when he does not allow Egypt's Pharaoh Neco to claim the prerogative of the divine promise. Josephus' editorial note on Josiah's death explains:

It was Destiny, I believe, that urged him on to this course in order to have a pretext for destroying him.¹⁰¹

We have one notable, yet circumspect, example of Josephus himself employing the divine presence formula in a post-biblical setting, in his version of king Herod's speech encouraging his troops about to do battle with the Arabs.¹⁰²

"You have no right to say this in the first place, for those who have justice with them (μεθ' ὧν), have God with them (μετ' ἐκείνων), and where God is, there too are both numbers and courage" (*Ant* 15.138).

Implications

When the divine "with you" formula does appear in these post-biblical Jewish contexts it does so most frequently as a biblical phenomenon, that is, employed as part of a quotation or allusion, or within a context particularly characterized by biblical idiom and language. Only rarely does the formula find fresh application beyond the biblical narrative, in the concrete situation within the world and words of the post-biblical authors themselves. As part of ongoing theological reflection the formula is often subject to redefinition and recharacterization along softer terminological lines.

The reticence among some post-biblical Jewish writers to employ the "with you" formula may indicate a growing circumspection regarding use of the divine Name. It may also reflect an evolution within a Judaism dealing

¹⁰⁰ See more examples: *Ant* 4.122, 128 (Deut 1:42); *Ant* 4.185 (Judg 7:12); *Ant* 5.42; 6.57; (1 Sam 10:7); *Ant* 6.181 (1 Sam 17:32, 37); *Ant* 6.196 (1 Sam 18:14); *Ant* 6.231 (1 Sam 20:13); *Ant* 7.65 (2 Sam 5:10); *Ant* 7.91 (2 Sam 7:3); *Ant* 7.338 (1 Chr 22:11); *Ant* 7.357 (1 Ki 1:37); *Ant* 8.295 (2 Chr 15:12); *Ant* 8.394 (2 Chr 17:3); *Ant* 11.259 (Esth 6:13).

¹⁰¹ *Ant* 10.76; cf. 2 Chr 35:21; 1 Esd 1:25.

¹⁰² Cf. van Unnik, "Dominus", p.281.

on a more complex level with portrayal of divine presence and absence; with God's witness and otherness.¹⁰³ Some may thus have considered the language of the formula too bold, and used more "neutral" theological terms to describe divine nearness, support and deliverance.¹⁰⁴

More to the point, however, is the genre of these writings. The clear narrative-*heilsgeschichtlich* context for the OT formula is not often matched in these post-biblical Jewish writings; Judith and Josephus' *Antiquities* are probably closest to narrative in style, and they do re-employ and newly apply the formula occasionally. Hence there seems to be an implicit recognition of an acceptable literary context for the formula, that of the scriptural recounting of 'divine history'.

5.8. The Formula and Matthew

In terms of Matthew's first century environment, this review points to a common understanding of the divine "with you" formula as a 'biblical' expression. It was not simply a general utterance of divine favour, but bold scriptural shorthand employed within Israel's narrative accounts to highlight moments of Yahweh's dynamic, *heilsgeschichtlich* involvement as Saviour on behalf of his people.

In post-biblical Jewish literature the formula remains bound to the historical context and idiom of Israel's patriarchs, monarchs and prophets. Rarely do writers give the formula application to their own historical settings later than the second pre-Christian century.

Noteworthy for Matthew's employment of the "with you" formula is the absence in this literature of application of the formula's bold language to *contemporary* individuals and communities. In this sense Matthew appears responsible for the 're-introduction' of the formula. His application of the formula to Jesus is a bold theological thrust, given the apparent reticence of his contemporaries to apply the formula.

Matthew was particularly concerned with the definition of his new community's boundaries, and clearly drew upon his understanding of the Hebrew experience of Yahweh's "witness" as an integral element in defining his people. For Matthew the "with you" formula presented a powerful

¹⁰³But there is no support here for the stereo-type of an early Judaism which held to an inaccessible God; see Sanders' cautions, *Paul*, §1.10.

¹⁰⁴Cf. van Unnik, "Dominus", p.281.

vehicle, already foundational to Israel's faith, which could be reformulated to assert the divine messianic presence of his Emmanuel Jesus. He adopts the formula, not only as an effective way to express his community's continuation of Israel's "narrative-heilsgeschichtlich" experience of Yahweh's "being with" his people, but also as a surprising new characterization of Jesus.

Thus the "Yahweh is with us" of the nation Israel becomes the "Emmanuel-God with us" of Matthew's universal ἐκκλησία, and the divine "I am with you" of Yahweh becomes the divine "I am with you" of the risen Jesus. In this way vital continuity is asserted between the old covenant community and the new ἐκκλησία of Jesus, yet with boundaries redefined.

The proximity of this connection is striking in another way. The last verse in Matthew's Hebrew Bible was probably Cyrus' proclamation to the returning exiles:

"Yahweh the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, *may Yahweh his God be with him*. Let him go up." (2 Chr 36:23)

Here is no less than a significant mandate for Matthew's attempts at continuity and redefinition. Cyrus, an "outsider", commissions a new chapter in the narrative-heilsgeschichtlich story of God's people. The boundaries of "his people" are somewhat open, God's supra-ethnic sovereignty is reaffirmed, and his divine "witness" is declared as critical to the task of rebuilding his community and place of presence. Hence Matthew takes up his story in these terms.

CHAPTER 6. MT 1:23: THE BIRTH OF THE "GOD-WITH-US" MESSIAH

The foregoing conclusions about the rhetorical function of Matthew's presence motif have resulted from applying a particular set of questions to the text as a narrative story. Another set of questions can be applied, to access the presence motif as an element within the evangelist's redactional activity. If the previous exercise was one of reading and interpretation à la Krieger's "mirror", the following conforms more to his "window", for here the text finds orientation in the context and activities in which it originated, and the reader's reading is refined thereby. But here historical data and redactional evidence are employed to inform our reading of the Gospel; the Gospel is not read in order to find historical evidence for the purpose of historical reconstruction.¹

Within this second set of questions, a number apply specifically to the subject of this chapter: Matthew's introduction of Jesus by means of the Emmanuel prophecy. 1) What redactional considerations can further illuminate the Emmanuel quotation and infancy narrative, in contrast to, refinement or validation of our reading in Chapter 3? 2) What does Matthew's redactional activity tell us about the relation of the infancy narrative to the gospel whole? 3) How does Matthew employ the Isaiah prophecy, and 4) what is the evangelist's relationship to the OT? 5) What are some of the theological and christological implications of the Emmanuel quotation?

6.1. Exegetical Considerations

Any investigation of Matthew's infancy narrative which turns to the secondary literature can quickly become overwhelmed by the centuries-old preponderance of interest in issues of patriarchy, παρθένος, and procreation

¹See Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.5. E.g., Brown's separation of Mt 1-2 into hypothetical pre-Matthean units of traditions tends towards the latter exercise - historical reconstruction *per se*; see *Birth*, pp.107ff, 154-9; also Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.234ff; Davis, "Tradition", pp.404-21.

sans partner.² Commentary on the Emmanuel naming has often come as a secondary appendage to these discussions.

Such an order of emphasis, however, is an inversion of the story's own priorities, in favour of subsequent ecclesial considerations.³ In reality, the narrator summarizes the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth with little interest in the event *per se*, and without further reference later in the Gospel.⁴ Those elements he does make rhetorically significant, however - Jesus' radical continuity and discontinuity with Israel and the OT, his role as the "God with us" Messiah, and the acceptance/rejection paradigm initiated by Joseph, the magi and Jerusalem - thereafter prove fundamental to the entire story. On a redactional level, then, these key themes and paradigms of the infancy narrative which prove recurrent in the story must be considered of greater importance to Matthew than the birth details.⁵

The redaction critical implications of the Mt 1-2 narrative have been pursued at length by others, in recent years ranging from Raymond Brown's solidly post-Vatican II *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* and *The Birth of the Messiah*, to Jane Schaberg's potent feminist interpretations in *The Illegitimacy of Jesus*. But in terms of the discussion here, it is preferable to focus on the priorities highlighted within the story itself, and their relation to Jesus as Emmanuel Messiah.

The well-known birth account of Mt 1:18-25 provides the immediate context for the author's employment of the Emmanuel quotation. The elements of this account, of the wider narrative introduction (Mt 1-2) and of the gospel story as a whole, provide three concentric rings of context. In

²Cf. the discussions of Box, *Birth*; Boslooper, *Birth*; Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*; Brown, *Birth*, pp.517-33; Luz, *Matthew* 1-7, pp.123-7.

³Cf. the silence of the NT on the events of Jesus' birth, apart from Matthew and Luke; cf. Mk 1:1ff; 6:3; Jn 1:45; 7:42; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:5-11; Rom 1:3; cf. Campenhausen, *Birth*, pp.12ff; Taylor, *Birth*, pp.1-20. More penetrating questions need to be asked regarding the sort of social environment in which the virginal conception and its concomitant doctrines arose, and gained such prominence. How much of the early and subsequent church's emphasis on these doctrines grew out of a particular cultural male view of virginity, female 'purity' and human sexual nature? Schaberg, Anderson and others are beginning to pursue some of these difficult issues.

⁴Apart from 13:55 (cf. 12:46-49), where some have seen the reference to Jesus as "the carpenter's son" as directly contradicting the virgin birth, see discussion in Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, pp.456f. But this hardly allows for any rhetorical subtlety, e.g., the author's employment of irony in revealing the blindness of Jesus' hometown.

⁵See Stendahl, "Quis", pp.60-2; Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p.25.

contrast to the colourful stories of Luke's infancy narratives, Matthew's are basic sketches, used to serve his very deliberate scriptural proofs of Jesus' messiahship. Matthew's initial presentation of Jesus is one of anticipation and fulfilment - 1:18-2:23 contains five of Matthew's eleven formula quotations, along with numerous allusions to OT motifs. Jesus' birth, his messianic mission, the visit of the magi and his family's geographical movements are all carefully related to the fulfilment of OT prophecy.

Mt 1:18-25 is narrated around several visible redactional themes, evident in Matthew's language: Joseph, the dominant actor (Ἰωσήφ 5x); the birth announcement of Jesus (τίκτω - υἱὸν 3x); the naming and interpretation of Jesus (καλέω - ὄνομα 3x). Thus the pericope's most striking characteristic: it speaks a second time about the pregnancy, the birth of the son and his name - this time a different name "Emmanuel" (1:22f).

Matthew carefully explains to the reader that Mary is pregnant ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου (1:18). It is notable that Joseph does not find this out until the angel's revelation in 1:20, but the reader is never allowed to suspect what Joseph presumes in 1:19 regarding Mary's infidelity.⁶ Matthew's language for Mary's conception and delivery of the baby is unexceptional.⁷ The use of ἐκ with a genitive noun following ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα can denote the male member responsible for the pregnancy.⁸ The

⁶For some critics this evokes an apologetic motif in Matthew's story (see Dibelius, *Tradition*, p.128; Stendahl, "Quis", pp.59ff; Davies, *Setting*, pp.286-315), which may include the four women of the genealogy (see Beare, *Earliest*, p.30; Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p.11; Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.52). For calumnies about Jesus' birth and infancy in the Talmud see Herford, *Christianity*; but dating is problematic.

⁷Brown, however, bases several of his assertions upon a presumption of Matthew's extraordinary use of this language. E.g., he notes that no substantive for 'child' appears in 1:18 or 20 (*Birth*, p.124).

This is hardly the point of the phrase ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα, for this common idiom never appears in biblical use with a substantive for child; as in English, 'conceiving' or 'becoming pregnant' naturally assumes the substantive 'child'. This is true in the LXX and NT: cf. Gen 16:4, 5, 11; 25:21; 30:41; 38:18, 24; 38:25; Ex 2:2, 22; 21:22; Nu 11:12; Judg 13:3, 5, 7; 2 Sam 11:15; 2 Kng 4:17; 8:12; 15:16; 1 Chr 7:23; Isa 7:14; 8:3; 26:18; Hos 14:1; Mt 1:23; 24:19; Mk 13:17; Lk 1:31; 21:23; 1 Th 5:3; Rev 12:2.

⁸Contra Waetjen, "Genealogy", pp.220-5, who claims the ἐκ phrase never refers to the male agent; so too Brown, *Birth*, pp.124f, 137; Anderson, "Gender", p.10. But this use is found in LXX Gen 38:25 where ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ... ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχω refers to Tamar's pregnancy by Judah (cf. 38:18). Thus the argument cannot be made from Matthew's terminology alone that the Holy Spirit did not perform as the male member in union with Mary.

Spirit here, however, is obviously Yahweh's,⁹ and is to be seen as the divine creative agent (cf. Gen 1:2; Ezek 37:1-14). Matthew's point is again one of theocentricity; he shows little interest in any physiological implications within the statement.

In 1:19 (and v.16) Joseph is designated Mary's husband, and in 1:20, 24 she is his wife, matrimonial consent having been exchanged.¹⁰ He is called δίκαιος; in the immediate context this refers to his decision not to expose Mary to shame. But the word is also a basic introduction to Joseph's character as a whole, and it fits well Matthew's employment of the word. He is δίκαιος inwardly and outwardly; outwardly in his obedience to the divorce laws, and inwardly in being faithful to God's revelatory word spoken to him over and again (1:19, 24; 2:14, 21, 22).¹¹

Within Matthew's sequence of angelic dream appearances, and in the Gospel as a whole,¹² the pattern of a genitive absolute with a post-positive δὲ and ἰδοὺ (1:20: ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ) is an important introduction. Here it not only connects the angel's appearance with the preceding plot sequence, but ἰδοὺ "points to a thing unexpected",¹³ in this case the redactional highlighting of the birth announcement.

The ἄγγελος κυρίου delivers Matthew's sequence of dream appearances to Joseph in 1:20, 2:13 and 19. The same figure appears in the OT where it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the angel of Yahweh and Yahweh himself,¹⁴ and the language is reminiscent of the אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה from the accounts

⁹ According to Moule, *Idiom*, pp.11f, the articular and anarthrous use of 'Holy Spirit' "is extremely difficult to reduce to consistency," but should not generally be interpreted as meaning less than God's Holy Spirit.

¹⁰ See the discussions of μνηστεύομαι in Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, pp.365-8; Brown, *Birth*, pp.123f.

¹¹ So Mohrlang, *Matthew*, p.114. Δίκαιος Mt:17 (with few synoptic parallels), Mk:2, Lk:11; δικαιοσύνη Mt:7, Mk:0, Lk:1. The δικαιοσύνη/δίκαιος/δίκαιοι group in Matthew consistently includes outward obedience and inward goodness, so Strecker, *Weg*, pp.149-58; Hill, *Words*, pp.127ff; Przybylski, *Righteousness*, pp.77-104. Contra those who narrow δίκαιος in 1:19 in contrast to Matthew's wider use, e.g., Brown, *Birth*, p.125; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.203. For a wider view of Torah in Palestinian Judaism see Sanders, *Paul*, pp.76-84, 419-28; cf. Barth, *TIM*, pp.138ff; Mohrlang, pp.95ff, 113f and references.

¹² Cf. 2:1, 13, 19; 9:10, 18, 32; 12:46; 17:5; 26:47; 28:11.

¹³ Bengel, *Gnomon*; in Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.206. Ἰδοὺ: Mt:62; Mk:7; Lk:57.

¹⁴ Cf. Gen 16:7-13; 21:17f; 22:11-14; 31:11-13; Ex 3:2-4; Nu 12:2ff; Judg 2:1ff; 6:12-14; 13:2ff; 2 Kings 19:35ff; Isa 63:9; Hos 12:5; see von Rad, *Theology 1*, p.286.

of Ishmael's and Samson's births (Gen 16:1-16; Judg 13:2-25). As part of the typical OT "birth announcement" the angel in each case announces conception and birth and reveals the child's name; likewise in Mt 1:20ff.

These three basic elements in Matthew have literal agreement with precedents in several LXX angelic birth announcements.¹⁵

ἄγγελος κυρίου	Gen 16:7f, 11; Judg 13:3
ἰδού	Gen 16:11; Judg 13:3, 5; Isa 7:14
ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχειν	Gen 16:11; Judg 13:5; Isa 7:14
καλεῖν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ	Gen 16:11; 17:19; Isa 7:14; cf. Judg 13:6
τίκτειν υἱόν	Gen 16:11; 17:19 Judg 13:5; Isa 7:14

But ἄγγελος κυρίου is here in Matthew a shorthand expression for Yahweh's 'visible voice' among his people; i.e., the angel "appears" (φαίνω¹⁶) only to speak as a holy messenger, not as Yahweh himself. Although Matthew does not seem to have picked up on the emergence in some speculative circles of later Judaism of a broad range of angelic intercessors and intermediaries,¹⁷ the angel provides clear evidence of Yahweh's active presence with his people.

Four times Joseph receives revelation in Matthew κατ' ὄναρ (1:20; 2:13, 19, 22), the magi once (2:12) and Pilate's wife once (27:19). Matthew is alone in the NT and LXX in using this expression. It provides a significant window to both his literary practice (the inclusio of dream scenes at the beginning and end of the Gospel) and his understanding of the theological importance of Gentiles within the mission of Jesus (revelation κατ' ὄναρ to the magi and to Pilate's wife).¹⁸

The Semitic formula for naming in birth oracles, καλεῖν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ¹⁹ is applied, and "Jesus" is interpreted by the angel's etymological

¹⁵See the discussion and bibliographies in Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, p.116; Brown, *Birth*, 155-9.

¹⁶Mt:13; Mk:1; Lk:2.

¹⁷See Brown, *Birth*, pp.129, 260; Dunn, *Christology*, pp.149-54. Cf. the ἄγγελος κυρίου of Lk 1-2; here apocalyptic angelology has had an influence, according to Tatum, "Stories", p.21. See the discussions of principal angels in Rowland, *Heaven*, pp.94-113; Hurtado, *God*, pp.71-92.

¹⁸Cf. ὄραμα in Acts 16:9f and 18:9, and τοῦ θεοῦ ... ἄγγελος in 27:23f. Brown, *Birth*, p.129, notes the use of ἐνύπνιον and ὕπνος in the LXX, as well as ὄραμα νυκτός in the patriarchal dream revelations. See ὄναρ in Josephus' account of Joseph, *Ant* 2, 63.

¹⁹Cf. ~~ἰσχυρὸς~~ ~~ἰσχυρὸς~~ ~~ἰσχυρὸς~~. Cf. Gen 16:11f; 17:19; 1 Kings 1:20; 1 Macc 6:17; see Mt 1:21, 23, 25; 2:23; Lk 1:13, 31, 59;

explanation, "for he will save his people from their sins".²⁰ This may reflect a popular understanding in which "Jesus" means something like "Yahweh saves",²¹ but in context the explanation stands as no less than the Gospel's thesis statement. The entire Gospel is to be read in light of the equation between Jesus' double naming and explanation in 1:21 and 1:23. According to the narrator this is Yahweh's own declaration through his angel of the future greatness of the messianic person and mission of Jesus.

In 1:21 "his people" refers to the OT people of God, but as discussed above in Chapter 3, contrary to many commentators the term is not a static signifier throughout the story. By the close of the narrative introduction (Mt 1-2) the fate of ὁ λαός αὐτοῦ in relation to Jesus' mission has become a central tension in the story. The term ὁ λαός most often refers specifically to the people of Israel (2:4, 6; 15:8; 21:23; 26:3, 5, 47; 27:1, 25, 64) but at other points broadens out to be more inclusive (4:23; 13:15) and even distinctly gentile in reference (4:16). Hence the term cannot be approached as a static, technical reference to Israel, but is best understood alongside the flexible narrative characterization of οἱ ὄχλοι.

The fulfilment formula in 1:22 is clearly Matthew's language.

(ἵνα) πληρωθῇ - Mt:9; Mk:0; Lk:1

τοῦτο . . . γέγονεν - Mt:3; Mk:0; Lk:0

τὸ ρηθέν - Mt:12; Mk:0; Lk:0

διὰ τοῦ προφήτου (and similar phrases) - Mt:13; Mk:0; Lk:1

"All this", Matthew claims, fulfills the original, divinely-uttered birth prediction of Isaiah, wherein the child was to be named Emmanuel. τοῦτο ὅλον is striking in its occurrence only here among the fulfilment quotations. The implication is that everything prior to 1:22 - the divine plan in Israel's history, the engrafting into Davidic stock, the Holy Spirit's intervention, Joseph's struggle and (pre-eminently) the angel's annunciation and naming - was foretold and now is understood in the birth of Jesus as meaning Emmanuel, "God with us".²²

²⁰Cf. the related statement in Judg 13:5: αὐτὸς ἄρχεται σῶζειν τὸν Ἰσραήλ, and the similar prophecies of future greatness couched in birth annunciations: Gen 16:11; 17:19; Isa 7:14; Lk 1:13, 31.

²¹Cf. Ps 130:8 (יְיָ יִשְׁעִי = "Yahweh is help"); Judg 13:5; Acts 4:12; see BAGD, pp.373f; Allen, *Matthew*, p.9; McNeile, *Matthew*, p.8; Lagrange, *Matthieu*, p.15; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.239; Brown, *Birth*, p.131. The etymology "God's help" was probably known among both Hebrew and Greek-speaking Christians. Among the latter, Philo's etymology is similar: Joshua means σωτηρία κυρίου; *Mut.Nom.*, 121, on Num 13:16.

²²See Tatum, "Stories", p.123.

In the NT Matthew is alone in quoting Isa 7:14,²³ and unlike almost all his other formula quotations the text here corresponds almost identically with the LXX. His editorial use of καλέσουσιν (LXX καλέσεις) has a deeper rhetorical purpose in context, as discussed in Chapter 3: "they", i.e., "his people" (1:21) will call him Emmanuel.²⁴

The annunciation in 1:21 and the formula quotation in 1:23 echo each other quite closely:

1:21	1:23
τέξεται δὲ υἱόν	ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει
καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ	καὶ τέξεται υἱόν
Ἰησοῦν	καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ
αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ	Ἐμμανουήλ
ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν	ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον
	μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός

The distinction between καλέσεις and καλέσουσιν allows Matthew to apply Ἐμμανουήλ to Jesus as a narrative characterization by which "his people" will recognize him.

Matthew does not necessarily translate the Semitic words and phrases of his Gospel, so his careful attention to the meaning of Emmanuel in 1:23 indicates the great importance of the name to him.²⁵ Matthew's translation (ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον)²⁶ of this Hebrew name - **אֱמָנוּאֵל** - for his readers, has been interpreted a number of ways. Some have concluded that in μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός he is calling Jesus 'God', drawing support from the 1:23 - 28:20 inclusio, wherein θεός in 1:23 becomes Jesus' own ἐγὼ εἰμι in 28:20, and from Matthew's ongoing emphasis on Jesus' presence with (μετά) the disciples, and as a theological corollary of παρθένος. But Matthew (and the NT) display little interest in calling Jesus 'God', and the argument finds no textual support in Matthew outside 1:23.²⁷ Even the word order of Ἐμμανουήλ ... μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός raises some questions about where the proper

²³Some commentators also see its influence on Lk 1:26-33, e.g., Marshall, *Luke*, p.66; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.212.

²⁴See Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.239. Frankemölle too quickly finds the church as the subject of καλέσουσιν, *Jahwebund*, pp.16-18.

²⁵See Malina, "Structure", p.91.

²⁶Never in the LXX; elsewhere only in Mk 5:41; 15:22, 34; Jn 1:41; Acts 4:36; in the same formula. In 27:33, 46 Matthew prefers ὅ/τοῦτ' ἐστὶν to ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον; cf. Mk 15:22, 34.

²⁷See Brown, *Jesus*, pp.1-33.

emphasis should be given in translation. The more accurate sense might be "with us is God".²⁸

But again it is the story's own context which provides its interpretive keys. In 1:21 "Jesus" is given an active, functional explanation as Israel's Messiah, and as the fulfilment of prophecy in 1:22f, little room is provided for any ontological equation. Matthew's language about Jesus' remains highly operative and relational, especially with his Father-Son emphasis, with distinct roles and clear heaven-earth spatial relations (cf. Mt 11:25-30). The introductory frame of the narrative has thus presented Jesus as the culminative embodiment of the divine will in history and in Israel and, if not "incarnational" in intent, 1:22f does stamp Jesus' coming and mission as the unique arrival of Yahweh's presence on behalf of his people. The translation of Ἐμμανουήλ is given to make explicit its gospel-wide characterization of Jesus' mission, and to highlight the congruence of both names, since together they speak of Yahweh's saving presence.²⁹

The reader's attention is swiftly drawn to the fact of the prominent, disruptive placement of the name "Emmanuel", its translation, its contrast with Jesus, its unusual title. The translation, "God with us" evokes the broad range of similar OT assertions of Yahweh's presence, seen in Chapter 5. The focus given to the motif here also displaces critics' attempts to make other christological themes dominant in the whole prologue.³⁰ Here Matthew deliberately initiates his presence motif in explicit form; this masthead, *that Jesus represents God's presence among his people*, now hangs over the whole Gospel. Unknown to the reader, this motif in 1:23 opens a major inclusio of divine presence which will close, but not end, with Jesus' final promise in 28:20, and will permeate the story throughout (e.g., 17:17; 18:20; 25:31-46; 26:29) .

²⁸Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.217.

²⁹Weiss, *Matthäus*, p.43: Emmanuel "wesentlich denselben Inhalt hat wie der Name Jesus, sofern der, mit welchem Gott allezeit in hilfreicher Gemeinschaft steht, allein im Stande ist, seinem Volk die messianische Errettung zu bringen".

³⁰E.g., Tatum, "Origin": son of David; Kingsbury, *passim*: Son of God; see below.

6.2. Tradition and Redaction

It is not difficult to highlight the differences between Mt 1-2 and the rest of the Gospel. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, the distinct stance of the narrator in relation to Jesus and the implied reader, the silence and passivity of Jesus, the temporal setting, and the deliberate situating of Jesus within the story's focal themes delineate Mt 1-2 as the story's opening narrative frame.

Some of the birth stories, for all the drama and significance they add to the circumstances of Jesus' origins, would appear to have had little impact upon the remainder of the Gospel. Nowhere outside the initial account do we find reference to the sort of political and social ruckus which the visit of the eastern magi apparently caused in Jerusalem. The Bethlehem birth, Jesus' escape from Herod's terrible massacre, and his family's move from the south in his early childhood are never again mentioned, and are particularly absent from 13:53-58. The account there, rather, gives the impression of Joseph's family being regular homegrown townsfolk. And there is no reference anywhere back to the Holy Spirit's generation of this Messiah child in an extraordinary conception.

As with many discussions of sources and traditions behind gospel texts, supporters can be found for each of the three basic positions in relation to Mt 1-2:³¹ 1) Matthew wrote it freely, with minimal reference to tradition;³² 2) Matthew synthesized a number of originally separate elements;³³ 3) Matthew adapted what was already essentially a unified story.³⁴

A number of more or less commonly shared observations have shaped the discussion. It has been argued that if one extracts what is obviously Matthean, i.e., the formula quotations, the text reads more smoothly without

³¹See the discussions in Bultmann, *History*, pp.291-4; Davis, "Tradition", pp.414-21; Vögtle, *Messias*; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.294-300; Brown, *Birth*, pp.104-21; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*; pp.190-5.

³²See Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.55; Goulder, *Midrash*, pp.228-42; Gundry, *Matthew*, pp.13-41.

³³See Dibelius, *Tradition*, pp.128f. Many scholars advocate that only 2:1-23 are pre-Matthean narratives, while 1:18-25 is Matthew's composition; e.g., Vögtle, *Kindheitsgeschichte*.

³⁴See Strecker, *Weg*, pp.51-5; Brown, *Birth*, pp.104ff; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, p.102; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.191-5.

them.³⁵ The genealogy appears to have a traditional basis.³⁶ And there are numerous resemblances between Mt 1:18-2:23 and the haggadic traditions and infancy legends about Moses.³⁷

But there is little consensus on the process and stages of formation and on what might justifiably be seen as redactional designs on meaning. Raymond Brown's well-known attempt at thorough disentanglement of tradition and redaction in Mt 1-2 highlights two problematic implications: 1) the possibility of such an exercise losing its relevance for the meaning of the present text by undue dependence on speculative reconstruction,³⁸ and 2) the doubt cast over any one set of interpretive results by the disagreement of others.³⁹ Much of this debate seems also to project the post-Guggenheim presumptions of a print-based culture onto first-century texts and traditions.⁴⁰ As W.B. Tatum asserts, Matthew may have been committing to writing for the first time a cycle of oral infancy traditions known in his community.⁴¹

The balance must arise from a clear recognition of the rhetorical unity within Mt 1-2, and between Mt 1-2 and 3ff, brought to the story by the author through significant structural, thematic and literary links. The theme of the genealogy in 1:1, γένεσις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, is echoed by the appearance of the same terminology in 1:18, while the narrative of 1:18-25, with its angelic revelation, constitutes the critical explanation of how Jesus has broken the 'was the father of' (ἐγέννησεν) pattern of the genealogy in 1:16.⁴² And what may appear as a large contradiction between

³⁵See especially Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*.

The genealogy could be pre-Matthean (Strecker, *Weg*, p.38), from an existing Jewish monarchical list of Davidids (Brown, *Birth*, pp.69f; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, p.108), or a Matthean adaptation of the above list and/or biblical models (Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.314; Johnson, *Genealogies*, p.210; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.165-7, 186f).

³⁷But these traditions are not direct antecedents. See Josephus, *Ant* 2.210-16; cf. 2.205-9; LAB 9:10; ExR 1:13 on Ex 1:15; see further references in Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.117f; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.192-4.

³⁸As in Brown's well-known attempt, *Birth*, pp.107f, 154ff.

³⁹Cf. Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.234ff; Davis, "Tradition", pp.404-21.

⁴⁰See Staley, *Kiss*, pp.1-5.

⁴¹"Stories", p.69. Cf. Allen, *Matthew*, p.lxi; Streeter, *Gospels*, p.266; Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.55; Knox, *Sources 2*, p.126.

⁴²So Stendahl, "Quis", who sees 1:18-25 as the "enlarged footnote" of the genealogy's crucial point; see also Weiss, *Matthäus*, p.40; Zahn, *Matthäus*, p.77; McNeile, *Matthew*, p.6; Lagrange, *Matthieu*, p.8; Schlatter, *Matthäus*,

the patriarchal and Davidic lineage in the genealogy, and the lack of human fatherhood in vv.18-25, is resolved by Joseph's enactment of legal paternity - he obediently takes (παράλαβεῖν, παρέλαβεν, vv.20, 24) his wife and names (καλέσεις, ἐκάλεσεν, vv.20, 25) the child.⁴³ Similarities between Matthew's two accounts of Jesus' birth, the genealogical in 1:1-17 and the narrative in 1:18-25, and the two accounts of creation, the numerical in Gen 1:1ff and the narrative in Gen 2:4ff, have also been pointed out.⁴⁴

A variety of descriptions have been applied to 1:18-25, including legend, haggadic midrash, and even christological midrash.⁴⁵ A majority of scholars would now agree that the pericope comes from Matthew's hand, or that he at least reformulated it in his own terms.⁴⁶ I.e., the formula quotation is indubitably his (1:22f), as well as the connection to the genealogy in 1:18a, and the substantial linguistic and material interconnection of the three "dream narratives" (1:20f, 24f; 2:13-15, 19-23).⁴⁷ According to the canons of form criticism, the pericope also amalgamates other forms, including an angelic birth annunciation,⁴⁸ and within the double scope of the double naming an oracle of divine name-giving in vv.22-23, borrowed from Isaiah's prophetic tradition, and couched within the form of a Matthean fulfillment formula quotation.

The structural, thematic and literary themes which tie the infancy narrative internally and to the gospel proper are echoed by consistent marks

p.7; Schmid, *Matthäus*, p.44; Milton, "Structure", pp.175-81; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.237; Brown, *Birth*, p.133.

⁴³See Mishnah *B.Bat.*8:6; cf. Lk 1:60-63; Brown, *Birth*, p.139. The Syriac Sinaiticus says in 1:16, 20, 25 that Joseph begat Jesus, and that Mary gave birth to a son to Joseph, perhaps a strong affirmation of Joseph's legal paternity as genuine paternity, not simply adoption. Stendahl, "Quis", p.61; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.237; Brown, *Birth*, p.139.

⁴⁴Davies, *Setting*, p.71; Brown, *Birth*, p.140. Brown also notes that the two parts of Mt 1 fit together smoothly in a fashion similar to the Adam - Noah genealogy in Gen 5:1-32 and the Noah narrative in 6:9ff.

⁴⁵Respectively: Bultmann, *Tradition*, p.291; Trilling, *Christusverkündigung*, p.27; Pesch, "Ausführungsformel" 2, p.87. See a fuller discussion and bibliography in Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.12-17.

⁴⁶On the former see Dibelius, *Tradition*, p.128; Pesch, "Ausführungsformel" 2, p.88; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.310; on the latter see Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.115-7.

⁴⁷See a comparison table in Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.196.

⁴⁸Cf. Gen 16:7-15; 17:1-3, 15-21; 21:3; Judg 13:3-5; Lk 1:29-31. The form of the birth announcement contains angel appearance, message and naming. See the analyses and bibliographies in Bultmann, *History*, p.292; Stendahl, "Quis", p.61; Brown, *Birth*, pp.155-9.

of Matthean style, language and organization which reflect much more than a cursory editing of existing traditions. The evangelist's penchant for repeating key phrases is evident in 1:18-25: *τίκτειν υἱόν* occurs three times (vv.21, 23, 25), *παραλαβεῖν* twice (vv.20, 24), and *καλοῦν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ* three times (vv.21, 23, 25),⁴⁹ thereby linking up the constituent parts of the pericope which have otherwise been assessed as distinct in form.

The list of vocabulary in 1:18-25 amply reflects the language particular to the rest of the Gospel,⁵⁰ even apart from the introductory formula of the fulfillment quotations, and those words in the passage which do not appear elsewhere in Matthew are in several cases made necessary by the unique requirements of the narrative.⁵¹ Thus, in terms of the agenda of the redaction critic, although Matthew's actual composition of the entire pericope will ever remain debated,⁵² the more important point is that he has definitely and definitively made the material his own.

The carefully organized structure of Matthew makes it unnatural to approach divergencies [between Mt and Lk] by a direct discussion of the 'source' or 'sources' behind Matt.1-2. Whatever the sources, Matthew works here with a clarity of purpose, which should allow us to find out what he thinks that he is doing with his material.⁵³

The infancy narrative reflects both internal and external unity with the Gospel. The rhetorical and thematic consistency evident in a narrative reading of the story is clear as well at a redactional level.

⁴⁹See Held, *TIM*, p.238.

⁵⁰See the discussion and references in Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.166-9. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.52, identifies the following expressions in 1:18-25 as Matthean: οὕτως, μή with the aorist subjunctive, θέλειν, ἐνθυμεῖσθαι, ἰδοῦ, ἄγγελος κυρίου, κατ' ὄναρ, φαίνεσθαι, φοβεῖσθαι, παραλαμβάνειν, τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν (cf. 26:56), ἵνα πληρωθῇ, ἕως, and ἐγείρειν. He concludes "that the section as a whole bears the stamp of the evangelist's manner." He also lists over 40 words and phrases which occur commonly in Mt 1-2 and the entire Gospel (pp.52f). Knox, *Sources 2*, p.125, wants to temper somewhat Kilpatrick's enthusiasm, but Luz's list is as extensive, *Matthew 1-7*, p.116.

Brown, *Birth*, p.105, based on Pesch, "Ausführungsformel" 2, pp.81-88, and Nellessen, *Kind*, pp.50-56, finds that 25 words in 1:18-2:23 are distinctly Matthean, out of a full list of 95 for the Gospel. See Morgenthaler, *Statistik*; also Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p.9.

⁵¹E.g., μνηστεύειν, συνέρχεσθαι, δειγματίζειν, λάθρα, μεθερμηνεύεσθαι and γινώσκειν with the meaning of sexual relations; see Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.52.

⁵²Held, *TIM*, p.238, has no doubt it is Matthew's composition.

⁵³Stendahl, "Quis", p.57.

Mt 1:22f: Placement

Given the rhetorical, structural and stylistic importance of 1:22f, the question of redactional design must be applied more specifically to the presence motif, here focused in the Emmanuel quotation. Matthew's common practice is to insert his formula quotations at the end of the pericope with which they are connected. In 1:18-25 the quotation's placement in the middle deliberately retains ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν at the end of the episode, as the narrative fulfilment of the angel's command to Joseph.

