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‘BEHOLD, THE ANGELS CAME AND SERVED HIM:’
A COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS OF ANGELS IN
MATTHEW

BY

KRISTIAN A. BENDORAITIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to elucidate the role angels play in the narrative of Matthew's Gospel by investigating how angel traditions have contributed to his portrait of Jesus. Angels have been significant in Christological research due to their primary function as messengers and mediators between heaven and earth. However, their role in the Gospel narratives has been largely unexplored. Matthew, in particular, demonstrates a noteworthy interest in angels through the handling of his sources, his redaction, and addition of unique material. Utilizing the Old Testament and sources from the Second Temple period to illustrate the variety of angel traditions, this study seeks to identify how these traditions are reflected in Matthew's Gospel and to interpret the passages in which angels appear or are represented. As a result, the majority of this study consists of a detailed exegesis of the passages that specifically mention angels. Each reference is critically analyzed in view of its role in the Gospel's narrative and in light of Matthew's redactional hand. In addition, discussion of relevant traditions of angels accompanies each chapter in order to illustrate how Matthew's use of angels has facilitated his Gospel's message. The thesis concludes that Matthew's narrative includes angel traditions for three reasons. First, through his emphasis on the angels' agency, Matthew advances his portrait of Jesus the Son of Man as an authoritative eschatological judge. Second, angels appear at significant moments in the narrative, expressing God's presence in the life of Jesus. Finally, angels contribute to the apocalyptic cosmology of Matthew's worldview.

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Declaration

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or in any other university for a degree.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient literature generally follow the conventions of Patrick H. Alexander, et al. (eds.), *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, MA, 1999). Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. In addition, translations from the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls respectively are from James H. Charlesworth, (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983) and Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, (eds.) *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols., Leiden: Brill, 1997). Finally, if there are multiple spellings for English words, this thesis adopts the version commonly accepted as the American spelling.

AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert Walter Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
HvTSt	Hervormde theologiese studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society

JLCRS	Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion Series
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NIDNTT	Brown, Colin, ed. <i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . Revised ed. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTS	New Testament Studies
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	Charlesworth, James H., ed. <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983.
RB	Revue biblique
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
ST	Studia Theologica
StudBib	Studia Biblica
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Chapter 1

Introduction

This study focuses on the ways that angel traditions shape Matthew's portrayal of Jesus and discipleship for the early church. My aim is to investigate the specific passages that refer to angels, paying close attention to their part in the narrative of Matthew through a careful analysis of the literary context and Matthew's redactional hand.¹ This provides evidence that Matthew has intentionally used angel traditions (1) to advance his portrait of Jesus as an authoritative eschatological judge and (2) to express God at work in the life of Jesus while (3) relying upon and contributing to Matthew's worldview.

Owing to their active participation in both the heavenly and earthly realms, angels have been particularly valuable figures for Christology. Their presence in Jewish and early Christian literature has caused many to speculate on the relationship between Jesus and angels. Initially, Jesus was perceived to be an angel, but later research gravitated towards Jesus' possession of angelic characteristics and descriptions with angelic imagery. However, angels also have their place in the narratives of the Gospels. In particular, the Gospel of Mathew seems to be interested in angels and often places angels and Jesus together in the same context. This suggests intentionality behind Matthew's portrayal of angels and a relationship worth investigating. In light of this, the remainder of this chapter will paint a backdrop from which to begin an examination of angels in Matthew. First, I will discuss the significance of angels and their place in Christological research. This will be followed by an explanation of the choice of Matthew for the context of this investigation, a description of the approach this thesis will take, and a brief overview of the exegetical section.

¹ Following convention, I will refer to the author of the Gospel as Matthew throughout the thesis.

For many, the idea of an angel is greatly influenced by the images of angels found in many Renaissance paintings with the halo, wings, and flowing garb. Notwithstanding the poor imitation of this image in contemporary porcelain figurines and cartoon characters perched on a cloud, the idea of an angel in the Old Testament, Second Temple literature and New Testament is very different.

The word ‘angel’ is the English translation of the Hebrew מַלְאָךְ and the Greek ἄγγελος and generally refers to a messenger.² The Greek and Hebrew terms can refer to both human and heavenly messengers, the latter of which is often thought of when the word ‘angel’ is used.³ For example, angels are part of the Second Temple Jewish and early Christian cosmology.⁴ More specifically, angels are found in the Old Testament⁵ and are prominent in much of the Jewish apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple period. In addition, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has further emphasized the role of angels in the culture surrounding the birth of the New Testament.⁶ Thus, an angel in this study will be defined as a heavenly being who is distinct both from God and from humans, serves God, executes his will, and will often mediate between the heavenly realm and humans.⁷

² In addition to these terms, there are varieties of terms that can also express an angel as well (e.g. sons of God, holy ones, host). Newsom, ‘Angels,’ in *ABD*, 1:248.

³ For example, Newsom’s article on angels in *ABD* almost exclusively discusses heavenly messengers. Newsom, ‘Angels,’ in *ABD*, 1:248-53.

⁴ Sullivan, *Wrestling*, 1.

⁵ For Matthew, the Old Testament traditions according to the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bible were important. This is most clear in his handling of Old Testament quotations and allusions, for which he shows familiarity with both the Septuagint and Hebrew Bible. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 29-33, and the extensive charts in 34-57. See also Gundry, *Old Testament*, 9-150. In particular, the similarities of and variations between the Septuagint and Hebrew Bible in some of the relevant angel of the Lord traditions (e.g. Exod 4:24; Num 22:22-35; Deut 32:8, 43; Judg 6:11-22) play a role in interpreting Matthew’s references to the angel of the Lord. This will be covered in more detail in the next chapter, which addresses the angel of the Lord in Matthew’s infancy narrative.

⁶ For example, see the works Davidson, *Angels*, Newsom, *SSS*.

⁷ Although there is some variance in how the definition is applied (see the following section on the history of scholarship), the definition is consistent across those studying angels. For example, see Carrell, *Jesus*, 14. (who is influenced by the work of Carr, *Principalities*.), Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, 27, Newsom, ‘Angels,’ in *ABD*, 1:248, Davidson, *Angels*, 21, n. 3. While Sullivan would not disagree with this definition, he also takes great care to explain the variety within the nomenclature of what might be considered an angel. Sullivan, *Wrestling*, 16-22. See also Freedman-Willoughby, Ringgren, and Fabry, ‘מַלְאָךְ’ in *TDOT*, 8:308-25.

The consequences of this definition for this study are twofold. First, it limits the study to celestial angels only, thereby excluding the human messenger. Within the Gospel, this places Matt 11:10 outside the limits of this investigation. In Matt 11:10, Exod 23:20 and Mal 3:1 are reflected in a Scriptural allusion concerning John the Baptist, 'See, I am sending my messenger [ἄγγελος] ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' In Exodus, the passage refers to the angel that goes ahead of the Israelites, 'I am going to send an angel in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.' However, the application of the 'messenger' in Exod 23 to Elijah in Mal 3:1 and 4:5 seems to be a stronger parallel to Matthew's understanding of John's role as the ἄγγελος who prepares the way of the Lord; 'if you are willing to accept it, he [John the Baptist] is Elijah who is to come' (Matt 11:14).⁸ Second, it focuses the study on Matthew's portrait of the connection between the divine and humans through heavenly beings. As a result, passages that address evil spirits and demons will not be discussed. Although their presence in Matthew contributes to the cosmology of his Gospel, their exclusion maintains the focus on Matthew's portrait of Jesus and heavenly angels. Consequently, the focus of this thesis provides the opportunity to contribute to the field of research on angels and their influence on Christology and New Testament interpretation.

1.1 History of New Testament Research on Angels

When Christopher Rowland begins his article on the influence of angelic categories for interpreting Revelation, he adeptly sets the context in which angels have contributed to New Testament theology.

The impact which Jesus of Nazareth made upon his followers was such that various ideas derived from contemporary religious and philosophical usage were employed to convey the significance of his person and work. All these ideas, in one way or another, were intended to impress upon readers and hearers the significant, indeed unique, status of Jesus in the relationship between God and man.⁹

⁸ Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:305, Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 10-11.

⁹ Rowland, 'Vision,' 1.

One of the ideas to which Rowland refers is the speculation on Jesus' relationship to angels. As heavenly beings that intermittently participate in earthly activities, angels have been a constant source of christological enquiry.¹⁰ In the past century, the topic has gained momentum.

Early in the twentieth century, Wilhelm Bousset approached the understanding of angels in Judaism through the influence of the Old Testament apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature.¹¹ He concludes that despite the abundance of the angels in broad circles, monotheism is affirmed; God continues to stand over against the angels in all his omnipotence and glory. However, he recognizes that there are two sides to the prominence of angels in the texts surveyed. Angels (*Mittelwesen*) are afforded a larger place in the faith of the people (*Volksglauben*). This, Bousset argues, likely played a larger role than appears in theology and literature, 'Man wird aber getrost behaupten dürfen, dass in der wildwachsenden Religion des Volkes die Engel eine noch viel stärkere Rolle spielten und der Glaube an sie noch viel wuchtiger und urwüchsiger auftrat als in der Theologie und der Literatur.'¹² In light of this, Bousset posits that a notion of angel worship (*Engelkult*) may be in the background. Although Bousset's conclusions have been critiqued, his interest in the prominence of intermediaries was indicative of the research on angels to come.¹³

One of the more notable contributions to the conversation of angels and Christology was the work of Martin Werner. In his book, *Die Entstehung des christlichen Dogmas*, he argued that early Christian belief about Jesus was an angel-Christology.¹⁴ Werner drew from traditions that saw the Son of Man as a heavenly being and stated that the title 'Lord' was also applicable to a certain class of angels.¹⁵ However, Werner's conclusion, which identified Christ as an angel,

¹⁰ Bakker investigates Josephus and the early church fathers (as well as Heb 1-2 and the Shepherd of Hermas) to argue that the title 'angel' was used for Christ by some Christians. Bakker, 'Christ,' 258-65. Similarly, Juncker demonstrates the value of referring to Christ as an angel among some of the early church fathers. His investigation avoids the ontological argument, and suggests the value of the title 'angel.' In this way, he sees the Old Testament theophanies as christophanies and thus the title angel as an inevitable development. Juncker, 'Reclamation,' 245-50. For a fuller discussion of angel Christology prior to Werner, see Carrell, *Jesus*, 98-111.

¹¹ Bousset and Gressmann, *Die Religion*, 321-29.

¹² Bousset and Gressmann, *Die Religion*, 329-30.

¹³ Hurtado and Stuckenbruck have both been critical of Bousset's notion of angel worship. Hurtado, *One*, 35-39, Stuckenbruck, *Veneration*, 5-14.

¹⁴ The English translation appeared in 1957.

¹⁵ Werner, *Formation*, 124-27.

received harsh criticism from Michaelis, who, publishing a year after Werner,¹⁶ confidently stated that there was no known angel Christology in early Christianity.¹⁷ Because of his severe critique, Werner's theories were almost entirely rejected.¹⁸

After Michaelis' response to Werner, the interest in the topic of angels was relatively quiet until Daniélou addressed it from a different perspective by redefining how angelic categories may have influenced understandings of Jesus for the early church.¹⁹ Investigating the appropriation of terms from Jewish angelology to speak of the Spirit and the Word, he argued for a different way of looking at the relationship between angels, the trinity, and Jesus in the New Testament.²⁰ Rather than argue for Jesus as an angel, Daniélou introduced the term 'angelomorphic,' by which terminology and imagery of angels borrowed from Judaism could be implemented to describe one as having the characteristics (or form) of an angel without possessing an angelic nature.²¹

Daniélou's proposal was accepted and developed by others who began to move from post-New Testament evidence to the possible influence of Jewish angelology on New Testament Christology.²² For example, Richard N. Longenecker argues in his book, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, that early Christian traditions (especially in Jewish Christian circles) included an angelic representation of Jesus.²³ After examining evidence in the Talmud, Philo, Origen,

¹⁶ See also McDonald for his critique of 'angel Christology' and those who seek to find Christ manifested in the Old Testament angel of the Lord. McDonald, 'Christology,' 335. Conversely, Fossum links Jesus to the angel of the Lord and argues that the reading, 'Jesus,' in Jude 5 is based on the figure of the angel of the Lord. Fossum, 'Kyrios,' 237.

¹⁷ Longenecker, 'Motifs,' 533, Hannah, *Michael*, 4. Gieschen is not as quick to accept all of Michaelis' critique, for he argues that just because there was a distinction between Jesus and angels, it does preclude the presence of an angelic description. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, 13.

¹⁸ Hannah, *Michael*, 5. Twenty years later, Werner's theories are still discussed, but also dismissed. For example, Dunn is very critical of the idea of Jesus being an angel, concluding his section on Christ as an angel with the statement that 'So far as we can tell then *no NT writer thought of Christ as an angel*,' (author's emphasis). Dunn, *Christology*, 149-58, esp. 58. However, Dunn has been criticized for oversimplifying the matter. For example, Hannah, *Michael*, 5, Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, 3-4, McDonald, 'Christology,' 325.

¹⁹ Daniélou, *Theology*. Published in 1958 and the English translation came out in 1964. Bousset and Werner do not represent the only research at this time. During the 1920's, Dix argued in a series of articles that Babylonian imagery was implemented for the Angel of the Lord as part of a school of doctrine that expected this angel to come as the messiah. Dix, 'Influence,' 241-56, Dix, 'Archangels,' 233, 44.

²⁰ Daniélou, *Theology*, 117.

²¹ Daniélou, *Theology*, 146.

²² Hannah, *Michael*, 6.

²³ Longenecker, *Christology*, 27-28. See also his article, Longenecker, 'Motifs,' 528-33.

Justin, and the angelology of the Dead Sea Scrolls, he applies his findings to Gal 4:14, Col 2:18 and Heb 1-2.²⁴ Similarly, Hengel's essay, *Son of God*, includes an examination of Jewish ideas of mediators and points to angelic figures as evidence of possible analogies to understand Jesus as the Son of God. Like Longenecker, Hengel does not suggest that this was *the* way Jesus was understood, but rather it was one of the possible ways in which early Christianity developed.²⁵

In the following year, Alan Segal published a monograph investigating rabbinic evidence of the heresy of the 'two powers in heaven', which Segal defines as 'interpreting scriptures to say that a principal angel or hypostatic manifestation in heaven was equivalent to God.'²⁶ With the supposition that Christianity was one of the early forms of this heresy, Segal looked at the rabbinic view of the rise of Christianity and Gnosticism and concluded that early Christians may have associated angels and exalted human figures with Jesus.²⁷ While Segal explored precedents for Christianity's affirmation of Jesus' divinity, Wesley Carr's monograph explains the background and meaning of αἱ ἀρχαὶ καὶ αἱ ἐξουσίαι in order to explain Jesus' relationship to these 'powers' in the writings of Paul. After examining the first century context of spiritual powers (namely, angels and demons) in both pagan and Jewish thought, Carr argues that the terms, αἱ ἀρχαὶ καὶ αἱ ἐξουσίαι, are more relevant to angels of God than to demonic forces.²⁸ When he reexamines Paul in light of this conclusion, he states that 'the Jewish background from which Christianity grew said much about angels and showed a growing concern with demons. The language, however, clearly demonstrates that the chief emphasis was upon angels as a means both of interpreting the activity of God among men and of extolling the Lordship of Yahweh.'²⁹

²⁴ Longenecker, *Christology*, 31.

²⁵ Hengel, *Son*, 89, Longenecker, *Christology*, 32.

²⁶ Segal, *Two Powers*, x.

²⁷ Segal, *Two Powers*, 208. While Margaret Barker's book does not appear until much later (1992), her work is similar to Segal's in that she sees two powers in heaven. However, Margaret Barker argues that Judaism before Christianity believed in a heavenly high court in which there were two great powers, the 'High God' and the greatest of the angels, Yahweh. Christianity, then, simply understood Jesus to be Yahweh, this other divine power in heaven. Barker, *Great Angel*. Hannah points out that this is simply another way of positing Werner's ideas that Jesus was an angel incarnate. Hannah, *Michael*, 11. Like Segal, Jarl Fossum also expressed interest in Gnosticism and, using traditions of the Angel of the Lord and Name of God, discusses Gnosticism's Jewish origins. Fossum, *Name*, 24.

²⁸ Carr, *Principalities*, 25-43, esp. 43.

²⁹ Carr, *Principalities*, 174.

Christopher Rowland also sensed the value of angelomorphic imagery and demonstrated an approach to Christology in Rev 1:13 beyond the use of titles.³⁰ In particular, he placed a strong relationship between the portrait of the risen Christ in Rev 1:12-18 and other angelic figures (e.g. Dan 10:5-9; Ezek 1:26-28; 8:2-4), and argued that the evidence of Jewish angelology in Revelation suggests its influence in the early strands of Christianity.³¹ However, Rowland clearly defines his approach as separate from angel Christology, and prefers to speak of it as angelomorphic for it 'in no way implies that Christ was identified entirely with the created order.'³²

In the same decade, Larry Hurtado published a short monograph, *One God, One Lord*, which sought to explain both the context and uniqueness of early Christianity's devotion to Jesus. He examines early precedents of divine agents within the Jewish setting (exalted patriarchs, principal angels, and personified attributes of God) for insight into early conceptions of Christ's divinity. Notably, Hurtado does not feel that angels are a suitable precedent for early Christology because they remain distinct from and subordinate to God.³³ Nevertheless, Hurtado argues that the category of the divine agents offered Christians a framework from which to understand the exalted Christ.³⁴ However, he concludes that these 'divine agents' fall short of a pre-Christian precedent for understanding Jesus' divinity. Instead, he proposes that the 'devotion' to Jesus (i.e. worship) is a Christian innovation, a 'mutation' of ancient Jewish monotheism.³⁵ Consequently, his emphasis on devotion helps distinguish between heavenly beings and God.³⁶ Similarly, Philip Davis also argues for Jesus' uniqueness amongst other heavenly beings. In an article, he examines traditions of mediators (using the same categories as Hurtado) to explore how elements of these traditions contribute to the New Testament portrait of Jesus. He concludes that while there are examples

³⁰ Rowland, 'Vision,' 1-2.

³¹ Rowland, 'Vision,' 11.

³² Rowland, 'Linen,' 100. Rowland also published, *Open Heaven*, a study on apocalyptic literature.

³³ Hurtado, *One*, 89.

³⁴ Hurtado, *One*, 46.

³⁵ Hurtado, *One*, 99-100.

³⁶ Hurtado's tome, *Lord Jesus Christ*, develops the ideas from *One Lord*, analyzing the early evidence of conviction, beliefs, and practices of devotion to Jesus. Hurtado, *Christ*.

of mediators that represent his previously defined kinds of mediation, only in Jesus are they consistently embodied.³⁷

The idea that angels were not venerated was challenged by Loren Stuckenbruck. In his monograph, he agreed with Hurtado's statement that no group centered their worship on angels, but Stuckenbruck argues that this does not exclude angels as simultaneously subjects of veneration and beings subordinate to God.³⁸ As a result, angel veneration could have provided a model from which to worship Jesus, a conclusion that Stuckenbruck applies to an analysis of Revelation.³⁹ Furthermore, the portrait of an angel's refusal of worship may also offer a subtle critique of any practice of angel worship. Comparatively, Jesus' acceptance of worship separates him from the category of angels (who cannot accept worship), despite his appearance in the form of an angel.⁴⁰

While Stuckenbruck focused on angel veneration, Peter Carrell developed Rowland's focus on angelomorphic imagery and examined the influence of Jewish angelology on Revelation's Christology. His study involved analysis of angelic figures (in Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel), principal angels, and angelomorphic figures before applying this to the portrait of Jesus in Revelation. With regard to principal angels and angelic figures, Carrell concluded that despite an angel's power, majesty, and proximity to God, this being was probably not worshipped or thought of as a second power in heaven prior to the end of the first century. Moreover, he saw little consistency with the identity of the chief angel and found no credible reason for a widespread speculation on an angel sharing equal status with God. Through his analysis of angelomorphic imagery and descriptions of Jesus, he argued that Revelation portrays Jesus in both the form and function of an angel while also conceiving of him as divine. For Carrell, although the boundaries of monotheism may be tested by some of the descriptions, the lines are not

³⁷ Davis, 'Mediators,' 503.

³⁸ Stuckenbruck, *Veneration*, 270.

³⁹ Stuckenbruck, *Veneration*, 272-73.

⁴⁰ Stuckenbruck, *Veneration*, 258-61, 71-72. Stuckenbruck also helped edit a collection of essays that investigated the contours of belief about Jesus in early Christianity with regard to monotheism. Stuckenbruck and North, eds., *Monotheism*. In his contribution to the volume, Stuckenbruck develops the ideas posited from his monograph, but with more concentration on the Jewish context. Stuckenbruck, 'Limits,' 45.

crossed, and monotheism is preserved and concurrently Jesus is presented gloriously to the church.⁴¹

While Carrell focused on angelomorphic imagery in Revelation, Crispin Fletcher-Louis explored angelomorphic traditions in Luke-Acts. While his monograph is the only other extensive analysis of angels in a gospel, his focus is on the appropriation of angelic categories in Luke-Acts. Rather than examine the presence of angels in the narrative, he applies angelomorphic traits to the earthly and risen Jesus as well as to the righteous.⁴² He argues that the righteous, including Jesus, exhibit a present angel-life, one that 'expresses itself in a privileged access to status and power.'⁴³ Through these categories, Luke-Acts is able to portray the heavenly characteristics of Jesus without compromising his divinity as well as anticipate the angelic life of the resurrected.

While Carrell and Fletcher-Louis focused on angelomorphic traditions in particular books (Rev and Luke-Acts), Charles Gieschen addressed the topic of angelomorphic Christology with a wider lens. He examined evidence of its development and appearance in early Christian texts, arguing that 'angelomorphic traditions, especially those growing from the Angel of the Lord traditions, had a significant impact on the early expressions of Christology to the extent that evidence of an Angelomorphic Christology is discernible in several documents dated between 50 and 150 CE.'⁴⁴ A year later, Darrel Hannah published his study on Michael and the archangel's influence on angelic Christology. While he admits that there is no firm evidence that Michael or principal angels traditions were essential in the development of early Christology, he concludes that these traditions contributed to the understanding of Christ in the New Testament and early Christian writings.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Carrell sums up his argument in the following manner, 'angelology has influenced the Christology of the Apocalypse in such a way that one of its important strands is an angelomorphic Christology which upholds monotheism while providing a means for Jesus to be presented in visible, glorious form to his church.' Carrell, *Jesus*, 226.

⁴² This does mean that he ignores angels, for he discusses at great length the purpose of angels in Luke 15.

⁴³ Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 106. In his interpretation of Luke 15, he goes on to claim an 'ontological transformation for the redeemed, in specifically angelomorphic terms.' Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 220.

⁴⁴ Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, 6.

⁴⁵ Hannah, *Michael*, 220.

While this history of research has largely centered on the relationship of angels traditions to early Christianity, a number of books in the past twenty-five years have been published that have sought to understand angels beyond angelomorphic Christology. For example, Carol Newsom, in her critical edition of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, offers an angelology for the Qumran document by analyzing the angelological terminology and the discussion of angelic hierarchy in the text.⁴⁶ In addition, the same year that Michael Mach published his survey of angels in Jewish literature also saw Maxwell Davidson's comparative analysis of the representation of angels in the Enochic literature and the sectarian texts found at Qumran.⁴⁷ In 2004, Kevin P. Sullivan examined the relationship between humans and angels by investigating texts that portray angel-human interaction as well as the appearance of angels as humans and, vice-versa, humans as angels. From the evidence he presents, Sullivan suggests that texts demonstrate the crossing of boundaries between heaven and earth, but is less inclined to agree that the boundaries between angel and human are blurred.⁴⁸ For Sullivan, angels, God, and humans remain distinct and separate.⁴⁹ A few years later, in 2007, a large collection of essays on angels was released. In this tome, a variety of topics and themes are covered, ranging from Old Testament to early Christian examples.⁵⁰ In the same year, R. M. M. Tuschling examined references to angels to understand what angels are and what role they have within orthodox Christianity. She argues

⁴⁶ Newsom, *SSS*, 23-38. In her analysis, she asserts that the primary purpose of angels in the *SSS* is to praise God.

⁴⁷ Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*. Of particular interest for this study is Davidson's assessment of angels and judgment; 'Thus the picture that emerges is one of extensive angelic involvement in the whole process of divine judgment. Obedient angels faithfully serve God and the final judgment sees justice done, with the righteous vindicated and blessed. Meanwhile, the righteous can take courage, for although the judgment is not said to be imminent, it is certain.' Davidson, *Angels*, 302. Research on Qumran documents and angel traditions is also evident in George Brooke's discussion of *Joseph and Asenath* where he assesses angelomorphic traditions and communion with angels associated with Qumran to assist in dating the text. Brooke, 'Angels,' 159-77. See also, Fletcher-Louis, 'Reflections,' 292-312.

⁴⁸ *Contra* Fletcher-Louis.

⁴⁹ Sullivan, *Wrestling*, 230-35.

⁵⁰ This collection is broken into seven sections, each of which explores a different, but sometimes nebulous, theme. They include (1) the origins of spirits, demons, and divine messengers in Egypt, the Ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome; (2) angels in the Old Testament (the largest section covering topics from angels in the patriarchal narratives to Jewish apocalyptic); (3) Raphael and Asmodeus in Tobit; (4) angels in the New Testament (with regard to the resurrection narratives, Gabriel, Paul, Hebrews, and 1-2Corinthians); (5-6) angels in Second Temple Judaism, early Christianity, and early Judaism; and (7) angels in religious art (namely grave inscriptions and orthodox practice). While covering a wide range of topics, the essays are specific in their aims and often give good detailed discussions. Reiterer, Nicklas, and Schöpflin, eds., *Angels*.

that when Christ enters the picture, angelology moves in the direction of liturgical praise, thus safeguarding monotheism. Consequently, for Tuschling, ‘the theological function of angels is therefore to ensure orthodoxy by modeling right practice and belief towards God.’⁵¹

It is by no means an exhaustive list, but this history of scholarship demonstrates the importance of angels for research in early Christology.⁵² As heavenly beings that mediate between heaven and earth, angels provide a category for interpreting Jesus’ heavenly character and a model from which the early church could understand Jesus. In addition, the study of principal angels, including the angel of the Lord, offers insight into the re-application of the privileged status of these unique angels to Jesus. As a result, the study of angels has advanced the discussion of heavenly mediators, challenged conceptions of Jewish monotheism, and sharpened the conversation about Jesus’ heavenly identity.

While there was initially interest in viewing Jesus as an angel (Angel Christology), there soon developed an increasing focus on angelomorphic imagery and language. The application of angelic characteristics, without attributing their nature, revitalized the discussion of angel traditions and Christology. As a natural consequence, angelomorphic categories were applied to more than just Jesus. The righteous, exalted patriarchs, and even the disciples could be understood in angelomorphic terms.

However, what is missing from the research on angels and its Christological impact is an approach that examines the significance of the presence and appearances of angels in a gospel.⁵³ The prevalence of angel traditions not only

⁵¹ Tuschling, *Orthodoxy*, 207-08. As a result of her concentration on angels’ place in the heavenly liturgy, Tuschling does little in exploring neither the role of angels at judgment nor their role as messengers. In an article several decades earlier, Kuhn documented the angelology of the non-canonical Jewish apocalypses and found that despite the varieties of angelologies, monotheism was preserved. Kuhn, ‘Angelology,’ 232.

⁵² For example, while aimed at a wider audience, Susan Garrett demonstrates a contemporary interest in Jesus and angels, and attempts to ground contemporary ideas in biblical tradition through a survey of angels in Christian tradition and contemporary culture. Garrett, *Angel*, 5. See also Daniélou’s survey of angels in the early church fathers, and Keck’s analysis of the influence of angels, both in biblical tradition and early Christian tradition, on medieval religious life and theology. Keck, *Angels*, Daniélou, *Mission*. Or, consider Olyan’s analysis of the origins and names of the angels. Olyan, *Thousands*.

⁵³ Studies that have focused on the gospels, including that of Fletcher-Louis, have concentrated primarily on angelomorphic categories. Of note, however, is John Ashton’s attempt to understand the newness of the claim of a human to be God in the Gospel of John. Ashton looks at the angel of

provided early Christians with the opportunity to understand Jesus as an angel or having angelic characteristics, but it also contributed to the worldview and theological vocabulary for retelling the life of Jesus. Moreover, since the Gospels can be considered theological portraits of the life and ministry of Jesus, it is useful to examine the significance of a Gospel writer's portrayal of angels in their narrative. Consequently, I argue that the narrative provides a context that has yet to be explored fully with regard to angels. Moreover, the Gospel of Matthew demonstrates a particular interest in angels, suggesting a theological and narrative purpose for his redaction and inclusion of angel traditions. Consequently, this study will attempt to fill a gap in the research by examining the appearances and references to angels in the narrative of Matthew with a view toward analyzing how angel traditions inform a narrative interpretation.

1.2 Angels in the Gospel of Matthew

There are three main reasons that the Gospel of Matthew was chosen for this study: its demonstrated interest in angels, its Jewish character, and its reflection of apocalyptic language and motifs.

1.2.1 *Matthew's Interest in Angels*

First, Matthew's Gospel demonstrates an interest in the way that angels are portrayed. This is evidenced primarily in the way in which Matthew has handled source material from Mark, his own unique material, and material that may have come from a shared source with Luke.⁵⁴ The frequency and consistency with which

the Lord, the liberating angel of Exodus, and the *angelus interpres* for insight into Johannine Christology and agency. Ashton admits he is largely influenced by Jan-Adolf Bühner's thesis, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg*, which was interested in the Jewish ideas of agency and mediation, and in particular, the connection between the concept of angels' and prophets' influence on the understanding of Johannine Christology. Ashton, *Studying*, 75.

⁵⁴ For the purposes of this thesis, there will not be a need to delve into the use or existence of the hypothetical document, Q, because nearly all of the references to angels in Matthew that are examined appear in Mark also, or they are unique to Matthew. With regard to the exception, Matt 4:6 (par. Luke 4:10), there is little evidence of relevant redaction explicitly related to the traditions of angels employed. Nevertheless, the thesis will follow the position of a majority of Matthew commentaries, reflecting Markan priority and the Two-Source Hypothesis when necessary for discussion. Keener, *Matthew*, 8-11, Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 97-127, Nolland, *Matthew*, 4-5,

Matthew has incorporated angels from his sources reveal he is interested in these traditions. For example, Matthew does not omit a single reference to angels from Mark's Gospel.⁵⁵ Similarly, while there are few references to angels in the material that appears only in Matthew and Luke (Luke 4:10; cf. 1:8-2:21), Matthew includes these references (Matt 4:6; cf. Matt 1:18-2:23)⁵⁶ with one exception (Matt 10:32-33).⁵⁷ But, Matthew does more than simply copy these references to angels into his Gospel. Nearly all of Mark's references to angels are adapted by Matthew to reflect his own interest in angels.⁵⁸ For example, Matthew redacts the Markan texts that involve the Son of Man and angels at the final judgment (Mark 8:38; 13:27). On both of these occasions, Matthew inserts a personal pronoun in front of the reference to angels, thereby changing the relationship of the Son of Man and angels to the 'Son of Man and his angels' (Matt 16:27; 24:30). The result is a reshaping of Matthew's portrait of the Son of Man. These two references are hardly enough to argue for a pattern, but the same theme is revealed in Matthew's own unique material. For instance, in the Parable of the Weeds, Matthew describes the Son of Man commanding his angels, sending them out to collect all causes of sin and evildoers (Matt 13:41-2),⁵⁹ and in Matt 25:31-46, the Son of Man at the final judgment 'comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.' In light of this, it is suggested that there is greater depth to the editing of Mark's reference to the angels' activity at his temptation (Mark 1:13) to read, 'Behold, the angels came and served him.' Here, Matthew's addition of the angels 'coming' to Jesus (language Matthew uses in his Gospel to suggest Jesus'

Garland, *Reading*, 3-4, Hagner, *Matthew*, xlv-xlviii, Harrington, *Matthew*, 5-7, Gundry, *Matthew*, 4-5, Hill, *Matthew*, 22-38, Schweizer, *Matthew*.

⁵⁵ Mark 1:13; 8:38; 12:25; 13:27, 32; cf. Mark 16:5; and parallels in Matt 4:11; 16:27; 22:30; 24:30; 24:36; cf. Matt 28:2-3.

⁵⁶ The infancy narratives do not share the same level of similarity as other passages commonly associated with Q, but the common elements between the birth stories of Matthew and Luke may suggest a common source. Brown, *Birth*, 34-7.

⁵⁷ Since the focus of the thesis is on the narrative of Matthew and angels do not appear in Matt 10:32-33, the text will not be addressed in the body of this work. However, since Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9 share much in common, the difference between Luke's 'angels of God' and Matthew's 'Father in heaven' is the most likely the result of Matthew's use of angels in the rest of his gospel. For a full discussion, see the appendix (p. 251-272).

⁵⁸ The only reference to angels that remains significantly unedited is Matt 22:30.

⁵⁹ Although there is no mention of the Son of Man in the Parable of the Net that follows soon after (Matt 13:47-50), the language of angels gathering and separating at the final judgment may not need to be repetitive to evince the same relationship.

authority), and serving him, is a reflection of the bigger picture of angels in Matthew's Gospel.⁶⁰

1.2.2 *The Jewish Character of Matthew's Gospel*

Secondly, Matthew exhibits evidence of addressing an audience familiar with Judaism.⁶¹ While the statement in Matt 5:17-18, 'I have come not to abolish [the law] but to fulfill,' has been a key element in the discussion of Matthew's audience, it is not the only piece of evidence that suggests his readers may have had a Jewish background. For example, Matthew routinely quotes from the Old Testament, repeatedly stresses righteousness, and limits the mission of the disciples to Israel (Matt 10:5-6). In addition, Matthew omits Mark's description of the Pharisees' washing practices (Mark 7:3-4//Matt 15:2), omits the declaration of all foods being clean (Mark 7:19//Matt 15:17), and exhibits anxieties about fleeing on the Sabbath amongst the trials in the eschatological discourse (Matt 24:20). While this is only a brief list, the individual works of Overman, Saldarini, and Sim have examined the Gospel of Matthew's Jewish elements and all advocated for a Christian form of Judaism in Matthew.⁶² Similarly, Hagner concludes that 'one of the virtually firm conclusions in Matthean studies is that the Gospel was written to Jews who had come to faith in Jesus as the Messiah.'⁶³ Since it is argued that Matthew's Gospel reflects Jewish elements, then angel traditions in the Old Testament and Jewish literature of the Second Temple period will be examined for background in order to assist in interpreting Matthew's references to angels.⁶⁴ The prevalence of angels in this body of literature and Matthew's Jewish characteristics suggest that the Gospel of Matthew is a good candidate for this study.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ These passages are examined more closely in the following exegetical chapters.

⁶¹ This is not to say that Matthew is a Jewish gospel as there is also evidence of Matthew's critique of the Jewish leaders (e.g. Matt 23:1-36).

⁶² Sim, *Judaism*, Overman, *Matthew*, Saldarini, *Community*. For a comparison of their views, see Hagner, 'Judaism,' 264-81.

⁶³ Hagner, 'Judaism,' 263. For an exception, see Clark, 'Gentile.', Meier, 'Matthew,' 625-27.

⁶⁴ Arguments about dating, when relevant, will occur in the footnotes. In addition, this does not mean that Matthew's gospel could not appeal to Gentile readers, but that the reflection of angel traditions in the gospel is likely grounded in the gospel's Jewishness.

⁶⁵ Although Fletcher-Louis defends his analysis of the Jewish belief in angels in Luke-Acts, texts predominantly thought to be associated with a Gentile audience, Matthew's Jewishness suggests his gospel may be more suitable for this thesis' enquiry. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 18-20.

1.2.3 *Apocalyptic Traits of Matthew*

Thirdly, the Gospel of Matthew exhibits a debt to apocalyptic literature and its symbolic universe.⁶⁶ More specifically, Matthew demonstrates a complex mixture of traits found in Jewish apocalypses and a perspective that sees the divine will active in earthly life. In 1981,⁶⁷ L. Sabourin addressed the apocalyptic elements of Matthew's Gospel, examining evidence of the apocalyptic genre in specifically Matthean material. Although Sabourin was initially skeptical, he concluded that 'the apocalyptic interest of Matthew seems to be amply demonstrated.'⁶⁸ This, he posits, has consequences for Matthew's delayed expectation of the Parousia of the Son of Man (which, he argues, Matthew separates from the destruction of Jerusalem) and the reassurance this offers his readers that the Son of Man who suffers is also the universal judge.⁶⁹ Hagner's analysis of Matthew's apocalyptic traits demonstrated that while much of the apocalyptic material is unique to Matthew, it is common also for Matthew to heighten the apocalyptic language in passages he shares with Mark and Luke.⁷⁰ As a result, in Matthew, 'the apocalyptic perspective holds a much more prominent place than in any of the other Gospels.'⁷¹ Hagner also sought to offer more than a survey of Matthew's apocalyptic passages and presented a comparison of Matthew with contemporary apocalyptic perspectives. He concluded that Matthew expresses continuity with apocalypticism, but also a discontinuity because of the 'newness brought by Christ.'⁷²

David Sim's, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, offers an comprehensive analysis of apocalyptic and Matthew. In his monograph, Sim reconstructs the apocalyptic eschatology of Matthew in order to understand

⁶⁶ Hagner, 'Apocalyptic,' 54-57. Rowland would likely be less comfortable with the ambiguity of this definition for he argues that the major element of apocalyptic is the revelation of the hidden things of God's will and the communication of these mysteries for application in earthly life. Rowland, *Open*, 9-14. Sim, on the other hand, sees that in order to view the relationship of apocalyptic to Matthew, one must be able to accept the traits of apocalyptic outside its genre. Sim, *Apocalyptic*, 31. This seems to reflect the idea that Matthew was not an apocalypse, but incorporated apocalyptic elements in his narrative.

⁶⁷ Sabourin, 'Apocalypticues.' The article was revised and republished in English in 1983. Sabourin, 'Traits.'

⁶⁸ Sabourin, 'Traits,' 32.

⁶⁹ Sabourin, 'Traits,' 32-33.

⁷⁰ Hagner, 'Apocalyptic,' 53.

⁷¹ Hagner, 'Apocalyptic,' 53.

⁷² Hagner, 'Apocalyptic,' 54.

further the concerns and community of Matthew's Gospel. After clearly defining his framework of apocalyptic eschatology in terms of dualism and determinism,⁷³ he examines the nature and extent of apocalyptic eschatology in Matthew.⁷⁴ With this as his foundation, he explores why Matthew might have adopted this particular apocalyptic eschatology, and concludes that Matthew's community was in a time of crisis and used this scheme to aid unity and assurance in the midst of hostile and opposing forces.⁷⁵ More than replicating the genre, Matthew adapted it to fit the purpose of his Gospel. Sabourin comments that 'it is not enough to interpret the teaching of Jesus in the light of apocalyptic, it is especially necessary, as John does in Revelation, to reread apocalyptic in light of Jesus.'⁷⁶ Similarly, Hagner refers to Matthew's apocalyptic as an 'altered apocalyptic.'⁷⁷ In this manner, Matthew appropriates apocalyptic language and motifs in order to describe the significance of the heavenly realm and its Christological implications for the present and for the future consummation of God's reign.⁷⁸

When traditions of apocalypticism and its revelation of heavenly mysteries burgeoned in the Second Temple period, they also showed an expansion of the seer's ability to gaze into the heavens and partake of God's glory, his throne room, and heavenly denizens. As heaven's descriptions began to include various levels and elaborate geography, the angelologies in the apocalypses and related literature blossomed.⁷⁹ Considering Matthew's penchant for an 'altered apocalyptic', it is likely that Matthew not only preserves angel traditions represented in Jewish apocalyptic texts, but also adapts them, innovating to illustrate the portrait of angels and Jesus, who, according to Matthew, has a place in the cosmological hierarchy.

⁷³ Under this framework, Sim is able to discuss the other characteristics of apocalyptic, namely the eschatological woes, arrival of a savior, judgment (as well as the fate of righteous and wicked), and the imminence of the end. Sim, *Apocalyptic*, 31-53.

⁷⁴ Sim, *Apocalyptic*, 75-177.

⁷⁵ Sim, *Apocalyptic*, 181-243. See also Hagner, 'Apocalyptic,' 57-59.

⁷⁶ Sabourin, 'Traits,' 21.

⁷⁷ Hagner, 'Apocalyptic,' 69.

⁷⁸ Hagner, 'Apocalyptic,' 73. Examinations of other elements in Matthew's gospel often incorporate the apocalyptic aspect. For example, Powell's analysis of the plot of Matthew and its portrayal of a cosmic conflict implicitly reflects an apocalyptic perspective. Powell, 'Plot,' 198-203. Similarly, Syreeni sees the significance of some of Matthew's language of heaven and earth as indicative of a symbolic universe (one that echoes apocalyptic ideals). Syreeni, 'Between,' 3-13.

⁷⁹ Rowland, *Open*, 78-82.

While Old Testament traditions are crucial to this thesis, several texts attributed to the Second Temple era will be used to establish a core of angel traditions that Matthew may reflect in his Gospel.⁸⁰ For many of these texts, the dating and provenance are difficult to establish. On the one hand, this might create some challenges if the goal was to attempt to establish the origins of Matthew's angel references. However, the focus will be on interpreting the angel traditions within the narrative of Matthew. This means that although there are texts employed in this thesis for which the dating is uncertain, or may be attributed to a time after Matthew, they are still significant for establishing common traits among some of the angel traditions reflected in Matthew. Their value is rooted in illustrating the trajectory and consistency of the traditions demonstrated in earlier, and more contemporary texts of Matthew. Consequently, the surveys of ancient Jewish literature (and occasionally Christian texts drawing on ancient Jewish tradition) will not go into detail regarding dating.⁸¹ The primary aim of this thesis remains on examining how the angel traditions have aided Matthew's portrait of Jesus in his narrative. In this manner, a methodology that meets this need will be necessary.

1.3 Method

Due to the subject material of the thesis, a method is required that will permit the analysis of both the editorial hand of Matthew and an examination of the whole of the Gospel's story. Consequently, the method employed will combine elements of both redaction and narrative criticism.⁸²

Redaction criticism remains an essential element to understanding Matthew.⁸³ By seeking to reveal and understand the editorial changes Matthew made to his sources, it is possible to gain insight into the theology of Matthew.

⁸⁰ While the majority of texts surveyed are attributed to this time period, this does not indicate that texts considered outside of this era will not be part of the discussion (e.g. *2Baruch*).

⁸¹ Sim employs a similar approach to Second Temple literature and angel traditions. Sim, 'Angels,' 695-96.

⁸² Other monographs on Matthew take a similar approach. Barton, *Family*, 11-22, Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 3-13, Cousland, *Crowds*, 23-27, Gurtner, *Veil*, 26-7. See also the article by Tan and the approach of Luz in his slim volume on the theology of Matthew. Tan, 'Developments,' 599-614, Luz, *Theology*, 1-10.

⁸³ Stanton gives an honest evaluation of the limits of redaction criticism but sees no grounds for abandoning it. Stanton, *Gospel*, 23-53, esp. 51, Donahue, 'Hauptstrasse,' 38-39.

The assumption is that the redactional elements are indicative of that which is most important to Matthew. With regard to angels in the Gospel, the comparison of Matthew to his other sources highlights Matthew's interest in angels and reveals the nuances of his angelology. However, redaction criticism does not always address equally the material that is copied 'unedited.' The decision to change, or leave a passage unchanged, is still an editorial choice. As a result, when Matthew uses a source, even word-for-word, it becomes Matthew.⁸⁴ By focusing mostly on the editorial changes, strict redaction critical approaches have been criticized for not considering, nor appreciating, the unity and cohesion of the Gospels' narratives.⁸⁵ Redaction criticism is of great value, thus its comparative techniques to highlight editorial interest will be implemented, but it alone cannot address the questions of this thesis.

Thus, elements of narrative criticism are employed to assess the significance and meaning of the presence of angels in the whole of Matthew's Gospel. By approaching the text as a unified narrative, the role of angels as characters in Matthew's drama can be evaluated. In Matthew, angels appear as a single character (e.g. the angel of the Lord) and as a character set (a group functioning as an individual).⁸⁶ With perhaps the exception of the angel's description at the tomb in Matt 28:2-4, Matthew tells very little about the angels. This is not unusual, as the Gospels tend to 'show' a character's traits rather than use a narrator to 'tell' the reader about them.⁸⁷ However, not everything about a character needs to come from the narrative, for previous stereotypes and traditions can inform a reader. Nonetheless, these traditions maintain a dynamic relationship with the narrative, for the author can also redefine the characters despite preconceptions of character traits. In light of the previous discussion of Matthew's 'altered apocalyptic,' it would not be surprising to see Matthew reshaping angel traditions because of his portrait of Jesus.⁸⁸ However, such a conclusion will need to come after the exegesis of the passages in question. In the mean time, it is crucial to note that in addition to what is revealed about the

⁸⁴ Patte, *Matthew*, 12.

⁸⁵ Kingsbury, *Story*, 1-2.

⁸⁶ Powell, *Narrative*, 51.

⁸⁷ Anderson, *Narrative*, 80-81.

⁸⁸ This is also what those proposing angelomorphic traditions are advocating, but for a different purpose.

angels, Matthew's portrayal of Jesus is informed by his relationship to the angels in the narrative.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, angels do not appear in the narrative as frequently as the disciples or the crowds, nor play as dynamic a character role as Peter. Therefore, the role that the angels play in the narrative can most likely classify angels as minor characters. However, this does not indicate their insignificance or the lack of value in the narrative – quite the contrary. The frequent appearances of angels in the text alongside Jesus (Son of Man) provide implicit connections to angel traditions and reveal a more developed portrait of Jesus. Consequently, even the minor characters can have a major role in the development of a character.⁹⁰

By relying on the elements of redaction and narrative criticism that contribute to a compositional analysis, this thesis is suited to examine the narrative function of angels while deriving insight from Matthew's editing and handling of his sources.

1.4 Overview

The nature of the thesis' investigation requires a large amount of space dedicated to the individual texts that specifically mention angels in Matthew. Consequently, the following nine chapters are exegetical examinations of the references to angels in Matthew. In these following chapters, some references lend themselves to being examined together (e.g. the three appearances of the angel of the Lord in the infancy narrative, Matt 1:21; 2:13, 19) while others are approached individually (e.g. Matt 22:30). The order of the following chapters follows the narrative of the Gospel, beginning with the infancy narratives (Matt 1:18-2:23) and concluding with the angel at the tomb in Matt 28:2-8. Having completed an analysis of all the references to angels in the Gospel of Matthew, the final chapter revisits the conclusions of the previous chapters, discussing them according to common themes. My goal is to fill in a gap in both in Matthean studies and in research on Christology and angels by both tracing the contours of Matthew's portrayal of

⁸⁹ Anderson, *Narrative*, 80. To some degree, the exceptions are Matt 18:10 and 22:30.

⁹⁰ This is a similar argument to Malbon's comments on the 'minor' characters in Mark. Malbon, 'Minor,' 59-61.

angels in his narrative and identifying the results of its contribution to Matthew's Christology.

Chapter 2

The Angel of the Lord and His Message (Matthew 1:18-2:23)

1 INTRODUCTION

From the first words of the Gospel, Matthew is interested in revealing the significance of the story of Jesus. For Matthew, this includes indicating Jesus' origins communicated through a genealogy and an infancy narrative. Of the four gospels, only Matthew and Luke have infancy narratives, telling of Jesus' birth, genealogy, and early childhood (Matt 1-2; Luke 1:5-2:52; 3:23-38). While Mark and John open their gospels in their own unique manner, it is likely that Matthew and Luke saw value in the christological implications of stories surrounding Jesus' birth for their particular gospel.⁹¹ Even though Matthew and Luke both exhibit infancy accounts, there are more differences than similarities between them. Nevertheless, the similarities suggest a shared tradition behind the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke.⁹² With this tradition as the foundation, Matthew and Luke most likely worked with their sources to tailor the infancy narrative for their gospels, incorporating theological and christological implications into the narrative surrounding Jesus' birth.⁹³ One of which, as this chapter suggests, is the use of an angel of the Lord.

In the infancy narrative, an angel of the Lord (ἄγγελος κυρίου) appears three times to Joseph in a dream. Each time, Joseph is given instruction on what to do and the reasons for this guidance. Each time, Joseph responds obediently to the

⁹¹ Mark begins by quoting the promises of the prophet Isaiah (Mark 1:2-3) and the corresponding events in Matt 1:4-15. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 11-12. Brown argues that the gospel of John pushes back the answer to the question of his identity even further till before creation (John 1:1-18; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; 17:5). Brown, *Birth*, 30-31.

⁹² Brown lists eleven points shared by Matthew and Luke. Interestingly, all but one occurs in Matthew 1:18-2:1. Brown, *Birth*, 34-35.

⁹³ Brown, *Birth*, 32.

message delivered by the angel of the Lord. Through Joseph's obedience, the narrative of these opening chapters rests on the words delivered by God's messenger.⁹⁴ The importance instilled in these divine messages by Matthew flows over into his choice of a messenger, through whom is conveyed the significance of God's presence and authority. The angel of the Lord has a rich and varied tradition in the canonical and non-canonical traditions, and Matthew's use of the figure of the angel of the Lord reflects an element of the presence of God these traditions hold in common. It will be argued in this chapter that Matthew uses the angel of the Lord to communicate the authority and origin of the messages that are key to the narrative. These messages accomplish this through their unique quality of being tightly connected to the presence of the Lord himself.

This chapter will demonstrate how the angel of the Lord functions in the infancy narrative of Matthew by first exploring the appearance of an angel of the Lord in the scriptural tradition that would have been available to Matthew. A working context from which to begin an investigation into Matthew's infancy narrative will thus be established. The following analysis will draw upon Old Testament texts to demonstrate the variation in the angel of the Lord traditions, but will also describe the common identification of the message of the angel of the Lord's as indicative of the direct presence and activity of God. Secondly, Matt 1:18-2:23 will be examined in light of these traditions to illustrate how understanding the angel of the Lord as evidence of God's presence and activity in Jesus' life contributes to Matthew's Christological portrait of Jesus. This will be accomplished through an in-depth analysis of the texts. Finally, having examined the relationship of the traditions of angel of the Lord to the rest of the infancy narrative, a foundation will have been established from which to begin a further discussion of the significance this relationship has in the larger context of Matthew's Gospel narrative and his use of angels.

2 THE ANGEL OF THE LORD IN TRADITION

⁹⁴ Luz notes the importance for the first appearance, calling the word of the angel the 'real point.' Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 115, 20.

As will be shown, the ‘angel of the Lord’ was likely part of Matthew’s context through his familiarity with biblical tradition, and thus appears in his infancy narrative to assist in the demonstration of Jesus origins. Therefore, keeping in mind that the purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how the angel of the Lord represents the presence of God and explore why Matthew might have chosen ἄγγελος κυρίου, it will be necessary first to establish how Matthew might have understood the ‘angel of the Lord’ from the Scripture with which he was familiar.

The discussion below proceeds as follows: first, the broader semantic use of ‘angel of the Lord’ in the Old Testament will be discussed in order to illustrate potential interpretive difficulties while still suggesting the common occurrence of associating the angel of the Lord with the Lord himself through the message the angel delivers. Second, this argument will be further developed using Old Testament texts that refer to an angel of the Lord. The role the angel plays in the narrative, the responses of the other characters in the text, and the way the narrator portrays the angel will be discussed. Third, there will be a brief survey of the development of the angel of the Lord traditions in early Jewish apocalyptic literature. Finally, there will be a proposal of how to incorporate these observations into the context of Matthew’s infancy narrative.

2.1 Semantics of the Angel of the Lord

Occurring over two hundred times in the Old Testament, מלאך, often translated as ‘angel,’ is more accurately defined as ‘messenger.’⁹⁵ The term can refer to both human and divine messengers, who, quite simply, carry the message of the one who sent them.⁹⁶ Within the category of the appearances of a divine messenger,

⁹⁵ The Septuagint tradition, with almost uniform regularity, translates מלאך with ἄγγελος. The few exceptions include substitutions in references to what could be thought of as a heavenly council: ἄγγελος for אלהים in Ps 96:7 and 137:1, and οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ for בני האלהים in Job 1:6, 2:1 and 38:7 (cf. Job 5:1; Deut 32:8, 43; 33:2). In Daniel, the LXX refers to Michael as an angel, rather than a ‘prince’ (שר, Dan 10:21; 12:1). In addition, the LXX tradition of Exod 4:24-26 (a passage with many other interpretive difficulties) has redefined the identity of the one seeking to kill Moses from Yahweh to the angel of the Lord (the targums follow this same pattern). For more on some of the textual difficulties with this passage, see Dumbrell, ‘Re-Examination.’ Alternatively, the comparison of David’s goodness to an angel of God is removed in 1Sam 29:9 LXX, but kept in similar comparisons (2Sam 14:17, 20; 19:28 LXX).

⁹⁶ Freedman-Willoughby, Ringgren, and Fabry, ‘מלאך’ in *TDOT*, 8:308. See also von Rad, *Theology*, 1:285.

the mention of the מלאך יהוה ('angel of the Lord'), is unique in that this messenger carries the divine name.⁹⁷ Von Rad notes that of all the angels, the angel of the Lord stands out in 'conspicuous relief' because this angel is mentioned in a variety of contexts and appears to have a special function in history.⁹⁸ There is, however, a lack of consistency and clarity in regard to the language of 'angel of the Lord.' This variability has resulted both in the richness and diversity of interpretation of this term and but has also resulted in difficulties with establishing the relationship between the angel of the Lord and the Lord. For example, in the biblical tradition, there does not ever appear more than one angel of the Lord (מלאך יהוה) at a time. However, this cannot be said for מלאך יםאלה ('angel of God'), which occurs in the plural, מלאכי אלהים, 'angels of God,' in the narrative concerning Jacob.⁹⁹ While מלאך האלהים does not carry the divine name, the occasional substitution of יהוה for אלהים in certain traditions raises the question of whether or not מלאך האלהים and מלאך יהוה refer to the same figure or class of angels.¹⁰⁰ For example, an angel appears to Hagar on two different occasions. The first time, an 'angel of the Lord' appears (Gen 16:7-14), while an 'angel of God' visits Hagar later (Gen 21:7).¹⁰¹ The variability of the language used is highlighted most clearly in Judges 13. In this narrative, an 'angel

⁹⁷ Identifying this messenger is not a straightforward task. In the Hebrew, מלאך יהוה, exists in a construct chain and should be considered definite ('the angel of the Lord') because proper names are considered determinate. Gesenius and Kautzsch, *Grammar*, 402, §125.2(d). However, there are exceptions when the *nomen regens* appears to be used indefinitely and thus would render the chain indefinite. For example, 1Sam 4:12 is a man of Benjamin and Deut 22:19 is a virgin of Israel. Gesenius and Kautzsch, *Grammar*, 412, §127.3(e). Consequently, מלאך יהוה could refer to one particular angel ('the angel of the Lord'), a generic angel ('the angel of the Lord as a class'), or an individual angel from a class or category of angels ('an angel of the Lord'). MacDonald, 'Christology,' 330-31. On nearly every occasion, the Septuagint renders the initial appearance of an angel of the Lord in a narrative anarthrous (some exceptions are Judg 5:23, 22:31; 2Sam 24:16; 1Kgs 19:7). On the other hand, the absence of an article in Greek neither renders the noun indefinite (it only gives the opportunity for indefiniteness) nor precludes it from being identified as generic. Wallace, *Grammar*, 244-45, 253-55. In this manner, the distinction between the angel of the Lord, the angel of the Lord as a class, and an angel of the Lord is not easily distinguished.

⁹⁸ von Rad, *Theology*, 1:285-6. See also Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:23.

⁹⁹ In the singular, Gen 21:17; 31:11; Exod 14:19; Judg 6:20; 13:6,9; 1Sam 29:9; 2Sam 14:17,20; 19:28; in the plural, Gen 28:12; 32:2; cf. 2Chr 36:16.

¹⁰⁰ The Septuagint tradition does not seem to demonstrate a recognizable pattern as it will sometimes translate 'angel of God' as 'angel of the Lord' (Judg 6:20) as vice versa (Num 22:22, 23, 24; cf. Tob 12:22).

¹⁰¹ Gen 16:7-13; 21:16-19. The Septuagint makes no effort to smooth out this discrepancy, yet in Judges 6:20, מלאך האלהים is translated as ἄγγελος κυρίου to have it agree with מלאך יהוה in the rest of the narrative (cf. Num 22).

of the Lord' (מלאך יהוה) to whom Manoah speaks is also referred to as 'angel of God' (מלאך האלהים) by the narrator, and 'man of God' (איש האלהים) by Manoah's wife. The Septuagint offers little help in clarifying this distinction as מלאך יהוה and מלאך האלהים are often translated as ἄγγελος κυρίου and ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ respectively.¹⁰² Later, the Targumim will cease using מלאך האלהים altogether, substituting the divine name with מלאך for occurrences of מלאך האלהים in the Old Testament.¹⁰³ It must be further noted that it is not clear that these texts even refer to the same angel.¹⁰⁴ The examples cited serve to illustrate the variability in the terminology used to refer to an angel of the Lord. How this variability is manifested in the Old Testament traditions will help create a background from which to discuss the angel's appearance in Matt 1-2.

2.2 The Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament

Having discussed the language of 'angel of the Lord,' I will now turn to the role the angel of the Lord plays in the literature of the Old Testament. Since the use of the angel appears in a narrative within Matthew, it is the role of the angel of Lord in the Old Testament narratives that will clarify the angel's significance as a unique messenger who communicates the presence of the Lord himself. To that end, the following discussion will look at the role of the angel as a messenger and how the angel is perceived in narrative texts.

2.2.1 *The Angel of the Lord as a Messenger*

The role of the angel of the Lord can be described succinctly as a messenger of God, who fulfills the will of the one who sent him. Often, the angel simply delivers a

¹⁰² The birth announcement of Samson (Judg 6:11-22) in the LXX smoothes out the differences and only the angel of the Lord is mentioned.

¹⁰³ Targum Onkelos has translated all references of 'angel/s of God' as 'angel/s of the Lord,' (Gen 21:17; 28:12; 31:11; 32:1; Exod 14:19; Judg 6:20). In Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Gen 28:12 simply has 'angels;' in Gen 21:17; 28:12; 31:11; 32:1; Exod 14:19, 'angel/s of God' is translated as 'angel/s of the Lord.' Targum Neofiti has 'angels' in Gen 21:17, 'angel/s from before the Lord' in Gen 32:2, 29, 31; Exod 4:24, and 'angel/s of the Lord' in Gen 32:2, 29, 31; Exod 4:24.

¹⁰⁴ Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:24.

verbal message, yet the angel of the Lord is also portrayed as physically confronting, and sometimes attacking humans.

The most frequent action attributed to an angel of the Lord is the communication of a message from God, both guiding and comforting. In Genesis, the angel of the Lord often comes at times of crisis.¹⁰⁵ For example, an angel of the Lord speaks to Hagar, comforting her as she runs away from Sarai (Gen 16:7-13; cf. Gen 21:17). Likewise, an angel calls out from heaven to Abraham, instructing him not to kill his son, Isaac (Gen 22:9-17). The birth announcement of Samson (Judg 6:11-14, 19-24), the prophetic messages of Zechariah (Zech 1:11-12; 3:1, 5-6), and Gideon's commission to rescue the Israelites from the Midianites (Judg 6:11-14) are all conveyed by an angel of the Lord.

Sometimes there is more than simply a verbal message. When Elijah is fleeing from Jezebel, he is visited and both offered food and told what to do by an angel of the Lord (1Kgs 19:5, 7; cf. 2Kgs 1:3, 15). Balaam and the angel in Num 22 demonstrate that an angel of the Lord can also be portrayed carrying out acts of violence on behalf of God. In Num 22, an angel of the Lord not only delivers a message but also threatens the life of Balaam when the king of Moab, Balak, beckons him to come and curse God's people, Israel. In this particular circumstance, the angel of the Lord attempts to prevent Balaam from completing his journey, sparing his life so that he could speak what he is told. In addition, an angel of the Lord strikes down one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians (2Kgs 19:35; 2Chr 32:21; Isa 37:36; cf. Ps 34:7; 35:5-6). These examples all portray ways in which God guides and protects his people through an angel of the Lord. However, this picture is not uncomplicated. On one occasion, the angel of the Lord is portrayed as turning his sword against Israel. In response to David's actions, the Lord punishes Israel and sends an angel to destroy Jerusalem. The Lord relents and David sees an angel of the Lord at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2Sam 24:15-17). In the parallel text, 1Chr 21:15-17, the immense size of the angel of the Lord is described, 'standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem' (1Chr 21:16). Here, the angel of the Lord is expressed more dramatically. This might be due to the hand of the

¹⁰⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 9.

author, or it might be indicative of a more developed angelology of that period.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, these examples show the various messages that the angel can bring to its recipients, while always remaining solely the messenger of God. In every case, the message originated with the Lord; the angel was never credited with speaking for himself. This is further reinforced by the description of the angel by the narrator and the reaction within the narratives to his appearance and message.

2.2.2 *The Angel of the Lord as Perceived in the Narrative*

Obviously, the act of an angel of the Lord delivering a message requires a recipient. While the narrators identify that the one delivering the message is an angel of the Lord, the designation is never put into the mouth of the angel himself. Because this identification comes from the narrator alone, responses to an angel's visit can offer insight into an interpretation of the angel. The author's words would reflect his understanding of both the messenger and the message.¹⁰⁷ The perception of the angel in the narrative, both by the narrator and other persons in the text, demonstrates the strong association of the presence of the Lord with the appearance of an angel of the Lord.

In many occasions, responses to the angel and his message are directed to the Lord himself in a manner that implies the angel of the Lord is regarded, in some way, as representing the Lord and his presence.¹⁰⁸ In Judg 2:1-4, after the angel finishes his message, the people respond with weeping and sacrifices to the Lord (cf. Judg 6:7-10). Likewise, when a ram is provided by the angel for the sacrifice instead of Isaac, Abraham offers praise to the Lord (Gen 22:9-17). In Gen 16:7-13, Hagar is fleeing from Sarai when an angel of the Lord finds her, speaks with her, and announces the birth of Ishmael. Afterward, the narrator describes Hagar crying out to the Lord (יְהוָה), who spoke to her through the angel, 'Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?' (Gen 16:13). Thus, while the

¹⁰⁶ Braun, *1 Chronicles*, 207.

¹⁰⁷ In light of this, the author's intentions could be corrective, narratively providing the proper response one was to have to an angel.

¹⁰⁸ Gen 22:14; Judg 2:5; 6:24; 13:22-23; 2Sam 24:17; 1Chr 21:17; Tob 12:22-13:1

narrator refers to the figure as an angel of the Lord, Hagar regards him as ‘God.’¹⁰⁹ While the Hebrew word used is אֱלֹהִים, a word that carries a larger range of meanings than יְהוָה, there is a possibility of understanding Hagar’s question as referring to either a ‘divine being’ or the Lord.¹¹⁰ In another passage, Gideon calls out to the Lord for help once the angel of the Lord has left, ‘Help me, Lord God! For I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face.’ The response from the Lord, ‘Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die,’ is interesting in light of the Lord’s response to Moses’ request to see God’s glory: ‘you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.’ This raises the possibility that an angel of the Lord bears some of the characteristics of God. In the case of Gideon, it is implied that the one who looks upon the face of an angel of the Lord might die. Wenham notes that when the angel first appears, he is thought to be a man, but by the end, ‘he is realized to be God.’¹¹¹ These passages show the emergence of a pattern of responding to the angel of the Lord as if he were the Lord himself.

In certain passages, it is not the characters, but the narrator who identifies the angel of the Lord with the Lord through changes in terminology (Exod 3:2; Judg 6:10-14; LXX Num 22). Returning to the example of Gideon, it is an angel of the Lord who appears and speaks with Gideon, but as their conversation continues, the angel no longer participates. Instead, the dialogue seamlessly shifts to an interchange between the Lord and Gideon (Judg 6:11-14). Later, when Gideon returns to the place where the conversation took place, a second dialogue commences in which the text is less clear about who is speaking to him (‘angel of the Lord,’ Judg 6:11, 12, 21, 22; ‘the Lord,’ Judg 6:14, 16; ‘angel of God,’ Judg 6:20).¹¹² In Exod 3, the angel of the Lord appears to Moses in the flame of the bush (Exod 3:2), but the conversation that follows is between Moses and the Lord, designated as both יְהוָה and אֱלֹהִים (Exod 3:4-4:17).¹¹³ The angel of the Lord appears only at

¹⁰⁹ This interpretation requires that הַלֵּם be read as אֱלֹהִים as is argued in Freedman-Willoughby, Ringgren, and Fabry, ‘מלאך’ in *TDOT*, 8:319. Eichrodt understands that Hagar has just seen the Lord himself. Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:24.

¹¹⁰ The fact that אֱלֹהִים is grammatically plural also permits ‘gods,’ or ‘divine beings.’ Freedman-Willoughby, Ringgren, and Fabry, ‘מלאך’ in *TDOT*, 8:319. However, the LXX has the singular, θεός.

¹¹¹ Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 9.

¹¹² Interestingly, the LXX smoothes out the terminology by changing references to the ‘angel of God’ and the ‘Lord’ to the ‘angel of the Lord’ in Judg 6:11-22. Alternatively, different terms are added in Num 22.

¹¹³ With the exception of Exod 3:4, the LXX maintains this ‘distinction.’

the beginning of this narrative and no attention is given to the apparent shift from יהוה to מלאך יהוה.¹¹⁴ It is possible to view this text as a combination of different sources where the appearance of an angel of the Lord is a secondary insertion.¹¹⁵ In his commentary on Genesis, Hermann Gunkel views the angel of the Lord through ‘religiohistorical observation.’ He argues that the earliest traditions speak unabashedly about the appearances of the Lord, while later this is considered profane and ‘angel of the Lord’ acts as a substitution.¹¹⁶ Westermann agrees that this might explain why the angel of the Lord is spoken of in later passages, but it does not explain why the angel and the Lord both appear in the same passages together. He states that it is irrelevant to talk about the angel of the Lord as the result of theological reflection. Instead, it is more the case of a ‘narrative transmission of actual and varied experience of an encounter in extreme distress’ in which a messenger brought a revelation that changed the course of events.¹¹⁷ However, it is necessary to consider also the theological implications of the text as it would have been read.¹¹⁸ For Exodus, the inclusion of the angel of the Lord here may foreshadow, or connect it intentionally, with the role of the angel in the events of the Exodus.¹¹⁹

A discussion concerning the angel of the Lord would not be complete without including Exod 23:20-23, in which an angel sent to guard and lead the Israelites in the wilderness is described as bearing the name of the Lord (‘for my name is in him,’ Exod 23:21).¹²⁰ Because this angel bears God’s name, Moses is instructed by the Lord, ‘Be attentive to him and listen to his voice . . . listen attentively to his voice and do all that I say,’ (Exod 23:21-22). Moses is to receive

¹¹⁴ There are different ways of trying to reconcile the appearance of the angel with following dialogue. It may be that the Lord was communicating his message through the angel, but it seems as though the message came directly from the Lord, without an intermediary. This also suggests the importance of the content of the message. See also Acts 7:30,35 for Stephen’s account of the angel in the burning bush.

¹¹⁵ Freedman-Willoughby, Ringgren, and Fabry, ‘מלאך’ in *TDOT*, 8:320.

¹¹⁶ For example, in Exod 11-12, the Lord goes out, in 2Kgs 19:35, it is an angel (cf. Exod 32:34 Num 20:16). However, Gunkel argues the tradition of the angel of the Lord is not so recent as to be able to remove it altogether from the text. In some cases the angel of the Lord is inserted without the remodeling of the text around the alteration. For example, Hagar’s response should be understood as directed as towards the Lord and not towards the angel. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 186.

¹¹⁷ Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 243. See also Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:28.

¹¹⁸ Both יהוה and אלהים are found throughout this text, suggesting the work of Yahwist or Elohist. Freedman-Willoughby, Ringgren, and Fabry, ‘מלאך’ in *TDOT*, 8:320.

¹¹⁹ Freedman-Willoughby, Ringgren, and Fabry, ‘מלאך’ in *TDOT*, 8:320. Furthermore, the activity of the final narrator must not be ignored. Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:26.

¹²⁰ There is no mention of the form מלאך יהוה.

the words of the angel as if it were the Lord himself. This argument is strengthened if an apparent lack of consistency in terminology is merged. The Lord sends both מלאכי, 'my angel,' (Exod 23:23; 32:34) and מלאך האלהים, 'the angel of God,' in front of his people (Exod 14:19; cf. Exod 13:21).¹²¹ While the division between this angel and the Lord is more distinct in these verses, the distinctions are less clear in Judges 2:1-4 where an angel of the Lord reports, 'I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you into the land that I had promised to your ancestors,' (cf. Exod 14:19-20; 23:23; 32:34; 33:2; Num 20:16; Judg 2:1-4).¹²² These examples demonstrate the variability of the language used to portray the angel of the Lord's presence, but do so while emphasizing the equivalency of the angel's message with a message directly from the Lord.

2.2.3 *The Angel of the Lord and 'I'*

In biblical tradition it is not unusual for an angel of the Lord to use the first singular pronoun, 'I,' in the message. The challenges that surfaced earlier when trying to interpret the identity of the angel of the Lord return when attempting to determine to whom the 'I' is referring. In Num 22:20, God (אלהים) comes to Balaam at night and commands him to go to Balak, specifically warning him to 'do only what I tell you to do.' However, the next day, an angel of the Lord attempts to prevent Balaam from completing his journey (Num 22:22). When the angel of the Lord (מלאך יהוה) appears to Balaam, he cautions him, 'speak only what I tell you to speak,' (Num 22:35). The two commands, one by God and the other by the angel of the Lord, are strikingly similar, and based on the previous discussion, should be considered as the same. In this way, as will be later modeled in the prophets, the angel's 'I' refers to God as well as to the angel. Another example of the overlap of the words of God and those of the angel of the Lord can be found in Gen 22:9-12. Abraham is preparing to sacrifice his son, Isaac, when an angel of the Lord calls out from heaven, stopping him. The words of the angel appear to come from God

¹²¹ In narratives where מלאך, 'an angel,' (Exod 23:20; 33:2) and מלאכי, 'my angel,' (Exod 23:23; 32:34) appear in the same narrative, it is most likely referring to the same angel. For examples of מלאכו, 'his angel,' guiding and protecting (Gen 24:7,40; Dan 3:28; 6:22; Tob 5:17; Sir 48:21; Bar 6:7 cf. Acts 12:11; Rev 1:1; 22:6,16).

¹²² See von Rad, *Theology*, 1:287.

himself when the angel indicates that he now knows that Abraham fears God because he has not withheld his only son ‘from me,’ (Gen 22:12; cf. 22:1-2). When the angel of the Lord calls a second time from heaven, the message of the angel includes a ‘signature’ by the Lord, ‘By myself I have sworn, says *the Lord*,’ (Gen 22:16).¹²³ This passage in Genesis testifies to the unique way in which the message of the angel of the Lord functions as if the Lord himself spoke it. Again, in Judg 2:1-4, an angel of the Lord speaks to the Israelites using the first person as if he were the Lord, ‘I brought you up from Egypt ... I will never break my covenant with you.’ It is unlikely it was thought that an angel, and not God, brought the Israelites out of Egypt and made a covenant with them. This is similar to Matt 2:13, in which Joseph is commanded to go to Egypt and remain there until the ‘I’ speaks to him again (ἕως ἄν εἶπω σοι). In light of these traditions, the use of the term ‘angel of the Lord’ seems to underscore that this being brings messages that are the very words of God and should be received as such.

2.2.4 Summary

At this point, certain observations can be made from the texts previously discussed. As a messenger of God, the angel of the Lord is primarily described as delivering messages of guidance and comfort as well as bearing the sword against Israel’s enemies. It is not surprising, then, that the angel of the Lord has been considered the ‘personification of Yahweh’s assistance to Israel.’¹²⁴ The association of the Lord with the angel of the Lord is reinforced by the responses of those who receive these messages in the narrative. These responses often include praise and prayer in a manner that implies an encounter with God. Furthermore, the narrator will sometimes shift the language used in the narrative, making it seem as though, at least on the level of vocabulary, the Lord and the angel are the same. While these examples have all come from the Old Testament (especially the Pentateuch), the scriptures available to Matthew contain angel of the Lord traditions continuing into the Second Temple era.

¹²³ Eichrodt proposes that in certain circumstance, the messenger formula, ‘thus says...’ is collapsed into the use of ‘I’ by the angel. However, he admits that this cannot be made into a general principle. Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:26-7.

¹²⁴ Grundmann, von Rad, and Kittel, ‘ἄγγελος,’ in *TDNT*, 1:77.

2.3 Apocalyptic and Second Temple Traditions

In the literature of the Second Temple period, there appears to be a remarkable expansion of belief in angels. Because the development of angelologies is much greater in that period, it is difficult to speak of an ‘angelology’ in a narrow sense. That difficulty extends to the angel of the Lord. Some have suggested that the development is the result of an increasing sense of God’s transcendence.¹²⁵ Alternatively (or concurrently), the myriad of angels may demonstrate the complete control of God and the relativizing of earthly structures to the heavenly realm.¹²⁶ In this regard, the Old Testament speaks of a celestial court in which God was surrounded by heavenly beings (Job 1:6-12; 25:3; Zech 3:1-7).¹²⁷ In Daniel and *1Enoch*, multitudes of angels are described as ministering before the Lord (Dan 7:10; *1En.* 1:10; 71:7; cf. *2Bar* 59:11; Jude 14; Rev 5:11). Similarly, in apocalyptic literature, the council is supplanted by a more developed hierarchy of angels.¹²⁸ For example, *Testament of Adam* 4 describes the different orders of angels and their respective roles. In *Jubilees*, various angels and their functions are described as being created in what appears to be three categories: angels of the presence, angels of sanctification, and angels over natural phenomena (*Jub.* 2:2, cf. 30:18; *1En.* 60:16-21; *2En.* 14:3, 19:4-5).¹²⁹ In addition, one of the essential characteristics of apocalyptic literature is the disclosure of divine secrets by divine revelation in order to deliver meaning and understanding into a world that seems confused and despairing.¹³⁰ This is usually mediated through a dream, vision, or divine intermediary.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Bousset and Gressmann, *Die Religion*, 320-31. Russell also includes the influence of foreign thought, including Hellenism and Persian beliefs, upon the developing angelologies. Russell, *Method*, 235, 57-62. See also von Rad, *Theology*, 81.

¹²⁶ Hurtado is specifically criticizing the claims of Bousset. Hurtado, *One*, 24-26.

¹²⁷ Mullen, *Council*, 275-76. In contrast, when an angel appeared on earth, it was alone and on a mission. In the Old Testament, there is no evidence of an attempt to systematize a doctrine of angels. Kuhn, ‘Angelology,’ 218-19.

¹²⁸ Mullen, *Council*, 277. Mullen also calls attention to the developing character of Satan in the council texts.

¹²⁹ Russell, *Method*, 241, Hannah, *Michael*, 29. A fourth category of Watchers is added in *1Enoch* (cf. Dan 4:10, 14, 20). This includes both guardian angels over the nations and fallen angels. Rowland, *Open*, 90-94.

¹³⁰ Whereas, in the Old Testament, the prophets speak of the hope of God rising out of the present and working through history, the apocalyptic writers describe the future breaking into the present with divine intervention. Rowland, *Open*, 14, 20.

¹³¹ The visions of prophets in the Old Testament became the raw material for later accounts of visions and heavenly ascents (1Kgs 22:19-23; Is 6:1-13; Psa 82:0-8; Ezek). Rowland, *Open*, 21.

Angels, as intermediaries, are often found functioning as agents of revelation. An angel can serve as a guide in an ascent through the heavens (2*En.* 1:3-10; *T. Abr.* 10-15A, 8-12B; *Apoc. Ab.* 15-18), direct one to untraveled places (1*En.* 17-36), or explain the significance of dreams and visions (Zech 1-6, Dan 7:16-18; 8:15-16; 4*Ezra*).¹³² However, the particular angel explaining visions varies greatly.¹³³ While these may have had their origins in the Old Testament, it also reflects a development from the Old Testament traditions. Although it is challenging to come to any conclusive reasons for this seemingly dramatic change, it is likely that this was a development of an already existing angelology.¹³⁴ If so, then the preceding discussion of the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament lies amongst the foundation stones of these angelologies. Consequently, the unique qualities of the angel of the Lord may have led to other traditions, namely those of privileged angels close to God.

In particular, there was a significant development in the attribution of names to angels. The personalization of angels appears in the book of Daniel, where both Michael and Gabriel interact with the protagonist (Dan 8:16; 9:21; 10:13,21; 12:1). In 1*Enoch*, the names of four principal or archangels are given: Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Phanuel (1*En.* 40:9; 54:6; 71:8; cf. 9:1).¹³⁵ The giving of names reflects an interest in specific angels and their roles, which, in turn, relates to the concept of exalted angels.¹³⁶ What is common among the exalted angel traditions is the idea that there is an angel that has been placed by God in a position close to him, so that he is second only to God.¹³⁷ While these angels are not specifically called ‘angels of the Lord,’ their role in carrying the messages of the Lord while uniquely representing the Lord’s authority and presence is redolent of the angel of the Lord traditions. However, naming the angels resulted in the

¹³² Hannah, *Michael*, 31.

¹³³ In Zech, the angel of the Lord explains the prophet’s visions; in 4*Ezra* 4:1, it is Uriel, Jaol in the Apocalypse of Abraham, Michael in the Testament of Abraham, and Raphael in Tobit. Rowland, *Open*, 89.

¹³⁴ Kuhn, ‘Angelology,’ 217.

¹³⁵ Yet, the number of archangels is not concrete and seven archangels are occasionally mentioned (1*En.* 20:1-8; 81:5; 87:1; 90:22; cf. Rev 8:2), further evidence of an undefined angelology. The list of seven often includes the aforementioned four: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Phanuel. Rowland, *Open*, 88, Hannah, *Michael*, 29.

¹³⁶ See Olyan, *Thousands*.

¹³⁷ In the *Apoc. of Abraham*, Jaol describes himself as having the divine name dwelling in him. (*Apoc. Abr.* 10). It is also connected to other traditions (Dan 10:6; Ezek 1:28; 28:13). In 3*Enoch*, Metatron is a figure that is described as resembling God. See Rowland, *Open*, 97. The discussion of the exalted angel has offered many insights into development of early Christology. See Hurtado, *One*, 23-35, 71-90, Segal, *Two Powers*, 60-73, Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, 124-51, Bauckham, *Crucified*, 17-20.

development of a unique tradition for each individual as distinct from the somewhat nebulous identity of the angel of the Lord. In this way, Second Temple literature seems to have taken these traditions in a new direction without forgetting its roots, taking advantage of and clarifying the close association of the angel of the Lord with the Lord himself.

2.4 Contemporary Analyses of the Angel of the Lord Traditions

Attempts have been made to clarify the difficulties arising from the paradoxical separateness and union of the angel of the Lord with the Lord. A number of theories concerning this enigmatic relationship have been proposed. The list includes, but is not limited to: the interpolation, representation, identity, logos, hypostasis, *l'âme extérieure*, and messenger theories.¹³⁸ These theories all try to accommodate the 'indistinguishability' between the angel and the Lord himself in certain texts, whilst not ignoring those texts where the angel and the Lord are notably separate. The number of theories is indicative of the difficulty in merging the evidence of the various traditions concerning the angel of the Lord. Gieschen proposes, in his book on angelomorphic Christology, that in Jewish and Christian circles, the angel of the Lord was interpreted as a being distinct from God yet bearing the full divine authority of the Lord.¹³⁹ For his interpretation, the key text is Exod 23:20-21, 'behold, I send an angel in front of you . . . for my Name is in him.'¹⁴⁰ The angel is conceived as not separate from God, for the Name is synonymous with God's divine nature.¹⁴¹ While this proposal reflects Gieschen's interest in identifying angelic precedents for early understandings of Jesus' incorporation into the Godhead, his theory demonstrates the strong association between the particular angel of the Lord and the Lord himself.

¹³⁸ von Rad, *Theology*, 1:286, Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:27-29, Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, 55, Daniélou, *Theology*, 117, Freedman-Willoughby, Ringgren, and Fabry, 'מלאך' in *TDOT*, 8.

¹³⁹ Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, 68. Westermann rejects the notion that the angel of the Lord is a separate being. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 243. This is in accord with Robert North's suggestion that angels be thought of in regard to 'presence.' As messengers, angels represent God's vicarious presence. North, 'Separated,' 419-44.

¹⁴⁰ See also Hurtado, *One*, 75.

¹⁴¹ The possession of the divine name is an important element for Gieschen as he looks at angelomorphic figures in the Second Temple period. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic*, 55-57, 68-69.

In his commentary on Genesis, Westermann wrestles with the difficulty of trying to understand the angel of the Lord. He argues that the problem with most attempts to interpret the phrase ‘angel of the Lord’, is that one initially superimposes either the idea that this is an ‘angel’ or a ‘manifestation of God’ onto the other, prioritizing one view over the other.¹⁴² While he notes that the angel of the Lord undergoes profound changes from the portrayal in the patriarchal narratives to the post-exilic literature, he suggests that in the early narratives, the angel of the Lord is the ‘one who meets.’ He is not a figure, representative, or manifestation of God. For Westermann, this must be understood in the context of the patriarchal narratives, where the figure of a mediator between God and humans has not appeared. Though messages come via messenger, any divine oracle comes from God, not a prophet or person of God.¹⁴³ The one who receives the message of the angel, hears the sender in the words of the angel of the Lord and experiences God in the angel’s presence. Thus, in the words of the angel, God is present.¹⁴⁴ Herein lies the importance of the angel of the Lord, because the message is delivered through a messenger suitable to convey the origin, content, and authority of the message. The two elements of the angel and the message collaboratively communicate God’s message and presence. Consequently, the strength of Westermann’s argument is that it focuses on the role of the angels in the narrative while not deliberately trying to answer the ontological question, an approach applicable to an examination of the angel of the Lord in Matthew’s infancy narrative.

The large number of theories demonstrates that there is not a consensus about the interpretation of the angel of the Lord, but the many opinions all acknowledge the close association of the angel of the Lord with God. This interest is due to the strong association with the Lord in the texts. The narrators and characters in the text often, but not always, regard the words and deeds of the angel of the Lord as those of the Lord.¹⁴⁵ In this respect, the different theories function to maintain the close interpretive relationship between the angel and the

¹⁴² He notes that the idea of ‘angel’ arose when other heavenly beings were called ἄγγελος, and the Vulgate differentiated between the earthly (*nuntius*) and heavenly (*angelos*) messenger. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 242-43.

¹⁴³ Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 243.

¹⁴⁴ Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 244.

¹⁴⁵ Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:27.

Lord while respecting the diversity of texts in which the angel of the Lord appears. The close relation is reflected in the presence of the angel of the Lord being regarded as the presence of God and his message being received as if from the Lord's own mouth. With this in mind, the following analysis of the infancy narrative of Matthew will investigate how the tradition is incorporated to suggest the presence of God through the angel of the Lord and his message.

3 'DO NOT BE AFRAID' AND 'NAME HIM JESUS' (MATT 1:18-25)

In Matthew's Gospel, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream three times during the narrative of Jesus' birth and infancy (1:20; 2:13, 19).¹⁴⁶ While it may seem as though the angelic appearance repeats with little variation, each occurrence is essential to Matthew's picture of Jesus' infancy. With each explicit appearance of the angel of the Lord, there is a repeated chain of events: (1) an angel appears, (2) a message is delivered, (3) Joseph responds obediently and promptly, and (4) a fulfillment of an Old Testament passage is revealed. However, in each of the appearances, the message is different. With the message, Joseph and the reader are informed of the importance of specific events with regard to Jesus. The repetition of the angel's appearance reinforces the importance of the message. The one who brings the message establishes the significance of the message. Thus, by using the angel of the Lord and Old Testament fulfillment quotations, Matthew expresses a set of traditions that communicate the presence of the Lord. The following discussion will adhere to this outline, noting how the angel of the Lord works with other elements in the narrative to communicate the presence of God and his direction in Jesus' life.

3.1 Appearance of the Angel of the Lord

In Matt 1:18-25, the appearance of the angel of the Lord establishes a foundation and pattern of God's presence and delivers a message that will be repeated in two

¹⁴⁶ The mention of the angel of the Lord in Matt 1:24 refers back to the message delivered by the angel in Matt 1:20.

subsequent appearances of this angel in the infancy narrative (Matt 2:13, 19). In this narrative several elements work together through the angel to validate the presence of God and confirm the significance of the message. The following discussion will examine Matt 1:18-25 in relation to the timing of the angel's appearance, the language of the angel's message, the similarities to other birth narratives, and the significance of dreams.

3.1.1 *Divine Timing of the Appearance*

In Matt 1:18-25, the angel of the Lord appears at a point in the narrative that is crucial to its progress. In these first verses of the narrative, Matthew describes the situation of Mary and Joseph (Matt 1:18-19). He depicts a situation in which history is changed by perfectly timed divine intervention. Mary is betrothed to Joseph and is found to be with child by the Holy Spirit (ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου, Matt 1:18, cf. Matt 1:16). In Matt 1:19, the focus shifts from Mary to Joseph, who is planning to divorce Mary quietly for her apparent unfaithfulness.¹⁴⁷ The reader knows that the Holy Spirit has been at work and is participating in the future of this couple through the child (1:18). Joseph, however, is unaware that Mary's pregnancy is of divine origin.¹⁴⁸ In these two verses, Matthew suggests Mary and Joseph will divorce if the current trajectory continues, meanwhile the reader is aware of the potential for an unwarranted separation.¹⁴⁹ Matthew has narrated a story with tension, needful of divine intervention, without which the rest of the Gospel story would not unfold. This is not unlike the stories of the patriarchs where God's life changing interventions often include an angel of the Lord (Gen 22:9). God has waited until the moment of decision and, as Joseph was reflecting on these things

¹⁴⁷ See Luz, 118-19

¹⁴⁸ It has also been interpreted that Joseph's unwillingness to take Mary because he knows that God has made her sacred. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 119.

¹⁴⁹ See Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 118. An attentive reader of Matthew's gospel will know that the divorce will not be completed, for the genealogy in Matt 1:16 spoke of Joseph as the husband of Mary. Yet, this depends on how one defines 'husband.' In the time between the betrothal and consummation of the marriage, Mary and Joseph could have been called 'husband' and 'wife.' Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 199.

(ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος, Matt 1:20), an angel of the Lord appears to him (Matt 1:20).¹⁵⁰

3.1.2 Appearance to Joseph and Other Birth Narratives

Matthew's depiction of the angel's appearance is succinct; 'Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream,' (ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων).¹⁵¹ The appearance of the angel is initiated by the interjection ἰδοὺ (1:20; 2:13,19, cf. Luke 1:31), the equivalent to the Hebrew הִנֵּה or הִנֵּה, and a term frequently used by Matthew (Matt 62x; Luke 57x; Mark 7x).¹⁵² The Greek, ἰδοὺ, and its Semitic equivalents are not uncommon at angelic appearances, theophanies¹⁵³ and, significantly, birth announcements. For example, an angel appears to Hagar and announces the birth of Ishmael; 'An angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold [הִנֵּה], you have conceived and shall bear a son,"' (Gen 16:11; LXX, ἰδοὺ).¹⁵⁴ In addition, the wife of Manoah is visited by an angel and informed she will bear a son; 'Behold, you are barren, having borne no children, you shall conceive and bear a son.' (Judg 13:3; LXX, ἰδοὺ).¹⁵⁵ In both of these passages, the angel who appears to these women bearing the news of their conception is an angel of the Lord. On the other hand, when the birth of Isaac is announced to Abraham, no angel appears, rather, God (אלהים) himself announces, 'Behold, your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac,' (Gen 17:19).¹⁵⁶ When Matthew uses ἄγγελος κυρίου and ἰδοὺ, it is possible that he is drawing together the language and traditions of birth announcements of significant people, especially those of the patriarchal narratives. At the same time, Matthew's use of ἰδοὺ is included in the

¹⁵⁰ The use of ἐνθυμέομαι indicates Joseph was not taking this lightly, for he was reflecting upon it carefully. *BDAG*, 336

¹⁵¹ This is my translation. The NRSV does not translate ἰδοὺ and in my opinion this term is important for linking to other angelic appearances, theophanies, and birth announcements.

¹⁵² The use of ἰδοὺ following the genitive absolute, as it appears in this verse, is even more characteristic of Matthew (Matt 1:20; 2:1, 13, 19; 9:10, 18, 32; 12:46; 17:7; 26:47; 28:11). Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:206.

¹⁵³ Gen 16:11; 28:12; Exod 3:2; 23:20; 32:34; Num 20:16; 22:32; Judg 13:3; 1Kgs 19:5; 2Kgs 19:35; Isa 37:36; Zech 2:3.

¹⁵⁴ This is my translation. Again, the NRSV does not translate הִנֵּה as 'behold,' but 'now,' a distinction not visible in the Hebrew.

¹⁵⁵ My translation.

¹⁵⁶ In the Septuagint, God's announcement begins with ἰδοὺ despite its absence in the Masoretic text.

descriptions of the appearance of the angel and not in the words of the angel himself.¹⁵⁷ Compared to the Old Testament tradition and to Luke, who reflects the tradition of ἰδοὺ as part of the angel's dialogue (Luke 1:20,31,36; 2:10), it seems Matthew employs language both echoing that of a birth announcement and signaling the importance of the messenger, not simply the message. In this way, the significance of the message is indicated by an appearance of an angel of the Lord.

3.1.3 *Description of the Angel and the Focus on the Message*

While there are traditions surrounding Gabriel and other named angels, it is noteworthy that Matthew does not indicate a name or physical description of the angel, other than this angel is an 'angel of the Lord.'¹⁵⁸ In comparison, the angel of the Lord in the Lukan infancy narrative is described as being the archangel Gabriel, who 'stands in the presence of the Lord,' (Luke 1:19). For Matthew, the namelessness of the angel is true not only for this appearance, but also for subsequent appearances of angels in his Gospel (1:20; 2:13, 19; 28:2-5). By not naming the angel, Matthew avoids explicitly linking his interpretation of the angel of the Lord with Jewish apocalyptic literature or any specific tradition of a named angel such as Michael, or Gabriel. Instead, he appears to be reflecting traditions associated with the angel of the Lord. Therefore, Matthew would be expressing the traditions found in the Old Testament wherein the identity of the angel of the Lord is closely associated with the Lord himself and represents his presence. Moreover, if the angel of the Lord at the tomb in Matt 28:2-5 is any indication of Matthew's comfort with apocalyptic language and the angel of Lord, then the lack of detail is significant. Matthew is silent on the angel's entrance and exit, thereby avoiding extraneous details about the angel.¹⁵⁹ To provide detail, Matthew describes the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Joseph as in a dream (κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ, Matt 1:20; cf. Matt 2:13, 19).

¹⁵⁷ Gnuse, 'Genre,' 109.

¹⁵⁸ Matthew's use of ἄγγελος is anarthrous. While the lack of the article may seem to indicate an ambiguity about the angel, the Septuagint regularly refers to ἄγγελος κυρίου without the article. In this sense, Matthew is most likely utilizing the language of the Septuagint.

¹⁵⁹ Luz agrees about not describing the appearance of the angel. For him, it is all about the message. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 120.

3.1.4 Messages in Dreams

In antiquity, belief in the significance of dreams was widespread, and within the biblical tradition, the dream was a legitimate way in which God could communicate or reveal himself.¹⁶⁰ While God speaks through dreams (Gen 20:3, 6; 31:24; 1Kgs 3:5), dreams have not always been looked upon favorably. Verses in both Deuteronomy and Jeremiah warn about the deceit of those that prophesy through dreams (Deut 13:3, 5; Jer 23:28, 32; 29:8). Nevertheless, dreams are typically considered an authentic way to receive the voice of God.

In biblical narratives, the description of the dream experience is referred to as the dream report and can be divided into two types, symbolic¹⁶¹ and auditory.¹⁶² In Genesis, the narrative of Joseph contains symbolic dream reports, for which interpretation plays a critical role in assigning meaning to these dreams.¹⁶³ These dreams are, however, unlike those that appear in Matthew, which are auditory and convey the message directly. In his article on the Matthean infancy narrative, Robert Gnuse applies his research on dreams in the Old Testament and proposes that Matthew's dream reports strongly resemble those of the patriarchs.¹⁶⁴ He compares the structure of message dream reports of the ancient Near East, Old Testament, and later Greek and Roman dreams, noting that Matthew's structure has the most connections with those of the Old Testament, particularly with Genesis. Gnuse proposes an outline that highlights the similarities of Matthew to the Elohist dream reports with the implication that Matthew, at the very least, is using a structure that is most likely familiar to his audience.¹⁶⁵ While many of the dreams (and visions) in the patriarchal narratives portray the Lord himself speaking in the dreams, Matthew has the angel of the Lord delivering the messages in the dreams. The reason for this will be examined later in the conclusions to this chapter, however, it can be stated with some confidence that Matthew appears to

¹⁶⁰ Oepke, 'ὄναρ,' in *TDNT*, 5:221-30.

¹⁶¹ Gen 20:6; 28:11-15; 31:11,24; 1Kgs 3:5; Gen 40:8; 41:1; Judg 7:13; Dan 2:1; Gen 37:5.

¹⁶² Gnuse, *Theophany*, 59-60, Oepke, 'ὄναρ,' in *TDNT*, 5.

¹⁶³ Gen 37:5-6,8-10,19-20; 40:5,8-9,16; 41:1,5,7-8,11-12,15,17,22,25-26,32; 42:9.

¹⁶⁴ Kee disagrees, proposing that it is more likely the result of Hellenistic or contemporary Jewish influence. Kee, *Miracle*, 187.

¹⁶⁵ Gnuse, 'Genre,' 107.

be connecting the angel of the Lord traditions found in the patriarchal narratives, guidance given in dreams, and birth narratives (including ‘behold’), in order to indicate and emphasize the presence and activity of God in this story.¹⁶⁶ At this point, the attention can be turned to how the current discussion of the presence of God through the angel of the Lord relates to the messages delivered.

3.2 Significance of the Message Delivered by the Angel

Before the appearance of the angel in 1:20, Matthew tells the reader that Joseph is planning to dismiss Mary secretly (1:19-20a). The words of the angel both respond to these circumstances and propel the narrative forward.¹⁶⁷ The angel instructs Joseph on what to do (do not be afraid to wed Mary, 1:20, name him Jesus, 1:21) and in both instances provides the purpose or reason for his command (she has conceived by the Holy Spirit, 1:20, Jesus will save his people from their sins, 1:21). The following discussion will look at the significance of the two instructions by the angel of the Lord and argue that the angel of the Lord is crucial as a credible authority from whom to receive these messages.

3.2.1 *Do Not Be Afraid*

The angel’s first words, ‘do not be afraid,’ are quite common among theophanies and angel appearances in the Old Testament.¹⁶⁸ In addition, Brown notes that the phrase, ‘fear not’ is also common among birth narratives. However, Edgar Conrad has criticized Brown’s use of ‘do not be afraid’ or ‘fear not’ as evidence of a birth announcement. He notes that ‘fear not’ appears in all of Brown’s examples in the New Testament, but not at all in the Old Testament texts Brown cites as representative.¹⁶⁹ However, rather than condemn, Conrad is interested in

¹⁶⁶ In Gen 31:11, an angel of God speaks to Jacob in a dream.

¹⁶⁷ See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:203.

¹⁶⁸ Gen 15:1; 26:24; 46:3; Num 14:9; 21:34; Deut 1:21; 3:2; 31:8; Josh 8:1; 10:8; 11:6; Judg 6:23; 2Kgs 19:6; 2Chr 20:15; Isa 10:24; 37:6; 41:13; 43:1; 44:2

¹⁶⁹ Yet, ‘fear not’ appears in all the New Testament birth announcements (Matt 1:20, Luke 1:13,30). Furthermore, the particle, ‘behold’ is either missing (Luke 1:31) or displaced (Matt 1:20). In Genesis 35:17 and 1 Samuel 4:20 ‘fear not’ is used in association with a birth, but in both cases it is used by the midwife to comfort the dying mother during childbirth. This is significantly different from the birth accounts in the New Testament. Conrad, ‘Annunciation,’ 656-67.

amending Brown's structure to strengthen Brown's thesis that the birth announcement was a pre-Matthean form.¹⁷⁰ Conrad asserts that while 'fear not' does not appear in Old Testament birth announcements, it does occur in a form that announces or promises 'offspring,' especially to the patriarchs.¹⁷¹ Influenced by the work of Robert Neff on Old Testament announcements, Conrad offers a simpler form than the one offered by Brown.¹⁷² He bases his conclusion on five texts (Gen 16:11-12; 17:19; 1Kgs 13:2; Isa 7:14-17; 1Chr 22:9-10; cf. Judg 13:5-7 which contain all but the second element). These include the texts that Brown utilizes, but also three additional ones that concern the birth of a Davidic King: Josiah (1Kgs 13), Immanuel (Isa 7), and Solomon (1Chr 22).¹⁷³

Matthew does not conform perfectly to these patterns despite their being applied to the announcement of the birth of a Davidic king. The command, 'fear not' is usually spoken to allay the fear experienced by those in the presence of the divine (cf. Matt 28:5). However, the command issued to Joseph is not related to his fear in the presence of the angel, but rather to his reluctance to take Mary as his wife.¹⁷⁴ Joseph had believed that Mary's pregnancy was evidence of her unfaithfulness, but then the angel appears to inform him that her pregnancy is of another origin. The appearance of the angel of the Lord indicates to Joseph and to the reader of the message both its authority and origin. As a result, Joseph can rest his fears about taking Mary as his wife because 'the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit' (Matt 1:20). In a similar way to his use of 'behold,' Matthew uses language typical to the form of a birth narrative and angelophany, but does not indicate that Joseph is afraid. As a result, the actual appearance of the angel does not receive a great deal of attention, and, perhaps more importantly, Joseph's only response to the angel's appearance is obedience to the message.

¹⁷⁰ See Brown, *Birth*, 155-59.

¹⁷¹ Gen 26:24; 46:34; Jer 30:10-11; 46:27-28; cf. Gen 15:1. Conrad, 'Annunciation,' 657, 62.

¹⁷² Conrad, 'Annunciation,' 657-58.

A: An announcement of the birth with

B: Designation of the name

C: Details of the child's identity

¹⁷³ Even Gen 17 has royal connotations. Conrad, 'Annunciation,' 658.

¹⁷⁴ In Luke, Zechariah should not be startled by an answer to his prayers (Luke 1:13) and Mary is not to be troubled by being called the favored one (Luke 1:28-30).

3.2.2 Name Him Jesus

In addition to the command to take Mary as his wife, Joseph is issued a second command and an explanation why he should be obedient. He is to name the child Jesus, 'for he will save his people from their sins,' (Matt 1:21; cf. Matt 26:28). The delivery of the particular name to be used fits into the pattern of other birth announcements. In his commentary on the birth narratives, Brown analyses the Old Testament birth announcements of Ishmael (Gen 16:7-13), Isaac (Gen 17:21; 18:1-15) and Samson (Judg 13:3-23) along with those of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-20) and Jesus (Matt 20-21; Luke 1:26-37). Brown presents five steps he deems typical to biblical birth announcements.¹⁷⁵ In Matthew, many of these elements are present. For example, an angel of the Lord appears and addresses one of the parents, delivering the message of the coming child, the child's name, and the reason for the name. Specifically, the angel indicates that Joseph is to name the child Jesus, 'for he will save his people from their sins,' (Matt 1:21). By indicating that Jesus will save his people from their sins, Matthew underlines the religious and moral character of messianic redemption. While Matthew omits an explanation of how Jesus will save in these verses, he ultimately answers the question by means of the Gospel narrative, culminating in the resurrection in Matt 28.¹⁷⁶ In this way, whilst speaking of Jesus' birth, Matthew is already pointing toward the passion, a direction made credible through the appearance of an angel of the Lord.

3.3 The Message Fulfilled

After the angel finishes delivering the message to Joseph, Matthew announces, 'All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him

¹⁷⁵ Brown, *Birth*, 156.

1. The appearance of the Lord or angel of the Lord.
2. Fear or prostration of the visionary
3. Divine message
4. An objection by visionary or demand for a sign
5. Giving of a sign

¹⁷⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:210.

Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us,”” (Matt 1:22-23).¹⁷⁷ In all of Matthew’s fulfillment quotations, there are only two times that the words of the Lord (τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου) are mentioned, both of which coincide with an appearance of the angel of the Lord in the infancy narrative. The words of God spoken by the angel of the Lord point to what fulfill the words of the Lord (τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου) spoken through the prophet. Matthew is emphasizing that it is the Lord’s words at work in the narrative. For Matt 1:18-25, this manifests in the name of Jesus and Joseph’s obedient response to the angel.

3.3.1 *Jesus Emmanuel, Son of David*

The way that Matthew has arranged Matt 1:21-25 serves to identify Jesus as the Son of David and as Emmanuel. Within the infancy narrative, only here does Matthew place a fulfillment quotation before he speaks of Joseph’s response to the angel. Matthew inserts the fulfillment quotation from Isaiah and then concludes the section with Joseph’s response to the angel’s commands, ‘When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, . . . and he named him Jesus,’ (Matt 1:24-25). The order is reversed in the other two appearance of an angel of the Lord (2:14-15, 21-23). The two actions Joseph takes establish his legal fatherhood of Jesus. By taking Mary as his wife, he claims responsibility for the child, and by naming Jesus, Joseph acknowledges Jesus as his son. Previously, Matthew has explained that Jesus is a Son of David through the legal fatherhood of Joseph, and the Son of God through the creative power of the Holy Spirit at his conception.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, by placing the quotation from Isaiah next to the angel’s message, the two names (Jesus and Emmanuel) are placed in proximity so that both meanings applied to the child born to Mary.¹⁷⁹

Matthew’s fulfillment quotation gives the name ‘Emmanuel’ to Jesus, but it seems the meaning, ‘God with us,’ is more important to Matthew than the name itself.¹⁸⁰ Matthew is quoting from Isaiah 7:14 LXX, which is a message spoken to

¹⁷⁷ Although it is possible to include the fulfillment prophecy as part of the angel’s speech, the parallel use of other fulfillment quotations are in favor of ending the message before 1:22. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:211. For contrasting perspective, see Fenton, ‘Divinity.’

¹⁷⁸ Brown, *Birth*, 138-9.

¹⁷⁹ Boers even calls them ‘semantically equivalent.’ Boers, ‘Language,’ 224.

¹⁸⁰ Brown, *Birth*, 152.

the House of David, and most likely draws his interpretation of ‘Emmanuel’ from Isaiah 8:10, ‘speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.’¹⁸¹ The interpretation, ‘God with us,’ helps in establishing the divine sonship of Jesus as well as his Davidic lineage.¹⁸² Furthermore, the mention of the presence of God connected with Jesus in Matt 1:23 forms an *inclusio* with Jesus’ parting words in 28:20, ‘And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age,’ (cf. 18:20). Together, they stand in a reciprocal relationship. In Matt 28:16-20, the concern is to demonstrate that the risen Jesus is none other than the earthly Jesus, and in Matt 1:18-25, Matthew indicates the earthly Jesus is also the exalted Jesus who is with his community.¹⁸³ Moreover, since Jesus hereafter is not called Emmanuel, and since 1:25 concludes with Joseph naming him Jesus, this suggests the significance of Emmanuel is to be read into the name of Jesus. This reflects Matthew’s view of the eschatological understanding of the presence of God through Jesus.¹⁸⁴ God’s work through Jesus has resulted in a final and complete manifestation of God’s presence with us.¹⁸⁵ It is very appropriate that an angel of the Lord appears, signaling the correlation of God’s presence with the beginnings of this child’s life.

3.3.2 *Joseph Responds Obediently*

In birth narratives, there is usually some sort of reaction to the birth announcement.¹⁸⁶ When Sarah and Abraham discover they are to have a child, they both laugh in disbelief (Gen 17:17; 18:12; cf. Gen 17:3; 18:2). Hagar names God in response to her good news from the angel (Gen 16:13). In Judges 13:2-23, after an angel of the Lord appears to Manoah’s wife to announce her conception, Manoah prays that the messenger will return. When he does, Manoah tries to feed the angel and discover his name. He does not realize this was an angel of the Lord

¹⁸¹ This follows the second mention of Emmanuel in Isa 8:8. The translation of Isaiah is an interpretation of Isaiah’s intent for a future deliverer, one that would be superior to any heroes begotten by sexual intercourse. Walker, ‘Errata,’ 392.

¹⁸² Brown, *Birth*, 153.

¹⁸³ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 122-23.

¹⁸⁴ Brown, *Birth*, 153.

¹⁸⁵ This is an important theme for Matthew, and has been explored thoroughly by David Kupp, *Emmanuel*.

¹⁸⁶ This is the fourth item on Brown’s birth announcement outline. Brown, *Birth*, 156.

until the angel departs, ascending in a fire. Manoah then says to his wife, ‘We shall surely die, for we have seen God,’ (Judg 13:22). Luke’s infancy narrative follows Brown’s birth announcement pattern almost flawlessly.¹⁸⁷ Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, trembles in fear when the angel appears (Luke 1:12), and when he questions the angel; he is not permitted to speak until Jesus’ circumcision (Luke 1:20, 63-64). Mary questions the angel when she is told of her pregnancy, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ (Luke 1:34). In Matthew, when the message of the angel is completed, nothing more is said about the angel. There is no mention of an exit or departure; instead, Matthew emphasizes the immediate obedience of Joseph following the message, ‘When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him,’ (Matt 1:24). Joseph takes Mary as his wife and names the child Jesus, in obedience to the angel’s commands.¹⁸⁸ Significantly, the verbs used in the message by the angel are the same ones that appear in the description of Joseph’s actions (παραλαβεῖν, καλέσεις, 1:20-1, παρέλαβεν, ἐκάλεσεν, 1:24-5).

Consequently, Joseph’s only response to the angel’s announcement is obedience. As indicated earlier, there is neither a fearful reaction to the angel’s appearance, nor disbelief or protest to the messages. Matthew has already referred to Joseph as righteous (δίκαιος ὢν, Matt 1:19), but commitment to fulfilling the Lord’s command is realized in his actions in response to the angel. On one hand, this is indicative of Jesus’ lineage and home in which he would have been raised, but on other hand, obedience to God is an important theme for Matthew. Joseph’s unquestioning obedience presages the obedience to God that will be demonstrated by Jesus throughout his earthly life (Matt 4:1-11; 26:47-56; 27:40-44). For Jesus’ followers, only the one that does the will of the Father will enter the kingdom (Matt 7:21; cf. Matt 5:20; 19:17) or be called his brother and sister (Matt 12:50). Another example is Matthew’s parable of the two sons which illustrates that the one who ultimately does his Father’s will is the one who finds favor (Matt 21:28-31; cf. Matt 25:21-23). In addition, one’s obedience should bear fruit (Matt 7:17; 12:33; 13:23; cf. Matt 5:16) and should not seek public reward, for the Father sees in secret (Matt 6:4, 6, 18). To do otherwise will result in judgment (Matt 3:10; 13:42, 50; 21:19; 22:11-13; 25:31-46; cf. Matt 16:27). In this manner, one

¹⁸⁷ Brown, *Birth*, 157. With the number of deviations that Matthew has from this pattern, it could be argued that Brown modeled his outline primarily on Luke 1-2.

¹⁸⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:218.

should be perfect like the Father (Matt 5:48; cf. Matt 19:21) and seek after righteousness (Matt 5:10; 6:33). Joseph's obedient and private reaction to the angel's message and the unquestionable fruit his response bore demonstrate a view of the angel's message equivalent to a message from God himself.

3.3.3 *Summary*

In Matt 1:18-25, the portrayal of the angel of the Lord reflects a number of different traditions to demonstrate the presence of God in the infancy narrative. Like other Old Testament birth announcements, an angel of the Lord appears, announcing the birth of a son and the significance of his name. In addition, the angel appears with perfect timing, and prevents Joseph, a key figure in Jesus' lineage, from divorcing Jesus' mother.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, Matthew does not hold tightly to the announcement formula, but rather recalls the "angel of the Lord" tradition while keeping the focus on the significance of the angel's message. This, along with the fact of Joseph's obedient response, allows Matthew to introduce key elements (Son of David, Emmanuel, and God's presence) into his Gospel. Moreover, the appearance of the angel of the Lord in Matt 1:18-25 establishes a pattern that will be continued in the two subsequent appearances of the angel of the Lord in this Gospel.

4 'GO TO EGYPT' (MATT 2:13-15)

In between the first and second appearance of an angel of the Lord, Matthew narrates that after Jesus was born, magi from the east began searching for him. Having seen what they refer to as 'his star,' they asked Herod for the birth location of the King of the Jews in order that they might go and pay him homage.¹⁹⁰ Herod, frightened, secretly calls for the magi and attempts to trick them into revealing the location of the newborn child (Matt 2:3, 7-8). Herod's plan, however, fails. The

¹⁸⁹ Boers, 'Language.'

¹⁹⁰ Although stars have been associated with angels in apocalyptic literature, Matthew's use more likely is connected with Num 24:17 and the narrative of Balaam or the connection of an astrological phenomenon to the birth of a significant person, often royalty. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:233-36, Brown, *Birth*, 170-74.

magi present gifts to Jesus and disregard Herod's request after they are warned in a dream to leave by another route (Matt 2:12).

In Matt 2:13-15, the angel of the Lord appears again to Joseph and delivers another message at a point of developing crisis. As in Matt 1:18-25, Joseph acts obediently, bringing his family out of danger, and fulfilling another prophecy. In this regard, Matt 2:13-15 has much in common with Matt 1:18-25. The discussion which follows will take note of that correlation while looking at (1) God's presence in the narrative apart from the angel, (2) the divine timing of the angel's appearance, (3) the significance of the similarities of Matt 2:13-15 to Matt 1:18-25, and (4) the importance of the angel's message and Joseph's response.

4.1 God's Activity in the Star, Dream, and the Angel of the Lord

The angel of the Lord is not the only way that God's activity is manifested in the infancy narrative. More specifically, Matthew refers to the magi being guided by a star and a dream towards Jesus. While the guiding star can be considered a cosmological phenomenon, Allison argues that since angels act as guides, shine, and can descend from heaven (to a particular place), it is likely that the star in Matthew could be considered an angel.¹⁹¹ Then, in Matt 2:12, the author uses the passive, 'having been warned in a dream,' (χρηματισθέντες κατ' ὄναρ, 2:12) to narrate how the magi knew not to return to Herod. The repeated phrase (κατ' ὄναρ) from Matt 1:20, 2:13, and 2:19 indicates that the magi were, like Joseph, recipients of divine guidance, although Matthew does not mention a specific message or the appearance of an angel. Moreover, the appearance of an angel of the Lord to Joseph in Matt 2:13 begins 'after they had left,' (Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν, 2:13) suggesting a continuity of God's guidance following the magi's departure in 2:12 (Matt 2:22; 27:19).¹⁹² Consequently, in Matt 1-2, the Lord is also at work, guiding not only Joseph but the magi as well.

¹⁹¹ Allison, *Studies*, 28.. He likens the star to the pillar of cloud and fire that went before the Israelites.

¹⁹² Note the use of the same verb in 2:12 (ἀναχωρέω) when the magi leave. In doing so, Matthew draws these narratives together (cf. 2:15, 19).

4.2 The Angel of the Lord Appears Again

When an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph for the second time (Matt 2:13-14), the description narrated by Matthew is essentially a repetition of the description of the angelic appearance in Matt 1:20-21. The subtle shifts of the tense of φαίνω (ἐφάνη, φαίνεται), the slight change of word order, and word choice for the indirect object (αὐτῷ, τῷ Ἰωσήφ) amount to the description and actions of the angel being interpreted as functionally identical.¹⁹³ As a result, the repetition focuses on the message and not the appearance of the messenger. In addition, the elements that indicated the significance of the messenger discussed earlier are maintained and the repetition creates a pattern for the reader. The notable difference, as will also be witnessed in Matt 2:20-23, is contained in the message.

4.3 The Significance of the Message Delivered by the Angel

In this second dream appearance, Joseph is commanded to, ‘get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you,’ (Matt 2:13).

The message of the angel also carries an explanation for the instruction. Joseph is to take his family and go to Egypt in order to escape Herod’s attempts to locate and destroy Jesus. This is first time that the reader and Joseph are made aware that the child’s life is in danger. Earlier, Herod’s decision to pursue Jesus to destroy, rather than worship, is only intimated by Matthew. To illustrate, in Matthew 2:2-3, Herod, and all Jerusalem with him, were troubled (ταράσσω) at the magi’s search for the King of the Jews, and in 2:12, the magi were warned to not return to Herod. Any doubt about Herod’s intentions is removed by the angel’s message. His intent is to search for Jesus in order to destroy him. Joseph must flee to Egypt. Herod’s response to Jesus further indicates the special status of this child and initiates the conflict Jesus will continue to experience throughout his earthly life. In the first appearance (Matt 1:18-25), the angel’s message reveals the role of the Holy Spirit in his birth and the purpose for his name; he is to save his people from their sins (1:20-21). Now, the message delivered to Joseph in the dream

¹⁹³ It is possible that some of the differences are evidence of further redactive work on the birth announcement in 1:19-21. Gnuse, ‘Genre,’ 109.

reveals that this child is subject to both the protection of the Lord and the wrath of Herod. Similarly, in Matt 1:20, the angel of the Lord appears at a crucial time to prevent the divorce of Joseph and Mary. Once again the angel arrives at a crisis point, preserving the life of Jesus and signaling the significance of this child.

Much like his response to the angel in the first dream appearance, Joseph immediately obeys the words of the angel. His obedience is highlighted again in the use of the same verbs the angel spoke (ἐγείρω, παραλαμβάνω, εἰμί), indicating a fulfillment of a word from the Lord.

4.4 Fulfillment Quotation

Matthew finishes this passage with another fulfillment quotation (cf. Matt 1:22-25). For the second time and last time, Matthew will call attention to the Lord's role in his fulfillment formula. Using the same phrase used in Matt 1:22, Matthew states this was, 'to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet,' (Matt 2:15).¹⁹⁴ The allusion, 'out of Egypt I have called my son,' is taken from Hosea 11:1. Matthew has taken this verse out of its original context, where 'son' clearly refers to Israel, and has applied it to Jesus, implying that Jesus is repeating the experiences of Israel. Whether one interprets the Old Testament quotation as alluding to Jacob's flight to Egypt or Moses' exodus out, Jesus' journey parallels that of Israel's own (cf. Matt 4:1-11). In this way, Matthew portrays Jesus recapitulating the redemption and exodus from Egypt.¹⁹⁵ In addition, this text refers to Jesus as 'son' for the first time, a designation that will be repeated at his baptism (Matt 3:17) and during his testing by the devil (Matt 4:3-7).¹⁹⁶

After Joseph receives the message of the angel in Matthew 2:13, he obediently responds by fleeing to Egypt with Jesus and his mother. The divine timing of the angel's appearance and Joseph's reaction is demonstrated in the verses following the command to flee which tell of Herod's search and murder of all the children under two years of age in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas (Matt 2:16-18). Herod was infuriated that he been tricked by the magi (2:16), but

¹⁹⁴ Hagner notes that Hos 11:1 was not actually a prophecy, but referring to the historical exodus of Israel. Nevertheless, Matthew, according to Hagner, is using its similarities to refer to two moments in redemptive history.

¹⁹⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:263.

¹⁹⁶ Kingsbury, *Structure*, 42-53, Nolan, *Son*.

his destructive anger was directed toward Jesus. It was not, however, the wise men who spoilt his plans. Rather, it was God, through dreams, directing both the magi and Jesus away from Herod. Joseph then obeys the angel's command to remain in Egypt until spoken to again (Matt 2:13), which foreshadows another message from the Lord.

5 'GO TO ISRAEL' (MATT 2:19-23)

The third and final appearance of an angel of the Lord comes after Herod dies. The danger has passed and the angel returns to Joseph, who has obediently remained in Egypt (cf. 2:13). Here we see the only addition to the typical angel appearance formula. In this case, the narrator reveals where the angel appears to Joseph, 'in Egypt,' (ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, Matt 2:19). Joseph has gone to Egypt and remained there until he was visited again. He has followed the words of the angel of the Lord each time without fail. His obedience speaks not only to the character of Joseph, but also to the significance of the messenger and the messages.

5.1 Third Appearance of the Angel of the Lord

The language and structure of the third appearance of an angel of the Lord to Joseph closely links it to the second encounter between Joseph and the angel (Matt 2:13, 19). When the angel directs Joseph and his family to a new location, the same language is used (almost word for word) for Joseph's obedient response. Because these appearances form a series of moves into different geographical locations (from Bethlehem, Matt 2:6, 8; to Egypt, Matt 2:13; and then to Israel, Matt 2:20; and Galilee, Matt 2:22), Stendahl has suggested that these relocations attempt to answer the question 'from where does Jesus come?'¹⁹⁷ While there is validity to Stendahl's argument, to suggest these passages answer this question only would miss much of the significance of what has been discussed above with regard to God's presence and activity in Jesus' life. Moreover, the third angel appearance builds upon this foundation. The chart below demonstrates the strong parallel

¹⁹⁷ Stendahl, 'Quis et Unde.'

between the angel appearances, the messages, and Joseph's responses in Matt 2:13-15 and Matt 2:19-21. As a result, much of what has been said before regarding the significance of these elements applies here as well.

<i>2nd Angel appearance (2:13-15a)</i>		<i>3rd Angel appearance (2:19-21)</i>	
Introduction and message delivered (2:13)	Joseph's response (2:14-15a)	Introduction and message delivered (2:19-20)	Joseph's response (2:21)
<p>Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων</p> <p>ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ</p> <p>καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἂν εἶπω σοι</p> <p>μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό.</p>	<p>ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβεν τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ</p> <p>νυκτὸς καὶ ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἕως τῆς τελευτῆς Ἡρώδου</p>	<p>Τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Ἡρώδου ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ λέγων</p> <p>ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ</p> <p>καὶ πορεύου εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ</p> <p>τεθνήκασιν γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου</p>	<p>ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβεν τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ</p> <p>καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ</p>

Despite the similarities, Matt 2:19-21 also contributes to the narrative. In particular, Matt 2:19-20 bears a striking parallel to Moses' return to Egypt. In Exod 4:19-20, the Lord appears to Moses in Midian and commands him to go back to Egypt, 'for all those who were seeking your life are dead,' (Exod 4:19). Moses responds by taking his wife and children back to Egypt. In the Septuagint, it is noted that the king of Egypt had died in the verse preceding the Lord's command to Moses. Like Exod 4:19-20, Matthew has the Lord come and offer assurance that the danger has passed; however, Matthew portrays this message coming by means

of the angel of the Lord, similarly communicating the presence of God, but adeptly coordinating with the other angel appearance in the infancy narrative, all of which are followed by an Old Testament fulfillment quotation.

5.2 Fulfillment quotation

The fulfillment quotation that follows the journey of Joseph and his family into Galilee differs from the other quotations in the infancy narrative. Matthew states that Joseph moved from Egypt, ‘so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean,”’ (ὥπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται, Matt 2:23).¹⁹⁸ In contrast to the previous two fulfillment quotations associated with the angel’s appearances, Matthew speaks of the word coming through the prophets, rather than the prophet. His use of the plural and the unexpected replacement of λέγοντος with ὅτι may be because Matthew is not quoting scripture directly, for the wording does not match any particular Old Testament text (cf. Matt 26:54). Matthew may have been using another source, or alluding to a number of different texts.¹⁹⁹ The apparent ambiguity may also be why Matthew omits the phrase (τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου, Matt 1:22; 2:15) which appears in the previous two angel appearances. Nevertheless, Matthew has followed the pattern of verifying the words of the angel with a fulfillment quotation, indicating the significance of Jesus and God’s activity in his life. Consequently, the narrative of Jesus’ birth and infancy concludes with this fulfillment, demonstrating that God’s hands have been directing and protecting Jesus and his family. In Matthew’s infancy narrative, this is accomplished almost exclusively through the actions of the angel of the Lord.

6 CONCLUSION

¹⁹⁸ At first, this seems like an allusion to Samson, but Matthew Black argues that there is no sound allusion to the birth or vocation of Samson in the birth of Jesus. Instead, it is probably a reference to Isaiah 11:1 (cf. Luke 1:35, cf. 1QSb iv: 27,28). Black, *Scrolls*, 83.

¹⁹⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 274–75.

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the significance of the angel of the Lord in the infancy narrative of Matthew. It has been noted that Matthew uses traditions from the Old Testament and Second Temple literature to construct the context in which the angel's presence and message can be interpreted as if they were God's own. In Matt 1-2, Matthew portrays the angel's method of instruction to Joseph in an almost identical manner each time an appearance occurs. Using nearly the same words, the visitation is narrated, 'behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.'

1:20	ἰδοὺ	ἄγγελος	κυρίου	ἐφάνη	κατ' ὄναρ	αὐτῷ	λέγων
2:13	ἰδοὺ	ἄγγελος	κυρίου	φαίνεται	κατ' ὄναρ	τῷ Ἰωσήφ	λέγων
2:19	ἰδοὺ	ἄγγελος	κυρίου	φαίνεται	κατ' ὄναρ	τῷ Ἰωσήφ	ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ λέγων

The description is short and succinct. The only actions of the angel are his appearing (φαίνω) and his speaking (λέγω). In both of these actions, the angel represents the one who sent him. In this way, Joseph experiences God's presence and hears his words. Matthew's laconic depiction of the angel's appearance complements the purpose to convey a message to Joseph. The message that the angel delivers is specifically relevant to the context in which the angel appears. Each angelic appearance begins with a genitive absolute, calling attention to the situation that Joseph and his company were in at that time: 'when he had resolved to do this,' (1:20), 'now after they [magi] had left,' (2:13), 'when Herod died,' (2:19). Matthew establishes the context for the impeccable timing of the angel's visit, after which the angel of the Lord delivers the message.²⁰⁰ These messages command Joseph what to do and why to do it. After each appearance, Joseph responds with exemplary obedience. Importantly, what Joseph does in each case has tremendous impact. Each time he acts, Matthew speaks of an Old Testament prophecy that these actions have fulfilled. Matthew is keen to communicate that Joseph's obedient responses to the angel demonstrate that this has been part of God's plan from before Jesus was born.²⁰¹ For Matthew, every element was necessary and chosen specifically to assist in bringing this point to the reader, including the choice of an angel of the Lord as God's messenger, through whom all activity has been governed. Consequently, all of the actions by Joseph and the

²⁰⁰ Boers, 'Language,' 223.

²⁰¹ In addition, Joseph's obedience plays a role in Matthew's presentation of discipleship qualities.

magi that are related to Jesus are a response to an action of God, through an angel, dream, or star. The whole of Matt 1:18-2:25 is a narrative of God's hand in Jesus' life. This will seem all the more important when set in contrast to Matt 4:1-11, where God's presence is no less real, but is much less tangible. In those verses, Jesus will choose what to do in the context of the devil's advances, his understanding of God's presence, and knowledge of scriptural tradition.

6.1 The Angel of the Lord and Jesus as Emmanuel

After the angel's first message to Joseph, a fulfillment of the Lord's words spoken through the prophet that this child will be called Emmanuel, 'God with us' (Matt 1:22-23) is declared. Through the angel's message Matthew communicates God's manifestation of his presence, through Jesus, in a new and significant way. The birth of Jesus initiates a new way in which to experience the presence of God. In his Gospel narrative this is further strengthened by the theme's repetition in Matt 18:20 and again, climactically, at the end of the Gospel (Matt 28:20).²⁰² For Matthew, Jesus is the locus of God's action and his presence. In light of this, it can be argued that Jesus, as the revelation of God, stands in contrast to the other forms of revelation Matthew uses in his infancy narrative. Gnuse suggests that the dreams in Old Testament narratives attributed to the Elohists serve as a form of revelation, which assumes a distant and transcendent deity unlike the anthropomorphic style of revelation found in the Yahwists. For Gnuse, dreams preserve the 'distance' between God and the recipient of the dream. Consequently, he suggests that Matthew may have deliberately wanted to highlight this sense of transcendence, contrasting it with the presence of God experienced in Jesus.²⁰³ Therefore, it is possible that the Old Testament tradition of the angel of the Lord in Matthew serves to communicate the activity of God whilst maintaining the verity of God's transcendence. Additionally, the voice of God from heaven at Jesus' baptism explicitly announces his identity, confirming what was said about Jesus in the infancy narratives. These baptismal words are in harmony with the activity of

²⁰² Kupp traces Matthew's incorporation of the presence of God throughout the whole of the Gospel's narrative. Kupp, *Emmanuel*, 52-108.

²⁰³ Gnuse, 'Genre,' 118. He also suggests that the Jewish audience was respected, similar to the use of kingdom of heaven, in this use of dreams to honor God's transcendence.

God conveyed by the angel of the Lord early in Jesus' conception and infancy. Consequently, if Matthew had the traditions of the patriarchal narratives in mind when he composed his infancy narrative, he would have been able to uniquely emphasize the direction of God's hand in the history of his people through the birth of Jesus. This could be done without overshadowing the new form of revelation to be found in Jesus. This point is strengthened by the succinct and repetitive way in which Matthew portrays the angel, utilizing the characteristic descriptors of the Old Testament tradition. By this succinctness, the author keeps the focus on his Christological and theological themes, not on the angel. In addition, the near verbatim repetition of the idea of the presence of God through the angel leads the reader to anticipate God's action in a way that continually points to the life and ministry of his Son.²⁰⁴

Within a variety of possible interpretations, one common element concerning the angel of the Lord streams through the Old Testament to Matthew's Gospel. It is that the words and actions of the angel of the Lord are uniquely associated with the Lord and are taken as if they were from God himself. When considering the importance of the messages delivered, Matthew's portrayal of the angel of the Lord was an ideal way to communicate the presence and words of God, a significant element in the larger picture of God at work.

²⁰⁴ See Anderson, 'Redundancy.'

Chapter 3

Angels at the Temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)

1 INTRODUCTION

Following the infancy narrative, Matthew describes the ministry and preaching of the John the Baptist, to whom Jesus comes for baptism (Matt 3:1-12). In Matt 3:13-17, Matthew narrates Jesus being baptized and the heavens opening, with a voice announcing, 'This is my beloved Son' (Matt 3:17). After this significant event, Jesus is led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil (Matt 4:1).

At the heart of Matthew's portrait of Jesus' temptation in the desert is the repeated demonstration of Jesus' obedience to God alone. This is manifested in three temptations, each following a similar, and somewhat formulaic pattern. What is unique to Matthew is the double use of angels to convey the significance of the second temptation and the divine response to Jesus' testing. First, the devil tempts Jesus with a quotation from the Psalms that promises angelic protection if he were to jump off the temple roof (Matt 4:6; Luke 4:10). Secondly, angels appear and minister to Jesus after the devil departs (Matt 4:11; Mark 1:13).

The following discussion will examine angels in the temptation narrative in order to demonstrate that God is present with Jesus during his temptation and approves of the result of the devil's defeat. Specifically, the discussion will focus on Jesus' second temptation atop the temple (Matt 4:5-7) and, in that context, the angels who assist Jesus after the devil is defeated (Matt 4:11) within the context of Jesus' obedience and the Old Testament quotations. After briefly establishing the context of this narrative within Matthew, the following examination of the role of angels in Matthew's temptation narrative will be divided into two main sections corresponding to the two uses of angels in the narrative. The first section will discuss the promise of angelic help by the devil when Jesus is on the temple roof

(Matt 4:5-7). Within this analysis, the three main elements of the setting, the devil's taunt using Psalm 91, and Jesus decision to forego the assistance of angels will be discussed individually in order to draw out fully the role of angels in the narrative. With this discussion of Matt 4:5-7 in the background, the significance of Matthew's reference to angels in Matthew 4:11 will be demonstrated through Matthew's adaptation of Markan material, the relevance of the angels' appearance to Psalm 91, and the rest of Matthew's narrative.

2 CONTEXT OF GOD'S PRESENCE

Before beginning an analysis of the role of angels in Matthew's temptation narrative, it will be necessary first to set the context for the discussion by briefly noting the sources of Matthew's temptation narrative, the significance of its relationship to the previous baptismal narrative, and the interpretive value of Israel's exodus.

2.1 Sources of Matthew's Temptation Narrative

For Matthew, the temptation narrative is an example of his use of sources to both maintain and augment the role of angels in his narrative. In this manner, Matthew has uniquely utilized traditions he shares with Mark and Luke, infusing his narrative with a distinctively Matthean flavor, particularly in Matt 4:11.

Each of the three Synoptic Gospels presents the temptation of Jesus somewhat differently. Mark presents a brief description of the temptation after the narrative of Jesus' baptism, 'And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him,' (Mark 1:12-13). Despite the brevity, Mark forms the foundation from which Matthew and Luke portray this same event. All three Synoptic Gospels share the basic idea of Jesus being driven

by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.²⁰⁵ However, Matthew and Luke diverge from the laconic Markan description by including a dialogue between Jesus and the devil for three separate temptations (Matt 4:1-11//Luke 4:1-13). The literary similarities between the longer accounts in Matthew and Luke raise the question of the likelihood of a shared source other than Mark.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the Matthean account still bears the fingerprints of Matthew's hand. Besides the typical Matthean language,²⁰⁷ the temptation narrative describes the final temptation on a mountain, a location that has been demonstrated to have significance for Matthew (Matt 4:8-10; cf. 28:16-20).²⁰⁸ Furthermore, Matthew emphasizes the word of God through additional quoted material in Jesus' retort in the first temptation, 'but by every word that comes from the mouth of God,' (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4).²⁰⁹ Moreover, Matthew concludes his temptation narrative with a redacted version of Mark 1:13, indicating the coming of angels to Jesus after the devil departs. While Luke omits this part of Mark, Matthew adapts it to his narrative to demonstrate a divine response to Jesus' specific encounters with the devil in Matt 4:3-11. The result is that Matthew ends with a more distinct portrayal of God's presence with Jesus. This is further emphasized by the way Matthew has related the narratives of Jesus' baptism and his temptation.

2.2 Relationship of the Temptation and Baptismal Narratives in Matthew

One of the defining characteristics of the temptation narrative in all three Synoptics is its placement in the text following Jesus' baptism.²¹⁰ There is more

²⁰⁵ The four common points between Mark and Q are (1) the influence of the Spirit, (2) location of the desert (ἐρημος), (3) duration of forty days, and (4) the tempting by the devil/Satan. (Mark 1:12-13; Matt 4:1-2; Luke 4:1-2).

²⁰⁶ Of the options of the relationship of Mark and Q, it is most probable that Mark and Q both stem from a common source as opposed to Mark being drawn from Q, or Q drawn from Mark. Regarding Matthew and Luke, the slight change in order and different wording of the temptation of the kingdom (Matt 4:8-10//Luke 4:5-8) may be evidence of different recensions of the same source. Hagner, *Matthew*, 62.

²⁰⁷ See Gundry, *Matthew*, 53-9.

²⁰⁸ Donaldson, *Mountain*.

²⁰⁹ Note how this nicely complements the repeated focus on the messages of God through the angel and the resulting Old Testament fulfillment portrayed in the infancy narratives. On another note, if Matt 4:1-11 reflects a shared source, the additional material in Matt 4:4 could either have been omitted by Luke, or added by Matthew. Either way, it reflects a Matthean emphasis on Jesus' obedience to the word of God.

²¹⁰ Marshall argues that there is no doubt that these two did not occur in the sources used. Marshall, *Luke*, 165.

than chronological order that suggests these two narratives should be read together.²¹¹ For example, the Spirit that descends as Jesus rises out of the water should most likely be understood to be the same Spirit that leads Jesus out into the desert (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10;²¹² Luke 3:22; cf. John 1:32). Yet, perhaps a more significant link for the longer temptation narrative in Matthew and Luke lies in the recognition of Jesus as ‘Son of God’ both at the baptism and temptation. While Luke separates the baptism from the temptation with his genealogy, culminating with Jesus as Son of God (Luke 3:38), Matthew tightly draws the two narratives together, seating the temptation narrative right against the final words of the baptism, the voice from heaven announcing, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,’ (Matt 3:17).²¹³ This can be compared to the very first words of the devil, ‘If you are the Son of God,’ which are repeated again at the beginning of the second temptation (Matt 4:3, 6). When the devil is compared to the demons that recognize Jesus as the Son of God (Matt 8:29), then the conditional clause (‘If you are...’) should not be understood as conveying uncertainty about Jesus’ identity, but instead be understood as, ‘Since you are the Son of God...’ (cf. Matt 27:40).²¹⁴ Consequently, this suggests the focus of the testing is on Jesus’ obedience to the will of God and not Jesus’ confidence in his own identity.²¹⁵ Furthermore, Matthew casts each attempt to challenge Jesus’ uncompromising allegiance to God in the light of Israel’s own testing in the desert.

2.3 Background of Israel’s Desert Experience in Matthew 4

Throughout the narrative, Matthew shows how Jesus relives the wandering of the Israelites in the desert and remains faithful to the will and guidance of the Lord in contrast to Israel’s disobedience. In this respect, G. H. P. Thompson argues that the

²¹¹ Luke separates Jesus’ baptism from his temptation with a genealogy, tracing Jesus’ descent back to Adam, a potentially similar theme to Mark. Cf. Gibson, ‘Temptation.’, Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, Thompson, ‘Called,’ 8-10, Seesemann, ‘πειράζω,’ in *TDNT*, 6:34, Hagner, *Matthew*, 61, Gerhardsson, *Testing*, 19, Pokorný, ‘Intention,’ 118.

²¹² In Mark, the Spirit ‘drives’ Jesus into the desert (ἐκβάλλει) instead of ‘leading’ (ἀνέχθη).

²¹³ The voice speaks to an audience, not just to Jesus (cf. Mark 1:11; also John’s ignorance in Matt 11:2-3).

²¹⁴ Hagner, *Matthew*, 65, Gundry, *Matthew*, 55. See Pokorný for an apologetic interpretation of Matthew’s main source for this narrative, Q, in which the contemporary ideas about Jesus’ messiahship are corrected and redefined. Pokorný, ‘Intention.’

²¹⁵ Hagner, *Matthew*, 65, Kingsbury, *Story*, 53.

voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:17; Luke 3:22) echoes the voice of the Lord calling the Israelites to obedience in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 4:36).²¹⁶ In his analysis of the background of Deuteronomy for the temptation narratives of Matthew and Luke, Thompson relates the hearing of the Lord's voice with the calling of God's chosen people. For Thompson, this creates a parallel journey in which both Jesus and the Israelites follow the path of being called and proved, yet behave in the two disparate ways, Jesus with obedience and Israel with disobedience.²¹⁷

From the beginning of the temptation narrative, Matthew displays a parallel to Israel's forty years in the desert as a time of testing, 'Remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments,' (Deut 8:2).²¹⁸ The Septuagint tradition even uses the cognate verb ἐκπειράζω to describe the testing (cf. πειράζω, Matt 4:1). Furthermore, in each of the temptations in Matt 4, Jesus faces a testing similar to that which the Israelites experienced, and each time Jesus responds by quoting scripture from Moses' address to the Israelites before they enter the Promised Land (Deut 6-8).²¹⁹ The context of each of Jesus' references recalls Israel's disobedient behavior and issues a reminder of how to remain faithful to God.²²⁰ By using these specific scriptures in response to the devil's advances, Jesus recapitulates the forty-year sojourn in the wilderness, only this time as the obedient Son of God. For example, after Jesus fasted for forty days and nights, the devil, in the first temptation, taunts him to turn stones into bread (Matt 4:3).²²¹ In reply, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, declaring his trust in God, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of

²¹⁶ Thompson calls the listening to God's voice one of the leading characteristics of Deuteronomy. Thompson, 'Called,' 9.

²¹⁷ For Thompson, this becomes a model for the Christian, who may pray, 'do not bring us to the time of trial,' (Matt 6:13) but knows that there will be times of testing. Thus, the example of Jesus' obedience during his trials is the example to be followed.

²¹⁸ The number forty has a great significance in Jewish tradition. Therefore, it is also possible that Matthew's mention of forty days and nights references Moses' fasting on Mt. Sinai (Exod 34:28; Deut 9:9).

²¹⁹ For a discussion of Jesus as a new Moses, see Allison, *Moses*.

²²⁰ This disobedience after the exodus became a clear theme and repeated warning in Old Testament literature (Ps 81:11ff; 95:8ff; 106:6ff; 78; Jer 7:22ff; Ezek 20:5ff).

²²¹ Matthew alone adds 'and forty nights' (καὶ νύκτας τεσσαράκοντα). This is possibility to reflect the time that Moses spent on Mount Sinai when he received the law (Exod 34:28; Deut 9:9). Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:358.

God.” In this instance, Jesus’ testing echoes the Israelites complaining and fear of starvation in the wilderness (Exod 16:2-3; Ps 78:20). In the background of this reference is the context of Exod 16 in which the Israelites have just been delivered from Egypt in a mighty demonstration of God’s presence and power (Exod 14). However, the pillar of fire and parting of the sea were quickly forgotten and the Israelites began to grumble and murmur to Moses, which was considered a complaint against the Lord himself (Exod 16:8). The Israelites, despite their complaining, are granted meat and bread by the Lord to satisfy their hunger (Exod 16:4-8). In contrast, Jesus, while hungry, does not complain or ask for a demonstration of God’s presence. Whereas the Israelites’ thoughts were centered on themselves and their need for a miraculous provision of sustenance to bolster their faith, Jesus rests obediently in the trust that life comes from God, not from material food.²²²

In addition, Birger Gerhardsson, in his foundational examination of the temptation narrative in Matthew, argues that the desert also should be considered a setting where God demonstrated his protection after the Israelites left Egypt and not as simply a place of testing. Gerhardsson accurately observes the protective care that God demonstrated for his people during the forty years in the wilderness, but he underemphasizes the relationship between Israel’s obedience and the protection of God.²²³ Israel faced many dangers in the desert during which the Lord responded by preserving his people, but these events, especially when viewed through the lens of Deuteronomy, must be interpreted as a time of testing, disciplining, and humbling.²²⁴ In light of this, the selection of verses and references in Matt 4:1-11 emphasizes both the presence of the Lord and the test of obedience (cf. Deut 8:2, 16; 9:7; Num 14:20-25; 21:5-6; 32:13). Significantly, this is also true of the scripture quoted by the devil in Matt 4:6.

3 PROTECTING ANGELS AND AN OBEDIENT SON (MATT 4:5-7)

²²² Thompson, ‘Called,’ 3. In the third temptation (Matt 4:8-10; second in Luke’s narrative, Luke 4:5-8), Jesus refused to bow down to the devil, and declares his complete worship to God alone, (Matt 4:10), when the Israelites doubted God’s provision and engaged with foreign idols (Exod 32).

²²³ Gerhardsson, *Testing*, 54-56.

²²⁴ See Mauser, *Wilderness*, 20-36.

After Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread, the devil took Jesus to the top of the temple in the holy city of Jerusalem.²²⁵ There the devil goads Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down,” for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,” and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone,” (Matt 4:6). In this near verbatim quotation from the Septuagint tradition (Ps 90:11-12 LXX),²²⁶ Jesus’ adversary challenges him to leap off the temple under the pretense of God’s unequivocal and supernatural protection through angels as noted in Psalm 91 (Ps 90 LXX). Previously, when Jesus refused to turn stones to bread, he resisted the devil’s advances by declaring his trust in God alone. Now, Jesus’ trust is put to the test again as Satan attempts to beguile him into throwing himself off the temple. The context of the location, scriptural quotation, and traditions of angels of assistance create a situation convincingly infused with the impression of God’s protective presence. In light of this, the following discussion will explain how the devil is portrayed as using these different elements to create an authentic picture of God’s presence, but distorted for the devil’s purposes. First, it will be argued that the temple, evocative of the presence of God, provides an apposite location if one were to depend on God’s saving presence. Second, the theme of refuge and protection in Psalm 91 will be examined to demonstrate its relevance to the devil’s challenge. In particular, the verses quoted in Matt 4:5-7 are examined in light of other traditions of angelic assistance to show the relevance of God’s active protection through angels. The third section will then address Jesus’ refusal to jump, and his quotation from Deuteronomy as evidence of his commitment to God alone and his trust in God’s presence.

3.1 Temple as the Setting for the Second Temptation

²²⁵ It is unclear whether Jesus was taken there physically or in a visionary experience. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:364-65. For the purpose of the narrative, this distinction is not significant.

²²⁶ Matthew omits a small section of Psalm 91, ‘to guard you in all your ways,’ (Ps 91:11). Luke includes a portion of this, but still abbreviates the quotation. It is possible, as Davies and Allison suggest, that this was intentional to symbolize the devil’s abuse of scripture. On the other hand, the context of Jesus’ potential leap does not specifically fit ‘in all your ways.’ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:366.

Unlike Mark, Matthew describes Jesus' testing in three different locations. Matthew expands the Markan narrative, which portrays the devil encountering Jesus only in the desert (Mark 1:12-13; cf. Matt 4:1), to also include the devil taking Jesus to the temple (Matt 4:5) and to a high mountain that overlooks 'all the kingdoms of the world,' (Matt 4:8). These locations are important to understanding each of the devil's challenges in Matthew. In the second temptation, Jesus is taken to the 'pinnacle' or 'wing' (πτερύγιον) of the temple (Matt 4:5). In challenging Jesus to jump from the temple, the devil has not taken Jesus to an ordinary location of great height. The importance of location is further reinforced by Matthew's setting of the devil's final challenge – a high mountain – which Luke does not include, 'the devil led him up and showed him,' (Luke 4:5).²²⁷ In comparison, the suggestion that Luke changed the order of the temptations in order to place the temple in Jerusalem as the final temptation further supports the significance of location in this narrative.²²⁸ In light of this, the changes of location can be seen as intentional elements in the Gospel's portrayal of the devil's challenge to Jesus. It should be noted that the devil's presence is no longer restricted to the wilderness (cf. Mark 1:12-13), suggesting the devil's presence is everywhere, including the temple, which is a symbol of God's presence.²²⁹ Since the temple setting is integral to the narrative, three aspects of its role will be examined, the temple as a symbol of God's presence, the temple as a setting for Psalm 91, and the literary significance of Jesus' exact location at the temple – the 'wing.'

3.1.1 *Temple as Symbolic of God's Presence*

For Israel, the temple physically represented God's protection and presence. The role of the sanctuary has been near the heart of Israel's history from its beginning. Regarded as the dwelling place of the Lord (Num 10:35; 2Sam 15:25), the ark and

²²⁷ For Matthew, the setting of a mountains features in a number of significant passages. Donaldson, *Mountain*.

²²⁸ It is equally possible that Matthew changed the order to bring the two Son of God references together and finish on the high mountain. Marshall, *Luke*, 166-7. Besides Donaldson's study on mountains in Matthew, the significance of locations in Matthew is highlighted also in the infancy narrative by Stendahl and in Matthew's geographical choice of Galilee. Stendahl, 'Quis et Unde,' Donaldson, *Mountain*.

²²⁹ Riches, *Conflicting*, 236.

the tent of meeting traveled with the Israelites, unifying the tribes around common worship in a common sanctuary. Accordingly, the sanctuary became a tangible symbol of the solidarity of God's chosen people. The resulting importance of the sanctuary was one of the primary reasons David moved the ark to Jerusalem when he made it his capital city. His decision left an indelible mark on Jerusalem, establishing the foundation for its future recognition as the 'holy city' (cf. Matt 4:5; 27:53).²³⁰ The sacred structure built by Solomon quickly became the center for Jewish worship, attracting pilgrims who desired to be where God was 'located' (Isa 30:29; 35:10; Pss 42:2-4; 43:3-4; 63:2; 65; 84:1-2,10; 122; 137:6). Hence, the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BCE was regarded as a great catastrophe.²³¹ While the association of the dwelling place of God with the temple may have been strained, it was never completely severed.²³² The attribute of the association of God's presence with the temple is most relevant for the discussion of Jesus' temptation atop the roof of the temple. When the narrative describes Jesus' choice of jumping into the hands of awaiting angels or remaining safely on something significantly more solid, Jesus was at the heart of Jewish sacred places in which the presence of the Lord is most associated.²³³ If there ever were a place to confidently test God's protection, this would be it, for this would have been the place where one could have been most sure of God's presence. Herein lies the allure of the devil's provocation.

3.1.2 Association of Protection with the Temple

If locations are significant in Matt 4:1-11, then the specific location of the 'pinnacle' or 'wing' of the temple (ἐπὶ τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ) may have had further significance. The diminutive of πτέρυξ ('wing'), πτερύγιον, only appears in

²³⁰ Cf. Neh 11:1, 18; Isa 48:2; 52:1; Dan 9:24; Sir 49:6; Tob 13:9; 1Macc 2:7; 2Macc 1:12; 3:1; 9:14; 15:14; 3Macc 6:5. The only other New Testament reference to 'holy city' outside Matthew occurs in Revelation (Rev 11:2; 21:2, 10; 22:19).

²³¹ McKelvey, *Temple*, 3-8.

²³² See Lichtenberger, 'Zion.'

²³³ Davies and Allison argue that Jesus was standing at a geographically important location as well. In Jewish tradition, the temple is placed at the center of Jerusalem despite geographical inaccuracies (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.198). In addition, Jerusalem was referred to as the center of the world (Ezek 5:5; 38:12; Jub. 8:19; 1En. 26:1; Sib. Or. 5:248-250). Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:365. While these specific notions concerning the temple and Jerusalem may not be reflected in Matthew's narrative, it does demonstrate a tradition of significance for this location.

the New Testament here and the Lukan parallel (Luke 4:9).²³⁴ Moreover, the dearth of evidence related to a πτερύγιον of the temple has led to much speculation about its location. One of the clearest references is Eusebius' reference to the πτερύγιον of the temple as the location from where James the Just is thrown down. James survives the fall, and his pursuers finish the deed by stoning him (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.11-16). This description suggests that this part of the temple was not high enough to guarantee death if one jumped from it. However, Matt 4:5-7 implies that Jesus' actions would warrant angelic rescue. Comparatively, Josephus indicates a point of considerable height in his description of the temple (*Ant.* 15.11.5), a location better suited to Matt 4:5. Nevertheless, he does not specifically mention a πτερύγιον and thus the connection remains tentative.²³⁵ On the other hand, Gerhardsson suggests an intentional literary link between the πτερύγιον ('wing') of the temple and πτέρυγας (wings) mentioned in Psalm 90:4 LXX, the psalm quoted by the devil (Matt 4:6). In the psalm, the one who trusts in the Lord, 'hopes under his wings' (ὕπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἐλπίζει, Ps 90:4 LXX).²³⁶ There does seem to be a difference between sheltering under a protective wing and leaping from a high location; yet, the challenge to jump off the 'wing' may suggest the temptation for Jesus' to leave the presence of God's sanctuary. In the psalms, the image of God's wings is a frequent way to describe the Lord's provision of deliverance from persecution and his offering of refuge and protection (Pss 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7).²³⁷ While the portrayal of God's shielding wings evokes the image of a protective bird and her young (Deut 32:10-11), the use of 'wings' as a reference to God's protection and presence have also been associated with the cherubim in the temple, epitomizing both the protective power of God and the tangible proximity

²³⁴ The only other reference to wings (πτέρυξ) in the New Testament occurs in the apocalyptic descriptions in Revelation (Rev 4:8; 9:9; 12:14). The majority of the LXX references are to the wings of the cherubim over the ark, the description of the creatures in Isaiah and Ezekiel, or the protective covering of God's 'wings'.

²³⁵ See Hagner, *Matthew*, 66, Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:365, Gerhardsson, *Testing*.