The evangelist performs an identical arrangement in Mt 21:1-7, where his insertion of a formula quotation occurs in a triple tradition (cf. Mk 11:1-7; Lk 19:28-35).⁵⁴

Setting of the scene	1:18-19	21:1
Command	1:20-21	21:2-3
Formula quotation	1:22-23	21:4-5
Execution of the command	1:24-25	21:6-7

On the assumption that the formula quotations are a unified group with a common design and function, and that their presence in material of varied origin displays their placement by Matthew in the Gospel's final redactional stratum⁵⁵, numerous scholars have concluded that 1:18-25 reads more smoothly and logically when freed of its latest redactional layer, the Emmanuel quotation of vv.22f. No longer are we faced with the apparent confusion of an angelic vision of one name and the prophetic oracle of a different one. Joseph, rather, receives the revelation and the angel's commands, wakes up, and obeys in straightforward fashion. The same assumption has also been extended to the entire infancy narrative. When stripped of its string of formula quotations, Mt 1-2 reads with greater coherence and verve.⁵⁶

But in light of the text's present shape, such an observation can lead in the other direction: rather than hiccups which interrupt the reading of an otherwise smooth narrative, the apparently obtrusive placement of the Emmanuel quotation and its four companions in Mt 1-2 can be seen as key to

⁵⁴ Pesch was the first to look carefully at this close parallel, "Ausführungsformel" 2, pp.79f, and the "formula of fulfilment": ποιέω + (ὡς or equivalent) + προσέταξεν or equivalent. See 30 OT references in Pesch, "Ausführungsformel" 1, p.225.

⁵⁵ Cf. Pesch, "Ausführungsformel" 2, pp.79f; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.234-6; cf. also Bultmann, *History*, p.291; Strecker, *Weg*, p.55; Tatum, "Stories", p.70.

⁵⁶ E.g., Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.165.

the Gospel's redactional and rhetorical design, for they signal the reader as to the story's interpretive framework.

The impact of the formula quotations in both 1:18-25 and 21:1-7 is thus heightened through their placement - they interrupt and interpret the narrative as direct comments by the narrator to the reader. This hardly makes the inserted Emmanuel quotation and its anticipated naming an incongruous or negligent element of the passage, as some discussions imply, citing its lack of immediate fulfilment.⁵⁷ The opposite is the case, if Matthew's story considerations are predominant. In fact, the added editorial explanation μεθερμηνεύόμενον in 1:23 brings into even sharper focus the quotation's anticipation that Jesus will be called "God with us". The heightened redactional emphasis on the Emmanuel naming turns its lack of immediate fulfilment into a gospel-wide expectation.⁵⁸

Redaction and Theology

If redactional analysis in Mt 1-2 does not provide us with a clear picture of the text's tradition history, it does highlight Matthew's evident interest in four main theological themes: Jesus' 1) Davidic sonship, 2) divine sonship, 3) mission to his people, and 4) identification as "Emmanuel - God with us". These are more valid indicators of the text's development than its attempted division based on distinctive elements of form. Running through every one of these four redactional focuses are the author's plot themes of theocentricity, acceptance-rejection and anticipation-fulfilment.

The core message of the infancy narrative is the birth of a messianic child of royal lineage.⁵⁹ The importance of Davidic sonship is verified by prominent use of the name and title (1:1, 6, 17, 20) and its emplotted significance within the narrative itself, at the heart of the genealogy, in the angel's address to Joseph, in the double command to take his wife and to

⁵⁷Cf. Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.231-4; Brown, *Birth*, pp.144f. Cf. Pesch's treatment of this insertion as part of a careful command-execution (Ausführungsschema) pattern; "Ausführungsformel" 2, pp.79-95.

⁵⁸Here is an example of where even careful tradition and redaction critical investigation can produce a conclusion -

All else, the prediction of the birth of a son, and the assigning of a name to him, are strictly speaking superfluous. (Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.239; cf. Strecker, *Weg*, p.54)

- which could derail the story's own logic, if given priority over rhetorical emphases.

⁵⁹Cf. Nolan, *Son*.

name her child, passing on his own Davidic lineage, and in Jesus' subsequent entanglements with Jerusalem.⁶⁰

Joseph's critical role in the whole of the infancy narrative emphasizes further the importance of Jesus' Davidic origin. That Matthew has made Joseph the most active player in the narrative's cast at this stage, as constant recipient of and respondent to divine revelation, entrusted with the patrilineal care of Yahweh's Messiah, dovetails well with the central significance being given to Davidic lineage.⁶¹ It is Joseph the δίκαιος, like the righteous Joseph of scripture, who hears God in dreams and obeys faithfully, steering and protecting his son Jesus through a series of 'Mosaic' crises.

The motif of Jesus' messianic mission to his people arises from the implications of the other three, and out of the narrator's own emphases. But in terms of the development of the infancy traditions, its key reference points are Jesus' designation as Χριστός (1:1, 16, 17, 18), the translations of "Jesus" and "Emmanuel" (1:21, 23), and the magi's and Herod's perceptions of him as Βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων (2:2), worthy of worship (2:2, 8, 11).⁶²

If Davidic sonship and messianic mission are commonly seen as original to the birth story, the entry of divine sonship to the picture is less clear.⁶³ Jesus' generation by the Holy Spirit, virginal conception and return from Egypt as ὁ υἱός μου, are most often viewed as later and mutually affirmative developments which reflect the growing intensity of the community's christological convictions, and offer apologetic reasoning

⁶⁰See especially Fuller, "Conception/Birth", pp.37-52.

⁶¹The parallel attestation of Joseph in Luke as ἐξ οἴκου Δαυίδ supports this as a core characteristic of the earliest birth traditions. Both infancy narratives have explicit reference to Davidic descent and a Bethlehem birth; cf. Mt 1:16, 20 and Lk 1:27, 32; 2:4; Mt 2:1 and Lk 2:4-6.

⁶²The narrator indicates that Herod and the Jerusalem leaders equate βασιλεὺς and Χριστός:

2:2 Magi: ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ τεχθεὶς Βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων

2:4 Herod: ποῦ ὁ Χριστὸς γεννᾶται

This narrative link between kingship and messiahship anticipates the same interchange of titles in the passion narrative; cf. 26:63, 68; 27:11, 17, 22, 29, 37.

⁶³For example, if the formula quotation of Mt 1:22f is a late addition to the tradition, prior to it Mary is nowhere called παρθένος. Natural conception would not be incompatible with ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου, seen in terms of theocentricity. But whether συνελθεῖν (1:18) indicates sexual relations, and when it and οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτήν (1:25) became part of the story, add further variables to the question. See Schaberg's development of some of these implications, *Illegitimacy*, pp.34ff.

against calumny. But within the text these elements are conjoined to produce the means and evidence of divine activity of Jesus' birth. The Holy Spirit acts as the agent of divine creation, and Mary's virginity is a physical reality which supports that divine act, and each element heightens the theocentricity of Jesus' origins and mission.

The last of these theological-redactional motifs, Emmanuel, "God with us", is readily identified as one of the formula quotations added to the infancy narrative. But its redactional priority is also evident. Among the formula quotations of Mt 1-2 it is easily the most prominent by virtue of its conspicuous placement in the middle of 1:18-25, its pointed elaboration with μεθερμηνεύόμενον, and its priority as the first fulfilment quotation of the story. But even as the fulfilment of a prophetic anticipation of Jesus' birth, in its use in Matthew the quotation itself anticipates a further fulfilment within the story: καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα Ἐμμανουήλ.

The capstone of Mt's birth story, then, from the temporal and theological viewpoint of redactional development, is his insertion of Isaiah's "Emmanuel, God with us" quotation and interpretation. This new element is added to the narrative of Jesus' naming: it is important for Matthew that Jesus is Emmanuel, for his messianic person and mission is and will be explained in terms of his agency of divine presence. In terms of all its redactional characteristics, the quotation and its explanation stand over against the events of the text with a dialogical function for the evangelist and reader. To elaborate what Luz has noted,⁶⁴ the inclusio of 1:23 and 28:20 creates a chiasmic, reciprocal relationship: in 28:16-20 the risen one makes his *earthly* teaching the basis for the mission of discipleship and his ongoing presence, while in 1:18-25 the earthly Jesus is already presented as the *exalted* Messiah, whose divine "witness" will become the defining characteristic of his community.

⁶⁴See Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.122f.

6.3. Isaiah 7:14

Matthew defines his birth story as the 'fulfilment' of Isaiah's original prediction of the conception and birth of the Emmanuel child. Matthew claims this fulfilment despite Isaiah's apparent lack of interest in a virgin birth, a divine child or a Messiah to be born centuries later.

Isa 7:14 was originally directed to King Ahaz of Judah, under threat during the Syro-Ephraimite war of 734 BCE, and probably unconvinced by Isaiah's counsel of neutrality and the prophet's initial attempts in 7:1-9 to assure him that the massed forces of Syria and Israel posed no threat.⁶⁵ Isaiah's sign is delivered in anger at Ahaz's obstinacy, and is a mixed prophecy of hope through the Emmanuel child and coming disaster for Judah. The identity of the mother and her child is unclear.⁶⁶ She might be seen as personifying Zion, and Emmanuel as the collective remnant. If she is a royal consort of Ahaz she could be giving birth to a future Davidic king (e.g., Hezekiah).⁶⁷ She might be an unknown woman, or the totality of pregnant women at that moment, with Emmanuel symbolizing their corporate faith in Yahweh's deliverance. She could be Isaiah's wife whose delivery of the Emmanuel child would then be the second of the prophet's three children bearing significant sign-names in his ministry (cf. Isa 7:3, 8:3).

הַעֲלִיזָה, with the definite article, tilts the argument in favour of one particular woman known to both Isaiah and Ahaz.⁶⁸ Isaiah, as the voice of the prophecy, is likely to play some part in the conferment of the child's name. This would support the identity of a woman within the prophet's social circle, while the behaviour pattern of Isa 7:3 and 8:3 adds some weight to her being his wife, and Emmanuel being his child.⁶⁹

⁶⁵See the various discussions of Ahaz's historical situation in Clements, *Isaiah*, pp.10f, 78ff; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, pp.136ff, 173ff; Thompson, *Situation*, pp.30f; Watts, *Isaiah*, pp.96ff; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, pp.289f.

⁶⁶On this question of identity, see Mowinckel, *Cometh*, pp.112-14; Fuller, *Foundations*, p.24; Dellling, *παρθένος*, pp.831f; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, p.103; Rice, "Immanuel", pp.220-7; Berg, "Identität", pp.7-13.

⁶⁷So held later Jewish interpreters; cf. Justin, *Dialogue*, 67.1; *Exod.Rab.* on 12:29; *Num.Rab.* on 7:48. On the child as Hezekiah see Lindars, *Apologetic*, p.215.

⁶⁸Cf. Kaiser, *Isaiah*, p.156; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, pp.290f; Watts, *Isaiah*, pp.98, 289; Brown, *Birth*, pp.147f.

⁶⁹Numerous difficulties remain, however: cf. Kaiser, *Isaiah*, pp.154f, 160.

Whatever these historical parameters, Isaiah is at minimum announcing the natural, imminent birth of a sign-child to be called "with-us-God", a name which will embody the assurance of God's dynamic power in the midst of his people. The symbolism of the child and his name will be confirmed early in his life by peace in Judah and desolation of the northern lands, mixed with the threat of hardship for Judah.⁷⁰ The force of the prophecy in the MT lies almost entirely with the name Emmanuel, the prophet's sign to king Ahaz that Yahweh's protection will soon intervene to carry Judah past its present crisis. Isa 7:14ff thus points to deliverance, but Emmanuel is not identified as the deliverer.⁷¹

The text's subsequent transitions into the LXX and Mt 1:23 involve several developments.⁷²

MT: Behold the young woman (נַעֲרָה) will/has conceived (הָרָה)

and will give birth to a son,
and she will call his name לֵאמָנּוּ

LXX: Behold the virgin (ἡ παρθένος) will conceive (ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει⁷³)
and will give birth to a son,
and you will call (καλέσεις) his name Ἐμμανουήλ.

Mt: Behold the virgin (ἡ παρθένος) will conceive (ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει)
and will give birth to a son,
and they will call (καλέσουσιν) his name Ἐμμανουήλ.
[which means, 'God with us'].

The LXX translation of נַעֲרָה by ἡ παρθένος has been widely discussed and need not concern us too directly here.⁷⁴ Even if the translators understood the term in an exact technical sense, the LXX passage requires only that someone who is now a virgin will conceive naturally.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Isa 7:14 in context appears to be a two-edged sign with good and bad news; for interpretations see Rice, "Isa 7:15-17", pp.363-9. Cf. the bad news/good news of לֵאמָנּוּ in Isa 8:8, 10.

⁷¹ See Gray, *Isaiah*, p.136; and cf. Edgar, "Interpretation", pp.47-54.

⁷² See the bibliography in Boslooper, *Birth*, p.203 and various comments concerning LXX text form and Matthean adoption of the quotation in Stendahl, *School*, pp.97f, 199; and "Quis", p.60; Christian, *Jesus*, p.49; Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.329; Davis, "Tradition", p.412; Davies, *Setting*, p.72; van Unnik, "Dominus", p.293; Gundry, *OT*, pp.89-91; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.229-53; Brown, *Birth*, pp.143-153.

⁷³ ἔξει = \aleph A Q; λή(μ)πεται = B L C. Brown, *Birth*, p.145, sees the latter as the dominant reading, but the former is accepted in Ziegler's Göttingen LXX and is the reading in Rahlfs' LXX.

⁷⁴ See Watts, *Isaiah*, p.97; Boslooper, *Birth*, pp.203ff; Box, *Birth*, p.16; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.203-31; Brown, *Birth*, pp.148f, 523f.

⁷⁵ See Box, *Birth*, p.169; Brown, *Birth*, p.524; Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, pp.69f.

Matthew's quotation follows the LXX. As noted in Chapter 3, καλέσουσιν instead of LXX καλέσεις demonstrates the evangelist's adaptation of the text to his rhetorical purposes, in which "they" = "his people" of 1:21.⁷⁶ Isa 7:14 was not the basis for the composition of Mt 1:18-25, but the prophecy was added deliberately with its fulfilment formula as the redactor's final act of interpretation of his birth narrative.⁷⁷ Divine utterance and the word form of the birth annunciation link both passages together, as well as the LXX translation of אֲנִי יְהוָה in Isa 8:8 (μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός) and 8:10 (ὅτι μεθ' ἡμῶν κύριος ὁ θεός), an OT formula for divine presence probably well known to Matthew.⁷⁸

But why in particular did Matthew choose Isa 7:14 to perform his first fulfilment quotation, and as the interpretive foundation for Jesus' birth narrative? Scholars have typically highlighted linguistic and conceptual connections, such as the birth annunciation and pregnancy of a παρθένος.⁷⁹ Capitalizing on these elements, Matthew unwittingly or deliberately eschewed the MT and LXX contexts in favour of the scriptural support the text could provide for Jesus' Davidic and divine origins,⁸⁰ and for his immediate didactic and apologetic needs.

⁷⁶Contra Strecker, *Weg*, p.55. "Matthew's καλέσουσιν could easily be a deliberate targumization of the Hebrew *qr't*, to fit the fact that Jesus was not, in fact, called 'Emmanuel'" (Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.229). The attempt by some commentators to see in καλέσουσιν a third person plural impersonal misses its connection to the critical question of "his people".

⁷⁷See Boers, "Matthew 1:18-2:23", p.224; and many others.

⁷⁸Twice more אֲנִי יְהוָה occurs in Isaiah, but in the rather opaque literary circumstances of two disparate oracles in 8:5-10 (cf. Thompson, *Situation*, pp.34f; Clements, *Isaiah*, pp.96f; Gray, *Isaiah*, pp.50, 135ff; Kaiser, *Isaiah*, pp.183ff; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, pp.321f). The linguistic similarity to 7:14 is clear, given its rare use of אֲנִי יְהוָה within the "I am/God is with us"

OT presence formula (only one other time in over 100 occurrences: Gen 35:3; cf. Dt 32:12). But Isa 8:8 and 10 are not references to the person Emmanuel as is 7:14 (cf. the LXX transliteration of 7:14 with its translation of 8:8: μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός, and 8:10: ὅτι μεθ' ἡμῶν κύριος ὁ θεός), and appear to have no relationship to the particular events of 7:14, the only OT use of the expression as a name.

⁷⁹See Davis, "Tradition", p.412. But apart from the quotation, παρθένος appears nowhere in Matthew (cf. Lk 1:27 2x). Contra Dodd, *Studies*, p.304, it is not clear that virginity is otherwise required by the birth narrative.

⁸⁰Note Ahaz's identity as "house of David" in Isa 7:14, and see van Unnik, "Dominus", p.287; Brown, *Birth*, p.149; Tatum, "Origin", p.531. In contrast see Goulder, *Midrash*, p.234; and Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, pp.70-3, who argues that Matthew here presupposes an illegitimacy tradition.

The paucity of references to Isa 7:14 in pre-Christian Judaism would seem to support the conclusion that the Emmanuel prophecy remained in Hebrew and LXX texts a natural sign of divine presence, and did not become the prophecy of a miraculous birth to a παρθένος or the expectation of a messianic figure.⁸¹ Isaiah's Emmanuel child remains a sign to the House of David, and a double-edged sign at that, its content bringing peace and its royal rejection by Ahaz bringing judgement. The name and early childhood of the sign-child "With-us-God" were a demonstration to a "wearisome" king that the power and deliverance of the transcendent Yahweh were imminently present at his people's lowest ebb. The messianic application of Isa 7:14 seems to be particularly Christian, and especially Matthean.

6.4. Matthew's Use of the Old Testament

Obviously Isaiah's prophecy does not fit snugly into Matthew's birth narrative, if one compares them solely on a modern critical basis of terminological and contextual correspondences. Hence a brief discussion of Matthew's engagement with the Jewish scriptures should provide some clarification of his use of the Emmanuel quotation in particular, and his relationship to the OT in general.

Matthew was one of those at the beginning of the common era who believed that the prophets had possessed a special foreknowledge about the person and mission of Jesus. Like others, Matthew shows little awareness that they might have actually been delivering oracles of crucial relevance to their own peers. These ancient prophets were unmatched in their exercise of the divine gift.⁸² What Matthew is doing here is not odd for his times. This understanding of a continuity between the scriptures and Jesus is not one of Jesus being found acceptable in OT terms. On the contrary, the person of Jesus has finally brought OT prophecy into true light. Its obscure and sometimes cryptic message has become coherent in him.⁸³

For some critics, 'fulfilment' in Matthew is therefore equivalent to a *midrashic* unearthing from prophecy of that hidden meaning therein which has

⁸¹Cf. Watts, *Isaiah*, p.103; Box, *Birth*, pp.16, 169; Dalman, *Words*, p.270; Stendahl, "Quis", p.62. But see 1 QH 3.6ff for the birth of a messianic figure; Tatum, "Stories", p.124.

⁸²Cf. Dan 9:1-2; 2 Esd 12:10-39; Rom 15:4; 1 Pet 1:10-12; cf. also Hab 1:5 and 1 QpHab2; Hab 2:17 and 1 QpHab12.

⁸³See Barton's helpful development of these issues, *Oracles*, pp.179ff.

been expressed and revealed in the Christ event.⁸⁴ It must also be remembered that Matthew does not start by attempting to prove that Jesus is the Messiah because he conforms to certain details of OT prophecy. Matthew begins with the narrative assertion that Jesus is the Messiah - he boldly heads his story in 1:1 with this interpretive 'given'; Jesus' ministry, crucifixion and resurrection have provided the revelation of truth which, as the sole hermeneutical key, unlocks the puzzles of Scripture.⁸⁵

It is certainly not new to emphasize the ingenuity with which Matthew pursues the nature of fulfilment, nor even to designate the verb, and wider theological import of, *πληροῦν* as the Gospel's special trademark and central theme.⁸⁶ But the subject has serious implications for our understanding of Matthew's presence motif which have not necessarily been fully appreciated. No evangelist makes so much and such explicit use of the OT as Matthew.⁸⁷ Most of Mark's explicit quotations of the OT are found in Matthew. Matthew and Luke employ four quotations in common. Almost twenty of Matthew's formal quotations are peculiar to his own material.⁸⁸ When Matthew cites and alludes to the OT his *modus operandi* is generally not unlike that of the other three Gospels. At least ten times, though, he stands alone in quoting the OT within the distinctive framework of his fulfilment formula, making anticipation/fulfilment a critical rhetorical and redactional motif of the

⁸⁴The comparison is not technically accurate, but has value, as France, "Scripture", pp.243-6, points out: "even if Mt. 1-2 is not, formally speaking, midrash, it shares a mentality and techniques which can fairly be called 'midrashic'" (p.245). Barton, *Oracles*, uses the word *pesher* to describe Matthew's approach, also Moule, *Origin*, pp.127ff. Davies, *Setting*, pp.208-9, and Gärtner, "Habakkuk", point out the differences between Matthew's method and the Qumran *pesherim*; cf. Brown, *Birth*, p.102. See also France's review of typology as a Matthean methodology, *Jesus*, pp.38-43, 76-80; *Evangelist*, pp.185f.

⁸⁵See Barton, *Oracles*, pp.182ff.

⁸⁶See, e.g., Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.169f, 388; Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.204f, France, *Evangelist*, pp.166-205. Cf. Moule, "Fulfilment-Words", pp.293-320.

⁸⁷Explicit quotations: Mt:42; Mk:19; Lk:19; Jn:14; see Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.18. The character of Matthew's relationship to the Jewish scriptures is more important than the numbers (Westcott and Hort list 123 quotations and allusions for Matthew and 133 for Luke). Unlike Luke, "Matthew rarely if ever shortened or omitted the OT references from his sources while he frequently expanded allusions and added quotations" (Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, p.31).

⁸⁸See the figures given by Smith, "Use", pp.43ff; cf. Gundry, *OT*, pp.147ff.

Gospel.⁸⁹ The formula quotations are characterized by three distinctive features: 1) their striking introductory formula, with its passive of *πληροῦν*, 2) their narrative voice, and 3) their mixed text form in many cases. At every stage Jesus increasingly becomes the fulfilment of God's divine purposes.

Sources for the Quotations and Formulas

On the one hand, Matthew appears to be primarily dependent upon the LXX,⁹⁰ i.e., those quotations in common with Mark and Luke appear characteristically Septuagintal in origin.⁹¹ On the other hand, of those quotations peculiar to Matthew, the fulfilment formula quotations in particular (apart from 1:23) have a mixed text form which differs substantially from the LXX, sometimes offering a more direct translation of the MT or other known variants. But at most places it is notably difficult

⁸⁹There are ten 'certain' fulfilment formula quotations:

- 1:22-23 (Isa 7:14)
- 2:15b (Hos 11:1)
- 2:17-18 (Jer 31(38):15)
- 2:23 (Isa 4:37 Judg 16:177)
- 4:14-16 (Isa 8:23-9:1)
- 8:17 (Isa 53:4)
- 12:17-21 (Isa 42:1-4)
- 13:35 (probably Ps 77(78):2; Matthew refers to "Isaiah")
- 21:4-5 (Isa 62:11; Zech 9:9)
- 27:9-10 (Zech 11:12-13; Matthew refers to "Jeremiah": cf. Jer 18:2-3)

Four more references have introductory formulas with variants that make them less certain candidates:

- 2:5-6 (Mic 5:1; 2 Sam 5:2) from the chief priests and scribes
- 3:3 (Isa 4:3) lacks *πληροῦν* in the formula
- 13:14-15 (Isa 6:9-10) no purpose clause in its formula
- 26:54 a rhetorical question with no quotation
- 26:56 the formula without any quotation

Many scholars refer to eleven fulfilment quotations, the ten above and Mt 2:5f.

⁹⁰Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.56; Bacon, *Studies*, pp.470ff; Stendahl, *School*, pp.iv, vi, 157f; Nolan, *Son*, p.202; Smith, "Use", p.44; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.104; Gundry, *OT*, p.89; Rothfuchs, *Erfüllungszitate*, p.89; France, *Evangelist*, pp.172-6.

⁹¹Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.56: In fact, in Matthew "the agreement with the LXX is regularly made more exact." Also Stendahl, *School*, p.148. Gundry, *OT*, p.150, disagrees strongly at this point; he splits Markan and non-Markan quotations in Matthew and finds that only the Markan quotations can be classed as Septuagintal - otherwise Matthew displays freedom in his quotations. But Gundry includes all possible OT allusions.

to ascribe the formula quotations to any known version.⁹² In their efforts to resolve this source quandary scholars have postulated a variety of *Quelle*: traditions which predate Matthew (written, oral, collected "testimony book", a missionary or non-missionary preaching quotations stock) or originate with Matthew (exegetical school, quotations from memory, redactive composition).⁹³ And R.H. Gundry has argued against any distinction between the fulfilment formula quotations and other OT quotations and allusions in Matthew, insisting that Matthew acted as his own multilingual targumist.⁹⁴

This argument from text form will probably not find a swift conclusion, and does not substantially advance our understanding of Matthew's story or theology. In providing bridges between earlier prophecy and later events, the quotations have inevitably been translated and adapted to fit the contexts in which they are set. It becomes particularly difficult to perceive a quotation's text form if one takes into account the growing evidence of Hebrew and Greek textual fluidity during the period. Added to this is the consideration that Matthew's wording might be that which was in familiar circulation. If Matthew is the first to perceive the fulfilment in question, his own adoption of the wording from any of the multiple known and unknown textual traditions (including targums) to meet his criteria for

⁹²See the helpful tables in Hawkins, *Horae*, p.52; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.34-57. See Strecker, *Weg*, pp.50, 82; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.63-106; Stanton, "Origin", p.1930; Kilpatrick, *Origins*, pp.51ff.

⁹³See these categories as broken down by Tatum, "Stories", pp.50f, with bibliography.

⁹⁴OT. Critique of Gundry has been strong; see Stanton, "Origin", p.1931; Brown, *Birth*, pp.102f; Smith, "Use", pp.44f; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.74f; but Gundry's emphasis on Matthew as the targumist carries forward Stendahl's work on the origins of the formula citations, and is verified by Rothfuchs, *Erfüllungszitate*, pp.17-20, and Soares Prabhu, pp.73-7, 104-6.

Stanton questions any "hard and fast distinctions" between the citations with and without the introductory formula, pp.1932f. But this distinction is very real within Matthew, if not on the basis of the wording and text form of the citations themselves, on the basis of the particular rhetorical emphasis given to this one group of citations by the introductory formula, and by its express redactional agenda. Cf. van Segbroeck, "La spécificité de ces citations devra être cherché plus dans les formules typiques d'introduction que dans les formes textuelles" ("Les citations", p.129).

fulfilment could easily place the question of text form outside our reach.⁹⁵ Gundry's identification of Matthew as "the targumist" has helped rightly to reorient the debate.⁹⁶ The relationship between Matthew's story and scripture is that of a dialectic.

On the redactional level it is the introductory formula which sets apart at least ten of Matthew's OT quotations and with variations generally runs: ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος. The introductory formulas themselves are certainly Matthew's own composition.⁹⁷ There is some evidence of divine oracles in the ancient Near East being introduced by formalized comments, and the practice is somewhat apparent in the OT with such formulas as הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ כֹּה אָמַר.⁹⁸ But Jewish and Christian texts of the period provide little support for Matthew's distinctive and solemn πληροῦν formula.⁹⁹ Likewise Matthew is alone in the NT in using the participle ῥηθὲν; he applies it only to his formula quotations and in three passages of similar import (3:3; 22:31; 24:15).

Matthew's Formula Quotations: Character and Purpose

Through the fulfilment motif of Matthew's formula quotations OT prophecy has become for Matthew recorded divine utterance filled with inspired anticipation of the Messiah Jesus. This use of the OT in Matthew represents the conviction that all God's past activity and revelation has converged unmistakably in Jesus. At times Matthew's use of biblical texts

⁹⁵E.g., the Judas pericope and its quotation (Mt 27:3-10) probably has a long and complicated literary history (cf. Lindars, *Apologetic*, p.119; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.394; Filson, *Matthew*, p.288), while the quotations of Mt 1-2 do not evidence this.

⁹⁶OT, pp.172ff; see the term's adoption by Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.73ff; France, *Evangelist*, pp.175f.

⁹⁷See especially the examination of the formula and its background in Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.46-63; cf. Strecker, *Weg*, p.50; Brown, *Birth*, p.103; Nolan, *Royal*, p.203; Stanton, "Origin", p.1934; Tatum, "Stories", pp.31-5, 62-6.

⁹⁸See Pritchard, *Texts*, pp.441-52.

⁹⁹Cf. 1 Kg 2:27; 2 Ch 36:21f; Ez 1:1 for a possible model. Lk 22:37 is the only other synoptic quotation with somewhat similar form (τελεῖν instead of πληροῦν). John's 'formula' quotations have no standardized form; cf. Jn 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 18:9, 32; 19:24, 36. Note Paul's approach; Ellis, *OT*, pp.22-5. Qumran and Mishnah material provide no significant parallels; see Fitzmyer, "Quotations", pp.297-333; see Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, p.46; Brown, *Birth*, p.102; Metzger, "Formulas", p.307.

can appear "to our critical eyes, manifestly forced and artificial and unconvincing".¹⁰⁰ But his redactional consistency bespeaks a specific rhetorical design _____ to engage the reader.

All of Matthew's formula quotations are drawn from the prophets,¹⁰¹ and eight are from Isaiah.¹⁰² Critics identify the formula quotations as predominantly *heilsgeschichtlich* in nature, not concerned, for example, with ethics or doctrine, but with the person Jesus and his messianic mission.¹⁰³ They have a decided christological and soteriological flavour. By their very form as explicit quotations said to 'fulfil', and not merely allusory bits of reference material, they deliberately support and illustrate Jesus' career with OT background. The OT does not simply supplement Matthew's text, rather, Matthew claims a radical continuity by portraying Jesus as the long-inherent subject of these utterances.¹⁰⁴ The quotations supply a range of information, from geographical details of Jesus' life¹⁰⁵ to serious propositions concerning his mission and person.¹⁰⁶

In the introductory formula the passive instrumentality of the prophet (ἵνα πληρωθῇ ... ῥηθὲν) is in each case clearly theocentric - implicitly or explicitly God is the speaker of the utterance. The christo-soteriological nature of the quotations is thus premised upon their theocentric origin. These grammatical passives highlight not an accidental correspondence with ancient prophetic words, but the revelation of a divinely ordained strategy within the events and person of Jesus. Thus a transition is visible in Matthew from the proclaimer to the proclaimed: the events and person of

¹⁰⁰ Moule, *Origin*, p.129; see France, *Matthew*, pp.22-7, 38-41. Stendahl comments on the history of the problem: "from Origen onwards we can trace how Matthew's manner of quoting the OT has presented special problems to his interpreters." Origen, Celsus, Justin, Porphyry, Eusebius, Jerome and others comment on the difficulties involved (see Stendahl, *School*, pp.39f).

¹⁰¹ However, Mt 13:35 quotes 'Isaiah' with words that probably come from Ps 77(78):2, and no agreement exists on the source for 2:23.

¹⁰² Although half the total of Matthew's quotations originate in the Pentateuch; see Soares-Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.53-5.

¹⁰³ Cf. Strecker, *Weg*, pp.49-85; Rothfuchs, *Erfüllungszitate*, pp.92ff; van Segbroeck, "Les citations", pp.107-130; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, pp.22, 134f, 300; Nolan, *Son*, p.202.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Dunn, *Unity*, p.248.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. 2:5f, 15, 23; although even in these citations an apparently dominant interest in geography is wedded to a deeper rhetorical and christological import.

¹⁰⁶ See, e.g., 1:22f; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35.

Jesus become, through the formula quotations, the events and person τοῦ Χριστοῦ in the re-interpreted language and terms of ancient biblical prophecy. So even while their theological significance is clear from a redactional point of view, their rhetorical strategy is particularly evident on the narrative level – the narrator voices each of the formula quotations directly. Apart from Mt 11:10 and parallels, Matthew's formula quotations are the only OT quotations in the synoptic Gospels which are not part of Jesus' direct speech, or another Gospel character's. In Matthew the narrator is thus able to communicate directly to the implied reader these important characterizations of Jesus' person and mission, and to educate the implied reader from a specific ideological point of view.

It has been argued that the formula quotations function apologetically,¹⁰⁷ contemplatively,¹⁰⁸ didactically¹⁰⁹ and eschatologically.¹¹⁰ It is difficult, however, so to delimit the formula quotations to one uniform purpose, and one which may be dependent upon one critic's reconstruction of Matthew's community. As well, a single purpose does not correspond well structurally to the sort of distribution which the formula quotations have in disparate sections of the Gospel.¹¹¹ Five of the formula quotations (if 2:5f is included) are found in the two chapters of the infancy narrative, four appear in the Galilean ministry between 4:14 and 13:35 and the last two with Jesus in Jerusalem.

The individual formula quotations inevitably found their own community value in more than one uniform purpose. 1:22f, for example, despite its clear christological, didactic features, could provide powerful apologetic material to counter accusations of Jesus' illegitimacy. Function thus becomes a question of the readers' particular applications of the material within their own contexts. Gospel critics are increasingly recognizing the polyvalent meaning of text on the literary level, and some are pushing that

¹⁰⁷Cf. Campenhausen, *Birth*, p.26; Stendahl, "Quis"; Gundry, *OT*, p.195; Lindars, *Apologetic*; see Nolan, *Son*, p.202, and Brown, *Birth*, pp.97f, who disagree with Lindars. Cf. Moule's analysis, "Words", pp.293-320.

¹⁰⁸Nolan, *Son*, p.202; as implied in the older term *Reflexionszitate* in Holtzmann, *Synoptiker*; see Brown, *Birth*, pp.96f; cf. Rothfuchs, *Erfüllungszitate*.

¹⁰⁹Brown, *Birth*, pp.97ff; Nolan, *Son*, p.202.

¹¹⁰O'Rourke, "Texts", p.402: to establish to Kingdom of God for Jews and gentiles; see in Nolan, *Son*, p.202 n.5.

¹¹¹Cf. Schweizer's development of this argument, "Kirche", p.147; and "Church", pp.132f.

literary recognition back to Matthew's own dialogue with his sources and audiences, to assert that the author himself was aware of differing levels of meaning in scripture and of comprehension among his readership.¹¹²

It is hardly helpful, therefore, to reduce the question of the quotations' relative importance to prioritization on the basis of tradition *versus* redaction.¹¹³ Each formula quotation is in the Gospel as we have it, and stands within the framework of an introductory formula, because of a conscious design on the part of the redactor. In determining what Matthew's theological interests are and evaluating the theological thrust of a quotation in light of those interests, we face the inherent danger of circular reasoning. And the quotations *per se*, as the main means of establishing Matthew's radical brand of continuity between the OT and the mission and person of Jesus, are *ex officio* central to Matthew's interests. Each quotation, prior to any attempt to discern in its content a reflection of the essential themes of the Gospel, is in essence already a reflection of one of Matthew's central themes: anticipation and fulfilment. Ultimately, the relation of a formula quotation to its context in the Gospel is dialectical, with the quotation having been adapted to its context and the narrative having been modified by its insertion.

6.5. Matthew's Use of Isaiah 7:14

Both rhetorically and redactionally, Matthew's interest in the child's conception is at best secondary; Isa 7:14 is employed because the meaning of Emmanuel captures best - "fulfills" - the person and mission of Jesus as narrated in Mt 1:1-21 (1:22 τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ). Matthew's belief in the virgin birth is thus a manifestation of a more foundational reality he wants to communicate - that in his origins in the Abrahamic/Davidic line and in the creative power of the Holy Spirit, and in his coming mission of deliverance, Jesus fulfills God's preordained plan to save and be "with" his people. Jesus' introduction as Israel's Χριστός (Mt 1:1-21) is thus fully summed up in Isaiah's prophecy of the Emmanuel child as the potent symbol of divine presence.¹¹⁴

¹¹²Cf. Hartman, "Exegesis", pp.233-51; France, *Evangelist*, pp.183f; Howell, *Story*, pp.184-90.

¹¹³Contra Brown, *Birth*, pp.104f.

¹¹⁴Cf. Trilling, *Israel*, p.41.

This is further borne out in Matthew's supplied translation of Ἐμμανουήλ as μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός. Ever since the name ܐܡܡܢܘܠ had been simply transliterated into Ἐμμανουήλ by the LXX translators, the Greek readers of Isaiah's prophecy had lost the force of the predicted child's sign-name. Emmanuel became simply a name and was no longer a message.

Likewise in Matthew, without the translation the significance of the name would be lost for a Greek audience. Ἐμμανουήλ as a Greek name *per se* says nothing about the relationship between divine presence and Matthew's explanation of 'Jesus' as Messiah of his people; the association between name, meaning and fulfilment of "all this" is broken. Matthew wants to rescue from obscurity the meaning of a Hebrew name lost to non-Hebrew speakers in his audience. Any terminological correspondence between Jesus' birth and Isa 7:14 provides basic surface congruity; the deeper motif of fulfilment in Emmanuel is found in its translation and association with OT divine presence. Despite his dependence on LXX form, Matthew returns to the full strength of the original MT connection between Yahweh's deliverance and his presence. Jesus's mission thus parallels Isaiah's original equation between deliverance and divine presence, at least in so far as in his role as Yahweh's long-planned Messiah he is best understood as the new, final and unique presence of God with his people.

Matthew's μεθερμηνεύμενον footnote also draws together the basic incongruity of the apparent bestowal of two different names to which are appended two different explanations.¹¹⁵ Matthew tells us that there is no tension here, rather, the occurrence of one is the fulfilment of the other. Matthew thereby declares that his explanation of 'Emmanuel' and the angel's explanation of 'Jesus' are complementary.

The translation and application of the OT divine presence to a child who is also himself the agent of salvation, takes the promise of God's presence beyond any of its known previous applications. Because the angel's explanation of his name makes Jesus the vehicle of salvation to his people, and because Matthew's translation of Emmanuel applies to Jesus the functional, messianic character of the divine presence formula, "God with us", Matthew has given us the restoration of the OT promise of divine

¹¹⁵ Justin Martyr may have recognised a problem. "It is interesting to see that Justin Martyr who quoted Isa.7:14 on several occasions (*Dial.* 43:8, 67:1, 71:3, 84) always cites the first half about the virgin birth only. In *Apol.*33 the full text is quoted, though not with the same IMMANUEL but with the Greek translation" (van Unnik, "*Dominus*", p.302 n.58).

presence in word, but has also given us the promise of presence in person. In Isaiah the Emmanuel child was only a symbol of God's deliverance which was to come by other means, namely miraculous military victory. Matthew's Emmanuel, however, is the personal agent of Yahweh's promise to save and be "with" his people. It is not unjustifiable then to see Jesus as the embodiment of all the salvific power found in the divine biblical assertion, "I am with you".

From a narrative standpoint, then, the fulfilment quotations function rhetorically to establish the narrator's authority and reliability with the narrator for the implied reader, and by their content the characterization of Jesus.¹¹⁶ Mt 1-2 includes so many formula quotations because here Matthew introduces themes and motifs which will be significant for the whole Gospel. They are lenses fitted by the narrator which will guide the implied reader's entire experience and interpretation of the story. Within Matthew's appeal to prophecy lies the assumption that the OT and its authority as God's word exist independently of the narrative world, and he can thereby reinforce his truth claims about Jesus through quotation. Israel's history as the people of God provides an external world of reference, and by quoting Isa 7:14 Matthew sets the stage for the rest of the story by establishing the implied reader's initial understanding of Jesus' characterization as Emmanuel, the God-with-us Messiah.

6.6. Some Theological and Christological Concerns

The claim is not made here that "Emmanuel" is the most important rhetorical and/or theological motif introduced in Matthew's prologue. It is, however, certainly *one* of several important themes and names appearing in Mt 1-2, which the narrator employs. Some scholars have made more or less exclusive claims regarding the predominance of a particular title or theological idea.

Son of David, Son of God and Holy Spirit

Matthew also displays a special interest in the Davidic sonship of

¹¹⁶Cf. Howell, *Story*, pp.185-90.

Jesus.¹¹⁷ Bornkamm and Strecker consider 'Son of David' the most important title applied to the Jesus of the ministry.¹¹⁸ Kingsbury attempts to correct this assertion in favour of the predominance of 'Son of God'; he concludes that for Matthew the Davidic title is a narrow and inadequate portrayal of Jesus, used only by outsiders for the pre-glorified, earthly, unmysterious Jesus, and never by Jesus or his disciples.¹¹⁹

It is arguable whether Matthew's use of the Davidic title is as insufficient a penetration of Jesus' identity as Kingsbury, and those who follow him, claim.¹²⁰ Mt 1 certainly portrays Jesus strongly and indelibly in the light of Davidic messianism. As noted earlier, Son of David plays a primary role for two chapters, both Jesus and Joseph are called υἱὸς Δαυίδ (1:1 and 1:20), the genealogy makes the lineage explicit, and the birth story in vv.18-25 gives Jesus the legal paternity of Joseph. The quotation of Isa 7:14 further emphasizes the point, as Jesus fulfils a prophecy originally delivered to the house of David, and Matthew's placement of the quotation reinforces the significance of Joseph's obedience at the end of the pericope, making Jesus his own son.¹²¹

Some who would assign Davidic sonship its lesser role argue that Davidic and divine sonship are intimately related in Matthew, and that an interlocking of the two takes place in the birth story of 1:18-25; for a descendant of the royal line to be conceived in the womb of a παρθένος, ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου, and named Emmanuel-"God with us" is tantamount to affixing to him the predication 'Son of God'.¹²² The endeavor to import 'Son of God' into 1:18-25 is not without problems, however.

¹¹⁷Used as a title for Jesus, 'Son of David' appears ten times in Matthew (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:31f (twice); 21:9, 15; 22:41-45 (twice), four times in Mark (10:47f (twice); 12:37-37 (twice), four times in Luke (18:38-39 (twice); 20:41-44 (twice), and not once in John. The only other NT occurrence is applied to someone else (Mt 1:20; to Joseph). See especially Nolan, *Son*; Brown, *Birth*, p.134; Kingsbury, *Structure*, pp.99-103.

¹¹⁸Bornkamm, *TIM*, pp.32f; Strecker, *Weg*, pp.118-120.

¹¹⁹See Kingsbury's "Son of David", pp.591-602; and *Structure*, pp.99-103.

¹²⁰See Fuller's criticisms in "Conception/Birth".

¹²¹See Mowinckel, *Cometh*, pp.280-4; cf. Brown, *Birth*, pp.137, 144.

¹²²See especially Kingsbury, *Structure*, pp.52f: "'God with us' contains in nuce everything that Matthew otherwise says in 1:1 to 4:16 of Jesus Son of God." 1:23 is Matthew's "thumbnail definition" of the predication Son of God, and "his entire Gospel may be seen as an attempt to elaborate on the implications of this passage and others that are similar to it (cf. e.g., 14:27; 18:20; 28:20)" Brown, *Birth*, p.137. See Seitz, "Prologues", pp.262f; Conzelmann, "Jesus", p.194; Dunn, *Christology*, pp.49f.

1. First and foremost, the birth story must be read on its own terms. Kingsbury comes to the infancy narrative with two convictions, that Son of God is the essential core of Matthew's christology, and that this predication is explicitly established in Mt 3-4, a part of the single literary unit spanning 1:1-4:16. But in Chapter 3 we have already seen significant problems with this delineation of Matthew's structure, and reading Son of God backwards from Mt 3-4 is similarly problematic.

2. 'Son of God' is a carefully bestowed christological title in Matthew, not clearly found in the infancy narrative.¹²³ As a specific predication of Jesus it is not applied until the baptism (3:17: ὁ υἱός μου) and the temptations (4:3, 6: Εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ). If a generalization can be made, the address "beloved Son" at the baptism is relational in a personal, "father-son" sense, whereas "Emmanuel" designates Jesus as the agent of divine presence and power; two different relationships. Those who derive Son of God christology from Emmanuel blur seriously their different OT backgrounds and distinct rhetorical functions in the text.

3. As for the Spirit's involvement in Jesus' conception, the picture in Mt 1-2 again does not coincide with the baptism. One is an act of creation, while at Jesus' baptism the Spirit is symbolic of divine approval and empowerment. These are two somewhat distinct activities of the Spirit. Jesus' virginal generation by the Holy Spirit is never mentioned after 1:18-25, and certainly not in connection with his predication as 'Son of God'. Certainly divine 'sonship' is important in Matthew's birth narrative in terms of Jesus' origins, but this should be seen in proper distinction from the functional, relational 'Father-Son' emphasis so key later in the Gospel.

4. The special role of the Spirit in our pericope also distances it from 'Son of God' language because of its normal proximity to Emmanuel language. The function of the Spirit in Mt 1 (and Lk 1) is unparalleled in biblical accounts. Divine power is certainly portrayed as making fertile formerly barren wombs, but the agency of the Spirit in the begetting of a

¹²³The fulfilment quotation of 2:15 is not clearly an application of the title, but at best an implication, given its primary analogy between Jesus and Israel; contra Kingsbury, *Structure*, p.52. See Stendahl, "Quis"; Fuller, "Conception/Birth", p.40; Dunn, *Christology*, pp.49f. Brown speculates that the use of Emmanuel in 1:23 has prevented the explicit use of another revealed title in the birth story until 2:15; *Birth*, p.135.

child in a virgin womb is unprecedented in Judaism.¹²⁴ The Spirit's function in Mt 1:18-25 could be analagous, if not directly parallel, to that in the first creation.¹²⁵

But if the Spirit's role here does bring a particular OT background to mind, it must include the picture of God's presence at work among his people. It is notable how often the Spirit and the "God is with us" presence formula appear in close proximity in the OT text. It is true of all the major individuals of whom it is said that "God is with them" that the divine activity which accompanies his promise of divine presence and enacts their deliverance and success is pneumatic in nature.¹²⁶ In light of this close connection it is not surprising to find a pneumatic explanation for Emmanuel's origin in Mt 1:18-25.

Retrospective Christology

One of the theses which has been argued here, especially by Raymond Brown, proposes a divine Son of God christology which has been arrived at by a process of retrojection, a christology which, as the earliest Christians reflected upon the significance of Jesus, was seen in retrospect to apply earlier and earlier within his life.¹²⁷ Key to the 'reverse trajectory' which this thesis sets up is the assumption of Matthew's consistent employment of christological language throughout the development.

Originally, according to this scheme, Jesus was seen as Son of God in the resurrection, as in the formula of Rom 1:3f, then in his baptism by John (cf. Mt 3:16-17 and parallels), and finally in his conception by the Holy Spirit, without normal human parentage. For Matthew the conception of Jesus is the begetting of God's Son, and Matthew is thereby able to combat adoption christology with "conception christology", while the fourth

¹²⁴See Strack-Billerbeck 1, 49f; Bultmann, *History*, p.291: "Divine generation from a virgin is foreign to the OT and Judaism and completely impossible. Philo's allegorical interpretation of the OT birth stories in terms of the mystical *ἱερός γάμος* is only one piece of evidence."

¹²⁵See Davies, *Setting*, p.71; Skinner, *Genesis*, p.71; Barrett, *Spirit*, p.24.

¹²⁶Cf. Nu 11:17; Dt 34:9; Judg 2:18; 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14; 1 Sam 3:19f; 10:6f; 16:13f; Isa 44:3; Hag 1:13f; 2:4; see van Unnik, "*Dominus*", pp.285f.

¹²⁷See Brown, *Birth*, pp.29-32; 134ff. See Fuller's thorough criticism of Brown's thesis, "Conception/Birth", pp.37ff.

evangelist used pre-existence christology.¹²⁸

While this idea of ongoing retrospection amongst early Christians is a positive attempt to explain developments historically, it assumes too readily in our case that Paul can be brought into the same line of retrojection as Matthew, and that Son of God is the operative phrase for both. It is generally agreed that the birth narratives of both Matthew and Luke contain no thought of a pre-existence christology.¹²⁹ As I have attempted to show, that which truly resounds in Matthew's birth story of 1:18-25 is a more subtle yet powerful plethora of themes which includes Jesus' Emmanuel presence. Jesus' divine sonship is another of those themes, but does not play the central role in the infancy narrative.¹³⁰ Jesus' mission, as ὁ Χριστός, will be to mediate the powerful signs, deeds and words of divine presence through his saving ministry. If there is anything retrospective about the christology of 1:23 it begins with and stems from the promise of 28:20, as part of the author's internal design of inclusio. The community which had grasped the resurrected Jesus' promise of continued presence looked back into his career and origins and, in reflecting upon his conception, found the fulfilment of Isaiah's Emmanuel - "God with us" prediction.

In summary, Matthew presents us in this short birth story with a flurry of divine activity and a variety of ways in which God deliberately mediates his presence amongst his people. We enter the pericope having just been given the genealogical evidence of a divine master plan through the royal line. The conception of Jesus then interrupts the genealogical sequence as a moment of divine creative power. His birth is revealed in the form of a divine utterance and fulfils a prophetic word of Yahweh from Isaiah. The genealogy, Holy Spirit, Emmanuel - "God with us", angel of Yahweh and others communicate the God's past presence and his powerful immanence now in the birth of this child Jesus. Jesus is not an actor in any part of the birth story. Anything said of him and of his person and career is unrealized and future. Matthew's birth story is about an active God; its message is immediately theological and incipiently and redactionally christological. A great transfer is taking place between the 'old' ways of mediating divine

¹²⁸Cf. Dunn, *Christology*, pp.49f, 56-9; Brown, *Birth*, p.141.

¹²⁹Though see Lindars, *Apologetic*, pp.2f; cf. Brown, *Birth*, pp.142f; Fuller, "Conception/Birth", p.39.

¹³⁰So Fuller, "Conception/Birth", p.40.

presence - royal line, divine covenantal promise formula, Spirit and angel, and the 'new' mediation of divine presence through the personal embodiment of these old ways in the birth of Yahweh's Messiah Jesus.

Chapter 7. Mt 18:20: The presence of Jesus and his ἐκκλησία

οὐ γάρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα,
ἐκεῖ εἰμι μέσῳ αὐτῶν.

Most studies of Mt 18:20 are dominated by questions of an historical *Sitz im Leben* nature, particularly in light of the saying's apparent resemblance to at least two rabbinic formulations. While drawing on the wisdom of these studies, my starting-point here is again the passage's participation in a whole rhetorical text, as pursued in the reading of Chapter 3. This sets the parameters for subsequent historical investigation.

The reading above confirmed the critical function of Mt 18:20 as an important statement by Jesus about his own presence in the midst of his people. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to investigate more closely this saying in Mt 18:20, first by reiterating and elaborating its place in Matthew's story, and second, by clarifying its redactional and theological significance.

7.1. The Story Thus Far...

In Chapter 3 we noted a number of the plot devices which give Matthew's story its particular orientation around at least three lines of suspense and anticipation: (1) how Jesus will become the saviour of "his people" and be acclaimed by them as God's Emmanuel Messiah, (2) who is to be identified as "his people", in light of his immediate rejection by the leaders of Israel, and (3) how the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders will be resolved.

From the perspective of engagement with the story's consecutive sequence, by 18:20 the narrator's control of plot and characterization has provided the implied reader with a number of other significant features which shape directly his or her perception of Mt 18:20. Among these:

(1) *First-last/last-first criterion*. The Kingdom of heaven turns normal human social hierarchies of authority and status on their heads when

defining true greatness (cf. 5:3ff; 18:1-4).

(2) These "little ones" (μικροί), with the status of children, are intimately identified with the presence of Jesus in the community (18:5; cf. 25:40, 45).

(3) Jesus reiterates his earlier transfer to Peter of "binding and loosing" authority, now to the members of the ἐκκλησία in general, in the context of dealing with a sinning brother (cf. 16:17-19; 18:18f).

(4) Jesus anticipates in 18:20 a new understanding of what it will mean for him to be in the midst of his followers, advocating a presence which moves beyond the limitations of their current dependence on his physical proximity, and thus answering the dilemma of inability, fear and little faith among his disciples raised previously in situations of his physical absence (14:22-33; 17:14-21).

7.2. Mt 18 - "The Community Discourse"

As one of Jesus' major discourses, Mt 18:1-35 is not an unbroken monologue, but takes its shape from his responses to two questions, posed in v.1 by his disciples: "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" and in v.21 by Peter, concerning repeated forgiveness of one's brother.¹ The narrator apparently assumes their location together "In the house" or "at home" (RSV) in Capernaum (17:24f),² again with the narrator's careful observation of their centripetal gathering - προσέρχονται - around Jesus.

Both parts of the discourse are thus addressed ostensibly to the disciples, i.e. the Twelve, who have been consistently presented to this point as distinct from the crowds (5:1; 8:18, 23), from common sinners (9:10, 11), from the disciples of John (9:14; 11:2). They are appointed emissaries of Jesus' mission (4:19; 9:37; 10:1, 24f, 40-42) who are gradually being initiated into the inner meaning of his teaching and the

¹Contra Pesch, "Gemeindeordnung", pp.220, 226f, for whom 18:15 begins (suddenly) the second half of the discourse.

²For Beare (*Matthew*, p.373) and others this formal location is "of no significance; in reality it is the risen Christ who speaks". But the question of rhetorical function here is very important. That the reader should envision Jesus delivering his community discourse to his innermost circle of followers within this house setting, is especially important for the affective impact of his ἐκκλησία principles and promise in 18:20 to be in the midst of their smallest (house) gatherings. The setting supplies the tangible illustration of his promise! See Crosby's treatment of 17:24-19:1 as a *Haustafel*; *House*, pp.70-3.

secrets of the Kingdom of heaven (11:25-27; 13:10f, 36ff; 16:17-20). But Jesus' response explicitly anticipates a future broad-based community of followers (παιδιά, μικροί, πρόβατα and ἀδελφοί) that encompasses a wider circle than the inner group of the Twelve.

It is important to note that the "community" so often referred to as the focus of Mt 18 forms nowhere in Matthew's story an actual character group, but remains an anticipated gathering which will constitute the ἐκκλησία of Jesus. The narrative carefully *anticipates* the community's existence without once providing an actual plot event of its gathering. Critics operating on the level of the historical *Sitze im Leben* of sources and evangelist have often assumed an easy identification between the anticipated community in the text and the historical community of the evangelist.³ To identify Mt 18 as "the community discourse" must be done with an awareness of the story's own clear temporal coordinates.

In Mt 18:2ff Jesus answers the disciples' question on Kingdom status, and uses it as prolegomenon to the issues of discipline and forgiveness in the *intra muros* relationships between the ἀδελφοί. In the parallel texts in Mk 9:34 and Lk 9:46 the issue is part of an actual dispute among the Twelve over the greatest disciple. In Mt 18:1 the disciples put it to Jesus in the form of a general question - perhaps even a laudable question seeking a didactic answer.⁴ In 18:2-4 Jesus makes the social status of the child he places ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν (cf. 18:20) the measure of the disciples' own entry and rank in the Kingdom of heaven. That Jesus "summons" (προσκαλέω) the child reinforces his child-disciple paradigm (cf. 10:1; 15:32; 20:25). In vv.5-6 the focus is still on the child/model disciple standing "in their midst" but Jesus now highlights the importance of receiving "one such child" within the fellowship: because of his complete identification with the μικροί Jesus' own reception within the community is contingent upon/

³E.g., Bornkamm, "Bind"; Forkman, *Limits*, p.119; Addley, "Matthew 18", pp.12f. José Caba, "El poder", pp.611-14, identifies the larger context as 17:22-18:35. Cf. Thompson, *Advice*, pp.71f, 83f; Pesch, "Gemeindeordnung", p.234, and Seelsorger, pp.68-71; France, *Matthew*, pp.269f, who are concerned that Jesus is addressing all disciples, rather than church leaders, or an innermost élite.

An intended historical audience is difficult to identify in any case. As Schweizer notes ("Church", pp.7f), there is "not a single hint of any officer in the whole chapter", and no interest is displayed in any office or hierarchy in the church.

⁴See Held, *TIM*, pp.236, 241.

concomitant with the reception of the littlest members, and to reject or trip up (σκανδαλίζω) one of these μικροί is unthinkable.

The σκανδαλ- motif is maintained in vv.7-9 as an issue of excising influences to sin from the community,⁵ while proper treatment of the μικροί appears again in vv.10-14, reinforced theocentrically by the parable of the Father's love for these little ones. Mt 18:15-19 consists of a series of nine conditional sentences formed through the use of εἰ and the aorist subjunctive, while v.20 appears in the present indicative,⁶ and shifts from direct second-person address to the immediate audience, to employment of the third person in the form of a general statement.⁷ The thought of the Father's love for the little ones in the preceding parable is now given specific application in the interrelations of community members and the exercise of authority. Jesus' promise of presence thus forms the capstone of a sequence of sayings uttered while a small child, one of the μικροί with whom Jesus so closely identifies himself, stands "in their midst" as Jesus' chosen paradigm for model discipleship, and as greatest in the Kingdom.

7.3. Mt 18:20

The language of 18:20 is consistent both with its immediate and wider context; from a redactional and comparative perspective it can be called Matthean. In Gundry's estimation the verse "consists almost entirely of words belonging to [Matthew's] special diction".⁸ On the level of vocabulary the statistics tell an uncontroversial story.⁹

⁵See Thompson, *Advice*, pp.119f. Under a "corporate interpretation" of vv.8-9 offenders within the community are excised from its membership; cf. Addley, "Matthew 18", pp.14-17; Forkman, *Limits*.

⁶See Caba's discussion, "El poder", pp.615f.

⁷This could indicate separate sources (e.g. Sievers, "Matthew 18,20", p.178), but can also be explained stylistically.

⁸*Matthew*, p.369. Brooks' assessment is more mixed: "a single M saying ... probably underlies vv.19-20" (*Community*, p.106).

⁹Gundry's statistics are only partially helpful here, e.g., with γάρ and ἐκεῖ; *Matthew*, pp.642f. Gundry's close adherence to Markan priority leads him to judge entire passages as paralleled, in somewhat gratuitous fashion (cf. pp.3f), and hence he tends to find a higher number of Matthean insertions and lower number of unparalleled occurrences.

	Mt/Mk/Lk	employed only in Mt in // material	occurrences in Mt's <i>Sondergut</i>
οὐ	3/0/5	0	3
γάρ	123/64/97	62	15
δύο ἢ τρεῖς	2/0/0	0	2
συνάγω ¹⁰	24/5/6	11	10
εἰς (τὸ) ὄνομα	5/0/0	3	2
ἐκεῖ	28/11/16	16	6
μέσος	7/5/14	1	4

These characteristics of surface structure support the initial observation that among the Gospels this vocabulary remains particular to Matthew's story in its application to the presence of Jesus. As José Caba has also noted, the logion is presented in Matthew in a precise adverbial-verbal structure.¹¹ I have ^{displayed} it as follows:

οὐ γὰρ	a]		[a ¹ ἐκεῖ
εἰσιν	b]	εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα	[b ¹ εἰμι
δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι	c]		[c ¹ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν

"Two or Three"

In the immediate context of v.20 the numbers "1, 2, 3" are significant; some see here the numeric principle of mnemotechnics.¹² This observation can be followed in two directions: first to the whole of Mt 18, which proves to be a series of sayings connected by the words "one" (vv.5, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16), "two" (vv.8, 9, 16, 19), or "two or three" (vv.16, 20).¹³ Furthermore, the same emphasis on mnemotechnics can also be found in the careful parallelism of v.20 diagramed above: in the story setting provided (spoken by Jesus to his inner group of disciples as he taught them in the house in Capernaum), and in any subsequent historical hearing or reading, the rhythmic utterance provides a powerful and memorable summary to the first

¹⁰Cf. ἐπισυνάγω: 3, 2, 3; in parallel material Matthew has one unique occurrence (see Mt 23:37-twice; cf. Lk 13:34).

¹¹Cf. "El poder", p.626.

¹²Cf. Thompson, *Advice*, pp.194-6; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.27f; Englezakis, "Thomas", p.263.

¹³Frankemölle asserts that these numbers are in large part traceable to Matthean redaction, when the passage is compared with Mk 9:42-50 and Lk 17:1-3a; 15:3-7; 17:3b-4; see *Jahwebund*, p.28 for details.

part of the discourse (18:1-20). And this careful parallelism finds a precursor in 18:5, which is structurally, aurally and rhetorically equal to 18:20 (see more below).

More important, however, these statistical and lexical preferences are also functional elements within Matthew's story. Jesus' assertion of his presence in the congregation of 18:20 follows his teaching of the three-fold attempt at reconciliation of the wayward member of the ἐκκλησία in vv.15-17, his emphatic (Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν)¹⁴ extension in v.18 of the authority to bind and loose given to Peter (16:19), and his parallel promise (Πάλιν [ἀμὴν] λέγω ὑμῖν) that the agreement of two ἐκκλησία members on earth will be ratified in heaven, in v.19. Contra some scholars, this saying in v.19 is not merely an inserted general statement concerning prayer, corresponding to 7:7-11; 21:22 and especially Jn 15:7, and only connected to context by the catchwords "heaven and earth" and "two or three".¹⁵ It is, rather, closely linked to the previous and following themes of status, discipline and forgiveness within the fellowship. The "agreement" of v.19 corresponds to and reinforces the decision "to bind" or "to loose" in v.18 - and provides the corporate application for the binding and loosing authority promised initially to Peter alone in 16:19.¹⁶ The precise nature of the authoritative power given to the community in 18:18 is not clear, perhaps including imposition or lifting of a ban, authority to teach and interpret (28:19), and to forgive or retain sin. That binding and loosing includes the authority to forgive sins may already have found support in Mt 9:8, where, following Jesus' healing and forgiveness of the paralytic's sins, the narrator emphasizes the crowds' fear and praise of God who had given such authority τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. In comparison with Mark, Matthew's story is also missing the question of Mk 2:7 - "who can forgive sins but God alone?", and thus seems to anticipate the community setting and exercise of authority in 18:18-20.¹⁷

¹⁴This introduction (vv.18 and 19) is commonly assessed as Matthean language; cf. 5:18-20; 10:42; 19:23f for parallel formulations in discourse material; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.28.

¹⁵So e.g. Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p.221; Manson, *Sayings*, p.211; Klostermann, *Matthäusevangelium*, pp.150f; cf. Caba, "El poder", pp.620-26, who posits direct redactional dependence.

¹⁶Cf. Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.226-32; Trilling, *Hausordnung*, pp.55f; Bornkamm, "Bind", pp.86ff; Thompson, *Advice*, pp.195, 200.

¹⁷Cf. Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p.301; Bacon, *Studies*, pp.189f; Held, *TIM*, pp.273f; Gerhardsson, *Acts*, p.76; Kynes, "Representative", pp.145f.

18:20 is linked sequentially and causally to the preceding subjunctive sequence in vv.15-19 by its opening conjunction γάρ. This causal connection makes Jesus' promise of presence in v.20 the basis for the authority with which the ἐκκλησία acts and makes decisions: because Jesus is in their midst, "his people" (1:21) can gain back the offending brother who listens and shun the one who does not, they can bind and loose, and they can agree and request, all with the approval of his Father in heaven. Thus the presence of Jesus becomes heaven's link with the earthly gathering.¹⁸ This heavenly ratification of the decisions of his gathered people reinforces Jesus' anticipated role as their mediator and implies an ongoing role for his divine filial agency.¹⁹

The idea of "two or three witnesses" constituting a quorum for proper corroboration is not attested in the other Gospels, but is certainly recognized elsewhere in Matthew²⁰ and in the NT (2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28) as a solid principle of Deuteronomic justice (Dt 19:15) applying to legal and quasi-legal situations. The second stage of Jesus' three-fold reconciliation process in Mt 18:15-17 actually incorporates the citation from Deuteronomy, without the legal trappings.²¹ In Mt 18:15-17 the import is less to "purge the evil (i.e. the false accuser) from the midst of you" (Dt 19:19), or to deal severely with "impurity, immorality and licentiousness" as found in Corinth (2 Cor 12:21), or among the elders (1 Tim 5:19ff), but is more oriented around the pastoral hope that the offending member will "listen"²² and be gained back. This all still takes

¹⁸Cf. Allen, *Matthew*, pp.198f; Klostermann, *Matthäusevangelium*, p.151; Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p.201; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p.420; Hill, *Matthew*, p.164; Bornkamm, "Bind", p.88; Thompson, *Advice*, p.196; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.27f; for comments on this causal connection.

¹⁹Cf. Thompson, *Advice*, p.198; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p.603; Bornkamm, "Bind", p.88; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.35.

²⁰The narrator's adherence to this Deuteronomic principle in Matthew's story extends as far as Jesus' own trial before Caiaphas, where the ψευδομαρτυρία sought must be "proper", i.e., corroborated by two or three witnesses in accordance with Dt 19:15. Cf. Mk 14:55-60 where corroborating witnesses cannot be found.

²¹The text of the citation is not clear. Cf. 2 Cor 13:1. See Gundry's argument for an "Ur-Lucianic" text, *OT*, p.139; contrast Stendahl, *School*, pp.138f.

²²Mt 18:15, 16, 17: 2x ἀκούω; 2x παρακούω; cf. Isa 45:12; Esth 3:3, 8; Tob 3:4; T.Dan 2:3; Mk 5:36. For this pastoral orientation (rather than judicial/disciplinary) of vv.15-17 see Thompson, *Advice*, pp.176-88; cf. France, *Matthew*, p.275.

place within the context of childlike status advocated earlier by Jesus, and the unlimited forgiveness taught in vv.21-35, so that the discipline of avoidance finally affixed to the offender in 18:17 does not contradict reconciliation and forgiveness but signifies the failure of the process and is a last resort. Such an excision from the community's membership also corresponds with the harsh imagery of losing hands, feet and eyes in vv.8-10, especially when the latter are given a corporate interpretation. In vv.15-17 the one who causes one of the μικροί to stumble in vv.6-9 is cut off from the offended one by a barrier of separation.

It is not clear whether the witnesses of v.16 bring additional testimony against the offender, or go along to witness the encounter and assist in the attempted reconciliation. The latter finds better support among commentators;²³ and given the lack of evidence for a judicial context is probably correct.

It is difficult to say how much of this picture of a quorum of corroboration between δύο μάρτυρες ἢ τρεῖς to persuade and recover the offender in 18:16 is then echoed in the quorum of δύο ἢ τρεῖς whose gathering evokes Jesus' presence in 18:20. At minimum, the rare occurrence of the phrase δύο ἢ τρεῖς provides a significant linking catchword, despite the reference to the μάρτυρες having been dropped in v.20, and serves the numerical principle of mnemotechnics. And the concept of two or three individuals in harmony constituting a minimum authoritative voice rings true in both texts, if for entirely different ends (the presence of Jesus is certainly not "authoritatively summoned" by the quorum in 18:20). But some substantial differences are also apparent. For one thing, the question of such a quorum's function is at issue three times in association with disparate activities in 18:15-20: with the "one or two" who back up the complainant in v.16, with the "two" who agree and pray/request in v.19, and with the "two or three" who gather in Jesus' name in v.20.

Furthermore, whereas 18:15-17 focuses on the attempt of one member of the local ἐκκλησία²⁴ (through consistent use of the second person singular) to restore a relationship with another member, and ultimately shunning him

²³Cf. e.g. Allen, *Matthew*, p.198; Plummer, *Matthew*, p.253; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p.220; Carson, "Matthew", p.403; France, *Matthew*, p.274.

²⁴Ἐκκλησία here anticipates a single localized gathering of Jesus' followers as opposed to 16:18, where Jesus use of the term designates the universal assembly, or ἡ πόλις, which will incorporate all followers. See Crosby's discussion of ἐκκλησία in the NT and Matthew, and its distinction from οἶκος/οἰκία, *House*, pp.33f.

if the attempt fails, Jesus' address then shifts from singular to plural in vv.18-20, where binding and loosing, agreeing and praying, and gathering together are mutual activities of at least two or three ἐκκλησία members. Thus the authority or efficacy ascribed to these different activities of "two (or three)" in vv.18-20 is formally connected to the quasi-legal quorum in vv.15-17, but is not simply an extension of the testimony of the two or three in v.16 (where the "one or two" are acting only as backup to the individual seeking reconciliation). More specifically, the directive to ostracize in v.17 is given in second person singular terms, focusing the primary impact of the shunning on the relationship between the complainant and the offender.²⁵ However, v.18 places the singular σοι of v.17 into the corporate context; the serious weight of the individual's responsibility is inseparable from the community's plural responsibility. The ἐκκλησία has the power to decide which of its members belong to it and may loose (allow) or bind (ban) activities and members with the supreme authority of heaven.²⁶

It is difficult to go along with Thompson, Derrett and others who see the "two who agree" in v.19 as the offender and his rebuking brother from vv.15-17.²⁷ Συμφωνέω in v.19 refers not to the settlement of a dispute between claimants, but to the unified decision of the community's members regarding the offender (vv.17, 18).²⁸ There is a basic continuity throughout vv.15-20 in Jesus's consistent reference to a quorum of two or three who act in harmony. Two or three corroborate regarding the offender in v.16; this underlies the corporate decisions of vv.17 and 18; in v.19 this is

²⁵Note the second person *singular* in v.17: ἔστω σοι - the offender is not necessarily separated completely from the community; so Thompson, *Advice*, pp.200-2; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.275; Brooks, *Community*, p.103. This makes even more inappropriate the use by some commentators of the term "excommunication"; cf. the comments of J. Galot, "Qu'il soit". Gnllka, *Matthäus 2*, p.139, uses the term in an excessively formal, ecclesiastical sense. Gundry (*Matthew*, p.368) prefers "ostracism" and Bonnard (*Matthieu*) "put in quarantine"; see France, *Matthew*, p.275.

Fenton's attempt to uncover a chiasmic structure in 18:15-22 (*Matthew*, p.298) misses the singular-plural shift and the distinction between the various activities undertaken by the two or three; he thus presents vv.19-20 as a single element of the chiasmus. Englezakis ("*Thomas*", p.264) similarly misses the singular-plural shift.

²⁶See Trilling, *Matthew 1*, p.334. The neuter object of binding and loosing in v.18 can refer to people; see Carson, "*Matthew*", pp.372f.

²⁷Thompson, *Advice*, p.202; Derrett, "*Misunderstanding*", pp.84f.

²⁸Συμφωνέω is also Matthean language; cf. 20:2, 13; also αἰτέω: 5:42; 6:8; 7:7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 14:7; 20:20, 22; 21:22; 27:20, 58. See Thompson, *Advice*, p.195 nn.80, 82; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.29, n.92.

reiterated in the agreement of the two; these correspond to the two or three who gather in Jesus' name in v.20. Any proposal of sharp disjunction in this continuity denies the discursive flow: Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ... Πάλιν [ἀμὴν] λέγω ὑμῖν ... γάρ ...

Thus Jesus' sayings in 18:15-20 provide for a compact series of teachings on reconciliation, discipline, community standards, exercise of authority under the divine presence of Jesus in the local ἐκκλησία, based upon the smallest effective quorum of witnesses. It takes at least two to corroborate a testimony, at least two to agree, and at least two or three to gather.²⁹ What Jesus does here in Matthew's story is to define the קָהָל of his people, the requisite number of gathered followers, not simply "for congregational worship",³⁰ but for formation, definition and regulation of the basic social and religious unit of assembly. In Mt 18:15-20 Jesus declares that "two or three" must gather to constitute the functional assembly of "his people".³¹ At the same time δύο ἢ τρεῖς is not numerically exclusive, nor is it the *raison d'être* of these linked utterances. Most critical is the attitude and motivation in each case for gathering.

Presence and Authority

This means, contra Derrett, that the context of 18:15ff is *not* narrowly defined only as "disputes internal to the Church", wherein two counter-claimants reaching agreement on any financial or practical matter become pleasing to God (v.19), having nominated two or three judges/arbitrators and brought them together (v.20). Vv.19-20 do not preclude such a situation and process, elicited by Derrett through numerous external historical associations, but the passage is contextually more inclusive. The initial concern of the discourse - the relative status of the disciples as members of the fellowship gathering in Jesus' name - is maintained by the narrative setting as given in 18:2: the humility/child model placed "in their midst". This model is developed through careful

²⁹Cf. Zahn, *Matthäus*, p.574; McNeile, *Matthew*, pp.266f; Manson, *Sayings*, p.211.