²³⁶ The LXX translates the imagery of wings from the Hebrew (כנף), but the *Targum of Psalms* conveys a more literal 'covering' (כנף). However, this covering is consistently used to communicate protection in the Targum (*Tg. Pss.* 5:12; 27:5; 36:8; 57:2; 61:4; 63:8; 91:1; 121:5; 140:8). Interestingly, *Shekinah* is the usual translation for 'wing' (כנף) when referencing the wings of God (*Tg. Pss.* 17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 61:5; 63:8). An exception to this is Psalm 91, where *Shekinah* is paired with 'glory' to portray God's refuge (cf. *Tg. Ps.* 18:12). Stec, *Psalms*, Introduction V, 3.

²³⁷ In addition, the Lord tells Moses to instruct the Israelites to wear tassels on the wings, i.e. corners (כנפי בגדיהם), of the garment in an apotropaic fashion to remind the wearer to obey the Lord's commandments (Num 15:38-9). Dommershausen, 'כנף,' in *TDOT*, 7:231.

to God's presence (Ps 36:7-8; 60:4-6).²³⁸ In the temple, the cherubim are described with their wings spread out to protect and guard the ark and seat of God's presence (Exod 25:20).²³⁹ Indeed, Tate suggests in his Psalms commentary that a refugee, seeking asylum in the temple, might know they are in a protected location when they see the wings of the cherubim.²⁴⁰ In addition, the psalm quoted by the devil also has tentative links to the temple. In the attempt to discern the approximate setting for the Psalm 91, many have suggested the temple as a liturgical setting.²⁴¹ More specifically, Hans-Joachim Kraus, in his commentary, proposes the psalm is intended for a person who has entered the protective area of the sanctuary and is being addressed to make a thankful confession.²⁴² J. H. Eaton has also argued that a priest or a prophet is addressing a king before going to battle.²⁴³ While the actual setting and use of the Psalm is debatable, it is useful to note that the suggestions offered reflect the temple or a king entering battle, both of which are relevant to the temptation narrative in Matthew. It must be admitted that amongst these various examples, there are none to which Matt 4:5-7 seems to appeal directly. Nevertheless, the number of allusions of the temple's 'wing' to God's presence and protection suggests the possibility that some of these examples might hover in the background of Matt 4:5-7.

3.1.3 *Temple as Setting for Testing*

²³⁸ Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 222, Weiser, *Psalms*, 607. The cherubim in Ezekiel have two sets of wings, one to fly and the other to cover their bodies (Ezek 1,9-11). The importance of the wings is suggested by their presence in both descriptions (Ezek 1 and 9-11). In addition, the winged seraphim of Isaiah use their six wings for the purpose of flying (one set) and covering (one set to cover their face, and the other to cover their 'feet'). On the other hand, it is proposed that the seraphim could not have been both above God and have human shape. Thus, they must be using their wings to cover God protectively. See Freedman and O'Connor, 'כְּרוּב', in *TDOT*, 7:314.

²³⁹ Consider also the cherubim guarding the way to the garden (Gen 3:24) and cherub the Lord mounted and flew (2Sam 22:11; cf. Ps 18:11). Perhaps the cherubim symbolize the heavenly element of the earthly temple. Gittlen, *Archaeology*, 88.

²⁴⁰ Besides the reference to the cherubim (Exod 25:20,22; 37:7-9; Num 7:89; 1Sam 4:4; 2Sam 6:2; 2Kings 19:15; 1Chr 13:6; Psa 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16), Tate also notes a possible reference to existing under the protective 'shade' of a king (Lam 4:20; Judg 9:15; Isa 49:2; 51:16; Hos 14:7-8). Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 453.

²⁴¹ Weiser, *Psalms*, 605-6, Schmidt, *Die Psalmen*, 451, Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms*, 279. Demonic protection is also suggested. Oesterley, *Psalms*, 2:407-11. While Tate notes Mowinckel's suggestion of a temple setting, he argues that it is too difficult to come to any firm conclusion. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 452.

²⁴² Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 221.

²⁴³ Eaton, *Kingship*, 143-4. Other ideas include a song of conversion. Eaton describes the angels as the ones carrying the divine throne.

Jesus, in being taken to the temple by the devil, has been taken to a location also associated with testing. By going to the temple mount, Jesus has returned to the location in which Abraham was put to the test. In Genesis, when God speaks to Abraham, he tells him to go to the land of Moriah to one of the mountains that he will show him (Gen 22:2). According to 2Chr, Moriah was the location of the temple, 'Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah,' (2Chr 3:1, cf. *Gen. Rab.* 56.2 [on Gen 22:4]). *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* further expands the significance of this mountain when Adam and Eve settle in the land of Moriah having been driven out of the Garden of Eden (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 3:23). In fact, the Targum indicates that the altar that Abraham places Isaac upon is the reconstruction of the one Adam built after arriving in Moriah (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 22:9, as well as the same one Noah uses, *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 8:20). In addition, the devil and angels appear in the traditions of Abraham's testing. In *Jubilees* (*Jub.* 17; and a corresponding portion of a scroll from Qumran, 4Q225), Mastema approaches God and reports on Abraham's love for Isaac. As a challenge, Mastema requests that God test Abraham to see if he will remain faithful (*Jub.* 17:16; 4Q225 2 I 9-10; cf. *Apoc. Ab.* 13:4ff).²⁴⁴ Knowing already that Abraham was faithful having tested him with a number of afflictions (*Jub.* 17:17), the Lord issues Abraham the ultimate test, to offer his son as a sacrifice (*Jub.* 18:1-2; cf. Gen 22:1-2). In the midrash on Genesis, the angels in heaven weep over the possibility of the sacrifice of Isaac (*Gen. Rab.* 56.5 [on Gen 22:9]; cf. *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10), and after the angel of the Lord stops Abraham from killing Isaac, the angels dissolve Abraham's knife with their tears (*Gen. Rab.* 56.7 [on Gen 22:11]). Reminiscent of the earlier discussion in regard to the 'wing' and Matt 4:5-7, there are few direct parallels. However, there does seem to be a collection of common elements and themes in Matt 4:5-7, namely that of an adversary's challenge, the 'testing' motif, and God's presence through angels.

3.1.4 Summary

²⁴⁴ In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, Abraham is confronted by Azazel, Abraham's enemy (*Apoc. Ab.* 13:13), in the form of an unclean bird, who attempts to deceive Abraham (*Apoc. Ab.* 13:4ff).

In summary, the specific location of this temptation is an integral element in the testing of Jesus' obedience.²⁴⁵ By locating this test at the temple, Matthew is utilizing a recognizable setting that conveys the presence of God to his readers and to the characters in the narrative. Further resonances occur with references to protection and to traditions of testing. As a result, both the allusion to Psalm 91 and the nearness of God's presence play important roles as Jesus contemplates an act that would require immediate action on the part of God's angels.

3.2 Psalm 91 and the Devil's Terms

The devil's challenge to Jesus to throw himself down centers on a quotation from Psalm 91 (Ps 90 LXX) and its promise of assurance of God's protection. Deliberately misusing Scripture, the devil recalls a portion of the psalm that insinuates if Jesus were to throw himself off the rooftop, then angels would catch him unquestioningly. In other words, the devil challenges Jesus' understanding of God's presence and Jesus' obedience to him.

In order to examine the devil's chicanery and the relationship of the angels to Jesus, a discussion of Psalm 91 is necessary. This will be accomplished by first demonstrating that the themes of trust and refuge are key to the psalm before more specifically examining the role that angels play in protecting the one seeking sanctuary.

3.2.1 *The Theme of Trust and Refuge in Psalm 91*

Psalm 91 is a song of praise that announces complete protection to those who trust in the Lord.²⁴⁶ In the central part of the psalm, bold metaphorical language is implemented to convey the promise of refuge offered from various kinds of dangers that occur through enemies and natural causes (91:3-4). This protection is manifest whenever and however one is persecuted, whether day or night (91:5-6). In any circumstance, the Lord offers extraordinary protection in daily life (91:10;

²⁴⁵ Likely due to the temple's importance in the gospel of Luke, this temptation is moved to the final position in his narrative, forming the climax of Jesus testing (cf. Matt 12:6; 22:7; 23:38-24:2; cf 26:61). For a brief discussion of the temple with a view toward God's presence in Matthew, see Kupp, *Emmanuel*, 130-37.

²⁴⁶ See also Pss 17:8; 27:5; 31:21; 32:7; 36:7; 57:1-2; 61:4-5; 63:7-8; 121:5.

cf. Pss 23:3ff; 84:6ff)²⁴⁷ and in the midst of danger, when thousands are falling on the right and left (91:7).²⁴⁸ In the psalm, the different protective portraits describe the range and depth of the Lord's sanctuary. It is for this reason that Jerome Creach, in his work on Yahweh as refuge, labels Psalm 91 a 'kind of microcosm of all the refuge language of the Psalter.'²⁴⁹ Among the various descriptions, the portrayal of God's protective care exercised through angels is one of the more clearly explained methods by which God guards his own (Ps 91:11-12). In these verses, the psalmist draws on the connection between angels and God's protection, promising miraculous help to the one who trusts in God (Matt 4:6; Ps 90:11-12 LXX). When one runs to God as a refuge, the Lord will command his angels to carefully shield them from danger. The psalmist paints an image in which angels carry one along in such safety that there is no chance of striking one's foot against a stone. The stony roads of Palestine and the psalms' frequent use of stumbling as a symbol for trouble or misfortune create a portrait of both literal and figurative relevance (Pss 37:31; 38:17; 56:14; 73:2; 94:18; 116:8; Prov 3:25,26; cf. Isa 8:14).²⁵⁰ As a result, Tate describes the bearing up by angels as a 'metaphor of special care,' becoming an active divine guard against physical as well as moral threats so that one can carry on without concern for danger. In a context in which Jesus is being attacked and the temple is evocative of refuge, the devil's quote of Ps 91 fits appropriately.

However, the promise of refuge in Psalm 91 is not unconditional. It requires complete and absolute trust in God. The psalm begins with an address to the Most High and a genuine confession of trust in the Lord as a safe refuge (90:1-2 LXX). Only afterward does the remainder of the psalm describe the different perils and dangers that would no longer beset the addressee of the psalm (90:3-13 LXX). Thus, at the core of the psalm is the promise of protection in light of the trust boldly established by the opening declaration of Ps 91:1-2, 'The one that dwells in the help of the Highest shall lodge under the shelter of the God of heaven. That one shall say to the Lord, "You are my helper and my refuge: my God; I will hope in

²⁴⁷ Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 224.

²⁴⁸ For a fuller discussion of the psalm's descriptions of protective refuge, see Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 222-24, Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 453-56.

²⁴⁹ Creach, *Refuge*, 94-5.

²⁵⁰ Weiser, *Psalms*, 611.

him,” (Ps 90:1-2 LXX).²⁵¹ These two verses evoke a complete attitude of trust, enabling one to proclaim the confession of God as their refuge. Since the psalm begins with this statement on trust, the sanctuary trumpeted by the rest of the psalm is inextricably linked with one’s faith and hope in God. This is reinforced again in the last words of the psalm, where the Lord promises refuge and deliverance to those who call on his name. Since knowing the name of the Lord is an expression of intimacy (Ps 90:14 LXX), the psalmist emphasizes the dependence of the one seeking refuge on God.²⁵² Thus, according to Ps 91:14-16, only those with an intimate personal connection with God can be assured of his help.²⁵³ For this reason, Weiser asserts that along with Psalm 46, ‘Psalm 91 is the most impressive testimony to the strength that springs from trust in God.’²⁵⁴ In Matthew’s narrative regarding the first temptation, Jesus declares his trust in God by refusing to turn stones to bread to satisfy his hunger (Matt 4:3-4). This is an affirmation not unlike the confession that begins Ps 91 (Ps 90:1-2 LXX). Later, in Matt 4:5-7, Jesus is taken to the temple, the sacred location signifying God’s presence, and is tempted by the devil with a quotation issuing forth from the myriad descriptions of God’s help in Psalm 91. The devil’s allusion to the verses from within the psalm specifically highlights the tradition of protective assistance of angels.

3.2.2 *Angels of Assistance*

Beyond the words of Psalm 91, angels are continually portrayed as conveyers of God’s protective care and presence. One of the more elaborate narratives of God’s angelic guidance and protection is the story of the journey of Tobias and Raphael in the book of Tobit. In search of a companion to guide his son, Tobias, Tobit employs the help of Raphael, an angel of God. Although Tobias is unaware of Raphael’s identity, the two journey together and encounter different circumstances through which Raphael divinely guides Tobias. Exhibiting narrative

²⁵¹ My translation of the LXX. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 453. On theme of protection, see Creach, *Refuge*, 94.

²⁵² Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 458.

²⁵³ Weiser, *Psalms*, 612.

²⁵⁴ The two psalms differ in that Psalm 46 focuses on the community and Psalm 91 on the individual. Weiser, *Psalms*, 604-5.

irony, Tobit, equally unsuspecting of the already present assistance of God, blesses the pair before they depart, ‘may his angel, my son, accompany you both for your safety,’ (Tob 5:17) and reassures his wife not to fear, ‘for a good angel will accompany him,’ (Tob 5:22). In fact, this blessing is narrated after Raphael promises no harm will come to Tobias (Tob 5:16), possibly suggesting the preemptive protection of God. Even before this request, Tobit and Tobias exemplify the kind of trust expected in Psalm 91. Similarly, the trust in the angelic presence of God is mirrored in Abraham’s reassurance issued to his servant when the servant is sent to look for a wife for Isaac, ‘he [God] will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there,’ (Gen 24:7). Like the psalmist, Abraham and Tobit exhibit faith in God while expecting his protective favor through an angel.²⁵⁵ Following the departure of Tobias and Raphael on their journey, Raphael’s promise of protection comes to fruition. The angel instructs Tobias on preparing the remains of a caught fish so that it would both restore the sight of his father (Tob 11:7-8,11-15) and exorcise a demon (Tob 6:17; 8:2-3), thus preventing Tobias’ death (Tob 6:14; cf. 8:9-18). Meanwhile, Raphael guides Tobias along the way to his destination (Tob 5:2,5-6) and assists in the acquisition of Tobias’ wife (Tob 6:13). While the narrative of Tobit would most likely not have been available to the authors of the psalms, it is possible that Matthew might have known about Tobit’s tradition of God’s personal guidance and protection through an angel.

The tradition of God’s angels guiding and protecting is found in texts other than Tobit. For example, two angels come to Lot in Sodom to deliver him and his family safely out of the city (Gen 19). In the book of Daniel, when the three Israelite men exit the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar blesses their God, ‘who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him,’ (Dan 3:28). Daniel too makes a similar exclamation when saved from the lions, ‘My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me,’ (Dan 6:22). One of the best examples of angelic protection is the angel that accompanies the Israelites on their exodus. Addressing Moses, God speaks of his angel going before the liberated nation, ‘But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you;

²⁵⁵ These narratives do not suggest that an angel will always be there, instead they show that angelic assistance was part of the tradition of divine assistance.

see, my angel shall go in front of you,' (Exod 32:34; cf. Exod 23:23). Outside the Old Testament, Simeon reveals that Joseph was saved by God when he sent his angel (*T. Sim.* 2:8; cf. *4Bar.* 6:22). Furthermore, the notion of protection via angelic intervention appears also in 4Q434, citing Ps 34:7 with regard to weaving a protective hedge (4Q434 f1 i:11). Similarly, God preserves Enoch's writing during the flood by commanding his angels to protect them (*2En.* 33:11; cf. *2En.* 36:2).²⁵⁶ In the New Testament, Peter acknowledges the Lord's activity through the angel in conjunction with his sudden freedom from the prison by saying, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me,' (Acts 12:11). As these examples show, God's angels are a common way of God demonstrating his protective presence. For this reason, this tradition has also found a place amongst deterrents from spiritual and demonic attacks.

3.2.3 Exorcisms

The promise of sanctuary and refuge in Psalm 91 may have been one of the reasons it was frequently associated with exorcisms and protection from demonic activity. In this regard, some of the metaphorical images used by the psalmist to describe the threats avoided while in God's sanctuary have been interpreted as figurative of demonic activity.²⁵⁷ Ancient rabbinical interpretations and use of Psalm 91 include the prevention of demonic attacks linked to the causes of many illnesses and threats to life (*b. Shevu'ot* 15b). Furthermore, Psalm 91 was found among a collection of supposed exorcist psalms at Qumran, including 11Q11, a set of fragments of songs against demons. While both the Babylonian Talmud and *Targum on Psalm 91* refer to the language and use of this psalm as preventative against demons and evil spirits, the discovery of Psalm 91 among the fragments of this scroll strengthens and pre-dates this interpretation before Matthew. In a more contemporary commentary, Oesterley's observations about this psalm are viewed almost exclusively through the lens of countering malevolent spirits.²⁵⁸ Clearly, this is not the main thrust of the psalm's use in Matthew, but if this is in the background, it is ironic when the words of the psalm come from the mouth of

²⁵⁶ This appears in both the longer and shorter recensions.

²⁵⁷ See Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 451-55.

²⁵⁸ Oesterley, *Psalms*, 2:407-11.

the devil. This irony contributes to the readers' awareness of the devil's abuse of and disdain for the scriptural tradition when compared to Jesus' faithfulness and obedience to it.

3.2.4 *Summary*

To this point, it has been argued that the use of angels at the temple rooftop is an integral instrument in the testing of Jesus. The one acknowledged as the Son of God at the baptism has declared his trust in God by refusing to turn stones to bread. Now, according to Psalm 91, Jesus is worthy to receive the protection promised, even to the point angels would bear him up. To emphasize the presence of God, Jesus is taken to the temple, a location uniquely associated with the presence and power of God, and is confronted with the challenge, 'Since you are the Son of God,' (Matt 4:6). If the psalm promises the guarding hands of angels to the one that confesses their trust in the Lord, how much more so will angels rush to catch the Son of God!

3.3 Jesus Refuses to Jump

Initially, Jesus is confronted with what seems like a situation in which he could assuredly throw himself off the temple into the hands of waiting angels. The temple was the perfect location for such a feat, filled with the presence of God, and the psalm is the quintessential reminder of God's divine protection. Moreover, there is a rich tradition of angels who clearly personify the hands of the Lord carrying one through trials. However, the entire situation at the temple is couched in the devil's terms. The temptation runs contrary to the substance of the previous discussions concerning the temple, psalm, and angels. The psalm promises sanctuary to those that unquestionably depend on God for it, not those that seek proof of its existence or intentionally seek danger. Both the presence of God at the temple and the examples of angels consistently exhibit the will of God. To expect that either would respond to another's will without the prior approval of the Lord is to put oneself in the place of God. In Matthew's temptation narrative,

the devil may have played his hand well, but he cannot compete with Jesus' unswerving obedience to the will of the Father.

Jesus chooses to demonstrate his power and identity through submission to the will of God. This is not unlike the choice that Jesus will make in the garden of Gethsemane when one of his disciples attempts to stop his arrest with a sword. He acknowledges the presence of angels at the ready had he known that this was not the Father's will (Matt 26:53). Likewise, Jesus' refusal to leap from the temple does not mean that divine and miraculous help would not have been given, but the assumption is that Jesus would have only jumped had he known it was the Father's will. His actions reveal the foundation for his life and ministry, one that is wholly obedient to the will of the Lord, dependent upon God alone and his promise of angelic presence. The commitment to a trust in God's presence without doubting absolutely manifests in itself Jesus' response to the devil.

3.3.1 *Jesus' Quotation of Deuteronomy 6:1: Obedience in the Face of God's Presence*

To the devil's quoting of the Psalm, Jesus responds by quoting Scripture, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test,' (Matt 4:7, cf. Deut 6:16). Jesus' refusal to test God echoes from Deuteronomy 6:16 LXX where the Israelites are commanded not to test God as they did at Massah (the location where Moses struck the rock for water in response to the Israelites complaining and doubt, Exod 17:1-7). Between leaving Egypt and arriving at Sinai, the Israelites complained frequently about their situation despite continual evidence of the providence of God (Exod 16-18). By the time Moses and the Israelites had nearly reached Sinai, the people had grumbled both over the lack of water (Exod 15:24; again in 17:2-3, 7) and food (16:2-3). In successive narratives, the complaints of the Israelites are contrasted with the conclusive evidence of the presence of and provision by the Lord. Each time the delivered nation protested against Moses, and therefore against the Lord, divine assistance was nevertheless provided. The Deuteronomy narrative contrasts with the obedient action of Jesus in that when there was no food or water, the Israelites' did not wait for the Lord to provide, but complained, doubting God. By testing God, the Israelites forgot that the presence of God was just as

genuine as their own hunger and thirst.²⁵⁹ As a result, in memory of the Israelites disobedient action at the rock in Exodus 17, the place was given the name Massah, (מַסָּה, MT; πειρασμός, LXX) meaning ‘testing’ or ‘temptation,’ because the Israelites, ‘tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”’ (Εἰ ἔστιν κύριος ἐν ἡμῖν ἢ οὐ, Exod 17:7 LXX). Accordingly, this rebellious act is recalled frequently when discussing disobedience (Num 20:13,24; 27:14; Deut 6:16; 9:22; 33:8; Pss 81:7; 95:8; 106:32). The Israelites demonstrated that to test or tempt God is to not take him, his power, or presence seriously. Such doubt and unbelief found expression in complaint against God’s guidance and in the failure to recognize his glory, presence, and his workings of signs and wonders (cf. Wis 1:2; Sir 18:23).²⁶⁰ In referencing this tradition, Jesus not only acknowledges the power and presence of God, but also demonstrates a faithful response by keeping his feet firmly planted on the temple roof.

Matthew implies that the angels are nearby, indicative of God’s presence, but that they are not waiting for Jesus to jump off the roof. Instead, they demonstrate the presence of God that accompanies Jesus, just as the Lord was present with the Israelites on their journey through the desert. The use of angels at this point in the temptation narrative capitalizes on the themes of Psalm 91 and utilizes the traditions of assisting angels to reflect Jesus’ acknowledgement of the presence of God but his unwillingness to put that presence to the test. With this in mind, it is not likely that Jesus is being tested to demonstrate his supernatural powers as the Son of God. If this were so, Jesus’ leap of faith would have been a public demonstration and revelation of his identity to Israel, and the movement from isolation in the desert to the temple roof would have been considered an opportunity to gain an audience. Matthew, however, makes no mention of any spectators. Moreover, there is little evidence that jumping from the temple roof is indicative of the Messiah’s arrival.²⁶¹ Instead, the experience of this testing is an answer to how the Son of God will act – through obedient trust in God. When

²⁵⁹ Durham, *Exodus*, 228-32.

²⁶⁰ Seesemann, ‘πειράζω,’ in *TDNT*, 6:26.

²⁶¹ There is late evidence of the Messiah manifesting himself in the temple, ‘When the king Messiah appears, he will come stand on the roof of the Temple and will make a proclamation to Israel,’ (*Pesiq. Rab.* 36). Translation from *Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths*, 2:682. See also Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:366-67. Josephus also mentions two messianic pretenders, Menahem (*J.W.* 2.433-48) and Simon bar Giora (*J.W.* 7.26-36). Bultmann also notes that the temptation narrative is not about Jesus proving he is the messiah. Bultmann, *History*, 254-57.

given a choice, Jesus will choose his Father's will, demonstrating through his life and ministry a complete trust in the purposes of God for him. This will include all the words he speaks, miracles he performs, and every trial he faces.²⁶² As mentioned earlier, Matthew revisits this theme at Jesus' arrest, intimating that had the cross not been the Father's will, Jesus would have confidently appealed to the Father for thousands of angels (Matt 26:53). Without ever denying the potential for angelic aid, Jesus chooses an obedience that is solely dependent on God. If one was looking for a sign, they must look to the only sign given, the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:39–41; 16:4). In other words, Jesus did not have to prove his trust in God by jumping from the temple roof; he proved it by not jumping, thus confirming God's declaration at the baptism, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased' (Matt 3:17).

4 WORTHY OF ANGELIC SERVICE (MATTHEW 4:11)

Following Jesus' refusal to jump into the hands of angels, the devil takes him up to a high mountain, and promises to hand over all the kingdoms of the world if only Jesus would worship him (Matt 4:8–9). In response, Jesus refuses the devil's advances, authoritatively sends him away, and again explains his faithfulness to God and the biblical tradition by quoting Deuteronomy 6:13, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him,' (Matt 4:10). In Matt 4:11, as a result of Jesus' third victory, the devil departs and angels arrive, 'Then the devil left him, and suddenly [ἰδοὺ] angels came and waited on him.' In the final verse of the temptation narrative, Matthew has edited together the end of the longer temptation narrative and the end of Mark's account (Mark 1:13), thereby constructing a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. In doing so, Matthew uniquely validates Jesus' trust in God and obedience to his will. Therefore, Matt 4:11 and the role of the angels in the narrative will be examined in two ways. First, the way in which Matthew adapts the material from Mark in light of Psalm 91 will be investigated. Second, an interpretation of the angels' service to Jesus will be offered.

²⁶² Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:367.

4.1 Mark 1:13 and Matt 4:11

In the last verse of his temptation narrative (4:11), Matthew alone has chosen to include the Markan material describing the ministering of the angels to Jesus (cf. Luke 4:13).²⁶³ In Mark, the temptation is briefly concluded with the statement that Jesus was ‘with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him,’ (Mark 1:12-13). There is no explanation of the end of the temptation or the result of Jesus’ time in the wilderness. Mark lets the account speak for itself. However, what Mark includes, which Matthew does not, is that Jesus was not just with the devil in the wilderness, he was also with the wild beasts (θηρίον) and angels (Mark 1:13).

For some scholars, the wild beasts and angels in Mark 1:13 are interpreted as redolent of the relationship between Adam and the inhabitants of the Garden of Eden.²⁶⁴ As suggested by the prophets, part of the hope of a renewed peace in the ‘last days’ is the return to the peaceful alliance between human and beast before the fateful bite of forbidden fruit (Isa 11:6-9; Hos 2:18).²⁶⁵ If Jesus is peacefully dwelling with animal and angel, then Mark can be interpreted as presenting Jesus as the new Adam tempted by Satan, who succeeds where Adam and Eve failed.²⁶⁶ On the other hand, Jeffery Gibson, in his article on Mark 1:12-13, suggests that the interpretation of the Markan temptation should not be based on a peaceful communion with beasts or an angelic ‘table-service.’²⁶⁷ Instead, Gibson reflects on the lack of a strong Adam Christology in Mark and frequent connotation of θηρίον (‘wild animal’) as evil rather than good, and suggests that the wild beasts and angels are a sign of victory and obedience.²⁶⁸ Citing Psalm 91 and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Gibson notes that the subjugation of wild animals is a result of faithfulness and obedience to God, ‘You will tread on the lion and the adder,’ (Ps 91:11-13), ‘Every wild creature you shall subdue,’ (*T. Iss.* 7:7), and ‘wild animals will fear you,’ (*T. Benj.* 5:2). Furthermore, these texts are addressed to those in a covenant relationship with the Lord (cf. Ps 91:2,14). In the *Testament of Naphtali*, it

²⁶³ It is possible to interpret Luke’s inclusion of angel’s ministering in the Garden of Gethsemane as having a reference to Mark 1:13.

²⁶⁴ Jeremias, ‘Αδάμ,’ in *TDNT*, 1:141, Balz, ‘τέσσαρες,’ in *TDNT*, 8:138-39, Guelich, *Mark 1-8*:26, 38-9.

²⁶⁵ Cf. Gen 1:19; Isa 11:6-9; 65:25; Hos 2:18; *Jub.* 3:27-9; *2Bar.* 73:6-7; *L.A.E.* 4; 33:2; *T. Levi* 18:10.

²⁶⁶ See Rom 5:12-21; 1Cor 15:42-50; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:356, Pokorný, ‘Intention,’ 120f.

²⁶⁷ Gibson, ‘Temptation,’ 19-20, Best, *Temptation*, 8.

²⁶⁸ Gibson, ‘Temptation,’ 32, Foerster, ‘θηρίον,’ in *TDNT*, 3.

is promised that angels will bless and wild animals will flee from those that ‘achieve the good,’ (*T. Naph.* 8:4).²⁶⁹ In light of this, the description of Jesus ‘with’ the beasts (μετὰ τῶν θηρίων) in Mark 1:13 suggests that Jesus has subdued them and is standing over them as their Lord.²⁷⁰ Therefore, the interpretation of the wild beasts as hostile in Mark creates a possible parallel to Jesus’ explicit defeat of the devil in Matthew and suggests a reason for the omission of θηρίον. Instead of Jesus’ defeat and subjugation of the beasts, Matthew tells of Jesus’ command for the devil to depart (ὑπάγε, σατανᾶ, Matt 4:10) and the adversary’s compliant exit (Τότε ἀφίησιν αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολος, Matt 4:11). While Mark’s narrative only implies that Jesus was successful in overcoming Satan’s testing, Jesus has undoubtedly triumphed over Satan at the end of Matthew’s temptation narrative. Read in this way, Matthew is much more explicit about the cosmic conflict between the devil and God through Jesus.²⁷¹

While the devil does not show up explicitly again in Matthew’s narrative, his conflict with God through Jesus will continue through opposition to Jesus and his ministry. Frequently, this antagonism will manifest itself in the Jewish leaders, but the disciples are not exempt from misunderstanding Jesus and attempting to thwart his purposes. In fact, Peter’s response to Jesus’ explanation that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed, warranted Jesus’ antagonistic words to Peter, ‘ὑπάγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ’ (Matt 16:23), mirroring those to the devil in the wilderness, ‘ὑπάγε, σατανᾶ,’ (Matt 4:10). Several textual variants even insert ὀπίσω μου in Matt 4:10 to reflect a more exact parallel.²⁷²

The temptation narrative, in one sense, symbolizes the battle between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of Satan, revealing Jesus’ life as a cosmic struggle against the devil (cf. Matt 12:25-32; 13:38; 25:41). The location of this episode (immediately before Jesus enters into his public ministry) suggests that all of Jesus’ future actions will be informed by his defeat of the devil’s advances, his obedience to the will of the Father, and the faithful acknowledgment of God’s

²⁶⁹ See also Gerhardsson, *Testing*, 67-8.

²⁷⁰ Gibson, ‘Temptation,’ 31.

²⁷¹ Powell, ‘Plot,’ 198-203.

²⁷² C² D L Z 33 M b h l* sy^{(s).c.h**} sa^{mss} bo^{mss}; cf. those that reflect the shorter reading, x B C^{*vid} K P W Δ f^{1.13}.

presence, demonstrated here by the presence of angels (Matt 4:6, 11).²⁷³ The consistent refusal of Jesus to bow down to Satan and deny his trust in the Lord in the temptation narrative finally culminates in Jesus' victory in the cross and resurrection. Nevertheless, the attempts of Satan to sabotage God's plan will continue until the judgment at the end of the age where the angels will play their part in the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 13:36-43; 24:30), coming with the Son of Man and casting the wicked into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). In light of this, Matt 4:11 grants a foretaste of the relationship between Jesus and the angels that become more clear as the Gospel continues.

4.2 The Angels Serving and Jesus' Obedience

At the end of their temptation narratives, both Matthew and Mark indicate that Jesus was 'served' by angels (διηκόνουν αὐτῷ). Although Matthew reflects the influence of Mark 1:13, his redactions show a development of the significance of the presence of angels. Through his small editorial moves, Matthew integrates this reference into his use of angels throughout the rest of his Gospel and reveals a connection to the promise of God's protective presence in Psalm 91.

4.2.1 *Matthean additions*

The insertion of an additional verb (προσέρχομαι) and appearance of ἰδοὺ before the angels come to Jesus are both evidence that Matthew did not simply copy Mark 1:13 without thought to the rest of the Gospel and his use of angels. For example, every time an angel is manifested in the narrative of Matthew, the appearance is prefaced by ἰδοὺ (Matt 1:20; 2:13,19; 4:11; 28:2). In this way, Matthew has intentionally called attention to the presence of the angels and their relationship to Jesus. In addition to ἰδοὺ, Matthew has also inserted a second verb (προσέρχομαι), indicating that the angels did more than 'serve' Jesus (καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄγγελοι προσήλθον καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ, Matt 4:11). The frequent use of προσέρχομαι in Matthew may appear to be a stylistic element, but Davies and

²⁷³ Kingsbury, *Story*, 53-54.

Allison have suggested an alternative. Of the fifty-two occurrences, all but two are examples of people or spirits approaching Jesus.²⁷⁴ When προσέρχομαι is connected with ‘worship’ (προσκυνέω) in Matthew (8:2; 9:18; 20:20; 28:9), the cult in Judaism, and with drawing near to royalty and their courts (Lev 9:5; Num 18:4; Deut 25:1; Jer 7:16; Heb 10:1; 1Pet 2:4; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.19) the verb carries with it the undertone of an approach with reverence. In light of this, Matthew seems to be implicitly suggesting the angels’ activity is more than διακονέω. Accordingly, this is the second occurrence of προσέρχομαι in Matthew. The first occurs in Matt 4:1, when the devil ‘comes’ to Jesus (προσέρχομαι). This suggests at the beginning of the temptation narrative the implications of the baptismal declaration. By comparison, the devil’s departure (ἄφηνιμι) is followed by the angels’ arrival (προσέρχομαι), ‘Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came,’ (Matt 4:11). This suggests that the approach of both the devil and the angels (Matt 4:1,11) subtlety hints at the majesty of Jesus as the Son of God.²⁷⁵

4.2.2 *Jesus and the Presence of Angels*

By adding προσέρχομαι, Matthew has also helped deepen the significance of the angels ‘serving’ Jesus. While διακονέω can be interpreted as ‘table-service,’ there is also the connotation of a broader understanding that the angels are acting as slaves to a master.²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the context of the temptation narrative in Matt 4:1-10 suggests that both interpretations may be working together.

The temptation narrative begins by noting that Jesus was fasting during his forty days and nights in the desert. Then, the devil appeared when Jesus was hungry, tempting him to turn stones into bread. The appearance of angels at the end of the three tests by the devil has been interpreted as providing sustenance.²⁷⁷ Jesus, like Elijah, received food from an angel of the Lord that came to him (1Kgs 19:5-8). The nourishment from the angels could presumably be thought of as

²⁷⁴ Interestingly, the remaining two uses of προσέρχομαι occur when Jesus is the subject and is in a glorified state– at the transfiguration (17:7) and after the resurrection (28:18). Perhaps this reflects the idea of Jesus’ role as being present with his disciples (Matt 18:20; cf. Matt 1:23; 28:20).

²⁷⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:360.

²⁷⁶ Gibson, ‘Temptation,’ 19-33, Beyer, ‘διακονέω,’ in *TDNT*, 2.

²⁷⁷ Gundry, *Matthew*, 59, Nolland, *Matthew*, 169, Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:357,74. Gerhardsson notes this interpretation, but is not satisfied with it. Gerhardsson, *Testing*, 69.

manna, the food found in paradise (*L.A.E.* 2-4; *b. Sanh.* 59b; *ARN* 1) and given to the Israelites in the desert (Exod 16; cf. Ps 78:25).²⁷⁸ In this case, Jesus would have received sustenance just as the Israelites were provided manna when they were hungry. Yet, unlike the Israelites, who only received the manna after complaining about their hunger (Exod 16:2-3), Jesus is attended to without complaint or request (Matt 4:3-10). Matthew does not, however, describe food, but angels coming to Jesus. The potential for presuming the presence of food is there, but the significance of the angels' presence goes further than just food.

The continued connection to Jesus' recapitulation of the Israelites' testing is relevant, especially in light of the numerous Old Testament quotations, but, as Gerhardsson argues, the presence of angels ministering to Jesus does not need to be limited to bread from heaven. In a more general sense, the angels could be interpreted as providing in a way relative to each of the temptations: providing food (Matt 4:3-4), protection (Matt 4:5-7), and by serving the Lord of heaven and earth (Matt 4:8-10; cf. 28:18-20). The presence of the angels after Jesus has demonstrated his unswerving obedience to the will of God echoes the promise of care and sanctuary of Psalm 91. Rather than overt proof of God's presence by jumping, Jesus' dependence on God results in the manifestation of God's provision through the angels. At the same time, the angels appear because they have been sent; they do not come on their own accord (cf. 'his angels,' Matt 4:6). For this reason, the angels' presence is indicative of God's reaction to the results of Jesus' temptations. Matthew demonstrates God's approval of Jesus and indicates his presence as Jesus encountered these three temptations. While Mark indicates that the angels and wild beasts were with Jesus in the wilderness (Mark 1:13), Matthew also implies that God was present with him, and his temptations required that he trust in that presence. Moreover, the presence of angels afterward retrospectively infuses the second temptation with a genuine tangibility.

The expression of divine approval through angels is not without precedent. After Abraham is tested (ὁ θεὸς ἐπείραζεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ, Gen 22:1 LXX), an angel of the Lord calls from heaven stopping Abraham from killing Isaac and letting him know of God's approval, 'for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me,' (Gen 22:12). Nearby, a ram is caught in

²⁷⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:374.

the thicket - a sacrificial substitute for Isaac provided by the Lord. In God's tests of both Jesus and Abraham, angels accompany divine approval and make available relevant necessary provision.²⁷⁹ As with Abraham, the testing of Jesus is indicative of the significance of the remainder of his life.

Likewise, the service of angels does more than simply provide for Jesus. Resonating with the conclusions of Gibson on Mark 1:12-13, Gerhardsson agrees that the angels help in communicating the significance of the testing of the Son of God.²⁸⁰ Jesus has been found both worthy and obedient. Consequently the presence of the angels ministering may suggest an exalted status.²⁸¹ On its own, this may play only in the background of Matt 4:11. However, the other uses of angels with regard to the Son of Man may be read back into this verse as the narrative continues. The significance of this will be the focus of later chapters of this thesis. In this way, the angels in Matt 4:11 presage a more developed understanding of Jesus that is brought to light through a narrative reading of the whole Gospel. The texts that speak of the Son of Man coming in all his glory with all the angels (Matt 16:27; 24:31; 25:31) can be read back into the angels coming to Jesus in Matt 4:11.

5 CONCLUSION

In the first four chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, there have already been notable references to angels' interaction with Jesus. In the infancy narratives, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph, providing Jesus' name and guiding his family to safety, each move punctuated with a prophetic fulfillment of Scripture and indicative of the presence and activity of God. In the temptation narrative, angels

²⁷⁹ Compare with the angel of the Lord coming to the aid of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21) as well as the expressions of divine disapproval: the cherubim guarding the gate to the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:24), the drawn sword of the angel of the Lord in front of Balaam (Num 22:22-35), and the near destruction of Jerusalem by an angel of the Lord in David's reign (2Sam 24:15-17; cf. 2Kgs 19:35).

²⁸⁰ Gibson, 'Temptation,' 31, Best, *Temptation*, 9-10. While the emphasis in this discussion lies in Matthew and on the appearance of the angels *after* Jesus was obedient and victorious in the testing, Ulrich W. Mauser comes to a similar conclusion of a victorious Jesus in Mark 1:12-13 arguing for a continuous presence of angels. Mauser, *Wilderness*, 101.

²⁸¹ Gerhardsson, *Testing*, 70.

help in communicating the depth of Jesus' obedience, signaling the presence of God in the midst of Jesus' temptation.

In Matthew 4:5-7, the devil takes Jesus to the 'wing' of the temple roof, and tempts Jesus to leap into the hands of awaiting angels since he is the Son of God. Atop the temple, Jesus is standing on a structure intensely associated with the power, sanctuary, and presence of God. Like the Israelites in the desert, Jesus is keenly aware of God's presence. Having confirmed Jesus' trust in God alone in the first temptation, the devil now attempts to exploit Jesus' words by quoting Psalm 91 (Ps 90 LXX). The Scripture referred to by Jesus' adversary speaks about the safety, protection, and refuge promised to the one who confesses their trust in the Lord Most High. Even the miraculous help of angels is assured in the psalm for such a profession of trust that Jesus exemplified when he refused to turn stones to bread (Matt 4:3-4). The narrative elements of the setting of the temple and affirmation of angelic protection work consonantly, providing an alluring temptation by the devil. Nonetheless, despite the devil's aggressive tactics, Jesus refuses to jump declaring that his complete and genuine trust in God is demonstrated by *not* jumping, but by believing that God will be there when needed. Jesus does not deny the potential for angelic protection, but refuses to prove God's presence by testing God. At the end of the temptation narrative, Matthew expands Mark's portrayal of the angels serving Jesus. More than just providing sustenance, the angels' appearance fulfills the promise of Psalm 91 and conveys a tangible expression of divine approval, verifying that Jesus is worthy of angelic service. In sum, the angels in the Matt 4:1-11 are clearly instrumental in portraying Jesus' victory over Satan and in demonstrating his unwavering obedience to the Father, a crucial element to understanding Jesus' subsequent ministry. Matthew narrates that Jesus moves to Galilee (Matt 4:12) and, from that time, 'began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near," (Matt 4:17).

Chapter 4

Angels at the Judgment (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50)

1 INTRODUCTION

Following Matt 11-12, the parables in chapter 13 come at a significant point in Matthew's narrative. In Matt 11-13, Matthew portrays Jesus encountering strident opposition to his ministry and the negative response to Jesus is important to understanding Matt 13 and especially the parables that express the eschatological consequences of different reactions to Jesus' message. In particular, the Parables of the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) and the Net (Matt 13:47-50) both refer to the end of the age and, with vivid apocalyptic language, illustrate both the authority of the Judge and the finality and universal nature of the judgment.

The Parable of the Weeds is a narrative concerning a field with weeds nefariously sown among an original crop of good seed. While the servants try to discern what to do with the unexpected addition to the field, the householder answers the confusion by instructing that the weeds remain among the wheat. They are to grow until the harvest, and only then, will they be separated, bound, and burned. The reason for waiting is to protect the wheat, 'for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them,' (Matt 13:29). A few verses later, in the parable's explanation, a lexicon of seven items is relayed to the disciples, explaining different elements within the parable.²⁸² The final part of the explanation moves beyond an equation of characters and unfolds the significance of the harvest itself. Matthew explains, just as it was with the harvesters and the

²⁸² In order to avoid confusion, the term *explanation* will refer to the specific pericopae in Matthew that follow the parables and provide allegorical equations in order to help the reader understand the parable. On the other hand, the term *interpretation* will refer to the goal of this discussion in trying to understand the broader ideas behind Matthew's use of angels in these parables.

field, so it will be at the close of the age, 'The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' (Matt 13:41-43). Meanwhile, the Parable of the Net (Matt 13:47-50) also speaks of angels at the judgment, and its similarity to the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) suggests that while the Son of Man may not explicitly appear, a relationship is implied. In these two parables, Matthew portrays the Son of Man as an eschatological judge, commanding angels to collect the righteous and the wicked. In so doing, Matthew introduces the relationship between the Son of Man and angels that will reappear in four other passages (Matt 16:27; 24:30, 39; 25:31). The significance of angels and the Son of Man will become more pronounced as each of these passages is discussed. For the moment, the parables that this chapter addresses are particularly valuable as they demonstrate a convergence of many of the themes found in the other passages. For this reason, this chapter will lay a foundation for the examination of the other passages while leaving certain discussions for more development in their respective chapters. For example, Matthew describes the Son of Man with 'his' angels in the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:41), but this portrait is fully examined in the chapter on Matt 16:27 where Matthew's explicitly redacts Mark 8:38 to read 'his angels' (cf. Matt 24:30).

Consequently, this chapter on the Parables of the Weeds and the Net will examine Matthew's portrayal of the Son of Man at the judgment and the eschatological presence of angels under the jurisdiction of the Son of Man. First, I will argue that Jewish apocalyptic traditions of angels at judgment scenes are a significant element in interpreting the Parables of the Weeds and the Net within the context of Matthew. Their value is especially relevant in their portrayal of angels in scenes of judgment. This includes examples of angels gathering and collecting in similar ways to Matthew's Parables of the Weeds and the Net, and thus, their inclusion contributes to Matthew's theme of judgment. Secondly, having established a possible background for interpreting the angels and the Son of Man, the Parables of the Weeds and the Net will be examined to demonstrate how these traditions contribute to interpretations of the parables that fit within and advance Matthew's portrayal of judgment and the Son of Man as the

authoritative eschatological judge. Since both the Parables of the Weeds and the Net overlap some of their themes, the more developed Parable of the Weeds will be examined first. An examination of the Parable of the Net will follow, demonstrating how it recapitulates many of the ideas introduced in the Parable of the Weeds, and fittingly concludes the discourse. Finally, the use of angels in Matt 13 will be set within the context of all of Matthew and his concept of judgment.

However, before beginning the discussion of texts with angels at judgment scenes, it is necessary to establish the significance of the parables' explanation.

1.1 Interpreting Parables in Matthew

For the first nineteen centuries, the Gospels' parables were embraced primarily through allegorical interpretation. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Adolf Jülicher began a new era in parable research when he called into question the allegorical approach. One challenging aspect of interpreting parables is the attempt to understand the connection between the world of the parable and that of the parable's audience. Jülicher argued these were two separate entities that could be connected in only one way. As a result, each parable had one point that it was trying to communicate. The impact of Jülicher was so great that there was a prolonged period before another definitive study on parables appeared.²⁸³ Almost forty years later, Jülicher's work was followed most notably by Joachim Jeremias and C. H. Dodd, who both incorporated his research into their own, expanding and drawing upon his conclusion that the parables were not allegory and could only have one point. Dodd sensed the importance of the eschatological element of the parables, but felt that they needed to be interpreted in line with Jesus' proclamation of the present coming of the kingdom. Consequently, Dodd attempted to reinterpret the parables without the ideas of a future parousia he believes were added by the early Church. Jeremias too was interested in exposing various alterations the early Church made to the parables. However, in contrast to Dodd's realized eschatology, Jeremias preferred to speak of eschatology in the process of realization.²⁸⁴ While interpreters such as Jülicher, Dodd, and Jeremias

²⁸³ Jeremias, *Parables*, 17. For a critique of Jülicher, see Wright, 'Voice'.

²⁸⁴ See Dahl, 'Growth.', Marshall, *Eschatology*

were interested in the contributions the early church might have added to Jesus' parables, contemporary parable commentators have been more willing to see the parable in its literary context. Some have sought this through a literary approach to the parables,²⁸⁵ while others have examined the parables in the context of their respective canonical book.²⁸⁶ These are, of course, broad categories, and in practice, an approach to parables does not always address everything due to the variety of parables. For example, Blomberg accepts the introductions and conclusions without removing them from the frames in which they are found, but dismisses the explanation to the Parable of the Weeds.²⁸⁷ Comparatively, Snodgrass also argues that parables should be considered as a whole, including their introductions and conclusions, but includes the explanations in Matt 13. Whether or not these 'extras' originated with Jesus, Snodgrass sees the importance of the narrative framework and arrangement of the Gospel writers. Consequently, he argues that the parables should be interpreted with a view toward the narrators' intent as well. In this way, the frame of reference is not the parables' place in history (e.g. the church), but its place in the ministry of Jesus presented by the Evangelists.²⁸⁸ This will be the approach taken in this chapter as an attempt is made to interpret the parables and their explanations within the context of Matthew.

1.2 Matthew's Reference to Angels in the Parable's Explanation

The Parables of the Weeds and the Net both have separate explanations that include descriptions of angelic activity at the close of the age. Since the references to angels appear in the explanations, this indicates that they were used to help clarify the explanations and the parables in which they appear. While it is not unusual for parables to have some sort of concluding remark that aids understanding the parable's meaning,²⁸⁹ only three parables in the canonical

²⁸⁵ Via, *Parables*. Crossan, *Parables*.

²⁸⁶ Kingsbury, *Parables*, Drury, *Parable*, Donahue, *Parable*, Hultgren, *Parables*.

²⁸⁷ Blomberg, *Interpreting*, 166, 200.

²⁸⁸ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 34.

²⁸⁹ For example, Matthew explains to the reader the parable of the yeast of the Pharisees (Matt 16:11-12; cf. Mark 8:21), and when Peter ask Jesus to explain the parable concerning the purity of what is eaten, Jesus obliges (Matt 15:15-20//Mark 7:17-23). In Mark 8:21, there is neither mention

Gospels bear the unique quality of a separate in-depth explanation.²⁹⁰ These include the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-9, 13-20//Matt 13:1-9, 18-23//Luke 8:4-8, 11-15), the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43), and the Parable of the Net (Matt 13:47-50). The collection of parables in Matt 13 contains all three, with two of these only appearing in Matthew.²⁹¹ Curiously, these two Matthean parables are ones that bear references to angels. When Matthew portrays Jesus giving these particular explanations, the reader, like the disciples in the narrative, is given a more comprehensive interpretation of the parable's meaning.

Moreover, the similar references to angels in both of the explanations suggest that this was of some importance to Matthew. In particular, they both have angels gathering and separating the good from the wicked as part of their explanations and theme of the final judgment. The high frequency of Matthean vocabulary and style has led some to suggest that Matthew composed the explanations.²⁹² As a result, interpreters of these parables, like Jeremias, have considered the explanations of the Weeds and the Net to be creations of the early church.²⁹³ On the other hand, it is possible that these explanations were initially based on traditions or interpretations Jesus gave, but are now inaccessible behind the heavy hand of Matthew's redaction. Nevertheless, their importance for the whole of Matthew's Gospel is highlighted precisely because of their Matthean language and emphases. For this reason, the explanations will be considered significant for understanding the parables and their contribution to Matthew's narrative.

1.2.1 *The Uniqueness of Matthew's Explanation*

Matthew's unique interest in the angels in the parables' explanations is further demonstrated by their absence in similar traditions. In possible parallels to this

of the disciples understanding nor the explanation of the parable to the readers. See Baird, 'Pragmatic.'

²⁹⁰ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 191.

²⁹¹ In a different form, they do appear in the Gospel of Thomas. This will be discussed later.

²⁹² Jeremias, *Parables*, 65-66.

²⁹³ Sim, in his article, argues that Matthew created it. Sim, 'Angels,' 710, Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:426-7, Harrington, *Matthew*, 206-7, Gundry, *Matthew*, 271-74, 79-80. Those skeptical of this conclusion include Hagner who argues that it could be derived from Matthew's own source or own creative composition. Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:392.

parable and its explanation, there seem to be precedents for independent descriptions of good and bad seed, delay in punishment, and an eschatological harvest. For example, Wis 4:3 describes the children of the ungodly as ‘illegitimate seedlings’ and explains that they also have neither deep root or firm hold (cf. 1QS 3:19-23; 4:15-26).²⁹⁴ *Fourth Ezra* 4:28-32 it describes the sowing of good and evil seed, but unlike the Parable of the Weeds, the evil seed must be harvested before the good seed can be planted. On the other hand, 2Bar. 70:2 indicates that the two seeds have grown together, ‘the time of the world has ripened and the harvest of the seed of the evil ones and the good ones has come,’ but, the text following does not describe an immediate and angelic judgment scene similar to the Parable of the Weeds. Instead, that which follows is a long description of the inhabitants coming to war against each other (2Bar. 70:3-10; cf. Ps. Sol. 17:21-32). When compared to the *Gospel of Thomas*, the Parable of the Net shares much in common with Gos. Thom. 8, where a wise fisherman pulls his catch ashore and chooses one large fish among the small ones. While much of the same details are shared, the themes are different. The parable in the Gos. Thom. appears to have a Gnostic undertone (choosing the large fish), lacks an explanation, and omits an eschatological focus. Likewise, the parallel to the Parable of the Weeds (Gos. Thom. 57) reflects similar differences, including a lack of angels and of an eschatological message.²⁹⁵ Even though the Parable of the Weeds has been suggested as a possible Matthean reworking of Mark’s Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (Mark 4:26-29) in terms of the placement and similar content,²⁹⁶ there is enough difference between the two parables that they do not seem similar enough for Matthew to have rewritten Mark’s parable.²⁹⁷ Nonetheless, even if the Parable of the Weeds is considered a redactional revision of Mark 4:26-29, it still demonstrates Matthew’s

²⁹⁴ With this in mind, Wis 4:3 may have greater similarity to the Parable of the Sower (Matt 13:4-20) than to the Parable of the Weeds.

²⁹⁵ Furthermore, the relationship between Matthew and the Gospel of Thomas is unclear. Whether or not the two texts share a common tradition or if one influenced the other is still debated. Blomberg, ‘Thomas.’ Snodgrass feels that ‘this is one of the easiest passages to argue for its dependence on the Synoptic tradition.’ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 200.

²⁹⁶ Luke omits this as well. Was this missing from their manuscript as it is one of the so-called minor agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark? Streeter thinks the omission is a scribal error and is missing in early copies of Mark. Streeter, *Gospels*, 171. For Matthew, its inclusion would destroy the triad that it seems he has constructed. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 407-8. T. W. Manson notes the obscurity of Mark 4:26-29 and reasons that is why both Matthew and Luke omitted it. However, as he comments on Matthew’s parable, he continually references how Matthew has adapted Mark. Manson, *Sayings*, 192-3.

²⁹⁷ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 199-200.

unique inclusion of angels in the explanation. These comparisons also highlight the eschatological and apocalyptic language of Matthew's explanation not found in many of the parallels.

1.2.2 *The Apocalyptic Elements in the Explanation*

Many of the components in this parable's explanation strongly suggest that Matthew is reflecting apocalyptic language for this explanation of the harvest and his portrayal of the eschatological events at the final judgment. For example, Matthew uses the phrase, 'there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' underscoring the discomfort awaiting those that demonstrate the attitudes and actions of the undesirable in the parables (Matt 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).²⁹⁸ In addition, Matthew depicts the angels throwing the wicked into the furnace of fire (βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός), a phrase likely borrowed from Dan 3:6 LXX, (ἐμβαλοῦσιν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός). Yet, the use of fire for punishment appears to be an established tradition before Matthew.²⁹⁹ In *1En.* 90:24-27, fire plays a crucial role in the punishment as the guilty are thrown into an abyss full of fire and flame. In addition, the place for sinners, blasphemers, and those who do evil is described as a bright place of flame from which emanates a voice of weeping, crying, and lamenting (*1En.* 108:5-6; cf. *1En.* 98:3; 102:1; 103:8).³⁰⁰ This is further illustrated by Matthew's other uses of Gehenna and fire (5:22,29-30; 10:28; 18:8-9; 23:15,33; cf. 3:10-12; 7:19; 25:41).

After the causes of sin (τὰ σκάνδαλα) and all evildoers have been collected and thrown into the fire by the angels, the righteous become the focus, 'Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father,' (ἐκλάμψουσιν ὥς

²⁹⁸ Five uses are unique to Matthew and one is shared with Luke (Matt 8:12// Luke 13:28).

²⁹⁹ In the Old Testament: Isa 66:24; Ezek 38:22; Mal 4:1; in Second Temple literature: Jth 16:17; Sir 21:9; Jub 9:15; 7:35-38; 13:10-11; 2Bar. 44:15; 48:39; 59:2; 3Bar. 4:16; Apoc. El. 5:22-24,37; and in the New Testament: Matt 3:10,12; 13:50; 25:41; Luke 16:24; Rev 20:10; 2Pet 3:10. Stuckenbruck, *Veneration*, 453.

³⁰⁰ This may have been picked up from the Book of the Watchers (*1En.* 10:6; 18:15; 21:3-6,7-10; cf. *1En.* 90:24-25; 91:9; 108:3-5; 54:1-2,6). The spirits of the sinners shall be cast away, (*1En.* 98:3, some manuscripts add 'into the furnace'; cf. *1En.* 90:25-26; cf. *1En.* 100:9) or shall be burned in blazing flames worse than fire for what the wicked have done to the righteous (cf. *1En.* 108:4-6; cf. *1En.* 21:7) or shall be slain in Sheol (*1En.* 99:11).

ὁ ἥλιος, Matt 13:43).³⁰¹ While this description is possibly reflecting the language of Daniel, the description of the righteous donning a new appearance is plentiful.³⁰² For example, the final verse of the collection of books in *1Enoch* concludes with the reminder of the place of sinners and the resplendence of the righteous (*1En.* 108:15). Comparatively, Matthew could have the transfiguration in mind, where Jesus shines with all his eschatological glory, foreshadowing the state the righteous will share in the future (ἐλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος; Matt 17:2). In the same way that Matthew begins his parable with the contrast of the good and bad seed, he ends it by highlighting the different fates of the righteous and wicked at the final judgment, paralleling the different fates of the weeds and wheat (the fire and the barn). In addition, Matthew begins the parables' explanations with the eschatological reference, 'so will it be at the end of the age,' (Matt 13:40, 49). Besides the Parable of the Net (Matt 13:49), the phrase 'end of the age' will appear again in two places in Matthew (Matt 24:3; 28:20), and only one other place in the New Testament (Heb 9:26).³⁰³ Significantly, Mathew's Gospel concludes with these words as Jesus promises to be with his disciples to the end of the age (καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, Matt 28:20). When it comes to the final judgment and the sorting out of the righteous and the wicked, it will be the Son of Man as eschatological judge that is at the forefront. In light of this, apocalyptic traditions are a helpful resource in examining and interpreting the significance of Matthew's portrayal of the angels in the parables' explanations. For this reason, the following section will examine different apocalyptic and related traditions for a background to the angels at a judgment scene such as in Matthew.

2 ANGELS AND JUDGMENT

³⁰¹ This may relate to the act of purifying the earth by removing all evil (cf. παλιγγενεσία, Matt 19:28). See Sim, 'παλιγγενεσία,' 6-7. *contra* Derrett, who sees παλιγγενεσία as Matthew's way of speaking of resurrection. Derrett, 'PALINGENESIA,' 51.

³⁰² Bauckham, 'Life,' 92. See also 1QS 4:6-8, 11-13; 1QM 12:1-7; 2En. 22:8-10; 37:2.

³⁰³ The apocalyptic language and parables of Mathew 24-25 follow the disciples' request for a description of the sign of Jesus' coming and the end of the age (Matt 24:3).

In the Second Temple Period, the belief in a delayed judgment along with a future resurrection developed, reflecting the belief that the righteous and unrighteous respectively are rewarded and punished at the end of time rather than in their lifetimes. Although there are glimpses of the hope for eternal vindication in the Old Testament (Dan 12:2-3,13; cf. Isa 26:19; 25:7-8; Ps 49:15; 73:24), Richard Bauckham, in his essay on resurrection in Second Temple Judaism, goes as far to say that ‘the vast majority of Jews believed in a desirable immortality for the righteous and in punishment after death for the wicked.’³⁰⁴ This is further supported by the literature of this period, which is replete with portraits of eschatological judgment. Accordingly, the scenes of judgment depicted at the end of the age also reflect the more prevalent appearance of angels carrying out God’s justice. These texts demonstrate that angels will confirm God’s activity and righteousness in the final judgment, and that there will be no escape for the wicked. The angels will gather both the righteous and the unrighteous, then the righteous will receive their reward and the wicked will suffer eternally, sometimes at the hand of angelic torturers. The following examples will include texts from the Old Testament, Second Temple period, and Christian apocalyptic literature.

2.1 Punishing Angels in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, angels are amongst the agents God uses to administer his justice, for both the righteous and the wicked. Although the setting is not often an eschatological one, the angels nevertheless demonstrate participation in God’s judgment. For example, before the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed, Abraham and Lot encounter two angels who speak about the coming judgment for the iniquity of the cities’ inhabitants (Gen 19:15). They assist in discerning the extent of the city’s sin so that its iniquity may be extinguished (Gen 18:20-21). The angels at Sodom and Gomorrah also illustrate that judgment does not need to come through angels, for the Lord himself rains down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:23-29). On the other hand, in Exodus, the final plague of the

³⁰⁴ Moreover, there is rarely literature that presents an argument for such a belief as if in response to disbelief. The notable exception to the general acceptance of resurrection is the Sadducees and the book of Sirach. Bauckham makes it clear that it is difficult to assign a clear origin of this development, but does point out that circumstances such as the Maccabean period made this sort of theology relevant to those experiencing righteous suffering. Bauckham, ‘Life,’ 82.

firstborn's death is portrayed as executed by an angel (Exod 11:14, 12:12, 23, 29).³⁰⁵ Similarly, Balaam and his donkey are nearly killed by a threatening angel in their path (Num 22:22-27, 31-32, 34-35), and the people of Israel are almost destroyed by an angel with his sword over Jerusalem. While this angel was sent by God (1Chr 21:14-15), he is also mercifully stopped by the Lord at the threshing floor of Araunah (1Chr 21:12, 15-16, 27, 30; cf. 2Sam 24:16-17;). In addition, there is the often remembered account of the angel of the Lord striking down the Assyrians (2Kgs 19:35; 2Chr 32:21; Isa 37:36; Sir 48:21; 1Macc 7:41; 2Macc 15:22-23). While these examples are not in an eschatological setting, they demonstrate angels carrying out and participating in God's judgment. Furthermore, they convey the emphasis on God's sovereignty and role as governor of life and death. Interestingly, these passages also portray God as merciful. In Gen 19, Lot and his family are spared (cf. Gen 18:22-33), and in Num 22, Balaam does not fall victim to the angel's sword. Furthermore, the destroying angel stops with his sword over Jerusalem when the Lord has mercy, 'the LORD took note and relented concerning the calamity,' (1Chr 21:15; cf. 2Sam 24:16). On the other hand, at the eschatological judgment, the decision is final.

2.2 Angels in Eschatological Scenes of Judgment and Punishment

Most literature of Second Temple Judaism reports that the righteous are guaranteed a just reward at the final judgment even if they do not see vindication during their lifetime. In the same manner, the iniquities of the wicked will be revisited and the requisite punishment administered. These eschatological ideas are often found in apocalyptic literature where they frequently include the appearance of angels as assisting in the judgment or as instruments of eschatological punishment. For this reason, this body of literature is a rich resource for understanding the context in which the angels in the parables of Matt 13 can be read.

³⁰⁵ See also *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* Exod 12:12 where ninety thousand myriads of destroying angels accompany the Lord to kill the first born. In addition, Exod 12:23 refers to the destroying angel (מלאכא מחבלא) rather than simply the destroyer (see Qumran section below).

2.2.1 Enochic Literature

Arguably, some of the most influential texts associated with Second Temple literature are those that are related to Enoch. The oldest strands of this tradition are found in the collection of material in *1Enoch*.

The *Book of Watchers* illustrates a world under divine control despite what evil might be present. In particular, this is portrayed through the agency of angels, obediently gathering and binding the wicked. In this manner, the angels' actions illustrate the impossibility of escape and the power of God's judgment. More specifically, the *Book of the Watchers* (*1En.* 1-36) narrates a vision of the descent of the Watchers from heaven and their judgment because of their iniquitous activity on earth. While the Watchers play a central role in the vision, the primary focus of the *Book of the Watchers* is God's righteousness and merciful response to the oppression instigated by the Watchers and their offspring (cf. *1En.* 9:1-3).³⁰⁶ God's reaction to the injustice is to step in, acting through his obedient angels, collecting, binding and punishing the guilty angels. For example, Raphael, one of God's righteous angels, is sent to bind Azaz'el, one of the wicked angels, hand and foot and throw him into the darkness to wait for the Day of Judgment (10:4). Likewise, Michael is in charge of leading Semyaza and his followers into the bottom of the fire and locking them there forever (*1En.* 10:10-14; cf. *1En.* 88; 90:21-24). Afterward, all iniquitous deeds are expunged from the earth, the righteous persevere, and the earth is cleansed (*1En.* 10:16-20). While this part of the vision speaks primarily about the judgment of wicked angels, it is not without note that the ones who battle with the evil angels, gather, and bind them, are God's angels. Comparatively, the language of the wicked being bound and put into fire as part of the process of removing evil from the earth is consonant with the description of judgment in the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:40-43). Yet, while Matthew comments on the final decision in the eschaton, the judgment portrayed in these chapters of *1Enoch* is preliminary to the final judgment where many of the wicked angels are bound until the eternal judgment, at which time they will be led into the bottom of the fire and locked up in torment forever (*1En.* 10:12-13). It is

³⁰⁶ There are other roles angels play in the *Book of the Watchers*. For example, the Lord arrives with ten million holy ones in order to execute judgment upon all, including destroying the wicked and sinners (*1En.* 1:9).

unclear who leads them, but in this context, it is likely that angels are implied. Wicked angels will not be the only ones who receive punishment at the final judgment. On the visionary journey in *1En.* 27, the seer observes a valley described by his accompanying angel as an accursed valley awaiting those condemned in the day of judgment. Like Matt 13:36-42, and 46-50, *1En.* 27 points toward the future consequences for those deemed unworthy. The assumption of a world under complete divine control despite the presence of evil can be compared to the divine control of the cosmos illustrated in the *Astronomical Book* (*1En.* 72-82). Again, angels are considered fundamental to the author's perception of the universe.³⁰⁷ In Matthew's Parable of the Weeds, this is not unlike the householder's confident response to the servants to let the weeds and wheat grow together until the harvest, when all will be sorted, the bad from the good.

In a different role, angels in the *Book of Dreams* (*1En.* 83-90) are portrayed as heavenly recorders. In preparation for the final judgment, a group (of shepherds) is instructed to watch over an appointed group of seventy shepherds (*1En.* 89:59), writing down everything they do to the sheep (*1En.* 89:61). This is in order that their documentation may bear witness against them when God evaluates them (*1En.* 89:63). At the judgment, the sealed books in which these deeds were written are opened (*1En.* 90:20). This does not suggest that records are necessary for God to remember one's deeds (*1En.* 84:3), but instead reassures the reader of the accuracy of the evidence against the wicked and the inevitability of judgment for both angels and humans.³⁰⁸

The *Apocalypse of Weeks* (*1En.* 91-93), which begins the *Epistle of Enoch*, does not specifically mention angels, but it is noted that at the final judgment, the deeds of the sinners depart from the earth (*1En.* 91:14).³⁰⁹ This is reminiscent of the priority given to collecting the wicked first in the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:30, 41-42). Given the summary style of this apocalypse it is not surprising that gathering, recording, and casting out the wicked are absent.³¹⁰ Similar to the *Apocalypse of Weeks* and *Book of Dreams*, the rest of the *Epistle of Enoch* (*1En.* 91-105)

³⁰⁷ Davidson, *Angels*, 93.

³⁰⁸ Davidson, *Angels*, 101-10. It is probable that the imagery reflects the practice in actual trial proceedings.

³⁰⁹ The *Apocalypse of Weeks* does not comprise *1En.* 91-93, but is found in those chapters, as they are neither all together, nor in order (*1En.* 93:1-10; 91:11-17).

³¹⁰ Davidson, *Angels*, 119-22.

demonstrates a significant shift away from the focus on the judgment of the fallen Watchers to the judgment of humanity in their wickedness and righteousness.³¹¹ This takes on the form of instruction to both the righteous and sinners. As part of the exhortation toward righteous living, the threat of judgment is used to assure of God's righteous judgment (1En. 94:9,11; 96:2,8; 97:1,3; 98:10). Like the *Book of Dreams*, every deed of injustice is recorded until the day of judgment (1En. 98:7-8; cf. 99:16; 104:1,7) and then read aloud (1En. 97:6).³¹² The righteous can rest assured knowing that they have not been forgotten and will delight in the glorious future that awaits them (1En. 103:2-4; 104:2; 108:13-15). The image of the final judgment is likened to a courtroom where the angels bring the prayers of the righteous against the wicked to the Most High (1En. 99:3) and investigate their deeds (1En. 100:10). Similarly, a relevant parallel to the angelic activity in Matt 13 appears in 1En. 100:4, 'And in those days the angels will descend to the hidden places and gather into one place all those who have given aid to sin.'³¹³ Unlike the *Book of Watchers* where the angels' descent is coupled with their iniquitous activity (1En. 6:6), the angels here act as agents of God's judgment, gathering all the wicked for condemnation.³¹⁴ The angels will comb the 'hidden places,' indicating that neither deed nor hiding sinner will escape the judgment (cf. 1En. 102:3; 104:5). Similarly, the angels in Matt 13:41 will collect all causes of sin and evildoers (πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα καὶ τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν), repeating the theme of the complete removal of evil. It is not surprising therefore that both accounts are followed by announcing the eschatological care for the righteous, and specifically contrasting it with the fate of the wicked (cf. Matt 13:43; 1En. 100:5-6).³¹⁵

Angels continue to play a much more defined role at the judgment in the *Similitudes of Enoch* (1En. 37-71). This differs from the depiction of angels punishing other angels in the *Book of the Watchers*. Here, they are portrayed at the judgment of the wicked (1En. 38, 45, 56) where actions are weighed in a balance (1En. 41:1;

³¹¹ The exception is the *Birth of Noah* (1En. 106-107), where Noah's strange appearance at birth suggests that he is the son of an angel, recalling the narrative of the Watchers.

³¹² It is interesting how both of these verses terminate sections, ending with the theme of judgment in a similar way to Matthew.

³¹³ Translation taken from Stuckenbruck, *1Enoch*, 426.

³¹⁴ Stuckenbruck calls attention to this contrast and suggests that 'those who have given aid to sin' may refer to fallen Watchers in Matt 13. Thus, the good angels descend to punish the bad angels who descended. Stuckenbruck, *1Enoch*, 434.

³¹⁵ Stuckenbruck, *1Enoch*, 439.

61:8). Sinners are expelled from among the company of the righteous (1En. 41:2) while the angels of plague work together to prepare the chains of Satan in order to help destroy the kings of the earth (1En. 53:3-4). Like Matthew's Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:41-43), the righteous are free from oppression when the wicked are destroyed (1En. 53:7). Furthermore, angels are described as performing tasks of gathering as they bring kings and cast them in the deep valley (1En. 54:2).³¹⁶ These sinful kings and rulers will be delivered to the angels of punishment by the Lord of the Spirits, where vengeance is exacted for oppressing the elect ones (1En. 62:11).³¹⁷ Moreover, the saved righteous will put on garments of glory (1En. 62:16) in a similar fashion to the righteous shining in Matt 13:43.

In his heavenly journey in *2Enoch*, Enoch visits the third heaven where he encounters the place for the righteous (2En. 9:1) and a disturbing location of torment and torture (2En. 10:1-6). In the description of this scene of cruelty and darkness, Enoch sees merciless angels torturing without pity (2En. 10:3) and after exclaiming his disgust, Enoch receives the explanation from his accompanying angels that this is the place for those who do not glorify God and practice evil deeds (2En. 10:4-6). Although there is difficulty in dating *2Enoch*, suggestions for which range from first century BCE to ninth century CE, this work nevertheless offers another view into the relationship of angels to eschatological judgment.³¹⁸ Consequently, in its various forms, the Enochic literature reflects many of the themes already discussed, namely the activity of the angels at the judgment in their gathering, recording, and punishing the wicked.

2.2.2 *Dead Sea Scrolls*

Perhaps picking up on language from the Old Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls also speak about angels of destruction. However, the group of texts uncovered at Qumran poses interesting challenges to the interpreter. In what can be considered only a fraction of the extinct library, the documents discovered represent a variety

³¹⁶ The angels are not mentioned, but it seems that they are the ones implied in this verse.

³¹⁷ Other examples include, pleading for a break from the angels of punishment (1En. 63:1), seized by angels on the day of judgment (1En. 55:3), and the righteous and elect ones in the light (1En. 58:2-4), angels of punishment are the ones who were prepared to release the waters of the flood, but angels of the waters prevent them (1En. 66).

³¹⁸ Dating according to Andersen, '2Enoch,' 94-95.

of very different texts that cannot be interpreted as one single collection. Consequently, a discussion of angels across multiple texts cannot refer to a Qumran ideal or cohesive theology.³¹⁹ For example, in 1QS 4:12-13, those who walk in the spirit of deceit will suffer at the hands of the angels of destruction (מלאכי חבל), 'for eternal damnation by the scorching wrath of the God of revenges, for permanent terror and shame without end with the humiliation of destruction by the fire of the dark regions,' (1QS 4:12-13). Like the parable of the Weeds, 1QS also contrasts the fate of the wicked with that of the righteous, describing their eschatological attire, for their reward will be 'a crown of glory with majestic raiment in eternal light,' (1QS 4:7-8). This same designation appears in CD 2:5-6, where those who turn aside from the path of God face the flames of fire from the angels of destruction. However, in both 1QM 13:12 and 4Q510 1:5, מלאכי חבל refers to angels intent on bringing malice to the righteous in their lives and does not refer to angels at the judgment. With this in mind, it seems that the term angels of destruction (מלאכי חבל) is not a term used with consistency across different texts. Nevertheless, both 1QS 4:12 and CD 2:5-6 show similarities to traditions where angels obedient to God inflict punishment with fire on the wicked. However, in contrast to the Parable of the Weeds in Matthew, the final age is perceived as a cosmic holy war in which the angels of light and darkness are fighting. Moreover, the members of the community see themselves as preparing to participate in the war together with the angels of light.³²⁰ This is in contrast to the Parable of the Weeds where there is a marked difference between the servants and the harvesters, and in particular, demonstrating the servants have no role at the harvest. Nevertheless, while angels are not necessarily portrayed as gathering and collecting the wicked and the righteous, they have a significant role in bringing in the final judgment and God's ultimate victory over evil.

2.2.3 Testament of Abraham

³¹⁹ However, Davidson's book draws convincing comparisons between several different texts from Qumran. Davidson, *Angels*.

³²⁰ Davidson, *Angels*, 230-31.

In the *Testament of Abraham*, angels are given very specific roles with regard to the judgment. Although it is called a testament, the text is more of a tour of heaven and earth that might usually be called an apocalypse, especially with regard to its emphasis on its portrayal of the judgment.³²¹ In particular, the archangel Michael guides Abraham to heaven where he witnesses a judgment scene (*T. Ab.* 10:14). Outside the first gate of heaven, Abraham sees angels driving souls through a wide gate that leads to destruction (*T. Ab.* 11:11) and bringing others through a narrow gate (*T. Ab.* 11:5). The author of the *Testament* describes the two angels driving the souls through the broad gate as having ‘fiery aspect and merciless intention’ while relentlessly beating the souls with fiery lashes (*T. Ab.* 12:1-3).³²² At the judgment scene, another two angels record righteous and sinful deeds, one on the right and another on the left of the balance used to weigh the deeds (*T. Ab.* 12:8; 13:9). Holding the balance is an additional angel who receives from another angel the fire needed to test the deeds. Two more angels help complete the scene; if the deeds are consumed, then the angel of judgment comes immediately to remove the accused to a place of punishment. Otherwise, the angel of righteousness carries away those whose deeds are tested by fire and persevere (*T. Ab.* 13:12-14). While the actions of the angels in the parables of Matt 13 are described with less detail, the roles are much the same, they gather, separate, carry off the wicked, and throw them into the fire. What is distinctive about the parables’ depiction of the scene is the presence of the Son of Man as judge. Rather than the numerous judgments and the balance indicating one’s eternal destiny, the Son of Man commands the angels to group their harvest (or catch) into respective groups. Similarly, the *Testament of Abraham* does not reflect angels in the act of gathering the wicked and the righteous from the world, but it does depict the angels driving the souls into the two gates. More so than any of the other texts mentioned so far, greater detail and attention has been paid to the angels in the narrative of the *Testament of Abraham*, bearing evidence of the tradition of angelic activity at the judgment.³²³

³²¹ Sanders, ‘Testament of Abraham,’ 879.

³²² In Recension B, an angel of the Lord is the one driving the souls to destruction (*Test. Abr.* 9:5). The two angels and their description found in Recension A are not found there.

³²³ This is not unlike the *Testament of Levi*, where the various heavens and their occupants are described. In the lowest heaven reside the spirits ready to accomplish the punishment of humanity, while the armies prepared to punish the spirits of error on the day of judgment are located in the second heaven (*T. Levi* 3:2-3). For Sim, it is clear that these spirits are angels. Sim, ‘Angels,’ 697. See also 1Kgs 22:19-23; Num 16:22; 27:16; 1QS 3:18-21; Sir 39:28-31.

2.3 'Christian' Apocalyptic Literature

2.3.1 *Revelation*

In the book of Revelation, the seer's vision is replete with angels active in the final days of the earth before judgment. Not only are the angels often described around the throne (Rev 5:11; 7:11; 8:2) but they are active in the judgment. For example, in Rev 7:1-8, the angels are prevented from destroying the earth until the 'number of those sealed' are collected, much like harvest imagery and collection of the wheat in the Parable of the Weeds. Furthermore, angels blow trumpets, bringing in eschatological signs and destruction (Rev 8:6-9:21; cf. Matt 24:31), wage a heavenly war (Rev 12:7; 19:14), announce eschatological events (Rev 14:6, 8, 9), bring plagues (Rev 15-16), and interpret the events (Rev 19:9). However, in Rev 14, the imagery of the angel, the harvest, and the Son of Man are combined. In Rev 14:14, the one like a Son of Man appears and swings his sickle over the earth, reaping its harvest (Rev 14:17). Following this, another angel appears and gathers the clusters of the vine of the earth with his sickle (Rev 14:19). In addition, the book culminates in the scene of judgment where evil is defeated and all are judged around the throne (Rev 20:13), where the wicked are cast into a lake of fire (Rev 20:15). In the book of Revelation, the imagery is rich and the description of the judgment is replete with angels, illustrating their participation at almost every event, from the demonstration of signs in nature to the harvest of the wicked. While the description in Revelation dwells on the times surrounding the judgment, other apocalypses focus on the judgment itself and the resulting punishments for those condemned.

2.3.2 *Non-Canonical Examples*

In apocryphal literature, heavenly ascents and tours of hell are often a part of the visionary's journey. In these places, especially on a visionary's descent, angels are witnessed inflicting punishment on the wicked.

In the *Apocalypse of Peter*, Peter is shown a vision of the last judgment (*Apoc. Pet.* 3) where angels play a role in gathering together sinners for the judgment, inflicting punishment, and bringing forth the elect and righteous in order to clothe them in the garments of eternal life (cf. Matt 13:43). Although sinners are described as ‘gathered’, with no subject (*Apoc. Pet.* 4), and driven by an unquenchable flame to the judgment (*Apoc. Pet.* 5), it seems likely that angels are implied in light of the heavenly setting and apocalyptic genre. Nevertheless, the angel, Ezrael (*Apoc. Pet.* 7), appears several times throughout the apocalypse, inflicting punishments upon sinners for their respective iniquity (*Apoc. Pet.* 7, 9, 11, 12).³²⁴ In a similar fashion, other angels on several occasions are portrayed as inflicting punishments. Yet even in the place of torment, not every castigation involves the detailed description of angelic administrators. It could be argued that by this time, angels are a common element of judgment scenes and eschatological punishment, and thus do not require a detailed description at every portrayal of eternal retribution. As a result, in this apocalypse and others that are similar, it could be assumed that angels are the ones primarily carrying out the gathering and punishment. However, the purpose of an apocalypse such as this is not purely descriptive of the last days, but also to convey a message to its hearers regarding what may or may not be in store for them in the eschaton. The *Apocalypse of Peter*, unlike some of the earlier eschatological judgment scenes, depicts the individual punishment in more detail and indicates a correlation between one’s punishment and one’s sins on earth. In this way, the eschatological portrait in the *Apocalypse of Peter* also includes an emphasis on *why* the punishment is carried out. Even so, angels seem to be an integral element in carrying out the justice of God, and in particular, vividly portraying the violence and significance of the future judgment.

Like the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Vision of Ezra* is a work that primarily focuses on the judgment and punishment of the wicked. Rather than ascending first, a common element among apocalyptic literature, Ezra descends into the fiery regions of hell and then is brought into Paradise after witnessing every judgment of sinners. Interestingly, a different set of angels travels with Ezra depending on his location. He is accompanied by seven angels of hell on his descent (*Vis. Ezra* 2),

³²⁴ Ezrael is not the only named angel in the apocalypse; there is also Uriel (*Apoc. Peter* 12) and Tatiros (Tartarouchos, *Apoc. Peter* 13). For a brief description of the *Apocalypse of Peter* and its place among other Christian apocalypses, see Bauckham, ‘Apocryphal.’

whereas another set of angels escorts him into heaven (Michael and Gabriel, *Vis. Ezra* 56). During the journey, angels appear whipping those who committed a particular sin (*Vis. Ezra* 19) as well as pricking their eyes with thorns (*Vis. Ezra* 40). However, not all apocalypses dwell on the wicked. The *Apocalypse of Thomas* briefly details the last days of earth. In terms of judgment, the seventh day features the air filled with angels at war, delivering the elect from the destruction of the world (cf. 1QM 12, Rev 12:7). Rather than dwell on the punishment of the wicked, this apocalypse speaks primarily about the rewards of the righteous, both those who have died and those living at the eschaton who escape destruction.

2.4 Summary

The preceding selection of texts, ranging from the Old Testament, Second Temple literature, and canonical and non-canonical Christian apocalyptic texts, have demonstrated a variety of angelic activity associated with eschatological judgment. This included the announcement of judgment, the gathering and escorting of the wicked and righteous to judgment, the keeping of heavenly records, and the actual administration of the punishment. In sum, the portrayal of angels contributes to a description of the justice and activity of God at the eschatological judgment. Moreover, these traditions show angels obediently carrying out the will of God as the judge, and relentlessly collecting, gathering and separating the evil for judgment. This establishes a foundation from which the angelic activity in the Parables of the Weeds and the Net can be interpreted.

3 PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS (MATT 13:24-30; 36-43)

Having covered the biblical and related traditions of angels involved in punishment and judgment scenes, the investigation into Matthew's use of angels will continue by looking at how this is reflected in the two parables in Matt 13: the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) and the Parable of the Net (Matt 13:47-50). These two parables are unique to Matthew and bear a similar focus on eschatological judgment. Yet, due to their differences, it is important to discuss

them separately and then investigate how they work together in the narrative of Matthew. Before beginning the discussion of the two parables, the context of Matthew's chapter of parables will be established.

3.1 The Context of Matt 13

The chapter of parables in Matthew comes at a significant point in his narrative. It marks the third discourse in Matthew's Gospel, following the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) and the Missionary Discourse (Matt 10). However, what sets apart Matt 13 as unique is its function following Matt 11-12. Matthew intentionally links Jesus' discourse to Matt 11-12 by announcing that Jesus told his parables on 'that same day' (Matt 13:1). This alerts the reader that this section of parables should be understood in its wider context of the growing discontent and opposition toward Jesus by the Jewish leaders. In Matt 11-12, Matthew portrays Jesus encountering opposition to his ministry (Matt 12:2, 14) and narrates the beginning of Jesus' rejection of Israel as the ones inheriting the kingdom of heaven (Matt 11:20-24; cf. 12:48-50). For this reason, Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (Matt 13:53-58) should be read as a more fitting finish to chapters 11-13 than to Matt 13 alone. The negative response to Jesus is important to understanding Matt 13. In the midst of this chapter, Jesus retreats into the house (Matt 13:36) separating himself from the crowds and addresses only his disciples, encouraging them to be obedient and faithful disciples of the kingdom as the new people of God.³²⁵ In this manner, Jesus' instruction becomes even more directed toward his disciples in Matthew after this discourse. Within Matt 13, Matthew presents seven parables³²⁶ to help explain the kingdom of God for those who have ears to hear (cf. Matt 13:10-17, 43). In two of the parables, the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) and the Parable of the Net (Matt 13:47-50), Matthew uses angels to help explain the parable and its message of judgment.

³²⁵ Is Jesus foreshadowing the separation that will take place at the eschaton? Will the two parables of separation evoke the removal of Jesus from the crowds – those that do not understand?

³²⁶ There are eight parables if the scribe trained in righteousness is classified as a parable (Matt 13:52); however, the Parable of the Net seems to be a more fitting conclusion.

3.2 Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30; 36-43)

In order to discuss the Parable of the Weeds, the parable will be broken roughly into three sections. The first introduces the situation of weeds in a field of wheat (Matt 13:24-26), the second relays a dialogue between the householder and his servants in response to the discovery of weeds among the wheat (Matt 13:27-30), and the third is an explanation Jesus gives to his disciples concerning the first two sections of the parable (Matt 13:36-43). The first two sections form the narrative heart of this parable. They establish what the parable is to illustrate about the kingdom – there are now weeds among the wheat and it is not until the harvest that the mixture of the fruits of both good and evil seed will end. The use of angels in the third section explains the eschatological value of the parable.

The Parable of the Weeds raises several questions, and the broad spectrum of interpretations in its history bears testimony to the difficulty of its meaning. Many of the interpretations focus on different aspects of the parable. For example, some concentrate on the origin of the evil seed, the mixture of wheat and weeds in the field, or the harvest of the crop and its botanical intruders.³²⁷ On some level, the parable engages with many of these issues, but this parable is one of the few in the Gospels that are accompanied by a detailed explanation. The following analysis will attempt to interpret the parable with the explanation in mind. In order to understand better the explanation, it is important to establish the narrative of the first two sections.

3.2.1 Section 1 (Matt 13:24-26), Establishing the Contrast

In the narrative of the Parable of the Weeds, the first section chronicles the problem of how two different plants of disparate origins end up in the same field together. The parable begins with a description of the sowing of the good seed, ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field,’ (Matt 13:24; cf. Matt 13:31,33,44,45,47; 18:23; 22:2).³²⁸ Meanwhile, the origin of the weeds is the result of an enemy sowing weeds in the midst of the planted

³²⁷ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 199-207.

³²⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:411, Jeremias, *Parables*, 79,156.

wheat. The description of the antagonist's activity is brief (he comes, he sows, he departs), 'an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away' (ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ὁ ἐχθρὸς καὶ ἐπέσπειρεν ζιζάνια ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σίτου καὶ ἀπῆλθεν, Matt 13:25).³²⁹ The word order and vocabulary (ἦλθεν... ἀπῆλθεν) brackets the enemy's activity, minimizing the adversary's presence and foreshadowing the impact of the diabolical deed. In these verses, Matthew contrasts not only the types of seeds, but also the differing origins of the seeds.³³⁰ In light of the rest of the parable, Matthew is succinct in the explanation of the origin of weeds in the field. Consequently, when compared to the good seed (καλὸν σπέρμα), it is clear that the weeds are nothing like the wheat in any way (Matt 13:24).³³¹ Having established the sowing of the field with contrasting plants, the narrative continues with the logical and expected outcome of the enemy's activity - the appearance of the weeds among the wheat.

3.2.2 Section 2 (Matt 13:27-30), Dialogue about the Presence of Weeds

Developing from what has already been established for the reader, that the field is full of both two different kinds of seed from two separate origins, the dialogue in the second section (Matt 13:36-43) discusses the discovery of the weeds' presence and progresses to the solution of what to do with the unwanted weeds. The conversation between the servants and the householder focuses on the weeds and further establishes the contrast between the seeds.

The dialogue begins with the servants noticing the weeds in the field and coming to the householder, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?'³³² Like the previous Parable of the Soils (Matt 13:3-9), the seed sown by the sower is understood to be quality seed and can be expected to produce quality yield. The question posed by the servants, οὐχὶ

³²⁹ The mention of night or sense of sleeping seen in other parables may imply a lack of watchfulness. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:412. However, here it seems that sleeping was a necessary narrative element needed to permit the sowing by the enemy. Gundry, however, sees significance to the sleep and believes that it relates to an influx of false disciples. Gundry, *Matthew*, 263.

³³⁰ All that is communicated is that he does not belong there (he has to come and leave), he is opposed to the sower (his enemy), and that he is the source of the weeds.

³³¹ Sim sees this division as evidence of dualism in Matthew. Sim, *Apocalyptic*, 78-79.

³³² The address to the householder, κύριε, raises some questions regarding the allegorical identity of this character.

καλὸν σπέρμα ἔσπειρας (Matt 13:27) uses οὐχί with the aorist indicative, ἔσπειρας, and expects a positive answer, ‘Yes, good seed was sown.’³³³ In addition, the following question posed by the servants assumes the appearance of the weeds is unexpected, ‘Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ (Matt 13:27). In light of this, the translation, ‘Since you sowed good seed,’ may more adequately emphasize the disparate origins of the contents of the field and the surprise of the weeds’ presence. This was unexpected from ‘good seed’ (καλὸν σπέρμα).

The householder, repeating what the reader already knows, replies ‘An enemy has done this’ (ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῦτο ἐποίησεν, Matt 13:28).³³⁴ Despite the enemy’s clandestine behavior, there is no secret to the origin of the weeds. According to the servants, if weeds are recognized as from an enemy, then they cannot remain amongst the wheat, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ (Matt 13:28). The householder quells the servants’ anxiety, instructing the weeds to be left among the wheat to grow until the harvest; only then, will they be separated, bound, and burned. The reason given is to protect the wheat, ‘for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them,’ (Matt 13:29).

Matthew does not explain the reason for the difficulty in uprooting only the weeds, only that a premature sorting would jeopardize the wheat. Nevertheless, some have argued that the roots have become entwined because either there are such a great number of weeds or the weeds and wheat have matured long enough for the roots to entangle.³³⁵ Agriculturally, it is unlikely that even a field sown with ‘good’ seed would be without weeds.³³⁶ Instead, it would have been more surprising to see a field without weeds. In this regard, there would have to be an exorbitant amount of weeds for the servants to question their origin.³³⁷ However, there is no implication in the parable of the amount of weeds, small or great. It is the presence of the weeds that has caused the stir (Matt 13:27).

³³³ BDF §427(2)

³³⁴ It is not stated how the householder knew this. The householder’s answer concerning his enemy’s activity is not without difficulty in terms of the parable’s realism, for how would he know an enemy did this if he and the servants were sleeping (cf. Matt 13:25). On the other hand, Manson argues it is probable that first century readers would have been familiar with military practices of agriculturally destroying an enemy’s crop with weeds or salt. Manson, *Sayings*, 193.

³³⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:414.

³³⁶ Manson, *Sayings*, 193.

³³⁷ However, Davies and Allison argue that Matthew does not seem to be concerned to remain stringently accurate, for the mustard seed is neither the smallest seed nor does it grow into a tree that would house birds’ nests (Matt 13:31-32). Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:420.

It has been posited that the weed most likely being described is darnel (*lolium temulentum*) and is considered to be nearly identical to that of wheat in its early stages of growth.³³⁸ Thus, if the servants were to wait until harvest as instructed by the householder, then the differences between the two would be more clear. However, Matthew speaks of the weeds' appearance (ἐφάνη, Matt 13:26), suggesting that the weeds would have been recognizable by sight.³³⁹ Moreover, the servants identify the presence of weeds and run to the householder with the news of the weeds. One could argue that the wheat and weeds may have matured already (cf. Matt 13:26), but then the notion of letting them grow until harvest seems out of place (Matt 13:30). Instead, Matthew's reason to wait until harvest exhibits concern for the preservation of the wheat. For Matthew, this is only possible if the separation is postponed until harvest.³⁴⁰ In this light, it is more likely that he is presenting an argument for the disciple's appropriate response to evil and the delay of God's final and inevitable judgment rather than describing the difficulty of identifying evil among the good. Manson suggests that the servants' question concerning uprooting the weeds would have been absurd and that the use here in the parable's narrative is only to set up the obvious answer; the weeds must be sorted out at the harvest.³⁴¹ In the explanation (section three), this becomes the victory of God over evil at the future judgment despite the present existence of evil in God's kingdom. At the harvest, the presence of the weeds is remedied.

The narrative of the parable ends with the householder reporting the instructions he will give the harvesters (cf. Rev 14:15), 'Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn,' (Matt 13:30).³⁴² If a particular plant is a weed, it will be destroyed; if it is wheat, it will be counted among the householder's possessions. While the servants ask the questions, the householder does not include them in his answer about the harvest. Despite the servants' (οἱ δοῦλοι) willingness to extract the weeds, it is the

³³⁸ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 198.

³³⁹ Manson, *Sayings*, 193.

³⁴⁰ This is related to how one interprets the field, especially in light of Matt 18.

³⁴¹ Manson, *Sayings*, 193.

³⁴² There is debate whether it was customary to gather the weeds and burn them or simply burn the field after the wheat had been harvested. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 415, Jeremias, *Parables*, 156, Gundry, *Matthew*, 265.

harvesters (οἱ θερισταί) that will gather the weeds and wheat separately, performing the necessary actions according to their respective species. For Matthew, the servants and the harvesters are clearly two separate groups demarcating two separate times. It is likely that such a distinction between the two would not have been true to life. More workers might have been hired, but the servants would have still helped at the harvest.³⁴³ For Matthew, the difference is crucial for the explanation; the harvesters are equated with angels, a clearly different category than Jesus' disciples.³⁴⁴

3.2.3 Section 3 (Matt 13:36-43), Jesus' Eschatological Explanation

Like the Parable of the Sower, the explanation (the third section) does not immediately follow the parable (unlike the Parable of the Net, Matt 13:47-50), being separated by two parables and a second brief explanation of why Jesus uses parables (Matt 13:34-35; cf. Matt 13:10-17). These two parables, the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt 13:31-32) and the Parable of the Leaven (Matt 13:33), both share the characteristic of God's triumph in the future. By placing them in between the two halves of the Parable of the Weeds, these three descriptions of the kingdom focus on the divinely ordered culmination at the end of time.³⁴⁵

The narrative introduction to the explanation describes Jesus leaving the crowds and entering the house (cf. Matt 13:34).³⁴⁶ Like the explanation of the Parable of the Sower, Jesus' disciples approach him seeking an explanation, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field' (Matt 13:36). For the second time in this discourse, Jesus reveals the meaning associated with specific characters and events (cf. Matt 13:18-23). A lexicon of seven items is relayed to the disciples, giving them the keys to understanding the parable, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy

³⁴³ Manson, *Sayings*, 194.

³⁴⁴ Although Fletcher-Louis does not address this parable, his conclusions on the boundaries between the angelic and human are less defined, and thus see the righteous as presently engaging in an angelic-life. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 106.

³⁴⁵ Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:431-2.

³⁴⁶ This has been noted by some to be significant in determining the structure of the discourse, for it is here that Jesus turns to teach his disciples only. Kingsbury, *Parables*, 12-15.

who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels,' (Matt 13:37-39). The list is incomplete as not every character or event from the parable's narrative sections is explained (e.g. the servants) or incorporated into the explanation that follows. Instead, the parable's explanation crescendoes in Matt 13:40-43, describing the relevance of gathering the weeds in greater detail.³⁴⁷ Just as it was with the harvesters and the field, so it will be at the close of the age: 'The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' (Matt 13:41-42). In this parable, Matthew introduces the relationship between the Son of Man and the angels. Before establishing Matthew's own use of this pairing, it will be important to discuss traditions regarding the Son of Man and angels.

3.3 Angels and the Son of Man Traditions

The association of angels and the Son of Man is closely linked with the description of the figure as 'one like a son of man.' The phrase 'son of man' or 'sons of man' in the Old Testament is typically understood in a nontitular sense referring to one's humanness.³⁴⁸ Even in Ezekiel, where the prophet is addressed as Son of Man, the term calls attention to the origin of human birth.³⁴⁹ At the same time, with the

³⁴⁷ Snodgrass states the crucial matter of the parable is usually at its end. Snodgrass, *Stories*, 19.

³⁴⁸ One of the prominent uses of 'Son of Man' in the Old Testament characterizes being born of a human, using literally the phrase 'son of Adam' (בן־אדם). See Chialà, 'Evolution,' 154-55. In the Septuagint tradition, בן־אדם is translated nearly every time as υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Slater uses the parallelism in Ps 8:4 to draw attention to this point. Slater, 'Son of Man,' 184 n.4. In addition, Ragnar Leivestad argues that the expression Son of Man should not be considered a title in any case and doing so impairs understanding the synoptic sayings. Leivestad, 'Exit.' For a reply, see Lindars, 'Re-Enter.' This is not unlike the Aramaic corpus of literature in which Son of Man is nontitular, referring to the aspect of humanness. The Aramaic idiom can be interpreted in three different ways, (a) a circumlocution for 'I', (b) generic (humans in general), (c) and indefinite (a man, i.e. someone). Burkett's article is a brief but informative survey of the history of these three nontitular forms of son of man. He concludes by emphasizing that future progress on Son of Man research will be aided by understanding that the bulk of the use of Son of Man is in a nontitular form. Burkett, 'Nontitular,' 520. See also Casey, 'Idiom,' 164-82. However, in most cases in the Old Testament, the reference is plural, 'sons of Adam' (בני־אדם), with the notable exception in the book of Ezekiel, where the prophet is addressed frequently as 'son of man'. The expression appears 95x in the LXX, each time addressing the prophet in the vocative, except Ezek 31:14, where it appears in the plural.

³⁴⁹ Since, God and his messenger use this expression for Ezekiel, it may highlight the contrast between heavenly and earthly origins. Nevertheless, the singular use may have influenced Daniel. T. Slater argues Daniel's dependence on Ezekiel is often overlooked when trying to understand the Son of Man, hereby exacerbating the Son of Man problem. Slater, 'Son of Man,' 190-92. Chialà

appearance of a figure described as ‘one like a son of man’, the imagery and language of Daniel 7 have become the object of much research in attempts to understand the use of the term in the Gospels.³⁵⁰ The vision of Daniel 7 follows the narrative of Daniel in the lion’s den (Dan 6) and begins a new section of visions (Dan 7-12). In this first dream vision, Daniel begins by describing four beasts rising out of the sea, which is followed by a report of a heavenly judgment. Thrones are set in place and the Ancient of Days is depicted with clothing white as snow, hair like pure wool, and sitting on a fiery throne with wheels of fire (Dan 7:9). After the last beast to appear is judged and put to death, Daniel reports, ‘I saw one like a son of man’³⁵¹ coming with the clouds of heaven,’ (Dan 7:13). This figure is then presented to the Ancient of Days, who then bestows on him glory, kingship, and an everlasting kingdom (Dan 7:14).³⁵² However, the figure in Dan 7:13 is described as one *like* a son of man (כְּבֶרֶךְ אִנְשׁ), implying that his humanity was only an appearance. This is not unlike how angels are described as appearing to humans in the Old Testament. For example, Gideon does not perceive the messenger sent to him is an angel until the very end of the visit when the angel vanishes from his sight (Judg 6:11-24; cf. Tob 5:4). Even in Daniel, similar language is used to describe the angel Gabriel’s appearance to Daniel, ‘Then someone appeared standing before me, having the appearance of a man [כְּמֵרֶאשִׁית אִנְשׁ],’ (Dan 8:15). Later, another figure appears to Daniel, one clothed in white linen (Dan 10:10, 12:6-7), and is described as one in human form (כְּדִמוּת בְּנֵי אָדָם, Dan 10:16, כְּמֵרֶאשִׁית אָדָם, Dan 10:18).³⁵³ While the identity of the figure in Dan 7:13 is still debated, there is more

makes note that the interpretation of Son of Man in Ezekiel has been interpreted differently. Some see it still as emphasizing the human nature of the prophet, while others see it elevating Ezekiel to a different level. Chialà, ‘Evolution,’ 155-56. There is some debate concerning whether or not Ezekiel had a specific role for the prophet and thus called him the Son of Man, or was simply identifying with the humanity of Ezekiel. Chialà, ‘Evolution,’ 155-56.

³⁵⁰ Despite the debate concerning Jesus’ use of the title for himself, it can be assumed that the evangelists thought of Jesus as the Son of Man. See also Burkett’s monograph which succinctly documents the history of the debate. Burkett, *Debate*.

³⁵¹ Then NRSV translates this ‘one like a human being’ but I have rendered the literal ‘one like a son of man’ in order to illustrate its relevance for the discussion.

³⁵² There are interesting LXX variants in which it is indicated that the ancient of days is the Son of Man and they are not two separate individuals. Reynolds, ‘Old Greek,’ Stuckenbruck, ‘Error.’

³⁵³ In the LXX of Dan 10:16, it is the likeness of a hand of a man that touches Daniel. Other versions of this verse do not include hand. Perhaps sensing the similarity, Brenton’s translation of this verse in the LXX infuses Dan 7:13 into it, ‘behold, as it were the likeness of a son of man touched my lips.’

agreement that these last examples are heavenly beings.³⁵⁴ For this reason, the figure in Dan 7 (and Dan 10) could be interpreted as an angel appearing as a man (anthropomorphic) or as a human bearing angelic characteristics (angelomorphic). While these two categories of interpretation differ ontologically, both categories illustrate that this figure is described with characteristics of humans and angels alike.

The scene is complicated further when there is no portrayal of a spectacular arrival of any figure in the vision's interpretation (Dan 7:15-28). Instead, the glory and kingdom are given to the 'holy ones of the Most High' in Dan 7:22 and 'the people of the holy ones of the Most high' in Dan 7:27.³⁵⁵ One explanation is to view the one like a son of man from Dan 7:13 not as an individual heavenly being, but as a representative, standing in for the holy ones just as the beasts represented the kings and their respective kingdoms.³⁵⁶ In this way, the reason the figure could have been described as humanlike was because he represented humans, namely Israel.³⁵⁷ While the exact relationship between these ambiguous descriptions remains unclear, the interpretation of the vision (Dan 7:15-28) is not often included in later reinterpretations of the Son of Man. Instead, the emphasis lies more on the figure of the Son of Man as an individual, his coming on clouds, and the bestowal of authority.

For example, the *Similitudes of Enoch* refers to a figure using the language of the Son of Man from Dan 7.³⁵⁸ In *1En.* 46:1-4, the seer describes the Ancient of Days using the same imagery of Dan 7:9 and places another individual with him who is identified as the Son of Man (*1En.* 46:2-3, cf. *1En.* 71:10). Echoing the one 'like a human' in Dan 7, *1En.* 46 sketches this figure with a face like that of a human being

³⁵⁴ Collins, 'Son of Man,' 451. Slater affirms that there is a consensus that Dan 8:15, 10:16 and 10:18 refer to heavenly beings. In Ezekiel, the same language is also applied to God. While the figure in Dan 7:13 has sometimes been thought to be Michael, this figure speaks of Michael as another heavenly being (Dan 10:13; 12:1). Slater, 'Son of Man,' 192-3.

³⁵⁵ See Collins, 'Enoch,' 216-17, Collins, 'Son of Man,' 451.

³⁵⁶ Margaret Pamment addresses this idea of the Son of Man as a representative and transposes it in Matthew, looking at the relationship between Jesus as the Son of Man and his disciples, saying that the Son of Man is representative of the righteous. Pamment, 'Son of Man,' 117-18.

³⁵⁷ Using the phrase son of man, Dan 2:38 and 5:21 contrast humans and beasts (cf. Dan 2:43; 4:13,22,29).

³⁵⁸ Collins, 'Son of Man,' 451. The dating of the *Similitudes* has been put both well after (Milik) and around the time of the writing of the New Testament. For example, Mearns puts it before the writing of the Gospels around 40 CE, whereas Knibb dates it (tentatively) to the end of the first century CE. Mearns, 'Dating,' 369, Knibb, 'Date,' 359. While, the relationship of *1Enoch* to the Gospels is still tentative, the possibility of a parallel tradition remains.

and a countenance ‘full of grace like that of one among the holy angels,’ (1En. 46:1). More so than Daniel, the imagery in 1En. 46 clearly uses features of both angels and humans. For the remainder of the *Similitudes*, when the Son of Man is indicated, he is often called ‘that Son of Man’, referring back to the figure in 1En. 46 and emphasizing the significance of his description there. Consequently, the rendering of the Son of Man in language reminiscent of Daniel enables the *Similitudes*, albeit in a new way, to illustrate the way the Son of Man figure possesses characteristics of both angels and humans.

In addition, the *Similitudes* dramatically lean towards the portrayal of the Son of Man as an individual being, avoiding the implication found in Dan 7 of the Son of Man as a representative or symbol. This can be seen in the way the Son of Man takes a different role in the judgment compared to Dan 7. In Daniel, the ‘one like a son of man’ appears after the Ancient of Days has pronounced his judgment on the beast and carried out the sentence. In the *Similitudes*, the Son of Man is placed on the throne by the Lord of the Spirits in order for him to carry out the judgment (1En. 61:8; 62:5; 69:29; cf. 45:3; 49:4; 51:3; 55:4; 63:11).³⁵⁹ The surrendering of the throne is somewhat remarkable as it departs from the Old Testament notion of God as the only judge. Even with this adaptation, the author of the *Similitudes* maintains cohesiveness with Dan 7 while also reshaping the figure of the Son of Man, demonstrating evidence of further interpretation and development of the tradition. This is not unlike what is witnessed in the Gospels.³⁶⁰

The Gospels, like the *Similitudes*, show honor to its Danielic heritage while also redefining how the term Son of Man is interpreted. This is evidenced most clearly in the sayings where the Son of Man appears on clouds of heaven.³⁶¹ For example, Jesus responds to the high priest’s question about his identity as the Messiah with imagery from Dan 7, ‘You have said so. But I tell you, from now on

³⁵⁹ Matthew’s emphasis on the role of the Son of Man as eschatological judge uncannily echoes the depiction of the Son of Man in the *Similitudes* (Matt 19:28; 25:31) The similarity has not gone unnoticed. In particular, see Leslie Walck’s forthcoming book. Walck, *Enoch*.

³⁶⁰ Outside the Gospels, the title Son of Man is only used in Acts 7:56, Rev 1:13, and 14:14. Furthermore, Matthew has the greatest quantity of references (Matt 30x; Mark 14x, Luke 25x, John 13x).

³⁶¹ Collins argues that the background for the imagery in Daniel 7 lies in Canaanite myths, with a triumphant Baal riding on clouds. Collins, ‘Son of Man,’ 450. Other later interpretations include 4Ezra 13, which shows a figure as a messiah using the imagery of this figure flying with the clouds of heaven. However, this implicit reference to Daniel’s Son of Man does not include angels. Nebe, ‘Angels,’ 123.

you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven,' (Matt 26:64). Here also is evidence of the bestowal of authority and kingship upon the Son of Man as witnessed in Dan 7:14. Perhaps capitalizing on this theme, Matthew alone speaks of the kingdom of the Son of Man (Matt 13:41; 16:28).³⁶² Furthermore, the Son of Man is no longer likened to angels in the same way as Daniel or the *Similitudes*. Instead, the Son of Man is accompanied by angels when he appears. Matthew, in particular, seems to have embraced the developing tradition of the Son of Man.³⁶³ For example, Matthew includes more references to the Son of Man and angels and repeatedly defines the relationship between the two with the pronoun 'his' (Matt 13:41; 16:27; 24:30; cf. Matt 25:31). His redaction of Mark 8:38 is a good example of his interest in the relationship between the Son of Man and angels, 'the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father,' (Matt 16:27; cf. Matt 24:31). In the uniquely Matthean Parable of the Weeds, the Son of Man is depicted sending out his angels to collect and sort the evil and the righteous (Matt 13:41; cf. Matt 13:49). The illustration of the Son of Man's accompanying angels may suggest that the Son of Man is an angel himself, overseeing his own group of angels (cf. Matt 25:41).³⁶⁴ If this is true, perhaps Matthew is offering a contrast when he alludes to 'the devil and his angels' in the judgment scene in Matt 25:31-46. On the other hand, these angels more likely indicate instead the status of the Son of Man, a figure with his own heavenly entourage (cf. Heb 1-2; 1Pet 3:22; Phil 2:9-11; Rev 22:16). The Old Testament offers

³⁶² In Matt 20:21, the mother of James and John requests seats for her sons at Jesus' right and left in 'his kingdom.'

³⁶³ Mark only has angels associated with the Son of Man on two occasions (Mark 8:38; 13:26-27), both included in Matthew (Matt 16:27; 24:30-31). Luke only includes Mark 8:38 (par. Luke 9:26). Luke's only other reference to the Son of Man and angels is unique to his Gospel (Luke 12:8-9; see Appendix). In addition, these references have been grouped traditionally into the category of future sayings. In an attempt to assist understanding the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels, the sayings traditionally have been broken up into three different categories. These include those that refer to (a) the present ministry of Jesus, (b) his suffering, (c) and the eschatological activity and coming of the Son of Man. Hooker notes that the final category also demonstrates most development between the Gospels. Hooker, 'Synoptic,' 195. As a result, it is suggested this category is the one that warrants the greatest suspicion regarding authenticity. Borsch, *Myth*, 353. In contrast, Maddox questions these categories and suggests that a better approach is to investigate what the evangelists meant, rather than what Jesus might have said. He then proceeds to explain every Son of Man passage through the lens of the Son of Man as eschatological judge. Maddox, 'Function,' 46-7. Luz takes a similar approach, but argues the categories relate to each other, emphasizing the contrast between a suffering and exalted Son of Man. Luz, 'Judge.'

³⁶⁴ David Catchpole comes to a similar conclusion through an analysis of Luke 12:8-9 and Matt 18:10, arguing that the depiction of the Son of Man as an advocate in Luke 12:8-9 parallels the angels before the face of God in Matt 18:10. Since they are both fulfilling similar roles, he proposes that the Son of Man should be considered an angel. Catchpole, 'Angelic,' Chilton, 'Heavenly,' 214-15.

no clear antecedent for angels with the Son of Man; however, the idea of an accompanying angelic entourage may come from traditions like Zech 14:5, where ‘the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.’ In Dan 7, the Son of Man is at the throne of the Ancient of days where, ‘a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him,’ (Dan 7:10; cf. Jude 14-15). Another option is to consider the accompanying angels as the eschatological forces of the Son of Man. With texts like the War Scroll from Qumran and Revelation, it seems that the arrival of the Son of Man with an angelic army for judgment would not have been a tenuous leap for the early Christians.³⁶⁵ The brevity of Matthew’s description of the relationship of the angels to the Son of Man does not suggest that Matt 13 or his Gospel is limited to any one of these traditions (entourage, angelic army). In fact, Matthew may have more than one in mind. He may also be drawing from Christian tradition, reflecting what is known about Jesus into his uses of Son of Man. This does not mean that influence of Danielic traditions is absent in Matthew, but it does suggest that the Jesus tradition was influencing his portrayal of the Son of Man.³⁶⁶ What this highlights is Matthew’s own way of speaking of the Son of Man and angels. While this will continue to be developed throughout the remaining chapters in which both the Son of Man and angels appear, it is important to consider their relevance to the Parable of the Weeds. This will be done first by examining how Matthew’s use of angels reflects the traditions of judgment scenes discussed earlier before, secondly, by demonstrating how this portrays the Son of Man as judge.

3.3.1 *Angels in the Parable of the Weeds*

In Matt 13:40-41, Matthew indicates that just as the harvesters gathered the weeds first and burned them (Matt 13:30), so too the angels gather the wicked and the righteous. In many of the apocalyptic visions discussed earlier, angels are the heavenly servants of God that perform the duties associated with judgment,

³⁶⁵ Hare, *Tradition*, p.

³⁶⁶ Luz, ‘Judge,’ 15-18. While Luz leans more toward the influence of the Jesus tradition on Matthew’s interpretation of the Son of Man, Marguerat sees more of a connection between the apocalyptic traditions and Matthew’s portrait of the Son of Man as judge, ‘En d’autres termes, si le Christ mt est ó υιός τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, c’est avant tout parce qu’il viendra juger le monde et régnera dans l’éon nouveau.’ Marguerat, *Jugement*, 71.

including gathering and punishing. By portraying angels in these roles, Matthew reflects these traditions and adapts them to fit his context. In what follows, some of the functions of angels at the judgment scenes will be compared with the Parable of the Weeds.

To begin, there are aspects of the angelic activity that do not appear in Matthew. For example, in contrast to some judgment scenes, there is no portrayal of angels holding a balance in Matthew. In elaborate scenes of judgment, such as in the *Testament of Abraham*, angels are portrayed as holding a balance, weighing the good deeds and bad as part of the soul's judgment. In cases where neither good nor bad works outweigh the other and the balance remains level, God shows mercy and tips the scale in favor of the soul's reward. In Matthew, there is little to suggest that the difference between the wheat and the weeds required a balance to indicate their future fate.³⁶⁷ On the other hand, this parable might be incorporating the tradition of angels as heavenly recorders of righteous and wicked deeds. While this interpretation is possible, the heavenly record books in *1Enoch* were most likely to reassure the reader of the evidence against the wicked, and it seems unlikely that this parable has this same principle in mind. Any assurance of an accurate judgment in the Parable of the Weeds does not come from the angels, but from the Son of Man who sends out the angels. That being said, angels would have carried out the Son of Man's instructions in a way that implicitly communicated that the judgment would have been fulfilled without error. Looking back at the parable's narrative section, the just outcome of the harvest is reflected in the householder's confident response to the servants. By permitting the weeds and wheat to grow together until the harvest, the conviction of the householder preserves the wheat. At the time of harvest, the mixed composition of the field will be rectified when finally the bad will be separated from the good.

In light of this, the angels can be seen as characteristic of the means by which God's ultimate and final judgment is carried out because God's angels are efficacious in their deeds. In the same way that *1En.* 100:4-5 speaks of the angels descending to the 'secret places' to gather all those who gave aid to sin, so

³⁶⁷ Consider how Matthew discusses the difference between the fruit of good and bad trees (Matt 3:10; 7:17-19; 12:33; 13:23; 21:19).

Matthew tells that the angels ‘will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,’ (Matt 13:41). Through the gathering of angels, there is no escape, no hiding, and no refusal. The wicked and all causes of sin will be brought together and cast into the furnace of fire while the righteous will shine like the sun. In this way, God’s activity at the judgment through the angels also preserves the righteous. Like Matthew’s pairing the fates of the wicked and the righteous, *1En.* 100:5 speaks of setting a guard of holy angels over all the righteous until all evil and all sin are brought to an end. The eschatological portraits demonstrate an interest in the preservation of the righteous until the judgment is complete. Without losing sight of the eschaton, Matthew’s Parable of the Weeds explains that the weeds must presently remain with the wheat so as to preserve the wheat. Only at the hands of the Son of Man and his angels will the two be separated. This explains Matthew’s clear distinction between the servants and the harvesters in the narrative section of his parable. The explanation has the role of the harvesting reserved for the angels alone. Moreover, Matthew has explicitly linked these angels performing the judgment activity to the Son of Man, ‘The Son of Man will send his angels,’ (Matt 13:41). Consequently, when Matthew reflects eschatological traditions of judgment scenes in his use of angels, he calls attention to the role of the Son of Man in Matt 13 as judge.

3.3.2 *Son of Man with his Angels as Judge in the Parable of the Weeds*

Matthew’s language of the Son of Man sending out his angels calls attention to the fact that they are sent out by the Son of Man and that they are his angels. Matthew’s language regarding ‘sending’ indicates the angels are obedient to the Son of Man. If their roles are understood in light of the apocalyptic traditions, then the angels are also accurate and effective in their gathering and sorting of the entire harvest. Since their actions fall under the purview of the one judging, this further suggests the role of the Son of Man as judge at the close of the age. Moreover, while there is a tacit understanding that the angels in the Book of Watchers have been appointed by a transcendent God and that divine instructions are carried out faithfully, Matthew’s indication that the angels will be under the direction of the Son of Man further underscores the importance of this portrait for

his Gospel.³⁶⁸ With regard to the rest of the passage, the parable's narrative indicates a mixture of wheat and weeds that cannot be separated before the harvest without damage to wheat. Indirectly, this focuses some of the attention on the one that can separate this mixture, for the householder also directs the harvesters, 'and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn,' (Matt 13:30).

In addition, Matthew uses 'his' to highlight further the activity and authority of the Son of Man at the judgment.³⁶⁹ Not only are these angels sent by him, but they are *his* angels.³⁷⁰ Moreover, the angels are sent to gather 'out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,' (Matt 13:41). The place in which the angels collect is under the rule of the Son of Man – *his* kingdom. Together with Matt 16:28, Matthew stands alone in the New Testament as referring to a kingdom of the Son of Man.³⁷¹ No matter how one attempts to differentiate the kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the Son of Man, Matthew is clear in that he sees the Son of Man as its authoritative judge.³⁷²

If it is understood that Matthew sees Jesus as the Son of Man, then this is not the first time that Matthew has implied Jesus as the judge. For example, the idea of Jesus' message of judgment and his role of judge can be set within the context of the words of John the Baptist. In Matt 3:12 the words of John the Baptist concerning Jesus bear some resemblance to the eschatological language of the two parables examined, 'His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.' Although there are no explicit or implicit references to angels, the similar references to sorting, saving the wheat, and burning suggest there is a definite link between the messages of imminent judgment and repentance in these passages.³⁷³ This intimates the larger theme of judgment that pervades Matthew's Gospel narrative and Jesus' role as judge in it.

³⁶⁸ Davidson, *Angels*, 77.

³⁶⁹ The use of 'his' with the angels will be examined in more detail in the next chapter on Matt 16:27.

³⁷⁰ Hare makes a similar point, but does not see as much value in 'his'. Hare, *Tradition*, 154.

³⁷¹ Marguerat, *Jugement*, 82.

³⁷² Walker argues that a distinction between the kingdoms cannot be maintained; Matthew speaks of *one* kingdom. Walker, 'Kingdom,' 579. Snodgrass cautions that no hard lines should be drawn. Snodgrass, *Stories*, 212.

³⁷³ See Catchpole, 'Baptist,' 557-70.

While the discussion will return with more examples after examining the Parable of the Net, it is important to mention Matthew's portrayal of the final judgment in Matt 25:31-46. In this scene, Matthew describes the Son of Man sitting on a throne of glory judging the nations with all the angels around him. For Marguerat, this portrait, together with the Parable of the Weeds, clearly put Jesus as the Son of Man on the throne 'En égard à la personne du Juge eschatologique, Mt 13,40-42 et 25,31-46 sont littéralement le théâtre d'une substitution d'identité.'³⁷⁴ He adds that in this way, Matthew expands on the understanding of Jesus' name given at his birth (Matt 1:21). He will not just save his people from his sins, but will install his kingdom through judgment of the world.³⁷⁵ As argued previously in Matthew's redaction of Matt 10:32-33, Matthew has intentionally constructed his text to demonstrate the role of the Son of Man as judge. In Matt 10:32-33, the use of angels could have made this less clear; however, the opposite is true here. The angels serve the Son of Man's role as judge.

4 PARABLE OF THE NET AND THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

Because of the strong similarities and repetition, Matthew's use of the angels to demonstrate the Son of Man as judge in the Parable of the Weeds is equally important in the Parable of the Net. Although the Son of Man is never mentioned in the explanation of the Parable of the Net, it is argued that Matthew used the similar structure and the vocabulary of these explanations to recall the previous parable of judgment, including the role of the Son of Man. In this manner, Hagner thinks the parables may reflect 'reciprocal influence,' perhaps even in the stage of oral tradition. Consequently, the similarities do not count against the interpretation of the parables, but they complement each other, emphasizing through repetition the key elements of the eschatological judgment. Comparatively, the differences of the two parables should not be ignored, especially in light of the position of the Parable of the Net in the discourse.³⁷⁶ The

³⁷⁴ Marguerat, *Jugement*, 81.

³⁷⁵ 'Le Seigneur, dont les croyants confessent le retour, ne se bornera pas à sauver les justes; il instaurera le royaume au travers du jugement du monde.' Marguerat, *Jugement*, 79.

³⁷⁶ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 196-99, Hagner, *Matthew*.

Parable of the Net stands at the end of Jesus' instruction in Matt 13, and thus the attention this parable draws to the judgment seems to be intentional.³⁷⁷ Consequently, the following discussion will compare the two Parables, drawing upon many of the conclusions about angels demonstrated in the previous discussion, and examine the unique contributions the Parable of the Net brings to the discourse.

4.1 The Parable of the Net

The narrative of the Parable of the Net is much more concise than the Parable of the Weeds and reflects a similar structure and rhythm to the two preceding parables (Parables of the Treasure, Matt 13:44, and Pearl, Matt 13:45-46).³⁷⁸ As in the Parable of the Weeds, the details of Matthew's construction of this parable reveal it is also steeped in the theme of judgment. For example, the parable's narrative begins with the kingdom being compared to a net thrown into the sea, catching fish of every kind (ἐκ παντὸς γένους).³⁷⁹ While the context implies 'catching,' the vocabulary indicates 'gathering' (συναγαγούση), a word Matthew often uses in his parables to refer to the final judgment (Matt 13:30, 47; 22:10; 25:32; cf. Matt 3:12).³⁸⁰ Similarly, the context of the net implies that fish are 'gathered,' but no fish are mentioned in this parable. Instead, Matthew only refers to the sorting of the good (τὰ καλὰ) and the bad (τὰ σαπρά, Matt 13:48). Likewise, the type of net (σαγήνη) that this parable describes is one that does not discriminate in what is caught.³⁸¹ This is not unlike the harvest of Matt 13:24-30 in which

³⁷⁷ Although there is debate on whether the pericope of the scribe trained in the kingdom of heaven should be considered a parable, the Parable of the Net is the last of the six times in this chapter in which Matthew begins, 'the kingdom of heaven is like...' (Matt 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47). Only the Parable of the Sower does not begin with a comparison to the kingdom (Matt 13:3). In this final group of three, it is only the final two that begin with πάλιν ('again', Matt 13:45, 47). Otherwise, the wording is identical. See also Carson, 'Introduction,' 277-82.

³⁷⁸ For those thinking that Matthew created this parable, it seems clear that he used the prior two as models. However, the similarity of the three may also suggest that these parables were circulated orally together.

³⁷⁹ Matthew does not mention who casts the net. Instead, it appears he uses a divine passive, implying that God is the one throwing the net.

³⁸⁰ Outside the parables, the verb, συνάγω, often means the gathering together of people (Matt 2:4; 13:2; 22:34, 41; 26:3, 57; 27:17, 27, 62; 28:12).

³⁸¹ While fish of every kind were caught, one must not push the analogy too far and propose that because the parable does not indicate that all fish were caught that not all will experience judgment.

everything in the field is harvested. For Matthew, this seems to imply the coming judgment incorporates every people group, regardless of class or race, and perhaps intentionally reflects the universality of the gospel message (Matt 28:19-20; cf. the fishers of people, Matt 4:19).³⁸² Finally, the parable's narrative section concludes that when the net was full (ἦν ὅτε ἐπληρώθη), it was drawn ashore and the catch was sorted. The good (τὰ καλά, cf. the good seed) were put into baskets (cf. the wheat into the barn) and the bad (τὰ σαπρά) were thrown out (cf. the binding and burning of the weeds).³⁸³

The similarities to the narrative of the Parable of the Weeds are striking. In both parables, both good and bad items are collected, separated, the bad destroyed (or thrown out), and the good preserved (into the barn, Matt 13:30, into a vessel, Matt 13:48). Moreover, the narrative of the Parable of the Net is also followed by an explanation of the parable's meaning where angels perform the eschatological actions. While the explanation of the Parable of the Weeds includes a detailed list of equations (Matt 13:37-39), describing the meaning of many of its elements, the Parable of the Net moves quickly into the description of the events at the eschaton without a similar list. When the two explanations are viewed side-by-side, it seems that such parallelism is deliberate.

Matt 13:40-43

Matt 13:49-50

a ὥσπερ οὖν συλλέγεται τὰ
ζιζάνια καὶ πυρὶ [κατα]καίεται,

b οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ
τοῦ αἰῶνος·

c ἀποστελεῖ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ
ἀνθρώπου τοὺς ἁγγέλους
αὐτοῦ,

d καὶ συλλέξουσιν³⁸⁴

e ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ

b οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ
τοῦ αἰῶνος·

c¹ ἐξελεύσονται οἱ ἄγγελοι

d¹ καὶ ἀφοριοῦσιν

f¹ τοὺς πονηροὺς [cf. σαπρός]

³⁸² Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:399.

³⁸³ Matthew chooses to use a word that sometimes means 'rotten.' However, it is likely that this refers to fish of inferior quality being that they have just been caught and have not had time to rot. *BDAG*, 913. Regardless, the emphasis lies on the difference between the two types of fish and σαπρά is an appropriate word to stand opposite 'good' (καλὰ).

³⁸⁴ This is a frequently used word in this chapter (cf. Matt 13:29, 30, 40, 48).

f	πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα καὶ τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν	e ¹	ἐκ μέσου τῶν δικαίων
g	καὶ βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.	g	καὶ βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.
h	τότε οἱ δίκαιοι ἐκλάμψουσιν ὡς ὁ ἥλιος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν.		

The chart above demonstrates the similar structure to the two explanations and the repetition of certain elements. This is most evident in the verbatim recurring of the comparison to the end of the age (b) and the description of the punishment for the wicked (g). These identical phrases frame a similar message: the angels (c, c¹) gather (d, d¹) the wicked and causes of sin (f, f¹) from the midst of the righteous (e, e¹). In the center sections (c-f, c¹-f¹), the differences are slight, but the thrust is the same. Matthew reminds his readers of the importance of an eschatological perspective. By keeping in mind the finality of this time, one looks forward to the culmination of God's kingdom in the future by living a life of genuine discipleship.

As in the Parable of the Weeds, the angels perform the eschatological acts of collecting and sorting those being judged. Again, once the gathering and separating are completed, the evil are thrown into the fire where 'there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' Matthew's phrase associated with judgment (Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).³⁸⁵ The Parable of the Net also indicates a mixture of evil and good, and the parable's explanation indicates the gathering of the evil from the midst (ἐκ μέσου) of the righteous (Matt 13:49). This is similar to the placement of the wicked weeds amidst the wheat (ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σίτου, Matt 13:25).³⁸⁶ It seems that Matthew chose specific elements for repetition that would help in communicating the portrait of judgment.

While sharing a very similar narrative of eschatological judgment, the two parables also exhibit differences. The Parable of the Net's central theme rests almost entirely on the eschatological judgment, where the good and the bad are

³⁸⁵ See also *Apoc. of Paul* 42; *Apoc. Peter* 5.

³⁸⁶ Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:399. Hagner sees this as referring to the Church as a mixed community and not the world as indicated in the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:38).

separated. While ending similarly, the longer narrative of the Parable of the Weeds more overtly addresses the question of the presence of evil, for which the solution is the final judgment.³⁸⁷ In this way, both use the eschatological judgment as a message to call the readers to live righteously in the present. In these parables, Matthew demonstrates that the final judgment is an inevitable element of God's kingdom. Jesus' disciples can rest assured that at that time God's victory will be revealed and evil will be destroyed. Moreover, the parables reflect apocalyptic traditions to illustrate the vivid imagery of the close of the age. In the meantime, the concern is with genuine discipleship that yields fruit (Matt 13:23) and the preservation of the righteous (cf. Matt 18) despite the presence of evil in the world (ὁ κόσμος, Matt 13:38). The discussion of God's rule and the delay of judgment would have been a strange idea concerning the kingdom, as it would have been expected the two different categories of good and bad could not have coexisted together. Instead, Matthew defines the kingdom as coexisting with evil in the world, which should be understood in light of the future expectation of judgment.

One final point with regard to the angels in Matt 13:47-50 needs to be made. In the Parable of the Net, only the angels are mentioned and not the Son of Man ('c' and 'c¹'). This is reflected in the angels coming (ἐξελεύσονται, Matt 13:49; cf. 25:31) and not being sent (Matt 13:41; cf. 24:31).³⁸⁸ While it is not indicated that the angels are being directed by the Son of Man, the strong parallelism between the two parables and the placement of the Parable of the Net after the more detailed Parable of the Weeds suggests this absence is not as significant as it may seem. Consequently, it is suggested that the Son of Man be read into the parable as the one directing the angels' eschatological sorting. In light of this, the role of the Son of Man as judge can be implied while not being explicitly mentioned. Consequently, the role of angels in the judgment in Matthew should not be interpreted apart from their relationship to the Son of Man. If so, then this has further implications for other references to angels at the judgment.

³⁸⁷ Options often discussed for the mixed nature of the field include Israel, the Church, and Matthew's community. Snodgrass, *Stories*, 202-06.

³⁸⁸ In Matt 16:27, the Son of Man comes with his angels.

4.1.1 *Examples of Angels Implicit in Parables of Judgment*

Although Matthew does not mention angels in every passage or parable of judgment, there are times when angels are implied. For example, at the end of the pericopae of the wedding banquet (Matt 22:1-14), Matthew includes a description of a man who attends the celebration without a wedding garment. Because of his lack of proper attire, the king, who is hosting the meal, instructs his attendants to cast him out into the outermost darkness (τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον). Although the majority of the passage is shared with Luke, this additional narrative concerning the man without a wedding garment is unique to Matthew (Matt 22:10-14), indicating a standard for those participating (Luke emphasizes unconditionally bringing in the poor and maimed).³⁸⁹ Using similar language to that found in the parables already discussed, Matthew describes the servants (οἱ δοῦλοι) performing similar actions to the angels in the parables of Matt 13, gathering all those whom they found (συνήγαγον; Matt 22:10; cf. Matt 3:12; 13:30, 47; 25:32), both good and bad (πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς; Matt 22:10). Then, the parable portrays the man without a wedding garment being cast out by the servants (τοῖς διακόνοις) under the orders of the king, paralleling the disposal of the weeds and bad fish (Matt 13:30, 42, 48-50). However, unlike the Parable of the Weeds and the Net, there is no detailed explanation which interprets the casting of the unworthy into a place of torment as an action performed by the angels. Consequently, the association of the servants (τοῖς διακόνοις) with angels is implied. In addition, Matthew changes his vocabulary to differentiate between those who send the invitation to the wedding feast (δοῦλος, Matt 22:3, 4, 6, 8, 10) and the servants that bind and cast out the one without a wedding garment (διάκονος, Matt 22:13). The difference is slight and caution should be exercised when interpreting the details of a parable, however the similarity to Matthew's choice of changing his vocabulary in the Parable of the Weeds is not without significance. In light of this, it seems the actions of the servants suggest similar activity to angels in judgment scenes, especially in light of the descriptions of angelic activity in Matt 13.

In Matt 18, there is a similar but more ambiguous reference to angelic punishers. In the Parable of Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:23-35), the man, who is

³⁸⁹ See Sim, 'Angels.'

forgiven but does not forgive, is punished until he has repaid all, 'his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt,' (Matt 18:34). With an interest in the apocalyptic eschatology of Matthew, David Sim concludes that the ones who torture the 'unforgiving servant' should be understood as punishing angels.³⁹⁰ Occupying the final position in the ecclesiological discourse where Matthew spells out discipline for the church, this parable emphasizes forgiveness and the eternal significance of the reciprocity of one's actions, a point that Matthew asks to be read back into the whole of the discourse. Nevertheless, Matthew does not miss an opportunity to remind his readers of the inevitability of judgment and concludes the parable with the threat that similar punishment will come upon those that do not forgive, 'So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart,' (Matt 18:35).³⁹¹ The traditions of punishing actions by the angels may be somewhere in the background of this parable, especially since their actions are reminiscent of earlier traditions, but unlike the other passages, the Father is portrayed as the one who judges. While the Son is not portrayed as the judge, the use of Father fits the context of the Father's love and care exhibited in his pursuit of the stray sheep (Matt 18:12-14).

4.1.2 *Angels in the Eschatological Discourse*

The angels in Matt 24-25 will be examined in more detail with regard to its larger context in the Eschatological Discourse (Matt 24:3-25:46), but it is important to mention them here to illustrate their role as part of a Matthean pattern.

In the midst of the eschatological discourse (Matt 24-25), the description of the coming of the Son of Man is accompanied by angels enacting an end-time gathering, 'he [Son of Man] will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds,' (Matt 24:30-31). In contrast to the Parable of the Weeds where the wicked are gathered first, the angels in Matt 24:31 are described as gathering the elect (ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ). While

³⁹⁰ Sim, 'Angels,' 707-15.

³⁹¹ Scott calls attention to the harshness of this parable, which is often missed. He also points out that the king goes back on his word, rescinding his forgiveness to the servant, which would have been a troubling image for a first century audience. Scott, *Parable*, 277.

both place angels at the eschatological judgment, the gathering of the elect in Matt 24:30-31 appears to come as a message of hope and rescue from the midst of apocalyptic suffering. The respective emphases between the use of angels at the judgment may differ slightly, but the angels in each parable function similarly. They participate at the close of the age, offering hope to the righteous and warning to the wicked as they accompany the Son of Man and obediently gather as instructed.

However, the Son of Man as judge is even clearer at a subsequent description of the future judgment. In Matt 25:31-46 Matthew narrates the Son of Man coming to judge as a shepherd separates goats and sheep (Matt 25:31). The only other occurrence of ἀφορίζω ('to separate', Matt 25:32) in Matthew is in the eschatological sorting of the net's catch in Matt 13:49.³⁹² In the eschatological separation of 'goats' and 'sheep', the distinction is made on what was done in one's lifetime, explicitly saying what was not said in the Parable of the Weeds and the Parable of the Net. Like Matt 16:27 and 24:30-31, the Son of man comes with angels; however, the angels in this passage are not portrayed as sorting or gathering. Instead, they highlight the exalted status of the Son of Man, 'the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory,' (Matt 25:31). In light of this, the Son of Man is the one who 'sorts' in this passage, fully demonstrating his role as judge.

4.1.3 *Matthew's Parables and Judgment*

A common trait among many of the examples above is the reference in a parable to angels. Furthermore, Matthew seems to place the discussion of judgment strategically near the end of a section of discourse or narrative.³⁹³ For example, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1-7:27), Matt 7:21-27 describes the consequences for the one who does not do the will of the Father (Matt 7:23) or the one who hears Jesus' words but does not do them (Matt 7:26-27). In addition, if Matt 13:51-2 is not interpreted as the final parable of Matt 13, the eschatological

³⁹² Cf. Luke 6:22; Acts 13:2; Rom 1:1; 2Cor 6:17; Gal 1:15; 2:12. Likewise, the act of the net gathering uses the same popular Matthean verb (συνάγω, Matt 24x, Mark 5x, Luke 6x) found at the gathering of the nations in Matt 25:32 (cf. ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου; Matt 13:35; 25:34).

³⁹³ Matthew primarily speaks of judgment through parables (with the exception of a few sayings (e.g. 7:21-23; 10:32-33). Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 293-94.

judgment of the Parable of the Net stands at the close of the discourse of parables. Both of the examples of implied angels discussed above fall at the end of their respective sections. The torturing of the person that does not forgive ends Matt 18, and the casting out of the one without a wedding garment (Matt 22:11-14) concludes the block of parables in Matt 21:28-22:14. But, perhaps the best example is the parable-like narrative of the separation of sheep and goats (Matt 25:31-46), which culminates both the final discourse (Matt 24:3-25:46) and the narrative of Matthew's Gospel before beginning the Passion Narrative. Consequently, it seems that Matthew is specifically interested in the future judgment. By using angels to help communicate the power of the final assize and placing these pericopae strategically, Matthew informs his readers that judgment is an inevitable element of the future kingdom where there will be both reward and punishment. Matthew highlights this aspect of the close of the age by using vivid imagery such as angels in order to illustrate the judgment.³⁹⁴ For Matthew, the apt response is genuine discipleship.³⁹⁵ In this manner, these parables do not concentrate only on the future character of the kingdom, but the character of those awaiting its eschatological arrival (cf. Matt 16:24-27). Since the expectation of the future crucially informs the present, the description of angels and future judgment by the Son of Man should be considered integral.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, it was argued that Matthew, using angels in the Parable of the Weeds and the Parable of the Net, benefits from one of the vibrant colors employed in Jewish eschatology to paint a portrait of the final judgment. By reflecting these traditions, Matthew communicates the eschatological consequences for the righteous and the wicked and the role of the Son of Man as judge. This was demonstrated by first looking at the role of angels in judgment scenes in texts from the Old Testament, Second Temple literature, and early Christian apocalyptic compositions. Having established angels as participating in the judgment through their gathering, separating, and administration of

³⁹⁴ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 293-4. It is possible to view this as a first century idea of 'turn or burn.'

³⁹⁵ Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:400. Hagner sees this as necessary for both Church and world.

punishment, the two Parables of the Weeds and the Net were examined. In the discussion of the Parable of the Weeds, the focus centered on the relationship of the Son of Man and his angels. Using agency and personal possession, Matthew portrays the angels as those specifically under the direction of the Son of Man, illustrating his authority and role as eschatological judge. Moreover, the Parable of the Net, through its climactic position in the discourse and similarities to the Parable of the Weeds, again emphasizes the final judgment. Although the Son of Man was not mentioned as the one sending the angels, it was argued that his role in the judgment was implied through the parallelism of both parables' explanations. As a result, in the brief narrative explanations of the two Parables of the Weeds and of the Net, Matthew is able through his use of angels to evoke the power of the judgment and demonstrate the role of the Son of Man as judge. In light of this, the chapter will conclude by first examining what this may imply about Matthew's worldview, and secondly, how this contributes to Matthew's understanding of discipleship.

5.1 Angels and Judgment as Part of Matthew's Worldview

The repeated role of angels in the parables' explanations suggests that they play a role in Matthew's worldview. Moreover, their use in the parables serves to convey the eschatological message, not primarily to relay an accurate description of angels. In light of this, it would seem that Matthew is depending on a certain level of awareness of the traditions associating angels with judgment scenes. The variety of texts examined shows that the relationship between angels and judgment would not have been uncommon. For Matthew, the angels are an essential part of an eschatological picture, for which the Son of Man is at the center, and thus a significant element for the explanations of the Parable of the Weeds and the Parable of the Net. Matthew may be attempting to portray an event he sees in the future, regardless of the actual order of events, emphasizing the future judgment's inevitability, the victory of God over evil, and the eternal significance of the choices made in the present. In this way, the significance of any perceived differences with texts like Matt 24:30 is minimized, where angels come

to gather the elect, and no mention is made of any division or gathering of the evil at that point.

Nevertheless, Matthew's Parable of the Weeds also speaks to the readers about the present condition of the field. While the field has both wheat and weeds, Matthew reminds his readers that God's future activity does not imply its absence in the present. Evil may exist, but it is not unnoticed. It will be dealt with irrevocably and this should not jeopardize the maturing of the wheat until its harvest. The placement of the Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven between the Parable of the Weeds' narrative section and its explanation informs this reading. Both of these parables illustrate the theme of the delayed concept of the growth of the kingdom and God's complete victory in the future.

Within the context of the rest of Matthew, the Parable does not read as permission for evil to persist. In the discourse of Matt 18, Matthew offers instruction on what to do with a believer who sins against a fellow believer (Matt 18:15-20). If they do not repent, Matthew concludes 'let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector,' (Matt 18:17). However, like the Parable's interest in the preservation of the wheat, the discourse of Matt 18 has at its heart the care and preservation of the disciples.³⁹⁶ They are to act humbly (Matt 18:2-5), not cause others to sin (Matt 18:6-10), not view other disciples with contempt (Matt 18:10), seek those that have strayed (Matt 18:12-14), and forgive as they have been forgiven (Matt 18:21-34). As it was mentioned earlier, Matthew frames this within the view of judgment, 'So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart,' (Matt 18:35). Moreover, as the parables of Matt 24:45-25:30 demonstrate, the certainty of the harvest is coupled with the uncertainty of its timing and thus, for Matthew, necessitates genuine discipleship in the meantime.

5.2 Discipleship and the Portrayal of Angels at the Judgment

In the Parables of the Weeds and the Net, Matthew has highlighted not only the difference between the wheat and the weeds, and the good and bad fish, he has demonstrated the eschatological consequences for these two groups. More than

³⁹⁶ Matthew 18 (and in particular, Matt 18:10) are discussed in Chapter Six.

just describing the punishment and reward, the parables challenge their readers to contemplate their own place in the parable's field or net.³⁹⁷ Is it among the wheat or weeds? Is it among the good or the bad fish caught in the net? More than simply using apocalyptic judgment to offer hope to the righteous, Matthew uses the final assize to direct the behavior of the disciples. In light of this, Cope states, 'The author is far more concerned with the coming judgment as a testing point of the followers of Jesus than he is with it as punishment for enemies or as punishment for unbelievers.'³⁹⁸

Matthew also encourages discipleship built not only upon the awareness of an eschatological judgment, but also upon other foundational elements such as forgiveness (Matt 18; 22:34-40), faith (Matt 9:15-17; 12:1-8, cf. 23:23), mercy (Matt 9:15-17; 12:1-8, cf. 23:23), self-denial (Matt 10:32-33; Matt 16:27-29), and love (Matt 22:37-40). The life that is lived and the actions that represent it flow and grow out of one's character.³⁹⁹ Throughout his Gospel, Matthew emphasizes Jesus' teaching the disciples to be distinct in their fruitful faithfulness (Matt 12:33-37; 13:23; 25:14-30). For example, consider how Matthew speaks about fruit and the type of tree from which it hangs. Good fruit is born by good trees, and a tree is known by its fruit (Matt 12:33-34). And yet, judgment lies in this metaphor also, 'Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire,' (Matt 3:10). One's actions are the manifestation of what is already outpouring from the heart. In this manner, it is not surprising that the 'sheep' in the last judgment in Matt 25:31-46 are those that were not aware of their compassion. However, character does not simply occur out of who a person is naturally, but how they are trained in the ways of righteousness. One must learn ways to live faithfully, but do so connected with the community and not merely as an individual.⁴⁰⁰ In other words, discipleship is not only about the individual and their own virtues, but also about how the believer connects into the *ecclesia*. But, as the Parables of the Weeds and the Net show, no matter how it is shaped, the idea of judgment remains in the picture, and for Matthew this includes angel traditions to communicate the vividness of the

³⁹⁷ Some would say that this is the point of parables, that is, to create an argument in which one has to decide. Linnemann, *Parables*, 30-33.

³⁹⁸ Cope, 'Apocalyptic,' 118.

³⁹⁹ Hays, *Moral Vision*, 98.

⁴⁰⁰ Hays, *Moral Vision*, 99.

kingdom message and the eschatological arrival of God's ultimate victory (cf. Matt 24:30-31; 25:30). Moreover, the angels highlight the role of the Son of Man as judge. In light of this Matthew, by portraying Jesus as the eschatological Son of Man, also shows that the judge is one whom the disciples know and trust.⁴⁰¹ The one whom the disciples have accompanied and whose teaching they have heard, the one who will suffer and die on the cross, is the same one that will sit in glory judging the world (Matt 25:31-46; 28:18).

⁴⁰¹ Matthew's portrayal of the Son of Man also indicts those who oppose Jesus and his teachings.

Chapter 5

The Son of Man and His Angels (Matthew 16:27)

1 INTRODUCTION

After the discourse in Matt 13, the Gospel continues to show the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. This resumes in Matt 14 with the narrative of the death of John the Baptist, a gruesome tale indicating that Herod has taken notice of Jesus (Matt 14:1-2) and foreshadowing the suffering that Jesus will soon announce (Matt 16:21). The conflict grows in each encounter with the Jewish leaders, including the Pharisees' challenge concerning the eating etiquette of Jesus' disciples (Matt 15:1-20), the demand for a sign (Matt 16:1-4), and Jesus' warning of the 'yeast' of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 16:5-12).⁴⁰² In the midst of the rising tension, the disciples participate in Jesus' miraculous feedings (Matt 14:13-21; 15:32-39), witness many healings (Matt 14:34-36; 15:29-31), and marvel at Jesus walking on water, confessing 'Truly you are the Son of God' (Matt 14:33). In Matt 16:13-28, Jesus further reveals the significance of his life and the role the disciples are invited to take.

Within the thesis' investigation, Matthew 16:27 is the second passage in a string of references to angels and the Son of Man that are set within an eschatological framework. The first reference appeared in the explanation to the Parable of the Weeds in Matt 13, where, the angels, sent by the Son of Man, gathered the wicked at the close of the age. Once again, in Matt 16:27 the

⁴⁰² There is also the frequent mention of Jesus withdrawing (14:13, 15:21; 16:4).

reference to angels points toward Jesus as the Son of Man, the heavenly and eschatological judge.

While the Parables of the Weeds and Net are unique to Matthew among the canonical gospels, the reference to angels in Matt 16:27 is part of a passage Matthew has redacted from Mark. However, Matthew's stronger emphasis on the future judgment and the Son of Man's role becomes clearer through his redactional changes.⁴⁰³ In particular, Matthew edited 'holy angels' to 'his angels' and, while this might seem an innocuous and simple change, it is one that Matthew has orchestrated to communicate his perspective on Jesus and the eschatological value of discipleship.

Therefore, this chapter first takes a brief look at Matt 16:24-28 to explain the context of the reference to angels in Matt 16:27. This highlights the relevant redactional changes Matthew has made to Mark 8:27-9:1 in order to show the emphasis of Matthew's narrative on the eschatological aspect of the Son of Man as judge. Second, the significance of Matthew's redaction to 'his angels' from Mark's 'holy angels' is examined in light of angel traditions and the discussion on Matt 16:24-28. Finally, Matthew's portrait of the Son of Man in the immediate context of Matt 16:13-17:13 is reconsidered in light of the contribution of Matt 16:27.

2 COST OF DISCIPLESHIP AND ITS FUTURE REWARD (MATT 16:24-28)

At the heart of Matt 16:24-28 is the exhortation in Matt 16:24 for the disciples to take up their own cross and deny themselves, 'if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.' Following Jesus' prediction of his own suffering and death, this is a bold statement concerning what it means to be a follower of Jesus (cf. Matt 10:38-9). In Matt 16:24, Jesus describes not the conditions for discipleship, but the alternative form of life that centers on Jesus. It is a path that Jesus himself demonstrates (Matt 16:21) and invites his disciples to follow.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰³ The following will not be a full redactional analysis, but an examination of the changes relevant to angels in Matt 16:27.

⁴⁰⁴ Hill, *Matthew*, 264-5, Gundry, *Matthew*, 339.

Three explanatory statements that begin with the post-positive γάρ follow the call to discipleship in Matt 16:24. The first two statements follow the Markan text quite closely. The first statement (Matt 16:25) presents the paradoxical proclamation that saving one's life requires that one lose it. This upside down rendition of worldly sense resonates with Jesus' explanation of his suffering – by sacrificing his life now, it will lead to life in a much greater sense. The second statement (Matt 16:26) builds upon the first, questioning the value of the world compared to life, 'For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?' This is similar to the devil's temptation in Matt 4:8, where Jesus is offered all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Likewise, the answer is similar; given the extreme value of 'life' there is nothing that could merit an exchange.⁴⁰⁵

In the third and final phrase, Matthew shifts the emphasis from shame to the coming of the Son of Man in judgment.⁴⁰⁶ In particular, Matthew makes three significant changes to this verse: he rewrites and moves the logia on judgment, changes 'holy angels' to 'his angels,' and increases the aspect of the imminence of the Son of Man's arrival.⁴⁰⁷

In Mark's version of this passage, Mark continues by connecting discipleship, or a lack of it, to the coming of the Son of Man, '[for] those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels,' (Mark 8:38).⁴⁰⁸ Matthew also reflects the eschatological nature of discipleship, but he approaches it with greater emphasis and from a different perspective. Instead of beginning with the retribution paid for one's actions, Matthew omits the language of shame and immediately precedes to the description of the coming of the Son of Man, 'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father,' (Matt 16:27a). Matthew concludes with a rewritten eschatological judgment in which one's life is assessed (cf. LXX Ps 61:13),

⁴⁰⁵ Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:484.

⁴⁰⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 340, Hill, *Matthew*, 265. In addition, it seems that this particular description of the coming of the Son of Man was important to each Gospel writer for Luke rewrites it also, 'when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels,' (Luke 9:26).

⁴⁰⁷ While the redaction in Matt 16:24-26 is minimal Luz's refers to Matt 16:27 as a 'new formulation.' Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 380-1.

⁴⁰⁸ The NRSV omits γάρ in its translation.

‘and then he will repay everyone for what has been done’ (Matt 16:27b). The singular use of *πρᾶξις* instead of the plural suggests that Matthew indicates one’s life as a whole was judged.⁴⁰⁹ In this context, the repayment according to behavior can be thought of as assurance and a reward for the suffering endured and denying of self. In this way, it offers both comfort and perspective to what it means to follow Jesus without losing sight of the significance of the judgment and Jesus’ role as judge (Mark 8:38).