³⁰So Englezakis, "Thomas", p.264. The requisite number in *Sanh.* 1:6 and IQS 6:3 is ten, based on the ten adult males from Num 14:27.

³¹Frankemölle to some extent underplays the numerical significance of the "two or three" (*Jahwebund*, p.34). Conversely it is notable the extent to which early Christian interpretations focused on allegorical interpretations of the "two or three" in Mt 18:20; see Englezakis, "Thomas", pp.269f.

inclusio to become the presence of Jesus "in their midst" by the end of the discourse. This inclusio of the child and Jesus "in their midst" has immediate and wider significance, for Jesus not only equates his own reception with the reception of these little ones in the immediate context (18:5; cf. 25:31-46), but in the story sequence his own divine and royal messiahship undergoes the same inversion to the lowest social status. He continues to predict, and ultimately experiences, his own suffering and death, thereby providing in himself the complete paradigm of presence and humility for the disciples. Jesus' promise of presence in v.20 thus not only anticipates and reiterates his predictions, but his close identification with the μικροί and call for the same identity in his disciples is reflected in the inclusio of vv.2 and 20.

Becoming great in the Kingdom of heaven, i.e., becoming humble, however, does not result in personal authority. To ask "who is the greatest?" (18:1) is also to ask who has authority, but Jesus remains remarkably silent here on human leadership and social structures. He answers this implicit question from the disciples by reinforcing his own constant theocentric posture and by anticipating his future presence among them as his ongoing agency of Yahweh's will. Jesus' point is that Kingdom status will derive not from the elevation of one or more particular disciples but that membership in his community will require the last-first inversion which he himself will ultimately model in his predicted suffering and crucifixion. Questions of human status and authority are secondary amidst the corporate focus on himself. The authority for the disciples' activities of reconciliation and ostracism, binding and loosing, agreeing, requesting and gathering will remain heavenly in orientation, bestowed through his presence. But there is also a notable shift of authority to Jesus himself within his saying in 18:20: *he* will be the centre of the gathered ἐκκλησία, for they will gather in *his* name.

The perfect periphrastic in 18:20, εἰσιν ... συνηγμένοι, agrees with the majority of the forty instances of the construction in the NT which denote an existing condition.³² Here the combination with the adverbial οὐ³³ ... ἐκεῖ and εἶμι produces a reference to a condition without grammatical limitation in frequency of occurrence, while the lack of any such plotted

³²See Burton, *Moods*, §84.

³³For textual variants see Thompson, *Advice*, p.196 n.85, and Caba, "El poder", p.627 n.52.

incident of the disciples gathering in Jesus' name thus far in the story creates for readers the anticipation that this mode of coming together will happen regularly and sometime soon. Correspondingly, οὐ ... ἐκεῖ sounds a further fundamental note through its generic character: the locale for these anticipated gatherings remains indeterminate.³⁴

Some space was already devoted in Chapter 3 to the particular employment of συναγ- words in Matthew's story. Apart from the lexical data listed there which quickly demonstrate that Matthew's preference is more than stylistic,³⁵ examination of the occurrences of συνάγειν and συναγωγή reveals a deeper agenda, one which goes to the heart of the story's conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

The most striking examples attached to συνάγειν are evident in the consistent narrative portrait of the "gatherings" of the character group most polarized from Jesus. To follow the συνάγειν activity of the Jewish leaders in Matthew's story is to recite a number of highlights in the plot development of their antagonism to Yahweh's Emmanuel Messiah. From their first knowledge of Jesus the Jerusalem leaders are "gathering" against him (2:4); Herod's summons brings together a strange alliance of Israel's political, cultic and religious leaders who are all troubled by news of the object of the magi's quest. By 12:14 the reader knows of a plot by the Pharisees to destroy Jesus, and in Mt 22ff Jesus' presence in Jerusalem and the Temple provokes the Jewish leaders "to gather" at least seven times against him. Each of these occurrences of συνάγειν is the narrator's; his consistent portrayal of their repeated gathering in opposition to the Emmanuel Messiah is completely in line with his constant characterization of the Jewish leaders as implacably opposed to the divine agency of presence and salvation in Jesus.

Synoptic comparison makes even sharper some of this Matthean characterization. In the three Gospels the double love commandment appears in answer either to the question of the greatest commandment in the law (Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-34), or to the question of how to inherit eternal life (Lk 10:25-28). Only in Mt 22:34 is the "gathering" of the Pharisees noted as the prelude to this challenge of Jesus. And while the confrontations in

³⁴ Note the association elsewhere between συνάγειν and a place for gathering in Mt 26:3,57; cf. also Acts 4:31; 20:8 (οὐ ἡμεν συνηγμένοι); Jn 18:2; Rev 16:16.

³⁵ See further in Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.34 n.120.

Mark and Luke end in relative equanimity,³⁶ in Matthew it accelerates into another confrontation specifically between Jesus and the "gathered" Pharisees. Whereas the plot arrangement in Matthew remains the same as in Mark (great commandment episode followed by the question about David's son), in Matthew the question is posed by Jesus as a challenge to the Pharisees while they were "gathered together" (22:41). In Matthew's story it is after these two episodes of confrontation between Jesus and the "gathered" Pharisees that "no one was able to answer him a word", or dared ask another question (22:46). The narrator has employed συνάγειν to draw uncompromising battle lines, and to portray Jesus as the victor on the home territory, Jerusalem and the Temple, of the Pharisees.

In contrast, the few times συνάγειν has as its subject the followers of Jesus, it is employed by Jesus in the context of activity which aligns with the purposes and will of the Father in his Son, the Emmanuel Messiah. Συνάγειν is used by Jesus in 18:20 to speak of his followers coming together "in his name" as the prerequisite for his presence, and here the participle stands in concert with συμφωνήσωσιν in 18:19; both imply gathering and unity.³⁷ In 25:35, 38 and 43 Jesus establishes the activity of συνάγειν (in this case "to receive strangers") as one of the universal criteria of judgement at the coming of the Son of Man. Here his language corresponds directly with the concerns of his discourse in Mt 18: the importance of care for the μικροί there is highlighted again in the judgement scene of 25:31ff. Ministry to, or neglect of, the hunger, thirst, alienation, illness and imprisonment of ἐνὶ τούτων (τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου) τῶν ἐλαχίστων" (25:40, 45) actually constitutes ministry to or neglect of the King himself, the son of Man, and grounds for eternal inheritance or punishment.³⁸

³⁶In fact at the end of their exchange in Mark, Jesus considers the scribe to be "not far from the Kingdom of God", after which "no one dared to ask him another question" (Mk 12:34).

³⁷Kretzer, *Herrschaft*, pp.237f, wants to understand συνηγμένοι as the antithesis of the Jewish synagogue; similarly Barth, *Dogmatics* 4.2, p.791; cf. Gnllka, *Matthäus* 2, p.140 n.27, and many others. Such an antithesis certainly exists within the story world of Matthew; its application to an immediate historical reference is more difficult to assess.

³⁸Cf. συνάγειν for the post-resurrection gatherings of the disciples and early Christians in Acts 4:31; 11:26; 13:44; 14:27; 15:6, 30; 20:7, 8; cf. esp. the perfect participle constructed with εἰμι in 4:31: ἦσαν συνηγμένοι; 20:8: ἡμεν συνηγμένοι. Luke's Gospel never uses the verb for the gathering of the disciples and only once (22:66) for the gathering of the Jewish leaders.

The temporal coordinate of the gathering in 18:20 in story time is important, for it contrasts with the repeated gatherings of the Jewish leaders. Each of the latter συνάγειν episodes is reported by the narrator as a plotted incident, as a series of clandestine meetings which surround Jesus at every turn, constituting a sub-plot of subversion to the main plot of his messianic mission. The "gatherings" implied in 18:20 are not yet plotted incidents, however; Jesus anticipates them and the implied reader awaits their fulfilment. In this way the plot device of anticipation has again been invoked, and the implied reader looks ahead to its occurrence (beyond narrative time?) as the first time (of many?) when Jesus' disciples will gather in his name and derive their Kingdom status from the peculiar authority of his presence. This also agrees with the widespread use of συνάγω elsewhere to designate the eschatological gathering of God's scattered people.³⁹ Matthew's Jesus has become the centre of that gathering.

7.4. The Nature of the "Gathering"

What sort of gathering is anticipated in 18:20? We have seen that συνάγειν in Matthew always denotes a gathering with a narratively specific orientation, whether positive - in alignment with God's agency of messianic presence in Jesus, or negative - in sinister rejection of his messianic presence. In 18:20 the gathering is certainly positive in orientation, but what sort of social picture are we given here? Can we make any comments about the gathering's social characteristics, formality, spontaneity or liturgical nature?

Commentators have diverse opinions. Jesus' presence in Mt 18:20 is frequently compared with the Shekinah in the Temple. Trilling employs this comparison to emphasize that Jesus' presence in 18:20 is of a static nature, giving the gathering cultic connotations, while 28:20 reflects dynamic presence.⁴⁰ Frankemölle has most strongly contested Trilling's distinction, on the basis of the LXX's undifferentiated use of ἐν μέσῳ and μετά.⁴¹ Goldberg and Sievers have also each argued for Shekinah as both Temple-oriented and independent of location.⁴²

³⁹ See a list of references in Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.282 n.78.

⁴⁰ *Israel*, pp.41f.

⁴¹ *Jahwebund*, pp.30-32; cf. Strecker, *Weg*, p.213.

⁴² Sievers, "Shekhinah", p.178; Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, pp.388, 453f.

Derrett, among others, has reacted sharply to attempts to contextualize the passage in a setting of worship or prayer⁴³. Given the historical parallels, 18:19-20 must describe the agreement between offender and offended regarding a judicial matter;⁴⁴ Beare and Carson have taken a similar tack.⁴⁵ But Derrett has overlooked the fact that Jesus has already told the complainant to take it to the community (v.17), not to judges appointed by the disputants. Derrett also assumes that the two (or three) in vv.19 and 20 are not the same individuals, but disputants and judges respectively - an unlikely scenario. The relationship of these historical issues to this text remains somewhat ambiguous, with the referential specificity required by Trilling, Derrett and others requiring an excessively narrow reading.

The text itself speaks of a situation where a small cell of believers is able to act with divine authority. The tiniest possible assembly is sure to be heard when united in prayer; God is sure to ratify the ἐκκλησία's decisions just as he hears two of its members and they experience his authority in the divine presence of his Son. Englezakis thinks such activities in themselves necessitate a "liturgical" setting. He sees in 18:20 a prayer saying, but he depends heavily on later Christian exegesis.⁴⁶ Caba categorizes the gathering of 18:20 as of a "fundamentally religious character"⁴⁷ and interprets this in the sense of the gatherings in Acts which "implican casisiempre un carácter religioso" (cf. Acts 11:26; 13:44; 14:27; 20:7). Caba's understanding of "religious", however, remains unfortunately a-social and 'ecclesiastical' in its focus on prayer. In the end, Caba's endorsement of a three-level portrait from 18:19f - the intercommunication of the Earth and its affairs, the presence of Jesus as intermediary, and the Father in heaven, forming a triple-plane conception of the church which is the centre of Matthew's Gospel⁴⁸ - runs counter to the story's own emphases.

⁴³E.g., Via, "Church", p.283, who identifies Christ's presence with the "power of prayer".

⁴⁴Derrett, "Misunderstanding". Derrett unfortunately suffers from his own case of illegitimate transfer of meaning in requiring αἰτεῖσθαι to mean "pursuing a claim". This is not required by αἰτέω elsewhere in Matthew.

⁴⁵Beare, *Matthew*, p.380; Carson, "Matthew", p.403.

⁴⁶"Thomas", p.266.

⁴⁷"El poder", p.629: "esa reunión sí tiene un carácter fundamentalmente religioso".

⁴⁸"Esta misma concepción de la Iglesia en triple plano es la que se da en el centro del evangelio de Mateo" (p.631). He cites Trilling, *Israel*², p.99: "Das Kirchenbild, das hinter der Worten steht, ist von einer dreifachen

Such pictures of "einer dreifachen Struktur" or "un cuadro a triple nivel" seem to me incompatible with the portrait of presence in Matthew. Jesus' agency of God's presence in the story is one of immediacy - it is the unmediated experience of the disciples and 18:20 anticipates that it will be the unmediated experience of the ἐκκλησία. Their power to bind and loose, to agree and petition effectively, and to gather, does not go through a three-stage hierarchy but is given now to be employed efficaciously by them. The distance and transcendence which three-level models imply is far removed from the dynamic and authoritative presence which Jesus anticipates here.

Frankemölle is correct that the style of the gathering is unclear;⁴⁹ certainly on historical and form-critical grounds it is not confined to a single category like prayer, eucharist, liturgy or judicial gathering. And given the temporal plot coordinates the vague description of this utterance as a logion of "the Exalted One" also does nothing to explain its meaning in the story.⁵⁰ Yet it is similarly futile to attempt a narrow definition of Jesus here as κύριος⁵¹ or as the exalted Son of God.⁵²

Jesus' authoritative presence in 18:20 does elaborate the assurance of v.19 and clarifies the certainty of the community's judicial acts in vv.15-18. "Spiritual" and "mystical"⁵³ are thus also inappropriately narrow descriptions of the nature of Jesus' presence, given the dynamic quality of Jesus' saving presence throughout Matthew, and the story's conscious rootedness in the material and dynamic OT presence of Yahweh.⁵⁴

Struktur: der Vater im Himmel, der Erhörung schenkt, Christus in der Mitte und Gemeinschaft seiner Gläubigen und die durch das Bekenntnis zum ihm geeinte Gemeinde." Cf. also Trilling, *Hausordnung*, pp.52f; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p.603.

⁴⁹*Jahwebund*, pp.35f.

⁵⁰Schweizer, *Matthew*, p.375. Cf. Barth, *TIM*, pp.135f; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.275; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p.420; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.34-6.

⁵¹See Strecker, *Weg*, p.213; Trilling, *Israel*, pp.40-42; Bornkamm, "Bind".

⁵²Kingsbury, *Structure*, pp.69f. Here he follows his commitment to the Gospel-wide dominance of "Son of God", and speaks of exalted κύριος christology as a denial of Matthew's intention in 18:20. But earlier, in *Parables*, p.43, while criticizing the 'monotitular christologies' of others, Kingsbury refers frequently to Jesus speaking to the church, "for as Jesus kyrios he resides in their midst (18:20; 28:20)" - cf. pp.18, 34, 72, 114.

⁵³See Frankemölle's references, *Jahwebund*, p.36: cf. Lagrange, *Matthieu*, p.356: "mystique".

⁵⁴Luz, "Disciples", pp.111, 113 has recognized the equation in the story between Jesus' presence and salvation; Mohrlang sees Luz's equation as too narrow, *Matthew*, p.171 n.62.

The four appearances of ἐν μέσῳ in Matthew's story are always applied to the relative position of characters and provide a portrait of proximity and presence, not merely of physical, but of personal encounter.⁵⁵ In each case the adverbial phrase also sharpens the focus on the characters themselves by virtue of their centripetal position "in the midst" of others: the disciples sent out as "sheep in the midst of wolves" (10:16); Herod's daughter dancing "in the midst of" his guests (14:6); the child placed "in the midst of" the disciples by Jesus (18:2); and Jesus being "in the midst of" those gathered in his name (18:20).

The Name of Jesus

The "gathering" referred to by Jesus in 18:20 is critically qualified by εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα, and this orientation clearly sets it apart from any of the "gathering" episodes of the Jewish leaders in Matthew's story. Each of *their* συνάγειν incidents has been *against* the name of Jesus, whereas in 18:20 the disciples will be gathering with the opposite orientation. This fundamental contrast between the two groups ties directly into the opposing application and orientation given to συναγωγή and ἐκκλησία language in Matthew's story and highlights the ongoing conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

We have already noted the critical importance of the double naming - Jesus and Emmanuel - in the opening incident of Matthew's story, not as merely identificatory, but providing significant narrative indicators of his characterization. The epithets "Jesus" and "Emmanuel" do accord in the story with their explanations (1:21, 23) - God's Messiah does come to save his people and does prove to be the divine agent of presence.

More important here, however, is the idea of acting "in the name of", or invoking "the name of" Jesus. The phrase εἰς (τὸ) ὄνομα is unknown to the other synoptic gospels; Matthew's story uses it three times where the Markan parallel does not (Mt 10:41-42, causally), and twice in unparalleled

⁵⁵Cf. ἐν μέσῳ: Mk 2x; Lk 7x; Jn 2x - both textually doubtful. It could be argued that the Gospels' employment of equivalent phrases (ἀνὰ μέσον, εἰς μέσον, etc.) negates any particular attention given to ἐν μέσῳ in Matthew. But two considerations remain: (1) other Gospels use ἐν μέσῳ to describe the relative positions of inanimate objects (cf. Mk 6:47; Lk 8:7; 22:55); in Matthew the phrase applies only to the close proximity of characters, i.e., personal presence. (2) In paralleled material Matthew avoids ἐν μέσῳ for inanimate objects, e.g., cf. Mk 6:47 // Mt 14:24; Mt 13:7 // Lk 8:7.

material (18:20; 28:19). The latter occurrences have prompted a number of commentators to speak of the phrase in terms of "confession",⁵⁶ which may have some justification in the case of the triadic formula in 28:19. In 18:20 the phrase εἰς τὸ ὄνομα is more the *raison d'être* of those gathered than their "confession". Furthermore, a number of equivalent phrases are also used in the story:

τῷ (σῷ) ὀνόματι (7:22 - 3x; 12:21; all in *Sondergut*)
 διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου (10:22, *Sondergut*; 24:9 = Mk 13:13/Lk 21:17)
 ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου (18:5 = Mk 9:37/Lk 9:48; 24:5 = Mk 13:6/Lk 21:8)
 ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου (19:29, editorial)
 ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου (21:9 = Mk 11:9/Lk 19:38)

In eleven of these fourteen instances in Matthew,⁵⁷ the subjects, either true or false disciples, are all acting "in the name of" Jesus.⁵⁸ They include the true disciples who are hated (10:22), who receive "one such child" (18:5), who gather together (18:20), who leave everything behind (19:29), are persecuted (24:9), and are baptized (28:19)⁵⁹ "in the name" or "for the sake of" Jesus, and false disciples - evildoers who prophesy, cast out demons and do many mighty works (7:22), and those who come as false christs (24:5) - "in the name of" Jesus.

Εἰς τὸ ὄνομα in 18:20 is thus causally understood,⁶⁰ and signifies the allegiance, or identity marker of this particular group. Commentators have often noted that the phrase translates the Hebrew/Aramaic *בשמי* and can be rendered as "for my sake",⁶¹ so that in a very practical sense the name of Jesus provides the divine authority which stands over the community.⁶² In

⁵⁶E.g., Dupont, "Nom", p.535: "Pour préciser le sens dans le quel on se réunit 'au nom' de Jésus, il faudrait sans doute faire appel aux confessions de foi de la chrétienté primitive, telle que: 'Jésus est la Seigneur'." See Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; 22:16; Rom 10:13; 1 Cor 1:2 for the invocation of the name of Jesus; cf. Thompson, *Advice*, p.198; Caba, "El Poder", p.629 n.57.

⁵⁷The other three instances, in 10:41-42, employ εἰς ὄνομα in reference to the disciples being received εἰς ὄνομα προφήτου ... εἰς ὄνομα δικαίου ... εἰς ὄνομα μαθητοῦ. Here too the identification between the disciples and Jesus' presence is very much at the forefront of the passage (cf. 10:40).

⁵⁸The citation from Ps 118:26, repeated in Mt 21:9 and 23:39, uses the phrase ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου in reference to Yahweh, to emphasize again Jesus' agency.

⁵⁹εἰς τὸ ὄνομα in 28:19 is applied to Jesus as part of the triadic formula.

⁶⁰Cf. Gnllka, *Matthäus* 2, p.140.

⁶¹See e.g., Bietenhard, "ὄνομα", pp.274-76; Sievers, "*Shekhinah*", p.177; cf. Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.34f; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p.302.

⁶²But contra Schweizer, *Matthew*, p.375, there is no direct linking of "name" in 18:20 with the operation of the Spirit, as in 1 Cor 6:11; cf. 5:4; Acts 4:7f.

each of the eleven instances listed above, the disciples, whether true or false, are actively engaged in some aspect of Jesus' messianic mission. The phrase "in the name of" never occurs as part of a plotted event, but is always used in future-tense or subjunctive language, anticipating events which do not happen in story time, but look ahead to the disciples' mission, times of persecution, "that day", judgement, or some other indeterminate future point beyond the narrative. The same is true of 18:20, which predicts a situation which has not arisen in the plot - the gathering of the disciples in Jesus' name.

Hence each time "in the name of Jesus" or its equivalent occurs in the story, the reader is left with another anticipated, yet-unfulfilled situation to add to the list of activities which at some point will be carried out "in his name".⁶³ From the language of these passages the reader also receives the implication that this activity "in his name" will be undertaken in Jesus' physical absence. Thus it becomes increasingly important to pay careful attention to these temporal coordinates of the story, and to differentiate between events in the narrative and those referred to in predictions and anticipations. In time the reader does find that some of these are fulfilled within the plot, while others, e.g., the mission discourse in Mt 10, remain unplotted by the end of the story. Yet the reliable pattern of anticipation and fulfilment in other incidents has created the expectation that any unfulfilled predictions will occur, even if after the plot ends. Hence the reader knows that the commission in Mt 10, the gatherings in 18:20, the coming of the Kingdom (3:2; 4:17), the judgement in Mt 24, the promise of presence in 28:20, and so on, will occur.

In relation to these plot devices of prediction and anticipation, ὄνομα in 18:20 recalls the double naming in 1:21 and 23. The first was fulfilled in 1:24f. In 18:20, however, the naming of 1:23 appears to receive another anticipatory reference. Since 1:23 is a prediction not of a literal naming by Joseph, but of a corporate recognition (indefinite future plural καλέσουσιν) by the people of Jesus that he is "God with us", in the saying in 18:20 Jesus therefore himself anticipates that corporate recognition by the members of the ἐκκλησία. He effectively reiterates the narrator's prediction of 1:23 by looking forward to a time when the gathering of his

⁶³Even the narrator's fulfilment quotation in 12:21: "...and in his name will the Gentiles hope" is introduced apart from any specific event of fulfilment in the plot. "This was to fulfil" in 12:17 refers only to Jesus' withdrawal from the Pharisees' plotting against him and his ongoing healing ministry.

people "in the name of" the Emmanuel Messiah Jesus will constitute the forum for his presence. 1:23 remains unfulfilled in the plot, but 18:20 also reinforces its expectation through anticipation. Those who will call him Emmanuel - "God with us", are those who will gather in his name with his presence in their midst.⁶⁴

"I am... "

"There I am in the midst of them" strikes the implied reader as Jesus' most radical self-pronouncement thus far in the story. Matthew's is not a story replete with εἰμί declarations by Jesus - only four, in 11:29; 14:27; 18:20 and 28:20,⁶⁵ although Mark and Luke show even fewer, only two each.⁶⁶ Each utterance in Matthew's story, however, is a significant moment of self-characterization by Jesus, and each advances the story's portrait of Jesus as the divine agent of presence.⁶⁷

In the first, in 11:29, Jesus is appealing to the overwhelmed with his offer of rest and an easy yoke, claiming "I am (εἰμι) gentle and lowly in heart". With this language Jesus presents himself in terms of a particular kind of divine presence. To this point in the story his divine agency and filial intimacy has found its clearest expression in 11:25-27. His appeal in vv.28-30 is thus not only in the traditional words of Wisdom/Σοφία, as has been frequently noted, but is the call by the agent of divine messianic presence to the oppressed to find tangible relief for one's body and soul through discipleship. "Δεῦτε πρὸς με" is an unmistakable invitation to divine proximity through the agency of Yahweh's gentle and humble-hearted Messiah, the one who calls his people to a Kingdom of inverted social values.

Only the second εἰμί declaration of Matthew's Jesus (14:27), in the water-walking story, finds a parallel in other gospel stories, in Mk 6:50 and Jn 6:20. But a number of distinct features in Matthew again orient the incident noticeably toward the motif of presence. As noted in Chapter 3,

⁶⁴Cf. Braumann, "Mit euch", p.162; Caba, "El Poder", p.630.

⁶⁵The mocking claim εἶπεν γὰρ ὅτι θεοῦ εἰμι υἱός is also put in the mouth of Jesus by the Jerusalem leaders at the cross (27:43; Matthew only).

⁶⁶Mk 6:50; 14:62; Lk 22:27; 24:39.

⁶⁷18:20 hardly supports Zimmermann's conclusion, however, that "Das, was in der Kirche geschieht, geschieht auch bei Gott; denn die Kirche ist die βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, "Struktur", p.182.

the reader is struck with the disciples' dependence upon the physical presence of Jesus, and with their impotence in his absence. Whereas in the parallel incident in Mark, Jesus intends only "to pass by" the boat of disciples, and his declaration "ἐγὼ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε" is to placate their fearful misapprehension of his ghostly appearance, in Matthew he comes to them (πρὸς αὐτοὺς - highly unusual, given Jesus' centripetal character in Matthew) without intending to pass, and the same declaration leads to Peter's testing of the waters. Ἐγὼ εἰμι in Matthew's story thereby becomes a declaration of divine presence and although Peter's failed attempt on the water earns him the rebuke ὀλιγόπιστε, Jesus' authoritative presence restores him and results in the disciples' confession of his divine sonship. Peter's response to Jesus' declaration, though half-hearted, represents another increment in the disciples' growing comprehension of the efficacious power of Jesus' presence. Although unsure of the *physical* identity and presence of Jesus, Peter steps out on the basis of Jesus' uttered reassurance of his presence.

The εἰμι declaration in 28:20 is dealt with in Chapter 8 - Jesus' climactic assertion of presence there provides the story with its important closing statement. There Jesus' presence is both present and anticipated. The disciples have gathered together in the final plotted incident of the story for their final meeting with Jesus. Yet the implied reader also knows that it is the first meeting of many anticipated in 18:20, the first time they are gathering in the name and presence of the risen and living Emmanuel Messiah.

7.5. Parallels of Presence: Shekinah and Jesus

A number of historical and literary correspondences have been suggested for Mt 18:20 and its immediate context; the help which these provide in interpreting the text is variable. Even apart from our initial decision to read Matthew as a story, by numerous redactional criteria already noted Mt 18:15-20 shows full integration into the narrative of the First Gospel, thematically, compositionally and rhetorically. Vv.15-17, 18 and 19-20 have often been treated as originally separate sayings,⁶⁸ but in their present position in Matthew's story they have a coherent thematic flow.

⁶⁸See Thompson, *Advice*, pp.175-202, for references and discussion; cf. the more recent treatment of Mt 18:15-20 by Brooks, *Community*, pp.100, 106f, who similarly argues for these three separate literary units.

Within extant gospel traditions Mt 18:15–20 stands as unique. The most obvious external correspondence has been noted above: the quotation of Dt 19:15 in Mt 18:16. W.D. Davies has asserted that the three-step procedure given for the correction of a brother (alone, with witnesses, and before the assembly) has a precedent of sorts in Qumran (1QS 5:25–6:1; cf. CD 9:2f).⁶⁹

A number of parallels have also been adduced for 18:18 and 20. The best known in the latter case, long since noted by Strack-Billerbeck,⁷⁰ is the striking correspondence of 18:20 to the saying attributed to Rabbi Hananiah b.Teradyon in *M.Abod* 3:2b(3):

If two sit together and the words between them are not of Torah, then that is a session of scorners, as it is said, *Nor hath sat in the seat of the scornful* [Ps 1:1]. But if two sit together and the words between them are of Torah, then the *Shekhinah* is in their midst, as it is said, *Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name* (Mal 3:16).⁷¹

The chronological difficulties with relating this passage, compiled at least a century after Matthew, to the saying in Mt 18:20 are well known, and Sandmel's warnings against "parallelomania" must be heeded.⁷² At the same time, some critics have found value in pondering the comparative worlds in these two texts, and have asserted varying degrees of overlap and particular relationships of dependence.

As Englezakis has noted, given the language and character of the passage, most commentators assume 18:20 to be a creation of early Christian prophecy, modeled on the *M.Abod* saying. But if Paul could speculate about being ἀπὸν τῷ σώματι παρὸν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι (1 Cor 5:3), why not Jesus? And why could Jesus not have surmised such a future gathering of his followers for his name's sake?⁷³ Ἐκκλησία in Mt 18 need not be deemed evidence of later vocabulary on the basis of its subsequent institutional connotations. In fact, the determination of 18:20 as authentic or inauthentic does not take us far on the road toward its meaning in the story. The prophetic boldness of 18:20 may represent the historical Jesus' self-perceived role as

⁶⁹Davies, *Setting*, pp.221ff; cf. Hill, *Matthew*, p.275.

⁷⁰Strack-Billerbeck 1, p.794; cf. Lachs, *Commentary*, p.271.

⁷¹Translation by Goldin, *Talmud*, pp.120f; see Sievers, "*Shekhinah*", p.174.

⁷²"Parallelomania", pp.1–13. Cf. Neusner's broader assertion of a fundamental incomprehension and discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism(s) of the first century; "Absoluteness", pp.18ff.

⁷³See Englezakis, "*Thomas*", pp.263f; cf. Jeremias, *NT Theology*, §17.

herald of God's eschatological Kingdom. Jesus' agency of divine presence in this story is Matthew's signatory formulation of the close link between the activity of Jesus and the divine purposes which both John and the synoptics hold in common.⁷⁴

If an historical setting is to be found, it hinges on the implied antithesis of 18:20. In the story ἐκκλησία provides a powerful counterpoint to the reverse, antagonistic orientation of συναγωγὰς αὐτῶν, and this could apply in the historical community/ies from which the story emanates. Divine authority and heavenly presence are in Mt 18:20 the symbols of the community of Jesus' followers; the claim of Matthew's author to represent God's people is an assertion over against those who have been gathering *against* his Lord. In the story and in the historical world referenced by it these opponents are the traditional Jewish leaders who have for generations claimed as their exclusive right the corporate ratification of Yahweh's presence, now being claimed in Matthew by Jesus' followers.

Given the ongoing questions about and possibility of 18:20's authenticity, can its long-asserted correspondence with *M. Abot* 3:2b still remain illustrative, at least in terms of interpretive background? Much of this discussion has centred on the question of the origins of the rabbinic concept of Shekinah and its relation to Mt 18:20, a question remaining essentially unsolved.⁷⁵ The noun never once occurs in the Hb Bible or the DSS. The verb שָׁכַן, "to dwell, rest or abide", certainly occurs frequently in the OT along with its derivatives, in reference to God and his sanctuary,⁷⁶ and in numerous places the verb through rabbinic use and interpretation of the texts became substantive in form.⁷⁷ But rabbinic references to the actual term שְׁכִינָה cannot reliably be dated early enough to provide temporal correspondence with Matthew, including the oft-cited

⁷⁴So Rowland, *Origins*, pp.174f; cf. Mt 10:40ff; Lk 10:16; John 5:23; 7:16; 12:44f; 13:20; 14:9; 15:23.

⁷⁵See the attempts by Bouyer, "La Schékinah"; Terrien, *Presence*, pp.404, 409, 420, to address the issue.

⁷⁶E.g., Ex 25:8, 9; 29:45; Num 5:3; Ps 74:2; see Sievers, "Shekhinah", p.171; Terrien, *Presence*.

⁷⁷E.g. Num 35:34 "in the midst of which I dwell" - שָׁכַן is subsequently understood by Sifre Num to indicate שְׁכִינָה; cf. Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.34.

occurrences in the *Aleinu* prayer, the Eighteen Benedictions and Targum Onkelos.⁷⁸

On the other hand, 2 Macc 14:35 may provide a Greek correspondence from outside rabbinic literature, with its reference to a prayer of the Jerusalem priests for the purity of the "Temple of your indwelling" (ναὸν τῆς σῆς σκηνώσεως); the closest semantic and formal Hebrew parallel for σκήνωσις is שְׁכֻנָּה. Such Greek references to the Temple as the "house of God's dwelling" may lie behind the development of the term Shekinah, possibly before 70 CE.⁷⁹

More important, however, is Sievers' observation that Shekinah in rabbinic literature became synonymous with divine presence in all modes, not confined to the Temple sanctuary. That *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael* interprets Ex 20:24 as both God's presence restricted to the Temple and God's presence with one, two or three holding court or 10 in the synagogue, underlines the distinction and tension between different views of divine presence,⁸⁰ and at least "weakens Goldberg's thesis that there was no connection between the ideas of the *Shekhinah* in the Temple and in the community."⁸¹ Other differences arise: whereas other traditions⁸² focus on preoccupation with Torah as the main prerequisite for the presence of the Shekinah with one or two persons,⁸³ the *Mekhilta* highlights only fear of the Lord and remembrance of his name. These various traditions seem to be struggling more with the problem of God's absence and presence than with the place to pronounce his name.

The concept and terminology of "Shekinah" may not be clearly traceable to the first century CE, but the striking correspondence between Mt 18:20 and the saying of Hananiah b. Teradyon points at minimum to two distinct religious circles, Jewish and Christian, dealing with similar questions about divine presence in terms of their own community identity and

⁷⁸Cf. Targum Onkelos: Gen 9:27 "And he shall cause his Shekinah (שְׁכֻנָּה) to dwell in the tabernacle of Shem"; Ex 25:8 "And I will cause my Shekinah (שְׁכֻנָּה) to dwell among them"; Ex 29:45 "And I will cause my Shekinah (שְׁכֻנָּה) to dwell in the midst of the children of Israel". See Sievers, "Shekhinah", pp.171f.

⁷⁹Cf. Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, pp.439-42; Sievers, "Shekhinah", p.172.

⁸⁰See 1 Kings 8:12-13:27; Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, pp.471-530.

⁸¹Sievers, "Shekhinah", p.173; see Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, p.500.

⁸²E.g., the Mishnah's only two occurrences of Shekinah in *M.Abod* 3.2b.

⁸³See examples in Sievers, "Shekhinah", pp.173f.

experience.⁸⁴ In the later rabbinic formulation the focus of gathering is "words of Torah", and in Matthew "my name"; in the former the presence bestowed is "Shekinah", in Matthew it is the intimate experience of Jesus' divine authority. Evidence for the source of Mt 18:20 is too scanty, the origin of the Shekinah concept is too clouded, and the contexts of the two sayings too distinct to point to any specific historical-literary relationship.⁸⁵ We cannot assert that Mt 18:20 was composed as the antithesis to the claims of the Shekinah saying, or that Matthew wanted to replace the presence of Torah with Jesus, or to equate Jesus with Shekinah - such a relationship is supported neither rhetorically nor historically. But the distance between *these* two particular historical, religious circles does not obviate either the rhetorical antithesis within the story or its possible reference to *another* historical antithesis between two religious worlds behind the story.⁸⁶ The main thrust of supercession in 18:20 is thus not against Shekinah *per se*, but against the συνάγειν activity of those referenced in the story as the Jewish leaders - Matthew's Jesus is at minimum claiming for his community the authority of heaven which these opponents had assumed was theirs.

⁸⁴As Englezakis, "Thomas", p.265, points out, concern about God's presence with the believer in any case pre-dates the Christian *monaxoi*, pre-dates Mt 18:20, and is a broader query within Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

⁸⁵Davies, *Setting*, p.225: "a christified bit of rabbinism", goes too far; so also Bultmann, *History*, p.147f, 149, 150f; Michel, "Conclusion", p.40 n.7, and many others. Bornkamm, "Bind", p.88, suggests that "the Christian logion was formulated antithetically in relation to the Jewish conception of the Shekinah", and Barth, *TIM*, p.127, talks about the replacement of Torah in 18:20 with ὄνομα, and in place of Shekinah, Jesus. Christian, *Brüder*, p.46, also sees too easily an identification between the Shekinah and the presence of God in Jesus throughout Matthew, depending on Strack-Billerbeck to assume that "Die Vorstellung von der Schechina reicht sicher in das 1.Jh.n.Chr." (p.328 n.100) According to Morton Smith's categories we are dealing with a "parallel with a fixed difference", *Parallels*, p.152 (cf. Sievers, "Shekhinah", p.176).