The restructuring in Matt 16:27 also allows Matthew to put a greater emphasis on the imminence of the coming of the Son of Man.⁴¹⁰ Mark describes the shame for those that are ashamed of Jesus *when* the Son of Man comes (ὅταν ἔλθῃ, Mark 8:38). However, Matthew moves the eschatological coming of the Son of Man to the beginning of the third γάρ phrase, and highlights the certainty of his arrival, μέλλει γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι (Matt 16:27; cf. Mark 9:1). Not only is the Son of Man coming, but his arrival is near (μέλλει . . . ἔρχεσθαι). The sense of imminence may be connected to Matthew’s ideas concerning the actual timing of the judgment, however it is just as likely that in this passage the ‘proximity’ of the Son of Man’s arrival relates to the urgency of genuine discipleship (cf. Matt 24-25; 10:23).⁴¹¹ The following verse (Matt 16:28) further suggests Matthew is emphasizing the urgency of following Jesus and the coming judgment, ‘there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.’ Along with Matt 10:23 and 24:34, Matthew’s pronouncement in Matt 16:28, has fueled much discussion concerning Matthew’s perception of the Parousia.⁴¹² Whether or not Matthew himself envisioned Jesus’ return in the immediate future or as an unknown distant event, it seems that discipleship (Matt 16:24) and faithful behavior (*πρᾶξις*, Matt 16:27)

⁴⁰⁹ Gundry observes that when Matthew indicates the judgment is based upon one’s *πρᾶξις*, it resonates with the advice against a disciple chasing the futile pursuit of possessions (‘gaining the whole world, Matt 16:25). Gundry, *Matthew*, 341.

⁴¹⁰ While the portrayal of judgment in the Parables of the Weeds and the Net seems to emphasize the delay of the judgment, it is possible the coming of the Son of Man in Matt 13 and 16 are two parts of the same coin. On one side is the explaining of the kingdom’s final victory in the final judgment, and the other describes the practical response in the mean time.

⁴¹¹ Luz adds that the sense of imminence also contributes to comfort for those who are bearing their cross. Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 381.

⁴¹² For a brief discussion of the options see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:677-81, Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 2:386-87, Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:486-88.

are lived in the shadow of the constant expectation of the Son of Man's arrival (cf. Matt 24:36).⁴¹³

Having briefly introduced Matt 16:24-28, the discussion will address Matthew's editorial change to the description of the Son of Man's arrival; namely, instead of coming 'with the holy angels,' (μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων, Mark 8:38) the Son of Man comes 'with his angels,' (μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ, Matt 16:27).

3 'HIS ANGELS' AND 'HOLY ANGELS' (MATT 16:27; MARK 8:38)

Setting aside the other redactional changes for the moment, the coming of the Son of Man described in Matt 16:27 is nearly identical to its parallel in Mark 8:38 except for how the angels are described.

Matt 16:27 - ἔρχεσθαι	ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ...
Mark 8:38 - ἔλθῃ	ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων <u>τῶν ἁγίων</u> .

Matthew's change raises a few questions, but rarely an eyebrow. At first glance, it appears as though Matthew has formed a cleaner parallel with the previous prepositional phrase, 'in the glory of his father' (πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ... ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ).⁴¹⁴ However, for Matthew to have made this change and then repeat the use of 'his angels' in other references to the Son of Man (Matt 13:41, 24:30; cf. 25:31), there seems to be something more than a stylistic emendation. In order to investigate a possible relationship of this redaction to Matthew's emphasis on the role of the Son of Man as judge, the following section will first determine any redactional patterns with 'holy' (ἅγιος) in Matthew and Mark. Afterward, traditions that refer to angels as 'holy' or with a personal pronoun are examined to ascertain possible reasons why Matthew may have preferred one to the other.

3.1 Use of 'Holy' in Matthew and Mark

When the uses of holy (ἅγιος) in Matthew and Mark are compared, Matthew does not appear to exhibit a discernable redactional pattern. In Mark, 'holy' is often

⁴¹³ See the following chapter on angels in Matt 24-25 for further discussion.

⁴¹⁴ Gundry points out that it also creates a parallel with 16:27, *πᾶξιν αὐτοῦ*. Gundry, *Matthew*, 340.

used in reference to the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8; 3:29; 12:36; 13:11), to Jesus ('the Holy One of God, Mark 1:24), John the Baptist ('a righteous and holy man,' Mark 6:20), and in the present passage, the angels (Mark 8:38). Although Matthew removes all of these except two references to the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11//Mark 1:8; Matt 12:32//Mark 3:29),⁴¹⁵ his Gospel also reflects additional uses of 'holy,' often in material unique to Matthew. This includes other references to the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18, 20; 28:19) and to Jerusalem as the holy city (Matt 4:5; 27:53).⁴¹⁶ In addition, Matthew clarifies Mark's location of the desolating sacrilege, 'where it ought not to be' (Mark 13:14) with 'the holy place' (Matt 24:15; cf. 4:5), instructs not to give what is holy to the dogs (Matt 7:6), and describes the risen saints ('the sleeping holy ones', τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων) walking around at the resurrection (Matt 27:52-3). There seems to be no significant pattern in Matthew's redaction of these passages and thus this leads to the conclusion that Matthew may have had another reason for editing Mark's text at this point.

3.2 'Holy Angels' as God's Angels

If Mark is drawing from the tradition that God is the only one from whom all holiness comes, then he states through the adjective 'holy' that these are God's angels. God alone is holy and all things that are described as holy are in reference to him. In the Old Testament, the most frequent use of the adjective is in relation to the cult and its worship of God.⁴¹⁷ The laws of purity and holiness were a great concern to the priests and those that upheld the law strictly, but at the center was the interest in the presence of God. Being holy validated an audience with the divine presence. In this manner, all things that are holy were dedicated and set apart for that purpose - whether it is people or items for worship. In light of this, it appears as though Mark was interested in describing these angels as those dedicated to God. The following examples support this proposal.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ With regard to Mark 12:36, Matthew leaves out 'holy' and simply refers to the Spirit (Matt 22:43) and with Mark 13:11, Matthew changes the 'Holy Spirit' to read 'the Spirit of the Father' (Matt 10:20). For Mark 6:20, Matthew abbreviates the entire pericope omitting this description of John (Matt 14:3-12); and with Mark 1:24, Matthew has omitted the entire pericope.

⁴¹⁶ In Luke's parallel to Matt 4:5, Luke records that it was Jerusalem (Luke 4:9).

⁴¹⁷ Seebass, "Ἅγιος," in *NIDNTT*, 2:223-27, Rogerson, 'Holiness,' 16-21.

⁴¹⁸ While the following examples include only references to 'holy angels,' it is acknowledged that the analysis could easily include the description of other items or figures as 'holy.' Moreover, the

3.2.1 Differentiating Angels

The use of 'holy angel' can differentiate a particular angel or angels from other angels. For instance, the *Book of Watchers* provides a good example of how angels described as holy separate them from other heavenly beings. In clear distinction from the wicked Watchers, many of the angels that appear are referred to as holy, often in apposition with the angel's name, for example, 'Raphael, one of the holy angels,' (1En. 22:3; cf. 1En. 20:2-7; 21:5, 9; 23:4; 24:6; 27:1; 32:6; 33:3; 71:8-9; 72:1; 74:2; Tob 12:15 LXX).⁴¹⁹ In this regard, the adjective seems to be a necessary element in defining the angel's association with God.⁴²⁰ Similarly, in the book of Revelation, the angels are described as holy to emphasize their dissimilarity to the beast and presence with the Lamb, 'those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, ... and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb,' (Rev 14:9-10). Similarly, the use of 'holy angels' may serve to emphasize the difference between the human and celestial. The appearance of the Son of Man, after a comparison to humans, is likened to angels in 1En. 46:1, 'his countenance was full of grace like that of one among the holy angels.' Similarly, Adam is not to eat from the tree lest he no longer be equal in glory to God and the holy angels (*Hist. Rech.* 20:4). While Mark's description of the Son of Man arriving with holy angels seems to associate the angels with God, there does not appear to be any explicit contrasting figures.⁴²¹

use of 'holy ones' is quite frequent and can refer to both people and angels (angels: Deut 33:2-3; Ps 89:5, 7; Prov 30:3; Dan 4:17; Zech 14:5; Sir 42:17; 45:2; 3Macc 2:2, 21; People: Job 5:1; 15:15; Pss 16:3; 34:9; Dan 7:18, 21-22, 25, 27; 8:24; Wis 3:9; 4:15; 18:1-2, 5). This list does not include the Pseudepigrapha and Qumran literature, where the use of 'holy ones' abounds. Newsom, *SSS*, 23-38. By limiting the examples to 'holy angels,' a more direct comparison can be made to 'his angels,' which should be sufficient for the purpose of this chapter.

⁴¹⁹ While this does seem to be true in nearly every case, an exception appears in the Epistle of Enoch in which both the wicked Watchers and those remaining obedient to God are called 'holy' (1En. 106:19).

⁴²⁰ However, this use is not relegated to the adjective 'holy' alone. See 2Bar 63:6 for an example of how 'his angel' functions in the same manner.

⁴²¹ There is a slight possibility that Mark has in mind a contrast to the demons and evil spirits who are in opposition to Jesus, the Son of Man (Mark 3:22-27).

3.2.2 Holy Angels and Heaven

The aspect of the angels' holiness also seems to be tied to their association with heaven, the dwelling place of the holy God. For example, *1En.* 93:2 places the holy angels among other heavenly elements, 'according to that which was revealed to me from the heavenly vision, that which I have learned from the words of the holy angels, and understood from the heavenly tablets.' While the author might be drawing from similar language used to refer to the angels who spoke with the visionary in the *Book of Watchers* (*1En.* 1-36; cf. *1En.* 108:5), the parallel usage of 'heavenly' and 'holy' seems to draw attention to their similar origins.⁴²² In addition, the association of the angels' location with their holiness is found also in *L.A.E.* 7:2, where it is the holy angels who are guarding the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (cf. angels in heaven *L.A.E.* 35:2).

Similarly, the description of angels as holy can also help communicate the state of those in the presence of these angels. This presupposes the often unsaid understanding of the heavenly state of the holy angels. For example, in the *Testament of Abraham*, Abraham is described as a true friend of the Most High and companion of the holy angels. This comes in the context of Death's greeting and seems be indicative of Abraham's righteousness as he is counted among those that are heavenly and holy – God and the holy angels (*T. Abr.* 16:8; cf. *Hist. Rech.* 17:5). Similarly, after previously indicating the consequences of the wicked (*1En.* 100:4), the *Epistle of Enoch* pairs holy angels with the righteous at the judgment; 'He [the Most High] will set a guard of holy angels over all the righteous and holy ones,' (*1En.* 100:5).⁴²³ In addition, in *Jub* 15:27, the angels present with God are described as holy, a relevant characteristic necessary for a sanctified Israel to join, 'he [LORD] sanctified Israel so that they might be with him and with his holy angels.' In this manner, it is possible that Mark was trying to communicate that the Son of Man was present amongst holy angels.⁴²⁴ These examples show that the use of holy

⁴²² Heavenly and holy should not be considered synonymous in this context, but mutually informing each other.

⁴²³ Interestingly, the verse prior to this describes the act of angels gathering those who gave aid to sin (*1En.* 100:5). Although angels are not described as collecting in Mark 8:38, they are in Mark 13:27 (par. Matt 24:31).

⁴²⁴ It is also possible that the description was being used to validate the Son of Man. In Acts 10, the narrator reveals that an angel plays a part in revealing God's word to Cornelius (Acts 10:3, 7; cf. Acts 11:13), but when the story of the vision is reported to Peter by Gentile servants sent by Cornelius,

with angels helps identify the angels as God's. In light of this, it would be difficult to argue that Matthew was correcting Mark, for Matthew would have agreed with Mark's statement regarding the Son of Man and the holy angels. On the other hand, Matthew demonstrates that he has an interest in the relationship of the angels to Jesus and what this means for his portrait of the Son of Man as eschatological judge. It would seem that this might be a reason for Matthew's redaction

3.3 'His Angels' as Subordinate

As a result of the previous analysis, it appears Mark 8:38 alludes to the aspect of the angels being set apart as God's angels. Matthew, however, changes the adjective 'holy' to the possessive pronoun 'his' in regard to the angels that come at the Parousia. As a result, it is possible that there is some sort of shift in emphasis when the angels are now described as those of the Son of Man. This does not indicate that they are no longer 'holy' or God's angels, but that Matthew was interested in these angels as those of the Son of Man.⁴²⁵

3.3.1 'His Angels'

In the Old Testament, an angel described with a pronoun is often also portrayed as being *sent* by God to perform a specific task. When this is part of a blessing, there is a sense of comfort intimated by those asserting that God is aware of a situation by sending his angels.⁴²⁶ For example, Abraham commissions his servant to find a wife for his son, assuring the servant success because God will send his angel before him (Gen 24:7; 'with him,' Gen 24:40). Similarly, Tobit also blesses his son's journey, 'May God in heaven bring you safely there and return you in good health

the angel is identified by them as a holy angel (Acts 10:22). Since this is the only time in Acts an angel is mentioned in direct speech on the lips of a Gentile, the use of 'holy' may have to do with validating the origin of the vision and its angelic courier in contrast to the servant.

⁴²⁵ For example, see 4Q511 f35:2-4. The ones whom God consecrates (i.e. sets apart) he refers to as his, 'God will consecrate some of the holy ones for Himself as an eternal sanctuary; a refining among those who are purified. And they shall be priests, His righteous people, His army, and ministers, His glorious angels.'

⁴²⁶ Angels who receive blessings are often described as 'his angels' with reference to God for they carry out God's will. For example, Tob 11:14 reports, 'Blessed be God, and blessed be his great name, and blessed be all his holy angels,' (cf. 11Q 14 f1 ii:5; Tob 22:22).

to me; may his angel, my son, accompany you both for your safety,' (Tob 5:17).⁴²⁷ This language is further modeled in Psalm 91:11 when it was discussed with reference to Matthew's temptation narrative (Matt 4:6), 'For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.'⁴²⁸ In addition to Psalm 91:11, some of the other texts examined earlier when investigating angel traditions in Matt 4:1-11 are relevant here and deserve to be reiterated briefly. This included the references to the angel sent to rescue the men from the furnace ('[God] has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him,' Dan 3:28) and Daniel from the lions' den ('My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me,' Dan 6:22). In Acts 12:11, Peter responds to his sudden freedom, saying, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me,' (Acts 12:11). In Exodus, God indicates to Moses to lead the people confidently, 'see, my angel shall go in front of you,' (Exod 32:34; cf. Exod 23:23).⁴²⁹ In the Hebrew Bible, this angel appears again, but without the pronoun in Exod 23:20 and Exod 33:2. However, the Septuagint tradition changes both to 'my angel' (τὸν ἄγγελόν μου), unifying the language and suggesting the importance of this nomenclature (cf. Num 20:16). Similarly, later traditions sometimes refer to the angel in texts that mention the angel of the Lord by using the possessive pronoun. For example, the Hebrew Bible records that an angel of the Lord struck down one hundred and eight-five thousand Assyrians (thereby protecting Israel, 2Kings 19:35; Is 37:36; 'an angel', 2Chr 32:21). Later Jewish literature records this event being performed by God's angel using the possessive pronoun ('his angel', Sir 48:21; 'your angel', 1Macc7:41; 2Macc 15:22). In the *Testament of Joseph*, Joseph includes the angel that came to the aid of Abraham when he prays for protection from eating enchanted food, 'May the God of my fathers and the angel of Abraham be with me,' (T. Jos. 6:7; cf. Gen 22). Likewise, in the *Testament of Simeon*, God saved Joseph when he sent his angel (T. Sim. 2:8; cf. 4Bar. 6:22). Furthermore, God responds to preserving Enoch's writing in the flood by commanding his angels to protect the texts (2En. 33:11; cf.

⁴²⁷ There is a bit of irony in Tobit's blessing as Tobias' companion, who is an angel appearing as a man, receives this blessing as well ('both').

⁴²⁸ See earlier, Chapter 3.

⁴²⁹ This is the only occasion the first person pronoun is attached to an angel in the Hebrew Bible. However, in the Septuagint tradition, בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים becomes ἄγγελοί μου in Job 38:7 LXX.

2En. 36:2).⁴³⁰ In Rev 1:1, the angelic courier by whom the message is sent is called 'his angel.' In this verse, the antecedent to 'his' is not clear. However, Rev 22:6 clearly reports that it is Jesus' angel that brings the message, 'It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches.'⁴³¹

In many of the examples given, the passages refer to only a single angel. This does not prevent the application of the findings to the description of angels in the plural in Matt 16:27. Instead, it opens the door for further discussion. In particular is the example of the multitudes of angels ('holy ones') that accompany God's return on the day of judgment in Zech 14:5, 'Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.' Similarly, there are reflections of this image in Jude's adaption of 1En. 1:9 (Jude 14-15).⁴³² However, Matthew's language is closely resembled in 2Thess 1:7-8, where it is stated that the end is signaled, 'when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire.' Similar to the angels sent by the Son of Man in Matt 13:41, these angels will punish, 'inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel,' (2Thess 1:8).

In the Old Testament and related texts, the use of the pronoun with angels is far less frequent than without, but there does seem to be pattern in its use that is witnessed elsewhere. In many of the passages above, the idea of an angel being sent (שִׁלַּח, MT; ἀποστέλλω, LXX) by God is coupled with the possessive pronoun (Gen 24:7, 40; Ex 23:20; 33:2; Dan 3:28; 6:22; Acts 12:11; Rev 1:1; 22:6; T. Sim. 2:8;). In fact, the act of God sending (שִׁלַּח) an angel is almost always rendered with a pronoun in the Hebrew Bible.⁴³³ In these examples, it seems as though the use of the pronoun with angels portrays a relationship between the angels and the

⁴³⁰ This appears in both the longer and shorter recensions.

⁴³¹ It is not unusual, especially in the Old Testament to have both God and an angel nearly interchangeable in dialogue (cf. Exod 3:1-6). See also the earlier discussion on the Angel of the Lord in the chapter on the birth narratives. Beale, *Revelation*, 183. While Rev 22:16 describes Jesus sending 'his angel,' the roles are reversed in the scene in Rev 14:14-15. Seated on a cloud with a sickle, one like a Son of Man is instructed by an angel to begin the harvest, 'for the hour has come.' The potentially troublesome picture of the Son of man taking orders from an angel can be explained via the angel's entry. When the angel comes to direct the one seated on the cloud, he comes from the Temple. In this regard, the angel is serving as a messenger, relaying orders that originate from God. Beale, *Revelation*, 776-78.

⁴³² Osburn, '1Enoch,' 340.

⁴³³ Exceptions are 1Chron 21:15 and 2Chron 36:15. Exodus 23:23, 32:34, and Tob 5:17 exhibit prepositional phrases that demonstrate the angels' companionship (לְפָנָיִךְ, πρὸ προσώπου σου) or verbs that suggest this idea (συμπορευθήτω; συνοδεύσαι; συναποστελῶ; cf. ἡγούμενός σου).

pronoun's antecedent that indicates obedience and suggests divine action (e.g. protection) directly associated with God himself. Psalm 103:20-21 adeptly summarizes what it seems to mean to be one of 'his angels' as the aspect of obedience is described and then highlighted, 'Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word. Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will,' (Ps 103:20-21).⁴³⁴ If this is true, then Matthew's description of angels in 16:27 may have more to do with their subordination to the Son of Man than being identified as God's angels. Despite the apparent absence of sending or commanding angels, Matt 16:27 reflects similar traditions to the Son of Man sending his angels to perform acts of judgment in Matt 13:41 and Matt 24:31. Nevertheless, God is not the only one described as having angels.

3.3.2 *Angelic Commanders: Satan and the Archangel Michael*

Considering the developing apocalyptic perspective and its support of a dualistic framework, it is not surprising that Satan appears with his own set of angels opposite the activity of God.⁴³⁵ In these passages, the angels are portrayed as extensions of Satan and his nefarious exploits. For example, the wickedness of Manasseh in the *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* is portrayed as the abandonment of 'the service of the LORD of his father, and he served Satan, and his angels, and his powers' (*Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 2:2; cf. *Test. Levi* 19:3). Here, the inclusion of Satan's angels and powers helps portray the great extent of the wickedness of Manasseh. Conversely, in *Test. Levi* 19:3, Levi's sons commit to living according to the law instead of the works of Beliar, and Levi appeals to the Lord and his angels as witnesses. The longer recension of *2Enoch* proposes an origin of Satan's angels when it describes a deviant one from the archangels being hurled from the height

⁴³⁴ In the songs of praise of Ps 148 and 103, angels are included as those that are to bless or praise the Lord. However, the pronoun is used differently in each psalm. In Ps 148, there is a long list of God's creation that is called to bless the Lord; yet the only two groups that are labeled 'his' are the angels (Ps 148:2), and his people (Ps 148:14). On the other hand, Ps 103 is salted with pronouns, emphasizing the greatness of God and his disparity with humanity.

⁴³⁵ Sim, *Apocalyptic*, 35-41. Texts interested in exorcism sometimes pair an angel with a demon so that a specific demon has their own angel that fights with them. For example, Solomon interrogates a dragon-shaped demon to find out by which angel he is thwarted and subsequently invokes 'his angel' (*T. Sol.* 14:7; cf. *1En.* 60:17).

of heaven together with the division under his authority ('his angels', *2En.* 29:3-5; cf. *L.A.E.* 14:1-15:1; *Rev* 12:7-9).⁴³⁶

The archangel Michael is the only other figure to be described as having his own angels with any frequency, especially when a celestial battle is concerned. For example, Revelation 12 describes a war between Michael and Satan which includes their battalions, 'and war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back,' (*Rev* 12:7; cf. *Rev* 12:8-9).⁴³⁷ Consequently, Michael is sometimes portrayed in a role befitting one who commands angels in battle (*1En.* 60:4; cf. 4Q491 f1 3:3). In later tradition, *3Baruch* depicts Michael over other angels, being called their commander (*3Bar.* 11:4-6) and possessing the keys to the kingdom (*3Bar.* 11:2; cf. Peter in *Matt* 16:19). Nevertheless, Michael is still one of God's angels; therefore, the angels described as 'his' should also be thought of as God's.⁴³⁸ Furthermore, angels in battle are not always Michael's. In the War Scroll, the angels being commissioned and directed in battle are described to God as 'your angels' (*1QM* 12:3-4). In addition, there are other examples of figures being described with accompanying angels, such as the *Apocalypse of Paul* 45-51, where the great saints and patriarchs approach Paul with their own accompanying set of angels. Similarly, in *Matt* 18:10, the children have 'their angels' in heaven, and the punishment of fire is prepared for the devil and 'his angels' at the judgment scene in *Matt* 25:41.⁴³⁹

3.3.3 Summary

These examples show that the concept of one's own group of angels was not relegated to God alone. Although this seems to be evidenced more in later traditions than in the Old Testament, it cannot be dismissed that these traditions

⁴³⁶ The description of Satan and his angels' expulsion from heaven only appears in the longer recension of the *2Enoch*. This is not unlike the later explanation in the longer recension of *2En.* 31 where Satan's difference from the other angels and his scheme against Adam is described.

⁴³⁷ It is possible that a similar scene is envisaged in *Matt* 25:41 when the eternal fire for the accursed is also described as 'for the devil and his angels.' However, this passage will be examined in more detail in the following chapter. Although Michael is not mentioned, the same dichotomy appears in *T. Ash.* 6:4-5, where the angels of the Lord and angels of Beliar (Satan) are described as sharing similar fates to the righteous and wicked at their ultimate end.

⁴³⁸ Michael is routinely referred to as God's angel ('his angel') by those in the narrative of the *Apocalypse of Moses* (*Apoc. Moses.* 3:3; 6:2; 9:3; 13:1).

⁴³⁹ The two Matthean passages will be discussed in upcoming chapters (*Matt* 18:10; 25:41).

might have been part of the force behind Matthew's redaction. It was argued that the Old Testament references to 'his angel' suggested this nomenclature communicated agency and subordination. In this way, the use of the pronoun is not so much about possession, but about the Son of Man's command of angels at the judgment. For Marguerat, this suggests that Matthew is placing the Son of Man in a role normally associated for God.⁴⁴⁰ This suggestion is further strengthened by the description of the Son of Man also coming in the glory of his Father in Matt 16:27. In Matthew, Matt 16:27 is the only depiction of the angelic entourage accompanying the Son of Man to reference the Father. In this portrait of the Parousia, the role of God the Father is not far from the Son. On the heels of Peter's declaration that Jesus is 'the Messiah, the Son of the Living God,' the association with the Son of God is strong. Kim notes, 'Perhaps this is the clearest example of the equation of the Son of Man with the Son of God in the Synoptic Gospels.'⁴⁴¹ Matthew appears to be establishing a Christological foundation for understanding Jesus as the Son of God and Son of Man who will be accompanied by angels in glory as the eschatological judge (cf. Matt 25:31). Retrospectively, this helps develop the reference to the Son of Man sending his angels in Matt 13, as well as anticipates the picture of the Son of Man coming for the final judgment in Matt 24-25. Additionally, it also contributes to the immediate context of Matt 16:13-17:13.

4 MATTHEW 16:13-17:13 REEXAMINED

Matthew 16:27 comes at a crucial turning point in the Gospel narrative, for it is in Matt 16:13-17:13 that Jesus' identity and purpose are made more explicit as he makes his way toward Jerusalem and the cross (cf. Matt 16:21). In particular, Matthew helps reveal who Jesus is through Peter's responses to Jesus (Matt 16:13-16; 21-23), the titles used (Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah), the transfiguration (Matt 17:1-8), and the narrative foreshadowing of Jesus' journey from his suffering (Matt 16:21, 17:12) to his return in glory with his angels (Matt 16:27, cf. 17:1-8).

⁴⁴⁰ Marguerat, *Jugement*, 80.

⁴⁴¹ Kim, *Son of God*, 3.

Luz argues that this narrative fits within a single arc, outlining the complete perspective on discipleship that runs from understanding who Jesus is (Matt 16:13-20), accepting the suffering of Jesus (Matt 16:21) and his followers (Matt 16:24-26), and culminating in his coming in glory (Matt 16:27).⁴⁴² As the previous examinations of the angelic traditions demonstrated, Matthew's redactional change is a significant emphasis in his narrative portrait of the Son of Man.

In the Parables of the Weeds (Matt 13:41) and implicitly in the Parable of the Net (Matt 13:49), the angels at the arrival of the Son of Man are more than a simple heavenly entourage. The angels come as those obedient to the Son of Man, participating in the judgment (Matt 13:41; cf. 24:30) and illustrating the authority of the Son of Man (cf. Matt 28:18). In other words, the angels and the Son of Man do not come independent of each other as if the angels were arriving at the same time for the judgment and victorious realization of God's kingdom. They come under the purview of the Son of Man. However, the language of agency in 16:27 is indicated only by the personal pronoun rather than an accompanying description of the angels' activity (Matt 13:41, 49; 24:30).⁴⁴³

Matthew's redaction of the passage on the Son of Man's arrival in Matt 16:27 fits with the portrait of Jesus and the Son of Man in Matt 16:13-17:13. More specifically, Matthew has redacted some of the sayings involving the Son of Man in order to maintain the unity and tension between the portrait of the suffering earthly Son of Man and the exalted heavenly eschatological judge.

4.1.1 *Who is the Son of Man? (Matt 16:13)*

In Matt 16:13, Jesus' question to his disciples begins with 'Who do people say that the *Son of Man* is?' This is followed very closely by 'but who do you say that I am?'⁴⁴⁴ Both Mark and Luke do not include the reference to the Son of Man here, instead they report Jesus asking, 'Who do people say that *I* am' before asking his disciples the same question (Mark 8:27; Luke 9:18). By introducing 'Son of Man' at

⁴⁴² Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 380.

⁴⁴³ Charette argues that mention of angels with the Son of Man suggests gathering and separating. Charette, *Recompense*, 107-08.

⁴⁴⁴ Emphasis added. This is also the first time that the crowd's and disciples' reaction to Jesus is contrasted. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 360.

this point, Matthew draws attention to the importance of understanding Jesus' identity as the Son of Man in this pericopae for the disciples.

So far in Matthew's narrative, the crowds within the narrative have little knowledge regarding the character of the Son of Man. The disciples have been told about the Son of Man's eschatological role (Matt 10:23; 13:37, 41), but the crowds have yet to understand (Matt 11:19; 12:40; cf. 8:20). Consequently, the disciples' answer to Jesus' question reveals their confusion, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets,' (Matt 16:14). For this reason, Matthew 16:13-28 (and Matt 17:1-13) is significant to the disciples' understanding of the Son of Man, for he is going to return (imminently) in glory with his own angelic entourage as the eschatological judge to repay everyone according to his or her behavior (πράξις, Matt 16:27).⁴⁴⁵

4.1.2 *The Suffering of Jesus (Matt 16:21)*

After Peter's declaration of Jesus as the Messiah and his reception of the keys of the kingdom, Matthew describes Jesus revealing the trajectory of suffering his life will take.⁴⁴⁶ Whereas Mark has Jesus predicting the upcoming suffering of the Son of Man, 'Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering,' (Mark 8:31) Matthew has omitted 'Son of Man' and refers to Jesus; 'Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering,' (Matt 16:21). With Matthew's omission, the next mention of the Son of Man after Matt 16:13 (see above) is the description of his glorious arrival in Matt 16:27. Matthew connects the suffering of the cross to the earthly Jesus and emphasizes the exalted authority of the Son of Man as judge.

Matthew 16:24-28 can be considered a single unit in which Matthew reveals what it means to be follower of Jesus, but it cannot be understood apart from the suffering Jesus announces in Matt 16:21.⁴⁴⁷ The suffering of Jesus and the suffering

⁴⁴⁵ Note also how Matthew directs the call to discipleship to the disciples only (Matt 16:24), omitting Mark's crowds (Mark 8:34).

⁴⁴⁶ It is noted that Matt 16:21 is a significant turning point in the structure of Matthew's narrative and clearly describes an event that chronologically does not occur right after the events in Matt 16:13-20. However, the placement of this 'passion prediction' adjacent to Peter's confession in all three Synoptics suggests the significance of Matt 16:21ff to be read in tandem with 16:13-20.

⁴⁴⁷ Matthew's use of τότε ('then,' 'at that time') also connects Matt 16:24 to the preceding verses. Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:483.

of the disciples are inseparable. Being a disciple means more than simply saying ‘Lord, Lord,’ (Matt 7:21) but obeying the will of God and bearing fruit (Matt 13:19-23). In this sense, it is possible that Matthew is portraying Peter in Matt 16:13-28 as someone who ‘understands’ who Jesus is (Matt 16:16), but who is not completely ready to live according to this understanding (Matt 16:22-23).⁴⁴⁸ Thus, by illustrating the authority of the Son of Man and the majesty and power of his arrival, Matthew is able to more clearly underscore the contrast with the earthly suffering that Jesus’ describes to his disciples in Matt 16:21 and in 17:12, after the transfiguration. Matthew does not place these two disparate events regarding the Son of Man as contradictions, but as one identity with aspects to be held in tension with one another.

4.1.3 *The Kingdom of the Son of Man (Matt 16:28)*

Following the portrayal of the Son of Man coming with his angels for the final judgment (Matt 16:27), Matthew describes the nearness of his arrival. Whether or not the imminence of the coming of the Son of Man is meant literally or used rhetorically to motivate the disciples, the results are similar – genuine discipleship is required immediately. As in Matt 16:27, Matthew edits Mark to highlight the authority of the Son of Man in Matt 16:28.⁴⁴⁹ Following the description of the coming of the Son of Man (Mark 8:38), Mark narrates Jesus saying, ‘Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power,’ (Mark 9:1). However, in Matt 16:28, it is not the kingdom of God that they will see, but ‘the Son of Man coming in his kingdom,’ (cf. Matt 13:41).⁴⁵⁰ Using the pronoun αὐτός again (cf. Matt 16:27), Matthew illustrates the realm of the Son of Man’s rule. Matthew has already spoken of the kingdom of the Son of Man in Matt 13:41. The repetition here not only reinforces the concept, but recalls the portrayal of the Son of Man commanding his angels at the judgment, giving further dimension to how the Son of Man, ‘will repay everyone for what has been done,’ (Matt 16:27; cf. Matt 28:18). Moreover, Matt

⁴⁴⁸ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 383.

⁴⁴⁹ See also Gundry, *Matthew*, 274.

⁴⁵⁰ If in Mark it is about the kingdom, then in Matthew it is all about the Parousia. Gundry, *Matthew*, 341.

16:28 implicitly communicates his kingship and authority while continuing to build onto both the description of the Son of Man's arrival and the importance of an eschatological perspective on Jesus' identity and forthcoming death.

4.1.4 *The Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-13)*

Directly after the declaration of the Son of Man's imminent arrival in Matt 16:28, Matthew seamlessly reports that, 'Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain' where Jesus was transfigured before them, shining like the sun in dazzling white (Matt 17:1-2). Drawing on imagery that describes God and heavenly beings, Jesus' portrayal anticipates both his resurrection and return in heavenly power. The appearances of Elijah and Moses along with God's voice from the bright cloud further reinforce the connection with this privilege of Jesus' exalted status. Adjacent to the description of the Son of Man coming with his angels, the transfiguration continues the narrative of Jesus' future glory and offers the readers the assurance of Jesus' identity as the Son of God (Matt 17:5).⁴⁵¹

Afterward, when Jesus and the three disciples descend the mountain, the disciples are confused and ask about Elijah coming first (Matt 17:10). The response Jesus gives in Matthew differs slightly from Mark, once again emphasizing the Son of Man, only this time his suffering. By grouping the Markan verses concerning Elijah together (Mark 9:11-12a, 13; Matt 17:10-12a), linking them explicitly with John the Baptist (Matt 17:13), and providing a direct statement about the Son of Man (instead of a question, Mark 9:12), Matthew illustrates that the life, ministry, and death of John the Baptist is a foretaste of what the Son of Man will endure, 'So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands,' (Matt 17:12b). Only now does Matthew explicitly state the suffering of the Son of Man. It seems that for Matthew, the picture of the Son of Man is not without suffering, but needs to be seen in light of the glory of his coming.

⁴⁵¹ Hill comments that the transfiguration narrative mirrors the significant themes of Matt 16:13-28, namely glory, Sonship, and suffering. Hill, *Matthew*, 266.

While Mark and Matthew have the same basic structure and narrate the same events, Matthew redacts the passage in a number of small ways that cumulatively make a much more emphatic statement on the identity of Jesus as the Son of Man. Mark may have had this in mind when he compiled his passage, but Matthew has made more explicit the aspect of the Son of Man as eschatological judge. This was illustrated by the redactional changes Matthew has made to Mark, including the description of the angels as those of the Son of Man (Matt 16:27). Gundry summarizes this well, ‘In quick succession the first evangelist has written about the Father of the Son of Man, the angels of the Son of Man, and the kingdom of the Son of Man – a Christological emphasis is hard to overestimate.’⁴⁵² Therefore, the seemingly small changes are just one way in which Matthew is deliberately using angels in his narrative to advance his portrait of Jesus. This, in turn, affects Matthew’s understanding and communication of discipleship. Following Jesus means the sacrifice of one’s life in the present in order to preserve it in the future (Matt 16:24-25). In other words, nothing in the world can compare to what is gained, ‘For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?’ (Matt 16:26). Consequently, the culminating description of the Son of Man’s dramatic arrival with his angels and in his Father’s glory is necessary for Matthew’s understanding of Jesus as the Son of Man (Matt 16:13-15) and a response to following him (Matt 16:24-26).

⁴⁵² Gundry, *Matthew*, 341.

Chapter 6

The Heavenly Worth of the Little Ones (Matthew 18:10)

1 INTRODUCTION

Although Jesus and the disciples have moved from a high mountain (Matt 17:1) to Galilee (Matt 17:22) and then to Capernaum (Matt 17:24), the instructions to the disciples in Matt 18 come shortly after the transfiguration (Matt 17:1-13) and the second passion prediction (Matt 17:22-23). The invitation to discipleship in Matt 16:24-28 now comes to a different point in Matthew. Having accepted to join Jesus on the journey of suffering and exaltation, his disciples are now charged with living together in community.

In the midst of this discourse, Jesus issues an instruction not to look down on any of the ‘little ones,’ relating their value to the Father by means of a reference to angels, ‘Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven,’ (Matt 18:10). By using angel traditions, Matthew is able to illustrate that the heavenly realm informs how one should live on earth. Because the ‘little ones’ have their own angels that see the face of the Father continually, they should not be despised.

This fits in with the rest of Matt 18. Retrospectively, it complements the instruction earlier in the discourse to be humble as a little child when it illustrates the other half of a warning against egocentrism, either seeing too much value in oneself or not seeing enough value in others (Matt 18:1-8). The reference to angels also looks forward, adeptly introducing the Parable of the Sheep⁴⁵³ (Matt 18:12-14), and contributing to the context of love and forgiveness with which to read the

⁴⁵³ The common title for this parable, ‘The Lost Sheep,’ is based upon Luke 15:3-7 and should not be imported onto Matthew. Instead of the pursued sheep being lost (τὸ ἀπολωλός, Luke 15:4), it is one that is led astray (τὸ πλανώμενον, Matt 18:12).

corrective discipline of Matt 18:15-20.⁴⁵⁴ Consequently, since the ‘little ones’ are so important to the Father, how one treats one of these is of utmost importance, which includes leaving the ninety-nine in pursuit of the one that is stray.

In light of the role that Matt 18:10 appears to play in the discourse, this chapter will begin with a brief discussion of the larger context of the discourse. Afterward, the two halves of the verse will be examined by first discussing the imperative not to look down on one of the little ones (Matt 18:10a) and secondly, looking at how Matthew is justifying this command with reference to angels (Matt 18:10b). This will be accomplished by examining a number of texts and references that may reflect traditions of angels that would help Matthew communicate and introduce the parable in Matt 18:12-14 and its message of Fatherly love toward his flock. Having demonstrated the variety of traditions that may contribute to understanding Matt 18:10, the chapter will turn to the place of Matt 18:10 within the discourse of Matt 18, and more specifically the Parable of the Sheep (Matt 18:12-14).

2 THE DISCOURSE OF MATTHEW 18

The reference to angels in Matt 18:10 falls in the midst of Matthew’s discourse on community living (Matt 18:1-35), which at a general level, is about the church and the conduct of its disciples. Its common designation as a ‘practical guide for the Christian community’ is largely due to the instruction on community discipline near the center of the discourse (Matt 18:15-20). However, Matt 18:15-20 is only a small portion of the discourse and should be understood within the context of the surrounding passages concerning a disciple’s humility, stumbling, worth, and forgiveness.⁴⁵⁵ In particular, Matt 18:10-14 illustrates the model of the love of the Father for the ‘little ones.’

Traditionally, the discourse is broken into two parts, of which Matt 18:10-14 concludes the first part.⁴⁵⁶ The first half can be further divided into three sections,

⁴⁵⁴ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:525.

⁴⁵⁵ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:514.

⁴⁵⁶ There is no unanimity to how to structure this discourse, with most dividing between 18:1-14 and 18:15-35 (both end with a parable). Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:514-15, Harrington, *Matthew*, 265.

each contributing to the main theme of community conduct. In Matt 18:1-5, Jesus responds to the question of the greatest in the kingdom by drawing a child to him and instructing the disciples to be humble like the child.⁴⁵⁷ Here, Jesus emphasizes humility (ταπεινώσει ἑαυτόν) as a characteristic of one interested in entering the kingdom in contrast to the rest of the world and its pursuit of greatness framed by power and status. In the verses that follow (Matt 18:6-9), Matthew issues some very strong language concerning the danger of causes of stumbling. This applies to one's influence on others, 'If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea,' (Matt 18:6), and one's own daily pursuits, 'if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire [τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός]' (Matt 18:8). Again (like the parables discussed in Matt 13), Matthew calls attention to the eschatological consequences for one's actions; thus demonstrating the danger of causing someone, including oneself, to stumble. Comparatively, the formidable language of Matt 18:6-9 is followed by a parable that narrates the shepherd's pursuit of the one stray sheep out of the hundred (Matt 18:12-14), illustrating the Father's dedication toward the 'little ones.' It is before this parable that Matt 18:10 is situated, further reinforcing the value of the 'little ones' on earth by reflecting their value in heaven.⁴⁵⁸ Having demonstrated the value of a disciple, Matt 18:15-20 documents the instruction to attempt to correct a fellow believer, who, like the sheep in the previous parable, has gone astray. The discourse concludes with the Parable of the Unforgiving Steward, illustrating the superfluity of the Father's forgiveness toward his children and the consequences of not reciprocating his mercy (Matt 18:21-35; cf. Matt 15:13). In this way, the harshness of the discipline suggested in 18:15-20 is mediated and surrounded with a pastoral concern for the value of a disciple, specifically with the Parables of the

⁴⁵⁷ The child had no status or social importance and thus Jesus instructs his disciples to look beyond social hierarchies. Harrington, *Matthew*, 266.

⁴⁵⁸ Matt 18:11, 'For the Son of Man came to (seek and) save the lost,' is included in many manuscripts, but missing from some of the stronger witnesses. A parallel appears in Luke 19:10 and its place here functions to link Matt 18:10 with the Parable of the Stray Sheep. Metzger, *Commentary*, 44-45, Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:525. Keener suggests it interrupts the flow of Matthew, while Harrington proposes that it may have been inserted as bridge. Keener, *Matthew*, 452 n.18, Harrington, *Matthew*, 265.

Sheep and the Unforgiving Steward. While the discourse is one of Matthew's shortest, it captures the value of the disciple to the Father and the instructions on how one should live toward each other. With this in mind, the uniquely Matthean reference to angels (Matt 18:10) contributes by communicating the heavenly value of one of the 'little ones.'⁴⁵⁹

Matthew 18:10 is comprised of two sections: the command, 'Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones,' (Matt 18:10a) and the reason for this instruction, 'for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven,' (Matt 18:10b). The second half is linked to the first half with γάρ, indicating that the reference to angels helps explain the imperative in the first half. In light of this, this verse will be first addressed by looking at the two halves of Matt 18:10, and more specifically, how the use of angel traditions in the latter half explains the imperative in the first. After the examination of Matthew's use of angels in this passage, the discussion will revisit the message of the discourse and how Matt 18:10 contributes to it. But first, it is crucial to discuss the imperative in Matt 18:10a, before addressing the reference to angels in Matt 18:10b.

3 'DO NOT DESPISE ONE OF THE LITTLE ONES' (MATT 18:10A)

Within the discourse, Matt 18:10 follows a series of instructions to the disciples with regard to their conduct. Already, in Matt 18:3-4, Jesus instructs his disciples to humble themselves as a child (ταπεινώσει ἑαυτὸν ὡς τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο); and, in Matt 18:6, Jesus advises them to avoid causing another to stumble (σκανδαλίζω) at all costs. Now, the disciples are not to look down contemptuously on one of the 'little ones,' neither thinking too highly of themselves (Matt 18:2-4) nor underestimating the value of others (Matt 18:10).

3.1 The 'Little Ones'

⁴⁵⁹ The similarity of Luke 15:10 may reflect a parallel to Matt 18:10. Snodgrass, *Stories*, 100.

A key element to the initial part of the discourse (Matt 18:1-14) is the language of the ‘children’ (τὰ παῖδιά) or ‘little ones’ (οἱ μικροί).⁴⁶⁰ In Matt 18:2, Jesus calls a child to himself in order to illustrate the humility necessary to enter the kingdom, and the following instructions to the disciples (Matt 18:5-14) continue to reference the ‘children’ (τὰ παῖδιά) and ‘little ones’ (οἱ μικροί).⁴⁶¹ While it is possible that after referring to a child in Matt 18:2, Matthew might continue to refer to actual children in the rest of the discourse, it is more likely that Matthew has a different group in mind, namely the disciples.⁴⁶² For example, in Matt 18:6, the ‘little ones’ are further defined as ‘the ones who believe in me,’ (τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ)⁴⁶³ and in Matt 18:15, the language switches to address a fellow believer (ἀδελφός) without referring to a separate group. In addition, the conclusion of the discourse in Matt 10 connects the disciples with the ‘little ones,’ ‘and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones [ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων] in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward,’ (Matt 10:42). This seems to be mirrored in Matt 18:5, ‘Whoever welcomes one such child [παῖδιον] in my name welcomes me.’ Even though a child is used as an example of humility in Matt 18:2, the use of ‘little ones’ (ἐν τῶν μικρῶν τούτων) and ‘children’ (παῖδιον) in Matt 18:3-14 appears to indicate these should primarily be considered as referring to the disciples, those that believe in Jesus (Matt 18:6).⁴⁶⁴

3.2 Pay Attention to Contemptuous Conduct

In light of this, Matthew 18:10 begins with the instruction for the disciples to be aware they are not to ‘despise’ or ‘disparage’ one another (Ὁρᾶτε μὴ

⁴⁶⁰ To complicate the issue, the language is not uniform within the discourse.

⁴⁶¹ Francis sees the ‘children’ as indicative of dependency and humility. Francis, *Children*, 153-4.

⁴⁶² While Davies considers that Matt 18:6-9 could be referring to literal children or the ‘poor’ of the beatitudes, he believes that there is little doubt that Matthew is referring to believers. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:757-58. Scott says it is a metaphor after Matt 18:2. Scott, *Parable*. On the other hand, Judith Gundry-Volf argues that it is not unlikely that Jesus is referring to both disciples and children, where ‘little ones’ contains two sides of the same coin. Gundry-Volf, ‘Children,’ 41-42. Although it likely does not apply to Matt 18, for the use of ‘little ones’ in apocalyptic literature, see Zech. 13:7; 1En. 62:11; 2Bar. 48:19. Orton, ‘Grasshoppers,’ 500-01.

⁴⁶³ Some textual variants (D and some Vulgate, Syriac, and Old Latin manuscripts) add τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ to Matt 18:10.

⁴⁶⁴ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:514. Orton sees the ‘little ones’ as immature, ‘undergraduate disciples.’ Orton, ‘Grasshoppers,’ 500-01. With a view towards Matt 25:31-46 and 10:45, the ‘little ones’ have also been called missionaries. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:228-29, 762.

καταφρονήσητε ἑνὸς τῶν μικρῶν).⁴⁶⁵ With the exception of Heb 12:2, καταφρονέω is used in a negative manner.⁴⁶⁶ In Rom 2:4 a warning is issued regarding despising the riches of God's kindness, and in 1Cor 11:22 the community is excoriated for showing contempt at the Lord's Supper through divisions. Similar caution is advocated to Timothy in 1Tim 4:12, 'Let no one despise your youth [Μηδεὶς σου τῆς νεότητος καταφρονεῖτω], and in 1Tim 6:2, slaves 'who have believing masters must not be disrespectful to them [μὴ καταφρονεῖτωσαν].'⁴⁶⁷ The only other appearance of καταφρονέω in Matthew is in Jesus' instruction concerning two lords where καταφρονέω is paralleled with hatred, 'for a slave will either hate [μισήσει] the one and love [ἀγαπήσει] the other, or be devoted [ἀνθέξεται] to the one and despise [καταφρονήσει] the other,' (Matt 6:24). In both Matt 6:24 and Matt 18:10-14, two responses are juxtaposed, one of devotion and one of disdain, both equally incompatible with each other. In Matt 6:24, Matthew explains the unattainable position of serving two masters (κύριος) while, in Matt 18:10-14, he illustrates that contempt toward another disregards their heavenly value. Unlike Matt 6:24, the message of devotion receives the most attention in Matt 18:10-14, being explained through a reference to angels (Matt 18:10b) and an illustration of the Father's devotion (Matt 18:12-14).⁴⁶⁸ With regard to Matt 18:10, Thompson asserts that καταφρονέω 'expresses the opposite of love and devotion.'⁴⁶⁹ In this regard, the command (Ὁρᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε, Matt 18:10a) to avoid treating a 'little one' as if they were of no real significance to the Christian community is a natural consequence of living out the heavenly explanation (Matt 18:10b) and parable of love that follows (Matt 18:12-14). However, Matt 18:10b-14 need not be relegated to balancing only Matt 18:10a, for it can be applied throughout the passage's instructions to the disciples. One's conduct toward one another, including those that have been led astray, should be done as if through the eyes of God. Moreover, Mt 18:10b-14 is as much an explanation of Matt 18:1-35 as it is of

⁴⁶⁵ When ὁράω is followed by μὴ with an aorist subjunctive, the meaning is 'pay attention' (cf. Matt 8:4; 9:30; 16:6; 24:6). Danker, 'Perspectives,' 720, Schneider, 'καταφρονέω,' in *TDNT*, 3:631-32.

⁴⁶⁶ Hebrews 12:2 speaks of Jesus' disregard for the shame of the cross.

⁴⁶⁷ Mounce calls καταφρονέω a 'strong word' that can go as far as disgust or even hatred. Mounce, *Pastoral*, 259.

⁴⁶⁸ This may be due to its narrative location in between two somewhat harsher instructions (Matt 18:6-9, 15-20).

⁴⁶⁹ He continues to say that in Matt 18:10, the exact form of the disdain is not specified and should be thought to warn against all forms of contempt. Thompson, *Advice*, 153.

Matt 18:10a, demonstrating that the heavenly value of a disciple should be manifested on earth in all of the community's conduct.

Nevertheless, the construction of Matt 18:10b specifically connects it to the command in Matt 18:10a. In his study on the narrative use of γάρ in Matthew, Richard Edwards argues that the reader is provided information concerning angels in the heavenly realm (Matt 18:10b) in order to help them understand the command given (Matt 18:10a).⁴⁷⁰ Edwards' interest is in the credibility of the phrase for the reader, which in this case is dependent upon the authority of the speaker in the narrative (Jesus). As a result, the narrative implication of γάρ in Matt 18:10 represents credible and privileged information (it is spoken by Jesus) that contributes to an understanding of the command. For this reason, the statement of angels in heaven is part of the argument for why the disciples were to act in the way advocated in Matt 18:10a. Thus, the next section will examine Matthew's explanation and what angel traditions might have contributed to understanding this passage.

4 'THEIR ANGELS ALWAYS BEHOLD THE FACE OF MY FATHER' (MATT 18:10B)

In the second half of Matt 18:10, Matthew reflects the value of not looking down on the little ones because, 'in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father,' (Matt 18:10b). The explanation in Matt 18:10b begins with the phrase λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν (cf. Matt 18:3, 10, 13, 18–19, 22), emphasizing the authority of Jesus' words and signaling the weight of what is to come.⁴⁷¹ Following the conjunctive introduction, Matthew alludes to two concepts concerning angels. First, by describing the angels as 'their,' Matthew reflects that angels are assigned and associated with the 'little ones.' While the use of a pronoun with angels has already been discussed with reference to the Son of Man and 'his angels' in Matt 13:41 and 16:27, the context of Matt 18 conveys a different sort of relationship between the 'little ones' and the angels. Rather than convey submission and eschatological authority, Matt 18:10 suggests the angels' interest is in the welfare

⁴⁷⁰ Edwards places this γάρ in his 'ideological' category and thus argues that it supplies privileged information to the implied reader. Edwards, 'Narrative,' 648.

⁴⁷¹ Nolland, *Matthew*, 741, Gundry, *Matthew*, 364.

of the ‘little ones.’ For this reason, traditions that reflect a similar relationship, such as the angels of the nations, will be the focus of the first section. Secondly, the particular group of angels to which Matthew seems to be referring is one that is continually present with God (διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς). In this regard, these angels seem to have a privileged position in heaven whether they actually ‘see’ God or are considered among the angels of the Presence. These two groups of traditions will be examined individually, and then analyzed with respect to Matt 18:10.

4.1 Assigning Angels

Since Matthew seems to be drawing upon the relationship between the disciples and ‘their angel,’ Matthew may be referring to angels that represent or protect a particular person or group. This group of angel traditions associates an angel with a nation or individual so that they might be directed on a different path had there not been heavenly intervention. Often the guidance is administered for the benefit of the angel’s charge, but occasionally, especially when referring to nations, it can be to their detriment. Nevertheless, God always remains in control and the angels’ function within this paradigm, carrying out his will.

4.1.1 *Angels of the Nations*

Beliefs in personal deities were not uncommon in the Ancient Near East, but the topic is scarce in the Hebrew Bible. If there is any evidence of similarities or remnants of shared traditions, it is manifested in the notion of angels representing the nations.⁴⁷² For example, in Deut 32:8-9, the Most High apportions the nations and divides humankind according the number of the ‘sons of Israel’ (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). However, no angel is apportioned to Israel, who alone has God as their patron (Deut 32:9). Significantly, the LXX reads that this was according to the number of

⁴⁷² Hannah also admits that despite the lack of evidence, it does not mean the absence of beliefs or traditions. Hannah, ‘Guardian,’ 414-16.

the ‘angels of God’ (κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ).⁴⁷³ The understanding that the ‘sons of Israel’ were to be interpreted as angels or other spiritual beings is evidenced in Deut 29:25-26, which speaks of the Israelite’s pursuit of idols and other gods which were not allotted to them and Deut 4:19-20, which forbids the worship of the sun, stars, and host of heaven for these were allotted to the people everywhere and not to them. Furthermore, this tradition does not seem to be limited to Deuteronomy. Sirach 17:17 states that in creation, a ruler was appointed for every nation except Israel, who was the Lord’s (ἐκάστῳ ἔθνει κατέστησεν ἡγούμενον, καὶ μερὶς κυρίου Ἰσραὴλ ἐστίν). While no angels or other power is suggested (angels are implied in 17:32), the similarity to Deut 32 is worthy of note.⁴⁷⁴ Likewise, *Jubilees* reveals a similar tradition while also reflecting development. For example, in *Jub.* 15:30, the doctrine of Israel being the people of God is affirmed in much the same way as Deuteronomy and Sirach, in that no angel or spirit was appointed over his people. However, unlike Deut 32 and Sir 17, spirits were made to rule over many nations and people in order to lead them astray. Rather than simply describe the apportioning, there is further description of the angels’ purpose.⁴⁷⁵ Although there are differences, there seems to be a common idea of angels (or spirits) being in charge of nations, which in turn are subservient to the rule of God.

The later chapters of Daniel and the *Book of Dreams* (1En. 83-90), both dating from a similar period of crisis near the Maccabean revolt, show similarities to *Jubilees* in that angels were in charge of the nations, to guide and lead astray. In one of the visions in the book of Daniel, an angel described as a ‘man dressed in linen’ comforts Daniel by explaining to him that he had heard Daniel’s prayers, but had been delayed by opposition from the ‘prince of the kingdom of Persia,’ (Dan 10:13-14). He continues to explain that only after the angel, Michael, came to help was he able to depart to attend to Daniel. Here, it is indicated that the national patron angels are in opposition to the angels of Israel and that such heavenly conflict can

⁴⁷³ In agreement with the LXX are 4QDeut^l [4Q37] and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 32:8-9 (cf. Deut 32:43; 4QDeut^q [4Q44]; Deut 32:43 LXX). In addition, it is thought that these angels numbered seventy after the seventy nations that came from Noah (Gen 10; cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 11:8; 28:3; Num 29:13; Deut 13:8; 32:8).

⁴⁷⁴ Davies seems to imply that this verse suggests that the rulers over the nations are angels. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:770-71.

⁴⁷⁵ Hannah, ‘Guardian,’ 419. In *Jub.* 10:1-9, the offspring of the Watchers, the demons, are credited with leading humans astray. Either way, this aspect of leading astray is neither explained nor justified in *Jubilees*.

impact those on earth.⁴⁷⁶ In contrast to Deut 32, Sir 17, and *Jub.* 15, the book of Daniel suggests that there are angels representing Israel. In fact, Dan 12:1 describes Michael as ‘the great prince, the protector of your people [Israel].’⁴⁷⁷ The development of Michael as the patron of Israel is a noticeable change and suggests that there was at least more than one view on the patron of Israel.⁴⁷⁸ Similarly reflecting a development of traditions, the *Book of Dreams* of *1Enoch* portrays the sheep handed over to seventy shepherds, who, as angelic patrons, are no longer simply leading the Gentiles astray, but are there to punish Israel.⁴⁷⁹ On the other hand, there seem to be differences among these traditions, such as the purposes of the angels in charge of the nations. Nevertheless, these examples demonstrate evidence of accepted traditions of angels representing the nations in heaven. Rather than a single tradition, or developing tradition, there is evidence of traditions conveying the relationship of a group of people to angels, suggesting an interest in a heavenly correspondence with activities on earth. While these traditions are similar to the concept of a heavenly angelic representative in Matt 18:10, Matthew’s description of the angels as the angels of the ‘little ones’ (their angels) implies that there might be other traditions influencing this passage, namely references to angels attending to a single person.

4.1.2 *Personal Protecting Angels*

If there are traditions that associate an angel with a nation or particular group of people, then it is possible to see how this relates to the correspondence of an angel with an individual, especially for protection. As was demonstrated in the previous analysis of angels in the narrative of the temptation (Matt 4:1-11), there are a number of passages in the Old Testament and Second Temple Jewish literature that imply angelic accompaniment or assistance, often for a temporary period of time or specific situation. To reiterate, the text of Ps 91:10-11 and other angelic

⁴⁷⁶ However, the fact that these are angels is only implied. Both the LXX and DSS both retain the language of a ruler (ὁ στρατηγὸς βασιλέως Περσῶν)

⁴⁷⁷ The Ethiopic version of *1En.* 20, in a list of the seven archangels and their commands, notes that Michael oversees the people and the nations, while the Greek recension indicates he is set over the good humanity (τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγαθῶν) and the chaos.

⁴⁷⁸ See also *T. Levi* 5:1-6; *T. Dan* 6:2-7; 1QM 17:6-8; 1QS 3:24; cf. Rev 12:7. Hannah, ‘Guardian,’ 420-23.

⁴⁷⁹ Hannah, ‘Guardian,’ 421. Compare also with the tradition of seventy angels and seventy nations.

references, such as the role of Raphael guiding Tobias in the book of Tobit (Tob 5:17-22 cf. Tob 12:11-15), demonstrated that angels were portrayed as instrumental in guiding and protecting individuals. The discussion included other texts such as the angels that accompanied Lot (Gen 19), assisted Abraham (Gen 24:7), rescued the young men from a furnace (Dan 3:28) and Daniel from the lion's den (Dan 6:22; Bel 34-39), and accompanied Israel on their journey in the desert (Exod 23:23; 32:34). However, the contexts of Matt 4 and 18 are somewhat different. In the discussion concerning Ps 91 and Matt 4:6, it was suggested that God takes care of those that are faithful to him. With Matt 18:10, the context suggests one who has gone astray, who, despite their activity, remains cherished and valued in the sight of God (Matt 18:10b-14). Nevertheless, it cannot be avoided that Matthew, in both situations, reflects traditions of angels for care and protection.

The previous discussion of Raphael in the chapter on Matt 4 focused on the angel as a protector for the journey with Tobias, but it is possible to think that Raphael was guiding and guarding Tobias more than on this journey alone. When Raphael reveals his identity at the end of the journey, he indicates that he has been their advocate even before he journeyed with Tobias, noticing Tobit's pious actions and interceding on their behalf (Tob 12:12-13), 'So now when you and Sarah prayed, it was I who brought and read the record of your prayer before the glory of the Lord, and likewise whenever you would bury the dead.'⁴⁸⁰ Other examples include Israel's blessing to Joseph and his sons. In this instance, an angel is acknowledged for Israel's protection, 'The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all harm, bless the boys,' (Gen 48:15-16).⁴⁸¹ In addition, a protecting angel is part of the proclamation of praise to the Lord for being guarded in Ps 34:7, 'The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them' (cf. *Jub.* 35:17; Ps 91). In the *Epistle of Enoch*, angels descend to secret places to collect the wicked in the description of judgment, while another group of angels is set over the righteous to guard them, keeping them as the 'apple of his eye' until the suffering is over so that they will have nothing to

⁴⁸⁰ Hannah, 'Guardian,' 423-4.

⁴⁸¹ It is not likely that Matthew had Gen 48:15-16 in mind when he constructed this passage, but the overlap of God's image as a shepherd, the care of angels, and God's blessing seem to echo much of Matt 18:10-14.

fear as they sleep (1En. 100:4-5). In the Epistle of Jeremiah, a warning is issued to fear God alone, 'for my angel is with you, and he is watching over your lives,' (Ep Jer 7). *Jubilees* narrates Isaac's discussion with Rebekah, who assures her that there is no need for him to make Esau swear not to harm Jacob, for even though Esau will not abide by any oath, Jacob's protector is greater, mightier, and more honored than that of Esau (*Jub.* 35:16-17). For R. H. Charles, this is the earliest distinct reference to a guardian angel.⁴⁸² While angels are only implied, Hannah points out that rather than evidence of guardian angels for every individual, this may reflect angelic protectors for important figures. This would resonate with Matt 18:10, which seems to argue for the value of the disciples. Nevertheless, Darrell Hannah admits, with *Jubilees*' strong interest in angels, it is conspicuous that (if Charles is correct) this is the only place in the book an angelic guardian is mentioned.⁴⁸³

Even in the New Testament there are intimations of angels personally guarding and protecting. For example, Paul in Acts reports that an angel appeared to him, comforting him and those on the boat with him (Acts 27:21-26). Although this could be argued as a unique event in which a message is delivered, the angel's report includes the promise that no life shall be lost in the storm, but does not explain how such an action occurs. In this context, it could be thought that angels were at work in saving Paul and the crew; however, there is also no indication in the text that angels are expected, only that God will act in keeping them safe. Similarly, at the culmination of the comparison between angels and the Son (Heb 1:1-14), the author of Hebrews suggests that angels are to serve humanity, 'Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?' (Heb 1:13-4). The context of Heb 1-2 suggests that the place of angels with regard to humanity is more likely in the foreground, but, again, it does not negate the possibility that the traditions of angelic guardians might have been in the picture. In addition, Heb 1:14 speaks of angels sent to those who are to inherit salvation, not unlike the group to whom the angels are associated in Matt 18:10 ('little ones' who believe in me; Matt 18:6, cf. 18:10). In this light, Matthew may be reflecting traditions in which an angelic guide is an indicator of one's righteousness. There is the example of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, where,

⁴⁸² Charles, *Jubilees*, 209.

⁴⁸³ Hannah, 'Guardian,' 424.

according to Matthew, Jesus could appeal to the Father for twelve legions of angels (Matt 26:53), and according to Luke, an angel from heaven appears and strengthens Jesus (Luke 22:43-44). While Matt 26:53 will be discussed more fully in a later chapter, it can be stated here that, in this situation, the emphasis is placed on the idea that angels in overwhelming numbers could have been there to stop Jesus' arrest had it been the Father's will. However, having prayed in the Garden, Jesus goes willingly when he is bound (Matt 26:36-56). The verses portraying an angel comforting Jesus in Luke 22:43-44 are troubled by conflicting textual variants that either omit or include Luke 22:43-44. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ignore the existence of the tradition of the angel's appearance despite its absence among certain witnesses.⁴⁸⁴

Later traditions continue to reflect this motif of a personal angel, although it is problematic when considering whether an influence from Matt 18:10 is possible. For example, *Testament of Adam* 4 reveals a hierarchy of angels in which the lowest order is ascribed for the service of protection, one angel to watch per human being (*T. Adam* 4:1). Similarly, the *Testament of Jacob* tells of a deathbed scene where Jacob encounters the angel that has been accompanying and guarding him his whole life, saving him from various dangers, including the hand of Esau (*T. Jac.* 2:4-11; cf. Gen 48:15-16). This seems to echo the 'protector' in *Jub.* 35:16-17 and support the argument that angels can be assigned to special or righteous individuals. In light of this, one can also look to the Shepherd of Hermas; for in *Herm. Vis.* 5:1-4 an angel comes to dwell with the visionary and remain with him the rest of his life. In *L.A.B.*, the Lord sends his angel of wrath to inflict punishment, but first instructs the 'angels who watch over them not to intercede for them,' (*L.A.B.* 15:5) and in *L.A.B.* 59:4, David sings of God's protection through his angels. Likewise, *L.A.B.* 13:6 seems to suggest an offering at the feast of trumpets for one's angelic watchers (cf. *L.A.B.* 64:6). Comparatively, the vision in *3Baruch* portrays five heavens, of which the final one portrays the archangel, Michael, collecting the good works of the righteous to bring before God (*3Bar.* 11). In the next two chapters (*3Bar.* 12-13), angels come to Michael bearing full, partially full,

⁴⁸⁴ For more information, see Marshall and Green who both recognize the difficulty of the varying textual witnesses, but nevertheless hesitatingly assert its Lukan origin. Green, 'Mount,' 35-36, Marshall, *Luke*, 831-2. Likewise, Clivaz, asserts the importance of the text in the history of reception. Clivaz, 'Sweat,' 439.

and empty bowls, representing the prayers or good works of particular people or people groups to whom they have been assigned.⁴⁸⁵ The angels over the evil men beg to be reassigned since they have not found any goodness in ‘the evil men’ (3Bar. 13:3-4). This description is not unlike that in *Apocalypse of Paul* 7-10. At the hour of sunset, all the angels go to worship God, bringing before him all the deeds of humanity, good and bad (*Apoc. Paul* 7). One angel goes from the person they ‘indwell’ to present an account before God (*Apoc. Paul* 7). Moreover, these angels are charged with protecting and serving humans because they are the image of God (*Apoc. Paul* 7). This is very close to the 3Baruch passage, except in the *Apocalypse* the instruction to the angels over the wicked is to remain with them until they convert and repent. If they do not, then they will be judged. As if to clarify, then the author of the *Apocalypse* turns to the readers and explains, ‘Understand then, children of men, that whatever you do, whether it is good or evil, these angels report (it) to God,’ (*Apoc. Paul* 10). In both 3Baruch and the *Apocalypse of Paul* angels are assigned to humans (cf. Herm. Vis. 5:1-4), resonating with Matt 18:10’s description of angels for the ‘little ones.’ However both texts describe angels that travel to and from earth and heaven while Matt 18:10 describes the angels as ‘continually’ (διὰ παντός) before the Father. This may suggest different traditions, but the idea of personal angels nevertheless remains similar. Nevertheless, it cannot be avoided that Matthew seems to be emphasizing the location of these angels in heaven (‘angels in heaven’ and before ‘my Father in heaven’) and many of these texts suggest the angelic accompaniment occurs on earth with the person. This does not mean that the angels could not travel back and forth such as in 3Baruch or the *Apocalypse of Paul*, but it is hard to overlook that Matthew’s repetition of ‘heaven’ bespeaks the importance of this location, possibly reflecting traditions that demonstrate the significance of the angels’ proximity to the Father. With this in mind, Matthew may be alluding to traditions that place angels before the heavenly throne, interceding on behalf of humanity.

4.2 The Angels as Being Always Before the Face of the Father

⁴⁸⁵ The Greek recension of 3Bar. 11:9 reads ‘virtues of the righteous and the good works which they do,’ but the Slavonic notes ‘prayers.’

As part of the explanation for the instruction in Matt 18:10, the angels are described as the ones that continually see the face of the Father in heaven (διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς). The description that these angels are in heaven (ἐν οὐρανοῖς) and constantly before the Father (πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς) may reflect other categories. In light of this, the following discussion will examine the traditions of interceding angels, seeing the face of God, and angels of the presence.

4.2.1 *Interceding Angels before the Face of God*

Angels that continually see the face of the Father might remain in God's presence in order to intercede on behalf of the 'little ones.' While Matt 18:10 does not immediately suggest that the reason that one should not despise the disciples is because they have angels interceding for them, the act of heavenly intercession suggests a divine interest in the person for which the prayers are being offered. Moreover, there are examples of traditions where angels participate in offering prayers. For example, as part of the first similitude in the *Similitudes of Enoch* (1En. 36-72), the visionary describes the four archangels, of which, the third of the four, Raphael, is reported as interceding and praying for those on earth (1En. 40:6,9; cf. Tob 12:12). Comparatively, in the *Book of Dreams* (1En. 83-90) the sheep, having been dispersed, receive intercession before the Lord (1En. 89:76; cf. 1En. 90:14). In the description of the heavens and their contents in the *Testament of Levi*, the uppermost heaven houses the archangels, who serve and offer sacrifices on behalf of all the sins unknowingly committed by the righteous (T. Levi. 3:5). When Levi returns to earth, he entreats the angel who accompanied him on his ascent for his name so that he may call upon him in the day of tribulation; the angel responds, 'I am the angel who makes intercession for the nation of Israel,' (T. Levi 5:6). Here, it seems that there is a heavenly counterpart to the temple cult activities on earth. In the same way that the priests intercede for the nation of Israel, so do the angels.⁴⁸⁶ Then there are traditions such as 1En. 104:1, where angels record both good and wicked deeds so that the righteous are comforted by the assurance that their deeds will be remembered by the angels before the glory of the Great One

⁴⁸⁶ Hayward, 'Heaven,' 63, Dimant, 'Self-Image,' 100-03.

(1En. 104:1). However, traditions of angels as heavenly recorders evoke the notion of judgment rather than care. Similarly, in *L.A.B.* 11:12, when the ten laws are given, one of reasons for not speaking false testimony is the threat that one's guardians might also speak falsely against them. Rather than protect, the angels are there as a threat to ensure that both good and bad deeds do not escape the notice of one's angel. Nevertheless, it should be noted that both traditions use angels in their description of the heavens to indicate a divine interest in the individual. Thus, the role of angels as intercessors or advocates (cf. Zech 3:1-2), whether in one's life or eschatologically, resonates with Matthew's argument for the heavenly value of the 'little ones.' On the other hand, Job seems to indicate that there is no one to intercede for him in heaven. In Job 9:33, Job professes that there is no mediator between him and God, 'There is no umpire between us.'⁴⁸⁷ According to Clines, when Job talks about a 'witness' in heaven, he is speaking about his own 'lament' rather than someone who is interceding on his behalf (Job 16:19-21).⁴⁸⁸ Thus, in Job 19:25, there is no personal redeemer (גאל) since the one to whom he would bring his case would be God, the very one whom Job has decided is his enemy. Instead, Job is convinced his innocence will be his sole evidence in heaven and will vindicate Job.⁴⁸⁹ While there does not appear to be evidence for an angelic mediator in Job, the premise of Job's predicament is founded on the venture that Job will curse God when God removes the protective hedge from around him. To have him appeal to a mediator rather than God does not seem to fit with the test that Job is experiencing (cf. Job 4:18; 5:1). Thus, it can be posited that while there are traditions that demonstrate the presence of angels interceding on behalf of humanity in heaven, it is not a universal tradition (cf. Job).

4.2.2 *Seeing the Face of God*

Matthew indicates these angels see the face of God (βλέπουν τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς); however, being able to look at God is treated with some reserve in

⁴⁸⁷ In his commentary on Job, Clines argues that while the Masoretic Text indicates no mediator exists, it should be read that Job wishes there were, by reading the negative particle (אין) as a wish particle (אִין). Clines, *Job 1-20*, 243. Habel, 'Jackal,' 232-33.

⁴⁸⁸ Curtis, 'Witness,' Clines, *Job 1-20*, 390.

⁴⁸⁹ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 459-60.

different texts. For example, according to Exod 33:20, the Lord tells Moses that he, ‘cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.’ If these angels in Matt 18:10 see God, then they can do what no human can do and live.⁴⁹⁰ On the other hand, in Isa 6:2, two of the six wings of the seraphim cover the face. This seems to imply these wings are shielding them from looking at God, and yet Isaiah remarks that he has seen (MT, רָאָה, LXX ὁράω) the King, the Lord of Hosts (Isa 6:5). Likewise, in 1En. 14:21, the seer describes the throne room and the one sitting upon the throne, while paradoxically including the declaration that no one, neither angel nor flesh, can look upon his face (1En. 14:21; cf. T. Levi 5:1-6). Similarly, despite the throne room being full, for there were tens of millions before him, they were unable to approach the throne (1En. 14:22; cf. Dan 7:10; Deut 33:2; Zech 14:5). Even Matt 5:8 indicates that the pure in heart will see God; however, this most likely refers to an eschatological vision of God where, at the eschaton, the righteous will get to see him (cf. Matt 19:28).⁴⁹¹ In this regard, there seems to be some flexibility in the way one described seeing God. Consequently, it seems that for Matthew, the angels seeing God was not something forbidden, but suggests a sense of significance and importance.⁴⁹² Moreover, to speak of the angels’ ability to see his face continually, implies unrestricted access.⁴⁹³ In this light, to see God’s face would imply that the angels before the face of the Father can be understood as among those closest to God; and, concerning the geography of heaven, the closer someone or something is to God, the stronger the implication that the more significant it is. Comparatively, the earthly temple of God is set up in a similar fashion, with the level of holiness and restrictions increasing the closer to the ‘location’ of the Lord’s presence in the Holy of Holies. While Nolland is unsure if these angels should be regarded as privileged, he argues that the idea is the little ones’ interests are presented uninterruptedly before God. The core of Matthew’s description indicates that the status of these angels places them close to God.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, Keener argues that since the angels nearest the throne were of the highest rank they would not have been guardian angels.⁴⁹⁵ While this is true of

⁴⁹⁰ Durham seems to indicate that is forbidden only to the ‘human family.’ Durham, *Exodus*, 450.

⁴⁹¹ Hagner, *Matthew*, 93.

⁴⁹² Compare this with seeing the face of a king (2Sam 14:24; 2Kgs 25:19; Esth 1:14).

⁴⁹³ Gundry, *Matthew*, 364.

⁴⁹⁴ Nolland, *Matthew*, 741-2, Schweizer, *Matthew*, 367.

⁴⁹⁵ Keener, *Matthew*, 451 n.14.

some hierarchies (cf. *Test. Adam* 4), some of the examples discussed have included the angel of the Lord and archangels such as Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. In light of this, it is not necessary to determine that the categories of guardian angels and ‘angels before the face’ are mutually exclusive.