But cf. Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.30: "Mt 18:20a findet in Aboth III 2 kein Vorbild", and pp.29f for a list of stylistic and material differences; also Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.446. Van Unnik, "Dominus", p.288: the content of the two sayings is as different as it is similar.

⁸⁶In this sense, Pesch's claim - "Die Christen lösen sich von dem Synagogen verband und glauben an die geistige Gegenwart ihres Herrn in ihrer Mitte" ("Gemeindeordnung", p.228) - is on the one hand over-optimistic in the specific historical connections it presumes, but on the other hand underestimates the true depth of the συναγωγή-ἐκκλησία counter-claim being made rhetorically and perhaps historically in 18:20.

It therefore becomes possible at this point in Matthew's story to talk about Jesus asserting for himself functions of Yahweh. It is obviously important for Matthew to establish lines of continuity in his story between Israel and the ἐκκλησία, between Yahweh and Jesus. But at numerous points these lines of continuity are becoming lines of transformation. As Frankemölle notes, Matthew not only emphasizes Jesus in terms of the κύριος traditions, but in describing Jesus as the one who forgives sins (cf. Lk 11:20; Mk 2:5ff), Matthew thereby perceives the transformation of God's people Israel into Jesus' disciples, "his people" (Mt 1:21), the community gathered in his name (16:18; 18:20). (Frankemölle does, however, connect this christological transformation too closely with OT *Bundestheologie* and the concept of Yahweh as *Bundesgott*, with an excessively "ecclesiological" air.) Jesus himself now manifests Yahweh's presence (whether or not thought of in terms of Shekinah) to the smallest possible gathering of his own people, given the condition of his name as their focus, i.e., their gathering in alignment with his filial agency of God's messianic will and presence.

7.6. Modes of Presence: Jesus and "the little ones"

Probably the most illustrative correspondence to Mt 18:20 arises from within Matthew's story, within the context of Mt 18, between v.5 and v.20.

Mt 18:5	Mt 18:20
a δς ἐὰν δέξηται ἐν παιδίον τοιοῦτο	a οὗ γάρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι
b ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι μου	b εἰς τὸ ἑμὸν ὄνομα
a ¹ ἐμὲ δέχεται	a ¹ ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν

Here the careful parallelism of the *a* and *a*¹ elements in each verse is noteworthy. In 18:5 the δέξηται-δέχεται parallel evokes an identification between the direct objects of both verbs; ἐν παιδίον τοιοῦτο is parallel to ἐμὲ and hence the stated equivalence between receiving/welcoming Jesus and receiving/welcoming "one of these children". Element *b* - ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι μου - provides the motivation and basis for the parallelism and identification between Jesus and the child.

Likewise, in 18:20 a verbal parallel exists in the *a* and *a*¹ elements between εἰσιν and εἰμι. This is strengthened further by the parallel locatives οὗ and ἐκεῖ to provide for the correspondence between the real presence of the two or three gathered in element *a* and Jesus' presence in their midst in element *a*¹. Based on the careful parallel structure, the tangible nature of the gathering in element *a* extends equally to the

presence described in element a¹; Jesus' presence in their midst is perceived as no less real than the actual gathering of the ἐκκλησία members. Again, element b - εἰς τὸ ἑμὸν ὄνομα - provides the same foundation for the parallelism as in 18:5, and here fuses the two presences within the one experience of gathering.

The tradition in 18:5 of a parallelism between receiving the disciples and receiving Jesus is known by several gospels, but employed most emphatically in Matthew's story.

Mt 10:40	ὁ δεχόμενος ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ δέχεται...
Mt 18:5	ὅς ἐάν δεξῇται ἓν παιδίον τοιοῦτο ... ἐμὲ δέχεται
Mt 25:40	ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων ... ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε
Lk 10:16	ὁ ἀθετῶν ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ ἀθετεῖ
Jn 13:20	ὁ λαμβάνων ἃν τινα πέμψω ἐμὲ λαμβάνει

This principle in Matthew's story, of repeatedly identifying the welcome and treatment of the disciples as tantamount to welcoming and caring for their Messiah, Jesus, evokes for some a scenario where the opposite is the case and needs powerful challenging and correction. Certainly within the rhetorical world of the story Jesus makes no secret of the basic antagonism to be faced by his followers (e.g., 5:10-12, 44; 10:16-23; 23:34f). This is a condition which thus may also apply in some fashion historically, in the post-Easter world referenced by the story. To welcome one of the μικροί is to receive Jesus; to reject one of the μικροί is to reject Jesus. Even here in the positive parallelism of 18:5 and 20 the story's fundamental ideological opposition between Jesus and the Jewish leaders appears, at least as an implied backdrop. Thus alignment with or against the μικροί means alignment with or against Jesus, and Jesus has again passed on (as with the keys of the Kingdom) a measure of his own agency of the Father to his disciples - they are now agents of him. Their presence is in some measure his presence, through this commissioned agency.

This rhetorical equivalence between Jesus and "the little ones"/ children/disciples thus sets up a paradigm for the network of relationships inside and outside the ἐκκλησία; in these relationships the presence of Jesus becomes a powerful motivating and guiding force religiously and socially. For the members of the ἐκκλησία, this functional identification of Jesus' presence with themselves and the marginalized brings both a greater internal cohesion and a clearer external hedge to those opposed to them and their Messiah. Presence here provides parameters, authority and focus for the community's activities, while 25:31-46 adds the eschatological

dimension of the same identification. On the strength of this parallelism the ἐκκλησία can challenge those gathered against it with an authoritative identity - reception/rejection of Jesus' followers invokes no less than Yahweh's sanction/condemnation, based on Jesus' ongoing post-Easter agency of divine presence with his followers.

That Matthew's story brings together the parallelism of 18:5 with the parallelism of 18:20 thus fortifies Jesus' presence as the functional element of equivalence in both verses.

Summary

To return to our original question, what does Jesus' presence in 18:20 mean in the story? How will Jesus be "in their midst"? The image is first and foremost an anticipation of something unknown, unexperienced and somewhat undefined. But in context it is predicated repeatedly upon Jesus' complete identification with his marginalized followers: "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me" (18:5; cf. 10:40; 25:40, 45) - Jesus' agency of divine presence is intimately bound up with the humility of the μικροί, their first place in the Kingdom and with his Father, and their treatment by others.

Jesus' presence is promised as the future experience of his heavenly authority among his gathered followers, in their efforts to reconcile, discipline, bind and loose, and agree and pray together. That Jesus is "in the midst" of those gathered in his name brings divine ratification to the daily functions, and religious and social boundaries, standards and mores of the ἐκκλησία. Implied within this dynamic promise *for* the ἐκκλησία is the counter-claim *against* the particular συναγωγή gatherings of his opponents; orientation around Jesus' name means heaven's ratification of the former and its activities, while orientation against Jesus means heaven's judgement and divine absence for the latter.

Thus the presence of Jesus "in their midst" is not a good feeling, or acknowledgement of a theological abstraction, or narrowly applied only to the regulation of disputatious church members - it is the socially and religiously functional experience of his gathered people, providing both focus and cohesion for the community's acts of self-regulation.

Mt 18:20 therefore offers a fundamental principle for community definition; "his people", those whom Jesus has come to save and who will call him "Emmanuel", are those who will gather in his name in 18:20. Οὗ γάρ

εἶσιν ... συνηγμένοι ..., ἐκεῖ εἰμι is not an open-ended declaration of 'pan-christology' which guarantees Jesus' presence, blessing and authority whenever and wherever a couple of ἐκκλησία members meet.⁸⁷ His divine presence and authority will go hand-in-hand with gathering in his name, in the context of pressing questions of community relations and group self-definition *vis-à-vis* outside social and religious forces.

Ultimately, however, the story also maintains its own rhetorical sense of ambiguity as to the precise character of Jesus' presence in 18:20. First of all, the promise he utters here is premised upon his own predictions of his future death, resurrection and physical absence from his followers - these events remain as yet unrealized and undefined in the plot.

Furthermore, his promise anticipates that future period - πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος (28:20) and points to the ἐκκλησία's ongoing experience of Emmanuel's presence then, not as an objective description in terms of vision, word or spirit, but in terms of the members' corporate apprehension of his personal power and authority. Finally, the precise function of Jesus as he is present in 18:20 is not delimited in context. The story is rhetorically deliberate in neither narrowing the function of Jesus' presence to the single issue of community discipline, nor leaving it broadly open as an unqualified guarantee of divine accommodation and approval. Jesus' statement here "denies importance to the presence of an institution, the size of the community, the sanctity of the place, the blessing of an official functionary, or visible success in the world",⁸⁸ and instead focuses on the importance of the members' harmony in binding, loosing, petitioning and gathering in Emmanuel's presence.

Once again Matthew's story works within the broad stream of Yahweh's presence with Israel, but sees Jesus as both the transformation and embodiment of that divine function. Mt 18:20 thus draws out the theological emphasis of the gospel itself, based on Jesus' radical fulfilment of the paradigm of Yahweh's *Mitsein* with Israel.

⁸⁷E.g., Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.230: Jesus is always present with his community where and when they are found together - because he is their Lord and helper. Cf. also Cunningham, *Jesus*, p.194.

⁸⁸Schweizer, *Matthew*, p.375. Cf. Barth, *TIM*, pp.135f; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.275; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p.420; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.34-6.

CHAPTER 8. MT 28:16-20: THE PRESENCE OF THE RISEN JESUS

The final words of the First Gospel are a promise uttered by the risen Jesus to "the Eleven":

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας
ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

They conclude Matthew's account in 28:16-20 of Jesus' post-Easter appearance to his disciples on a Galilean mountain. This carefully crafted climax brings together several major strands of the story, including: mountain as a locus of christological significance; the manner and meaning of the risen Jesus' appearance; the disciples' obedience, worship and doubt; Jesus' claim to reception of divine authority; making disciples as a universal commission; baptism in the triadic name as ritual initiation into the community; the centrality of Jesus' ἐντολαί for the community; and the promise of his risen, continuous presence with his commissioned disciples.

Thus it is claimed that the last pericope of Matthew contains *in nuce* the essence of the Gospel; it provides the 'abstract' for Matthew's 'dissertation', but more so, it is, in rhetorical and theological terms, both a digest and telos of the work.¹ Michel's assertion that the conclusion "is the key to the understanding of the whole book" has some merit.²

The consensus on the importance of Matthew's final pericope does not extend to its interpretation. The literature devoted to 28:16-20 is both

¹The importance of Matthew's conclusion was particularly noted by Lohmeyer in 1945 in "Mir ist" and by Michel in 1950 in "Abschluß" (ET "Conclusion"), p.21, and has been incorporated by the majority of Matthean scholars to date in their treatments of the passage. See, e.g., Bornkamm, "Lord", p.205; Barth, *TIM*, pp.131-7, 142f, 148; Malina, "Structure", pp.87ff; Blair, *Jesus*, p.45; Meier, "Two", p.407; Stanton, "Origin", pp.1922f; Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.17ff; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, pp.1f; Soares-Prabhu, "Jesus", pp.39ff; Trilling, *Israel*, p.21; Vögtle, "Anliegen", p.266; P.F. Ellis, *Matthew*, p.22.

²"Conclusion", p.35.

plentiful and diverse. This may be because

der Schlüsseltext des ganzen Buches ist zugleich auch der Text, in dem sich wie in keinem anderen die Probleme des ganzen Buches wie in einem Brennpunkt sammeln.³

It is not my intention here to revisit extensively the available secondary commentary on the text of Mt 28:16-20, but to investigate it as part of Matthew's redactional strategy. We have already seen some of his rhetorical strategy above in Chapter 3. In Jesus' final appearance and words we find a resolution of the story crisis concerning the identity and boundaries of "his people", and we witness the complete alignment of the reader with the narrator, Jesus and the Eleven in temporal and ideological terms. Yet this final alignment does not force narrative closure; the open temporal and dialogical framework given to Jesus' promised presence connects the story to its post-narrative world, so that the story's structures, point of view and unresolved tensions guide the readers' completions of the story within their experience. Jesus' promised presence not only concludes the Gospel's narrative frame, with the divine utterance of Jesus' post-resurrection authority, but given the nexus of all these elements in 28:16-20 it also provides the bridge between God and his people in the post-narrative world of the commission. The question here is whether these distinct rhetorical strategies are supported redactionally.

8.1. The Text: Language, Style and Composition

Mt 28:16-20 divides naturally between narrative and discourse; a section of narrative preamble (vv.16-18a) lays an important foundation for the utterances of Jesus which follow (vv.18b-20). Stylistically vv.18b-20 is a consistent whole, given internal coherence through the natural and repetitious linking of $\pi\alpha\varsigma$ and important particles. The risen Jesus has received "all" authority, and because of this ($\text{o}\tilde{\upsilon}\nu$; v.19) he orders a new, world-wide mission of discipleship to "all" nations, based on initiatory baptism and "all" the $\epsilon\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\alpha\acute{\iota}$ of his earthly ministry, and most importantly ($\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}$ $\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\upsilon$; v.20), in all this Jesus will "always" be present with his disciples.⁴

³Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.19.

⁴Tradition criticism has frequently assessed Jesus' words in vv.18b-20 as three separable sayings, v.18b; 19-20a; 20b. So, e.g., Barth, *TIM*, pp.131ff; Bornkamm, "Lord", pp.205ff; Hahn, *Mission*, p.64; Jeremias, *Promise*, p.39; Trilling, *Israel*, pp.21-45; Malina, "Structure", p.87.

We possess no direct extra-Matthean parallels to this text.⁵ Mt 28:16-20 has traditionally been seen as one of several extant stories about the risen Jesus appearing to his disciples, showing affinities to that group which has commissioning at its heart (cf. Lk 24:44-9; Acts 1:4-8; Jn 20:19-23), but being characteristically singular. The historical core and traditional pattern of the account (if it ever existed) have been all but erased and reformulated for Matthew's purposes.⁶ Lexical character and stylistic peculiarities should provide a guide to the special emphases of Matthew's final pericope and Jesus' promise of presence within the author's overall redactional scheme.

8.2. The Narrative Framework: Mt 28:16-18a

16 Οἱ δὲ ἑνδεκα μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, 17 καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν. 18 καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων...

The Characters and Setting (v.16)

The precise reference to the remaining core of Jesus' followers as οἱ δὲ ἑνδεκα is probably Matthew's own designation,⁷ following his tendency to identify the disciples as οἱ δώδεκα [μαθηταὶ/ἀπόστολοι]⁸ and resulting naturally from his detailed narration of Judas' death in 27:3-10 (*Sondergut*).⁹ Matthew has only six shared synoptic occurrences of πορεύομαι; the others are editorial and *Sondergut* occurrences (Mt 29; Mk 0; Lk 51).¹⁰

⁵Some speculate that Mt 28:9-20 depends on a lost Markan ending originally attached to Mk 16:8; e.g., Allen, *Matthew*, pp.590f; Gundry, *Matthew*, pp.590f. But cf. Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p.228; Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.172ff; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, pp.101ff, 137-49.

⁶See, e.g., Bultmann, *History*, p.288; Bornkamm, "Lord", pp.203f.

⁷There is evidence for "the Eleven" being a traditional designation, but not in any material parallel to Matthew. See Lk 24:9, 33; Acts 1:26; 2:14; cf. 1:13f, also Mk 16:14. See the post-resurrection "Twelve" in Jn 20:24f; 1 Cor 15:5.

⁸Cf. Mt 10:1, 2, 5; 11:1; 20:17; 26:14, 20, 47.

⁹See Meier, "Two", p.408; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.575; Schaberg, *Father*, p.43; against Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.113.

¹⁰Disregarding Mk 16:10, 12, 15; though see παρα-, εἰς- and ἐκ- compounds.

Εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν recurs four times between 26:32 and the end of the First Gospel. Matthew has a particular interest in Jesus' post-resurrection return to Galilee. The identical phrases in 26:32 and 28:7 are paralleled in Mark (14:28; 16:7) but are twice more repeated in Matthew by Jesus (28:10) and the narrator (28:16). The return of the disciples εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν is thus traditional, but its emphasis in Mt 28 is editorial. The deliberate repetition of the phrase in 28:7, 10 and 16 provides Matthew with another of his typical catchwords, which links together structurally these sections of Matthew's epilogue, bridging across the narrative sub-plot of the counter-resurrection rumour (vv.11-15). The repetition highlights Galilee thematically as a place of rhetorical and theological significance in Matthew's Gospel.¹¹ And as noted in Chapter 3, this phrase draws the reader from the conclusion of the Gospel back to its beginning and the story of Jesus' origins (2:22), in another element of literary inclusio between the opening and closing narrative frames.

Arguments appear more commonly for¹² than against¹³ a tradition behind the commissioning mountain. But many parallels cited are demonstrably independent or actually stem from accounts such as 28:16-20, and Matthew is fond of τὸ ὄρος as a site of christological importance, as is visible in strong redactional evidence, such as his employment of this setting in 5:1, 8:1 and 15:29. The addition of the mountain setting to Jesus' rhetorically

¹¹Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.358-91, spends considerable time developing Matthew's Galilee symbolism: "das heidendurchsetzte, in besonderem Maße benachteiligte Siedlungsgebiet Israels, ist gleichsam das Exil, in dem Jesus von vornherein in Israel zu leben gezwungen ist" (p.385), contra Trilling, *Israel*, pp.131ff. We have seen in Chapter 3 that Jesus' geographic movements in Matthew at minimum highlight the major rhetorical motif of the opposition to him from Israel's leadership (e.g., 4:12).

Davies, *Land*, pp.221ff, 240f (and Stemmerger, in Davies, pp.409-38), underplays the significance of Matthew's Galilee motif.

¹²E.g., Matthew lacks any previous reference to this mountain; so Fuller, *Resurrection*, p.81; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.73; Meier, "Two", p.409; against Marxsen, *Resurrection*, p.47. Also mountain-tops are popular for theophany-type settings, and some see non-Matthean elements in οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς; so Lohmeyer, "Mir", p.24; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.417; Schmid, *Matthäus*, p.390; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p.528; Meier, "Two", p.409; Schaberg, *Father*, pp.77f, n.201; Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.172-4. See "parallel" gnostic traditions listed by Robinson, "Gattung", pp.29-31; and Perkins, *Dialogue*, pp.31, 42.

¹³See Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.138ff, for references, and his comments on the methodological difficulties in appealing to these other traditions.

and theologically significant return εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, thus appears to be Matthew's editorial development.¹⁴

Matthew's fondness for τὸ ὄρος as a significant theological and not necessarily geographical motif throughout his Gospel also supports this conclusion,¹⁵ and the dominant importance of 28:16-20 within the Gospel make this last mountain scene a fitting summit for the pattern of peaks which leads to it.¹⁶

Matthew's mountain-tops are best classified not as places of revelation,¹⁷ but according to their rhetorical and christological character. The final mountain has a coordinating and climactic role by which it summarizes and epitomizes these characteristics.¹⁸ For this reason, although some elements of Sinai and Moses typology might cautiously be granted here,¹⁹ they are subsumed under the dominant rhetorical and christological themes of the mountain-top utterance, themes which are explicated by, and which

¹⁴Strecker, *Weg*, p.208; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.73; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.575; Fuller, *Resurrection*, p.81; Zumstein, "Matthäus", p.16; Steinseifer, "Ort", p.249; and Lange, *Erscheinen*, all argue for τὸ ὄρος being Matthew's editorial insertion.

Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.174ff, although finding τὸ ὄρος to be traditional, does still treat it as a careful editorial insertion.

¹⁵Stendahl, "Matthew", p.798: Matthew's ὄρος has "mythological rather than geographical significance".

¹⁶Out of sixteen occurrences of ὄρος Matthew has at least six mountains with particular christological significance.

4:8	the mountain of the third temptation
5:1; 8:1	the mountain of teaching (both editorial)
15:29	the mountain of healing and feeding (editorial)
17:1, 9	the mountain of transfiguration
24:3	the Olivet discourse
28:16	the mountain of commissioning by the exalted Jesus

Some would include 14:23 as Jesus' mountain of prayer despite its brevity and Markan similarity (6:46); others would omit 24:3 as less mythological and too geographically specific; cf. Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.392. Using the symbolism of "seven", Schaberg overemphasizes 28:16-20 as "the culmination of seven mountain scenes"; *Father*, pp.59 n.2, 103 n.6, 322.

¹⁷Contra common assumption; see Donaldson's discussion, *Mountain*, pp.215f.

¹⁸Cf. Schmauch, *Orte*, pp.71f; Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.393-440; Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.5-12, 174ff.

¹⁹Οὗ ἐτάξατο could recall the meeting arrangements for Sinai in Ex 3:12; 19:11, and the occurrence of ἐντέλλομαι in Mt 28:19 could echo frequent Dt LXX usage. Smyth, "Matthew 28", finds the "rendezvous motif" as characteristic of OT theophanies (Ex 19:10-17; 24:1, 12; 33-4; Nu 12:4-9); but see Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.179f. See the Sinai links variously discussed by Lohmeyer, "Mir", pp.24f, 44; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, pp.92ff; Perrin, *Resurrection*, pp.51f; Cox, *Matthew*, p.188; Gundry, *Matthew*, pp.593f. Davies' pessimism, *Setting*, pp.83-6, is not always heeded.

explicate, the exalted, post-resurrection Emmanuel nature of the Messiah.²⁰

Other lexical evidence, however, creates some difficulties. οὗ functions adverbially 3x in Matthew, each time in *Sondergut*, but in 2:9 and 18:20 it means "where", while here in 28:16 it has the sense of "to which" or "whither". Each of its three settings has arguably a traditional basis, but the very fact the adverb appears three times could indicate Matthew's own language.²¹ Some find support for a traditional source in τάσσω, in its simple verbal form a hapax legomenon in Matthew, with one textually dubious participial form in Mt 8:9 (=Lk 7:8). This compares with two other occurrences of the simple verb in the NT (Acts 15:2; 1 Cor 16:15; in all forms: Lk-Acts 6x; Paul 2x).²² But the wider use of the τάσσω family in Matthew shows his editorial control of οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, even if traditional in origin.²³

Jesus' Appearance and the Disciples' Reaction (v.17)

A number of features mark the composition and language of v.17 as wholly Matthean. The nominative participle ἰδόντες with an accusative or dependent clause appears frequently as a redactional feature in the Gospel²⁴

²⁰So Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.180, who sees this trait as characteristic of Matthew: "wherever Mosaic typology appears elsewhere in the Gospel, it is transcended by and absorbed into some higher christological pattern." Note the caution of Bornkamm, "Lord", p.204; also Trilling, *Israel*, pp.37f.

²¹Mt 3x; Mk 0; Lk 5x. In favour see Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.49; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.575. Meier, "Two", p.409, (followed by Schaberg, *Father*, pp.43, 77 n.201) emphasizes the unique linguistic usage of οὗ in 28:16.

²²The meaning of οὗ ἐτάξατο has proven a thorny problem, as outlined by Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.172ff, 277 n.23. He advocates the standard view: an elliptical expression which presumes an infinitive such as ἐλθεῖν or ὑπαντᾶν (αὐτόν), similar to Acts 22:10. Cf. Schaberg's arguments, *Father*, pp.77f.

²³The fields of meaning for some members of the τάσσω family do overlap ("direct, command, arrange"). προστάσσω: 1:24 *Sondergut*, 8:4 paralleled; συντάσσω: 21:6 and 26:19 editorial; 27:10 *Sondergut* - probably Matthew's adaptation of the LXX.

More importantly, each of Matthew's editorial or *Sondergut* uses above echoes the use of τάσσω in 28:16, being a direction or command of "the Lord" (1:24; 27:10) or of Jesus (21:6; 26:19). In the latter two editorial cases Matthew's formulation is much more succinct than the Markan parallel (Mt 21:6 = Mk 11:4-6; Mt 26:19 = Mk 14:16).

²⁴At least 10x only Matthew employs this grammatical structure in paralleled material; it also appears 7x in his *Sondergut*. Cf. Gundry, *Matthew*, p.594; Meier, "Two", p.409; Schaberg, *Father*, p.43; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.575.

and, as here, Matthew often links two actions within an event with an aorist participle before the aorist main verb.²⁵

Furthermore, προσκυνέω is certainly a favorite word of Matthew's (13x; Mk 2x; Lk 2x); he commonly adds this specific term to the Markan account to describe the attitude of those approaching Jesus (see Chapter 9). Matthew is the only evangelist to use the term in the appearance accounts, and he does so twice.²⁶ Διστάζω appears only twice in the NT, both times in Matthew, and both times associated with προσκυνέω (see 14:31-33).

Lively discussion has arisen over the translation of οἱ δὲ ἐδίδισασαν.²⁷ Οἱ δὲ is construed to refer to a variety of different subjects: i.e., "they worshipped him, but... "

- 1) "some who were present (in excess of the Eleven) doubted"²⁸
- 2) "some (of the Eleven) doubted"²⁹
- 3) "they all doubted as well".³⁰

The first interpretation holds little weight any longer - as to the doubters, readers are given only the Eleven from whom to choose.³¹

Among the majority who opt for the second reading, some protest that v.17a and b taken together seem to force an almost impossible contrast of actions: προσκυνέω and διστάζω. But this apparent contradiction in terms is best seen in light of Matthew's rhetorical interests elsewhere. The narrator employs προσκυνέω, with Jesus as the object, in a range of pre- and post-resurrection settings. He also paints the disciples in non-idealistic hues; they are often followers with meagre faith. And in 14:31-33 Matthew associates διστάζω with προσκυνέω, in his version of the water-walking story (14:22-33). His juxtaposition there of the two responses is comparable to

²⁵G. Barth, *TIM*, p.131; Schaberg, *Father*, p.43.

²⁶Lk 24:52 is textually doubtful; see Metzger, *Commentary*, p.190.

²⁷See the specific treatments of this subject by Rigaux, *Dieu*, pp.254ff; Giblin, "Doubt", pp.68ff, for much of the following material.

²⁸Allen, *Matthew*, p.305; Plummer, *Matthew*, p.427; McNeille, *Matthew*, p.484; Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p.230. Cf. Culver, "Commission", pp.105f.

²⁹Many commentators, including Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p.275; Stendahl, "Matthew", p.798; Filson, *Matthew*, p.305; Malina, "Structure", p.98; Neirynck, "Les Femmes", p.180 n.1; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.76; cf. also Bonnard, *Matthieu*, pp.416ff; McKay, "Use", pp.71f; van der Horst, "Once More", pp.27-30.

³⁰Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.418; I.P. Ellis, "Doubted", p.574-7; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, pp.572, 576; Giblin, "Doubt", pp.68-71.

³¹See also Giblin, "Doubt", p.68, on the attempt to reinterpret the verbal aspect of the phrase (e.g., "sie, die da früher gezweifelt hatten", in Klostermann, *Matthäus*, on Lagrange); cf. Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p.415.

this juxtaposition in 28:17; both describe the wavering doubt and worship of unidealized followers, consistent with his frequent characterization of them as ὀλιγόπιστος.³² "Doubt" is not therefore unbelief, but "little faith".³³

Some differences in context must be noted, however. In 14:22-33 Jesus saves the drowning Peter physically from his doubt and the disciples are moved to their confession of faith by miraculous events. In 28:16ff these features are notably absent, i.e., we are told nothing about the risen Jesus being exceptional in appearance. Subsequent to the disciples' reaction of doubt in 28:17, no miraculous sign is offered. Jesus' "approach" and utterances of vv.18-20 carry the implicit message of reassurance.³⁴

Yet it remains striking that the last thing said of the disciples in Matthew's story is that they doubted Jesus. No motives for doubt are articulated; we might presume the apparent insufficiency of Jesus' ὄραμα in v.17a, which precedes and thus seems to have somehow occasioned their doubt. In this respect their response of worship could be naturally mixed with their uncertainty and hesitation about the reality of the resurrection. To require of their worship that it arise from purest belief and unsullied adoration would for Matthew falsely dichotomize faith and doubt and demand of the disciples a response outside their characterization within the First Gospel.³⁵

Regarding the third reading, Mt 27:22b-23 provides another context in which οἱ δὲ implies 'all' of the original subject.³⁶ If Matthew had wanted

³²See 6:30; 8:16; 14:30; 16:8; 17:20.

³³"Their doubt should not be construed as positive disbelief or refusal to worship", Giblin, "Doubt", p.71; contra Klostermann, *Matthäus*, pp.230ff; cf. also Calvin, *Harmony* 3, p.249; K. Barth; "Study", pp.59ff.

As G. Barth, *TIM*, pp.132f, shows, and Bornkamm, "Lord", p.204, confirms, the doubt of the disciples has quite different meanings in the various Easter texts. In Lk 24:41 Jesus eats food to overcome the disciples' doubts and to prove he is not a ghost; he provides resurrection proof through sight and touch. Similarly, in Jn 20:24f doubting Thomas touches Jesus' wounds. In Mk 16:14ff the risen Jesus appears to unbelieving disciples who doubted the message about his resurrection. In Matthew, however, their doubt is not overcome by sight and touch, but is addressed by the words and authoritative presence of Jesus, consistent with the story's progressive movement away from dependence upon Jesus' physical presence.

³⁴So G. Barth, *TIM*, p.132; Bornkamm, "Lord", p.204; Soares Prabhu, "Jesus", p.40; contra Dunn, *Jesus*, p.124: "Jesus neither addresses himself to [the doubt] nor removes it."

³⁵Cf., e.g., 8:23-7; 14:22-33; 16:13-28; 17:6f, 17-20.

³⁶Mt 26:67 is one debatable exception where οἱ δὲ translates "and some", but the synonymous verbs and more carefully defined context make clear the

to differentiate the subjects of vv.16a and 17a (οἱ δὲ ἑνδεκα ... προσεκύνησαν) from v.17b (οἱ δὲ ἐδίδασκαν) he would have done so more explicitly, as elsewhere in his story (cf. 8:21; 16:14; 21:9; 25:3-4, 29). What is at issue is that doubt exists at all within this inner circle of worshipping followers to whom the risen Jesus has appeared. Furthermore, when Jesus' commission is given αὐτοῖς (v.18) this can only mean "the Eleven", and consequently, οἱ δὲ ἐδίδασκαν in v.17b, standing as it does between the Eleven who worship and the same Eleven who receive the commission, should logically be interpreted as no less or other than the same Eleven who have doubts.³⁷

As is apparent to both the narrator and the reader, two levels of actors are involved: the risen Jesus and the Eleven of the narrative world, and the risen Jesus and the contemporary community of the actual reader. Our reading in Chapter 3 showed an intersection of their worlds in this final pericope. In this respect the question "Who doubted?" misses the heart of the issue, that there are worshipping doubters in both worlds who are here addressed and challenged by the words and presence of the risen Jesus. In their post-Easter world, the followers of the risen Jesus will always confront the existence of doubt. The narrator's characterization of the disciples is thus consistent to the end of the gospel story, and provides a clear lead-in to the reader's post-narrative reality.

In connection with the immediate context ἰδόντες is the direct fulfilment of the reiterated promise in 28:7c and 10d that the disciples would "see" Jesus in Galilee, but the event is notably anticlimactic in comparison with its build-up.³⁸ Matthew's text is remarkably silent about the nature and details of Jesus' appearance, and consequently ambiguous.³⁹

difference in subjects; see the discussion by Benoit, "Les Outrages", pp.91-110, especially pp.91-3; cf. Giblin, "Doubt", pp.69f.

³⁷So Giblin, "Doubt", pp.69-71; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, pp.572, 576; Graystone, "Translation", pp.105-9; R.A. Edwards, "Faith", p.59. Giblin's suggestion, that οἱ δὲ ἐδίδασκαν would be better understood as a sentence in itself is helpful, but difficult to support on the basis of Matthean style. Of the references Giblin gives (Mt 2:9; 4:20; 9:31; 14:21, 33; 20:5a; 22:19b) as examples of the article plus δέ introducing short sentences in Matthew, only 20:5a and 22:19b are comparatively brief enough to give adequate support to his proposal, and 22:19b proves longer than its Markan parallel.

³⁸So Michel, "Conclusion", p.31; Meier, "Two", p.409; Schaberg, *Father*, p.43.

³⁹Cf. the more specific details in Lk 24:16, 31-42; Jn 20:14-20, 27; 21:4, 12; also Markan appendix 16:12. See Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p.231; G. Barth, *TIM*, p.132; Bornkamm, "Lord", p.204; Meier, "Two", p.409; Schaberg, *Father*, pp.43, 89f; Soares Prabhu, "Jesus", p.40. As K. Barth, "Study", p.57, has

It is difficult, then, to establish the origin and setting of Jesus' appearance and sayings in 28:16-20.⁴⁰ Suggestions have ranged from proleptic or actual parousia⁴¹ to a heavenly vision of the ascended Jesus, who in resurrection transcended death by translation to heaven, perhaps in the manner of Enoch and Elijah.⁴² On the other hand vv.16f could be a primitive appearance tradition joined by Matthew to the utterances in vv.18-20 which originated earlier as prophetic 'I'-sayings in the community.⁴³

Matthew's account, however, does not allow a definitive judgement between a heavenly vision and an earthly appearance.⁴⁴ As for the origin of Jesus' words, Matthew's text again resists easy ascription. The text's features and emphases evidence a skilful blend of tradition, prophecy and editorial composition. The dominant theme of commissioning and reassurance does rest well with the commissioning traditions of the risen Jesus; the emphatic first person voice in his pronouncement of authority, gentile mission and divine presence, and the polemical edge of the utterance, correspond well with the profile of Christian prophecy,⁴⁵ yet the language, style and rhetorical motifs betray much of the first evangelist.

The fact that Matthew does not elaborate ἰδόντες in v.17, therefore, cannot be supplemented or prejudged by tradition. Matthew's deliberate emphasis in 28:7 and 10 on "going and seeing" has already been noted. The simple description ἰδόντες in v.17 is equally deliberate, for (1) it is consistent with Matthew's apparent understanding that Jesus' identity had not changed after the resurrection;⁴⁶ (2) it is consistent with the apparent

noted, it is the story of Jesus and the women (28:8-10) which actually establishes Jesus' identity as the crucified one who has risen.

⁴⁰See Dunn's discussion of the resurrection appearances in *Jesus*, chap.5.

⁴¹E.g., J.A.T. Robinson, *Jesus*, pp.131, 136.

⁴²Cf. Schweitzer, *Matthew*, p.528; Meier, "Two", p.411; Schaberg, *Father*, p.89.

⁴³Several regard 28:18-20 as such a prophetic saying: Beare, "Sayings", pp.164f; Fuller, *Resurrection*, p.90; Dunn, *Jesus*, p.173; Sand, *Gesetz*, p.168; Boring, *Sayings*, pp.204-6.

⁴⁴See Dunn, *Jesus*, pp.116, 124, on "Christophanies" and "Christepiphanies", with reference to Lindblom, *Geschichte*.

⁴⁵See Boring, *Sayings*, pp.204-6.

⁴⁶The reaction of the guards and two Mary's (28:1-8: terror, fainting, fear, great joy) to the appearance and message of Yahweh's angel is more striking than the women's reaction to the risen Jesus himself (28:9: prostrate worship). Cf. the more distinctly epiphanic features in the transfiguration (17:1-8). Bornkamm, "Lord", p.204, rightly will not designate 28:16ff an appearance story; contra Lohmeyer, "Mir", pp.26f; and Stendahl's "glorious

inadequacy of Jesus' appearance to the disciples, having evoked their mixed response of worship and doubt; (3) it ultimately focuses the pericope on Jesus' declaration, mission mandate and his promised presence, which take them beyond a momentary "seeing" to the sustained experience of his risen presence.

28:20b thus becomes a clear commentary on ἰδόντες in v.17, for the story implies a risen Jesus who, in relation to his disciples, is in transition from earthly master to heavenly Lord. The missing epiphanic characteristics which leave ἰδόντες blank are replaced by the more important non-visual features of divine authority and presence. Jesus provides the final redefinition of how the disciples should "see" and be "with" him, and he "with" them, consistent with his training of them during the crowd-feeding episodes, Peter's water-walking, their post-transfiguration healing attempt, his community address in Mt 18 and his identification with "the least of these". Ostensibly the disciples have been sent to Galilee to "see" Jesus (28:7, 10) in accordance with tradition, but in Matthew the inadequacy of sight is met by the greater ὄραμα of his revealed authority, commission and divine presence.