4.2.3 *Angels of the Presence, Those That Stand before God*

Aside from the discussion of seeing God, there is a group of angels, described as the ‘angels of the presence,’ that are considered to be those that reside closest to God. In *Jubilees*, along with the heavens and the earth, the spirits that minister before the Lord were created, of which the angels of the presence are included (*Jub.* 2:2; cf. *T. Ps.-J. Gen* 1:26). In *Jub.* 2:18, the two great kinds of angels, the angels of the presence and the angels of sanctification, are to keep Sabbath with the Lord. In the book of Tobit, at the end of his journey with Tobias, Raphael reveals himself as an angel, and says, ‘I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ready and enter before the glory of the Lord’ (*Tob* 12:15; cf. *Rev* 8:2). As mentioned earlier, Raphael is included among the four angels that are beside the Lord of the Spirits in *1En.* 40:1-10. Although there is no specific naming of ‘angels of the presence,’ the location of these four angels singing praises before the Lord indicates that these angels are to be regarded as something different and significant.⁴⁹⁶ In addition, the presence of angels and holy ones in heaven and in the presence of the Lord is also found amongst the various texts found at Qumran. In particular, the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400) chronicle the liturgy for joining the angels in worshipping the Lord in his presence. The text, 4Q4001 i:4, speaks of servants of the presence; however, the text is difficult to interpret at this point because of damage (cf. 3Q7 f5:3). In addition, 1QH^a 14:16 speaks to all the men of the council, who are considered together with the angels of the presence. In the New Testament, Gabriel describes himself as one that stands in the presence of God (*Luke* 1:19; cf. *1En.* 40:9-10). Similarly, *Rev* 8:2 describes the trumpets being given to the seven angels that stand before God.

Thus, the angels considered among those that stand before the presence of God could be considered some of the privileged few. In many of the examples,

⁴⁹⁶ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:526-7.

these were limited to only four or seven. On the other hand, it is not stated that these are the only angels that stand before the Lord. In light of this, it is hard to ignore the traditions of myriads of angels that accompany the Lord on judgment day (Dan 7:10; Jude 14; *1En.* 1:9; cf. Zech 14:5).⁴⁹⁷ Instead, Matt 18:10 uses this group of angels as a description of those uniquely close to God. For Matthew, to portray these angels as constantly before the face of the Father in heaven is to place this group of angels of the ‘little ones’ in a position of honor.

5 REEXAMINING MATT 18:10 IN ITS CONTEXT

In the discussion so far, it has been demonstrated that there are a variety of traditions that place angels in representative roles, in positions of guardians, in close proximity to God, and as intercessors. In one way or another, each of these traditions fits, albeit some more loosely, with the description of angels in Matt 18:10. Therefore, the little ones are special objects of divine care and protection, and thus to look down at one with contempt is to cross purposes with God.⁴⁹⁸

The idea of an angel being assigned to a person for protection or guidance supports the language that these are angels of the ‘little ones.’ Early interpreters of Matt 18:10 seemed to have taken notice of this. Origen, in his reflection on God’s work of creation, *De principiis*, reasons that angels must also have been given roles and responsibilities on purpose by God. All this, according to Origen, is not by chance, but ordered by God who created them in this way. He lists as examples the angels Raphael, Gabriel, Michael, the angels of the churches in Rev 1-3, and the little ones of Matt 18:10 (*Princ.* 1.8.1). Chrysostom, in *Hom. Matt.* on Matt 18:10, indicates that every individual has an angel. Aquinas (*Summa T* 1a.113) agreed that there were guardian angels, but argued that Christ did not have an angel.⁴⁹⁹

However, Matt 18:10 does not explicitly say that a person is being *protected* by an angel, especially since these angels are in heaven continually. If the guardian angel is the means by which God in heaven is able to provide protection,

⁴⁹⁷ VanderKam, ‘Theophany,’ 147-8, Black, ‘Use,’ 10-11.

⁴⁹⁸ Gundry-Volf, ‘Children,’ 42.

⁴⁹⁹ For an excellent discussion of these texts and more on guardian angels in later Christian tradition, see Daniélou, *Mission*, 68-82.

then one's guardian angel should be on earth, close to the one they are protecting - not in heaven.⁵⁰⁰ In addition, the suggestion of a protecting angel does not seem to fit as smoothly with the imperative in Matt 18:10a as a reason not to despise the little ones. Why instruct the disciples not to look down on another if angels are protecting them? Furthermore, the connection to the Parable of the Sheep has little to do with protection, but the pursuit of a sheep gone astray.

The traditions of angels interceding or representing (angels of the nations) suggest that the angels, with regard to the 'little ones,' might be interceding on their behalf. This resonates with Matt 18:10, as the angels are located in heaven before the face of God. Moreover, these angels are those that 'see' God continually. Whether or not they actually behold the face of God is unstated, but the variety of traditions regarding the heavenly throne room establishes a foundation in which one can reside in the Lord's presence and still respect the splendor of his glory. In light of this, these angels, although not named as such, could be considered among the angels of the presence, an elite group of angels in close proximity to God. Consequently, Matthew's reference to these angels and their connection to the 'little ones' would establish a heavenly significance for the 'little ones' that would be reflected in their treatment by the disciples (Matt 18:10a). Additionally, it adeptly reflects the shepherd's care for the sheep in the parable that follows (Matt 18:12-14). On the other hand, Matthew does not describe any particular role these angels perform with regard to the 'little ones.' To assert that they are interceding on behalf of the 'little ones' might be relying too much on a loosely associated tradition.

In light of this, there does not seem to be one tradition that alone expresses or explains why Matthew refers to angels in this manner.⁵⁰¹ Collectively, it can be

⁵⁰⁰ Davies disagrees, noting there are angels in *LAE* 33:1-3 which move back and forth between heaven and earth. These are the two angels that were guarding Adam and Eve in the Garden. This verse indicates they left the Garden to go to heaven to worship in the presence of God (cf. *Apoc. Moses* 7:2-3).

⁵⁰¹ The apparent ambiguity has resulted in a variety of opinions on Matt 18:10. For example, Calvin approached the topic of guardian angels cautiously, admitting that he is unsure if every believer has their own angel; but, he affirms that even if they don't have their own angel, they are cared for by one divine consent, whether it is one angel or them all (*Inst* 1.14.6-7). For Calvin, Acts 12:15 is more convincing of a personal guardian angel than Matt 18:10 (*Inst* 1.14.7). Héring uses the text to advance the discussion regarding infant baptism. Héring, 'Un Texte.' Hagner says that this verse falls short of advocating 'guardian angels' assigned to individual Christians; however, Davies is of the mind that Matthew is referring to guardian angels. Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:527. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:771. Schlatter states that the title 'guardian angel' does not fit the verse adequately; for

asserted that these traditions suggest an interpretation of a portrait of angels that indicates their importance to God and to their charges. Furthermore, in the context of Matt 18 and the grammar of Matt 18:10 (γάρ), it can be confidently suggested that Matthew is primarily expressing the importance of the disciples rather than establishing something about angels.⁵⁰² Similarly, Matthew is not arguing about who has an angel, but for the fact that the ‘little ones’ do not lack angels.⁵⁰³ Therefore, if an exclusive group of angels represent the little ones in some undisclosed fashion before the face of God, how much more should followers of Jesus share similar values? For Matthew, their heavenly value is represented through the portrayal of angels. Since the ‘little ones’ have such great value to God, then, as a disciple, one should not look down on them.

5.1 Parable of the Stray Sheep

When Matthew begins the Parable of the Stray Sheep (Matt 18:12-14) with the bold statement of the worth of the little ones in Matt 18:10, he connects the heavenly worth of a disciple to the Father’s care.⁵⁰⁴ In the Parable of the Sheep, a man leaves his flock of ninety-nine sheep to go in search of the one that has gone astray. If the shepherd restores the one sheep that strayed, the worth of the one sheep is celebrated, ‘he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray,’ (Matt 18:13).⁵⁰⁵ In light of the heavenly value of the disciple established in Matt 18:10 and the rejoicing of the shepherd when he finds the sheep, this passage can be compared to Luke 15:7, which concludes Luke’s version of this parable, ‘just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance’ (cf. Luke 15:10).

it is about the Father’s care for the little ones. Schlatter, *Matthäus*, 551. Meanwhile, Hannah argues that Matt 18:10 ‘without question alludes to guardian angels of individuals,’ and Schweizer argues that the idea of guardian angels is far from universal and is found only in later writings. Hannah, ‘Guardian,’ 416, Schweizer, *Matthew*, 367.

⁵⁰² Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:527, Edwards, ‘Narrative,’ 648.

⁵⁰³ Nolland, *Matthew*, 741.

⁵⁰⁴ In *Gos. Thom.* 107, any sense of divine care comes across differently for the largest of the flock is the most important. In Matthew, it was not the value of the stray sheep that sent the shepherd searching, but the fact that it was one that belonged to the shepherd. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:776.

⁵⁰⁵ One ought to be careful not to read too much into the leaving of the other ninety-nine. The point is the joy in finding the one, not the imported ‘risk’ that is seen in the shepherd leaving to seek the stray sheep. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:775.

While there are similar elements (finding, celebrating, heaven), the two passages portray the heavenly response differently. In Matt 18:10, the individual disciples are given great earthly value by illustrating their heavenly value, which is repeated in Matt 18:14, ‘So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.’ Instead of explicitly modeling one’s heavenly value, the emphasis in Luke 15:7 (cf. Luke 15:10) seems to be more on the heavenly response to that which happens on earth.⁵⁰⁶ The context of the two parables is a bit different in the Gospels as well. While Luke illustrates God’s pursuit of the lost, Matthew’s text is also a summons to share God’s concern with stray sheep. In Matthew, the call of the disciples to emulate a heavenly perspective may also be reflected in the emphasis on heaven, for Matthew repeats the point that this value is one that is witnessed in heaven (‘angels in heaven,’ ‘Father in heaven’) and should be expressed on earth (Matt 18:10a). In this way, the disciples are encouraged to live out actively God’s heavenly care on earth (cf. Matt 6:10).

Therefore, as a disciple, one should also remain obedient to the Father’s will. As was intimated earlier, the final verse of the parable, Matt 18:14, summarizes the worth of the sheep adeptly by connecting it to the Father’s will.⁵⁰⁷ This is why disciples should be welcomed into the community (Matt 18:1-5), why they should not be caused to stumble (Matt 18:6-9), and why with repeated attempts they should be guided back (Matt 18:15-20); it is because they are precious in the sight of the Father.⁵⁰⁸ As has been demonstrated, Matthew’s use of angels in Matt 18:10 establishes the heavenly value of Jesus’ disciples.⁵⁰⁹ In other words, since the will of God is not to lose one of the little ones, and the disciple is

⁵⁰⁶ For Jeremias, Luke’s parable is not about the intimate bond between the shepherd and flock, nor unwearied search, but is ‘simply and solely the joy.’ Jeremias, *Parables*, 107. Yet, even with the differences, it is possible that there might be a core of tradition that exists behind these two passages that accompanied the Parable of the Sheep. Gundry seems to think that Matt 18:10 was adapted from the source witnessed in Luke’s version. Gundry, *Matthew*, 364.

⁵⁰⁷ Matthew uses the same language, albeit a frequent designation, to describe the Father in heaven in Matt 18:10 and 18:14.

⁵⁰⁸ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:528. Davies asserts that the parable is about a professing disciple who is danger of becoming lost, not one who already is (cf. Luke 15). Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:774. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:769.

⁵⁰⁹ Hagner says ‘the passage thus provides a theological rationale for the preceding passage concerning not causing others to stumble, as well as for the admonitions concerning proper conduct toward disciples in the remainder of the chapter.’ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:525.

to be perfect as God is perfect (Matt 5:48), then the desire of the disciples should be to share in God's act of shepherding (Matt 18:15-20; cf. Ps 23).⁵¹⁰

6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Matt 18:10 supplements and contributes to the message of the discourse of Matt 18 by demonstrating that the value of a disciples is not measured by earthly means, instead it should be measured by the way in which the Father cares for them. This is illustrated clearly in Matt 18:10 and Matt 18:12-14, and as a result formed the discussion of this chapter. After first discussing the context of the discourse, Matt 18:10 was examined in two parts. First, the command in Matt 18:10a demonstrated that the disciples were not to look down on any of the 'little ones' with disdain or contempt. During this discussion, it was established that despite the actual child in Matt 18:2, the 'little ones' in Matt 18 referred to disciples, the 'ones that believe in me.' Secondly, the explanation given for the instruction in Matt 18:10a is examined by searching for texts and traditions that may give light to an interpretation of Matt 18:10b. It was discovered that there are a variety of traditions that may have contributed, including the angels of the nations, guardian angels, intercessory angels, and angels of the presence. In light of this, the final section of the chapter returned Matt 18:10 to its context in the discourse and examined the significance of these traditions, namely to the Parable of the Sheep (Matt 18:12-14). Here it was concluded that Matthew was not expressly clear what traditions he may be reflecting since Matt 18:10 seems to include parts of many while drawing on the core within all of them that indicates that by connecting the 'little ones' to these angels, Matthew is illustrating their great value to the Father.

In Matt 18:10, Matthew has demonstrated another role that angels play in his Gospel. In the infancy narratives and in Matt 4:1-11, angels communicated the presence of God on earth through their message and activity. In the two parables in Matt 13 and in Matt 16:27, angels appear at the end of the age with the Son of Man, responding to his command as the eschatological judge. The angels in Matt

⁵¹⁰ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:525. Jeremias, *Parables*, 142.

18:10 demonstrate the significance of the heavenly world for Matthew's understanding of kingdom living, and the worth of 'one that believes' to the Father is portrayed through that one's heavenly value.

Chapter 7

Sadducees and Heavenly Angels (Matthew 22:30)

1 INTRODUCTION

After the Pharisees attempt to entangle Jesus in his words (Matt 22:15-22), the Sadducees approach Jesus with a similar goal (Matt 22:23-30). Specifically, the Sadducees confront Jesus with a situation involving an extreme example of the levirate law of marriage in order to challenge his interpretation of Scripture and understanding of resurrection.⁵¹¹ Jesus' response to the Sadducees includes a comment on the state of those resurrected that links it with that of angels.

Unlike 'angels' in the redactions of Mark 1:13, 8:38, 13:27, and 16:27, Matthew does not amend this reference to angels in any significant way.⁵¹² The scarcity of Matthean redaction to this Markan passage, other than stylistic amendments, suggests that the author of Matthew endorsed this portrayal of Jesus' confrontation with the Sadducees, including the reference to angels as an effective means of countering their question and the relationship between the heavenly and earthly realms.⁵¹³ Since there are few significant redactional changes with regard to angels, the text of Matthew will be examined on its own terms.

As in Matt 18:10, the response of Jesus in Matt 22:30 presupposes the heavenly realm is used to inform the earthly, and with regard to the Sadducees, this involves the way life will be at the resurrection. Matthew 18:10 uses the relationship between heaven and earth to illustrate that care for those on earth

⁵¹¹ Owing to Jesus' predictions of his own raising from the dead (Matt 16:21; 17:22; 20:17), this becomes a controversial topic, for the Sadducees do not believe in resurrection (Matt 22:24).

⁵¹² Cf. Matt's use of Mark 13:32//Matt 24:36.

⁵¹³ As a result, the remainder of the discussion of this passage will speak of Matthew as the author of this passage, despite its strong Markan similarity, due to the understanding that Matthew intentionally chose these words to convey his Gospel. Cf. Luke's changes (Luke 20:27-40).

should resemble the care exercised toward the disciples in heaven. However, rather than draw similarities, Matt 22:30 draws attention to the contrast between heaven and earth. The Sadducees assumed that life will be very much the same, and Jesus disabuses them of this when he says that, 'You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven,' (Matt 22:29–30).

Therefore, this chapter will examine how different traditions of angels help inform how Matthew may have conceived of the resurrection as different from earthly life. This will be accomplished by demonstrating Jesus' response to the Sadducees' challenge suggests a life that is categorically different from earthly life in significant respects. Secondly, the reference to angels will be examined to discover what kind of resurrection may have been in mind when the afterlife was likened to that of angels.⁵¹⁴ This will include looking at the Pentateuch first, for the Sadducees most likely only held this set of scriptures as authoritative, followed by traditions that may have developed from the Old Testament. Afterward, the text will be reexamined in light of these references to angelic life.

2 SADDUCEES' CHALLENGE AND JESUS' RESPONSE

2.1 The Sadducees Approach Jesus

When the Sadducees come to Jesus, they begin their question by summarizing a Mosaic law that states that a man should marry and bear children with the wife of a deceased brother who had no children. This levirate law was an ancient solution to the potential problem of a family's lineage dying out.⁵¹⁵ Although the law is explained in Deut 25:5-6, the first example occurs in the narrative of Gen 38, where Judah says to his son, Onan, in response to his brother's death, 'Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her; raise up offspring

⁵¹⁴ Although Matthew does very little editing to this passage, it does not mean that Matthew did not agree with the use of angels.

⁵¹⁵ Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 253. A woman could be one of two places, living with her father as an unmarried virgin, or married, residing with her husband and expected to bear children. As a result, the childless widow had no place in ancient society. See also Belkin, 'Levirate.'

for your brother' (Gen 38:8-9). This is not unlike Boaz's actions concerning Ruth in order to 'maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance,' (Ruth 4:5,10).

The Sadducees' explain a situation that pushes the law to the extreme to pose a question challenging the concept of resurrection.⁵¹⁶ They posit a situation where a set of brothers attempt to fulfill the Mosaic law of taking a brother's wife in order to raise up offspring to carry on his name. However, all seven die before they are able to complete this task. Eventually, the woman dies having never given birth to a child (Matt 22:25-27). Accordingly, the Sadducees challenge Jesus to answer whose wife she will be in the resurrection since all had married her and consummated the marriage ('for they all had her,' Matt 22:28).

The question is complicated by the Sadducees' view of the resurrection. Little is definitively known about the Sadducees, but it is suggested that they held only the Torah as authoritative and opposed the Pharisees on a number of issues, most especially on the resurrection (cf. Acts 23:6-10).⁵¹⁷ Since most attempts to reconstruct their identity are from antagonistic sources, any conclusions are tenuous. However, the tradition that they denied the resurrection fits everything that is known about the Sadducees.⁵¹⁸ In addition, there is some debate over whether or not the Sadducees believed in angels. The bulk of the argument regarding the Sadducees and angels is in reference to Acts 23:8 where it is stated that the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection, angels, or spirits (Σαδδουκαῖοι μὲν γὰρ λέγουσιν μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασιν μήτε ἄγγελον μήτε πνεῦμα, Φαρισαῖοι δὲ ὁμολογοῦσιν τὰ ἀμφοτέρω). Since there is little information concerning the Sadducees, Acts 23:8 remains one of the only pieces of evidence for their disbelief in angels. Bamberger and Zeitlin have argued that it is not angels themselves that the Sadducees had a problem with, but angels as a means for revelation.⁵¹⁹ Similarly, Bamberger cites rabbinic evidence that is adverse toward

⁵¹⁶ The relevance of this is foreshadowed by the mention of the Sadducees' disbelief in the resurrection.

⁵¹⁷ Nolland, *Matthew*, 901, Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:641, Harrington, *Matthew*, 313. While Saldarini acknowledges that most studies of Sadducees often differentiate them from the Pharisees by their literal interpretation of Scripture and the adherence to the written Torah only, he argues that neither of these characteristics is implicitly or explicitly found in relevant sources. Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 303.

⁵¹⁸ Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 303-4, Lightstone, 'Sadducees,' 216-17. The fact that Matthew identifies that the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection suggests that his desire is for them to be understood in this way (cf. Acts 4:2; 23:6-8; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.4 §16 and *War* 2.8.14 §165).

⁵¹⁹ Bamberger, 'Sadducees,' Zeitlin, 'Sadducees.'

the cult of angels, not to angels themselves.⁵²⁰ According to Zeitlin, since the advent of prophecy, the function of an angel had ceased.⁵²¹ In this way, the Sadducees would disregard what Paul was saying since it was revealed to him by a spirit or angel (Acts 23:9).⁵²² Comparatively, Daube argues that Acts 23:8 is speaking of angels and spirits as the interim state between death and resurrection. Thus, the Sadducees deny both the resurrection and the interim state.⁵²³ However, Viviano disagrees with Daube, stating that τὰ ἀμφοτέρω refers to angels and spirits (Acts 23:8) in relationship to their denial of the resurrection.⁵²⁴ Angels and spirits indicate the survival of the soul, representing a way one is resurrected. In this way, Viviano posits that angels and spirits are not the state of the deceased in the interim, but the state of resurrection, ‘there is no resurrection either as an angel (i.e., in the form of an angel) or as a spirit.’⁵²⁵ While there is little consensus on how the Sadducees denied angels in Acts 23:8, there is general agreement that since angels are part of the Torah, and this was accepted as authoritative, angels portrayed in the Pentateuch were most likely accepted by the Sadducees.⁵²⁶ Similarly, any understanding of ‘life after death’ for the Sadducees would be grounded in the Torah and would have related to one’s lineage and offspring.⁵²⁷ The lack of a family line in the challenge posed to Jesus reflects even a denial of afterlife the Sadducees would have understood.⁵²⁸ Keeping the background of the Sadducees in mind, the response that Jesus gives to the Sadducees seems to turn their presuppositions upside-down.

2.2 Jesus’ Response Undermines the Sadducees

When Jesus responds to the Sadducees, he does not answer the Sadducees’ question directly. Instead, Jesus reveals the Sadducees’ misunderstanding on a

⁵²⁰ Bamberger, ‘Sadducees,’ 434.

⁵²¹ Zeitlin, ‘Sadducees,’ 69-71.

⁵²² Parker agrees that it is most likely the excessive speculation on angels they rejected. Parker, ‘Terms,’ 365.

⁵²³ Daube, ‘Sadducees,’ 493-97.

⁵²⁴ Viviano and Taylor, ‘Sadducees,’ 497-8.

⁵²⁵ Viviano and Taylor, ‘Sadducees,’ 497.

⁵²⁶ Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 254, Parker, ‘Terms,’ 345-7.

⁵²⁷ Levenson, *Resurrection*, 108-22, Viviano and Taylor, ‘Sadducees,’ 498, Kilgallen, ‘Sadducees,’ 479.

⁵²⁸ Implicitly, they ask how one can affirm both Torah (levirate law) and the resurrection. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 254.

more fundamental level, which can be broken into two general sections. The first section begins with an accusatory riposte, ‘You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God,’ (Matt 22:29), and appeals to angels as indicative of the resurrected state, ‘for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven,’ (ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἀναστάσει οὔτε γαμοῦσιν οὔτε γαμίζονται, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἄγγελοι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ εἰσιν Matt 22:30).⁵²⁹ Secondly, Jesus addresses the concept of resurrection (περὶ δὲ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῶν νεκρῶν). It is the first of these two sections that will be the central focus of this enquiry because the response in Matt 22:30 concerning angelic life facilitates Jesus invalidating the Sadducees’ question and overturning their ideas concerning resurrection.

At first, it appears as though Jesus’ response is simply negating marriage in the resurrection. In other words, the brothers will be celibate, like angels, who neither marry nor are given in marriage.⁵³⁰ While there is nothing inherently incorrect with this interpretation, it does not include the impact of the adversative, ἀλλά, following the two uses of οὔτε. If the adversative is understood as signaling a contrast and perhaps suggesting the irrelevance of marriage in the resurrection, then this suggests the reading, ‘in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, *instead*, they are like the angels.’⁵³¹ If the force of the ἀλλά is fully appreciated, then the emphasis lies not on the absence of the institution of marriage, but that being like the angels is wholly different to the Sadducees’ concept of resurrected life (one that includes marriage).⁵³² This suggests the Sadducees’ question presupposed that resurrected life will be like life in this age in which people are married and given away in marriage. Matthew’s description of life before the sudden arrival of the Son of Man suggests that this language concerning marriage could be representative of earthly living, ‘in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in

⁵²⁹ Edwards, ‘Narrative,’ 649.

⁵³⁰ This particular interpretation is reflected by those that seek to understand whether angels were married or could marry.

⁵³¹ On ἀλλά see, BDF §448.1; and for οὔτε, see BDF §445. Other examples of this construction (οὔτε...οὔτε...ἀλλά) in the New Testament (John 9:3; 1 Cor 3:7; Gal 1:12; 5:6; 6:15) and the LXX (1 Mac 15:33; Wis 16:12; Is 30:5) generally reflect the concept that what follows the ἀλλά is to be affirmed because what was previously negated by οὔτε does not apply or is not relevant.

⁵³² This does not mean that marriage was not being addressed, but that the comparison to angels was much more than a simple denial of matrimony.

marriage,' (Matt 24:38).⁵³³ Jesus' likening (ὥς) of the resurrected life (ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἀναστάσει) to angels in heaven is one that will no longer be focused on issues such as marriage, but on something different. Grammar alone cannot sustain this argument; other aspects of the immediate context that support this reading are necessary.

Jesus' initial address to the Sadducees, 'You are wrong [πλανᾶσθε], because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God,' (Matt 22:29) seems to support a reading of Matt 22:30 that understands the life of the resurrection to be different than what the Sadducees expected. Moreover, to simply negate marriage in the resurrection would be to play on the Sadducees' terms. Jesus' response undermines the presupposition their question implies (cf. Matt 22:18-22). They have misunderstood the concept of resurrection life on a more fundamental level and reckoned that it would be resuming life as currently understood. For the Sadducees, if all seven brothers and the wife were resuscitated, there would be a question concerning whose wife she will be.⁵³⁴ However, Jesus says that instead of this, resurrection life will be something completely different – something akin to how the life of angels differs from life now. Tradition often holds that angels are associated with heaven and thus quite different from that on earth. In light of this, it may be that Matthew is drawing on the contrast of angelic life from that of earthly life.

3 ANGEL TRADITIONS

The proposal that the use of angels is to establish the difference between earthly life and the resurrected life is strengthened by angel traditions that illustrate this contrast. Examining these traditions elucidates the association of angels with the heavenly sphere through means of the angels' origin when fulfilling the role of a messenger and as representing paradigmatic characteristics of heaven-dwellers.

⁵³³ There is no Markan parallel to this verse (cf. Luke 17:27). Kilgallen argues that Jesus' denying of marrying was the denying of the repetitive marrying to produce a male heir. Conversely, to be given in marriage refers to the women, who were forced to marry. In this light, Jesus is saying that their concept of 'resurrection' will not apply, for they will be like angels. Kilgallen, 'Sadducees,' 484.

⁵³⁴ Or, they want to know which husband will continue the male line. Kilgallen, 'Sadducees,' 483-4.

Before beginning a discussion of some relevant texts, it is necessary to first clarify an issue regarding the limits of the traditions involved in Matt 22:23-33.

3.1 Sadducees, Angels, and the Implied Reader

This particular passage presents a unique problem to investigating the background of possible angel traditions. It is commonly understood that the Sadducees embraced only the Torah as authoritative and thus for the narrative to remain coherent, any argument posed by Jesus in the text would have to appeal to this set of Scriptures.⁵³⁵ Since Jesus appeals to Exodus when arguing for the resurrection instead of Daniel 12, it seems that a similar move may have been made with his reference to angels. In light of this, the suggestion of the Sadducees' limited view of authoritative Scripture implies that Jesus' answer to their concept of resurrection life would depend on an understanding of angels found in the Pentateuch alone. Meanwhile, it cannot be denied that Matthew may have had more than the Sadducees' concept of angels in mind. Considering the variety of traditions employed in Matthew's other references to angels, Matthew could be alluding to a broader spectrum of angel traditions. Even so, the conversation relayed in the narrative of this passage would struggle to fully convey its force if Jesus was portrayed as using only a breadth of angel traditions irrelevant to the Sadducees. Admittedly, one cannot be sure what Matthew might have expected from his readers concerning the subtleties of the background material, but it is hard to deny that a wider understanding of angel traditions could have influenced an understanding of this passage while still resonating with Torah traditions.⁵³⁶ Therefore, the following analysis of angel traditions will begin with the Pentateuch and how it supports the argument for a resurrected life that is different from earthly life. Afterward, a larger view of angel traditions, as witnessed in canonical books outside the Pentateuch and Second Temple literature, will be explored as

⁵³⁵ Nolland, *Matthew*, 901, Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:641, Harrington, *Matthew*, 313. Saldarini argues that this assumption is not firmly substantiated. Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 299. Nevertheless, assumption the discussion will begin with the conservative perspective of the Sadducees subscribing to a limited authoritative canon and then it will proceed to incorporate other texts.

⁵³⁶ Parker would argue that it is these speculations on the angels that the Sadducees denied. Parker, 'Terms,' 365.

evidence of developments from the pattern witnessed in texts embraced by the Sadducees.

3.2 Angels in the Pentateuch

The Pentateuch says little, even by implication, about angelic life and especially its relationship to the afterlife. Instead, the examples of angels representing and fulfilling the heavenly activity of God in the earthly sphere become foundation for later speculation on heaven and angelic life. In this manner, when angels carry in their actions and word the presence of God, they create a narrative framework in which to talk about God's activity while remaining uniquely separate from God.⁵³⁷ In many respects, this is purely a functional role and not an ontological one, but one undeniable implication is the association of angels with God in the heavenly sphere. As a result, the portrayal of angels in the Pentateuch provides a paradigm of belonging to the heavenly sphere while interacting with the earthly. The unique role of appearing in both spheres is the foundation for a later development that uses angels and their characteristics as a pattern to describe humans shifting from the earthly sphere to heavenly in both visions and the afterlife. For example, in Jacob's dream both heaven and earth are conceived as different locations connected by a ladder traversed by angels (Gen 28:12-17). The angels rise to heaven, a feat of which humans themselves are incapable, and yet they seemed to inhabit earth (*ascend and descend*) as well as heaven.⁵³⁸ In this brief dream vision, the angels represent something wholly other to life on earth, one that permits the participation with the divine in heaven. This is not saying angels are the exclusive way in which God interacts with humans in the Pentateuch, for on many occasions, God speaks directly to humans (Gen 12:1-3, 13:14-17; 22:1-2; 32:3; 35:1), appears (Gen 12:7; 17:1-22; 18:1a; 26:2-5,24; 35:9-13) and speaks in visions (Gen 15:1,13; 46:2) and dreams (Gen 20:3; 28:13-15; 31:24; 25:23). However, the portrayal of angels' actions relaying the message of God is an integral element in the narratives of the Pentateuch.

⁵³⁷ The observation that the distinction between the sender and the messenger is blurred in some narratives (Gen 16:13; Exod 3:2-4) further strengthens the association between the sender and messenger.

⁵³⁸ Enoch might be considered an exception (Gen 5:24).

References from previous discussions have called attention to how angels protected, guided, assisted in judgment, and manifested the presence of God. Many of these texts also apply to Matt 22:30, so it will be prudent to review quickly how these reference to angels also illustrate the contrast between heavenly and earthly life so the discussion can move into Second Temple literature. For example, one of the common representations of an angel in the Torah is in the role of delivering messages from God. Coming from heaven, the messages are received as if they were from God himself. In this manner, the angel designates the sender and indicates that this message is not like other messages because of its heavenly source.⁵³⁹ The response of praise or obedience to the message further reveals and validates the heavenly origin. For example, both times an angel appears to Hagar, she is encouraged and the narratives reveal the truth of the angel's message (Gen 16:6–14; 21:14–19). In Gen 19, two angels enter Sodom and save Lot and his family from the fate of the rest of the city. An angel of God appears to Jacob in a dream and instructs him to leave and return to the land of his birth (Gen 31:11–16), reminding of the Lord's protection and his vow to return to his homeland (Gen 28:20–21). The same is applicable to an angel's message of judgment. For instance, an angel of the Lord reminds Balaam with sword drawn to only speak what he is told to say (Num 22:32–35). In these texts, the importance of the timing and content of the message is connected to the angels' heavenly character. In this manner, the content also has a heavenly authority. This is most evident in Gen 22 when Abraham has bound his son and is about to strike with raised knife. At that point, an angel of the Lord calls out from heaven and stops him. The angel reveals that he now knows of Abraham's commitment to God and indicates there is a ram nearby that should be sacrificed instead of Isaac (Gen 22:11–14). No other messenger could have delivered such news as convincingly as an angel from heaven (cf. Exod 3).⁵⁴⁰ In this way, the angel represents the heavenly sphere, and more importantly, one ruled and inhabited by God.

The affirmation of an angel's accompaniment also suggests something about the presence of God for, or on, a particular task, implying divine guidance

⁵³⁹ Angels may appear as men (cf. Gen 18:2; Gen 19:1), but their message reveals they and their message are from a celestial source. Köckert, 'Messengers,' 53.

⁵⁴⁰ Similarly, in Exod 3, an angel of the Lord appears to Moses in a flame of fire out of a bush, inviting Moses to a conversation with God.

and approval, one that is distinct from earthly or humanly presence. For instance, when Abraham is looking for a wife for his son, Isaac, he encourages his servant by telling him God will send an angel before the servant on his task (Gen 24:7).⁵⁴¹ When Jacob sees angels on his way back to his homeland, he declares that the location is 'God's camp' and renames the location (Gen 32:1-2). On the corporate level, an angel goes before the Israelites on their journey to the promised land (Exod 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2). In these narratives, the presence of the angels suggests the presence of God and his participation in the activity by means of the angels' presence. Angels as divine messengers provide a paradigm of the heavenly and the earthly spheres interacting, a crucial element for later development.

3.3 Angels Outside the Pentateuch

In the rise of apocalyptic literature and the developing beliefs about resurrection, the comparisons to angels became more prevalent. Although this sort of comparison to angels does not explicitly appear in the Pentateuch and is only briefly referenced in other canonical books, the theme of angels representing the heavenly sphere and God's activity was established in the previous discussion of the Pentateuch. In this manner, there appears to be a trajectory that continues into Jewish and early Christian literature of the Second Temple period. Since Matt 22:30 likens the resurrected life to that of angels, this study is interested in examples where there is a comparison made to angels. This will illumine possible ways in which angels facilitated similar explanations. For example, in 1Sam 29:9, David's blamelessness [טוב] is compared to that of an angel of God, and in 2Sam 14:17, the king is likened to an angel of God, discerning good and evil (cf. 2Sam 19:27).⁵⁴² In addition, the Son of Man's countenance is described in *1En.* 46:1 as full of grace, like that of one of among the holy angels. Similarly, the *Rule of the Congregation* lifts up those in heaven as those to emulate, 'may you be like an angel of the face in the holy residence' as one in the holy habitation' (1QSb 4:24-5). In

⁵⁴¹ Likewise, when Israel is blessing Joseph's sons, he addresses God and 'the angel who has redeemed me from all harm,' (Gen 48:15-16).

⁵⁴² In *Hist Rech* 7:11, the noble elders and spiritual youths are compared to angels and then addressed by the 'man of sin' as Earthly Angels.

these examples, angels represent the heavenly exemplar of these characteristics, implying that they are distinctly different from those exhibited by humans.

Since angels are participating in the heavenly sphere, representing heavenly characteristics, and dwelling near to God, they are often ideal figures for an explanation of the nature of the afterlife and the celestial dwelling place of God. In light of this, the illustration of a shift from one sphere to another often employs angelic characteristics as representative of the heavenly sphere. Very often, this involves some sort of change as one moves from the earthly to the heavenly, and when one does change, they are described as taking on characteristics similar to the angels. In most cases, one does not become an angel but incorporates an angelic quality inasmuch as it signals the shift into the heavenly sphere.⁵⁴³ Moreover, the emphasis rarely falls on the angels themselves but on a characteristic that shapes their identity as originating from heaven. Thus, by reflecting or resembling an aspect of angelic life, the visionary or righteous dead are portrayed as received into the heavenly abode. Although there is not a set way that one is compared to an angel, there does seem to be some common categories, which include the physical appearance of an angel and fulfilling angel-like activity. Although these categories often overlap, one's appearance and one's activity as compared to that of an angel will both be examined as illustrative of the paradigm of being like an angel.

When one's appearance takes on a characteristic of an angel, it is often in the context of a vision of the afterlife. For example, when the seer in the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* leaves Hades in his vision and begins what appears to be the journey to heaven, he is greeted by angels, puts on an angelic garment, and prays with them in their language (*Apoc. Zeph.* 8:3). Through this description, the seer is characterized as one having crossed a boundary into the heavenly sphere (cf. *1En.* 62:16). In *1En.* 104:4-6, the *Epistle of Enoch* offers comfort to the living righteous, indicating that after death they will be remembered in heaven, shining like the lights of heaven, and rejoicing like the angels, for they will be 'partners with the good-hearted people of heaven.' (cf. *4Ezra* 7:97-98). Similarly, in *2Baruch*, the dead will be raised in the same way the earth received them. On the day appointed,

⁵⁴³ I would like to emphasize that I am using the term 'angelic' to mean 'angel-like' in that one does not become part angel, but resembles a characteristic of angels.

though, they will be changed: the evil will become a more evil form and the righteous will be glorified so that they may receive the undying world (2Bar. 51:3), changed into the splendor of angels, 'For they will live in the heights of that world and they will be like the angels and be equal to the stars,' (2Bar. 51:10). The emphasis seems to be on the grandeur of the reward of the righteous, for it describes the magnificence of their form, 'the excellence of the righteous will then be greater than that of the angels,' (2Bar. 51:12). In the *Testament of Job*, Job gives his daughters cords from heaven (*T. Job* 46-50), and when they put on the cords, they began to speak like the angels (*T. Job* 48:3; 49:2; 50:1). These examples illustrate that by being described with something similar to an angelic characteristic, the humans involved are associated with the heavenly sphere. The change should not be considered automatic or a prerequisite, but regarded as evidence of one's righteousness, purity, or divine approval.

The similar celestial location and brilliance of stars has led to some comparisons between stars, the righteous, and angels.⁵⁴⁴ The relationship of angels to stars in apocalyptic literature was more than simply a description of the heavens, but an illustration of the complete control that God had over the cosmos. In the midst of, or in response to a crisis, for which much apocalyptic literature was written, the reminder of God's ultimate sovereignty was apparent even in the twinkling stars in the heavens at night. For example, the resurrected wise 'shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever,' (Dan 12:3; cf. *1En.* 104:2-7). In 4Macc 17:5, the seven sons are called, 'star-like', [ισάστερος], much like the comparative, ισάγγελοι, used in the Lukan parallel to Matthew and Mark's ὡς ἄγγελοι (Luke 20:36; Cf. 2Bar. 51:10). In addition, the location of stars in the heavens provided a framework for illustrating a heavenly home. For example, in *L.A.B.* 33:5, Deborah notes, if then you become like 'your fathers' then you will be like the stars in heaven. Although there is no mention of shining, this does seem to suggest the location of heaven as evidence of a changed state.⁵⁴⁵ Similarly, *T. Mos.* 10:9 seems to suggest the location of the stars in heaven as important when God raises Israel to the heights, and fixes Israel firmly in the heaven of the stars, and the place of their habitations.

⁵⁴⁴ Allison, *Studies*, 36-41.

⁵⁴⁵ This might also be reflected in the inability to pray for anyone (*L.A.B.* 33:5).

The mirroring of angelic activity can express the completion, and sometimes, expectation of the shift from the earthly sphere into the heavenly. For example, *T. Isaac* 4:43-8 suggests that those that are pure, will engage in angelic service after death, ‘then they will be engaged in holy, angelic service by reason of purity. Then they will be presented before the Lord and his angels because of their pure offerings and their angelic service,’ (*T. Isaac* 4:43-8). This is not dissimilar to the description of the Levites’ service for the Lord on earth as a parallel to the angels ministering before the Lord in heaven (*Jub.* 30:18, cf. *T. Levi* 4:2).⁵⁴⁶ Likewise, it is thought that the community at Qumran, in upholding the utmost purity and righteousness, would join with the angels in their worship. The *Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice* was most likely a liturgy that moved one towards angelic worship while inviting the angels to participate with the community.⁵⁴⁷ While the aspirations to participate in the heavenly liturgy were likely a motivation toward ritual purity (1QS 11:7-8), the desire to participate with the angels in heavenly worship also indicates the way that joining with the angels was a way to join the heavenly worship.

3.4 Immortality, Angels, and Marriage

While the discussion has primarily centered on angels in Jesus’ response, it must not be neglected that Jesus began this rejoinder with the explanatory prepositional phrase, ‘for in the resurrection’ (ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἀναστάσει, *Matt* 22:30). Since resurrection is thought of as bringing life to the dead, then *Matt* 22:30 could be drawing from traditions that view angels as immortal. Thus, the comparison would suggest that being like angels, one would not die. This is not unlike the concept of the levirate law of marriage mentioned by the Sadducees, for the law itself was an attempt to circumvent the perishable body to create an ‘imperishable’ family line. Despite the paucity of texts that specifically speak of angels as death-

⁵⁴⁶ Hayward, ‘Heaven,’ 60. Dimant’s article examines the same principle, but at Qumran instead of *Jubilees*. Dimant, ‘Self-Image.’

⁵⁴⁷ Dimant, ‘Self-Image,’ 98-103. Dimant goes further to say that the communion with angels was one ‘by analogy rather than an actual one.’

less, there are other similar characteristics that suggest that this was likely the case.⁵⁴⁸

3.4.1 *Angels as Only One Gender*

One way that suggests angels were immortal is that angels are only portrayed as male. By being only one gender, this implies that there would have been no manner to procreate and no need to multiply in order to prevent extinction because of death (cf. b. Hag 16a).⁵⁴⁹ Again, this is never made explicit and is determined from contextual evidence. For example, in *1En.* 20 the names of angels are male and *Jub.* 15:27 even notes that the angels of sanctification and angels of presence were born circumcised, a characteristic reserved for males (cf. *Jub.* 2.2). Furthermore, explanations of Gen 6:2-4 involving the Watchers descending to have sex with women on earth (cf. *Book of Watchers*) suggest that angels were male, or at least these angels were (cf. *1En.* 6-7).⁵⁵⁰ Along this line, *1Enoch* reports, with regard to the Watchers, that wives were not made for angels, because the dwelling place of spiritual beings of heaven is heaven (*1En.* 15:6-7). As a result, the Watchers' iniquitous acts warranted a new state of being; they had eternal life and were immortal, but are now 'formerly spiritual,' (*1En.* 15:6).⁵⁵¹

3.4.2 *The Bodies of Angels*

While the Watchers' spiritual nature was revoked in *1Enoch*, there are some texts that speak of angels' bodies. Philo discusses the state of Abraham after death, likening his immortality to the angels, for they are bodiless and happy souls (ἄσώματοι καὶ εὐδαίμονες ψυχαί; *Sacr.* §5). In addition, Philo speaks of their

⁵⁴⁸ The silence on the issue may also suggest that this was an accepted fact about angels and was not in need of being said or corrected (apologetically).

⁵⁴⁹ Any evidence for female angels, Davies asserts, originated later. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:229 n.58.

⁵⁵⁰ This sort of reasoning may also be behind the instructions for veiled women in 1Cor 11:2-6, in order that they prevent tempting the angels. Fitzmyer, 'Angelology,' 54-55, Hooker, 'Authority,' 412.

⁵⁵¹ Furthermore, this also reinforces that God is the creator of life and death, for he can take away the immortality from the Watchers. In addition, this may help explain how the angels die in *2Bar.* 56:15 where the fallen angels drown with the rest of the earth's inhabitants not on the ark. Similarly, *3En* 40:3-4 could be considered an example of angels being destroyed.

spiritual nature when wrestling with the complexity of the union of the Watchers and humans (πνευματική δὲ ἡ τῶν ἀγγέλων οὐσία; QG 1.92; cf. Ps 103:4 LXX). Occasionally, this creates problems when angels appear as humans. For example, in *T. Ab. A* 4:9,⁵⁵² the angel Michael discusses with the Lord how he is to appear human to Abraham at the dinner table, since all the heavenly host are bodiless and neither eat nor drink (πάντα τὰ ἐπουράνια πνεύματα ὑπάρχουσιν ἄσώματα, καὶ οὔτε ἐσθίουσιν οὔτε πίνουσιν). Likewise, Tobias' companion, who turned out to be the angel Raphael, reveals, 'I really did not eat or drink anything—but what you saw was a vision,' (Tob 12:19).⁵⁵³ Angels, in these examples, do not share the same kind of body that humans have, one that requires food to sustain it and one that succumbs to death.⁵⁵⁴ Tobit and the *Testament of Abraham* both suggest that the food designed for human consumption is incompatible with angels. On the other hand, the angels that appear to Abraham eat the food prepared for them (Gen 18:8).⁵⁵⁵ Nevertheless, this still illustrates the proposal that angels in Matt 22:30 represent the heavenly sphere and facilitate the contrast between heaven and earth.

3.4.3 *Sex for Procreation, Not Pleasure*

The angels' immortality has an impact on the resurrection if humans are like angels in this respect. If there is no death after resurrection, then there will be no need to continue to create new life. And, if marriage is seen as a means for procreation and the continuation of life, then there will no need for marriage or procreation in the resurrection (cf. Matt 22:30; 1Cor 15:53–56). The view that sex was for procreation only does not appear to be an unfamiliar belief in the first century. In his discussion of Joseph's restraint during Mary's pregnancy, Allison cites many examples from Greek, Roman, and Christian sources of texts discouraging sex while a woman was pregnant because sex was for procreation only.⁵⁵⁶ For example, Tobias at his wedding bed prays, 'I now am taking this

⁵⁵² Recension B does not contain this part of the dialogue.

⁵⁵³ Jacobs proposes that by not eating, Raphael demonstrates that as a creature of heaven, he has not become entangled in earthly matters. Jacobs, 'Food,' 131–32.

⁵⁵⁴ In *Jos. Asen.* 16:8, the angels eat, but only of heavenly food.

⁵⁵⁵ In contrast, manna is thought of as bread of the angels (*L.A.E.* 2-4).

⁵⁵⁶ Allison, 'Divorce,' 6–10.

kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but in sincerity,' (Tob. 8:7; cf. *T. Iss.* 2:3; *T. Benj.* 8:2). Josephus describes sex as for procreation (*Ag. Ap.* 2.199), and with regard to the Essenes, he talks about refraining from sex with women when they are pregnant because then it would be for pleasure only (*J.W.* 2.161). For Philo also, sex was about procreation, not pleasure, 'the end we seek in wedlock is not pleasure but the begetting of lawful children,' (*Spec. Laws* 3.2, 9).⁵⁵⁷ At Qumran, where holiness was a prerequisite to joining the angels in worship, celibacy was often considered important for those seeking perfect holiness. However, Baumgarten argues that this was never made into a universal form and celibacy could only be for a particular stage.⁵⁵⁸

If sex were for procreation only, there would be no need for marriage in the resurrection. Witherington, on the other hand, argues that in the resurrected state the marriage bond will continue. With regard to Matt 22:30, he states that it is not a matter of there being no marriages in resurrected life, but no new marriages will take place and existing ones will be upheld.⁵⁵⁹ While this attempts to emphasize the indissolubility of the marriage bond, it also reinforces the Sadducees' challenge by complicating whose wife she would be.⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, texts such as *1En.* 10:17, which imply that the righteous in the final judgment will multiply and become tens of hundreds, and *2Bar.* 73:7, which indicate women will no longer have pain in childbirth, seem to support resurrection procreation. But, it is more likely that these are indicators of the richness of the afterlife and the reversal of the curse in Gen 3 (cf. *b. Ber.* 17a) than arguments for afterlife marriage.

3.5 Summary

The previous discussion includes two aspects of angelic life that may have played a role in the use of angels in the argument against the Sadducees' question to Jesus. First, using references from the Pentateuch, it was argued that angels represented the heavenly sphere on earth and in doing so, created a paradigm for later writers

⁵⁵⁷ Allison, 'Divorce,' 8.

⁵⁵⁸ Baumgarten, 'Restraints,' 20.

⁵⁵⁹ Witherington, *Women*, 34-5. *pace* Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 70-71.

⁵⁶⁰ Witherington seems to imply that since she died unmarried, she would be resurrected unmarried. However, he does not address the seven brothers that died married to her. Witherington, *Women*, 34-5.

to make comparisons with this heavenly being. In the second section, angels as heavenly representatives became ideal candidates for comparisons to the afterlife and visionaries on heavenly ascents. In addition, it was posited that the immortality of angels might help explain the linking to marriage, for there would no longer be a need for procreation and marriage when death was eliminated in the resurrection.

4 MATT 22:30 REEVALUATED

On one level, Matt 22:30 describes the state of the resurrected, but Matthew does little to clarify what about the resurrected state is like an angel. The comparison does not seem to be ontological in that the resurrected become angels. As the survey of texts above demonstrated, characteristics of angels functioned as representative of heaven and how one moved into the heavenly sphere by resembling an angelic attribute. In this way, the use of angels helps signal the shift into the heavenly sphere, but does not create requirements or a pattern for it. Similarly, the comparison is likely not geographical in that the resurrected do not join the angels in heaven. Such an interpretation would not discredit the Sadducees' challenge.⁵⁶¹

Likewise, the angels' immortality could be read as a counter for the need to procreate, and thus the need for sex and marriage. For one who is immortal in the resurrection, there will be no need for marriage. Furthermore, this interpretation feeds into Jesus' following declaration concerning resurrection that God is sovereign over the power of death. Since death was seen by the Sadducees as nullifying a covenant, Trick argues that the angels' immortality helps support Jesus' use of Exod 3:6 to argue God's enduring covenant with the patriarchs.⁵⁶² He brings life to the sterile, keeps his promises, and remains still the God of Abraham (Matt 22:31-33). Does this mean that the resurrected life will be without marriage? Matthew gives no indication either way, but nevertheless, these considerations

⁵⁶¹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:227 n.43.

⁵⁶² Trick, 'Death,' 242-3.

miss the heart of Jesus' encounter with Sadducees, which is on the resurrection, not marriage, angels, or sex (Matt 22:31-33).⁵⁶³

Consequently, it is proposed that the primary emphasis of the parallel to angels is to say that the resurrected are different from current life on earth and are clearly associated with God and the heavenly realm (cf. 1Cor 15).⁵⁶⁴ This by no means denies a secondary meaning that death will be abolished in the resurrection, and thus in the afterlife, one will be like an angel, immortal. Fortunately, these two categories are not mutually exclusive. The result is a somewhat conservative conclusion, but this seems both to honor Matthew's brevity and to maintain the underlying emphasis firmly based in the Pentateuch and other Jewish literature.⁵⁶⁵ The simplicity of the comparison serves this purpose well, but as Christian tradition testifies, it also temptingly invites speculation.⁵⁶⁶ In light of this, perhaps it is beneficial to view Matthew as quietly directing questions concerning the resurrection to the end of his Gospel and the unfolding narrative after the drama of the cross.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has sought to show that Matthew believed the resurrection life would be akin to angelic existence in its contrast to earthly life and its absence of death. This was demonstrated through an analysis of the Sadducees' challenge, which showed that Jesus' response revealed and undermined their presuppositions about the afterlife. Next, traditions of angels were examined. Beginning with the Pentateuch, and proceeding to the Old Testament

⁵⁶³ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:73-74.

⁵⁶⁴ Schnackenburg, *Matthew*, 220, Morris, *Matthew*, 561.

⁵⁶⁵ Luke seems to pick up on both of the issues that we have discussed. In Luke's version of this pericope, he expands how angels both illustrate the difference between the ages and the immortality of the resurrected state, 'Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection,' (Luke 20:34-36).

⁵⁶⁶ Probably because the foundation of resurrection in Matt 22:30 was not based on the resurrection of Jesus, the interpretation of Matt 22:23-33 played no significant role in Christian history. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 73. However, Matt 22:30 and its parallels became a center of discussion regarding the nature of angels and the resurrected. For example, see Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 78-88, Sim, *Apocalyptic*, 142-45.

and Second Temple literature, it was established that angels represented the heavenly sphere. In the Old Testament, the heavenly character of the angel illustrates the authoritative origin of a message or task appointed to them. In later traditions, angels' heavenly origin became a focal point for comparing the righteousness of humans and a figure identified with traditions of incorporeality and immortality. Having developed a background to reevaluate Matt 22:30, it was argued that the differing traditions were not mutually exclusive and could all be used to support Matthew's emphasis on the resurrection.

Chapter 8

Son of Man and the Angels at the Judgment (Matthew 24:30-31, 24:36 and 25:31-46)

1 INTRODUCTION

The main body of the Gospel of Matthew is composed of alternating narratives and discourses, of which Matt 24:3-25:46 is the fifth and final discourse. Its location in the Gospel is significant as it contains key themes of Matthew and prepares the reader for the passion, which it immediately precedes. At the foundation of Matthew's discourse on eschatology lie three key Christological statements (Matt 24:30-31; 24:36; 25:31), each of which is explained by including a reference to angels. These will be examined each in turn, demonstrating how angels are a key part of Matthew's intent to elevate and communicate the status of Jesus as the Son of Man.

1.1 Context of the Last Discourse

Judgment for Matthew has been a topic he has chosen to repeat strategically throughout his Gospel. In particular, he finishes each discourse with a saying or parable about the final judgment, often including the Son of Man. Consequently, it is fitting that the final discourse follows this pattern both within the Gospel narrative, as its overarching theme is the parousia of the Son of Man and his judgment of the nations, and within the discourse by concluding with a depiction of the final judgment.

The discourse is regularly divided into three parts (Matt 24:3-31; 24:32-25:30; 25:31-46) with the first part culminating with the depiction of the arrival of the Son of Man (Matt 24:29-31). However, in between this (Matt 24:29-31) and the description of the last judgment (Matt 25:31-46) that would seem to follow the Son

of Man's arrival is a long paraenetic section. In this middle section, Matthew instructs the disciples on the urgency and need for faithful living in light of both the Son of Man's arrival and his judgment of all the nations. As it will be observed, the key figure of the sections will be the Son (of Man). Moreover, Matthew, using Mark, will use angels at each opportunity to help communicate the glory and authority of the Son of Man. Consequently, the following discussion will take a brief look at each of the three sections and how angels function in the discourse (and Gospel) to communicate Matthew's Christological picture of Jesus as the eschatological Son of Man.

2 THE MAJESTY OF THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (MATT 24:30-31)

In the discourse's first section (Matt 24:3-31), Jesus responds to the disciples' question concerning the signs of the temple's destruction and the signs of his coming (Matt 24:1-3). In a circuitous response to their question, Jesus gives them instructions and warnings while they wait for his return. He tells of the events before the end, the persecutions, the desecration of the temple, and the coming of false messiahs and prophets. As a result, the disciples are instructed to avoid being led astray (Matt 24:4, 11, 24, 26), not be alarmed by these events (Matt 24:6), and endure to the end (Matt 24:13). The disciples are told what will take place before the parousia, but their question remains unanswered, 'what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?' (Matt 24:3). In an unexpected way, the question is answered in Matt 24:29-31; if the disciples were seeking clues to the timing of the Son of Man's arrival so that they might prepare themselves, then the spectacular entrance of the Son of Man in Matt 24:29-31 will not give them that chance. Drawing on the language of Dan 7 and other apocalyptic concepts (such as angels), Matthew edits Mark's version to portray an unmistakable and glorious arrival that erupts into the present and declares the Son of Man to be the eschatological judge. The coming of the Son of Man is in dramatic contrast to any of the false messiahs mentioned in Matt 24:3-28.

Matthew portrays the parousia of the Son of Man in apocalyptic drama, describing the darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars (see also

Mark 13:24-25). However, Matthew employs further imagery to stamp the coming of the Son of Man indelibly as the climax of Matt 24. Consequently, the discussion will examine how Matthew uses angels in his portrait of Jesus, the Son of Man and heavenly judge. First, the events surrounding the arrival of the Son of Man will be demonstrated as communicating the significance of the one arriving. This will be followed by an examination of the description of his entry in glory and the sending out of his angels, which show evidence of Matthew's portrait of the Son of Man as judge.

2.1 Cosmic Upheaval, Universal Recognition, and the Sign of the Son of Man

The significance of the end-time events is highlighted by Matthew's description of the cosmic signs that signal the coming of the Son of Man. For example, Matthew significantly shortens the transition into the coming of the Son of Man when he redacts Mark, adding εὐθέως, 'Immediately [εὐθέως] after the suffering of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,' (Matt 24:29).⁵⁶⁷ Together with the three parables in Matt 24:32-25:30, Matthew indicates the Son of Man arrives unexpectedly.

The arrival of the Son of Man is cataclysmic and universal. There is no place that will escape witnessing his coming. The picture of the lightning flashing from one end of the sky to the other (Matt 24:27) is definitive and unavoidable. However, the description of the end of the celestial lights signals something different. More so than just the earth, the entire cosmos participates (Mark 13:24-25; cf. Is 13:10; 34:4). Into Mark's description of the heavens, Matthew adds the appearance of the sign of the Son of Man and the mourning of the tribes of the earth, 'Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn,' (Matt 24:30). At this point, all will recognize what the resurrection will confirm – that he has all authority in heaven and earth.⁵⁶⁸

As is typical with much of what appears in this discourse, Matthew does not clarify this sign (σημεῖον). Various interpretations have included a cross in the sky or a field banner or standard, or that there is no additional sign other than the Son

⁵⁶⁷ Matthew alone uses εὐθέως.

⁵⁶⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:358.

of Man himself.⁵⁶⁹ Since a distinction is made between the false messiahs producing signs (σημεῖα) in order to lead astray (Matt 24:24), it seems that the coming of the Son of Man would be the most clear sign of all.⁵⁷⁰ Additionally, it is hard to imagine how a flag or cross in the sky could have inspired the response of the tribes of the earth mourning the same way that would have been caused by Matthew's portrayal of the Son of Man on clouds with angels, power, and great glory (Matt 24:30).⁵⁷¹ However, Matthew speaks of the sign in heaven, then the coming of the Son of Man, which could suggest these are two separate events.⁵⁷² Nevertheless, Matthew's unique inclusion of the sign, like his redaction of angels, seems to fall in place with his attempts to draw attention to significance and authority of the Son of Man. If disciples were seeking advance notice of his coming, there will be none. Even the darkening of the heavens is not referred to as a sign. Jesus' arrival will surprise them and the world.

2.1.1 *The Power and Great Glory of the Son of Man*

After his addition of the sign of the Son of Man, Matthew returns to the Markan text, announcing that at that time, 'they will see "the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" with power and great glory,' (Matt 24:30). The words of Dan 7:13 LXX are followed quite closely, especially in Matthew as he changes the preposition in Mark and adds τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Perhaps more than Mark, Matthew is attempting to draw the reader closer to the Danielic text at this point and its portrayal of one given authority and power.⁵⁷³ This resonates with Matthew's repeated emphasis on the Son of Man as judge. Similarly, Matthew (and Mark) is quick to include that the Son of Man comes, 'with power and great glory,' (μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς, Matt 24:30), language not unlike Dan 7:14 LXX which speaks of authority (ἐξουσία) and glory (δόξα) given to the one like a Son of Man.

⁵⁶⁹ Luz, *Matthew* 21-28, 201.

⁵⁷⁰ Note how the cosmic occurrences in Matt 24:29 are not called signs. Luz, *Matthew* 21-28, 202.

⁵⁷¹ Luz, *Matthew* 21-28, 202.

⁵⁷² Schweizer, *Matthew*, 455. Schnackenburg and Lambrecht say that the Son of Man is the sign, but Hagner disagrees. Schnackenburg, *Matthew*, 244, Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:713-14, Lambrecht, *Parables*, 258.

⁵⁷³ In Matt 24:15 (par. Mark 13:14), Matthew elucidates Mark's reference by inserting, 'as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel.'

In terms of the Gospel narrative, it seems that Matthew is slowly shifting his language regarding the glory and the Son of Man. In Matt 16:27 (par. Mark 8:38), the Son of Man is specifically referred to as coming ‘in the glory of his Father.’ Now, in Matt 24:30, there is no mention of the Father and the accompanying description of his arrival is now spoken of as with ‘power and great glory.’⁵⁷⁴ There is nothing to suggest that the glory is not that of the Father, but the absence of a reference to the Father suggests that Matthew was trying to say more about the Son of Man. These two occurrences hardly form evidence of a pattern, yet Matthew offers a third elaboration. In the final saying in the discourse, the Son of Man is depicted as coming in ‘his glory,’ (Matt 25:31). Matthew has moved from describing the glory as that of the Father (Matt 16:27), to that of the Son of Man (Matt 25:31). Perhaps inspired by Mark, Matthew has advanced the reader step-by-step slowly toward a fuller understanding of the glory, power, and authority of the Son of Man, for in his final depiction of the eschatological Son of Man, he sits on a throne judging the nations. But, before the discussion gets ahead of itself, it is important to look at the arrival of the Son of Man with angels in Matt 24:30-31.

2.1.2 *Sending Out His Angels with a Trumpet Call to Gather the Elect*

In Matt 24:30-31, the appearance of angels once again calls attention to the role of the Son of Man as judge. In a similar manner to his redaction of Mark in Matt 16:27, Matthew elaborates the text from Mark, creating a different context from which the angels are sent, ‘And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other,’ (Matt 24:31).⁵⁷⁵ In particular, Matthew includes the trumpet blast and the description of the angels as those of the Son of Man.

The trumpet call is traditionally associated with holy war, a theophany, or the close of the age (Joel 2:1; Zeph 1:16; Isa 27:13; 4Ezra 6:23; 1Thess 4:16; 1Cor 15:52; Rev 8:2).⁵⁷⁶ For example, in the *Life of Adam and Eve*, the trumpet blast is the call for

⁵⁷⁴ The singular use of power (the plural often tends to refer to spirits as powers) occurs in Matt 22:29; 24:30; 25:15; and 26:64, with the key passages being 24:30 and 26:64.

⁵⁷⁵ Luke omits this verse entirely.

⁵⁷⁶ See Friedrich, ‘Σάλπιγξ,’ in *TDNT*, 7:78-84.

the judgment of Adam (L.A.E. 22:1). It is likely Matthew's readers would have identified the eschatological overtones of the horn, but the trumpet also announces the coming of the Son of Man audibly, adding one more ingredient to the spectacle of his arrival.⁵⁷⁷ With the trumpet sounding and the heavenly lights darkened, the only light will be the glory of the Son of Man.⁵⁷⁸ Complete attention will be on the Son of Man as he sends out his angels to gather the elect.

As demonstrated in the earlier chapter on Matt 16:27, the evangelist has made a crucial redactional change by adding 'his' to angels. It is not necessary to repeat the argument in detail, but only briefly reiterate that by describing the angels with the possessive pronoun, Matthew highlights that the Son of Man is the one directing them (Matt 13:41; 16:27; 24:31; cf. Matt 25:31, 'all the angels'). It is not that angels are simply present at the close of the age with the Son of Man, but they are also under the governance of the Son of Man. In addition, the angels are sent (ἀποστέλλω) by the Son of Man, further demonstrating his heavenly and earthly jurisdiction. The authority of the judge of all the nations extends to commanding angels.

Unlike the gathering of the wicked in the Parables of the Weeds and the Net, here the angels gather the elect. It may seem as though the two descriptions of the end of the age are in contradiction to one another; however, it is likely that Matthew is primarily interested in the portrait of Jesus and a disciple's response to him instead of the details of an ordered description of eschatological events. Here, in the last discourse, Matthew is utilizing varying elements to illustrate the image of Jesus at the close of the age. One example of this is Matthew's intent on continuing to describe the angels' participation at the close of the age and obedience to the Son of Man.

2.1.3 Summary

In the discourse leading up to the appearance of the Son of Man, Matthew reports that others will perform signs and wonders in order to lead people astray and there will be various sufferings and persecutions. However, the only genuine sign

⁵⁷⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:363.

⁵⁷⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:362.

of the close of the age is the appearance of the Son of Man at his coming. Any earthly activity is over when the Son of Man comes, it is the arena of God's action now.⁵⁷⁹ The change happens suddenly (εὐθέως, Matt 24:29) and dramatically. There may have been a desire for insight into the future, but all Matthew does is point toward Jesus. It is about not calculating the exact time, but living in light of the expectation of the coming of the Son of Man; it is about not being led astray and instead being watchful. Consequently, the coming of the Son of Man is the climax of the first section and Matthew's redaction of Mark has highlighted his emphasis on the status and role of the Son of Man as judge. For this reason, Davies argues that here is where Matthew raises the Son of Man to his highest height.⁵⁸⁰ While it is difficult to decide between Matt 24:31 and Matt 25:31-2, having this position it seems that Matthew is interested in communicating the significance of the Son of Man at the close of the age.

3 NEITHER THE SON NOR THE ANGELS, BUT THE FATHER ALONE (MATT 24:36)

After the arrival of the Son of Man has been described in full fanfare (Matt 24:30-31), the discourse takes an abrupt turn in Matt 24:32-25:30. While Matthew describes the Son of Man's arrival in Matt 24:30, it is not until the end of the discourse (Matt 25:31-46) that the last judgment is described in further detail. Between these two accounts of the Son of Man sits a large section of parables and parnetic material concerned with the faithful and wise life lived in preparation for the sudden parousia. At the heart of this section is a declaration of the mystery of the day and hour when Jesus will return in glory. By Matthew removing any knowledge of the end, and describing the suddenness and drama of the arrival of the judge, the disciples are encouraged to be faithful as they wait expectantly. In light of this, Matthew approvingly uses Mark nearly word for word, announcing, 'But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father,' (Matt 24:36; Mark 13:32).⁵⁸¹ However, Matthew sharpens Mark's text, emphasizing that the Father is the only one that knows the time. He

⁵⁷⁹ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 201.

⁵⁸⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:362.

⁵⁸¹ Luke omits this verse.

changes the ‘day or hour’ of Mark to the less ambiguous ‘day and hour’ and adds *μόνος* in order to highlight the significance of the Father’s privileged information. On the other hand, the Son and the angels of heaven are among those who are ignorant of the appointed time. One might have expected that with Jesus’ discourse on the end of time that the Son of Man would not have been included in this list. In light of this, it is interesting that while Matthew and Mark both share this verse, Matthew contains far more textual variants with regard to removing the Son from the list. Schweizer argues that the omission was due to the offense of Jesus’ ignorance.⁵⁸² Nevertheless, by limiting the knowledge to the Father alone, there can be little doubt about the unexpectedness of the Son of Man’s arrival. From this foundation, Matthew is able to build a strong section of material that instructs the disciples to live faithfully in light of the unexpected timing of his return (Matt 24:37-Matt 25:30).

With the amount of emphasis on the relationship of the Son of Man to the angels that Matthew has already demonstrated, it could seem a bit odd that the Son and the angels of heaven seem to be put in the same category.⁵⁸³ So far in Matthew’s Gospel, in every other instance in which both the Son or Jesus and angels appear, the angels are either being commanded by the Son (Matt 13:41, 24:31), serving Jesus (Matt 4:11), or are described as ‘his’ (Matt 13:41; 16:27; 24:31).⁵⁸⁴ This would suggest Matthew does not see the two as equals. However, when it comes to this particular topic, they both are limited in their knowledge of the day and hour. This seems uncharacteristic of Matthew’s use of angels.

In Matt 11:27, the relationship between the Son and the Father was modeled, ‘All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and

⁵⁸² Schweizer, *Matthew*, 458. Schnackenburg admits that it can be unsettling that the Son does not even know. Schnackenburg, *Matthew*, 246. Metzger notes that despite being absent from a majority of the witnesses, it is more likely that it was omitted here than added, especially with regard to its occurrence in Mark, and Matthew’s addition of ‘μόνος.’ Metzger, *Commentary*, 51-52.

⁵⁸³ This verse has not been without problems in its interpretation for it may seem to limit who Jesus is as the Son of God. In other words, how can Jesus be God if he does not know the time of the end? Attempts at understanding this have included the notion that Jesus did know, but he did not want his disciples to know, Jesus knew after the resurrection, or that Jesus knew according to his divine nature, but not his human nature. See Luz, for a brief, but more complete discussion. Luz, 3:213-14.

⁵⁸⁴ If this says anything about the relationships between the Father, Son, and angels, it would have been something already apparent to Matthew’s readers – the Father was superior to the angels.

anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.⁵⁸⁵ Having already demonstrated such an intimacy, the expectation would be that the Son would know. Likewise, in this verse, Matthew deviates from a great many Jewish texts in which the angels possess heavenly knowledge beyond that of humans.⁵⁸⁶ For example, Prov 30:2-3 seems to imply the ignorance of humanity compared to angels, ‘Surely I am too stupid to be human; I do not have human understanding. I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the holy ones.’ On the other hand, the angels are not always reported to know everything. In 11Q5 26:12, in a passage on God’s greatness and wisdom, God shows his angels what they had not known, rightly implying that the angels’ knowledge is limited compared to God’s (cf. 2En 40:3). In the same way that Matthew 24:36 uses the ‘ignorance’ of angels to make a point about another’s heavenly wisdom, the knowledge of Enoch is extolled in 2En 24:3, ‘Listen, Enoch, and pay attention to these words of mine! For not even to my angels have I explained my secrets.’ However, it is not just the Son and the angels that are grouped together, but also everybody else, ‘about that day and hour no one [οὐδεὶς] knows.’ In light of this, it seems that the Son and angels are set aside as examples of those that perhaps should know but do not, ‘neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son.’ Morris comments that ‘nothing could be more explicit.’⁵⁸⁷ Thus, Matthew’s point to the disciples concerning the parousia is that even those that one might expect to have an understanding of the timing of the last judgment, do not know. In other words, since the Son and the angels are uninformed of this hour, do not expect to know yourselves. This helps Matthew make the point of preparedness in this section of the discourse (Matt 24:37-25:30). For Matthew, the mention of angels helps underscore the limitedness of the knowledge of the day and hour – a contradiction to typical apocalyptic treatises.

4 ANGELS AT THE THRONE AND ANGELS IN FIRE (MATT 25:31-46)

⁵⁸⁵ With the emphasis on the Father, it may be that Matthew has in view Jesus’ unique filial relationship with the Father as the Son of God as opposed to the Son of Man (cf. Matt 11:27). This is not suggesting that Son of God and Son of Man are disparate categories or roles, but for Matthew, each carries a special significance and accent.

⁵⁸⁶ Luz, *Matthew* 21-28, 295.

⁵⁸⁷ Morris, *Matthew*, 613.

The third section of Matthew's last discourse contains a single pericope, a depiction of the last judgment. It is Jesus' last major block of instruction to his disciples and the last before the passion begins. For these reasons, it carries great significance for Matthew's narrative and consequently is Matthew's most extravagant demonstration of the Son of Man as authoritative eschatological judge.⁵⁸⁸

4.1 The Son of Man Comes with All the Angels

More than any portrayal of the Son of Man in Matthew, this particular description captures the magnificence of Son of Man's arrival like no other, 'the Son of Man comes in *his* glory, with *all* the angels with him, and then he will sit on the throne of *his* glory,' (Matt 25:31).⁵⁸⁹ Matthew has been building up his portrait of the Son of Man throughout his Gospel. As indicated earlier, it is not the glory of the Father (Matt 16:27), but his own glory, in which he comes. Furthermore, it is not just his angels, but *all* the angels that arrive with the Son of Man to sit on the throne designated for him – his glorious throne. It seems that Matthew has saved this description of all the angels coming with the Son of Man until the very end. Matthew first began with angels ministering to Jesus after his testing in the wilderness with no real or explicit comment made (Matt 4:11). Then, in descriptions of the Son of Man in scenes of judgment, he redacted texts from Mark, referring not just to angels but to 'his angels,' describing them as being 'sent' (Matt 13:41). The most important of these appears in Matt 16:27 (Mark 8:38), where Matthew changes Mark's implicit description of God's angels into those of the Son of Man. In the last discourse, prior to Matt 25:31, he again describes the angels as those of the Son of Man in Matt 24:31, but accompanies it with portrait of a spectacular and cosmic parousia scene. Consequently, the result is that this motif climaxes when the entire angelic population of heaven is emptied and commanded by the Son of Man as he sits on his glorious throne. Slowly, Matthew has been according the Son of Man a status usually accorded to God.

⁵⁸⁸ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 264.

⁵⁸⁹ Emphasis added.

4.1.1 *Glory: A Parallel Development*

It seems as though Matthew was interested in incrementally developing the idea of Jesus as the Son of Man in his eschatological glory. The portrait of the Son of Man in Matt 25:31 appears to be its climax for this is the last time that glory is mentioned in the Gospel. Throughout the Gospel, but especially since the first passion prediction (Matt 16:21), there is a narrative of the growing glory assigned to the Son of Man at his coming (Matt 16:27; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31).⁵⁹⁰ After Jesus' baptism, when he is in the wilderness, the devil takes Jesus to a very high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in order to tempt him (Matt 4:8). Jesus responds by refusing to take the glory by his own strength. The glory of the kingdoms of the world will not compare to what will be given to him later (cf. Matt 28:18). This starts to become more clear after Matt 16:21, where Jesus' life takes a new direction toward Jerusalem. In Matt 16:27, the Son of Man will come 'in the glory of his Father' and in Matt 24:30, the Son of Man will come on the clouds of heaven 'with power and great glory.' Meanwhile, Matt 19:28 refers to the Son of Man seated on the 'throne of his glory.' Here, Matt 25:31 portrays the Son of Man coming in 'his glory' and sitting on 'his glorious throne' to judge all the nations. The last reference to the coming of the Son of Man is at Jesus' trial in Matt 26:64 when Jesus responds to the high priest's question concerning his identity as the Messiah, 'But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.' While glory is not explicitly mentioned, Matthew has demonstrated its association with the coming of the Son of Man. At the trial, Matthew exposes the juxtaposition and irony of power - the one to judge everyone is being judged himself. In light of this, it seems as though Matthew has waited to use this description of the Son of Man until right before the passion narrative, the time when this vision of Jesus will be challenged the most.

4.2 The Fire Prepared for the Devil and His Angels

⁵⁹⁰ Mark has glory also in 10:27, which is to sit at your right and left in your glory. Matt changes this to kingdom.

After Matthew has succeeded in illustrating the power, authority, and majesty of the judge on his throne with all his angels, he describes a scene of the last judgment, ‘All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left,’ (Matt 25:32–33). Once the sheep are placed on his right and the goats on his left, the Son of Man pronounces his judgment on each group. The main body of the passage is composed of a dialogue between each group and the Son of Man⁵⁹¹ that helps Matthew’s readers understand why judgment has preceded in such a manner. The significance of this judgment scene in Matthew is reflected in colorful debate among scholars concerning who are judged and why they receive punishment or reward.⁵⁹² Since the condemnation of those on the left refers to angels, the following discussion will focus on the narrative effects of describing the punishment in this way.