Matthew is aware that the post-narrative ἐκκλησία of the reader would be helped little by an appearance account where doubts are dispelled by the sight and touch of the risen Jesus, when their own doubts can not be answered in a similar fashion, but only through his prophetic promise of presence.⁴⁷ Thus Matthew seems to have chosen the format of Jesus' final encounter with his followers to give his own particular answer to the problem of believing without seeing.⁴⁸ Klostermann is probably right to see the admission of doubt as an historical reminiscence, "daß der Glaube an die Auferstehung nicht sofort Allgemeingut gewesen war,"⁴⁹ but Matthew has also carefully crafted this theme with an eye to the concerns of his readers' worlds.

epiphany", "Matthew", p.798. Bornkamm notes that Dibelius' definition of epiphany (*Tradition*, p.94) excludes Mt 28:16-20.

⁴⁷For similar problems in 3rd century traditions see Str.-Bill 2, p.586; in Michel, "Conclusion", pp.32f.

⁴⁸See Mt 8:5-13; 12:38ff; 16:1-4; cf. Mk 15:32; Jn 4:48; 6:30; 20:8; 20:29.

⁴⁹*Matthäus*, p.231; also Fuller, *Resurrection*, pp.81f; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p.529; Dunn, *Jesus*, pp.124, 392 n.124. Cf. Bornkamm, "Lord", p.204.

Jesus' Response (v.18a)

Jesus "approaches" his doubtful, prostrate disciples in order to declare his new authority (v.18b). The narrative introduction of v.18a is Matthew's own composition. Προσέρχομαι is his own term (Mt 52; Mk 5; Lk 10; NT 87). This is only the second time Matthew has used it for an action of Jesus; his editorial use of the word in 17:7 has a similar context. There Jesus "approaches" the terror-stricken disciples after his transfiguration, likewise a specific movement of reassurance and words to quell their uncertainty.⁵⁰

προσελθὼν ... ἐλάλησεν is the second example within this pericope of Matthew's style of linking two actions within an event by means of an aorist participle before the aorist main verb (also v.17a). Statistically λαλέω may not appear particularly Matthean (26; Mk 21; Lk 31) but half its occurrences in the First Gospel are editorial,⁵¹ and ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων appears often in Matthew's editorial material.⁵²

Within Matthew Jesus is the dominant centripetal focus for the story's events and characters, and for the expression of the narrator's point of view. Hence, when the narrator describes him "approaching" the disciples, he is highlighting an extremely unusual shift in action for his protagonist, from both a rhetorical and redactional point of view.

The narrative framework of vv.16-18a is an indispensable introduction to and constituent part of 28:16-20 and the Gospel's finale. Jesus' physical approach is a movement of reassurance, which introduces the more substantial reassurance of his final utterances. Matthew addresses a historical and contemporary dilemma: the original ὄραμα of the risen Jesus (see 28:1-10) is no longer sufficient, and no such personal, tangible confirmation is available to the reader.

⁵⁰In Mt 17:6f Jesus' reassurance involves the further gesture of physical contact (ἅπτομαι, also 14:31); cf. Hubbard, *Commissioning*, pp.77f, where the texts of 17:6f and 28:16ff are compared in parallel columns.

⁵¹See Mt 9:18; 10:20; 12:22, 34, 46, 47, 13:3, 10, 13, 33; 15:31; 17:5; 23:1.

⁵²See Mt 13:3; 14:27; 23:1; further in Kingsbury for this and related idioms, "Composition", p.576; cf. Gundry, *Matthew*, p.595.

8.3. Jesus' Declaration: Mt 28:18b

Ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς

The subject of v.18b, ἐξουσία, does not appear an exceptional number of times in Matthew (10; Mk 10; Lk 16), but its placement within the text demonstrates the importance of Jesus' ἐξουσία as a christological description in the First Gospel. To take one prominent example, in Mk 1:21f those attending the Synagogue in Capernaum are astonished at the ἐξουσία of Jesus as he taught there one Sabbath. But the Matthean parallel in 7:29 gives ἐξουσία a radically broader application. The public astonishment at the ἐξουσία of Jesus' teaching is used to summarize the whole of the Sermon (Mt 5-7) and to emphasize Jesus' authority as upholder and new interpreter of the law, as the Teacher of true Torah, and as elocutionist of Kingdom principles and the divine will.

Apart from Mk 1:27 (Matthew does not have the pericope), Matthew parallels in his own contexts each of Mark's uses of ἐξουσία which describe Jesus' deeds and words, and he has the term in 9:8 where Mk 2:12 does not.⁵³ In the *Sondergut* of 28:18 πᾶσα and ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς specifically define the risen Jesus' ἐξουσία in cosmic terms. In Matthew Jesus refuses the Tempter's offer of πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν (4:8; cf. Lk 4:5f) in exchange for worship (προσκυνέω), in direct contrast to his exaltation in 28:18 through his subservience to the Father.⁵⁴

Πᾶς is certainly more often inserted than borrowed in the First Gospel⁵⁵ and Kingsbury considers its anarthrous use here a Matthean idiom.⁵⁶ More

⁵³In Matthew ἐξουσία refers to several aspects of Jesus' authority:

7:29 teaching (= Mk 1:22)

9:6 forgiving sins (= Mk 2:10)

9:8 forgiving sins (editorial)

8:9 healing and exorcism (centurion; = Lk 7:8),

10:1 healing and exorcism authority given to disciples (= Mk 6:7)

21:23-27 (4x) teaching, healing, receiving children's praise and overturning tables in the temple (= Mk 11:28-33)

See Lange's discussion, *Erscheinen*, pp.24-96; including the five ἐξουσία passages in Mark and Q material which Matthew has omitted or altered (pp.91-6); cf. Blair, *Jesus*, pp.46f; Hübner, *Gesetz*; pp.196-207; Mohrlang, *Matthew*, pp.72ff; Meier, "Two", p.413.

⁵⁴Cf. πάντα from the "Father, Lord of heaven and earth" in Mt 11:25-7; also cf. ἐξουσία in Jn 17:2; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; Col 1:16ff; 2:10; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 2:26f; 13:2; also Phil 2:9f.

⁵⁵Gundry, *Matthew*, pp.595, 647, lists 63 insertions of the adjective and 40 paralleled occurrences, with at least 25 more in Matthew's *Sondergut*.

⁵⁶"Composition", p.576; see 3:15; 5:11; 23:27-35; 24:22 (=Mk 13:20); cf. 2:3.

importantly, *πᾶς* appears four times within 28:18b-20, where it unifies Jesus' sayings within a stylistic and thematic whole, giving the Gospel's conclusion unqualified theological weight and rhetorical power:

*πᾶσα ἐξουσία ...
πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ...
πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ...
πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ...*

The adjective *πᾶς* marks the pericope not just as his own literary composition but as his special concluding manifesto.⁵⁷

ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς is similarly well-represented in Matthew, for heaven and earth are placed in conjunction or opposition in Matthew 13x (Mk 2; Lk 5) in a variety of forms, and only three have synoptic parallels.⁵⁸

For Matthew there is something new in Jesus' reception of *πᾶσα ἐξουσία* of v.18, beyond the *πάντα* of 11:27. Matthew's earthly Jesus teaches, heals, exorcises and forgives sins with authority, but the Jesus who speaks here is risen, stands atop the story's final mountain, and the authority he now claims is as universal as "heaven and earth". He has unprecedented ability to command a world-wide mission (and thus to close the unfinished business of Mt 10), and because of this authority is able to promise his own constant presence in divine terms.⁵⁹ What qualifies *ἐξουσία* in 28:18 as new is thus as much its rhetorical function and setting as terminology - the "heaven and earth" description, the universal parameters of the four "all" phrases, and the redactional employment of the mandate in 28:19-20 as Jesus' first person narrative closure to the story.

Some critics have attempted to connect all uses of *ἐξουσία* in Matthew to Jesus' authority as teacher.⁶⁰ The wider issue of concern for many is just what sort of exaltation Jesus receives in 28:18, and its dependence on

⁵⁷ Cf. especially G. Barth, *TIM*, pp.71ff; also Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.150ff, 328-9; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.579.

⁵⁸ See the discussions in Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.49; Trilling, *Israel*, pp.24f; Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.147; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, pp.82f; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.576.

⁵⁹ Contra Strecker, *Weg*; Bornkamm, "Lord", p.208, who minimize the difference between the authority of Matthew's earthly and risen Jesus; similarly Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.45, 177; Verseput, "Son", p.540; see Meier, "Two", p.413.

⁶⁰ So Strecker, *Weg*, who interprets Matthew's Jesus primarily as a teacher leading us in the way of righteousness, e.g., p.186. Cf. Bornkamm, *TIM*, pp.52-7; Soares Prabhu, "Jesus", pp.41f; Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.89: "Die *ἐξουσία* offenbart sich grundlegend an der 'Lehre' Jesu"; p.177: "Jesus ist für Matthäus zuerst und zuletzt der eschatologische 'Lehrer' (und Richter); er ist auch und gerade noch in 28,18."

Dan 7:14. Vögtle and Meier take different sides to the issue, in somewhat representative fashion, the former finding the perspective of Dan 7:14 totally different and hence incompatible with Mt 28, and the latter asserting that Matthew has found a new and creative way to employ Dan 7:13f within his theology.⁶¹

Meier is thus representative of many who posit a connection between, or even fulfilment of, Dan 7:14 LXX in Mt 28:18b-20, based on several verbal and contextual characteristics in common.⁶² The idea of "enthronement" or "exaltation" is thereby often ascribed to Mt 28:16-20, as found more formally in texts such as Ps 110 and Dan 7, and reflected in Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:3-5, 5-14, with their developed christological portraits.⁶³

This is not the place to determine the degree to which Matthew is or is not dependent upon Dan 7's vision, and whether Mt 28:16-20 reflects elements of enthronement or exaltation; neither quest clearly serves our primary interest in Matthew's presence motif.⁶⁴ At minimum we can say that the passage in Daniel did not provide a pattern or "enthronement model" which controlled the composition of Mt 28:18ff.⁶⁵ Διδόναι τίνι ἐξουσίαν is a sufficiently common phrase; a similar passive form in Dan 7:14 and Mt 28:18 is not grounds enough to establish an exclusive link.⁶⁶

⁶¹See Meier, *Law*, pp.35-7; and "Salvation-History", pp.203-15; and "Two", pp.413ff; also Vögtle, "Anliegen", pp.267f; and see Frankemölle's criticisms of Vögtle in *Jahwebund*, pp.62f.

⁶²Many commentators, including Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p.418; Lohmeyer, "Mir", pp.34f, and *Matthäus*, pp.416ff; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp.61-66; Albright, *Matthew*, p.xcvii; Fuller, *Resurrection*, p.83; McNeile, *Matthew*, p.435; Trilling, *Israel*, p.23; Tödt, *Son*, p.288; Bornkamm, "Lord"; G. Barth, *TIM*, p.133; P.F. Ellis, *Matthew*, pp.22f; Schaberg, *Father*, pp.111-41, especially pp.129f; K. Barth, "Study", p.61; Davies, *Setting*, p.197.

⁶³For more discussion and references see Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.175-8; Meier, "Two", pp.413f.

⁶⁴See Lange's bibliography of those pro and con, *Erscheinen*, p.212. See some of the contextual and conceptual differences between Mt 28:18-20 and Dan 7:13f noted by Vögtle, "Anliegen"; Rigaux, *Dieu*, p.256; Zumstein, "Matthieu 28,16-20", pp.18f; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p.965; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p.577; Trilling, *Israel*, pp.6f, 25; Malina, "Structure", pp.88f; Tödt, *Son of Man*, p.288; Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.176f.

⁶⁵So Hahn, *Mission*, p.66 n.3; Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.350; Malina, "Structure", p.89: any formal relationship claimed must be "sheer conjecture"; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.82; contra Michel, "Conclusion", p.33; Lohmeyer, "Mir ist"; G. Barth, *TIM*, p.133; Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.177, further references, p.180.

⁶⁶Cf., e.g., LXX Dan 3:97; Sir 17:2; 1 Macc 1:13; 10:6, 8, 32; 11:58; Mk 6:7; 11:28 and pars; Mt 9:8; Lk 4:6; 10:19; Jn 5:27; 19:11; Rev 2:26; see Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.181, 281 nn.63f; and cf. Daube's treatment of

Although he refutes Vögtle and allows for a reference to Dan 7:14 in Mt 28:16-20, Lange highlights Mt 11:27 as the primary basis for Matthew's composition of 28:18. In both passages Jesus is the passive recipient of a divine bestowal (11:27: πάντα μοι παρεδόθη; 28:18: ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία). Lange also sees elements of correspondence in the wider contexts: the learners (11:29: μανθάνω) have become the teachers (28:19: μαθητεύω; 28:20: διδάσκω) and the taking up of Jesus' yoke (11:29: ἄρατε τὸν ζυγόν, 11:29) may be found in discipleship (28:19: μαθητεύω) and in baptism (28:19: βαπτίζω) as an initiatory acceptance of Jesus' way.⁶⁷ But Meier rightly criticizes Lange for overdoing the parallel and missing the distinctiveness of πᾶσα ἐξουσία in 28:18.

Though concerned with the exaltation of Jesus, the passage remains highly theocentric. This is the first meeting of Jesus with his disciples since his arrest and crucifixion, and from the events subsequent we can assume that the divine passive of resurrection (ἡγέρθη in 28:6, 7)⁶⁸ implies the same divine agent as ἐδόθη in v.18b, i.e., resurrection in Matthew has meant both Jesus being raised from the dead and the bestowal of his unlimited authority.⁶⁹ There is, therefore, "eine universale Ausweitung" of Jesus' ἐξουσία here.⁷⁰

The picture of exaltation which is present in v.18b is delivered directly and simply. Whatever his dependence on common traditions of exaltation, Matthew places it within a non-apocalyptic context, removes any mythological descriptions, sets it into first person parlance, and redefines ἐξουσία in accordance with his own emphases on teaching, discipleship, ἐντολαί and divine presence. Without such authority Jesus can neither commission universally, nor promise his divine presence perpetually. Thus those commentators are closer to the mark who are convinced that v.18b is the result of Matthew's own composition, echoing and developing the words of 11:27 and ἐξουσία in 7:29; 9:8; 21:23.

ἐξουσία in *Judaism*, pp.206-23.

⁶⁷See *Erscheinen*, e.g., pp.45, 150-70.

⁶⁸Cf. Mt 11:5; 14:2; 16:21; 17:23; 26:32; 27:52, 64.

⁶⁹See Jeremias, *NTT*, p.310; Davies, *Setting*, p.360; Meier, "Two", p.412.

⁷⁰Trilling, *Israel*, pp.22, 24; cf. Strecker, *Weg*, pp.209ff; Zumstein, "Matthieu 28,16-20", p.25; Lohmeyer, "Mir ist", pp.34f; G. Barth, *TIM*, pp.133f; Schmid, *Matthäus*, p.391; Vögtle, "Anliegen", p.271.

8.4. Jesus' Mandate: Mt 28:19-20a

As the consequence and on the basis of (οὖν, v.19a) his possession of universal authority Jesus charges his followers with a mission, to "make disciples", explained in the participial imperatives of "baptizing" and "teaching".

v.19a: πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

The first element of the missionary charge, the command proper, shows every indication of Matthean language, style and composition. The nominative participle πορευθέντες is a common Matthean insertion⁷¹ and in good Matthean style recalls its previous use, ἐπορεύθησαν in v.16.⁷² This use of the circumstantial participle attending an imperative is a stylistic and often editorial feature elsewhere in Matthew.⁷³ The term οὖν (Mt 58; Mk 4; Lk 31) occurs 21x with commands in the First Gospel, and at least 18 of these are editorial.⁷⁴

Of the four NT occurrences of μαθητεύω three are in Matthew, and the two in 13:52 and 27:57 are demonstrably redactional. Mt 28:19 and Acts 14:21 are the only active uses of the verb in the NT, with Mt 13:52 and 27:57 as deponent.⁷⁵

Ἔθνος (14; Mk 5; Lk 11) shows at least seven editorial insertions in Matthew, while πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (4; Mk 2; Lk 2) shows one synoptic parallel (24:14 = Mk 13:10), one redactional use by Matthew (24:9) and two uses in his *Sondergut* (25:32 and 28:19). With the four emphatic uses of πᾶς in 28:18-20 being Matthew's, the application of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη to the commission

⁷¹8x in paralleled material; see Gundry, *Matthew*, p.595. For πορεύομαι see v.16.

⁷²Similarly, Mt 10:6 & 7; 21:2 & 6; see also 2:8 & 9; 11:4 & 7; 28:7 & 11; with other verbs in 2:9f; 2:12f; 8:25f; 9:6f; 9:15 & 18; 12:39 & 46; 14:15 & 23; 17:4f; see Kingsbury, "Composition", p.576; Schaberg, *Father*, p.43.

⁷³See especially 9:13; 10:7; cf. also 2:8; 11:4; 17:27; 28:7.

⁷⁴Cf. 5:8; 6:8, 9, 31, 34; 7:12; etc. Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.306, has counted 30 instances where οὖν is editorial in Matthew, with another 15 possibilities in Q and *Sondergut* material.

⁷⁵See Bl.-Debr. §148, 3. Cf. μαθητὰς ποιεῖ in Jn 4:1 which seems closer to the Hb מַלְמְדֵי הָעָם; see Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.308. Μαθητεύω does not occur in the LXX, Josephus or Philo. Cf. Kingsbury, "Composition", p.577; Schaberg, *Father*, p.43; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.84; also Bornkamm's comments on Matthew's understanding of μαθητεύω, "Lord", pp.217-8.

may well be his own editorial description of the mission's new breadth,⁷⁶ but the idea of a gentile mission already appears in Mark 24:14 and is elsewhere applied to another final commissioning in Lk 24:47.⁷⁷ More importantly, it has been a Matthean theme as early as the magi.

The question of whether πάντα τὰ ἔθνη means 'Gentiles' (exclusive of Israel) or 'nations' (inclusive of Israel) has caused considerable debate recently, and touches on an issue central to the Gospel. Hare and Harrington, Walker and Lange have opted for the former, and hence the rejection and replacement of Israel within Hellsgeschichte.⁷⁸ However, even though the emphasis in 28:19 is undeniably on the new element of gentile mission, explicit reference to the rejection of Israel would be required to posit the end of that mission, as commanded in Mt 10. Jesus' transfer of the kingdom from one ἔθνος to another in 21:43 is uttered to his primary audience in the temple, the chief priests and elders. Furthermore, in Mt 24:9, 14; 25:32 "all nations" appears to include both Jews and Gentiles.⁷⁹ But as noted above the tension over Matthew's own seemingly contradictory stance on mission to the Jews and Gentiles is not completely resolved in 28:19.⁸⁰

v.19b: βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς
καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος

The triadic ὄνομα baptismal formula has engendered no small amount of discussion.⁸¹ On the surface most of v.19b could be considered essentially Matthean, at least on the basis of language and literary style.⁸²

⁷⁶So Meier, "Two", p.410; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.577.

⁷⁷Cf. Strecker, *Weg*, p.255; Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.301.

⁷⁸See Hare and Harrington, "Disciples", pp.359-69; Walker, *Hellsgeschichte*, pp.111f; Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.300-5. Cf. here also Clark, "Bias", pp.165-72; Weiss, *Matthäus*, p.508; Holtzmann, *Synoptiker*, p.298; Jeremias, *Promise*, pp.38f.

⁷⁹To this end see Trilling, *Israel*, pp.12-14, 28; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, pp.84ff; Hahn, *Mission*, pp.125ff; O'Brien, "Commission", pp.73-5; Schmid, *Matthäus*, p.391; Tagawa, "People", p.160; France, *Matthew*, pp.413f; Donaldson, *Mountain*, pp.183, 281f, n.74.

⁸⁰E.g., see further Tagawa's short survey of the issue, "People", pp.155-8.

⁸¹I use "triadic" as opposed to "trinitarian" or "Trinitarian"; the latter terms arose from later theological interpretation of such texts as Mt 28:19b. See the distinctions applied to these terms in Schaberg, *Father*, pp.5-9.

⁸²So Allen, *Matthew*, pp.306f; McNeile, *Matthew*, p.437; Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.310-15; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.577; see G. Barth, *TIM*, p.131; Bornkamm, "Lord", p.208.

βαπτίζοντες, in this case a participial imperative, fits into the Matthean pattern of circumstantial participles coordinated under a finite verb:

μαθητεύσατε ... βαπτίζοντες ... διδάσκοντες.⁸³

The special importance of εἰς τὸ ὄνομα has been discussed above in relation to 18:20. Elsewhere in the NT the phrase occurs four times as a Johannine idiom for "believing in the name of" Jesus (πιστεύω εἰς τὸ ὄνομα: Jn 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; 1 Jn 5:13; cf. Jn 20:31; 1 Jn 3:23). But four of the other five NT occurrences speak of "baptizing in the name" (βαπτίζω εἰς τὸ ὄνομα: Acts 8:16; 19:5; 1 Cor 1:13,15); elsewhere the phrase occurs only in Heb 6:10.

Likewise amongst the synoptic writers Matthew displays by far the strongest penchant for referring to God as πατήρ (44; Mk 3-4; Lk 17), and is constantly employing the term in his story (at least 30 unparalleled occurrences). Absolute references to ὁ πατήρ are otherwise limited to traditional material, however.⁸⁴ ὁ υἱός occurs absolutely four other times in Matthew, though each is traditional.⁸⁵ The specific term πνεῦμα ἅγιον (Mt 5; Mk 4; Lk 13; Acts 43; cf. πνεῦμα θεοῦ: Mt 2; Mk 0; Lk 0) connects with Jesus' divine origins in infancy (1:18-20) and with John's description of baptism by Jesus in Mt 3:16ff, where the Father (implied in φωνή ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν), ὁ υἱός and [τὸ] πνεῦμα [τοῦ] θεοῦ all participate in the event.⁸⁶

Even with the evidence of Matthean vocabulary and style provided by word statistics, there are major features in v.19b which appear strange within the context of the First Gospel. The command to baptize does come as a surprise. βαπτίζω occurred 6x within 3:6-16 and not again till 28:19, all uses of the verb in Mt 3 being traditional, apart from v.14. Typical of the Synoptics, baptism has never been undertaken as part of Jesus' ministry in Matthew, despite the Baptist's prediction (3:11).⁸⁷ Suddenly, rather, unique

⁸³ βαπτίζω: Mt 7; Mk 10 (excluding 16:16); Lk 9; Acts 21.

βάπτισμα: Mt 2; Mk 4; Lk 4; Acts 6.

In Mt 4:23; 9:35 (cf. 3:1) Matthew summarizes Jesus' mission to Israel: περιήγεν ... διδάσκων ... κηρύσσων ... θεραπεύων, and in a similar manner in 28:19-20a he summarizes the post-Easter mission of the disciples to the whole world. Cf. Kingsbury, "Composition", pp.577f; Schaberg, *Father*, p.44.

⁸⁴ 11:26-7 (cf. Lk 10:21f); 24:36 (= Mk 13:32).

⁸⁵ Mt 11:27 - 3x (= Lk 10:22); 24:36 (= Mk 13:32; though see textual problems, Metzger, *Commentary*, p.62). Cf. also Mt 2:15; 3:17; 17:5; 21:37f.

⁸⁶ πνεῦμα: Mt 19; Mk 22; Lk 37; references to the divine πνεῦμα in various forms: Mt 12; Mk 6; Lk 21.

⁸⁷ It is unclear whether Jesus ever does actually baptize in John; cf. Jn 1:25; 3:22, 26; 4:1, 2.

to Matthew, the disciples themselves are commissioned as baptizers in 28:19.

Furthermore, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον is a weak link in the triadic chain of names. Nothing of the OT-style function of the Spirit as God's divine power in Matthew would lead us to expect it as a full member of the triadic formula, as an apparent object of faith. Essentially, apart from Mark's many references to πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον (14 of 23 πνεῦμα sayings), Matthew and Mark have the same OT understanding of πνεῦμα as God's special acting power. The divine πνεῦμα sayings in the First Gospel do not lead to the more distinctive understanding developed in the Luke-Acts and John material. The formulaic nature of the triadic statement in 28:19, and its unprecedented juxtaposition of these three names so closely, provoke some serious questions about its place in Matthew.

Enough has already been said by others to establish on the basis of the usual canons of textual criticism the authentic place of the triadic formula in the earliest Matthean mss.⁸⁸ C.K. Barrett points out that even if the three-member formula were an early interpolation, so early that not a single extant mss contains the short formula, we are still left with the same problem: explaining the early appearance of the triadic baptismal formula almost contemporary to Matthew.⁸⁹

The development of the formula is closely bounded temporally by the almost contemporary parallel in Didache 7:1-3 and by the initial single-member baptismal formulas well-represented in Luke and Paul.⁹⁰ Jane Schaberg argues that the Mt 28:19 formula is undeniably unique among triadic NT texts.⁹¹ The formula's novelty would thus also seem to indicate its

⁸⁸See the discussions of the so-called Eusebian substitution by Lagrange, *Matthieu*, pp.544f; Bruce, "End", p.204; Michel, "Conclusion", pp.37f; Trilling, *Israel*, p.35 n.83; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, pp.151-75; and Donaldson, *Mountain*, p.178.

In contrast see Conybeare, "Forms", pp.275-88; Lohmeyer, "Mir ist", pp.29-33; Kosmala, "Conclusion", pp.132-147; Flusser, "Conclusion", pp.110-20. H.B. Green, *Matthew*, p.230, and "Command", pp.60ff, argues that the triadic phrase was originally absent from the Matthean text.

⁸⁹*Spirit*, p.103.

⁹⁰See baptism ἐν/ἐπί/εἰς τῷ/τὸ ὄνομα(τι) τοῦ Ἰησοῦ in Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; cf. Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 1:13, 15; 6:11; 10:1-4. Bultmann, *History*, p.151, postulates the simple christological ὄνομα as the original tradition behind Matthew's text. See Hahn's argument, *Mission*, p.67, for the appearance of the triadic baptismal formula as early as the latter half of the first century.

⁹¹See her reasons in *Father*, pp.10-15; with references to other triadic NT texts.

employment in a particular geographic setting.

Schaberg, Lange, and Hubbard are among those who have recently investigated these questions at length. Any attempt to synthesize their labours makes it clear that the origins, authenticity and development of the formula are not easily available. At best we can speculate that Mt 28:19b is a second generation development of single-member christological baptismal traditions and of more elementary triadic texts which circulated commonly. In its present form, Matthew appears to have incorporated the formula stylistically without fully integrating it theologically into his Gospel. The inclusion of "Holy Spirit" to form the triadic *ὄνομα* remains without explanation in the Gospel. Some assert that the combination of the three names could have originated in Christian prophecy, and could plausibly be a development from within the context of the First Gospel's own *ἐκκλησία*.⁹²

The importance of this discussion here is that despite the triadic formula, "Spirit" does not define the divine presence in 28:20b, which remains the promise of *Jesus'* presence. Matthew's acceptance, adaptation and/or composition of the three-member baptismal formula functions to refine the identity of the *ἐκκλησία* in the face of other proximate religious groups, particularly those which used baptism. The First Gospel is the *ἐκκλησία*-oriented Gospel; here *μαθητεύσατε ... βαπτίζοντες ... διδάσκοντες* functions as the mandate for *ἐκκλησία* formation and definition. Baptism, as the rite of initiation into the fellowship, brings the initiate into the inner circle which gains its identity and authority under the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Within Matthew the addition of 'Father' to the simple christological formula for baptism in the name of Jesus, is strikingly consistent with the patrocentricity of the First Gospel, and reflects Matthew's explicit concern to establish in his Gospel the identity of the true Israel in continuity with the language and symbols of Judaism.

v.20a: *διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν*

The pre-eminence of teaching in the First Gospel comes to a head in the third element of the mission mandate. The Eleven are not only to initiate the new disciples into the *ἐκκλησία* through baptism but to teach obedience to the tradition of *Jesus'* commands. Teaching, though not prominent statistically in the occurrences of *διδάσκω* (14; Mk 17; Lk 17) is the

⁹²Cf. Michel, "Conclusion", pp.37f; Grass, *Ostergeschehen*, p.30; Strecker, *Weg*, p.209; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, pp.967f; Bornkamm, "Lord"; Dunn, *Jesus*, p.173.

distinctive activity of Matthew's Jesus. Matthew appears to eliminate eleven of Mark's seventeen uses of διδάσκω, in favour of those which correspond to his own understanding of teaching as Jesus' primary activity and narrative characterization. In 4:23; 5:2; 11:1; 21:23 Matthew adds διδάσκω in several editorially critical passages, each time portraying Jesus as the Teacher, in 'their' synagogues, on the mountain, in 'their' cities and in the temple. The parallel διδάσκω statements in 5:19 (possibly in anticipation of 28:20a) elaborate the crucial importance for Jesus that his followers teach and practise the law.

The careful way in which Matthew proceeds with his use of διδάσκω makes its occurrence in 28:15 (ἐδιδάχθησαν, *Sondergut*) surprising. The high priests and the elders "teach" the soldiers in 28:11ff to deceive and lie for money, in direct contrast to Jesus' teaching throughout the Gospel and his instructions in 28:20. Lange may be correct in that "hier nimmt die Darstellung des Matthäus die Art eines Pamphlets an",⁹³ but Matthew's inclusion seems deliberately ironic in light of the contrast struck with Jesus' mandate to teach only a few sentences later. The type of teaching going on in 28:15 certainly upholds the narrator's gospel-wide characterization of the Jewish leaders as thorough antagonists to God's will.

In 28:20 teaching becomes the disciples' responsibility for the first time, their function in the ἐκκλησία, as an inevitable corollary, along with baptism, of the command to make disciples.⁹⁴ Teaching, as well as its content, τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν, is described in Matthean terms, using his style and vocabulary. πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν is an example of Matthew borrowing an OT idiom, this one found especially in LXX Deut.⁹⁵ Every use of τηρέω in the First Gospel is an editorial insertion or occurs in *Sondergut*,⁹⁶ and in 23:3 Matthew also uses τηρέω with πάντα ὅσα. Πάντα

⁹³ *Erscheinen*, p.318.

⁹⁴ The implication of the text, that this instruction is post-baptismal, cannot be pushed too hard; cf. Acts 2:37-42; 8:12f; 9:18f; 10:34-8; 16:13-15; 18:8-11; contra Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.89; cf. Dodd, "Catechism", pp.11-29.

⁹⁵ See, e.g., LXX Ex 7:2; Deut 1:3, 41; 4:2; 12:11; 13:11; 30:8; Josh 1:7; Jer 1:7; see further in Trilling, *Israel*, p.37.

⁹⁶ Mt 6; Mk 1; Lk 0. Mt 19:17 (cf. Mk 10:18; Lk 18:19); 23:3 (cf. Mk 12:37-40); 27:36 (cf. Mk 15:25); 27:54 (cf. Mk 15:39); 28:4, 20.

ἔσα in Matthew (7; Mk 3; Lk 2) has only one synoptic parallel.⁹⁷

Of four occurrences of ἐντέλλομαι (Mk 2; Lk 1), Matthew employs two to characterize Jesus' instructions to his disciples, once when descending the mountain of transfiguration (17:9) and here on the final mountain of commissioning. This unique use of ἐντέλλομαι in the Synoptics categorically redefines Jesus' sayings as fundamental religious truth, as ἐντολαί.⁹⁸ Early on, Matthew's Jesus, in the midst of teaching his own commands, paused to establish the importance of the role of teacher (5:17-20) and here the reader is left in no doubt as to the divine and binding essence of Jesus' ἐντολαί.

The subjects of the four uses of ἐντέλλομαι in Matthew provide an illuminating pattern of the transition of the authority to give commands, from God in 4:6 (cf. 15:4), to Moses in 19:7, to Jesus in 17:9 and 28:20. This deepens the significance of the OT idiom in 28:20 by highlighting the authoritative nature of Jesus' teaching in Matthew as superseding that of Moses, penetrating as never before to the heart of true Torah. This is especially apparent in 19:7-9 with the contrast between Moses' divine command and that of Jesus which supersedes it: Μωϋσῆς ἐνετείλατο ... λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν.

8.5. Jesus' Promise: 28:20b

Jesus' final words are thus rooted rhetorically and redactionally in the context provided by 28:16ff.

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας
ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

The literary characteristics of Jesus' promise are wholly Matthean. Matthew is particularly fond of emphasis through ἰδοὺ (62; Mk 7; Lk 57) with as many as 34 insertions of it into common tradition and 19 occurrences in his *Sondergut*,⁹⁹ while καὶ ἰδοὺ occurs 28x in Matthew (Mk 0; Lk 25). Matthew

⁹⁷21:22 = Mk 11:24. The four in *Sondergut* are probably editorial (13:44, 46; 18:25; 23:3) and 7:12 (cf. Lk 6:31) certainly is; see further in Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.316.

⁹⁸Cf. Mt 5:19; 15:3; 19:17; 22:36, 38, 40. However Jesus never gives a formal system of commandments; see Meeks, *World*, p.140. Cf. McConnell, *Law*, p.99; also Rohde, *Rediscovering*, p.63; Davies, *Setting*, pp.85f; Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.320f; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.92.

⁹⁹Gundry, *Matthew*, p.645.

employs καὶ ἰδοὺ or ἰδοὺ 22x redactionally, uses καὶ ἰδοὺ 4x in *Sondergut*, while in 12:41f it is twice paralleled in Lk 11:31f.¹⁰⁰ Within Mt 28 alone Matthew employs καὶ ἰδοὺ four times (vv.2, 7, 9, 20) and ἰδοὺ twice (vv.7, 11); those in v.7 are editorial; the others are in *Sondergut*.

Ἴδου ἐγώ is redactional in Mt 10:16; 11:10; 23:34, reflecting the fact that Matthew uses ἐγώ more often than the other synoptic writers, as well as his particular tendency to add ἐγώ to first person sayings for reasons of both style and emphasis.¹⁰¹ Owing to the christological subtlety of the Synoptics in this area as compared with the Fourth Gospel, ἐγώ εἰμι or other forms of 'I' sayings are not as prominent or as explicit in nature in the first three Gospels. This only adds, however, to the significance of the first person utterances which are found in the mouth of the synoptic Jesus.

Amongst the first three Gospels Matthew is certainly the most familiar with first person references in the mouth of Jesus, in character with the large, developed discourses which he delivers. Thus the vast majority of first person sayings by Jesus in the First Gospel are uttered within his self-conscious identity and role as authoritative teacher, often declaring "I say to you".

The phrase πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας is not at first easily identifiable as Matthew's. In this precise form, as an accusative of duration with no further modifiers, it is a hapax legomenon in the NT. At the same time, however, the repetitious use of πᾶς has already been identified as a prominent editorial feature of this pericope, while ἡμέρα (45; Mk 27; Lk 83)

¹⁰⁰ Moulton and Geden, *Concordance*, p.469, in their list of ἰδοὺ occurrences in Matthew prefix only 17 with καί, when by my count Matthew actually prefixes ἰδοὺ with καί 28x. The reason for Moulton and Geden's incomplete listing is not obvious to me; it does not correlate with Matthew's editorial practice. Their listing is similarly incomplete for the rest of the NT.

Lange, *Erscheinen*, pp.328, 514; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.579; Meier "Two", pp.410, 414; Schaberg, *Father*, p.44; and others depend on Moulton and Geden and each other when listing these same erroneous statistics. See Allen, *Matthew*, p.lxxxvi, who lists 23 references for ἰδοὺ prefixed with καί. Cf. Barth, *TIM*, p.131 n.1; Gundry, *Matthew*, p.645.

Meier also uses Moulton and Geden's similarly incomplete statistics for καί ἰδοὺ in Luke-Acts (Lk: 17; Acts: 6); I count Lk: 25; Acts: 11.

¹⁰¹ ἐγώ: Mt 29; Mk 16; Lk 22 (Jn 132). At least 13 occurrences of ἐγώ in Matthew come from his own hand, including the phrase which appears 6x verbatim in 5:22-44: ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν. Three others are in *Sondergut*. 12x in Matthew ἐγώ has a clear synoptic parallel.