Matt 25:34

τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς ὅτις ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ
δεῦτε⁵⁹³
οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου,
κληρονομήσατε τὴν
ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν
βασιλείαν
ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

Matt 25:41

τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ὅτις ἐκ εὐωνύμων
πορεύεσθε⁵⁹⁴
ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ
[οἱ] κατηραμένοι
εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον
τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς
ἁγγέλοις αὐτοῦ

To those on the right, the king will say, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,’ (Matt 25:34). Here, Matthew illustrates that the kingdom has been specifically prepared for those deemed worthy at the judgment. This implies that since the beginning of

⁵⁹¹ The text says ‘king,’ but the context suggests that Matthew has Jesus, the Son of Man in mind (Matt 25:34, 40).

⁵⁹² The three main interpretations include judging (1) all the world, (2) just Christians, (3) and only non-Christians. For succinct explanations, see Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 267-74, Snodgrass, *Stories*, 551-52.

⁵⁹³ This may suggest that the righteous are not immediately present, which seems to line up with Matt 24:30; however, in this verse, there are no mention of angels and the ones on the right are beckoned to come.

⁵⁹⁴ On the other hand, the command to ‘go’ assumes that the wicked are already there. Perhaps there is an underlying switching that is happening in a similar manner to Jesus’ comment that those who are first shall be last.

the world, a kingdom has been designed for the righteous, not unlike the householder sowing the good seed into his field in the Parable of the Weeds. However, after the Son of Man has spoken to those on his right who have served the hungry, thirsty, and imprisoned, he then turns to speak to those on his left and condemns them, ‘depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’ (Matt 25:41).

The place of the accursed has been prepared for a different audience. Those on the king’s left will depart into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew seems to imply that it was not originally intended for them.⁵⁹⁵ Two dramatic polar opposites are portrayed at the judgment. As a result, Matthew is emphasizing that all who facilitate and enable the devil’s nefarious activity are punished with him. This includes the verdict that angels that joined with the devil are to join him in eternal fire. In concert with the illustrious depiction of the Son of Man in Matt 25:31, it not surprising that the Son of Man, in his condemnation against all evil, is also portrayed as ruler over all powers and angels. He is the one with complete authority (cf. Matt 28:18). While this does bear some similarities to the narrative of the Watchers’ judgment (*Book of Watchers*), this passage nevertheless is an emphatic declaration of the Son of Man’s power over evil and all obstacles to following the will of God.

The depiction of the Son of Man in the fullness of his glory to judge the world is the final picture of Jesus before the Passion. Matthew seems to want the readers to have this image in their minds as they begin to enter into the narrative of the death of Jesus. The picture of the Son of Man’s glory prepares the reader to further understand the passion. At key points, Matthew will remind his readers of this. For example, Jesus at his arrest reports that he can appeal to the Father for twelve legions of angels (Matt 26:53) and later speaks at the trial of the coming of the Son of Man (Matt 26:64). Moreover, these events are two key moments in Jesus’ life where he chooses to follow the path to suffering (cf. Matt 4:5-8, where Jesus is tempted to depend on angels to bring in his kingdom). It is in these moments that Matthew reveals the nature of the kingdom and the messiah in humble obedience and future victory. In the final discourse, and especially in Matt 25:31, Matthew

⁵⁹⁵ Luz comes to a similar conclusion. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:282.

offers an eschatological lens through which to view the messiah, the true king of Israel, who submits and suffers for the will of God. Matthew's awareness of the significance of the cross is illustrated in the contrast between the image of the Son of Man's glory on the throne and the humiliation of Jesus' death.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The previous discussion has focused on examining how angels have played a role in emphasizing key points regarding the arrival of the Son of Man (Matt 24:30; 25:31), its timing (Matt 24:36), and the judgment (Matt 25:31, 41). Matthew uses apocalyptic concepts to communicate his ideas without the need to develop them in detail.⁵⁹⁶ This helps explain why Matthew seems eager to include and redact references to angels in many of his discourses and narratives. He was interested in using this powerful apocalyptic concept to highlight the authority of Jesus, the Son of Man, as judge.⁵⁹⁷ Likewise, Matthew develops his use of angels and glory throughout the Gospel narrative until its culmination in this last discourse. In light of this, it becomes clearer how and why Matthew is using the glorious and imminent arrival of the Son of Man to promote love and active faithful living in the present. With elements such as the darkening skies, trumpet blast, and personal entourage of angels, the significance and authority of Jesus the Son of Man as judge is emphasized, creating a resounding note that echoes into the suffering of the passion narrative.

This enables Matthew to establish the close relationship between the two seemingly contrasting descriptions of the Son of Man – one in glory and the other suffering. This contrast seems to be significant for Matthew's representation of Jesus, for immediately following the discourse, Matthew adds another reference to the suffering of the Son of Man, 'When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified,"' (Matt 26:1-2). Matthew,

⁵⁹⁶ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 294.

⁵⁹⁷ Luz notes that Matthew's reserve concerning apocalyptic language is discarded when emphasizing the 'divine exaltation of the World Judge, Jesus.' Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 287.

through this discourse and portrait of Jesus as the glorious Son of Man foreshadows the resurrection and the announcement in Matt 28:18-20.

Looking retrospectively through the resurrection and Jesus' words at the conclusion of Matthew, it can be said that Matt 24-25 is also a statement on the presence of Jesus in the present. Matthew casts his view of discipleship in the eschatological discourse as a portrayal of living life in the mundane in light of the extraordinary.⁵⁹⁸ For Matthew, this is cast in the shape of the Son of Man as judge who also is the earthly Jesus whom the disciples have come to know and trust. Using traditions of angels and other apocalyptic imagery in this discourse, Matthew emphatically demonstrates the authority and glory of the Son of Man while uniquely introducing this eschatological portrait with a reference to Jesus in the form of the disciples' question, 'what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?' (Matt 24:3; cf. Mark 13:4).

⁵⁹⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 411-12.

Chapter 9

Angels at the Arrest in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:53)

1 INTRODUCTION

The final chapters of Matthew are the climax of the Gospel narrative, for it is in this section that Jesus is arrested, tried, crucified, and raised from the dead. Matthew has been building towards these moments from the birth narratives and especially since Peter's declaration of Jesus as the Messiah (Matt 16:16). In these last chapters of Matthew, Jesus' obedience to his Father's will is portrayed as the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan.

At the arrest, Matthew makes a definitive statement about Jesus' willingness and determination to fulfill his Father's will. Jesus, seized and bound, confesses his conviction that this is the Father's will, otherwise he could appeal to the Father and he would at once have sent twelve legions of angels (Matt 26:53). The way in which Matthew uses angels in this passage will be examined by first setting the context of the arrest within Matt 26 and its frequent foreshadowing of the betrayal. Second, reactions of the disciples and Jesus will be compared to illustrate the significance of the angels in Jesus' response. As part of this, numerous texts will be discussed in order to demonstrate the tradition of celestial warriors and angelic assistance. In light of this, the chapter will next examine Jesus' own ability to call angels and will determine that these angels are those of the Father, responding to his will. As a result, the final section will show how, in light of the chapter's conclusions, Matt 26:53 demonstrates Jesus' sonship of the Father, his commitment to obeying God's will, and the implications this has for Jesus' disciples.

In the charged narrative sequence of Matt 26:47-56, Jesus' betrayal by Judas creates an event in Matthew's narrative where Jesus, once again, expresses his desire to do the will of the Father. Matthew shows Jesus facing a decision that challenges his understanding of his identity and relationship to the Father. The significance of this event is highlighted by the frequent references to the betrayal in Matt 26, foreshadowing the conflict at Gethsemane. The result of the betrayal is the arrest and necessary handing over of Jesus to the Jewish and Roman authorities for his trial, crucifixion, and death. Thus, in this section, the discussion will demonstrate the narrative movement toward the arrest and betrayal, then examine both Jesus' and a disciple's response to the arrest. The goal throughout this section will be to reveal how angels help reveal Jesus' unwavering obedience and submission to the will of the Father.

2.1 The Movement toward the Arrest in Matt 26

Since the arrest is the final act of Jesus' betrayal, references to his being handed over infuse Matthew's narrative with tension and expectation. While the anticipation of Judas' treachery begins early in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 10:4; 17:22; 20:18-19), the betrayal becomes more significant in the narrative of Matt 26:1-56. Following the eschatological discourse (Matt 24-25), Matthew alone frames the beginning of his narrative with the impending betrayal, 'When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified,"' (Matt 26:2; cf. Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2). This is then set in tension with the conspiracy by the chief priests and elders to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him (Matt 26:3-4). In this way, the passion begins with an introduction and reminder to the disciples (and readers) that this is the end; in two days, the Son of Man will be betrayed and crucified. Matthew is leading his readers into the darkness of the passion after having just described the glory of the eschatological Son of Man on the judgment seat (Matt 25:31-46).

In the scenes following, Matthew continually references the upcoming betrayal and death. For example, Jesus is prepared for his burial when the woman with the alabaster flask anoints him with expensive ointment (Matt 26:6-13). Then (τότε), Judas approaches the chief priests, seeking a reward for betraying Jesus. After the payment of thirty silver pieces, he begins to seek an opportunity to hand him over (Matt 26:14-16). The betrayal draws closer in the narrative of the Passover meal as Jesus identifies the traitor as a disciple of his, reveals that this is the fulfillment of Scripture, ('The Son of Man goes as it is written of him,' Matt 26:24), fingers Judas Iscariot as the one who betrays him (Matt 26:21-25), and shares his last meal with his disciples (Matt 26:26-29). After the meal, Jesus and his disciples move to the Mount of Olives, the location of the betrayal and his arrest (Matt 26:30). Consequently, Matthew has colored Matt 26:1-35 with the impending betrayal, suggesting the significance of the scene in Gethsemane that features Jesus' preparation and reaction to his arrest. In Gethsemane, Jesus predicts the disciples' abandonment (Matt 26:31) and seeks the will of the Father before he is faced with the decision to follow it (Matt 26:36-46). This is a unique circumstance, for Matthew reveals Jesus' emotions for the first time (Matt 26:38). On three separate occasions, Jesus goes away by himself to pray, each time returning to sleeping disciples. First, he prays, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want,' (πάτερ μου, εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν, παρελθάτω ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο· πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ' ὡς σύ, Matt 26:39). Matthew alone indicates the words of Jesus' second prayer, 'My Father, if this [cup] cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done,' (πάτερ μου, εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἐὰν μὴ αὐτὸ πίνω, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, Matt 26:42; cf. Matt 6:10) indicating that this will not pass from Jesus. As a result, Matthew reveals that Jesus knows what is God's will. More so than Mark, Matthew has called attention to Jesus' commitment to the Father's will. After the third prayer, the moment arrives when Jesus has the opportunity to demonstrate his faithfulness, 'my betrayer is at hand,' (Matt 26:46) where Matthew will carry over the emphasis on Jesus' obedience into the arrest scene.⁵⁹⁹ Senior goes as far as to say that from this moment the 'real Passion of Jesus begins.'⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁹ Senior, *Passion*, 112.

⁶⁰⁰ Senior, *Passion*, 118.

After the confrontation and brief interchange between Jesus and his betrayer, the crowd, chief priests, and elders of the people lay hands on Jesus, seizing him (Matt 26:50). Jesus is betrayed and arrested. All eyes and ears are poised to know how Jesus will respond. While Jesus does and says nothing, one of the disciples (εἷς τῶν μετὰ Ἰησοῦ) draws his sword and cuts off the ear of the high priest's servant in what appears to be an attempt to prevent the apprehension of Jesus. As might have been expected, this provokes a reaction. While all of the canonical gospels contain the narrative of the zealous disciple (Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50; John 18:10), Matthew includes a unique reaction to the sword, one that reveals a deeper color to Matthew's portrait of Jesus.⁶⁰¹ Jesus' immediate response is to tell the disciple to put the sword away. The disciple has misunderstood that the sword is not the right course of action in this situation. Jesus tells the disciple in a chiastically formulated saying, 'πάντες γὰρ οἱ λαβόντες μάχαιραν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀπολοῦνται,' (Matt 26:52).⁶⁰² While the consequence of violence begetting violence is not an unfamiliar concept (cf. Rev 13:10),⁶⁰³ Jesus instructs him to put his sword back in its place, suggesting that there will be no need for its use on account of his ability to appeal to the Father for twelve legions of angels.

2.2 Angels Are Better Than a Sword

Matthew narrates Jesus' riposte by further illustrating who Jesus is and why he is yielding to their seizure. The unwarranted strike of the sword is expounded by Jesus' rhetorical question, 'Do you think that I am not able to appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?' (Matt 26:53; cf. Matt 9:28). Matthew announces that the meager flash of steel by one of Jesus' own is no comparison to what Jesus could have brandished. Traditions of heavenly assistance and angelic soldiers illustrate the magnitude of Jesus' parry in Matt 26:53.

⁶⁰¹ Compare to Luke's account, which alone has Jesus heal the servant's ear (Luke 22:51).

⁶⁰² The disciple's action clearly goes against the teaching of Jesus in Matt 5:39, 'But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. However, if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.' Yet, it may also relate to reciprocity evinced in Gen 9:6.

⁶⁰³ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:789. In the following examination of Jesus' response to the unnecessary sword, the focus will be on Jesus, rather than the disciple, for the goal will be to determine Matthew's intention in Jesus' words rather than attempt to postulate why the disciple brandished his sword.

2.2.1 Heavenly Assistance and Battling Angels

The angels that would have responded to Jesus' appeal would have been sent by the Father; thus, traditions that express God's readiness to battle as well as those in which angels do the fighting all serve to illustrate Jesus' response in Matt 26:53. For example, the narrative of 1Sam 17 verifies David's complete trust in the Lord when he fights the Philistine, 'The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine,' (1Sam 17:37). Later, in his taunt to Goliath, David expresses his confidence in God, 'This very day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, ... that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and he will give you into our hand,' (1Sam 17:46-47). The retelling of this narrative in *L.A.B.* 61:5-9 portrays an angel as the means of God's heavenly assistance.⁶⁰⁴ In addition, in 2Kgs 6:15-19, the King of Aram sent horses, chariots, and a great army to seize Elisha by night. Upon realizing his predicament, Elisha showed his servant that he was not afraid because, 'the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha,' (2Kgs 6:17). Although there is no mention of angels or ensuing battle, the portrait strongly suggests the presence of heavenly assistance.

Near the center of 1Sam 17 and other references are words like that of Deut 20:3-4 where God's presence in the midst of battle is declared, 'Hear, O Israel! Today you are drawing near to do battle against your enemies. Do not lose heart, or be afraid, or panic, or be in dread of them; for it is the LORD your God who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to give you victory.' Although this was offered to the Israelites as they entered the land, the War Scroll references this passage with regard to an eschatological battle (1QM 10:3-5; cf. *Test. Levi* 3:3). In addition, the promise of angelic support appears several other times in the War Scroll: the company of the holy ones is found 'in their midst' for eternal support (1QM 12:7-9; cf. 1QM 17:5-6) and the Prince of Light is there to assist them (1QM 13:10).

⁶⁰⁴ Harrington dates *L.A.B.* to sometime around the time of Jesus, which suggests that the traditions of this work date prior to this. *OTP*, 2:299. On the other hand, Fisk argues that any date remains uncertain as the arguments and evidence for dating either pre or post-70CE are equally unconvincing. Fisk, *Remember?*, 34-40.

Although *2Baruch* most probably is composed after Matthew, its text likely contains older angel traditions while also demonstrating their continued appeal.⁶⁰⁵ For example, *2Bar.* 51:11 speaks of the army of angels ready at the Lord's command (cf. *Zech* 14:5), and in *2Bar.* 63:5-11, Hezekiah prays to the Mighty One for relief from the attacks of Sennacherib. The Mighty One sends Ramael, the angel of true visions (*2Bar.* 55:3), who destroys the army for the glory of God (burning their insides, leaving their weapons and clothes).⁶⁰⁶ According to *2Macc*, when Judas Maccabeus was confronted with the ensuing attack from Lysias' army of eighty thousand infantry and all his cavalry, he and all the people prayed for God to send a good angel to save Israel (*2Macc* 11:6). As a result, when Judas Maccabeus took up arms and went to fight, a horseman clothed in white and brandishing weapons of gold inspired and assisted in a humiliating defeat of Lysias and his army (*2Macc* 11:7-15). In a similar situation in *3Maccabees*, Eleazar and the Jews cry out in prayer in response to the arrival of the king and his forces (*3Macc* 6:16-7). As a result, God opened the gates of heaven and sent down two glorious angels, causing confusion and binding the forces with immovable shackles (*3Macc* 6:18-19). Similarly, *4Maccabees* tells the story of Apollonius and his attempt to retrieve money from the temple. His pursuit of this wealth by means of his army (*4Macc* 4:5) quells attempts at resistance until he finally approaches the temple. In protest, the priests, women, and children pray and God sends angels on horseback with flashing armor, terrifying and disabling Apollonius (*4Macc* 4:10-11; cf. *2Macc* 3:22-30).⁶⁰⁷ According to the third section of the *Testament of Adam*, these angels are grouped together. The sixth order (of seven) is the category of angels that rule over victory and defeat in battle (*Test. Adam* 4:6-7). Several examples are given, including the angel who ravaged the Assyrians, killing one hundred eighty-five thousand (*Test. Adam* 4:6; cf. *2Kings* 19:35; *Isa* 37:36).⁶⁰⁸ The portrayal of angels with swords also communicates the image of the angel as a warrior. For example, in *Num* 22:23 an angel with a sword, whose original intent was to kill, confronts

⁶⁰⁵ Davila argues that *2Baruch* was most likely written in response to the fall of Jerusalem (70CE) but before the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135CE). Davila, *Provenance*, 127.

⁶⁰⁶ See also, *2Bar.* 7:1-8:2, where angels destroy Jerusalem so that Israel's enemies cannot take credit for its destruction.

⁶⁰⁷ He was revived by the prayers of Onias, the High Priest, thus enabling him to report that he was stopped by divine means (*4Macc* 4:13-14).

⁶⁰⁸ He also mentions the angel maintaining peace in *Zech* 1:7-11 (cf. *2Macc* 3:24-26).

Balaam (cf. 1QM 11:2). The leader of the army of host appears to Joshua with a sword in his hand (Josh 5:13; cf. 3En. 22.6) and in 1Chron 21:16, David sees the angel of the Lord standing over Jerusalem with his sword drawn.⁶⁰⁹

In Matt 26:53, Jesus reports that the quantity of angels that would respond would number more than twelve legions. Since a legion would comprise about six thousand troops, this would have amounted to more than seventy-two thousand angels!⁶¹⁰ Whilst clearly representing a significant quantity of angels, this number (i.e. twelve) also has symbolic connotations.⁶¹¹ Nevertheless, in the narrative, the sum of these angels is vastly disproportionate even when compared to the ‘large crowd’ that accompanied Judas to Gethsemane. The number of angels seems all the more exorbitant when one angel single-handedly killed one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrians (2Kings 19:35; 2Chr 32:21; Isa 37:36; Sir 48:21; 1Macc 7:41). Clearly, for Matthew, the angels are much more effective than the sword of a disciple and Jesus is not calling on them.

In sum, angels are part of Matthew’s worldview, carried eschatological overtones, and were at God’s disposal, ready to fight for him. Furthermore, these angels of God are always victorious. In this regard, Matthew’s reference to the angels shows that it is clear that Jesus’ arrest could have been stopped had the angels been sent.

2.3 Jesus’ Ability to Call Angels

Although Jesus’ response evokes traditions of angel warriors, they are not summoned and Jesus’ arrest is carried through without further obstruction. The angels’ absence in the arrest scene could suggest that Jesus’ response was an empty threat, but then the force of Matthew’s portrayal of Jesus’ willingness to capitulate is lost. If these were empty words, then Jesus would have had no choice but to

⁶⁰⁹ With the occasional references to stars fighting (Judg 5:20; cf. *L.A.B.* 32:15) and the connection of angels with stars (*1Enoch*), Davies asks whether the readers might have imagined the stars being at the command of Jesus, particularly since arrest happened outdoors and at night. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:514-15.

⁶¹⁰ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:789.

⁶¹¹ It is possible that it relates to twelve tribes of Israel, or a full complement to the 12 disciples. Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:790.

surrender to an armed mob, and the threat of celestial intervention would have been all for show. However, this does not seem to be the case.

Matthew's portrait of the Son of Man helps contribute to understanding this passage. In various places, Matthew has alluded to the eschatological Son of Man and his appearance with and command over angels (Matt 13:41; 16:27; 24:30-31; 25:31). As was suggested in the previous chapter, the climax of the eschatological discourse was a portrait of the Son of Man with all the angels, in his glory on the judgment seat of his glorious throne (Matt 25:31-46). As the readers head into the narrative of Jesus betrayal and death, Matthew seems to have grounded the Passion in the image of the majesty of the eschatological Son of Man and all his angels. In light of this, it is more likely that Matthew understands Jesus really could have called upon angels for his defense.

However, this implies that Jesus had the ability to command angels at that point. If this is true, then Matthew is suggesting that Jesus' choice to succumb to his captors is voluntary by virtue of Jesus choosing not to take advantage of his power to stop the arrest. In other words, Jesus himself could have prevented this through heavenly assistance; he could have given the order to the angels and they would have prevented it. This is the conclusion of some commentators,⁶¹² yet this conclusion does not fully incorporate Matthew's pattern of the Son of Man and angels, who up to this point have all been portrayed together at the eschatological judgment. One could appeal to Matt 4 where the angels come to Jesus and minister to him. However, Matt 4:6 describes the angels as those of the Father, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' (cf. Ps 91:10), not unlike the angels in Matt 26:53, 'Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?' Therefore, by suggesting that Jesus has the power to call upon angels to help him seems to miss the emphasis on the Father's involvement at the arrest.

⁶¹² Hare states that Jesus had access to spectacular power but renounced its use. Hare, *Matthew*, 304. Harrington believes that 'Jesus refused to turn this into a cosmic fight, although the assumption is that he could have done so.' Harrington, *Matthew*, 375. The angels are at Jesus' disposal according to Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:513. Senior seems to imply that Jesus has this power when he states that Jesus has the power to 'evoke' the aid of angels. Senior, *Passion*, 141, Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:789-90. Robinson states that the early church, 'had no doubt that Jesus had at his disposal all the celestial forces of God, and could have used them for the overthrow of his enemies.' Robinson, *Matthew*, 220. On the other hand, both Morris and Patte agree with the point this chapter is making, namely, Jesus would have to appeal for the angels to come and thus Matthew is not commenting directly on Jesus' power. Morris, *Matthew*, 676, Patte, *Matthew*, 370.

2.3.1 *The Will of the Father*

In light of this, I argue that in Matt 26:53, the power to command the angels abides with the Father. This means that for the angels to have been sent, the Father would have wanted to send them. Rather than make a comment on Jesus' power to call angels, Matthew appears to be communicating that Jesus understands that the betrayal and arrest is the Father's will; and, secondly, Matthew comments on Jesus' relationship to the Father. Not only does it portray an intimacy with the Father demonstrated earlier in Jesus' prayers in the Garden, but it also indicates Jesus' obedience to, and faith in, the Father. Matthew indicates that if the arrest were not part of God's plan, then twelve legions of angels would have been present to prevent it. More importantly, Jesus would have known this and would have then appealed to the Father for the angelic warriors. From another perspective, it can be said that Matthew does not portray Jesus' knowledge of his Father's will because there are no angels, as if Jesus was only being arrested because the Father was not sending a rescue party. Instead, the question posed indicates that Jesus was certain of his Father's intentions and it involved Jesus going willingly. In light of this, I argue that Jesus' response to the disciple was about obedience, 'Do you not know that I am aware that this is the Father's will? If the Father wanted otherwise, I would have known it and appealed to him for a way to prevent it. Moreover, his intervention would have made incredibly clear that he did not want it to happen.' More than just being celestial warriors, the angels in many of the examples given earlier also indicate that one's rescue was at God's request. Angels at the arrest scene would have suggested that God himself did not want it to happen. This also can be considered a complement to the presence of God represented in the infancy narratives. Consequently, Matthew uses angels in Jesus' response to truly emphasize Jesus' commitment to his Father's will.

In this way, Matthew presents Jesus not as one who is refusing heavenly assistance, but as one who understands himself as an agent of God whose access to the Father implies if it were the will of the Father, then angels would have appeared as a result of an appeal to the Father. Consequently, contrary to the images of the Son of Man and angels, the primary use of angels in Matt 26:53 does

not illustrate the power and authority of Jesus, but provides the background for proof that this is God's will.⁶¹³ Twelve legions of angels would have been more than sufficient to stop a crowd with swords and clubs. The numerous traditions of angelic warriors cited above have made this clear. In light of this, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus understood the Father's will concerning his arrest, and the angels are a crucial element in Matthew's portrayal of Jesus' fulfillment of God's will in his journey toward the cross.

2.3.2 *Jesus' Obedience as Fulfillment*

The following verse, Matt 26:54, further strengthens this conclusion, 'But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?' Senior refers to this as the climax of the arrest scene.⁶¹⁴ In light of this, the interpretation suggested above for Matt 26:53 would dovetail the ideas of Jesus' arrest being centered on the Father's will and Jesus' obedient actions (cf. Matt 4:1-11). Like Matt 26:53, Jesus asks a question of the disciple, informing him and the reader that Jesus is aware of the congruence between his actions, the Father's will, and scripture. More than simply obeying his Father, Jesus' arrest and his response to it are part of God's larger plan, one that began early in Israel's history. It is not clear what specific scriptures Matthew had in mind, but his repetition and expansion of Mark 14:49 in Matt 26:56, 'But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled', expresses Matthew's desire to show Jesus' actions as necessary.⁶¹⁵ In light of this, Matthew shows that Jesus is aware of the role of his obedience to the Father's will and its place in the Scriptures and history of God's people. Even the fleeing of all his disciples shows that Jesus' own predictions are fulfilled, not just those of Scripture.

Thus, Matthew's addition of this reference to angels has taken Mark's narrative of Jesus' arrest and strengthened both the emphasis on Jesus' obedience

⁶¹³ It is not that the image of the Son of Man and the angels could not have existed in the background, but the *primary* role of the angels is somewhat different here.

⁶¹⁴ Senior, *Passion*, 142.

⁶¹⁵ What is meant by 'the whole of this' is not clear. Some say that it refers to all of the passion (Senior), others think it is just the arrest (Hagner). Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:791-2. Senior argues that Matthew respects Mark's lack of a Old Testament citation and thus should be considered with other fulfillment passages. Senior, *Passion*, 146-7.

to the will of God and that these actions clearly are his will. His arrest is the manifestation of the betrayal of Jesus and his response is the evidence of the sincerity of his prayers in Gethsemane.⁶¹⁶ By using angels in his narrative, Matthew portrays Jesus' progress toward the cross fully convinced that this is the Father's will and completely surrendered to it.

2.4 Intratextual Echoes of the Temptation Narrative

With the theme of obedience to the Father's will as a product of understanding Jesus' calling, there are distant echoes of the temptation narrative. In particular, Jesus is faced with making a conscious choice to be obedient to his calling. This does not suggest that Jesus' life was not full of choices regarding his calling and identity, but Matthew deliberately calls attention to these specific moments in Jesus' life where his decisions define his submission to the Father's will.

As was discussed in an earlier chapter, Matthew, in the temptation narrative, takes advantage of traditions of angels in roles of guidance and protection to communicate his point. Now, at the arrest, Matthew draws on tradition of angels as warriors.⁶¹⁷ But unlike the temptation narrative (Matt 4:1-11), the choice is not presented by the devil, but as the prayers in the Garden illustrate, within Jesus himself.

Similar to the angels in the temptation narrative, there is no doubt that angels could be there to assist Jesus, but the understanding in both Matt 4 and 26 is that it be according to the will of Father. Jesus could have jumped off the temple or appealed to the Father, but in both situations, to do so would reveal a misunderstanding of the will of God. Thus, Matthew uses angels and their traditions to illumine Jesus' obedience to the Father alone and his trust in him and his plan of salvation history.

Like the temptation narrative, the tension is high as Jesus faces this part of the journey alone. He prays alone (Matt 26:36-46), his disciples abandon him (Matt 26:56), Peter denies him (Matt 26:69-75), and God the Father is not taking the cup away via angelic help (Matt 26:53). This is a significant point in understanding the

⁶¹⁶ Senior is in agreement. Senior, *Passion*, 148.

⁶¹⁷ Senior also notes the similar use of angels. Senior, *Passion*, 141.

crucifixion, for Jesus alone is the one who ‘saves his people from their sins’ (Matt 1:21). Jesus’ understanding of the Father’s will and his angelic help assists in making this point. His trust and his obedience alone see him to the cross and beyond the tomb.

2.5 Discipleship and Jesus’ Example of Trusting in the Father

By making it clear that the one that draws his sword is one of the disciples (εἷς τῶν μετὰ Ἰησοῦ), Matthew implicitly makes a comment on discipleship.⁶¹⁸ Through this passage, discipleship means being obedient to the will of the Father in the same way Matthew has demonstrated Jesus’ unrelenting obedience.

Through the unnamed disciple and his action of cutting off the ear of the high priest’s servant, a different stance to Jesus’ prayer in the Garden is reflected, ‘Not my will but yours.’ It seems that the disciples have yet to fully incorporate the picture of who Jesus is, as well as what it means to belong to the kingdom. For Matthew, this is likely intentional. In order to understand Jesus completely, one must see him through the eschatological lens of the resurrection.⁶¹⁹ For this reason, it also appears that the over-reaction by Peter in Matt 16:21 to Jesus’ passion announcement may also be in view. Moreover, this is not unlike the earlier discussion on Matt 16:24-27 concerning following Jesus, where one must take up one’s cross. While Matt 16:24-28 and Matt 26:51-53 both seem to express the suffering that results from following Jesus, the portrait of discipleship in Matt 16:24-28 is framed within the coming of the Son of Man and his angels to render judgment. In Matt 26:51-53, the portrait of discipleship seems to resemble the way traditions of angels were used in Matt 1-4 to communicate the presence of God and his activity in Jesus’ life. While it was argued that the presence of angels at the end of the temptation narrative was suggestive of Jesus’ exalted status (Matt 4:11), in both Matt 4:6 and in Matt 26:53, Jesus’ sonship is defined by his rejection of angelic help.

⁶¹⁸ To not find Peter in this position almost seems contrary to Matthew’s pattern of Peter as the representative for the rest of the disciples (cf. Matt 26:69-75). Matthew also makes no explanation of why this disciple has a sword (cf. Luke 22:36-38). Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:511.

⁶¹⁹ Even then, some doubted (Matt 28:17).

The repetition of this theme may suggest that Matthew may have been portraying Jesus in this way to correct a view of angels with regard to Jesus in his community. If this were true, then it would seem that Matthew is making it clear that Jesus' relationship with the Father is defined by his dependence on God alone (cf. Matt 11:25-27). Therefore, a disciple of Jesus would follow this pattern, being completely dependent and obedient to the Father. Nevertheless, despite the lack of evidence that might suggest insight into Matthew's community, it is still noteworthy that Matthew portrays angels to help define Jesus' sonship of the Father.

3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it was argued that Matthew's use of angels in Jesus' response to the sword-wielding disciple demonstrates both Jesus' unswerving obedience to the Father and God's ability to intervene dramatically in Jesus' life. The discussion began by illustrating the frequent reference throughout Matt 26 to Jesus' forthcoming betrayal, thus foreshadowing the arrest of Jesus. Next, the analysis turned to Matthew's portrayal of Jesus being handed over and seized, which includes a response to the disciple's act of violence that rebukes the disciple's swordplay by illustrating that the Father could provide angelic help, more than enough to prevent Jesus' arrest, if the arrest were not God's will.⁶²⁰ This discussion included a variety of references to angelic warriors that suggested that the angels in Matt 26:53 be understood as supernal warriors sent by God to fight for him and his people. In light of this, it was argued that these angels, like the angels in Matt 4:6, were described as those of the Father and thus representative of his activity at the arrest. Instead of the saying being about Jesus' own power to call angels, it speaks about Jesus' intimacy with the Father (knowing his will, Matt 26:36-46) and his obedience to his Father's will. Thus, Matt 26:53 helps set in motion the rest of the Passion, culminating in the death on the cross and vindication in the resurrection.

⁶²⁰ Jesus' actions differentiate him from the disciples, for he alone demonstrates an awareness of the Father's will.

Chapter 10

Angel of the Lord at the Tomb (Matthew 28:2-10)

1 INTRODUCTION

It is a bit of a misnomer to refer to Matt 28:1-20 as a resurrection narrative for Matthew does not narrate Jesus' resurrection, but the time following it. Instead, it is the announcement of the resurrection and the response to the news of the resurrection that is integral to understanding the narrative.⁶²¹ Unlike Mark, Matthew includes an appearance of the resurrected Jesus and some final words of instruction.⁶²² In previous discussions of Matthean texts that are also found in Mark, it was demonstrated that Matthew has put his own touches on Mark's narrative while often following the structure of Mark. The account of the women at the tomb is not an exception. In this section, Matthew has kept many of the same elements (women, empty tomb, heavenly messenger, fear) and has also made some key editorial moves that reveal more clearly his intent to show God at work in the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection. Consequently, the redactional elements of Matthew's narrative become a significant way into understanding Matthew's composition of the events following Jesus' death.⁶²³ In particular, Matthew has chosen to refer to the 'young man' in Mark as an angel of the Lord and describes his entry with apocalyptic language.

⁶²¹ Gundry suggests that the resurrection occurred during the earthquake, and the rolling away of the stone by the angels was to let Jesus out. Gundry, *Matthew*, 587.

⁶²² Wright argues that since Matthew follows Mark so closely up to Mark 16:8, it is possible that Matthew retains a now lost ending to Mark. Wright, *Resurrection*, 623-24. Gundry, *Matthew*, 591.

⁶²³ Luz calls his use of Mark, 'uneven.' Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 591. See Crossan for a discussion of Matthew's relationship to the *Gospel of Peter*. Crossan, *Cross*, 16-30.

In this chapter, the appearance of the angel of the Lord at the tomb will be examined through first setting his appearance in the context of the demonstration of God's activity at Jesus' death. Once it is established that Matthew was drawing attention to the work of God in Matt 27:45-53, it will be argued that events at the tomb similarly reveal the Lord's activity, only this time, through the particular messenger of an angel of the Lord. Since both Matt 28 and Matt 1-2 both refer to an angel of the Lord, the two texts will be compared to further understand Matthew's use of the angel of the Lord in Matt 28.

2 MATTHEW'S EMPHASIS ON GOD'S ACTIVITY

Matthew positions his use of the angel of the Lord with a number of other editorial additions that call attention to God's hand at work at Jesus' death and resurrection. Working with Mark as a foundation, Matthew has made the activity of God more explicit through apocalyptic motifs and language.⁶²⁴ Hagner aptly states that these 'events themselves are apocalyptic in character and point to the decisive importance of the death of Jesus.'⁶²⁵ While Matthew incorporates Mark's description of darkness and the tearing of the temple veil (Mark 15:33, 38), he adds an earthquake, rocks splitting, tombs being open, and the dead being raised (Matt 27:51-53). The following discussion will demonstrate how these elements show an emphasis upon God's activity in Matthew's narrative.

2.1 Darkness Covers the Earth (Matt 27:45)

The darkness that covers the land at midday before Jesus' death is suggestive of an apocalyptic event (Amos 8:9) for darkness itself can be interpreted as a metaphor for God's judgment.⁶²⁶ For example, Joel 2:1-2 speaks of darkness accompanying the day of the Lord, 'for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near — a day of

⁶²⁴ Luz argues that the Matthean vocabulary suggests Matthew expanded the Markan narrative. For example, Matthew explains the rolling away of the stone that is presupposed in Mark 16:4. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 561.

⁶²⁵ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:848.

⁶²⁶ Allison, *Studies*, 97-105. Besides judgment, Allison also includes a discussion of darkness associated with mourning and shame. Nevertheless, he admits that the various meanings are complementary and one need not choose just one.

darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!’ (cf. Joel 2:31; Zeph 1:15–16; Isa 13:10).⁶²⁷ In addition, Ezekiel’s message of judgment includes darkness, ‘All the shining lights of the heaven I will darken above you, and put darkness on your land, says the Lord GOD,’ (Ezek 32:7-8). Matthew demonstrates this in his own description of the last days (cf. Mark 13:24-27). In Matt 24:29 the description of the events prior to the coming of the Son of Man and the final judgment includes darkness, indicated by the ‘darkening’ of the sun (ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται), but also the stars falling (cf. Isa 34:4). For Nolland, the darkness is suggestive of God’s presence at Jesus’ death with a ‘proleptic eschatological sense’ that suggests ‘the frown of God’s displeasure and anticipation of his judgment.’⁶²⁸ While the darkness may be difficult to assert as indicative of God’s displeasure, it certainly is evocative of God’s judgment and indicative of his activity.

2.2 The Tearing of the Temple Curtain

At the ninth hour, still in darkness, Jesus cries out with the words of Ps 22. Those standing by think he is calling for Elijah (Matt 27:46) and, still misunderstanding him, they offer Jesus a drink.⁶²⁹ After Jesus surrenders his spirit (Matt 27:47-50), Matthew continues the description, calling attention to the supernatural events that follow Jesus’ death with his typical ἰδοῦ,⁶³⁰ ‘the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split,’ (Matt 27:51). God’s action in the tearing is illustrated by the passive verb used (ἐσχίσθη) to describe the tear, suggesting God is most likely the one behind this action. While the tearing of the veil can be called a ‘hidden’ sign⁶³¹ because it happens within the temple, the fact that it is followed by a number of dramatic acts of God may indicate that it could signal God coming out from his temple.⁶³² At the

⁶²⁷ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:844. Note the different use of darkness in Matt 4:16, ‘the people who sat in darkness.’

⁶²⁸ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1205.

⁶²⁹ Keener, *Matthew*, 683.

⁶³⁰ Matthew uses ἰδοῦ six times in Matt 27-28 (Matt 27:51; 28:2, 7, 9, 11, 20).

⁶³¹ Keener, *Matthew*, 686-87.

⁶³² Nolland also notes that it could also be signaling the coming doom of the temple. Nolland, *Matthew*, 1211-12.

baptism, the heavens are opened to reveal the Spirit coming down (Matt 3:16).⁶³³ Now that the temple curtain is split, God comes forth to act in power. In light of this, Nolland imagines the shaking of the earth in Matt 27:51 as God's footfalls as he is leaving the temple.⁶³⁴ For Gurtner, the splitting of the curtain also removed the 'cultic barriers between the holy (God) and less holy (humans).'⁶³⁵ While there is theological significance to this action,⁶³⁶ Matthew himself does not elaborate and counts it among the other apocalyptic acts evident of God's activity at Jesus death.⁶³⁷

2.3 Earthquake and Splitting of Stones

Using the same verb for splitting (σχιζω) that described the tearing of the temple curtain, Matthew expands on Mark and also describes an earthquake, 'the earth shook, and the rocks were split,' (Matt 27:51).⁶³⁸ In the Old Testament, the shaking of the earth often refers to the activity of God. For example, in Nahum, the Lord is described as 'great in power' (Nah 1:3) where 'mountains quake before him' (Nah 1:5) and 'by him rocks are broken in pieces' (Nah 1:6). Psalm 114:7 makes the petition, 'Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,' and Judg 5:4 (cf. Ps 68:7-8) describes the way the Lord moved on earth, 'LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled [γῆ ἐσείσθη, Judg 5:4 LXX].' When in 2Sam 22:7-8 the Lord responds to a prayer and 'the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations of the heavens trembled and quaked, because he was angry,' Nolland describes this as God 'throwing his weight around.' In light of this, it is not surprising that in Revelation the earthquakes herald the coming of God (Rev 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18).⁶³⁹ Conversely, in 1Kgs 19:11, the earth shakes and the wind splits rocks; the Lord is not to be found in the typical elements of a theophany, but a gentle breeze (1Kgs 19:12), illustrating to Elijah that the Lord can

⁶³³ Interestingly, Matthew changes Mark's version of the baptism, which describes the heavens as splitting (σχιζω), to opening (ἀνοίγω).

⁶³⁴ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1212.

⁶³⁵ Gurtner, *Veil*, 200.

⁶³⁶ See Gurtner, *Veil*, 195-98.

⁶³⁷ Hagner, *Matthew*, 848-9, Brown, *Death*, 1108-9. Hagner suggest that Matthew can leave this unexplained because it was so familiar to the early church. Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:848.

⁶³⁸ This is my translation. The NRSV does not translate both the passives accordingly.

⁶³⁹ Bauckham, 'Earthquake,' 226. However, Matthew does not seem to reflect the notes of God's wrath in many of these texts. Nolland, *Matthew*, 1214.

be found in the stillness as much as the earthquakes, fires, and winds.⁶⁴⁰ However, connotations of judgment also accompany earthquakes. For example, Zech 14:4-5 speaks of the Mount of Olives splitting from an earthquake as the Lord goes about carrying out his judgment (cf. 2Bar. 32:1; 1En. 1:3-9; 102:2-3),⁶⁴¹ and Joel 2:10 includes the shaking of the earth as an expression of the fear of God's coming at judgment (cf. Matt 24:29; Isa 13:10). Moreover, an earthquake often accompanies the 'signs' before the End (2Bar. 27:7, 70:8, 4Ezra 9:3, Apoc. Abr. 30:6).⁶⁴² Perhaps, though, the earthquake that occurs with the image of the dry bones rising in Ezek 37:7 LXX is a fitting reference for the earthquake (σεισμός) and the dead coming out of the tombs in Matt 27:52-3.⁶⁴³ In addition, there is the description of the theophany at Sinai in Exod 19-20. In addition to the description of thick smoke,⁶⁴⁴ thunder and lightning (Exod 19:9, 16), the coming of the Lord is described as a descent in fire for which the 'whole mountain shook violently,' (Exod 19:18). In his study of the earthquakes in Revelation, Bauckham argues that while the earthquake in Exod 19:18 does not take a prominent position in the retelling of the Sinai theophany in Deut 5, the combination of all the signs is broadened to cover the whole Exodus event (Ps. 77:17 f., 68:8, 114, Isa. 64:3, Hab. 3), and by 4Ezra 3:18 the Sinai earthquake is now being described as a cosmic quake, 'you bend down the heavens and shook the earth, and moved the world, and made the depths to tremble.'⁶⁴⁵ For this reason, McDonald is correct in his assertion that the earthquake in Matt 27:51 is 'Matthew's code for an apocalyptic act of God.'⁶⁴⁶

2.4 Tombs are Opened

With more passives suggesting the activity of God (ἀνεώχθησαν, ἠγέρθησαν), Matthew introduces a particularly problematic passage, 'The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,' (Matt

⁶⁴⁰ DeVries, *1 Kings*, 236.

⁶⁴¹ In this case, it is against the Gentiles (Zech 14:3).

⁶⁴² Bauckham, 'Earthquake,' 225.

⁶⁴³ It is possible that this simply refers to the shaking of the bones as life is returned to them, but this does not preclude Matthew's reappropriation of the text. Grassi still thinks that Matt 27:51-53 is a strong indirect reference to Ezek 37. Grassi, 'Ezekiel,' 163.

⁶⁴⁴ Could this be darkness as conceived at the crucifixion?

⁶⁴⁵ Bauckham, 'Earthquake,' 225.

⁶⁴⁶ McDonald, *Resurrection*, 91.

27:52). While there is much discussion concerning the details of this strange event,⁶⁴⁷ Brown argues that Matthew is ‘deliberately vague,’ and the strength of Matt 27:52 lies in its ‘atmosphere.’ Brown refers to the opening of the tombs as evidence of the ‘awesome power of God’ and states that it is the ‘inbreaking of God’s power signifying the last times have begun.’⁶⁴⁸ Gurtner amends Brown’s thoughts by saying that it is not about God’s power generally, but specifically about his activity displayed at Jesus’ death. In particular, it demonstrates the life-giving nature of Jesus’ death.⁶⁴⁹ While Matt 27:52-3 continues to raise interesting questions, the focus for this thesis will remain largely on the narrative. In this light, it seems the raising of the holy ones suggests that the death of Jesus has altered the nature of death itself. Meanwhile, the future resurrection is foreshadowed and bound together with Jesus’ own resurrection through Matthew’s anachronistic annotation, ‘after his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many,’ (Matt 27:53).

2.5 Christology and Judgment

In a similar way to the Baptism (Matt 3:16-17) and Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-5), Jesus’ affirmation as the Son of God is accompanied by dramatic acts of God (cf. Matt 14:33). These apocalyptic images provide a cosmic perspective on Jesus’ life. In light of this, Matthew gives voice to the centurion, explaining that the soldier’s declaration is the result of his witnessing the apocalyptic events, ‘Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”’ (Matt 27:54).⁶⁵⁰ In Mark, this confession comes when they witness Jesus breathe his last (Mark 15:39). Instead of an observation on the manner of

⁶⁴⁷ See the summary of current research in Waters as well as the excursus in Hagner. Waters, ‘Collapse,’ 489-91, Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:850-52. See also Troxel, ‘Reconsidered,’ 30-47, Senior, ‘Holy Ones,’ 312-29. Some examples of this include a portrayal of the heavenly Jerusalem (Benoît), the saints raising to testify against Israel (Witherup). McNeil argues that there is only one earthquake (same one as Matt 28:2) and that the saints rise at the same time as Jesus. Benoît, *Passion*, 199-204, Witherup, ‘Saints,’ 574-85.

⁶⁴⁸ Brown, *Death*, 2:1126. Nolland, with regard to the tombs opening, argues that Matthew is ‘concerned here with proleptic manifestations of eschatological realities, not with the full substance of those realities.’ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1214.

⁶⁴⁹ Gurtner, *Veil*, 150.

⁶⁵⁰ Matthew also changes the number of those present. Brown argues for evidence of more than one witness, Gurtner calls this speculative. Brown, *Death*, 2:1143, Gurtner, *Veil*, 164.

Jesus' death, Matthew comments on the marvelous and dramatic events that follow his death.⁶⁵¹ For Matthew, the recognition of Jesus as the Son of God is connected to the demonstration of God's activity at Jesus' death. The identification that has largely eluded Jesus most of his life is affirmed at his death.⁶⁵² The centurion acknowledges the presence of deity and the evidence, as illustrated by Matthew, is enough to convince him of Jesus' divine sonship.⁶⁵³

3 THE ANGEL AT THE TOMB

After the events surrounding Jesus' death, Jesus' body was removed from the cross and prepared for burial (Matt 27:57-59). They placed his body in a tomb hewn from rock and rolled a great stone in front of the door (Matt 27:60). In Matt 27:62-66, Matthew alone describes the placement of a guard and sealing of the tomb to guarantee that no one can get in (cf. *Gos. Pet.* 28-33).⁶⁵⁴ After the Sabbath, the women go to see the tomb and witness the dramatic appearance of an angel of the Lord. Although Mark portrays a 'young man' in the tomb, Matthew expands on his heavenly messenger, depicting a grandiose arrival and reaction in a similar apocalyptic style to Matt 27:45-53. Moreover, Matthew's narrative of the events at the tomb directly calls attention to the acts of the angel.⁶⁵⁵ The women function as bookends to the narrative (arriving at the tomb, Matt 28:1; and leaving, Matt 28:8), while the angel and his message dominate the central part of the scene (Matt 28:2-7). In particular, Matt 28:2 describes the angelophany (a descent from heaven and the effect that this has upon the earth), Matt 28:3 describes his appearance, and Matt 28:4 portrays the guards' reaction to the angel. The next three verses comprise the angel's message in which he (1) addresses the women's fear (which Matthew never explicitly mentions), (2) reveals the message concerning Jesus, and

⁶⁵¹ Gurtner adds that the apocalyptic elements hint at the 'secret' in heaven that is integral to God's plan of salvation, a 'secret' that will soon be revealed in Matt 28 with the appearance of an angel and Jesus himself. Gurtner, *Veil*, 168. Since Jesus has already alluded to his raising, it seems difficult to think of it as his 'secret.'

⁶⁵² Nolland, *Matthew*, 1221.

⁶⁵³ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1220.

⁶⁵⁴ Crossan, *Cross*, 267-78.

⁶⁵⁵ Nothing suggests that this happened before the women arrived. Luz, *Matthew* 21-28, 3:595 n.42.

(3) commissions the women (Matt 28:7).⁶⁵⁶ The following discussion will look at the angel in Matthew by first investigating its relationship to the ‘young man’ in Mark 16:5. Secondly, the examination will demonstrate how the appearance of the angel illustrates the presence of God through his entrance, description, and message. Finally, the appearances of the angel of the Lord in Matt 1-2 and Matt 28 will be compared, revealing that Matthew may have used this final angelic encounter to further emphasize obedience and the validity of God’s message.

3.1 Mark’s Young Man as an Angel

In Mark’s Gospel, when the women reach the tomb and enter expecting to find Jesus, they find instead a young man dressed in a white robe (νεανίσκον . . . περιβεβλημένον στολήν λευκήν, Mark 16:5).⁶⁵⁷ While Mark never calls this individual an angel, the language and context suggest that this is a heavenly messenger. For example, in 2Macc 3, two young men appear in the temple (δύο προσεφάνησαν αὐτῷ νεανίαί) and are described as ‘remarkably strong, gloriously beautiful and splendidly dressed,’ (τῇ ῥώμῃ μὲν ἐκπρεπεῖς, κάλλιστοι δὲ τὴν δόξαν, διαπρεπεῖς δὲ τὴν περιβολήν, 2Macc 3:26). Their message is one that renders the one entering the treasury, Heliodorus, close to death (2Macc 3:31), after which they restore him to health at the request of the high priest, ‘the same young men appeared again to Heliodorus dressed in the same clothing,’ (2Macc 3:33). Josephus also uses the term to describe the form of the angel that appears to Manoah’s wife (*Ant.* 5.277). In the book of Tobit, Tobias addresses the undisclosed angel as ‘young man’ (νεανίσκε, Tob 5:5, 7, 10).⁶⁵⁸ Similarly, in the Shepherd of Hermas, the six young men that appear in the third vision are later identified as ‘holy angels of God,’ (*Herm. Vis.* III 1:6-8; 4:1; cf. *Vis.* I 4:1).⁶⁵⁹ While this shows that an angel can be called a ‘young man,’ it does not reciprocally indicate that a ‘young man’ is an angel. The number of times ‘young man’ refers to a person outnumbers that

⁶⁵⁶ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:591.

⁶⁵⁷ Luke describes two men in dazzling garments (ἐν ἐσθῇτι ἀστραπτύσῃ, Luke 24:4) and John portrays two angels in white sitting where Jesus used to lie (δύο ἄγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς, John 20:12). Some have argued that this is the same ‘young man’ that fled Mark’s scene of Jesus’ arrest, only clothed now (Mark 14:50). For an extended discussion, see Brown, *Death*, 299-304. And, for a larger bibliography, see Brown, *Death*, 238-39.

⁶⁵⁸ Recension S (as opposed to BA).

⁶⁵⁹ Nicklas, ‘Resurrection,’ 295.

referring to an angel.⁶⁶⁰ Notwithstanding the message delivered, the description of the being dressed in a white garment is far more indicative of a heavenly origin. This is most evident in the color of his garment, for white is the color evocative of heavenly glory. In Revelation, the heavenly righteous wear white (Rev 3:5; 4:4; 7:9, 1; cf. *Jos. Asen.* 5:6; Matt 13:43) and in Dan 7:9, the clothing of the Ancient of Days sitting on the throne is 'white as snow' (cf. *1En.* 14:19-20). While white clothes carry a variety of connotations,⁶⁶¹ the most likely association of white in Mark 16 is to angels that wear white (*1En.* 71:1; 87:2; 90:31-33). In 2Macc 11:8, one of the angelic horsemen is wearing white (cf. 2Macc 3:26) and seven heavenly men are in white clothing in *Test. Levi* 8:2. Acts 1:10 describes two men wearing white that appear after Jesus ascends into heaven. Furthermore, it is notable that the last time that 'white' was used in Mark was to describe the color of Jesus' clothes at the transfiguration, 'and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them,' (Mark 9:3).

Consequently, it does not necessitate a huge stretch for Matthew to speak of Mark's young man as an angel.⁶⁶² This change illustrates Matthew's penchant for appealing to traditions of angels to assist in his narrative. In addition, Nicklas suggests that one of the reasons that Mark may not have referred to an angel might be that in his narrative, he portrays the women running away in fear, telling no one. They misunderstand the message of Jesus' resurrection. The women 'saw' a young man and did not comprehend that this was an angel delivering a heavenly message.⁶⁶³ In Matthew, the women depart from the angel in both fear and joy with the intent to tell the disciples (Matt 28:8). In this way, by referring to the messenger as an angel, Matthew has coordinated the reference within the apocalyptic language and other narrative elements to indicate God is at work at Jesus' death and resurrection.

⁶⁶⁰ Over ninety times in the LXX.

⁶⁶¹ In addition, white and linen both play roles in religious settings outside Judaism. See Keener, *Matthew*, 700-01.

⁶⁶² Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 536. Jenkins argues that it is not conclusive the young man is an angel and that the white robe is more suggestive of the heavenly garb of martyrs. In light of this, his presence at the tomb is a challenge for Jesus' followers not to flee, but face death willingly. Jenkins, 'Young Man,' 239. On the other hand, Luz says that Matthew interpreted Mark correctly. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:592.

⁶⁶³ Nicklas, 'Resurrection,' 296. Keener, *Matthew*, 701.

3.2 The Appearance of the Angel of the Lord

Unlike Mark, who portrays the young man already in the tomb when the women arrive at the tomb (Mark 16:5), Matthew narrates the appearance of the angel, ‘And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it,’ (Matt 28:2). Matthew narrates a great earthquake (σεισμὸς μέγας), which occurs as an angel of the Lord descends.

The earthquake recalls the seismic activity at Jesus’ death and thus, in a similar fashion, demonstrates God’s activity.⁶⁶⁴ After the quiet of the Sabbath, God is now again at work.⁶⁶⁵ After descending, the angel of the Lord rolls away the stone in front of the tomb and sits upon it.⁶⁶⁶ Mark portrays the stone already rolled away, but Matthew clearly identifies both who opens the tomb and when this occurs. In Matthew, the narrative effect is greater than simply apologetic,⁶⁶⁷ for the size of the stone indicated in Matt 27:60 (λίθον μέγαν) suggests the great strength of the angel to have to roll it away. In light of the earthquake that accompanies the angel’s arrival and rolling of the stone, it could be seen that the angel shook the earth to roll the stone.⁶⁶⁸ Following the last reference to angels in Matt 26:53, where Jesus could have appealed to the Father for warrior angels, the image is quite striking – at least the guards in Matt 28:4 thought so. In addition, Matthew also indirectly provides an answer to the question posed by the women in Mark’s Gospel, which Matthew omits, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?’ (Mark 16:3). Unlike the angel in the infancy narratives, this angel descends in bodily form, not appearing in a dream as the angel did to Joseph (Matt 1:20; 2:13; 19). As a result the tangible result is that the angel’s entrance communicates his power and heavenly presence, one that is worthy of awe and fear.

⁶⁶⁴ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:595. However, Gurtner thinks that this particular earthquake does not carry with it the tones of judgment found in the seismic activity at Jesus’ death. Gurtner, *Veil*, 145.

⁶⁶⁵ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1247.

⁶⁶⁶ While Matthew has already spoken of an earthquake at Jesus’ death, this is not the only other use of the noun (Matt 8:24; 24:7; 27:54; 28:2; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11) and its cognate verb (Matt 21:10; 27:51, 54; cf. only Mark 13:8//Luke 21:11//Matt 24:7).

⁶⁶⁷ By placing a guard at the tomb and leaving the tomb closed until this point, Matthew could be answering objections to an empty tomb.

⁶⁶⁸ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1247.

Departing from his sparse description of the angel of the Lord in the infancy narrative, Matthew provides a description of the angel's appearance and expands Mark's 'white garment' to 'his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow,' (Matt 28:3; cf. Matt 13:46). Through his redaction, Matthew has drawn on more imagery that links this angel to the glory of heaven. For example, it is not unlike the description of the heavenly being in Daniel 10 who is dressed in linen and has a face like lightning (Dan 10:5-6; cf. Dan 12:6-7; Rev 15:6; 19:14; *L.A.B.* 9:10). In *1En.* 14:20, the Lord's garment is described as 'shining more brightly than the sun, it was whiter than any snow,' and at the end the author of the *Similitudes* describes the clothing of the angels as white and the 'light of their faces was like snow,' (*1En.* 71:1). The faces of two angels are described as like the shining sun in *2En.* 1:5 (longer recension). Ezekiel 10:4 describes the brightness of God's glory and *4Ezra* 10:25-27 speaks of the vision of the personified Zion as having a shining face flashing like lightning (cf. *T. Job* 3:1; 4:1). The shining of heavenly glory also is attributed to those who experience God's glory. In Exod 34:29-35, Moses' face is described as bright after his encounters with the presence of the Lord and in Dan 12:3, the righteous will shine in the resurrection (cf. *4Ezra* 7:97; *2Bar.* 51.3).⁶⁶⁹ Although Matthew's only overlap with Mark's description is in the color of 'white', the similar thrust suggests that Matthew may have had in mind a connection between the two accounts of heavenly glory.⁶⁷⁰ Consequently, the description of the angel indicates that he has come from the realm of the glory of the Lord and is acting for and in the power of God.⁶⁷¹ Thus, Nolland rightly observes that the presence of the angel and his exalted description point 'in turn to the exalted significance of Jesus himself.'⁶⁷²

Because of the angel and his dramatic entrance, the guards at the tomb tremble and faint out of fear, or more literally, 'become like the dead,' (ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ

⁶⁶⁹ It is ironic that both darkness and light can be indicative of God's presence. Nevertheless, it is possible that there is a contrast being made between the darkness at Jesus' death and light at the angel's presence.

⁶⁷⁰ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1247.

⁶⁷¹ Nicklas, 'Resurrection,' 300. Nolland, *Matthew*, 1248.

⁶⁷² Nolland, *Matthew*, 1248. Additionally, this recalls Matt 16:1-4 in which the Pharisees request from Jesus a sign from heaven. Jesus instead refers to his resurrection, 'An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah,' (Matt 16:4). Luz, *Matthew* 21-28, 3:595.

φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθησαν οἱ τηροῦντες καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροί, Matt 28:4).⁶⁷³

The irony in this verse is rich; after trembling (σειώ) at the angel's shaking of the earth (σεισμός), those in charge of guarding the dead become like the dead themselves. While the debilitation of the guards explains the ability of the women to approach the tomb, it also illustrates the spectacular nature of the angel's arrival and appearance (cf. John 18:6). Luz sees these events as important for Matthew's portrayal of the resurrection, for it shows that 'God himself actually acted with clear, visible, and traceable consequences.' This, he argues, is why Matthew describes the angel and his activity, it is an 'unmistakable sign that God is at work here.'⁶⁷⁴ Following the events surrounding Jesus' death, Matthew's portrayal of the angel at the tomb further reinforces the eschatological significance of the resurrection.⁶⁷⁵ With the guards disabled and the tomb open, the angel now delivers a message.

3.3 The Message of the Angel at the Tomb (Matt 28:5-7)

In Matthew, the women remain silent for the entire narrative; it is only the angel of the Lord that speaks in Matt 28:1-8 (cf. Matt 28:9-10, 16-20).⁶⁷⁶ As in the infancy narratives, the angel of the Lord demonstrates the work of God in Jesus' life when he announces the meaning of events and gives instructions on how to respond. The only times that Matthew has an angel deliver a spoken message, the angel is identified as an angel of the Lord (Matt 1:20; 2:13, 19; 28:2-7). By referring to this angel in this manner, Matthew has drawn a connection to the infancy narratives and used a tradition that suggests a personal message coming from the Lord himself. As in the infancy narrative, this specifically calls attention to the important content of the message and its significance to God's plan.⁶⁷⁷ Similarly, the message has weight in the narrative itself, for it says as much to the reader as

⁶⁷³ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:869. Fear is not an uncommon response to such an angelophany (cf. Dan 10:7 and 2En. 1:7). See Stuckenbruck, *Veneration*, 75-103.

⁶⁷⁴ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:596.

⁶⁷⁵ Nicklas, 'Resurrection,' 300.

⁶⁷⁶ Mark, on the other hand, has the women say to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" which Matthew omits (Mark 16:3).

⁶⁷⁷ Luz accurately refers to this as 'the most important part of this text.' Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 604.

it does to the ones receiving the message. For Matthew, the message at the tomb is one that cannot be discovered nor inferred, it must come from a credible source.

In the first words of the angel, Matthew changes Mark's 'Do not be alarmed' (μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε) to 'Do not be afraid' (μὴ φοβεῖσθε). While this is frequently an introductory comment by angels to their addressees, Matthew uses 'fear' to tie his message to his effect on the guards and to calm the women. The angel in Matt 28 qualifies his instruction with his knowledge that the women's purpose at the tomb differs from that of the guards, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified,' (Matt 28:5).⁶⁷⁸ They are not to be afraid in the same way that the guards were. In this way, Matthew commends the women for their pursuit of Jesus.⁶⁷⁹

The angel then announces the resurrection (Matt 28:6) and issues a series of commands to the women, 'come,' 'see,' and 'go,' 'say,' (Matt 28:7).⁶⁸⁰ The women are to come and see the place where Jesus used to be, and then, go and tell Jesus' disciples that he has been raised and is going ahead of them to Galilee where they will see him. In light of the first pair of commands, the angel did not open the tomb so that Jesus may exit, but so the women may see that the tomb is empty.⁶⁸¹ At the heart of the angel's commands to the women is the declaration that Jesus has risen from the dead, 'He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said [καθὼς εἶπεν],' (Matt 28:7). Matthew has moved the final line of the angel's message in Mark, 'just as he said,' to the announcement of Jesus' resurrection (Matt 28:7). Instead of Mark's declaration that Jesus has gone to Galilee 'just as he said,' Matthew calls attention to Jesus' expectation of the work of God (ἡγέρθη).⁶⁸² Instead of alluding to a comment Jesus made in Gethsemane (Mark 14:28; cf. Matt 26:32), Matthew emphasizes the resurrection and Jesus' several predictions of it (Matt 16:21; 17:22-23, 20:18-19). Consequently, he draws together the earthly Jesus and the one resurrected, connecting Jesus' ministry as Emmanuel and the one who is present till the end of the age (Matt 1:23; 28:20). The importance of this point

⁶⁷⁸ This is my translation, for the NRSV omits the explanatory γάρ.

⁶⁷⁹ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1249.

⁶⁸⁰ The aorist participle, πορευθεῖσαι, carries the force of the surrounding imperatives. Wallace, *Grammar*, 640-45. Furthermore, even if it did not balance the pairing, it is more awkward to think of πορευθεῖσαι as an adverbial participle, 'After you go quickly, say.' Nolland, *Matthew*, 1250.

⁶⁸¹ Nevertheless, when the angel finishes, the women leave with great haste, never looking in the tomb as instructed.

⁶⁸² Note the use of the passive again, indicating the activity of God.

can sometimes eclipse the fact that it comes through the angel at the tomb. As an angel of the Lord sent from God it is accepted that he knows what Jesus said and can effectively communicate its significance.

Then, only after the angel finishes his instructions to the women, does he remind them of his prediction that Jesus goes ahead of them to Galilee.⁶⁸³ At the end of the angel's message, Matthew has the angel finish with a declaration to the women that these words are his, 'Behold I say this to you.' This reminds the reader of the angel as the messenger, for these are the words of the angel of the Lord, God's chosen delivery agent. In Matthew's own style, he has unambiguously declared the heavenly origin of this message.⁶⁸⁴

Through his portrayal of an angel of the Lord at the tomb, Matthew demonstrates a loose parallel with Peter's declaration of faith in Matt 16:16. Jesus' response to Peter indicates that his disciples' understanding of Jesus is not something that he figured out on his own, but had a heavenly origin, 'flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven,' (Matt 16:17; cf. Matt 11:27). In this way, the women's response to the news is directly related to the messenger whose heavenly origin Matthew has made dramatically clear (Matt 28:2-4).

At this point, the only evidence of the resurrection is the angel's report that Jesus has been raised. The tomb is open and empty, but Matthew does not depict the women ever looking in. Instead, they depart quickly after the angel speaks (Matt 28:8). With the focus on the message, Matthew has chosen to authenticate this report in a very dramatic fashion. He has used apocalyptic motifs (darkness, earthquakes, tombs opening, fear) and the tradition of an angel of the Lord to testify to the hearers that this announcement is authentic, 'Jesus is not here for he has risen,' (Matt 28:6, 7). In this manner, the angel is not simply an accessory; he is crucial for Matthew's portrayal of the substance of the resurrection. It is his message that opens the eyes of the women while it remains hidden from the unconscious guards.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸³ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:597.

⁶⁸⁴ This also separates the message from that which Jesus will soon deliver to the women. Hagner adds that this also lends authority to the angel's words. Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:870.

⁶⁸⁵ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:597.

3.4 The Angel of the Lord in Matt 28 Compared to Matt 1-2

In the infancy narrative, the angelic message announced the birth of Jesus and maneuvered Joseph and his family out of harm's way.⁶⁸⁶ Perhaps more importantly, the message demonstrated the significance of the fulfillment of the prophets through Joseph's actions, reflecting the hand of God at work in the life of Jesus, even in his infancy. While Matthew could have referred to Mark's 'young man' as an 'angel,' Matthew instead calls this messenger an 'angel of the Lord.' By doing so, Matthew connects the angel in Matt 28 to the angel in Matt 1-2.⁶⁸⁷ Moreover, the similar function of the message and the same reference to an angel of the Lord seems to reflect a similar motif of fulfillment and manifestation of God's activity. Instead of demonstrating all the connections between the narratives of Matt 1-2 and Matt 28,⁶⁸⁸ the following discussion will focus on how Matthew has portrayed the responses to the angel and his messages.

In the infancy narratives, one of the crucial roles of the messenger was to offer instruction in anticipation of the righteous and obedient response by Joseph. Joseph's actions placed Jesus out of harm and illustrated that God was instrumental in bringing about his plan for his people. This included the significance of Jesus' name (Matt 1:20-21), escaping Herod's wrath (Matt 2:13), and moving to Galilee (Matt 2:19-20). In conjunction with the fulfillment prophecies, this foreshadows the significance of the identity of Jesus for Matthew's Gospel.⁶⁸⁹ Consequently, it might be expected that Matthew's use of an angel of the Lord would invoke a similar pattern. However, Matthew deviates from it slightly.

To begin, Matthew does not portray the women responding with the same level of verbatim obedience as Joseph. In Matt 1-2, there was much correlation between the angel's message and Joseph's actions. If Matthew indicated that the

⁶⁸⁶ The message centers on the resurrection of Jesus, but it is also interesting to note that the majority of the angel's message concerns the whereabouts of Jesus: 'He is not here', 'he goes ahead of you to Galilee.' This seems to direct the attention of the reader to the appearances and message Jesus' delivers in Matt 28:16-20. This could be compared to Stendahl's article on the where and who of the infancy narratives. Stendahl, 'Quis et Unde.'

⁶⁸⁷ Nicklas, 'Resurrection,' 298-99. Nolland notes the different uses of 'do not be afraid' by the angels in Matt 1:20 and Matt 28:5, but its repetition nevertheless suggests a connection. Nolland, *Matthew*, 1248.

⁶⁸⁸ For a list of sources that compare Matt 1-2 with Matt 27-28, see Kupp, *Emmanuel*, 111.

⁶⁸⁹ Powell, 'Characterization,' 166.

angel said, ‘Get up and go’, then he also said that Joseph, ‘Got up and went’.⁶⁹⁰ In Matt 28:5-7, the angel instructs the women to not be afraid and to come and see. There is no indication they ever enter the tomb, and thus the women completely neglect the angel’s instruction to come and see. Despite this ‘disobedience,’ Matthew shows that the basis for the women’s faith is founded on the announcement of Jesus’ resurrection, not the ‘fact’ of the empty tomb.⁶⁹¹ Next, despite having been told to not be afraid, they leave the tomb quickly, never completely abandoning their fear (Matt 28:8; cf. Matt 28:7). If the dramatic angelic encounter the women experience is compared to the angel’s appearances to a slumbering Joseph (Matt 1:20; 2:13, 19), then Matthew’s portrayal of the women’s departure in fear need not be considered significant. Moreover, this is complemented by Matthew’s indication that the angel carries a message of joy.⁶⁹² Nevertheless, having never looked in the tomb to witness Jesus’ absence, the women experience Jesus’ presence when he meets them on their way to the disciples (Matt 28:9).⁶⁹³ The women’s faith, demonstrated by their response to the angel, is confirmed by the risen Jesus himself.

4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it was argued that the angel of the Lord at the tomb was one of the many elements that Matthew employed to demonstrate the presence and activity of God at Jesus’ death and resurrection. Furthermore, being the only angel to speak in the Gospel, the angel of the Lord is a unique messenger to Matthew, bearing the full authority of God’s own word. As a heavenly being, he fittingly announces the news of the resurrection, highlighting the authenticity of the report of Jesus’ resurrection and the instruction to meet Jesus in Galilee. Moreover, the appearance of the angel, a message, and an immediate response is

⁶⁹⁰ For examples of the second and third appearances, please refer to the chart in the chapter on Matt 1-2.

⁶⁹¹ In John 20:24-29, it is never revealed whether or not Thomas touches Jesus. On the other hand, John 20:8 indicates the empty tomb elicits faith. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:597.

⁶⁹² This is dramatically different to Mark’s Gospel where the women depart and tell no one anything because they were afraid (Mark 16:7-8). In addition, the magi react with great joy when the star stops over the location of Jesus (Matt 2:10).

⁶⁹³ Matt announces the significance of this meeting with his typical ἰδοὺ.

very similar to the actions of the angel and Joseph in the infancy narrative (Matt 1-2). For this reason, the chapter concludes with a comparison of the two accounts, showing that once again the messenger contributes significantly to the immediacy and obedience of the recipients' response.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

This thesis has provided enough evidence to suggest confidently that Matthew's portrayal of angels is instrumental in communicating the three points introduced in the first chapter. To recapitulate, Matthew's use of angels in his narrative (1) helps convey Jesus, the Son of Man, as the authoritative eschatological judge, (2) expresses God's presence in Jesus' life, and (3) contributes to the heavenly character of Matthew's apocalyptic worldview.

Now that all the references to angels in Matthew have been examined, it is possible to construct a Matthean angelology by grouping the common uses of angels together to analyze the patterns and contributions to Matthew's Gospel. However, it can be said that Matthew does not make a direct statement on angels, for his references to angels are dependent upon their relationship to the pericopae in which they appear. These may be about the Son of Man and the Parousia, judgment, God's message, resurrection, a disciple's value, or angelic assistance. He does not directly explain what angels are, who they are, or how they relate to the Father, Jesus, or humans. Matthew simply assumes their existence and relies upon traditions of angels to elucidate what he is saying. By reflecting angel traditions, Matthew both preserves these traditions and at the same time redefines an understanding of angels in relationship to Jesus and the early church by placing them in his narrative. In this way, Matthew's angelology, while not explicit, is important for an early portrait of Jesus and his followers. It would be naive to say that angels are the only way in which Matthew has communicated something about his Christology. Equally so, it would also be unfair to Matthew to say that they did not play a role in the way that he portrayed Jesus and the way that God interacted with the world.

In light of this, a summary of the exegetical sections is offered, grouped by theme, rather than in a narrative order, with a view toward illuminating what Matthew says about angels, Jesus, his worldview, and the early church.

1 SUMMARY

1.1 Son of Man as Authoritative Eschatological Judge

Of all the ways that Matthew has orchestrated his use of angels in his Gospel, his portrayal of the Son of Man with the angels is one of the most distinct, and, indeed, unique to him. This is most evident in his addition of the personal pronoun ‘his’ (αὐτοῦ) to references of angels in both his material and that taken from Mark. With this small word and other redactional changes that emphasize judgment, Matthew has altered his portrayal of the Son of Man and the Parousia. At the end of the age, the Son of Man does not arrive by himself or with a nondescript category of angels, but the angels that accompany the Son of Man are those that are considered ‘his.’ No other Gospel writer has adapted these two concepts in the way that is represented in Matthew.⁶⁹⁴ The result is a picture of the Son of Man as a heavenly and authoritative eschatological judge. The discussion that follows is a brief review of five passages that demonstrate this use of angels in Matthew’s Gospel.

Matthew first introduces this concept in the explanation to his Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:36-43), the second of the seven parables that comprise Matthew’s parable discourse in chapter 13. In the explanation of the parable to the disciples, Jesus reveals that the parable concerns the final judgment, ‘Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age’ (Matt 13:40). Then, the Son of Man will send his angels to gather up out of his kingdom all causes of sin and evildoers (Matt 13:41). Using vivid imagery, Matthew paints a portrait of two fates. The wicked are bound and tossed into a furnace of fire while the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father (Matt 13:42-

⁶⁹⁴ Outside of the Gospels, the same language of Jesus with his angels at the Parousia appears only in 2Thess 1:7. In Rev 1:1 and 22:16, the angel that reveals the revelation to John is referred to as Jesus’ angel.

43). In this passage, Matthews seems to be drawing upon traditions that place angels in scenes of judgment. While the Old Testament occasionally portrays angels as carrying out punishment for the Lord, the development of apocalypticism and delayed divine retribution reveals a variety of traditions in which angels are depicted as gathering, separating, and even performing the punishment themselves. In the dramatic event portrayed in this parable's explanation, the language of the Son of Man sending (ἀποστέλλω) his angels on this task into his kingdom suggests an important point for Matthew. The Son of Man is illustrated as the eschatological judge supported by the angels at the final judgment, who gather and execute punishment at the command of the Son of Man. For Matthew, this is relevant for his parable and his view of the kingdom. The eschatological actions of the Son of Man and angels emphasize the finality of the future judgment and the resulting influence this should have on one's actions in the present. By keeping in mind the final fates of the wheat and the weeds, Matthew suggests that one should live one's life in faith and deed so as to be considered among the wheat. In addition, the picture painted in the explanation of the Parable of the Weeds incorporates the fullest depiction of the activity of the Son of Man and angels. While the other references do not bear a similar amount of detail, Matthew's pattern of interest concerning angels and the Son of Man suggest they be read together. Collectively, they bolster Matthew's portrayal of this aspect of Jesus as the Son of Man.

For example, the final parable in the discourse of Matt 13, also unique to Matthew,⁶⁹⁵ portrays angels in a similar role, this time gathering and separating the good (τὰ καλὰ) and bad (τὰ σαπρά)⁶⁹⁶ caught in a drag-net (Matt 13:48-49). While the parable does not include the Son of Man, he need not appear in the text for his presence to be implied. Mirroring the more comprehensive description in the Parable of the Weeds, the Parable of the Net invokes the angels' activity at the end of the age to illustrate the consequences of decisions in the present.

The confession of Peter at Caesarea and the following instruction on discipleship offer another look at the Son of Man and angels. Unlike the angels in

⁶⁹⁵ Both of the Parables of the Weeds and of the Net are unique to Matthew among the canonical gospels (cf. *Gos. Thom.* 8; 57) and draw the attention to finality of the final judgment and action of the judge, the Son of Man.

⁶⁹⁶ 'Fish' are never mentioned, only implied by use of the net.

the two parables in Matthew 13, the angels in Matt 16:27 are not described explicitly as having a particular task. When Matthew's Gospel is read as a whole, the description of the angels' activity in the parables (and later in Matt 24:30) suggests that the angels' presence with the Son of Man here includes their role in the final judgment. Even if this is implied, the picture Matthew paints of the final act portrays the Son of Man arriving with a retinue of his angels, an image Matthew connects to discipleship. Anyone who desires to come after Jesus must deny himself, take up his cross and follow him (Matt 16:24). The result of such self-denial and discipleship culminates when the Son of Man comes in the glory of his Father with his angels. At that time, he will render to each according to how they have lived their lives (τότε ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ, Matt 16:27). Matthew's strong redactional hand in this Markan passage centers the emphasis on the coming of the Son of Man and his role as judge. The eschatological element of discipleship in this passage focuses on the suffering of the disciples as they follow Jesus. Reminiscent of the missionary discourse of chapter 10 and the eschatological discourse of chapters 24 and 25, Matthew describes the suffering, persecution, and sacrifice as a result of choosing to follow Jesus. Here, Matthew illuminates the eschatological values and reversal through his portrait of the coming of the Son of Man. Situated between the first passion prediction and the transfiguration's foreshadowing of Jesus' future glory, Matthew indicates that a disciple's own suffering and glory is bound to Jesus, the Son of Man. The very one who suffers on the cross and whom the disciples are asked to follow (Matt 16:24) is also the one who commands an accompanying heavenly host at the close of the age (Matt 13:41; cf. Matt 24:30). This is significant for Matt 16:13-28, for Matthew draws together the suffering and exaltation of the Son of Man. Often, the different sayings regarding the Son of Man are divided into three separate groups: those that refer to Jesus' present ministry, to his suffering, and to his future eschatological state. However, the exaltation of the Son of Man with angels seems to place an emphasis on the resurrected Jesus that can be read back into an understanding of the earthly Jesus. As a result, the two, the resurrected and earthly Jesus, need not be held in tension chronologically since Matthew's understanding of the earthly Jesus can be seen through the lens of the post-Easter Jesus. Thus, Matthew does not appear to view the categories as separate, but holds

the suffering in tension with the exaltation so that the glorified Christ is in view on the cross and in a disciple's choice to follow Jesus.⁶⁹⁷

In the eschatological discourse, Matthew paints a picture of the arrival of the Son of Man at the end of the age and the times surrounding it (Matt 24:3-25:46). For Matthew, there is no mistaking his arrival. The sun will be darkened, the stars will fall from heaven, and the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven (Matt 24:29-31). Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matt 24:30). The fanfare will be accompanied by the sending out of his angels with a loud trumpet call to gather the elect. The portrayal of the Son of Man and the angels is very much like what has been seen in the references to the Son of Man and angels already discussed (Matt 13:41, 13:49, and Matt 16:27). Like the previous references, the angels are again described uniquely as 'his angels.' Once more, Matthew has decided to demonstrate the authority of the Son of Man with his entourage of angels. Furthermore, the angels are commanded by the Son of Man, being sent out to collect the righteous. The change of context has also altered the recipients of the angels' actions. In Matt 24:31, the righteous are the ones collected. In the midst of their trials and suffering, the coming of the Son of Man is a sign of rescue. Similar to Matt 16:24-28, one's relationship to Jesus, the Son of Man, is one that has eschatological consequences (cf. Matt 10:32-33).

Matthew's portrait of the angels and the Son of Man reaches its zenith in the portrayal of the final judgment at the very end of the eschatological discourse – the so-called Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt 25:31-46). This scene is introduced with more majesty and celestial pomp than any of the other preceding references to the arrival of the Son of Man: 'When the Son of Man comes in *his* glory, and *all* the angels with him, then he will sit on *his* glorious throne' (Matt 25:31).⁶⁹⁸ Matthew decides not to refer to the angels as 'his' but instead describes the arrival of the Son of Man as accompanied by all of the angels. In this final passage before the passion narrative, the glory of Jesus sits in tangible tension with the suffering and darkness that accompanies Jesus' death.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁷ Luz, 'Judge,' 9.

⁶⁹⁸ Emphasis added.

⁶⁹⁹ In light of the portrait of the Son of Man over the angels, it is likely that Matthew had good reason to change Matt 10:32-33 to portray Jesus standing before the Father in heaven than have his

To review, by portraying the angels as those under the command of the Son of Man, the five passages discussed have worked cohesively within the narrative to communicate a portrait of the Son of Man as an authoritative eschatological judge. The angels' presence at the coming of the Son of Man is evocative of his majesty, and their role in gathering at the final judgment emphasizes Matthew's interest in the theme of judgment and the Son of Man as judge. It has also been suggested that the use of angels with regard to the Son of Man has influenced Matthew's eschatological paraenesis by vividly portraying the events and finality of the future judgment for both the righteous and the wicked (Matt 10:32-33). In addition, Matthew's exalted Son of Man is juxtaposed with an earthly and suffering Son of Man. While Matthew presents the earthly Jesus as meek, one that does not crave power (cf. Matt 4:1-11),⁷⁰⁰ those that understand and who have ears to hear are able to see Jesus also as the authoritative eschatological judge.

Having briefly discussed angels as a significant element in Matthew's portrait of Jesus as the Son of Man, the conclusion will turn to address a second outcome of Matthew's use of angels in his Gospel, namely how the presence of God manifested through angels further reveals Matthew's portrait of Jesus. Matthew has chosen to place these references at the beginning and end of Jesus' life and ministry and so the discussion will include the events of Jesus' birth, temptation, arrest, and resurrection.

1.2 God at Work in Jesus' Life

Matthew, in particular, has a strong interest in the way God's presence is manifested in Jesus. This can be seen most clearly in Matthew's reference to Jesus as Emmanuel, God with us, and in the final words of the Gospel in which Jesus promises, 'I will be with you always, to the close of the age.' In addition, Matthew's intent to demonstrate that God was active and present in the life of Jesus can also be seen in his portrayal of angels at significant points in his narrative of Jesus' life. In each of these events, Matthew shaped his portrait of Jesus with angel traditions.

text indicate it was the Son of Man before angels of God (Luke 12:8-9). See the Appendix for a full discussion.

⁷⁰⁰ See Müller, 'Figure,' 168.

In the birth narratives (Matt 1:18-2:23), Matthew draws on the tradition of the angel of the Lord, a unique and important angel in the Old Testament and Second Temple literature. Three times the angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream and gives him instructions (Matt 1:20-21; 2:13, 19-20). Each dream is followed by a prompt and obedient response, which in turn is instrumental in the fulfillment of an Old Testament Scripture (Matt 1:22-23; 2:15, 23). In the Old Testament, when the angel of the Lord appears, he delivers a specific message from the Lord himself. At times, the differentiation between the angel and the Lord speaking all but disappears.⁷⁰¹

It was argued that Matthew reflects on this characteristic of the angel of the Lord tradition to communicate the authority and origin of the messages to Joseph.⁷⁰² As a result, these messages carry significance for Matthew as they reveal the hand of God at work in Jesus' life, announcing the significance of Jesus' life through his name, 'you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins,' (Matt 1:21), and guiding him and his family away from danger on a journey that paralleled Israel's own (out of Egypt and to the land of Israel). The result of Matthew's portrayal of the angel's presence communicates God's activity and interest in the life of Jesus very early in his Gospel's narrative. In his own style, Matthew takes the tradition of the angel of the Lord (and other angelophanic birth announcements), and foreshadows the importance and unique identity of this child as the Son of God.

While no angels appear at the baptism of Jesus, it is worth noting that the theme of God's activity continues. At the baptism, the heavens split open, the spirit comes down as a dove, and a voice from heaven announces, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, in whom I am well pleased' (Matt 3:17). The significance of this declaration is brought to the forefront in the testing that immediately follows the baptism. Jesus is driven into the wilderness by the Spirit and is tempted by the devil (Matt 4:1). After forty days, Jesus is tested three times. In the second temptation, Jesus is taken to the top of the temple and challenged, 'Since you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you," and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not

⁷⁰¹ For example, the angel of the Lord (מלאך יהוה) appears to Moses in the burning bush, but God (אלהים) calls out to him (Exod 3:4).

⁷⁰² Perhaps the magi as well are visited by the angel (Matt 2:12).

dash your foot against a stone” (Matt 4:6). The devil taunts Jesus with Psalm 91’s promise of angelic assistance in the time of need. Compared to the angel in the infancy narratives, Matthew offers a different scenario concerning God’s presence and Jesus’ understanding of the heavenly words spoken at his baptism. Despite the promise of an angelic ‘safety-net’, Matthew defines Jesus’ identity as rooted in obedience to the will of the Father, and not dependent upon angelic assistance. After the third refusal to succumb to the devil’s advances, Matthew describes Jesus commanding the devil to depart. Subsequently, as if in response to Jesus’ faithfulness throughout the testing, angels come to Jesus and serve him. While the angels’ activity can be seen as tending to the physical needs of Jesus’ fast in the wilderness, it was argued that Matthew may have a more developed understanding of this angelic visit. Through the addition of the angels coming (προσέρχονται) to Jesus and in light of the presentation of angels under the command of Jesus the Son of Man at the final judgment, Matthew’s portrait of the angels serving (διακονέω) Jesus can be viewed as indicative of Jesus’ cosmological identity and confirmation of God’s activity and presence in Jesus’ life.

Near the end of the Gospel, when the Last Supper is completed and Jesus and the disciples are in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is tested again in a similar fashion to the temptation narrative. After Jesus has gone off three times to pray, asking God if the cup may pass from before him and declaring his obedience, Judas approaches with a large armed crowd (Matt 26:36-46). When they seize Jesus, one of the disciples reacts impulsively, lopping off the ear of the high priest’s servant. Jesus, turning to his disciple, says, ‘Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels’ (Matt 26:53). While reflecting traditions of protecting angels evidenced in the temptation narrative, Matthew also capitalizes on traditions that portray angels as warriors at God’s command. This includes traditions of an apocalyptic holy war and even the frequently cited Old Testament description of the sole angel that destroyed 185,000 Assyrians single-handedly. If this is what one angel can do, and if a legion is about 6000 troops, Matthew certainly creates a striking image with the possibility of 72,000 angels appearing! Jesus’ response indicates that had he known that this was not the Father’s will, he could have appealed to the Father and

thousands of angels would have made short work of those attempting to obstruct Jesus. Using these angel traditions, Matthew makes a unique and dramatic statement regarding Jesus' journey to the cross. He goes obediently, and he goes alone, for he alone will save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). Comparatively, Matthew does not suggest the absence or abandonment of God, for he portrays Jesus admitting that angels are at the ready had the Father wanted otherwise. Consequently, Matthew demonstrates the activity of God behind the scenes while Jesus goes to the cross, obediently following the will of God.⁷⁰³

If the arrest scene describes the presence of God 'quietly' behind the scenes, then Matthew's uniquely apocalyptic portrayal of the death and resurrection are a different story.⁷⁰⁴ At Jesus' death, darkness envelops the land, the earth shakes, tombs are split open, and the righteous dead are raised so that they may go into the holy city after Jesus' resurrection, bearing witness of his raising (Matt 27:45-53). Matthew even changes Mark so that the centurion's declaration, 'Truly this man was God's Son!' is in response to witnessing these dramatic events (Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39). The eschatological and apocalyptic language continues at the tomb. On the third day, an angel of the Lord descends from heaven, shaking the earth, rolling back the stone that blocked the entrance to the tomb, and sits upon the stone triumphantly. Unlike any other time in his Gospel, Matthew describes the appearance of the angel: 'His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow' (Matt 28:3). While the apocalyptic drama inspired the centurion to confess Jesus as the Son of God, the spectacular events at the tomb have a different effect on the soldiers. Stationed at the tomb to guard the dead body of Jesus, they faint out of fear of the angel, becoming like dead men themselves (Matt 28:4). In this appearance, Matthew blends apocalyptic elements with the traditions of the angel of the Lord already referred to in the infancy narratives, for the arrival of the angel was to bring a message to the women at the tomb. Moreover, the description of the angel in apocalyptic language evokes the apocalyptic concept of the inbreaking of God into history and communicates the significance and cosmic

⁷⁰³ Matthew shows Jesus himself as living out his own teaching, turning the other cheek, loving one's enemy, pursuing righteousness, loving God, and remaining obedient.

⁷⁰⁴ In a way similar to the infancy narratives, the activity of God is revealed with the use of angels and other apocalyptic and eschatological elements. Matthew incorporates much of Mark in his passion and resurrection narratives, but quenches any doubts that these events have divine importance.

victory of the resurrection. The women are told that Jesus has been raised from the dead and they are instructed to report this to Jesus' disciples. As he does with Joseph in the infancy narratives, Matthew describes the women responding obediently to the angel's message, embracing the content of the revelation with 'great joy and fear' (Matt 28:8; cf. 2:10). In both the infancy and resurrection narratives, Matthew has chosen the appropriate messenger to convey the divine origin and significance of this message.

1.3 Matthew's Cosmology/ Worldview

Not all of the references to angels in Matthew fit as neatly into categories as have the ones already discussed. While a completely systematic approach to Matthew's presentation of angels in his Gospel is not required, these remaining references demonstrate the ease with which Matthew could include angels in his cosmology and Gospel narrative. This does not suggest that only these references communicate Matthew's worldview, for all of the angels in Matthew's Gospel contribute. As the following summary will illustrate, these passages communicate a worldview that contributes to the significance of the other references.⁷⁰⁵

In Matt 18:10, the Parable of the Stray Sheep (Matt 18:12-14) is introduced with a command not to look down on 'one of the little ones' for 'in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven' (Matt 18:10). In this uniquely Matthean verse, the linking of angels to the disciples is the explanation for avoiding treating the 'little ones' with contempt. While the language of the personal pronoun appears similar to that of the use of the Son of Man, the context is significantly different. The angels are not at the disciples' command or accompanying the 'little ones' but are in the presence of the Father in heaven (διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς). As a result, it was concluded that Matthew drew upon aspects from angelic traditions of intercession, guardians, and angels of presence to argue that the 'little ones' had extreme value to the Father. By drawing upon his worldview and revealing that angels were connected to the 'little ones,' the reference to angels qualifies the prohibition of

⁷⁰⁵ Matthew has incorporated two of the references from Mark (Matt 22:30; 24:36; par. Mark 12:25; 13:32), the others are unique to Matthew (Matt 18:10; 25:43).

treating the 'little ones' with contempt and aptly introduces the parable of the loving care of the shepherd for his 'sheep' (Matt 18:11-14).

The contribution of angels to Matthew's worldview is also witnessed in Matt 22:30 where the state of the resurrected is compared to that of the angels.⁷⁰⁶ When the Sadducees challenge Jesus with a riddle concerning the law of levirate marriage, Jesus responds by turning their question on its head, 'You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven' (Matt 22:29-30). In Matthew, Jesus approaches the question of marriage in the resurrection by appealing to the state of angels. While the verse shows evidence of traditions concerning angels' marriage-less state and their heavenly origin, it is more significant that the angels represent a heavenly life different from that found on earth. Consequently, earthly concerns, such as those of the Sadducees, will not be important compared to life in the resurrection.

In the eschatological discourse (Matt 24:3-25:46), Matthew makes the point that the coming of the Son of Man will be both sudden and unpredictable. As a result, regular life will be interrupted and thus a disciple should live his life faithfully, expecting paradoxically both a long wait and an immediate return. One of the ways that Matthew argues for this is through traditions of angels' partaking in the divine mysteries, even though in this instance, they remain ignorant: '[B]ut about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father' (Matt 24:53). Although the angels do not know when the Son of Man is coming, the expectation is that they would be among the group that should know. In this way, the portrait of angels within Matthew's worldview helps establish that the Father alone knows the time.⁷⁰⁷

For the final reference to angels in this summary, the discussion returns to the portrayal of the final judgment at the end of the eschatological discourse in which the Son of Man is with all the angels. From his glorious throne, the Son of Man separates the righteous and the wicked, pronouncing judgment (Matt

⁷⁰⁶ This is the only passage Matthew does not significantly redact Mark. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Matthew did not express interest in his portrayal of angels. Since Matthew has redacted all of the other references to angels, his lack of editing suggests that this passage was important to Matthew as it was received.

⁷⁰⁷ The emphasis on the Father in Matt 24:36 is further illustrated by Matthew's addition of *μόνος* so that it is clear that the Father alone knows the time.

25:34).⁷⁰⁸ To the righteous, he invites them to ‘inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’ (Matt 25:34) but the wicked are sent away ‘into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’ (Matt 25:41). Although the description of angels with the devil seems contrary to the portrait of the Son of Man and his angels, the narrative implies that the Son of Man is in a position of authority over the devil and his angels. Moreover, Matt 25:41 is evidence also of the cosmic conflict centered on Jesus.⁷⁰⁹

From the evidence presented, it can be seen that angels play a significant role in the Gospel of Matthew. Even though they could be considered one of Matthew’s minor characters, they play a significant role in communicating particular themes within his narrative.

2 FINAL THOUGHTS

2.1 Matthew, Angels, and Apocalyptic

As has already been discussed, angels are a common element in apocalyptic literature and thus, Matthew’s handling of angels may offer some insight into the Gospel’s apocalyptic characteristics. On two occasions, angels are part of a saying that refers to angels assisting Jesus. In Matt 4:6, Jesus does not take advantage of Psalm 91’s promise of angelic help and leap from the temple; and, in Matt 26:53, Jesus declares that the Father would send angels in response to his appeal had he known that this was not his Father’s will. In both occasions, Matthew portrays Jesus at a point where his decisions reveal his identity as obedient Son of God. While one can say that what Jesus does and says defines him, it cannot be ignored that what Jesus does not do communicates something as well. In this way, it is possible that Matthew’s narrative comments on the expectation of a dramatic appearance of divine assistance accompanying the inauguration of the Messianic rule. For example, in Matt 26:53, the availability of angels to God is a tradition that

⁷⁰⁸ Although the narrative says ‘king,’ it seems clear that Matthew has the Son of Man in mind.

⁷⁰⁹ While the conflict between God and the devil is clear in the temptation narrative, the opposition to Jesus manifests through a different set of opponents, namely the Jewish leaders and sometimes Jesus’ disciples (cf. Matt 16:21-23). Powell, ‘Plot,’ 199-203.

would have had apocalyptic overtones. The fact that God's victory is not initiated this way may contribute to correcting 'military-like' apocalyptic expectations of God's intervention.⁷¹⁰

In addition, if the portrait of angels at the judgment (Matt 13:41; 49; 16:27; 24:30-31; 25:31; cf. 25:41) is included with these prior two references (Matt 4:6; 26:53), it can be argued that Matthew is using apocalyptic ideas (such as judgment) as a means of orientating one's life toward righteous obedience.⁷¹¹ Luz calls Matthew a special kind of apocalypticist – one whose views serve in the most part to advance the idea of judgment rather than strengthen the identity of an apocalyptic group.⁷¹² On the other hand, Sim sees Matthew's church as an apocalyptic community, unified and strengthened in the midst of crisis by its acceptance of the apocalyptic eschatology and alternative symbolic universe.⁷¹³ Regardless, it seems that Matthew could be attempting to shape behavior because of angels. If this is true, then Matt 18:10 rises to the top of the list. In this instruction to the disciples, Jesus explains that their behavior must take into account the heavenly reality of angels. The assumption is that Matthew's readers would share both this belief and reaction to its portrayal of reality. Without the acceptance of angels and a worldview that supports their participation, verses like Matt 18:10 have little value.⁷¹⁴

2.2 Matthew, Angels, and Angelomorphic Christology

The hope is that this study will offer another voice in the multitude that have sought to better understand the early conceptions of Jesus through the study of angels. Prior research has investigated the Old Testament and other Jewish Second Temple literature in the hopes of gathering evidence to explain the early acceptance of Jesus as divine. The unique feature of angels as existing in the

⁷¹⁰ Perhaps the rebuke by Peter or the reply to John's disciples can be included as a similar kind of misunderstanding of Jesus (Matt 11:2-6; 16:22).

⁷¹¹ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. See also Hagner, 'Apocalyptic,' 73-77.

⁷¹² Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 3:295.

⁷¹³ Sim, *Apocalyptic*, 243.

⁷¹⁴ While these references advance the place of angels in Matthew's worldview, they are not alone in communicating the cosmological dimension of the Gospel. The Gospel contains numerous references to demons and Jesus' exorcisms and healings. Jesus' healings themselves are an attack on the spiritual world itself. For Powell, these are evidence of the cosmological conflict that dominates the plot and subplots of Matthew. Powell, 'Plot,' 198-203.

heavenly realm with God, and at times being allocated a privileged position, has been an integral element in establishing precedents for Jesus' divinity. In particular, the description of Jesus with angelic characteristics or in angelic roles has been a significant area of research. A logical consequence of this investigation is the similar analysis of these angelic characteristics portrayed on other persons in the New Testament with the understanding that a follower of Jesus will begin to take on angelomorphic traits like their master.⁷¹⁵ By approaching Matthew's narrative and examining references to angels themselves instead of angel characteristics, this study contributes an additional perspective on how the category of angels has informed the early church's conception of Jesus' unique identity. Moreover, this approach has also contributed to various other discussions, including Matthew's worldview and the importance of the final judgment and eschatological for Matthew's paraenesis.

3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis has presented an explanation for the frequency and consistency with which Matthew has engaged his sources concerning angels. It is argued that three outcomes of the use of angels include, firstly, Matthew's portrayal of the Son of Man as an authoritative judge at the end of the age. The description of the angels as those of the Son of Man and the portrayal of angels participating at the final judgment emphasize the exaltedness and authority of the eschaton's ultimate judge. For Matthew, Jesus' disciples need not fear the activity of the angels at the final judgment, for the one that sits upon the throne is the same earthly Jesus with whom they are familiar. Secondly, Matthew demonstrates that angels are a manifestation of God's presence and activity of God. The angel of the Lord in the infancy and resurrection narratives of Jesus emphasizes the spoken message of the Lord. Meanwhile, the angels at the temptation and arrest communicate Jesus' unwavering obedience to the Father in spite of potential angelic intervention. Finally, angels in the Gospel illustrate how Matthew's worldview includes the heavenly realm as part of its picture of life on earth. For

⁷¹⁵ For example, see Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 72-107.

example, in Matt 18:10 and 22:30, angels and their angelic life were significant elements in the descriptions of this life and the resurrection. Therefore, it can be confidently asserted that the Gospel of Matthew benefits from the inclusion of angel traditions in its narrative presentation of Jesus and discipleship for the early church.

Appendix

‘My Father in Heaven’ and ‘Angels of God’ (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9)

1 INTRODUCTION

In a passage occurring in both Luke and Matthew, Jesus speaks of a judgment scene concerning those who acknowledge and deny him.⁷¹⁶ Those who acknowledge him before those on earth will be acknowledged in heaven. Similarly, those who deny him will be denied in heaven. Yet Matthew and Luke differ on who receives the heavenly acknowledgement and denial. Matthew 10:32-33 indicates that Jesus will be before his ‘Father in heaven’ when he acknowledges and denies, yet Luke 12:8-9 expresses that this same action will be executed before ‘angels of God.’⁷¹⁷

One of the observations of this thesis is that Matthew consistently utilizes source material that refers to angels while additionally incorporating angels in several passages unique to his Gospel. For example, Matthew uses the material from a shared source in his temptation narrative, but then ends it with Mark’s reference to angels from Mark 1:13.⁷¹⁸ From Mark, he also integrates the references to angels and the Son of Man from Mark 8:38, 13:27 and 13:32; any time Mark uses angels Matthew does also.⁷¹⁹ In terms of material unique to Matthew, an angel of the Lord appears in both the infancy and resurrection narrative (Matt 1:20; 2:13, 19; 28:2-9),⁷²⁰ angels at the close of the age assist the explanation of judgment in the Parables of the Weeds and the Net (Matt 13:39, 41, 49), guardian

⁷¹⁶ Absent in Mark, but cf. Mark 8:38, as discussed below.

⁷¹⁷ Note that in Luke it is the Son of Man, not Jesus (‘I’), that denies and acknowledges in heaven.

⁷¹⁸ In terms of shared tradition, angels are found in the birth narratives of both Matthew and Luke.

⁷¹⁹ Luke omits or redacts Mark 4:11; 13:27,32 to exclude angels.

⁷²⁰ Matthew and Luke both include, albeit differently, angels in their infancy narratives. Uniquely Lucan material also incorporates angels (Luke 15:10; 16:22; 22:43; 24:23), especially when considering Acts (Acts 5:19; 6:15; 7:30,35,38,53; 8:26; 10:3,7,22; 11:13; 12:7-11,15,23; 23:8-9; 27:23). For a study of angels in Luke-Acts, see Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*.

angels are suggested in Matt 18:10, and angelic warriors are intimated in Jesus' remark in the Garden of Gethsemane at his arrest, 'Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?' (Matt 26:53). With one exception (Matthew 10:32-33), every time angels are mentioned in a pericope with a parallel in Matthew they are included.⁷²¹ The parallel passage to Matt 10:32-33 in Luke (12:8-9), states that the Son of Man will deny those that deny Jesus before the angels of God. In contrast, Matthew indicates that this will be performed before 'my Father in heaven.'

There are three general explanations for this similar, yet different material in Matthew and Luke. Either (a) Matthew and Luke independently obtained two different texts with a common textual ancestor, (b) there was no shared source and Luke copied and changed Matthew's text, or (c) Matthew and Luke had access to a single shared source which may or may not have included angels. Since both (a) and (b) assume that the text in Matthew would not have originally included angels for him to omit, then these options will not be discussed. However, since there is a possibility in (c) that Matthew may have intentionally omitted a reference to angels, this will have to be explained. As a result, the following discussion will propose a reason for Matthew's omission if a reference to angels existed for him to exclude. It may be that the shared source resembles Matthew, suggesting that the confessing and denying was before the Father, and Luke changed it to read the angels of God. On the other hand, Matthew frequently uses the phrase Father in heaven, and this may suggest that Matthew changed the text to one of his favorite phrases.⁷²²

Yet, if Matthew has the proclivity to include references to angels, then why in this instance might Matthew's text not incorporate such a reference? Therefore, I am arguing that had the tradition behind the text in Luke and Matthew referred to angels, and despite Matthew's interest in angels, he had better reasons for changing it to read Father in Heaven than refer to angels. In

⁷²¹ This assumes that the references to angels in Luke's Gospel not found in Matthew originates from material available only to Luke. There is the possibility that some of Luke's unique material may have been part of the hypothetical source Q that Matthew intentionally omitted. However, as has been seen already by Matthew's consistent deliberate use of angels, it is not likely that Matthew would have excluded these references. Nonetheless, one cannot be sure of the form or existence of Q, nor of what and why Matthew may have omitted.

⁷²² For many whose interests involve this passage, this is the common assertion.

light of this, I am proposing that if Matthew and Luke's versions of this pericope shared a source, Matthew redacted this text for two reasons. First, he wanted to avoid distracting the reader from the role angels play in Matthew's narrative to communicate the exalted status of the Son of Man as eschatological judge and king. Second, Matthew wanted to emphasize the relationship between Jesus, the Father, and the disciples in the missionary discourse of Matthew 10.

In order to address this question, the following analysis of Matt 10:32-33 will proceed in two parts.⁷²³ First, it is necessary to establish the possibility of Matthew's exclusion of angels from his text through (a) an examination of the inclusion of angels in similar and parallel judgment traditions and (b) redactional changes in the shared saying of Matthew and Luke's texts. After determining the possibility of Matthew intentionally excluding angels, we shall then explore the narrative of Matthew in light of what might have been gained by his construction of the saying with 'Father in heaven' without angels.

1.1 Could Matthew Have Omitted a Reference to 'Angels'?

Since the text of the saying as it appears in Matthew does not include a reference to angels, the options that could have led to this result reside in two general categories. Either Matthew never had any knowledge of angels in this saying and therefore could not have introduced it, or he had the reference and chose to omit it. Therefore, the goal of this section is to first show that Matthew was aware of angels in this tradition or sources in order for him to intentionally omit them. Here, a consideration of similar judgment traditions and the texts of both Matthew and Luke may shed light on whether there is any evidence that angels formed part of Matthew's received tradition. The discussion will be approached from two angles. First, other traditions in which there appear similar judgment scenes to Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9 with angels are examined in order to investigate the possibility of existing traditions that may demonstrate Matthew excluding angels. Secondly, the discussion will continue with an analysis of the texts of Matthew and

⁷²³ Since the following discussion is exploring the reason why Matthew may have omitted a reference to angels if it existed for him to exclude, the argument is thus dependent upon the existence of a shared source from which Matthew and Luke both drew this pericope. Consequently, it will be assumed for the rest of this appendix that this shared source exists.

Luke in respect to a potential shared written source available to both Gospel writers. By assuming a mutually available written source, then the most original must have been absent of 'angels' in order for Matthew to be innocent of potentially omitting this reference. Combined with the previous analysis, the redactional characteristics of the Matthean and Lukan sayings will form the evidence for determining the possibility of Matthew's 'angel-less' saying as the more original.⁷²⁴

1.2 Possible Parallel Traditions

The possibility of an omission by Matthew does not require the existence of a shared written source to which both Matthew and Luke had access.⁷²⁵ There is also the consideration of shared tradition. Thus, the possibility of Matthew's intentional omission is strengthened if there is evidence of an existing tradition that places angels in similar judgment scenes.

1.2.1 Mark 8:38

One of the more striking parallels with the saying that appears in Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9 is Mark 8:38. Noting the cost of being his disciple, Jesus says in Mark 8:38 that the one who is ashamed of him and his words will be the one of whom 'the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' To further understand Mark 8:38, one should incorporate the first reference to the Son of Man in this passage (Mark 8:31; cf. Mark 10:32-45; 13:9-13). Mark 8:31 relates to the suffering and rejection the Son of Man must endure (Mark 8:31), while the second occurrence (Mark 8:38) portrays the Son of Man as the one in glory speaking for those who were or were not

⁷²⁴ While the second discussion will focus on the redactional changes made by the authors, the first investigation of tradition of angels in judgment scenes is necessary to avoid investing the conclusion of the investigation in the assumption of a shared source.

⁷²⁵ Donaldson, in his monograph on mountains in Matthew, acknowledges that assuming Mark and Q were two of Matthew's sources is not without its problems. While he maintains the two-source theory for his analysis, he does not disregard the arguments of Farmer (and other proponents of Matthean priority) and Farrer (and those that deny the existence of Q, but still hold to Markan priority). Importantly, Donaldson also recognizes the value of examining Matthew in terms of Matthew as a means of measuring the results of redactional analysis. Donaldson, *Mountain*, 19.

ashamed of him and his words (Mark 8:38).⁷²⁶ The glorious coming of the Son of Man is the counterpart to his predicted suffering and rejection. Therefore, the disciples will face similar hardships also, and likewise, they too will have their reward (cf. Matt 10:32; Luke 12:8).⁷²⁷ The message of judgment in Mark 8:38 conveniently parallels the saying in Matt 10:33 and Luke 12:9 in that becoming a disciple of Jesus and taking up the cross must also reflect an awareness of the coming judgment.

Morna Hooker, in her commentary on Mark, draws the connection between Mark 8:38 and its so-called Q parallel (Matt 10:33//Luke 12:9).⁷²⁸ She argues that the inclusion of shame implies a judgment scene in which the Son of Man plays a role as judge or advocate.⁷²⁹ Furthermore, this verse in Mark resembles the negative half of the saying in Matthew and Luke, reflecting both the protasis and apodosis of what Käsemann has called 'sentences of holy law.'⁷³⁰ The action of shame toward Jesus is reciprocated toward the one who is ashamed at the eschatological coming of the Son of Man. In addition, the similarity of these passages has drawn much attention from those seeking to further understand the association of Jesus with the Son of Man in Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9.⁷³¹ In particular, the investigation has been directed toward determining the oldest tradition influencing these verses. For those that conclude that the common

⁷²⁶ Hurtado, *Mark*, 138, Marshall, *Luke*, 377.

⁷²⁷ Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 27.

⁷²⁸ See also de Jonge, 'Sayings,' Lambrecht, 'Q-Influence.'

⁷²⁹ Hooker draws a connection between those that are shamed and those that appear to be out of God's favor (cf. Pss 25:3; 119:6; Isa 41:10ff; Jer 17:18). Hooker, *Message*, 210.

⁷³⁰ Käsemann, 'Sentences,' 77-78. The distribution of justice in equal measure is an example of *jus talionis* (cf. Matt 7:2; Mark 4:24). Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 27. See also Matt 5:19 and 6:14. Marshall claims that the Mark may have dropped the positive half of this saying because it did not fit into his thought. Marshall, *Luke*, 377.

⁷³¹ Craig Evans notes the variety of opinions on the origin of Son of Man in Mark 8:38 and parallels. Evans thinks that the logic and force of the saying only make sense if it is understood that Jesus thought of himself as the Son of Man in this saying. Why would the Son of Man be ashamed of another on account of the shame toward another person other than the Son of Man? Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 27. Although Hooker acknowledges the debate over the seeming confusion of Jesus' identity (or not) as the Son of Man, she concludes that Mark clearly assumed that they were one and the same. It is possible that the tradition could have already merged the two by the time that Mark wrote or that the identification was implicit from the saying's origin. As for Mark 8:38, Hooker says that the use of 'me' and 'Son of Man' would have been synonymous for the Christian reader. She alludes to the synonymous parallels such as this occurring in the psalms. Hooker, *Message*, 210-11.

source reflects the older tradition, the frequent reconstruction of the source often includes ‘angels of God’ and not ‘Father in heaven.’⁷³²

Regardless of the literary relationship between Mark 8:38, Matt 10:32-33, and Luke 12:8-9, the saying in Mark still includes angels as a necessary element in its communication of the coming of the Son of Man and one’s earthly response to Jesus. For example, the coming in glory will be clothed in the drama of the Son of Man of Daniel 7 and thus the accompanying holy angels as Jesus returns.⁷³³ In other words, the roles of the angels in Mark 8:38 may differ from Luke 12:8 by relating to the glory of the Father instead of acting in the heavenly court, but they are both present and participating in the last judgment. Therefore, it is likely that the tradition behind the similar saying of Mark 8:38 increases the possibility that Matthew knew of an association of angels with this saying.

1.2.2 Revelation 3:5

In Rev 3:1-6, a letter to the church of Sardis contains a message of judgment relevant to this discussion.⁷³⁴ In this vision, Christ (Rev 1:12-20) speaks about the church’s lethargy that borders on being called ‘spiritually dead’ (Rev 3:1-2). Those that are worthy are clothed in garments of white with Jesus (Rev 3:4-5; cf. Dan 11-12; Zech 3:5-6; Gen 35:2; *1En.* 62:15-16; Rev 19:8).⁷³⁵ Here it seems the white robes are a symbol of perseverance of one’s faithful testimony to Jesus in the face of

⁷³² Pesch and Lambrecht argue that the Q tradition of ‘angels of God’ is the oldest. Pesch, ‘Autorität,’ 39, Lambrecht, ‘Q-Influence,’ 285-88. De Jonge says Mark was not likely dependent upon the common source of Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9, but is convinced by the Markan characteristics of Mark 8:38 that the common source reflects the older tradition. de Jonge, ‘Sayings,’ 112-18, esp. 17. Interestingly, Käsemann believes that the Matthean form of the saying is more original than the Markan form due to the use of the verb ‘ashamed’. He believes that the use of ‘ashamed’ represents an older modification of ‘acknowledge’ and ‘deny’. On the other hand, he holds that the ‘I’ saying in Matthew is secondary to the Son of Man prediction in Mark. Overall, he does not believe that in any form it goes back to Jesus himself. Käsemann, ‘Sentences,’ 77-78. In contrast, Lindars observes that the difference between ‘ashamed’ and ‘deny’ in this tradition may be due to their similar sounding Aramaic counterparts, ‘*h^aphar*’ and ‘*k^aphar*’ respectively. Lindars, ‘Advocate,’ 486. Davies and Allison posit that the Markan saying is secondary. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:214 n.2.

⁷³³ Evans also notes that there is a tension of the coming suffering as well as the coming glory. Into this confusion, Jesus offers the encouragement of 9:1. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 27.

⁷³⁴ ‘For I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God,’ (Rev 3:2); perhaps that they are completed by human standards but not God’s. Beale, *Revelation*, 273.

⁷³⁵ For a statement that talks about clothing a priest in white or black depending upon their examination, see *b. Yoma* 19a and *m. Middot* 5.4. Beale, *Revelation*, 278.

persecution.⁷³⁶ Also, those that prevail in Jesus' name are rewarded by one's name not being blotted out of the book of life and Jesus confessing 'your name before my Father and before his angels,' (ὁμολογήσω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ, Rev 3.5).⁷³⁷ Like the saying in Matthew and Luke, the one faithful to Jesus is confessed (ὁμολογέω) before a heavenly audience; however, in Rev 3:5 it is performed before both Father and angels.

The similarity is difficult to ignore. With respect to Matt 10:32 and Luke 12:8, Bauckham calls this verse an 'almost certain allusion to Synoptic tradition.'⁷³⁸ He affirms that the author of Revelation is dependent upon earlier tradition, but adapts it to his own purpose by conforming it to one of his 'one who conquers' phrases (ὁ νικῶν, Rev 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 6:2; 15:2; 21:7) thereby disrupting the parallel protasis and apodosis of the synoptic saying. Interestingly, the inclusion of angels in this heavenly scene is unlike Mark 8:38, where the angels merely accompany the Father (cf. Matt 16:27; Luke 9:26). Instead, the one who merits acknowledgment is worthy 'before my Father' and 'before his angels.' Using the preposition ἐνώπιον (cf. Luke 12:9 contra Matt 10:32-33) with both Father and angels (ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ), each audience receives equally the same action by Jesus. On the other hand, it could be argued that the Father takes precedence over the angels by coming first in the word order. This would resonate with Matthew's emphasis on the Father, but still does not explain the absence of angels (or even Luke's omission of the Father). While Rev 3:5 most likely reflects the texts of Matthew and Luke,⁷³⁹ the mention of angels with the Father strengthens the possibility that angels were part of the accepted tradition surrounding this saying.⁷⁴⁰ This does not mean that Matthew would

⁷³⁶ These robes are the reward given out at death, or at entrance into heaven (Rev 4:4; 6:9-11; 7:9-14; 19:13; cf. with the reward beginning in this life, Rev 3:18). Beale, *Revelation*, 279.

⁷³⁷ The book of life, used five other times in the book of Revelation (Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27), symbolizes the salvation of those that have been recorded before the beginning of time. Beale, *Revelation*, 279.

⁷³⁸ Bauckham, 'Parables,' 163 n. 6. He also lists other possible synoptic parallels (e.g. Rev 3:3 might be a variant of Matt 24:42-44 on the thief coming at night, cf. Rev 16.15) Beale, *Revelation*, 280-81.

⁷³⁹ It could also be a unknown shared source, but the similarity to Matthew and Luke runs against the sharp edge of Ockham's razor.

⁷⁴⁰ Perrin argues that Rev 3:5 offers evidence for both Father and angels of God. Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 189. Beale calls this an abbreviation of the larger synoptic statement. Beale, *Revelation*, 280-81. Higgins notes that this is another variation on the saying in Matthew and Luke. Higgins, *Jesus*, 59.

necessarily have been aware of angels in this saying, but it does demonstrate that the tradition was not at odds with angels as part of this tradition.

1.2.3 Enochic Tradition

In *1Enoch*⁷⁴¹, angels are portrayed as participating in judgment scenes in a variety of ways. For example, angels gather together the unrighteous (*1En.* 100:4), appear with God in his heavenly court (*1En.* 1:9; cf. *Dan* 7:10; *1En.* 40:1; 60:1-2; 71:7-8,12), and participate in meting out judgment through punishment (*1En.* 53:3; 56:1; 62:11; 63:1; 66:1; etc.). Interestingly, angels are also portrayed as interceding for or representing humanity (*1En.* 99:3; cf. 97:3-6; 104:1; 9:1-11; *1En.* 39:5; cf. the angel of the Lord representing Joshua in *Zech* 3). Moreover, the *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1En* 37-71) pick up on two themes found in *Matt* 10:32-33 and *Luke* 12:8-9. The reference to 'Son of Man' in the *Similitudes* has drawn considerable attention despite the debate concerning the dating of Enoch's *Similitudes* and their absence from the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁷⁴² In the *Similitudes*, the Son of Man is depicted as chosen by the Lord of Spirits and placed upon his throne, executing judgment upon the faithful and unrighteous (*1En.* 49:4; 55:4; 61:8; 69:27).⁷⁴³ In addition, the language of judgment is particularly directed at those that deny the Lord of Spirits (*1En.* 38:2; 41:2; 45:1-2; 46:7; 48:10; 52:9; 60:6; 67:8,10). In contrast to the saying in Matthew and Luke, the denial is not directed toward the Son of Man, but the Lord of Spirits. However, both the Synoptics and the *Similitudes* demonstrate a comfort in understating this distinction by emphasizing the relationship between God and the Son of Man (*Mark* 8:38; 16:27; *Luke* 9:26; 10:22; cf. *Matt* 11:27). For example, in the *Similitudes*, the Son of Man is placed on the Lord of the Spirit's throne of glory (*1En.* 45:3; 51:3; 55:4; 56:5; 61:8; 62:2-3,5; 69:27,29; cf. *1En.* 60:2). More so than *Mark* 8:38 or *Rev* 3:5, the *Similitudes* illustrates the regular participation of angels in judgment

⁷⁴¹ See L. Stuckenbruck's discussion of the development and collection of Enochic writings, Stuckenbruck, *1Enoch*, 8-14.

⁷⁴² For a discussion of dating, see Knibb, 'Date.', Mearns, 'Dating.' The dating of the *Similitudes* by Mearns and Knibb to the first century, makes it at least a possibility that the *Similitudes* may be considered a parallel text to the Gospel of Matthew in that they show similarly developing traditions with regard to the Son of Man. The level of overlap is explored by Leslie Walck in his forthcoming book, Walck, *Enoch*.

⁷⁴³ For a discussion of the themes of judgment and salvation in *1Enoch* in relation to the *Similitudes*, see Nickelsburg, 'Salvation.'

scenes as well as the negative impact of denial. These three brief examples of angels in similar situations illustrate the potential for a tradition of angels in communicating judgment and a heavenly court. Thus, it is likely that Matthew would have been aware of such traditions even if his sources did not include angels. In addition, given his propensity for including angels in judgment scenes (Matt 13:39,41,49; 24:36; 25:31,41), their absence here is not without note.

1.3 Redactional Characteristics of Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9

Consequently, it is crucial to examine the texts of Matthew and Luke to explore the editorial hand concerning the ‘Father in heaven’ in Matthew and ‘angels of God’ in Luke.⁷⁴⁴ Here, I will argue that Matthew changed his text to read ‘Father in Heaven’ and that Luke had more reason to remove the reference to angels than add it.

Having established the inclusion of angels in traditions similar to Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9, one may conclude that there is a possibility that Matthew's sources may have contained angels. Yet, examining the texts of Matthew and Luke can strengthen this further.

Matt 10:32-33	Luke 12:8-9
<p>Πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ὁμολογήσει ἐν ἐμοὶ ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὁμολογήσω, καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν [τοῖς] οὐρανοῖς</p> <p>ὅστις δ' ἂν ἄρνησηταί με ἔμπροσθεν</p>	<p>Λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν, πᾶς ὃς ἂν ὁμολογήσῃ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁμολογήσει ἐν αὐτῷ ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ θεοῦ</p> <p>ὁ δὲ ἄρνησάμενός με ἐνώπιον</p>

⁷⁴⁴ This will be approached without first determining the sources behind the text. Thus, the discussion about Matthew's ‘Father in heaven’ addresses the common source and Matthew's use of Luke. Likewise, the section on ‘angels of God’ in Luke similarly addresses the theory of a common source and Luke's use of Matthew.

τῶν ἀνθρώπων
ἀρνήσομαι καὶ γὰρ
αὐτὸν
ἔμπροσθεν
τοῦ πατρὸς μου
τοῦ ἐν [τοῖς] οὐρανοῖς

τῶν ἀνθρώπων
ἀπαρνηθήσεται
ἐνὼπιον
τῶν ἀγγέλων
τοῦ θεοῦ

The close verbal overlaps between Matthew and Luke in these two verses raises the question of the literary source of this saying. The characteristic literary agreement between these verses in Matthew and Luke is not unique to this passage and is part of a larger discussion that is intent on satisfying the question about how the texts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are related. However, for the sake of this discussion, the focus can remain on this passage alone. In this manner, Matthew and Luke may have had different, but very similar sources, thus accounting for the slight differences.⁷⁴⁵ On the other hand, both Matthew and Luke could have made redactional changes to the same parts of the source, rendering the original indiscernible. Although the line of questioning that seeks to determine the most original sayings of Jesus has its place, the present discussion will not attempt to resolve the exact sources at work in the entire saying. Instead, the following discussion will explore the editorial hand concerning the ‘Father in heaven’ in Matt 10:32-33 and ‘angels of God’ in Luke 12:8-9. This will further the investigation of the possibility that Matthew may have deliberately omitted a reference to angels.

Much is similar between these two passages. After a cursory glance, it is noted that these two passages are not identical. Reflecting both the styles of the Gospel writers and possible attempts to harmonize language within these verses or with the rest of their Gospel, the minor differences include changes of the verbs’ moods (ὁμολογήσει, ὁμολογήσῃ, ἀρνησάμενος, ἀρνήσεται), pronouns (ὅστις, ὃς ἄν), and prepositions (ἔμπροσθεν, ἐνὼπιον).⁷⁴⁶ However, is it possible to discern

⁷⁴⁵ In reference to the difference in ‘I’ and ‘Son of Man,’ Marshall notes that Matthew and Luke may have had different versions of Q. Marshall, *Luke*, 515.

⁷⁴⁶ One example of this is in the usage of the prepositions in the second half of this shared tradition. While Matt 10:32 and Luke 12:8 both have ἔμπροσθεν, they differ on the parallel verse about denying. Matthew 10:33 has ἔμπροσθεν, while Luke 12:9 switches to ἐνὼπιον, a favorite of Luke's. It is possible that Luke, who is fond of ἐνὼπιον decided to use it here (22x in Luke, 0x in Matt, 0x in Mark). However, it is also possible that Matthew, upon seeing ἐνὼπιον, decided to strengthen the parallelism between these the two verses by using ἔμπροσθεν in both.

any editing concerning ‘angels of God’ (Luke 12:8,9) or ‘Father in heaven’ (Matt 10:32,33)?

1.3.1 *Matthew's ‘Father in heaven’?*

In Matt 10:32-33, Jesus will represent those that have confessed or denied him to the ‘Father in heaven’ in contrast to Luke's ‘angels of God.’ While Matthew's use of ‘Father’ is second only to the Gospel of John, his identification of God as the ‘Father in heaven’ or ‘heavenly Father,’ is distinctively Matthean.⁷⁴⁷

The likelihood of Matthew changing or adding ‘Father in heaven’ is answered in a resounding affirmative, but if this is true, what may have been part of the original saying? Is Matthew explaining ‘God’ as ‘Father’ as he has in other passages? In this manner, it is possible that there was simply a reference to appearing ‘before God’ (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ) as in the nearby explanation of the value of sparrows, ‘Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight [ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ]’ (Luke 12:6). It is telling that the parallel in Matthew refers to the Father, ‘Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father,’ (Matt 10:29).⁷⁴⁸ This shift is visible again in the same chapter of Luke, ‘they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them’ (Luke 12:24), yet Matthew reads, ‘and yet your heavenly Father feeds them’ (Matt 6:26). However, later in that same pericope both Luke and Matthew refer to God as Father, (‘your Father knows’, Luke 12:30; ‘your heavenly Father knows’, Matt 6:32; cf. Luke 12:32). Furthermore, Matthew's preference for ‘Father’ is reflected in his redaction of Mark 3:35; Mark refers to the ‘will of God’ while Matthew refers to the ‘will of my Father in heaven’ (Matt 12:50). In contrast, Luke does not change Mark’s title for God in his parallel to this passage, ‘My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it’ (Luke 8:21).

Although Matthew's pattern of having ‘Father’ instead of ‘God’ in parallel passages may offer insight into Matt 10:32-33, how the text may have read before Matthew remains decidedly unclear. Nevertheless, it can be said with reasonable certainty that references to ‘Father’ and especially ‘Father in heaven’ are likely

⁷⁴⁷ Matt 5:16,45,48; 6:1; 6:9,14,26,32; 7:11,21; 10:32,33; 12:50; 15:13; 16:17; 18:10,14,19,35; cf. 11:25; 23:9.

⁷⁴⁸ De Jonge asks a similar question, but argues that ‘angels of God’ was behind Matthew's Father in heaven. de Jonge, ‘Sayings,’ 108.

editorial products of the author of Matthew.⁷⁴⁹ Now the discussion will turn to Luke's text, to explore whether clues into editorial changes are evident.

1.3.2 *Angels and Luke 12:8-9*

Having established that the text of Matt 10:32-33 most likely reflects changes by the evangelist with regard to the heavenly audience, it is necessary to investigate the saying in Luke in order to explore the alternative reading to 'Father in heaven.'

If Luke's original source said 'God' instead of 'angels of God', it seems this would be something that Luke would not have changed. In Luke's writings, 'before God' is far more frequent than 'before the angels of God.' For example, Gabriel describes John the Baptizer in Luke 1:15, saying that he will be great before the Lord (ἐνώπιον [τοῦ] κυρίου).⁷⁵⁰ Luke 16:15 affirms that, 'what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God [ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ].' Even within the adjacent context of the passage in question, Luke 12:6 says concerning the sparrows, 'Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight [ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ].' If it is supposed that Luke added 'angels' to 12:8-9, then that argument is not helped by the presence of ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ in such close proximity. Moreover, 'before God' appears in Acts five more times (4:19; 7:46; 10:31,33, ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ; 10:4, ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ). The only other occurrence of 'before the angels of God' is Luke 15:10, where 'there is joy in the presence of the angels of God [ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ θεοῦ] over one sinner who repents.' In an essay that attempts to establish the earliest traditions of Luke 12:8-9 and Mark 8:38, Henk Jan de Jonge argues that this Lukan passage was influenced by the language of Luke 12:8-9, and not the other way around.⁷⁵¹ In addition, the phrase in 15:10 should likely be understood spatially, as 'in heaven', when compared with the preceding pericope, 'there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents' (Luke 15:7), as opposed to the judgment scene of Luke 12:8-9.⁷⁵² Fleddermann, while coming to a

⁷⁴⁹ Hagner and de Jonge both admit that Father in heaven is obviously Matthean. de Jonge, 'Sayings,' 108, Hagner, *Matthew*, 288.

⁷⁵⁰ Interestingly, in Luke 1:19 the angel Gabriel describes himself as an angel that stands 'before God' (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ).

⁷⁵¹ De Jonge asserts that the Lukan parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) is a retelling of the preceding Q parable of the lost sheep (Matt 18:12-14//Luke 15:3-7). de Jonge, 'Sayings,' 109.

⁷⁵² Walls, 'Presence,' 316.

similar conclusion as de Jonge, argues that only ‘before angels’ (ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀγγέλων) is original and that Luke added ‘of God’ (τοῦ θεοῦ). Several verses reflect his observation of Luke’s tendency to add ‘God’ to his sources (Luke 9:20, τὸν χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, cf. Mark 8:29; Luke 8:11, cf. Mark 4:14; Luke 11:42, cf. Matt 23:23; Luke 22:69, cf. Mark 14:62; Luke 23:35, cf. Mark 15:32). But, it is not necessary to debate the exact wording of Luke’s source for this discussion, only posit enough proof to establish that angels were part of the original tradition that Matthew may have intentionally not included.⁷⁵³ Therefore, it is more likely that ‘angels’ were part of Luke’s source and Luke left in the reference. This conclusion is strengthened further if the context of confessing and denying is understood as within a heavenly court scene.

Initially, the setting of the one confessing and denying Jesus was thought of as something similar to a courtroom, where one publicly declares Jesus. This conclusion has largely been attributed to the language of ‘confessing’ and ‘denying’ used in this saying. In particular, Michel’s article on ὁμολογέω notes both the verb’s legal context and the use of ἔμπροσθεν as a reference to standing before a judge.⁷⁵⁴ The conclusion of an earthly forensic setting of the one denying or confessing Jesus based wholly on the vocabulary has rightly been called into question. It is more likely that one’s religious conviction is being expressed instead of restricting the saying to a warning about one’s behavior in a courtroom.⁷⁵⁵ However, doubt about an earthly court setting does not negate the possibility of a heavenly court.⁷⁵⁶ In light of the context of eschatological judgment, it is suggested that these verses should be interpreted as a scene of a heavenly court.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵³ Fleddermann, ‘Saying,’ 611. De Jonge argues that ‘angels of God’ is part of the original text, further citing Luke’s proclivity to using ἐνώπιον (Luke 22x, Matt 0x) instead of ἔμπροσθεν, and his refraining from changing this preposition as evidence that might suggest a similar gesture when the reference to ‘angels’ was encountered in Luke’s source.⁷⁵³ However, Luke’s use of ἔμπροσθεν in his own additions (5:19; 19:28), unique material (14:2; 19:4; 21:36; cf. 19:27), and shared material (7:27; 10:21) does not necessitate a decision based upon this preposition.

⁷⁵⁴ Michel, ‘ὁμολογέω,’ in *TNDT*, 5:207, 08 n. 27. Marshall understands ἔμπροσθεν as stressing a public acknowledgment Marshall, *Luke*, 516.

⁷⁵⁵ Catchpole, ‘Angelic,’ 257-59, McDermott, ‘Stone,’ 529-31, Fleddermann, ‘Saying,’ 612. Harrington acknowledges the forensic element of ‘acknowledge’ and ‘deny,’ but also admits that does not necessarily limit their usage to a legal situation. Harrington, *Matthew*, 150, Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 104.

⁷⁵⁶ McDermott, ‘Stone,’ 530.

⁷⁵⁷ de Jonge, ‘Sayings,’ 110.

1.4 Summary

The discussion at this point has posited enough evidence to conclude that there is a possibility that Matthew intentionally omitted angels. By examining Mark 8:38, Rev 3:5, and the Enochic tradition, it was established that angels have played a role in the traditions parallel to Matt 10:32-33. Then, through a brief redactional analysis, the texts of Matthew and Luke have been examined; this leads to the conclusion that Matthew most likely added 'Father in heaven' and Luke had no reason to insert angels and greater reason for removing them. Therefore, having established that it is likely that Matthew altered his text in such a way as to exclude a reference to angels, the discussion will now turn to address the interpretation of these changes in light of narrative of Matthew's Gospel.

2 INTERPRETATION OF MATT 10:32-33

The question of sources in Matt 10:32-33 may be simplified by attributing an 'angel-less' saying to either a complete absence of 'angels' in Matthew's sources and tradition (therefore having no option to incorporate them) or Matthew deliberately omitting the reference to 'angels.' The common characteristic of both these possible presuppositions is the absence of 'angels' in Matt 10:32-33. Consequently, regardless of Matthew's sources, Matthew's text here, as it stands without angels, must be interpreted as such when analyzing the narrative. Yet, if Matthew were explored only with narrative criticism, noting the absence of angels would be of little concern. Therefore, the text will be interpreted with both the tools of narrative and redaction criticism, giving attention to deliberate adaptations highlighted above without ignoring the Gospel's narrative.⁷⁵⁸ Furthermore, because it has been established there is a possibility that Matthew omitted this reference to angels, the question of why this move may have been made is the focus of the following discussion, especially when Matthew seems inclined to assimilate this kind of tradition. Thus, for the sake of the following

⁷⁵⁸ Randall Tan takes note of at some of problems associated with redaction criticism and argues for a more holistic 'compositional criticism.' Tan, 'Developments.'

discussion, it will be assumed, based upon the evidence established in the previous discussion, that Matthew intentionally changed his text both to read 'Father in heaven' and exclude a reference to 'angels.'

2.1 Jesus and the Son of Man in Matthew 10:32-33

There are two clearly apparent differences between Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9. The first centers on the heavenly audience before whom the confessing and denying is performed: 'angels of God' or 'my Father in heaven.' The second of the redactional distinctions in this pericope is the difference between Matthew's references to Jesus in the heavenly setting as 'I' while Luke portrays the 'Son of Man.' This clear difference in terminology has been part of the discussion about Jesus' identity as the Son of Man.⁷⁵⁹ Although the interest of this appendix is on the former of these two major redactional differences, it is difficult to ignore the relevance of this passage to the debate on the Son of Man. Yet, instead of trying to determine the history of the text in regards to 'I' and 'Son of Man,' the issue of interest is the relationship between these two differences within the narrative of Matthew. Lindars claims that there is no real significant difference between Matthew's 'Father in Heaven' and Luke's 'angels of God,' claiming the only real difference worthy of discussion is between 'Son of Man' and 'I'.⁷⁶⁰ However, both of the major redactional alterations occur in the apodoses, changing both the subject and the audience to someone different.⁷⁶¹ Thus, Matthew's own portrait of the Son of Man and interest in the Father's relationship to Jesus and believers may be instrumental in Matthew editing out both 'Son of Man' and 'angels' from his text.

This will be investigated first by exploring how Matthew incorporates the tradition and imagery of the Son of Man from Daniel 7 both in Matt 10:32-33 specifically and in the narrative of his whole Gospel. Afterward, the investigation will examine how Matthew's heavenly representative and audience in Matt 10:32-33 contribute and cooperate within the context of the discourse of Matthew 10.

⁷⁵⁹ McDermott, 'Stone,' cf. Fledermann, 'Saying,' 616.

⁷⁶⁰ Lindars, 'Advocate,' 487.

⁷⁶¹ Although Jesus and the Son of Man may be considered by some as one and the same, the argument here is that use of 'I' instead of 'Son of Man' by Jesus in Matthew's text results in a different emphasis of 'who' and 'role.'

2.2 The Danielic Portrait in Matt 10:32-33, Mark 8:38, and Luke 12:8-9

Considering the central figure of the Son of Man, the final judgment, and the host of angels, Daniel 7 has been argued as the most likely background to Matt 10:32-33, Mark 8:38, and Luke 12:8-9.⁷⁶² However, the role of Jesus in the tradition of the saying of Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9 (cf. Mark 8:38) may reflect the role of a heavenly advocate instead of the imagery of the Danielic Son of Man. In an article exploring Jesus' role as advocate, Lindars explores Mark 8:38 and the parallel traditions in Matthew and Luke (Matt 10:32-33; 16:27; Luke 12:8-9; 9:26), arguing that the use of 'denying' better preserves the tradition of the saying compared to Mark 8:38, but Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9 demonstrate a more developed and fuller parousia judgment scene.⁷⁶³ The portrayal of a heavenly representative before a divine audience in Matthew and Luke illustrates a heavenly courtroom, while Mark 8:38 simply notes the Son of Man coming 'in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' For Lindars, this difference between Mark and the shared tradition of Mathew and Luke is important because it demonstrates an elaboration of the text based upon the interpretation of the Son of Man in light of Daniel 7, whereby the future judgment is associated with the coming of the Son of Man.

This is not unlike the development of the Son of Man in the *Similitudes* of Enoch where the exercising of judgment is an expansion of the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven in Daniel 7. Jane Schaberg, in her analysis of Daniel 7 and 12 in the New Testament passion predictions, affirms that the *Similitudes* reinterpret the Son of Man as an 'individual heavenly Messiah,' taking a specific role at the judgment.⁷⁶⁴ In this manner, the passages in *1Enoch* which portray the Son of Man deposing kings and the mighty (*1En.* 46.4-8) while exercising judgment

⁷⁶² Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:214-15. Considering the language of both Son of Man and heavenly angels, the connection between Luke 12:8-9 and Daniel 7 is remarkably greater than that which Matt 10:32-33 offers. It is no surprise then that it has been argued that Luke's 'angels of God' is nearer to Mark than Matthew's text. Lindars, 'Advocate,' 485-86. Luz argues that Matthew may reflect the language of Daniel 7 and Jewish apocalyptic, but not the messianic connotations. Luz, 'Judge,' 8-9.

⁷⁶³ Lindars, 'Advocate,' 482.

⁷⁶⁴ She draws further parallels between Enoch and the Servant of Second Isaiah (*1En.* 48; Isa 49:1-8; *1En.* 49:4; Isa 42:1; *1En.* 38:2; Isa 53:11; *1En.* 62-3; Isa 52-3), noting that while there are similarities of representing the downtrodden, there does not appear to be language of vicarious suffering. In this manner, the glory of the heavenly figure balances the suffering of the present community (cf. 4Ezra 13). Schaberg, 'Daniel,' 216.

from his throne of glory (1En. 62:5; 69:26-29) reveal the developing tradition in which power is given to the one like a Son of Man of Daniel 7.⁷⁶⁵

2.2.1 *The Different Roles of the Son of Man in Matt 10:32-33, Mark 8:38, and Luke 12:8-9*

However, it seems that the more elaborate scene of Luke 12:8-9 (cf. Matt 10:32-33) does not portray the Son of Man in the same role as Mark 8:38. Hooker, discussing the future glory of the Son of Man, argues that Mark 8:38 portrays the Son of Man in a more exalted role than in Luke 12:8-9 (cf. Matt 10:32-33). The Son of Man in Mark 8:38 is illustrated as the very one admitting or rejecting men and women into his presence (cf. Matt 25:31-32). In contrast, Luke envisions a court scene where the Son of Man appears as a witness or counselor before a heavenly jury, both accusing and defending those that respond to him.⁷⁶⁶ In other words, the Son of Man does not appear as a judge, but rather a guarantor to those that confirm a relationship with Jesus.⁷⁶⁷ Davies and Allison, while claiming that Matthew in 10:32-33 probably thought of Jesus as sitting on a throne at the judgment, state that it is clearly Mark 8:38 which conveys the Son of Man as judge. Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9, on the other hand, portray him as an accuser or advocate with God as the judge.⁷⁶⁸ Matthew may have noticed the different roles represented in these passages and decided that the saying inadequately fitted into his portrait of the Son of Man as an exalted eschatological judge and king.

2.2.2 *Son of Man in Matthew*

Matthew's attempt to portray the Son of Man in his Gospel as judge and king is demonstrated in numerous passages in his narrative.⁷⁶⁹ It is important to reiterate some of these briefly in order to establish the necessary background for explaining Matthew's possible redaction to Matt 10:32-33. For example, Luke nearly copies Mark 8:38, but Matthew's text adds an extra line, promising that the Son of Man 'will repay everyone for what has been done,' (κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ, Matt 16:27;

⁷⁶⁵ Hooker, 'Synoptic,' 199.

⁷⁶⁶ Hooker, 'Synoptic,' 195.

⁷⁶⁷ Tödt, *Tradition*, 56.

⁷⁶⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:216 and n. 14, Higgins, *Jesus*, 140.

⁷⁶⁹ Tödt, *Tradition*, 90, Hooker, 'Synoptic,' 199. esp. Luz, 'Judge,' 6-7.

cf. Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12).⁷⁷⁰ Moreover, Matthew eliminates the context of Son of Man's shame and suffering in his redaction of Mark's portrayal (Matt 16:21; cf. Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22); and, with the additional material, he emphasizes the Son of Man's role as a judge.⁷⁷¹ In the following verse, the judicial role of the Son of Man in Matthew is complemented further by the declaration that the Son of Man will come into *his* kingdom, (Matt 16:28). This is not unlike the Matthean parable of the tares (Matt 13:36-43), where the Son of Man is judge of the world and participates in separating the righteous from the unrighteous (cf. Matt 24).⁷⁷² Furthermore, Matt 19:28 portrays the Son of Man sitting on his throne of glory, and Matt 25:31 declares that the nations will be gathered and separated, 'when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory,' (cf. Mark 14:62).

In addition, Matthew seems to be emphasizing a relationship between the Son of Man and angels when he includes the pronoun 'his' with 'angels.'⁷⁷³ Matthew 24:31 adds this detail; the Son of Man 'will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call,' when Mark simply states 'he will send out the angels' (Mark 13:27). In addition, Matthew changes the wording of Mark 8:38, 'when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' to associate the angels with the Son of Man, who comes 'with his angels in the glory of his Father' (Matt 16:27). Moreover, the material unique to Matthew similarly communicates this relationship (Matt 13:41, 'Son of Man will send his angels'; 25:31, 'Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him').⁷⁷⁴ Therefore, it appears Matthew has employed angelic accompaniment for the Son of Man to communicate further the Son of Man's exalted status.

Consequently, the act of Jesus (Son of Man in Luke 12:8-9) reporting before angels in a heavenly court does not seem completely consonant with Matthew's

⁷⁷⁰ While it is true that Luke nearly copies Mark's text, he changes the coming of the Son of Man to emphasize that he will come in his own glory, not just that of the Father, 'he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels' (Luke 9:26). Marshall, *Luke*, 376.

⁷⁷¹ Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:485, Hooker, 'Synoptic,' 195-6, Higgins, *Jesus*, 58. Higgins also adds that Matthew's alteration intentionally removes distinction between Jesus and the Son of Man.

⁷⁷² Tödt, *Tradition*, 69-71.

⁷⁷³ It should be noted that Jesus does not refer to the angels as 'his' but often the Father's (Matt 4:6; 26:53; cf. Matt 24:36) and the Son of Man's (cf. Matt 18:10; 25:41).

⁷⁷⁴ A. J. B. Higgins, in his analysis of the Son of Man tradition, notes this Matthean trait of the angels and the kingdom of the Son of Man. He argues that the intention, perhaps, was to distinguish his kingdom from the kingdom of God (a point picked up by Vielhauer). Higgins, *Jesus*, 97.

portrait of the Son of Man as king and eschatological judge.⁷⁷⁵ Tödt similarly acknowledges the incongruity of the Son of Man as intercessor with Matthew's purposes for the Son of Man as judge in his narrative. He concludes this might have been instrumental in the omission of Son of Man from this passage.⁷⁷⁶ Moreover, if 'angels' were part of the tradition of Matt 10:32-33, then it is not only possible, but likely Matthew navigated his narrative away from the mention of angels in order to avoid detracting from the relationship between the Son of Man and angels when editing Matt 10:32-33.

In a sense, the conclusion so far has only discussed Matthew's choice in avoiding speaking about angels and the Son of Man in Matt 10:32-33. Consequently, it is necessary to explore what Matthew did say through his text, recasting the saying with Jesus and the Father in heaven as the heavenly representative and heavenly audience.⁷⁷⁷

2.3 Jesus' Relationship to His Disciples and the Father in Matthew 10

The change of who receives the heavenly acknowledgment and denial further contributes to how the role of Jesus in Matthew 10:32-33 illustrates the life Jesus' disciples will live, resembling Jesus in both suffering and mission. In Matt 10, Matthew connects the relationship between Jesus and the Father to the apostles' relationship with Jesus (and therefore, the Father as well). As a result, the language of Matt 10:32-33 demonstrates a deliberate continuity and congruency within the context and narrative of Matt 10.

The discourse in Matthew 10 can be broken up chiastically into two triads with a center section. In the first triad, Jesus issues detailed instructions to the missionaries about where to go and what to bring (Matt 10:5-15), lists the

⁷⁷⁵ See similar issues related to the portrayal of the one like a Son of Man in Rev 14:14-16 who seems to be taking instructions from an angel.

⁷⁷⁶ In fact, he calls this the 'only conclusion that remains probable.' Tödt, *Tradition*, 90. The use of both 'I' and 'Son of Man' in Matt 19:28 demonstrates that Matthew's exchange in Matt 10:32-33 was not simply one to eliminate distinction. Tödt, *Tradition*, 90. This is in contrast to Higgins, who posits that Matthew equates the two. Higgins, *Jesus*, 118. See also Luz, who does not understand how this distinction can be made. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 90 n. 56. Hare sees no complication in the roles of both witness and judge in his understanding of Matt 10:32-33. It is possible that his conclusion is founded on the fear of interpreting Jesus as 'demoted' in Matthew 10 instead of a different portrait. Hare, *Tradition*, 11.

⁷⁷⁷ Weaver, *Missionary*.

persecutions that they will face (Matt 10:16-23), and explains that the disciple will be treated as the master (Matt 10:24-25). The persecution and suffering that Jesus faces are echoed in the lives of his disciples.⁷⁷⁸ In these two short verses, Matthew illustrates the link between Jesus and followers as they model themselves on Jesus' life, imitating him.

At the center of this discourse (Matt 10:26-31), Matthew offers a message of hope, summarized in verse 31 'So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.' Recall how Matthew illustrates this affection with the language of God as 'Father' (Matt 10:29; cf. Luke 12:6). Jesus' followers can rest in the care and love of the Father, casting aside their fears about persecution. Davies and Allison compare this chiastic center with Matt 6:25 and 7:11, illustrating the safekeeping of the Father and the love for his children.⁷⁷⁹ Within the larger context, the tension is drawn out as Matthew illustrates the Father is both the Lord of Judgment (Matt 10:28,33) and the one that cares for Jesus' disciples.

Mirroring the first triad, Matt 10:32-33 further demonstrates the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. Again, the actions of Jesus and the disciples are the same: if Jesus was persecuted, so too will his disciples be (Matt 10:25), if his disciples confess their relationship to him, Jesus acknowledges them (Matt 10:32). In contrast to Käsemann's sentences of holy law, Hare argues that this saying does not coordinate good and bad behavior, but points toward a relationship.⁷⁸⁰ Likewise, Tödt states that while there is a relationship between actions on earth and results in the future, the language of confessing and denying already presupposes a relationship.⁷⁸¹ Furthermore, this verse puts Jesus at the forefront of soteriology. He is the deciding factor in the coming judgment. The one that rejects or accepts him is thereby reciprocally rejected or accepted into the eschatological kingdom.⁷⁸² Thus, the emphasis also lies on the comforting of the

⁷⁷⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:215. Lindars, 'Advocate,' 489.

⁷⁷⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:160-62. Comparing Matt 10:32-33 with 7:21-23, Luz notes that the one doing the will of the Father in heaven is the one that enters the kingdom. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 104. Again, this is about the proclamation that Jesus is delivering in both word and deed. Consequently, the disciples are to imitate Jesus.

⁷⁸⁰ Hare, *Tradition*, 10, Käsemann, 'Sentences.'

⁷⁸¹ Tödt, *Tradition*, 55.

⁷⁸² Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:215. The one who has the power to destroy is the one who has the power to save (Matt 10:26-31). However, the key to the interpretation, according to Luz, lies in the person of Jesus. In him is the relationship to the fatherhood of God. Through discipleship this

disciples with 10:32, for this is the first time in this discourse that Matthew speaks of the rescue of the disciples in judgment.⁷⁸³ Not only will Jesus be the one in whom the disciples place their allegiance and trust, but he will be the same one representing them at the judgment. Rather than clarifying the identity of the Son of Man, the main thrust of this saying is the continuity of fellowship of the disciples with Jesus on earth and in heaven.⁷⁸⁴

In addition, it is the knowledge of the Father that will be contrasted with the break with the earthly fathers in the descriptions of persecution in the second triad (Matt 10:34-39). Here, the relationship with Jesus and the Father is prioritized over family ties (cf. Matt 23:9).⁷⁸⁵ The discourse concludes with the reception of the missionaries, who in their discipleship reflect Jesus and the Father (Matt 10:40-42).⁷⁸⁶ Harrington calls attention to the Christological importance of 10:40, 'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me,' calling it the 'chain of mission.'⁷⁸⁷ In one sense, this verse echoes the order of Matt 10:32-33 (cf. 10:24-25), only the disciples are now representing Jesus and those that receive the disciples are, by virtue of this relationship, receiving the Father (cf. Matt 25:31-46). Woven throughout the discourse of Matt 10, the significance of Jesus and his disciples' relationship to the Father would have been a point difficult to make if the heavenly audience of Matt 10:32-33 were the 'angels of God.'

3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the goal of this appendix was to investigate, first, if Matthew's text reflected the possibility of an omission of angels when he is so inclined to include them, and second, to explore the possible benefits to Matthew's Gospel if such a move had been made. In this regard, it was established both in the traditions

relationship is practiced, meaning that both providence and judgment are experienced. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 106.

⁷⁸³ Luz notes that salvation is still an act of grace. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 104. On this saying in Luke, Marshall debates whether the saying was introduced for comfort, warning, or both; but it has vital significance in the here and now for the coming judgment. Marshall, *Luke*, 516.

⁷⁸⁴ Tödt, *Tradition*, 57.

⁷⁸⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:217.

⁷⁸⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:160-62.

⁷⁸⁷ Harrington, *Matthew*, 154.

surrounding this saying and redactional changes to the texts of Matt 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9 that Matthew had good reasons if he excluded angels from this saying. Consequently, Matthew's text in 10:32-33 reflects the use of angels in the whole of his narrative, emphasizing the exalted status of the Son of Man with angels. In addition, Matthew's 'my Father in heaven' highlights the relationship between Jesus, the Father, and believers in a way not possible had the text resembled Luke's 'angels of God' (Luke 12:8-9). Therefore, if angels were part of the tradition passed on to Matthew, then it can be concluded that even in his silence, Matthew is consciously orchestrating his narrative to communicate his Gospel message, including his Christology.

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