καὶ ἐγώ: Mt 9; Mk 0; Lk 6. One in Matthew is paralleled: 21:24a = Lk 20:3. Five are redactional (10:32f; 16:18; 21:24b; 26:15) and three occur in *Sondergut* (2:8; 11:28; 18:33). Cf. Lange, *Erscheinen*, p.328.

is often the subject of Matthew's editorial insertions.¹⁰² Matthew's dependence upon Deuteronomic language in v.19 above appears also to continue with πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας, found precisely in this form in LXX Deut 4:40 and 5:29.¹⁰³

Matthew uses and consistently inserts ἕως into his sources.¹⁰⁴ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος is found only 6x in the NT, five of them in Matthew, hence here widely accepted as his own composition.¹⁰⁵

As it stands in the First Gospel, then, the promise of presence in v.20b reflects in detail the work of Matthew.¹⁰⁶ If he was dependent upon some primitive Christian tradition the present text has subsumed any evidence of pre-Matthean wording. Furthermore, we have no comparable statement applied to Jesus elsewhere in the relevant gospel materials which might evidence a primitive tradition.

The more obvious point, however, is that any lines of dependence run directly to the antecedent symbols and language of Judaism, especially to the OT "with you" promise formula of divine presence. Matthew has reinterpreted the divine promise in unique christological fashion, by taking the well-known first person utterance of Yahweh and placing it in the mouth of Jesus. Of the 114 MT and LXX occurrences of the promise formula in its various first and third person forms, there are four variations in the LXX with close similarity to Mt 28:20b.

ἐγὼ εἰμι μεθ' ὑμῶν (Hag 1:13)
 μεθ' ὑμῶν ἐγὼ εἰμι (Jer 49[42]:11; Hag 2:4)
 μετὰ σοῦ ἐγὼ εἰμι (Jer 1:8, 17, 19)
 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μετὰ σοῦ (Gen 28:15)
 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι (Mt 28:20)

None, however, provides Matthew with the particular word order which gives

¹⁰²Matthew parallels all but five of Mark's uses of ἡμέρα, employs 17 of his own, and uses ἡμέρα 9x in *Sondergut*; see Gundry, *Matthew*, pp.597, 644. Matthew most often uses ἡμέρα in reference to a temporal era, or sometimes to refer to that eschatological 'day' at the end.

¹⁰³In Deut 4:40 Moses tells the people:
 "Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, ὅσας ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι σοι σήμερον, that it might go well with you, and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God gives you πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας."

¹⁰⁴Mt 38; Mk 15; Lk 28; see Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p.49; Gundry, *Matthew*, p.597, lists at least 13 insertions by Matthew into common tradition.

¹⁰⁵Cf. Mt 18:39, 40, 49; 24:3. Except for 24:3, each instance of the phrase is spoken by Jesus. The other NT occurrence (Hb 9:26) uses the plural τῶν αἰώνων.

¹⁰⁶Contra Meier, "Two", pp.414f.

emphasis to the emphatic "I" and the prepositional phrase "with you". The LXX examples invariably have ἐγώ εἰμι in subject-verb conjunction, apart from the verbless formula in Gen 28:15.

That 28:20b (and, substantially, 28:16-20) is Matthew's own redactional formulation only strengthens the observations in Chapter 3 regarding its rhetorical, structural and thematic importance as the culmination of the Gospel and of the motif of divine presence as developed from Jesus's infancy. The full rhetorical, thematic and theological weight of Matthew's deliberate structural inclusio between 1:23 and 28:20 becomes apparent. That Matthew begins his story of the Messiah Jesus as the infant with the anticipated title "Emmanuel - God with us", who at the end becomes that divine Emmanuel persona in his promise (to always) remain with his followers, is Matthew's way of purposefully framing and developing his Gospel around the Emmanuel messiah.

CHAPTER 9. WORSHIP, WISDOM, THE SPIRIT, THE POOR: OTHER ELEMENTS OF MATTHEW'S JESUS AND DIVINE PRESENCE

A number of other avenues can be pursued in relation to Matthew's presence motif. One example is the subject of Jesus' threat to destroy and promise to rebuild the temple, a deeply embedded tradition and dominant element in his opponents' accusations against him in the Gospels.¹ At numerous points of contact with it, the exclusiveness of Temple ideology was overturned by Jesus' actions and warnings of its destruction. These all appear connected with Jesus' expectations of eschatological restoration, although as Sanders argues, we can never be certain how well Jesus was understood by his contemporaries. More to the point here, Christians early on took up God's OT promise to be with his people and applied it to his dwelling by means of the Holy Spirit in the church, the body of Christ.²

But Matthew in particular has bypassed the emphasis on the Spirit's indwelling (see the comments below on the Spirit in Matthew) in favour of a clear identification of the human personality of Jesus as the only adequate shrine for God on earth among his people. Hence the rationale seems to be that Jesus was the true temple who finally captured the immanence side of the divine transcendence-immanence spectrum with which Israelite thinkers had striven so long. Jesus' followers' reverence and worship of him in Matthew indicates their awareness of this divine immanence in him.

9.1. Worship and the Presence of Jesus

Of the thirteen times Matthew uses προσκυνέω Jesus is its object ten times. Matthew's application of the term is striking in that he uses it to describe attitudes of those approaching Jesus both before and after the

¹Mk 14:58; Mt 26:61; Jn 2:18-22; cf. Mk 13:2. Sanders considers Jesus' activity in the temple as "the surest starting point" for his investigation; see his discussion, *Jesus*, pp.61-90.

²1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; cf. Rev 21:22. See Clements, *God*, pp.138f.

resurrection, right from the infancy narrative through to the final commissioning.

Προσκυνέω is certainly an important activity in Matthew (13x; Mk 2x; Lk 2x), applied particularly to Jesus. Matthew commonly employs this specific term when the Markan parallel does not, to describe the attitude of those approaching Jesus.³ Matthew is the only evangelist to use the term in the appearance accounts, and he does so twice.⁴ Furthermore, διστάζω appears only twice in the NT, both times in Matthew, and both times associated with προσκυνέω (see 14:31-33; 28:17).

The use of προσκυνέω elsewhere in the NT reinforces its special importance for Matthew. Outside of Matthew Jesus is worshipped (προσκυνέω) only by the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:6; absent from Matthew's story in 8:29), in mockery by the soldiers (Mk 15:19; omitted in Mt 27:30; cf. γονυπετέω in Mt 27:29), by a man with restored sight (Jn 9:38) and by God's angels (Heb 1:6). It is notable that Jesus is not once the object of προσκυνέω in the twenty-four occurrences in Revelation; worship of God alone is emphasized in 19:10 and 22:8f.

Προσκυνέω in Matthew

2:2	the magi:	ἦλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ
2:8	Herod:	καὶ γὰρ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ
2:11	the magi:	καὶ πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν
4:9	the Tempter	Ταῦτα σοι πάντα δώσω ἐὰν πεσὼν προσκυνήσῃς μοι
4:10	Jesus:	Κύριον τὸν θεὸν σου προσκυνήσεις καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύσεις
8:2	a leper:	προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ
9:18	a ruler:	ἐλθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ
14:33	disciples:	προσεκύνησαν
15:25	Canaanite woman:	ἡ ἐλθοῦσα προσεκύνει αὐτῷ
18:26	king and servant:	πεσὼν οὖν ὁ δοῦλος προσεκύνει αὐτῷ
20:20	mother of James and John:	ἡ μήτηρ . . . προσκυνοῦσα καὶ αἰτοῦσά τι
28:9	two Mary's:	ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ.
28:17	the Eleven:	καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν.

H. Greeven has pointed out that in the NT the object of προσκυνέω is always understood to have divine status;⁵ this appears to be true of

³E.g., Mt 8:2; cf. Mk 1:40: γονυπετῶν (see textual problems)

Mt 9:18; cf. Mk 5:22: πίπτει πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ

Mt 14:33; cf. Mk 6:51: καὶ λίαν [ἐκ περισσοῦ] ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐξίσταντο

Mt 15:25; cf. Mk 7:25: ἐλθοῦσα προσέπεσεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ

Mt 20:20; cf. Mk 10:35: προσπορεύονται

Cf. Bauer's discussion, *Structure*, pp.117f; Hubbard, *Commissioning*, p.75; Kingsbury, "Composition", p.575; Meier, "Two", p.409; Schaberg, *Father*, pp.43, 89-90, 330, 345.

⁴The term in Lk 24:52 is textually doubtful; see Metzger, *Commentary*, p.190.

⁵"προσκυνέω", p.763.

Matthew. The magi are the first in Matthew to seek to fall down and worship him (2:2), and when they do (2:11) it is in recognition of Jesus' divine and kingly authority; hence they initiate an important Matthean pattern of worship. Not only do the magi fall down in worship, but προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα. In the LXX, "gift" is frequently an offering presented to God, and elsewhere in Matthew τὸ δῶρον concerns only Temple offerings to God (5:23f; 8:4; 15:5; 23:18f).

Thus προσκυνέω in Matthew is not merely an act of social genuflection. Even in the case of those coming to request healing, their worship already declares something of the attitude of the magi. The tempter's claim backs this up, for he asks for what Jesus declares belongs to God alone: worship. In those cases in which Jesus' closest followers are motivated to προσκυνήσις, it comes as part of their growing comprehension of his divine sonship and role as Emmanuel.

How do we reconcile Jesus' citation of Deut 6:13 in Mt 4:10 with his open reception of προσκυνέω acts throughout the Gospel? Surely equality with God is not the issue.⁶ Nowhere in Matthew's portrayal are Jesus and God simply identified, and Jesus' self-perception is clearly within the hierarchical relationship of the Son to his Father. (See Chapter 3 and Excursus for more on theocentricity). For Matthew, Yahweh is the only true divine God, and Jesus his Son, the Emmanuel Messiah.

The various characters in Matthew who worship Jesus provide some context. According to Mt 2:2 the magi worship Jesus as king of the Jews; they do not simply bend their knees, but fall on their faces, a noteworthy action because of the tendency in Judaism to think of prostration as proper only in the worship of God.⁷ The same can be said of the mother's prostration in 20:20, given her question of status in Jesus' Kingdom. In 8:2; 9:18 and 15:25 the attitude of the supplicants' worship is filled with faith in Jesus' divine powers as healer. In 14:33, 28:9 and 17 the disciples (men and women) recognize Jesus as God's Son, as the very presence of God with them in the extraordinary evidence of the moment. Here Peter, James and John's experience on the Transfiguration mountain must be added - they "fell on their faces and were filled with awe" (17:6). So Jesus is consistently the object of προσκυνήσις and δῶρον as king, divine healer, Son

⁶Gundry (*Matthew*, p.594) and others come too close to an equation.

⁷Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1, p.248.

of God, and 'the Son' of the Father, but he is not God. Both Jesus and the narrator remain theocentric to the end. Both Jesus and his followers exist to do the will of the Father.

Matthew thus uses προσκυνέω as a means of representing Jesus' divinity within his earthly ministry. We could conclude with C.F.D. Moule that the occasionally recognized "numinous" presence of Jesus was intensified by Matthew during his ministry.¹⁰ But my thesis here is that within προσκυνέω, the reader has gained another narrative index to the importance of Jesus' divine presence, and to genuine and proper response to Jesus.

1) Those who truly worship Jesus in Matthew are the most important characters to his ministry - Jesus' disciples, followers, and the marginalized. His divine presence is real to them within the story, and their worship is appropriate to their perception of him. Matthew employs their characters to reveal to the reader divine immanence within the story. Those who truly worship Jesus in Matthew become a microcosm of the coming Kingdom - men, women, lepers, gentiles, the marginalized - these provide the shape of "his people".

2) Within the events of the narrative world, Jesus himself sets the fundamental condition for worship in 4:10: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only". But the narrator tells the implied reader that from the beginning as an infant, to the end as the Risen One, Jesus is the fitting object of worship. Every subsequent προσκυνέω instance is added by the narrator. As well, as the centripetal focus of the story action, the narrative often employs προσέρχομαι to describe people who come into Jesus' presence (e.g., 8:2, 5b, 19; 9:18, 20, 28; 15:22; 17:14b), a word with cultic overtones in the LXX, often used by Josephus of those approaching kings.¹¹ Jesus' declaration in 4:10 and the actions of his worshippers can only exist side-by-side if they are in essence fulfilling 1:23 and declaring through their worship that he is the Emmanuel Messiah.

3) Worship of Jesus is also used to highlight the opposition between Jerusalem and Jesus. In the contrast between the true worship of the magi (2:2, 11) and the deceitful worship of Herod (2:8), the narrative already presupposes God's turning to the gentiles.¹² Here, in the magi, is the ideal

¹⁰*Origin*, p.176.

¹¹See BAGD, p.270; Held, *TIM*, p.226. Schneider, "προσέρχομαι", p.683: "The circle of powers, men, groups and classes which came to Jesus with differing concerns is brought out with astonishing clarity."

¹²See Luz, *Matthäus* 1, pp.129ff.

response to Jesus. Their worship affirms for the reader the majesty of the Christ, Son of David (1:1), Son of God (2:15) and Emmanuel Messiah (1:21-23). The implied reader knows the true meaning of each incident of προσκυνήσις, just as he or she knows from 1:1ff the true nature of Jesus as divine presence, which Jesus' true followers will grow to recognize.

9.2. Wisdom and the Presence of Jesus

The wisdom tradition in Israel has long been studied, and wisdom motifs have long been recognized in the NT. More recently, the effort has been made to demonstrate that wisdom speculation was a central feature of the Christology of both Q and Matthew.¹³ The thesis runs something like this: (1) In Jewish wisdom literature from Proverbs to Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom is portrayed as a semi-personified mediator, God's agent in creation, who came from God and made her home among his people, to be the channel of God's guidance and his blessings. Wisdom is personified as a speaker of oracles, and as sending her envoys, who are rejected by each generation, yet she continues to offer her revelation, and is identified with the Law. (2) Jesus and John in Q are the last great envoys of Wisdom. and as with their predecessors, are persecuted and killed; hence doom with fall on "this generation". (3) Matthew has, in particular, altered Q so as to identify Jesus with Wisdom.

For example, in Mt 23:34 Jesus declares: "Therefore I send you prophets, wise men and scribes". Then Jesus laments Jerusalem "killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you" (23:37). On the strength of parallels in Q and Baruch, Jack Suggs has claimed that:

Matthew successfully transfers a Wisdom saying to Jesus because for him Jesus is identified with Sophia... As this figure, Jesus can say - as no merely historical individual might - 'I would gather your children under my wings'. Jesus is Wisdom incarnate.¹⁴

Fred Burnett has furthered the identification: "The evangelist, by his addition of 11:28-30 to 11:25-27, built upon the identification of Wisdom

¹³Important recent works include Christ, *Jesus Sophia*; Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence*; Suggs, *Wisdom*; Robinson, "Logos Sophos", and "Jesus". Robinson and Koester, *Trajectories*; Burnett, *Testament*. Johnson, "Reflections", pp.44-64, provides some solid critique of Suggs. See Dunn's overview in *Christology*, pp.197-206; cf. the more recent work by Deutsch on Mt 11:25-30 in *Wisdom*.

¹⁴Suggs, *Wisdom*, pp.70f.

and Torah in order to identify Jesus-Sophia with Torah".¹⁵ For Burnett *παρεδόθη* in 11:27 denotes the *ἐξουσία* given the Son by the Father; this authority is primarily what has been hidden from the wise and revealed to babes.

The nature of Q and the strength of its Sophia motif stands at the heart of the debate. Proponents for Matthew's Wisdom christology have argued from Q as a collection of revelatory articles (Robinson: *λόγοι σοφῶν*), wherein Jesus can be seen as Wisdom's envoy. Q contained utterances of Sophia, which were subsequently attributed to her final envoy, Jesus.

F. Christ, B.W. Bacon, U. Wilckens, W.A. Beardslee and J. Robinson each conclude that Q has identified Jesus with Sophia.¹⁶ James Dunn speaks "of a Q christology in which Jesus is understood as the messenger of Wisdom," and along with R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, M.J. Suggs, K. Stendahl, R.H. Gundry and G.N. Stanton, cannot find the identification of Jesus with Sophia until Matthew's text.¹⁷

The important Matthean passages in question are few: Mt 11:19, 25-27, 28-30; 23:34-36, 37-39.¹⁸ When we turn to a specific text where the verbal echoes seem clear - Mt 11:28-30, in its resonance with Ben Sira 51:23-27 (cf. 6:24-31), the fundamental difference in content is as obvious as the apparent indebtedness to words and concepts. Ben Sira and Jesus each call people to come and learn from them and to take up a yoke. But Ben Sira's yoke is the yoke of Wisdom; Jesus' yoke is his own. Ben Sira speaks of labouring a little for Wisdom's rest; Jesus gives his own rest to those who labour. Ben Sira points elsewhere to another mediator; Jesus *himself is* that mediator with the Father.¹⁹

¹⁵ *Testament*, pp.377f.

¹⁶ Christ, *Jesus*, pp.73-4: In both the pre-Q and Q tradition "Jesus appears at the same time as the bearer of wisdom and as Wisdom itself"; Bacon, *Studies*, p.203; Wilckens, "σοφία", pp.515-517; Beardslee, "Wisdom", pp.236f. Robinson goes as far as to talk about the "Sophia Christology" of Q and its motif of Wisdom's envoys, and he postulates a complex tradition behind Q ("Jesus" p.10).

¹⁷ Dunn, *Christology*, p.205; *Unity*, pp.221, 258f, 285; Stendahl, *School*, pp.27, 142; Gundry, *Matthew*, p.213; Stanton, "Christology", pp.36f.

¹⁸ Cf. also four other secondary passages: Lk 2:40-52; Mt 2:12; 6:2; 12:38-42 and pars., studies by Christ, *Jesus*, pp.61f.

¹⁹ Cf. France, "Worship", p.22. Stanton has argued against those who interpret this logion against a Wisdom background, "Matthew 11:28-30", pp.6f.

This is not the place to revive all the discussions around which this topic has been built over the past two decades. There are some problems with the supposed Sophia-Jesus identification in Matthew. It is difficult to find either in Proverbs and the Ben Sira a clear pictures of Wisdom sending envoys or prophetic messengers, or in Suggs' other texts, a solid pre-Christian Jewish myth of Sophia sending her envoys with revelation to the people. In Mt 23:34 *Jesus* sends prophets, wise men and scribes; in Lk 11:49 *Wisdom* does the sending - rather than Matthew identifying Jesus as Wisdom, it is arguable that Matthew is *avoiding* an identification of Jesus with Wisdom, given that his readers would likely be unfamiliar with Luke's passage.²⁰

The motif is limited to a few passages of Q material, in Mt 11 and 23, and is an admittedly minor theme. It is not alien, however, to the Gospel's eclectic employment of various titles and themes. When the passages are considered, in Mt 11:25-30 in particular, Matthew like other NT writers displays his awareness of Wisdom ideas, and works with a poetical personification of God's wisdom.²¹

How does Wisdom impact Matthew's presence motif? Certainly there could be theological and christological enhancement of an Emmanuel Messiah, who is also presented as Wisdom personified. But the argument for Wisdom Christology in Matthew, is seriously limited by its method of discovery. That method is not available to all, for the critic to insist on his interpretation creates reading problems for those outside his paradigm, historical or narrative. For Jesus to be understood as Sophia and Torah incarnate in Matthew, requires a specific reader/hearer: someone or some community familiar with the terminology and connections to the appropriate Q and Wisdom passages and concepts, and employing the same pattern of literary relationships as the critics in this case. This historical interpretation is thus teneble, but not applicable to many audiences. In terms of a narrative reading, Wisdom Christology does not have a strong foothold within the rhetoric of the story. Apart from arguing for a particular audience's awareness of Sophia language and concepts outside the narrative, Jesus as Sophia/Torah is not a clear characterization in the story.

²⁰See Johnson, "Aspects", for more critique.

²¹See Deutsch's more recent, helpful analysis on Mt 11:25-30, *Wisdom*.

9.3. A Note on the Spirit and Presence

A number of commentators have equated Matthew's presence motif with other evangelists' talk about the Holy Spirit. Luz, for example, decides that "the formulation 'I am with you' probably means in effect the same as what is said with the catch-word 'Spirit'".²² Crosby follows a similar reasoning, defining Jesus' "withness" in Matthew in terms of the Spirit's presence with the community.²³ But this involves their transference from the writings of Luke, John and Paul, which talk about divine support, authority and power in the church in terms of the Spirit (Lk 24:29; Acts 1:4f; 2:1-21; Jn 20:19-23; 1 Cor 15:45, etc.)

This approach is not true to Matthew's text, either in its rhetorical structure or redactional emphases. Matthew is very cautious with his Spirit language, avoiding identification of Jesus and τὸ πνεῦμα. Note Mt 9:4 (and Lk 5:22): "Jesus, knowing their thoughts"; but Mk 2:8: "Jesus, perceiving in his spirit". Mt 12:38f and 16:1-4 do not have Jesus "groaning in the Spirit" as does Mk 8:12. Where Mk 13:11 has the Holy Spirit speaking through the disciples, Mt 10:20 has the Spirit of your Father. The effect is often to remove any connection between Jesus and the Spirit.²⁴ Only one reference to πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον appears in Matthew, versus 14 in Mark; Matthew prefers "demons" to "evil spirits".

But Matthew clearly supports straightforward references to πνεῦμα as the Spirit of God. The Spirit has a clear role as God's agent responsible for Jesus' miraculous conception, and Jesus is endowed with God's Spirit at baptism. In 3:16 Matthew has [τοῦ] θεοῦ in addition to τὸ πνεῦμα in Mk 1:10, and in 10:20 he has τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς for τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον (Mk 13:11), and in 12:28 πνεῦμα for δάκτυλος (Lk 11:20). In the *Sondergut* material of 12:18 God's Spirit is laid on his Servant Jesus, a fulfilment citation from Isa 42:1.

In each instance, the application of the Spirit to Jesus does not notably transcend the OT definition of its activity; the Spirit remains the way in which the evangelist talks about the enabling power of God working on

²²"Disciples", p.112.

²³*House, passim*. Also Hubbard, *Commissioning*, pp.121ff, and Ziesler, "Presence", pp.90-5.

²⁴Cf. also Mt 12:31f and Mk 3:29f. Note the exception of Mt 22:43 where he retains the connection of Jesus with the Spirit as in Mk 12:36. See further Ziesler, "Presence", p.93.

behalf of his people. The Spirit is not otherwise personalized. Even Jesus' supernatural conception by the Spirit does not step beyond the bounds of current understanding of πνεῦμα as the creative power of God, within popular Jewish writings and Hellenistic-Judaism.²⁵

So the question for Matthew is not the avoidance of divine activity as undertaken by the Spirit of God, but avoiding the suggestion that the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, as appears in Mk 2:8; 3:30; and 8:12. Matthew's tendency to silence regarding this aspect of the Spirit should not be over-interpreted. The evidence is slim in Mt 7:15-23 for Matthew carrying on a polemic against a pneumatic/charismatic group of Gnostics²⁶ or antinomian enthusiasts²⁷. That their insufficient *Christocentricity* was a threat to the church seems a weak rationale for Matthew's tendency regarding the Spirit. The fact that he did not oppose charismatic and wonder-working activities *per se*, within a proper master-disciple relationship, makes it more doubtful (cf. 10:7f, 41; 17:20).

On the other hand, to see Jesus' final promise in Mt 28:20b as the same assurance given in Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4f; 2:1ff; Jn 20:19-25; 1 Cor 15:45; etc., with only a difference in terminology, requires that Matthew actively reject a 'pneumatology' or Spirit-terminology which he may not even have had access to.

Ziesler's contention that Matthew has replaced the Spirit's presence in the church with Jesus' presence in the church because of his tendency to disassociate Jesus and the Spirit is not a strong thesis - it bases key elements of Matthew's presence motif on redactional avoidance. Matthew could easily have adopted a form of the promise of presence which spoke of the "promise of the Father" and the "Spirit of the Father"; this language would not have contradicted his avoidance of the Spirit of Jesus, but would have been insufficient for him christologically. (This latter phrase - "Spirit of the Father" - is his own editorial insertion in 10:20, while the "promise of the Father" is a traditional phrase according to the evidence of Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4; Jn 14:16, 26.)

²⁵Thus, as noted in Chapter 8, the placement of the Spirit as one of the three members of the triadic formula is surprising. Cf. Schweizer, "πνεῦμα", pp.396-404; Barrett, *Spirit*, pp.102f. Barrett, pp.117ff, finds that the subdued Gospel presentation of Jesus' pneumatic features simply represents the writers' lack of interest in pneumatic persons as such, understandable in a setting where pneumatic phenomena were all too common.

²⁶See Barth, *TIM*, p.164; Davies, *Setting*, p.200.

²⁷See Dunn, *Jesus*, p.45; Hill, *Matthew*, p.67; Ziesler, "Presence", p.94.

For Matthew it is paramount that Jesus is with his post-narrative church in the way that Yahweh was with Israel. With so high a christology, it is clear that for Matthew, Spirit language could not convey his presence motif. The rhetorical and redactional structuring of Matthew's conclusion is bent on one thing - the emphatic continuity of the risen Jesus with the earthly Jesus. For this reason Matthew speaks of *Jesus'* continuing presence with his people, rather than speaking of the Spirit. Therefore Matthew's presence motif throughout the Gospel has been *christocentric*, and his references to the Spirit *theocentric*. The serious difference with the other NT writers in the profound depth to which Matthew has plumbed God's personal presence as liberator in the OT as the foundation for its continuity in Jesus the Messiah.

9.4. The Poor and the Presence of Jesus

Εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι,
 ὑπάγε πώλησόν σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα καὶ δός [τοῖς] πτωχοῖς,
 καὶ ἔξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν οὐρανοῖς,
 καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολούθει μοι. Mt 19:21

To be with Jesus, in his inner circle, is costly. In Mt 19:16ff Jesus does not criticize the rich young man's obedience to the law, but Jesus' final challenge to obtain perfection, and full obedience and commitment to the cause, is socio-economic. The man's rejection of the call to discipleship is then contrasted with the disciples, who have accepted the poverty arising from their commitment to Jesus (19:27).

Michael Crosby has devoted his recent monograph, *House of Disciples*, to the thesis that justice as the form of re-ordered relationships and resources was a central image in Matthew. I am indebted at numerous points to his discussion. I want to assert here that Jesus' presence with his ἐκκλησία is linked to his followers' faithful exercise of God's justice with the poor.

It is certainly the case that Jesus' self-defined mission (11:2-6) and his call to discipleship (19:16-26) are inseparably linked with solidarity with the poor (25:31-46). Based on his stories and vocabulary, a number of commentators have concluded that, more than Mark or Luke, Matthew's audience included many landholders, merchants, businessman, and entrepreneurs, i.e.,

it was a relatively prosperous community.²⁸ W.D. Davies claims that "nowhere does Matthew reveal an emphasis on poverty and ascetic rejection of wealth".²⁹ What Matthew does emphasize, however, in his particular practice of δικαιοσύνη, is justice toward the poor within and around the community. The exercise of justice needs to be both social and economic (cf. Mt 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 11:5; 19:21; 21:32).

Relevant here is the nature and exercise of Jesus' ἐξουσία, where Max Weber's discussion of three types of authority - traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic - has some applicability.³⁰ Wayne Meeks sees conflicts within Matthew's community over which mode of authority would prevail, as the charismatic activity of prophets³¹ faced the development of formal - institutional and legal - kinds of authority.³²

More to the point here, Weber asserts that charismatic leaders and their followers, in order to carry out their mission, must relinquish normal ties, vocations and family duties. Those in Matthew's story who were victims of their leaders' and prophets' *anomie*, or the normlessness of their marginalization and poverty, found a special identity with Jesus' charisma. Among the Gospels, only Matthew uses ἀνομία, most often in relationship with the charismatic activity of true and false prophets.³³ I would thus assert that Jesus' charisma most clearly manifests itself in his divine presence as the Emmanuel Messiah. The identification of marginalized people with Jesus, and his identification in turn of his presence with their needs, performs a reciprocal equivalence. The public phenomenon of Jesus' centripetal magnetism in Matthew, whereby he draws people to himself and creates his inner circle of followers, is the charismatic nature of his presence. In relation to the poor and marginalized, Matthew thus develops the special connection between Jesus and οἱ μικροί, and εἷς τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων. This connection transcends Jesus' earthly ministry to become a defining characteristic of his ἐκκλησία, and of the final judgement.

²⁸See Mt 5:25f, 39-52; 6:19; 13:22 (cf. Mk 4:19); 13:45f; 19:23 (cf. Mk 10:23); 20:1-16; cf. Smith, "Middle-Class", p.266; Kingsbury, *Story*, pp.125f; in Crosby, *House*, pp.40f.

²⁹*Setting*, p.213.

³⁰See Weber, *Economy*, pp.111-58, and *Sociology*, pp.46ff.

³¹Mt 5:12; 10:41; 13:17, 57; 23:34, 37; and false prophets: 7:21-23; 24:4-28.

³²*Moral World*, p.137.

³³Mt 7:23; 13:41; 23:28; 24:12. See this discussion in Crosby, *House*, pp.95f.

In Matthew, οἱ πτωχοί are characterized as subjects integral to Jesus' central mission (11:2-6). His disciple's sacrifice on behalf of the poor brings heavenly reward, and is critical to entry to the Kingdom (19:21-26). In saying "you always have the poor with you" (26:11), Jesus was not affirming their state. His own interaction with the poor sustained the disciples criticism of the woman's expensive anointing (26:9), but here her model discipleship (ἔργον γὰρ καλὸν ἠργάσατο εἰς ἐμέ, 26:10) in light of his coming suffering took priority. So Mt 26:11 cannot be used to discharge responsibility for the poor or to legitimate existing social injustice and exploitation of the poor. Rather, regarding his anointing by the woman, Jesus promises that "what she has *done*" would become part of the gospel message throughout the world (26:13), for it exemplifies the sharing of resources with the poor required in his call to perfection (19:21).

The poor in Matthew are part of that group of marginalized people which includes οἱ μικροί, and οἱ ἐλαχιστοί, an under-class which also brings in the πρόβατον, παιδία, τεκνά, gentiles, women, and diseased untouchables. With these Jesus delights to identify himself and he promises to them the favour of divine blessing and Kingdom priority.

This is not the place to address comprehensively Matthew's ethics, and his call to mission and community. But the question of the poor in Matthew does bring to the fore the social implications of Jesus' presence as Emmanuel Messiah. Given Jesus' primary mandate to "save his people" in 1:21, there is little argument with μετα^νοία and στρέφειν as the core of his call to discipleship.³⁴ With the exception of Judas in 27:3, "conversion" in Matthew is collective, not individual, and thus includes the need for communal or social reconstruction.³⁵ The dominant concern, then, is with community codes and obligations - social justice, as defined by Matthew's Jesus.

Fewer would agree that Matthew's Jesus and his followers sought to overthrow social structures. Yet it is clear that repentance, as Jesus' collective call to form God's people, involved at heart a number of challenges to existing social values and institutions, including table

³⁴See Mt 3:2, 8, 11; 4:17; 5:39; 7:6; 9:22; 11:20f; 12:41; 16:23; cf. 18:3; 27:3.

³⁵See Crosby, *House*, pp.196ff, for this discussion. He notes, e.g., that only 21 percent of the Sermon on the Mount's passages might refer to individual conduct or attitudes; the rest deal with community standards and relationships.

fellowship,³⁶ Torah interpretation and Temple hierarchy,³⁷ Sabbath requirements,³⁸ and a new people and social order for the Kingdom.³⁹ Jesus' charge to seek God's βασιλείαν and his δικαιοσύνην (6:33) is paradigmatic of conversion in Matthew, a process of seeking and finding represented in the Kingdom parables of Mt 13 and in Jesus' challenge to the rich young man and his words on riches (19:21ff). Following Jesus thus means the reordering of one's relationships and resources on behalf of the poor, and thereby seeking after God's Kingdom and justice, a journey made nearly impossible by prosperity (19:23f; 6:21, 24).

Essential to understanding Jesus' presence and the poor in Matthew is his presentation of the βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν/τοῦ θεοῦ.⁴⁰ God's reign in Matthew is intrinsic to the entire story; it *is* the good news, for Jesus sought to establish God's reign through his preaching, teaching and healing; it is present in Jesus and will be the centre of his ἐκκλησία; and it is future in its reference to God's eschatological reign.⁴¹ In his Emmanuel Messiah, God has come to be present with his people and to establish his Kingdom, a reign of his justice and right relationships, with spatial, temporal and relational qualities. Leander Keck is thus right to have called βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν a "master image" in Matthew: it is not a definable concept, but a concrete image incorporating ambiguity and tension,⁴² making βασιλεία a "tensive", rather than "steno" symbol.

Entering this Kingdom is a major concern in Matthew; it appears in Jesus' sayings and in each of his five main discourses,⁴³ and in the narrative.⁴⁴ Ultimately, entrance to the Kingdom will require meeting the Son of man's standards for justice as described in 25:31-46. Here Matthew's

³⁶See 8:11f; 9:10-12; 11:19; 22:1-14; and Perrin, *Rediscovering*, pp.102-8.

³⁷See 5:17-20, 21-48; 21:1ff; and Borg, *Conflict*, p.62.

³⁸See 12:1-8, 9-14.

³⁹See 11:25=30; 18; 19:19-30; 25:31-46; cf. 6:10; 7:21; 12:44, 50; 13:55; 18:14; 21:31; 23:37-39, and see Crosby's approach to these challenges, *House*, pp.198-203.

⁴⁰βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν: Mt 32; Mk 0; Lk 0. βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ: Mt 4-5; Mk 13; Lk 32.

⁴¹Cf. Kingsbury, *Structure*, pp.128ff.

⁴²"Ethics", p.47.

⁴³Cf. 5:20; 7:13f, 21; 8:12; 11:12; 13:41-43; 18:3, 8, 19; 19:23; 21:31; 23:13.

⁴⁴Cf. 5:19; 8:11; 11:11.

identification of Jesus with the marginalized, and the eschatological consequences of practising Kingdom ethics, are most vivid. The δίκαιοι will be separated from the others, not on the basis of any apparent allegiance, but, as David Catchpole notes, "on the basis of whether they have or have not done anything to alleviate human need." The poor and needy are the heart of the discourse - "the essential demand is defined as διακονία", service which "shows itself as δέχσθαι and the satisfying of physical needs." "Such service is performed for all in need and without restriction", and here "eschatological blessing is promised to the person who takes the role of the servant."⁴⁵

Critical here for us is the equivalence established between the poor and Jesus, a strong reiteration of the equivalence established between Jesus and "the little ones" in Mt 18. Matthew is thus defining entrance to the Kingdom as obedience to God's call for justice, and humble, child-like submission to his will. The response of the just to their blessing in 25:37-39, and the unjust to their curse in 25:44, cuts short any debate over who "the little ones" or "the least of these my brothers" might be - both groups are just as surprised. Hence, entry to the Kingdom is not calculated, and Jew/gentile, Christian/non-Christian distinctions are immaterial to judgement. Justice and righteousness are self-forgetful and responsive to Christ and the needs of any neighbour.⁴⁶

Two further corollaries arise: (1) Jesus' identification and presence with the marginalized stands within his fundamental conflict with his opponents. Given his expression thereby of God's concern for his flock, Jesus' divine presence even further alienates him from his adversaries.⁴⁷ (2) Jesus strongly asserts his presence with the marginalized, but given the surprise of both groups at the judgement as to their identity, readers are given no picture of his presence. Jesus' presence here is incognito, and only discovered later. Rather than identifying what Jesus' presence looks like for his followers, Matthew provides parameters for their obedience. It is in their role as servant to the poor, in doing the justice of God's will, that his followers are surprised by his presence with the marginalized. In serving them, they serve him, and see his presence.

⁴⁵Catchpole, "Poor", p.389.

⁴⁶See Verhey, *Reversal*, p.90; in Crosby, *House*, pp.227f.

⁴⁷See more in Minear, "Disciples", pp.31f; cf. van Unnik, "Dominus", p.284.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION.

O Lord, you have searched me and known me...

Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there;

If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. Ps 139:1,7f.

Many years ago the Hebrew psalmist was overwhelmingly convinced of the constant presence of God. But the human quest after divine presence has taken dramatically different turns in different eras. Today our 'post-Christian' society more often asks "Does God exist?" or "Who is God?", than it assumes divine presence. Almost two millennia ago the first evangelist provided a strong voice in a moment of significant transition between religious eras. His is a story of social and religious continuity and discontinuity between two communities, for both of which the presence of God was the essential defining characteristic. It would be helpful to summarize and ponder the most salient elements of our study above.

In the current moment of western biblical criticism, the means of assessing a concern such as the presence motif within the ancient text of Matthew have multiplied to the point, some claim, of disparity. The choice in this study to employ both narrative and redaction criticism has not been for the sake of a new eclecticism, but is an attempt to respond authentically to some of the structural, historical and theological dimensions which the text exhibits. We have sought to read Matthew both as a mirror and a window - as a unified and dynamic story that invites readers to inhabit imaginatively its narrative world and seeks to structure their responses, and as a text with an historical author and context.

The Story

In applying narrative criticism to the presence motif in Matthew's story we have seen the rhetorical importance of the Mt 1-2 prologue: here the narrator establishes the setting, ideological point of view, and primary conflicts of the story. God's past presence with his people provides the

foundation for a new era of divine presence in Jesus' birth. The genealogy and narrative make clear Matthew's inheritance of Israel and its paradigms.

God's presence in the person and mission of his Messiah finds emphatic explanation in an important double naming. "Jesus" and "Emmanuel" are linked, for as Messiah, Jesus will save "his people", who will call him Emmanuel - Μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός. The crises of Jerusalem and the magi in Mt 2 initiate the story's elemental conflicts. Within this environment Jesus must work out the substance of his mission: Who are the people of God? How will the Emmanuel Messiah save them? How will the deadly antipathy between Jesus and his opponents be resolved?

Jesus' adult preparation in Mt 3:1-4:11 further reinforces these themes: (1) Jesus' coming as a special advent of God's presence; (2) the story's acceptance/rejection motif; and (3) Matthew's theocentric focus. Jesus' Galilean ministry takes shape with two concentric circles of disciples and crowds carefully drawn around his centripetal presence. Jesus calls apart those of his inner circle, teaches them, demonstrates his ministry, and then gives them a mission like his own. The story tension created by this mission's apparent lack of fulfilment implies the disciples' need for more faith, and a better grasp of Jesus' empowering presence. (Ironically, the Jewish leaders see intuitively the divine significance of his presence, and by Mt 11-12 their opposition becomes public.) Despite moments of clarity and developing perception (e.g., 13:51f; 16:5-12, 13-20; 17:13), in a number of incidents - the water-walking (14:22-32); the two feeding stories (14:13-21; 15:32-9); Peter's rebuke (16:21-3); the disciples' healing attempt (17:14-21); the Garden abandonment (26:36-56) - the disciples demonstrate their continued dependence upon Jesus' physical presence for their empowerment and faith.

By the critical juncture of 16:13ff Jesus anticipates his suffering and death, and ^{the} building ^{of} his own ἐκκλησία. His presence "in their midst" (18:20) becomes the focal point for the future gatherings of his followers. Mt 18 advances several crucial principles of membership in his ἐκκλησία, while the intimate identification of his presence with the μικροί highlights his first-last inversion of kingdom status (re-emphasized in 25:31-46 as a major criterion of final judgement). The narrative polarization between the gathering of ἐκκλησία μου and the gatherings of συναγωγαί αὐτῶν grows.

In Mt 19:1ff Jesus reverses his lifelong flight from Jerusalem and looks ahead to his suffering. His presence in the Temple provokes an escalating series of conflicts with his opponents which culminate in his

condemnation of the Jewish leaders, rejection of Jerusalem, physical/symbolic withdrawal of divine presence from the Temple, Jerusalem and Israel, and prediction of the Temple's destruction. The story has come back full circle to Mt 2 with judgement pronounced on the leaders of God's people, who even then rejected God's agent of divine presence among them. In the table fellowship of Mt 26, Jesus being "with" the disciples (μετά 9x) gains definition beyond the physical - he models the key symbols for their ongoing faith in and celebration of his presence in the post-resurrection ἐκκλησία.

The narrative close (27:51-28:20) provides a careful summary of themes and thorough evocation of the story's beginnings. The Jewish leaders remain consistent to the end, blindly opposed to God's presence and power among them. In the critical finale of 28:16-20, the risen Jesus gathers his followers to the Galilee mountaintop; the disciples are obedient, restored and worshipful, and yet doubtful of his risen presence. The risen Jesus reassures them with his authority, issues a world-wide commission, and declares his divine presence in the first-person voice of Yahweh.

This final rhetorical structuring brings the narrator, Jesus, disciples and implied reader into temporal and ideological alignment at the end. The commission is thus a beginning and ending; Jesus' command and presence is applicable both to disciples and readers. The fundamental conflicts and characterizations of the story carry over into the post-narrative world, but the disciples can now minister as Jesus' emissaries in the divine authority of his risen presence. The finale's open-ended dialogue, temporal unboundedness and unfulfilled commissioning connect the story to the readers' own contexts, so that Jesus' ongoing teaching and ministry, and the texts' structures, point of view and unresolved tensions call for their completion of the story within their own contexts.

The Setting

Ancient Israel and early Judaism grappled not so much with the existence of God as with the special places and conditions for human encounter with divine immanence. For the people of the Jewish scriptures Yahweh's presence was not simply a by-product of the covenant, but a gift which preceded it, and hence the very reason for their existence. Yahweh's presence was the foundational blessing for his people to discover. His

dwelling among them had to be faithfully maintained; nothing could take place for his people apart from it.

Israel's central quest to establish and maintain the presence of God was formed out of its various stages of experience, and was expressed in diverse paradigms, under which lie a fundamental unity. The patriarchal stories of clan god and clan father provided a foundation for understanding divine call and accompanying "witness". Sinai supplied Israel's primary pattern of presence, forever after told, retold and celebrated. All of Israel's life somehow originated at the mountain of God. Yahweh's Sinai presence brought Moses, election, Torah, covenant and the tent shrine. At Sinai Israel learned that divine presence is personal and holy; it attracts and repels. Yahweh's presence and his people's disobedience are incompatible, and reconcilable only with Moses' mediation. At the mountain Israel found itself in the revelation of Yahweh's presence, and thereafter sought to maintain his presence in its midst, and to regularize ^{by} cultic ^{means} the encounter. Yahweh's presence became their origin, survival, identity and *raison d'être* (Ex 33:16; Ezek 37:28).

Jerusalem and the kings brought a paradigm shift to accommodate new socio-political realities. Sinai and Jerusalem presence had a fundamental continuity, for Yahweh's call, covenant and dwelling among his people remained central convictions. But new concerns arose, and different (and sometimes competing) rationales for Yahweh's presence with Israel developed around Jerusalem and the Temple. Prophets like Jeremiah and Micah fought strongly the view of Jerusalem as Yahweh's guarantee of divine security and blessing, and the Deuteronomists recast Yahweh's personal dwelling as the dwelling of his name in the Temple.

With the upheaval of the Temple's loss, the exile and reconstruction, divine presence remained central to the Israel of both Palestine and the diaspora, but was reinterpreted. Ezekiel and the Priestly composers spoke of Yahweh's "glory" as the mode of his presence. Tension arose between the conviction and promise of Yahweh's dwelling amidst his people, and their immediate experience. The tension grew into an increased wrestling over the interplay of divine immanence and transcendence, with impact for Jewish understandings of history, theology and eschatological hope. Various texts witness development of other means of expressing divine immanence, e.g., Shekinah and Sophia, while maintaining holy divine transcendence. Periphrastic language for divine encounter and holy presence increased,

along with mediating powers, and growth in eschatological longings, in the midst of diverse growth in Judaisms.

The "I am with you/God is with us" saying stands as a remarkably consistent formulaic expression of divine presence in the Jewish scriptures. Its dominant appearance within narrative-heilsgeschichtlich contexts agrees with its application of concrete "help" vocabulary to personal situations of individual leaders and to Israel's corporate community, and occasionally to "outsiders". The formula functions as an important description, promise or anticipation of Yahweh's saving immanence, retrospectively and immediately, "with" his people.

The Author

Matthew inherited directly this central and evolving quest after divine presence in Judaism, and its central paradigms, and found in Jesus a new paradigm for the old quest, and discovered a bold personification of the divine "I am with you" formula. As the heir apparent to these traditions, Matthew's commentators have always pondered his Jesus, mountains and sermons for their reflections of Moses, Sinai and Torah. But Matthew's clearest legacy came from Israel's core emphasis on Yahweh as the "I am with you" liberator, and the completely pervasive nature of the exodus tradition in Israel, which emphasized Yahweh's active role in history.¹ And the Emmanuel Messiah Jesus took on this role in the history of God's people in Matthew. His presence as divine liberator described in 1:21-23 stands in continuity with the exodus paradigm and the language of the "with you" formula.

Likewise, the importance of divine presence in Mt 1-2 climaxes with inclusio, as the key legitimizing factor for, and manifestation of, Jesus' risen authority in Mt 28:18-20. Where in Ex 33 "the issue of Yahweh's presence is enmeshed in the issue of Moses' vocation",² in Matthew, God's presence is the issue of Jesus' vocation. Matthew reflects a new struggle, and he reorients the Jewish questioning after the where and how of God's presence and absence, to focus upon the risen Jesus and his followers. In answer to his readers' quest for divine presence Matthew replies with the risen Emmanuel Messiah, who brings divine authority and presence into the midst of his people, who are now to be gathered from all nations.

¹See further Spurling, "Religion", pp.21, 29.

²Brueggemann, "Crisis", p.65.

That which appears as a clear rhetorical motif within Matthew's story, and as a dominant heilsgeschichtlich motif in the literature around Matthew, surfaces as an editorial priority for the evangelist. From a redactional perspective Matthew's "key" presence passages (1:22f; 18:20; 28:20) prove not to be isolated instances of interest in divine presence, performing mere stylistic inclusio, or depending only on μετá language. In each case these are Matthew's own final, considered theological reflections and christological assessments of Jesus.

For example, rather than hiccups which interrupt the reading of the narrative, Mt 1:23 and other formula quotations are carefully placed keys to the Gospel's redactional design, signalling the story's interpretive framework. Redactionally, Jesus' identification as Emmanuel-"God with us" is one of four main theological themes in Mt 1-2, intertwined with Davidic sonship, divine sonship and his messianic mission to "his people". And in his "God with us" translation of Emmanuel, Matthew has deliberately reintroduced the Hebrew meaning of the name, lost to Greek speakers, and explicitly made Jesus' messiahship the new expression of Yahweh's OT presence.

Jesus' rhetorical inversion of first-last kingdom criteria in Mt 18, where normal human social hierarchies are turned on their head, is also supported as a redactional theme. Mt 18:20 appears as one of four significant εἰμι utterances by Jesus in Matthew - all with overtones of the presence motif. How will Jesus be present "in their midst"? - as a child, one of the μικροί; when his followers gather to reconcile, bind and loose, agree and pray together; with authority; but also in the future, undefined and rhetorically open, in Jesus' radical fulfilment of the Yahweh *Mitsein* paradigm.

Mt 28:16-20 stands as a key redactional text within Matthew. It summarizes, draws together, and highlights the Gospel with its language, themes and style. They mark the pericope as his own literary finale, and as his special concluding manifesto. Jesus' final promise of presence is wholly Matthean redactionally and theologically, the most dramatic and pregnant 'I am' saying of the Synoptics. It connects the risen Jesus to the building of his future ἐκκλησία, by means of his bold embodiment of the first person utterance of Yahweh: "I am with you", now extended "always, to the end of the age".

In character, 28:16-20 is a paradigmatic, somewhat 'supra-historical' text, embodying less emotion and less interest in historical details and

phenomena than the narration of Jesus' death, and the women at the tomb. The passage is open-ended - there is no farewell, Jesus does not leave, and he specifically promises to remain. This passage is to address all time - the entire future of his ἐκκλησία. The narrative and post-narrative worlds are linked by his presence: the readers, Jesus, characters and narrator meet.

Thus 28:16-20 functions as the transition point in the continuum between the earthly and risen Jesus. These two horizons of Matthew have been apparent at various points within the story, but here they are enlarged (παύς, 4x). Authority is a major element in linking the two sides of the continuum (11:25-27; 28:18), as is worship of Jesus. The cosmic proportions of Jesus' authority (v.18b), enables him to command a world-wide mission, to mandate his earthly teaching as required learning for all new followers, and to speak as Yahweh of his own divine presence.

Some Implications

This attempt to respect the rhetorical qualities and redactional features of Matthew does not in the end require an artificial synthesis of structural, historical and theological elements, but agreement appears in several areas.

The story's centripetal focus on Jesus agrees with Matthew's redactional heightening of christology. As the embodiment of God's presence, in Matthew it is Jesus around whom his people gather (συνάγω), not on a mountain, or in the Temple. As noted earlier, Terence Donaldson has found that Matthew's Jesus replaces Zion as the centre, for both Jews and gentiles, of eschatological fulfilment. This is the reality of the centripetal force of Jesus' presence throughout and following the story. That which draws the magi at the beginning only foresees the gathering of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη anticipated at the end. Unlike Luke, Jesus in Matthew has replaced Jerusalem and the Temple as the focus of eschatological fulfilment and saving events, and the locus of God's presence. Hence Jesus' threats of the Temple's destruction and promise of rebuilding do have in mind the long-awaited Jewish promise of Zion's restoration, but will be answered according to Matthew through the fulfilled commission, with the gathering of the ἐκκλησία not to Zion, but to Jesus, who is himself Emmanuel.

To use later Christian language, the presence motif in Matthew can also be seen as the "grace" pole of the grace-works spectrum. Matthew has been

accused of being the 'Gospel of works', with its emphasis on **ἔργον**, parallel to the traditions of the Sinai covenant, using the eschatological hammer to coerce obedience, thereby threatening to make Jesus and his teaching out to be a mechanism for the dispensation of rewards and punishments. But Jesus' presence also becomes a note of grace, the transcendent God's gift of immanence in his Emmanuel Messiah, which corresponds more closely to the mystery and eternal unconditionality of Zion. Matthew is not necessarily thereby dichotomized into the spiritual experience of divine presence and **ἐντολαί** - grace and works, but affirms both simultaneously and codependently. Hence Matthew maintains Israel's two-sided biblical relationship between God and his people; upholding "both activity and passivity as proper postures for both partners".³ Presence, obedience, and the **ἐκκλησία** each presupposes the others, and they are interdependent. That precedent paradox which lies at the heart of Jewish spirituality has been carried through by Matthew into the new age inaugurated by the Emmanuel Messiah amidst his **ἐκκλησία**, even as Jesus newly expresses the immanence of the transcendent Yahweh.

Matthew's presence motif involves a narrative and theological movement from theocentricity in Mt 1-2 to christocentricity in 28:16ff; from numerous manifestations of divine immanence with the people of God as the Emmanuel Messiah as introduced in Mt 1-2, to the risen Jesus as the christological focus of divine presence in the final commissioning; from the narrator's "God with us" to Jesus' "I am with you". This movement entails the dramatic transfer of **ἐξουσία** to Jesus, practised throughout his ministry, highlighted in 11:27 and fully bestowed in 28:18. As Crosby and others have asserted, this **ἐξουσία** is the symbol and reality of Jesus' abiding power among his disciples. The risen Jesus' authoritative presence is the basis for all exercise of human authority in the **ἐκκλησία**. The challenge to Jesus' followers in Mt 28:16-20 is to move beyond their struggles with **ὀλιγοπιστία**, deepen their faith, and find empowerment in the divine **ἐξουσία** of Jesus' presence. The doubt of the earthly disciples follows them to the final scene, so that Jesus' reassuring presence and **ἐξουσία** stands for all readers as the recurring invitation to abandon their doubt, move beyond their need for Jesus' earthly persona, and worship and live in his abiding presence.⁴

³So Levenson, "Temple", pp.50f, in application to Israel's temple worship.

⁴Cf. Crosby, *House*, p.81, further p.98.

Matthew's inheritance of the Sinai presence paradigm again comes to mind, as well as the doubtful response of recipients in many Hebrew commissioning stories. Moses' request to see Yahweh's glory (Ex 33:18, *פָּנֵי*)⁵ and Yahweh's reply with the affirmation of his presence continues to echo the original sequence of doubt and reassurance in Ex 3-4. The Moses of Ex 33:18 reflects the popular desire for majestic phenomena, a secure vision, a cultic guarantee of divine presence, somewhat like the disciples in Mt 28:17, while the divine reflections of Ex 33:19-23 and Mt 28:18b-20 function as the proper correctives of these misconceptions. Presence in both Exodus and Matthew is assured through the personal divine word of promise, in anticipation of future experience of presence, and not as religious certitude.

Where does this leave Matthew's reader? We have seen that the disciples and the 'church' behind Matthew's Gospel cannot be simply identified, nor can the implied reader and disciples. Along with receiving Jesus' and the narrator's ideological point of view, and the position of the story's characters in relation to him, since Mt 1:1ff the implied reader has received from the narrator a knowledge of Jesus which is *superior* to that of the disciples in the story; he alone is able to judge what it truly means to follow Jesus. In being the only one to receive the full impact of the Gospel's narrative rhetoric, the implied reader is 'with' Jesus more than any of his followers in the story, as is the actual reader who takes up this role. Thus it is through obedient disciples and readers that the tensions of the Gospel are to be resolved - "his people" are formed as readers respond in obedience at the end of the story. The story's rhetorical agenda is successful, and Jesus' future promises of presence with his *ἐκκλησία* come to fulfilment, in the midst of readers-become-followers gathered in his name.

In Mt 28:16-20 the implied reader is challenged to obey Jesus' teaching and follow him as the model for discipleship.⁶ Jesus' commission in 28:19f looks retrospectively over his entire teaching ministry (*πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην*) and thus achieves literary closure for the Gospel. And because the *inclusio* formed between 1:23 and 28:20 causes convergence of the

⁵Cf. Ex 16:7; 24:16; 40:34f; Nu 14:10.

⁶For Jesus as the ultimate exemplar of discipleship in Matthew see Meier, *Vision*, pp.67-74; Bauer, *Structure*, pp.57-63; Howell, *Story*, pp.251-9.

narrator's (1:23) and Jesus' declarations of divine presence (28:20), the implied reader is made a recipient of his final promise.

To borrow Matthew's own language, each reader is to become a final redactor or γραμματεύς, be "discipled for the Kingdom of heaven", and take up the challenge to "bring from their treasure" both the "old" (Matthew's story) and the "new" (their contemporary situation), and continue interpreting and writing the story of Jesus for their post-narrative world (13:52). The reader is called to concrete application, to the προᾶξις (16:27) of adopting Matthew's and Jesus' system of values, joining horizons and interpreting the way of Jesus, in other words, the active hermeneutical exercise which is "inseparable from the wider social relations between writers and readers".⁷ In story form, Matthew calls the reader to follow his model of discipleship, reshaped to fit the new situation of the generation after Jesus.

This explains the lack of completion and open-ended structure of Matthew's climax. Matthew's paradigm of presence has the parameters outlined above, but inside those parameters sets no rigid requirements. Jesus' earthly presence with his disciples is only a preliminary model for post-resurrection experiences. Key passages in Matthew place the presence motif in primary relation not to the activities of the earthly disciples in the story, but to their anticipated ministry in the post-narrative world: "Emmanuel" as a future recognition by "his people" (1:23); the prospective ἐκκλησία principles concerning the μικροί, discipline, forgiveness, prayer and gathering (Mt 18); the coming supper celebrations of his salvation and presence (26:18ff); the eschatological drinking of the cup in the Kingdom (26:29); the commands to baptize, teach and make disciples (Mt 28:19f). In all of these, the image of Jesus "with them", "in their midst", is an anticipation of a post-Easter, authoritative divine presence yet to be experienced or thoroughly understood and defined.

Along with Matthew's character as a story anticipating completion beyond itself, does Matthew also end on a note of rhetorical subversion with its ambiguous language about presence? Are the readers' expectations subverted? After all, what is presence at the end of Matthew? - not the authoritative magnificent activities of the anointed Messiah king, the divine Son of God, but the spoken promise of empowerment and of Jesus' divine "withness" to a group of doubting disciples; not convincing

⁷Eagleton, *Theory*, pp.205f; also in Crosby, *House*, p.45.

theophanic phenomena, but identification with the μικροί. Jesus' resurrection is powerful, but the irony is strong: God manifests his divine authority and presence not in Jerusalem, but in Galilee; not on a throne, but on a cross and in an empty tomb; not in the capital city with political and military strength, but on a wilderness mountain with teaching and healing; not in divine appearances, but through future "gatherings" of followers; not in power and wealth, but in poverty and humility; not in alliance with the power-brokers, but with the little guys; not with the thousands, but with "two or three"; not in the Temple, but in his risen Son. The son of Abraham, son of David, Emmanuel Lord Messiah in the end naturally looks a little questionable to his closest followers, despite his claim to "all authority in heaven and earth".

At the end of the story the Jerusalem leaders remain in power, in control of Israel, and able to convince the people of their version of Jesus' story (28:11-15). The end of Matthew is thus the continuation of the struggle, more than the triumphant end to the story. The base of Yahweh's salvation has shifted dramatically since Mt 1, when perhaps a more 'traditional' episode in Israel's story of salvation was expected by the reader. Despite elements of continuity (the law - as redefined by Jesus - and Scriptures; Yahweh's presence, and will to deliver his people), the elements of discontinuity stand in sharp relief (geography, ethnicity and the redefinition of God's people; Jesus as personal embodiment of God's presence and salvation; the new gathering (ἐκκλησία) *versus* the old (συναγωγή); the role of women; etc.).

But herein also lies the story's true inversion of the socio-religious status quo: Jesus (with all authority in heaven and earth) is most present with the little ones. This contradiction is key to the story from the beginning: in Mt 1-2 the picture of the infant Son fleeing Herod and Jerusalem, and Jesus' parents running for his life from the city and environs, stands a little askew with the angel's and narrator's claims, that he is the Christ, the Son, Emmanuel, who will save his people.

The potential for modern application of this inversion is great. Readers of Matthew today are called to a conversion which requires obedience to his radical form of justice, humility and spirituality.⁸ Mt 25:31-46,

⁸Stephen Barton shows in his forthcoming treatment that the sense of God's presence is the starting point for spirituality in Matthew. He ties together spiritual formation in Matthew with the dominant elements of the presence motif, and finds that spirituality in the First Gospel is something

for example, is not about determining who precisely are the sheep and goats, the just and unjust, and the least brothers. It is about Jesus' surprising presence with the poor, and the responsibility incumbent on each of his followers to exercise self-forgetful righteousness and respond to the needs of any neighbour.

The implications of such an inversion of human status through Jesus' divine presence are social, economic and religious, and they call for individual and corporate conversion to Matthew's holistic form of spirituality. Although Matthew did not anticipate today's global crises, concretizing the ethics implicit in his presence motif certainly impacts a whole variety of injustices in current socio-economic institutions and relations. Jesus' "Truly I tell you, just as you did/did not do it to one of the least of these (my brothers), you did/did not do it to me" (25:40, 45) deliberately jolts his audience from their self-contentment, with a new awareness of his presence in the unexpected. Today that shock, if truly registered, goes to the heart of our post-industrial society and its various addictions, often fed without regard for human and environmental costs, and frequently victimizing our contemporary world's μικροί.⁹

The understanding of the presence of Jesus in Matthew, as having social, economic and religious impact on the communities of his followers, also holds a profound challenge for today's religious institutions. The church's presence in our contemporary society often appears indistinguishable from society itself, rendering impotent any social or economic critique from that church. Matthew's concern for the "little ones" was also a concern for those called scribes, Bible teachers and leaders of the Christian ἐκκλησία (23:8-12), whose abuse of authority and Jesus' "last-first" inversion undermines their communities as the place of Jesus' presence.¹⁰ Hence, when it lives by and mirrors the predominant economic and social attitudes of today's marketplace, the church ceases to be Jesus' inverted gathering, in solidarity with the poor, proclaiming the justice of the Kingdom. It can no longer claim the presence of Jesus as its basis for authority.

learned by being with Jesus in total commitment to discipleship and the ἐκκλησία.

⁹See Korten's *21st Century* for analysis of dehumanizing poverty, collapsing ecological systems and deeply stressed social structures. These global phenomena now require rapid religious, social, economic and political paradigm shifts to prevent irreversible human and social deterioration. Cf. Crosby, *House*, pp.252-62, for a discussion of First World society's cultural addictions.

¹⁰See also Garland, *Intention*, pp.214f.

In his day, Matthew's answer was faith and the advent of Jesus' presence. To the sins and addictions of his society, he offered the Messiah who comes as "God with us" to save "his people" (1:21-23). To those anxious and fearful over money, food and clothing, Jesus offered his personal comfort and vision of God's Kingdom and justice (6:24-34). To the frequent "little faith" of his disciples, required to meet many needs with few resources, walk on water, perform wonders and remain faithful in death's valley, he brought empowerment and ability in his authoritative presence (cf. 14:15-21; 22-33; 15:32-38; 17:14-20; 26:36-56). To the leaders of his gathered people, riven by quarrels over Kingdom status, in need of forgiveness and reconciliation, he showed the humility of a child and brought his humble presence among them to serve and champion the needs of the little ones, and to provide his heavenly authority for the ἐκκλησία to reconcile, bind and loose, and agree and pray together (16:18f; 18:1-20). To the poor and marginalized he offered himself, identifying their presence and needs as his own, and as the very heart of his mission (11:4f; 18:5f; 19:21; 25:31-46). And to his obedient, doubtful followers on the final mountain, his divine, Yahwistic presence was both a lasting promise, and a binding call to build his ἐκκλησία through the extension of his mission beyond Israel.

The application of Matthew's paradigm of presence is difficult. The sheep and goats and least brothers and sisters of Matthew's eschatological judgement scene prove hard to identify in any historical moment. Jesus' promises of presence can easily be drowned by voices much louder. Jesus as empowering divine presence can then be reduced to a subject only for quiet academic study in theological faculties. But to the degree that Matthew's paradigm of presence becomes the experience of God's people today, they can know and practise an ἐξουσία greater than the seemingly dominant forces around them.

EXCURSUS 1. The Divine Point of View: Theocentricity in Mt 1-2

Jack Kingsbury has argued in a number of places¹ that it is God's evaluative point of view that has been established by the implied author as "normative" in Matthew, and in all four Gospels. This is an important but misleading statement, which requires several cautionary notes.

(1) In narrative terms, God is not a character in the story of the First Gospel, so much as an assumed reality, and as such is not in Uspensky's scheme a possible vehicle of the ideological point of view internal to the work. God does not "enter the world of Matthew's story as an 'actor'" with the events of Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, as Kingsbury claims;² in 3:17 and 17:5 the reader hears only a heavenly voice. Kingsbury's statement voids the theological subtlety of Matthew's narrative world, where the dialectic of divine immanence and transcendence has gained a new potency and expression through the narrator's nuanced presentation of Jesus in terms of divine presence. For the implied reader divine activity is always implicit or at least "mediated" in Matthew, and made "visible" in the story in terms of the Holy Spirit, angels, dreams, scriptural prophecy, and divine passives (1:20ff; 2:12, 13, 19, 22; 3:16; 4:1; etc), and articulated through the narrator's and characters' interpretations of events, and ultimately through the presence of Jesus.

(2) Kingsbury has turned the proper sequence on its head:

the evaluative point of view that Matthew ascribes to himself as narrator or to any given character is to be adjudged true or false depending upon whether it aligns itself with, or contravenes, the evaluative point of view of God.³

This statement does not reflect the narrative task but the theologian's impulse to give priority to the divine perspective. But in terms of narrative structure, the Matthean narrator's ideological point of view and "god-like" omniscience, omnipresence and omnicompetence (narrative

¹*Christology*, pp.47-50; "Probe", pp.4-7; *Story*, p.34; also echoed by Weaver, "Discourse", pp.88f.

²"Probe", p.12.

³*Story*, p.34.

categories which even Jesus does not necessarily display in the story) must remain the reader's starting point, and hence "normative". Kingsbury appears to misunderstand as theological the technical terms "omniscience" and "omnipresence" when applied to the narrator and Jesus, commenting that Matthew's narrator does not exercise either view with regard to God, his abode, or his mind.⁴ But if these are not explicit concerns of the story, the narrator can hardly be held responsible for knowledge in this area; Matthew's narrator is properly omniscient and omnipresent within the boundaries of the story.

Narrators are omniscient to the degree that they are able to give the reader inside views which no observer would have... It is pointless to speculate about what the narrator does not know or knows but doesn't tell us. The extent of the narrator's knowledge can only be assessed from what the reader is told.⁵

(3) To claim that in Matthew, or in any Gospel,

"it is God's evaluative point of view that has been established by the implied author as normative"⁶

is to confound the entire issue as to what "God's evaluative point of view" might actually be in the story. The point is that in Matthew both protagonist and antagonists, both Jesus and his opponents, claim to be aligned with the divine point of view. Hence a different Matthew could have been written wherein the narrator aligned himself with the Jewish leaders and adopted their point of view, making Jesus the opponent, and their rejection and crucifixion of him justifiable! Even in this scenario Kingsbury's statement would not change - God's evaluative point of view would still be normative, but now as articulated by the Jewish leaders.⁷ But the narrator chooses to align himself with Jesus' point of view, and with his interpretation of the Father's point of view. By accepting his or her role in the fictional contract, the implied reader buys into the

⁴Story, p.32; so also Weaver, *Discourse*, pp.34f, who expands this limitation to Satan.

⁵Culpepper, *Anatomy*, p.21. See Anderson, "Over Again", pp.79-87; Howell, *Story*, p.175. Similarly, Jesus' acknowledgement of his limited knowledge in Mt 24:36 ("concerning that day and hour no one knows") does not constitute a contradiction of his narrative omniscience (contra Anderson, "Over Again", p.85); the narrator's complex inside views of Jesus remain reliable and consistent in terms of the story world.

⁶Kingsbury, *Story*, p.34 n.118.

⁷Recently Howell, *Story*, pp.176f n.3, has also shown support for this observation. He appeals to Lanser's summary of the fact that psychological affinity between narrator and characters ultimately depends on the narrator's portrayal of any character; see Lanser, *Act*, pp.214f.

narrator's (and Jesus') interpretation of the divine stand-point, and comes to believe in Jesus' own claims to divine alignment, over against those of his opponents.

Similarly, citation of scripture is not automatically the expression of God's evaluative point of view,⁸ for the narrator, Jesus, the opponents, and the devil all cite scripture, but the narrator makes normative *his own ideological point of view* when portraying Jesus as the fulfilment of prophecy.

If narratively incorrect, the impulse behind Kingsbury's assertions can be restated theologically in terms of the *theocentric* orientation of Mt 1-2. For all the christologically specific language of Mt 1-2, it is remarkable that Jesus is the subject of only one active verb, σώσει (1:21), and this in reference to his future ministry. Otherwise Jesus is subordinate to the actions of others. His birth is cast in the (divine) passive (γενάω: 1:16,20; 2:1,4; τίκτω: 2:2) and he is the object of worship (προσκυνέω: 2:2,8,11), of searching and finding (ἐξετάζω, εὕρισκω: 2:8; ζητέω: 2:13), he is given gifts (προσφέρω: 2:11), and is taken by Joseph to Egypt and back (παραλαμβάνω: 2:13,21).

The corollary of Jesus' "passive" status in Mt 1-2⁹ is that God is, if only by inference, actively engaged in Matthew's prologue; Jesus appears on the scene and is kept there purely through the immanent activity of Yahweh: preparing, creating, and protecting. This initial theocentric orientation of the narrative is part of the narrator's deliberate establishment of a functional and relational continuity between Yahweh and Jesus, already highlighted in the narrator's citation in 2:15: "Ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου". Through Jesus, Yahweh inaugurates the era of fulfilment, and in the shift from the introductory section of the narrative frame to the story in 3:1ff, Jesus' designations (son of Abraham and David, Christ, Emmanuel, "my son", etc), passively received, become actively expressed in his mission. The prologue is therefore theocentric, while its christology is

⁸So Kingsbury, *Story*, p.35.

⁹Passivity on Jesus' part in Mt 1-2 is more than the obvious consequence of his limitations as an infant. In the prologue to the Fourth Gospel the author utilizes an "active" role in the establishment of Jesus' origins and the narrative framework of his story. Matthew chooses rather to contrast the helpless infant messiah to the powerful political and religious forces of his world and thereby establish clearly the necessity of his intimate and dependent relationship to Yahweh; thus he employs passivity to emphasize the theocentricity of Jesus' mission to save his people.

purely anticipatory, and this shift further supports the identification of Mt 1-2 as the story's narrative framework. As a description of Jesus' origins Mt 1-2 is thus a careful act of narrative contextualization, not merely christological but *theological* in orientation.

EXCURSUS 2. "Then Jesus began..."

Note the similarities between 11:20 and the two "formulas" of 4:17 and 16:21, which two Kingsbury claims provide the tripartite structure with its critical pivots:

4:17 ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρύσσειν καὶ λέγειν
 11:20 τότε ἤρξατο ὀνειδίζειν τὰς πόλεις
 16:21 ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς δεικνύειν τοῖς μαθηταῖς

Although 11:20 does not contain the preposition "from", its parallelism is otherwise complete: adverb "then" + finite verb "(Jesus) began" + complimentary infinitive + a summary of the content of the message.¹⁰

If 4:17 and 16:21 are "remarkable" because they are asyndetic (Bauer, p.85), the same must be said of 11:20; it too is asyndetic. Why asyndeton is so significant here for Kingsbury and Bauer is mysterious, however. Although the construction ἀπὸ τότε is rare (Mt 4:17; 16:21; 26:16; Lk 16:16), τότε is extremely common in Matthew (89x; Mk: 6x; Lk: 14x; Jn: 10x; NT: 159x). Of the 89 occurrences of τότε in Matthew, 78 are asyndetic; *the adverb itself* functioning in each case as the connective. τότε does more than designate new pericopes in Matthew; it is a strong plot device signalling both temporal and causal connectivity.¹¹

It is possible to argue that τότε ἤρξατο in 11:20 is as pregnant with meaning as is ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο in 4:17 and 16:21. In Mt 11 the motif of rejection arises in earnest and in 11:20 Jesus, for the first time, takes on the role of judge and refiner, the one who baptizes ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί (3:11). John the Baptist's expectations are first met here in the very context in which his doubts are expressed (11:2-6). Jesus has completed his first Galilean tour, called the Twelve and established the core identity of his people, and now begins the public separation of "sheep and goats".

¹⁰Bauer, *Structure*, p.85.

¹¹Contra Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p.352. See Theissen, *Stories*, pp.198ff; McNeile, "Tote", pp.127f; Howell, *Story*, p.112.

Thus 11:20 demonstrates the expression of a new stage in Jesus' life and ministry, comparable to 4:17 and 16:21. This is not to assert for it, however, a structural significance on par with the claims made about 4:17 and 16:21, but to point out again the need to modify that tripartite structural thesis, and to question the elevation of any particular thesis of structure in favour of reading the Gospel by means of the natural drama of its story development.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</i> , ed. Pritchard
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testament
ATR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
AusBR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
BAGD	Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker: <i>Lexicon</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	Brown-Driver-Briggs, <i>Lexicon</i>
BET	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BETS	<i>Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BLS	Bible and Literature Series, Almond Press
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BVC	<i>Bible et vie chrétienne</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CBNT	Coniectanea biblica, New Testament
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
DBSup	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément</i>
EBib	Études Bibliques
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ET	English Translation
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
ExpT	<i>Expository Times</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FFNT	Foundations and Facets: New Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HKNT	Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>

ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> , ed. G.A. Buttrick, et al.
IDBSup	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume</i> , ed. K. Crim, et al.
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
ITQ	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSS	JSNT Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSS	JSOT Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JTSA	<i>Journal of Theology: Southern Africa</i>
KEKNT	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LB	<i>Linguistica Biblica</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
NCIB	New Clarendon Bible
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	<i>Novum Testamentum Supplements</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NRT	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i> (Tournai)
NT	New Testament
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTL	New Testament Library
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTSR	New Testament for Spiritual Reading
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBS	Oxford Bible Series
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , ed. J.H. Charlesworth
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RThPh	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SBEC	Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBM	Stuttgarter biblische Monographien
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
ScrMin	Scripta minora
SE	<i>Studia Evangelica</i> 1, 2, 3 (= TU 73, 87, 88, etc.)
SJ	<i>Studia Judaica</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
ST	<i>Studia theologica</i>

TD	Theologische Dissertationen
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
TGl	<i>Theologie und Glaube</i>
ThD	<i>Theology Digest</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TIM	<i>Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew</i>, eds. G. Bornkamm, et al.
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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